

The GW Hatchet

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SARAH ROACH | EDITOR IN CHIEF

History department chair Katrin Schultheiss said increasing the proportion of STEM majors could push officials to reduce the amount of resources allocated to non-STEM departments.

Push to increase STEM majors could lead to cuts in non-STEM departments, faculty say

ALEC RICH & ETHAN SCHWARTZ
REPORTERS

Officials' push to increase the number of STEM majors could mean "major" cuts in funding for non-STEM departments, humanities and social science, faculty said.

University President Thomas LeBlanc announced at a town hall earlier this month that he intends to increase the ratio of science, technology, engineering and math majors at GW from about 19 to 30 percent of the undergraduate population as the University rolls out its next five-year strategic plan. More than 10 liberal arts faculty said LeBlanc's decision could strain budgets in non-STEM departments and impede progress on research projects.

LeBlanc said he aims to admit more STEM majors amid plans to cut undergraduate enrollment by 20 percent over the next five years. He said at a Faculty Senate meeting in March

that GW still lags behind most private research universities in terms of its percentage of STEM students, falling at second to last behind Georgetown University.

"The world is changing and STEM is an accelerator," LeBlanc said at a town hall meeting earlier this month. "We should all want every student at this University to have access to the skills necessary for the quantitative analysis of data using technology."

Katrin Schultheiss, the chair of the history department, said she is "concerned" with LeBlanc's twin goals of increasing the percentage of STEM majors and cutting the undergraduate population. She said the changes will necessitate reductions in funding for non-STEM departments and result in a "radical shifting of resources away from non-STEM fields."

"If the new push for more STEM majors were coupled with a clear commitment to finding new sources of revenue to fund

that initiative, I would be more supportive," Schultheiss said in an email.

LeBlanc said in an interview earlier this month that while he does not want to make GW a competitor in STEM education on par with schools like the California Institute of Technology, he wants to bring the school more in line with its peers' STEM-to-non-STEM ratios.

Schultheiss said LeBlanc's focus on STEM through his strategic initiatives downplays the value of a humanities education at GW.

"Studying the humanities equips us to examine the world around us with a critical eye and to understand the place that we as individuals and as citizens play and have played in society," she said. "Without such understanding, we cannot hope to change the world in ways that are truly meaningful."

She said LeBlanc's push is part of a broader decline in enrollment in humanities across many academic

institutions as a result of STEM graduates generally earning higher incomes than non-STEM students.

"If you want to find something to blame for the declining fortunes of the humanities, look to broader trends in society that prioritize salaries, economic utility, tech-facilitated efficiency and social status," she said.

Masha Belenky, an associate professor of French, said officials should continue to commit the same level of funding to departments that represent GW's "traditional areas of strength" in the humanities and social sciences to preserve the academic programs that help GW stand out among other colleges.

She said officials should create a "clear plan" detailing how they intend to account for the reduction in enrollment and increase in the proportion of STEM majors so that non-STEM departments have enough resources.

See OFFICIALS Page 2

ANC exceeds budget by thousands to fund community projects

SHREYA SATAGOPAN & ZOYA WAZIR
REPORTERS

A local governing body exceeded its 2019 budget by thousands of dollars to pay for legal fees and pedestrian safety studies for projects on and around campus.

The Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission announced last week that the organization exceeded its fiscal year 2019 budget by about \$3,000 to finance several community projects, like the Foggy Bottom Campus Plan waiver and a renewed liquor license at The Watergate Hotel. ANC commissioners said the organization's financial reserves – which grow every year – will pay for the extra services.

Commissioner Patrick Kennedy said the ANC collaborates at the beginning of each fiscal year to outline potential expenditures for community services and votes on which projects could be funded. In fiscal year 2019, which ends Sept. 30, the ANC used about \$8,400 – more than twice as much as the organization spent last year – to finance community projects, he said.

"The payments that can fluctuate the most based on the needs of a given year are those for professional services," he said. "The ANC often retains the services of people like lawyers or traffic consultants to provide expertise and represent the community's interests in areas where the volunteer commissioners themselves lack subject matter expertise."

The ANC hired a traffic engineer for nearly \$2,000 last December to study pedestrian safety around Washington Circle after residents complained that cars failed to stop at the crosswalk on 23rd Street and changed lanes haphazardly around the circle. The District Department of Transportation created a traffic island on 23rd Street south of Washington Circle in April.

Commissioners voted in June to hire a firm for \$5,000 to assess pedestrian safety on the section of H Street that runs through campus. Officials added a second cross-

walk on the block between the Marvin Center and Kogan Plaza last fall after several students complained that cars would nearly hit pedestrians crossing the street.

Kennedy said the ANC hired legal counsel to help the commission finalize a settlement with the University detailing temporary housing situations for students displaced by renovations to Thurston Hall. The University agreed last week to pay a \$1 million fine for every semester that students live in off-campus buildings past its intended finish date, which is scheduled for fall 2022.

"That work guaranteed the Commission's unanimous support for the project and an expeditious handling of the application that will hopefully allow the project to proceed quickly," he said in an email.

Kennedy said the services the commission funded this year will ultimately benefit the community and will not negatively impact the ANC's finances next fiscal year.

"That means, in effect, that the ANC could, without receiving another dime from the District government, continue to pay its bills for almost three years just from the money we have saved," Kennedy said. "So there will be no impact from running a slight deficit this year."

ANC Chairman William Kennedy Smith said the commission received about \$19,000 from the D.C. Council for fiscal year 2019. But Smith said the ANC saves any money from its Council allotment, which has accumulated to almost \$60,000 in reserves that will cover this year's extra expenses.

"In any given year we have reserves that are equal to three years worth of operating," Smith said. "We have plenty of margin to make expenditures beyond what we set for each year's budget."

Commissioner Detrick Campbell said the over-expenditure does not pose a financial burden because the budget is flexible.

"However, when we budget for purchases of service, it doesn't necessarily have to go to that, it's just our best guess," he said.

Officials host on-campus trainings, debut new service ambassadors

MEREDITH ROATEN & ZACH SCHONFELD
STAFF WRITERS

A service ambassador team will host leadership training sessions this fall for faculty and staff as part of a push to improve institutional culture.

Officials said the Culture Leadership Team – a group of faculty and administrators working to improve staff morale and interactions – developed an aspirational statement and values, oversaw four work teams and created an ambassador team to lead in-person training sessions this fall. Faculty leading the initiative said officials have invested significant resources into the initiative, but the culture will only improve if every faculty and staff member is on board.

Executive Vice President and Treasurer Mark Diaz, who chairs the Culture Leadership Team, said the group used feedback from the Disney Institute's culture assessment of the University last fall to guide its work. The survey identified four main areas of dissatis-

faction: inconsistent leadership, inefficient communication, poor service culture and lack of employee appreciation.

"Faculty and staff agreed that we need to change our culture," he said in an email. "This will not happen overnight and will require a long-term, multi-faceted deliberate effort by faculty and staff."

University President Thomas LeBlanc has drawn attention to the lack of a service-driven culture at GW – a move that received widespread faculty support – since he arrived two years ago. He formalized the initiative to improve culture as one of his five strategic initiatives.

Culture work team recommendations

Officials created four cross-functional work teams focused on leadership behaviors, recognition, orientation and care this spring. The teams, consisting of 40 faculty and staff, developed recommendations for administrators to improve the University's institutional culture.

Diaz said the work teams' recommendations were "wide-ranging" and included immediate changes – like free summer access for faculty and staff to the Lerner Health and Wellness Center – and longer-term efforts like creating an internal portal for faculty and staff.

"Implementation of work team recommendations will continue, and updates will be provided to faculty and staff as changes and enhancements are introduced," Diaz said.

John Philbeck, the vice dean of faculty affairs for the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, said that during the faculty and staff recognition working group's meetings, participants primarily discussed the distinction between "recognition" and "care." Faculty, staff and administrators suggested different ways officials could show care to faculty and staff but declined to elaborate on specific suggestions.

"People suggested possible forms of recognizing faculty and staff, and we discussed the pros and cons," he said in an email.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

University President Thomas LeBlanc has focused on improving GW's "transactional" culture since he arrived in 2017.

Service ambassadors and new trainings

LeBlanc announced in an email to faculty and staff earlier this month that officials will brand the initiative to change GW's culture as "Our GW." Officials had appointed 25 new faculty and staff service ambassadors to

lead on-campus trainings for employees this fall, he said.

The trainings – open to all "regular full-time and part-time faculty and staff" at the Foggy Bottom, Mount Vernon and Virginia Science and Technology campuses – will provide employees with "guidance" on the Univer-

sity's new "framework" for the initiative.

"We have all agreed that we need to change our culture," he said in the email.

GWHATCHET.COM

How service ambassadors plan to change GW's culture.

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News

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CRIME LOG

THREATS IN A MENACING MANNER

University Mall
9/17/2019 – 10:22 p.m.
Closed Case

GW Police Department officers observed a man unaffiliated with the University throwing fake punches at a male student. GWPD issued the man a bar notice.

Subject barred

UNLAWFUL ENTRY

Shenkman Hall (Food Court)
9/18/2019 – 9 p.m.
Closed Case

A GWPD officer noticed a previously barred man in the Shenkman Hall food court. GWPD arrested the man and issued him another bar notice. Metropolitan Police Department officers responded to the scene and transported the subject to the Second District police station for processing.

Subject arrested

THREATENING PHONE CALLS

Academic Center
9/20/2019 – 4:10 p.m.
Open Case

A female staff member reported receiving phone calls from a “disgruntled” male parent threatening legal action.

Case open

DESTRUCTION OF FIXTURE/ VANDALISM, BURGLARY II/FORBIDABLE

Academic Center
Unknown – Unknown
Open Case

A female staff member reported that someone broke into her office and stole her cellphone and other personal belongings.

Case open

THEFT II/FROM BUILDING, THREATS TO DO BODILY HARM

Private Property on Campus (7-Eleven Store)
9/22/2019 – 5:49 a.m.
Closed Case

GWPD responded to 7-Eleven for a report of a man unaffiliated with the University who stole cigarettes from the store and threatened 7-Eleven staff. MPD officers responded to the scene but couldn't find the subject.

No identifiable subject

– Compiled by Kateryna Stepanenko

Unlawful Fulbright entry sparks safety concerns

MAKENA ROBERTS &
MARISOL CABRERA
REPORTERS

An unlawful entry into Fulbright Hall earlier this month rose security concerns among the building's residents.

On Sept. 14 at about 1:40 p.m., Monee Rogers entered Fulbright Hall behind a student who allowed her access through the front entrance and entered a room. In interviews, more than 15 students who live in Fulbright said they generally feel safe in their hall but wish the University had alerted them about the entry closer to when the incident first happened instead of waiting about a week to email students.

The student whose room Rogers entered, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for her personal safety, said Rogers entered her unlocked room and asked to use the bathroom. She said Rogers, 61, told her that she had to use the bathroom or she would “pee on the floor.”

“She was wearing a dress so she moved to take her underwear off, so I sprinted and I banged on my RA's door,” the resident said. “I got my RA and we got back to my room and she had closed the door on me and locked it.”

The resident said her resident adviser contacted GW Police Department officers, who asked Rogers why she entered the hall. The resident said Rogers claimed that Allah told her she “owned the building” and that she was “praying” to Allah.

“I'm working with them now to talk about different options to help fix this, and the only thing they could really give me was to be more vigilant,” the resident said.

Associate Vice President of Safety and Security Scott Burnotes said GWPD officers investigated the incident and found that a student allowed Rogers to enter through the hall's front door, and Rogers made her way into an unlocked residence hall room. Metropolitan Police Department officers arrested the woman for unlawful entry, according to an MPD report.

“Students and parents initially raised concerns



GRACE HROMIN | PHOTOGRAPHER

Students living in Fulbright Hall said they wish officials would have alerted them about an unlawful entry in the building earlier this month.

because people wrongly assumed that a door had been propped open or was not functioning correctly,” Burnotes said.

He said the crime was not the student's fault, but officials are encouraging Fulbright residents to follow safety tips – like asking for a person's student ID before holding the door for them or telling a visitor to sign a log if they do not have an ID – to reduce the chances of crime occurring.

“The University is working with resident advisers and staff to address any safety concerns and to continue to help students incorporate safety habits that will help ensure their safety in their residence halls,” Burnotes said.

More than 15 students living in Fulbright said they generally feel safe in the hall but should have been informed when the incident first occurred. Fulbright students received an email from their area coordinator notifying them of the incident and alerting them that a student access monitor would be stationed at the front of the hall moving forward.

Alicia Harris, an RA in Fulbright, said the incident seemed like a “one-off” occurrence, but she wishes that SAMs had been stationed at the hall since the beginning of the year.

“It's nice that we have SAMs now,” she said. “I

wish we had SAMs the entire time since we are on the very outer edge of campus, this close to the Metro and the rest of D.C.”

Julia Hagen, a freshman living in Fulbright, said students received an email about a week after the incident saying a SAM would be placed at the entrance to the hall 24/7 because of the unlawful entry, but that a monitor hasn't been present the entire time.

A Hatchet analysis found earlier this year that several residence halls lack security more than 90 percent of the time. The University hired 50 percent more SAMs over the summer for this fall than it has in previous years.

Hagen said she and her roommates will start locking their door more regularly.

“It definitely makes us feel a little less safe because someone did get into the building and got into someone's room, and we leave our door open a lot because our hall is very social,” she said.

Cordelia Scales, a freshman living in Fulbright, said she feels about as safe in her hall as she did before the incident occurred, but the unlawful entry caught her off guard because officials didn't immediately notify students of the incident.

“I would have appreciated a text or something saying, ‘An attempted break in at Fulbright,’ instead of waiting a week for an email,”

Scales said.

Aidan Lang, a freshman living in Fulbright, said he was in the lobby when the woman was arrested, and information about the arrest spread quickly over texts among the hall's residents.

Lang said he has noticed many people holding the door open for people coming in behind them, the same way Rogers was able to enter the residence hall earlier this month.

“I had noticed other people letting other people in a lot and everyone just holds doors open for those going out and in, so that doesn't seem very safe,” Lang said.

He said he was satisfied with GWPD's response to the incident, because officers efficiently removed the person from the hall. Lang said he has noticed more GWPD officers in the Fulbright Hall lobby since the incident, and officers have ensured that all doors to the residence hall – except the main door – are locked.

GWPD officers are working with facilities' employees to ensure that the door to Fulbright Hall's basement is consistently locked, according to the email students received from the hall's area coordinator.

“They showed up and got the person out,” Lang said. “I think asking much more of them would be asking them to be super-humans.”

Officials must be more transparent about STEM goals: faculty

From Page 1

“A great STEM school should have equally great humanities programs that foster critical thinking and historical and global perspective, skills and qualities that GW strives to foster in students,” she said in an email.

Joel Kuipers, the chair of the anthropology department and a professor of international affairs, said officials should include student voices in the decision-making process as officials prioritize STEM and cuts in enrollment. Incoming students in

non-STEM schools could see their financial aid packages decrease over time, he said.

“Students are unaware of the impact on them, student scholarships specifically,” he said. “It will affect who we can attract.”

He said the increase in STEM majors will cause budget shortfalls for the University as a result of the increased cost of teaching STEM students, including lab costs and scholarships for first-generation students, many of whom pursue STEM majors and need “extra” financial support. The University's external debt reached about the same

level as its endowment for fiscal year 2018, according to a presentation at this month's Faculty Senate meeting.

He said the move will necessitate budget cuts, and members of his department are concerned about what the cuts could mean for humanities enrollment and research. He did not specify whether he or members of his department have approached LeBlanc with their concerns.

Melani McAlister, a professor of American studies and international affairs, said improving STEM literacy and programming is important for GW to remain a “top

university” but cautioned against elevating STEM “at the expense of our well-established strengths.”

“My concern has to do with setting a very high goal for STEM undergraduate majors, without having the history, infrastructure or funding to support this unusual – and for us, unprecedented – switch in emphasis,” McAlister said in an email. “If President LeBlanc's main goal is excellence, then we build on our strengths in the social sciences and humanities while also supporting STEM.”

McAlister said she is con-

cerned with LeBlanc's decision to cut undergraduate enrollment because fewer students paying tuition coupled with increasing STEM majors will reduce support for student aid, research and teaching for non-STEM fields.

“For the University to do that while it is also raising the number of STEM majors, who get a greater discount rate and whose departments are already subsidized by tuition dollars from other students – this is just deeply worrisome,” McAlister said.

McAlister said members of the GW community “deserve better than we are

getting” in terms of information being passed down from the Office of the President and the Board of Trustees. She said officials need to hold more “serious and sustained” faculty consultations on how STEM programming decisions will affect the school as a whole before cuts and changes take place.

“Certainly many of us in the humanities and social sciences support STEM and want GW to do well in STEM,” she said. “But a major shift in our university's identity and priorities is not a decision where we have had consultation or input.”

GroW Garden works to increase enrollment in local agriculture program



ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

One of the managers of the GroW Garden, Sharon Shatananda said, she wants to survey CSA subscribers to learn more about their food preferences.

SHANNON MALLARD
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

After enrollment in a student-run locally sourced food subscription program spiked to a record high this spring, involvement dropped this fall.

The Community Supported Agriculture program

– a service the GroW Garden organizes in which students buy a semester's worth of locally sourced food – enrolled nearly 150 students in the spring compared to fewer than 100 students this fall. Students who subscribe to the program said increasing enrollment will support local food producers and allow

more students to eat sustainably.

“For us at the GroW Garden, the numbers aren't so important,” senior Hannah Brenner, one of two GroW Garden managers, said in an email. “What matters to us is the impact we're making, whether that means having 100 people participate or 10.

We are concerned with getting the message out there to eat locally and sustainably and to support local farmers.”

Brenner said the GroW Garden sends emails about the CSA program to the GroW Garden listserv and to past participants in the program, but relies “heavily” on word of mouth to promote their organization.

“Students really want to join and participate when they see the price points and realize it's an affordable way to eat as well as being good for farmers,” Brenner said.

She said the increase in enrollment over the past few years is likely because of students' increased interest in eating ethically and sustainably, and because students can now pay for the subscription using their GWorld. While enrollment dipped between the spring and fall, involvement has still grown from 91 students in fall 2016 – when the program launched – to 98 students this fall.

She said she hopes enrollment in the program will continue to increase so that students can economically support a larger number of local food producers.

“The more people we have involved in the program, the more we can get the word out about how important it is to support local farmers and eat in a conscious way,” she said in an email.

Senior Sharon Shatananda, one of the GroW Garden managers, said the GroW Garden works with D.C.-based organization Community Foodworks, which subsidizes food shares through the CSA program for food-insecure individuals living in the D.C. area.

“First, you're supporting locally from an ecological sense – you're buying local, everything is organic and everything's really grown around here,” she said. “But then also, you're supporting local farmers, and then you're also subsidizing shares for folks who maybe wouldn't otherwise be able to get them.”

Shatananda said the GroW Garden advertises the CSA program to students throughout the academic year, so enrollment in the program is usually lower in the fall than in the spring. She said students are more conscious of what their grocery needs are as the year

progresses.

She said the group will continue to ask CSA participants about their food preferences to tailor the variety of locally sourced food that is available through the program. She said students are more likely to join and remain in the program if the shares available are catered toward what foods they specifically request.

Shatananda said the group reaches out to green student organizations, like Green GW and Fossil Free GW, and to students taking sustainability courses about joining the program through email and social media.

Shatananda said students participating in the program are supporting producers who sell food sustainably and ethically rather than larger food corporations, like Whole Foods, that rely on “exploitative” labor practices, like paying workers low wages.

“If you're buying from Whole Foods, you're feeding into a lot of systems that are exploitative,” Shatananda said. “Here, you're saying, ‘I'm really valuing what I eat, how it's produced and the people that are a part of that whole system.’”

MPD stop data show racial disparities in Second District policing

AVI BAJPAI
REPORTER

Metropolitan Police Department officers disproportionately stopped black individuals in the Second District, where GW is located, over the course of four weeks this summer.

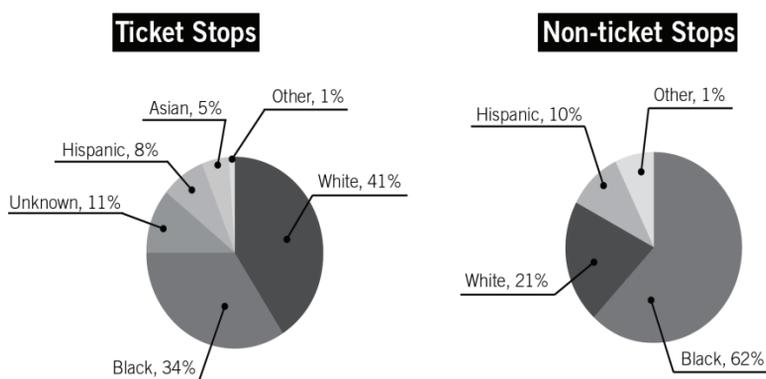
Sixty-two percent of the non-ticket stops made in the Second District, which encompasses neighborhoods like Foggy Bottom and Georgetown, were made for black individuals in a four-week period, according to a stop and frisk report MPD released after years of delay earlier this month. Criminal justice experts said police departments should engage in community outreach to minority communities to curb racial disparities in policing.

The Second Police District encompasses parts of Wards 2, 3 and 4, where black residents account for 9, 6 and 52 percent of the population, respectively, according to Census Reporter, a website that gathers U.S. demographic data.

MPD spokeswoman Alaina Gertz said the data collected over the four-week period is insufficient to draw conclusions from about racial bias in police stops. Gertz said MPD will release stop data for all of 2019 at the beginning of 2020 and release stop data every six months after that.

"MPD is committed to ensuring that each police stop meets its high standards

Ticket and non-ticket MPD stops by demographic in the Second District



Source: Metropolitan Police Department

GRAPHIC BY ALYSSA ILARIA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

for fair and constitutional policing and demonstrates respect for the individual stopped," she said.

In other police districts, black individuals comprised higher proportions of non-ticket stops, totaling 97 and 98 percent in the Sixth and Seventh districts, respectively, where black residents make up larger portions of the areas' populations.

The NEAR Act, which the D.C. Council passed in 2016, requires MPD to collect comprehensive data on police stops to build transparency and increase community trust.

In May 2018, the American Civil Liberties Union of D.C., Black Lives Matter D.C. and the Stop Police Terror Project D.C. sued MPD and

Mayor Muriel Bowser for failing to collect stop data. The latest release of data comes nearly two months after a D.C. Superior Court judge ordered MPD to comply with the NEAR Act and track the race of each person officers stopped.

Black individuals constitute just under half of the District's population but accounted for 86 percent of total non-ticket stops MPD officers made citywide during a monthlong report MPD released earlier this month. Gertz said the department will work with independent researchers to further analyze the data and additional stop data before drawing conclusions about the disparities.

Gertz said only 5 percent

of the roughly 11,600 individuals that police officers stopped during the reporting period received protective pat downs in addition to being stopped. Nearly 90 percent of the individuals who were subjected to protective pat downs during their stops were black, according to data posted on the department's website.

The department defines protective pat downs as limited protective searches conducted when an officer has "reasonable suspicion" that an individual is involved in criminal activity.

In the Second District, only 4 percent of police stops resulted in a protective pat down, compared with 5 percent of stops resulting in a protective pat down city-

wide, according to MPD's data.

Scott Michelman, the legal co-director of the ACLU of D.C., said the newest data supports previous ACLU findings, which reviewed police data collected from 2013 to 2017 and demonstrated that black individuals are more likely to be stopped than any other race.

The ACLU will work closely with Black Lives Matter and Stop Terror to reform police practices but is not clear on specific next steps for reform, Michelman said.

"We are continuing to analyze the data, but already these numbers raise grave questions about whether the D.C. police are over-policing community members of color," Michelman said. "We will continue to seek answers and fight for reform."

Experts on racial disparities in policing said police departments can utilize community policing tactics to keep trust between officers and residents.

Richard Rosenfeld, a professor emeritus in criminology at the University of Missouri-St. Louis, said police departments should hold continuous meetings with members of minority communities and establish a set of agreed-upon conditions for where to place police officers in the city to alleviate concerns that minorities are over-policed.

"Basically, you hear all of the time, 'With all these cops around, you would think we wouldn't have so

much crime. Where are they when we really need them?'" Rosenfeld said.

Renee Hutchins, the dean of the University of the District of Columbia's David A. Clark School of Law, said MPD's racial disparities in the Second District are "grossly disproportionate" to the black population in the area.

Hutchins said she hopes MPD can turn to other cities that have been successful in reducing racial disparities in policing to find ways to curb the disparities.

"There are smart people thinking about these issues that can help us figure out how to move to a different place, and I would hope that MPD would aggressively lean into those solutions, as opposed to hunkering down and becoming defensive about the findings," she said.

Brandon Lantz, a professor at Florida State University, said disproportionate policing of black residents can have amplified effects on minority populations who may believe police treat them unfairly.

"More broadly, because police act as gatekeepers, the decisions that they make can cause reverberations throughout every stage of the criminal justice system," Lantz said. "If these decisions are racially biased, they increase racial disparities in incarceration, which may lead to increased community and family disruption among minority communities."

Senior class gift coordinators to focus on building community through events

ZACH SCHONFELD
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

This year's senior class gift coordinators said they want to foster a stronger sense of unity in the graduating class and improve the campaign's marketing.

Senior class gift coordinators Malcolm Badger, Helena Doms and Jared Levinson said they will host social events, like happy hours and meals, throughout the year to encourage interactions between the entire senior class and improve a sense of community among students. The events, along with social media promotion, will help raise awareness for the campaign and encourage donations from seniors, organizers said.

"One of our main goals is to improve the relationships that we have with the GW campus as a whole," the three organizers said in a joint email.

Badger, Doms and Levinson said they want to reach 350 or more recurring gifts from seniors at or above one of three contribution levels, ranging between \$4.17 and \$20.84 per month. Last year's gift organizers also placed an emphasis on recurring donations, rather than one-time gifts.

Senior class gift campaign coordinators last year raised almost \$80,000 from about 39 percent of the class, about a 43 percent decrease from the \$140,882 raised by the Class of 2018.

This year's organizers hosted a "Senior Kickoff" event Sept. 4 on the roof-

top of Hotel Hive, offering giveaways like drink tickets and GW "accessories." The organizers also doled out more than 150 free bagels and t-shirts at the annual Senior Breakfast on Aug. 26. Organizers said they plan to continue hosting social gatherings, including a Halloween-themed event.

The three organizers said they will focus on rekindling old friendships between seniors after learning that many attendees at the kickoff event did not have close bonds with friends they made earlier in their time at GW.

"At our senior kickoff, we heard many comments that it was the first time that some seniors had seen their friends since freshman year," the organizers said. "We want to create more opportunities like that, in addition to promoting and advertising other senior-related events, dates and deadlines."

The organizers also administered a survey to seniors at the beginning of the academic year through a Google Form and received "great feedback" about their overall student experience, awareness of the gift campaign and event interest. Ninety-one seniors responded to the survey, which coordinators said will guide the types of events organizers hold this year.

"We used the survey to gauge what seniors would be interested in, and we received many great responses," they said.

The organizers added that they plan to hold career



ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Senior class gift coordinators said they want to enhance a sense of community among seniors through social events and social media outreach.

preparatory events, like hosting a networking event and offering headshots for seniors, to help them land jobs after graduation. Last year's organizers partnered with the Center for Career Services to host career panels.

"Senior year can be stressful, which is why we thought hosting an event with GW alumni and career services would assist seniors looking for their next step," this year's organizers said.

Badger, Doms and Levinson said they will enhance their marketing by using social media accounts and "educational materials," which

will spread awareness about the campaign and related events. The campaign's past events have been advertised on the senior class Facebook page and Twitter account.

"We also plan to use the accounts to celebrate students who make their gifts," the organizers said. "At the end of the day we're seniors too, we want to connect with the class on a humorous, easy-going level."

The organizers declined to say how much money they hope to raise or what percentage of the senior class they hope will participate.

Philanthropy experts

said the messaging and events surrounding a senior gift campaign can entice more students to donate.

Andrew Foiles, the assistant director of student and young alumni engagement at Virginia Tech, said events throughout the year can "absolutely" promote the gift campaign by making seniors aware of the campaign.

"We're going to have a presence at the different academic colleges and will have a welcome back event this year," Foiles said. "And we'll be there just to talk with people – not necessarily to make the ask, but just to make sure

that brand recognition and identity is getting out there."

Foiles said setting donation goals can encourage students to donate by creating a sense of competition. The organizers said they are working with Development and Alumni Relations to offer new matching gift incentives in addition to traditional donation challenges.

"Students – I'm sure this is pretty equal across the board – love a good competition," Foiles said. "They want to make sure that they beat last year, or maybe they want to outdo a rival institution."

Rebekah Hatherly, the young alumni and student engagement coordinator at High Point University in North Carolina, said building friendly relationships between coordinators and other members of the class can make asking for gifts "easier."

"I think the more you spend time with people and the more you get comfortable with them, the more you get to answer questions that you might not be wanting to when you first initially meet them," Hatherly said.

Hatherly added that the focus on recurring donations could also lead to a jump in alumni giving rates in the future.

"Alumni participation is always great because you want your students to see that just because you graduate from the university, you're still part of it," she said. "You should always want to have the university getting better and bringing more students and providing scholarships."

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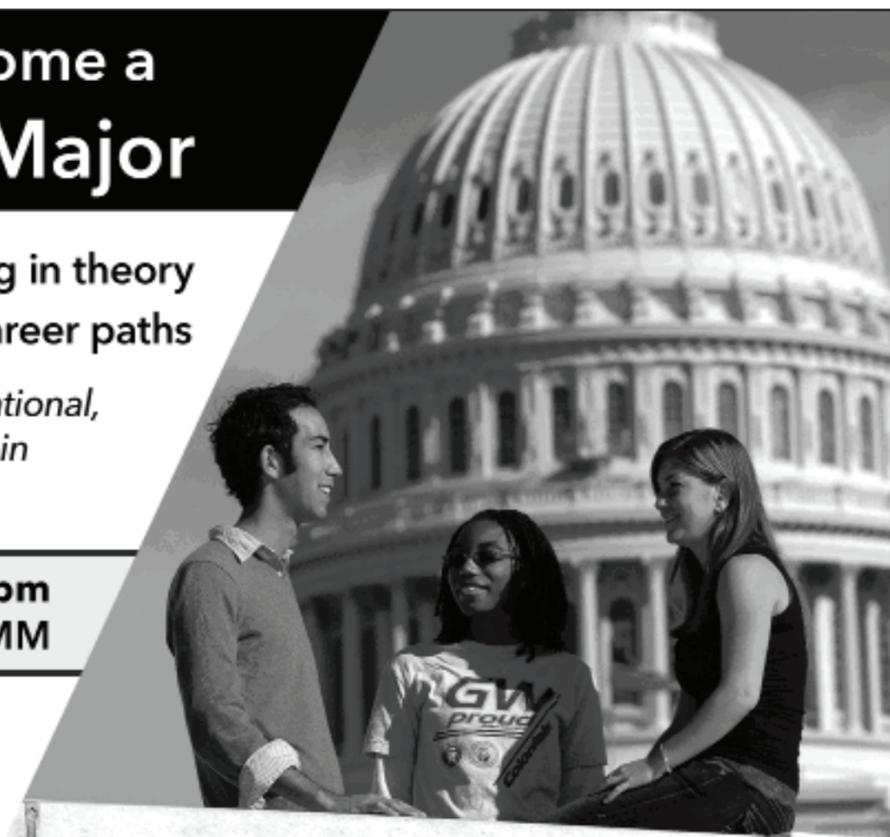
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State lawmakers should not suppress student speech

STAFF EDITORIAL

At least 17 states have proposed or approved legislation designed to prevent students from speaking out against controversial speakers on their campuses. But these proposals masquerade as a way to block students from exercising their right to protest.

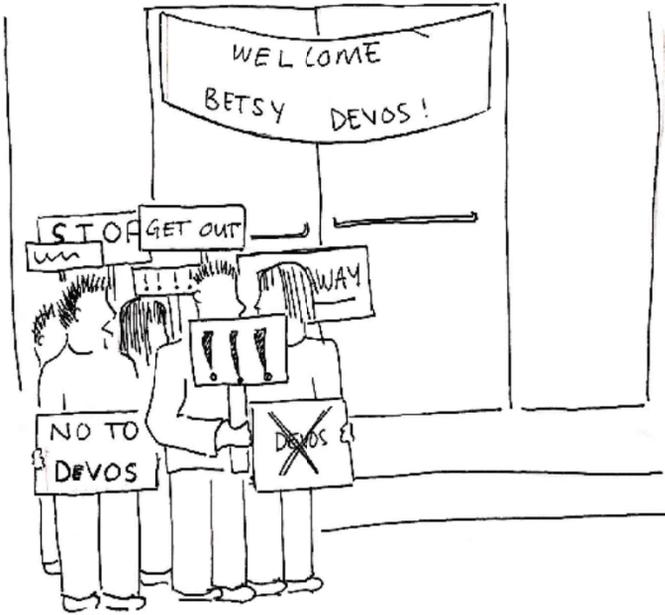
Students protesting against controversial speakers has been a nationwide occurrence, from students at the University of California, Berkeley opposing a visit from conservative commentator Milo Yiannopoulos to students shouting down a lecture by author Charles Murray at Middlebury College. Although lawmakers see student protests as a negative reflection of a university, there is nothing wrong with standing up against controversial figures. Protests have led to meaningful conversations about politics and values between students of different beliefs.

Legislation currently being considered by Wisconsin lawmakers is extreme because the bill would require universities to suspend or expel students who prevent the speech of other individuals. Introducing legislation to prevent controversial voices from being drowned out does not protect free speech – it does the opposite. Lawmakers should not infringe upon students' First Amendment rights and should allow students to speak out about the

people and issues they oppose.

Students have used their right to protest speakers to spark conversations about issues relating to the controversial figures. Students protested Education Secretary Betsy DeVos in 2017, prompting conversations about her Title IX policies and allowing survivors and their allies to speak out. The University has also asked Brazilian politician Jair Bolsonaro to visit campus, but students protested and created a conversation about the legitimacy of right-wing rhetoric from a foreign politician. In 2012, students protested the appearance of Phyllis Schlafly – a conservative politician who supported antifeminism – starting discussions about the role of feminism and female empowerment.

Passing legislation that would block students' ability to protest controversial speakers like DeVos and Bolsonaro would prevent dialogue about issues – like sexual assault and hate speech – from developing on campuses. Universities should feel comfortable bringing in dicey speakers knowing that students may revolt. Suspending students who voice their opinions violates their right to free speech and supports the speech of individuals whose beliefs sometimes hurt student groups.



Cartoon by Tara Peckham

The language of Wisconsin's proposed law is vague, giving universities and lawmakers a loose mandate to decide when suspension or expulsion is necessary. The legislation states that Wisconsin schools suspend students who "interfere with the expressive rights of others" more than once and requires public universities in the state not to take positions on public policy matters. States that adopt this law need to be

clear on who is making the decision behind suspensions and on what grounds they are basing these suspensions. Students who incite violence should be suspended, but students who speak out against a speaker or interrupt an event should not be punished for exercising their rights.

Students' rights to protest should extend as far as students want, so long as they do not incite violence or use hate speech,

like when students at UC, Berkeley protested Milo Yiannopoulos and caused \$100,000 worth of damage to campus. Last year, GW's Young America's Foundation hosted conservative commentator Ben Shapiro. Students posted flyers threatening the event and suggesting that YAF hire security. Universities should be willing to intercede when student protests get violent or break laws, but they should not limit the speech of students who

are peacefully protesting. Universities should not be discouraged from bringing controversial speakers to campus for fear of student backlash. The University's role is to provide education and share ideas – even from those with whom we disagree. But students should not be expected to blindly listen to people they oppose without speaking up. Just as the speaker has the right to espouse controversial opinions, students have the right to speak against them.

This law tells students that their voices do not matter and sets a dangerous precedent that one person's speech is more valuable than another's. Lawmakers are signaling that people in power are more important than students' voices and ideas. The law seems to protect the image of a university and ensure that students will not appear to embarrass a school when a high-profile speaker visits. It is in a school's self-interest to prevent situations that might reflect poorly on it, but taking away freedom of speech to do this is an overreach.

This law places all power in the hands of administrators and powerful speakers. It is unacceptable in any circumstance to violate the First Amendment to freedom of speech and assembly – even if students disagree with what is being said.

D.C. should recognize student-athletes as paid workers

College sports drive billions in profits to universities and are watched by millions of people. But collegiate athletics are also performed by students who do not get any of the money they help generate.

Matthew Zachary
Columnist

California made headlines earlier this month when its lawmakers passed a bill allowing college athletes at public and private universities to be compensated for the use of their name, image and likeness. College athletes at California universities can also hire agents to represent them in any endorsement and licensing deals. The New York and South Carolina legislatures are poised to consider similar bills. But the legislation contradicts longstanding rules imposed by the governing organization of college athletics: the National Collegiate Athletics Association.

The NCAA demands that its workers perform at least 20 hours of work every week for no pay. But California and other state legislatures know the NCAA cannot continue making billions of dollars off the work of unpaid employees, and the D.C. Council should follow suit. The District should pass legislation recognizing student-athletes for who they are – workers who deserve to be paid.

The NCAA argues that college athletes must not be paid to keep a "level playing field" in the recruiting process and in competition, because universities that can afford to pay athletes could outbid other institutions.

But universities can profit off the appearances of their athletes. Schools use student-athletes to boost alumni donations and rake in funds from tickets sales and publicity contracts.

Student-athletes often deal with grueling practice schedules and hours of team workouts on top of their academics, preventing them from working jobs. Scholarships help to offset the costs of living at an expensive institution like GW, but many students can still struggle to support themselves in their day-to-day lives.

Student-athletes have more obligations to the University and less time to earn money to support themselves financially. While athletic scholarships are offered to student-athletes, scholarships are not enough for students who cannot afford to attend college. Allowing them to profit off their names would help student-athletes provide for their families and live comfortably.

Students often find jobs or paid internships to supplement their food budgets, but student-athletes cannot do so because Division I athletes commit to at least 20 hours of practice per week. Non-athletes might spend those 20 hours earning money. For students whose families struggle to get by, playing sports might be the only way to afford college – the NCAA offers 150,000 full scholarships to Division I and II athletes. But playing sports can also make it harder for them to be able to help at home.

Some fans and college administrators could argue that student-athletes are students first and their athletics are part of their extracurriculars, adding

that they are already paid in scholarship funds. But scholarships are an entitlement or necessity for students, not compensation for the work they do. Paying athletes for their work is a labor rights issue. The NCAA's belief that a fair college game necessitates a lack of pay for players shows the organization's greed, because they pocket all of the money that players might otherwise earn. Money from the NCAA is redistributed to schools, but the majority of it does not go to the players.

Until recently, searching for an athlete's name on the NCAA online shop returned results including that player's jersey. In other words, the NCAA made a profit on an amateur's name while the player was not allowed to earn a dime. In 2008, the NCAA and two other companies made a video game that included the physical likenesses and jersey numbers of then-current and former college basketball players. One of those athletes sued the NCAA for using his features in an ongoing lawsuit. The NCAA, and GW, can treat their workers better.

GW basketball tacks posters showing players around campus to advertise games and makes money off ticket sales. The Smith Center displays corporate sponsors throughout the facility to bring in more money for the University than players will ever see. GW is complicit in profiting off its players without ensuring their well-being. The University and the D.C. Council must fight for players' rights to profit off their likeness and performance.

—Matthew Zachary, a junior majoring in international affairs, is a columnist.

Offering new GWorld cards for free benefits transgender students

Picking up a Starbucks cup with your name misspelled is a pretty universal experience. But telling the barista a preferred name that does not match your GWorld card – then picking up an order without the preferred name – is an experience that affects transgender students only.

Kris Brodeur
Columnist

For years, I handed over a GWorld card without my preferred name. At Starbucks and at South Block, I was misgendered because GW required my full legal name on my card. Officials changed the policy this spring, allowing students to print new GWorld cards with their preferred names for free. No one should be required to use their legal name when doing something as simple and arbitrary as buying coffee on their way to class. Allowing students to print new GWorlds is a step forward for transgender individuals.

When I was a freshman, I was disheartened to learn that my legal name was required for my GWorld card, because it was a name that did not reflect who I am as a genderqueer individual. My legal name is far less androgynous, and hearing it reminds me of all the years I spent closeted. College should be an opportunity to start fresh, and I looked forward to only being known by my preferred name for the first time ever.

Three years after starting college, GW finally granted me the ability to feel heard and accepted on campus: It gave me a new GWorld card with my preferred name.

I no longer need to hold my breath or brace myself whenever I order coffee because the barista will only see my preferred name – and my real name – on my GWorld. The policy change prevents students from facing uncomfortable and frustrating situations like hearing their legal name announced at South Block for everyone to hear, outing them as transgender to everyone in their immediate surroundings.

In my first weeks on campus, I spoke about the issue with students and staff of the LGBTQIA Resource Center in the Multicultural Student Services Center. Staff and students were aware of the issue, but at that point in time, they had not persuaded

the school to shift its policy. The University previously claimed that using a preferred name was a safety hazard. But the University did not account for trans students who were subjected to being outed by calling them by their legal names.

Students who wanted to change their GWorld cards for whatever reason also needed to pay a \$35 fee under the former policy. The fee disproportionately affected trans students, especially those who may have waited until college to transition. Students' appearances change during transition, eventually to the point where the photo taken freshman year no longer reflects their appearance. Although I did not need to change my photo, other trans students may want to take a new picture. Now when students go to the GWorld Card Office, they can freely change their picture at no additional cost.

Allowing transgender students like myself to use their preferred names instead of their legal names is not merely a matter of preference but prioritizes their health and safety. A study published last fall in the Journal of Adolescent Health shows that rates of depression and suicidal ideation among transgender individuals are consistently lower in instances where transgender individuals are called by their preferred name. Trans students deserve to be called by their preferred names because it is who they are.

The University's new GWorld policy is a positive step, but there is still more GW can do to support trans students. Our Google accounts still have our full legal names when we create documents and presentations for classes, outing people whenever they need to work on group projects. Our GW Housing e-Services accounts still use our full legal names when we apply for housing and request roommates, forcing us to share our dead names with our peers.

A trans individual should not have to justify their existence and explain their past just to go about their day-to-day life, and a major contributing factor is having a form of identification that reflects who they really are. Thanks to the new change in policy, trans students at GW are a step closer to living as their authentic selves.

—Kris Brodeur, a senior double majoring in international affairs and Latin American and hemispheric studies, is a columnist.

The GW
Hatchet

609 21st St. NW
Washington, D.C. 20052
gwhatchet.com | @gwhatchet

news@gwhatchet.com
opinions@gwhatchet.com
sports@gwhatchet.com
culture@gwhatchet.com
photo@gwhatchet.com
multimedia@gwhatchet.com

Sarah Roach, editor in chief

Leah Potter, managing director*
Parth Kotak, senior news editor
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Culture

September 23, 2019 • Page 5

THE SCENE

MARTIN GARRIX

Echostage
Oct. 2 • \$45
Dutch DJ known for hits like "Animals" and "In the Name of Love" will perform Wednesday.

LAUV

The Anthem
Oct. 5 • \$36
Moody pop star Lauv will perform hits like "I Like Me Better" Saturday.

STEVE LACY

9:30 Club
Oct. 6 • \$55
21-year-old lo-fi artist Steve Lacy will perform Sunday.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

'HEY, I'M JUST LIKE YOU,' AN ALBUM BY TEGAN AND SARA

Student influencers promote social issues, businesses using digital media

ADVIKA MEHRA & ARIELLE OSTRY
REPORTERS

While some students use social media to post about their night out, others use digital networks to influence others on social and political issues.

Social media networks and other digital platforms like personal blogs and websites have opened a platform for young voices to

grow a large following of people who support issues like LGBTQ rights and gun control. Whether it is starting a new business venture or advocating for a social issue, seniors Ethan Somers and Natalie Geisel and junior Jay Xu have capitalized on the chance to develop a digital following and promote their passions.



PORTRAIT OF ETHAN SOMERS BY CAMILLE DRURY | PHOTOGRAPHER

ETHAN SOMERS

After beginning college at 16 years old at Red Rock Community College in Lakewood, Colo., Somers transferred to GW as a 19-year-old senior studying history and philosophy. But in between his studies, Somers is assembling youth all over the country to end gun violence using Twitter and Instagram.

Somers said his passion for political activism began in 2018 shortly after a shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Florida killed 14 students and three school staff members. He said the injustice of the act inspired him to advocate for gun control through social media platforms.

"Gun violence has existed in this nation forever, and it's been a real issue forever, but it wasn't apparent to me the devastation it could cause until I saw those students die in those classrooms and realized it could be me next time," Somers said. "I think that was what drew me to that issue specifically."

Somers went on to organize a Colorado statewide march in August 2018 protesting the National Rifle Association. Somers said he was also drawn to the March For Our Lives movement – a student-led demonstration that supports legislation to prevent gun violence – and helped form the D.C. chapter. He now leads the organization's communications team and advises Colorado's March For Our Lives chapter, he said.

More than 10,000 users follow Somers' Twitter account, and more than 7,200 users follow his Instagram account. On social media, he posts updates about his work with March For Our Lives, encourages his followers to attend rallies and events and asks for feedback about what the D.C. chapter should do next.

"If my work is able to encourage more young people to speak out and get involved in their specific issue, whether it's gun violence or climate change, whatever issue they might care about, encouraging those people to step up can radically change the landscape in that particular fight," Somers said.

JAY XU

Xu, a junior majoring in international business, never considered himself a fashion influencer. But his Instagram-led business, @gwthrif, has gained more than 1,700 followers since it launched last fall.

Within his first week on Instagram, Xu said he sold 10 articles of clothing that he curated from different thrift stores in the DMV area. More than 180 posts later, Xu said he continues to provide an "alternative method of fashion shopping" through a "convenient" platform: social media.

When Xu saw an opportunity his sophomore year to bring vintage clothing pieces to students and the greater D.C. community, he created his resale platform. He said he has an "influence in fashion" on campus because he sees students wearing the clothing posted on his Instagram account.

Xu said he has also begun expanding his business to Facebook. He used the platform to promote a pop-up shop with the GW Fashion Club in University Yard late last month, he said.

"I am just really happy to see people are able to enjoy what I bring, what I share and the style I bring out to people, but to be influential in the fashion industry, it comes down to having an idea that is different," Xu said.

Xu said that his platform's popularity increased "exponentially" because his current customers often repost their purchases on their own Instagram pages, which introduces the business to other students.

"Anyone who mentioned me in their posts was able to bring something to the page," he said.



PORTRAIT OF JAY XU BY ATHENA MASTHOFF | PHOTOGRAPHER



PORTRAIT OF NATALIE GEISEL BY KATE CARPENTER | PHOTOGRAPHER

NATALIE GEISEL

Geisel, a senior majoring in women's studies, turned her passion for LGBTQ rights into action with a blog.

She said she found her footing in the blogging world during her junior year of high school when she launched a blog – "Fractured Aesthetic" – to write about culture, music and fashion. In the past year, she said everything on the blog is "LGBTQ-oriented in some way," like her pieces "Why Queer Girl Bands Were What My 15-Year-Old Self Needed" and "King Princess Reminded Me to Love My Gayness."

Geisel's blog averaged more than 3,000 views during its most active months in March 2016 and November 2018. But she said she switched platforms to The Thirly – a health and wellness inclusive website – in March, and the website averages about 60,000 views per month.

Geisel started publishing her writing in her own column called "Camp Thirly" on Thirly's website after she interned for The Thirly last semester. Her content focuses on queer culture for college- and high school-aged audiences.

She said she wanted to start a personal column after learning about issues relating to women's studies and queerness.

Geisel said she aims to normalize queerness through her blog and make people feel comfortable in their own skin. She said she writes pieces about queer online dating, queer YouTube users and other LGBTQ-related content.

"I like to think that my writing influences people, especially for the platform I have now, which is mostly geared toward younger people," Geisel said. "I think it's really cool to have writing for queer audiences because it's such a small field."

She said she doesn't want people to think they are "outsiders" if they identify as queer.

"I want people to just kind of use my content to know that they are not alone, which is kind of cliché, but it's generally definitely what I want," Geisel said.

Ring in fall with seasonal desserts around the District

MOLLY KAISER

CONTRIBUTING CULTURE EDITOR

It may still feel like summer, but Sept. 21 marked the beginning of autumn. Whether you're a pumpkin spice fanatic or just have a sweet tooth, ring in the season with these fall flavors from the District's dessert hubs.

District Doughnut's sweet potato pie flavor

We picked District Doughnut's cherry blossom flavor for dish of the week this spring, and the shop's fall menu has shaped up with equally as delicious flavors.

The speciality doughnut shop – with locations in Southeast D.C., Georgetown, Union Market and The Wharf – is known for its over-the-top seasonal doughnut flavors. This fall, it is offering several sweet and mouth-watering doughnut flavors like maple butter pecan, pumpkin glazed, sweet potato pie, pumpkin spice latte creme brulee and caramel apple streusel.

The sweet potato pie flavor combines pumpkin dough, sweet potato pie filling, marshmallow glaze and candied pecans for a taste reminiscent of Thanksgiving. The pumpkin spice latte creme brulee is a twist on the shop's year-round creme brulee flavor, with the addition of pumpkin pie filling and pumpkin dough. Each doughnut costs between \$2.75 and \$3.50.

District Doughnut, 3327 Cady's Alley NW. Open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams' pumpkin cake roll ice cream

Gourmet ice cream shop Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams whips up seasonal flavors, like dream puff ice cream to honor drag queen Nina West during Pride month in June. This fall, the shop is curating several autumn-inspired concoctions, like brown butter almond brittle, coffee with cream and sugar and cream puff.

The shop's featured fall flavor is called pumpkin cake roll and combines heirloom pumpkin ice cream with spiced sweet cream cheese and vanilla spice cake for a bursting sensation of sweet and salty. Opt for a scoop of pumpkin cake roll in a waffle cone (\$7) for the ultimate sugar rush.

Jeni's Splendid Ice Creams, 1925 14th St. NW. Open Sunday through Thursday from noon to 11 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from noon to midnight.

Sprinkles' pumpkin cupcake Sprinkles, a vibrant cupcake bakery located in Georgetown known for its "Cupcake ATM," is keeping it simple this fall with a classic pumpkin cupcake and a pumpkin patch mini sampler.

The pumpkin cupcake unites favorite fall spices like nutmeg, ginger, clove and cinnamon and is smothered with sweet cinnamon cream cheese icing. The mini sampler features three flavors: pumpkin cinnamon, pumpkin cream cheese and pumpkin chocolate. The full-sized pumpkin cupcake costs \$4.50, and the pumpkin patch mini sampler costs \$5. *Sprinkles Georgetown, 3015 M St. NW. Open Monday through*



CAMILLE DESANTO | PHOTOGRAPHER

District Doughnut's pumpkin glazed doughnut will help you transition into the fall months.

Saturday from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 10 a.m. to 8 p.m.

Ice Cream Jubilee's apple butter oatmeal cookie and maple rye pecan ice creams

Ice Cream Jubilee is a funky ice cream joint featuring flavors like honey lemon lavender and Thai iced tea. You can grab a scoop of ice cream in locations in Navy Yard and Logan Circle.

The shop is bringing the fall spirit this season with its apple butter oatmeal cookie and maple rye pecan flavors. The apple butter oatmeal flavor combines homemade apple butter and

crumbled oatmeal cookie pieces. If you're looking for a bolder taste, try the maple rye pecan, which includes spiked rye whiskey, sweetened maple syrup and roasted pecans. You'll spend about \$5 for a scoop in a cone.

Ice Cream Jubilee, 1407 T St. NW. Open Sunday through Thursday from noon to 10 p.m., and Friday and Saturday from noon to 11 p.m.

Baked and Wired's 'The Great Pumpkin' cupcake

Baked and Wired, a family-owned bakery in Georgetown, is keeping it simple this fall with its "Great Pumpkin" cup-

cake flavor (\$4.10). If the cupcake is as scrumptious as the shop's other offerings, like the "Dirty Chai" or "Texas Sheetcake," you won't be disappointed.

A pumpkin cupcake, or "cakecup" as Baked and Wired calls it, is topped with pumpkin spice cream cheese frosting and garnished with a dash of cinnamon and pumpkin seeds to create "The Great Pumpkin" flavor.

Baked and Wired, 1052 Thomas Jefferson St. NW. Open Monday through Thursday from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., Friday from 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m., and Sunday from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.



WOMEN'S SWIMMING & DIVING
at the FIU Fall Classic
Friday & Saturday
The Colonials face nine competitors in their season opener at the annual FIU Fall Classic.



WOMEN'S SOCCER
vs. Massachusetts
Thursday 13 p.m.
Women's soccer looks to capture its sixth straight win against the Minutewomen.

Women's rowing eyes NCAA after acclimating to new head coach

BELLE LONG & ALEC RICH
STAFF WRITERS

After a year of adjustment and transition, women's rowing is beginning its 2019-20 season with heightened expectations.

Last season, head coach Marci Robles led the Colonials to their best Atlantic 10 finish in program history in her first year at the helm. After spending a year adapting to Robles' coaching style, rowers said they set their sights on the NCAA Division I Rowing Championship – a feat the program has only achieved once in 1998.

Junior Olivia Herbstritt said last year's team was in an adjustment period, getting to know Robles' coaching style and expectations for the team. But this season, she added, the squad is synced and ready to reach for a NCAA championship.

"I think last year we were in a different mindset, given new coaching staff, people coming in," Herbstritt said. "Definitely an adjustment year where we weren't all on the same page. But now, our first priority is winning A-10s and going to the NAAs."

GW's first and only NCAA Championship berth came in 1998. The Colonials



The women's rowing team is reaching for the NCAA Division I Rowing Championship, a feat the team has not achieved since 1998.

nabbed second in the A-10 and sent their Varsity 8 boat to the national competition.

Prior to Robles, the team had been on an upward trajectory since 2015 after it placed seventh in the A-10 Championship. In 2016, the team tied for fifth, and the squad elevated its placing to third the next season. The Colonials repeated their third-place finish in 2018.

Eric Carcich, the former

women's rowing coach, resigned in 2018 to take the women's rowing head coach position at Cornell. In his nine years with the program, the Colonials nabbed four top-three finishes.

Herbstritt said the squad is poised for a return to the top of the NCAA and a first-place finish at the A-10 Championship given its top performance last season.

"Seeing the goal so close

to us and so within our reach, we definitely have gotten a taste of what we can do and we can see the end goal within our sights, and doing that and getting that gold is attainable," she said.

Robles said when she took over as head of the program, she implemented some new rowing techniques and focused on altering the way the team watched the boat move. She said the slight changes

gave the squad more powerful strokes.

Opening the new season at the Head of the Potomac Regatta Sept. 22, Robles said the team's performance at the event went "as expected." The squad raced two boats, finishing second and third in the women's open eight with times of 17:10.1 and 17:27.5, respectively.

She added that the competition was a "positive" way to start the season after flooding led to the Head of the Potomac's cancellation last year.

"For us to be able to put together our first 5,000 piece at race pace with only a few days on the water was just a great opportunity to get a sense of where we are fitness-wise," Robles said.

After losing six seniors to graduation last year, the Colonials enter the new season with a roster of just 31 rowers, down from 40 last season. But Robles said illness and injury hurt the team last season, and strong physical health will help rowers find success this year.

"That's the first step, it's making sure that we have people that are healthy and ready to get to work," she said. "We had a really good complete roster at practice and that's a big step in the right direction."

The squad's fall schedule features three regattas. About a month after the Head of the Potomac, the team will row in the Princeton Chase and wrap its season Nov. 2 at the Head of the Occoquan.

Sophomore Alexa Miller-Smith said the team is looking to use some of the smaller tournaments, like Head of the Potomac, as training opportunities for more competitive races later in the season, including the NCAA tournament in May.

"We actually treated Head of the Potomac as a practice, in a way a training day, because we actually rode to a relatively even eight," Miller-Smith said. "So I think the goal there was to get the feel of racing so when we go to more important races down the line, we've got the skillset that we need."

Miller-Smith said the team's focus this year is to train with the mindset of a "yearlong project," with the end result being NCAA success. She said the goal could motivate rowers to maintain physical health.

"Now we're training smarter, not harder," Miller-Smith said. "We're really big on pushing ourselves, obviously, but not hurting ourselves."



Tennis veterans make up most of the men's team this season, giving the squad an edge over its competitors.

Men's tennis leans on experience, leadership ahead of fall slate

ROMAN BOBEK
STAFF WRITER

Men's tennis relied on its experienced roster ahead of its first competition at the Joe Hunt Invitational this weekend.

Leadership and experience are the names of the game for the Colonials after fielding a majority freshman squad last year. Head coach Rob Castille and sophomore Zicheng Zeng said the team's prior experience early in the season will give players an edge over their opponents this season.

"Last year when we were freshmen, we were really trepidatious the first time we were playing dual matches together," Zeng said. "I think with this year, we've gained a lot of experience, and we also took a lot of time to reflect on the journey we had."

Men's tennis rostered seven sophomores and two seniors. Last season, six freshmen, two juniors and one senior comprised the team.

This season will be Castille's first full fall slate with the Colonials after joining the team in the middle of the 2018 fall season and missing two tournaments. Former head coach David MacPherson resigned about two weeks before the fall semester, and former assistant coach Damiano Farinola helmed the squad until Castille stepped in.

Last year, the team held a 7-14 overall record. In Atlantic 10 play, the squad nabbed five wins and suffered three losses. Dayton eliminated the Colonials in the quarterfinals of the A-10 Championship.

Zeng said Castille conducted individual practices throughout the week to hone in players' specific skills and

techniques. Zeng said the personal training allowed him to focus on the mechanics of his forehand and practice drills specific to his technique.

"I tend to hit a lot of flat balls," Zeng said. "My coach encouraged me to use a lot of spin, to hit heavier balls to push the opponent out and use spin to become more aggressive on the court."

Zeng played exclusively at the No. 1 spot for the Colonials last season, going 16-18 and 5-2 in conference play. He said his freshman year on the court exposed him to a higher level of play that will allow him to analyze where he went wrong and rectify his shortcomings this season.

"I feel like I've matured a lot," Zeng said. "Through those experiences – even if I feel nervous or was hesitant on the court or during the match – I think I'm able to replay those moments back, last year, and then find solutions to solve those problems on the court."

He added that the team is focused on improving mental strength and adaptability to differing play on the court. Castille has implemented match rules, like caring for rackets, in practice to ensure players are careful in their play.

Castille added that the team needs to focus on elements of play that are within its control and place less of an emphasis on factors like poor weather conditions and bad line calls.

"I'm looking for the guys across the board to compete really well," Castille said. "We preach that there's a big difference between playing well and competing well."

At the Joe Hunt Invitational, two Colonials — sophomore Ben Barnett and

senior Dennis Afanasev — went perfect in singles play, winning all three of their respective matches. Zeng defaulted on his three matches, dropping them all as a result. Sophomores Ethan Jacobs and Lawrence Sciglitano recorded one loss, and sophomore Hanyu Liu and Ryan Navarro each recorded two singles losses over the course of the tournament.

The doubles duos of Barnett and Zeng, Liu and sophomore Michael Barsky, Navarro and Jacobs and senior Jakub Behu and Sciglitano won each of their matches.

The squad welcomed Jacobs this season. He played at the No. 1 spot at Bucknell, boasting an 18-10 singles record and a First-Team All Patriot League nod.

"There's a good foundation there, but we have to improve some things," Castille said. "I think just repetition at the net and he'll handle it better and get just a little more confident in there."

Castille also pointed to seniors Jakub Behu and Dennis Afanasev as leaders for the team in terms of experience, but a slew of players have taken on an active role in leading the team. Sophomores Ben Barnett, Lawrence Sciglitano, Ryan Navarro and Zeng are members of the Leadership Academy, which Castille said will improve their relationship with the team on and off the court.

"It's going to be a great program, and I'm excited for when it's their time to take over the reins and lead a team that they're going to be really well prepared," Castille said.

The Colonials are back in action Oct. 11 for the Navy Blue Invite.

—Emily Maise contributed reporting.

Men's rowing scraps fall schedule to save funds for English regatta

ROMAN BOBEK
STAFF WRITER

Men's rowing will not compete this fall for the first time in six years.

One unofficial scrimmage comprises the Colonials' fall schedule, marking the team's first season without an Eastern Association of Rowing Colleges sanctioned fall slate since 2013. Rowers and head coach Mark Davis said the team cut the fall competition to save funds to travel to England for the Henley Royal Regatta in June.

"I felt we could spend our time better just training, focusing on ourselves, making our own selves fast, and put us in a position to be able to race at the Henley Royal Regatta next June," Davis said. "So it's just prioritizing what we want to use our budget for."

In past years, the team has competed at the Princeton Chase and the Head of the Charles during the fall. Senior captain John Knies said the lack of fall competition doesn't disappoint the team because the team can use the extra funds to travel overseas to a competition it has only attended once.

"Everyone realizes that it's pretty big for our program to go there," Knies said. "We've only gone once before. I think everyone is on board with it and OK with it because Henley is one of the biggest rowing events in the world. That's definitely the goal."

The squad went to its first Henley Royal Regatta in 2016. The Colonials ended their first competition in the

quarterfinals of the Visitors' Challenge Cup. The Royal Henley Regatta hosts club, university and national teams from nearly every continent. In 2019, U.S. teams like Purdue, Harvard and Georgetown universities have entered to compete in the regatta.

Knies added that competing can take away from the team's practice time, and the open fall slate will allow the team to focus on its training.

"Sometimes racing can get in the way of your training, because you can't really practice that day," Knies said. "We're just taking advantage of all the time we have here better."

Last season, the Colonials captured their best finish in program history at the IRA National Championship in June. The Varsity 8 boat nabbed a 13th-place finish in the nation.

Junior Alex Maycock said the team will use the time between now and March, when the spring season usually begins, to carry the momentum from last season forward and improve on its technique.

"In the past, we've jumped into racing really early, especially in the fall," Maycock said. "The fact that we don't have these races means that we can really slow down and focus on technique and some things and aspects of practice that we haven't really had a chance to work on."

The Colonials will turn toward their 15 upperclassmen for motivation and guidance during the training period, Davis said. The Colo-

nials have 12 juniors, one graduate student and two seniors — Knies and Brendan Carney — rostered on the squad.

Davis said Knies has stepped into his leadership role as a captain and has kept the team motivated in its training by maintaining a positive attitude during practice.

"He works so hard, and his energy every single day is always positive," Davis said. "It's always on, which is hard to do because it's a long year. It's early mornings and it's a lot of hard work. The whole sport is just about training and training really hard."

Davis said he created several opportunities for the team to stay motivated throughout the offseason so rowers are ready to hit the ground running in the spring. The team members race against one another to play for shirts — a rowing tradition that Davis said began in the 1700s.

"There's this rowing tradition, that when you're racing another team, if you lose, you give them a shirt," Davis said. "So we race for shirts and guys usually bring in the goofiest shirt they have, or the smelly shirt, depending on what it is."

Davis added that the team is keeping track of points won during practice races throughout the fall. At the end of the season, members of the winning team will receive a prize, like a piece of gear.

Despite the lack of a fall schedule, the Colonials will see action in one scrimmage against Navy and Drexel Nov. 2.



The men's rowing team will not attend competitions this fall to save money for a regatta in June.