

The George Washington University

Self-Study Design

Submitted to the Middle States Commission on Higher Education

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I. Institutional Overview

The George Washington University (GW) was chartered by Congress in 1821 to fulfill its namesake's vision of a national university that would educate the next generation of citizen leaders. Since its founding nearly 200 years ago, it has been the university's mission to educate students representing diverse perspectives and interests so that they may become well-informed, ethically grounded citizens and leaders able to find creative solutions to society's most complex problems. Equally important, in recent decades GW has become a major research university, pushing the boundaries of intellectual inquiry across diverse disciplines. Students now come from all 50 states and some 125 different countries to learn not only about the arts and sciences but also about engineering, medicine, business, education, law, international affairs, public health, professional studies, and nursing in the ten colleges and schools. Currently, the enrollment in the university's 10 colleges and schools totals more than 26,000 students. Of these students, 10,900 are undergraduates, almost 15,000 are graduate and professional students, and more than 400 are non-degree students.

The university offers associate, baccalaureate, master, doctoral degrees of practice and of research, post-master certificates, and post-baccalaureate certificates. Degrees are offered through 10 schools and colleges: The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business, the Elliott School of International Affairs, the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the Law School, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the Milken Institute School of Public Health, the School of Nursing, and the School of Professional Studies. The faculty is at the heart of the university. In addition to being effective teachers, faculty members are accomplished scholars and active participants in their fields. In 2015, full-time faculty totaled 1,465; of this group, 65% were tenured or have a tenure track appointment, and 35% were contract faculty.

The University operates three campuses: the Foggy Bottom Campus, including the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design, and the Mount Vernon Campus, both in the District of Columbia; and the Virginia Science and Technology Campus in Loudoun County, Virginia.

The Foggy Bottom Campus is located in downtown Washington, D.C., three blocks west of the White House, within the Foggy Bottom and West End neighborhoods. It covers approximately 42 acres of land, 26 residence halls, two sports facilities, and numerous campus dining locations. The 25 acre Mount Vernon Campus is located just three miles northwest of Foggy Bottom, in the verdant Foxhall neighborhood of Northwest Washington, DC. It includes classrooms, six residence halls, and athletic facilities including an outdoor swimming pool, softball field, and tennis courts. About 700 mostly first year students live on the Mount Vernon campus. The Vern Express provides 24-hour transportation to and from the Foggy Bottom Campus.

The Virginia Science and Technology Campus is located in the Northern Virginia technology corridor near Washington Dulles International Airport. It covers approximately 123 acres of land with seven buildings that house science and engineering laboratories, classrooms, and some of GW's major support units including the Division of IT. The campus focuses on interdisciplinary STEM-H research, including biology and health sciences, big data and analytics, high performance computing and energy science,

and technology. Degrees and certificate programs are offered by seven of GW's schools and colleges including programs in education, professional studies, health sciences, business, engineering, The Campus focuses on interdisciplinary STEM-H research, including biological and health sciences, big data and analytics, high performance computing and energy science and technology. Degrees and certificate programs are offered by seven of GW's schools and colleges including programs in nursing, health sciences, engineering, education, health sciences, information technology, and business.

Mission and Strategic Plan

GW's institutional identity and mission capitalize on our location in the heart of the nation's capital, creating a synergistic relationship that is one of our greatest assets. As described in our mission statement: "GW draws upon the rich array of resources from the National Capital Area to enhance its educational endeavors. In return, the University, through its students, faculty, staff, and alumni, contributes talent and knowledge to improve the quality of life in metropolitan Washington, DC." *Vision 2021: A Strategic Plan for the Third Century of the George Washington University*, completed in 2011, supports and builds upon our mission of "furthering human well-being" through a coherent educational experience that produces innovative thinkers who become leaders in their field; our commitment to basic and applied research, turning this knowledge into action to address and help solve society's most challenging problems; and by becoming a model institutional citizen to the Washington community. GW has implemented many of the strategic plan's goals for globalization, innovation through cross-disciplinary collaboration, governance and policy, and citizenship—using these goals to further guide our mission of "excellence in the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge."

Since the creation of the Strategic Plan, several significant changes in the university structure, facilities, enrollment, and finances have occurred that have furthered many of the goals in the Strategic Plan; created opportunities to enhance our research mission; to reaffirm our commitment to diversity; to focus on the undergraduate student experience; and to improve access and affordability.

Enhancing the Research Mission

GW continues to advance its mission as a "center for intellectual inquiry and research." Currently we have more than 100 centers and institutes that engage in cutting edge research projects in science and technology, health, public policy, global security, and the arts and humanities. Several recent developments that have forged new alliances with the arts and humanities, sciences, and engineering fields have opened up research opportunities for faculty and students that did not exist before.

In recent years, as GW climbed into the top tier of research institutions, the growth of our research profile outpaced our research facilities. This began to change with the opening of Science and Engineering Hall, a new LEED-certified 500,000 square foot building, on the Foggy Bottom campus in 2014. The building opening was a transformative event in promoting cross-disciplinary collaboration. This \$275 million investment in research infrastructure and facilities was designed to enable cutting-edge experiments in engineering and the sciences and to move GW into the front ranks of the nation's research universities.

An \$80 million transformative gift was given by the Milken Institute to the School of Public Health. It will help move the School into the top tier of public health schools. The gift was announced in 2014, a few months after the completion of Public Health's LEED-certified new building on 24th Street. The donation set a record for GW and is being used to boost research and scholarships in public health over the next 5 years. This gift has also propelled the School of Public Health forward not only in areas of cross-disciplinary collaboration, but in furthering the university's goals in the areas of globalization and the creation of policy.

Finally, in the area of the arts, two significant developments have occurred, both of which have engaged the global, interdisciplinary, and policy-oriented goals of the strategic plan. DC's Textile Museum moved to GW's Foggy Bottom campus in 2014, establishing GW's first art museum. Its gift of \$25 million was used to build the museum and create an alliance with the Albert Small Washingtoniana Collection, which documents the formation, development, and history of Washington, DC from the 18th to mid-twentieth century. The museum provides museum studies and museum education graduate students an opportunity to curate and design art exhibits; space for students to congregate and study; and a variety of exhibits and events that bring the broader DC community to campus.

GW's entered into a historic collaboration with the Corcoran Gallery of Art and the National Gallery of Art under which the ownership of the Corcoran College of Art and Design and the Corcoran's iconic building on 17th Street were transferred to GW. As part of the agreement, GW also received approximately \$43 million in funds, of which \$35 million will go toward the renovation of the 17th Street building, and \$8 million in restricted endowment funds will be used for the operation of the school, now known as the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design within the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences. Students enrolled at the Corcoran in the fall of 2014, and full-time faculty members teaching at the time, were transferred to GW. In addition, the university assumed ownership of the Fillmore building, which was sold in summer 2015, with proceeds going to the renovation of the 17th Street building and for programs within the Corcoran School of the Arts and Design. The university has begun a multi-year, phased renovation of the 17th Street building, during which the building will continue to serve as the home of the Corcoran School. Renovations will be designed to upgrade outdated infrastructure and preserve the Corcoran Building's historic exterior and interior spaces while accommodating the needs associated with an innovative model of arts education into the future.

The Corcoran School's inaugural director, who came on board in October 2015, embraces the opportunity to integrate the arts at GW and to add cultural vibrancy to the broader university community. (More information about the Corcoran School can be found in the Substantive Change document, Team Visit report, and two follow-up reports.)

Research, innovation, and creativity are driving forces advancing GW's commitment to "excellence in the creation, dissemination, and application of knowledge"...and to act as a "catalyst for creativity in the arts, the sciences, and the professions by encouraging interaction among its students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the communities it serves."

Investing in Diversity and Inclusive Excellence

In line with both its mission and Strategic Plan, the university has made a concerted effort to diversify the members of the campus community. This includes the diversification of senior leadership in the appointment of new deans, provosts, and vice-presidents. A target of opportunity hire program was also created to allow deans and department chairs greater flexibility to increase faculty diversity and, slowly, the percentage of non-U.S. and minority faculty has increased. However, it is clear that the university must continue to invest resources in the recruitment and retention of these faculty.

Similarly, the university has been moving ahead to further diversify the student body, and has been most successful with international students. Whereas approximately 7% of undergraduates and 12% of graduate students were international when the strategic plan was adopted in 2011, today, approximately 11% of the undergraduate population and 18% of the graduate student population are from abroad. Plans are currently underway to increase underrepresented students through new initiatives and funding. With the creation of the Office of Enrollment Management and Retention, GW is strengthening its ability to increase the diversity of the student body by improving its recruitment, admissions, and financial aid practices.

Focus on Retention and Graduation

The Provost's Office also has intensified its focus on improving undergraduate graduation rates. This effort has included identifying students most at risk and increasing support systems and outreach for these students. GW is examining its current programs for increasing college attendance for low-income and first-generation college students to ensure that we are making every effort to support academic success for underrepresented students

Access and Affordability

The cost of attending GW is a major investment for the majority of families; the cost of attendance and family's ability to pay is a reality we must address. We continue to moderate undergraduate tuition increases in support of affordability goals. We have held our annual rate of increase of undergraduate tuition to 3-4% since FY 13, and we continue our fixed tuition policy where the tuition entering students pay remains fixed for up to five years of their undergraduate education. This program provides families with financial assurance and predictability when planning for college tuition. We also are increasing our undergraduate financial aid budget in recognition of the growth in the number of financially needy students because family income has not kept pace with tuition increases. In addition, we have developed several innovative degree completion programs in partnership with community colleges that address the issues of affordability, access, and mobility directly through a combination of discounted tuition rates as well as scholarship. We must maintain a competitive undergraduate financial aid program in order to improve access to and the affordability of a GW education. We have had to make important trade-offs to do so by balancing our increased investment in financial aid with cost savings and efficiencies in other areas of our budget.

We balance our focus on affordability with the need for new revenues to support investments in our academic priorities and services to enhance the educational experience of our students. We balance the following major factors:

- Managing costs to students to ensure **affordability, diversity, and retention**;
- Strengthening programs to improve **competitiveness**; and
- Aligning with peer institutions on price and quality for **competitive market analysis**.

Ensuring Financial Stability

GW's financial health remains strong with robust undergraduate enrollments, growing research expenditures, and dynamic new partnerships. While we, like many universities, have experienced some decline in the overall rate of growth in graduate enrollment, we have worked across the university to increase enrollments and to control costs to ensure expenditures are in line with revenues.

The university moved to a long-awaited new budget model in FY16 to provide new incentives for schools to grow graduate enrollments, to develop innovative programs with new revenue streams, to enhance research, and to have more transparency and autonomy about how best to allocate resources. In the first year of the implementation of the new budget model, we are seeing improvements in graduate enrollments, the development of new programs and curricular innovations, along with new modes of instructional delivery. A key intention of the new budget model was to garner more resources for the schools to invest in their strategic priorities, and that is happening; one important implication of this shift, however, is that the administrative areas of the university need to realign and rebalance their cost structures to ensure that they are operating in the most cost-effective, efficient way possible.

II. Model for the Self-Study

The adoption of a comprehensive self-study review model will enable the university to confirm its alignment with the seven standards of accreditation as well as the requirements of affiliation and verification of compliance with federal regulations. This self-study will also provide the opportunity for the members of the university community to reflect critically on what we have become and evaluate the impact of these changes. The original strategic plan was envisioned as a living document with modifications expected when appropriate. The self-study provides the vehicle to assess these changes and to provide direction for the next five years.

Each of the seven standards for accreditation will be assigned to a Working Group co-chaired by two members of the Steering Committee. An eighth Working Group, also co-chaired by two members of the steering committee, will address the requirements of affiliation and the Verification of Compliance with Accreditation-Relevant Federal Regulations. The reports submitted by these eight Working Groups will provide GW with recommendations for the further implementation of its strategic plan.

III. Intended Outcomes for the Self-Study

1. To demonstrate how GW meets the Middle States accreditation standards, requirements of affiliation; and verification of compliance with accreditation-relevant federal regulations;

2. To measure and assess GW's progress in the implementation of its strategic initiatives in innovation through cross-disciplinary collaboration, globalization, governance and policy, and citizenship and leadership;
3. To develop recommendations to help the institution continue its mission as a diverse, student-centered institution of intellectual inquiry and research preparing the next generation of citizen leaders; and
4. To review GW's assessment of the quality and effectiveness of academic programs and administrative services, especially in relation to the changing needs of the students and the broader community that it serves; and further GW's progress in developing a culture of assessment and continuous improvement across the university.