Foggy Bottom and West End
Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC-2A)

c/o St. Mary's Court 725 24th Street, NW Washington, DC 20037 (202) 736-1775

February 16, 2004

Ms. Carol Mitten, Chair
District of Columbia Zoning Commission
441 Fourth Street, NW, Suite 210
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Z.C. Case No. 02-26 (GWU- Wellness Center) Request to Reopen the Record and Decide the Case (Square 42, Lot 847)

Dear Chairperson Mitten:

I would like to call the Commission's attention to my letter of October 17, 2003, and the attached ANC 2A Resolution 02 11A, dated November 13, 2002. The University is basing its request on a change in conditions. Conditions have changed, but not as presented by GWU's filing of February 9, 2004.

What has changed since this request was first filed in 1994 is that by GWU's own admission, its enrollment has increased over 50%. The timing of this request is further compounded with the construction of the " Ivory Towers Dormitory" located across G Street from the H & W Center. This bulky oversized building is to house 735 students plus support staff with a loading dock facing the H & W Center across G Street. In addition, the University has completed and opened "Affinity Housing" at 23rd & G for 200 students plus staff. Now GWU files this request to increase the classes of users at the Center with inconclusive data as to how many persons are in each class. In addition, the University's request to extend operating hours till the wee hours of the morning is truly unacceptable to this residential neighborhood of white-collar workers and senior citizens.

I respectfully raise several questions relevant to the applicant's filing of February 9, 2004.

1. It is my understanding that eventually as many as 1500 students may be housed at the Mt.Vernon Campus.

2. The buses that GWU uses between Mt. Vernon Campus and Foggy Bottom are too large for the streets in FB, and with deliveries being made to the Ivory Towers Dormitory on the south side of G Street, and buses unloading on the north side, this narrow one-way street, with parking on both sides, would frequently be blocked. When Virginia Ave. is closed for VIP motorcades or otherwise obstructed, traffic is directed to use G Street to go West.

3. This request does not benefit a residential neighborhood but benefits only GWU, which built the Center too large for the University's use and now wants to commercialize the Center to cover the cost.

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4. One class of users mentioned is the University Club. The Commission should know that this, too, has not been a GWU success, and so the University has opened its operations to the students where they are served wine and beer.

5. The applicant also mentions the Remington Condominiums. I have in my possession an agreement with the Remington in which GWU agrees to let the owners of the Remington condominiums use the Center as well as park 35 cars at Columbia Plaza. This arrangement was made to allow GWU to incorporate the Remington's parking lot retaining wall into the Ivory Tower Dormitory construction, to be used as the retaining wall to underground parking and was not a part of the original Order for Square 43.

6. Last but not least, a check of other neighborhood health faculties found that they are closed by 10:00pm. Why should a tax-exempt organization located in a residential area be permitted later operating hours?

If the above request were granted, it definitely would violate 11 DCMR 210.2, "***Use as a college or university shall be located so that it is not likely to become objectionable to neighboring property because of noise, traffic, number of students, or other objectionable conditions.***"

If the Commission members have had a chance to review this file (my file fills three (3) paper carton boxes), they will note that the position of ANC-2A has not changed. In the 1985 Campus Plan, Square 42, Lot 847, was GW's second choice for a dormitory. I recommend the Commissioners review the transcript covering the original hearing on the Center before making a decision.

It is *deja vu* all over again. When GWU originally filed this application they promised all who supported it would have use of the Center. The estimated total was 160,000 persons. The BZA voted to protect the abutting residential community at the western campus boundary by approving this building as a low-intensity use facility with conditions. To reward GWU, now when it is basically out of compliance with its current campus plan, is unacceptable. GWU should not be granted approval of this application that would increase objectionable conditions in our neighborhood. ANC-2A recommends that the ZC not approve this request until the University **has proven** that it is in basic compliance with the current campus plan and with all zoning orders that have been issued.

Respectfully submitted,

Dorothy Miller

Dorothy Miller, Chair
Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2-A

Attachment (1) A student's point of view

The GW Hatchet Monday, December 9, 2002

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bad working conditions

If the zoning regulation changes and allows the Health and Wellness Center to stay open until 1 a.m. Monday to Friday, many unforeseen problems will come to head for HWC management and is student employees.

Currently, all student employees at the HWC are seen as expendable, and management urges students who are unhappy about quality of life issues and wages to seek other employment instead of trying to give pay raises and create a good working environment.

HWC management is not striving for high standards but is concerned with saving its own jobs at the expense of the student worker. With the additional burden of later hours on the horizon, it is of utmost importance to take care of student employees who constitute the workforce that runs these buildings and to take into consideration their thoughts and feelings.

Presently, however, management resorts to firing those who express their concerns with such operations, as it did to my friend, who voiced his concerns. It is probably those that express such concerns, after three and a half years of work, that truly care about the organization for which they work and are trying to improve – as with my friend.

I saw first hand how employees are treated when I was poked with a radio antenna by the head manager during the Jay Leno concert at the Smith Center. He treated me condescendingly for looking like I was enjoying the show. I have also heard horror stories of student employees who get screamed at by student patrons for enforcing pointless Department of Athletics and Recreation policies, then have the management side with the screaming students instead of backing up the student they employ. Furthermore, I asked student employees how much they are paid, and it is surely not enough to take such abuse from management, who sees them as expendable, or from fellow students, who yell at them for enforcing mundane policy.

Next time you go into the HWC, please inquire as to how upper management treats their student employees.

–Chris Kucharski
senior