

Dear Colleagues,

With a few months to go in our recruitment season, we'd like to share an update on our work, including the patterns we're seeing among the college seniors, graduate students, and professionals we're working to recruit. As always, we'd welcome your advice and collaboration.

At this point, we're tracking toward an incoming corps that may be smaller than the current one, and because demand for corps members has grown in recent years, we could fall short of our partners' overall needs by more than 25 percent. We understand that this has very real implications for you and your students, and though we've still got nearly half our recruitment season to go, we wanted to keep you in the loop.

Today's education climate is tough—fewer Americans rate education as a “top 2” national issue today, and teacher satisfaction has dipped precipitously in recent years—down from 62% in 2008 to 39% in 2012. Additionally, an increasingly polarized public conversation around education, coupled with shaky district budgets, is challenging the perception of teaching as a stable, fulfilling profession; in turn, we're seeing decreased interest in entering the field nationwide. (You can read analysis of this trend here in [Education Week](#).) We've felt some of this same polarization around TFA. At the same time, the broader economy is improving and young people have more job options than in recent years. Having experienced the national recession through much of their adolescence, college graduates today are placing a greater premium on what they see as financially sustainable professions. Teaching and public service have receded as primary options.

Against this backdrop, we're committed to holding our same rigorous bar for admissions in order to provide candidates who have the potential to have a tremendous positive impact with kids. Through our first four deadlines, we've received 26,000 applications. While this is fewer than we had last year at this time, we are on track to receive more than twice the number of applications we received each year between 2005-2007, the last time we were in a strong economy. Our recruiters are meeting with more people than ever, and those they meet with are applying at similar rates to prior years, but we've seen a drop in the number of individuals who submit applications without meeting with us directly.

We think part of the solution lies in finding more great people to sit down and talk with. To that end, we're reaching out to members of our network to get suggestions of individuals (including many former students!) they think are ready for this work for students. Additionally, we're redoubling our efforts to share how important it is that this generation chooses to fight for educational equity and helps create the change we need for children in our country today.

We hope you'll consider lending your voice to this effort, too. We've provided sample social media, newsletter, and email listserv language below, and would be happy to support you if you're interested in writing an op-ed on this topic, or joining one of our recruiters on a local campus. We're finding that college seniors want to hear personal perspectives from those immersed in this work. They want to interact directly with professionals in the field in order to learn about Teach For America.

As always, we remain optimistic. The quality of our applicant pool is strong, with applicants from a diverse set of backgrounds, institutions, and professional sectors. The candidates we've accepted to date reflect the excellence you've come to expect from Teach For America. We're committed to doing all we can to enlist additional high-quality candidates in the months ahead and we're certain that whatever the size of this year's corps, we'll bring a large group of leaders into this work, each with the potential to make meaningful, positive change in the lives of the students they teach and inspire. Members of your local regional team will be reaching out soon to follow up, and please also let us know if you have questions or ideas for other ways you can help.

Sincerely,

Elisa & Matt

SAMPLE SOCIAL MEDIA LANGUAGE:

Twitter: Define your success by what you help others achieve. #ChooseMore. Teach. <http://bit.ly/1vo66GY>

Bring your passion to the classroom. #ChooseMore. Teach. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DIMYq4Vivik>

Facebook: Don't settle for statistics. Define your success by what you help others achieve. #ChooseMore. Teach. <http://bit.ly/1vo66GY>

SAMPLE EMAIL TO YOUR LISTSERV

Subject: Small action, Big Impact

To [ORGANIZATION],

At ORGANIZATION, we believe that an excellent education is a universal right.

As you know, Teach For America is a great partner to us, and this fall, we're looking to lend them a hand.

Demand for their teachers is up--districts and schools are asking for more corps members than ever before, and we don't want them to be let down. Schools deserve large groups of diverse talent to choose from, and that's where you come in. **If you know some current leaders who would make great educators, [refer them to apply to Teach For America](#).**

SAMPLE BLURB FOR NEWSLETTERS:

Small action, big impact: We believe that a great education should be a universal right, not a privilege. [Recommend](#) leaders you know to apply for Teach For America and join the effort in making that dream a reality.