

**The DC Zoning Commission
October 30, 2006**

**in support of GW-School Without Partnership
by Ms. Shannon Holmes
President of the GW Black Student Union
and
The George Washington Williams Scholars Village**

Thank you for the opportunity to testify tonight on the proposed project of a partnership of the GWU and the School Without Walls. I am Shannon Holmes, the President of the GW Black Student Union and the Student Coordinator of the GW Williams House, the university's Black House and Scholars Village where nine GW students live together to study DC and African American History & Culture.

We are very supportive of the GW-Walls partnership. Our GW students have the pleasure of working, mentoring and studying with School Without Walls students. We are very impressed with these students while sharing our experiences in college life and African American history & culture together at least once a month. Our faculty advisor, Bernard Demczuk, Assistant Vice President at GW and Walls Black Studies teacher has formed a partnership between Walls students and GW students that is beneficial to both parties. We learn and advance intellectually, socially and culturally together with the hopes of improving the quality of life in the District of Columbia.

Furthermore, we hope a new high-rise student housing unit will emerge from behind the School Without Walls. We want to locate more of our students on campus and lessen the impact of students in the Foggy Bottom community. In addition, we think this close proximity of GW students with Walls students will strengthen our intellectual and cultural partnership even more.

Lastly, we would like to encourage every university in the city to create an academic partnership with a local high school much like GW has accomplished with Walls. This direct partnership is a major reason why Walls students excel academically and 100% of them go forward to higher education after high school.

The GW BSU and Black House thank you for this opportunity to support this project.

- Shannon Holmes

