



**The Graduate Professional Council
University Of Missouri**

OFFICIAL REPORT:
*FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS FROM THE OPEN FORUM ON HOUSING FOR
GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL STUDENTS*

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-BACKGROUND-

On 22 February 2014, a structural failure occurred at the University Village apartment complex causing a concrete walkway to collapse. The collapse killed one person, a firefighter responding to the structural failure, Lieutenant Bruce Britt of Columbia Fire Station No. 1. Shortly thereafter, the students living in that building were evacuated and the entire complex was inspected for structural safety.

The University Village apartment complex houses many graduate and professional students including many international students.

On 12 March 2014, Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin announced that the University Village apartment complex will be shut down and demolished shortly after 30 June 2014.

The Graduate Professional Council (GPC), hearing concern from many students about where they can get safe and affordable housing, hosted an open forum on 3 April 2014 to take graduate-professional student feedback on the issue.

This report outlines the findings and conclusions gained from the forum.

-FINDINGS-

This section will be devoted to summarizing the comments made by students in attendance at the forum. The forum later turned to a discussion and some comments are recognized as being more general points of that discussion.

Tina: Resident at 707 University Village

Tina feels that the University does not consider graduate students as being a part of the University. She notes that graduate students have a great impact but feels that graduate student housing is not a priority. She wants to have a voice and she wants GPC to advocate for graduate students.

Mitchell: Economics

Mitchell notes that the University has previously bought housing for undergraduate students and wants to know if they have done this for graduate students. He also wanted to know if university housing was subsidized by the University.

Frankie Minor, Director of Residential Life

Residential Life has recently toured some properties to purchase or Master Lease for graduate students. He is also talking with private landlords to see if they could make an arrangement. He feels there is currently too much housing for undergraduates because of the cost difference between the units.

Jordan Hoyt: Off-Campus Housing

- There is a strong need for single unit housing (2x1 units and 1x1 units).
- International students are disproportionately affected. They often do not have a car and there are significant safety concerns.

Jake Wright: Question posed – Why are you living where you live?

- Quiet, soundproofing
- No Undergraduates

Deon George: Off-Campus Housing

- There are only about 30 properties suitable for graduate students in Columbia
- Average cost is \$600 per month (2 x1 within 3-5 miles of campus)

Eric A. Hucker: Question posed – What should GPC do in the short term?

- Start a budget for signing a new property
- New buildings are a necessity

- Money for new housing would likely come from Revenue Bonds making the cost economically infeasible unless a donor was found.

Kristofferson Culmer: PhD, Computer Science

Kristofferson notes that this issue has been raised before and that students are demanding action. He asks what kind of University does Mizzou want to be? He suggests that the Chancellor convene a task force to explore graduate housing options.

General comments from discussion:

- The University should explore other AAU institutions and see what their graduate housing is like.
- Graduate students should not be charged for the demolition of University Village.
- There is a strong need for a close location with a dedicated shuttle (including summer shuttles) for those students without cars. The Columbia bus system does not operate on the same schedule as students.
- Adding new fees to build housing would be burdensome to graduate and professional students.
- Suggestion to start a Capital Campaign to seek funding through appropriations.
- Suggestion to connect with Alumni Association Development Office to seek potential donors.

-CONCLUSIONS-

The following conclusions have been derived based on the findings from the forum:

Conclusion: If the University is to continue support for graduate and professional student housing, significant action will need to be taken by University Administration to ensure that new facilities are built to a high standard.

Conclusion: Graduate and Professional students, especially student parents, strongly feel that they are not valued and their needs are being willfully ignored by University Administration.

Conclusion: Securing housing in the Columbia community can be problematic due to:

- Cost – too expensive, not single units
- Noise – too loud, too many undergraduates

Conclusion: In the short term, securing a Master Lease or other arrangement with a housing complex in Columbia community would be helpful.

Conclusion: Adding new fees would be burdensome for graduate and professional students, including fees for the demolition of University Village.

Conclusion: The University could explore options for building new graduate student housing and seeking funding to do so. Ideas include:

- Convening a Chancellor's Task Force to explore the topic
- Forming a plan to budget funds for construction
- Assisting in the seeking of donors

This report is designed to serve as a guide for understanding the needs of Graduate and Professional students, as directly reported by those students. The conclusions herein are not necessarily reflective of the views of the Graduate Professional Council. However, GPC is committed to ensuring that Graduate and Professional students have safe, affordable, and convenient housing to suit their needs. GPC will continue to advocate for Graduate and Professional student needs in regard to housing.

This report was prepared by Eric A. Hucker, Vice-President of GPC and submitted to the GPC Executive Board for review. Any questions or comments regarding its content may be directed to gpcvicepresident@missouri.edu.

-END REPORT-