

# The GW Hatchet

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## 'It just gets exhausting': Students, experts react to string of racist incidents

**TIFFANY GARCIA**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Junior Sofia Gonzalez may have transferred to GW midway through her freshman year, but she said she's always felt "detached" from the University.

When she heard former history professor Jessica Krug falsely claimed a Black identity, she said she felt "anxious" for Krug's students and the Afro-Latinx population on campus that once trusted her. But those feelings aren't new — students of color at GW have needed to bear "a lot" of the emotional labor following racial in-

cidents in recent years, she said.

"We've been having a lot of incidents with racism on our campus," she said. "And it's just one of those things that keeps adding up and adding up, and it just gets exhausting at a certain point."

Gonzalez is one of several students of color who said they often turn to the Multicultural Student Services Center or Office for Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement for a safe space after racial incidents, but they wish those resources weren't needed in the first place. Higher education experts said multiple racist inci-

dents can increase stress for students of color who are supposed to attend GW to study and graduate.

**A tense past**

After at least five racial incidents in the past three academic years, officials have had to address present demands from students for greater diversity and inclusion training in student groups, faculty and the administration.

In 2018, two members of the Alpha Phi sorority were condemned for posting a racist photo on Snapchat, pushing dozens of students, faculty and staff to create a report outlining plans to improve diversity

and inclusion. A little over a year later, officials suspended Panhellenic Association fall programming after a racist image posted by the then-president of the Phi Sigma Sigma sorority surfaced.

In February, University President Thomas LeBlanc apologized after facing backlash from students for comparing support for fossil fuel divestment to hypothetical support for shooting "all the Black people here." And a few months later, Krug, the history professor, admitted to falsely claiming a Black identity.

Jordan West, the director of University diversity

and inclusion programs, said the office acknowledges that a lot of members in the GW community were "deeply hurt" and impacted by Krug's actions, and officials have provided "campus resources" and a community space for those directly impacted.

"We heard and continue to hear and respond to the pain in our community," West said in an email. "We remain committed to creating the spaces needed by members of our community to process and heal."

She said about 5,000 people registered to attend #GWInSolidarity, a four-

week-long ODECE series in June following nationwide protests against police brutality. She said she has led educational workshops covering bias, identity and other social topics on a "regular basis" with student organizations, staff and faculty since she was hired in fall 2018.

"During #GWInSolidarity, a workshop on unconscious bias for faculty was led by myself and included practices on inclusive classroom design, and more than 160 people attended and stayed for the full two hours," West said.

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FILE PHOTO BY ALEXANDER WELLING | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

As departments downsize across the University, federal work-study students are finding it increasingly difficult to find secure jobs.

## Federal work-study positions 'limited' this semester, students say

**MIRANDA NAZZARO**  
REPORTER

Last spring, junior Jalen Judy clocked out of a shift at the GW Key Depot without knowing she would soon be furloughed after nearly two years in the facilities department.

After receiving word of her furlough in April, Judy said she applied for over 30 remote federal work-study positions over the summer and heard back from one — but the job fell through. September marks the fifth month without FWS income that would help cover tuition and groceries, she said.

Judy is one of more than 10 students who said they've lost their FWS position and are struggling to find a new one amid the pandemic. Officials said they are working to create new FWS jobs with D.C.-area organizations, but students said they haven't heard back from listed positions on Handshake or were told the positions were already filled.

"I've been getting a lot of emails like 'this application is now closed,' or 'please be patient in the hiring process due to the pandemic and remote

work,'" Judy said. "I get that, but at the same time, these are funds that I clearly need and the government thinks I need."

Bridget Schwartz, the director of student employment, said officials started recruiting additional nonprofit organizations in the D.C. area for their Off-Campus FWS Program in the spring to create more jobs. She said student employment officials launched a social media campaign this summer to encourage academic departments to hire FWS students.

When the University transitioned to online learning for the remainder of the spring, officials permitted FWS positions to pay students until the end of the semester even if they did not continue their work in a virtual setting.

Schwartz said the number of FWS positions available are "slightly" down this year compared to the past because departments that hire "large" numbers of students for positions that can only be performed on campus have been removed. She said she will continue to work with GW departments and off-

campus sites to provide as many opportunities as possible for students.

She said at the start of classes, there were about 350 job openings available on the Student Employment Talent Management System Applicant Portal, and positions will still be posted for the fall semester as departments solidify their budgets. She said most postings also have "multiple" openings for students.

"There are a variety of positions available to students this fall," Schwartz said in an email. "In particular, we have seen a significant number of virtual research, communications, administrative and project assistant positions posted so far this semester."

Kaitlynn Slattery, a junior majoring in biology, said she learned Tuesday that Ross Hall staff would terminate all undergraduate laboratory assistant positions to limit the building's capacity during the pandemic. Slattery said she has begun looking for jobs near her apartment in D.C. because there are fewer FWS positions available than past months.

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## Denying raises for promoted faculty 'severely' impacts careers: experts

**SAMANTHA SERAFIN**  
STAFF WRITER

Faculty senators at GW's peer schools said officials' decision to deny salary increases for promoted faculty members can "severely" impact professors' long-term careers and hurt morale.

The Faculty Senate passed a resolution earlier this month urging officials to reverse their decision to deny salary increases for promoted faculty members and called on them to fulfill the raises before awarding salary increases to any non-newly promoted faculty member or administrative official. Provost Brian Blake said denying salary promotions was an "excruciatingly tough decision," and he will "re-review the situation" in December once officials understand GW's enrollment for the spring semester.

"The decision to delay these raises represented about a half million in FY21 savings and help to offset our need for further personnel actions," he said in an email. "I am personally empathetic to our newly promoted faculty who are at that peak of their productivity."

Blake said the decision to deny salary increases was "difficult" because

he knows from his own experience that promoted professors are reaching the "pinnacle" of their careers.

He declined to say how many faculty members who have been recently promoted have not received salary increases and whether officials have plans to comply with the requests of the resolution. He declined to say if officials have a set scale for how much of a salary increase a promoted faculty member receives.

At least four of GW's 12 peer schools, including Wake Forest University, the University of Miami and Georgetown University, have implemented a policy of pausing merit salary increases in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Faculty senators at GW's peer universities said denying salary increases to promoted faculty is "unfair" and suggested providing half of the salary increase now and delivering the rest later on.

Wayne Davis, the president of the Faculty Senate at Georgetown University, said denying salary increases to promoted faculty can cause their salary to become "really uncompetitive" compared to faculty of the same rank at other

universities. He said faculty promotion raises typically range between \$10,000 and \$20,000, and missing a promotion salary increase would have a "cumulative" effect on their future raises.

"If you miss one, your career is really severely impacted," Davis said.

He said Georgetown's Faculty Senate and administrators made the decision together to stop annual merit increases and cut 403b retirement contributions — which allow employees to add to their retirement savings while decreasing current income tax — for all faculty and staff but said they didn't think "two minutes" about stopping salary increases for promoted faculty.

Officials are pausing retirement contributions for employees starting in October, which experts said is common for universities to enact in a time when they need to cut costs.

"I can't believe it makes any sense to give these people a permanent lost promotion increase," Davis said. "They're just going to risk losing this whole category of faculty, their whole career is going to be ruined basically."

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FILE PHOTO BY GABRIELLE RHOADS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Provost Brian Blake said the salary increase freeze saved the University about \$500,000.

## Administrators cut medical school jobs, CCAS adviser, employees say

**ZACH SCHONFELD**  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Officials have laid off multiple School of Medicine and Health Sciences administrative employees and GW's sole pre-law adviser in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, employees with knowledge of the reductions said.

The SMHS layoffs affected multiple administrative positions in the school's academic departments and began at least one month ago, said three employees with knowledge of the eliminations, who requested anonymity for fear of retribution from GW. University

President Thomas LeBlanc said at a Faculty Senate meeting earlier this month that at that time last month, officials had laid off about 250 employees who had an average salary of roughly \$75,000.

One employee told The Hatchet that officials laid off employees, including a department manager, an administrative manager and an academic department administrator, in the medical school.

The employees did not know how many SMHS administrative positions were eliminated in total.

Deborah Baker, CCAS' senior adviser for pre-law, said in an email to student law organiza-

tions on Aug. 27 that it would be her final day at GW and her position was eliminated.

"I don't have to tell you how I feel about each of you that I've known for some time, and how eager I was to get to know those of you I've only met recently, but do know that it was my pleasure to work with you all," Baker wrote in the email, which was obtained by The Hatchet.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal declined to confirm the layoffs in SMHS, saying departments are currently being restructured.

"Reviews and restructuring of administrative

unit functions and staffing are underway, and the goal is for each vice president and dean to determine the scale and scope that is appropriate for their administrative unit," Nosal said in an email. "These efforts include very difficult decisions about position eliminations and layoffs that have become more urgent given the financial implications of our fall scenario."

Officials said at the September senate meeting that the layoffs would be completed near the end of the month. Officials are expected to make final decisions for a second phase of cuts to

close GW's projected \$180 million budget gap in the coming days, which could include a faculty pay reduction.

Hundreds of students and employees have signed onto various petitions condemning recent layoffs.

Provost Brian Blake said at the senate meeting that as part of the restructurings, officials increased the ratio of students per academic adviser from 193 to one to 220 to one, which he said is still below the national average. He said there was "some elimination" of academic adviser positions, which is the first public statement from an

official confirming layoffs in a specific department.

"I needed to be able to go and make sure these units are as efficient as they can be," Blake said. "We had five weeks of conversations, we were actually looking at national norms and any anecdotal challenges."

Blake also confirmed there were some positions eliminated in the Center for Career Services. Officials have also laid off at least dozens of staff across the University's technology offices as well as at least 60 employees within the facilities division and an internal consulting office.

# News

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## THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

### "MEDDLING IN THE BALLOT BOX: THE CAUSES AND EFFECTS OF PARTISAN ELECTORAL INTERVENTIONS"

September 21 • 1 p.m. EDT • Free  
Dov H. Levin will speak about his latest book "Meddling in the Ballot Box: The Causes and Effects of Partisan Electoral Interventions," which discusses his theories about why foreign powers interfere in elections.

### NATIONAL VOTER REGISTRATION DAY

September 22 • 7 a.m. EDT • Free  
GW Votes will host a panel of faculty and students on National Voter Registration Day as they discuss how to register, vote and more.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

September 21, 2006

After winning the Democratic primary to fill the Ward 3 D.C. Council seat, law professor Mary Cheh said she would continue to teach at GW should she win in November.

## Student advisory board charts new vision for GWPD

JARROD WARDWELL  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

After months of calls for campus police reform, officials reassembled the Division of Safety and Facilities' Student Advisory Board this month to evaluate students' demands.

Second-year graduate student Rebecca Bizzarri, the coordinator for the student advisory board, said board members convened for their first meeting of the academic year Tuesday, during which students reported to officials like GW Police Department Chief James Tate. Bizzarri said the board consists of 12 undergraduate students who will meet every three weeks throughout the school year to share feedback about campus safety and discuss initiatives.

GWPD established the student advisory board in 2018 to better connect students with the department and discuss on-campus safety concerns.

"As we enter the third academic year since the formation of the Student Advisory Board, the division remains committed to our goal of promoting transparency and collaboration between staff and students through the Student Advisory Board," Bizzarri said in an email.

Bizzarri said board members can participate in personnel hiring, join safety

walks through campus and provide input for the Return to Campus plan, as officials prioritize transparency to keep students engaged with University planning.

"Opportunities to participate in safety initiatives are ever-involving, and we are thankful to have a committed group of students willing to lend a hand and provide feedback on a number of different topics," she said.

Tate mentioned the advisory board last month as he unveiled his vision for GWPD to promote community involvement and institute new reforms – including body-worn cameras, a training program and plans this fall to hire a community outreach officer who will meet with students on the board.

He said students beyond the board can now join the GWPD officer hiring process and interview new officers themselves. He said he plans to reach out to student organizations like the Student Association and Black Student Union to involve more students in officer hiring.

Anna Weber, the Student Association's vice president for campus operations, said she serves on the board alongside other members of the SA, BSU and Residence Hall Association. Students spent last week's meeting asking officials questions about how GWPD plans to address safety during the

pandemic and social justice issues like the Black Lives Matter movement, she said.

Tate told board members he hopes to minimize officers' contact with students during the pandemic, limit their presence in the area and market the department as a community-wide resource for student safety, Weber said. She said officials have welcomed students' perspectives and she hopes GWPD can continue to build relationships with students.

Weber said officials updated the board on last month's reforms to GWPD and introduced members to The GW Guardian App, designed to replace GW PAL, connect students with GWPD and provide a new Safety Timer that monitors late-night activity. She said Scott Burnotes, the associate vice president of safety and security, suggested officials increase nighttime lighting on campus, as students mentioned they felt less safe at night when campus is relatively deserted.

"Because campus is less dense, it can be really, really scary at night, hence why you would look at things like lighting or video surveillance or all of those other components under safety and facilities that you can use instead of having officers patrolling campus because cops at every corner are not the solution," she said.



FILE PHOTO BY ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR  
Students on the Division of Safety and Facilities' Student Advisory Board spent last week's meeting questioning officers about safety on campus during the pandemic.

SA Sen. Sam Packer, CCAS-U, who also serves on the student advisory board, said this year's panel will grant students greater access to police officers than a city police department, adding that student activists want better communication with GWPD so they can feel safer when protesting on campus.

Earlier this year, an officer who allegedly pushed a student down several stairs outside University President Thomas LeBlanc's on-campus residence was placed on

administrative leave, and officials later announced plans to reform GWPD practices. BSU wrote a letter to the department in June, demanding that officers strengthen their relationship with students.

"We wouldn't want another incident like what happened in the spring to occur again, and hopefully with better communication, we protesters can do our action without having to risk altercations with GWPD," Packer said.

Packer said she will maintain "constant open communication" with students as she serves on the board this fall, and she wants to ensure GWPD training and guidelines are effective in preventing violence on campus.

"It is more important than ever that people of color, LGBTQ people and activists all feel protected by our campus security, not threatened due to similarities to the police that have been acting so violently around the country," she said.

## Withholding promoted faculty raises a 'short-sighted' solution, experts say

From Page 1

Chris Bonneau, the president of the Faculty Senate at the University of Pittsburgh, said promoted faculty at the school are still receiving salary increases. He said senators worked with officials to discuss how to make cuts to the university budget salary freezes for non-promoted faculty.

Bonneau said rejecting promoted faculty members'

salary increases is "short-sighted" because the financial savings are relatively small.

He said he is concerned that the clause of the resolution that calls for promoted faculty to receive salary increases before other faculty members receive them may "pit" professors against each other. Bonneau said Pittsburgh's senate usually resolves issues with administrators before creating a resolution and when an issue

becomes public, it changes the "dimension of the discussion."

"We disagree with the administration plenty," he said. "Usually it's done behind closed doors so by the time something comes up, we're all on board."

Bonneau said the fact that this issue was discussed in the open is a "failure of self-governance."

Kevin McFarland, the co-chair of the Faculty

Senate at the University of Rochester, said he serves on a faculty salary reduction advisory committee, which decides how to address the university's financial shortfalls. He said senators and officials decided "very early on" to stop all raises except in the case of promotions.

"As a faculty member, you typically don't get very many promotions in your track," McFarland said.

McFarland said mem-

bers of the Faculty Senate were consulted in the decision to stop all other raises and were able to come to an agreement with administrators without the need to create a resolution.

"A well-run shared governance system helps you get to consensus," McFarland said.

Dave Haaga, a faculty senator representing the College of Arts and Sciences at American University, said officials at American froze salary increases for

all faculty, regardless of recent promotions, and said furloughs and salary cuts will likely come in the near future.

GW officials implemented a salary freeze for all employees in April and announced that some senior administrators would take a voluntary pay cut.

"The key in my mind would be just making sure that faculty have input into these decisions about tradeoffs," Haaga said.

## Legal concerns may block LeBlanc from sharing Swain hiring details: experts

AMY LIU  
STAFF WRITER

Experts said University President Thomas LeBlanc may have refused to say what led to the hiring of an official involved with the Larry Nassar sexual abuse scandal because of legal concerns.

The Faculty Senate voted earlier this month to recommit a resolution censuring LeBlanc for hiring Michigan State University official Heather Swain to a senate committee, asking committee members to meet privately with LeBlanc so he can speak more frankly about the hiring. Employment law experts said publicly sharing details about controversial hirings could potentially lead to a defamation suit against the University.

The censure resolution, which could be placed on the senate's agenda at its meeting on Oct. 9, would request a "full and complete" report of the vetting process for Swain's hiring. Swain withdrew her job offer as GW's vice president for communications and marketing last month after rampant criticism of her role in shielding information from prosecutors during the Nassar suit.

Arthur Wilson, the chair of the senate's executive committee, said at the senate meeting earlier this month that the executive committee has worked "very hard" to receive an explanation from LeBlanc, but the committee has "consistently" been told GW's lawyers will not allow LeBlanc to "go into detail."

Employment and labor law experts say there is no

explicit law prohibiting an employer from disclosing the details of a staff hire, but officials could have entered into a settlement agreement that prohibits them from discussing the details of the hire. They said LeBlanc could theoretically disclose general information like the occurrence of a vetting process without going into what they uncovered during the investigation.

Barbara Lee, a professor of human resource management at Rutgers University, said potential legal liability may play a part in employers' reluctance to disclose hiring details.

"Unless the University has a clear policy that requires the president to confer with others or to provide details about a search or a hiring decision, I'm not aware of any other legal limitations on the president's authority," Lee said in an email.

Lee said there are "disincentives" for employers to disclose the circumstances of a hiring, like confidentiality concerns with respect to the candidate.

"There could be confidentiality concerns like who the other candidates were, why they were not chosen, what was learned during reference checks," Lee said. "Negative information disclosed about any particular candidate could become the basis for a defamation lawsuit."

GW policy requires officials to oversee a "standard background screening" for all "finalists" for faculty and staff positions, which are normally conducted by third-party

vendors. Hiring records are then kept on file for at least two years.

Joseph Hornack, a professor of law at the University of Pittsburgh, said it's not uncommon for legal counsel to take a "cautious approach" with determining what hiring information to disclose publicly.

"The attorney might be nervous about disclosing information because if they end up disclosing something that potentially could be damaging to the applicant's reputation, there could be legal implications," he said.

"The attorney might be nervous about disclosing information because if they end up disclosing something that indicates some form of bias in the hiring or not following certain best practices or ends up disclosing something that potentially could be damaging to the applicant's reputation, there could be legal implications there," he said.

Hornack said if the information disclosed is false and does damage to the reputation of the applicant, then the University could be subject to a defamation lawsuit. But he said there is no valid defamation claim if the information disclosed is true.

Hornack added that instances where a job offer was either rescinded or withdrawn could have negative consequences on a university's reputation.

"It certainly can do some damage to the university's reputation to have made a hiring decision and then having to back down because they didn't do the proper checking of the applicant



HATCHET FILE PHOTO  
The University could face a defamation suit if it reveals information about Heather Swain's hiring, legal experts said.

before hiring," he said.

Orly Lobel, a distinguished professor of law at the University of San Diego, said while the president doesn't have a legal obligation to speak about the hiring process, he isn't legally barred from it either.

Lobel said a president's only limitation to revealing information would be signing a non-disclosure agreement. She said depending on how the NDA was drafted and the scopes of the contract, LeBlanc may have limits in speaking out.

"It is good practice for a university to have relative transparency in hiring processes," she said in an email. "Though the reality is that these organizations, especially private universities, have been increasingly conducting hir-

ing processes with opacity and secrecy."

She said the president could supply some information about the hire rather than information that was disclosed during the vetting process, like reassuring the community that the people involved in the process were independently investigated.

Lobel added that universities have a high interest in doing "due diligence" with respect to candidates, like contacting previous employers and vetting the candidate so that there "aren't any skeletons left uncovered."

"This is especially true at universities where faculty governance is a fundamental principle," she said. "Especially true these days when we know that systematic patterns of wrongdoing and hushing

of unlawful and unethical activities have been exposed in a range of institutions."

Lynne Bernabei, an employment discrimination lawyer at D.C. law firm Bernabei & Kabat, said transparency is especially essential in the hiring process for higher-level administrators given their power in the university and the vulnerability of students.

She said incorporating students and faculty in the vetting process, conducting background checks and having public sessions discussing the hire could make the process more open.

"Higher-level administrators have more authority and power at the university," she said. "There is a need to be even more careful with these hires."

# Admissions office changes tactics to recruit potential undergraduates

TIFFANY GARCIA  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The Office of Undergraduate Admissions is adjusting its recruitment events this fall amid the ongoing pandemic.

Potential applicants can tune in to more than 50 panel discussions specific to majors and campus life as well as GW Day, an all-day workshop on life at GW, the office's events website states. Ben Toll, the dean of undergraduate admissions, said officials have greater access to students from around the country and world through virtual programming, like Zoom informational sessions and college fairs.

"Even before the University officially transitioned to remote instruction in March, the undergraduate admissions office has been reimagining the tactics and strategies by which we recruit students to best fit a virtual environment," Toll said in an email. "In fact, the virtual environment opens some new opportunities as it removes some of the logistical barriers that can constrain our work."

He said the office is working with high school college counselors to identify how to connect with prospective students attending school in person

and fully virtual. He said the admissions team participated in nine more high school visits and college fairs between Aug. 1 and Sept. 15 than they did last year.

Toll said the office is creating a group of admissions staff to identify "changes in student behavior" through students' applications as a way of connecting with applicants impacted by COVID-19. He said admissions counselors are "well-positioned" to engage with students and offer additional assistance if they notice "concerning patterns" or issues similar to this summer's Connect GW text initiative.

"There are great schools throughout the world, but sometimes the in-person logistics prevent us from making those personal connections," Toll said. "This year, we are taking full advantage that those barriers have been erased. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 across race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status and geography will have real impacts on how students approach their college search."

He said Your GW, a weekend-long recruitment program for high school seniors interested in learning about GW, will operate as a semester-long mentorship program for

prospective students. He said students who are accepted to the Your GW program will be paired with office staff and current students to guide them through conversations on topics like diversity, equity and inclusion and tips on the admission process.

Students taking part in Your GW 2020 will meet every other week with a small group of admissions staff members and current students in the Dean's Council for Multicultural Recruitment, according to the admissions website.

"A lot of students and counselors rely on fly-in programs for exposure to different colleges they may never hear about, especially ones out of state or further away," Toll said. "With the inability to have physical fly-in programs due to COVID-19, students are still looking for some way to connect with schools."

College admissions experts said admission officers need to emphasize building personal connections with students at virtual college fairs and high school informational sessions to assist students navigating the college application session.

Andrea Felder, the assistant vice provost for undergraduate admissions at American University, said the office created



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

Dean of Undergraduate Admissions Ben Toll said moving events online has actually enabled admissions staff to reach students all over the country and world.

a "robust" plan to connect with students, families and high school counselors this fall at more than 50 virtual AU information sessions.

Felder said the department has "significantly increased" its outreach with simulated classes for students to hear directly from faculty and a joint counselor hosted event with D.C.-area colleges like GW to share information about their institution.

Dave Kobzina, the assistant director for transfer recruitment at Port-

land State University in Oregon, said the department is offering longer personalized adviser meetings with students interested in applying and hosting live sessions like virtual tours on Zoom with enrolled students to walk families through the campus.

He said the pandemic's uncertain timeline might leave students reconsidering whether they want to apply to colleges that are out of state or far from home because of concerns with affordability, which can mean a smaller pool

of applicants.

College administrators anticipate students grappling with the financial and psychological impacts of the virus could choose to stay closer to home, go to less expensive schools, take a year off or not go to college at all.

"We have a lot of students that need that extra help," Kobzina said. "For many students, and I'm not classifying any one group, online learning is posing challenges. So how can we be empathetic to them and try to assist them as best as possible?"

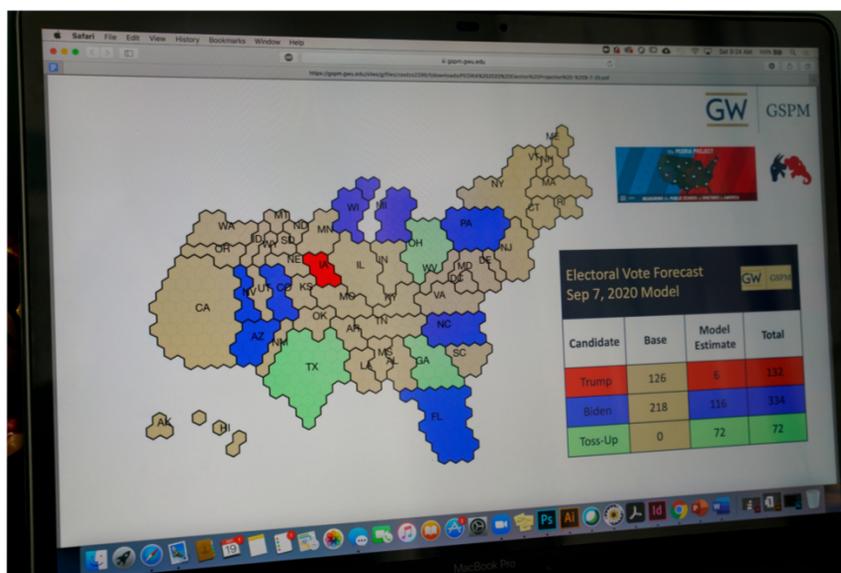


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SYDNEY WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The model predicts a win for former Vice President Joe Biden, who is expected to take eight out of 12 swing states.

## GSPM researchers using Twitter data to predict 2020 general election

YANKUN ZHAO  
STAFF WRITER

Researchers in the Graduate School of Political Management are using Twitter data to predict the outcome of the 2020 presidential election.

The Public Echoes of Rhetoric in America Project is tracking Twitter topics and conversations related to the November general election to predict voter behavior and to determine which candidate will win electoral college votes from battleground states like Arizona and Colorado. Researchers involved with the project said they can improve upon existing forecasts for the presidential election by incorporating social media discourse like discussions of and reactions to the election and the candidates.

Michael Cornfield, the director of the PEORIA project and an associate professor of political management, said he and GSPM Director Lara Brown are analyzing Twitter data to build an improved election forecast model using tweets and public opinion.

"Dr. Brown and I formed the project five years ago to explore the potential of social media metrics as a new methodological window on public opinion," he said in an email.

Researchers factored a state-level partisan lean based on past elections, polls, unemployment rates since January and national favorability ratings for each candidate into the forecast model, in addition to Twitter data, according to the project's reports.

Cornfield said voters should pay attention to factors that may impact the outcome of the election like endorsements by prominent

figures and the number of requested absentee ballots by political parties in certain states, both of which he said Democrats currently "hold the edge" in.

Researchers from the PEORIA project began releasing predictions for the 2020 Democratic primaries in February and created a weekly Tweeterboard covering the election last August.

Cornfield said the weekly Tweeterboard is a "fun offshoot" of PEORIA's main forecast model and is set to make a return this week to examine the number of tweets mentioning each candidate in battleground states.

"If we detect an interesting pattern or change, we will delve into those tweets and examine their authors and content," he said.

The most recent report from Sept. 9 predicts that former Vice President Joe Biden will win the Electoral College and eight out of the 12 potential swing states. Iowa is the only state to lean toward President Donald Trump with Texas, Georgia and Ohio as tossups, the report states.

The project released its first predictions on the presidential election on Aug. 11 and has had two other reports since then with limited changes.

Meagan O'Neill, the leading researcher on the project, said PEORIA's model offers a forecast different from other popular election-predicting websites, like FiveThirtyEight or RealClearPolitics, by including an analysis of trends from Twitter.

"We're specifically interested in any dynamics or movements in the election and what that means in terms of the Twitter data," she said. "For example, when

we suddenly see a spike in our prediction, we can log onto Twitter and pull those tweets in order to see what might've caused that spike so that it's more about the public conversation about the campaign."

O'Neill said the project is very "transparent" about its methodology since the information researchers are including is easily accessible by the public. She said researchers are working with Brandwatch, a digital consumer intelligence company that collects and analyzes the Twitter data they use, which she said mitigates many of the concerns surrounding bots and fake accounts on Twitter skewing the discussion online.

O'Neill said researchers for the project are predicting results nationwide but specifically selected 12 battleground states — Arizona, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan, North Carolina, Nevada, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin — earlier in March to examine in depth. She said either candidate can win these states after reviewing their prior voting history and consulting with experts and other forecast models.

O'Neill said the researchers intended to release weekly reports, but due to limited changes in the race, they are now releasing a new report with updated predictions every two weeks.

She said despite the election being fewer than 50 days away, there does not seem to be any major changes in the reports "from week to week," but she noted there have been some since the release of their Sept. 9 report.

"It looks like North Carolina is moving toward a tossup state, and it looks like Texas is moving toward a safer Trump state," she said.

## Student Court judges overhaul bylaws to replace 'vague' guidelines

MAKENA ROBERTS  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Student Court judges overhauled their governing documents late last month for the first time in more than seven years, arranging court procedures and case deadlines for students to easily access online.

The judges — two undergraduate and three graduate students — outlined initiatives in May for the academic year, like updating the body's rules and procedures with lengthened guidelines and increasing virtual access to formal complaint documents.

Associate Judge Yun-Da Tsai said the court prioritized an update of the procedures because the small number of guidelines were "exceptionally vague," so he spent months reworking the bylaws, procedures and compiling past court decisions.

"The thing is that the old bylaws and I think the old procedures were basically just the first level," he said. "It was just, 'this is how you fill out a complaint, and here's the general timeline of basis. Things may happen. Who knows?' And that's it."

Throughout the summer, the judges updated their rules and procedures, now on the SA website, which allows all parties to look through the judicial handbook to assess how to address their complaint to the judges, Tsai

said.

He said all procedures for the court are now "uniform" and available for public access on the court's virtual page, which includes a "standardized and simplified" format of court briefs and motions.

Tsai said he wrote roughly 45 new rules of possible court situations regarding procedures to ensure future judges also know how to address a situation. He said without the updates to the court documents, the body would have spent more time addressing "basic" questions in a hearing — which are now outlined

**"As the scattered archives of the court can attest to, poor record-keeping and unofficial unwritten agreements harms future courts and litigants, as it makes it near impossible to piece together the events leading up to a case and what reasoning underlies the final judgment in a case."**

YUN-DA TSAI  
ASSOCIATE JUDGE

in the judicial handbook on the SA website — rather than coming to a decision.

"In the future, you will have courts where there may be four non-law students and one law student," Tsai said. "And God forbid that law student not be well trained in civil procedure."

Judges are appointed by the Student Association president and approved by the senate, and the court must include three graduate and two undergraduate students, according to the court's judicial handbook.

Tsai said he is currently compiling court

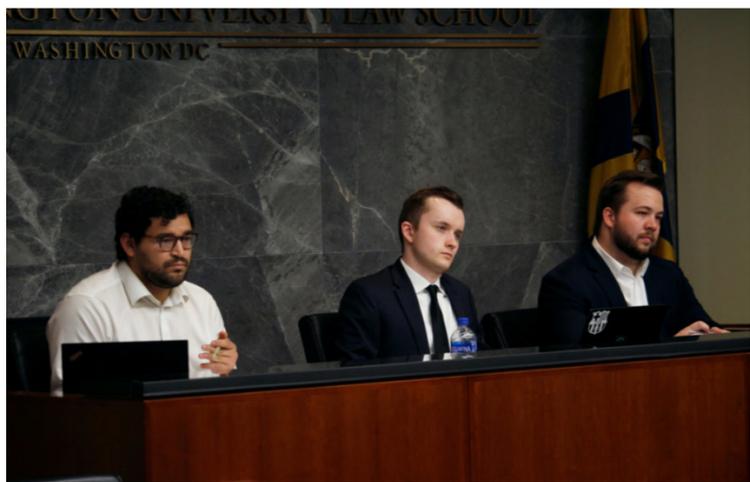
documents and decisions from the court's creation in 1991 up to present day, but he said documentation has not been "well kept" for court decisions since around 2000. He said the updated bylaws and procedures state all court decisions must be written down — instead of made only verbally — via general order or judgement, a court decision regarding legal rights and decisions.

He added that the judges convened late last week to select a new court registrar in charge of the body's social media and outreach on behalf of the court.

"As the scattered archives of the court can attest to, poor record-keeping and unofficial unwritten agreements harms future courts and litigants, as it makes it near impossible to piece together the events leading up to a case and what reasoning underlies the final judgment in a case," he said.

Shealyn Fraser, the SA vice president for public affairs who communicated with Tsai on the court updates, said she met with Tsai via Zoom to outline the information that needed to be updated on the SA websites — a "pretty simple" process. She said keeping the old information would "confuse students."

"It was important for me to be a part of it because if we hadn't talked, all of last year's procedures would still be up on the website," Fraser said.



FILE PHOTO BY SYDNEY WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Members of the court spent months reworking the Student Court's bylaws to eliminate confusion for the judges and parties before the court.

# DDOT unveils plans for protected bike lane network on campus

JARROD WARDWELL  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The D.C. Department of Transportation announced plans earlier this month to start constructing a network of protected bike lanes on campus with new installations on 20th, 21st and G streets.

DDOT spokesperson Mariam Nabizad said officials will start installing the two-way protected bike lanes “in late fall” and will finish the project after summer 2021. The bike lanes, which will run through campus on 20th and 21st streets and connect on G Street in front of Lisner Hall, are the first of a three-phase project that will connect the National Mall to Dupont Circle.

Nabizad said the bike lanes will range between 12 to 15 feet wide and replace about 140 parking spaces, as officials install the lanes on the west side of 20th Street, the south side of G Street and the east side of 21st Street. During construction, workers will set up “hundreds of signs,” modifications to traffic signals and curb ramps, new striping, “protected bike lane devices” and “a floating bus island,” she said.

In Phase One, design plans show officials will construct protected lanes between Massachusetts Avenue near Dupont Circle and the south end of campus at Virginia Avenue. In Phase

Two, the bike lanes will continue down 21st Street before hitting Constitution Avenue at the National Mall in late 2021. Officials will extend the 20th Street bike lane past Dupont Circle and up to Connecticut Avenue in Phase Three.

Nabizad said officials have not yet set a timetable for Phase Three. She said DDOT officials first decided to install the lanes on 21st Street through a long-term plan called MoveDC, and officials later identified 20th Street as another route to include in the project following discussions with neighborhood stakeholders in Foggy Bottom.

The Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission has negotiated the city’s bike lane proposals with DDOT for more than two years since District officials first announced plans in 2017. The ANC supported the city’s initial plans in 2018 and passed a resolution last January to request that DDOT install the lanes on either 20th or 21st street.

“Stakeholders in the West End and Foggy Bottom neighborhoods were instrumental in shaping the final alignment of the 20th and 21st street NW protected bike lanes,” Nabizad said in an email.

DDOT officials launched a neighborhood planning study in 2018 to determine how to situate the new bike

lanes between 20th, 21st and 22nd streets, and the agency held three public meetings with community members in 2018 and 2019 to gauge feedback, Nabizad said. She said agency officials gave “great weight” to recommendations ANC commissioners proposed throughout the project.

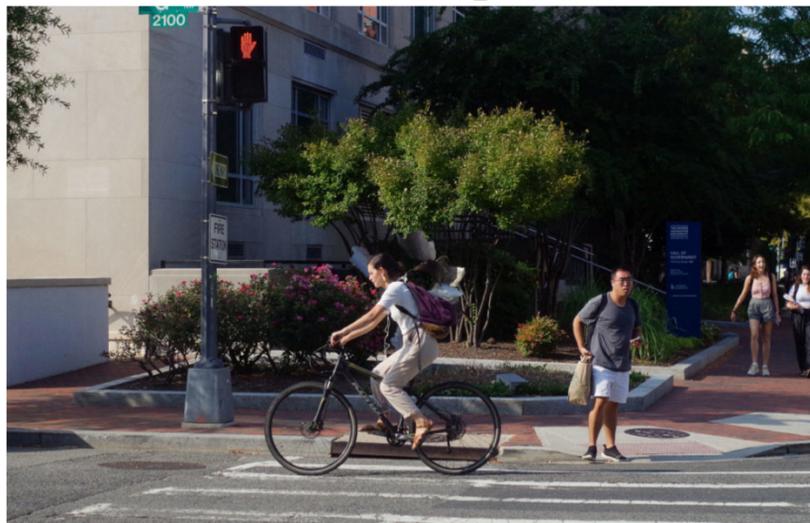
Nabizad said the final plan is a “hybrid” of ANC proposals.

“The 20th/ 21st/ 22nd Street Protected Bike Lane Project was developed with extensive public and interagency input, including several public meetings and robust stakeholder engagement,” she said.

James Harnett, a senior and the chair of the Foggy Bottom and West End ANC, said he was encouraged to see DDOT advance the ANC’s recommendations to install bike lanes on 20th and 21st streets because it will provide a safer means of transportation for individuals commuting through the neighborhood.

“This is going to be able to deliver on the safety that folks from very young to very old are looking for to safely navigate Foggy Bottom and the West End and get to the places they need to be,” Harnett said.

Harnett said the protected lanes will limit the cyclist’s fear of getting struck by a driver on busy roads that run through campus – a concern that he said comes



FILE PHOTO BY SABRINA GODIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

The on-campus project is part of a larger plan to connect the National Mall to Dupont Circle via bike lanes.

with commuting through local traffic.

“Many folks are frankly and rightfully scared of biking or scooting in the roadway, especially in rush hour when folks are speeding to get either into or out of the city along the roads that go through campus,” Harnett said.

Harnett says the three-phase approach allows officials to start installing improvements ahead of time instead of waiting a few years for all three phases to be ready simultaneously.

“We’re still moving forward on most of this network

because we know that most of the network is ready to go, and we can come back to these very small pieces later, and frankly, that’s a much better outcome,” Harnett said.

Garret Hennigan, the community organizer for the Washington Area Bicyclists Association, said local bikers have expressed “enormous enthusiasm” toward the new bike lanes. WABA members have spent the last six years communicating with ANCs, engaging with residents across the ward and meeting together monthly to push for more bike lanes and off-street

trails in D.C., Hennigan said.

“The best way to get people biking is by creating safe spaces for them to do that,” he said. “The average person is not going to look at 20th Street as it is today and think, ‘That’s a place I want to ride a bike.’”

He said WABA’s goal is to create 20 miles of protected bike lanes in D.C. by 2020.

“We have people in every ward really clamoring to be building more protected bike lanes, so while we haven’t quite hit the mileage that we were going for, there are so many more projects in the pipeline,” Hennigan said.



GABRIELLE RHOADS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Elliott School officials have released resources for professors to help make their classes more inclusive, like model inclusive syllabus language and support for students who want to report bias-related acts.

## Elliott School officials provide resources for ‘inclusive teaching’

CARLY NEILSON  
STAFF WRITER

Elliott School of International Affairs officials said they spent the past year increasing student leadership in its Council on Diversity and Inclusion and added resources for inclusive teaching to their website as part of an annual plan to promote diversity in the school.

Officials said they hired a diversity program manager, integrated diversity and inclusion into the hiring process for faculty and staff and held various events in partnership with cultural organizations at GW. They said while some events needed to be canceled due to the pandemic, Elliott School staff completed focus groups that have helped set diversity and inclusion goals for this academic year.

Jonathan Walker, the assistant dean for student services, diversity and inclusion for the Elliott School, said officials hired Kylie Stamm, a specialist in diversity in higher education, as a diversity program manager last November to support and implement the goals of the plan. He said she has provided “significant support” in executing the initiatives from the action plan.

Walker said Elliott School officials also hosted various “cultural heritage and identity-based” programs, including a partnership with the U.S. State Department to host a reception for the Historically Black Colleges and Universities Foreign Policy Conference for Black History Month. He said officials also hosted a keynote speaker, a professor of psychology and education from Columbia University, who spoke about microaggressions and racism related to the COVID-19 pandemic for Asian and Pacific Islander Heritage Month in May.

Walker said East Asia National Resource Center staff partnered with Spelman and Morehouse colleges to host programs and seminars this year on U.S.-China trade relations and professional development. The center also worked with K-12 schools to host teacher training seminars and field trips for students, he said.

Walker said officials restructured the Council on Diversity and Inclusion to include four undergraduate student seats representing freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors and graduate student seats for first-year and second-year representatives. He said a team of faculty from the council created an inclusive teaching statement over the summer with resources like readings from a diverse group of authors for Elliott School faculty to use in their classes.

The teaching statement includes four “components” to make teaching more inclusive for students: “how we teach,” “what we teach,” “where we draw our pedagogical materials” and “how we support constructive and supportive student engagement.”

The statement features resources and examples for professors to make their classes more inclusive for students through inclusive syllabus language, diverse class readings and support resources for students to understand race and report bias-related acts.

“Our faculty and students also worked on developing best practices and recommendations to integrate implicit bias discussions into the core courses of Elliott School students,” Walker said.

He said officials also completed focus groups with staff members, which has “informed” upcoming goals for the 2020-2021 academic year.

Stamm, the diversity program manager, said over the course of the year, Elliott School officials created an email newsletter to “expand” communications within the Elliott School and broader GW community and worked to support the creation of the Young Black Professionals in International Affairs student organization.

Jennifer Brinkerhoff, a professor of international affairs and former co-chair of the council, said she is “proud” of the council for creating the inclusive teaching statement, which she said faculty, staff and students worked to create in response to the Black Lives Matter movement.

Rollie Lal, an associate professor of international affairs and co-chair of the council, said the council, which includes seven students, has placed students in working groups for officials to “seriously” take their input into consideration. She said to increase student engagement with faculty and students about diversity issues, Elliott School officials assigned all freshmen to read the book “Tell Me Who You Are: Sharing Our Stories of Race, Culture, & Identity.”

She said faculty plan to discuss the book, which is about the way people across the U.S. experience racism, early in the semester.

Lal said she spent the summer adding resources to the webpage for the inclusive teaching statement, which she said can help faculty understand how they can implement gender equality in their course syllabi.

“I think it was really a major step forward in really stating that this is important to us as a school, and it is important to us as individuals and we’re all going to work on moving forward on this,” she said.

## Millions of patients at risk for losing health center access

LIA DEGROOT  
NEWS EDITOR

Researchers from the Milken Institute School of Public Health published a study earlier this month revealing that millions of Americans are at risk of losing access to community health centers because of a lack of funding.

The report, which is published annually using the Health Resources and Services Administration’s data on health centers, shows that visits to community health centers had dropped by about 20 percent by late August since before the pandemic and about one out of 14 centers have closed nationwide. Jessica Sharac, a research scientist in the Department of Health Policy Management, said community health centers provide services like dental care and transportation that people risk losing long-term access to.

Sharac said she worked with Geiger Gibson/RCHN Community Health Foundation to compile the report for 2019, and she and her team are using financial and demographic data from HRSA to track how the pandemic is affecting community health centers on a weekly basis.

She said HRSA is reporting how many centers have closed, the decline in weekly visits to centers and the percentage of staff that is unable to work due to safety concerns from the pandemic.

The report found that nearly 30 million Americans – many who are racial and ethnic minorities – received care at a federally funded health

center in 2019.

Sharac said community health centers are missing large amounts of revenue because of a drop in patient visits and a lack of federal funding, which could lead to multiple closures. She added that the Affordable Care Act provided funding for community health centers, but centers could lose federal funding after the CARES Act’s funding runs out in November.

“The big problem really facing community health centers right now is financial uncertainty,” Sharac said. “Obviously with the decline in visits to community health centers because of people being afraid to go out to get health care and trying to stay indoors, they might not be able afford health care because they lost a job or similar things like that.”

Public health experts said community health center closures put uninsured community members at risk of losing their care in the long term.

Leila Barraza, an associate professor of public health at the University of Arizona, said many people haven’t been accessing the regular care they need from primary care doctors, including at community health centers, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She said people with underlying medical conditions who are at a greater risk for contracting COVID-19 may have trouble accessing the health care they need if their community health center has closed and they don’t have another primary care doctor.

“People still need their primary care,” she said. “We know that

people with underlying medical conditions are at higher risk of severe complications from COVID-19, so those underlying conditions, people still need care for those.”

Tara McCollum Plese, the chief external affairs officer for the Arizona Alliance for Community Health Centers, said health centers in Arizona have started to offer telemedicine options for patients who don’t want to come into the office, which she said can make reimbursements for doctors complicated because telemedicine costs less than in-person care.

The Medical Faculty Associates started offering virtual follow-up visits for patients who received care at the emergency department, which medical experts said can complicate the reimbursement process for health care providers.

“The funding issue is paramount because if you don’t have a good strong workforce, it is almost impossible to serve the people in that community,” Plese said.

She added that policymakers and public health officials should use data like the information compiled in Sharac’s report to guide their decisions about how they’ll fund community health centers moving forward.

“Those people with chronic diseases may find themselves concerned about not having seen their primary care provider in a certain period of time,” she said. “Especially if they’re diabetic or have asthma, this is really the time that this is most critical that they be able to touch base with their primary care providers.”

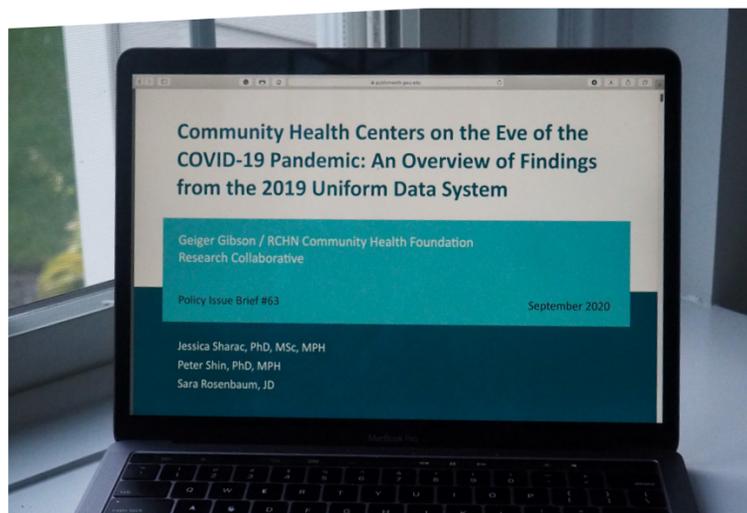


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE HROMIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

About one in 14 community health centers have closed nationwide since the pandemic began.

## CRIME LOG

## THEFT II/ALL OTHER LARCENY

CVS Pharmacy (The Shops at 2000 Penn)  
9/14/2020 – 6:30 a.m.

Open Case

The reporting person stated that an unknown subject entered the store and approached the bathing products before looking around and grabbing several large CVS shopping bags from behind the counter. The subject returned to the bathing products and filled the bags with 50 Dial soap dispensers, initially valued at \$250, before exiting the store without paying.

Open case.

## SHOPLIFTING

Mitchell Hall (7-Eleven)  
9/14/2020 – 4:22 p.m.

Closed Case

A female complainant reported a male subject was shoplifting. GWPD officers responded to the scene and apprehended the man who said he had shoplifted hygienic items. Officers gathered the stolen items, which were actually Ben & Jerry's ice cream and a Coke, and returned them to the store clerk. Officers barred the man and escorted him from the store.

Subject barred.

## THEFT II/FROM BUILDING

CVS Pharmacy (The Shops at 2000 Penn)

9/14/2020 – 7:14 p.m.

Open Case

The reporting person stated an unknown subject entered the store and stole five laundry items worth a total of \$82.50.

Open case.

## DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY LESS THAN \$1,000

GW Hospital  
9/18/2020 – 12:45 p.m.

Closed Case

Metropolitan Police Department Officer Tramaine Albert Williams was informed that 25-year-old Alphonso Johnson was picking flowers from University property outside the GW Hospital on 23rd Street. MPD officers escorted Johnson away from the hospital, but he returned and continued to pull up flowers from the property. MPD Officer Angela Bracey arrested Johnson and transported him to the Second District Police Station for processing. He damaged 40 flowers worth a total of \$1,000 during the incident.

Cleared by arrest.

—Compiled by Jarrod Wardwell & Kateryna Stepanenko

## SNAPSHOT

ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR



District residents gathered outside the Supreme Court for an impromptu vigil following news Friday that Associate Justice Ruth Bader Ginsberg died.

## Racist incidents increase student stress: experts

From Page 1

## Moving past 'spreading awareness'

Junior and Black Student Union Vice President Peyton Wilson said she hopes officials will implement changes after being nationally scrutinized after Krug's confession. She said she is appreciative of the MSSC staff who offer spaces to debrief, reflect and recognize the importance of identity in students.

She said administrators need to have "frank" conversations acknowledging the harm caused when racial incidents occur to make everyone on campus feel integrated and acknowledged.

"Now we're getting past the spreading awareness stage and getting into the 'OK, so what are we going to do about it' phase because it's really important," Wilson said. "We've talked about it. Now it's time to get some action into it."

Amira Al Amin, a sophomore majoring in human services and women's studies, said the University needs to show greater transparency when incidents occur and focus on acknowledging the pain students of color feel to build trust. She said stu-

dent groups like GW Black Defiance have created their own spaces to speak up and educate students about racial issues.

Student groups like the GW National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have launched workshop series for minority students to "enlighten" others on topics like cultural appropriation.

"I want what's real – I want to be able to say 'my university said that this was racist, and they acknowledge it and hold accountability,'" Al Amin said.

## Holding officials accountable

Experts in diversity in higher education said officials must actively listen to students' concerns and strategize new solutions to issues like racism if they recur.

David Kirkland, the vice dean of equity, belonging and community action at New York University's Steinhardt School for Culture, Education and Human Development, said students repeatedly speaking out against racial injustice have not had a chance to recover from the "exhausting times" they are living in. He said after students have raised their concerns, officials must find solutions without acting defensive or

dismissing students' concerns.

"We need to hold listening sessions, call for restorative care circles, develop with students new levels of interpersonal wealth," Kirkland said. "Reparations are about healing justice, holding ourselves accountable to the harms we have committed and doing all we can to redress the damage by any means necessary."

Laura Rendon, a professor emerita at the University of Texas, San Antonio, said universities should involve students in their plans to address racism because some administrators might not understand what it means to be the "other" in society. She said schools should engage consistently with students of color to build a long-term plan that includes a budget, resources and staff needed to combat racism and discrimination.

"I think it's good that students are galvanizing and becoming advocates for justice and equity," Rendon said. "But at the same time, I feel that it puts a lot more stress, a lot more work on them, when the institution should be involved in resolving these issues and letting the students do what they were brought to do, which is to study and to finish their degrees."

—Tara Suter contributed reporting.

## Students demand help from officials with work-study

From Page 1

"I don't get money sent to me from my parents, so I'm pretty much fully doing it on my own now," Slattery said. "It's just stressful now because I do have money from the summer, but I have to buy furniture so I could go through that money pretty quickly. So it's definitely like the clock is ticking, and I want to be in a good position in two months."

She added that the University should have told students earlier this year that they might not have access to their FWS positions this fall so students knew to apply to other jobs.

"I definitely think FWS should have been reaching out to students a lot sooner to warn them federal jobs will probably be limited or canceled because of the pandemic so that students could have started searching sooner," Slattery said. "It's probably one of the biggest things on my mind, especially as someone who tends to be an anxious person."

Junior Anjantee Manandic, an international affairs major, said some GW departments are offering remote FWS positions but have reduced the number of students they are hiring. After working as a front desk assistant for the Elliott School of International Affairs' undergraduate advising office last academic year, she said she was told after an interview on Aug. 24 she would not be rehired as the advising office reduced the number of students on its staff from 10 to four this fall.

She said since late August, she has applied to seven FWS positions but has been denied from them all because the applications closed or offices are only hiring a limited number of students. She said she has had to rely on D.C. unemployment payments to afford her apartment in the District while balancing an unpaid internship, adding that she wishes officials would be proactive in connecting students to open positions this semester.

"I wish that the work-study program and employment services started earlier, even as early as May when school ended," Manandic said. "I know there was a whole administrative decision about reopening, but we could've had a 'plan A' and 'plan B' in the case we were fully online again."

## COVID-19 tracking dashboard can help GW respond to pandemic, experts say

MIRANDA NAZZARO  
REPORTER

Experts in public health data said the University's COVID-19 tracking dashboard will help students and officials make informed decisions about how to handle the pandemic.

The dashboard, which was released last week, will provide daily updates on the 4,000 on-campus community members who are required to be tested weekly, the dashboard's website states. Officials said in a release that they hope the dashboard will "ensure transparency" as they start to discuss if and when students can return to campus.

The dashboard uses interactive bar chart graphics to display daily total administered tests, daily total positives and seven-day positive rates as well as a breakdown into student and employee results, reason for getting tested and affiliated campus. Milken Institute School of Public Health researchers developed the University's diagnostic tests, which will be processed in an on-campus public health lab, the website states.

"We are continuing to gather information about the current spread of the virus and projections about its trajectory – both in the D.C. region and nationally – and how these factors and any local government limitations will affect our operations next semester," University President Thomas LeBlanc said in the release.

As of Sunday, the dashboard showed 10 positive cases after testing 9,453 community members.

Health experts said releasing COVID-19 data in an understandable way is crucial for officials to maintain trust between them and the community they're guiding through the pandemic.

Kasisomayajula Viswanath, a professor of health communication at Harvard University,

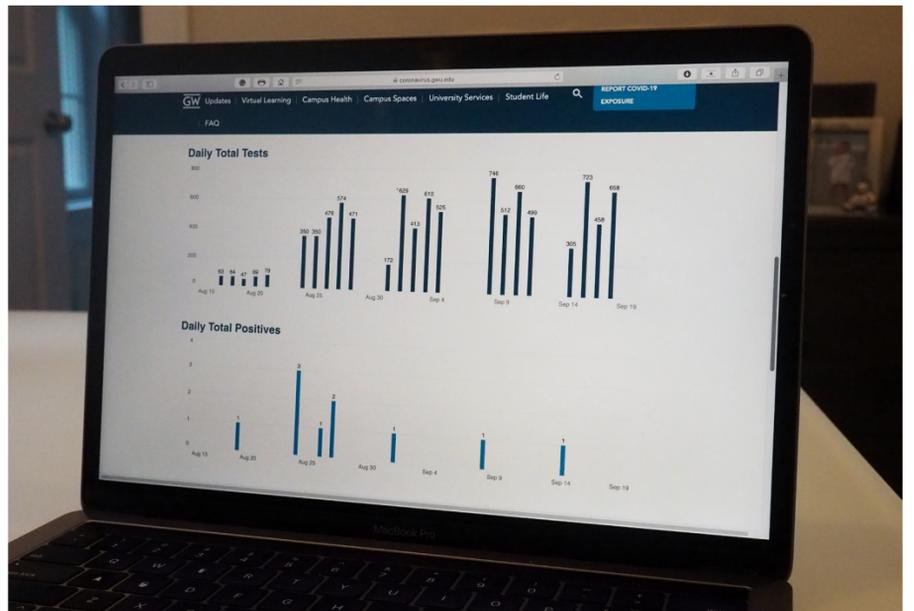


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE HROMIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

As of Sunday, GW's COVID-19 dashboard showed 10 positives from about 9,500 total tests on GW community members.

said college campuses should release testing data to promote informed decision-making on how to operate during the pandemic. He said the surrounding residents of a city college campus are an equally relevant audience for this data because they interact with students in their community.

Foggy Bottom community members voiced concerns last month that off-campus students' return to the neighborhood could put Foggy Bottom's elderly community at risk of contracting the virus. Some members of a fraternity also contracted the virus after attending an off-campus party earlier this month.

"It is essential for them to know how safe it is to enter the buildings, not enter the buildings, attend in our classes and not attend classes, open the restaurants and not open the restaurants," Viswanath said. "All these decisions will de-

pend upon the information they get."

Viswanath said public health communication during emergencies depends on "three principles of transparency, trust and credibility."

"We are demanding a lot of people in the COVID-19 context," he said. "So if you want people to comply, they should be able to trust you and you should have the credibility. The open release of this data is a first step toward building that."

With at least 88,000 positive COVID-19 cases across 1,600 college campuses, the GW dashboard joins the effort of many universities, like Boston and Syracuse universities, to distribute testing data to its community.

Rolf Halden, the director of the Center for Environmental Health Engineering at the BIODESIGN Institute of Arizona State University, said this type of public access to data is neces-

sary to combat COVID-19 on a uniform, national level so citizens and government officials can make decisions about their COVID-19 strategy using the same basic information.

"Society is at a critical juncture," Halden said. "We know how powerful data is, and we know and appreciate certain data is withheld from us for various reasons to control public opinion. But when it comes to our health and the health of our families and loved ones and the health of not only the country and its population but also the economy, I think everyone has a right to access this data."

Halden said GW's dashboard is a step in the right direction for the community because it shows transparency in the University's handling of the pandemic and allows students and community members to make informed decisions as they navigate the pandemic.

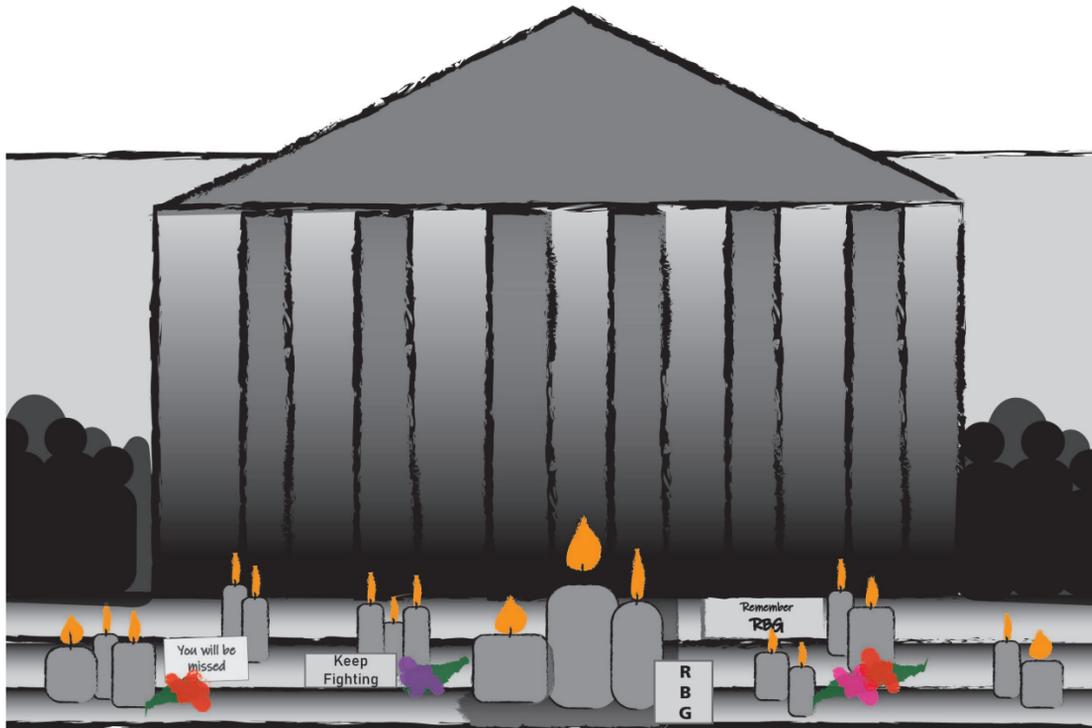
## We have a responsibility to continue Ginsburg's fight for gender equality

Former Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg died Friday of complications from pancreatic cancer she had been fighting for years. Her passing marks a serious loss for the country and to the thousands of women and young girls that she helped to inspire — myself included.

Hannah Thacker  
Opinions Editor

Without her fight and without her spirit, many women would not have the liberties that we have today. Ginsburg was a trailblazer for abortion rights and gender and marriage equality, just to name a few. Because of her fight for equal rights for women, women like me are able to be protected under the Constitution's equal rights protections. She's the reason I can proudly say I'm a feminist, and she's the reason we must continue fighting for equal rights as men.

I grew up naive to issues of gender and marriage inequality — for a long time I didn't consider myself a feminist. I thought women can do anything men can and that there was no need for such terms and ideas as feminism. As I got older and learned more, I realized



Cartoon by Hannah Thacker

the only reason I was able to think that I could do anything a man can was because of the women who came before me — women like Ginsburg who fought for women's rights to be seen as human rights. We owe it to her, to her legacy and her memory to remember and recognize everything she has done for us.

We all stand on the shoulders of those that came before us. Women today stand on the shoulders of people like Ginsburg, who was willing to risk everything and challenge the status quo and fight for what she thought was right. So many of the rights we take for granted today are because of women like Ginsburg. We take for

granted that we are able to apply to the same jobs as men, that we are able to have the same educational and financial opportunities and that we are able to have autonomy over our own person. Now that the Supreme Court justice is gone, we can't forget what she did for us, and we can't let history repeat itself — we must follow in her foot-

steps and stand at the forefront of the fight for gender equality.

Women can carry her legacy in their personal lives and careers. We must push for the same wage as men. We can fight for authority positions in our place of work and throw away the notion that any of us are merely meant to be a "housewife." The struggle

for equal rights as men has gone on for centuries — but Ginsburg has reassured us that it's not an impossible feat.

While many conversations surrounding her passing have been focused on her potential replacement, political parties and President Donald Trump's next nomination, we must remember that her life made a serious impact on the soul of our nation. RBG was more than just a political prop that stands between a conservative Supreme Court and a more liberal court. She represents decades of work toward women's equality. Her character and her spirit will live on in any person who looked to her as a symbol of hope, both in her personal life and work in the highest court in the country.

Her passing should be felt as a loss to women all across the country, no matter their political party or ideology. What Ginsburg stood for was more than something that could be prescribed to a political party. Her death must not be seen as a marker of political importance but as a marker of social importance that affects us all. We have a responsibility to carry on her legacy.

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

## Vote this election — it really may be the most important one of our lives

### STAFF EDITORIAL

Between the COVID-19 pandemic, a gloomy economy and the specter of climate change, our generation is facing an uncertain future because of today's problems. Yet the voices and activism of young people on these issues are often belittled or suppressed by politicians. The president himself has repeatedly bashed and cast doubt on mail-in voting, the method by which students generally vote. As a consequence, public policy, like the federal response to the pandemic, has largely ignored college students.

For our issues to be taken seriously in spite of these obstacles, one of the most important things to do is ensure our votes are counted this November.

If young people voted in the same numbers as previous generations, it would reshape the electorate and shift the focus toward the issues we care about, like climate change and the cost of college. That's what happened in the 2018 midterms — youth turnout doubled, ushering into office the youngest and most diverse group of federal legislators in history. We have a responsibility to keep speaking out and participating to effect long-lasting change. And this November, that means turning out to vote. Each and every vote has never been more important — and almost all of us are back home to be able to do it.

Almost all of the existential problems our generation will inherit will have been handed to us by policymakers from previous generations. None of us had a say in demolishing the economy

in 2008 or allowing the climate to heat up. Even now, young people barely merit a second thought in policy decisions. The federal pandemic response, for example, deliberately excluded college students from direct cash payouts. We will be responsible for fixing those problems eventually — and even if we cannot make them disappear right away, we can still slow their advance by showing up at the polls.

Our vote is even more critical because of the unique stakes of this election. The trite refrain of "this is the most important election of our lifetime" happens to be true this year. The Trump administration has actively damaged democracy at home and abroad. At this moment, he is attempting to make the November election unfree and unfair by sabotaging the United States Postal Service — cutting funding, dismantling ballot-sorting machines and increasing delivery times. These steps constitute an active attempt to reduce the number of ballots counted this year — and the best way to push back against that is to turn out in historic numbers. Put simply, turning out this year may be the only way we can vote in free and fair elections in 2024.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also brought both new challenges and opportunities for our generation to vote. While college students typically vote by mail because they're on campus, it may be easier to cast a ballot this election cycle while students are living at their childhood homes or permanent resi-

dences. Being at home makes it easier for many students to receive and send their mail-in ballot or show up at a polling place if they feel comfortable and safe turning out in person. Going to the polls or mailing in your ballot with parents, family or friends can lessen the difficulty or boredom associated with casting a vote and help remind you to request your ballot and cast your vote amid schoolwork and classes. There's no excuse this year.

Though some aspects of the virtual semester make it easier for students to vote, others can be seriously detrimental. Actually registering to vote can be a barrier for many students. In states like Louisiana, those wanting to register to vote have to print out forms and documents, which could post a barrier to people without printers. In some states like Georgia and Wisconsin, you need several forms of identification, which can be a barrier for someone who maybe never got their driver's license. All of these may seem trivial but are just one more step between wanting to vote and actually casting a ballot.

In this election, for most students, voting will only take a few minutes in between the activism necessary to enact systemic change. Yet the upsides of doing so are tremendous, even if you live in a solidly Democratic or Republican state. Do some research on your jurisdiction's voter registration rules and down-ballot races. Find out where your nearest polling place or ballot drop box is. And vote.

## Colleges should not blame their students for COVID-19 outbreaks

College students have been put through hell for the last six months. They've been ripped away from their school friends, needed to re-adjust to living and studying at home and are constantly worried about an uncertain future. And some college students have unfortunately tacked one more issue onto the list — being scapegoated for COVID-19 outbreaks on campuses.

Andrew Sugrue  
Contributing Opinions  
Editor

Northeastern University recently made news for the draconian way it disciplined students who were caught hanging out maskless in a residence hall. Not only were the students expelled, but the university refused to return any of their nearly \$40,000 in tuition for the semester. Students and parents were rightly aghast. But this episode is only one example of a troubling trend of colleges blaming their students for COVID-19 outbreaks that should have been administrators' job to prevent. Solely relying on students' willpower to prevent outbreaks on campuses is naive — and if colleges aren't willing to confront the reality of in-person education during a pandemic, then they should follow GW's lead and keep campuses closed until it is over.

Colleges that have reopened campuses — even in a limited capacity — risk causing virus outbreaks. The chief solution that some

universities — including Northeastern, apparently — have come up with is to place the onus on students to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus. And if students break the rules, their university hangs them out to dry and heaps scorn on the student body for being reckless and selfish. Other schools like Syracuse University and the University of Pittsburgh have suspended students for partying, but Northeastern's response was unique in its severity.

The simple reality of pandemic-era college education is that students are going to gather if given the chance. Students watched the lives they had built at college collapse as the pandemic brought the world to its knees. Most then spent six months in their childhood homes, with the best substitute for social interaction being a grainy Zoom image on their laptop screen. Not to mention they have watched their government fail to fight the virus in a way that prevents death and economic disarray. After enduring the unendurable for half a year, there should be no doubt in anybody's mind that students will try and claw back any semblance of normalcy they can if campuses reopen. When nearly half of young people are presenting signs of anxiety or depression because of the stress and isolation of the pandemic, reuniting with their friends is not a capricious luxury — it is a survival instinct.

To be fair, it would be foolhardy and wrong to merely suggest that students who violate mask mandates and flaunt social distancing rules are justified in doing so.

Plenty of rule-breaking can be chalked up to sheer foolishness — like fraternities covering up COVID-19 diagnoses or holding parties. But that is not the point — the point is that relying on the threat of punishment is a cynical, naive and ineffectual way to prevent college students from congregating. Colleges need to have empathy and realize that college students will walk over broken glass right now if it means human contact — and they should shape policy accordingly. And if there is no safe way for students to gather and spend time together safely, then campuses simply should not reopen. GW made that agonizing decision — administrators put the health and well-being of students first and foremost. Even though bringing the student body back to Foggy Bottom would have been the smartest choice for the University's tanking budget, the risks of an outbreak were too high to justify that course of action. More colleges should make that same calculation and follow the path GW has taken.

It is on everybody — including college students — to be responsible citizens and comply with pandemic-era restrictions. But slip-ups are inevitable for those experiencing unfathomable stress and loneliness. If colleges are going to blame their students and take their tuition money instead of figuring out ways to make campus living safe, then campuses should not open in person at all this academic year.

—Andrew Sugrue, a junior majoring in political communication, is the contributing opinions editor.

# Culture

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## THE SCENE

### SUNSET CINEMA

September 25 • Min. \$10 • The Wharf  
Enjoy popcorn, Pacifico beer and Jumanji as you watch the sun set across the Potomac.

### FOREST BATHING WALK

September 27 • \$35 • National Arboretum  
Join a guided meditation through the beautiful trees in Northeast D.C.

## RELEASED THIS WEEK:

"ALICIA," AN ALBUM BY ALICIA KEYS

## Students take online classes on the road

HANA HANCOCK  
REPORTER

With classrooms and study halls out of sight, students are packing up their laptops and studying on the road.

Instead of being stuck in their childhood bedroom for the semester, some students said they are traveling to places like Maine and Egypt or planning cross-country road trips while they enroll in online courses. Students said they wanted to take advantage of the flexibility of virtual learning through travel, and the change of pace has helped improve their attention in school.

"Being online can give you more freedom in your life to do what you want because you're not in D.C. all the time," junior Jordan Paladini said.

### West Coast road trip

Paladini headed out west from his home in New Jersey earlier this month to visit his brother and sister-in-law in Park City, Utah.

The trio headed to Cheyenne, Wyoming, for a drive-in concert and finally hopped over the border to nearby Colorado for more outdoor adventures, he said. Paladini said they hiked the Unitas mountain range in Utah, made fresh juices out of vegetables and fruits

from local farmer's markets and explored several hiking trails if they had the time.

He added that the outdoor adventures with family allowed him to reset between classes, improving his focus on Zoom calls.

"It was actually easier to focus on my classes [while traveling] because I knew once my classes were over I could do really fun things that I usually can't do when I'm home [in New Jersey]," he said. "It kept me focused on the work."

### Heading up north

Up a dirt path in a small rural town in southern Maine, junior Sydney Horlbeck and four of her GW friends are staying in a log cabin until early October.

Spotty WiFi slightly hampered online classes, but she said the group has stayed in good spirits by hiking and reconnecting with one another. She said the group hiked up Peary Mountain, which led to a "breathtaking" view 500 feet above the region.

Horlbeck said she enjoys being with friends because she hasn't spent time with them in months, and the getaway makes her life feel like it's back to normal.

"It's nice to be somewhere where, half of the time, we don't have to think about coronavirus unless



SOPHIA YOUNG | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR  
Students say now that classes aren't keeping them in D.C., they've got the time to explore the rest of the country and even locations abroad.

we're putting on our mask to go to the grocery store," she said.

### Swapping cities

Senior Jessica Miller and her roommates didn't want to be blindsided with another short-notice announcement to go home. She said her roommate suggested embarking on a "semester abroad" – but in the United States.

Miller and two of her friends picked Toledo, Ohio,

because one of the trio was from the region and could tour apartments to rent before the other two arrived. All three live together in an apartment in the city while working at a nearby chiropractor's office.

She and her two roommates make use of an empty conference room in an office building where her roommate's father works to complete their online classes. She said living in Toledo is cheaper than living in D.C.,

allowing them to take more road trips and shop.

"Being in D.C., spending all that money and having to worry more about social distancing just did not seem worth it to me," Miller said.

### Sort of back home

Junior Zena Osman headed from Boston to Egypt – where her family is originally from – for the semester. She said she lives with her father, mother, sister and grandparents in Cairo.

She said her only obstacle in taking online classes is the six-hour time difference. When she isn't waking up in the early hours of the morning to attend student organization meetings or watch lectures, Osman said she likes to go to the beach or try local street food.

"As nice as it is being in D.C., it's a very fast-paced lifestyle," Osman said. "I usually feel more stressed there, which makes it nice to be in Cairo even though it's a pretty unconventional and crazy time to be a college student."

### Cross-country road trip

Senior Arielle Jordan is gearing up for a solo cross-country road trip in her family's SUV during which she will drive through 15 states, starting in Virginia and ending in Tennessee.

She said she plans to stop at eight states before heading to Florida – where she lives – for Thanksgiving. At each of the eight states she will actually stop in, Jordan said she will camp or stay in Airbnbs close to family or friends.

"It's a little nerve-racking to go alone and know how things will change in each state and be monitoring their COVID protocol and guidelines, but I'm also trying to make the most of it and take classes and balance it all," Jordan said.

## Students find new ways to ring in 21st birthdays during pandemic

ANNA BOONE  
CULTURE EDITOR

DIEGO MENDOZA  
CONTRIBUTING CULTURE EDITOR

Senior Erin Grossmann was planning to hit the club on her 21st birthday in May, but the COVID-19 pandemic threw her plans out.

Instead, she invited 20 of her friends to a birthday party on Zoom, where they answered Kahoot questions about Grossmann like "What cocktail would Erin NOT drink?" She said while it was nice to see her friends, the party lasted about 45 minutes because it was difficult to keep her friends engaged.

Grossmann is one of hundreds of juniors and seniors who recreated the club scene in their backyard, living room and on Zoom to celebrate their first year of legal drinking. Students said the unexpected twist to their birthday allowed them to get creative with parties, hosting small get-togethers and setting up makeshift bars in their home.

"It wasn't obviously the one I wanted, but I think people really made an effort to make it special," Grossman said.

### Club in the living room

Senior Lindsey Kalamasz was close to accepting the boring fate of her birthday when her roommates surprised her with a lively "club" in the living room of her home in

D.C.

At midnight on the day of her birthday in May, she said her two roommates coaxed her into her living room, which was transformed into a full bar complete with drinks like mojitos and margaritas. They hung a 21st birthday sign across the room, and a roommate pretended to be a bouncer and checked her ID, she said.

"I knew we were going to do something [to celebrate] but I didn't really realize what they had planned, they were being secretive and sketchy," she said.

### Beer in the basement

Senior Olivia Eckstein spent 14 days quarantining in her boyfriend's home after a spring break trip to Mexico in March. One of those days just happened to be her 21st birthday.

Eckstein said she put on one of her favorite dresses and waited until midnight to FaceTime her family. Eckstein said her boyfriend's mom baked the couple a chocolate cake and left it at the top of the stairs, and she drank a beer to mark the occasion.

"We really had no contact with anyone," she said.

### Italian cuisine and alcoholic drinks

Senior Sam Rivere celebrated his 21st with Italian food and drinks at his new off-campus residence

in Adams Morgan last month.

Rivere added that while he drank his father's gift of Fireball whiskey, turning 21 is "overrated" because most college students have already been drinking since freshman year. Had the pandemic not halted plans, Rivere said that he would have invited friends to a "drunch," a brunch complete with mimosas.

"I was just happy to spend the time with my friends, my parents and my girlfriend," he said. "That's what really matters."

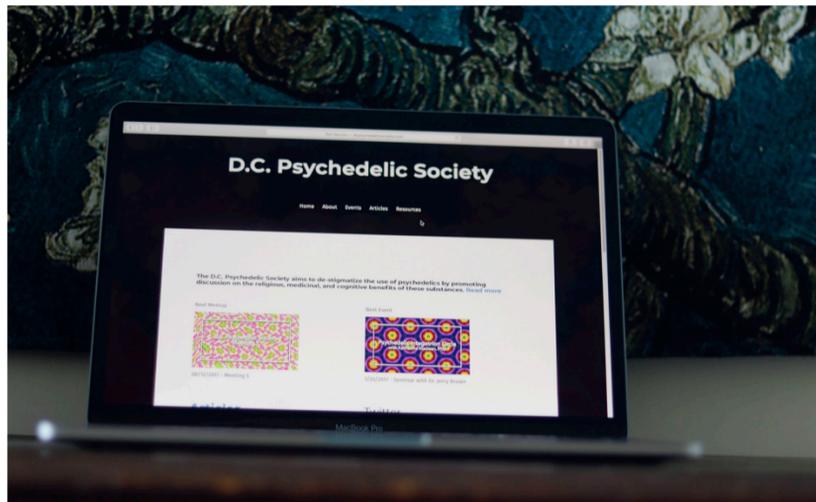
### A low-key night in

Senior Liz Irons isn't "much of a drinker" and didn't have big plans for her birthday, but her friends and family compensated with cake and appetizers.

Irons said she was visiting her friend in D.C. for the three weeks around her birthday last month. She said her mom delivered a cake to her friend's place, and they went to another apartment to celebrate later that day with carrot cake cupcakes, a charcuterie board and a couple of drinks.

Irons added that she discovered she likes the taste of whiskey on her birthday when her friend whipped up an Old Fashioned for her.

"I didn't expect to like whiskey in any way, but I did like it," she said. "So that was something I learned from my 21st."



CAMILLE DESANTO | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR  
For Melissa Lavasani, who proposed the ballot initiative, psychedelics – or plant medicine, as it's sometimes known – helped her overcome postpartum depression.

## D.C. activists hope to lessen law enforcement priority of psychedelics

CLARA DUHON  
STAFF WRITER

This November's election will be significant for many reasons, one of the lesser-known being an initiative to make psychedelics the lowest law enforcement priority in D.C.

D.C. residents will vote this year on Initiative 81, which would not decriminalize psychedelics completely but would make law enforcement "among the lowest law enforcement priorities." Advocates of the initiative said D.C. could be at the "forefront" of helping people who are disproportionately struggling with mental health issues by lessening the legal blow of the drug.

Melissa Lavasani, who proposed Initiative 81 and spokesperson for Decriminalize Nature DC, said the use of "plant medicine," a term commonly used instead of "psychedelics," helped address her postpartum depression and can help many communities struggling with PTSD.

The initiative comes shortly after Denver's successful campaign to decriminalize hallucinogenic mushrooms and legislation that decriminalized several psychedelics in Santa Cruz, California.

Lavasani said the initiative is the first step in creating "safe spaces" for people to feel comfortable talking about their trauma and to have "honest conversations" about plant medicine. She said the initiative is aimed at "educating" the D.C. community and its leaders about the effects of psychedelics,

which include treating anxiety and depression.

"The psychedelic space is handicapped by the fact that Americans were fed a lot of really negative propaganda against psychedelics," Lavasani said.

Lavasani said even though she and her husband had "amazing" health care and security nets, she was still close to losing her life to postpartum depression. She said the initiative would be the first step in providing the D.C. community with "long-lasting" help like how psychedelics helped her battle depression.

"We were in a terrible mental health crisis before the pandemic," Lavasani said. "But after this pandemic passes at some point in the near future, hopefully, we're going to have to deal with the aftermath of this."

Lavasani said mental health resources like therapy are "not-accessible" for people in low-income communities, including those in the District. She said the U.S. health care system needs "a lot of work" in improving accessibility and empathy, and the initiative will aid those who lack access to adequate health care.

"Poverty is a real issue," Lavasani said. "And it's not just being poor, it's not just providing housing for people, you've got to heal the trauma that people are experiencing in their daily life."

Lia Kuduk, an organizer for Decriminalize Nature DC and a graduate from GW Law, said using psychedelics helped them reach a new "understanding" of their gender identity. They

said their experience with psychedelics helped them "resolve" their childhood trauma, like hormone conversion therapy.

"I was experiencing really severe episodes of anxiety and depression that I really just could not explain until I got these certain insights through experiences with entheogens," Kuduk said.

Kuduk said the initiative, if passed, would signal that the public is looking for the D.C. Council to move toward legalizing and setting up a framework for access to these substances, considering their "high therapeutic potential."

Guy Ginsberg, a recent graduate who worked on a minidocumentary surrounding the ballot initiative, said the question of whether to decriminalize psychedelics or not is a question of "human right." He said someone who wants to explore nature through psychedelics should have access to them without legal retribution.

He said fear of punishment for using drugs can be "debilitating" and halt people's "exploration process" of the drug altogether. Ginsberg, who said he has used psychedelics, said exploring these drugs allows humans to better "integrate" with nature.

"The question over one's right to ingest plant medicines – psilocybin, ayahuasca and ibogaine to name a few – is not truly the question we are being asked," Ginsberg said in an email. "The question truly is this: should each one of us have the right to explore? Should I be allowed to punish you for your curiosity?"



SABRINA GODIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR  
For many students, their 21st birthday is a big milestone. Find out how some students celebrated the event in quarantine this year.



**MEN'S WATER POLO**  
vs. Salem  
Sept. 22, 2019  
Men's water polo notched an 11-goal victory, its largest of the season.



**SAILING**  
at Hatch Brown  
Sept. 17, 2017  
Sailing took No. 8 out of a 20-team field as part of a three-tournament weekend.

## Sailor works with athletic department to improve LGBTQ inclusivity

EMILY MAISE  
SPORTS EDITOR

Senior sailor John DeRuff is working to improve inclusivity efforts for LGBTQ fans, student-athletes and coaches.

DeRuff worked this summer with Athlete Ally, an organization that aims to boost inclusivity for members of the LGBTQ community by evaluating athletic department policy and drafting reform. Over the summer, he helped the athletic department write a fan code of conduct, sexual misconduct policy and policy regarding transgender and gender-nonconforming student-athlete participation.

"Since publishing my coming out story on Out Sports exactly a year ago, I've been feeling more compelled to use the voice I have as an athlete and at a large school like GW to make some change in areas that I feel tied to, like athletic departments," DeRuff said.

DeRuff joined the organization's research team to create the 2020 Athletic Equality Index, which allots points to schools' athletic departments based on their nondiscrimination policies, LGBTQ inclusive fan code of conduct and pro-

LGBTQ equality campaign or statement. Each school receives a number out of 100.

Researchers like DeRuff were instructed to parse through schools' conduct handbooks, policy manuals and other campus resources to find the outlined policies and practices – including that of GW's. He said the University scored a 25 out of 100 because its policies aren't readily available on the athletic department website.

"I took it in stride, but it was a little embarrassing because GW would have received, with what was already online, a 25 out of 100, which would have put us in like 11th place in the A-10 conference," DeRuff said.

DeRuff said he contacted Athletic Director Tanya Vogel and Associate Athletics Director of Internal Operations John Square shortly after researching the department to discuss drafting policy changes. He said Square connected him with Sarah Vollaro, the senior program associate of student-athlete development, to draft new policy proposals based on successful practices from other schools.

After looking at the athletic department's low score, DeRuff said he

took action to remedy the three "big" policy areas the department fell short in – a fan code of conduct, policy accommodating to transgender student-athletes and sexual misconduct policy.

DeRuff said fans at GW sporting events were previously held to a conduct standard when attending games at home venues like the Smith Center but until this summer that standard was unknown. The new policy outlines prohibited actions, like homophobic or transphobic actions, that can result in a fan's, coach's, athlete's or officials' removal from the venue.

Even though GW was the first Division I school to have an openly transgender basketball player in its program, DeRuff said the school did not have a formal policy on transgender or gender-nonconforming student-athletes.

DeRuff said GW wanted to "lead the way" when drafting a policy to accommodate transgender and gender nonconforming athletes. The department's new policy seeks to create a "safe, inclusive and welcoming" environment that aligns with NCAA rules for student-athletes who

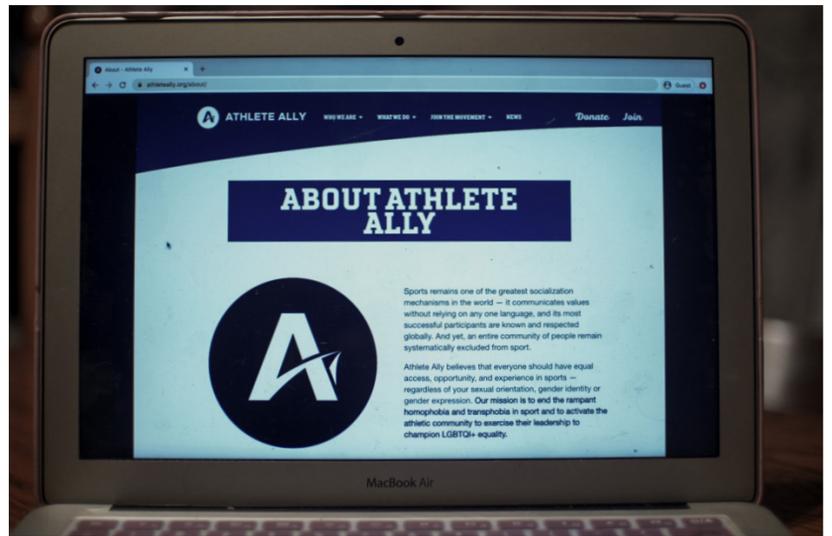


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SABRINA GODIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR  
The athletic department's sexual misconduct policy now applies to fans and anyone associated with the department, thanks to one athlete's efforts.

identify as transgender, the policy states.

The athletic department's sexual misconduct policy lists seven prohibited forms of conduct, defines terms like sexual harassment and domestic violence, links to Title IX resources and provides both confidential and nonconfidential resources to report sexual misconduct. The policy was extended to apply to fans

and anyone associated with the athletic department, DeRuff said.

DeRuff added that the athletic department should implement other educational initiatives, like a diversity and inclusion training. He said most athletic departments have an inclusion training for student-athletes and staff, but he would like to see the training expanded to include

topics like learning cultural bias.

"If we continue to lead the field in this and actively seek to be the most educated, inclusive department there is, fellow athletic departments within DC., like with Georgetown, American, Gallaudet, those schools are going to follow and that just broadens the reach and our impact," he said.



FILE PHOTO BY OLIVIA ANDERSON

Redshirt junior forward Neila Luma will participate in the program alongside three of her teammates.

## Women's basketball players join A-10 programs in push for social justice

EMILY MAISE  
SPORTS EDITOR

Women's basketball is teaming up with squads across the Atlantic 10 to fight for social justice.

Redshirt junior forward Neila Luma, redshirt sophomore forward Mayowa Taiwo, sophomore guard Essence Brown and graduate student guard Jasmine Whitney are joining other A-10 athletes in Athletes Driving Change, an organization focused on promoting equality through education and service. Athletes said they intend to organize panels on peaceful protesting and host a game recognizing the Black Lives Matter movement.

"A lot of times when you are an athlete, your voice is kind of silenced because they say, 'just dribble a ball,'" said Taiwo, who serves as a general body member. "But I think it's great that we're taking the steps to show that yes we are athletes, but outside of athletes we're all women, some of us are Black women, but some of us are allies."

Members plan to host panels with lawyers and local law enforcement on their rights and peaceful protests, Taiwo said. The organization will also connect teams with voter registration groups to provide resources on where to vote, how to vote and who's on the ballot, she said.

Women's basketball teams will also play in a game honoring BLM during the week of Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday in January, the website states. Student-athletes will wear black warm-up shirts with "Athletes Driving Change" written on the back and the school logo made from names of victims of police

brutality placed on the front of the shirt, the organization's website states.

"The goal of these games is to provide African-Americans and other minorities that play the sport of basketball a day of celebration," the website said. "These shirts will physically display the unity we all feel and the dedication to standing together to make change."

During Black History Month in February, Athletes Driving Change will donate \$1 for each free throw made and will urge the A-10 to match the donation. Donations will be put toward the Colin Kaepernick Know Your Rights Camp, which seeks to uplift the voices of minority communities through education and self-empowerment.

Luma, the vice president of Athletes Driving Change, said Dayton redshirt senior guard Araion Bradshaw reached out to at least one member of each team in the conference after protests broke out across the country earlier this summer to share ideas about how the league can unite and foster change for racial equality.

"Ultimately our mission is to create real change toward equality for all people," Luma said. "To do that, we're really just collaborating and finding different ways to engage in our communities across all of the college campuses in the A-10."

Head coach Jennifer Rizzotti said she was sent a list of "actionable items" Athletes Driving Change wanted to accomplish, like holding a game honoring BLM and partnering with a local school or community center to mentor children.

"Essentially we're here

to raise them up and support them," Rizzotti said. "We're here to publicize and promote as coaches and just let them be the voice and the mouthpiece for this organization because it really is their creation and their baby."

Outside of Athletes Driving Change, the squad has been active in promoting equality, releasing statements, raising awareness for social justice and creating action plans after the death of George Floyd and shooting of Jacob Blake. The team also attended the March on Washington last month.

The team has been holding conversations about advocacy and racial equality since June and have shared books and movies about racial equality with one another, Rizzotti said.

She added that an assistant coach told each player to research a monument or building in D.C. that is significant to Black history. The team will compile each location into a pamphlet for visiting teams to explore, she said.

Rizzotti said her team has spent the last few months reflecting on their individual backgrounds and implicit biases and learning how to have "uncomfortable conversations." She said she's "proud" of her group for the passion they've shown in advocating for racial equality.

"We've made it clear that this isn't really an opinion," Rizzotti said. "People's rights and equality is not an opinion, and I feel like our team is very passionate about fighting for what's right and standing for what's right and using their platform and their voices in the right way."

## Top GW sports moments: Men's rowing reaches highest-ever ranking

ROMAN BOBEK  
STAFF WRITER

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

### No. 5: Varsity Eight enters National Championship with highest ranking in program history

The 2008-09 men's rowing team charged into the Intercollegiate Rowing Association National Championships with a No. 12 ranked Varsity Eight boat – the highest ranking in program history.

Led by head coach Greg Myhr, the Colonials finished No. 15 in the nation – their highest finish in the program's 53-year history. The year also marked the first time the program became a permanent member of the Eastern Association of Rowing Colleges, a league boasting several national champions of past years.

The Colonials opened their fall season on a high note at the Occoquan Chase Regatta, placing first and third in the Open Men's Eight division.

Later in October, the Colonials finished No. 20 at the Head of the Charles Regatta, an international competition that saw the Colonials rowing against college competition and national teams. Among college teams, the Colonials placed No. 14.

Despite surpassing several quicker teams due to time penalties, the Colonials posted improved raw times that boded well for the remainder of the season. Following this performance, the

Colonials finished No. 15 at the Princeton Chase Regatta, and its freshmen boats nabbed third at a regatta in Charlottesville, Virginia, to cap off the fall season.

After a five-month competition hiatus, the Colonials kicked off the spring season in dramatic fashion by taking down Pennsylvania by less than a second to hold onto the McCausland Challenge Cup. The team then returned to the Potomac to finish in the middle of a 12-team field at the GW Invitational Regatta.

But the now-No. 17 ranked Colonials bounced back to rout Georgetown and Rutgers to win the George Cup for the first time since 2005. After springing ahead to an early lead, the Colonials finished with a healthy margin of four seconds above the Hoyas and 10 seconds over the Scarlet Knights.

The Colonials staved off Pennsylvania to finish fourth in the preliminary heats of the EARC Eastern Sprints to advance to the Petite Final for the first time in GW history. The Colonials finished third ahead of Dartmouth, Navy and MIT to capture ninth overall.

As a result, the Colonials earned an automatic bid to the IRA National Championships. Prior to the sprints, the Colonials had won a duel over Dartmouth and narrowly lost to No. 10 Boston by just 1.1 seconds.

After taking third in the preliminary heats, the Colonials managed to qualify for the repechage race against Pennsylvania and Dartmouth in the hopes of qualifying for the top-two semifinal races.

Despite coming hard off the line and securing an early lead, Dartmouth charged ahead, leaving GW in its wake.

The Colonials took second place in the fourth semifinal, finishing just behind Princeton to advance to the third level final but missing a top-two qualifying spot.

GW started the final race strong and managed to keep itself neck-and-neck with Princeton. The Colonials could not keep pace with the Tigers for long and slid behind into second.

With 200 meters left in the race, Navy stormed ahead and seized the second-place finish. Despite finishing third, the Colonials still saw themselves ahead of Oregon, Gonzaga and San Diego to end the day with a time of 6:13.231.

Though the Colonials came up short, they established themselves as a national contender and brought the half-century-old program to new frontiers, laying the groundwork for a program on the rise. Myhr left the team after the 2008-09 season to take a job at Pennsylvania, and Mark Davis took over the program.

Under Davis, the squad took just five years to capitalize on the program's momentum and secure a No. 14 national finish. Five years later, GW would reach new heights again, nabbing a No. 13 overall finish in 2019.

After the 2020-21 season concludes under new head coach Eric Gehrke, men's rowing will no longer play at the varsity level but has the option to compete in the EARC as a club team.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO  
In the 2008-09 season, the men's rowing team jumped to new heights with a No. 15 finish in the Intercollegiate Rowing Association National Championships.