



Faculty Senate

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SENATE MEETING
HELD ON FEBRUARY 14, 2025
HYBRID: 1957 E STREET/STATE ROOM & ZOOM**

Present: President Granberg; Provost Bracey; Executive Committee Chair Feldman; Parliamentarian Binder; Registrar Cloud; Senate Office Staff Liz Carlson and Jenna Chaojareon; Deans Ayres, Bass, Feuer, Goldman, Henry, Kelly-Weeder, Lach, Riddle, and Wahlbeck; Professors Akman, Badie, Bamford, Belenky, Briggs, Brinkerhoff, Callier, Cheh, Core, Cseh, Eakle, Engel, Hernandez, Kargaltsev, Kay, Morant, Mylonas, Orti, Parsons, Rain, Sarkar, Schultheiss, Schwindt, Tielsch, Trangsrud, Vyas, Wagner, Warren, Wilson, Wirtz, and Zeman.

Absent: Dean Matthew; Interim Dean Perry; Professors Borum, El-Ghazawi, Gore, Kieff, Kulp, Lu, Marvar, Warshaw, and White.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:05p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of the January 10, 2025, Faculty Senate meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

INTRODUCTION: KIM FULMER, GW STAFF COUNCIL PRESIDENT (Ellen Granberg, President)

President Granberg welcomed Kim Fulmer, the new President of the GW Staff Council, who is joining today's meeting via Zoom. By way of background, Kim has worked at GW for 16 years and currently serves as a Research Program Manager for the Public Health & Law Research Support Team (formerly Pod 2). Kim is also a doctoral candidate at GSEHD and earned her master's degree from GW in higher ed administration. Kim was instrumental in the founding of the GW Staff Council and last year served as GW Staff Council Vice President. The President noted that she is looking forward to seeing the collaboration between the Faculty Senate and the Staff Council grow stronger.

INTRODUCTION: REV. KRISTEN GLASS PEREZ, UNIVERSITY CHAPLAIN (Colette Coleman, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students)

Dean Coleman introduced Reverend Glass Perez, who is an established college and university chaplain. Prior to coming to GW, she served at multiple institutions, most recently at Northwestern University, Muhlenberg College, and Augustana College. She has a great deal of experience in building and leading multi-religion teams of chaplains and staff who work alongside students.

Reverend Glass Perez noted that she read GW's mission statement, which the Board approved in February 2019 and which was taken from the Congressional charter that founded the university. The statement reads:

“The mission of George Washington University is to educate individuals in liberal arts languages, sciences, learned professions and other courses and subjects of study and to conduct scholarly research and publish the findings of the research.” This, she said, is a mission for such a time as this; every day the community gets to explore together in community what really matters. The newly formed Center for Interfaith and Spiritual Life (CISL) comes directly from GW’s Strengthening Our Community plan and supports the overall university mission with a call to strengthen the university’s religious, secular, and philosophical diversity by providing opportunities to engage with spiritual life on campus through interfaith engagement, education, service, worship, and meditation. This is both care for people as well as critical thinking and engagement with interfaith leadership and religious pluralism. She noted that the day-to-day of the Center includes crisis care, ritual support for students and other university communities with things they may need based on their religious, secular, or spiritual tradition, including things like housing, dining, and classroom accommodations. It also involves interfaith leadership development and programming. She expressed her gratitude for this opportunity and her enthusiasm for working with the GW community.

[INTRODUCTION: DR. SIMRAN KAUR-COLBERT, DIRECTOR OF THE CENTER FOR INTERFAITH AND SPIRITUAL LIFE](#) (Colette Coleman, Vice Provost for Student Affairs and Dean of Students)

Dean Coleman next introduced Dr. Simran Kaur-Colbert, who is a community engaged scholar, practitioner, and Dharmic scholar who identifies as a critical religious pluralist. Before coming to GW, Dr. Kaur-Colbert was the Director of Student Engagement and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion at Earlham College and served as Special Assistant to the Interim Vice President for Institutional Diversity at Miami University.

Dr. Kaur-Colbert stated she is honored to be the inaugural director of the new CISL. She added that her scholarship is at the intersection of how students’ sense of belonging and their religious, spiritual, and secular development intersects with organizational development, and she will be putting this into practice at GW. She noted that she has explored how public and private universities build the infrastructure and the material resources to make an impact, especially in those areas. Every day, she meets students from around the world and across the country who get to engage with how they can become more of themselves, particularly with this component of their identity that often has gone overlooked. She is honored to see the great progress that is being made in this area at GW and everything that is already in place to accommodate students at the intersection of their religious identity to be successful and for faculty to be their whole selves in the classroom as well.

[PRESIDENT’S REPORT](#) (Ellen Granberg, President)

The [President’s report](#) is attached.

[BRIEF STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS/PRESIDENT’S REPORT](#)

Professor Wirtz indicated that he had a question related to the Medical Faculty Associates (MFA). Before posing this question, he observed that the GW Hatchet has done a stellar job of reporting recently, specifically on the issue he was about to raise and the one related to rollout concerns of the GWPD arming plan. He also thanked CFO Fernandes for being so forthright with the Fiscal Planning & Budgeting committee on this very difficult issue. Recent revelations in the GW Hatchet have led to the perception of a conflict of interest, which puts the university on a potential collision path as the very people who would be

affected by any decision regarding the MFA are in fact the ones who are in the position of making that decision. He asked:

- Who made the decision to make the MFA responsible for its own conflicts of interest, as opposed to the university?
- Is it clear that anyone who would be affected by the kinds of decisions that are about to be made are being disassociated from those decisions?

President Granberg responded, noting first that the MFA is an independent 501(c)3 with its own Board of Trustees. GW is the sole corporate member of the MFA, but the MFA is an independent organization with authority to operate independently. This is as it needs to be in order that the MFA's liabilities are not tied up with GW's. Around two years ago, the decision was made to begin to move certain responsibilities into the MFA from the university (e.g., Human Resources). She asked General Counsel Barber to speak to this further. Mr. Barber added that, as a separate organization, the MFA has always had its own conflict of interest policy. There have been times in managing conflicts that the university has been involved. However, the MFA increased its own efforts to manage these matters a couple of years ago and now has its own compliance office. He noted that there is still university oversight and involvement on these issues.

President Granberg returned to Professor Wirtz's second question, which is very important as discussions move into a phase where very substantive conversations are taking place. There is a strong focus on conflict of interest, and this is being handled as the parties move through the process. Professor Wirtz noted that the GW Hatchet article was clear that there is a perceived conflict of interest; this could be a broad issue if those making decisions are directly impacted by those decisions.

President Granberg responded that, like any organization, the MFA Board of Trustees is entrusted with making often extremely consequential decisions. Any conflicts on a board must be disclosed and managed, and this will happen with any decision about the future of the MFA; she agreed with Professor Wirtz that this is extremely important. She noted that it is possible to argue that any Board member could be affected by its decision; if a decision is made to dissolve the MFA, of course the entire board would be affected. She stated that she is satisfied with the rigor and intentionality of the decisions being made. Mr. Barber is involved, and these issues have to be taken seriously; she added that she is very comfortable with process to date.

Professor Wagner alerted the group that she planned to move an executive session later in the meeting but had two questions for the open session. She recalled that a year ago, the Senate passed Resolution 24/7, which addressed the impact of the MFA debt on strategic planning, education, and financial aid. That resolution included a resolving clause that asked that, by March 1, 2024, and by February 1 of each subsequent year, a report be made by the President, Provost, and CFO to the Trustees' Committee on Academic Affairs (CAA) and the Senate Educational Policy & Technology (EPT) committee. This report should account for both the impacts and opportunity costs of ongoing losses at the MFA on the university's mission of advancing undergraduate and graduate education across its schools. She asked whether this report was indeed delivered to CAA, and, if so, if it could be shared with EPT as well.

Professor Wagner's second question related to the independent investigation taking place around the implementation issues with the arming of the GWPD. She asked for the President's assurance that the findings of this report will be shared not only with the Senate but that the Senate will also have an opportunity to engage in a substantive, meaningful discussion of those findings and any policy changes that may be considered as a result of the investigation.

On the first question, President Granberg responded that the GW leadership engages with Board on issues related to the MFA at every meeting and at great depth. The Board is extremely concerned with the MFA's financial condition and its impacts on GW's academics. With the GW Board, it is therefore less about a report going to CAA than it is that this is an important and robust element of the discussion with the Board. She stated that, as far as she knew, there was not a specific report to CAA because this is a topic with which the whole board is engaged. Professor Wagner noted that this question comes up a year after the Senate's resolution because the university is working toward finalization of the strategic framework, which includes considerations of the opportunities that can be pursued and those that cannot. This goes to the hard work that Deputy Provost Murphy and the Innovation Committee are doing, but this question feels monumentally important because the university is about to endorse a strategic plan.

On the second question, the President noted that there will be a public version of the report she received that will be shared with the university community. There will certainly be an opportunity for the Senate to have a conversation about this. She added, however, that there are personnel issues involved that will remain confidential and will not be discussed. She expected that the public report would be released by mid-March. Professor Wagner hoped that the Senate might therefore be able to engage with this topic at its April meeting.

Professor Orti relayed that the Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom committee (PEAF) heard from some colleagues in the medical school that some chairs of the MFA have expressed concerns that Savista's billing processes are less effective than when billing was handled within the MFA. Those raising these issues were pushed out of further discussions, leaving them feeling powerless to question Savista's effectiveness and competency. He asked whether the administration is convinced that Savista is doing good work and charging a fair rate for that work.

President Granberg responded first that she did not know if Savista is doing better now than MFA did on its own; that decision was made quite a long time ago, and she imagined that many people who were chairs then are not now. As to whether Savista is doing a good job, she noted that there are two pieces to this question. The first is whether Savista is upholding its contract. The second is whether the MFA is managing its own part of the revenue cycle such that Savista is able to extract the maximum revenue possible. When he arrived, Bill Elliott determined that the MFA was not staffed appropriately to send the kind of data to Savista that would allow for this maximized return. He has since put procedures in place to correct this issue.

[PROVOST'S REPORT](#) (Chris Bracey, Provost)

The [Provost's report](#) is attached.

[BRIEF STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS/PROVOST'S REPORT](#)

Professor Brinkerhoff observed that there is a lot of suffering at present, impacting GW's students and alumni. She spoke specifically of students on the cusp of graduating who have had internships and jobs evaporate. In talking with these students, she hoped the university might be able to meet one request that came up, specifically, to extend some support services offered to students at least over summer if not into the next fall (e.g., library, wellness center access). This would certainly demonstrate the care the university has over a lifetime for its students. Provost Bracey responded that he would take this under advisement.

Professor Bamford asked when the annual Core Indicators of Academic Excellence report would be delivered. Provost Bracey confirmed that it will be presented at the March Senate meeting.

Professor Bamford noted that the Appointments, Salary, & Promotion Policies committee (ASPP) has been discussing the drop in percentages of tenured and tenure-track faculty and the failure to replace vacated lines. Recognizing that this is a national trend, she asked how GW sees tenure and keeping a strong tenure percentage as part of its Association of American Universities (AAU) membership. Provost Bracey responded that the heart and soul of GW's research enterprise is its tenured faculty. To extent the university seeks to solidify its position within the AAU and advance within that peer cohort, it needs to continue to invest in the kinds of faculty members who are going to be generating the impactful research that drives GW's reputation forward. The President fully agreed with the Provost's remarks. She added that she has had some conversations with faculty who have talked about the degree to which the lack of sufficient staff support is one of the biggest blocks to their ability to do more research. In thinking about how GW can grow its research enterprise and support and grow the tenured and tenure track faculty, therefore, she is also thinking about this element.

Professor Schultheiss raised a question about the university calendar, referencing a discussion in today's EPT meeting about the process for setting the academic calendar, which used to have more faculty input, including the EPT chair. She noted that the late addition of the election day holiday last fall—announced over the summer—threw a wrench in many faculty's syllabi. On a separate note, she noted that the snow day called earlier this week was for a full day when the weather wasn't forecast until mid-afternoon. She asked about the process for these types of decisions and whether an EPT chair might be engaged as well.

Provost Bracey responded that the academic calendar typically set as far ahead as possible in consultation with the Office of the Registrar, acknowledging that the election day addition last fall was a late decision. The Registrar stated that her office tries to have at least five years of academic calendars at any given moment, consulting with a calendar committee that includes representatives from two schools as well as operational staff. Professor Wirtz recalled that, when he was chair of the Educational Policy committee, faculty were represented on the calendar committee by virtue of that committee's chair being an ex officio member. He asked if this is no longer true. Deputy Provost Murphy responded that she did not know about this element of the calendar committee membership when she assumed it as part of her portfolio; it can certainly be restored, and EPT chairs (or their designees) will be included moving forward.

Provost Bracey noted that weather closing determinations do not go through the calendar committee. A group of senior leaders reviews recommendation from the safety & security office in making these decisions. This group does its best to try and follow predicted weather but obviously cannot control it; they recognize the inherent challenge with these decisions and err on side of caution. While a lesson from the pandemic is that many faculty can pivot relatively easily to virtual instruction, he acknowledged that this is disruptive. The President added that weather closures are a safety decision, especially in the DC region, which is often at the edge of a weather system, making forecasting particularly challenging. Professor Schultheiss expressed her worry that the administration may feel that it is too easy to pivot to Zoom instruction but that, very often, lesson plans have been designed around other modalities of instruction.

Professor Wagner noted that, at its January meeting, EPT heard a presentation from Follett Access on its inclusive access program for textbooks. The committee was told that, if the proposal is accepted, Follett Access would be implemented university-wide in Fall 2025 to provide students with access to course materials with one flat fee per semester assessed to their account. EPT members raised several major reservations and wanted to seek assurance that this program has not actually been agreed to. Committee

members did not think that this was an appropriate or good fit for GW and felt that it actually undermines the very efforts that EPT wishes to support from Libraries & Academic Innovation (LAI), which include their efforts to enhance educational resources and lower costs for students. Professor Wagner asked if Dean Henry might take a moment to speak to this; EPT wants the full Senate to understand what the Follett Access program is and how it might be actually working counter to LAI's efforts.

Dean Henry affirmed that the library cares a great deal about making sure GW students have access to affordable course materials. They work to identify courses that have very expensive texts, purchasing multiple copies of those and keeping them on reserve so that students can come in and use them. The library also subscribes to quite a number of journals, spending a large amount of money on those resources. The goal is to ensure students are able to use journals GW subscribes to rather than having to purchase course packs where they would end up paying for the same material that is already available in the library.

LAI also provides a lot of support for faculty in adopting open education resources and more affordable resources, including some incentive programs to help faculty make course materials openly accessible and adaptable by other faculty so that they can continually evolve and be high quality resources for students.

She noted that the Follett Access program sounds very inclusive; she noted that it is designed to be an opt-out program. From experience with these in the past, she noted that students very often don't understand that there is an option to opt out; they just see the fee on their bill and assume that it must be paid. The Department of Education, at least as of a few weeks ago has regulations specifically regarding these kinds of programs that require the university to be proactive in letting students know they can opt out. Not doing so can lead to the Department of Education finding the institution not compliant with their regulations.

Professor Wirtz recalled EPT's clear message at the January meeting that many in attendance had real misgivings about what was being presented and the form in which it was being presented, essentially as a fait accompli. EPT was clear in its thinking that this was not a good idea and that, if this program was going to move forward toward implementation, the entire Senate should be involved in that discussion.

Professor Warren added to Dean Henry's comments that the faculty grants for adapting course materials for equity are open right now and available for applications until March 3rd. He encouraged all faculty to apply for these grants, which provide incentives to faculty to both create and find existing open educational resources.

[EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT](#) (Ilana Feldman, Chair)

The [Report of the Executive Committee](#) (FSEC) is attached.

[BRIEF STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT](#)

None.

[RESOLUTION 25/6: TO SUPPORT GW STUDENTS IN PURSUING THEIR EDUCATIONAL ENDEAVORS](#) (Sarah Wagner, Co-Chair, Educational Policy & Technology Committee)

Professor Wagner introduced the resolution with the following remarks:

“In our December meeting, on behalf of the Education Policy and Technology Committee (EPT), I presented the “Educational Policy & Technology Committee Working Group Report in Response to Spring 2024 Encampment and Resulting Stet Agreements,” which we—this chamber—then discussed at length with the aim of gathering feedback for EPT’s consideration.

At the conclusion of that discussion, you will recall, my colleague from EPT, Phil Wirtz, put us on notice that the report’s recommendations would return to the Senate floor. And so here we are.

In the interim, as promised, EPT dedicated time during its January 10 meeting to discuss again the report’s recommendations, including in light of the strong support that the report itself received from the Faculty Senate in the December 13 meeting.

As it had come up in the Senate deliberations, we discussed the particular phrase of “politically neutral” found in the third (bulleted) recommendation:

“GW leadership should use the interim suspension process in a politically neutral way and adjudicate such processes as quickly as possible;”

Both the Working Group members and the full committee agreed to keep the language as is. We had in mind that all of the listed recommendations are intended to be forward thinking, and, on this specific question of interim suspensions, the committee was particularly concerned about the possibility of political interference in the future—regardless of the politically oriented issue that might arise.

The language of political neutrality is, we agreed, clearer to define (e.g., versus unbiased). We also acknowledged the strength in keeping the recommendation focused — we felt that if too broad, the point would be otherwise diluted.

In that same recommendation, I should note, the one change we did make was to correct a previous typo — replacing what had formerly been the word “adjust” with “adjudicate.”

EPT voted unanimously to approve the resolution in its January 10 meeting.

We now ask you to join us in endorsing the set of recommendations laid out in the Resolution. Modest as they may seem, EPT feels they provide important guidance going forward for the university’s strong commitment to support our students in pursuing their educational endeavors.”

Professor Wagner moved adoption of the resolution; Professor Wirtz seconded the motion.

Professor Parsons noted that he was unclear on why the resolution was structured as it is, with the resolving clause pointing to the collected recommendations in an appendix as opposed to including them as separate resolving clauses in the body of the resolution, as is typical. The Parliamentarian noted that other Senate resolutions have been structured in this manner, with all the specific content in an exhibit and a short resolving clause directing the reader to that exhibit.

Professor Wagner responded, noting she would err on the side of overemphasizing that the eight members of this working group spent 11 weeks compiling the information in the full report. They felt very strongly that the report should stand as is, representing as it does the working group’s fastidious work of presenting perspectives and pulling from those what they could. EPT unanimously supported this choice to leave the

working group report as is. However, the committee also feels strongly that the working group report also puts forth several recommendations and that this is where the focus of the resolution lies. These recommendations are therefore listed as appendix 1 to the resolution. The report itself was discussed extensively at the December Senate meeting. In good faith, she added, EPT members were asked to carefully read the December Senate meeting minutes. They did so, taking all feedback provided at that meeting very seriously.

Professor Parsons stated that this structure is very different from previous resolutions and that he wanted to have an idea of why the appendix was being presented as a standalone, take-it-or-leave-it wall. Professor Wagner hoped that Professor Parsons did not feel that the committee was building a wall with this set of recommendations. She reiterated that the focus of the resolution is on the recommendations as a forward thinking set of guidelines that reinforce the university's commitment to supporting students' pursuit of their education. The amount of labor that went into putting the working group report together should not be underestimated. The working group's conversations were painful and challenging, and, while reactions to the report can be wide-ranging, the report was certainly done in good faith and as thoroughly as possible.

Professor Parsons affirmed the working group's hard work and its ability to put out the report it did. He expressed his concern, however, about endorsing the recommendations as a group without the ability for the Senate to propose changes to those recommendations. He recalled being very supportive at the December meeting of the group's efforts to attain more transparency in the interest of fairness for all involved.

Professor Wirtz expressed that this seems to be an almost irrelevant discussion—a set of recommendations has been presented, and no one is proposing changes to those, rendering the issue moot. If this is important, the resolution can be amended to pull the bullet points into their own resolving clauses, but he stated that he still needs to be convinced that someone has something they want to change before supporting such an amendment.

Professor Sarkar asked whether the choice not to include the bullet-pointed recommendations as separate resolving clauses was because this would somehow lose the rest of the report. Professor Wagner responded that EPT felt that this was the most direct way to first endorse the working group report's recommendations itself and then to create a resolution to ask the Senate to endorse the same recommendations. The resolution represents what EPT has already endorsed; the Senate is now invited to make the same endorsement.

President Granberg asked Professor Parsons if he was proposing converting the appendix bullets to resolving clauses so that he could make propose an amendment to one of those individual points. Professor Parsons responded that this was indeed the case. He expressed concern that the resolution as currently arranged seems to imply that the Senate somehow endorses everything in the full report. Changing the appendix to resolving clauses would permit the separation needed if a Senate member has concerns about the original report but not the recommendations themselves.

Professor Wagner reminded the group that they have had this report since well before the December Senate meeting. She affirmed again that the recommendations set out in the resolution are forward thinking and not relitigating the past. She encouraged the Senate to take that as their charge for this resolution.

Professor Schultheiss noted that there is nothing in the resolution that says the Senate would be approving every bit of the working group report by adopting the resolution. Rather, the resolution describes when the

report was presented and asks the Senate to endorse the recommendations made in the report, which is a simple measure. The resolution endorses the report's forward-looking measures and is asking for approval of every word of the report. Professor Parsons responded that the resolution does ask for an endorsement of every word in Appendix 1.

The Parliamentarian offered some advice that concerns about any aspect of the resolution should be done on a procedural motion and amendment to strike or add something. Otherwise, the option is to vote against the resolution or to move it be returned to the committee. She suggested that Professor Parsons formulate what he would like to see happen into an amendment.

Professor Parsons moved an amendment to convert each bullet point from the Appendix to separate resolving clauses. Professor Sarkar seconded the motion. Professor Brinkerhoff moved an amendment to Professor Parsons's amendment to change the language of the resolving clause to read: "That the Faculty Senate hereby endorses the recommendations of the Educational Policy and Technology Committee, which are as follows:" with the recommendations then listed as bullet points on the resolving clause page. This amendment was adopted by unanimous consent. Professor Parsons's amended amendment was then also adopted by unanimous consent.

Professor Parsons made a motion to add a bullet point to the recommendations that would read: "Information on penalties for transgressions against other students in the university must be made transparent if we are to discourage future transgressions." The amendment was not seconded.

Professor Parsons moved adding "as defined by our regular rules" to the end of the second bullet point. The amendment was not seconded.

Two typographical corrections were noted:

- Add "EPT" as an abbreviation in the first Whereas Clause; and
- Add "(attached)" to the end of the first Whereas Clause to refer the reader to the working group report.

[Resolution 25/6](#) was adopted by unanimous consent.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

None.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- I. Nominations for membership to Senate Standing Committees
Two nominations were approved by unanimous consent:
 - Fiscal Planning & Budgeting: Oded Rozenbaum (GWSB), voting
 - Libraries: Katherine Puskarz (GWSC/GWSPH), nonvoting
- II. Senate Standing Committee Reports
 - None

BRIEF STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Professor Wagner moved that the Senate move into executive session for a discussion of executive orders and related guidance issued by the federal government that may impact GW, and that Provost Bracey, Bruno Fernandes, all of the deans, Charles Barber, Jonathan Post, Colette Coleman, Ellen Moran, Terry Murphy, Jay Goff, the Senate office staff, Registrar Cloud, Parliamentarian Sarah Binder, Gina Lohr, Baxter Goodly, and Jeff Brand be invited to attend the executive session. She further moved that time in executive session be limited to 30 minutes, at which point the Senate will vote to return to regular session. The motion was seconded and approved by unanimous consent.

The Senate adjourned to executive session at 3:58pm.

ADJOURNMENT

Following the executive session, the meeting was adjourned at 4:52pm.

**Faculty Senate
President Granberg's Report
February 14, 2025**

NIH Funding Policy Changes: University Response

As you know, since our last Faculty Senate meeting on January 10th, the new presidential administration has undertaken significant policy changes, the scope and scale of which are unprecedented.

To keep our community informed, we have launched two web pages. The first appears on the Office of Sponsored Projects site and was [specifically designed for our principal investigators](#), sharing the information and guidance they need related to the impact of federal actions on our research enterprise.

The second targets students, faculty, and staff and [explains the executive orders and federal guidance most relevant to higher education](#)—particularly in the areas of DEI, antisemitism, immigration enforcement, Title IX, and research.

We will be updating both of these sites as new information becomes available, especially because guidance will likely evolve as legal challenges advance through the judicial system.

One of the most recent changes involves imposing a 15 percent limit on indirect cost recovery associated with NIH grants. As we shared in the messages earlier this week, such a change would have a devastating effect not only on the GW research enterprise but on medical research across the country.

The announced cuts will threaten delays in advancements and discoveries related to critical diseases like heart disease, cancer, HIV, diabetes, and Alzheimer's. These delays will impede progress fundamental to advancing and improving disease prevention and outcomes for our patients, our D.C. community, the United States, and beyond.

In response to the NIH's directive, GW joined a lawsuit as a co-plaintiff in the U.S. District Court in Massachusetts. Alongside the Association of American Universities and several other AAU institutions, as well as the Association of Public and Land-grant Universities and the American Council on Education, GW opposes the proposed action not only because of its impact on research but also on the grounds that it is arbitrary and capricious and a violation of federal statute and regulations.

This was one of three suits filed on Monday. The judge issued a temporary restraining order pending a hearing next week, and the NIH has since issued a memo stating that until further notice they will follow their existing FY25 funding policies and use the previously approved negotiated indirect cost rates.

MFA Update

I know that there are ongoing concerns about the operational deficit at the MFA. We continue to work through the pathways to improve its operations under the oversight of GW. There will be an update on the MFA's financial results at the March Senate meeting.

I also want to acknowledge the public discussion going on about the university and conflicts of interest with regard to the selection of Savista as an independent contractor to manage MFA billing and reimbursements. I'll say at the outset that GW and the MFA both have robust conflict of interest policies and follow them faithfully.

For the university, these policies extend across our entire community and include faculty members who have started companies, staff members whose spouse the university does business with. Put simply, these policies ensure that there is no conflict between a duty to the institution and self interest. In every case, there are procedures in place to manage that conflict.

With that in mind, what I see in this public discussion is a fundamental disagreement about how those conflicts should be managed as well as the assumption that somehow GW should do more than execute the standard and effective approaches to managing those conflicts. There are people who think, for example, that if you have a conflict or even the perception of a conflict, you should never be able to serve on a board. What is problematic about that is that, particularly on boards that require knowledge of a particular field, it is relatively common for people to have conflicts to serve. If you remove the ability for anyone with any conflict to serve, you shrink the pool of qualified individuals. That is a piece of why the standard for managing these issues is to require disclosure of the conflict and then to create a management plan that is independently monitored.

This is what we have in place at GW. In my own service on boards, and in my own work at universities, I have now been involved in conflict of interest procedures at three different universities; no procedure is perfect. I do think, however, that the requirement of disclosure and management of that is an effective way to balance having good controls with ensuring that there is also an ample supply of qualified people to serve.

One other note I will make is that I have now worked with Ellen Zane for 18 months. I have observed her abiding by the requirements of the compliance plan and have at all times seen her to be someone who is very serious about doing a good job on behalf of the MFA and also abiding by the requirements of conflict management.

Leadership Update

Turning to leadership updates, soon after our last Faculty Senate meeting, GW shared the news that Donna Arbide, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations, will be leaving her role to focus on her health.

Donna has been a difference-maker at GW since she became our chief fundraiser nearly 7 years ago, increasing annual contributions to scholarships and financial aid for talented students, boosting contributions to GW's endowment, and garnering philanthropic support for innovative university initiatives including the Global Food Institute.

The search will begin in the next few weeks and I anticipate having a new VP in place by early fall. Donna has agreed to continue in her role during the search process and will work with us to ensure a smooth transition.

Strategic Framework Update

I am pleased to share an update on our collective progress toward GW's Strategic Framework. I want to start by extending my gratitude to the hundreds of community members who have deeply engaged in this process. More than 400 faculty, staff, and students participated in community conversations, and over 170 idea briefs were submitted, reflecting the passion and commitment that earned GW its place among the nation's most distinguished universities.

A special thank you goes to the Innovation Committee for their hard work over the last two semesters and to Terry Murphy for her phenomenal leadership.

Two imperatives emerged from the wide-ranging feedback we received: first, prioritizing opportunities to enhance GW's distinctiveness and impact and, second, laying the foundation for GW to become a preeminent institution in higher education.

The ideas we heard demonstrated GW's exceptional interdisciplinary strengths and our capacity to embrace society's greatest opportunities. I am particularly excited by several recommendations that have emerged directly from community conversations and idea briefs. A few examples of things we are thinking about include:

- Creating opportunities for GW to be one of the top conveners in Washington DC by strengthening connections among GW academic government agencies, NGOs, and global institutions, leveraging our unique position in the District;
- Expanding our high-impact educational practices and pedagogy, including undergraduate research opportunities and real-world project-based learning; and
- Developing and expanding innovative intersections between our traditional strengths and emerging capabilities.

Something that emerged loudly from everything we heard in the fall—including the retreat with Faculty Senate—demonstrated the importance of building a strong foundation for our future preeminence.

Some examples of the foundational priorities identified during last semester’s conversations include:

- Strengthening our research infrastructure and support;
- Strategically hiring and retaining faculty across disciplines;
- Rebuilding staff capacity and providing opportunities for professional development; and
- Enhancing student financial aid, support, and experience.

With these in mind, I see a real path forward toward a framework for achieving institutional excellence at GW.

As we move into the next phase of the framework process, here is what you can expect:

- The Steering Committee is reviewing and synthesizing the Innovation Committee’s list of recommendations and our community’s extensive feedback
- In April, we will share a draft framework for public comment and host another set of community-wide briefings
- A draft framework will go to the GW Board of Trustees in May with final approval anticipated at the retreat in June
- The full framework will launch in in the fall.

We look forward to sharing more with the community as our framework continues to take shape.

Other Engagements and News

The Strategic Framework is just one way we are encouraging dialogue and engagement across GW’s various communities. I’d like to share a few others.

Soon after the semester started, our community came together for the GW 8th Inaugural Ball. We launched this tradition in 1993, and this year was another memorable night for the GW community to dust off dancing shoes and enjoy a special evening with friends.

Earlier this week, I was in Florida for a series of donor and alumni meetings. Among the highlights of the trip were the roundtable dinners in Palm Beach and Miami. These small gatherings are intended to create stronger bonds between GW and its supporters. Stacy Dean, Carbonell Family Executive Director of the GW Global Food Institute, joined me and did a wonderful job sharing information about the institute and its activities. The audience really enjoyed her presentation, , and Stacy will work with Deveopment & Alumni Relations (DAR) on follow up with interested donors.

Next week, I am travelling to New York City, where Frank Sesno will join me for another roundtable conversation. Over the next few months, we will be holding larger gatherings with GW alumni in the DMV and overseas. These gatherings mark our continuing work to share GW success stories with donors and alumni across the country and around the world, and I look forward to sharing more about these events as we move forward. Stacy and Frank are two of many faculty members who have joined me at these events, and all have been very well received.

I’ll add that last year when I travelled across country to meet with GW alumni and donors in my first year as president, I didn’t have faculty accompany me, and I really see the difference in the way our alumni connect when faculty are talking about subjects they are passionate about. Seeing these connections gives me great pride in all that our faculty are accomplishing, and I deeply appreciate this partnership in sharing the story of the GW research enterprise.

GW's global connections were reinforced earlier this week when we received a congratulatory letter from the U.S. Department of State for GW's designation as a "Top Producing Institution" of Fulbright U.S. Scholars and Fulbright U.S. Students in 2024-2025. This achievement is a testament to GW's deep commitment to international exchange and to building lasting connections between the people of the United States and people around the world.

The semester is barely 4 weeks old, and GW has already hosted an amazing series of events.

On day two of the semester, we welcomed Arati Prabhakar, who served as Assistant to the President for Science and Technology and Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, discussed the administration's accomplishments and what lies ahead in health, climate change, and artificial intelligence. GW hosted her final public appearance as an outgoing member of the Biden Administration.

A few days later, Michael Smith, CEO of AmeriCorps, moderated an inspiring student leader panel at the opening program on GW's MLK Day of Service. As with Arati, this was Michael's final public appearance in his Biden Administration leadership role. That day, around 550 GW volunteers participated in the MLK Day of Service, contributing about 1,200 service hours in total on the day of service.

At the end of January, our Law School hosted the 75th Annual Van Vleck Moot Court Constitutional Law Competition for a packed Lindner Hall. Law schools across the country have moot court competitions, but at GW, our panel of judges this year included Supreme Court Justice Ketanji Brown Jackson. One of our other judges—Chief Judge David J. Barron—serves in the United States Court of Appeals for the First Circuit and is the son of GW Law professor and former dean Jerome A. Barron. What a special moment for our law students as they prepare themselves for the challenges of their careers. Kudos to Dean Bowen and her team for such an outstanding example of legal education in action.

At the beginning of this month, we hosted the Politics and Prose event that some of you may have attended, featuring Bill Gates and GW honorary degree recipient and Commencement speaker Savannah Guthrie.

Earlier this month, I had the privilege of helping to kick off the TrailsCon 2025 conference. GW hosted this two-day international conference on the theme AI at Work: Building and Evaluating Trust. Organized by the NSF-funded multi-institutional Institute for Trustworthy AI in Law and Society or TRAILS, the conference featured more than 300 AI thought leaders, researchers, and advisors from academia, industry, and government.

I understand that one of the most exciting presentations was by Professor Robbie Melton of the University of Tennessee on the impact and value of different types of AI wearables in education (like smart glasses or watches that monitor wellness). Bringing together experts like Dr. Melton and hundreds of others allows GW to showcase the cutting-edge research faculty are doing across the country and around the world in the AI space, an outstanding example of the power of GW's role as a global convener.

GW is also showcasing our faculty's outstanding research at this very moment at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) annual meeting in Boston, a meeting that GW is co-sponsoring. Most of you know that this is the world's largest multidisciplinary science gathering, attracting more than 4,000 participants from more than 65 countries. Our engagement at the conference spans multiple schools and offices and includes workshops, panels, and interactive exhibits.

I'll end on this high note. Thank you very much. This concludes my report.



**Faculty Senate February Meeting
Provost Bracey Report
February 14, 2025**

Good afternoon. I have some updates to share today from the Provost Office.

School of Business Dean Announcement

Given all of the headwinds we face, I want to start off with a piece of good news. Yesterday, we made an exciting [announcement about our new School of Business dean](#). We are very pleased that Sevin Yeltekin, currently the dean of the Simon School of Business at the University of Rochester, will be joining GW on August 1. She is an experienced administrator, a prolific scholar, and she understands the many possibilities for innovation in business education. The search committee was impressed with Dr. Yeltekin's academic and administrative expertise, particularly as it comes to building the next generation of forward-thinking and resilient business leaders.

She has already demonstrated a thorough understanding of GW's unique positioning within our nation's capital and the School of Business's ability increase its impact, and we very much look forward to having her join us this coming summer. As many of you know, we were invited to join the Association of American Universities (AAU) in June of 2023 in light of our growing research profile. It is exciting to have a sitting dean of a business school at an AAU university join us as we rise to GW's AAU moment.

Federal Actions

As President Granberg discussed, we are closely monitoring potential impacts of executive orders and other actions on the university, including the research enterprise. Interim Vice Provost for Research Bob Miller and I, along with other members of leadership, have sent numerous messages over the past several weeks sharing guidance for our researchers. The most up-to-date information is available on the [Federal Transition Updates 2025 webpage on the Office of Sponsored Projects site](#).

In general, investigators should continue working according to the existing terms of their awards unless they have received updated guidance from sponsoring agencies or are notified by the Office of Sponsored Projects. If an investigator is preparing a proposal, they should regularly check the sponsor website to track any changes to solicitation requirements or possible removal or revisions of solicitations.

NIH's indirect cost rate announcement is the subject of litigation, including a lawsuit that GW has joined as a co-plaintiff. A nationwide temporary restraining order has been issued that prevents federal agencies from implementing or enforcing the change. **Investigators should continue to utilize GW's federally-negotiated indirect cost rate when developing and submitting NIH proposals, as well as for existing awards.**

Be assured that we will continue to provide guidance as more information becomes available. You may forward any research-related questions to askovpr@gwu.edu.

Research Support Teams

In other research news, at the end of January, Interim Vice Provost Miller and I were pleased to share a number of enhancements in our research administration infrastructure that will enhance support for, and amplify the impact of, our world-class scholars.

These enhancements will strengthen school-level research support, facilitate collaboration across teams and central units, and better meet the needs of our growing and evolving research portfolio.

The enhancements include:

- Renaming pods as “Research Support Teams” and realigning portfolios to leverage affiliations among schools and take advantage of administrators’ specialization and subject-area expertise;
- Adding an RST for the School of Engineering and Applied Science;
- Creating an integrated reporting structure for RSTs to create consistency and help clarify roles and responsibilities; and
- Establishing a research operations committee to coordinate sponsored research activities.

These enhancements are the result of considerable consultation with our research community. They will not reduce current staffing levels or impact the primary points of contact for research support.

We will continue to identify areas to improve administrative support for research and implement additional changes as necessary. We also plan to conduct a “pulse check” later this spring to assess the efficacy of this first round of enhancements.

Faculty Annual Reporting

A quick note about Faculty Annual Reporting. It’s that time of year again. Merit-eligible faculty should have submitted their annual reports earlier this week, either in Lyterati or our new system, Elements, depending on your school. Department chairs or directors will submit comments in March, and deans will submit comments in April. We greatly appreciate your attention to this important process.

School of Public Health Dean Search

In late January, I formally charged the members of the Milken Institute School of Public Health Dean Search Committee. This committee includes faculty, trustees, students, staff, and alumni.

The committee is charged with developing the criteria and position description for the next dean, working with the search firm to create a strong and diverse pool of candidates, from which they will select candidates for committee interviews; and identifying finalists for consideration.

The next step is to obtain public health full-time faculty approval of the position description for the next dean. This will occur in the coming days. Following approval, we will post the position description online for our national search, during which time we will accept both internal and external candidates. We will share the posting with the community when it is available. I look forward to the committee’s important work ahead in our search and selecting the next dean of the school.

NSF Career Awards

Some more good news to share. We recently learned that two GW faculty members have been awarded NSF CAREER Awards. They are Jimmy Saw from the Department of Biological Sciences and Zhengtian Xu from the School of Engineering and Applied Science.

The CAREER award is NSF’s most prestigious honor supporting new work from junior faculty with the potential to serve as academic role models in research and education and to lead advances in their fields. GW faculty members are consistently recognized with this award, and we currently have nearly 20 active NSF CAREER awards at GW. This is a testament to the strength and innovation of our distinguished faculty. Congratulations to Professors Saw and Xu.

Upcoming Events

Finally, there are a few exciting events next week that I would like to highlight.

Sesno Series

On Tuesday February 18th, the Sesno Series returns with Frank Sesno hosting an interview with former Governor Chris Sununu of New Hampshire. The event is called “Disruption, Discord, and Democracy: The Road Ahead” and will take place at 6pm in the Jack Morton Auditorium. This discussion of politics and the new Trump administration is a true #OnlyatGW moment. Yours truly will offer some opening remarks, and I encourage you all to attend. You can RSVP via the SMPA website.

Teaching Day

On Thursday the 20th, Libraries and Academic Innovation will host Teaching Day, which offers a day of panels, master classes, and lightning talks dedicated to celebrating teaching and connecting faculty across disciplines who care about teaching. This year’s theme is “Supporting Faculty, Supporting Students” and focuses on the importance of centering our faculty’s needs as well as our students’. You can register for this event on the LAI website.

Three Minute Thesis Competition

Finally, the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs is once again hosting the annual Three Minute Thesis competition next Thursday the 20th. It is a competition where GW doctoral students have just three minutes to effectively communicate their findings and the value of their research project, all for the chance to win a cash prize and go on to compete in a regional competition.

We have over 20 doctoral students competing this year from multiple schools, and it promises to be a very exciting event. I encourage you to visit the Office of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs website to see which students are competing and encourage your colleagues and students to come out and support the event. It will take place in the amphitheater of the University Student Center, and you can register via the OGPA website.

This concludes my report, and I am happy to take questions.



Faculty Senate

Report of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC)

February 14, 2025

Ilana Feldman, Chair

FSEC Activities

FSEC met on January 31, arranging the agenda for today's Senate meeting and receiving updates on Senate committee activities. The group engaged in extensive discussions with the President and Provost around the barrage of Executive Orders coming from the Trump administration and the potential and real impacts these will have on the university.

The group discussed the message sent on January 29 by Provost Bracey, CFO Fernandes, and VP for Research Miller to the GW research community which encourages "researchers to continue their research to the extent possible" and provides additional guidance about navigating the current uncertain environment.

The group also discussed diversity and the implications of the Executive Order on DEI initiatives. GW remains committed to supporting a university environment where all students, faculty, and staff can thrive and feel supported.

The Provost shared a draft policy development guidelines preview (pursuant to SR 25/2: On Process for Policy Revisions); FSEC made some initial comments and recommended that the draft guidelines be shared with the Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom Committee for their input.

Last week, the Senate office sent out the annual call for committee service; Senate standing committees must be restaffed each year. Please be sure to sign up for service and spread the word in your schools; all faculty are welcome to serve on Senate committees. In addition, we anticipate several committee chairships turning over this spring; please reach out to Jenna in the Senate office if you are interested in learning more about these opportunities. Senate committees must have a Senate member as chair; all committees but one (Honors & Academic Convocations) have co-chairs who do not need to be Senate members.

On February 6, FSEC joined the Board of Trustees Executive Committee for their regular joint meeting. The group had a wide ranging and productive conversation about the potential impact of the new Presidential administration for GW and higher education more generally. We also continued previous conversations about ongoing strategic framework planning, reflecting our shared interest in supporting excellence at GW.

Personnel Actions

There is one active grievance at the university; the parties have moved to mediation.

Calendar

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee is February 21, 2025. Draft resolutions and any other possible Senate agenda items should be forwarded to Liz Carlson in the Senate office as soon as possible, given that this meeting takes place one week from today. The next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate meeting is March 7, 2025.