Schliesser questions dive in city

by MICHAEL LEVI
Contributing Writer

With the number of international students attending Tufts doubling in the past two years, there is growing interest in the Tufts international community to start a program to provide financial aid for foreign students. Tufts international students with visas for study are currently unable to receive financial aid until their junior year.

These foreign students are also unable to work off campus because their visas are for study only. The only financial aid now available is an emergency fund set up by the International Center. This fund provides foreign students with small, short-term loans, but the loans are only granted when a student is awaiting the arrival of money from home. Parents of international students must document proof that they will be able to finance their child’s entire four years of study at Tufts. Adequate funds include the four years of tuition and other expenses that would total over $100,000 at current prices.

This policy and the lack of funds for foreign students has stirred discussion among the Tufts international community. Juniors Eric Schliesser, a Trustee representative, and International Club President Alfred Woon are now coordinating a committee with Jane Etuk-Andrews, director of the International Center, to examine this issue. The committee plans to meet next week to discuss the problem.

Schliesser said the goal of the committee is to begin to raise funds for international undergraduates at Tufts, but more importantly, it is to educate the entire Tufts community about the financial problem that many foreign students face.

Director of Financial Aid Bill Eastwood said this week that any money spent on financial aid for foreign students would have to come directly from Tufts. Tufts cannot offer loans to foreign students because many would be too risky, as many countries are in economic and political disarray. Furthermore, federal money given to Tufts for financial aid cannot be spent on international students. Woon stated that he would like to use the International Club’s money remaining at the end of the year for financial aid that currently the money is returned to the Tufts Community Union Senate, but Woon feels it would be much more useful in a fund of this kind.

Schliesser agreed with Woon, saying, “Many countries are very unstable and problems do arise.”

The long-term goals of the committee, Schliesser said, are to set up fully endowed scholarship funds. Both Schliesser and Woon doubt this goal will be achieved before they graduate next year, but they want to begin the process and involve undergraduates. Schliesser and Woon are targeting international corporations and governments for funding. The problem with establishing a fully endowed scholarship, Schliesser said, is that an endowed scholarship requires at least $500,000. They both agreed that it would be easiest to target the European community, but they would also like to get scholarships established for students from third world countries.

The other issue that arises from the problem of incoming international undergraduates not being able to receive financial aid is whether Tufts is actually diverse— a claim the Administration often makes about the University. “As interesting as the [foreign] group is, we’re not getting all the benefits of an international community,” remarked Schliesser. He added that much of Tufts international community is not representative of exactly what it means to be from a different country. Schliesser claims the Tufts international community does not represent all socio-economic facets of life.