

Hi everyone, I am Hyunsoo Lee, a GE in Anthropology and VP Equity and Inclusion at GTFF. This is my fifth year since coming from South Korea. Thank you for giving me an opportunity to speak about housing experiences. I would like to share mine and couple of other grad students' stories.

Summer is particularly a very difficult time for international students and for domestic students who are rejected for summer GE application or do not have relevant financial support. Though the contract says a tenant can sublet after receiving written consent from university, it is almost impossible to sublet a university-affiliated apartment. International students are not allowed to work off-campus during their first academic year in any cases, and even in the rest of the years, only possible through visa sponsor and university's authorization with qualifying economic hardship or an emergent circumstance. A lot of GEs have to ask parents for money, to pay rents for empty rooms during summer when it is the only time they can do a long-term, concentrated research abroad and/or meet their family that they dearly miss every moment.

An international GE in sociology has recently been rejected from summer GE position. Since this is the only financial source in summer, they are worried that they may have to move out from current apartment, cancel the planned travel abroad, prevent progressing prospectus defense and eventually graduating.

Numerous incoming, first year graduate students suffer from extreme stress due to difficulties in finding affordable housing. Information about when you will get approval or rejection of applied UO housing is provided in very ambiguous and slow manners. The wait-list periods you get informed are very inaccurate and unreasonable. University housing just provide a random, very long waiting period, which is unreasonable because we see a lot of tenants struggle to find roommates. Instead of being a graduate student doing teaching and research, we have to worry and spend a lot of time being a housing manager, property renter, roommate-finder, advertiser, and a realtor.

An international student from Canada, a fully English speaker, had difficulty as well. They did not get a GE appointment in the first year, so after paying all the tuition and fees, they could not afford the housing rent. No information that one need a credit and rental history to apply non-university affiliated housing was given for the new student. As a result, they had to live in an AirBnB for the first three months and paid rent in cash out of an ATM. Proper housing was not secured until the second year, that they saw no practical support or advice from the university.

Another Canadian grad student has gone through difficulties as well. In their first year, they were about to finally sign the non-university affiliated housing. The landlord, however, said that they need an American co-signer. The student's family members were all rejected being the co-signer. They repeated the process over and over until the student paid an extra month of rent as a security deposit. The two Canadian grad students expressed concerns how much more difficulties would exist to non-native speakers, such as to international GE in Education who is very worried about rapid rent increases and the installation of middle-class tax cuts, reminding her of very first week of sleeping at hotel.

Grad students with families can be much more vulnerable to difficult housing and financial situations. A story from a graduate student from Hungary also shows us the challenges. In prior to starting the first year of the program, this student made a visit to Eugene in May 2018 to seek and apply for university housing. Application was made for a 3 bedroom since the student has a wife and two kids. In July they were told that the waiting list dates back to 2016 and there is no chance getting the applied unit. The

entire family panicked as they only had a hotel booked for their first week. Their son's status who applied for the 6th grade middle school in Eugene also was in vulnerable position because the address was the applied university housing unit. They suddenly started to search non-university affiliated housings through internet while in Budapest, but without support or information from anyone, it was extremely difficult. Even when they have found some proper unit, landlords rejected because they had no credit, rental history, local income or renter insurance.

Finding an affordable housing is still a struggle for another international GE. They are a single parent with a lovely kid. Before coming to US, they sent out numerous housing applications which costed fifty dollars each, but only response came from an expensive apartment they were not hoping to end up with. If you don't meet the criteria which almost every international GE does not meet, the real estate asks you to pay additional deposit equal to the normal deposit amount. They are still on the waiting list of university housing, having no idea when they will be able to move.

A student from Costa Rica is planning to have their wife moving to Eugene. Due to the regulations for F2 visa holders, their wife cannot work in the US, so the both will rely solely on the GE stipend. This GE is deeply concerned that increases in UO housing and mandatory fees will not allow them to continue the degree program, that proposed salary increase from UO administration will not make up for the increased economic pressure of having a dependent. And if the proposed cuts on our health insurance become a reality, seeing a doctor can be impossible.

As these stories show, finding and maintaining affordable, livable housing is extremely stressful and results in huge negative impacts to grad students who research, teach, work hard everyday that build up the backbone of this university and community. We sincerely ask university to carefully reconsider housing issues and connected matters including insurance, summer support, and equity and inclusion elements, that heavily impacts graduate students, undergraduate students, and every members of this valuable community. Thank you.