

December 11, 2024

Dear University Board of Trustees,

In 1999 I graduated from the UF College of Agriculture with a degree in Food and Resource Economics. If not for the sense of community within Dean Cheek's office and the greater Gator Nation, I would likely not have graduated. The sense of community was fostered vertically and horizontally around my secondary education.

The vertical relationships were with upper classmen, professors, and my work leadership at Gator Dining, where I worked throughout my schooling. Horizontally it was friends, Gator games, my fraternity, and peers within my classes.

I stayed in Alachua County after graduation. I have a family, and give back as a sitting City Commissioner in Newberry and current Chair of the Alachua County Republican party. These experiences and desire to give back were all seeds sown on campus.

I do not want our university to become a pseudo commuter school without on-campus housing for ALL students. Particularly graduate housing. UF's Graduate housing was a melting pot of various backgrounds and situations. Families all working together and learning. Undergrads do not have children seeing their parents striving for doctoral degrees. Graduate housing does. This also builds the bench and sets the pace for future Gator greats.

Should the housing be demolished in pursuit of more research labs etc, the rounded nature of that community will be lost forever. A lost sense of attachment to community means less connection. Less connection means less Alumni dollars long term. Less longevity. Do not tear down the graduate housing without a wholistic replacement option in place. We need graduate housing at our university.

With the multiple leadership changes at UF, a pause on demolition is warranted. There is little to lose by waiting six months or a year. Costs are escalating too. What was \$10,000,000 two years ago is doubled. I have a front row seat to these rising prices from my City of Newberry Commission dias as we try to move projects forward. Our advance wastewater treatment plant rose from \$40,000,000 to \$88,000,000 in two years! We are scrambling for resolution.

Please do not mistake this letter's brevity for lack of concern. I am trying to be respectful of your time.

Best Regards,

Timothy R. Marden

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Gator Grad '99
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