

The GW Hatchet

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2021 STUDENT ASSOCIATION ELECTIONS GUIDE

SA CANDIDATES FOR TOP ROLES PRIORITIZE BUILDING TRUST WITH GW COMMUNITY

CLARA DUHON
STAFF WRITER

If candidates running for the Student Association's top positions could address just one issue in the next academic year, they say it would be trust.

After the majority of SA cabinet members vacated the body and former SA President Howard Brookins resigned amid sexual misconduct allegations, candidates for SA elections said rebuilding trust between the SA and GW community is a top priority. They said if elected, they would create more opportunities to speak with students informally through town halls and increased engagement with student organizations.

"Creating more ways of having conversations with the students and having conversations with organizations is going to be crucial," said SA Sen. Charles Aborisade, U-at-Large and a candidate for president. "That's one way to really build trust – by access, by making it easier for students to contact and have conversations with the SA."

Aborisade said he will allocate time outside of office hours to communicate with student organizations about any issues the SA could address. SA senators are currently

required to hold office hours every week to meet with students, and students can request to speak during public comment at the biweekly senate meetings.

Aborisade said he will routinely communicate with student organizations in addition to holding office hours and town halls to integrate more student voices into the SA.

He said he also plans to create a task force composed of SA members and any interested student organization leaders to increase collaboration and event planning. He said student organizations typically reach out to just one individual in the SA, which leads to advocacy efforts from a few SA members, instead of the full senate.

"What I imagine with the task force is to amplify those concerns and bring them into the hands of the entire SA," Aborisade said. "It will also provide the senate with a deeper understanding of student concerns since they'll be more aware of the issues the task force are tackling."

Hannah Edwards, a candidate for SA president and a former SA vice president for diversity and inclusion,

SAMANTHA SERAFIN
STAFF WRITER

said she thinks students feel that SA leaders carry themselves "above the rest of the student body." She said this perception stems from a trend of students running for SA executive positions and focusing more on the politics of the SA instead of supporting students.

Edwards said increasing events for students to casually engage with SA members can help establish an "equal relationship" between the SA and the student body. She said hosting weekly conversations with students about SA actions, accomplishments and projects will increase transparency and communication.

"All of those things will help to foster not only transparency but also build community," Edwards said.

SA Sen. Kate Carpenter, U-at-Large and a candidate for vice president, said Brookins' "bad relations" with University President Thomas LeBlanc hindered the organization's ability to work effectively with administrators.

Brookins called for LeBlanc's resignation before consulting with the senate – an action that senators said damaged the SA's relationship with

officials. Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights defended LeBlanc, saying the Board had no plans to remove him from his position and criticizing Brookins for his statement.

Carpenter said she will be transparent with officials "from the start" when communicating with administrators about policy initiatives, which she said she has already practiced during her time in the senate.

"We are there to serve as a mediator between the students and the admin, and we need to deliver that message in a professional and transparent and communicative way," Carpenter said.

SA President Brandon Hill, who is running for another term as president, said throughout his three years in the SA, he has learned "trust is deeply tied to transparency" and the need to facilitate a "stable" SA team. As president, he said he boosted communication between the SA and GW community, updating the SA website, increasing social media presence and "actively" communicating with student organizations.

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One year into pandemic, GW longs for a return to normalcy

ALEC RICH
STAFF WRITER

LIA DEGROOT
NEWS EDITOR

ZACH SCHONFELD
NEWS EDITOR

One year ago this week, D.C.'s stay-at-home order instituted the beginning of a new normal, leaving GW's once-bustling campus barren amid what seemed like an otherwise normal semester.

The weather was warming, but the typical frisbee tournaments and outdoor studying in University Yard were suddenly replaced by a never-ending flow of cars in line for coronavirus testing as cases surged around the country. GW's operations had been completely upended with no resolution in sight.

As spring break ended, classes resumed remotely with most students logging in from their childhood bedrooms, while only about 500 students remained on campus. Officials had initially hoped for students to return as early as April 5, but as cases spiked, the University has remained in remote operations for more than a year.

The once-in-a-century pandemic would persist for months as GW found itself in the crossroads of history. A reignited movement for racial justice fueled by the police killing of George Floyd led demonstrators

through campus on their way to the White House in the summer. Months later, the National Guard would occupy campus for days as part of unprecedented security measures in the wake of the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol.

These events have defined an extraordinary year for GW, with officials now expressing optimism for a return to campus this fall enabled by the continued distribution of vaccines across the country.

Throughout the year, GW's medical enterprise stepped up to contribute research to the development of a COVID-19 vaccine and established a COVID-19 testing infrastructure for the community.

A team of researchers at the School of Medicine and Health Sciences led an arm of the Moderna vaccine trial. The trial included participants from around the D.C. area who logged their symptoms weekly and exceeded its goal for including Black and Latino participants.

"I have to say that we are particularly grateful for our volunteers given all of the negative press that has been floating around regarding vaccines, and they are really taking a step to volunteer and to control whether or not there will be a vaccine moving forward," David Diemert, a professor of medicine and the lead researcher on GW's arm of the trial, said at a press conference in the fall. GW's nursing students

staffed the University's testing centers, which they said allowed them to get hands-on experience in their field. But with the added workload on top of their nursing classes, students said they had to learn to manage their time between classes, testing and personal lives.

Faculty also stepped up to study the pandemic using the University's internal fund for COVID-19 research. Projects ranged from studying the pandemic's effect on primary school education throughout the DMV to how the pandemic has impacted Black adults' mental and physical well-being.

"I am aware there are a lot of disparities already in D.C., and we have seen some of those augmented because of COVID, especially when you look east of the river where Wards 7 and 8 are located versus the other wards," Janice Blanchard, a professor of medicine working on a project about residents' perceptions of the city's public health recommendations, said in an interview last month.

In the early months of the pandemic, an in-person fall 2020 semester seemed plausible. Officials submitted a reopening plan to the District in mid-June but later reversed plans after a summer surge in coronavirus cases just weeks before classes were set to begin.

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About half of on-campus residents traveled during spring break: officials

YUTONG JIANG
REPORTER

About half of the on-campus cohort of students traveled out of the DMV during spring break, officials said.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said about half of the students living on campus reported travel plans outside of D.C., Maryland or Virginia during the break through a travel notification form, available online until the start of the week off. More than half a dozen students living on campus said they traveled outside of Foggy Bottom to reunite with family members and to take a break from their living environment in residence halls, consumed by online learning throughout the semester.

The University requires on-campus students traveling outside of the DMV to quarantine upon their return to campus until they receive two negative tests and clearance from the Campus COVID Support Team.

Nosal declined to say the exact number of students who left the DMV during break, but half of the current on-campus cohort would be about 750 students. She declined to say how many students tested positive for the coronavirus after returning and deferred to the general COVID-19 tracking dashboard. Chidera Eje, a freshman living in Potomac

House, drove home to Fayetteville, North Carolina, to visit her family for spring break instead of flying because of health risks tied to traveling during the pandemic. She initially planned to stay on campus for the week but changed her plans after realizing more students went on vacations to destinations like Miami, leaving her residence hall with fewer students to see during the week.

Visitors from across the country piled into South Beach during the spring break, turning Miami into a scene packed with maskless crowds and stirring concerns about the virus's spread.

Eje said she spent most of her time at home during the break, eating, catching up on sleep and reuniting with family members.

"I wasn't able to hang out with my other friends who are from my hometown because of the pandemic," she said. "So I spent most of my time at home with family."

Eje said she signed the travel notification form from the University, which asked her how long she was going to stay off campus and the dates of her departure and return. She also had to report her symptoms on a daily basis while living away from campus, the same protocol for on-campus living.

She said she entered quarantine after returning to campus toward the end of break and needed

to wait three to four days to receive two negative COVID-19 tests before leaving isolation last week with no virus-related symptoms.

Freshman Eli McCullick, a criminal justice major, traveled by plane to his hometown of Boulder, Colorado, where he visited his family and friends. He said he missed his home and visiting the area helped improve his "mindset" away from campus.

McCullick said he started quarantine after returning to campus last week without any COVID-19 symptoms and wasn't aware of anyone he came in contact with testing positive for the virus during his travels.

Joshika Kumaran, a freshman majoring in international affairs, said she drove to New Jersey and New York during the break and gathered with four family members, including a brother traveling from California, after they each got tested a week in advance. Kumaran said she decided to return home because she missed seeing her family, and she tested negative for the coronavirus with no symptoms after returning from her trip.

Kumaran said her activities in New York City weren't "totally" coronavirus-safe, where some establishments situated tables closer than six feet apart and allowed walk-in seating while others required reservations and regulated capacity.

PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

HANNAH EDWARDS

TARA SUTER
REPORTER

Hannah Edwards vowed not to leave home for college unless she was accepted to GW.

Edwards said in eighth grade, she took a family trip to the District and fell in love with the University when she stumbled upon campus. Since then, she said she made it her mission to attend the school she saw in the middle of this “great” city.

“I worked my butt off in high school so that I could try to go to GW, and I’m also a first-generation college student,” Edwards said. “Nobody in my family has gone to college before.”

Edwards, who announced her candidacy for Student Association president earlier this month,

is running on a platform centered around a 15-point plan, including initiatives like advocating for a mandatory diversity and multiculturalism course and establishing an SA task force to participate in conversations with officials about plans for potentially reopening campus this fall. She served as the SA vice president for diversity and inclusion last year.

Officials announced earlier this month that they will initiate a phased reopening plan over the summer in preparation for students potentially returning to campus next semester.

Edwards said the student body does not fully realize the impact that the SA can have both on GW and the broader GW community. She said she intends to organize events,

like the LGBTQ conference and a welcome banquet on the Mount Vernon Campus for Black students, to advertise SA resources to students and connect the SA with the GW community.

She has served in the SA for two years, but Edwards said she still considers herself an “outsider” in the organization because she brought forward legislation independently or with a group of people she already knew rather than with officials’ help.

“The ideas that I’m proposing, because of the experience that I had working as a cabinet member, like in the executive side last year, I figured out how to get things done on my own without University leadership, without even a whole bunch of support from the Student Association,” Edwards said.

She said hosting SA fundraisers like a 5k run/walk for the entire D.C. community can help create stronger bonds among the SA and the GW and D.C. communities as the event will be open to everyone to get to know each other.

Edwards said she is also hoping to create a Men of Color Conference and a Women of Color Conference for students and the D.C. community to establish stronger connections with GW students and D.C. residents.

“Engaging the community in those types of events and then engaging the broader D.C. community as well into those types of events that we’re integrating students into, that is what will truly make a difference,” Edwards said.



Year: Junior
Hometown: Kansas City, Missouri
Major: Political Science and Psychology
Favorite quarantine activity: Cooking or watching videos of cooking
Favorite outdoor activity: Running
Who is your role model: My high school counselor, Mrs. Gray
What would your walk-up song be: “Girl on Fire” by Alicia Keys



Year: Junior
Hometown: West Orange, New Jersey
Major: Political Science and Philosophy
Favorite quarantine activity: Hanging with my dog, Champ
Favorite outdoor activity: Walking through the D.C. area with my friends at night
Who is your role model: My mom. She is a trooper. I love her.
What would your walk-up song be: “Pressure in My Palms” by Aminé

CHARLES ABORISADE

ZACHARY BLACKBURN
STAFF WRITER

Charles Aborisade spent much of his downtime during the COVID-19 pandemic playing with Champ, his German shepherd.

Aborisade, who announced his campaign for Student Association president late last month, noted that he is not the only person to recently run for office alongside a German shepherd with the name Champ – President Joe Biden also has a dog of the same breed and with the same name.

“That’s a coincidence – nothing was planned,” Aborisade said. “I got Champ in 2014, so this was before I even knew

Biden had a dog.”

Aborisade’s primary platform points include increasing funding for the Knowledge in Action Career Internship Fund grants, which support students in unpaid internships, and using SA executive funds to create an “online textbook pantry” that would allow students to access textbook materials online at a discounted price or for free.

Aborisade, who has served in the SA Senate for two years and is the current finance committee chair, said his experience as a chairperson and work with many student organizations give him “unique insight” into student organization opera-

tions and will help him build relationships with the GW community as president.

He proposed a policy called “AborisAid” that would involve a task force of SA members and students working to plan events for the student body. He said the task force would help expand student organization programming.

“Now it’s very important to really build that community aspect up, and I think there’s no better way to do that than with student organizations,” Aborisade said. “My job currently as the finance chair gives me a unique insight of how student organizations operate, how they function

and what the possibilities lie for them moving forward.”

He said he also hopes to change SA finance operations to allow student organizations to request budgets biannually rather than annually.

Aborisade said he is the best candidate for president because he believes the student body needs a “progressive” student government leader to make changes after spending nearly three semesters away from campus due to the pandemic.

“It’s going to be very important that we have a student government that not only wants to go back to normal but also wants to progress from where we were,” Aborisade said.

CHRISTIAN ZIDOUEMBA

VITA FELLIG
STAFF WRITER

Christian Zidouemba is “always smiling.”

He said his friendly disposition and talent for connecting with people will help him build relationships with students across campus if elected as SA president. He said his experiences attending GW as both an international and first-generation student make him a “compassionate” leader necessary for the student body.

“I want to become the next SA leader so that I can enact change for our campus because so much change is needed, but in order to do that, we need to have people who have the passion, the drive and the compassion to understand the struggles for ev-

ery day students at GW,” he said.

Zidouemba announced his campaign for SA president earlier this month with plans to increase professional development opportunities through an alumni mentorship program and advocate for marginalized students with more SA leadership roles.

If elected, he said he would also create a director of student-athletes position to focus on communicating with the athletic community and advertise athletic events to students.

He said he created a platform that aims to foster a “community-oriented student experience” on campus.

“There is a gap between the Student Association and regular students,” he

said. “If you ask any person on campus, ‘Who is currently serving in the SA?’ they probably won’t know because they are not engaged, and I think that one thing we can do to address that is by establishing a vice presidential office of housing and [director of] athletics to better reach students and represent their needs.”

He said his previous experiences working at the Lerner Health and Wellness Center and in the Office of Undergraduate Admissions as a student orientation leader have allowed him to forge “strong” connections with administrators and prepare him for student advocacy.

“The SA has been seen for far too long as a bureaucratic place where student leaders take

themselves way too seriously and don’t look to amplify the voices of students on campus, whether it’s international students, the Asian community or first-generation students,” he said. “I’m someone who can bridge that gap between those who are left out and GW campus administrators.”

He said he would work with officials to provide a U-Pass Metro card to help students afford traveling off campus.

“When we come back from COVID-19, we need to have this so that students can access Foggy Bottom and experience what GW has to offer, because that’s really what makes the school such a good place is the wider Foggy Bottom community that we are a part of,” he said.



Year: Junior
Hometown: Burkina Faso, West Africa
Major: International Business and International Affairs
Favorite quarantine activity: Running by the monuments in D.C.
Favorite outdoor activity: Coaching soccer for elementary school kids with the organization I volunteer for
Who is your role model: Thomas Sankara, the former president of Burkina Faso
What would your walk-up song be: “Tu seras élevé” by DJ Kerozan



Year: Junior
Hometown: Waldorf, Maryland
Major: Political Communication and Human Services and Social Justice
Favorite quarantine activity: Mindlessly scrolling through TikTok
Favorite outdoor activity: Going to the monuments
Role model: Michelle Obama
What would your walk-up song be: Any song by Nicki Minaj

BRANDON HILL

SEJAL GOVINDARAO
STAFF WRITER

Brandon Hill wants to be held accountable.

Hill, who announced his bid for the Student Association’s top spot in February and currently serves in the role, said he recognizes that at times it seems that the SA is working against the student body. But in the SA’s “roots and intentions,” the institution exists to support students, he said.

“I look forward to the opportunity to be held accountable and to represent the students,” Hill said.

Hill is running on a platform of more than 15 initiatives to improve student inclusivity in SA governance and internal opera-

tions and increase course affordability for students. He said he believes the SA needs a “major culture change” to encourage the senate to take their work seriously but not take themselves too seriously.

Hill said his prior experience in the SA is an asset to his candidacy, especially because he served during the initial transition period to remote learning at the start of the pandemic.

He served as SA executive vice president until February, when he assumed the presidency amid former SA Howard Brookins’ resignation from the role.

“There’s only been one SA president who’s ever been elected for a second

term,” Hill said. “So providing students with that sense of comfortability that I will be here for another year, that I can be here for another year to support their issues and continue on the projects that I’m doing, is super essential, because I think I have a proven track record of getting things done.”

If elected, Hill said he will create a “robust” SA cabinet including more than 40 members – more than double his current cabinet – to represent as many students as possible in the SA. He said he will also work to transition the body’s bylaws to align with the SA’s updated constitution that will go into effect with the new term.

Hill said he found his

own community at GW and believes that the SA is a place where students of all backgrounds can come together, relate with one another and find common ground.

“I have never found another place on campus where students of color, students of multiple religious backgrounds and also students in computer science and the Corcoran School [of the Arts and Design] have all been able to come together and find a common ground or relate on similar issues or experiences,” Hill said.

“Being able to have those impactful discussions of intersectionality have been super helpful in assisting in University advocacy.”

VICE PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATES

KATE CARPENTER

LILY SHANMUGASUNDARAM
REPORTER

Kate Carpenter knew on March 13 of last year that “things were going to change forever.”

When she stood on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial at 11:12 p.m. with 400 to 500 students “just sitting there,” she said she knew GW was her family. Students were sent home in mid-March after the rise of the coronavirus led to virtual learning for the remainder of the semester and the next academic year.

“I didn’t even know everyone there, and I knew that we were there together, no matter what

happened in the future,” Carpenter said. “GW was going to be there for each other.”

Carpenter, who is running for Student Association vice president, said through her experiences in the SA, she has seen not only the inner workings but also the “shortcomings” of the body, making her a qualified candidate for a top leadership spot.

“I have seen the internal conflict, and I have seen the things that we have failed at, and I recognize those, and I am ready to improve upon them,” she said.

Carpenter said there is “petty student politics” in the SA that have inhibited the body from advocating

on behalf of students.

She said her platform outlines plans to build community and resolve the “internal divide” in the group by facilitating “hang-out times” for SA members to increase community and bonds.

Carpenter said she’s noticed a lack of school spirit in the SA, which needs to be a “beacon and leader” for passion for the University. She said SA members currently do not attend and support enough University athletic events, like basketball and soccer games, which she said she wants to encourage members to take a larger part in.

“We need to be there as advocates for GW school spirit, and that is some-

thing that we just haven’t done in most recent years,” Carpenter said.

She said the SA needs to be approachable to build a better relationship with the student body through more casual conversations and updates on SA initiatives to increase transparency. She said student government can play an “important” role in the community if the SA creates an environment for them to be effective advocates for students.

“We can be advocates for the student body, we can be approachable, we can be a beacon for school spirit, and we can erase the internal conflicts that come with us evaluating the shortcomings,” she said.



Year: Sophomore
Hometown: Stillwater, Oklahoma
Major: Public Communications
Favorite quarantine activity: Hanging out with my friends on Zoom and playing “Just Dance”
Favorite outdoor activity: Spikeball, football and dancing with my friends
Who is your role model: My grandmother
What would your walk-up song be: “More than a Woman” by the Bee Gees



Year: Junior
Hometown: The Woodlands, Texas
Major: Cognitive Neuroscience and Psychology
Favorite quarantine activity: Having time to spend with friends
Favorite outdoor activity: Picnics
Who is your role model: Sarah McBride, a democratic member of the Delaware Senate and the first openly transgender state senator in the country
What would your walk-up song be: “American Idiot” by Green Day

SOPHIA PACKER

CARLY NEILSON
STAFF WRITER

Sophia Packer never thought she’d get involved in student politics.

Three years later, she is running for Student Association vice president.

Packer, who announced her candidacy late last month, said she is running on four main pillars – transparency, graduate student inclusion, a back to campus policy and equity and accessibility. She said if elected, she would focus on ensuring officials discuss decisions with students, faculty and staff before they are finalized.

“I would be the best

choice because I know what it’s like to be on the outside, to look at on campus politics and not know what’s going on, to think that the SA is an ineffective, do-nothing body, but I also have the knowledge of somebody who’s worked within the system,” she said.

Packer said GW needs leaders “ready and able” to work with administrators to bring students back to campus in the fall. She said as vice president, she would collaborate with officials to create a “concrete idea” for bringing as many students back to campus “as soon as possible.”

“I think having SA

leadership who is ready to take on that responsibility early is really important,” she said.

She said administrators need to grow the diversity of GW’s faculty community, and she hopes to urge officials to enact a proposed cluster hire – an initiative to hire 18 minority faculty members primarily in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences. Packer said she wants to increase and promote diversity on campus through increasing “physical and mental” accommodations for students who need them.

She said she is the best choice for vice president

because she knows what it’s like to be on the “outside” of the SA. She said her involvement in many student organizations in addition to the SA can help serve as a bridge between the body and students at large.

“I have the knowledge to take the concerns of the student body and really translate them into actual policy change,” Packer said. “I haven’t lost those connections to the student body, to the activist communities, to the various identity groups, and I think that being that bridge is a very important role for the vice president.”

WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT THE VIRTUAL SA ELECTIONS

BRENNAN FISKE
STAFF WRITER

Candidates will wrap up weeks of campaigning for entirely online Student Association elections this week.

Joint Elections Commission Chairperson Chloe Wagner said the commission – which oversees SA elections – changed campaigning rules this academic year to require all candidates to campaign solely in a virtual format, axing the use of campaign posters around campus. Wagner said this academic year all executive and senate races will be conducted via ranked-choice voting after using it only for executive races last year.

“We’re the ones doing all the behind-the-scenes work between making sure that everything goes smoothly online, transitioning things that work traditionally in person to making sure that we can have them function virtually,” Wagner said.

Here’s how the elections will look different from previous years:

Tweaking virtual elections rules

Wagner said the SA Senate passed a bill in November to update the body’s bylaw language and make elections guidelines “more clear.” The rules included for this year’s elections, like removing at-large positions from the race

and decreasing the number of signatures required to make the ballot, will not remain in effect for future elections unless the senate votes to do so.

Senators cut the number of signatures required for each candidate for president and vice president from 500 to 250. The number of signatures required for senators varied based on what constituency they would represent.

The bill also allows candidates to run a joint campaign, creating website and social media pages together, but their names will appear separately on the ballot. The JEC previously declined to allow candidates to run on joint campaigns in prior years.

SA President Brandon Hill, running for another term, and SA Sen. Kate Carpenter, U-at-Large, and a candidate for vice president, announced their joint campaign last month.

Wagner said all of the positions in this year’s elections, including the senate seats, will be decided via ranked-choice voting – a system that allows voters to list their preferred candidates in order. The JEC conducted only the presidential and vice presidential elections via ranked-choice voting last year because of technology limitations for the senate races.

Increased messaging

She said the JEC is working to help students through the online elections process through emails sent to students explaining how to vote and instructions on the JEC website. She said an explanation about how ranked-choice voting works will also be included on each student’s ballot.

“As you’re voting, students will see this isn’t a regular election and will have the chance to learn more about what that voting experience is like,” Wagner said.

Wagner said students voiced concerns about the voting process after the initial 2020 elections results showed then-presidential candidate George Glass ahead of the eventual winner Howard Brookins until the final round of ranked-choice tallies. To address the confusion, she said the JEC is going to send out two explainer emails ahead of the elections on Monday and Wednesday to show how and when students will vote.

Students will vote on Engage from Tuesday, March 30, at 9 a.m. to Wednesday, March 31, at 9 p.m.

SA elections were pushed back two weeks last year after in-person classes were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Candidates campaigned in person for more than three

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW AHEAD OF SA ELECTIONS

- 1 SA candidates were allowed to run on a joint campaign in this year’s elections for the first time in the body’s recent history.
- 2 The signature requirement for SA candidates to be placed on the ballot was cut in half for all executive and senate seats.
- 3 All seats in this year’s elections are conducted via ranked-choice voting – unlike last year, when only the races for the top two spots were conducted in this format.

weeks before officials sent students home.

The JEC pushed the elections dates back one week this year after the Student Court extended the candidate registration deadline three days.

Wagner said the campaign period would function “very differently” as candidates aren’t able to campaign in person through setting up tables in Kogan Plaza or staying after classes to talk with students.

“Those more organic opportunities to connect with people that you normally wouldn’t and to talk about your vision for the student

government aren’t there for candidates,” Wagner said.

Virtual campaigning Wagner said the JEC’s guidelines for the 2021 campaign period forbid all in-person campaigning and physical campaign materials to ensure students’ safety amid the pandemic. Candidates are also not allowed to campaign during “academic proceedings” like class sessions on Zoom and Blackboard Collaborate to protect class time.

Candidates were also required to create their own social media accounts for their campaigns to advertise their platforms, she said.

She said the entirely virtual campaign period decreases opportunities for candidates to speak directly with students, but candidates can still campaign through social media outlets, like GroupMe and Facebook pages.

Each candidate for the president and vice president positions created an Instagram page or website that includes graphics and videos about their campaigns and platforms.

“I have full faith the candidates are tech-savvy and can promote their message through various social media means,” Wagner said.

SA candidates use outreach efforts to increase trust in the body

From Page 1

“If elected to continue this work, I plan to expand this vision, working with a passionate, all-encompassing communications team to advertise the SA and host a space for public feedback,” he said in an email.

He added that the SA’s first-ever director of in-

ternal relations will help mitigate possible conflict among SA senators and “strengthen public reputations.” He said the new role comes after senators “expressed high tensions” in the midst of rejecting Hill’s nomination of Carpenter as executive vice president in February.

Christian Zidouemba, a candidate for SA president, said he plans to create a “diverse” cabinet –

specifically for increasing international student input – that represents “the entire University” to rebuild trust with students and mitigate the SA’s “bureaucratic” reputation. As he has not previously been a part of the SA, he said he can bring an outside perspective into the body to “unite” the SA and students.

Then-freshman Justin

Diamond launched a last-minute campaign in 2019 as a write-in candidate with promises to abolish the SA because he believed the group was an ineffective body to represent students.

“It’s the time that we will represent the voices of all students on our campus by having representation within the SA and for me as an international student

and a first-generation student, I think that the Student Association will have someone who understands this struggle and who will fight for them,” Zidouemba said.

SA Sen. Sofia Packer, CCAS-U and a candidate for vice president, said she has spoken with constituents throughout her time in the SA who do not grasp the SA’s current affairs. She said she will

host monthly town halls to communicate with students through casual conversations rather than a formal meeting, like the SA meetings.

“The goal is to be more approachable because unless you want to give a public comment at a full senate meeting or go to office hours that not everyone can make, it can be difficult to contact the VP,” Packer said.

News

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THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

HOW IS COVID-19 AFFECTING WOMEN AND GIRLS WORLDWIDE?

March 30 • Noon EDT • Free
The United Nations reports that one in three women will experience physical or sexual violence in their lifetime. This event will report on how the pandemic has contributed to a rise in domestic violence worldwide.

TO BIBI OR NOT TO BIBI: ISRAEL'S END-LESS ELECTION

March 31 • 12:15 p.m. EDT • Free
Dahlia Scheindlin, Natan Sachs and Shibley Telhami will analyze the fourth Israeli election since 2019.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

March 30, 1978

Administrators find that 60 percent of University holdings in stock and bonds are in companies with investments in South Africa amid calls from SA leaders to divest in protest.

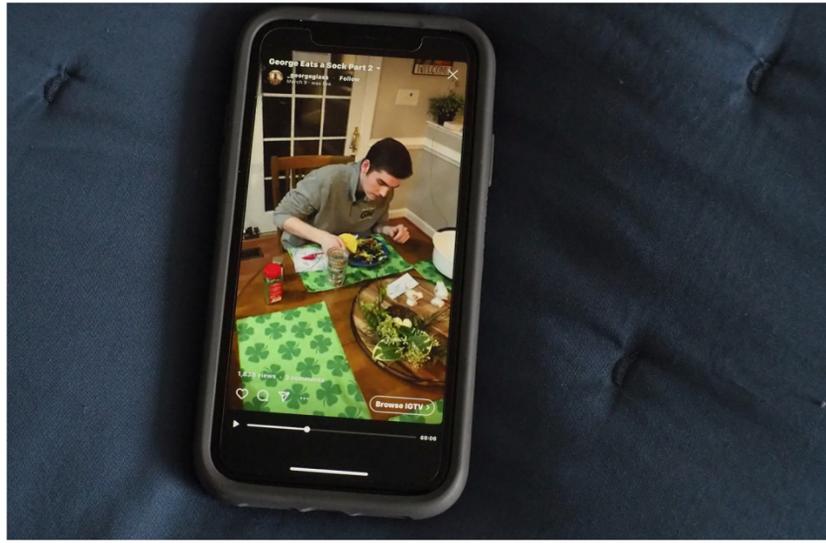


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE HROMIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Senior George Glass has raised several thousand dollars for students in need by consuming a sock on Instagram Live.

Students host unconventional fundraisers for mutual aid fund

BRENNAN FISKE
STAFF WRITER

A student-run fundraising organization is donating more than \$4,000 in individual contributions to support peers in need of emergency financial assistance.

The GW Mutual Aid Fund, which provides resources and financial support to peers impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, hosted two events on Instagram Live during spring break for students to tune in to and donate for the group's emergency collective fund. Students involved in organizing both fundraisers said they wanted to host nontraditional ways to rally student excitement online, through events like a sock-eating livestream and chess tournament.

Yannik Omictin, one of the co-founders of GW Mutual Aid, said the pandemic has demonstrated the necessity of mutual aid efforts and wealth redistribution in response to the rising need for emergency financial relief. He said the group has worked year-round to educate students and remind them at events about the need for community involvement to support each other.

He said in addition to the livestreamed events, other on-campus organizations like GW Black Defiance and

students have hosted fundraisers of their own this past month. He said the fund has no structured leadership and operates as a collective, meaning any student can approach the organization with an idea to host a fundraiser or plan to gather donations.

Students can request financial assistance through the group's request form, which is dispersed on a rolling basis to cover students' immediate needs.

George Glass, a senior who organized one of the fundraisers, said he ate a sock on Instagram Live last summer after losing a bet to one of his friends and was shocked to see more than 50 students tune in to watch. He said seeing students' excitement prompted him to host a fundraiser for GW Mutual Aid in October, at which he consumed a second sock before more than 300 people over Instagram and raised more than \$1,225 in donations.

He said he decided earlier this month to hold one last sock livestream fundraiser with a goal of reaching \$2,000 in student donations. A student counted donations as they came in throughout the event, which attracted up to 500 viewers and \$2,300.

In total, he said he has raised \$3,525 in total for the GW Mutual Aid fund over the past six months.

Sophomore Karina Ochoa Berkley and junior Justin Diamond also raised more than \$2,100 in an online chess tournament where viewers were able to tune in, donate and have the chance to play themselves. Ochoa Berkley, a political science and philosophy major, said the tournament included student leaders from the Student Association, GW College Democrats and GW College Republicans, as well as others with large social media presences.

Ochoa Berkley said she and Diamond had a "mutual interest in chess," which prompted the idea for the event. She said they wanted to pick students with large social media followings and campus presences, regardless of their chess ability, to encourage a larger student audience to donate.

Ochoa Berkley said she sees potential for students to organize more niche events in the future that also benefit funds like GW Mutual Aid.

Diamond, the co-organizer for the event, said he hopes the tournament will "begin a virtuous cycle" of student events organized outside of the University that rally everyone in the community. He said the group set up their fundraising goal to "ramp up their efforts" to support students after seeing Glass' success.

Professor researches pandemic's effect on health, stress

ABBY KENNEDY
STAFF WRITER

A sociology professor partnered with a global team of more than 100 interdisciplinary researchers to investigate the perceived risk factors of the novel coronavirus and their impact on stress.

Antwan Jones, an associate professor of sociology and epidemiology, said his research project looks at how likely an individual is to be infected with the virus and the economic burdens caused by the pandemic and their ties to health-promoting and health-damaging behaviors. He said the ongoing project, which began in June, can help identify common stressors, like the anxiety about contracting COVID-19, that people around the globe face and how they impact their physical health habits.

He said the research relies on data from his collaboration with the PsyCorona project, a multinational, longitudinal study of behavioral and psychological responses to the COVID-19 pandemic, and uses data from 24 countries.

Jones said participants complete a survey asking about their likelihood of

contracting COVID-19 and their economic burdens. He said researchers then follow up with participants about their specific economic situations throughout the pandemic.

He added that he hopes to identify the effects of the stressors participants experience throughout the pandemic on their health.

He said about 60,000 people completed the initial questionnaire and were divided into half longitudinal panels, where respondents were interviewed multiple times, and cross-sectional panels, where respondents were only interviewed once to be mindful of participants' time and energy.

Jones said the team members are close to completing their paper, showcasing the results of the study, and will submit it to "Annals of Behavioral Medicine."

He said he decided to get involved in the project after identifying a need for a new line of research to address sociological, psychological and epidemiological aspects of the pandemic. People have reported feeling depressed and anxious and struggling with insomnia

since the pandemic began last year.

Jones said as he saw the stress of his friends and family grow as they lost loved ones and worried about their health, jobs and the unknown, he recognized the need for this project.

Jones said conducting his research became a way for him to deal with his own stress and sadness about the pandemic.

"Doing work on perceived COVID risk was personal to me," Jones said. "Like many of us, I was sandwiched between two emotional states: one of perpetual worry that I would acquire COVID-19 and the other of intermittent sadness thinking that others may die from the disease."

Jones added that he co-runs a website designed to examine the social impact of the pandemic and bring attention to the inequities surrounding it. He said the panel is ongoing, and anyone who wants to participate in the research can still sign up.

"The volunteer work that I have done to make sure that one less person is exposed to COVID-19 is also my way of using my talents to help us all get to our place of 'new normal,'" he said.



COURTESY OF ANTWAN JONES

Antwan Jones, an associate professor of sociology and epidemiology, approached his research by surveying people to ask them about their perceptions of contracting COVID-19.

Locals press officials to consider preserving Nashman Center building

ABIGAIL OSBORNE
STAFF WRITER

Some Foggy Bottom residents are protesting the University's plans to demolish the Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service building.

John George, the president of the Foggy Bottom Association, issued a letter to the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission earlier this month urging commissioners to consider preserving the building because of its long-established roots in Foggy Bottom. But members of the University and ANC are resisting the calls for reversing the plans, saying the building isn't qualified for preservation without historic site designation from the District.

"The FBA asks the ANC to request that GW consider preserving the house and perhaps incorporate it into the eventual new development," the letter reads. "Although the house is not currently a protected historic site, by virtue of its age and qualities, it could be nominated for inclusion in the D.C. inventory of historic sites."

Officials announced their intention last month to demolish the building after the Nashman Center offices move into the new Hillel building on H Street in late April or early May. The Nashman Center building, also known as the Waggaman House, is the only remaining row house of the original 11 that developer Thomas Waggaman built in 1886 before GW purchased the then-residential building in 2000.

The building has since housed the Nashman Center and previously housed the women's, gender and sexuality studies program.

George said in the letter to the ANC that the Waggaman House serves as an "irreplaceable reminder" of Foggy Bottom's

history and said the issue is a matter of historic preservation. The building is the last of more than 50 row houses built on the block, according to the FBA's letter.

An FBA webpage also states that the building's destruction would make the currently occupied lot "noisier and less private" since the house has served as a "buffer" to I Street traffic. Locals are urging the ANC to open discussions about preservation and are not necessarily asking commissioners to request preservation, according to the letter.

George said the FBA hopes to collaborate with officials to "reincorporate" the Waggaman House for a different purpose in which it could house a different University office or division.

"Once you wipe it away, then people forget," he said. "You could look it up in a book, but it will never be back. And so if you were to reincorporate it in some way, again recognizing feasibility of that, then you recognize what the campus was when it moved to Foggy Bottom in 1912."

But ANC members have pushed back on the idea of taking extra consideration for the preservation of the Waggaman House. Commissioner Jeri Epstein, the chair of the ANC, said she's "positive" there will be no further negotiations regarding the building's preservation because officials already agreed with city leaders on plans to fill the area with green space in the University's 2007 Foggy Bottom Campus Plan.

"There is no room for negotiation, and the reason I say that is these agreements have been so carefully crafted with so many lawyers and so much input from the neighborhood, the University, the city, the neighborhood lawyers, the University's lawyers and the city's lawyers that it was the best agreement everybody could get



SKYLAR EPSTEIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

While some Foggy Bottom residents argue that the Nashman Center ought to be preserved as a relic of the neighborhood's history, administrators continue to hold that old buildings are not automatically historic.

and that we could all agree to," Epstein said.

She said commissioners agreed that the Waggaman House was an old building, but it had no historical significance worth preserving.

"It's always a balance between 'Do we keep all the old stuff and do nothing new?' or 'Do we agree to preserve what makes sense out of the old stuff and continue to move forward?'" she said.

Kevin Days, the University's director of community relations, said officials intend to continue their plans to demolish the building despite backlash from the FBA. He said the University's 2007 Foggy Bottom Campus Plan identified

several buildings around campus that were worthy of historic preservation, but the Waggaman House was not included in that list because officials didn't consider it "worthy of historic designation."

"I understand that this is an old building, but an old building is not a historic building," Days said at an ANC meeting earlier this month. "And we believe that we've gone through that process, and we have an agreement with the city that supports our decision to move forward."

Days said officials believe that clearing the lot for additional green space serves as the "best use" of the location and wouldn't make the

area any noisier.

Days said officials won't have any other use for the building after the Nashman Center relocates and will schedule the demolition of the building after the offices move into the Hillel building in April or May. City officials haven't yet approved the University's raze permit to destroy the site, he added.

The D.C. Office of Planning's Historic Preservation Office said in a statement provided to The Hatchet that the building never received a historic designation because it's isolated from any other similar row houses while surrounded by newer buildings on a site with planned facility upgrades.

Officials update doctor of public health program to include more courses

YANKUN ZHAO
STAFF WRITER

Milken Institute School of Public Health officials are updating the doctor of public health program for the fall to place a greater focus on leadership and professional development.

The program curriculum was updated to include foundational courses like public health policy analysis and methods courses like principles of clinical trials, and oversight for policy and operations was consolidated under one associate dean rather than four department chairs. Faculty and students involved with the program said they wanted to create a more applied, rigorous curriculum with a greater emphasis on practical experience.

The updates will only apply to future cohorts of students.

Gene Migliaccio, the director of the program and the associate dean for applied public health, said the doctorate is a “leadership degree” that will begin to admit students annually instead of biannually and provide a common curriculum in fields of global health like environmental and occupational health, biostatistics and epidemiology.

“This is an interdisciplinary, public health leadership training program that delivers practice-based curriculum and applied research to equip public health leaders

with skills for the development, implementation and evaluation of public health programs and systems policies,” he said in an email.

Migliaccio said the updated curriculum offers a public health program that is “superior” to the initial version. He said officials wanted to change the program to build a stronger residential, and eventually online, program.

“Students will benefit by enrolling in one of the most progressive and academically rigorous DrPH programs in the nation that provides 14 core courses where the majority of courses are taught by public health practitioners with earned DrPH degrees,” he said. “Also, students will benefit by having a pathway to complete graduation requirements within three years for full-time students and four years for part-time students.”

He said the updates will help the program keep its accreditation by adhering to more of the Council on Education for Public Health’s criteria, which include categories like data and analysis, leadership and education and workforce development.

He said as public health issues become increasingly complex, students with leadership and practical skills will “lead the organizational change in the U.S. and worldwide,”

especially in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has shown the need for more DrPH-trained leaders to focus on the gaps in the public health infrastructure throughout the nation and globally,” he said.

Current students in the program said the changes will help future cohorts elevate the program’s appeal and distinguish it from other doctoral programs.

Ans Irfan, a professorial lecturer at the public health school and a doctoral student in environmental and occupational health, said officials made the changes in response to student feedback calling for a more “rigorous, applied and leadership-focused program.”

“These much-needed and long overdue changes will thrust GW’s DrPH program at the top of DrPH programs in the nation, which is important to me as the future alumni,” he said in an email.

He said faculty and students nationwide often have “narrow” and “myopic” views toward doctor of public health programs because of a general lack of understanding of their differences with other doctoral programs. He said typical curricula are generally expected to focus heavily on research.

He said the updated program will put a greater emphasis on skills like applied dissertation with



DANIELLE TOWERS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Program affiliates said the updated program will emphasize applied skills with hands-on fieldwork and advanced policy analysis.

hands-on fieldwork and advanced policy analysis in relevant fields. He said these changes will provide students with practical public health-related experiences that are crucial for career development.

“These are the critical skills that public health leaders and practitioners need and make the DrPH degree the terminal degree for the field of public health and basically a PhD+,” he said.

Irfan said he wished these changes were in place for his 2018 cohort because the updated curriculum will provide future students with a more “holistic training” rather

than the more narrow approach that standard doctoral programs provide.

“Public health problems are increasingly complex, especially with the existential threat of climate change,” he said. “We need public health leaders and practitioners who not only know the methodology really well but also know a lot of the other leadership and management skills.”

Bobbi Snowden, a doctoral student in global health, said officials in the program have been “invested in the individual student” throughout her time as a student. She said the changes reflect

officials’ efforts to equip students with the tools to become “implementers of change.”

“My hope is that when I do graduate, I’ll be able to utilize the skills I have learned and the knowledge I have gained to be able to be a better public health advisor for whatever leadership position I’m in,” she said.

Snowden said the updated program is “enhanced” and will provide students with the tools to tackle issues of public health as better practitioners, especially given the recent rise in public health awareness due to the pandemic.

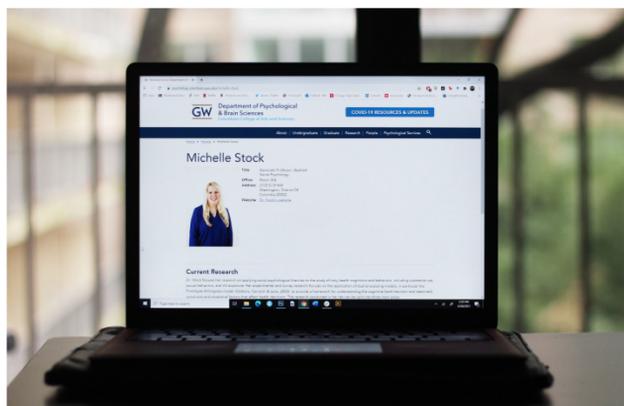


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LILLIAN BAUTISTA | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR
Michelle Stock, the professor behind the study, will use her preliminary results to apply for further grants and expand the scope of her research.

Professor researches pandemic’s effect on Black young adults’ health

ABBY KENNEDY
STAFF WRITER

A psychology professor is investigating the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and intersectional discrimination on mental and physical health disparities among Black young adults.

Michelle Stock, an associate professor of applied social psychology, said she used financial support from GW’s COVID-19 internal research fund to confidentially survey more than 360 Black young adults, ranging in age from 21 to 35 in the DMV, on how the pandemic and racial stressors have affected their mental and emotional health. She said she hopes her research will shed light on how to change the environment that hosts these stressors, especially once her research expands to include an older population and more participants.

“I already knew that there’s a lot of people struggling, and when you get the perspectives and information from other groups outside of your little small group that you see more, as we’ve all been somewhat isolated in the past year, it really opens you up more and expands your thoughts more about the struggles,

the real struggles that other people have and the multitude of struggles people have,” Stock said.

She said she began studying race-related, discrimination-based and social stressors’ effects on the Black and African American community when she attended graduate school at Iowa State University in 2007.

She said her graduate school mentors followed a panel of African American families over many years, inspiring her to research more in the field.

She said she chose to study young adults because that age group is generally more likely to socialize and adhere less to COVID-19 guidelines than other populations. In addition to studying stressors, Stock said she observed protective factors, measures people take “to help them thrive,” like having social support or a close family unit that can help eliminate loneliness.

“We are seeing those types of potential stressors, but also protective factors, like being in a close family unit during the pandemic time can be a protective factor,” she said. “But if you had a year in a household where there’s a

lot of stress, maybe economic stress, occupational stress, other factors, then that actually is less of a protective factor due to the other stressors.”

She said the survey was conducted between November and February and used Craigslist, Instagram and an online research participant finder to recruit respondents.

She added that the grant she received from GW allowed her to gain preliminary data that she is now using to apply for two additional grants. She said she finished gathering her data about a month ago and hopes to expand the research to a larger scale study with more participants.

She said in her next study, she wants to shift her research to focus more on substance abuse and how both pandemic-related and other stressors affect participants’ willingness to seek treatment.

“We will focus a little more on alcohol use-related disorders, since that’s the goal of the grant to focus on alcohol-use disorders, alcohol use, alcohol-use treatment, which is something we didn’t really get at as much with our participants,” she said.

—Tessa Walls and Yutong Jiang contributed reporting.

Anthropology professor digitizes COVID-19 memorial

MICHELLE VASSILEV
STAFF WRITER

A professor partnered with a local artist to transfer a COVID-19 flag memorial from the RFK Stadium to a digital memorial launched earlier this month.

Sarah Wagner, an associate professor of anthropology, said she has been researching the effects of the coronavirus on mourning and commemorative events since May for her project, “Rituals in the Making.” During her research process, Wagner said her visit to artist Suzanne Firstenberg’s memorial “In America How Could This Happen...,” which showcased one white flag for every COVID-19 death displayed in RFK Stadium, sparked the idea for their digital collaboration in November.

“It was just being confronted with this sea of white flags,” Wagner said. “It was a little bit of a windy day the first time I encountered it, and so these flags have a kind of motion. There’s a sound to it, and it’s just incredibly powerful. That was my first impression, coupled with having a conversation with Suzanne.”

Wagner said during the conversation, Firstenberg shared her concern that the installation was set to close after Thanksgiving because there was insufficient space to accommodate the then-surpassing 250,000 flags. Daily COVID-19 deaths reached nearly 3,000 in the weeks following Thanksgiving, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

“She was really struck by the fact that the installation was coming to a close, and it felt incomplete,” Wagner said. “That was when we were entering into the next major wave that would car-

ry all the way through February, and so she was aware that it was in the middle of a pitched battle against COVID and that people were dying.”

COVID-19 deaths have skyrocketed since then, with almost 550,000 deaths in the United States to date, according to the CDC.

Wagner said many of the flags carried personalized messages from family members who had lost their loved ones and wanted to dedicate a flag to them. She said she suggested digitizing these 1,865 personalized flags so family members could continue acknowledging the loss of their loved ones.

Firstenberg, the artist who created the initial physical installation, said she wanted the physical memorial to capture the virus on both “the individual level and the national level.” She said the personalization on the 1,865 flags allowed visitors to reflect on the pandemic’s individual toll.

Firstenberg said after installing the physical memorial, news about her work spread through Facebook grief groups, in which people from around the country would share the names of loved ones they had lost. She said members of these Facebook groups who lived locally would collect these names, visit the installation and write names or other words on the flags to memorialize those lost.

Firstenberg said she wanted her installation to compare the country’s response to the pandemic to the response of other countries. She said she planted 25 white flags under the installation’s sign in October, showcasing the number of deaths New Zealand had faced at the time.

Firstenberg said the reason

she decided to plant one flag per person rather than have one flag represent many people was to make the death toll more visible.

“I wanted art that would draw attention to the fact these were real loved ones in real families,” Firstenberg said. “They weren’t numbers. These were real truly very, very difficult losses.”

Firstenberg said Maggie Peterson, an academic administrator in the anthropology department, was largely responsible for transitioning this physical installation to the online environment.

Peterson said Wagner asked her to join the project, knowing that her expertise in archaeology would be helpful in finding a way to collect, mark and preserve each physical flag.

Peterson said she spent the entire day on Nov. 28 – along with Wagner, Firstenberg and Adam Fracchia, an assistant research professor of anthropology at the University of Maryland – walking through the memorial. She said they used tape measures, graph paper, pencils and red flag tape to mark each personalized flag with a tape and to assign it a number.

She said 17 volunteers helped them as they plotted each flag’s number on a piece of graph paper, which was scaled to represent the size of the field.

Peterson said she transferred the scanned versions of the physical maps onto software called ArcGIS, which compiles geographic data to create a digital map. She said she altered the resulting website over time, increasing the accessibility of the “search for your flag” and “add a flag” sections and making the background information on the mourning rituals and digitization process more secondary.



FILE PHOTO BY GABRIELLE RHOADS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Anthropology professor Sarah Wagner was inspired to undertake the project after she realized the original memorial was scheduled to close amid a surge of new COVID-19 deaths nationwide.

GW Alternative Breaks engages in virtual spring service events

LAUREN SFORZA
STAFF WRITER

A student-run service program revamped participants' spring breaks this year through virtual service opportunities based on social and environmental issues.

The Nashman Center for Civic Engagement and Public Service's Spring Alternative Breaks program, which is entirely student-led, hosted four virtual events focused on educating participants about issues like immigration, systematic racism and indigenous rights. Amy Cohen, the executive director of the Nashman Center, said Alternative Breaks partnered with leaders of various community advocacy organizations, like the American Immigration Council, to educate participants about each organization's focus.

"The student-led program featured four virtual service experiences that gave students the opportunity to become active citizen leaders while building lasting connections with people from various communities through a mutually beneficial experience," Cohen said in an email.

Alternative Breaks traditionally sponsors service-based trips during winter and spring breaks both nationally and internationally. In between trips, students attend discussions and workshops year-round related to the community they serve during the weeklong service project.

Cohen said participants did not need to pay to attend any of the events because they were not in person, unlike previous years. She said a total of 32 students partici-

pated in the virtual events, which included a speaker series centered on combating systemic inequality and oppression.

Cohen said GW's Alternative Breaks partnered with other Alternative Break chapters at American, Howard and George Mason universities and the University of Maryland this year to form a DMV Alternative Breaks Coalition. She said leaders of each chapter discussed the "best practices" to make each program a "success" but hosted their events separately.

"This year, education has been more important than ever," Cohen said. "Because we were unable to serve in person, learning about, and with, community organizations has been crucial for students to fully understand their role in the D.C., national and global community."

Senior Will Hoadley-Brill, the executive chair of Alternative Breaks, said the program focused on four service issues – community empowerment and systemic inequality, indigenous rights and education, disaster relief and sustainability and immigration and border relations. He said the topics, chosen by each student leader, maintain long-term "mutually beneficial partnerships" with various local community members.

He said his role as chair was to streamline communication both with the Nashman Center's staff director and Alternative Breaks chapters inside and outside the DMV to make the program run smoothly. Participants attended educational meetings every other week last fall and weekly meetings

this spring to discuss their specific issue focus and how their partners engage in the community, he said.

Hoadley-Brill said leaders included asynchronous elements to combat "Zoom fatigue and scheduling challenges" as many students attend events from different time zones. He said the switch to online events helped facilitate collaboration between community organizations and student leaders to further the program's mission to "inspire active citizenship."

"The virtual format allowed us to increase accessibility to a larger population of students as we were able to make our program free of charge for leaders and participants," Hoadley-Brill said in an email. "Additionally, the online format has allowed us to cultivate spaces for deep learning and reflection with smaller group sizes."

Senior Caroline Frenzel, a trip leader for Alternative Breaks, said her service project focused on educating students about immigration and border relations in collaboration with advocacy groups like the American Immigration Council. She said holding events online allowed her to collaborate with nonprofit organizations to host the Zoom events about Latin American border communities and advocating for immigrant communities.

Frenzel said participants attended virtual "cultural exchange" classes on bracelet-making and medicinal plants with the Tandana Foundation, which is based in Ecuador, to learn about the culture of Latin America. She said participants also hosted a fundraiser on the

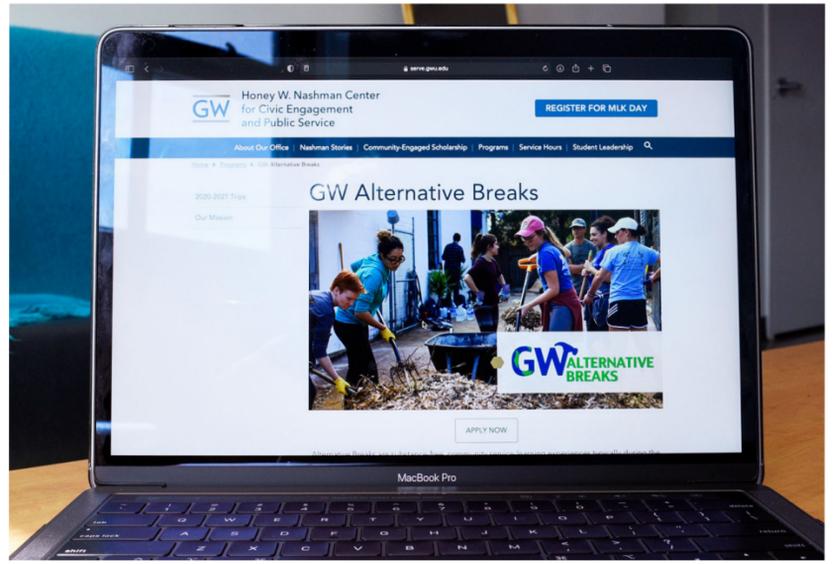


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DANIELLE TOWERS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Unlike in previous years, the Alternative Breaks programs were free of cost to students, owing to their virtual nature.

Alternative Breaks Instagram and Facebook pages, which raised about \$340 for the foundation's secondary education scholarships.

"For immigration and border relations, there aren't a lot of online service opportunities, especially because not all of our participants speak Spanish," Frenzel said. "Most of the service opportunities online directly related to immigration and immigrant communities were translation jobs. So instead we opted to do more cultural exchange and fundraising for certain initiatives in Latin America and Central America."

Frenzel said she held approximately 20 immigration and border relation virtual events over the spring semester, with about five to 10 student participants at each.

"Especially this year, we were hoping to get freshman students who were new to the GW community entering into it in a virtual strange setting," Frenzel said. "We wanted to be able to reach those people even though they have never been on campus and been able to interact with Alternative Breaks in person."

Senior Alyson Campbell, a trip leader for Alternative Breaks, said she led "interactive" virtual workshops in collaboration with nonprofit groups Plentitude and Green Communities to teach participants about sustainability. She said Plentitude, based in Puerto Rico, shipped fruits and vegetables to participants to participate in a virtual cooking class with the organization's leaders.

Campbell added that

Green Communities, based in Costa Rica, sent coffee from their farms for participants to taste-test and learn about sustainability in farming. She said keeping the programming "immersive" helped overcome some of the challenges of being online by keeping participants engaged in learning.

"I wanted [participants] to learn about sustainability, especially in these contexts that aren't Washington, D.C.," Campbell said. "Costa Rica and Puerto Rico have very different views on sustainability, but they also have very similar views on sustainability. We're seeing how what they're doing in Puerto Rico and what they're doing in Costa Rica can be taken back here for us to do on our own."

Biden's loan forgiveness plan may not help students with large loans

ZACHARY BLACKBURN
STAFF WRITER

Higher education experts said President Joe Biden's plans to forgive up to \$10,000 of debt may not benefit GW graduates who have taken out larger loans.

In an email to The Hatchet, an Education Department spokesperson said Biden and Education Secretary Miguel Cardona are "taking a close look" at all options regarding student loans. But the spokesperson said any action taken on student loan cancellation must be in the form of congressional action and not through executive action by Biden or Cardona.

"It is crucial any discussion of student loan cancellation must come with congressional action to address affordability going forward," the spokesperson said in the email.

Cardona, who worked as an elementary school teacher before becoming Connecticut's education commissioner, has spent the beginning of his tenure primarily focused on re-opening K-12 schools after COVID-19 shutdowns. Cardona, who was confirmed by the U.S. Senate earlier this month, will also work on Biden's plan for higher education policy, which includes a proposal to offer tuition-free public university education for families making less than \$125,000

and free community college.

"For far too long, we've let college become inaccessible to too many Americans for reasons that have nothing to do with their aptitude or their aspirations and everything to do with cost burdens and, unfortunately, an internalized culture of low expectations," Cardona said in a speech following his nomination in December.

The Senate confirmed Cardona as secretary of education in a bipartisan vote of 64 to 33.

During the presidential transition period, Biden called on Congress to cancel \$10,000 in student debt per borrower. Prominent Democrats have called on Biden to cancel student debt by executive order, but experts have warned that Biden could run into legal challenges if he attempts to achieve the goal without Congress.

Former Education Secretary Betsy DeVos was a staunch opponent of student loan forgiveness, denying nearly 130,000 claims for forgiveness in her last year in the position alone.

Stephanie Cellini, a professor of public policy and public administration at the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Administration, said Biden's plan to cancel \$10,000 of student debt would go a "long way" in helping student borrow-

ers who could potentially fail to pay their loans.

"The \$10,000 plan seems to focus in on the students who are most likely to default on their loans," she said. "It's kind of counterintuitive, but most of the students who end up defaulting on their loans are students who borrow \$10,000 and less."

She said that relief needs to be targeted to ensure financially vulnerable borrowers, like students who drop out of school, don't default on their loans.

"I worry a lot about low-balance borrowers who may default, and these tend to be students who drop out of college after taking just a few classes or they tend to be students at for-profit institutions," Cellini said.

She said students from higher-level universities like GW may not necessarily be the targets of debt relief, as they are more likely to be able to pay off their loans.

"Students who get a B.A. from places like GW and other high-quality colleges see their earnings go up and, for the most part, they are able to repay their debt," she said. "If we're thinking about four-year college and more expensive colleges, like GW, college still pays off."

Biden has also considered working to expand a specific category of loan payment plans called "in-



COURTESY OF SHUTTERSTOCK
Experts said Biden's debt forgiveness plan is not necessarily targeted to graduates of institutions like GW, where a college degree comes with a return on investment that allows borrowers to pay their debt off.

come-driven repayment plans." These plans allow borrowers to pay different amounts of their loan back depending on their income level and then have their balance forgiven after a certain amount of time, usually 20 years.

Cellini said income caps, which limit who qualifies for debt forgiveness to those earning under a certain income level, could help target relief to those who need it most.

"Those are a good idea to have some kind of a means-test there so that people who are doctors or lawyers and are going to be able to repay because they have high earnings don't

necessarily need their loans forgiven," she said. "We want to make sure we're targeting the relief to people who most need it."

Constantine Yannelis, an assistant professor of economics at the University of Chicago, said the severity of students' financial situations depends on the borrower. He said medical students, who borrow relatively more money but earn higher incomes to pay off loans later, fare better than graduates of for-profit colleges and community colleges, who he said face "adverse outcomes."

"Many borrowers, but not all, are struggling and would benefit from debt re-

lief," Yannelis said.

He said the majority of the benefits of debt forgiveness would center around high-income individuals, who tend to have a more expensive education than those with lower incomes. Yannelis said an expansion of income-driven repayment plans would be beneficial in targeting relief to those in need.

"Expanding the usage and generosity of income-driven repayment plans would lead to more benefits for low-income borrowers," he said. "Expanding these plans would target relief to those who really need it and who are facing financial difficulties."

Officials express optimism in advance of fall semester

From Page 1

As students remained at home, officials began facing a grim \$180 million annual budget gap, driven by losses in tuition and housing revenue. Officials had quickly cut costs by suspending most capital projects and hirings, freezing merit raises and instituting a pay cut for top administrators, but more needed to be done to balance the budget.

Before classes moved online, University President Thomas LeBlanc had sought to reduce the undergraduate population by 20 percent over five years as part of his 20/30 Plan, but officials placed the plan on hold in April once the pandemic began threatening GW's enrollment levels. Undergraduate enrollment ultimately fell nearly 8 percent this fall,

including a large decline in the international student population.

Officials began laying off employees and announced plans to suspend GW's employee retirement contributions. These moves brought up tensions with many faculty who said the cuts could have been avoided if officials had listened to their concerns before the pandemic about the 20/30 Plan's impact on University finances.

Officials admitted multiple rounds of students off the waitlist and the largest number of transfer students in years to stabilize enrollment levels. But GW is expected to fall short of its pre-pandemic target for tuition revenue by tens of millions of dollars, which is also driven by this year's 10 percent undergraduate tuition discount during remote learning.

Many of the layoffs came

as part of broader restructurings of GW's administrative units.

Criticisms over LeBlanc's hiring of Heather Swain, who later rescinded her offer to lead GW's newly reorganized communications shop, brought tensions between faculty and LeBlanc to a new high. Some sought to censure him or even hold a no-confidence vote.

The Student Association, more than 40 student organizations and hundreds of GW community members called on LeBlanc to resign in a matter of weeks.

After trustees asked faculty to tone down their criticism, the Faculty Senate ultimately voiced "severe disapproval" for Swain's hiring. The wider Faculty Assembly voted to establish a faculty-wide survey of LeBlanc's leadership abilities a few weeks later.

The survey results indicated barely a quarter of full-time faculty agreed that they had confidence in LeBlanc's effectiveness as a leader. Trustees are now conducting a standard review of LeBlanc as they decide whether or not to extend his contract, which expires next year.

As the survey was underway and GW's health care workers began receiving the vaccine at the start of the year, an already extraordinarily tumultuous year took another turn.

Thousands traveled to the Ellipse Jan. 6 for the "Save America Rally," just blocks from campus, in protest of Congress' verification of President Joe Biden's victory in the November general election.

Later in the day, after former President Donald Trump encouraged rally-

goers to march to the U.S. Capitol, the crowd turned into a violent mob. Hundreds stormed the building with Congress and former Vice President Mike Pence still inside. Many rioters had parked in GW garages.

As the demonstrations turned violent, officials activated an emergency operations center and increased the GW Police Department's presence on campus.

As threats continued, campus entered military occupation as eyes turned toward the inauguration.

Officials gave students on campus special identification cards to prove their residency to National Guardsmen and other law enforcement as Foggy Bottom and much of D.C. was transformed into an armed fortress. GW's offices and COVID-19 testing sites shut down out of security con-

cerns.

Except for the National Guardsmen marching through campus, life came to a near standstill.

As security concerns subsided following the inauguration, hundreds of additional students returned to campus in late January, bringing the total to about 1,500. Vaccine production was increasing, some budget restrictions began to loosen and the end of the pandemic finally seemed within reach.

Officials began earnestly planning the University's post-pandemic future, forming groups to examine areas like academics.

Officials have repeatedly said GW will be open in person this fall to the "fullest extent possible," and they plan to house up to 2,000 students this summer and ramp up testing and public health protocols.

WHAT THE UNIVERSITY WON'T TALK ABOUT THIS WEEK

How many on-campus students tested positive for COVID-19 after returning from spring break travel. p.1.

FROM GWHATCHET.COM/OPINIONS

"I can't help but worry that other Asian students or I might face racial violence if we come back to campus."

— HENRY DENG ON 03/25/2021

EDITORIAL BOARD ENDORSEMENTS

Every year, students vote on who will represent them in the Student Association – and every year, the editorial board endorses a candidate for president and vice president. The candidates we endorse generally have a lot of relevant experience – not just in student advocacy but lived experience too. They also tend to have big ideas and specific plans to make those ideas a reality.

Before each year's election, we invite each of the candidates to sit down with the editorial board to discuss their platforms, experiences and thoughts on what issues are most important to the GW community. We use those conversations as a basis for whom we urge students to vote for. We also rely on our collective thoughts as a board, based on our engagement with the policies, issues and current events affecting the GW community throughout the year.

Our endorsements also serve as a point of reference for holding GW's elected leaders accountable. It is an understatement to say that the SA is experiencing a

crisis of confidence right now. Existing misgivings about transparency and efficacy have only been exacerbated by the recent resignation of former SA President Howard Brookins amid sexual misconduct allegations. As the SA works to regain the community's trust, the platforms and commitments made by the candidates we endorsed will serve as an effective scorecard down the line for assessing whether or not progress happens. That is an assessment we look forward to making.

We do not expect, nor do we hope, that anyone will make their decision solely based on our endorsement. What we do aim to do with our endorsement is the same thing we strive for with every piece our editorial board publishes: to present a cogent argument for readers to consider. We believe the candidates we endorsed have demonstrated the most vision and capability when it comes to making GW a better place for all students, and we hope students will take our stance into account as they figure out how they plan to vote.

Hannah Edwards for SA president



Every year, the editorial board endorses a candidate for Student Association president, a candidate for vice president and opinions on how students should vote on referenda. Out of a competitive field of candidates for SA president, the candidate who is best suited for the position combines experience, actionable plans and fresh ideas.

Students should vote for Hannah Edwards as their next SA president.

This year has been a whirlwind year for the SA after sexual misconduct allegations against former SA President Howard Brookins and his subsequent resignation. Moving forward, the SA needs someone who is going to improve its transparency, culture and bylaws. To do this, many candidates focused on large sweeping reforms, the use of executive sessions in senate meetings and bylaw amendments. While Edwards did include many of these things, she also put an emphasis on little

things that would make a big difference. Edwards proposed publishing monthly statements from the SA president detailing the SA's progress in different advocacy efforts. This small action item would create a culture of accountability and transparency that has been lacking within the SA. Plus, it's something that can happen on day one in office.

With two classes of students having never set foot on campus during their undergraduate experience, there is a lot of focus and opportunity for the SA president to work to change GW's culture and spirit. Many candidates had innovative ideas for this, but what set Edwards apart was feasibility and principle. Edwards pointed to thorough research that all of the University's peer institutions but GW had an SA Reopening Task Force of some kind. Proposing this new addition to the SA makes logical sense and would give students more of a seat at the table when officials con-

tinue to weigh reopening plans this fall.

Edwards also has a clear vision for bringing students and members of the D.C. community together. Edwards wants to approach bringing students onto campus as a fresh slate for school spirit and GW's community through partnering with service organizations and GW's athletics department.

While the majority of candidates focused on improving diversity and inclusion on campus through the hiring and admissions process, Edwards took a unique approach. She proposed a partnership with D.C. public schools, along with various specific conferences, dinners and programs that would create community on campus and create inclusive spaces. An example of these specific events would be to partner with interfaith and religious organizations on campus to create one large interfaith dinner and dialog series that would foster community and promote

respect among communities on campus. The events are something that would take planning and time to execute but are much more realistic goals than using the SA's pressure to influence administrative hiring decisions. Edwards has proven in the past that she has the ability to host this conference, having hosted the inaugural conference on LGBTQ health advocacy the previous year.

Aside from her platform points and demonstrated research, Edwards' experience shows commitment and dedication to diversity and GW's community. Edwards has shown her commitment to diversity and inclusion through her term as the former SA vice president for diversity and inclusion, and she serves as president of GW's chapter of the NAACP. While Edwards does not have some of the more SA-focused experience that some of the candidates do, her demonstrated leadership is enough to garner our support for the top position of the SA.

Kate Carpenter for SA vice president

This year's race for Student Association vice president comes down to two qualified, passionate and driven candidates, either of whom would do an outstanding job in the role. Both Kate Carpenter and Sofia Packer bring experience in the SA, detailed platforms with clear visions for GW and poignant personal motivations for seeking the vice presidency.

It is a close call, but students should cast their ballots for Kate Carpenter.

The editorial board felt that Carpenter's platform and experience demonstrated the clearest vision of not only what needs to get done to make GW a better place but how to make it happen. Carpenter came prepared with a list of broad ideas of what is important, specific policies to make those ideas real and clear-cut plans for getting those policies enacted.

Her plans around mental health offer a good example of this

thorough preparedness. She spoke personally and in detail about why students need better access to mental health care. Then, she listed off the specific policies she thought needed to be enacted to make that happen, including items as seemingly trivial as streamlining web pages to as broad as working with the Colonial Health Center to accept more health insurance providers. Carpenter then listed off specific administrators she'd already started having conversations with about actualizing these policies. Almost every one of her platform points followed this kind of model: Here's why it's important, here's why it matters to me, here are all the small changes I will make and here's how I'll make it happen.

The editorial board was also encouraged by Carpenter's involvement with the SA. The vice president role requires striking a balance between working with both sitting senators and

officials. Carpenter demonstrated that she has constructive working relationships with all relevant parties right from the start.

One concern that has underpinned much of this year's student body elections is how to address the disgust felt by many students toward the SA in light of the sexual misconduct allegations that led to the former SA president's resignation. Both Carpenter and Packer made clear in no uncertain terms that the SA has a lot of work to do in gaining students' trust again. Carpenter showed a unique insight into this problem and how to fix it. She's experienced the SA's dysfunction and insularity firsthand – her nomination to fill the then-vacant executive vice presidency was shot down by the SA behind closed doors. To remedy this huge disconnect and trust deficit between the organization and students, she's proposed creating spaces where

students can weigh in on the SA. Unstructured and unrestrained input from the student body is needed to hold the SA accountable, and Carpenter showed she understood that reality and wants to make it better.

A lot of additional negative sentiment around the SA, especially around election time, comes from the perception that some of its members think they're acting out an episode of "The West Wing" or some other political TV show. It is true that sometimes SA campaigns can seem like vanity projects. But in this year's race for vice president, that is firmly not the case. Both Carpenter and Packer have articulated crystal-clear reasons for running and have demonstrated that they care about doing the work, not just holding the position. That is hugely refreshing to see, especially at a moment when GW faces so many challenges. It is to both of their credit, and it benefits all GW students.



How to vote on referenda in this year's SA elections

This year, the Student Association put forward two referenda for students to vote on in the upcoming election.

The first referendum, The Constitutional Reform and Amendment Referendum of 2021, would allow for the SA president to leave their position voluntarily or by an executive cabinet unanimous vote. The second referendum asks students to vote on whether they would be in favor of the creation of an urban studies minor within the Columbian

College of Arts and Sciences.

Students should vote yes on both referenda this upcoming election.

Vote yes on: Constitutional Reform and Amendment Referendum of 2021.

This referendum is a clear reaction to what happened this past year with then-SA President Howard Brookins' sexual misconduct allegations and subsequent impeachment process and resignation. The referendum should be recognized as a faster and more effective

way of removing someone who has caused harm to the community from office.

Voting yes would preserve the autonomy of the SA and student body from administrative red tape and offices like the Office of Student Rights and Responsibilities. The fact that there was no official complaint reported to the University was a large hindrance to removing Brookins from office after the misconduct allegations surfaced. This referendum will place some of the

power in the hands of the SA, allowing the executive cabinet to remove a president from office if they pose a threat to the student body without needing to jump through hoops that prolong the process.

Voting yes on this amendment will also set a precedent for years to come that the SA can learn from events past and make it easier to hold elected officials accountable for their actions. If it is easier to remove someone from office because of inappropriate

and harmful actions, then maybe students will have more of a say in what happens once we elect someone to office.

Vote yes on: Creating an urban studies minor

While the referendum on the urban studies minor may seem random and inconsequential if you don't have an interest in urban studies, it is the byproduct of student support. The editorial board could not come up with a concrete reason why not to endorse this referendum, because

it is supported and backed up by students. That said, the editorial board could not find a reason for why this topic was important enough to be made into a referendum.

It is worth noting that this referendum is an odd way to gauge student support for a minor. The SA is capable of sending out surveys or polls to students when it likes, and it could have done so specifically for CCAS students rather than through a student-wide vote.

Culture

March 29, 2021 • Page 8

THE SCENE

EASTER COOKIE DECORATING BASKETS TO-GO
Apr. 1 • \$43 • The Fairmont
Pick up a DIY cookie kit from The Fairmont in Georgetown. Show up in an Easter outfit or mask for a chance to win a fancy dinner.

LIVE MUSIC AT THE PARK
Apr. 2 • \$15 • Virginia Highlands Park
Celebrate the National Cherry Blossom festival with an outdoor performance by Carter Farm Boys.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

“THE BITTER TRUTH” BY EVANESCENCE

Make your apartment a houseplant haven with these tips

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

Indoor plants can help freshen your cramped apartment air with new life, but it can seem daunting to get your indoor plant collection started.

For college-aged students living through the pandemic, pets are the new kids and plants are the new pets. So hit the plant shop and follow these tips to claim your green thumb and #plantmom badge.

Picking your plants

Choose a low-maintenance or high-maintenance plant, depending on your commitment to it. If you don't have a ton of gardening experience, choose a plant that is simple to care for like a Spider Plant, Calathea or Philodendron. If you are an expert of indoor plants, you probably aren't reading this guide, but plants like Elephant's Ear or a Boston Fern would be right up your alley.

While most indoor plants are a refreshing addition to your scenery, you can also choose your plants for utility. If you're a home chef or just want to have some fresh herbs on hand, try picking up some herbs like basil, mint or chives. If you're over the age of 21 in D.C., you can try growing your own cannabis plant. You can legally grow no more than three mature cannabis plants.



If you're new to the plant game, low-maintenance varieties like the Calathea or Philodendron are your best bet.

DARIA NASTASIA | PHOTOGRAPHER

Lighting is everything

Some plants are well-suited for spaces with little to no natural light. But for most other plants, natural light is the key to success. The first step is finding places in your apartment that have direct sunlight exposure for the longest periods of the day. Any window sill, balcony

or fire escape will do as long as these spots face south. Windows or other openings that face south will receive the sun's most direct rays from late morning through mid-afternoon unlike North- or East-facing windows, which receive weak morning rays.

If you can't seem to find a spot where your plant gets enough natural light, you can

try using sun lamps that mimic the type of natural light plants need to thrive.

Hydrate or Die-drate

Watering plants may seem like a universally simple task, but some plants need less water than others. Most plants require more water in the warmer spring and summer months

even though they may live in an apartment with air conditioning. But before you water your plants the recommended every two to four days, feel the soil. Check for dry, moist or waterlogged soil, and adjust your watering accordingly. Cacti and succulents should be watered modestly and through a topsoil layer of gravel that helps water drain more quickly and prevents waterlogging. They should also be watered from below to avoid moistening the exterior of the plant. You could also mist your plants to create a more humid environment for plants that thrive.

Lots o' pots

Assuming you aren't starting your plants off from seeds, they can live in their black plastic pots they came in until their roots or body outgrow it. But once your plant is ready to leave its first nest, grab a terracotta or clay pot with holes in the bottom for drainage. Terracotta or clay pots are great temperature regulators and have a porous texture that allows for air and moisture flow. This type of pot also allows you to evaluate the calcium levels of your soil easily. If a plant's soil is retaining too much calcium, it will "flush" white-colored residue that seeps through to the exterior of the pot.

You can shop for artistically styled terracotta pots or grab some paint and style your own.



ZACH BRIEN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Jewish youth group NuRoots is holding a Passover House Party from 9 to 11 p.m. on April 1 in "a modern celebration of renewal, tradition and connection."

How to celebrate Passover and Easter during the pandemic

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

You may not have been able to peacefully celebrate Passover or Easter last year as the pandemic initially took its hold on the U.S. So take time this year to make up for what you missed out on.

Check out these virtual events to celebrate Passover or Easter from anywhere.

Passover

April 3 | Shabbat, Yizkor and Passover festival service by Washington Hebrew Congregation

Join Washington Hebrew Congregation to "take the opportunity to remember those who live on in our memories and hearts as we conclude the Passover festival." This virtual service runs from 10:30 to 11:30 a.m. and you can download a prayer book here.

March 29 through April 2 | Uyghur Week of Action

Throughout this week, join the Jewish World Watch to celebrate Passover while raising awareness for the Uyghur people, a Turkish, Muslim ethnic minority group, being "toturated, sterilized and murdered" in China since 2017.

Daily through April 2 | The Passover

Daily by Temple Rodef Shalom

The Temple Rodef Shalom is hosting daily virtual educational sessions for those who want to refresh or learn more about Passover. The sessions are daily from 12 to 12:30 p.m. But guests are encouraged to logon by 11:45 a.m.

April 1 | Passover House Party

Hosted by the Jewish youth group NuRoots, this Passover House Party is "a modern celebration of renewal, tradition, and connection," and will run from 9 to 11 p.m.

Easter

April 1, 2 & 4 | National Cathedral services

The National Cathedral is offering Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Easter Sunday services virtually this year beginning at 7 p.m., noon and 11:15 a.m. respectively. And if you're in D.C., you can partake in a curbside communion from 1 to 3 p.m. on Easter Sunday; register here.

April 4 | The District Church Easter Sunday services

This non-denominational church is offering two in-person services at 1:30 and 3:30 p.m. on the National Mall in David's Tent at 800 Madison Dr. NW near the Smithsonian

National Gallery of Art as well as a virtual service at 10 a.m.

Anytime | Virtual Easter Egg Hunt

This website called Easter fun lets kids search through pictures of two actual yards scattered with Easter Eggs as a quick and low-maintenance alternative to hiding plastic eggs in your own apartment or home. The website also has Easter themed games, and printable activities for kids.

April 5 | Fun with FLOTUS LIVE: Virtual White House Easter

The day after Easter is the customary day for the White House to host its annual Easter Egg Roll. This year, the event is virtual and hosted by a new administration. Register here for the event which goes from 6 to 7 p.m. The virtual event is focused on telling the history of Easter at the White House.

Daily through April 6 | VIRTUAL CINEMA: Easter in Art

If you're an art history buff, you can pay \$12 to stream this exclusive 2021 documentary directed by Phil Grabsy that walks you through the story of Christ through analyzing the art of Da Vinci, Rembrandt, Caravaggio, Michelangelo, Rubens, Titian and Dali.

What students are excited for in a post-coronavirus world

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

For students, the light at the end of this long, dark tunnel of a pandemic couldn't come soon enough. As of March 19, 100 million doses of vaccines have been administered in the United States, and in every state, at least 10 percent of the population is fully vaccinated. As the world grows more eager to get back to normal, we asked students to tell us what they're most excited to do once the pandemic is finally behind us. Here's what they said:

What is the first thing you'll do when life is back to 'normal'?

"See my friends – all of them. Maybe kiss them."
"Go to a restaurant!"
"It's so random, but I really want to go to an amusement park. I miss roller coasters."
"Go to New York."
"I want to have dinner with a large group of my friends at Thunder Burger in Georgetown once I am able to get back on campus."
"Hopefully go to a concert or a live sports game."
"Probably hug the homies."
"Hopefully travel."
"Go to a music concert and travel overseas."
"Probably not the first thing but go drinking out in public."
"Concerts! I used to be so anxious having so many people around me, but for some reason I actually crave it now – the adrenaline, the sweaty bodies."
"Go to a rave (this would have to be

normal, normal though)."
"Find a concert. Doesn't even matter who it is."
"Visit family members who I haven't been able to see in a long time, like my grandma."

What is something small or seemingly mundane that you're looking forward to being able to do again?

"Keep my dorm door open so I can meet new people."
"Seeing friends without worrying who they have seen or where they have been."
"Working out at a gym without a mask. Also, eating inside at a restaurant."
"Going to sit in a coffee shop and being able to see my friends."
"I'm excited to pass by random people in museums, the street, Metro, and see their smiles as we acknowledge each other's presence and then go on to live our separate lives."
"Go to a movie and spend \$20 on a small popcorn plus soda."
"I am looking forward to going on a

"I want to have dinner with a large group of my friends at Thunder Burger in Georgetown once I am able to get back on campus."

walk without wearing a mask."
"Going to the movie theater."
"Talking to people face to face without a mask."
"Buffets or movie theaters!"
"Going to the gym without a mask, getting on public transit without worrying about the pandemic, feeling the sun on my whole face when I'm outside."
"Smiling at people in public (without a mask)."
"Trying on clothes in a dressing room when shopping."



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

Attending concerts, sporting events and movies were among the activities students said they were excited about in the post-pandemic world, whenever that may be.



BASEBALL
vs. Virginia
Mar. 30 | 3 p.m.
The Colonials will seek to build on their three-game winning streak against the Cavaliers.



MEN'S SOCCER
vs. George Mason
Apr. 3 | 1 p.m.
Men's soccer faces off against the Rams for the second straight time this season.

'She taught me how to be a leader': Alumnae reflect on Rizzotti's tenure

EMILY MAISE
SPORTS EDITOR

NURIA DIAZ
STAFF WRITER

WILL MARGERUM
STAFF WRITER

Head coach Jennifer Rizzotti hit the ground running at the beginning of her five-year stint at GW.

During the 2016-17 season, her first team found its way to the WNIT. Her second team claimed the 2018 Atlantic 10 Championship, hanging the program's seventh A-10 banner in the Smith Center rafters and sending the squad to the NCAA tournament.

But her squad's pace began to slow in the three following years that saw the program record a 33-50 three-year overall record. And one week after this season ended with a 9-14 overall record, Rizzotti and her seven-member coaching staff were fired.

Rizzotti could not be directly reached for comment, but Mike Anthony of The Middletown Press reported about her departure. She told Middletown Press last week that she had a year left on her contract and that her firing came down to the "wins and losses," which she called surprising given the "really positive" feedback she had received.

Former student-athletes recall playing under Rizzotti

Six former players said Rizzotti and her coaching

staff pushed them to perform their best on the court. But they didn't remember the wins and losses as much as they cherished the time spent off the court with Rizzotti and her staff, the former players said.

2019-graduate guard Mei-Lyn Bautista said Rizzotti's firing surprised and hurt her.

She added that Rizzotti and her staff focused on ensuring everyone was working as hard as they could, while developing their leadership skills and understanding that everyone brought different skill sets to the team.

Alexandra Maund, a forward who used her final year of eligibility at GW, said Rizzotti had treated her as "her own kid" on and off the court. During the first months of the pandemic when she struggled to find a place to store her personal belongings, she said Rizzotti cleared out her basement and of Maund said she "absolutely loved" being coached by Rizzotti and described her as one of the "most uplifting" coaches she ever had.

"I just felt like I was being seen in a way that I hadn't been use to for a couple of years," Maund said. "And she, in her trusting in me and seeing something in me, I started to believe that I could play for myself. She really helped me with my competence as a basketball player."

Hannah Schaible, a 2017 graduate and guard who played for two coaches at

GW, said because Rizzotti had "gone through the gauntlet" as a college player, professional player and coach, she could better connect to her players. She added that as someone who lived through a coaching change, players might feel uneasy about playing for a new regime.

"Long term, I'm sure GW will put out a great interview process and find another great match," she said. "Short term, as a player who had to go through a coaching change, it can be a little strenuous, and especially if a new coach comes in and has a different kind of mentality."

Student-athletes leave following firing

Rizzotti's departure prompted an exodus of student-athletes from the roster and into the transfer portal. Redshirt junior forward Neila Luma, freshman center Ali Brigham and freshman forward Caranda Perea all announced their intentions to leave the University in the wake of the coaching change.

All three did not respond to requests for comment. Athletic department spokesperson declined to facilitate interviews with student-athletes and Athletic Director Tanya Vogel, saying the department would not comment on "personnel matters."

The Colonials will lose key sources of production on the court with Luma and Brigham's departures. Luma



COURTESY PHOTO BY GW ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

For many of the student-athletes Rizzotti coached, her willingness to treat her athletes as her own family endeared her to them.

has been a mainstay in the lineup for Rizzotti since her freshman year and averaged 7.7 points per game this season.

Luma and graduate student guard Sydney Zambrotta were the only two players that did not sign a statement from the squad expressing its surprise and displeasure at Rizzotti and her staff's firings.

Brigham quickly found herself as the centerpiece of GW's offense during her first year in Foggy Bottom. Racking up 11.9 points per game, Brigham constituted 21.2 percent of the team's entire scoring output. Perea missed a chunk

of the season due to injury but became a part of the rotation over the course of the campaign, averaging 4.2 points and 2.3 rebounds per game.

GW also elected not to bring back any of the coaches serving under Rizzotti, including assistant coaches Kevin DeMille, Bill Sullivan and Ganiyat Adeduntan. Graduate assistants Anna Savino, Sarah Overcash and Ariel Stephenson and director of operations Christina Richardson are also no longer with the team.

DeMille, Overcash, Stephenson and Richardson did not return requests for comment. Adeduntan

declined to comment.

Savino started her career with the team as a manager during her freshman year before joining the roster as a walk-on during her senior year and starting 27 games. After finishing her undergraduate degree, Savino joined the coaching staff for the 2019-20 season.

Savino said she found out about the coaching changes directly from Rizzotti and that she was "not privy" to any information that suggested the staff would be let go. Savino was planning to leave the program upon graduation and did not intend to further her coaching career.

Christian looks back on season during a pandemic

EMILY MAISE
SPORTS EDITOR

In a season plagued by a revolving door of personnel changes, canceled games and COVID-19 pauses, head coach Jamion Christian can now turn his attention to rebuilding a depleted roster.

Seven players left the program, 10 games were postponed and eventually canceled and two COVID-19 pauses lasted a combined 37 days. Christian said his team fought through the adversity of a season during the pandemic, while he and his coaching staff worked around all of the challenges thrown at them.

The Colonials normally returned to Foggy Bottom after a brief summer break in June or July to begin gelling as a team and practicing, but Christian said his squad wasn't on campus and the hardwood together until early September.

With seven new additions to the squad, Christian said he had to begin game preparations for a Nov. 25 season start without allowing his team time to mesh personalities and develop habits together.

GW began the season on a low note, dropping six of its first seven games. The team's zone defense allowed opponents to put up 77.1 points a game during that time frame. Christian said the zone was not executed "very well."

The squad rolled into

A-10 play down three players, after senior guard Maceo Jack, senior forward Ace Stallings and sophomore guard Jameer Nelson Jr. left the team in December. GW was not deterred by the thinning roster, kicking off A-10 play with a 2-1 record after knocking off Fordham and Duquesne.

But the team missed two consecutive games due to the insurrection at the U.S. Capitol and a positive COVID-19 test among a Tier 1 staff member. Once the team returned to practice, sophomore forward Jamison Battle, the team's second-leading scorer, suffered a concussion.

The NCAA then granted all transfers the ability to play immediately. Maryland transfer junior forward Ricky Lindo Jr. initially planned to sit out the full 2020-21 season to work on his game, a decision Christian said he and his staff supported. But with the added year of eligibility, Christian said he gave Lindo Jr. time to get comfortable enough to play.

When the team returned to play against VCU Jan. 13, Lindo Jr. made waves in his first game as a Colonial with 13 points, 12 rebounds and five steals.

He saw time in the team's next matchup against Dayton Jan. 17 before the squad embarked on a 35-day COVID-19 pause that saw "just under half" of the team contract COVID-19,

Christian said.

Christian announced Jan. 19 that he tested positive for COVID-19, and he added that some symptoms still linger today. He said despite his battles with the virus, his players were his first concern.

He said the squad followed the team doctor's instructions, but different players had different symptoms, which increased the challenge of taking care of the team. Christian added that he and his staff focused on making the players feel "loved and cared for" as the pause wore on.

As players began to clear the 10-day COVID-19 quarantine and seven-day return to play protocol, a semblance of practice could return, but Christian said his team was never the same after its pause.

The Colonials ended their season in the second round of the A-10 tournament. Within two weeks, Battle, Paar, Seymour and freshman guard Lincoln Ball entered the transfer portal. Christian said Moyer signed with an agent with the intent to play professional basketball and graduate student guard Brandon Leftwich is still undecided if he will use his extra year of eligibility, leaving just assured returners.

Now, Christian said he is turning his attention to developing a "bigger, faster, more aggressive team" that plays "as a brotherhood."



FILE PHOTO BY SABRINA GODIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Despite losing eight seniors, the lacrosse team is off to its best start in three seasons.

Lacrosse jumps out to best start in three years after shortened slate

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After dropping all seven games in a 2020 season cut short by the COVID-19 pandemic, lacrosse is off to its best start in three seasons.

The Colonials (4-4, 1-2 A-10) have won half of their eight games this season. Head coach Jennifer Ulehla said the team is focused on learning her offensive and defensive systems and growing to match her heightened expectations.

"This team is just starting to understand the system that we're trying to instill," Ulehla said. "We're building a different culture, and they're learning different ways to do things, and the expectations are higher. And the discipline that we expect is something they're not used to, so they're learning that they have a lot more in them."

The squad is scoring more often this season, netting 91 goals through eight games – 17 more than the team's average through eight games the last four years the team played eight games.

After losing eight seniors – including leading scorer midfielder Katie Quinn – Ulehla said the squad is playing a more team-oriented game, which allows for more players to fire shots between the pipes. GW has shared the wealth this season, with 15 different players recording at least one goal. Through

seven games last season, just 11 players found the back of the net.

Senior attacker Ioanna Mantzouratos is leading the charge on offense, shooting .500 percent with a team-leading 18 points. She was named A-10 Player of the Week March 16 after matching her career-high with five goals and throwing a career-high nine shots on frame against American.

Three other players have reached double-digit scoring this season, but the Colonials are not scoring more goals than they're allowing. On the season, GW has scored 91 but allowed 120 goals against – the most goals allowed of any team in the conference.

Ulehla said the squad defends as a "shifting team unit," and players can be interchanged for each other.

But she added that sophomore midfielder Kianah Watson, who has started all eight games, stands out among her teammates as an "excellent" defender who is usually tasked with guarding the competition's best attacker.

Junior goalkeeper Megan Patrick has taken on the majority of the responsibility between the pipes, starting all eight games. She has nabbed 77 saves on 216 shots faced for a .445 save percentage.

"Our goalkeeper has really stepped up into a whole different level," Ulehla said. "She's making great saves when she really

needs to."

She added that the team's draw control has also improved, which can help the team win closer games. The squad has racked up 111 draw controls – 17 more than the team's 94 draw controls through eight games two seasons ago.

She said the team has been able to improve with the help of new assistant coaches Hayley Sabol and LeighAnn Stauffer, who were former A-10 players at Saint Joseph's and St. Bonaventure, respectively. The duo joined the program in January, about two months before the season kicked off.

She added that the team can still improve on reading the field to create space and making better on-field decisions, like reducing offside calls and staying disciplined. She added that most of the team's remaining shortcomings are "fixable" and will come with more time and experience on the field.

The Colonials have five remaining matchups, all of which are against A-10 competition. GW has three conference games under its belt – a win over George Mason, a closely contested loss to Richmond and a decisive 18-7 beating from Davidson. GW will see all three teams one more time this season and VCU twice to round out its regular season.

Lacrosse will hit the road to take on VCU Saturday at 1 p.m.



COURTESY OF GW ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

The men's basketball team dropped six of its first seven games in a rough start to a rocky season.