



CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION

Office of Sustainability

Letter of Affirmation—Garden

Dear AASHE STARS Program Staff:

In the summer of 2011, Tisch Library, the Tufts Facilities Services department, and the New Entry Sustainable Farming Project partnered to create a demonstration garden, located in front of the main student library. New Entry is a project affiliated with Tufts' Friedman School of Nutrition, and aims to assist recent immigrants and people with limited resources to begin farming in Massachusetts. New Entry has trained dozens of farmers from North America, Southeast Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa and the Caribbean, many of whom are who are now active producers across Eastern Massachusetts and beyond.

Since many of these farmers grow vegetables native to their country of origin that are not familiar to New Englanders, the demonstration garden was conceived as a way to showcase the unusual plants. The garden is located outside Tisch Library, and includes maize, sorghum, mustard greens, sweet potatoes, Japanese eggplant, millet and other ethnic and traditional crops typically grown by many New Entry Farmers. With its location in one of the most trafficked areas on campus, it has already attracted much attention from students, faculty, staff, and visitors. Each day, many people stop to admire the greenery or read the signs explaining the unfamiliar plants. It has even become a stop on prospective student campus tours.

While other universities do have demonstration or educational gardens, they are usually used to educate the community on sustainable gardening techniques or native plants. This garden is unique in its ties to the New Entry project as well as its message of "global community engagement", a fundamental Tufts value. That is, it showcases the value of locally grown, but globally-influenced vegetable options for immigrant communities, as well as how a Tufts education can be applied to help create income generating activities for recent immigrants. The garden also exposes students and the rest of the Tufts community to a new perspective on a "vegetable garden" and how the culture of food varies significantly from country to country. Thus, we are unaware of any other university campuses with projects that achieve similar goals.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Tina Woolston".

Tina Woolston
Sustainability Program Director