

To: Erika Paterson
From: Justin Man
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Subject: Proposal for improving housing selection process at UBC.

Introduction:

The University of British Columbia is a prestigious university with a rich history of higher education and learning opportunities. In the Vancouver campus alone, UBC is the educational institution for almost fifty-five thousand undergraduates and graduate students. UBC Canada's largest university in-terms of on-campus housing with over 9,400 residential spaces available for undergraduate and graduate students studying on campus in Vancouver. Although the University of British Columbia holds the most residential spaces in all of Canada, students at UBC face the challenge of finding housing convenient enough for a reasonable commute.

Statement of Problem:

Although UBC's housing program is the largest all across Canada, many students are not offered housing at UBC Vancouver. The selection process behind residential offers to student enforced by UBC Housing provide fair and equal opportunities for every student to obtain housing, regardless of location (non-local and local students have the same probability of obtaining UBC campus residence). As a result, a large number of students who went to secondary-school in Vancouver are receiving UBC housing offers. With residential spots being occupied by students who grew up in the local vicinity, many students moving from outside the greater Vancouver area are left trying to find a home outside of UBC campus. In other words, students who grew up in neighborhoods relatively far from UBC: Burnaby, Delta, Surrey, Tsawassen, and New Westminster are obligated to devote 2-4 hours of travel time a day just to get to class. Also, students from downtown Vancouver, Kitsilano, Kerrisdale, Oakridge, Marpole, Dunbar, etc. are occupying residential spaces that seem more beneficial for non-local students. In addition, international and out-of-province students who are not offered campus housing are forced to find a living situation outside of campus making the search for a home another worry in the transition process of studying a new country.

Proposed Solutions:

Exposing this issue to student bodies such as UBC's International Student Association and Alma Mater Society can spark a potential policy change from UBC housing. Proposing the formation of a student collective to assist students whom were not offered residence in finding a home is a

realistic solution that will benefit commuting UBC students. Group pages on Facebook have already created a community of commuters and have helped a countless amount of people find housing across Vancouver. Creating a student collective within either one of the student unions mentioned above will provide a more hands-on resource for students facing this struggle. A resource with the purpose not only to help students find properties to live in, but also roommates and co-signers interesting in sharing a home and reducing living expenses. A resource like such can be beneficial for students who are currently struggling to find housing off-campus and future students to connect and plan past their scheduled leases on-campus.

Audience:

UBCISA and AMS are two student bodies with rich histories of student activism across UBC campus and even across various Vancouver communities. AMS specifically was established in 1915 and have been involved in student run operations helping communities across Vancouver. AMS is also involved in social and political activism enriching UBC students with guest lectures and presentation educating students about the social and political landscapes of North America. AMS and UBCISA are great student bodies who are most likely to form a student collective willing to assist students find off-campus housing in Vancouver.

Scope:

To help aid the exploration of this topic, the following questions need to be addressed:

1. How many students applied for UBC Housing?
2. How are students selected for housing at UBC today?
3. What is the average commute time for a students living inside the Greater Vancouver area?
4. What is the average commute time for a students living outside the Greater Vancouver area (Burnaby, Surrey, Delta, Tsawassen, New Westminster, etc.)?
5. Can a subgroup or branch of UBCISA or AMS be established to help this specific issue?

Methods:

Discussions with David Le, a former Residential Advisor at UBC who was also part of the selection process for UBC Housing will help me understand and analyze the selection process of residence at UBC. I will also provide information from interviews and surveys with commuters at UBC, both domestic and international, to understand their experiences with off-campus living. Along with my primary sources, I will be conducting statistical research regarding the demographics of the residents on the UBC Vancouver campus as well as literary research of university campus life through academic journals.

I hope to provide valuable evidence supporting the formation of a student collective. A student-driven operation that helps other students find a basic necessity for their life seems more than essential, especially at a university as multicultural, socially diverse, and financially various as UBC.

Qualifications:

Firstly, I am a third year sociology major at the University of British Columbia with a great interest in understanding demographics. Being a student at such a multicultural setting, I was shocked to have met a large number of non-local students who commute to class everyday. To be in a country far away from home with no family to rely on, I would expect a majority of non-international students to be living on UBC Campus. Secondly, I am an international student myself who was not offered residence this past term but was granted residence the two terms prior.

Conclusion:

Despite UBC's efforts trying to provide housing to at all students, a large number of students from the University of British Columbia face the challenge of finding housing outside of campus. There are a number of solutions that UBC Housing can provide for non-local students struggling to find housing. But it is more important to establish and create ways in taming the issue through student-operated collectives before we make drastic changes to a system set in place for many years.