

**Faculty Senate  
President's Report  
April 11, 2025**

Good afternoon. It's a pleasure to see you all.

Like many of you, I'm feeling the weight of this moment. The uncertainty we're facing is real—and deeply unsettling. Over the past year, I've had the opportunity to speak with many of you about the uncharted waters we are facing. I want to acknowledge how challenging this period has been—not just for GW, but for higher education more broadly. I'm deeply grateful for the support, candor, and feedback so many of you have shared as we navigate one of the most difficult chapters in our institution's history.

In times of such change like this, it is especially meaningful to have venues like the Faculty Senate—spaces where open dialogue, shared governance, and principled debate can help guide our path forward. Please know that my colleagues and I are doing all we can to stay informed, prepare for multiple scenarios, advocate for our community, and ensure GW remains as safe and secure as possible. The partnership with the Faculty Senate is a fundamental part of this.

**Federal Situation**

Since our last Faculty Senate meeting, we officially launched new weekly federal update. We have received positive feedback from faculty on this update, and we are continuing to refine it so people can see how the changes at the federal level impact GW. I encourage you and your colleagues to submit questions or concerns via the [email address in the federal update](#). As we see patterns of regular questions, we will work to produce answers for the community.

Several items stand out just from this week's update.

- In recent weeks, universities and news reports have documented cases of international students whose visas have been revoked or terminated by federal agencies, including the Department of Homeland Security.
- At GW, the university is aware of a small number of students whose visas were similarly terminated: 3 current and 2 graduating students. We understand that these actions have caused anxiety and concern within our international community, and we are here to help. The International Services Office (ISO) continues to assist affected students and provides immigration and safety information and other useful guidance to students and others on the ISO website.
- Various schools and colleges at GW are providing tuition discounts for recently dismissed members of the federal workforce who are considering an advanced degree. Participating programs are within the Columbian College of Arts & Sciences (CCAS), the College of Professional Studies (CPS), the Graduate School of Education & Human Development (GSEHD), the GW School of Business (GWSB), the School of Nursing (SON), and the Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH). [More information is available online.](#)
- On April 9, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services Office (USCIS) [announced](#) that it would “begin considering antisemitic activity on social media and the physical harassment of Jewish individuals” as grounds for denying immigration benefit requests, including those applying for lawful permanent resident status as well as international students.

- On April 4, the U.S. District Court for the District of Massachusetts issued a [final judgment](#) permanently enjoining, or prohibiting, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) from reducing the indirect cost rate to 15 percent. On April 8, the Trump Administration filed a notice of appeal, which will be heard by the Court of Appeals for the First Circuit. GW is a party to this suit, along with about half of the membership of the AAU.

We continue to engage our broad alumni network across the district and political spectrum to navigate the current situation. GW alumni are also helping to lead the new administration, including Office of Management and Budget Director Russell Vought, a graduate of the GW Law School. Other GW alums nominated for positions within the administration include Department of Education General Counsel nominee Jennifer Mascott and Department of Education Undersecretary nominee Nicholas Kent.

## **Endowed Professorships**

Last week we installed Manya Magnus as the Michael and Lori Milken Professor of Public Health in GWSPH. Professor Magnus is an expert in HIV prevention and public health. She serves as the Chair of the Department of Epidemiology and is the principal investigator of the DC Clinical Trials Unit designed to address the HIV epidemic in the District.

On April 24, in the Law School, GW will officially install Mary Anne Franks as the Eugene L. and Barbara A. Bernard Professor of Intellectual Property, Technology, and Civil Rights Law. Professor Franks is an expert on the intersection of civil rights, free speech, and technology as well as family law, criminal law, criminal procedure, First Amendment law, and Second Amendment law.

Endowed professorships are so important to GW because they provide sustained funding that helps us attract and retain top faculty, support groundbreaking research, and enhance academic excellence.

## **Board of Trustees Elections**

I have been so pleased to work in partnership with our trustees, especially at this time of change for the university and for higher education more broadly. Here are the results of last week's Board elections:

- Grace E. Speights, J.D. '82, will continue as chair for an additional year.
- Mark H. Chichester, B.B.A. '90, J.D. '93, will serve another term as vice chair.
- Jeffrey Flaks, M.H.S.A. '96, has been elected as secretary for a one-year term beginning in June.
- I offer my thanks to Avram Tucker, B.B.A. '77, who is completing his term as secretary and stepping off the board at the end of May after twelve years of service.

## **Giving Day**

Giving Day, GW's 24-hour fundraising campaign, is designed to increase philanthropic support for the university. It launched in 2021, and every year we have set new records in terms of the number of donors as well as their gifts. This year, we raised \$2,023,869 from 3,596 donors, and we saw a record number of match and challenge dollars. 616 GW faculty and staff made donations this year (up from 596 last year), and our donors came from all 50 states and 19 countries.

## **Annual Celebration of Scholarships and Fellowships Dinner**

I attended the annual celebration of scholarships and fellowships dinner last week; it was an incredible experience to be in a space of so much joy. 230 of our major scholarship donors and student scholarship recipients were able to meet and mingle. This event reaffirmed the value of the work we do and our impact on the next generation in an up-close and personal way. The environment was so special and heartwarming that it moved a donor to make an on-the-spot commitment to an additional gift, which closed out our two-year, \$12 million Third Century Scholarship Endowment Match initiative. One of the student speakers marveled at "how amazing is it to see real scholarships being made in real time" at the event.

On a personal note, Sonya and I were very pleased to meet Robert Jackson, the inaugural recipient of the Granberg-Rankin Endowed Scholarship. Robert is an undergraduate studying international affairs and security policy. Sonya and I are proud to create opportunities for students like Robert to thrive; this was a deeply moving experience.

### **Launch of Vice President for University Advancement Search**

The search was announced following our last Senate meeting, and I anticipate an appointment by fall. I want to thank those serving on the search advisory committee, including co-chairs Dean Dayna Bowen Matthew and Chief of Staff Scott Mory. The committee has been charged, and we have engaged Ron Schiller, Managing Director and founding partner of Aspen Leadership Group, to run the search. As a reminder, the division, which was previously known as Development and Alumni Relations, is now named University Advancement.

### **Commencement Update: Student Speaker, Keynote Speaker and Honorary Degree Recipients**

Just announced this week is that the Commencement student speaker will be Natalia Anzaldúa, an occupational therapy doctoral student. Natalia is an amazing student who was born in Monterrey, Mexico, and then later moved to McAllen, Texas. She describes GW as a place where she was continually encouraged to ask “why” and where, for the first time in her life, she wasn’t considered a troublemaker but rather someone with tremendous potential. Natalia eventually wants to work with children and families with disabilities, especially Spanish-speaking families.

In late March, we announced that the Commencement keynote speaker will be Jonquel Jones, B.A. ’19 (Criminal Justice). Jonquel is a former GW basketball standout and now a WNBA forward. She is a superstar with the New York Liberty and in 2024 was named the WNBA’s most valuable player for her performance in the fifth and final game in which the New York Liberty secured the WNBA championship. I’ve gotten to know Jonquel during my time at GW, and she has an incredible personal story of courage, faith, and persistence that I believe will be inspiring for our graduates.

This year’s Honorary Degree recipients are:

- Mark D. Lerner, Bachelor of Business Administration ’75 (Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters): Mark is the managing principal owner and vice chairman of the Washington Nationals.
- Eleanor Holmes Norton (Honorary Doctor of Public Service): Delegate Norton is a longtime activist, especially in codifying federal civil rights law against gender discrimination. In 1990, she was elected to the House representing the District of Columbia and remains a steadfast advocate for civil rights and equality.
- Mark R. Shenkman, MBA ’67 (Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters): Mark is the founder and president of Shenkman Capital Management; he is a former GW trustee and a pioneer in the high-yield bond market.

### **Faculty Coffees and Lunches**

I continue to meet with different groups of faculty members, getting to know them and their work, and hearing their ideas and concerns. It is extremely important to me to stay in touch with what’s happening with the faculty and to ask and answer questions and share updates. I continue to aspire to transparent leadership with open ongoing communication and will continue meeting with faculty in the fall.

### **Class visits**

Over the spring semester, I’ve continued to visit classes across campus; these visits are pure joy for me. Last week, I attended a Politics and Leadership course with Professor Maltzman and the Mechanical Engineering Capstone Design presentations with Professor Shooter. Late last month, I visited Law of Multiracial Democracy in the U.S with Professor Overton in the Law School. I have visited other courses in the School of Media & Public Affairs (SMPA), the School of Engineering & Applied Science (SEAS), SMHS, and GWSB. These visits are another way to stay in touch with what’s happening on campus. I truly enjoy spending time with our faculty and students and impressed by the outstanding teaching and by our exceptional students.

## London Trip and DAR Presidential Roundtables

I traveled to London recently; this was my first international trip as GW's president, and the first GW presidential visit to London since 2017. I enjoyed meeting alumni, hearing their stories, and sharing updates. I also attended a roundtable with Stacy Dean, Executive Director of the Global Food Institute.

I have also attended two DAR roundtables recently. Last month, I enjoyed a roundtable on Artificial intelligence with David Broniatowski and Zoe Szajnfarder. I attended another roundtable led by Zoe Szajnfarder (again) and Ethan Porter, who leads the Institute for Data, Democracy and Politics. These events showcase our great strengths as an institution as well as our outstanding faculty who are very well received and add great energy and depth to these conversations. We plan to continue highlighting faculty in these dinners.

## Accolades and Athletics

- [MSN reported that GW is among the 50 private colleges that are most worth the investment.](#)
- GW was designated a 2025-26 Voter Friendly Campus by the Fair Elections Center's Campus Vote Project and NASPA- Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education. This is the third time we have received this designation. It is a clear recognition of GW's efforts to inform students of their civic duty and prepare them to be engaged participants in our democracy.
- Ganiyat Adeduntan was announced on March 20 as the new women's basketball coach. She was formally introduced with an event on campus this past Tuesday. She spent four years as the head coach at Colgate University. Prior to that, she spent three seasons and four years as an assistant coach at GW, so this is a homecoming for her.
- The men's basketball team had their best season in ten years.
- GW Women's Swimming & Diving captures their fourth straight A-10 Championship.
- GW Men's Swimming & Diving captured their fifth straight A-10 Championship.
- GW Women's Gymnastics won the EAGL championship, the equivalent of the A-10.

## Upcoming Events

- April 17: Politics and Prose with Melinda Gates
- April 24: Investiture of Professor Mary Anne Franks as the Eugene L. and Barbara A. Bernard Professor in Intellectual Property, Technology, and Civil Rights Law
- April 24: Politics and Prose with José Andrés