

Opinions

The editorial board presses for a safe, in-person Commencement for the Class of 2021.
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Discover our top shops to get piercings and tattoos in preparation for hot girl summer.
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What's inside



FILE PHOTO BY GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

Public health experts said requiring vaccinations is necessary to achieving herd immunity once students return to campus.

Experts say COVID-19 vaccine requirement will maximize immunity on campus

SEJAL GOVINDARAO
STAFF WRITER

Public health experts said they support GW's decision to require COVID-19 vaccinations for those returning to campus this fall, stating the requirement could help prevent any future outbreaks on campus.

Officials said they will grant "limited exceptions" to the requirement for individuals with medical issues or religious reasons preventing them from receiving the vaccine, but everyone without an exemption must be fully vaccinated two weeks prior to returning to campus this fall. Public health experts said the vaccine requirement can strengthen public health on campus, but students said they could face logistical issues receiving doses before the fall semester.

Officials said the requirement places the University community one step closer to a full return to campus in the fall.

"We remain optimistic about the coming months,

and we are excited to take more positive steps that prioritize health and safety as well as focus on flexibility and an engaging on-campus experience this fall," the email announcing the vaccine requirement states.

More than 30 universities across the country have mandated the vaccine, including three of GW's peer schools – Northeastern, Georgetown and Syracuse universities.

Public health experts said the vaccine requirement is crucial for limiting COVID-19 outbreaks on campus and establishing herd immunity once students return to campus in the fall.

John Swartzberg, a clinical professor emeritus at the University of California Berkeley's School of Public Health, said a vaccine mandate not only improves GW's herd immunity, but it will also enhance the health of the University's surrounding community.

"Study after study have shown that when college campuses have an

explosion of outbreaks, then what follows is an explosion in the community those colleges are in," Swartzberg said. "So the virus doesn't respect the fact that it's just college students who stay within the campus."

He said the mandate will lighten the financial burden on universities because schools won't need to regularly test students for the coronavirus after everyone receives the vaccine.

"Most of the schools will be doing testing on a regular basis, while the students won't have to do that if they're vaccinated to save a lot of money," Swartzberg said. "More importantly, it'll save a lot of people getting infected, sick, some hospitalized and tragically there will be occasional deaths."

Andrea Berry, an assistant professor of medicine at the University of Maryland, said college students should note the large quantity of COVID-19 outbreaks that have happened on campuses since the pan-

demic began. She said a vaccine mandate would establish campus herd immunity with between 90 to 100 percent coverage.

Berry said universities should develop messaging and campaigns targeted toward students with concerns about vaccination to increase trust in the vaccine and make students more comfortable with the requirement.

"Town halls and focus groups are really important to find out what the concerns are as well as developing a kind of marketing and messaging," she said. "Having webinars inviting vaccine experts to speak to people about reasons for vaccine hesitancy or the science behind vaccines is also very crucial."

Some students who travel internationally said the requirement could limit them to vaccines only approved in the United States, which they might struggle to receive in time before returning to campus.

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LeBlanc unlikely to restore community trust, faculty say

ISHA TRIVEDI
NEWS EDITOR

YANKUN ZHAO
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Faculty said University President Thomas LeBlanc may not be able to salvage relationships with the GW community on the heels of a year marked by ongoing tensions between the two and calls for LeBlanc to resign.

Tensions between LeBlanc and faculty members have been escalating since last February but have heightened this past year as various student groups, faculty and alumni launched petitions and statements criticizing his performance and calling for his resignation. Now, as the Board of Trustees works to conduct its standard review of LeBlanc – which they last conducted in spring 2019 – half a dozen faculty members said relations with the administration may have "passed the point of no return," as they continue to await the future of LeBlanc's leadership.

Professors' frustrations with LeBlanc culminated in a Faculty Assembly meeting last fall when faculty overwhelmingly voted to survey University leadership. The survey results, which officials released this spring, revealed that a majority of the full-time faculty surveyed has lost confidence in the president, and experts in higher education administration said the results could jeopardize LeBlanc's future at GW.

Leo Chalupa, a professor of pharmacology and physiology and GW's former vice president of research, said the "breach in trust" between LeBlanc and the faculty will be a "tremendous challenge" to fix.

"It's certainly not impossible that things could be fixed, but it's pretty unlikely because the extent of the negativity towards him is so widespread," he said.

Chalupa, who served as an administrator for nearly 10 years, said LeBlanc may

not be able to "point to a number of clear accomplishments" that former University President Steven Knapp could, like improvements to GW's research rankings and the development of the Science and Engineering Hall.

"So in my judgment, a tremendous amount was accomplished during Steven Knapp's tenure," he said. "Now we're four years into President LeBlanc's, and I'll let you decide what are the accomplishments."

He said for LeBlanc to improve relationships with faculty, he would have to do "something really big," like investing \$100 million into the research enterprise across GW. Professors have recently expressed concern for faculty research funds, saying the proposed budget for the upcoming fiscal year does not allocate enough money for research in a time when the pandemic has driven up the need for investment.

"Small little things are unlikely to shift faculty opinion, in my opinion," he said. "Something bold, something big, I mean a great gift would be fantastic, opening up some kind of new program, something that would make GW prominent that he could be associated with."

Elizabeth Anker – an associate professor of American studies and political science and a member of the Faculty Association, a group of full-time faculty – said it's unlikely LeBlanc will be able to improve relationships with the GW community since he has remained "remarkably inflexible" adjusting to the position of University president for "more than a few years."

"In all of his time here, I have never once heard him ask a genuine question of any faculty, student or staff member," Anker said in an email. "He lacks curiosity about who we are and thus lacks understanding of what makes GW special. Unfortunately, I do not expect anything different at this point."

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LeBlanc relied on conservative messaging strategy throughout pandemic

ZACH SCHONFELD
SENIOR STAFF WRITER

As University President Thomas LeBlanc found himself increasingly at odds with faculty while the COVID-19 pandemic progressed, he locked in on a defined messaging strategy – communicate regularly and don't overpromise.

At each defining moment over the past year, like summer demonstrations fueled by the murder of George Floyd, an insurrection at the U.S. Capitol and extensions of remote learning, the University community's inboxes have been filled with messages from a regular sender – "President Thomas J. LeBlanc." As the Board of Trustees works to conduct its standard review of LeBlanc, the University president also faces growing criticism from faculty who have been calling for him to resign since last February.

Among his dozens of public statements, 13 subject lines indicated an "update" – often related to operational planning for Commencement or future semesters – while more than 10 offered support for marginalized groups, including responses to a rise in anti-Asian hate crimes or condemnations of recent police killings of Black Americans.

"I've talked to folks in Florida, I've talked to folks in California or New York City – I think different parts of the country, different families and frankly, different socioeconomic strata, are experiencing the pandemic differently," LeBlanc said in a January interview. "We know there has been a disproportionate negative impact on people of color in our community, so we're all experiencing it a little bit different. I think regular communication from the University unifies, to some extent, our experience."

LeBlanc has said that as GW prepares to emerge from the pandemic, he intends to continue regular communication to stay engaged with the University community.

"It just reminds me the importance of that even after the pandemic, we need to be continually communicating with our community, even if it's a message that says things are still going okay or things are not changing that much, but we are keeping an eye on it and we want you to know that," he said.

Officials' conservative messaging strategy has brought on angst at times from members of the University community looking for certainty and commitments to in-person operations, including plans for Commencement.

Administrators have consistently said they plan to return to campus in the "fullest extent possible" in the fall but have yet to make a definitive decision. While some other D.C.-area universities have used similar messaging, others have come closer to solidifying plans for the fall, like Georgetown University.

"We anticipate the conditions will be in place this fall to bring our full community back and resume more regular life on our campuses," Georgetown University President John DeGioia said late last month. "We will begin our gradual return this summer, leading up to a full return of our community for the fall semester."

Although officials have been wary to commit to a full on-campus return, planning is underway for an in-person semester. GW's course registration system, Banweb, lists classroom locations for courses this fall, and administrators opened up the on-campus housing application earlier this month.

Officials will also require students, faculty and staff to receive COVID-19 vaccinations before returning to campus this fall, a move expected to enable a more normal semester with loosened restrictions. Students said they are concerned about the requirement since some international students may struggle receiving doses in countries with



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

LeBlanc has said he plans to engage the GW community with regular communication as the University looks toward post-pandemic operations.

slower rollouts and a lack of vaccines approved in the United States.

Most remote operations will continue through the spring, including commencement ceremonies that officials said would remain online later this year. District officials announced guidance earlier this month for universities to conduct in-person graduation events, which has led schools like Georgetown, Howard and American universities to host events on their campuses in May.

But at GW, officials have confirmed plans for an entirely virtual commencement ceremony, a mass event typically held on the National Mall but is not currently permitted under the National Parks Services

COVID-19 guidelines. The decision has sparked criticism from students on social media.

As officials navigated the pandemic, GW found itself in the midst of demonstrations and protests with national attention in the District, like Black Lives Matter protests. LeBlanc sent messages to the GW community following other major events like ongoing D.C. statehood advocacy and the 2020 presidential election.

In May, LeBlanc condemned the police killings of George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery and Breonna Taylor.

"I cannot begin to fathom the hurt GW's Black students, faculty and staff may be feeling," he said. "My heart goes out to all who are

suffering and may not feel safe."

LeBlanc said in a statement last week that the conviction of former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin in the murder of Floyd gives him a "sense of hope," but more work remains to be done.

"I recognize that some in our community are experiencing racial battle fatigue, trauma, hurt and harm right now," LeBlanc said. "Please continue to check in on one another and provide space or support to the students, faculty and staff in our community who may need it."

He also condemned the rioters who stormed the U.S. Capitol in January, calling the incident "deeply disturbing."

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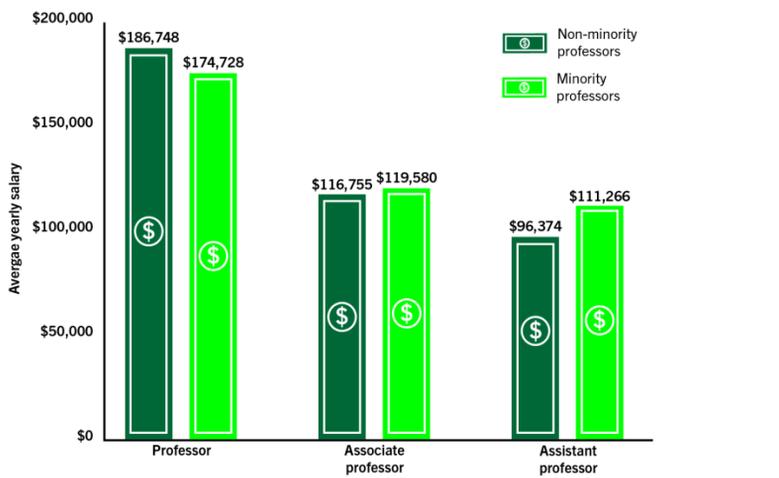
THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

ADJUSTING TO THE NEW PHASE: MENTAL HEALTH & COVID-19 - A DISCUSSION WITH MELISSA DOMAN, CCAS BA '07
 April 27 • 4 p.m. EDT • Free
 Join organizational psychologist and CCAS alumna Melissa Doman for a discussion on adjusting to life after the pandemic.

CELEBRATING 200 YEARS: GEORGE TALKS BUSINESS | RESPONSIBLE AI PANEL
 April 28 • 12:30 p.m. EDT • Free
 The School of Business will host a panel discussion on the development, regulation and ethical responsibilities surrounding AI technologies.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY Officials decide to implement less stringent alcohol policy regulations for graduate students, following almost a year of lobbying from GW Law students, The Hatchet reported.
 April 30, 2012

Average faculty salaries among professors by race/ethnicity



NICHOLAS ANASTACIO | GRAPHICS EDITOR

University data displays salary splits between minority, non-minority faculty

YANKUN ZHAO
 ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Full professors of color from across the University earned a lower salary than their non-minority counterparts this past academic year, while minority faculty salaries for associate and assistant professors were higher, University data shows.

About 84 full professors of color earned an average of \$12,020 less than 285 non-minority professors, but minority associate and assistant professors made more than their non-minority counterparts, according to University salary data. Experts in economics said several factors can affect disparities between minority and non-minority faculty, like supply and demand of the job market and increased hirings that drive wage growth.

The faculty salary data is broken down by minority and non-minority professors across three levels of professorship – full, associate and assistant – and includes an aggregate of total average pay across GW's eight schools.

Chris Bracey, the vice provost for faculty affairs, and Cheryl Beil, the associate provost of academic planning and assessment, said the aggregate data across the three faculty ranks doesn't

reveal "any meaningful conclusions" because the average salary for full professors is far higher than associate or assistant professors.

The data shows that 96 associate minority professors were paid an average salary of \$2,825 more than 259 non-minority faculty, and 74 minority assistant professors earned nearly \$15,000 more than the other 144 faculty.

Full professors in GW Law earned the most on average at \$275,860 while full professors in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences made the least at less than \$150,000, according to the data. Associate and assistant professors in the School of Business were paid the most on average at \$174,870 and \$184,675, respectively, while associate and assistant professors in CCAS earned the least on average at \$103,668 and \$89,129, respectively.

GW currently employs fewer minority professors among all three levels, with minority faculty making up about 22.7 percent of full professors, 27 percent of associate professors and 34 percent of assistant professors, according to the data.

Bracey and Beil said officials excluded some schools' information to preserve anonymity because faculty salaries could be easily calculated and their identities revealed if included in the data. Only three schools – CCAS, GWSB and the School of Engineering and Applied Science – were listed in officials' data for each of the three ranks because they had more than five minority and non-minority faculty members at each level.

Full minority professors in the law school and the public health school earned more on average than their full non-minority counterparts, according to officials' data. Minority associate professors at the Elliott School and assistant professors in CCAS and GWSB earned more on average than their non-minority counterparts.

The data shows that non-minority full professors in GWSB, CCAS and SEAS earned a higher average salary than their minority counterparts. Non-minority associate faculty in GWSB, CCAS, SEAS, GSEHD and the public health school earned more on average, with the same for non-minority assistant professors in GWSB.

Economic experts said factors like competition in the job market and length of tenure at an institution can drive disparities among minority and non-minority faculty salaries, especially at a research institution like GW.

Overhauls to SA bylaws to take effect this week

SAMANTHA SERAFIN
 STAFF WRITER

Overhauls to the Student Association's bylaws are set to take effect next week, increasing the number of committees in the body and reforming election guidelines.

The SA formed the constitutional transition task force in the fall to ensure no discrepancies exist between the SA bylaws and the changes made to the constitution last spring, which updated SA financial allocations and reformed elections. The SA Senate approved the new bylaws last month through the SA Modernization Act, which will go into effect Saturday.

SA Sen. Thomas Falcigno, CPS-G and the chair of the task force, said he and the 13 other constitutional transition task force members started going through the bylaws "line by line" in December to resolve language that was "redundant or inconsistent" with the updated constitution.

Students approved a referendum last spring to update the language in the SA constitution, clarifying the body's separation of powers and

including more inclusive pronouns in the document.

Falcigno said one of the most significant changes was increasing the number of committees in the SA from four to nine because the committees were designed for graduate students. He said two of the previous committees, the student life committee and the academic affairs committee, were divided into separate committees for undergraduate and graduate students to address the "different issues" they face.

Falcigno said the updated financial services and allocations committee, previously called the finance committee, will focus on legislation related to administrative affairs involving the Office of Student Financial Assistance, University investments and the Student Services Hub. He said committee members will continue to be responsible for allocating funds to support student organizations and the SA.

He said the newly created physical facilities and urban affairs committee will deal with campus operations, including food services, which currently falls

under the student life committee's purview. He said the committee will include a permanent sustainability subcommittee, which will allow members to consider legislation specific to how campus operations can be more sustainable.

Falcigno said the updates also permit virtual participation in SA meetings once all students can return to campus because technology allowed for more remote involvement throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. He said the previous policy that required physical attendance for members to be considered present at meetings made attendance difficult for members who lived off campus or were enrolled in distance-learning programs.

Joint Elections Commission Chairperson Chloe Wagner said the SA's previous bylaws, like those pertaining to methods of ranked-choice voting, were "not in line" with the constitution or JEC election guidelines. She said the updates will help ensure that all students understand election procedures, regardless of whether or not they are involved in the SA.



FILE PHOTO BY GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR
 SA Sen. Thomas Falcigno, CPS-G, said the bylaw updates will allow virtual participation in SA meetings even after students return to campus.

Metro officials maintain current service levels with next year's budget

RIO MATSUMOTO
 STAFF WRITER

Metro officials passed their fiscal year 2022 budget last week, maintaining current operation levels for at least another year and averting drastic budget cuts that could have shuttered stations and terminated weekend service.

The Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority approved a \$2.07 billion operating budget for fiscal year 2022 with approximately \$720 million coming from federal stimulus funding, including the American Rescue Plan, according to a release from the agency. The budget will ensure standard operations will continue for at least another year after WMATA first proposed devastating budget cuts, like eliminating nearly half of its bus routes and staggering some train arrivals to every 30 minutes.

"Under the approved \$2.07 billion operating budget, Metro will maintain service at 80 to 85 percent of pre-pandemic levels to support expected ridership growth as the region resumes events, classroom learning and businesses reopen with increased capacity," the release states.

WMATA officials considered the sharp cuts late last year following a sharp downturn in ridership and revenue intake during the pandemic. WMATA officials said federal funding allowed Metro to dodge the cuts and maintain operations.

"The impact of the pandemic on ridership and revenue forced us to consider drastic cuts that would have been necessary absent federal relief funding," Metro Board Chair Paul C. Smedberg said in a release. "Thankfully, the American Rescue Plan Act

has provided a lifeline for Metro to serve customers and support the region's economic recovery."

The budget includes nearly \$40 million to initiate service at the newly-expanded Silver Line near Dulles Airport, which could open as soon as next year after nearly eight years of construction. The budget also shuttles money toward investments like new fare gate installations starting in June, a multi-year and city-wide escalator renovation project and the purchase of new rail cars, according to the release.

Some members of the Metro's board of directors also expressed support for lowering the fare for Metrorail to a \$2 flat fee from current fares that range from \$2 to \$6. The change is not yet confirmed, but advocates for the lower fare said it would attract riders back to the Metro following the ridership freefall that the agency witnessed since last March.

John George, the president of the Foggy Bottom Association, said Metro played a vital role in supporting the transportation of workers and growth of businesses in Foggy Bottom before the pandemic, and consistent funding is "critical" for boosting local business.

"The Metro system also brings shoppers, diners and those seeking other services into our local businesses," George said in an email. "We need those consumers for robust business growth."

George said lowering fares could give residents who have been impacted financially by the pandemic the ability to move around the city easier and may be conducive to draw riders back to the service.

"Lower fares may help draw people back in, but lower or no fares on certain routes is immensely helpful to those impact-



ANTHONY PELTIER | PHOTOGRAPHER
 Some members of the Metro Board of Directors expressed support for implementing a \$2 flat fee for riding the Metrorail.

ed financially and yet depend on public transit," George said.

Trupti Patel, who serves on the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission, said recent changes to Metro's schedule have forced essential workers and hospitality workers to use more expensive methods, like ride shares, to travel home from work. Metro reduced hours early last year, ending train and bus routes at 9 p.m., but they later expanded those hours to 11 p.m. in August.

"If Metro is closing at 11 p.m. when restaurants are scheduled to stay open until midnight, workers can't afford spending

\$50 to go home in a rideshare," Patel said. "The minute that Metro closes its lines, you'll see rideshares automatically double their fares."

Patel said funding to keep the Metro afloat is necessary to Foggy Bottom because service slowdowns could hinder the economic recovery of the community.

"I understand ridership is horrendously down on the Metro but at the same time, we need Metro to be functional, especially considering we have a major hospital in ANC 2A," Patel said. "The people who work in the hospital need a way to get to and from work."

Patel said WMATA should

utilize some of the budget to promote sanitation standards and to lower or eliminate fares for a day as a public relations campaign to incentivize people and tourists to return to public transportation. Patel said tourists are vital to the economic success of the city, and the Metro needs to work to get them back in town.

"If we don't have tourists coming to our town, if we don't have tourists staying in our hotels, if we don't have tourists eating in our restaurants, we have no money coming into his city," Patel said. "Until people feel safe and comfortable, we're going to be in this storm that is COVID-19 a little longer."

SA funding rises for fall semester ahead of potential return to campus

LAUREN SFORZA
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

The Student Association has allocated nearly 60 percent more of its funds to student organizations for next fall than in fiscal year 2021 in hopes of in-person activities returning to campus.

SA Sen. Charles Aborisade, U-At-Large and the chair of the finance committee, said the SA allocated more than \$430,000 to fulfill student organizations' funding requests through October, before the organizations will need to submit a second request to receive funding for the spring semester. Student organization leaders said the SA has met most of their allocation requests like Zoom Pro accounts and technical equipment this past year at a time when virtual events have required less funding.

"Things along those lines are really integral to the essence of what the organization is and what they're supposed to be doing," Aborisade said. "So we've seen a lot of creative ways in which organizations adjusted to the COVID situation in the virtual environment."

The SA allocated \$270,660 to student organizations for fiscal year 2021, marking a 78 percent decrease from the year before when the SA allocated over \$1.2 million to student organizations. The senate passed a unanimous bill approving next semester's budget totaling more than \$430,000 in allocations earlier this month.

Aborisade said the co-sponsorship fund, which allocates funding to organizations' large events, will have \$100,000 in left-over funding that was not allocated to student organizations this academic year. He said these funds will be added to the estimated budget that the SA annually receives from GW, which totals approximately \$1.5 million, to accommodate for student organizations' funding requests in the fall.

Aborisade said 225 student organizations requested funding for the fall semester, a downturn from about 350 student organizations in FY 2020. He said he expects small-scale in-person student organization events to take place in the fall with larger in-person events, like GW Program Board's comedy shows, returning in the spring.

"Requiring members of the community on campus to be vaccinated might play a substantial role in what the possibilities of what could be done for the fall," Aborisade said. "So while we are still operating in the dark a little bit, I do have some hope for getting back to normal as soon as possible."

Officials announced earlier this month that students, faculty and staff must be fully vaccinated before returning to campus in the fall.

Senior George Glass, the SA's vice president of financial affairs, said he approved about five student organizations' funding requests every day this year, a decrease from approximately 20 daily student organizations' requests last year. He said before last year, approximately 200 organizations would each request about \$20,000 for the fiscal year, but only a few organizations, like the GW Program Board, requested that amount this year.

Glass said requiring student organizations to submit two separate requests for the next academic year will help student organizations better plan their budgets because they don't know yet whether events will be held in person in the fall.

"It's going to make them request money closer to the event, so they're going to know a lot more about their event, which I think is going to be better because then they're going to be able to have a better budget plan that's going to help us allocate some actual money," Glass said.



COURTESY OF CHARLES ABORISADE

Aborisade said he expects smaller in-person events to be held this fall while larger events may return next spring.

Organizations will need to submit a second request next fall to secure funding for the rest of the year, according to the bill.

Some student organization leaders said they requested fewer funds this academic year because they did not need to pay for transportation and rental space on campus for their events.

Senior Simon Ignatovsky, the finance chair of the GW Shakespeare Company, said the organization was allocated \$2,950 from the SA in the fall but only used \$150 of it to purchase a Zoom Pro license before GW made it available for students.

Ignatovsky said the group also never used \$800 in funding for virtual show rights, which provides a license to record some Shakespeare plays online, because

they decided to use plays from the public domain. He said in a typical year, the organization usually requests additional funding for props, theater space rentals and regular show rights, which weren't needed in the virtual environment.

"We didn't know what we're going to be doing for fall 2020, so we only had one line item," Ignatovsky said. "We basically didn't expect to be spending SA funds for fall 2020 simply because we didn't know what we were going to do."

Junior Saul Threadgill, the treasurer of GW Mock Trial, said the organization requested funds from the SA to pay its yearly dues to the American Mock Trial Association and mock trial competition fees to the schools hosting

them. Threadgill said the organization typically brings in revenue from hosting mock trial competitions at the Marvin Center with more than 60 other schools but that wasn't possible this year.

He said the SA first rejected a \$200 request to pay off dues for its national chapter, but the finance committee handed over the funding after GW Mock Trial appealed. Threadgill said the organization still received less funding than in a typical year.

"We put a lot of effort into going into that appeal and making sure we just made a really effective case for what we needed the money for," Threadgill said. "So we ended up having to resubmit another budget when they reallocated and got next to no money through the appeal process."



SKYLAR EPSTEIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Assistant professor Peng Wei said GW's portion of the NASA grant will cover expenses for tools like unmanned aerial vehicles and weather sensors.

SEAS professor receives grant from NASA to develop safety system for pilotless planes

ISHANI CHETTRI
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

An engineering professor received a \$2.5 million grant from NASA to develop the first-ever safety system for small self-flying airplanes last month.

Peng Wei, an assistant professor of mechanical and aerospace engineering, received the three-year NASA System-Wide Safety grant to develop a safety system for air mobility vehicles – small pilotless passenger airplanes that people will be able to use as an "air taxi" for transportation in the sky. Wei said he is creating a system that will make urban air mobility, the use of autonomous planes in the sky, safe and effective at alleviating traffic congestion on the ground in cities.

"The first part is basically we will build a system and the second part is the application or the problem, which is how do we ensure all those advanced air mobility airplanes or new airplanes safely fly in an urban environment," he said.

Wei said he will work with a team of 13 researchers from Vanderbilt University, the University of Texas-Austin and MIT's

Lincoln Lab who will study weather airspace safety risks and use statistical methods to judge changes to the system's performance over time. He said they will work with NASA's Aeronautics Research Mission Directorate, which focuses on developing more innovative and safer aviation technology.

Wei said the system he's developing will support planes that are electrically powered, pilotless and much smaller than traditional airplanes, which, like an Uber, can carry passengers from one location in the city to another. He said these characteristics make the planes much more susceptible to dangers, like adverse weather and battery degradation, than traditional airline industry planes.

"Because they are not as heavy and not as powerful as our traditional airplanes, they are very vulnerable to adverse weather, so that's why we want to focus on the first hazard, which is adverse weather," Wei said. "And number two, because these vehicles are powered by electricity and not traditionally gas-powered, that's why we are focused on the electrical compo-

nents' faults or degradation like battery degradation or propeller faults."

Wei said he hopes the safety system can mitigate an operational risk in which the autonomous planes could become "non-cooperative" and invade other planes' corridors – the "highway lanes" in the sky.

Wei said GW's share of the NASA grant will fund expenses for equipment like small unmanned aerial vehicles, weather sensors that could help avoid aircraft collisions, tuition and monthly stipend costs for his team of three doctoral students and a month of his summer salary. He said his team and the other researchers plan to integrate the pieces of the system that they build with the pieces from NASA to complete the first model of this safety system in about two and a half years.

He said the project will help establish GW's name in the aviation safety industry and the innovation of Artificial Intelligence machine learning autonomy technologies. He said being stationed in the District can enhance new technology development because lawmakers in Congress and regulators with agencies like the

Federal Aviation Administration can recognize the value of these new technologies and eventually implement them.

Experts in engineering said this research on the safety of advanced air mobility vehicles in urban environments can contribute to the evolution of safe and innovative future air technologies.

Gautam Biswas, a professor of computer science and computer engineering at Vanderbilt University who serves on the research team, said researchers will use a simulation that can model urban landscapes and a simulation of an unmanned aerial vehicle drone to test the vehicle's safety system's software. He said the team will need to transition their virtual work to the physical parts of the safety system carefully because not all components of the physical system will work the same virtually.

Biswas said creating a safety system for advanced air mobility vehicles can help to alleviate traffic congestion on the ground to make cities less congested. Americans lose an average of 99 hours a year to traffic, according to the U.S. News and World Report.

Some students concerned about vaccine access

From Page 1

Sophomore Ekaterina Shengeliya said she lives in Ukraine and supports the vaccine requirement, but she's worried the slow vaccine rollout in Ukraine will delay her ability to secure an appointment before the fall.

"I'm sure that this applies to a lot of foreign students who come from countries which are not part of the Western world, where vaccinations are going very slowly too," she said. "And the concern for people like me is, 'Okay, I know as a resident I can't get vaccinated in Washington.'"

Shengeliya said she's frustrated the University didn't commit to any concrete plans about whether the fall semester will be online or in person after the vaccine mandate announcement. She said she wants to return to campus but needs to know in advance if the University will allow international students to check into housing early so they can isolate before classes begin.

Otherwise, she said she

would have to spend more money booking a hotel for isolation upon her return to the District before the start of classes.

Officials have said they plan to open campus "to the fullest extent possible" this fall but have yet to make a definitive decision about in-person operations.

Oscar Rios, a sophomore studying political science, said he plans to request an exemption from the vaccine mandate for religious reasons. He said as a Roman Catholic there are "moral guidelines" about vaccination like a document the Vatican published which states that receiving the vaccine should be a voluntary act and not a "moral obligation."

Rios said he wishes the University would expand its vaccine requirement to include vaccines that have been authorized internationally like Sputnik V, a vaccine developed by the Gamaleya National Centre of Epidemiology and Microbiology in Russia, and the CoronaVac vaccine by Sinovac, a Beijing-based pharmaceutical company.

Faculty question LeBlanc's future

From Page 1

She said the results of the faculty survey on University leadership "speak for themselves," indicating a high disapproval rating from faculty across all schools and ranks.

"A vast majority of faculty do not think that LeBlanc understands GW and its core values, do not think he acts in good faith and do not think he comprehends how university governance is supposed to work," she said. "It is upsetting to think how low GW's morale, working conditions and governance have fallen since Steven Knapp was president."

Gregory Squires, a professor of sociology and member of the Faculty Association, said he suspects LeBlanc has "passed the point of no return" when it comes to repairing relationships with GW community members.

"At this point there's just been so many examples of issues that have been problematic for students and faculty and that at this point his contract is up for renewal within the year, so then I think if that were to be extended, that would be

viewed as a real blow to the morale of the faculty," he said.

LeBlanc has also come under fire in the past year for staff layoffs during the COVID-19 pandemic and the hire of Heather Swain, a Michigan State University official who was involved in the Larry Nassar sexual abuse case.

Squires said it's "stunning" how negative the faculty survey results are, indicating a "sweeping condemnation" of LeBlanc's leadership abilities.

"And to ignore that, I think, would be a real misstep on the part of the Board," Squires said. "I don't see how he can be an effective leader."

Kathryn Kleppinger, an associate professor of French studies and international affairs, said she was initially optimistic about LeBlanc because he identified issues at the University similar to what she noticed, like the school's "transactional culture" that limits progress. She said she has since lost all confidence in his ability to restore trust with faculty members because many feel like they have been "exploited" under his tenure with his proposed improvements like his strategic plan.

CCAS officials quiet about anthropology department culture survey findings

ISHANI CHETTRI
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

Nearly one year after an anonymous complaint of harassment and bias was filed in the anthropology department, officials have yet to disclose recent feedback from students, faculty and staff regarding culture in the department.

An unknown number of current and former graduate students in the anthropology department filed a confidential complaint with the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences last July, driving officials to assess department culture through an inquiry and a survey that officials distributed to graduate students, faculty and staff. Faculty and students in the department said CCAS officials haven't shared any updates about the survey's findings, which could help direct ongoing department initiatives on diversity, equity and inclusion once released.

Alexander Dent, the chair of the anthropology department, said the department hasn't received the results of the survey and inquiry that were conducted in the complaint's aftermath. He said CCAS officials conducted the culture survey to assess feel-

ings about diversity, equity and inclusion in the department.

"I'm looking forward to hearing the results of the culture survey and incorporating any findings into the work we are doing," he said in an email. "We have lots of work to do as a department, and GW has lots of work to do as an institution."

He said CCAS Dean Paul Wahlbeck encouraged the department to keep working on already established initiatives – like the department's Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Task Force that formed last fall – to address diversity, equity and inclusion concerns until the survey findings are released. He said other departmental initiatives include syllabi transformation workshops and the development of the new governance model for biological anthropology faculty.

Dent said these recent initiatives led by faculty and students are unrelated to the complaint and have been in the works for some time, but the dean's office has "affirmed" that the initiatives are consistent with the "needs" expressed in the survey. He said learning about the survey's findings will help guide the department's future actions, par-

ticularly those of the task force.

"We have always been clear that the results of the survey will deeply inform the work of the Task Force that is already under way and may result in actions we have not yet anticipated," he said in an email last October.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said CCAS officials have taken addressing concerns from current and former anthropology students "very seriously."

She said CCAS officials worked with the department on initiatives like the task force to provide anthropology students and faculty a more positive and inclusive environment for graduate education, research and mentoring.

"CCAS has supported and continues to encourage these initiatives, as well as the ongoing endeavors of our colleagues in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement to create spaces for BIPOC students to share their concerns about the department as part of our ongoing assessment and future planning," she said.

Nosal declined to provide any information about the complaint or updates on the survey results.



ANTHONY PELTIER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Chair Alexander Dent said the department's recent diversity initiatives are unrelated to the complaint and have been in the works for some time.

Rachel Nelson, a second-year doctoral student who serves on the task force, said it's "frustrating" that CCAS officials have yet to release any further information about the survey results.

Nelson said the task force has created subcommittees to address aspects like undergraduate management and graduate admissions to make the department as diverse, equitable and inclusive as possible, since CCAS officials have not acted.

"I think there are a lot of things that should be and can be changed within our department, and we're working on it and we are taking steps to make sure that we can have a lasting impact," she said.

Kai Blevins, a first-year doctoral anthropology student who also serves on the task force, said task force members hoped to hear

back from CCAS officials by the end of last semester, and the lack of updates has been "disappointing."

"We are just trying to work on things internally as much as we can and also create other collaborations within the University with other student groups and faculty groups to make changes because we're just tired of waiting for the University to do something," they said.

Biology professor studies ecological impact of cicadas

NICHOLAS PASION
STAFF WRITER

A biology professor is studying the ecological impacts of an insect that will emerge underground and flood the DMV for the first time in 17 years this spring.

John Lill, the chair of the biological sciences department and a professor of biology, said the cicada, known as Brood X or "The Great Eastern Brood," that will reemerge in the area is one of the largest periodical broods, a type of cicada that spends most of its life underground and comes up only every 13 or 17 years. He said he will spend the next few years researching how the billions of periodical cicadas – a food source for most predatory animals – will affect local food webs in eastern forests this summer.

"We're focusing on the food webs that involve birds, that feed on caterpillars, that feed on oak trees in these Eastern forests," he said.

Young periodical cicadas bury themselves in the ground around trees, where they feed on nutrients from tree roots as they mature into adulthood, according to National Geographic. Adult cicadas live four to six weeks above ground after digging themselves out as the ground warms to about 65 degrees.

The research team – composed of Lill, a doctoral student in the biology department, a Georgetown University professor of environmental biology and several undergraduate research assistants – will create fake caterpillars with clay to resemble the ones that birds regularly eat. They will then place the clay caterpillars in a conservation farm and research center in Maryland, Lill said.

He said researchers

will analyze the number of markings on the clay caterpillars to determine birds' diets. He said fewer beak marks would suggest that birds changed their food source from caterpillars to cicadas while a greater number of beak marks would suggest that the birds aren't switching their diets to cicadas.

Lill said predators that eat insects will experience a growth in numbers following the cicada emergence because cicadas serve as an additional food source. He added that rats usually experience an "explosion" in their population after cicadas emerge because of the extra food that they will receive from the cicadas.

"There's tons of other animals that will also be eating the cicadas," he said. "Pretty much anything that can eat them will eat them when they come out, including things like foxes, possums, squirrels, chipmunks, even fish will eat them when they fall into the streams and ponds."

Zoe Getman-Pickering, a doctoral student in biology working on the study, said the cicadas will affect each level of the food web differently. She said the team expects the caterpillar population to increase as birds turn to cicadas as a food source, leaving a higher number of caterpillars to eat leaves and cause tree damage.

She said the researchers started examining local eastern forest ecosystems in Maryland last spring to observe the environments without the cicadas. She said the team members will continue their work in the coming years to better understand Brood X's impact on the ecosystem.

She said the team will compare the data they collected previously to their findings from this year and future years. She said the researchers hope to

publish their findings in three to six papers by 2023 or 2024.

The research team also developed an educational cicada website for teachers and students, featuring free materials like cicada photos, a digital workbook and frequently asked questions and videos.

"We're studying all the ways that that huge pulse of nutrients and food into the ecosystem changes the behavior of different animals in forest food webs," Getman-Pickering said.

Biology experts said researchers mapping where the Brood X cicadas emerge this spring will allow them to learn more about the insects' impact on ecosystems.

Gene Kritsky, the dean of behavioral and natural sciences and a professor of biology at Mount St. Joseph University in Ohio, said he developed an app to crowdsource and map the various Brood X awakenings occurring this year.

He said the app's users will be able to take photos or videos of cicadas they see and upload them with a quick description. Kritsky said a group of researchers at his university then maps the submitted uploads to track where the cicadas emerge.

Michael Raupp, a professor of entomology at the University of Maryland, said students who are afraid of insects should try to learn more about the cicadas to overcome their fear.

"It is going to be a fantastic opportunity for children of all ages, from three years old to 103 years old to simply go out and witness one of the most spectacular and unique events that Mother Nature has evolved in the entire planet," Raupp said. "It's something that happens only a handful of times in a lifetime."



DIANA CROMPTON | PHOTOGRAPHER

Incoming freshman Annie McFee said GW's test-optional application helped her decide to apply after her SAT was canceled last May.

Incoming freshmen struggle to navigate commitment process online

ABBY KENNEDY
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

With college placement tests canceled and campus tours shut down across the country, incoming freshmen said GW's frequent communication and virtual programs for potential students contributed to their choice to commit to GW.

Incoming freshmen struggled to make their college decisions with guidance and resources restricted to virtual tours and information sessions that kept students separated from the campuses they'd hoped to tour. More than half a dozen incoming students said GW's efforts to engage prospective students with online events helped them gather information during a process that was "isolated" without easy access to school counselors or admissions officers due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Eleanor Fitzgerald, an incoming freshman majoring in international affairs, said her visit to GW last February played a large role in helping her decide where to attend, since many other schools shut down their tours over safety concerns during the pandemic. She said her visit to campus helped her visualize herself as a student and imagine life at GW instead of American and Fordham universities, the other schools she was considering.

"It was just so hard for me to visualize myself at the two schools, American and Fordham, that I hadn't visited," she said. "So that was really what pushed me more in the GW direction was how I felt on campus, the stories I heard on campus and just being able to refer back to how I felt at GW."

She said frequent communication with the University made the idea of committing seem more favorable, especially since she could not meet with staff or get informed about GW in

person.

"GW was in constant communication with me, whether that be through email or through letters, acceptance letters, financial situation letters, packets about what the school was like," Fitzgerald said. "That was something that made me look more favorably on GW compared to other schools. I felt like they were actively making an effort to inform me about the school."

Annie McFee, a rising freshman majoring in journalism and mass communication, said her involvement in the Your GW program, an online mentorship program offered to high school seniors interested in applying to GW, helped her decide to commit.

The program was adapted to a remote environment for the first time this year, and students received advice about essay writing and how to decide between early action and regular decision applications, according to the Office of Undergraduate Admissions website.

"There were a bunch of mentorship meetings about the application process and information about GW, so I got a lot of my information about GW from that," she said.

McFee said her decision-making process became a lot easier after visiting GW last January because she could compare the campuses of her top three schools – GW, American University and University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill – while using first-hand experience.

"It definitely did make the process easier that I had been able to tour before the pandemic started," she said.

McFee said GW's test-optional application also aided her decision to apply after her SAT was canceled last May.

"I felt like me not being able to take the SAT wasn't going to negatively affect

my chances," she said. "I did submit my ACT scores, I was able to take that in February. So it was nice to have the option because I did end up submitting some of those."

Diego Carradero, an incoming freshman living in Puerto Rico, said the pandemic caused added stress to his application and decision because he lost easy access to his counselors who could help him complete applications. He said he had to do independent research to learn about schools and the application process, leading to more stress.

"Very, very stressful because I am in Puerto Rico, and specifically from my school, barely anyone decides to apply to U.S. universities," he said. "So not only that worked in the other fact that I couldn't get the help or the direct treatment from my counselor and that also definitely caused even more stress."

Carradero said he couldn't visit any of the colleges that he applied to because of COVID-19 restrictions and financial strains on his family that were also brought on by the pandemic.

"When COVID hit we saw how the plans had to be changed because we also came into a lot more spending for the different things like wipes and different sorts of those materials to keep us safe, and also while my mom couldn't be working so much," he said. "So that also trickled in, and I think overall it was just harder."

He said he was relieved to utilize GW's test-optional policy since he couldn't retake his scheduled SAT in March and was planning on taking it multiple times to improve his score. He said he chose against submitting his SAT scores because even though he was a good candidate, he did not have the opportunity to retake the exam.



COURTESY OF SHUTTERSTOCK

Researchers said the cicadas could serve as an additional food source for animals like birds and rats.

Officials should consider holding a safe, in-person Commencement

STAFF EDITORIAL

Last week, administrators reaffirmed their plans to hold commencement ceremonies for the graduating Class of 2021 in an all-virtual format.

The cancellation of the full in-person ceremony on the National Mall for graduating seniors was not unexpected, and, as the editorial board wrote when the decision was first made in October, it was the right call. But the facts on the ground are different now. Amid rising vaccination rates and declining case rates, almost every other major university in the District has announced plans to hold some form of an in-person celebration. Considering how undeniably important commencement is, officials should consider at least some safe form of a scaled-back, in-person ceremony, or set of ceremonies, between now and the full, yet-to-be-scheduled commencement.

Right now, students justifiably feel cheated out of a real send-off. After all, American, Howard and Georgetown universities have all announced plans to hold in-person graduation ceremonies next month. Georgetown even plans to hold its commencement at Nationals Park – a reasonably iconic D.C. landmark with plenty of space for social distancing. Some of these decisions were announced at about the same time as GW made the final determination in favor of a fully virtual ceremony, which leaves students to wonder why other schools are able to pull it off safely but GW is not.

Administrators' communication with the student body has also left a lot to be desired. Some of the frustration and pain felt by the 2021 graduating class upon hearing the news could have been headed off by more fulsome and transparent



Cartoon by Hannah Thacker

communication. There is a widespread sentiment among students that administrators are aloof at best and disinterested at worst when it comes to student concerns – and hearing little on the subject of Commencement aside from two press releases while other schools are announcing in-person events certainly does not help. The lack of transparency on

the decision-making process also leaves students no assurance that administrators considered options for smaller, in-person events at alternate venues like other D.C. schools did. If it were clear that officials explored similar options and ultimately decided that it would be unsafe, then at least GW students could find some solace in knowing that officials made the

effort.

If at all possible, administrators should emulate the procedures undertaken by American, Howard or Georgetown universities to create some in-person facsimile of graduation. Commencement is not just a luxury – it's the moment when students can look at themselves after four years of hard work and say "I did it." For students who are

the first in their family to attend college or who faced obstacles in getting to this point, the event is all the more significant. Of course, if the pandemic means that not even modified in-person alternatives can take place, then that is fully valid. But administrators should at least be caught trying, and that is something they have not conclusively demonstrated at this point.

Administrators need to prioritize students' needs and desires, especially when it comes to a decision that is so crucial to the student experience. Students are promised a graduation ceremony on the National Mall when they commit to GW as seniors in high school, and officials should show their work in trying to make that happen. At the very least, they should attempt to hold a ceremony in some capacity. Given the improving public health situation in the District and other schools' decision to hold scaled-back in-person events, administration should not have been so quick to deny students the opportunity to celebrate the end of their four years at GW. The lack of student voice in the factoring of this decision is just the latest in a long line of actions that shun student opinion.

Administrators are right to look for the safest option in light of the pandemic, but their process to come to that decision seemed rushed and does not consider the ramifications it has on the student experience. Because GW's planning process was not transparent, we don't have a clear understanding of the rationale behind an all-virtual commencement. If University President Thomas LeBlanc and the administration want to temper calls for his resignation, the University must take student voices into consideration.

What abolishing the police really means

Since I started writing this article, at least 64 people have died at the hands of law enforcement – half of them Black. It is time we abolish the police.

To be clear, people who support abolishing the police are not advocating for the removal of public safety or accountability. What abolitionists do advocate for, though, is being imaginative in a way we never have before to build community support services that aren't posing a danger to members of the community. Confusion surrounding what abolishing the police means and entails is certainly valid and expected because the movement itself is not monolithic. Some scholars and activists disagree over what the phrase should entail – the words defund, abolish and reimagine the police are all phrases used in different contexts.

Karina Ochoa Berkley
Columnist

A way to distinguish between abolition and defunding is understanding the degree to which the two movements want to phase out police presence in communities. The defund movement generally imagines a space for police (i.e. exclusively responding to violence) whereas the abolition movement advocates for a world without police and reimagines ways in which violence can be addressed. Students who support abolishing the police should educate their community about alternatives to policing they can begin advocating for.

The structure of law enforcement as it currently exists is so entrenched in violent tendencies, corruption and inadequate provision of safety that it cannot be reformed. While reforms can reduce the extent to which the adverse effects of these

characteristics are inflicted upon the community, reforms cannot reduce these effects to an extent that would be sufficient to protect our most marginalized communities. Understanding that those who experience the failure of our current policing structure is drastically disproportionate along racial and class lines is key to understanding the abolition argument. What this means is that the way in which the popular imagination understands the role of police, as maintaining the safety of communities, is not experienced by everyone in the same way.

For example, Black, Indigenous and people of color have experienced the most violent and disruptive aspects of policing because of structurally discriminatory policies that stem from neighborhood segregation. People often understand segregation as being a relic of the past. But racially restrictive practices, like the implementation of zoning laws and redlining, have worked to confine Black Americans and other racially marginalized groups to neighborhoods "that were overlooked and underserved by local governments, financial institutions and private developers. Meanwhile, federal policy incentivized home ownership for White families in areas that saw ongoing public and private investments." As generations of communities have established themselves in these neighborhoods, these dynamics have "produced neighborhoods with profound differences in employment opportunities, poverty rates, school quality, access to health care, exposure to environmental hazards and crime, and so much more." Even if racially discriminatory behavior, policies and processes were to be halted, racism would endure because its victims are left with disadvantages in life

conditions, choice, opportunity and power.

Abolishing the police, while it sounds dramatic or radical, is really based more on common sense than it appears. For example, in the event of an armed burglary, one would call the police and, in the absolute best case scenario, the police would show up and arrest the burglar. Besides the threat of prison, few measures are taken to ensure this person won't burglarize another home. There are also few efforts to assess why this person felt it necessary to burglarize your home in the first place. Additionally, since policing isn't survivor centered, if you've suffered trauma from the burglary or need financial or emotional support, you're on your own.

Of course, in advocating for abolition, it is important to understand what is going to replace the police. The short answer is it depends, and the long answer is that activists' replacements to policing must be informed by the culturally, historically and temporally specific characteristics of a community. Abolitionists have organized to form a variety of alternatives to the police, each specific to the needs of their fellow citizens, and we shouldn't assume that what works for one community will work for another. In considering all of this, students should begin to identify how they can amplify access to social and economic resources aimed at supporting members of the community, while simultaneously reducing their reliance on, and eventually working to phase out, their local police presences. Once there's an understanding of the constructive and restorative potential of abolition, we can start working to build a better community.

—Karina Ochoa Berkley, a sophomore majoring in political science and philosophy, is a columnist.

Officials must make campus housing worth students' money

GW has long been known for its location, situated closer to the legislative heart of the United States than any other higher education institution in the country.

Freshmen live just blocks from the White House and the National Mall, and all of the Smithsonian museums are a half-hour's walk or a short Metro ride from campus. For many students, GW's location in the nation's capital is a major reason they choose to come here. So when GW closed its residence halls last March, a great number of students understandably decided they would move back in the fall to try to find a semblance of a normal college experience.

Kyle Anderson
Writer

But returning to D.C. put students in an awkward position as officials only planned to offer 500 beds in the fall and an additional 1000 beds in the spring. As a result, many students found themselves turning to off-campus housing. As they moved into their off-campus living arrangements, many found their new abodes to be both more affordable and of better quality than the residence halls they left behind. The COVID-19 pandemic era has made it abundantly clear that GW's residence halls are exorbitantly priced and, despite the premium, leave much to be desired.

It's long past time

for officials to finally address the University's housing problem. To do this, they have two real solutions – they can reduce the price of housing to make it a better value or remove the three-year residency requirement, forcing GW's residence halls to compete with the surrounding properties.

The poor value of GW's student housing isn't a new problem. Residence halls are so overpriced and so low-quality that some freshmen and sophomores have even falsified their documents with the University in order to secure a housing exemption. The reason many students resort to such a drastic measure is the University's housing policy which requires first, second and third-year students to live in on-campus housing, with the exception of those who plan to commute or need a residency exemption. In the District, this policy is only shared by Georgetown University, while Howard University, the University of the District of Columbia and American University have no such restrictions. It's also worth noting that Georgetown and GW both have average on-campus housing costs, including room and board, of more than \$15,000 per academic year. Howard is close with an average annual housing cost of about \$14,000 per year, while UDC and American both tout residence hall costs of about \$11,000 per year.

Each student at GW spending the whole

academic year on campus will be paying anywhere between \$1,900 and \$2,400 per month for the privilege of living in GW's housing. While this might just seem to be the cost of big-city living at first glance, a quick search yields dozens of studio apartments in Foggy Bottom for less than \$1,500 per month. Clearly, an average housing cost in Foggy Bottom, which is below the minimum housing cost at GW, indicates that officials have gouged the price of residence halls on campus. The considerably lower price tag alone makes it easy to see why some students are willing to find some loopholes to live off-campus, even when they're not supposed to – but it's far from the only reason.

Considering all of this, it's plain to see that students want to live off-campus because officials have failed to make residence halls a good value for the GW community. Why would a student live on campus when they could live in more comfortable off-campus apartments for half the price? It's a trick question – they wouldn't. Clearly, GW's residence halls are overpriced for what they provide, and until officials lower housing costs or increase residence hall quality, the residency requirement serves only as a testament to the University's greed.

—Kyle Anderson, a sophomore majoring in political science and criminal justice, is an opinions writer.

Culture

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THE SCENE

POETRY & THE CREATIVE MIND — VIRTUAL GALA SUPPORTING NATIONAL POETRY MONTH
April 29 • Free • Online Registration
Attend the Academy of American Poets' annual gala.

THE SOULFUL SHIRLEY HORN
April 29 • \$20 • Online Registration
Celebrate Jazz Appreciation Month by learning about jazz vocalist Shirley Horn's life at an event by the National Museum of American History.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

NEW ALBUM: "NURTURE" BY PORTER ROBINSON.

Donut shop face-off: District Doughnut vs. Astro Doughnuts & Fried Chicken

STEPHANIE CHEUNG
REPORTER

Sweet tooths in D.C. have a variety of options to fulfill their donut cravings, so we put two popular donut shops to the test to get one step closer to finding the best donut shop in the District.

In this face-off, we're measuring up the reliable favorite, District Doughnuts, and the new buzz-worthy kid on the block, Astro Doughnuts & Fried Chicken, to find out which one reigns supreme. One offers delectable treats in an Instagram-worthy setting while the other caters to fried-food lovers looking for a sweet and salty flavor combination.

We're on a mission to see which shop is crowned king of finals season to satisfy your late-night study cravings.

The Face-off

Taste

Of the three donuts I tried at District Doughnuts, the cookies and cream was the tastiest. The Nutella Cream Bismarck was a close second with a gooey Nutella cream surprise on the inside, drizzled with chocolate and topped with a hearty sprinkling of hazelnuts. I'm not a huge Nutella lover, but I thoroughly enjoyed this one. Though I usually enjoy fruit-flavored sweets, the straw-



LILLIAN BAUTISTA AND STEPHANIE CHEUNG | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER AND STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Along with its fried chicken, Astro offers a variety of donuts, like creme brulee, maple bacon and cherry blossom.

berry glazed donut tasted too much like artificial strawberry flavoring, and my palette was overwhelmed by a sickly sweet strawberry candy-like flavor.

Astro's donut flavors were extravagant and inviting but a few missed the mark on flavor. I was really looking forward to trying the creme brulee do-

nut because of its shell of sugar on top, but my experience was quite literally soured by the taste. I was pleasantly surprised to find vanilla pastry cream filling inside, but unfortunately, it seemed that the cream had gone bad by the time I ate it. The maple bacon donut was tasty but not memorable. I was intrigued

by this savory flavor-combo, but the maple glaze overpowered the smoked bacon pieces on top. The cherry blossom donut definitely lived up to its hype as one of the shop's most popular. Frosted with cream cheese glaze and filled with tart red cherry jam, I enjoyed the sweet and tart combination this donut of-

fered. It was the prettiest of the four I tried, and chocolate and pink buttercream cherry blossom decorations only enhanced its appeal.

Experience

While both shops do not provide indoor seating due to COVID-19 restrictions, District Doughnut's Georgetown location afforded ample seating near Grace Street and the Potomac River at the Waterfront and alongside Cady's Alley.

While I enjoyed sight-seeing the touristy spots along my walk to Astro Doughnuts, which is just east of the White House and Lafayette Square, the ongoing construction nearby paired with the widespread security measures around the White House definitely put a damper on the mood. Although you can grab your donuts and walk 15 minutes to enjoy them right outside the Washington Monument, there were virtually no tables or seating available within a one mile radius.

Both shops provided excellent customer service and offered creative options to expand your D.C. donut horizons.

But in my book, District Doughnut took the crown for its convenient location, pleasant ambiance and wide range of flavors. Astro Doughnuts is still worth a visit if you want to experiment with the unlikely pairing of fried chicken and donuts.



SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Several restaurants around the District are offering DIY meal kits for customers who aren't comfortable dining indoors yet.

Meal kits to bring restaurant-quality food to your kitchen

GABRIELLA SPINA
REPORTER

For District diners who aren't comfortable eating inside a restaurant just yet, try a do-it-yourself meal kit from one of your favorite D.C. joints.

For a restaurant quality meal from the comfort of your own home, The Hatchet rounded up a variety of meal kits from some classic District spots. Some kits are family style and can serve a group while others pack individual servings if you're looking to treat yourself or fuel a study session.

Some restaurants require advance notice to order a meal kit, so be sure to plan ahead.

Here are some of the D.C. restaurant scene's make-at-home offerings to fulfill your cravings.

Muchas Gracias

At Muchas Gracias, Chef Christian Irabien is serving up authentic Chihuahuan food, to raise funds for Tables without Borders, a non-profit that provides refugees with chef training. Order the "Family Taco Night" kit for \$49 to share with family or friends. Whether you opt for vegetarian, fish (+\$8) or meat tacos you can expect all the sides (beans, rice, salsa verde, chips and salsa), and tres leche cake to close out the night. Throw in a take-out cocktail pitcher (\$40) and eat happily knowing that your food is helping a philanthropic organization.

5029 Connecticut Ave.

NW. Order between 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. and 5 to 9 p.m. through DoorDash, Grubhub or ChowNow, or pick up in store.

Stellina Pizzeria

Light a candle, pull out a tablecloth, pour some wine and transport yourself to the streets of Naples where chef Matteo Venini grew up. Stellina Pizzeria's grocery shop, Stellina Bottega, is basically the choose-your-own-adventure of Italian food. Serve two for \$18 with the pesto pasta kit complete with sauce, cheese and homemade noodles. Serve four for \$45 with pizza dough, sauce and toppings as well as cannoli shells and fresh ricotta filling. Feed a crowd with two frozen pizzas, two frozen lasagnes, two pasta kits, a cannoli kit and a bottle of wine for \$150. Cook with the restaurant's Instagram Live tutorials, or if you prefer, put on some Frank Sinatra to set the mood while you cook.

399 Morse St. NE. Kits require two to four hours advance ordering notice. Order through its website.

Republic Cantina

If you can't make it into Republic Cantina's first-come-first-serve outdoor seating or limited indoor seating, whip up the restaurant's sizzling fajitas in your own kitchen. Choose between either vegetable fajitas for \$32 or chicken and steak fajitas for \$35 to finish off in your own oven and feed yourself and a friend. Assemble with traditional

fajita toppings including homemade guacamole and homemade flour tortillas. If fajitas aren't your thing, try the EZ Bake enchilada platter that just requires a hot oven and hungry mouth. Add margs (\$36) or queso (\$6), and finish the night with either mesquite sopapillas (\$8), tres leche cake (\$7) or both.

43 N St. NW. Available Tuesday and Thursday through Saturday. Order through Tock.

Farmers Fishers Bakers

The Georgetown staple is whipping up both finish-at-home brunch and cocktail kits. For \$50, choose a sweet bread like cinnamon rolls or skillet cornbread, salad or fruit, banana bread pudding or buttermilk pancake mix (+\$7). Choose from dips like cauliflower hummus or crab and artichoke, eggs in quiche or breakfast burrito form, pasta, something from the carving board and dessert that bakes while you feast. The kit is marketed as "Brunch for Two," but you can purchase add-ons for an additional price to feed a few more mouths. Try the shareable seven-cheese macaroni (\$5), mashed potatoes (\$4) or roasted veggies (\$4). Explore your baking skills with the buttermilk biscuit mix or indulge in the ice cream sundae kit, complete with warm fudge and waffle cones.

3000 K St. NW. Pre-order for Saturday brunch on Thursday and Sunday brunch on Friday. Order through its website.

D.C. tattoo and piercing shops to visit before the summer

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

Summer is just around the corner, which means it's the perfect time to get that piercing or tattoo about to complete your aura of confidence.

We sifted through D.C.'s tattoo and piercing shops so you don't have to. Be wary of limited hours and appointment requirements as most of these stores have altered their policies since the pandemic began.

Here's a rundown of D.C.'s tattoo and piercing shops, so you don't have an excuse to not make that appointment:

Fatty's Tattoos & Piercings

With two locations in D.C. and one in Maryland, nine tattoo artists and four professional piercers, Fatty's is the largest tattoo and piercing chain in D.C. You can search through each tattoo artist's sample works on the artists' profiles on the website to find the best person to execute your ideal tattoo.

Dupont Circle location at 1333 Connecticut Ave. NW, 3rd floor. Open daily noon to 8 p.m. Appointment only.

Jinx Proof Tattoos

Jinx's five tattoo artists specialize in a range of styles and can be specifically requested in the appointment request form, which also gives customers space to describe what

they envision their tattoo looking like and to add inspiration pictures for the artists to look at ahead of time. For piercings, Jinx only services customers ages 18 and older, even if you have parental consent.

3285 ½ M St. NW. Open daily noon to 9:30 p.m. Tattoos by appointment only. Piercing services available daily by call-ahead.

Tattoo Paradise

This shop is located in the heart of Adams Morgan, making it an ideal spot to hit after coffee at Tryst or music at Songbird Cafe. The store has 13 tattoo artists, so you have plenty of artistic avenues to choose from. They also offer microblading, which is a technique used to add semi-permanent pigment to the skin for cosmetic purposes, and graphic printed t-shirt merch. To make an appointment, email the shop at tattoo-paradiseDC@gmail.com.

2444 18th St. NW. Open Sunday through Thursday noon to 10 p.m. Friday and Saturday noon to midnight. Walk-ins available as time allows for tattoos and are encouraged for piercings.

Embassy Tattoo

Fill out this form to get your tattoo process kicked off. The shop encourages you to note if you are flexible with which artist tattoos you because the shop only has four artists and appointment slots are limited for each. The art-

ists' profiles are packed with well-executed realism pieces, so if you want a portrait or photo replication, this could be the spot for you.

1762 Columbia Road. NW. Open Monday through Saturday noon to 10 p.m. and Sunday noon to 8 p.m.

Electric Cat Scratch Tattoos & Piercings

Electric Cat Scratch is currently strictly open by appointment only for tattoos and is not offering piercings. They recommend emailing one of their four tattoo artists individually with a request for the fastest response. Email addresses can be found under each artist's profile. Include specifications like color scheme, size, location and budget for your tattoo.

505 Florida Ave. NW. Open Thursday through Monday 1 to 8 p.m. Strictly appointment only.

Wasteland Tattoos

Wasteland Tattoos, located in Columbia Heights, has a western vibe but the artists can do a range of artistic styles when it comes to tattoos including minimalist, bohemian, classic Americana and new school. The store is open by appointment only. You can book by emailing the store at wastelandtattoos@gmail.com.

Near the Columbia Heights Metro station at 3423 14th St. NW. Open 1 to 8 p.m. Wednesday through Monday, closed Tuesday. Appointment only.



ARIELLE BADER | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

With more than a dozen tattoo artists and professional piercers, Fatty's Tattoos & Piercings is the largest tattoo and piercing chain in the District.

GAMES OF THE WEEK



SOFTBALL
vs. George Mason
Saturday | Noon
GW faces off against George Mason in a double-header Sunday.



BASEBALL
vs. Saint Louis
Sunday | Noon
The Colonials take on the Billikens in a double-header Saturday.

NUMBER CRUNCH

52

Softball's 2021 season home run count, up from its five-year average of 29.8.

Men's soccer sophomore goalkeeper notches breakout season

ZUHA HAMEED
REPORTER

Despite a condensed men's soccer slate, sophomore goalkeeper Justin Grady produced a breakout performance this season, ushering his team to their first Atlantic 10 Championship game since 2011.

The Colonials (5-3-2, 3-1-2 A-10) overcame an 11th place preseason ranking, dropping just one loss in conference play in overtime to advance out of the central pod into the A-10 playoffs. Grady's ability to make key saves down the stretch has largely contributed to GW's success this season.

Grady started all 10 games this season and put up a 0.854 save percentage and a 0.65 goals against average despite an unusual season amidst the pandemic. He also tied a career high six saves against Dayton to secure a 1-0 victory and guide the Colonials to the title game against Fordham.

"I said from the beginning it was always just going to be a weird way to kind of get to the championship," Grady said. "But I think once we were there, we didn't really shy away from the moment."

The Colonials ultimately fell short in a 2-0 defeat to the Rams. The squad felt the absence of two key players in senior forward Oscar Haynes Brown and freshman defender Aaron Kronenberg, who were injured in the win over the Flyers.

Grady kept the Colonials in

the game despite trailing by a goal early in the first half. In the 29th minute, graduate student defender Matt Sloan fired a shot toward the top left corner of the net off a set piece attempt. The ball took a deflection off the back of a GW defender, forcing Grady to make an acrobatic save to touch the ball over the crossbar.

Though GW stumbled in the final, Grady's contribution to the Colonials' standout season did not go unnoticed. The second-year netminder racked up various honors, earning a spot on the All-Conference Second Team and the All-Championship Team. He also ranked 12th in save percentage nationally while tying the conference lead with five shutouts.

Although Grady said he was excited to receive individual honors, he believes team success is more important at the end of the day.

"I'll always be grateful for that kind of thing," Grady said. "But at the same time you kind of smile about it, you're happy, and then you tuck it away and get back to work."

He said a lot of his success can be attributed to the strength of his defensive back line and the chemistry they developed among themselves upon rebuilding the roster after losing a combined nine seniors and graduate students.

Sophomore Ryan Cedeno returned to the lineup this time in a starting role, and he was joined by newcomers Kronenberg and graduate student Hrólfur



Sophomore goalkeeper Justin Grady received recognition for his contributions to the Colonials this season, earning spots on the All-Conference Second Team and the All-Championship Team. COURTESY OF GW ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT

Sveinsson at center back and sophomore midfielder Elias Norris stepping in at left back in the absence of senior defender Joshua Yurasits. The newly formed back four conceded just seven goals all season.

After starting just seven games

in the 2019 season in which the Colonials had a 3-5 record in conference and a 5-11-1 record overall, Grady emerged as the full-time starter this season with the graduation of former goalkeeper Noah Lubin.

Head coach Craig Jones said

Grady has progressed steadily since joining the squad in 2019, becoming more confident coming off his line and distributing the ball from the back.

"We did well this year, we went far, we were just short of the goal that we wanted," Grady said.

Softball player returns from injury to spearhead dominant conference run

WILL MARGERUM
STAFF WRITER

Last spring, redshirt junior utility player Sierra Lange watched her team from the dugout after suffering a season-ending ACL injury. Just a year later, Lange tossed the fifth no-hitter in program history.

Lange's return to the field has boosted the Colonials' (25-8, 15-1 A-10) dominant streak in conference play that has put the squad atop the Atlantic 10. She helms a Colonial pitching staff, owning the second-best ERA on the squad with a 1.98, while also notching 45 hits at the plate.

Lange ranks second on the team with a .413 batting average and has started 20 games in the circle, closing out 13 of them. She has struck out 123 batters in 113 innings of work and has formed a one-two punch with graduate student utility player Faith Weber, who is first on the team with a 1.93 ERA across 80 innings.

"As a pitching staff, we have a lot of different weapons in our arsenal, and I think they all complement each other really well," Weber said. "Each of us has a different style, wind-up and velocity, so switching it up on teams throughout the series helps to keep the opposing hitters off balance."

Weber added that Lange's drive and determination on the mound is "contagious" and pushes her to own her own game. Weber's boost development in the circle, along with the team's explosive offense and reduced slate amid the

pandemic, has allowed head coach Shane Winkler to manage Lange's innings this year. She is on pace to throw 144.2 innings, which will keep her fresh for the A-10 Championship.

"Well if you look back at 2019, we threw her almost every meaningful inning we had," Winkler said. "I mean we were running her out there for 14 innings a day and having Faith Weber as another number one has been huge for us."

During an April 17 doubleheader against Saint Joseph's, the Colonials dominated on both sides of the ball, nabbing both games via the run rule. In the opening 8-0 win of the series, Lange delivered the fifth no-hitter in Colonials history and the first since Kaitlin Buff and Ashley Pilcher combined to no-hit Howard on Feb. 28, 2018.

Though Lange was happy to earn the no-hitter, she said she's more focused on achieving team success than personal accolades.

"To be honest I really wasn't focused on that," Lange said. "I was really focused on winning, so I didn't really care about the thing that was actually going on. I know that my team has my back. It's always nine against one when I'm up there pitching."

A game later, Lange recorded four hits and pitched the final inning of a 16-6 victory to cap off the day. While Lange's focus has been on team success, she has produced on an individual level since arriving at GW.

In her first year on the squad, Lange was selected

to the A-10 All-Rookie Team. She made an immediate impact on both sides of the ball, striking out 115 hitters while also batting .355 as the Colonials made a run to the A-10 Championship against Dayton.

"It makes our jobs a lot easier," Winkler said. "You get two players for one scholarship basically which is huge when you get two really good players like that but she's just an outstanding athlete."

She found continued success in the 2019, nabbing herself a spot on the A-10 All-Conference First Team and All A-10 Championship Team as she shattered several program records en route to a share of the A-10 crown for the first time in school history.

Lange threw 272 innings during the campaign, 68 more than any Colonial in history, across a record 49 total appearances in the circle. Her 246 strikeouts, 32 complete games and 31 wins also topped the pitching charts for GW. At the plate, she set a single season school record with 85 hits.

Her success stalled during her junior year when she endured a torn ACL that kept her out of the entire 2020 season. In her absence, GW lost 10 of their first 11 games in a season cut short by the pandemic.

As they enter the final stretch of the season, Lange and company will look to notch wins against George Mason and St. Bonaventure before heading to the A-10 Championship to capture their second title in three years.



Associate Director of Development Chris Monroe said officials will award the scholarship to a member of the men's or women's basketball programs annually. HATCHET FILE PHOTO

Basketball scholarship pays respect to former student-athlete mentor

ALEC RICH
STAFF WRITER

Men's and women's basketball players can soon apply for a scholarship that aims to help student-athletes succeed off the court.

The Leroy Charles Memorial Scholarship, which was created last semester, pays tribute to the former vice president of external affairs of the GW Medical Center, who passed away in February 2019. Charles left behind a legacy of mentorship in the basketball program over the course of his more than 30-year career, something the athletic department's associate director of development Chris Monroe said was a driving motivation for creating the scholarship.

"It's important to remember a man who took the time to really show and really connect student athletes to their career paths after basketball," Monroe said. "As well as to show us that there's more than sports out there, and especially for minorities, he really put us in a good position to understand the landscape."

The scholarship, which is still in the process of reaching its \$100,000 funding goal, will become an annual award given to a selected member of either the women's or men's basketball program to support their GW education, Monroe said. Recipients will be selected by two of the scholarship's lead donors, including former Medical

Center administrator John Williams, along with members of the Charles family.

As a basketball player in his youth, Charles played at Tufts from 1972 to 1976, becoming one of the school's all-time leading scorers. Upon his arrival at GW in 1986, Charles made it his responsibility to help members of both the men's and women's basketball programs find their respective career paths off the court.

One of those student-athletes was Monroe, who played for the Colonials from 1999 to 2003 and became the squad's all-time leading scorer. Monroe said Charles helped land his first summer internship in 2000 at an accounting firm, a role that greatly influenced the trajectory of his life and ultimately influenced his decision to return to GW.

"He took the time to get to understand my wants and needs and that of my family," Monroe said. "So I have a personal connection to him, and I always want to honor his memory, not only for what he did for me, but what he's done for other student athletes, as a mentor, as somebody that was always on call to be able to educate us on how to be good basketball players and how to balance studies as well as life."

The scholarship is the second basketball-related entity named in Charles' honor since his death. In late 2019, men's basketball

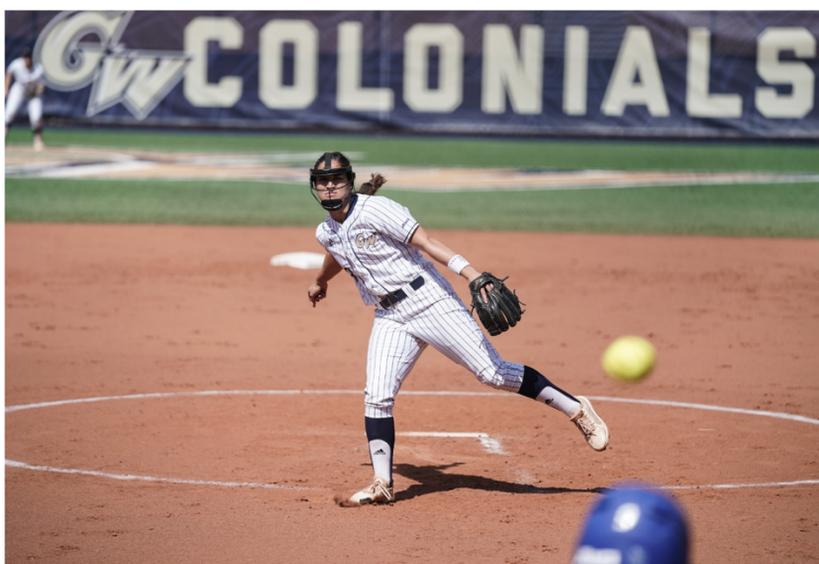
head coach Jamion Christian revamped the team's mentorship program and renamed it the Leroy Charles Mentorship Program, to connect student-athletes with professionals in their desired fields of interest.

Monroe said Christian has also worked to help get the scholarship up and running and noted that new women's basketball coach Caroline McCombs will be brought on board "shortly" to help facilitate a smooth rollout.

He said members of the GW community, specifically basketball alumni, have contributed to the fund because of Charles' continued mentorship beyond their years at GW, which in some cases lasted until the day he died. Monroe added that Charles' former colleagues at the GW Hospital have also been key contributors to the fund.

He said the scholarship program will help foster a greater sense of community by engaging alumni and potentially boosting recruitment efforts.

"Somebody starts something and then people say, 'Hey, that's what I want to be a part of,'" Monroe said. "So from a recruiting standpoint, for coaches from an alumni engagement standpoint, from a faculty and staff standpoint, it's great, and it shows that the GW community really cares about their student athletes and wants to put them in the best position possible."



Redshirt junior Sierra Lange said she's more focused on the team's success than her own achievements. COURTESY OF GW ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT