



September 14, 2006

Zoning Commission, Hearings on the George Washington University Campus Plan

I very much appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today in support of The George Washington University Campus Plan. My name is Lisa Benton-Short, and I am an Associate Professor of Geography and also the Chair of the University and Urban Affairs Committee of the Faculty Senate. The University and Urban Affairs Committee (UAUA) helps foster continued good citizenship between GWU and the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area. By affirmatively tracking GW's already allocated resources and initiatives, the UAUA "paints the big picture" of GW's community relationship and subsequently provides the University with a valuable source of advice on continuous improvement and possible future endeavors. My comments today represent the sentiments of many of the faculty on this committee and focus on how the plan enhances faculty research and teaching at GW, particularly the academic space needs within the existing Foggy Bottom campus boundaries.

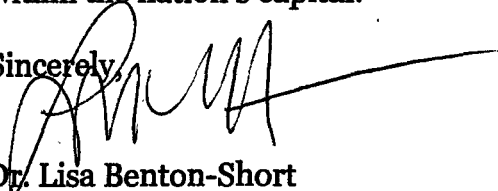
As a faculty member I teach several courses each semester and can attest to the fact that there is simply not enough classroom space on campus. In addition, much of it needs to be upgraded. As technologies advance this has allowed us to integrate slides, videos, PowerPoint and internet material into our teaching, making for much more active and dynamic learning situations. For example, I use PowerPoint and Arcview maps to diagram processes, display spatial relationships and graph trends. Yet many of our existing classrooms are inadequate to meet the demands of a global and high technology society. Both faculty and students suffer when our capabilities are thus limited. The approval of the campus plan will allow GW to generate the funds it needs in order to retrofit old classroom spaces, and more importantly, to build state-of-the-art classrooms and labs. This will benefit faculty, students and the community, who are welcome to audit GW courses.

As a faculty researcher, I can also attest to the inadequate research labs and research space currently available. Many faculty members were delighted to learn that one of the long term plans for the GW campus is the building of a new Science Center. A new facility such as this will allow both faculty and students the opportunity to engage in cutting-edge research on a range of critical national and global issues. It is imperative that research scholars have the facilities that provide cutting-edge technology research spaces. Faculty understand that the development of Square 54 will provide non-enrollment revenue to support the

university's core academic mission of both teaching and research. Thus the approval of the Campus Plan will make it possible to improve both the teaching and research facilities here at GW.

In summary, I strongly endorse the GW Campus Plan. I believe it reflects GW's broader strategic planning initiatives that will create a world-class university within the nation's capital.

Sincerely,



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