

**Testimony to Zoning Commission
The George Washington University Campus Plan
September 21, 2006**

Madame Chairwoman, and the distinguished members of the Zoning Commission:

My name is Omar T. Woodard, and it is with great pleasure that I provide testimony in support of The George Washington University's Campus Plan. My standing in the GW community has run the gamut. I am a former Student Body President and a current graduate student. I took part in the deliberations of the campus plan as an undergraduate, so I am intimately familiar with the plan.

What led me to attend GW almost six years ago, I must admit, was not GW. Growing up in Philadelphia, enjoying politics, I wanted desperately to be in Washington DC. But I heard that DC was too dangerous, and that the nation's capital wasn't safe for me. And that was before 9/11.

As most tragedies do, 9/11 brought us together. It made us realize once again that we are all interconnected, that our destinies are intertwined. As such, it is clear that the success of this city, and any great American city, is dependent upon the resolve of its citizens and its institutions. George Washington is one such institution. The more we invest in our institutions, the better off we are. And GW recognizes the more they invest in this city and its citizens, the better off we all are! From providing full scholarships to graduating seniors, to partnerships with public schools, to providing a new, robust tax revenue stream for the city in Square 54, GW will continue to invest in this city.

GW does all of this because it recognizes we are all in this together. It seems to me then that the Campus Plan is about investment in BOTH this city AND in GW, but it also about growth. No amount of legalisms and technicalities can hide the fact that growth, when done right, benefits everyone. The process GW has embarked upon is getting it done right. When the opposing argument is reduced to legal technicalities and ad hominem attacks, it shows that GW's strategy of community/university partnerships is working. Advancing the tried and true notion that our success is inevitably intertwined is showing results. It is not a coincidence that as this city continues to grow in density and prestige, so too does GW.

With respect to the Campus Plan process, it is a reflection of competing interests yes, but on its face it is also a reflection of a positive vision for the future, and shared values of GW and the community.

There is collaboration, which we've seen in our community outreach. We've seen accountability, competence and transparency, as noted in the enrollment audit. And GW's enduring commitment to reinvest in this city and its people is good for everyone.

The bottom line is this: This campus plan represents the future of higher education in the very heart of the nation's capital - emerging from the dimly lit shadows of mediocrity to the illuminating glow of international prominence. This city deserves no less than excellence from its institutions, and with your acquiescence, GW will continue to do just that, and move from strength to strength with this Campus Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide this testimony.

**ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia**

CASE NO. 06-11

EXHIBIT NO. 115

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