

Faculty Senate Meeting: President's Report October 04, 2024

I want to start my report today by sharing some exciting staffing news with you all.

Earlier this week, Colette Coleman and I were pleased to announce that following a rigorous and comprehensive search process, we have hired the GW Center for Interfaith and Spiritual Life's inaugural leadership team, including University Chaplain Kristen Glass Perez and Director of Interfaith and Spiritual Life Dr. Simran Kaur-Colbert. These two individuals will be pivotal to the success of the Center's initiatives, resources, and programming.

An ordained pastor, Glass Perez brings more than 11 years of faith-based experience in higher education to her new role at GW; and Kaur-Colbert holds a Ph.D. in student affairs in higher education with extensive experience helping college students develop their religious, secular, and spiritual identities. Both Glass Perez and Kaur-Colbert have demonstrated their unique expertise at the institutions where they have previously worked, and I am very happy to welcome them to the GW family.

As we welcomed new staff, we also took time to honor the contributions of others.

Last week, many in the GW community gathered to honor and celebrate the 18th President of the George Washington University, Dr. Mark S. Wrighton, during his official portrait unveiling.

The portrait, which now hangs in the Science and Engineering Hall, captures the poise and calm that President Emeritus Wrighton brought to our campus and, of course, includes his dog Spike, who was beloved by many within our community.

Under Mark's leadership, GW strengthened and expanded its commitment to academic excellence, deepened its relationships with the District through partnerships like the Penn West Equity and Innovation District, established 14 new professorships with far-reaching impacts on the advancement of health-related teaching and research, and reinvented itself as the GW Revolutionaries.

And perhaps most importantly, Mark significantly bolstered the university's ability to attract talented students of all backgrounds by improving the student experience and expanding financial aid resources, including philanthropic campaigns and university endowment funding for critical need-based aid.

I know many of you worked closely with Mark and I hope you can take a moment soon to see the new portrait.

This semester, we have also hosted several "Only-at-GW" events.

In late September, GW's College of Professional Studies hosted the Mark Penn Presidential Pollsters Event. This is an annual reception where experts and political analysts provide critical insights into where Americans stand on critical issues, including elections and government performance.

The event, titled "Do Americans Still Have Confidence in Their Government," featured Mark Penn, the founder, president, and managing partner of The Stagwell Group—and a proud GW parent—in conversation with Dr. Chris Arterton (*ARE-TER-ten*), an Emeritus Professor of Political Management and the founding dean of GW's Graduate School of Political Management.

On the 22nd, GW's Global Food Institute co-sponsored a private event with the Bezos Earth Fund in New York City. Held at the beginning of September's Climate Week, the theme focused on "Trailblazers of a Sustainable Food Era" and brought together corporate, nonprofit, and governmental leaders to highlight some of the inspiring work happening across sectors.

Finally, last week, I had the privilege of joining another CPS and GSPM event for their Alumni Lifetime Achievement Award ceremony, honoring Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro.

In his keynote, Secretary Del Toro reflected on his life journey, including his time at GW, and the profound importance of service to our country, both in military and civilian roles. He then stayed for a fireside chat with Dean Riddle, which the crowd loved.

I also want to mention the university's recently launched [financial highlights website](#). As you know, in recent months students and other constituents have expressed a desire to better understand university finances. This website fulfills a commitment we made to our community to provide greater financial transparency and clarity by providing easily accessible information about the university's finances all in one place.

While the site is comprehensive, we expect content to evolve as we receive additional input from the community. There is a feedback form on the site to collect thoughts and ideas from our students, faculty, staff, and others, and I hope everyone will use it.

Last week, Provost Chris Bracey and I were pleased to share that GW is officially embarking on the formal development of our new strategic framework. From town halls, meetings, and dinners to impromptu conversations and correspondences, I have really enjoyed learning what GW means to our community, and I have appreciated the honest feedback on how we can strengthen the university.

In that feedback, I heard two things loud and clear: first, our community has enormous pride in being a part of GW, and second, there is a genuine desire to improve the GW experience, to continue leveraging our extraordinary strengths to change the world through education and research, and to build a community of adaptable and resilient global leaders who are prepared to take on the world's biggest challenges.

This past Wednesday, I had the privilege of meeting with the Strategic Framework Innovation Committee, composed of faculty and staff with relevant experience from across GW, and officially charging them with their work. Their energy and enthusiasm were palpable, and I look forward to receiving their reports. I'd also like to thank Deputy Provost Terry Murphy and Associate Provost Jeff Brand for their leadership in this process.

Provost Bracey will share more about how we plan to achieve those bold aspirations in his report.

Finally, last week, we had our first full board meeting of the academic year. We covered a range of topics, including the medical enterprise, preparations for the upcoming elections, and the strategic framework process.

On the medical enterprise, discussion with the trustees was quite productive, and we identified several next steps in the effort to bring the MFA to financial sustainability. We will have news to share with you on this front at the November Faculty Senate meeting.

Thank you, everyone. That concludes my report today, and I will open the floor to questions.