
Update on Post-COVID Academic Innovation Task Force

Provost M. Brian Blake <provostmail@gwu.edu>

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To the George Washington University Community:

While there are many challenges still ahead, we are enthusiastic and optimistic about the possibilities and opportunities of 2021. We soon will celebrate GW's Bicentennial, and thanks to the distribution of vaccines, we hope to welcome back this fall students, faculty, and staff to campus. You have been resilient and inventive this academic year, and we want to capitalize on the lessons learned and brainstorm together on what a post-pandemic GW looks like.

In early December, we announced the formation of a Post-COVID Academic Innovation Task Force, which will be charged with the goal of considering, and recommending, new and innovative ways of fulfilling our academic mission. The task force, comprising faculty, staff, and students, will be agile and open-minded, particularly as it considers ideas from a broad range of sources. Notably, the task force will review previous academic innovation work from the GW community, particularly recommendations from the Strategic Plan's High-Quality Undergraduate Education Committee and the Distinguished and Distinctive Graduate Education Committee. It also will study emerging literature on the post-pandemic higher education landscape, and embrace any ideas or opportunities regarding course delivery, short-term academic experiences like certificate programs, our academic calendar, and the research enterprise. To better understand our community's thoughts and ideas about academic innovation, the task force will seek ideas from faculty, staff, and students.

In consultation with Faculty Senate leadership, Pamela Jeffries, dean of the School of Nursing, and Jason Zara, professor of biomedical engineering, associate chair for academic affairs for the Department of Biomedical Imaging, and chair of the Educational Policy and Technology committee in the Faculty Senate, have agreed to serve as the co-chairs of this task force, which, as promised previously, will comprise a minimum 75% faculty. We requested from schools and colleges prior to the winter break nominations to serve on the task force, and we have received dozens of nominations in recent weeks. The co-chairs, in collaboration with the Provost and Christopher

Bracey, vice provost for faculty affairs, discussed and finalized task force membership. Sixteen individuals received formal invitations last week to serve on the task force, and they have accepted. We will charge the task force formally later this week, with the goal of having a finalized list of recommendations by late May.

The task force members are:

- Pamela Jeffries, Dean, SON (co-chair)
- Jason Zara, Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Associate Chair for Academic Affairs for the Department of Biomedical Imaging, SEAS (co-chair)
- Donald Braman, Associate Professor of Law, GW Law
- Cynthia Dowd, Professor of Chemistry, CCAS
- Erica Gralla, Associate Professor of Engineering Management and Systems Engineering, SEAS
- Tamara Henry, Teaching Associate Professor and Practicum Director of Prevention and Community Health, GWSPH
- Lionel C. Howard, Associate Professor of Educational Research, GSEHD
- Srinikhila Karri, Student, 7-Year BA/MD Program
- Russell Korte, Associate Professor of Human and Organizational Learning, GSEHD
- Miro Liwosz, Assistant Dean, Online Learning and Instructional Technology, SON
- Michael Moore, Director of International Economic Policy Program and Professor of Economics, ESIA
- Guy Lotrecchiano, Associate Professor of Clinical Research and Leadership and of Pediatrics, SMHS and Associate Dean, Innovative and Collaborative Pedagogy, LAI
- Billy Mullins, Clinical Assistant Professor, SON
- Liesl Riddle, Associate Dean for Graduate Programs and Associate Professor of International Business and International Affairs, GWSB
- Victoria Shanmugam, Director of Division of Rheumatology & Professor of Medicine, SMHS
- Sarah Wagner, Associate Professor of Anthropology, CCAS
- Gayle Wald, Professor of American Studies, CCAS
- John Warren, Director and Associate Professor, MPS in Publishing, CPS

We are excited for this diverse task force to dive in and begin exploring the many possibilities of academic innovation. Throughout this process, we are committed to keeping the GW community informed. In addition to monthly updates to the Faculty Senate Educational Policy and Technology committee, the task force will share regular communications with the GW community and post meeting notes and other updates to a new [web page](#) devoted to the Post-COVID Academic Innovation Task Force initiative. As the task force convenes over the course of the spring semester, the community will see its work take shape into a set of actionable recommendations that will help GW take its next innovative step into the future.

This is our opportunity to shape our future by tapping into the incredible intellectual capacity of the GW community, reimagining the university as we enter our third century by building on the ideas of all who came before us. Please engage with the Post-COVID Academic Innovation Task Force and support its work as we look forward to its innovative recommendations. We are excited about the possibilities ahead of us.

Sincerely,

M. Brian Blake
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs

Pamela R. Jeffries
Dean, School of Nursing

Jason Zara
Professor of Biomedical Engineering and Associate Chair for Academic Affairs for the Department
of Biomedical Imaging, School of Engineering and Applied Science

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