



Faculty Senate Provost Report: Friday, May 10, 2024

Good afternoon. I have some end of year updates to share with you today.

End of the Semester

I know the encampment on University Yard and other protest activities have provided challenges and additional stress for members of our community during the busiest time of year. Thanks to the Office of the Registrar, we were able to pivot quickly with our academic operations. Final examinations in buildings surrounding University Yard were moved to different locations, and the Provost Office has continued to communicate the status of examinations and where students should be directed to share questions or concerns about finishing out the end of the semester, including a message early this morning. As much as possible, we have endeavored to maintain normal university operations.

I would like to thank the faculty for your flexibility and your continued support of our students during this challenging time. I am sure you have had to field many tough questions and concerns in recent weeks. I am sincerely grateful for all you have done to keep the university moving forward and for your attention to Provost Office guidance through this final examination period.

Spring Grades

A quick housekeeping note on spring grades. It is very important that faculty submit grades as soon as possible after the completion of final exams. University policy requires that grades be submitted within five business days of the exam, or after the final class meeting if no exam is given. They can be submitted online 24/7. Grades not being submitted on time can negatively affect a student's financial aid and academic standing and can delay the conferral of a student's degree. Please help us honor our commitment to offering students the best possible experience by meeting this deadline. And please remind your colleagues!

Strategic Framework Development

Regarding the Strategic Framework Development process, thank you to all who have provided very helpful guidance and feedback on the future-focused conversations summary report. Hopefully you saw that the summary report, which incorporated feedback from the Faculty Senate retreat and other meetings with stakeholders, was posted on the Strategic Framework website for community feedback. We received dozens of submissions through the feedback form. We are processing the feedback and developing a set of thematic areas to share with the Board of Trustees in May.

GW Alliance for a Sustainable Future Celebration

In April, the Alliance for a Sustainable Future held an exciting event that celebrated the creativity, scholarship and leadership that is working to advance a more sustainable way of life for the health of our planet. The program included a roundtable discussion with GW faculty experts, moderated by yours truly, and a keynote conversation with Delaware senator Chris Coons, the co-founder and co-chair of the bipartisan Senate Climate Solutions Caucus.

There continue to be exciting developments in the Alliance since its launch in November, including the addition of faculty and staff support, so I urge you to keep an eye on their website for developments and storytelling.

Academic Honors

We also had the pleasure of recognizing over 200 undergraduate students at our Academic Honors ceremony with the Outstanding Academic Achievement Award. These students are in the top 2% of their schools by GPA. 59 students received this award for the 2nd time, and 49 received it for the 3rd time – demonstrating a strong base of consistent academic achievement among our undergraduates.

We also recognized 10 Distinguished Scholars – which includes 3 from CCAS, one for each focus area of Arts and Humanities, Social Science, and Natural Science. The selection process for Distinguished Scholars differs by school, but they are all excellent, engaged students with bright futures. We look forward to seeing many of these students graduate in just over a week.

Faculty Honors

In late April, we held the 14th Annual Faculty Honors Ceremony, which recognized excellence in teaching, research, and service among our faculty and graduate teaching assistants. I truly appreciate having the opportunity to celebrate the many accomplishments of our faculty, who I believe are the single most important ingredient to our success as a serious research institution. I was especially proud to recognize Senator Jim Tielsch with the Oscar and Shoshana Trachtenberg Prize for Service.

Looking ahead to 2025's ceremony, I encourage you all to pay attention to the call for nominations when they go out in the fall and to nominate your peers for these important honors.

Research Showcase

On May 1, the Office of the Vice Provost for Research hosted the 2024 Research Showcase. Members of the campus community, alumni, employer partners, and external collaborators gathered to learn more about GW research on the theme of sustainability and equity.

More than 50 undergraduates, graduate students, and postdocs from across GW presented posters. It was a lively program with lab tours, a display of faculty authored books, presentations by research institutes, and oral presentations by winners of the Three Minute Thesis competition and the New Venture Competition.

It was also the culmination of a month of school- and department-led research symposia.

It is very exciting to see the outcome of student-led projects that have developed over the course of an academic year. I would like to thank all the faculty who are serving as mentors to our student scholars in the classroom, the field, and the lab.

Commencement

Finally, as you know, Commencement Week is next week. A strong faculty showing at graduation events demonstrates to our graduating students and their families and friends that we are proud to see them cross the finish line and are excited about their future endeavors, so I look forward to robust faculty participation at school events and on the National Mall.