

State of McCourt Student Questions

Current State of McCourt

The McCourt School fell in the public policy school rankings even after receiving the McCourt gift. Why did this happen despite the increased resources? Aside from the absence of a McCourt PhD program, what factors contributed to the decline in school ranking and what steps are being taken to remedy them?

- Ranking is a composite ranking of public policy and public affairs schools – some schools that are ranked are not our peers (we don't put the same kind of programs together)
- There are no objective components to this ranking: they are based upon other schools' Dean's perceptions of the program, not based on evidence (e.g., GPAs, GRE scores, graduation, employment, etc.). It's a reputational contest, it's a beauty contest.
- What can explain how schools are ranked? The best predictor of rankings is how long a school has had a PhD program. Another predictor is how you do in public management – it's not something we've traditionally focused on, but we're working on it.
- Because we do not have a PhD program, we don't have faculty teaching in other policy programs who know McCourt.
- We need to do a better job marketing/branding ourselves and our great community. We have a compelling story to tell, and we have to do a better job at selling our story.
- We have hired a new Digital Marketing Associate and increased our marketing budget to get the word out about what we do.

Does McCourt have an integrated communications plan to help with branding and building up the image of the school?

- Our Communications and Events team is focused on raising the visibility of McCourt- our outstanding faculty, unique students and programs and activities with key internal and external audiences like prospective students and peer institution leaders.
- We accomplish this through:
 - Proactive press outreach on faculty research and McCourt programs and events, like GU Politics and our Whittington Lecture.
 - Producing videos to more effectively tell our story in a digital age. This year we've produced a video on McCourt Policy and practice and the Policy Innovation Lab. And were working on videos on our Data for Social Good Effort and a video targeting admitted students to improve Admissions yield.
 - Marketing pieces like our annual Policy Perspectives magazine for our students. Faculty alumni and peer institutions leaders; the McCourt Report biannual email for peer institution leaders, and The Policy Memo, an email for McCourt alums done in conjunction with the Alumni Board.
 - Professional and faculty marketing to NAPSAA, APPAM and other professional academic associations, who hold the key to our ranking.
 - Using social media channels like Facebook and Twitter to share our actives with

internal and external audiences.

- In addition to these activities, we work to produce thought provoking policy events like the Whittington lecture, LEAD Conference, while also supporting programming at GU Politics, MDI and the Baker Center.
- We know there is room for improvement, and we're open to your ideas. Email or call Lauren Mullins, who would love to talk with you.

What would be the case for or against moving the campus closer to the Hill?

- The case for downtown comes down to two things
 - Synergies with Law school
 - Connected to gov't agencies and being accessible with rapid transportation
- We're not doing anything close to what the school of continuing studies has done having a standalone building by themselves – a campus is a campus.
- First, to address the rumor, we are not moving to the Hill any time soon. The campus is seeking out funding and a location, but we are at least 5-7 years away from considering a move.
- Pros:
 - Closer to Capitol Hill and government agencies for internships, partnerships
 - More Metro accessible
 - More collaboration with the Law Center
 - Would hopefully get more space
- Cons:
 - Loss of a campus/community feel
 - Some faculty have joint appointments and/or do research with other programs on campus – including SFS, Government, Econ
 - Difficult to take classes in other programs

Why did the tuition increase by more than \$1,000 between last and the current academic year? What is the additional money being used for?

- Tuition typically increases by about 3% each year to cover additional expenses (e.g., faculty/staff salaries, building/maintenance operating costs, new initiatives).
- Our tuition has been growing slower than other schools. Why tuition is raising at all: it funds faculty raises, renovation of facilities.

How do you think we can improve collaboration and communications with other Schools and Departments at Georgetown?

- We are recruiting some joint hires, such as with Law and Computer Science.
- MDI is multidisciplinary and brings together faculty/researchers from across campus.
- We are co-offering a course with MSFS on Iraq/Syria.
- Our Office of Career Development works closely with SFS and the Business School on co-sponsoring events, employer visits, etc.
- We donated money to the Graduate School Government to help with the Holiday Party.

- We encourage our student organizations to seek out opportunities for working with other students. For example, LAPA co-hosted a conference with many other programs' student organizations and GPPSA held a successful happy hour with the JD/MBA programs.
- We also co-sponsor the APPAM Student Research Conference with 12 other local policy schools where our students can present their research and meet students and faculty from other schools.
- The challenge for collaboration is that our priority is: McCourt students. To open classes to other departments (and same the other way around), we want to make sure that our students have priority seats first.

McCourt Gift/Initiatives

What is the administration's strategy in utilizing the McCourt gift to continually improve the school and attract increasing levels of talent to it?

- The gift agreement gave 100M\$ over 10 years. It also came with an endowment – good news is that it comes forever, the bad news is that endowment returns comes at about 5cents on the dollar.
- Our commitment to McCourt was four-fold:
- Student Excellence- allows us to bring in some exceptional students.
- Faculty Excellence- allows us to bring in some renowned faculty (such as George Akerlof).
- MDI- fund high quality research, host Census Data Center, produce useful research.
- GUPolitics- Fellows/events bring high level of access to students.

What is the 5- and 10-year plan for McCourt and the use of the endowment?

- What we want to make sure is that we set the stage for the next gifts. Hopefully one gift may be real estate – we want our own building: that's key to deliver high quality experience to our students.
- Our staff, faculty, and select students/alums recently participated in a 5 year Strategic Plan. I am currently reviewing the recommendations, and we will publish the plan once it is finalized.
- The gift has very strict limitations for what we can pay for -- we cannot use the gift for anything else, except:
 - Student Excellence- 5 McCourt Scholars each year
 - Faculty Excellence- hire exceptional faculty
 - MDI
 - GUPolitics

Faculty

What is McCourt's plan to create a more permanent faculty? As it stands, many of our courses are taught by practicing adjuncts, who I do not feel take teaching as seriously as full-time research-based faculty members.

- Being in Washington DC gives us access to the field that we couldn't have in other areas – it would be foolish to cut ourselves from the opportunity to take someone from the World Bank, the EPA, etc.
- For the Fall 2016 semester, approximately 60% of McCourt courses were taught by full-time faculty members (both core and teaching).
- We try to have core/full-time faculty teach the core MPP, MPM, and MIDP courses, though sometimes they are covered by adjunct faculty.
- For electives, we take the view they may be more topical – maybe an elective is topical now, but not two years from now.
- We value our part-time faculty and recognize that they do have full-time jobs. However, they should be taking their teaching seriously and responding to students.
- Please let Leslie or Dean Rom know if you have faculty who are not meeting our expectations.
- Please fill out the course evaluations -- we take them seriously and use them in future hiring of adjuncts, faculty pay/raises, and personnel decisions.

The McCourt administration is great at bringing on professors that come from careers in government, academia, and civil society in the U.S. and abroad. While these professors undoubtedly bring great value to the table in terms of experience-based insights and personal anecdotes, this does not necessarily translate to solid pedagogy. What steps is McCourt leadership taking to eliminate lecture-based teacher-driven pedagogy and implement project-focused student-driven learning?

- How each class should be taught depends on the class – we don't want to implement a one type of class design.
- We are not actively trying to eliminate lecture-based teacher-driven pedagogy as sometimes this is the best method for teaching certain subjects. We value our faculty are subject-matter experts.
- We do encourage faculty to use a variety of pedagogies, especially with types of assignments. For example, the spring break courses Negotiation and National Security Policy will have table top exercises, simulations, and other interactive learning methods.
- We have brought in the Center for New Designs in Leadership and Scholarship to train faculty on different types of teaching and learning styles.
- We created the client-based capstone as an option for the MPP to address this, and we are looking at other types of client or project-focused courses. For example, we plan to offer a Global Residency trip to Costa Rica in Spring 2018 where students will work on projects with government officials, NGOs, and private companies.

Should McCourt hire more professors in every domain (risking to duplicate work already existing at Georgetown and reinforcing silos) or facilitate connections with other departments (classes, research initiatives, seminars, etc.) - and if so, how?

- We are trying to develop some strong boundaries across schools by hiring joint faculty, co-sponsoring classes, holding topic-specific seminars (such as the development seminars which are open to students).

- We're also planning to hire several McCourt Chairs. These positions will have open fields and disciplines and rather focus on candidates with outstanding records of teaching and research.

Curriculum

What is the current status and the vision for a McCourt PhD?

- We are still at least 5 years out from developing a PhD -- we need to hire more faculty and secure some more funding in order to create a competitive program

Half your professors already use R instead of Stata for their own work. Any consideration of switching the program to R? Do you have an ongoing contract with Stata?

- About four years ago we moved to Stata from SAS based on employers' feedback. We are open to move to R, we have no plan to doing so. We want to make sure that it enhances your employability first of all.
- We haven't considered changing it just yet because our employers and alumni have told us that Stata is the most marketable skill right now. However as needs change, we will consider changing the types of programs we teach. We used to teach SAS but then went to Stata when the federal government implemented it.
- No, we do not have a contract with Stata.

What steps are McCourt taking to add more energy and environment classes?

- This is a growing area for us and Georgetown -- our two tenure-line faculty members Pasha Mahdavi and Raphael Calel teach courses on energy and environment and may offer more in the future.
- For Spring 2017, we will be adding an International Environmental Law/Regulation course with Professor Eliza Northrop from the World Resources Institute.
- We have confirmed that we will be offering a Natural Resources Law and Policy in Fall 2017, taught by former adjunct Patty Beneke (Director and Regional Representative of the United Nations Environment Programmes; former Senior Counsel to the U.S. Senate Committee on Energy and Natural Resources)
- If you have other ideas for energy/environment courses, please let Leslie know.

Can students have the opportunity to do a capstone and a thesis? (perhaps with a mini capstone second semester first year and a thesis second year)

- This is difficult because of the way our curriculum works -- we want the capstone experience, whether thesis or client-based for the MPP program -- to be a culmination of all your core courses
- However, we are looking a semester-long client-based courses in different areas. We are looking to see if we can partner with the State Department to offer their Diplomacy Labs as a course where students and faculty would work with a specific embassy on a policy issue.

Admissions/Scholarships

What is the current state of the Admissions Department?

- As you may know, both our our full-time admissions staff left earlier this semester. The Academic and Student Affairs team stepped in to continue operations and met with over 80 prospective students.
- We have hired a new Associate Director of Admissions Indhika Jayaratnam who comes from the SFS Global Human Development Program. She is in the process of recruiting a new Assistant Director of Admissions.
- We recruited at several Idealist.org fairs and organized prospective student events in Boston, New York, Chicago and San Francisco. We are hosting on-campus information sessions, online sessions, and Facebook live sessions and have reached out to alums to promote our programs .
- Thanks to the over 40 current students who signed up to be Admissions Ambassadors and have been meeting with or emailing prospective students.

Why doesn't McCourt have more need-based scholarships?

- Georgetown does not offer need-based scholarships at the graduate-level. Our scholarships are all merit-based.
- It is hard to determine a graduate student's need -- someone coming from undergraduate may be seen as having a low income vs. someone who just quit their job to come to graduate school.
- Our alumni are currently discussing a scholarship fund based upon need.

What is the strategy to reach out to more diverse, disadvantaged students? How critical do you think that is for McCourt as a brand, or as a strategic school shaping new leaders?

- Absolutely critical.
- We have done targeted marketing to increase our domestic US applicants and international applicants, particularly those from underrepresented communities. We sent emails and marketing materials to students from the GRE list, McNair Scholars, PPIA graduates, HBCUs, HSIs, and other specific organizations.
- With a full admissions staff, we hope to do even more in-person recruiting at specific schools, organizations (such as black sororities/fraternities).
- We are working with SFS to become a Public Policy/International Affairs (PPIA) host site to train underrepresented students in economics, statistics, and public policy.
- In conjunction with the Diversity and Inclusion Task Force, we are working to insure that all students feel welcome and supported at McCourt, both within and outside of the classroom. We're one of the best places for this – we'll continue doing more.
- Our alumni are also currently discussing a scholarship fund for underrepresented students.

Career Development

When can students expect McCourt to start having On Campus Interviews similar to

those held at the Goldman School, Harris School and the Kennedy School?

- All employers are offered the option to conduct on-campus interviews at McCourt. Like, Goldman, Harris and the Kennedy Schools, employers that have selected to interview multiple current students may choose to conduct on-campus interviews.
- Often employers are conscious of conserving resources and will typically choose to come to campus just one time to meet with students across several programs that have the relevant skills they are seeking at that time. As a result, OCD often collaborates with other career development offices across campus to provide McCourt students with as many recruitment opportunities as possible. This semester, McCourt students were invited to attend over 40 employer recruitment events and/or activities.
- On-campus recruiting is just one tool employers use to select and hire new talent. Some employers conduct ad hoc interviews or informational interviews/office hours after their information sessions. Additionally, employers have started to move away from on-campus recruiting entirely, and have been transitioning to virtual interviews, information sessions, resume books/drops, and other time and cost-effective strategies. To keep up with this current trend, OCD offers employers options for virtual meetings, webinars and on-site visits to have recruiting access to McCourt students.
- One of the many advantages of being in Washington, DC is the ability to go to the organization itself to interview. This allows you to see the space, feel the energy of the organization, and meet with additional team members which can be used in evaluating the position/offer. OCD makes every effort to accommodate specialized employer recruitment requests to enable the most efficient and effective access to students.

Over the last year, students have complained about career services lacking specialized knowledge in public policy careers. What steps is McCourt taking to ensure all students are able to receive valuable assistance from career services?

- Public Policy is a set of skills – not a certificate like a Law Degree.
- OCD staff has over 30 years of combined experience in career development and bring expertise from public policy, law and business.
- Unlike law or medicine, there is no specific track of “policy jobs;” but rather a specific set of skills, experiences and expertise that employers seek from policy students
- Positions that require these skills vary across employers and policy areas in terms of title and duties. OCD seeks to equip students with the tools and skills to showcase how their education and experiences align with the needs of the organization.
- OCD maintains constant communication with employers, alumni, colleagues and other stakeholders to identify current desired skills and opportunities expressed by employers.
- They participate in numerous workshops, conferences and events to stay abreast of new and trending policy areas which change constantly.
- This semester, OCD hosted two lunch chats with faculty to share their specialized knowledge of public policy careers. These events were well received and OCD plans to continue in the Spring. If you have suggestions on faculty or policy areas that you would like to learn more about, contact Katrina.

Given the change in administration, how will the school support those students who may no longer be interested in administration jobs? What steps will be taken to support these students as they assess new short-term (or long-term) career paths?

- The vast majority of federal serving jobs are career jobs. Those jobs work with Democrat, Republican administrations – administrations they like or don't like. If you want to work there because you like the work, because it's your passion, go there and continue the good work no matter who's your boss today. It's different if you're a political appointee – but don't quickly abandon your passion because you don't like the current administration.
- Our program train you to many opportunities: about 40% end up federal employees, but our students also go to Urban Institute, or to Deloitte.
- An unexpected career pivot can be upsetting and stressful. While we are all waiting to see what will occur with the private and public sector job market in the coming months we are encouraging students to take this opportunity to conduct some self-reflection about their professional career path by scheduling an appointment with a OCD staff member to discuss career their concerns. OCD can:
 - Help you identify your relevant skills and experiences transferable to alternative employment sectors
 - Re-brand and revise your employment materials (resumes, cover letters, etc.) to reflect new areas of interest
 - Connect you with alumni in newly discovered areas of interest
 - Collaborate with you on alternative strategies to continue on current chosen career path (i.e., state and/or local agencies, etc.)
 - Going forward OCD will present new resources and targeted programming on relevant topics such as how to change career path, navigating the new administration and relevant opportunities and how to manage career related stress. Other ideas are welcomed!

Other Student Issues

Why are international students charged for 0.5 credit course we have to take in order to work off-campus during the semester? The course costs McCourt nothing, and it's unbelievable that international students have to pay \$500 for it just to be allowed to work.

- Except for the MIDP program, McCourt students are not required to complete an internship in order to graduate. Therefore, international students who want to work are required to enroll in an internship course.
- Our internship course is .25 credits (other departments charge 1 full credit). Georgetown will not let us charge \$0 for .25 credits. If your internship is unpaid, McCourt will provide you with a .25 credit scholarship to cover the cost. If your internship is paid, you are expected to cover the cost.
- We are looking into whether we should require an internship or other work experience as part of the degree program.
- If you have questions, please talk to Leslie or Nirmala.

Why is there no funding for language courses (both GU courses and external courses in the DC area)?

- McCourt does not require a second language for graduation. Therefore, students cannot take language courses for free. However, if you need to learn a language for **academic** purposes, you can apply for a scholarship. You can ask Leslie about the details.
- GPPSA has also set up an informal Language Buddies program -- see Beatrice Leydier for details.