THE GW STAFF COUNCIL
Pillars Newsletter

A Message from Staff Council President, Mindy Galván

Welcome to summer, GW staff! While summer is admittedly my least favorite season, I know many of you are looking forward to some well-deserved time away from the office. Even if a vacation is not feasible right now, I encourage you to take time off to recharge and care for yourselves throughout the season.

By now, you have likely heard about the 3% staff merit increase for FY26–27. The Staff Council has submitted questions to university leadership to help clarify the process, and we will share updates with your representatives so they can help answer any questions you may have. At this time, we understand that the increase will come from a merit pool and will take effect on July 1, 2026.

We are also looking forward to the upcoming GW Staff and Faculty Festivals on June 9 (VSTC) and June 10 (Foggy Bottom), and we hope you have registered to attend. The Staff Council will be there with some fun swag, along with a survey to help gauge staff engagement with the Council and gather constructive feedback. Prior to the June 10 festival, our Development and Recognition Committee will host an in-person Career Mapping Workshop from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the University Center. Please email Allene David if you would like additional details.

At our June meeting, we will hear from leaders involved in the campus plan and provide time for your questions and feedback. If you missed the AI presentation at our May meeting regarding updates from the university's AI working groups and next steps, please reach out to your representative for a recap of the discussion. Additionally, our Employee Resource Groups are officially up and running, and we are excited to see these communities continue to grow.

Finally, the Staff Support and Well-Being Committee is offering a Care for the Caregiver training session on June 12 from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This virtual training still has limited availability and is designed to equip staff with tools to support colleagues experiencing distress and connect them with appropriate Employee Assistance Program (EAP) resources. The training may be especially valuable for managers and supervisors.Please email Andrew Godleski if you would like to join the training,

I recognize that there are many developments within the university and across higher education that may create uncertainty about the future. Throughout these times, the Staff Council remains committed to advocating for staff, just as we did during discussions surrounding merit increases. We ask that you continue to take care of one another, build community within your departments and teams, and be kind. It may seem small, but when I feel discouraged, kindness from another human makes a difference.

If you have implemented creative ways to build community or show kindness within your school or department, I would love to hear about it.

Best,

Mindy Galván

Community Connections: Accounting & External Reporting and GW IT



What began as a simple question—*"How does Copilot work?"*—quickly turned into a powerful story of collaboration, curiosity, and innovation within GW's Controller's Office and GW IT.

Fall 2024, the Accounting and External Reporting (A&ER) team — Esteban Garces, Nisha Pancal, Leslie Zito — set out to explore whether AI could simplify complex foreign income reporting and reduce significant manual effort. The process presented an ideal opportunity to think differently and test new ideas.

Recognizing that innovation thrives in collaboration, the A&ER team partnered with GW IT colleagues: Sue Bogan, Digital Transformation Specialist; Michael Ng, Web Developer III; and Hector Alicea from Cybersecurity Management. Together, this cross-functional team brought diverse expertise and fresh perspectives to the table.

Through brainstorming sessions and hands-on experimentation, the group began identifying ways to streamline data collection and improve accuracy. Their shared goal was clear: reduce manual effort while strengthening the integrity of reporting data.

By December 2025, their efforts had evolved into a new Box AI contract process. The enhanced workflow now reviews contracts, extracts key metadata, and uses AI agents to locate and validate specific information. Built-in data checks ensure consistency, while a daily output report provides timely, actionable insights.

The team has achieved meaningful time savings and improved data accuracy, particularly in identifying contract details and validating information—areas that previously required extensive manual review.

But for this group, the journey doesn't end there. Fueled by their successes, the team continues to meet, ideate, and explore new opportunities to innovate. Their work exemplifies how curiosity can spark transformation and how collaboration across disciplines can turn ideas into impactful solutions.

Their achievements were recently celebrated at DIT Data Days (pictured right). *Sometimes, all it takes is one simple question to start something extraordinary.*

Staff Council is excited to spotlight the incredible work happening across George Washington University through our Community Connections feature! Each month, we highlight a department, office, or team - celebrating achievements, sharing impact, and helping our community stay connected. Know a team doing amazing work? Want to celebrate the accomplishments of your own team?

Submit nominations to staffcouncil@gwu.edu with a brief description. We'll reach out to the nominated team to write their feature.

Staff Resources: Free Grubhub+ Membership

All members of the GW community have the ability to receive a free Grubhub+ Membership, which includes:

- Unlimited orders with $0 delivery fee on orders of $15 or more
- On average, savings of $4-$5 per order
- Access to exclusive offers

GW Faculty and Staff are able to redeem this benefit by following the steps below:

- Download the Grubhub app (An account can be created with any email/password you would like.)
- Under “Account,” select “Campus dining”
- Select “George Washington University”
- Enter your GW email and password
- Select “I am faculty / staff”
- Receive membership instantly and have healthy food delivered right to your doorstep

Development & Recognition Tip of the Month

In the book *Switch*, Chip and Dan Heath share a counterintuitive leadership perspective: what looks like resistance is often a lack of clarity. When we are under pressure, big goals like "improving culture" or "increasing efficiency" can feel paralyzing.

If a direct report seems resistant, they might actually just be confused about the first step. To overcome this, you have to "script the critical moves." Don’t just point at the destination or end goal; give them the turn-by-turn directions for the first three miles. Instead of asking for better communication, ask for a three-bullet update every Friday by 4:00 PM. By removing the decision paralysis of how to start, you lower the friction and make it easier for people to say yes. This week, if you’re meeting resistance, ask yourself: *Have I given them a goal or have I given them a move?*

Volunteer for Move-In, First Night, and Weeks of Welcome Traditions

The university is seeking volunteers to support several activities and events to welcome new and returning students to campus. They are asking for assistance with Operation REV UP! (August 19-21) and various events during Weeks of Welcome (August 22-September 30), both led by the Division for Student Affairs. Operation REV UP! volunteers will help with line and traffic management, lead activities, check blue carts in and out, and direct new students and their families. Weeks of Welcome volunteers will support the facilitation of a variety of events. Please fill out the form below with your interest and anticipated availability to assist with welcoming the Class of 2030 by **July 1.**

Sign Up to Volunteer

Employee Resource Groups

The Staff Council Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) are already underway! These groups are designed to offer an opportunity for staff to connect with other GW staff, build community, and discuss recommendations, concerns, and questions that impact their workplace experience.

To learn more about ERGs or find future meeting information, please visit the Employee Resource Groups page of the Staff Council website.

The Staff Council's ERGs are inclusive spaces open to all members of GW's staff. All colleagues are welcome to participate in any ERG regardless of the interest around which an ERG is organized.

Attend a Staff Council Meeting

The next Staff Council meeting is Friday, June 26 at 10:00 a.m.

Future and Past Meetings: You can find meeting minutes from past meetings on the Staff Council website, along with information on upcoming meetings. Registration is required so please be sure to register for any upcoming meetings you'd like to attend.

If you have any questions or topics that you would like to be addressed, please send them to your Staff Council Representative in advance of the meeting.

The GW Staff Council meets on the third Friday of each month from 10:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. EST. GW Staff Council meetings are held via Zoom and are open to the GW community. Please direct any related questions to staffcouncil@gwu.edu.

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