

April 29, 2011

D.C. Zoning Commission
Suite 210
441 4th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

RE: **Opposition** to Georgetown University Campus Plan 2010-2020, Case No. 10-32

Dear Zoning Commissioners:

My name is Richard Cunningham and I have lived, worked and/or volunteered in Georgetown for the past eleven years. I am writing you to express my strong opposition to Georgetown University's Proposed Campus Plan.

When I lived on the west side of Georgetown, at 1423 36th St, NW, my wife and I experienced the impacts of Georgetown University's sprawling off-campus student population in many ways. Below are just a small sample of the frequent incidents we encountered:

When a stack of firewood stored beside our driveway began to disappear a few pieces at a time, I put a note on it saying it was private property and asking that it not be taken. The next day, the entire half-cord of wood had been taken – no doubt to punish us for the temerity of trying to exercise our property rights.

On another night, a group of students at a house on P Street were partying in their backyard which abuts our back fence. The next morning I found that a cinder block had been thrown over the fence and had gone through the roof of our garden shed. When we contacted the University, they expressed shock and then did absolutely nothing.

From this same house and a couple of others, frequent parties would begin around 11:00 PM and then carry on until 3:00 or so, with the level of music, conversation and shouting going up as the night wore on. I got very used to having to keep a robe and slippers handy so I could walk out and ask to have the stereo or conversation notched down so we could sleep. Needless to say, being wakened and finally having to take a trip outside at 2:00 in the morning can make it difficult to get a good night's sleep.

Every week or so I go up and down the block picking up trash left out by students, and occasionally ask for assistance from occupants of particularly messy houses – usually the response is a very cold stare and no help. On one instance in particular, I found that a full trashcan of kitchen garbage had been dumped into my holly bushes in front of the house, apparently once again to punish me for expecting decency from the neighboring students.

This is not to say that students are uniformly bad – we have had a number of delightful and thoughtful student neighbors who have gone out of their way to be good neighbors, and we've tried to be nice to all our student neighbors. We believe that a reasonable number of students, monitored effectively by the University, can make the neighborhood more vibrant and vital.

Unfortunately, the problem seems to lie in the increasing concentration of students – their bad behavior begets more bad behavior, and there is very little stewardship of the students' behavior by the University. The students in general often exhibit an air of arrogant privilege, especially after having

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consumed a quantity of alcohol.

The University has promised us for years that its off-campus student program would improve the situation, but over the years we have had to keep more and more phone numbers by our bedside to try to get relief from various parties, brawls, or drunken parades of homeward bound students.

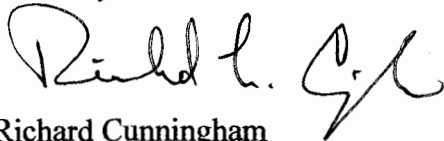
At the end of the day, the University's solution places the burden on the residents of every block to report loud late night student parties to GU or the police, and to report trash and other problems to other DC agencies. And overall, it's just not working. Each year the problems get worse, and the University seems to care less and less.

The Zoning Commission needs to ensure the University grows responsibly while ensuring the adjoining community is not displaced or otherwise adversely impacted. I urge you to require the University to modify its Campus Plan to minimize the University's objectionable impacts on the community. In particular I urge the Commission to require the University to:

- Provide more student housing on the traditional campus
- Readopt its former goal of housing 100% of its undergraduates on campus
- Link undergraduate and graduate enrollment levels to University housing availability
- Strengthen sanctions to reduce disorderly student behavior off campus and to see to it that sanctions get applied
- Reduce student traffic and parking demand on our neighborhood

Thank you for your consideration and for helping preserve the character of our neighborhood.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Richard L. Cunningham". The signature is stylized with a large "R" and a long, sweeping underline.

Richard Cunningham