Resolution on the Retirement of Michelle Gaudette  
Department of Biology, Tufts University

Her colleagues in the Department of Biology join with the Faculty of Arts and Sciences to express our appreciation for the companionship and contributions of our colleague Michelle F. Gaudette upon her retirement. Tufts University has benefited from Michelle’s loyal service throughout the past 22 years - a remarkable span of academic, advising, and administrative contributions to our university community.

In 1976 Michelle entered Washington University in St. Louis, MO where she soon developed an interest in biology and scientific research. As a result, Michelle pursued graduate studies at The Johns Hopkins University where she examined chromosomal DNA replication.

After earning her Ph.D. degree in 1988, she moved to Massachusetts to work on gene transcription during mammalian development at the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology. During her postdoctoral fellowship not only did she continue to develop her research skills, but she also realized she enjoyed working with students in the classroom as she began to teach courses at Assumption College in 1991.

Michelle joined the community at Tufts in 1994 and began a long and productive career that included research, mentoring, university service, and teaching. In the classroom, she combined her passion for science with her desire to expand student thinking. Her approach to learning went far beyond standard lecturing and her enthusiasm made students want to learn the material. She taught a diverse list of courses including introductory, upper-level laboratory, and non-majors classes. In her twenty-two years of service, Michelle was an adviser, mentor, and teacher to over 9000 students! This means she has tirelessly written hundreds of letters of recommendation, answered thousands of emails, and has spent countless hours helping the members of our community. Her remarkable dedication to her students demonstrates her desire to make a difference in the lives of those around her. Nothing makes Michelle happier than when she gets an email from a former student thanking her for what they learned in her classes and for the rigor of her curriculum.

For example a former undergraduate writes: “I will have to admit, when I took your class I was upset that I didn’t get the same high grades that I got in high school. I was so focused on the final grade, I never thought about what I had learned. Looking back, you taught me how to think about problems, how to ask good questions, and importantly where to find the answers. I just completed my first year of medical school and I wanted to say thank you for everything.”

In addition to her dedication in the classroom, Michelle took advantage of her strong background and passion for research to enhance her teaching goals. For example, she collaborated with members of the Biology department conducting research and supervised undergraduate research assistants on numerous projects. Not only did this research enrich the content of Michelle’s courses, but it also resulted in a published paper, conference abstracts, and several meeting presentations.
In summary, during her tenure at Tufts Michelle was dedicated to enriching the lives of students, staff, and faculty. She is truly special for her compassion and commitment to helping others. Her altruistic approach to providing a fair, safe, and nurturing environment has helped countless individuals succeed when no one else believed they could. For those of us that have worked closely with this generous woman, it is safe to say that Michelle wears her heart on her sleeve. Her students and colleagues alike will sorely miss Michelle’s many contributions to the Department of Biology and to the University. We wish Michelle a long and happy retirement and we trust she will remain in close contact with us through the years. We hope in her retirement she will be able to spend more time with her family - and of course with her handsome horse Rozzi and cherished pony, Toby.

On behalf of the Department of Biology, be it resolved that this resolution on the retirement of Michelle F. Gaudette be spread on the minutes of the faculty of Arts and Sciences and that copies of it be sent to our honored colleague, to her husband, Dan, and to her son Will.