

RAISING HIGHER: OneGW's PATH *to* PREEMINENCE



THE GEORGE
WASHINGTON
UNIVERSITY
WASHINGTON, DC

[STRATEGICFRAMEWORK.GWU.EDU](https://strategicframework.gwu.edu)



KNOWLEDGE THY **1821** CLOSEST FRIEND



Dear Fellow Revs,

We are proud to join colleagues across the university to announce the launch of GW's new strategic framework, *Raising Higher: OneGW's Path to Preeminence*, a bold roadmap for our third century. Reflecting the voices and ideas of our community, and responding to the opportunities before us, this framework will guide our decisions, shape our priorities, and inspire our collective progress as we work together to raise higher, elevating GW from a well-respected institution—purpose-focused and mission-driven—to one of true preeminence on the national and global stage.

For more than two centuries, GW has transformed the world through exceptional education, groundbreaking research, and outstanding patient care and service. Global in outlook and revolutionary in spirit, this university has always attracted remarkable students, faculty, and staff to the heart of the nation's capital. A catalyst, convener, and connector, GW provides unparalleled access to government, industry, and culture, creating unique opportunities throughout the District for our students, faculty, and staff to generate impact and tackle some of the world's greatest challenges.

At the heart of this journey lies a simple but powerful truth: The world's greatest universities are both distinctive and distinguished. Distinctiveness comes from **clarity of purpose**. We know what sets us apart, and we harness those strengths to forge a unique path to excellence. GW's distinctiveness lies in our setting and our spirit: A university rooted in the dynamism of the District of Columbia, defined by curiosity-inspired innovation, and animated by the belief that knowledge must be put to work for the good of humanity.

But distinctiveness alone is not enough. To be truly preeminent, a university must also be distinguished, recognized for the **quality** of its achievements in educating students, generating new knowledge, and serving society. GW is poised to build on its foundation of excellence to achieve distinction of the highest order as we equip every student for success, push forward the frontiers of knowledge and discovery, and expand our impact far beyond campus walls.

As with any set of goals and aspirations, the framework's true power lies in how we activate it—together. This framework is a call to action, inviting every one of us to unite as OneGW. We are stronger when we work together. We are smarter when we think together. And we are unstoppable when we advance together. By aligning our efforts, working across disciplines, and investing in a culture of excellence, we will shape a university that is both distinctive in character and distinguished in accomplishment.

Our goals are clear: to strengthen student success and grow GW's research enterprise. We will measure our progress in the ideas we generate, the discoveries we advance, and the ways in which our students thrive at GW and beyond.

As we embark on this journey, each of us has a role to play in transforming our community's aspirations into achievement. We look forward to continuing to work side by side with all of you in the interest of building a stronger GW and a better world.

Together, we will raise higher.

Sincerely,

Ellen M. Granberg

President

John Lach

Interim Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs
Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering



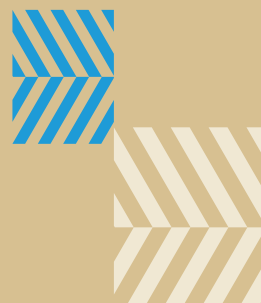


From Strength to Strength

The best universities understand their unique strengths and leverage those strengths to forge a distinctive path to excellence. For GW, the process of developing this framework affirmed that our location in Washington, D.C., and our unique ability to capitalize on it are what make us distinctive. GW is positioned to leverage its location, between the White House and the State Department, to enhance academic offerings and expand service and leadership opportunities, thereby improving student success metrics and enhancing the quality of the student experience.

Further, our membership in the Association of American Universities demonstrates the strong foundation of disciplinary strengths upon which we will continue to build a world-class research enterprise. In an era when funding for basic research faces unprecedented scrutiny and greater emphasis is placed on practical application, GW is well-positioned: Our faculty already apply their findings to influence law, policy, and politics and to educate and enlighten the world. By expanding our research enterprise, we can elevate our academic standing, retain and attract top-tier faculty, staff, events, and awards, and generate essential partnerships that further advance our mission.

Finally, sustained progress will also depend on a strong institutional foundation. This means valuing collaboration and transparency, encouraging informed risk-taking and investing in efficient systems aligned with our goals. By advancing through both distinctiveness and distinction, GW can amplify its ability to serve as a force for positive change in the world, producing graduates who lead with purpose and generating knowledge and impact that address humanity's most pressing needs.





IDENTIFYING GW's INSTITUTIONAL PRIORITIES

During the spring 2024 semester, the university held a series of community-wide, future-focused conversations. These discussions aimed to deepen our understanding of the future that GW is preparing for, including topics such as the future of the workforce, higher education, and knowledge. These conversations highlighted four recurring themes among the constituencies:

Theme 1

**Advancing Impactful
Knowledge Production
Through Interdisciplinary
Excellence**

Theme 2

**Reimagining Skill
Development for
the Future**

Theme 3

**Redefining Authentic
Leadership for
Modern Challenges**

Theme 4

**Turning Ideas into
Action as a Premier
Global Convener**

In the fall of 2024, the GW Innovation Committee gathered additional input from the GW community through various means, including opportunities to submit idea briefs, community town halls, and informal dialogues about strategic opportunities aligned with these themes. This process resulted in three clear institutional priorities that will drive GW's future success. This effort aimed to bring the themes to life and set them within a framework that prioritizes research, educational, and operational excellence.



PRIORITY ONE: *Generate Scholarship with Impact*

This priority builds on thematic core elements one and four, establishing a distinctive role for GW in addressing some of society's pressing challenges, including climate change, artificial intelligence, and the preservation of democracy. GW boasts a remarkable legacy of disciplinary scholarship that produces real-world impact. Now, in our third century, our traditional strengths in policy, politics, international affairs, and law can combine with emerging strengths in science, health, and engineering, enabling us to tackle these issues in innovative and creative ways. Additionally, our unique location in Washington, D.C., positions us to be a premier convener for critical conversations that enhance the impact of basic research by applying it to develop sound policy and legislation.



PRIORITY TWO: *Prepare Students to Be Strong and Resilient Leaders*

This priority embraces thematic core elements one, two, and three. We will leverage the expertise of GW's faculty and staff to ensure that GW students graduate at rates equal to the nation's top universities. This means a fully inclusive environment that provides every student with the access, support, and opportunity they need to pursue a rich interdisciplinary education that leverages the unique opportunities inherent in our location and connections, equipping them with essential skills as well as the practical and social experiences needed for success.



PRIORITY THREE: *Strengthen Our Foundation for Excellence*

To achieve this ambitious agenda, GW must improve how we operate as a university. We will strengthen our community by building and maintaining a culture of excellence that focuses on impact and results, providing opportunities for members of our community to inform decision-making and cultivating an organizational culture characterized by collaboration, openness, and innovation.

Although these priorities are presented in a sequential order for organizational clarity, they are equal in importance and intended to work together to achieve our vision.



PRIORITY ONE:

Generate Scholarship with Impact

GW has a remarkable legacy of disciplinary excellence that creates a tangible impact. We will leverage this unique advantage by strategically investing in collaborative initiatives that transcend traditional boundaries and connect strengths, amplifying research impact across the GW community to address society's most pressing challenges.

GOAL ONE

Make strategic investments in faculty, nurturing their intellectual diversity and providing them the resources they need to drive interdisciplinary research designed for real-world impact.

GOAL TWO

Address organizational barriers to interdisciplinary research and translational work while also enhancing our capacity to spearhead large-scale, multi-institutional initiatives.

GOAL THREE

Position GW as a premier global convener of thought leaders across major areas of study by strengthening our capacity to facilitate the most important conversations of our time. We will engage GW's broad ecosystem of faculty and alumni to develop impactful, high-visibility programs and build on existing programs such as endowed lectures.



PRIORITY TWO:



Prepare Students to Be Strong and Resilient Leaders

We will leverage the expertise of GW's faculty and staff to ensure that GW students graduate at rates equal to the nation's top universities. This means a fully inclusive environment that provides every student with the access, support, and opportunity they need to pursue a rich interdisciplinary education that leverages the unique opportunities inherent in our location and connections, equipping them with essential skills as well as the practical and social experiences needed for success.

GOAL FOUR

Create a multiyear strategy to **meet the full demonstrated financial need** of GW's residential undergraduate students.

GOAL FIVE

Leverage GW's deep connections to the nation's capital to **expand students' access to a wide array of leadership and career development opportunities** through curricular and co-curricular experiences that include D.C.-based internships, research opportunities, and civic engagement.

GOAL SIX

Support GW students in realizing the full benefits of a liberal arts education, ensuring they develop the intellectual skills necessary to navigate an ever-evolving world, from technological and data proficiency to leadership, critical thinking, and empathy.

GOAL SEVEN

Support GW's graduate and professional programs by enhancing curricula, fostering a strong and inclusive student experience, and celebrating the vital roles that graduate students play in sustaining GW's research enterprise and professional students play in advancing its impact.

GOAL EIGHT

Foster a stronger sense of community and well-being for students by investing in initiatives that deepen school spirit and belonging, such as athletics, campus traditions, university programs, mental health and wellness resources, leadership and skill-development opportunities, robust student organization offerings, and other student-led programming.

GOAL NINE

Create a vibrant and welcoming campus environment through purposeful placemaking, campus beautification, and bold sustainability initiatives.



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Strengthen Our Foundation for Excellence

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GOAL TEN

Build a robust staff and administrative system with the depth and expertise to advance GW's academic and research missions. Prioritize university-wide functions that directly support student success and scholarly excellence, generate revenue, drive GW's reputation, and manifest an environment that rewards innovation and positive impact.

GOAL ELEVEN

Develop a budget model that supports GW's financial sustainability and its institutional aspirations by making the best possible use of existing resources, solidifying our financial strength, and identifying new and innovative sources of revenue and opportunity, such as philanthropy, holistic corporate partnerships, and leveraging GW's intellectual property.

GOAL TWELVE

Nurture a lifelong community where alumni can engage purposefully with the university and one another through career and personal development programs, tailored social opportunities, and meaningful volunteer roles, including forging connections with current students.





Moving Forward

GW's new strategic framework will guide decision-making for the next seven to 10 years. Designed as a living document, it ensures the university can grow with intention while adapting to new opportunities and challenges.

PHASED IMPLEMENTATION

We will implement the framework in a phased approach to ensure clear progress and adaptability over time. The framework will inform our fundraising activities to support these projects and initiatives while also guiding strategic investments made during annual budget planning. Each phase will be designed to stay responsive to our evolving environment, ensuring we make intentional progress while adapting to new opportunities and challenges that arise.

NAVIGATING AN UNCERTAIN ENVIRONMENT

As we embark on this ambitious journey, we recognize that we are launching this strategic framework amid significant uncertainty and instability. Like all higher education institutions, GW faces evolving challenges and headwinds, including the increasing impact of federal government actions. In times such as these, it is especially important that we have a clearly defined, mission-grounded direction toward which to travel. Thus, this framework will guide how we prioritize, invest, and focus.

We also acknowledge that the current climate may affect the timing of our plans and the speed with which we pursue them. We commit to continuously evaluating these external pressures, adjusting our approach as needed, and maintaining transparent communication with our community about progress and any necessary changes.

BUILDING ON A RESILIENT LEGACY

For over 200 years, GW has weathered challenges while serving our students and advancing knowledge, and we will continue to do so in our third century. This framework stands as a testament to our university's resilient legacy, its enduring strengths, and the bright future we are building together.

MEASURING SUCCESS

Success at GW will be defined by two clear outcomes: **improving student success** and **expanding our research enterprise**.

- » We will measure improvements in student success through retention and graduation rates, as well as how well our graduates thrive in their careers and communities.
- » We will track growth in our research enterprise through increases in sponsored program proposals and expenditures, as well as the production of scholarly publications, including articles, books, awards, citations, and other forms of dissemination and impact.

By focusing on initiatives and ideas that directly impact these outcomes, the framework ensures we are accountable to progress that matters most—for our students, our faculty, staff, and the world we serve.

A Call to Action

This is an invitation for every member of our community to engage, contribute, and bring these priorities to life in their daily work. We call on our community of Revolutionaries to:

- ★ **Embrace this framework as your own and consider how your work, research, teaching, or learning aligns with these shared priorities and goals.**

- ★ **Generate and share ideas that advance our institutional priorities and contribute to GW's distinctiveness and impact.**

- ★ **Participate actively in the ongoing dialogue about GW's future.**

This framework will evolve as GW evolves, and your continued engagement is essential to ensuring that this document remains relevant, responsive, and reflective of our community's highest aspirations.

As OneGW – a community of Revolutionaries united in purpose and committed to excellence – your participation is vital as we lead GW in its third century.





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Ellen M. Granberg
PRESIDENT

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