There is a sense of inevitability gathering around the retail development on 25th Street, between Charles and Howard — just down the road from the Homewood campus. This development, called “25th Street Station” would play host to Lowe’s, Wal-Mart, and other shops as yet to be determined. When the project was first proposed around February 2010, opinions were fiercely divided on whether the impact on the community would be positive or negative.

The proponents of 25th Street Station argue that the construction and service jobs would be a boon to the local economy, and that low-priced goods would help keep more money in people’s pockets. Others say that a Wal-mart and a Lowe’s would destroy at least as many jobs as it would create, with the few created jobs being predominately low-wage with no benefits and with little opportunity for advancement. This view has some support from empirical studies showing that large chain stores have a net negative effect on local wages and property values. Baltimore luminaries, from the celebrated John Waters to the arch-hon Denise Whiting, have also weighed in on this issue (Denise - pro, John - con).

This conflict has also pitted the various neighborhood associations against each other. Both the Remington Neighborhood Alliance and the Greater Remington Improvement Association are of the view that the development is inevitable and concessions should be negotiated, like more funds for the roads to handle the increased traffic, and preservation of an adjoining church. Both the Medfield and Hampden community associations think that Remington should take a harder line, and lament that they have been left out of the loop in a discussion that affects them directly. Hampden in particular has a few local hardware stores whose business would be impacted by a nearby Lowe’s.

Regardless, the period for public comment has passed, and the development has the go-ahead from the city council land use committee. Some city council members like Belinda Conway have put up some resistance, but have found that they have no position to negotiate from.

A large issue in the debate is over whether the employees of Walmart and Lowe’s will be paid a living wage. Councilwoman Mary Pat Clarke introduced a bill requiring retailers that make $10 million or more in profit pay their workers at least $10.50 an hour (about $2 more than the typical twenty-level wage). This bill is widely regarded as being directly aimed at 25th Street Station.

Even though the issue seems largely settled, the initial proposal brought concerned citizens out into the streets and into meeting halls. As a result of this process the community groups have become much more adept with the permit and zoning process. The fight over 25th street station seems to have started a wave of activism and concern for local affairs that extends beyond this particular issue.
by Patrick Fessenbecker

As many of you know, the GRO conducted a survey of the Homewood graduate student body in the spring of 2009. This survey focused in particular on stipends and cost of living expenses, asking some seventy questions about various aspects of graduate student financial life. The GRO conducted the survey for two reasons. First, in our ongoing advocacy on behalf of the graduate students, it became clear that we needed non-anecdotal, systematic evidence of the financial struggle graduate life at Hopkins sometimes entails. Second, the GRO noted that the graduate students at the University of Pennsylvania had successfully used survey data to argue for an increase in stipends for graduate students, and we hoped we could achieve a similar result.

Our survey opened on 6 February 2009 and closed on 31 March. We received a total of 830 responses; this comprised fifty-two percent of the Homewood graduate student body at the time. We received responses from members of all of the departments in the Whiting and Krieger schools, with the departments of Near Eastern Students and Anthropology having particularly high rates of participation. For various reasons, unfortunately, analysis of this data – and attempts to explore it in a formal report that could be used in an appeal to raise stipend amounts – did not begin until this fall. However, we are pleased to report that we have completed a preliminary analysis, and begun deploying it in our advocacy. As such, I write today to apprise you of the significant findings in our analysis of the survey, our policy recommendations on the basis of this analysis, and on the actions we have taken to address the issue.

The data reveal a significant disparity in stipend levels within the Hopkins community, correlating roughly with department. The numbers are quite stark: the average stipend amount in the department with the highest-paid graduate students was $28,333, while the average amount in the department with the lowest-paid graduate students was just $15,067. (Our understanding of FERPA regulations prevents us, at the moment, from naming these departments in a public forum). As one might suspect, this disparity has given rise to several subpopulations within the graduate student body. One population is dealing with the financial struggles of graduate life quite well: they report being “satisfied” or “very satisfied” with their stipend levels, generally avoid debt, and are on track in the process of completing their degrees.

Another population, however, is struggling – and this group became the focal point of our analysis. The data reveal that some 36% of the Homewood graduate student body is financially at-risk: they are going into debt, either in the form of student loans, credit cards, or both; they live in unsafe neighborhoods or are obligated to engage in unsafe commuting patterns; and they go without needed medical care, often in the form of dentistry. We sought to determine whether this at-risk status revealed poor spending habits, or whether it was a simple result of a lower stipend.

There is clear evidence that it is the latter. Perhaps most revealing are the stipend averages: the average stipend amount for the students who fell into the at-risk, “target” population was $16,100, while the average amount for students who were “satisfied” with graduate student life was $23,644 (the overall average stipend amount was $19,433). As such, it seems clear that the simplest and most efficient way to increase graduate student quality of life is to raise the lowest stipend amounts. Correspondingly, it seems clear that the main cause of graduate student financial difficult is simply the fact of lower stipends: students with higher averages report the sorts of problems we are concerned with at much lower rates.

(continued on page 3)
GRO Stipend Survey (continued)

Nevertheless, we found that the explanation was not quite so simple. Notably, one's stipend amount – by itself – wasn't a certain predictor for status in the target population. In particular, there were departments with roughly equal average stipend amounts who nevertheless had widely varying percentages of students in the target population (one department, for instance, placed nearly eighty percent of its students in the at-risk population, while a department with an essentially equal average stipend amount placed just forty percent). Similarly, another feature of graduate student life – summer funding options – was strongly correlated with membership in the target population: the target population was composed largely of students on nine-month stipends.

On the basis of this analysis, we recommended four policy changes to the Dean's Offices of the Whiting and Krieger Schools: 1) raise the minimum graduate student stipend to $25,000; 2) add dental and vision insurance to the existing graduate student health plans; 3) institute some form of summer funding for graduate students who currently lack it; and 4) conduct a new analysis that could explain department-specific factors impeding graduate student quality of life.

Our analysis was received positively. Although the Dean's Offices remain uncertain about how precisely to increase stipends within the current financial context of the university, the central facts of our analysis were not disputed, and were indeed generally confirmed. Moreover, the university administration had already recognized graduate student stipends as a problem.

Nevertheless, we found that the explanation was not quite so simple. Notably, one's stipend amount – by itself – wasn't a certain predictor for status in the target population. In particular, there were departments with roughly equal average stipend amounts who nevertheless had widely varying percentages of students in the target population (one department, for instance, placed nearly eighty percent of its students in the at-risk population, while a department with an essentially equal average stipend amount placed just forty percent). Similarly, another feature of graduate student life – summer funding options – was strongly correlated with membership in the target population: the target population was composed largely of students on nine-month stipends.

On the basis of this analysis, we recommended four policy changes to the Dean's Offices of the Whiting and Krieger Schools: 1) raise the minimum graduate student stipend to $25,000; 2) add dental and vision insurance to the existing graduate student health plans; 3) institute some form of summer funding for graduate students who currently lack it; and 4) conduct a new analysis that could explain department-specific factors impeding graduate student quality of life.

Our analysis was received positively. Although the Dean's Offices remain uncertain about how precisely to increase stipends within the current financial context of the university, the central facts of our analysis were not disputed, and were indeed generally confirmed. Moreover, the university administration had already recognized graduate student stipends as a problem.

Restaurant Review: McCabe's

By Megan Mayerle

Last night my husband and I decided to sample one of the smaller, lesser-known restaurants in Hampden, McCabe's. Located at 3845 Falls road, McCabe's is about 3 blocks north of the west end of The Avenue. It's a tiny place with exposed brick walls, lots of woodwork, a few smaller-sized tables and a long wooden bar. It was absolutely packed with people when we arrived. We ate at the bar; for a table I'd strongly recommend a reservation (http://mcabeshampden.com or at 410-467-1000).

Since we were seated at the bar, the bartender was our server, who despite the busyness was very attentive and helpful. McCabe's has a full bar with a decent beer selection (Dogfish Head 60 min on tap, Duval and Sam Smith's in bottles, $3-$5) and a small but adequate wine selection (generally $7 per glass, $25 per bottle). Upon bringing our drinks, the bartender offered us free popcorn. It was served with a variety of house-made seasoned salts: chipotle-lime, curry, and Old Bay. We tried the curry-flavored salted popcorn while looking over the menu, and it was delicious.

McCabe's menu (www.facebook.com/mccabeshampden) is good though not particularly unique. Appetizers include French onion soup, crab and spinach dip, shrimp, wings, and a variety of salads. Also on the menu are a variety of sandwiches ($10-$11) including their specialty, cheeseburgers made from locally raised beef. Entrees include crab cakes, seared tuna, NY strip steak, shrimp and grits, and a variety of homestyle sounding specials ($15-$25). McCabe's offers one vegetarian sandwich (eggplant), one vegetarian entrée (polenta veggie lasagna), and no vegan food. Desserts vary nightly including a variety of cobblers, bread puddings, and pies. I ordered a bowl of French Onion soup as an appetizer, with crab cakes, macaroni and cheese, and asparagus as my entrée. My husband ordered a cheeseburger topped with cheddar cheese (a variety of cheeses are available) and bacon, served with fries and a pickle, and sweet potato pie for dessert.

My French Onion soup arrived in a small crock covered with melted gruyere. It was delicious. The crab cakes were quite good, plenty of hunks of crabmeat and not too much filler. They were served with a lemony tartar sauce that went quite well. The asparagus was grilled and buttered, and the macaroni and cheese was creamy and delicious. It was a very satisfying dinner. My husband's burger was cooked properly (he'd asked for it done medium), and juicy and delicious. The sweet potato pie arrived covered with amaretto whipped cream and freshly shaved nutmeg. It had a candied taste, and the freshly grated nutmeg was an especially nice touch. All in all, it was a great dinner.

Rating: 3/5 stars
## March/April 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sunday</th>
<th>Monday</th>
<th>Tuesday</th>
<th>Wednesday</th>
<th>Thursday</th>
<th>Friday</th>
<th>Saturday</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3pm Coffee Hour - Levering</td>
<td>6-9pm Taiwanese Student Assoc. film screening Krieger 203</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3pm Coffee Hour - Levering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3pm Coffee Hour - Levering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6pm General Council - Levering</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GPSA Week Events

April 4-7 is National Graduate and Professional Student Appreciation (GPSA) week!

### Monday
Mega Bonus Coffee Hour catered by Carma’s
3-4pm, Levering Lounge
Scavenger Hunt and Stress Busters
4-5pm, Levering Lounge

### Tuesday
Lattman Lecture Series
5:30-6:30pm, Maryland 110
Dance Party
8-10pm, Charles Commons A&B

### Wednesday
Decadent Deserts
5-6 pm, Glass Pavillion

### Thursday
Dean’s Luncheon
12-1pm, Glass Pavillion
Super Mega Bonus Happy Hour
6-8pm, Location TBD

---

If you know about any interesting events going on - off campus or on campus - please e-mail us at gradnews@jhu.edu

---

**JHU GRO to Host Regional Graduate Student Conference**

The GRO is pleased to announce that it will host this year’s National Association for Graduate-Professional Students (NAGPS) South East Regional conference on April 8-9.

Graduate and Professional students from as far south as Florida, and as east as Alabama will be getting together on the Homewood campus to talk about how things are done at their respective institutions and share information and resources with the wider graduate student community.

The NAGPS is the only national student organization that represents the interests of graduate & professional students in public and private universities at local, state, and national levels.

Attendees will have access to papers and presentations relating to all aspects of graduate student life such as: job-search, taxes, housing, leadership, international student issues, libraries, transport, safety, graduate affairs, student organizations, etc.

Our own Adam Rueben will be giving a stand-up performance, followed by a signing of his book “My Stupid Stupid Decision to go to Grad School,” which will be available for purchase for only $5.

The $15 registration fee includes five meals, and a welcome bag stuffed with goodies, and lots of useful information. For JHU students, this is a great deal.

For more info about the conference, or for questions about registration or presentations, please contact: nagpsser@gmail.com
A schedule of events is available at the NAGPS website: www.nagps.org_events/southcentral-regional-conference-0
To register please go to: http://tinyurl.com/nagpsser