

Good Morning

I am Shelly Heller, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs at the Mount Vernon Campus of the George Washington University and the director of the Elizabeth Somers Center for Women's Leadership. It is my please to welcome you to the George Washington University and for those of you who have traveled from afar, welcome to our Nation's capitol.

George Washington was determined to have a great national university in the nation's capital. His hope was that students from all parts of the country would gain a first hand knowledge of the practice as well as the theory of republican government while being instructed in the arts and sciences. He bequeathed 50 shares of The Potomac Company "towards the endowment of a University to be established within the limits of the District of Columbia, under the auspices of the General Government, if that government should incline to extend a fostering hand towards it." Despite Washington's intentions, The Potomac Company folded and Congress never extended a "fostering hand," so the University did not take shape until a group of Baptist clergymen led by Reverend Luther Rice took up the cause. They raised

funds for the purchase of a site and petitioned Congress for a charter. Congress insisted on giving the institution a non-sectarian charter which stated “That persons of every religious denomination shall be capable of being elected Trustees; nor shall any person, either as President, Professor, Tutor or pupil be refused admittance into said College, or denied any of the privileges, immunities, or advantages thereof, for or on account of his sentiments in matters of religion.”

George Washington, as Columbian College, was finally chartered by Congress in 1821. It is fitting that this topic, biosimilars, is being discussed here at GW. As noted by Steven Knapp, the newly installed President of GW, the university has a long history of innovation in science and law.

When the Medical School first opened, there was a shortage of cadavers. Some charged the director with improper acquisitions—in other words, grave-robbing! The charges were dropped when a bright young attorney came to his defense. That attorney was Daniel Webster. Years later, that same Medical School was home to a well-known doctor named Walter Reed—for whom the Army Medical Center is named—as well as Dr. Frederick Russell, who

introduced the typhoid vaccine to the United States Army.

In 1939, the great scientist Niels Bohr first announced the fission of uranium at a conference here, ushering in the nuclear age.

George Gamow began as a faculty member in 1934 and produced a landmark paper *The Origin of Chemical Elements*. This paper became known as the Alpher-Bethe-Gamow theory. (Gamow had added the name of Hans Bethe, listed on the article as "H. Bethe, Cornell University, Ithaca, New York" (who had not had any role in the paper) to make a pun on the first three letters of the Greek alphabet, *alpha beta gamma*.)

It is also fitting that the Elizabeth Somers Center is participating in this conference. Elizabeth Somers founded the Mount Vernon College and seminary to provide an outstanding education for women in the liberal arts and sciences. Today the Center has year-long programs to education young women for leadership roles and provides research concerning how to bring and keep women and underrepresented minorities in the sciences and engineering.

You have surely come to the right place at the right time. I know that the meeting schedule offers

outstanding presentations at every hour, that the meals, coffee breaks and receptions are designed for networking experience but I want to encourage you to try to take a peek at the campus. There is a lovely gallery on the 2<sup>nd</sup> level of this building, a beautiful campus quad and the lively student center border are just steps away.

On behalf of the organizing committee, whether this is your first time in DC or this is where you make your home, if you have any questions about the facilities or activities, please let us know and we will try to find appropriate accommodations.

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I wish you all an outstanding intellectual journey.