

TESTIMONY FOR
RORY PULLENS
FOR
ZONING COMMISSION HEARING
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY 2010 CAMPUS PLAN

Good Evening Mr. Chairman and Members of the Zoning Commission. My name is Rory Pullens and I am Head of School at the Duke Ellington School of the Arts located in Burleith. I am proud to say that Duke Ellington School is an institution that has brought tremendous opportunity in the arts to DC public school students for over thirty years.

I am here tonight to talk about how Georgetown University has been a good neighbor and a good friend to Ellington School over the years.

First, I would like to tell you about Ellington School and then I would like to talk about how Georgetown University's students, staff and faculty support our school.

Ranked as one of DC Public Schools' top high schools, Duke Ellington School of the Arts provides its students with an educational experience that includes a college preparatory curriculum, pre-professional artistic training, and access to the cultural and intellectual resources of the District of Columbia. Students enrolled at Ellington complete a rigorous academic program in the humanities, mathematics and sciences that exemplifies the highest of standards and prepares them for the demands of a changing, global society. Students are expected to continue their learning at the post-secondary level upon graduation from Ellington. Over 95% of Ellington students are accepted to our nation's most competitive universities and conservatories each year, including Yale, Howard University, NYU, Harvard, Juilliard, Smith, Parsons School of Design, Pratt Institute, and many other institutions.

Ellington's academic faculty is fully credentialed and includes several Fulbright Scholars, award-winning writers and musicians, and various PhD's. We offer a full academic course-load as well as majors in one of eight arts disciplines (Dance, Literary Media, Museum Studies, Instrumental or Vocal Music, Theater, Technical Design and Production, and Visual Arts). The rigorous artistic and academic programs offered at Ellington exceed the standard curriculum offered at other high schools in DC.

Over the years, Georgetown University's students, staff and faculty have helped enhance our school's academic, artistic and social demands.

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For example, Georgetown University currently partners with Ellington in an initiative called the Biology Thesis Program. This is an educational outreach program which pairs Georgetown senior biology students with classroom teachers throughout the academic year, to develop and teach biology to high school students. The Georgetown students take rigorous teacher-training course-work to help prepare their science lessons, which meet DC and National Standards and emphasize science literacy for real-world use.

In the summer of 2009, the university's theater and performance studies program and Duke Ellington School of the Arts launched a partnership, joining students from both schools on stage for theatrical productions and other learning opportunities. The theater and performance studies program offered a six-week, intensive course, at Georgetown University's Davis Performing Arts Center, that culminated with performances of Thornton Wilder's Pulitzer Prize-winning classic *Our Town*, starring students from both schools. This partnership provided an amazing opportunity for Ellington students to work with college-level students and to receive college-level instruction to help perfect their acting skills.

Two programs Georgetown students are engaged in help to assist with social issues confronting some of our students today. Girl Talk, a gender related mentoring program for ninth and tenth grade girls helps deal with gender related issues, including eating disorders and sexual harassment. The Male Development Association has male students from Georgetown mentor male students at Ellington.

Georgetown University also has reached out to Ellington students to participate in the annual Georgetown University History Bowl, a college bowl-style academic tournament run by one of Georgetown's professors. It covers all aspects of European history – political, social, economic, cultural and diplomatic - from the origins of the Renaissance to the outbreak of World War I. Ellington is one of only two DC Public Schools that have participated.

Over the years, Georgetown University has helped sustain Ellington School during crises and in times of need. When the landmark Adirondack chair, which sits on the front lawn, was warped and damaged, Georgetown University provided \$7000 to finance the replacement. In addition to financing the project, Georgetown's facilities department managed the project and worked with the contractor during the day-long construction and painting of the chair.

When Ellington's dance studio flooded and was uninhabitable, the university provided classroom space on their campus for Ellington students to use.

When the threat to close Ellington school loomed because of crumbling steps at the R Street entrance, Georgetown University's President immediately dispatched staff from its facilities department to repair the steps thus, preventing the shutting of the school.

The Georgetown University Alumni Club of DC painted the walls in the main stairwells and the hallways as one of their annual service projects. This was done prior to the celebration commemorating Duke Ellington's birthday celebration, an event on which a Georgetown alumnus served as co-chair.

During DC Public Schools Beautification Days, Georgetown students volunteer to paint, pick up trash, and other exterior beautification efforts.

Several years ago, Georgetown renovated the track at what is known as Ellington Field, a facility a few blocks away from the school, which is used by Ellington as well as other public schools such as Wilson and the Boys & Girls Club. The track, which surrounds the field, used to be a cinder track and, frankly, was a mess. Now, it's a beautiful track enjoyed by anyone and everyone in the community, from a child learning to ride a bike, to neighbors exercising whether jogging or walking, to the university track team who practices at the facility a few hours a week. Staff from Georgetown have been involved in a recent, community-wide effort along with Ellington, the Burleith Association, the Cloisters and Hillandale, in bringing about a revitalization of the facility. I am proud that Ellington provides such a community asset for our neighbors and want to recognize Georgetown as being a major contributor to making the facility the wonderful space that it has become.

Finally, the university routinely contributes to the Ellington Fund, a non-profit designed to supplement the allotted budget. Because Ellington provides an extended curriculum and requires additional credits for students to graduate, funding provided by District of Columbia Public Schools covers only a portion of the cost for an Ellington education. We rely on the generosity of donors like Georgetown University to offer our comprehensive arts program.

Georgetown University has been an excellent partner and great neighbor to Ellington School and we appreciate their countless efforts. I believe Ellington School as well as the greater Washington community benefit by having such a caring organization go beyond its gates to help its neighbors. Please know that Georgetown has our support for its Campus Plan.