

The Graduate Student Life Initiative

Written by Members of the Graduate
Student Government Assembly and the
Graduate U-Council

Presented to the CPUC
March 12, 2001

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Centennial of the Graduate School has been an active one. It has been an opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge all that the Graduate School has contributed to the University. The Centennial is also an opportunity for us to re-dedicate ourselves to excellence. The following seven-part report highlights primary issues of graduate student life and proposes a number of suggestions.

- Of greatest concern, we assess the complex situation of students who have not finished their degree by the allotted time, informally termed “post-enrolled.” Post-enrolled students experience great difficulties finding housing and healthcare. Further, they are often overwhelmed with additional burdens such as teaching requirements, student loans coming due, ineligibility for fellowships, visa difficulties, lack of official University ID, and depression at a time when they should be finishing their dissertations and searching for a job.
 - We propose that the University commit to openness and freedom of information regarding the size and scope of this population.
 - The University should include post-enrolled students in its plans for student housing and end the practice of charging those able to get housing a 19% surcharge.
 - The University should grant all post-enrolled students the right to purchase the Student Health Plan or similar health care coverage.
 - The University should issue IDs to all students actively pursuing their degrees. In addition, the University should include post-enrolled students in the University community by maintaining mailing lists for them and allowing them to participate in University events.
 - The University should grant access to library, computer, and other basic facilities to all students working on their degrees.
 - In sum, we recommend that the category of post-enrolled student be eliminated. This would have far-reaching, beneficial effects on the vast majority of graduate students at Princeton.
- In light of the current housing shortage, we highlight many of the needs for adequate graduate housing.
 - We recommend that graduate students be actively included in the decision-making process and informed regularly.
 - We recommend a diversity of affordable and well-maintained housing units that are near campus.
 - In addition, the housing office should be more customer-oriented.
- Parking is simply insufficient, forcing graduate students to park in illegal dangerous locations and receive tickets.
 - We suggest that parking can be enhanced on Western Way and on FitzRandolph Road.
 - We propose that better shuttle service to residential units would enable efficient, safe, and parking-free transport.
 - In addition, the University should eliminate the Graduate College parking fee.
- Computing accessibility is limited for most graduate students.
 - We propose multiple short-term goals: the room wiring of Hibben-Magie, Butler, Lawrence, Annex apartments and 529 Alexander Road.
 - Proximity-card access should be granted to Edwards Hall computing facilities.
- Graduate and undergraduate student interactions are not as frequent and open as desired.

- The interactions can be improved through the co-sponsorship of student events, greater permeability of student organizations, and reduced residential segregation.
- The Health Care Report presents serious concerns about limited hours at McCosh Health Center. In addition, it points to gaps in coverage for dental, prescription drugs, and vision under the Student Health Plan. Some of these concerns were addressed in January.
 - We advise that there be increased staffing and service at the McCosh Health Center during break and summer months.
 - We recommend that the Student Health plan for off-campus care be expanded to include a vision plan, an optional dental plan, and an affordable prescription drug plan.
- The Recent Graduate Alumni Trustee initiative presents the case for the election of two recent graduate alumni to serve on the Princeton University Board of Trustees.

We greatly appreciate this opportunity to share our recommendations with the University Community.

TABLE OF CONTENTS:

INTRODUCTION	1
HOUSING REPORT.....	2
INTRODUCTION	2
GRADUATE HOUSING NEEDS	3
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	4
CONCLUSION	5
PARKING AND TRANSPORTATION REPORT	6
POST ENROLLMENT REPORT	8
SUMMARY.....	8
INTRODUCTION	9
STATISTICS	11
HOUSING.....	13
HEALTH CARE	14
STRESS AND DEPRESSION	15
BUREAUCRATIC ANNOYANCES	16
FINANCIAL WORRIES	17
QUALITY OF RESEARCH	19
PROPOSALS	19
CONCLUSION	21
COMPUTING REPORT	23
GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED BY JANUARY 2002	23
GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED BY JANUARY 2003	23
GOALS TO BE ACHIEVED BY JANUARY 2005	24
ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS	24
GRADUATE-UNDERGRADUATE RELATIONS	25
RECENT GRADUATE ALUMNI TRUSTEE REPORT.....	27
SUMMARY.....	27
BACKGROUND	27
THE GRADUATE SCHOOL.....	27
PROPOSAL.....	28
RATIONALE.....	29
HEALTH CARE REPORT.....	31
SUMMARY.....	31
GRADUATE STUDENT HEALTH CARE AT PRINCETON	32
GRADUATE STUDENT HEALTH CARE SURVEY	32
HEALTH INSURANCE AT PEER INSTITUTIONS	36
RECOMMENDATIONS.....	37
APPENDIX.....	38

INTRODUCTION

In the Centennial year of the Graduate School, the graduate students have been celebratory, reflective, involved, and forward-looking. We have danced and dined at the splendid Centennial Gala. We have honored our fellow scholars and alumni community for contributing to the Frontiers of Knowledge. We have become more involved than ever in campus-wide activities such as the Daily Princetonian, theatrical groups, ethnic associations, and political organizations. The Graduate Student Government (GSG) has adopted a new constitution and moved to direct elections of its officers. In addition, the GSG has compiled the following report, the Graduate Student Life Initiative, to express many of our concerns about life as a graduate student at Princeton. The report includes seven sections: Housing, Parking and Transportation, Post-Enrollment, Computing, Graduate-Undergraduate Relations, the Proposal for Recent Graduate Alumni Trustees and the Health Care Report.

The first three reports were written specifically for this project. Of the three, the report on Post-enrollment is our most distressing area of concern and the one that currently attracts the least attention of the Graduate School. The Computing report was submitted earlier this year to Provost Jeremiah Ostriker, at his request. The report on Graduate-Undergraduate relations was written as part of the Undergraduate Student Government's Student Life Initiative. And lastly, members of the GSG and Graduate U-Council wrote the Health Care report and the Proposal for Recent Graduate Alumni Trustees. These two reports were presented to the Council of the Princeton University Community in November and February, respectively.

We are fortunate to be part of a community that welcomes the input of Graduate Students. We intend that this report will enable further productive dialogue.

HOUSING REPORT

Introduction

Housing is difficult for graduate students everywhere, but especially at Princeton, which experienced a major housing shortage last year. Graduate student housing must address a wide range of customers with a variety of concerns that are much more extensive than those of undergraduates—the group that traditionally receives the focus of the University’s housing office. Whereas undergraduate housing is usually concerned with young adults with homogenous needs, graduate housing must address a diverse customer base. Loosely, the graduate student customers can be divided as follows: single students who have recently graduated from their undergraduate institution; single students who have spent several years in some professional capacity; married or cohabiting couples at least one of whom is a graduate student; and families with children. We will attempt here to identify the housing requirements for these various groups and examine how the existing system serves them, and how the existing system might better serve them.

To begin, we recognize that the housing situation in Princeton is different than many comparable graduate institutions. Princeton University exists in a wealthy suburb, while most comparable institutions are in urban areas. The significance of geographical location should not be under-emphasized. In our conversations with Princeton graduate students about available housing, many have pointed out that universities located in urban areas benefit from low-cost mass transit that allows graduate students to live 20 or 30 minutes from campus, vastly increasing the pool of neighborhoods where affordable housing may be found. (Since graduate student stipends are currently well below salaries paid to people with equivalent undergraduate and work-experience backgrounds, the cost-of-living is of particular importance to graduate students. Therefore, gross cost-of-living, including rent *and* transportation costs must be considered.) Unlike the urban locations of many comparable universities, Princeton’s suburban location necessitates one of three housing choices: 1) nearby University-owned or subsidized housing, 2) nearby open-market housing, or 3) distant less expensive open-market housing.

These facts have been evident since the most senior of us arrived here in 1995. Since then, the growing economy has outpaced the limited cost-of-living adjustments to graduate student stipends. Furthermore, housing demand in the local area has outpaced construction. This has led to two primary consequences and one secondary consequence. The primary consequences are that open-market housing prices have risen both nearby and in more distant neighborhoods, and that open-market housing in general has simply become more scarce—as observed by comparing the number of classified ads for available rooms between 1995 and 2000 in the Princeton Packet. The secondary consequence of these trends is that more graduate students have sought University-owned housing as the only affordable option. The University has responded to this pressure, primarily by transferring a significant fraction of Hibben-Magie units from faculty/staff to graduate student status. Furthermore, graduate housing that was under-subscribed in 1995 (Butler apartments, the Graduate College) can no longer satisfy the existing demand.

Graduate Housing Needs

Graduate students have two primary requirements for their housing. Most important is **affordability**. As stated previously, graduate students live on tight budgets, often depending on savings, loans, or the support of a family member. Unlike professional (medical, law, etc.) schools, graduate students at Princeton do not expect a six-figure salary upon graduation to defray debt incurred during their time as graduate students. In fact, the cost-of-living, balanced against offered stipends, figures greatly in a prospective student's choice of whether or not to matriculate at a particular institution. The second primary requirement for graduate housing is **proximity**. As students, graduate students are expected, and hope, to participate in the "university community," the nebulous entity that includes intellectual/political/artistic discourse that makes participants more able citizens and wise leaders. Princeton University has shown a large commitment to the participation of undergraduates in this "university community," and has recognized that graduate students, as educators/mentors/students, have much to both give and receive from the university community. However, participation in the university community is not a 9-5 prospect. Rather, it demands the residential proximity to participate on weekends, outside of normal working hours, and at a moment's notice. In fact, University policy encourages faculty to live within a short distance of campus; this policy extends to housing aid offered to faculty wishing to live within a certain distance of campus.

Beyond these two universal concerns, graduate student housing needs are quite diverse. Students in their early 20s are often interested in housing options that allow them frequent socialization with their peers. The Graduate College, with its active and well-funded residential committee, centrally located dining hall, and recreational facilities, is a popular housing option for exactly this reason. Similarly, students with families including children desire opportunities to socialize with *their* peers (i.e. other families with children) but the nature of their social interaction is very different. In fact, one unfortunate circumstance observed by this committee is that the social needs and desires of families with children often seem at odds with the social needs and desires of single graduate students and child-free couples. Residential committees of University-owned apartments—where single graduate students and families are equally represented—often address this dichotomy by sponsoring certain events that are more "child-friendly." Depending on the membership of these committees from year to year, the proportion of events may shift largely to one type or the other.

However, it should not be construed from the above that the Graduate College is for single students and the apartments are for students with families. For example, many single graduate students seek a solitary apartment lifestyle. Currently, the only such housing available to graduate students is Millstone apartments, a complex that has been on and off the market for the past six years, if not more. Furthermore, these apartments are not available to incoming single graduate students. Quite simply, there is a major shortage of single-living apartments for graduate students.

The availability of cooking facilities should also not be overlooked. Upon entry to the University, single graduate students are encouraged to live in the GC. One of the requirements of living in the GC is subscription to the meal plan. One of the reasons for this requirement is that kitchen facilities in the GC are not sufficient to support a large number of students preparing meals on a regular basis. While the meal plan certainly has advantages (frequent social interaction with peers, time saved not cooking or grocery shopping, no need for transportation to and from grocery stores) it is not satisfactory for all graduate students, for either dietary or quality reasons. In fact, a frequent reason cited for students who choose to move out of the GC to a University-owned apartment or annex is the desire for private kitchen facilities.

Recommendations

We are pleased that the University has responded to one of our primary recommendations to include graduate students in the planning process. In January, the University formed both a short- and long-term housing committee that includes staff from the housing department and current graduate students. By inviting graduate student input to inform housing policy and planning, the University is wisely reducing the risk of overlooking many of the graduate students needs. We further recommend that, although these committees were formed in response to a housing crisis, they should not be eliminated in perceived absence of this crisis. We expect and hope that ongoing and careful planning will enable the University to ensure affordable housing to all enrolled graduate students, and offer assistance in locating housing to all post-enrolled students.

The current graduate housing crisis points to a second recommendation: the University needs a flexible long-term housing plan. The University *must* develop a plan to address graduate housing on the decade time-scale. Some degree of flexibility has existed in the past (e.g. the shift of Hibben-Magie from mostly faculty/staff to partly graduate housing), however, more flexibility should be built into the University's overall housing system. One perfect opportunity exists in the planning of a new undergraduate residential college. By including, at a cost significantly lower than the construction of separate graduate housing, units that may be desirable for both undergraduate and graduate students, the option exists to shift more graduate or undergraduate students into these units as necessary. Furthermore, as demonstrated with Hibben-Magie, flexibility can be built into the graduate-faculty/staff housing systems as well.

Our third recommendation comes at the request of graduate students who have families and have previously had some professional career. These students are probably making a larger sacrifice than those who move directly from undergraduate education to graduate school. To our surprise, we have found a number of students who have either purchased, or expressed interest in purchasing, a home in the local area. Some are students with families planning to settle in central New Jersey for a significant period of time. Some are older students with the means to purchase a “fixer-upper” as an investment and/or rental property. In all cases, these students have expressed interest in the mortgage assistance and partial ownership arrangements offered to faculty. We therefore recommend that this same assistance be offered to qualifying graduate students. (The financial risk for the University is low—because the University maintains equity in the property in question, and because the local real-estate market will maintain value for the foreseeable future.)

Several more specific, but less sweeping recommendations:

- 1) The University should endeavor to maintain reasonable quality in graduate student housing—as seen in the renovations of the GC in the early ‘90s. On the other hand, substandard Butler units have been renovated on an emergency and piecemeal basis and Lawrence apartments residents have serious concerns about kitchen ventilation and fixtures.
- 2) The University approach to graduate housing must become more customer-oriented. The Housing Office should expand its mandate from simply managing existing graduate housing to *finding* graduate housing. Although the Housing Office recently started a print and online directory of ads for available housing, they could still do more to work with local landlords and real-estate agents. In addition, based on many complaints from students who have tried to get housing with the Housing Office, we believe that the Housing Office can improve its communications with students about the availability of housing.
- 3) Lastly, the University should undertake periodic cost-of-living assessments to determine whether a) University housing costs are reasonable, and b) whether any other reasonably priced housing is available nearby. We reiterate: the affordability and availability of housing is

critical in one's choice of graduate school. A regular audit of housing cost (including transportation) versus available stipends will allow Princeton to remain competitive with comparable institutions.

Conclusion

The University housing system strength offers a variety of housing options at usually affordable prices in a community where housing is otherwise financially out of reach to the typical graduate student. The grad housing system is also particularly strong in promoting social interaction among graduate students in a variety of settings tailored to a variety of lifestyles.

On the other hand, the grad housing system seems crippled by lack of oversight. The current housing crisis is partly a symptom of an apparent lack of long-term planning. This lack has since been in part rectified by the formation of a long-term planning committee. We hope that this committee has the authority to either set or strongly recommend sufficient graduate housing policy on the decade time-scale.

Finally, frequent communication with graduate students can reduce the risk of major oversights in managing housing for a very diversified group of students.

Parking and Transportation Report

As the University has been unable to provide housing within walking distance for its graduate students, many students drive to the main campus. Exacerbating this problem is the lack of a daytime shuttle. As students are forced to drive to campus, by 9:45 a.m. often all the spots in the graduate parking lot and along Western Way are filled. This has forced graduate students to park illegally in unmarked spaces, creating a safety hazard.

To address these issues, the Parking and Transportation Committee had a meeting with Associate Director of Public Safety, Charles Nouvel. Public Safety recognizes the parking shortage on campus and Officer Nouvel told us how the new staff parking garage near New South would affect parking throughout campus. It was good to see how changing the staff and undergraduate parking would benefit graduate students, but in reality it only makes it more likely that graduate students will be able to find parking in overflow lots. The GSG would like to improve in the current parking situation for graduate students and also increase transportation so that graduate students have another option for getting to campus.

Our short-term suggestions include the following:

1. Improve parking along Western Way.

The current spots along Western Way are larger than necessary for an average sized car to be parallel parked and have been inefficiently utilized. The lines designating spots could be painted closer together or the spots could be redesigned to allow for head-in angled parking, allowing more cars to be parked along already existing parking space.

2. Designate spots along FitzRandolph Road.

We have been told that graduate students can park along Fitz-Randolph Road as overflow when the spots along Western Way are full. We would like to have the spots indicated with signs.

3. Reduce faculty/staff overflow in lot #25.

The graduate student lot off Western Way (#25) should not be an overflow parking lot for staff when their lots are full. Staff should be made aware of their other overflow lots and discouraged from parking in lot 25.

4. Elimination of Graduate College parking fee.

Currently students living in the Graduate College pay to have parking stickers to park overnight in lot 19, while graduate students living in other University housing do not need to pay to park at their place of residence nor for parking on campus. We believe this is unfair and would want the University to remove this fee.

5. Extend shuttle service hours.

One way to help alleviate the parking problem is to provide alternative ways to get to campus, such as a shuttle. The current shuttle runs in the late afternoons and at nights. We propose a morning shuttle that will stop at the graduate student housing complexes to take people to main campus. This is important for students' safety, especially in bad weather, as well as a way to decrease parking demand.

We would also like to see a shuttle that included Forrestal Campus and Millstone Apartments, making these University-related locations more accessible to the graduate students without cars. Currently a graduate student has driven a van to take students to Forrestal Campus, but upon her graduation, there is no plan by the University or the Academic Departments housed at Forrestal to continue this to provide this transportation service. As a short-term goal, we recommend finding out exactly what would be necessary to make this extended shuttle service a reality. We need to figure out the costs for a shuttle, the insurance/maintenance, and a driver, as well as plan routes and stops. This data will help determine what kind of shuttle service is feasible. With a survey, it is possible to determine graduate students' preferences and their willingness to pay for parking and extended shuttle service.

Our long-term suggestions include the following:

1. Provide all day shuttle service from graduate housing complexes to campus and from main campus to Forrestal Campus and Millstone Apartments.
2. Build a parking garage where lot #25 is to provide parking both for graduate students during the week and for football fans on Saturday.
3. Consider the parking needs of the students, faculty and staff for every new building that is constructed.

POST ENROLLMENT REPORT

Summary

Across Princeton University, each department establishes an official period of enrollment, in years, for a PhD program, beyond which graduate students become “post-enrolled.” Post-enrolled graduate students have great difficulties finding housing and health care. They are overwhelmed with major problems and small annoyances. These include:

- burdensome teaching requirements
- student loans coming due
- ineligibility for fellowships or further student loans
- visa difficulties and the threat of deportation
- loss of health care
- loss of University housing, or surcharges when housing is available
- lack of official University ID or recognition as members of the University community
- stress and depression
- loss of access to basic facilities necessary for prompt degree completion.

In this report, we present narrative and quantitative data demonstrating the surprising extent of the problem, namely that it affects the majority of graduate students at Princeton and has done so for many years. We first propose piecemeal solutions to everyday difficulties:

- The University must commit to openness and freedom of information, regarding the number of post-enrolled students and the harsh realities of the post-enrolled status.
- The University should include post-enrolled students in its plans for student housing and should end the practice of charging those fortunate enough to get housing a special surcharge.
- The University should grant all post-enrolled students the right to purchase the Student Health Plan or similar health care coverage.
- The University should issue University IDs to all students still actively pursuing their degrees. The University must make an effort to include post-enrolled students in the University community, by maintaining mailing lists for them and allowing them to participate in University events, for instance, purchasing season tickets for sporting events.
- The University must grant access to library, computer, and other basic facilities to students still working on their degrees.
- The University should commit to lessening burdensome teaching requirements on some students, especially in the humanities. The University should also make the financial commitment necessary to support all graduate students who are actively pursuing their degrees, through teaching or research positions, or, if the University cannot provide enough teaching or research positions, through grants.

We also propose the complete elimination of the category of post-enrolled student. We demonstrate that this change in nomenclature can be done without significant financial cost to the University. Nevertheless, such a change would have far-reaching, beneficial effects on the vast majority of graduate students at Princeton.

Introduction

Perhaps the most vexing problem confronting the Graduate Student Government is the issue of post-enrollment. While the University is making great strides in information technology, the cost of living, and health care, and while the University has made commitments to improve graduate student housing and parking, virtually no progress has been made on the issue of post-enrollment.

In this report, we intend to convince you, the reader, of four things: (1) that a problem exists, (2) that the scope of the problem is very large, (3) that the University has a responsibility to solve the problem, and (4) that a solution is simple, inexpensive, and within reach.

Through conversations of various GSG members with members of the administration, it is clear that the severity and scope of the problem is unrecognized. To those unaware of the issues confronting post-enrolled graduate students, we present the following scenario:

Imagine that you are a graduate student completing your fifth year of enrollment in a PhD program in one of the engineering departments. Your advisor has informed you that you have at least another year until you earn your degree, possibly more. You will no longer be an enrolled student; instead you may be reclassified as staff.

You immediately lose your University housing. If you're lucky enough to find University housing that is not wanted by faculty, enrolled students, or staff (since post-enrolled students have the lowest priority), you may rent it for 19% more than you were able to while you were enrolled, but the University reserves the right to evict you with thirty days' notice. With the present housing crisis, you don't have any hope of getting University housing, so you search for housing off-campus, perhaps as far away as Pennsylvania or New York.

You lose your health care, but you can buy health care back for the first year of post-enrollment for a couple thousand dollars. You can no longer continue to defer your existing student loans, and payments are now due. The Graduate School may call your loan agency and try to convince them you are still a student, and this just might work, if you're lucky.

Horrible? The situation is considerably worse for humanities students. Instead of being simply classified as staff, you'll have to teach five classes a semester simply in order to qualify for health benefits. Up to this point, you have been eligible to take out student loans to help you through graduate school, but you have now become ineligible to take out any further loans, and all the while the loans you have already taken out are now coming due.

In your seventh year, you'll lose your health care unless you find a private provider or unless you're lucky enough to receive a teaching assignment that includes health benefits. You'll lose your access to e-mail and library privileges, depending on when you passed generals. If you are an international student, the loss of your student status for your sixth year means you have one year of "practical training" in which to get your degree and find a job, after which there exists a real possibility of deportation.¹

Don't even bother to apply for a fellowship, because you are no longer an enrolled student, and thus you won't qualify.

There are a host of small bureaucratic nuisances, like the lack of a valid University ID, loss of your library carrel, inability to purchase season tickets for athletics events or get student tickets at McCarter Theater, ineligibility for commercial airfare student discounts, and any continued use of Dillon Gymnasium being predicated upon payment of new fees. These hardly matter, but the loss of the right to purchase season tickets, for example, seems so petty and gratuitous as to be mean-spirited.

¹ In some cases, student visa status may apparently be extended for one additional year.

You are not alone. Post-enrollment at Princeton is not a small problem that affects just a few students. It affects the majority of PhD students at Princeton. If you are currently enrolled in a PhD program, chances are you will be post-enrolled in a PhD program.

This is a bold claim, and we anticipate that the administration will deny the scope of this problem. The Graduate School has been unhelpful in the compilation of statistics. When asked about the relevant numbers of post-enrolled students, Associate Dean David Redman claimed that the Graduate School did not possess at present comprehensive statistics regarding post-enrolled students, as such. Surprisingly, he felt confident enough to indicate at the same time to committee members that, in his perception, post-enrollment does not pose a realistic challenge to the completion of one's doctorate [Dean David Redman, interview with Kevin Osterloh, 7 February 2001]. Graduate School Dean John F. Wilson has been found to frequently question the identity of the post-enrolled student body. Dean Wilson wrote to GSG Chair Lauren Hale, in response to a request for statistics:

Your question premises that the GS knows about all persons who fall into a neat category "post-enrolled students." The closest to this is a more comprehensive status, "Enrollment terminated, degree candidacy continues." But this is a messy category incorporating a range of individuals extending from those who finished enrollment last summer who are now actively completing dissertations to some who may have effectively given up on ever receiving the degree. [Dean John F. Wilson, letter to Lauren Hale, 22 January 2001.]

Despite denying that "post-enrolled" students exist as a category, Dean Wilson and others from time to time refer to them by this name in official memoranda, such as this one, soliciting students to teach in new writing programs:

Post-enrolled graduate students may be appointed to teach one writing seminar per term. They are routinely limited, however, to a total of one year of participation in the program. Post-enrolled graduate students will be paid at the current salary for lecturers without the Ph.D. [Dean Nancy Weiss Malkiel, Dean Joseph H. Taylor, and Dean John F. Wilson. "Opportunity to Teach in the New Writing Program", 15 February 2001.]

Dean Wilson has also stated that he believes that a good job market will ameliorate the problem of post-enrollment, because graduate students will work harder and finish earlier [Minutes of the Graduate College House Committee, 2 October 2000]. This response indicates a failure to appreciate the scope of the problem. It is almost ubiquitous across the Graduate School as a whole. Post-enrollment does not simply go away in good economic times and return in worse, nor does the problem affect only a small group of graduate students who might hypothetically seek to delay their entrance into the job market by extending their student careers.

Handicapped by lack of cooperation with the Graduate School, the GSG has done its best to collect its own data. Unfortunately, there have been great difficulties with respect to collecting the information on a first-person basis from individual departments. Some departments are unwilling to part with statistics about how long their students take to complete PhDs. In one case, a department refused to answer the GSG's request for information, claiming that such information is confidential and secret. In the course of surveying the departments, it has become clear that many departments mislead prospective students by telling deceptive half-truths about the actual length of the average PhD student's research.

Our first recommendation is that the Graduate School acknowledge that there is a serious problem and agree to release all data already acquired dealing with the issue (in a format that does not compromise student privacy). Since the Graduate School keeps comprehensive statistics regarding all PhD graduations, one can assume that other tabulated data on post-enrolled students can be easily assembled. What is more, the data released by the Graduate School, namely the median years to degree of 5.5 years and the mean years to degree of 5.6 years, logically imply that a serious post-

enrollment problem exists, since the majority of the PhD programs have at most a stated length of five years. According to Dean Redman, these releasable data exclude those few individuals who complete their PhD in less than one year and those many others who take longer than twelve, thus explicitly demonstrating that the Graduate School has already identified the post-enrolled student body despite many claims to the contrary [Dean David Redman, interview with Kevin Osterloh, 7 February 2001].

The most recent comprehensive set of available Princeton data was published in 1995 by the National Research Council (see data below) [Marvin L. Goldberger, Brendan A. Maher, and Pamela Ebert Flattau, Editors, "Research-Doctorate Programs in the United States: Continuity and Change" (Washington, DC: National Academy Press, 1995), Appendices J-N]. They compiled data from 1986-1992, and the median number of years to a PhD in every department surveyed exceeded the maximum enrollment time of the department. This means that the majority of students in every PhD program became post-enrolled. In some departments, the median student was post-enrolled for over seven years beyond the five years of enrollment. Note that the situation is even worse than these figures imply because some advisors, lacking funding, choose not to enroll their students for the entire length of the program, a common practice in some of the Engineering departments at Princeton. In many departments, post-enrollment starts after the fourth year.

The GSG conducted a confidential narrative survey of post-enrolled students in 1999. We found that post-enrolled students had trouble getting proper medical care. They feel excluded from the Princeton community because they feel themselves to be treated like outcasts. They were, in various cases, clinically depressed, ridden with debt, and even worried about whether they could find enough money to feed themselves. Throughout this report, as we address the various serious problems associated with the end of enrollment, we present quotes taken verbatim from the 1999 survey and personal testimonials received from post-enrolled graduate students, inclusive to the present date.

Members of the administration frequently ask us questions along the lines of, "Who exactly are these post-enrolled students?" We hope that these narratives go a distance toward answering this question. These students are the majority of graduate students at Princeton University at one time or another, students who deeply resent being misled about the length of their programs and the real time required for completion, evicted from student housing, and forced to complete their dissertations while coping with the loss of their homes, their medical insurance, their access to basic facilities, and any recognition by the University that they are still students.

In a way, Deans Wilson and Redman are correct: post-enrolled students do not fall into any neat categories. Nevertheless, there are many problems that unite them. By and large, these are problems that can be solved with a minimum financial commitment on the part of the University. We ask for a commitment to honesty, openness, and a refusal to allow small bureaucratic problems to interfere with the University's great goal of education and academic freedom. We hope that Princeton can commit to better serving those graduate students who have served Princeton as Assistants in Instruction, Assistants in Research, and many other capacities, for several years.

This report addresses each of the major problems associated with post-enrollment and then proposes some solutions that we earnestly hope that the administration will take under consideration.

Statistics

Admittedly, the statistics we have compiled are incomplete and inadequate. Nevertheless, they are persuasive. In the table below, for each department, we list its official number of years in the PhD and the current percentage of students in that department who are post-enrolled, i.e. actively pursuing a degree, but no longer enrolled. We then provide an average of the last five years in the next column. The data in the fifth column are taken from the National Research Council study cited above, and they

represent the median year-to-degree for PhD graduates receiving their degrees in the years 1986-1992, inclusive. We have done a similar calculation, based on data collected from the last five years. Finally, we have calculated a mean where data were available. Unless otherwise noted, the data were collected from the departments listed.

DEPARTMENT	YEARS IN PROGRAM ^{2,3}	CURRENT FRACTION POST-ENROLLED	AVG FRACTION, LAST 5 YRS	MEDIAN YTD, 1986-1992	MEDIAN YTD, 1996-2000	#PhD's, 1996-2000	MEAN YTD, 1996-2000	% ON TIME, 1996-2000
Astrophysics	4/5			5.7				
Aerospace Eng	4/5			6.7				
Anthropology	5			10.0				
Art History	5			12.5				
Chemical Eng	4/5	14.3%	19.4%	6.3	6	41	5.8	43.9%
Chemistry	4			6.3				
Civil&Env Eng ⁴	4	18.9%	25.6%		5	6	5	16.7%
Civil Eng	4/5			7.3				
Classics	5			8.8				
Comparative Lit	4/5			8.3				
Computer Sci	4/5			6.0				
Ecology	5			6.8				
Economics	4			6.6				
Electrical Eng	4/5	11.8%		5.8				
English Lit	5			6.8				
French Lit	4			7.8				
Geosciences	4			7.0				
German Lit	5			7.9				
History	5			9.2				
Mathematics	4/5			5.2				
Mechanical Eng	4/5	8%		6.9				
Molecular Bio	6	16.5%	21.8%		6	79	5.7	87.3%
Music	4			10.4				
Near East Stud	4/5	15.8%						
ORFE	4	23%						
Philosophy	5			8.0				
Physics ⁵	4/5			6.1	5.2	34	5.3	35.3%
Plasma Physics	5	20%	27.8% ⁶		6	31	6.2	19.4%
Politics	4	20.5%	27.0%	9.4	6	60	7.4	0% ⁷
Psychology	4/5			5.4				
Religion	4/5			8.7	5,5.5 ⁸	33	5.7, 5.4	30.3%
Sociology ⁹	4/5	36.3%		8.6				
Spanish Lit				9.3				

There are several things to note from this data:

1. As of 1986-1992, the median year-to-degree was higher *in every department surveyed* than the maximum years of enrollment. This means that the average student became post-enrolled, and

² Over the last 28 years, the trend has been for departments to extend the official length of programs from 4 years to 5 [Dean David Redman, interview with Kyle Morrison and Dan Novak, 22 March 1999].

³ Based on the data from the NRC report where available.

⁴ Civil and Environmental Engineering was established as a separate department in 1999, so statistics are only based on data from 1999-2000.

⁵ Figures from the Physics Department are taken from 1994 and the first five months of 1995. Data were unavailable after this date, except the statistic that the mean year-to-degree in 1999-2000 was 5.5 years.

⁶ Data from Plasma Physics indicates the average is 24.5% over the last decade.

⁷ One student apparently graduated within 4 years in 1995. Otherwise, since 1993, the remaining 96 have taken longer than the prescribed 4 years.

⁸ The Religion Department has both 4- and 5-year programs. Data are given for these, respectively. Data for Religion is computed over the period 1990-2000.

⁹ Department staff representatives in the Sociology Department have indicated that they regard year-to-degree information as confidential, and they therefore refuse to divulge it to anyone except for representatives of the Graduate School.

- frequently by several years. Only Astrophysics, Electrical Engineering, and Mathematics had medians less than 6 years. Since this is the *median*, not the mean, it is not sensitive to outliers.
2. During the period 1996-2000, every department surveyed had a median year-to-degree above its maximum term of enrollment, with the sole exception of Molecular Biology.
 3. Of the departments surveyed this year, only Molecular Biology had a majority of students (87.3%) graduate within the time allowed for degree completion in the standard program. In Chemical Engineering, nearly 44% graduated on time.
 4. The general trend seems to be one of improvement, but in every program save Molecular Biology, the majority of students not completing their degrees within the time allotted for the PhD program. The Molecular Biology Department currently allows a sixth year, and as it has the best record for graduating students on time, it provides evidence that extending the period of enrollment does not simply increase the time to degree. Members of the administration have at times claimed that the threat of post-enrollment encourages students to finish their degrees faster. Not only do these statistics clearly refute this assertion, the Molecular Biology case suggests that post-enrollment can actually significantly hinder dissertation progress.

Housing

Q. Did becoming post-enrolled affect your research (positively or negatively)?

“Added at least 2 months to my thesis due to time wasted in apartment hunting and moving.”

“Slightly negative, [an] hour spent commuting.”

Q. Did you have trouble finding/keeping housing?

“I wasted a solid month in apartment hunting.”

“I had to sign a year lease on my new apartment which locks me in until August.”

“Yes. Extreme trouble. As a post-enrolled student, you’re disqualified for the only housing in Princeton that you could conceivably afford.”

Several years ago, the GSG gained an important concession from the administration with regard to the housing issue. Previously, post-enrolled graduate students had no access to University housing, even if the housing in question was vacant. Currently, post-enrolled students can gain access to University housing under three conditions: (1) that no enrolled graduate student, faculty, or staff member desired the housing, (2) that leases would be on a month-to-month basis and could be terminated by Housing at any time with 30 days’ notice, and (3) that a 19% surcharge would be added to the rent. Usually, the relocation is to housing of lower quality. It demonstrates the remarkably bad position of post-enrolled students that such an agreement could be the greatest victory to date in the battle to overcome the bureaucratic nightmare that is post-enrollment.

This concession by the University has resulted in additional financial pressures placed on post-enrolled students, whose rents go up by 19% overnight, and additional stress, in that they know that they can be forced out of housing on 30 days’ notice.

With the recent University housing crisis, however, there are few, if any, post-enrolled students in subsidized housing, and there are unlikely to be any for the next several years.

We ask that the University commit to housing post-enrolled students. This commitment must be made soon, as plans are being drawn up for the construction of new housing for graduate students,

faculty, and staff. The Housing office has estimates of the faculty, staff, and enrolled student populations and is able to plan for housing these members of the community. The situation is different for post-enrolled students, however.

According to Director of Housing Tom Miller, the Housing office has “no knowledge of the number of post-enrolled students” [Tom Miller, letter to GSG Corresponding Secretary Eric Adelizzi]. Since the Housing Department has no figures, they would not be able to plan for housing post-enrolled students, even if resources were available.

The 19% surcharge on University Housing for post-enrolled students apparently has its origin in the notion that degree candidates who are no longer students should be charged as “guests” rather than students, although the Housing Department is unable to state definitively the origin of the surcharge [Tom Miller, letter to Eric Adelizzi, 19 February 2000].

In the area of housing, we have several requests:

1. The University must commit to collecting statistics on the number of post-enrolled students and the trends in this number. These statistics and projections from them must be public record, available to the GSG and to all University departments.
2. The University should agree in principle that all students in degree programs, both enrolled and post-enrolled, deserve the option of University housing, even if special provision is made to allow enrolled students to have priority over post-enrolled students.
3. The University should incorporate estimates of post-enrolled numbers into its current plans for expansion of University housing. This could be somewhat expensive, we readily admit. The alternative, having graduate students commuting from as far away as Pennsylvania or New York, is unacceptable.
4. The University should not place a 19% surcharge on housing for post-enrolled students. This charge results in a negligible amount of income for the University and hits graduate students exactly when they are having the greatest financial difficulties. Making this change at the present moment will cost the University nothing immediately, because no post-enrolled students are likely to be housed next year. This gesture would therefore be mainly symbolic in the short-run, but in the long run, this would make a significant difference to a lot of students.
5. Once housing is available for post-enrolled students, the University should undertake to make leases available for periods of up to one semester or one year, especially for those students in the earlier years of post-enrollment, who are the majority of post-enrolled students. We do not quarrel with the University policy of allowing newer students to have room priority over older students, but we do disagree with the policy of taking overt measures to guarantee that post-enrolled students cannot afford to live in Princeton.

Health Care

Q. Did becoming post-enrolled affect your research (positively or negatively)?

“I had to teach a great deal more in order to get health insurance.”

Q. After becoming post-enrolled, did you have any trouble with your medical insurance coverage?

“Yes, in fact, that was part of my reason for seeking full-time employment.”

“I am anxious about health coverage for next year.”

“Definitely -- considering that the University only extends the ‘privilege’ of buying into the health plan at roughly \$1200/year to students in their first year of post-enrollment [*sic*], I haven’t had coverage for the past 3 years. NJ

health insurers don't offer catastrophic insurance, and the cheapest coverage (according to my research last fall) is Blue Shield at \$200/month."

"No trouble per se, though it was something of a financial hardship to have to pay \$1000 to extend it. If I weren't finishing this year, I would not even have the option of extending it again, and I think I'd have to go without health insurance."

"I found a job just before I broke my arm, so I was lucky."

"Yes—minus full-time teaching, insurance is prohibitively expensive."

Affordable health care is a basic human need. What is affordable to a post-enrolled graduate student whose yearly income (on average) rarely peaks above \$20,000 and more often than not borders the poverty line is not what is affordable to your standard skilled laborer or white-collar Princeton employee.

Dean Redman, in response to GSG concerns regarding this problem, stated that payment for health care is an issue that all adult Americans must contend with, even if the costs are high [Dean David Redman, interview with Kevin Osterloh, 7 February 2001], but such comparisons are baseless, since graduate students earn far less money than they would in the private sector as college graduates. Further, it would be inconceivable that the University would even consider health care for faculty, staff, or undergraduates to be a private issue outside of the University aegis.

In the meantime, many graduate students forego health insurance. Approximately 400 students become post-enrolled each year, and only somewhere between 100 and 150 of them purchase the Student Health Plan [Dean F. Joy Montero, interview with Kyle Morrison and Dan Novak, April 1999]. We assume that many of the rest have no health coverage whatsoever.

Potential room for a compromise could be found in:

1. Lowering the yearly costs by a certain percentage.
2. Extending the right to purchase (at or below cost) University health coverage to students past their first year of post-enrollment.
3. Lowering the number of teaching hours required to receive health insurance.
4. Offering the option of alternative, cheaper plans with fewer benefits and thereby affording greater flexibility.

Suggestions (2) and (4) could be done at little or no cost to the University.

The University must commit to the principle that all graduate students, post-enrolled the same as enrolled, deserve health care, even if they are required to teach for it. Graduate students should not be denied health care merely because there are no classes available to teach, nor should they be required to teach an excessively large number of classes and thereby stall progress on their dissertations. At present, the difficulties in purchasing decent health care are one more obstacle to degree completion and one more cause of extreme stress.

Stress and Depression

Q. Did you feel any excessive emotional distress (way too much stress)?

"... [c]ertainly there is an unnecessary stigma attached to being unenrolled. And the very process of becoming unenrolled—the pink slip that must be signed by various depts. on campus and culminating in having a hole punched through one's picture i.d. (and through the head at that!)—is nothing more than ritual humiliation (to my mind, at least)."

“I had my first-ever panic-attack over becoming post-enrolled. I was facing the loss of my stipend and my housing, and was still very unsure about the next year. No one would answer my questions, or tell me what my options were. I felt like the University was washing its hands of me. It all worked out more or less OK, but for about a month I seriously considered leaving graduate school over it. I deeply resent that month.”

“Yes. Extreme. You feel your existence is on the line each semester.”

“Yep. I’m currently having to pay for counseling at \$100 a week for anxiety and depression.”

“Yes. I felt almost no support in the transition process and no concern about my financial problems, except from my advisor.”

“My whole [experience] here has been very emotionally upsetting. I would never choose this graduate school if I had it to do over again. The full funding without teaching is not worth the nastiness that comes afterward. I’d rather have my labor exploited openly.”

“Yes. I’ve had stress-induced high blood pressure since the summer.”

Post-enrolled students experience a host of problems, causing stress and depression. The University should be concerned not only for the sake of the students themselves, but also for the sake of the quality of their research. The GSG recommends the University address the roots of the problem:

1. Post-enrolled graduate students should be given access to the counseling facilities at McCosh Health Center, as part of, or as a separate measure from, reforms made to the health services offerings.
2. The Graduate School Announcement and/or the Guide for Graduate Students should contain a section on the end of enrollment, explaining procedures and changes, if any, to benefits, so that graduate students are aware of what will happen to them well in advance.

Bureaucratic Annoyances

Q. Did becoming post-enrolled affect your research (positively or negatively)?

“It affected my writing in the sense that it was disruptive (not to mention depressing) to get my library carrel taken away, and to have to deal with the bureaucratic procedures involved, at the library and at the gym.”

Q. Did administrative personnel treat you any differently?

“I feel really excluded and unwelcome, even though I’m doing a lot of really good teaching work for the University.”

“Yes; [i]n many ways I felt like I was a last priority. All of a sudden it became very difficult to get simple things taken care of, and to get solid answers to questions. No one wanted to deal with my problems.”

“Yes, though only in the Graduate School.”

Q. Were there any other enrolled-student benefits that you especially missed?

“There are a million times when we have to demonstrate some connection to the university, and a very shoddy-looking library ID doesn’t cut it. They really need to make up some official status for us, and give us a photo ID. It sounds simple, but it would be a huge help.”

“Inability to use the Counseling Center at McCosh.”

“[T]here are many things you don’t hear about because you are off the email lists.”

“I can’t get discount tickets to McCarter or to Richardson music events – it’s all the little indignities that add up.”

“Yes, the use of Dillon gym facilities.”

A cloud of small problems is associated with being post-enrolled. Many of the indignities foisted upon the post-enrolled student are so small and unimportant as to be petty. Yet, the negative ramifications of many of these tiny indignities are far-reaching and quite parlous to the livelihood of the post-enrolled student. Perhaps the largest of these for international students is the perpetual worry that they will become ineligible for student visas and be deported; this a rare but very real situation. Over the last five years, at least 10 international graduate students have been forced to return to their home countries because the University no longer uses the term “student” to describe them [Dean F. Joy Montero, interview with Kyle Morrison and Dan Novak, April 1999]. As far as we can see, the visa problem can only be rectified through a change in nomenclature, a subject that we shall address below.

Another issue is the loss of library carrels. Post-enrolled students are not even included on the list of persons eligible for carrels [Dean David Redman, interview with Kyle Morrison and Dan Novak, 22 March 1999], but they are occasionally granted use of carrels on a case-by-case basis for limited period of time. The increase in the undergraduate population foreseen by the Wythes Report will make the situation even worse.

We propose here a few small, cheap, and ameliorative ideas:

1. Post-enrolled students, whatever their status, should be issued with a University ID, valid until their degree candidacy terminates or they permanently withdraw from the University. The cost for this would be very small, and yet afford a great deal of dignity, as well as opening the door to other measures proposed here.
2. The University must keep a list of post-enrolled graduate students so that they can be informed, perhaps by e-mail, of University events that may interest them, such as APGA Career Brunches. This e-mail list should be made available to the GSG, in the same way it currently possesses a list of enrolled students. This involves no direct cost.
3. Post-enrolled students must be given access to such facilities as library carrels, even if their priority is lower than enrolled students.
4. Season tickets for sporting events and student discounts at McCarter and Richardson should be made available. The cost to the University would be negligible, and the IDs described in proposal (1) could be used for purposes of identity verification.

Financial Worries

Q. Did you have any financial difficulties?

“Major. Had to worry about whether I’d have enough money for groceries; couldn’t afford rent outside University grad student housing; qualified for faculty housing when teaching, but couldn’t afford it.”

“In addition to health insurance, having to leave Princeton-owned housing has forced me to live in a higher-rent apartment, which I find financially difficult.”

“All of these things combined to put a lot of [pressure] on me to make more money than I otherwise would have needed to get by. This means fewer hours to devote to the dissertation. I feel trapped in a [vicious] cycle I can’t get out of.”

“Yes; severe difficulties. When the University kicked me out of university housing in July, I had a very hard time finding new [accommodations]. The rent of the apartment I finally found is \$200/month more than my [on

campus apartment]. From August to January, when I finished, this cost an extra \$1,200.00 in rent above what I would have paid had I been allowed to remain [on campus]. Utilities are not included at my new apartment, so there's an additional \$80/month (average) on top of the rent difference. The move itself cost about \$700.00 for van rental and moving supplies. The new apartment is further away, thus increasing my commuting costs. The only way I had to fund these expenses was to run up credit card debt.”

“Yes, I am paid less, have to pay \$175 more in rent, and had to get a part time job to cover the difference.”

“Yes, my tax situation changed and decreased [m]y stipend noticeably”

“No, in the sense that I've easily found employment But working 20+ hours a week has certainly slowed down my dissertation progress.”

Q. Were you unable to apply for loans, grants, or scholarships that you would have otherwise?

“Not really. Princeton has turned me off to formal education.”

“Yes, many potential outside grants require you to be an enrolled student.”

“No. I just live on rice and don't go out much!”

Q. Did becoming post-enrolled affect your research (positively or negatively)?

“Yes, negatively, in that I was forced by economic circumstances to get a full-time job to support myself and that cut down on research and writing time.”

The Graduate School should not want graduate students to work full-time outside jobs, to worry about finding food to eat, or to be ineligible to apply for outside fellowships which might actually have the effect of bringing additional research money into the University.

When Dean Redman was asked about fellowship opportunities that are denied to post-enrolled students [Dean David Redman, interview with Kevin Osterloh, 7 February 2001], he named two fellowships for which post-enrolled students are eligible, to indicate that the situation is not as bad as it seems. Upon closer examination, these fellowships can help only a handful of post-enrolled students. The Charlotte Elizabeth Procter Fellowships are restricted to students in their first six years of study, provided that the year in which they receive the fellowship is their terminal year. At most three students can receive this fellowship in any given year, and it is not even clear whether post-enrolled students are eligible. Dean Redman also cited the Woodrow Wilson Fellowship, noting, however, that the rules for this fellowship explicitly discourage any post-enrolled students from applying.

Many post-enrolled students have undergraduate (and graduate) student loans that come due when they are no longer “students.” The Graduate School may call student loan agencies to try to convince them that you are still a student, and this often works. The graduate school views this practice as a “favor” that it extends to the post-enrolled student. It is, in fact, another symptom of the Graduate School's mistaken perception that post-enrolled students are no longer students. Said favor is bestowed on a case-by-case basis, at the Graduate School's discretion, thus forcing each of the individual students in question to make a case for the obvious – that they are still students. Leaving aside the fact that the burden of proof is foisted upon them, each of these students makes this request of the Graduate School with the knowledge that this “favor” may not be granted.

Once again, if other problems associated with post-enrollment are solved, many of the financial worries associated with housing and health care will go away.

We propose the following:

1. The University must recognize post-enrolled students as “students” so that they are eligible for outside grants and support. Below, we will outline one possible scheme for achieving this.
2. The University must commit to providing financial support for those post-enrolled students to whom it cannot offer teaching or research positions by attempting to offer some form of employment to those students actively pursuing their degrees. So long as the amount of teaching required is reasonable, we have no objection to the University’s requiring post-enrolled students to teach for their stipends. However, students should not lose financial support merely because the University does not have enough teaching assignments to go around. Dean Wilson implicitly recognized this problem in a memo circulated recently (and quoted above), in which he announced new teaching fellowships in a University writing program, so that more post-enrolled students will soon be able to support themselves through teaching.
3. Once again, we request openness. Students must be informed in a clear and forthright manner about the financial difficulties they may face. Students should be notified well in advance of an upcoming semester of their funding options, so that they can take appropriate steps to ensure their well-being.

Quality of Research

Q. Did becoming post-enrolled affect your research (positively or negatively)?

“Well, negatively in that I have been teaching 'part time' (actually full time) each semester to keep my health insurance and pay the rent, etc. It's hard to get time to work. Also, I lost my student status, and therefore my access privileges at all of the libraries Princeton has agreements with. Some of these I needed for my research, and it's been a hassle. Also, I can't defer my student loans, so that puts more financial pressure on me. I had to take another small job on the side to deal with them.”

“... [N]ot being eligible for any of the [University’s] travel funds or computer/web training is a blow”

As mentioned above, quality of research suffers when graduate students are overburdened and overwhelmed. The University should be very willing to assist post-enrolled graduate students on this front, as the prestige and output of Princeton are at stake.

We suggest:

1. Post-enrolled students must continue to have access to library and computer facilities, and not just as alumni or paying guests. This should be at a relatively small cost, as the University itself offers library and computer access to many students for several hundred dollars *per annum*.
2. Insofar as it is economically feasible, post-enrolled students must have access to travel funds or other grants that would aid in the speedy conclusion of their dissertations.

Proposals

Now that I’m post-enrolled my loans are out of deferment, my health care coverage is in question. All of this means that I’m at the mercy of the University for teaching jobs. Right now I’m teaching 6 precepts, just trying to make ends meet. And of course since I’m not enrolled, I’m not eligible for further student loans. A system in which a continuing enrollment status was available would cost Princeton little and give students a lot. [Testimony of current Princeton post-enrolled student.]

Aside from the many foregoing proposals for ameliorating the condition of post-enrolled students, we would like to propose the complete elimination of the category of post-enrolled student as such. Most of these students technically fall into the category of “Enrollment Terminated; Degree Candidacy Continues.” We propose that the University establish a new category of “post-coursework” or “continuing matriculation” students, saving post-enrollment for those students who are truly no longer actively working toward their degrees on a full-time basis. These “post-coursework” students would differ from post-enrolled students primarily because the people who fall into this new category would be “students.” They would have student IDs and be saved the indignities associated with no longer being students. They would continue deferment of student loans and be eligible for new loans, if necessary. They might also be eligible for some fellowships. International students would no longer have visa problems.

The only objection that the GSG has ever heard to such a scheme is that grant agencies require that everyone who is classified as a “student” be treated the same way with regard to tuition [Provost Jeremiah Ostriker and Dean John Wilson, interviews with Kyle Morrison and Dan Novak, March and April 1999]. This is an illusory problem, though, because the University can establish funds for paying the “tuition” of post-coursework students, as it very soon will be doing for first-year students.

The Trustees have recently approved “[a]n expanded fellowship program that will provide all first-year doctoral students in the sciences and engineering with full tuition and a stipend to assist with living expenses. Previously, two-thirds of the first-year students in these fields [the sciences and engineering] relied on support from research grants obtained by faculty members or from teaching assignments” [Princeton University Office of Communications Press Release, January 27, 2001]. This expanded fellowship program will cost the University a considerable amount of money, because endowment funds will be used to replace income which used to come from research grants, at least in the sciences and engineering. Our proposal would mirror the fellowship program for first-year students, which clearly must be acceptable to grant auditors, while costing little to no money. Post-coursework students, working as Assistants in Instruction and funded by the University as they are currently (or as Assistants in Research and funded as they presently are through research grants), would receive their stipends without additional cost to the University, as they do now. The fellowships granted by the University would be given only to those students employed as Assistants in Instruction or Assistants in Research and would only cover the cost of tuition. That tuition money would be paid out of the funds designated for this fellowship program, back to the University, like all tuition funds. The University therefore has no net expenditure.

If the University made this change, many problems, including the visa, student loan, and fellowship problems would be solved at limited cost to the University. Post-enrolled students would again feel like part of the University community with official University IDs.

The plan would cost the University little to no money. If the University is concerned about the small costs associated with providing IDs, library access, and computer accounts to post-coursework students, the GSG would not object to a small “continuing matriculation fee.” Nevertheless, we feel that the reduced administrative burden on the Graduate School, coping with loan extensions and tax and visa problems, would in and of itself pay great dividends.

So, we present as an alternative proposal, distinct from but complementary to the first, a nominal fee to cover the real costs of the University. (We might also suggest that post-coursework students be charged a rate of tuition considerably lower than “enrolled” students, if such a scheme would be acceptable to external auditors. A similar scheme, currently in place at New York University, might be a good starting point for discussion.)¹⁰

¹⁰ Many other Universities have schemes that differ from Princeton’s and yet are acceptable to grant auditors. At Yale, for instance, the standard PhD program has been six years, but tuition has only been charged for the first four. Columbia has

Dean Wilson has in principle conceded that the objections of federal auditors could be met and overcome by the establishment of a continuing enrollment fee, adding that the Graduate School has no objection *per se* to the application of the term “student” to post-enrolled degree candidates [Minutes of the Graduate College House Committee, 2 October 2000].

Claims of Deans Wilson and Redman to the effect that no graduate student would be willing to pay symbolic “continuing matriculation” fees are unfounded. In fact, every indication that we have assembled points to overwhelming support for such a compromise from the graduate student body. If the Graduate School does not wish to force a fee on unwilling graduate students, they can merely make continuing enrollment optional, so that students who may be fundamentally opposed can avoid the fee.

Requiring the Continuing Enrollment Fee to be paid by Faculty out of research grants or other budgets would provide an incentive to the faculty members to encourage students to finish their dissertations. We suggest this as only one of several plausible options. The details are negotiable, and the GSG is flexible. The GSG is very interested in establishing a real dialogue with the administration to work out better solutions.

We have not addressed many issues, because they are minor or because we have no immediate solution to propose. In the sciences and engineering, for instance, faculty will frequently declare their students post-enrolled before the maximum number of years of enrollment is past, in order to avoid paying tuition from their research grants. We have no good proposal to solve this problem, except to say that the practice, obviously not grounded in the student’s best interest, should stop.

Conclusion

Q. Is there any issue you had not alluded to here?

“Perhaps allowing people to purchase the student health plan after the first year of unenrollment, even at it a slightly increased rate as time goes on, would make things more livable.”

“... [L]osing my library carrel was a fairly major inconvenience. They told me that there was a shortage, and that they could not continue to give them to post-enrolled people. The problem is that my old carrel remains unassigned and vacant, to this day. There’s **absolutely** no reason I couldn’t be using it. The shortage was an out and out lie.”

“I am no longer legally permitted to park on campus, which is ridiculous since I am still working on my thesis here.”

Q. If you could change something about the University's policy on Post-Enrollment, what would it be?

“I may not still be on my stipend, but that only means I need the discounts even more than before.”

“All of it—I want some dignity!”

“Speaking from my own experience, I know that ET-DCC interferes with one’s work at precisely the time when one is wrapping things up. It delays rather than speeds up the time it takes to finish. It causes tremendous financial hardship. It causes severe emotional stress. It has been a major problem for all students I have known who have been forced to take it.”

“Why increase the rent for ETDCC (it goes up by 19%)?”

charged significantly lower post-generals tuitions rates than pre-generals rates [Dean David Redman, interview with Kyle Morrison and Dan Novak, 22 March 1999].

“The last thing a student needs to think about is where he/she is going to live for the next few months, while attempting to write a dissertation and find a job. In a nutshell, guaranteed housing for at least one year into ETDCC status would be a big help.”

“Just drop it. Be honest about it when people come and sign up. INFORM people that they will be treated like this.”

In conclusion, we restate that our primary goals are (1) openness and freedom of information, and (2) willingness to admit that a severe problem exists. Many deny the size and scope of the post-enrollment problem, yet solving it requires that we acknowledge it and commit to finding a solution.

There is a tendency to consider graduate school as a fixed program of 4-5 years, just like the undergraduate program. We do not advocate that students in the 6th, 7th, 8th, or later years of their programs be treated identically to students in earlier years. Given the finite amount of money available to fund graduate students, it is entirely reasonable that students who stay past their 5th year be forced to teach for their pay. Nevertheless, teaching five or six classes is extremely burdensome and leaves very little time for research. We are cognizant of, and grateful for, the full funding received by graduate students for their enrolled years we do not suggest we extend this, but we must put an end to the punitive measures foisted upon post-enrolled students.

It is a misconception that post-enrollment and loss of student status can be used as a tool to “encourage” graduate students to finish their dissertations earlier. In many cases, the pace of dissertation progress is largely a function of advisor-student relations and, of course, the vicissitudes inherent in any open-ended research program. Even in those cases where it is the student’s fault that he or she is spending a 6th year in a program, is it proper to “encourage” said student to work harder by evicting him or her from his or her home and revoking his or her health insurance, denying him or her even official recognition as a student? Would anyone at Princeton tolerate a suggestion that undergraduates who need to stay in a special program over a summer be evicted from housing and refused student health treatment at McCosh Health Center, in order to “encourage” them to do better work? If you are appalled by the suggestion about undergraduates but not by the situation faced by the majority of graduate students at some time in their academic careers, we ask that you consider the reason for the distinction that you are drawing. Revocation of health care as “encouragement” to work harder or faster is a punishment that no one would ever inflict on undergraduates, staff, or faculty.

We remain confident that the plight of post-enrolled students is compelling. We hope that something can be done soon. All of us here at Princeton, from the graduate student body to administration and staff, have a common interest in the prestige of Princeton University. It is in the interest of the Graduate School to have as many successful Princeton graduate alumni enter their professions or academia as possible. It is also in the interest of Princeton graduate students to have this prestige backing them when they are applying for jobs. The present plight of post-enrolled graduate students serves neither the goals of the student body nor those of the administration. In short, everyone suffers. Let us commit to working together to build a better Graduate School, and a better Princeton.

COMPUTING REPORT

The Graduate Student Government is concerned about providing adequate access to computing and network services to graduate students who reside on campus. Graduate students depend heavily on computing and network services to conduct their research even after they leave their departments and go home to their residences. We urge the University to improve and upgrade its computing infrastructure with the following goals in mind: 1) providing room access to the university network for those who own computers, and 2) providing equity in graduate student access to computer clusters. At the request of Provost Ostriker, the GSG wrote the following list of computing goals. The GSG Assembly unanimously approved of the recommendations on January 10, 2001.

Goals to be achieved by January 2002

1. Provide room wiring for GC annexes.

As we understand it, some recently renovated annexes have already wired and only need to be connected to the campus network. This wiring should not come at a significant cost, given the existence of a line running to the undergraduate residence in 2 Dickinson Street and a line running to the Graduate College. We therefore recommend giving high priority to provide room wiring for GC Annexes, given that 93 residents live in the Annexes, that the anticipated costs of wiring and connecting are not high, and that Annex residents do not presently have easy access to network or cluster services.

2. Install a student-computing cluster in Hibben-Magie.

Over 200 graduate students live in the Hibben-Magie complex, yet they have no access to a computing cluster or networked services. Given the significant distance between the Hibben-Magie residence and any public cluster, we consider the creation of a student-computing cluster to be something that should be achieved in the short term. In order to prevent abuse of computing and printing privileges by non-student family members who live in the Hibben-Magie apartments, we recommend making most or all of the computers accessible only to student logins.

3. Grant graduate student proximity-card access to Edwards computing cluster.

Even if the GC Annexes are wired, those who do not own computers will have to walk a significant distance to access 24-hour computing resources. The Graduate College is currently the only option, and the cluster there is already overburdened with users. We recommend granting proximity-card access to the Edwards computing cluster to graduate students in the immediate future.

4. Expend funds already allocated to reconstruct the New GC cluster.

The New GC cluster was shut down a number of years ago, and CIT has had money allocated for at least a year to start it up again. In September 2000, the Graduate College House Committee complained to Georgia Nugent from the Office of the Provost that no work had been done. Ms. Nugent was surprised to hear of the news because she thought it the work had already been completed. She promised to look into it, but the House Committee has heard nothing. We request that the University expend the funds already allocated to reconstruct the New GC Cluster.

Goals to be achieved by January 2003

1. Provide room wiring for Lawrence apartments.

With 148 graduate student units, Lawrence should be provided with room wiring.

2. Provide room wiring for all units in Hibben-Magie.

Hibben-Magie already houses more than 200 graduate students, and this number has been increasing over the past few years. Furthermore, there are hundreds of post-docs and research staff who live in these apartments. We recommend room wiring for all units in these apartment complexes.

3. Renovate and provide room wiring for Butler units as they are renovated or reconstructed.

We understand that Butler apartment units will be renovated or reconstructed in the upcoming years. As units are renovated, they should be provided with room wiring to the campus network.

Goals to be achieved by January 2005

- 1. Wire 529 Alexander.**
- 2. Wire Millstone Apartments, connect via wireless relay, as is being done with Forrestal.**

Additional Considerations

- 1. All new wiring should be 100-base ethernet.**
- 2. The GC ethernet should be upgraded to 100-base ethernet as soon as the undergraduate residences are so upgraded.**
- 3. Any new graduate student housing constructed over the next few years should be wired initially with 100-base ethernet.**
- 4. Allow network connectivity for laptop "gates" in common areas, such as Old GC Common Room, Coffee House, etc., and similar areas in the other residences.**

GRADUATE-UNDERGRADUATE RELATIONS

In the past few years, there have been greater interactions between graduate and undergraduate students outside the classroom setting. More than ever before, undergraduate students can expect to see graduate students participating in intramural athletics, social events, student activities and campus publications. The establishment of Frist Campus Center points to the potential for even more integration between undergraduate and graduate students.

In order to bring the “spirit of Frist” to full expression, namely the creation of a truly unified campus community, we propose the following regarding graduate-undergraduate relations:

1. Co-sponsorship of student events

Encourage more collaboration on University-wide events, especially between the Undergraduate Student Government and the Graduate Student Government.

From campus concerts to the Student Activities Fair to Communiversity Day, undergraduate student groups should collaborate with graduate student groups on student events. Every effort should be made to make such events open and accessible to both graduate and undergraduate students.

2. Permeability of student organizations

Allow graduate students to serve as officers in student organizations (in positions other than President or Treasurer), and encourage the creation of graduate student liaisons for student organizations.

Currently, student organizations are designated separately as “undergraduate” and “graduate” student organizations. While this separation makes sense for administrative and financial purposes, it has the unfortunate consequence of splitting up constituencies that barely have a critical mass. For instance, there are simply not enough Chicano students or Green Party supporters to form separate graduate and undergraduate organizations. In order to allow for greater integration, while maintaining administrative and financial accountability, we propose that graduate students be allowed to serve as officers in student organizations in positions other than President or Treasurer. We also encourage the creation of graduate student liaisons for student organizations, and ask that a list of liaisons be kept on file in the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Students.

3. Diminish residential segregation

Reform the current policy on proximity cards, reform the Graduate Fellow program in residential colleges, and encourage mixed housing in the new residential college.

Residential segregation between graduate and undergraduate students dates back to the founding of the Graduate School, when the Dean of the Graduate School Andrew Fleming West prevailed over President Woodrow Wilson in keeping the Graduate College separate from campus. While residential separation makes sense for graduate students who have families of their own, there are also hundreds of graduate students who find themselves in similar social situations as undergraduates, the former having themselves only recently graduated from college. One major negative consequence of residential segregation has been the perpetuation of “separate and unequal” conditions, as well as negative attitudes and misconceptions between undergraduate and graduate students.

In order to mitigate the effects of residential segregation, we propose that the University reform its current policy on proximity cards. In order for graduate and undergraduate students to get to

know each other and treat each other alike, they should be able to enter each other's colleges with their proximity cards. Furthermore, the Graduate Fellow program in residential colleges should be reformed so that undergraduates have more substantive interactions with their Fellows. Reforms may include greater programming of events or even the creation of a residential position.

Finally, the University should consider creating some mixed housing in the proposed sixth residential college, a residential setting where graduate and undergraduate students could get to know each other on a personal basis and collaborate on various projects, academic and otherwise. Such an integrated residential space would carry forward the promise of the Frist Campus Center and its potential to integrate the lives of graduate and undergraduate students.

RECENT GRADUATE ALUMNI TRUSTEE REPORT

Summary

The Graduate School is an essential component of Princeton University's mission "to be both one of the leading research universities and the most outstanding undergraduate college in the world." (Wythes Report) It provides a first-rate graduate education, producing prominent and distinguished alumni in academia, public service, business, and the arts. The involvement of graduate students directly benefits both faculty research and undergraduate education. Graduate students are involved as well in the social and administrative life of the University and have a unique perspective on the complex and changing nature of higher education. Including recent graduate alumni on the Board of Trustees can help the University harness their talent, energy, and perspectives in a more effective way to serve the entire University community.

Background

The Board of Trustees of Princeton University is a body empowered to make decisions regarding the finances, administration and long-term goals of Princeton University. In recent years, the Board has made several important decisions regarding the present governance and future development of Princeton University, including a significant increase in the size of the undergraduate student body, the development and adoption of the comprehensive Wythes committee report on Princeton's programs and resources, and an initiative to reduce the underage consumption of alcohol among University students.

At present, the Board of Trustees consists of 40 members, of whom two are ex officio (the President of the University and the Governor of New Jersey). Thirteen members of the Board are Alumni Trustees who are elected by the alumni members of the University and serve four-year terms. Of these Alumni Trustees, four are recent graduates with baccalaureate degrees. The junior and senior classes, along with the two most recently graduated classes, annually elect a member of the graduating class to serve a four-year term on the Board of Trustees. The remaining trustees are elected by the members of the Board. Charter Trustees serve ten-year terms, while Term Trustees serve four-year terms. In addition to the 13 Alumni Trustees, no more than eight serve as Term Trustees; the rest serve as Charter Trustees. There is always at least one alumnus/a of the Graduate School on the Board. Currently, there are two - Harold T. Shapiro *64, President of the University and ex officio member of the Board of Trustees, and Barry Munitz *68 *65.

The Graduate School

The Centennial of the Graduate School at Princeton University is a particularly opportune and appropriate time to consider increasing the involvement of graduate alumni in the governance of the University. During its hundred years of producing first-rate scholars and professionals, the Graduate School has made a significant contribution to the intellectual and cultural life of the world as well as the University. Graduate alumni include such notables as President James Madison (the University's first graduate alumnus), Cornel West *80, George Will *66 *68, and Syngman Rhee *10. The last

three presidents of Princeton have been graduate alumni (Harold T. Shapiro *64, William G. Bowen *58, and Robert F. Goheen '40 *48), and Richard Spies *72 is currently the Vice President for Finance and Administration.

In addition, the Graduate School is essential in maintaining the quality of the faculty and the undergraduate body. Professors are drawn to Princeton by the opportunity to work with and train young scholars who share their enthusiasm for research and learning. Professors also recognize that high-quality graduate research assistants make their own scholarship more productive.

Graduate students make a significant direct contribution to undergraduate education at Princeton, as a great deal of teaching and learning takes place in precepts and other graduate student-led seminars. The recent development of the McGraw Center for Teaching and Learning in offering additional training to assistant instructors attests to the importance of graduate student instruction.

As Woodrow Wilson explained during his presidency of the University, "It is our confident hope that [the introduction of precepts] will bring about very gratifying results: that the undergraduate will take more pleasure in his studies, derive more profit and stimulation from them, and that the instructor will find vital intercourse with his pupils...." We believe the graduate instructor-undergraduate student relationship has fulfilled this early promise. Instruction by young scholars close to the undergraduate student's experience and perspective is an excellent complement to instruction by distinguished professors. Of course, it is also essential experience for the next generation of distinguished professors.

In addition to being involved in their own teaching and research, graduate students are increasingly involved, informed, and committed to the health and advancement of the University. In the last year, the Graduate Student Union reinvented itself as the Graduate Student Government, expanding from an advocacy group for graduate students into a more active partner with the CPUC and the USG in the governance of the University community. Graduate students have created new activities, such as a cappella ensemble and a South Asian theater festival. The Graduate College has become an active hub of graduate student life, as reflected in increasing demand for rooms in recent years, well beyond capacity. Graduate students, like undergraduates, develop sentimental ties to the University and are true Princetonians.

Proposal

Composition

We propose the creation of two new positions on the Board of Trustees for young alumni of the Graduate School (hereafter "Recent Graduate Trustees"). These two Recent Graduate Trustees shall serve four-year terms with staggered elections every two years. In order to accommodate these two positions, we propose a commensurate reduction in the number of Term Trustees.

Eligibility

At the time of each election, those who have graduated from Princeton University within the previous two years with a terminal graduate degree shall be eligible for candidacy as a Recent Graduate Trustee. Those eligible to vote would be current graduate students, as well as graduate alumni who have graduated from Princeton University with a terminal degree in the previous 2 years. Graduate students and recent graduate alumni would vote for the candidate who they believe has best served the University during his or her time as a student and who would best serve as a member of the Board of Trustees.

Rationale

This proposal parallels the Young Alumni Trustees, created in 1969 amid growing student interest in the governance of the University. Since then, the adoption of four Young Alumni Trustees has aided the administration of the University by providing important insights on student life and the needs and concerns of current undergraduates and recently graduated alumni. In recent years, graduate students have been increasingly involved in student life and in the governance of Princeton University. Adding two Recent Graduate Trustee positions will enhance the ability of the University to meet its short-term and long-term goals involving student life, academic affairs and other matters pertaining to the governance of the University. As reflected in the Wythes report, the university's mission depends on both graduate and undergraduate education, and it is important that the Board of Trustees always include people intimately familiar with the current nature and needs of graduate education.

We believe that having two Recent Graduate Trustee positions with staggered terms is important to ensure some substance and continuity in the contribution of graduate alumni to the governance of the University. While it would be ideal to have a similar four-person structure for graduate alumni, we recognize that there is an upper limit to expanding the Board of Trustees and that there are more undergraduate than graduate alumni. With these considerations in mind, we propose the creation of two Recent Graduate Trustee positions on the University Board of Trustees. Since the current Board is at its upper limit of 40 trustees, we propose a reduction by two in the number of Term Trustees who are not Alumni Trustees of the University.

Graduate alumni bring valuable skills and perspectives to the Board of Trustees. Rigorous academic training at Princeton gives graduate alumni strong analytical skills that would be useful in decisions involving the governance of the University. In addition, both Ph.D.s and terminal masters degrees such as those in the Woodrow Wilson School and School of Architecture often have specific expertise related to University governance, from the perspective of faculty, public administrators, or architects. As noted earlier, graduate alumni have already served capably as President, Vice President and other senior administrative posts at Princeton University.

We specifically propose creating these positions for recent graduate alumni. We believe recent graduates are likely to feel a closer connection with the University and are more likely to be familiar with the issues and processes related to its governance than those who graduated less recently. We also believe that it is important that current graduate students be able to vote on the new trustee positions. This proposed voting system enables current graduate students and recent graduate alumni to contribute to the governance of the institution. Such a system will enable the University to respond in creative and productive ways to issues affecting the Graduate School, graduate students and graduate student alumni. Just as important, it will strengthen institutional commitment and loyalty to Princeton University among current graduate students, as well as graduate alumni pursuing successful careers in academia, government and the private sector. This step will further the process already underway of making graduate student and alumni as committed to and involved in Princeton as undergraduates, a process that can only be beneficial to the University.

This proposal itself is evidence of a growing interest among graduate students in contributing to the overall success of the University. The impetus for proposing the creation of recent graduate trustees comes from a genuine feeling among many graduate students that we have essential contributions to make to the University. The value of graduate degrees depends on the continued excellence of Princeton, which further encourages graduate students to contribute to the well being of the University. As the marketplace for recent Ph.D.s increasingly includes industry and private-sector positions as well as traditional academic careers, it is important for the Graduate School to adapt. It must take advantage of the new information economy and changing career outlooks of graduate

students while retaining its strong academic research focus and keeping graduate students committed to the University. The inclusion of recent graduate alumni on the Board of Trustees can help the University meet this challenge, as it has at other institutions. For example, Susan Timberlake '93 is a recent graduate alumna on the Board of Trustees of Duke University, and Vice President Janet Dickerson (formerly at Duke) reports that the other members of that Board have appreciated her contributions.

Adopting our proposal will contribute to the governance and well being of Princeton University, continuing the traditions set by current and past Presidents and acting in full spirit of the centennial celebration of the Graduate School. Giving recent graduate alumni a direct voice in the board of trustees will bring significant long-term benefits to the entire Princeton community and represents an important step towards fulfilling Princeton's mission of being both a world-class research university and an outstanding undergraduate college.

HEALTH CARE REPORT

Summary

This report evaluates the current state of graduate student health care at Princeton University. We describe the results of a survey conducted in January 2000 on graduate student use and satisfaction with their health care. We evaluate health care in Princeton in two parts: one part for on-campus primary care services provided by McCosh Health Center and one part for the Student Health Plan insurance coverage for off-campus care.

Finally, we compare Princeton University Health Care to what is offered at peer institutions in a benchmarking study and offer suggestions to improve graduate student health care at Princeton.

Major findings of the Health Survey:

Graduate students report relying on McCosh Health Center for their primary care and generally rate the services that are provided as “fair” to “good”. Areas that could be improved include the extension of service hours over breaks and summer months; better appointment availability, particularly for annual gynecological exams; and better monitoring of quality of care by referred outside providers.

Graduate students also report depending on the Student Health Plan as their primary source for health insurance. Students express considerable concern with the level of coverage provided by the Student Health Plan and urge for an extension of coverage into the areas of dental care, vision and prescription drug benefits. Students describe debts incurred and treatments foregone because of the lack of coverage in these areas.

Major findings from comparison of Princeton to peer institutions:

In a comparison of health benefits currently offered to graduate students, Princeton University lags behind peer institutions in the areas of vision care, dental plan and prescription drug options. Princeton University did have the least expensive fee for enrollment of a single individual in the student health plan.

Conclusion:

Following these analyses of graduate student usage and satisfaction with health services as well as a comparison of health care offerings at peer Ivy League institutions, we recommend increases in the staffing and service hours at McCosh Health Center during breaks and summer months. We also recommend that the Student Health Plan for off-campus care be expanded to include a vision plan, an optional dental plan, and a prescription drug plan similar to those offered at peer institutions.

Graduate Student Health Care at Princeton

Princeton University currently offers its graduate students access to the on-campus primary health care facility at the McCosh Health Center, and for a mandatory additional \$360 yearly fee covers enrolled graduate students in the Student Health Plan (SHP) for off-campus care that can not be handled at McCosh.

McCosh Health Center offers scheduled outpatient appointments with nurse practitioners and physicians, inpatient services, sexual and reproductive health care (e.g. annual gynecological exams), athletic medicine, allergy and immunization administration, counseling and mental health, basic laboratory services and some health education programs. There is no additional charge for these services with the exception of prescription drugs, vaccines and immunizations and some general supplies dispensed at McCosh.

The Student Health Plan (SHP) offers coverage for some forms of medical care outside of The McCosh Health Center after the individual has met a \$250 annual deductible (\$500 for families). For off campus office visits to physicians in the new Preferred Provider Organization (PPO) network there is a \$10 co-pay per office visit (which does not count toward the deductible).

For visits to physicians outside the PPO and for other medical treatments such as surgery, hospital stays, some prescription drugs, MRI scans, and inpatient mental health, the plan pays 80% of costs up to a maximum of \$250,000 per individual per year with a \$500,000 lifetime maximum. Maximum yearly out of pocket expenses paid by individuals (excluding physician office visit co-pays) is \$5000. All off-campus care in the geographic area (except in case of emergency) must be pre-authorized by McCosh. For graduate students with families the addition of one dependent to the plan costs \$2,500 (or \$2,300 with the higher deductible of \$1000).

Vaccines, routine tests and physical examinations are not covered under the Student Health Plan. Dental benefits are limited to covering expenses that result from accidental injury to teeth as well as the removal of full- or partially- impacted wisdom teeth. Costs for basic dental care; routine eye or hearing exams; and prescription eye glasses and contacts are not covered by the SHP and are not included in the yearly out-of-pocket maximum expense. Prescription drugs are covered under the Student Health Plan with a deductible of \$250 and a 20% co-payment thereafter.

Graduate Student Health Care Survey

In January 2000, the Graduate Student Government (GSG) sent out an email asking all graduate students to fill out a web survey soliciting information on their satisfaction with student health care services and the Student Health Plan (SHP). There were 462 respondents to the survey out of a total graduate student population of approximately 1,700 students, yielding a response rate of 27%.

Of these respondents most were single (63% single, 37% married or domestic partner) and a large proportion indicated that they were international students (58% US citizens, 42% international). 92 percent of respondents reported using the SHP as their primary care provider. Of those with spouses and children, 35% reported using the SHP as the primary care provider for their spouses and dependents.

The survey included 23 multiple-choice questions and one open-ended section. A copy of the survey is in the Appendix of this report. In discussing the results of the GSG Health Survey, we shall

present tabulations of key questions. We shall also provide some testimonials provided in the open-ended section of the survey.

A. McCosh Health Center

Almost all enrolled graduate student respondents (93%) indicated using the McCosh Health Center at some point during their enrollment. The center was praised for its convenient on-campus location and for the general friendliness and helpfulness of staff. Most respondents rated their overall experience at McCosh and the quality of care and helpfulness of doctors and nurses to be “good” to “very good”. Specific praise was mentioned for counseling services and for athletic medicine.

During their enrollment at Princeton, graduate students reported using McCosh for the following: common illnesses (60%), vaccines (57%), annual gynecological exams (25%), sexual health (18%), mental health (16%), sports medicine (15%) and allergies (12%).

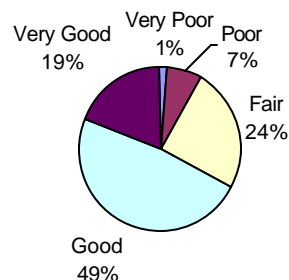
Suggestions for improvements in the McCosh Health Center by respondents in the survey include:

1. **Extending hours during break periods and over the summer.** 43% of respondents found the hours of operation during break and summer months to be incompatible with their needs. Complaints centered on the availability of inpatient services and the availability of doctors for appointments during the summer.

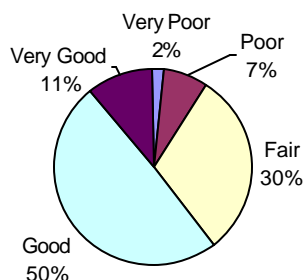
“As a graduate student who is here during the summers, I have found it a great frustration that the only service is to go to the hospital if one gets sick on the weekends. I had gotten sick during this time period and did not go to the hospital but instead decided to wait it out until the following Monday ... which left me very sick.”

2. **Improving appointment availability.** 26% found that appointments at McCosh were not readily available when they needed them. In the open-ended comments, this problem of appointment availability was especially prevalent for gynecological examinations.

Quality of Care and Helpfulness of Doctors and Nurses at McCosh



Overall Experience at McCosh



“The SECH office of McCosh that does gynecological exams seems to always be understaffed...you have to wait weeks for an appointment, even in the summertime.”

“[SECH is] undergrad oriented. So sometime you have to wait to see a gynecologist for more than a month, because, it is the undergrad break. Their hours are bad...”

3. **Improving the consistency of care provided by SECH.** In the open-ended comments, there were mixed reviews of the quality of care provided by Sexuality Education Counseling and Health [SECH]:

“Some of the SECH nurses are fabulous, but others seem very inexperienced and not very knowledgeable.”

“I have heard 3 bad reports from fellow graduate students about the SECH program, so I continue to go to my doctor at home for my annual exam. This is a significant expense and much less convenient since it is at a distance, but until I hear better things about SECH, I will continue to avoid it.”

4. **Better monitoring of quality of care by referred outside providers.** 30% of those referred to an outside doctor through McCosh indicated that they were not satisfied with some aspect of the care they received.

“I have been referred more than once, by very satisfactory McCosh doctors and nurses, to very unsatisfactory and expensive outside specialists.”

“When they give you a referral they just give you a list of doctors names so you have no way of knowing the quality of those doctors... One thing that might help this problem is a student website listing feedback about each doctor and nurse. This is done for professors, so why not doctors and nurses?”

B. The Student Health Plan

The major sources of concern were not with the services of McCosh health center but with the Student Health Insurance Plan (SHP) and its limited areas of coverage for outside care. As the three top priorities for improvements in the SHP, students cited the need for dental benefits to defray costs of dental check-ups and other dental work, a vision plan to help with eye exams and cost of eyewear and a prescription drug plan to help defray costs of medications.

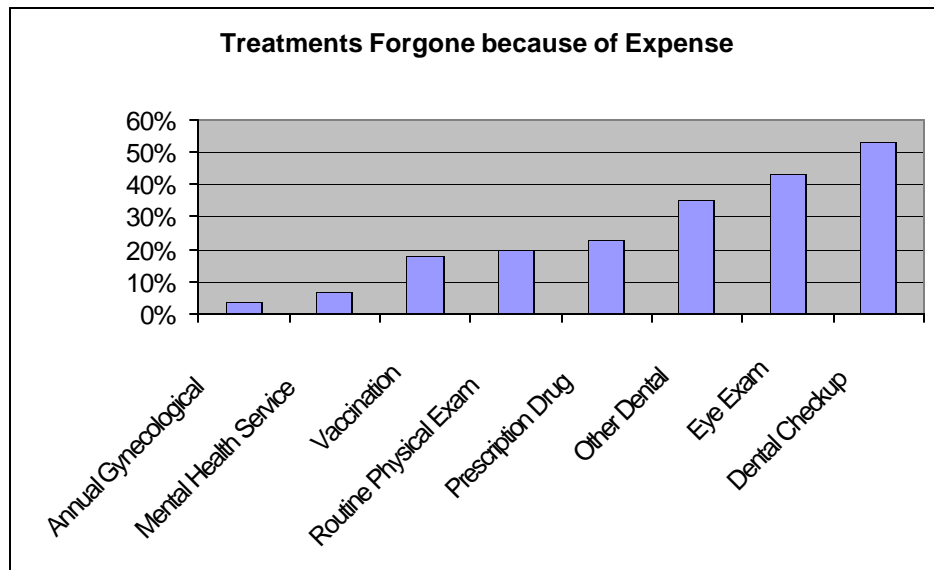
Students cited several treatments that they did not receive because they were too expensive. Two of the top three responses related to the provision of dental care. 53% of respondents reported going without a dental checkup, and 35% indicated going without other basic dental care. Similarly, nearly one-half of all respondents did not have an eye exam because of the expense.

“Without both a vision and dental plan, I have had to forego needed care. 4-6 years is a long time to go without a dental check-up.”

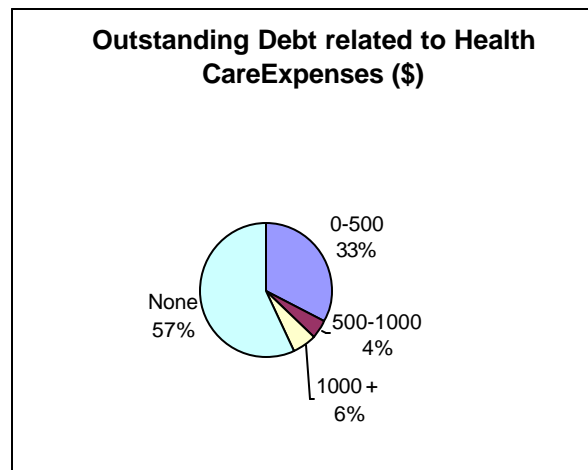
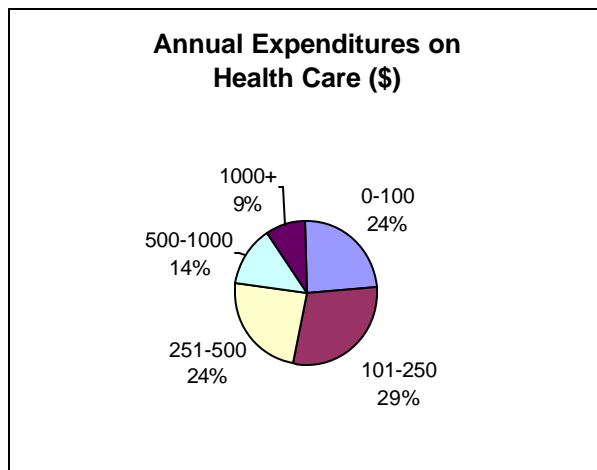
“Lack of a basic dental plan is another major problem. I know of international students who wait to go back to their countries to get the dental care they need, even though it means their condition will worsen by then”

“Please, please, please figure out a way to give us decent dental coverage and eye exams!!!”

In addition to vision and dental care, graduate students expressed concern with the expense associated with prescription drugs, routine physical exams and vaccinations.



In addition to treatments forgone, the GSG Health Care Survey also asked questions related to annual health care expenditures. 53% of respondents indicated that their health care expenditures were less than \$250 per year.



At the same time, a large proportion of graduate students reported health care expenses exceeding \$500. A significant proportion also reported debts related to health care that exceeded \$1000.

“Dean Montero’s office is very generously providing financial assistance (with grants from the President’s Fund), but having to ask for financial assistance and submit one’s medical history to an office of the Administration is humiliating. Not being able to pay outstanding medical debts and not being sure of whether the Administration will provide financial assistance can cause considerable anxiety.”

“My portion of the bill (20 percent) did not clear the maximum out-of-pocket, but it was (and is) nonetheless an enormous difficulty on a grad student budget... Adjusting this percentage would help people facing more serious financial hardships. In my case, and probably others, it would also

increase a student’s likelihood to pursue follow-up care which may not be essential, but which financial concerns ought not to preclude. With the debt I have incurred due to necessary surgery and physician visits, I find myself unable to pursue recommended follow-up visits.”

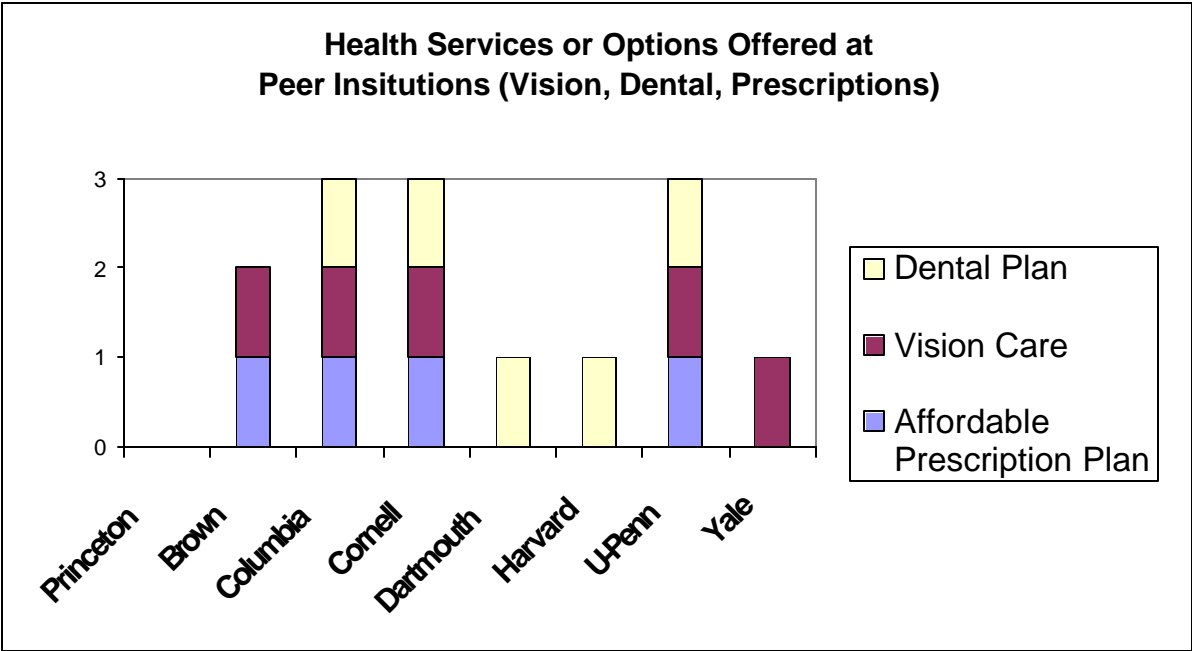
Additional suggestions frequently mentioned in the open-ended comments section included improved insurance coverage for post-enrolled students and less expensive coverage for spouses, domestic partners and dependents.

“My officemate from China has a wife who doesn’t work and a child. He can’t afford coverage for both of them, so he has purchased (at great expense) medical coverage for his son but has left his wife uninsured. That is tragic.”

Health Insurance at Peer Institutions

A comparison of Health Care offerings and insurance plans at peer Ivy League institutions was completed. Information for this comparison was obtained mainly through official University web sites. The focus of our comparisons is based on the main concerns expressed by graduate students in the health survey.

Our benchmarking study reveals that the majority of institutions cover eye exams and/or offer an optional reduced rate vision plan (for more detailed information, see Appendix). Many institutions also offer affordable prescription drug plans based on flat-fee co-payments and have a participating pharmacy on-campus. Finally, some institutions offer an optional dental plan to students for an extra premium. Princeton University does not currently offer these services.



Recommendations

Based on the findings from the graduate student health care survey and a comparison with Princeton University's peer institutions we make the following recommendations:

McCosh Health Center

1. **Extend staff availability and inpatient services over breaks and the summer.** Increase the availability of doctors for appointments, and gynecology-related staff in SECH. Also enable the continuation of inpatient services during the summer.
2. **Improve the consistency of care provided by SECH.**
3. **Provide information on the quality of care provided by outside specialists.** Create a website that serves as a guide to the quality of care provided by specialists. In addition to relying on external reviews by sources such as New Jersey Monthly Magazine,¹¹ the website should enable students to provide feedback about each specialist to whom they have been referred.

Student Health Plan

1. **Basic dental coverage.** A group dental plan along the lines available in 2001 to staff and faculty at Princeton University. Given the modest stipends given to graduate students, we recommend that the University incorporate the annual fee as part of the student health services fee.
2. **Discounted vision care.** A vision care plan to help cover off-campus eye exams and eyewear such as the Vision One Program that several peer institutions offer. (See Appendix)
3. **An affordable prescription drug plan.** A prescription drug plan maintaining the present deductible of \$250, but instituting a co-pay of either 10% or \$10 per prescription. Also, the plan should be accepted by the U-Store so that students do not have to pay out of pocket and wait for reimbursement. (Model for adoption: Princeton University staff prescription plan)

¹¹ The New Jersey Monthly Magazine guide to top specialists in New Jersey is available online: <http://www.njmonthly.com/issues/Nov98/articles/docsintro.html>. These lists are excerpted from The Best Doctors in America database, which includes approximately 28,000 doctors in over 350 medical specialties. The database is compiled and maintained by Woodward/White Inc. For a fee, Best Doctors Inc. will undertake specialized searches. For more information, contact Best Doctors by phone (888-DOCTORS).

APPENDIX

Prescription Coverage at Peer Institutions

SCHOOL	PLAN /COST	DEDUCTIBLE	CO-PAY/POLICY ON REIMBURSEMENT	MAXIMUM	MEDS COVERED
Brown	standard medical (cost included)	0	\$15 copay only* *discount prices at University pharmacy	\$750	some not covered
Cornell	standard medical (cost included)	0	\$20 copay only* *with medical card	\$750	some not covered
Dartmouth	standard medical (cost included)	\$200	\$4 copay only* *if at Dartmouth	toward \$500,000 maximum	some not covered
Columbia	1. Basic 2. Comprehensive (cost included)	0 0	\$20 copay only* \$20* (50% if past \$750 maximum) *If outside pharmacy, pay full price and get reimbursed	\$750	some not covered
Harvard	standard medical (cost included)	\$750	95% reimbursed after paying	\$3000	All
Princeton	standard medical (cost included)	\$250	80% reimbursed after paying	toward \$250,000 maximum	some not covered
U-Penn	choice between two medical plans (cost included)	0	\$15 copay only* *waived if on campus	\$400* *for acne meds only, Mega Life plan only	some not covered
Yale	Prescription Plus (optional) \$204	\$100	20% copay only* *if at Yale/otherwise pay full price and get reimbursed	\$15,000	All

Vision and Dental Coverage at Peer Institutions

	Vision	Dental
Brown	Annual eye exam	None
Columbia	Vision One discount program*	Cleanings for \$25 co-pay; optional extended dental plan for \$125; 10% reduced cost on other services at Columbia Dental School
Cornell	Vision One discount program	Discounted rates at local dentists (Plan provided by The Chickering Group)
Dartmouth	None	Optional comprehensive dental plan for \$95 premium (single), \$185 (one dependent) and \$261.50 (two or more dependents); 20% co-pay for preventive services; 50% co-pay for fillings and oral surgery
Harvard	None	Optional dental plan for \$140 per year that includes two cleanings, radiographs, fluoride treatments and fillings.
Princeton	None	None
Yale	Eye exams covered; Reduced cost-for-fee Contact Lens Service on-site.	None
U-Penn	Annual eye exam; Vision One Program	Optional dental plan for \$144 premium.

* The Vision One Discount program, a part of Aetna US Healthcare, is offered to students as part of their student health plan, with no additional deductibles. The plan gives discounts of up to 70% on eyeglass frames, up to 55% off on lenses and lens options (e.g. scratch-resistance, anti-reflective coating, UV coating), and 20% on contact lenses; replacement contact lenses also get a discount. Eye exams are set at a fixed price (\$34 for the current year), and contact lens eye exams get \$10 off. These discounts are given at participating Vision One centers. The center nearest to Princeton University is the optics center at Sears in the Quakerbridge Mall.

Graduate Student Government (GSG) Health Plan Survey

In an effort to address the health and medical needs of the graduate student community here at Princeton, we ask that you fill out this brief survey so that we might collect information about the current system's failures and successes. Please do not answer questions that do not apply to your own situation.

All responses will be treated anonymously, and the results of this survey will only be used in an aggregated manner of how Princeton University graduate students use the Student Health Plan and the Health Services available on campus.

Please note that this survey is being run by the Graduate Student Government and is unrelated to a survey which will be released shortly by the University. This survey is particularly designed to assess graduate student needs. The GSG encourages graduate students to complete both surveys, as they have different agendas.

Tell us about yourself

1. Name (optional):

Your name is not required and you may ignore this question and submit it anonymously.

2. Are you either (please check one that applies):

a. Enrolled / Unenrolled

b. US citizen / US permanent resident / International student

c. Married / Domestic partner / Single

3. Number of children (please check box that applies)?

0 (Skip to Q5) 1-2 3-4 5+

4. If you do have children, are they (check both if applicable)

Under 12 / 12 and older

5a. Do you use the Princeton Student Health Plan (SHP) as your primary care provider?

Yes / No / Don't Know

b. Does your spouse rely on the Princeton Health Plan for his/her primary care provider?

Yes / No / Don't Know

c. Do your children use the Princeton Health Plan as their primary care provider?

Yes / No / Don't Know

6a. Would you like your domestic partner to be able to join SHP?

Yes / No / Not Applicable

b. If you have access to an outside health insurance plan through your spouse or domestic partner, would you like to be able to waive the SHP?

Yes / No / Not Applicable

7a. Have you suffered from a serious illness (e.g. requiring hospitalization, extensive drug or physical therapy, etc.) while attending Princeton University?

Yes / No

b. Have any of your dependents suffered from a serious illness while you were attending Princeton University?

Yes / No / Not Applicable

8. Who pays your annual SHP fee? (check all that apply)

Personal Advisor / Outside fellowship / University fellowship / Department / Don't know / Other

9. Excluding the annual SHP fee, how much do you estimate you spend annually on health related expenses (including money towards the deductible and money spent on dependents)?

0-\$100 / \$101-\$250 / \$251-\$500 / \$500-\$1000 / \$1000+

McCosh Health Clinic

10. Have you ever used the McCosh Health Clinic for any service?

Yes / No

11. If so, what for? (check all that apply)

- a. vaccinations
- b. allergy treatment
- c. annual gynecological exam
- d. common illness(cold etc.)
- e. physical therapy
- f. mental health services
- g. sexual health
- h. sports medicine
- i. other / Please specify:

12. Rate your overall experience at McCosh on the following scale:

1 very poor 2 poor 3 fair 4 good 5 very good

13. Rate the quality of care and helpfulness of the doctors and nurses seen:

1 very poor 2 poor 3 fair 4 good 5 very good

14. During the school year (not including breaks), do you find the hours of operation at McCosh to be compatible with your needs ?

Yes / No

15. During breaks and the summer, do you find the hours of operation at McCosh to be accessible?
Yes / No / Not on campus during that time

16. Do you find that appointments are readily available when you need them?
Yes / No

17. If you have been referred to an outside doctor through McCosh, were you satisfied with the care you received?
Yes / No

Student Health Plan

18. Have you ever forgone any of the following treatments because of the expense (check all that apply)?

- a. eye exam
- b. vaccination
- c. prescription drug
- d. routine physical exam
- e. annual gynecological exam
- f. mental health services
- g. annual dental check up
- h. dental work (not including annual check up)
- i. elective surgery
- j. other / Please specify:

19. In the time that you have been on the Princeton SHP, have you ever exceeded the annual deductible?

(The annual deductible is defined in the SHP as "Benefits are paid after a covered person satisfies a deductible (within a plan year) consisting of \$250 of eligible expenses. The family deductible (including the student) is \$500 per plan." In other words - the amount of money you must pay out of pocket before the health plan will consider paying your bills.)

Every year / Yes / No

20. Have you ever exceeded the annual maximum out of pocket expense (\$5250)?
Yes / No

21a. If you have any outstanding debts related to medical expenses, how much do you owe?
\$0-\$500 / \$500-\$1000 / more than \$1000

b. What kind of medical expenses created your debt? (check all that apply)

- 1. child care
- 2. mental health care
- 3. emergency care
- 4. specialist care
- 5. prescriptions

- 6. chronic illness
- 7. hospital stay
- 8. other / Please specify:

22. If you have used mental health services, please rate your satisfaction of the SHP in the following areas:

- a. general care
1 very poor / 2 poor / 3 fair / 4 good / 5 very good
- b. choice of doctors
1 very poor / 2 poor / 3 fair / 4 good / 5 very good
- c. the cap on the number of visits covered by the plan
1 very poor / 2 poor / 3 fair / 4 good / 5 very good

Improvements

23. What do you think the four top priorities should be in changing the current health system available to the graduate students? (Assign numbers 1-4, 1 being most important.)

- a. nothing
- b. improve quality of service at McCosh Health Center
- c. improve hours at McCosh
- d. improve insurance coverage for unenrolled students
- e. improve child health care plan
- f. reduce deductible amount (\$275)
- g. reduce maximum out of pocket expense (\$5275)
- h. improve prescription plan
- i. improve mental health benefits
- j. basic dental coverage
- k. other (please tell us what in the comments section)

If you have any ideas about how any of these services can be improved, use the comments section below.

24. Comments. If you think that we missed an issue that is important to you - please let us know. We are also interested in any bad or good experiences that you may have had with the McCosh health center or the health plan in general. Examples of inadequate health care that you provide us with are an invaluable resource for future discussions with the PU administration. If you feel strongly about the health care issues and have a desire to help us improve it, please put your comments in the box below. Don't forget to click the "submit" button below after you've completed your comments!

Note: We do not have your e-mail address, so if you want to request information, please click the button below to submit the form, and then send us an e-mail.

THANK YOU!