During 2006-2007, the agenda of the Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid was in part driven by the headlines, in part by the Admissions calendar and in part by the concerns of the Committee members and the Admissions staff. During Fall 2005, the announcement that Harvard was ending early decision and the speculations that other colleges would be forced to follow its example, prompted the Committee to address this issue. Our discussions concluded that Tufts was in a different position than Harvard and that our interests would not be served by ending early decision. A further exploration of combining the current two early decision programs into one met with sympathy on the Committee, but was ultimately rejected by Admissions because of its potentially negative effect on athletic recruiting. During Spring 2007, the revelations of abuses by financial officers in peer institutions in recommending loan sources to parents and students led the Committee to monitor the procedures at Tufts in this area and on the safeguards that assured the probity of our practices. We were satisfied that the Tufts process was fair and equitable and that the safeguards were sufficient, but recommended greater transparency in explaining both to parents and students. This policy recommendation was implemented with success for the incoming class.

As in past years, the Committee heard reports from Dean Lee Coffin at each of its meetings on the progress of the process of selecting the Class of 2011. In particular, the Committee was interested in monitoring the results of new strategies to increase the diversity of the entering class, particularly where African-American and socio-economically disadvantaged students were concerned. We are pleased to report that the results have been strongly positive in both areas this year, reflecting new hires, targeted recruiting and the progress in fundraising for need-blind admissions. The Committee also monitored the results of the new Kaleidoscope part of the Tufts Supplemental Application, designed in consultation with Dean Robert Sternberg to identify creativity and practical intelligence. The initial evaluation of Kaleidoscope was positive: it had produced higher quality and more revealing essays, which was an aid to Admissions, and had also identified Tufts to applicants as a place where creativity was valued. Moreover, a large percentage of applicants and accepted students had chosen to do the optional Kaleidoscope essay. The Committee stressed the importance of following students whose acceptance in part reflected their Kaleidoscope performance throughout their Tufts careers to see what difference it made in their academic performance and contribution to the Tufts community. As the university community has been informed, the Class of 2011 is the best class academically and the most diverse class in Tufts history. This is a credit to Dean Coffin and his staff, and to all the members of the Tufts community who have made Tufts a university that can attract first-rate students.

The Committee concluded its final meeting by electing as co-chairs for 2007-2008 Professors David Garman and Jeffrey Taliaferro.