

A RESOLUTION ON THE IMMEDIATE NEED TO FILL POSITIONS IN THE DEANERY OF LIBRARIES AND ACADEMIC INNOVATION (21/5)

WHEREAS, the Libraries Committee “periodically reviews the operation, materials and facilities of all the libraries of The George Washington University; evaluates the level of satisfaction of faculty and students with the materials and services provided; estimates the levels of cooperation between the component parts of the libraries among themselves and with the community-at-large; and makes suggestions for the continuing development and planning of the facilities”; and

WHEREAS, GW has announced a round of budget cuts to deal with the fallout of COVID-19;¹ and

WHEREAS, GW’s Libraries already suffered from a round of devastating budget cuts in 2016, in which the then-administration prioritized the integrity of the collection over Librarian and staff positions²; and

WHEREAS, President LeBlanc volunteered at the faculty Senate meeting on May 8, 2020, that preparation for online education is not free but needs investments; and

WHEREAS, GW’s smooth transition to online learning in Spring 2020 was in large part thanks to the professionalism, dedication and tireless effort of the Libraries and Academic Innovation (LAI) team; and

WHEREAS, the administration has alerted the faculty that they need to plan how to deliver instructions in Fall 2020 both on-campus and online as well as in a hybrid-mode; and

WHEREAS, for GW’s smooth operation of instruction and research in Fall 2020, faculty will thus heavily rely on the team overseen by the Dean of Libraries and Academic Innovations (LAI); and

WHEREAS, at the Senate’s April meeting, Dean Henry shared that LAI requested 5 expert Librarians and 2 staff positions as system-critical with anticipated hiring dates of May 1, 2020, and additional expert Librarians and staff as system-critical with anticipated hiring dates of July 1, 2020, and Provost Blake reported that “some library positions should be kept open” and confirmed “that this area is extremely important to nurture this infrastructure”³;

¹ <https://gwtoday.gwu.edu/update-budget>

² <https://gwtoday.gwu.edu/departmental-reorganizations-announced>

³ <https://facultysenate.gwu.edu/files/2020/04/April-2020-minutes-attachments.pdf>

WHEREAS, these requests are held up for approval in an administrative committee which is to evaluate each individual exception from the GW-announced hiring freeze, albeit concrete candidates or finalists have been identified already, and reference or background checks have in part been conducted; and

WHEREAS, it is recognized that budget mitigation in the face of the COVID-19 crisis will require a broad-based approach, the special need for investing in the university's ability to effectively offer instruction on line requires special investments;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

1. That the Senate expresses its highest appreciation for the ceaseless dedication and expert advice of the LAI team to get GW online in Spring 2020; and
2. That the Senate urges the President and Provost to direct the administration to approve immediately the expert Librarian positions and staff hires requested, cognizant that time is of the essence if they are to be ready to help GW faculty and students prepare for and work in Fall 2020.

Faculty Senate Libraries Committee
May 15, 2020

Adopted as amended by the Faculty Senate
May 20, 2020