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Officials urge Class of 2020 to persevere amid pandemic uncertainty

SHANNON MALLARD
NEWS EDITOR

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In an online Commencement ceremony Sunday, officials recognized the Class of 2020 for their hard work during their time at GW and perseverance amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In lieu of an official Commencement speaker, several officials addressed the Class of 2020 and charged graduates to reflect and learn from their experiences and challenges as students. University President Thomas LeBlanc said the class is an “exceptional” group and urged graduates to face challenges with “creativity” and “optimism”

during the pandemic and beyond.

“It is in times like these, when we remember that communities needn’t share geography, but they must share values, care and support one another,” LeBlanc said. “And by these measures, we remain a strong community.”

Officials canceled Commencement in March amid concerns over COVID-19 and announced a virtual ceremony to celebrate the Class of 2020 in April. LeBlanc invited graduating seniors to attend next year’s Commencement ceremony on the National Mall.

Provost Brian Blake said he was excited to participate in GW’s Commencement ceremony in his first year as provost and under-

stood the disappointment students felt to hear the in-person ceremony was canceled. He said the online ceremony was unprecedented, but the support and encouragement students have received throughout their time at GW from family, friends, classmates and mentors has prepared them to confront challenges.

“In this challenging time, your resilience is more important than ever,” Blake said. “Your accomplishments during this difficult time was a perfect example of how the GW community has persevered.”

Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights said the pandemic has brought anxiety-inducing uncertainty, but the graduates’ education will help them to “se-

sure” the future and guide others through upcoming challenges while still continuing to learn from others around them.

“Your ‘Only at GW’ education and experiences have prepared you for this moment,” Speights said. “At GW you embrace uncertainty and welcome being pushed outside of your comfort zone. At GW you ask complicated questions, without easy answers, and engage in thought-provoking discourse with your professors and peers.”

Patricia Carocci, the senior associate vice president of alumni relations and annual giving, said the GW Alumni Association will continue offering students career guidance and help them build pro-

fessional networks despite challenges presented by the pandemic. She said alumni – who usually attend Commencement in person – were watching the ceremony at home and supporting students from afar.

“The support we provide each other and the connections we weave as GW alumni, strengthen the fabric of our community and help us to find a path forward, even in the midst of uncertainty,” Carocci said.

Former Student Association President SJ Matthews began her remarks with a quote from Belva Ann Lockwood, the first female graduate of GW Law, urging graduates to “set their own precedence” and form creative solutions

to pressing societal issues. She encouraged graduates to channel their frustration surrounding the pandemic into making positive impacts on their communities.

“It’ll be on us to rise to the occasion,” Matthews said. “It’ll be on us to set our own precedence.”

LeBlanc closed his remarks by congratulating graduates for their perseverance amid the uncertainty of the pandemic and conferred degrees to the Class of 2020.

“Class of 2020, I know that you will continue to bring your leadership and service to your communities around the world,” LeBlanc said. “And I know that no matter the challenges ahead, you will rise up and raise high.”

Inside the decision room: How GW coordinates its pandemic response

ZACH SCHONFELD
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Reinstating in-person classes in early April after just two weeks of remote learning was once a possibility.

But two months later, University President Thomas LeBlanc and Provost Brian Blake logged off the virtual May Faculty Senate meeting a few minutes early to join their now-regular ritual: the 5 p.m. Crisis Decision Team call, during which officials consider the possibility of remote operations for the fall semester.

Officials said the team – which is composed of LeBlanc, Blake and Executive Vice President and Chief Fi-

ancial Officer Mark Diaz – is one of many groups they formed to facilitate check-ins between GW’s top administrators as they grapple with responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even with the extensive planning infrastructure now in place, officials have said through more than 50 public statements on GW’s response to the pandemic that the uncertain and fast-paced circumstances have necessitated academic and financial decisions they had once hoped they would “not need.”

“It’s hard to believe, but just about three months ago we were all on campus and experiencing what we now call a ‘normal’ spring se-

mester,” LeBlanc said at a Board of Trustees meeting Friday. “As we all know, this changed very quickly.”

Scott Burnotes, the associate vice president for safety and security, said GW’s response to the pandemic began in late January – the approximate time of the first reported coronavirus case in the United States – when officials activated an on-campus Emergency Operations Center. Administrators also created a Pandemic Response and Readiness Task Force, which has now met daily for more than two months since cases began to steadily increase in the District, he said.

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Students working during pandemic faced tough balancing act, they said

TIFFANY GARCIA
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

At the beginning of the semester, then-senior Annie Wallace worked in the Department of Emergency Medicine at GW Hospital as a technician part time, assisting patients in critical condition resulting from cardiac issues to trauma.

But since mid-March, Wallace works from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. every Friday, Saturday and Sunday as the number of COVID-19 cases swelled in the DMV. She said working at the hospital during the pandemic allowed her to witness firsthand how staffing needs increased to handle the influx in patients.

“At the beginning of our shift, we have what we call ‘take five,’ where we go

through updates and protocols as reminders, and then we get bigger assignments,” Wallace said. “For every take five, there was a new update on the COVID protocol. How we were handling things was changing daily and even, hourly, in the middle of shifts at times.”

More than five students ranging from a hospital technician to a wholesale store clerk working as essential personnel during the pandemic said they have faced increased stress and responsibilities from their workplaces, requiring them to adapt to new “chaotic” environments with extra safety procedures. They said the added responsibilities have prompted them to ask their professors for assignment extensions to complete their coursework around their

shifts at work.

Wallace said to save protective gear like N95 masks, technicians are now required to complete all initial preparations like dressing patients in one patient visit rather than spreading the preparations out to attend to several patients at once. She said patient visits can now last up to two hours, and all staff are required to wear a mask during the entire 12-hour shift.

“It’s super uncomfortable to have a mask on for the entire day and then having a mask – and an N95 mask isn’t a surgical mask – on top of that and then goggles or a face shield and a scrub cap and gown and shoe covers,” Wallace said. “It gets very hot very quickly.”

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HATCHET FILE PHOTO

The new guidelines narrow the definition of assault to include conduct that is “severe” and “pervasive.”

New Title IX regulations may decrease reporting: experts

LIA DEGROOT
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

SHANNON MALLARD
NEWS EDITOR

Experts said a new set of Department of Education regulations governing Title IX investigations will undermine survivors’ rights during investigative processes.

The regulations – which carry the force of law – break from Obama administration guidelines that focused on survivors’ rights and assumed assailants’ guilt in Title IX case proceedings. Four Title IX experts and sexual assault survivor advocates said the new regulations could deter students from reporting sexual assault and harassment and require students to relive their trauma during case proceedings.

The new regulations

define sexual harassment as “unwelcome” sexual conduct that is “severe, pervasive and objectively offensive,” according to the education department’s summary of the regulations. Some changes include measures to eliminate the single-investigator model in favor of a multiple person hearing board, allow cross-examination during live hearings and no longer require faculty, staff and advisers to be mandatory reporters.

The regulations include measures that allow universities to forgo the preponderance of evidence, or “more likely than not,” standard for determining guilt in favor of the “clear and convincing” standard, which requires more evidence to prove guilt. The regulations state that universities are not required to investigate

sexual misconduct cases that occur off-campus, in non-University owned buildings or on non-GW study abroad programs.

“Essentially for what they’re saying the new definition is for, it could be so severe, pervasive and objectively offensive that it effectively denies a person equal access to the school’s education program or activity,” said Kenyora Parham, the executive director of End Rape on Campus.

Tamara Washington, the assistant director of the Office of Advocacy and Support, said the office’s “commitment” to survivors will not change in light of the new regulations, and officials will continue to provide resources like information about reporting options and counseling.

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THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

WARD 2 D.C. COUNCIL CANDIDATE FORUM
 May 18 • Free
 7 p.m. EST
 Learn about the eight candidates vying to replace Jack Evans serve as the next councilmember for Ward 2.

POLITICS & PROSE: BAKARI SELLERS & KAMALA HARRIS
 May 18 • \$27
 4 p.m. EST
 Author Tiffany Cross will moderate a talk between former South Carolina Representative Sellers and Sen. Harris, D-Calif.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

MAY 21, 2000
 Six seniors were removed from Commencement on the Ellipse 20 years ago for protesting their speakers, then-Secretary of State Madeline Albright and a former World Bank president.

Board of Trustees delays vote on budget amid financial uncertainty

ZACH SCHONFELD
 CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

The Board of Trustees did not consider next year's budget at its meeting Friday, a delay from the usual passage at the Board's May meeting amid financial uncertainty of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Board Chair Grace Speights said the meeting, which was held virtually through WebEx, attracted more than 150 attendees – a far greater number than the typical attendance at the Board's meetings normally held in the Marvin Center. Trustees said they plan to release the Environmental, Social and Governance Responsibility Task Force's "early" set of recommendations to address its charge from the Board.

Speights said trustees have been "very engaged" in addressing the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and trustees have held a number of calls with University President Thomas LeBlanc and other officials to discuss GW's pandemic response since mid-March.

"No one could have predicted the magnitude of this pandemic," she said at the meeting. "President LeBlanc and his administration have done a remarkable job working diligently and tirelessly to steer our institution through this crisis and prepare for the future."

Officials unveiled three enrollment scenarios for the next academic year earlier this month, which project annual revenue losses of \$100 million to \$300 million. Administra-

tors plan to make a final decision in mid-June, days before the Board's summer retreat – now happening virtually – and the start of the fiscal year, which begins July 1.

Alumni survey

GW Alumni Association President Richard Jones said more than 20,000 alumni responded to a survey conducted this spring about their perception of the University – a 7 percent response rate. He said 86 percent of respondents said they take "pride" in holding a GW degree, while 68 percent said they value their GW relationship and the University values its alumni.

But he added that only 24 percent of respondents said they feel that they are a part of the GW community.

"We clearly have more opportunities to engage," Jones said. "We will be working on virtualizing all of our programming and making sure it is accessible to our alumni. Much of that has been virtualized already, and we look forward to continuing that."

He also announced the group is creating a new award, called the Monumental Award, to recognize alumni who have made "distinguished contributions" in their professions. The award will be unveiled in January or February, he said.

Environmental impact task force

Peter Harrison, a trustee and chair of the Board's environmental task force, said members of the task force plan to host town halls to

gather feedback from and share progress with the GW community in the coming weeks after they release the draft recommendations this week.

The Board established the task force in February following a week of student protests over GW's investments in the fossil fuel industry, which are estimated to total about \$53 million – 3 percent of the University's endowment.

"The pandemic highlights the importance of environmental and social issues," Harrison said. "We are on an accelerated work plan."

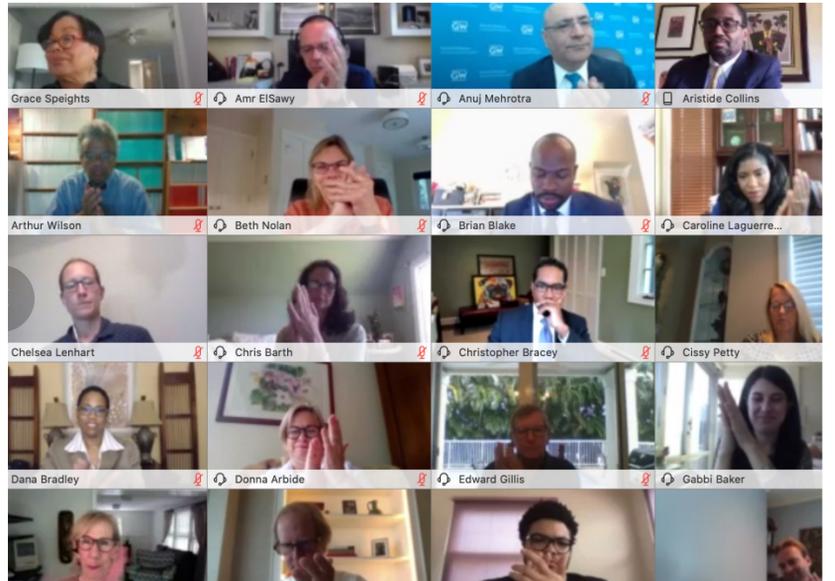
Harrison said the task force has heard an "overview" of the endowment's holdings, examined peer institutions' policies on divestment and heard from GW's sustainability experts.

"We have a strong foundation on which to build," he said. "This has inspired us to elevate our aspirations. The task force is composed of a diverse set of constituencies, and we see this work as an important connection point across all of these groups."

Dean updates and trustee elections

Barbara Bass, the dean of the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, said the GW Hospital has seen a steady decline in total hospitalized patients since Monday, and the school will resume student clinical rotations June 8.

The hospital triaged patients showing symptoms of COVID-19 in March, suspended elective surgeries to accommodate patients and



ZACH SCHONFELD | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
 About 86 percent of 20,000 alumni surveyed said they were proud of their degree, but just 24 percent said they felt like part of the GW community, according to a presentation at the May Board of Trustees meeting.

set up tents outside of the hospital to handle patients.

"It's been a remarkable adventure," Bass said. "We're going to learn a lot and be proud of the process by which this has been managed. We're going to get through this."

Christopher Bracey, the interim dean of GW Law, said he has convened an ad-hoc faculty committee to discuss how to deliver the school's curriculum in the fall if the pandemic persists.

Geneva Henry, the dean of libraries and academic innovation, said her team has worked to fully digitize 60 of the 69 course textbooks available through the Top Textbooks program during the

online learning period.

Her division is also providing "concierge-style assistance" to those who struggle with online education, she said. Libraries staff activated a plan aimed at implementing remote learning and operations when coronavirus cases began to rise this spring.

LeBlanc said officials are close to concluding a search for a permanent vice provost for enrollment and student success, and final decisions are now being made.

Trustees elected Mollie Bowman, a former GW ambassador and two-time graduate of the School of Media and Public Affairs, to serve as the next recent alumni trustee

after more than 60 people were nominated for the position in the fall. She will serve a four-year term on the Board, succeeding Gabbi Baker on June 1.

"She served on this Board during some pretty heavy days and inflection points, including this moment," Speights said. "We are better for Gabbi's years of service."

Trustees Roslyn Brock, Judy Rogers and Amr ElSawy were re-elected to serve four-year terms beginning June 1. Michael Hoffman and Madeline Jacobs were re-elected by the Board to serve two-year terms.

—Jared Gans and Shamon Mallard contributed reporting.

International students say time difference hindered learning online

CLARA DUHON
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 ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Out of fear the U.S. border would close, rising sophomore Ishita Gupta made a last-minute decision to fly home after officials announced classes would move online for two weeks.

Gupta said she wanted to participate in her classes this semester, but she struggled to concentrate with a nine-hour time difference between Mumbai and D.C., making her classes fall at about 2:30 a.m. She said the disruptions to her academics resulted in her "unplanned" decision to transfer to New York University in the fall, where she has a cousin she could live with if the University's fall semester moved online.

"I think it was just very stressful dealing with the housing and stuff at GW considering I'm an international student and I don't really have another place to go. I would have to keep coming," Gupta said. "Considering scientists have been saying that this could go on for 2021, that's a major part of my university life. So I just want to make sure that I have a place to stay even if I was asked to leave the housing."

In interviews, 10 international students said the transition to online classes hindered their ability to engage and keep up with courses. Students said their new environments required them to adapt to new schedules and communicate closely with their professors to accommodate for missed courses occurring late at night for students in different time zones.

Gupta said missing the in-person experience of being on campus prevented her from participating as she used to in her classes. She said attending classes at night prevented her from staying engaged with the lectures she was watching.

"I think I was able to manage my coursework online just fine," Gupta said. "But I would have preferred, as I said before,

to participate in the voluntary discussions because I did feel like the readings were kind of useless when I wasn't discussing them."

The International Services Office is currently hosting virtual academic counseling meetings with students needing advice in their courses, according to its website. The ISO is also monitoring travel restrictions the federal government has placed amid health concerns on its website.

Katie Jackson, a rising senior majoring in biology and anatomy, said adjusting from life at GW to the United Kingdom, one of the countries in Europe most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, was stressful to handle during the semester and made academics less of a priority over taking care of her mental health. She said all but one of her professors kept their classes synchronous and weren't accommodating to the five-hour time difference that forced her to attend classes until about 2:30 a.m.

"I understand it is difficult for everyone, but being on a different continent with a significant time difference made academics seem so alien and detached from my current life in the UK," she said. "Although the content of my courses did not change, the fact that it was online made it feel trivial and not as serious as it normally does when in person."

Jackson said a University-wide requirement for professors to record lectures and upload them to Blackboard would have better supported students during the instructional continuity period because they could watch recorded lectures at any time.

Rising sophomore Emir Hancioğlu, an international student from Turkey majoring in international affairs, said the shift online prompted him to communicate more often with his professors not only to ask for coursework accommodations but to discuss topics he found interesting and relevant to his situation, like Turkey's national lockdown during the pandemic.

He said his International Relations of South Asia class would take place at 2 a.m. in Turkey, which required him to adapt to the changes in his schedule.

"Sometimes I stayed up, but sometimes I missed it, and my professor didn't make any issue of it," Hancioğlu said. "She was very comfortable with it, and she later posted the videos, so it didn't cause any issues to me."

Joseph Izumi, a rising sophomore majoring in international affairs from Japan, said the 13-hour time difference between Japan and D.C. flipped his daily routine so he completed his coursework in the mornings before attending lectures at night. He said accommodating to his new schedule was challenging but did not affect his academic performance.

"That for me was very challenging because your body just doesn't really want to stay awake," Izumi said.

Five students said the week before spring break proved to be the most stressful because of their difficulties making plans to move back to their respective countries. Storage services currently employed by GW do not ship packages internationally so students said they needed to pack all their belongings prior to leaving campus.

Izumi said the most stressful part for him this semester was the week before he flew home because he was unable to focus on academics while trying to organize his return home and research travel laws meant to slow the pandemic's spread. He said he was most concerned about moving out of his residence hall because he knew he would not be able to come back if he forgot a belonging.

"I had to really make sure I had no mistake on that regard in terms of my stuff in the room because there's no 'Oh, I can always come up and get that' situation," Izumi said. "I had to make sure if I left, I had everything in check. So I spent a lot of time thinking about what's the right process about storage."



FILE PHOTO BY JACK FONSECA | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
 The Board of Trustees' Task Force on Naming is working virtually to develop a set of procedures trustees can use to evaluate future name change requests.

Building naming task force to begin drafting recommendations in June

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 ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The Board of Trustees' task force on building naming policies will start crafting policy recommendations on addressing name change requests at the start of June, members said.

The Task Force on Naming, a 17-member committee the Board formed in November to draft recommendations to guide potential building name changes, hosted two town halls May 6 and 7 via WebEx to collect feedback on students' opinions about the task force's guiding principles. Mark Chichester, the task force's chair, said members organized outreach initiatives like town halls in January as part of the yearslong effort to produce a set of policies the Board will use to address building name change requests if approved at a June 26 meeting.

Chichester said the town halls were meant to discuss the progress the task force had made with the community and clear up misconceptions of the charge Board Chair Grace Speights assigned to the group. He said the task force will use questions students asked, like how student requests will be

weighed against those from a faculty member, to consider the procedures they recommend to the Board.

"I can say with some confidence that this will not be a process that is shrouded in secrecy," Chichester said in an interview.

Chichester said the task force's values of emphasizing diversity in the community are closely aligned with the University's values like collaboration and diversity. He said the members have hosted meetings with representatives from other universities who have changed their buildings' names, student leaders and the Faculty Senate to gather their opinions on controversial building names before starting to draft recommendations.

The controversial histories tied to buildings like Lisner Auditorium and the Marvin Center have sparked student pushes to rename the centers. The Marvin Center is named after former University President Cloyd Heck Marvin, a segregationist who doubled enrollment, tripled faculty size and increased the endowment eight times.

Speights formed the task force in November to recommend a set of policies for the Board to govern building naming, name change procedures and name change requests of buildings on campus by the end of the

academic year. The group's members include officials like Vice Provost for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement Caroline Laguerre-Brown and University President Thomas LeBlanc, four trustees, an emeritus trustee, three students in leadership positions on campus, three faculty and two alumni.

Officials moderated two town halls to answer community members' questions on the task force's charge earlier this month via WebEx, according to the Task Force website. Members of the task force said more than 100 students attended the town halls in total.

Chichester, a Board member, said at the town hall that the task force consists of historians, students and faculty determined to address the circumstances of "problematic" building names with respect to history and community concerns. He said the task force decided to continue meeting virtually once a month after officials announced classes would transition online for the semester because members saw their recommendations as an "action item" that could not be delayed.

"I think the sense of the task force was a way to figure out how to prepare for what could be a new normal," Chichester said at the meeting.

SA leaders say academic forgiveness policy will help all students succeed

LAUREN SFORZA
STAFF WRITER

Student Association leaders said the newly expanded academic forgiveness policy will ease undergraduates' worries about career paths post-graduation.

The Faculty Senate passed a resolution earlier this month to expand the freshman forgiveness policy to all undergraduates and allow students to retake up to three courses in which they received a D+ or lower starting in the fall. SA leaders who have advocated for the policy said its expansion will enable students to feel comfortable exploring courses beyond their major and help them become strong candidates in the job market.

SA Sen. Thomas Falcigno, G-at-Large, said he gathered support from all undergraduate schools' deans for the drafted policy before he started his SA executive vice presidential campaign in 2016, incorporating the proposal into his platform. Falcigno said he spoke with Phil Wirtz, the then-chair of the Faculty Senate's educational policy committee, before the full senate approved the resolution in February 2017.

"It's sometimes a tedious process working with some faculty, but for the most part it was a wonderful experience and showed what can be done when faculty and students come together," he said.

Falcigno said he and other SA leaders of the 2017-18 academic year collaborated with former Provost Forrest Maltzman and officials in the Registrar's Office at the time to finalize the policy's wording. He said administrators told him they already intended to implement a similar policy in the future.

"It really was a collaborative effort and the administrators were all on board for it," Falcigno said. "From what I understand, not many of them had any concerns, and they expressed to me that this was a policy in the direction of where they wanted to go, and they just didn't have student support for it."

Almost 50 freshmen used the policy in fall 2017, and by fall 2018 more than 500 students opted to retake a course.

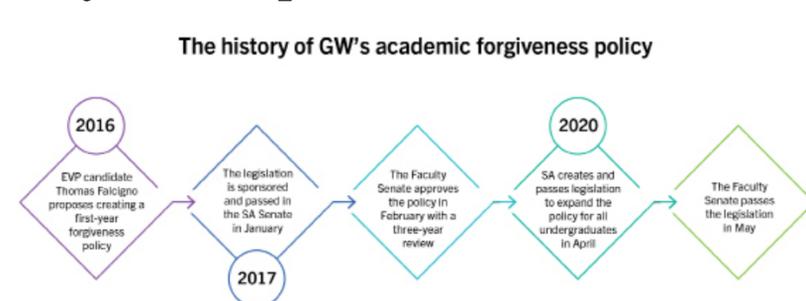
Niccolo Cennamo, the former SA senate chief of staff, said she researched similar policies at the University's 12 peer schools in July and concluded more than 75 percent of GW's peer institutions

had forgiveness policies for all undergraduates.

Nine of GW's 12 peer schools have policies that allow undergraduate students to retake at least one course they previously failed without affecting their GPA. New York, Tufts and Georgetown universities have policies that allow students to retake courses they may have failed in the past but still factor the failed grade into the students' GPA.

Cennamo said 77 percent of students who used the freshman forgiveness policy in its first year retook STEM courses like chemistry and calculus, and the expansion of the policy will give more undergraduate STEM students a "security net" to explore new subjects throughout their GW career. She said the expansion to allow students to retake up to three classes can make STEM classes more "accessible" for all students as officials seek to increase the University's STEM population and therefore grow the number of "rigorous" STEM courses.

Cennamo said increasing the number of classes students can retake can help retain students at the University because many financial aid packages require students to meet a minimum



SIDNEY LEE | GRAPHICS EDITOR

GPA to maintain their aid.

She added that the expansion could decrease students' mental health struggles like depression and anxiety that develop if a student is stressed about maintaining high grades. She said research indicates upperclassmen are more likely to suffer from these issues than freshmen, emphasizing the need for GW to academically support all undergraduates.

"First-year forgiveness was absolutely amazing, and first-year students do deal with the struggle of transitioning to GW," Cennamo said. "But there are other issues that juniors and sophomores experience as well."

She said the SA released a survey in November via the SA newsletter to gather

students' feedback about the freshman forgiveness policy that helped shape the proposal to expand.

The SA Senate voted in favor of the academic forgiveness resolution late last month, and the Faculty Senate also unanimously passed the resolution earlier this month.

Cennamo said now that the resolution has passed through the Faculty Senate, she is going to advocate to include the expanded policy on course syllabi and the Blackboard home page in her position as an SA senior policy adviser next year to ensure students are aware of the policy change.

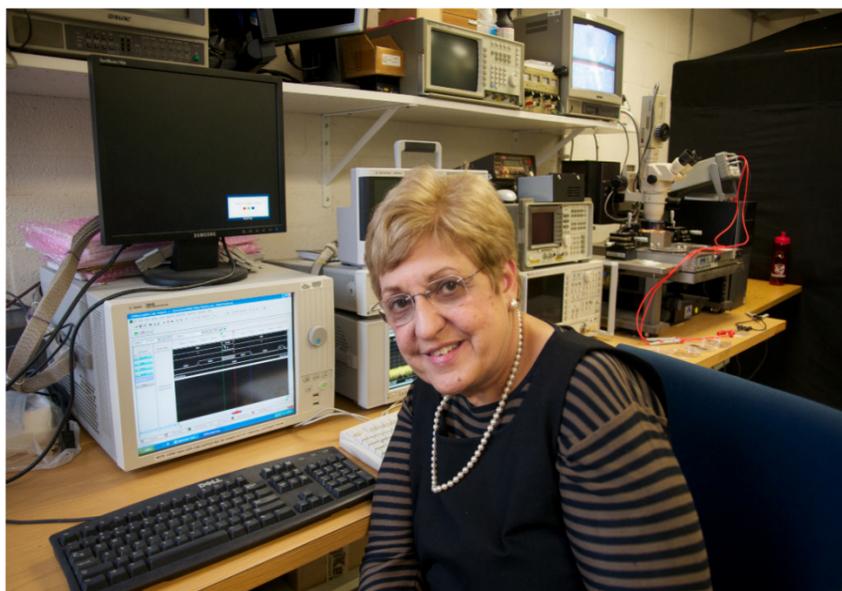
"I think with first-year forgiveness, no students knew it was a thing," she said.

Amy Martin, the former

SA executive vice president, said undergraduate academic forgiveness ensures every student has an equal opportunity to succeed in a specific course. She said after the SA released the survey about freshman forgiveness policies, many students said the policy should be applied to all undergraduates because students can face challenges like mental struggles, at any point throughout their time at GW.

"They have the option, but it wasn't something that encouraged them to purposely take their classes or purposely failed their courses," Martin said. "It was something that they wish that they had the ability to use beyond just their first year."

—Isha Trivedi contributed reporting.



Researchers at GW are developing an at-home COVID-19 test that uses a smartphone app, artificial intelligence and single-use sensors to detect the virus in patients. COURTESY OF MONA ZAGHLOUL

Researchers work to develop at-home COVID-19 test

JULIA RUSSO
STAFF WRITER

Researchers in the School of Engineering and Applied Science and the Milken Institute School of Public Health are developing an at-home test for COVID-19.

Mona Zaghoul, a professor of engineering and applied science, and her post-doctoral scientist Yangyang Zhao created a sensor in 2014 that could identify chemicals in the atmosphere, and they teamed up with epidemiology professor Jeanne Jordan to repurpose the device to detect COVID-19. Zaghoul and Zhao said the convenience and price of their device would allow people to test themselves for COVID-19 much more frequently than current tests permit.

Zhao said the pair recently received a call from Jerry Comanescu, a licensing associate in the Technology Commercialization Office, asking them to transform their sensing device into a COVID-19 tester. Using pre-existing technology, Zhao said he and Zaghoul began designing a nanosized, optical sensor that can test a human sample, like a cheek or nose swab, for COVID-19 and report results within a few minutes.

"The thing is for the testing of a specific virus — one-time testing doesn't make sure you are safe forever," Zhao said. "If you're safe today, that doesn't mean you're safe for the next few months, so people have to be periodically tested or continuously monitored and thus such a device has to be low cost and convenient to use because otherwise no one can afford the cost."

Zhao said the team made the sensing device from fused silica, a compound similar to glass and has small holes that detect different types of coronaviruses. He said once the virus binds to the sensor's receptors, the local refractive index — or the speed at which light passes through a medium — will change, causing the

color of the sensor to slightly change as well.

This change in light can't be seen by the naked eye, but a smartphone camera is powerful enough to monitor the slight color change, Zhao said. He said artificial intelligence will then analyze the color change to identify if it is positive for the virus or not, and the information will then be sent to public health organizations through a cell phone application.

Zaghoul and Zhao said people using the device would need to purchase the cell phone application and a single-use sensor for about \$2, based on the cost of the original sensor. They said they anticipate that the sensor will be finalized in three to four months.

"The low cost is a huge advantage because it makes it possible to be largely distributed to the community so people could be tested every day or every two days or every three days for that matter," Zhao said.

Zhao said the team will use a receptor that captures all coronaviruses and then use AI to separate the viruses because experts currently don't know whether COVID-19 antibodies differ from other coronaviruses like influenza. He said each type of virus will form a unique bond with the sensor's receptor, producing a specific color light on the sensor for the cell phone camera to pick up.

"Let's say you have two different viruses but three different sensors, then all of the sensors will give you a signal of the two different viruses," Zhao said.

Since they just began transforming this device to detect COVID-19, Zhao said they must still conduct testing to ensure it is sensitive enough to detect the virus and able to differentiate between other viruses. He said once they prove the device works in the lab, then they can start performing clinical trials.

Zhao said the device then

must receive Food and Drug Administration approval for commercialization.

Zaghoul and Zhao have been testing their device using a personal computer application, but they said they will eventually convert the operating system to a cell phone application. Zhao said the team's goal is to send data from each test through an AI-based algorithm to be made accessible to public health officials.

Infectious disease experts said more people should be screened for COVID-19 on a regular basis, but this test would need to be highly sensitive to produce valid diagnoses.

Daniel Griffin, an infectious disease specialist at Columbia University Medical Center, said getting Zaghoul and Zhao's sensor to work "would be fantastic and very helpful" because self-testing is "critical" to reach the threshold of testing experts predict is necessary.

"Self testing is critical considering the amount of testing we anticipate needing to be done," Griffin said. "The challenge seems to be that people only do a good job if monitored, so this does require some technology and the ability to do it so people can be monitored via video during the collection of specimens."

Dwayne Breining, the executive director of Northwell Health Labs in New York, said offering at-home testing gets "a bit tricky" because of the varying sample quality outside of health care settings. He said people could use a poor swab technique or results could be "gamed" by someone who wants a negative test result but added that the test could be useful in regular screenings that are becoming more common in places like nursing homes.

"It is likely that this type of test will be less sensitive than some other methods," Breining said. "That may be OK depending on exact numbers, if there is a low risk level of the population being tested."

Elliott School faculty, staff host lectures on pandemic's effects

VALERIA FERNANDEZ
LEON
REPORTER

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STAFF WRITER

A lecture series hosted by the Elliott School of International Affairs on domestic and global responses to the COVID-19 pandemic has helped bring the school's members together, faculty and staff said.

Faculty and alumni involved in the "Experts Weigh In" web series, which is held on WebEx, have discussed over the past few weeks how certain regions of the world or academic fields like economics and international relations have been impacted by the ongoing outbreak. Elliott School faculty and staff said the series has helped raise awareness for worldwide concerns in international affairs like globalization during the pandemic.

Matt Donovan, the assistant director of annual giving and alumni relations in the Elliott School, said the series aimed to hold community programming for alumni and students remotely.

"In light of the pandemic, all in-person alumni programs at the Elliott School were canceled, and the 'Experts Weigh In' series offered a chance to bring community members together for timely and important programming," Donovan said in an email. "The fundamental goal of the series is to bring community members of the Elliott School and broader University together for conversations on issues affected by the coronavirus."

Donovan said officials have received "overwhelmingly positive feedback" on the series and have heard that many audience members have expressed a desire to ask

questions to the experts during the series.

He said speakers were selected based on their "expertise and availability" and include current Elliott faculty and alumni, like financial journalist and alumna Diana Henriques, who specialize in economics.

Donovan said the series has held five sessions so far, and officials are working on a sixth lecture hosted by Michael Schwartz, a Pulitzer-prize winning journalist for The New York Times.

He said he anticipates ongoing developments with the pandemic will provide topics of discussion for future sessions.

As the pandemic progresses, the series will also present the opportunity to look back to "see how expectations played out," Donovan said.

Hope Harrison, an associate professor of history and international affairs, said holding the series furthers the mission of the Elliott School to raise awareness about global issues, like the state of the economy and international responses to COVID-19, during the pandemic.

"We're an educational institution and whether we're on campus or not, we still have that mission, and we're still taking that and doing whatever we can to educate people," she said.

Harrison, who hosted a lecture on April 15 about Germany and the larger European response to COVID-19, discussed Chancellor Angela Merkel's efforts to lead Germany through the crisis, how German public opinion has reacted to her decisions and financial programs she implemented to sustain the economy.

She said in her lecture that Germany has implemented a program in which the government funds workers' salaries,

allowing companies to recover from the economic crisis the pandemic has caused without losing the investment they put into their employees, which she said had been useful when implemented during the 2008 crisis.

Harrison said the skills Merkel developed when living in East Germany helped her to lead the country during the crisis.

"People in East Germany, first of all communist East Germany, were used to some difficult circumstances and restrictions of their freedom even if they didn't like it," she said.

Maggie Chen, a professor of economics and international affairs, said she gave an overview on the current state of the global economy and discussed how the COVID-19 economic crisis is affecting various industries, occupations and countries differently.

"Most of the crises we have seen in the last decades were financial in nature, but this time around is very different," she said in her lecture. "It started as a health crisis and this health crisis quickly was converted into a shock in the labor market as the government introduced lockdowns."

Chen said the crisis has been challenging for labor environments in which working remotely is more difficult and is predicted to cause gross domestic product to decrease across countries with advanced economies. She said some of the "protectionist" measures like tariffs employed by countries concerned about globalization could slow down the global economic recovery.

"The pandemic is reinforcing some governments' concerns that globalization has gone too far and the fear of dependence on other countries is motivating some to turn more inward," she said.



Five events in Elliott School faculty and officials say a virtual speaker series focusing on domestic and international responses to COVID-19 has helped maintain a sense of community. FILE PHOTO BY ERIC LEE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Campus sidewalks too narrow for social distancing, map shows

JARROD WARDWELL
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Foggy Bottom sidewalks are too narrow to enable effective social distancing, according to a new website launched late last month.

The website, named "Sidewalk Widths DC," features an interactive map aimed to highlight a sprawling network of D.C. walkways too narrow to create the six feet of separation required for social distancing. Alumnus Matthew Holden, a geospatial data scientist for Wells+Associates – a transportation planning company – said he launched the website April 27 to increase the public's awareness of social distancing limitations on sidewalks and paths throughout the District.

"Narrow sidewalks on busy streets matter when people are trying to social distance because of public health and coronavirus issues," he said.

The website marks walkways up to 14 feet wide as either "too narrow" or "difficult" for pedestrians to social distance, whereas all other paths can allow for social distancing to occur. Holden said he used social distancing guidelines that require six feet of separation to decide whether or not a walkway was too narrow.

The blocks that cover GW's campus are part of the issue, according to the website's map. Walkways narrower than 14 feet appear on each block of campus and nearly surround blocks housing the Science and Engineering Hall, Shenkman Hall, University Yard and

Potomac House, the map shows.

Holden's site features a map of D.C. with color-coded lines running down the center of every sidewalk or path throughout the entire District. The lines switch color among sidewalks in increasing order of width from less than 10 feet in red to orange to tan to yellow to green to blue, which includes all walkways 20 feet and wider – considered "great" for social distancing.

Red dominates nearly the entire map, lining District streets narrower than six feet from Southeast to Northwest. The National Mall in addition to circles and parks scattered throughout the region like Washington Circle and Lafayette Square serve as the few locations with ample spacing for social distancing to occur, according to the map.

Holden said he was motivated to publish the website after seeing other cities like Oakland, Charlotte and Seattle implement new policies to expand sidewalks or block traffic to allow pedestrians more space to socially distance outdoors. He said he noticed how D.C.'s sidewalk extension measures near storefronts failed to match other legislative efforts in these other cities throughout the country.

Mayor Muriel Bowser shut down the National Mall and Tidal Basin in March after tourists crowded the area to catch a glimpse of the season's cherry blossom bloom, stirring widespread concern for the District's social distancing enforcement.

"The city hadn't really

announced a plan to do this like a lot of other cities had," Holden said. "They announced they were going to slowly extend some sidewalks in front of some grocery stores, but nothing city-wide. I was thinking about how to make a map or do something like this to bring attention to the issue."

Office of the Mayor spokeswoman LaToya Foster did not return a request for comment.

Bowser announced a plan last month that expanded sidewalks in five locations, including the placement of parking barriers in front of the Trader Joe's sidewalk near Washington Circle. Holden said sidewalk improvements like those at Trader Joe's, which installed barriers in an adjacent parking lane, have fallen short of creating new walkways that would protect pedestrian safety throughout the entire District.

"They put all these concrete barriers up, but it didn't in effect really give any more space," he said. "They're doing some things like that, but they aren't creating networks where people can actually move from place to place."

Holden said a similar New York website called "Sidewalk Widths NYC," which launched earlier last month to outline how sidewalks affect social distancing in New York City, served as another city-wide initiative that inspired him to create his own website. He said he adapted the code used to construct the NYC map and used mapping data from the D.C. government's website to design the site.

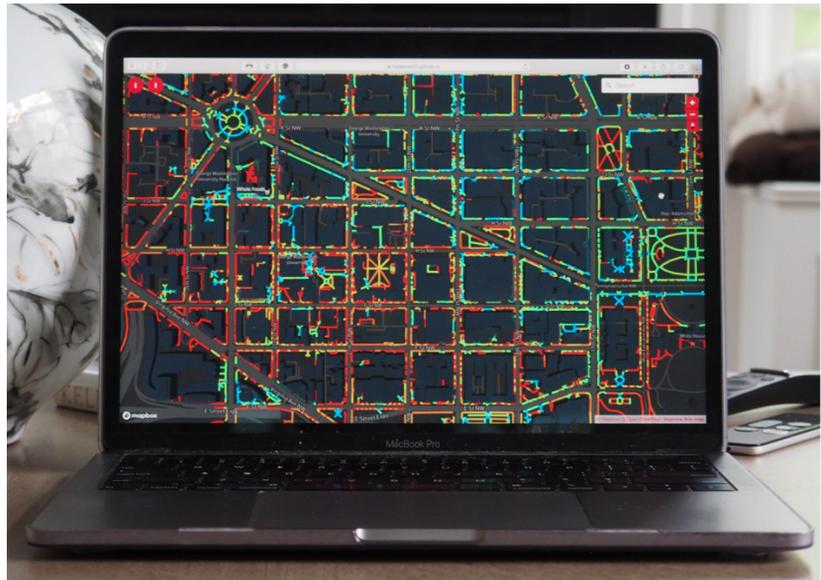


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE HROMIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Many of the sidewalks criss-crossing campus do not allow pedestrians to maintain an adequate distance away from others, according to a map developed by an alumnus.

Holden, who lives in Dupont Circle, said his neighborhood's sidewalks are narrow and lose even more space because of barriers like trash cans and tree beds planted into public walkways. He said pedestrians have to step into the street and in the way of oncoming traffic to avoid getting too close to other neighborhood locals.

"Everyone has that experience of walking in the city," he said. "But a map like this that has the whole city and you can see the pattern throughout the city, it's like 'Oh it's not just my neighborhood that is experiencing this or where I'm experiencing this. This is an issue for lots of people.'"

Holden said he received positive feedback after he communicated his map's findings with the Dupont Circle Advisory Neighborhood Commission, a local governing body, which has been sharing the map with other ANC members.

James Harnett, a senior and the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission's vice chair, said Foggy Bottom sidewalk space is limited because of the wideness of the streets that run through campus. He said neighborhood leaders need to start considering ways to convert roadways to pedestrian space and limit on-street parking.

"Our sidewalks are simply too narrow to allow

for pedestrians to safely physically distance from one another on the scale of thousands of people in a neighborhood that traditionally has wide roads for its vehicles," he said.

Harnett said ANC members and officials who serve as neighborhood "stakeholders" should consider sidewalk extensions, road closures and cycle lane protections to ensure pedestrians can practice social distancing in public spaces like sidewalks on campus.

"We need to try out things that we've never done before and upend the status quo that we have for too long relied on as part of our transportation policy to keep people safe," he said.

Researchers develop tool to determine number of contact tracers needed to reopen

CIARA REGAN
CONTRIBUTING NEWS
EDITOR

ISHA TRIVEDI
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Researchers at the Milken Institute School of Public Health developed a tool earlier this month to determine the number of COVID-19 contact tracers needed to reopen society in the United States.

The tool estimates a total of 165,000 contact tracers – people who help identify those who have come in contact with COVID-19 – are needed to reopen the country. Researchers involved in developing the tool said it will help health care officials plan ahead to determine the most accurate number of contact tracers needed to limit the spread of the outbreak.

Edward Salsberg, a professor of health policy and management, said many of the previous national projections of contact tracers needed were based on population-based ratios used in other states and countries and applied to the United States, instead of using tools that were designed specifically for the United States.

"We understood that many communities more severely affected by COVID-19 would need a higher number of

contact tracers because of the increased number of cases," he said in an email. "We wanted a tool that factored in the number of cases into the estimate of the contact tracing workforce."

Salsberg said the two Health Workforce Research Centers led by Patricia Pittman, the director of the Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Health Workforce Equity, supported the work on the tool. He said the U.S. government's Health Resources Administration provided \$450,000 in funding for the tool through a "collaborative agreement."

"Following the COVID-19 outbreak, HRSA solicited ideas for COVID-related projects that they could support, and both this estimator, as well as the state-level hospital workforce estimator, were selected as additional emergency projects to be funded this year," he said.

Candice Chen, an associate professor of health policy and management, said the tool starts with a baseline of 15 contact tracers for every 100,000 people and adds additional contact tracers for areas with a higher number of cases.

The tool shows the number of contact tracers needed at the national, state and county level when applying these

variables to the previous number of cases from the past 14 days, she said.

"We know that the number of cases in areas is changing too – some areas like NYC are seeing a decrease in cases and others are seeing an increase – and this will affect the number of contact tracers needed," Chen said.

She said the current estimate of national need for contact tracers is about 165,000, which was determined using the preset values for the calculator.

Chen said contact tracing helps control further spread of the virus as states and local communities move to reopen, and the tool is available online for anyone to use through this reopening process.

"There is a growing economic cost of state-wide quarantining and pressure to re-open," she said. "Expanded contact tracing allows states and counties to target those quarantining to those most at risk for the virus – those who have had contact with a known case."

University President Thomas LeBlanc said during a Faculty Senate meeting earlier this month that officials cannot invite students and faculty back to campus in the fall without COVID-19 testing, quarantine

capabilities and contact tracing.

Public health experts said the tool will help those involved in combating the COVID-19 pandemic, like health departments and policymakers, to limit the spread of the virus.

Richard Callahan, a professor of public health at the University of San Francisco, said the tool supports the public health workforce in protecting people from a contagious disease. He said the tool has the potential to be valuable to public health departments looking for evidence-based decision making.

"Investment in public health is an investment in our society," Callahan said. "Any estimates to help us understand the need for workforce investment in public health is valuable to society."

Marcelle Taylor Dougan, a professor of public health at San Jose State University, said the application of the tool should use "cultural competency" and should take into consideration the various cultural differences in communities within the United States.

"I want to make sure that this tool takes into account languages spoken in different communities across the U.S.," she said.

GW 'remains committed' to supporting survivors: officials

From Page 1

Washington said members of the GW community can fill out a feedback form to share their thoughts, concerns and questions about the new regulations, which officials will use to "inform" how the advocacy and support office will respond to Title IX policy changes.

"We remain committed to building a culture of care that empathetically supports, empowers and respects the autonomy of survivors," Washington said in an email.

Caroline Laguerre-Brown, the vice provost for diversity, equity and community engagement, said officials are reviewing the new regulations and will continue encouraging individuals to report allegations of sexual misconduct. Laguerre-Brown said officials will continue to provide support and services to individuals who do not file formal complaints.

"We understand that concerns have been raised that some of the new requirements may discourage individuals from coming forward with allegations of sexual misconduct," she said in an email. "The University remains committed to supporting and promoting the well-being of our community."

Title IX coordinator Rory Muhammad said the new regulations will require changes to the office, but GW's "key features" will remain the same.

"Today we do comprehensive and fair investigations, and under the new regulations we will continue to do comprehensive and fair investigations," Muhammad said in an email.

Officials declined to specify what changes they will make to the Title IX office and when changes will go into effect. Universities are required to comply with the new regulations by Aug. 14.

Students Against Sexual Assault released a statement on Facebook Wednesday condemning the changes and proposing measures officials can take to mitigate the regulations' "dangerous consequences."

SASA's proposals include measures like retaining the preponderance of evidence standard and maintaining "responsible employees" – faculty, staff and advisers who are required to report cases of sexual misconduct. The post called on officials to use outside judges with expertise in Title IX to hear evidence and determine responsibility instead of volunteers who lack training and may know the parties involved.

"SASA strongly condemns the [ED]'s changes as another shameless attack on survivors and other marginalized communities on college campuses," the post states.

Title IX experts said the new regulations will likely decrease reporting of sexual misconduct and "disempower" survivors.

Parham, the executive director of End Rape on Campus, said new

regulations define sexual harassment as severe or repeated trauma, which could present a barrier to reporting harassment.

The new regulations also require that universities carry out live hearings in sexual assault and sexual harassment cases instead of private investigations and both the complainant and the respondent be allowed to have an adviser throughout the length of the hearing, according to the education department's summary.

Parham said the live hearings will be unfair to survivors because they will have to be questioned by someone who is biased against them in favor of the accused.

"The live cross-examination piece would also be detrimental, particularly because having advisers of choice would then essentially mean that survivors are then even questioned of their truthfulness," Parham said.

She said students can call their congressional representatives urging them to reinstate the Campus Accountability and Safety Act, which would provide students with a confidential Title IX adviser and require comprehensive sexual assault and harassment reporting from universities.

"Essentially what that legislation would provide are a little bit more safeguard provisions in place," she said.

Shana Maier, a professor of criminal justice at Widener University in Pennsylvania, said the live hearings will force survivors to endure re-traumatization and revictimization.

"My concern is that it's going to lead to even less reporting, if they know that they have to sit in a room or wherever they may be with other people and with their alleged perpetrator and detail exactly what happened," Maier said. "It's almost like putting, for lack of a better use of words or way to put it, it's almost putting the survivor on trial."

She said students who report sexual harassment typically report after having repeated harassment experiences, and the new Title IX regulation makes reporting even more difficult for those individuals.

"I think it's problematic," Maier said. "Any legal changes that further disempower survivors, any legal changes that disempower survivors or minimize their experiences are certainly problematic."

Nellie Drew, the director of State University at Buffalo's Center for the Advancement of Sport, who researches Title IX, said requiring students to report directly to the Title IX director and attend a live hearing could lead to a decrease in reporting. She said the regulations are "tone deaf" to survivors' circumstances and deter students from reporting incidents to administrators.

"They completely ignore all that we've learned about victim awareness and how to treat a victim," she said. "And that's a major, major issue."



HATCHET FILE PHOTO
Researchers in the Milken Institute School of Public Health estimate that the United States needs roughly 165,000 public health staff to trace contact with COVID-19 patients to reopen the country.

CRIME LOG

THEFT II/FROM MOTOR VEHICLE, UNLAWFUL ENTRY OF A MOTOR VEHICLE

Fire Department: Engine 23 (Rear of Engine 23)

Unknown – Unknown
Case Open

A non-GW affiliated male reported his laptop stolen from his vehicle while parked at the fire station. There were no signs of forcible entry into the vehicle.

Open case

ROBBERY PURSE SNATCH/LARCENY

Off Campus
4/30/2020 – 8:00 p.m.

Closed Case

A male staff member reported his GWorld stolen while he was walking off campus.

Off-campus incident

THEFT II/FROM BUILDING

Smith Center
Unknown – Unknown

Open Case

A female staff member reported that a small amount of cash was stolen from an office inside the Smith Center.

Open case

THEFT II/BICYCLES

Public Property On Campus (900 Block of 23rd Street)

Unknown – Unknown

Closed Case

A male staff member reported his bicycle stolen.

No suspects or witnesses

DRUG LAW VIOLATION

Amsterdam Hall
5/11/2020 – 3:34 p.m.

Closed Case

GW Police Department officers responded to Amsterdam Hall where an area coordinator found a small amount of marijuana in a male student's room. The officers collected the marijuana and brought it to the Academic Center.

Referred to DSA

DRUG LAW VIOLATION

Amsterdam Hall
5/11/2020 – 6:09 pm.

Closed Case

GWPD officers responded to Amsterdam Hall where an area coordinator found a bong in a male student's room. The officers collected the bong and brought it to the Academic Center.

Referred to DSA

—Compiled by Kateryna Stepanenko



FILE PHOTO BY DEAN WHITELAW | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
The organization held biweekly events throughout the school year focusing on the experiences of women of color.

Women of color student group works with organizations, holds events across D.C.

MAKENA ROBERTS
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Members of a group for female minority students said the organization established a space on campus exclusively for female students of varied cultures to discuss their experiences.

Executive board members of GW Women of Color, an organization launched in September to unite women of different ethnicities, said members hosted events every other week during the academic year like a women's history night, a professional panel of minority women in the workforce and open table discussions about minority students' challenges in the classroom. Group leaders said they focused their events on discussions around a "broader" identity of being a minority woman in everyday life.

Rising sophomore Taarika Gopinath, the organization's community chair, said many other organizations like the Indian Students Association are centered around specific ethnicities and can feel "isolating" because participants are not able to share their "unique"

experiences if they do not align with the organization's focused culture. The group's open table discussion about the challenges minority students face in the classroom, like expectations to be an expert on their own culture, allows minority students to learn from one another's experiences, she said.

"While we may be different, we have shared experiences not being part of the majority in this country," Gopinath said. "What we really want and what the founders wanted was to build a space for women, especially who are often hit with a double standard when you're a person of color and you're female."

She said members organized a women's history event in early March focused on historical and current women in STEM, government and art to connect different fields with students' interests.

The organization hosted a professional panel in November to discuss challenges in the workforce and address students' concerns about classroom obstacles, like discussions around "sensitive" topics for students as part of

a "traditionally oppressed identity," she said.

She said speakers of the panel included Scheherazade Rehman, an international finance and business professor; Madalene Xuan-Irang, the president of the Asian Pacific American Institute for Congressional Studies; and Jacqueline Reyes, an audit senior at Ernst and Young – a multinational professional service firm.

She said the group intends to expand its outreach to the GW Alumni Association in the fall to increase the organization's professional events and guest speakers. The e-board members spoke with other student organizations like Women in Finance and Casa Blanca – a Latinx infinity in District House – this year to participate in and co-sponsor each other's events throughout the academic year, like a movie night and discussion about the movie "Hidden Figures."

"We wanted them to advertise what we were doing but we didn't necessarily enlist their help because I feel like a lot of people – just based on how society is – a lot of professional people are predominantly Caucasian,"

she said.

The group leaders created a website last summer to feature the organization's upcoming events, and members sent out a bi-weekly newsletter to general body members about events throughout the year.

AnaSofía Stieglitz, a recent graduate and the organization's former vice president, said roughly 15 students on average participated in the organization's bi-weekly events throughout the academic year. The Women in History event emphasized women across different fields of study so a "broader" community of students attended the event, she said.

Stieglitz said the organization collaborated with Kavita Daiya, the director of the Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies program and an associate professor of English, to discuss holding open table events – designed for students to talk about personal experiences as a woman of color – for next semester. She said the organization is working with Daiya to create a "staple" event with professional networking opportunities and food from multiple cultures.

Officials 'face immediately tough choices'

From Page 1

"The greatest challenge that GW faced, along with other institutions of higher education and local, state and the federal government, was the quick pace of developments," Burnotes said in an email. "There is still a lot of uncertainty regarding information about the disease because it is a new and unknown factor in our daily lives."

He said the task force includes a wide group of administrators from across the University, including the Division of Safety and Security; GW's medical experts and faculty; Facilities Planning, Construction and Management; the Division for Student Affairs; the Division of External Relations; and the Student Association.

Each task force call begins with local, regional, state and federal situation reports with subsequent follow-ups on previous issues and updates from the group's various stakeholders, he said.

Beyond the task force and Crisis Decision Team, Burnotes said the University Leadership Council and other groups meet on a "regular basis" to coordinate GW's pandemic response.

When the crisis intensified, officials transitioned classes online for the latter portion of the spring semester, packed and stored students' belongings in residence halls and provided refunds for lost housing, dining and parking costs.

"But these and other decisions come with increased costs and decreased revenues estimated in the tens of millions

of dollars," LeBlanc wrote in a message to the GW community last week. "We have been working hard to manage this unexpected and significant financial impact."

GW is projected to face a net loss of \$25 million through June 30 as a result of the pandemic. Officials expect GW to lose between an additional \$100 million and \$300 million depending on when students return to campus, which may not happen until 2021.

LeBlanc said officials will need to make "personnel decisions" to offset lost revenues, which could include furloughs, pay and benefit reductions or early retirement options. Officials suspended merit pay increases next year, and top administrators will take a pay cut beginning July 1 – including a 20 percent pay reduction for LeBlanc.

"We face immediately tough choices," he said at the Board meeting Friday. "We continue to listen to staff and students, consult with the Faculty Senate and share our discussions comprehensively with the Board of Trustees before making a budget decision."

Board Chair Grace Speights said Friday the Board's executive committee has met three times since early February, mainly to discuss GW's pandemic response. The Board voted in early April to pause the development of GW's next strategic plan as a result of the pandemic at LeBlanc's recommendation.

"You have given more time, more energy and more resources than you have ever had to do before," Speights told trustees.

Diaz, the executive vice

president, said in an interview earlier this month that the degree of uncertainty is "significant" as circumstances continue to change, which has made it more difficult to plan and make major decisions.

Officials plan to make a final decision on bringing students back to campus in the fall by mid-June.

Diaz said as officials grapple with major budgetary changes as a result of the pandemic, administrators are considering every scenario and option rather than limiting themselves in a "premature" way.

"We have to make sure we have all mitigation actions on the table," he said.

Blake, the provost, said at a senate meeting earlier this month that two groups formed during the pandemic – the Fall Enrollment Planning Committee and a Fall Re-Open Operations Initiative Committee – are spearheading GW's contingency planning. Officials also formed five working groups – enrollment and retention, academic and faculty planning, student residential life, public health and research – to inform decision-making, he said.

Blake said the committees and working groups, which comprise more than 45 members in total, have released various surveys and met with students and faculty to garner ideas.

"The planning committees will be sending subject-matter expertise and planning reports to the operations committee and other leadership," Blake said. "In those conversations, we'll pull all that info together and develop some basic scenarios and contingency plans."

Student workers say they face a heightened risk of contracting COVID-19

From Page 1

Addressing health concerns

Rising sophomore and EMeRG crew member Alex Hastava said he has worked with Huntington, New York's first aid squad as an EMT crew leader since officials announced residence halls would close in March. Hastava said he worked 12 hours each week to prioritize school during the online learning period but is planning to increase his availability during the summer to help.

Hastava said the first aid squad is conducting contact tracing to help the Suffolk County Medical Control Agency, a volunteer ambulance service provided by Stony Brook University Hospital, to keep virus cases minimal. He said his county borders Nassau County, which is reported to have the most COVID-19 cases in the United States besides New York City.

"Our chief dispatcher just ran the numbers and we've had 500 calls in the past month alone, and in one of our record days in March, there were I think 36 calls in one day," Hastava said.

Sophomore Amy Elsherbiny, a public health major working as an emergency department technician at the GW hospital, said she works 60 hours a week attending to patients with COVID-19, in addition to patients needing emergency assistance for conditions like strokes.

Elsherbiny said she has been exposed to more than 50 patients diagnosed with COVID-19, but the hospital takes many precautionary measures to protect staff and patients like placing patients diagnosed with the virus in separate waiting areas.

"Do I ever feel at risk of getting COVID? Sure, like all the time," she said. "Am I worried that my work is not doing enough to protect me in that sense? I would say they're doing everything that they can now."

Elsherbiny said the experience of working in the emergency room during a pandemic has taught her to prioritize connecting with patients, who she said are more on edge with concerns of being infected.

She said she doesn't have an extra 10 minutes to get to know her patients like she used to because she has to move quickly between many patients. But Elsherbiny tries to ask questions about their personal lives in the few minutes she does have to calm them down, she said.

"I've had days where I've had 20 people that I have to care for," Elsherbiny said. "And I have two nurses and me, and we have 20 people between us, and it's just an insane workflow to juggle."

Balancing school and work

Albina Galimullina, a junior majoring in psychology, said she has had to balance working at a local ice cream shop and her uncle's law firm as an office assistant in Baltimore, Maryland since classes moved online. Galimullina said she saw herself falling behind in her courses once she began to work 25 hours each week to support her family that had experienced unemployment due to the pandemic.

"It's just insane how difficult this job is," Galimullina said. "I come home, my back aches, my arm hurts, everything hurts and I just fall asleep early. So I have been falling behind with my schoolwork."

Galimullina said her night shifts end at 10 p.m., causing her to adjust her sleeping schedule to stay up until 3 a.m. to complete schoolwork and sleep through her recorded lectures the following morning. She said she made sure to communicate with her "understanding" professors for extended deadlines on projects and exams whenever she felt overwhelmed.

Olympia Victor, a sophomore majoring in international affairs, said she works as a cashier at BJ's Wholesale Club for more than 20 hours each week in East Rutherford, New Jersey. She said for the past couple of months, she worked the job on top of her now-completed internship and federal work study position both for the Colombian College of Arts and Sciences.

She said she struggled with time management because she had to organize her time around her work schedule to complete her coursework.

She said her FWS position in the CCAS counseling office required her to remotely scan documents, but she was unable to work more than a few hours each week because of her "inconsistent" schedule at BJ's. She said her professors were understanding of her situation and gave her flexible deadlines to complete her remote work.

"I think for me, just because I knew that office I worked in on campus, everyone was very understanding," Victor said. "When I cut down on the time, they were very understanding of that."

New federal Title IX guidelines will hurt survivors and shield perpetrators

STAFF EDITORIAL

Students who need to use Title IX should always expect a process that is caring and dedicated to the truth. But those who need Title IX resources may soon face obstacles that make it more difficult to come forward about sexual assault or harassment.

The Department of Education released new Title IX regulations earlier this month slated to take effect by August 14. The regulations will require Title IX proceedings to allow cross-examination of all parties involved and switch from a single-investigator model to one involving at least three officials: one to investigate, one to adjudicate and one to issue disciplinary action. The new regulations also mandate the officials investigate incidents that occur on school-affiliated, off-campus properties and include stalking and domestic violence as sexual harassment.

The changes will transform the Title IX process to something resembling criminal proceedings. While there are some positive changes, the downsides of the policy vastly outweigh them, and in some cases directly counteract the positive portions of the regulations. The University needs to be active in advocating against these new regulations before they take effect in August.

One example of this give-and-take is seen in the definitions of sexual harassment and assault. Stalking and domestic violence will now be categorized as harassment under Title IX, a notable blind spot in previous regulations and a step toward

justice. But the same regulations also raise the threshold for conduct to count as sexual assault — unwelcome actions have to be "severe" and "pervasive." While more activities now fall under the purview of Title IX, any conduct has to reach a higher bar to be investigated, which will result in miscarriages of justice on campuses nationwide.

The rest of the changes under the new Title IX policy will discourage survivors from coming forward to make complaints and tip the scales of justice in favor of the wealthy or better-

connected. One of the most drastic changes is the introduction of cross-examination in Title IX proceedings. Under the guidelines, a third party — a family member, an attorney, a friend — is able to cross-examine the survivor and the accused party. The education department is seeking to introduce an element from the criminal justice system into Title IX proceedings. But universities aren't courtrooms, and Title IX officials aren't judges. This set of guidelines will allow wealthier accused parties — be they students, officials or professors — to evade justice

by hiring an expensive attorney and force survivors to relive traumatic events during cross-examination, disincantizing them from speaking up about their assault in the first place.

The new changes will also lengthen the time until justice is served in Title IX proceedings. By eschewing the single-investigator model in favor of multiple parties, investigations will take longer, and survivors will spend more time reflecting on disturbing events in vivid detail, especially since information may fall through the cracks as cases move

from one official to another. The changes may also force survivors to explain their case over and over again to new people. GW officials adopted the single-investigator model to replace the six-person hearing board that complainants previously had to face, which received criticism. The return to a multiple-investigator model creates a lengthy and unnecessary obstacle to justice.

Taken as a whole, the guidelines do not focus on assisting survivors — rather, they are more of a measure to prevent theoretical false accusations from leading to unwarranted disciplinary action. The idea that false allegations of misconduct are widespread is simply not reflective of reality — rather, it is a talking point often parroted by opponents of efforts that support justice for survivors. It is valid to support a more formalized process for determining guilt or innocence, but these new guidelines go far beyond that — they allow perpetrators of sexual assault to be let off the hook.

For these new changes to be implemented, GW — which receives federal funding and thus must adopt these rules — will also need to hire and train people to take on the roles of the multiple investigators that the proposal details, in addition to updating definitions and creating new procedures. Yet universities have relatively little time — just three months — to implement these rules. This is problematic given the unprecedented pandemic that has evacuated cam-

puses nationwide. While all federally funded universities have to comply with these new orders, the deadline to implement them came at the wrong time, as higher education officials are occupied with issues threatening their institutions' solvency.

But administrators at GW are not powerless and should take action to help survivors and bring perpetrators to justice. GW's officials should join administrators from other colleges, like University of California President Janet Napolitano, in voicing opposition to these changes. And given that organizations like the American Civil Liberties Union are issuing court challenges, the University should explore filing amicus briefs to try and help block these new guidelines. In the meantime, GW can release information to the student body explaining what these new rules mean for its students.

The education department's imposition of these new guidelines will put survivors through even more trauma and hardship than they have already endured, while creating opportunities for perpetrators of sexual assault to get off scot-free. No one who turns to a university's Title IX office deserves to be put through brutal cross-examination where traumatic details are rehashed. Unless these new changes are rolled back, colleges will enter an era where those who commit sexual assault will face even less accountability, and those who experience it will receive even less support.



Cartoon by Tara Peckham

Graduates are an inspiration to the GW community

The Class of 2020's final days at GW have been upended by a pandemic, leaving them to watch University President Thomas LeBlanc confer their degrees on a computer instead of in the backdrop of the National Mall.

Hannah Thacker
Opinions Editor

Graduates did not end their college careers in the way they imagined. They could not surround themselves with friends and family, they could not receive hugs and flowers from their family and they could not take their quintessential #OnlyAtGW picture in front of the Lincoln Memorial. But whether they liked it or not, the class set an example for what it truly means to make the best out of difficult circumstances. Their sacrifices should be commended and remembered as we work to return to normal in the coming months.

It's not the first challenge the Class of 2020 faced during their time at GW. Graduates have needed to adjust to a new University president and several new administrators, saw changes to their dining plans and participated in historic protests following the presidential election, school shootings and

the confirmation of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh. With every experience, the class was able to learn about what it means to advocate and ultimately adapt to change. They may have not known it at the time, but with every curveball they were thrown, they grew a bit more.

Now, their Commencement was scrapped because of a public health crisis. And once they head into the world, graduates will face a declining economy, skyrocketing unemployment rates and uncertainty over when the pandemic will subside. They deserved better than a virtual graduation ceremony, but the class should know that they have demonstrated what it means to take everything with a grain of salt and adjust.

It would be easy to fall into a black hole about now: your graduation isn't going as planned, you need to find a job in the middle of a pandemic and the state and health of our nation is in question. Even with all these negatives, I have still seen countless graduation pictures of people in their cap and gown, surrounded by family, in their childhood home or in their apartment, trying to make the best of this situation.

The Class of 2020 is an inspiration to us all. When we start

to complain about the mundane things in life like finals or our potentially annoying roommates, we should all remember what the Class of 2020 endured. They took the time to be upset, then adapted to the change and continued to celebrate with smiles on their faces.

While many of our graduating class have every reason to wallow, many are getting right to work. Those graduating with degrees in medicine and health sciences are preparing to enter a workforce that is on the front lines of fighting the pandemic. Those graduating with degrees in political science or international affairs are aiming to work toward a more just world and democracy. Some who don't yet have a job are still working as essential personnel in grocery stores and businesses. Their commitment and discipline should inspire us all to work harder and appreciate what we have right now.

The Class of 2020 should know that if they can endure a pandemic as they enter the workforce, they can tackle pretty much anything. This year's graduates are flexible and dedicated — we shouldn't forget about them as we continue our time at GW.

—Hannah Thacker, a rising junior majoring in political communication, is the opinions editor.

Remember the rights you enjoyed before the pandemic

After a national crisis, the government has a tendency to take our rights away from us.

The 9/11 attacks prompted officials at the time to strip our rights to online privacy. Our phone and internet usage data has since been funneled without our consent into government databases to be evaluated. This practice, under the Patriot Act, was justified to us as a temporary national security initiative to prevent further terrorist plots. But after 19 years, as our data continues to be collected by the government and freely sold between tech companies, we are no closer to gaining our online privacy back. It's as if we had never had it in the first place.

Filip Vachuda
Writer

To build up our army during World War II, the government instituted Selective Service, an emergency initiative requiring all men under 35 to register for potential conscription. But the idea of conscription was so normalized after the war's end that the program was renewed and remains in effect to this day. Those who were once able to refuse military service are now denied access to federal benefits, including student aid, if they don't put their name down for a potential draft.

Now, under the threat of COVID-19, the government has strictly limited where we can go and who we can interact with. Most of us happily accept this without question because we understand the restrictions to be temporary and a necessary measure for society to recover, but assuming that things will go back to normal once the virus is eliminated is naive.

To prevent the spread of the virus, policymakers are taking

increasingly drastic measures to curtail our individual rights and freedoms. We must not normalize these emergency regulations as we have done so many times before. If we do, they could permeate our way of life for years beyond this pandemic; leading to excessive government control over our healthcare, movement and even speech.

Bill Gates, the world's largest funder of coronavirus vaccines, recently called for public digital certificates of every American's vaccination status, which would take away our right to patient confidentiality. Tech companies are developing contact tracing applications for governments that would track people's locations 24/7, taking away our right to privacy from state surveillance. YouTube plans to ban all videos contradicting World Health Organization guidelines, which would strip our right to critique an unelected international organization. Meanwhile, Denmark passed a law allowing its authorities to vaccinate people without their consent. If we followed suit, we would no longer have the right — so cherished in most contexts — to choose what's done with our own bodies.

Our constitutional rights to free assembly, religion and protest have also been challenged by the virus, as funeral attendees, church worshippers and protesters alike have been arrested to halt the spread. The consequence of this is perhaps the most worrying of them all: where our government can assume absolute, unconstitutional power at a moment's notice whenever it declares an emergency; and be met with hardly any skepticism from Americans.

While these policies are useful in curbing the spread of the virus, any of these policies would be borderline authoritarian in normal times. It would be dangerous if we allowed them

to set precedents for our society going forward. Say the government instituted mandatory contact tracing apps — many would clamor for them to become lasting fixtures of our lives to prevent future deaths. Tyrannical government surveillance could become commonplace unless we remember what life was like beforehand and stand up against it.

As we've seen with Selective Service after World War II or online privacy after 9/11, we often fail to remember the freedoms we enjoyed before a crisis and normalize a more oppressive life. If we continue down this same path, we may one day forget we ever could travel or assemble without a government permit, or even shake hands with a friend without first verifying their health status.

No matter where you may stand politically, you should always remember what your rights were before this pandemic. Try to think beyond just the number of COVID-19-related deaths and consider the broader societal ramifications of any policy. As restrictions continue, ask yourself whether it is still necessary for your rights to be denied you, and ensure your sacrificing them now will not lead to their permanent forfeiture. The coronavirus won't last longer than a year or two, but the consequences of our lost civil liberties could be felt for generations.

Above all, do not take individual liberty for granted as just some antiquated, right-wing talking point. Individual liberty is at the core of each decision we have made throughout our entire lives. If we lose it, we are little more than glorified automatons.

Let's save lives as much as we can; but not create a future in which we'd rather not live at all.

— Filip Vachuda, a rising junior majoring in international affairs and economics, is an opinions writer.

Culture

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THE SCENE

A NIGHT OF COVENANT HOUSE STARS

May 18 • Free
YouTube Livestream
Join singers like Dolly Parton and Jon Bon Jovi for a night of performances to raise money for homeless and at-risk youth.

INDIGO GIRLS

May 21 • Free
Instagram Livestream
The iconic duo will perform some of their most popular hits, which you can watch all from your couch.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

“HOW I’M FEELING NOW,” AN ALBUM BY CHARLI XCX

Where to find effective masks around the DMV, online

RIKA KANESHIGE
REPORTER

Wearing a mask in public is pretty much commonplace during the COVID-19 pandemic.

You can purchase an effective mask from dozens of businesses, or you can make your own mask following guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. If you’re in the market to find your own, we’ve compiled a list of businesses around the DMV and online selling protective gear for your face.

Pizza and a side of masks

At All-Purpose Pizzeria’s Riverside location, you can buy child or adult-sized fabric masks along with ordering your pizza dinner. Chef Adam McClendon’s mother is hand sewing these patterned masks with designs like Washington Nationals and Capitals patterns imprinted on them.

\$10 each. For pick up at 79 Potomac Ave. SE or delivery with DoorDash. Order online here. Open 11 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. Friday through Sunday and 4 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Tuesday through Thursday.

Masks designed by D.C. locals

Shop Made in D.C. has updated its inventory to

include cloth mask lines by local D.C. craftspeople. If you want to check out different fits and styles, you can view the selection on Shop Made in D.C.’s website. These masks can be shipped if you want to support D.C. small business but are out of the area.

Mask prices range from \$12 to \$17 each.

Disposable masks with your steak dinner

The Grill steakhouse in D.C. is offering a cheaper alternative to cloth masks. Customers can add up to five disposable masks to their pick up or delivery orders. Customers can also add nitrile gloves by pair or latex gloves by the box and hand sanitizer to their orders.

Masks, \$4.99 each (max five per order), nitrile gloves, \$7.99 per pair (max one pair per order), latex gloves, \$5.99 (max one box per order). For pick up at 99 Market Square SW or delivery with DoorDash. Open 11:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Masks to represent your favorite basketball team

The NBA is selling cloth masks with all of the team logos and patterns. You can buy single masks for about \$15 each or “fanatics” packs with three different styles of your team’s logo for about

\$25.
Single mask for \$14.99, three-pack for \$24.99.

Stylish masks to accent your outfit

Anthropologie, an American clothing and lifestyle brand, added vibrantly patterned cloth masks to their inventory. From floral to gingham fabrics, these cloth masks will make staying safe a fashion statement.

Masks range from \$14 to \$38 each.

Stylish masks to match your outfit

Revolve, a designer apparel retailer, takes fashion masks to the next level. Some of its masks are made with fabric to match a clothing item or set. Some are made to match sweatsuits, while others match fancy dresses.

Masks range from \$14 to \$45 each.

Disney-themed masks

Disney is designing cloth masks featuring your favorite Disney, Pixar, Star Wars and Marvel characters. The masks are offered in small, medium and large sizes in packs of four. Profits from the character-themed masks will be donated to MedShare, a company that donates medical supplies globally.

Four pack of masks for \$19.99 each.



Muslim students say the pandemic disallows community engagement and makes fasting more difficult as they observe Ramadan, a month of prayer and reflection in Islam. COURTESY OF SHEREEN RAGEB

Students switch up Ramadan traditions amid pandemic

ZEINA MOHAMMED
STAFF WRITER

Before the pandemic forced many places of worship to close, recent graduate Sayf Merzouk spent Ramadan attending “Taraweeh”, nightly prayers conducted in mosques, alongside friends and family.

But for the past few weeks of Ramadan, Merzouk said he has filled the time by reading the Quran, praying by himself and spending time with his parents. He said his sense of time while in quarantine can feel “simultaneously fast and slow,” making fasting during Ramadan particularly “tiresome.”

“I think I can speak for most people when I say quarantine has altered our perception of time,” he said.

Usually a period of congregation, from nightly prayer to community “iftars” — breaking fast — those observing Ramadan have needed to adapt their traditions in the wake of the pandemic. In interviews, Muslim students said they miss being able to spend time with friends and family to pray and break fast, but they have been able to more intentionally observe the holiday by themselves or with immediate family.

Recent graduate Isha Rauf said Ramadan is typically a “community-based holiday month,” but this year she isn’t able to gather with others for worship.

“I miss being in the mosque when it’s just way too packed,” she said. “There’s too many people. It’s too loud. You want to kick someone’s kid. Just the chaotic, hectic experience.”

Rauf said her days typically stretch from 1 p.m. to 6 a.m., which helps her fast throughout the day. She fills her days by completing schoolwork, reading the Quran, scrolling through TikTok and enjoying time with her family, she said.

She added that while she misses being able to pray in a mosque, praying by herself has helped her focus and spend time alone and away from her family.

Graduate student Ibrahim Diane, who lives by himself in Silver Springs, Maryland, said he usually passes time by spending time with others recognizing Ramadan, but he has needed to find ways to keep himself occupied alone.

“Normally, at least I could go to the mosque, which really gives you a sense of purpose,” Diane said.

Diane said that while time passes slowly, he is exerting less energy throughout the day, which helps him fast. During his nightly meals, Diane said he has tried to find comfort in “typical dishes” he would usually eat with family.

“I’ve tried to cook the typical dishes that we eat but, aside from that, ev-

erything is different when your family’s not with you,” he said.

Diane said that without being able to celebrate Ramadan with other people, he has needed to find motivation to fast and pray. He said Ramadan has become more meaningful because he has more time to think about why he chooses to observe it.

“When you are alone, it’s harder to motivate yourself and easier to question things,” he said. “When you begin to fast away from your culture, you really mean it, it really has to come from you.”

Recent graduate Majula Swareh said recognizing Ramadan this year has helped her become more “intentional” about why she fasts. Most Muslims seek to form a closer connection to God during Ramadan, she said.

“Often times we grow up Muslim culturally, so we’re just fasting because we’re fasting with groups of people as opposed to making the conscious decision to fast because it’s the right thing to do or because I’m trying to get in touch with myself and with God,” she said.

She added that observing Ramadan away from the rest of her family is frustrating, but she is using the month to focus on praying.

“We’re in the middle of a global pandemic, so you really have no choice but to pray,” she said.



At several D.C. businesses, you can order dinner with masks on the side to protect yourself, your roommates and your family from COVID-19. ERIC LEE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Students reinvent social functions over video calls

CHLOE KEARIN WILLEFORD
REPORTER

DIEGO MENDOZA
CONTRIBUTING CULTURE
EDITOR

You may be living thousands of miles away from your friends, but that doesn’t mean your 21st birthday has to be spent alone in your bedroom.

As a result of stay-at-home orders and social distancing measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19, many large events like concerts, performances and lectures have moved online. Beyond that, personal events like birthday parties, family reunions, dates and happy hours are taking place over Zoom, FaceTime and Skype to safely stay in touch with friends and family.

Here is how four students have taken advantage of video chat platforms to connect with others during the pandemic.

Friendship across state lines

Rising junior Hana Hancock said she organized a digital birthday surprise for her friend’s 20th birthday in early April, which helped her keep her relationships strong while people practiced social distancing.

“She was really shocked and a little emotional because we were all separated,” Hancock said.

Hancock said she and six other friends joined a call on Zoom to catch up since leaving GW, but about an hour into the conversation, Hancock surprised her friend celebrating the birthday with a slideshow displaying pictures of their time together at GW.

“We wanted to show her that we want to celebrate her, and that we love her and we’re still thinking about her despite not being together,” she said.

Hancock said the ideal night out would have consisted of a residence hall party or a dinner at one of her friend’s favorite restaurants, but Zoom enabled her to present a gift without seeing her in person.

Family reunions turn digital

Rising sophomore Maria Cueto Vélez said she has used Zoom to keep in touch with her family in the Dominican Republic while she quarantines.

Cueto Vélez said she previously traveled to relatives’ homes on weekends to cook, but they are now using Zoom to catch up. Every week, she and her family plan a list of topics to discuss for the next meeting so they never run out of things to talk about, she said.

Cueto Vélez said the virtual meetings help bring her family closer together. Video calls usually last for a few hours each and include up to 15 family members,

she said.

“I feel like we’re closer because when I was in D.C., I wasn’t really talking to my extended family,” she said. “So now that we’re all quarantined, we’re finding an excuse to talk to each other.”

Game night over Zoom

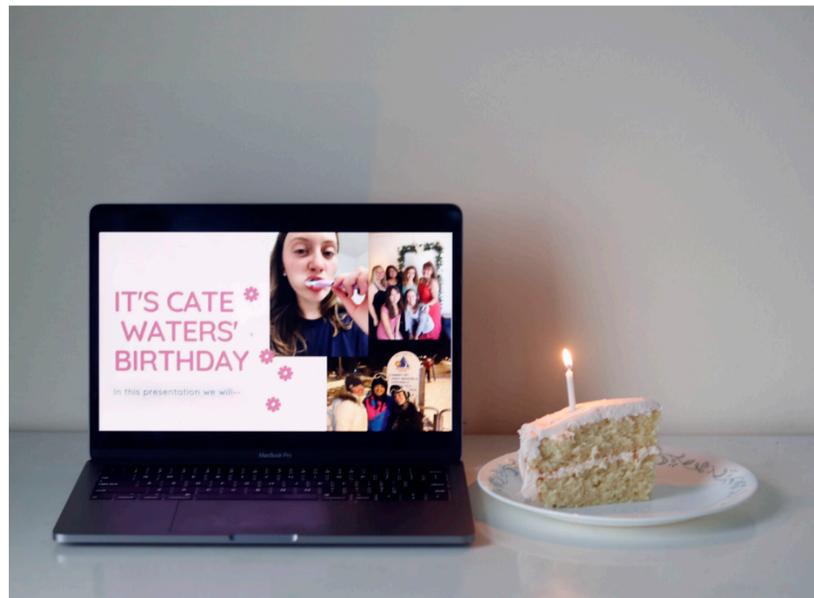
Just because there’s no more trivia night at Tonic doesn’t mean you have to give up game nights, rising junior Lizzie Irwin said.

Irwin said she and six other friends organized a virtual game night just after spring break with online activities like a Pictionary challenge and a virtual adaptation of Cards Against Humanity. The group played games for four hours, from 8 p.m. to midnight, she said.

“I think we wanted to catch up in a fun way versus doing another Zoom call and just talking — there wasn’t much conversation left, I guess,” Irwin said.

The group couldn’t share snacks or cocktails during the game night, but Irwin said being able to spend time with friends over Zoom helped them connect with each other when the semester moved online.

“It really does feel like sometimes you can’t hang out because it’s as close to socializing as possible,” she said. “It’s just one of those cool things where you can show your friends your



Students are organizing virtual birthday celebrations, parties, family reunions and game nights as COVID-19 halts in-person gatherings. CAMILLE DESANTO | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

childhood bedroom.”

A virtual rager

Having just been evacuated from her study abroad experience in Spain, rising junior Zoe Kusnick said she was lonely at home in Nevada, so she used her 21st birthday as an excuse to throw a drinking party for nearly 50 people over Zoom.

“I also thought it was funny because I have a lot of friends that don’t know each other, from when I studied abroad and from like home and school,” Kusnick said.

“So I thought, ‘let’s just put them all in a Zoom together and see how they do.’”

Besides watching “Never Have I Ever” videos on YouTube, Kusnick said she found a website where she and her guests could all play the drinking game King’s Cup. Naturally, the night of fun resulted in a large group of intoxicated college students, she said.

“I think there was a range of drunkenness, because some people weren’t drinking at all, but some people came on at the be-

ginning and stayed to the end and drank with me,” she said.

Kusnick added that if she were to throw another virtual party, she would gather a few friends who all know each other to avoid awkward interactions in a large video call.

“Like any large video call, it is so stressful, especially because I was the only person that everybody knew,” she said. “There was a lot of pressure on me to talk a lot, which I do already, but it was still scary.”

GAMES OF THE PAST



SAILING
at St. Sperry Women's National Championship
Tuesday, May 23, 2017
Sailing ended day one of the women's nationals in fifth place.



BASEBALL
vs. Xavier
Wednesday, May 22, 2013
Seven years ago, the No. 3 seeded Colonials opened the postseason with a road loss to Xavier.

NUMBER CRUNCH **231**

The number of career games senior outfielder Mike Bassett recorded on May 25, 2002, setting the all-time program record.

Sports management professor brought 'unique' insight to business school

BELLE LONG
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

Mark Hyman, an assistant teaching professor of sports management, will serve as the new George Solomon Endowed Chair in Sports Journalism of Maryland's Povich Center, according to a press release Thursday.

During his seven-year tenure with the management department in the GW School of Business, he taught courses in sports media and communication, law, finance and video production and brought a lineup of guest speakers to campus. While Hyman said he is sad to leave the University, he added that he was honored to take on his new opportunity at Maryland.

"This is a unique opportunity to lead one of the elite university sports journalism programs in the country," Hyman said in an email.

The center was formed under former Washington Post sports editor George Solomon, who Hyman called an "icon" in the sports journalism profession. He added that he will take on broader responsibilities as chair, including mentoring students, developing curriculum and planning symposia and other special events. At GW, Hyman primarily focused on teaching.

Hyman began his career as a sports journalist, earning bylines in The New York Times, Sports Illustrated, Time.com and The Post. He reported on the Orioles as a beat writer for the Baltimore Sun and covered the "pay for play" scandal that brought down the Southern Methodist University's football program during his time in the field.

Beyond teaching, Hyman hosted the GW Business of Sports podcast and worked on several research projects,

often including business school students as research assistants. After teaching a class in 2015 on the development of baseball in China, Hyman and several students began developing a documentary on the hunt for the first Chinese Major League Baseball player.

Hyman said he was grateful GW gave him the opportunity to create "experiential courses" which have allowed him and some of his students to travel across the world for research. They've gone to China for documentary production, Japan to research sports globalization and the West Coast to learn about the athletic apparel industry, he said.

In his role as a professor, Hyman and his classes have also worked with the athletic department. His Sports Media and Communication class analyzed several social media accounts and presented the athletic department with its findings, and his video production course paired with ESPN+ to operate cameras during games.

Lisa Delpy Neirotti, the director of the sports management program, hired Hyman as an adjunct professor in 2011. She said his experience as a baseball beat reporter and sports business journalist, coupled with his willingness to teach courses outside of his expertise, were "ideal" for the position.

Neirotti added that Hyman shared her mission for the sports management program to provide "unique learning experiences both in and out of the classroom."

"His contacts in sport media and baseball are extensive and allowed us to bring a number of well-known sport personalities to campus both in-person and virtually," Neirotti said in an email.

Sports professionals and



FILE PHOTO BY JACK FONSECA | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Mark Hyman, an assistant teaching professor of sports management, will leave the School of Business to join University of Maryland's journalism school July 1.

commentators like 2018 Olympic figure skater Adam Rippon, sports reporter Ken Rosenthal and sports columnist Christine Brennan made guest appearances and gave lectures to students in Hyman's courses.

Bailee Weisz, a 2020-graduate, former president of the Sports Business Association and three-time student of Hyman's, said Hyman helped his students form connections with professionals he brought in by allowing students to moderate discussions.

"He told us that at this point in his life, he really doesn't need to make any more connections or he really doesn't need to boost his resume," Weisz said. "Whatever opportunity he can give to his students to have a lasting impact on these industry professionals, he's going to try and do that."

Weisz said Hyman taught her the importance of examining any issue or problem from multiple angles, a skill she said he picked up as a journalist.

"His journalism background really taught him that and he really emphasized that through a lot of different interactions I had with him, whether it was in the classroom or outside the classroom," she said.

As the year winded down, Weisz said she attended an online sports management celebration meant to commemorate graduating students, but the students filled the time with "accolades" about Hyman. She added that he humbly tried to steer the conversation back to the senior class, but the students refused to let his impact go unrecognized.

"We all just completely disregarded it just because he's been so instrumental during our time that it would be a disservice for us not to celebrate him and thank him," Weisz said.

While she is sad to see him leave her alma mater, Weisz said she couldn't think of anyone "more deserving for the role" at Maryland. She added that even though his classes at GW weren't centered around journalism, he would "sprinkle in a little bit of that journalism background."

"I'm just happy that he is able to do something that he's dedicated his entire career for and I think that's going to be leading a group of students at Maryland for the next couple of years that will definitely go on to do really great things," she said.

Emily Maise contributed reporting.

Atlantic 10 shortens 2020-21 schedule for seven teams

EMILY MAISE
SPORTS EDITOR

The Atlantic 10 will condense schedules for seven teams next academic year in response to concerns over COVID-19, according to a release Thursday.

The conference plans to "condense and regionalize" playing schedules for field hockey, volleyball, men's soccer, women's soccer, baseball, softball and women's lacrosse by 25 percent next season. The 2020-21 championship circuit for volleyball, men's soccer, women's soccer, baseball, softball and women's lacrosse will now feature a four-team playoff, the release

states.

The A-10 also plans to conduct men's basketball media day, sport committee meetings and administrative meetings virtually to curb the spread of COVID-19, according to the release.

"The decisions made, including revisions to our conference schedules, championship formats, policies and procedures were extremely difficult," A-10 commissioner Bernadette McGlade said in the release. "However, each was considered and discussed with empathy, in consideration of the health, welfare and safety of our student-athletes, coaches, support staff and overall athletic programs."

The pandemic forced the

A-10 to scrap the remainder of spring seasons and cancel winter and spring championships. All changes to next season were made to reduce cost, minimize travel and allow for teams to play in a "safer environment," the release states.

Several squads traveled outside the DMV last season to take on competition. Volleyball played two-day and three-day tournaments in Florida, North Carolina and Texas. Men's soccer traveled across the country for a game in Portland, Oregon. Baseball traveled to Louisiana for a three-day tournament and to Knoxville, Tennessee to battle the Volunteers prior to its season ending early.

Softball traveled to Mexico, playing in the Puerto Vallarta College Challenge in its first international tournament in program history. The squad also played two back-to-back tournaments in North Carolina.

Prior to the A-10's announcement, eight programs competed at the men's and women's soccer championships, seven baseball programs vied for the conference crown and six programs battled for women's lacrosse, softball and volleyball titles, respectively.

The release states that the smaller championship pool allows for competition to be completed in one weekend, which will boost safety for athletes and

minimize travel. Previously, men's and women's soccer championships stretched over a two-week period, softball and baseball's tournaments lasted five days, while a winner for the volleyball and women's lacrosse's championships were determined in three days.

The A-10 is preparing for sports to resume in the fall semester. Should that plan change, the conference will reassess "in the best interests of our student-athletes and programs," according to the release.

"The hope is that there will be a return to campus and classes with the ability to implement the necessary COVID-19 protocols for the fall semester," McGlade said.

Club sports leaders adjust training, communication during pandemic

BELLE LONG
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

Club sports leaders are trying to turn disappointment over the COVID-19 pandemic into motivation to practice and stay connected.

While varsity sports are bound by NCAA guidelines and supervised by coaches and support staff, club sports are largely student-run. Leaders of club sports like baseball, ultimate frisbee, women's soccer and women's basketball said they have used online communication, remote training and virtual recruiting to maintain operations remotely.

"For club sports, it's hard to get the word out when you're not on campus because it's one of those things that's more ingrained into campus life and it's not something that's always easy to find on GW's website," rising senior Maya Lilly, the president of the club women's basketball team.

Leaders said the adjustments and cancellations to their schedules could hurt club teams financially, because players need to pay out of pocket to attend tournaments. Lilly said she is hoping the Student Association will offer teams funding for tournaments they paid to attend but were canceled amid COVID-19.

Club leaders said the pause also hurt clubs' recruiting processes, especially if it continues into the fall semester. Many teams rely on the spring season to connect with potential recruits, and Lilly said the women's basketball team uses the

fall semester to raise awareness and hold tryouts.

Rising senior John Guerrette, the president of club ultimate frisbee, said he plans to embrace the new virtual reality and get creative with recruiting. Guerrette said he and the team will use the club's social media accounts to message potential recruits and coordinate with them about joining the squad.

"We're just going to try and keep them in the loop as much as we can and try to incorporate them in our team," Guerrette said.

He said ultimate frisbee's spring season is more competitive and strenuous than the fall because it includes the squad's championship leg. Teams compete in sectionals with the hopes of landing a spot in the regional competition, ultimately setting its sights on the national competition. Guerrette said the timing of the pause hurt the team's attempt to make a deep run in spring competition.

During the pause, teams also took different approaches to conditioning and maintaining fitness levels. Leaders from club programs like baseball and women's basketball said they asked their players to train individually, while leaders from women's soccer and ultimate frisbee distributed workouts for members to follow.

Guerrette said during a normal year, ultimate frisbee players would spend the summer competing in leagues or playing with professional club teams. But he said players are struggling to continue ultimate frisbee play



FILE PHOTO BY ERIC LEE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Leaders of GW's club sports teams say the pandemic has disrupted competition schedules and hindered recruiting efforts.

while games and practices are canceled during the pandemic.

"It's easy to stay conditioned, but it's hard to keep playing ultimate frisbee because most people can't toss a disk with people right now," Guerrette said.

Junior Jack Lamar, the club baseball's travel liaison, said it would be almost impossible to have any type of season if the fall semester was online. He added that because players are from all over the country, he can't hold practices or matches online.

"The key for us being able to play is everyone being on campus," Lamar said.

Jenny Deveaux, the vice president of club women's soccer, said the Region I Club Soccer League – the conference in which the squad competes – is considering adjustments for an online semester, including possibly pushing the regional competition from October to the spring. But she added that the competition would ultimately be canceled if the new date was met

with adverse weather conditions.

Deveaux said that despite being apart from her squad, she's stayed connected with teammates by running together through Charity Miles, an app that tracks how many miles have been run and donates funds to a charity of choice.

"I feel like this has pushed us to find more ways to be connected," she said. "We aren't super connected over the summer, so it's a new way of looking at things."