

# THE GEORGETOWN CURRENT

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### University has taken valuable measures

As residents of the communities near Georgetown University, we want to applaud the recent steps the university has taken to maintain the quality of life in our neighborhoods.

Since school started this year, the university has deployed twice-daily trash patrols on the streets of West Georgetown and Burleith, collecting more than 100 tons of trash — including non-university trash. The university has hired seven Metropolitan Police Department officers to patrol on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, working with campus security officers to prevent and deter crime on our neighborhood streets. In addition, the university has started a new shuttle bus service to take students to and from M Street, which means fewer students traveling on foot through our neighborhoods late at night.

Each of these new initiatives benefits residents who live near the university. But all District residents benefit from the economic development and services that the university provides to the city.

Georgetown University is the largest private employer in the city, employing more than 9,800 people — 40 percent of whom live in D.C. Last year, the university spent \$86 million on goods and services from D.C. businesses. Georgetown University undergraduate and graduate students provide countless hours of volunteer public service to District residents each year at free health clinics, soup kitchens and other social service agencies. Overall, Georgetown University's positive impact on our city is broad and deep. When the university prospers, it enhances all of our lives.

We also applaud the university for listening to its neighbors to the west by removing the so-called "loop road" proposal from the campus plan. The university is now proposing an approach to providing better internal circulation for its commuter shuttle buses that will reduce the number of buses on neighborhood streets without building the loop road. It's a win for everyone.

Whether we moved here recently or years ago, we each made a decision to live near Georgetown University, knowing that there are pluses and minuses to living near any large institution. On balance, we continue to think that the benefits of living near the university far exceed any negative impacts.

We appreciate the importance of Georgetown University to our neighborhood and support its campus plan, which includes these new community initiatives. And we thank Georgetown University for its continuing efforts to enhance our city and to be a good neighbor.

**Grace Bateman**

*Georgetown*

**Elliott Croke**

*Foxhall*

**John Doolittle**

*Cloisters*

**Erika Higley**

*Glover Park*

**Charlie Skuba**

*Hillandale*

**Tom and Sarah Strike**

*Burleith*

**ZONING COMMISSION**

District of Columbia

CASE NO.10-32

EXHIBIT NO.361F

MONDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2011

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# The Washington Post

AN INDEPENDENT NEWSPAPER

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## EDITORIALS

### Editorial Board Opinion

#### **Correction:**

*An earlier version of this Oct. 24 editorial incorrectly referred to the Northwest D.C. neighborhood of Foxhall as Foxhollow. The reference has been corrected below.*

### **It's D.C. vs. Georgetown in urban planning**

By Editorial,

Published: October 23, 2011

IMAGINE A CITY telling its largest private employer — one that pays millions in taxes and salaries, strives to hire local residents and voluntarily does community service — that it can't grow anymore, that it might have to cut back. That seems far-fetched in light of today's scary economy, but it's essentially what D.C. officials are telling Georgetown University by insisting it either house all its students or cut back enrollment. The District seems distressingly disinterested in promoting a knowledge-based economy.

Georgetown's 10-year plan for its 104-acre main campus, the subject of hearings before the D.C. Zoning Commission, would cap the undergraduate population at current levels while increasing graduate students by about 1,000. Enrollment in 2010 was 14,033, of whom 6,652 were undergraduates. The plan is modest: It contains no major new building, no additional parking and an offer to reduce the main campus enrollment by moving some graduate students to satellite locations. Still, adjacent neighborhoods — particularly Burleith and Foxhall — are up in arms, and they seem to have city officials on their side.

A recommendation by the city's office of planning would require the university to provide housing for 100 percent of its undergraduate students by 2016; failure to do so would force cuts in enrollment starting in 2015. Georgetown houses a higher percentage (84 percent) of undergraduates on its campus than most of the other universities in the city. Not only is it unfair to hold Georgetown to this new standard, but it's unrealistic to expect the school to raise the money or find appropriate sites. The city's suggestion that the university consider an off-campus site outside the university's Zip code (Arlington?) is laughable.

What's most troubling about the city's posture is the notion that an increase in young people, particularly those in search of an education, is somehow undesirable. What happened to the idea that these are the very kind of people that should be lured to make the District their home? Here's how Sally Kram of the Consortium of Universities of the Washington Metropolitan Area put it in testimony supporting Georgetown: "Given that students are one of the District's most assured conduits for new residents — a lifeline for any urban community — it seems particularly odd that the District's Office of Planning seems committed to restricting student growth, particularly graduate and continuing education students."

There is no question that the neighborhoods surrounding Georgetown have some legitimate complaints. There have been issues of noise and litter and other problems by students living off-campus. But the solution isn't to banish students or punish the university. Georgetown has increased police, provided additional garbage pickup and disciplined chronic troublemakers. Besides, for all the complaints, the neighborhoods — which, it must be pointed out, came long after the university — still are desirable places with steady demographics and increased home prices.

In the fine balance that must be weighed between town and gown interests, city officials tipped the scale too far. It will up to the zoning commission to right that balance when it makes its decision next year.

## COMMENTS

**HoyaSinceBirth**

10/25/2011 11:08 PM EDT

The total # of group homes in the 20007 area code has gone down not up in the last 10 years as has the total # of students off campus.

<https://gushare.georgetown.edu/OfficeOfCommunicati...>

<https://gushare.georgetown.edu/OfficeOfCommunicati...>

The neighbors continue to push their agenda of lies and deceit.

**janehoya123**

10/26/2011 5:54 PM EDT

What exactly is the issue with (the "adverse impact" of) students living in these neighborhoods? I am a student living in Burleith, and I do nothing to the neighborhood except contribute. I pay (a huge amount) to live in my house, and I pay utilities and taxes.

Not to mention that, when I go out of my way to be friendly towards my neighbors (through a smile or a "hello"), I only receive cold responses. It seems to me that these unfriendly people I encounter have more of an "adverse impact" than I do.

**bijan20**

10/25/2011 5:03 PM EDT

Regarding student behavior, there may be some cases of excessive noise, but I think the residents are greatly exaggerating. Students cannot be expected to live like senior citizens and not have a single party all year. GU students have lived off campus for many decades. I lived off campus in the sixties for seven years in the Georgetown neighborhood as an ungrad (GU), graduate student (AU) and young professional. Only twice did neighbors ask us to turn down the volume of the music during a party, which we did and the problem was solved. In those days, neighborhood activists did not scowl at students and give them dirty looks, they even responded to their hellos. Georgetown is ranked 12th among national universities in terms of the selectivity of its ungrad students by US News, most students are in the top 5% of their class. Every applicant is interviewed by an alumnus, and one of the character traits that is checked, is maturity. As an alumnus I interview applicants and find them invariably outstanding. GU students are not as rowdy as most schools. The university is no longer seen as a party school. Instead students are attracted to it for its academics, the opportunity for community service and internships. More than half of students receive financial aid, the majority are women, and the percentage of minority and foreign students is steadily increasing.

GU has already made many concessions regarding its Campus Plan. As promised it should find as soon as possible a facility off campus where to conduct its "professional development" continuing studies courses to complement its facility at Clarendon, and start shifting courses there from the main campus starting this coming Spring Semester if at all possible. The BZA should find a compromise solution that is doable by GU and does not force the school's back to the wall.

### **HoyaSinceBirth**

10/25/2011 4:38 PM EDT

Here are some facts that are being ignored by the neighbors. The campus plan:

Freezes undergraduate enrollment at currently permitted levels.

Proposes voluntary maximum on undergraduate and graduate student enrollment. (The litigation over the last 10 year plan resulting in a finding that they could not impose a limit like this on Georgetown. The University is voluntarily capping enrollment.)

The university had to Remove from the plan the "1789 Block" proposal, which would have provided new on-campus housing for undergraduate or graduate students. Due to neighborhood complaints.

Freezes Medical School enrollment at current levels.

Georgetown provides 5,053 beds to house undergraduates in University-owned residence halls, apartments, and townhouse properties. There are only

Student Life Initiatives yield significant outcomes. 73% of off-campus student houses in

the West Georgetown and Burleith neighborhoods had NO SNAP or MPD contact in academic year 2009-2010.

The number of undergraduate student residences in the neighborhoods surrounding the University has declined over the past decade.

The number of undergraduate students living in the neighborhoods surrounding the University has declined over the past decade.

Georgetown currently houses more Students than most of it's peer institutions located in similar locations. It houses more than UPenn, U Chicago, John Hopkins, and Northwestern.

Georgetown will build 250 beds on campus as part of the 10 year plan. With those additional 250 beds Georgetown will house 80% of it's students on campus.

In fiscal year 2009, Georgetown contributed directly to the District's economy in the following ways:

- Paid approximately \$127 million in wages and salaries to D.C. employees.
- Spent approximately \$72 million in the purchase of goods and services from vendors located in the District and paid \$29 million to Certified Business Enterprises (CBEs).
- Paid approximately \$9 million in taxes to the District.
- Employed roughly 8,300 employees, 38% of whom are District residents.

Since school started this year, GU has deployed twice-daily trash patrols on the streets of west Georgetown and Burlieth, collecting more than 100 tons of trash—including non-University trash. GU has hired 7 MPD officers to patrol on Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, working with Campus Security officers to prevent and deter crime on our neighborhood streets. In addition, the University has started a new shuttle bus service to take students to and from M Street, which means fewer students traveling on-foot through our neighborhoods late at night.

**bijan20**

10/25/2011 4:26 PM EDT

I fully agree with the editorial. Although it is true that the original projection of increase in graduate enrollment by GU was too high, the University has lowered its projections repeatedly since and has accepted a voluntary cap on its enrollment for its main campus. There were some elements in the original Campus Plan that could be seen as objectionable such as the ring road, a tall chimney for a power plant, etc. but these have since been dropped. Also GU has offered to add 250 additional beds for undergrads on campus. The University should take into account the interests and views of its neighbors but the rules proposed by the Planning Office to be imposed on the University are much too severe and would force it into decline.

I know of no city that has required a university to house all of its undergraduate students.

If this rule is imposed on GU, does that mean it will also imposed on GWU, AU, Howard and Catholic U. ? If the rule does not apply to other universities, does that mean that GU is being discriminated against or targeted? GU does not the space on campus to build dorms accommodating all its undergrads. People who have not been on campus of a long time should go there and see how build up it is. The few areas still not build (e.i. parking lots and the tennis courts) are needed for the urgently needed extension to the Lauinger Library and for student spaces. Also, GU cannot afford to build so many dorms. Its endowment is one twenty-seventh of Harvard's and in recent years it has had a deficit of about \$15 million a year. Being forced to build dorms for all its undergrads or alternatively reduce its enrollment would break the school's back financially. It would mean for example that the university might have to fire faculty and staff.

Some of the buildings included in the Campus Plan are actually in the interest of the residents. These include the Student Center planned in the old cafeteria in the New South building. If the students have an inviting and enjoyable space on campus they will be less likely to go the "M" Street bars for entertainment. The Library also serves the community. As a Northwest DC resident I belonged to the Library Associates, as did hundreds of other NW DC residents. As such I could attend excellent lectures on campus as well as borrow books. When the Georgetown Public Library burned down, GU's Lauinger Library stepped in to help. Now the Lauinger Library is 41 years old, bursting at the seams and in urgent need of renovation.

**guwinster**

10/25/2011 11:58 AM EDT

Georgetown area residents and home-owners should be thankful for Georgetown. The Georgetown neighborhood was an industrial ghetto one hundred years ago. Increases in the number of "rich, snobby" students fundamentally changed the surrounding area. Increased enrollment, especially after WWII, was a major driver in the improvements made to the surrounding community. These improvements afford local residents the high quality of life they currently have.

Demand from students (especially grad students), allows property owners to charge absurd rents. It also fuels the exorbitant real estate values. If Georgetown housed all of its undergrads on campus and discouraged grad students from living in the area, who would be around to pay \$1500 a month for a 450 square foot basement apartment? Rents and housing values would go down. The city probably would not reassess properties or change the millage rate and owners

**CrazytownDC**

10/25/2011 10:36 PM EDT

I do agree that the University's restrictive policies for on campus parties are not helping the problem.

As someone who went to Georgetown and lived in Burlieth I can attest that it is a two sided problem. If you want student to "start acting like adults" their neighbors should treat them like adults. Failing to confront your neighbors (students or otherwise) and

calling the police to resolve problems (that as you said was wasting resources) is not an 'adult' action either.

My house wasn't a rowdy group most of the time, but we were lucky enough to have neighbors that contacted our landlord when we were being a bit too loud. While we all would have preferred they contact us directly, we appreciated that they were able to try to resolve the problem without involving the police, SNAPS or the university. Guess what? We went over to talk to our neighbors, introduced ourselves and never had an real problems in the year we lived there.

Clearly not all students are going to be as mature and some will be a problem no matter what you do. But to suggest that Georgetown is responsible because "Gtown selected them, brought them here, let them loose on the neighborhood" is ridiculous. The University is highly selective, widely considered one of the top 25 schools in the country, and graduates countless successful, mature and accomplished adults. So again, if you think the University should have more mature students spend some weeknights at U. Maryland, George Mason, James Madison or most other schools not named Brigham Young and you won't complain as much about Georgetown.

Either way adults in their young 20's aren't as mature as you want them to be, they weren't in the past, and they won't be in the future. That's just the way people are, which is why I said you should expect it when moving in.

**HoyaSinceBirth**

10/24/2011 10:44 PM EDT

The first part of your statement is correct. It is a very vocal minority that is raising a stink. Most residents have no problem with the students who live off campus. The ANC's do not represent the majority of residents.

**HoyaSinceBirth**

10/25/2011 4:05 PM EDT

Read the 2nd letter here published by the Georgetown Dish:

<http://www.thegeorgetowndish.com/thedish/citizens-...>

It is a joint letter by 7 residents of surrounding the university commending Georgetown on their efforts to ease tensions and they say they support the Campus plan.

If you polled everyone in the the Georgetown Area zip codes you would find that the majority do not oppose the campus plan. I can guarantee that.

**aged**

10/24/2011 4:47 PM EDT

Thank you Georgetown University and your students for the Vince Lombardi Center where my son's leukemia was treated. Yes nearby parking in those days was difficult, but his cure was worth it.

**HoyaSinceBirth**

10/24/2011 6:23 PM EDT

1) The unkempt lawns are the fault of the landlords. You should take the issue up with them. Georgetown is trying to address the problem by working with the DCRA.

Neighbors point the finger at the university but the real problem you have is with the landlords

2) Georgetown enforces it's code of conduct of campus and punishes students for noise violations.

3) Georgetown provides more on campus than other similar universities and the highest in DC.

4) the % of students who live in the surrounding neighborhoods has gone down not up.

5) the point is there is a % of students who want to live of campus. There's currently a surplus of housing on campus all demand for on campus housing is met.

**esmerelda123**

10/24/2011 2:52 PM EDT

I still don't get it. Is the University expanding into residential areas? Seems to me that there are no buildings going up but this is an issue of a small group of people not knowing how to behave. Yes, the city has the right to regulate the university itself in terms of where it builds, but that -- at least according to this op-ed -- is not the situation here. There are no new buildings. There are just idiot students (you assume, since the person urinating outside could easily be one of 15 people I knew in college who were not students) disrupting life for other residents. As someone who lived on campus as a freshman then off campus in DC for the rest of college since I couldn't afford campus (and who remains in DC 20 years later, thanks to college here), this impinges on a working student's right to live where she wants to live. I don't care how expensive your house is or if you have to make a phone call at 2 AM due to some OTHER idiot (and note: you may have to make that phone call no matter where you live in the city; so what should we do? ban parties next in case they get out of hand?). You should not have the right to tell me where to live or how much to spend on my rent while I pursue the best education I can where I received a scholarship. Period.

**esmerelda123**

10/24/2011 2:56 PM EDT

And for the sake of full disclosure, I live in Chevy Chase. I have had to call the cops on parties that kept me up, we have gone to neighbors to ask to keep it down while sleeping, and I have seen people pee on the street -- all in one of the richest zip codes around. I also have had the cops check in on our own parties when we were unaware of volume, and we are in our 40s. Sometimes it is a fact of life, living among other human beings. Not that it excuses poor behavior, but it is crazy to tell everyone where to live because a few individuals are morons.

**HoyaSinceBirth**

10/24/2011 6:17 PM EDT

AlrexLansing

but that is not true. Georgetown does enforce it's code of conduct of campus and has bent over backwards to accommodate neighborhood concerns.

In addition the majority of students being added are not undergraduate students. Most of them are continuing studies students who are adults with jobs and families.

**dingan999**

10/24/2011 12:50 PM EDT

Education is a far-reaching investment whose return does not show up quickly enough to satisfy some short-sighted officials. What the DC government does to Georgetown University is both disappointing and penny wise and pound foolish. It is DC's honor to have such a world-renowned university located in its city! The DC government should do all it can to help make Georgetown's educational development go as smoothly as possible! Go, go, go, Georgetown go! (Chen D. Yang, Herndon, VA)

**dbd1830**

10/25/2011 10:48 AM EDT

Actually, the GU student body is more racially diverse than the surrounding neighborhoods. Sadly, when GU had fewer minorities, the neighbors didn't object to students living in the neighborhood.

**PostReader91**

10/24/2011 3:16 PM EDT

As a student of georgetown, I need to disagree with "purpledrank" and his or her assumptions.

In response to your assertion that we are "rowdy" and "entitled" I will again disagree. Yes, I admit that we have a large portion of our student body who is upper-class and many students engage in social gatherings in Georgetown on weekends, but calling our behavior rowdy and assuming that it infringes on our neighbors is laughable compared to any other university. We are a relatively tame school. Furthermore, as a student on financial aid and who volunteers as tutor in southeast DC and as a member of a board of students that seeks to make our DC community better, I refuse to see my peers as entitled. No, I am not here to be a leech on the DC community by causing a raucous and then staying around after graduation to take yet another job away from another candidate. I am here to expand my mind and my experiences in order to better serve the community that I choose to go to when I leave DC after graduating. The population around Georgetown makes it clear that they don't want me around, not matter how I personally treat them, because of the stereotypes and assumptions they impose on me. That is the dishonest analysis that most of the community sees and hears on a daily basis. We as students could follow suit and make blogs and hold meetings discussing our side, but we are focusing on our immediate educational goals that we hope to attain in spite of the lack of welcome in our community.

**guwinster**

10/25/2011 11:46 AM EDT

Given that all of the surrounding residents who complain about Georgetown tend to be rich, white and elitist, it really irks me to hear the same complaints about Georgetown students.

Also, while a large number of Georgetown students act abhorrently, it's not like the surrounding community offers many examples of model behavior. Many long-term residents violate open container laws by drinking in the parks or by pulling out tables and drinking on the sidewalks. Many more show up at the dog parks or little league baseball games drunk. I can not count how many high schoolers came back from boarding school this summer and paraded around the neighborhood drunk.

**Hummerp**

10/24/2011 4:02 PM EDT

Again, why don't you voice some of your displeasure to you neighbors who rent the houses to the students. Last time I checked, America is a free country where people can choose to live where they wish. You can't order people to live in a particular area. We've tried that before and it wasn't a good idea then and it's not a good idea now.

**HoyaSinceBirth**

10/24/2011 6:10 PM EDT

Nor should it be the university's responsibility to control them. They are adults. This is no different than if non students threw a party and a fight broke out. You cannot discriminate against them just because they're students. Punish the behavior when they violate the law and punish them for that. It seems like that was done. The police responded and took care of the situation. Living next to a university is like living next to a strip of bars there's going to be noise and drinking. If those things bother you then you should not live in that area. You can only hope that when people violate the law they are punished. It's also not fair to characterize all students based off the actions of 1 or 2 houses. Neighbors like to make it seem like every student house is a problem when in fact it's only a handful of problem houses every year.

**HoyaSinceBirth**

10/24/2011 6:02 PM EDT

In addition most of the additions to enrollment is in the school of continuing studies. Aka these are adults many with families who are taking night classes and going back to school to get degrees. They are clearly not a problem.

**Hummerp**

10/24/2011 4:09 PM EDT

These issues exist in EVERY city, town, burgh, hamlet that is home to a university. To get some perspective, the Georgetown neighbors should visit Madison, WI or Lincoln, NB or or Athens, GA or Berkley, CA or Boston, MA. To make it sound like these issues are unique to Georgetown is just ridiculous. Get a grip folks. THEY'RE KIDS!

**HoyaSinceBirth**

10/24/2011 6:00 PM EDT

Further more Georgetown has gone through great trouble to correct these problems by paying for trash pick ups and shuttling students so they do not have to walk on the street as much as well as cracking down on parties more. Neighbors ignore these efforts to meet them half way. It seems the neighbors will not be happy until the university relocates to the suburbs.

**plq123**

10/24/2011 11:08 AM EDT

As a Georgetown student, it's really nice to hear someone agreeing with our campus. It has simply never made sense to me or anyone I've spoken to (admittedly other students) why people in the Georgetown community seem so shocked to find a college in the neighborhood. I understand that college students might not be the most desirable for a family to have next door, but all my off campus friends have worked extremely hard to build friendly relationships with their fellow Burleith-ers, and are generally met with animosity simply for being enrolled at Georgetown. The student body here is better behaved than what I've seen at other schools and nothing that the campus asks for seems unreasonable.

**MdLaw**

10/24/2011 10:59 AM EDT

The gist of all of this is that the District want to require a certain group of people (students) to live in a certain place (on-campus) to corral those that it believes are "undesirables." The government should not, and legally can not, force any class of people (other than prisoners) to live in a government designated area. Doing it through a proxy (the University) doesn't change the fact that it is the government forcing the decision.

If the problem is illegal group homes, take regulatory action to close them.

If the problem is people urinating in public, the enforce the laws prohibiting such conduct.

If the problem is parking, then enforce the laws.

The university has a legitimate interest in determining that it is in the interest of its educational mission to tell freshmen and sophomores that they have to live on campus, it is quite difference for the government to ban an entire group from living in a particular area because it dislikes the behavior of some of the group's members.

**PSL9903**

10/24/2011 1:04 PM EDT

I completely agree. I am a Georgetown graduate - college '99 and law '03 - and I lived off campus during my junior and senior years and have lived in Georgetown my entire time since graduating. I have lived close to campus (35th Street between O and N) and a few blocks further away (31st and N, 33rd and P). I also rent out a number of my former homes to students. So, I know this issue from all angles.

We have had to deal with loud parties, and messy neighbors, and we typically deal with them the same way we would deal with non-students who have loud parties or leave their garbage out - we talk with them, and if that doesn't work we call 311 and complain. It usually stops after that. These students are also legal adults and should be treated as such. They can be mature, responsible members of the community of they know that is what is expected. And unless there is a law forcing them to live on campus, or a regulation forcing Georgetown to force their students to live on campus (both of questionable legality under the D.C. human rights act), students - particularly upper classman - will want to live off campus.

**esmerelda123**

10/24/2011 2:38 PM EDT

Okay, I'm curious. What regulations has Georgetown violated? You never say. You also keep parroting the "power" of Georgetown as an institution and "citizens' rights" but that doesn't consider the right of a legal adult to go to its chosen university and live where he can afford to live. To force someone (like me, once upon a time) who is a law-abiding citizen and goes to the best university possible on scholarship to live in a dorm is preposterously hypocritical. Those students are taxpayers and have rights, too, including to choose where to live.

**TheGreenMiles**

10/24/2011 10:32 AM EDT

Very well said. This would seriously hurt DC's economic present and future, and for what? Unquantifiable (and therefore unsatisfiable) concerns about noise?

**dbd1830**

10/25/2011 11:29 AM EDT

Purpledrank, the problem is that the opponents of the campus plan have been dishonest in their claims. (Many of them are the same activists who waged a voter intimidation campaign on Election Day 1996 and who presented falsified maps to DC zoning boards.) There has been a surplus of housing for undergraduates who want to live on campus, and even so, GU has offered to create more on-campus housing as part of the plan. The neighbors objected to a plan to build more campus housing for grad students. The percentage of neighborhood residents who are students continues to decrease, not increase, and property values continue to rise. If students are barred from living off campus, the group homes are likely to be filled by young professionals who cannot be disciplined by the University. It's the case of a small group of very vocal extremists vs. the majority who support town-gown co-existence.

**kbor**

10/24/2011 10:21 AM EDT

A measly 7% increase in students over 10 years? Comprised solely of graduate students, who tend to be more considerate neighbors than undergrads to begin with? DC Planning has more pressing problems to worry about.

**Cavan9**

10/26/2011 11:22 AM EDT

They're not single family houses. They're townhouses. There are plenty of people with roommates and such who aren't students there and probably have been since the day they were built in the 1920's.

**spr1**

10/24/2011 10:26 AM EDT

More than enough space? Where exactly would you put one or two new dorms? Have you ever even been on campus? Beyond that, though, when the university purchased the Wormley school on Prospect the neighbors fought everything that the university proposed to convert that building from the dilapidated heap that it was into something useful. 10 years and no cooperation, and GU ultimately had to sell the building. That space could have been used for offices or other things that would have opened up space on campus and allowed more students to live there. But, as usual, the GU neighbors are WAY too myopic to understand that. Likewise, when the campus plan initially proposed making additions to the block where 1789 is, most of which the university owns, again neighbors balked and the plan was dropped.

There is not space left to build new dorms. It is unfortunate that neighbors cannot understand that more creative options are needed, and until they are willing to stop being so childish themselves, things will not improve.

**HoyaSinceBirth**

10/24/2011 10:57 AM EDT

In addition the neighbors opposed the last major dorm construction on campus in the form of the South West Quad. The fact is that there's currently of surplus of on campus housing. The university is being prudent by building things that are essential for the school like the New Science Building rather than something that the students do not want.

**DC\_Progress**

10/24/2011 9:32 AM EDT

The Post's editorial page nailed this one. We live in GP, with a regular stream of bargoers from Gtown group houses on 37th and a group house a few doors away. Yes we're annoyed by the loud revelers on their way home and the occasional beer bottles on the front steps, but driving these young knuckleheads away will be a stake to the heart of our local economy and the city as a whole, long term.

**DC\_Progress**

10/24/2011 12:42 PM EDT

shnook1, we don't own a bar. And, we're residents of Glover Park, not Georgetown. Our relatively small retail area on Wisconsin (other than a few fixtures like Whole Foods) struggles to pay its rent and the college community is a big part of supporting it. We'd like it to thrive and grow and a balanced approach that keeps students in the neighborhood is likely key to that.

If your basic demand is that the group houses (and other non-campus student housing) go away in favor of on campus housing then you ARE demanding that the students move away. The city and our neighborhood need the energy and disposable cash of these residents to thrive. I agree with other posters that we have to police the trash and urination, etc. and a strong community push-back on that is appropriate. But City restrictions on housing aims for a placid utopia that isn't practically, financially sustainable.

**dbd1830**

10/25/2011 11:15 AM EDT

Property values near GU keep rising, developers want to build more units near GU, and most neighbors don't object to the campus plan. Every year the same few activists scream that the neighborhood is about to fall apart, and yet in reality it has become more popular than ever as a place to live.

**HoyaSinceBirth**

10/24/2011 10:39 AM EDT

Actually Georgetown is much more likely to win any court battle. The thing that the neighbors do not seem to understand or at least choose to willfully ignore is that Upperclassman choose to live off campus. It is not due to a lack of current housing. There is currently a surplus of housing for those who want it. There are currently dorm rooms that are open because students chose to live off campus. Georgetown currently meets 100% of demand for on campus housing. Building new on campus housing when they don't use all of current housing and when the students have no desire for it would be irresponsible. I lived all 4 of my undergrad years on Campus if students want on campus housing they get it.

The Neighbors also fail to point out that they opposed Georgetown's last dorm construction of the South West Quad dorm complex. They also forced Georgetown to remove a dorm from the current 10 year plan because it was outside the main gates, but still on Georgetown's property. The neighbors are completely unreasonable.

**dbd1830**

10/25/2011 11:08 AM EDT

Bikes-everywhere, you've got your facts wrong. The university has increased on-campus housing significantly in recent years, despite facing opposition from some neighborhood activists who don't want any construction taking place. In the current campus plan, GU proposes more undergraduate housing without increasing undergraduate enrollment. Only a small percentage of the neighborhood objects to the plan, but they're the same people who oppose anything that benefits students. The office of planning simply copied everything fed to them by a vocal anti-student activist (proven from records from a FOIA request) and their rep showed incredible incompetence when questioned during a recent hearing on the topic. The biggest problem in that area is the presence of a small group of hyperactivists with no regard for the truth.

**JacquesOfAllTrades**

10/24/2011 8:30 AM EDT

That's actually what the system currently is. All freshmen and sophomores are required to live on campus. Juniors and seniors have the option to live off campus, and a little less than half of those two classes choose to do so.

The fact is that when you do an apples-to-apples comparison, there are fewer undergrads living in the neighborhood now than there were 10 years ago. (Undergrad enrollment increased by 500 while the number of on-campus beds increased by almost 800). Some small percentage of graduate students, who range in age from 23-40, for the most part, choose to live in Georgetown, but many more choose to live in apartment complexes or homes in other parts of the city. And many of the group houses that some neighbors complain about are filled with young professionals, rather than students.

But those facts don't square with the pre-determined narrative of some campus plan opponents, and they're summarily dismissed.

**orengeman**

10/24/2011 10:01 AM EDT

Great post, Jacques.

All the posters complaining about university policy and students living off campus who cause "problems" are barking up the wrong tree. If you have a problem with your neighbors (who happen to be students), why don't you take it up with them or their landlords? Why should the school police the activities of its students when they are off-campus and not involved in a school related/sanctioned activity?

**DaymondMyles**

10/24/2011 10:15 AM EDT

Nothing is more annoying than overprivileged adults with too much time on their hands making it their mission to tear down anything around them that disturbs their little world. The freaking university was there first. If you didn't want to deal with college students, then why the heck did you move next to a university? And if you think Georgetown has worse behaved kids than most universities, you are about as deluded as they come. You are killing this university which made this wonderful little enclave called Georgetown even possible. You know how many universities have 100% housing for students? Almost none. Especially in a city. Get a clue people and stop making other people as miserable as you.

**hill\_guy**

10/23/2011 10:38 PM EDT

Totally agreed - I'd be fascinated to hear if any other large urban universities are subjected to the same 100% rule. Also, doesn't DC law prohibit discrimination in housing on the basis of matriculation status? If so, isn't this violating that same policy?

**georgetownfs101**

10/23/2011 10:20 PM EDT

One of the best editorials the Washington Post has written in a long time! Thank you. I couldn't agree more.

**dbd1830**

10/25/2011 10:52 AM EDT

Property values in the area around GU have skyrocketed, and developers are planning to build more high-priced units in the immediate area due to the demand. A small group of extremists opposes the University, while others are desperately attempting to become its neighbors.

**callitlikeiseeit1**

10/23/2011 9:54 PM EDT

Georgetown not only takes local students, but many Georgetown students stay in DC after graduation to work, open businesses, pay taxes, make DC their home, and strive to make DC better. I can think of five Washington-based institutions off the top of my head - Monumental Sports and Entertainment (Leonsis), LivingSocial (O'Shaughnessy), Smucker Farms of DC (Smucker), Chef Geoff's (Geoff), Sweetgreen (Jammet, Neman, Ru) - founded and/or currently run by Georgetown grads. This doesn't even include all the community service that Georgetown students do while attending the school. So shortsighted to treat the University this way.

# The Washington Post

## Seeking a good-neighbor policy with Georgetown

October 25, 2011

Regarding the Oct. 24 editorial “ Town (D.C.) vs. gown (Georgetown) ”:

The District’s resistance to Georgetown’s expansion plans seems, like so much else the District is doing, appallingly counterproductive to its economic, educational and cultural future. The key appears to be in the rampant NIMBYism of nearby neighborhoods. As the editorial noted, the university was there first. The question must be asked, if you treasure quiet enjoyment of your property, why would you choose to live next to a college?

Perhaps the good folks who live there have forgotten their own college experiences. Sometimes adolescents interacting with other adolescents can be noisy and messy, and they have been known to be out and about at late hours. As the parent of a Georgetown student, however, I can say that the majority of students make an effort to respect the neighborhoods. Georgetown University is a responsible neighbor and is doing a good job of mitigating some of the worst student behaviors.

The university contributes much to the city, as well as to the country and the world. It should be allowed modest expansion.

Linda J. Cimarusti, Bethesda

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The Post is correct that the solution to neighborhood complaints about noise and littering by off-campus students is not to “banish students or punish the university.”

The real culprits are absentee landlords who pack their high-priced rental housing with groups of college students and then fail to maintain their property or to monitor tenant behavior. Residents of communities near Georgetown University are fortunate that the university has taken up the slack by collecting trash from our streets and paying for weekend patrols to keep our neighborhoods quiet and safe.

If Georgetown University housed all of its undergraduates on campus, groups of students and others from elsewhere in the city would replace them in the poorly maintained, high-priced rental housing. But the university would then not be obliged to collect trash or provide security services to address the impact of these renters. Opponents of Georgetown University’s Campus Plan should be careful what they wish for.

Grace Bateman, Washington

## COMMENTS

**bijan20**

10/25/2011 11:29 PM EDT

There may be some cases of excessive noise, but I think the residents are exaggerating. Students cannot be expected to live like senior citizens and not have a single party all year. GU students have lived off campus for many decades. Even in the 19th century some students boarded with local families. I lived off campus in the sixties for seven years in the Georgetown neighborhood as an ungrad (GU), graduate student (AU) and young professional. Only twice did neighbors asked us to turn down the volume of the music, which we did and the problem was solved. In those days, Georgetown residents did not scowl at students and give them dirty looks, they even responded to their hellos. They did not call the police automatically as soon as there was an indication that we were having a party. Georgetown is ranked 12th among national universities in terms of the selectivity of its ungrad students. Every applicant is interviewed by an alumnus, and one of the character traits that is checked, is maturity. GU students are not as rowdy as most schools. The university is no longer seen as a party school. Instead students are attracted to it for its academics and the opportunity for community service and internships. More than half of students receive financial aid, the majority are female, and the percentage of minority students is steadily increasing.

GU has already made many concessions regarding its Campus Plan. As promised it should find as soon as possible a facility off campus where to conduct its "professional development" continuing studies courses to complement its facility at Clarendon, and start shifting courses there from the main campus starting this coming Spring Semester if at all possible. The BZA should find a compromise solution that is doable by GU and does not force its back to the wall and say we don't care what our rules does to your institution, just do what we arbitrarily say.