

Dear UF Community,

February 6th, 2023

I have been following the conversations and concerns of the residents at UVS and Maguire Village for several years. I was saddened to learn that those villages were planning to be demolished and replaced with recreational fields and parking. Removing graduate housing communities that have functioned to serve as homes away from home, in an environmentally inviting space, and convenient to campus, for over 50+ years and largely consisting of 70% international graduate students, which served as a reprieve and interactive space for students/families, seems short-sighted, at the least.

It appears, from the conversations in which I have been involved, the lack of communication and transparency on the part of the university/housing is a major contributor to the frustration of the residents. I understand that recreational facilities are important and the loss of some of those facilities due to the building of a new undergraduate residential dorm may impact students' recreational options. However, has the university provided the numbers that show the use of the previous courts and pool to justify removing graduate residences for replacement recreational facilities? I believe there is data available that indicates the high demand for on-campus graduate housing— 800 students on the waiting list as of fall 2022. What concrete plans are in place to relocate graduate students, especially those with families, with reasonable accommodations that can be afforded on a graduate student stipend? I don't doubt that these are concerns that housing has considered, but have they sat down with students, especially in the beginning of the process to discuss the needs of both sides or simply show the cost analysis of refurbishing those units? Were any surveys provided to the residents of those facilities to see how these changes may impact the people being displaced or no longer accommodated? Does the university "have" to provide this service— no, but from the academic learning and humanitarian perspective, what are the costs of communication and transparency, or the lack of it? Isn't the university an educational institution as well as a business entity? The university seems the perfect playing field to promote the best practices of both. Will the students always get what they want— no, but will they be heard and treated as important entities of the university they serve and receive services from? Will they learn about best practices of operations through these exchanges and gain a better understanding of what happens from the other perspective? I believe all would learn through public exchange and communication. I hope you will revisit the decision to demolish Maguire and UVS and consider saving them for current and future graduate students.

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