



October 13, 2016

Mr. William White  
President, Somerville Board of Aldermen  
Somerville City Hall  
93 Highland Avenue  
Somerville, MA 02143

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CITY CLERK'S OFFICE  
SOMERVILLE, MA

Dear President White:

Provost David Harris and Executive Vice President Patricia Campbell, along with the Deans of Arts and Sciences and Engineering convened a Residential Strategies Working Group last year. The group included students, staff and faculty from across the Medford/Somerville campus. The goal was to fully understand the residential component at Tufts—who lives in the dorms, the status of residential facilities, where students live off-campus, what steps Tufts can take to expand the capacity for housing students on the campus in order to reduce numbers living in Somerville and Medford and housing costs.

The report noted that juniors and seniors prefer apartment style living to dormitories and that they want to live as close to the campus as possible. Their interest in living on the campus is stronger some years than others. It noted that some of our residential buildings were in need of significant maintenance work and that we needed to expand the number of rooms that are accessible.

We met with some neighbors from Medford who described the experience of living with Tufts students. They complained about disruptions but also said they enjoyed the presence of young adults and wished they weren't so transient.

Several proposals are now being investigated.

1. Renovation of Miller and Houston Halls. This project will be done over two summers, expanding accessibility by adding elevators and renovating all bathrooms in both buildings. The work will improve dormitory living and add more beds to the existing structures.
2. Explore the possibility of using some of the wood frame houses Tufts has purchased over the years as undergraduate housing that is staffed and supervised. The wood frames, if converted, would only be those immediately adjacent to the campus and in areas where students are already renting. This is very much in the discussion phase with the possibility of creating a pilot project on the Medford side of the campus. No decision has been made on this proposal nor has a schedule been established.
3. With a consultant, investigate the aspects of a new dormitory and any other opportunities to increase student housing on the campus.
4. We are also looking at ways to better support and manage students who are renting from private landlords in the neighborhoods around the campus.

The recommendations of the report are under consideration. We will reconvene the discussion with the Mayor's office and Aldermen as soon as we have more information available.

We are sharing this letter with all members of the Board of Aldermen and are happy to discuss at your convenience.

Thank you,

Barbara Rubel  
Director

Cc: Mayor Joseph Curtatone  
Senor Vice President Mary Jeka