

TESTIMONY OF WILLIAM COOKE D.C. ZONING COMMISSION —

6/2/11

GEORGETOWN CAMPUS PLAN

My name is William Cooke, and for three years I've been a permanent DC resident at 39th & Reservoir, NW.

I am a graduate of Georgetown, as was my father. My wife, both daughters and brother are also graduates. I have been fortunate to have donated thousands of dollars to Georgetown for scholarships. My wife is currently Chairperson of the Alumni Annual Fund which is focused squarely on this compelling need. We believe in this university, and are acutely aware of the ongoing balancing act between its mission, its limited resources and its responsibility to the outside community.

The good news I bring you this evening is two-fold. First, as an old Hoya rower, I am not even going to mention the crying need we have for a University Boathouse.

The second piece of good news is this: I am certain this Board, and my school can and will reach agreement on the important question of the Campus Plan.

Why such confidence? For thirty years as a businessman in the college town of Ithaca, NY, I served on **both** sides of the table as we dealt with difficult zoning and "town / gown" issues. I found then, as now, that good faith, a balanced approach, and patience from both sides yields success.

I am proud of Georgetown for the dozen or so concessions she has made to date in order to reach a friendly accord. From the freeze on undergraduate and Medical School enrollment (and its attendant enrollment caps), to scrapping plans for a convocation center and other construction, through to the creation of an internal loop to ease traffic problems on local streets, the University has demonstrated consistent, meaningful and frankly expensive measures in an earnest desire to address public concerns.

Likewise, I am sure that this Zoning Commission **must** ultimately conclude that a number of recommendations from the Office of Planning are unacceptable....even outlandish. To require the University to house 100% of its students (now at about 80%) is, to my knowledge, without precedent in this country. This, coupled with the recommendation to "roll back" current enrollment by nearly 1100 students completes a crippling "one-two punch". A reasonable Zoning Commission simply **CANNOT** and **MUST NOT** force a non-profit University to both increase its costs and decrease its revenue -- in effect putting its long term viability at grave risk.

Ladies and gentlemen, the stakes are very high here. With "balance" and "mutual respect" as your guiding principals, you will justify my confidence in a fair outcome. A number of the Office of Planning recommendations are unjust. You must not allow them to derail the good work of this fine University, begun 222 years ago. Both the school and the neighborhood will be the poorer for it.

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

CASE NO. 10-32

EXHIBIT NO. 188

