



A MESSAGE FROM

**M. Brian Blake**

Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs



Dear GW Community:

We have listened and heard the concerns from some members of our community about the appointment of Dr. Ilana Feldman, current vice dean of the Elliott School of International Affairs, as interim dean following the announcement of Dean Reuben Brigety's coming departure. The concerns revolve around personal views that Dr. Feldman has expressed about the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement.

The university's policy on BDS is clear and unambiguous, as has been the setting of expectations with Dr. Feldman: GW does not support divestment or other actions called for by BDS. While the university does support academic freedom for all, members of the administration – including those in an acting or interim capacity – are required to comply with all university policies, including the policy on BDS, and foster an atmosphere that allows all voices to be equally heard. Dr. Feldman has also specifically committed to adhering to [GW's policy regarding freedom of expression](#).

To be clear, the university does not tolerate discrimination in any form, including anti-Semitism and racism. We also believe in an inclusive and robust community that respects all points of view. These values, which at times can come into tension with each other, are intrinsic to the GW community. We acknowledge that tension, but also insist on taking the opportunity to reaffirm our values; and we believe there is no better way to do so than by the appointment of a new dean who embodies the best of what the Elliott School has been and will be as we look to the future.

We thank all who have written and called to contribute to this important conversation, and invite you to engage in the process of identifying a new dean for the Elliott School, which is already underway. The search committee has been formed, and we are pleased to announce that James E. Foster, Oliver T. Carr Professor of International Affairs and Professor of Economics, has agreed to serve as its chair. The other committee members are:

A. Michael Hoffman, Trustee  
Donna Hill Staton, J.D. '82, Trustee  
Christopher A. Bracey, Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs (non-voting member)  
Maggie X. Chen, Professor of Economics and International Affairs  
Alexander B. Downes, Associate Professor of Political Science and International Affairs  
Hope Harrison, Associate Professor of History and International Affairs  
Benjamin D. Hopkins, Director of the Sigur Center for Asian Studies and Associate Professor of History and International Affairs



Kimberly J. Morgan, Professor of Political Science and International Affairs

The committee will also include members from the Elliott School Board of Advisors, alumni and graduate and undergraduate student body. We will announce those members once the appointments are made.

We are working to identify a search firm to aid in the process of identifying potential candidates. We anticipate that the search committee will be charged at the beginning of June, with interviews to be conducted early in the fall semester. Dr. Feldman will not be a candidate for the permanent position. We appreciate her service during this interim period.

Once again, we thank everyone who has contributed to this conversation, and we encourage you to send any additional thoughts and comments to [provostmail@gwu.edu](mailto:provostmail@gwu.edu).

Sincerely,

M. Brian Blake  
Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs