Recommendations Regarding the Removal of the Gargoyle and Mallinckrodt 100A as Student Group Reservation Options

by Senator Anne He

Introduction
On March 2, 2019, WashU informed a select set of student groups that they planned to turn the Gargoyle and Mallinckrodt 100A into office spaces after May 2019 Commencement. When complete, the refurbished “Gargoyle” level will be home to the Writing Center and the College Writing Program, as well as some administrative staff for the Title IX Office and the Learning Center’s Cornerstone office. All Cornerstone student services will remain in their current location on the South 40.

Background
A total of 1400 students signed the petition to prevent the removal of the Gargoyle and Mallinckrodt. Student group leaders from countless organizations on campus immediately expressed major concerns that will arise if these spaces are no longer available.

1. **Number of Hours Used:** In 2018, the Gargoyle was booked by student groups for 2674 hours total, with 1084 of those hours being used for dance rehearsals. This space is not a desire, it is a need.
2. **Cost of Other Spaces:** The Gargoyle is one of the only free spaces available to book. Alternative spaces like the Olin Dance Studios or the Olympic Studio charge student groups a fee for each hour of rehearsal. Student group budgets for Fall 2019 have already been finalized, so groups will not have the necessary funding for rehearsal space.
3. **Booking Limitations for Other Spaces:** The Gargoyle allows for flexible booking. Rehearsal times for other spaces like the Performing Arts Dance Studios can only be booked one to two weeks in advance for a limited amount of time. Groups are already fighting for rehearsal times; removing the Gargoyle will put a huge strain on the flexibility of rehearsal times. In addition, student groups have spoken to the Athletics administrative staff about the South 40 Dance Studio, and they do not have the same accommodations in mind as the ones provided to student groups in the original communication regarding the removal of the Gargoyle. This indicates a lack of firm planning and communication which will ultimately negatively impact our student groups.
4. **Bon Appetit Restrictions:** The Gargoyle is one of the only non-Bon Appetit exclusive standard spaces. If removed, student groups will not have the ability to choose different or less expensive vendors for their events and will have to pay for all WFF Facility Services costs necessary for setup and cleanup of other spaces of similar size.
5. **Logistical Needs:** The Gargoyle is used for many concerts, banquets, and other large-scale events that require the acoustics and storage options that it provides. Student groups have not been offered alternative options for these logistical needs.

6. **Cultural Shows:** Even if accommodations can somehow be made for dance rehearsals, banquets, and concerts, the Gargoyle is imperative to cultural groups including Black Anthology, Carnaval, Diwali, and LNYF, because it holds their 200+ performers with props, costumes, and instruments for all of the show weekends. Distributing these people and props across Mallinckrodt and/or the Danforth University Center would severely hinder the ability of these groups to coordinate their shows.

7. **Lack of Student Input:** None of the 50+ student groups who regularly reserve the Gargoyle were consulted about the removal of this space. However, WashU heavily uses the 4 cultural shows as promotion of the University’s commitment to diversity and inclusion. Removing the Gargoyle will hinder these shows’ ability to fulfill not only their own mission, but the University’s mission as well. Moreover, there was no student input on the accommodations that were given to these groups, and only through consistent protest did groups get to express their needs if the Gargoyle were to be removed.

**Recommendations**

SU Senate recommends that:

1. *The University provides clear opportunities for all student groups to provide feedback and suggestions about the changes and accommodations made with the removal of the Gargoyle.*

2. *The University make clear promises to work with student group leaders about permanent changes to all policies that the removal of the Gargoyle will effect BEFORE they are enacted.*

3. *The University work with SU to ensure that this change, at least for this first year of implementation, does not impact financially the ability of student groups to program their events. Because of the decision of the University to withhold this information after budgets were due, groups will be forced to re-allocate money from event programming to room reservations. Financial assistance should be provided for the rental costs of WFF Facility Services in Umraht Lounge, the Olin Dance Studio, and the Olympic Studio.*

4. *The University make clear the permanent accommodations being provided for cultural shows and the PAD in terms of a temporary staging space. These shows and performances are integral to the WashU campus culture, thus, we think it is also imperative that WashU make clear promises with respect to the shows it utilizes to promote WashU’s cultural inclusion.*

5. *The University work with groups such as SPB and KWUR to determine identifiable plans to maintain a concert/performance venue on campus.*

6. *Beyond just the Gargoyle, the University take more initiative in soliciting the opinion of students and what resources and tools they need for their campus experience. If the goal of all of these changes is to enhance the student experience, why were we not part of the conversation? We don’t doubt that the decisions made had the students in mind, but we do question the validity of making changes affecting a demographic that wasn’t part of the decision-making process.*