

Dear Chairman Hood,

2011 JUN -6 AM 9:49

My name is Alexander Hart, and I am a 2010 graduate of Georgetown University. I'm writing to strongly encourage the Zoning Commission to support the Georgetown campus plan (case number 10-32) as proposed and reject the Office of Planning's recommendations, which are both unreasonable and unneeded.

While I was a student from 2006 through 2010, I saw first-hand the strong, positive impact that Georgetown University has, both locally in the neighborhood and more widely across the city. My friends mentored at-risk children through the After School Kids program and helped provide low-income kids with their first books. I personally taught English classes for facilities staff members who spoke Spanish as their native language, and I helped edit an international affairs journal that can be found in bookstores across the country.

But Georgetown University's impact on the community runs deeper. Area senior citizens can audit classes for just \$50, providing them with a low-cost opportunity to continue the lifelong journey of learning. Georgetown students also help support local shops and restaurants along M Street and Wisconsin Avenue with millions of dollars of spending each year. And in my sophomore year, when my friends and I encountered a man on Prospect Street who had been injured in a severe fall, we called GERMS, the student-run EMT service, because we knew he would get medical attention faster than if we had called 911.

And personally, I owe much of my current position—a happy, fully employed resident of Ward 2—to experiences and opportunities I had at Georgetown University. It was Georgetown Magazine, my first summer internship, that made me seriously consider journalism as a profession. A journalism class I took my sophomore year—with adjunct professor and Washington Post columnist Al Kamen—made me even more sure. And the excellent professors I had in my economics classes prepared me well to cover budget and tax issues for *The New Republic* and *Congressional Quarterly*, where I now work. All of this was possible only because Georgetown University offered me tens of thousands of dollars in need-based scholarships; otherwise, I could not have afforded to attend school here.

The Office of Planning's unwise recommendations would imperil the programs I have listed above and countless others, and they would also seriously risk denying future students the opportunities I enjoyed and so greatly benefitted from. The requirement that all students be housed on campus by 2016 would require the university to spend hundreds of millions of dollars constructing dormitories—money that Georgetown University, which has a far smaller endowment than peer schools, could put to far more effective use. The severe mandated cutbacks in enrollment would also cost the university millions. Program cuts, job losses, and financial aid reductions would follow. This would benefit no one.

In constructing its campus plan, the university negotiated in good faith. It conducted numerous community meetings, solicited feedback and modified its plan in response to community concerns, for example by adding an additional 250 beds and eliminating a proposal to extend the height of the chimney on the cooling plant. Its community outreach efforts extend well beyond the decennial campus plan process, too. In response to community concerns about student behavior off campus, even though

ZONING COMMISSION
District of Columbia

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the overwhelming majority of off-campus student residents do not cause problems, the university created SNAP, a professional patrol service that makes sure noise at nights is minimal. It also hires three MPD officers on a reimbursable detail to help keep the whole neighborhood—not just students—safe.

Despite all of the university's efforts and positive benefits for the community, the Office of Planning issued a report that makes unreasonable, unprecedented and unfair recommendations. These recommendations would severely impede the university's ability to provide the high-quality education and community services its students and neighbors have come to expect. Students are a protected class under the DC Human Rights Act of 1977, and it is important to remember this when considering Georgetown University's campus plan. I respectfully urge you and the rest of the zoning commission to reject the Office of Planning's recommendations and instead approve the Georgetown University campus plan as proposed.

Sincerely,

Alexander Hart

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Alex Hart", with a stylized flourish at the end.