



RAISING HIGHER: ***OneGW's*** **PATH** ***to*** **PREEMINENCE**



Working Group on DC Experiences Final Report

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**THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY**

WASHINGTON, DC

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Executive Summary

THE OPPORTUNITY

GW is the only AAU member headquartered in Washington, DC, steps from federal agencies, Capitol Hill, the Smithsonian, and the world's most concentrated ecosystem of policy, culture, and civic institutions. The District and the larger DMV (DC, Maryland, Virginia) region are home to private sector companies shaping our world, such as tech, private equity, law firms, and the national associations representing their industry's views, as well as the government affairs arms of the top Fortune 500 companies. The region is also a sports and tourism magnet. Despite this singular advantage, GW has not fully staked its distinctiveness on this landscape, and our DC-based learning currently happens in silos: faculty work within their individualized networks, do not have added support to enhance or expand the DC experience in courses; experiences are inconsistently resourced; and invisible as a coherent institutional offering. President Granberg charged the DC Experiences Working Group with changing that.

The case for acting now is strong. GW received the 2026 Carnegie Classification for Community Engagement, the only DC institution to hold this designation. The strategic framework explicitly calls for expanding DC-based internships, research, and civic engagement, and in an increasingly competitive enrollment environment, a signature, place-based student experience is a meaningful differentiator. This is the moment to move from aspiration to architecture.

WHAT WE ARE RECOMMENDING

TIER	TIMEFRAME	RECOMMENDATIONS
Immediate	Act. AY 2026-27	A. Establish the DC Experiences Hub B. Commit that every undergraduate will have a distinctive DC experience C. Ask each school to define and publish its DC experience pathway, including its courses with strong DC experiences
Near-Term	AY 2027-28	D. Expand District Connections into a multi-year scaffolded model E. Launch a digital badge / formal designation for sustained DC engagement
Longer-Term	AY 2028 and beyond	F. Create and establish a short list of GW-wide institutional partnerships G. Explore protected experiential time in the weekly schedule

DC EXPERIENCES HUB

The proposed Hub is intended to support broader engagement with Washington, DC, including partnerships with the institutions that make Washington so unique, such as Congress and the Smithsonian, as well as a broad range of private companies in sectors like aerospace and defense, biotech, think tanks, national professional associations, major tourism sites unique to the District, and major organizations headquartered in the region like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. This abbreviated list illustrates the opportunity to build on GW's existing engagement across the DMV region by expanding and deepening its range of partnerships.

Additionally, connecting students and faculty more fully with these parts of the DC/DMV ecosystem will require the Hub to draw upon relationships and expertise from across the university. GW's strong alumni networks on the Hill, in law, across the private sector, and throughout many of the industries represented in Washington can play an important role in expanding access to internships, career mentoring, professional networks, and other distinctive DC experiences. The Hub should therefore include a meaningful alumni engagement component while also recognizing the complementary roles of the Career Center, Nashman Center, schools and colleges, and other university units and divisions. If the Hub is launched, GW should clearly define how these units work together and establish a structure that leverages their respective strengths while avoiding duplication of effort.

EQUITY: THE GAP WE MUST NAME

The Working Group's commitment that every student will have the opportunity for a distinctive DC experience is only meaningful if access is genuinely equitable. The report identifies several populations at risk of being left behind if this is not addressed explicitly:

- » Students with financial need, for whom even modest costs (transportation, meals, unpaid time) create real barriers.
- » Graduate, professional, and online students, whose schedules, employment obligations, and program structures make daytime or in-person experiences difficult to access.
- » Students in schools or programs with limited DC experience infrastructure today.
- » Budget cuts of recent years have forced schools to scale back funding for a variety of activities, so prioritizing an enhanced set of DC experiences across every school will mean that GW will need to support the costs that faculty identified in the survey as barriers to a fuller DC experience in their courses: lack of honoraria, transportation costs, external program costs, etc.

We recommend that equity metrics, specifically participation rates disaggregated by Pell eligibility, enrollment type, and school, be established as core success indicators from the outset, and that the Hub be charged with closing identified gaps within three years of launch.

CONCLUSION

GW already has the relationships, the location, and the institutional history to make DC-based learning a defining feature of what it means to be a GW student. What has been missing is the coordinating architecture to make that promise real and equitable at scale. These recommendations provide that architecture. We look forward to the opportunity to discuss them with you.

Respectfully Submitted,

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DC Experiences Working Group: Report

INTRODUCTION

Location and chartered purpose have shaped the George Washington University from its founding. An act of Congress established GW not only as a place of academic inquiry, but as an institution deeply connected to the civic, political, and social life of the nation. That founding vision continues to draw students, faculty, and staff motivated by the opportunity to put ideas into action: to study, work, and lead in a city where leaders make decisions, test policies, and confront global challenges in real time.

As GW looks ahead, its location in the nation's capital remains central to the university's future. The university's strategic framework, *Raising Higher: OneGW's Path to Preeminence*, reinforces this commitment by calling on GW to prepare students to be strong and resilient leaders through interdisciplinary and experiential education that leverages the unique opportunities inherent in our location and connections. In particular, the framework highlights the importance of expanding students' access to leadership and career development opportunities through DC-based internships, research, and civic engagement.

Rigorous scholarship set within a vibrant urban campus in the heart of Washington, DC, attracts students driven by purpose, engagement, and impact. Our learning environment extends far beyond the classroom, offering proximity to institutions that shape public life and opportunities for impact that begin during the academic experience rather than after it. Beyond the District itself, the broader DMV region expands these opportunities through a dynamic network of public institutions, private industry, museums, nonprofits, and cultural organizations across Maryland and Northern Virginia. An orientation toward service, leadership, and engagement suffuses GW's academic and co-curricular life, including for students pursuing careers in the private sector who apply these values in corporate, nonprofit, and entrepreneurial contexts.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and the American Council on Education recognized GW's commitment to community engagement through the 2026 Carnegie Elective Classification for Community Engagement designation. GW joins only 230-some institutions with this distinction, notably the only one in Washington, DC to hold this status, reflecting a longstanding institutional commitment to civic engagement and impact.

Of all the Congressionally chartered universities in the nation's capital, and as the only member of the Association of American Universities in Washington, DC, GW alone occupies the very heart of policy Washington, steps away from federal agencies, museums, think tanks, major nonprofits, national associations, and Capitol Hill. GW maintains strong connections with the capital's most active corporations, sits within blocks of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and has enduring ties to the sports and arts communities that animate the city. One of the largest alumni cohorts serving on both sides of the aisle on Capitol Hill, and across the public, private, and nonprofit sectors, further reinforces GW's role as a convener and connector within a uniquely dense ecosystem of institutions influencing national and global outcomes.

Across the university today, faculty, students, and staff already leverage this location to create real-world learning opportunities aligned with GW's strategic priority to generate scholarship with impact.

These experiences span disciplines and degree levels and include curricular, co-curricular, and experiential models, from health sciences students engaging with federal agencies, to anthropologists collaborating with the Smithsonian, to law students benefiting from deep ties to the Supreme Court, and to students working alongside DC government and local community partners to address challenges within the district.

At the same time, the Working Group heard consistently that these efforts often occur in silos, without a clear understanding of their collective scope, impact, or distinctiveness. As a result, GW has not yet fully leveraged the scale of its engagement or articulated a coherent vision for how DC-based experiences should be intentionally embedded across the student journey. This is a critical moment for the university. While GW has long benefited from its location in the nation's capital, proximity alone is no longer enough to distinguish the student experience. Other universities are increasingly establishing a presence in Washington, DC, through satellite sites, academic centers, policy institutes, and experiential programs designed to give their students access to the city's civic, cultural, governmental, and professional ecosystems. In order to maintain and strengthen GW's edge, it must move from relying on location as an implicit advantage to investing in DC as an intentional, coordinated, and institution-wide educational asset.

As GW moves forward in its third century, there is a timely opportunity to elevate its relationship to place—transforming proximity into purpose and individual initiatives into a signature element of the GW student experience. President Granberg charged this Working Group:

To develop recommendations to embed distinctive, DC-based experiences across academic programs and throughout the student journey. The committee will also explore strategies to position these experiences as a signature element of the GW experience, one that fully leverages our location in the heart of the nation's capital to enhance learning, leadership, and post-graduate pathways.

The pages that follow reflect the DC Experiences Working Group's deliberations in response to this charge, including how we define distinctiveness, how GW can more intentionally organize, support, and scale its DC-based engagement, how we can lower barriers to success, and how we should assess impact.

DEFINING A SIGNATURE AND DISTINCTIVE EXPERIENCE

Throughout its deliberations, the DC Experiences Working Group repeatedly returned to a central question: What makes the DC experience at GW truly distinctive? While students across many universities engage with their surrounding cities, GW occupies a singular position, one that blends proximity, purpose, and institutional history in ways that create opportunities few institutions can match. At the same time, the Working Group recognized that not all DC engagement is inherently distinctive, and that proximity alone does not guarantee impact.

To move from a collection of individual opportunities to a coherent, signature experience, the university should be clear about what counts as distinctive, why it matters, and how it supports student learning and development across the full student journey. Against this backdrop, the Working Group developed a proposed definition of a "distinctive DC experience" to guide future design, collaboration, assessment, and investment.

Proposed Definition: A Distinctive DC Experience at GW

A distinctive DC experience at the George Washington University is a purposeful, structured engagement with the people, organizations, and institutions in the National Capital Region, “Greater Washington” and/or the “DMV” that leverages GW’s institutional strengths, location, and partnerships to advance student learning, leadership development, and professional growth in ways that could not be replicated in most other settings.

The following six core elements characterize distinctive academic and co-curricular DC experiences:

1. **Engagement grounded in partnership**, emphasizing collaborative, ethical, and reciprocal relationships with institutions, organizations, companies, and communities that shape public life, policy, culture, science, and industry. These experiences are designed to contribute meaningfully to the communities with which GW engages.
2. **Deliberate integration** with a student’s academic or co-curricular pathway, rather than occurring by chance or solely through individual initiative.
3. **Direct interaction, observation, or contribution** (e.g., site visits, applied projects, research partnerships, internships, service, or behind-the-scenes access) rather than relying solely on classroom discussion or guest speakers.
4. **Designed so that students can clearly articulate what they gained and why it matters**, and tied to academic credit, program milestones, skill development, formal recognition, or documented achievements (such as transcript notation or graduation distinctions).
5. **Created, where appropriate, with scalability and access in mind**, supported by shared infrastructure, partnerships, or models that expand opportunities for participation across schools and disciplines, while recognizing that some high-impact experiences may remain inherently limited in scale.
6. **Reinforce GW’s longstanding commitments to community partnership and public service, leadership, and impact**, while at the same time championing the innovation, creativity, and contributions of the private sector, where our graduates excel as well. We embrace DC experiences for students across all sectors.

Importantly, this definition does not prescribe a single model or require uniform implementation across all programs. Instead, it establishes a guiding structure that can support multiple pathways while reinforcing what makes engagement with Washington distinctive at GW. It also creates a foundation for strengthening the infrastructure, recognition, and scalability needed to ensure that DC experiences are not left to chance but become a visible and meaningful anchor for the GW student experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations build on the definition of a distinctive DC experience at GW and outline how GW can more intentionally support, expand, and communicate distinctive DC experiences over time, while remaining attentive to feasibility, equity, and integrity. These recommendations are drawn from myriad sources of input, including but not limited to a survey of faculty on how they have embedded DC experiences in their courses, peer benchmarking, existing student and alumni surveys, and various convenings and consultations with GW stakeholders.

A. Establish a “DC Experiences Hub” to coordinate and strengthen GW’s engagement across the National Capital Region.

A central recurring theme in the Working Group’s discussions focused on the need for central coordination capability to strengthen GW’s connections with organizations, agencies, companies, and associations across the National Capital Region. Today, individual faculty and staff sustain most of these relationships through their own effort, limiting reach and sustainability. Faculty reported that lack of contacts, uncertainty, and lack of approval procedures had prevented them from including DC experiences in their courses. A central function could ease these barriers.

Northeastern University, which has carved out a distinctive profile with its co-op program, built a central coordinating function for this work to elevate and strengthen ties with employers, prevent duplication, and give heft to the effort. Similarly, a “DC Experiences Hub” could help GW deepen strategic partnerships; offer faculty, staff, and students an enhanced network; prevent crossed wires; and improve internal alignment across academic units.

A centralized, partner-facing DC Experiences Hub could intentionally curate, coordinate, and enable experiential learning opportunities rooted in Washington, DC’s unique institutional ecosystem. Rather than focusing on placements or employment alone, the Hub would treat DC as an experiential classroom, engaging government entities, NGOs, international organizations, cultural institutions, and other mission-aligned partners to co-create structured learning experiences embedded within academic pathways and aligned with GW’s civic mission. The Hub would serve as GW’s central experience coordination and partnership steward, supporting the delivery and sustainability of high-quality DC experiences by managing long-term partner relationships and facilitating coordination across schools to promote equity, scale, and consistency. Importantly, this model would build on the strong foundation of existing GW units that already maintain deep and sustained relationships across the Nation’s Capital, including Career Services, the Nashman Center, Student Affairs, University Advancement, and Government and Community Relations, by providing a coordinated structure that amplifies impact, reduces fragmentation, and broadens access across the university. Central leadership would focus on partnership development, shared infrastructure, and lowering barriers to engagement for external partners, while schools and programs would retain primary responsibility for integrating DC-based experiences into their academic contexts, aligning them with learning outcomes, and communicating clear pathways to students, positioning DC not merely as a location advantage, but as a defining, integrated component of a GW education.

B. Articulate a university-wide commitment that every GW student who seeks one will be given the opportunity to engage in a distinctive DC experience at some point in their learning journey.

The Working Group discussed repeatedly whether GW should make an explicit institutional commitment related to DC engagement. The group considered whether such experiences should be required across all programs, and members held differing views. Some advocated for a more formal requirement as a way to advance a more ambitious and differentiated model, while others raised concerns about feasibility given accreditation requirements, curricular

density, and program structure. The Working Group ultimately aligned around committing to opportunity and access rather than a uniform requirement. A commitment at the university level would apply across undergraduate programs, while allowing schools flexibility in how opportunities are delivered, such as through coursework, co-curricular programming, research, internships, or structured partnerships.

C. Ask each school to define and communicate how DC experiences support student learning within its academic context.

Recognizing that some individual courses cannot easily add DC components, the Working Group coalesced around the idea that the school- or program-level provides the most feasible locus for intentional design. Rather than expecting every course to embed DC engagement, each school would articulate on the DC Experiences Hub:

- » What DC experiences are available in their school.
- » How DC experiences align with disciplinary learning outcomes.
- » Where in the student journey (first year, mid-curriculum, capstone) engagement carries the greatest impact.
- » How curricular and co-curricular opportunities complement one another.

This approach respects disciplinary differences, supports accreditation constraints, and helps students understand how DC engagement fits into their academic pathway, rather than encountering opportunities in an ad hoc way.

D. Build on the success of District Connections by expanding it beyond the first year into a multi-year undergraduate, scaffolded model of DC engagement.

The Working Group expressed strong enthusiasm for District Connections as an example of a co-curricular program that is:

- » Clearly place-based.
- » Highly valued by students.
- » Distinctive to GW.
- » Supported by evidence of impact.

At present, the primary barrier to expansion is funding, not concept or demand. The group discussed the potential to evolve District Connections from a first-year experience into a longitudinal framework, with touchpoints across multiple class years (e.g., first-year orientation to place, mid-career applied engagement, senior-year synthesis or reflection). Scaling this model would create continuity and coherence across students' DC engagement, reduce inequities in access, and provide a recognizable through-line that students and families could understand and value.

E. Develop a digital badge or formal designation that recognizes sustained, high-quality engagement with DC experiences.

Students and Working Group members consistently emphasized the importance of experiences that “count” toward something meaningful. The group expressed excitement about a credential that would recognize both curricular and co-curricular engagement, be tied to learning outcomes and skill development (e.g., leadership, civic engagement, applied problem-solving), and appear on resumes, LinkedIn profiles, transcripts, or at commencement.

The Working Group also discussed aligning such a credential with the core pillars of a distinctive DC experience—academic learning, leadership development, and professional growth—potentially organizing the badge as a set of interconnected pillars. Individual experiences could contribute to one or more of these areas, creating a structured but flexible pathway for students to demonstrate sustained engagement over time.

Notably, the necessary technology infrastructure to support digital badging already exists, but the remaining work lies in defining thresholds, categories of engagement, and governance. Importantly, the Working Group agreed that the credential should emphasize depth and intentionality, not just participation volume.

F. Establish a process to identify a short list of priority institutional partnerships for GW-wide engagement that serve students across multiple schools.

While many DC organizations are relevant to one or two academic units, the Working Group identified a subset of institutions whose reach, mission, and scale make them appropriate for GW-wide engagement through more formalized partnerships, potentially at the presidential or provostial level. This aligns with GW’s strategic framework goal of positioning the university as a premier global convener of thought leaders across major areas of strategy. To guide this process, the group emphasized using a small number of broad partner categories as a framework for identifying and prioritizing specific institutional relationships, rather than relying on an ad hoc or individually driven set of connections. These categories include, but are not limited to:

- » Federal government and policymaking institutions (e.g., House of Representatives, National Institutes of Health)
- » International and multilateral organizations (e.g., The World Bank, International Monetary Fund)
- » Cultural and educational institutions (e.g., The Smithsonian Institution, Mount Vernon, and the George Washington Leadership Institute)
- » District and regional government and community partners (e.g., DC Government, Destination DC)
- » Private sector, industry, and professional associations (e.g., U.S. Chamber of Commerce, Headquarters of International Chain Hotels)

These categories are intended to guide the identification of high-impact partnerships within each area that can support students across multiple schools and programs.

The group also highlighted the presence of embassies just blocks from Foggy Bottom as a uniquely GW-relevant opportunity. While comprehensive agreements with all embassies would be impractical, this same approach could be applied to identify a small, representative subset of embassy partnerships that could unlock meaningful global academic and co-curricular opportunities.

G. Explore a model for reserving time during the week to support DC-based experiential learning as a signature element of the undergraduate experience.

One concept discussed by the Working Group as potentially distinctive, but applicable only to the residential undergraduate experience, is the intentional reservation of Fridays for “DC experiences,” achieved by minimizing the scheduling of classes on Fridays. This approach could create protected time for internships, site-based learning, research, service, and co-curricular engagement across the National Capital Region, reinforcing DC engagement as a defining feature of the undergraduate experience.

However, the Working Group also acknowledged significant logistical and academic constraints associated with this idea. Large introductory courses often rely on Friday discussion sections; limitations on classrooms have required use of the full scheduling week to accommodate complete course offerings; and the model is not uniformly feasible for graduate programs given accreditation and program-specific requirements. Participants also noted that many high-impact DC experiences, such as internships, do not align with a single-day-per-week model, and that concentrating student participation on Fridays could create challenges for external partners. Additionally, given already full student schedules, members emphasized that DC experiences should be integrated into the academic experience rather than additive requirements that increase student burden. Any exploration of this approach would need to ensure it does not extend time to degree or introduce unintended barriers for students or faculty.

This priority might be achieved through simply allowing for differentiated “experiential” time during the week and emphasizing that schools should consider preserving scheduled time for DC engagement whenever would make the most sense for a particular curriculum or program.

ENABLING CONDITIONS

Realizing a distinctive, scalable vision for DC experiences will require moving beyond individual programs and relationships toward a set of shared enabling conditions. The Working Group was clear that GW does not lack compelling DC-based activity; rather, the challenge lies in coordination, visibility, and support. Addressing these gaps will allow the university to amplify what already works while lowering barriers for students and faculty across schools.

A. Integrated Communications Infrastructure

The Working Group also identified the need for stronger integrated infrastructure and communications systems to surface and showcase DC opportunities across all schools. Students and faculty consistently noted that while opportunities exist, they are often difficult to discover outside one’s home unit and rely heavily on informal networks. A key need identified was the development or enhancement of a centralized, searchable platform that allows students and faculty to easily identify DC-based curricular, co-curricular, and experiential

opportunities across the university. While tools such as GW Career Connect already exist, awareness and usage remain uneven, limiting their effectiveness as university-wide resources. A clearer, more integrated platform for communicating DC-based opportunities would improve equity of access, help students navigate options aligned with their interests, and reinforce DC engagement as an intentional and visible component of the GW experience.

B. Funding

Funding emerged as another critical enabler. Working Group members emphasized the importance of assessing what levels of funding are required to support coordination, transportation, site visits, honoraria, and program expansion, and of developing compelling case statements that link DC experiences to student success, leadership development, and institutional distinctiveness. The group viewed DC experiences as particularly well-suited for future Advancement efforts, given their resonance with alumni, donors, and external partners.

C. Faculty Engagement

The Working Group spent considerable time discussing how the university might better support and incentivize faculty who wish to deepen DC experiences in their teaching. Time, logistics, and recognition surfaced repeatedly as barriers, and the group noted that current systems do not consistently reward this work. Potential supports discussed included formal recognition of DC-embedded teaching and engagement in annual evaluations, similar to how service responsibilities receive credit; the possibility of course releases or development support for faculty designing new DC-embedded courses where feasible; the development of a centralized syllabus or best practices repository and resource hub for DC-embedded courses, to be housed and managed through Libraries and Academic Innovation (ScholarSpace), to support course design and the sharing of best practices; and targeted funding to offset costs associated with site visits or external contributors. The group also noted the importance of avoiding additional burden on faculty, particularly early-career faculty, by ensuring that these efforts are supported and appropriately recognized. Importantly, the group emphasized that these supports should be optional and enabling, recognizing that not all courses or disciplines can incorporate DC experiences due to accreditation or curricular constraints.

D. School-level Specificity

Given the variation across disciplines, schools, and colleges, the Working Group encouraged the development of sector- and school-specific pathways. Areas identified for further development include the arts and humanities (such as “Literary DC” and an exploration of Washington, DC’s music heritage), sciences and engineering, business, law, education, health sciences, and the social sciences and international affairs. These discipline-specific paths would help students understand how DC engagement connects meaningfully to their academic journey while reinforcing a cohesive institutional story.

E. DC Experiences Toolkit

Finally, the Working Group expressed strong interest in creating a GW-wide toolkit of adaptable DC experiences that faculty and staff across schools could readily draw upon and use for inspiration. Examples such as the DC EconWalk and the School of Medicine and Health Sciences’ “Walk with a Future Doc” illustrate how inexpensive, highly flexible activities

can meaningfully leverage place. Playlists that draw on DC's music heritage could be another low-barrier-to-creation idea and might be a fun way for campus community members to create something together. Additional ideas included further incorporating DC engagement into first-year experience courses, developing a syllabus or course-description repository to highlight successful approaches, and expanding models like "Professors on the Town" beyond the University Honors Program to include Faculty in Residence and other interested faculty members. Collectively, these tools would lower the barrier to participation, encourage experimentation, and help scale proven ideas without requiring every unit to reinvent the wheel.

BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

Working Group members also identified several barriers to implementation, noting that these would need to be considered for any effort to be successful.

A. Costs and financial barriers.

Working Group members consistently raised costs as a primary constraint, both for students and for faculty and staff design experiences. The faculty survey similarly surfaced "funding" as one of the top five barriers to creating DC experiences in their courses. Expenses such as transportation, meals, honoraria, tickets, supplies, parking, and unpaid time create real barriers to access and equitable opportunity for participation, particularly for students with financial need. Members also noted that even modest costs can stall otherwise strong ideas in the absence of clear funding pathways. Without dedicated or flexible funding mechanisms, DC experiences risk remaining ad hoc rather than becoming a scalable, inclusive signature of the GW experience.

B. Staffing and administrative support.

Working Group members emphasized that many DC experiences already exist but are difficult to sustain or scale because of limited staffing support. Activities such as organizing site visits, managing risk and waivers, coordinating partners, and navigating approvals often fall to individual faculty or staff in addition to existing responsibilities. This leads to uneven quality and loss of institutional and relational knowledge. Participants repeatedly pointed to the need for clearer points of coordination, shared resources, and practical "how-to" support to reduce friction and make participation feasible across schools and units.

C. Faculty roles and reward.

Any effort to do this at scale will involve faculty in work that is, initially, unfamiliar and, over time, may require additional effort. This work has the potential to meaningfully reshape teaching and research, but is not always consistently recognized, supported, or rewarded within existing departmental and disciplinary structures. As a result, implementation may require adjustments to how faculty roles are defined and evaluated, including clearer recognition of DC-engaged teaching and partnership-based work.

D. Time constraints and student overload.

Students consistently described high time demands from coursework, employment, leadership roles, and co-curricular commitments, often exceeding 20 hours per week outside the

classroom. Many expressed interest in DC experiences but questioned how to fit additional activities into already full schedules. Similarly, faculty described challenges in shoehorning site visits or out-of-classroom experiences into a packed course schedule where each class has limited hours. In the faculty survey, “time” ranked as the very top reason for not including a DC experience in courses. DC experiences need to be intentionally designed to count, either through credit, recognition, or integration into existing academic and co-curricular structures, as opposed to just an optional extra that competes with other priorities.

E. Connecting alumni and students at scale.

While GW has an exceptionally strong alumni presence in DC, participants noted that connections between alumni and current students are often informal, uneven, or dependent on individual relationships. Faculty, staff, and alumni alike expressed interest in more structured, repeatable mechanisms to facilitate mentoring, guest engagement, behind-the-scenes access, and career exposure. The camaraderie and reach of the GW Revs network could be a tremendous asset to strengthening DC experiences, but University Advancement, which leads alumni engagement, does not have sufficient staff to dedicate some solely to coordinating alumni engagement for faculty and students to build DC experiences. This is an area where a central coordinating “DC Experiences Hub” could bridge this gap by facilitating more intentional and scalable alumni engagement, both enabling stronger integration of alumni into DC experiences and advancing a core goal of GW’s strategic framework: to engage alumni more purposefully with the university, including through forging connections with current students.

F. Barriers for graduate, professional, and online students.

Graduate, professional, and online students face distinct constraints that limit participation in traditional co-curricular activities. Evening schedules, employment obligations, and program intensity make daytime or unpaid experiences difficult to access. DC experiences targeting graduate, professional, and online students will need to include more flexible models, including short-format, evening, or hybrid experiences that connect online students to the intellectual and professional ecosystem of Washington.

METRICS FOR SUCCESS

Working Group members discussed in detail the importance of understanding what works and what does not and invest accordingly. The following metrics are intended to assess progress across all recommendations in this report from the establishment of the DC Experiences Hub and the university-wide commitment to student opportunity, through the expansion of District Connections, digital badging, institutional partnerships, and experiential scheduling. They also apply to the enabling conditions, including faculty engagement, funding, and communications infrastructure. This framework clusters metrics by audience and purpose, recognizing that distinctive DC experiences touch students, faculty, partners, and institutional systems in different ways:

A. Student Access, Engagement, and Outcomes

A core objective of the recommendations is to expand access to high-quality DC experiences and ensure that those experiences meaningfully support student learning, belonging, and

post-graduate pathways. Metrics in this area include:

- » Student participation and engagement, including satisfaction and alignment with academic interests,
- » Admissions data, including whether awareness of DC experiences influences enrollment decisions, as well as reasons students choose not to attend,
- » Broader student success outcomes, including persistence/retention from year to year and sense of belonging, per the climate survey,
- » Connections between participation and career-related outcomes such as internships, graduate school placement, civic engagement pathways, employer engagement, and alumni-reported career relevance, and
- » Leadership skill development, professional confidence, and civic identity formation through student reflections and alumni feedback.

B. Faculty Engagement, Support, and Recognition

Faculty engagement is a critical enabling condition for sustaining and scaling distinctive DC experiences. Within the broader assessment framework, a focused set of faculty-specific indicators should be tracked to ensure that expectations around engagement are matched by appropriate institutional support and recognition. Metrics in this area may include:

- » Whether and how DC-engaged teaching and partnership-based work are formally recognized in annual review and evaluation processes,
- » Faculty access to development support, course design assistance, or course release where DC-embedded course development is encouraged,
- » Uptake of shared resources, toolkits, or centralized support through the DC Experiences Hub, and
- » Faculty satisfaction with institutional support for DC-embedded teaching and engagement over time.

C. Partner Experience and Ecosystem Impact

Because DC experiences rely on reciprocal and sustained external relationships, assessment should also reflect partner perspectives and longer-term sustainability. Metrics in this area include:

- » Feedback from external partners, including satisfaction and the perceived value of engagement with GW students, and
- » Stability and longevity of partnerships across schools and programs.

As pilot programs transition to more established offerings, we should assess their resource requirements relative to student reach and impact. This includes evaluating staffing models, partnership costs, logistical complexity, and administrative burden alongside participation levels and outcomes. The goal is not to standardize all DC experiences, but to identify which models are most

scalable, sustainable, and aligned with institutional priorities. There also may be discipline-specific experiences that are better suited to remaining smaller, high-touch offerings.

The Working Group also noted that some outcomes, particularly leadership development and civic identity formation, are inherently more difficult to measure and may require a combination of self-reported data, pilot studies, and longitudinal tracking.

Our proposed assessment approach should support experimentation, innovation, learning and adaptation. Clear documentation of how well new efforts worked, various conditions that enhanced success, and what did not work will be as valuable as clear successes. Initiatives that fall short of expectations will provide insight, helping us refine design assumptions, adjust implementation, or decide thoughtfully when to sunset an approach. In this way, assessment serves as a tool for continuous improvement and institutional learning rather than a barrier to innovation.

CONCLUSION

As GW advances its strategic framework, *Raising Higher: OneGW's Path to Preeminence*, it is time to build on an identity that is already deeply rooted in Washington, DC by making a clear and intentional institutional commitment: that every GW student will have the opportunity to participate in a distinctive DC-based experience as part of their academic journey. This report demonstrates that GW already offers a strong foundation of partnerships, programs, and place-based learning, but that these efforts must be more intentionally coordinated, expanded, and connected to ensure equitable access and sustained impact. In an increasingly competitive higher education landscape, this is not simply an opportunity but a necessity. Achieving this will require strengthening reciprocal relationships across the National Capital Region, aligning infrastructure and incentives, and making thoughtful, and at times bold, decisions about how to organize and scale this work so that it is integrated into the student experience rather than left to chance. In doing so, GW can establish a clear institutional standard for DC engagement and further advance its commitment to preparing students to be strong and resilient leaders.





APPENDICES



Appendix 1: Benchmark Analysis – Competitive Intelligence

The Working Group reviewed how research universities are leveraging their cities, regions, and surrounding communities as distinctive educational assets. The goal of this review was to better understand how peer and aspirant institutions are using location-based programming to shape the student experience through orientation, experiential learning, coursework, civic engagement, research, internships, and community partnerships.

The benchmark scan shows that research universities are increasingly treating their cities and regions as intentional educational assets rather than passive settings. Several institutions introduce students to the city through orientation or first-year programming, including Boston University (BU), Columbia University, New York University (NYU), Northeastern University (NU), and Washington University in St. Louis (WashU). Others embed city-based engagement directly into the curriculum through service-learning courses, urban studies programs, applied research, civic fellowships, project-based courses, and community-engaged course designations. A second major pattern is that many universities are formalizing these experiences through recognizable programs, certificates, transcript notations, course labels, fellowships, and branded experiential pathways. These structures make opportunities easier for students to identify and allow institutions to communicate the value of place-based learning more clearly. Finally, the strongest models connect student learning to the distinctive strengths of the city or region. Rice leverages Houston’s energy economy, Miami emphasizes climate resilience and South Florida communities, Columbia and NYU use New York City’s neighborhoods and civic infrastructure, and UChicago connects students to the South Side’s history, culture, and community organizations.

A detailed summary of the specific approaches and examples identified across each benchmarked institution is provided below.

INSTITUTION	CURRICULAR EXAMPLES	CO-CURRICULAR EXAMPLES
Boston University	» BU Hub, Cross-College Challenge, and MetroBridge integrate project-based learning with Boston-area partners and city governments. » Students work on applied urban challenges related to public health, walkability, tree cover, and other local priorities.	» First-Year Student Outreach Project introduces new undergraduates to Boston through an orientation service track with local partners and a semester-long reflection component.

Columbia University	» Urban Studies uses NYC as a research environment through neighborhood coursework, off-campus excursions, and senior theses. » Sustainability Management and Construction Administration incorporate NYC site visits and Manhattanville case studies on renewal, displacement, and equity. » City Newsroom / Local & Nonprofit News Initiative connect students to hyper-local reporting across NYC.	» Engineering first-year Immersion Experiences include an Explore NYC track focused on arts, food, history, transit, and landmarks.
New York University	» City as Text uses NYC for place-based analysis through guided visits to ports, markets, parks, industrial sites, and other urban spaces. » Students develop city-based research projects tied to the built environment, history, culture, and social issues.	» Project OutReach is a pre-orientation program focused on service, active citizenship, and social change. » First-year programming includes guided neighborhood walks through Greenwich Village, Chinatown, Harlem, and Brooklyn. » Give Where You Live provides cohort-based community service with student leaders and local organizations.
Northeastern University	» Co-op Program offers six-month, full-time placements with companies, nonprofits, civic institutions, and public-sector organizations. » Service-learning courses connect students with Boston schools, health clinics, nonprofits, and community organizations while integrating structured reflection.	» Welcome Week includes excursions that help new students explore Boston's neighborhoods, history, transit, and cultural assets.

Rice University	» Kinder Institute Community Bridges is a yearlong, for-credit fellowship pairing students with Houston nonprofits for research on housing, hunger, health, and urban inequality. » Carbon Hub connects students to Houston's energy economy through research, industry convenings, presentations, and networking.	» Moody Civic Immersion introduces students to Houston's social issues and community partners through service, reflection, and civic leadership training. » Leadership Rice Mentorship Experience provides paid summer internships with Houston nonprofits, public agencies, and social impact organizations, paired with a two-credit advocacy course.
University College London	» London Research and Policy Partnership connect government and higher education to strengthen collaboration between research and public policy. » The partnership includes Areas of Research Interest, policy roundtables, matchmaking tools, and London-level learning modules.	» UCL participates in the London Anchor Institutions' Network, supporting city-wide civic engagement, apprenticeships, and policy partnerships.
University of Chicago	» South Side History Bike Tour uses Chicago neighborhoods as a living classroom for urban history, sociology, policy, and culture. » Arts + Public Life and the South Side Science Festival connect students to community-based arts, culture, and STEM outreach.	» Engage Chicago and Neighborhood Service Projects connect incoming students with South Side civic leaders and community organizations through service, internships, and reflection. » The student-organized Scavenger Hunt encourages campus and city exploration through team-based challenges. This is a signature student experience at Chicago.

University of Miami	» Civic Scholars requires four community-engaged courses, co-curricular service, and a South Florida capstone, resulting in transcript notation and a certificate. » CIVIC-designated courses help students identify community-engaged coursework across disciplines. » Architecture urban studios use Coral Gables and Miami-Dade neighborhoods for applied design and planning.	» Miami Community ResilientSea engages students and residents in dune restoration, reef gardening, climate workshops, and community-driven coastal resilience.
Washington University in St. Louis	» Civic Fellows is a 14-month pathway combining classroom learning, civic coursework, and a summer impact project with St. Louis regional agencies. » Confluence Collaborative supports community-engaged research with St. Louis partners. » Public Exchange connects university teams with city agencies and nonprofits to address civic problems.	» Civic Start / In the Lou introduces students to St. Louis neighborhoods, culture, and civic engagement through tours and service opportunities.



Appendix 2: Examples of Curricular DC Experiences

The following examples highlight a selection of GW courses that intentionally incorporate Washington, DC, and the broader DMV region into the student learning experience. Collected through the work of the DC Experiences Working Group and the faculty survey on course-embedded DC experiences, these examples demonstrate the breadth of place-based learning already taking place across the university. They illustrate how faculty are using the city's institutions, organizations, communities, and professional networks to extend learning beyond the classroom and connect academic concepts to real-world contexts.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AND POLICYMAKING INSTITUTIONS

- » **IAFF 3190 / IAFF 6118 / PMGT 4109** - The Fundamentals of U.S. Foreign Policy Decision-Making: Washington, DC, serves as a direct entry point for students to examine how foreign policy decisions are made across global, regional, bilateral, and multilateral contexts. Students explore interagency, intra-departmental, and embassy-level leadership challenges while engaging with current and former senior foreign policy officials. The course includes site visits and practitioner engagement connected to the Embassy of Sweden, the Atlantic Council, the Office of the Envoy of the Middle East, and The Washington Post, as well as sessions on Congress, and the National Security Council.
- » **PPPA 6056** - Regulatory Comment Clinic: Students gain direct exposure to federal rulemaking, public comment processes, and regulatory advocacy. The course reflects the type of hands-on policy learning uniquely enabled by GW's location in the nation's capital, where students can connect legal analysis, public participation, and administrative processes to the federal agencies that shape public policy.
- » **PPPA 6069 - Science and U.S. Public Policy:** Scientific expertise is connected to federal policymaking and public-sector decision-making through a DC-based lens. Students examine how science informs policy debates, regulatory choices, and the work of institutions that shape science policy in Washington.
- » **PUBH 6122 - Protecting Public Health and the Environment:** Policies, Politics, and Programs: Public health, environmental policy, political decision-making, and regulatory institutions are brought together through DC-based examples and policy contexts. Students are able to examine how policy design, implementation, public health outcomes, and environmental protection intersect in practice.

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTILATERAL ORGANIZATIONS

- » **PSC 2440 - International Organizations:** GW's proximity to international organizations, embassies, multilateral institutions, and policy convenings creates opportunities for students to connect classroom learning with the global institutions located in Washington, DC. The course helps students understand how international organizations operate not only as theoretical actors, but as institutions with a significant local presence in the city.
- » **IAFF 6186 - WMD Arms Control:** Washington's concentration of federal agencies, think tanks, embassies, defense policy organizations, and international security practitioners gives students a strong applied context for studying arms control and global security. Through a DC connection, students can situate course concepts within the institutions and expert communities shaping security policy.
- » **IAFF 6385 - Africa in the Global Economy:** Students engage with DC-based institutions and events focused on Africa, global development, and international economic policy. One example includes students attending events at organizations such as Brookings or the Atlantic Council and writing reflections that connect those experiences to course themes.
- » **IAFF 6118 - The Ethics of Foreign Aid:** Academic discussions of global development, humanitarian assistance, and foreign aid are connected to the international organizations, NGOs, and policy institutions located in Washington, DC. The course demonstrates how GW's location can help students examine the ethical dimensions of aid through both scholarly and practitioner perspectives.

CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

- » **CGD 2091 - Design Studio II:** Student teams apply design principles to real community-centered projects with local partners. Through work with Rock Creek Conservancy, Free Minds Book Club, and the U.S. Dream Academy, students develop cohesive branding materials across print, social media, and motion while helping community organizations communicate their values and mission.
- » **CGD 2060 - Typography II:** Visual communication becomes a vehicle for community storytelling in this course. Students partner with Free Minds Book Club and participants in its poetry writing program for incarcerated youth, creating graphic designs for poems that are shared in both print and web formats.
- » **CMST 6404 - Museums and Social Media:** The Smithsonian and local museum ecosystem provide an applied context for studying digital public engagement and institutional communication. Students can connect course themes to the ways cultural institutions use social media to reach audiences, interpret collections, and shape public understanding.
- » **SLHS 1081 - American Sign Language I:** Language learning is connected to community and culture through participation in local Deaf community events and engagement with institutions such as Gallaudet University. These experiences allow students to practice American Sign Language while developing a deeper understanding of Deaf culture in DC.
- » **CMUS 3125 - DC in the History of Punk Music:** The city's music history, neighborhoods, arts venues, and cultural movements provide the foundation for examining DC as a site of cultural production and social change. Students explore how local music scenes reflect broader questions of identity, politics, community, and resistance.

DISTRICT AND REGIONAL GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- » **BADM 4001 - Civic Opportunities for GW School of Business Students:** As an experiential learning course completed by all GWSB students, BADM 4001 gives students opportunities to apply business skills in support of local nonprofit and public service organizations. Students use marketing, project management, data analysis, and other business tools to help community partners build capacity and advance social change.
- » **PUBH 6299 - The Autism Experience, A Public Health Perspective:** Service-learning and community participatory research methods guide students' exploration of the autism experience. By engaging autistic young adults, parents, researchers, clinicians, and service providers, students examine the transition to adulthood and research priorities.
- » **GTCH 1002 - Inquiry Based Lesson Design:** Through the GWTeach program, STEM students preparing for teaching licensure in Washington, DC, design, teach, and assess STEM-based lessons. Students engage directly in local classrooms, including McKinley Middle School and DC Preparatory Academy, with mentorship from a Master Teacher.
- » **PT 8481 - Interprofessional Community Practicum:** Physical therapy students work directly with community partners such as senior wellness centers, adaptive sports programs, and National Park Service. Student teams have developed exercise videos, infographics, and injury prevention resources for community audiences, including Special Olympics athletes.
- » **HSSJ 2171 - Child and Adolescent Development:** Theories of human development are connected to weekly service with local human service organizations. Students have worked with organizations such as In the Streets and Marie Reed Elementary School, providing tutoring and mentoring to local youth while reflecting on developmental frameworks.
- » **BISC 1007 - Food, Nutrition, and Service:** Students translate the science of food and nutrition for community audiences. Through partnerships with local schools such as ARISE High School, students create learning activities and support youth research projects on topics including food deserts and the intersection of food and racism.
- » **HSSJ 1177 - Organizing for Social Justice:** Advocacy and organizing strategies are paired with applied work for DC-area organizations. Student projects have included a social media campaign for DC Action for Children, an advocacy toolkit for the Coalition for Nonprofit Housing and Economic Development, and materials for a health literacy campaign.
- » **HSSJ 4195 - Capstone Seminar for Human Services & Social Justice:** Students synthesize the knowledge, skills, and values of the Human Services & Social Justice major by operating a philanthropy program in partnership with the Learning by Giving Foundation. They develop selection criteria, issue a call for proposals, raise funds, and award grants to local human service organizations.
- » **SOC 2189 - Rethinking DC Youth and Policing:** DC serves as the central context for examining youth justice, policing, race, policy, and community advocacy. Students build relationships with DC police, policymakers, activists, and organizations working to improve the lived experiences of Black and brown youth who may have a history of justice involvement. Applied initiatives have included School Resource Officer education and support, youth handcuffing policy revisions, and anti-human trafficking work.

- » **PPPA 6016 - Program Evaluation:** Students conduct pro bono evaluations for nonprofits and local governments, contributing applied analytical capacity to public-serving organizations. The course gives students hands-on experience with evaluation methods while supporting the work of local and regional partners.
- » **CE 3520 - Environmental Engineering Design Drinking Water Treatment:** Students connect engineering concepts to regional water infrastructure through site visits to facilities such as Blue Plains Advanced Wastewater Treatment Plant, the Washington Aqueduct, and AlexRenew. These experiences help students see how drinking water, wastewater treatment, and water reuse systems operate in practice.

PRIVATE SECTOR, INDUSTRY, AND PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- » **TSTD 6263 - Destination Marketing:** GW's access to DC's tourism and hospitality ecosystem allows students to participate in high-value professional experiences. Students in the course have attended Destination Capitol Hill, a professional tourism advocacy conference organized by the U.S. Travel Association. Students have also participated in a member-only industry event and connected classroom learning to professional practice.
- » **TSTD 3101 - Sport & Event Business Management:** The region's event venues, sports organizations, hospitality sector, tourism industry, and professional networks provide an applied learning environment for students studying sport, tourism, hospitality, and event management. The course reflects how DC's private-sector and events ecosystem can support professional exploration.
- » **MBAD 6289 - Business Ethics and Public Policy:** Business, regulation, public policy, and corporate decision-making are examined in a city where national business associations, advocacy organizations, federal regulators, and private-sector leaders are deeply interconnected. Students can use DC as a context for understanding how ethical questions arise in business and policy environments.
- » **CAH 2001 - Navigating the Art Market:** Galleries, auction houses, cultural institutions, collectors, and arts professionals in the DC region provide a professional context for exploring the art market. The course demonstrates how the city's arts economy can support applied learning, career exploration, and engagement with cultural industries.
- » **CSCI 1311 - Discrete Structures:** The DC Metro system map is used as a place-based example to help students understand graph theory concepts such as nodes, links, networks, and connectivity. This example shows how even technical courses can use local infrastructure to make abstract concepts more concrete and applied.

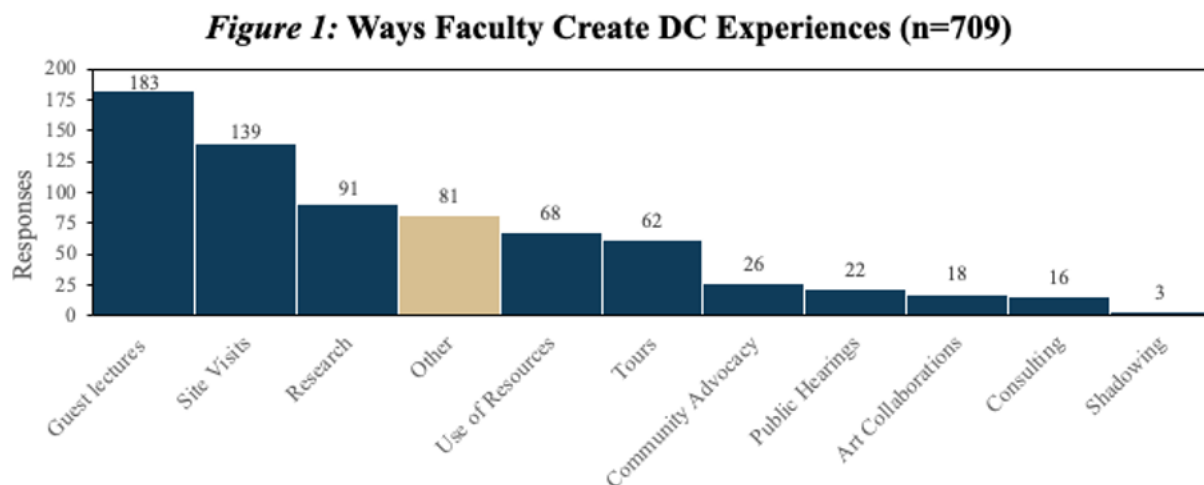


Appendix 3: DC Experiences Faculty Survey Summary

The **Course-Embedded DC Experiences Faculty Survey** was administered to full-time and part-time faculty who have taught at least two of the last four semesters (Spring 2024 through Fall 2025) from **1/8/26 to 2/5/26**, and was distributed to **2,755 faculty**, yielding **309 responses (11.2% response rate)**. The survey was designed to understand how faculty are currently incorporating DC-based experiences into their teaching, identify barriers to doing so, and surface opportunities for institutional support. The concept of a “DC experience” was defined broadly to include engagement across the **DMV region**. The survey included six core questions, and the results are summarized below.

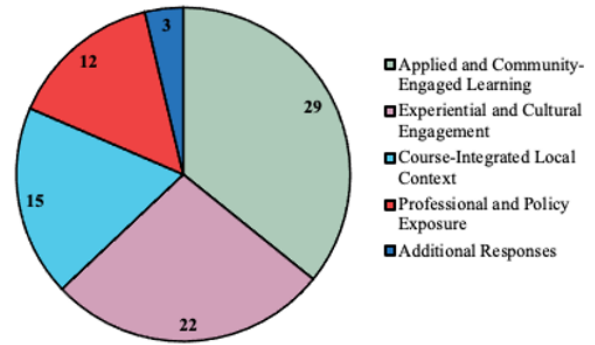
QUESTION 1: HOW DO FACULTY CREATE DC EXPERIENCES IN THEIR COURSES?

Faculty were asked to indicate how they incorporate DC experiences into their courses. A total of 283 faculty answered this question. Because faculty could select multiple choices, this resulted in 709 total selections across the available categories. As shown in Figure 1, guest lectures, site visits, and research activities were the most commonly reported approaches.



Among the 283 faculty who answered this question, 81 selected “Other” and provided written responses. These written responses were reviewed and grouped into themes to capture approaches that did not fit neatly within the predefined categories or provided additional context on how faculty use DC-based resources. As shown in Figure 2, the most common “Other” theme was applied and community-engaged learning, which included service learning, community-based research, clinical placements, capstones, and projects with local nonprofits. Experiential and cultural engagement included museum visits, performances, festivals, neighborhood-based assignments, cultural events, and other place-based experiences. Course-integrated local context included the use of DC-specific case studies, datasets, local examples, and assignments grounded in the region. Professional and policy exposure included think tank events, embassy briefings, public hearings, mock testimony, alumni engagement, and exposure to policy or professional environments.

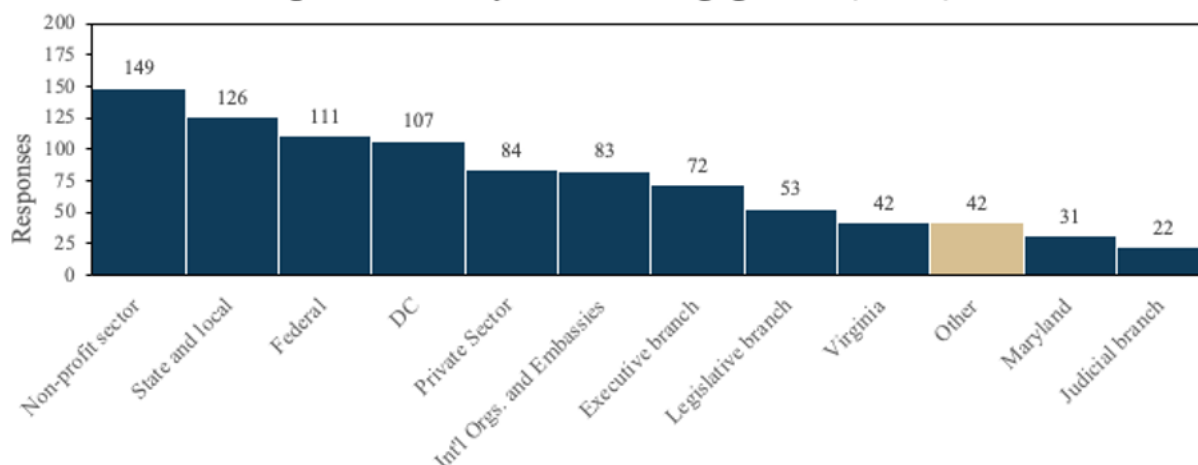
Figure 2: “Other” Themes Identified in DC Experiences Responses (n=81)



QUESTION 2: WHAT SECTORS DO DC EXPERIENCES ENGAGE?

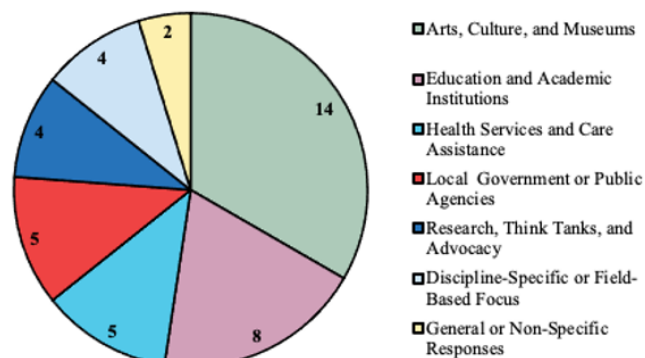
Faculty were asked to identify the sector or sectors through which their courses engage with DC-based experiences. A total of 275 faculty answered this question. Because faculty could select multiple choices, this resulted in 922 total selections across the available categories. As shown in Figure 3, the most reported sectors were the nonprofit, state/local government, and federal government.

Figure 3: Faculty Sector of Engagement (n=922)



Among the 275 faculty respondents who answered this question, 42 selected "Other" and provided written responses. These written responses were reviewed and grouped into themes to better describe sectors or settings that were not fully captured by the predefined response options. As shown in Figure 4, the most common "Other" theme was arts, culture, and museums, which included museums, Smithsonian institutions, theaters, arts organizations, monuments, and cultural events. Education and academic institutions included schools, universities, and student-facing learning environments. Health and human services included hospitals, mental health services, and community-based care settings. Government or public agencies included specific entities such as the Federal Reserve Board, Department of State, Public Defender, and Securities and Exchange Commission. Additional responses referenced research, think tanks, advocacy organizations, and discipline-specific or field-based settings, including computer science, cybersecurity, literature, architecture, and design.

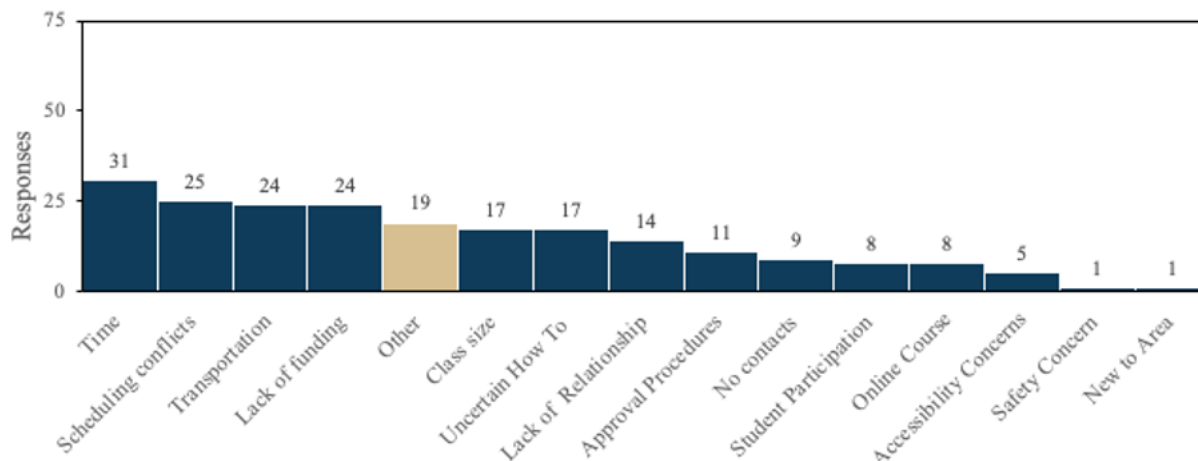
Figure 4: Themes Identified in Faculty Sector "Other" Responses (n=42)



QUESTION 3: WHAT BARRIERS LIMIT THE INCLUSION OF DC EXPERIENCES?

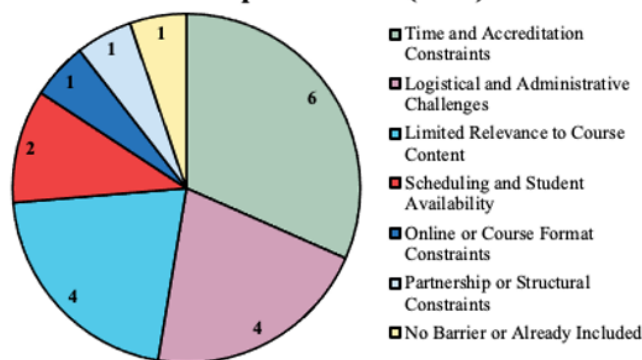
Faculty who do not currently include a DC experience in their courses were asked to identify the barriers or challenges they have encountered. A total of 79 faculty answered this question and had the ability to select multiple choices, resulting in 215 total selections. As shown in Figure 5, the most cited challenges were time, scheduling conflicts, transportation, and lack of funding.

Figure 5: Barriers to Incorporating DC Experiences (n=215)



Among the 79 faculty respondents who answered this question, 19 selected "Other" and provided written responses. These written responses were reviewed and grouped into themes to capture barriers that extended beyond, or added detail to, the predefined response options. As shown in Figure 6, the most common "Other" theme was time and course constraints, including limited class time, short course durations, multiple course sections, and competing curricular priorities. Logistical and administrative challenges included university processes, coordination across sections, and lack of established protocols for working with external partners. Limited relevance to course content reflected courses where faculty indicated that DC experiences were not directly applicable to the subject matter or did not align with course learning objectives. Additional themes included scheduling and student availability, online or format constraints, partnership or structural constraints, and responses indicating that no barrier existed.

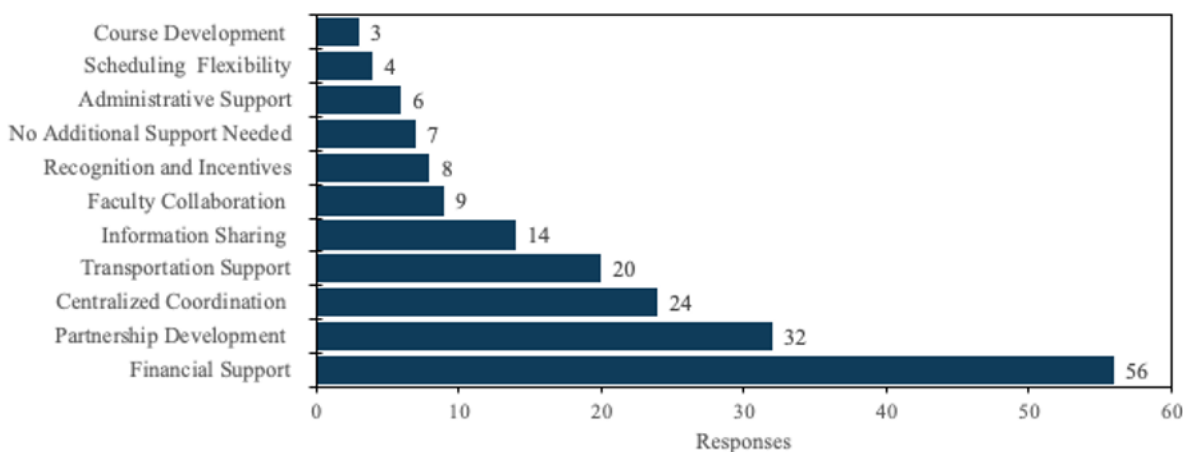
Figure 6: "Other" Barriers to Implementation (n=19)



QUESTION 4: WHAT SUPPORT DO FACULTY NEED TO STRENGTHEN DC EXPERIENCES?

Faculty were asked to identify what GW could do to better support the integration of DC experiences into their courses. In total, 183 faculty answered this question (Figure 7).

Figure 7: Institutional Support Required (n=183)

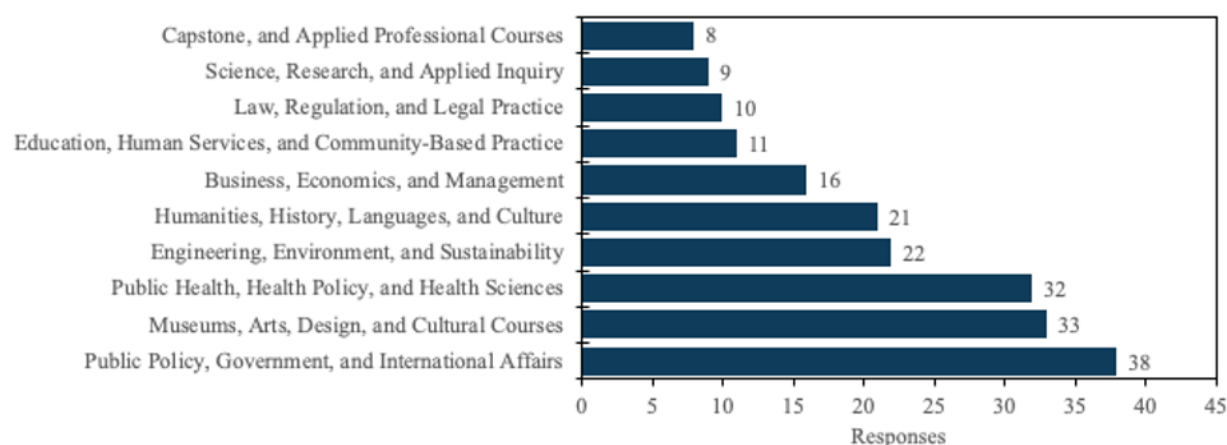


The most frequently cited area of support was funding and financial resources, particularly for transportation, guest speakers, site visits, tickets, and course-related activities. Partnership development reflected faculty interest in support identifying and connecting with external organizations, including nonprofits, government agencies, embassies, think tanks, and industry partners. Centralized coordination and staff support included interest in a dedicated office, coordinator, or point of contact to assist with logistics, partner relationships, site visits, and guest speakers. Other themes included transportation support, information sharing and resource access, faculty collaboration and knowledge sharing, recognition and incentives, logistical and administrative support, scheduling and structural flexibility, course development and pedagogical support, and responses indicating that no additional support was needed.

QUESTION 5: WHAT COURSES INCORPORATE DC EXPERIENCES?

Faculty were asked to share information on courses that incorporate DC experiences. In total, 200 courses were recorded, with representation across a wide range of academic areas, as shown in Figure 8. Courses were grouped into broad academic areas based on course titles, subject matter, and the type of DC engagement described, rather than by specific department or school. The most frequently represented areas were public policy, government, and international affairs, with 38 courses; museums, arts, design, and cultural institutions, with 33 courses; and public health, health policy, and health sciences, with 32 courses. Other course areas included engineering, environment, sustainability, and urban systems; humanities, history, languages, and culture; law, regulation, and legal practice; business, economics, and management; education, human services, and community-based practice; science, research, and applied inquiry; and interdisciplinary, capstone, and applied professional courses.

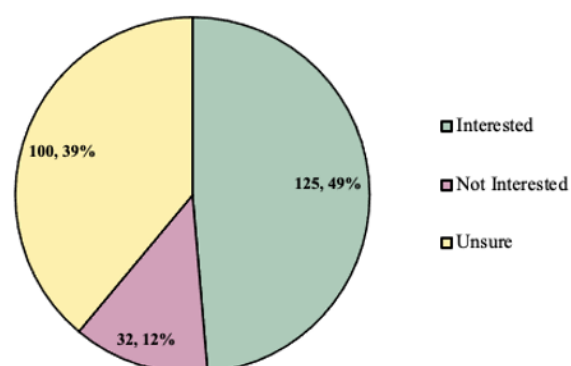
Figure 8: Courses Areas Incorporating DC Experiences (n=200)



QUESTION 6: ARE FACULTY WILLING TO SHARE COURSE MATERIALS?

Faculty who have embedded DC experiences into their courses were asked whether they would be willing to share course materials, such as syllabi or assignments, in a GW repository. A total of 257 faculty respondents answered this question, with responses grouped into three categories: interested, not interested, and unsure. Nearly half of faculty indicated a willingness to share materials, with 125 faculty respondents, or 49%, selecting "Interested." A smaller portion indicated that they were not interested, with 32 faculty respondents, or 12%, selecting "Not Interested." A substantial number of faculty, 100 faculty respondents, or 39%, selected "Unsure," suggesting that many faculty may be open to sharing materials if provided with clearer guidance on the purpose, format, and use of a potential repository.

Figure 9: Faculty Interest in Sharing Course Materials in a GW Repository (n=257)





Appendix 4: Working Group Members and Co-Authors

The DC Experiences Working Group included representatives from across all GW schools and a diverse range of departments and administrative units. This report would not have been possible without the group's sustained engagement, thoughtful input, and commitment over a seven-month span during the 2025–2026 academic year. The recommendations and analysis presented above were directly shaped by the perspectives, feedback, and expertise shared throughout this process. While individual members brought different perspectives and priorities to the discussion, the report reflects the Working Group's collective effort to identify opportunities that would strengthen and elevate DC-based experiences for GW students.

The following individuals* served as members of the Working Group and co-authored this report.

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**Names and titles reflect those in place at the time of the Working Group's work.*



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