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## **Tufts University's CIRCLE Awarded Federal Grant to Build Online Social Network and Federal Grant to Study Civic Participation**

### **Grants Expand CIRCLE's Mission of Researching Civic Engagement of America's Youth**

**Medford/Somerville, Mass** – The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement (CIRCLE), part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University, has been awarded a grant by the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) this week to build an online community that college students can use to strengthen their service and activism in the greater Boston area. A second grant will fund CIRCLE to conduct research on national civic engagement.

“We are honored to have received these grants and work with the Corporation for National and Community Service,” said Peter Levine director of CIRCLE. “This exciting research will provide us with a deeper understanding of youth civic engagement and the culture of service in America. The social network, in particular, will be an experiment in online civic work.”

CIRCLE was awarded \$570,000 as part of the Corporation's Learn and Serve America College Student Social Media grant, which is the first of its kind by a federal agency. The grant funds organizations that aim to increase the use of social media to engage college students in service to meet community needs.

The three-year grant focuses on two emerging trends: the strong civic attitudes of today's youth and college students, and the explosion in use of social networking sites. CIRCLE will create an online community for college students using the innovative software YouthMap. A sophisticated tool for analyzing the use of networks online and in the real world, YouthMap will plug into popular social networks such as Facebook and MySpace. CIRCLE will collaborate with Community Knowledge Base, the University of Massachusetts-Boston, Massachusetts Campus Compact and the Boston Foundation to build, refine and promote this online community.

The Corporation also awarded \$128,000 to CIRCLE with its first-ever Expanding Research on Volunteerism and National Service grant. CIRCLE will study national data on volunteering and other forms of civic engagement and publish results in publicly accessible forms, in partnership with the National Conference on Citizenship.

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“These grants give us a unique opportunity to strengthen our understanding about volunteering and national service, as well as deepen our knowledge about the nonprofit climate,” said Dr. Robert Grimm, the Corporation’s Director of Research and Policy Development. “With this information, we will be better prepared to engage more people in volunteering and service at levels never seen before, and make more significant impacts to individuals and communities across the country.”

CIRCLE/Tufts University was one of five institutions of higher education to receive the Expanding Research on Volunteerism and National Service grant, and one of six organizations to receive the Learn and Serve America College Student Social Media grant.

***CIRCLE (The Center for Information and Research on Civic Learning and Engagement)*** conducts and promotes research on the civic and political engagement of Americans between the ages of 15 and 25. A part of the Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service at Tufts University, CIRCLE has received funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts, Carnegie Corporation of New York and several other foundations.

***The Jonathan M. Tisch College of Citizenship and Public Service***, a national leader in civic engagement, prepares students from all fields of Tufts University to become engaged public citizens and community leaders.

***Tufts University***, located on three Massachusetts campuses in Boston, Medford/Somerville, and Grafton, and in Talloires, France, is recognized as one of the premier research universities in the United States. Tufts enjoys a global reputation for academic excellence and for the preparation of students as leaders in a wide range of professions. A growing number of innovative teaching and research initiatives span all Tufts campuses, and collaboration among the faculty and students in the undergraduate, graduate, and professional programs across the University's schools is widely encouraged.

***The Corporation for National and Community Service*** is a federal agency that improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year the Corporation engages more than four million Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service to meet local needs through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Learn and Serve America programs. For more information, visit [www.NationalService.gov](http://www.NationalService.gov).

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