Resolution on the Retirement of
Christiane Zehl Romero,
Department of International Literary and Cultural Studies

Christiane first came to Tufts University as a Visiting Assistant Professor in 1973, having received her PhD from the University of Vienna. In 1974 she returned as a tenure-track Assistant Professor. She was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure in 1979 and to Professor in 1985.

Over this period, she has taught a rich array of courses, both in German and English, including language at all levels, surveys of German literature, special topic courses on film, women writers and one on Vienna, from where she hails. Loved by her countless students in the classroom, over this period she also directed many theses and independent studies. She has been, put simply, a pillar in the German curriculum for decades.

Equally impactful has been Christiane’s very distinguished publishing record. Her work on German women writers has been seminal. She was one of the first feminist Germanists and worked on Anna Seghers, Crista Wolf and others, including Simone de Beauvoir, over the course of nine books either written or edited by her. This prodigious output also includes forty seven (!) articles and other pieces that extended her scholarship into film, gender studies and still other writers. In recognition of this achievement, she has received sixteen fellowships or grants both for her own work and to promote that of the department. She fittingly received the Distinguished Scholar Award at Tufts in 2005.

While doing all of this, Christiane has also provided exemplary service to the university. Not only has she been Director of the German Program, but also Chair of the Department for nine years, Director of International Relations, Chair of Tenure and Promotion, Chair of Committee on Committees, and Co-Chair of the Executive Committee—and that does not exhaust the list. She was also a founding member of the programs in International Relations and Women’s Studies. There virtually is no place in Arts and Sciences where her positive presence has not been felt.

What characterizes Christiane is fortitude, integrity and an indomitable spirit—one on display most importantly in her championing of all things international, not just German. She not only supported but made welcome our expansion from the original German-Russian pairing to include Arabic, Chinese, Hebrew and Japanese. If we educate our students to be global citizens, then she surely has been a model one—long before the term existed.

Throughout all that she has done in her forty-four years here, Christiane has been an outstanding colleague in the department and across the Tufts community. Her boundless energy and perennial good cheer are infectious, and her leadership—defined by unstinting support for everyone—has been inspiring. She will be sorely missed by all of us, but her tremendous legacy
will remain rock-solid as will our debt to her for the exceptional example she has set as administrator, researcher, teacher and colleague.

Submitted on behalf of the Department of International Literary and Cultural Studies, Gregory Carleton, Chair