

Resolution on the Retirement of Rachel G. Bratt
Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning

Colleagues in the Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning (UEP) join with the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to record our admiration for, and gratitude to, Professor Rachel Bratt on this, the occasion of her retirement after 38 years at Tufts. Rachel's remarkable career as a scholar has been intertwined with a deep commitment to the development of students, mentoring junior faculty, and the growth of UEP. The field of urban planning has also been strengthened through her scholarship in housing policy and her many efforts to promote just and equitable policies for poor and vulnerable populations.

Rachel was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. As she has often commented, this was long before it was trendy to come from Brooklyn. Her love for Boston sports teams grew naturally from her connection and support of the Brooklyn Dodgers. With over 1,600 other students, she graduated from Erasmus Hall High School and, at 20, she received a B.A. in psychology from Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. Soon afterwards, tiring of laboratory work and with a growing aversion to rats, she made her way to Boston, and never left.

Rachel met her husband, Michael, and they were married in 1970; she immediately inherited her two wonderful step-children, Christopher and Laura. Her Ph.D. in Urban and Regional Studies was conferred by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1976. At that time, their first child, Joanna (Tufts, B.A., International Relations, 1998), was 6 months old.

One month after graduating from MIT, Rachel joined Tufts as an assistant professor of political science, with full-time responsibilities in the then 3-year old Graduate Program in Urban, Social and Environmental Policy. Rachel was the first tenure track member of the fledgling program. This appointment signaled a major vote of confidence on the part of Tufts that the critical policy issues that the core faculty was articulating were ripe for academic inquiry. Interestingly, Rachel is also the first tenured member of the UEP faculty to retire.

In her early years at Tufts, Rachel was forging a new path for junior female faculty. When she became pregnant with her second child, Jeremy (Tufts, B.S., Computer Science, 2001), she inquired about the university's maternity leave policy. Learning that no such policy existed for faculty, and with the support of then-Provost Sol Gittleman, they made one up. She was awarded a semester off, no pay, but, importantly, the tenure clock was stopped. Rachel was promoted to Associate Professor with Tenure in 1986 and became full professor in 1996.

For nearly 10 of the years between 1995 and 2007, Rachel served as UEP Chair; the need to have a diverse faculty, both in terms of gender and race, became a driving personal and departmental goal. The department has been successful in both recruiting and retaining outstanding academics of color.

Rachel also led UEP's successful effort to seek accreditation from the Planning Accreditation Board for our M.A. degree. Joining the ranks of accredited planning programs has enabled UEP to become more visible in the professional planning community, both locally and nationally. Along with the chairs of the Harvard and MIT planning departments, Rachel helped launch the Boston area planning schools' annual planning symposium; the first was held at Tufts in 2005. Under Rachel's leadership, UEP also created our Master of Public Policy degree in 2002,

tailored to professionals with substantial work experience in policy and planning. The diverse backgrounds of our M.P.P. students greatly enrich the overall UEP experience.

Within the university, Rachel is respected and admired. She was one of the original co-signers of the formal declaration forming the University College of Citizenship and Public Service, which became Tisch College. Also, working closely with then-Dean Susan Ernst, she played a lead role within the School of Arts and Sciences in developing the Professor of the Practice position.

Rachel is a renowned and influential scholar of housing policy. Her research is focused on the needs of low-income households and the role of nonprofit community-based organizations in producing long-term affordable housing. Her work in this area has helped to frame arguments about why housing should be viewed as a human right in the U.S. and to shape an entire generation of scholarly inquiry on the unique attributes and benefits of producing and maintaining housing through nonprofit and community-based ownership. She is the author or co-editor of three books, as well as scores of academic and popular articles, book chapters and professional reports, including a host of *Boston Globe* op-ed articles.

Active and highly respected in both scholarly and professional communities, Rachel has served on many prestigious editorial boards, and local, state, and federal committees. The international reach of her scholarship also has been expanding. She has presented lectures in many countries across the world and, in 2008, she delivered the keynote speech at the Australia National Housing Conference in Sydney, Australia. In 2012 she was named Scholar-in-Residence at the Tufts campus in Talloires, France.

Rachel is known as a demanding teacher and advisor and has served as thesis advisor to scores of students, many of whom have distinguished themselves in careers in government, academia, and the for-profit and nonprofit sectors. She is enormously proud of their accomplishments and enjoys interacting with them as colleagues. Her commitment to help students actualize their goals is unrelenting, while her support for them is unconditional. She was particularly honored that two former UEP students asked her to officiate at their wedding. In 2013 Rachel was awarded the A&S Seymour Simches award for Distinguished Teaching and Advising.

Rachel will remain active in her field and is currently a Senior Fellow at the Joint Center for Housing Studies, Harvard University. She will also continue pursuing her lifelong desire to be a musician, playing the bassoon (which she started 6 years ago) in several local music groups and occasionally playing a tune on her bagpipes. Though Rachel is leaving her daily routine at Tufts, we know that she will be as engaged and busy as ever, pursuing her many passions for life, spending time with her fantastic family whom she adores, and with her many amazing friends. We will miss Rachel's day-to-day presence, but look forward to many continued interactions with our much beloved colleague.

On behalf of the Department of Urban and Environmental Policy and Planning, be it resolved that this resolution on the retirement of Rachel Bratt be spread on the minutes of the faculty of Arts and Sciences and that a copy of it be sent to our honored colleague.

May 14, 2014