

COLLEGE HOUSING COMMITTEE
Annual Report AY 2019-2020

This academic year the CHC finalized a proposed revision of *Matching Grant Plan*. The purpose of the revision is to incentivize owners of houses purchased from the College to maintain property, so that houses will return to the College in better conditions. The proposed change allows

- 1) that after the 10 percent of the purchase price allocated for capital home improvement is exhausted, a new appraisal can be conducted and the fund will be increased to match 10 percent of the current appraised value (such reappraisals can be done in every 5 years by the College)
- 2) that structural and systems projects that upgrade or maintain the structure and/or systems of the house or property will qualify for up to 50 percent match
- 3) that renovation projects that modernize the house or property will qualify for up to one-third match

The CHC's proposal is waiting for approval by the Trustees.

After finalizing the language of this proposal, we turned our attention to possible policy changes regarding the College's house purchase program. We see the problems the College faces with the Housing Program at present as following:

- since faculty members have to move out of the houses at retirement, there is little incentive for maintaining the properties or investing in them. Consequently, houses that are returned to the College are in bad condition and require large sums of money for renovation
- we believe that the most important selling point of houses in the next decade will be energy efficiency and the condition of the houses. In the present system, house owners have no incentive to invest into making their houses more energy efficient. The installment of solar panels, for instance, is costly and is worth the expense only if people can stay in the house for a significant amount of time
- many of the houses the College owns are too large, have high taxes, and produce high heating bills. Consequently, nobody wants to buy these houses. Standing empty, these houses deteriorate rapidly. The maintenance of empty houses requires large sums of money

It is not only financial problems and waste we would like to solve by changing policy regarding the purchase of college housing.

We consider it important:

- that the College maintains control of its perimeters. Such control is crucial for possible future expansion of the College, and also because changing zoning laws might change the College's surrounding, which might affect the College and its work negatively in the future
- that the College cultivates its community and encourages faculty to live close to the College and be actively engaged with the social and intellectual life of the institution. Faculty commuting long or even short distance cannot be asked to participate in community building events, support students by inviting them to their house, attending

performances and academic talks, in other words be a member of the community in and around the institution. As more and more faculty choose to move further away from the College, the nature of what it means to be a residential College and what it means to be part of the college community changes. With a student body facing increasingly more mental challenges, we find it important to strengthen the sense of community

- that the College uses its Housing Program (both Rental Housing Program and the Home Purchase Program) for recruiting and retaining faculty. At a time when housing prices are high, the College's Housing Program can be an affective recruiting tool
- that the College maintains its Housing Program so that faculty can avoid long commute and respect environmental concerns. Living walking distance from the College would cut down significantly on the use of cars in our community

We drafted a proposal for policy changes and started initial consultations with the College's administration. Unfortunately, because of the COVID19 crisis the CHC was not able to finalize the proposal. For next year the CHC will need to work out some details in the proposal and finalize the language.

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