Tufts Community Research Center Annual Report
D. Brugge, August, 2007

This summer marks the second year since TCRC was founded. It is a good time to sum up our progress over the past year and to think about goals and directions for the new year. Below are what I consider to be the high points.

A) Perhaps the most significant accomplishment of TCRC during its second year was the development of an advisory board and the decision of the board to reconstitute itself as a steering committee. The consolidation of a core membership (see below), the increased sense of responsibility for TCRC and the addition of new community members to better balance membership are highly positive developments. Currently the steering committee plans to meet 5-6 times per year (after meeting 2 times in the past year) to help direct the center. Steering committee members are:

1. Doug Brugge, Public Health, Tufts
2. Warren Goldstein Gelb, Welcome Project, Somerville
3. Barbara Rubel, Community Relations, Tufts
4. Elmer Freeman, Center for Community Health, Education, Research and Service, Boston
5. Susan Ostrander, Sociology, Tufts
6. Linda Martinez, Community Health, Tufts
7. James Jennings, Urban Environmental Policy and Planning, Tufts
8. Bart Laws, Latin American Health Institute, Boston
9. Bindu Panikkar, Graduate Student, Engineering, Tufts
10. Angie Lee, Undergraduate, Arts and Sciences, Tufts
11. Jean Wu, American Studies, Tufts
12. Alex Pirie, Immigrant Service Providers Group, Somerville
13. John Durant, Engineering, Tufts
14. Esther Lee, South Cove Community Health Center, Boston Chinatown
15. Ellin Reisner, Somerville Transportation Equity Partnership, Somerville
16. Chris Economos, School of Nutrition, Tufts
17. Lydia Lowe, Chinese Progressive Association, Boston Chinatown
18. Laurel Leslie, Pediatrics, Tufts-New England Medical Center

B) In the fall of 2006 we issued our first RFA soliciting applications for seed funding to be used to develop a national-level community-based participatory research proposal. Funding was awarded to a team headed up by Chris Economos for their effort to develop a CBPR proposal to NIH that would address obesity issues in immigrant populations in Somerville. The team succeeded in preparing and submitting their proposal in May 2007, using the funding to generate preliminary data that was integral to their proposal.

C) The first national-level CBPR proposal development effort that TCRC supported financially (in spring 2006) led to the Community Assessment of Freeway Exposure and Health proposal to NIH that I led. This proposal received a score in fall 2006 at the 20th percentile of applicants for the CBPR funding, was revised based on reviewer comments and resubmitted in spring 2007 without additional financial support from TCRC.
D) With the assistance of Kent Portney TCRC now has a page on the web site of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service: http://activecitizen.tufts.edu/?pid=344.

E) The TCRC email lists grew and became an established function of the center. Lists are divided into community, faculty, students, the steering committee and national contacts with almost 200 combined addresses. I try to keep email to a minimum and regularly include a selection of items from the international CBPR list serve. Periodic unsolicited feedback has been positive, with some people requesting staying on the list when they leave Tufts and others thanking us for a particular email that was directed their way. An example of how the email list has impact is that Linda Martinez got a grant to support her CBPR class after first seeing the notice on our email.

F) Our graduate assistant, Bindu Panikkar, compiled a record of community-collaborative research at Tufts. The listing, which is probably 80% complete at this time, could be a useful resource for documenting Tufts community involvement in grant proposals and should help TCRC think about its strategic direction.

G) Ms. Panikkar also interviewed a majority of TCRC steering committee members to get their input about TCRC. She has recently summarized points raised during the interviews which will be available soon to inform future TCRC discussions.

H) Lydia Lowe and Bindu Panikkar and I led a session on community organizing and community research at the 10th annual conference of Community Campus Partnerships for Health in Toronto. The session was well attended, perhaps 50 people, and we still hope to write something based on our presentations and the feedback from the audience.

I) The successful development of TCRC to the point where it is a recognized entity at Tufts has positioned us to be at the table with the medical school and hospital as they are working on a variety of issues related to community engagement. Members of the steering committee were strongly represented in a series of meetings called by the vice-provost for research. I have also been asked to play a larger role in the community engagement section of the revision and resubmission of the large CTSA proposal to NIH.

J) The directorship of the center has allowed me to take on undergraduate student community research projects that I would otherwise not be able to justify. Two examples from this past year are: 1) Stan Henkin who did a study of asthma and obesity in Asian American children, and 2) Katherine Chui, working with 3 high school students who have ties to Chinatown, who are studying pulmonary function and living or attending school near major highways.

K) The three PhD students doing CBPR are also important to mention. Jamie deLemos is working on uranium in drinking water in Navajo communities, Bindu Panikkar is working with the project headed up by David Gute that is addressing occupational hazards for immigrant workers in Somerville and Christine Rioux is working with data generated by Katy Tucker’s Puerto Rican Health Study to assess biomarkers of cardiovascular health and proximity to highways.
L) There have been numerous publications that came out of community collaborative research involving Tufts faculty and/or students this year:


Lee AC, Brugge D, Phan L, Woodin M. A comparison of knowledge about asthma between Asians and Non-Asians at two pediatric clinics. Journal of Immigrant and Minority Health (online in advance of print publication).


