Chair Amanda Burden  
City Planning Commission  
22 Reade Street  
New York, NY 10007

Dear Chair and Commissioners:

The Gallatin School of Individualized Study is a small liberal arts college which is a part of the large research university that is NYU. We have 1400 undergraduate students and 200 masters students, making us about the size of Amherst College. With the help of faculty advisers, our students shape their own interdisciplinary courses of study, drawing on classes and professors from around the university. Our students take on average 50% of their classes in the Gallatin School, and 50% outside the School, selecting classes from all of the other Schools at NYU. Gallatin attracts highly qualified independent-minded students who include some of the very top-ranked undergraduates who attend NYU. To weaken our mission would weaken NYU both because of the loss of the ability to attract these students, who don’t fit in traditional academic departments, and because of the loss of the interdisciplinary faculty, committed to research and teaching, whom we are able to attract.

The need for more academic space in NYU’s core is very serious for Gallatin, and I would like to address four areas: 1. Student needs; 2. faculty office space and need for faculty growth; 3. Faculty recruitment; 4. Concern for our part-time faculty.

**Gallatin Student Need for added academic space in NYU’s Core:**

As should be apparent from my description above, Gallatin students need to have access to classes from across the university. While some degree of movement over longer distances can be accommodated, classrooms that are in and around the core, for undergraduates especially, remain crucial for us to fulfill our academic mission. Students simply cannot build a curriculum involving classes in many different schools if they have to travel long distances between them. Already classroom space in the core is very limited, and were it to remain at the level it is now, it is clear that classrooms would need to be added at very significant distances from Washington Square. It would without doubt make our program more unmanageable and less attractive to students if they begin to find that they cannot schedule classes in close time proximity to one another. Gallatin is perhaps an extreme example of this problem, which presents an issue for all NYU undergraduates. Gallatin Masters students take about 85% of their classes in other schools, and for them, too, distant classrooms and faculty with offices in other parts of the city, would limit their ability to complete their programs of study in an efficient and timely manner.

Gallatin is committed to a small class model of instruction, and so we offer about 135-150 small classes a semester, each of which needs a classroom. If space for classes does not expand, we will be forced to consider abandoning a central part of our identity, and to turn to lecture classes that accommodate more students at one time and use fewer classrooms. Lectures are very valuable educational tools, and our students have this educational experience elsewhere in NYU. But we offer the small college experience to our students, and we stake a lot in our recruitment of top students on being able to offer small classes and seminars to students for those classes they do take in Gallatin.
Thus a significant part of our quality depends on access to classroom space, both in our vicinity for our own classes, and in the core for the courses taken outside our School.

In the Gallatin building, student space for learning, for collaboration, for classes and for workshops is very limited. Not a week goes by without a student lobbying me for additional space, whether for co-curricular activities, or central academic ones. We await with eagerness the moment that the university can find additional space for some of the other academic units in our building, so that we can acquire one additional floor and to alleviate this pressing need. Only development like that proposed in NYU’s Plan 2031 can in fact make this possible for us.

**Faculty office space and need for faculty growth**

We have now reached the moment where we have no new faculty office space in Gallatin or in rented space we have acquired to help deal with this space crisis. We have been supported by the university in expanding our full-time faculty in the past 5 years, an expansion important in part because it has allowed us to diminish our need for part-time faculty. Increasing the full-time faculty size is in my judgment crucial to continuing to maintain and increase our quality because our model depends on intensive advising, and full-time faculty are the only ones who can make the time commitments we need for high quality advising. However, we cannot hire new faculty without having office space for them. If things do not change, I predict that we will face a very real struggle to avoid a diminishment of quality. We also may have to return to a situation in which a higher percentage of our faculty are part-time. Across the nation it is clear that moving to as many full-time faculty as possible is seen as a goal and a value for universities, but in our case we have a university willing to move in this direction, and an inability of the School to do so because of the specific space limitations we face.

**Faculty recruitment**

One example: Two years ago I recruited a very high-powered chaired professor from another institution. This faculty member asked in the course of the recruitment process if I would promise that he/she would be able to have a windowed office in the Gallatin building. I was unable to offer this in the first year, but promised I’d find a way for the second year, and I was able to attract the professor to Gallatin. I would be completely unable to make such a promise today. Indeed, I would find it difficult to promise an office at all without displacing other faculty and asking lower ranked faculty to start sharing offices. While this may not sound terrible, I can assure you that nothing is more important, especially in New York City, for the success of faculty research, not to mention student advising, than sufficient private office space. Lack of space for growth at Gallatin will certainly have a very detrimental effect on my ability to recruit high quality faculty. All the deans face this issue very intensely if in our own ways. Faculty office space, and some of the related spaces needed for the research and work they do, is crucial to our success as a university.

**Concern for our part-time faculty**

A final concern for us as a school which continues to rely on a significant base of part-time faculty is the loss of available office space for them. Each year we have been forced to diminish the number of offices we can make available, and to diminish the hours that these offices are available for their use. This is a real hardship for our very committed and long-term part-time faculty. I respect them and value very highly their contribution to the School and to the learning of our students, and feel that it is
crucial that we work immediately to alleviate this problem. The added academic space to be provided by the 2031 plan will allow all of the Schools of NYU in the Core the chance to have access to additional space which will, in turn, allow us to provide what would be a more appropriate amount of office space for our part-time faculty.

For all of these reasons, from the point of view of my School, I strongly urge you to support NYU’s plan 2031.

Yours sincerely,

Susanne L. Wofford

Dean, the Gallatin School, NYU