To: Executive Committee  
From: FAB  
Re: Progress Report on the Proposed Reorganization of Dowling  
Date: Nov 25, 2014

The following draft report reflects our initial fact-finding interviews and some provisional discussions. The committee still has an important interview coming up this week with Dean Glaser; we will meet on Dec. 4 to draft a more developed report. The provisional nature of our report also reflects the fact that proposed organization chart has been in flux during this process while crucial aspects--such as precisely what parts of the Dowling operation will move and what the actual reporting structures will be in regard to the Associate Provosts--have also not been spelled out.

This draft report reflects a series of meetings with senior administrators and many of the key players in the proposed reorganization; the list of interviews is included below. These interviews made clear what is referred to as “Dowling” represents a large and complex operation, including seven branches (Student Affairs, Student Services, Student Life, Academic Advising, Orientation and Transitions, Study Abroad, Health and Wellness). Each of these branches operate with various degrees of autonomy and face different challenges, but they all also interact in complex and productive ways with each other, the schools, central administration, and the broader university. In what follows the word “Dowling” should be understood as referring to this overall complex operation currently reporting to the Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Students.

I. Challenges with the Current Organization
1. Student Life, Student Affairs, and Student Services do not have high enough visibility or “a seat at the table” at either Provostial and Presidential levels in terms of communication of important everyday issues and problems as well as short and long range budget planning and decisions related to facilities, construction, enrollment etc. that major impacts on student life. There is a shared concern that this lack of adequate attention to the student experience can have a detrimental impact on the “core business” of the school in delivering the highest quality campus-based residential experience. The provost also argued that pulling parts of Dowling out from under the deans’ budgets would make it easier to determine what the appropriate budget for Student Affairs, and Student Services should be.

2. There seems to be an endemic challenge to cooperation between the deans of A&S and SOE due to current budgetary models and the relation with the provost. While in some case the “dotted lines” reporting structure works well for SOE, in other cases the school does not feel adequately served by Dowling. This has necessitated the development of parallel structures such as advising and career services in SOE.

3. There is widespread dissatisfaction with the budgetary processes at every level. People spoke of the lack of flexibility with their own budgets and the lack of any regular budget process that would allow mid- and long-range planning, and a lack of transparency about budgets with central administration.

II. Concerns with the Proposed Reorganization
1. ACADEMIC OVERSIGHT AND ACADEMIC INTEGRATION
There are substantial concerns about preserving academic oversight and integration with the academic mission for the Dowling operation if parts are moved to central administration. This reflects a strong consensus that it is problematic to draw clear distinctions between “academic”/“non-academic,” “grad”/“undergrad,” and “A&S and SOE” in connection with any of the seven branches. A major strength of the operation is how it can engage faculty as part of integrated model of academic, co-curricular, and residential student life supported by student services and student affairs.

2. GETTING A SEAT AT THE TABLE FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS/SERVICES
The challenges of giving a stronger voice in the central administration to those most directly involved in shaping student life and dealing with student affairs and services was recurring theme in our interviews. Yet we also heard that there were aspects of the current structure in which important issues could be readily addressed (such as OEO matters). Some also noted that it currently seems easier to heard at the presidential than at the provostial levels. Several suggested that there were other mechanisms besides the large schedule restructuring for achieving this goal, such as was suggested in the “Enhancement of Reporting Structure” developed by Dowling for regular meetings that would literally put more people around the table:

3. BUDGETARY CONCERNS
Everyone agrees that putting large parts of Dowling under the provost would impact the budgets and budget flexibility of the two deans, though the provost argued that they would lose both revenue and expense. This matter is the central concern of B+P committee as is the question of whether or not the new reporting structure would reduce these structural tensions between the deans since they would still be in competition for funds, albeit from a significantly smaller overall budget. We heard of significant concerns about checks and balances on the budgets for Dowling operations if they were removed from reporting structures responsible for the academic mission.

4. SHORTCOMINGS OF THE “BEST PRACTICES” MODEL
Several commented on problems of applying “best practices” when evaluating the academic placement of Dowling in comparison to other schools. While our administrative structure for student affairs and students services at Tufts is atypical, so is our unusual combination of schools, the way in which we integrate a liberal arts college within a research university, and the history of limited central coordination. Unlike peer schools with strong central operations need to coordinate undergraduate programs in multiple schools and professional programs, Tufts only has undergraduates in the two schools. Several pointed out that Dowling operations (with the exception of accessibility and health and wellness) are generally not set up to serve students in other schools either on the Medford campus or at the Grafton and Boston campuses.

FAB Meetings
Dean Linda Abriola
John Barker, Dean of Undergraduate and Graduate Students
Melanie Bowdler, Sr, Dir of Health and Wellness
Associate Provost Kevin Dunn
Dean James Glaser (meeting scheduled for 11/16/14)
Provost David Harris
Kim Knox, Dean of Students, SOE
Carmen Lowe, Dean of Academic Advising and Undergraduate Study
Mary Pat McMahon, Dean of Student Affairs
Bruce Reitman, Dean of Student Life and Leadership
Paul Stanton, Dean of Student Services
Prof. Vickie Sullivan, co-chair A&S Strategic Plan Committee