



Tufts Alumni Admissions Program



**TAAP Member Handbook
2011-2012**

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**TAAP MEMBER HANDBOOK
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Additional resources available at http://taap.tufts.edu/alumni_training.htm:

- ❖ College Fair Training Module
- ❖ Interviewing Training Module
- ❖ Congratulatory Calling Training Module

STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

The Tufts Alumni Admissions Program (TAAP) supports the recruitment efforts of the Office of Undergraduate Admissions and extends the University's reach into local communities across the country and around the world. Through representing Tufts at college fairs, *Tufts on Tour* events, and as interviewers, TAAP volunteers are a face and voice for the University. TAAP exists to enhance both the human connection between Tufts and its applicants and to provide meaningful accounts of applicant interviews that add depth to their consideration for admission to Tufts.

INTRODUCTION

Each year TAAP volunteers from around the globe represent Tufts at hundreds of local college fairs, attend *Tufts on Tour* events for prospective students and their families, conduct thousands of interviews, and on occasion organize and host receptions for prospective students and admitted candidates. The personal contact between applicants to Tufts and University alumni is a powerful public relations tool. TAAP is an essential component of Tufts' admissions effort, and accordingly the admissions staff is committed to increasing the size and range of the program, and supporting it as effectively as possible.

THE PROGRAM

TAAP members are organized into regional committees which are directed by a local alumni chairperson. The chairperson and members of the committee work with the admissions staff to develop effective ways to recruit compelling candidates from their area. College fair coverage and alumni interviewer activities are directed by the chairperson of the TAAP committee in consultation with the admissions staff.

The regional organization of the admissions office fosters high-quality communication and superior working relationships with TAAP chairpersons and local high school counselors. Each admissions officer is responsible for a geographic territory where he or she will potentially travel and ultimately from where he or she will review and evaluate applications. Admissions officer territory assignments can be found on our website at <http://admissions.tufts.edu/?pid=147>.

MEMBER RESPONSIBILITIES

TAAP members provide an avenue for prospective students and applicants to learn more about Tufts and make a personal connection with a member of the Tufts community. TAAP members are recognized as representatives of Tufts and its admissions office. Be mindful of the fact that TAAP members may be the sole representative of Tufts a prospective student and/or family encounters; therefore we hold our volunteers to a high standard.

Member expectations include:

- Maintain up-to-date knowledge about Tufts and its application process. Key information is available through the *TAAP Member Handbook*, the admissions website (<http://admissions.tufts.edu/>), the monthly *TAAP Tuesdays* (updates emailed electronically from the TAAP Coordinator the second Tuesday of every month), *The Bulletin of Tufts University* (<http://ase.tufts.edu/bulletin/>) and on the TAAP website (<http://taap.tufts.edu>).
- To project a professional attitude; be personable, helpful and interested; exhibit good judgment.
- Represent Tufts at local college fairs when available.

- Conduct at least 4-6 interviews during the interview season (October through February). This number may be more or less depending on each committee's size and the size of the applicant pool in that area.
- Communicate time constraints, extended travel away from the area, and relationship to any applicant to the committee chairperson to allow the chairperson to plan accordingly.
- Prompt communication with applicants to reduce frustration and anxiety for the applicants.
- Participation in any local TAAP committee meetings or training events, as available.

The TAAP Calendar is mailed with the TAAP fall mailing at the beginning of each academic year.

RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES- COLLEGE FAIRS

Each year the admissions office is invited to send a representative to hundreds of college fairs so that students can learn about a number of colleges and universities during one program. Usually, it is not possible for a member of the admissions office to be present at these events but well informed alumni can successfully represent Tufts and therefore expand our reach into the local community. College fairs typically are organized by a high school, school district, or special interest group. They may cover the student population in more than one school; some include the entire community. Most will include parents as well as students.

Please see the College Fair Training Module for college fair responsibilities and tips which can be found at: http://taap.tufts.edu/alumni_training.htm

RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES- *TUFTS ON TOUR* EVENTS

In various cities across the country and around the world, the admissions office and TAAP committees host approximately 50 *Tufts on Tour* receptions. *Tufts on Tour* events are intended to encourage greater interest in and understanding of Tufts and its admissions process. As gatherings, *Tufts on Tour* events are an effective way to meet with a large number of students and families in one geographic area while also allowing potential applicants to meet successful Tufts alumni in their communities.

Personal invitations to the meetings are sent to students on the admissions mailing list and general invitations are sent to local high schools. Notice of the event will also be sent to all active TAAP members in the area because these meetings can serve as an excellent update for members preparing for college fairs and the next season of interviewing.

Tufts on Tour events are organized by the admissions office. Members of local TAAP committees are invited to attend, and sometimes participate. Meeting involvement for volunteers may include:

- Greeting students and parents upon their arrival.
- Assisting with attendee check in.
- Sharing thoughts about your Tufts experience.

TAAP ONLINE

Accessible from the TAAP website (<http://taap.tufts.edu>), *TAAP Online* is an online information management system that facilitates the interview assignment process. Your username and password will be included in the first fall TAAP mailing. After logging into your *TAAP Online* account, you will be able to view assignments, submit interview reports and access password protected resources.

When you are assigned an interview by your Chairperson, you will receive an email making you aware of the assignment. The email will contain the name, city, state, high school, phone number and email address of the student you are assigned to interview. You can view additional information about your interviewee through the *TAAP Online* assignment form which includes the student's contact information, activities and academic interests. After you conduct the interview, you will submit an interview report via TAAP Online. We recommended you word process the report, save it to your hard drive and then cut and paste it into the online interview. The electronic interview report then becomes part of the candidate's electronic record and the admissions staff will access it when reading the applicant's file or during admissions committee. It is in the best interest of the applicant to write and submit the interview report promptly so the interview is fresh in your mind.

Help screens are available at various points of the site to answer any questions you might have. If you have questions about the site, please feel free to call us here in Bendetson at 617-627-3170 or e-mail admissions.taap@ase.tufts.edu.

RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES- INTERVIEWING

PHILOSOPHY OF THE INTERVIEW

TAAP volunteers have the face-to-face opportunity to meet and interact with Tufts applicants allowing interviewers to engage applicants in a way that both excites them about Tufts and enhances the depth of their candidacy for admissions. The purpose of an interview is to:

- personalize the application process, especially in the framework of our large and competitive applicant pool.
- answer an applicant's questions about Tufts.
- gather information about an applicant that may not have surfaced in an application itself (i.e. motivations and interests, how/why they've become involved in various activities, the overall match/fit with Tufts).
- fill in the gaps that may exist in an application.
- highlight certain parts of the applicant's experience.
- foster a candidates excitement about Tufts.

Through the interview process, TAAP members provide the admissions office with a better understanding of the ability, achievement and personal characteristics of applicants. Interviews generally last between forty minutes and one hour, and should feel more like a conversation rather than a question and answer session. Please note that TAAP interviews are not required and the applicant opts into the TAAP interview process via the Tufts Supplement. If the applicant chooses to decline the interview when contacted by a TAAP member, they have the right to do so without penalty or judgment.

After the interview is completed, an interview report should be composed and submitted to the admissions office. By requesting alumni interviewers to submit reports implies that the interview report influences admissions committee decisions. While good interview reports provide information that can add depth to the student's application for admission, they do not dictate or define an admission decision. We respect your opinions and value both the information you provide and the time you spend with these candidates. However, no single credential, including alumni interview reports, can dictate decisions to the admissions committee - either positive or negative. Just as an applicant will not be admitted or denied based on standardized test scores alone, neither will a student be admitted or denied based solely on the content of an interview report. It is important to understand that ***your input will not be treated as a recommendation but rather as a critical piece of information about an applicant's attributes.***

Alumni must also trust the admissions staff; admissions officers have the perspective gained by reading an entire application and through exposure to the complete applicant pool consisting of over 17,000 candidates. Do not be discouraged if admissions decisions run counter to your interview experiences. The admissions staff chooses the most qualified students based on a variety of factors, some of which will not be available to you at the time of the interview.

The admissions process is as much an art as a science. While we are very concerned with a student's course selection, grade point average, rank-in-class, and standardized tests scores, we also are interested in a student's initiative, motivation, and achievements in school and in the community. Not only do we seek the most academically qualified group but also a first-year class that is diverse geographically, politically, ethnically, and socio-economically. In essence, we strive to assemble a class of students who will make the most of the Tufts experience and add to our community both in and beyond the classroom.

Applicants more often than not present very well in their TAAP interviews. Unfortunately, some applicants who appear very impressive in conversation do not have the academic power or extracurricular depth to stand up in the competition of the entire applicant pool. You may or may not agree with every decision made by the admissions committee, but we hope you will understand the volume of information considered when decisions are made. Because we accept about one in five applicants, we are not able to admit every qualified student. Please do not be discouraged if the students you interview are not admitted. Even in these cases, your efforts are important and appreciated. There is great value in a positive interview experience even when we are unable to admit the student. The impression the candidate has of Tufts when they leave their interview will likely outlast the disappointment of not being admitted. With that said the success of a TAAP year should not be measured in the number of interviewees accepted, but rather by the energy and excitement you helped to generate about Tufts.

Please see the Interview Training which can be found at: http://taap.tufts.edu/alumni_training.htm

IMPACT OF THE INTERVIEW

The role the TAAP interview plays in the admissions process at Tufts exists on two levels. First, the information gleaned from TAAP interview reports enhances the admissions committees' ability to evaluate applicants both in the context of their respective communities, and as a fit for Tufts. Second, those applicants who are fortunate enough to enjoy a TAAP interview have an additional opportunity to personally connect with Tufts and are more likely explore the University to greater depth. Please note that TAAP is not a tool for judging candidates as either admissible or inadmissible. Instead TAAP exists to promote the Tufts experience and to create opportunities to know our applicants in a more complete and personalized way.

In 2010-2011, over 3,500 TAAP volunteers completed over 9,000 interviews (of 17,130 applicants). Data shows that admitted applicants who request and receive a TAAP interview are more likely to enroll than those who are not interviewed. Given this fact we remain committed to working with individual chairs and committees to recruit new members and continue progress toward interviewing as many applicants as possible.

YIELD ACTIVITIES- TAAP CONGRATULATORY CALLING
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At the completion of both Early Decision I and II, alumni interviewers will be able to access the admissions decision for every candidate interviewed via *TAAP Online*. Chairs of TAAP committees are able to view all decisions for applicants assigned to their committee, while members are only able to

view decisions for applicants they interviewed. Early Decision candidates are either admitted, deferred to regular decision, or denied. Early Decision I applicants will be notified of their decision in mid-December and Early Decision 2 applicants will be notified in mid-February. We ask that you contact your interviewees who were admitted through ED to welcome them to the Tufts community. (See the guidelines for calling admitted students below). If you are unable to call the admitted students whom you interviewed, you may wish to write a brief note or email following the same guidelines.

In late March or Early April, Regular Decision candidates will be notified of their admissions decision, either admit, waitlist or deny. You will receive an email when these decisions become available to you through TAAP Online. TAAP members are encouraged to call the admitted students they interviewed to offer congratulations and to encourage their matriculation to Tufts. Contact with admitted students and their parents following the announcement of admissions decisions, is an important means of encouraging the enrollment of the university's top candidates. You may be asked by your committee chair to call and congratulate students your committee was unable to interview.

Please see the Congratulatory Calling Training Module which can be found at: http://taap.tufts.edu/alumni_training.htm.

YIELD ACTIVITIES- SPRING YIELD RECEPTIONS FOR ADMITTED STUDENTS

In many locations, spring yield receptions for admitted students and their parents are organized by the admissions office. These April receptions are either hosted by Tufts alumni or at local hotels arranged by the admissions office. Yield receptions are attended by members of the admissions staff, recent Tufts graduates, members of local TAAP committees, and admitted students and their families. University representatives join members of the local TAAP committee in recognizing the abilities and talents of admitted students and encouraging their enrollment at the University. In many instances, students attending these receptions already have decided to enroll, and the reception will serve to reassure the students and their parents of the appropriateness of their decision. For other students, they are in the final stages of deciding where they will enroll and the information and interest demonstrated at these gatherings will assist them in determining if Tufts is the right choice for them.

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions will contact you if there is a yield event in your area.

THE SELECTION PROCESS

It is the goal of the admissions office to craft a class of compelling and qualified students through a thoughtful and equitable process. Tufts seeks to enroll a class that is diverse geographically, ethnically, socially, politically and economically. There are no established minimum qualifications for class rank or test scores, as all available information will be considered by the admissions committee. There are no "quotas" for the number of students admitted from a school or geographical area.

To complete an application to Tufts, students must submit the Common Application and the Tufts Supplemental Form. If the student submits the Supplement first (and most do) the data from this form will be used to populate the TAAP Online interview form (this data includes academic interests, activities, legacy status, etc.). If the Common Application is submitted first, these specific data elements are not available and will result in an interview form that contains less information.

The writing components of the application included one short answer question, two short essays and an optional essay found on the Tufts Supplement and a personal statement found on the Common Application. A completed file will also include the high school transcript, recommendations and standardized test scores. Specific essay questions from the Tufts Supplement can be found online at <http://admissions.tufts.edu/?pid=109>.

When an application is complete, it is reviewed by one or two admissions officers. The high school transcript is the most important document as it reveals the academic setting in which the student was educated, the rigor of the curriculum selected and the performance over time. Standardized test scores are a measure to compare academic achievement in conjunction with the high school transcript. A counselor recommendation assesses the student within the context of the school, and a teacher recommendation assesses the student's scholastic attributes and participation in the classroom. Appropriate supplemental recommendations will be also considered.

The short answer questions are valuable in a number of ways. They help us to assess the “fit” or “match” and allow the student to provide a more personal description of who they are and to provide some context to their lived experiences. The essay and optional second essay provide the admissions committee with a sample of the student’s ability to express thoughts and ideas in a concise, cohesive manner. It also provides information about the environment in which the student was raised. A list of extracurricular activities, summer and community activities reflect the student’s sustained participation in the activity of choice and any leadership positions held.

Interview reports help to personalize the application. Your assessment of the student’s intellect, enthusiasm, knowledge of their community and the world is helpful in selecting the most interesting students.

The admissions committee also considers special talents that a student may bring to the university community. Significant contributions in the arts or athletics are an example. Alumni relatives are given special attention by the admissions committee. Recognizing the importance of a strong tradition of interest and support to the university, alumni relatives are given every consideration in the selection process, although that will not be the sole reason for admission. The percentage of alumni relatives admitted is typically above the general acceptance rate. Special care is taken to assure that no qualified student is overlooked and that all constituencies receive fair treatment in the admissions selection process.

Once the file has been read, the admissions committee will review candidates and select those who are most compelling.

FINANCIAL AID

All financial aid awarded at Tufts is based on need. Need is the difference between educational expenses (tuition, room and board, books, and personal expenses) and the university’s estimate of the parents’ and student’s financial resources. Students are encouraged to apply for aid because each family circumstance is unique. **Income alone does not establish financial need.**

Incoming first-year students apply for financial aid by submitting the College Scholarship Service (CSS) PROFILE, the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA), and other required information. To receive the PROFILE, students must register online with CSS. More information is available in the financial aid instructions found in the application packet. The FAFSA is available online as well. Aid decisions are announced shortly after admissions decisions are released.

Financing a quality education is a major concern of parents at almost all levels of income. Tufts, too, is concerned that considerations of financing may affect planning for college, specifically whether Tufts is an affordable option. Students should not hesitate to apply to Tufts for lack of financial resources. Tufts will strive to bridge the gap between a reasonable expectation from available resources and the cost of the Tufts education.

A typical financial aid package may include a self-help portion (campus job and loan), and grant money, which is not repayable. Students at Tufts are eligible for a full range of financial aid in the form of university, state, and federal grants; long-term Perkins, Stafford and Tufts loans; and campus employment available through the federally subsidized work study program (FWS).

In 2009, 40% of the entering class had financial need and was awarded more than \$13 million in total aid – \$29,500 was the average grant, with the average total award (including FWS & loans) of over \$34,000.

Tufts recognizes that some excellent students may be undecided about seeking admission in the belief that they will have difficulty in financing their education. These students should investigate local, state, federal, and private sources of aid and apply for the financial assistance that Tufts offers.