

The GW Hatchet

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ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

In 2019, GWPD officers received 173 calls from on-campus blue light stations and made contact with nine of those callers.

Blue light phone use drops almost 20 percent in 2019

GRAHAM HURLEY
REPORTER

Blue light emergency phone use on campus decreased by nearly 20 percent between 2018 and 2019, according to GW Police Department data.

In 2019, GWPD officers received 173 calls from on-campus blue light stations, of which officers made contact with the caller nine times, the data shows. In interviews, more than 10 students said they've never needed to use blue lights, but knowing the phones can be used to call emergency services makes them feel secure while walking around campus.

Mary Paradis, the former interim chief of police, said blue light callers rarely made contact with police officers because callers typically leave the area before officers arrive. GWPD officers did not make contact with nearly 90 percent of all blue light calls since 2016.

"It is not as important for students to use them as it is for students to be aware that we have these phones and to be aware of their location," Paradis said in an email. "Blue light phones are strategically placed around campus as a means to connect the community with GWPD."

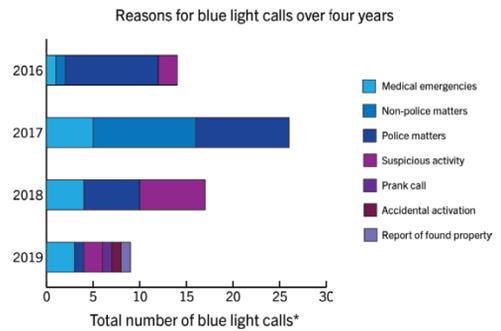
GWPD received 110 blue light voice calls in 2016, but GWPD only made voice contact with the caller on 23, or about 20 percent, of the calls. In 2017, the department received 228 calls and 26 callers made contact with the caller, about an 11 percent increase from the previous year, according to GWPD data.

Paradis said the University added "several" blue light phones to campus in 2017, which likely caused the spike in calls that year.

She frequently responds to blue light calls than to the calls made from the PAL app, which allows users to text or call GWPD about an emergency and tracks the user's location using GPS. Paradis said the University will begin transitioning to a new "app-based" security system this spring.

"The vast majority of our calls for service are through our emergency telephone line," she said. "Calling the GWPD emergency line allows you to interface with dispatchers and provide the most detailed information about the emergency."

Eleven students said they've never used a blue light phone but feel safer knowing that the phones are a back-up option to calling emergency services.



ALYSSA ILARIA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

Senior Jennifer Nwoko said the blue light phones make her feel secure on campus, but she doesn't know if they're functional or not because she's never used one.

"If something were to happen and there's no resort, it's good to know that they're there," she said.

Freshman Danielle Shakib said her roommate used a blue light recently because she felt unsafe when she was walking home late at night.

"She pushed the button, but somebody was there to help her right away and walk her home, so it was no big deal," she said.

Freshman Ryan Shiu-Kim said the blue light phones and GW's other security services, like Safe Ride and consistent GWPD

patrols, contribute to his overall sense of security on campus.

"It's great that it is there for people who might need it," he said. "And I feel like it is placed strategically around campus. So it's definitely accessible."

Campus security experts said college students typically opt to call emergency services on their own cell phones, but the blue light is a secure option for students to use.

Marc Lovicott, the director of communications for the University of Wisconsin-Madison Police Department, said an "overwhelming majority" of his department's blue light activations are generally accidental or prank calls.

See **LIGHTS** Page 2

DOE complaints decline by more than two-thirds since 2015

SHANNON MALLARD
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The number of complaints filed against GW in the U.S. Department of Education Office for Civil Rights has declined 70 percent over the past five years.

The OCR – a DOE branch that investigates discrimination allegations – launched 10 federal probes into discriminatory behavior claims in 2015 but only investigated three cases of alleged discrimination in 2019. Discrimination law experts said the number of complaints may have decreased after officials mandated diversity and Title IX trainings and better handling of cases at the University level.

Caroline Laguerre-Brown, the vice provost for diversity, equity and community engagement, said the number of complaints filed with the OCR each year is "unpredictable" and cannot "easily" be attributed to specific factors. Laguerre-Brown said an individual could file more than one report with the OCR in a certain year, and the DOE may consider each grievance as a separate complaint.

"Still, we fully recognize that regardless of whether the number of complaints filed with OCR increases or decreases in any given year, complacency is simply not an option, and we remain committed to ongoing analysis and improvement of systems and processes for addressing student concerns," Laguerre-Brown said in an email.

Laguerre-Brown said officials have taken measures like revising the Code of Student Conduct and reworking the Equal Opportunity, Non-Discrimination, Anti-Harassment and Non-Retaliation Policy to ensure GW is equipped to handle discrimination cases.

Officials debuted a bias incident reporting website last February that allows faculty, students and staff to report bias-related acts for the Bias Incident Response Team – which includes administrators from offices like the Division of Operations – to review. Laguerre-Brown added that officials "regularly" evaluate ways to increase student awareness of resources like the Title IX and ethics offices.

Recent investigations

Of the 24 cases brought

against GW between 2015 and 2018, only one complaint stated that the University violated an individual's rights and required officials to take corrective action, according to a ProPublica report.

In 2017, the OCR began investigating GW's website accessibility. The probe found that University websites lacked viewing features like video and photo captions to accommodate disabled individuals' needs.

Officials formed a task force in early 2018 to examine website accessibility issues. GW met its first OCR deadline to make online content more accessible last January.

The OCR initiated an investigation into a complaint alleging that officials retaliated against a former student for protesting age discrimination last January. The complainant alleged that the University fostered a culture in which longer-serving professors "bully" non-tenured and clinical research faculty.

When the DOE publicly listed the complaint on the OCR website in February, officials said they were "confident" they acted "appropriately" toward the student. The complaint is still listed on the OCR website.

The OCR also opened two investigations into allegations of disability discrimination later that month.

The first inquiry investigated whether GW denied an individual benefits on the basis of their disability, and the second launched an investigation into whether the University retaliated against an individual for protesting disability discrimination. Neither complaint is listed on the OCR website.

Education and enforcement

Alan Sash, a partner in the litigation department at the firm McLaughlin & Stern who has worked on Title IX cases, said students come from a variety of different backgrounds, so officials should establish clear standards of acceptable interpersonal behavior. He said instituting mandatory diversity and Title IX training for students could result in a decrease in the number of complaints filed with the DOE.

See **COMPLAINTS** Page 2

Science and Engineering Hall has bolstered GW's research output: faculty

VITA FELLIG
REPORTER

Since the biology department moved from Bell Hall to the Science and Engineering Hall five years ago, professor Courtney Smith said she's noticed "simple" improvements in her working conditions.

She said SEH's more effective air conditioning system and the availability of pure deionized water in all of SEH's sinks have made her research process faster and more efficient. The space available in the building has allowed her to keep an "animal housing room" in the basement, which she could not maintain at her former location.

"These are the standard aspects of science buildings that should be available, and this new building has made it so it's true for GW," she said.

Roughly five years after its official opening, Smith is one of several faculty members who said the hall – which houses more than 150 faculty and holds classes for thousands of students from four of GW's ten schools – has enhanced student and faculty research opportunities. Officials said the building has helped students and faculty produce more competitive research, improved student satisfaction and led to more faculty from top-20

universities joining GW.

"As a result of our hiring, our research expenditures have increased dramatically, our faculty's publication numbers are up, the number of research-active faculty at SEAS is up – everything is up," Can Korman, the engineering school's associate dean of research and graduate studies, said in an email.

Korman said the building – which cost \$275 million to construct and opened in March 2015 – is the "key facility" in terms of infrastructure that supports GW's scientific research. SEH encourages faculty research by providing more lab space and facilitating more cross-disciplinary work between researchers from different schools, he said.

Korman added that the building, which is home to faculty fosters a "collaborative education" for students because they can work side-by-side. The building has also improved the sense of community among STEM students and faculty, he said.

"Students like to spend time in the SEH common areas," Korman said. "I see them gathered together studying all the time."

Jason Zara, an associate professor of biomedical engineering, said the building's creation has been a "game changer" for promoting his department's research because it created enough space

to house the entire department in one location. The biomedical engineering department was previously divided between Phillips and Staughton halls.

He said the building has allowed him to expand the range of his research – which focuses on using imaging technology to try to detect illnesses, according to his faculty profile – to include sea urchins and biofilms.

"Having proximity to other researchers has greatly expanded the scope of my research and led to many more collaborative projects," he said.

Igor Efimov, the chair of the biomedical engineering department, said research opportunities for students have improved as a result of SEH's design by physically integrating research and academics together. The building houses classrooms and labs side-by-side and separates them with clear glass panels.

"I think that the transparency of the floor design is really helpful because you can essentially see what other laboratories are working on," he said.

Efimov said in his own laboratory, where he studies therapy treatments for heart disease, he has hosted at least 12 undergraduate students to work with him each year. He said the spaces in SEH allow so many undergraduate students to work in his lab



HATCHET FILE PHOTO
Officials said the multi-million dollar Science and Engineering Hall has attracted top faculty and improved student satisfaction since it opened five years ago.

because they are conducive to working on research projects.

He added that the proximity to SEH's research facilities are a consideration for prospective students, who he said are clearly "impressed" with the building itself when they visit.

Nirbhay Kumar, a professor in the department of global health, said that while SEH does provide a "pleasant" place to work, the building's layout places large windows adjacent to lab space, which can present some obstacles to

his research which uses materials damaged by light.

"I would have designed [the building] in an entirely different way and had the office spaces put near the windows, and labs put into the interior of the building, so there would be less outside light coming into the lab," he said.

Kumar added that he is concerned about the building's lack of security.

In June, a person stole camera equipment from SEH after breaking into an office in the building. Two months

later, someone assaulted a GW Police Department officer after the officer arrived at the building to investigate reported loitering.

"One concern that people have always brought up is that in general the SEH building is open to anyone who can walk in, even the general public," he said. "You have students studying in open spaces, and someone can just walk in and start doing something mischievous. I think building access has to be limited in this sense."

News

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CRIME LOG

FALSE FIRE ALARM

West Hall
12/21/2019 – 2:05 p.m.
Closed Case

GW Police Department officers responded to a fire alarm activation and discovered that a male student activated the fire alarm after his GWorld card access was denied.

Referred to the Division for Student Affairs

THEFT I/FROM BUILDING, SIMPLE ASSAULT

Mitchell Hall (7-Eleven Stores)
12/28/2019 – 10:41 p.m.

Closed Case

GWPD and Metropolitan Police Department officers responded to a report that a non-GW affiliated man stole cigarettes and pushed a 7-Eleven employee. GWPD arrested the man for theft and simple assault and issued him a bar notice. MPD transported the man to the Second District police station for arrest processing.

Subjected arrested

EXTORTION

2208 F St.
1/2/2020 – 9:45 a.m.

Closed Case

GWPD officers responded to a report of two male students in a dispute. One student had taken personal property, clothing, a cell phone and wallet from the other and demanded monetary compensation for the return of property. While officers were on scene, the property was returned to the rightful owner, resolving the dispute.

Referred to DSA

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY/VANDALISM

Hand Chapel (MVC)
Unknown – Unknown

Closed Case

A female staff member reported a discharged fire extinguisher at the Hand Chapel.

No suspects or witnesses

– Compiled by Kateryna Stepanenko

Student leaders to host inaugural conference on LGBTQ health, advocacy

ILENA PENG

CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Student leaders are hosting a conference on health-related issues pertaining to the LGBTQ community Saturday.

The conference, which will take place starting at 9:30 a.m. in the Marvin Center, will feature a town hall and presenters from the National LGBTQ Task Force and the non-profit health center Whitman-Walker Health. Hannah Edwards, the Student Association's vice president for diversity and inclusion, said the conference will allow LGBTQ students to ask questions about wellness issues related to their identity and teach students how to advocate for the LGBTQ community.

Student organizers chose the theme "We're Still Here" for the event to highlight the ramifications of anti-LGBTQ public health policies and the community's resilience in the face of regressive legislation. Edwards added that the conference aims to address student concerns about the scope of the Colonial Health Center's treatment options for LGBTQ students.

"I thought that it would be good to have some type of opportunity for students who are a part of the LGBT community to be able to come and learn about health services and health advocacy," she said.

The conference will feature speakers on topics like sexual health and the push to decriminalize HIV on college campuses, Edwards said. Criminal laws related to HIV often require individuals diagnosed with HIV to disclose their HIV status to sexual partners even when there is a negligible risk of transmitting the virus, according to the American Psychological Association.

She added that the event will feature a town hall discussion with CHC staff to inform LGBTQ students about the health services that are covered by GW's student health insurance plan, which roughly 30 percent of undergraduates use.

Student leaders are partnering with several organizations to host the event. The Columbian College's LGBT Health Policy and Practice Program will fund the conference's keynote speaker, who has not yet been announced, and NuVegan Café will provide lunch, Edwards said.



ALEXANDER WELLING | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
The LGBTQIA+ Health and Advocacy Conference will educate students about health issues related to the community.

Edwards added that Whitman-Walker Health will provide a free HIV testing service for attendees starting at 10 a.m. on the day of the conference.

She said she conceived the idea for the conference after participating in the psychology department's "Health Promotion in Underserved Communities" summer institute, which examines how diversity-related factors influence health outcomes. The two-month summer institute helps host an annual LGBTQ health forum at the University, which Edwards said she wanted to replicate in a student-run conference.

"I think that it could start a movement on campus where instead of people talking about everything that needs to change and stuff like that, that we really just see that we can take that initiative ourselves," she said.

Edwards said she hopes the conference will become an annual event.

Bridget Carl, the SA's director of student health services, said she hopes the conference includes a discussion of trans and non-binary identities, which she said receive less recognition in conversations about LGBTQ health. Carl added that dialogue about health in the LGBTQ community focuses intensely on HIV and AIDS, overlooking other health issues pertaining to the community.

"I oftentimes am frustrated in how little we talk about that – this whole community," Carl said. "And if we do talk about it, it's again, far too

often focused on HIV/AIDS, which I can understand because D.C. has a big HIV/AIDS problem – but there's a lot more to it."

Carl added that she hopes students of all backgrounds will attend the conference, particularly those planning to work in health care or the health care policy space in the future.

SA President SJ Matthews said students will learn how to advocate for LGBTQ individuals at the conference, in addition to learning about health issues in the community.

"I think the conference is important in order to create a space for members of the LGBTQIA+ community to come together and discuss health and wellness as a group," she said in an email. "It's going to be a great experience for anyone at GW, and I'm excited to have some great conversations with members of the GW community."

SA Sen. Brandon Hill, CCAS-U, said the conference will provide a dedicated space for LGBTQ individuals to receive information about health-related issues, adding that the conference will increase LGBTQ visibility on campus.

"Today's climate deeply stigmatized members of the LGBT+ community and discourages them to ask questions about their mental, physical and sexual health," Hill said in an email. "The conference fosters a place that will allow those questions to be asked freely and answered honestly."

Former chemistry department chair to retire after almost 50 years at GW

JULIA RUSSO

REPORTER

Michael King always found joy in teaching others about math and science from a young age.

He has tutored many of his fellow students since elementary school and knew his future belonged with the study of chemistry and in pedagogy when he headed to college at the Illinois Institute of Technology. After receiving his doctorate from Harvard University, he started as an associate professor in the discipline at New York University in 1970 before he began at GW in 1973 – 2020 marks his 50th and final year of working in academia.

"I knew at a very early age that teaching was something that was natural and comfortable for me, and I knew I wanted to pursue it," King said.

After serving as the chair of the chemistry department for more than 20 years, from 1996 to 2019, King will retire from teaching at the end of this academic year to focus on his own research. After retirement, King plans to travel with his wife, conduct more of his own research on organic chemistry in GW's laboratories and work on behalf of the department to recruit graduate students.

"It was just an amazing experience, and I am really humbled to have been able to represent this department in a period of substantial growth," King said. "For over the years, I have had amazing colleagues and I am so proud to be able to represent them in the

forms of the University."

King said he has been heavily involved with the organic chemistry program at the University throughout his career, teaching General Chemistry I and II and managing laboratory operations for the program.

"Chemistry was an area of science that came naturally to me from high school to now," King said. "I always enjoyed it – I liked the manipulations, I enjoyed watching the chemistry unfold in the laboratory – so all of that sort of played out from my bachelor's degree to my doctorate."

He said he enjoyed the size of GW's student body during the first couple decades of his career – smaller than the student body in recent years – because the smaller class sizes allowed him to get to know his students and talk with them "on a little bit more on a personal level."

King said he felt his previous experiences in academia made him qualified to serve as chair of the department after his predecessor David Ramaker resigned. He said he put his name up for consideration to serve in the position, and his colleagues elected him to serve as the department's leader.

"I was fortunate for my colleagues to have the confidence to select me to do that," King said. "So one of the things I was particularly interested in doing was to improve the communication and collaboration of the department that would be of value to my colleagues."

While serving as chair, he worked to in-

crease opportunities for faculty in the department to work together and confer on projects, King said.

King's colleagues said he consistently sought to provide support to students, faculty and the University throughout his tenure.

Former Provost Forrest Maltzman said he worked with King on several different initiatives and projects, including the design process for the Science and Engineering Hall and the creation of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences' Dean's Council.

He said King played a "leading role" working with the provost's office and the Department of Operations to develop SEH's design, adding that King deserves a large portion of the credit for the building's completion, which Maltzman characterized as "inevitably the most complex building in the University."

Maltzman said King has served as a mentor to "academic leaders" across the University and has demonstrated the value of collaboration and collegiality.

"While building a very successful and research-oriented chemistry department is an important contribution that Michael made, his impact is much broader and his legacy will be felt for a very long time across the University because of the lessons he informally taught his colleagues about being an academic leader and the example he set," Maltzman said in an email.

Christopher Cahill, the current chair of the chemistry department, said King played

an integral role in growing the department to its fullest potential by doubling the number of faculty in the department.

"He has been tirelessly flying the chemistry flag the entire time he has been here and, as a consequence, we have been able to grow and have our aspirations for research and education evolve accordingly," Cahill said.

Cahill said one of his fondest memories of King was watching him hold office hours in a hallway in SEH using the building's whiteboard walls. He said a crowd always showed up to talk to King, even on a Friday afternoon.

"He was sort of beloved because he has taught organic chemistry this whole time and organic chemistry has, in many respects, an undeserved reputation of being an incredibly difficult and sometimes 'weed-out' course," Cahill said. "But Michael King has never taught this as a weed-out course and has always been committed to his students' success."

LaKeisha McClary, an assistant professor of chemistry, said she has seen King work "tirelessly" to support faculty members' individual growth as well as the department's collective growth throughout her seven years working with him.

"I appreciate a lot about Dr. King, but perhaps what resonates most with me is that he always considered different perspectives within the department and sought to do what was best for us – our graduate students and chemistry majors and minors, our staff and our faculty," she said in an email.

Trainings can lead to fewer complaints: experts

From Page 1

Incoming students are required to attend in-person sexual assault prevention training and complete online diversity training during their first semester. The Student Association Senate passed legislation last spring demanding that members of student organizations participate in separate Title IX training sessions.

Sash added that educating students about the consequences associated with sex, race, age and disability discrimination deters prejudiced behavior.

"The mandatory Title IX training for incoming freshmen is huge," he said. "Because you are getting young men and women, some 17 and 18, from across the country – maybe even the world – where norms of what's appropriate and what's not are very different to different people."

Improving institutional responses

Sash said the number of complaints filed with the OCR will likely decrease if officials handle allegations of discriminatory behavior with a "fair" investigation process that doesn't make

"presumptions" about the individuals involved in a case.

Officials overhauled the Title IX investigation process in 2018. Under current GW policies, a single official handles individual sexual assault cases rather than a multiple-person hearing board, and all faculty are required to report sexual harassment incidents to the Title IX office.

"If you follow the facts, you have to investigate," Sash said. "You have to investigate fully and fairly and listen to people and treat everybody with respect."

Dan Schorr, the managing director of Ankura – a risk management consulting firm – and a former sex crimes prosecutor, said partnering with the OCR to develop responses to individual cases could decrease the likelihood of future complaints. He said collaborating with the OCR provides officials with the tools to address discriminatory behavior.

Schorr added that instituting bystander intervention training for students can lead to fewer complaints because officials will be equipped to handle discrimination cases before individuals feel the need to complain to the OCR.

"If the campus works with OCR and other experts in the field and develops and implements best practices to address sexual misconduct and discrimination, that should lead to a decrease in complaints if that's effectively done," Schorr said.

Marissa Pollick, a sports management lecturer at the University of Michigan with experience in Title IX research, said DOE reforms implemented under President Donald Trump's administration – like rolling back protections for sexual assault survivors – could cause a decrease in complaints. Pollick said individuals facing discrimination might be less inclined to report incidents if they feel the agency will not adequately respond to and investigate complaints.

In November 2018, the DOE announced proposed Title IX guidelines that eliminate the single investigator model, allow institutions to dismiss assault cases that occur off-campus, require cross-examination during investigations and use a more stringent standard for determining guilt.

"If the administration doesn't prioritize civil rights, as this one does not seem to be doing, it's not unusual to see a decline," she said.

Blue lights improve sense of safety: experts

From Page 1

"They are very underutilized technology," Lovicott said. "Now, that is not to say that we're looking into getting rid of the blue light phones. We see them as a good thing on our campus, and it provides a sense of security to our campus as well."

Lovicott said blue light phones are meant to help students who don't carry cell phones with them or whose cell phones break.

"Most people carry a cell phone," he said. "That's probably the number one way they'll reach our department, but we also like to have these around in places that are a little more desolate, and it brings a sense of security to individuals as well," he said.

Gary Sigrist Jr., the CEO of the campus security company Safeguard Risk Solutions, said the drop in blue light use doesn't mean the

University should phase the system out because the phones still contribute to campus safety as a whole.

"Everything is a layered approach, and so those blue lights are just one layer," he said. "If there were four emergencies that they responded to where they helped somebody, that's a good thing."

John Vinson, the president of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Officers, said blue lights are a single part of a security portfolio that universities employ in addition to security apps.

"Every institution, university and/or community college has to decide what works best for their respective community to ensure that no matter what the issue or concerns are, around perceived and or real crime or safety concerns, their community has a variety of ways to contact them," Vinson said.

Traffic crashes in Ward 2 highest in District despite four-year low

LIA DEGROOT
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Traffic accidents on and near campus have decreased by nearly 15 percent over the past four years, according to District data.

Ward 2, which has tallied the highest number of traffic crashes city-wide for at least the past four years, faced about 5,400 traffic crashes in 2019 – a slight dip from the previous year, during which about 5,800 crashes plagued the ward. Transportation experts said the decrease in crashes could be the result of transportation safety initiatives, like banning right turns on red lights and adding safe biking infrastructure, that the District Department of Transportation implemented last year.

Alexis Perrotta, a lecturer of public and international affairs at the City University of New York, said many traffic safety advocates view transportation as a safety “hierarchy,” under which pedestrians rank the highest, followed by cyclists and vehicles. Perrotta said safety measures, like banning right turns on red lights and constructing pedestrian waiting areas at intersections, help cities prioritize pedestrian safety over motor vehicles.

“That’s what makes our city run economically,” she said. “Dense cities require people on foot, they don’t foot people behind the wheel

in the same kinds of numbers.”

Perrotta said officials could add bulb-outs, or extensions to curbs at intersections, to both provide added space for pedestrians to wait to cross the street and slow cars down at intersections, decreasing the chance for pedestrian-vehicle crashes.

DDOT recommended adding bulb-outs at several intersections around the city, Greater Washington reported in 2016.

Perrotta added that building protected bike lanes in cities contributes to fewer fatalities because drivers are aware of bikers riding on the street.

DDOT and the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission have been negotiating the route for a protected bike lane running through Foggy Bottom for more than a year and are planning to start construction on the bike path in 2020.

“Seeing someone on a bicycle when you’re driving slows a person who’s driving down, and that’s important,” she said. “Anytime you slow down, you’re going to have fewer fatalities.”

Kara Kockelman, a professor of civil, architectural and environmental engineering at the University of Texas at Austin, said the drop in Ward 2 crashes is likely the result of District traffic safety initiatives. She said safe

streets encourage residents to use several transportation methods other than walking.

“If you feel safer, they often will bike more, walk more and let their children bike and walk more, which is nice,” she said.

DDOT spokeswoman Lauren Stephens did not return multiple requests for comment.

Total traffic fatalities decreased in the District for the first time since 2016, but some transportation experts said traffic death rates tend to fluctuate, and there may not be a specific reason for the decrease.

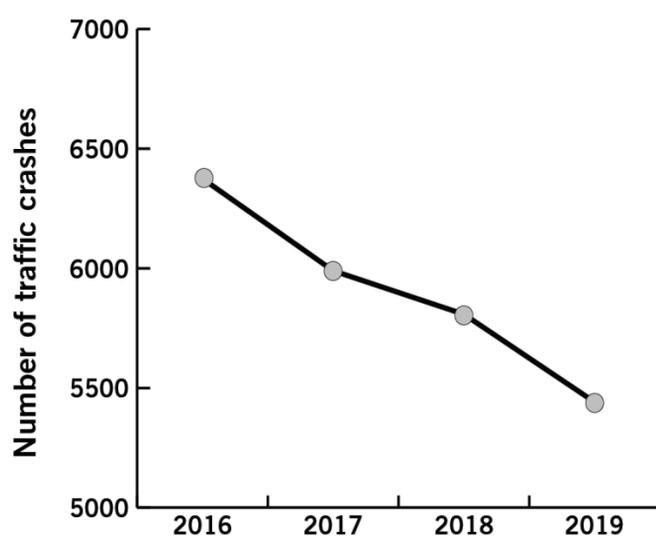
Vision Zero, which Mayor Muriel Bowser committed to in 2015, aims to eliminate all traffic fatalities by 2024.

Ian Savage, a professor of economics at Northwestern University, said the 25 percent drop in the District’s traffic fatality count – from 36 in 2018 to 27 in 2019 – is “objectively” positive but doesn’t necessarily prove that the city’s efforts to curb traffic deaths have been effective. He said D.C.’s overall traffic fatalities are too low to determine a specific cause for the drop.

“When you’re dealing with things that are under 30ish in terms of number, then you expect to see quite a variation from year to year,” he said.

Among those killed in traffic crashes this year were biking advocate Dave Sa-

Traffic crash count in Ward 2



ALYSSA ILARIA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

lovesh, who was killed while riding his bike in Northeast D.C., and two people experiencing homelessness in Foggy Bottom, who were killed by a speeding driver in Foggy Bottom.

Savage said D.C. officials likely need to work on a “micro” level to continue the city’s downward traffic fatality and crash trend, meaning DDOT could investigate individual intersections.

“The answer here is that probably everything you’re going to do is at a very local level, I mean a really mi-

cro level, in the sense that you’re going to look at individual intersections and things and you’re going to find that many of these are just badly designed,” Savage said.

Some experts attributed the lofty overall traffic crash numbers in Ward 2 to the large concentration of traffic in downtown D.C.

Najmedin Meshkati, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Southern California, said Ward 2 likely has a higher rate of traffic

crashes in the city overall because the area encompasses most of downtown D.C., where traffic is concentrated.

He said the drop in Ward 2 traffic crashes could have resulted from city-wide safety improvements, like additional signage or street markings.

“This is a very obvious direct one-to-one relationship,” he said. “If you don’t have congestion, and you don’t have that much traffic, there is much less chance of accidents.”

Student organization demands GW divest from fossil fuel holdings

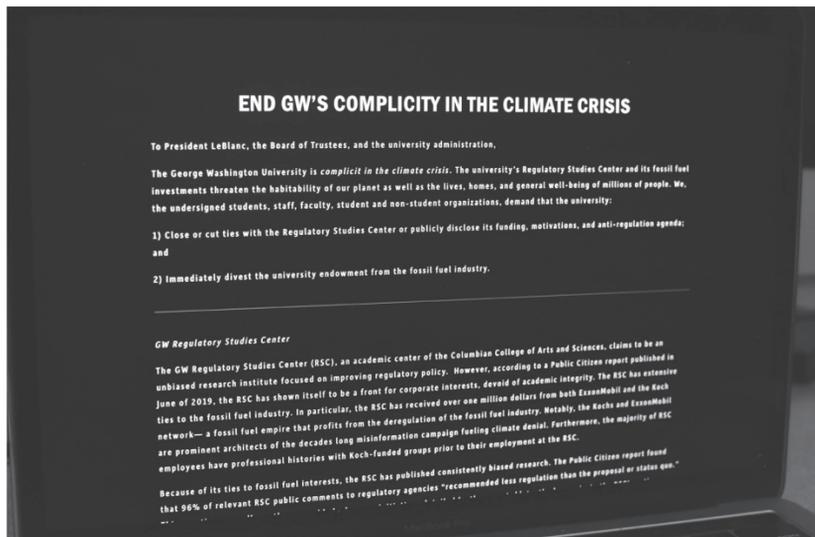


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ALEXANDER WELLING | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
The environmental advocacy group Sunrise GW posted a letter on its website calling on officials to stop accepting money from fossil fuel companies.

LIZZIE MINTZ
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Students are calling on officials to cut ties with the fossil fuel industry and reconsider its relationship with a research center that receives donations from fossil fuel companies.

Members of Sunrise GW – a student-led environmental activism group formerly known as Fossil Free GW – published a letter late last month urging officials to divest from fossil fuels and restructure its relationship with the Regulatory Studies Center, a research hub that receives donations from fossil fuel companies like

ExxonMobil. Students who endorsed the letter said the University should distance itself from the center and divest GW’s endowment from the fossil fuel industry to meet national environmental standards.

Sunrise GW member and sophomore Bryce Maples said the group posted the letter to build wide-scale student support for fossil fuel divestment, which he said will ultimately encourage officials to adopt the letter’s requests. Maples declined to say when the group will present the letter to University President Thomas LeBlanc and the Board of Trustees.

“We are done with our

University pretending to care about the climate by using their support of the Paris Climate Agreement and talking about sustainability but then investing more than \$20 million in fossil fuels and the climate crisis directly,” Maples said. “We feel that we’re in a time where we need to stand up and fight back or we don’t have a future to fight for.”

Maples added that the letter garnered more than 100 signatures within three days of the launch, and six student organizations including the Progressive Student Union and Green GW, have all endorsed the letter. He declined to specify the

total number of signatures on the letter.

The letter urges officials to “close or cut ties” with the Regulatory Studies Center or “publicly disclose its funding, motivations and anti-regulation agenda.” The letter calls on officials to divest its endowment from the fossil fuel industry.

Sunrise members extracted the data from a June 2019 report from Public Citizen – a progressive consumer rights advocacy group – that has criticized the center for alleged right-wing bias.

Officials have previously stated that divestment is not part of the University’s investment strategy. A 2015 report financed by the Independent Petroleum Association of America – an oil and natural gas trade organization – predicted that universities’ endowments would likely shrink if officials withdraw their holdings in fossil fuels.

The ExxonMobil Foundation donated \$927,000 to the center between 2013 and 2017 and the Charles Koch Foundation – a foundation that funds research grants – gave about \$1.2 million in grants to the University between 2010 and 2017, according to the report. Foundation and University spokespeople did not return Public Citizen’s requests to confirm whether the gifts were given primarily to the center or other departments, the report states.

Maples said Sunrise reached out to several student organizations for input

on the wording of the letter. He said the group will spend the semester growing interest in the letter among other student organizations in which Sunrise members are also involved.

“The most important element is movement building and coalition building,” he said. “We want to involve as many students, faculty members and student organizations as possible.”

A University spokesperson said Sunrise GW had not yet contacted officials about the letter, but officials will be “happy to respond” once they do.

The Student Association Senate unanimously voted in 2016 in favor of divesting the University’s holdings in the fossil fuel industry, and 70 percent of students indicated support for divestment in a 2015 referendum.

Jillian Webber, the president of Food Recovery Network, which has endorsed the letter, said she met individually with Sunrise members in December to help craft the language of the letter. She said she decided to endorse the letter because green organizations on campus should support important sustainability issues, even those that aren’t related to their group’s specific focus.

She added that she shared the letter on Green GW’s social media and will include the letter in GW Food Recovery Network’s weekly newsletter so group members can

learn more about Sunrise’s efforts and continue to grow support for divestment.

“Although we occupy different niches within the sustainability community, I think, most importantly, it’s really important that all the green groups get together and endorse the letter because we’re holding the University accountable for not doing its part in the climate fight,” she said.

Keith Nagy, the president of GW College Democrats, said the group’s executive board decided to sign the letter to strengthen the organization’s relationship with Sunrise. He said part of the executive board’s mission is to build connections with other student groups.

Nagy said the group has shared its endorsement on social media and encouraged College Democrats members to sign the letter. He said he will potentially organize rallies with organizations like Sunrise this semester to demonstrate the student organization’s commitment to supporting divestment.

“We feel that this is very much in line with progressive ideals that are valuable to the Democratic Party with environmental stewardship,” he said. “We thought that this would be a great way to better our relationship with Sunrise GW while also advocating for a pretty great cause.”

– Ed Prestera, Isha Trivedi and Jarrod Wardwell contributed reporting.

Ward 2 unaffected by homicides in 2019, MPD data shows

LIA DEGROOT
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Despite a city-wide uptick in murders, the area on and around campus was unaffected by homicides in 2019, Metropolitan Police Department data shows.

Ward 2 – which encompasses the Foggy Bottom Campus and much of downtown D.C. – logged zero homicides in 2019, but the counts fluctuated in other areas of the city, from three killings in Ward 3 to 63 in Ward 8. Criminal justice experts said Ward 2’s low homicide numbers are likely a reflection of the area’s low poverty rate, which can correlate with violence, compared to relatively more impoverished city sectors.

MPD spokeswoman Alaina Gertz said the department does not comment on crime trends, but many homicide victims and suspects carry illegal firearms and have prior violent offenses.

About 80 percent of the year’s homicides were committed with a gun, about

18 percent were committed with a knife and the rest were committed with various other weapons, according to District data.

Gertz said MPD plans to work with District organizations like the Pathways for Young Adults program, which assists young unemployed people who are not in school to find job training and work. She said the department will also work with the Office of Neighborhood and Safety Engagement office, which works with other agencies to lower the city’s violence rates.

“The city is working to address those root causes by engaging individuals who have fallen into that high-risk group through interventions,” Gertz said in an email.

MPD data shows 166 documented homicides throughout D.C. last year, the deadliest year the District faced in more than a decade. Seven homicides have been committed so far this year – none of which occurred in Ward 2 – compared with eight at this time last year, according to

MPD’s crime map.

The majority of the District’s homicides are concentrated in Wards 7 and 8, according to MPD data. Gertz said MPD plans to implement violence prevention programs this year, like summer and fall crime prevention initiatives, that target homicide-prone areas of the city.

“MPD will continue to work hard to prevent and deter all crime throughout the entire city in the upcoming year,” Gertz said.

Criminal justice experts said high poverty rates correlate with homicide rates because people who live in poverty are more likely to feel isolated from their communities and turn to violence.

Ward 2, which has consistently maintained some of the city’s lowest homicide rates, experienced a slight downturn in homicides in 2019 – from three to zero – which David Brotherton, a professor of sociology and criminology at the City University of New York, said is likely connected to Ward 2’s

high education and employment levels.

Ward 2 has a 3 percent unemployment rate, compared with 7 percent District-wide, according to D.C. Health Matters data. Thirty percent of Ward 2’s population over the age of 25 holds at least a bachelor’s degree, and about 29 percent hold a master’s degree, compared with 24 and 20 percent city-wide.

“When you have levels of one, two and three, marginal differences, you can’t really say much,” Brotherton said.

He added that areas with more thorough policing are less likely to experience high homicide rates because police officers are present to prevent violent crimes from occurring. Poverty doesn’t directly cause spikes in homicide rates but leads to an environment in which people are more likely to commit interpersonal violence, Brotherton said.

He said poverty can lead to high rates of stress and mental illness, which can cause people to turn to violence and interpersonal

crimes.

“In those circumstances, violence can come out simply from frustrations and alienation,” Brotherton said.

Ward 2 boasts the second-highest median income in the city, about \$105,000 compared to the rest of D.C., according to data from D.C. Health Matters. Wards 7 and 8 have the lowest median incomes, rounding out to about \$38,000 and \$34,000, respectively.

“We know that poverty creates all kinds of full conditions in which people have to make their lives every day,” Brotherton said. “Poverty makes it difficult for families to function properly. There’s a lot of trauma within families, crises within families just caused by the need to survive.”

John Michaud, the director of Husson University’s School of Legal Studies in Maine, said examining the types of homicide, like domestic disturbances or violent felonies, allows police officers to develop strategies to target the specific causes of killings.

“It’s important when you look at homicides not to look at them as a total picture, but more as pixels that put the total picture together,” Michaud said. “And then you can look for causes.”

He said factors like Ward 2’s demographics and the presence of universities, which are equipped with their own police departments that provide additional crime prevention, could contribute to an area’s low homicide rate.

Michaud said police departments can use methods like crime mapping to determine which areas of the city have the highest concentration of homicides and target those areas.

“People have to understand that there are only X number of police officers, only X number of dollars to spend,” Michaud said. “So are there areas that the police department, that law enforcement can recognize as high concentrations of crime areas? Obviously, that’s where they need to put their resources.”

Student organizations must prioritize diversity amid enrollment cuts

STAFF EDITORIAL

Officials released internal models late last semester showing that reducing the undergraduate student body will decrease diversity. Faculty have already expressed concerns about the impact of the cut on humanities and social sciences, but when we are talking about diversity, student organizations – The Hatchet included – will take the biggest hit.

The University has made strides to foster a more diverse and inclusive student body over the past couple of years, hiring a diversity and inclusion education director, creating mandatory diversity trainings for first-year students and sending admissions officers to recruit applicants from urban and low-income school districts. But these efforts cannot curb the impending impact of an enrollment reduction on

the undergraduate student body. Student leaders should make diversity and inclusion just as much of a priority as some administrators have – even if other administrators are at fault for reducing diversity.

Lack of diversity can harm a student's feeling of inclusion on campus, especially in light of racist and anti-Semitic instances last semester. Both events undermined a campus culture in which minority groups feel unsafe, and reducing diversity will not ameliorate the situation. Students look to the more than 400 organizations to find community on campus, whether it be through a fraternity and sorority, sports team or community service organization. Student organizations have a responsibility to understand the value of diversity and inclusion and ensure underrepresented

communities feel welcome in their groups.

This effort includes The Hatchet. We may not be able to measure the diversity of other student organizations around campus, but we can take a look at ourselves. We conducted a survey of The Hatchet's 41-person staff, which includes editors and research assistants, and asked them to respond to questions regarding their race and ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability status, religion and financial aid standing with the University.

This survey revealed that the majority of Hatchet staff – 65.9 percent – is white, while 14.6 percent are two or more races, 7.3 percent are East Asian, 4.9 percent are Hispanic or Latinx, 2.4 percent are South Asian, 2.4 percent are Southeast Asian and 2.4 percent are Middle East-

ern or Arab. The bulk of Hatchet staff also identify as straight, while 14.6 percent identify as bisexual, 7.3 percent as gay and 2.4 percent identify as queer – 4.9 percent of staff elected not to answer the question pertaining to sexual orientation. In addition, 36.6 percent of Hatchet staff receive need-based financial aid from GW.

Our diversity – or lack thereof – in areas like race and ethnicity and sexual orientation affects the stories we find and cover. A more diverse staff could show expanded coverage to underrepresented communities and a greater willingness for all students to want to take part in the paper in some capacity. We are going to keep trying to diversify our staff, make everyone included and represented in our paper – especially as we prepare for the diversity

of the student body to decrease.

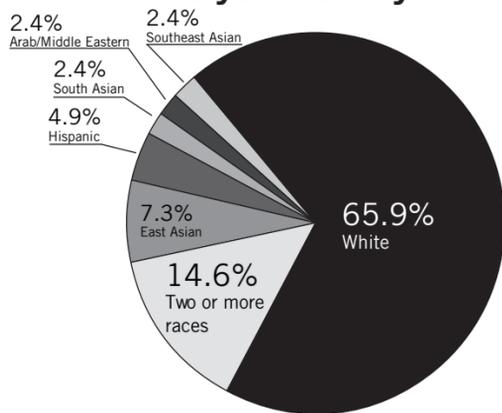
The Hatchet and student organizations together should not let GW's lack of diversity prevent us from working to foster more inclusive environments for all students. Other student organizations on campus should also take steps to evaluate their own diversity and work to improve. We could all foster discussions on unconscious biases and push members to participate in events at the Multicultural Student Services Center. We should also reevaluate the diversity of their leadership because it is easier to feel welcome in an organization in which the leadership is representative of a community to which an individual may belong.

Lack of diversity has an adverse effect on student organizations by creating an exclusionary

environment, limiting viewpoints and potentially creating an environment in which problematic behavior goes unchecked. All student organizations would benefit from increased diversity, and the University's commitment to cut enrollment means that student organizations need to make an immediate effort.

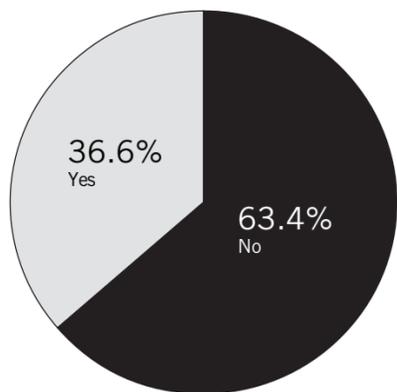
Diversity is more than a buzzword to be thrown around when talking about making people feel included. On our staff, diversity is a factor in the stories we find and the way we can report on them, and other student organizations could be affected in similar ways. As we all move forward in trying to right our wrongs and represent our community better, the University and other organizations need to move with us to make our campus a truly diverse and inclusive place.

What race/ethnicity do you identify as?

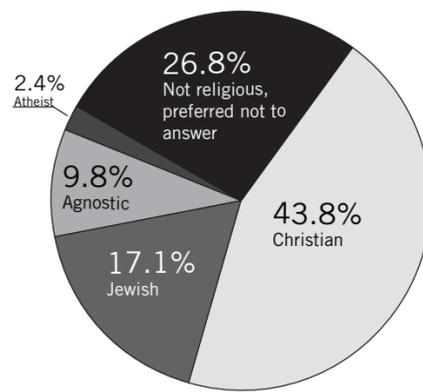


*Data from internal Hatchet staff survey

Do you receive need-based financial aid from the University?



What religion do you identify as?



OLIVIA COLUMBUS | DESIGN EDITOR

Humanities and social sciences are in need of expansion, not STEM

Humanities and social sciences departments are in need of expansion. But scaling back the undergraduate population and increasing the proportion of STEM majors is not going to give these departments the support they need.

Isabella Sorial
Writer

The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences lags behind in the quality of advising and academics. Unlike schools like the Elliott School of International Affairs and the School of Engineering and Applied Science, CCAS does not offer students a first-year experience class and is still trying to improve its academic advising office. CCAS is the University's largest school and deserves more attention, not less.

Growing the proportion of STEM majors could mean taking a step back for a school that needs more funding so it can improve its academics and advising services. It is not just the school's services that are in need. Faculty in the psychology department have complained about the embarrassing state of their department's building, and Bell Hall is more than eight decades old. Meanwhile, many STEM classes are housed in a multi-million dollar Science and Engineering Hall, one of the new-

est buildings on campus. When officials increase the proportion of STEM majors, they should keep in mind that CCAS is really the school that needs more funding to improve.

Cutting CCAS enrollment might mean administrators may not be able to address some long-standing issues in the school, like advising. There are currently 12 CCAS advisers for more than 5,000 undergraduates, while the Elliott School has 15 advisers for about 2,000 undergraduates. Officials should continue to focus on improving academic advising services in the next couple of years, which could mean more funding for the department. Allocating more money to CCAS advising could enable officials to hire more advisers and ensure students have enough staff members to visit for questions or advice on academics.

The Elliott School, SEAS and the GW School of Business also offer a first-year experience course to help students adjust to college academics and learn skills like time management and organization. But CCAS students do not have the same opportunity as students in other schools, placing them at a disadvantage. Officials should ensure CCAS has access to the same class as other schools, which, like advising, means more funding. It is concerning that officials are still looking to grow the University's STEM presence while

CCAS still lags behind in resources.

While CCAS is the largest school at GW, it is sometimes outshone by smaller schools that have more resources and better facilities. The Elliott School and the Milken Institute School of Public Health are both prominently ranked by services like the U.S. News and World Report. But CCAS, which contains some of GW's most popular majors – like political science, which was placed at No. 40 nationally in the U.S. News list for its graduate program – is not as highly ranked. Administrators should dedicate more attention to the University's core school – CCAS.

The glaring differences in resources between GW's schools show the root of the problem – the University does not put enough emphasis on its largest school. CCAS is already struggling, and slashing the number of humanities majors will not make the problem better. University President Thomas LeBlanc said that cutting enrollment will prioritize quality over quantity, but when the resources for CCAS are already scarce, it is hard to imagine how the quality will improve. The University must work to ensure that CCAS students are given the same tools for success as their peers.

– Isabella Sorial, a freshman majoring in international affairs, is an opinions writer.

Students should not be required to live on campus for their third year

Students are beginning to consider their housing for the fall, but some upperclassmen may be left paying for on-campus housing they do not want.

Laya Reddy
Writer

Officials increased the on-campus housing requirement from two years to three years in 2013, saying the policy would enhance students' academics and social life despite students speaking out. Students were right when they first raised concerns about the policy – upperclassmen are forced to buy a housing and meal plan unless they receive an exemption.

Two years is a sufficient amount of time to develop a sense of community on campus and find academic success. Adding another year to this requirement is excessive because it deprives students of the freedom to choose their housing for an additional year, which could subject them to higher housing expenses and a meal plan they may not want. If administrators really want to make the University more affordable, they should revert back to a two-year housing requirement so students can opt for cheaper housing and leave campus in their third year.

Some students wanted a way out of the housing policy anyway and got creative, making up excuses

to qualify for an exemption. Students should not need to fabricate documents to opt out of on-campus housing. Officials should allow students to choose between on- or off-campus housing to ensure they have the option to find cheaper housing elsewhere and allocate their own money toward meals.

Part of the reason students are dodging housing requirements could be because they have already found their sense of community and do not need another year to meet new people in residence halls. Students would have already established a sense of community in their first two years on campus, so an additional year will not likely make their sense of community any better. If so many students are already finding a way to live off campus, the University should make it easier for them to do so by changing the housing policy.

The three-year requirement might be reasonable if on-campus housing was cheaper than off-campus housing. Officials estimate rates are comparable to those of surrounding off-campus housing, but a report last year found that on-campus housing is more expensive than off-campus apartments. Students should not be forced into paying for on-campus housing for three years because of its high cost.

Pricier housing is not the only added expense from living on campus – it also includes the meal

plan. GW requires all undergraduate students living on campus to buy the meal plan, which ranges from about \$3,000 to nearly \$5,000 per academic year. Students should be able to decide how they want to spend their money on groceries during their third year, but mandating that they live on campus restricts their dining choices.

The cost of the meal plan, coupled with the cost of housing, forces students to pay more. But some of GW's peer schools give students more housing options. Ten of GW's 12 peers – Boston, New York, Northeastern, Syracuse, Tufts and Tulane universities and the universities of Miami, Pittsburgh, Rochester and Southern California – require less than three years of on-campus housing. Many universities across the country have abandoned the on-campus housing requirement altogether. GW should lower its requirement to two years to match its peer institutions and eliminate a financial burden for students.

Forcing students to spend more money to live on campus is disadvantageous to students who cannot afford high rates. Administrators should commit to making GW more affordable by reducing the on-campus housing requirement to two years.

– Laya Reddy, a freshman majoring in political science and music, is an opinions writer.

Culture

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THE SCENE

RON POPE
Union Stage
Jan. 15 • \$30
Indie rock artist Ron Pope will perform beats, like "Drop In the Ocean" Wednesday.

MY FAIR LADY
The Kennedy Center
Jan. 17 • \$39
Drop by the Kennedy Center's adaptation of the classic "My Fair Lady."

SNOOP DOGG
The Filmore
Jan. 19 • \$59
Iconic rapper Snoop Dogg will perform in Maryland Sunday.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

'RARE,' AN ALBUM BY SELENA GOMEZ

Sororities host first bid day during winter break

Sisters celebrated their first bid day on the last day of winter break Sunday.

Panhellenic Association recruitment was held for the first time during the final days of winter break, ending the day before classes

begin. Bid day also took place on the National Mall for the first time in three years – sisters welcomed their new members in Kogan Plaza in 2018 and in Potomac Park, a parking lot off G Street, last January.



ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR



ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR



SABRINA GODIN | PHOTOGRAPHER



SABRINA GODIN | PHOTOGRAPHER



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JACK FONSECA | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
The WRGW podcast "Food for Talk" was inspired by two seniors' travels abroad.

WRGW explores global dishes in first podcast series

KATHERINE ABUGHAZALEH
STAFF WRITER

WRGW's first podcast series will connect people from different cultures around a dinner table – literally.

Seniors Janaki Goudar and Sara Tohamy are the hosts of "Food for Talk," WRGW's first podcast published on Apple and Spotify Monday. The hosts bring in chefs from around D.C. and students interested in cooking to their apartment kitchen table to discuss popular dishes from their culture and how they connect with their background through food.

"I'm a firm believer in the idea that food can bring people together," Tohamy said. "Despite our differences, everyone can talk about food. Everyone's got to eat."

Goudar and Tohamy said "Food for Talk" is a way to unite people beyond common interests and perspectives through food. Each episode explores a dish selected by the guest and a conversation around a dinner table about how the food is significant to the guest's life, they said.

"Food for Talk" was inspired by Goudar and Tohamy's travels, they said. While Tohamy studied abroad in Singapore, she invited Goudar to visit and travel together in Thailand and China where they bonded with natives and other travelers over local delicacies.

After Goudar and Tohamy returned to the U.S., they said they wanted to

continue exploring different foods from around the world. The podcast series allows them to taste several dishes and talk with people who can share their favorite dishes from their culture.

For each episode of "Food for Talk," Goudar and Tohamy said they first pick a theme that could range from "food as anywhere but home" to "food as resilience," and guests share stories on the podcast centered around the dish or food they choose. The hosts and guests choose a recipe to discuss in their West End apartment, then cook and talk about the dish together.

Behind the scenes, a production team comprised of WRGW board members operate all technical equipment, record the show and edit the sounds of cooking, eating and discussion, they said.

"We come up with the themes ourselves," Tohamy said. "But behind the scenes, there's way more going on."

The podcast's first episode featured a mother-son duo that runs Z&Z Za'atar, a local Palestinian business that sells classic flatbreads at farmers markets in D.C. and Virginia.

In the podcast episode, Goudar and Tohamy learn how to make Z&Z Za'atar's classic flatbread before sitting down to taste and talk about how the mother and son started their business.

"The second part of our mantra is having stories

heard that would normally never be heard," Tohamy said. "They're Palestinian. They started from the bottom up. This episode is really cool."

The second episode's guests are based on the theme "food as anywhere but home." Two of Goudar and Tohamy's friends, seniors Ilona de Heusch-Desquiron and Mahalia Smith, appear on the show to discuss how their international upbringings in Tanzania, Argentina, Shanghai and Haiti influenced their cooking styles. De Heusch-Desquiron prepared a Haitian dish from her childhood while Smith showcased her homemade empanadas.

"We also wanted people that are out of the restaurant business, like everyday GW people," Goudar said. "You get to talk to your friends about something you don't talk about every day."

The next two episodes will focus on a theme of "food as resilience" and how guests found respite in cooking and sharing their craft. Goudar and Tohamy said they will feature stories of immigrant business owners and workers who established a home in D.C. through the comfort of cooking.

"Everyone, to some degree, has experienced adversity," Goudar said. "We've been really inspired by people in Washington who have challenged obstacles in life and have been able to overcome them specifically through food."

Student opens up residence hall room for concerts

JULIA RUSSO
REPORTER

In the corner of sophomore Gitika Maheshwari's Francis Scott Key residence hall room sits a keyboard, a drum set, microphones and speakers. The desks are pushed into the kitchen, the beds are in the hallway, and the walls are strung with lights to set the stage for a tiny concert.

Maheshwari launched the Instagram account @TinydormconcertsGW late last semester, a spin-off of NPR's Tiny Desk concerts that host small shows in an office space. Maheshwari said she created the account to meet more people from the music community and help student artists gain exposure in the low-key setting of a residence hall room.

"Dorms can be small, but that is also somewhat of the purpose," Maheshwari said. "It is going to be a pretty intimate and relaxed setting for both the audience and the artist."

She said she first talked the idea over with a friend, junior Theo Magill, and together they launched an Instagram page. Maheshwari said in addition to being a talented guitarist in his own band, Magill is an executive board member of the Student Musicians Coalition and can borrow equipment from the group to host shows.

All of the concerts are held in her FSK space in room 305, and she promotes events and the opportunity to play shows on the Instagram page, Maheshwari said. Interested student musicians can direct message the Instagram account to set up a concert date, she said.

So far, Maheshwari said she has received about 20 messages from different student artists who are interested in performing.

Freshman Adam Gokcebay was slated to be the sole performer Nov. 23, but Maheshwari said she ran into two members of the band PineWalls, Greg Rice and Joesph Allen, who spontaneously decided to join in at the first Tiny Dorm Concert.

About 20 to 30 people squeezed into

Maheshwari's residence hall room to watch the concert, during which PineWalls played their own songs for about 40 minutes and Gokcebay sang for the first time live, she said. Those who couldn't make the show could watch on @TinydormconcertsGW's live stream.

"For the first show, a lot of my close friends came to support because I was pretty anxious on the turnout," Maheshwari said. "Theo had people from the music community and the Student Musicians Coalition come and then the artists brought their friends, and what was most exciting was having people come by after just seeing it on Instagram."

Maheshwari has four more concerts lined up for this semester on Jan. 25, Feb. 23, March 27 and April 17. Each of the four upcoming concerts has two to three people scheduled to play.

"I was really excited to see where this goes and where it takes itself," Maheshwari said. "The informal nature and atmosphere is really comfortable for everyone because it comes together quickly."

In the future, Maheshwari said she wants to plan a Tiny Dorm Concert festival, during which concerts would take place in multiple residence hall rooms next to each other throughout one night. She added that she wants to incorporate art exhibits in the rooms during concerts to highlight artists who don't sing or play instruments.

Allen, the lead singer of PineWalls, said he ran through a few songs and asked Jacy Case, a student who has performed backing vocals for their live shows, to play with them the night of the event. He said members of the band "love" playing live shows and wanted to play in a relatively small setting like a residence hall room.

"We figured it would be interesting to perform in an intimate, stripped-down setting like that – stripped-down because three of our band members were out of town that week," Allen said. "There were probably 30 or so people there throughout the night, which really fills out a dorm room."



COURTESY OF GITIKA MAHESHWARI

Sophomore Gitika Maheshwari will host concerts in her room in Francis Scott Key Hall this spring.

GAMES OF THE WEEK



MEN'S BASKETBALL
vs. George Mason
Wednesday 7 p.m.
Men's basketball searches for its first conference win of the season against the Patriots.



MEN AND WOMEN'S SWIMMING AND DIVING
vs. Georgetown
Saturday 1 p.m.
The Colonials take on the Hoyas in the last home meet.

NUMBER CRUNCH **24.1**

The percentage of three-pointers women's basketball sinks in the fourth quarter, down from its season average of 34.4 percent

Men's basketball hones in on 'little things' as marginal losses plague A-10 play

EMILY MAISE
SPORTS EDITOR

Drives to the basket and free throw shots helped men's basketball chip away at Saint Louis' lead in the final minutes of a game last week, but the last-minute push wasn't enough to overcome the Billikens.

The Colonials (6-10, 0-3 A-10) have walked away with marginal losses at the buzzer during their past three Atlantic 10 games, making a comeback in the final minute that has placed them within five points of winning each time. Head coach Jamion Christian said the squad's ability to focus on its game supersedes wins and losses, making them more "dangerous" for future games.

The last time the Colonials' opened their conference slate 0-3 was in 2008-09 when the squad ended the season with just four A-10 wins and an 11-18 overall record.

"You can play great and lose a game," Christian said after the game against Saint Louis. "You can play bad and win a game. It's not really about that for us. It's really just about us staying locked in what we've got to do and trying to learn how to play at our very best that allows us to be at our best when our best is required."

The Colonials have battled St. Bonaventure, Saint



Senior forward Arnaldo Toro and freshman forward Jamison Battle defend against Duquesne.

Louis and Duquesne in their first conference games of the season, dropping each contest by five points. The team's 61.7 points per game in conference play ranks it 12th in the A-10, but the Colonials have battled back from deficits as large as 17 to create two-possession games.

Each of the squad's losses has been at the hands of inconsistency. Against St. Bonaventure, the team could not sustain its defensive prowess in the second half and let a halftime lead slip away.

On the road at Saint

Louis, the Colonials missed open layups and allowed the Billikens to net 15 second-chance points on a few missed box-outs. Against Duquesne, play-calling confusion between Christian and the team on the court let a one-possession game turn into a two-possession loss.

Christian said the team needs to learn and grow every day to better itself incrementally throughout the season if players want to capture a title in March.

"If we continue to have a growth mindset and learn from our experiences, we've

got the chance to be a really special team," Christian said. "No team right now is set to win the title today and the team that can learn the most about themselves right now and adjust from it has the best chance to hoist that banner up at the end of the year."

Christian has stayed consistent with his starting lineup throughout each game, relying on junior guard Maceo Jack, sophomore guard Amir Harris and a trio of freshmen in guard Jameer Nelson Jr., forward Chase Paar and forward Jamison Battle.

Christian said he makes frequent substitutions in conference matchups to "keep guys fresh," reaching for senior forward Arnaldo Toro and redshirt senior guard Armel Potter for an average of 21.3 and 35 minutes off the bench, respectively.

He added that the veteran leadership of Potter has been instrumental in leading the team by example on the hardwood. Potter averages seven assists and 11.7 points per game in A-10 play. In tight games, Christian trusts Potter to handle the ball as the clock ticks down.

"Potter does an unbelievable job of leading our guys on the floor and really being a guy that can battle," Christian said after the game against Duquesne. "He's got a great determination for helping our team."

Battle said the team has the vigor to win games, but its biggest issue lies in tightening up its play.

"Once we figure out the little things, what we need to work on, I think we just have that fight and have the things we need to do and we'll be a really good team," Battle said after the game against Duquesne.

Battle continues to be a bright spot for the Colonials throughout conference play. The big man logs a team-leading 36 minutes per conference matchup and is pacing the squad with an

average of 19.3 points against A-10 competition.

He converts 41 percent of his shots from the field and connects on 36.4 percent of his attempts from deep.

Battle said Christian's system is "perfect" for him. He added that constant encouragement from his teammates has pushed him to take more shots.

"I know Maceo always says it, tells me that I'm a great shooter," Battle said after the game against Duquesne. "Every time we talk on the floor he says that to me, so I think it's just the confidence level my teammates bring and the confidence level coach brings is something that keeps me going."

Christian said the team hasn't fully reached its potential on the court, but its resiliency and connectivity are the marks of a "great team."

"I just appreciate being around a group of guys that just keep fighting and they keep leaning on one another and I think as we tie that in with our ability to execute, I think we're going to be a really tough team," Christian said after the game against Duquesne. "We're not where we want to be at today, but that resiliency - great teams have that - and we have a lot of that."

The Colonials are back in action Wednesday as they take on George Mason in the Revolutionary Rivalry. Tipoff is slated for 7 p.m.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO BY HADLEY CHITTM I PHOTOGRAPHER
Redshirt freshman forward Mayowa Taiwo is averaging 9.7 points and 8.7 rebounds per game in conference play.

Women's basketball finds strength in frontcourt in first A-10 games

EMILY MAISE
SPORTS EDITOR

Women's basketball has begun to see improvement in reducing turnovers and scoring in the paint during the first few conference games.

In their opening trio of Atlantic 10 games, the Colonials (7-9, 1-2 A-10) defeated Duquesne but fell to George Mason and Fordham. Head coach Jennifer Rizzotti said the squad is still learning from past games and gaining experience to find a balance in all facets of the game.

"Our guards and our posts needed to figure out how to play together and what's going to work, and it's just been a focus for us and something that we talked a lot about," Rizzotti said.

The Colonials are averaging 12.7 turnovers per game in A-10 play, down from their season average of 17.7 per game. Through its first trio of conference games, GW is sharing the ball and averaging 14.3 assists per game, up from its season average of 11.8.

The squad's assist-to-turnover ratio in conference play clocks in at No. 4 in the A-10 at 1.13. Rizzotti said the statistic demonstrates how her team has progressed to strengthen a former weakness.

"There's an area that was a real weakness for us, and we're figuring out how to neutralize it a little bit," Rizzotti said. "I wouldn't say that it's a strength, taking care of the ball, but it certainly

hasn't been as big of a weakness for us in A-10 play."

Rizzotti added that her backcourt is an area in which she wants to see "continued growth" because her players are relatively inexperienced. Junior guard Lexus Levy is the only guard who has seen minutes in conference play this season who also saw minutes on the court last season.

Graduate student guard Ariel Stephenson and redshirt junior guard Sydney Zambrotta have college-level playing experience, but they are wearing GW uniforms for the first time this season and have been sidelined throughout the year with injuries.

Redshirt freshman guard Tori Hyduke, who is in her first year on the court, has assumed a portion of the ball handling responsibilities and leads all guards in average minutes with 27.7 per game. Sophomore guard Maddie Loder, who averaged 26.6 minutes per game last season as a ball handler, has not seen the floor since Dec. 20.

Rizzotti said for her backcourt to be successful, they need to be more patient. Guards have averaged 20.7 points in conference play this season.

"We need to make sure we have a little bit more patience early in the game about letting our offense work and letting our post players draw the kind of defense that's going to allow for easier shots on the perimeter," Rizzotti said.

The frontcourt has thrived in Rizzotti's system. It has amassed 38.1 points per game against A-10 competition. The Colonials have also tapped into the paint for scoring opportunities, averaging 24.7 points a game.

A duo made up of graduate student forward Alexandra Maund and sophomore center Kayla Mokwuah lead the charge for the Colonials, averaging double-digits.

Rizzotti said Mokwuah and Maund are able to sub in and out for each other, allowing them to stay fresh in each rotation.

"When I can split minutes between them, they end up being really, really efficient," Rizzotti said.

Redshirt freshman forward Mayowa Taiwo nearly averages a double-double against conference foes. In her first look at A-10 play, she is averaging 9.7 points and 8.7 rebounds per game. She notched a career-high 18 points against Duquesne and ripped a career-high 14 boards against Fordham.

Rizzotti said Taiwo's success has sprouted from a new approach to using her quickness and strength.

"It was nice to see her trying to really figure out in the last couple weeks how to take advantage of her physical assets, but also to be able to slow the game down in her mind and be much more effective," Rizzotti said.

The Colonials are back in action Saturday at Davidson. Tipoff is scheduled for 1 p.m.
— Roman Bobek contributed reporting.

IN BRIEF

Duquesne knocks off men's basketball

Men's basketball had a plan to recover from a four-point deficit with less than 30 seconds left, but confusion between head coach Jamion Christian and players stunted the comeback against Duquesne Saturday.

The Colonials (6-10, 0-3 A-10) evened the score at halftime, but timely execution in the final moments of play powered the Dukes (14-2, 4-0 A-10) to a tight 66-61 win. Christian said he and the team had two different plays in mind, and players did not know where to pass the ball in the remaining seconds.

"We want to be a team that really executes well at the end there and it seems like we didn't do a good job of executing, and that's on me," Christian said. "Just making sure the guys know where you want the ball to go."

Freshman forward Jamison Battle led the squad for the second straight game with 20 points, matching his career-high against St. Bonaventure Jan. 5. He tacked on 10 rebounds to record his second consecutive double-double.

The Colonials struck first with a layup from freshman forward Chase Paar. Duquesne fired back with a 7-0 run before freshman guard Jameer Nelson Jr. notched a layup down low. On the day, he netted 14 points on 6-of-14 shooting.

Battle sunk his first three-pointer of the night to even the score at nine, but junior guard Tavion Dunn-Martin responded with a triple of his own to retake the lead. Dunn-Martin along with three other Dukes finished in double-digit scoring.

With less than 10 minutes to play, Duquesne blocked a layup attempt from Paar and secured two points in the paint for themselves. The Colonials went back to Paar on the next possession and the big man hit the layup.

An 13-4 run by the Dukes built an 11-point lead for the team with three minutes remaining in the half. Thirty seconds later, Battle found his rhythm from long range, hitting two back-to-back triples and nailing two free throws to bring the Colonials within three points.

Battle said his teammates played a large role in his offensive production, allowing him to take a team-leading 15 shots throughout the game.

"I probably wouldn't get as many shots as I do, it's just with my teammates, right, because they're the ones who pass the ball to me," Battle said. "And I think they're the ones always coming to me, 'Keep shooting, keep shooting, you're a great shooter.'"

With four seconds on the clock in the first frame, Battle hit a buzzer-beating three-point shot to send both teams into the locker room knotted at 32. He netted 18 of his points from deep, connecting on 6-of-15 attempts from beyond the arc.

"We were pretty excited," Battle said. "We knew that we just had to come out in the second half and fight, and I think at points we did, but I just think there's just more to it."

Despite Battle's hot hand, the Colonials only connected on 26.7 percent of shots from beyond the arc and netted 40 percent of its attempts from the field. Duquesne's shooting percentage stood at 39.3 percent from the field, but the Dukes fired at a .429 clip from deep.

Both teams markedly improved its shooting in the second half, trading basket for basket. The Colonials sunk 46.2 percent of its attempts from the field and 36.4 percent from beyond the arc. The Dukes fired at a .500 clip from long range and connected on 60 percent of its three-point attempts.

Another triple from Battle and a layup from sophomore guard Amir Harris boosted the Colonials to a three-point lead. The Dukes rallied a 9-0 run to take their largest lead of the half, advancing by six points.

The Colonials lagged behind by one or two possessions for 10 minutes before Nelson Jr. sunk two shots from the charity stripe to even out the score at 54. The lead changed six times in the final five minutes of play.

A Nelson Jr. dunk off an inbound pass pulled the Colonials ahead by one at the 2:27 mark, but a three-point stroke from sophomore guard Sincere Carry gave the Dukes a lead GW could not overcome.

"Great awareness by them of getting the ball to the right spots and really keeping pressure on us," Christian said. "We just couldn't get that stop to come out with another offensive possession and really open it up."

Miscommunication between Christian and the squad on the court coupled with clutch free-throw shooting from the Dukes sealed the Colonials' fate. GW fell to Duquesne 66-61.

Christian said the team will focus on the execution portion of practice in the days to come to ensure players are moving to the right spots on the floor to "really attack the opposing team."

The Colonials are back in action Saturday to host George Mason. Tipoff is scheduled for 7 p.m.

—Emily Maise