Framing the Discussion – NEASC Standards VII and VIII

Definition – Information & Technology Resources
For the purposes of this discussion, “information & technology resources” are the physical and virtual library and information technology resources and related services at Tufts. This includes library collections, enterprise applications and infrastructure, desktop and mobile computing, dedicated library and computing facilities, support services and training, and planning and oversight.

Themes from the Standards
Two Working Groups at Tufts are charged to address the two NEASC standards that have a focus on information & technology resources. See http://cihe.neasc.org/standards_policies/standards/, standards VII (Library and Other Information Resources) and VIII (Physical and Technological Resources). While these standards are defined separately, each containing numerous subsections, there are several shared and overarching themes:

- Providing sufficient and appropriate information & technology resources necessary for the achievement of our mission, especially, but not limited to supporting our teaching, learning and research activities.
- Ensuring adequate access to and support for using Tufts information & technology resources.
- Appropriate and informed planning, management and maintenance of these information & technology resources.
- Demonstrating the effective use of information & technology resources relative to the goals of Tufts’ academic and research programs.

In general, the accreditation self-study process asks us to consider how the institution currently addresses each of these themes, our strengths and weaknesses related to each area of focus, what has been accomplished over the last five years, and what processes and commitments exist for enhancing areas of strength and addressing current weaknesses. NEASC also asks us to identify the processes and information/data that informs our current assessment and guides future planning.

Discussion Questions
1. How would you characterize Tufts’ existing information and technology environment relative to its mission – education, research and service? Are information & technology resources sufficient and appropriate given institutional goals?
2. How would you describe and assess Tufts’ current level of support and training for using our information & technology resources?
3. What specific information & technology resources are actively used in support of Tufts education and research activities? What is lacking?
4. What processes exist to regularly review, assess and address information & technology resources needs? How effective are these processes?
5. Are the resources discussed above used effectively? Does Tufts measure the effectiveness of those resources?