Good afternoon. It is wonderful to see you all for the final Faculty Senate meeting of the calendar year.

End of Semester Notes

First, a few notes about the end of the semester.

We are focused on helping our students finish the semester strong. With final exams beginning next week, stress and anxiety among our students are high. Messaging has, and will continue to be, distributed to students with information about Counseling and Psychological Services, the Office of Advocacy and Support, and more.

I encourage our faculty to remain strong sources of guidance and support for our students. We cannot be everywhere all at once, but we can make it clear to our students that support and resources are available, should they need them.

End of Semester Grading

A brief reminder about grading. Faculty are required to submit final grades within five (5) business days after the final examination, after the submission of a final project, or after the final class meeting if no exam or project is given. Final grades should be submitted no later than December 24.

Updated instructions on final grade entry can be found on the Registrar website. With the update to the Incomplete Policy in the University Bulletin, you will now be asked for additional information when entering an incomplete grade. Detailed information and instructions about entering Incomplete grades can also be found on the Registrar website, and this information will be distributed to faculty via email next week.

Disability Support Services

Also in our faculty messaging next week, we will include information about partnering with Disability Support Services to ensure we meet our students’ accommodation needs during the final exam season and are providing a fair, accessible and inclusive learning environment. Test Accommodations Guidance can be found on the Disability Support Services website, so I encourage you to look for information there, and stay tuned for this information next week in your inbox.

GW Alliance for a Sustainable Future

We were very excited last month to announce the new GW Alliance for a Sustainable Future, a university-wide initiative that will form a powerful strategic alliance of research institutes, academic programs, offices, organizations and individuals dedicated to the shared mission of combating climate change and promoting healthy and thriving resource systems for all. This alliance will enhance GW’s many existing strong examples of climate and sustainability work by identifying and amplifying areas of collaboration, further leveraging GW’s location in the nation’s capital, and increasing the community’s global impact. The alliance is led by executive director Frank Sesno, director of strategic initiatives for the School of Media and Public Affairs and founding director of Planet Forward, with support from Donna Attanasio, managing director.
The alliance has had an excellent response so far, and I have heard that many faculty members who engage in climate or sustainability work are reaching out to Frank and Donna to find out how they can participate. This energy is extremely exciting, and we look forward to further developments in the spring semester, so stay tuned.

Diversity Summit

We sent a reminder infomail yesterday about the Diversity Summit, taking place from February 20-22 of next year. The theme is Defining Revolutionary: A Call for Justice, Liberation & Empathy. If you would like to submit a proposal for a session, it is due Tuesday, January 9, so don’t forget to work on it over winter break. Registration will remain open until Friday, February 16. I encourage you all to participate and share proposals that align with this year’s theme and learning goals. Information can be found on the Diversity Summit website.

Interim School of Business Dean & Dean Mehrotra

Finally, I’m pleased to share that early next week, we will announce the interim dean for the GW School of Business, who will begin January 1, so stay tuned for that announcement.

Of course, that announcement means that we are nearly at the point of saying goodbye to Dean Anuj Mehrotra, who leaves us at the end of the calendar year to become dean of Georgia Tech’s Scheller College of Business. He joined GW in 2018, and, under his leadership, he has had many successes. The school has reimagined business education to serve the rapidly changing marketplace, including: introducing flexible certificate programs to create customizable master’s degrees; expanding online offerings; and introducing 4+1 combined degree pathways. He has also spearheaded innovative initiatives and engagement opportunities such as George Talks Business and the GW Business and Policy Forum. We would be here for a very long time if I listed all of his achievements.

Having worked with Dean Mehrotra in multiple ways since he joined GW, I have observed other leadership qualities that have made him so successful in his role here: his genuine excitement in his work, how he approaches every day with fresh eyes, and his steadfast commitment to the pursuit of excellence in all that he does. It has been an absolute pleasure working with him over the years. He has left an indelible mark on the School of Business and this university, and we will miss him. So thank you, Dean Mehrotra. I wish you the best in the next chapter of your career.

Conclusion

Finally, I want to thank the faculty for your efforts to keep the academic enterprise moving forward over the course of this semester despite a global crisis that has touched most of us in some way and, for some of us, has dominated much of our thinking over the past several months. There is no doubt that our faculty have been impacted by these events, but your steadfast commitment to ensuring that we deliver upon our teaching and research mission and provide students with an opportunity to engage and grow intellectually in the face of these obstacles and distractions is a testament to your commitment to GW, our students, and the values that we uphold. So thank you all for your sustained efforts in advancing this university in a time of adversity.

This concludes my report.