

The General Assembly,

Alarmed by the struggle of graduate and professional students to find safe and affordable housing near Duke's campus,

Taking into consideration that a valuable full-time position dedicated to graduate student housing issues was eliminated during the financial crisis,

Recognizing that the University's endowment has since recovered and Duke's financial position is once again stable,

Recognizing that Duke's peer institutions have resources available for this issue and that Duke should have them too,

1. URGES the administration of Duke University to create once again a full-time, exempt position of "Program Coordinator" that will be responsible for managing Duke Community Housing;
2. CALLS UPON the GPSC Community Housing subcommittee to work with this position to update the Housing Website and conduct the Apartment/Neighborhood reports, which have not been updated since 2009, in a more timely fashion; and
3. ENCOURAGES the GPSC Community Housing subcommittee and Program Coordinator to build relationships with local landlords and the City of Durham to advocate for safe, affordable housing that is suitable to graduate students.

*Background Information Pertaining to Resolution I-2013*

GPSC PACSA: Community Housing Subcommittee

Topic: "Duke HDRL Community Housing Program Coordinator Position"

**Background**

The past few decades have seen a shift at Duke in the use of Central Campus from graduate to undergraduate student housing, where now very few graduate students are able to get on-campus housing. While there are benefits to living off-campus, many graduate students struggle to find safe and affordable off-campus housing.

In 2000, the graduate student government passed a proposal recommending that the university create a full-time employee position dedicated to helping graduate students navigate the housing situation in Durham. The graduate students took their proposal to the administration, arguing that peer institutions had resources available and that Duke should demonstrate its commitment to its graduate students and create a similar resource. As a result of this proposal, a full-time position to maintain student housing was created and Linda Moiseenko was hired to fill the position.

Linda has now been at Duke for 13 years, and for the first 10 years she was fully dedicated to Duke Community Housing, an initiative dedicated to helping Duke graduate students find housing that was both safe and affordable. During those first 10 years, Linda had regular contact with GPSC. Upon the request of GPSC, Duke Community Housing developed a housing survey, which produced the [Apartment Complex Reports](#) and the Durham Neighborhood Reports. These reports have become an invaluable resource for graduate students. Linda also worked with the city of Durham to obtain the crime statistics that were also included in the Housing Reports.

However, following the 2008 financial crisis, economic constraints forced Duke to reduce its workforce. Thus, several positions and departments were combined to form the current Housing, Dining, and Residence Life (HDRL) organization at Duke. In this process, the resources for Duke Community Housing were compromised. Linda's responsibilities expanded to include on-campus housing, and she now spends the vast majority of her time with on-campus housing issues. As such, Linda has very little time, resources, or staff that she can devote to Duke Community Housing. As a result, the Apartment Complex Reports have not been updated since 2009 and the housing website is essentially unusable as it was last updated by Student Affairs IT several years ago.

**Our Proposal**

The GPSC Community Housing subcommittee was created in Summer 2013 as part of GPSC Presidential Advisory Committee on Student Affairs to address the housing issues that graduate students face. It is clear that the current resources are insufficient to meet the needs of graduate students, and graduate students would

benefit from a return to 2008 levels. We do not believe that Duke intends to send the message to graduate students that they are valued less than undergraduate students. Thus, we propose to work with the Duke University administration to create a full-time, exempt position of “Program Coordinator” that will be responsible for managing Duke Community Housing.

The GPSC Community Housing subcommittee would work closely with the Duke Community Housing Program Coordinator to:

- (1) Update the website – the [current website](#) offers very little for students. The website as currently managed by the Student Affairs IT department is not functional and must be revamped. If for some reason this cannot be accomplished by Duke employees, this might require an outside developer.
- (2) Design and analyze the Duke Community Housing survey and disseminate the results in a timely fashion through the Apartment Complex and Neighborhood reports.
- (3) Publicize the results to both current and incoming graduate students so they are aware of the resource.
- (4) Build relationships with local landlords and the City of Durham to advocate for safe, affordable housing that is suitable for graduate students.