

AN ANALYSIS OF GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY'S WINTER BREAK STUDENT HOUSING POLICY

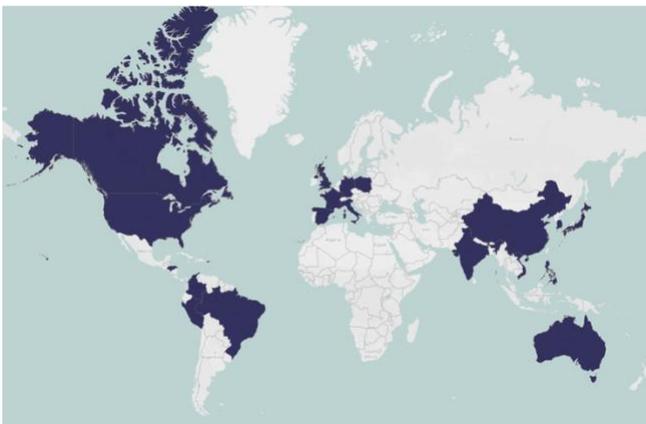
NOVEMBER 2021

Kenan Dogan (SFS'23), Kelly He (MSB'23), Shurui Liu (MSB'23)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

With financial assistance from the Georgetown University Institute for the Study of Ethics, we surveyed 117 students to analyze the burdens they face from having to vacate their dorms over winter break. We find that **76% OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS LIVING ON CAMPUS WOULD CONTINUE LIVING IN THEIR DORMS OVER WINTER BREAK** this year if given the opportunity. Further, the average international student that would like to remain on campus over break would be willing to pay \$1,000 to do so. Given these topline considerations, **WE RECOMMEND THE UNIVERSITY ALLOW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO REMAIN IN THEIR DORMS DURING WINTER BREAK.** This report will provide further insight as to which students are most burdened by the need to vacate their dorms, what these students are currently planning to do in place of returning to their home countries, how much these students would save if they could remain in their dorms, and which price the university should consider charging students that remain their dorms.

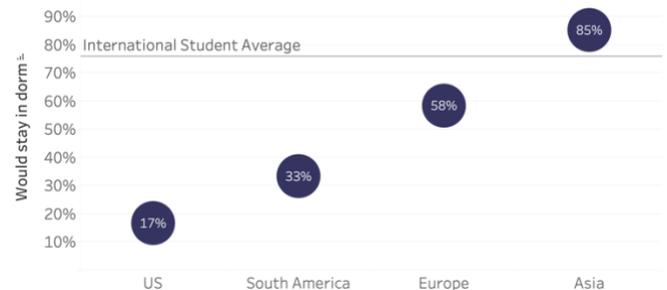
SURVEY RESPONDENTS REPRESENT 21 COUNTRIES



WHICH STUDENTS ARE MOST IMPACTED?

STUDENTS FROM FURTHER-AWAY CONTINENTS ARE SIGNIFICANTLY MORE LIKELY TO WANT TO STAY IN THEIR DORMS OVER WINTER BREAK. 85% of students from Asia wish to do so, compared to 58% of European students, 33% of South American students, and 17% of North American students. Several variables can explain why Georgetown's current policy especially burdens students from further-away continents.

76% OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WANT TO STAY ON CAMPUS

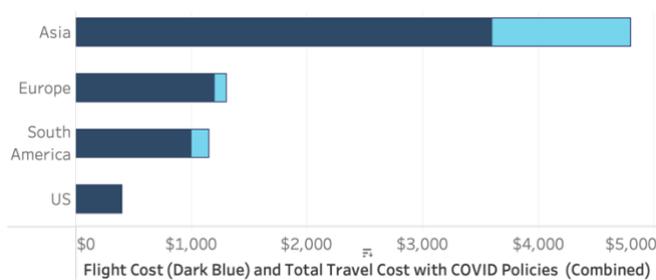


THE AVERAGE STUDENT FROM ASIA FACES 21 DAYS OF QUARANTINE AND MUST PAY \$1,200 FOR QUARANTINE, specific to 2021. With winter break being only 25 days, **THE AVERAGE STUDENT FROM ASIA WOULD SPEND VIRTUALLY ALL THEIR BREAK IN QUARANTINE IF THEY DECIDED TO TRAVEL HOME.** By contrast, the average student in all other continents faces no quarantine, and thus no quarantine costs. Students in South America, Europe, and Asia often need to pay for COVID testing, though this fee is rather insignificant compared to other costs.

THE AVERAGE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MUST PAY \$2,400 TO FLY HOME. This number is \$3,600 to Asia, \$1,200 to Europe, and \$1,000 to South America, compared

to just \$400 within North America. Parallel to flight costs, the average international student faces a 24-hour trip back home. This number is 28 hours to Asia, 14 hours to Europe, and 11 hours to South America.

TRAVELING HOME ENTAILS SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL BURDENS



As most countries with high travel burdens require quarantine and most countries with light travel burdens do not, it is difficult to analyze whether travel burdens or quarantine more greatly incentivizes students to wish to stay in their dorms. It is probable that COVID-19 policies make students from Asia more likely to want to stay in their dorms than could be explained by travel burdens, but travel burdens are the likely reason that more students from Europe and South America wish to stay in their dorms than do students from North America. **AS IT IS LIKELY THAT BOTH QUARANTINE REQUIREMENTS AND TRAVEL BURDENS CAUSE STUDENTS TO WISH TO STAY IN THEIR DORMS, WE RECOMMEND GEORGETOWN ALLOW STUDENTS TO REMAIN IN THEIR DORMS FOR SUBSEQUENT YEARS AS WELL.**

WHAT WILL IMPACTED STUDENTS DO?

A SOLID MAJORITY OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS – 69% – WILL STAY IN THE US THIS WINTER BREAK IN LIEU OF RETURNING HOME. This figure, however, varies wildly by continent. A staggering 88% of students from Asia will remain in the US, though this number drops to 17% for European students and 0% for South American students.

NOTABLY, 85% OF THOSE STAYING IN THE US OVER BREAK WOULD REMAIN IN THEIR DORMS IF GIVEN THE OPPORTUNITY. We can therefore conclude that a strong majority of international students—particularly those from Asia—will not return home this break, and that a vast majority of these students would prefer to remain in their dorms than find other accommodation in the US.

The current reality, however, is that **THE AVERAGE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT REMAINING IN THE US – BUT THAT WANTS TO STAY IN THEIR DORM – WILL SPEND \$2,225 TO REMAIN IN THE US,** combining housing and travel costs. This number might seem high, but it pales in comparison to the **\$6,100 MEDIAN COST OF RETURNING HOME FOR THIS GROUP,** not to mention the **21-DAY MEDIAN QUARANTINE TIME** and nearly **30-HOUR TRAVELING PROCESS.** Though 71% of these students will travel away from the DMV area, traveling away from the DMV does not increase the amount of money that these students will spend to remain in the US. Accordingly, it seems that students are working to reduce their costs as much as possible, which substantiates the reality that 85% of this group would prefer to stay in their dorms.

EVEN 55% OF INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS WHO ARE LEAVING THE US WOULD PREFER TO REMAIN IN THEIR DORMS. The average student in this group, half of which are from Europe, will spend 20 hours travelling home, face 5 days of quarantine, and spend \$1,500 on travel-related expenses. Given that this \$1,500 price to return home is lower than the \$2,225 median cost to remain in the US, it is probable that many of these students are only returning home because it is cheaper for them to do so under Georgetown’s current winter break housing policy.

HOW MUCH WOULD STUDENTS BENEFIT?

Altogether, if Georgetown allowed international students to remain in their dorms, **THE AVERAGE**

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT THAT WOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS POLICY WOULD SAVE OVER \$2,000. For scale, if Georgetown has 500 international undergraduate students, and 75% of them remained on campus, **AGGREGATE STUDENT SAVINGS WOULD AMOUNT TO A STAGGERING \$750,000.** This would greatly relieve student anxieties over the financial burden of having to leave their dorms.

We find that **THE AVERAGE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT THAT DESIRES TO REMAIN IN THEIR DORM FEELS ALMOST 3X AS MUCH FINANCIAL ANXIETY** relating to finding a place to stay over winter break than those who would not stay in their dorms. The former group's self-reported median financial burden rating was 8/10, while the latter group's was 3/10. By allowing international students to remain in their dorms, the university would greatly relieve this large group of financial anxiety by saving them over \$2,000 each.

Not only would Georgetown relieve financial stress by allowing international students to remain in their dorms, but the university would also relieve general stress from the time searching for a place to stay over break. **THE AVERAGE INTERNATIONAL STUDENT THAT WANTS TO STAY IN THEIR DORM REPORTS 2X AS MUCH STRESS AND TIME BURDENS** in looking for a place to stay than those who would not remain in their dorms, with median ratings of 8 vs. 4. **ACCORDINGLY, GEORGETOWN HAS THE CAPACITY TO GREATLY REDUCE STRESS AND FINANCIAL ANXIETY AMONG INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS BY ALLOWING THEM TO REMAIN IN THEIR DORMS.**

PRICE CONSIDERATIONS

We understand that Georgetown would incur considerable costs should they allow students to remain on campus over winter break, perhaps including security, utilities, cleaning, garbage removal, and limited food services. Accordingly, the university may consider charging students

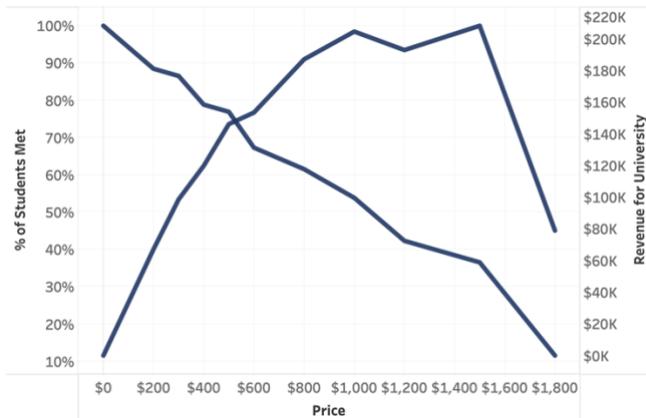
remaining on campus, should it feel compelled to recuperate the costs it would incur.

Based on what students reported as the maximum price they would pay to remain in their dorms over winter break **THIS YEAR, THE UNIVERSITY WOULD MAXIMIZE REVENUE BY CHARGING BETWEEN \$1,000-\$1,500 FOR WINTER BREAK ACCOMMODATION.** Notably, this is roughly the same price that students pay each month for on-campus during the semester.

Though charging \$1,500 would maximize revenue, it would do so by serving only a fraction of the international students that wanted to remain on campus—37%. Further, while our study revealed that over half of students from Asia would pay this price, no student from any other continent would do so. This finding aligns with statistical analysis, which revealed that whether a student would pay \$1,500 to remain in their dorms is almost exclusive a reflection of the magnitude of burdens they would face if they traveled home. Accordingly, it is likely that very few students will be willing to pay \$1,500 in subsequent years, should COVID quarantine policies be relaxed.

Given that Georgetown can mitigate unnecessary student stress and spending caused by the need to vacate their dorms simply by allowing them to stay, **WE PROPOSE THAT GEORGETOWN INSTEAD CHARGE STUDENTS THAT REMAIN IN THEIR DORMS THE LOWEST PRICE AT WHICH IT CAN RECUPERATE THE COSTS IT WOULD INCUR.** While we are not privy to the university's costs, the right axis of the figure on page 4 offers estimates of the revenue the university would receive at different price points based on an international student population of 500, which the university can compare with their costs. The left axis of the figure displays what percentage of the international students who wish to stay in their dorms would continue to do so at different price points.

UNIVERSITY REVENUE AND INTERESTED STUDENTS REMAINING IN DORMS BY PRICE



FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Georgetown can collectively save its students hundreds of thousands of dollars in unnecessary student spending and alleviate needless anxiety by allowing all international students to remain in their dorms. As it is simply impractical for Chinese students to return home this year given the 21-day quarantine requirement, **WE STRONGLY RECOMMEND THE UNIVERSITY CHANGE ITS CURRENT 2021-2022 WINTER BREAK HOUSING POLICY IN LIGHT OF THESE CIRCUMSTANCES.**

While burdens are particularly high this year due to COVID-related policies, specifically for Asian students, we find that flight costs alone persuade many European students to wish to stay in their dorms. Accordingly, **WE ALSO RECOMMEND THE UNIVERSITY ALLOW INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS TO REMAIN IN THEIR DORMS FOR ALL SUBSEQUENT WINTER BREAKS.** Should it choose to do so, however, it would likely need to charge a lower price point than it would for the 2021-2022 year, given that students will no longer be incentivized by COVID-related policies.

Further, we understand that the university may be preventing students from living on campus because staff would need to enter their rooms for cleaning purposes. Foreshadowing this concern, we asked students if they would still wish to stay on campus

if they would have to spend one night in a hotel night due to dorm maintenance purposes. **95% OF THOSE WHO WISH TO REMAIN IN THEIR DORMS WOULD STILL DO SO EVEN IF THEY HAD TO SPEND A NIGHT IN A HOTEL.**

Finally, though international students are particularly burdened by the university's current policy and should be prioritized for winter break housing, over 15% of domestic students would also remain in their dorm if given the opportunity. Accordingly, **WE ALSO ADVISE THE UNIVERSITY TO ALLOW DOMESTIC STUDENTS TO REMAIN IN THEIR DORMS ON A CASE-BY-CASE BASIS.**

We thank you very much for your time and consideration on this matter, and we are more than willing to engage in further dialogue should the administration find our continued input valuable.

Survey Data Summary:

- 117 total responses. 108 of these students live on-campus.
- 40 responses were from American students, including one response from the U.S. Virgin Islands. 36 of these students live on-campus.
- 77 responses were from international students. 72 of these students live on-campus.
- 56 responses were from Asia (41 from China, 4 from Hong Kong, 2 from Singapore, 2 from India, 2 from Japan, 2 from South Korea, 2 from Vietnam, 1 from Philippines). 53 of these students live on-campus.
- 1 response was from Australia, which we included in the Asia group. This student lives on-campus.
- 13 responses were from Europe (4 from Spain, 3 from France, 2 from Germany, 2 from United Kingdom, 1 from Italy, 1 from Poland). 12 of these students live on-campus.
- 6 responses were from South America (2 from Columbia, 2 from Peru, 1 from Brazil, 1 from Honduras). All these students live on-campus.
- 1 response was from Canada. This student lives off-campus.

Full survey data available upon request.