

# The GW Hatchet

## Hill becomes first candidate to begin campaign for SA president

**MAKENA ROBERTS**  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

**SAMANTHA SERAFIN**  
STAFF WRITER

The current Student Association president became the first to announce his campaign for the SA's top spot for the next term Tuesday.

SA President Brandon Hill – a junior who previously served as executive vice president and assumed the presidency last month – is running on a platform to improve course affordability, student inclusivity in governance and internal operations in the SA. Hill said he will work with members of the SA Senate and officials to help students regain stability following the COVID-19 pandemic and expand cultural resources on campus outside of the Multicultural Students Services Center.

"I think I am someone who doesn't take myself too seriously and still takes the work I do seriously," Hill said. "And that's how you add personality to the work that we do and allow students to feel comfortable bringing issues to you and believing that you'll actually act upon them, rather than them shouting into an empty hole."

Hill is required to gather at least 250 signatures during the candidate registration period from Feb. 24 to March 3 and be approved by the Joint Elections Commission to qualify as a candidate. The senate approved legislation in November that cut the number of required signatures in



COURTESY OF BRANDON HILL  
Hill touted achievements related to student refunds for dropped courses and Pass/No Pass policies as part of his record of listening to student voices.

half for candidates to run this year.

Hill said the relationships he has built with officials throughout his time in the SA will give him an advantage if elected as president because he "won't have to start from the ground up."

He said he has built a "super collaborative" relationship with Mark Diaz, the executive vice president and chief financial officer. He said they have worked together to advocate for financial policies for students in the past, like extending the timeline for when students can receive a refund after dropping a course.

"Having those powerful and strong relationships with administrators just makes it more of a collaborative effort rather than a fight," Hill said.

Hill said in his three years in the SA, he served on the student engagement committee where he collected "anecdotal data" from students on the Mount Vernon Campus to gauge interest in providing lockers for those students on Foggy Bottom. He said as a Columbian College of Arts and Science senator, he established the Black Senators Caucus, which he said has sparked the creation of other caucuses in the body.

He said as the executive vice president, he worked with officials to increase the amount of refunds a student can receive if they drop a course and implement an optional Pass/No Pass policy for students during virtual instruction.

"I think these are all issues that have been driven by the students and for the

students," Hill said. "And they all start with students expressing concern or students raising their voices."

Hill said he hopes to work with administrators to ensure financial support policies implemented due to the pandemic will remain in effect in the future. He said officials should continue to allow students to register for classes with an outstanding tuition balance of up to \$2,500 instead of reverting back to a previous threshold of \$1,000.

"The University has been doing some really positive things to impact the student experience," Hill said. "They've been deemed as temporary, so I want to make sure that the University doesn't rubber band back in terms of the financial policies that were implemented this year."

The Student Association Senate confirmed Catherine Morris, the senate's chief policy adviser, as executive vice president in a special senate meeting Sunday.

SA President Brandon

Hill presented SA Sen. Kate Carpenter, U-at-Large and a Hatchet photographer, last week as his pick for executive vice president after he ascended to the presidency and left the EVP spot open, but the senate rejected his nomination. Morris said she learned "what is possible in the SA," like advising on legislation and facilitating meetings with administrators, while working under the "phenomenal leadership" of Hill and former SA EVP Amy Martin, who held the position in the 2019-20 school year.

"They push me to be a better advocate and a better student leader," she said. "I'm excited to have the opportunity to follow in their footsteps of leadership."

Morris previously served as an undergraduate Columbian College of Arts and Sciences senator, a finance committee aid and as the vice chair of the finance committee. She said she is looking forward to continue advocating for students during the remainder of the term, "in a time when students need it the most."

"This is a time we re-

commit to student advocacy," Morris said. "This is when we decide the future

## What's inside

### Opinions

The editorial board breaks down how GW should spend its COVID-19 relief.

Page 5

### Culture

Read our rundown about the best meal prep delivery services to meet your needs.

Page 6

### Sports

Men's and women's swimming and diving find their sea legs as competition returns.

Page 7

## SA Senate approves Catherine Morris as executive vice president

**MAKENA ROBERTS**

CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

The Student Association Senate confirmed Catherine Morris, the senate's chief policy adviser, as executive vice president in a special senate meeting Sunday.

SA President Brandon Hill presented SA Sen. Kate Carpenter, U-at-Large and a Hatchet photographer, last week as his pick for executive vice president after he ascended to the presidency and left the EVP spot open, but the senate rejected his nomination. Morris said she learned "what is possible in the SA," like advising on legislation and facilitating meetings with administrators, while working under the "phenomenal leadership" of Hill and former SA EVP Amy Martin, who held the position in the 2019-20 school year.

"As a friend, a colleague and a fellow [School of Media and Public Affairs] student, I have full faith in Morris' abilities to serve over a divided body of students," Hill said. "Morris knows that we get nowhere from wishing each other the worst and making backdoor deals."

Hill said at last week's senate meeting that he was "disgusted" by the "backdoor deals" some senators had been making in an attempt to deny Carpenter, his previous pick, the position.

Senators also unanimously approved a piece of legislation endorsing a faculty petition that calls on the University to "commit itself" to diversity, equity and inclusion through hiring "a cluster" of faculty of color. An informal group of faculty is circulating a petition to administrators to hire 18 minority faculty members, primarily in CCAS.

## Experts say GW diversity audit must focus on strengths and weaknesses

**CARLY NEILSON**  
STAFF WRITER

**EVA CHILLURA**  
REPORTER

Experts said the University-wide external diversity audit officials announced late last month could lead to campus-wide improvements in diversity and inclusion if it can effectively reveal both GW's strengths and weaknesses.

Administrators said they will use the findings to create an action plan to improve GW's financial aid policies, the GW Police Department's interactions with staff and students and diversity in the University's hiring practices. Experts in diversity in higher education said a diversity audit can provide data about GW's potential shortcomings to help officials choose where they need to allocate the most resources needed to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Nine of GW's 12 peer schools, like Syracuse University and the University of Rochester, have conducted a university-wide pulse or temperature surveys to gauge student and faculty opinion on diversity within the schools. Other institutions, like New York University, have imple-

mented similar diversity assessments using third-party audits to improve campus climate.

Officials said in late January they would complete the audit by late spring and will use the "coming weeks" to find an external party to conduct the audit.

Lisa Coleman, the chief diversity officer at NYU, said administrators implemented an assessment called "Being@NYU" in 2017 to assess diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging by surveying students, faculty and staff across all of NYU's campuses globally.

She said officials hired three external firms – Rankin and Associates, Helios Education Foundation and the Center for Diversity Education and Inclusion at the University of Maryland – to conduct the survey and report the findings to the institution.

Coleman said GW officials should not approach the diversity audit "looking for problems" but searching for goals.

Coleman said the assessment found overwhelmingly "positive" results and highlighted key areas of improvement, with 83 percent positive responses and 17 percent negative. She said NYU officials developed 12 "themes," or areas

of development based on the negative responses, with three committees to tackle the 12 areas.

She said the assessment also allowed NYU officials to localize the negative responses to specific departments and "borrow" successful practices from some departments and apply them to others lacking in mentorship or innovation. Officials were able to identify exclusionary conduct, problems with program recruitment and retention discrepancies in the climate assessment, she said.

Faculty members have recently been calling for officials to hire more diverse faculty at GW. An informal group of department chairs and program directors began circulating a petition earlier this month calling for officials to implement a "cluster hire" of underrepresented faculty members.

Ron Idoko, the diversity and multicultural program manager at the University of Pittsburgh, said Pitt has conducted several "climate assessments," both campus-wide and program-specific. He said these surveys try to assess feelings of inclusion on campus from both students and faculty to find identity groups who "may require more engagement."



GRACE HROMIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR  
GW's medical enterprise has administered 8,600 vaccines to D.C. residents over the age of 65 and to health care personnel.

## Students to be eligible for vaccine in D.C.

**ISHA TRIVEDI**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Administrators said D.C. health officials will treat out-of-state students living in the District as city residents when they become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Lynn Goldman, the dean of the Milken Institute School of Public Health, said at Friday's Faculty Senate meeting that officials are also examining vaccine regulations for Virginia and Maryland to help facilitate access to the vaccine for GW community members.

William Borden, the chief quality and population health officer for the Medical Faculty Associates, said vaccinations for health care workers at the GW Hospital are "largely complete for those who want them."

GW launched clinical trials for Moderna Inc.'s COVID-19 vaccine last August, and the GW Hospital was named a distribution site for Pfizer's vaccine in December. A group of hospital employees became the first to receive the vaccine that same month.

Borden said officials

are "actively developing" events to support community vaccination, increase access to the vaccine and address racial and geographic disparities in the District's vaccine distribution.

These disparities have continued as Wards 4, 5, 7 and 8 – where Black residents make up more than half of the population – continue to have the highest number of COVID-19 cases.

Borden said officials so far have delivered a total of 8,600 vaccinations – which officials are delivering at the Lerner Health and Wellness Center – to D.C. residents over the age of 65 and health care personnel.

He said while hospital officials are currently limited to vaccinating patients who live in the District, they are working to figure out how to vaccinate Medical Faculty Associates patients who live outside of the District and "hope that will change soon."

Arthur Wilson, the chair of the senate's executive committee, said at the meeting that officials are working to compile the quantitative and qualitative data of a faculty survey of University

President Thomas LeBlanc's leadership. He said the qualitative results of the survey are currently "somewhere between 300 and 500 pages" so he expects the results "might come a few days after" Feb. 22, when the results were originally slated to be released.

LeBlanc also said after several officials took a pay cut last April to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic, the salaries have been "restored" to their June 2020 levels, but officials did not receive any bonuses in fiscal year 2020. He said officials have not had any conversations about taking bonuses in fiscal year 2021.

Blake, the provost, also provided a report on the University's core academic indicators and outlined how academic metrics like GW's enrollment levels and yield rate have been affected by the pandemic.

Faculty senators unanimously voted to approve a slate of members as the executive committee nominating committee, which will work to nominate the members for the executive committee in the 2021-2022 session.



FILE PHOTO BY JACK FONSECA | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

GW joins nine of its peers in conducting a university-wide probe of diversity at the institution.

# News

February 16, 2021 • Page 2

## THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

### THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Feb. 22, 1969

### RE-IMAGINING HIGHER EDUCATION WORLDWIDE AFTER COVID-19

Feb. 17 • 9:00 a.m. EST • Free

This seminar will engage chief executive officers to explore how the pandemic has impacted their institutions to the internationalization of higher education and local responsiveness.

### THE MIDDLE EAST IN REFUGEE HISTORY

Feb. 18 • Noon EST • Free

Join two Middle East scholars as they discuss the role the Middle East has played in modern refugee history and how historians should respond.

Chief Justice of the United States Earl Warren received an honorary degree from GW and gave remarks to students at Winter Convocation.



Provost Brian Blake said he intentionally tripled the acceptance rate of transfer students in 2020 relative to 2019 to change the composition of that year's class.

## Yield rate falls amid pandemic as academic metrics remain steady

**ISHA TRIVEDI**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

**ZACH SCHONFELD**  
NEWS EDITOR

Officials said GW's freshman yield rate dropped to a 10-year low as the pandemic continues to alter the University's enrollment.

Provost Brian Blake said at a Faculty Senate meeting Friday that the COVID-19 pandemic caused shifts in some academic metrics closely tracked by officials, like enrollment levels and yield rates. The most recent data also shows improvements in providing students more flexibility to pursue interdisciplinary studies and double majors, he said.

### Student metrics

GW's yield rate – the percentage of admitted students who attend the University – for incoming freshmen dropped from 23.8 percent to 17.4 percent in 2020, the lowest since at least 2011. Officials received a nearly record-high number of freshman applications in 2020 as they sought to reduce the size of the undergraduate population but ultimately admitted multiple rounds of waitlisted students once the plan was put on hold during the pandemic.

Officials also accepted 69 percent of transfer students in 2020, more than triple the previous year's acceptance rate, to boost enrollment.

The four-year graduation rate increased slightly to 79 percent, nearly tying a record high, while the six-year graduation rate is expected to decline "slightly" from last year.

Nine percent of new students had a high school GPA of below 3.2 in 2020, tying with 2017 for a 20-year low. The percentage of new students with high school GPAs between 3.4 and 3.75 increased slightly to 33 percent, Blake said.

Blake added that student retention rates fell this year, largely because about 4.5 percent of students took leaves of absence during the pandemic.

The percentage of students graduating with two majors increased from 14.1 percent to 14.9 percent this year, which Blake said is a measure of students' abilities to cut across fields of study at GW. Officials introduced an option for students in the Elliott School of International Affairs to pursue a Bachelor of Science in 2019 to encourage students to also study STEM fields.

### Faculty metrics

Blake said officials are committed to maintaining the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty to 75 percent of the faculty population, but the number dropped from 74.8 to 74.1 percent among regular faculty members this year.

The percentage of non-tenured or tenure-track faculty this year increased from 25.2 to 25.9 percent University-wide. The Faculty Code states that the percentage of regular faculty members in non-tenure track appointments "shall not exceed 25 percent in any school."

The number of regular tenured or tenure-track faculty decreased from 871 to 851 this year, and Blake said he approved 15 new tenure-track hires "a few weeks ago" to address the gap. Officials implemented a hiring freeze last March to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic.

Compared to 2011, the percentage of tenured or tenure-track faculty members increased in six schools – the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, the Elliott School, the Milken Institute School of Public Health, the School of Engineering and Applied Science, the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the School of Nursing, according to Blake's presentation.

Blake said officials are

## SMPA director prioritizing community, diversity in first year

**MAKENA ROBERTS**  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS  
EDITOR

As the University was gripped by the COVID-19 pandemic, Silvio Waisbord was just stepping into his role leading the School of Media and Public Affairs.

Waisbord, who previously served as SMPA's associate director, said he initially agreed to take the position for one academic year until officials could conduct a full external search for a long-term director. But after the rise of the COVID-19 pandemic and a University-wide hiring freeze, Waisbord said he agreed to remain in the role for an additional year while GW continues to respond to the academic and community effects of the virus.

Waisbord replaced former SMPA Director Frank Sesno, who served in the role for about a decade.

In his first year, he said he prioritized maintaining relationships with students and faculty, especially in light of the pandemic. Waisbord added that he has encouraged professors to integrate diverse course materials into their curricula and hired a diverse group of faculty.

### Tackling remote learning

In his first semester as

director, Waisbord said the largest challenge he's faced has been overseeing the implementation of virtual teaching methods, which included restructuring course content, readings and assignments to fit an online platform.

He said SMPA officials sent a survey to students over the summer to gather their feedback from the spring 2020 virtual semester in preparation for the "technology needs and situations" of the coming fall semester. The survey asked students about their experience with virtual classes last spring.

Waisbord added that while he understands school members may be "maxed out" during the pandemic, he asked faculty to carve out time to provide feedback about how the school could improve.

### Improving diversity

Waisbord said increasing SMPA's faculty diversity is an "obvious" goal but how to effectively achieve that goal is more complex. He said one approach could be recruiting officials in SMPA to develop contacts with fellow schools, newsrooms and media organizations with employees who might be interested in teaching full time or part time at GW.

He said SMPA profes-

sors should incorporate resources like diverse readings, materials or podcasts in course syllabi to appeal to all "experiences and interests" to support students' community engagement.

He said he has found an advantage in virtual learning in that faculty can more easily bring in speakers with "different experiences and backgrounds" from around the world. He said he has pressed professors to seek guest speakers and has planned conversations with faculty about fostering diversity in the materials taught in the classroom.

He said he facilitated a survey at the beginning of the year regarding diversity and inclusion in SMPA to gauge students' feedback about the issue.

### Engaging the SMPA community

Waisbord said he has met monthly with SMPA's Student Advisory Board – a student group that provides feedback to SMPA officials – to hear comments and ideas that help shape students' experiences. He said the meetings are "very important," especially in a virtual environment, for students to provide suggestions, even as small as updating a website, on issues officials may not be aware of.



COURTESY OF SARAH CRISCI

In his first year, SMPA Director Silvio Waisbord's priorities have included bolstering diversity efforts, smoothing the transition to remote learning and keeping the SMPA community intact virtually.

## Students with COVID-19-positive roommates briefly move to stay healthy

**ABIGAIL OSBORNE**  
REPORTER

**JARROD WARDWELL**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

With residence halls filling up with doubles and some quads last month, students said they've had to either quarantine with roommates positive for COVID-19 or move into empty units to avoid catching and spreading the disease.

Since the fall semester, students who test positive for COVID-19 have been required to self-isolate for at least 10 days without leaving their assigned unit, while they receive mental health services and essentials like meals and groceries from nearby staff members. But with more students living together this spring, officials and students said some roommates who might be exposed to the virus are quarantining in separate rooms to cut down on transmission across campus.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said students can move into other units on campus for temporary stays if their roommate either tests positive for the virus or is directed to self-isolate after traveling to the District from a high-risk state. She said no students moved units during the fall semester since most were living in singles at the time.

Nosal said "a handful" of students have quarantined in empty units in their residence halls so far this spring, most during the two-week move-in period last month, when some students needed to self-isolate. She said officials recommend that students consider temporarily moving out of their unit if their roommate tests positive for COVID-19.

Nosal declined to say the number of open units but said "any

student who desires to quarantine outside their assigned unit" may do so. She said officials clean each temporary unit after use with disinfectant products approved by the Environmental Protection Agency and according to guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Students who opt to stay in the same unit as someone who's positive for COVID-19 should draft a schedule for kitchen and common space use and clean their room on a regular basis, Nosal added.

During a community forum with residential students and their families earlier this month, Megan Landry – the project director for the campus COVID-19 investigation team – said officials alert a student of a positive case after it's detected by the University public health lab, which then alerts a University medical provider and the Campus COVID-19 Support Team.

She said after members of the Campus COVID-19 Support Team alert students that they tested positive, the team conducts a "full medical investigation" to log demographics, symptoms, medical history, potential exposure, use of personal protective equipment and contact tracing.

Landry said students who have been exposed to another student who tested positive must quarantine for 10 days and wait until their fifth day of quarantine to get tested. After receiving a second negative test between three to five days after their first test, students can leave quarantine, she said.

Dan Wright, a member of the Campus COVID-19 Support Team, said officials drop food at students' doors as needed via Safeway delivery and Grubhub orders, coordinate family care packages and regularly check in with students over the phone during their quarantine or isolation phase.



On-campus students whose roommates test positive for COVID-19 have the option to move into empty rooms on campus, but no student used the option last semester, a University spokesperson said.

One student, who asked to remain anonymous for her roommate's medical privacy, said she moved out of her Shenkman Hall suite and temporarily moved to a unit down the hall after her roommate tested positive for COVID-19 and she tested negative late last month. The student said she had to receive a second negative test five days after her quarantine, and staff members said she could leave after a 10-day period.

The student said both the University and the city are using email and text to keep contact with her, and she has filled out a daily quarantine survey for potential symptoms every day. The student said

she has been cooking "mainly the entire time" and moved her own set of groceries that she purchased before move-in from her assigned unit into her new living space.

Despite testing negative and completing her 10-day quarantine, the student said she opted to stay in the separate unit since her roommate was still experiencing COVID-19-related symptoms. She added that she felt Wright has been helpful in calling and sharing information about quarantine.

Sebastian Loredo, a sophomore living in a South Hall suite with three other students, said he and his roommates decided to quarantine in the same unit two days af-

ter one of them tested positive for COVID-19 last month. Loredo said he and his other roommates tested negative for COVID-19 after distancing themselves for 17 days and coordinating kitchen and common space use via text.

Loredo said he struggled to decipher between "mixed messages" from the University, which proposed a 14-day quarantine, and D.C. Department of Health officials, who recommended a few days longer. Receiving about a half dozen phone calls from the University and from the District, Loredo said the communication with medical advisers could have been smoother.

# Student vlogger series connects students to campus life during pandemic

**NICHOLAS PASION**  
REPORTER

Three students living on campus this semester are connecting with off-campus students, alumni and prospective students as the University's official campus vloggers.

The Office of Student Life launched the "Connect to Campus" student video blog series last semester following Maansi Srivastava, Anne Laurie Joseph and Eddie Micheletti's daily lives attending GW during the pandemic. The vloggers, short film makers who document parts of their life, said the program has helped current and prospective students learn about their life on campus during remote learning.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said the students have sought to produce new vlogs on the University websites and social media platforms at least every other week since it launched in October. She said each vlog averages about 9,500 views across the University's three platforms – Twitter, Facebook and Instagram – where they are posted.

She said the University has received positive feedback overall from students, including alumni who have commented on the vlogs reminiscing about their own campus experiences, like seeing snow for the first time.

"The name of the series means exactly that – we want to make GW students feel connected to campus," Nosal said in an email. "We realized early on in the fall that it would be important to show our students what life at GW and around D.C. is like. This is especially those first-year and transfer students who still haven't been on campus because of this unprecedented pandemic."

The vlogs are shared through the GW Today news-

letter when they are published.

Srivastava, a photojournalism major and Hatchet photographer, said she has filmed five different vlogs this academic year for the program, focusing on topics like her first day of school, self-care tips she practices and advice for studying during finals week.

In Srivastava's most recent vlog earlier this month, she detailed the University's COVID-19 safety guidelines as she walked viewers through her experience and process moving back onto campus. She said she lived at home in Wilmington, Delaware, during the fall semester where she filmed her first three vlogs, which was difficult because her dog was often barking in the background and she was juggling a full course load.

"It definitely had its own difficulties," she said. "But I think it all worked out in the end."

Srivastava, also a University photographer, said members of the Marketing and Creative Services office asked her to film the vlogs, being the only student who worked in the office. She said she was excited to share her life with viewers, also recruiting Joseph, her friend, as another vlogger for the program.

Srivastava said vloggers pitch their own ideas based on recommendations from student viewers and the creative services team before filming the three-to-four minute long videos. She said she and the team exchange ideas, but once the team has approved a vlog theme, she can decide the shots, with a few reshoots depending on the needs of the publishing team.

She said that she's received compliments from students through her personal social media accounts about her videos. She added that some stu-

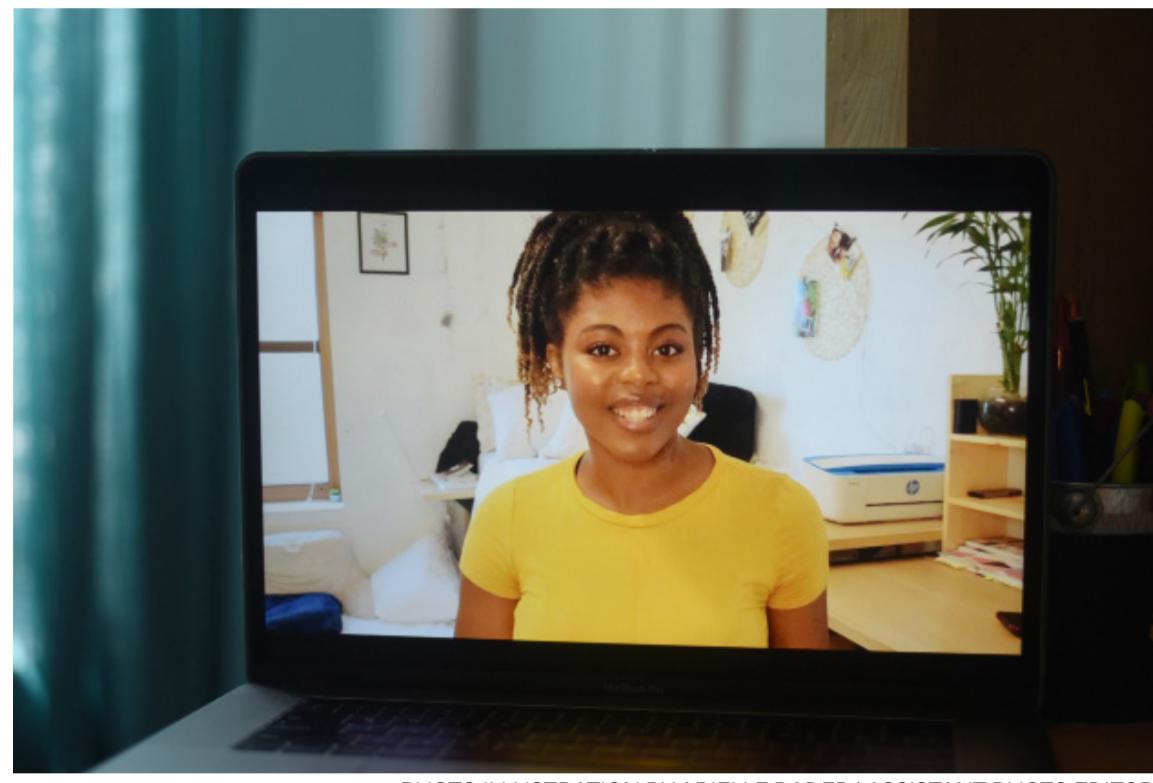


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

The University is embracing nontraditional means of engaging with prospective students and alumni through three official student vloggers.

dents have even reached out to her asking how they could become a vlogger.

"When people DM me, I am like, 'Oh my god, hi. I do go to GW with you. This is really cool,'" Srivastava said. "Lots of the time it's usually nice things, not on the Insta that you messaged, but on my more personal one people will be like 'Oh my god can we see one of your plants or can we see one about your room.' And I'll be like 'Oh my god that's such a good idea, and I'll pitch that to GW.'"

Joseph, a sophomore and student vlogger living on campus, said one of her favorite vlogs she filmed last semester was the city's reaction to President Joe Biden's election in November. She said the mood felt

through campus was energetic as she and her friends joined a celebration in Black Lives Matter Plaza.

Joseph said students have reached out to her about the vlogs, asking for advice on making friends, the move-in process, food options and well-known campus spots for students who have not yet been to campus. She said the series might not continue next academic year as more students return to campus, but she hopes the series will continue into next year as college vlogging nationally grows to attract prospective students.

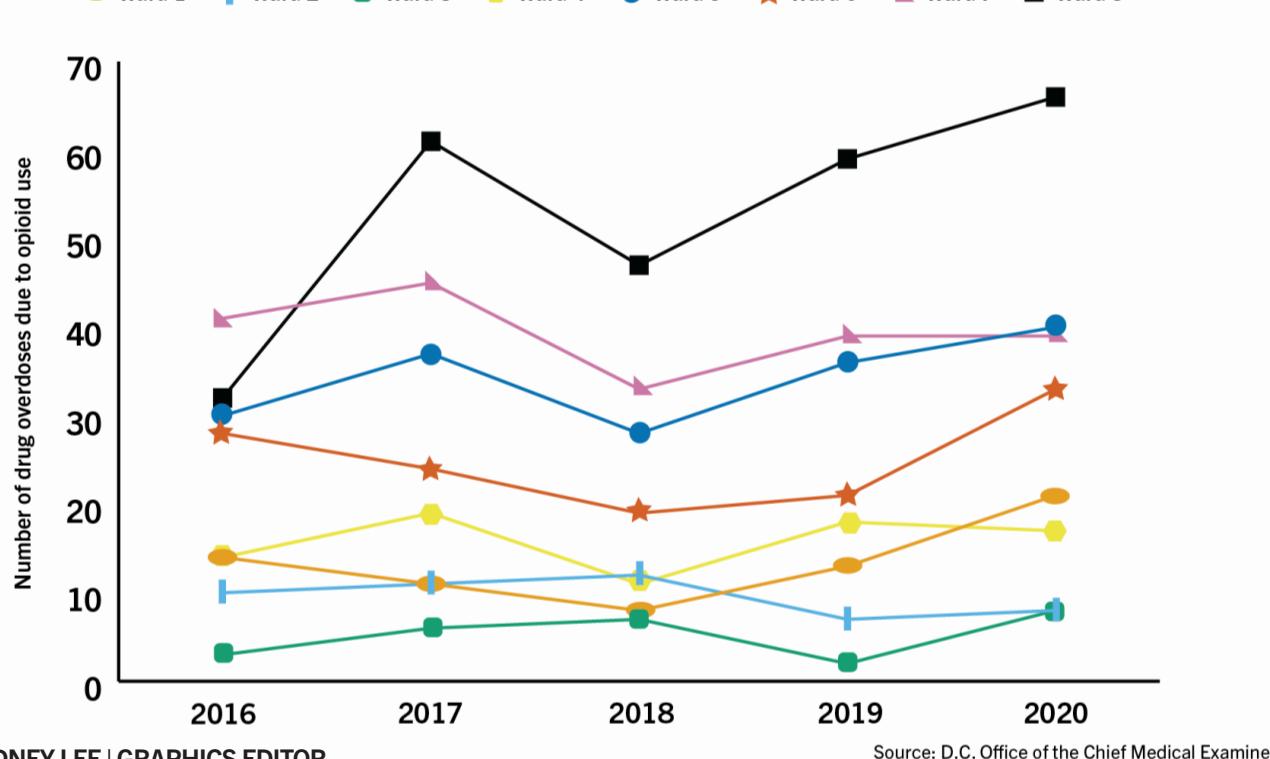
"Personally, before I came to GW, I never came to campus, so everything I learned about GW was either through their

website or through their virtual tours or through YouTube channels," Joseph said.

Joseph said the videos can connect students who may feel lonely at home to life at GW or who are interested in learning more about campus life, which she sees as the ultimate goal of the program. She said she joined the team already feeling comfortable with the film and editing process because she had already published videos on YouTube.

"Having this platform, specifically for me, it gives me a way to show GW or show prospective students the stuff I wish I had seen before coming to campus," Joseph said. "And I do think it actually is making an impact."

## Number of drug overdoses due to opioid use by ward — 2016 to 2020



Source: D.C. Office of the Chief Medical Examiner

## Opioid deaths spike across D.C., remain stagnant in Ward 2

**ZACHARY BLACKBURN**  
REPORTER

Opioid overdose deaths in D.C. reached a record high last year amid a nationwide surge in drug deaths, according to District data.

Data released by the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner last month showed that Ward 2, where GW is located, sustained only eight opioid deaths over the course of the year, compared to 39 and 66 deaths in Wards 7 and 8, respectively. Experts in opioid addiction said the COVID-19 pandemic has created conditions of stress and isolation, exacerbating a crisis that has been growing for several years.

The data show that the 349 overdose deaths in the first 10 months of the year had already surpassed the previous yearly record, set in 2019 at 281 deaths, by 24 percent.

The data show that in 2020, there were 34.9 deaths per month, an almost 50 percent increase from the 23.4 deaths per month in 2019.

Mayor Muriel Bowser vowed in 2018 to cut opioid deaths in half by late 2020.

The D.C. Council approved legislation in December that broadened the number of D.C. government employees approved to carry naloxone, a drug overdose antidote, and

expanded "Good Samaritan" laws, which provide legal protections to people who report overdoses to 911.

Tarlise Townsend, a postdoctoral fellow at the New York University School of Medicine and an expert in drug epidemiology and policy, said the COVID-19 pandemic has likely worsened the opioid epidemic. She said the added stress people have experienced as a result of the pandemic has likely increased the use of fentanyl, an opioid that is "more potent than heroin" and was involved in 94 percent of D.C. opioid deaths in 2020.

Wards 2 and 3 have sustained the lowest number of deaths since at least 2016, both logging eight deaths during the first 10 months of last year, according to the data. Every other ward has tracked more than 20 opioid deaths over the course of last year.

The report also showed that opioid deaths disproportionately affected Black residents, accounting for 85 percent of total deaths citywide last year despite making up only 44 percent of the population.

Townsend said "these alarming trends" still need to be studied, but continued "racist policing and racist drug war policies" play a role in creating those disparities.

She said the "Good Sa-

mritan" approach to addressing overdosing can be difficult to implement in communities with low levels of trust in the police.

Townsend said local and federal policymakers must make changes to stop what is now a yearslong increase in drug deaths nationwide, including increased access to safe syringes and dependence-relieving drugs like buprenorphine for those who suffer from addiction.

She said while drug decriminalization laws, like recent legislation in Oregon decriminalizing the possession of all drugs, still need to be studied, there needs to be a "serious conversation" in the country about whether they could potentially be better at preventing overdose deaths than strict drug laws.

District officials have taken steps over the past few years to address the opioid epidemic, including when officials decriminalized the possession of drug paraphernalia in December and expanded access to overdose-reversing drugs like Naloxone.

Courtney Hunter, the vice president of state policy at the Connecticut-based anti-addiction organization Shatterproof, said COVID-19 restrictions have created limited access to inpatient addiction treatment, causing increas-

es in drug overdoses and deaths. Hunter said mental health issues caused by social isolation and financial uncertainty have contributed to the increase in drug use, as well as decreased use of substance abuse recovery programs in D.C.

D.C. health care providers have previously been more limited in their ability to administer the dependency-relieving drug buprenorphine because of the X-waiver requirement, which required providers under the Controlled Substance Act to complete eight hours of training being able to administer the drug.

The Department of Health and Human Services eliminated the X-waiver requirement for physicians treating up to 30 patients at a time last month, which Hunter said would increase access to the drug.

Silvia Martins, an associate professor of epidemiology at Columbia University, said improving access to health care for medically underserved residents could lead to a decrease in opioid deaths among marginalized populations.

She added that social and economic stress caused by the pandemic have likely caused the spike in drug-related deaths.

## IN BRIEF

### Officials to increase incoming class size next year after pandemic causes enrollment drops

Officials hope to increase the incoming class size by upward of 300 students next year, a sharp reversal from a pre-pandemic initiative to significantly reduce the undergraduate population.

Administrators announced Friday that GW will adopt recommendations made by the Future Enrollment Planning Task Force – a group charged in November to develop targets for next year's incoming class – to enroll between 2,475 and 2,550 freshmen and between 150 and 300 transfer students. The targets mark a pivot away from the now-obsolete 20/30 Plan, a hallmark of University President Thomas LeBlanc's tenure that sparked tensions between administrators and faculty.

Jay Goff, the vice provost for enrollment and student success, said the targets will serve as building blocks for GW's long-term enrollment strategy.

"The final set of goals really are designed to encourage the University community to move in this direction that would increase the diversity, accessibility and affordability of GW," Goff said.

Last year, officials had sought to reduce the size of the incoming class to 2,250 freshmen and 300 transfer students as part of the 20/30 Plan but ultimately fell short of the overall target by nearly 300 students.

Officials placed the plan on hold in the wake of the pandemic and have since said it is obsolete.

Provost Brian Blake said the task force's efforts will be integrated with Faculty Senate committees' work moving forward.

"Over the FEPTF's two months of meetings, I asked them to be aspirational and creative, guided by a set of principles emphasizing academic talent, diversity, a safe campus environment, an appropriately-sized student body and a high-quality student experience," Blake said in an email to the GW community Friday.

He applauded Goff's work as co-chair of the 23-member task force, which met nine times between November and January to develop the targets. The members included faculty senators, professors, deans and a student.

"Jay's transparency, patience and know-how were key to leading the group to a collective recommendation," Blake said. "This aspirational work is shaping GW's future for the better."

# Students add jobs, heavier course loads to online learning schedules

**LAUREN SFORZA**  
STAFF WRITER

**TIFFANY GARCIA**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

With extra time on their hands, students said they are taking advantage of their relatively open schedules by enrolling in more courses, conducting research and working full time.

While some students have felt low morale and productivity as online instruction continues, others said the virtual learning has allowed them to be more flexible with their time because they do not have to commute to classes or schedule their courses around a job. In interviews, seven students said they have felt themselves perform more efficiently in classes and are focusing on professional opportunities like full-time internships and course loads.

Senior Tess Peterson, a political communication major living in D.C., said she accepted a part-time nannying job last semester while taking five courses. She said she cut down on time because she doesn't have to commute to Foggy Bottom for classes.

"A lot of seniors in their second semester try to get full-time positions just to fill

up the time," Peterson said. "I'm not somebody that does well with idle time. I really needed something to do and the family that I'm working for now was really ready and willing to accommodate whatever class obligations I had, and so we just worked out a schedule that works for everybody."

Peterson said she would not have been able to accept a full-time position if she were taking in-person classes this semester, and she is grateful for the flexibility of an online schedule. She said taking care of a seven-month-old has helped her mental health because her job does not require her to focus on daily news coverage as she would in an internship.

She added that nannying has been "great" because she gets paid full time, which is not guaranteed at an entry-level job or internship.

"There's a lot of unpaid internship culture within GW, and obviously what I'm doing now is not an unpaid internship," Peterson said. "But I think the idea of having a more real job was more appealing to me with all this time that I had, and especially one that was so caring and thoughtful."

Junior Mark Thomas-Patterson, a history major living off campus, said he

took five courses last semester in addition to beginning an independent study on foreign relations, which he had more time to dedicate to researching. He said the extra free time during the pandemic allowed him to take on the independent study.

He said he is taking four courses this semester and is continuing his independent study so he can spend more time preparing to apply to graduate school. He said the "biggest" challenge this semester has been not being able to interview people in person and find physical copies of archived sources in Gelman Library for his research.

"There's a big issue of finding sources, so I have to do research projects that I can do with available online primary sources," Thomas-Patterson said. "I am a lot better off than a lot of other people. I still have challenges, but they've been relatively small and I've done some really interesting research."

Sophomore Michael Martineau, an international affairs major living in Allentown, Pennsylvania, said his grades have improved while attending classes virtually because he had more time to focus on his studies and enjoy learning the material. He said he began to research graduate pro-



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SYDNEY WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The upside of remote instruction for some students has included the ability to earn extra income on the side with jobs or to catch up on missed lectures via video recordings.

grams in his spare time, which he said surprised him after a "rough" first year academically at GW.

He said he decided to challenge himself and take a full course load last semester because of virtual instruction, which he otherwise would not have during normal times. He said it was only after offhandedly taking an elective on the philosophy of human rights because of online learning that he found what he wanted to concentrate in.

Martineau added that he has begun to take more challenging courses in his concentration to stand out among his peers when he applies for graduate programs, which he has more time to plan and look into.

"I wasn't too interested," Martineau said. "And then since the pandemic, I was getting a lot better grades and into some good material in my classes. And I feel like I've missed out on some college experiences, and part of the decision was, I

want to gain some of that back during grad school."

Junior Emma Sauder, an international affairs and history major living off campus, said she originally planned to take her required international economics course over the summer at a local city college. Instead, she decided to take the economics course and two writing-intensive courses this semester because she had more time during the day to work on assignments, she said.

## Black Student-Athlete Alliance creating space for Black athletes

**CELESTE NORAIAN**  
REPORTER

A group of Black student-athletes is banding together to build community on and off campus.

Since registering on GW Engage in November, the Black Student-Athlete Alliance has held events like fundraisers for D.C. nonprofits and four student body meetings for Black student-athletes. Executive board members said the organization will hold events like professional development discussion panels to support each other in GW's predominately White athletic department and advise the department's ongoing diversity and inclusion efforts.

Black Student-Athlete Alliance President Alexis Williams, a senior on the women's soccer team, said the student organization formed in September in response to the summer's Black Lives Matter protests and a call for amplifying Black individuals' voices. She said the organization should have been made "a long time ago" to combat the lack of representation some Black students have felt in GW's athletic department.

In addition to its student leadership, BSAA is led by head women's tennis coach Torrie Browning and Administrative Associate Shatara Stokes, both of whom will be able to connect the students to officials about topics like diversity recruitment.

"We should be able to come together, create a group and solidify unity but also speak on important issues because there aren't that many Black athletes in the athletic department or even at this school," Williams said.

Williams said the org-

ganization's secretary, sophomore Maya White, will represent the group in a panel discussion this month, hosted by the Black Pre-Law Student Association, to discuss Black students' advocacy efforts. The event is a part of the Black Heritage Celebration.

BSAA teamed up with the GW Sports Business Association last week to host a separate BHC event, a panel discussion called "Black Is More Than A Player." The event featured Black professionals and former athletes who shared their experience pursuing their career in the sports industry as a minority.

She said the athletic department has been supportive of the organization by spreading awareness of the group via their website and word of mouth to teams and coaches to recruit more members.

The athletic department painted a raised fist and "BLM" on the Smith Center hardwood court last semester in support of Black lives and a "commitment" to educating people about the plight of Black Americans.

Sophomore Melody Williams, the public relations manager of BSAA and a member of the women's volleyball team, said at least 15 students attended the group's first general body meeting in November to discuss the organization's goals.

She said a "major component" of the group's mission is to build a community where students can have conversations about topics relevant to the BLM movement and their personal experiences as a student-athlete.

She added that BSAA is working to reach out and support disadvan-

taged families in the D.C. community. Williams said the organization hosted a virtual fundraiser in December with Georgetown and American universities' Black Student Athlete coalitions to raise money for GOOD-Projects, a D.C. homelessness focused nonprofit.

Williams said the team raised more than \$1,800 to directly help families and children in three of D.C.'s impoverished neighborhoods receive toys and COVID-19 supplies for the holidays. She said the team is preparing to launch another fundraiser later this month to raise funds for COVID-19 supplies, which they will package and distribute to families in collaboration with the local nonprofit Martha's Table.

"Outside of Foggy Bottom and the NW area, D.C. has a very large Black population, and I think everyone who goes to GW doesn't necessarily see that because our institution is a [predominantly White institution], and we are located in and around predominantly White neighborhoods," Williams said. "Fundraising for organizations that help Black D.C. residents is fundraising for the D.C. community as a whole."

White, BSAA's secretary and a student-athlete on the women's track and field team, said members are eager to promote the group and their voices on campus by collaborating with student organizations like the sports business association and teams in the athletic department. She said the group is not allowed to meet in person even if members are currently on campus but is looking forward to holding in-person meetings next year.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Black Student-Athlete Association members are teaming up with other Black organizations to host Black Heritage Celebration events this month.



FILE PHOTO BY DONNA ARMSTRONG | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER  
Jeri Epstein, the chair of the Foggy Bottom and West End ANC, will head the infrastructure committee, which will focus on priorities like safer sidewalks.

## ANC to launch four committees to tackle community issues

**RIO MATSUMOTO**  
REPORTER

A local governing body will launch committees this year to prioritize small businesses, pedestrian safety and homeless communities in Foggy Bottom.

Epstein said the neighborhood life committee will focus on homeless services, like the distribution of meals from food pantries and sanitary supplies. The economy committee will work to bring more businesses and consumers to Foggy Bottom after the COVID-19 pandemic prompted several business closures, and the strategic planning committee will work to best allocate the community's resources, like ANC funding to the city's projects, she said.

Epstein said she selected each committee leader according to their passion and expertise in each subject. She said Causey has experience in redevelopment and business. Patel and Omictin have advocated for protecting homeless communities and Barbisch has developed planning skills with a concentration in public health through her leadership in the U.S. Army.

The economy committee held its first meeting last week to discuss plans to up-zone the apartment complex at Columbia Plaza, which would permit the construction of a larger building.

Omictin, who will lead the neighborhood life committee, said his concentration should be divided among two separate committees, one covering public neighborhood life issues and another addressing senior living. He said dividing the committee would expand discussions about neighborhood life into conversations about homelessness and food insecurity, but the single group can still "get those solutions on the table."

He said he hopes to organize a task force including local community organizations, advocates and residents to pressure Mayor Muriel Bowser and the D.C. Council to pass legislation and invest in services that prohibit discrimination "on the basis of whether or not you have a home."

Omictin said he hopes the committees will allow community members to "air grievances" and discuss more frequently the problems they face in the District. He said he's contacting community groups, students and local advocates and residents to join as members.

He said he will push for a structured schedule for all committee meetings rather than the current plan to host meetings when an issue arises.

Barbisch, a former major general in the U.S. Army, said she decided to head the strategic planning committee to set priorities for the ANC's projects based on her leadership experience with the military during the Vietnam War. She said her committee will work to establish long-term plans in collaboration with the D.C. Office of Planning to address issues, like homelessness, unsafe traffic and local streetscapes.

Barbisch said she hopes the committee will prioritize these local issues and draw up "road maps" to efficiently resolve them.

She said she's currently working to update the ANC's website with information about the committees' projects and opportunities for community member engagement for local constituents, nonprofits and businesses. She said she encourages community members to attend more ANC meetings and express their interest in joining committees to commissioners in hopes of addressing community problem-solving.

# Opinions

February 16, 2021 • Page 5

## WHAT THE UNIVERSITY WON'T TALK ABOUT THIS WEEK

The number of open units to students whose roommates have COVID-19 p.2.

FROM GWATCHET.COM/OPINIONS

"For the sake of safety, please fight the urge to go out for a date or hookup this Valentine's Day."

— JENNA BAER ON 02/10/21

## GW should spend COVID-19 relief funding in ways that help students and staff

### STAFF EDITORIAL

The University has \$13 million in COVID-19 relief funding to dole out. That money should be put toward helping students and staff.

GW has needed to lay off employees, institute hiring freezes and cut certain department budgets. On top of that, students and their families have been hit hard by the pandemic, so much so that officials ran out of money to give quickly after their first load of pandemic relief came in. When the University distributes its COVID-19 relief money, officials should prioritize distributing the funds to students because they are the core of this University, and students need to be able to pay tuition. After that, the money needs to go toward ending hiring freezes and rehiring staff that were let go at the start of the pandemic.

Students are dealing with unprecedented times. Many students have lost monetary prospects like Federal Work Study or are in need of more income for their family and personal expenses. Jobs are scarce and dangerous during this pandemic. Students with demonstrated need should not need to put themselves in the line of fire when the University has the means to assist them. Last time the University received funding, students had to demonstrate need in order to get funding. The same criteria should be applied this time. All students who need extra support should be able to access assistance from the University.

On top of all of the students who need more aid this semester, there is another group of students on campus who might need more help: undocumented students. Last time, undocumented immigrants and students were left out of federal relief. While it looks as if they will be included this time



Cartoon by Hannah Thacker

around, should the tides turn and they are left out once again, the University should prioritize undocumented students who are receiving no federal relief.

Once students are taken care of, the GW community would be well-served by the University trying to undo many of the pandemic-era cuts it made to

faculty and staff. These cuts meant that many employees, starting with events staff back in the spring, wound up jobless just as the virus spread and the

economy cratered.

The hiring freeze has also meant fewer adjunct professors – which, according to department chairs, has led to fewer course offerings for students. Students' learning experiences, already weighed down by the virtual environment and pandemic stress, have been pulled down even lower by having fewer courses available. This has been even more pronounced in the humanities, like English and anthropology, that had been in the crosshairs for cuts even before the pandemic. Putting some of the COVID-19 aid toward thawing the hiring freeze could help fix that problem.

This funding could also present a great opportunity to enact the proposed "cluster hiring" plan that officials and faculty have been discussing. The proposal, aimed at diversifying GW's White-dominated professoriat, calls for onboarding 18 new faculty members of color and expanding the University's Africana studies program. Officials, while seeming to support the plan in principle, have cautioned that it would be difficult to enact in the pandemic environment. Still, it is worth considering as an option right now rather than later on if GW is able to put some pandemic relief aid toward hiring.

Obviously, the editorial board is not the entity that makes these decisions, and we are not at all privy to the full range of factors that the University has to weigh when allocating resources. Nevertheless, it is worthwhile to articulate some of the different needs the University has and different places this funding could go. The University is only as strong as the students who learn there and the faculty and staff who work there – so making sure they benefit first and foremost is paramount.

## Universities nationwide must stop practicing legacy admissions

In theory, legacy admissions seem like a good way to get more students into higher education. But they have historically been used to discriminate against people on the basis of their religion, and the practice has evolved into a way to keep elite institutions elite.

The practice originated in the 1900s, when colleges and universities started to reward the families of their alumni on merit in the hopes of donations. But over time, it became used to discriminate against Jewish and Catholic students. The process has evolved to favor White and wealthy students today.

Laya Reddy  
Columnist

Despite the negative implications of legacy admissions on students of color and low-income communities, many colleges and universities across the country continue to use the process. School administrators give preferential treatment to children of alumni who tend to be from wealthier families, and as a result, place those who are not related to alumni at a disadvantage. Legacy admissions is unfair, racist and classist and must end at the University and schools nationwide.

A decade ago, children of GW alumni were reported to be one and a half times more likely to be accepted than applicants who did not have a parent who attended the University. To this day, the University offers special programming, like information sessions and orientation activities, to new and prospective legacy students. Off the bat, officials should publicly disclose whether or not their admissions process still favors legacy applicants. But even the notion that legacy families have access to exclusive events is inherently elitist. GW must, like all other colleges and universities that engage in this discriminatory behavior, stop giving legacy students and their families the upper hand.

There are a slew of other ways GW and other schools can bring in donations without leaning on wealthy alumni with college-aged kids.

About 42 percent of private colleges and universities considered legacy status in their admissions process, according to a 2018 survey by Inside Higher Ed. In a 2019 study, Inside Higher Ed found that children of alumni were more than three times more likely than non-legacy applicants to be admitted into some of the most selective institutions in the country. At Harvard University, the rate of acceptance for legacy applicants was more than five times higher than that of non-legacy applicants. These applicants are strongly preferred in the admissions process, making it more difficult for non-legacy students to be accepted. This means that a large portion of admissions spots are being filled by people who already had a leg up, excluding qualified applicants who may not have had the same privileged background.

Many students, at no fault of their own, do not have parents who attended the universities to which they are applying. An analysis of the racial and economic factors involved in the admissions process makes clear that these processes are not only just unfair, but also discriminatory against people of color, first generation students and people from lower-income communities.

Only 27 percent of Black children and 21 percent of Hispanic children have a parent with a bachelor's degree, compared to 53 percent of White students. It is far less likely for students of color who apply to college to have a parent that attended a university, and specifically the university to which they are applying, than White students. They are also less likely to benefit from the preferential treatment given to legacy students. Some have even referred to legacy admissions as affirmative action for White people.

— Laya Reddy, a sophomore majoring in political science and music, is a columnist.

## Op-ed: End GW's complicity in the climate crisis

One year ago, we wrote to you outlining the two primary ways GW was complicit in the climate crisis – its fossil fuel investments and its continued affiliation with the Regulatory Studies Center. At the end of June, thanks to the hard work of relentless student advocates, you committed GW to the most aggressive steps in the University's history to combat the greatest crisis of our time. In committing to full divestment from fossil fuels, carbon neutrality by 2030 and reversing GW's entire 200-year carbon footprint, you aligned with science and acknowledged the need for our society to transition off of fossil fuels as quickly as possible. Why, then, has the University continued to lend its name and credibility to climate deniers and efforts to deregulate the fossil fuel industry by harboring the RSC?

Sunrise GW

The problem starts at the top. During her time in then-President George W. Bush's administration, RSC Founder and Director Susan Dudley was the official responsible for the suppression of a finding from her own administration's Environmental Protection Agency scientists that greenhouse gas emissions pose a danger to human welfare. Dudley has a long history of advocating for increased emissions and downplaying the existential threat of climate change. She has argued that there are benefits to climate change, such as preventing the next ice age. She also once argued that smog is beneficial because its blocking of the sun

can reduce skin cancer and cataracts. This type of advocacy work from Dudley and others at the RSC was described in a recent article as continuing "to harm the most vulnerable communities impacted by environmental racism."

An issue that should be of utmost concern to the University is that Dudley has repeatedly used her position to elevate and lend credibility to climate deniers, fossil fuel cronies and other discredited backers of pseudoscience by allowing them to use GW's name, despite a lack of affiliation with the institution. Among these individuals is Julian Morris, who wrote a public comment for the RSC on GW letterhead advocating for the rollback of the Obama-era fuel efficiency standards. Morris is a well-documented climate denier who "has called global warming a myth created by a coalition of self-interested scientists, governments and environmental groups."

This group also includes Richard Belzer, a former Exxon consultant, who has advocated that the EPA strike the finding that greenhouse gases pose a threat to human welfare. He made his intent to undermine climate science very clear: "The goal here is not to change the policy but to correct the science." Dudley has also lent GW's name and credibility to Tony Cox, yet another industry consultant and "fringe" scientist who has been paid to undermine science that could hurt his clients' products. Cox is so discredited that even Bush's Food and Drug Administration commissioner struck his testimony from proceedings. "The agency found that he 'intentionally misquoted

published articles,' and 'Dr. Cox's credibility was such that his testimony was so unreliable that it was inadmissible,'" according to GW professor and former OSHA head David Michaels. These three examples are part of a long list of anti-science individuals that Dudley has allowed to trade on GW's name and credibility through the vehicle of the RSC.

In 2018, 10 funding agreements for the Mercatus Center at George Mason University were released and showed clear violation of the norms of academic freedom by giving donors influence over hiring. Dudley was the director of the Regulatory Studies Program at the Mercatus Center while some of these practices were ongoing. In addition, three of these 10 norm-violating agreements were with the Koch Foundation, including one from 2009, the same year the RSC was founded. Other RSC donors have been found in violation of the principles of academic freedom in the past as well. It is reasonable to ask if RSC funding agreements with the Koch Foundation (or any donor) from the same era similarly violated the norms of academic freedom. Part of the reason these practices have potentially been allowed to permeate the University is because GW lacks an institutional conflict of interest policy and does not mandate its centers and departments to disclose funding or terms of funding agreements.

—Sunrise GW is a student organization dedicated to fighting the climate crisis. The following op-ed is an abridged version of a letter delivered to officials and the Board of Trustees last week.

## The GW Hatchet

609 21st St. NW  
Washington, D.C. 20052  
gwhatcet.com | @gwhatcet

eric@gwhatcet.com  
news@gwhatcet.com  
opinions@gwhatcet.com  
sports@gwhatcet.com  
culture@gwhatcet.com  
photo@gwhatcet.com  
multimedia@gwhatcet.com

Parth Kotak, managing editor\*

Kiran Hoefner-Shah, managing director\*

Jared Gans, senior news editor

Lia DeGroot, news editor

Zach Schonfeld, news editor

Isha Trivedi, assistant news editor

Jarrod Wardwell, assistant news editor

Tiffany Garcia, assistant news editor

Makenna Roberts, contributing news editor

Ciara Regan, blog editor

Hannah Thacker, opinions editor\*

Andrew Sugrue, contributing opinions editor\*

Anna Boone, culture editor\*

Diego Mendoza, contributing culture editor

Molly Kaiser, contributing culture editor

Emily Maisie, sports editor\*

Belle Long, contributing sports editor

Sarah Roach, editor in chief

Lillian Bautista, senior photo editor

Arrielle Bader, assistant photo editor

Camille DeSanto, assistant photo editor

Grace Hromin, assistant photo editor

Sabrina Godin, assistant photo editor

Sophia Young, contributing photo editor

Amanda Plocharski, assistant video editor

Dante Schulz, assistant video editor

Heidi Estrada, assistant video editor

Alec Rich, podcast host

Sarah Sachs, podcast host

Gwyn Wheeler, podcast producer

Lizzie Mintz, copy editor

Ed Prestera, assistant copy editor

Carly Neilson, research assistant

Lauren Sforza, research assistant

Yankun Zhao, research assistant

Olivia Columbus, design editor\*

Riley Burke, contributing design editor

Grace Miller, contributing design editor

Sidney Lee, graphics editor

Aaron Kovacs, web developer

Lindsay Paulen, social media director

Amy Liu, contributing social media director

Donna Armstrong, contributing social media

director

\* denotes member of editorial board

Business Office

Andrew Shlos, business manager

Meredith Polk, sales representative

Mary Clare O'Connor, sales representative

Submissions — Deadlines for submissions are Friday 5 p.m. for Monday issues. They must include the author's name, title, year in school and phone number. The GW Hatchet does not guarantee publication and reserves the right to edit all submissions for space, grammar and clarity.

Submit to [opinions@gwhatcet.com](mailto:opinions@gwhatcet.com)

Policy Statement — The GW Hatchet is produced by Hatchet Publications Inc., an independent, non-profit corporation. All comments should be addressed to the Board of Directors, which has sole authority for the content of this publication. Opinions expressed in signed columns are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of The GW Hatchet. All content of The GW Hatchet is copyrighted and may not be reproduced without written authorization from the editor in chief.

Cost — Single copies free. Additional copies available for purchase upon request.

# Culture

February 16, 2020 • Page 6

## THE SCENE

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

"SUPER MONSTER" AN ALBUM BY CLAUD

**DIEGO MENDOZA**  
CONTRIBUTING CULTURE EDITOR

Some eateries are now referred to as "ghost kitchens," but don't worry, they're not haunted.

Since the onset of the pandemic, many establishments have chosen to shut down their dining rooms and switch entirely to takeout and delivery service. With new COVID-19 variants becoming more and more prevalent, you may want to ditch your dinner plans and instead order from these "ghost" kitchens for takeout or delivery using apps like UberEats and Doordash.

Here's a rundown of restaurants where you can grab your meal to go:

### Thamee

Eric Wang — the owner of D.C.'s only full-service Burmese restaurant — said that he has chosen to keep his dining room closed for the safety of his staff and customers.

"The only way we'll fully open back up for dine-in services is when the vaccines are available to people of all ages and backgrounds in DC, and when all of our key staff members have completed their vaccinations," Wang said in an email.

For now, you'll have to settle for takeout and delivery from Thamee through UberEats, Grubhub and Doordash. For people afraid of spice, Burmese food is a great way to introduce yourself to southeast Asian flavors because of its milder ingredients, so be sure to try a bowl of delicious curry stew, like Thamee's catfish Mohingar (\$19).

1320 H St. NW. Open from 4 to 8 p.m. Wednesday through Sunday.

### Cane

This Caribbean street food joint was known in pre-pandemic times for its small, narrow and intimate dining room where no reservations were ever taken. The chefs have elected to remain a takeout and delivery restaurant only for the time being, according to the restaurant's website. You can order its mouthwatering jerk wings (\$12) or grilled oxtail (\$22) on Grubhub or UberEats.

403 H St. NE. Open for lunch Monday through Saturday 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. and dinner from 4 to 8 p.m., and until 9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday.

### Ben's Chili Bowl

Perhaps the backbone of D.C. cuisine, this nationally famous restaurant was recently featured in the History Channel's #SaveOurRestaurants initiative — a philanthropic effort that highlights some of America's historic eateries that have been impacted by the pandemic. While the Nationals and FedExField locations remain closed, you can order classics like the original half-smoke (\$7.70) on UberEats, Grubhub and Doordash for pickup or delivery from the U Street or H Street locations.

1213 U St NW and 1001 H St. NE. Hours differ by location: Check here for details.

### The Red Hen

An Italian-inspired restaurant using "mid-Atlantic bounty" according to the joint's Instagram, this eatery will keep its dining room closed until further notice. Instead, you'll need to download Toast for delivery or place an order for pick-



HATCHET FILE PHOTO  
For many restaurants, health and safety meant closing down in-person dining and operating with a barebones crew for delivery and takeout.

up on the restaurant's website. Try The Red Hen's pasta like its garganelli with Tuscan duck ragu (\$21) or squid ink linguini (\$19) that you can pair with one of their several wines from their extensive drinks menu.

1822 1st St. NW. Open from 5 to 8 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and until 9 p.m. Friday through Saturday.

### Timber Pizza Company

In addition to its food truck that you can often find at Foggy Bottom Market, you can order homemade pies from Timber Pizza Company's Petworth location. The restaurant does not offer delivery, which means you'll either have to call or use the pizza shop's Square site — a takeout and payment service

— to place your order. Timber Pizza Company's pizza menu changes depending on the ingredients in season. For instance, the winter offerings currently include pizzas, like the "Green Monster" (\$15.50) pie with pesto, kale and zucchini.

809 Upshur Street NW. Opens for dinner daily at 4 p.m. and weekend breakfast at 8 a.m.



DIEGO MENDOZA | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

HelloFresh offers students a 15 percent discount upon verification from a list price of \$60 to \$96 a week.

## Meal prep services for every kind of eater

**ISABELLA MACKINNON**  
REPORTER

Whether you aspire to be the next Gordon Ramsey, you're looking to consume sustainably or you just don't want to break the bank, there is a meal prep service for you.

Meal delivery services like HelloFresh and Blue Apron have risen to popularity over the past year as the COVID-19 pandemic keeps people at home and in the kitchen. Some services cater to vegans, while others pride themselves on their relatively low prices.

### For students on a budget:

**Every Plate:** This service ranks among the cheapest of meal prep services. The service has plans for two and four people with options for three to five meals per week. You can choose from weekly menus, and most meals take about 30 minutes to prepare. Options from its weekly menu include creamy dijon chicken, mushroom and pepper jack quesadillas and Israeli pita pockets.

\$4.99 per serving plus shipping. You will be charged four days prior to the scheduled delivery, and modifications are accepted up to five days prior to the delivery.

### For those looking to hop on trending services:

**Green Chef:** This service offers a few different plans, depending on household size (two or four) and number of meals desired for

the week (two to five). Once these specifications have been determined, you can select your meal choices from the provided weekly menus, which include dishes like the balsamic tomato & herb chicken, pork carnitas tacos and szechuan pork & green bean stir-fry. Some take less than 30 minutes to prepare, while others require closer to an hour to make. You don't need to use the subscription every week. You could cancel for a week or two if you're cooking on your own.

\$60 to \$96 a week. Students are offered a 15 percent discount upon student verification.

**Blue Apron:** This company was created to emphasize sustainable consumption. Blue Apron offers a few different meal plans — the "Signature" plan, "Signature for 4" family plan, "Vegetarian" plan and "Wellness" plan.

Some meals are quick and easy to prepare, while others are more complicated. The service accommodates customers with dietary restrictions as well as those looking to order low-calorie meals.

You can choose from dishes like the one-pan spicy pork udon, Spanish lamb and saffron rice and monterey jack Beyond burger.

About \$9 per meal and in each plan. Blue Apron also provides an accompanying wine delivery service.

**For the environmentally conscious:**

**Green Chef:** This business is the first USDA-certified meal prep service and the only meal prep service with a 100 percent carbon

\$11.99 per serving for the two-person plan (\$71.94 weekly) and \$9.99 per serving for the four-person plan (\$79.92 weekly). Shipping is free.

### WRITING HOUR

Feb. 16 • Free • Online registration  
Gain inspiration from the Portrait Gallery's paintings to jump-start your creative writing journey alongside other writers.

### VIRTUAL BLACK GEORGETOWN COMMUNITY HISTORY PROJECT

Feb. 17 • Free • Online registration  
Explore Georgetown's Black history and learn how to preserve your own family photographs, documents and more.

## Q&A: Alumna discusses work as a 'GoPuff' ambassador

**ANNA BOONE**  
CULTURE EDITOR

Students use delivery services all the time, but one service allows you to show off all your delivered items for cash.

College students across the country are working to become brand ambassadors for the snack and alcohol delivery company GoPuff. The service allows brand ambassadors to make a bit of money without needing to work inside grocery stores and other food services during the pandemic.

The Hatchet chatted with 2020 alumna Natalie Dannett about her experience working as a GoPuff ambassador in the age of the COVID-19 pandemic:

### How did you become a GoPuff ambassador?

Natalie Dannett: I'm working in a job that doesn't pay a lot of money. I am doing a service year, so I earn a stipend rather than a salary, which means I make less than minimum wage, which is hard to live on...I didn't feel safe getting a second in-person job, like working in a restaurant, working retail, things like that. So I was like, "How can I make even tiny amounts of money just to help pay for groceries or something, not leaving the house?" And I think I Googled something like "at home side hustles" or something and all these websites

were like, "be an influencer!" And I thought, "I can't be an influencer, I do not have any followers." That's not the lifestyle I seek, but I knew a girl from my hometown actually, who was a GoPuff ambassador. And she was much more the influencer type. She has a YouTube channel, she's trying to make it in that space, but I was just like, "Oh, I bet that's kind of easy."

So I Googled the GoPuff ambassador application. It was a Google form. I filled it out. And then a few days later I got an email that I was accepted.

### What does your work with GoPuff look like?

ND: For each story that I post on my Instagram, I make anywhere from \$2 to \$5, usually closer to \$5. And that's if you repost an image that GoPuff has made, like their graphic design team has made. If I post an image on my story that I took, like a picture I took of my GoPuff snacks, then I'll make more like \$10 to \$15. And for real posts, like pictures that will show up in my feed.

### What obligations do you have as a brand ambassador for GoPuff?

ND: As far as I know, I have no obligation to make any number of posts per week or per month or anything. So we use an app called Social Ladder, which I would imagine a

### How has your work affected your outlook on social media influencers?

ND: It's harder than you think it is. Reposting pre-made graphics is so easy, but coming up with original content to showcase a thing without seeming annoying or phony, or like a sellout is next to impossible. And I think influencers with a lot of followers on the internet tend to get a lot of hate whenever they post any kind of sponsored content. But the thing is, that's how they make their money. So I do have kind of an appreciation for people who are able to do that now that I didn't really have before.



COURTESY OF NATALIE DANETT  
Natalie Danett, a GoPuff ambassador, said she has a newfound respect for influencers' ability to post original content riffing off brands as a result of her partnership with the delivery company.

# Sports

February 16, 2021 • Page 7

## GAMES OF THE WEEK



**MEN'S BASKETBALL**  
vs. Saint Joseph's  
Feb. 17 | 6 p.m.  
Men's basketball is slated to play its first game in a month after COVID-19 delays.



**MEN'S GOLF**  
at Invitational at Savannah Harbor  
Feb. 20-21  
The Colonials will look for a better result in Savannah after a last place finish in their first meet of the season.

## NUMBER CRUNCH

**38**

The number of service aces volleyball posted through its first five games, up from its 23.4 average through its first five games over the past five seasons.

## Men's and women's swimming and diving work to rebuild routines

**EMILY MAISE**  
SPORTS EDITOR

After almost a year outside competitive lanes, the men's and women's swimming and diving programs kicked off a shortened 2020-21 season last week.

Both teams opened the season at the three-day Cavalier Invitational against Virginia and Pittsburgh – their first of just three scheduled regular season meets. Swimmers said the return to competition helped them get into a routine and provided them with fresh faces to race against after months of challenging teammates.

"It was a great practice, if nothing else, to get back into the routine of racing and doing the team warmups together, team cheers, that sort of thing," junior Dylan Arzoni said. "It was just a great thing for the teams to be able to get down there and do some racing and also get back into the routine of what we do when we travel."

A normal swimming and diving season at GW begins in October and extends through the first weeks of March. But this year, because of COVID-19, student-athletes waited until Feb. 5 to compete again after returning to practice in August.

Graduate student Emils Pone, who chose not to take part in NCAA competition last season to focus on training for the upcoming 2021 Olympics, said he felt "rusty" in his first competition back.

He added that he tested a new race strategy, attempting to start the race off strong rather than finishing the race strong and playing "catch up." But Pone had no trouble seeing results in the pool, finishing second in the 400 yard IM with a time of 3:56.04.

Freshman Karol Mlynarczyk struck gold in his first collegiate

meet. He nabbed a top-25 time in the 100 yard backstroke preliminaries (46.97) before pacing the competition in the finals with a time of 47.29. He also topped the leaderboard in the 200 yard backstroke, posting a 1:43.94. Both times rank No. 2 in program history.

Head coach Brian Thomas said Mlynarczyk is poised to be "one of the best athletes in the Atlantic 10" but is still working through his first year on the college scene.

In an October interview, Thomas said 30 of the 52 rostered student-athletes from both programs were on campus in the fall for training. The other 22 swimmers and divers were practicing with hometown teams and continuing to train, he added.

Junior Grace Olivardia said she was antsy to get back in a competitive environment after months of practicing. She said 11 months of training took some pressure off her first meet back, but continuing to train without competing became "annoying" as time wore on.

Junior Courtney Sicinski said she and her teammates have spent time racing each other and weight training to prepare for the season. She added that she leaned on her experience and training to erase any nerves she may have had coming into her races last week.

"It was just a little nerve wracking to start at the beginning," she said. "But once you dive in and hit the water and you're just swimming, it all comes back to you because you've been doing it for years now. And we've been training this every single day, so once you just get into it, it gets much easier."

Sicinski beat out sophomore Alex Marlow for the No. 1 spot



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

Freshman Karol Mlynarczyk notched some of the fastest times in program history in the 100 yard backstroke and 200 yard backstroke at the men's swimming team's first meet of the season.

in the 200 yard IM, nabbing a 2:08.95, and posting a 4:34.71 in the 400 yard IM. Olivardia nabbed a third place finish and the highest spot of any Colonial in the 200 yard freestyle, improving her preliminary time by two seconds.

An abundance of caution due to COVID-19 concerns in GW's programs canceled the teams' first dual meet of the year Feb. 13, leaving both programs with just one meet left before the NCAA Championships March 8 to 10 and 24 to 27. Thomas said he has spoken with coaches as recently as Wednesday about getting more meets on the calendar in

mid-March.

He added that the squads' main opportunity to qualify for the NCAA Championships will be at the Navy Invitational March 5 and 6 – exactly one month after the season started. The Atlantic 10 Championship for both programs, which is traditionally before the NCAA Championship, will now take place April 14 to 17.

Thomas said with a shortened year and inverted schedule, his teams need to harness each competitive opportunity and use it to the best of their abilities to get better because practice can't simulate the real race

environments athletes will face in March.

"What we're doing to manage such a strange year is making sure we're taking advantage of every opportunity we have to get better because they're sometimes few and far between," he said. "It had been 11 months since we competed together, so it's really taking some of those things we can learn and just the benefit of getting races on video."

The Colonials are scheduled to return March 5 at the Navy Invitational. Competition starts at 11 a.m.

*–Belle Long contributed reporting.*

## Gymnastics adapts to truncated schedule during pandemic

**WILL MARGERUM**  
STAFF WRITER

After three canceled or postponed meets, gymnastics has needed to adapt to an ever-changing slate this season.

The Colonials were set to kick off the 2021 campaign with a meet at Pittsburgh Jan. 24, but it took nearly three weeks for them to open the campaign with a 196.150–192.950 defeat against Towson last week. Head coach Margie Foster-Cunningham and student-athletes said they have needed to be flexible with the frequent changes and stay focused on sharpening their skills and bonding as a team.

Athletic department spokesperson Brian Sereno said GW canceled its participation in the Pittsburgh meet because the team lacked time to "appropriately prepare" for competition.

The next scheduled matchup was a trip to Chapel Hill for a showdown with North Carolina Jan. 31. But the meet was postponed after a snowstorm blanketed much of the Northeast days before the team was set to depart. Both programs are working to reschedule the

meet, according to a Jan. 30 release.

The third time was not the charm for the Colonials. New Hampshire did not travel to the Smith Center for a Feb. 7 meet due to inclement weather, delaying the start of the campaign again. The programs are attempting to reschedule the meet for a future date, according to a Feb. 6 statement.

Foster-Cunningham said in her 36 years at the helm, she has never experienced three consecutive cancellations to open the season but added that her team is calm and ready to tackle any obstacle with a "different level of appreciation for an opportunity."

Cancellations and delays have become the norm since the COVID-19 pandemic began a year ago. The 2020 schedule was cut short due to the pandemic, causing an abnormally long offseason for the Colonials that desynchronized the team's development.

Junior Olivia Zona said having meets canceled can be a "little bit" frustrating, but the team was afforded extra time to practice for its eventual competitions. The Colonials have also held intra-squad sets where the gymnasts can showcase their skills in a simulated

competition environment.

Zona said sharing a space with her teammates in their off time has also been helpful because they can constantly interact with each other.

Senior co-captain Anna Warhol said although the team was excited to begin the season as originally planned, the student-athletes were prepared for the unexpected during a year full of uncertainty.

Warhol said when the snowstorm struck D.C., the team held workouts in its District affinity residence hall for the gymnasts to compete against each other. The team has also been cooking meals together to strengthen their bond even further, she said.

A pandemic-stricken season is hardly a typical introduction to collegiate competition for the team's four freshmen, but Foster-Cunningham said it's "almost easier" to manage them than the upperclassmen because the first-years can't compare the truncated season to a regular year.

The Colonials' second opportunity to compete will come Friday at 6 p.m. when they face off with NC State, William and Mary and Oklahoma in Raleigh.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

The gymnastics team's first three meets of the season against Towson, North Carolina and New Hampshire this season have been delayed because of inclement weather or other mitigating factors.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

The squash team is preparing for a shortened season amid the pandemic.

## Men's squash to play shortened four-game season

**EMILY MAISE**  
SPORTS EDITOR

Men's squash returned to campus Jan. 11 to resume practice for a truncated season slated to begin in March.

Senior Salim Khan said eight of the team's nine members are back on campus to compete in the team's final season as a varsity sport. He said this season the team will change its home venue, players will don masks during matches and the squad will compete in a limited schedule.

Khan said the Colonials are looking to suit up four times this season in back-to-back rumbles with Navy one weekend and Virginia another weekend. While GW doesn't have its 2020-21 slate released, Navy has matches against GW listed for March 13 and 14. Virginia has yet to announce a matchup with men's squash yet.

Athletic department spokesperson Brian Sereno said the men's squash schedule is still being finalized and will be released prior to the team's first competition.

The Colonials will no longer call the Matthew J. Grossman Squash Courts home during the 2020-21 season. The courts are inaccessible due to HVAC repairs, and the team has

instead been practicing and will play its matches at Squash on Fire, Khan said.

The squad will return six members of last season's team and welcome two new additions – freshman Ismail Atef Abdalgawad Al and junior Henry Ohrstrom. Khan said the team will play without sophomore Moustafa Montaser, who earned seven victories last season playing at the top of the ladder, after he chose to remain in Egypt amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Sophomore David Varela, who notched six victories playing at the middle rungs of the ladder, will also not return to the team, according to the 2020-21 roster.

With players hailing from three different countries and cities around the United States, Khan said the varying degrees of virus-related lockdowns meant some athletes lacked access to practice courts. He added that players from Colombia were unable to train for most of the summer, but some clubs in the United States remained open or partially open.

But now that players are back in the District and back to practice, Khan said he and his teammates are working on separate courts and undergoing repairs, and the team has

practiced. He added that for the first five weeks of practice, the athletes hit the ball to themselves and slowly added more movement to work back to a normal pace.

GW joins a small number of squash teams playing a season after the Ivy League and Liberty League canceled competition for winter sports during the pandemic. The College Squash Association also canceled team national championships and individual national championships after teams announced they would sit out the 2020-21 season.

Women's squash will not play a 2020-21 season because of limited competition, and the majority of team members are opting to stay home rather than travel to Foggy Bottom during the pandemic.

Khan said the CSA will grant another year of eligibility to student-athletes, and because GW will discontinue its squash programs at the conclusion of this season, student-athletes would need to find another institution to continue their playing careers. He added that he has considered transferring next year, but he hasn't made his mind up yet.