

The GW Hatchet



ARI GOLUB | PHOTOGRAPHER

BLACK HISTORY MONTH 2020

This year's student-led Black Heritage Celebration kicks off with record funding

CLARA DUHON, MAXWELL LAWSON & RHYMA ASIM
REPORTERS

GW's 14th annual Black Heritage Celebration is kicking off with the most funding in its history and a slate of more than a dozen entirely student-led events.

Student leaders said this year's theme, "Reclaiming Our Renaissance: Our History, Our Culture, Our Legacy," honors the centennial anniversary of the Harlem Renaissance. For the first time since BHC launched in 2006, the celebration is entirely organized by students and received a record \$29,000 to fund nearly 20 different events, like discussions on black women's self care and a step show, student leaders said.

The celebration will begin Monday with keynote speaker Brittany Packnett Cunningham, a social justice activist, followed by about five events per week throughout the rest of the month. BHC will round out Feb. 29 with a formal event at the L2 Lounge, according to the BHC agenda.

Raven Lucas, the BHC programming co-chair and a former Hatchet reporter, said the BHC committee received several event proposals from dance teams, graduate student organizations and for the first time, from academic departments and LATAM@GW.

will be Televised" in 2017.

"I would say as programming chairs, we just wanted a diverse array of programs throughout the month," she said.

Students lead BHC with record funding

The SA dished out \$29,000 to the BHC for this month's celebrations, which organizers said were put toward funding speakers, providing food at events and lowering the price of tickets for the final event.

"That also speaks to increased diversity within the Student Association, which shows that it's becoming more diverse and starting to reflect what the student body looks like and represents," Lucas said. "They're starting to see the importance of having this programming."

Nia Lartey, the BHC programming co-chair and a former Hatchet reporter, said the BHC committee received several event proposals from dance teams, graduate student organizations and for the first time, from academic departments and LATAM@GW.

"That was a big thing last year be-

cause a lot of non-black people who were wondering if they could come to BHC events or if they were for them, and we really wanted to stress this year that the entire community is welcome to anything that is happening in February," Lartey said.

In past years, Lartey said George Rice, the former associate director of the Multicultural Student Services Center, was the administrative force behind BHC, but no official replaced his role in the planning process when he left last year. Lartey said graduate student Cassandra Allen filled in as an adviser to oversee the planning process, but all of the people planning the month are students.

"While it was daunting in the beginning that we had to plan the month without the powerhouses that we had in past years, everything happens for a reason, and I believe we were able to give this year's BHC some much-needed new love," she said. "We have free t-shirts, extremely discounted finale tickets and events with organizations we haven't had the privilege to partner with yet."

She said BHC organizers send a

form to apply to host an event at the end of September, and student leaders considered the proposals in the first week of November. The events must relate to the theme of the month, and organizers give greater focus toward new organizations that want to be part of the celebration, she said.

Lartey and Lucas said the BHC marketing committee, a subset of the planning group, runs an Instagram account, @GWUBHC, where they counted down the days to the start of the celebration and provide updates about events. She said the marketing committee also posts flyers in residence halls and around campus to spread awareness for the month.

Lartey added that organizers gave away five tickets to attend the celebration finale later this month for the first time to help promote the event. Finale tickets are currently \$10 and will go up to \$15 on Feb. 15.

GWATCHET.COM

H to learn about what BHC leaders have planned for the month-long celebration

Panhel faces lowest recruitment participation since at least 2010

SHANNON MALLARD
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Less than 350 students participated in formal sorority recruitment this spring, the lowest number in recent memory.

A total of 340 women participated in the first day of Panhellenic Association recruitment and 289 accepted a bid, or invitation to join a sorority, at the end of the process, officials said. Greek life experts said a recent racist event involving a sorority member could deter students from participating in

the process, but sororities can hold continuous open bidding and informal recruitment to make up for the deficit.

"Over the remainder of the spring semester, we look forward to continuing to support GW women that are interested in joining a Panhellenic organization through the continuous open bidding process or informal recruitment," Associate Dean of Students Colette Coleman said in an email.

Fifty-five percent fewer women participated in formal recruitment and more than 60

percent fewer women received bids compared to 2010. A record-high 719 women registered for formal sorority recruitment and nearly 600 women received a bid in 2014.

The drop comes after Panhel leaders held recruitment for the first time over winter break. Panhel initially switched from fall to spring recruitment in 2016, requiring that students complete at least 12 course credits to be eligible for the process.

See **BIDDING** Page 4



GABRIELLE RHOADS | PHOTOGRAPHER

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GW halts China abroad programs amid coronavirus outbreak

CIARA REGAN &
JARED GANS
STAFF WRITERS

Officials have canceled or relocated study abroad programs in China in the aftermath of a coronavirus outbreak in the country.

Students scheduled to study abroad in China are now slated to go to countries like Australia and Serbia after officials halted China abroad programs amid an epidemic that has killed more than 300 people and infected more than 14,000 worldwide. Officials said they are monitoring the situation and providing students with up-to-date information while assisting them in making alternative plans.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said officials are coordinating with all students who had planned to study in China this spring to make alternate plans.

She said several students had already traveled to China before their classes started, and officials are in contact with them to monitor their departure.

"We are corresponding with all to be sure they are safe and to be alert to any additional needed support we can provide," Nosal said in

an email.

The U.S. Department of State announced a travel warning Tuesday for all of mainland China following the outbreak. Officials imposed travel restrictions Friday on foreign nationals who visited China in the previous two weeks while quarantining Americans who visited Wuhan, where the outbreak began.

Nosal said officials have messaged all GW students studying abroad in China and elsewhere to encourage them to "stay aware" and seek the most recent information from their programs about changing conditions about the new virus and their program's status.

Nosal declined to say how many students are enrolled in study abroad programs in China this semester. She did not specify which of GW's programs in China have been canceled or delayed this semester, whether students enrolled in canceled programs will receive academic credit this semester or where those students will be housed this semester.

The World Health Organization declared a global health emergency Thursday in light of the spreading disease.

At least four of GW's 12 peer schools have delayed

or canceled their abroad programs in China, and University of Rochester officials are conducting a screening of all students who are currently abroad there.

Other schools in the District – American and Georgetown universities – also canceled their China programs in light of the virus.

Study abroad experts said canceling abroad programs, in general, is not common, but officials are willing to take necessary steps when events like disease outbreaks put students in jeopardy.

Sara Dumont, the executive director of American University Abroad, said AU's undergraduate study abroad programs have been canceled, and the students who were already in Beijing for this spring have returned to AU's campus in the District, where they will finish their semester.

Dumont said canceling abroad programs is "never" common, but officials tend only to cancel abroad programs when circumstances that either present a serious risk to participants or the program pose conditions where it is no longer possible to deliver the program's objectives.

News

February 3, 2020 • Page 2

CRIME LOG

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY/VANDALISM, BURGLARY II/FORCIBLE

Hand Chapel (MVC)

Unknown – Unknown

Open Case

GWPD officers responded to a report of damaged walls and fixtures and multiple discharged fire extinguishers. Officers who arrived on scene discovered that the door was forcibly opened. Two similar acts of vandalism in Hand Chapel were reported earlier this week.

Case open

PUBLIC DRUNKENNESS

District House

1/26/2020 – 1:07 p.m.

Closed Case

GWPD officers responded to a report of an intoxicated male student in District House. EMeRG arrived on scene and transported the student to the GW Hospital.

Referred to the Division of Student Affairs

ROBBERY/PICK POCKET, CREDIT CARD FRAUD

Marvin Center

1/26/2020 – 2:35 p.m.

Open Case

A female student reported that her wallet had been stolen from her bag, and she noticed fraudulent charges posted on her credit card.

Case open

SIMPLE ASSAULT (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, HARASSMENT: E-MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA, STALKING)

Public Property on Campus (700 Block of 22nd Street)

Multiple – Multiple

Closed Case

GWPD received a report from a female staff member that her spouse recently assaulted her off campus. The staff member reported that her spouse continues to stalk and harass her on campus. The spouse arrived on campus while the woman was filing the report with GWPD. GWPD officers met with the spouse and barred her from campus.

Subject barred

DISORDERLY CONDUCT/INTOXICATION

Science and Engineering Hall

1/27/2020 – 6:54 p.m.

Closed Case

GWPD responded to a report of an intoxicated man unaffiliated with the University interrupting classes in session in the Science and Engineering Hall. The subject was issued a bar notice and EMeRG transported him to the GW Hospital.

Subject barred

HARASSMENT; E-MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

P812 20th St. (Building YY)

Multiple – Multiple

Open Case

GWPD received a report from a female staff member that her spouse recently assaulted her off campus. The staff member reported that her spouse continues to stalk and harass her on campus. The spouse arrived on campus while the woman was filing the report with GWPD. GWPD officers met with the spouse and barred her from campus.

Subject barred

-Compiled by Katerina Stepanenko

Planning committees release draft recommendations for next strategic plan

ZACH SCHONFELD
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

The four committees guiding GW's next strategic plan issued reports late last month detailing their initial recommendations after four months of meetings and soliciting feedback.

University President Thomas LeBlanc announced four pillars in September – world-class faculty, high-quality undergraduate education, distinguished and distinctive graduate education and high-impact research – with corresponding committees that will guide the process to create GW's next five-year plan. The interim reports mark the midpoint of the committee planning process, which will wrap up in May.

Each committee's written report outlines the current state of the committee's purview, recommendations for officials and the guiding principles behind those recommendations.

Here are some key takeaways from the reports:

World-class faculty

The world-class faculty committee developed two primary goals – "faculty excellence and diversity" and "distinguished faculty" – along with five guiding principles and six initiatives based on community feedback and forums.

"Our recommendations and priorities reflect one overarching aim – to position GW as a center of ever-increasing excellence in learning, innovation and ideas and as a magnet for strategic investment for the future," the committee wrote in its report.

The report states that faculty are "substantially less likely" to report high satisfaction with GW's "intellectual life" and faculty research, based on the results of the 2019 Colonial Group Faculty Survey.

Scott Kieff, a law professor and the committee's chair, said the survey was originally conducted last year by a group of faculty at the request of the provost.

"It was a significant amount of effort that faculty had already mustered, and because our committee was focused on faculty, we wanted to base it on that significant effort and hear their insights," Kieff said.

The committee's suggestions include establishing a Center for Faculty Excellence, which will recommend ways to support the "recruitment and advancement of high-impact faculty" across GW. The report also suggests officials create more faculty recognition opportunities and a faculty mentorship program.

GW currently offers three University-wide honors for tenured faculty, one award for full- and part-time faculty and one award for graduate teaching assistants, according to a University website.

Officials also host a Faculty Honors Ceremony each year at the end of the spring semester to recognize winners of those awards and others.

The committee also recommended officials set a standard for advising by creating a "University-wide first-year experience," lowering the student-to-adviser ratio in some schools and rearranging the freshman year schedule for STEM students

to be more "supportive" and increase retention. SA leaders have previously pushed for a first-year experience course.

Committee members advocate for hiring "high-impact" professionals as distinguished visiting faculty or distinguished professors of the practice and creating a University-wide hiring plan focused on diversity in the report.

"I know this was a real sprint – everyone on the committee worked hard together, and our work as a committee was greatly benefited from other committees, faculty and groups on campus," Kieff said.

"My committee is looking forward to receiving input from the wider community on our first draft of the strategic report," Wald said in an email. "We know no brief report can possibly speak to everyone's concerns, but we will continue to listen to all of the input we receive."

High-quality undergraduate education

The undergraduate committee's report identified challenges like negative perceptions about introductory STEM courses and variation in the quality of academic advising and student support across schools. A Student Association survey found in 2018 that advisers lack personal connections with students, and the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences recently overhauled their advising system to assign students with individual advisers.

"GW can do more as an institution to support student success for all, and it can strive to eliminate silos to permit and encourage students to pursue educational opportunities across schools and programs," the committee's report states.

The committee recommended that officials develop one-credit "pop-up" courses and interdisciplinary "discovery tracks" to help students explore different fields as well as encourage experiential opportunities, like internships and study abroad programs.

Other recommendations include launching "interdisciplinary, problem-based" courses and linking STEM offerings to GW's strengths, like public policy and the arts, according to the report.

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Distinguished graduate education

The graduate committee found that graduate students are "generally satisfied" with their experience at GW and their academic programs but are less impressed with aspects of the University like mental health services and financial assistance.

"GW lacks strategic focus in fostering excellence in graduate education, promoting cross-school synergy and interdisciplinarity, and advocating for graduate students," the committee's report states.

The committee developed eight criteria, like a well-defined mission and student satisfaction, to evaluate graduate programs. Committee members also recommended that officials strengthen their reviews of doctoral and master's programs by incorporating the criteria.

The report also identifies a goal of making the planning of graduate programs more "strategic" and "coordinated" by appointing a vice provost for graduate studies, focusing on providing additional interdisciplinary programs and improving financial accounting, like ensuring a "sound and uniform" method of analyzing revenues.

Carol Sigelman, the psychology department chair and the chair of the committee, said the proposed vice provost position would raise the "visibility" of graduate education and convince other offices throughout the

University to be more responsive to graduate student needs.

"We have a whole slew of things that this new person can take on as soon as they're hired," Sigelman said. "That's what we think will really allow some new developments in graduate education and improvement and quality."

High-impact research

The research committee identified five principles – preeminence, identity, ecosystem, leadership and diversity – and three aspirational goals – investing in people, ideas and infrastructure – as the foundation for the committee's work.

The committee recommends the establishment of an academic research leadership team to oversee the long-term growth of GW's research ecosystem. LeBlanc identified improving GW's research presence as one of his top five priorities as University president, and officials are currently implementing recommendations provided by a faculty-led research ecosystem review last April.

"One of our major recommendations is that our committee should represent the first step to a faculty academic research leadership team that we believe will be a critical component of the successful implementation of the university research strategic plan," the report states.

The committee's recommendations also include establishing a GW research academy to stimulate research and building a centrally located faculty research center.

Alan Greenberg, the chair of the epidemiology and biostatistics department and the committee's chair, said he hopes the University community will provide input to the committee online and in-person as the planning process moves forward.

"Our committee is very much looking forward to receiving feedback from the GW community through the online portal and upcoming town halls so we can continue to revise and improve the recommendations," he said in an email.



Gayle Wald, the chair of the American studies department and the undergraduate education committee, said the report includes recommendations to improve STEM.

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Committee members advocate for hiring "high-impact" professionals as distinguished visiting faculty or distinguished professors of the practice and creating a University-wide hiring plan focused on diversity in the report.

Gayle Wald, the committee chair and American studies department chair, said the report provides "strong" recommendations about how to elevate STEM at GW and how to leverage existing resources to enhance the undergraduate experience.

"My committee is looking forward to receiving input from the wider community on our first draft of the strategic report," Wald said in an email. "We know no brief report can possibly speak to everyone's concerns, but we will continue to listen to all of the input we receive."

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Student voter participation increased 25 percentage points from 2014 to 2018 midterm election: report

MAKENA ROBERTS
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Student voter participation jumped about 25 percentage points between midterm elections in 2014 and 2018, sticking GW above the national rate, according to a report compiled by a Tufts University-based organization.

About 11,000 students – or about 47 percent of the student body – cast a ballot in the 2018 midterm elections, about eight percentage points higher than the 39 percent average across all U.S. universities, according to the National Study of Learning, Voting and Engagement published last semester. Political science and higher education experts said schools that host pop-up voter drives and seminars about voting and elections – both of which GW has done in recent years – help to increase voter turnout.

"The midterms were an incredible election in terms of college students for a number of reasons, but the main takeaway is that turnout doubled from the previous midterm election," said Adam Gismondi, the director of impact at the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education, which is based out of Tufts.

NSLVE works with the National Student Clearinghouse – a career and college preparation organization – to research and compare institutions' voter participation rates in a database. NSLVE compiles voting information from major elections into a specialized report sent to each participating college, according to NSLVE.

The number of students registered to vote at GW increased by more than 4,500 students between the 2014 and 2018 midterm elections, and the number of students who voted after registering increased by more than 6,700 votes, the study states.

GW majors like communications and literature recorded



HATCHET FILE PHOTO BY GABRIELLE RHOADS | PHOTOGRAPHER

About 47 percent of GW's student population voted in the 2018 election, about eight percentage points higher than the national average.

the greatest increase in student votes between 2014 and 2018, according to the report. Students majoring in English literature and language increased about 37 percent, and cultural and gender group studies major voter participation increased about 35 percent between the two midterms, the report found.

The Class of 2021 also recorded the highest voting rate for undergraduate students that year, standing at 40 percent.

Gismondi, the director of impact at the Institute for Democracy and Higher Education who was involved with compiling the report, said faculty involvement across disciplines, holding in-depth student forums about current political issues and educating students about voting rights history or how to cast a vote have increased voter turnout.

The number of student voters

in the 2016 presidential election increased more than 11 percent at Tufts with a voting rate of about 63 percent, according to the school's report. The national average for student voters in 2016 clocked in at more than 50 percent, according to the report.

Gismondi said a student organization called JumboVote holds student forums and town halls during elections to educate students on political candidates and engage them in "peer-to-peer support."

Alissa Karton, the director of special projects and assistant to the vice president at George Mason University, said the school launched an organization called Mason Votes in 2007 to educate students about voting and elections. The school's voter participation rate increased by about 25 percent between the 2014 and 2018 midterm elections, and the

school recorded a 2018 voter rate of about 52 percent, according to the report.

"We want students to understand that local and regional government and voting in elections is just as important, maybe more important than the presidential one," Karton said.

Like Mason Votes, a nonpartisan task force in the Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service called GW Votes released a plan to increase presidential voter participation rates from 58 percent in 2016 to 65 percent by 2020. The program communicates with more than 15 student organizations, like GW College Democrats and GW College Republicans, to develop events that encourage students to vote.

GW Votes launched a competition between residence halls in 2018 to encourage students

to register to vote, resulting in more than 1,100 new voters.

George Mason's urban location attracts several inquiries from political speakers, which helps rally students around political engagement, Karton said. Faculty are also encouraged to host "flash lectures" during election season to educate students about current campaigns, she said.

Presidential candidates like Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt. and former presidential candidates Hillary Clinton and Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., have visited campus over the past couple of years.

More than 100 students registered to vote during the event and members of the organization provided more information to students interested in the election.

"We have student organizations who do voter registration, plan candidates to come on campus or do debates," Karton said. "So Mason Votes tries to help facilitate connecting those groups with the right resources."

John Olds, the GW College Republicans chairman, said GW boasts an active political community, but a significant number of students are not responsive to "in-your-face activism," which counteracts efforts to increase student voter turnout. The group intends to table in Kogan Plaza Feb. 3 with GW Votes, and representatives from the Republican National Committee are invited to attend the group's general body meetings to help register students to vote.

Prior to the midterm elections, College Republicans and College Democrats set off on canvassing trips to advocate for nearby candidates in a Virginia district.

"Apathy is a big issue, and we in the political community need to do a better job of relating to students who aren't so into politics because their voice matters, too," Olds said.

SA launches app to foster Chinese exchange student community

MAKENA ROBERTS
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Student Association senators are trying to bridge the communication gap between Chinese students and administrators with a messaging app.

SA Sen. Haining Bao, ESIA-U, launched "GW WeChat," a platform similar to Facebook that helps Chinese international students read up on events around campus and information about campus events in Chinese. Students who use the app said they have been able to foster greater communication among each other and stay up to date on issues involving Chinese students, like the coronavirus, and other GW news.

"I reached out to several reliable Chinese students who said they would like to be a part of the same project," Bao said. "So basically, I needed the team to post all the detailed information."

The China-based company Tencent founded the app in 2011 and assists other companies and organizations to create their own iteration of the platform, according to its website. Companies like Burberry and British Airways use WeChat to advertise their services to customers.

Bao said student volunteers help manage the GW WeChat account by translating information, like SA

Senate biweekly agendas, from English to Chinese. They also address any questions or concerns students using the app submit, he said.

"The app is sort of a platform where students can submit their concerns on the request to us and, as available, we send our specialists that know about American culture and suggest procedures to them," he said.

Bao said translating information for Chinese students provides an easily accessible platform for students to check for updates on campus news or events that student organizations like the Chinese Student Association and the Chinese Cultural Association hold.

He added that students have used the app to publish a video of University President Thomas LeBlanc wishing students a happy Lunar New Year and coordinated efforts to gather and donate supplies to the Chinese embassy to people experiencing the coronavirus.

"We communicate with Chinese students through WeChat and they will donate money and materials to send to the Chinese embassy for aid," Bao said.

Student volunteers and GW WeChat channel users said the app has helped to inform Chinese students of happenings around campus and allows for more accessible communication among

Chinese students.

Flora Zhang, a volunteer member of the GW WeChat group, said she helps to record and translate the SA meetings into Chinese to post in the chat and make the information accessible to Chinese students. Zhang said many Chinese students do not read SA updates from senate meetings, so the app helps to inform them in a language they are most familiar with.

"I think that many students when they know about WeChat, they want to help us," Zhang said. "There's no actual recruitment process and most of the time students just reach out to us to ask if we need help with the chat."

Yushu Peng, who uses both the general and GW WeChat platforms, said she frequently uses the app to communicate with other Chinese students on campus and receive information about how the SA operates. She said the app is helpful for international students who face a gap in communication between administrators and student leaders.

"It helped me to know how GWSA works and what we can do and gain from it," Peng said in an email.

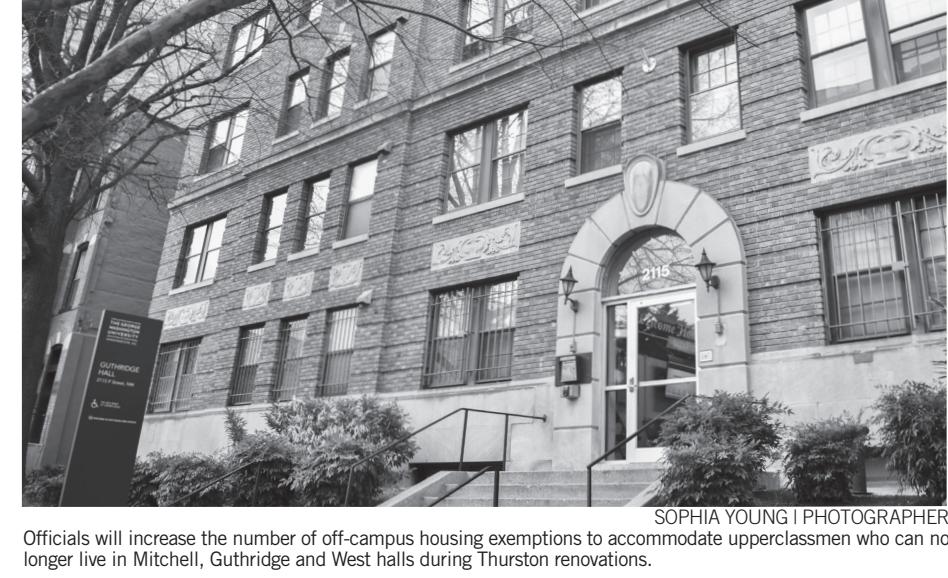
GW HATCHET.COM

H for more on how Chinese students have used the app



SYDNEY WALSH | PHOTOGRAPHER

SA Sen. Haining Bao, ESIA-U, said the app will allow Chinese-speaking students to catch up on news and other important information about campus.



SOPHIA YOUNG | PHOTOGRAPHER

Officials will increase the number of off-campus housing exemptions to accommodate upperclassmen who can no longer live in Mitchell, Guthridge and West halls during Thurston renovations.

Guthridge, West, Mitchell to house only freshmen next academic year

TAYLOR ROWE
REPORTER

Mitchell, West and Guthridge halls will house only freshmen during the two-year Thurston Hall renovations, officials said.

Seth Weinshel, the assistant dean of students, said Guthridge, which currently houses upperclassmen, will be filled with first-year students this fall in addition to mostly freshmen residence halls West and Mitchell. Weinshel said officials chose to convert Guthridge to an all-freshman hall because of its location on the 2000 block of F Street, which is located near first-year halls Potomac and Mitchell.

"Each building has its own community space and the resident advisers will program that space and program for the residents to connect them," Weinshel said. "I anticipate with first-year students because they're wanting to connect, we'll end up with strong communities in Guthridge."

Officials proposed a complete gut renovation to Thurston Hall in December 2018, and the Zoning Commission approved renovation plans for the building in December 2019. Weinshel said Guthridge, Mitchell and West halls will house only freshmen at least during the renovations, and officials will re-evaluate whether to convert the buildings back to upperclassmen housing when construction wraps up.

Officials are also increas-

ing the number of off-campus housing exemptions they offer from 600 to 650 spots next academic year to accommodate the change, he said.

Weinshel added that next year's housing rates will be approved in a Board of Trustees meeting Friday.

He said he hopes the all-freshman Vern residential community will grow with the aid of Residence Hall Association programming and the addition of living and learning communities, or cohorts that house students studying a similar topic.

"I anticipate that community to become a strong community, and our staff will help connect students to the greater GW community," Weinshel said.

GW came to an agreement last summer to house third- and fourth-year students in the Aston and One Washington Circle while renovations are underway.

RHA President Trinity Diaz said freshmen living in Guthridge Hall, which is equipped with individual kitchens, will have to learn to cook and budget for groceries, which most freshmen don't currently need to consider. Fulbright Hall, which transitioned to house only freshmen last year, is the only freshman hall that includes kitchens in each individual room.

Diaz said freshman cooking classes and GW's Supermarket Sunday deals, which offer a \$10 discount when students spend \$40

on groceries at Safeway or Whole Foods, will help freshmen adjust to living with a kitchen.

She said Fulbright Hall residents have used their kitchens to cook together with friends, and she hopes Guthridge's in-room kitchens will facilitate bonding experiences and community for incoming freshmen.

"If anything, they'll have more space inside of their rooms to bring over their friends and build that community and strengthen ties with other buildings, because they have a place for their friends to hang out and cook meals together," Diaz said.

Brooke Cody, the RHA council president for Mitchell, said living in a building with only single rooms provides students with a balance between individual spaces and interacting with other students in their hall.

"With it being only freshmen next year, the sense of community we have now will only be heightened especially because Thurston won't be there, so they'll probably be more activity and an increase in sociability in Mitchell," Cody said.

Chris Zuniga, a sophomore West Hall resident, said freshmen will enjoy the close community found in West and living in a renovated building.

"While they might not have the biggest social network, they'll definitely have a network that is more tight-knit," Zuniga said.

Informal bidding can make up for low recruitment turnout: experts

From Page 1

Kappa Alpha Theta, Pi Beta Phi and Sigma Delta Tau will hold continuous open bidding or informal recruitment this spring. The University's spring informal recruitment webpage does not list any chapters that are eligible for or that will be participating in informal recruitment.

Dani Weatherford, the executive director of the National Panhellenic Conference, declined to comment on GW's sorority recruitment rates but said sororities frequently host continuous open bidding and informal recruitment to garner more members.

"Many members of our Panhellenic organizations find the membership in their organizations through continuous recruitment or continuous open bidding, and I think that that's really important for people to know that this is just as authentic as any other type of recruitment process," she said.

Eight Panhel chapter presidents did not return multiple requests for comment. Sigma Delta Tau President Lizzie Irwin was not available for comment, and Chi Omega President Laurel Braaten declined to comment.

Panhellenic Association President Alexa Saberito and former Panhel President Sarah Sem did not return requests for comment.

Phi Sigma Sigma withdrew

from the recruitment process before bid day, one day after recruitment began. Officials told Panhel chapters in September that sororities would be prohibited from holding social events or participating in informal recruitment after a racist Snapchat from a former sorority president surfaced.

Michelle Ardern, the executive director of Phi Sigma Sigma, said the sorority's remaining members decided to consult with "internal and external" recruitment experts to agree on performance metrics for the chapter after nearly two-thirds of the chapter disaffiliated.

Ardern said Phi Sigma Sigma "unfortunately" fell short of meeting agreed upon metrics that would indicate a "successful experience" for the chapter, prompting them to withdraw from recruitment.

"The situation has been incredibly painful for our women and our international organization, but we are resolved in taking the lessons learned from this past year and ensuring that we are adhering to the highest standards and creating an environment for accountability and reflection for all our members," Ardern said in an email.

Greek life experts said student concerns over racism in sororities usually engage in annual COB and informal recruitment practices to increase membership.

Peter Lake, the director of the Center for Excellence in Higher Education Law and Policy at Stetson

University, said the recent drop in sorority rush numbers is not consistent with "steady interest" in Greek life nationwide.

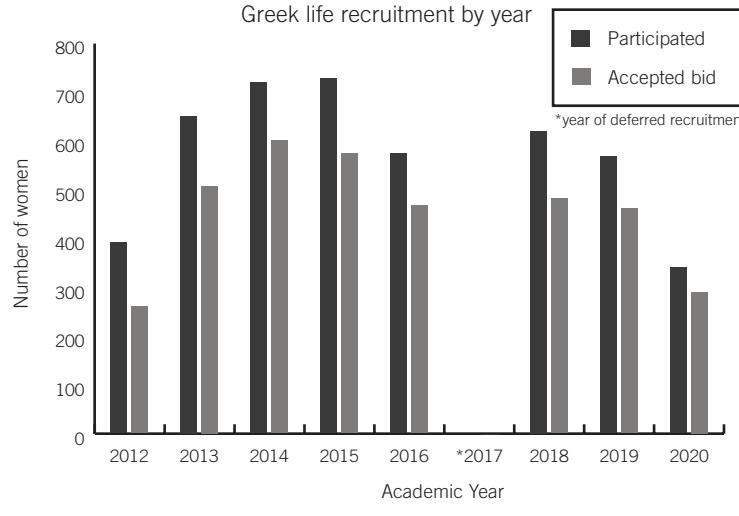
He said multiple factors, like the high cost of membership and increasing popularity of affinity housing, might contribute to a decrease in Greek life interest. But Lake added that the racist Snapchat posts could discourage potential members from going through the process because college students have become more "concerned" about diversity and multiculturalism in the past few years.

"You had the incident, you then had a response by this big drop-off," Lake said. "At least on its face, it's a smoking gun that seems to be why people are drifting away because they're concerned."

CJ Graziano Smith, a fraternity and sorority programs coordinator at the University of Arizona, said COB – which her university holds every year – helps Greek communities grow. Smith said sorority members can become "tired" after continually focusing on bringing in new members during informal recruitment if the women do not view the process as a good opportunity to grow the chapter.

She said women will want to join a sorority if existing chapter members act "authentic" while recruiting new members.

"COB should be a way for each chapter to welcome people into the chapter by marketing who they



ALYSSA ILARIA | GRAPHICS EDITOR

number of members.

But she said the National Panhellenic Council, the national governing body for sororities, recently instituted a policy requiring each Panhellenic chapter to accept a threshold of 95 percent of the total number of members from the previous recruitment. She said the policy change will give potential new sorority members more opportunities to become engaged in Greek life.

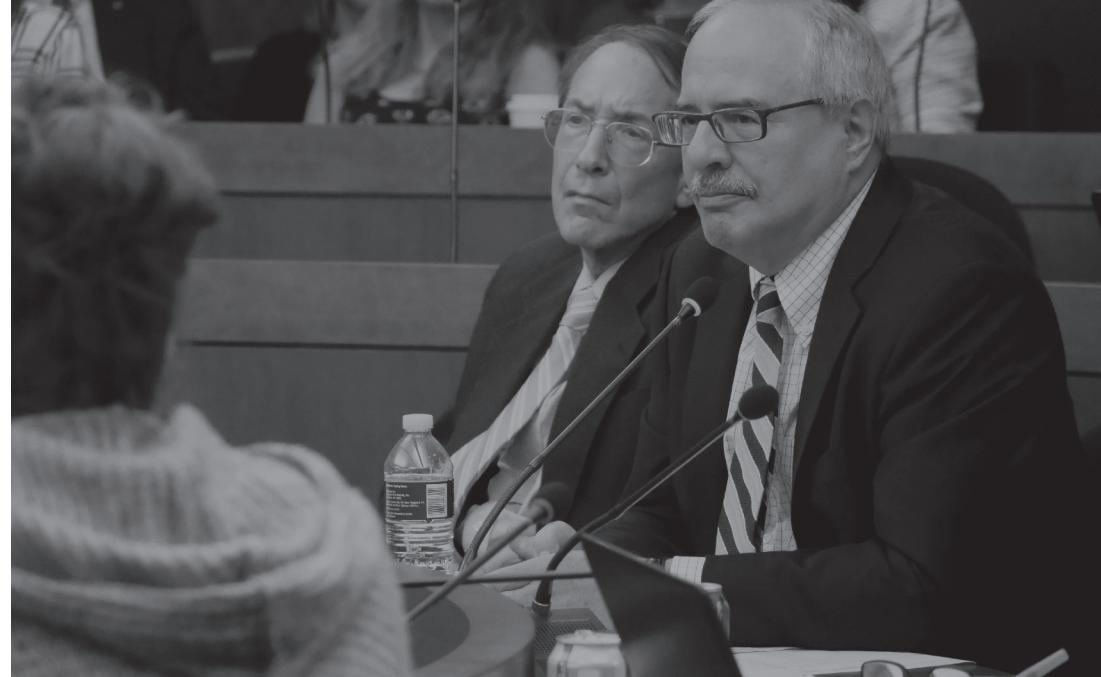
"This change to the new 95 percent rule in the semester without formal recruitment will open the door for more women to join Panhellenic outside of formal recruitment," Christman said in an email.

authentically are," she said in an email. "Each event, open house, whatever you call it, should be what the members already do, so you bring in new members who are like you."

Ashley Christman, the assistant director of student engagement for fraternity and sorority life at the University of North Alabama, said her school typically "resets" the total number of members chapters can recruit to the median chapter size after formal recruitment each year.

Christman said chapters that fall short of the threshold recruit through COB and informal processes until they meet the median

LeBlanc apologizes for 'insensitive' analogy amid backlash from SA, divestment group



LeBlanc said that about 3 percent of the University's investments are connected to the fossil fuel industry in a video that surfaced Saturday.

ZACH SCHONFELD
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

University President Thomas LeBlanc said he "deeply apologizes" for comments he made in a video that surfaced Saturday that shows him comparing support for fossil fuel divestment to shooting "all the black people here."

In the video, which was posted to the Facebook page "Overheard at GW," an individual who identified herself as a freshman asked LeBlanc about GW's investments in fossil fuel companies and donations from the fossil fuel industry, which prompted LeBlanc to use an analogy that students condemned on social media. LeBlanc's apology comes after the Student Association's Black Senators' Caucus published a statement characterizing his comments as "racially insensitive" and "thoughtless."

"The Black Senators' Caucus recognizes the manner in which this incident occurred as both a pattern of racially insensitive behavior on this campus as well as proof of the degree to which accountability and reasonable sensitivity are absent from this University – even at the highest and most visible level," the caucus' statement reads.

The student in the video, who Sunrise GW identified as a member of their organization, asked LeBlanc whether he would shut down GW's Regulatory Studies Center – a research hub that receives funding from donors like ExxonMobil and has been criticized for a right-wing bent – if a majority of students agreed. LeBlanc rejected the idea that a majority vote mattered, adding that the decision to keep the center is an issue of academic freedom.

LeBlanc said majority rule should not guide every decision, likening a majority in support of shutting the RSC to a hypothetical majority in favor of causing harm to African-Americans on campus.

"What if the majority of the students agreed to shoot all the

black people here?" he said in the video. "Do I say, 'Ah, well the majority voted?' No."

LeBlanc told The Hatchet in a statement Sunday that he did not intend to offend anyone by using the analogy.

"Yesterday, in a conversation with a student, I attempted to emphasize a point and used an insensitive example that I realize could be hurtful to members of our community," LeBlanc said in an email. "I deeply apologize for using that example."

He added that he intended to caution the student against using majority rule as justification for violating academic freedom.

"The point I was making – that majority rule should never suppress the human rights of others – was obscured by the example I used," LeBlanc said. "I regret my choice of words and any harm I unintentionally inflicted on a community I value greatly."

SA President SJ Matthews and Executive Vice President Amy Martin, who extended their office hours Sunday afternoon in the wake of the video, declined to comment, deferring to the statement issued by the black senators' caucus.

Archer Gallivan, a sophomore who posted the video to the Facebook group, told The Hatchet the woman in the video declined to comment about the video.

The student in the video raised concerns to LeBlanc about the RSC's donors, to which LeBlanc responded that he is not "crazy" about gifts from donors affiliated with the fossil fuel industry but added that he cannot shut the "legitimately constituted" academic center down without violating principles of academic freedom.

"Here at GW, you get to make your case and people get to listen to it, and agree with it, or disagree with it and make another case," he said.

LeBlanc said in the video that he similarly did not respond to those asking him to fire law professor Jonathan Turley fol-

lowing his testimony before the House Judiciary Committee as a part of the impeachment inquiry into President Donald Trump.

LeBlanc also disclosed the scope of GW's fossil fuel investments in the video for the first time.

He revealed that about 3 percent of the University's investments are connected to fossil fuel companies through funds GW invests in. The University's portfolio does not include any individual stocks issued by fossil fuel companies, LeBlanc said.

"We're 97 percent carbon-free now, and we're getting no credit for it," he said in the video. "Everybody's hammering us as if all we own is coal – we're 97 percent carbon-free now."

He added that officials are working with GW's investment advisers to eliminate all remaining investments in fossil fuel companies and working with the Board of Trustees to develop a "statement of principle" by the end of the year that will explain GW's vision for divestment in the next five to 10 years.

The video has received almost 130 comments as of Sunday afternoon, ranging from those defending the ideas he put forward, comments criticizing his choice of words and some messages calling on LeBlanc to resign.

Sunrise GW, a student-led environmental activism group that rebranded in November, published a statement Sunday condemning LeBlanc's comments in the video. The group published a letter urging officials to cut ties with the center and divest from fossil fuel companies in late December, which the SA Senate backed last week in a resolution.

Sunrise GW condemns in the strongest terms President LeBlanc's racially insensitive comparison of students supporting fossil fuel divestment and basic academic integrity to the idea of student support for racial violence," the statement reads.

LeBlanc said in the video that he similarly did not respond to those asking him to fire law professor Jonathan Turley fol-

Program focused on study of D-Day to relocate to GW after receiving grant

JARED GANS

ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

An institute focused on commemorating D-Day will use its new space in Phillips Hall to expand its presence on campus, the center's faculty said.

The inaugural space was unveiled Jan. 15 to house the Albert H. Small Normandy Institute – established in 2011 to honor the lives of American soldiers who died in France on D-Day in 1944 – following a donation from the institute's namesake, a donor who funded its creation. Faculty said the institute's new space will allow it to expand its capabilities to hold programming for interested scholars, faculty and students.

Charles Long, the academic director of the institute and an assistant professor of history, said the institute's new space in Phillips Hall guarantees it will be able to fulfill its mission of educating people about one of the most significant days in World War II in addition to allowing more students to participate in the program by centralizing its operations.

"I think that having a physical location here will guarantee that it will continue in perpetuity, which is I know what Mr. Small wanted," he said.

The institute's leaders send 15 teams of high schoolers and their teachers annually to Normandy – the landing site where Allied troops invaded Nazi-occupied Europe during the war – to view key sites from that time period and give graveside eulogies to a specific fallen soldier buried there, according to their website. Those involved participate in online discussions and research their own soldier over the course of the program, which lasts several months, the website states.

Long said three student participants from the program in years past have attended GW for college. He said the space on the third floor of Phillips – which students will engage with when they visit the District prior to traveling to France in June – may entice more students participating in the program to join GW.

He said students and their teachers go to the National Archives in College Park, Maryland, to research the soldier whose life they have chosen to examine.

"I think that's the biggest advantage of having the institute here and based at GW," he said. "I know Mr. Small wants it to be a rigorous academic program and he wants it to be run by GW professors."

He said leaders of the institute use podcasts as a way to spread information to participants in the program. He said he has recorded three episodes and will soon record a podcast on the Battle of the Atlantic, a monthlong campaign during World War II over control of Atlantic sea routes, for the current participants in this year's cohort.

He added that professors in departments like history and

American studies, including Katrin Schultheiss, the chair of the history department, and Steven Brady, an assistant professor of history, will record episodes on topics like France's role in the war for the students.

"We're using a really broad cross-section of faculty from the University, and I think having a base here gives something to focus on," Long said.

He said the institute's main area of focus at the moment is the high school cohort but added that he is open to expanding the institute's offerings with more discussions in the future with a new home.

Long said he and other leaders recently met with a member of the World War II Museum in New Orleans who is interested in holding a symposium at the institute, and he is considering inviting guest speakers to give lectures on related topics.

"The time will probably come when there are more activities centered around the institute than there are," he said. "So far there never had been before, but it never really had a home before."

Long's office is located in the center itself, and his associates' offices are located just outside the institute on the same floor of Phillips, according to the history department's website.

Denver Brunsman, a deputy academic director for the institute and an associate professor of history, said having a physical space on campus is not "absolutely necessary" for all centers and institutes at GW, but it helps organize the institute's administrative unit.

"I think that everyone's very excited to have an institute here in the space because I think it shows an investment in GW," Brunsman said. "It will be located here."

Eric Arnesen, a deputy academic director and a professor of modern American labor history, said the location will be a central space for the institute's leaders to field any questions anyone has related to the institute's mission or its work.

He said students in Long's class at GW on the Normandy invasion can volunteer with the center to serve as mentors for the high school-level program and help high school students conduct research.

"I think it anchors the whole concept," Arnesen said. "I think it's good to have this. Involving GW students is one of the purposes of the institute. Our students are wonderful – they are a resource."

Arnesen said members of the institute have begun talking with potential partners about featuring more academic programming based on World War II and "D-Day-specific experiences."

"One of the nice things about having a physical home and having a clear identity is that now affords us an opportunity to think more creatively about what more can we be doing, what direction should we go and what avenues might we explore," he said.

Study abroad students say GW's decision 'absolutely necessary'

From Page 1

Officials indefinitely suspended study abroad programs in Hong Kong last semester following protests that led to violence between police officers and protesters. Donna Scarboro, the associate provost for international programs, said in December that programs in Chile were suspended following violent protests.

"In this case the Centers for Disease Control and State Department risk assessments for China were a determining factor in the programs' cancellations," Dumont said in an email.

Dumont said AU officials were informed that the level of risk of catching the virus in Beijing was relatively low, but the measures taken in China to contain the virus were not enough for the program to function effectively. "Should the situation

worsen, students could have been at greater risk at a time when it would not be possible for them to depart due to flight cancellations," Dumont said.

Jay Dee, a professor of higher education at the University of Massachusetts Boston, said institutions have a "duty of care" to protect their students, and higher education officials will do everything they are able to do to ensure students are being sent to a safe location.

"It's important for institutions to make very clear and quick decisions to put the safety of their students first," he said.

Dee said officials that want their students to have "global experiences" must grapple with securing students' safety. He said administrators remain responsible for safety even in situations where they do not have direct control of the students'

experiences, so they must have plans in advance.

"Universities have developed a range of protocols to make sure that contact information is updated, notifications from the U.S. State Department are conveyed to faculty and staff so there's a clear web of communication," Dee said.

"In this case the Centers for Disease Control and State Department risk assessments for China were a determining factor in the programs' cancellations"

SARAH DUMONT
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, AMERICAN UNIVERSITY ABROAD

Students participating in China abroad programs said they are disappointed that they cannot travel to China but understand that officials needed to make a decision to protect them.

Students participating in GW's study abroad programs have been offered the opportunity to study abroad in several countries in place of China, including Italy, Jordan, Senegal and Taiwan, according to emails sent to students in China abroad programs.

Pilar Reyes – a sopho-

outbreak began was quarantined, that her trip to Fudan University in Shanghai may not take place.

She said the email chain from the University made it appear that the trip may happen, but over the course of six days, it seemed less likely. She said her program coordinators sent her an email Wednesday that the program was formally canceled, and officials were looking for alternative locations to send her cohort.

"I think GW was just trying to make sure that they were making the best decision for the students," Reyes said.

Reyes said those in her program were looking forward to going to China for nine months, adding that she began learning Mandarin in the lead-up to her visit. Reyes said she learned Thursday her cohort would be traveling to New Zealand for the semester to complete

the global bachelor's require-

Niels Graham, a junior majoring in economics and international affairs, said he was already in Beijing for a month-long program and was planning on participating in the spring semester Beijing abroad program starting Feb. 12.

Graham said he originally received an email from program officials that the course would be delayed but received a follow-up email shortly after to state that it was canceled. He said he registered for classes at GW this semester, and he expects to be able to adjust to his classes after he catches up on the work he missed.

He added that canceling the abroad programs on the Chinese mainland was "abso-lutely necessary."

"I think it was the right move, just with how rapid the spread of the virus was," Graham said.

Outgoing Documentary Center head a role model to students: faculty



COURTESY OF NINA SEAVEY

Emmy-award winning documentary filmmaker Nina Seavey will step down from her position at the School of Media and Public Affairs to pursue an investigative podcast project.

RACHEL ANNEX & SHANNON MALLARD
REPORTERS

After stumbling upon Ken Burns' award-winning Civil War documentary series as a graduate student in 1989, Nina Seavey said she realized the "amazing" storytelling power of the medium and wanted to pursue it herself.

Since then, she's created documentaries on topics ranging from bull-fighters to the history of the poliovirus, won an Emmy award, earned two additional nominations and collaborated with students and filmmakers from all around the

world.

Now, after nearly three decades leading the School of Media and Public Affairs' Documentary Center, Seavey will step down from her position June 30 to pursue an investigative podcast project about U.S. government surveillance of citizens involved in anti-Vietnam War protests. Seavey said her proudest accomplishment during her decades-long tenure heading the center is the opportunity she had to teach her students how to become skilled documentarians.

"You don't need to go to film school to be a documentarian," Seavey said. "What you need is

really great mentorship. And I think that what we've done is to mentor filmmakers in a way that is really part of a lifelong journey."

Seavey said that while at the center's helm, she created a six-month "intensive" certificate program to teach students documentary production and storytelling techniques. She said she designed the program to carve out a niche for SMPA among peer institutions like the University of Southern California and New York University, which offer only a master's of fine arts degree in filmmaking.

Seavey said she also created fellowships for

emerging foreign filmmakers to allow students to collaborate with aspiring documentarians from countries like Bangladesh and Kyrgyzstan. The program, supported by two U.S. Department of State grants in 2008 and 2010, allowed about 450 students who participated in the program to act as "ambassadors" to "open the hearts and minds" of worldwide audiences.

"Twenty filmmakers got together over a six-week period, lived here on campus and made films together, went back to their home countries and changed the world," Seavey said.

Seavey said she will stay on as executive producer for GW's bicentennial film, which will showcase University accomplishments over the past 200 years. GW will observe its bicentennial anniversary with a year-long celebration kicking off in February 2021.

She said she wants to use the documentaries as a way to highlight academic departments and bring the University community together. Academic heads from departments like biostatistics approached her asking her to "tell stories about what we do," she said.

"We can help you with that because everybody in a university has a story about their work, about their research, about how they're changing their field, what are they contributing to their cannon," Seavey said.

Seavey said the docu-

mentary center has yet to name a new leader, adding that she does not want to influence the decision and wants to let the new director lead the program according to their own vision. But she added that she intends to answer any questions that officials involved with selecting the new director have about the center to ensure the transition process is as "smooth" as possible.

"Now it's up to somebody else to really put their paw print in it and say 'This is mine,'" Seavey said. "Because, right now, it's so much a reflection of my strengths, and I avoid the things that are my weaknesses. I can't say how it should look, except that I hope it takes the form of somebody else's good strengths."

SMPA faculty said Seavey has been an "excellent" role model for students interested in becoming documentarians, and the next director of the center has "big shoes to fill."

Outgoing SMPA Director Frank Sesno said Seavey brought a "rigorous" type of documentary filmmaking to the institute and taught students how to "go the extra mile" when shooting film and interviewing hard-to-reach sources.

"When it's all said and done, you can point to where somebody comes to life in your film, where an issue or an experience becomes poignant and

powerful, and you can stand back and just be intensely proud of having created that experience for your audience," Sesno said.

Sesno added that quantifying the importance of documentary filmmaking can sometimes be difficult but Seavey's teaching has given rise to the next generation of documentarians.

"Measuring impact in long-form storytelling and documentary is always a challenge, but in this case, it's pretty simple – educating successive generations of aspiring filmmakers, and that's something to be very proud of," Sesno said. "The students who have experienced the institute have been able to, at the end of that experience, know that they've created something unique and special."

David Karpf, SMPA's associate director, said Seavey is a "force of nature" who had a "real impact" on both the media and public affairs school and the larger field of documentary.

Karpf said Seavey effectively challenged her students and imparted her years of knowledge and experience to the next generation of documentarians.

"She's been a role model in how to build an intensive educational experience that demands and produces excellence," Karpf said.

Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies program pilots capstone seminar

MAX SKIDELSKY

REPORTER

The Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies program is piloting a new capstone seminar for graduate students' senior theses discussions this semester.

The seminar allows graduate students to jointly develop their theses through dialogue and peer review with other graduate students working on their final projects, faculty said. Kavita Daiya, the director of the program, said the seminar takes graduate students out of the isolation that students usually face in writing their theses and fosters a greater sense of community among the students.

Daiya said she came up with the idea for the course with Cynthia Detitch and Eiko Strader, two other professors in the program. She said the three of them began talking last year about how to improve the program's graduate student experience to combat seclusion.

"They're largely working on their own in the library all by themselves or in the attic and doing this research in isolation," she said.

Daiya said faculty gathered student feedback last spring informally through word of mouth and formally through a survey, which led to faculty discussions about

how to reinvent the curriculum.

"We did a survey of the graduate students, and we learned about what was working for them, what they saw as the strength of their experience here at GW," Daiya said. "Then we asked them to share what they found challenging."

She said students typically write their theses and receive feedback from a single professor, which limits their opportunity for feedback and discussion, but she wanted students to be able to collaborate so they could reap the benefits of other perspectives on their work.

"Instead of being isolated in your last semester like that, we thought it would be really great to bring everyone together who was working on these theses into a seminar," she said.

Faculty said nine students are currently enrolled in the course, and 14 are expected to enroll next year. There is no limit on the number of graduate students who can enter the program, professors said.

Daiya said faculty plan to pilot the capstone this year by introducing tentative changes for this semester only, and if students enjoy the experience and Strader reports it met its goal to improve students' writing, faculty will offer the program every year.

She said she has met with a few students in the capstone seminar, asking for reactions, and heard positive feedback about the changed curriculum.

"They've all had really positive things to say about it," she said. "They are enjoying the fact that it is providing a writing community."

Strader, the professor overseeing the course, said she pitched the idea last year with some faculty members on a curriculum review committee looking to improve the capstone program.

She said she determined that the graduate students needed a more creative experience by brainstorming with others to further their intellectual goals. By talking to their peers regularly, they can receive suggestions about reading and research that would benefit their theses, Strader said.

"The goal is learning how to do research on your own and also how to be in conversation with your peers," she said.

Strader said she agreed to design and teach the seminar because she wanted to develop a more systematic approach for graduate students and other professors who the students in the seminar consult with, the program will likely be formally incorporated into the curriculum beginning next year.

Joseanne Lopez, a second-year graduate student

they have taken so far, including feminist theory and research issues.

"They need to bring all those things together and develop their own research paper," Strader said.

Strader said that based on the feedback already obtained from graduate students and other professors who the students in the seminar consult with, the program will likely be formally incorporated into the curriculum beginning next year.

Joseanne Lopez, a second-year graduate student

in the course, said the seminar has encouraged a more rigid timeline for completing her work by requiring certain deadlines be met so she can collaborate with peers.

She said the feedback from her peers has been a "great resource" that has helped ensure her research "is credible and of high quality."

"The capstone seminar has provided me with an insightful and forward-looking approach to not only constructing my research paper but also in developing an in-depth

meaning to and understanding of my research goals," she said.

Sarah-Anne Gresham, another student in the course, said the seminar complemented her writing strategy during the "most stressful semester of a master's program" by including other perspectives in her writing.

"It is providing the structure needed to complete my research on time, and it is also helping me to become more disciplined and strategic in my approach to writing," she said.



Kavita Daiya, the director of the WGSS department, said the seminar will alleviate feelings of isolation while students are writing their theses.

SOPHIA YOUNG | PHOTOGRAPHER

Opinions

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WHAT THE UNIVERSITY WON'T TALK ABOUT THIS WEEK

How many students were enrolled in study abroad programs in China. p. 1

FROM GWHATCHET.COM/OPTIONS

"Officials can stop grade inflation by simply changing the way professors are evaluated and being transparent about grade distributions."

— EDITORIAL BOARD ON 1/27/20

Jack Evans does not deserve another chance to represent Ward 2

STAFF EDITORIAL

Former D.C. Councilmember Jack Evans is putting his personal interests above Ward 2 voters – again.

Evans resigned from his seat shortly before a vote was set to remove him from the D.C. Council late last month. In response to his departure, councilmembers organized a special election to vote in his replacement, all while candidates are already vying for his Ward 2 seat in June's general election. Ward 2 residents' reprieve from Evans has been short-lived because he officially filed to run in both elections last week.

While the District serves as the backdrop for President Donald Trump's impeachment trial, Evans' misconduct hits closer to home. He has become the center of several ethics investigations while serving as a councilmember and has come under fire for placing his personal business interests above those of his constituents. His actions may not have gotten him arrested, but they are textbook examples of unethical behavior.

Evans' decision to run is selfish and does not benefit voters or the Council. He should drop out of the race.

Ward 2 voters need time to get familiar with other candidates, especially because Evans has been the Ward 2 incumbent for nearly 30 years. Voters should not waste their time on understanding a candidate who may have extensive Council experience but clearly does not deserve the seat. Evans is only a distraction to the seven other candidates advocating for ways to address issues like homelessness, transportation and the cost of rent in Ward 2.



Cartoon by Jeanne Franchesca Dela Cruz

His candidacy is not only a distraction, but it is a financial burden for taxpayers. Evans' initial resignation is the reason the ward needed to assemble a special election, which costs money. Voters should not be on the hook

for the monetary and time costs of the special election when he is making an undignified spectacle of his departure from office.

Evans is doing a disservice to voters, the Council and himself in running for another term. He is

demonstrating that he has not listened to the thousands of people who signed petitions calling for his resignation, nor the council-members who already planned to vote him out. Voters should not forget that he was almost force-

fully removed from office amid several ethical violations. Evans' decision to run is merely a slap in the face to everyone who stands against him.

Four members have already made the commitment to reopen removal proceedings against Evans if he is reelected, and all current members of the Council released a statement condemning his run. The Council should not let Evans get away with putting himself above voters, and they should make clear that they will continue the removal process should Evans win again.

Voters should not be expected to dignify his selfish tantrum by considering him as a viable candidate. Evans is making a mockery of all that the Council stands for, and he is assuming that the voters are either too unintelligent or apathetic to vote against him. By running for reelection, Evans is embarrassing himself and the voters of Ward 2. If he were to win, it would show that anyone of power can get away with unethical behavior and misuse of office.

Evans' decision to run in his own special election to replace him is just as selfish as his corrupt actions while he sat on the Council. Much like his corruption, his decision to run serves no benefit to Ward 2, harms D.C. voters by putting them through unnecessary elections and stress, makes D.C. look like it does not have a valid model of governance and makes a joke out of the ethics rules of the Council. Evans has shown a lack of concern for Ward 2 and the legitimacy of the Council. He should pack up his stuff, admit his wrongs and move on from Ward 2.

Why we're reclaiming our renaissance

When September 2019 came, the Black Heritage Celebration committee was tasked with encapsulating the black experience at GW for the upcoming year. The committee recognized the centennial anniversary of the Harlem Renaissance and wanted this year's theme to incorporate this meaningful milestone.

The period of the Harlem Renaissance was a time for the reformation of black culture and identity in America. As black people were no longer slaves, they had the ability to create their own space in society. Harlem became the Mecca of all things politics, art and film for black Americans that eventually spread across the country.

This month is an opportunity for black students, and the GW community at large, to reclaim things that have been lost or stolen from their identity.

"This month is an opportunity for black students, and the GW community at large, to reclaim things that have been lost or stolen from their identity."

cycle, this anniversary is more important than ever for black Americans across the country to redefine their culture. Through various outlets, we have the opportunity to personally and professionally develop skills that will give us the chance to utilize our

abilities well beyond the Foggy Bottom limits. Our exploration of our roots and cultural differences will help provide clarity and reconciliation within ourselves.

It is important for GW black students to "reclaim" this month to highlight to their peers, professors and administrators that their identity is imperative to their educational experience. The burden does not solely lie on the black community, but rather, it is necessary for all to step up, and even step back in order to make room for the revival.

And to the GW black community: In an age where the commodification of the black experience is pervasive, let this be a reminder to never repress your blackness.

—Bishop Walton and Guinevere Thomas are co-chairs of the Black Heritage Celebration. Almaz Abedje is the president of GW's National Association of Black Journalists.

Officials must prioritize quality of CCAS advising over quantity

Advising at the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences has been subject to extensive criticism for several years. And while the office has made strides to improve its services, it continues to fall short.

Kyle Anderson
Writer

anyways instead of providing the advice I needed.

My poor experiences with advising are connected with a couple of issues. Officials' most recent advising update assigned students with an adviser by last name to ensure they had one person to see on every visit. While the change gives students individualized attention, they still cannot meet with advisers who have specific knowledge of their major or have the ability to assist CCAS students with an undeclared major. Instead of assigning students an adviser by last name, students should have the ability to access advisers who have an understanding of the requirements for each major. These changes would allow individual advisers to better answer student questions and give undecided students an outlet to seek guidance if they are weighing their options.

The argument that CCAS advising is understaffed is fair, especially when people are rushing to ensure their classes are set at the beginning of the semester, but it has its flaws. Numbers are not the main issue. Advisers need to have the ability to provide accurate and succinct advice to students across a wide variety of backgrounds.

Either they do not have the time to give you better advice or they do not know what better advice to give you. Clearly, if it were simply the lack of time, my experience would have been different. Narrowing the scope of an adviser would allow them to give higher quality advice, curing the CCAS "advising blues."

—Kyle Anderson, a freshman majoring in political science, is an opinions writer.

LeBlanc's insensitive analogy showed poor judgment

In a video posted to Saturday night, University President Thomas LeBlanc made an insensitive analogy comparing students asking for fossil fuel divestment to a hypothetical situation in which students want to shoot African American students.

Kiran Hoeffer-Shah
Opinions Editor

LeBlanc apologized for the comments made in the video on

Sunday, but his apology cannot undo the damage of his words.

His comments show an inability to understand and empathize with minority students on campus who might already face challenges on a majority white campus. While he explained his analogy in further detail the next day, the fact that he was comfortable making the analogy speaks volumes about his leadership.

LeBlanc has continuously rebutted the will of the student body, from failing to take a con-

crete position on the Colonial nickname to admonishing students who were disappointed by Marcia McNutt being chosen as the Commencement speaker. While LeBlanc faced pressure from students in both events, he did not use offensive statements to support his argument.

The basis for his argument is not entirely unfair – the majority opinion of students should not drive University-wide decisions. LeBlanc cannot bend to the wishes of all students, but he can provide

some rationale behind his decisions like he did in the video. But his analogy is unfair because it equates climate activism with an inexplicably racially charged crime.

The comparison might have been intended to be an extreme example, but it came off as a poor attempt to condescend students. Using an analogy as extreme as LeBlanc's does not further his argument, it shows his ignorance toward black students.

Trying to win an argument

with students by using an inflammatory analogy does not make students more comfortable, and apologizing later does not solve the problem. The issue is not just about what LeBlanc said but the judgment he showed in using insensitive language.

LeBlanc never should have made the analogy, and students are right to be upset.

—Kiran Hoeffer-Shah, a junior majoring in political science and psychology, is the opinions editor.

The GW Hatchet

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

news@gwhatchet.com

opinions@gwhatchet.com

sports@gwhatchet.com

culture@gwhatchet.com

photo@gwhatchet.com

multimedia@gwhatchet.com

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Parth Kotak, senior news editor
Dani Grace, senior news editor
Jared Gans, assistant news editor
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Submit to opinions@gwhatchet.com

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Culture

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THE SCENE

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

'HIGH ROAD,' AN ALBUM BY KESHA

SARAH SACHS

REPORTER

Black History Month is a time to recognize the achievements and contributions of African Americans, and there's no better way to do it than at museums and other historical exhibits around D.C.

Throughout February, pay a visit to sites like the Martin Luther King Jr. memorial and museums like the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Here's a rundown of places around the District that highlight the strides African Americans have made throughout history.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture

The National Museum of African American History and Culture opened in 2016, becoming the newest of the Smithsonianians. The museum, located on the National Mall, is built to look like the three-tiered corona crown used in Yoruban art from West Africa. It is wrapped in a bronze-colored metal lattice to honor the ironwork of African Americans enslaved in southern states.

The museum includes nearly 36,000 artifacts

showcasing everything from music and sports to slavery and how black Americans were involved in World War I. Another exhibit guides visitors through the efforts that U.S. presidents, members of Congress and activists made to open the museum and commemorate African American contributions.

If you're looking to spend hours exploring black history over hundreds of years, the National Museum of African American History and Culture is a must-see.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture, 1400 Constitution Ave. NW, open every day from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., reserve free passes.

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial

Also on the Mall and overlooking the Tidal Basin, this memorial commemorates King Jr. with inspiration from his famous speeches. The focal point of the memorial is a statue of King emerging out of a piece of stone, referencing his "I Have a Dream" speech where he says, "with this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope." This statue is surrounded by a wall of other noteworthy quotes like, "I was a drum major

for justice, peace and righteousness" and "darkness cannot drive out darkness, only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that."

Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial, 1964 Independence Ave. SW, open 24 hours, free.

African American Civil War Museum

The African American Civil War Museum sheds light on how African American soldiers helped fight during the Civil War. The museum, which opened in 1999, tells visitors the stories of black soldiers during that time through archival photos, documents and seminars by museum staff.

One of the museum's main exhibits, called "From Slavery to the White House: the USCT Ancestors of First Lady Michelle Obama," takes visitors through the lives of former First Lady Michelle Obama's two ancestors who fought in the United States Colored Troops. Visitors can also look up their own ancestors who fought during the war in a database located in the museum.

The African American Civil War Museum, 1925 Vermont Ave. NW, open Mondays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 6:30 p.m., Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sundays noon to 4 p.m., free.



The National Museum of African American History and Culture houses nearly 36,000 artifacts that tell stories of the African American experience.

Frederick Douglass National Historic Site

African American politician and abolitionist Frederick Douglass' home and the place where he passed away has become a public site for people to visit. Born a slave, Douglass fled to Massachusetts and became the leader of the national abolitionist movement and an activist against slavery and for women's rights. The home now houses thousands of artifacts like books, letters and furniture that belonged

to the late social justice leader. You must sign up for a guided tour, but there are also eight acres of surrounding estate open to the public to explore.

Frederick Douglass National Historic Site, 1411 W St. SE, open every day from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., for free.

National Museum of African Art

The National Museum of African Art aims to prompt people to think about the power of African art with both historical and more con-

temporary pieces of work. The museum features art from sub-Saharan Africa like an ivory female figure as well as modern work like a wind sculpture by British-Nigerian artist Yinka Shonibare.

One exhibit currently on display sheds light on female artists from Africa and their contributions to issues like the environment, identity, politics and race through painting and fashion.

The National Museum of African Art, 950 Independence Ave. SW, open every day from 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., free.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CAMILLE DESANTO | PHOTOGRAPHER

Richard Wright wrote the "Native Son" in 1940, but the story about a young black man facing oppression and racism has stood the test of time.

Black authors' works to read this February

ZENIYA COOLEY

REPORTER

From author and filmmaker Zora Neale Hurston's vivacious prose to writer and journalist Ta-Nehisi Coates's incisive observations, there are dozens of black writers who have made their mark on literature.

Here are a few noteworthy works by black authors deserving of examination and celebration.

'Native Son' by Richard Wright

Published in 1940, Wright's magnum opus discusses the demise of Bigger Thomas, a 20-year-old African American male who lives in the slums of South Side Chicago. As the novel progresses, the reader learns how Bigger is driven to self-destruction amid the racism and oppression he faces.

Wright portrays the protagonist as a product of his environment, reflecting the despair that black individuals – including the author himself – often felt in a prejudiced society. The narrative is a cautionary tale that signifies how American racism can devastate both the oppressed and the oppressor.

'The Warmth of Other Suns' by Isabel Wilkerson

Wilkerson, a Pulitzer Prize-winning journalist, analyzes African Americans abandoning the South for the promise of Northern and Western regions in the United States – a phenomenon now known as the Great Migration – in this remarkable study published in 2010. The work is based on Wright's poem, "The Warmth of Other Suns," which follows the story of three migrants.

The author covers the three people through complex storylines, allowing the reader to revere Ida's free-spirited optimism, sympathize with George's shattering collegiate dreams and gape at Robert's aspirations. Wilkerson illustrates several different black stories and brings out both tragedy and triumph in this read.

'Well-Read Black Girl' by Glory Edim

A reader should never judge a book by its cover, but "Well-Read Black Girl" is enchanting inside and out. The book's eye-catching cover – a blend of peach and purple surrounding an illustration of a female reader – makes Edim's anthology impossible to miss. The interior is equally as engaging, introducing the audience to a collection of essays from the black women writers Lynn Nottage, Jesmyn Ward and Gabourey Sidibe. "Well-Read Black Girl" reveals the value of black women seeing themselves in literature and recognizing that their experiences deserve a permanent place on the page.

'The Fire Next Time' by James Baldwin

Notorious for his critical rhetoric, Baldwin often inveighed against the state of race relations in the U.S. In the 1962 book "The Fire Next Time," he writes about the need for racial integration and peaceful coexistence between black and white races.

The opening letter of the book, addressed to Baldwin's nephew, sets the tone for the rest of the book, asserting that love and acceptance are the only solutions to black oppression. The essayist alludes to the biblical story of Noah to argue that without racial reconciliation, America is vulnerable to similar fiery devastation.

'The Autobiography of Malcolm X' by Malcolm X and Alex Haley

Before the Spike Lee-directed film adaptation, there was the classic book – published in 1965 – detailing the civil rights activist's momentous life. The book begins with Malcolm's impoverished upbringing and concludes with his assassination in 1965. The advocate-author, alongside Haley, chronicles his convictions and contributions to black national thought. The autobiography is focused on Malcolm's perspective, highlighting experiences of challenge and change that can apply to all people.

Black history events to attend around D.C.

ISABELLA SORIAL

REPORTER

Outside of politics, D.C. is filled with rich culture and history, and Black History Month is the time to celebrate it.

From black art shows at coffee shops to civil rights memorials, here are some of the top events to check out during Black History Month.

Friday, Feb. 7: 'Meditations,' A Black History Art Show

Kick off the month at the black-owned business Culture Too in Northeast D.C. The coffee shop is showcasing pieces from two African American artists, husband and wife James and Zsudayka Terrell, who produce prints, paintings and textiles. All of their work will be on display and available for purchase.

Culture Coffee Too, 300 Riggs Road NE, 6 to 8 p.m., free.

Saturday, Feb. 8: Black History Read-in

The D.C. chapter of The North Carolina A&T State University will host a black history read-in to commemorate the 1960 Greensboro, N.C. sit-in when black students refused to leave a segregated lunch counter

after being denied service. Anyone is welcome to read a piece of literature about the movement or attend as an audience member. Interested readers can register online through Eventbrite, but drop-in performers are also welcome.

Aggies Helping Aggies, Inc., 1525 Iris St. NW, noon to 2:30 p.m., free.

Saturday, Feb. 15: The Beloved Community: MLK Jr. and Activism

Archivist Derek Gray of the D.C. Public Library will give a presentation on King's activism in D.C., focusing on his community organizing efforts and speeches, at the Anacostia Community Museum. When you attend, you can also visit a related exhibit called "A Right To The City," which features stories of how D.C. residents advocated for better city planning and civic engagement throughout history.

Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, 1901 Fort Place SE, 2 to 4 p.m., free with RSVP.

Thursday, Feb. 20: Rayceen Pendavis Is Living Black History

Head to Cleveland Park Library for an evening rec-

ognizing black history and art. Black entertainer and D.C. community advocate Rayceen Pendavis will host an event celebrating the accomplishments of African American people throughout history. The program will include several different performers, including singer and songwriter Nia Simmons and poet Micah Powell. Head to Cleveland Park Library for an evening recognizing black history and art.

Cleveland Park Library, 3310 Connecticut Ave. NW, 5 to 8:30 p.m., free with registration.

Saturday, Feb. 22: Black History Luncheon and Book Signing

Grab lunch and listen to a book reading at the Washington Renaissance Hotel later this month. The Association for the Study of African American Life and History, which is headquartered in D.C., is hosting a book reading and signing event centered around the theme, "African Americans and the Vote." The event will bring in more than 20 different authors to discuss books like "Meet Jim Crow!" and "Trailblazer."

Washington Renaissance Hotel, 999 9th St. NW, book signing begins at 10 a.m. and is free, \$115 for luncheon tickets.



CAMILLE DESANTO | PHOTOGRAPHER

Cleveland Park Library is hosting D.C. community advocate and performer Rayceen Pendavis for an evening discussing the accomplishments of the black community.

Sports

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GAMES OF THE WEEK



SQUASH
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Friday-Sunday | All day
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NUMBER CRUNCH

40

The percentage of men's basketball's 272 assists this season that come from redshirt senior guard Armel Potter

Inside the coaching staff: Meet the volunteer coaches working for gymnastics, baseball

WILL MARGERUM
STAFF WRITER

Behind the scenes of every team is a staff of coaches working to help it improve and perform. But some of those coaches choose to pour hours into practice and games without pay, just because they love the sport.

The baseball and gymnastics coaching staffs both include volunteer coaches that specialize in catching and spotting, respectively. The coaching duo, comprised of Justin Watson and Ryan Smoot, said their love for the sport and the experience they've cultivated at GW supersedes a number on a paycheck.

Watson ranks among the most experienced coaches on campus, having joined the gymnastics coaching staff for the Colonials back in 2005. He has served as a volunteer under head coach Margie Foster-Cunningham in every season since.

Watson said he accepted an offer from Chantilly in May 2005 and moved up to the District, he said.

Throughout summer 2005, Watson met GW gymnasts who went to Chantilly to stay in shape during the offseason. Through those connections, he said he learned about an open volunteer coach position on Foster-Cunningham's staff.

"I feel very fortunate to have been able to stumble into this position," Watson said.

Watson said the position allows him to work with Foster-Cunningham, a four-time NCAA coach of the year in the southern and southeast region.

"The culture of our team is

outstanding," Watson said. "Like I said, the girls work really hard. She's a great leader. She's been a really great mentor for me."

In charge of level nine and level 10 gymnasts at Chantilly, Watson said he has overseen the development of national champions at the Junior Olympic level. Foster-Cunningham said Watson's experience in spotting helps athletes stay safe while they're practicing routines.

"It's really an invaluable contribution that he's making to our program and our development," Foster-Cunningham said.

Under NCAA guidelines, a paid coach must have completed a four-year degree. Watson said he is looking to complete his degree in information systems management to be eligible for paid employment in a college athletic department.

On the baseball squad, Smoot is in his first season as a volunteer baseball coach on head coach Gregg Ritchie's staff, specializing in the catching position.

Smoot graduated from the Virginia Military Institute last May with a degree in economics and business. In four seasons on the field with the Keydets, Smoot split time at first base and catcher, starting 75 games and accumulating a career on-base percentage of .428.

"I went there for four years and knew early on there that I wanted to work in baseball and probably coach," Smoot said.

Advice from current and former coaches helped forge Smoot's path to a position on a collegiate staff, encouraging him to start building



ARIELLE BADER | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

Gymnastics volunteer assistant coach Justin Watson has worked with the program for 15 years.

connections and a coaching reputation of his own, he said. After spending the summer coaching at baseball camps, including one at GW, Smoot said he received an offer from Ritchie's staff to coach at GW.

Smoot said he holds the same responsibilities as paid coaches on the team. He added that he takes care of administrative work and sets up prior to practices, helps

run practice activities and then returns to the offices to evaluate the performances of his players.

In addition to coaching on Foggy Bottom, Smoot said he heads to a training facility to teach young kids baseball skills after GW practices.

"A few nights a week I go to a baseball training facility to give lessons to some kids. Kind of a way that I can make a few bucks, so in that respect that's probably the

biggest difference between me and the rest of the staff," Smoot said.

Smoot added that the coaching experience and passion for baseball motivate him more than a salary.

"I enjoy the game, I enjoy being around our guys and working with our staff and I enjoy competition," Smoot said. "I think if those are things you value maybe a little bit more than money, then what you're doing is satisfying."

IN BRIEF

Billikens stymie women's basketball's winning streak

Less than five minutes into the first half, sophomore guard Myia Clark drained a three, then tacked on three more points to seal a lead over women's basketball that helped decide Saint Louis' win.

The Colonials (9-12, 3-5 A-10) couldn't erase the third-quarter deficit, snapping its two-game win streak and dropping a 59-45 contest to the Billikens (12-9, 4-4 A-10).

"Credit to Saint Louis, I thought they shot the lights out from three," head coach Jennifer Rizzotti said. "I hope that doesn't happen too much against us the rest of this year. They won some 50-50 balls down the stretch when we really needed to get a stop, and then obviously their point guards are a really tough check for us."

On the season, the Billikens shoot 33.6 percent from deep. But against the Colonials, Saint Louis drained 56.3 percent of its attempts from beyond the arc on 9-of-16 shooting. GW hit just 4-of-20 from three-point territory, down from its season average of 31.3 percent.

Redshirt junior guard Sydney Zambrotta led the team with 16 points followed by sophomore center Kayla Mokwuah with 12 points. Both players came off the bench in Sunday's outing.

On the other side of the court, freshman guard and forward Rachel Kent poured on 19 points, hitting 6-of-8 attempts from behind the arc over the course of the game.

"She had a really quick release," Zambrotta said. "She moved really well off the ball. So we didn't really do a good job finding her throughout when they were on offense, and we were on defense. All credit to her. She's a great shooter, but we definitely struggled finding her on the perimeter and being there on the closeout."

Saint Louis opened the game with a steal, picking off redshirt freshman guard Tori Hyduke and returning it for a layup. Redshirt freshman forward Mayowa Taiwo responded with a layup of her own a minute later to even the score.

The Colonials went 6-of-17 from the field, while the Billikens went 6-of-14 in a back-and-forth quarter. Despite getting several looks off screens, the Colonials went 3-of-10 from beyond the arc, while the Billikens converted 2-of-3.

Zambrotta drained a three-point bucket to draw the Colonials and Billikens level at 15 before the conclusion of the first quarter.

The Billikens struck first again in the second quarter, hitting a three-pointer from the corner to reestablish their lead. The Colonials came within one point twice in the second quarter but could not break through.

The Billikens continued to amass points from deep, hitting 3-of-5 attempts to inch in front. Freshman forward Faith Blethen prevented the Billikens from routing the Colonials early on, hustling for the ball after a steal from the Billikens. By the end of the half, the Colonials trailed by two possessions.

"Their shooters had a really quick release so we just needed to be there, meaning be prepared to be there and anticipate the shot," Mokwuah said.

The Billikens started the second half with another hit from deep and proceeded to go on a 9-0 scoring run. The Colonials burned a timeout to stifle some of the momentum, and Zambrotta hit a shot to end the run at the 5:14 mark.

Mokwuah said the team needed to be more patient on the offensive side of the ball.

"We definitely talked about being more patient in the post position and the guard position," Mokwuah said. "Just hitting people when they're open and just executing our plays better and running what works."

Despite going 3-of-14 from the field and 0-of-3 from beyond the arc, the Colonials found some momentum of their own in the waning minutes of the quarter. A block from Mokwuah led to a layup from Taiwo, but sophomore guard Ciaja Harbison sunk a triple to end the quarter and left the Colonials trailing at 46-38.

The Colonials came out hot to start the fourth quarter and chip away at the lead. GW started a high press, and Zambrotta earned a steal and a bucket. Blethen also nabbed the ball and dished it to Taiwo for a layup, decreasing the deficit to 11.

The Billikens settled back in as Kent hit her final three-point shot of the game at the 3:38 mark to stymie the Colonial comeback. The Colonials went 5-of-11 from the field, but the Billikens ran out the clock to land on top of the Colonials 59-45.

"I actually thought over the course of the game, our execution wasn't bad," Rizzotti said. "We only had nine turnovers, but we have to be able to make shots and finish plays, whether it's through contact or somebody running at us or having a quick short-term memory of the shot you just missed and being able to step up and make the next one."

The Colonials are back in action on the road Thursday against St. Bonaventure. Tipoff is slated for 7 p.m.

ROMAN BOBEK

-Roman Bobek

SQUASH

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Friday-Sunday | All day
Squash hosts the MASC.



MEN'S BASKETBALL
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Wednesday | 7 p.m.
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The percentage of men's basketball's 272 assists this season that come from redshirt senior guard Armel Potter

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