

Faculty Senate
Provost Bracey Report
April 11, 2025

US News Graduate Program Rankings

I am very pleased to start my report with some good news that was published in GW Today this week. The latest list of US News and World Report's best graduate programs shows strong rankings for several programs.

- Milken Institute School of Public Health ranked 12th among public health schools;
- The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences' Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration ranked 16th among public affairs schools;
- GW Law's part-time program was ranked second; its full-time program ranked 31st; *and*
- GW Engineering climbed 14 places, from 88 to 74.

Many other specialty programs were ranked, so I encourage you to read the article to see the breadth of impressive rankings.

Transparency in Funding Task Force

Last week, the university released the final report of a Transparency in Funding Task Force that evaluated GW's institutional policies governing the acceptance and transparency of grants and gifts. I charged this task force with conducting an assessment of GW's practices, policies, and procedures as well as benchmarking GW's approach against peer institutions.

The report found that GW employs appropriate measures to review incoming funding, and that university policies are in line with other academic institutions while also acknowledging that more can be done to clarify and communicate the considerations that go into decision-making. The task force recommended strengthening the balance between maintaining appropriate transparency and protecting academic freedom through a list of recommendations, all of which can be found on the [Office of the Provost site](#). I want to thank the task force for its work, and I look forward to sharing updates on recommendations as they become available.

Budget Model Redesign Process

You all should have received a message yesterday from myself, EVP Bruno Fernandes and Senior Vice President Scott Mory linking to the [university's budget model redesign website](#). As you know, we are updating our budget model to better meet our needs and priorities, support our academic and research mission, improve planning and investment and encourage collaboration. We have engaged groups of key campus stakeholders help create the guiding principles that reflect the university's expectations for the budget redesign process and serve as guideposts for designing the new budget model, and those are available on the website, along with a timeline for developing and implementing the new budget model and a set of FAQs.

We welcome faculty and staff engagement in this process and feedback on the guiding principles and ongoing work to reshape our budgeting practices. There is a [feedback form](#) on the website where faculty and staff may submit thoughts on the guiding principles. We will also host virtual faculty and staff community conversations on Thursday, May 8 and Friday, May 9. Please be on the lookout for details about these sessions in the coming days.

GW JPulse

Regarding concerns recently brought to the attention of the Faculty Affairs office. We have been made aware of a website listing a group of GW faculty who have publicly shared views regarding advocacy efforts. This external group is not sanctioned by or affiliated with the university, and we understand concerns about the information it is sharing about GW and members of our community. The university will monitor the site and consider further action as necessary.

We take very seriously any actions that target our community members based on their views, and the university has resources and support available for faculty, students, or staff affected by doxxing or online abuse. The [doxing page on the Student Affairs site](#) includes information about requesting removal of false information and obtaining legal advice. In addition, the university also offers the “Delete Me” service to assist individuals in the removal of personal data online.

GWALA

The 5th cohort of the GW Academic Leadership Academy, or GWALA, graduated this morning. You may recall that I created this program in 2019 with then-provost Forrest Maltzman to enable our academic leaders to step outside their day-to-day functions and dedicate time to professional development, relationship-building, and enhancing their skill sets. The graduation is an annual event designed to honor the hard work, dedication, and insights gained throughout the program. This event is an opportunity for cohort members to present final projects and celebrate their shared successes.

Applications for the 6th cohort will open soon, so keep an eye out for that announcement.

Inside GW

Inside GW events have been ongoing since last week through the Office of Undergraduate Admissions. As you may be aware, these are annual welcome events for newly admitted students and their guests. Throughout the day, they will hear from a member of leadership, such as President Granberg or myself, engage in academic sessions with a school, do breakout sessions, tour campus, and more. These events are a huge amount of work but play an extremely important role in welcoming admitted students to GW and getting them to become deposited students and therefore the newest members of our scholarly community. If you see any of these admitted students and their guests around campus in the coming days, I encourage you to be welcoming.

I am very grateful to Jay Goff and his team for all the effort they put into Inside GW this and every year!

Middle States

As you are aware, the Middle States Self-Study process has begun, with the appointment of a Steering Committee and invitations being issued to members of the GW community to join working groups formed around the Middle States Commission on Higher Education's Seven Standards of Excellence.

Next Friday, April 18, Middle States liaison Michael Bowden, Vice President for Institutional Field Relations, will be on campus to meet with members of the community to discuss accreditation standards and the launch of GW's self-study process. This is an opportunity to hear about Middle States's expectations for institutions and ways that you can be engaged in the process, so I strongly encourage the Faculty Senate, the faculty, and the community at large to attend and meet with Michael to join the discussion and learn more. He will meet with the community from 10:45 to 11:30am in the SMPA Building. This event is listed on the GW events calendar, so please go there for information and to help spread the word, as this meeting is approaching quickly.

I will distribute this information to leadership and will also send a message to the community in the coming days with more information about the launch of our Middle States self-study process. In the meantime, if you have questions, please contact Karen Frosolid-Jones, associate provost for academic planning and assessment and the co-chair of our Middle States Self-Study Steering Committee.

Provost's Seminar

As you are aware, colleges and institutions nationwide have had discussions around institutional neutrality or restraint. These are approaches by which institutions refrain from issuing statements -- or selectively issue statements -- on political and social issues. Associated with this debate are discussions around free speech and academic freedom. These are topics of great interest in higher education, and I know the Senate is introducing a resolution on institutional neutrality later in today's agenda.

To start a conversation on these topics with our community, on Monday, April 21, I will host a virtual discussion with two legal scholars: Vikram Amar, Distinguished Professor of Law at UC Davis School of Law, and Frederick Lawrence, Distinguished Lecturer at Georgetown Law and the 10th Secretary and CEO of the Phi Beta Kappa Society.

I will send a formal invitation to the community next week, but in the meantime, you can find this event on the GW events calendar. This Provost's Seminar on Institutional Neutrality and Free Speech on University Campuses will be held from 3 to 4:30pm, and you can register via Zoom. Again, it will be on Monday, April 21. This will mark the beginning of a more extensive engagement around the question that will likely involve a presentation to the Board of Trustees, the formation of a task force or blue-ribbon panel to study the issue and make recommendations over the summer, and perhaps some additional discussion and engagement with the community next fall.

Finally, a few notes about some exciting end of academic year upcoming events.

Academic Honors

I recently notified a large group of undergraduate students that they had received the Outstanding Academic Achievement Award, our highest undergraduate academic recognition. It is presented to students who are

approximately the top two percent of their schools, by grade point average, and who have earned at least 60 credits at the university by the fall semester, at least 30 of which were earned at the university.

Each school with undergraduate students also selects a Distinguished Scholar, and the Columbian College selects up to three. You can find all these names on the Provost website under Awards & Honors. Students are invited to bring a faculty guest to the Academic Honors Ceremony on Tuesday, April 22, where President Granberg, the school deans, and I will celebrate their many academic accomplishments.

Faculty Honors

In fact, it will be an exciting week of celebrating achievement at GW! Just two days after Academic Honors, we will hold the 15th Annual Faculty Honors Ceremony on Thursday, April 24. Hopefully, you saw the announcement of this year's Faculty and Graduate Student Teaching Awards winners and emeriti faculty honorees. Of course, the Faculty Senate's own Ilana Feldman is the recipient of this year's Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Prize for Service, in part because of her dedicated service to the Faculty Senate. So please make sure to RSVP for the ceremony to celebrate Ilana and all of our other faculty and graduate student teacher colleagues who will be recognized.

InnovationFest

Finally, GW's inaugural InnovationFest is fast approaching on Thursday, May 1. It will be a daylong celebration of impactful research, scholarship, creativity and entrepreneurship. The dynamic program features performances, panels, demonstrations, art, posters, book signings and inventions—all under one roof! Join us on May 1 in the Smith Center, and more information to come.

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