



Faculty Senate

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR SENATE MEETING
HELD ON DECEMBER 12, 2025
HYBRID: 805 21st STREET NW/MPA 309 & ZOOM**

Present: President Granberg; Interim Provost Lach; Parliamentarian Binder; Registrar Cloud; Senate Office Staff Liz Carlson and Jenna Chaojareon; Deans Ayres, Bass, Gebo, Henry, Matthew, Riddle, Wahlbeck, and Yeltekin; Interim Dean Zara; Professors Akman, Badie, Bamford, Briggs, Brinkerhoff, Callier, Cheh, Cohen-Cole, Crandall, Cseh, Eakle, El-Ghazawi, Engel, Fagan, Feldman, Gore, Hernandez, Kay, Kieff, Kulp, Liu, Markus, Mendelowitz, Mylonas, Orti, Rain, Rigg, Sarkar, Schultheiss, Schwindt, Vyas, Warren, White, Wilson, and Wirtz.

Absent: Dean Kelly-Weeder; Interim Dean Howard; Professors Belenky, Borum, Core, Cottrol, McAlister, Merluzzi, and Trangsrud.

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 2:02p.m. Interim Provost Lach welcomed the group back to the Senate's temporary home while the State Room is under renovation. As MPA 309 is an active classroom, he asked that attendees be sure to remove any trash when leaving. He also reiterated last month's request that in-person attendees be extremely careful about sidebar conversations. The ceiling microphones will pick up all audio and transmit it over Zoom. Those needing to communicate with a neighbor during the meeting are asked to either text or pass notes.

MINUTES APPROVAL

The minutes of the November 14, 2025, Senate meeting were approved without objection.

PRESIDENT'S & PROVOST'S REPORTS (Ellen Granberg, President, & John Lach, Interim Provost)

The [President's report](#) and [Interim Provost's report](#) were provided with the posted agenda for today's meeting.

President Granberg offered the following additional remarks:

Good afternoon, everyone. I hope you all had a wonderful Thanksgiving break and your preparations for finals and the holiday season are going well. I am sorry that I'm not able to join you in person today. I am travelling on behalf of the university, meeting with alumni and donors in advance of the holidays.

I want to thank the Executive Committee and the Faculty Senate more broadly for agreeing to continue testing the pre-read approach to Faculty Senate meetings. This approach is designed so that Interim Provost Lach and I can share routine updates via a written pre-read in advance of the meeting, allowing us to maximize our time together for discussion and questions.

UHS/MFA Negotiation Update

Negotiations with UHS are continuing. Both sides now have a clear understanding about the respective positions on all of the most critical issues. We're largely in agreement on overall structure, but there are a lot of complex details that we are working through. And so, while it's taking a bit more time to get through these discussions toward a new future state, both sides want this resolved as soon as possible, and we're all working hard to bring this to a close.

Artificial Intelligence

Today, I would like to focus on the university's artificial intelligence strategy and especially on last week's announcement of the strategic mapping initiative. As you saw in my message and in the GW Today story, this university-wide initiative will focus on the uses, opportunities, and risks associated with AI and will encompass the uses of AI in all its facets, from research to teaching to operations.

My hope is that this mapping exercise will provide a foundation for discussions and greater clarity within departments, schools, colleges, and across the university about how we want to leverage AI at GW. I see our Faculty Senate discussion about leveraging AI as particularly critical since this effort will inform both our curriculum and how we prepare students for life after GW, as well as the critical research and scholarship already being produced here.

I want to thank Zoe Szjanfarber for agreeing to lead this large team effort [round of applause?] as Senior Advisor to the President on AI Strategy. I also want to thank the faculty and staff members who are leading the research, education, and operations working groups.

The research working group will be co-chaired by David Broniatowski, professor of engineering management and systems engineering in the School of Engineering and Applied Science (SEAS), and Ted McKoy, assistant director for award set-up and subaward management in the Office of Sponsored Projects.

The education working group will be co-chaired by Ryan Watkins, professor of educational technology leadership in the Graduate School of Education and Human Development (GSEHD), and Karen Singer-Freeman, associate dean of teaching and learning excellence in the Center for Teaching Excellence.

And the operations working group will be co-chaired by Sue Bogan, GW IT digital transformation specialist, and Patrick Hall, teaching assistant professor of decision sciences and chief AI officer in the GW School of Business (GWSB).

The response to the initiative has been more than I could have hoped for. I understand that Zoe received so much interest from colleagues wanting to participate in the project that she set up a Google form to help manage the responses. So another thanks to those who have already reached out.

We are living in a moment of extraordinary possibility. Artificial intelligence is not just changing the tools we use — it is reshaping the very landscape of knowledge, creativity, and human endeavor.

Our students will graduate into a world where AI is woven into every profession, every discipline, and every act of discovery. The question before us is not whether they will encounter it, but whether we will prepare them to lead with it. That responsibility rests with us and especially with the faculty who are the stewards of our curriculum, the guardians of our intellectual traditions, and in many ways the architects of our students' futures.

Together, we have the opportunity to consider deeply what education means in the age of AI:

- to design courses that teach not only technical fluency, but ethical wisdom;
- to cultivate graduates who can harness AI to solve problems as well as question its assumptions; and
- to ensure that every student, regardless of discipline, leaves here with the confidence to shape this technology rather than be shaped by it.

This is our moment to lead. If we embrace it, our university can become a beacon, showing the world how higher education evolves not by abandoning its values, but by extending them into new frontiers. And I see the Faculty Senate and its standing committees as critical partners with the administration and the rest of the faculty as this discussion moves forward.

I ask you to join me in this work with courage and creativity. Let's map the future of AI at our university not as administrators and faculty working in parallel, but as true partners in vision. Let's give our students not only the skills to succeed, but the imagination to transform the world they inherit. The future is arriving quickly. Together, we can ensure our graduates are not only prepared for it but also ready to shape it, and I very much look forward to the conversations this initiative will generate.

Dr. Lach offered the following additional remarks:

To echo the president, I wanted to take a moment to share my excitement and thanks to everyone who has expressed their enthusiasm for the AI@GW strategic mapping exercise, which we announced last week. AI was an ever-present theme throughout the Strategic Framework planning process. The opportunities and challenges that AI poses are tremendous, as is the expertise around GW to seize those opportunities and address those challenges. I'm very excited to learn more about what we are currently doing across campus and what the greatest opportunities and needs are that will inform our institutional AI strategy. I'm also exceedingly grateful for Zoe Szajnfarber's leadership of this important effort.

I know that she is already having great conversations with faculty, students, and staff across campus, including the Faculty Senate Educational Policy & Technology (EPT) and Research Committee Co-Chairs. If you are interested in AI and haven't yet connected with Zoe, she'd love to hear from you.

Clarifying Grade Designations for Undergraduate and Graduate Courses

Earlier this week, I distributed messages to faculty and students clarifying the university's grade designations for undergraduate and graduate courses, as stipulated by approved Resolution 26/3. We will continue to disseminate this messaging moving forward through various channels to ensure that faculty and students are aware of this resolution's impact on grading and potential impact on financial aid.

Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs Search

As you know, at the beginning of this academic year, Professor Emily Hammond graciously agreed to serve as the interim vice provost for faculty affairs upon Professor Rumana Riffat's return to GW Engineering. Soon, we will be launching the formal search for the permanent role and inviting applications from internal candidates. The role will be open to all tenured faculty applicants at the rank of full professor. I will be setting up the search committee very soon, and I will send a call for applications message to faculty when the role is posted.

General Thanks

Finally, I'd like to wrap up my comments simply by thanking the Faculty Senate for your support during my first semester as interim provost. It has certainly been a whirlwind semester as I have adjusted to this role and its faster pace, broader scope, and lots and lots of meetings! But it has also presented a wealth of opportunity — the chance for me to meet so many faculty, students, staff, and alumni, attend events that showcase the university's many strengths, and learn much more about this university that we all care about so deeply and are working hard every day to continue advancing. I am grateful to have the partnership and support of leaders like you, the Faculty Senate, as I continue leading our academic enterprise this year.

I wish you all a happy and healthy break, and we will now open the floor to questions.

BRIEF STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS/PRESIDENT'S & PROVOST'S REPORTS

Professor Cheh, following up on a discussion from the November Senate meeting, requested clarification of the university's commitment to the shared university free speech values. Hypothetically speaking, she asked, what the administration's position is when there is adverse action taken against a member of the university community for a private social media post—not something that could be criminally or civilly liable, not a violation of regulations, and not an attempt to portray the university's position in any way, but an individual's private social media post. She asked whether the administration is prepared to protect members of the university against adverse action in such cases.

President Granberg responded that GW's policies provide a very robust framework in such cases. The right to free expression is very clear in these policies, which include a statement that, when there is doubt about whether or not a particular kind of speech is a problem that could result in some kind of action, preference should be given toward free speech. This, she felt, is in keeping with the First Amendment and with what other universities do and is something that she and Dr. Lach support. She added that, at all universities, it is possible at times that a particular speech interferes with an individual's ability to do their job; in the rare instances when that occurs, supervisors and Human Resources do take this into consideration; a great deal

of case law exists on this. She also noted the importance of remembering that situations are always more complicated than one simple question and that the wider community does not know everything that happens in any one personnel situation. She reiterated that GW has strong policies protecting free speech in place and that the preference leans toward free expression when there is doubt.

Professor Warren reported that, at today's meeting of the Senate Research committee, two committee members reported hearing from faculty that GW is abandoning federally funded research. The committee members were not aware of the source of this concern, and Professor Warren asked if the leadership could reaffirm GW's commitment to research in light of these concerns. Dr. Lach responded that growing GW's research enterprise, including sponsored research, is one of the core priorities of the strategic framework, and the university is absolutely committed to that. Dr. Lach speculated that the context for this concern might stem from the work being done on the new budget model to assess the true cost of doing sponsored research. That work is in no way a backing away from research but rather represents a thorough and thoughtful approach to understanding what investments will be needed to support growing GW's research enterprise.

President Granberg added that she is aware of discussions around the idea that federal funding for research might dry up at some point and that the university therefore needs to think about diversifying its research funding sources. She affirmed that the university is fully committed to maintaining GW's research mission and, as Dr. Lach noted, understanding what supporting that mission costs.

Professor Wirtz expressed his concern about an increasingly chilled climate for freedom of speech and academic freedom, noting a staff member no longer employed by GW and faculty who have felt attacked for what they say in the classroom. He stressed that Professor Cheh's concerns should not fall by the wayside and that everyone should be vigilant about this important point.

Professor Wirtz then referenced the President's report on the Joint Committee of Faculty and Students (JCFS) in her pre-read, specifically, JCFS's consideration of textbook affordability and the Follett all-access program. He noted that EPT spent an enormous amount of time looking at the Follett proposal, debating and discussing it with student leaders in the room; the committee came to the conclusion that this policy is not in the best interest of the students. EPT has been oriented toward what is in students' best interest for some time, and it is rare for the committee to spend as much effort investigating an issue as it did with the Follett proposal, which has many flaws. Now, JCFS (which is not a Senate standing committee) has taken an exception to EPT position on this proposal, which Professor Wirtz found odd given that EPT includes strong student representation. He hoped that, if there were an issue with EPT's position, that those students would feel they can speak up there. He hoped that the administration was not prepared to take action on the Follett policy without first considering the very real concerns that EPT has about that policy and working to resolve any differences between the EPT and JCFS positions.

President Granberg responded that she learned recently about EPT's work on this issue. She added that, while JCFS is not a Senate standing committee, it is officially recognized as a committee that the Senate supports and that the Senate was vocal in its support of reconstituting the committee this year. She noted that the Follett proposal was a top issue for the students at the first JCFS meeting. There was not unanimity among the students on the committee about whether this is a good idea, and the students wanted to discuss it. JCFS can send resolutions to the Student Government Association (SGA) and the Senate, and, if JCFS reached another conclusion about the proposal, they are able to formally send something forward. The President supported working out the differences, and she noted that there are now opt-out provisions that were not part of earlier discussions of the program. The conversation will need to involve many different

groups, including EPT, and she affirmed that the administration will not make a decision about this proposal based only on a recommendation from JCFS, particularly given all of the work EPT has put into this issue. Professor Wirtz was relieved to hear that the administration will not move forward on this without resolving EPT's concerns. He added that JCFS is a fabulous committee and that he in no way meant to impugn their motives. This issue received a lot of attention in EPT, however, and that should not be ignored.

Senior Vice President Mory noted that, when JCFS was re-formed, the Follett proposal was one of main issues the students wanted to discuss, so it was placed on agenda. The meeting included a presentation from Follett, and there was no unanimity from faculty or students in the meeting. There will be a subsequent conversation to address many questions; he added that JCFS can refer resolutions and matters back to the Senate and SGA and are not a decision-making committee. He also noted JCFS's link with FSEC, with Professor Vyas serving this year as the JCFS liaison to FSEC; this provides another route for JCFS issues to come to the Senate.

Professor Cohen-Cole noted that this issue was raised in the Senate last year and was in the EPT annual report. SGA leadership was always invited to EPT meetings, and the current SGA president was a member of EPT last year. The students contributed to the conversation in EPT but did not object to the direction the conversation took, which was ultimately unanimous against the Follett plan. There were a number of reasons for this, all of which put student interests and lowering prices first. Notably, the Follett plan offers a discount against an artificially high benchmark, namely the GW Bookstore. Professor Cohen-Cole provided the example of an economics text that is less expensive through the Follett plan than through the GW Bookstore but substantially more expensive than what a student would find on the open market. Other issues included the fact that the plan is opt-out, as opposed to opt-in, and that the GW Bookstore profits from the plan. He noted that his concern is that the bookstore did not take into account the concerns they heard from EPT and that those concerns were not then presented to JCFS. EPT continues to work on lowering the prices of instructional materials for students, and he encouraged leadership to direct the bookstore to incorporate the criticisms EPT had of the Follett plan and to work as best it can to lower the prices of materials to at least the existing market prices before it moves toward approving a proposal.

Professor Vyas noted that the reconstituted JCFS only recently held its first meeting and that, as the committee continues, the FSEC liaison to JCFS will bring issues raised in JCFS back to FSEC for discussion and referral to Senate committees. This particular issue hasn't yet had the opportunity to be raised in FSEC and returned to EPT, but she fully expected that would be the next step.

Mr. Mory added that the students on JCFS expressed the same skepticism Professor Cohen-Cole relayed and that it will be very informative to share EPT's conclusions with JCFS and have the committees work together on this issue.

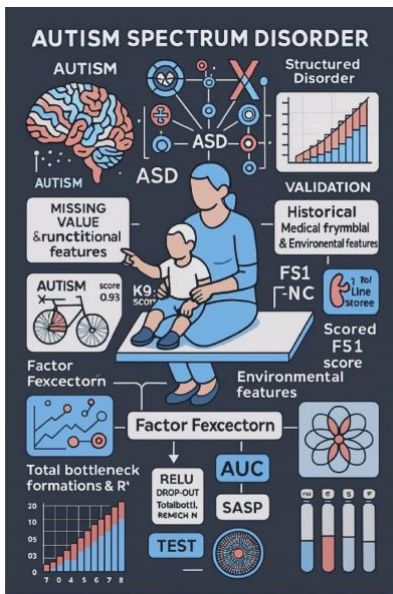
Referencing the AI mapping exercise President Granberg outlined in her report, Professor Feldman stated that, on a broad level, she is very glad to see that the university would be thinking proactively and comprehensively about AI and how to engage students in developing the skills that they need with AI while also being aware of its limitations. She raised a related set of questions on one aspect of the issue that was not raised in the description of the mapping exercise. Specifically, in a world where AI exists, there is the matter of teaching students how to use it well and ethically. There is also, however, the question of how to teach non-AI skills in an era when AI presents itself as a shortcut or a reason not to develop those skills. Many skills remain crucially important, and new pedagogical tools are needed to ensure that deep learning continues to happen. She encouraged those involved with the mapping exercise to include this as part of the

consideration of GW in an AI era. President Granberg responded that she could not agree more with this point, which was a part of the conversation during the Senate retreats on the strategic framework. She welcomed thoughts on how this conversation might best be structured. Dr. Lach added that the mapping process will bring forward many thoughts from the community and that philosophical and humanistic questions are an important part of the conversation. He asked Professor Feldman to follow up with Professor Szjanfarber on this.

Professor Schultheiss added that she did not want to see GW abandon its traditional adherence to evidence-based policies for enthusiasm about what is new. Research on how AI affects teaching in non-quantitative fields is only just beginning, and plans and recommendations need to be based on evidence. Dr. Lach affirmed that the mapping exercise will survey what is happening currently so that the university can begin making decisions about strategy.

Professor Wilson noted that, with the prevalence of generative AI, one cannot be certain a student wrote an assignment without observing them while writing. This could require more contact hours (e.g., oral exams?) and has implications for scheduling. Dr. Lach responded that mapping current activities will identify issues and needs in this area. He added that the best approach for GW will likely be less of a blanket policy and more of a formative framework for individual programs faculty members to determine how best to educate their students in the age of AI.

Professor Cohen-Cole noted that, while he knows what to do as a faculty member if a student submits materials that are clearly AI-generated (plagiarism or fabrication, depending on the course permissions for using AI), he is less clear on how to proceed when a faculty-published piece is clearly using AI irresponsibly. He encountered two peer-reviewed articles recently, one including a very bad infograph and one with AI-hallucinated references. To illustrate the former, the infograph is included here:



He asked Dr. Lach, in his capacity as provost, what a faculty member should do with something like this. Dr. Lach responded that he might ask the same question of the chairs of EPT and the Professional Ethics and Academic Freedom (PEAF) committees. He noted GW’s research integrity policy as well as the university’s processes for determining whether something is a violation of policy. In the age of AI, it will be

important to interrogate how AI use fits into this and whether it represents a violation of GW's policies or not. Professor Cohen-Cole noted that the policy (which is up for revision) is currently vague, essentially stating that individuals should know better than to fabricate their work. He asked whether someone should know better if all their citations are to journals that don't exist. Dr. Lach responded that this is a great question and asked whether it might be included on the next PEAFF agenda for discussion. He noted that scholarship is governed by scholars, with different expectations in different fields. This should be discussed, and, as scholars, the community should decide together what should be considered a violation of GW's research integrity policy.

Professor Callier affirmed the importance of thinking about governance and having a group dedicated to these questions. She noted her concern not only with false references but also with the erasure of scholars when faculty and students cite AI instead of real people whose work was taken by LLMs. This is bigger than PEAFF and requires serious thought about the underlying ethics issue generally, as well as what faculty want to do in the classroom. Dr. Lach affirmed this point, noting that the university can decide what is and isn't a violation of GW's research integrity policy but needs to consider the broader scholarly community as well. The discussion of these kinds of standards will be very important.

Professor Cohen-Cole referenced [SR 25/7](#), adopted by the Senate last year with the goal of improving the experience of transfer students. The resolution suggested a university-level committee to help achieve this, and he asked about progress on this, particularly given need to meet enrollment targets. Vice President Goff responded that the future enrollment planning committee will restart at the end of January and would be in the best position to take up this issue.

FACULTY SENATE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE REPORT (FSEC Chair)

The [Faculty Senate Executive Committee \(FSEC\)](#) report was circulated with the agenda of today's meeting. Professor Orti noted that FSEC has been discussing ways of improving communication among Senate committees and administrative working groups; today's discussion of parallel conversations in EPT and JCFS highlight the need for this, and FSEC will continue to work with the administration on strategies in this area.

As noted in the FSEC report, the [Senate's academic freedom portal](#) remains open and available for faculty to note any concerns they are experiencing in this area.

Professor Orti highlighted that the next FSEC meeting will take place one week from today, on December 19, and that the Senate office will be closed during the GW holiday break from December 24 until January 5.

BRIEF STATEMENTS & QUESTIONS/FSEC REPORT

None.

REPORT: Enrollment (Jay Goff, Vice President and Dean of Enrollment Management & Student Success)

Vice President Goff shared a pre-read of his update to the Senate and made the following remarks on the [attached updated slides](#) before turning to questions:

Good afternoon, and thank you, members of the Faculty Senate, colleagues, and members of the GW community. I appreciate the opportunity to provide this year's fall enrollment update. I plan to primarily reflect on the materials shared in the pre-read and hope to leave time for questions at the end of my presentation.

Our official fall census, completed in early October, shows that the university's total headcount stands at just over 24,500 students. As you can see from the pie chart, our undergraduate and graduate student populations each make up about 43% of our overall enrollment. Our professional students in law and medicine remain steady at 10%, and our non-residential/distance undergraduate programs have stabilized at 3%. You'll also notice a slight decrease in non-degree enrollment, which is primarily due to the planned phase-out of a pre-college outreach program that enrolled non-credit, non-tuition-bearing students.

Our domestic enrollment remains strong, with 21,219 students from all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and several U.S. territories. As in past years, about 57% of our students come from New York, New Jersey, California, Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Our global footprint continues to be broad, with 3,280 international students from 140 countries enrolled this fall. Just over half of our international students come from China, India, South Korea, Zimbabwe, and Saudi Arabia. While our overall international numbers have declined, likely due to changes in federal visa policies and immigration rules, we have maintained the broader global reach we intentionally built after the pandemic. This diversification strategy has been key as the number of students coming from China and other parts of Asia continues to decline nationwide.

Breaking down our total enrollment by student category highlights where post-pandemic changes have occurred.

The good news:

- Residential undergraduate enrollment has grown beyond our goal of 10,000 students and stayed steady.
- Professional student enrollments remain stable.
- Full-time domestic graduate enrollment has increased.

Where we continue to see challenges is in international enrollment and part-time graduate enrollment, particularly among master's students who are working adults taking one or two classes per semester. These two groups have not fully rebounded since the pandemic.

Our post-pandemic enrollment plan focused on:

1. Restoring full-time enrollments
2. Maintaining or improving academic profile
3. Expanding national reach to offset the demographic cliff
4. Diversifying international markets
5. Increasing access and student success

I'm pleased to report that, thanks to campus wide efforts, our full-time domestic enrollment reached a new institutional record this fall with 15,726 students.

Turning to international full-time enrollment: We have 2,720 full-time international students this fall, down from last year, again this appears to be primarily due to visa delays and federal policy changes.

As I shared with the Senate last spring, we were on track for a strong new international student intake this fall, and our post-pandemic international diversification strategy had been effective in expanding the new student outreach to other countries. However, the visa delays clearly impacted our international enrollments, particularly in graduate programs. I will show more details on that trend shortly.

The distribution of undergraduate majors has remained consistent:

- 47% in the Columbian College
- 17% in the Elliott School
- 17% in the School of Business
- 8% in SEAS
- 5% in the Milken Institute School of Public Health

At the graduate level, the enrollment distribution across schools has remained balanced, with steady enrollments in our professional programs. The primary change is simply fewer part-time and international graduate students, consistent with the earlier trends I noted.

This year's new residential undergraduate class was on target with our desired student profile. Although our headcount target of 2,650 new students was slightly lower due to Mitchell Hall's renovation, which removed about 340 beds, the incoming class slightly exceeded goal with 2,697 new first-year and transfer students enrolling.

The academic profile was on target with our five-year goals. We also enrolled 22% Pell-eligible students, surpassing our 20% target, driven in part by new Pell definitions in the redesigned FAFSA. We also met our global target, with international students representing 7% of the new first-year class. These results were due to the hard and dedicated work of many individuals across our community. My sincere thanks to:

- Ben Toll and the Undergraduate Admissions team
- Jennifer Donaghue and the International Services team
- Michelle Arcieri and the Student Financial Assistance team
- Taj Jones and the Student Services Hub
- And all colleagues in orientation, advising, and student support.

Their combined efforts ensured we brought in a strong, engaged, and thriving new class.

Looking ahead, our plan is to enroll a class slightly larger than this year. Our seven-year average for new undergraduates is just over 2,700 students. It is still early in the admissions cycle, but applications for Fall 2026 are currently ahead of last year. We expect more than 16,000 additional undergraduate applications to arrive around the January 5 deadline for both Regular Decision and Early Decision II applicants. Dean Toll has finalized the Early Decision I class, and admission decisions will be released on Monday afternoon, December 15.

Looking ahead, the Fall 2026 undergraduate class will be particularly important. It will be the final entering class under the current five-year enrollment plan established by the Future Enrollment Planning Committee in 2021. In late January, will start to ask for nominations to reconvene the committee to review our current profile goals, assess current market conditions, and extend the plan through Fall 2031. We will share updates on this work at future EPT and Senate meetings.

Now let me shift to graduate and professional student enrollment. Our post-pandemic patterns have been very strong among domestic students. However, international graduate enrollment has not followed the same trend. While our professional programs remain steady, the loss of part-time and international master's students is the most significant ongoing challenge.

I know many of you may have specific questions about markets, trends, and the data we use for our planning models. To support that interest, Dr. Eric Grynawski, chair of the Enrollment Planning Committee, will be hosting a two-hour open session after the holiday break. All senators and interested faculty will be invited.

I also want to update you on the work of the Student Loan Task Force as the university prepares for the new federal loan environment beginning in 2026–2027. With the passage of HR 1 (the “Big Beautiful Bill”), several major federal loan changes are coming.

Three key findings:

1. No changes for current borrowers this year. Students who remain in the same degree program can continue using their existing federal loans for up to three more years.
2. New graduate/professional students starting after July 1, 2026, may still borrow up to their Cost of Attendance, but the Federal Graduate PLUS Loan program will be discontinued. This means many students will need to turn to private lenders, similar to the pre-2010 financial aid landscape.
3. A new private loan portal will launch on the Student Financial Assistance website by April. Students will be able to compare lenders and apply online. The task force is currently reviewing responses from lenders to determine which will be included based on rates, services, and competitiveness.

We have created a detailed [Federal Aid Changes homepage](#) with regularly updated FAQs, which has already received very positive feedback. A new informational video and updated list of professional programs will be added shortly.

Primary Takeaways for the GW Community:

- Current borrowers are protected.
- Starting July 1, 2026, new graduate students may need to transition some of their student loans to private loans due to the end of federal Grad PLUS program.
- Students electing to use loans should continue to complete the FAFSA (and CSS Profile where required).
- The new private loan portal will be available simplify the private borrowing process starting this spring.

Although loan types are changing, one thing that remains constant is our commitment to expanding financial support for low-income and high-need students.

Vice President David Unruh and the University Development team will continue to advance the Open Doors Initiative. Our priorities remain:

- Increasing support for Pell-eligible students
- Reducing reliance on unsubsidized loans
- Exploring loan forgiveness opportunities
- Expanding fellowships for graduate students

In just three years, this initiative has already raised \$80 million in endowed support to help our students pursue and complete a GW degree.

In closing, I wanted to provide an update on the Only at GW Experience Portfolio, a pilot project we highlighted last year as way to better explain GW unique value proposition to new undergraduates. The full Core-GW-Experience App (often called CORE-in-4) fully launched last spring with the newly admitted residential first-year undergraduates. The app has received positive feedback and could serve a mechanism for personalizing the GW experience to new students. Students answer seven questions about their academic and co-curricular goals. This includes internships, research, community and campus service, and study abroad. The electronic portfolio provides curated pathways and recommendations based on their major and personal goals.

We will be reaching out after the holidays to update departmental information and ensure the Core-in-4 Portfolio is ready to launch with the undergraduate Regular Decision notifications in late March.

If you are interested, you can try the GW experience portfolio app today by using the QR code on the screen. The curated content from this project also feeds into our new Augmented Reality tour system, which creates personalized campus tours based on each visitor's interests. Both systems are another way we helping new students understand the distinctive value of a GW education.

That concludes my report. Thank you for your time, your partnership, and your support of our students. I'm happy to take questions.

Professor Wilson asked whether Mr. Goff had any theories about why part-time graduate student enrollment is down so sharply. Mr. Goff responded, that, post-pandemic, certain programs and fields were more impacted (e.g., teaching, health care professionals, public service professions). Some of the impact was a result of pandemic exhaustion; more recently, some students initially interested in programs lost their employment and decided not to enroll.

Professor Wilson then asked if, in the effort to meet enrollment targets, there is there a danger GW is admitting some students who are not academically strong enough. Mr. Goff responded that the same quality measures remain in place. While there may be concerns around using AI for college admissions essays, those tools do not help students with placement exams and high school grades, even assuming some grade inflation. He stated there is no indication that GW has lost student quality in academic strength.

Professor Wilson noted that private lending to students is presumably profitable and asked why GW does not make these loans directly. Mr. Goff responded that some institutions do get into the direct loan business

but that GW is not structured to do so. In addition, it is not clear that GW could best the rates and services offered by the best private lenders.

Professor Briggs noted that HR1 (known as the One Big Beautiful Bill) enacts changes that impact the nursing and health professions significantly by declassifying these professions as “professional degrees.” This means that students in these programs only qualify for about half the federal student loan money they would previously have been able to borrow. She asked what GW can do to mitigate this. Mr. Goff responded that most of these students can borrow to the full cost of attendance now. Many were already using some private lending, and their portfolios will likely have more private lending going forward. He added that other options (e.g., assistantships) should be investigated.

Professor Feldman observed that the news makes it sound as though funding graduate education will no longer be possible, and the university needs to communicate that the landscape is changing and that they are working to help students navigate that. Next, she noted the difference between the dropoff in international enrollments at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Recognizing that many factors are out of the university’s control, she asked whether there is anything the more dispersed graduate program enrollment processes can learn and deploy from GW’s relative success at undergrad level.

On Professor Feldman’s first point, Mr. Goff noted that the task force is working to get more information out. The website is updated weekly and is included in the federal update emails. The task force also recorded an informational video that will go live shortly that can be shared with students. On the international enrollment question, Mr. Goff noted that there is nothing obvious that was or was not done—the same services were provided for undergraduate and graduate applicants with two different results. The difference was often which consulates and on what timeline students needed to get their visas. For whatever reason, the undergraduates had a smoother, more consistent process, and his team has not been able to identify anything they did differently that would help the undergraduates more than the graduate students. The team is looking now at whether it can create a monitoring system with the federal student visa system (SEVIS) within its new CRM system that would allow for better data monitoring.

Professor Schwindt noted that, nationally, the top topic of discussion in nursing is how the change in professional degree designation will impact graduate education in nursing. With part-time enrollments down, and a majority of the School of Nursing (SON) students enrolled part-time, many students are likely to default to the least expensive degree option before they know about all of their funding options at GW. She asked whether enrollment is thinking about this from a marketing perspective. She also asked about the best place to obtain school-specific enrollment data and how to communicate that to faculty. Mr. Goff responded that each school has a set of graduate enrollment teams that oversee their specific programs; he encouraged faculty to make sure that those teams are putting the information he has shared into their communications. Projecting the impact this will have on graduate enrollments is the difficult piece, and the schools should be as clear as possible that there is no need to panic. Student will still be able to borrow to the full cost of attendance. This was the practice before 2010; it worked well then, and he expected it will work well now. He added that the private lenders on the GW portal only stay there if they are good partners supporting GW’s students; they will be pulled if not. In addition, briefings for each dean will include a report showing current student borrowing loads; this may not help with predictions but will provide a scope to consider. Professor Schwindt noted that the leading professional organizations are not sending this message; their white papers in opposition to the degree designation change tell a different story. Professor Vyas noted that public health is seeing the same thing, with associations telling a panicked story of fewer jobs and changes in loans. This is leading many students to default to state universities. Mr. Goff noted that GW is a leader in its lending portal and website, adding that communications can always be enhanced.

Professor Vyas asked whether the 4-year experience builder for undergraduates might be tailored for graduate programs as well, noting that this would help graduate students see the difference GW offers over other universities.

REPORT: Fiscal Planning & University Budget (Bruno Fernandes, Executive Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer; Neena Ali, Associate Vice President, University Controller; Hemant Bakshi, Vice President for Finance and Assistant Treasurer)

A pre-read of the [FY25 Financial Results Review](#) as well as a link to the [FY24 & FY25 Consolidated Financial Statements](#) were shared with the agenda posting for today's meeting, and Ms. Ali highlighted some points from these slides.

She noted that GW's assets increased by \$323 million and liabilities by \$182 million, and total net assets increased \$141 million. At the same time, GW's operating revenue increased by 2%, while operating expenses increased by 8%. GW's accounts receivables balance is high; the main driver for that is the Medical Faculty Associates (MFA). MFA was paying invoices for rent and shared services until December 2024. Due to financial difficulties, the MFA has stopped making those payments, so GW has not received those payments. The MFA's losses are at a level that means all the money the university has given them has gone to fund their operations. The balances also include \$19 million of vacation carryover; in late FY2024, the university changed its vacation carryover policy.

Dean Matthew noted the large jump in compensation and asked whether the finance team could share a breakdown of this. Ms. Ali responded that she would work with Mr. Bakshi's team to see what can be put together, adding that the Finance Directors already have this information. She noted that the main reason for the compensation increase is that, even without a merit increase in FY2026, the average increase in FY2025 was 4.5%. In addition, the vacation carryover creates additional expense recorded in salaries and benefits.

Professor Wirtz noted that it would be helpful if the Senate could be provided with more than on-the-fly verbal direction on what is impacting these financial results. He asked what the major agents are for the 8% increase in expenses? Ms. Ali responded that the primary driver is merit increases, with headcount increases in advancement and athletics also contributing. Mr. Fernandes added that the financial statements are public, and that presentation includes more detail that his team can provide.

Professor Crandall asked whether the budget impact of vacation accruals will be an ongoing issue. Mr. Fernandes responded that this is an issue for the university from the perspective that vacation accruals continue to increase, because of the change in policy but also because a lot of personnel are not taking vacation time.

Professor Wirtz asked whether the increase in athletics is related to the Name-Image-Likeness (NIL) agreements. Mr. Fernandes responded that, per the legal agreement, GW cannot use tuition revenue for NIL payments. Funds for NIL payments come from sponsorships and philanthropy.

Mr. Bakshi shared the [attached summary of the FY26 budget](#). He noted that the FY26 budget timeline was elongated as headwinds were identified; the budget was approved by the Board in August. While the university initially expected that the budget would yield an operating surplus, the result of the elongated

process was essentially a break-even budget. He noted that the headwinds to revenues, embedded in those numbers, are indicative of the challenges in undergraduate enrollments (especially on the international side), a higher level of financial aid, pressures on graduate enrollment, and the back-out of interest income from the MFA. On the expense side, pressures from inflation continue to be reflected in this budget. The expense side also does not reflect any merit. He stated that this year is an inflection point for the university, a transition period during which GW can come up with a better than break-even margin and then go on to a sustainable margin that is over 2% in the short term and over 3% over a 5-year period.

Professor Cohen-Cole asked what the amount of lost interest payments and rent is from the MFA. Mr. Bakshi responded that the interest impact is about \$12-\$13 million and the rent impact is about \$5-6 million.

Professor Schultheiss asked where the new budget model enters into these numbers, if at all. Mr. Bakshi responded that the new budget model will not be implemented until next year; he noted that it provides a more transparent way of looking at the performance of an individual unit at the university but does not impact the top-level overview shared today.

Professor Feldman asked Mr. Bakshi what gives him confidence that this year is an inflection point and that GW is now moving toward a better situation. Mr. Bakshi responded that historic trends showed expenses consistently outpacing revenues; the university has taken a hard look at initiatives intended to decrease expenses. Professor Feldman asked whether these projections include a returning to merit increases. Mr. Bakshi responded in the affirmative, and Dr. Lach confirmed that this is a high priority. Professor Eakle asked when that would be; Mr. Fernandes responded that the commitment is to do something in FY2027.

INTRODUCTION OF RESOLUTIONS TO BE REFERRED TO COMMITTEE

None.

GENERAL BUSINESS

I. Nominations for Senate Standing Committee Membership

The following committee nominations were approved by unanimous consent:

- Educational Policy & Technology: Anna Vakulick/nonvoting
- Research
 - Nick Vonortas (ESIA Associate Dean for Research)/nonvoting
 - Vanessa Perry (GWSB Associate Dean for Research)/nonvoting
- Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom: Frederick Jacobsen (SMHS/voting)
- FSEC liaisons to Senate standing committees/voting:
 - Tarek El-Ghazawi/Research
 - Scott Kieff/Honors & Academic Convocations
 - David Mendelowitz/Fiscal Planning & Budgeting
 - John Warren/Educational Policy & Technology

II. Senate Standing Committee Reports

The following interim reports were received by the Senate office and have been posted to the Senate website:

- [Appointments, Salary, & Promotion Policies interim report](#)
- [Athletics & Recreation interim report](#)
- [Fiscal Planning & Budgeting interim report](#)
- [Physical Facilities & Campus Safety interim report](#)
- [Professional Ethics & Academic Freedom interim report](#)
- [Research interim report](#)

Any additional interim reports received by January 8 will be posted with the January Senate agenda.

BRIEF STATEMENTS AND QUESTIONS

Professor Schultheiss asked whether there has been any further communication with the federal government following the letter from the Department of Justice. President Granberg responded that nothing definitive has happened; there was one outreach from the Department because they mistakenly thought GW had not replied to the initial letter.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 4:07pm.

THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

Faculty Senate Meeting FY26 Budget

December 12, 2025



FY26 Budget

Statement of Operations <i>(\$M)</i>	FY26 Budget
Revenue	1,333.3
Expenses	
Compensation and Benefits	757.7
PurchSvcs, Occupancy, Other	374.9
Depreciation and Amortization	97.5
Interest	92.2
Contingency	10.0
Expenses	1,332.3
Operating Margin	1.0
%	0.1%