



Graduate Assistants United
YOUR UNION, YOUR VOICE

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Wednesday, May 22, 2023

ATTN:

UF Senior Housing Director Tina Horvath
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UF Graduate School Dean Dr. Stedman
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UF Chief Financial Officer Chris Cowen
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UF President Ben Sasse
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UF Board of Trustees
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Dear Dean Stedman, UF Housing Senior Director, Tina Horvath, UF Chief Financial Officer, Chris Cowen, President Sasse, and UF Board of Trustees:

We are aware the university intends to close Maguire Village and University Village South on June 25, 2023. We are writing to request the university stop this closure, and allow graduate assistants to continue residing in these viable, affordable housing options during academic year Fall 2023 - Spring 2024.

Affordable housing continues to be in short supply for graduate assistants and their families. The wait list for graduate family housing has reached over 900 graduate students. The planned "replacement" for this loss of affordable housing stock, Varsity House, is not going to be open by Fall 2023, as originally promised by the university. Rent prices continue to increase despite a recent surge in the housing supply of luxury apartments near campus. For example, the estimated monthly rent cost of housing options at Varsity House is, on average, \$513.50 more expensive than similar housing options at Maguire Village. That is an anticipated increase of \$6,162 in rent burden every year. The minimum stipend for graduate

assistants has not increased proportionally since the closing announcement for Maguire Village and UVS in 2019, forcing graduate assistants into financial precarity. Graduate family housing is a resource on which graduate assistants depend and the only way many of us can afford to live in Gainesville.

We, as graduate assistants, must focus on our main charge of researching and teaching. These housing-related matters are a non-stop, personal strain on our ability to focus on the main reason we are here. It is in the best interest of graduate assistants and the University of Florida to invest in these well-loved, highly-appreciated communities instead of pursuing expensive off-campus ventures. Therefore, we are requesting UF Housing to adopt the following four policies:

1. Keep Maguire Village and University Village South open for the Fall 2023 and Spring 2024 academic semesters. Allow new residents to move into the viable units to offset the rapidly-growing list of graduate students in need of affordable housing.
2. If UF Housing deems none of the units in Maguire Village or UVS to be viable, we request a written explanation of the rationale, as well as evidence of how this determination was reached (e.g. health inspector reports, building code violations, etc.).
3. If UF Housing deems none of the units in Maguire Village or UVS to be viable, we request an estimate of the cost to return these buildings to livable conditions.
4. Written confirmation Diamond and Corry Village are accepting new applications for residency.

Warm Regards,

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