

# The GW Hatchet

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## Faculty Senate committee recommends LeBlanc censure

**ZACH SCHONFELD**  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

The Faculty Senate's appointment, salary and promotion policies committee recommended late last week that senators censure University President Thomas LeBlanc for his hiring of Heather Swain.

The senate directed the ASPP committee last month to obtain a "full and complete accounting" of the Swain hiring process from LeBlanc in private, amid concerns he may not be able to legally share details publicly, and advise the senate if they should vote to censure LeBlanc. LeBlanc answered all the committee members' questions during a private meeting on Sept. 25 and proposed a standard vetting process for vice presidential hires that includes faculty input, according to a committee report made public late last week.

LeBlanc has apologized for hiring Swain, who rescinded her offer to serve as the University's vice president for communications and marketing following widespread criticism for her role in the Larry Nassar case at Michigan State University.

LeBlanc's proposed vetting process, which will be discussed at the senate meeting Friday, states that officials will consult the senate's executive committee on all future vice presidential hires. The executive committee will also nominate a faculty representative to sit on the search committee.

Outside firms involved in the search will vet candidates through contacting references and examining news articles and social media, the proposal states. LeBlanc said last month the University came to "an agreement" and did not pay any money to the outside search firm used to hire Swain.

Members of the University's search committee will also conduct reference checks, and a "trusted third party" will vet candidates through criminal record, civil case, credit, degree verification and driver's license checks as permitted by law in addition to press and social media searches.

The University president will personally contact the last two presidents or leaders for whom all finalist candidates worked before making an offer, the proposal states.

The ASPP committee endorsed the vetting proposal, and the full senate is set to debate the censure resolution Friday.



FILE PHOTO BY ALEXANDER WELLING | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights reaffirmed her support for University President Thomas LeBlanc and characterized the SA's push for a no-donate pledge as "incomprehensible" at a Board meeting Friday.

## TRUSTEES BACK LEBLANC Speights affirms support for LeBlanc amid SA's call for resignation

**ZACH SCHONFELD**  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights defended University President Thomas LeBlanc at a Board meeting Friday, sparring with the Student Association president over his executive order calling for LeBlanc's resignation.

SA President Howard Brookins' order called on the University community to suspend donations to GW until LeBlanc is replaced, and the SA Senate subsequently passed two resolutions Wednesday supporting LeBlanc's resignation while abrogating Brookins' demand to halt donations to all GW funds. Speights lauded LeBlanc's leadership throughout the meeting, marking her first public statement addressing hundreds of faculty, staff and students' demands for new leadership.

"As someone charged with leading a group dedicated to promoting the general welfare of students, encouraging a no-donate pledge is just incomprehensible to me and is just not something I would expect a leader in your position to do," Speights told Brookins during the meeting.

Speights said LeBlanc has demonstrated "strong" leadership and praised his decisions to allow those unable to return home to continue living on campus, avoid a University-wide salary cut and move the semester online.

"Leading a dynamic, diverse University community with many differing and strong opinions is challenging in the best of times, and these have been among the most difficult, challenging times we have ever faced," she said. "The Board of Trustees appreciates and supports the outstanding work you and your leadership team have done to navigate circumstances unlike any we have ever experienced before."

Speights added that Brookins' executive order, which cited GW's low alumni giving rate compared to its peers, left out key philanthropic accomplishments, like high total fundraising levels since LeBlanc's arrival at GW. Donors have committed more than \$57 million toward student aid during LeBlanc's first three years at the University, she said.

"I'm most disappointed because both the executive order and the resolution contain a number of inaccurate and misleading statements," Speights said.

Speights said recent SA actions have caused "divi-

siveness" at GW, and she encouraged student collaboration with LeBlanc.

Brookins said in an interview that LeBlanc and administrators have already created division and a "fractured relationship" with members of the University community.

"It has been documented in different speeches that I have given, in different clashes with the administration," he said. "I would like to point out that the Student Association is trying to unite the GW community because most students agree on this issue. Students do not feel that President LeBlanc is the best fit for this University."

At the senate meeting Wednesday, senators asked Brookins to sign a new executive order specifying that members of the GW community should cease donations to the President's Fund for Excellence, a discretionary fund overseen by LeBlanc, rather than call for a blanket no-donate pledge.

After speaking with SA senators, Brookins said the pledge has been updated to only discourage donations to the GW general fund to avoid the effort affecting financial aid levels.

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## Most graduate, undergraduate students support fall pass/fail policy: officials

**ISHANI CHETTRI**  
REPORTER

**JAYDE LYON**  
REPORTER

Officials said the majority of undergraduate and graduate students support adopting Pass/No Pass or Credit/No Credit policies this fall.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said 96 percent of undergraduate students and 82 percent of graduate students indicated support for the respective policies in a survey sent out two weeks ago. She said if the pass/fail or Credit/No Credit policy were to be implemented this fall, the parameters for students to select that option would need to change from its implementation last semester, when anyone could opt out of a letter grade.

"Even with your successes in online learning, we understand that you are facing challenges during this unprecedented time, and we want you to know that we are always here to support you and listen to your thoughts about how the semester is progressing," Provost Brian Blake said in an email to students about the pass/fail policy.

Nosal said officials have received "hundreds of responses" to the surveys that were sent out last month. She said officials have considered whether implementing the pass/fail or Credit/No Credit policy this fall will address the challenges to "good academic performance" during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The conditions and course preparation leading up to the remote fall semester were different than the course preparation that took place in the middle of the spring semester, when we went remote very suddenly," Nosal said in an email.

She added that more than 300 professors took part in workshops to help them navigate technology over the summer, and administrators have implemented "significant software and technology enhancements" to improve online learning.

Following the move to online classes in March, officials implemented an optional pass/fail policy for undergraduate students. Faculty said they did not change how they conducted classes despite the switch to remote learning.

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## Disproportionate access to resources creates health disparities: experts

**SEJAL GOVINDARAO**  
REPORTER

The majority-White area around GW has sustained one of the lowest coronavirus death rates among D.C.'s neighborhoods, especially compared to other areas of the city that are majority Black.

The city's coronavirus case data shows that a quarter people who have died from COVID-19 have been Black, despite making up just less than half of the city's population. District officials and public health experts said the pandemic is unequally hitting marginalized communities because they face disproportionate access to essential services like health care and education.

"It's not an easy thing when you think about all of the realities that poor people face simply because they are poor, economically poor," At-large D.C. Council member David Grosso said. "This is not easily solvable. The COVID emergency has actually kind of ripped off the band-aid and shown us all what the reality is for so many of our poor residents."

The majority of cases are concentrated in the northeastern, southeastern and southwestern parts of the city, where Black residents make up half or more of the population. Black residents constitute just over half of total positive COVID-19 cases in the District, and Hispanic residents comprise about a quarter of city-wide cases, according to the District's COVID-19 website.

Ward 2's 1,000 positive cases are the second-lowest number of positive cases of any ward, just below Ward 3, which logged 770 cases as of Sunday, according to the website. Foggy Bottom has tracked about 100 positive cases as of Sunday, placing the neighborhood in the bottom 10 neighborhoods in terms of positive coronavirus cases, the data show.

Ward 4 has been hit the hardest with COVID-19 cases, logging almost 3,000 positive cases as of Sunday, according to the website. Wards 5, 7 and 8 recorded just more than 2,000 cases each by Sunday, the website indicates.

Grosso said Black and Latino residents tend to work in essential services, like health care and food service, which have remained open throughout the pandemic. He said city officials have directed resources, like personal protective equipment and small business support, to essential workers in the city.

He added that many residents of color live in high density housing units, like apartments and public housing, that could lead to an increased risk of coming in contact with the virus.

"They have to show up to work, and they are our grocery line workers and working in our hospitals and other places where they couldn't actually isolate themselves away from the virus like our more affluent White residents who tend to have more office jobs too," Grosso said.

He said marginalized

communities experience disproportionate access to transportation and grocery stores, another reason why the virus has hit those communities particularly hard.

He said government officials have taken strides to mitigate these disparities by prohibiting evictions and offering support for businesses who have been hurt financially amid the pandemic.

"We've provided more and more and more personal protective equipment, the PPE, for essential workers in the city," Grosso said. "We've also tried to keep businesses from closing by supporting them. We've also prohibited evictions."

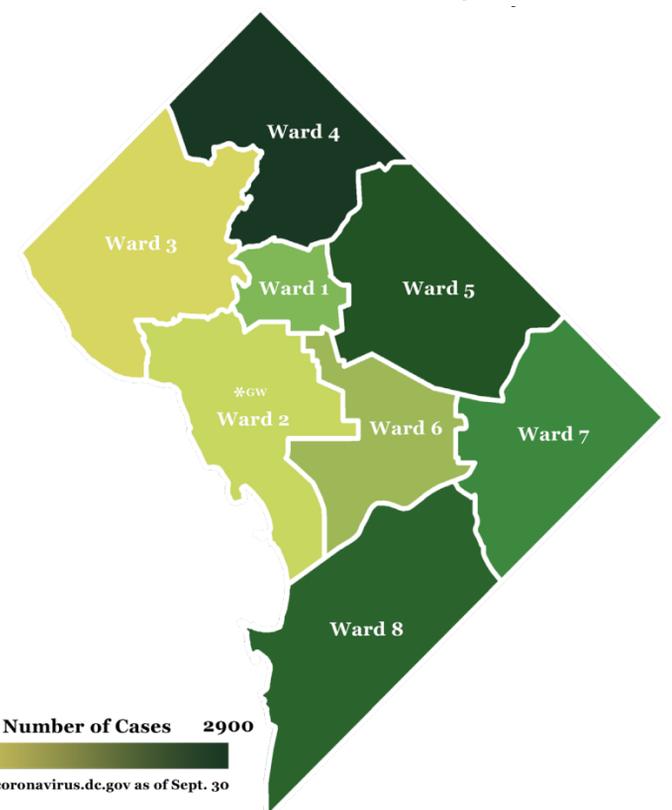
The Council passed a complete eviction ban late last month, preventing landlords from ending rent agreements.

Grosso said some marginalized communities tend to lack trust in the health care system, which he said could be a result of not having the educational resources to navigate the system. He said city officials have publicized public health information through emails, newsletters and social media platforms, but it's still an uphill battle to build trust and connect residents with a primary care physician.

"We also know that the education of folks has been something that we have not fully accomplished, and there's huge disparities in our achievements at education and that lack of education," Grosso said.

Alison Reeves, a spokesperson for the D.C. Depart-

Positive COVID-19 cases in D.C. by ward



ILENA PENG | CONTRIBUTING WEB DEVELOPER

ment of Health, said Mayor Muriel Bowser is working on private sector partnerships, like a new Howard University hospital and a GW-run hospital at the St. Elizabeth's campus in Southeast D.C., which aim to improve equity throughout the District.

Public health experts said racism is deeply rooted in

public health issues throughout the United States and government officials should take strides to address the issue when devising solutions to the coronavirus pandemic.

Cities like Milwaukee and New York have seen similar racial disparities in their coronavirus case

data, according to a New York Times report from this summer. The same report revealed that nationwide, Black and Latino residents are three times more likely to contract the virus than White residents.

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# News

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## THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

### P&P LIVE: PETE BUTTIGIEG - "TRUST: AMERICA'S BEST CHANCE"

Oct. 5 • 8 p.m. EDT • Free  
Politics and Prose Bookstore will offer the first 100 GW students who RSVP free admission to a conversation with the former presidential candidate about his new book, "TRUST."

### WHAT DID WE LEARN ABOUT NEWS AND PROTEST IN SUMMER 2020?

Oct. 8 • 6 p.m. EDT • Free  
Join a panel of experts from CNN, the Los Angeles Times and more to discuss the critical role media have played in the way protests are covered, organized and discussed.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

October 2, 1994

Former College Republicans Chair Carolyn Hall resigned from her position amid impeachment charges over an inquiry into misappropriation of organization membership dues.



FILE PHOTO BY LILLIAN BAUTISTA | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

Public health school researchers have used federal funding to strengthen the country's response to COVID-19 and study its effects.

## Milken has taken in \$2 million in grants to study COVID-19

RACHEL ANNEX  
STAFF WRITER

TESSA CONRADY  
REPORTER

Researchers in the Milken Institute School of Public Health have received more than \$2 million in grants from the National Institutes of Health to fund COVID-19 research throughout the pandemic.

Since the start of the health crisis, Milken researchers have been using grants they've received to develop at-home COVID-19 tests and launch clinical trials for a potential vaccine. Milken officials said the school's public health researchers engage in a variety of disciplines, like epidemiology and biostatistics, that play a role in the solutions to the pandemic.

Adnan Hyder, the senior associate dean for research at the public health school, said in addition to the funding already received from the NIH, "millions more" applications for federal funding are under review. He added that several institutes within the school have directed their existing resources to support COVID-19 research.

"In many cases, COVID-19 research aims to better understand the virus, the way it is spread, how it triggers severe illness and how we can prevent it," Hyder said in an email. "The goal of such research ultimately is to prevent adverse health effects from this virus."

Using funds allocated to the public health school, researchers have invested time in a variety of public health issues regarding the pandemic, like investigating the connection between COVID-19 mortality and obesity and administering a health care worker survey about experiences responding to the pandemic.

GW has also set aside an internal fund for research that offered researchers grants between \$5,000 and \$25,000, which they could apply to between April 17

and June 1. The proposals were subject to an unusually quick approval process and an eight-page limit, according to the University's research website.

Lynn Goldman, the dean of the public health school, said Milken officials have been evaluating research proposals to determine how many resources they need to conduct their work.

"As public health researchers, we broadly frame our work around all phases of pandemic preparedness response – identifying actions to protect health prior to, during and in the period of recovery from a pandemic or any other disaster," she said in an email. "We look broadly at many factors, including biological, social, behavioral and environmental, that can be important in preventing diseases like COVID-19."

Goldman said Milken's Office of Research Excellence tracks potential research projects and notifies faculty of any project that may be a good fit for them. She said the most successful opportunities for researchers have been when they can use research to better understand the pandemic and apply knowledge to address a specific problem.

"For example, some projects aim to better understand a disease like COVID-19 or pave the way for a treatment or vaccine," she said. "Others aim to address a problem, such as the lack of personal protective equipment for frontline health care workers."

Academic research experts said many universities have accelerated their research proposal processes to prioritize addressing the coronavirus pandemic. Despite universities' larger budget cuts, they said academic research teams have remained largely unaffected by cutbacks, given that direct research funding has primarily come from government institutions.

Moshe Levi, the interim dean for research at

Georgetown University, said Georgetown had an expedited application process for internal funding and received 30 proposals for research within a week after they notified faculty of the fund.

Levi said because funding from government institutions is already set in stone, university layoffs and funding cuts for faculty are the only factors that might financially inhibit research.

"If you have unfunded faculty – the university gives you money for travel, to go to scientific meetings, for this or that – that's affected, but otherwise, research in most universities is really funded by external grants, not internal grants, including George Washington," Levi said.

Levi said Georgetown's COVID-19 research has not come at the expense of other areas of research at least for now. He said if research-funding institutions like the NIH do not see increases in their budgets, funding for COVID-19 research will eventually cut into opportunities for research in other fields.

"Within NIH or other funding agencies, sometimes they put money into COVID-19 research, and if their overall budget does not increase, that comes at the expense of other areas, which is really dangerous," Levi said.

Meredeth Cole, the communications manager for the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of Virginia, said UVA's grant proposal process has also been accelerated to more rapidly address COVID-19. She said UVA has awarded nearly \$3 million in grants in a significantly more "rapid" manner than the typical funding process.

"Seeing problems and coming up with solutions, and not in a way that's 'How much money can we make off of this?' but 'How can we share with others?'" she said. "And I think the generosity between academics has been tremendous during the pandemic."

## Officials pause culture initiative, end Disney Institute partnership

ZACH SCHONFELD  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS  
EDITOR

Officials are pausing University President Thomas LeBlanc's strategic initiative to improve institutional culture and have ended GW's partnership with the Disney Institute.

Soon after arriving at GW in August 2017, LeBlanc identified improving institutional culture as one of his five top priorities as University president. University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said administrators decided to end the Disney partnership and pause the initiative as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, but the "service priorities" of safety and care developed through the initiative continue to guide officials' decision-making.

Officials also began "preliminary" discussions with Gallup earlier this year to continue surveying employees, but Nosal said the discussions are halted due to the pandemic.

LeBlanc began taking steps to improve employee morale in 2018 by giving employees the full week off between Christmas and New Years Day and revamping employee orientation.

"When President LeBlanc first came to GW, he heard repeatedly about the need to address what many in our community viewed as a transactional culture that was challenging to navigate for our students, faculty and staff, and that negatively affected the student experience," Nosal said in an email. "Addressing these challenges was the objective of the culture initiative."

She declined to say when the partnership concluded.

Administrators started meeting regularly in April 2018 to define the current culture of GW and find short-term and long-term

improvements.

Almost six months later, officials partnered with the Disney Institute – a professional development company under the umbrella of the Disney corporation – to examine GW's employee culture through a survey to faculty and staff and focus-group interviews. The initial partnership's cost was estimated at roughly \$300,000, which LeBlanc said demonstrated the importance of the issue to him.

"I would start with the question, 'do we believe at GW, culture's an important issue?'" LeBlanc said when officials announced the partnership. "Well, everybody I've talked to said yes. Students said yes. Staff said yes. Faculty said yes. Alumni said yes. The trustees said yes."

But after the employee survey's release, some began raising concerns about its effectiveness, adding that the survey was "generic."

In January 2019, LeBlanc said the nearly 3,000 employee responses to the Disney assessment enabled administrators to pinpoint four top culture issues: inconsistent leadership, inefficient communication, poor service culture and lack of employee appreciation.

The next month, officials announced they would extend GW's contract with the Disney Institute for their guidance in mending the four top issues identified through the assessment.

Administrators subsequently created four cross-functional work teams, which each consisted of 10 faculty, staff and administrators, to manage the issue areas. Officials said the work teams made "wide-ranging" recommendations, including immediate changes like free employee access to the Lerner Health and Wellness Center during summer 2019 to long-term efforts

like an internal portal for faculty and staff.

As the groups were making recommendations, administrators finalized a new culture "framework," consisting of a common purpose statement, seven University-wide values and three ranked-service priorities: safety, care and efficiency. Officials held in-person training sessions open to all faculty and staff last fall to introduce the framework.

Officials asked employees in managerial roles to attend a training in September of 2019 delivered by the Disney Institute, while all other employees were encouraged to attend a training later that fall facilitated by a team of 25 faculty and staff, known as Our GW Service Ambassadors.

The trainings were met with mixed reviews from faculty, some of whom had previously expressed frustrations with the partnership, saying it was conceived as if GW was a corporation rather than a university. Officials have stressed that GW leadership is leading the culture initiative, and the Disney Institute has only provided guidance and support.

"It is important to note that while the University utilized guidance from the Disney Institute, the culture initiative was a GW initiative led by a leadership team of faculty and staff," said Nosal, the University spokesperson.

The total cost of the partnership between the Disney Institute and GW remains unknown. Nosal declined to say how much GW has paid the Disney Institute.

The move to end the Disney partnership comes as hundreds of faculty, staff and students have signed petitions and statements in recent weeks calling for LeBlanc's resignation, with many citing the partnership in their rationale.



FILE PHOTO BY SOPHIA YOUNG | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR

The University paused its culture initiative and ended its partnership with the Disney Institute.

## LeBlanc acknowledges rising tensions

From Page 1

"Students, staff, faculty and alumni are the lifeblood of this University," Brookins said. "I value the opinions of the true stakeholders of the University much higher than any donation because the reputation of the University stems from the people within and the experience that they have."

The senate resolution asks officials to include student, faculty and staff representatives on the search committee for a new University president. Some faculty raised concerns about representation on the search committee during LeBlanc's hiring process.

SA Sen. Gabriel Young, CCAS-U and a sponsor of the senate's resolution calling for

LeBlanc's resignation, declined to comment. SA Executive Vice President Brandon Hill did not return a request for comment.

At the Board meeting, LeBlanc acknowledged rising tensions, adding that he will continue to look for areas of agreement and engage students, faculty, staff and alumni.

"I know for some in our community, there have been strong disagreements with the actions that we have taken and with me personally," LeBlanc said at the meeting. "Being on a college campus with diverse opinions, that's not surprising. What I can tell you is that since I came here three years ago, I have focused my energy every day listening to everyone in our community and striving to do what is best for this University."

## Half of all undergraduate, third of graduate students used spring pass/fail policy: officials

YANKUN ZHAO  
STAFF WRITER

Officials said just more than half of all undergraduates and nearly a third of all graduate students took at least one class last semester as Pass/No Pass or Credit/No Credit.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said 50.8 percent of undergraduate students and 31.2 percent of graduate students took at least one class as pass/fail or Credit/No Credit. She said 96 percent of courses taken pass/fail by undergraduates resulted in course grades of "P" and 87.6 percent of courses taken Credit/No Credit by graduate students resulted in course grades of "CR."

Officials announced in

March that undergraduates would be able to take "most" classes as pass/fail after moving all classes to an online format. GW Law officials also moved all classes to the Credit/No Credit format last semester, and Nosal said officials from the School of Medicine and Health Sciences continued to assign letter grades.

Nosal said the remainder of students who did not receive a pass or credit grade who requested to take a class as pass/fail or Credit/No Credit received a "combination" of no pass grades, incompletes and withdrawals.

"In spring 2020, students were afforded the opportunity to see their grades and then pick-and-choose

which, if any, grades to replace with a P or NP," she said in an email. "In addition, the criteria for making the dean's list was relaxed for spring 2020."

She said officials saw a "sharp increase" in the number of students who were eligible for the dean's list last semester, which she said was a result of changes like the pass/fail and Credit/No Credit option and a more "relaxed" criteria to opt in to the pass/fail policy.

She said 47.4 percent of students made the Dean's List in spring 2020 compared to 25.9 percent in spring 2019. From fall 2018 to fall 2019, the percentage of students who made the Dean's List increased by 0.8 percentage points, she said.

Provost Brian Blake sent

out a survey to undergraduates and graduate students two weeks ago for feedback on whether officials should implement the policy again this semester, and officials said the majority of undergraduate and graduate students support adopting pass/fail and Credit/No credit policies this fall.

"There is agreement among the provost, deans and faculty that faculty should continue to be mindful of the continuing difficulties presented by the coronavirus, taking care to be flexible, supportive and understanding in working with students who want to remove a grade, request additional time to satisfy course requirements or take a leave of absence," Nosal said.

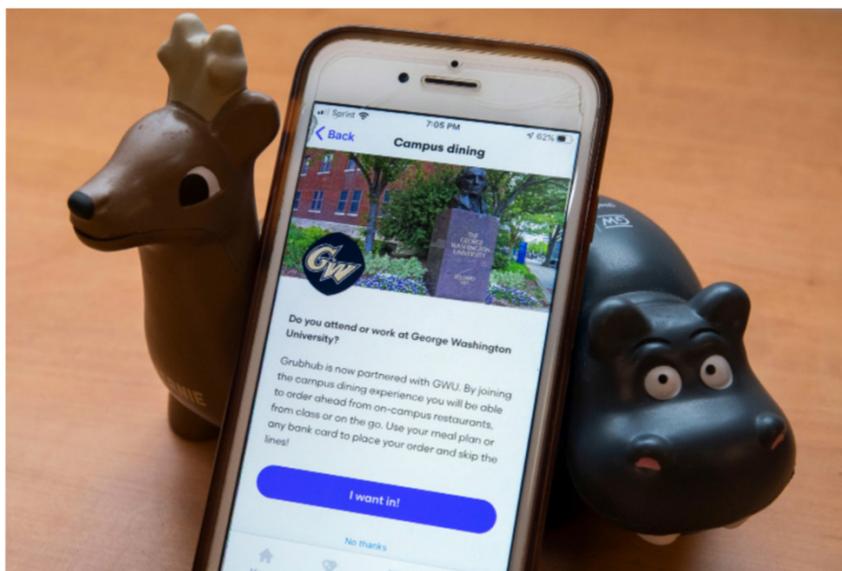


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GABRIELLE RHOADS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Students say administrators mischaracterized the University's partnership with Grubhub, which they say was advertised as free delivery but comes with several fees and restrictions.

## On-campus students struggle to afford 'contactless' delivery services

JARROD WARDWELL  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

When junior Diing Manyang tested positive for COVID-19 in early July, she depended on the University's food delivery service to scrape together meals while she was isolated in South Hall.

After ordering delivery straight to South Hall four times when she was sick and more than 10 times when she was living on campus during the summer, Manyang realized she was paying upward of \$30 for most meals and could no longer afford the service. Since the fall semester began, she's only ordered delivery twice and picked up groceries herself, struggling to pay off the costs she says are too expensive for a regular dining plan.

The University partnered with Grubhub this summer to offer students free delivery for a year through each student's GET accounts. But students living on campus this fall said despite the convenience of the service, officials have mischaracterized the costs of buying food through the program, restricting them from ordering meals cheaper than \$20 and attaching pricey delivery fees.

"If I had an option, I would have been doing delivery, but it's too expensive," Manyang said. "So I have to go in person to buy whatever I need."

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said officials organized delivery programs through partnerships with Grubhub, Whole Foods and Healthy Fresh Meals to offer students safe dining access when they're isolated on campus.

GW added Healthy Fresh Meals, which delivers pre-cooked meals, to its selection of GWorld vendors two years ago before starting delivery partnerships with Grubhub and Whole Foods this summer.

The Healthy Fresh deliv-

ery option allows students to use their GWorld to meal prep with "bulk family style proteins" and sides without a subscription to the company's service, according to GW Dining's website. The Whole Foods delivery service lets students fill out an online order form before deciding to pick up groceries or get delivery free of charge, the website states.

Each delivery service manages its own COVID-19 health and safety protocol with sanitation, personal protective equipment requirements and contact-free handoffs to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, Nosal said.

She added that officials who are updating students about GWorld delivery services during the pandemic are "pleased" with the reception from students on campus.

Junior Christian Zidouemba, who lives in South Hall and studies international business and international affairs, said he wasn't previously familiar with the Whole Foods and Healthy Fresh delivery options but ordered nine meals from Grubhub last month.

He said Grubhub would add a \$10 delivery fee for most orders, and if he wanted to use the app to purchase two meals in one day, he would often be paying \$60. Zidouemba said he's since stopped ordering Grubhub delivery because the attached fees were too expensive.

Zidouemba said officials should better communicate the new delivery programs so more students on campus would be inclined to use them. He said site coordinators who have maintained close contact with students living on campus this fall should send information about the delivery programs to the residents they supervise.

"That would be the best way because they've been doing a lot of reaching out to students so I think they would

be best fitted to do that job," he said.

Although the University's website promotes the Grubhub program as offering contact-free delivery, keeping six feet apart from delivery drivers is more complicated than advertised, Zidouemba said. Since drivers don't have access to residence halls, the only spot to drop off meals is outside the front door, where Zidouemba said someone once almost stole his meal moments before he stepped outside.

To ensure he receives each meal he pays for, he said he has to walk outside and physically grab his food from the driver.

Zidouemba said he's resorted to purchasing food in person from Whole Foods and local restaurants, where he feels comfortable during the pandemic as long as everyone wears PPE and keeps safe distance from each other.

Sophomore Emily Mosley, who transferred to GW this fall and studies international affairs, said she picks up groceries every week from Whole Foods, allowing her to meal prep without shopping through the entire store. Mosley said she can grab her groceries in a few minutes near the checkout area, which is sanitized.

Since she can stock up supplies from Whole Foods, Mosley said she avoids ordering from Grubhub more than once a week, where she often pays \$6 in delivery fees for each meal. Mosley said loading her GWorld card onto the delivery app makes payments simple, but she hasn't noticed any discount despite GW's claims stating that delivery would be free.

"I haven't noticed any massive discount or anything that I'm saving, and especially when delivery is something like \$6, you don't get a ton of savings off of Grubhub-ing one meal," she said.

## Teaching assistants struggle to find work-life balance during pandemic

SAMANTHA SERAFIN  
STAFF WRITER

Teaching assistants are experimenting with platforms like WebEx and Blackboard Collaborate to keep their students engaged with lessons during the remote semester.

Half a dozen teaching assistants who have worked as instructors in past semesters said they have "completely" readjusted their approach to teaching to help students learn and stay engaged while conducting sessions entirely virtual. TAs said they miss having personal interactions with their students and are struggling to maintain a healthy "work-life balance" because of the extra assistance their students need to navigate their classes virtually.

Second-year graduate student Marianna Fotakos, a TA for Sociocultural Anthropology, said she has had difficulty separating her TA responsibilities from her personal life and struggles to set boundaries with students who contact her outside of office hours.

She said she finds herself tuned into her computer answering students' emails nearly "every hour," adding that her in-person teaching was more engaging and she could dedicate more time to answering questions.

"We're all in this together," Fotakos said. "So I think that there's a lot of understanding on everyone's part with each other, trying to understand and be compassionate, because I think everyone's struggling with it. It's not just students - it's everyone. It's a big learning curve."

Fotakos said she separates her students into breakout groups on WebEx during discussion sections and encourages them to communicate with each other and form study circles. She said

other TAs in the anthropology department have implemented similar strategies to ease the teachers' workload outside of teaching hours.

"We want to be there, we want to support you, we want to answer your questions, but we also have to take a step back and realize that we don't have to be available all the time," she said.

Senior Abigail Sepich, a TA for Introduction to International Business, said her role as a TA has become more "administrative" because her discussion section is strictly for review of the material taught in class. She said when she was a TA last semester, she was actively involved in lectures by taking attendance, recording students' participation and answering questions.

Now that her section is not mandatory to attend, Sepich said her tasks are focused on setting up online sessions and helping students with technical issues.

Sepich said she doesn't mind her new role but said she is not a "tech expert" and feels less qualified to help students with technical issues than the course material itself. She said administrators offered courses for TAs on navigating Blackboard Collaborate Ultra throughout the summer, but it covered the platform's basics, which she had already learned.

"Before I would say it was a lot more of a teaching role," Sepich said. "Now, it's a lot more like being an administrative assistant."

Second-year graduate student Christiaan Bedrij-Arpa, a TA for Introduction to International Politics, said students attending his discussions ask more "technical" questions relating to terms mentioned in the textbook or in the professor's pre-recorded

lectures since they are unable to ask questions in class. He said he's been working closely with the course's professor to ensure the section runs smoothly and every student is following the course.

He said international students in his class watch his recorded discussion section and then email a written response to an assigned question about a discussion topic.

He said the course's professor is requiring students to participate in each discussion section to receive full participation credit so students are engaged in his section. He said the policy incentivizes students to ask questions, but students may be participating more because they can't talk to the professor directly.

"Now, somebody always has a question - we run past the end of class," Bedrij-Arpa said.

Third-year graduate student Michael Kaplan, a TA for Foundations of Anthropological Thought, said he wishes there was better communication between administrators and TAs about the University's Zoom licensing restrictions and whether TAs have access to their own premium account. He said he doesn't know if TAs have the same access to Zoom as professors so he has been using Blackboard Collaborate to hold his discussion sessions.

Kaplan said Collaborate only allows him to see a few students' faces, which makes it harder to gauge if students are engaged and paying attention. He said he is still "unfamiliar" with many of the students in his discussion sections because he is unable to see their faces.

"It's hard to feel like you're speaking into a void when you can't see anyone," Kaplan said.



SOPHIA YOUNG | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR

Teaching assistants say the pandemic has led to a reimagining of their role from a teaching one to an administrative one

## Fall pass/fail policy should be adjusted for special circumstances: experts

From Page 1

GW Law officials announced in March that law students would take all their courses for the spring semester on a Credit/No Credit grading scale, with a notation placed on transcripts indicating that administrators made the decision for public health reasons. Nosal said School of Medicine and Health Sciences officials continued to assign letter grades.

She said more than half of all undergraduates and nearly a third of all graduate students took at least one class as pass/fail or Credit/No Credit in the spring.

Nosal added that policies like undergraduate academic forgiveness, incomplete grades and

leaves of absence are available to assist students who are concerned about course performance.

"There is agreement among the provost, deans and faculty that faculty should continue to be mindful of the continuing difficulties presented by the coronavirus, taking care to be flexible, supportive and understanding in working with students who want to remove a grade, request additional time to satisfy course requirements or take a leave of absence," Nosal said.

Nosal said there might be "longer-term implications" for students who have transcripts with multiple semesters of binary grades because regular letter grades are traditionally required for competitive graduate pro-

grams, graduate funding opportunities and certain internships.

"We have also heard from schools and colleges that the student experience in courses sometimes was negatively affected due to students who had chosen P/NP CR/NC putting in less effort, which became especially noticeable in group projects," she said.

Nosal said schools and colleges have communicated that there are "potential challenges to equity" and complications with the implementation of the pass/fail and Credit/No Credit policy this year that could lead to "inconsistencies" across programs and grading scales.

She said if officials decide to implement the policy this semester, they would face a logistical

question of when GW would revert back to its normal grading policy.

Students launched a petition last week urging officials to extend the pass/fail policy to the fall semester due to the "tremendous challenges" students have faced this year. The petition, which has garnered more than 300 signatures, states that the policy would allow accommodations to be made during "unprecedented times."

Higher education experts said if the pass/fail policy is implemented this semester, it should be adjusted to address the varying circumstances students are facing this fall.

Ann Marcus, a professor of higher education and the director of the Steinhardt Institute of Higher Education Policy

at New York University, said the transition to online classes last spring saw "abrupt and often dramatic dislocation" for students who were forced to move out on short notice and faculty who were forced to teach online for the first time.

"At that point, there was a significant movement to say that all courses should become pass/fail for everyone," Marcus said in an email.

She said regardless of the policies and procedures that will be implemented for students' grades this semester, most students will not benefit from having "a few of pass/fails" on their transcripts for purposes like graduate school.

"I would favor a compromise - relaxing deadlines with the understanding that life is

definitely more challenging but not going as far as you did last spring," Marcus said.

Maximilian Schuster, an assistant professor of practice in the Department of Education Foundations, Organizations and Policy at the University of Pittsburgh, said while the letter grade system offers specific comments on a student's performance in a class, the pass/fail system doesn't provide students with the same individual feedback.

"As I think about the fall semester and knowing that every student is going to be in unique and different circumstances based on where they are situated, I don't know if taking a one-size-fits-all approach is necessarily the best course of action forward," Schuster said.

## COVID-19 racial disparities are a 'systemic' issue, experts say

From Page 1

Tyan Dominguez, a clinical professor of social work at the University of Southern California, said marginalized communities tend to lack trust in the health

care system because they have historically lacked access to health care and faced disparities in quality of care based on race.

"These are systemic issues, it's not a silver bullet solution and it's not something that is going

to be fixable overnight," Dominguez said. "It's a multi-pronged issue from the longstanding history, and I think it's going to take a multi-pronged approach and consistency in what responses are within the system."

Camara Jones, the former president of the American Public Health Association, said the national response to the pandemic has been focused on medical care, when pandemic response officials should treat it as a public health

issue.

She said paid sick leave, a universal basic income and a living minimum wage would help mitigate disparities in public health outcomes. She said investing in housing, green spaces and schools for commu-

nities of color would also help reduce public health disparities.

"There's no basis in the human genome for racial subspéciation," Jones said. "We know it's not a gene, but it's not even our choices."

# Enrollment in student health insurance drops slightly amid pandemic

MIRANDA NAZZARO  
REPORTER

Enrollment in GW's student health insurance plan dropped slightly this academic year as most students took classes off campus for the semester.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said 9,278 students waived the comprehensive Aetna student health plan compared to about 8,800 students last fall, an increase of about 5 percent this year and slight drop from 2018. Nosal said this year's data is not a "one-to-one" comparison to last year because online classes have changed some students' means of accessing health insurance.

"As an example, international students who are required to have a domestic-based insurance plan while living in the United States were able to opt out of the Aetna insurance and continue with their country-based insurance provider if they remained in their home country while taking classes this fall virtually," she said in an email.

The Colonial Health Center automatically enrolls all undergraduate, medical, on-campus nursing, health science and international students holding a J1 or F1 visa in the University's health insurance plan, according to

the CHC website. Students can waive the University health plan if their individual or family coverage fulfills GW's requirements, the website states.

Officials implemented a mandatory insurance policy in 2018 to reduce the overall cost of student health insurance and make the program more accessible for students.

Students who chose to waive the University plan this fall after enrolling last year said the combination of virtual telehealth options available through their home insurance and a lack of trust in the CHC's services prompted them to opt out.

Junior Liora Ami said she waived the student plan after two years of enrollment because she can access telehealth options outside of the CHC. She said she previously enrolled in the University's plan because she lived in D.C. and could easily access the health center in person.

Ami said using her family's insurance also appealed to her because she can see the same doctor each time instead of meeting with a different CHC staff member with each visit.

"I didn't really have a doctor I could go to my freshman and sophomore year, but now that it's mainly transitioned online, the level

of care that I get from my other doctors is much better and it's much more convenient," Ami said.

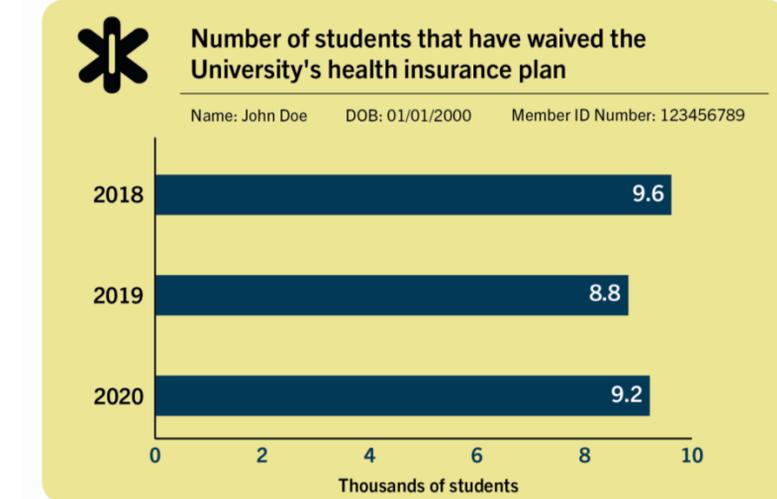
More than a dozen students said last fall that they experienced poor quality of care and long wait times at the CHC, which led them to receive delayed prescriptions and left them unable to access mental health resources.

Junior Caroline McGinnis said she has chosen the University plan the past two years because her family's plan was not accepted in D.C., but she's since switched to her family's plan because it offers telehealth options.

"I would have re-enrolled in it if life was normal because even though it was really slow, it was really convenient to get testing for infections really quickly," McGinnis said.

Health insurance experts said enrollment in the health care plan may have dropped because students' home health insurance is more accessible while they are away from campus.

Linda Bergthold, a former senior consultant at the consulting company Watson Wyatt Worldwide, said living in close proximity to an on-campus health clinic is an "advantage" of a university plan, but students can't



SIDNEY LEE | GRAPHICS EDITOR

reap the same benefits while they're home.

"One of the benefits of a university plan usually means there's an on-site clinic of some kind, where you can just go," she said. "It's convenient when you're living on campus."

Bergthold said all students must be on an insurance plan, whether it be a university or individual plan, to ensure they're covered if they contract a virus like COVID-19. She said students should consider the costs of an individual and

university plan if they are no longer on a family plan because a standalone plan can be expensive.

Aetna offers student plans for \$2,180 annually for mandatory enrollment and \$3,330 annually for voluntary enrollment, according to Aetna's benefits summary for GW students.

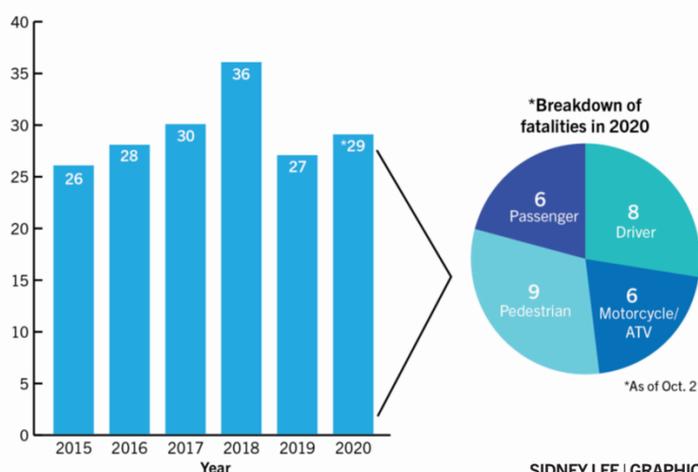
"It's not like a year ago when your biggest concern might have been being in a car accident or getting an STD," Bergthold said. "Now, it's living or dying."

Charles Gaba – the

founder of ACASignups.net, which tracks enrollment in the Affordable Care Act – said students should typically choose a health care plan with as wide a network of care providers as possible when deciding between plans. He said students are likely choosing plans this year that are closer to where they reside, which is likely why GW health care insurance enrollment dipped.

"The D.C. network doesn't do any good if you're in Michigan if you get sick or injured," Gabs said.

## Traffic fatalities in D.C.



SIDNEY LEE | GRAPHICS EDITOR

## D.C. traffic deaths rise in 2020, impeding plans for zero-death goal

JARROD WARDWELL  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The District hopes to eliminate all traffic deaths by 2024, but recent traffic safety trends aren't pointing in the right direction.

D.C. has seen 29 people killed in traffic-related deaths so far this year, marking a 53 percent increase from 19 deaths at this time last year, according to the Metropolitan Police Department. City officials said the pandemic has driven the fatality upsurge, as widespread self-isolation has minimized traffic and cleared roads caused more drivers to speed on city streets.

"Across the country, serious and fatal injury traffic crashes have increased due in part to less traffic on the roads," MPD spokesperson Alaina Gertz said in an email. "This allows for increased speed by many vehicle operators. As speed increases, the seriousness of a traffic crash increases."

This year's traffic accidents have claimed the lives of eight drivers, six passengers, nine pedestrians and six people riding a motorcycle or all-terrain vehicle, according to MPD data.

Gertz said this year's numbers, which are on track to surpass the city's highest yearly death count of 36 in 2018, are part of a trend that's spread across the country during the pandemic. The increase also sets back D.C.'s Vision Zero Initiative – the city's goal to wipe out all traffic-related deaths and serious injuries by 2024.

She said local drivers are "strongly encouraged" to drive within the posted speed limit and follow all traffic laws. Safe driving during the pandemic has been a priority for District officials during the pandemic – Mayor Muriel Bowser lowered the city's default speed limit on "local roads" in June from 25 to 20 miles per hour and identified a network of "Slow Streets" that cover 20 miles across the city.

Gertz said pedestrians

should contact their district police station if they see speeding or reckless drivers and continue to be aware of sidewalk and traffic signs.

"MPD continues to enforce all traffic laws in the District of Columbia," she said.

Senior James Harnett, the chair of the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission, said commuters are more likely to drive their own cars during the pandemic instead of riding public transportation, which many fear could be a leading spreader of the coronavirus.

Harnett said he's doubtful the city will achieve its main goal of the Vision Zero Initiative, to eliminate all traffic deaths by 2024, so long as city officials do not invest more money in traffic safety measures. He said "more people are going to die" if the D.C. government doesn't invest more money in the Vision Zero bill passed last month.

The D.C. Council voted to implement a package of traffic safety measures, like requiring sidewalks to be installed on both sides of all roads and removing "right on red" turns from stops near pedestrian-heavy areas.

"It's not going to happen," Harnett said. "It's a fairy tale to assume that we're on track to end traffic fatalities and serious injuries by 2024. Anyone who tells you that is lying. It's simply not true."

Harnett and other commissioners on the Foggy Bottom and West End ANC have funded two neighborhood studies in recent years – one on Washington Circle and one on H Street – to strengthen traffic safety near campus.

The ANC's Washington Circle study ushered city officials to install a traffic island at the circle's intersection with 23rd Street last year where cars had previously failed to stop for pedestrians crossing the street.

The ANC launched its \$5,000 H Street study last June in hopes of facilitating Bowser's Vision Zero Initiative and identifying changes that could enhance the safety of

the street pedestrians typically dominate. The study found drivers often roll through the H Street crossing area, and many pedestrians cross the street without using the crosswalk.

The ANC has also approved plans over the past two years for the District Department of Transportation to install bike lanes on Pennsylvania Avenue, 20th and 21st streets and G Street. Bike lane construction on 20th, 21st and G streets will begin by the end of the fall, and commissioners voted last month to request officials launch the Pennsylvania Avenue project "immediately."

Harnett said city officials need to offer free Metro access – which students have demanded for years – and circulate more Metrobuses in hopes of removing drivers from the cars that have elevated traffic fatalities to new levels in recent years.

"Our opportunity in this moment is to recognize we need to redesign our streets to prioritize the folks that aren't in two-ton death machines and that we need to protect the folks that are dying at the hands of drivers," he said.

Traffic safety expert Brian Pfeifer – a former research engineer at the University of Nebraska and the president and CEO of Quality Forensic Engineering, an engineering and accident reconstruction firm – said he's seen traffic accidents become "more severe" during the pandemic as empty roadways have encouraged speeding.

He said eliminating traffic deaths by 2024 is "very lofty," but it sets the right motive to cut fatalities as much as possible.

Pfeifer said D.C. officials should condense police presence along city streets to let drivers know they'll be punished for speeding and risking more deaths during the pandemic. He said stronger law enforcement would yield "immediate results" but legislative action – like roadway redesign or modifying road signs – would help address the city's long-term goal.

## SA Senate graduate seat applications hit record high

LAUREN SFORZA  
STAFF WRITER

MAKENA ROBERTS  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS  
EDITOR

The Student Association Senate received a record number of graduate student senator applications this year.

The governance and nominations committee received 21 applications this fall for specific school seats – the most the senate has received in recent memory. Senators said more graduate students may have applied for these seats because they can more easily access online meetings and push for a graduate tuition discount this fall.

"We are getting specific input from those schools that we usually don't get senators from about what's going on and about the issues that they are facing," said SA Sen. Thomas Falcigno, CPS-G and the chair of the governance and nominations committee. "And that's a really great thing for the Student Association to make sure we have people on the ground, telling us what's happening in the schools that we usually don't get senators from."

Senators selected eight of the 21 applicants to pitch their interest in the SA at a meeting last week, and the senate confirmed five of those applicants.

The senate approved Antonio Navarello to represent the School of Nursing, Megan Freeman for the Graduate School of Education and Human Development and Mustafa Emin Oktay for the School of Engineering and Applied Science. Caroline Fuss and Connor Hounshell were also chosen as Milken Institute School of Public Health representatives.

Falcigno said members

of the governance and nominations committee are holding interviews throughout October to confirm the remaining vacancies in the senate that have now been converted to graduate-at-large positions instead of school-specific seats. After 30 class days of a vacancy in a school specific seat, the seat becomes an at-large position, according to SA bylaws.

SA Sen. Jovawn McNeil, ESIA-U and a member of the governance and nominations committee, said the flexibility of online class allows them to tune into virtual senate meetings, driving an increase in applications. Without the commute to work and school every day, graduate students have more opportunities to participate in student organizations like the SA, he said.

"Remote allows us to do a lot more in terms of connectivity," McNeil said. "They're reaching out to everyone because we're all in different places, and we're all just in our crib online and come together at these meetings and not have to worry about any other aspects, like people who are commuters or who lived off campus or were grad students."

The SA has a history of low representation of graduate students, and many SA graduate senate seats are often left vacant.

SA senators established the first-ever graduate student caucus late last month.

SA Sen. Edward Rastgoo, ESIA-U and the vice chair of the governance and nominations committee, said the increase in graduate student involvement will "diversify the voices" in the senate because the senate has had less graduate participation in recent years. He said the appointed graduate sena-

tors, in conjunction with the newly established graduate caucus, will create a better platform for all of the University's graduate students.

"You know that they're passionate about these issues, and you know that they actually came here to make change," he said.

Rastgoo said graduate students may have been compelled to apply to the SA because they did not receive a tuition discount for the virtual fall semester as undergraduate students did. SA graduate student applications went live after officials said they didn't plan to increase tuition for graduate students this academic year, according to an email sent to graduate students.

Rastgoo said he considered "diversity and perspective" from applicants like international and first-generation students when conducting interviews for the vacant positions.

"Through the SA, I think they are a powerful group that has a lot of great ideas and have a totally different perspective than undergraduate students do," Rastgoo said. "Getting more passionate graduate students on the SA is just a great thing, and I'm glad that that has happened this year."

SA Sen. Connor Hounshell, MISP-H and a newly confirmed senator, said the controversies in the hiring of Heather Swain and "insensitive" statements from University President Thomas LeBlanc could have contributed to the uptick in graduate advocacy in the SA. He said during a pandemic when many graduate students have lost full-time jobs and are supporting families, officials should provide more support for their graduate students – like expanding the tuition decrease to graduate students.



FILE PHOTO BY GRACE HRONIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR  
Student Association Sen. Thomas Falcigno, CPS-G, said the higher number of applications from graduate students this year might be linked to the absence of a graduate tuition reduction.

## CRIME LOG

### THREATS TO DO BODILY HARM

Public Property On Campus (2100 Block of G Street)  
9/26/2020 – 11:45 a.m.  
Open Case  
A male student reported that an unknown male subject threatened to beat him at the intersection before leaving in his vehicle. GW Police Department officers canvassed the areas with negative findings.  
**Case open.**

### THEFT II/FROM BUILDING

Mitchell Hall (7-Eleven)  
9/26/2020 – 12:02 p.m.  
Open Case  
GWPD officers responded to a report of theft in 7-Eleven. Upon arrival, officers contacted a female complainant who reported that two unknown men stole a case of water and a bag of ice. Officers canvassed the area with negative findings.  
**Case open.**

### DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY/VANDALISM

Public Property On Campus (900 Block of 23rd Street)  
9/26/2020 – 8:38 p.m.  
Closed Case  
GWPD officers responded to a report of a trash can fire. When officers arrived at the scene, D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services responders had already extinguished the fire. Officials later discovered that the fire was set intentionally by an unknown subject. Shortly after, GWPD officers arrested a male subject. Metropolitan Police Department officers arrived on scene and transported the subject to the Second District police station.  
**Subject arrested.**

### SIMPLE ASSAULT (DOMESTIC VIOLENCE), DESTRUCTION OF PROPERTY/VANDALISM

Off Campus  
Unknown – Unknown  
Closed Case  
A female faculty member reported that a female student had her laptop destroyed and might be experiencing domestic violence. The faculty member stated the student did not want to file a police report.  
**Referred to the Title IX Office.**

### URINATING OR DEFECATING IN PUBLIC

University Yard  
9/28/2020 – 3:06 p.m.  
Open Case  
An anonymous female complainant reported that an unknown male subject had exposed his genitals and urinated in public.  
**Case open.**

—Compiled by Kateryna Stepanenko

## SNAPSHOT

PHEBE GROSSER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER



The group Covid Survivors for Change lined up 20,000 empty chairs on the Ellipse outside the White House Saturday to pay tribute to the 200,000 Americans who died from COVID-19.

## Performing arts groups try out new platforms for rehearsals, events

TIFFANY GARCIA  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Performing arts student organizations are trading in dance studios and stages for living rooms and bedrooms.

A dozen student leaders in performing arts student organizations like GW recsS and Generic Theatre Company said they've adjusted their fall performances and rehearsals to Zoom, WebEx and TikTok or postponed them to the spring in light of the remote semester. Some said recruiting new talent is "difficult" because of time differences and schedule conflicts, prompting them to push auditions to the spring.

Senior Abby Guen, the vice president of the cappella group GW MotherFunkers, said all six GW cappella groups are not holding auditions this semester because recorded auditions would not showcase someone's vocal abilities and personality as well as in person. She said the organization is using social media more than in the past to maintain interest among prospects and promote their album "Nexus Iconoclash" on Spotify and Apple Music.

"We have been posting lots of fun and engaging things on our Instagram, @gwfunkers, like 'guess the member' games and have

some other fun things in store for potential members in the future to get to know our personality as a group," Guen said in an email.

Senior Raagini Chandra, the business director for GW Pitches, said the a cappella group is creating a TikTok where members post clips of their favorite songs from past performances for interested members to duet and to connect prospects with current members. She said the group will connect with interested students through general body meetings and social events like happy hours and game nights.

Instead of using the Marvin Center, District House or residence halls to meet, student leaders said they've adapted to Zoom and WebEx and have experimented with new rehearsal settings.

Junior Jasmine Kabira, the president and co-captain of GW Naach, said members of the Bollywood dance group traditionally learn one large routine they perform at the end of the semester in Kogan Plaza but are instead teaching a new dance each practice for fun. She said the group decided not to focus on one routine because of the difficulty for members to teach, memorize and polish dances through online practices.

"We unfortunately cannot

perform at events this semester, but we hope that having online rehearsals every other week, exciting social media opportunities for members such as dance TikToks and virtual bonding events will help recreate the welcoming, family-like environment we have on campus," Kabira said in an email.

Senior Moss Woodbury, the president of recsS, said the comedy group has had difficulty practicing improv "quite as well" online because students can't bounce off of each other. He said the group has decreased their meetings from four times to twice a week and will instead work on writing sketches and holding workshops to walk students through sketch writing and improv for potential new members.

He said the virtual improv will be "definitely harder" to walk students through but said sketch writing over Zoom has worked well where students can share a document online and brainstorm altogether.

"We're focusing on writing sketches rather than doing improv," Woodbury said in an email. "We're also really good friends with each other so it's not difficult."

Senior Nicole Wolber, the president of GW Balance, said the dance group has been us-

ing WebEx to hold classes on topics like strength, stretching and yoga, which require less space than choreography. She said the group has been holding classes throughout the summer, like a class fundraiser for Black Lives Matter, and will host virtual shows where students record their dances to create video performances.

"It's really based on what people want to be doing right now and how comfortable they feel, but we're still holding virtual shows this semester so there will be weekly rehearsals for everyone participating, and we have classes every week," Wolber said.

Juliette Ghaffari, one of the musical directors for GW Pitches, said their treasurer bought 14 microphones the organization shipped to members, a Zoom premium channel and the audio workstation program Logic with funds from the Student Association. She said instead of rehearsing in person, members will submit videos of them singing a part of a chosen song that the two directors will compile into one video to share on their social media.

"Hopefully by the end of the semester, we have a couple songs put out probably on our YouTube but also across various platforms and social media sites," Ghaffari said.

## Capital Bikeshare celebrates 10 years in D.C.

JARROD WARDWELL  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Docked bicycle service Capital Bikeshare notched a decade of service in D.C. late last month.

City officials have installed five Capital Bikeshare stations with 60 bike docks across the Foggy Bottom Campus amid station expansions, the debut of electric bikes and the rollout of student discounts in the decade-long development of the program, which began Sept. 20, 2010. University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said the system has created new ways of commuting to and around campus, adding that officials hope to continue working with students and community members to expand student access to the program in the future.

"D.C. government's bicycle master plan notes many benefits of enhancing convenient access to bicycle-sharing services to the GW community, including addressing the region's primary source of air pollution by decreasing congestion for roads, easing burdens on crowded popular local transit services and increasing equitable, healthy and affordable transportation options," she said in an email.

Capital Bikeshare officials did not return a request for comment.

Here's how today's network of Capital Bikeshare stations came to campus:

### Bike-sharing begins

Capital Bikeshare was preceded by a similar program called SmartBike DC, which launched in 2008 with 120 bikes and 10 stations, one located just outside of the GW Hospital. About 1,600 people joined as members within its first two years, according to the Capital Bikeshare website.

District officials initiated the Capital Bikeshare program in 2010 through a partnership with city officials from Arlington, Virginia,

unveiling a selection of 100 stations in the District that would together hold about 1,100 bikes. District Department of Transportation officials selected three sites for Capital Bikeshare stations on campus – one at the existing station in front of GW Hospital, another station at 1959 E St. and a third outside The Shops at 2000 Penn.

### Expanding stations

Over the years, D.C. officials and neighborhood leaders have worked to expand Capital Bikeshare's presence around GW's campus, both in Foggy Bottom and near the Mount Vernon Campus.

City officials installed a bike-sharing station with 16 bike slots in front of Duques Hall in 2017.

A year later, Capital Bikeshare opened another station with 16 docks near the Vern. Students said at the time that the new addition provided better access to a method of transportation than the Mount Vernon Express.

The Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission continued the push for Capital Bikeshare's steady expansion last year. ANC commissioners passed a resolution pressing the D.C. government to add more bikes to stations on campus.

### System upgrades

City officials have discovered new ways to enhance Capital Bikeshare in more recent years.

DDOT officials created a \$25 student pass last year that offered students at D.C.-area universities one year of discounted access to the Capital Bikeshare system. While regular membership would cost \$85, officials signed the deal last August to give students better bike access for the entire academic year.

Nosal said officials began discussing the discount plan with the Student Association in 2017 and met with planners from Capital



FILE PHOTO BY KATE CARPENTER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Last year, the District Department of Transportation and GW reached an agreement that allows students to access a Capital Bikeshare annual membership for \$25.

Bikeshare and the D.C. government to implement the discounted student membership service. She said officials have since worked to locate spots for additional Capital Bikeshare stations near campus through talks with DDOT leadership, students and community members.

Much of Capital Bikeshare's progress in Foggy Bottom has been a product of the University's focus on students and sustainability, Nosal said.

"In response to feedback from student leadership, to enhance the student experience and also work toward GW's sustainability goals, the University has implemented numerous alternate transportation

options including its partnership with Capital Bikeshare," she said.

City officials introduced another upgrade to Capital Bikeshare in summer 2019 when Lyft launched a new feature that allows users to rent public bikes through their account.

City officials started rolling out electric bikes this summer after a year-long mechanical issue kept the e-bikes off city streets.

### The future of Capital Bikeshare

During a difficult time for transportation, Capital Bikeshare's numbers outline a more encouraging pre-pandemic backdrop. Member-

ship has climbed from about 1,200 in 2010 to more than 26,500 today, and 27 million trips have covered 150 million miles. More than 600 stations and 5,000 bikes line city streets throughout the D.C.-area.

Mayor Muriel Bowser said in a press release last month that Capital Bikeshare has upheld a "crucial part of our transportation network" as officials remain hopeful for the program's continuing success in the future.

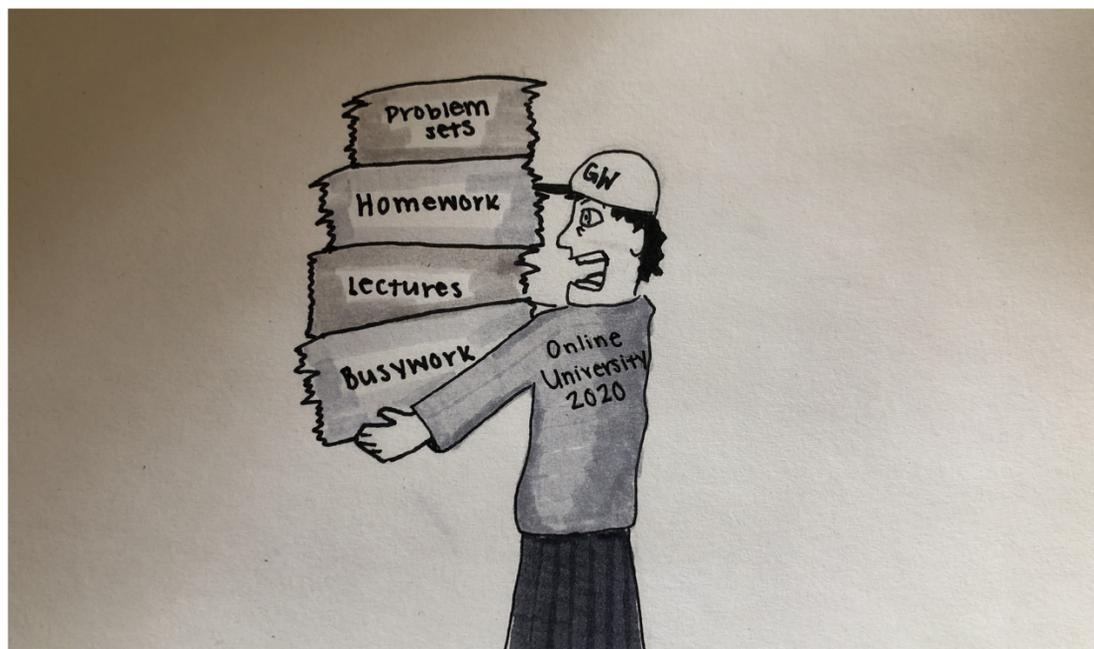
"We look forward to the next decade of building out and expanding the Capital Bikeshare system to give even more riders a sustainable way to travel through neighborhoods, the city and the region," she said.

## Professors should lighten up the workload in light of pandemic

There has not been a more challenging time to focus on college studies in the United States since the Vietnam War, where students had to learn despite widespread protests about the war and amid the civil rights movement. Now, we're facing four major crises: political, economic, social and environmental. Our country and its college students are beating back authoritarianism, dealing with extreme unemployment levels, combating racial injustices and fleeing from wildfires and hurricanes.

Matthew Zachary  
Columnist

Completing dozens of calculus problems or reading hundreds of textbook pages feels superfluous to the happenings in the world around us, and professors should lighten the academic burden accordingly. Some ways to reduce the workload are straightforward, like reducing the amount of out-of-class busywork. Other ways, like keeping the syllabus updated so the class has a solid flow, require more work in the short-term for professors, but in the long run students will remain more engaged. To put it simply, less is more this semester.



Cartoon by Hannah Thacker

Although a petition to reinstate the Pass/No Pass policy is in the works, there is no guarantee that administrators will do the bare minimum to support us in our distance-learning environment. As such, students have no recourse but to turn to professors and ask for leniency. We're facing technical issues and merely can't replicate the in-person experience quite as well. My professors this semester have shown kindness and

compassion as students work through difficulties, and my classmates have reciprocated when technological challenges arise for professors.

It is time for professors to extend that same compassion beyond the classroom. Not only have many students expressed difficulties accessing materials on Blackboard, but some have struggled as their classes require more than 100 pages of reading a week. It's too much. There is no way to expect

a student to retain the details of 500-plus pages in all their classes, let alone regurgitate it on papers and other assessments. Even in the best of times this expectation is questionable — in the time of COVID-19 and remote learning, it is laughable.

While there should be less breadth of work, this should be replaced by more in-depth discussion. The courses I have enjoyed and learned the most so far this semester have all centered around

class or group discussions. Often the big assignment for class that week was 40 to 50 pages of reading — plenty more manageable than 100 — and the class benefited from the lighter course load. Plus, given the increased likelihood students will be able to complete their work, students may be more willing to contribute to class discussions if they feel better prepared.

As smaller assignments decrease, the length

of assessments must too. Professors need to continue to offer expected page counts on papers, but they must understand that students are dealing with a variety of personal issues, from poor WiFi to a lack of a quiet work space to ailing family members. Not to mention some students could face distractions from other jobs or younger siblings. In other words, if a student turns in six pages on a minimum seven-page assignment, understand that was the best work they could produce, and an additional page likely would have been filled with fluff. Extending in-class compassion to larger assignments will go a long way toward keeping everyone that much more focused on their studies and sane.

As students across the world continue to adjust to remote working and learning, college communities like GW are no exception. We must continue to work together to get through this, and reducing the academic stress both on students and faculty will help to ensure everyone's wellbeing. We are all human, and we must be able to rely on our communities to support us in this frightening, difficult time.

—Matthew Zachary, a senior majoring in Latin American studies, is a columnist.

## Administrators should extend Pass/No Pass policy to fall semester

### STAFF EDITORIAL

Students are now taking their classes from all across the country — all while navigating the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on their work, families and friends. All the while, students are expected to achieve optimal grades as though the health crisis hasn't seeped into our academic lives. That is a frivolous expectation and can absolutely be changed.

Officials decided last spring that students and professors were facing enough hardship and allowed classes to be taken on an optional Pass/No Pass basis. The policy helped alleviate burdens brought on by the pandemic when it first hit DC., but since then, things have arguably gotten worse. Some students have needed to pick up extra work, care for family members or younger siblings who are also learning from home or face learning setbacks that make it harder to stare at a computer screen for hours.

Professors are not only out of their element in teaching classes online, but they need to do much more work to make their courses accessible for everyone. Officials may say that professors had more time to prepare for this transition, but that doesn't change the fact that our environment simply is not conducive to learning.

The University needs to extend the Pass/No Pass and Credit/No Credit policies to this fall. Students are paying for an education, not the grades attached to it, and they shouldn't feel unfair pressure to succeed when the odds are stacked against them.

Switching to a pass/fail grading scale could both ease the pressure on students and improve in-class performance. Many students utilized the policy in the spring, showing its popularity and need among students. While professors are attempting

their best, students may feel as if they are having to teach themselves — which defeats the purpose of class time and lecture hours. It's too much to expect students to spend however many hours in class, then even more time drowning in assignments or readings to understand the lesson. Throw poor WiFi or a job in the mix and students simply cannot learn to the best of their ability.

The policy would redound to faculty's benefit as well. Professors are under immense pressure to do the impossible: build a virtual environment conducive to student success with limited time and resources. The reality is that virtual learning is a contingency, not an alternative, and expecting both faculty and students to perform at their highest level during a pandemic is unrealistic. A Pass/No Pass option would let professors focus on conveying material and ensuring students' learning, rather than forcing them to rely on graded assignments. This is especially relevant for fine arts and laboratory classes, which are even harder to replicate over Zoom. It would also insulate students from having their grades suffer from poor instructional quality that may not be anybody's fault.

Adopting the policy is also a completely costless way for the University to improve student morale and feelings toward the University. The relationship between administrators and the GW community right now could be charitably described as frayed — students and faculty have repeatedly expressed a lack of confidence in the administration. Acceding to the pleas of students and implementing Pass/No Pass would redound to administrators' benefit, as the gesture could win back some good will with the stu-

dent body. And if officials are concerned that pass/fail classes would set students back from graduate school acceptances, they can make the policy optional as they've done in the spring.

Despite these many up-sides — and fervent support for the policy by students — administrators has been loath to make the swap. To be fair, their concerns are valid at face value. Administrators mainly worry that implementing Pass/No Pass could dissuade both students and faculty from putting in the appropriate amount of work. But this concern is probably overblown. Students would still have to work to pass their classes — this would not be a Brownie points system and hard work would still be expected. What would be disincentivized, though, is students spinning themselves into a whirlwind of stress about turning a C+ into a B- while dealing with a hellish pandemic.

Many top-echelon schools that GW often seeks to emulate have announced Pass/No Pass policies for this semester, namely many of the Ivy League schools and the University of California system. Since only a few of GW's peer schools, Tufts, Georgetown and New York universities, have made the option available, GW has the potential to lead its peers in implementing Pass/No Pass for the semester.

Implementing optional Pass/No Pass for the fall semester would be, at the very least, a humane gesture that lets students and faculty know that GW cares. At best, it would be a saving grace for students and faculty who are legitimately suffering right now. The pandemic era is lobbying brick after brick at college kids right now — making life just a little easier for them would go a long way.

## Op-ed: A no-donate pledge hurts students, not the University

Simply put, a no-donate pledge hurts students, not the University.

During more than three years working at GW's student call center, I asked thousands of alumni to donate to GW. In the process of raising more than \$35,000, I saw firsthand how donations from members of the University community are absolutely necessary for the success of our community.

Sebastian Weinmann  
Student Association  
senator

The pledge does not "hit GW where it hurts," as The Hatchet Editorial Board erroneously claims. Donations to GW can be designated with extreme specificity. As a result, most donations bypass GW's wallet and go directly to students.

Donors don't usually give to operations budgets or the President's Fund for Excellence — which would actually hurt the president's wallet — but rather to need-based scholarships, assistance funds, student organizations and resources that support under-privileged and marginalized student populations. When donations are withdrawn or withheld from these crucially important causes, the University does not supplement them. The money just disappears — not from GW's bottom

line but from students' pockets.

A donation withheld from a scholarship fund means a low-income or first-generation student cannot attend GW. A donation withheld from The Store means a student cannot eat a proper meal. A donation withheld from an emergency assistance fund means a student cannot fly home last-minute to be with a sick family member. It is not a hypothetical that student access, support and resources are lost when donations are low and are gained when donations are high.

The editorial board and Student Association President Howard Brookins' executive order claimed the pledge won't be effective unless people sign on. The sad irony is that the more people who follow the

Simply put, a no-donate pledge hurts students, not the University.

editorial board's well-intentioned but logically-flawed call to action, the more effective the pledge will be at hurting our most vulnerable student populations. This tangible detriment to students is why the SA Senate overwhelmingly voted in favor of abrogating Brookins' executive order that included a University-wide, no-donation pledge. Brookins has since clarified the pledge to encourage people to withhold donations to the president's office, a much more effective way to set the

University's top leaders back.

I understand and share the frustrations of those that created and signed this pledge. I am in my seventh and likely last year as a student. It is clear GW's most senior leadership, including University President Thomas LeBlanc and the Board of Trustees, have failed us. But them failing us is not a reason for us to fail ourselves. In fact, their failure is even more of a reason for members of the GW community — especially alumni who are less impacted by their irresponsible and incompassionate decisions — to step up and support those still struggling to be seen and heard.

After the pledge was announced, I not only proudly continued but also increased my monthly donation to causes on campus I care about. I urge all members of the GW community to donate to student-centric causes such as the GW Cares Student Assistance Fund, The Store, the Multicultural Student Services Center or any of the hundreds of student organizations and dozens of need-based scholarships that go to students.

It is students, not the University, who cannot afford to lose donations at this unprecedented time.

—Sebastian Weinmann, a third-year law student, is a Student Association senator, member of the Student Bar Association and Class of 2018 graduate.

# Culture

October 5, 2020 • Page 7

## THE SCENE

**"SPIT DAT"**  
Oct. 5 • Free • The Woolly Mammoth Theater  
Join a virtual rendition of D.C.'s longest-running spoken word show.

**PARACORD BRACELET WORKSHOP**  
Oct. 9 • \$35 • Wear Ever Jewelry  
Customize and craft your own PARACORD charm bracelet.

## RELEASED THIS WEEK:

"WONDER," A SINGLE BY SHAWN MENDES

## Alumna, advocate discusses sex work during pandemic

**ANNA BOONE**  
CULTURE EDITOR

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit the District, one recent graduate, a sex worker, said she was fortunate enough to add a couple new clients — but not everyone in the industry was as lucky.

For cisgender, White or light-skinned women like herself, the alumna, who spoke under the condition of anonymity to protect her privacy, said mainstream sites like Seeking Arrangement have helped garner clients and pocket about \$2,000 per month. But she said her skin color and gender identity gives her an advantage on mainstream websites, while sex workers of color and trans sex workers are constrained to more dangerous means of finding work on "the street."

"A lot of girls can't ask for what I ask for because they're either trans or they're a person of color that isn't light-skinned," she said. "There's a whole number of issues."

Sex workers like the recent graduate have relied on their independent contract work to stay employed during the health crisis. But the alumna said the pandemic has exposed the violence and lack of government resources women of color and trans sex workers face in the industry, prompting advocacy organizations to ramp up their fight to decriminalize sex work.

A bill to decriminalize sex work has not garnered enough support for the D.C. Council to hold a vote, but groups like DecrimNow DC and HIPS DC, which stands for Helping Individual Prostitutes Survive, are pushing for a bill to pass. Advocates said the pandemic has left sex workers in D.C. more vulnerable than before as they can't formally apply for financial support from the District government.

"The COVID-19 global pandemic is exposing the lack of health care

and food infrastructure, coupled with the severe lack of jobs and housing guarantee in D.C.," DecrimNow DC wrote. "During this crisis, organizations like HIPS and No Justice No Pride have provided cash assistance, housing, health care and more to people in the sex trade, including victims and survivors of sex trafficking, despite the lack of government intervention or support."

The alumna said trans women and women of color were forced off of a sex worker site called Backpage when President Donald Trump made the website illegal in 2018. She said women of color and trans women of color who relied on the website to find work were sent "back into the streets" to solicit business in public.

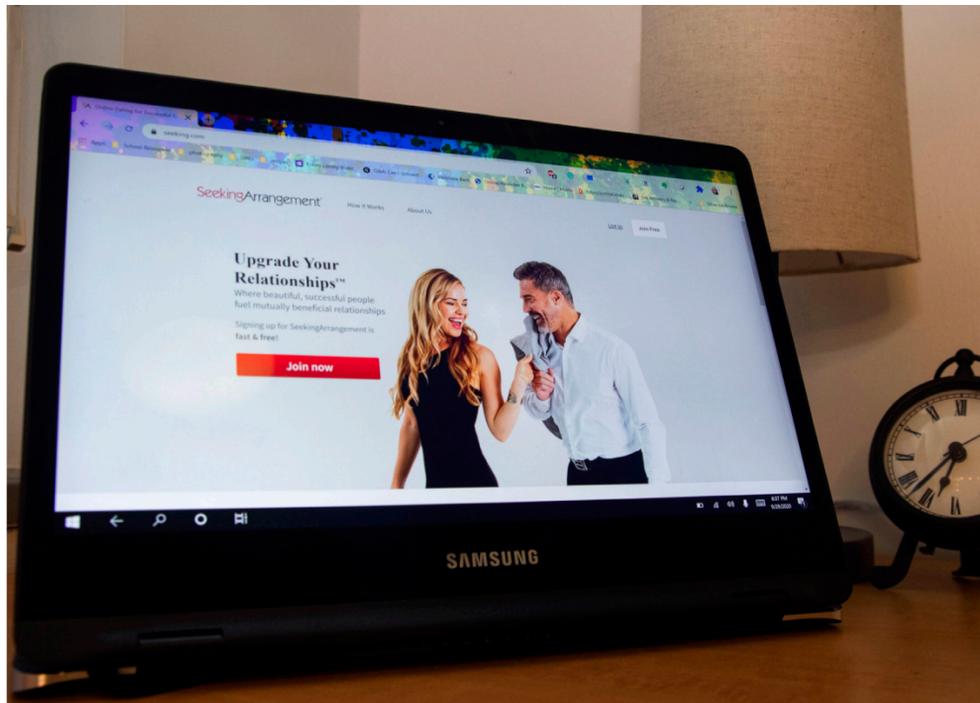
She said when sex workers have to rely on business from "the streets," they are more likely to encounter violence, mainly from police officers.

"The violence is usually with police officers that will humiliate them and ask them for random searches, ask them to open their bags, throw everything that's in their bags on the floor, get violent with them because transphobia and the whole bit," she said.

Aside from police violence and the lessened base of men looking for sex workers in public because of the pandemic, the alumna added that sex workers are finding the streets and clubs where they could normally find clients are quiet or closing.

"They're not doing too great to be honest because they're mainly doing in-person work right now and it's a lot more difficult, that's for sure," she said.

Kate D'Adamo, a community organizer for sex workers who partners with Reframe Health and Justice, said soliciting sex work for people who don't have the eco-



GABRIELLE RHOADS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The alumna said she uses Seeking Arrangement to find clients but many other sex workers struggle to find work through the same platform.

nom privilege and "conventional attractiveness" is more challenging during the pandemic. She added that generally finding work has turned entirely online, which can be difficult for people who don't have stable housing, WiFi or electronic resources.

"Clubs were closing down, in-person places that were indoors where people could engage in sex work were also closing down," she said. "When you also had stay-at-home orders, that meant that you can't have strolls, you can't go and meet people."

She said women of color and trans sex workers are negatively

affected by the pandemic because they're predisposed to marginalization.

"When you hit economic downturns, that's always impacting people of color and trans folks more because the structural marginalization is just really reaffirmed," D'Adamo said.

D'Adamo said sex workers can't rely on financial support from the government, through food stamps and unemployment checks, as other low-income workers because their work is considered illegal.

"Sex workers often don't even have access to the same support systems that a lot of other workers

take for granted," she said. "It's really scary to have to go on the radar sometimes when you come from a criminalized form of economic income."

D'Adamo added that decriminalizing sex work would help alleviate the fear of working in the industry, especially during a health crisis when they need added financial support.

"Everyone is dealing with these massive crises at the core of our being," she said. "All decriminalization would do was make sure that those marginalized people are not also worried about getting arrested and thrown in jail on top of that."



SOPHIA YOUNG | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR

Law student Ethan Schuchart built a website to connect students looking for work to parents and residents in D.C. in need of some extra help amid the pandemic.

## Recent alumnus creates babysitting network for D.C. students and families

**DIEGO MENDOZA**  
CONTRIBUTING CULTURE EDITOR

Knowing he and his peers were entering a disastrous COVID-19 job market, a law student developed an online service for D.C.-area students to connect with local families looking for babysitters.

Ethan Schuchart, a GW alumnus who graduated with a bachelor's degree in law this spring, founded Students for Students DC, which more than 90 undergraduate and graduate students have used since its launch over the summer. He said the service aims to help students looking for work during the pandemic and assist families living in the District who are dealing with the added pressure of online school for their children.

"I know COVID has not only impacted these families being able to send kids to school, but it has affected work opportunities for [college] students," Schuchart said.

When he nannied for D.C. families while an undergraduate at GW last academic year, Schuchart said he was "overwhelmed" by babysitting requests from families when D.C. schools announced an entirely digital semester.

Schuchart posted an interest form on Overheard at GW that 200 students responded to, prompting him to build a website where interested students and families could

connect.

Parents and guardians can browse through the profiles of students interested in child care on the website. The students' profiles include their preferred age group to work with, the type of services they're willing to offer and their contact information.

Interested families can decide on the job description, what type of COVID-19 precautions the caregiver must undertake to work with children and negotiate wages with the student, he said.

When he's not in classes, Schuchart said he nannies a 1-year-old in the area for 12 hours every week. Besides basic tasks like providing snacks and changing the toddler's diaper, Schuchart said he has been taking the toddler to the park and playing around the house.

He said students interested in featuring themselves on the website should contact him directly to get started by using his email found on the website.

Claire Cantrell, a 2020 alumna, said she used the site because she wanted to reconnect with her passion of working with children while she searches for a permanent post-graduation job. Within 24 hours of posting her profile online, she was connected by Kate Crawford, a mother who was looking for an assistant to supervise her child and

seven other kindergarteners during the school week.

She works inside Crawford's garage, which morphed into a temporary classroom fit with computers, school supplies and desks. Cantrell said her main responsibilities include helping students with in-class activities, leading games and projects during the children's breaks and tutoring students who need extra help on assignments.

Cantrell added that because many of the children's parents are essential workers, all adults agreed that the children and helpers should wear masks in Crawford's house, which the kids have followed.

"I think I was surprised a little bit by how aware they were [about COVID]," she said. "They understand why they have to wear them — they understand not to share germs."

Crawford said the site helped her get a better idea of what kind of service each student could offer through their individual profiles. She added that she's recommended the site to other parents in the area who are looking for babysitters and tutors.

Crawford said she ultimately chose Cantrell because she is available every day and can speak Spanish, which helps her communicate with the kids.

"We've been really impressed — she has a really good manner with the kids," Crawford said.

## Kennedy Center, Heist collaboration postponed

**CLARA DUHON**  
STAFF WRITER

The Kennedy Center postponed the opening night of a pop-up collaboration with Heist due to public health concerns.

Heist, a nightclub and lounge in Dupont Circle, and the Kennedy Center planned to host about 360 attendees on the rooftop of the performing arts venue every Saturday. Neither Heist nor the Kennedy Center has shared when they will host the new opening night, which was originally scheduled for Saturday.

"The Kennedy Center has determined the opening of the HEIST pop-up, an outdoor rental event, will not take place this weekend [Oct. 3] to allow for further evaluation and to ensure such gatherings meet our building's health and safety standards as well as respect the city's latest reopening guidelines," the Kennedy Center told Washington City Paper.

The two venues may have put off the opening date to determine whether Heist is considered a restaurant under the District's Phase Two reopening guidelines, which is subject to different safety guidelines than entertainment venues, according to DC Eater. Gatherings of more than 50 people are prohibited under Phase Two regulations, but restaurants are allowed to remain open as long as they operate at half capacity.

The announcement of the collaboration came shortly after rolling out Mayor Muriel Bowser's "Phase Two Live

Entertainment Pilot," which allows six venues to host live entertainment, including the Kennedy Center. Kennedy Center staff said the Heist pop-up was "misreported" as being a participant in this program.

John Falcicchio, Bowser's chief of staff, told Washington City Paper that in an effort to operate as a restaurant under Phase Two reopening guidelines instead of a venue, the pop-up would not include live entertainment.

Live entertainment venues are already struggling in the District, and Phase Three doesn't indicate whether they can reopen anytime soon. While other bars can open outdoor set-ups, Heist's sidewalk was not wide enough to become an outdoor "streetery" — an outdoor seating venue that takes up a portion of the street — Heist staff told Washington City Paper.

The originally scheduled opening night sold out in 15 minutes after the tickets went live, according to a Heist Instagram post. The nightclub pop-up was originally planned as a weekly event, and tickets for each Saturday event were slated to go live each Tuesday morning.

Attendees could purchase tables ranging from \$240 for "VIP" level tables to their most expensive option of a \$1,000 minimum. Alcoholic drinks, snack trays, desserts and single-use mixers were available for attendees to purchase.

The Kennedy Center and Heist did not return requests for comment.



ILENA PENG | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The planned collaboration between Dupont Circle nightclub Heist and the Kennedy Center has been postponed to comply with D.C.'s Phase Two reopening guidelines.

## GAMES OF THE PAST



**MEN'S SWIMMING AND DIVING**  
at FIU Fall Classic  
Oct. 7, 2017  
The Colonials finished 20 points shy of first place Grand Canyon.



**SAILING**  
at the Intercollegiate Offshore Regatta  
Oct. 10, 2018  
Sailing secured one runner-up and two first-place finishes, good for second overall.

## NUMBER CRUNCH

44

The percentage of A-10 Most Outstanding Performer awards won by a GW swimmer on the men's team since 1995.

# Fall check-in: Swimming and diving prepare for 'uncertain' season start

**BELLE LONG**  
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

*With fall sports delayed until the spring semester, The Hatchet is checking in with head coaches from affected programs to gain insight on how each team is handling the pause on competition. Check back each week for new installments.*

Despite an uncertain competition timeline, the swimming and diving programs are relying on team culture to maintain focus on the year ahead.

When the Atlantic 10 postponed fall play, the men's and women's swimming and diving squads lost competition experience. Head coach Brian Thomas said just more than half of the squads are back in D.C. and preparing for an unknown start date to the 2020-21 season.

Like most programs, swimmers and divers restarted in-person practices using GW facilities. To maintain adequate social distancing, Thomas said practices are

held at various facilities, including the Smith Center, the Mount Vernon Campus and the St. James sports complex in Springfield, Virginia.

Thomas said 30 of the 52 rostered student-athletes across the men's and women's programs are back in D.C. for the semester. He said athletes who didn't return to campus are training with competitive club teams at home, and he regularly checks in with their club coaches each week.

He added that the team is hosting multiple team meetings each week, one at 8 a.m. and another at 3 p.m., to stay in touch with student-athletes dealing with time differences. Some athletes are residing on the West Coast, in various European countries, Australia and Singapore.

Although swimming and diving is a winter sport, the teams typically begin competing in early October. Last season, GW opened play in the FIU Fall Classic Oct. 4.

Throughout the fall schedule, which lasts

from October through late November in a normal season, players typically compete to gear up for the A-10 Championships in the winter, Thomas said. He said athletes won't make up for the lost competition time in the winter because it conflicts with the height of competition season.

"If we were to pack our schedule in January, competing every week or weekend, it might be a detriment," he said.

Thomas said the A-10 championships are "tentatively" slated for its usual February time slot, but nothing is set in stone. The women's program nabbed their first A-10 crown last season, and the men's squad captured three championships in the last four years.

"At this point, we're still a little unsure as to when we're going to be able to compete," Thomas said.

Despite the uncertainty, Thomas said his players have had no problem staying motivated. Some are gearing up for the U.S. Olympic trials, which have been postponed until



FILE PHOTO BY ZACH BRIEN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
A little more than half of the men's and women's swimming and diving teams are in D.C. for practice, which is held at several facilities.

next June, he said.

Some swimming and diving programs in conferences like the Southeastern Conference and the Big Ten, which opted to continue with fall competition to some degree, have already returned to the pool. Thomas said he's received

"a lot of interest" from other conferences about setting up nonconference competitions.

The two squads held their last competition in March. Thomas said taking a six-month break from the pool is unusual, but he and his staff are trying to act as safely as

possible to avoid injury and follow the return to athletics guidelines.

"We just have to think about it logistically and put it together step by step," Thomas said. "Literally, how are we going to walk on to the pool deck and make it safe?"

# Women's basketball alumna debuts podcast on athletes off the court

**ALEC RICH**  
STAFF WRITER

Former women's basketball graduate student forward Alexandra Maund is trying to get rid of the stigma that athletes are just baskets and statistics through a podcast she debuted last month.

Maund launched the "Baskets and Brains" podcast as part of her capstone project in the School of Media and Public Affairs' master's in media and strategic communication program. She said she hopes to shed light on coaches and athletes for more than their sporting abilities through the podcast by discussing their interests and hobbies outside sports.

"We're not dumb," Maund said. "Our ability to play sports does not dictate our ability to think or speak out on issues or exist in this country, and I wanted to find a way to make that the core of my capstone project."

Maund said she got inspiration for the podcast after stumbling onto a 2018 video of Fox News host Laura Ingraham telling NBA star LeBron James to "shut up and dribble" following critical comments he made about President Donald Trump's leadership and rhetoric.

She said the clip, which angers her to this day, led her to conduct interviews that allow athletes to speak their minds and share their perspectives about topics outside sports.

"I thought, 'Well, politics can be how an athlete feels about what's going on around them,'" Maund said. "Politics can be what they feel about something like George Floyd or the debates that we had last night. How do I find a way to ask athletes about how they feel and bring it into something

that means a lot to me so that I'm engaged?" I think that I found it with this podcast."

Originally looking to hand in just three episodes for the class, Maund said she is now hoping to complete at least 10 for her capstone, and she currently plans to continue the podcast after graduating.

The podcast includes interviews with athletes and coaches, like former Utah track and field runner and current sports dietician Elise McVicar and Wake Forest assistant women's basketball coach Melissa D'Amico. Maund and McVicar discussed McVicar's time as a student-athlete and her new role as a nutritionist and dietician. On D'Amico's episode, they talked about how she found her passion for coaching and love for service with play BOLD.

One of Maund's most recent interviews was with women's basketball assistant coach Kevin DeMille, who spoke about coaching women's athletics and his involvement in sports as a gay man.

She added that interviewing DeMille, who served as a mentor to her on and off the court during her time with the team, was a "special" opportunity because of the bond they created in her year with the women's basketball program.

"He was willing to help me, even though I'm not even his player anymore," Maund said. "That really speaks to not just him as a person and as a coach, but GW women's coaches and women's athletics being there for their players even after they've gone on to other things and have moved on and graduated."

Maund took on a leadership role at the start of last season to develop rela-

tionships with the younger players. Maund was also a force on the court, leading the team in scoring with 11.1 points per game while shooting at a 50.4 percent clip from the floor.

Inspired by social justice movements across the country and in professional basketball leagues, Maund said she is also looking for ways to include discussions around race and equity in her podcast. She said she wants to follow in the footsteps of NBA and WNBA players by using her platform to make a difference for and serve others who are "disenfranchised and overlooked."

"Seeing that some of my role models and people who I watched growing up try and make a difference for others has definitely influenced my love of talking to these athletes and hearing about what it is that they love," Maund said.

Maund said she uses the app Anchor and her phone to conduct and record interviews. She uploads the nearly weekly podcast on multiple streaming platforms like Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Google Podcasts and Pocket Casts. She also runs Instagram and Twitter accounts for her podcast.

Maund said those interested in nominating someone for the podcast can also reach out to basketandbrainspodcast@gmail.com.

She added that she's learned a great deal about other people in her life through the three interviews she's conducted so far.

"This podcast has shown me that there's so much to the people in our lives," Maund said. "There are so many layers to who we are as people and sometimes you have to dig with intention to get that out, but it's such a rewarding experience."

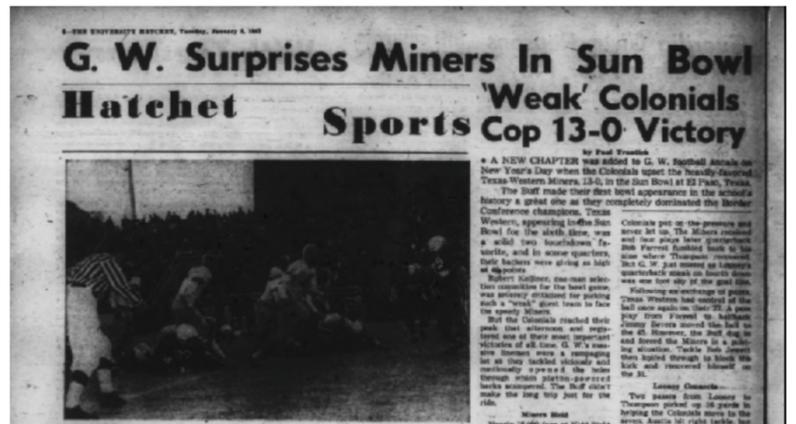


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SABRINA GODIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR  
Less than a decade before the Board of Trustees voted to shutter GW's football team, the program won its first and only Sun Bowl game.

# Top GW sports moments: Football stomps Texas Western in Sun Bowl

**WILL MARGERUM**  
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. 8: Football captures Sun Bowl win

Football capped a record-breaking campaign by defeating Texas Western at its first and only Sun Bowl game on Jan. 1, 1957.

The Colonials, led by head coach Eugene "Bo" Sherman, ended the year with a program-best 8-1-1 record. The team finished third in the Southern Conference with a No. 17 AP national ranking.

A strong rushing attack, which featured future NFL running back Mike Sommer, was the basis for GW's success. Seven players ran for more than 170 yards on the year while the team attempted just 8.7 passes per game, completing 35.9 percent of them.

The Colonials started the season with three straight wins. GW dealt Miami University in Ohio its only loss of the season with a 7-6 victory, to open the year. A 10-0 shutout over Furman and a 13-7 win against Hardin-Simmons earned GW a No. 16 national ranking heading into a clash with Boston.

A 20-20 tie with the Terriers pushed GW out of the national rankings, but the Colonials would bounce back the following week. A 40-14 win over VMI got GW back in the win column and returned it to the

AP top 25 with a No. 17 ranking.

William and Mary was the Colonials' next victim. GW escaped with a 16-14 victory that launched the team to its highest ranking in program history at No. 14.

GW suffered its only loss of the season in its ensuing game against West Virginia. The Colonials' offense sputtered as the Mountaineers ran out with a 14-0 win that once again tossed GW from the national rankings.

After being shut out by West Virginia, GW responded by putting up its second-most points of the season against Richmond. The Colonials' 32-6 win in their final home game of the year restored them to No. 18 nationally.

In the last game of the regular season, GW topped The Citadel 20-0. The win boosted the Colonials one spot in the national rankings and earned them a trip to the Sun Bowl.

GW became the first nationally ranked team to play in a Sun Bowl, but the squad opened as 14-point underdogs to Texas Western at its home stadium, Kidd Field.

The Miners, who had lost just one game, featured a high-powered offense that scored at least 50 points in three games that year. Future Pro Football Hall of Fame inductee and Super Bowl III champion running back Don Maynard had 662 all-purpose yards in what would be his final year at Texas Western.

GW's defense set the tone, holding Maynard and the Miners scoreless. The Colonials recovered three fumbles and

intercepted three passes from quarterbacks Bob Laraba and Bob Forrest.

The Colonials came up empty on its first few drives, failing to score deep in Miners' territory. They eventually broke through with less than a minute to play in the first quarter, when quarterback Ray Looney hit All-Conference wide receiver Paul Thompson for a 30-yard touchdown.

The game was on a knife's edge at 7-0 in the third quarter when the Miners took them into the red zone. GW halfback Ted Colna came up big to preserve the shutout, intercepting Forrest at the Colonials' 23-yard line.

Colna's pick put the ball back in the hands of GW's offense, which made no mistakes. Fullback Claude Austin, the eventual most valuable player of the game, ripped a 47-yard run down to the Miner's 18-yard line as the quarter ended.

Running back Pete Spera, GW's leading rusher during the regular season, punched the ball into the end zone from three yards out early in the fourth quarter to seal the victory.

Sherman left the team in 1959 after a 1-8 campaign. Sommer was drafted 16th overall in the 1958 NFL Draft by the then-Washington Redskins. He played on both sides of the ball and retired in 1963.

The Colonials played their final game on Thanksgiving Day in 1966, losing 16-7 against Villanova. Then-GW President Dr. Lloyd Elliott said the program lost \$254,000 that year and the Board of Trustees voted to discontinue it Jan. 19, 1967.



FILE PHOTO BY ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR  
A 2018 video of Fox News host Laura Ingraham telling NBA star LeBron James to "shut up and dribble" pushed one alumna to start a podcast to highlight athletes off the court.