

Opinions

After one year of Zoom University, the editorial board looks back on the highs and lows.
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Men's tennis alumni reminisce and bid farewell to the axed program.
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PANDEMIC CONTINUES TO HIT BUSINESSES, RESIDENTS

Residents face glitches on vaccine registration website

RIO MATSUMOTO
STAFF WRITER

The District is working to simplify the COVID-19 vaccine registration process as Foggy Bottom residents struggle to secure appointments.

Foggy Bottom residents said they've been unable to book vaccine appointments because of website crashes, limited availability and difficulty navigating the registration website. To address the glitches, residents have sought technical help from other community members to register for the vaccine, and city officials will launch a preregistration system this week for residents to enter personal information ahead of time and choose from limited appointments more quickly.

John George, the president of the Foggy Bottom Association, said eligible elderly residents continue to face difficulties getting a vaccine appointment because they can't register fast enough before all available appointments are taken. Citywide patients have overwhelmed the website in recent weeks – the volume of site visitors Friday causing a six-minute delay in the site being activated that morning.

George said friends and family members who can type and find open appointments faster have helped local senior citizens register for the vaccine but have also created more traffic that slows or crashes the website. GW Hillel launched a similar program earlier this year where student volunteers helped senior citizens sign up for the vaccine and navigate any technical difficulties.

The District's registration website opens every week at 9 a.m. on Thursday for residents in Wards 5, 7 and 8. All other residents can register Fridays at 9 a.m.

Under the new registration system, patients can enter their personal information online during preregistration, and only 3,000 users can use the registration website at once while others stay in a virtual waiting room.

The District has prioritized vaccinating patients from Wards 5, 7 and 8, which have been the hardest hit by the virus, opening more appointments for patients and notifying high-priority cohorts about openings. Despite falling in priority, George said residents from Foggy Bottom have understood the need to enhance equity and have shown support for city officials' decisions at Advisory Neighborhood Commission meetings.

Denise Snyder, the executive director of the Foggy Bottom West End Village, said she's connected volunteers with elderly residents who struggle to quickly type their personal information and find open appointments on the website before they're filled.

Snyder said the District's prioritization of residents from lower-income neighborhoods has improved equitable distribution. But she said city officials also need to increase the total supply of doses offered to residents disproportionately affected by



Nearly a quarter of Ward 2 residents have received a COVID-19 vaccine.

GRACE HRONIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Local workers continue struggling with unemployment

ZACH SCHONFELD
NEWS EDITOR

YUTONG JIANG
REPORTER

struggled to obtain unemployment benefits and find new jobs in the area, citing a lack of District and federal government assistance.

Trupti Patel – a member of the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission and lead D.C. organizer for One Fair Wage, a national nonprofit advocating for workers' rights – said 150 to 200 Foggy Bottom workers are currently unemployed because of a lack of business demand to recruit workers. She said between 50,000 and 75,000 workers have been indefinitely laid off across D.C. in the hospitality industry, a sector accounting for 1,000 jobs in Foggy Bottom and the West End.

The CFO's report states unemployment claims in the District have slightly dipped since August, down to about 65,000 in December after peaking in July at about 87,000. The hospitality, business services and education industries have been hardest hit by the economic effects of the pandemic, according to the report.

Patel said some workers were ineligible to receive unemployment benefits because of wage theft from employers' incorrect filings or wages they received from multiple states, disqualifying them from in-state benefits. She said the District's failure to upgrade its IT infrastructure that operates the city's unemployment system has worsened struggles for local workers.

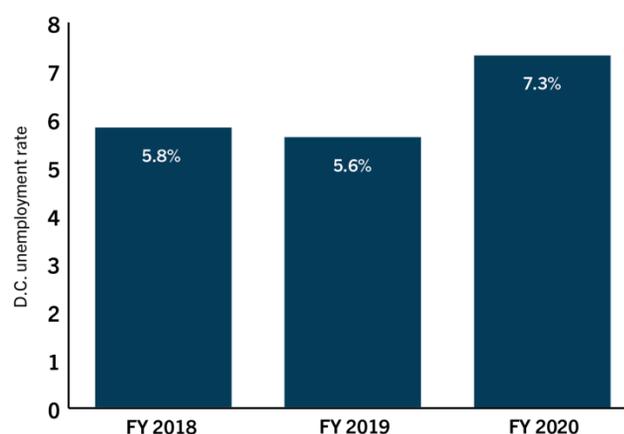
Patel said a lack of awareness has worsened the ongoing issue, and she'll continue fighting to connect workers with their "rightfully entitled" unemployment benefits, like insurance, food stamps and Medicaid. She said the District should ensure people receive their benefits in "a timely fashion" to help them recover financially.

John Kilker, a former full-time bartender at Cafe Deluxe, said losing his job last March was "shocking," and he later "briefly" worked as a pollster for the AFL-CIO from mid-September to Election Day. He said he currently has enough savings for basic necessities like meals but has experienced three-week delays in receiving his unemployment relief from the federal government since September.

Kilker said he didn't earn enough money from his job working as a pollster in Virginia to be eligible to receive federally granted benefits.

Kilker said finding a new job feels like walking "between safety and financial security" because of the pandemic. He said he hopes for a more "efficient" unemployment system to be "proactive" in maintaining technical operations once the pandemic is over.

D.C. unemployment rate through pandemic



SIDNEY LEE | GRAPHICS EDITOR

COVID-19 cases and mortality.

Susan Lampton, a Foggy Bottom resident, said she received her second dose of the Moderna vaccine last week after her family members helped her register for an appointment. She said she first tried to register at every hospital in the area, but locations like Howard University Hospital only opened appointments after she received her first dose at the Giant Food grocery store on O Street.

After becoming eligible to receive the vaccine as a senior citizen in January, Lampton said she tried registering for an appointment four times but couldn't enter her health insurance and personal information fast enough. She said she couldn't secure her appointment until receiving help from family members.

When the COVID-19 pandemic first reached the District, businesses scrambled for support.

Many businesses laid off workers, while others closed temporarily and applied for government assistance. But those same issues are continuing to plague local businesses, as continued closures and delays in receiving financial benefits deepen workers' struggles.

The District's unemployment rate jumped to 7.3 percent during fiscal year 2020 after remaining at 5.6 percent the year before, as the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic prompted closures and layoffs across the city, according to last month's report from the D.C. Office of the Chief Financial Officer. Unemployed workers in Foggy Bottom said they've

Officials roll out student advisory council to advise financial aid office

TIFFANY GARCIA
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

After two years of planning, officials will begin accepting applications this month for a council for students to relay concerns about the financial aid office.

The Financial Aid Advisory Council will begin meeting this September with at least 10 students and officials to provide a student perspective on GW's aid policies and services. Officials said the council will meet six times over the next academic year to review policies in the financial aid office and relay student feedback, improving previously strained communication between students and the office.

Jay Goff, the vice provost for enrollment and student success, said officials have been informally working with Student Association leaders to identify four areas in the office for "immediate focus," like providing faster award packaging and improving overall communication with students. He said their conversations also helped the office with introducing an online counseling appointment system and expanding the course enrollment refund policy to 100 percent for the first two weeks of the semester.

"From my perspective, what I'm trying to do is make sure that we have active student feedback in all

of our services," Goff said. "I believe that's the best way to have accurate and reliable, continuous improvement efforts. And so the idea of having an active and regular advisory council, that is perfect with my concept for the new strategic enrollment management plan at GW."

Goff stepped into his position last August while the University was adjusting some students' financial aid packages during the pandemic. At the time, students had raised concerns about the amount of their awards, prompting officials to hold two town halls on WebEx to answer student concerns and address the issue.

He said the office collaborated with the SA on the town halls, before beginning to regularly communicate with then-Executive Vice President Brandon Hill for an additional perspective. He said their conversations focused on how to improve communication with students and introduce new policies the office was considering.

He added that students on the council will learn more about office processes like repackaging awards, which they can share with their peers to prevent the same type of miscommunication that occurred last August.

"As we went through the repackaging process, we talked about what are some long-term activities

we could do to make sure that we have regulatory and consistent student input on the financial aid processes and programs," Goff said.

Michelle Arcieri, the executive director for student financial assistance, said the office launched a scheduled counseling system last fall they had piloted in the spring to address students' concerns with their repackaged financial aid awards. She said the new system allows students to submit questions before their meeting and get help promptly instead of having to wait via the office hotline.

She added that the office has been collecting students' feedback via a customer service assessment, which will be shared with the advisory council once they meet.

"We launched a scheduling concept that allowed families to schedule time in advance, have their questions submitted to us and all of that," Arcieri said.

She said selected students will serve one-year terms on the council, meeting a total of six times next year, three times per semester, with additional meetings called if necessary. She said each meeting will focus on different topics throughout the year, like reviewing student service platforms in October and student feedback in November.

The council's first meet-



FILE PHOTO BY ALEXANDER WELLING | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Financial aid office staff have worked to implement student suggestions to improve the office, like instituting a counseling system that allows students to submit questions before appointments.

ing in September will focus on reviewing students' accessibility applying for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid. The last meeting in April will include the development of the group's annual report and recommendations for next academic year.

Arcieri said the financial aid office will work with 10 to 20 students and two appointed members of the SA to provide the office with advice regarding communications, technology and student services. She said the council will select students from all resi-

dential and non-residential schools – except GW Law and the School of Medicine and Health Sciences, which have separate financial aid offices – to represent students' concerns broadly.

"We had some delays and COVID then struck and so we just sort of had a number of delays with the startup," Arcieri said. "But the goal was always to have the advisory council start. It is something that again, student feedback is essential and we know that, and we know that this is not to get the council up and running and let it fizzle out."

Hill, now the SA president, said the SA will encourage students to apply for the council through the group's newsletter and social media platforms, like Instagram. He said the need for the council was "pertinent" before but has been "exacerbated" as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic's effects on students' financial situations.

He said the council will help students understand the office's processes regarding aid and streamline communication between both their peers and officials.

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THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

MEETING THE MOMENT: GOOGLE'S BROOKE PEARSON, ESIA MIPP '19
 March 8 • 3 p.m. EST • Free
 To celebrate International Women's Day, the International Women of Elliott will host Brooke Pearson, a staff program manager for Google's Privacy Sandbox.

MYANMAR COUP AND GOING FORWARD
 March 11 • 8 p.m. EST • Free
 Join a panel of experts and two Burmese students for a discussion on the most recent coup that took place in Myanmar on Feb. 1, and its implications with a focus on Myanmar's youth.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

March 9, 1982

Outgoing SA President Doug Atwell's office is vandalized with spray paint on the night of a contentious SA election marked by numerous campaign violations and warnings.



COURTESY OF MARIAH BAKER AND LEILA MESHKAT

Remote working at NASA's headquarters meant alumni watched live and celebrated their work on NASA's Perseverance rover with friends and family at home.

Alumni, students contribute to NASA's Perseverance mission on Mars

ZACHARY BLACKBURN
 STAFF WRITER

Alumnus George Tahu watched from NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California last month as the Perseverance rover completed its 300-million-mile journey to Mars.

Tahu said he was responsible for setting objectives and constraints needed to keep the project on schedule while also reducing costs and risks of the project. The rover, which weighs more than 2,000 pounds and traveled through space for seven months, landed on the surface of Mars on Feb. 18, culminating nine years of planning and research.

Tahu, the program executive of the Mars 2020 mission who earned two master's degrees from the University, is one of at least four GW students and alumni working on the newest Mars rover as a part of the project. Others who have worked on the mission said they contributed by collecting meteorological data or serving as engineers.

NASA was unable to open its doors to guests for celebrations of the Mars mission because of COVID-19 restrictions, but Tahu said he was still able to watch the landing live at JPL and celebrate with teammates while

respecting safety protocols in person.

Tahu said one of the main goals of the Mars 2020 campaign is to begin an effort to return Martian rock samples to Earth, which will be studied for evidence of past microbial life on the planet and to learn how rocky planets like Mars form. He said the Perseverance rover sets the stage for a Mars sample return project, with cooperation from the European Space Agency, that may happen as soon as 2026.

The Perseverance rover's payload contains a weather tool called the Mars Environmental Dynamics Analyzer, which could provide information to help enable future human exploration of Mars, Tahu said.

Tahu said he hopes Perseverance excites the public for future NASA missions. He said he has been excited to see an outpouring of hope from the public and from officials, including in a video call with President Joe Biden and the Perseverance team at the JPL.

Mariah Baker, a first-year graduate student studying in the Space Policy Institute in the Elliott School of International Affairs and a postdoctoral fellow with the Smithsonian Air and Space Museum, said she was un-

able to be at the JPL for the landing of the Perseverance, but she still celebrated at home with her mother and virtually with her teammates.

Baker's work, which focuses on the wind-driven movement of sand and dust on Mars, began after the landing of the rover. She said the research coming from Perseverance could play a role in future missions because of the potential effects the sand and dust may have on energy and weather on Mars.

Baker said she primarily uses images and meteorological data to study wind-driven processes happening on the surface and will present results to the Perseverance team.

She said her work may also help plan projects that will put humans on Mars, as unpredictable movements of sand or dust have doomed Mars missions in the past, including a dust storm that disabled the Opportunity rover's ability to recharge its batteries.

Baker, who has worked on two other Mars rovers with NASA, said she's taking classes at the Space Policy Institute, which conducts research and offers courses on space policy, to expand her opportunities within the field.

International enrollment numbers unlikely to recover in fall: experts

NICHOLAS PASION
 REPORTER

Experts said the University's international student enrollment numbers will continue to see the pandemic's effects even as officials move to return fully in person this fall.

GW's undergraduate international student enrollment this academic year fell slightly below its peer institutions and the national average, dropping by 18.4 percent compared to a 16 percent national decline. Experts in international student recruitment said next fall's enrollment numbers are unlikely to jump up to pre-pandemic numbers because of difficulties with students' visas and U.S. political security as the pandemic continues through 2021.

Other peer institutions like Georgetown and Syracuse universities saw less than 10 percent drops in international enrollment numbers, according to their enrollment dashboards. Tulane University and the University of Southern California both saw an increase in international students by about 5 percent, according to their enrollment data.

Five peer schools have not yet updated their en-

rollment data online for this academic year, according to their enrollment dashboards.

The Institute of International Education, in collaboration with nine higher education associations like the College Board, found that international enrollment dropped by 16 percent nationwide compared to last academic year. GW's undergraduate international enrollment fell below the surveyed average, dropping from just more than 1,400 students last year to about 1,150 this past fall.

William Fish, the president of the Washington International Education Council, said universities benefit from international attendees in part because many of those students will pay their full tuition, which supports the schools' endowment funds. He said colleges like GW will need to be "competitive" with their recruitment tactics to recover their numbers through methods like traveling to and promoting their programs in other countries.

He said GW could admit more domestic students to offset the lack of international students attending next fall, but the difference might not be

made up. He said university finances are hurt by enrolling fewer international students, who are less likely to require financial aid than domestic students.

Administrators said GW is on track to accept its largest freshman applicant pool ever this year, with a 5 percent increase in domestic student applications. Although the total number of applications is at an all-time high, the number of international applications is down compared to this time last year, officials said.

Ben Olsoe, the program coordinator for the Asian-American educational studies center at Virginia Commonwealth University, said in addition to safety concerns, racism and U.S. political conflicts under former President Donald Trump's term have deterred international students from learning in the states.

GW's total international enrollment dropped for the first time in at least nine years in 2017. Olsoe said recent hate crimes against Asian Americans have also stoked fears abroad, which may cause international students to shift the scope of their desired university.



FILE PHOTO BY ERIC LEE

GW's drop in international student enrollment this semester fell slightly below the national average, according to higher education statistics.

Former RAs worry program cancellation will damage residential community

JARROD WARDWELL
 ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

ISHANI CHETTRI
 STAFF WRITER

Former resident advisers said officials should reverse their decision late last month to cancel the RA program if they don't reinstate financial benefits previously offered through the program.

More than half a dozen students and former RAs who criticized the move said residents may not build the same trust with professional staff members who will move into buildings to handle student conflicts, and former RAs will lose their residential roles that came with free housing benefits. Former members of the program, which has been suspended during the COVID-19 pandemic, said officials should have consulted with them about the decision because they have been waiting to work as an RA again.

Officials said in the email that they plan to replace the RA program with non-student residential staff members who will handle issues in buildings and add 200 new student employment positions focused around residential life. Officials said they used years of feedback from exit interviews and focus groups with former RAs and consulted with the Residence Hall Association, area coordinators and community directors about residential life to inform their decision.

Former RAs who choose to live on campus in the fall will be automatically accepted in a transitions position if they apply — one of the new employment positions that will help students move in and out of residence halls — receiving \$1,500 each semester, officials said.

Vice President for Student Affairs and Dean of Students Cissy Petty said professional staff

members will serve as "the best resources" for taking action during emergencies like fires and for students struggling with personal issues. She said she's surprised professional staff members have never served in buildings full time at GW before and all will have at least a master's degree in student life or student affairs.

Stewart Robinette, the assistant dean of students, said officials will assign at least one professional staff member to each building and two in the larger residence halls. He said officials are scouting candidates at a national convention called The Placement Exchange, which features nearly 100 universities and thousands of prospective employees, typically graduate students and "entry-level professionals."

Robinette said the staff members will join the residence hall community so students can familiarize themselves and feel comfortable approaching them with any personal concerns.

"I am confident that the staff that we're going to be able to bring in are going to be able to not be intimidating because the students will be able to get to know them, and the students will see that they truly care about their well being, and also again, being able to celebrate when things go great and being able to be there when they need a shoulder," he said.

But senior Tyler Kusma, a former RA, said the programming assistant position won't replicate prior relationships forged between student RAs and their residents.

"If they're only limited to those events, they're going to have a much weaker relationship with people, and it's going to be a struggle to even get those initial relationships because I was able to form relationships with people who didn't even show up to my



FILE PHOTO BY KATE CARPENTER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Administrators plan to replace the RA program with 200 new student positions focused on residential life and professional staff members in residence halls.

events," he said.

Kusma said community in residence halls could decline because officials are placing more of an emphasis on programming rather than more casual interactions students have in lounges or communal kitchens. He said professional residential staff won't replicate the same living environment because they won't share relatable experiences that RAs develop as college students themselves.

"The students will lose out by losing out completely on that peer mentorship role and also just having weaker results than we had before," Kusma said. "It's really just going to be bad for everyone that's

engaging that dorm experience at GW."

A former RA, who requested anonymity for future employment reasons, said canceling the program will "hurt a lot of students" with free housing and consistent student support eliminated. He said the University should have reached an agreement about the program with RAs after the pandemic because some students have been waiting to work in the position for up to three semesters.

"It's going to be detrimental to the college experience and to the living experience," he said. "I don't think it'll work, just being that every college in America, at least

from my knowledge, has RAs and when they don't have RAs, something always goes wrong. I don't think people are comfortable telling an adult or a 35-year-old their issues, so I think it's a really bad decision."

Fryda Cortes, a sophomore majoring in political science, said she disagrees with the decision because those in the new student employment positions won't be able to connect with students in the same way as RAs while they manage other responsibilities. She said the hourly wage from work-study jobs will also fall short in making up for lost free housing.

-Vita Fellig contributed reporting.

Milken pre-med concentration provides extra advising support: students

APRIL GARNOCK
REPORTER

Students said the pre-medical concentration launched last semester has helped them apply to medical school by providing them with advisers who can walk them through the application process.

Milken Institute School of Public Health officials said the concentration is beneficial for students applying for medical school, jobs and internships because they can note their pre-med concentration on their resume, demonstrating they have prepared academically for a medical career. Students said the concentration has allowed them to discern which classes will prepare them for their careers and connect with advisers who are familiar with the medical school application process.

Sara Wilensky, the public health school's assistant dean for undergraduate education, said students have been "very positive about the change," and more than 40 students have declared the concentration – 38 in public health and three in nutrition science – out of the roughly 500 undergraduate students currently in the school.

Students looking to declare a pre-med concentration can select the concentration within the public health major, according to the pro-

gram's website.

The public health school offers three undergraduate majors – exercise science, nutrition science and public health. Wilensky said the exercise science major already had a pre-med concentration to prepare students for medical school.

Students majoring in public health who declare the concentration are required to take classes like organic chemistry and general psychology in addition to their public health classes.

Wilensky said she hopes the concentration will also lead more students to consider a public health or nutrition science major.

She said Milken officials plan to add a pre-health concentration to the public health major this fall, geared toward students interested in physical therapy, nursing, physician's assistant work and dentistry.

"In terms of concentration elements, it is pretty straightforward because we relied on the advice from the pre-health advisers regarding which courses to include," Wilensky said. "We will always look for ways to improve the overall experience of our pre-med concentration students, as well as all of our other GWPSH students."

Isabella Atrachji, a senior majoring in public health who is pursuing the pre-med concentration, said some of the pre-med courses like

chemistry and biology are "really hard" to learn online because they require "a lot of visualization."

"It's definitely changed my experience, and I am a big office hours girl, so I always took the time to go to office hours in person," she said. "But now being online I don't really go to office hours that often. I feel like the connection between me and my professors has been lost, which I'm sure a lot of students feel as well."

Atrachji said she wishes more clinical classes were offered to students before the pandemic, like shadowing at the GW Hospital, since pre-med students need clinical hours to put on their medical school applications. But she said she is "really happy" that officials implemented the concentration despite the effects of the pandemic.

She said the concentration also allows her to more easily speak to advisers about medical schools' application expectations.

"It's really nice to see that Milken is recognizing that being pre-med isn't just a list of classes to take, but it's also a lifestyle and I think all pre-meds deserve recognition on their degree for all the hard work we've put in," she said.

Calista Mueller, a sophomore majoring in public health who is also pursuing the concentration, said the program helps students decide which classes



ANTHONY PELTIER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Student said they appreciated the ability to talk to advisers in the concentration about medical school application expectations.

to take to help them with their medical school applications.

"I like that it shows the effort I put into those classes because those were just elective courses I was taking before it was considered a concentration," she said.

Mueller said she also benefits from the additional advising because she has both a public health adviser and a pre-med adviser who help her plan out the two parts of her degree.

"When I'm planning out my courses, it's a little bit eas-

ier to see how many credits I need exactly for each section of my degree," Mueller said. "It just helps to map out my future semester plans better."

Ana Campos, a senior majoring in exercise science who is also pursuing the pre-med concentration, said the concentration has provided her with "structure" for her time at GW. Milken officials create a four-year plan for students who declare the concentration to schedule when students should take the required classes for their major and

the concentration to graduate on time.

But Campos said the concentration could be difficult for students who join later during their undergraduate career since many high-level classes have prerequisites or require students to have knowledge from lower-level courses.

"I feel like there should be a little more flexibility for people who are coming into the concentration as a sophomore and a little more reassurance that it's going to be fine," she said.

Law school dean works to build connections in first year



COURTESY OF DAYNA BOWEN MATTHEW

Law school Dean Dayna Bowen Matthew said despite taking over during a pandemic, she has fallen in love with the school.

CARLY NEILSON
STAFF WRITER

ISHA TRIVEDI
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

GW Law Dean Dayna Bowen Matthew periodically runs with her students

around the National Mall.

Matthew, who became the dean of the law school in July, said the runs are a way to keep her connections with students strong as the COVID-19 pandemic prevents many in-person interactions. She said she still gets emotional thinking back to her

first run with the students, one of her fondest memories so far as dean.

Now more than a semester into her tenure, Matthew, who was previously a professor of law and public health sciences at the University of Virginia, said she has been able to get to

know members of the community through regular virtual meetings with faculty and students. Law faculty members said Matthew has been an "impressive" leader during the pandemic and has worked to increase the profile of the law school by hosting events that showcase faculty expertise.

Building connections

Matthew said her workdays typically last from 7:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m. and typically consist of meetings with faculty and students to discuss topics like diversity and inclusion.

Matthew added that she has collaborated with the Dean's Student Advisory Board and Student Bar Association by supporting its vision for increasing access to textbooks and class resources. She said she hasn't seen a more "effective" organization than GW's SBA in the 30 years she's been teaching.

Kate Weisburd, an associate professor of law, said despite stepping into the role of dean during the pandemic, Matthew has embraced her role during a difficult time.

Weisburd said Matthew has been working to increase

the profile of the school across the country by hosting events for law professors to speak on legal issues, like intellectual property. Matthew has also hosted fireside chats and panels and launched a podcast about social issues facing the country during the presidential election, allowing her to "leverage" the expertise of law faculty and engage professionals outside the school, Weisburd said.

Supporting diversity

Matthew said she has been working with faculty to support diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives within the school. She said all first-year law faculty members have since participated in a training on creating inclusive classrooms with Caroline Laguerre-Brown, the vice provost for diversity, equity and community engagement.

She said the training helped law professors learn how to conduct classroom conversations in a way that is relevant to issues of race.

Matthew said officials are raising funds to attract students from diverse ethnic, racial, socioeconomic,

gender and sexuality backgrounds and "all marginalized groups" to better train law students to "serve in a pluralist society."

Matthew said her experience serving as the co-founder and director of the Equity Center at UVA in 2019 has been useful to her as she has been working to establish a similar equity institute at GW Law.

Matthew, the first woman to serve as the dean of the law school, said "it means everything" for her to break ground as a woman in this role.

Facing the current national climate

Matthew, who started as dean during the pandemic, said the pandemic has sped up how quickly she "fell in love with the school" by bringing the school together during "terribly hard times."

Matthew said GW Law, which was founded in 1865, was established in the most "divisive" and "fractured" time in history at the end of the Civil War, and in a post-pandemic world, she wants the school to train lawyers who will bridge divides across the country.

Take the first vaccine you can get, GW's medical experts say

ABBY KENNEDY
STAFF WRITER

SEJAL GOVINDARAO
REPORTER

With three COVID-19 vaccines now available to the public, GW's medical experts said the public should accept any of the vaccines first made available to them.

The Johnson & Johnson vaccine, which the Food and Drug Administration approved for emergency use late last month, was found to be 85 percent effective against the most severe COVID-19 illnesses and only requires one dose rather than the two needed for both the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines. Lynn Goldman, the dean of the Milken Institute School of Public Health, said the three vaccines are much more alike than they are different, and people should not prefer taking one vaccine over another.

The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines are both more than 90 percent effective at preventing any illness from the virus. While all three vaccines were designed to fight against the original variant of the coronavirus, researchers have said the new variants, like those originating in the United Kingdom, South Africa and Brazil, are similar enough that the vaccine will likely still be effective in fighting off variants.

Despite having a lower efficacy rate than the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, the Johnson & Johnson version was tested against some variants that were spreading at the time. The Pfizer and Moderna vaccines were only tested while the original variant of the virus was present, but a third booster shot to increase efficacy against the variants is being studied.

Goldman said both the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines inject RNA encased in a lipid-packaging agent, which commands the cells in the body to create proteins that can trigger an attack on the coronavirus when it enters the body. She added that the mRNA used in the vaccines tends to degrade easily, requiring that the vaccine be kept at extremely low temperatures.

The Pfizer vaccine originally needed to be stored at temperatures as cold as -80 degrees Celsius but now can be stored at between -25 and -15 degrees. The Moderna vaccine must be stored at about -20 degrees Celsius while the Johnson & Johnson vaccine can be stored at between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius.

Goldman said the Johnson & Johnson vaccine uses an inactivated adenovirus, which is not harmful to humans, to package DNA rather than the synthetic RNA found in the Moderna

and Pfizer vaccines. The DNA codes the cell to produce RNA, which creates the same proteins that can be produced by the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

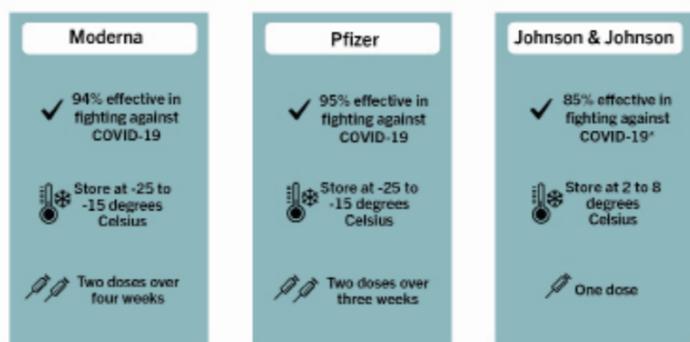
Goldman said the goal of all three of the vaccines is to recognize the proteins found on the outside spikes of a coronavirus and create a targeted immune response toward the part of the virus that makes it infective.

She said comparing the effectiveness of the three vaccines is difficult because each clinical trial was slightly different in terms of design and the selected populations. Goldman said Johnson & Johnson's could potentially turn out to be overall more effective because people can get vaccinated with a single shot compared to Pfizer and Moderna vaccines, which require people get a second shot a few weeks after the first.

Nirbhay Kumar, a professor of global health in Milken, said the side effects of the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines could include fever, body aches and muscle aches. The side effects of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine could include the same symptoms, according to a Johnson & Johnson release.

Kumar said these potential side effects should be seen as a "good thing" because it means the vaccine

Differences between COVID-19 vaccines



SIDNEY LEE | GRAPHICS EDITOR

is effective in fighting the virus.

"If it is doing its job then that means there is a good likelihood of a good possibility that you are going to have effective immunity that is going to provide the protection you need," he said.

Kumar said the adenovirus in the Johnson & Johnson vaccine lasts longer in the body and could potentially be just as effective as the Moderna and Pfizer vaccines, which require two doses.

"The adenovirus that is in the J & J vaccine the vaccine itself can last longer in the body," he said. "It means it is more like getting infected and the infection is giving you better immune responses, so I think the

single dose is equally effective for the J & J vaccine as compared to the Moderna and Pfizer vaccine."

Neil Johnson, a professor of physics in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, said he has researched the online arguments between pro- and anti-vaccination views since the pandemic began last year. He said he has found more of a brand hesitancy than a vaccine hesitancy in his research that is continuing as new companies unveil their COVID-19 vaccines.

He said he's noticed that people are now starting to discuss the pros and cons of each vaccine, instead of having equal trust in all of them. He added that he's concerned that a drop in the

trust in one of the vaccines could set back the push for herd immunity.

President Joe Biden unveiled a plan last week that would expedite the production of COVID-19 vaccines, resulting in enough vaccines for all Americans by the end of May. But experts warn the distribution of those vaccines could take much longer.

"What we see is instead of it being the vaccine, we begin to see a lot of discussion about particular types," Johnson said. "It is almost like the discussion of, 'OK, you are going to get a smartphone. Everyone should have a smartphone.' Then it comes down to, 'OK, which smartphone are you going to get? Which version?'"

Online programs' rankings largely hold steady during pandemic

YANKUN ZHAO
STAFF WRITER

With thousands of students learning through online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic, GW's online programs held steady in their rankings in U.S. News and World Report earlier this semester.

The ranking placed the School of Nursing's online master's in nursing program seventh, the School of Engineering and Applied Science's online master's in engineering program 14th and the School of Business's online master's in business administration 20th nationwide. A majority of GW's online programs saw slight improvements in their rankings this year, according to data provided by officials at the Office of Institutional Research and Planning.

"GW's ranked online programs demonstrate our investment in virtual education and the dedication of the University's faculty and staff in supporting and enhancing these programs," Provost Brian Blake said in a University release. "We have gained valuable insight over the past several years of online education, particularly during the pandemic, and now are poised to embrace all the possibilities of academic innovation on the other side of COVID-19."

Most of the online programs saw slight tweaks in their standing, with the online bachelor's program increasing from 20th to 19th, the online MBA program from 22nd to 20th and the online master's in engineer-

ing program from 15th to 14th.

Other programs saw some drops in their rankings, with the master's in nursing program dropping from sixth to seventh and the master's in education program having the most significant fall from 31st to 52nd, according to officials' data. The education program ranked the lowest of all programs.

Others like the online master's in non-MBA business programs were ranked around the middle of the pack compared to the rest of GW's online programs at 24th.

Officials did not return a request for comment about the reasons for the changes in the rankings, whether they plan to expand and provide more support for online programs in the future and the implications that the rankings will have for the University.

Shahram Sarkani, the director of online and off-campus programs for SEAS and Engineering Management and Systems Engineering, said officials in the engineering school are "extremely proud" about the online master's in engineering program reaching its highest ranking since about a decade ago, when it was ranked in the mid-60s. He said the achievement will help the program attract more "quality students" by raising the program's profile.

"We believe, in the online stage, that the ranking is very significant because people aren't bound geo-

graphically to go to the nearest college or university," he said. "Actually, they can go anywhere in the nation or in the world for that matter."

He said the program's emphasis on assuring students have access to professors in an online environment, through strategies like frequent office hours and taped class sessions, has helped differentiate it from other universities' programs that may not be using these techniques.

"A lot of universities just have lectures that play over and over like a horror movie so to speak," he said. "But we made a conscious decision of offering live classes via the web so that students can actually ask professors live questions during class, listen in live and interact live with the professor and other students."

He said SEAS officials reached out to him last spring to serve on a committee to help the engineering school's initial transition to virtual instruction because of his experience with teaching online.

"We believe our experience and our program helped launch the rest of the school to successfully go online," he said.

Sarkani said administrators for the program hope to reduce class sizes to no more than 20 per class from the current average of 30 to raise the University's name recognition.

"Obviously, as you get closer to the top, it gets harder and harder to move up," he said. "It's getting tougher to move up, but our goal is

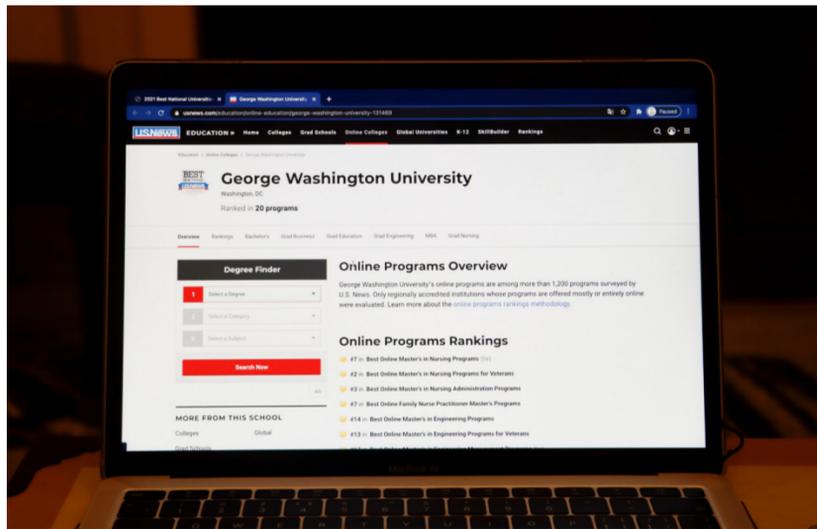


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY HENRY DENG | PHOTOGRAPHER

Most of GW's online programs moved only slightly in rankings last year.

to break into the top 10 in the near future."

Experts in online education said online programs will likely play a greater role in higher education in the aftermath of the pandemic by boosting GW's name recognition and providing students with a "valuable tool" to select high-quality programs.

Cassandra Ott-Kocon, the assistant director of online and transfer programs at the University of Arizona's Eller College of Management, said online programs have seen "some growth" recently as many prospective students may be out of work or looking for career changes due to the pandemic.

She said the widespread transition to distance edu-

cation over the past year has created new virtual resources that were previously unavailable to online programs, like electronic signature capabilities on online documents that speed up administrative requirements.

"There are processes being built to be long-term," she said. "I don't foresee, when things return to in person, that those tools will go away for our students."

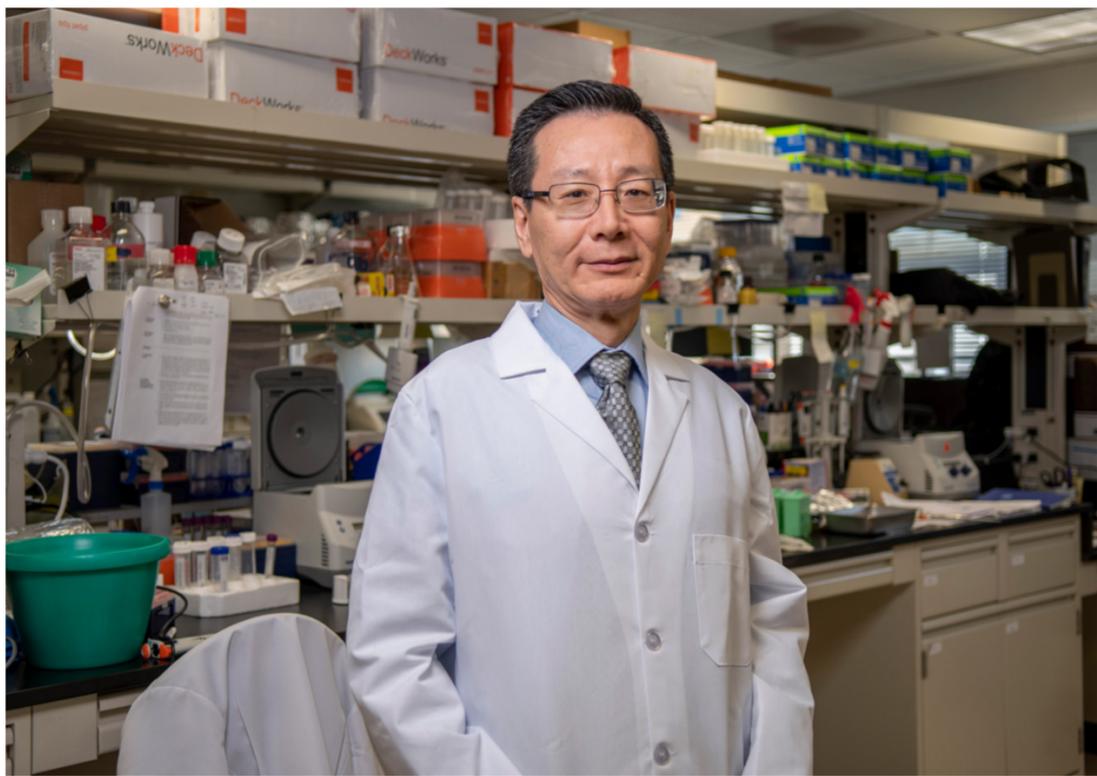
John Watret, the chancellor of Embry-Riddle Aeronautical University Worldwide Campus, said officials can improve their online programs' design by "treating online as a separate modality of delivery" since the learning style in online classes is different from in-person classes. Embry-Rid-

dle has in-person campuses in Florida and Arizona but largely operates online.

"Many schools fail in providing quality online programs when they try to recreate their face-to-face course and then just publish some of the content online and expect it to be similar to that," he said.

Watret said he expects more schools to invest in creating and supporting the "online arms of their institutions," especially since traditional faculty now have experiences in teaching virtually.

"One of the big take-aways is that the use of technology in the classroom is going to increase, whether it be in a truly online course or whether it be in a traditional in-person course," he said.



COURTESY OF RONG LI

The research team's grant will allow him to investigate memory T cells in animal models, but the research could have implications for humans too.

Medical school researchers receive grant to study cell memory

MICHELLE VASSILEV
STAFF WRITER

A team of researchers received a \$1 million grant late last month to study how memory cells recall past events when responding to attacks on the immune system and injuries on the skin.

The project's lead researchers said the team is looking into how memory T cells can memorize certain events, like an attack from a virus, and recall that memory once those events appear a second time. Rong Li, the chair of the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Medicine in the School of Medicine and Health Sciences and the lead researcher on the project, said the team hopes to learn the molecular process these memory cells use to recall past events and to eventually mimic this process in treatments like cancer therapies and inflammation care.

Li said the three-year grant from the W.M. Keck Foundation is exclusively for pre-clinical work, meaning the funds will cover the investigation of animal models and molecular tools. But he said if his research team is successful at working with the animal models, their findings could be applied to humans.

Li said the key to this research is the "different expertise" of each member of the research team.

He said he comes from the molecular biology perspective, while Brett Shook, an assistant professor of biochemistry and molecular medicine, is looking at this research through a physiology lens, including the healing of skin cell wounds and inflammation. He said other contributing researchers are helping with the immunological side of the research.

Shook said the team is applying an irritant to mice's skin and then will "precisely manipulate" one gene at a time to determine the effect it has on memory. He said they can use tools in their lab to express a gene at a higher level than it's typically expressed to try to emphasize a memory in certain cells, or they can eliminate the gene of interest entirely, completely disrupting the cell's ability to remember any previous events.

Shook said the researchers are using these mice models to observe skin inflammation to determine how the memory cells respond.

He said they first apply an irritant to mice's skin, which will cause inflammation in the tissue and eventually a rash. The researchers then manipulate the specific gene in the mice, which they believe controls the skin cells' memory of the inflammation, and then reapply the irritant to determine whether the memory

cells can recall the event and eliminate the rash more quickly.

"Anytime you have a rash, that area now has some memory of inflammation," Brett said. "We are able to injure the same area, and what has been documented is that regions of skin that have previously experienced inflammation will heal faster."

Experts in medicine and infectious diseases said this research is a relatively unexplored area and the findings could pave the way for enhanced cancer treatments.

Joaquin Madrenas, a professor of medicine at UCLA, said the implications of this research are "very important," especially in terms of immunological memory. He said vaccines give the immune system exposure to foreign antigens so that upon exposure, the immune system can mount a memory response.

Madrenas said studying cellular memory may also help cancer patients, especially those with types of cancer associated with a lack in immune response.

"If you know the mechanisms of memory, you can induce memory in the immune system of a patient that can then get rid of the cancer and keep the cancer from growing," Madrenas said.

He said laboratory mice are inbred animals that are kept under clean conditions

and should have no history of exposure to infections, making the task of translating the research findings to humans complicated.

"We live in a completely exposed and uncontrolled environment," Madrenas said. "Each one of us has a completely different antigen history. Your exposure to different viruses and bacteria and other infectious diseases is very different from mine, so the ability to manipulate your memory pool may be very different from mice."

Girish Kirimanjeswara, a professor of immunology and infectious diseases at Pennsylvania State University, said studying memory cells allow researchers to understand how the body encounters and responds to infectious diseases. He said this area of research is "relatively less explored" and this project could pave the way for a deeper understanding of how immune cells can recall a past exposure to a virus or cancer.

"While we know how memory T cells may recognize a second encounter of a foreign substance, we are still learning about how these cells may be regulated, how long can they last, how do they function at various times etc," he said in an email. "This research will explore many of those areas and also study the inherent cellular memory."

IN BRIEF

Distribution of emergency grants from stimulus bill 'underway': officials

GW's COVID-19 testing apparatus is projected to cost \$10 million this fiscal year, but officials plan to use federal funding from the stimulus bill passed late last year to offset the costs.

Officials accepted nearly \$14 million allocated to GW as part of a roughly \$900 billion coronavirus relief package signed into law in December by then-President Donald Trump. University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said officials will use \$9.2 million to offset institutional costs brought on by the pandemic.

"Given our foremost priority of safety, the University will use all of this funding to help offset the significant costs associated with implementing and continually strengthening our public health capabilities, such as our in-house COVID-19 testing, which alone is projected to cost \$10 million this fiscal year," Nosal said in an email. "These capabilities are especially critical as we prepare for fall, when we will be back in person to the fullest extent possible."

GW has conducted more than 70,000 COVID-19 tests so far, and officials switched to pooled, self-administered testing for asymptomatic students earlier this semester.

Officials had announced they would also distribute roughly \$4.5 million to 5,735 students, who were selected based on their expected family contributions calculated by the Free Application for Federal Student Aid this academic year. Each eligible student is expected to receive a one-time grant of roughly \$794, and Nosal said the distribution process is "underway."

"These students have been notified of their eligibility and have been provided detailed instructions on how to accept and receive the grant," Nosal said. "Detailed information has also been provided on the HEERF website."

Nosal declined to provide exact figures for the total amount of funding directed for students, but the legislation mandates a minimum amount of \$4,559,265. She declined to say if officials will use the \$9.2 million for public health purposes other than COVID-19 testing.

She declined to say if GW supports the roughly \$1.9 trillion American Rescue Plan, which passed the Senate Saturday and would allocate an additional \$40 billion to colleges and universities.

Ted Mitchell, the president of the American Council on Education – which lists GW as a member institution – said the amount falls short of ACE's most recent estimate of \$97 billion in needed aid for students and colleges. He called on President Joe Biden to provide additional funding for higher education.

"We urge Congress to quickly agree on and pass a final bill for President Biden's signature so that these funds can be distributed in a timely manner," Mitchell said in a statement. "But the severe financial challenges posed by the pandemic are far from over, both for higher education and the country as a whole."

-Zach Schonfeld

What we've learned from one year of Zoom University

STAFF EDITORIAL

If we have learned anything from the past year, it's that Zoom University sucks.

Online education is not comparable to in-person schooling. It never will be, no matter how high-speed our WiFi is or how well a professor can conduct a class remotely. We have felt the onset of stress and sadness early on in the pandemic, and now it's in full swing. We have more time on our hands, but we couldn't feel less motivated to get work done.

It has been one year since the COVID-19 pandemic sent students home. We have a lot to learn and a lot more we may wish to forget about. But if we should do anything this week, we should reflect on a year of really high highs and really low lows.

For one, we haven't gotten a great return on investment as students. We have paid the cost of an in-person college experience for an online school. Many students pursue majors, like photography and engineering, that depend on on-campus services to complete their required degrees and get the most of out their classes. A lot of those students may have needed to purchase their own equipment because they aren't on campus. And as a whole, we have paid a bit too much for Zoom classes. If the University can learn anything during a time of crisis like the pandemic, it's that students need an explanation for where their

money is going when the thing they paid for — college — has been taken away.

As students, in hindsight, we may have also undervalued what a campus experience means. Attending college is about more than just the degree. We cannot walk through Kogan Plaza and see students working and studying together or enjoy the frazzled camaraderie of Gelman Library at 2 a.m. during finals season. We can't laugh with our roommates in between writing a paper or walking to the National Mall after a long day of classes. In essence, we're in college without getting a college experience, and we should never take that experience for granted when we potentially return to campus in the near future.

To no fault of professors' own, a Zoom education is subpar. Discussion sections and classroom participation over an online interface are just painful. Students never want to speak up in a class of strangers while sitting in the same spot they've been sitting in for hours in their childhood bedroom. Trying to get people to speak and contribute to class discussions is like pulling teeth and takes away a crucial part of a college education — learning how to discuss ideas, topics and situations with your peers from a variety of perspectives. Nobody signed up to do their classes online, and this includes professors. Professors are unable to



Cartoon by Hannah Thacker

replicate certain aspects of class over platforms like Zoom, causing students to either get a watered-down version of the content or for content to be cut altogether. Should we all return to campus one day, students must not take their classroom experience for granted.

Even outside of the quality of education, the pandemic has been brutal to

students' mental health and overall well-being. College-aged people are almost universally stressed past the breaking point — more so even than usual. GW in particular is a competitive school — even in normal times, this time of the semester would be hallmarked by widespread burnout, with midterms, internship applications and jobs competing for

every second of students' time. The mental health and motivational obstacles faced by students have dramatically increased in the last year, but the rat race remains the same — making it even harder for students to balance everything at once. In a sense, the pandemic has helped put into perspective exactly how much stuff students have been expected

to do at the same time even during normal times.

Still, we've learned that there are a few silver linings to online school amid the many, many downsides. Zoom eliminates that dash across campus to class when you sleep through your alarm — and it also means you can turn your volume off when the devil's advocate starts talking. But more importantly, virtual platforms have made classes more accessible in some respects, especially the recorded lectures component. Students with chronic illnesses or those who need accommodations — both of whom have been especially hard-hit by virtual learning's challenges — are well-served by being able to go back and watch lectures on their own time. And people who have a hard time asserting themselves in free-wheeling class discussions can speak up using the chat function. The upsides may be few and far between, but they exist. And who knows, maybe we can integrate them into the way in-person classes work once GW reopens.

On the whole, students have endured a hellish year and should give themselves credit for making it through. The virtual environment has proven to be a flimsy substitute for real-life classes. Hopefully, when we're all back on campus together, we'll have a renewed appreciation for the little things and big things that we missed out on this year.

Homecoming: My return to my Southern roots

I revisit most Southern when I pronounce strawberry like skrawberry without guilt or guile. Back when I never questioned crunk music, choosing instead to inhabit the chaos. 2000s South Carolina — the setting for my kid self — gave me that freedom. I found it in the tree vines I would climb, in the roller rinks I would stumble-skate around, in the aluminum foil grills I wore to emulate rappers' diamond fronts. For a while, I lost sight of that Southern-ness. I thought I had to exorcise it to accommodate my New York City dreams. But a series of homecomings — three musical experiences, courtesy of Black Southern artists — encouraged me to love my country soils. They reintroduced me to that little brown skin girl who talked smack and lived joyously, telling me to hold her close and never let go.

Zeniya Cooley
Writer

Beyoncé's 2018 Coachella performance marked my first homecoming. The megastar and her troupe of Brown talent presented a beaming display of Black joy, a jubilation I recalled from my younger years. Celebrating the vibrant culture of historically Black colleges and universities, Beychella reminded a White world colorblind to our golden grace that Blackness was majesty, not a tragedy. Beyoncé's grand entrance perfectly captured that regal power. Twirling to face a camera, she sparkled in a crystal cape embroidered with a portrait of Egyptian queen Nefertiti. In witnessing such splendor, I thought about one Halloween in the first grade. I had dressed up as Cinderella — Disney had yet to consider a Princess Tiana — but it was not the shimmer on my blue gown that gifted me Black girl magic. My magic came from me. It manifested in the way I carried my cascading skirt to strut across the hall, in the way I waved my silver star-tipped wand to cast a spell of

my own design. I also saw myself in the step tradition that Beyoncé enacted on the Coachella stage. Her steppers, the Bug-A-Boos, seemed like fireworks: a burst of brilliance and scattered sound. Their showmanship and humor brought to mind my childhood friend's choreography.

"Southernplayalisticadillacmu zik," the 1994 debut album of rap group OutKast, also felt like home. It was the earthiest creation I ever encountered: a gumbo of funk, filth and fire. A major part of the project's earth is its unapologetic approach to sexuality. The record "Funky Ride," an erotica on wheels and wax, shamelessly indulges in sensual pleasure. A woman is even heard moaning behind the velvety voice of a male singer, who coaxes her to "feel your spirits fly." In this orgasmic world, the feeling is as fundamental as the five elements. The Atlanta duo's ownership of what the older women in my life called "being fresh" — or openly expressing sexuality, typically at a young age — transported me back to elementary school. In those days, boys who were insolently indifferent to the presence of teachers would smack girls on their behinds in the classroom. Smirks on their faces, they refused to wait for surreptitious opportunities on the playground or bus.

In terms of visual odes to earth, the music videos for OutKast's album honor the Atlanta landscape as much as the cityscape. In the video for "Git Up, Git Out," trees dominate certain frames, grounding the rappers in their rural realities. OutKast's inclusion of these features expressed their reverence for the rustic communities that nurtured them. South Carolina's country surroundings also cultivated me. At my maternal grandmother's house, I would dance around a tree-covered backyard, treating the stumps at my feet like thrones. Just like the Atlanta-earth-informed Andre 3000 and Big Boi's artistry, my birthplace's earth fueled my fantasies.

My most electric homecoming came when I first heard rapper

Megan Thee Stallion, the spice of my experience. Her music sets ablaze the stereotype of Southern hospitality and represents unfriendly Black hotties like me who usually greeted strangers with scowls. Braggadocio, though, is the supreme characteristic of spice, and Megan oozes it on all of her records. The self-congratulatory "Cocky AF" is a prime example. Over bass loud enough to make a car quake, the rapper says, "Bitch, I look good and you know that." It is a simple, ego-shattering line delivered with a king's confidence and a pimp's contempt. Rhyme was also my medium for channeling swaggering spirits. Years ago, I conjured a verse about enviable sneakers that began with the lines, "Got no new kicks? / Yeah, I bet you wish you want this." Megan's art thus spoke to a six-year-old version of me. The me who based her banter on a desire to outwit and out-stunt. The me who recited Bow Wow's "You ain't fresh azimiz" like the hook was holy scripture. It is true that my flames had dwindled when I got to high school and, later, college. But the sizzling sounds of a Hot Girl reignited the spice that had been burning in me since birth.

From now until forever, I hold my Southern-ness tight. A Southern-ness expressed with loud and proud joy. A Southern-ness comprising earth and spice. I still sing in the house, turning my mirth into music like Beychella trumpeted Black joy. I also continue my childish habit of blowing on dandelions aged into white wisps. When I watch the flowers send my wishes dancing in the wind, I think of OutKast and their interactions with Georgia's earth. And although I do not rap smart-mouthed freestyles evocative of Megan Thee Stallion anymore, I do write my Southern slickness into free verse poems about hot girls and ghetto boys. It took some time, some soul-searching, and some soul food. But I finally made it back home.

—Zeniya Cooley, a sophomore majoring in journalism and mass communication, is an opinions writer.

Op-ed: GW must treat their essential employees better

GW's workers are the backbone of our University. It certainly wouldn't be an exaggeration to say they are what allow our campus to run smoothly every single day. And, while these crucial staff members have often been underappreciated, their efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic are especially worthy of praise and recognition. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the University's frontline staff have been consistently putting their lives at risk to ensure our education proceeds without interruption.

Matthew Allen
Chair: Roosevelt at GW

Despite their constant work, we at the Roosevelt Network have heard numerous accounts from workers that officials have refused to do nearly enough to protect their safety during this challenging time. Officials have provided sparse benefits and unresponsive whistleblower protocols. Considering how essential a role they play in all of our day-to-day lives, it is appalling that we have heard accounts of their poor treatment.

For one, GW is only providing the minimum 80 hours of paid pandemic leave required by the federal government, which amounts to ex-

actly the two weeks that is strongly recommended by public health experts as a quarantine period for those who've contracted or been exposed to COVID-19. This means that if workers have to quarantine multiple times, they would have to do so without receiving a paycheck, which for many of them is simply not an option.

Workers we spoke to all expressed the concern that they lack an adequate mechanism to report violations and concerns about the University's current safety policies. When we met with Dana Bradley, the chief people officer, and other members of the human resources department last semester, they seemed quite proud of the fact that their whistleblower reporting system — which allows workers to report safety violations — received zero submissions. But we find that incredibly concerning. Rather than serving as proof of an incredibly unlikely total of zero problems over the entire length of this pandemic, it actually highlights how the system itself needs improvement. If they've received no official complaints, given the workers we spoke to have myriad issues they want addressed, they need to ensure that workers know of and are not afraid to use their whistleblower re-

porting system.

Administrators are also claiming that workers who have exhausted their pandemic leave can receive workers' compensation. But the frontline workers we spoke to were unaware of anyone who had been able to successfully utilize this benefit. Officials, while celebrating this policy as one of their successes, have not released specific data on how many workers have utilized this program despite our push for them to do so.

By refusing to do more to ensure the safety of our workers, administrators are essentially telling employees they need to choose between their financial health and their physical health, a choice no one should ever be forced to make. The Roosevelt Network and several co-signing organizations have recently released a letter to officials demanding that they increase pandemic paid pandemic leave to 180 hours and take other actions to protect GW workers. If you want to join us and support GW's frontline workers, sign our petition and contact the administration. Our frontline workers are members of the GW community, just like any one of us. They deserve our support.

—Matthew Allen is a sophomore and the advocacy chair of Roosevelt at GW.

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Culture

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THE SCENE

WOMEN MAKING HISTORY... ONE OBJECT AT A TIME
March 10 • Free • Online registration
Take a virtual tour of the DAR museum and learn about the great craftswomen and female artists of American history.

RENEWAL 2121
March 12 • Artehouse • \$20 with GWWorld
Enjoy this techno-art exhibit and embark on a journey 100 years in the future at the reopened Artehouse.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

"POSTER GIRL" AN ALBUM BY ZARA LARSSON

TikTok, 'Some Good News': One year of quarantine trends

ISABELLA MACKINNON
REPORTER

One year ago on Wednesday, officials announced that classes would be held online for two weeks after spring break.

Then, administrators said classes would be held remotely for the rest of the spring semester. Two major announcements followed in the next year: The fall and spring semesters would also be held online.

Since then, students spread out across the globe have picked up new ways to trudge through the pandemic, be it by endless scrolling on TikTok or picking up new baking recipes. From the debut of "Tiger King" to a virtual Coachella concert, take a look down memory lane at all of the ways we've found some good news in a lot of dark days.

Cooking trends

To fill open schedules, avoid grocery store runs and try some new recipes, many turned to baking in the early months of quarantine. Sourdough starters left local grocery stores perpetually out of yeast last spring. Focaccia bread was elevated with intricate floral designs made of tomatoes and herbs. Pasta recipes like penne alla vodka and feta pasta went viral on TikTok, and mug cakes and banana bread became some of the most searched recipes.

The rise of TikTok

On top of infiltrating food trends, TikTok exploded as one of the most popular social media platforms for college-aged students. When TikTok user Nathan Apodaca went viral for his video skateboarding while drinking Ocean Spray and singing along to Fleetwood Mac's "Dreams," the video received more than 41 million views and was replicated by ev-



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CAMILLE DESANTO | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
During the pandemic, it seemed like a different TV show each month commanded the attention of everyone online.

eryone, including Mick Fleetwood himself. His video also prompted "Dreams" to reenter the Billboard Hot 100 after 43 years and No. 1 on Apple Music. Apodaca's video impacted his own life - Ocean Spray, the brand of cranberry juice he had been drinking, purchased him a truck to replace the one that had broken prior to filming his viral video.

Virtual concerts

As world tours, festivals and concerts were postponed, artists found a new venue in social media. Diplo hosted his "Corona World Tour," with multi-weekly streams of his sets on platforms like Twitch and YouTube. In March, the Dropkick Murphys hosted "Streaming Up From Boston" on St. Patrick's

Day in place of its usual live show. In April, Post Malone streamed an hourlong Nirvana tribute from his home where he sang Nirvana songs with Blink-182's Travis Barker on drums. In October, YouTube hosted a virtual festival in support of "Save Our Stages," a fundraiser that would allocate \$15 billion to independent music venues and employees struggling through the pandemic. The lineup featured more than 35 artists including G-Eazy, the Foo Fighters and the Black Pumas.

Trending shows

We've all had our fair share of time in front of our screens this quarantine, and a lot of that time has been dedicated to binge-

watching movies and TV shows. The number of Netflix subscribers soared since last spring, and viewers blew up Netflix Original series like "Tiger King: Murder, Mayhem and Madness," "Outer Banks" and "The Crown." Hulu subscribers binged "Little Fires Everywhere" and "Euphoria" while Disney+ subscribers geeked out over "The Mandalorian" original series.

Mock graduations

When in-person graduations were ruled out last year, most colleges and universities moved their festivities online. High schools across the country held online ceremonies, socially distanced outdoor events and car parades where graduates received their diplomas through rolled-down windows.

GW graduates also had graduation festivities at home to celebrate.

In an effort to prop up the graduates, celebrities and other influential figures worked together to produce televised graduation specials like "Graduate Together: America Honors the High School Class of 2020" created by LeBron James. The videos featured public figures like former President Barack Obama, Pakistani activist Malala Yousafzai and U.S. soccer player Megan Rapinoe, who delivered uplifting words of wisdom and advice to graduates.

'Some Good News'

It has been difficult to find good news over the past year, but actor John Krasinski found a way to offer people a bright spot. In March, he launched the news network "Some Good News," where he streamed entertaining home videos sent in by viewers, shared stories of triumph and hosted famous guests for a healthy dose of comic relief.

Fashion

As much as baking dominated the start of quarantine, other creative trends continued to circulate social media and kept professional and first-time artists occupied. Knitting became a particularly popular trend after singer Harry Styles' JW Anderson cardigan went viral. TikTok users began posting their renditions of the cardigan, and the trend's hashtag garnered more than 41 million views. Jonathan Anderson, the original designer of Styles' cardigan, responded to the trend by posting the patterns for public use as well as a detailed tutorial on how he made the garment. Following its internet fame, Styles' original cardigan was donated to London's Victoria and Albert Museum. Following his December debut as the first man on the cover of Vogue, and in a dress no less, Styles contributed to the social movement of blurring gender lines in fashion.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SABRINA GODIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Make yourself a "quarantini" to wash down the memories of the year.

Cocktails for an at-home spring break

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

You can't go on a wild spring break trip this year, but that doesn't mean you can't drink like you are.

Here are some cocktails that will help you and your roommates forget that you haven't been to a party in a year.

'Quarantini cocktail' by The Novice Chef

Yields one serving
2 shots vodka
2 tablespoons honey
2 ounces Lemon juice
2 tablespoons water
Vitamin C supplement powder of choice
Ice (optional)

Run a lemon wedge around the rim of a martini glass, pour the vitamin C powder on a plate and dip the rim of the glass to coat. Warm water and honey in the microwave until you have created a honey syrup. Add the syrup, lemon juice and vodka to a cocktail shaker optionally with ice. Pour into vitamin C rimmed glass and enjoy. Chase with Vitamin C powder if you're feeling it.

'Cooler jungle juice' from TikTok

Yields one large cooler worth
Large cooler filled half-way with ice

2 large bags assorted gummy candy
1 large bag frozen strawberries
1 pound fresh pineapple
2 sliced lemons
1 gallon each Berry Blue Typhoon and Fruit Juicy Red Hawaiian Punch
2 liters Sprite
4 12-ounce bottles Smirnoff Ice
1 liter mango pineapple Svedka
1 liter Malibu
1 gallon Bacardi
1 liter Blue Curacao

Literally put everything in the cooler with ice and mix. It doesn't really matter the order or ingredients. This is a blueprint. Just put in a lot of alcohol and enjoy.

'CoronaRita Margarita' by Delicious Table

Yields 6 servings
7 limes
1 orange
8 cups ice
1 cup tequila
1/4 cup triple sec
2 cups margarita mix
6 pack, 7-ounce Corona beers
Sea salt

Slice two limes for garnish. Cut one lime in half and run over the rims of your margarita glasses. Pour sea salt onto a shallow plate, dip the glass rims in sea salt and set aside. Juice remaining

limes and orange and add the juice to a blender. Add ice, tequila, triple sec and margarita mix to the blender and blend until smooth. Fill your margarita glasses with blended mixture. Tip a Corona into each glass and garnish with lime wedges.

'Pink Whitney Cosmopolitan' from Lovetoknow

Yields one serving
1/4 ounces freshly squeezed lime juice
1 ounce cranberry juice
2 1/2 ounces Pink Whitney
Ice
Lemon peel for garnish

In a cocktail shaker, combine lime juice, cranberry juice and Pink Whitney. Shake thoroughly and pour over ice. Garnish with lemon.

'Electric Lemonade' by Renee's Kitchen Quest

Yields 12 servings
1 cup Lemon Deep Eddy's
1 cup Blue Curacao
1 cup sweet and sour mix
2 liters Sprite
4 lemons

In a large pitcher, combine Lemon Deep Eddy's, Blue Curacao and sweet and sour mix. Cool in the fridge. When you're ready to serve, pour over ice, top with Sprite and garnish with a lemon wedge.

Students look back on final memories before leaving campus

CLARA DUHON
STAFF WRITER

During her last few days on campus last March, then-sophomore Cece Michalowski went on one last monument walk with friends from her theater company.

Michalowski said she walked around the National Mall for three hours with some of her closest friends from 14th Grade Players, most of whom were graduating seniors at the time, and sat together at the backside of the Lincoln Memorial. The next day, she had a picnic under the magnolias and the cherry blossoms at the George Mason Memorial.

Michalowski is one of four students who recounted their last fond memories in D.C. before packing up their rooms and heading home for the rest of the academic year. The students said their last recollection of an in-person college experience involved eating in bustling restaurants, sitting outside in Kogan Plaza as the days warmed up and walking around the National Mall with friends.

Bella Courchesne, a junior majoring in politi-

cal communication, said she sat with her friends on a picnic blanket in Kogan Plaza doing homework, drinking lemonade and eating fried dough from a nearby food truck the week before spring break. She said her internship at Hill TV had taken up most of her free time that semester, and she had more time off that week to catch up with friends.

Dylan Basescu, a senior majoring in physics and political science, said last year on Valentine's Day he surprised his girlfriend, senior Eleanor Paul, by taking her out to eat her favorite type of food at Pho 14, a Vietnamese restaurant in Mount Pleasant. He said it was the last dinner they'd have together before the pandemic hit - Basescu went back to New York and Paul went to California to quarantine.

He said while in the following weeks the virus would prove to be an increasingly "serious" issue, the date was one of the last times that he didn't have to worry about the virus.

"I was not forecasting the degree of devastation that it would have on the

country," he said. "So it was, that was roughly around the last time that I wasn't thinking about it."

Rebecca Radillo, a senior from Huntington Beach, California, said she was directing a production of "Julius Caesar" with the GW Shakespeare Company in the weeks leading up to the transition online. She said a friend of hers from out of town visited the University to take a photoshoot of the cast for the show's posters, and she took her friend to see another Shakespeare show, "Macbeth," premiering the last weekend of February.

That was the last show they were able to put on before leaving campus, and Radillo's production of "Julius Caesar" was canceled, she said.

Radillo added that she showed her friend around Smithsonian museums, walked around the District and enjoyed a meal out that weekend.

"In a strange way, I knew then that I had to savor that weekend as much as possible, because I knew that there was never going to be another one like it," Radillo said.



FILE PHOTO BY ARIELLE BADER | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Now that mask orders, restaurant closures and social distancing are the norm, even mundane experiences like grabbing lunch with some friends are nostalgic to reflect on.

GAMES OF THE WEEK



LACROSSE
vs. American
Wednesday | Noon
The Colonials will host a cross-town rival for their second home game of the season.



WOMEN'S BASKETBALL
at the Atlantic 10 Championship
Wednesday | 4 p.m.
No. 11 women's basketball will take on No. 14 George Mason in the first round of the conference tournament.

NUMBER CRUNCH

50.4

The percentage of men's basketball's offense that came from sophomores guard James Bishop and forward Jamison Battle this season.

Women's basketball gears up for tournament after conference wins

ROMAN BOBEK
STAFF WRITER

After starting Atlantic 10 play with just one victory in its first 10 games, women's basketball ended its A-10 slate with four straight wins ahead of the conference tournament.

The Colonials (8-13, 5-9 A-10) secured a No. 11 A-10 tournament playoff berth, three places lower than the squad's seeding last year, for a date with No. 14 George Mason Wednesday. GW routed its last four conference opponents, winning each of their games by 15-plus points, firing at a 45.7 percent clip and holding opponents to just 41.8 points per game in that time frame.

"It's just been nice to have a little bit more of a balanced scoring attack on the offensive end, but we've definitely taken the most strides on the defensive end," head coach Jennifer Rizzotti said after the team's regular season finale against Fordham Thursday.

The Colonials tallied a 3-4 nonconference record, winning their first two games over Lincoln and Old Dominion before hitting a three-game slide and capping the regular season with a loss to Fordham.

A comeback victory over Delaware sent the squad into conference play on a positive note. But GW initially struggled in conference play, opening the season with a loss to Davidson Jan. 1.

Redshirt junior guard Gabby Nikitinaite became eligible at the start of the A-10 slate. After averaging 3.3 points per contest in her first four games, Nikitinaite found her stride as the season closed, averaging 11 points an outing in her final four games.

The team went on to lose against No. 1 and No. 2-seeded Dayton and Fordham, respectively. The program struggled to score from the three-point line in its first nine games, going 23-of-127 from distance.

The Colonials captured their first win of conference play against George Mason Jan. 17 in a resounding 67-47 victory.

The team would not find its way back into the win column until Feb. 12 against Duquesne. In the monthlong span in between, the Colonials dropped five straight games and then postponed two games after a member of the team tested positive for COVID-19.

The squad came back from its brief five-day pause refreshed, and its offense took on a new life, averaging 61.5 points – 7.8 points more than its 53.7 points per game average in its previous 10 A-10 matchups. In the team's last five games of the season, the squad connected on 40 percent of its attempted triples.

"There have been good days, there have been bad days, but overall we've been climbing slowly," Nikitinaite said after the team's win over George Mason Feb. 28. "We still haven't achieved all. We can get to higher places, but we're taking it day by day, and I know we can be better every day."

During the team's four-game win streak, the Colonials dominated their second matchup against the Patriots, marking the largest A-10 win since an 80-49 victory over George Mason in 2017. The Colonials bullied the Patriots defensively, forcing 24 turnovers to score an additional 26 points to cap their largest win of the season 68-39.

The Colonials are heading into the tournament off a four



The Colonials' resounding 68-39 victory over George Mason this season marked the largest A-10 win since the Colonials routed the Patriots by 31 points in 2017.

HATCHET FILE PHOTO

game conference win streak, but they endured a nonconference 48-43 loss to Fordham Thursday. Rizzotti said redshirt sophomore forward Mayowa Taiwo was the "common denominator" for the team's strides this season, like holding Fordham to a season-low 48 points and allowing just four three-point buckets to a team that averages nine per game.

Taiwo suffered a lower body injury in the team's first meeting with George Mason, missing all five games during the team's skid. She returned to the court, and the

squad has won all but one game with her in the starting five.

In the stretch of five games Taiwo missed, the Colonials allowed 62.8 points a game on 42.9 percent shooting from the floor. Since Taiwo's return, the Colonials have allowed 41.8 points a game on 32.4 percent from the field.

In addition to Taiwo, freshman center Ali Brigham emerged as a threat in the post, scoring 12 points per game on 50.7 percent shooting on the season. Graduate student guard Jasmine Whitney and redshirt junior forward

Neila Luma sit No. 1 and No. 2, respectively, on the team in minutes per game and are the only two players to start all 21 games.

Whitney tallied 100 assists for the fourth time in her career and nabbed 61 steals as she led the offense. Luma rips a team-leading 6.3 boards a contest and averages 8.2 points.

With two victories already in the books, the Colonials will look to complete the trifecta over No. 14 George Mason. Tipoff is slated for 4 p.m. in Richmond.

Men's tennis alumni memorialize, bid farewell to the program

NURIA DIAZ
STAFF WRITER

With their backs against the wall in the 2005 Atlantic 10 men's tennis tournament, then-sophomore Daniel Balke and then-senior Daniel Raisbeck, playing at the No. 3 pairing, vied for the doubles point against Xavier.

Balke said the duo were losing most of the must-win match, but they worked the final set to a match point in their favor. Raisbeck returned the volley and the ball soared toward Balke, who said he closed his eyes, stuck his racket out and made contact with the ball, sending it to the Musketeers. On the next shot, Raisbeck "hit a winner" and celebration ensued, Balke said.

The Colonials would go on to lose the matchup and finish fifth at the tournament, but Balke said those minutes of celebration were his best moments in the program.

Men's tennis will no longer have the opportunity to celebrate a hotly contested win – the program lacks enough players to hold its last season as a varsity team, effectively ending its 65-year tenure with GW. Former men's tennis players said they learned leadership and discipline in their time with the program, along with lifelong friends they still cherish.

The team began

its earliest years in the Southern Conference, where it won eight titles in nine seasons between 1956 to 1964. In 1978, the team moved to the Atlantic 10.

In the 42 years the team has played in the A-10, the squad has won six championships. The first conference crown came in 1979 and the other five occurred between 2011 and 2016. The squad roared back to nab three consecutive championships in as many years.

Matt Hane, a 2004 graduate, said it was upsetting for him to hear about the program's termination at the end of the 2020-21 season. He added that the men's tennis program was one of the biggest reasons he chose to attend GW.

Hane earned A-10 Most Outstanding Rookie Performer in 2001 and A-10 Most Outstanding Performer in 2002 and 2004. He was inducted into the GW Athletic Hall of Fame in 2016. Hane said the program taught him responsibility, leadership and management as he served as a captain in his last years with the team.

The program produced 14 A-10 Championship Individual Champions in singles and seven A-10 Championship Individual Champions in doubles play. Hane earned the honor in 2002 at the No. 1 spot and in 2004 as the No. 1 doubles

pairing with then-junior Jake Jopling.

Hane said his fondest memories came from traveling and competing with his teammates. He added that junior tennis is typically individualistic, but collegiate tennis' team-based approach allowed him to spend time with 10 other players.

He added that his time in the program was an overall great experience for him, which made it harder for him to find out about the team's termination.

Viktor Svensson, a 2014 graduate, said winning the A-10 tournament his senior season as an "underdog" against VCU, and extending his final year of collegiate tennis into the NCAA Tournament were the highlights of his four years at GW.

The program boasted 35 All-Conference First Team honorees and 18 All-Conference Second Team honors, including Svensson's two Second Team nominations. Before the conference differentiated First and Second Team honors, the program notched 22 selections for All-Conference distinctions.

Svensson, who helped the team reach its highest end-of-season rank at No. 53 nationally, said he was disappointed that the program's history couldn't live on for future teams after it played such a large role in his life.



While the pandemic has forced GW's golfers away from their normal practice course, it hasn't affected their slate of games, which is larger than last year's.

HATCHET FILE PHOTO

Shortened golf roster to play largest spring slate in four years

WILL MARGERUM
STAFF WRITER

During a year that has forced most sports into abbreviated schedules, golf designed its busiest spring slate in four years.

The Colonials are set to compete in seven tournaments this semester, the most since the 2017 spring campaign. Head coach Chuck Scheinost said he increased the number of events and scheduled a week between each event to account for potential cancellations or pauses due to potential positive COVID-19 tests.

The squad has already hit the links in two events, the Oldfield Invitational Feb. 8 and Feb. 9 and the Invitational at Savannah Harbor Feb. 20 and Feb. 21. GW's 79-over par 943 at the Oldfield Invitational was the worst among the eight competing teams, and in Savannah, the squad placed No. 10 out of 15 programs.

After the Atlantic 10 postponed all fall sports to the spring semester, Scheinost said most of the team opted not to return to campus for the fall term to instead attend tournaments without on-campus restrictions. Prior to the start of the 2020-21 season, the squad last played almost a year ago on March 10, 2020, at the Bash at the Beach after the A-10 cut the spring season short at the onset of the

pandemic.

The program reunited in January, but a thinning roster for the first few events left little room for error. Injuries and COVID-19-related absences early in the year caused the team to play a small roster at its first few events, Scheinost said.

Only four student-athletes – sophomore Ty Sullivan, senior Clifford Thompson, sophomore Hugo Riboud and junior Luis Alfonso Preciado – were available for the Oldfield Invitational. Sophomore Jakub Hrinda returned for the following outing, and graduate student Adrian Castagnola is expected to tackle the course at the Ross Collegiate Classic Monday and Tuesday.

Scheinost said two student-athletes – senior Stephen Brown and junior Logan Othmer – opted out because of the pandemic, and the team will have a maximum of six golfers eligible for future tournaments. He added that he is pleased with where the team is at the moment and that the group is working to hit its stride for the Atlantic 10 Tournament.

The pandemic altered the Colonials' practice routine, forcing them away from their normal practice course – the Army Navy Country Club – for health and safety reasons, Scheinost said. He added

that the team's short game facilities have also been limited to comply with Lerner Health and Wellness Center guidelines.

Senior Clifford Thompson said the team calls ahead to ensure they can practice, and the program contacts other golf courses to find areas to play outside and away from Foggy Bottom. Scheinost added that this winter has been one of the coldest during his tenure at GW, meaning opportunities to get the team outdoors have been hard to come by.

With past tournaments as far as Hawaii in 2019, the squad normally flies to events. But to cut down on exposure to COVID-19, golfers said the squad loads up a van and drives to its tournaments in North Carolina, South Carolina, Virginia, West Virginia and Georgia.

Thompson said when the team is traveling, everyone stays in their own hotel rooms unless they are on the golf course, including ordering in all of their meals to prevent potential exposure to COVID-19.

Riboud said the new travel arrangements don't affect the team and even allows them to squeeze more practice rounds in before the competition.

The Colonials will continue their season at the Ross Collegiate Classic in North Carolina Monday and Tuesday.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

In the 42 years the team has played in the A-10, the squad has won six championships, including five from 2011 to 2016.