

Share Your Stories:

Tufts University

SCHOLARS AT RISK
NETWORK



As a part of our 10th Anniversary, Scholars at Risk is compiling stories from scholars who have been helped and campus leaders, administrators, faculty, students and friends who open their hearts and homes to them. Please share your stories with us! Send us emails, letters, pictures, audio, video or whatever you have about how you or your campus has been involved in protecting scholars and promoting academic freedom.



Professor Aviva Must was juggling the demands of a new department chair when she first learned of Scholars at Risk. An e-mail from the Provost highlighted Tuft's participation in the Network and included the profile of a scholar seeking help. It described a medical professor who during a recent political crisis in his country had offered road-side assistance to injured protesters.* He also shared his eyewitness observations with international monitors tracking the crisis. "He was being harassed by the government in his country and had been jailed several times." Aviva recalled. "It just seemed so familiar." Aviva soon realized that a faculty member in her department of Public Health had recently shared this same scholar's CV with her—a mutual colleague had worked with him previously and had heard that he had run into some trouble in his home country, but did not know much else.

The connection was too close to ignore. "At a distance, the profiles of these scholars seeking help might seem remote, almost theoretical, about people on the other side of the world you've never heard of," says Aviva, "but these are real colleagues who might be only one or two steps removed from the people and places we know. We had to do something."

So Aviva and her colleagues began to explore how to bring the scholar to Tufts. Given his background, they saw it as a way to enhance the Public Health Department, especially discussions of medical ethics in global public health. They also saw it as a way to share with students the passion of someone who took risks to serve his community, and the example of their own community taking steps to help. They first looked within the campus for the financial support needed to make a visit possible. The Provost's office offered some help, and Aviva's department committed funds. When these were still not enough, Aviva worked with the Scholars at Risk office to find external support. "I spoke to the staff there—who are great at what they do—and they helped us find a way to make it happen." In this case, Tufts and Scholars at Risk together applied for a fellowship from the Institute of International Education's Scholar Rescue Fund, a program designed specifically to assist campuses hosting threatened and refugee academics that works closely with Scholars at Risk. When the fellowship came through, all the pieces were in place and the scholar was formally invited to Tufts.

However one last minute obstacle threatened their plans. As the scholar was scheduled to arrive, a blizzard paralyzed the eastern United States, closing airports and cancelling train service. Aviva worried the scholar would be stranded. She contacted the scholar who reassured her—he had survived repeated jailing, harassment, and government threats. He could handle a little snow.

He quickly became involved in campus life, speaking to students and other groups about the situation in his country, particularly issues of public health. He described the difficulty accessing medical care in impoverished communities where he had worked, often for free, and talked about his experiences offering assistance to injured protesters during the crackdown. Aviva remembers, "For the students, I think it was really eye-opening," she said. "It gave them an awareness of the way repression works on a personal level, in relation to the individual, and how committed people can respond."

Hosting a scholar in her department further convinced Aviva of the value of the Scholars at Risk Network: "This is exactly the sort of thing a university is supposed to do; cultivate active citizenship and increase the engagement of faculty and students, while at the same time helping out a scholar who is in a bit of a bind."

The scholar's placement at Tufts ended and he is currently teaching at a university in Europe. But he intends to return to his home country when it is safe to do so. When that day comes, hopefully soon, Aviva plans to send students from Tufts to study with him there, to benefit from his passion and experience once again.

Support SAR's 10th Anniversary Campaign

Please help us meet the needs of at-risk scholars today, while reducing the number of scholars needing protection tomorrow.

- \$10** Finds a host for an at-risk scholar through SAR's "Scholar-of-the-Week" email bulletin
- \$100** Drives a global letter-writing campaign to free a wrongly imprisoned scholar
- \$1,000** Reunites a scholar separated from a spouse or child through an Emergency Fund travel grant
- \$10,000** Defeats intellectual repression by supporting safe haven for an at-risk scholar
- Other** At whatever level, your support helps save lives and protects the right to think, to question and to express ideas freely, without fear.

To make a gift to SAR's 10th Anniversary Campaign by credit card visit www.scholarsatrisk.org or mail a check payable to "NYU/Scholars at Risk" to: Scholars at Risk, 194 Mercer Street, 4th Floor, New York, NY 10012 USA. Scholars at Risk is hosted by the Office of the Provost at New York University, a 501(c)(3) Tax-Exempt Organization. Donations are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Share your story or learn more @ www.scholarsatrisk.org

**The scholar's name is withheld to facilitate the earliest safe return to his home country.*