FSEC Activities

FSEC met on December 15, one week following the December Senate meeting. FSEC continued what will undoubtedly be an ongoing conversation about the importance of freedom of expression and academic freedom as bedrocks of the university, especially in challenging times. Taking note of a national landscape marked by increased threats to academic freedom, FSEC discussed the importance of ensuring that GW’s strong policy supporting academic freedom continues to be experienced in practice by faculty.

To that end, we would like to create a portal to enable faculty to report any constraints on, or concerns about, their ability to exercise their academic freedom and use their expertise in the classroom and in their professional life. The portal will enable faculty to submit reports anonymously or with their names and will allow faculty to indicate if they would like assistance in responding to the constraint. (The portal instructions will clearly note that the Senate itself is not empowered to act on complaints but can refer faculty who do wish to obtain assistance to the proper channels.) The academic freedom subcommittee of the Senate’s committee on Professional Ethics and Academic Freedom (PEAF) will track submissions and will consider what the reports reveal about whether additional systemic support for academic freedom is needed at GW.

Senate Elections

The Senate Office has sent reminders to the schools about holding timely elections for 2024-2025 Senate membership. The Faculty Organization Plan requires that elections be completed by March 15 each year; election results should be communicated as soon as possible to the Senate Office. Anticipating Board approval of Faculty Assembly Resolution 24/1, the Senate Office has also provided election guidelines to the College of Professional Studies so that they may prepare for the election of their first Senate delegates.

Faculty Organization Plan Revisions

The Board office let us know this week, that, in the course of the review of the Committee on Academic Affairs materials, a question was raised regarding a potential omission in the redline of the Faculty Organization Plan (FOP). Specifically, the term “university professor” is used to describe a rank when identifying faculty eligible for Assembly membership. The question centered on whether “university professor” should also be used to identify those eligible for Senate membership in the FOP.
The Senate office brought this question to the Parliamentarian, who observed that the Faculty Code uses the term “university professor” as a title, not a rank and therefore it should not appear in either place. Her recommendation, which was transmitted back to the Board office, is that the reference to “university professor” in the Faculty Assembly eligibility text be removed in a future round of revisions to the FOP.

**Personnel Actions**

There are no active grievances at the university.

**Calendar**

The next regularly scheduled meeting of the Faculty Senate Executive Committee is January 26, 2024. Draft resolutions and any other possible Senate agenda items should be forwarded to Liz Carlson in the Senate office as soon as possible to assist with the timely compilation of the FSEC meeting agenda, ideally by January 19. The next regularly scheduled Faculty Senate meeting is February 9, 2024.