



Faculty Senate

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SENATE MEETING HELD ON APRIL 11, 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, and Lach; Interim Dean Perry; Professors Akman, Bamford, Belenky, Borum, Briggs, Brinkerhoff, Callier, Cheh, Core, Crandall, Cseh, Eakle, El-Ghazawi, Engel, Gore, Hernandez, Kargaltsev, Kay, Kieff, Kulp, Morant, Mylonas, Orti, Rain, Sarkar, Schultheiss, Schwindt, Tielsch, Wagner, Warren, Warshaw, Wilson, Wirtz, and Zeman.

Absent: Deans Kelly-Weeder, Matthew, Riddle, and Wahlbeck; Professors Badie, Lu, Marvar, Parsons, Trangsrud, and Vyas.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:09p.m.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The [minutes](#) of the March 7, 2025, Faculty Senate meeting were approved by unanimous consent.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF SENATE MEMBERS COMPLETING TERMS (Ellen Granberg, President)

President Granberg recognized the [Senate members who are completing their terms](#) with today's meeting. She thanked them for their enthusiastic partnership and dedicated service to the university. This is, she noted, a serious commitment on top of research and teaching duties, and everyone is deeply appreciative of all they, as faculty members as well as members of the Faculty Senate, do for GW.

RESOLUTION 25/8: OF APPRECIATION FOR ILANA FELDMAN (Katrin Schutheiss, Faculty Senate Executive Committee)

Professor Schultheiss introduced and read the resolution into the record. The President noted that Professor Feldman is the first FSEC chair with whom she worked when she stepped into her role as president of GW. She expressed her deep appreciation for the thoughtful, collaborative, calming, and intellectually-grounded voice Professor Feldman has brought to their conversations.

[Resolution 25/8](#) was adopted by unanimous consent, and the Senate showed its appreciation with a round of applause.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT (Ellen Granberg, President)

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

BRIEF STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS/PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Professor Akman asked what, if any, mobilization or organization is happening among universities across the country in response to the hits that major, wealthy univs are taking from the federal government. President Granberg responded that she is not aware of any major mobilization of universities yet. Conversations are starting to happen, and she noted that she would take part in a conference call this weekend with a group of AAU presidents. She suspected that institutions are trying to figure out the playbook and options in the current environment as well as their risk-benefit calculations. While there has been a great deal of conversation about what could be done, major actions haven't emerged yet.

Dean Goldman noted that, across the country, NIH has specifically targeted and eliminated grants directed toward controlling HIV/AIDS in minority communities (in terms of racial, ethnic and sexual minorities) under the justification that this work no longer reflects the administration's priorities. The American Public Health Association, along with some other groups, have filed suit. While these grants do not represent a large percentage of grants in the Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH), this work is being done nationally; this could be first research area the administration pursues eliminating, rather than terminating all grants at a particular university. President Granberg affirmed that focused lawsuits are happening, noting that GW is part of the suit around the proposed reduction to indirects.

Professor Tielsch, noting the resignation of the CEO of the GW Hospital just before the new Cedar Hill hospital opened, asked whether this has any implications for Cedar Hill's opening and the stability of the Medical Faculty Associates (MFA) commitment to Cedar Hill. President Granberg responded that the CEO's decision to step away from that role has not changed UHS's plans in any way around Cedar Hill.

Professor Brinkerhoff expressed her deep concern for international students at GW and elsewhere whose visas have been revoked. She asked whether the President could provide more information about how many GW students were affected, including whether they are undergraduate or graduate students and what fields they are studying, and she noted that this would likely have an effect on students who may now look elsewhere for their programs of study. President Granberg responded that she did not know the details around numbers or disciplines, noting that some individuals are GW graduates, while some are still studying at the university. She affirmed that Vice Provost Goff is constantly looking at enrollment projections and factoring in these issues. Provost Bracey confirmed that the individuals with revoked visas include both current students and graduates. He noted that all of the AAU provosts report seeing the same disappointing phenomenon at their institutions.

Professor El-Ghazawi asked whether the university is able to offer any help or support for students forced to leave the country mid-program. Provost Bracey responded that each case is different. Depending on where the student is located, conversations are happening with the deans about whether they might be able to complete their program online. This is easier if the student is nearly done with their program as opposed to just beginning it. He noted that the [International Services Office \(ISO\) website](#) lists many helpful resources. ISO staff are also meeting individually with students, and some students are seeking legal representation. This is helpful as the auto-termination the government is applying in the Student and Exchange Visitor Program (SEVIS) system is immediate. There is no grace period, which means that

students are put at immediate risk; the university has therefore recommended that students seek legal representation.

Professor Wilson asked whether the university might be able to provide assistance to students who wish to obtain legal representation, noting that the cost of this can be prohibitive and that GW's Law School may be a good resource. He also wondered whether GW's study abroad programs might provide a place for students to work on their programs outside the country. President Granberg responded that it is her understanding that the university is doing everything it can to support its students. Provost Bracey thanked Professor Wilson for both of his good suggestions.

Professor Brinkerhoff noted that faculty working at GW on visas have the same concerns students do. She asked whether GW will be able to provide support for faculty if they visit home over the summer and are not able to return to the country. Professor Sarkar added that faculty want to know if, from the President's perspective, they can actually resist the government's actions when they still have to work within that structure. Everyone feels they should be doing something but are not sure what the recourse is. President Granberg responded that everyone thinks about the risk of a Pyrrhic victory. Recognizing that this is a frustrating response, she stated that it is probably too early to know. Provost Bracey directed the group to [Princeton President Eisgruber's recent New York Times podcast](#). On that podcast, he set forth his position, which is to fight for Princeton.

Professor Hernandez referenced an email she received this morning from the Office of the Vice Provost for Research (OVPR) about having to submit grants to OVPR earlier so they can be reviewed for terms identified as problematic by the administration. She asked whether the university has given up and decided it will follow all of the executive orders banning extremely general terms. President Granberg, while not aware of the specific email, expressed her view that some of this is an attempt to keep important science from being rejected immediately because of a word that would activate an AI tool. Senior Associate Vice Provost Lohr clarified that the guidance is trying to help PIs determine whether using certain words would result in a proposal being rejected on an automatic AI review. She added that OVPR is not telling PIs to eliminate language but to try to find ways to adjust their wording. Importantly, some funding agencies have clearly said PIs should keep that language in, even knowing what the federal government is saying.

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

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

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

Professor Wirtz noted that he has received a lot of calls from his GW School of Business (GWSB) colleagues over the past 24 hours due to what appears to be a significant cutback to some of GWSB's longstanding activities. He observed that GWSB brings in certain number of dollars and expends a certain amount to support those enrollments. This has not changed much over the years, although each amount has gone up proportionately, as would be expected. Yet, there is now word of cutbacks to important school initiatives. When he asked about this, Professor Wirtz noted that the answer he received was that there is a certain amount of money going back to the central administration—known as the margin—for central services such as electricity, maintenance, etc. He reported being told that this margin number has been increased and that all of the deans have received additional margin requirements they were not expecting, resulting in a need to cut their expenses to meet the new margin.

Professor Wirtz expressed his surprise that, in President Granberg's and Provost Bracey's remarks today, there was no reference to the albatross the university has been fighting for years now—namely, the MFA. He stated that it appears the central administration is imposing additional margin requirements on the deans that come at the considerable expense of academic initiatives to support poor outcomes at the MFA as well as other initiatives over which the schools do not have any control. He asked who audits the margin and what is driving additional margin requirements on the schools. Further, he asked why information has not been provided about initiatives that aren't working out, such as the MFA, and what can be done to regain control and prevent cutting back important academic initiatives.

Provost Bracey responded that he has not seen an increase in the margin contribution, either for an individual school or on a consolidated basis. He noted that there has been a miss in graduate enrollments in GWSB and suggested that the resulting decline in revenue may have caused the dean to consider whether the same level of activities can be supported in the school while still making the margin contribution. CFO Fernandes added that his office has not asked the schools to increase their margin; as this is the first he had heard of this, he planned to look into it.

Professor Wirtz recalled that, at one point, there was a deans' discretionary fund—essentially, a rainy-day fund—that allowed the deans to divert funds on a short-term basis should something go awry in order to support important school initiatives. He relayed his understanding that those funds have been co-opted by the central administration and that the deans no longer have control over those funds as they did in the past. CFO Fernandes stated that there have been changes over the years in how the university accounts for its categories funds as it transitioned over to gap accounting. He affirmed, though, that these reserves still exist, albeit called something else. He noted that the accounting and finance teams are working to help the deans understand what is available for their use.

Interim Dean Perry noted that, mathematically, reducing expenses results in a theoretical increase to the margin.

Professor Wirtz observed that he has rarely experienced the sense of anger from his GWSB colleagues that he has recently. To him, this was reminiscent of the recent travel funding issue in the Columbian College of Arts & Sciences (CCAS). He stressed that the faculty is angry and does not understand why the university continues to support the MFA and its losses at the expense of academic initiatives in other schools of the university.

President Granberg responded that she has kept the Senate up to date as much as possible on the ongoing work to resolve the MFA situation. She did not have developments that could be announced publicly today and therefore did not include the MFA in her report to the Senate today. This, however, should not be taken as sign that the administration isn't working on this issue very hard and taking it very seriously.

The President asked CFO Fernandes to confirm that the central margin call on the schools has gone down in recent years. Mr. Fernandes confirmed this, stating that the university has not requested additional increases in margin on a per-school basis. He noted that a 1% margin is about \$13-14 million; that was the request for this year and is what the university has been working toward. With that said, from a ratings agency perspective, a 1% margin is basically break-even; a 2% margin is where the institution starts to achieve a surplus. Should something negative happen, the \$14 million from a 1% margin gets used very quickly. The university needs to be in position where it is not in a negative situation going forward, so a higher margin will need to be built; 1% is the minimum margin, and this is what the university addressed this year.

Professor Gore noted that she has been fielding, over the last day, the same kind of calls and issues Professor Wirtz described. The three questions she is hearing the most often are:

- Faculty were told the MFA issue wouldn't impact research, but it appears that is exactly what has happened here; is that accurate?
- Is grant funding being mismatched, with temporary funding sources (grants) being applied to long-term expenses (infrastructure)?
- How many cuts is central administration making, and why are cuts happening to research as opposed to overhead?

President Granberg asked whether Senate members from other schools are receiving these types of calls from their colleagues. If not, this issue may be unique to GWSB, and she asked that the Provost and dean dig into the details to find out what is happening. Professor Sarkar noted that his dean relayed that margins went up in general in past years, which affects the school's ability to make strategic investments.

Professor Akman expressed his concern that the MFA has become the bogeyman for every financial issue in the schools. He noted that, when the CFO and President push back on this perception, faculty should take that message back to the faculty; everyone has a responsibility to reduce the energy of the conspiracy theory that the MFA is responsible for all of the challenges facing the university.

Professor Wilson stated that this would be an excellent time for a dramatic increase in transparency, noting that he has not seen even an overview of the GWSB budget in years. At present, there is not enough transparency around the budget to address the concerns expressed today. He added that the Senate has heard for the last several months that something dramatic was going to be announced with respect to MFA and asked when this news would be forthcoming. President Granberg responded that the MFA issue is a difficult thing to resolve and that she has never promised anything was imminent. She affirmed that a solution will be found, but this is not easy work. She promised the group that enormous energy is going into figuring out the MFA issue.

Professor Kulp stated that, from the deans she has spoken with, she has heard that there is a push to reduce variable costs because of the coming headwinds. Some deans are ahead of the game on this, and Interim Dean Perry's message may simply have been the first—this is not just a GWSB problem but something that will impact everyone. She added that this shouldn't be a surprise to everyone. If these challenges were anticipated, this should have been an ongoing conversation for months. She noted that GWSB communicated that, due to position reviews, it will be difficult to hire adjuncts and to get overload pay, raising the question of who will teach classes. She echoed Professor Wirtz's surprise that this topic was not raised earlier in the meeting; if the situation is as dire as the GWSB Senate members are hearing, it should not have been the surprise it was to so many faculty.

Interim Dean Perry observed that, likely, none of the GWSB Senate members are interested in making this all about GWSB and offered a statement in her role as interim dean. She stated that the one thing she has realized during this time that, as a dean, she has very little flexibility around what happens with the budgets. The schools are in conservatorship; those running the financial operations on the school level don't report to the deans, and the only way information is relayed is through leaks and rumors. Transparency around the budget is a systemic issue and is about the process by which financial decisions are made. Provost Bracey stated that he would look into the issue, noting that he had intuitions on the revenue side but would look into the full picture with Interim Dean Perry.

Professor Wagner requested a clearer understanding of the issue, and the source of the problem. She asked whether the financial pressures under discussion are due to a lack of funds because of MFA pressures or because of necessary preparations for upcoming headwinds. Provost Bracey responded that Professor Wirtz has one theory for why there are cuts in GWSB, and the CFO has another. He stated that he would need to sit down with the GWSB dean and determine what is happening. He stated that he does not believe the MFA's situation is what is prompting the GWSB reduction in expenses and that this is more likely due to a revenue miss, but he would need to look at details and find out for certain. Professor Wilson added that full transparency and access to the numbers would allow the group to distinguish between those theories.

Professor Cseh reported that this issue is not limited to GWSB. As a faculty member in the Graduate School of Education & Human Development (GSEHD), she noted that one cannot imagine the faculty frustration levels. GSEHD faculty have no funds for conferences or anything else. The budgeting issues and the threats to the institution are putting a great deal of stress on the faculty beyond GWSB.

Professor Sarkar referenced the CFO's earlier comments about the need for a larger margin than 1%. He suggested that, post-COVID, the institution recognizes that it needs larger reserves, a realization that could lead to better stewardship. CFO Fernandes responded that this is correct but noted that the margin requirements from the schools has not increased but has in decreased. He noted that he was a little caught off guard by the GWSB discussion as he only heard about it within the last hour. He noted that this is not something coming from the finance organization. If there is a cut happening, it is being driven by the dean and something (e.g., a revenue decline) is leading to that. He affirmed that the university has learned over the past few years that a 1% margin is not sufficient to get through some of the headwinds it is experiencing. As a consequence, the university needs to think about what it needs to do to increase that reserve.

Professor Brinkerhoff asked where the revenue projections come from, noting that today's discussion sounds like the dean is being unilaterally blamed for the present situation. The schools and administration need to work better in partnership to achieve reasonable revenue projections, particularly when challenges to enrollments can be anticipated. Provost Bracey responded that, each year, fall planning meetings take place with school leadership at which the schools relay their projections. Over the course of the academic year, the administration and school go back and forth; spring planning meetings then take place to determine what revenue projections are going to be based on expected enrollment and rate increases. This is a collaborative approach that has been undertaken for years. Sometimes schools miss and have to make adjustments over the course of the year to ensure that their expenses don't exceed what was budgeted, less the revenue miss. He suspected that the decision to reduce expenses in GWSB is an appropriate response to a revenue miss, and he reiterated his need to get more information.

Dean Goldman thought it would be helpful for the faculty to hear from a dean that GWSPH is missing its revenue projections this year; she noted that she has been open about this with her faculty. She relayed that what happens in that case is that the margin as a percentage goes up because the central administration is counting on the fixed-dollar margin agreed to for the year. The school therefore tries to figure out where to trim to be able to make its contribution to central. If revenue is down and the margin is the same, the resulting margin percentage is higher; this may be a communication issue. Professor Wagner thanked Dean Goldman for this very helpful explanation.

Professor El-Ghazawi asked about maintaining incentives to make sure that schools that are producing more can continue to do so and contribute to the margin. CFO Fernandes responded that incentives and

investments are very important. With limited resources, choices are required. Because the institution is running such a tight margin, doesn't have very many reserves associated with that, the choices are limited; the university has to be very calculated in terms of where those investments get made. Professor El-Ghazawi added that reserves are of course very good for an institution but that they might be also good at the school level for multi-year projects. CFO Fernandes responded that improvements along these lines are in the new budget model, with transparency and multi-year planning, which will really help with the issues that have been raised here today.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT (Ilana Feldman, Chair)

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

BRIEF STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS/EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT

Professor Tielsch asked about the status of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) nominating committee's work toward presenting a roster and chair for the coming year's FSEC. Professor Feldman responded that the nominating committee is working to conclude its work; the Senate will vote on the 2025-2026 FSEC and Chair at its May meeting. Professor Wirtz asked if the change to a May vote on the new FSEC was formally changed by the Senate; this change was made following [Faculty Assembly Resolution 24/1](#) (resulting from Senate action) and subsequent Board of Trustees approval.

RESOLUTION 25/9: TO MAINTAIN THE UNIVERSITY'S COMMITMENT TO TENURE (Heather Bamford, Co-Chair, Appointments, Salary, & Promotion Policies Committee)

Professor Bamford introduced the resolution, which was co-sponsored by the Appointments, Salary, & Promotion Policies (ASPP) and Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom (PEAF) committees and moved its adoption. She stated that the resolution calls on the administration to uphold the University's long-standing commitment to tenure and the integrity of the tenure-track system. It proposes an amendment to the Faculty Code to ensure that the proportion of tenured and tenure-track faculty is accurately and transparently monitored, especially in the context of rising numbers of non-tenure track positions and the progressive decline in the percentage of tenured and tenure-track faculty. The resolution responds to the University's aim to be a preeminent research institution in which tenure and a robust tenure-track system play a fundamental role in maintaining R1 status and GW's membership in the AAU, as well as encouraging academic freedom, innovative research, and a world-class faculty. Finally, the resolution also recognizes that specialized faculty, who make up an increasingly significant part of GW faculty, are recognized as a key part of GW's full-time faculty.

The resolution centers on Article 1B of the Faculty Code, which addresses GW's commitment to tenure as a cornerstone of a prestigious research university. It proposes an Amendment to the Faculty Code so that the calculation of the thresholds of tenured and tenure track faculty includes Specialized Faculty. The proposed amendment maintains existing exemptions of certain schools from the tenure/tenure-track thresholds. These exempted schools include the School of Medicine and Health Sciences (SMHS), the School of Nursing (SON), the Milken Institute School of Public Health (GWSPH), and the College of Professional Studies (CPS).

The current language of the impacted part of Article 1B on regular faculty states that non-tenure-track appointments among Regular Faculty shall not exceed 25% in any school, and that no department shall have fewer than 50% tenured or tenure-track faculty. The proposed amendment makes a deletion in Section B

and adds a new Section G. The new Section G clarifies that, for the purpose of these thresholds, the Code combine the proportions of Regular and Specialized Faculty to assess compliance with the 25% and 50% requirements. By formally including Specialized Faculty in the denominator, the University can accurately gauge if schools and departments are adhering to the intended structure of the faculty composition.

Professor El-Ghazawi asked about the inclusion of research faculty in the resolution, noting that they are supported by soft money but included with the broader Specialized Faculty category. He suggested that they should be explicitly excluded in the new Section G proposed by the resolution. Dean Goldman noted that, when the Code was implemented, there weren't that many research faculty; the schools listed as exceptions had large numbers of research faculty.

Professor Feldman noted that there are two kinds of Specialized Faculty: some are faculty who are hired to teach and do service (two of the three requirements underpinning tenure) and are paid from hard money, and some who are research faculty paid from soft money. She stated that she would support separating that second category—soft-money funded research faculty—from this calculation as they are a very different kind of faculty member with different financial implications for the university. The Code could perhaps specify that, for these purposes, research faculty are not Specialized Faculty.

Dean Goldman recalled that, at one point, the Code referred to research faculty as staff. They were only recently called faculty, and it would be a step backward to remove them. Professor Bamford confirmed that, in Article 1.C, research faculty are included in Specialized Faculty.

Professor El-Ghazawi moved to amending Section G of the resolving clause's Exhibit 1 to begin: "Except for research professors at large, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences..." The motion was seconded.

Professor Feldman stated her support for the resolution, noting that the current system is not an open and accurate accounting of what the university is doing with regard to faculty paid by the university who are teaching. She did not want to see the reconfiguration as ultimately limiting the schools' ability to engage in research-generating activities with soft money.

Professor Wilson noted that the exempted schools are already listed. Professor El-Ghazawi responded that the School of Engineering & Applied Science (SEAS) has many research faculty, as do other schools.

Professor Crandall suggested a language adjustment to refer to "research faculty" instead of "research professors at large," as the latter would exclude some research faculty. This suggestion was accepted, and the amendment was adopted by unanimous consent.

[Resolution 25/9](#), as amended, was adopted by unanimous consent.

[RESOLUTION 25/10: REGARDING INSTITUTIONAL NEUTRALITY](#) (Guillermo Orti, Co-Chair, Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom Committee)

Professor Orti introduced [Resolution 25/10](#) and moved its adoption:

Over the past year, amidst political scrutiny, many universities have committed to 'institutional neutrality'—whereby they are choosing to remain silent and avoid taking a political stance. As the Provost anticipated, GW also will be looking into this topic by hosting a roundtable with experts in April. Proponents argue that "by adopting institutional neutrality, universities signal their dedication

to debate, viewpoint diversity, and the pursuit of knowledge rather than undermining academic dialogue with political statements.” On the contrary, critics see it as a tool for repelling social criticism and a convenient excuse for university leaders to stay silent as politicians restrict how leaders and universities operate. Further, critics argue institutional neutrality ignores classroom realities and enables university presidents to foreclose public debate on campuses. [Quotes from some articles cited in Appendix 1 of the resolution]

The Professional Ethics and Academic Freedom (PEAF) formed a Subcommittee on Neutrality in November 2024 with a charge to discuss if GW should include the topic of institutional neutrality in developing its strategic framework. On November 4, 2024, the GW Hatchet reported that GW would not consider adopting neutrality amid a national push for schools to adopt this stance. Since then, the GW administration has assured the faculty and GW Hatchet that it has not yet adopted institutional neutrality.

Subcommittee members reviewed several reports and articles (published in the Chronicle of Higher Education, Inside Higher Education, etc.) on institutional neutrality and institutional restraint, some of which are quoted in the report). After weighing the pros and cons of adopting institutional neutrality at GW, its members concluded that institutional neutrality and institutional restraint are not the solution or panacea to the problems facing GW or other universities. Hence, the subcommittee concluded that GW should look inward at its character, educational mission, and core values to project itself outward, (i.e., uphold its core values of academic freedom and shared governance) rather than focusing attention exclusively on the issue of ‘neutrality.’

Consistent with this view, the resolution seeks to endorse the AAUP Statement on Institutional Neutrality—that provides a concise historical review of the concept, in addition to discussion of the pros and cons—and the statement by the PEAF subcommittee, with its recommendations.

Professor Schultheiss requested clarification of the language in Resolving Clause (RC) 3, finding the language confusing. Professor Orti responded that the spirit of this clause is to underline the basic principles GW operates under as a university. Professor Schultheiss responded that the language of this clause likely needs to be reworded as it seems to be combining multiple elements into one clause.

Professor Feldman noted that the introduction to the resolution was clearer than language of the resolution itself. As she read the resolution, she questioned what it is saying about institutional neutrality, partly because it references something that isn't in the resolution and raises a lot of other things. She restated back what she thought Professor Orti said this resolution is trying to do; namely, to say that, regardless of what decision the university makes about institutional neutrality, the committee wants to double down on, underscore, and affirm some basic principles. She stated that she agrees with this but felt it wasn't clear to her that this is what the resolution is doing.

Dean Ayres noted that, last year at the Elliott School of International Affairs (ESIA), the issue of institutional neutrality came to a fore, and whether ESIA as a school and she as a dean should issue some kind of a statement on the horrible attack of October 7th, and then everything that happened thereafter. The school spent a lot of time talking about the issue of institutional neutrality and came down to the conclusion that ESIA, as a school, had never actually made a big statement on an event around the world. This is, in part, because there are so many, and major statements can't be made every day: What do you choose? How do you select? If you select five things, you haven't selected dozens of others. Dean Ayres relayed that she has heard over and over again in the intervening year and a half that this was the right

decision for ESIA because it allows the faculty and our students to be the voices of their perspectives and their expertise. The idea of institutional neutrality has been an important principle for ESIA; it has protected people's academic freedom because it allows the voices of expertise to be those that aren't institutionally directed. She noted her belief that the AAUP statement on institutional neutrality actually goes in a different direction from that principle and wanted to add that comment here. She understood that this is a GW-wide faculty body that does not impose any requirements on individual schools, but this has been a really important issue for ESIA.

Professor Schultheiss proposed crafting language to edit RC3 and create a new RC4 that would reference treating communities with respect, neither privileging nor disadvantaging any identity or ideology. In the end, she asked, what is the committee hoping to accomplish, and what advice is going to the administration? Is it that the university only make statements that uphold its core mission and are neutral in terms of viewpoint, or something else? Professor Orti responded that the former is accurate.

Professor Eakle appreciated and supported the sentiment of resolution but expressed concern about endorsing *any* ideology, if it is based in hate. He moved to amend the amendment, striking the proposed RC4, and Professor Schultheiss seconded.

Professor Feldman foreshadowed her intention to propose sending the resolution back to the committee, as it requires more than wordsmithing. Professor El-Ghazawi concurred. Professor Wagner acknowledged that it is difficult to send something back to a committee that has already worked hard. However, there is a lot of support for the resolution in the Senate, and the group wants to see the strongest possible resolution.

Professor Schultheiss indicated her willingness to withdraw her amendment, and there were no objections from the Senate membership to doing so.

Professor Feldman moved that the resolution be sent back to committee with support for the work being done and a sense that more clarification is requested. (She wondered whether a fuller discussion of institutional neutrality in next Senate meeting might be warranted.) Professor El-Ghazawi seconded the motion. Professor Wagner agreed with the motion but, understanding the appetite to move on this topic sooner rather than later, suggested that the committee consider inviting Senate members to come to a special meeting on this topic.

The motion was approved by unanimous consent, and the resolution was returned to the Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom (PEAF) committee.

REPORT: ON NEWLY PROPOSED GUIDELINES FOR UNIVERSITY POLICY REVIEW PROCESS (Guillermo Orti, Co-Chair, Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom Committee)

Professor Orti presented the report, which was [distributed with the agenda for today's meeting](#).

PEAF has been charged with providing feedback on the proposed "Guidelines for Development of University Policies" (included with the posted report), and the committee has been discussing it at our regular meetings, including one with the Provost on March 4. Given the complexity of the issues and the rapidly changing environment, PEAf members are not yet ready to provide specific recommendations. However, we believe that it is important to share our concerns and feedback with the Faculty Senate to broaden participation and solicit additional comments.

I also note that the process described in this new document is currently being implemented as interim policy to review changes in five policies to comply with an agreement with the Office of Civil Rights (OCR). The implementation of the process allows for online community feedback.

PEAF welcomes any feedback on the proposed policy review process from the faculty.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

None.

GENERAL BUSINESS

- I. Nominations for membership to Senate Standing Committees
 - None
- II. Senate Standing Committee Reports

Annual reports were received from the [Honors & Academic Convocations](#), [Physical Facilities & Campus Safety](#), and the [Research](#) committees and are available on the Senate website. Committee chairs are reminded to submit their annual reports to the Senate office as soon as possible.

BRIEF STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

None.

Professor Wagner moved that the Senate move into executive session for a discussion of the new federal administration's policies and their potential impact on the university's mission, and that the following individuals be invited to attend the executive session: President Granberg, Provost Bracey, Bruno Fernandes, all deans, Scott Mory, Richard Weitzner, Charles Barber, Jonathan Post, Colette Coleman, Ellen Moran, Terry Murphy, Jay Goff, Gina Lohr, Baxter Goodley, Jeff Brand, the Senate office staff, the Parliamentarian, and the Registrar. She moved further that time in executive session be limited to no more than 30 minutes, at which point the Senate will vote to return to regular session. The motion was seconded and adopted by unanimous consent.

The Senate adjourned to executive session at 4:16pm and returned to open session at 5:09pm.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 5:09pm.



Faculty Senate

Departing Senators April 2025

CCAS

Oleg Kargaltsev
Don Parsons
Sarah Wagner

GWSB

Yixin Lu

LAW

Blake Morant

GWSPH

Jim Tielsch

SMHS

Paul Marvar
Bob Zeman

**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

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 Froslid-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.



Report of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC)

April 11, 2025

Ilana Feldman, Chair

FSEC Activities

FSEC met on March 28, arranging the agenda for today's Senate meeting and receiving updates on Senate standing committee activities. The President and Provost provided updates about several campus activities, including the launch of the University Advancement leadership search and the announcement of the Commencement speaker and honorary degree recipients.

The President and Provost also provided updates on federal actions impacting higher education, and the group engaged in an extensive discussion around how best to support the university community in light of these actions.

The executive committee reviewed upcoming vacancies in Senate standing committee chairships. These need to be filled as soon as possible in order to proceed with building committee rosters for the coming session. The Senate office is available to answer any questions about the responsibilities this work entails and the support the office can provide to committee chairs. Every Senate standing committee must be chaired by a current Senate member; committees are also staffed with co-chairs who can be non-Senate members.

Immediately following its March meeting, FSEC met to discuss a tenure-and-promotion nonconcurrency delivered by the Provost. FSEC has delivered its recommendation on the case to the Provost.

Outgoing Chair Reflections

As I conclude my tenure as FSEC chair, I want to begin (as I did in my incoming reflections) by thanking my colleagues---in FSEC, the Faculty Senate more broadly, and in the wider university community---for their active engagement and collaboration, and for their deep and abiding commitment to our students, our research and scholarship, and to the health of the university more generally.

When I agreed to take on the role of FSEC chair, I thought it would be a good time to do this, for two reasons. We were welcoming a new President to the University, and I looked forward to collaborating with her to take the institution forward. And, in contrast to some other moments, it looked to be a relatively calm time at the University. The first was correct; the second, not so much.

Despite the times, and the myriad challenges that have come with them, it has been a pleasure to work with all of you. And I look forward to continuing to do so as a member of the Senate.

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 April 25, 2025. Draft resolutions and any other possible Senate agenda items should be forwarded to Liz Carlson in the Senate office as soon as possible, ideally by April 18, 2025. The next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate meeting—the first of the 2025-2026 Senate session—is May 9, 2025.



Faculty Senate

A RESOLUTION REGARDING INSTITUTIONAL NEUTRALITY (25/10)

WHEREAS, “Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interests of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition”¹;

WHEREAS, the free search for truth and its free exposition represent cornerstone objectives of The George Washington University; and

WHEREAS, the George Washington University Faculty Senate has heretofore implicitly, but not explicitly, endorsed its adherence to the tenets of the free search for truth and its free exposition;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE FACULTY SENATE OF THE GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY

1. That the GW Faculty Senate endorses the AAUP *Statement on Institutional Neutrality*², and the attached “PEAF Statement on Institutional Neutrality,” and in so doing remains unequivocally dedicated to safeguarding the free search for truth and its free exposition for all members of the GW community to promote robust academic freedom and intramural and extramural speech;
2. That any institutional statements regarding issues under public discourse shall not be presented as, nor be interpreted as representing, the collective view of the GW Faculty; and
3. That the GW administration and Board of Trustees are strongly encouraged to join the GW Faculty in providing assurance to all members of the GW community, through concrete actions and decisions, that the free search for truth and its free exposition underscore the basic mission of the University, treating *all* members of the community with respect, and neither privileging nor disadvantaging any identity or ideology.

Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom Committee
April 3, 2025

¹ [AAUP \(2025\). Advancing academic freedom](#)

² [AAUP \(2025\). On institutional neutrality. Feb 2025](#)

Appendix 1
Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom Committee
Statement on Institutional Neutrality
March 17, 2025

PREAMBLE

Universities are integral to a healthy, functioning democracy. As institutions of learning, they offer spaces where the challenging work of debating ideas takes place through free inquiry, deliberation, and expression. In today's unsettling times, it is important to reiterate,

“Institutions of higher education are conducted for the common good and not to further the interests of either the individual teacher or the institution as a whole. The common good depends upon the free search for truth and its free exposition.”³

Over the past year, amidst political scrutiny, many universities have committed to ‘institutional neutrality’- whereby they are choosing to remain silent and avoid taking a political stance. Proponents argue that “by adopting institutional neutrality, universities signal their dedication to debate, viewpoint diversity, and the pursuit of knowledge rather than undermining academic dialogue with political statements⁴.” On the contrary, critics see it as a tool for repelling social criticism and a convenient excuse for university leaders to stay silent as politicians restrict how leaders and universities operate. Further, critics argue institutional neutrality ignores classroom realities and enables university presidents to foreclose public debate on campuses⁵.

PEAF’s SUBCOMMITTEE ON NEUTRALITY

The Professional Ethics and Academic Freedom (PEAF) formed a **Subcommittee on Neutrality** in November 2024 with a charge to discuss if GW should include the topic of institutional neutrality in developing its strategic framework. On November 4, 2024, the GW Hatchet [reported](#) that GW would not consider adopting neutrality amid a national push for schools to adopt this stance. Since then, the GW administration has assured the faculty and GW Hatchet that it has not yet adopted institutional neutrality.

The Subcommittee members reviewed several reports and articles (published in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, *Inside Higher Education*, etc.) on institutional neutrality and institutional restraint and met in Dec 2024. After weighing the pros and cons of adopting institutional neutrality at GW, its members concluded that **institutional neutrality and institutional restraint are not the solution or panacea to the problems facing GW or other universities**. Hence, GW should look inward at its character, educational mission, and core values to project itself outward, i.e., uphold its core values of academic freedom and shared governance.

³ [AAUP. \(2025\). Advancing academic freedom](#)

⁴ [Heterodox Academy. \(2025\). New report: The rising tide of statement neutrality](#)

⁵ Ghachem, M.W. (2024). A better way to protect free speech: Grand statements ignore classroom realities. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Feb 3, 2023.

Ford, A. (2024). The Chicago principles are undemocratic. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. May 6, 2024.

Vasquez, M. (2024). Is institutional neutrality catching on. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Feb 8, 2023.

At its February 2025 meeting, PEAf recommended that the Neutrality Subcommittee members examine peer institutions to see how they are dealing with the issue of “neutrality” so that PEAf can make sure the administration will not *unilaterally* make any decision about adopting institutional neutrality.

RECOMMENDATIONS

After reviewing the AAUP’s newly released *Statement on Institutional Neutrality*⁶ and other articles published on universities rushing to adopt institutional neutrality, this Sub-committee reaffirms its commitment to our earlier conclusion.

1. We argue that GW, as an institution of higher learning, should **focus on safeguarding principles of shared governance and upholding the academic freedom of its constituents** (faculty and students⁷). It should stand for teaching, learning, and the basic tenets of the university by remaining a firm supporter and forum for vigorous, data-informed discussion, debate, scholarship, and teaching. In asserting this Subcommittee’s conclusion, we quote the AAUP’s Statement on Institutional Neutrality:

“A commitment to neutrality,” the new statement declares, “is not some magic wand that conjures freedom. Calls for neutrality instead provide an opportunity to consider how various practices of an institution—not only its speech or silence but also its actions and policies—might promote a more robust freedom of teaching, research, and intramural and extramural speech.”

“The statement calls for principles of academic freedom and shared governance to be chief considerations in the issuing of institutional and departmental statements as well as decisions on financial investments and campus protest policies.”

2. Further, our members are concerned that any statement made by the university administration could be misconstrued as reflecting the views of the faculty as well. We want to emphasize that academic freedom is distinct from and does not constitute a collective faculty view. Hence, this Subcommittee reiterates that **University statements on any issue under public discussion do not and should not be presented/ interpreted as representing a collective view of the University Faculty.**
3. We urge the University administration and Board to **assure members of its community through their concrete actions and decisions that it will uphold principles of shared governance, protect academic freedom and free speech, treat *all* with respect, and that it will neither privilege nor disadvantage any identity or ideology** (see AAU President’s statement below).

We conclude with a quote from the Editorial Board’s Opinion⁸ piece published in the New York Times (March 14, 2025):

“College presidents do not need to become pundits. But they do need to defend the core mission of their institutions when it is under attack. University leaders would help themselves, and the country, by emerging from their defensive crouches and making a forthright case for inquiry, research, science and knowledge.”

⁶ [AAUP. \(2025\). On institutional neutrality. Feb 2025](#)

⁷ Please refer to [AAU President, Barbara R. Snyder’s statement](#)

⁸ [New York Times, March 14, 2025](#)