Annual Report of the Campus Planning and Development Committee: 2017-18

The Campus Planning and Development Committee met four times during the year, November 15, November 26, and February 28, and April 5. The November 26 and April 5 meetings were held with just faculty and students.

Based on discussions held during the 2017-2018 academic year by this Committee and the Faculty Work-Life Committee, we decided last Spring to recruit a team of Tufts graduate students in the Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning Department to explore opportunities for Tufts to enhance graduate and faculty housing opportunities, especially through innovative partnerships. That team began its work in January and at the time of this writing is now wrapping up their report. They examined many possible paths forward, but identified one very promising solution in their research: opportunities for Tufts to partner with Medford and Malden property owners to reserve a limited number of apartment units in existing buildings for Tufts graduate students. This idea could lock in reasonable rental rates, help address the logistical challenges faced by international students, and give Tufts a chance to test out the University's leverage in the private market to get concessions from landlords around better conditions and rental terms for students. The team will present their findings and recommendations at a Fall 2019 CPDC meeting and share their full report this summer.

In November 2018, the TCU Senate issued a resolution calling for the Tufts Administration to build a new undergraduate dorm. The CPDC invited several TCU Senators who had authored the resolution to a November 26, 2018 meeting where they explained the reasoning behind their resolution and their plans going forward. CPDC Committee Chairs Hollander and Gallagher then invited them to provide a more formal presentation at the February 28, 2019 CPDC meeting. During the April 5, 2019 meeting, CPDC members discussed the new dorm concerns and articulated new and revised principles for the Administration moving forward.

An ongoing Tufts-wide effort to centralized, formalize, and extract greater financial resources from space management was discussed at the February meeting. During the April meeting, principles for space management were also developed.

Space Management & Planning:
a. Ensure that departmental leadership teams are an early partner in any decisions around the use or management of currently occupied space;

b. Provide opportunities for non-leadership faculty, staff, and students to provide input around space management decisions impacting their currently occupied space;

c. There is a role for Department managed space within a larger university-wide space management system in order to foster a sense of community within each Department and to honor historic norms for shared governance. As such the Administration should create customized plans with all University Departments to designate which spaces are available for university-wide or external use and which spaces are not.

d. Any revenues generated through external space rentals ought to be shared with impacted Departments and reinvested in those facilities through maintenance (cleaning after events, putting furniture back to where it was before rental) as well as capital investments;

e. Maintain graduate student and faculty housing opportunities in off-campus Tufts-owned buildings;

Student Housing:

a. Siting, design, and programming of any new dorm should be based on extensive student and faculty input
b. The addition of new dorm space should either directly or indirectly result in additional graduate student, post-doc, and faculty housing either on or near campus

c. A new dorm should accommodate a faculty residence, along the lines of “house” residential systems at many Ivy League universities

During this year, the Committee continued to implement a set of procedures approved two academic years ago (February 8, 2017) through a resolution approved by the AS&E faculty. The following steps have been fully integrated into CPDC operations:

1) At the beginning of every semester, the Vice President of Operations delivers a written summary of all upcoming planning and major development efforts on the Medford Campus to the Chair of CPDC and could request agenda items for the next CPDC meeting.

2) CPDC members consider those plans and development projects and then articulate for each a set of principles that reflect the concerns and aspirations of the AS&E faculty.

3) CPDC shares those principles with the AS&E faculty and the administration through announcements at faculty meetings and the Office of the Secretary of the Faculty’s website. It is the expectation of the CPDC that those principles will inform the administration’s planning and development efforts.

With these procedures, CPDC serves as a better venue for collaboration with the administration: the Committee becomes the place where the administration communicates plans and development projects and where CPDC can offer meaningful response. During this academic year, the principles have been used to check the administration on their progress on each development project. We are pleased to report that the principles have been largely honored and when they have not, the Administration has presented reasonable explanations and accommodations. The principles have worked effectively to place faculty and student voice into the Administration’s decision-making process for campus planning and development.

Here are the current principles adopted by the CPDC

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Dana-Barnum Reuse:
  a. Create coherent thematic academic environment
  b. Preserve large teaching spaces
  c. Meet pressing university space needs
  d. Create flexibility elsewhere with additional teaching spaces
  e. Deal with pressing facility condition needs (as in high cost to preserve Lincoln Filene for Tisch College)
  f. Preservation of the historic qualities of the exterior architecture
  g. Meeting/study space for students

Houston/Miller Renovation:
  a. Ensure that the modest addition to the center of the fronts of the two buildings are designed to enhance the pedestrian experience along those two roads/paths parallel to the Rez Quad
  b. Addition of study spaces with common space

Villages Concept:
  a. Preserve historic facades and neighborhood-feel of village, minimize Tufts signage.
  b. Walnut Hill should continue its acquisition program off-campus, to make-up for units that upperclassman will displace
c. Provide opportunities for married graduate students to serve as dorm parents/RAs within these villages

d. Ensure that any displacement that results does not interfere with transitional housing opportunities for faculty

e. For faculty who are displaced, efforts should be made for Walnut Hill to accommodate them in another residence in the same school district (if requested by the faculty member).

Cummings Building:

a. Available event space that can accommodate 300 +/- people

b. Pedestrian access and orientation should be prioritized

c. Close attention to the design of the street wall along College Avenue

d. No bars/detail on the windows to make it look prison-like

e. Make the building a node for connecting the Tufts campuses, providing facilities to support that (e.g. touch-down space)

f. Get affected departments involved early in planning discussions

g. Inclusion of public art that expresses the student experience

Aquatics Building:

a. Maintain community use of pool

b. Limit the set-back of the building and take other landscaping measures to create a definable street wall along College Ave

For the Committee: Justin Hollander (UEP) and Hugh Gallagher (Physics/Astronomy)

Faculty Members:
Anne DeLaire Mulgrew Romance Languages
David Henry Feldman, Child Development
Kathleen Fisher, Computer Science
Hugh Gallagher, Physics and Astronomy
Justin Hollander, Urban & Environmental Policy and Planning
William Messner, Mechanical Engineering
John Mulligan, Drama and Dance
Rebecca Scheck, Chemistry
Reed Ueda, History

Student Members:
Benya Kraus
Colter Weil
Dan Kasenberg

Ex Officio Members:
Matthew Austin, Associate Director of Residential Life
James Glaser, Dean, A&S
Jim Hurley, Interim Executive Administrative Dean, A&S
Mary Pat McMahon, Dean of Student Affairs
Jianmin Qu, School of Engineering