Ms. Sheila Cross-Reid
Director, Board of Zoning Adjustment
Suite 210
441 Fourth Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20001

July 18, 2000

16566

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Dear Ms. Cross-Reid,

I have been a resident of Burleith for the last two years and have been very disappointed with the response of Georgetown University to its problem student houses during that time. I would like to state that I am very concerned about and oppose GU's plans to increase student enrollment, particularly when they have no plan for where to house the new students and when they have been totally ineffective in handling the problems we've had with students in the past. I do not have a problem with students in general, some of them are quite mature and considerate neighbors.

The problem itself, I'm sure many have already mentioned in detail and I will only summarize them here and list problems I have personally encountered. Depending on what kind of students end up in the student houses that switch out every year and every summer we can have a relatively peaceful term or a nightmare term. Nightmare terms involve the almost weekly occurrence of very loud parties and roaming student groups until very late hours of the night; trash on the lawns following the parties, broken beer bottles, cans, litter, etc.; lack of parking on weekends; driving mopeds and moving trucks onto front lawns; drunken "peeling out" style of driving during and after the parties; drunks passed out on the lawn on some occasions and simply unpleasant and insolent behavior from students when asking them to quite down. On the occasions when I have tried to speak to students, they have been rude and have geered at me, knowing that nothing serious can be done to them and they have no need to be polite or respectable. During the bad terms, this had affected our ability to sleep properly, builds up anger and ruins our weekends as we realize that we have no real recourse, makes us feel as if we've moved into a war zone at times.

The process of trying to contain the problem is totally and woefully inadequate. To get out of bed between midnight and 4am to try to find the source of the noise so that we can report it to the GU office of Student Conduct or the police is not the way I would like to spend my weekends. It is impossible to track down the "roamers" - loud groups of noisy, shrieking, hooting students - in time to quiet them down. The GU "Hotline" only works on weekends, during term and there are often problems outside of term, not limited to weekends. I have called the hotline many times only to get a recording (during Hotline hours). There were times the recording says they are on the phone with other neighbors and to please call back, when actually there was no one there at all. Sometimes when police come even they too get treated badly by students (which I have seen). They obviously have no interest in dealing with these spoiled, badly behaved children and feel pretty silly spending their time trying to shut down parties.

It takes up to two hours (once I have gotten out of bed to go find the house in question) and many phone calls to quite down the house and close it down completely. When the party finally does break up - loud students go through alleys and streets breaking bottles etc. The whole thing is a nightmare especially if it's a house close by. Only once after 2 hours of calling GU and two visits by the GU conduct person on site to the party, has a party been closed down by GU. Usually, it takes the police coming out several times to close down a party permanently. However, I strongly believe that police

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should be handling real crime issues instead of babysitting GU students because GU is ineffective in handling the students themselves. This is a drain on our public resources.

Nothing serious can be done to get rid of students in problem houses. GU claims they have rights like any other renters. The problem is that other renters don't behave this way, and it is only GU student houses that create problems. GU Office of Student Conduct can supposedly put students on some kind of probation, but this is after three police fines - again a drain on public resources. By the time a student house might be on probation, the whole year has passed and we are left with the prospect of a new house full of new unknowns. Whether or not we can enjoy living in our house in each given year, is up to the luck of the draw. Given that this is the case I do not believe that GU is living up to its requirement that it shall not become objectionable to neighboring property.

My last point regards timing and turnover. Most students stay in the neighborhood, one or at most two years. By the time a student might be disciplined, he will probably be graduating. While some students are perfectly fine neighbors, the ones that are not, clearly have no interest or incentive in being considerate neighbors. This contributes to the problem and renders ineffective the very slow GU process for dealing with the problem.

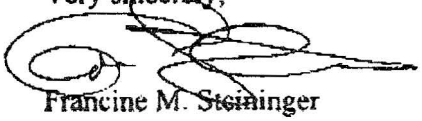
I propose that all undergraduates be placed in on-campus housing. Even with the new dorm being built, not all undergraduates will be able to live on campus. In this case, there should be absolutely no further increase in enrollment unless there are on-campus plans for the students. If there must be students who live off campus, only the well-behaved students should be entitled to do so.

GU must be responsible for its students. If there are complaints about a house, the response must be swift, effective and decisive. There must be a system in place that can get problem students out of a house within one month maximum. GU is responsible for handling its students no matter how excellent its academic standing is. Public resources should not be used to babysit problem students. I don't want to have to get out of bed at all hours of the morning to babysit problem students. Until GU can handle their students effectively, in the eyes of the neighbors who have to live with this problem, there is no way that GU should be allowed to consider increasing its enrollment.

I hope that you do consider our concerns in making your final decision on the GU expansion plan.

Thank you very much for listening to our concerns.

Very sincerely,



Francine M. Steininger
3618 T Street, N.W.
Washington, DC 20007

cc: Councilmember Jack Evans

FAX

E-mail: fsteininger@iie.org

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(Including this page)

TO: Ms. Sheila Cross-Reid
Director
Board of Zoning Adjustment

FAX: **9 727 6072**

FROM: Francine Steininger
3618 T Street, N.W.

DATE: July 18, 2000

SUBJECT: **Proposed Georgetown University Plan to increase Student Enrollment**

16566

Please see attached

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