Intercultural Festival allows Tufts students to explore ethnic diversity

by HELAINE BATOFF
Contribution Writer

The Tufts Intercultural Festival may only be one week long, ending this Friday, but the activities it offers and the planning that went into it were extremely extensive.

The International Club and the International Center coordinated the festival, which is co-sponsored by various organizations, departments, special interest houses and dorms. Even Tufts Dining Services was involved, and this week’s menu includes foods from different cultures and regions.

The week’s activities ranged from Karate demonstrations and African-style music and dance to a coffee hour in the French House. The coordinators have organized various panels and documentary films reflecting political issues of different regions. Contributing to the Festival on an individual level, students from Panama and Eastern Europe are participating in panels to give a personal perspective.

“We’ve tried to incorporate a wide mix of social and intellectual activities,” said Enrique Cuan-Ruiz, vice president of the International Club.

Planning for the International Festival began in October. According to Joedy Chidester Hu, an international student advisor, the International Center and the International Club contacted other organizations to inform them of the Festival, and encouraged them either to plan events for the week, or to highlight those events that were already planned by individual clubs. As Cuan-Ruiz pointed out, “the Festival has provided a good opportunity for a lot of clubs on campus to become visible.”

In one event, the International Food Fair, twelve different organizations participated. In addition to providing a great sampling of foods, the fair served a philanthropic purpose. The Armenian, Asian Student, Carribean, Korean, and Portuguese clubs, and the Tufts Indian Subcontinent Association each donated a portion of their earnings to the Laila Moshiri Yazdi Memorial Fund. According to Chidester Hu, the fund, which provides short-term loans to international students, received over $280 in donations. As the government does not provide international students with financial assistance, this fund is “heavily used,” she said.

With all the talk about diversity on the Tufts campus, the Intercultural Festival is one of the events that contributes to making this term an actuality. As Chidester Hu said, “the Festival gives students the opportunity to share different pieces of other cultures and to celebrate all of the different backgrounds represented at Tufts.” Tufts Daily, Mar. 1, 1990