



Capitol Hill Campus
709 12th Street, SE
Washington, DC 20003
(202) 547-3424
Fax (202) 547-2507

Chavez Bruce Prep
770 Kenyon Street, NW
Washington, DC 20010
(202) 723-3975
Fax (202) 723-3976

Parkside Campus
3701 Hayes Street, NE
Washington, DC 20019
(202) 398-2230
Fax (202) 398-2535 HS
Fax (202) 398-1966 MS

Testimony

Irasema Salcido

Zoning Commission Hearing

Georgetown University Campus Plan

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Good evening Members of the Commission. My name is Irasema Salcido. I am the Founder and CEO of Cesar Chavez Public Charter Schools for Public Policy and the Project Director of the DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative in Washington, DC. I am here tonight in strong support of Georgetown University's 2010-2020 Campus Plan and to testify about the difference Georgetown University makes in the lives of residents in Washington, DC, particularly in Ward 7.

Georgetown University has been a valuable partner with the Chavez Schools and the Promise Neighborhood Initiative (DCPNI) by delivering educational resources to ensure that Chavez students and those in the Parkside-Kenilworth community are prepared to enter and graduate from college. We are extremely fortunate to work closely with Georgetown University students, staff, faculty and administrators. The major point I would like to make tonight is to describe the many resources Georgetown University has made available to us, which are not otherwise available to Cesar Chavez and the community and, perhaps will be in jeopardy if the recommendations from the Office of Planning - to house 100% of their students and to reduce the enrollment - are adopted.

First, I'd like to tell you about Cesar Chavez Schools. Chavez Schools consists of two middle schools and two high schools, educating 1,400 students in the District of Columbia. Our schools provide a rigorous college preparatory program in a safe, nurturing environment. The curriculum is infused with a public policy program that teaches students to impact their communities and government through research, analysis, problem-solving and team building to solve public policy issues.

Many of our students reside in the city's most underserved communities and 80% qualify for free and reduced-priced meals. Our three school facilities are located in Columbia Heights in Ward 1, Potomac Gardens in Ward 6, and Kenilworth-Parkside in Ward 7. It is because of our location in Ward 7 that we have developed a partnership with Georgetown University, due to its longstanding engagement in that community.

One of our more promising partnerships with the University is the DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative (DCPNI). DCPNI is one of 21 communities nationwide that successfully won a planning grant from the US Department of Education in September 2010. Modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone, DCPNI seeks to create a cradle to college pipeline of services to dramatically change outcomes for children and youth who live in the Parkside-Kenilworth neighborhood in Ward 7. Among others, Chavez partners include America's Promise Alliance, the Community College of the District of Columbia, Children's National Medical Center, DC Housing Authority (DCHA), DC LISC, DC Public Schools (DCPS), the DC Office of the Deputy Mayor for Education, and of course, Georgetown University. We are quite proud that Washington DC is the only Promise Neighborhood Initiative in the country with a university partner.

The primary goal of DCPNI is to increase the number of children who complete their education, going from cradle to college, and enter adulthood as productive participants in the 21st century. This will be achieved by building strong schools and a healthy, safe and supportive community so that all students in the neighborhood succeed in school and in life. Georgetown University has provided its full commitment to DCPNI by becoming an integral partner in the planning and development process. The University has provided strong leadership at every level; whether its staff who chair working groups, senior level leadership from administrators who sit on the DCPNI board, or President John DeGioia, who hosted an education forum featuring school leaders and education policy makers.

I'd like to take a few minutes to cite some examples of Georgetown's generous support for Chavez Schools, Ward 7 and the DC Promise Neighborhood Initiative.

Meyers Institute for College Preparation (MICP)

Since 1989, Georgetown University has run what is now known as the Meyers Institute for College preparation (MICP), a pre-college academic enrichment program that starts in the 7th grade for students in targeted Ward 7 middle schools, including Chavez. The program supports the students every year through their first year of college. Since its

inception, 98% of MICP students have graduated from high school and 85% have completed college within 5 years. I understand that one of the witnesses you will hear from shortly is a graduate of this program and will tell you more about the impact of the program on her life, which is the story of many participants.

Currently, there are 120 students, ranging from 7th-10th grades, enrolled in MICP.

Ward 7 Initiative

Begun in 2007, the Ward 7 Initiative seeks to strategically organize Georgetown's education outreach to provide coordinated support to the Ward 7 community. The university-wide Initiative follows the University's long tradition of service and outreach to the Ward 7 community. It focuses on strengthening partnerships with Ward 7 schools, community organizations, and other partners to build a broad network of support for Ward 7 students and families. Programs include:

- DC Reads. DC Reads provides mentoring and tutoring for underperforming students in elementary school. Since 1997, Georgetown University students volunteer through this program, as mentors and literacy interventionists in Ward 7 and Ward 8. They spend hours during and after school helping students reach grade level, a service which would otherwise be a costly venture for the schools. Just this past year, 422 students were served just in Ward 7, including students at Kenilworth Elementary School in the Parkside/ Mayfair/ Kenilworth Neighborhood of DCPNI.

Students from the DC Reads Program have also provided much needed support for two DCPNI Neighborhood Resident Retreats in January and March at which more than 150 Parkside-Kenilworth residents spent a full day re-envisioning their community. Georgetown students served as note-takers and supported the process that allowed the residents to define the needs of their children and articulate their expectations of DCPNI. At the end of one of the retreats, a young resident of Parkside-Kenilworth testified that "Until today, I did not know that anyone in the neighborhood cared about us (youth)!" Without the contribution of Georgetown students that day, this young lady might not ever have come to this realization.

Finally, DCPNI has partnered with DC Reads to submit an application to the DC Children and Youth Investment Trust to provide an extended day summer

academic enrichment program. The program would serve approximately 100 Parkside-Kenilworth students.

- Kids2College – Kids2College is an early college awareness program that connects DC area 6th graders to college students to familiarize them with the concept of higher education. While many colleges and universities already have educational awareness programs in place, "Kids2College" is unique in its outreach to sixth graders.

Every year, Georgetown University students visit classrooms at two schools in Ward 7, including Chavez, twice a week for up to six weeks, to facilitate college preparation workshops for 200 sixth graders. The program concludes with a day-long visit to Georgetown's campus.

- School of Continuing Studies Summer Scholarships - The Summer College Courses and the Summer Honors Intensive Program, at Georgetown University's School of Continuing Studies, offer high school students access to more than 100 courses that span across multiple disciplines. High School students have the opportunity to live on campus and attend classes with Georgetown's undergraduate students and to earn up to 12 college credits before graduating from high school. Scholarships to DC school students are available through the Ward 7 Initiative.

As you can see, Georgetown University has become an integral part of Ward 7 through these various initiatives and most recently, as a valuable partner in DCPNI's planning and development process. All of these efforts underscore the University's generosity and commitment not just to Ward 7, but to schools and communities across the city.

I would like to close by restating that the decisions you will make with respect to the University's campus plan will have implications for the continuation of these vital programs and partnerships. Respectfully, I urge you to deliberate thoughtfully. Thank you for the opportunity to present my testimony.