

EDUCATION

Tufts helps students build bridges to Africa.



TUFTS AFRICA FORUM

In Tufts' music department and dance program, students dressed in traditional Ghanaian costume move to drumbeats in courses on African dance and drumming. Others converse in Swahili under the tutelage of Professor Daniel Brown. And in history, they reconstruct Africa's past and develop historical perspectives on contemporary African crises.

Fulbright Scholar and veterinary school student Eric Brum is partnering with the Feinstein International Famine Center and the veterinary school at the Universidade Eduardo Mondlane in Mozambique to study African cattle populations in flood areas. Brum and his colleagues are working towards a better understanding of livestock health during disasters, with the hope of developing methods to evaluate other disaster-prone areas.



Last year at Tufts, scholars, policy makers, and practitioners both from within and outside convened at a major forum on the Congo. Developed by Professor Peter Uvin and colleagues at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy and the Feinstein International Famine Center, the forum has launched dynamic, hands-on partnerships among experts in the field of African and humanitarian studies.

The Tufts Africa Forum

TAF
CENTERS OF EXCELLENCE

FROM THE STUDY OF PUBLIC HEALTH IN TANZANIA TO THE CREATION OF CO-CURRICULAR TEACHING IN UGANDA, TUFTS UNIVERSITY HOSTS A WEALTH OF AFRICANA INITIATIVES. IN APRIL, 2001, THE UNIVERSITY LAUNCHED THE TUFTS AFRICA FORUM (TAF)—AN AFFILIATION AMONG TUFTS FACULTY, RESEARCHERS, AND STUDENTS WITH INTEREST AND EXPERTISE IN AFRICA AND THE AFRICAN DIASPORA. DESIGNED TO CAPITALIZE ON TUFTS' DYNAMIC INTERDISCIPLINARY FOCUS, TAF FOSTERS COLLABORATIONS AMONG THE UNIVERSITY'S MANY AFRICANA PROJECTS IN ARTS & SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, THE FLETCHER SCHOOL OF LAW AND DIPLOMACY, THE SCHOOL OF NUTRITION AND HEALTH SCIENCES, THE SCHOOLS OF MEDICINE, VETERINARY MEDICINE, AND DENTAL MEDICINE, AND RELATED CENTERS AND INSTITUTES.

Linking Theory and Practice Through Technology

Technological innovation has transformed Tufts' programs on and in Africa, allowing faculty and students to imagine more equitable and engaged partnerships. Members of the Tufts Africa Forum are developing a single, multi-use, web-based resource that links the wealth of research, data, policy, and practical information about Africa being generated at Tufts. Through the Internet, TAF is creating synergy among many schools and research initiatives to better serve Tufts and its African partners.

Together, the Feinstein International Famine Center and three African universities are documenting the problems and policies concerning forced migration within Africa. They are putting this data online to enhance collaboration between Tufts and its African partners, and to provide struggling populations in Africa with life-sustaining information—and power.

Those at Fletcher are collaborating with the Famine Center to look at issues of humanitarian assistance and refugees, while engineering faculty are contributing their expertise on watershed issues to help develop policy.

By bringing together the many research and teaching initiatives within Tufts, the Tufts Africa Forum helps our faculty teach to one another's strengths and areas of expertise. Our goal is to underscore the depth of overlap among disciplines and to build collaborations.

—Jeanne Penvenne, Director, Tufts Africa Forum

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And in the medical school, researchers are partnering with the University of Durban as part of the Medical Information Project, as well as working with those in veterinary medicine and environmental health to study African concerns regarding nutrition, public health, and agriculture.

Africana Across the University

Members of TAF are also coordinating Africana curricula across the university. By providing course offerings, student organizations, and study abroad options, Tufts forges student connections to Africa. Through lectures, exhibits, co-curricular areas of study, and collaborations with African universities, Tufts also brings African expertise to the university, teaching students the value of learning from their partners across the Atlantic.

Within Arts & Sciences, undergraduates can minor in Africa and the New World, including courses in Race in America, Black World Literature, the Anthropology of War and Peacemaking, and the Construction of Whiteness. They can attend a Black Cultural Studies seminar, or enroll in Kuniwe Drumming and Dancing. They can study in Africa through Tufts in Ghana or other non-Tufts African programs.

Students publications such as ONYX, a black magazine of visual and literary arts, offer outlets for expression and information about Africana, while groups such as the Pan African Alliance give students opportunities to share ideas about their research and experience.

Under the umbrella of the Tufts Africa Forum, experts both here and on the African continent are forging valuable, interdisciplinary links to exchange ideas, create policy, and identify synergistic collaborations for further study. Through the bridges being built to Africa, Tufts will enhance its commitments to scholarship, policy, teaching, and engaged global citizenship.

