

## **Frequently Asked Questions – Follow-up to Cost Mitigation Message**

*Most recently updated on Wednesday, May 7, 2025*

**Q: How will the university be monitoring the financial situation, and is there a possibility that some of these mitigation actions will be revisited sooner than January 2026?**

**A:** We are closely tracking federal policy changes, economic trends, revenue generation, philanthropic giving, and enrollment patterns. A formal reassessment will occur by the end of the fall semester. If conditions improve significantly, we may be able to revisit some of the cost savings actions sooner. We will remain in touch with our faculty and administrative staff leaders throughout the fall as we have more information.

**Q: Who does the merit increase pause apply to, and how long will it last? A:** The merit increase pause applies to the following employees:

- Merit increases for faculty and staff with a full-time equivalent salary of \$50,000 or greater that would have taken effect July 1, 2025, will be paused for the duration of the first half of Fiscal Year 2026. We will reassess by December 2025.
- Merit increases for senior-level executives (SLE) and administrative staff whose annual base salary is \$200,000 or more will be paused for the entire FY 2026 (July 1, 2025 - June 30, 2026). We will reassess the need for continuation or adjustment as we prepare for FY 2027, based on our financial health and the external environment.

**Q: During the merit pause, how will performance evaluations be handled?**

**A:** Performance evaluations will continue as scheduled and remain an important part of professional development and recognition at Georgetown. While salary increases are paused, evaluations will inform future merit decisions once financial conditions allow.

**Q: Will merit increases for staff earning between \$50,000 and \$200,000 resume in January 2026? Do merit eligibility standards change with the revised implementation date?**

**A:** Our strong hope is to proceed with merit increases in January 2026 for administrative staff earning between \$50,000 and \$200,000, but this decision will depend on the external financial environment as assessed in December 2025. To prepare for a potential merit increase in January 2026, units are being asked to collect and submit proposed merit increases based on the most recent review cycle (March 1, 2024 – February 28, 2025). Eligibility standards for merit will not change with the revised timeline.

**Q: Does this freeze apply to faculty salary increases and reclassifications? Will faculty promotions through the rank & tenure process be impacted?**

**A:** Merit-based salary increases for faculty are paused through December 31, 2025. However, promotions and associated salary increases through the standard rank and tenure process will continue as planned.

**Q: Will merit be restored retroactively when the pause is lifted?**

A: While we do not anticipate making retroactive salary adjustments for the paused period, we will have ongoing updates on the financial condition throughout the fall and we will resume merit-based increases moving forward based on performance and fiscal conditions.

**Q: Will employees earning less than \$50,000 annually be eligible for additional merit increases in January 2026?**

A: Qualifying employees with a full-time equivalent salary of \$50,000 or less will be eligible to receive merit-based salary adjustment, under our standard processes, starting on July 1, 2025. Therefore, these employees will not be eligible for additional merit increases, should they occur, in January 2026.

**Q: What criteria are being used by senior leadership to determine mission-critical positions?**

A: Adjustments will be approved only if they are necessary for the university's critical functions — such as essential student services, health and safety, or strategic academic, research or operational needs.

**Q: Can administrative staff salary adjustments or reclassifications continue to be requested during the freeze?**

A: Requests can be submitted but will undergo a strict review by senior leadership to determine if they meet the critical threshold.

**Q: When is the effective date of the freeze? What happens to promotions and reclassifications that are already in process?**

A: The freeze of all hiring, promotions, and reclassifications for administrative staff positions is effective immediately. Actions that were fully approved before April 30 will move forward. New or pending requests will be subject to the more stringent review process.

**Q: Will any hiring of administrative staff positions be allowed during the freeze?**

A: Hiring will be extremely limited and permitted only for roles that are externally funded or identified as critical by senior leadership (e.g., essential for safety, compliance, or mission-critical academic and research operations).

**Q: If our unit wants to make a hire, what is the process for seeking senior leadership approval? What is the exception process?**

A: All requests for administrative employees and positions should follow the standard [HR eRequest process](#). eRequests will only be approved if they are deemed mission-critical by senior leadership (Executive Vice Presidents or Chief Operating Officer).

For faculty positions, more information will be forthcoming from academic campus leadership.

**Q: During the hiring freeze, will the university allow searches to proceed for positions that are already posted? What about instances where offers have already been extended?**

**A:** Offers that have been formally extended will be honored. Future offers and posting approvals will be subject to the more stringent review. Hiring requests (eRequests) that were previously approved but where an offer has not yet been extended will now undergo an additional review by senior leadership. These positions must meet the criticality criteria established by the Executive Vice Presidents or the Chief Operating Officer in order to proceed.

**Q: Some key employees in our unit retired or are retiring under the Staff Voluntary Retirement Program (SVRP). Will they be replaced?**

**A:** Positions under review through the SVRP process will be assessed individually by the relevant campus leader for mission-criticality during the hiring freeze.

**Q: What additional savings measures are being considered?**

**A:** Executive Vice Presidents and the Chief Operating Officer are leading efforts to review savings within each campus, including reducing non-essential spending (travel, catering, supplies, events), streamlining services, and deferring non-essential projects.

**Q: Will there be opportunities for the community to provide input on savings ideas? A:**

Yes. During the process of developing our current mitigation efforts, a number of consultations were held with faculty governance groups and administrative staff leadership. These groups shared many helpful ideas and faculty and staff are encouraged to continue to share ideas for efficiencies with their school or unit leadership.

**Q: Will professional development, travel, or catering and events budgets be impacted?**

**A:** Non-essential travel, professional development, and events will be carefully reviewed and, in some cases, deferred to conserve resources. Essential academic, research, and mission-critical travel may still be permitted with normal approval processes.

**Q: Will there be layoffs or furloughs? Will 403(b) contributions be paused?**

**A:** Our proactive cost containment measures are specifically designed to avoid widespread layoffs and furloughs. By taking early, disciplined actions, we aim to preserve stability and minimize disruption across the university. Executive Vice Presidents are reviewing programs and budgets carefully—evaluating them based on enrollment trends, research activities, and strategic priorities—to inform any future decisions. Additionally, we do not intend to pause 403(b) employer contributions and those will continue without interruption.

**Q: What is the projected financial impact of the federal changes?**

**A:** The full impact of federal changes remains fluid and difficult to predict. However, we have taken a proactive approach by developing detailed financial models to assess potential risks. Several dedicated working groups are closely monitoring key areas—such as research funding and student financial aid—to ensure we are ready to respond to any changes that may affect the University’s operations.

**Q: Will there be any impact to current, ongoing or future capital projects?**

**A:** We are reviewing all planned capital projects carefully. Non-essential projects may be delayed or restructured based on evolving financial conditions, while mission-critical investments will proceed.

**Q: Is there a possibility of additional cost-saving measures if federal funding cuts worsen?**

**A:** We are committed to adapting responsibly as conditions evolve. While our current actions are designed to avoid deeper reductions, if financial conditions significantly worsen, we may need to consider additional mitigation strategies to protect the university’s core mission.

**Q: How is Georgetown advocating at the federal level to protect research and education funding?**

**A:** Georgetown actively engages with federal policymakers, higher education associations, and peer institutions to advocate for the importance of research funding, student aid, and policies that support higher education. These efforts are ongoing and a critical part of our response.

**Q: What does this mean for the Job Classification and Career Pathway (JCCP) study currently underway?**

**A:** Implementation of the JCCP project is paused; however, critical behind-the-scenes work — such as building the new job architecture in GMS and engaging unit leaders — will continue. It is a priority to ensure that this project is effectively implemented across the university.

**Q: Are there exemptions from the merit increase pause for personnel that are 100% externally funded?**

**A:** No. The merit increase pause (for employees >\$50k) also applies to employees that are externally funded.

**Q: How will the current merit pause impact base salary—especially for faculty and staff over the long term? Will future increases take into account missed merit from FY2026?**

**A:** We understand the uncertainty and frustration this situation has created, particularly for employees who are balancing long-term financial planning with short-term realities. At this time, no final decisions have been made about how merit-based salary increases will be handled

beyond January 2026. While we hope to resume merit increases in January, this will depend on financial conditions and approval by the Board of Directors.