



Faculty Senate

University & Urban Affairs (UUA) 2024-2025 Annual Report

Submitted by: David Rain, Associate Professor of Geography & International Affairs (CCAS), and Maranda Ward, Assistant Professor & Director of Equity, Clinical Research & Leadership (SMHS), Co-Chairs of UUA

In Summer 2024, The University and Urban Affairs (UUA) Standing Committee was reconstituted with several new members added under co-chairs, David Rain and Maranda Ward. During the 2024-25 academic year, the committee met seven times, on September 19, October 17, November 21, January 16, February 20, March 20, and April 17. For convenience, all meetings of the UUA committee have been done virtually via Zoom.

Current (2024-25) UUA Members:

- David Rain, Chair (CCAS)*
- Maranda Ward, Co-chair (SMHS)
- Arthur Wilson, Faculty Senate Executive Committee Liaison (GWSB)*
- Oluwatomi Adetunji (SEAS)
- Sonal Batra (SMHS)
- Marisa Birkmeier (SMHS)
- Mary Cheh (LAW)*
- Amy Cohen (Honey W. Nashman Center)
- Bagmi Das (GSEHD)
- Leslie Davidson (SMHS)
- Wendy Ellis (GWSPH)
- Aris Hines (GWSB)
- Sandy Hoar (GWSPH)
- Lionel Howard (GSEHD)
- Benny Hwang (SGA)**
- Adnan Lakdawala (SMHS)
- Samantha Luna (CPS)
- Renee McPhatter (Gov. & Community Relationships)**
- Eugene Migliaccio (GWSPH)
- Kelsey Nelson (CCAS)
- Chavon Onumah (SMHS)
- Cara Padovano (SON)
- Pablo Serrano (SMHS)
- Peter Shin (GWSPH)
- Sawali Sudarshan (SMHS)
- Rebecca Thessin (GSEHD)
- Leslie Trimmer (GSEHD)
- Margaret Venzke (SON)
- Jennifer Walsh (SON/SMHS)
- Erin Wentzell (SMHS)
- Sara Wilensky (GWSPH)
- Dwayne Wright (GSEHD)
- Christy Zink (CCAS)

*Faculty Senators

** Nonvoting members

Committee Mission states:

The Committee on University and Urban Affairs helps foster continued good citizenship between The George Washington University and the greater Washington, DC metropolitan area. The University and Urban Affairs Committee serves as an ongoing catalyst for maximum efficiency in this area and prevents the duplication of effort between GW and the community itself. By affirmatively tracking GW's already allocated resources and initiatives, the University and Urban Affairs Committee "paints the big picture" of GW's community relationship and subsequently provides the University with a valuable source of advice on continuous improvement and possible future endeavors.

Charge for 2024-25

The Faculty Senate Executive Committee (FSEC) recommended the four items below for consideration in the 2024-2025 session:

- (1) Explore the development of a faculty survey to support the identification of community activities taking place at GW;
- (2) Explore ways to bring GW's scholarly work into the community to help combat disinformation about higher education in media and politics;
- (3) Engage in conversation with the administration about GW's plans to assess community needs and establish community trust and rapport given the new GW hospital coming to Ward 8; and
- (4) Proactively engage with the strategic planning process as the framework is developed this year.

FSEC also discussed committee charges that are more ongoing in nature and recur year over year:

- (1) Identify and examine the ways that faculty and university programs interact with the local community for the benefit of scholarship and the community;
- (2) Benchmark effective practices and the institutional practices and policies that support community work at GW and in other institutions; and
- (3) Collect and disseminate effective program examples, including for the renewal of the Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement.

Committee Actions (2024-25 Academic Year)

Activities as they relate to the charge:

- (1) Explore the development of a faculty survey to support the identification of community activities taking place at GW.

A perennial goal for the UUA committee going back to 2010 and noted in numerous UUA Committee Reports was the introduction of a system for reporting community engagement-related activities. The committee was pleased to share the news that thanks to the efforts of the Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs, there are now questions in the current annual report software, Lyterati, for community engagement activities. This is a major accomplishment that could only have happened through the work of many. And GW has only just begun to assess the impact of better measures of community engagement on our institution. Next year Lyterati is scheduled to be replaced by a new reporting system, Elements. The community engagement questions will not be in next year's reports but will be there in the year after that. In addition, the GivePulse platform allows for the tracking of community engagement activities and makes documentation relatively straightforward.

- (2) Explore ways to bring GW's scholarly work into the community to help combat disinformation about higher education in media and politics.

The UUA monthly meetings in the fall included discussions on exploring forms of community outreach to counter disinformation about higher education. This echoes some of the program efforts conducted or coordinated by UUA in prior years, efforts that included a speaker series at St Mary's Court elder housing, adult literacy efforts, and a housing summit. The November 2024 election renewed the committee's focus on bringing GW's scholarly efforts

into the community. Given the threats to higher education everywhere, the committee renewed its efforts to survey GW's impacts on Washington DC.

One idea that emerged out of the discussion was to highlight GW's role in city efforts to establish housing for the unhoused in the District, following a pledge by Mayor Muriel Bowser to extend such facilities to all eight wards. The Aston, a former graduate student residence hall at 1129 New Hampshire Avenue, NW, was sold to the District in 2022-23 so that it could be converted to housing the unhoused. It opened in November 2024 and now has 100 residents, about half its capacity.

A second issue discussed by the committee in the spring meetings was the potential loss of Home Rule in the District, following the introduction of legislation in the House of Representatives on February 6. The loss of Home Rule would have multiple impacts on the campus and the university, including possible impacts on policing and zoning. As of this writing at the end of April, no hearings on this legislation have been scheduled.

Another issue affecting the Foggy Bottom campus was the removal of most of the tent camps on Virginia Avenue NW and along Whitehurst Freeway. After the June 2024 Supreme Court decision (*Grant's Pass v. Johnson*), cities can ban people from camping on public property. This cause has been taken up by District government, but over 90 percent of the District's parks are under the control of the National Park Service.

- (3) Engage in conversation with the administration about GW's plans to assess community needs and establish community trust and rapport given the new GW hospital coming to Ward 8.

This charge constituted much of the committee's activities and deliberations. In February 2022, ground was broken for a new hospital in Ward 8, the Cedar Hill Regional Medical Center GW Health, a full-service 136-bed hospital including a maternal health and delivery unit, level II neonatal intensive care unit, and trauma center. Through hosting two guest speakers, the committee sought to clarify GW's role in the new facility. At the October 17 meeting, it invited Dr. LaQuandra Nesbitt, Executive Director of the Center for Population Health Sciences and Health Equity (and a family physician since 2008), to speak to the committee about plans for Cedar Hill including a timeline for community engagement. Dr. Nesbitt clarified GW's role: it will offer some clinical services but will not operate the hospital. That responsibility goes to Universal Health Services, the same company that operates GW Hospital in Foggy Bottom. Cedar Hill will replace United Medical Center, the then-existing hospital east of the river. A new community health needs assessment is planned for 2026. Concerns were expressed about the GW branding, as well as some concerns about the services offered by the facility.

For its March 20 meeting, the committee invited Ellen Moran, Vice President for Communications and Marketing to speak about branding and the possible reputational impact of Cedar Hill on GW. Ms. Moran reported that Cedar Hill "undergirds our service mission," and that she has a productive relationship with the communications staff at the hospital. Committee members voiced some concerns for the enterprise, given the at-times strained relationship with Medical Faculty Associates and the failure rate of hospitals east of the river. Ms. Moran responded that the relationship with Cedar Hill is structured differently. The committee agreed about the need to include faculty, students, and staff in the conversation.

- (4) Proactively engage with the strategic planning process as the framework is developed this year.

Discussion about the Strategic Framework currently being conducted by GW took place on a few occasions. Some committee members noted that some of the priorities and goals of the process directly address GW's sense of community (for example, Goal Eight is a call to foster a stronger sense of community and belonging *for students*, and Goal Nine recommends nurturing lifelong community *for alumni*), but they do not address the embeddedness of the campus in a physical and social community beyond the campus. Only Goal Eleven ("Create a vibrant and welcoming campus environment through purposeful placemaking, campus beautification, and bold sustainability

initiatives where the GW community can thrive while learning, living, and working”) seems to address the urban embeddedness of the campus and the “town and gown” dynamics that are the UUA committee’s focus.

Looking ahead, the committee will continue monitoring Cedar Hill and participating in needs assessments for the new hospital, which opened on April 15. In addition, the committee would like to be involved in the next Campus Master Plan process, as well as the DC Comprehensive Plan. In addition, the committee endorses faculty, student, and staff participation in the process of local governance through the Advisory Neighborhood Commission (ANC) 2A, comprising Foggy Bottom and the West End.

Please direct all inquiries to UUA Co-Chairs, Professor David Rain at drain@gwu.edu and Maranda Ward at maranda@gwu.edu.

Reviewed by: UUA Members