



Athletics and Recreation Committee
2024-2025 Annual Report

Jennifer Sacheck-Ward (Co-Chair)
Peng Wei (Co-Chair)

This year the committee has met three times in October 2024 (in person), January 2025 (online), and April 2025 (online).

We welcomed our new athletic director (AD) Mr. Michael Lipitz, and our new managing director of Lerner Health and Wellness Center Mr. Mark Mermelstein. Our committee meetings have covered the following discussions:

AD Lipitz' vision is build a strong athletic program, and strengthen the campus community. He highlighted that GW has a strong academic performance from our student athletes. Our 95% graduation rate 95% is one of the highest in the country. The priorities of this year at GW Athletics include: university strategic planning, revenue generation such as tickets, fund raising, corporate partners, etc.

Most importantly, AD Lipitz' briefed the changing landscape in NCAA and student athletic programs, and highlighted that we need to plan for these changes. For example, lawsuits and discussions on name, image and likeness (NIL) of the student athletes and the revenue generated; team generated revenue (for us it's M/W basketball) can be shared back with student athletes; scholarship limitation will be removed or increased.

Athletic facility planning master plan project was ongoing to evaluate and plan for updating GW facilities, e.g. we do not have an indoor practice facility, our tennis courts are not very well conditioned.

The committee discussed what faculty can do to help GW athletic programs and recreation programs?

- Discussions on the changing NCAA landscape
- Community building, show supports

- Study verified that admission and enrollment will increase from success of student athletic programs. Gain supports from different schools

AD Lipitz' spring 2025 updates include:

- There were 5 student athletes won academic achievement awards (among which, it's Rachel Katz' third time on this list)
- Competitions and championships: mens/womens swimming and diving teams won our 4th and 5th consecutive championships; gymnastics wins EAGLE
- GW mens basketball had 20 wins in this past season, first time in 9 years
- Ganiyat Adeduntan has been named as the new head coach for our women's basketball. She is moving from Colgate, previously coached at GW as an assistant coach.
- Jonquel Jones (women basketball) is our this year's GW commencement speaker
- House vs NCAA: "the changing college athletics landscape": judge hearing was held on 4/7/2025: back damages (mandates), future NIL (optional), roster limits (optional)

AD Lipitz answered questions from Karen, Blake and Kyle on the NCAA landscape change, and the implications to A10 and GW athletics.

A10 conference media contract and coverage:

- The value of Atlantic 10 (A-10) membership: 39.9M TV households, 33% of total national market, A-10 members are in 7 of the top 30 media markets
- A10 received \$7.7M from media streaming or TV, which will be distributed to each member university
- A10 is right behind Big East in terms of media contract and coverage; A10 basketball also ranks similarly to some of the football conferences (not the power conferences)

New initiatives:

- GW Athletic Hall of Fame (public nomination, and a selection committee will review all the nominations)
- Honored and Retired Jerseys

Celebration of the 50th Anniversaries:

- Dec 5-7: 50th anniversaries in 2025-2026
- GW athletics 50th Anniversaries
- Smith Center 50th Anniversaries
- A10 conference 50th Anniversaries (GW is the only charter member remaining in A10)

Mermelstein shared the following information from the GW recreation program.

- Lerner's replanning process and facility updates. Fitness center has brand new flooring. The equipment has been in the process of updating. New running track and basketball courts have been updated. \$500K updates have been implemented for cardio workout space. New lobby furniture is installed for students at Lerner. Students come hang out, even they are not working out. Championship banners for student clubs are up in Lerner.
- Sport club programs: 1,900 student athletes and 40 clubs; implementation of concussion protocols;
- Intramural sports: 1,200 participants for intramural, with top 3 from the past fall: indoor soccer, laser tag and dodge ball. In addition, more fun events were added, such as pop-up play, corn bag toss, Mario carts, 10/26 river horse race event, inflatable ponies. A lot of fun things are now in GW intramural.
- Group fitness: draw increasing numbers from last year; meditation sessions Tuesday and Friday; now offering 15 classes for group fitness, and personal training. Massage therapy are also available
- Outdoor adventure: 70 students in 5 different trips

The committee members asked about how to get faculty and graduate students in intramural. Mermelstein mentioned he and his team would work on marketing and on-campus communications on this, such as email notifications and/or social media posts available to faculty members and students.

We also discussed that it shows the number of faculty membership at Lerner is decreasing. We can work on marketing to show that the updated Lerner facility. \$39 monthly rate is a good option for our faculty members.

Currently nursing students are not allowed to use Lerner. Only the veteran students can use. Director Mermelstein said he and his team would look into that what resulted this decision and how to resolve it.