

STUDENT SENATE BILL 2024-1065

TITLE: Resolution Addressing the Financial Burden Stemming from a Lack of On-Campus Graduate Housing Options

AUTHOR(S): Senator Hunter Monson

SPONSOR(S): Deputy Minority Party Leader Anamika Naidu, Minority Party Leader Nathaniel Pelton, Senator Raj Mia, Senator Vivian Phung

WHEREAS, graduate students at the University of Florida experience significant difficulty finding on-campus housing options, and with the closure of both Maguire Village & University Village South, their options have been even further limited to only Corry Village, Diamond Village, Tanglewood Village, & The Continuum [1]; and,

WHEREAS, the demolition of Maguire Village & University Village South has consequently increased the graduate student housing waitlist exponentially, forcing students to find more expensive housing options with the eventual hope that they will be moved up on the waitlist; and,

WHEREAS, excluding the Continuum, the other three on-campus family graduate housing options (Tanglewood Village, Diamond Village, & Corry Village) come unfurnished, which would contribute to even more additional costs [2]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2020, the average rent in Gainesville was \$721 for a studio apartment, \$795 for a 1-bedroom apartment, \$971 for a 2-bedroom apartment, \$1,267 for a 3-bedroom, \$1,315 for a 4-bedroom apartment [3]; and,

WHEREAS, since January 2021, the year-by-year increase for rent in Gainesville has increased 2.8% annually with the starting average rent being \$1317 in January of 2021 & \$1671 in November of 2023 [4]; and,

WHEREAS, in 2023, the University of Florida Student Senate passed “*Resolution Calling for the Immediate Reversal of the Plans to Close and Demolish Maguire Village and University Village South (UVS) Graduate and Family Housing Facilities,*” advocating for the reversal of

the decision to stop the planned demolition of both University Village South & Maguire Village [5]; and,

WHEREAS, graduate students use the stipends, salaries, & tuition waivers earned from their assistantships as a primary source of income while pursuing their graduate degree, which majorly contribute to both their family's and their own living expenses; and,

WHEREAS, a 2021 Graduate Assistants United poll recorded responses from about one-quarter of graduate students, including residents from both University Village South & Maguire Village, found that 72% of respondents couldn't afford general living conditions [6]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida Master Plan (2020-2030) has recognized that "the Gainesville & Alachua County student housing market is very aggressive with many new high-density complexes recently constructed... many of these new complexes are luxury style living" [7]; and,

WHEREAS, the Master Plan also recognizes how on-campus housing options are lacking as stated that "compared to older private-market student housing, these new facilities are being constructed much closer to campus, often within walking distance" and also with modern amenities & living styles [7]; and,

WHEREAS, 25% of the on-campus headcount enrollment are expected to be housed at full capacity in 2029-2030 [7]; and,

WHEREAS, the University of Florida recognizes how it has fallen behind regarding student housing, which suggests that these inadequacies should be corrected; and,

WHEREAS, the Master Plan's "need to demolish the University Village South and Maguire Village Graduate/Family housing complexes due to building conditions" with suggested "options to accommodate demand as needed" insinuates that there would be a plan to accommodate the graduate students and their families who have been displaced [7]; and,

WHEREAS, despite that insinuation, it is recorded on page 7 that the 2004-2005 graduate-housing maximum occupancy of 1,811 students will be nearly halved by 2029-2030 [7]; and,

WHEREAS, with no tentative plan to "accommodate demand as needed" for the sudden decrease of on-campus graduate family housing, it can be inferred that the University of Florida Master Plan has no intention to heed the need for affordable graduate housing options [7]; and,

WHEREAS, graduate student and writer, Alexandria Drake, details her own personal struggles of affordable housing whilst pursuing her graduate degree, stating "there are many joys and

privileges that come from being a graduate student: pursuing my passions, developing expertise, and working with specialists in my field... , yet, these positive experiences are often a tradeoff for an adequate and affordable home,” a common sentiment for graduate students nationwide and especially at the University of Florida [8]; and,

WHEREAS, with the annual increase in rent for off-campus housing options, housing insecurity becomes an even worse issue, prompting graduate students who already suffer from food insecurity to potential health risks [8]; and,

WHEREAS, a 2006 study researching 16,651 low-income adults produced results stating that 23.6% of subjects had housing instability and 42.7% had food insecurity [9]; and,

WHEREAS, housing instability and food insecurity have been linked to predetermined measures of poor access to health care [8]; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that the growing costs of rent in Gainesville as well as the lack of On-Campus Graduate Housing provides significant monetary distress for graduate students at the University of Florida; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes an inherent need for supplemental housing plans to be made with the utmost efficiency; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FURTHER BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate recognizes that the present conditions regarding housing have fostered unease and worry within the graduate community, especially in regards to affordable housing options, which make it challenging for these students to choose housing options; and,

THEREFORE, LET IT FINALLY BE RESOLVED that the University of Florida Student Senate calls for the formulation of a timely plan to increase affordable, on-campus housing options for graduate students (& their families) who have been displaced due to the University of Florida’s Master Plan’s projection to gradually decrease graduate family housing occupancy [7].

Proviso: A copy of this resolution shall be sent to University of Florida President Ben Sasse, Senior Director of Housing and Residence Education Tina Horvath, IRHA President Kara Sammetinger, Associate Provost, Graduate Council Chair, and Dean of the University of Florida Graduate School Dr. Nicole Stedman, UF Graduate Student Council Representative Kevin Senior, Dean of UF International Center & Associate Provost Marta L. Wayne, Graduate

