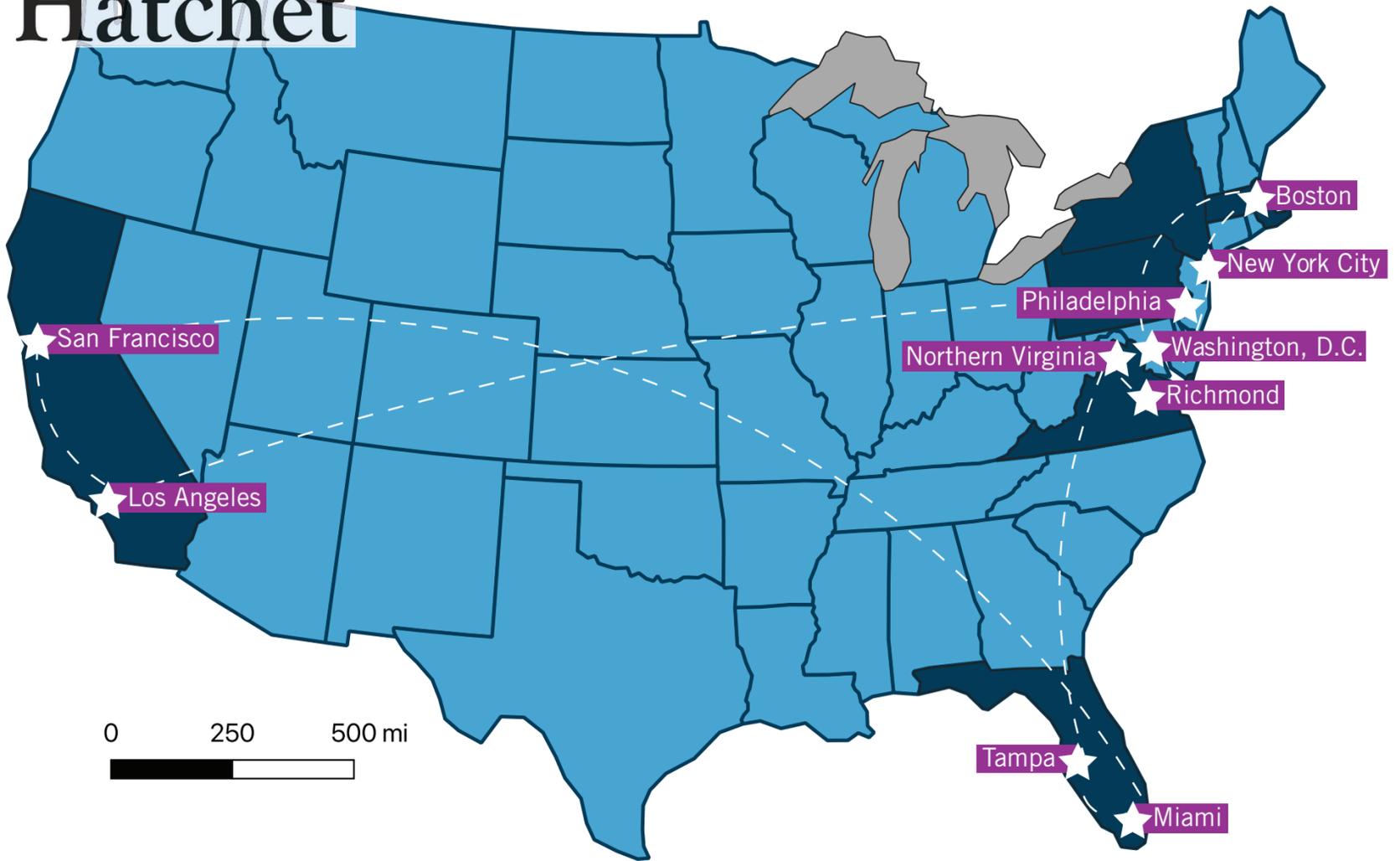


The GW Hatchet



PREPARING FOR THE BICENTENNIAL LeBlanc to hold community receptions in 10 cities across the nation

ILENA PENG
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

University President Thomas LeBlanc held the first of 10 planned receptions across the country last Tuesday to celebrate GW's achievements and increase community engagement.

The GW + You Community Receptions, at which LeBlanc aims to engage alumni, students and their families in a "conversation about the vision for GW's future as we approach our

third century," will take place in six states and D.C. over the course of the spring semester. The receptions come amid planning for GW's bicentennial anniversary in February 2021, during which officials are slated to launch a major fundraising campaign.

LeBlanc traveled to Philadelphia last week for the first event and will head to California next week to hold

events in Los Angeles Jan. 28 and San Francisco two days later. Registration is open for people interested in attending the receptions in California and Florida, where LeBlanc will head in February to meet community members in Miami and Tampa.

LeBlanc named philanthropy and constituent engagement among his five key strategic initiatives after arriving at GW two years

ago. In his first year in office, he embarked on a tour of five U.S. cities to discuss his priorities and traveled to London to boost alumni engagement.

Later this semester, LeBlanc will visit cities like New York City, Boston and Richmond, Virginia, in addition to a stop in Northern Virginia. The tour will end with an event in the District on June 11.



LILLIAN BAUTISTA | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR

GW accepted about \$76 million from the Saudi government and about \$3 million from the Chinese government.

GW took millions from China, Saudi Arabia, largely in tuition, since 2013

MEREDITH ROATEN
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

Officials have accepted nearly \$80 million in funding from foreign governments in recent years, mostly in tuition payments.

The University took more than \$75 million from the governments of China and Saudi Arabia since 2013, according to U.S. Department of Education disclosures. Officials said a large portion of the funding went toward student tuition grants, and the remainder funded academic initiatives.

University spokeswoman Crystal Nosal said all of the money GW received from Saudi Arabia funds tuition payments for students. About 70 percent of the funding provided by China went to seminars, workshops and tuition, while the remainder of the money funded GW's Confucius Institute, an educational program that supports the study of Chinese language and culture.

"Foreign governments have for many years provided tuition and expenses for pre-college, undergraduate, graduate and medical education and training for their students attending GW," she said in an email. "We regularly evaluate our international programs, including our programs with these countries, to ensure they are consistent with our educational mission."

Nosal declined to confirm the amount of funding that appears in the disclosures

to the Department of Education. She also declined to take a position on criticisms of ties between the United States and China and Saudi Arabia on account of issues related to human rights, free speech and intellectual property theft.

GW accepted \$76 million in contracts from the Saudi Arabian government since 2013 and \$3.4 million from the government of China, the disclosures state. The Chinese government also gave the University about \$333,945 in gifts, according to the disclosures.

Funding from foreign governments at universities has increasingly come under scrutiny after FBI director Christopher Wray testified before a U.S. Senate panel that the Chinese government was "taking advantage" of the United States through its universities by "exploiting" the country's research environment.

The Department of Education announced in November that federal officials found \$1.3 billion in unreported foreign funding in the early stages of its investigation of six U.S. universities.

Officials said about a year ago that they were not considering closing GW's chapter of the Confucius Institute, one of the many centers for China studies that has faced scrutiny from academic freedom experts and members of Congress for spreading government propaganda.

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Death in vacant I Street home prompts calls to restore neighborhood properties

LIA DEGROOT
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Foggy Bottom residents are pressing community leaders to restore decrepit-looking properties in the neighborhood after a woman was found dead in a vacant I Street home.

Alaina Gertz, a Metropolitan Police Department spokeswoman, said police officers responded to the 2500 block of I Street on Jan. 10 at about 9:50 p.m. for a report of an unconscious person. The woman had gone missing on New Year's Eve, according to an MPD release, and Gertz said officers found the woman unconscious and not breathing in a vacant I Street property.

The incident has raised concerns from Foggy Bottom neighbors over two other properties on the street, 2505 I St. and 2506 I St., which are run-down and vacant. Community leaders said they are planning to hold a meeting Tuesday to discuss how to address the state of the homes.

Gertz said D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services responded to the scene and pronounced the woman dead.

"D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services responded to the scene, where they found no signs consistent with life, and the victim was pronounced dead," she said in an email.

She said the woman was transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner, and the case is still under

investigation. Gertz said MPD will continue to respond to service requests for drug and narcotic complaints on the block.

"We advise that if anyone witnesses any type of illegal activity to immediately call 911," she said.

Duncan Bedlion, the Second District commander, said at a neighborhood meeting Wednesday that MPD's technical team is further investigating the woman's death. Bedlion said he and other officers found evidence in the home that several people may be using the home to take drugs.

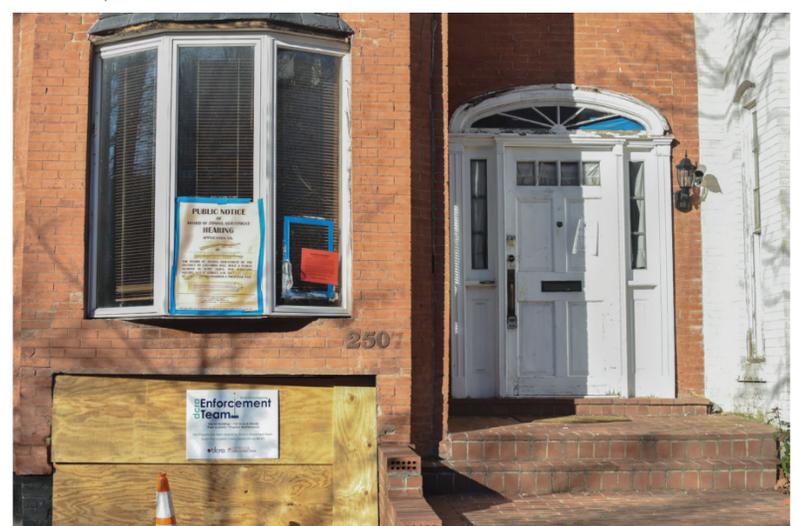
"There was some indication that drug activity was taking place," Bedlion said. "That was observed by me. I was there. I can't disclose to you what we know about the victim at this time."

The Hatchet is not naming the woman to respect her privacy.

Bedlion added that the Department of Consumer and Regulatory Affairs boarded up the property last week to prevent people from entering the house, which is pending development. He said MPD can provide additional patrolling in the area if community members have further concerns about the property.

"Let Lieutenant Terry, let Captain Caldwell - who's your sector captain - know, and we'll have our officers give special attention," Bedlion said.

See ASSOCIATION Page 5



ALEXANDER WELLING | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Metropolitan Police Department officers found a woman dead in a vacant house on the 2500 block of I Street earlier this month.

News

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CRIME LOG

BURGLARY II/FORCIBLE

Ross Hall
Monroe Hall
Unknown – Unknown
Open Case
GW Police Department and Metropolitan Police Department officers responded to a report from a male faculty member that his speaker was stolen from his office.
Case open

ASSAULT ON A POLICE OFFICER-MISDEMEANOR

Public Property on Campus (900 Block of 23rd Street)
1/9/2020 – 6:54 a.m.
Closed case
A man unaffiliated with GW attempted to hit a GWPD officer with an object while he was being apprehended in connection with a robbery that occurred in Ross Hall. MPD officers arrested the subject and transported him to the Second District police station for processing.
Subject arrested

THEFT I/FROM BUILDING

2125 G Street (Building GG)
Unknown – Unknown
Open Case
GWPD received a report from a female staff member that a security box was taken from her office.
Case open

—Compiled by Kateryna Stepanenko

SNAPSHOT

ERIC LEE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



People gathered around the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial Monday to observe the activist's day of remembrance.

IN BRIEF

Senior Greek life official departs GW after nearly five years

A senior Greek life official no longer works at GW, according to one of the employee's social media pages.

The LinkedIn profile for Ethan Stubbs, the assistant director of fraternity and sorority life, was changed Friday to show he has concluded his time in the position after securing the job in August 2018. His school email is no longer associated with the University.

Stubbs worked as the University's area coordinator for Greek life and Interfraternity Council ad-

viser from March 2015 to August 2018, according to his profile.

University spokeswoman Crystal Nosal said officials do not "typically comment" on personnel matters. Stubbs did not return a request for comment.

There is currently no job listing for Stubbs' position on the University's employment webpage.

—Lizzie Mintz

Retention rate for Class of 2022 drops one percentage point from previous year

ILENA PENG
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

The retention rate for the full-time freshman cohort that matriculated in 2018 dipped roughly one percentage point from the previous year.

GW retained 92 percent of the Class of 2022, about one percentage point lower than last year's retention rate of 92.9 percent – the University's highest in seven years – according to Joe Knop, the director of institutional research and planning.

After GW dropped three spots in national rankings in part because of a dip in the retention rate from 2014 to 2015, former University President Steven Knapp refocused efforts to boost retention by strengthening "inner-community things" and improving the investigation process surrounding sexual assault.

Officials also hired an inaugural executive director of enrollment retention, Oliver Street, in August 2016 and created the Enrollment Re-

tention Office soon after to improve retention. The office was combined into the Office of Enrollment and the Student Experience in July 2018.

Street departed GW last August. GW's rate has risen in the past couple of years alongside University President Thomas LeBlanc's push to improve the University's institutional culture through measures like increasing student dining dollars and allowing all students to take an 18th credit free of charge. LeBlanc also led the Colonial Health Center through its first major overhaul since its 2015 opening, implementing changes like a health insurance mandate and increased free mental health sessions.

David Ruitter, the associate provost for student and faculty success at the University of Texas at El Paso, said reaching retention figures in the 90 percent range requires a "collective effort" from faculty, students and staff to foster a positive community.

"Whatever it happens to be, I would guess that it's an indicator

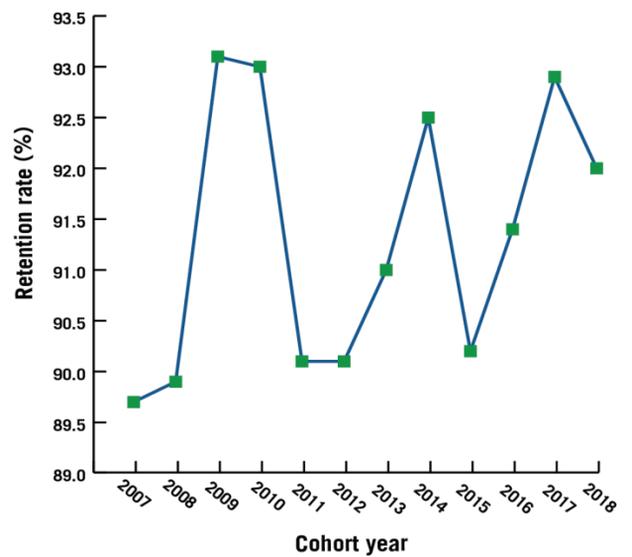
that your community formation is stronger than ever," Ruitter said of the retention rate.

He added that strong academic and financial advising services contribute to higher retention figures.

Denny Bubrig, the assistant vice president for student affairs at the University of Southern Mississippi, said GW's 92 percent retention rate is a "fantastic" statistic. He said the factors that influence retention rates vary depending on a university's demographics but cited students' academic preparedness and the availability of support networks for students as key determinants of retention.

"You will see an assessment effort of students who do not continue their career at the institution in question," Bubrig said. "From there, the institution may make adjustments in physical services, student engagement, further education in financial management, study skills, time management, career pathway selection or something of the like."

Freshman retention rate



ALYSSA ILARIA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

Source: Institutional data

SA anti-Semitism task force to push for religious tolerance in first semester

JARROD WARDWELL
REPORTER

A group of Student Association leaders aiming to combat anti-Semitism on campus said they will spend the semester working to improve accessibility for bias incident report systems and encourage officials to incorporate religion in diversity modules.

After an anti-Semitic Snapchat rocked campus last semester, the SA formed a task force aimed at encouraging tolerance for religious diversity and preventing anti-Semitic incidents. Task force members said they hope to incorporate modules discussing religious diversity into new-student trainings to educate students on ways to react to anti-Semitism.

Hannah Edwards, the SA's vice president for diversity and inclusion and a task force member, said the group held its first meeting last Sunday to discuss members' goals for the semester.

"My hope is that students working with the task force will see that not all members of the Student Association are just walking buzz words, but passionate individuals who are truly trying to make change at GW," Edwards said.

Julia Kerrigan, the SA's director of interfaith engagement and a task force co-chair, said she hopes the committee will initiate conversations with officials to

figure out how to address past incidences of anti-Semitism with "lasting institutional change" and "guidelines that stick."

"Everyone belongs on this campus and everyone deserves to feel comfortable on this campus no matter your faith background," Kerrigan said. "You should be able to have a place here without feeling like you're ever being targeted. So I think that's sort of what the group stands for as a whole, and that's why it's important to have a group of people working on it together."

In the wake of the anti-Semitic post last semester, student leaders held forums for students to share personal experiences with anti-Semitism and help formulate steps to take against anti-Semitism on campus. The SA Senate passed a resolution last month urging officials to create a working definition of anti-Semitism.

Kerrigan said adding hypothetical social situations into diversity modules for first-year students could help engender discussions among students about religious diversity.

"Just having something that involves interfaith and talking about how to deal with meeting different people of different faiths, like what is acceptable and unacceptable to be saying," Kerrigan said. "For bias reports, when someone feels they've experienced an act of

bias against them, you know how the situation is being handled."

Zachary Nosanchuk, the SA's vice president for undergraduate policy and a task force co-chair, said he intends for the committee to spark conversations about anti-Semitic incidents that have harmed the school's interfaith culture. The 10-member task force includes three SA cabinet members, three SA senators, three public members and a residential engagement adviser, Nosanchuk said.

The task force is considering meeting with the Faculty Senate to construct active steps to curb religious discrimination in the classroom, he said.

"The task force will help bring to light a lot of discussions that people have been having behind closed doors, and we'll be able to bring that forward as the Student Association of GW and talk about these discussions on this higher level," he said.

SA President SJ Matthews said the task force will hold listening sessions in the next week to garner student feedback about how the group can tackle anti-Semitism on campus.

"I'm looking forward to seeing the great work this task force will be doing this semester and the positive impact they will have on the GW community," Matthews said.

She added that most students have concluded the



Task force members are hoping to incorporate modules discussing religious diversity into new student trainings.

GABRIELLE RHOADS | PHOTOGRAPHER

first-year diversity training modules, but the University could work with organizations, like the Multicultural Student Services Center and GW Hillel, to educate the community on religious awareness.

Task force members also intend to bring more attention to the availability of a bias reporting system implemented last year, she said. The tool allows students to submit anonymous reports of hate crimes or discrimination acts, and an official will address the report and explain concrete next steps

within 48 hours, according to the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement website.

Gabriela Rossner, a member of Jewish Voice for Peace and a task force member, said she joined the group to voice her own experiences with anti-Semitism. She said the task force could push for more faith spaces on campus, like prayer rooms, and ask officials not to schedule exams on Jewish holidays.

A space intended for students to pray or meditate opened up on the third floor of the Multicultural Student

Services Center last academic year.

Erin Grossmann, a public member of the task force, said she wanted to join the task force to use her voice for those who feel uncomfortable speaking out against anti-Semitism and compel students to initiate open discussion to the community.

"The task force is only as good as the input is, and making sure people feel comfortable talking to us is important in getting a variety of perspectives and stories so we can cater to everybody," Grossmann said.

How Jack Evans' resignation will affect the Ward 2 Council race

AVI BAJPAI
REPORTER

After the D.C. Council's longest-serving councilmember resigned earlier this month, Ward 2 voters will be left without formal representation until an election in July.

Jack Evans, who has represented Ward 2 for nearly 30 years, stepped down from the Council amid ethics probes involving his abuse of his Council seat to solicit business dealings for his personal consulting firm. The D.C. Board of Elections announced earlier this month it will hold a special election to replace Evans June 16, two weeks after the Democratic primary election June 2.

The candidates must obtain at least 250 signatures from registered Ward 2 voters to qualify for the primary election. The candidates must collect at least 500 signatures to qualify for the special election, according to D.C. Council code.

D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson said in a statement that Evans' resignation was a "very sad moment" but "appropriate" given the breadth of controversies and scandals surrounding Evans.

"It's clear that Mr. Evans had not only lost the trust of his colleagues but the trust of the public," Mendelson said in a statement. "The public has a right to expect that their public officials are ethical,



D.C. Council Chairman Phil Mendelson told Ward 2 residents that while the councilmember's seat is empty until the summer, the ward's Council office will remain staffed.

and it's a fragile trust."

The Ward 2 Council office will remain staffed to ensure residents can continue to access Council resources, Mendelson said at the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission meeting Wednesday. Ward 2 residents can call Monique Wynn, the office's deputy chief of staff, with any inquiries, according to the D.C. Council website.

"We're trying to make sure that folks are harmed as little as possible and also that there's still a place for Ward 2 residents to be able to call if there are any neighborhood or constituent issues that we

can help with," Mendelson said at the ANC meeting.

A spokesperson for Evans declined to comment on his resignation and his plans for after resignation. His departure went into effect Friday, and the Ward 2 seat will remain empty until the new councilmember is sworn in this summer.

LaDawne White, a spokesperson for the D.C. Board of Elections, said officials decided to hold the primary election before the special election to "minimize confusion among voters" and give the candidates enough time to collect signatures.

All six Democratic candidates have announced that they'll participate in both the Democratic primary and the special election.

The candidates are required to operate separate campaigns and fundraising operations, according to the D.C. Office of Campaign Finance.

Patrick Kennedy, the newly elected chair of the ANC, said he had anticipated a special election after the D.C. Council voted to recommend Evans' expulsion last December. Kennedy said the only change his team will have to make to run in the special election is operating finances for two separate campaigns.

"I'm the same candidate, it's the same message," Kennedy said. "It's the same basic amount of information we want to convey to voters about experience and ideals, and so it's really a question of just making sure with the special election being a factor that we're reaching out beyond the Democratic Party."

Kennedy said electing the same candidate in both elections is in Ward 2 residents' best interest because the candidate can immediately work to represent the ward instead of dedicating time to competing in another election.

"This is an unprecedented set of circumstances," Kennedy said. "Trying to explain how three different elections all happen this year, which election is for

what term; who can vote in what election; who can't vote in the election – it's confusing no matter how you slice it."

Candidate Daniel Hernandez, a Microsoft employee and a former Marine from Dupont Circle, said he plans to compete in both the primary and special election. Hernandez said he has been canvassing in Ward 2 neighborhoods and speaking with residents to garner support.

"I'm currently planning to file for both, as I believe it makes the most sense for the same person to win both elections," he said in an email.

Jordan Grossman, a former Obama staffer and a Ward 2 candidate, said he plans to run in both elections to begin addressing Ward 2 issues "as soon as possible."

"I have filed as a candidate for both elections with the Office of Campaign Finance, and our campaign is collecting far more than the required signatures from registered voters in Ward 2 to qualify for the ballot in each," he said in an email.

Yilin Zhang, a health care worker and a Democratic candidate, said she plans to run in both the primary and the special election.

"It is critical that we restore not only trust and accountability to this office but also place a priority on listening to all perspectives to create comprehensive policies that make our community better," she said.



LILLIAN BAUTISTA | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR
Researchers at the Milken Institute School of Public Health and the GW Cancer Center hope their upcoming symposium will raise awareness for the ways lifestyle impacts cancer risks.

Scientists to host symposium on lifestyle choices, cancer risk

ILENA PENG
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Scientists from the Milken Institute School of Public Health and GW Cancer Center will host a symposium in the Marvin Center Friday to examine the relationship between lifestyle choices and cancer risk.

In partnership with the American Institute for Cancer Research, the symposium will feature six speakers presenting on the effects of factors like physical activity, obesity and diet on cancer risk. Cancer and nutrition scientists speaking at the symposium said the event will raise awareness about how the daily, routine choices people make can impact their odds of developing cancer.

Kim Robien, an associate professor of exercise and nutrition sciences at the public health school, said she began planning the symposium with Nigel Brockton, the American Institute for Cancer Research's vice president of research, last September. She said presenters at the symposium will focus on policies that promote healthier food choices and physical activity to decrease cancer risk.

"The conference goals are to review the latest research on diet, physical activity and body composition in relation to cancer research and prevention, and help participants think about how to start moving these research findings into action," Robien said in an email.

Conference organizers are promoting the event through local healthcare providers, professional organizations and social media. She added that depending on the turnout and

reception to Friday's event, organizers may hold similar events in the future.

Brockton, AICR's vice president of research, said physicians working with cancer patients are sometimes unaware of how strong the evidence is linking risk factors like eating red meat or consuming alcohol to cancer, adding that the event will help inform health care providers.

"It still astonishes me that people actually very closely aligned in the field don't know how strong the evidence is for certain risk factors and how prevalent they are," he said. "So in that respect, this symposium is more about sharing information that's already out there rather than conferences that tend to be more latest research results."

He added that the public misidentifies the relative danger of certain factors that drive cancer incidence, citing how many people fear carcinogens in pesticides when research on diet choices has indicated a stronger link to cancer.

"The awareness part is really multi-pronged," he said.

Brockton added that the one-day symposium, which GW staff and students can attend for a discounted rate of \$25, is more affordable than conferences that often last multiple days. The full price of a ticket to attend the symposium is \$50.

William Dietz, a Milken professor and the director of the school's Sumner M. Redstone Global Center for Prevention and Wellness, will speak at the event about the relationship between obesity and cancer. He said he hopes the symposium will extend the conversation from treating cancer with more invasive techniques

like chemotherapy to treating the disease with preventative steps like improving nutritional choices.

He said simple steps like reducing the consumption of processed meats and sugary drinks can minimize cancer risk, particularly when these recommendations come from doctors. But he added that even physicians have failed to see the link between the stigmatization of obesity and the obesity-cancer relationship, which is not "widely recognized."

"A lot of providers don't know how to open the conversation about it because it's so stigmatized and because they often will blame patients for their obesity," he said. "They think of obesity the way I think many people within the public think about obesity, that people with obesity are lazy or they lack self-control or they're responsible for their obesity."

Fang Fang Zhang, a cancer epidemiologist and Tufts University professor who has worked on research with AICR, said she hopes to push nutrition policy in her presentation at Friday's symposium. She said she advocates for policies like taxing sweetened beverages and requiring products with high levels of added sugars to have warning labels that could create a large and sustainable shift toward healthier lifestyles.

"If we think about the cancer burden that can potentially be prevented – that's what lifestyle factors can help prevent – it's not a trivial percentage," Zhang said.

Sigur Center debuts lecture series on Asian politics, affairs

JARED GANS &
YANKUN ZHAO
REPORTERS

The Sigur Center for Asian Studies launched a lecture series on Asian political developments last week with an event on U.S.-Iran relations in the aftermath of an Iranian general's assassination.

The series will focus on original policy-related scholarship on current events in the Asian-Pacific region, and each lecture will feature experts exploring recent developments in Asia and providing insight on their potential impacts on the rest of the continent. Staff said the series is intended for people whose interests may not necessarily lie within Asia to broaden their understanding of the world's most populous continent.

Helen Jiang, the program coordinator at the Sigur Center, said the series highlights the Sigur Center's mission to research Asian affairs and teach it to a broad audience.

"The Sigur Center is very privileged to be the largest Asian studies center in the D.C. area, and I think with that status, it's really critical for our reputation and also for our depth and breadth that we do have something that's so policy-relevant, timely, innovative and advancing original scholarship," she said.

The first lecture, on U.S.-Iran relations, featured Prashanth Parameswaran, a scholar affiliated with an international affairs magazine focused on the Asia-Pacific region and a research center on international affairs, according to the Sigur Center's website.

Parameswaran discussed the implications of the

U.S.'s killing of Qassem Soleimani, a high-profile commander in Iran's Revolutionary Guard, for key regional countries and potential future developments in the region.

Earlier this month, American military forces carried out an airstrike at Baghdad International Airport, killing Soleimani. Iran responded with missile strikes on two American military bases in Iraq, injuring 11.

February's installment in the lecture series will focus on the recent Taiwanese election and developments from incumbent Tsai Ing-wen's reelection since then.

Jiang said lectures in the series will be held monthly, and staff members currently have a short list of potential lectures for March's event, though they will continue to monitor emerging issues in the region to stay up-to-date. She added that Sigur Center members are trying to "feel out" what students, policymakers and scholars in the field are interested in discussing for future lectures in the series.

She said the members are marketing the series through a variety of methods, like live-tweeting the events and accepting audience questions over Twitter. She added that the center's members collaborated with partners like the School of Media and Public Affairs' Institute for Public Diplomacy and Global Communications for the first lecture and are reaching out to other GW programs for co-sponsors and speakers.

"We're always on the hunt for new co-sponsors and we're really happy to engage with seasoned partners," she said.

Jiang said Benjamin Hopkins, the Sigur Center's

director, began planning the lecture series this past summer. She said the leaders want to ensure that the series covered current "hot topics" while not repeating scholarship already discussed in similar forums elsewhere.

"That's the innovative and original part of the lecture series," she said.

Jiang said she, Hopkins and Sigur Center associate director Deepa Ollapally met during the summer to decide the parameters of the series. She said the series fits with University President Thomas LeBlanc's commitment to advancing research at GW.

Jiang said scholars and students should attend the series to better understand Asian issues and how those issues can affect their own country.

"People seem to forget that Asia is a huge continent, enormous population, economy is really taking off – it's about to overtake the West," Jiang said. "This is a huge region that does need to have a diverse foundation – especially for Americans or at least international students – in the United States."

Hopkins, the center's director and an associate professor of history and international affairs, said the series will include a "wide array of perspectives" on issues like the ongoing war in Afghanistan.

"With a history of hosting upwards of 60 events annually, the Sigur Center is well-positioned as the intellectual hub of Asia-focused scholarship and public outreach in the nation's capital," he said in a release.

Ollapally, the center's associate director, did not return multiple requests for comment.



ARIELLE BADER | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR
Benjamin Hopkins, the director of the Sigur Center for Asian Studies, said the center's speaker series will include expert discussions on developments in Asia.

GWHATCHET.COM

For more information about presentations at the symposium

GW offers sufficient time for family, medical leave, faculty say

SHANNON MALLARD
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

When William Winstead found out his mother had terminal cancer, he knew he needed to dedicate precious time to caring for her.

Winstead, a political science professor, said he was “extremely grateful” for the support he received from colleagues and felt the University’s leave policies allowed him to make the most of the time left he had with his mother. About six weeks after finding out about his mother’s diagnosis, Winstead took a full spring semester off work.

GW offers fewer weeks of family and medical leave for staff members than most of its peers, but the school is on par with its peers in the amount of time off granted to full-time faculty. Full-time faculty who have needed to take time off said they were satisfied with GW’s policies because the process of asking for leave is relatively “easy” and they face little “stigma” from colleagues for requesting leave.

“It can provide much needed support during a quite difficult moment in one’s life – like caring for a sick relative who needs real attention,” Winstead said in an email. “I hate to think of how I would have managed without GW’s leave policy in place.”

University spokeswoman Crystal Nosal said the introduction of new laws and programs at the District level has expanded the size of the population eligible for unpaid and paid medical and family leave options.

The D.C. Council introduced in 2016 the Universal Paid Leave Amendment Act, which requires

most employers to cover an amount equivalent to 0.62 percent of employees’ wages while on leave. The act will go into effect July 2020.

Under the act, “covered employers,” or any institution that exercises control over employees’ wages, hours and working conditions, must pay unemployment insurance on behalf of its “covered employees.” The act defines “covered employees” as individuals who spend more than 50 percent of their work time working for a District employer and less than 50 percent of their work time at the same employer in a location besides D.C.

Nosal said the human resource office, benefits consultants and vendor partners annually review all health and welfare benefits, including leave. She said officials examine benefits the law requires and trends related to leave to evaluate the quality of the University’s leave programs.

“The ability to take paid leave to care for a family member, such as paid parental leave, is a highly valued benefit among faculty and staff,” Nosal said in an email. “The University recognizes that each benefit may impact a particular family differently so we continually work to harmonize and coordinate the programs available.”

Jennifer Lopez, the associate vice president of the resource office, said faculty and staff typically provide feedback to benefits team members about the University’s family and medical leave policies through phone, email and in-person meetings.

She said the Benefits Advisory Committee – on which six faculty members, six staff members and one medical resident serve

– acts as a “vehicle” to collect and solicit feedback about leave policies from faculty and staff.

“This group meets during the year to provide feedback from around the campus community and share ideas that maximize the quality of GW’s benefits, including family and medical leave policies,” Lopez said in an email.

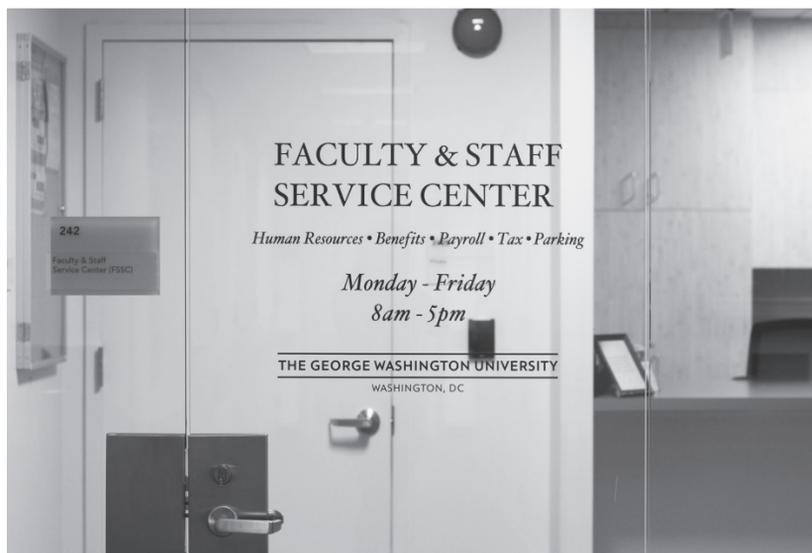
The University of Pittsburgh and Tulane University each offer up to four consecutive weeks of paid leave for full-time staff and regular part-time employees, while Wake Forest University offers six weeks of paid leave for staff members and one semester off for associate and senior-level faculty.

GW offers six weeks of paid family and medical leave for full-time staff members and medical residents and provides one paid semester off – about 14 to 15 weeks – to full-time faculty members, according to the faculty code.

Northeastern University offers eight weeks of partially paid leave to faculty and staff. Tufts University offers 12 work-weeks of paid leave to eligible employees who have been employed for at least a year and worked at 1,250 hours in the last 12 months.

New York, Syracuse and Georgetown universities and the University of Rochester offer 10 to 12 weeks of paid or partially paid leave to eligible full-time and part-time staff. Syracuse and Georgetown universities offer one semester of leave to full-time faculty, and New York University covers the salaries of full-time faculty for up to six months.

Tufts University offers 12 weeks of paid leave to eligible employees who



LILLIAN BAUTISTA | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR

Officials said the District-wide laws and initiatives opened up medical and family leave options for more employees.

have been employed for at least a year and worked at 1,250 hours in the last 12 months.

Boston University allows up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave for most employees. Employees’ leave must exhaust their paid sick days, personal days and vacation time to cover the first portion of a leave of absence, and the rest is unpaid. The University of Miami allows 12 weeks of unpaid leave for eligible employees.

Faculty who have gone on family or medical leave said they were largely satisfied with their experiences because the leave-requesting process is simple, and fellow colleagues did not stigmatize the practice of taking time off.

Kathryn Kleppinger, an associate professor of French, francophone studies and international affairs, said she took one semester of leave in spring 2018 after she gave birth in December 2017. She

said she was “particularly pleased” that officials expanded leave policies to specialized full-time faculty, who were ineligible for leave until fall 2019.

“For full-time faculty, the leave policies around the birth or adoption of a child are excellent,” Kleppinger said in an email.

But she added that the University should extend family and medical leave benefits to adjunct and part-time faculty so everyone can spend time bonding with newborn children or caring for their own or a family member’s health.

“An important policy priority should be to expand benefits to reflect the realities of our faculty workforce,” Kleppinger said.

Celeste Arrington, an assistant professor of political science and international affairs, said she took one semester of leave twice – each time to care for newborn children. She said the process of requesting leave, which

involved sending an email to the political science department chair and receiving written approval, was relatively “easy.”

Arrington, a tenure-track professor currently under consideration for promotion to become an associate professor, said her department chair paused her tenure clock twice to accommodate her while she was caring for her newborns. She added that she was initially hesitant to request leave to care for her second child because taking longer than normal to achieve tenure has traditionally been viewed negatively in the academic community.

But she said she ultimately decided to take time off because her department chair included a note in her tenure file – consistent with national trends – that she was still approaching tenure consideration at an average pace despite technically taking longer to become eligible.

Tap access expanded to all residence halls except Thurston



JENNA BANKS | PHOTOGRAPHER

Students said adding electronic tap access to residence halls alleviates the worry of losing their key.

TAYLOR ROWE
REPORTER

Nearly every on-campus student can now use their GWorld card to unlock their residence hall rooms.

Officials added electronic keys to 15 residence halls as part of the University’s ongoing efforts to enhance its security profile. In interviews, more than 20 students said the tap access is more con-

venient than using a key, which can more easily be lost or stolen.

Mark Diaz – the executive vice president and chief financial officer – said electronic access aligns with the University’s overall culture initiative, which prioritizes safety.

“We had a disparate experience amongst the students,” Diaz said. “Some had it, some didn’t. That didn’t make any sense.

Anything that will enhance our safety position and create an environment that’s safer for students and our faculty and staff, we’re not waiting.”

Thurston Hall will not be updated with the electronic lock system because the residence hall is set to be gutted and renovated this summer, University spokeswoman Crystal Nosal said in an email.

The University has installed tap access in rooms

in the GW Law School building, and officials added tap access to all on-campus residence hall lobbies last semester.

“We have a project at the law school to implement and install tap access and so now the classrooms have the ability to lock down if we ever have some type of targeted violence event,” Diaz said. “Before we didn’t.”

Diaz said he planned to dedicate money to the safety division to prioritize student security. He said the cost of installing tap access hit the “low seven figures.”

Diaz added that he worked with the Student Advisory Board, the Student Association and the Residence Hall Association informally during the discussion about installing tap access. He said he attended SA forums, where student leaders asked him questions about the project.

“I want as much feedback and engagement,” he said. “That’s the piece that I want. I want the students to engage in whatever initiatives we’re rolling out, or whatever ideas that they want.”

He said students will still be able to use a physical key from Key Depot

to unlock their rooms if an electric lock malfunctions.

“The malfunctions happen rarely, but now you can go from a tap reader to a mobile device, and finally to a key,” Diaz said.

RHA President Trinity Diaz said she worked with members of facilities, planning, construction and management to advise officials on how to install the electronic locks around students’ schedules.

“A lot of the plans for tap installation were made by high-level administration in order to prioritize the undergraduate student experience through better facilities,” she said. “So we acted as a student voice to help minimize the impact and give some insight where we could.”

More than 20 students said tap access to their individual rooms is more convenient than a physical lock because they can rely on their GWorld instead of having to remember a key.

Feyi Idera, a Madison Hall resident, said electronic access has saved her from waiting for her roommate to unlock their door when she routinely forgot her key.

“I definitely prefer tap access to using a key

because I can safely put my GWorld in my phone holder without it falling out, the way my key would,” Idera said.

Nick Sawaf, a District Hall resident, said he often uses GW’s app-based electronic ID to access his residence hall room and can use his app if he misplaces his GWorld.

“I frequently use the electronic ID app to access my room and prefer it to the regular ID most of the time because I’m on my phone throughout the day anyway, so to be able to use it to unlock my room door is convenient,” Sawaf said.

Malin Hillemann, a 1959 E St. resident, said individual tap access has made accessing his room more efficient because his roommate doesn’t have to let him in when he forgets his key. He said he keeps his GWorld in his wallet, which he said is easier to keep track of than an individual key.

“It’s also so quick and easy to tap rather than having to unlock the door with a key every time,” Hillemann said. “It also makes me feel safe when I know only other students are able to get into my building with their cards.”

Officials should share sources, uses of foreign funding, experts say

From Page 1

International policy experts said officials should be transparent about conditions associated with funding from foreign governments to reassure students and faculty that foreign governments are not improperly influencing the University’s research or expert testimony.

Mandy Smithberger, the director of the Straus Military Reform Project at the nonprofit government watchdog Project on Government Oversight, said the public expects research output and testimony from faculty associated with universities to be independent, but foreign funding puts academic integrity at

risk.

GW’s large international affairs program magnifies the consequences of potential influence from foreign governments because of the public’s trust in the Elliott School of International Affairs’ academic perspective, she said.

“They are considered to be one of the leading universities on international affairs – it raises questions about their independence,” she said. “We have an ongoing public debate about what strings are coming with these kinds of contributions and whether this is another way foreign governments are trying to influence U.S. foreign policy.”

Ben Freeman, the director of the Foreign Influence Transparency Initiative at

the foreign policy think tank Center for International Policy, said GW risks attracting negative publicity by continuing to accept funds from the Saudi Arabian government after the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi by Saudi government operatives. Freeman said many places would not take the money because of its association with the regime.

Think tank The Middle East Institute announced it would stop taking money from the Saudi government shortly after Khashoggi’s death before Saudi officials admitted that the journalist was killed at the Saudi embassy in Turkey.

“I think, in some senses, Saudi Arabia became something of a scarlet letter,” he

said. “It became very taboo to continue to work with Saudi Arabia.”

Freeman said it is possible that contracts like GW’s with foreign governments do not come with any improper influence, but officials should disclose any strings attached to the funding if they exist.

“Just be open and honest about what you’re doing and don’t try to hide it,” he said. “The more they try to hide that, the shadier it looks, and the shadier it probably is.”

Saudi Arabia’s government has funded faculty positions at GW like that of GW Cancer Center faculty member Edward Seto, the holder of a cancer biology professorship named after a former Saudi king dedi-

cated in 2017.

A University release at the time credited the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia with the establishment of the professorship but did not say how much funding the government provided.

“I’m honored today to be given this opportunity to contribute, no matter how small, to the GW Cancer Center, the medical school, the University and to the educational ambitions and goals of the late King Fahd,” he said in the release at the time.

Beryl Brenderly, a science writer who wrote a column calling for more transparency in foreign funding at universities for Science magazine, said that beyond building mistrust in universities, foreign

funding and involvement in research is sometimes associated with the theft of new ideas and technology. Because the Chinese government is in close competition with the United States, Chinese officials could try to leverage their funding at U.S. universities to recruit talent back to China, she said.

An Associated Press investigation found that the FBI questioned universities across the country about Chinese theft from their researchers and investigated some collaboration between China and researchers.

“This business of the talent, bringing back the talent that’s everywhere, that’s pervasive,” Brenderly said.

Sesno focused on student support, fundraising during tenure as SMPA head

SHANNON MALLARD
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Frank Sesno's proudest accomplishment as director of the School of Media and Public Affairs was easy to name: the students.

Sesno said watching them graduate and return to visit the school as successful journalists and politicians is an "amazing" source of pride for himself and the school.

Sesno will step down as SMPA director at the end of this academic year and return to the school as a faculty member after a year-long sabbatical, which he said he'll use to conduct "deep" research into areas like how the media frames and covers climate change. He leaves the school after introducing new programs to develop SMPA's alumni base and to increase funding available to students to take advantage of job opportunities around the District.

"If I were to think of the single thing that would bring me to tears, it's being with our students and hearing their aspirations and then meeting with graduates after they're done being students and seeing how they're turning their aspirations into reality," he said.

Over his tenure as director, Sesno has worked to engage alumni and "outsiders" – professionals in journalism and political communication – interested in the school's trajectory in fundraising efforts to provide students with experiential learning opportunities like internships and guest speakers. Sesno also had a hand in developing SMPA's Career Access Network, which grants scholarships to SMPA seniors and graduate students who work in low-paid or unpaid internships.

With Sesno at its helm, the school has added two major research efforts – the Project on Ethics in Political Communication, which examines ethical standards in the field, and the Institute for Data, Democracy and Politics, which studies digital misinformation.

"The benefit of all of these is they reinforce and advance our mission to understand how we inform and gather around information to govern ourselves toward the aim of both learning through our research, teaching and then

actually contributing to the real world out there," he said.

Sesno said that during his sabbatical and moving forward, he hopes to dedicate more time to Planet Forward – a project he began 11 years ago to teach students how to report on the environment – in addition to personal writing and audio projects.

He said officials asked him to step into the director's position shortly after he created the project in 2009, but the demands of the SMPA directorship prevented him from devoting as much time as he would have liked to Planet Forward and other personal projects.

Sesno said his decision to step down was partially driven by a sense of "urgency" related to issues like climate change and organized disinformation campaigns – deliberate attempts by bad actors to mislead the public with false information – that he wants to further investigate.

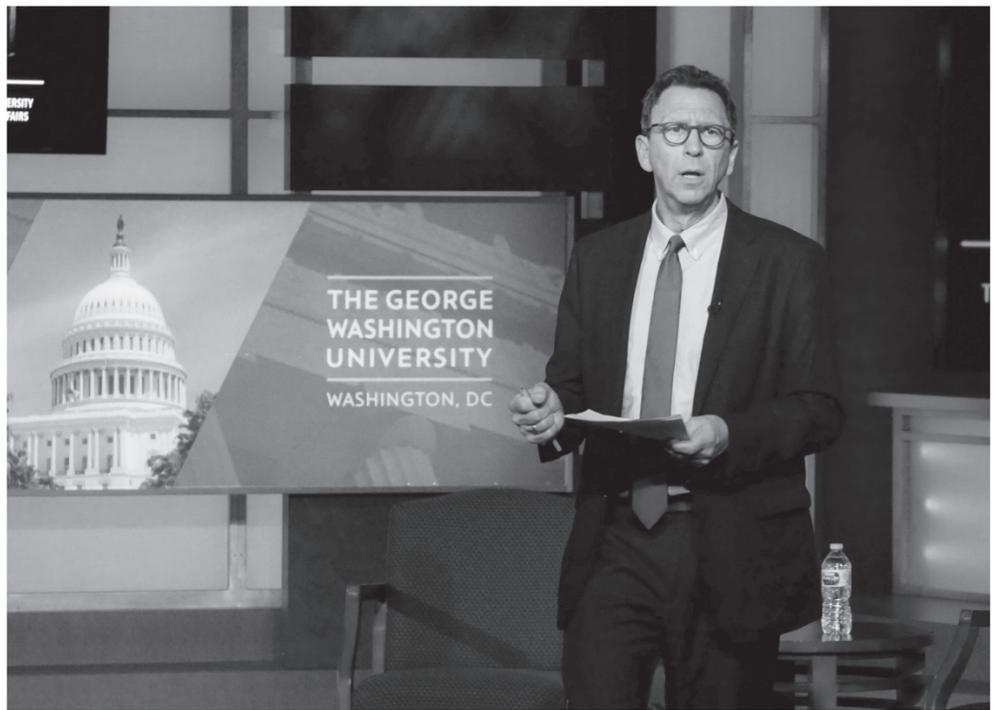
"It felt to me with a sabbatical coming, which I actually delayed, that this was an appropriate time here to pass the baton and a good time for me to sink my teeth into some of these other projects," he said.

Sesno said SMPA officials will announce an interim dean for the school within the next couple of weeks. He added that he is still speaking with SMPA officials about what his responsibilities as a faculty member will entail once he returns from his sabbatical.

Steven Livingston, a professor of media and public affairs, held the interim director post in 2004 after the school's director resigned. Lee Huebner, a professor of media and public affairs, served as the school's director for a few years before resigning in 2009, when Sesno came on board.

"I have spent the last 11 years committed to SMPA, to helping this place grow and everyone here," Sesno said. "I hope to be more productive and feel like part of a very special community. Just because I won't be the director, per se, doesn't mean that I still wouldn't be heavily invested in that proposition and be willing to advance it."

Sesno said the school's next director will face the "intensifying" challenge teaching SMPA students



Frank Sesno, the director of the School of Media and Public Affairs, will announce his successor in a couple of weeks. HATCHET FILE PHOTO

about the effects on politics and the media of misinformation campaigns and "deepfakes" – videos and audio falsified using artificial intelligence that are nearly indistinguishable from authentic clips. He added that the new director must further the school's commitment to bolstering diversity and inclusion efforts.

In 2016, SMPA officials created a committee aimed at increasing the diversity of the student body. Last spring, SMPA students planned to propose new diversity measures after claiming officials had not taken serious action to make the school more inclusive.

"We need to really be committed – genuinely, honest-to-god committed – to diversity and inclusion," Sesno said. "That needs to be not something we just talked about but something that we take risks to achieve."

SMPA faculty said that in addition to his tangible accomplishments, Sesno has undertaken the work of forming personal relationships with faculty, staff and

students.

SMPA Associate Director David Karpf called Sesno the "charismatic centerpiece" of SMPA, adding that his ability to both "joke around" with students and address their concerns indicates to the student body that SMPA leaders are invested in their education and success.

"It's a signal to them that they've arrived at the place where they wanted to be," Karpf said.

Peter Loge, the director of the Project on Ethics in Political Communication, recalled a moment when he saw Sesno walking outside his classroom and asked him to join his class discussion about the U.S. House of Representatives' move to impeach President Donald Trump. Loge said Sesno recounted his experiences covering the Clinton impeachment and offered some similarities and differences between the two instances.

He said the anecdote is representative of Sesno's commitment to forming meaningful relationships with students and impart-

ing his knowledge gained from years of professional journalism experience.

"He's a busy guy," Loge said. "He could have easily said, 'Hey, I've got to run' – he could have not responded when I shouted his name – it could have been any number of things but, instead, he hung around and he wanted to engage the conversation which is, I think, fantastic."

Garret Hoff – a co-director of the SMPA Director's Advisory Council, a student advisory body revived under Sesno – said working with Sesno has been a "true honor and privilege." He added that the director's decision to reintroduce the council reflects his dedication to listening to the opinions and concerns of SMPA students.

"He is a brilliant, inspiring leader who I always found to be a tireless advocate for all members of the SMPA community," Hoff said.

—Ed Prestera contributed reporting.

Foggy Bottom Association members to meet to discuss neighborhood concerns surrounding woman's death

From Page 1

Neighborhood leaders said the incident is indicative of a larger issue residents have faced with unkempt homes on I Street.

Marina Streznewski, the president of the Foggy Bottom Association, said she heard from community members that the woman who died struggled with substance abuse. Streznewski said the property in which the woman was found has been vacant since she moved to the neighborhood in the early 2000s.

"The property is a wreck and has been a wreck for decades," she said.

Streznewski said the death at the property has highlighted neighbors' concerns with the appearance and danger posed by dilapidated properties in the neighborhood. She said the Foggy Bottom Association will hold a meeting Tuesday night to discuss how neighbors and city officials can address the homes.

"People are fed up about the buildings that are in bad shape, and it's brought that issue to the forefront once again," Streznewski said.

Following the death, Foggy Bottom community member Scott Wayne said in an email to community members that the death at 2507 I St. led him to feel concerned about vacant properties in the neighborhood, including the home across the street – 2506 I St. – that is "leaning" and has "crumbling" steps.

"We do not know the full circumstances of the woman's death and how she accessed the space, but one thing my neighbors and I definitely agree on is that having abandoned and dilapidated properties in the neighborhood is not helpful, healthy or safe," he said in the email, which was obtained by The Hatchet.

Wayne said allowing vacant and decrepit-looking properties to remain in the neighborhood is a "blight" to the community.

"We have lived in the neigh-

borhood for more than 20 years and will continue to do so, but are fed up with these properties making our neighborhood seem like a slum," Wayne said in the email.

Susan Lampton, a Foggy Bottom resident, called for "accountability" in homeownership in the neighborhood.

"I look forward to immediate resolutions and will join my other neighbors who will not let the circumstances of the woman's tragic death be shrugged off," she said in the email.

Lucinda Babers, the deputy mayor for operations and infrastructure, said in an email obtained by The Hatchet that DCRA officials inspected the property next to 2507 I St., where the woman was found dead, and the home at 2506 I St., located across the street. She said officials noted possible violations for the front step of the home and a window but planned to do a full inspection last Wednesday.

She said DCRA officials found

no citations at 2505 I St. but will schedule a follow-up inspection to confirm.

"DCRA has taken enforcement action against the property going back several years for failure to maintain the exterior of the building," Babers said.

William Kennedy Smith, the former chair of the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission, whose term ended Wednesday, said the family that owns the vacant 2506 I St. property wants to extend the property and move into the home.

Smith said several neighbors are protesting the expansion of the home because the added rooms would block sunlight from the house in the back. The family will need an exception from DCRA to build if the expansion does block the light, he said.

"The ANC has to decide whether to allow these to make an exception to do their expansion, or whether they're going to sell this," Smith said.

Multiple community mem-

bers noted in the email chain that they had often observed lights on and boards removed from the doors of the vacant I Street properties.

Inez Saki-Tay, a community outreach specialist at DCRA, fielded questions about the death and the properties on I Street from community members at the ANC meeting Wednesday. City officials cannot remove squatters or people who live in a home they don't own, from vacant properties, according to D.C. law.

Saki-Tay said people can be arrested for trespassing for entering a home that's been abated, but officials need proof of a "direct correlation" between the squatter and the home's boards being removed.

"Ugly is not a violation," Saki-Tay said. "What I mean by that is there are properties that don't look that great. But if the property is sound, and it's not causing harm to the public at large, then we can't force the person to beautify their property."

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FROM GWHATCHET.COM/OPINIONS

"Finding the right person to replace Evans will be a difficult task, and students should think about which issues matter to them when choosing a candidate to support and advocate for."

— KIRAN HOFFNER-SHAH ON 1/16/20

Phi Sigma Sigma recruitment withdrawal reflects intolerance for racism

One sorority did not get to partake in the buzz and hype of sorority recruitment and bid day on the National Mall this year. Phi Sigma Sigma withdrew from the process on the first day of recruitment, leaving many people outside of the Panhellenic Association with unanswered questions about the chapter's future.

Hannah Thacker

Contributing Opinions Editor

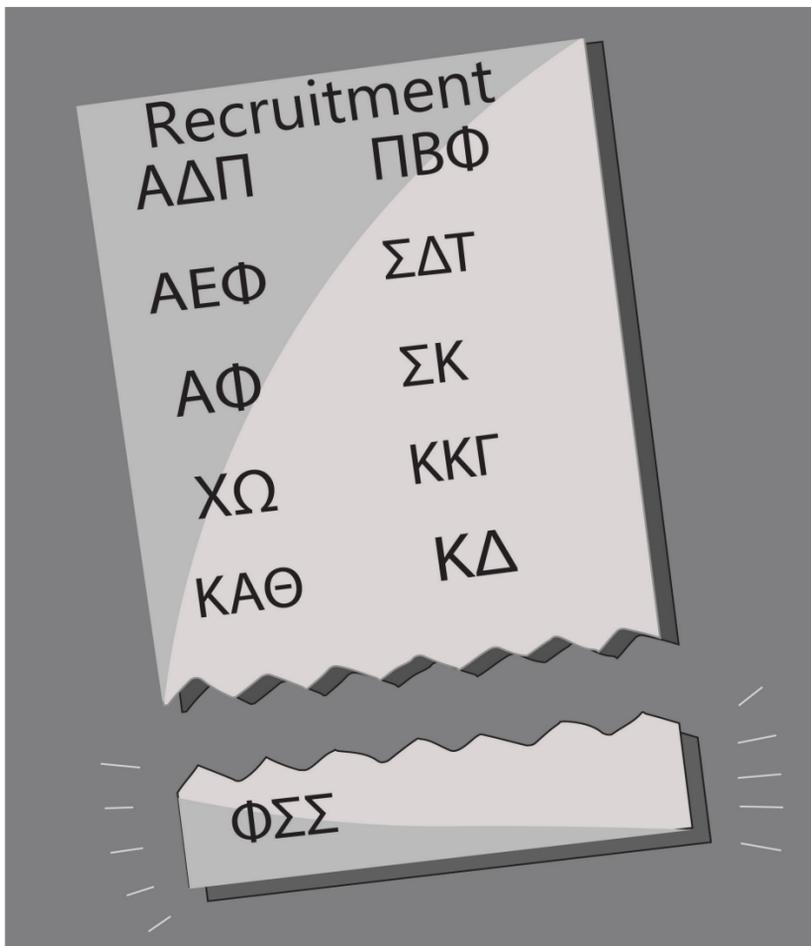
What goes around comes around, and Phi Sigma Sigma is paying the price for its former president's racist Snapchat last semester. But seeing that the chapter was unable to continue with recruitment showed a change different from the diversity trainings and discussions all Panhel sororities were required to attend in the fall.

Sororities head into recruitment with the sole purpose of garnering more members. But Phi Sigma Sigma knew it could not take in the members it needed for a successful process, demonstrating that students may have not wanted to be part of a sorority with a racist past. Choosing to leave recruitment is both a sign that potential new members did not want to be part of

Phi Sigma Sigma and an example of what happens to an organization that develops a reputation for allowing racism.

Sororities are supposed to foster an environment in which women feel that they are part of a family. But Phi Sigma Sigma has hindered that goal and prevented potential new members from believing that they can take part in an inclusive organization. There is nothing more isolating than feeling like you are a part of an organization that allows or condones racist or unethical actions, and potential new members likely saw that concern during the recruitment process.

On the heels of two racist incidents over the past couple of years, officials and student leaders have pushed diversity to the forefront of the University. By now, values of diversity and inclusivity should be ingrained in all students' minds, and Phi Sigma Sigma's departure is a reflection of the direction the University should be heading. Potential new members may have not wanted to preference Phi Sigma Sigma because they do not stand for racist behavior. This shift in attitude is a step in the right direction for both sororities and new members, and sororities should continue to promote inclusivity to ensure another



Cartoon by Hannah Thacker

insensitive event does not happen again.

The sorority's removal also sends a message

to sororities about the consequences of their actions. There is no tolerance for organizations with problematic histories, and Panhel should continue working to ensure they do not need

to pay for the actions of another sorority member. The University is continuing to promote a culture of inclusivity, and sororities need to move in the same direction.

For Phi Sigma Sigma, withdrawing from recruitment can give the chapter time to rebuild its relationships with members of the GW community. Instead of welcoming new members, the chapter can use the semester to make amends with communities it hurt. Phi Sigma Sigma needs to make it clear to the community that while they were represented by someone who showed racist behavior, they are moving forward with steps that will prevent any incident from happening again.

Taking a chapter out of the recruitment process may look like a hit for Panhel, but it does not need to be. Phi Sigma Sigma's removal is a sign that students do not tolerate racist behavior and a lesson for other sororities that they will pay for their actions. If Phi Sigma Sigma wants to remain on campus and get new members in the future, they need to show growth and a commitment to reforming the internal culture of the sorority.

—Hannah Thacker, a sophomore majoring in political communication, is *The Hatchet's* contributing opinions editor.

GWPD's new chief should prioritize community policing

STAFF EDITORIAL

Nearly nine months after the former senior associate vice president for safety and security abruptly left, administrators have selected a new GW Police Department leader. More importantly, GWPD has been given another chance to start fresh.

James Tate will be the fifth person to oversee GWPD in two years, bringing with him experience as the former chief of police at Rice University but taking over an office with many unanswered questions about administrative changes. In a department plagued by turnover, Tate's new leadership gives the GW community an opportunity to develop goals for the direction of the office.

Tate has mentioned intentions to introduce community policing, meaning that GWPD officers would prioritize building relationships with the community. At a school where GWPD has sometimes lacked community trust, bringing in a new approach to policing could help the department rebuild. As Tate takes over a historically shaky office, he should present plans to institute community policing that prioritizes trust, communication and relationships.

Some student organizations have criticized GWPD for its role in race relations in past years, alleging that GWPD contributes to a national issue of distrust between civilians and police. Student trust has also been damaged by past incidents, like a 2017 lawsuit that alleged GWPD arrested an admitted student who was the victim of domestic abuse.

Taking a community policing approach can help

build trust while making students feel safer and more comfortable around officers. The department could create a website to report police discrimination, which students advocated for in 2015. GWPD should also increase the number of programs that educate students and community members about GWPD procedure and host discussions among officers, administrators and students to allow community members to voice concerns.

In the past, GWPD has aimed to build trust through the Connect Program, which brought officers and students together in an informal environment. Officials also created a student advisory board in 2018 to help GWPD identify safety concerns and work with students. Tate should institute more programs that allow students and officers to get to know each other, while also addressing larger problems with trust that center around race relations and abuse on campus.

Tate should also consider some of our peer schools' programs aimed at building community trust. At Boston University, officials hired a veteran officer with roots in the community to serve as deputy chief. The Georgetown University Police Department has worked to quantify racial incidents between police officers and students and administrators hosted an open forum for students and officials to discuss racial bias in policing. Members of the University of Southern California can have a say in policing by participating in the school's Cadet Program, which allows people to learn about policing and criminal jus-

tice. The University of Miami's police chief gets to know students by taking them out to lunch and asking them for suggestions to improve the office's policing. GW's peers have made an effort to take a community approach to policing by prioritizing trust and communication – and GWPD should do the same.

To regain the trust of the community, officers must build a better relationship and work to understand the needs of campus. One way GWPD has improved community relations in the past was by changing its policy on liquor law violations to only EMeRG students if emergency medical services finds them over-intoxicated. Policies that minimize the need for GWPD to intervene will alleviate some concerns about interacting with officers.

Community policing can easily be a buzzword that does not solve real problems, but it can also be a framework for bridging the divide between officer morale, campus safety and student satisfaction. Externally, some students do not trust GWPD. Internally, GWPD officers may lack morale as several officials have shuffled in and out of the department. Community policing, which brings accountability in the form of open forums and relationships, is a compromise that can solve GWPD's external and internal problems.

It will be easier for Tate to improve campus safety measures if he has the trust of students and the broader GW community. He must implement a stronger community policing approach that is grounded in communication, trust and community relationships.

Bisexuality is just as valid as every other letter in LGBTQ

You are just confused. Are you ever going to make up your mind? You are not really bisexual, you are just gay and do not want to say so. You should be careful – bisexuals cheat on people.

Hannah Thacker
Contributing Opinions Editor

I have heard it all, and it is because I am bisexual. But I rarely hear a conversation about biphobia – the fear or aversion toward bisexual people – which is surprising given that I experience the issue in all facets of my life. Bisexual people face discrimination from both the straight and LGBTQ communities, which often doubt their existence because they are not seen as a member of either group.

Biphobia is seen in everything, like the insistence that bisexual people are confused about their sexuality and only attracted to one gender. It is seen in the fear-based stereotypes that bisexual people are promiscuous or more likely to cheat on their partners than people who are not bisexual. Bisexual people are cut out of conversations on LGBTQ issues like health care and societal acceptance, and sometimes they are cut out of the community altogether. But bisexual people are part of the LGBTQ community and deserve to have a seat at the table.

I was lucky enough

to grow up in an accepting area of Los Angeles, surrounded mostly by people who were supportive of my choices and my identity. But I can still point to instances of biphobia I faced from those inside and outside of my family and friends.

In high school, I was talking with friends about our futures and potential lives. I was dating a woman at the time, but I was told that I would end up marrying a man because my "phase" will be over by the time I am grown up. I was so hurt that my friends did not seem to believe that my identity was real, but I bit my tongue because I felt it was better to say nothing.

I have also faced judgment from within the LGBTQ community. In one instance, I was told that bisexual people are greedy and want to say they are a part of the community and still date opposite gender partners. Hearing a stereotype from a community that is supposed to be accepting of all identities was disheartening and made me feel that there is no group that really accepts bisexuality.

Bisexual people are not confused. They are not just secretly gay, and they are not more likely to cheat on you. Bisexual identities are valid and deserve to be seen as such.

Many misunderstandings and stereotypes about bisexual people are rooted in ignorance. Being attracted to more than one gender may confuse

some people because it is considered the norm to be attracted to only one type of person. Bisexuality challenges that norm and, in turn, causes many people to question and doubt it. This lack of understanding is at the core of issues facing the bisexual community.

Many people in the LGBTQ community may believe that bisexual people are too afraid to come out as gay or do not want to be with bisexual people because they think we are more likely to cheat. Bisexual people are not considered in discussions about issues facing those in the LGBTQ community because many see bisexuals as having a "hetero" privilege when they are in opposite-gender relationships, or they are seen as posers when they are in a same-sex relationship.

Stereotypes and misunderstanding about bisexual people are harmful to both the people perpetuating these beliefs and the bisexual community. If there is enough tolerance to understand and accept that some people are attracted to the same gender, there should be enough tolerance to understand that some people are attracted to more than one.

Bisexual people are valid. Intolerance, stereotypes and toxic erasure toward this sexuality should not be accepted. We are here, and we are here to stay.

—Hannah Thacker, a sophomore majoring in political communication, is *The Hatchet's* contributing opinions editor.

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Submit to opinions@gwhatchet.com

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Culture

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THE SCENE

LIL BABY
The Anthem
Jan. 23 • \$55-80
Rapper known for his collaboration on "Yes Indeed" with Drake will perform Thursday.

GRACE POTTER
The Anthem
Jan. 25 • \$45-75
Roots rock singer Potter will bring chill vibes like "Stars" to D.C. Saturday.

ARMIN VAN BUREN
Echostage
Jan. 25 • \$159
This Dutch DJ will make attendees jump to electro house beats Saturday.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

'CIRCLES,' AN ALBUM BY MAC MILLER

Oscar-nominated movies worth watching before the awards ceremony

Dozens of films are up for Oscar nominations, but only a few will take home the coveted golden statue. You may not have the time, interest or money to watch every film, so we've compiled a list of note-

'Joker'

Todd Phillips' "Joker" is disturbingly compelling but an absolute must-see. In the film, clown-for-hire Arthur Fleck — played by Joaquin Phoenix — feels isolated by a society that knocks him down time and time again, literally. When Fleck stops taking his medications and gets ahold of a gun, the man behind the clown mask seeks revenge on the world that turned its back on him.

Phoenix portrays Fleck's mental devolution with such intensity that his every little movement and mannerism sends chills down your spine. For a full two hours, your heart will pound and you won't be able to pull your eyes away from the screen in this suspenseful film.

—Rachel Trauner

'Ford v. Ferrari'

"Ford v. Ferrari" is not just an action-packed racing movie — it's a human interest story. Matt Damon and Christian Bale star in the true story of visionary automaker

Carroll Shelby and race car driver Ken Miles, who take on Enzo Ferrari's racing empire. While the story moves slowly at times, "Ford v. Ferrari" takes the time to show the grit that comes with the world of professional racing. James Mangold's film jumps between adrenaline-inducing racing scenes and heart-wrenching personal struggles, all while teaching a valuable lesson that not every attempt for success pays off.

—Kiran Hoeffner-Shah

'The Irishman'

For a movie about following rules, "The Irishman" sure does break a few. In many ways, the movie shows director Martin Scorsese wrestling with his own inner demons, but it also serves as an overview and arguable culmination of his career. Based on the book, "I Heard You Paint Houses," the movie slowly takes us along on the journey of an average, working-class man's life as he joins the Irish mob and becomes close friends

with powerful labor union leader and figure in organized crime, Jimmy Hoffa. Robert De Niro plays the title character, Frank Sheeran, and shows us with nuance, vulnerability and gentle humor the consequences of decay. "The Irishman" is a vital reminder to the viewer about the inevitability of time passing.

—Gracie Jamison

'1917'

We've seen dozens of movies about war, but "1917" is worth adding to the list. The film is made to look as if it is one single shot, taking your breath away and breaking your heart at some jaw-dropping moments. Featuring something of a dream team in director Sam Mendes and 14-time Oscar nominee writer Roger Deakins, "1917" centers around two men seeking to save a battalion from walking into a trap. The scenes, some of which show a town in flames and images of combat, look like paintings on the screen, while the moments of human bravery

worthy movies. Here's a rundown of the films that racked up the most Oscar nominations to help you narrow down which movies are worth your time at the theater.

touch your soul. If a movie can reinvent the wheel, it's this one.

—Gracie Jamison

'Jojo Rabbit'

"Jojo Rabbit" is a comedy showing the story of an impressionable 10-year-old German boy named Jojo living in Nazi Germany during World War II. Throughout the film, Jojo confides to his imaginary friend: Hitler. But when he discovers a Jewish teenage girl his mother has been hiding in the attack, Jojo's developing Nazi beliefs and trust in his imaginary pal are tested. The directors cased an odd mix of actors like Rebel Wilson and Scarlett Johansson, but the star-studded group embodies the film's elements of satire and drama.

—Anna Boone

'Little Women'

The novel "Little Women" has been adapted several times, but Greta Gerwig's modern take on the American classic will inspire you with stories of young wom-

en. The movie depicts the upbringing of four sisters, each with different dreams for their futures, from a small Massachusetts town during the Civil War. The March sisters navigate their transition into adulthood, facing challenges with love and the responsibilities of a woman in the 1800s. The film is filled with Hollywood's best with actors Saoirse Ronan, Timothee Chalamet, Meryl Streep, Florence Pugh, Laura Dern and Emma Watson. "Little Women" is a must-see for anyone who wants to leave the theater with a full heart.

—Carly Neilson

'Parasite'

Making history as the first Korean film to be nominated for best picture and several other Oscar categories, Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite" tells the story of the poverty-stricken Kim family who artfully manipulate their way into replacing the household staff of the affluent Park family. Commenting on class division and social inequality, the film shows the light and

dark sides of both families, crafting parallels between the families while creating a double-edged sympathy and distrust of both families' behaviors. The film culminates in an unexpected plot twist during a birthday party for the Park family's young son. Enticing and unsettling, "Parasite" is nothing short of cinematic brilliance.

—Bridie O'Connell

'Once Upon a Time in Hollywood'

"Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" tells the story of Rick Dalton — played by Leonardo DiCaprio — an aging actor struggling to find his place after his heyday in a '50s western television show, and Cliff Booth — played by Brad Pitt — who is Dalton's longtime stunt double and best friend. Written and directed by Quentin Tarantino, the film explores themes of consequence and companionship as Rick and Cliff navigate the changing landscape of Hollywood during the late '60s.

—Brennan Fiske



CAMILLE DESANTO | PHOTOGRAPHER

The techno-inspired exhibit "Future Sketches" will showcase the work of artist and computer programmer Zach Lieberman.

Artechose exhibit uses code to create interactive design

RACHEL ARMANY
STAFF WRITER

A new installation at Artechouse uses computer code to transform images of the human body into an interactive design.

The "Future Sketches" exhibit, which will be on display at the Artechouse until March 1, uses elements like light, animation and facial recognition software to show visitors an expressive augmented reality. New York-based new media artist Zach Lieberman said he intends for the exhibit to illustrate what the human voice or body might look like in inanimate objects.

"Technology should always be in service of the idea," Lieberman wrote on Artechouse's website. "The idea should be something that is poetic or that tells us about what it means to be human. When I create work, I don't want people to point at it and say, 'That's dope software.' I want them to say, 'That's a beautiful idea.'"

The exhibit is divided into three distinct rooms. The "Code Lab" gives visitors a look at the code behind the designs, the "Interactive Lab" allows visitors to augment their body with drawings and costumes, and the "Face Lab" allows people to virtually try on geometric masks.

Visitors can also expect to see short ani-

mations of costumes or shapes projected onto moving bodies, distorted human faces and hands and moving shapes and colors.

"I want to make artwork or create a space that makes you feel like you want to make something too," he said. "I want to show what code feels like because this is a medium that I really love, but I think it's not always approachable."

Lieberman said he splits his time between his art and teaching media arts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the School of Poetic Computation in New York. He said that like teaching, it was rewarding to watch people interacting with the space he created.

"You don't understand your work until you see how other people see it," he said. "So actually putting it out there and seeing how other people, what they're excited about, you learn about yourself as a trainer."

Lena Galperina, the visitor experience director at Artechouse, said Lieberman was an easy choice for the company's 15th exhibition because he combines education about code and media art to create an artistic design, following Artechouse's goal to help visitors learn about technology through art.

Galperina cited a feature of the exhibit in which Lieberman shows a video essay of design-

er Jessica Helfand that chronicles the history of facial recognition and phrenology — the ways in which phrenology has been racially discriminatory in determining what a "criminal" face is.

"The structure of the exhibition, whether it has labs, the sketch lab, the code lab, it invites you to learn in a very playful environment," Galperina said. "And there are elements that he brings in that are not just playful, but he wants to create a space for greater conversation."

The interactive labs of "Future Sketches" also include a device where visitors can talk into a microphone and see their voice turn into colorful lights on a screen. A light refraction software that reflects shapes and letters are placed on a table that people can move around, manipulating the displays on the screen.

Exhibit attendee Zoe Hawryluk said her favorite element was the "Face Lab" — a feature that allows visitors to sit down and make facial expressions on camera. The expressions are coded to match with other faces that are similar to theirs.

"When you raise your eyebrows or smile, you get like this burst of light," she said. "And I thought that that was very beautiful to equate human emotion with so many different kinds of people."

Freshman mentors high schoolers in Michelle Obama campaign

DIEGO MENDOZA
REPORTER

Many freshmen only dream about landing an internship or leadership position in their first year, much less a job under former First Lady Michelle Obama.

But freshman Linette Delgado is one of four selected to participate in Obama's "A Year of Firsts" project, a multimedia collaboration between the advocacy group ATTN and the first-generation college student myself. The campaign aims to provide students from socioeconomically marginalized backgrounds with insight into the lives of first-generation students before they embark on college themselves.

"The first year of college is exciting, but also a little nerve-racking," Obama wrote on Instagram earlier this month. "As a first-generation college student myself, I know how intimidating it can be to try to navigate through a new place and make new friends, all while trying to figure out who you are and who you want to be."

The campaign's four participants are students who have faced "tremendous odds" to attend college, Obama said in the post. The interns will share their stories about "the ups, the downs and everything in between" of college life, she said.

She said that as a first-generation Latina student, she had to independently apply for college and navigate a predominantly white school. She said the initiative is an opportunity for her to encourage other Latino stu-

dents to pursue higher education despite the University's relatively small Latino student population.

About 9 percent of GW students identified as Hispanic in 2019, according to institutional data.

"I'm the oldest out of three siblings, and I come from a Mexican household where you're told you have to go to school because that's the only option to get out of how you grew up," she said. "At times, I did doubt my worth, because you're competing against other students and you also have limited resources."

She said she interned for Reach Higher last semester and worked for iMentor, an advocacy organization that guides high school seniors through the college application process. Delgado said she impressed Reach Higher coordinators with her commitment to help first-generation students, and she was recommended as a representative for Obama's campaign.

"I didn't think it was fake when I got the email about the project, but it came out of nowhere," Delgado said. "I said, 'Yes' immediately because I feel that Latinos, in general, have to be represented, and it was a chance to encourage other Latino students to pursue higher education."

She said the bulk of her job with "A Year of Firsts" involves blogging and recording videos on IGTV of her typical days at school, which involves morning treks to class, reflections of her days and topics followers ask her to discuss. Delgado also texts daily with assigned mentees,

who she counsels through the college application process and fields questions about school, she said.

Delgado said she sends her vlogs to campaign producers, who compile videos from the three other representatives from California, North Dakota and Alabama into a series on ATTN's IGTV page. The first episode is set to premiere later this month, she said.

She said that while she mostly vlogs about her study habits and campus culture on her phone, there are other not-so-positive aspects of college life that she wants to share. Delgado said she discusses her struggle to find a core group of friends and student organizations to join. "I do try to give them a raw experience of what college is like," Delgado said. "I think a lot of students will glamorize college life and won't tell you what's really going on, so I try to be real and keep that balanced."

Delgado said that while she ultimately wants to give high school seniors insight into her experience with class, friends and extracurriculars, she also wants to use the opportunity to break down the stereotype that Latino students cannot succeed in school.

"There are lots of students of color who are excited about pursuing higher education," she said. "This is about letting the world know that we need help, and if that help could be given, it would be greatly appreciated because there are not a lot of support systems."



SARAH URTZ | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Freshman Linette Delgado is one of four first-generation student representatives for former First Lady Michelle Obama's "A Year of Firsts" campaign.

GAMES OF THE WEEK



MEN'S TENNIS
vs. Howard
Friday | 12:45 p.m.
Men's tennis goes after its first victory of the 2020 season.



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
vs. Dayton
Wednesday | 7 p.m.
The Colonials look to snap a two-game losing streak and nab their second conference win.

NUMBER CRUNCH

.38

The average number of seconds by which graduate student Haoning Chen defeated the closest opponent in his first Division I swimming competition.

INJURED TO STARTERS: FIRST-YEARS LEAD WOMEN'S SQUAD

First-year forward finds starting role for women's basketball

ROMAN BOBEK
STAFF WRITER

A preseason injury kept redshirt freshman Mayowa Taiwo off the court last season, but she's bounced back this year and exploded into Atlantic 10 play.

Taiwo earned a pivotal starting role on the squad this season, becoming a regular to the starting lineup last month and contributing 5.8 points and 6.7 rebounds per game in that span. The Hanover, Md.-native reached career highs in both points and rebounds in her first four games of conference play.

"I'm hoping to be a consistent player for coach," Taiwo said. "She's really looking for somebody to play both sides of the floor, so I hope to bring my defense into offense."

Taiwo said she developed a bond with redshirt freshman guard Tori Hyduke, who was sidelined with an injury last season and helped her overcome the first-year roadblock.

Taiwo averages 6.2 rebounds per game and has amassed 106 total rebounds this season. On offense, she averages 5.3 points per game over the course of 17 games.

She has garnered career highs in A-10 play, taking 14 rebounds against Ford-

ham Jan. 12 and 18 points in a victory over Duquesne Jan. 8. Against conference foes, she averages 7.8 points per game and a team-high 7.5 rebounds per game.

Her strength on the boards distinguishes her from other players in the A-10. In conference games, Taiwo ranks No. 9 in rebounds per game, and she ranks third among A-10 players with 3.5 offensive boards per game.

Head coach Jennifer Rizzotti said Taiwo has become "more comfortable" with her strength and quickness, and she has the ability to harness her it during games to succeed.

"I've really tried to put her in positions where she can use her strength and her quickness to get easy baskets," Rizzotti said. "But she's worked really hard on being able to change her pace and find different ways to score based on how the defense is guarding her. So she has a lot more patience."

In the absence of junior forward Neila Luma, who has been relegated to the bench with an injury since Nov. 20, Taiwo has provided much-needed intensity down low, averaging 23.6 minutes on the court per game. Rizzotti said she hopes Luma will be able to participate in practice in the coming weeks to provide Taiwo

with a "veteran presence" and substitute.

Rizzotti added that Taiwo is learning how to adapt to the different defenses opposing teams implement to counter her play and increase her offensive range to the perimeter to serve as a double threat.

"She's made some really big strides in her development, and I think her confidence has skyrocketed as a result of that," Rizzotti said.

Graduate student forward Alexandra Maund said Taiwo is an athletic "tank" and plays at "100 percent" during every moment of every game.

"I've had some teams that have been close, but she is 100 percent every second that she is on the floor and it is so incredible to watch," Maund said.

Taiwo said her confidence has only grown "a little bit" since finding more court time this season, but Maund said it's because Taiwo plays with humility.

"Sometimes I'm like, 'Really? You don't have to be good at everything,'" Maund said. "But it's in such a humble way and she's very shy about all her talents."

The Colonials return to the Smith Center against Dayton at 7 p.m. Wednesday after a two-game road stint.



FILE PHOTO BY ARI GOLUB | PHOTOGRAPHER
Redshirt freshman guard Tori Hyduke drives the ball toward the basket in a game against Georgetown.

Redshirt freshman point guard guides women's basketball after injury

ROHAN KANDESHWARATH
STAFF WRITER

After spending a year on the sidelines, redshirt freshman guard Tori Hyduke has found the ball in her hands more than any women's basketball player this season.

An ACL injury put Hyduke on the bench for the 2018-19 season, delaying her debut at the point for the Colonials (7-10, 1-3 A-10). This season, Hyduke said she is developing her voice as a young leader and adapting to the expectations of managing GW's offense at the point.

"It's definitely a big jump from high school to college," she said. "Having to step into the point guard role as a freshman is difficult, but it's something that I'm trying to get better and better at every day."

The squad lost both redshirt junior guard Sydney Zambrotta and sophomore guard Maddie Loder to injury on Nov. 13 and Dec. 20, respectively, which limited the team's options at the point. In their absences, Hyduke is the lone Colonial to start all 17 games this season and leads GW with 32.2 minutes per game.

She fires at a 39.3 percent clip from the field and sinks a team-leading 41.1 percent of shots from deep to the tune of 10.2 points per game. She earned Atlantic 10 Rookie of the Week honors last month

for averaging 22 points in a pair of road comeback wins against Delaware and Quinnipiac.

"I'm really just thinking of trying to run our offense to the best of my ability, and the shots just come from it," Hyduke said.

Last season, Hyduke said she looked up to 2019-graduate point guard Mei-Lyn Bautista for her style of play and love for the team. She added that she and Bautista spent some time last season discussing the nuances of the point guard role in GW's system.

Hyduke said she is looking to head coach Jennifer Rizzotti this season, a former point guard at UConn, to help her improve her leadership and communication skills.

"She's hard on me, but I'm ready for it and I know that it's going to help me in the long run and help the team in the long run," Hyduke said, referring to Rizzotti.

As the offense attempts to derive more points in the paint and from post players, Hyduke's role on the team is ever-changing. Rizzotti said she has responded well to the shift from a producer to a passer.

"The first couple of conference games, teams have really keyed on her and she's struggled to get done what she was able to do in the non-conference portion," Rizzotti

said.

She added that Hyduke's shifting role has been accompanied by increased minutes studying film, asking "good" questions and turning her mindset away from being a scoring point guard.

"There's a receptiveness to her and a willingness to be a really consummate point guard and not just a scoring point guard that I've really seen develop over the last few weeks," Rizzotti said.

Hyduke's teammates have also tried to encourage her development through communication on the court, a skill necessary to running an offense, graduate student forward Alexandra Maund said. She added that the squad's heightened communication has helped her see the floor and find teammates.

Maund said coming back from injury to a starting position is not easy, but Hyduke has transitioned well and became a floor general who can lead the Colonials to victory.

"To go from being out for a whole year, not playing any basketball to coming on and playing college basketball is such an adjustment," Maund said. "It's one I actually made myself and it's so hard. So, to know that she's not only come back on the floor but is now starting and leading us as a point guard is insane."

—Roman Bobek contributed reporting.



FILE PHOTO BY ARI GOLUB | PHOTOGRAPHER
Redshirt freshman forward Mayowa Taiwo takes a free throw in December's game against Georgetown.

'Someone to lean on': Freshman roommates offer support system in first year

EMILY MAISE
SPORTS EDITOR

Men's basketball topped George Mason for its first Atlantic 10 win Wednesday, but another moment stuck out to freshman guard Jameer Nelson Jr. and freshman forward Jamison Battle.

Freshman forward Chase Paar was hit by a screen, and the gum he was chewing flew out of his mouth. Nelson Jr. scanned the court and locked eyes with Battle, who burst into laughter. The moment was insignificant to the game's outcome, but the duo said it demonstrates a closeness that has helped them thrive in their first year as Colonials.

Nelson Jr. and Battle have been staples to head coach Jamion Christian's team, serving as two of the three players to see action in all 18 games this season. The two hold three A-10 Rookie of the Week honors, making them the first pair of freshmen to receive the nods since Joe McDonald and Kevin Larsen earned the award seven years ago.

Battle said the moments in games when he can "laugh and goof around" with Nelson Jr. represent their connectivity off the court as roommates and friends.

"I think having my roommate on the court

with me, it just boosts my morale," Battle said. "He believes in me and I believe in him, and I think it's something I'm lucky to have."

Battle has been a force from three-point range, hitting a triple in every game this season and leading the squad with a .416 three-point shooting percentage. His sharpshooting has led him to average 12.3 points per game. In conference play, his average jumps to 16 points per game.

"Shooters don't get shots if they don't get the ball, and I think my teammates have really helped me," Battle said. "Coach has helped me. He believes in me. He's given me this opportunity as a freshman and I think not a lot of freshmen get the opportunity right away."

Nelson Jr. said Battle was criticized for his rebounding coming into college, but he has since snatched a team-leading 7.6 rebounds in conference play to shut down commentators.

"He's just going against a lot of adversity," Nelson Jr. said. "In high school, people said a lot of things about him. 'You can't rebound, you can't do certain things,' but he's proved people wrong. He's been a crazy scoring threat for us."

Nelson Jr. was tasked

with handling the ball from the get-go, and he has proven to be an effective scorer and passer, averaging 10.1 points per game on .389 shooting from the field and ranking second on the team with 38 assists. On defense, Nelson Jr.'s quick hands have disrupted opponents' passing and earned him a team-leading 33 steals.

Battle said Nelson Jr. took on the challenge at the point position and has grown to be a jack-of-all-trades through shooting, driving to the rim and defending to help the team win.

"I just remember seeing him in the summer," Battle said. "I know coming in, point guard, there's a lot you have to know. As a freshman, I think he's just grown tremendously, the right reads, he's just becoming a better player."

The bond between the two freshmen extends off the court and into the residence hall room they share. Battle said the two have stayed up until the early morning "just talking." Nelson Jr. added that the pair grabs dinner together at least five times a week, frequenting their go-to spot Wawa.

"We're always talking about basketball, whether it's in the dorm or in the locker room," Battle said. "We're always talking about something. We're



ARIELLE BADER | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR
Freshmen Jameer Nelson Jr. and Jamison Battle said sharing a room has helped them bond on and off the court.

always connecting."

Nelson Jr. added that their bond as roommates and friends causes them to hold each other to a high standard and feed off each other in games and practice.

"We get on each other a lot, but it's because we love each other," Nelson Jr. said. "We want to be the best at whatever we're trying to do. We just work and work off each other. I think we keep each other at a certain standard. We hold each other accountable."

Battle has started the most games of any

Colonial this season, racking up 17 starts. He also leads the team in minutes, logging 34.6 per game. Nelson Jr. averages 28.1 minutes per game and has started 16 contests. Christian said Battle and Nelson Jr. earned their playing time in practice and make contributions to the squad on both offense and defense.

"We really value guys that can shoot the ball, and Jamison Battle is obviously one of the best shooters in our league," Christian said. "We value guys like Jameer that are great defensively and can

shoot the ball but also make really dynamic plays in the lane."

Christian added that the duo was a "good combination" for the program's future and their bond off the court created a support system for the young players.

"It's great that they're roommates and they have the chance to bond together and work together and just go through these trials and tribulations together," Christian said. "They have someone to lean on."

—Belle Long contributed reporting.