

Maria Donoghue, PhD

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Maria Velleca Donoghue is a Neuroscientist and Professor of Biology at Georgetown University. Her scholarly work on early brain development has been funded by the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation and published in top scientific journals. After obtaining her Ph.D. from Washington University, Maria began her faculty career at Yale University School of Medicine, primarily focused on research. As time went on, however, she felt drawn to teaching and mentoring both undergraduate and graduate students and she moved to a College of Arts & Sciences setting twelve years ago. As a member of Georgetown University's Biology faculty, she cofounded and directed a new undergraduate major, directed and renewed the University's Howard Hughes Medical Institute program, served on the Faculty Senate and its steering committee, helped design and then resided in a new science building, and taught undergraduate courses for science majors, non-science majors, and interdisciplinary classes while also teaching and mentoring graduate students. In all of these experiences, she has been a firm advocate for the power of a liberal arts education. And she is grateful to have received multiple teaching and mentoring awards at Georgetown. In 2015, Maria became the Senior Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs and Strategic Planning for Georgetown College of Arts & Sciences. As the only tenured faculty member on the Dean's staff, she was responsible for a faculty of 500, spanning 26 departments and 11 interdisciplinary programs. In this work, Maria focused on supporting a strong and diverse faculty and helping departments and programs achieve their operational and scholarly goals. She also worked closely with the Provost's office in coordinating programming across Georgetown's main campus and with other university units. She was deeply involved in the recruitment, promotion, retention, and mentoring of the College's faculty and in the development of strong leadership in department Chairs and program Directors. In addition, Maria was committed to disciplined stewardship of financial matters and then strategic alignment of resources with College priorities. Stepping out of the role in 2017, Maria was a visiting scholar at Duke University for the 2017-18 academic year. She returned to Georgetown in the fall of 2018 to resume teaching and directing her research laboratory while assisting the Provost's office with a strategic analysis of policies regarding full time term faculty. In addition to her responsibilities on campus, Maria is a trustee of St. Albans School, an independent boys school in Washington, D.C. including a term as Governing Board Chair from 2016-2018 when she guided a leadership transition and completed a fund-raising campaign- volunteer experiences that informed her work in higher education. Maria has been married almost 25 years to a biopharma entrepreneur and they have two sons- a senior at Swarthmore and a sophomore at Davidson. She is excited to learn more about Drexel.