

April 26, 2022

Dear Chair Speights,

On behalf of the Environmental, Social, and Governance Responsibility Task Force, we write to notify you of the successful conclusion of our work.

This transmittal letter outlines the process the Task Force has undertaken and makes recommendations for ongoing engagement from university leadership.

Our success would not have been possible without the hard work, dedication, and commitment of our members. We want to thank them for their service and commitment to improve the George Washington University. We also want to thank President Mark Wrighton, Provost Christopher Bracey, and EVP-CFO Mark Diaz, whose leadership and willingness to integrate ESG into the university's conscience achieved a core objective of the Task Force's charge. We would be remiss if we did not thank the Office of the Board of Trustees for their steadfast support of our work.

Following the revamp of the Task Force in 2021, we divided our work into three subgroups to address the issues outstanding from its charge: developing recommendations for the university on the Social issues, Governance issues, and a process by which the university will continue to engage on ESG-related matters. A breakdown of the subgroup members is included as an attachment.

Each subgroup held numerous meetings to identify, discuss, and suggest a set of priorities for the Task Force. Additionally, we [held a series of community forums](#) in October and November to discuss the subgroups' draft statements and principles with the community. More than 100 members attended across the three forums to provide important feedback, and many more submitted their feedback online through the Task Force's website.

Enclosed are the subgroups' reports, which present a series of issues and recommendations for the university's consideration related to ESG.

We recognize that this is an iterative process in which the administration must engage and operationalize as the context for ESG issues evolves. President Wrighton's arrival initiated a new direction to consider the work of the Task Force in a more comprehensive and strategic way. Provost Bracey has committed to serving as the champion for holding the university accountable for the Social efforts and EVP-CFO Diaz has agreed to continue leading the effort to incorporate and address the Environmental investment and campus operational goals approved by the Board in 2020. On Governance, the principles of transparency, ethical behavior, and diversity, equity, and inclusion are ideals that the university embraces. We believe

the Task Force has achieved our charge to hear from the community in order to provide guidance to the Board of Trustees.

ESG is a complex topic, which affects many different areas of the university. We believe the proposed recommendations are grounded in transparency and equity, and entrust the administration to address the goals and targets proposed by the community, refined by the Task Force, and to report on their performance relative to the corresponding metrics. The ESG Responsibility Task Force has worked diligently, listened to the community, and incorporated many ideas that will shape the future of the George Washington University as a leading institution in sustainability, social responsibility, and consideration of ESG issues. As such, we recommend that the administration carry these principles forward to implement at the university.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Roslyn Brock, Co-Chair, ESG Responsibility Task Force  
Peter Harrison, Co-Chair, ESG Responsibility Task Force

## **Task Force on ESG Responsibility 2021-2022 Membership List**

### **Trustees:**

1. Roslyn Brock, Task Force Co-Chair
2. Peter Harrison, Task Force Co-Chair
3. Michael Hoffman, Trustee
4. George Wellde, Trustee
5. Lydia Thomas, Trustee Emerita
6. Grace Speights, Board Chair, ex-officio
7. Mark S. Wrighton, President, ex-officio

### **Students:**

1. Ama Appiah, graduate student
2. Jeremy Liskar, graduate student
3. Liam Searcy, undergraduate student

### **Faculty:**

1. John J. Forrer, Associate Research Professor of Strategic Management & Public Policy
2. Antwan Jones, Associate Professor of Sociology, Africana Studies, and Epidemiology, CCAS
3. Saniya LeBlanc, Associate Professor of Engineering and Applied Science, and Energy Innovation Research Director, SEAS
4. Melani McAlister, Professor of American Studies and International Affairs, CCAS
5. Tara Scully, Assistant Professor of Biology and Director Sustainability Minor, CCAS

### **Alumni:**

1. Somender Chaudhary, GWAA Executive Committee Member

### **Administration:**

1. Dorinda Tucker, Associate Vice President for Ethics, Compliance, and Risk, and Chief Privacy Officer

### **Task Force Advisors:**

1. Kenneth Shimberg, Managing Director, Strategic Investment Group

The work of the Environmental, Social, and Governance Responsibility Task Force is supported by the Office of the Board of Trustees including:

- Aristide Collins, Vice President, Chief of Staff to the President, and Secretary of the University
- Rhonda Carter, Executive Associate
- Edward Howland, Assistant Director of Board Operations
- Meg McDermott, Director of Board Operations
- Jonathan Post, Assistant Vice President for Board Relations

## **Subgroup Membership 2021 - 2022**

### **Social**

- Ama Appiah, graduate student
- Saniya LeBlanc, Associate Professor of Engineering and Applied Science, and Energy Innovation Research Director, SEAS
- Melani McAlister, Professor of American Studies and International Affairs, CCAS
- Tara Scully, Assistant Professor of Biology and Director Sustainability Minor, CCAS

### **Governance**

- Somender Chaudhary, GWAA Executive Committee Member
- Lydia Thomas, Trustee Emerita
- Liam Searcy, undergraduate student
- John J. Forrer, Associate Research Professor of Strategic Management & Public Policy

### **Discernment**

- Antwan Jones, Associate Professor of Sociology, Africana Studies, and Epidemiology, CCAS
- Jeremy Liskar, graduate student
- Dorinda Tucker, Associate Vice President for Ethics, Compliance, and Risk, and Chief Privacy Officer
- George Wellde, Trustee

## ESG Social Subgroup

### Part I: Statement

**Draft Statement:** George Washington University is committed to cultivating a richly diverse and inclusive community whose members thrive in a supportive culture. As an institution, GW has a responsibility to promote equity, support social justice, and act with integrity. The university upholds the highest standards of research ethics, encourages new and innovative thinking, and supports the academic freedom of our faculty. We aim to challenge our students with a rigorous curriculum while supporting them in their development as persons and as citizen leaders of the world. We believe in using our resources and research to foster intersectional, critical thinking, and respectful engagement of each others' perspectives. In its role as an employer and in the community of Washington, DC, GW is committed to providing a safe, healthy, accountable, and respectful workplace, and promoting an active engagement with the city and region in which we operate.

### Part II: Social Areas

#### Diversity & Inclusion

Measurement:

- Publish annual reports on diversity demographics (including racial, gender, sexuality, age, religious, nationality) of faculty, students, and staff.
- Publish annual reports on recruitment and retention efforts of undergraduate and graduate students, for those studying in-person and on-line.

Actions:

- Develop recruitment and retention strategies aimed to increase the diversity of faculty, staff, and the student body.
- Foster strong sense of belonging at the university through campus programming, academics, and research.
- Ensure that all members of the community have access to the university's physical spaces, and can participate in its activities fully.
- Examine our investment and procurement policies to encourage greater support for local business and community development.

#### Social Justice:

Measurement:

- Publish annual report on how our investments align with targeted socially responsible investing goals.
- Public meeting to discuss the progress of the university towards these social justice goals.

Actions:

- Support faculty in their teaching and research missions, including those that examine the history of inequality and privilege, and politics of diversity in the US and globally.
- Develop procurement and investment procedures which prioritize the selection of businesses and investments that take into consideration their environmental impact, human rights record, labor practices, supply chain management, diversity, equity and inclusion, accountability, and transparency.
- Recognizing the university's advantages and resources, develop strategies to share those resources and advantages both within the GW community and in the larger community.

**Wellbeing:**

Measurement:

- Conduct annual focus groups/surveys of students, faculty, and staff.
- Annual report on pay scales and benefits across all position bands (including part-time and contract employees).

Actions:

- Strive to ensure affordable health care, equitable family leave, and accessible mental health care for all members of the community.
- Work to include all GW workers in the health plan.
- Ensure access to confidential grievance mechanisms.
- Provide healthy and equitable working, studying, and living conditions.
- Deepen support for medical, scientific, and public health research that expands global knowledge about health, wellness, and the environment.

## **ESG Governance Subgroup**

### **Part I: Statement**

**Draft Statement:** The George Washington University aspires to good governance based on the integrity of our Board of Trustees, faculty, administration, staff, and students. We aim for robust and holistic processes and procedures across our endowment, operations, and academics.

### **Part II: Governance Areas**

1. Transparency as it relates to funding
2. Policies related to federal government funding of teaching and researching
3. Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion across the university

### **Part III: Offices**

There are a number of offices that engage with issues related to the areas above, such as:

[Office of the Board of Trustees](#)

[Office of General Counsel](#)

[Office of Diversity, Equity, and Community Engagement](#)

[Office of Research Integrity](#)

[Office of University Controller](#)

[Office of Ethics, Compliance, and Privacy](#)

[Office of Risk Management](#)

### Part IV: Draft Good Governance Considerations

Good Governance Factors	Endowment	Operations	Academics and Engagement
Transparency	<p>GW's endowment report is related to its investment philosophy and ESG considerations.</p> <p>[Clear and easily accessible reporting] on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Current Investment</li> <li>● Investment criteria]</li> </ul>	<p>GW's financial and nonfinancial disclosures are timely and relevant.</p> <p>GW will produce an ESG and Sustainability report addressing goals, policies, progress</p>	<p>Engage diverse stakeholders and report on progress on ESG goals.</p> <p>Report on progress achieving ESG goals related to student admissions, faculty hiring, research institutes and centers.</p>
Diversity, Equity & Inclusion	Include DEI in investment criteria	Include DEI in university operations	<p>Include DEI in its teaching philosophy.</p> <p>Conduct periodic review of DEI related matters, where appropriate, in course content, extracurricular programs, and boards</p>
Stakeholder Engagement	<p>In making investment decisions, ensure that shareholders' rights are protected.</p> <p>[Identify organizations to engage and confer with regarding investment criteria]</p>	Engages the stakeholders in key decisions related to the university.	Seek recommendations or modifications to current academic offerings.
Accountability	Benchmark investment criteria to other universities	Be accountable to the stakeholders	
<p>Accountability &amp; Compliance</p> <p>(Including Anti-corruption and ethics)</p>	<p>Complies with the regulatory and legal requirements.</p> <p>Complies with GW's ESG goals.</p> <p>Procedures in place for GW's investments portfolio management.</p>	<p>Compliance procedures in place for GW's operations</p> <p>Manages risks and have risk mitigation strategies</p>	<p>Complies with all relevant regulatory and legal requirements.</p> <p>Encourage a culture of academic accountability in faculty and students.</p>



## **ESG Discernment Subgroup Proposal for a Standing ESG Review Committee**

### **Part I: Guiding Principles**

- Accountability
- Transparency
- Accessibility
- Inclusivity

### **Part II: Structure**

- The ESG Review Committee will be a permanent advisory body to the Board of Trustees and administration
  - Chartered by the university president and facilitated by a senior-level administrator
  - Faculty, students, administrators, and alumni are voting members
  - Two trustees will serve in an advisory capacity
  - Voting appointments made by their respective bodies; the Student Association (1 year term), Faculty Senate (2 year term), Alumni Association, and University President.
  - Chair of the Board of Trustees will appoint trustee advisors
  - Eligible for reappointment

### **Part III: Evaluation Standards for Proposals**

- Alignment with ESG Responsibility Statement, and with institutional, academic, and research missions
- Support from a critical mass representative of GW community opinion

### **Part IV: Mandate**

- ESG Review Committee will have access to information needed to make informed recommendations on proposals, including university data, documents, and personnel when appropriate.
- The committee will serve as a connector across the GW community to facilitate missing data where appropriate
- The committee will regularly provide updates to the administration and the GW Board of Trustees, including at Board of Trustees meetings. At these updates, there will be an opportunity for dialogue.
- The committee will also provide updates to the Faculty Senate and Student Association when appropriate and relevant.

### **Part V: Process**

- Active members of the GW community (students, faculty, or staff) develop a written proposal for consideration by the ESG Review Committee. This proposal aligns with GW's ESG responsibility statement, as well as the

institutional, academic, and research missions. Relevant metrics should be included where possible.

- For full evaluation, in addition to the written proposal, at least one of the following thresholds must be met (within one calendar year prior to submission).
  - Student Association Senate Resolution
  - Faculty Senate Resolution
  - Petition with at least 1,000 GW community signatures (students, faculty, staff alumni). Must indicate community relationship.
  - Student Association ballot referendum with at least 2/3 support of those voting.
- If there is a Student Association or Faculty Senate Resolution as its support, the committee will vote (simple majority) to begin evaluation
- If there is a petition or ballot referendum, the committee shall begin evaluation
- Thresholds reached during the 2021-2022 academic year will be considered sufficient.
- Proposals should be reviewed for evaluation within two months of their submission, the submitters notified of their status, and if the proposal was accepted for review.

**If accepted:**

- A subgroup of the committee (2-3 members) will facilitate the proposal through the process, including research, tracking, reporting, and implementation. They will serve as a point of connection for implementation should the proposal be accepted by the relevant decision-maker. The subgroup will connect with relevant offices from time to time to review implementation.
- The committee will evaluate the proposal against the set evaluation standards and any additional information gathered from university sources.
- The submitting group will be invited to a meeting of the committee to present their case and answer questions
- The committee will host and publicize public forums, provide an opportunity for written feedback, and, if needed, meet with impacted stakeholders. These comments will be taken under consideration.
- The committee will complete its evaluation within 4 months after approving to take it up, and will make a recommendation to the appropriate decision-making authority (e.g. President, Provost, Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Board of Trustees)
- The decision and recommendation by the ESG review committee will be publically available.
- The decision-making authority who received the recommendation will decide and announce the decision within 6 months of receipt.

**If rejected:**

- One calendar year must pass before the proposal can be resubmitted for evaluation.

**Communication:**

- If adopted, public reporting will be made by relevant administrations at significant implementation points throughout the process. There will also be a one-year impact report.

**Part VI: Launch**

- The ESG Review Committee will begin receiving proposals as early as is possible following Board approval.

