

GSG recommendations regarding Campus Planning  
3/1/2006

Main principles:

- 1) Graduate students are on campus more often than undergraduates -- especially during academic breaks and holidays.
- 2) Graduate housing is located at the periphery of central campus. This makes traveling to and from central campus logistically difficult and often leads students to feel that graduate students aren't a part of the campus.

Main priorities:

1) Graduate Student Space/Services

\* Social spaces. While graduate students are a third of the student population on campus, we do not have any dedicated social spaces on central campus. Most activities occur at the residential areas, which are scattered across the peripheral campus and are not in easy walking distance. Student groups have to compete with undergraduate groups for social spaces (this issue will get worse as the undergraduate population increases). It would be nice if there was a dedicated space on central campus that would feel as a center for graduate student life.

\* Childcare/family friendly spaces at central campus. What would be best is a child-care facility that is affordable for graduate students, that has enough spaces to accommodate graduate students with families, and the hours of which are reasonable considering an academic's schedule. For example, in Columbia they have a program that is called "Two Rooms". In one room, the parents work on research in a fully-equipped office space; in the other room, a staff member look after their children. Because the parents are present, you don't need that much staff so the program is relatively cheap (and therefore, affordable for graduate students). While we don't think this can replace real childcare facilities/programs, this may be a useful stop-gap measure until facilities can be built.

\* Study spaces. Many graduate students do not have home offices in their department, so it is often difficult to find appropriate places to study. For example, the GSG has been working with Firestone Library to increase the amount of secure storage space for graduate student study spaces. A small number of departments have individual lockers for some of their graduate students, but most do not. Especially since students are often carrying laptops and books with them to the library, it is important that they have a dedicated space to store their valuables and to organize their research materials on campus.

\* Services during the academic breaks (eg, summer, holidays). Most services -- health care, library hours, Frist Campus Center hours, shuttle service -- shut down during academic breaks, even though many graduate students (not to mention staff and faculty) are still around. This is frustrating for students who are trying to complete research during these times (more often than not, the summer is our most productive time of the year) and again contributes to the feeling amongst graduate students that we are not important. For example, we have been working with Frist on the possibility of keeping Café Vivian open for long hours during these breaks. While we understand that it is too expensive to keep all of Frist open for long hours, it would be great if at least a part of it was open.

2) Transportation

\* Hours of shuttle operation. Since graduate students do not live on central campus but remain on campus for academic and recreational reasons, it is important for graduate

students to have access to the campus via shuttles (eg, late-night, early-morning, weekends, holidays, summers). Especially since graduate student housing is peripheral to central campus, this is important so that we feel connected and included in the university community. It is also important for safety reasons.

\* Consideration for students without cars. Students without cars are especially dependent on the shuttles if they do not have a car to bring them from home to central campus or to important services (eg, public transportation, grocery shopping). If shuttle service can be improved, this is also an environmentally-friendly practice of the university. It also helps to recruit new graduate students, especially international students, if cars are not a necessity for graduate students. For example, University Services ran a pilot holiday shopping shuttle this winter to Route 1 shopping centers. This service could be continued on a regular basis.

\* After-hours parking. While it seems to be necessary to have daytime parking on the outskirts of campus with shuttles back to campus, parking should be available closer to each building after normal hours. This is important for students who work late, to be able to bring their cars back to campus and not have to walk far at night when they leave. This is a safety and convenience concern, especially as long as shuttles cannot serve this purpose. For example, when there are big events being held on campus, graduate students find it difficult to find parking near their buildings to conduct research during the weekends.

### 3) Safety on campus

\* Lighting and crosswalks. The GSG has worked for several years to improve the safety of sidewalks on campus, particularly those that lead to and from central campus and the graduate housing complexes. However, there has been no significant progress made on lighting, crosswalks, and sidewalks. For the major problem areas, please refer to the attached letter we sent to Vice President McKay last fall. We recommend that there be a campus walk to and from all graduate housing, preferably at night, to see exactly what the conditions are. You could join efforts with Public Safety, who is planning on conducting regular campus walks to identify lighting/safety issues for pedestrians.

\* Bike paths. Students who bike from graduate housing to central campus do not have bike paths to use. It is often dangerous with automotive traffic to bike (eg, Faculty Roads, Harrison Street, Washington Road). Better bike paths will also encourage environmentally-friendly travel around campus.

### 4) Sustainability/Energy conservation

\* Visibility and promotion of recycling programs. We don't feel like there are enough recycling containers around campus. Within buildings, the availability of recycling containers (that have trash, paper, and can/bottle) is erratic. Outside of buildings, there are very few containers on campus and those that are present are poorly labeled. For example, we are currently participating in Recyclemania, a multi-university recycling competition. However, there is very little publicity on most levels of the university that this event is occurring.

\* Energy-efficient building operation. We encourage motion sensors, better temperature control, keeping windows closed.

\* Energy-efficient building design (new construction). We encourage better use of insulation, solar energy, recycled building materials, inclusion of motion sensors, and central control of HVAC.

\* Design of parking spaces. We should consider more parking garages instead of surface parking -- which takes up an unnecessary amount of space and is not cost-effective to maintain (eg, snow-plowing).

\* Incentives for energy conservation. Departments and administrative offices have no incentive to conserve energy because they do not directly pay the energy costs. Also, there is no information given to people about what practices help conserve energy (eg, keeping windows closed). It would be helpful if there was a way to reward departments that reduce energy costs. It seems like the university is open to the idea of energy-conservation, but often makes it difficult for actual implementation. For example, the GSG Executive Committee has been working for at least six months just to get lids added to recycling containers in Hibben-Magie and a plastic recycling container in the laundry rooms. Also, the GSG has been working with Facilities to improve energy conservation in Frist. We were told that while Frist was originally built to be completely motion sensed, faculty and staff complained about this service and so many of them were removed. Finally, the Icahn genomics center was just built three years ago but doesn't have motion sensors in their rooms or corridors.

Comments --

- \* Re-survey the needs of buildings' emergency power backups to support research
- \* Wayfaring: Signs outside of each building on campus (central and at housing complexes) in visible font that give the name of the building and, if applicable, departments/organizations contained within, signs on all roads leading to Princeton to direct them to main campus and visitor parking
- \* Pet-friendly graduate housing -- including apartments that allow animals and pet-friendly outdoor areas (eg, fenced in areas)
- \* Recreation/social spaces at graduate housing: space for organizations for meetings & parties, social events, recreation spaces (e.g. yoga classes), child playrooms, outdoor playgrounds/playsets, outdoor recreational fields/courts (e.g. soccer, basketball, etc), grills/picnic tables

Attachment: Letter written to Mike McKay in 2005

8 August 2005

Mike McKay  
Vice President for Facilities  
Office of the Vice President for Facilities  
Macmillan Building  
Princeton NJ-08540

Dear Vice President McKay:

We write to draw your attention to two issues – one regarding campus safety, another regarding facilities to support outdoor recreation.

We would like to highlight several issues regarding the quality and illumination of pedestrian sidewalks on or near campus.

Some important roads have discontinuous or no sidewalks:

- The stretch of Faculty Road between Hibben-Maggie and Washington Road has a barely visible pavement. For certain sections, one has to walk through bare mud. This path therefore becomes very slippery during wintertime and when it rains.
- The stretch of Faculty Road between Harrison Street and Washington Road does not have a continuous sidewalk. Graduate students going to South Campus from Butler Apartments frequent this road.

The existing sidewalks along many roads are poorly lit:

- Graduate students from Graduate College, Hibben-Magie, and Lawrence Apartments use the sidewalk along Alexander Street from the intersection with College Road to the intersection with Faculty Road. The poor lighting of this sidewalk raises serious security concerns for these students.
- The residents of Butler Apartments face similar hardships when they commute from their homes to Frist or to E-quad via Harrison Street and Prospect Avenue. The only light comes from cars when they drive along the road.
- The sidewalk along Faculty Road connecting Hibben-Magie with Washington Road also lacks good lighting. Pedestrians rely on the inadequate illumination from the streetlights. The problem is exacerbated by the cover provided by the tall trees on either side, which make the area pitch black at night.

Some crosswalks are dangerous for pedestrians:

- The crosswalk across Faculty Road closest to Washington Road is next to a sharp curve so that speeding cars can be a serious threat to pedestrians. We ask you to consider moving the crosswalk towards Alexander Street by 100 feet.

- Crosswalks across roads tend to be unseen by traffic especially if the road is very wide or if there is poor lighting. Most crosswalks across Nassau Street and the crosswalk at the intersection of College Road and Alexander Street have this problem. We recommend installing flashing lights like the ones at the crosswalk connecting Carl Icahn Laboratory and Jadwin Hall.

We understand that it may be difficult to visualize these problem areas based solely on our descriptions. Karin Sigloch, our Health and Life Committee Chair, would therefore be more than willing to accompany you on an evening walk so that you can experience these problems first hand.

The second issue we would like to discuss is the scarcity of outdoor activity resources available to students throughout the year.

There is a lack of opportunity to indulge in water sports during summer:

- Lake Carnegie is an example of a location that is underutilized by students in the summer. We propose purchasing 3 canoes and 4 kayaks for the Princeton University community for free use on Lake Carnegie and the canal during the summer. The one-time budget for this PUID-based program would be minimal, as the canoes and kayaks (and associated paddles and life vests) could be purchased for under \$3,500.

Field space for playing outdoor games is not easily available:

- Many graduate students, undergraduates, and post-docs enjoy playing team sports, both informally and as part of an intramural sports program. However, all such groups have problems finding a space to play on campus. Due to poor maintenance and occupation by summer camps, many of the existing fields are not in good condition. Examples would be the small field next to the Graduate College and the Poe field.

As the time approaches for your office to make Priorities Committee requests, we ask that you consider including the above concerns in your list of requests. We thank you for your consideration and welcome any questions or comments you have regarding these issues.

Sincerely,

Shin-Yi Lin  
Graduate Student Government Chair

Cc: Janet S. Dickerson, Vice President for Campus Life  
F. Joy Montero, Associate Dean of Graduate Student Life  
Steven J. Healy, Director of Public Safety  
Chad L. Klaus, General Manager, Services, Office of the Vice President for Facilities  
Karin Sigloch, Chair of the GSG Health and Life Committee