

November 2017

A RESPONSE TO “An Open Letter to the Tufts University Dance Program” from Dance Program Director, Renata Celichowska.

I write in response to the November 20, 2017 Open Letter in the *Tufts Observer* regarding experiences of bias in the Tufts Dance Program. I do so with sincere respect for all students and faculty in the Dance Program and hope that my comments will be received in this same spirit. The Tufts Dance Program has been, and remains committed to, promoting an equitable, welcoming, and safe environment for everyone. I am deeply saddened and concerned that this has not been the experience for some members of our student population. The open letter provides a moment to pause, reflect, and continue to work.

The letter includes impassioned and serious concerns, to which it would be easy to respond defensively and with the intention of devaluing their intellectual and emotional grounding. That is not my intent. If members of our student community feel disenfranchised, it is our goal as faculty to help address those issues. As a next step in this conversation, I would like to suggest a Town Hall meeting after Fall term grades are submitted, and at the start of next term. **To that end, I invite members of the Tufts student, faculty, and staff community to join us on Wednesday, January 24, 2018, between 12-1pm in the Jackson Dance Lab, for a facilitated conversation.** In this way, I hope we can continue to move toward what I think are mutually held beliefs and goals. Students who would prefer to have a one-on-one conversation about their concerns either before the end of this semester or in lieu of the Town Hall meeting are invited to contact our department chair, Heather Nathans, to arrange a time to meet with her.

I appreciate the commitment that the writers of the Open Letter have shown and look forward to further dialogue.

Thank you,

Renata Celichowska
Lecturer & Director, Tufts Dance Program
Department of Drama & Dance