

The GW Hatchet

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STUDENTS, FACULTY PREPARE FOR ONLINE SEMESTER

Freshmen explore new ways to connect with each other

TIFFANY GARCIA
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

After spending their final months of high school at home, incoming freshmen said they're concerned about forming and maintaining relationships during their first college semester.

In interviews, more than 10 incoming freshmen said they're nervous about connecting with their peers and performing well in their classes entirely online but are excited to begin their first semester of college. Students said while they've struggled to adapt to new methods of meeting and getting to know each other online, they've also had the opportunity to meet new people outside of their major via social media and text group chats that they may not have formed in person.

Eleven students interviewed said they have relied primarily on social media as a means of connecting with their peers during the summer over orientation. Three students said they're concerned about forming close friendships during the semester, while two said they appreciated how the online semester offered a chance to meet others outside of their major.

The Division for Student Affairs hosted a month-long virtual New Student Orientation during August consisting of online modules with "interactive content" and "virtual live events" leading up to the first day of classes.

Maureen Rafter, a freshman from western Maryland, said she applied to GW early decision and has been connecting with students through social media and in-person since December. She said she's sought out group chats with students who live nearby or share similar interests but has found it difficult since the pandemic started to maintain friendships because she doesn't feel comfortable attending meet-ups.

"As of right now, it's easy to follow someone on Instagram and like people's pictures and comment when people are asking for help and stuff like that," Rafter said. "So even if I don't have all of my best friends set up in line, by the time I get to campus, you're still familiar with people, and some of them I'm taking classes with so that helps you get to know them, even if you're not going to be in person."

She said she has found herself reaching out to upperclassmen in student organizations or other freshmen when she has questions instead of advisers. She said they've been able to share similar worries about recalculated financial aid packages for the fall and gave her tips on the upcoming semester.

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HATCHET FILE PHOTO
Phillip Troutman, a professor of writing and history, said faculty have worked "thousands of hours of unpaid overtime" this summer to prepare for virtual classes.

Faculty 'eagerly awaiting' start of online fall semester

CARLY NEILSON
STAFF WRITER

ISHA TRIVEDI
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

More than 10 faculty members said they are "excited" about the online fall semester and have adjusted their classes over the summer to make them more accessible to students.

After weeks of planning for a mix of online and in-person classes with social distancing measures, officials decided in July that classes will remain online this fall. Faculty said they have spent the summer preparing for a virtual fall semester, adding virtual office hours to allow for more interaction and support between students and professors and trying out different class schedules to accommodate students' personal, academic and geographic circumstances.

Phillip Troutman, an assistant professor of writing and history and director of the Writing in the Disciplines program, said he is looking forward to teaching this semester because of updates he is making to his classes, like creating small research teams for students to share their work and get to know each other outside of class.

"We are still learning a lot – and there will be experimentation happening as we go – but I am really proud of what GW faculty have done this summer to prep for fall," he said in an email.

Troutman said faculty have worked "several thousand hours of unpaid over-

time" this summer to attend workshops and boot camps on online teaching.

Faculty have been participating in FLEX or Forward Looking Explorations teaching camps to prepare for the fall semester, according to a University release. GW Libraries and Academic Innovation staff held the camps throughout the summer and taught faculty members "effective course design" in addition to providing guidance in using Blackboard and other educational technologies.

Akos Vertes, a professor of chemistry, said he is teaching General Chemistry II for the first time this semester and needed to simultaneously "recalibrate" himself to the new course material in addition to adjusting the course to an online format.

"This is clearly a challenge, and I think it's a challenge for the students as well," he said. "My plan is to forge an alliance with the students and face these challenges together, so I expect them to tell me if something is not working for them, and likewise."

Vertes said the pandemic has forced professors to "embrace technology," adding that the transition could produce a positive outcome.

He said faculty members who taught General Chemistry II in the past changed the required textbook this fall to a textbook that was available for free online, which makes it easier for students to search for information digitally rather than using the index of a physical textbook.

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About 500 students to live on campus in three residence halls this fall

JARROD WARDWELL
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

As most students ready for an entire semester online, officials granted on-campus housing this fall to a few hundred students seeking space to work and study away from unfavorable home environments.

Assistant Dean of Students Seth Weinschel said about 500 students have moved into District House and Shenkman and South halls after receiving special approval from officials to return to campus. Weinschel said officials approved on-campus living assignments for international students, students living in unsafe conditions, students who can't complete online learning from home and those who must be on campus to complete research, art projects, clinical programs or activities that are "facility-specific or D.C.-resource-related."

Weinschel said students moved in between Aug. 17 and Aug. 27 to minimize congestion near residence halls. Students were given three-hour move-in periods throughout each day and could arrive at their halls at either 8 a.m., 11 a.m., 2 p.m. or 5 p.m., he said.

"Our move-in process has been different this year," Weinschel said in an email. "Keeping social distancing in mind, we implemented several new guidelines and procedures during our fall move-in."

Officials announced earlier this month that building access will be closed to all students, faculty and staff not approved to live on campus during the fall semester.

A few international students faced flight delays, so officials needed to adjust plans for their arrival, Weinschel said. He said students living on campus will have their own bedroom and will share a bathroom with no more than one other person.

Students returning to campus this fall said they wanted to distance themselves from adverse home situations that made studying difficult.

Sofia Bletnitsky, a sophomore from Las Vegas, said she moved into District House on Aug. 17 and is living alone in a two-person unit. She said other students in the building live in pairs in four-person units that hold two bedrooms, a common room and a bathroom.

Bletnitsky said she requested on-campus housing in late July, and officials responded more than a week later in August. She said housing officials didn't respond to her request until she asked the head of the University Honors Program to contact the department.

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Officials have cut roughly 60 event positions, employees say

ZACH SCHONFELD
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Officials have eliminated roughly 60 event staff across various University offices, according to employees in affected departments.

The dozens of affected staff, which include employees in Events & Venues as well as school-based event departments, were told about their positions being eliminated at the end of last month through a video call, four employees, who requested anonymity for fear of retribution from the University, told The Hatchet. The layoffs are part of cuts occurring across administrative offices as GW works to close in its \$220 million annual budget gap.

University spokeswoman Crystal Nosal declined to answer all of The Hatchet's questions about the layoffs, reiterating that officials are currently restructuring administrative units.

"These efforts include very difficult decisions about position eliminations and layoffs that have become more urgent given the financial implications of our fall scenario," Nosal said in an email.

She said the current budget gap projections are more than double what officials anticipated in June, before officials decided to transition classes online for the fall

semester. "We continue to share that there are many unknowns about the pandemic, which can't preclude the need for further action in the future," Nosal said.

Nosal declined to confirm that administrators have laid off event staff as part of the restructuring.

Officials have also laid off at least dozens of staff across the University's technology offices as well as at least 70 employees within the Center for Career Services, Facilities Planning, Construction and Management and the Continuous Improvement and Business Advisory Services office as part of the budget cuts.

Administrators previously announced a suspension on most hirings and capital projects, a freeze on merit salary increases and a suspension of the University's matching and base retirement contributions. Top officials also accepted a temporary pay cut.

The event staff will now be consolidated into roughly nine positions, according to one employee whose job was eliminated.

The Division for Students Affairs is hiring two event schedulers, an event planner, a facilities position and a technical services position, while the University Events team will now employ two event schedulers, one director of events and one

event manager, according to the employee.

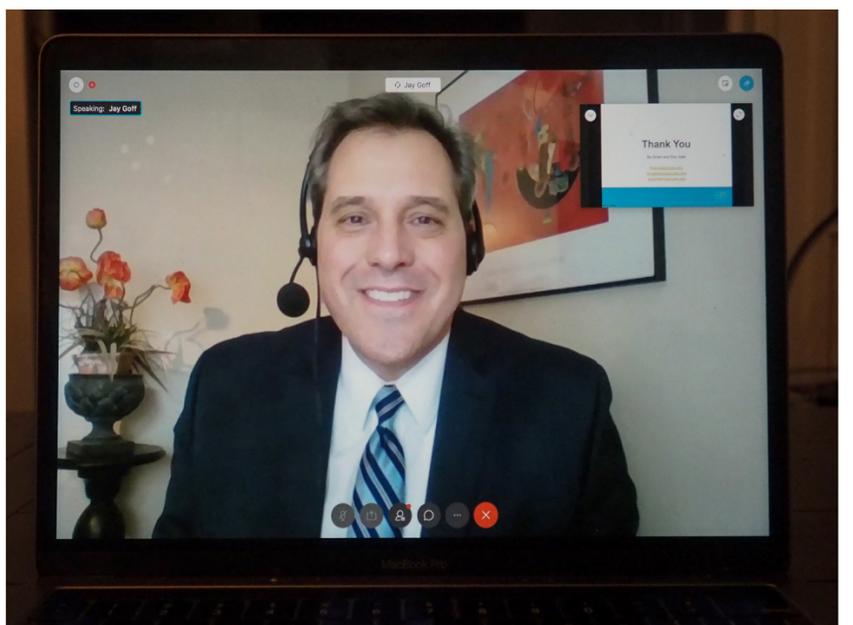
The layoffs affected nearly all event divisions across GW, including staff who managed event spaces in Lisner Auditorium and the Marvin Center, including the Dorothy Betts Marvin Theater, the employees said.

One Events & Venues employee said he was asked to join a call, with a 20-minute notice, with Human Resources that informed him that his position would be eliminated. The employee said the call lasted 10 minutes and described the overall termination process as "cold" and "impersonal."

The employee said they were not initially allowed to return to campus to clean out their desk, and officials said they would mail a box for them to return any University property located at their home.

Events & Venues canceled all department bookings scheduled for the fall semester as well as all student bookings for the entire academic year, according to the University website. External clientele reservations are not currently being accepted until further notice.

"Once a decision has been reached on when and how campus will open up again, student organizations will be contacted regarding the process to submit new event requests," the website states.



GRACE HROMIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Administrators said a little more than 4,700 tuition aid packages were adjusted after the 10 percent tuition cut to reflect most students' reduced costs of board.

Officials address confusion for students' financial aid packages

LIA DEGROOT
NEWS EDITOR

MAKENA ROBERTS
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Financial aid officials met with students and families last week to clarify the makeup of students' financial aid packages after officials made adjustments for the virtual fall semester.

Jay Goff, the vice provost of enrollment and student success, said students' financial aid packages were adjusted to reflect a change in housing costs, and students won't be paying more than their out-of-pocket cost before the semes-

ter went virtual. Officials said students can schedule one-on-one phone consultations with an adviser in the financial aid office this week to determine the best financial decisions for them this semester.

In two hour-long WebEx meetings, officials fielded questions about financial aid adjustments, deferred admissions and leaves of absence. Officials scheduled the town halls after dozens of students posted concerns to Facebook stating their calculated tuition for the virtual fall semester was greater than their previous in-person cost.

Michelle Arcieri, the executive director for student

financial assistance, said just more than 4,700 undergraduate aid packages were readjusted to reflect estimated costs of attendance after officials added a 10 percent tuition reduction for off-campus undergraduates and room and board costs were wiped from students' bills.

Arcieri said students' aid packages were adjusted for the full academic year, but officials will readjust aid packages if administrators pursue in-person learning in the spring.

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News

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THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

POLITICS & PROSE LIVE! IN CONVERSATION WITH HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

September 1 • 5 p.m. EDT • Free
Join Louise Penny for a conversation with Hillary Clinton about her most recent book that she co-authored with her daughter, "The Book of Gutsy Women."

A TUMULTUOUS YEAR FOR TRADE

September 3 • 9 a.m. EDT • Free
Join a moderated discussion about Trump v. Biden on emerging trade barriers.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Aug. 31, 2005

The GW Deli, then a campus fixture for 60 years, begins taking GWorld

Faculty say higher education, research is 'rife' with discrimination

ISHA TRIVEDI
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Sherry Molock was a graduate student when a professor warned her not to do her research on Black people because she would get "pigeon-holed."

"I remember thinking, 'You do research on White people, you're not pigeon-holed,'" she said.

Molock, now an associate professor of clinical psychology who studies suicide prevention in Black adolescents and young adults, said "top-tier" academic journals associated with the American Psychological Association are less likely to publish research on communities of color than research on predominantly White communities.

After she arrived at GW, Molock said the then-chair of her department told her to either change her area of study or add another expertise unaffiliated with the Black community to get published in academic journals. Otherwise, she would "hurt" her chances of earning full professorship, the chair said.

On the heels of nationwide protests against police brutality this summer, Joy Woods and Shardé Davis, both Black women in communications research, used #Blackintheivory in June to share their experiences of racism in higher education on Twitter. Since then, thousands of students and faculty members across universities like Yale began using the hashtag to share their stories of discrimination and bias in academia.

Molock is one of almost a dozen faculty at GW who said they weren't surprised by stories detailed in the Twitter campaign, adding that they've faced institutional

racism firsthand in their academic careers. Faculty said they have experienced discrimination through biases in research funding allocation, biases in universities' hiring practices and unconscious bias.

Molock said at every level of the grant review process, Black scholars are "much less likely" than their White counterparts to receive research funding.

She cited a study from the National Institute of Health that found research topic preference accounts for "more than 20 percent of a persistent funding gap" for Black scientists applying for National Institutes of Health research project grants compared to White scientists.

"If you can't have your work funded, then you are not going to get promoted to tenure, and you're definitely not going to get promoted to full professor," Molock said. "All along the levels of where you can make inroads in your career, you have strikes against you that professors who are in the majority culture don't have to deal with these days."

Molock said she has written about six to seven grant proposals in the past 10 years and has not received funding for any of them, which she said is due to the focus of her area of study.

"One of the reasons why COVID-19 is impacting more negatively on communities of color is because of health disparities, and that's research that needs to be done," she said. "And yet, if you do that research, you're less likely to get tenure, you're less likely to get a grant."

Erin Chapman, the president of the Faculty Association and an associate profes-

sor of history, said systemic racism in liberal arts includes "a lot of lip service" to diversity but "not a lot of follow up." She said universities may hire people of color for positions that are specific to race, like a race specialist in a sociology department but are less likely to do so when it comes to "more broad" positions.

"Even though African American literature, for example, or Chicano literature, are certainly American, when push comes to shove, they are most likely going to hire the White man who works on Thoreau or something along those lines, or Faulkner or what have you," she said.

Provost Brian Blake said he does not always "jump immediately" to systemic racism but said as an administrator he has often seen unconscious bias from people who assume he is not an administrator.

Blake said he has often been mistaken for a graduate student and "everything but associate dean."

"I didn't always look my age, and there's very few African Americans who are administrators, whether that's a chair, dean, provost or president," he said. "There are very few spaces that I would go into where a person would suppose that I was that person."

Blake added that among University President Thomas LeBlanc's staff, LeBlanc is only one of two White men. He said he thinks there is "bubbling" diversity within GW's administration.

"Yeah I'd be happy if we had other Black people," Blake said. "But, I mean, I would challenge you, what other senior presidential administration is that diverse?"

He said as provost, he



FILE PHOTO BY GABRIELLE RHOADS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Faculty interviewed say systemic racism in academia consists of discrimination at the undergraduate level all the way up to microaggressions and bias in academic departments.

wants to focus on climate, recruitment, mentoring and retention when addressing issues of diversity and inclusion.

"I think administrators have to devise policies to make sure that when you're doing admissions or search, that those pools for students, faculty or staff are as diverse and inclusive as possible," Blake said.

Lakeisha McClary, an assistant professor of chemistry, said it is "hard to disentangle" the different types of discrimination and bias against Black people in higher education because of how often it occurs.

She said as a Black woman in the STEM field, she has noticed unconscious bias in course evaluations from her students. McClary said students often misunderstand her tone as being "aggressive," which she attributes to her race.

"My tone, the way I come across sometimes, this is just me, it can come across as 'aggressive' because if you're not used to talking to people of color and being familiar with our community, then it comes off as that," she said.

McClary said course evaluations are used by officials to determine potential merit promotions, and as a contract faculty member, they factor into whether her contract will be renewed. She said poor course evaluations from students who are biased can put her and others in similar situations at risk of losing their jobs.

The Faculty Senate passed a resolution in July calling on administrators to start conversations to propose "concrete" plans of action to increase diversity, equity and inclusion in tenure and promotion practices.

Dwayne Wright, a visiting assistant professor of higher education administration, said the resolution is a "great" first step but thinks the "pressure needs to stay on for actual change."

He said officials should commit to a "cluster of hires" of people of color across all schools at GW to address this issue.

Wright said Blake's presence in the administration is a sign that GW is seeking to improve, and he said "at the end of the day, actions speak louder than words."

"Next year when we look back on the year anniversary of George Floyd, the anniversary of this declaration at the Faculty Senate, what will change?" Wright said.

Students felt safe during move in

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Following University approval, Bletnitsky said the move-in process was "streamlined," but she said the first day of move-in saw about 20 students plus family members who had to wait in line on I Street almost halfway to the end of the block near Lafayette Hall. She said she and her dad waited 10 to 15 minutes in the line before loading her belongings into blue moving carts and moving in.

About 15 to 20 people live on the same floor as her, but none of them moved in at the same time she did, Bletnitsky said.

Bletnitsky said officials require returning students to receive weekly testing for COVID-19 at the Smith Center, after which they learn their results after 24 to 48 hours. She said she was the only student at the center when she received her test earlier this month, which came back negative for the virus.

She said that since moving in, each student has been linked to a "point of contact," an official who responds to general questions or concerns when students are isolating. Bletnitsky's point of contact responded to one of her questions via email about COVID-19 testing in just two minutes, she said.

"Basically, if you have any concerns about really anything, you can contact this person," she said.

With weekly tests and orders to wear masks outside rooms at all times, Bletnitsky said she is confident in maintaining health and safety on campus. She

added that she's able to focus better on campus and is working to find a work-study job for the fall.

"It makes me extremely happy just because even though I've had to quarantine for a while, the weekly testing and all of that, I no longer feel extremely isolated," she said.

Sophomore Danielle Villardi said she also moved into District House on Aug. 17 in hopes of finding a job on campus that would better support her parents, who are considered at "high risk" for infection and have been unemployed during the pandemic. Villardi said her family has recently been unable to pay Internet expenses, but finding a job would alleviate some financial struggles.

"Because my parents are high risk, I was forced to bring back all my belongings by myself," Villardi said in an email. "Of course this was difficult - however, in terms of how GW handled move-in, I found it to be quite a safe and effective system."

Villardi said she hasn't seen any students living on her floor, and the people she has come close to have worn masks and kept their distance. She said she feels more comfortable being back on campus than she first expected after seeing students in the area following public health guidelines to limit the spread of COVID-19.

"Because the students on campus are here because of special circumstances, I feel as though each of us feel a personal responsibility to ensure that we stay on campus," Villardi said.

Students face steep fees, lose belongings in scramble to retrieve storage boxes

JARROD WARDWELL
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Junior Mimi L'Engle paid \$700 to ship home her belongings from International House - some of which didn't make the trip back.

L'Engle said after asking Storage Squad - one of the three companies that moved out students' belongings in March - for shipping quotes, company representatives told her they couldn't report shipping fees to students until packages were already on the way. Preparing for another several months away from GW, L'Engle said she decided to ship without knowing the cost, ultimately paying hundreds to receive several boxes "torn apart" with damaged kitchen appliances and broken glasses. One box of bedding didn't show up at all, she said.

With classes still online and more people left

without a path to reclaim their belongings, students like L'Engle have had to navigate sometimes faulty lines of communication with moving companies responsible for handling their personal possessions in the spring and summer. L'Engle is one of 10 students who said poor planning, weak communication, steep fines and lost possessions have riddled the University's COVID-19 packing program that officials began in March and will expire at the end of September.

Representatives from Storage Squad, Interstate Moving and JK Moving did not return multiple requests for comment.

Last spring, students said the moving program lacked coordination, and now with classes online and fall plans in flux, those issues have in some cases worsened.

When L'Engle was deciding whether she should

ship her items back in July, the movers told her she either needed to donate materials too large to fit into packing boxes, like furniture, a fan and a mirror, or someone would need to come to the storage facility to grab the items for her, she said. L'Engle said she donated all her large items because company representatives did not provide alternative options.

Assistant Dean of Students Seth Weinschel and Assistant Dean of Residential Engagement Stewart Robinette sent an email to students earlier this month that announced a new "continued storage" option following the decision to move classes online. The email states that students should not consider items damaged if they are still usable.

The email states that students should visit the University's lost items website if any of their belongings cannot be found. Weinschel

and Robinette said if a student receives a package of temporarily lost belongings, that student may also find someone else's possessions in the mix, in which case they should report the items online.

Cara Lee, a junior from Maryland, said she picked up her residence hall room belongings from the Interstate Moving warehouse in late July but found a rotten banana wrapped up in her load of packaged materials when she got home.

Lee said she lost between \$25 to \$30 of possessions that included a laundry rack, a ceramic bowl and kitchen knives. She said the rest of her items were stored in good condition and her communication with the moving team was "pretty smooth."

Lee said her vicinity to the warehouse was helpful to her during the process because she could drive over to the storage unit and pick up her possessions.



FILE PHOTO BY ERIC LEE
From packing to transport to shipping, students say each step of the storage process has been fraught with uncertainty and poor communication.

Local transportation options sustain closures, alter service

JARROD WARDWELL
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Transportation options may look different for students returning to Foggy Bottom this fall as closures, adjusted operating hours and new health guidelines have reshaped the way locals move across the city.

Students have previously taken for granted the traditional methods for transportation near campus – the Vex, Safe Ride, the Metro, the Circulator and the Virginia Science and Technology Campus shuttle – but the COVID-19 pandemic has made traveling a new risk for locals in D.C. As students return to campus, the Vex and VSTC shuttle stay closed, but public transportation options continue service despite the current caseload in the D.C. area.

Here's what to expect if you're in D.C. this fall:

The Mount Vernon Express

The Vex will be closed during the fall semester, University spokeswoman Crystal Nosal said.

Nosal said officials canceled operating the Vex because the Mount Vernon Campus will be closed this fall. She said athletes will continue to use the Vern

for practice fields, but they will use their "in-house" shuttles – personal team vehicles – to move back and forth between the Vern and residence halls.

The University's Transportation and Parking Service website instructs students who live near the Vern and normally rely on the Vex for transportation to seek out bus routes on the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority's website.

Safe Ride

Students living in D.C. can continue to use Safe Ride to move around campus, Nosal said. She said the University's "temporary drivers" are still employed but "may be adjusted during the semester depending on rider volume."

Safe Ride vehicles will operate every day from 8 p.m. to 4 a.m., according to the University's Safe Ride website.

Nosal declined to say how many University-employed drivers operating Safe Ride, the Vex and the VSTC shuttle are working during the pandemic.

Metro

After scaling back service when the pandemic struck D.C., Metrorail and Metrobus are back at full

pre-pandemic service levels. Ridership numbers jumped by several thousand during the first week of full service earlier this month.

Metro lost its first employee to COVID-19 just more than one week ago, and the agency reported on its website that 308 workers have tested positive for the virus during the pandemic. Metro officials plan to distribute free masks and install hand sanitizer dispensers at 130 stations later in the fall, as the agency hopes to keep stations, trains and buses from fueling the spread of the virus in D.C.

D.C. Circulator

Students can access the Circulator for free on any day during the pandemic but must wear a mask on buses at all times, according to a press release from the D.C. Department of Transportation Thursday.

The release came after Mayor Muriel Bowser announced Thursday that the operating hours of two Circulator routes that run near the northern side of campus – Union Station-Georgetown and Rosslyn-Dupont Circle – will operate until 11 p.m. every day under expanded hours. Buses will open at 6 a.m. on weekdays and 7 a.m.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

Students looking to get from Foggy Bottom to the Mount Vernon Campus will not be able to use the Vex this semester.

on weekends, the release states.

Passengers can board the Georgetown-Union Station bus at four stops along the stretch of Pennsylvania Avenue that runs across campus, and the Rosslyn-Dupont Circle bus will pick up riders at the corner of L and 24 streets, just north of Washington Circle.

The release states all passengers, except for those who need assistance to board, must enter and exit the Circulator at the rear of

the bus. Passengers must distance themselves from others, cover their sneezes and coughs and should avoid touching their face with unwashed hands.

The Circulator route that circles the National Mall will remain closed, the release states.

VSTC Shuttle

Nosal said the VSTC Shuttle will not operate this fall, even though some buildings on the Virginia Science and Technology

Campus will still be open to students and staff. She said officials expect most staff and students to be working remotely in the fall, eliminating the need to maintain an operating shuttle.

"While the VSTC campus will have some buildings in use this fall, the vast majority of staff and students will continue to work remotely this fall and there will be few, if any, needs for this intra-campus shuttle," she said in an email.



FILE PHOTO BY ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Student Association leaders say they're pushing administrators on issues like a graduate student tuition cut and Pass/No Pass classes for the fall semester in response to the unprecedented pandemic.

SA members refine priorities in light of online classes, pandemic

LIZZIE MINTZ &
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

MAKENA ROBERTS
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

In early March, Student Association candidates were running campaigns on platform promises to implement a campus accessibility director and update the Student Code of Conduct.

Then, the COVID-19 pandemic landed in the District.

The candidates, elected during the initial weeks of online learning last semester, said they needed to alter their goals for the academic year in light of the health crisis. Elected SA leaders said moving forward this fall, they will push officials to ease students' transition to online classes, urging for a Pass/No Pass grading scale and increased transparency in officials' decision-making.

"There's also really no roadmap for what we're doing at the moment," SA Executive Vice Brandon Hill said. "All the past executive vice presidents, all the presidents, have had someone to rely on and someone to ask for."

Hill said the SA is often "pretty quiet" during the summer while members focus on transitioning into their roles, but the unprecedented pandemic and civil unrest across the country prompted the full senate to meet twice and hold five senate workshops and all SA committees to meet twice via Zoom.

SA leaders held virtual office hours and promised to hold discussions about police brutality and racial injustice following demonstrations worldwide. They also pressed administrators to issue a GW Police Department climate survey.

Hill added that the pandemic has brought to light

"some inequalities" in student aid, prompting officials to waive late fees and clarify financial aid packages this fall.

Administrators, Hill and SA President Howard Brookins held two virtual town halls last week after dozens of students said their recalculated financial aid packages stated they would pay more to attend GW online than if they were on campus.

Brookins said SA leaders spoke with University President Thomas LeBlanc earlier this month about reducing tuition for graduate students and recent staff layoffs as a result of the pandemic, which Brookins said LeBlanc was "very resistant to" discussing. The SA created two email campaigns earlier this month directed at Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights to reduce student tuition for graduate students and resist faculty layoffs in light of the pandemic.

"The level of lack of care for these individuals who were once part of the GW community and worked diligently to ensure that GW was a great place were just left out to dry," he said. "And we continue to fight these layoffs and make sure that staff have some type of support system."

SA Sen. Charles Aborisade, U-at-Large and the chair of the finance committee, said he spent the summer communicating with student organizations about their financial operations for the upcoming year.

The finance committee – the body that oversees funding requests for all student organizations, distributing roughly \$1.7 million through fall and spring allocations – mandated earlier this month that all student organizations resubmit their requests for funding after officials announced the fall

semester will be held virtually late last month.

He said the finance committee is "restricted" on the amount of funds it can give to student organizations for this year's allocations so he advises groups to "thoughtfully" create funding plans before submitting them to the SA so the committee can more easily allocate funds.

"I think a lot of people don't realize, but finance is one of the most important committees, especially when it comes to student life and how organizations are going to be operating," Aborisade said.

George Glass, the SA's vice president for financial affairs, said the finance committee communicated with officials like Natalie Hershberger, the assistant director of experiential learning and leadership, to create an updated plan for the committee to reallocate money after officials announced that students won't return this fall. He said officials informed the finance committee to cut student organization allocations by 10 percent of the overall budget.

He said one of the largest costs the finance committee reviews are requests for food and venue expenses, but after the fall semester moved online, organizations switched their events from in-person setups to hosting virtual speakers for their members.

The committee reviewed more than 215 funding requests earlier this month for virtual events that student organizations have planned, compared to last spring's roughly 350 requests, Glass said.

"We're just trying to make sure that we're coordinated as possible for when we are getting these requests," Glass said. "I think we're more prepared now."

Milken partners with Amtrak on COVID-19 response

RACHEL ANNEX
STAFF WRITER

Amtrak is enlisting the assistance of the Milken Institute School of Public Health's department of environmental and occupational health to advise the agency on how to best handle workplace and operational safety during the ongoing pandemic.

The rail service partnered with the public health school earlier this month to determine the best sanitization practices for its trains and monitor regional and national COVID-19 data, Amtrak spokesman Jason Abrams said. He said Amtrak's internal health and safety team will collaborate with Milken faculty to enhance its coronavirus response and delivery of a new standard of travel, which includes some "contact-free" services and cleaning protocols.

Abrams said Milken's team will advise Amtrak on reviewing safe work practices, implementing workplace practices that go beyond the latest public health guidelines and adding measures to enhance Amtrak's coronavirus response. He said passengers are currently required to wear masks on trains, and Amtrak officials have increased cleaning protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 on its trains.

"In an effort to simplify and safeguard the travel experience, several cleaning, contact-free and convenience measures have been implemented into every part of the customer journey – from time of booking to the moment of arrival," Abrams said in an email. "Amtrak continues to evaluate current practices and launch new initiatives to support personal safety."

Milken spokeswoman

Mina Radman did not return multiple requests for comment about why public health officials chose to partner with Amtrak and how they will advise the agency.

Transportation experts said transportation agencies can implement social distancing on trains and limiting eating to prevent the spread of COVID-19 during travel.

James Moore, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Southern California, said Amtrak should close down food services or commissary cars while COVID-19 is a concern. He recommended practices like wearing masks, spacing out passengers and sanitizing surfaces to make traveling on trains as safe as possible.

Amtrak has limited its number of bookings to allow passengers to maintain distance on its trains and has limited its cafe cars to carryout-only orders, according to Amtrak's website.

Moore said train companies should treat train cars as "indoor environments," which are higher risks for COVID-19 spread than outdoor environments when developing upgraded travel protocols. He said travel companies are currently struggling financially because they depend on demand for travel, and significantly fewer people are traveling now.

"I often get the question, 'What is safe?' and safety is a relative term," Moore said. "Safe just means an acceptable level of risk, and the implicit question there is when is that risk acceptable, and acceptability of risk varies with people. I can't tell you what is safe for you or for others. I can tell you what

risks I am willing to accept."

Sean Qian, an associate professor of civil and environmental engineering at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, said the city has seen about an 80 percent decrease in the number of people using public transportation compared to before the pandemic. He said train companies could dispatch more trains when needed to allow passengers adequate space to maintain six feet of distance from each other.

"Providing some technology during the pandemic to enable some sort of contact tracing will be helpful to lower the chances of COVID-19 spread," Qian said. "There is technology already there, and agencies like Amtrak already have the information of passengers on board."

Kara Kockelman, a professor of transportation engineering at the University of Texas at Austin, said enforcing proper mask-wearing is crucial to reduce the spread of COVID-19 on trains. She said she's noticed some people wear masks below their nose, but masks should cover the nose and mouth to prevent the spread of the virus.

She said train companies could enforce a system in which passengers report others not following COVID-19 protocols.

"They could even have a photo reporting line for if you see people who aren't behaving," Kockelman said. "You can't have a conductor or employee on every train car, so you have to leave it up to other travelers to help get that information out, even if it's quietly through reporting in a platform with photos taken on different train cars at different times of the day."



ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

The public health school will advise Amtrak on its current practices to keep employees and passengers safe and recommend new guidelines.

New pod research model may increase collaboration, experts say

LIA DEGROOT
NEWS EDITOR

The University's pod model for research will facilitate collaboration and teamwork between GW's researchers, experts said.

Officials announced the switch to the pod model – which organizes schools into research groups by subject matter – earlier this month, saying the new structure will consolidate projects and equip pods with staff members to lead the process of creating grant models. Experts in academic research said the new model may allow researchers to share equipment that they previously would have needed to purchase individually and increase communication between faculty studying similar topics.

Provost Brian Blake said officials decided to implement the pod model after hearing feedback from the Faculty Senate's working group on research that the Office for the Vice President for Research needed to cut costs and increase efficiency in workflow.

"Most faculty and staff appreciate the principles behind the structure and how it could potentially address some of the challenges in the research operations," he said in an email. "Although the provost's office led a four-week working group, I appreciate that during the pandemic faculty are concerned about the timing of the change."

Blake said Pod 1 will consist of the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, Elliott School of International Affairs, School of Business and Graduate School of Education and Human Development, and Pod 2 will consist of the Milken Institute School of Public Health and the Biostatistics Center.

The School of Medicine and Health Sciences, the School of Engineering and Applied Science and the School of Nursing will make up Pod 3,

Blake said.

Blake said he will work directly with "senior leaders" within OVPR to maintain research operations following former Vice President for Research Robert Miller's transition to his role as interim vice dean for research and academic affairs at the medical school. He said officials will search for someone to fill the vice president for research position when officials have a clearer understanding of how the pandemic will impact the University.

"There will be some new efficiencies in our operations associated with the change to the pod structures that will lead to layoffs," Blake said.

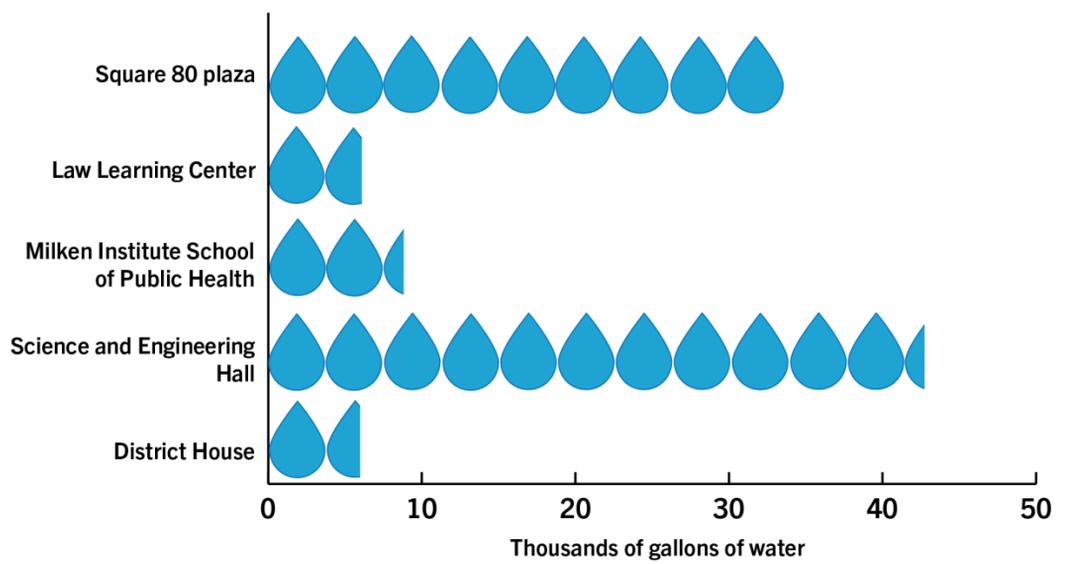
Faculty members criticized the new changes at this month's Faculty Senate meeting, saying that the original system was effective and the pod system will actually further centralize University research by grouping schools together.

Edward Hackett, the vice provost for research at Brandeis University, said the new model could provide workers with an improved sense of teamwork because the same people who develop a proposal will be involved in the process from start to finish, increasing worker satisfaction. He said assigning workers multiple tasks within a project increases productivity and satisfaction because they can develop new skills while working toward a common goal.

Terry Davidson, the director of the Center for Neuroscience and Behavior at American University, said the pod model could allow researchers to share expensive equipment for different projects.

He said universities traditionally separated research projects into "silos" in which researchers wouldn't collaborate with people outside of their department, and many universities are now moving toward an interdisciplinary approach.

Gallons of storm water each campus space can hold



Source: GW Sustainability Office

SIDNEY LEE | GRAPHICS EDITOR

The University has met its goal of diverting at least 40 percent of waste away from landfills.

Officials say University met zero-waste goal this calendar year

LIA DEGROOT
NEWS EDITOR

Eight years after officials set a slew of sustainability goals for GW with deadlines for this calendar year, officials said they have taken steps to lower the University's waste output and have promoted sustainable food consumption.

Officials had initially created targets in 2012 to work toward becoming a zero-waste campus, adding more green spaces and increasing the amount of locally grown food available on campus. Meghan Chapple, the director of the Office of Sustainability, said officials met GW's goal to divert 40 percent of its waste from landfills by this calendar year and have added a water-absorbing space – Square 80 – to campus.

She said officials have adapted their goal to add more sustainable food to campus after officials switched to an open dining plan. She said GW still participated in its annual Green Move Out program, and students donated a total of 11,550 pounds of non-perishable items to charity.

"Sustainability is an issue area around which students, faculty and staff consistently are active," Chapple said in an email.

She said officials designed the Square 80 space, which was constructed in 2010, using sustainable practices, like using pervious paving and collecting stormwater in the space. She said the fountain in Square 80 runs using collected stormwater.

She said the Law Learning Center, the Milken Institute School of Public Health, the Science and Engineering Hall and District House are all stormwater collecting spaces, with a collective capacity of almost 100,000 gallons.

Chapple said the University's sustainability efforts ultimately save money, but she declined to say how much the initiatives cost.

She said moving forward, officials will focus the University's sustainability efforts on divesting from fossil fuels, which the Board of Trustees voted in June to fully divest from by 2025 following pushes by student activists to divest from fossil fuels.

"Student activism has historically driven most major sustainability progress on campus, and we continue to hear from our stakeholders that they want GW to prioritize sustainability in and out of the classroom," Chapple said.

Audrey Friedline, one of the GroW Garden managers, said she hopes the University

will continue to prioritize sustainability even as the University's budget tightens because of COVID-19.

She said the University's commitment to sustainability goes beyond funding green organizations on campus and should be focused on equity within the GW community.

Sustainability experts said universities must be transparent about their sustainability goals and continuously update their communities on their progress, even when they need to push a deadline or alter an objective.

The sustainability office released its first progress report in nearly a decade last February, which revealed that it had met just 14 of the University's 56 sustainability goals set in 2009. Officials created the University's Climate Action Plan in 2010 and provide information about sustainability initiatives on the sustainability office website.

Raul Lejano, a professor of environmental conservation education at New York University, said universities' sustainability officials should organize teams to track data to report the institution's progress annually, and officials should include shortcomings or changes in goals in their reports.

Lejano said some sustainability efforts are quan-

tifiable, but it can be harder to track changes in student culture and community engagement. He added that sustainability is rooted in compassion, which universities can sometimes overlook when formulating goals because they tend to focus on "technocratic" initiatives that are easy to advertise to prospective students.

Dennis Carlberg, the associate vice president for sustainability at Boston University, said becoming a zero-waste campus means reaching a 90 percent diversion rate for waste – that the majority of the campus' waste is diverted from landfills – which he said is a "really, really" difficult goal.

Carlberg said using third parties, like the sustainability tracking systems STARS and LEED, to monitor universities' sustainability efforts is key to staying on track to meet goals. He said updating community members on sustainability goals often, even if the institution hasn't met a certain goal, is crucial to making progress.

"I tell everybody, 'I don't really care what the answers are, I just want the answers to be right,'" he said. "Because if we're misleading ourselves thinking we're doing better than we're doing, then we really can't address the problem very well."

Freshmen use text groups to connect

From Page 1

"I feel bad saying that because, again, I understand the situation that they're under," Rafter said. "But I also think they can be making a better attempt and making sure that we understand everything that we're supposed to be doing."

Gillian Villarroel, a freshman from Arlington, Virginia said she joined the Organization of Latin American Students this summer as a freshman representative to stay busy during the semester. She said she prefers attending events like live streams hosted by student groups instead of New Student

Orientation, which she said felt "scripted" and did not provide her with many opportunities to meet new students.

She said she went to dinner with a few OLAS executive board members in the DMV and heard about GW from their perspective, which helped her feel more comfortable about the start of classes.

Reeya Patel, a freshman from Northern California, said she is excited to head back to school and have more to do with her time but is nervous that she will struggle in her higher-level courses without being near her peers. She said she would find it helpful if her professors assigned group projects at the begin-

ning of the semester to facilitate group conversations.

"I'm in these group chats with all my classmates on GroupMe, but we only really communicate on there if we have a specific question, so if I was guided to actually get together with a couple people and either FaceTime or Zoom with them, that would be really nice," Patel said.

Five students said they were anxious about being able to complete their courses remotely. Students said they adopted new techniques like rearranging their room to create an office space and accommodating their schedules to create a course load they can manage from home.

Steve Giammona, who is taking classes from Long Island, New York, said after the semester transferred online, he decided to take more classes and select courses that would count toward his general education requirements. He said he is buying a webcam to prevent himself from getting distracted on his work computer during classes.

"I have the feeling that if I have a webcam on, and not always, but there's a chance that eyes are going to be on me," Giammona said. "It's going to keep me more honest and more diligent with my work when it comes to writing papers and doing homework."

Students allowed to keep merit aid if they choose to defer

From Page 1

She added that students who were planning to live on campus and now are living in off-campus apartments can submit the undergraduate change form and a copy of their lease to have their room and board costs reflected in their financial aid award.

"Although most need-based aid awards were adjusted due to students' lower cost of attendance, all full-time undergraduate students who were planning to live in GW housing will see no increase in their direct out-of-pocket expenses," Arcieri said.

Goff said the financial aid office did not come across many mistakes in students' cost of attendance adjustments, but many students have requested accommodations because they are now living in off-campus housing instead of at home.

"When we looked back at the financial aid packages, we did not find a large number of what you'd consider mistakes," Goff said. "What we found was that students had made changes in their living arrangements, so although the aid was calculated properly, we were assuming that the student was living at home."

Student resources

Brandon Hill, the executive vice president of the Student Association, said he plans to hold regular meetings with Goff to discuss any financial aid issues students are facing. He added that the SA is revamping its director of student advocacy position to serve as a liaison between students and officials on issues like financial aid.

"One of their main priorities will be supporting student-led ini-

tiatives, like the student advisory council that has been talked about recently and continuing some previous advocacy on front-facing aspects of the Office of Student Financial Assistance," Hill said.

SA President Howard Brookins said he intends to work "extensively" with officials in the financial aid office to increase transparency between the office and students. He said he intends to create a student advisory council made up of students who have experienced problems with the office to identify the areas that need to be addressed.

Officials said in February they're working to establish a financial aid advisory council, which was first announced during an overhaul of the office two years ago.

"I think there are many different areas to improve, and I look forward to working with all of the people on this call today in the future to make the process much better overall for all students," he said.

Deferring or taking a leave of absence

Ben Toll, the dean of undergraduate admissions, said students have until the first day of classes Monday to decide if they want to defer their enrollment to the spring or next fall. He said students who choose to defer or take a leave of absence will have access to the same merit-based scholarships they would have used this year upon their return next year.

"As you may recall when you were offered that scholarship, it was actually offered to you for up to 10 semesters," he said. "Not that we plan for this environment, but it's designed so that if something happened and you had to take a semester off, that we didn't make it harder for you to come back by you then losing your scholarship."

Faculty use new technology for fall

From Page 1

"In a PDF, I can search for anything really, find information very, very quickly, so that's also an innovation," he said.

Irene Foster, an associate professor of economics, said the most challenging issue she faced when shifting her classes online was creating a "sense of community," specifically for her freshmen.

Foster said she plans to share some of her personal life throughout the semester to make her classes more intimate. She added that

she has hosted Zoom meetings in the past week where her students can get together for "chit chat."

"I am really dropping this idea of being so formal – I tend to teach kind of formally," Foster said. "I just need to make it all more relaxed so that students come in with more of a familiarity and a comfort level."

She said she learned how to incorporate new technology into the classroom that she plans to use in future in-person classes. Foster said she will use the interactive virtual class-

room program Top Hat, which allows users to record lectures, administer quizzes and take attendance.

She said her teaching assistants are helping make her classes more accessible to students that need extra help. She said they plan to try out several class meeting times to see what works best for students in different time zones.

Melani McAlister, a professor of American studies and international affairs, said prior to the announcement of the virtual fall semester, she planned to take her two and a half

hour seminar-style class on trips to places like the National Gallery for events and walking tours. She said she will instead divide her class into smaller groups on some days to give her students more "accessible" discussion time in addition to larger class meetings.

"I hope and trust that it will be better than the second half of the spring semester," McAlister said. "I feel like we all had to make a quick pivot and that was hard on everybody, but now we've worked pretty hard this summer to figure out how to do this."

CRIME LOG

THREATS TO DO BODILY HARM

Public Property on Campus (2400 Block of H Street)
8/19/2020 – 5:38 p.m.
Closed Case
GW Police Department officers responded to a report from a man who was threatened by an unknown male subject. The victim asked the suspect who was riding a bike if he was speaking to him, and the suspect responded with death threats. GWPD officers swept the area with negative findings, and the Metropolitan Police Department issued a report.

No identifiable suspect.

OBSCENE TELEPHONE CALLS

Media and Public Affairs Building
8/20/2020 – 7:15 a.m.
Closed Case
GWPD officers received a report from a female staff member who received a harassing voicemail with cursing from an unknown subject.

No identifiable suspect.

DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY/ VANDALISM

Public Property on Campus (700 Block of 22nd Street)
Unknown – Unknown
Open Case

A male victim reported that someone scratched across the exterior of his car.

Case open.

THEFT II/ FROM BUILDING, UNLAWFUL ENTRY

Mitchell Hall (7-Eleven)
8/20/2020 – 3:41 p.m.
Closed Case

GWPD officers received a report from a male 7-Eleven staff member who said a previously barred male suspect entered the store, stole three chicken sandwiches and walked out. The subject committed four crimes at the store last week, including unlawful entry and theft. GWPD officers arrested the man several hours later, and MPD transported him to the Second District police station.

Subject arrested.

STALKING, RESISTING ARREST

Public Property on Campus (2400 Block of G Street)
8/25/2020 – 7:11 p.m.
Closed Case

GWPD officers responded to a report of an unknown male subject chasing a female student after following her from the Watergate Complex. GWPD officers made contact with the subject who then fled the scene. Shortly after, GWPD apprehended and arrested the subject, and MPD transported him to the Second District police station.

Subject arrested.

HARASSMENT (VERBAL OR WRITTEN)

Public Property on Campus (2000 Block of F Street)
8/25/2020 – 11:23 p.m.
Closed Case

A GWPD male officer reported he encountered a male subject talking to himself and making derogatory comments. The subject then followed the officer, called him racially-charged slurs and spat toward him. The officer directed the suspect to leave the area to which the subject complied.

No identifiable subject.

—Compiled by Kateryna Stepanenko



FILE PHOTO BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

This year's student organization fair will be hosted online over three days in September.

Student organizations adapt to remote fall recruitment, programming

CLARA DUHON &
STAFF WRITER

TIFFANY GARCIA
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

As the fall semester gets underway, GW's more than 450 student organizations are learning to navigate the remote semester and adapt to new methods of outreach, programming and community building entirely online.

In interviews, more than 10 student organization leaders said they were relying "heavily" on social media to recruit new members, especially students from the Class of 2024. Student leaders said in lieu of in-person programming, the virtual setting has prompted them to shift to online platforms like Zoom for general body meetings and up collaboration with similar student groups or outside organizations to engage members.

Recruiting students online

In interviews, 12 student leaders said they've signed up for the virtual organization fair but have relied more heavily on social media marketing to amp up their online outreach efforts.

The virtual student organization fair will be hosted on Sept. 5, 6 and 13, according to the Division for Student Affairs website. Students can reserve their spot ahead of time at one of the five WebEx events grouped by organizations' focuses like academics, recreation and culture.

Sophomore Sophie Gengler, a student leader with Sunrise GW, said she was personally drawn to Sun-

rise after she joined a Sunrise D.C. protest that shut down a city intersection in September protesting fossil fuel divestment. She said virtual recruitment won't fully convey the group's "passions and abilities" as an activist student organization, but the group will continue to recruit new members by involving them in phone banking and voting pushes.

"With the upcoming election, GW students will hopefully be seeking politically active communities to feel a part of and jump into, and we hope to provide a supportive community for that," Gengler said. "One where first-years can learn the ropes of the Sunrise movement."

Junior Louie Kahn, the president of GW College Democrats, said GWCD created a Facebook group for the Class of 2024 as a way for students to connect and talk to fellow Democrats. He said GWCD plans to send text reminders about virtual events, meetings and new information about the group at least twice a week to students who sign up for a Remind 101 text banking system.

He said the remote semester has forced the organization to shift its in-person activities like committee meetings and watch parties to online services like Zoom, but with the election year ahead, the group's leaders do not plan to cancel any of their events outside of in-person canvassing. He said the organization eliminated members' dues for the semester, so events like their election night and debate watch parties are open

to anyone.

"We're hoping to engage students as much as possible in our organization and make their GW experience as worthwhile as possible, even though we are all not on campus," Kahn said.

Seniors Jonathan Lehrfeld and Liat Wasserman, the co-presidents of the Jewish Student Association, said the group hosts Launchpad, an early orientation program for freshmen students, before the start of the academic year but needed to shift online for the first time. The pair said they tried to make the program interactive to engage students, like holding small icebreaker group discussions and online cooking classes.

"We are constantly brainstorming and building on our different programming and learning opportunities for all students, including our incoming first-years," Lehrfeld and Wasserman said in an email. "Many of these programs will give a platform for first-year students to engage one-on-one with each other and develop meaningful relationships."

Collaboration between student organizations

Student leaders are also expanding the way they engage with other student organizations as a means of recruitment and engagement.

Senior Josh Kutner, the chair of GW College Republicans, said the student organization plans to host events like phone banking for candidates and Zoom talks with politicians to en-

sure students are getting the "GW experience" from afar. He said he plans to collaborate with smaller right-wing organizations like Young America's Foundation to ensure those organizations have opportunities to continue operations.

"We're lucky in that we have a large base of members and a budget allocated for speakers and that sort of thing," he said. "But for smaller organizations, it might be a little bit tougher to front the money for a Zoom premium plan and that sort of thing."

Senior Aedy Miller, the president of Trans Non Binary Students at GW, said they spoke at various panels during the virtual New Student Orientation on attending GW as a transgender non-binary student and promoting student organizations like TNBS. Miller said the group's programming will focus on providing "consistent" spaces for students to talk with each other and bond like weekly study halls on the TNBS Discord server, an online messaging platform.

They added that the group plans to engage in "distance advocacy" through collaborating with the Gay-Straight Alliance Network in the DMV to talk with LGBTQ youth about their own experiences growing up.

"One thing that we wanted to do since the org's founding was to work with GSAs in the DMV to show younger kids that you do get to grow up and be trans," Miller said. "You do get to be queer and get to go to college and have these cool experiences."

Living and learning communities continue programming virtually

CIARA REGAN
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Freshmen living and learning communities will continue their programming virtually this fall through virtual bonding events, officials said.

All nine LLC programs, like Civic House, the Women's Leadership Program and Politics and Values, will continue to operate events virtually in light of officials' transition to online classes this fall. Officials said faculty plan to offer students virtual tours of the District, film screenings and guest speakers.

Elizabeth Chacko, the associate provost for special programs and the Mount Vernon academic experience, said she hopes to replicate some of the experiences they would have shared in person.

Chacko said she hosted a virtual orientation for the Mount Vernon Campus Scholars program, where officials offered "real-time interactive elements" for students, like a quiz about the District, breakout sessions with incoming students and responses to questions about the transition from high school to college. She said the incoming students appreciated the opportunity to interact with their peers.

"Teaching and learning completely online for an entire semester is a new experience for all of us," Chacko said in an email. "As young people who are mostly in their late teens, our students are exceptionally adept at interacting in cyberspace, and I hope to build a vibrant and safe online community for the

MVC Scholars with their help and by actively listening to them."

Several alumni of the MVC Scholars Program who were on the Student Advisory Council to the Associate Provost last year have offered to interact with the freshmen on a "regular basis" this fall to help build both community and offer advice, she said.

Chacko added that she plans to send out a weekly newsletter with events and "interesting" issues to students in the LLCs.

Mary Buckley, the director of the Women's Leadership Program and a professor of international arts, said faculty in the program hope to create a "vibrant" and "interactive" learning environment for students through virtual lectures, small group assignments and guest speakers. Former WLP students will also be invited to mentor current students, she said.

"We are taking advantage of the multiple online materials that have been developed in the past few years — online library resources, open-source textbooks and new media tools," she said in an email.

WLP will host several online symposium events, bringing in speakers like Iranian journalist Yeganeh Rezaian and former White House speechwriters Vinca LaFleur and Sarada Peri, Buckley said. She added that students will participate in the Race in America event hosted by the Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement in September.

Buckley said she met with incoming WLP students over the



FILE PHOTO BY DONNA ARMSTRONG | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elizabeth Chacko, the associate provost for special programs and the Mount Vernon academic experience, held a virtual orientation for Mount Vernon Campus Scholars this summer.

summer and was excited by their "eagerness" to begin a new "academic adventure." Enrollment in the program has been consistent in the last four years, and some students who were accepted to WLP from their application in May recently committed to the program, she said.

Incoming students said they are disappointed that they will not have the full LLC experience but are optimistic they will still benefit from the program.

Isabella Scipioni, an incoming

freshman in the WLP, said she is hopeful she will still benefit from being in the program's classes and having the opportunity to meet other students.

Scipioni added that the program has run smoothly online so far. She and her peers have had several calls with professors over Zoom and had a virtual orientation with information about activities and planning on Blackboard, she said.

Dasia Bandy, a freshman in Civic House, said she ultimately decided to stay in the program despite

the transition online because she wanted a "small-knitted family" to begin her academic experience.

Bandy said she has participated in Civic House Orientation, Mount Vernon Scholars Orientation and the Institute for Citizen Leaders Retreat, which included various icebreaker activities where she had the opportunity to meet her peers.

"Through these events I have had the opportunity to build a strong relationship with my cohort and prepare for the fall semester," she said.

GW must respond to student activism as it happens

STAFF EDITORIAL

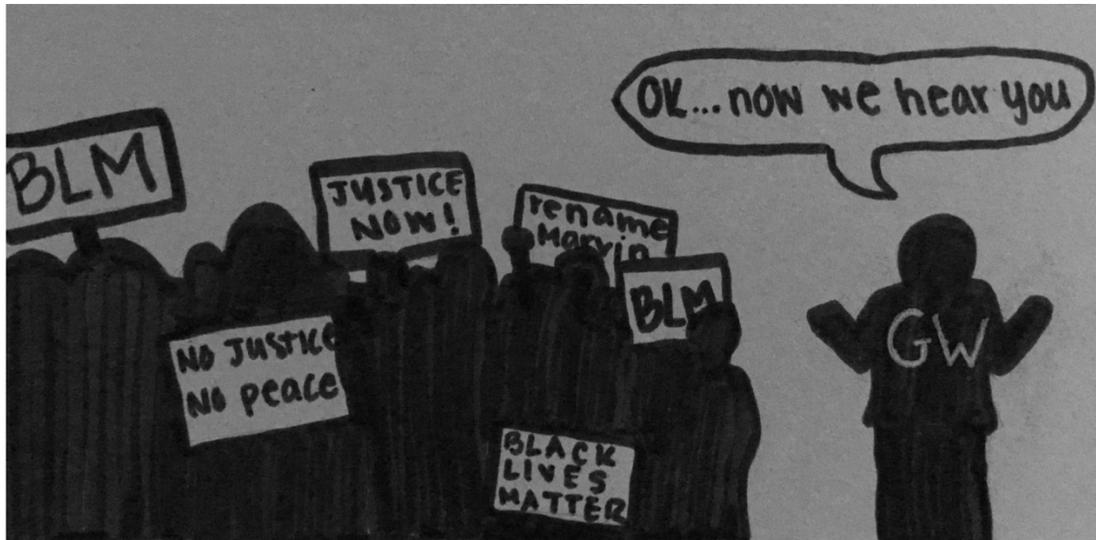
Students have been advocating for controversial campus names like the Marvin Center and the Colonials moniker to be changed for years – but officials consistently sidestepped their calls.

Then, the Black Lives Matter movement swept the globe.

In a moment of national upheaval and protest, the University chose to create committees to evaluate the problematic names of the Colonials moniker and the Marvin Center, among other building names. But it shouldn't have taken a global civil rights movement to get the University to act. Not only that, but it shouldn't take global calls for racial justice to only hear officials say they'll "evaluate" these offensive monikers. It's disappointing that activism has gone unaddressed for years and that officials are only willing to give in when outside pressures cave in.

The University must take the Black Lives Matter movement as a key moment to decide how they'll address racism and student activism moving forward. Officials should map out a clear route to respond to student pushes and take tangible steps to change what's staring them in the face – the Colonials nickname and the Marvin Center.

Students have been pushing for the renaming of buildings like the Marvin Center and the Colonials Moniker for years. From Student Association committees, student petitions and a referendum



Cartoon by Hannah Thacker

that received backing from more than half of voting students, student activism has not died down. Officials did not publicly address any of these demands until the Black Lives Matter movement gained traction. GW needs to respond to student advocacy as it happens and take tangible steps forward, not make empty promises.

The University's decision to form working groups that evaluate these names appears as more of a good public relations move rather than a step toward concrete change. While it is great that they seem to be meeting the moment, they have only released a press release announcing the task forces – no concrete steps, actions or plans have been laid out

and we do not know what the groups have accomplished since their creations. It's fair to say that the University's promise to evaluate these names isn't even a step forward. Officials have been aware of these pushes for a long time, and they should have at least scoped out these names behind closed doors before producing a task force.

GW's empaneling of this committee, coupled with a slow and vague action plan, gives off the strong impression that appeasing people is a higher priority than actually making change. Rolling out a task force to investigate whether or not the University should change its nickname is not action. A cautious response to something as significant as changing the Colonials

nickname might have been forgiven if it hadn't taken years of student activism to get the issue even noticed. But every step of the way – from acknowledging the issue, to putting the moniker up to a student vote, to announcing a task force to begin with – student activists have dragged the University there kicking and screaming.

To begin to rectify the situation, GW needs to demonstrate in good faith that they care about what students are saying and are not just trying to make the protests go away or insulate GW from bad press. The naming task force should produce concrete actions and be open about every step of its investigation – and in the end, the University needs to come up with a

compelling case to students for why the moniker should or shouldn't be changed.

It is true that the University is in a tenuous financial position and that much of the administration's bandwidth is occupied by the basic task of keeping GW afloat during the pandemic and recession. It is also fair to note that changing the nickname would be a huge financial undertaking that would require changing essentially every public-facing aspect of the University. As a result, it would be impossible for the University to axe the Colonials moniker tomorrow and immediately set about removing it from campus. But it is very possible for the University to release a plan for how they would phase

out the Colonials branding, even before a decision is made one way or another. Officials could also take another look at how changing the mascot might negatively impact alumni donations – and be transparent about what those numbers look like. And in the future, a quick and transparent process should begin as soon as hundreds of students start demanding change – not after years of protests.

While many can argue against changing campus buildings' names and our moniker, the reality is that it is in the University's best interest to listen to the students who are greatly impacted by this. For starters, in this moment of national conversation, many businesses including D.C.'s own football team, are rebranding and renaming in an attempt to step away from offensive and insensitive names. Following through with renaming and rebranding at GW will show that the University intends to be a part of the progress its students are demanding and not just trying to protect the University's bottom line.

Getting the University to take decisive action on a moniker and several building names that make many feel like outsiders on their own campus should not be a Sisyphean effort from student activists. Student activism should not only be listened to when GW's reputation or bottom line is at stake – it should be addressed early on and in good faith.

GW must provide students with the means to succeed this fall

Officials had good intentions to return everyone to campus this fall. But without a coherent national response to the pandemic, fall plans going awry was inevitable. Administrators worked in our best public health interest to decide against in-person classes and now bear the responsibility of ensuring quality education

Ella Stern
Writer

this fall.

GW's original plan to have a residential experience was not completely unrealistic. After all, most residence halls are within walking distance of a massive metropolitan hospital, there's no communal dining hall on the main campus and most halls do not have communal bathrooms. But being in D.C. and attracting students from all over the world brings a huge threat to the number of COVID-19 cases in the District. Not only that, but we can't really trust students with social distancing when night falls. Look at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, which faced an immediate rise in COVID-19 cases upon reopening. Expecting students who have been starved of social interaction for months to comply is a challenge in itself and places an undue burden on immunocompromised students, staff and professors.

Students need to understand that while taking classes at home this fall isn't ideal, it's much safer than physically being on campus. And as we transition into an entirely online semester, officials need to provide students with the

means to succeed in their classes. GW should focus their efforts on providing students living at home with financial relief and implementing a flexible grading scale, as it's done in the spring to alleviate academic stress from home.

For many universities, keeping students off campus this fall brings a detrimental financial burden to the school's finances. But as a relatively wealthy institution, GW has some loose change to dole out to students despite losing millions of dollars this fiscal year. Officials should encourage professors, donors and family members to contribute any funds they can to assist students who are less fortunate. Students working from home may need to pick up extra jobs to help their relatives and need as much assistance as possible on top of classes. GW can continue pushing for donations to funds like Emergency Student Assistance Funding, the GW Cares Student Assistance Fund and the Ron Howard Assistance Fund. Any money that can be used to support students must be used for exactly that purpose.

GW must also ensure the quality of classes is held to the same standard as if the classes were in person and work diligently to ensure students do not fall behind as a result of the circumstances. Officials must answer Student Association calls to implement a Pass/No Pass grading scale to alleviate the stress of a virtual semester and the burdens it inevitably causes for some students. Officials cannot assume that their students are in living conditions suitable for online education. They also can't pressure students to try just as hard in

class as they would have on campus if there are circumstances out of their control. Schools like the universities of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Massachusetts-Amherst have listened to those calls, and the University should too. For the sake of students' mental health and well-being, GW must alleviate the grading scale.

GW must also be transparent about issues impacting students as we approach the semester. Students should not have to find out about changes to their financial aid packages through the SA's Instagram – the communication must be more streamlined from the office to students. The mistake of miscalculated packages creates an undue burden for many students already dealing with the hardships of the current moment and the switch to virtual learning. Dealing with the transition online should not be coupled with a complete unawareness of situations such as complications with financial aid packages. The administration must ensure transparency and openness to students.

The University can and should provide students with the resources to have a successful online semester. Students should be their first priority above finances and any other issuing plaguing GW during the pandemic. Moving forward this semester, officials need to pay attention to students' financial aid concerns, actively distribute funds to students who need it and ease the grading scale for at least the semester.

—Ella Stern, a sophomore majoring in journalism and mass communication, is an opinions writer.

LeBlanc's numerous missteps disqualify him – he must go

The failure of GW's leaders – millions of dollars spent on Disney consultants and trips to the Magic Kingdom, enrollment cuts, racial insensitivity and non-competitive high-level hires – was evident long before the current pandemic. The confused response to the pandemic, and the work involved in preparing for remote learning, have provided something of a smokescreen for the most recent examples of closed-doors decision-making and appallingly bad judgment, such as offering a high-level executive position to a person linked to the Michigan State University sexual abuse scandal. As we begin a new school year, the time has come to confront and resolve these chronic leadership problems. GW needs to act decisively, heal rapidly and move forward.

Bernard Wood
University professor of human origins

Leaders must be responsible custodians of resources, but effective leadership involves so much more than fiscal responsibility. They must lead by example – their behavior must be models of probity, honor and decency. They must be competent, respectful, inspirational, trustworthy and transparent. In the good times, they need to generate the stores of respect

and trust they will need to allow them, and the community they lead, to weather the challenging times. Good leaders collaborate, they do not control. Good leaders surround themselves with strong-minded and competent colleagues, who are not afraid to talk truth to power. Good leaders respect the values, customs and ethos of the community they lead. If they think change is needed, they work to build consensus within the existing system. Good leadership is especially important for an institution like a university, which leans on the people who work and study there, who over the years have contributed to its reputation.

University President Thomas LeBlanc's performance has fallen short in each and every aspect of the leadership criteria set out above. He has pursued fiscally irresponsible policies, he has squandered goodwill and he has disrespected students, staff and faculty. He has demonstrated poor judgment and insensitivity about people and policy. Instead of working with the administrative talent he inherited, he has indulged in blatant institutional nepotism, replacing experienced GW employees with a stream of ex-colleagues from the University of Miami. He has been less than honest in his dealings with faculty. He pays lip service

to shared governance. He claims to listen, but he fails to hear.

It is evident from his behavior and decisions that LeBlanc has never had confidence in us. Now we have lost confidence in him.

The faculty have been outspoken at town halls and in unprecedented special formal meetings convened to express their frustration at the lack of effective shared governance. LeBlanc's missteps have consumed thousands of faculty hours that should and could have been more profitably devoted to teaching students and pursuing scholarship and research.

It is time that the Board of Trustees recognizes LeBlanc's appointment was a costly mistake. They have backed him through thick and thin, but now their obstinacy threatens the future of GW. They are throwing good money after bad. LeBlanc's tenure has tainted GW's reputation and sapped the morale of the staff and faculty at a time when their goodwill is needed as never before. At any time, but especially in these turbulent times, the staff, students and faculty of GW deserve a competent, empathetic and effective leader they can trust. LeBlanc is none of these things.

He must go.
—Bernard Wood, who joined GW in 1997, is a University professor of human origins.

Culture

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THE SCENE

BEHAVIORS OF INCLUSION WORKSHOP

September 3 • Free
Eventbrite Registration
Join your peers for a digital conversation on methods to end systematic racism in American society.

THE TEA: TAMIKA LOVE JONES

September 4 • Free
Facebook Livestream
The National Museum of Women in the Arts will host a concert and discussion with Tamika Love Jones about how she creates her music.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

“WHOLE NEW MESS,” AN ALBUM BY ANGEL OLSEN

Non-GW classes to expand your academic experience this fall

BRENNAN FISKE
REPORTER

Students intending to expand their learning opportunities this fall might want to look outside GW for a discounted course.

Whether you've decided to take a semester off or are looking for options past the allowed 18 credits, you can enroll in hundreds of courses offered for free or at reduced rates this fall. Hundreds of colleges are making their courses publicly available online through Coursera and edX, giving outside students the chance to pick up a class like “Medical Neuroscience” and “Leading in the Digital Age.”

Depending on the course, edX charges \$40 to \$160 to receive a certification of completion you can include on your resume or your LinkedIn profile. You can pay anywhere from \$29 to \$99 per class on Coursera, which gives you assignments, tests and a final grade.

Here's a rundown of some classes you can take at other top universities this fall:

Duke University

Duke offers 70 classes through Coursera, from “Behavioral Finance,” to “Advertising and Society” to “Medical Neuroscience.” You can also enroll in the Blockchain Applications MasterTrack Certificate, which allows you to work through a partial master's program online and earn a certificate of completion and a 10 percent tuition scholarship toward a full master's program. Tuition to enroll in classes is \$3,000 with the next session beginning in January 2021.

Massachusetts Institute of Technology

MIT offers nearly 200 courses through edX. For those interested in physics, check out

the mechanics series of classes with offerings like “Mechanics: Momentum and Energy” or “Mechanics: Kinematics and Dynamics.” And on the business side, you can take “Entrepreneurship 101: Who is your customer?” which covers market and customer analysis. MIT courses on edX are free or charge a fee if students choose to receive a verified certificate.

The University of Michigan

In addition to more than 100 classes like “Python for Everybody Specialization” and “Data Science Ethics”, which charges anywhere from \$29 to \$99 per course, the clear focus of the University of Michigan's offerings is its degrees and certificates. Shorter MasterTrack Certificate courses are available for \$2,000 to \$2,100, as well as fully online master programs in “Public Health, Applied Data Science” and “Population and Health Science.”

Boston University

Business and Marketing is the clear focus of BU's edX offerings. Its offerings include “Leading in the Digital Age,” “Strategic Social Media Marketing” and “Digital Leadership.” A select few faith-based classes covering how religion affects the material society like “Religion and Conflict Transformation” “Faith and Finance” are also being offered through edX. BU courses on edX are free or have a small fee if students choose to receive a verified certificate.

Harvard University

With more than 150 courses offered for free on edX, this prestigious institution is one of the best places to look for free online education. You can find everything from “Ancient Masterpieces of World Literature,” to “Backyard Meteorology: The Science of Weather” to the con-



A protester raises her fist during an Aug. 15 Black Lives Matter march organized by TheyThem Collective. LILLIAN BAUTISTA | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

Pandemic, civil rights, protests: This summer's top headlines

CARLY NEILSON
STAFF WRITER

It was easy to get lost in the deluge of summer news this year — there was a lot of it.

The University spent weeks preparing for a hybrid fall semester, only to scrap plans and extend online learning to the fall. Meanwhile, global calls to end police brutality and racial discrimination prompted action from student organizations, the Board of Trustees and the D.C. Council alike.

Here are this summer's top headlines:

Fall semester plans

Officials submitted a plan to the D.C. government in mid-June proposing a mix of in-person and online classes. The plan included social distancing measures in classrooms, regular COVID-19 testing and a mask mandate on campus, among other protocols.

But the proposal received pushback from students and faculty who worried the plan was still unsafe. Nearly half of professors who answered a GW survey also said they intended to hold classes online regardless of the fall semester status.

By the end of July, the University reversed its plan and announced that GW's classes would be held online this fall. Officials said about 500 students facing “extenuating circumstances” would be allowed to return to campus, and those remaining off campus will receive a 10 percent tuition reduction.

COVID-19 cuts

Officials knew by early summer they would need to make layoffs to mitigate the financial toll of the pandemic, which is projected to make a \$220 million dent in GW's budget.

University President Thomas LeBlanc and several other top of-

ficials vowed to take pay cuts and halt most capital projects to help offset the University's finances, avoiding layoffs initially. But at least dozens of staff in career services, consulting, facilities and technology have lost their jobs this summer during a process of consolidation and restructuring across several University departments.

Protests about racial injustice across D.C.

In response to recent episodes of police brutality, protesters took to the streets of D.C. in late May and have continued to throughout the summer. The demonstrations brought into question the University's and D.C. government's own hand in racial injustice.

In early June, the D.C. Council passed an emergency police reform bill that removes power from police unions to conduct disciplinary action and bans hiring officers with a history of misconduct.

The GW Black Student Union has also called on officials to reform GW Police Department's policies. In a letter addressed to GWPD Chief James Tate and Associate Vice President for Safety and Security Scott Burnotes, BSU demanded that the department adopt a no-tolerance policy for officers who act on racial bias and lessen its dependence on the Metropolitan Police Department.

Officials in the Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement also launched a series of events aimed at educating people on equity and anti-racism.

Colonials nickname, building names changes

After years of student activism, the Board of Trustees approved a framework to reevaluate the Colonials moniker and to rename buildings named after figures who enforced racist policies.

Officials will create two com-

mittees — one to consider ditching the Colonials moniker and one to evaluate renaming the Marvin Center, which is named after a former University president who supported segregation. Officials said they will consider any request from students, employees or alumni for name changes to buildings or memorials based on six variables, and calls to change names must be backed by at least 500 people.

Fossil fuel divestment by 2025

After years of pressure from student activist groups like Sunrise GW and the Student Association, officials announced in June that they plan to divest the University's \$53 million in fossil fuel holdings by 2025.

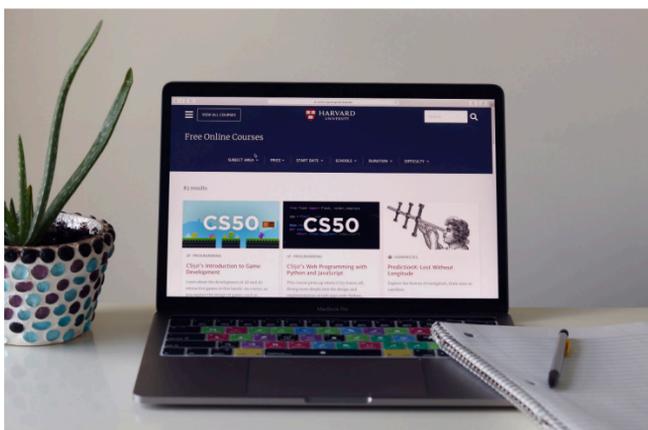
Students have pushed for the University to divest for more than a decade, but the movement didn't pick up steam until LeBlanc revealed GW's indirect holdings in the industry in early February. Following a week of student protests, trustees formed a task force to examine the University's fossil fuel investments.

Stories of sexual abuse detailed on social media

In late July, at least 10 people came forward with allegations of sexual assault against a recent graduate and student leader, sparking conversations about sexual abuse on college campuses.

At around the same time, dozens of people shared anonymous accounts of being sexually assaulted or harassed on the Instagram account @gwsurvivors. The account has posted more than 200 stories to date.

Officials said in a statement that they're concerned about the “hurt and pain” described by students in the social media posts and hope students go to the University with their stories.



CAMILLE DESANTO | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Think GW's course offerings aren't enough? Explore classes offered online by other universities this semester.

Racial justice classes to enroll in this semester

MOLLY KAISER
CONTRIBUTING CULTURE EDITOR

Recent instances of police brutality against Black Americans and racial discrimination have sparked an increased awareness of social injustices this summer.

It's important to be engaged in conversations of injustice both in your personal and academic life, and adding a course that might expand your knowledge of these issues is one way to do it. Enroll in one of these courses this fall or down the line in your academic career to get a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the Black experience in America.

UW 1020: Africa and the African Diaspora

The University Writing Program offers a variety of course topics each year, including Africa and the African Diaspora taught by assistant professor Randi Kristensen. The course explores contemporary Black life in America as it relates to culture, social movements and its roots in African nations while examining Western perspectives of Africa, according to the course description.

AMST 1160: Race, Gender and Law

This course in the American studies department covers the

intersectionality of race, gender and law. You can expect discussions on social issues in America, like domestic violence, mass incarceration, sexual assault and racial profiling. The course is not being offered this fall, but look out for it next semester. It would satisfy a critical thinking general education requirement.

AMST 3360: African American History to 1865

Understanding race in America often starts with grasping the Atlantic slave trade, in which European colonizers kidnapped Africans for their own economic gain. This course explores the effects on everyday American culture, the economy and nationality resulting from this phenomenon by exploring African American history from centuries ago to the end of the Civil War in 1865. This course also counts as a critical thinking GPAC requirement.

AMST 4702W: Race, Medicine and Public Health

Race, Medicine and Public Health is taught by Vanessa Northington Gamble, a University professor of medical humanities and the first woman and African American to hold the faculty position. The course delves into the experiences of African Americans in the health care system as both patients



SOPHIA YOUNG | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR

If you're looking to dive deeper on race through academics this semester, consider one of the following courses during the add/drop period.

and providers, highlighting disparities between race and public health in America.

SOC 1001: Introduction to Sociology

This introductory sociology course explains social issues on both a personal and societal level. You'll learn how U.S. systems perpetuate structural inequality among different races, genders and socioeconomic groups and why some racial groups can access more job and academic opportunities than others. This

course counts as the social science GPAC requirement.

SOC 2146: The Bill of Rights and Criminal Justice

The Bill of Rights set the precedent of American freedom and personal liberty that distinguishes the country from other nations. But its modern interpretation does not guarantee all people are protected equally under the law. This class examines the power of law enforcement and the modern interpretation of

these 10 amendments.

SOC 2151: Jackie Robinson: Race, Sports and the American Dream

Jackie Robinson was the first African American baseball player to integrate Major League Baseball in 1947, and as such, became a pioneer for racial justice in sports and beyond. In the sociology course, Jackie Robinson: Race, Sports and the American Dream, you'll reflect upon his legacy in both sports and fighting racial discrimination.



VOLLEYBALL
vs. Toledo
Aug. 31, 2018
The Colonials bested Toledo in five sets, notching their first win of the season.



MEN'S WATER POLO
vs. Navy
Sept. 2, 2017
Men's water polo opened its season by routing the Midshipmen 15-11.

NUMBER CRUNCH

.333 Women's soccer's shooting percentage against No. 17 Arkansas on Sept. 4, 2016 – the first time the team beat a ranked opponent in 20 years.

Top sports moments: Women's squash secures lowest national finish

EMILY MAISE
SPORTS EDITOR

In lieu of fall sports, we're dusting off the history books and taking a look back on 10 of the best GW sports moments, ever. Here's to hoping some old-fashioned nostalgia can keep us going until the restart.

A year after winning the Kurtz Cup in 2014 for the first time, the women's squash squad secured a No. 7 national finish.

The ranking was the lowest any team had achieved on the men's or women's side in the program's history. The squad was led by then-junior Anna Gabriela Porras, who earned 11 wins at the No. 1 spot and notched her third straight College Squash Association All-American honor that season.

The Colonials had been on the rise for the three previous seasons before nabbing its first Kurtz Cup in 2014. The squad shifted its focus on breaking into the coveted A-Division, which houses the top-eight teams in the nation.

Riding its postseason success, the squad entered the 2014-15 season ranked No. 8, the highest postseason ranking the program had ever seen. The Colonials

burst into the season with a 9-0 win over Georgetown.

The squad then faced its first ranked opponents in No. 6 Cornell and No. 7 Stanford. Cornell bested and Stanford topped GW in a doubleheader. Another loss to No. 5 Princeton closed out the first half of the squad's schedule. The team entered the winter break 2-3 and riding a three-game losing streak.

The Colonials began the new year with three games in as many days. The squad started the trip hot, beating Bates College 8-1, but were swept by No. 3 Penn the next day. The Colonials regrouped for a rematch with Stanford to cap its trip.

The Colonials completed the upset, narrowly besting the Cardinals 5-4 on their home court. Then-senior Alejandra Porras and then-freshman Lindsey Dewey were the difference-makers for the Colonials, nabbing wins in four games, respectively. The victory bumped the team's ranking from No. 8 to No. 7.

GW picked up a pair of 8-1 wins, extending its win streak to three games, before running into No. 10 Dartmouth. The Big Green and Colonials battled, exchanging match victories

until the two were tied at four apiece. With the win riding on the No. 4 matchup, Tan dropped her first game but bounced back to secure the second.

Up 8-7 in game three, Tan sustained an injury, forcing her to forfeit the match. Dartmouth was awarded the 5-4 victory, and the upset pushed the team back to No. 8 nationally. With Tan sidelined, the middle of the ladder shifted for the remainder of the season to absorb her absence at the No. 4 spot.

The squad endured an 8-1 loss to No. 4 Yale before squaring up with No. 9 Columbia. Then-freshman Mary Jo Mahfood earned a quick 3-0 win at her new No. 7 spot, helping the team to a 5-4 win over the Lions. Taking down the Lions was a must-win for the Colonials to secure a spot in the A Division for Nationals, former head coach Wendy Lawrence told The Hatchet after the match.

"We needed to win this match to stay in the A's," Lawrence said. "Now, the only way we get bumped down is if some team below us beats a team above us — this match was the only time we had control over staying in the top eight."



HATCHET FILE PHOTO
The team that year secured a Chaffee Award for the first time since 2008, a distinction given to teams that exemplify "sportsmanship, teamwork, character and improvement."

The victory began a four-match win streak that propelled the team into CSA Team Nationals, where they would face No. 1 Harvard. The Crimson swept GW in each game and match to a spotless 9-0 victory.

A blizzard was set to plow through the Northeast during Team Nationals, which were hosted at Harvard in Boston, Massachusetts. Several

teams, including GW, opted to skip the remainder of Nationals to avoid the storm, which dropped 12 to 20 inches of snow.

As a result, the team forfeited its second match with Yale and did not play the third match. Despite the less than storybook ending to the Colonials' season, the squad's efforts were rewarded at the end of the year when it was ranked No.

7 in the nation.

With a 10-7 overall record, the Colonials cemented themselves into the A Division for the first time in program history. The squad was also honored with the Chaffee Award for the first time since 2008, a distinction presented to teams that exemplify "sportsmanship, teamwork, character and improvement."

Cutting sports hurts donor relations, experts say

WILL MARGERUM
STAFF WRITER

Sports law and business experts said GW may risk damaging alumni relationships and missing out on tuition revenue once it eliminates seven varsity programs at the end of the academic year.

The University will take varsity status away from men's rowing, men's tennis, men's indoor track and field, men's and women's squash, women's water polo and sailing at the end of the 2020-21 year. Experts said while cutting the program could appear as a short-term cost-saving measure, GW is putting donations, marking and recruitment opportunities on the line.

Alumni of eliminated teams said they're disappointed with the University's decision, adding that they're reconsidering their financial support to the athletic department and hoping to turn their programs into club teams. Squash and women's water polo alumni launched petitions urging GW to reconsider its decision.

David Ridpath, an associate professor at Ohio University specializing in sports administration, said most alumni donors are lost "forever" if their sport is no longer supported at their alma mater.

GW is one of several schools cutting programs amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Stanford chopped 11 sports in July, Iowa discontinued four programs in August and Connecticut cut four teams in June. GW is the only school in the 14-member Atlantic 10 Conference

that has announced sport eliminations.

He added that universities and athletic departments can save money by reducing coaches' salaries rather than eliminating entire programs. To save money, Vogel and other administrators and deans are taking a pay cut that will last at least until the end of the academic year.

"What are you saving when you're not having these sports at George Washington? What are you gaining?" Ridpath said. "And I'd say you're losing a lot, and you're gaining very little, if anything. Almost always, the backlash, the negatives, far outweigh the positives."

Ridpath said schools are already suffering from slashed enrollment and finances amid the pandemic, and cutting programs will further hurt enrollment opportunities. Officials are closely monitoring the University's matriculation this semester as 150 freshmen — a larger number than in previous years — deferred enrollment.

Joel Maxcy, the director of sports management at Drexel University, said larger costs, like coach salaries, are fixed costs that are not easy to eliminate. He added that smaller programs were "low-hanging fruit" for the athletic department to cut because other larger, long-term wages cannot be moved.

Athletic department spokesman Brian Sereno declined to say how much money the University would be saving by cutting the seven programs, deferring to the Frequently Asked Questions page of

the initial announcement.

The page states that savings "cannot be tabulated in one total sum" and will be seen gradually as students come off scholarship and expenses in areas like travel, compensation and operation are reduced. It added that the athletic department had been underfunded and understaffed, and the cuts will help remedy that issue.

Maxcy said GW's decision may be short-sighted because the long-term value of most athletic programs is not in their direct revenue, but the publicity and students they bring to the school over time.

"One of the things to think about is, why do universities have sports anyway?" Maxcy said. "And it's not really in the sense to make money, but what they are doing is trying to attract students and students that ultimately pay tuition and so forth. That means that those sports that they're cutting, at some point in the past, were perceived to have value."

Jeffrey Wolfman, the vice president for institutional advancement at Fitchburg State and the son of former GW Associate Vice President of Academic Affairs Brunetta Wolfman, said the University will be hard-pressed to convert athletic donors into academic donors once athletic programs are removed.

"People who give to athletics could care less about the library or could care less about the rising star junior faculty startup packages," Wolfman said. "They're only interested in that affinity to that sport."



FILE PHOTO BY OLIVIA ANDERSON
About 30 percent of GW's roster last year that qualified for an additional year of eligibility will take advantage of it.

Less than one-third of student-athletes set to graduate in 2020 to return for final year

EMILY MAISE
SPORTS EDITOR

After the Atlantic 10 and NCAA canceled spring sports amid the COVID-19 pandemic, student-athletes set to graduate around the country were left in limbo.

In late March, the NCAA voted to grant impacted student-athletes another year of eligibility, leaving it up to individual schools to decide whether to offer that extended eligibility to their athletes. At least 14 of the 49 eligible athletes — which include 45 seniors and four graduate students — in their last year of play will stay on for a second shot at closure, according to team rosters.

Steve Barmakian, baseball's fifth-year utility player, said the NCAA's decision was welcome news. Barmakian said he was instantly "all in" to get a second chance at closing out his baseball career when baseball head coach Gregg Ritchie asked him to return.

"Your whole life, you grow up and you know that one day you're going to have to stop playing," Barmakian said. "You have no idea when it's going to be, but you hope it's as late as possible. And when that decision came out, I had this feeling of hope that it was not going to end with a sour taste."

Sports law and management experts said the extra season is a good move from the NCAA, but the increase in athletes could financially strain athletic departments. Athletic officials said the department is underfunded and spread thin, recently announcing

that seven programs will be entirely cut at the end of the 2020-21 season.

The NCAA is allowing schools to draw from its Student Assistance Fund to pay for scholarships to ease the financial burden on athletes and universities. Student-athletes can dip into that fund to financially support another year or semester of tuition.

While Jaret Edwards said he was excited by the NCAA's decision, he originally was unsure if he could return because he "didn't budget for a fifth year of school." But thanks to assistance from Ritchie, pitching coach Rick Oliveri and the NCAA, Edwards said he was able to return and enroll in a graduate program at GW.

Some returning seniors said they decided to alter their original post-graduation plans to pursue graduate degrees. Both Edwards, who is pursuing a master's in statistics, and Barmakian, who enrolled in a one-year program management and leadership certificate program, said if there hadn't been a pandemic, they likely would have pushed their graduate programs to years down the line.

Of the seven seniors on last year's roster, four players chose to return to the diamond for one more year. Baseball led the way with the highest number of returning players in their final year of eligibility. Softball and men's rowing each had three players return, while women's rowing returned two athletes, according to teams' respective rosters.

Women's water polo and golf are each bringing

back one student-athlete for an extra year of eligibility. Sailing, women's outdoor track and field, men's outdoor track and field, men's tennis, women's tennis and lacrosse do not have a student-athlete returning to GW for an extra season, according to 2020-21 rosters.

Three of the six members of softball's 2020 class are returning, including graduate student utility player Jenna Cone, graduate student utility player Jessica Linquist and graduate student utility player Faith Weber. But infielder Elena Shelepak, pitcher Kaitlin Bluff and utility player Priscilla Martinez opted not to use the extra year at GW, according to the 2021 roster.

Cone, who is going for a master's in media and strategic communications, said returning without the teammates she's played with her entire college career will be an "adjustment."

But all three players said extra eligibility gives them a second chance to accomplish their goals for their careers.

Cone said the team has its eyes fixed on winning an Atlantic 10 Championship and going deep in the postseason, a goal set before the pandemic. She said the team got a "taste" of postseason play in 2019 when the Colonials were declared co-champions with Fordham but did not earn a bid to the NCAA Tournament.

"Our main goal for this year before the pandemic was to be A-10 Champions again and continue on to the postseason," she said. "That still remains my goal to win a Championship and go in the NCAA Tournament."



PHEBE GROSSER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Sports law and business experts said dropping a sport can be costly for a university because alumni of those programs often quit donating altogether.