



## Fall 2024 Interim Report Committee on Educational Policy & Technology

The Committee on Educational Policy and Technology (EPT) has met six times so far this year – on 7 May 2024, 23 August 2024, 13 September 2024, 18 October 2024, 15 November 2024, and 13 December 2024.

### I. Background

In formalizing its charge for EPT for the AY2024-2025, FSEC took into consideration the aims listed by EPT in its final report for the AY2023-2024.

#### 2024-2025 FSEC Charge:

- Academic freedom and free speech: provide input on best practices for managing the discussion of difficult issues in the classroom (part of the administration’s “Fostering Productive Dialogue” initiative), particularly in light of events on campus in the spring 2024 semester. Invite the Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom committee to provide their expertise throughout this process.
- Provide additional input on the Task Force on Academic Credentials’ report, “Guidelines for Combined Degree/Certificate Programs.”
- Proactively engage with the strategic planning process as the framework is developed this year.
- Engage with the Office of the Provost regarding the annual timely release of the Fall syllabus template (mid-late July), the religious holidays calendar (also mid-late July), and updates to the “Instructor Frequently Asked Questions” (IFAQ).
- Monitor and assess student success and academic performance.
- With the administration, develop guidance around the use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI) on courses at GW, including Writing in the Discipline; monitor guidance for updates as technology changes.
- Assess the effectiveness of the first-year experience and undergraduate special programs, including the Mount Vernon Campus.

### II. Spring and Summer 2024

The primary focus of the first AY2024-2025 meeting on May 7 was **student success and retention**. EPT received a presentation from Kimberley Williams, Office of Student Success, which highlighted OSS goals and new initiatives (e.g., student lifecycle CRM and new student bridge), persistent trends (e.g., DFW rates have returned to pre-pandemic level), the need to invest in high-impact practices. On interpreting data related to student success, members expressed concern about developing recommendations without a more complete picture (e.g., recommending doing internships early in academic career). Jay Goff, Vice Provost for Enrollment and Student Success, provided an **enrollment update**: registrations for the fall semester were 20% ahead of this point last year. However, FAFSA has been an ongoing problem, with the Department of Education unable to

deliver the data in March and April. The committee discussed three major challenges: Supreme Court changes to how schools make admissions offers; FAFSA; and the demonstrations and the encampment on campus. Finally, Madison Jennings, a graduate student from the Disabled Students Collective at GW, shared slides and emphasized the importance of having faculty enable **Blackboard Ally** for their students.

The co-chairs met with Jeff Brand, Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and Special Programs, in mid-July to discuss issues and resources related the upcoming academic year, including updates to the Instructor Frequently Asked (IFAQ) information, syllabus template, and the timely dissemination of the religious holiday calendar.

### III. EPT Fall 2024 Meeting Summaries

The fall meetings (September - December) focused on an examination of the internal (GW disciplinary proceedings) and external responses (US Attorney's Office) to the Spring 2024 encampment demonstrations, an effort that was spearheaded by the 8 volunteers of the ad hoc Working Group; continuing discussion of enrollment planning and student retention; the educational mission of the strategic framework; CAPS programs; AI-related resources and programs; and two initiatives proposed by Student Government Association (SGA) representatives – faculty adoption of Blackboard Ally and mental health days. The following summaries capture the scope of each meeting; more in-depth information on specific topics is provided below.

#### August 23, 2024

The meeting began with approval of the May 7 meeting minutes and brief announcements of the FSEC charge, a follow-up Google form asking for subcommittee volunteers and introduction of our SA representatives. RaShonda Riley, Assistant Director of Outreach at **CAPS**, provided a brief update on **new programs** for the campus community. The new CAPS Director, Dr. Laura Finkelstein, will present at our October and March meetings. Christy Anthony and Julia Dunn (Office of Conflict Education and Student Accountability, formerly SRR) provided an update on the **Spring 2024 suspension proceedings**, the US attorneys **“stay away” order**, and the SRR to **CESA name change**. Jay Goff (Vice Provost for Enrollment and Student Success) provided a FAFSA update. Jeffrey Brand (Associate Provost, Undergraduate Affairs & Special Programs) gave up his time to discussion of the draft resolution introduced by Professor Phil Wirtz regarding the US attorney's role in determining sanctions for GW students. Given the need for additional information on this matter, a working group will be formed to look into this matter and report to the larger committee on September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

#### September 13, 2024

EPT will experiment with Zoom automated meeting summaries in compliance with university policies. EPT subcommittees for the AY2024-2025 year are Future Enrollment, Academic Technology, Academic Freedom and free speech, Student Success and retention, and Strategic Planning. Karen Frosliid-Jones, the new Associate Provost of Assessment and Planning, was introduced. There was robust discussion with Provost Bracey and General Counsel Charles Barber about **disciplinary action** taken against students (related to the **Spring 2024 protests**). They each answered pre-prepared questions about the GW disciplinary process, the role of the US District Attorney's office and the **STET agreements** entered into by students. EPT members stressed the importance of shared governance and faculty consultation to ensure best outcomes when the

disciplinary process intersects with or impedes the university's educational mission. Terry Murphy spoke about the university's new **Strategic Framework** and the newly formed Innovation Committee. FSEC chair Ilana Feldman planned a report to the BOT Committee on Academic Affairs on **EPT priorities regarding strategic planning**. Finally, Amita Vyas (EPT Liaison to FSEC) floated the idea (originating from the Administration) of a **possible faculty consultative committee** that would provide advice in emergencies. The work of the committee would be confidential.

### October 18, 2024

After introducing new members to the committee, EPT co-chairs noted the use of Zoom AI for meeting minutes – a first for the committee. Eyal Aviv discussed the **Working Group's** ongoing efforts to gather additional information on the decision-making process behind the stet agreements between the GW students and the US Attorney's office. Regarding **enrollment**, Eric Grynawski noted that the residential undergraduate population has mostly rebounded from the pre-COVID period although the underlying demographics have changed. There is a decline in the number of graduate students. The **Strategic Planning subcommittee** requested that the EPT co-chairs draft a two-page letter to the President, Provost, and Strategic Planning Innovation and Steering Committees outlining EPT's priorities for the strategic plan. Director Laura Finkelstein provided a comprehensive report on **student mental health needs and CAPS resources** available to meet those needs. There was some discussion on how best to let the university community know about the available resources. SGA President Ethan Fitzgerald presented **SGA's Mental Health Days** proposal. A subcommittee will be formed to discuss the proposal. Ben Bronner and Thomas Choate presented **guidelines on generative AI use**, to be distributed as suggestions by Carol Hayes and the Writing Center. Irene Foster and Yordanos Baharu discussed a plan to implement a **one-semester pilot of Blackboard Ally**, an accessibility tool, in Spring 2025. Finally, Anna Vakulik, Yordanos Baharu and Katie Cloud presented on the **integration of Blackboard and Banner** beginning this Fall. They are looking for faculty volunteers to pilot the **new grade submission process**.

### November 15, 2024

The meeting covered discussions on two **AI projects** aimed at enhancing educational experiences, as well as a comprehensive review of a **report addressing stay-away orders** affecting GW students. The working group's efforts in gathering information, addressing concerns, and making recommendations were acknowledged, with emphasis placed on supporting students' educational pursuits and maintaining due process. The conversation ended with decisions on forwarding the report to the Faculty Senate, addressing formatting issues, and discussing leadership transitions within the working group.

### December 13, 2024

A subcommittee is following up on **SGA's Mental Health Days** proposal. The subcommittee will report to EPT at the January 2025 meeting. Regarding the **Academic Integrity Code Report and Resolution**, Charles Drummond (Assistant Director, CESA) reported that there is still a backlog. A proposed resolution was passed that would extend the addendum from last year to May 2026 with some changes. Permanent changes to the code will be considered by EPT next year. CESA will also begin monitoring faculty responses to CESA's calls for volunteers. Eric Grynawski provided an **enrollment** update focused on three themes – national challenges with undergraduate enrollment, graduate enrollment, and future headwinds. Suresh Subramaniam,

Vice Provost for Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs, provided an update on **graduate programs**, and the improvements to **OEPS and GTAP**. Emily Lewis, GW Staff Council, presented on **GW Staff turnover and compensation**. The impact of this on education and the student experience will be submitted in the form of idea briefs to the university to aid the strategic planning process.

Additional information on specific topics:

**Working Group:** Led by co-chairs Mountasser Kadrie and Lisa Schwartz, the eight members of the Working Group spent eleven weeks gathering information regarding the GW administration's role in and response to stay agreements and stay-away orders issued by the US Attorney's Office for a group of GW students arrested during Spring 2024 encampment. They presented their report with its findings and recommendations to the full committee in the November 15 meeting; the committee unanimously approved that the report be sent to FSEC and presented to the Faculty Senate in its December 13 meeting. Feedback from the Senate's discussion will be integrated into the draft resolution for EPT's consideration in its January 10 meeting.

**Strategic Planning:** On October 28, EPT submitted a three-page report to President Granberg, Provost Bracey, FSEC Chair Ilana Feldman, and members of the Innovation and Steering Committees that outlined the committee's recommendations to advance the strategic planning process as it relates to undergraduate education; the report was also shared with members of the Faculty Senate during its November 8 retreat and its meeting later that same day. The recommendations addressed the university's first-to-second year and second-to-third year retention rates, and its six-year graduation rate:

- (1) Establish a six-year graduation goal of 90%; identify year to reach that goal (e.g., by 2034).
- (2) Establish clear, nearer-term benchmark goals for first-to-second and first-to-third year retention (e.g., 95% and 92% respectively) to chart progress toward 90% six-year graduation rate goal.
- (3) Evaluate and prioritize new initiatives using these graduation and retention rate metrics.

**Enrollment:** During the August 23 meeting, the committee received a brief update from Jay Goff (Vice Provost for Enrollment and Student Success) and Ben Toll (Dean of Undergraduate Admissions) regarding the impact of the delayed FAFSA rollout. The future enrollment planning subcommittee met several times during the fall semester, and its chair, Eric Grynawski, provided an update to the committee in the December 10 EPT meeting on national challenges with undergraduate enrollment, drops in graduate enrollment, from high-yield markets such as China and India, and potential headwinds in light of a new administration taking office.

**Generative AI guidance on Writing in the Discipline:** EPT members Thomas Choate and Ben Bronner worked over the summer months developing a set of suggested guidelines and resources for generative AI use related to Writing in the Discipline (WID) courses. They consulted with Carol Hayes and the Writing Center, and the two-page compilation of suggestions were distributed to faculty across the university on October 30, 2024.

**Blackboard Ally pilot program:** In response to the GW Disabled Students' Collective and the GW Student Government Association, EPT and LAI submitted a proposal to the Faculty Senate that Blackboard Ally be turned on for all Blackboard class in Spring 2025. Given Senate approval, the opt-out pilot initiative will take place during the Spring 2025 semester. The pilot will allow

Blackboard administration to collect data on any problems with usage and determine whether Ally should be permanently turned on beginning Fall 2025.

**SGA Mental Health Days proposal:** The SGA's proposal for Mental Health Days was discussed by an ad hoc group within the student success subcommittee, made up of Laura Finkelstein (Director, CAPS), Rochelle Mills (Director, DSS), Jeff Brand (Associate Provost for Undergraduate Affairs and Special Programs), Prof. Meg Ulfers, Prof. Ben Bronner, and Prof. Irene Foster. An updated proposal will be brought to EPT at the January meeting.

**Academic Integrity Code Temporary Extension:** Regarding the Academic Integrity Code Report and Resolution, Charles Drummond (Assistant Director, CESA) reported that there is still a significant backlog in academic integrity processing. A proposed resolution was passed that would extend the temporary addendum to the code from last year to May 2026; it also included the new provision that for cases in which graduation or academic progress are threatened, "CESA, at the discretion of the Director or designee, can convene an ad-hoc panel of at least one student and one faculty member, in order to bring a case to a more timely resolution and minimize long term academic impact." This resolution will be presented to the Faculty Senate on January 10, 2025.

EPT will establish a subcommittee in April with the mandate to work with CESA to draw up recommendations that address the backlog issue and improve recruitment; CESA will also begin monitoring faculty responses to CESA's calls for volunteers.

### **III. Subcommittees and Working Groups**

In addition to the Working Group established to address the Spring 2024 demonstrations, EPT has several subcommittees working on a range of issues, including those related to the FSEC charge. Summaries of their AY2024-2025 activities will be provided in the annual report.

- *Working Group:* Co-Chairs, Mountasser Kadrie and Lisa Schwartz, Eyal Aviv, Scott Beveridge, Thomas Choate, Jamie Cohen-Cole, Crystal DeVoss Mahany, and Andrew M. Smith II
- *Technology Subcommittee:* Chair, Katrin Schultheiss, Ben Bronner, Scott Beveridge, Jane Hyatt Thorpe, Andrew M. Smith II, Rohini Ganjoo, Scott Quinlan, Katrin Schultheiss, Joyce Knestrick, Michael Kern
- *Future Enrollment Planning Committee:* Chair, Eric Grynawiski, Jamie Cohen-Cole, Thomas Choate, Sameh Badie, Sarah Wagner
- *Strategic planning:* Chair, Jamie Cohen-Cole, Eric Grynawiski, Shaista Khilji, Mountasser Kadrie, Megan Siczek, Katrin Schultheiss, Joyce Knestrick
- *Student Success:* Irene Foster, Ben Bronner, Chante Clarkson, Eric Grynawiski, Kevin Knudsen, Meg Ulfers
  - *Ad-hoc Working Group on SGA Mental Health Days Proposal:* Irene Foster, Meg Ulfers, Ben Bronner, Laura Finkelstein (Director of CAPS), Rochelle Mills (Director of DSS)
- *Academic Freedom and Free Speech:* Crystal DeVoss Mahany, Lisa Schwartz, Shaista Khilji, Mountasser Kadrie

### **Resolutions presented to the Faculty Senate**

1. The committee reviewed and voted unanimously to send the “[EPT Working Group Report in Response to Spring 2024 Encampment and Resulting Stet Agreements](#)” to the Faculty Senate in its December 13, 2024 meeting. The committee is now working on a draft resolution that outlines the report’s recommendations to submit to the Faculty Senate in the February 14, 2025 meeting.
2. The committee reviewed and deliberated the “Redline of Current Addendum,” and unanimously voted to approve “[A Resolution to Extend the Approved Temporary Changes to the Code of Academic Integrity \(25/5\)](#).” The resolution will be presented to the Faculty Senate in the January 10, 2025 meeting.

Respectfully submitted,  
Sarah Wagner and Irene Foster  
Co-Chairs, EPT  
January 6, 2025