

The GW Hatchet

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Departed SA members quiet on exits as controversy around Brookins mounts

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Since early December, more than a dozen Student Association cabinet members have resigned their posts, some of whom at the time of their departure claimed SA President Howard Brookins created a “negligent and careless work environment.”

Then, less than a week after the most recent flurry of departures, a female student came forward with allegations of sexual misconduct against Brookins.

Now, dozens of student leaders – including the majority of the SA Senate – are pressing Brookins to resign. Brookins did not return a request for comment about the sexual misconduct allegations or the calls for his resignation by the time of publication.

Most cabinet members who left have kept mum about what transpired in the organization prior to their departures, and when sexual misconduct claims emerged, they did not return requests about whether they knew about the allegations at the time of their resignation. One now-former cabinet member, alumnus Gaurav Gawankar, declined to say why he resigned “due to threats of legal action” from Brookins.

Current SA leaders said that if Brookins does not resign on his own accord, the organization could possibly initiate impeachment or censure proceedings, adding that the SA must be a space for women to feel comfortable working.

Departed SA members stay silent

As of Jan. 16, 14 SA cabinet members have left the organization. Gawankar, who served

as Brookins’ chief of staff before graduating last semester, said he resigned Dec. 8. Senior Policy Adviser Nicole Cennamo said she stepped down Dec. 28, but she declined to say why.

Six departed cabinet members – Senior Policy Adviser Amy Martin, Director of Interfaith Engagement Julia Kerrigan, Director of Student Advocacy Arzina Lakhani, Vice President for Diversity and Inclusion Hannah Edwards, Director of the Arts Hannah Clayton and Deputy Chief of Staff Bairavi Sundaram – did not return requests to say when they left the SA or why they resigned. The former members left sometime between Nov. 28 and Jan. 16, according to Internet archives.

Former Chief of Staff Shealyn Fraser said she resigned because of “poor communication” within the SA. She said as other cabinet members were resigning, “it became clear that the positive work environment had rapidly declined.” She declined to say when she resigned or if she knew about the sexual misconduct allegations prior to her departure.

“I personally believe Howard should resign at this point if we want to gain upward traction again in advocating for students,” she said last week in response to how the SA should respond to the cabinet resignations.

Former Vice President for Academic Affairs Liz Gonzalez, Director of Graphic Design and Assistant Vice President for Public Affairs Cat Oriol and Vice President for Campus Operations Anna Weber resigned Jan. 16, claiming mismanagement in the executive branch. The trio declined to say whether they knew about the sexual misconduct allegations when they resigned.

In a resignation letter Dec. 28, then-Vice President for Government Relations Yannik Omictin said he was leaving the SA because of “irreconcilable personal differences.” Omictin declined to say whether he was aware of sexual misconduct claims at the



Over the weekend, SA President Howard Brookins has been called on to resign amid claims of sexual misconduct from a female student and allegations of creating a “negligent and careless” work environment. FILE PHOTO BY GRACE HROMIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

time he left the SA.

Three of the remaining members of the branch – George Glass, the vice president for financial affairs; Karina Ochoa Berkley, the vice president for sustainability and a Hatchet opinions writer; and Anna Adler, the director of student engagement – published a joint statement Friday night calling for Brookins to step down. The letter states that the “few” remaining members of the SA could not “stay quiet” knowing the SA has a “credibly accused sexual harasser” in its leadership.

SA members consider impeachment, censure proceedings

SA Executive Vice President Brandon Hill said in an interview Saturday that senators are looking into the possibility of initiating a censure or impeachment trial. He said Monday’s senate meeting will likely determine how the body chooses to act based on whether Brookins

attends the meeting and how he takes “accountability” for himself.

Hill said he has not been able to reach Brookins for the past few days.

The SA Senate has the ability to initiate impeachment proceedings – which could result in removing Brookins from office – or censure proceedings – which could result in a formal expression of disapproval and could include other repercussions apart from expelling Brookins from the organization, according to the SA’s constitution and bylaws.

University policy states student organizations cannot take action against an individual for violating GW’s policies. Hill, the executive vice president, said in an earlier interview Saturday that the senate can only impeach a member of the SA if they violate the organization’s bylaws.

He said in an interview last week that finding new members to fill the vacancies is a top prior-

ity. There are currently three applications out for the first three positions that became vacant, which will “hopefully” be filled at Monday’s meeting, he added.

The confirmation process for students applying to vacant positions will follow all standard protocols, Hill said. Vice presidential appointments and new members must be confirmed by the full senate, he said.

Drew Amstutz, the former vice president of undergraduate student policy who resigned Jan. 16, said he ultimately decided to leave the SA earlier this month when he was told about the sexual misconduct claims the female student described in her tweets Friday.

Amstutz said the SA must focus on “healing,” and Brookins either needs to resign or be impeached. He added that the SA should ensure a woman serves in at least one of the body’s top three positions – either as president, executive vice president or senate pro tempore.



Since allegations of sexual misconduct against the SA president came to light Friday, more than 30 SA senators have called for his resignation. GRACE HROMIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Explainer: How the SA could address mounting calls for president to resign

LIZZIE MINTZ
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

ZACH SCHONFELD
NEWS EDITOR

After claims of sexual misconduct surfaced against Student Association President Howard Brookins and at least a dozen SA cabinet members have left the organization since December, uncertainty remains over Brookins’ future in the role as calls for his resignation mount.

In a series of tweets published Friday evening, a female student said Brookins touched her without her consent and “crossed clearly set boundaries” throughout their friendship. That evening, three of the remaining cabinet members wrote a letter calling for Brookins to step down.

The Hatchet does not identify people, outside of public means like social media channels, claiming to have experienced sexual misconduct without their consent.

At least a dozen student organizations and 31 SA senators

have called for Brookins’ resignation since Friday evening.

“We the undersigned senators no longer have confidence in President Brookins’ ability to lead the Student Association,” the senators wrote in a statement released Saturday. “We are requesting that President Brookins resign his position immediately as Student Association president so that we can begin to repair the damage inflicted on the Student Association’s reputation and its members.”

As pressure for Brookins to leave and possibilities of impeachment or censure loom, here is everything you should know about the future of the SA if Brookins were to exit office.

If Brookins resigns, SA Executive Vice President Brandon Hill would be next in line for the role, but if he “fails to succeed” to the presidency, the senate would elect a new president, according to the body’s constitution.

Hill, the executive vice president, said he cannot commit to assuming the presidency

if Brookins resigns, adding that the decision will depend on the GW community’s response.

According to the SA constitution, the senate is not explicitly required to elect someone within the body as president if the executive vice president does not take the position. If the executive vice president does not take the position, the SA Senate would elect a new president.

“A lot of it depends on the sentiments of the student body in regard to if they want someone external for the role or they think that I’m the best person to preserve the integrity of the Student Association,” he said in an interview Saturday.

Hill said the senate cannot impeach Brookins based on sexual misconduct allegations. The Student Code of Conduct prohibits student organizations from taking “adjudicatory or sanctioning action” for violations of University policies without the written approval of the director of Student Rights and Responsibilities.

Homeless residents threatened by inauguration security levels

RIO MATSUMOTO
REPORTER

Residents at the homeless encampment on E Street typically rely on social services and outreach groups for food and supplies, but road barriers and National Guard members stood in their way last week.

The encampment fell under the District’s green zone, a region where traffic was restricted to residents and businesses, as part of the Secret Service’s security operation to clamp down on public safety before the presidential inauguration. Local leaders said people experiencing homelessness faced a higher risk of criminal profiling and displacement by National Guard members, while nearby outreach groups struggled to provide their typical food, shelter and sanitation services.

Senior Yannik Omictin, a member of the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighbor-

hood Commission, said inauguration security measures elevated the risk of criminalization for people experiencing homelessness who are “viewed with more suspicion” because National Guard troops are more vigilant for potential threats. One E Street encampment resident told Omictin he was followed by police officers and needed to explain that he was returning to his tent after shopping.

“There’s an increased suspicion because the groups that are here are looking for people who don’t belong or who are deviants,” Omictin said. “They automatically see unhoused folks and stereotype them as deviants, as people who don’t belong.”

DCist reported that 7,000 National Guard members will stay in D.C. following the inauguration, and 5,000 will remain in the city until March.

Workers with homeless outreach groups like Miriam’s Kitchen and

Bread for the City said they feared that individuals experiencing homelessness might have been confronted by federal law enforcement or removed from secured areas if they were not in shelters or service centers downtown. Omictin said people experiencing homelessness face fear from both seeing troops stationed around them “at all times” and the possibility of displacement resulting from security measures.

He said Mayor Muriel Bowser had communicated in a flyer distributed by the Department of Human Services earlier this month that encampment residents could be displaced at any time, a scenario that would disrupt pathways to housing and that usually starts with the removal of a stable encampment. He added that U.S. Park Police personnel have also threatened displacement against homeless populations in the past.

See **LEADERS** Page 3



Federal police and troops providing security heavily disrupted the lives of people experiencing homelessness by demanding ID or forcibly moving tents on federal property. FILE PHOTO BY GABRIELLE RHOADS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

News

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THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

TAKING STOCK OF CLIMATE CHANGE: EARTH, AIR, FIRE AND WATER

Jan. 27 • Noon EST • Free
Join a panel of environmental experts as they discuss their roles in climate change, the dangers it poses and actions we can take to prevent its effects.

BOOK TALK WITH PROFESSOR ETHAN PORTER

Jan. 28 • 6 p.m. EST • Free
Tune into a conversation with SMPA Professor Ethan Porter about the launch of his new book about the disparity between the amount of time spent and the amount of cognitive resources to being a consumer and being a citizen.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

JAN. 26, 1989

GW rejects the idea of a student-run Emergency Medical Service, the precursor to EMeRG, for liability reasons. EMeRG would later come to be five years later.



FILE PHOTO BY ERIC LEE

Honors Program students said they are still waiting for progress on many of the suggestions they made regarding diversity and inclusion in the program.

Honors program working to update curricula to support diversity: report

NURIA DIAZ
STAFF WRITER

The University Honors Program released a report earlier this month outlining the changes that officials made to its curricula and admissions policies in the fall to support diversity efforts.

The report states officials have surveyed freshmen about their experiences with diversity and inclusion in the program, plan to host diversity and inclusion workshops for those involved in the program and are working to create a webpage to publicize the progress of UHP's diversity and inclusion efforts. Students in the program said they felt the report was a step in the right direction, but they are still waiting to be updated on many of the suggestions they made to the program's diversity and inclusion committee last year.

Bethany Cobb Kung, the director of UHP and an associate professor of honors and physics, said the program's diversity

and inclusion work is ongoing, and officials expect it to continue "long term."

Kung said students, faculty and staff have been "highly engaged" in efforts to support diversity and inclusion in UHP by recommending improvements to the program during workshops and at bias trainings. Faculty have been working to update their course syllabi to be more inclusive by adding new material that covers current diversity issues, she said.

"I know that some of the best online reading discussions in my class this fall were focused on readings that I added because of some of the discussions we had over the semester," she said in an email.

Kung said officials also implemented a new course substitution policy after several students, faculty and staff had indicated an interest in it, but she declined to say how the policy fits in with the program's efforts to support diversity and inclusion.

The policy, which will be implemented as a "trial run" for the next academic year, will allow students to petition to take a course outside of UHP's offerings that will still count for the program's requirements, the report states.

"This policy will help to increase the flexibility of the program so that it is easier for all of our students to fully complete the program requirements during their time at GW," Kung said. "Additionally, this will allow students to take a course on a topic – or with a faculty member – that they are really excited about but which we are not currently able to offer through the program."

Kung said the diversity and inclusion workshops that officials have held for UHP community members – led by Jordan West, the director of diversity and inclusion education – have helped participants become more comfortable discussing issues of diversity and inclusion and learning the relevant terminology for these issues.

Security restrictions loosen following tumultuous month

ZACH SCHONFELD
NEWS EDITOR

After a historic month of political upheaval, security restrictions are loosening around the District following the presidential inauguration.

This month's riot at the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6 caused law enforcement to implement significant security measures leading up to President Joe Biden's inauguration, locking down much of downtown D.C. for days as thousands of National Guard troops swarmed the District to provide additional security. Federal and local agencies have started breaking down the many miles of fences and barricades constructed while some heightened security measures remain in place.

At a press conference Thursday, Mayor Muriel Bowser thanked the Secret Service, National Guard, supporting federal agencies and the thousands of police officers who traveled to the District to provide security during the

inauguration.

"I also want to thank D.C. residents for enduring the street closures and the intense security measures that we all saw, and I know that we will continue working together to keep our city safe but accessible," Bowser said at the press conference.

Crews began removing the barriers that surrounded the National Mall and other areas Wednesday evening, and District officials said it could take up to 36 hours to finish taking down the remaining fences.

Most of the National Mall was reopened within hours of the conclusion of Wednesday night's concert at the Lincoln Memorial.

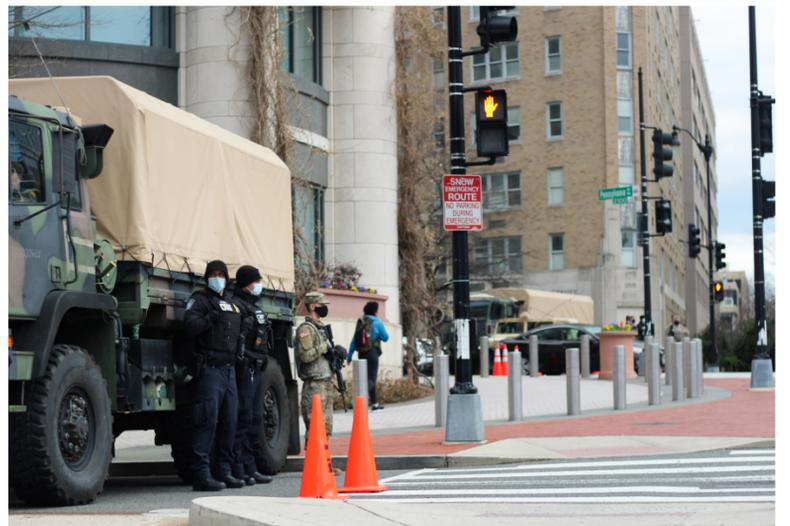
Bowser also reopened indoor dining in the District Friday up to 25 percent capacity. She issued an order last month banning indoor dining during the holidays but later extended the ban through Inauguration Day amid security concerns in light of the Capitol riot.

The National Guard said in a statement that nearly 26,000 troops from 50 states, D.C. and three territories provided support during the inauguration, but only 10,600 troops remained on duty as of Thursday.

Roughly 7,000 National Guard personnel are anticipated to provide assistance through the end of the month, the group said.

As former President Donald Trump's impeachment trial in the U.S. Senate gets underway, as many as 5,000 National Guard troops will remain in the District through mid-March, Politico reported Sunday.

University President Thomas LeBlanc said in a message to the GW community Thursday that he expects to see heightened security in Foggy Bottom gradually rolled back in the coming days, but officials will maintain an "enhanced safety team" on campus in coordination with local and federal agencies.



Nearly 26,000 troops from 50 states, D.C. and three territories were present in the District during inauguration.

Sorority chapters turn to informal recruitment after decline in interest

TIFFANY GARCIA
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Formal sorority recruitment participation continued its multi-year downward trend during the organization's first virtual recruitment period during the COVID-19 pandemic earlier this month.

About 275 students participated in the Panhellenic Association's sorority recruitment this year – an almost 20 percent drop compared to last year – and 214 were offered a bid, a formal invitation to join a sorority, student leaders said. The mark falls below last year's participation in formal recruitment, which was at the time the lowest in at least 10 years, prompting all chapters to hold informal recruitment to reach more potential recruits.

Anne Graham, the director of student involvement and leadership, said the Office of Student Life connected Panhel leaders with resources, like advice from peer institutions' chapters' experiences leading virtual recruitment and early access to GW-licensed Zoom accounts for chapter leaders while organizing recruitment. She said the office also supported Panhel in removing the 12-credit minimum requirement for students to take part in the recruitment process to remove any barriers for students seeking to make connections in the Panhel community.

"The Office of Student Life has received positive feedback from chapter leaders, new members and chapter advisers on virtual recruitment," Graham said in an email. "We are extremely proud of the Panhellenic Association executive council and of each of the chapters for their ability to continuously adapt to the changes and run recruitment successfully in the virtual environment."

Senior Morgan Islam, the vice president of recruitment for the Panhellenic Association and a member of Sigma Delta Tau, said she remained "on call 24/7" throughout the week in a separate Zoom breakout room, considered Panhel's "headquarters," with other

executive sorority leaders. She said chapters' recruitment chairs could contact them for help on how to run their online events and expand their membership.

"I really do think that potential new members were still able to have genuine and authentic conversations about values with our members, which is at the heart of our recruitment process," Islam said in an email.

She said chapters presented their values and philanthropy efforts on the first night this year, taking the place of what is usually an evening to hold casual conversations with members. She said the switch offered potential new members additional information about each chapter and the recruitment process that they may have not had access to in the fall.

"They didn't get to experience being in classes with sorority women, witness their public philanthropy events, get to know them in other student organizations or even just see their letters around campus," Islam said. "This unfamiliarity with our chapters put this group of PNMs at a disadvantage when it came to making informed decisions about where they wanted to end up."

Senior Alexa Saberito, the president of Panhel and a member of Sigma Delta Tau, said all 10 chapters are hosting continuous open bidding, an informal recruitment process, so she cannot confirm how many bids have been accepted. Last year, three sororities – Kappa Alpha Theta, Pi Beta Phi and Sigma Delta Tau – held informal recruitment.

Continuous open bidding, which began on bid day, allows chapters to extend invitations to students who did not end up in a chapter after formal recruitment or did not go through formal recruitment processes, Saberito said.

"269 PNMs were eligible and 214 received bids," she said in an email. "Our continuous open bidding process is currently underway so I expect most of the PNMs that constitute that discrepancy will end up joining the Panhel community."



Panhel chapter leaders received early access to GW-licensed Zoom accounts to conduct virtual recruitment this season.

She said Panhel and the student life office eliminated its 12-credit hour requirement after many freshmen reached out to her directly saying they had deferred their admission to GW until spring because of the pandemic.

"As always, we want there to be as few obstacles to joining our community as possible, and we saw the 12-credit requirement as an unnecessary barrier," Saberito said in an email.

She said this year participants also submitted either a video or short essay answering questions about their own personal values so chapters could familiarize themselves with applicants prior to rush week.

She added that the organization's recruitment registration process is "largely" influenced by each chapter's campus presence, so the pandemic forced members to reach out to potential new members through virtual means like school

emails and social media.

"Besides the obvious fact that we were not in the Marvin Center and able to have in-person interactions, our process really wasn't all that different," Saberito said.

Seven chapter presidents did not respond to multiple requests for comment. Kappa Delta declined to comment due to not being allowed to speak to media.

Katie Menello, the chapter president of Pi Beta Phi, said virtual recruitment went "surprisingly well" for their chapter this year. Pi Beta Phi will also hold informal recruitment, according to the chapter's Instagram.

"Pi Phi was so excited to welcome 20 incredible new members [so far], and we are looking forward to even more women joining our sisterhood soon through the informal recruitment process," Menello said in an email.

Sophomore Hannah Merenstein, the chapter president of Sig-

ma Delta Tau, said the chapter has already welcomed 20 new members but will continue to hold informal recruitment to invite more students to join. She said "very few girls" had signed up for recruitment by the deadline to register for recruitment, prompting the deadline to be extended a week.

She said getting to know potential new members virtually was challenging because learning about each person online wasn't the same as reading a person's actions in person. She said to combat the difficulty of connecting online, the chapter hosted multiple breakout room sessions dedicated to sisters and potential new members connecting with each other.

"We made it very clear that if they were feeling uncomfortable at all, or just needed a break, because it is so exhausting sitting on Zoom all day, to just be honest," Merenstein said. "Just to make sure that they had the support they needed."

Professor creates database with COVID-19 patient data for researchers

ABBY KENNEDY
REPORTER

This story is part of *The Hatchet's semester-long project sharing stories of GW's faculty members at the forefront of researching the COVID-19 pandemic.*

Keith Crandall, the founding director of the Computational Biology Institute at the Milken Institute School of Public Health, has been working to create infrastructure to house COVID-19 patient data, like symptom logs and the number of hospital visits, from the GW Hospital for use by GW's researchers.

Crandall said he's merging the data he gathers with the National Institutes of Health National Cohort Collaboration, a national project that compiles COVID-19 patient data, for researchers to use in their work. He said hospitals typically have strict regulations that prevent medical data from being released to the public, but the pandemic revealed a need for this type of data

—unaccompanied by patient identifiers — to be released.

Crandall said he's signed legal agreements with the hospital to access patient information, like their age and time of visit, without identifying the patient. He said hospitals typically can't legally share this information with the public for privacy reasons.

"Normally hospitals are a bunch of independent organizations that really have a hesitance to share any data whatsoever," he said. "It's hard even as a patient to get my own data out of a hospital, right?"

He said part of his research money, provided through the University's internal COVID-19 research fund, has been used to purchase the computer to house the data, which GW researchers can access through the University's server. He said his data-aggregating process involves moving the data securely from the GW Hospital to a "warehouse" within GW's firewall and to then remove

personal information, like a patient's address, social security number and birth date, to ensure privacy.

He said even without the identifying information, the data still provides researchers with valuable information, like complicating factors, drug therapies and whether patients were seen multiple times. He said the information can be useful for both clinical and genomic research.

Crandall said the added workload of conducting research on top of his teaching responsibilities can be "exhausting" to manage, but he enjoys doing both.

"I have a much more structured schedule in terms of dedicated time for writing on papers, dedicated time for working on grants," he said. "I actually for the first time have blocked off noon to one for lunch."

Crandall said he has also assigned his students projects relating to COVID-19, which has given him the opportunity to learn about the pandemic alongside his



HATCHET FILE PHOTO
Keith Crandall, the director of the Computational Biology Institute, hopes to use COVID-19 patient data from the GW Hospital for research efforts at GW.

students.

"It has been good, but I miss the personal interaction with students," he said. "There is just something fun about seeing students in a classroom, and it's hard

to see the lightbulb turn on with the students when you're all on one screen."

Crandall said it was "amazing" that the University was able to find the money to give to talented

teams of researchers.

"I'm glad they have the foresight to get this started and the fortitude to get this finished," Crandall said.

—Nicholas Pasion
contributed reporting.

Professor drafts website on K-12 teaching strategies during pandemic



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

A professor and graduate student in the Graduate School of Education and Human Development are working to compile solutions to problems teachers have encountered with remote instruction.

ABBY KENNEDY
REPORTER

Jennifer Clayton is trying to point educators to best practices for teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic through a website.

Clayton, the director of the educational leadership and administration

programs in the Graduate School of Education and Human Development, said she has spent the past several months researching ways K-12 education leaders have responded to the pandemic. Through her research, she said she is working with a graduate student to create a website housing informa-

tion about ways educators can better their remote teaching.

"For me in my research, I think it is very important to understand how leaders who are really charged with ensuring that equitable outcomes exist for all children are able to sort of navigate this very unpre-

cedented event in U.S. history," Clayton said.

In conversations with educators, she said she learned of school officials offering WiFi on buses for students' virtual classes and a principal who started a parent book study over Zoom. Those practices are funneled into the website, which is financed through the University's internal fund for COVID-19 research.

Clayton said the goal of her project is to share potential solutions on how to teach effectively while dealing with the pandemic for schools around the country. She said she also wants to demonstrate the "resilience" of education leaders in their pandemic response.

Clayton said she's currently meeting with K-12 educators in Hampton Roads, Virginia, which includes about 15 school divisions in the area. She said she has been using her network of senior educators to assist her in sourcing people to interview for her research, which she said has been useful because the issues facing the education field have been in flux throughout the pandemic.

"Having direct and constant access to a network like this allows me to have both formal and informal ongoing and interactive conversations with them, which is really critical, and this is at a time where some schools have actually placed limitations on the ability to conduct research because quite frankly their personnel are so overwhelmed with the day-to-day management," Clayton said.

She said she has been collaborating with a graduate student in GSEHD who is helping her build the website to house the information gathered from her research. She said the goal of the website is to make her research widely available to the K-12 community around the country, which would otherwise have limited access to research that is only published in paid academic journals.

She said GW's prioritization of education research proved critical in a time where the need for research is working on an abnormally fast timeline.

"We have children who are going to need tremendous support and who have needed tremendous

support from a number of different angles and trying to think about what that re-entry if you will is going to look like is just so critical," she said. "So I am really excited to see part of that and having GW's support to do that work."

Emma Lindberg, the graduate student assisting in creating the website, said she began developing the website in late December, and it is still in the early stages of development.

She said the website will contain the resources collected in Clayton's research on various COVID-19 topics, including how to reopen schools and how to mentally and emotionally prepare students to return to school. She said the website will mainly consist of a compilation of blogs, research papers and articles that educators can easily access.

"There is so much information to sort through right now, and it is helpful to have important pieces in one place," she said in an email. "Additionally, people are looking for information from a trusted, reputable source. I think Dr. Clayton and this website can be that source."

SA Senate could initiate impeachment, censure proceedings

From Page 1

Hill said senators can only impeach a member of the SA if they violate the organization's bylaws.

On whether the senate should attempt to impeach or censure Brookins for claims that he created a "negligent and careless" work environment, Hill said he hopes Brookins "would spare" the senate a trial "out of respect" for himself, the SA and the student body.

If Hill assumes the presidency, the senate's chairperson pro tempore — currently SA Sen. Thomas Falcigno, CPS-G, who has served as both acting and permanent executive vice president as an undergraduate — would temporarily fill the vacant executive vice president position, the constitution states.

Within two weeks of an executive vice president vacancy, the constitution requires the new president to nominate a new second-in-command to serve the remainder of the term, which would require confirmation by the senate.

"If there were a situation where I would need to step in as acting EVP, I would absolutely honor that responsibility and ensure a seamless transition into whoever was confirmed by the senate to be EVP," Falcigno said in an interview Saturday.

Falcigno said he would feel "very comfortable" stepping into the role of executive vice president again given his past experience.

"There's a lot of institutional knowledge that I think would be important," Falcigno said. "And in times of such uncertainty, I think that hav-

ing somebody in that role that understands it is important, and it shows strength and continuity in government."

Brookins doesn't resign, faces impeachment

If Brookins does not resign, the senate could attempt to impeach and remove him from office.

To initiate impeachment proceedings, one-third of senators would need to sign a petition outlining charges against Brookins. The body would then send a copy of the petition and charges to Brookins; Hill, the executive vice president; and Maggie O'Brien, the Student Court's chief judge — the senate's by-laws state.

The chief judge would then schedule and preside over an impeachment hearing between 10 to 15 days after Brookins is given notice to appear before the senate. The hearing would include the presentation of evidence against Brookins by a member of the senate, and Brookins would have the opportunity to speak on his own behalf, be represented by counsel and produce witnesses in his defense, according to the bylaws.

Following closing arguments, Brookins would leave the hearing, and the senate would subsequently debate the evidence presented and decide if he is "more likely than not" guilty of the charges.

A two-thirds majority in the senate would be required to vote to convict and expel Brookins from office, the by-laws state. More than two-thirds of senators have called for Brookins' resignation, but senators have not publicly said whether they would sign a petition initiating impeach-

ment proceedings or would vote to convict him.

Falcigno, the senate pro tempore, said the signatories comprise more than a two-thirds majority of senators.

"It should be noted that as it will stand on Monday evening, there will be a total of 43 Senators with one vacancy," he said in an email. "This means that in order to successfully convict a member of the SA through the impeachment process, only 29 members of the senate need to vote in the affirmative to convict and remove from office."

Brookins doesn't resign, faces censure

If the senate chooses not to proceed with impeachment, the body could choose to issue a formal disapproval.

The body must forward censure charges to an accused SA official at least five days before the censure vote would be held, according to the constitution. Any elected SA official may be censured by a two-thirds vote of the senate for failing to "fulfill their duties and responsibilities," the constitution states.

Should the body present censure charges against Brookins, he would have the opportunity to answer the charges before a vote is taken and would have the right to counsel. The senate would then decide any penalties resulting from the censure vote, barring removing the accused official from office, according to the constitution.

"Invocation of this provision by the Student Association Senate shall in no way preclude further action from being taken by the Senate under any other provision of this constitution," the constitution states.

Local leaders encourage students to learn about encampments

From Page 1

"It is egregious, and a lot of these organizations operate with no real regard for the residents and people who live here," Omicntin said. "It's really unsurprising that they'd be willing to take these kinds of measures, and that's why I'm skeptical about the future. Without cynicism about the state of affairs in the short term, you risk putting a lot of peoples' lives at danger."

Omicntin said blocked-off roadways and National Guard troops demanding self-identification made it difficult for outreach groups, like Miriam's Kitchen and Remora House, to reach those in need with food and sanitary products. He said social workers needed to spend extra time seeking entry at checkpoints because of the security restrictions in place.

He said it took 45 minutes for social workers to reach the E Street encampment and pass through a perimeter of Secret Service members and National Guard troops forming a "soft barricade" at 23rd Street.

Omicntin said mobility restrictions and Metro station closures have deprived people experiencing homelessness of a "significant source of warmth" and the ability to travel to resource centers or case workers. He said these individuals often travel to the Downtown Day Services

Center, where people can take showers, do laundry, get haircuts and practice for job interviews.

Even though security fencing and barriers were dismantled after Inauguration Day, Omicntin said students should educate themselves about the District's homeless services to understand their daily struggles. He said students should donate to organizations — like Ward 2 Mutual Aid, which assembles community fundraising — while urging local officials to fund permanent supportive housing and targeted affordable housing.

"There's no excuse to not know what's going on in our own backyard, and that's the big message," Omicntin said.

ANC Commissioner Trupti Patel said she joined other commissioners and activists across the city in issuing Bowser a letter that demanded District officials provide temporary shelters for people experiencing homelessness following the Capitol riot and leading up to the inauguration. She said the homeless community was especially "susceptible" to violence tied to the Capitol mob.

"They had been in some cases harassed, bullied, name-called," Patel said. "I just know many of the unhoused neighbors tried to find different areas that they could go to and some were even displaced from the normal areas that they felt safe to be at."

After Patel helped

pressure city officials with the letter and several online press conferences demanding homeless aid, she said the District launched an outreach program to temporarily move some residents of encampments into various shelters and hotel rooms.

Patel said the heightened security surrounding the inauguration blocked locals and volunteers from checking on those living on the street, as they would normally would.

"Many community members would make sure our unhoused neighbors got food, so there wasn't this ability to consistently check in during the time of heightened security," Patel said.

ANC Commissioner Joel Causey said he heard the Department of Human Services was planning to move people experiencing homelessness out of the green zone and into temporary shelters, adding that he noticed how certain encampment residents disappeared from the green zone leading up to the inauguration. He said officials planned to move some residents from E Street to Washington Circle to circumvent the security, but he isn't completely sure of their current whereabouts.

"I unfortunately have seen people that were in the green zone aren't there anymore, and that's kind of concerning because I would like to know where they went," he said.

Foggy Bottom Food Pantry reopens amid shortage of clients, supplies

YUTONG JIANG
REPORTER

A local food pantry is back up and running after shutting down in March during the first wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

George Madill – a volunteer at the Foggy Bottom Food Pantry, housed in The United Church on G Street – said the pantry first shuttered due to food shortages and renovations before returning last month with “limited food stocks” and a few clients who were aware of the reopening. He said volunteers are working to rebuild the pantry’s operations and clientele, now offering curbside delivery and virtually contacting clients about the service reboot.

“I hope that it keeps people from starving,” Madill said. “People that don’t have money to buy the food or don’t have sources for food, if we can help them out, they come over here, they can pick up food.”

After reopening last month, Madill said volunteers are struggling to account for food shortages and a dropoff in local customers. Aside from the pantry’s listing with Mayor Muriel Bowser’s office and the Capital Area Food Bank, Madill said staff members are mes-

saging clients with contact information and advertising the pantry on Facebook and the church’s website to amplify community awareness.

“The clients haven’t found out that we’re open again, but they’re starting to come back, so it will be a while before we get as many clients as we had before the pandemic,” he said.

Madill said the pantry has also been shortchanged on food supplies after the food processors and manufacturers that shut down last year strained the distribution system for local suppliers, like the Capital Area Food Bank. He said volunteers and community members can’t do “that much” to resolve this issue that is influenced by shortages facing the “food supply chain.”

“It’s getting better now, but there was kind of a squeeze on food,” he said. “Everybody’s trying to get the same food, so people were going hungry.”

He said volunteers are now looking to open market vendors like Costco or Giant to offset the supply dropoff, which has left local food banks competing to dole out their remaining supplies to clients amid high demand. He said the pantry accepts

“grants and donations from individuals and organizations”, but the number of clients the pantry is able to attract will ultimately determine how well it feeds community members in the area.

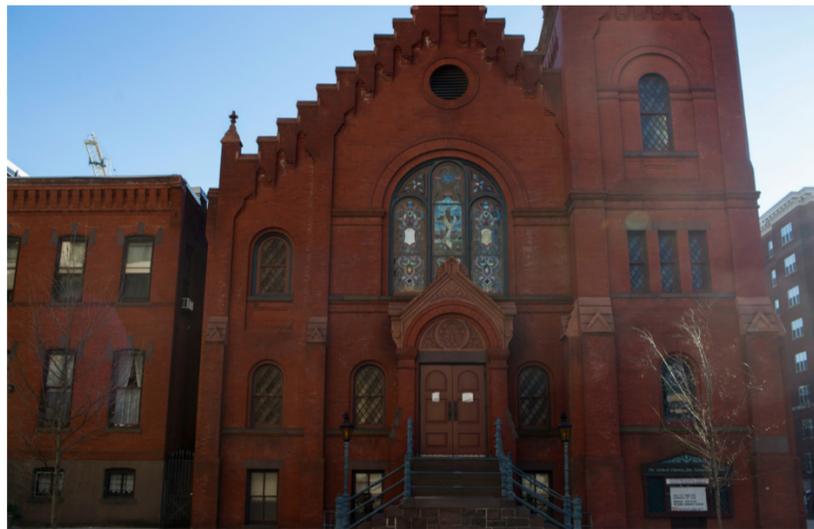
“We’re competing with each other,” Madill said. “The food banks are competing with the commercial grocers, competing with the government even, for food to supply to people.”

Madill said the pantry will remain open on its pre-pandemic schedule on the second and fourth Saturday of each month from 10 a.m. to noon.

Kevin Rost, the church administrator at The United Church, said the pantry’s clientele dropped from about 125 to 300 families before the pandemic to now just between 25 to 50. He said the pantry sets income and family size eligibility requirements for clients.

Rost said community members now receive food products at the pantry in a box instead of walking through the pantry and picking items off the shelves, like they typically would before the COVID-19 outbreak. Many clients are currently unaware of the pantry’s reopening, he added.

“The word has not got-



ZACH BRIEN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The Foggy Bottom Food Pantry located at United Methodist Church is back up and running after shuttering during the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ten mailed that we’re reopened,” he said. “The clientele are not necessarily connected electronically, not like you have an email list and can email and say, ‘Hey, we’re open again.’”

Rost said he hopes to continue benefiting the local community before hopefully returning to indoor food distribution in the future.

“The hopes and goals are that we can get to serve the people who need to be

served and eventually that we can return to inside service so that it’s a much more personable experience,” he said.

John George, the president of the Foggy Bottom Association, said the pantry has a decades-long history of helping struggling community members, like furloughed federal employees and laid-off workers, in need of extra supplies. He said the pantry is “critically

necessary” during the pandemic as a center where volunteers help connect those community members with food.

George said he plans to raise donations, promote the pantry around the neighborhood and discuss its services at the FBA’s upcoming meeting Tuesday to increase local awareness. He said students could also volunteer and aid the struggling food pantry.



FILE PHOTO BY JACK FONSECA | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Rachelle Heller, the director of the Center for Women in Engineering, said 13 pairs of mentors and mentees have participated in the center’s mentorship program since its start this summer.

SEAS women’s mentorship program helps students prepare for careers

ISHANI CHETTERI
REPORTER

More than a semester into a mentorship program for female engineering students, participants said the program has provided guidance in building resumes, establishing professional relationships and preparing for job interviews.

Officials from the School of Engineering and Applied Science’s Center for Women in Engineering said they launched the mentorship program last July to connect students with alumnae who can share career advice. Mentors said they have been able to learn from their students about how to adapt to working in a virtual environment, and mentees said they have benefited from the advice they received about working in a male-dominated field and preparing for jobs and internships.

Rachelle Heller, the director of the center and a professor of computer science, said the mentorship program has attracted 13 pairs of mentors and mentees since its start in the summer.

She said mentors have noted that the training materials officials provided them were helpful as part of their general feedback. The program’s website includes resources like a mentoring toolkit, which features tips on active listening and starting “difficult conversations” for mentors.

Heller added that the officials leading the center are promoting the program through a “variety of channels” and are working to improve the program “as necessary.” She said officials will work to expand the program based on feedback they have received directly from the mentors and a survey distributed to mentees.

Evalyn Maxwell, a sophomore majoring in civil engineering, said she joined the program to have a mentor to assist her in building her

resume and preparing for interviews for potential internships and future jobs. She said her mentor’s experience in the workforce has given her “insight” into the experience of being a woman in STEM and what she could do to further her own career prospects.

“Even though I only meet once a month with my mentor, I think it’s for a good amount of time because it gives us enough time for any possible changes within my academics and current job applications,” Maxwell said.

She said even though participating in the mentorship program online can have drawbacks like “weird” internet connections, it has been convenient since she doesn’t have to worry about spending time commuting to meet her mentor.

Monica Uribe-Francisco, a senior majoring in systems engineering, said her mentor helped her with networking by passing along her resume to potential employers and introducing her to colleagues working in computer engineering.

“Some of the things I’ve been able to do with my mentor in this program is not only talk about full-time jobs and how to prepare for that but also what it is to be a woman in the field of engineering, especially as a woman of color in my case,” Uribe-Francisco said.

She said as a first-generation college student, she was looking for help with navigating “life after graduation,” so she wanted to take advantage of the opportunities that GW offers while she is still in school.

Claire Silverstein, a visiting civil engineering assistant professor and three-time SEAS alumna in 2013, 2015 and 2019, said her mentee has had a positive experience with the program so far and now has access to a professional network that she can build on while fostering relationships at GW and beyond.

“If you have had a good experience as a mentee, hopefully one day you will mentor other people,” she said. “I think just having it full circle, having that support system as you go through schooling and as you enter your career is really important.”

Silverstein said the experience she had with mentors when she was a student at GW helped her pursue paths like graduate school and was also an outlet for her to discuss frustrations and receive advice. She said her knowledge of the “inner-workings” of higher education as a student and part-time faculty member gives her a “unique” perspective when giving her mentee advice or bouncing ideas around for possible careers.

Tanya Ford, a SEAS alumna and mentor, said it’s “especially important” to provide mentorship opportunities for women in STEM because of their underrepresentation in the field. In recent years, women made up less than 25 percent of jobs in STEM fields, according to the U.S. Department of Commerce.

Ford said participating in the program virtually has allowed her and her mentee to be flexible in setting times to meet with each other. But she said she has faced setbacks since she can’t take her mentees to physical locations if they are interested in learning more about a specific work site.

She said during her time as a mentor she has been able to learn from her mentee’s “willingness to be adaptable” with her studies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Not only have I been able to deposit nuggets and give her words of wisdom and best practices but she’s also helped too in terms of being adaptable, flexible and open-minded when it comes to limitations,” she said. “It’s been a rewarding and a great experience for not just her but for myself as well.”

Public health professor issues proposals for COVID-19 response

ZACHARY BLACKBURN
REPORTER

A Milken Institute School of Public Health professor authored a report last week calling on President Joe Biden to focus on reducing public health inequities in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Jeffrey Levi, a professor of health management and policy, wrote a report urging the Biden administration to handle COVID-19 through long-term policies, like expanding access to health insurance, that address racial inequity. Levi said the pandemic can’t be addressed by medical care alone but requires government officials to invest in tangential areas of health, like food and housing policy, to create long-term improvements in public health.

Levi compiled the report based on conversations with 50 community leaders, like health experts and people running community service-based organizations, responding to the pandemic at the national, state and local levels, according to the report. The report states the response to COVID-19 must focus on related “health, social and economic impacts,” in addition to the virus itself.

The report was published through GW’s Funders Forum on Accountable Health, which funds projects relating to health provider accountability. The report is broken down between immediate, post-pandemic and rebuilding responses to the pandemic.

The immediate recommendations include accelerating vaccine distribution and expanding access to health insurance while the post-pandemic stage outlines targeting underlying health conditions that were exacerbated by

COVID-19 and emotional healing for frontline health care workers. The report states the rebuilding stage should include establishing equitable health care systems in the United States, building on the policies outlined in the first two stages.

Levi said policies that fix underlying social conditions, like food and housing insecurity, are just as necessary to improve public health as medically focused policies.

The pandemic has exacerbated pre-existing disparities in public health outcomes. Data from the District’s coronavirus database reveals that the majority of COVID-19 deaths have occurred in medically underserved areas of the city and where Black residents make up the majority of the population.

The report names several goals that can be reached either administratively, like simplifying both the process of health care enrollment and providing technical assistance to states, or legislatively, like implementing broader Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Programs and removing barriers to insurance coverage.

Levi called Biden’s announcement of a temporary 15 percent increase in Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits necessary “economic support” for people in need but said he worries that its temporary nature could maintain public health disparities.

Levi said because the political environment is “hard to predict,” the report highlights changes that can be done administratively by Biden, like the SNAP expansion, in addition to the broader policy changes that require congressional approval.

Experts in public health said addressing racial disparities in health

is key to combatting the pandemic and laying the groundwork for systemic improvements in public health services.

Camara Phyllis Jones – a family physician, epidemiologist and former president of the American Public Health Association – said racial inequities seen in the impacts of COVID-19 and other areas of public health have been caused in part by centuries-long injustices, including slavery, divestment from Native American reservations and Black and Brown communities and inequities in public education. She said ending the social inequities is vital to promoting public health equity.

“If we really want to be stronger as a community and not be fractured with differential impact, by race or by indigenous status or even by income, then we need to deal with all of those other sectors outside of health,” Jones said.

Tina Sacks, an assistant professor at the University of California, Berkeley’s School of Social Welfare, said improving public health goes beyond medical policy to also involve social policy. She said she agrees with the report’s recommendations and supports expansions in food stamps, housing programs and child care subsidies as ways to reduce inequities in public health both during the COVID-19 pandemic and in the future.

“We know from some comparative social policy studies is that in Western Europe, countries that do have more comprehensive social safety nets also have better health outcomes,” Sacks said. “What we need is a more robust safety net in general, and those are the kinds of policies and programs that could be put in place that would go a long way to reducing health inequities.”



FILE PHOTO BY KATE CARPENTER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Using conversations with 50 community leaders and health experts, Professor Jeffrey Levi wrote a report urging the Biden administration to increase focus on racial equity in its COVID-19 response.

When some members of the SA executive cabinet resigned p. 1.

FROM GWHATCHET.COM/OPINIONS

“Higher education should be a right, not a privilege. Students should be allowed to focus on the classroom instead of their next paycheck.”

— KIRAN HOFFNER-SHAH ON 1/21/21

What Biden's pick for secretary of education should bring to higher education

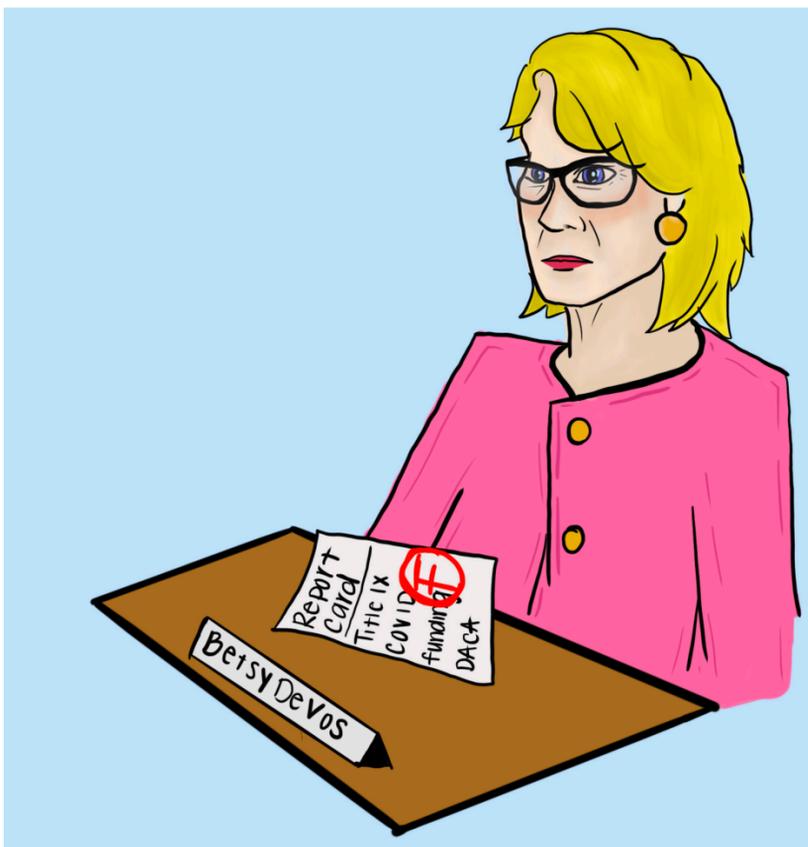
STAFF EDITORIAL

As the nation welcomes President Joe Biden to the White House, higher education institutions across the country are saying goodbye – and good riddance – to former Secretary of Education Betsy DeVos. Biden's pick for the post, Connecticut Commissioner of Education Miguel Cardona, is widely expected to change the tone and direction of the Department of Education. As he enters his post, it is imperative that Cardona cast aside DeVos' policies and directives for higher education and forge a better path forward.

DeVos' departure marks the end of her unqualified reign of terror. Her tenure as chief education official was marked by the rollback of Obama-era policies, extreme animosity toward teachers across the country, unforgivable support of guns in school and many other harmful policies specifically pertaining to higher education, from Title IX regulations that could discourage survivors from stepping forward to the exclusion of DACA recipients from the COVID-19 relief bill. Her threats to cut funding to public schools that refused to reopen because of public health concerns amid a pandemic and advocacy for funding cuts to public education revealed her open disdain for public school systems nationwide.

Biden's pick for secretary of education brings the experience needed for the position. Cardona is a former public school teacher, principal and administrator, giving him vital classroom experience and a valuable perspective for policymaking. As a former teacher and member of a teacher's union, Cardona will be far more understanding of the struggles of teachers nationwide and far more accommodating of their demands, especially during a time when many put their life on the line to teach students in classrooms. And if he upholds Biden's presidential platform, Cardona will introduce student loan reform among other policies that may benefit college graduates.

Despite Cardona's stellar qualifications, it is important to note that there are potential issues with his background. While he brings experience with public education that was sorely lacking from the previous administration, Cardona has no experience in higher education administration. Biden's pick for deputy secretary of education, Cindy Marten, also hails from a K-12 education background. These picks could indicate that the ED will primarily focus on K-12 policy and punt higher education to the White House, but this development isn't



Cartoon by Hannah Thacker

unwelcome. The president and first lady Jill Biden, a community college educator, have already proposed higher education policies to benefit the nation, like free community college tuition, and likely will continue to do so.

However responsibilities are divided between the secretary of education and the White House, there are several DeVos-era policies that Cardona should reverse starting on day one and even more for which he should advocate

and introduce. DeVos repealed previous policies and guidelines regarding LGBTQ protections, which should be reinstated and provide the LGBTQ community the protections they deserve. The previous administration disregarded

the virus and actively threatened public school funding if they did not reopen their campuses. Cardona also needs to work with Biden's new COVID-19 task force to create public health guidelines when it comes to public schools and reopening plans. In violation of the spirit of the law, DeVos funneled funding to private and religiously affiliated schools – Cardona should ensure a more equitable split. While DeVos' Title IX rules are hard to reverse, Cardona should make it clear to universities that they will not face trouble for enforcing Obama-era Title IX policies instead.

Both Biden and Cardona have indicated that they support free community college for certain income brackets, but the Biden administration's higher education policies should exceed just this target. Cardona needs to be a champion for measures that would rein in the increasing costs of higher education, expand debt repayment opportunities and provide more assistance to students burdened with student debt.

The new Biden administration needs to step up for higher education. Cardona's appointment is the first step to repairing the Trump administration's harmful education policies, but the new administration has room to improve.

Brookins must resign from the Student Association

STAFF EDITORIAL

Allegations of sexual misconduct have emerged against Student Association President Howard Brookins, prompting SA cabinet members and several student organizations to call for his resignation. We agree – he should leave the organization.

The editorial board of Volume 116 endorsed Brookins for the presidency last year based on platform points and promises made, but we cannot continue to support him. He has shown disregard for his now-departed cabinet members and friend who bravely shared her story of sexual misconduct.

The Hatchet's editorial board believes women who come forward with allegations of assault and survivors. We are rescinding our endorsement of Brookins and urging for him to exit his post.

It took courage for the student to come forward with her personal and deeply sensitive story and share it, publicly, with the GW community. Student leaders must be held accountable for their actions, as people have bravely done in the past. Brookins

is charged to represent and work alongside. The leader of the body intended to represent all students cannot be someone who is accused of sexual misconduct. The SA is a student advocacy body and has fought to protect students from sexual violence. Brookins' actions undermine the work of the SA and its ability to represent students.

The SA president also has a responsibility to act as a liaison between the GW community and officials and the Board of Trustees. Brookins' alleged actions do not represent all students and should not be tolerated. The GW student body is comprised of a wide variety of people, including women and those who have been survivors of sexual assault and harassment. For Brookins to continue representing the student body with these allegations, he is insulting and disregarding the experiences of women and survivors of sexual assault.

It is important that the GW community believes survivors and supports the members of the community who have been directly and indirectly affected by

“The Hatchet's editorial board believes women who come forward with allegations of assault and survivors.”

has a responsibility to the survivors, the GW community and the integrity of his office, to step down from his position and allow the community and survivors to heal from his alleged actions.

The SA represents all students. It is unacceptable for that body to be led by someone who is claimed to have committed atrocious actions against women and against the people he

Brookins. The first way to start doing that, is to remove the source of the problem from office. Brookins needs to take accountability for his actions, allow the SA to move forward representing the GW community and heal.

The student body deserves better, survivors deserve better and the GW community deserves better.

Brookins must resign immediately.

Progressives must ditch the quip ‘settle for Biden’

Progressives around the country “settled” for President Joe Biden this past November. Now that he is in office, we need to do more than that.

Declan Duggan
Writer

Despite the fact that 60 percent of voters under 30 years old supported former Democratic candidates Bernie Sanders or Elizabeth Warren, that same age group turned out to vote for Biden in record numbers. Both Sens. Sanders, I-Vt., and Warren, D-Mass., supported Biden after he earned the Democratic party's nomination and encouraged their supporters to get out and vote for Biden. In fact, an online campaign encouraging progressives to “settle for Biden” gained traction, and that mentality convinced many progressive activists to vote for him last November.

The quip was a good idea with strong merit leading up to the general election. But now that Biden has been sworn into office, it is time to ditch this mentality. We will not have another four years of right-wing extremism, but that does not mean we can live through four years of platitudes, corporatism and piecemeal measures that will not fundamentally change a system that has been failing Americans for decades. We have seen signs that the Biden administration will need more than just words of encouragement to move to the left because of his ties to the defense, oil and financial sectors.

Instead, progressives must use the slim Democratic majority in the U.S. House of Representatives to force critical rule changes regarding issues like the filibuster, and vote for important legislation like statehood for D.C. and Puerto Rico, the nation-wide legalization of marijuana, a large climate and infrastructure spending package and broad executive action. In doing so, progressives will be able to secure marked improvements for Americans.

In the weeks leading up to Biden's inauguration, officials with corporate ties and deeply moder-

ate track records were appointed as members of his cabinet. His secretary of defense, retired Gen. Lloyd Austin III, has sat on the boards of defense contractors since he left the military in 2016, and most recently, he joined the board of Raytheon Technologies, which has profited off of our wars in the Middle East for years. Both Antony Blinken, Biden's pick for secretary of state, and Avril Haines, his pick for director of national intelligence, have corporate ties. Blinken and Haines worked at WestExec Advisors, a consulting firm that has refused to release a client list but has secured multimillion dollar contracts in the defense sector. Janet Yellen, the nominee for treasury secretary, has taken more than \$7 million in speaking fees from organizations like Goldman Sachs and Citigroup. One of his senior advisers, Cedric Richmond, received extensive donations from the oil and gas industry as a member of Congress.

These cabinet nominees should concern any progressive who hopes for four years of reform, justice and growth rather than military expansion abroad and Wall Street coddling. Leaders with deep corporate ties will be very hesitant to cross the industries that have provided much of their wealth and success. They will likely opt for incrementalism or even ignore the concerns of progressives as we saw in the Obama administration. Those eight years of incrementalism is what allowed the rise of Trump's populism, and if we ignore these concerns for another four years, the next president will not be Trump, but much worse.

These cabinet picks are almost certainly going to be confirmed, but the fight does not end there. We have seen encouraging signs that progressives can work with the Biden administration to realize major change, just as long as we put in the work. Rep. Deb Haaland, D-N.M., a fierce climate advocate who supports the Green New Deal and has openly opposed fracking and drilling on public land, was named Biden's nominee for secretary of the interior. Biden has also released strong immigration reform proposals and shown a

willingness toward deficit spending.

We also recently saw how progressives can utilize the slim Democratic House majority to force crucial rule changes into various legislation. The Congressional Progressive Caucus was able to secure two exemptions to the Paygo rule, one for spending related to the economic and public health effects of COVID-19 and the other for spending related to the economic, environmental and public health consequences of climate change. The Paygo rule has been a roadblock for major policies like Medicare for All and the Green New Deal, and that roadblock has now been lifted because progressives used their leverage appropriately.

Now, as Democrats take control of both houses of Congress and the White House, it is time for progressives to amplify that leverage and work with Congressional leadership to hold votes on significant pieces of legislation. This should include – at a minimum – votes on another round of \$2,000 stimulus checks, statehood for D.C. and Puerto Rico, massive investment in our crumbling infrastructure, health care expansions and the legalization of marijuana.

Progressives must pressure their elected leaders in Congress and activists around the country to enforce these changes and resist corporatism. Student activists should be on the forefront of this movement. The number of Millennial and Gen Z voters is projected to equal the amount of votes from older generations in 2024 and surpass it in 2028. We are an overwhelmingly progressive generation and deserve a voice in the policies of the Biden administration. Student activists should lobby members of the Congressional Progressive Caucus to block votes on legislation that is important to congressional leadership until votes on progressive legislation are brought to the floor.

We don't need to settle for Biden for the next four years. We must bring progressive issues to the forefront and enact real change.

— Declan Duggan, a freshman majoring in international affairs, is an opinions writer.

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Submit to opinions@gwhatchet.com

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Culture

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THE SCENE

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The first part of a five-part series, this art history conversation traces the history of political art within the Chicano community

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RELEASED THIS WEEK:

“COOLER RETURNS” AN ALBUM BY KIWI JR.

Students join Georgia Senate campaigns to increase voter turnout

CLARA DUHON
STAFF WRITER

After learning of voter suppression in Georgia during the 2018 gubernatorial election, now-freshman Shivani Desai looked forward to helping people get to the polls in her home state's 2020 Senate race.

Desai said when the election rolled around in November, she had been helping manage and create content for then-Democratic candidate Jon Ossoff's social media. Then, after the election headed to a runoff, she said Ossoff's campaign team merged with then-Democratic candidate Raphael Warnock's, and she worked along other interns to ramp up attention to the two candidates through TikTok.

Desai is one of five students who said they've volunteered for the two Democrats' successful campaigns for Georgia's senate seats through phone banking and canvassing. The students, all of whom are from southern states, said they wanted to help the U.S. Senate secure a Democrat majority and encourage a more progressive agenda in the South.

"I learned that it really makes a difference if you have it in your power to work for a campaign that you know is one of the best, if not the strongest avenue, to bring justice for your state and for the country," Desai said.

Desai, who volunteered for both Sens. Ossoff and Warnock's runoff campaigns, said she credits former Georgia House Rep. Stacey Abrams, D-Ga., and other political activists for their push to flip Georgia blue through initiatives like the New Georgia Project, which helped increase voter registration,

particularly for traditionally underrepresented groups like younger voters and racial minorities.

Senior Madeleine Deisen, a former Hatchet reporter and member of Swing Left – an organization that works to flip states from red to blue – said she spent 15 to 20 hours per week phone banking and friend banking, which includes reaching out to friends and family members to remind them to vote in the election. Deisen said friend banking was a more "personal" way to encourage people to vote.

"It doesn't have to be your best friends, although, of course, that's really powerful," she said. "But even just an acquaintance, if someone that you know in your personal life and your real life asks you to vote, that's a lot more powerful than a stranger calling you up on the phone."

Since an additional runoff election took place in January after the regular election in November, Deisen said she and the rest of the coordinated campaign for both candidates wanted to ensure they reached out to young people, particularly Georgia college students who might not be living at the same location they were during the general election. To target this group, Deisen said she and other organizers used a voter mobilization tool called Reach to make it easier to reach out to friends and family with voter information.

When the election headed to a runoff around the time of final exams, Deisen added that she had a "tricky" time balancing her school work and her responsibilities for the campaign since she didn't anticipate the campaign to continue past November.

"One thing you're doing – your



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CONNOR WITSCHONKE | PHOTOGRAPHER
Students joined the Georgia Senate race mainly by phone banking and friend banking to campaign for the Democratic candidates and win control of the U.S. Senate.

job for the runoff election – is literally determining the fate of our country," Deisen said. "And then it's like, 'Do I phone bank or do I write papers?' It's hard to find motivation to write your papers."

Jack King, a junior who volunteered with the Georgia Democratic Party, said he participated in "Get Out The Vote Weekend" from Jan. 2 through Jan. 5 by canvassing in the Atlanta area. He said despite living in the neighboring state of

Tennessee, he was driven to volunteer for the Georgia Democratic campaigns to win partisan control of the Senate.

Hailey Figur, a sophomore from outside of Atlanta, said she volunteered for Ossoff and Warnock's campaigns through Swing Left GW after Deisen reached out to her via friend banking. She said issues related to gender equity pushed her to join the campaign trail.

Figur said when she was younger, she never expected her traditionally Republican home state to flip. She said Georgia successfully flipping blue happened in large part because more Black voters showed up to the polls.

Turnout among Black voters was 93 percent of that in the November election, while turnout among White voters was only about 87 percent of that in November.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
A darker season of "Euphoria" awaits viewers this week on HBO Max.

Release radar: TV shows to watch out for this year

DIEGO MENDOZA
CONTRIBUTING CULTURE EDITOR

Even with the promise of a vaccine, social distancing is expected to remain in place for some time. Lucky for you, streaming services are still churning out new content to help keep you relatively sane at home.

While Hollywood filming and production has been dramatically impacted by pandemic-imposed regulations, there are still a handful of great comedies, thrillers and dramas to be released this year. Here's a rundown of TV show recommendations you should watch on Netflix, Hulu, HBO, Disney+ and Amazon Prime Video now or in the near future

"The Underground Railroad" Amazon Prime Video TBA for 2021

Directed by Barry Jenkins – the mastermind behind the Academy Award-winning film "Moonlight" – this thriller is based on the Pulitzer Prize-winning novel "In Moonlight Black Boys Look Blue" and centers around an alternate timeline where the Underground Railroad was actually a subterranean steam engine system that transported enslaved Americans to freedom. Retracing the darkest times of American history, a solemn and dark trailer has already caught the attention of TV fans.

"Euphoria" season 2 HBO or HBO Max Jan. 24, 2021

This drama, which revolves around high school drug use, sex and social scenes, was one of the most talked-about shows in 2019, with critics particularly obsessed with lead actress Zendaya's award-winning performance. After two hourlong specials were released in the last couple of months, fans are now amped-up for the second season, which actress Sydney Sweeney has described as "darker" than the first

"Loki" Disney+ May 2021

While "WandaVision," a new Marvel mystery show, has made the headlines for the last few weeks, Marvel fans who want a more traditional superhero experience should put "Loki" on their list. The show features Owen Wilson and Gugu Mbatha-Raw alongside Tom Hiddleston, who stars as the mischievous Norse god who has been sucked into his own crime thriller.

"Dad, Stop Embarrassing Me" Netflix TBA for 2021

This heartwarming comedy starring Jamie Foxx is based on his own relationship with his daughter Corrine, who also serves as

one of the show's producers. One of the few multi-camera sitcoms to be produced by Netflix, the streaming service has kept back details about the show as it prepares to launch sometime this year.

"Impeachment: American Crime Story" FX TBA for 2021

The third installment of Ryan Murphy's new anthology series, this season of "American Crime Story" is set to recreate the Monica Lewinsky scandal and subsequent political turmoil in former President Bill Clinton's administration. As with any great Murphy production, actress Sarah Paulson will take the lead role as Linda Tripp, the civil servant who recorded phone conversations between Lewinsky and Clinton.

"The Lord of the Rings" Amazon Prime Video TBA for 2021

With contracts already guaranteeing at least two seasons, this high-fantasy series features an ensemble cast set thousands of years before the events of the "The Hobbit." While there was initial trepidation the show could be canceled altogether because of the pandemic, New Zealand's successful COVID-19 containment allowed filming to wrap up last year.

Inside an empty library: Gelman staff soldier on during pandemic

BRENNAN FISKE
STAFF WRITER

For Gelman Library staff, working in an empty library is like working in "Sleeping Beauty's palace, waiting for the students to come wake it up."

Valerie Fliss, a course reserves and resource sharing specialist with GW Libraries and Academic Innovation, and Noah Paulovic, a resource sharing specialist, said the library has felt "sleepy" with the majority of students off campus this year during the COVID-19 pandemic. They said that while there are no students to interact with, they've carried on their responsibilities of making electronic resources accessible to the GW community for research and classwork during the remote semester.

The library closed in March and limited access in September to students, faculty and staff members with active GWorld cards and permission to remain on campus during the semester, which comes with stringent COVID-19 testing protocol.

Fliss said she splits her time between Gelman and the Virginia Science and Technology Campus Library in Ashburn, Virginia, researching new electronic resources and scanning books to make them electronically available to students and faculty. She said she found the vacant library in Foggy Bottom "spooky at first" and often thought she was hearing voices in the empty stacks.

Fliss added that her responsibilities cultivating online resources for students and managing the distribution of physical resources "are the same" but have shifted to focus more toward finding e-resources or scanning physical materials to make them accessible online for remote students and faculty.

"[Responsibilities] have shifted from focusing on physical books to electronic resources and making sure that the GW community can access our materials remotely," Fliss said in an email.

Paulovic, who works at the Consortium Loan Service at Gelman Library, said he spends most of his time scanning book and archive resources for professors, digitizing materials for students and managing deliveries to and from the library.

"My days have been very busy since the shift to virtual learning," Paulovic said. "My job duties have shifted from working on a variety of tasks to primarily digitizing materials."

The Consortium Loan Service allows GW members to request library materials from any school in the Washington Research Library Consortium, which includes eight other schools in the D.C. area.

The number of library staff has been reduced to fewer than 10 members, but Paulovic said Gelman is large and he often doesn't know how many people are working at a time. In his unit, Resource Sharing, Paulovic said they usually have about three people managing and distributing resources.

While entrance into the library is allowed only with special permission by reservation, students and faculty have been the main benefactors of the work of these few staff members in making resources available during the past few months of remote learning.

Mary Ellen Wolfinger, a graduate student studying curriculum and instruction, said she continues to use the online database that Gelman staff curate to access journal articles for research and is still loaning out a Chromebook laptop that she borrowed from the library in January 2020.

Wolfinger has taken advantage of many of GW Libraries' remote resources, like using Gelman's exterior book drop to return books and GW's VPN to access social media data and statistics software. Still, she said she misses being able to work in Gelman and use the in-person services, like meeting with research librarians, that she could use before.



SOPHIA YOUNG | CONTRIBUTING PHOTO EDITOR

The few remaining staff across the GW Libraries system have labored hard to make library resources available for students and faculty working remotely.



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL

vs. VCU
Jan. 27 | 11 a.m.
The Colonials will take on the Rams, who sit at No. 3 in the conference standings.



VOLLEYBALL

vs. Morgan State
Jan. 29 | 5 p.m.
Volleyball will make its season debut on the road against the Bears.

NUMBER CRUNCH

5.4

The number of triples women's basketball averaged per game over the previous five seasons through its first 13 games played.



FILE PHOTO BY ZACH BRIEN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The men's basketball team is picking up a new assistant coach who played professionally in Greece and Hungary and with the Utah Jazz's D-League affiliate, the Idaho Stampede.

Men's basketball taps Howard assistant coach to join staff

BELLE LONG
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

Men's basketball picked Howard men's basketball assistant coach Eric Atkins to fill a vacancy in the coaching staff, according to a release Thursday.

Atkins spent one and a half seasons at Howard, joining head coach Kenneth Blakeney's staff in 2019. He previously served as the video coordinator and helped with day-to-day program oversight for his alma mater Notre Dame.

"I'm super excited about joining the GW program," Atkins said in the release. "It's an honor to be at a school with such a rich basketball tradition, and I'm looking forward to connecting and assisting our staff and student-athletes as we become a top program in the Atlantic 10."

With the Bison, he assisted in developing some of the Mid-Eastern Athletic Conference's top players, including top-20 five-star recruit freshman forward Makur Maker.

Atkins had a successful career as a point guard for the Fighting Irish, recording

more than 1,000 points and 500 assists. He played under former Colonial and current Notre Dame head coach Mike Brey and appeared in 133 games, tying him for second in all-time program history.

After graduating in 2014, Atkins played professionally in Greece and Hungary. In 2015, he was briefly acquired by the Utah Jazz before spending time with the Idaho Stampede, the Jazz's D-League affiliate. For the 2015-16 season, he joined the Erie Bayhawks, the then-D-League affiliate for the Orlando Magic. In 24 games, Atkins averaged 6.5 points and three assists.

Head coach Jamion Christian said he's "excited" for Atkins to help develop GW's talent at the guard position for this season and seasons to come.

Christian added that Atkins first came across his radar during his high school career. Atkins played for Mount Saint Joseph's High School in Baltimore. During his prep career, he was named the Baltimore Catholic League MVP twice.

"I had the opportunity to watch Eric when he

was playing early in high school, and I was always so impressed with his demeanor and how he consistently found a way to lead his teams into the winning category," Christian said.

Atkins is the third member of Christian's staff to join the team for the 2020-21 season. Director of operations Lauren Shear and director of scouting and analytics Seth Jackson joined the team prior to the start of the season.

The additions come after former director of operations Austin Kelly, director of scouting and analytics AJ Register and assistant coach Nima Omidvar departed from the program prior to the season opener.

The Colonials (3-9, 2-3 A-10) are currently paused since Christian tested positive for COVID-19 last week. They postponed games against Dayton and Rhode Island and are currently set to resume activities Jan. 27 against George Mason, but no updates have been provided about when the team will end its quarantine

Gymnastics' 2021 schedule features fewer meets, two at Smith Center

EMILY MAISE
SPORTS EDITOR

Gymnastics will kick off the 2021 season Sunday, the team announced in a schedule release Tuesday.

Gymnasts will compete at seven meets this season – down from their usual 10-plus competitions – and will host two in the Smith Center. The Colonials were picked to finish third in the East Atlantic Gymnastic League preseason poll and were tabbed No. 35 in the Women's College Gymnastics Association preseason poll.

Among EAGL teams, GW nabbed 46 points, including two first place votes. The squad finished just behind 2020-Champion NC State and Pittsburgh, who collected 59 and 49 points, respectively. Among WCGA voting, the squad accumulated 160 points and were the third EAGL team to appear among the top 35 teams in the nation.

After its 2020 season was cut short due to the COVID-19 pandemic, 14 of the team's 16 members are returning for the 2021 campaign. Graduate student Cydney Crasa, senior Anna Warhol and senior Hannah Cohen will captain the team for head coach Margie Foster-Cunningham's 36th season helming the program.

Crasa is entering her fifth season with the program and coming off Second Team All-EAGL honors in vault and First Team All-EAGL honors on floor in 2020. Warhol tabbed Second Team All-EAGL recognition in both bars and on floor, while Cohen notched First Team All-EAGL honors on beam.

Junior Deja Chambliss, who ended

last season with an all-around crown at the Senior Day meet, nabbed spots on the All-EAGL First Team on vault and All-EAGL Second Team on bars.

The team also added four freshmen to the mix to round out the 18-member squad. Every team member was back in D.C. for the fall semester, giving the squad the opportunity to begin practicing for the upcoming season, Foster-Cunningham said in an October interview.

The Colonials were set to open the season at Pittsburgh Jan. 24, but the team chose not to travel for the competition.

"We just didn't have enough time to appropriately prepare physically and mentally for the rigor of competition," athletic department spokesperson Brian Sereno said in an email.

GW will instead open the season Sunday at North Carolina to take on the Tar Heels and West Virginia, which is a change from the early January start time of previous seasons. The team will then return to the Smith Center Feb. 7 for its first home meet against New Hampshire. Three straight away meets at Towson, NC State and Temple will take the team into March.

GW will face Towson – for the second and third time that season – for its final two meets of the year. The Colonials will host the Tigers March 7 for senior day and then travel to Towson, Maryland, to take on the Tigers, New Hampshire and Temple in the final competition of the regular season.

Competition against North Carolina and West Virginia begins Sunday at 2 p.m.



FILE PHOTO BY DEAN WHITELAW |

Nearly all of the team's 16 members last year are returning to compete this year.

Volleyball to kick off delayed season Friday

EMILY MAISE
SPORTS EDITOR

After more than a year without competition, volleyball will open its 2020-21 season Friday.

The Atlantic 10 delayed fall sports' seasons to the spring semester amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Volleyball, who normally plays from August through November, will now compete from January through April.

The A-10 will institute a pod system for conference play this year that is split

by geographic location. GW will be in a pod with Fordham, George Mason, La Salle and Rhode Island, while Dayton, Davidson, Duquesne, VCU and Saint Louis will comprise the other pod.

The league and GW condensed and regionalized schedules for the 2020-21 season to cut costs and limit team exposure to COVID-19 through travel.

Normally, the team would play about 30 games, including 14 conference matchups and a few tournaments in nonconference play. But this

season, the Colonials will play 11 conference games with five nonconference matchups sprinkled throughout the schedule.

GW opens its slate with back-to-back nonconference road games against Morgan State and Delaware State Friday and Saturday, respectively. The team will then head to George Mason to open conference play with consecutive games against the Patriots Feb. 6 and 7.

Feb. 9, the team will take on Howard to start a four-game homestand that includes battles with VCU

and two contests against La Salle. A trip to Rhode Island Feb. 27 and another home game against Fordham March 5 will lead into a three-game road trip for the backend of home-and-home series with Howard, Fordham and La Salle.

The Colonials will close out the regular season on a three-game homestand, taking on West Virginia, Rhode Island and George Mason.

GW will see the Patriots and Explorers three times and Fordham, Rhode Island and Howard twice.

The A-10 tournament is

slated for April 2 and 3. The Championship will feature four teams – the top team from each pod and the next two teams with the best records, regardless of pod affiliation. The team with the top seed will play host to the competition.

The Colonials were tabbed to finish fourth in the A-10's preseason poll, receiving 64 points. GW trails No. 1 Dayton (98), No. 2 VCU (87) and No. 3 Saint Louis (84), but the squad has the highest preseason rank among its pod members.

Rhode Island, La Salle, Fordham and George Mason

placed No. 7, No. 8, No. 9 and No. 10, respectively.

The Colonials will return nine members of its 15-person roster from 2019. The squad added a trio of freshmen and two transfers to bolster its 2020 squad. In a September interview, head coach Sarah Bernson said she did not have her full team on campus for the fall semester, but all student-athletes were keeping up with training and practice while they awaited a return to play.

GW's first matchup against Morgan State Friday will begin at 5 p.m.

Women's basketball comes home empty handed after loss to Saint Joseph's

NURIA DIAZ
STAFF WRITER

At the top of the second quarter Sunday, freshman forward Caranda Perea nailed a jumper to give women's basketball a 14-point advantage over Saint Joseph's. But the lead was short-lived – the Hawks put up 29 points in the second quarter, raining 21 points from beyond the arc.

A fourth quarter push from GW brought the team within two points, but the comeback attempt proved futile as the Hawks (4-1, 2-1 A-10) toppled the Colonials (4-9, 1-6 A-10) 63-61. GW dropped its second straight game and has just one win in conference play.

"We just didn't really move the ball as well as we did to start the game," head coach Jennifer Rizzotti said. "I thought we got impatient. We got a little bit stagnant, a little bit sticky with the ball. I thought we fixed some of that in the second half, but it still ended up being

something that hurt us down in the end."

Freshman center Ali Brigham led the team in scoring, notching 16 points and firing at a 45.5 clip. Graduate student guard Sydney Zambrotta and graduate student guard Jasmine Whitney followed with 13 and 12 points, respectively. Whitney led the team from three-point land, knocking in two triples.

Graduate student guard Alayna Gribble led the floor with 17 points for the Hawks, hitting 5-of-9 from distance. Junior guard Katie Jekot followed with 14 points, netting 4-of-7 from deep.

GW shot at a 41.1 percent clip, hitting five treys on 14 attempts. Saint Joseph's hit 44.4 percent of their shots, including a 12-of-26 clip from the three-point line.

"I thought we did a poor job especially in the second quarter of identifying and getting out to their shooters and making them put the

ball on the floor to score," Rizzotti said. "We got a little bit better as the game went on, but we gave up a couple of key threes late in the game when we needed some stops."

Each team turned the ball over 13 times. The Colonials forced seven turnovers, while the Hawks forced nine turnovers. GW's turnovers had been on the decline throughout conference play but spiked on its road trip to Pennsylvania. In the first five A-10 games, GW averaged 9.8 turnovers, and in two games against La Salle and Saint Joseph's, the team averaged 16.5.

"Today we were also very careless with balls – something that we'll have to take a look at as the coaching staff and see if we can figure it out," Rizzotti said. "But it certainly has been a big reason why I believe that we've lost the last two games, because we haven't been able to take care of the ball like we

did in the prior couple of games."

Zambrotta, Brigham and redshirt junior Gabby Nikitinaite combined for a six-point run to start the first quarter. A jumper from sophomore guard Kaliah Henderson broke the Hawks' two-minute scoring drought, but Nikitinaite responded with a triple to extend the lead to seven.

The Hawks could only muster six more points in the remaining seven and a half minutes as the Colonials jumped out to an early 20-8 lead. Five different Colonials contributed to the team's scoring.

Saint Joseph's entered the second quarter with renewed vigor as it fought to outscore the Colonials. A three-pointer by junior forward Elizabeth Marsicano began a downpour of triples from the Hawks, including four consecutive three-point buckets.

The Colonials fell into two three-minute scoring

droughts in the second frame, which the Hawks used to go on an 8-0 run and 12-0 run, respectively. Saint Joseph's outscored GW 29-8 in the second frame after four different players combined to shoot 77.8 percent from beyond the arc.

Down nine at the half, Brigham scored four straight points to open the third frame and cut the deficit to two possessions. GW and Saint Joseph's traded buckets, and neither team was able to build up consistent momentum.

Both teams struggled to get shots to fall in the third quarter. The Colonials hit just 3-of-10 from the field, and after their efficient second quarter, the Hawks completed just 4-of-14 from the floor. GW dominated the charity stripe, getting to the line 12 times and knocking 10 attempts down throughout the game. Four of those baskets came in the third quarter.

In the final quarter the

Colonials began staging a comeback, outscoring the Hawks 23-17. A layup and a pair of free throws from Brigham and back-to-back triples from Whitney worked to keep the deficit to single digits.

A three-pointer from Perea with 17 seconds on the clock shortened the Hawks' lead to four points. Whitney hit a jumper with a second remaining to bring GW within two, but the team couldn't secure the comeback, dropping the game 63-61.

"We're still at a place where we're still not able to be consistent for an entire game," Rizzotti said. "We're going to have to be if we want to be one of the better teams in the league. We're going to have to show up. We're going to have to play hard on both ends of the floor. We're going to have to take care of the ball."

The Colonials are back on the road Wednesday to take on VCU. Tipoff is set for noon.