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TUFTS

## New Tufts program will have incoming students spend a year doing service before starting 4-year college studies

Posted by Matt Rocheleau February 19, 2014 01:15 PM

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By Matt Rocheleau, Boston.com Staff

Tufts University unveiled plans Wednesday for a program in which incoming students spend a year working full-time with a national or international service organization before starting their traditional four-year college studies.

Tufts 1+4 will transform the so-called “gap year” between high school and college into a “bridge year,” campus officials said. The university said that it plans to “democratize” the program so that no students will be precluded because of limited financial resources.

The program will be formally announced during a symposium Wednesday evening at the university’s Medford/Somerville campus, Tufts officials said.

The event’s keynote speaker, retired Army general Stanley McChrystal, is expected to commend the program and to urge higher education institutions across the country to take join or launch similar initiatives, campus officials said. McChrystal chairs the leadership council of the Aspen Institute’s Franklin Project, which calls for making military or civilian national service a voluntary rite of passage into adulthood.

Tufts 1+4, which will be based at the university’s Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service, will place admitted first-year Tufts students in selected, partner service organizations starting in the fall of 2015.


Before embarking students will attend an on-campus orientation. During their service year, students will also be taught civic and leadership skills and other academic content, and they will maintain regular contact with Tufts advisors, officials said.

After the service year is complete, students in the program will meet at Tufts’ campus to reflect. The students will then start their four-year undergraduate studies at the university. The program will also host regular meetings, workshops, events and other gatherings for students after they complete their service year.

“Through this unique experience, young people will develop their abilities and passions in ways that will strengthen their studies and experiences at Tufts, as well as their personal and professional trajectories,” said a statement from Tufts provost David Harris. “They will contribute in significant ways to solving pressing social problems while making discoveries about themselves and diverse societies.”

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The university said it hopes to initially have 50 students participate in the program, before increasing involvement over time.

To select service organizations for the program, the university this spring will issue a request for proposals that will define the specific criteria for service opportunities and a framework for placing students. Tufts said it anticipates each service site would accommodate four to six Tufts students.

Tufts said it has secured early donor funding to launch the program and will rely on additional gifts to expand it.

Donors include: Brian H. Kavoogian, university trustee, member of the Tisch College board of advisors and a 1984 Tufts graduate; university trustee Thomas M. Alperin and Marsha C. Alperin, members of the class of 1981; J.B. Lyon and Tom Bendheim, members of the class of 1985 and funders of the Lyon and Bendheim Alumni Lecture Series; and Daniel H. Schulman and Jennie A. Kassanoff, parents of a Tufts sophomore.

The Tufts 1+4 program was developed from a 10-year strategic plan the university unveiled in the fall, campus officials said.

“This program aligns perfectly with Tufts University’s historic commitment to innovative and active engagement in the world, and with our mission of providing our students with an education that can truly change their lives and the lives of others,” said a statement from university president Anthony P. Monaco. “We hope it will inspire students to use their talents to contribute to the world around them.”

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