

Open Forum on Graduate Student Housing
Wednesday, Feb. 21, 2001
McCosh 46 - Noon to 1pm

**Minutes as noted by S. Karthick Ramakrishnan, GSG Press Secretary

Administrators present: Joy Montero, Ulli Struve, Patricia McArdle

Lauren Hale, chair of the Graduate Student Government gave an intro to the GSG and its continuing interest in this issue, and the Graduate Student Life Initiative

Karthick Ramakrishnan spoke briefly about past actions on the housing issue, including the December CPUC meeting and the housing rally in Firestone Plaza that month. He then introduced Kristen Harknett, a student member of the short-term housing committee.

Kristen spoke of various scenarios regarding first-year enrollment and desire for on-campus housing, and the housing implications of each. Even in the best-case scenario, we are looking at a shortfall of at least 120-150 students. This is made worse by students not being able to draw into Millstone.

Possible solutions that are being investigated:

Lockhart - 75 people - the advantages are that there is a large kitchen. Intended mostly for single students.

Wyman - 12 - Annex-like, historic building. May be gotten through room improvement.

Jan Weinberg - up to 50 - Realtor who is willing to have up to 50 apts. reserved for the University if the University will hold them as they become available.

Hibben/Magie - give preference to grad students for new vacancies in H/M.

GC - Convert some two-room singles in the new or old GC into doubles.

[Patricia McArdle said that there were 58 of such rooms in the OGC and 32 in the NGC] - In later discussion, people indicated that doubling up in the NGC was not possible, but that it would be possible in the OGC, if the students paid lower rents. Also, there was concern about the increased demand on GC facilities.

Edwards - possibly 30 rooms if undergrads do not fill it [mentioned as very unlikely]

Millstone - 20 students - 3 houses near Millstone. Would house up to 20 students two of the houses would be destroyed by the proposed Millstone Bypass.

In discussion, some suggested making all housing need-based, with income based either on the last years' tax forms or on stipend levels. Dean Montero said that such a move would require too much in terms of staff resources. She also noted that hardship applications are difficult to secure, but will take into consideration peoples' family circumstances.

Some suggested that the graduate school should start reducing its admissions, or at least give more priority to people it has already admitted.

Subsidies were also mentioned as a solution, but Kristen noted that increasing off-campus housing would mean an even worse parking situation. Having the University subsidize NJTransit passes for those living in Trenton, Hamilton or New Brunswick was also offered as a solution that would not worsen on-campus parking.

Kristen said that she would take the comments made and report them to the short-term housing committee, whose recommendations would then go on to the Policy group of the University.