Faculty Committee on Work / Life
Annual Report, 2018-2019
Co-chairs Anna Sajina and Amahl Bishara

Activities: The committee met regularly throughout the academic year, including meetings of members and ex-officio members as well as with campus leaders regarding Work/Life related topics, including Julien Carter, Vice President for Human Resources, Patricia Campbell, Executive Vice President, Robert Chihade, Director of Real Estate, and the Deans of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering James Glaser, Jianmin Qu, and Academic Deans Joe Auner, and Nancy Bauer. We held our semesterly meetings with Work/Life Liaisons. Due to Anna Sajina’s spring research leave, she led meetings in the fall while Amahl Bishara led meetings in the spring.

Communication and information sharing. Our Work / Life Liaison program remains a good way to disseminate information about new and existing policies regarding work / life issues, as well as a good way to hear from faculty about new concerns. We advised Erin Sullivan in re-designing online resources regarding Work / Life on the webpage of the Secretary of the Faculty. We also advised Melissa Kelly regarding updates on the two-page Work / Life resource sheet.

Childcare. In anticipation of the end of the contract of Bright Horizons Teele Square, faculty committee members participated in a RFP and interviews for the new contract for the child care center located in Teele Square. Upon learning that only BHTS submitted a proposal for the childcare center, we wrote a letter to Julien Carter and others that made the following recommendations, as sent by Prof. Sajina to Julien Carter and others in December 2019:

- We prefer a 3 year contract rather than a 5 year contract as the last one was (this would give flexibility to change things around sooner if needed)
  The Bright Horizons proposal suggested if Tufts does not increase the yearly rent (by 40K) they would give a discount to Tufts families.
- Our preference is to go ahead with the rent increase and forego the BH tuition reduction. HOWEVER, this is only if the increased rent amount is to be 100% used towards the set up of a portable need-based childcare fund to meet the needs of the Tufts community (presumably administered by HR). Please let us know if this is feasible.
  -- The above scenario is our preference, but if it will not work (i.e. the increased rent money cannot be allocated towards such a childcare fund), then we recommend taking up the Bright Horizons offer of tuition reduction in exchange for holding the present rent. But this is our second choice.
- Our committee is pleased at the proposed setup of a toddler room at the center even if it is only for a small number of children.
- We would encourage that the new contract write-in the Tufts special connection including continued activities/events that make this center unique among other Bright Horizons centers.
By the time of our final meeting in May, the contract had not been finalized, but we had been notified that our proposal for creating a portable need-based childcare fund had been declined.

**Housing.** Following up on concerns of faculty members, we sought to clarify the policies of Walnut Hill Properties in a meeting with Patricia Campbell and Robert Chihade. They confirmed to us that Walnut Hill Properties currently has no budget for a website and that they do not want to make a written statement of their various policies regarding longstanding and new tenants.

**Commuting.** Both committee members and Work Life Liaisons have been eager about expanding the support for commuters through (1) better communication about existing resources, (2) support for bikers, (3) expanded shuttles. We have begun conversations with Charles Grab, Transportation and Fleet Manager, on the latter subject, and this topic is ripe for continued work next year.

**Definition of the “family” for purposes of caregiver leave.** Following up on a concern raised by at a liaison meeting, building on committee discussion, and working with Elizabeth Remick, we recommended that the Tufts definition of the “family” for purposes of caregiver leave be expanded. This is a timely concern since a new Massachusetts law will require the University to expand the definition of the family in any case.

Specifically we have requested:

1. Addition of the following familial relationships: sibling; sibling of parent (e.g., aunt or uncle); parent of spouse or domestic partner (parent-in-law); grandchild; grandparent; spouse or domestic partner of child; spouse or partner of sibling.

2. Creation of consistency between the Tufts definition of *in loco parentis* and the Federal FMLA definition, which does not require a formal legal relationship.

3. Inclusion of non-familial caregiving relationships, with close association documented by a healthcare proxy or power of attorney. Alternatively, the university could simply allow the employee to attest to the closeness of the relationship through a formal affidavit.

We look forward to following up on this issue throughout the summer and at the start of next year.

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1 Note that Bárbara Brizuela regularly attends our meetings as an ex-officio member.