

# The GW Hatchet

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## How administrators have addressed GW's budget gap amid pandemic

**ZACH SCHONFELD**  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Administrators have been grappling with the financial impact of the pandemic on the University for months. But now, officials say they have identified the cuts needed to close GW's projected budget gap.

University President Thomas LeBlanc announced to employees late last week steps that will be taken as part of the second and final phase of financial mitigation, which will include reductions of non-recurring expenses and use of the University's unrestricted assets. GW's annual budget gap is currently projected to reach \$160 million this year in addition to an estimated \$45 million in lost revenues last fiscal year, which ended June 30.

"Barring a significant change in the pandemic and its impact, we believe that these final steps will conclude our budget mitigation for this fiscal year," LeBlanc said in an email, which was obtained by The Hatchet, to employees Thursday.

Since the pandemic began affecting the University's operations in March, officials have stressed that financial projections are subject to change until more information becomes available about

enrollment and the ability to bring students back to campus. Total undergraduate enrollment fell sharply this year based on preliminary estimates, and administrators began meeting this month about spring operations.

**March**

Days after students started taking classes online following spring break, administrators began implementing the first phase of financial mitigation.

Officials announced on March 25 they would suspend most capital projects and hirings, the first public action taken to reduce expenses. Administrators had previously suspended non-essential international travel and urged employees to delay all domestic travel out of health concerns, which also led to savings.

**April**

In early April, LeBlanc provided the first known estimate of the pandemic's financial impact on the University. Officials anticipated a \$25 million loss from the original fiscal year 2020 budget, driven by a \$45 million annual revenue shortfall.

The projection did not account for the impact of the pandemic on the University's medical enterprise. The GW Hospital

temporarily suspended elective surgeries to allocate more resources to locate COVID-19 patients.

On April 27, officials announced they would freeze all employee salaries and top administrators, including LeBlanc, would take a pay cut.

At the time, LeBlanc said administrators were not planning any "immediate" layoffs and would only do so if "necessary."

The Faculty Senate subsequently requested layoffs be used only as a "last resort." Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights and LeBlanc said they wouldn't commit to implementing layoffs only as a last resort, adding that it would only effect administrative support rather than faculty.

**May**

As the pandemic's impact persisted, GW's financial outlook continued to worsen.

On May 8, administrators announced a projected annual revenue shortfall of between \$100 million and \$300 million for fiscal year 2021, which runs July 1, 2020, through June 30, 2021, depending on when students return to campus. The Board delayed the passage of the fiscal year 2021 budget from its May meeting given the financial uncertainty of the pandemic's



FILE PHOTO BY ARI GOLUB | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
GW's revenue losses from COVID-19 are now estimated at \$160 million a year, according to University President Thomas LeBlanc.

impact.

Officials said during fiscal year 2020, which ended June 30, they projected the \$45 million revenue shortfall would yield a net loss of \$13 million after running out the University's budgeted surplus and implementing various mitigation steps.

As officials discussed more drastic measures to close the budget gap, they vowed not to use GW's endowment, arguing it would jeopardize the long-term financial stability of the University.

"Tapping the endow-

ment or reserves today would not be a prudent decision or in the best interest of GW because it will only hamper our financial standing in the future," Speights, the Board chair, said at the May senate meeting. "We cannot sacrifice our long-term future to resolve the challenges posed by this pandemic."

The decision quickly led to criticism from some faculty who said using endowment funds could prevent potential layoffs and other cuts.

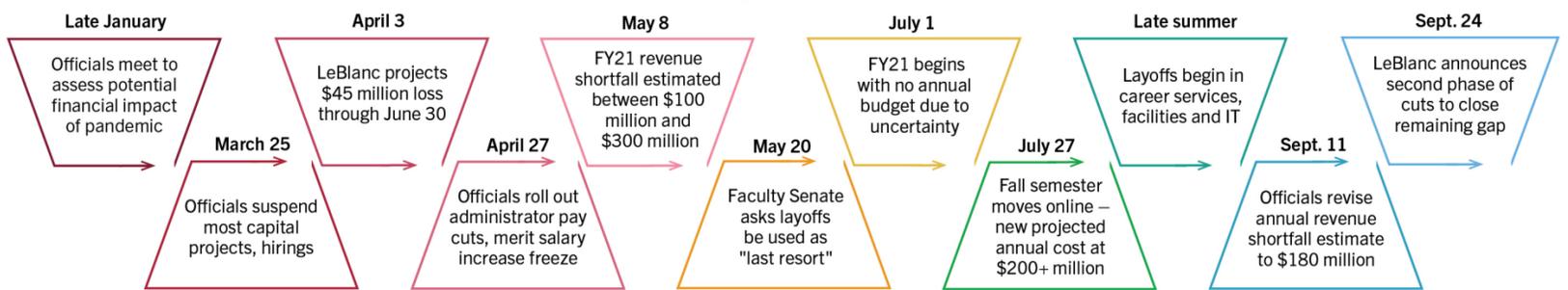
**June**

At the summer's start, administrators said layoffs were no longer just a possibility – they were inevitable.

On June 4, LeBlanc wrote in an email to Andrew Zimmerman, the then-president of the Faculty Association, saying that officials would be unable to avoid layoffs for "any longer" – marking LeBlanc's first known confirmation of impending layoffs.

See BUDGET Page 4

### GW's estimated budget shortfall from COVID-19



SIDNEY LEE | GRAPHICS EDITOR

## Researchers surpass diversity goal for COVID-19 vaccine trials

**RACHEL ANNEX**  
STAFF WRITER

Almost two months after GW launched its arm of COVID-19 vaccine trials, researchers have surpassed their goal for including participants from minority communities as part of their test population.

The researchers aimed for 30 percent of their trials' participants to be from a diverse background, including African Americans and people from the Latinx community, but the trials have surpassed this goal, with about half of enrolled participants being people of color. The research team – led by David Diemert, a professor of infectious diseases – said they're currently conducting Phase Three of the vaccine trial after the first two phases proved to be safe and showed an immune response.

The team, which includes School of Medicine and Health Sciences professors Marc Siegel and Elissa Malkin and Milken Institute School of Public Health professor Manya Magnus, said testing the vaccine on a sample population that includes Black, Latinx and elderly populations ensures researchers prove the vaccine works on those populations, which have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

"If we do not enroll a representative sample in this study, we will not know whether this vaccine is safe and prevents COVID-19 in those most affected by the pandemic," the researchers said

in a joint response.

The team said they were able to target a diverse sample population using connections from their past work on HIV and a database that keeps track of people who are interested in participating in vaccine trials.

They said they've almost reached the 300-person capacity for the number of people who can be enrolled in the trial, and once the last person is enrolled, they'll follow the participants for the next 25 months.

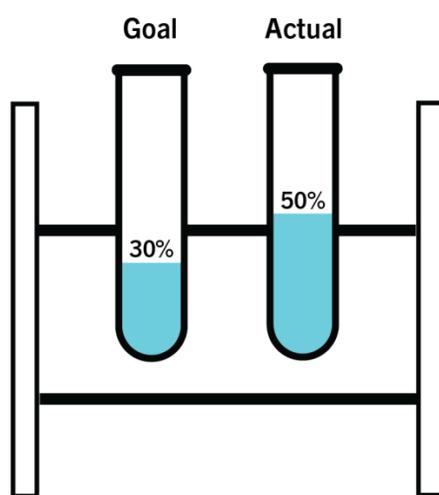
"There will be several interim analyses as the study proceeds to evaluate for vaccine efficacy, and so it is possible that there will be study results that are released before the completion of the study," the researchers said.

Black residents have comprised 52 percent of cases and 75 percent of deaths related to COVID-19 in the District, according to a May NPR study.

Vaccines can take 10 to 15 years to research, develop and be approved by the Food and Drug Administration for widespread use, but Operation Warp Speed, a government-funded program implemented to accelerate vaccine trials, has provided the resources to speed up the vaccine development process.

Infectious disease experts said including people from diverse backgrounds in COVID-19 vaccine trials can increase the public's trust in the vaccine's effectiveness because it included members of communities

### Representation of people of color in GW's COVID-19 vaccine trials



SIDNEY LEE | GRAPHICS EDITOR

that have been hit the hardest by the pandemic. Michael Osterholm, the director of the Center for Infectious Disease Research and Policy at the University of Minnesota, said minority populations are at a greater risk for COVID-19 in part because of their socioeconomic status and because many members of those communities are essential workers.

"It could be huge to reduce the number of cases of COVID-19 not only in terms of reducing the illness in communities but giving the communities confidence that they can try to find that new normal in life," Osterholm said.

Osterholm said the rate at which vaccines

are being produced will likely not continue when the pandemic ends. He said making a vaccine at this speed is more expensive than going through the five-to-seven year process it typically takes and the government is unlikely to fund those efforts when there is not an imminent crisis.

"I think at this point it's a situation where the people, the government is willing to spend that additional money to do this kind of work, which is very expensive," he said. "In that regard, that's not going to happen unless you have a crisis."

See DIVERSITY Page 5

## Power outages, poor air quality disrupt West Coast students' lives

**TARA SUTER**  
REPORTER

**TIFFANY GARCIA**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Sophomore Gabriel Young was woken up in the middle of the night last month in San Jose, California, from dry thunder and lightning storms, which sparked the second-largest wildfire in California's recorded history.

Young, who is currently taking classes remotely, said he slept next to a packed backpack and luggage for a week in mid-August after receiving an evacuation warning and watching his neighbors up the road evacuate. When classes began, he said he struggled to stay motivated and focused as the fires ripped through five California counties and thousands of acres of land.

"Although I am doing internships within my area, it just made it even harder to focus and be productive," Young said. "When your conditions around you are just uncertain, not only from the [Black Lives Matter] movements but with COVID too, adding another stress factor onto me just made it very hard to concentrate and take it all in."

Images of glowing orange skies and smoky, ash-filled air saturated the news in late August after wildfires spread along the West Coast. The fires have continued to worsen air quality in the region – cities like Portland, Oregon, and Seattle topped worldwide lists for having the

worst air quality in mid-September, and smoke from the fires has spread all the way to D.C.

More than 10 students taking classes in California, Oregon and Washington said they began their semester facing "extreme" heat waves and knowledge of at least one wildfire near them. Students said power outages and poor air quality have distracted them from schoolwork, bringing on another layer of stress for their families affected by the fires.

Sophomore Prerna Agarwal, an international affairs major also from San Jose, California, said she remembers crying from the toxicity in the air quality around her when she went outside during the peak of the fires in August. She said it was "impossible" to leave her house for days because of poor air quality and intense heat waves.

Air quality poses little or no health risk when the air quality index is between 51 and 100. At 101 to 150 – which Agarwal's region reached – the air is considered unhealthy for sensitive groups like the elderly, children and people with lung disease.

"I ended up staying indoors during most of the fires, and I am very grateful that I had a space to be able to do so," Agarwal said in an email. "They did have to intermittently turn off WiFi, which made it challenging to engage in online school or finish work."

See WILDFIRES Page 4

# News

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## THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

### A CONVERSATION WITH THE AMBASSADOR OF GERMANY TO THE UNITED STATES

September 28 • 4 p.m. EDT • Free  
Join Emily Haber, the ambassador of Germany to the United States to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on Germany and the European Union.

### ANALYZING THE FIRST PRESIDENTIAL DEBATE

September 30 • 6:30 p.m. EDT • Free  
The third installment of the Frank J. Fahrenkopf & Charles T. Manatt 2020 Election Series will feature a panel of experts as they analyze the first presidential debate between Joe Biden and President Donald Trump.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

September 28, 2008

D.C. Mayor Adrian Fenty shuts down the only homeless shelter in Northwest D.C., located on 13th and K streets, over the objections of the D.C. Council and shelter residents.

# Students with disabilities decry lack of support from DSS

LAUREN SFORZA  
STAFF WRITER

Sophomore Madison Girault said she's used Disability Support Services for accommodations since she was diagnosed with dyslexia at 18 years old, but online learning has thrown a wrench in her studies.

Girault, who is majoring in photojournalism, said she normally receives emails at least twice a month from DSS listing resources to succeed in class, but she has not received any communication since the semester started. She said completing tasks like discussion posts and reading assignments has caused her to tire more easily, and she hopes DSS staff will reach out to offer additional support or tips to aid online learning.

"Staring at computer screens for really long or reading a lot, which obviously teachers have been like 'here's a bunch of reading' and doing these blog posting situations, I get so tired," Girault said. "My brain works four times more than the average human when it comes to reading between the dyslexia and the eye tracking disorders. So it's literally just been so much."

Half a dozen students with DSS accommodations said the office has provided limited communication during the virtual semester,

causing them to face issues solo. Students said they wish the office provided them with resources like closed captioning and guidelines for how to talk to professors about needing extra assistance with lectures or work.

"The lack of communication makes me feel like I don't have support at GW," Girault said. "And it's very scary. In person, we got emails probably at least once a week, if not every other week. I had emails in my inbox all the time. Going from that to no emailing over the summer to none now – unless you email them – it definitely makes me feel very frustrated."

In the last few years, registration in the DSS office jumped nearly 40 percent under former Director Susan McMenemy. McMenemy left GW in January, and Alisa Major filled her place as the interim director.

Major said the office has seen an increase in accommodation requests from students who previously did not need the assistance for their transition to online. She said DSS is providing workshops this fall for students to stay on track of coursework and prepare for exams in addition to connecting students with academic offices like the GW Writing Center and Office for Student Success.

"DSS continues to provide academic and housing

accommodations to students with disabilities who register with our office," Major said in an email. "This fall we are continuing to provide the needed support – it just looks a little bit different in a virtual environment."

Major said the office is educating more faculty this semester about the need for accessibility and Universal Design in Learning, which breaks down the learning barrier for students with accommodations by creating flexible lesson plans. She said the office has been working with professors to support students online by teaching techniques like subtitling presentations, which allows students to go back and re-view lectures.

"There has been a positive aspect to the transition to online learning," Major said. "GW did a wonderful job when planning for the fall semester to get prepared to be able to provide an accessible, remote learning environment."

But students say DSS has been "behind" this year in terms of communicating and connecting students with accommodations for online learning.

Freshman Shea Trimble said keeping up with professors' presentations has been "challenging" because of her field vision loss in the left side of both her eyes, which makes it difficult to see the



FILE PHOTO BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

Students say the Office of Disability Support Services has provided them with limited communication during a particularly difficult semester.

presentation and her notebook simultaneously. She said she has an auditory processing disorder, a hearing condition that causes problems processing sounds, but her professors post everything online so she can listen back to what she may have missed.

"My brain takes longer to process sound than it should," she said. "And it's worse online. So it's hard to keep up with what people are saying, but at the same time, because of the legal

blindness, it doesn't really matter."

Trimble said she requested that DSS staff send accommodation letters to her professors in August, but they weren't submitted until three weeks into the semester. She said she told professors of her accommodations herself because she hadn't heard from the office.

Luana Kiwakana, a senior who experiences frequent migraines and flare-ups, said Zoom discussions have caused migraines, hurt-

ing her ability to focus. She said "very few" of her professors use closed captions in class, and she struggles to get work done during the allotted class time.

She said she has reached out personally to her professors to ask for assistance because she feels DSS has not adapted to assist students learning virtually. She said DSS staff have previously provided resources for students on how to talk to their professors about accommodations.



KATE CARPENTER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Metro's ridership is currently at 12 percent of its pre-pandemic level, according to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority.

# Metro's budget cuts could complicate travel, students say

DANIEL OKAY  
REPORTER

As commuters continue to avoid public transportation amid the pandemic, the Metro is anticipating financial shortfalls and dramatic changes in its operations.

Commuters and D.C.-area students alike are evading the enclosed Metro cars due to remote work and fear of COVID-19 infection – the Metro currently sees 12 percent of its pre-pandemic ridership, according to the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority. Students said Metro's struggle to stay afloat during the pandemic could disfigure their travel routines in months ahead.

Earlier this month, the Metro Board of Directors approved a proposal that cuts \$212 million of the agency's 2020 operating budget if WMATA doesn't receive more federal support by the end of 2020. Metro's \$767 million in CARES Act funding expired in July, and officials are preparing to slash nearly half of its \$467 million yearly budget as revenue continues to slip away.

Usually, the Metro transportation system is bustling with commuters, second only to the New York City subway. But ridership has fallen by nearly half a million daily entries during the pandemic – two thirds of Metro's average – and revenue has decreased by 90 percent on some lines.

WMATA initially cut ser-

vice to curb the spread of COVID-19 but failed to rebound with its usual flock of riders when it fully reopened earlier this month.

WMATA General Manager and CEO Paul Wiedefeld said at a special board meeting Friday that the organization may have to lay off as many as 1,700 of its 13,000 employees, reduce arrivals by 25 percent, cut hours from 11 p.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and halt construction on the 23-mile Dulles Metrorail Project.

Wiedefeld said he hoped fully restoring operations in August would help revitalize the D.C. economy and reestablish some normalcy for public transportation, but commuters have largely steered clear of the system.

"Metro is what drives the region's economy and moves our federal workforce," Wiedefeld said. "Cutting service, shortening operating hours, laying off and furloughing workers – these all run counter to the strong recovery that everyone wants."

Metro Board Chair Paul Smedberg said in the release that officials will make "much deeper and more painful" cuts next fiscal year should additional federal aid not relieve the pandemic's strain on transit. The board plans to finalize budget cuts in November, according to the release.

Sundhya Alter, a sophomore studying sociology, said she still uses the Metro every day to travel from Georgetown to Federal Cen-

ter to go to her gym, adding that she thinks the risk of infection is the same as going to any other public space. Alter said Metro's budget cuts would affect her regular travel plans as she relies on the transit system to get from place to place.

"There's no need to have a car in the city because the Metro pretty much brings you everywhere," she said. "I rely on it pretty heavily."

Previously riding the Metro across the District once a week, sophomore Eva Neumann, a public health major, said she's only ridden the Metro three times in the two months she's been living off campus during the pandemic with "less to do" in the city. Even though her travel schedule has shifted, Neumann said she still feels safe riding the train in the city.

"I'm pretty comfortable using it now, and it definitely is the cheapest option compared to Uber-ing or finding a friend with a car or something like that," Neumann said.

Neumann said the Metro's But Mark Schlager, a sophomore and lifelong D.C. native, said he feels unsafe using the Metro amid the pandemic and hasn't ridden any Metro trains or buses since the outbreak in March, now driving his car to get around the city.

"I still don't really trust going on the Metro just in case someone is on a train and has it," Schlager said. "So I've been just driving everywhere."

# SA LGBTQ caucus to prioritize change to housing policies

MAKENA ROBERTS  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS  
EDITOR

Leaders of the Student Association's newly established LGBTQ+ caucus said they will work with housing officials on gender rooming assignments and create spaces to listen to concerns of the LGBTQ community.

SA Sen. Sam Packer, CCAS-U and the chair of the caucus, said the group can serve to especially support an LGBTQ community that has been viewed as a "relatively" small community. She said the members will prioritize changing the University's housing policy so students' assignments are based on gender instead of sex, collaborating with other LGBTQ organizations and forming a simplified name change process for students on all GW documents.

Five SA senators and one SA vice president are currently serving on the caucus.

"It was past time for the student leadership and the administrators to take a more direct focus on our issues, especially for the gender diverse community," Packer said. "That's trans people, nonbinary people, gender queer people, anyone who doesn't identify within or essentially as a cisgender person."

She said the caucus will meet at least once a month to discuss policy goals. Packer added that she reached out to LGBTQ organizations like Transgender and Non-Binary Students of GW, Allied in Pride and Delta Lambda Phi, a queer fraternity on campus, before drafting the caucus legislation to invite them to apply for a member position in the caucus.

She said the caucus is open to all members and allies of the community who are "passionate" about LGBTQ issues. Packer said a priority for the caucus is working with IT administrators to simplify the "complicated" process to change a student's legal name to their preferred

name on all GW databases.

"That needs to be standard," Packer said she wants to expand access to LGBTQ resources like "community spaces" and "health resources" for graduate students because "very few" graduate students participate in student organizations. She said she will reach out to graduate students through the SA graduate newsletter.

"I want to make sure that all of the resources we have as a community are available to all students within our community, be that undergraduate students, graduate students,

**"I want to make sure that we're bringing those people into the room and helping empower them to strive for those leadership positions, whether in the Student Association or in their student organization."**

DREW AMSTUTZ

SA VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNDERGRADUATE STUDENT POLICY

part-time, online – even when not in the pandemic – because we are an inclusive community, and I want to make sure that everyone has the access to resources that they need," Packer said.

She added that the caucus will advocate for adding at least one gender-inclusive bathroom in all buildings on campus so students who aren't comfortable with using a sex-assigned bathroom don't have to walk multiple blocks in between classes. Following student advocacy, a gender-inclusive bathroom was built in the Marvin Center in the spring.

Drew Amstutz, the SA's vice president for undergraduate student policy and a member of the caucus, said he will focus on outreach to LGBTQ student organizations and intends to create a mentorship program between LGBTQ students and professionals across the University's schools.

He said many student "positions of power" across campus aren't representative of transgender students so a mentorship program can help students

– specifically transgender students – find more opportunities to be in leadership positions on campus. Amstutz said upperclassmen and student leaders part of the LGBTQ community would act as mentors.

"I want to make sure that we're bringing those people into the room and helping empower them to strive for those leadership positions, whether in the Student Association or in their student organization," Amstutz said.

SA Sen. Courtney Mason, CCAS-G and a member of the caucus, said she will continue to advocate

for previous legislation passed in the SA, like the creation of gender-inclusive bathrooms, when speaking with officials on LGBTQ issues. She said she will speak with administrators like Cissy Petty, the dean of students experience and vice president of student affairs, to "improve"

campus resources for all students, specifically LGBTQ individuals.

"I'm hoping that LGBTQ students do feel safe and welcomed on campus and that they can be themselves," Mason said. "And I don't think there's necessarily specific issues, but I think that there are areas for improvement."

Anna Weber, the SA's vice president for campus operations and a member of the caucus, said the caucus provides a "designated" space for students to talk about LGBTQ issues, especially considering the "robust" LGBTQ population at GW. She said she will advocate to bring back an event similar to the LGBTQIA+ Health and Advocacy Conference, which featured a town hall and presentations from national figures in the spring, through her position as a caucus member.

"I would like to try and do something with that again," Weber said. "Otherwise, I'd like to just provide input to the senate members, and it's just a really good place to have discussion about these issues."

# Student organizations rally civic engagement away from nation's capital

ABIGAIL OSBORNE &  
RIO MATSUMOTO  
REPORTERS

Civic engagement groups on campus are searching for ways to stay active and vocal despite setbacks brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

As Election Day nears and calls for racial justice across the nation and in D.C. grow louder, student organizations are continuing to rally members through online events to stay involved and fight for change while observing social distancing protocols. Student activists and leaders with groups like GW College Democrats and GW College Republicans said members have adjusted to the pandemic, pressed leaders for change and built up momentum heading into Election Day.

College Democrats President Louie Kahn said he's encouraged members to phone bank in their states to stay involved and push Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden and several Congressional candidates to victory on Election Day, planning five phone banks a week for candidates in November's election. He said members dedicate Tuesday nights to phone bank for Biden and divide time throughout the week to advocate for candidates that could tip the balance of power in the U.S. Senate, like Mark Kelly in Arizona, Cal Cunningham, a former

North Carolina state senator who is now running for the U.S. Senate, and Sara Gideon in Maine.

"We are six weeks out from the most important election in modern American history and probably the most important election of our lifetimes," Kahn said. "Now is not the time to remain on the sidelines. Now is the time to get involved."

Junior Patrick Burland, the director of public relations for College Republicans, said members have continued programming online, organizing a "mock convention platform event" and hosting talks with California Congressional hopeful Young Kim and House Minority Leader Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., via Zoom. The group also led a virtual training with the Republican National Committee and connected students with political internships and campaigns.

As the group prepares for the rest of the online semester, Burland said members have spent the year posting blogs that discuss several politically-charged issues like police brutality, environmentalism and the filibuster on the group's website. Burland said those blogs have kept members active, but he still remains focused on reviving the lost sense of community.

"The biggest challenge has been bringing the D.C. community and aspect to

our members, especially the new ones, but through a variety of online venues we've been able to keep our members engaged," he said.

Sophomore Sydney McArthur, the co-leader of Students for Indigenous and Native American Rights, said recruiting new members has been challenging, "especially when you're a minority on campus." No longer able to gather in large groups on campus, McArthur said SINAR has used its Instagram to engage with students and advertise movie screenings.

"It is definitely hard – it's a lot of social media tactics like what we post, who we follow, how we can get connected, and we do appreciate a lot of reposts – that's how we get a lot of attention sometimes," McArthur said. "So a lot of it has been through social media, strategic work and also hopefully throughout emails."

McArthur said SINAR members have focused on the Black Lives Matter movement in recent months to show "solidarity and intersectionality of indigenous sovereignty and Black liberation."

SINAR partnered with several other student organizations on campus, like the Black Student Union and Persist GW, this summer to launch the Reconsider The Names campaign, which calls for officials to reconsider the names of six campus



FILE PHOTO BY DONNA ARMSTRONG | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
The GW College Democrats are hosting five phone banks a week for Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden and other Congressional candidates in November's election.

buildings named after controversial figures from history as well as the Colonials moniker.

McArthur said she plans to use the fall months ahead to raise awareness about issues facing Indigenous and Native American communities, like the disproportionate amount of violence and murder Indigenous women face relative to the rest of the country.

"We do plan to do a lot of information regarding missing and murdered Indigenous women, the environmental aspect of activism especially what's going on

in the Amazon forests with those tribes, and we also wanted to do some events that collaborate with other organizations to emphasize the importance of intersectionality and just being stronger together," she said.

Senior Matthew Oberstaedt, the leader of the GW chapter of Students for D.C. Statehood, said the COVID-19 pandemic has made it more difficult to organize events that would otherwise be in person, like "lobby days" on Capitol Hill. Now, lobby days are virtual, he said, and members of the organization joined other

chapters and congressional staffers at an event called the 51 for 51 Youth Advocacy Day Thursday.

Oberstaedt added that the COVID-19 pandemic has offered up new opportunities for the 50-member group, as students have engaged with chapters from across the country to discuss the connection between statehood and racial justice and the similarities between the D.C. and Puerto Rican statehood movements. The organization hosted a speaker event with a Puerto Rican native last week, he said.



COURTESY OF SEBASTIAN WEINMANN

Student Association Sen. Sebastian Weinmann, Law-G and the caucus chair, said the SA is often seen as a space not inclusive of graduate student perspectives.

## SA graduate student caucus aims to link students with administrators

MAKENA ROBERTS  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Members of the Student Association's recently established graduate student caucus said they intend to boost the visibility of graduate issues through more direct communication between students and officials.

SA Sen. Sebastian Weinmann, Law-G and the caucus chair, said he established the graduate student caucus to ensure graduate students have a "unified body" to advocate for graduate-specific issues, like connecting students across graduate schools with administrators. He said the caucus will advertise resources available at the University to graduate students and continue advocating for a 10 percent tuition reduction like the one undergraduate students received this semester.

"For far too long graduate students' voices have been diminished or completely ignored by the SA and University, despite the majority of the GW student body being graduate students," Weinmann said.

He said he wants to break down the assumption that the SA only serves undergraduate students by bringing in more graduate students from outside the SA into the body. The new caucus comes on the heels of an SA referendum last semester in which nearly 70 percent of students voted to divide the SA into separate undergraduate and graduate bodies.

Weinmann added that the caucus will work with graduate student organizations who need help directing their concerns to administrators in each

graduate school. He said himself plus the three members currently on the caucus will "likely" meet once a month.

"Graduate umbrella organizations are quite effective at advocating for their constituencies to their schools' administrations," Weinmann said. "However, they, to no fault of their own, often have little knowledge or experience in navigating the University-at-large bureaucracy."

SA Sen. Thomas Falcigno, CPS-G and a member of the caucus, said he will aim to increase graduate student participation in the SA by informing graduate students who had applied for senate positions but were not selected for the seat that they can still be involved with the SA via the caucus. He said the SA received a record number of applications for vacant graduate positions this year.

"My goal really is how we can get graduate students involved in the SA – that's one of my top priorities for this caucus," he said. "And also how we can make sure that if we are not currently accessible to grad students, how can we make ourselves accessible to grad students?"

He said recent changes to the SA, like pushing back legislative votes to the end of SA meetings this year, allows more graduate students to vote because their classes sometimes run past the senate's 9 p.m. start time for meetings. In previous years, legislative voting took place at the start of the meetings or was held immediately after discussing the legislation.

"Figuring out additional ways in our bylaws in the

way that we set ourselves up to be more accessible to grad students is something I think goes hand-in-hand with getting more grad students involved in the SA," Falcigno said.

SA Sen. Gabriel Young, CCAS-U and a co-sponsor of the bill that created the caucus, said the caucus will help connect graduate students with the University by serving as a space for the group to discuss their concerns without input from undergraduates, who may have a poor grasp of graduate student life.

"By actually focusing on the issues that graduate students collectively agree on, then that's the best way for them to be able to promote and meet with administrators or find people who actually are on focus and on task with the problems that they are trying to solve within graduate schools," Young said.

He said as an undergraduate student being conscious of the spaces reserved for graduate students and allowing them to discuss among their peers without undergraduate intervention can help support the caucus as a whole. Young said he plans to talk with graduate students that are involved in similar extracurriculars as himself and encourage them to sit in on meetings and join the caucus.

"A lot of times the most exposure I get to graduate students is through social media, through Overheard at GW and Facebook," Young said. "And so I think this would be a great way of putting it out there and letting people know and be informed that there is a place for them at the GW Student Association table."

## Honors program students of color group seeks to build support system

SAMANTHA SERAFIN  
STAFF WRITER

A group of students of color is working to create an inclusive and diverse space that they say has been "lacking" in the University Honors Program.

Seven students launched the UHP Black, Indigenous People of Color Collective earlier this month to build a closer community with each other and support students' success in the honors program, advocating for policies like diversifying peer mentoring and programming. The members of the collective said the group will spend the semester pushing administrators in the program to enact their proposed inclusion policies and create a safe space for BIPOC students.

Junior Ebonoluwa Akinbode, one of the two students who originated the idea for the group, said a group of students sent a letter to Bethany Cobb Kung, the UHP director, in June following nationwide protests against racial inequality. Akinbode said student leaders demanded the UHP require unconscious bias training for students and core faculty.

"Your mission is to organize committed scholars from diverse backgrounds to engage in questions of humanity and apply it to the complex world around us," the letter states. "The program's current environment in which students of color feel alienated, ignored and frustrated in spaces of your own creation make it impossible to fulfill this purpose."

The UHP released a statement in June announcing the formation of a diversity and inclusion committee and the starting of other policies like

requiring bias training for all students, staff and faculty in the program.

But Akinbode said some students who joined the committee resigned after a meeting with Associate Provost for Special Programs and the Mount Vernon Academic Experience Elizabeth Chacko and Kung. The collective wrote in an Instagram post that members who resigned said officials demonstrated "no understanding" of the work students put into the committee and "blamed" students for the program's lack of diversity.

Chacko said she formed a Vern student advisory council last year to advise her on various issues, like creating a Multicultural Student Services Center space on the campus. She said students, faculty and staff should work "closely and collaboratively" to make GW and the programs within it more inclusive.

"Over the last year, I have had great experiences working with BIPOC and other students in the Mount Vernon Scholars Program," Chacko said in an email.

She said she met with members of the collective while they were serving as student representatives on the diversity and inclusion committee "in a listening capacity." She said she participated in a second meeting to address some "issues" that the students raised, but she didn't specify which issues were brought up.

Chacko said the UHP has increased its student diversity with White students making up about 45 percent of freshmen in the program this fall compared to between 69 and 73 percent from 2017 to 2019. She said Asian students made up about 23 percent of this year's in-

coming UHP class while last year they comprised 16 percent, and Black student percentages more than doubled between 2019 and 2020.

"As I informed the students, UHP faculty in collaboration with admissions have paid careful attention to diversifying the incoming class and over the last couple of years have admitted a larger number of students of color, but they do not have control over which students among those admitted decide to come to GWU," Chacko said.

Sophomore Fryda Cortes, a member of the collective, said the UHP Origins course readings are "extremely" Eurocentric and include racist undertones and ideas by the authors. She said updated reading lists included more women authors, but the lists still don't feature enough voices from BIPOC authors.

She said the collective will make a list of its own reading content and encourage students of color to fill out a UHP student testimony form to advocate for themselves and report bias incidents. She said the collective will engage with administrators in offices outside of the UHP, and members have spoken with Jordan West, the director of University diversity and inclusion programs, about reporting racist incidents.

Junior Nicolas Rios, a member of the collective, said the group has about 15 members and will continue to promote itself on social media to attract students interested in joining. He said the collective is open for all students interested in addressing issues facing UHP BIPOC students and will host meetings every second and fourth Thursday of the month.

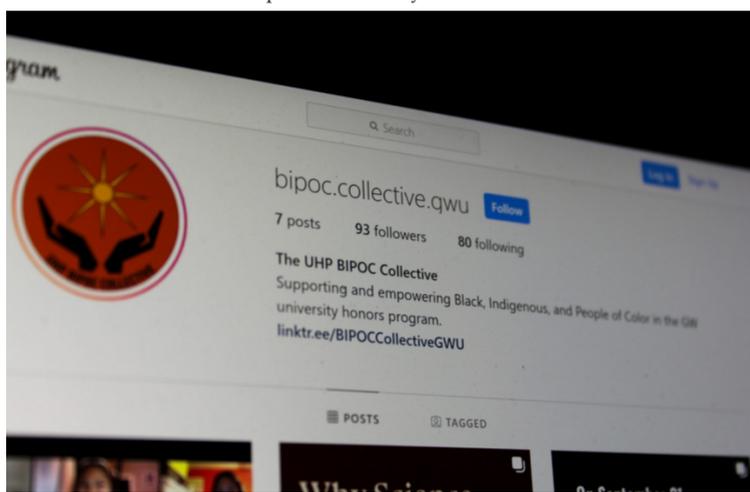


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY IAN SAVILLE | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
A group of students in the University Honors Program is pushing for changes to the program's curriculum and operations to better include Black and Indigenous voices.



FILE PHOTO BY OLIVIA ANDERSON  
Lisa Benton-Short, the geography department chair, said the program will bridge the gap between quantitative approaches to problem-solving and environmental issues.

## Geography faculty launch major in environmental, sustainability science

CARLY NEILSON  
STAFF WRITER

ISHANI CHETTRI  
REPORTER

Geography department faculty launched a Bachelor of Science degree program in environmental and sustainability science this fall in response to growing interest from students in the area over the past few years.

Faculty said students in the major will develop skills in earth sciences and ecological management for careers like environmental sustainability planning and policy. They said they are “excited” about the major, which they said was created as an additional path for students to the existing Bachelor of Arts in environmental studies program and builds on the sustainability minor through a more science-based study of the environment.

Melissa Keeley, the director of the environmental and sustainability science program and an associate professor of geography, said student interest in the science side of the environmental studies program sparked the development of the program. She said many students had already completed the requirements for the new major under the existing bachelor’s program so faculty decided to create a separate degree.

“This meets a need that existed and students were wanting this kind of an option so it meets students’ interests and that’s what we wanted,” Keeley said.

The program combines the courses from the department’s existing bachelor’s programs in geography and environmental studies with a variety of science courses like Introduction to Sustainability and Introductory Biology, ac-

ording to the department’s website.

Keeley said the major has two concentrations, one in earth and environmental sciences and one in ecological management. She said the major is interdisciplinary, including classes from about eight departments like geography, physics and chemistry and electives in classes like Conservation Biology, Water Resources and Oceanography. “They are most interested in the science side of the environmental studies program,” Keeley said. “That was always their interest so it just makes a lot of sense to them. I think we are seeing students who have strong interest in the sciences but are drawn to the ability to take classes across disciplines.”

Lisa Benton-Short, the chair of the geography department, said the program will provide students with the types of skills required for understanding and solving “critical issues” like climate change and biodegradable diversity. She said the program will “translate” well into a world that is facing a demand for environmental sustainability.

“It’s also important to have a STEM degree particularly in some of the areas where the physical science and environmental science side demands more quantitative approach to problem-solving,” Benton-Short said.

She said Keeley led the push along with faculty members in other departments to design the major. Benton-Short said after hearing student demand for the major, faculty from the department worked to create an “innovative” program.

“We pride ourselves on knowing our students really well and having a fantastic, engaged, intellectual commu-

nity,” she said.

Jason Brown, an adjunct professor of geography, said he hopes students in the new major take courses like Introduction to Remote Sensing because of its usefulness in other fields outside of geography like agriculture and emergency and disaster management.

He said studying remote sensing helps prepare students for jobs in environmental and sustainability science by giving them a “foundation” in understanding how the environment changes.

Brown said the geography faculty are “very knowledgeable” because of their specialties and disciplines.

Tommy Gray, a junior majoring in environmental and sustainability science, said they previously pursued international affairs, astrophysics and environmental studies majors before “officially” declaring a major in the new B.S. program this semester. They said the new major combines the two subjects they enjoyed the most, quantitative science and humanities.

“I feel like that’s the word of the decade right now is interdisciplinary,” Gray said. “We’re in a time where we’re starting to realize that all these separate fields that have all these barriers between them need to start being torn down.”

They said they weren’t sure if they were going to graduate on time because of their multiple major changes, but Keeley suggested that switching to the new major would make it “easier” for them to finish on time because they already completed many of the courses required for the major.

“Hopefully, that will draw a lot of even more intelligent people to the major and to that field because we need it,” they said.

## Officials debut updated campus safety app

JARROD WARDWELL  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Officials released an upgraded campus safety app during virtual orientation last month that includes a wider selection of digital features and hotlines.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said the new app, called GW Guardian, will replace the previous campus safety app, GW PAL, which students could use to either call a SafeRide or send an alert to the GW Police Department. Nosal said the new app will carry more utilities than its predecessor and will continue to roll out new features “that will benefit the GW community.”

“The Guardian app is integrated with our GW Alerts system and has far more robust features that integrate with our GW Dispatch systems than the GW Pal app,” Nosal said in an email. “Rave Guardian has determined best practices after working with a number of large businesses and other universities and can offer extensive support.”

The app includes links to the National Sexual Assault, Domestic Violence and Suicide hotlines, the Network for Victim Recovery of D.C. and the Poison Control Center. Students can also reach GW’s Title IX Office, the Office of Advocacy and Support, Campus Advisories and SafeRide, according to the app.

Students can use the app to create a personal profile with emergency contacts and medical history information, which responders can see when students call EMeRG, GWPD or 911.

Students can also use

a “Safety Timer” that indicates how long someone may take to get home, allows students to contact GWPD and sends an alert with a student’s location to a list of family and friends if the timer expires.

Nosal said the University’s Health and Emergency Management Safety team, consisting of GWPD, GW Dispatch and the offices of Emergency Management and Advocacy and Support, helped develop the new app, which nearly 140 students have downloaded as of Friday. “We believe it will give them quick access to the resources they need and provide them with an alternate way to receive alerts,” Nosal said.

Nosal said officials will further advertise the app when the majority of students return to campus.

Senior Kent Trespalacios, a two-year member of the Division of Safety and Facilities’ Student Advisory Board, said GW Guardian improves upon GW PAL because it offers students a larger selection of features, including the phone directory and the Safety Timer. Officials planning system upgrades have also considered adding a messaging system through which GWPD officers can communicate and track students asking for help, he said.

“When I downloaded the app when I first got to GW, I realized that it could be better, and I believe that the newer version is that better version because it has more features that students are more inclined to use,” Trespalacios said.

Trespalacios, who lives off campus, said the app gives him “peace of mind” while walking around a quieter campus in the evening because he can alert

GWPD about his whereabouts on the app.

“I would feel comfortable knowing that I have this app that is connected to the police department, and if I needed help, assistance would not only be able to get to me, but they’ll also have a detailed profile of me,” he said.

Experts in sexual violence and criminology said the app would help students feel connected to resources like EMeRG in case of an emergency, but it may not successfully prevent crime.

Joseph Schafer, a criminology professor at St. Louis University, said the app won’t reduce the number of incidents that may occur on campus but can still help students take responsibility for personal safety, react to incidents and make phone calls more quickly than before.

Monika Lind – a doctoral candidate at the University of Oregon and a research associate at the Center for Institutional Courage, said GW Guardian may not be helpful in preventing sexual assault on campus. She said the app’s features like the Safety Timer are geared to help students when they’re approached and assaulted by a stranger, which she said is the rarest form of sexual assault.

She said most cases of sexual assault occur when the assailant and victim know each other, an outcome she believes the app fails to address.

“In terms of the prevention piece, I would not expect this app to be timely and helpful for people who are actually at risk of being sexually assaulted or in the process of being coerced or whatever because it’s so often someone you know,” she said.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY JENNIFER CUYUCH | PHOTOGRAPHER

The new app features a safety timer that allows friends and family to “watch over” students as they walk from one location to another.

## Projected budget losses take optimistic turn as fall progresses

From Page 1

As administrators prepared for layoffs, they continued planning for an in-person fall semester. Officials submitted a plan to the District on June 15 for students to return to campus in August with an extensive testing and social distancing plan.

### July

But uncertainty remained as cases began rising throughout the United States during the summer. The new fiscal year began without an annual budget, and the Board instead granted officials temporary financial authority until the financial situation became clearer.

On July 27, administrators announced classes would remain online for the entire fall semester with a 10 percent tuition discount for Foggy Bottom undergraduates, leading to tens of millions of dollars in lost housing revenue and an expected annual revenue shortfall of \$220 million.

### August

As the end of the sum-

mer neared, officials laid off hundreds of staff in administrative units, including the Center for Career Services, technology offices, event departments and academic advising. LeBlanc said at the September senate meeting that officials had laid off about 250 staff members with more expected in the coming days.

Multiple faculty senators met with trustees to discuss officials’ financial mitigation strategy and requested the Board use endowment funds to help close the gap, according to a senate executive committee report. Speights, the Board chair, did not return a request for comment about the meeting through a spokesperson.

Hundreds have called on LeBlanc to resign, citing the layoffs as part of their rationale.

### September

As fall enrollment levels became clearer, GW’s projected losses became more optimistic.

LeBlanc said earlier this month that total undergraduate enrollment fell about 7.2 percent this year based on the latest known estimates, significantly better than May

expectations, reflecting a \$180 million revenue shortfall.

LeBlanc said the “first phase” of GW’s mitigation efforts, which included all budget actions taken through September, reduced expenses by about \$100 million, leaving tens of millions of dollars of the budget gap unaddressed. Officials have declined to say how much money was saved by each individual action taken, including staff layoffs.

But LeBlanc said Thursday that updated projections reduced the estimated annual revenue shortfall even further, now estimated at \$160 million. The second phase of cuts, which include suspending the University’s base and matching retirement contributions, reducing non-recurring expenses and using up to \$20 million of the University’s unrestricted assets is expected to close the remaining gap.

“I anticipate things could get better,” LeBlanc said at a senate meeting earlier this month. “We built in fairly conservative projections, so I don’t see it getting much worse than this.”

## ‘Distressing’ wildfires plague student anxiety

From Page 1

Agarwal said it was “heart-breaking” to see places she had hiked burnt. She said she struggled to focus in her classes due to power outages brought on by the heat, evacuation concerns and anxiety from the fires’ destruction.

“The media exacerbated that fear with visuals of neighborhood forests or orange skies, and there was fairly vague or convoluted information coming from our city, which added to the stress of not knowing exactly what would happen,” Agarwal said. “It was so difficult to justify doing my history readings when the sky right outside my window was hued orange, and I had no idea whether we would have to evacuate next.”

Adriana Tapia, a senior studying political science and French from Sammamish, Washington, said she moved to D.C. before the fires and has had to rely on her dad back home and the news for information about the wreckage occurring in her region.

She said seeing photos of Seattle covered in gray ash was “distressing,” especially because she couldn’t relate her concerns to her roommates who aren’t from West Coast states.

“It was really sad,” Tapia said. “I almost felt a little guilty for leaving. I’m probably one of the only ones I know for my circle

**“It was so difficult to justify doing my history readings when the sky right outside my window was hued orange, and I had no idea whether we would have to evacuate next.”**

**PRERNA AGARWAL**  
SOPHOMORE MAJORING IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

of friends that actually went back to their college town. It was just like the hard aspects of being away from home and the consequences of my roommates not really fully grasping and understanding the severity of it.”

Freshman Lauren Nixon, a journalism and mass communication major, said she experienced poor air quality for four to six weeks when the fires were closest to Orinda, California, where she is currently

staying. She said the air was hazy and smelled like smoke from the Dolan Fire and SCU Lightning Complex, making it difficult to be outside without getting a headache.

Nixon said the wildfires exacerbated her anxiety, affecting her ability to stay focused on school work. She said she didn’t need any extensions for her classes but is worried if she isn’t able to connect to the Internet while experiencing longer power outages in October or November.

“While there have been scares about needing to evacuate my community for the past three years, this year poses extra problems because of the pandemic,” Nixon said. “Whether it’s the fact that I might lose power for multiple days at a time and not be able to keep up with my online classes, or that my 90-year-old grandmother may need assistance evacuating but we can’t come in direct contact with her because of the virus, a lot of unfortunate and largely unnecessary situations are occurring, which is very stressful.”

## CRIME LOG

**THEFT II/FROM MOTOR VEHICLE, DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY/VANDALISM**

Public Property on Campus (600 Block of 23rd Street)  
9/17/2020 – Unknown  
Open Case  
A male staff member reported that while parked on 23rd Street, his vehicle was broken into through the rear passenger window. His backpack and some tools were stolen from the car.  
**Case open.**

**THEFT II/FROM BUILDING**

Mitchell Hall (7-Eleven)  
9/19/2020 – 8:45 p.m.  
Open Case  
GW Police Department officers responded to a report of theft from a female complainant who stated that an unknown male subject stole two boiled eggs, two sandwiches, a pack of fruit and a cookie. GWPD officers canvassed the area with negative findings.  
**Case open.**

**THREATS TO DO BODILY HARM**

CVS Pharmacy (The Shops at 2000 Public Property On Campus (900 Block of 23rd Street)  
9/20/2020 – 4:00 p.m.  
Closed Case  
A male student reported that an unknown male subject had threatened him with a fight earlier that day.  
**No identifiable suspect.**

**THEFT II/OTHER**

University Yard  
9/22/2020 – 8:24 a.m.  
Closed Case  
A non-GW affiliated female victim reported her jacket stolen by a non-GW affiliated male subject who had fled the scene. GWPD officers located and stopped the subject, retrieved the item and barred the man from GW property. The victim refused to press charges.  
**Subject barred.**

**FRAUD**

Statesman Apartments  
Multiple – Multiple  
Open Case  
A female student reported that she was the victim of online employment check fraud. The victim stated that she will contact the Metropolitan Police Department on her own.  
**Case open.**

**SIMPLE ASSAULT**

Public Property on Campus (22nd and F Street)  
9/23/2020 – 6:07 p.m.  
Open Case  
A non-GW affiliated female reported being assaulted by a non-GW affiliated male subject. MPD arrived and issued a report.  
**Case open.**

—Compiled by Kateryna Stepanenko

## Diversity in vaccine trials increases trust: experts

From Page 1

"I think at this point it's a situation where the people, the government is willing to spend that additional money to do this kind of work, which is very expensive," he said. "In that regard, that's not going to happen unless you have a crisis."

Anna Wald, the head of the allergy and infectious diseases division at the University of Washington

School of Medicine, said including a diverse group of participants in the trials will increase trust in the vaccine among members of those populations.

"COVID-19, for a variety of reasons, has affected the people of color and minority populations clearly disproportionately, and aside from the fact of why that is, it is clear that those are the people that we have to protect, that we have the obligation to protect most of all," Wald said.

David Benkesser, an assistant professor of biostatistics and bioinformatics at Emory University, said the way COVID-19 vaccines are being evaluated is "standard" even though the process is accelerated.

"There's a lot of uncertainties about what the impact will be that depend on the details of the results of these trials," Benkesser said. "But if I had to bet, I would put my money on there being at least one vaccine that is efficacious but probably not perfectly so."

## Career center continuing operations after layoffs with six virtual fairs

**CIARA REGAN**  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS  
EDITOR

The Center for Career Services is continuing to provide individualized career coaching for students despite recent layoffs, officials say.

Administrators eliminated eight positions in the career center as part of hundreds of staff layoffs to close GW's annual budget gap amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Rachel Brown, the associate provost for University Career Services, said the career center will continue to offer individual and comprehensive career coaching for students looking to find employment during the

pandemic.

"We recognize this is an unprecedented time and we are here to help students take the next step no matter where you are in your professional development journey from exploration to implementation – we are with you," Brown said.

Brown said the career center currently employs 24 full-time staff members. Career center staff had to make "difficult decisions" about staffing levels alongside other offices across the University, she said.

"We tried to make the best decisions possible that would create efficiency while not dramatically impacting the student experience," Brown said.

Brown said the career center will continue to offer its traditional coaching services, including career exploration coaching and industry-specific coaching. She added officials will offer new opportunities, like group coaching, online modules and job and internship groups.

The career center has also expanded opportunities for students to engage virtually with employers, Brown said.

She said instead of the usual three career fairs this fall, the career center will host six virtual fairs. She said the career center will continue to host virtual informational sessions and interviews and launch city-based industry panels, in

lieu of on-campus events.

Brown said career center officials have expanded KACIF travel grants to offer reimbursements for remote internship expenses like internet access and equipment. She said they have created tailored resources in Handshake to help students navigate the virtual environment and launched a new micro-internship site.

"There are thousands of remote and non-remote opportunities, across all sectors, on Handshake, QuadJobs and our new micro-internship site," Brown said. "Postings show that many employers still want to hire even if the position is remote and that's encouraging."

## Students sign petition calling for officials to reinstate pre-law adviser

**ISHA TRIVEDI**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

A student launched a petition earlier this month calling on officials to reinstate Deborah Baker, the senior academic adviser for pre-law students in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, who was recently laid off.

Sophomore Karina Ochoa Berkley, a political science and philosophy major who started the petition, said the petition was signed by students, faculty and alumni who have responded to the situation with "outrage, disappointment and overall concern." Provost Brian Blake said his office ran a study in June to determine the efficiency of many academic units including GW's advising structure, which found that GW had about 193 students per undergraduate adviser compared to the national average of 250

students per undergraduate adviser.

He said he made the "hard decision" to change the ratio to 220 undergraduate students per adviser after seeing the results of the review, which he said is still better than the national average but "more in line with what we can afford."

"I collaborated with a group of faculty senators and deans to evaluate the structure and assure that the University is appropriately sized, considering our need to mitigate budget challenges due to the pandemic," Blake said in an email.

He said he subdivided the reduction in "certain" schools, colleges and units, and deans made decisions on how to manage the reductions.

Blake said there are still "several" advisers in the CCAS advising team who hold law degrees, and some have played "key roles" in

pre-law advising before. He said these advisers will coordinate with the Elliott School of International Affairs to "coordinate the pre-law effort across schools."

"They also have secured support for pre-law from the Writing Center, which has the capacity to review applications, and Career Services, which has alumni in legal fields who can offer advice and mentorship," he said.

Berkley said students are worried about their "future prospects in law" without access to a pre-law adviser, alumni are upset that a "crucial asset" that helped some of them get into law school will be taken away and faculty are upset that students do not have the resources for the "quality education" that they signed up for.

She said officials are making decisions that are "adversely and directly" impacting students' futures, and they need to understand

that student resources are not "pawns" and their decisions have "serious consequences" on students' livelihoods.

She said she sent the petition to Blake, University President Thomas LeBlanc, Vice President of Student Affairs and Dean of Students Cissy Petty, Vice President for Development and Alumni Relations Donna Arvide and Vice Provost of Enrollment and Student Success Jay Goff. She said more than 500 people have signed the petition, and "roughly" 300 chose to express their grievances with the decision.

Berkeley said she intends to send one of these messages to officials every day to show what Baker meant to the GW community and "what it has lost in her termination."

"Her reinstatement is of paramount importance," she said in an email to the officials. "We hope you will make the right decision."

## Unionized nursing homes tally fewer COVID-19 deaths, study finds

**SEJAL GOVINDARAO & ZACHARY BLACKBURN**  
REPORTERS

Nursing homes with unionized staffs have logged fewer COVID-19 infections and deaths than nursing homes without them, a GW study from earlier this month shows.

Adam Dean, a professor of political science and the lead researcher on the project, found that unionized nursing homes in New York sustained a 30 percent lower COVID-19 mortality rate compared to nursing homes without unionized staff. Dean said unionized workers' ability to demand access to personalized protective equipment, like N-95 masks and face shields, could explain the lower mortality rate among unionized homes.

Dean said earlier research on nursing homes during the pandemic focused on a potential link between the quality ratings of certain nursing homes and their respective COVID-19 mortality rates, but his research indicates that unionization is a more powerful explanatory variable for coronavirus death rates across nursing homes.

"In the broadest sense, the findings suggest that the benefits of unionization are not just limited to union members or the health care workers who are represented by labor unions, but potentially for residents in nursing homes or patients in hospitals perhaps and for the broader public," Dean said.

Dean and his team used data made public by the New York State Department of Health to analyze COVID-19 mortality in 355 nursing homes from across the state.

Dean added that health care workers who are a part of the 1199SEIU, the main labor union representing health care workers in nursing homes in New York,

have greater access to training funds through their union's partnerships with nonprofit organizations and nursing homes. He speculated that these education programs could lead unionized workers to better understand how to properly use PPE.

He added that unionized workers are typically more likely to have access to paid sick leave, reducing their chances of infecting residents while on the job.

"It might be the case that unions may be associated with better outcomes for residents in the setting because unionized health care workers are more likely to have paid sick leave and therefore not come to work when they are sick," Dean said.

Nursing homes in New York, which was an early epicenter of the pandemic, have been hit exceptionally hard as a result of COVID-19, with more than 6,500 deaths in nursing homes throughout the state. More than 77,000 nursing home patients have died of COVID-19, accounting for about 40 percent of total COVID-19 deaths in the United States.

Atheendar Venkataramani, an assistant professor of medical ethics and health policy from the University of Pennsylvania who worked on the study, said in addition to demanding adequate PPE, union workers have higher pay, potentially averting the need to work at more than one nursing home, which could lead to cross-contamination.

"New York City was actively discharging COVID-19 positive patients to nursing homes, and so it's possible that unionized nursing homes managed the flow of infected persons into nursing homes differently than non-unionized nursing homes did," he said.

Economic experts said the benefits of unionization include a wide network of support for worker ac-



COURTESY OF ADAM DEAN

Adam Dean, the study's lead researcher, said past research on the topic of COVID-19 in nursing homes focused on quality rankings.

cess to PPE, which may contribute to lower COVID-19 mortality rates.

Brigham Frandsen, a professor of economics at Brigham Young University, said the study shows that adherence to PPE procedures could have led to lower death rates, which isn't unique to unionized nursing homes and could be adopted at non-unionized nursing homes as well.

"The study suggests that it might be, and previous evidence suggests that it could be, adherence to procedural guidelines and better access to workplace safety equipment including PPE," Frandsen said. "If that's the case and I think the study gives evidence that

it is, then certainly non-unionized workplaces could also implement those things."

He said the study's results shouldn't be extrapolated across the board, but the findings provide valuable insight into how the U.S. health care system at large could implement procedural safety.

"One explanation for disparity is that unions traditionally in the collective bargaining process will advocate for adherence to procedural guidelines, maybe to a greater degree than would be present without a union," he said. "And a situation like a pandemic or rising infection rates would be one where adherence to procedural guide-

lines could potentially reduce the risk of infection and fatality quite a bit."

Aaron Sojourner, an associate professor of labor economics at the University of Minnesota, said the pandemic could prompt a greater push for unionization among nursing home workers.

"In every nursing home in the country, the new environment demands changes to the job and workers are being asked to shoulder the burden of that to a larger extent," he said. "They want to have a voice in shaping those new rules of the workplace and the new design of their jobs in this new environment."

## Protesters shouldn't have to feel threatened by police at demonstrations

In early June, less than 10 blocks from campus, President Donald Trump held a photo shoot in front of St. John's Church in the midst of protests over Black lives and police shootings. Later reports indicated that during this political stunt, the Department of Defense considered deploying "heat rays" and sound cannons against protesters who stood between the White House and church.

Hannah Thacker  
Opinions Editor

When I first heard this news, I thought it had to be a joke. Beside the fact the government contemplated violence against peaceful protesters, even thinking about using a "heat ray" — formally known as an Active Denial System — made the event seem straight out of science fiction. But this weapon, like the government's inquiry, was real and is a jarring exemplar of over-policing at relatively peaceful protests around the country. Not only that, but it's an indication of the racism prevalent in the response to demonstrations pushing for social justice. Protesters, many of whom were students and recent graduates, shouldn't worry about facing pain or death at the hands of their own government at a demonstration.

The issue of over-policing isn't unique to the



Cartoon by Hannah Thacker

District. Police across the country have overmilitarized their forces and brought in additional officers even though it was never necessary. In small towns and cities, routine police matters like drug arrests are often addressed with far more firepower than needed — literally. Protesters pushing for racial justice nationwide have faced down military-style tanks and weapons used allegedly to keep the peace. In the nation's capital, protest-

ers saw more than four different types of law enforcement, from the Metropolitan Police Department to the National Guard. Weapons developers originally designed the aforementioned heat ray for use on the battlefield in Iraq, but ethical concerns indefinitely delayed deployment. What message does it send that the president felt that the walk between the White House and St. John's Church merited the use of a weapon deemed un-

ethical for use against the country's enemies?

The excessive force hundreds of thousands of Americans have encountered pose a serious threat not only to those peacefully protesting but to everyone who lives in cities across the United States who encounter the police in mundane contexts. The job of police is to protect and serve its residents, not to attack them and commit violent acts against them in the name of maintaining civility.

And, as with every issue, race plays a role in who faces the brunt of police militarization. At a "Unite the Right" rally in Charlottesville, Virginia, in 2017, hundreds of White supremacists took to the streets to chant incendiary slogans until the rally devolved into violence between those marching and those opposing them. During this whole event, the police did not step in until things got violent between the two groups. Initially, this rally was

devoid of violence, and the police allowed it to continue as such. That's a stark contrast to what has happened at Black Lives Matter protests across the country. There's no question that the treatment of BLM protesters is far worse than that of White supremacist marchers. While those in Charlottesville chanted and marched, police never once saw them as a threat to the peace that they needed to forcibly remove them from the streets as they have done at recent BLM protests.

Many students are politically active and were likely to be at various protests, not only in D.C., but in their home cities nationwide. The prospect of any student facing assault by police officers simply for protesting should scare everyone, no matter your political views. It should be common sense that the use of military-grade weapons against civilians, especially those fighting for Black lives, is tantamount to fascist and racist behavior.

It doesn't matter if you stand with the BLM movement or not — excessive police force should not be used on protesters. Heat rays and sound cannons should only exist in the pages of comic books and plots of movies, not opposite demonstrators at the White House.

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

## Students, staff and alumni should sign the SA's no-donate pledge

### STAFF EDITORIAL

A flurry of statements, bad press and protests have escalated calls for University President Thomas LeBlanc's resignation. And this week brought a new form of protest: a pledge from the Student Association president asking people not to donate to GW until LeBlanc is replaced.

The pledge is part of SA President Howard Brookins' executive order calling for LeBlanc to leave his post. It implores students, faculty and alumni to withhold donations from GW until LeBlanc is ousted and "shared governance is implemented" among staff, faculty and the student body. Hundreds of people and groups — including The Hatchet Editorial Board — have been asking for LeBlanc

to step down for months now. This pledge could be an even more effective way of actualizing those demands because it hits GW where it hurts — its wallet.

We could begin to make some headway in much-needed changes at the University if every member of the GW community — students, faculty, staff and alumni — sign the pledge. We must sign on to ensure new leadership and a greater voice at the top.

"Students very often do not have a say in the happenings of the University, but signing this pledge can change that. Students, alumni, staff and faculty must take advantage of the SA's protest and join the pledge."

These criticisms are getting old, but let's rehash the series of missteps through-

out LeBlanc's three-year tenure at GW. LeBlanc lost the trust of students and faculty through his hiring of a string of former colleagues at the University of Miami, a racially insensitive comment, plans to cut enrollment while increasing funding to STEM programs at the cost of the humanities and recent layoffs and disdain for student activism. There is near-unanimity among the GW community that he should step aside — but even in the face of opposition, LeBlanc has refused to even answer

**This pledge could be an even more effective way of actualizing those demands because it hits GW where it hurts — its wallet.**

questions about whether or not he will step down. This pledge goes beyond just words, which is a necessary step given LeBlanc's refusal to hear what students are saying.

This pledge could have substantive effects — taking a financial angle is a key tactic of effective protest. Lack of donations can negatively impact GW's rankings in U.S. News and World Report and The Wall Street Journal, which are tentpoles of the University's prestige and pitch to prospective students. During a financially stressful time amid a pandemic, the University also cannot afford to lose donations. The prospect of further financial woes is a nightmare for administrators and could feasibly force them to accede to student demands

for new leadership.

While protests and statements signed by dozens of student organizations and faculty did not sway LeBlanc and the Board of Trustees into considering new leadership, the prospect of reducing GW's appeal to potential students would be a jolt — and rightly so. A pledge is a commitment to action, not just words on a page or people holding signs. A pledge to not donate to the University until things change demonstrates commitment and impacts the University where it matters most — its wallet. It won't be effective unless students, faculty, staff and alumni sign on.

Aside from placing financial pressure on the University, this pledge is also beneficial to the SA. Brookins, the organization's president, is demonstrating his message to the entire University community — and that carries a lot of weight. Not only was Brookins voted into office to represent all students at the University, but he is the only student member on the Board. And he decided to strike while the iron is hot — the Board is set to convene next week and Brookins has an opportunity to express students' and faculty's frustration toward GW leadership.

Students very often do not have a say in the happenings of the University, but signing this pledge can change that. Students, alumni, staff and faculty must take advantage of the SA's protest and join the pledge.

## Professors must prioritize intersectionality in class

In one of my creative writing classes last week, our professor invited students to discuss former history professor Jessica Krug, who lied about her racial identity for most of her life. When it was our turn to ask questions, another student and I explained Krug's mistaken hiring was rooted in the lack of racial diversity in academia and in the GW history department.

Shreeya Aranke  
Columnist

My professor was far more interested in steering the discussion toward the "character-building" element of the Krug debacle. As a creative writing class, he was equating Krug to the creation of a fictional character who fabricated varying personas. Assuming he was equating creating a fictional character to Krug creating varying types of Black and Caribbean personas, his comment conveniently glossed over the racial nuances of the Krug debacle.

But this kind of White-washed environment is common in GW classrooms. Students are often subject to the professors' narrow understanding of subject matter, rather than having the opportunity to discuss a more diverse set of interpretations. Instead of focusing on a single aspect of a topic

or text, professors need to consciously discuss the intersection between their conversations and ideas of racism, sexuality and gender identity.

This professor's selective interpretation of Krug hiding her race is analogous to most classroom discussions. In most of my past English classes, we discussed the literary worth of Shakespeare's plays, but we never talked about how his ambiguous sexuality might have affected his work. We discussed poet Emily Dickinson as a shining example of a talented female writer in a male-dominated field, but we barely discussed how her White privilege gave her the opportunity to

**My professor was far more interested in steering the discussion toward the "character-building" element of the Krug debacle.**

sit down and write while women of color rarely had the chance to do so.

The professor who coined the term "intersectionality," Kimberlé Crenshaw, used the term to describe how race, class, gender and other characteristics overlap with one another. In an academic setting, acknowledging intersectionality would mean professors account for their racial and ethnic identity in their interpretation of course material and encourage other students to share their perspectives. Professors must welcome the ideas of their students rather than expecting their class to stick within

the confines of their own understanding.

In practice, intersectional discourse on course material would give students a holistic understanding of the subject at hand. This approach can be applied to all subjects, not just English or creative writing. For instance, in one of my history courses last year, we were discussing Mohandas Gandhi's understanding of "swaraj" or home rule in India. A narrow discussion of his writing would focus on his understanding of culture and why he believed Indians — South Asians — were fit to rule over their own subcontinent instead of the British. An intersectional approach would

include a discussion of the elitism and sexism that influenced his writing. This way, students would receive a better understanding of what views Gandhi actually held

when it came to his ideas about which Indians should govern.

Classroom discussions are often bound by the professor's interpretation of the material. Because of the overall lack of diversity in academia for generations now, these interpretations are looking at the material in a very narrow way. An intersectional approach will illuminate different aspects of the professor's interpretation of the topic or text at hand, and will enrich students' understanding of the subject matter.

—Shreeya Aranke, a junior majoring in history, is a columnist.

# Culture

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## THE SCENE

### VIRTUAL BEER DINNER

October 2 • Min. \$65 • Roofers Union & Pizza Paradiso  
Pick up a DIY meal kit and craft beer pairings then Zoom-in from home to discuss your cooking results and favorite beer.

### PORCHFEST

October 3 • Free • Adams Morgan  
Walk the streets of Adams Morgan to discover the talent and passion of local musicians.

## RELEASED THIS WEEK:

“SHORE,” AN ALBUM BY FLEET FOXES

## Beyond the walls: Examining the history of campus building names

**JULIA RUSSO**  
STAFF WRITER

**MOLLY KAISER**  
CONTRIBUTING CULTURE EDITOR

As recent incidents of racial injustice continue to gain national attention, long-standing names and traditions are being brought into question – and GW is no exception.

In a 1967 press release, administrators said unnamed campus buildings should be named for people affiliated with the D.C. area or those “distinguished in American thought and culture.” But a coalition of five student groups is calling on the University to rethink the names of the Colonial moniker and six campus buildings named after prominent figures who, despite their contributions to the University and the United States, enslaved people or supported segregation.

“A lot of the times Black students have been asked to live, breathe and occupy spaces in buildings which are named after reprehensible men who promoted segregation in their time here at GW,” said Rayaah Ahmed, the director of advocacy for The Black Student Union – an organization involved with the campaign. “At the end of the day, Black students aren’t asking for a lot. We’re literally asking for the rooms that we sleep and eat in to not be named after individuals that claim our people.”

Students launched the campaign just a week after officials established task forces to evaluate these names, including that of the Marvin Center and the Colonial moniker. In the meantime, we sifted through Hatchet archives, GW Libraries’ pages and press releases to better understand each building’s namesake and why students are pushing for their name changes.

### Cloyd Heck Marvin Center

Named: 1971  
Named after: Former University President Cloyd Heck Marvin

Formerly known as the “University Center,” the Cloyd Heck Marvin Center opened its doors Feb. 16, 1970, but remained nameless for almost a year. Students informally dubbed the building “Kent State Memorial Center” on May 5, 1970, to honor the lives lost in the Kent State shooting – a massacre conducted by the Ohio National Guard on a group of students protesting the United States’ involvement in the Vietnam War.

Less than a year later on Feb. 15, 1971, the building was officially named the Cloyd Heck Marvin Center after former University President Cloyd Heck Marvin, who served from 1927 to 1959. Dorothy Betts Marvin, the late GW president’s wife, donated \$1 million to the University to name the center for him two years after his death, according to Washingtonian.

Marvin is known for increasing the school’s endowment eightfold, tripling the faculty size and doubling enrollment during his tenure. But the name had never sat right with students. Since the year it was dedicated to Marvin, students have protested the building’s namesake, citing his segregationist attitudes.

During his presidency, Marvin resisted desegregating the University and restricted students’ freedom of speech. His anti-integration advocacy made the University the last in D.C. to integrate in 1954.

When Hatchet staff members wrote an editorial in the spring of 1947 arguing that Black students should be admitted to the University, Marvin swiftly suspended them.

Marvin also defended his segregationist views, saying students learn best within their own racial groups.

“Students of any race or color perform their best educational disciplines when they are happily situated in a congenial and homogeneous group, and the University, in its tradition and social environment, has long preserved this policy,” Marvin said in an unaddressed internal policy statement in 1938.

### The Churchill Center

Named: 2016  
Named after: Former British Prime Minister Winston Churchill

The Churchill Center opened Oct. 29, 2016, through a partnership between the University and The International Churchill Society, an organization dedicated to preserving former Prime Minister Winston Churchill’s legacy. Located in the basement of Gelman Library, The GW-founded center is the first major research center dedicated to the study of the former prime minister of the United Kingdom.

The society chose to partner with GW due to its proximity to the White House and its status as a world-renowned university, according to GW Libraries.

“Churchill’s leadership during the greatest crises of the 20th century [referring to WWII] provides inspiration and instruction to leaders in every field of endeavor,” a GW Libraries page states.

But Churchill was involved in overseeing concentration camps in Kenya and South American and orchestrated the Bengal Famine, during which a substantial portion of the rural population of British India died via starvation. Student groups that launched “Reconsider the Names” said those acts are grounds to change the center’s name.

Churchill has also been quoted conveying racist attitudes. For example, he denied the harmful effects of racism and asserted that Whites constituted a superior race.

“I do not admit for instance that a great wrong has been done to the Red Indians of America or the Black people of Australia,” Churchill said in a 1937 address to the Palestine Royal Commission. “I do not admit that a wrong has been done to these people by the fact that a stronger race, a higher-grade race, a more worldly wise race to put it that way, has come in and taken their place.”

### Fulbright Hall

Named: 1996  
Named after: Former U.S. Senator J. William Fulbright, D-Ark.

Fulbright Hall, originally known as the Everglades Apartments, was renamed in 1996 to honor the late J. William Fulbright, a Democratic senator from Arkansas and alumnus. The building earned the designation of a historic site by the National Parks Service in 2010.

Fulbright created the 1943 Fulbright Resolution, which prompted the United States to join the United Nations. A couple of years later, he proposed a bill to Congress calling for the sale of excess war property to fund international peace “through the exchange of students



SOPHIA YOUNG | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR

Many of the buildings on GW’s campus are named for statesmen with unsavory personal histories often swept under the rug.

in the fields of education, culture and science.” For that reason, The Fulbright Program, an international exchange program funded by the U.S. government, was named after him.

Despite his contributions to U.S. foreign policy, Fulbright was a signatory of the Southern Manifesto, a document written in 1956 to oppose the landmark Supreme Court case *Brown v. Board of Education* and the racial integration of public spaces.

### Colonial moniker

Established: 1926  
Named after: George Washington

The University, originally called Columbian University, was renamed to The George Washington University in 1904 after the George Washington Memorial Association commissioned a campus building in honor of the first U.S. president. Officials adopted the Colonial moniker in the fall of 1926 as a way to pay homage to the school’s new namesake.

Prior to 1926, sports teams were called the “Crummen,” which was the last name of an old sports coach, “Buff and Blue” and the “Hatchetites.” A Hatchet editorial written on Oct. 27, 1926, advocated for GW to instead go by the “Colonials.”

“George Washington University, in its antecedents, is a colonial school,” the editorial states. “Dating back to very early post-Revolutionary days, it was founded when the term ‘colonial’ still applied to an era which was then passing. Let us then, in just regard for our precious heritage, adopt as the name for the warriors wearing the Buff and Blue the term ‘Colonials.’”

But Phillip Troutman, the director of writing in disciplines and an assistant professor of writing and history, said the “Colonials” nickname was conceptualized by administrators “romanticizing a purportedly glorious golden age of patriarchal gentlemen and civilized ladies.”

“Adherents of the 20th century Colonial Revival idea routinely ignored and sometimes openly embraced the genocidal wars and violent enslavement inherent to the American colonizing project and

to white colonists’ identity,” Troutman said in an email.

Troutman added that the term is not closely tied to George Washington, the person, or the Revolution. “Washington led the Continental Army and disparaged the petty ‘Colonial’ ones,” Troutman said. “But the term is even more problematic today, especially for a university so well known for international affairs: when our study abroad programs instruct students not to pack any GW clothing with the term ‘Colonials’ on it, you know you need to change your ‘brand.’”

### Francis Scott Key Hall

Named: 1940  
Named after: Lawyer Francis Scott Key

FSK Hall was built in 1940 and named after Francis Scott Key, the songwriter of “The Star-Spangled Banner.” It’s unclear why the GW residence hall was named for him.

Key was an advocate of slavery and an enslaver himself. He served as the district attorney of D.C. for seven years and he used his position to defend slavery and attack the abolitionist movement, according to the Smithsonian Magazine.

“He spoke publicly of Africans in America as ‘a distinct and inferior race of people, which all experience proves to be the greatest evil that afflicts a community,’” journalist Jefferson Morley wrote in the 2012 book “Snow-Storm in August: Washington City, Francis Scott Key, and the Forgotten Race Riot of 1835.”

As a former DA, Key spent time trying to “crack down” the rhetoric and “free speech” of abolitionists in D.C. who he believed were “riling things up in the city,” Smithsonian Magazine wrote. At one point, Key prosecuted a doctor living in Georgetown for possessing abolitionist pamphlets. The case ended up going to the Supreme Court as *United States v. Reuben Crandall*, where Key tried to argue that property rights of slaveholders outweighed the free speech of abolitionists. He believed that abolitionists’ free speech rights were so dangerous that he tried to have Crandall hanged, according to Smithsonian Magazine.

### Madison Hall

Named: 1957  
Named after: Fourth U.S. President James Madison and first lady Dolley Madison

Madison Hall, originally known as the Flagler Apartments, was built in 1945 and acquired by GW in 1957. The University renamed the building for the fourth president, James Madison, and his wife, first lady Dolley Madison.

Madison is known as “The Father of the Constitution” for his role in drafting and ratifying the document. But students are calling for the University to reconsider this name because of Madison’s role as an enslaver – he owned a plantation in Virginia called Montpelier with more than 100 slaves in 1801. He viewed slavery as a necessary element of the Southern economy.

### James Monroe Hall/Hall of Government

Named: 1951  
Named after: Fifth U.S. President James Monroe

Monroe Hall/Hall of Government was built in 1951 and named after the fifth president of the United States, James Monroe, that year. The Founding Father’s triumphs include the Westward expansion of the United States and the creation of the Monroe Doctrine, which states that America would not interfere in wars between European powers and that Europe should stop colonization and expansion in the Western world.

Students leading the “Reconsider the Names” campaign said the hall’s namesake should change because of Monroe’s role as an enslaver and “his dehumanization of native people to uncivilized ‘savages,’” according to the group’s initial petition. The Monroe Doctrine paved the way for the United States to further colonize occupied countries and expand its power and influence into regions where some say it never belonged.

“The Monroe Doctrine’s legacy is steeped in the blood and sweat of the Latin American people,” the Reconsider the Names petition states.

## Events online and in D.C. to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month

**NURIA DIAZ**  
REPORTER

Spend the next couple of weeks celebrating Hispanic Heritage Month with a lineup of in-person and online events around the District.

D.C. is hosting a handful of events celebrating Hispanic culture during the celebratory weeks, which run from Sept. 15 to Oct. 15. Take part in events like a Hispanic film festival and learn about traditional food, costumes and dances unique to the culture during the celebration.

### Sept. 22 to Oct. 28: Young Portrait Explorers National Portrait Gallery

The Smithsonian museum arranged an online program for younger audiences to observe portraits of prominent Hispanic figures like Associate Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, late singer-songwriter Selena Quintanilla-Pérez and author

Sandra Cisneros. This event will teach attendees about the stories of people featured in these portraits with biographies of their lives. Some of the discussion will be offered in Spanish.

*Tuesday, Sept. 22 to Wednesday, Oct. 28. Tuesdays and Wednesdays starting at 11 a.m. For more information, visit the National Portrait Gallery’s Facebook page.*

### Sept. 19 to Oct. 10: La Cosecha Cena y Cine

La Cosecha Foundation, an organization dedicated to the education of Latin American culture and heritage, will host a movie and dinner at its merchant space near Union Market every Saturday to commemorate Hispanic Heritage Month. You can enjoy films like “Coco,” “Selena,” “Mi Familia” and “Stand and Deliver.” La Cosecha food merchants will also sell meals for purchase.

*1280 4TH St. NE, Saturday, Sept. 19 to Saturday, Oct. 10. The*

*screening will begin by 6:45 p.m., but the doors will be open at 6:30 p.m. For more information, visit the La Cosecha website.*

### Sept. 15 to Oct. 15: ¿Dónde está mi gente?

GW’s Latinx Heritage Celebration has prepared a month-long virtual program to enrich the University community on Latinx heritage and culture. You can tune into a discussion on the impact of COVID-19 in communities of color, a Netflix watch party of the show “Genetified” and a conversation with alumnus Ivan Zapien, a former chief of staff in the House of Representatives and Senate and a lobbyist. The celebration will also feature a social media campaign encouraging members of the Latinx community to vote with posts on why people voted.

*Tuesday, Sept. 15 to Thursday, Oct. 15. Check the Multicultural Student Service Center to register for events.*

### Sept. 28 to Oct. 9: D.C. Public Library Virtual Storytime

The DC Public Library will host both a Hispanic Heritage month Twitter chat Sept. 28 and a weekly Virtual Story time every Friday until Oct. 9. The Hispanic month Twitter chat will discuss Latinx-based young adult fiction like “Clap When You Land” by Elizabeth Acevedo. The virtual Storytime events will include a bilingual Facebook live stream starting on Fridays at 10:30 a.m. to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month.

*Twitter chat: Monday, Sept. 28. Virtual Story time: weekly on Friday at 10 a.m. EDT until Oct. 9. Check the D.C. Public Library’s Facebook and Twitter for more information.*

### Oct. 1: Afro-Latinidad Panel

The Multicultural Student Center of the Illinois College of Lake County is hosting an Afro-Latino Panel through Zoom,

which will concentrate on the Afro-Latino experience.

*Thursday, Oct. 1. For more information, visit its website.*

### Oct. 1: “¡Viva Broadway! Hear our voices”

Viva Broadway, an audience development partnership with the Hispanic community, will provide a musical event hosted by actress Andréa Burns for Latinx Heritage Month. The event will include musical and dance performances by Tony-winning artists and other renowned artists like actor Christopher Jackson and Antonio Banderas, playwright and actor Lin-Manuel Miranda and singer-songwriters Gloria Estefan and Thalía. The show will premiere on Oct. 1 on Playbill.com, Playbill’s YouTube channel and on The Broadway League’s website and remain available until Monday, Oct. 5.

*Premieres Thursday, Oct. 1. For more information, visit its website.*



**WOMEN'S SOCCER**  
vs. St. Bonaventure  
Oct. 2, 2016  
The Colonials recorded their fifth shutout of the season against the Bonnies.



**WOMEN'S CROSS COUNTRY**  
at the Paul Short Run  
Sept. 29, 2018  
Suzanne Dannheim recorded the third-fastest 6 kilometer time in GW history.

## Athletic department cuts staff, prepares for seasons amid pandemic

EMILY MAISE  
SPORTS EDITOR

The sports that members of the GW community knew before the COVID-19 pandemic are “gone,” Student-Athlete Advisory Council President Lauren Bennett said.

All spring and fall sports have been halted, and the athletic department needed to make cuts of its own – including slashes to seven teams, a pay reduction and scaled back travel budgets. As the pandemic dragged into the fall and social unrest swept the United States, athletic officials began to formulate a return plan for student-athletes and implement a slew of diversity and inclusion initiatives.

“We are having to move forward, and move forward better now, while trying to stay as safe as possible,” said Bennett, who rows for the women's program.

### Department cuts staff

Vogel said she needed to lay off “some” employees and decrease operating and administrative budgets to account for financial loss brought on by the pandemic. The department's proposed plan to expand the Smith Center and replace the pool with a practice basketball court has been paused along with the suspension of other

capital projects.

Vogel took a pay reduction along with other top officials, but the rest of the athletic department did not face pay cuts, she said. She declined to say how much of a pay reduction she took.

Programs' operating budgets were decreased “25 to 35 percent,” Vogel said. She said the department cut back on teams' travel budgets and nixed the training table, which provided breakfast to athletes every morning.

The Atlantic 10 regionalized fall sports' regular season and championship schedules amid the pandemic, and the modifications will remain when fall sports compete in the spring.

“We really approached it that way, knowing that travel makes up a large percentage of what we do,” Vogel said. “That was the area I felt like we could make the biggest impact.”

The department announced July 31 it would eliminate seven programs at the conclusion of the 2020-21 season. Vogel called that Friday a “horribly difficult day for GW athletics,” saying the department had been considering reductions “long before” she arrived at GW.

She added that a 27-program department outsized market basket

schools, and the conversation about cutting the teams became “more active” in the last year and a half. Officials said in the summer that the pandemic sped up plans to slim down the department.

### Vogel, SAAC work toward racial equality

Vogel said conversations about racial equality spawned in March after the killing of Ahmaud Arbery and have prompted officials to create a Diversity, Equity and Inclusion task force and increase focus on diversity in recruiting practices.

She said the Smith Center will also receive updates to honor the Black Lives Matter movement, but the additions have not been revealed yet. Student-athletes are also forming the Black Student-Athlete Alliance, led by head women's tennis coach Torrie Browning and Administrative Associate Shatara Stokes, to discuss improving inclusivity in the department, she said.

“My commitment to our staff and our students is that we're going to continue to have conversations and work to make real actionable change,” Vogel said.

Vogel said the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion task force existed for about a year, but it was recently revamped to include events and a film series highlighting the push



HATCHET FILE PHOTO  
Tanya Vogel, the head of the athletic department, said she mandated a six-week-long unconscious bias training for teams after talking with women's basketball assistant coach Ganiyat Adeduntan.

for racial equity.

Vogel added that she mandated a six-week-long diversity and unconscious bias training – an idea sparked by conversations with women's basketball assistant coach Ganiyat Adeduntan.

### Department prepares for future seasons

Vogel said the department established committees to plan each team's return to athletics and competition. The groups will

help transition athletes and coaches back into practice and set up protocols for programs to follow, she said.

During the first weeks of the return to athletics plan, Vogel said student-athletes' training hours are limited, and masks and social distancing are required. The plan will then progress to zero-contact training that includes small group workouts before student-athletes can partake in scrimmages or full team practices, Vogel said.

She added that the upcoming basketball season, the first athletic events since March, will look differently as a result of the pandemic. With the basketball season set to start Nov. 25, Vogel said the Colonials may begin the season in an empty arena depending on public health guidance.

She added that the Smith Center, which seats 5,000 people, has ample room to accommodate social distancing if D.C. allows fans to attend sporting events.

## Basketball standouts talk social justice, sports at Elliott School panel

EMILY MAISE  
SPORTS EDITOR

Head women's basketball coach Jennifer Rizzotti and a former men's basketball hall-of-famer discussed the intersection of sports and social justice at an Elliott School of International Affairs event Wednesday.

Rizzotti and former men's basketball standout Pops Mensah-Bonsu talked about racism in sports and the ongoing push for social justice in the Atlantic 10. Lindsay Krasnoff, an international sports writer and expert on sports diplomacy, moderated the event.

Rizzotti said if she had received the invitation to participate in this talk six months ago, she wasn't sure she would have accepted. She said she didn't know enough about the Black Lives Matter movement and has worked hard in the past few months to expand her knowledge.

“We didn't have these conversations when I played back in high school and in college,” Rizzotti said. “I thought, ‘Well, I'm a part of the women's basketball community. We're diverse and we're accepting doesn't matter what race, sexuality, we're one of the most inclusive communities in the world.’ I never put the work into understanding.”

She added that she had talks with her team after the police killing of George Floyd, and several members of the squad involved themselves in Athletes Driving Change, an Atlantic 10-wide organization seeking to create equality through education and service.

“It's important for me to be a role model for my student-athletes, for my family, for my kids at home, for people to understand that it's our responsibility to continue our evolution, regardless of our background, regardless of our upbringing, to make sure that we're educated to make a difference going forward,” Rizzotti said.

Women's basketball and the WNBA has been at the forefront of the BLM movement as players took knees

during anthems, wore social justice warm-up shirts and even took time away from the game to advocate for social equality.

Rizzotti said women have always needed to be on the defense against sexism or critics doubting their ability to play the game, and fighting for social justice was no different.

“They're always having to play defense,” Rizzotti said. “And this summer, they played offense, and they set the message that they felt like needed to be set. And every one of them was on board, every single player – American, non-American, White, Black, moms, single wom-

**“It was actually the absence of sports that made us pay attention to something that's way more important. When those sports came back, every one of them – soccer, baseball, football, basketball – their focus was on the right things.”**

JENNIFER RIZZOTTI  
HEAD WOMEN'S BASKETBALL COACH

en, straight women, gay women – they were all on the same page. And it was a beautiful thing to see.”

She added that the lack of sports as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic actually benefited the team's push for social and racial equality. She said players and fans were not consumed in normal seasons and had more time and energy to dedicate to social justice.

“It was actually the absence of sports that made us pay attention to something that's way more important,” Rizzotti said. “When those sports came back, every one of them – soccer, baseball, football, basketball – their focus was on the right things.”

Mensah-Bonsu, a 2006 graduate and former hall-of-fame forward for men's basketball, said he had teammates from across the United States and world, like Ukraine. But he said the topics of racial equality or social justice weren't discussed in a sports setting until he played on the British National Team.

He added that a crowd in the Czech Republic made

racist gestures toward him while he was shooting free throws, which sparked a conversation between him and his teammates about the injustices Black people and other minority groups face.

“That was probably the one situation overseas where it really stood out to me and some of my teammates were like, ‘Man, how do you feel about that? How do you feel?’ and we had to explain to them that it's just everyday life for us,” he said.

Mensah-Bonsu said Black athletes were previously afraid to speak out about racism in sports, but the recent movement for social causes has empowered more athletes to speak up against injustice.

Mensah-Bonsu, who operates a Sports for Education and Economic Development camp in Ghana, said he wants to use his experiences playing around the world to educate future basketball players about culture and their rights.

He added that he wants to reduce “culture shock” when players from Africa come to play in the United States.

“Anything I'm going through, I really want to speak to that so that they don't have to experience it too,” He said. “It was difficult coming up. Again, I wouldn't change anything because it made me the man I am today. And it allows me to use that experience to help others to not have to go through that.”

He encouraged attendees to vote in national and local elections and use their platform to support social justice movements. He added that he will continue to use his platform to fight for a time when “we will not be judged by the color of our skin but by our work, ethics and morals.”

“I'm glad to be a part of it because it's history,” Mensah-Bonsu said. “And you have to look yourself in the mirror and say, ‘Which side of history do I want to be on?’ I want to be on one side when my grandkids ask me in the future what did I do, I want to tell them this is how I championed this cause.”



HATCHET FILE PHOTO  
The Colonials knocked off Hofstra, Monmouth, Florida, San Diego State and Valparaiso to win their first postseason title.

## Top sports moments: 2015-16 men's basketball team clinches NIT crown

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STAFF WRITER

*In lieu of full 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.*

### No. 7: Men's basketball nabs first NIT Championship

The 2015-16 men's basketball team made its mark in GW's history books when it claimed the 2016 National Invitation Tournament title.

Head coach Mike Lonergan led the team to its winningest season in program history, racking up a 28-10 record. The roster was chock full of talent, featuring redshirt junior forward Tyler Cavanaugh, senior forward Kevin Larsen and senior guard Patricio Garino. Cavanaugh nabbed the NIT MVP award during the tournament run.

The Colonials started the season with six straight victories in their nonconference schedule. GW received an early season boost when it knocked off No. 6 Virginia at the Smith Center 73-68 in the second game of the campaign. Cavanaugh and Garino both scored 18 points in the statement win.

A 61-56 loss to No. 24 Cincinnati did not deter GW. The team bounced back with three straight wins over Power Five schools, including eventual Big East champion Seton Hall. The victories elevated the Colonials to a No. 20 national ranking.

Despite going 11-2 in nonconference play,

the Colonials would struggle against Atlantic 10 opposition. A 10-8 conference record earned GW the fifth seed in the A-10 Championship.

Sophomore guard Yuta Watanabe's 19-point performance in the second round of the tournament lifted the Colonials over Saint Louis by eight points. In the quarterfinals the Colonials' run ended as Saint Joseph's eliminated GW 86-80, leaving the Colonials' postseason fate in the hands of the selection committee.

GW did not receive an at-large bid to the NCAA Tournament, but it did accept an invitation to the NIT as a No. 4 seed, facing Hofstra in the first round.

The Pride put up a tough fight, eventually falling 82-80 to a bucket from graduate student guard Alex Mitola with less than three seconds on the clock. Cavanaugh powered the team with 20 points and 11 rebounds.

The second round went smoother for GW. The Colonials knocked off No. 1 seed Monmouth 87-71 behind Cavanaugh's second straight 20-point plus double-double.

Power Five opposition awaited the Colonials in the quarterfinals. The No. 2 seeded Florida Gators came to the Smith Center for GW's final home game of the season. The Gators were led by redshirt senior Dorian Finney-Smith, who now starts regularly for the Dallas Mavericks.

At the end of a game that saw 19 lead changes, GW came out on top with an 82-77 victory. Finney-Smith had the chance to put Florida ahead with less

than a minute on the clock, but he missed the open look from beyond the arc and Larsen snagged the rebound.

Just after a Colonials' timeout, Cavanaugh drilled a triple of his own to put his team in the driver's seat for the waning seconds of the game. He and Mitola combined to hit all five of their late free throws.

Six days later at Madison Square Garden, defense was the name of the game in GW's semifinal showdown with San Diego State. The Aztecs shot 13.6 percent from three-point land as the Colonials trampled them.

The Colonials became the winningest team in program history and captured a postseason title in one fell swoop in their next meeting with Valparaiso.

Valparaiso's success came from the standout duo of senior forward Vashil Fernandez and junior forward Alec Peters. Fernandez won the Lefty Driesell Award as the nation's best defender after amassing 119 blocks, while Peters led the team in scoring with 18.4 points per game.

GW went into halftime with a slim 32-31 lead but came out swinging in the second period. The Colonials left Valparaiso in the dust, outscoring their opponents 44-29 in the final 20 minutes. Mitola cut down the nets to mark the program's first title.

Just months after the win, Lonergan was fired amid reports of abuse toward his players. Assistant coach Maurice Joseph succeeded him in the head coaching role.