The UAFAC had an active year and dealt with a number of large and small issues summarized below. The faculty members on the committee appreciate the assistance and cooperation of all the administration members on the committee – especially Lee Coffin and Patricia Reilly. Their willingness to discuss difficult issues with the committee makes service on the committee interesting and progress possible.

Restructuring Reporting Relationships for Undergraduate Admissions

The UAFAC held four meetings in September and October to consider the implications of the Provost’s reorganization proposals for AS&E undergraduate admissions and financial aid policy. The discussions were wide-ranging but the primary issues were: the administration of admissions and financial aid budgets, where primary policy-making responsibilities should reside, and the role of the administrative position currently identified as the AS&E Dean of Admissions and Enrollment Management.

The committee benefited from the participation of many administrators with intimate knowledge of the relevant issues. Invited participants included: Dean of Engineering Linda Abriola, Vice Provost Kevin Dunn, Dean of A&S James Glaser, and AS&E Dean of Campus Life and Student Leadership Bruce Reitman. Ex officio members of the committee included: AS&E Dean of Undergraduate Education John Barker, AS&E Dean of Admission and Enrollment Management Lee Coffin, AS&E Dean of Academic Advancement and Undergraduate Studies Carmen Lowe, AS&E Director of Financial Aid Patricia Reilly, and Associate Provost Dawn Terkla. Each of these administrators gave forthright and thoughtful answers to questions about the strengths and weaknesses of the current organization.

At the end of this series of meetings, committee members were polled on the following three questions. Student members had not yet been appointed to the committee and the ex officio members did not respond due to a perceived conflict of interest.

Question 1. Should the AS&E Dean of Admissions be responsible for “coordinating” or “improving” admissions practices in schools other than A&S and E?

All respondents were opposed to expanding the role of the AS&E Dean of Admissions to cover any aspects of admissions practices at the other schools. It was thought that AS&E admissions, especially undergraduate admissions, is too important to Tufts and too large a responsibility to take the risk of disrupting an organization and process that is currently working very well.

Question 2. Should the budgets for AS&E admissions and financial aid be set and controlled by the Provost’s Office or by the Deans of A&S and E?

No respondents felt that the budgets should be set and controlled by the Provost’s Office. All but two of the respondents felt the budgets should be set and controlled by an equal collaboration of the Dean of A&S and the Dean of Engineering. It was deemed important to keep the decision making in the hands of the two deans directly responsible for A&S and Engineering, and to allow those deans to have the budget authority to make spending trade-offs or to use the savings from improved efficiency.

Question 3. Should the AS&E Dean of Admissions report to the Deans of A&S and Engineering (solid lines to both deans and dotted “informational” line to the Provost’s Office) or to the Provost’s Office (solid line to the Provost’s Office and dotted “informational” lines to both deans)?
All respondents felt that the AS&E Dean of Admission should have a solid line reporting relationship to both the Dean of A&S and the Dean of Engineering. It was noted that Dean Coffin has always acted “as if” he had solid line reporting relationships to the Deans of A&S and Engineering and that his approach has worked very well.

Several UAFAC members were active participants in the various AS&E meetings on reorganization issues, but there has been no further committee discussion since the February 25, 2015 AS&E faculty vote against reorganization of AS&E admissions.

Policies on Undergraduate Applicants with DACA and Undocumented Status

The UAFAC devoted two meetings to considering our policies on applicants with DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals) status or undocumented status. These applicants are residents of the U.S. (typically from early childhood) who do not have legal immigration status. The first meeting raised enough issues that Senior Vice President and General Counsel Mary Jeka and representatives from “Tufts United for Immigrant Justice (UIJ)” were invited to the second meeting. The second meeting established the committee’s support for considering these undocumented students as domestic applicants for undergraduate admission and financial aid consideration. Vice President Jeka took the lead in presenting the case to other university administrators and President Monaco authorized the announcement of the new policy at the April 7 student rally. The collaboration between the committee, the administration and the student advocates produced an important policy change in a surprisingly short time.

Financial Aid

Undergraduate financial aid budgeting was addressed in two UAFAC meetings and the committee benefited from the participation of Dean Glaser and AS&E Executive Associate Dean Scott Sahagian in our discussions. The stark reality is that tight budgets in AS&E have made it infeasible to continue increasing the financial aid budget at the rate of recent years. The percentage of our entering class receiving financial aid grants is smaller than the percentage for our closest competitors and we will lose more ground with the Class of 2018. This hinders our ability to enroll classes that have the socio-economic diversity we seek and presents a problem that will continue without a substantial increase in the AS&E endowment for financial aid.

Miscellaneous Issues

1. The problems caused for non-traveling students when dining halls close over holidays were discussed and resolved through the efforts of Dean Barker and the cooperation of Dining Services. 2. The bad feelings caused by charging prospective students and parents $8 to park in Dowling Hall were discussed and remain an issue for future consideration. 3. Undergraduate admissions does not retain written assessments of admissions officers and is not faced with the issue of releasing those records to admitted students that some other colleges are dealing with.
Two Issues on the Functioning of the UAFAC

Ex Officio Member Voting

During the AS&E committee bylaw revisions of two years ago, the Executive Committee changed the status of the ex officio members of UAFAC from nonvoting members to voting members. This change was a surprise to members of UAFAC since it had not been discussed by the committee or requested by the committee chair. Although relatively few votes are taken each year, those votes tend to be on policy matters that are related to the administrative or supervisory roles of the ex officio committee members. The ex officio members have consistently felt it inappropriate for them to vote on such resolutions and that their previous status as nonvoting members was more appropriate.

Student Members

The current student membership policy of UAFAC is not working well. Many UAFAC discussions involve admissions and financial aid issues that connect to current undergraduate students in a personal way. It is always difficult and frequently impossible to hold productive discussions of these issues without covering details that could potentially identify individual students or foster rumors about highly sensitive policies. Holding these discussions with students present force faculty and administration members to be so guarded and abstract that little is accomplished. This problem is exacerbated by the tendency of student appointees to be first-year students who are appointed mid-way through the fall term, who serve as members for only one year and who are unavailable for the meetings times that have been established. Inviting student representatives to specific meetings to focus on specific issues seems to be a better model for student involvement in UAFAC. This is the approach used for this year’s UAFAC discussions of policies related to applicants with DACA and undocumented status.

Respectfully submitted on behalf of the Committee,
David Garman, Associate Professor of Economics