

The impact of “nontraditional” undergraduates and graduate students on the adjacent communities

Graduate students and the so-called “nontraditional” undergraduates, no less than traditional, undergraduates, often can and do have objectionable impacts on the surrounding communities.

According to GU’s consultant, the average age of GU’s medical students living in zip code 20007 is 25 and the average age of GU’s other graduate students living in zip code 20007 is 27. (Bolan Smart Associates, Inc. March 2011 report, p. 9, “Lifestyle” paragraph (a).) The University also has reported that 52% of nontraditional undergraduates living in zip code 20007 in Fall 2010 were only 24 years of age or younger. (GU Response to Ron Lewis Information Request re the Draft Campus Plan, copied in Attachment 7, below, p. 2 # 6.) That means that hundreds of these students living in the communities adjacent to the University are 23, 24, 25 or 26 years old – or younger. That is not much different, if different at all, from a 21 or 22 year-old traditional undergraduate, and it often gives rise to the same types of objectionable conduct. And GU’s other nontraditional undergraduates and graduate students 27 years of age and older can and do engage in disruptive conduct as well.

Moreover, significant numbers of graduate students who do not live in zip code 20007 – 9 percent of responding graduate students and 7 percent of responding School of Continuing Studies students – told the University, in response to a survey with a 20-25% response rate, that they would like to move closer to campus. That would be some 403 additional graduate students based on a Fall 2010 graduate student enrollment of 4,485, plus 94 additional School of Continuing Studies students based on a Fall 2010 SCS student enrollment of 1,347. GU’s survey results are attached, from GU’s April 26, 2010 Campus Plan Presentation (Handout), Community Meeting, pp. 17-18; graduate student and SCS student Fall 2010 enrollment numbers are in the GU Campus Plan submission, December 30, 2010, Ex. L, p. 4.

In addition to conduct issues, the transient-rental issues of degraded properties are very similar for graduate-student or nontraditional undergraduate rental houses and traditional undergraduate rental houses. These off-campus group houses often suffer the same lack of upkeep and maintenance as undergraduate off-campus houses, for the same reasons: they are transient rental properties, and neither the landlord nor the student tenants have a significant incentive to keep them well-maintained in harmony with the standards of the neighborhood. The traffic impacts are significant, too. Both resident (in zip code 20007) and commuting graduate students and nontraditional undergraduates occupy the neighborhood’s parking spaces; and those who commute add to the traffic congestion near the University as well.

The University seeks now, in Exhibit L to its December 30, 2010 proposed campus plan, to move some of the undergraduates it formerly characterized as “nontraditional” into the traditional undergraduate category. That is a step in the right direction. However, GU proposes to maintain a sizeable category of “nontraditional” students – including, using the Fall 2010 numbers, some 160 nursing students in the Bachelor of Science in Nursing program; 317 “non-degree” undergraduates; and 250 School of Continuing Studies undergraduates. GU proposes to include these categories in the graduate student totals.

We believe this proposal to switch some undergraduates to the graduate-student category needs careful scrutiny. If the students mostly commute from outside of zip code 20007, then including them with graduate students might be appropriate. If, however, they tend to live in off-campus housing in the communities neighboring the University, then it could well be more appropriate to treat them as undergraduates – bearing in mind that they are undergraduates. The University should be requested to provide more information on these categories of students, including the average age in each category and where they have been living.



Data Analysis – Transportation

Graduate Student Survey

GU surveyed the graduate population and, based on a 20% response rate

- 74% are full-time students
- Over 70% of graduate students use GUTS, Metro, walk, or bike to campus
- 24% drive to campus
- Only 9% indicated that they would move “closer to campus” because of their coursework ←
- 16% already live nearby and said living close to campus has facilitated their enrolling at Georgetown



Data Analysis – Transportation

School of Continuing Studies (SCS) Student Survey

GU surveyed the SCS student population and, based on a 25% response rate

- 86% come to campus after 4 PM
- 73% are employed full time either at GU or elsewhere
- 62% drive to campus because they are coming from work
- 70% reported that they park either on-campus, at a meter, or on the street with a Zone 2 permit
- Only 7% indicated that they would move “closer to campus” because of their coursework ←
- 10% already live nearby and said living close to campus has facilitated their enrolling at Georgetown