

GSGA29-R4

A Resolution Calling for a Halt to the University's Plans to Develop the Wooded Hillock

Summary: A resolution calling on the University to halt development of the Wooded Hillock and increase student and faculty involvement in the decision-making process of campus development projects.

WHEREAS, the Wooded Hillock is a heavily forested area of 22.4 acres that the University owns and now plans to partially develop (9 of the 22.4 acres) into the relocation site for East Campus facilities and paved parking lots; and

WHEREAS, the Wooded Hillock is one of a decreasing number of “terrace gravel forests”, whose development, according to the University Office of Sustainability, will impact the “the connectivity to other forested areas in and around campus” and “result in additional storm water runoff”; and

WHEREAS, the University Strategic Plan (approved in 2008), clearly states that the University strives to be “widely recognized as a national model for a Green University”; and

WHEREAS, the development of the Wooded Hillock potentially conflicts with key goals of the University's Facilities Master Plan (released in 2001) to “preserve the beauty of the campus while protecting and restoring its natural resources” and to “protect and preserve designated natural features, special open spaces, views and vistas”; and

WHEREAS, the University is legally obligated to meet conservation requirements specified by the state of Maryland's Department of Natural Resources (DNR), which “may or may not involve a [costly] 1:1 replacement of removed forest” as well as other unforeseeable restrictions; and

WHEREAS, the city of College Park, the Office of Prince George's County Councilman Tom Dernoga, the Maryland Native Plant Society, and the Anacostia Watershed Society have formally voiced concerns about the development; and

WHEREAS, no faculty, no graduate student, and only one undergraduate student were members of the East Campus District Subcommittee (ECDS), the decision-making body that designated the Wooded Hillock as relocation site; and

WHEREAS, the Facilities Council approved an updated development plan that included substantive changes to the initial plan, such as changes from underground and structured parking to paved parking lots, without ECDS, faculty, or student input; and

WHEREAS, more than fifteen courses and 2000 students annually use the Wooded Hillock as a site for hands-on learning;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the GSG calls on the University to halt the development of the Wooded Hillock; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the GSG requests that relocation sites be reconsidered by a committee comprised of an equal number of administrators, students, and faculty; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the GSG requests that student and faculty representatives will be included as voting members in future development decisions.

Author(s): Henrike Lehnguth, AMST

Sponsor(s): Anna Bedford, CMLT

Date and Time of Submission: 04/10/2009

Date of Presentation: 16/10/2009

Action(s) Taken:

Signature of GSG President

Date