The committee is a subcommittee of the Educational Policy Committee. It meets four or five times during the academic year to oversee the study abroad options for our students in both Tufts and non-Tufts programs. Our work includes monitoring the list of approved non-Tufts options, voting on student petitions for programs not listed, discussing practical and academic problems that arise, and evaluating both new proposals and old programs. We also regularly review our guiding principles. Our criteria for an acceptable program include a minimum of thirteen weeks of academic study, a final transcript issued by an accredited, degree-granting institution, and a high degree of cultural immersion (so we favor, e.g., programs based in a single country, and those with homestays and strong language components). We are proud of Tufts’ reputation as a leading study-abroad school. Usually, around 40% of our undergraduates enroll in some study-abroad program or other.

In AY 2018-19, we met five times (9-14-18, 10-5-18, 11-16-18, 3-8-19, and 4-29-19).

The total number of students enrolled in Tufts and non-Tufts programs in AY 2017-18 was 488, around 38% of the Junior class (assuming a class size of 1,275). An unusually high proportion, 47%, of these students were enrolled in Tufts programs (usually it is only about 33%). In AY 2017-18, our ten Tufts programs chalked up 125 “full time enrollments”—211 individual students in all—for either one semester or the full year, slightly above the average for the past 5 years. The enrollments for 2018-19 also look strong.

The most significant development this year has been the introduction of new short-term study-abroad programs over the winter and summer breaks. Joe Auner (Dean of Academic Affairs) and Diana Chigas (Associate Provost and Senior International Officer) visited our September meeting, and we discussed these programs at length. We discussed criteria for evaluating proposals, basic rationales, and practical issues of cost and logistics. At our November meeting, we approved the continuation of the first such program, which ran successfully as a pilot in Summer 2018: a 5-week Spanish language and culture program in Cadiz, Spain. At our April meeting, we also discussed and approved a proposal by the Italian Language Program and Computer Science Department for a 5½ week summer program at the University of Pavia. We hope that these short-term programs will attract students who have been under-represented in our other programs, especially engineering and other STEM students.

The other meetings focused on routine business.

Bruce Hitchner attended our March and April meetings as liaison with the Executive Committee.

We continue to be on the lookout for further study-abroad opportunities for STEM, and especially engineering students.

We continue to monitor the slow but steady decline in students studying abroad for a full year.
Our work would not be possible without the efficiency, hard work, and competence of the terrific staff of the Office of Programs Abroad: Dean Sheila Bayne (Director of Tufts Programs Abroad); Stephen Hall (Foreign Study Advisor); Melanie Armstrong (Program Specialist); and Julianna Dugan (Program Coordinator). Unfortunately, Sheila and Stephen are retiring this year. Stephen’s insight, comprehensive research, and general good sense has been indispensable in our evaluation of non-Tufts programs. Sheila has nurtured and developed Tufts study-abroad options for over 30 years from meagre beginnings to today’s booming program to the point that we are currently ranked 22nd in the nation for undergraduate participation in study-abroad programs (Institute of International Education statistics, Nov 2018). This has hugely enhanced Tufts international profile and, over the years, has brought enormous, often life-changing benefits to over 14,500 students. The committee wishes them both the very best in their retirement.

Respectfully submitted for the committee:

David Denby

Senior Lecturer in Philosophy