

# Order of The Golden Bear

ΔΙΩΚΩ

ESTABLISHED 1900

Temporary Meeting Location, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Homelessness both in our community and on campus.

A fellow opened the discussion by recounting their first extracurricular experience at Cal in the early 1980's. The fellow discussed their involvement in a committee to try to advise the campus on the housing crisis, and if that report had been followed, things could be different now. The main takeaways from the report was that the campus was increasing the enrollment numbers however they have only added a small number of housing units in comparison to the increased admissions. This has had an impact on the housing crisis as well as the difficulty for students to get into classes and maneuver classes.

To add to the historical context, another fellow added that the university was built upon the German education model in which housing was not considered something to provide, assuming that there would be an supply of affordable off campus housing. However, the bay area housing market, the legislative and policy issues at the state level (Proposition 13, California Environmental Quality Act, etc.), NIMBY-ism, as well as other factors have resulted in increased prices.

A fellow reminded the Order that there are very important actions going on in state legislation to remove NIMBYs, some being proposed right now alongside the city's ability to provide housing.

A fellow brought up the impact of homelessness in the general Berkeley area. Constantly seeing individuals sleeping on the streets of Bancroft leads us to wonder if the community is committed to the fact that there is a homelessness crisis. The state is not solving the problem nor looking at the core issue of running society in a way so that people have shelter, food, and healthcare.

The topic of student homelessness was brought up, especially in relation to a recent article from the Los Angeles Times highlighting a student that is being evicted from a trailer in which he cares for his younger siblings while attending school full-time.

Fellows that are current students brought up the point that those that are in student housing are mostly freshman and very little sophomore undergraduates. During junior and senior year, students are on their own to find housing on the market. The university doesn't assist in the search. The reasoning behind leaving the on-campus housing is mostly cost, off-campus housing is significantly cheaper. It is also worrisome that students are no longer guaranteed housing in their first year and may have to find alternative living situations.

The topic of People's Park came up as a possible location to put in new housing, however there are conflicts in terms of the safety, the concentration of violence in the area, and the cultural baggage of building upon a historically significant area of Berkeley.

A fellow discussed how freshman may feel disadvantaged if they haven't found housing after March, and they may focus less on academics and more on searching for housing. In addition, students may have to work tirelessly in order to afford the expensive rents, and students with poor backgrounds face more hardships.

Other students have had issues with landlords in which they threaten to take the large security deposits due to wear and tear of the home. Thankfully there is an attorney at the LEAD center that works with students and legal residential issues.

A fellow brought up the model of UC Merced and UC Davis in terms of public private partnerships (P3s). They have been able to have housing owned by the university and operated by private developers through negotiations before the shovel hits the site. These models can be done at Berkeley however it would take a real in depth look to see how it could alleviate the housing crisis.

A fellow brought up the fact that they were interviewing incoming Cal students for the regents and chancellor's scholarships, and this was the first time when housing concerns have come up with asking about the university. It would appear as though the housing situation is a factor of the decision process for potential students, and if it gets worse it could impact the quality of the students in the long term.

In addition, the topic of partnerships with other cities was discussed. To have students commute from Pittsburgh, as well as Crockett is tough, it would be better to have students commute from Oakland or Emeryville, possibly through partnerships with the university.

In terms of answers to high costs and what the city and UC Berkeley administration are doing, a fellow touched upon the fact that the high costs of on campus housing is due to the constant retrofits and renovation costs of the housing. This includes the remodeling of Clark Kerr campus, the earthquake-proof measures as well as police services that are available at the residential halls.

The Landmarks Commission is reviewing potential housing projects in places such as the area across from Hearst Gym. There has been some controversy over certain projects, but the press is more likely to report the controversies rather than ongoing and pending projects.

On closing points and other solutions, it would appear as though current students have been taking a stand on the issue. There have been student-led ballot initiatives such as creating an emergency fund if students become displaced, as well as a fund to create housing deposit dollars for students that are unable to upfront those early costs. In addition to those, student affairs has been partnering with real estate to strategize where to build and help fill the gaps around the area.

