



Board of Trustees Meeting
September 27, 2024
Staff Council Report

Thank you, Madame Chairwoman. Before proceeding with our report, I would like to express gratitude for the recent merit pool increase, the addition of election day as a paid holiday, and the continued hybrid and remote work options. As the inaugural staff council moves into the final months of our term, it is my honor to share some of our current initiatives and feedback that we have received.

First, we are excited to work with Ethan Fitzgerald and the SGA to have staff representatives on their Free Speech, Financial Transparency, and Campus Inclusion initiatives. We're also exploring ways for students to show appreciation for staff and how we can work together to amplify both student and staff voices.

In partnership with the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement, the council's Justice, Equity, Diversity, & Inclusion Committee will launch a bimonthly roundtable series this fall, providing a safe and collaborative space for discussions on social issues impacting the GW community. These sessions will be led by GW faculty and staff.

The council also recently released the survey results from our monthly surveys. These results demonstrate many of the staff's concerns and paint a picture of their experience working at GW. More specifically, of the staff that responded, the results show that:

- Most respondents commute more than 40 minutes each way to work and must use more than one method of transportation.
- 49% indicated that they have never used the popularly promoted tuition remission benefit due to a lack of time or support from their leadership and concerns about the tax exemption process.
- One-third have an additional job, with most saying they need the extra income to live.
- 22% have childcare costs necessary to perform their job duties, and many spend more than \$1,000 a month on that childcare.
- We also see signs that the GW staff are facing burnout.
 - More than two-thirds feel their office or team is understaffed.

- Nearly half work more than 40 hours a week to perform their jobs.
- Also, a significant number of staff find their workload unmanageable, feel exhausted or drained after work, and report feeling negative or cynical about their jobs.
- The hundreds of comments highlighted a lack of respect, poor management, and excessive bureaucracy in the workplace. High turnover, understaffing, and overwhelming workloads add to the stress, along with low pay and the high cost of living. One comment stated, “The expectations placed upon us are not achievable with the staffing and resources we are provided with. Instead, we are consistently expected to far surpass the 40-hour work week. This additional time is not acknowledged, incentivized, or compensated. When time off is finally used, it is not respected by others and is accompanied by overwhelming stress upon return.” But also amidst these comments were the staff’s deep desire to do great work and their love of supporting GW students.
- The results can be viewed at go.gwu.edu/staffcouncilresults.

Regarding the recently released University Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Action Plan:

- As noted in the Climate Survey and the action plan, many staff reported that they do not have a community at GW where they feel like they belong, they have financial and economic concerns, and staff with minoritized identities experienced identity-based negative treatment more than others.
- While the plan mentioned that the GW schools have individual DEI offices, it did not mention DEI positions within the administrative divisions.
- Also not mentioned in the plan was a way to address the “financial challenges related to pay.”
- Finally, one of the responses to improve the policies and procedures to promote diversity noted that EEO training is required for anyone participating in interviews. While EEO training may be tracked, it is not enforced.

The plan exemplifies some of the broader challenges with the staff experience including communication, performance management, merit and compensation, training and development, flexible work arrangements, and creating a community of belonging at GW. The deep organizational silos encourage an inconsistent staff experience where employees often grow out of GW rather than advancing within it, which ultimately effects the student experience.

I would like to end my final report by expressing my immense gratitude to the Staff Council Executive Officers and Representatives, volunteers on our committees, VP of HR, Sabrina Minor, and our partners across campus. Thank you to all of the staff who

have entrusted the council with their feedback and support. It has been the highlight and most humbling experience of my career to represent staff.

To all of the members of the GW community, executive leadership, and the Board of Trustees, I urge you to continue to engage with the Staff Council and the incoming council President, Kim Fulmer. Our staff are incredibly talented and passionate about their support for GW students; they are the backbone of the university, and they will be integral in the success of GW for years to come.

Madame Chairwoman, this concludes my report.

Verbally submitted to the Board of Trustees on behalf of the Staff Council by Staff Council President Bridget Schwartz.