

# The GW Staff Council

## Pillars Newsletter



### A Message from Staff Council Vice President, Kim Fulmer

Hello to my fellow staff members. I am Kim Fulmer, Vice President of the Staff Council. I oversee the committees and serve as back up to our President, Bridget Schwartz. I work remotely in research administration but consider the Virginia campus to be my home, since I live right beside it. I am also a mom, doctoral candidate, and alumna at GW.

It has been a privilege to get to know so many of you over the last year at committee and executive meetings. Our staff is so committed to equity, justice, diversity, and bringing about improvements to the staff experience. Bit by bit, our new Staff Council has already been pulling in wins. Our council leadership has established strong connections with GW administration and been legitimized as a voice for staff. The proof is in Bridget being asked to give a speech at the Presidential Inauguration and our Representatives walking in regalia at the processional. When the transition leave policy was announced, Staff Council member feedback was immediately taken into consideration and the policy was improved to allow staff to use the transition leave first. Not only that, but President Granburg has attended our monthly Staff Council meeting on multiple occasions. She has made it clear that she is excited that our group exists and has taken the time to answer our important questions. In January, our monthly meeting (January 19, 10am – 12pm) will feature Executive Vice President & CFO, Bruno Fernandes and Vice Provost for Enrollment and Student Success, Jay Goff to give our staff more insight into finance at GW.

Additionally, I am so thankful to Sabrina Minor, CPO and all of her HR colleagues that helped us establish the Staff Council and continue to support us through direct connections to leadership. These opportunities to collaborate and converse with GW's executive leadership did not exist previously. I am so proud of what our staff members have accomplished through the Staff Council. Thank you to our executive leadership team (Bridget, Andrea, Raymond, Mindy, Nicole, Alex, Amy-Leah, Amanda, and Michelle) and all of our Representatives for your dedication and hard work. In the new year, let's keep the momentum going through our committees and increasing connections. I look forward to the JEDI committee's Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) and making more progress toward improvements to staff compensation. Please encourage your colleagues to attend our monthly meetings and join a committee or two. Information on how to get involved is [on our website](#). Have a restful holiday break and may peace be with you and your communities.

All the best,

Kim Fulmer

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### Staff Spotlight

#### Colleen O'Hara

International Operations Administrator, Travel & Safety  
Office of International Programs  
Provost - EVPAA

Colleen is the university's International Operations Administrator for Travel & Safety. Overarchingly, she is responsible for the University's International Travel Policy and all GW-affiliates who are registered for international travel in GW Passport.

Perhaps of most importance, she is charged with reviewing all high-risk travel proposals (that travel which will occur in a location that is deemed especially high risk for any number of reasons). Colleen works closely with travelers to high risk destinations in arranging their travel logistics for maximal safety and security, for being prepared while abroad, and if necessary, in coordinating any medical assistance or evacuation needs. She also monitors all locations where GW-affiliates are abroad (often more than 100 countries at any given time!), alerting them of any developing issues and providing assistance as required. Colleen also gives pre-departure orientations to groups who request that preparatory step or who are traveling to high-risk locations. She contributes significantly to the International Program's pre-departure evaluative reports of overseas locations or institutions when we are preparing to send leadership teams on travel. Her advice is both data-driven and compassionate and has come to be relied upon by International Programs and the wider University community.

Colleen has many years of experience in higher education, but is relatively new to the area of travel and risk mitigation, having come into the field during COVID. She has spent all of her two plus years at GW learning everything she possibly can, connecting to colleagues and experts both internal and external to the university. She works tirelessly to understand the business needs of various departments and units to ensure International Programs is creating systems and processes that promote safety while supporting international professional and academic endeavors as they pertain to travel.

She is such a dedicated, knowledgeable and caring staff member. So much of her job involves emergencies and crises and she is always the epitome of calm and a source of sound of advice.

**Nominated By:** Vanessa Brimner



*Each month, we would like to highlight & recognize GW staff members who make a positive impact on the GW community. If you'd like to nominate a fellow staff member, please the form below. In order to be considered for the January newsletter, please submit your nomination no later than Friday, January 19th. Nominations submitted after this date may not be considered until February.*

[Submit a Staff Spotlight Nomination](#)

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## Learn How to Make Your Work More Accessible

We are using more and more technologies in our work - from digital documents, to videos, and teleconferencing as more. There are ways that you can make your work more accessible to everyone who encounters it, including those with disabilities. Consider accessibility in many definitions - accessible to people with disabilities, easy to use, easy to understand or appreciate. How can we make our work easily understandable? What are ways in which we may create barriers that could be improved or removed? Below are some ways you can learn more about making content usable and accessible.

- Provide agendas and materials in advance if you can so people can review and prepare to contribute thoughtfully.
- Break up long content into more manageable chunks. For documents, you can do this using headings to designate segments, or you can split into shorter documents. For video or audio content, consider 15 minutes maximum for a segment. If you're giving a longer meeting or presentation, make space for processing or questions every 15 minutes.
- Read and bookmark [go.gwu.edu/DigitalAccessibility](https://go.gwu.edu/DigitalAccessibility) which has overview steps you can take, a more in-depth [checklist](#) and [list of workshops](#).

- Visit [Office Hours](#) with the [Web Strategy Team](#) to ask your questions about accessibility, and [review their standards and practices](#).

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## New Staff Council Website

We're pleased to announce that the Staff Council website has transitioned from GW Blogs to Drupal. Thank you to our friends in Communications and Marketing for their hard work on the site and for ensuring a smooth transition.

Please visit the Staff Council website for information on our members, updates and minutes from recent meetings, and more!

[GW Staff Council Website](#)

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## Attend a Staff Council Meeting

The GW Staff Council typically meets on the third Friday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. EST. GW Staff Council meetings occur via Zoom and are open. Agendas, minutes, and meeting information will be posted online. Please direct any related questions to [staffcouncil@gwu.edu](mailto:staffcouncil@gwu.edu).

Missed a meeting? Don't worry! We've got you covered. You can find meeting minutes from past meetings on the [Staff Council website](#), along with information on upcoming meetings. Registration is required so please [be sure to register](#) for any upcoming meetings you'd like to attend.

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## Staff Council Ideas & Feedback Form

The Staff Council welcomes ideas & feedback from the GW community through the Staff Council Feedback Form. We encourage you to share your thoughts, concerns, and feedback so we can better support you. This is your opportunity to make your voice heard. Please be sure to provide your contact information on the form if you would like to receive a response from a member of the Staff Council.

[Submit Your Ideas and Feedback](#)

We are listening to your feedback. In a recent Staff Council meeting, Staff Council Parliamentarian Mindy Galván summarized the feedback we have received so far. You can [view the presentation here](#). You can also find a summary of the discussion in the [November meeting minutes](#).

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