

NOTES ON OPEN FORUM MEETING ON HOUSING AND HEALTH CARE  
February 5, 2002 at 12:00pm in Whig Hall

Present from the administration were:

Physical Planning Architect/Planner Mark Kirby  
General Manager of Plant and Services Michael E. McKay  
International Graduate Student Advisor for the Office  
of General Counsel Jennifer McNabb  
Associate Dean of the Graduate School for  
Budget and Administration Sandra L. Mawhinney  
Director of Housing S. Thomas Miller  
Vice-Provost for Administration Joanne Mitchell  
Associate Dean of the Graduate School for  
Student Affairs F. Joy Montero  
Associate Dean of the Graduate School for  
Academic Affairs David N. Redman  
Graduate College Residence Life Coordinator Lisa M. Sherov  
Office Assistant Katherine Sundberg  
Dean of the Graduate School John F. Wilson  
Vice-President and Secretary Thomas H. Wright

Graduate Students present included:

Eric A. Adelizzi (Chemical Engineering)  
Matthew J. Fouse (Politics), Chair of the Graduate Student Government  
Tamar Friedmann (Physics)  
Scott M. Miller (Chemical Engineering)  
W. Garrett Mitchener (Applied and Computational Mathematics)  
Elliot A. Ratzman (Religion)  
Meredith E. Safran (Classics)  
Cynthia E. Tobery (Molecular Biology)  
and three or four graduate students who could not be identified

#### INTRODUCTION

Dean Wilson called the Open Forum to order at 12:07pm in the Senate Chamber of Whig Hall. He stated that the decision to hold this forum had been based on the great success of previous forums. Dean Wilson introduced Vice-President Wright, to speak on the subject of the new housing being constructed at the site of the Lawrence Apartments.

#### LAWRENCE CONSTRUCTION

Vice-President Wright offered some prefatory comments before taking questions. He describe Princeton as a community in which the University must provide housing for graduate students and others. He stated that

undergraduate housing would change over the next three to four years as a new undergraduate residential college is constructed. He stated that, as an experiment, some graduate students would be housed there.

Vice-President Wright went on to say that flexibility was the key to housing being planned by the University. Graduate students, postdocs, and even junior faculty, have similar housing needs, so the goal is to design living space that could be appropriate for all three groups. Since the University cannot predict what will occur in the next 10, 20, or 30 years, design must account for the possibility that a given space will have multiple uses over time.

Vice-President Wright described the Lawrence construction as a first step in a number of things that will be done to expand and improve graduate student housing. For instance, plans are afoot to add more housing to the Butler complex, an area which the administration believes is capable of supporting a greater density of housing. There are also other plans to increase the housing stock.

Vice-President Wright cautioned that planning must be carried out in the context of a community that is extremely sensitive and views the activities of the University with suspicion. The Princeton community is especially concerned presently with the effect that new construction or University expansion will have on traffic and pressure on the local housing market.

Vice-President Wright stated that traffic is a growing problem in Princeton. He considered that the Lawrence construction might even have the capacity to help with this issue. He then discussed the effect on the housing market. Princeton houses nearly 100% of its undergraduates and 80% of its graduate students. While it aims to continue providing this housing, the University does not wish to force third- or fourth-year undergraduates or any graduate students to live on campus. Inevitably, no matter what housing the University provides, some will live off-campus.

Vice-President Wright stated that the Lawrence construction project as it would shortly be described by Mr. Kirby to those present was not a foregone conclusion. On Thursday, it will go before the Princeton Township Planning Board. Several parts of the plan, including a new traffic light

on Alexander Road, will be up for discussion specifically.

Vice-President Wright also stated that, in conjunction with the new Lawrence Construction, the clubhouse for the Springdale Golf Club would be moved from its present location on College Road to behind the Lawrence Apartment complex. He stressed that parts of the plan will likely be amended and that the plan has been designed to be environmentally sensitive.

Vice-President Wright then introduced Mr. Kirby, the architect, to discuss the planned construction in greater detail. Mr. Kirby began with an introduction to the history of the current project.

Mr. Kirby stated that the project was initiated about a year ago when the need for additional graduate student housing was noted. The goal at that time was to have as many units in place by Fall 2002 as possible. The Lawrence site was selected by the planners in the Facilities Department as available land that, if built on, would have the least impact on the community, and therefore raise the least number of planning objections. A plan was developed for several three-storey wood-frame buildings, and this plan was put forward to the Board of Trustees. The Trustees rejected the plans, calling for better quality buildings to be constructed and allowing another year for their construction. The project cost was approximately doubled.

Mr. Kirby stated that the current plan involves bringing half of the new units on-line in Fall 2003, and the other half by Fall 2004. Construction will start by Fall 2002.

Mr. Kirby displayed a site plan. The selected site lies just north of the existing Lawrence Apartments. The site for the golf clubhouse will lie northwest of Karin Court, the low-income housing facility located adjacent to the existing Lawrence Apartments. The clubhouse move is not linked to the current construction, which will proceed without regard to the final plans for its relocation. It is being done at the same time for the sake of convenience in planning and design.

Mr. Kirby described the new construction. Seven additional buildings

will

be added at the Lawrence site, to the north in a wooded area. Attempts will be made to preserve the woods and the low-lying trees and other vegetation near the stream. The buildings will range between three and six storeys: there will be one six-storey building, two five-storey buildings, and four three-storey buildings. All buildings above three stories will have elevators.

Mr. Kirby stated that original plans had foreseen 176 two-bedroom apartments, which were considered the most flexible type of space. A new design, prepared in consultation with students, includes a number of one-bedroom and studio apartments, designed around the same footprint.

The

total amount of space used in one one-bedroom apartment and one studio apartment is equal to the amount of space in one two-bedroom apartment. The goal here is to maintain flexibility and allow for future changes to be made without the necessity of altering external walls. The two-bedroom

units will be 900 square feet, the one-bedroom units will be between 450 and 500 square feet, and the efficiency units will be about 350 square feet. The efficiencies will include small galley kitchens. The one-bedroom units will include slightly larger kitchens. One reason for the decision to build a series of small buildings was that residents of the twelve-storey Lawrence tower were inconvenienced by long waits for the elevators.

Mr. Kirby continued, stating that there will be a total of 138 two-bedroom

apartments, 34 one-bedroom apartments, and 33 studios, for a total of 206 apartments. This will complement the existing Lawrence apartments, which include 94 one-bedroom apartments and 56 two-bedroom apartments. The existing parking lot of 160-odd spaces will be enlarged by 240 spaces. Parking areas will be realigned. The goal of the design was to integrate the buildings, including Karin Court, into one large community.

The new building that is most central to the entire complex will feature a

number of common facilities, including meeting rooms, common space, and small offices for student organizations. Laundry facilities will be located here and at the far, eastern end of the new construction.

The parking area has been designed with the goal of providing three convenient shuttle stops. It was noted that a shuttle would probably be

created to serve the apartment complex once all of the new residents had moved in.

Mr. Kirby showed a number of plans and drawings of the proposed construction. The seven new buildings would be laid out around two quadrangles, one of which will be an open field and the other of which will be wooded.

Mr. Kirby stated that the two five-storey buildings are being planned to be completed and ready for occupancy by Fall 2003, with the other buildings to be completed 6-9 months later. Some delay was a result of the redrawing of the plans to allow for one-bedroom and studio apartments.

Vice-President Wright asked Mr. Thomas Miller whether a pricing structure for rents had yet been worked out. Mr. Miller replied that it was under consideration, but, as the new units would be bigger and nicer than the current Lawrence units, they would likely be priced accordingly higher. He added that the new units would include not only ethernet jacks for DormNet, but also air conditioning.

Vice-President Wright opened the floor for questions.

A graduate student who identified herself as a Lawrence resident asked how much noise and inconvenience for current residents would be generated by the construction project. Mr. Kirby stated that the largest inconvenience would come from the relocation and redesign of the parking lot which might require temporary parking arrangements. He assured that ample notice would be given in this respect. As for noise, it was unavoidable. Construction will only proceed between the hours of 7:30am and 3:30pm and will last for 18 months. It will naturally have the worst effect on the people who live in the buildings closest to the site. Additionally, it is possible that the Lawrence vegetable garden may have to be reconfigured.

Mr. Mitchener stated that, from the plans, it appeared that there were driveways inside the planned courtyards. Mr. Kirby stated that there were not; the areas in question were pedestrian walkways that were designed to be wide enough for service vehicles to use. Mr. Kirby stated that it would be theoretically possible for some pathways to be used by regular vehicles, perhaps at scheduled move-in times.

Mr. Mitchener asked about insulation within the building. Mr. Kirby stated that the old plan had involved wood and sheetrock, but that the new plan called for concrete block and concrete brick, which would provide for excellent sound absorbance. Mr. Kirby was pleased to say that the quality of construction of the new buildings would be as good as that of the existing Lawrence buildings, something that could not have been said if the original plans for rushed construction had been carried through.

Mr. Mitchener asked about the heating and climate control plans. Mr. Kirby stated that the University would, for the first time, be using a geothermal heating system. Four-hundred fifty wells would be constructed under the golf course. The new apartments would also, for the first time, contain their own heating furnaces instead of being connected to the main University system. Each apartment unit will contain its own thermostat for control of heating and air conditioning.

Miss Safran asked about the proposed shuttle system. She wondered whether a pilot program could be started now to gauge usage before 350 new people moved into the complex. Vice-President Wright stated that he was not directly involved with discussions about a shuttle system. He nevertheless doubted the usefulness of a pilot program in judging demand for future residents. Nevertheless, he promised a "maximal effort" to make the proposed shuttle work once construction was complete. Miss Safran pointed out that there were already a number of people living at Lawrence who could use a shuttle. Vice-President Wright stated that he understood that some type of shuttle service was already in place. Dean Montero was asked to clarify the situation. She stated that an evening shuttle was in place, but not a daytime shuttle. The evening shuttle is funded by Public Safety and staffed by undergraduates. There have been discussions, involving the Graduate Student Government (GSG), about the establishment of a daytime shuttle. Dean Montero noted that students, when referring to a shuttle service, are envisioning something along the lines of the staff shuttle that runs on campus. Mr. Adelizzi commented that discussions had taken place with Public Safety and that Vice-President for Finance and Administration Richard R. Spies, who left the University in December, had stated that an Administrative Process Team would be formed to discuss the matter. The Administrative Process Team, however, was apparently not going to be formed, and the GSG had been referred to discuss the matter with the new Vice-President for

Administration, who had not yet been hired. Vice-President Wright said that he really couldn't help, except to affirm that the administration is "aggressively seeking" a successor for Vice-President Spies.

A graduate student asked what transportation strategies, besides a shuttle, were being devised. Vice-President Wright stated that there are no plans for other methods of getting people to drive less. Mr. Kirby pointed out that although provision had been made for shuttle access to the Lawrence Apartments, plans have also been made for additional parking.

A new entrance to Alexander Road, located between the current entrance at West Drive and Faculty Road, was being planned. The University has conducted an extensive traffic study and has determined that the additional traffic from the new construction will be very small compared to the current traffic. A new traffic light at the proposed intersection should, further, improve traffic flow. Vice-President Wright commented that he would like a monorail like the one recently installed at the Newark International Airport, but that this was probably not in the University's future.

Miss Safran raised the issue of pedestrian safety. She asked about the current trail that runs through the woods adjacent to the Lawrence Apartments. Mr. Kirby stated that there would only be small changes to this path. A new path will run alongside the new automobile bridge over the stream. Miss Safran asked about a dedicated bicycle path. Vice-President Spies said that he would consider the suggestion.

Mr. Ratzman asked whether any plans were under consideration to encourage bicycle purchasing and use. He assumed that islets would be created for bicycle parking; this was confirmed by Mr. Kirby. He asked whether the annual bicycle sale could be brought forward to September.

Dean Wilson, by way of bringing the discussion to a close, emphasized that the new construction constituted a major commitment on the part of the University to graduate student housing. Graduate student housing plans had changed significantly over the years, as exemplified by the graduate students living in the lakeside Hibben-Magie Apartments. He looked forward to longer-term efforts in the area of graduate student housing. Dean Wilson thanked Vice-President Wright and Mr. Kirby.

#### HEALTH CARE

Dean Wilson turned to the second item on the agenda, namely a discussion

of the improvements in the graduate student health plan that have come to pass in the last year. He recognized Vice-Provost Mitchell.

Vice-Provost Mitchell began by thanking the GSG for producing the Graduate Student Life Initiative report in March 2001, which included a well-written and comprehensive section on health care. Former President Harold Shapiro and former Provost Jeremiah Ostriker had, in response to the report, created a committee and charged it with examining potential enhancements in health benefits for graduate students. The committee had included the Vice-Provost, Dean Montero, Vice-President for Campus Life Janet Dickerson, Director of Health Services Pamela Bowen, then-Director of the Office of Risk Management (and now Associate Treasurer) Laurel Harvey, Associate Director of Health Services Janet Finnie, two graduate students nominated by the GSG, and one undergraduate affiliated with the Student Health Advisory Board. The Committee was ably assisted by a number of people from the Office of Risk Management. The Committee isolated three areas as priorities:

1. Prescription Drug Benefits. The Committee investigated and quickly implemented a plan by which graduate students have a prescription card worth a 20% discount on prescription purchases. This plan supplemented the post-deductible 80% reimbursement of prescription purchases under the student health plan. Vice-Provost Mitchell has heard that this is an extraordinarily helpful and very welcome benefit.

2. Dental Insurance. Dental insurance was previously not available to graduate students. Now, the University covers both preventative dental care and significant dental work. The plan includes an annual \$125 reimbursement for dental cleanings and x-rays, which, it is hoped, will help graduate students keep up their level of dental care. One impediment to the extension of dental benefits was the lack of available dentists in the Princeton area willing to take on new patients. In addition, the Associate Treasurer was able to work through the Eastern Dental/Healthplex system to identify a plan which could be purchased, as optional additional coverage, by graduate students. Approximately 300 students signed up this year. More expressed interest after the end of the open-enrollment period, so it is likely that these figures will increase next year.

3. Vision Benefits. An optional plan, identical to the staff plan, is now available to graduate students. It offers a \$10 co-pay on vision examinations and discounts on glasses, etc. About 200 graduate students have signed up.

There were information sessions in the fall on these benefits.

Vice-Provost Mitchell was pleased to state that President Shapiro and Provost Ostriker had, in the end, increased the amount of money to be

spent on these programs from the original planned allocation.

Dean Wilson solicited questions on the augmented health benefits.

A graduate student asked whether the vision plan covered both glasses and contact lenses. The administrators of the Student Health plan at Princeton had indicated that it did, but a doctor whom she consulted said that it did not. She suggested that more definite information was needed,

in general, perhaps in the form of literature on the programs.

Vice-Provost Mitchell stated that additional information sessions were being planned and that some might be run by the providers. She said that she could not answer the specific question immediately. The graduate student suggested that information could be compiled into a booklet or put

on-line since the current information on-line was very vague. The Vice-Provost stated that she would look into a benefits website. Perhaps a FAQ could be created.

Dean Wilson stated that he had received expressions of astonishment from his colleagues at other Universities that Princeton was able to offer these expanded benefits. He thanked Vice-Provost Mitchell for all of her work.

Dean Wilson then stated that a first-year graduate student in the Psychology Department who could not be present had submitted two written questions. The first dealt with nursery and childcare benefits.

Vice-Provost Mitchell explained that the University is affiliated with two

childcare organizations located in buildings on Broadmead Street. She and

former Vice-President for Human Resources Joan Doig had recently started a

survey to study the availability of such services in the Princeton community. The University already provides a subsidy for needy staff members. Vice-Provost Mitchell stated that the issue is a longer-term one, not susceptible to easy solution. It is possible that various administrative offices may be relocated from the Broadmead buildings at some point to provide additional space. The Vice-Provost said that she would welcome suggestions and ideas. A meeting will be held in one-and-a-half weeks to discuss the issue further.

Dean Wilson relayed the second question, which dealt with insurance for dependents of students. A staff member can insure two dependents for \$1500 a year, while a graduate student must pay \$4000 a year to insure

two dependents. Vice-Provost Mitchell stated that her committee had considered the issue. It is, unfortunately, impossible to insure students under the current staff plan. The alternative would be to purchase additional insurance for graduate students, but this option proved prohibitively expensive. It was deemed a lower priority than prescription costs, dental care, and vision care. Vice-Provost Mitchell conceded that the high cost of insuring dependents is an "extraordinary financial burden" but her committee was unable to find a better system.

Miss Safran asked whether birth control was covered under the prescription plan. Vice-Provost Mitchell stated that it was covered but that it was cheaper to get birth-control prescriptions filled through McCosh Health Center. Miss Safran asked whether a new prescription would be required or whether an existing prescription could be transferred. Vice-Provost Mitchell was unsure, but she guessed that a new prescription would be required.

Dean Wilson thanked Vice-Provost Mitchell.

#### GENERAL COMMENTS FOR THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

Dean Wilson then opened the floor to general comments and questions for him and his staff.

Mr. Fouse asked for more details on the plans to house graduate students in undergraduate colleges. Dean Wilson stated that he has pushed this plan very hard. The previous day, Trustee Meg Whitman had pledged \$30 million toward the construction of the sixth undergraduate residential college, which will be constructed on the site of the tennis courts south of Dillon Gymnasium. (The tennis courts, the Dean assured those present, would be relocated.) The undergraduate colleges will be paired, and one college in each pair will house juniors and seniors and a small number of graduate students. The paired colleges will have joint programming. About 10 graduate students will live in one college of each pair, but they will not be additional Assistant Masters. Instead, they will be resources for undergraduates, adding "gravity" to undergraduate life. Ideally, they would be drawn from a cross-section of disciplines. The plan is modeled after the Harvard "House" system and the system in place at Oxford, where the graduate-to-undergraduate ratio can be as high as

1:2  
or 1:3.

Mr. Adelizzi recalled that Dean Wilson had spoken of future plans for graduate housing beyond the Lawrence Construction and the proposals for Butler. He asked whether Dean Wilson could provide further details.

Dean

Wilson stated that such plans would be in the "very long term". He said that the Butler Apartments had been built in 1947 from surplus army barracks and that the University had promised to tear them down within five years. He said that the difficulty in replacing the units was that they cannot be removed all at once, since that would create a housing shortage. Dean Wilson envisioned a gradual replacement process and suggested that garden-style apartments would be an appropriate choice for new construction. Dean Wilson emphasized what he called the "theme" of a "spectrum" of graduate student housing options and the current thinking that new housing should be flexible enough to house graduate students, postdocs, and junior faculty, as needed.

Mr. Scott Miller asked when the Butler units were likely to be replaced. Dean Wilson stated that the new undergraduate residential college would open in 2006 and that Butler would likely be the next construction following this. He cautioned that the University's limited resources created a "funnel" of construction projects and made it difficult to pursue more than one major project at a time. He estimated that new Butler construction might be complete within a decade.

Mr. Miller raised the issue of network connections. The Lawrence Apartments and the graduate annexes had recently been wired for DormNet. His understanding was that Hibben-Magie would be considered next, but that

plans to wire Butler were being delayed until it was decided if and when the current Butler units would be demolished. Dean Wilson replied that plans for the Butler project had been slated for earlier implementation, but when the recent housing crisis occurred, attention had shifted to the Lawrence site as the University was likely to be able to add more units more quickly there. As a result, the Butler reconstruction had become a lower priority. Nevertheless, Dean Wilson stated, wiring would definitely

be included during the planned reconstruction.

Mr. Miller considered that if the construction will not occur for a decade, then the time scale for the project would be longer than the useful lifetime for the wiring technology and the depreciation of the

equipment. Dean Wilson conceded that this might be right and that the subject should be pursued. He added that within the last 8 months, Betty Leydon had taken over as Vice-President for Information Technology. During this time, she has attempted to measure a whole range of IT problems across campus. Dean Wilson said that he would be pleased to talk to Vice-President Leydon about wiring Butler. The Lawrence wiring, he added, had been done on orders from former Provost Ostriker, who was a great advocate of expanding the campus network and therefore very sympathetic to the request. Dean Wilson reiterated that he would make sure that Vice-President Leydon heard the request. Vice-Provost Mitchell stated that such wiring would be decided as part of the Capital Planning Process, adding that Vice-President Leydon had a plan for the networking of all new buildings on campus. She added that the wiring of Butler was definitely on Vice-President Leydon's agenda but that she, the Vice-Provost, would see if it could be "emphasized" and that she would check on the time horizon envisioned by OIT. It would definitely depend on the construction plans for Butler. Dean Wilson and Vice-Provost Mitchell stated that they felt that Vice-President Leydon was, in general, very responsive to student concerns.

#### CONCLUSION

Dean Wilson thanked those present for attending. He added that feedback from graduate students is always appreciated. He suggested that everyone should read Friday's newspaper to see the result of the Thursday night discussions between University planners and the Township Planning Board.

Dean Wilson adjourned the Open Forum at 1:20pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Eric Adelizzi