

Hearing for Campus Plan
June 2, 2011

Testimony, 3 minutes

Good evening, everyone. My name is Michelle Siemietkowski. I work full-time in the Office of Campus Ministry at Georgetown University as the Director of Residential Ministry and as the University's first-ever Chaplain-in-Residence to students who live off-campus. Together with my husband, Michael, and our six year old daughter, Mary, I live at 1409 36th Street, NW, across from Magis Row.

As the Director of Residential Ministry, I oversee the ministry of 25 volunteer Chaplains in Residence and Jesuits in Residence who live in apartments on campus alongside our undergraduates. Trained pastoral ministers, these Chaplains in Residence and Jesuits in Residence offer support, guidance, faith-sharing, prayer, service opportunities, and activities to help meet our students' various pastoral needs.

These CIRs and JIRs are available to meet with students in times of loss or crisis, or amid the ordinary challenges that come with college. They also serve as "on-call" chaplains for particular times of need or emergencies.

Prior to last August 2010, there had never been such a Chaplain in Residence for off-campus students. I am very happy to say that as of last August 2010, the University recognized the need to have a Chaplain in Residence for Off Campus students, and I serve these students in this capacity as their chaplain.

As the Chaplain in Residence to Off-Campus students, I work very closely with my colleagues in the Off Campus Student Life office and minister to students who live in Burleith and West Georgetown. I minister to the students through a weekly program that I host in the Off Campus Student Life house (1300 36th Street); through active outreach to individual students who may have particular needs; through weekly emails to let the students know I am available for them; and through other programs, such as Dinners with Jesuits which focus on aspects of our Jesuit Education.

This inaugural year as the Chaplain in Residence to Off Campus students has been very successful, for students have really appreciated the active outreach and support that I am able to provide.

As someone living across the street from Magis Row, I can faithfully and happily say the students living on Magis Row are quiet, respectful, and among Georgetown's finest and brightest, deeply committed to our Jesuit ideals of striving for justice and service. The original goal of Magis Row was to expand programmatic opportunities for our juniors and seniors living in the Residence Life system. Students have to go through a competitive application process to be part of Magis Row. Examples of some of the communities of students who live on Magis Row include: 1) Nobody Home, a community of students aimed at raising awareness about DC's homeless epidemic and

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raising money for “Hannah House,” “SOME” and “Keys for the Homeless.” 2) Catholic Social Justice Community founded on Christ’s command to love and serve one another; and 3) Justice and Diversity in Action, committed to addressing social justice problems on Georgetown University’s campus and in DC at large. I have been deeply impressed and inspired by the students living on Magis Row.

My personal experience living on 36th Street is that the students on Magis Row are gracious, respectful, thoughtful, and – to our great joy and even surprise – quiet.

Thank you for your kind attention.