To Whom It May Concern:

The Student Senate of the University of New Hampshire recently passed the attached resolution regarding student opinion on the need for additional student housing. Led by our Campus Structure Chair, Christian Mereb, the Student Senate considered the many factors that should affect the decision to create additional student housing. The details of this research and discussion are included in the resolution below. The Student Senate respectfully requests that the University considers the students’ recommendation to not take any immediate action on the construction of new student housing due in large part the number of current unknown factors.

Respectfully,

Gabriel Hoffman
Student Senate Speaker
University of New Hampshire
Whereas, the University of New Hampshire student body has, for many years, requested renovations, updates, and more rooms in order to be in accordance with the original plans and building room designations, and

Whereas, the University of New Hampshire, in its 2004 Campus Master Plan focused on the expansion of graduate apartments into the Woodside undergraduate apartments because there was no assessed undergraduate housing need, and

Whereas, in addition, it expressed two other options for graduate students who are single or married/partnered without children: the first was a gradual replacement of Babcock Hall, while the second was the reuse of Adams Tower East, and

Whereas, both halls could be adapted into having 8 single rooms per floor (total of 56 rooms with private baths) which share a common living room and kitchenette, and

Whereas, the University of New Hampshire, in its 2004 Campus Master Plan presented 11 campus buildings as potential surplus and this is representative of the campus buildings that can be considered near or even past their useful life, and would be eliminated or reassigned if the University assesses a need for space, new construction, and/or alternate use (instructional, research based, administrative, residential, and support service centered), and

Whereas, of these buildings, the Minis are the only residence halls placed on the list, and

Whereas, as expressed in the 2012 Campus Master Plan, the immediate housing priority was to renovate Hetzel Hall, and

Whereas, the 2012 Campus Master Plan also underscores the renovation of Stoke Hall as a need that is not critical, but appropriate, and

Whereas, as expressed in the 2012 Campus Master Plan, the future plan is to eventually expand the 5 SERCS to four buildings, and

Whereas, the University of New Hampshire has been in discussion with independent hotel chains with the intent to have Hetzel and Alexander Halls renovated and converted into a hotel. Such a change would cause a loss of 300 beds, which would need to be replaced, and
Whereas, the cost to build a new residence hall with 350 beds would be roughly $2 million and would lead to an approximate 5% increase in any year to the housing rates in order to pay off the debt, and

Whereas, the Town of Durham has over the years increased its number of available beds. Since the year 2010, the number of available beds has increased by more than 2,000 due to the establishment of new housing communities, and

Whereas, a major initiative of the 2004 Campus Master Plan was to increase the amount of on-campus undergraduate housing, so that 60% of students can reside on campus. Increases in enrollment have allowed for 55% of the full time undergraduate students to live on campus (as of 2012). This is bearing in mind that the current design capacity is 6,800 beds. Each fall, UNH housing houses an additional 300-500 students in “built-up” units, and

Whereas, there is uncertainty regarding the demand for additional campus housing in the future, as there are estimates that enrollment will decrease over the coming years. See figure 1, and

Be it resolved by the Student Senate of the University of New Hampshire to recommend that the University of New Hampshire take no immediate action on building any residence halls within the next two years until better approximations on future student enrollment can be assessed to warrant the need for an increase in student housing costs, and

Be it further resolved that the University, through strategic funding and budget management, attempt over the next 3-5 years to renovate the following residence halls in an effort to maintain quality housing for students:
1. Adams Tower
2. Stoke Hall
3. Hetzel Hall if there is no hotel built over the property

Senate Action: Passes with one abstention
Speaker Verification: Gabriel Hoffman