

Duke University

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DUKE STUDENT GOVERNMENT
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September 15, 2006

Mayor William V. Bell
Office of the Mayor
101 City Hall Plaza
Durham, NC 27701

Dear Mayor Bell:

As you are aware, on August 11 Duke student Erin Kuhns was struck and almost killed by a sport utility vehicle near the intersection of Broad Street and Perry Street in District 2 off of Duke University's East Campus. On behalf of the 6,400 undergraduate students at Duke whom I represent, I am writing to express my concern about the conditions at that intersection and to urge the City of Durham to adequately respond to this unfortunate accident.

The intersection of Broad and Perry Streets is widely considered by Duke students and other members of the community to be a dangerous one. Although a bright green sign was placed at the intersection shortly after the accident in order to alert motorists to the presence of the crosswalk, conditions have not improved since the accident occurred over a month ago. Now that the semester has begun and students have returned to campus, I would like the Duke Student Government to work with the City of Durham to increase the safety at that intersection—for the benefit of Duke students and other members of the Durham community.

A minimal investment by the City would likely bring about a great benefit, and residents have already put forth a series of suggestions to that end. I ask that these "low-cost, immediate" recommendations presented by the Old West Durham Neighborhood Association and other members of the community be given due consideration by the City:

- Place white posts indicating "ped x-ing" in the middle of the crosswalk (similar to those currently on Ninth Street) so that drivers will slow down in order to prevent from side swiping them.
- Extend the curbs close to the crosswalk out into the street to decrease the length of the crosswalk.
- Install a raised crosswalk with a rough brick surface to encourage drivers to slow down.
- Decrease the speed limit in the vicinity of the crosswalk.

After a pedestrian was killed at the intersection of Markham and Broad Streets, the City placed a crossing signal at the intersection in order to improve safety; a more long-term solution would be to do the same at the intersection of Broad and Perry, especially considering that the two intersections

have comparable levels of pedestrian traffic. Now that the unfortunate incident of August 11 has highlighted the hazardous situation at Broad and Perry, a long-term solution should be implemented before another accident raises this issue again.

In addition, although these suggestions would primarily serve to increase the safety of the intersection at Broad and Perry, they would also have an important additional benefit: breaking down a barrier between Duke's campus and the wider Durham community. Many students frequent Ninth Street and other areas off-campus, and recent efforts by both the Duke administration and the Duke Student Government have sought to encourage students to regularly interact with the community. Currently, however, students fear for their safety when crossing the street in order to walk only a block from East Campus to Ninth Street. I am sure that many of our neighbors in Durham whom we welcome on campus feel the same way about that intersection as well.

If your schedule permits, I would like to meet with you to discuss this and several other topics further. I very much appreciate your attention to this matter and look forward to working with you in my capacity as the President of the Duke Student Government.

Sincerely,

Elliott Wolf
Duke University, Class of 2008
President, Duke Student Government

CC: Richard Brodhead
Tallman Trask
John Burness
Mike Woodard