

The GW Hatchet

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ALEXANDER WELLING | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Students at the Board of Trustees meeting Friday protested the University's investments in the fossil fuel industry.

Trustees form group to examine GW's environmental impact amid protests

ILENA PENG & ZACH SCHONFELD
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITORS

The Board of Trustees has created a task force to manage its "environmental, social and governance responsibility" following a week of student protests condemning GW's fossil fuel industry investments.

Board Chair Grace Speights said at the Board's meeting Friday that the task force will provide the community with an "institutional statement of beliefs" and address a "broad range" of issues, and she will work with the Student Association, faculty and the GW Alumni Association to appoint members to the group. The board also approved next year's tuition and housing costs and an updated nepotism policy at its meeting.

Speights announced the creation of the task force, which will be chaired by trustee Peter Harrison, to about 25 students who attended the meeting holding signs with phrases like "#GWUDeservesBetter" and "What's next is up to YOU." Speights invited Archer Gallivan, a sophomore and member of Sunrise GW, to speak at the meeting on behalf of the student activists.

"While we are sincerely grateful for the platform you've given us today, being quiet is simply not an option for us," Gallivan said at the meeting. "We will continue to make our voices heard until the mo-

ment you tell us you will divest - until you show us that this University respects the lives of its students and of this planet we share."

A video Gallivan posted last week showing University President Thomas LeBlanc making a racially "insensitive" comparison on video when discussing divestment with a member of Sunrise GW led LeBlanc to apologize at the Board meeting for his remarks. LeBlanc also apologized for his comments the day after the video surfaced.

"I've been reflecting on this during the week," LeBlanc said at the meeting. "I'm most sorry for the fact that I'm aware of the burden that students of color carry on this campus, and adding one ounce to that burden is my deep regret."

The Board's decision to create an ESG task force to measure the University's impact comes after a week of student activism on climate change. Members of Sunrise GW protested an event Tuesday celebrating the 10th anniversary of the Regulatory Studies Center, which has been accused of harboring an anti-regulatory stance, and about 70 students rallied Wednesday for divestment outside LeBlanc's residence on campus, the F Street House.

Sunrise GW called for the University to divest from its fossil fuel holdings in a letter late last year, which also asked officials to either cut ties with or become more

transparent about donations to the RSC.

The activist organization released a statement following the Board's announcement in which members stated they were "disappointed" by the task force, which they characterized as an inadequate solution to a pressing issue.

"The moral imperative of divestment is clear and does not need a moment's thought as to whether or not it is actively contributing to the degradation of our planet," the statement reads. "Whatever exploration the University seeks to embark on has been conducted by the countless other institutions that have already divested."

The creation of the task force also comes days after Georgetown University's student newspaper, The Hoya, reported that Georgetown officials have announced plans to divest from the fossil fuel industry, joining institutions like the University of California system.

SA President SJ Matthews expressed her frustration to trustees on a number of issues at the meeting, including the "broken" trust between students and administrators. She added that she was frustrated that student protesters had to "put themselves in harm's way" and that "the people who are charged with protecting the GW community were the ones to harm them."

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Fossil fuel divestment must be backed by policy changes to be 'meaningful,' experts say

SHANNON MALLARD & ZACH SCHONFELD
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITORS

As tensions grow over GW's fossil fuel investments, divestment experts say nixing the investments will have a marginal impact on the environment unless it is backed up by green policy changes.

University President Thomas LeBlanc revealed in a video last week that administrators have invested about 3 percent of GW's endowment, about \$53 million, in fossil fuel companies through funds. LeBlanc said in the video that officials are "working on getting rid of that, too" but walked his comments back at a Board of Trustees meeting Friday, declining to say whether he supported divestment in an interview.

LeBlanc said he supports Board Chair Grace Speights' announcement to create a task force examining the environmental and social impacts of the Board's decisions.

"I support the creation of the task force," he said. "I think what Chair Speights is saying is the task force has to look at a lot of issues and hear from members of the community, and I don't want to prejudice the outcome of that."

The task force's creation comes in the wake of protests by members of Sunrise GW - a student-led climate activism organization. The group interrupted a panel discussion Tuesday at the Regulatory Studies Center's 10-year anniversary conference and led a march Wednesday to deliver a letter to LeBlanc calling on officials to divest from fossil fuels.

Divestment experts said GW's level of involvement with fossil fuel companies is "on par" with other higher education institutions but added that moving away from those investments may be difficult.

John Jurewitz, a professor of economics at Pomona College, said holding 3 percent of investments in the industry is not "unusual," and GW likely does not

"heavily" invest in fossil fuels.

"In fact, it looks like they [hold] more or less than what you would expect in a diversified portfolio that just holds all U.S. companies more or less in proportion to their capitalization," he said.

He said divesting completely from funds connected to the fossil fuel industry could be "difficult" if the University holds its fossil fuel investments through index funds, a portfolio of stocks that is representative of the market at large.

LeBlanc said in the video that emerged Saturday that GW's fossil fuel investments are held through funds.

Jurewitz said officials could, instead of holding index funds, invest the University's endowment in all the stocks listed in an index fund excluding those listed on the index fund's sub-portfolio denoting energy-sector stocks, which are likely to contain fossil fuel companies.

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Video surfaces on Overheard at GW
- Feb. 2**
LeBlanc apologizes for statements made in the video
- Feb. 4**
Students protest Regulatory Studies Center anniversary event
- Feb. 5**
Sunrise GW protests in front of LeBlanc's F Street house
- Feb. 7**
LeBlanc apologizes at Board meeting, Sunrise GW holds silent protest

'Vague' undergraduate report excludes humanities, sustainability: students

JARROD WARDELL
REPORTER

Student leaders said a report detailing long-term goals for undergraduate education uses "vague" language and overlooks "important" concepts of humanities and sustainability.

A faculty-led committee released a report late last month outlining principles to help officials execute the University's next strategic plan, which emphasizes research, world-class faculty, and graduate and undergraduate education. Student Association leaders said the goals leave out plans to address issues of sustainability and diversity and threaten GW's strengths in the humanities by shifting academic focus toward STEM.

"What it has continuously looked like is some kind of rubber stamp on President LeBlanc's vision for this University rather than a collaborative process where other students, faculty members, alumni and staff get to weigh in and shape the way that this University will look," said Yannik Omicin, the Student Association's vice president for government relations.

The report lists seven goals, like expanding STEM opportunities and attracting

a more diverse undergraduate student body. Omicin said STEM students feel "unheard" in their field because their curriculum is limited to a setlist of courses and students can't branch out into other areas of study.

The report includes goals to decrease the student-adviser ratio and implement "pop-up" courses and "discovery tracks" to provide students with broader curriculum choices. Omicin said the "incongruent" section on pop-up courses doesn't detail the resources required to make the courses possible, like hiring more faculty.

The Columbian College of Arts and Sciences updated advising programs last January to include one-on-one advising for students, and student leaders pushed last semester to implement a first-year experience course that helps students navigate the District and budget.

"It seems to me like someone had the idea in a committee session or outside a committee session, like, 'Woah, this could be cool,' and they just stuck it in the report," he said.

Omicin added that officials did not include tangible proposals to address diversity, only including "buzz words" often associated with diversity and inclusion. The

proposed plan to cut enrollment may reduce racial diversity on campus, according to models presented by the Office of the Provost and obtained by The Hatchet.

"What I care about is the content of it," Omicin said. "It was so vague, this, 'The University will promote diversity and inclusion.' Well, we've been saying that for the last however many years."

He said the University must invest in improving space for the Multicultural Student Services Center and evaluating changes for the Colonials nickname and the Marvin Center. Just more than half of voting students supported ditching the Colonials moniker last semester, and student leaders have pushed to rename the Marvin Center, named after a former University president who supported segregation, for several years.

The report states that the University should enroll more first-generation students and involve faculty and staff in more diversity trainings. But Hannah Edwards, the SA's vice president for diversity and inclusion, said officials can take more "concrete" actions to improve campus inclusivity by offering need-based scholarships for low-income



ALEXANDER WELLING | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Yannik Omicin, the Student Association's vice president for government relations, said students have largely been left out of GW's strategic planning process.

students, increasing GWorld funds and enrolling more students from "historically marginalized backgrounds." GWorld dollars increased for the third time last semester, and admissions officers partnered with four elite universities to travel abroad to encourage students from other countries to attend GW in fall 2017.

"This administration, like

any, does not wish to be held accountable if they fail to implement these measures," Edwards said in an email.

The report also outlines goals to allow students to earn joint STEM degrees, implement a STEM honors program, improve pre-med and pre-health programs and better link GW's location to STEM fields.

SA Vice President for

Sustainability Jan Nowak said the University's plan to increase its STEM presence would detract from the University's "strong" studies, like international affairs, if officials re-allocated resources to STEM programs.

GWHATCHET.COM

H for more on how the student task force will provide feedback

News

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CRIME LOG

THEFT I/FROM BUILDING

Lerner Health and Wellness Center
1/30/2020 – 6:10 p.m.

Open Case

A female student reported that her headphones were stolen from a locker room.

Case open

VOYEURISM

Thurston Hall
1/30/2020 – 6:10 p.m.

Open Case

A male student reported that he was a victim of voyeurism while using the first-floor bathroom in Thurston Hall.

Case open

HARASSMENT: EMAIL AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Mitchell Hall
Multiple – Multiple
Closed Case

A male student reported that his parents sent him harassing text messages.

Referred to Title IX

HARASSMENT: E-MAIL AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA

Mitchell Hall
Multiple – Multiple
Closed Case

A male student reported that his parents sent him harassing text messages.

Referred to Title IX

VOYEURISM

Lerner Health and Wellness Center
1/31/2020 – 1 p.m.

Open Case

A male student reported that he was the victim of voyeurism while taking a shower.

Case open

LIQUOR LAW VIOLATION

Marvin Center
2/4/2020 – 1:08 a.m.

Closed Case

While conducting an inventory of an underage female student's lost and found backpack, GW Police Department officers discovered alcohol. Police disposed of the alcohol on scene.

Referred to the Division of Student Affairs

—Compiled by Kateryna Stepanenko

SNAPSHOT

LILLIAN BAUTISTA | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR



A sign reading "endangered species" was left on the hippo statue last week after officials announced that it would be left out of campus tour routes. Students rallied in support of keeping the statue following the announcement, leading officials to reverse their decision.

Failure to divest from fossil fuels could result in 'negative' reputational consequences: experts

From Page 1

He added that selling fossil fuel investments would likely not dramatically change the price of the funds, so the biggest effect of divesting would be to make a "political statement," rather than a real economic or environmental one. Lobbying for environmentally friendly policies, like a cap-and-trade scheme or taxes on carbon emissions – two market-based policies to curb emissions – would have a more "meaningful" effect, he said.

"You can basically wash your hands and say, 'I'm holier than thou – I don't own any fossil fuel stock,'" he said. "But that's all you're getting unless you're also supporting some kind of political efforts."

More than 70 percent of students voted in favor of divestment in a 2015 SA referendum, but officials at the time said divestment is not part of GW's investment strategy and added that they would prioritize maintaining a sustainable investment portfolio. Student leaders collaborated with the Board in 2018 to create a \$2 million environmentally friendly investment fund.

Clair Brown, the director of the Center for Work, Technology and Society at the University of California, Berkeley, said the share of GW's investments in the fossil fuel industry may be underreported depending on how the University's investment managers "define" the fossil fuel industry.

She said that if GW invests in companies that refine, transport and extract

fossil fuels in addition to corporations that hold oil, coal and natural gas reserves, the total sum of money the University invests in the industry could be closer to 5 to 6 percent of the endowment.

These investments, though not necessarily logged as fossil fuel investments, aid fossil fuel companies in furthering the destruction of the environment, Brown said.

"We shouldn't be doing that – our financial investments in the fossil fuels are actually ensuring that we're contributing to global warming and the climate crisis," Brown said.

Brown said failure to divest from fossil fuels could result in negative "social and reputational" consequences for a university. She said universities that invest in fossil fuels generally face "pushback" in the

form of protests from "upset" alumni and students.

"How could a university that's supposedly educating tomorrow's citizens and leaders actually invest in and finance the fossil fuel industry and global warming?" Brown said.

Wes Lauer, the director of the Environmental Science Program at Seattle University, said higher education institutions should divest from the fossil fuel industry to show students that officials are committed to protecting the future of the environment.

"Our primary mission as educational institutions is to facilitate a conversation about the issues, and if we're not acting in a way that's consistent with the broader social movements of the time, then that really damages our ability to reach students," Lauer said.

Faculty concerned about lack of detail in strategic plan interim reports

ALEC RICH & ETHAN SCHWARTZ
REPORTERS

Murli Gupta, a professor of mathematics and a faculty senator, combed through the strategic plan interim reports when they were released, searching for each committee's recommendations.

Gupta said he was "quite interested" in the world-class faculty committee's ideas about promoting diversity, but he found the point lacked in one crucial detail – it offered no definition of what was considered diversity.

The plan states that administrators should create and "continually update" a faculty hiring plan focused on diversity in collaboration with the Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement.

He is among faculty who say the recommendations contained in the interim reports for GW's next strategic plan appear promising but lack sufficient detail or specific proposals. Faculty said they are worried that the committees did not provide enough information about the recommendations to assure them that officials will be able to accomplish the goals University President Thomas LeBlanc has laid out for the plan.

"That is something I would like to see defined – what kind of diversity, how to achieve the diversity, what kind of diversity are we talking about," Gupta said.

The four committees associated with the pillars of the next strategic plan – faculty, undergraduate education, graduate education and research – issued reports last month detailing their vision for the final strategic plan.

The interim reports mark the halfway point of the planning process for the University's next five-year strategic plan, which will conclude in June. The reports outline the committees' current progress and initial recommendations for officials.

Gupta said he is also concerned about the time constraints faculty face with some of the committee's recommendations. He does not think faculty will have the time to participate in a Society of Distinguished Faculty, intended to "cultivate the University's relationship to its members," one of the committee's suggestions.

Gupta reviewed some of the interim reports' recommendations positively, like the research committee's suggestion to create a research academy to serve as a think tank and "database" where professors can share research skills. The academy could be successful if enough people buy into the idea, he said.

The academy could hold interdisciplinary research workshops, a speaker series and "idea incubators" to develop research proposals, the report states.

"Having a database where this kind of information is available, having periodicals and having series that I mentioned can be useful," Gupta said. "But unless you widely inform the people about the existence of it and usefulness of it, they are not going to do anything."

Stephen Lubkemann, an associate professor of anthropology and international affairs, said he has concerns about the viability of the plans introduced in the interim reports because of a lack of hard data that shows how the University will benefit from the proposed increase in STEM students.

The undergraduate education committee's report, which states the committee's charge to envision a future in which 30 percent of students graduate with STEM degrees, calls on officials to differentiate its STEM offerings from other schools by linking them to GW's traditional areas of strength, like its location in the capital.

"There is no data that has been put on the table to tell us exactly how particular policies are going to produce more high-quality students and whether or not increasing STEM students, all else held equal, will somehow increase student quality," Lubkemann said. "In fact, they are probably a lot of ways in which you could assume the contrary would be the outcome."

Soon after LeBlanc announced the proposed changes to increase STEM majors in September, many liberal arts faculty members expressed concern about the potential cuts to non-STEM departments associated with the increase in STEM students.

Officials are holding three forums, moderated by Provost Brian Blake, to gather feedback from the GW community on the interim reports next month, according to an email sent to students Friday.

Lubkemann said that while LeBlanc's new strategic plan for undergraduate and graduate education portrays GW and Georgetown as "outliers" relative to other universities for not graduating enough STEM students, the proposed changes do not ask the question of whether that figure represents a "weakness" or demonstrates GW's record of "exploiting a relative strength."

"GW and Georgetown have in fact carved out a



Murli Gupta, a professor of mathematics and member of the Faculty Senate, said the strategic planning committees' interim reports lack details about how various goals will be implemented.

niche for themselves in which they take advantage of being in Washington, D.C.," Lubkemann said. "That may skew students toward those particular subject areas and not toward ones in which they don't necessarily have a competitive advantage."

Gastón de los Reyes, an assistant professor of strategic management and public policy, said that while the goals as a whole outlined in the reports are "fine," the reports should have included more detail about how they will be implemented. He said he has not received information about how administrators will achieve the goals laid out in the reports apart from the emails his department received from officials notifying them the reports were released.

"A strategy is not just about goals but how you actually are going to achieve them," de los Reyes said. "And the University has not demonstrated the capability to generate collaboration between faculty or any

of the specific programs that are on these goals."

de los Reyes added that he is skeptical the University will be able to achieve its goal of greater interdisciplinary research in support of the high-impact research initiative because individual faculty members do not have more of an incentive to spend their time engaging in cross-disciplinary work than they do on their own individual research.

"Faculty are evaluated by publishing research in key journals in their field, so there is no incentive to pursue interdisciplinary research," he said. "Unless there is a plan to address that, it will be a tall order."

Harris Mylonas, an associate professor of political science and international affairs and a faculty senator, said other universities that compete with GW for students are catching up to GW's strengths in political science and international affairs. Mylonas said he is concerned that LeBlanc's strategy to shift the school's undergradu-

ate focus away from those fields and toward STEM will further reduce the gap.

"GW cannot rest on its laurels or it risks quickly falling behind," Mylonas said in an email. "It needs to dedicate new funding to its traditional strengths, or it might wake up one day realizing it has lost its once impressive edge."

Mylonas said GW has done a "good job" attracting quality faculty but added that administrators have historically encountered difficulty in retaining them – he has seen other faculty accept offers at other institutions, something he attributed to the increasing focus on STEM at the University.

"In some cases, it was a financial decision based on what the other school could offer that GW could not," Mylonas said. "In most cases, though, it was at least in part anxiety about the role of social sciences in general and political science in particular in GW's future."

—Carly Neilson and Jared Gans contributed reporting.

Inaugural chief people officer seeks to boost staff development, culture

ZACH SCHONFELD

CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

GW's first-ever chief people officer has spent her first semester working to make employees feel more welcome at the University.

Dana Bradley, who took over the University's top human resources post Sept. 3, said her biggest priority since coming to campus has been "putting people first" as part of a broad overhaul of the HR department in her first sit-down interview with The Hatchet. Bradley, the first person to hold the title of chief people officer at GW, has helped lead a push by University President Thomas LeBlanc to improve GW's institutional culture.

"I love HR, but what sold me on GW and what made me think that this was the best thing ever is the culture work," Bradley said. "I think that our president, our provost and our executive vice president have been bold in what our aspiration is, and I think that there's something to be said that we in our broader community, students, staff and faculty will benefit from all the work that's underway."

She said that since arriving at GW, she spent her first few months on the job meeting with every dean, every vice president and other staff and faculty across the University. Many employees have told her that they want GW's HR processes to have a larger "community focus" by incorporating the voice of each employee in top decision-making, Bradley said.

"When I think about those meet and greets, I use it as a way



Dana Bradley, the inaugural chief people officer, said she was drawn to University President Thomas LeBlanc's push to improve employee culture.

to collect data," Bradley said. "And I'm asking them, 'what are our opportunities? What is it that we do that you want us to continue?' And then I'm also using it as an opportunity to collect their input on what they think that we should improve or change."

As CPO, Bradley serves as a member of the Culture Leadership Team – a group of roughly 10 officials overseeing LeBlanc's institutional culture initiative. Since her arrival, administrators have held culture training sessions for all faculty and staff,

which have encountered mixed reactions from faculty.

As the University enters the second year of its extended partnership with the Disney Institute, which is part of the culture initiative, Bradley said she visited the Disney Institute last month with about half of the human resources staff to learn from their processes. A Disney Institute staff member will visit the remaining HR staff on campus to impart lessons from the visit, Bradley said.

"I've been fortunate because

early on the culture initiative had rolled out, and they brought me on the Culture Leadership Team, so I've had my voice," she said.

Bradley said she did not know how much money officials have spent on the Disney Institute partnership. Officials have continually declined to comment on the cost of the partnership.

The HR staff on the Disney Institute trip included Marlon Sukal, who administrators hired last month to serve as GW's assistant vice president for talent and organizational development.

Sukal, who oversees employee engagement and onboarding, reports directly to Bradley.

Faculty passed a petition in October calling on four Faculty Senate committees to investigate the costs of the partnership, but officials have not provided the requested information.

Sylvia Marotta-Walters, the chair of the Faculty Senate and a member of the Culture Leadership Team, said Bradley's participation in the Culture Leadership Team is "crucial" because her background in HR and talent development has provided valuable expertise and a fresh perspective as officials continue to make progress on the initiative.

"Every aspect of the University is going to continue to have the elements of the service framework implemented," she said.

LeBlanc said Bradley will continue to build on the culture initiative's progress in her role.

"Dana's going to be working with the senior administration, looking at everything we do, from recruitment, orientation, training opportunities, promotion opportunities," he said. "We're going to try to become a model organization."

He added that having a top official dedicated to developing GW's employees helps improve the University's institutional culture by serving as an outlet for their views at the highest levels of decision-making.

"It's a lot of work and obviously she has only been here four months, but having that chief people officer voice at the table in the leadership representing those issues, I think, is really important," LeBlanc said.

SA senator launches second bid for executive vice president

MAKENA ROBERTS

CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

A Student Association senator is kicking off his campaign for executive vice president – his second time running in as many years.

Senior and SA Sen. Quentin McHoes, ESIA-U, who transferred to GW last spring, said he will return to GW as a fifth-year undergraduate next semester. McHoes said his two years in the SA, consistent contact with administrators and executive positions across multiple organizations make him qualified to tackle issues like affordability, food insecurity and student mental health.

"I came away with a thought that I definitely wouldn't be able to leave GW without knowing that I did something to truly make the experiences for all students, particularly those who are struggling the most just a little bit better," McHoes said. "We have to think about how well we can make something easier for those who come after us."

McHoes must garner at least 500 signatures to qualify as a candidate, and the Joint Elections Commission, which oversees the race, must approve him as a candidate. Registration begins Feb. 15, he said.

In his year and a half on campus, McHoes said he has served as the SA vice president for undergraduate student policy, an executive board member for Class Council, GW NAACP vice president and a member of student health center search committees.

McHoes said he will work with administrators to incorporate "flexible" student financial policies, like

the resolution the senate passed last month urging officials to exempt students with an outstanding balance of \$1,500 or less from paying late fees. He said customizing student payment plans helps allay financial stress on students who come from low economic backgrounds.

"The issue is that students who are struggling the most are going to be those who are the most financially burdened," McHoes said.

McHoes said he has spoken with administrators like Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students Cissy Petty, Executive Director of Student Financial Assistance Michelle Arcieri and Associate Director Ruth Hoch, who said they will work with the financial office to initiate changes to payment plans and protection policies.

McHoes added that he wants to up communication with student organizations by bringing student leaders along with him to administrative meetings and request that officials reach out to student organizations on a consistent basis. He said student groups should focus on co-hosting events that increase student engagement instead of events designed to raise funds.

"I would like to see our relationship be less focused on the purse and more focus on what we can do to collaborate together," McHoes said. "We've seen proof of success with the LGBTQIA health conference that was recently hosted and co-sponsored with the Student Association, and it was in a supportive role."

He said he intends to institute administrator and student positions dedicated to finding and recruiting potential GWorld dining

partners and mandating that all dining and non-dining GWorld students use a regular meal-deal system, regardless of whether or not a student lives off campus.

Administrators pushed to include more meal-deals, or discounted food deals, for students in 2018, but few vendors got on board.

McHoes said he has spoken with members of the Board of Trustees, University President Thomas LeBlanc and student employees about increasing the number of GWorld dining partners.

"I think that we need to be focusing on the least vulnerable among us when it comes to addressing these types of problems," McHoes said. "And I think we also need to be respectful to students who are wealthier or come from more economically stable backgrounds who might not feel like they need a meal plan at all."

McHoes said he wants to increase student privacy for those seeking mental and emotional support to ensure students feel comfortable asking for help. The Colonial Health Center, located in the Marvin Center, provides students with physical and mental support services.

He said moving emotional health services to another section of the Marvin Center and enabling students to make emotional and mental health appointments online – a feature not currently available to students – could alleviate concerns about current counseling procedures. McHoes said a specific spot for the counseling services has not yet been discussed.

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H to learn more about McHoes' platform points



SA Sen. Quentin McHoes, ESIA-U, will run for Student Association executive vice president for the second straight year.



LILLIAN BAUTISTA | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR
The median sale price of a single family home in the Foggy Bottom and West End neighborhoods was about \$686,000 in 2019, according to a real estate company's annual report.

Single-family Foggy Bottom home prices jump nearly 43 percent

RACHEL TRAUNER
REPORTER

The price of houses sold near campus increased by nearly 43 percent in 2019, according to real estate company Long and Foster's end-of-year report.

The median sale price of a single-family home in the Foggy Bottom and West End neighborhoods, where GW is located, increased from about \$480,000 in December 2018 to about \$686,000 by December 2019, the report found. Real estate experts said Foggy Bottom's uptick in property values is consistent with a national trend of rising urban housing costs.

Donna Evers, Long and Foster's managing broker, said people are moving to D.C. at a higher rate than the property is becoming available, which raises property values. D.C.'s population grew to about 706,000 last year, but growth has been slowing down over the past four years, WTOP reported last month.

"It seems to indicate that we have more money floating around loose in the city, and the people are able to buy more with the money they have," Evers said.

Evers said Long and Foster compiles data from market research reports and real estate data to create monthly reports about housing prices in the area. An average of 30 units per month was sold in December 2019 compared with 35 per month in December 2018, according to the report.

Evers said D.C.'s market is the most successful she's seen since she started working in the real estate industry. Evers has worked at Long and Foster for 35 years, according to her LinkedIn profile.

She added that Foggy Bottom's hike in median

home price is consistent with increases throughout the District.

The median price for single-family homes in San Francisco was \$1.7 million at the end of 2019, about the same as 2018, according to San Francisco Curbed, a publication that reports on real estate. New York City's median home price was about \$650,000 at the end of 2019, nearly a 1 percent decrease from the year before, according to Zillow.

"It's pretty thrilling to be involved in it right now because everybody has a very positive attitude toward being here," she said.

Buyers were paying about 97 percent of the listing price in Foggy Bottom in December of both 2018 and 2019, according to the report. Houses stayed on the market for an average of 38 days in December, compared with an average of 62 days in December 2018, and the number of newly listed homes in December 2019 is half the number recorded in December 2018, according to the report.

Real estate experts said Foggy Bottom's upward trend in housing could indicate an influx of people in the area.

Jan deRoos, a professor of real estate at Cornell University, said houses are generally on the market for 16 to 90 days. He said rising housing prices in Foggy Bottom are a result of limited supply and higher demand for homes in D.C.

"It's really, really hard to build in D.C. given the height restrictions," deRoos said. "It's hard to build densely, and that really limits the supply."

Leah Brooks, the director of the Center for Washington Area Studies at GW, said rising housing costs are a trend in many large cities in which populations are rising

but housing supply is stagnant. Harvard University published a study late last month revealing that rental housing costs have been on the rise nationwide, increasing about 37 percent over the past 20 years.

Brooks said Foggy Bottom and West End housing costs are rising because new, pricier housing units attract buyers with higher incomes than those living in existing units. She said factors like efficient transit and high walkability in Foggy Bottom contribute to the neighborhood's high prices.

The Residences on the Avenue, an apartment building located above Whole Foods and a popular housing choice for students who do not live in residence halls, was constructed on campus in 2011, according to For Rent. Union Place apartments were built on K Street in 2018 and cost renters between about \$3,000 and \$5,000, according to the Union Place website.

"If you own, it's great," Brooks said. "If you're renting, it stinks."

She said short-term rentals, like Airbnb and HomeAway, could also drive up housing prices.

Short-term rentals have contributed to average inflation of 2.24 percent – a slight increase – on single-family homes, but inflation has exceeded 5 percent in areas like Foggy Bottom, according to research the University of Maryland published in December.

"Those kinds of rentals have probably slightly increased rental rates, particularly any part like this," Brooks said. "It would be a very convenient place to get an Airbnb."

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H for more on why housing costs rose in Foggy Bottom

New alumni relations official aims to personalize alumni engagement



ARI GOLUB | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Patricia Carocci, the associate vice president of alumni relations and annual giving, said she has worked to personalize relationships with potential donors in her first few months on campus.

ZACH SCHONFELD
CONTRIBUTING NEWS
EDITOR

Six months after arriving at the University, GW's new head of alumni relations said she has worked to enhance the "culture" of her team and retain existing alumni donors.

Patricia Carocci, who arrived at GW as the associate vice president of alumni relations and annual giving in July, said her top goals in the office include adding a personal element to alumni engagement efforts and attracting and retaining more alumni donors. Half a year into

her position, she said she has traveled to cities across the U.S. with University President Thomas LeBlanc to meet with alumni and set new donation goals.

"I'm just really impressed with the quality of folks at GW, and we want to make sure that our alumni efforts match that quality," she said. "You came here for a reason, and you want to be proud of your degree. So we want to make you feel that way."

Carocci added that she has adjusted to GW's pace and culture in her first few months, which she spent getting to know her team's members and iden-

tifying areas for improvement. Before arriving at GW, Carocci served in development and alumni relations positions at institutions like The Spence School – a private girls' high school – and the University of Maryland, College Park.

"It's nice to be back in higher education," she said. "I find that the complexity of a big place like GW is really wonderful. I like collaborating with my colleagues at the school and center level and trying to understand their needs."

Carocci arrived days after the University notched

the lowest alumni giving rate among its 12 peer institutions for the second consecutive year, which she said is symptomatic of a nationwide downturn in the number of university donors.

She said her office is aiming to attract 14,500 alumni donors this fiscal year – a nearly 10 percent reduction from last year's goal – and to retain 63 percent of existing donors. She said that in general, retaining donors tends to be easier than attracting someone who has never donated to give for the first time, adding that GW is "in great shape" to meet those self-imposed benchmarks.

As the alumni giving rate fell, the University marked its third-highest total donation amount on record. Carocci said that across the U.S., institutions of higher education are observing average gift sizes increase in light of the drop in the number of donors.

She said she has engaged donors while attending LeBlanc's GW + You community receptions in California and Pennsylvania this spring, each of which so far has drawn at least 150 alumni. Carocci has met with alumni for coffee and held informal meetings during each of her trips as part of her goal to create personal connections through alumni engagement efforts, she said.

"I'm reaching out to

alumni – 'Hi, I'm Patty Carocci, I'm the new person and I'm going to be in town. Would you like to have coffee?'" she said. "So I'm sending out those emails just like the rest of my team, and the response has been great when people are able to participate and have the time."

She said that in her conversations with alumni, they seem interested in learning from officials about the strategic planning process, the future of arts at the University and GW's sticker price. The cost of tuition grew by about 3 percent this year, in line with its growth historically.

Carocci said a large part of her job is working with the newly minted GW Alumni Association that launched in May. The group conducted a listening tour at the start of the academic year and is currently devising its priorities moving forward, she said.

She added that the GWAA executive committee has met twice in person and has held at least five conference calls since the group's formation. The group's priorities will focus on three core principles – togetherness, spirit and connectivity – based on the feedback given during the listening tour, Carocci said.

"The themes that came up were that there's more power together," she said. "This GW alumni network

is very powerful, and if we can make those connections, we have a stronger group."

LeBlanc said alumni have appreciated the community receptions that Carocci has helped plan because they allow officials to personally connect with individuals in GW's large alumni base.

"It's really hard to engage in a community that big, but we want to get out and engage as best as we can," LeBlanc said.

He added that Carocci's efforts to engage alumni and increase donations will benefit students by funding increased investment in programs that affect the student body.

"Ultimately, if you're passionate about students studying at the University, help contribute to the University so we can invest in it."

Richard Jones, GWAA's president, said Carocci has been "fantastic" and has brought energy and expertise to alumni engagement efforts.

He added that Carocci has spent much of her time interacting with students, officials and the entire GW community to better understand the needs of the University.

"She is very devoted and committed," Jones said. "She has brought in some good leadership, some strong and some great advisers for us to just make sure that we are moving in the right direction."

Student task force aims to address gaps in University's interim reports, increase student voices in strategic planning process

SAMANTHA SERAFIN
REPORTER

A task force aiming to provide student input for the next five-year strategic plan met for the first time this semester to evaluate the missing links of recently released interim reports.

Faculty-led strategic planning committees released reports late last month outlining goals for GW's steps to cultivate world-class faculty, high-quality undergraduate education, graduate education and high-impact research. SA President SJ Matthews said task force members are looking to address gaps in the report, like accessibility and sustainability, and will meet every two weeks throughout the spring.

Matthews said the task force is composed of about 15 members who will offer feedback on goals outlined in the reports, like increasing the share of STEM graduates and maintaining a greater percentage of high-quality faculty across studies.

"Really making sure that students are at the heart of our plan for the next five years and they're not an afterthought –



ALEXANDER WELLING | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
SA President SJ Matthews said the task force for the strategic plan will meet every two weeks to discuss gaps in the existing committee reports.

that's my personal goal going into this planning process, is making sure that students are always at the forefront," she said.

Matthews also serves on the faculty-led undergraduate committee task force – one of the four groups created to provide recommendations for the next five-year plan.

Members who attended this semester's first meeting discussed five key aspects that the task

force felt were omitted from the report – accessibility, sustainability, flexibility, accountability and intersectionality. Matthews said she will present the feedback about the interim reports compiled during the group's first session to officials in two weeks.

"We came out of the meeting with what we felt were the five things that were lacking in the reports, and then that is

what is going to be in the report compiled to present to administrators," Matthews said.

She added that task force members are concerned that officials didn't detail concrete steps to carry out the goals listed in the report, increasing the need for student representation at the upcoming faculty meeting.

Faculty also expressed concerns about the lack

of detail in the interim report, which they said could hinder implementation of the report's goals.

"That's the issue with a strategic plan, it's almost like a concept," Matthews said at the first strategic task force meeting earlier this month. "Following through on that is a completely different ball game."

The undergraduate education report suggested officials increase the number of "experiential learning opportunities" like study abroad, internships, service-learning and community engagement.

Matthews said experiential opportunities should be the top priority in the new strategic plan because the University is uniquely located in the heart of a city, providing students access to a wide range of hands-on experience options in their prospective fields.

"A big draw of GW is our location and the cool things around us, and we have yet to leverage that," she said. "We're the only school in our end of D.C. We can do a lot because of that."

Kelton Estabrook, the SA's co-deputy chief of staff, said at the task

force's general body meeting that the strategic plan should give students more flexibility for general education requirements so students can take classes in various concentrations.

"Let's be honest – we all sit down for our science labs knowing the only reason we are here is to hit this G-PAC, and as soon as I exit this class, that's it," Estabrook said.

Students have complained that the expected general education requirements are too demanding, particularly for students who are double-majoring. Some requirements, like an arts general education course, do not double-count for multiple majors, like political science or criminal justice.

Yannik Omictin, a senior policy adviser for the SA, said the interim reports should include ways to make student schedules more flexible because students often struggle to meet both G-PAC and major requirements.

"Our gen-eds would be bearable if the courses were different and had at least some relation to what we're doing," Omictin said.

IN BRIEF

Officials advance zero-waste efforts with upgraded trash, recycling bins

Officials installed new trash and recycling bins to reduce cross-contamination between waste receptacles and "enhance the campus identity."

University spokeswoman Crystal Nosal said 115 sets of trash and recycling bins were installed around campus at the end of January, and new bins will be added through March on rooftops, interior courtyards and public areas. Nosal said the bins provide "easier" and "faster" access for those disposing trash compared to the old bins, which had handles that someone had to pull before throwing away trash or recycling.

"These are a newer, more identifiable model, which will enhance our sense of place and waste collection efforts," she said.

Nosal said the new bins sport labels detailing which items should be deposited in which bin to ensure waste is placed in the correct receptacles. She added that a committee review constituted of "multiple vendors" selected the updated bin style.

She said officials are exploring options for the previously used bins to be kept in "operational shape" for other institutions to use. Nosal declined to comment on the cost of the new bins.

"While the University does not disclose costs for upgrades such as this effort, we can share that we anticipate the new bins will increase efficiencies given their design, which allows for an easier and faster side access," she said.

—Ilana Peng

Officials meeting with final candidates for law school dean position: LeBlanc

From Page 1

Matthews's remarks appeared to reference an incident involving a GW Police Department officer who was placed on administrative leave after he appeared to push a student protester down a flight of stairs.

"I am frustrated that time and time again the student voice is met with silence by the GW administration," Matthews said. "I am frustrated that all too often my week-ends and nights are spent drafting statements condemning things like racism and anti-Semitism only to be met with University silence."

LeBlanc said in an interview that he "appreciated everything" Matthews said during the meeting, and he will work to fix lapses in communication between administrators and the student body.

"An apology is a first step and I understand that," he said. "I was just saying we have a lot of work to do, particularly to help students of color feel more included in this community. I hear that loud and clear and I know we've got a lot

of work to do, and we're going to work on it."

In addition to announcing the task force, trustees approved revisions to a policy on nepotism and personal relationships which was last revised more than a decade ago. The new revisions clarify the definition of related parties to encompass those in a relationship or living in the same household.

The revisions also specify employees' obligations to report potential nepotism and the process of addressing instances when the involved parties are in a "supervisor-to-subordinate relationship." The Board's committee on audit and compliance reviewed the policy following the 2018 adoption of a policy banning student-faculty relationships.

LeBlanc said administrators have met with the final candidates for the law school dean position and will announce the new dean "very soon." Interim Dean Christopher Bracey has served as the law school's chief since Blake Morant's departure at the end of the 2018-19 academic year.

Officials hold workshops to brainstorm ideas for campus planning

LIA DEGROOT
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Officials held four meetings last week for urban planners to hear feedback from students, faculty and staff about the next iteration of the University's long-term campus blueprint.

The four meetings – which were held for faculty, staff and undergraduate and graduate students – were intended to gauge feedback about how students want to utilize community and academic spaces on the Foggy Bottom and Mount Vernon campuses. Students who attended the workshops said they hope officials will consider adding more community spaces to campus and improved facilities, like upgraded advising offices, for students working in the humanities.

The University is currently in the process of developing a long-term strategic plan to bolster research and improve graduate and undergraduate education.

Brian Shea – a partner at Cooper Robertson, the company working with the University to develop the campus and facilities master plan – said at the undergraduate workshop that the company wanted to provide students with an overview of the Strategic Campus and Facilities Master Plan, which is the University's long-term campus plan, and how a university's infrastructure can support students' experience.

"We're trying to put on the ground and illustrate to a lay audience what we think the framework, the physical structure of the University is on the ground," Shea said.

He said every campus planning process is unique to its university, and students should be heavily involved

in the process to provide officials feedback about what they want to reap from the campus. Each meeting, which was comprised of about 30 attendants, split into "breakout groups" during which students gave feedback to the urban planners about their campus experience and explain how they typically use campus facilities.

Shea said Cooper Robertson's goal is to incorporate aspects of the University's goals to bolster research and improve graduate and undergraduate education in their strategic planning process when designing the campus.

"The president of Ohio State University president, Gordon Gee, said once, 'if you've seen one university, you've seen one university,'" Shea said.

University spokeswoman Crystal Nosal said the workshops are part of the "information gathering and analysis" phase of the Strategic Campus and Facilities Master Plan. She said garnering feedback from the campus community is a priority for officials as they develop the master plan because students, faculty and staff use the campus every day and can provide input.

"Cooper Robertson will work with University staff to review the comments gathered during the community planning process," Nosal said in an email. "Information gathered will help prepare for the next public engagement phase in April when initial options will be shared with the GW community for feedback."

She said officials chose to work with Cooper Robertson because the company has a deep profile that includes work with several other uni-

versities.

"Cooper Robertson has an extensive urban planning portfolio and has completed plans for many higher education institutions," she said. "They know each setting has unique opportunities and challenges and have worked to develop actionable campus plans."

Undergraduate workshop

Camila Torres, a freshman business major, said the undergraduate workshop, which was held in the Marvin Center Monday night and attended by about 30 students, helped her understand the community planning process that is involved in the campus master planning process. She said she thought urban planners typically performed "physical" work, but the representatives who presented at the workshop focused on improving community spaces and student culture.

"I guess the more like human emotional sides of like this physical space, and so I think it'll be interesting to see where that goes," she said.

Eitan Magaliff, a sophomore studying political science, said he learned about the workshops through his involvement in Campaign GW, a student environmental advocacy organization, and decided to attend to learn about the master planning process. He said the breakout sessions, during which students mapped their daily route through campus and the route they would show a prospective student, would help him explain to the urban planners how he utilized the campus every day.

"University officials would probably in general have a better sense of, logistically or literally, the direction



LILLIAN BAUTISTA | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR

Officials hosted four workshops for undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty and staff to give suggestions on how to improve campus spaces.

of the University of needs to go," he said.

Graduate workshop

Rebecca Bizzari, a graduate student in the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and a program assistant in the Division of Safety and Security, said she didn't have "specific" feedback to give the urban planners but was interested to hear feedback that her peers had about campus.

"You hear a lot of things, about bike racks and parking spots and things like that," she said. "So I'm interested to see what other people with different experiences have to say about campus planning."

Joseph Crandall, a doctoral student studying electrical engineering, said he hopes officials improve community spaces on campus. Officials added community spaces outside Gelman Library and in Kogan Plaza in August

2018.

"I hope that what people take away from tonight is the value of especially open spaces within the urban campus and what we can do to improve on those," Crandall said.

Vern workshop

Students who attended the Vern community workshop, which was held in West Hall Thursday night, said the campus needs an additional stop for the Vern Express on the Mount Vernon Campus because students who live in West have to walk up a hill to reach the Vex stop. The Vex currently stops outside of West Hall and Eckles Library, according to the Vern's website.

Freshman Anna Weber, the Student Association's deputy chief of staff, said she doesn't live on the Vern but attended the workshop because she wasn't available to

attend the other workshops. Weber said she wants officials to make the Vern more accessible for students with physical disabilities.

"I think what's important tonight is how we approach the broader use of space," she said. "And that's where these fancy New York architects can help us out because there's a lot of green space, and a lot of athletic facilities that can be used."

Andrew Butt, a resident adviser in West Hall, said he also attended the undergraduate campus planning workshop, which didn't touch on the Vern. He said Vern is part of the undergraduate experience because all students have to take trips to the campus for University Writing.

"I think that being able to participate in this process with the architecture firm itself and not university higher-ups, was a big strength," he said.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

Richard Robin, a professor of Russian and international affairs, said the Global Business Languages journal, which will relaunch next month, will teach students how to better engage in international business.

'Prestigious' business languages journal relaunches at GW

TIFFANY GARCIA
STAFF WRITER

A "prestigious" journal previously published at Purdue University will relocate to GW next month.

Mohssen Esseesy, the department chair and coordinator of the Arabic program, and Margaret Goglewski, an associate professor of German and the director of German language, will co-edit the Global Business Languages journal, which they will unveil at a conference in March. Faculty said the journal's transition to GW will strengthen the University's reputation as a leader in business language instruction because the journal is the only publication that delves into business languages.

Gongelweski, who is overseeing the journal's transition to GW, said the business language field lost a valuable "venue" for publishing research in 2014 when Purdue exhausted its grant funding for the publication. She said she proposed republishing the journal through GW CIBER, a center that supports business language instruction, to contribute to the University's aspiration of becoming a "premier research university."

"I viewed it as a chance to support this important academic field and the scholars working in it," Gongelweski said in an

email. "We could have instead proposed to start a brand new journal, but we saw it as an enormous advantage to build on the long history and good reputation of GBL."

Gongelweski, Esseesy and Anna Helm, the GW CIBER director, said in a joint statement that the center will focus on the themes of "institutions, inclusive globalization and U.S. competitiveness" when presenting the journal at the event.

"This theme draws on strong GW faculty capabilities across a range of disciplines, as well as University-wide interests in promoting economic development through scholarship, education and outreach to the business, academic and policy communities," the trio said in an email.

Anna Helm, who is also an associate teaching professor of international business, will serve on the journal's editorial board alongside members of the University language faculty. She said the journal's relaunch is a reflection of the University's commitment to fostering strong "cross-disciplinary" collaboration between language and business.

"This move also reaffirms our position as a regional and national resource center for business language teaching and scholarship," Helm said.

In 2010, about 80,800 articles were downloaded

from The Global Languages Journal, with an average of 414 downloads per article or review, according to the publication's website. In 2019, the publication was downloaded about 22,000 times, the website shows.

Faculty members said professors can draw upon the research in the journal when teaching students about business language communication.

Richard Robin, a professor of Russian and international affairs and the director of the Russian language program, said students can use the journal to learn how to engage with other cultures while conducting international business. He said faculty teaching business language courses can draw on content from the journal to teach students about multilingual communication in a growing global economy.

"He said GW CIBER differentiates the University from peer institutions because the center hosts specialized language training workshops for business language professors.

"And again, we're not talking about boardroom business, we're talking about every day on-the-ground transactions," Robin said. "Those things have usually not been included in the curriculum, and the journal that I will be contributing to discusses precisely how that kind of thing can be done."

First Changemaker Week imparts lasting lessons to students: officials

ISHA TRIVEDI
REPORTER

The Nashman Center's first-ever week focused on increasing the number of active citizens in the GW community inspired participants through "collaborative" discussions, officials said.

Members of GWupstart, a program located in the center that conducts "social innovation" training and mentoring, hosted the University's first Changemaker Week, a series of events open to the GW community focused on finding solutions to deal with ongoing social issues like climate change and low voting rates. Officials said they hope the week has inspired participants to take more active roles in their local community.

Dania Castro, the program manager for service and social innovation at the Nashman Center, said the week went better than she expected, with a "great" turnout and students who seemed enthusiastic while participating in the events.

The center held 15 events over the course of seven days, focusing on topics related to professional development and social engagement, including a pitching training session, a program on voting and a workshop on how to engage in productive dialogue to enact social change, the center's web-

site states.

She said students who attended the events noted in surveys distributed after the events that they were interested in further discussing the topics presented at the events.

Castro said she was happy to hear from the surveys that students felt comfortable and thought the events were a "really great learning experience." She wants to ensure more people are aware of these events through greater advertising over social media in the future to further build on the week's success, she said.

Castro said the collaboration and initiative demonstrated by the student leaders in organizations like Sustainable GW and faculty members who were involved in planning made it hard to pinpoint one specific event that she thought was the most successful.

"Even if one person comes and they take a lot out of the experience, it was more than worth it," Castro said.

She said the week was a "campus effort" that several offices, like the Office of Sustainability and the Office of Innovation and Entrepreneurship, helped to plan.

She said plans for the future are already in the works, including a video about "changemaking" internationally and a social innovation workshop in partnership with the sus-

tainability office.

Amy Cohen, the Nashman Center's director, said one of the high points of the week was the keynote speaker event Thursday featuring Nicole Cardoza, the executive director of Yoga Foster, a non-profit organization that seeks to bring yoga into primary and secondary school classrooms. The event drew in about 65 community members, she said.

Cardoza discussed how she became a socially involved entrepreneur and how to help people deal with issues like anxiety through yoga and meditation, according to the center's website.

"Bringing her here really is inspiration for our students because the programs that we run here are designed to help students to be able to be those kinds of entrepreneurs and to take their ideas for real social change and for social innovation and make them a reality," Cohen said.

She said the center regularly partners with other offices at the University and members of the GW community to increase outreach and get more people involved in their events, which are often marketed through social media.

GW HATCHET.COM

to read about one professor's experience at the event



ARIELLE BADER | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

Dania Castro, the program manager for service and social innovation at the Nashman Center, said participation for the center's first Changemaker Week was "great."

Single people, do not spend Valentine's Day on dating apps

It's this time of year again. While all of your roommates are out with their significant others on romantic evenings, you are sitting alone wallowing in how lonely you are. You retreat to the refuge of Tinder to try to find someone who is equally as lonely as you are. But this year, you should just stay away.

Hannah Thacker

Contributing Opinions Editor

On Valentine's Day in 2015, Tinder recorded the largest number of people using the app that year. People look for relationships and connections because of the day, not because they feel they are ready for a relationship or because they think the person they find on the app is actually the right fit for them. Tinder users could hop on the app on Valentine's Day because they feel lonely, but people will just go back to their old habits and previous lives once that day passes. Meeting up with people from dating apps on Feb. 14 is nothing but a placeholder for the significant other they do not yet have.

Valentine's Day is about more than meaningless sex. Single people should take care of themselves and people they love on Friday instead of wallowing in their loneliness.

The holiday started as a Roman festival to pair off women to men by lottery, but it has turned into a commercial holiday intended to get couples



Cartoon by Hannah Thacker

to spend money on chocolates and flowers and inadvertently make single people feel lonelier than ever. The holiday should not become a damper on the lives of people who feel sad because they did not get gifts from a significant other. Expressions of love through material goods are only cre-

ated by companies that want to reap the financial benefit of a day that is meaningful to only some people.

Despite all pressures and commercialization, Valentine's Day should be about expressing your love for the people in your life and if you are single, giving love to yourself and

your friends. Not being in a relationship does not mean that you are worthless or that you should be lowering all standards just to have some intimacy with another person. Your value is worth more than the material items couples give one another for the sake of the day.

Being single on Valentine's Day sucks. But engaging in meaningless sex from a random person on Tinder to make you feel less lonely does nothing but lower your standards. Take time to yourself to recognize your value instead of running to the first person who will validate nothing about you except your looks. You could consider Valentine's Day to be the best so-called treat yourself day of the year. Finding a hook-up on Tinder is not going to help you celebrate yourself.

Instead of swiping through Tinder and searching for another lonely person to hook up with this Valentine's Day, consider doing something for yourself and loving yourself. Give your best friend flowers, cook or pick up a nice meal and watch a movie. Take yourself out to a museum or go for a walk around the monuments – anything to avoid the lonely realms of dating apps.

Having sex is great, and it is nothing to be ashamed of, but using sex as a substitute for someone or something else in your life is detrimental to your value and worth. The more you take time to care for yourself rather than search for the validation of others, the easier it will become for you to be OK with your single life. Before you know it, someone could come along and like you for both your looks and personality. That time does not need to be Valentine's Day.

—Hannah Thacker, a sophomore majoring in political communication, is the contributing opinions editor.

Essay: Sharing a birthday with Valentine's Day

Valentine's Day is among my least favorite holidays, but Feb. 14 is one of my favorite days of the year – my birthday.

Kiran Hoeffner-Shah

Opinions Editor

I do not have a grudge against Valentine's Day for the typical reasons – it is not about having to evaluate how lonely I am or about how committed I am to relationships. It is not even about getting fewer Valentine's cards with candy in elementary school.

My frustration on Valentine's Day goes back to my 14th birthday – the first year the majority of my friends were dating. I had always assumed that Valentine's Day was a fairly meaningless holiday, mostly about candy, cards and flowers. But one by one, I heard from my friends that they could not spend time with me on my birthday because they had all planned Valentine's Day dates.

I was stunned. How did Valentine's Day become so important to them? It seemed like my friends had created sentimental value for a holiday that did not exist before they were dating. I could not come up with a reason for why my friends did not choose to celebrate Valentine's Day on another day. That was the first year when I started hating the holiday, but it would get much worse.

I would learn, over the years, that even something as simple as wanting to go out to eat for my birthday would be difficult because of Valentine's Day. To eat at any nice restaurant on my birthday, I have to make reservations several weeks in advance – and that's how I ended up having Taco Bell for my 17th birthday dinner.

Later, I had my first Valentine's Day while dating. I am not a birthday diva – I do not ask for gifts. It is appreciated, but I have never asked someone for one. Unfortunately, at that point in my life I failed to understand that getting a gift for my girlfriend, on Valentine's Day, was fairly compulsory.

My 15th birthday started with a girlfriend and ended without one.

But part of what I learned from that experience is that the holiday does have some meaning, and even if it does not matter to me, it still might matter

to others. Even though my 15th birthday had a rocky start, I enjoyed it. I got to spend time with my family, and my experience helped me learn that birthdays really are not that important – and maybe my hatred of Valentine's Day was a little selfish. I had enjoyed my 14th too, even if it was just with one of my friends instead of all of them. I started to value Valentine's Day because it gave my birthday some extra meaning – then college happened.

My first birthday spent away from home was looming, and I was not looking forward to it. Having spent so many birthdays with just my family, I was starting to get homesick. But I got lucky – my mom had to attend a conference in D.C. for work and would be visiting me.

As a freshman eating most of my meals on GWorld, my mom's visit presented an opportunity to finally go somewhere nice for dinner. The restaurant we went for dinner had replaced its regular menu with a couples tasting menu, and the waiter stifled a laugh when he came to our table, and I noticed some curious looks from other patrons. Among them, there were some students who I had seen around campus. In the candlelight, I came to the realization that it appeared I was on a date with my mom. I have no problem with that – my mom is awesome. But I also realized that for everyone around us, it was pretty unclear that she was my mom. We do not look alike – she is Indian, whereas I look incredibly white. In this restaurant, which was clearly supposed to be for romantic couples dinners, my birthday dinner really did not look like one.

Looking back, I doubt anyone in that restaurant cared why I was eating there, and they likely did not notice my Valentine's date with my mother. When I came back to my residence hall for the night, my friends who had returned from their plans surprised me with a cake. I may have declared war on Valentine's Day, but in the end my birthday has not been much different from anyone else's birthday.

Even if I have had my share of awkward birthdays and feelings of loneliness, at least I have something going for me. For one, nobody ever forgets my birthday.

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

Officials must address xenophobia prompted by coronavirus

The coronavirus has killed 800 people worldwide – but its damage might be more extensive than its death toll.

Kiran Hoeffner-Shah

Opinions Editor

Coronavirus originated in China, where the vast majority of deaths have occurred. While there have only been 12 confirmed cases of coronavirus in the U.S., racism and discrimination toward Chinese individuals have been on the rise.

Despite the low risk of coronavirus spreading at American universities, colleges have prepared a response to the potential threat. At GW, officials sent emails to students reminding them to wash their hands and notified students of the location of hand-sanitizer throughout campus. But administrators have not responded to the possibility that the virus could lead people to act discriminatory toward Chinese international students.

Amid travel alerts and warnings from governments, fear of the coronavirus is rising. Alongside fear, there has been an uptick in racist rhetoric toward Chinese individuals around the country due to the coronavirus. Social media posts have shown individuals avoiding Asian-Americans on public transportation, and other videos have shown people moving away from Chinese individuals who were wearing face-masks. But there are serious conse-

quences to racism based on fear. In Philadelphia, a Chinese person was assaulted on the subway by someone who feared they might have coronavirus. Business owners in San Francisco's Chinatown have lost income because patrons are unwilling to eat there, and at Columbia University a racist message was written in the library warning students of the coronavirus.

The epidemic has served as an excuse for casual racism toward some international students, an issue that other campuses have experienced. A Duke University professor required international students to only speak English last year, and nearly one-third of international students say they feel discriminated against on campuses across the U.S. For international students from China and other Asian countries, coronavirus has presented an opportunity for domestic students to belittle and shame them based on their nationality. At one university, a student posted a Snapchat of their majority Asian class, captioned "I hope I don't get coronavirus." At the University of California Berkeley, administrators posted a flyer normalizing xenophobia as a response to the coronavirus.

While there have not been any documented cases of racism brought on by the coronavirus at GW, administrators should not wait before shutting down xenophobia and racism that could arise from the epidemic. Officials might not want to admit that an incident could occur at GW, but it is better to be precau-

tionary than reactionary. GW should make it clear to the student body that using a public health crisis to act discriminatory toward Asian students is not acceptable.

At Arizona State University, administrators took a proactive approach to combat racism and xenophobia when news broke of the coronavirus and provided students with information about the crisis with details of the school's diversity values. The University of Massachusetts at Boston – where one student was diagnosed with coronavirus – took a similar response. Officials reminded students that anyone can get sick and that the campus community is composed of many types of people.

While the University has released some health information, they have not commented on the potential insensitive behavior the virus could elicit. Telling students to wash their hands might be helpful to prevent the spread of disease, but it does not stop acts of discrimination.

By addressing the coronavirus through health tips to students but not addressing the underlying xenophobia brought on by the virus, administrators are contributing to the problem. The reality of coronavirus is that students are unlikely to catch it, and sending health tips only raises fears. If administrators are trying to prevent coronavirus from impacting GW, they should make an effort to prevent racism too.

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

Culture

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THE SCENE

SAINT MOTEL
9:30 Club
Feb. 11 • \$70
This indie pop band will perform songs from their 2019 EP.

REX ORANGE COUNTY
The Anthem
Feb. 12 • From \$75
Rex Orange County will rock out to hits like "Loving is Easy" Wednesday.

FITZ & THE TANTRUMS
The Anthem
Feb. 14 • \$45
This band will have the crowd jumping to indie dance songs.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

"BIRDS OF PREY," A MOVIE DIRECTED BY CATHY YAN

TinderU student ambassadors encourage meet-ups, not hook-ups, this Valentine's Day

VITA FELLIG
REPORTER

While couples are heading out on dates Friday, GW's TinderU student brand marketing managers are advising single students to stress less about finding someone on the social app.

Sophomore Stephanie Lee and junior Sabrina Mai work to promote TinderU, a version of Tinder meant only for college students, through campus events as brand ambassadors for the app. The ambassadors said they are organizing an event around Singles Awareness Day in the next few weeks to encourage single students to spend time with others rather than swiping to find a romantic partner on Valentine's Day.

"We aren't trying to make TinderU like a relationship app," Lee said. "I know a lot of people see it as that and people usually associate the app with hook-ups and finding a fling or a relationship possibly. But we're trying to change that idea to more like finding people to hang out with."

TinderU only allows users with a university-affiliated email address to sign up

to ensure they only match with other college students at their own school or with students in the area. Lee said the college version is "safer" than the original app because students can only meet up with those at GW or neighboring schools.

"TinderU is better than the regular Tinder because you have to get verified with your college email address in order to make an account, so it kind of blocks out all the people who are fake," Lee said.

Instead of celebrating Valentine's Day, Lee and Mai said they are planning to host an event in the next few weeks around Singles Awareness Day, which is recognized Saturday, in which they will partner with different student organizations and organize a hangout. The ambassadors said they want to emphasize that TinderU is not only about dating and hook-ups, but it's a way for people to meet others on and around campus.

Lee said she wanted to apply for an ambassador role last semester after she met her boyfriend through TinderU and met new friends.

"I've had positive experi-

ences [with the app] although there were some negatives," Lee said. "So I was hoping to help balance out the bad parts about it and get more people involved in TinderU. I made friends there, I met my boyfriend there too. So I wanted other people to have positive experiences as well."

The ambassadors added that they hold conference calls with their manager at TinderU Headquarters for about an hour to relay any concerns they have heard and offer suggestions, like adding a feature that alerts authorities about unsafe meet-ups, to improve safety.

"As a marketing manager I have direct access to HQ, and we talk with corporate people and we are able to directly express our concerns," Lee said.

The two ambassadors said they spend about five hours per week planning activities around campus, like events with sorority and fraternity chapters, to promote the app.

"It was really hard for people to figure out, like, what does our campus do? We don't have tailgates, we don't have bars where people hang out in one open area,



SKYLAR EPSTEIN | PHOTOGRAPHER

Sophomore Stephanie Lee is a brand ambassador for Tinder's college app, TinderU.

but we do have Greek life parties," Mai said. "But there is the rest of the school we want to reach out to."

The ambassadors said they host about two events per month around campus, where they typically hand out free giveaways like boba tea or TinderU merchandise. Mai said the ambassadors hosted a party with Beta

Theta Pi last semester and gave out free merchandise in exchange for app downloads.

"Their merchandise is really, really cute and people like to wear it when they go out or for everyday usage," Mai said.

Mai added that the dating app allows people to set expectations for their relationship from the time they

begin using TinderU. She said students know that a dating app might not grant them instant love, but it is a good way to meet and talk to someone.

"Even if you match with someone it doesn't mean you're going to go on a date and find love," she said. "But it's just an opportunity to give you the push."



FILE PHOTO BY DONNA ARMSTRONG | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Lovers can learn about how different animals mate and enjoy drinks and dessert at the National Zoo's "Woo at the Zoo."

Unconventional ways to spend your Valentine's Day

RACHEL ARMANY
STAFF WRITER

You can spend Valentine's Day going out to dinner or seeing a show with your significant other—or you can opt for less traditional activities.

From learning how animals mate at the National Zoo to petting cats at Crumbs & Whiskers, here are some of the most unconventional activities to do around D.C. Friday:

'Woo at the Zoo,' at the National Zoological Park

The National Zoo is educating people about animal mating at a 21-plus night out Friday. Tickets for "Woo at the Zoo" include a cocktail, access to an 80's prom-themed dance party, desserts and the main event: presentations on animal dating and mating. The presentation "Waddle I Do Without You" focuses on how penguins find their soulmates when they all look the same, and another workshop titled "Performance Anxiety" walks through ways to ensure endangered species are bred at the zoo.

National Zoo, 3001 Connecticut Ave. NW, activities vary from 7 to 10 p.m. with the presentations playing at 7:30 p.m. and 9 p.m. Tickets are \$60, 21-plus.

Crumbs & Whiskers

The popular Georgetown cat cafe is hosting events for both Valentine's and Galentine's Day on Feb. 13 and 14. Starting at 7 p.m. on both Thurs-

day and Friday, visitors can bring their significant others or friends to the cafe for sweets, a free cafe beverage and the opportunity to pet a bunch of cats.

Crumbs & Whiskers, 3211 O St. NW, tickets are \$35 each for both events.

Diva Royale Drag Show

For those interested in dinner and a show, Diva Royale Restaurant near Penn Quarter will host a "Drag Dining Experience" at 7 p.m. Friday. The event features optional prepaid dinner packages along with drag queens impersonating iconic female vocalists like Dolly Parton, Adele, Nicki Minaj and Britney Spears.

Diva Royale, 1201 New York Ave. NW, 7 p.m., tickets range from \$20-75, 21-plus.

Date Lab at the Smithsonian

The Smithsonian American Art Museum is offering a free event to learn more about how The Washington Post's Date Lab is run. The Post's column "Date Lab," in which writers pair D.C.-area singles and send them on a blind date, is partnering with the American Art Museum for an interactive exhibit to get a behind-the-scenes look at how the writers of the column pair people for dates. Attendees can also participate in a dating game show where audience members can help

pair up dates on stage or take part in a "social scavenger hunt" inside the museum.

Smithsonian American Art Museum, 8th and G streets, third floor, 6 p.m., free.

Boxing with Bae

The District Running Collective has an opportunity for you to box with your partner or friend. "Boxing with Bae" is a couples/partnered-themed boxing workout. During the 60-minute class, participants can learn the basics of boxing and mitt work together, allowing you to "connect with your significant other in a way you never have before," according to the event description.

District Running Collective, 733 11th St. NE, 7 to 8:30 p.m., tickets range from \$25-150.

Love is Hell: A Valentine's Day Horror

Port City Brewing Company will offer a "Valentine's Day horror experience" Thursday and Friday in which visitors can get advice from an evil Cupid and take pictures in a horror-themed photo booth. Your ticket also includes a free pint of beer, and you can pick up food at the trucks Basic Burger on Feb. 13 and Borinquen Lunch Box on Feb. 14.

Port City Brewing Company, 3950 Wheeler Ave. Alexandria, Va., 7 to 10 p.m., Tickets are \$25.

Gift your valentine something sweet from the 2019 New Venture winners' bakery

SARAH SACHS
REPORTER

This Valentine's Day get your special someone something sweet from Dulceology, a Latin American bakery owned by the New Ventures 2019 winners.

Dulceology, owned by graduate student, Edith Alejandra Leiva and her sister Nicole Leiva, specializes in Alfajores, which are a Latin American pastry resembling macaroons. The sisters were able to fully begin their business—with their first brick and mortar location opening in Baltimore at the end of the month—after they won cash prizes in three categories, New Venture Track Winner, Best Art and Design Student Prize and Best Food & Beverage Industry Venture.

"There was so much passion back then," Edith Alejandra Leiva said, referring to the competition. "That's the reason why our business has been able to flourish because we do have that sheer passion."

With Valentine's day coming up, Leiva has started working on better, shareable gift boxes that can be shipped nationwide.

"We're going to be launching a mini alfajor gift boxes," Leiva said. "They come in little packages of six and they're smaller, so they're easier to give

away." They also have a few different themed gift boxes available on their website including gluten free options of the alfajor assortment and samoas. The St. Valentine's Day Gift Box (\$25) is filled with an assortment of colored and red, heart-shaped alfajores. The Sweetheart box (\$25) has slightly larger sized cookies and comes with pink, heart shaped alfajores.

The hand-made alfajores use no added preservatives—just as they are traditionally made—and filled with a dulce de leche, topped with coconut shavings and covered with milk chocolate.

Alfajores aren't the only thing you can get at Dulceology. The business also regularly sells samoas which are layered with a dulce de leche, topped with fresh toasted coconut shavings and drizzled with milk chocolate. The Leiva sisters also do custom dessert tables and favors for weddings and custom cakes.

Leiva said baking alfajores dates back to the 14th century and every country has their own version of it. She said she has had customers from various parts of Latin America who have tried alfajores and are unable to find the product in the U.S., so

that makes Dulceology unique.

Leiva said that baking had always been a big part of her life with her mother being a pastry chef and her father used to manufacture restaurant equipment in El Salvador.

"We were always surrounded by kitchens," she said.

Once her family moved to the United States in 2001, she said they had a difficult time finding the cookies and sweets that they loved so much in El Salvador.

"We went into our family recipe book and found our grandmother's version of the alfajor," Leiva said. "We tweaked it a bit. We made it our own version."

Leiva said that she and her sister started to sell these treats through Etsy about three years ago. She said there were no other alfajor makers on etsy at the time, and today they have had more than 600 sales just on Etsy.

Leiva said she is grateful for the support of GW in this venture as they move from only an online presence to a physical space in Federal Hill, Baltimore.

"I would have not imagined where I'd be right now if it wasn't for GW," Leiva said. "Really GW gave me the resources to plan for this."



CAMILLE DESANTO | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Graduate student Edith Alejandra Leiva and her sister Nicole Leiva started a bakery last year after winning cash prizes from a start-up competition.



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
vs. LaSalle
Wednesday | 7 p.m.
The Colonials look to build off Sunday's win over VCU.



WOMEN'S TENNIS
vs. Delaware
Friday | 1 p.m.
The Colonials host the Blue Hens at home.

The number of runs softball has scored through five games played, down from its average of 22.3 runs in the first five games over the past four years.

Competition to coaching: Student-athletes rejoin former teams behind the bench

BELLE LONG
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

For most student-athletes, their senior season caps years of hard work and sacrifice. But for a few, it marks the beginning of a new chapter in their athletic career – the transition from player to coach.

Five former players have extended their leases as Colonials by coming onto the coaching staff of the teams they played for. The assistant coaches, who hail from men's cross country and track and field, women's basketball, gymnastics and men's squash, said their past athletic experience helps them form better relationships with athletes and incorporates their experience as athletes into each program.

Matt Lange, men's and women's track and cross country assistant coach and recruiting coordinator, is in his second season with the program. As a runner, he stamped his name into the record books.

During the 2017-18 season, he was one of the first athletes in GW history to qualify for the NCAA meet in the 3,000-meter steeplechase. He helped the Colonials nab their highest finish at the Atlantic 10 conference in the same season.

Lange said being one of the older players on the team helped prepare him for the transition from player to coach. He added that his experience as a Colonial gives him greater authority and reliability from players because he can speak "from experience."

"When I tell them I know what

it's like being a student-athlete, I know what it's like trying to balance that and I know what it's like to balance it here," he said.

Lange knew he wanted to coach while he was still a player, adding that accepting head coach Terry Weir's offer was a "no brainer."

Weir ran in college at South Alabama and racked up All-Conference nods for cross country and for track and field. Lange said he feels "fortunate" to work with someone with Weir's experience.

Women's basketball graduate assistant Anna Savino said she is grateful for the opportunity to become a colleague of her former coach, head coach Jennifer Rizzotti.

"She was the former president of the Women's Basketball Coach Association and she's the assistant coach for the USA Olympic team," Savino said.

Savino held several different roles with women's basketball at GW. She served as the team's manager for three years before walking on as a player during the 2018-19 season. She started 27 games in her senior season and averaged 2.4 points and 2.6 rebounds per game in 25.3 average minutes.

Savino said she currently assists in practices and administrative operations, like travel. She said the transition to a coach has not negatively affected her relationship with her former teammates.

"There hasn't been an instance where I've had to be like, 'Hey guys, remember I'm not your teammate anymore' just because they're such a great group of girls anyway, that



JACK BOROWIAK | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Stephanie Stoicovy Worrell, an assistant coach for gymnastics, competed with the squad before joining the coaching staff.

they know what it's like, what the difference is now," Savino said.

Moudy Abdel-Maksoud, who graduated in 2019, played at the No. 1 spot on the ladder for men's squash and returned as a student assistant coach for both the men's and women's programs.

He inked his name in the men's squash record book, earning the third slot on the career singles' wins list, tallying 54 over his tenure. He

was also a member of two Hoehn Cup-winning teams.

Gymnastics' coaching staff holds two assistant coaches who competed for the Colonials – Chelsea Raineri and Stephanie Stoicovy Worrell. Raineri graduated in 2017 and became the third gymnast in GW history to compete individually at the NCAA Championship, where she competed on the vault.

Stoicovy Worrell graduated from GW in 2013 and joined the coaching staff in 2015. In 2018, she was named EAGL Assistant Coach of the Year.

"As a student-athlete, it was about competing for the team and representing GW and as a coach it's about competing to make each student-athlete better every time I interact with them," Stoicovy Worrell said.

Rhode Island drubs men's basketball in third straight loss

BELLE LONG
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

Freshman guard Shawn Walker Jr. took full advantage of a Rhode Island turnover midway through the second half, netting both a layup and his first career double-digit performance Saturday.

Walker Jr.'s 14 points and five assists were a bright spot in a 31-point GW loss. The Colonials (10-14, 4-7 A-10) fell to the Rams (18-5, 10-1 A-10), sustaining their third consecutive 20-point plus loss in an 82-51 defeat.

"That ball is such an energy source for our team and the team that has control of that ball has the best opportunity to use it to win the game," head coach Jamion Christian said. "We're just giving it up to the other team a little bit too much now, and in ways that are not aggressive."

GW endured its worst offensive performance of the season, shooting at a 16-of-55 clip with a season-low 29.1 field goal percentage. The Rams neutralized the Colonials' three-point game, and the squad sunk just 2-of-23 attempts.

"I thought we had some good looks early that we didn't take and when you're playing a good defensive team, you've got to be aggressive on the looks that you get," Christian said.

The team felt the absence of redshirt senior guard Armel Potter, who was sidelined with a lower body injury he sustained in a

game against Davidson Jan. 29. Prior to his injury, Potter was one of the team's key ball handlers, dishing out 110 assists on the season.

"Since Armel's been out, we've been averaging about 18 turnovers per game," Christian said. "We've got to get back to really taking care of the ball and showing that level of toughness."

Christian started four freshmen – forwards Jamison Battle and Chase Paar and guards Jameer Nelson Jr. and Walker Jr. The quartet tallied 40 points on the night, good for 78.4 percent of the team's total offense. Junior guard Maceo Jack, who snatched a team-leading four steals, rounded out the Colonials' starting five.

Barring a free throw from Walker Jr., the Rams held GW scoreless during the first three minutes of play until a layup from Paar ended the drought.

But the two triples from junior guard Fatts Russell began and capped a 10-point Rhode Island push that worked the lead to 11 points.

Russell took a floor-leading 24 points against the Colonials on 8-of-19 shooting from the field and 6-of-10 attempts from deep.

Walker Jr. kicked off a 9-0 GW run that pulled the squad within two points of the lead. But a 17-point Rhode Island slant widened the gap between the Rams and the Colonials.

Battle hit a buzzer-beating three to send the squad to the locker room down 41-25. The Colonials'

shooters went cold, going 9-of-28 from the floor and 2-of-12 from beyond the arc.

GW's scoring woes continued in the second half, mustering a 28.6 field goal percentage and missing all 11 attempts from deep.

The team turned the ball over five times in the first four minutes of the half, allowing the Rams to go on a 16-5 run and increase the gap. The Colonials were unable to capitalize on chances from the floor, with Battle and senior guard Adam Mitola missing back-to-back triples.

Rhode Island stayed relentless throughout the half, dropping 21 points in the final 10 minutes of play. The Rams walked away with an 82-51 victory.

GW now has a week off from competition with Saturday's game in the books. Christian said he wants his players to focus on watching film, evaluating their performances and getting rest before A-10 play resumes.

"Every game we've done something else at a really, really bad level, so I think we just have to get great balance, but I know we will and we've done that all year long," Christian said. "We've had great responses all year long, so it's about getting them fresh, taking a deep breath and addressing the areas where we need to improve at."

After the week off, the Colonials will hit the road against local rival George Mason. Tipoff is slated for 4:30 p.m.



FILE PHOTO BY ZACH BRIEN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Junior guard Lexus Levy shoots over a defender last week. Levy contributed to the team's win over VCU Sunday.

Women's basketball upsets VCU by a single point

ROMAN BOBEK
STAFF WRITER

Junior guard Lexus Levy was fouled in the waning seconds of women's basketball's battle with VCU. In her first career start in 80 appearances, Levy walked to the line boasting a 100 percent free throw percentage.

She swished both shots, lifting the Colonials ahead by one point with 10 seconds on the clock. A strong defensive showing sealed the game, propelling GW to an upset victory over VCU Sunday.

The Colonials (10-13, 4-6 A-10) defeated the Rams (13-10, 8-2 A-10) 56-55 to hand VCU its second Atlantic 10 loss of the season. Despite trailing by 10 points early in the second quarter, the Colonials rallied the rest of the game and denied the Rams a last-second chance to steal the game.

Nine different Colonials contributed offensively and 10 players played 18 or more minutes. On the defensive side, sophomore center Kayla Mokwuah led the team with 10 rebounds.

"When they started to press us, our team stayed really poised," head coach Jennifer Rizzotti said. "I thought Sydney was excellent in terms of handling pressure and getting the ball to the right people out of the press."

Levy started the game with a jump shot that put the Colonials on the board first, but the Rams quickly responded with a bucket of their own. GW kept up with precise shooting, converting 7-of-10 from the field while the Rams hit 7-of-15 attempts.

Both teams suffered behind the arc. The Colonials converted just 1-of-3 while the Rams sunk 1-of-5. By the end of the quarter, the score remained level at 16-16.

VCU opened the scoring in the second quarter as the Colonials' shooting game suffered a steep drop-off, converting just 4-of-14 from the field and 1-of-3 from deep.

The Rams hit a stride, connecting on 5-of-12 to stretch their lead. Despite falling behind by 10 points with less than three minutes left, the Colonials rallied a seven-point scoring run to close out the half. The Colonials trailed 29-26 heading into the locker room.

Rizzotti implemented a new subbing strategy following the squad's 59-55 loss to St. Bonaventure Thursday. She rotated all five players off the court throughout points of the game, replacing them with five fresh players off the bench.

"What we wanted to do is tighten some things up defensively to try to keep the rotations fresh today," Rizzotti said. "So subbing a lot of guys in and out so that they can stay sharp and stay locked in."

VCU opened the scoring in the third quarter for the second straight quarter. Junior guard Taya Robinson hit a three to push the lead to two possessions.

Freshman guard Essence Brown countered with a three-point basket of her own, quickly followed up by another three from redshirt freshman guard Tori Hyduke to gain the lead. After back-and-forth play, the Colonials pulled ahead, building a five-point lead heading into the final quarter.

The Colonials constructed a seven-point lead, their largest of the game, at the 6:41 mark. A crucial three-point shot put the Rams back in the game, trimming the lead to two possessions.

The Rams continued to attack and managed to find their way back on top after a pair of free throws from senior center Danielle Hammond. With less than 10 seconds remaining, Levy drew a foul and stepped up to the line.

She knocked down both free throws to maintain her perfect 4-of-4 record this season from the charity stripe to give the Colonials the lead. The Rams attempted one last shot off before the end of regulation, but lockdown defense by the Colonials forced the shot to ricochet off the rim.

The Colonials came away with the 56-55 win. Rizzotti said the key to victory in the final minutes was preventing second-chance opportunities and winning rebounds.

"We talked about our execution staying sharp because their best offense is transitional offense," Rizzotti said. "So we wanted to make sure that we had the opportunity to get our defense set."

The Colonials begin a two-game home stint Wednesday against La Salle. Tipoff is slated for 7 p.m. at the Smith Center.



ALEXANDER WELLING | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Freshman guard Jameer Nelson Jr. takes a free throw during Saturday's game against Rhode Island. GW fell to the Rams by more than 30 points.