

The GW Hatchet

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FALL HOUSING HUNT INTENSIFIES

Freshmen search for community after virtual year

ABBY KENNEDY
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

With her entire freshman year completed, Lucia Shen has still never slept a night on campus.

Shen spent her freshman year living in an apartment 15 minutes off campus and said losing her freshman residence hall experience left her without a sense of community. Shen is one of more than half a dozen students who said they struggled to find community in an entirely virtual environment this academic year, turning to student organizations and social media to form relationships instead.

"It's hard to meet other college students," she said. "Whereas, if we were living in the dorms, I feel like we could just pop on next door and have someone to hang out with or talk about or do work with or anything."

Officials responded to burn out and mental fatigue from a year of virtual classes and socializing online with well-being initiatives and virtual forums to address students' questions and concerns about the virtual learning environment. Officials said they will implement more programs next fall to foster community among students after completing a year of schooling entirely online.

Colette Coleman, the senior associate dean of students, said the mental fatigue spurred on by the pandemic and experienced by the Class of 2024 will resemble the experiences of other classes next year. She said the University is working to plan in-person events to try to rebuild human connection and a sense of community that was lost among students in the virtual environment.

"What we were hearing from students was that we're really tired of being in that space, and so that reflected and stood in the attendance of those events," she said. "And what we were hearing from the students was, again, that fatigue, that mental fatigue, the fatigue of being on the camera in the boxes and the lack of human connection."

Coleman said administrators are planning a New Student Orientation for both the classes of 2024 and 2025 next fall in the hopes of allowing for a smooth transition to campus.

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DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Freshmen said they could occasionally visit campus to try to connect with other students, but it was difficult to build community in a virtual setting.



DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

About 150 rising juniors currently remain on the on-campus residency exemption waitlist, officials said.

More students receive housing exemptions

FRANCISCO CAMACHO
REPORTER

Hundreds of students are looking to live off campus this fall despite administrators' plans to open all residence halls for occupancy.

Officials said they approved at least 800 requests from rising sophomores and juniors asking for exemptions from on-campus housing requirements for the upcoming school year. Students who requested to live off campus said they plan to live in apartments in Foggy Bottom that offer looser COVID-19 restrictions and more space than GW's residence halls.

Administrators typically require freshmen, sophomores and juniors to live on campus, but students can apply annually for exemptions to live off campus instead.

Assistant Dean of Campus Living and Residential Education Seth Weinsel said officials initially planned to only accept 650 juniors but ended up approving an additional 50 requests to accommodate students who currently have leases extending into the academic year.

"We understand this to be an unusual year or two because of the evolving pandemic," Weinsel said in an email. "And since we do not want to negatively impact a student's financial situation, we approved all rising juniors who demonstrated that they currently had a lease that extended well into next academic year."

Officials received requests from 125 sophomores and approved 100 of them, which is "consistent" with non-pandemic years, Weinsel said. He said about 150 rising juniors currently remain on the exemption waitlist.

Sophomores who wish to live off campus must meet specific criteria and have their requests approved by the Division for Student Affairs while juniors are approved on a first-come, first-served basis.

Rising sophomores can request exemptions because of parental, marital, veteran or disabled status, permanent local residency or religious beliefs.

Officials have said campus will be open to the "fullest extent possible" this fall but have not yet released details about restrictions that may be in place.

See **JUNIORS** Page 4

Faculty salaries drop at GW, nationwide during pandemic, data shows

YANKUN ZHAO
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Full-time, assistant and associate professors earned a lower average salary this academic year compared to the last, part of a nationwide fallback in faculty compensation during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The American Association of University Professors' annual survey on faculty compensation, which reports on more than 900 U.S. universities, including GW, found that real wages for full-time faculty decreased for the first time since the Great Recession this past academic year. Officials' data showed slight decreases in average salaries for all three levels of professorship with full professors decreasing by an average of \$1,023, associate professors by \$381 and assistant professors by \$478 this year.

The GW data is broken down between tenured and non-tenured professors across three professorships — full, associate and assistant — for the past five years. Chris Bracey, the vice provost for faculty affairs, and Cheryl Beil, the associate provost for academic planning and assessment, said the University's budget mitigation response to the pandemic impacted the entire University community, including faculty.

"Faculty (and staff) did not receive salary increases during last year's merit cycle," they said in an email. "It is expected that the Board of Trustees will approve a full merit pool for this year's merit cycle, and that faculty (and staff) will be eligible for salary increases that will take effect July 1."

Officials' data revealed that average salaries for full, assistant and associate professors have been on the rise in the years leading up to the pandemic, with most increases spanning from 2016 through the 2019-2020 academic year. Average salaries for associate professors decreased by less than \$100 in the 2019-2020 academic year, while all other professorships continued to receive salary increases before the pandemic's outbreak.

For tenured or tenure-track faculty, full professors earned on average \$1,431 more than last year, while associate and assistant professors, respectively, earned \$950 and \$1,596 less on average, according to officials' data. For non-tenure-track faculty, full professors made \$3,478 less than last year while associate and assistant professors earned \$188 and \$640 more, respectively.

AAUP's data for full-time faculty real wages, which adjust for inflation, reported the first decrease since the 2011-2012 school year, with real wages for full-time faculty dropping at 68 percent of institutions surveyed.

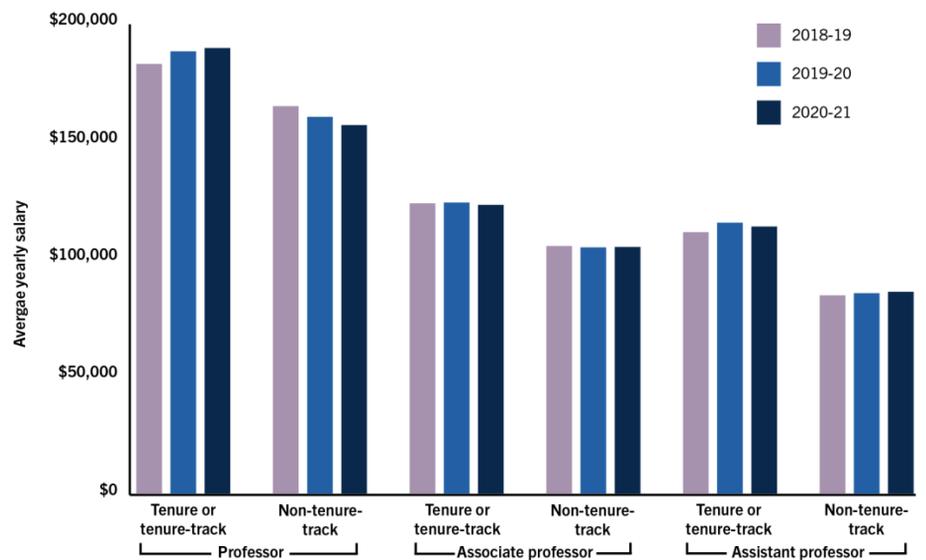
The survey results indicate that 62 percent of institutions saw reductions in the number of full-time faculty this year with 26 percent of schools losing more than 5 percent of their professors. The total number of full-time faculty members among surveyed schools decreased by 0.3 percent overall.

GW data on the total number of full-time faculty increased minimally in the four years before the pandemic, from 993 members in the 2016-2017 academic year to 1,021 members in the 2019-2020 academic year. Officials declined to supply the data for the 2020-21 academic year.

The AAUP survey also measured the nationwide response from higher education institutions to the COVID-19 pandemic, finding that more than 60 percent of schools implemented salary freezes or reductions, while more than 30 percent eliminated or reduced some form of fringe benefits. More than 20 percent terminated or didn't renew contracts for some non-tenured faculty, and almost 10 percent of schools furloughed at least some faculty members.

Officials implemented a hiring freeze last March and suspended all salary increases last April to mitigate the financial impacts of the pandemic that created an estimated \$180 million gap in the University budget this fiscal year. Officials also laid off a total of 339 staff members in divisions like communications and academic

Average yearly faculty salaries by rank



Source: American Association of University Professors

NICHOLAS ANASTACIO | GRAPHICS EDITOR

advising last year.

Experts in economics said the COVID-19 pandemic was the determining factor in the faculty wage decreases in higher education institutions this year, but they're unsure about its long-term effects. They said the pandemic's long-term impact on faculty salaries, the speed of economic recovery and university reopening timelines remain unknown.

Ben Hansen, a professor of economics and the director of graduate studies at the University of Oregon, said faculty wage decreases were driven by university cost-cutting measures instituted at the onset of the pandemic, like temporary salary furloughs and salary freezes. He said this past year may have resulted in the weakest academic market ever, with listings for full-time positions down as much as 70 to 80 percent during the pandemic's peak, which meant the lack of outside offers from other universities to professors also likely contributed to wage decreases overall.

Hansen said enrollment figures and students' willingness to return to campuses this upcoming academic year will determine whether or not faculty real wages reported by AAUP will continue to drop in the near future.

Yujung Hwang, an assistant professor of economics at Johns Hopkins University, said her school canceled retirement contributions for faculty members this past year like at many other institutions, but she added that her university is returning to a "normal payment scheme" for professors next year. She said she is unaware of how wage cuts could affect faculty in higher education differently than the pandemic as a whole.

Officials froze all employee salaries last April and retirement contributions last October but reinstated GW employees' base retirement contributions and promotion-related salary increases in January. Officials also announced this March that they are resuming matching retirement contributions and merit salary increases

es for faculty starting this July.

Joyce Chen, an assistant professor of economics at The Ohio State University, said most universities she is familiar with have implemented some sort of budget restrictions and skipped annual increases for faculty this past school year because of the pandemic. She said these restrictions and wage reductions could exacerbate existing pay disparities for female and minority faculty.

Recent GW data on minority and non-minority professors revealed that full professors of color made less on average than non-minority full professors, while minority associate and assistant professors made more.

She said female and under-represented faculty have been "harder hit" by the pandemic with increased caregiving responsibilities and health risks. She said this has been a "lost year in productivity," which is likely to worsen pay gaps for minority and female professors as any promotions and the prospect of gaining tenure status are delayed.

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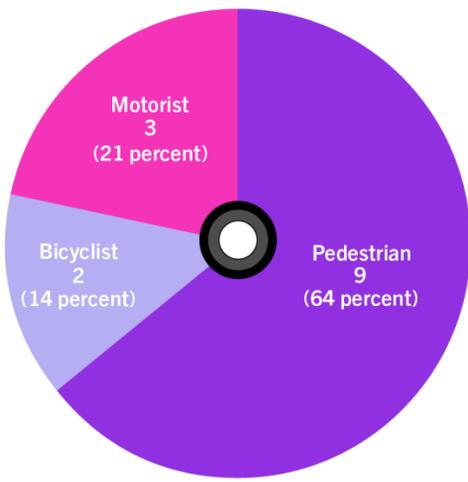
THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

A MULTICOUNTRY ANALYSIS OF MULTIDIMENSIONAL POVERTY IN CONTEXTS OF FORCED DISPLACEMENT
 May 10 • 10 a.m. EDT • Free
 The GW Institute for International Economic Policy will host a panel discussion on research regarding multidimensional poverty levels in Ethiopian, Nigerian, Somali, South Sudanese and Sudanese populations.

IMF GLOBAL FINANCIAL STABILITY REPORT: PRE-EMPTING A LEGACY OF VULNERABILITIES
 May 11 • 10 a.m. EDT • Free
 Join the Institute for International Economic Policy and the International Monetary Fund for a discussion on the policy measures taken in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY After almost a yearlong review, University President Steven Knapp announces officials will not arm University Police Department officers, The Hatchet reported.
 May 11, 2009

D.C. traffic-related fatalities in 2021*



*As of May 7. Percentages are rounded. Source: DDOT
 NICHOLAS ANASTACIO | GRAPHICS EDITOR

Traffic deaths surge during pandemic as local leaders call for change

VITA FELLIG
 STAFF WRITER

Traffic fatalities in the District have nearly doubled since this time last year.

Sixteen people have been killed in traffic-related accidents so far this year, nearly double the nine deaths registered at this time last year, according to data from the Metropolitan Police Department. Local leaders said city officials should improve biking and walking infrastructure and implement tougher traffic enforcement to curb the rise in deaths.

Nine pedestrians, two cyclists and three motorists have died in accidents in the District this year, according to District Department of Transportation data, which accounts for 15 of the 16 fatalities in 2021. In one such incident, a cyclist was struck and killed by a car on Massachusetts Avenue last month just hours after tweeting about unsafe transportation infrastructure in the District.

The District is currently on track to log about 45 traffic fatalities this year, which would be the most in D.C. since 2007 when 54 people died in traffic-related incidents according to Metropolitan Police Department data. There were 37 traffic fatalities in 2020 but just 27

in 2019, MPD data shows.

One traffic fatality occurred near campus earlier this semester when a vehicle struck and killed a pedestrian who was outside of a marked crosswalk on the 1800 block of E Street in February, according to an MPD release.

A DDOT spokesperson said emptier streets this year have led to fewer crashes, and the city has seen a 40 percent decrease in minor traffic injuries in 2021 compared to 2020. But they said the number of severe high-speed crashes has increased, causing the spike in traffic deaths.

In Ward 2, which encompasses Foggy Bottom, three pedestrians and three cyclists have suffered “major” injuries in traffic incidents this year, accounting for less than 6 percent of all major injuries in the District, according to city data. At least 40 pedestrians and cyclists have also suffered minor injuries in Ward 2 this year, the data shows.

Jeri Epstein, the chair of the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission, said precautionary COVID-19 measures to decrease police interactions with the public have led to more relaxed speed limit enforcement

within the District.

The number of traffic stops decreased in the District during the pandemic, according to MPD data. MPD officers conducted more than 385 traffic stops per day in the last five months of 2019 but only performed about 220 stops per day in 2020.

An MPD spokesperson did not return multiple requests for comment.

Epstein said the decrease in stops and the relatively empty streets that can encourage speeding could be to blame for the spike in traffic fatalities. She said when traffic congestion and law enforcement return to normal, the District may register fewer speeding accidents and deaths.

Epstein added that inadequate bike lanes and unsafe sidewalks contribute to traffic incidents, and transit infrastructure needs to be revamped as biking and walking become more commonplace in the city. The ANC unanimously approved plans to construct a new bike lane along Virginia Avenue this fall, which would become the third major bike lane constructed near campus in the past year, following projects on G Street and 20th and 21st streets.

The New York Times tops GW’s digital news subscriptions

YANKUN ZHAO
 ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Officials said The New York Times has been the most popular news subscription among the GW community with nearly two million views since they began offering the service last November.

Students, faculty and staff received free digital access to three of the nation’s most recognizable newspapers — The Times, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal — last fall. Officials said University data on access to the subscriptions show that The Times recorded nearly 2 million page views, followed by The Wall Street Journal with more than 250,000 and The Post at nearly 110,000 between Nov. 6 and April 30.

Mark Diaz, the University’s chief financial officer, said the digital news subscription access is an example of several ways administrators have continued to “enhance service” with more community engagement and information through digital news. He said the feedback about the subscription service has “only been positive,” and officials have received suggestions to expand to other publications.

Annual digital student subscriptions to The Wall Street Journal and The Times typically cost \$48, and a subscription to The Post costs \$12 for the first year and \$60 every year after.

The Student Association Senate passed a resolution last April calling on officials to provide students with access to newspaper subscriptions, and officials announced the launch of the service in November. The University halted a similar program in 2011 that offered students newspapers at their residence hall doors.

Robing Delaloye, the associate dean of student success and communications, said The Times amassed more than 6,500 active unique subscribers from the GW community, while The Wall Street Journal attracted 5,315 “activated users” as of the end of last month. University access to The Post does not require users to create accounts but is only available via their website.

Students who have taken advantage of the free digital subscriptions said access to three premier newspapers has helped them stay updated on current events and inform their class discussions.

Sophomore and Student Association Sen. Gabriel Young, CCAS-U, said he has used The Times and The Post for his homework assignments and reads the newspapers in his free time. He said being stuck behind paywalls freshman year was frustrating because he would sometimes need access to information in the newspapers to complete class projects.

He said the SA currently has no plans to call on officials to expand the subscription service to include other sources as the University continues to transition through a recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mariko Hokamura, a sophomore majoring in sociology, said she’s accessed The Times and The Post daily since GW began offering the student subscriptions last fall. She said she could keep track of the topics relevant for her developmental psychology class this semester with the parenting and health sections of The Times.

She said she has used The Times subscription more than the other publications because she can access news stories through her phone, while the lack of mobile access for The Post has been “inconvenient.”



HATCHET FILE PHOTO
 By the end of April, The New York Times had amassed more than 6,500 unique active subscribers from the GW community.

Outgoing Faculty Senate parliamentarian reflects on 13-year tenure

ISHA TRIVEDI
 NEWS EDITOR

Former Faculty Senate Parliamentarian Steve Charnovitz said his final senate meeting late last month was a “depressing” end to his 13-year stint in the position.

Charnovitz, who started teaching at GW in 2004, has held the position of senate parliamentarian longer than anyone else in the senate’s history. As his tenure has come to a close, he said he feels the senate has “wasted” time on resolutions to question University President Thomas LeBlanc’s leadership abilities rather than advise University leaders on policies to help navigate the COVID-19 pandemic and a changing higher education landscape.

But he said throughout his time as parliamentarian, he is proud of the work he has done to improve the senate’s transparency with regular updates on its website and to help quickly transition the senate’s activities online following the COVID-19 outbreak. Charnovitz said he hopes senate leaders will propose a “strategic plan” for the work they hope to accomplish in the upcoming year to maintain the senate’s efficacy.

The senate unanimously approved a resolution expressing appreciation for Charnovitz last month, touting his “tireless efforts” and “outstanding contribution” to GW.

The COVID-19 pandemic

Charnovitz said once the pandemic hit he worked swiftly with Sylvia Marotta-Walters, the chair of the senate’s executive committee at the time, to develop a resolution in late March allowing senators to hold their monthly meetings online. They also designated a vice chair of the executive committee who can take over if the chair is

unable to perform their duties if they contract the virus, he said.

Charnovitz said holding senate meetings online instead of in person has opened up a “new means of participation” for students, faculty and staff who were previously unable to attend meetings. But he said remote operation has still been difficult for senators.

Charnovitz came under controversy at last fall’s Faculty Assembly when he advised LeBlanc that professors could not vote online under the Faculty Organization Plan. The rules require faculty to be “present” to vote — which historically has excluded remote voting — but when Charnovitz argued that LeBlanc should align with precedent, some professors said they could legitimately vote since the meeting was being held entirely online.

An unsatisfying end

Charnovitz said senators’ decision to close debate about University leadership last month at a special senate meeting — his final meeting as parliamentarian — reflects his broader concerns that the senate has not been an effective organization recently. LeBlanc convened the meeting after the survey’s completion, and senators passed a resolution expressing “serious concerns” about administrators’ ability to uphold GW’s vision and mission.

Charnovitz said senators’ decision to close debate violated principles of freedom of speech.

Charles Garris, a faculty senator and the former chair of the senate’s executive committee, moved to delay the discussion of the resolution under consideration, arguing that the survey results were unreliable because 680 faculty members were excluded from questioning. Members of the survey team said they excluded



FILE PHOTO BY GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR
 Charnovitz, who received accolades from colleagues upon his departure last month, said he’s seen the senate lose some of its value to the University during the past year.

faculty members whose primary affiliation is with another institution outside of GW, making Garris’ assertion “grossly misleading.”

Senators later voted during the same meeting to close debate on a motion proposed by Marotta-Walters, who argued that senators were rushing to pass this resolution. Charnovitz said the senate has never voted to close debate twice in one meeting, and it would be “unusual” for an academic body to do so.

Concerns with the senate’s recent efficacy

Charnovitz said he has been disappointed by the senate’s con-

duct in the past year, and that they should have offered guidance to University leaders on ways to address “existential problems” facing GW. Instead, he said the senate “wasted the whole year” with various resolutions to criticize LeBlanc’s leadership abilities.

Charnovitz said he has always felt that the senate had some “positive value add” to the well-being of the University because of its ability to share a faculty perspective with officials regarding University issues.

Looking to the future

Charnovitz said he hopes Sarah Binder, a professor of political

science and the senate’s new parliamentarian, will hold his former position for at least the next five years.

Charnovitz said the parliamentarian’s value to the senate increases with each year of experience as they learn more about how the senate works with the Board of Trustees and faculty at large.

Charnovitz said the time the senate has spent working on the survey of University leadership has been a “misallocation” of its time this year. He said he hopes senate leaders develop a plan to tackle subjects like undergraduate or graduate education and research in the future.

Surplus in budget could boost research in long term, experts say

ISHA TRIVEDI
NEWS EDITOR

Amid calls from faculty to allocate more funding for research as the University emerges from the COVID-19 pandemic, experts said directing money to a surplus can better support GW's long-term research offerings.

Faculty said instead of setting aside money for a surplus in the upcoming fiscal year, officials should direct that money to faculty research given delays to new studies during the pandemic and GW's declining Higher Education Research and Development rankings. But experts in higher education finance said budgeting money for a surplus could also serve as an investment in GW's research capacity for years to come.

Chief Financial Officer Mark Diaz said allocating money for a surplus serves as an investment in the University's long-term well-being and infrastructure. He said if officials don't set aside a surplus, they could end up with a "significant deferred maintenance backlog," which could delay renovations to campus buildings and affect other parts of student life.

"You need margins to reinvest back into your enterprise – you need margins to make strategic investments," Diaz said in an interview last month. "Otherwise, what you're doing is to just kind of figure out how you stay within a box and save a little over a year

and then you can make your investment once you save enough."

Joseph Cordes, the chair of the Faculty Senate's fiscal planning and budget committee and a professor of economics, said allocating more money to a surplus can also boost GW's bond rating – the assessment of the quality of an organization's credit given by credit rating agencies.

Standard and Poor's Global Ratings and Moody's Investors Services have rated GW as A+ and A1, respectively, during the pandemic. The ratings came at a time when Moody's downgraded higher education from "stable" to "negative" as an industry.

"A better bond rating means that when we need to borrow money we don't have, we're able to do it on reasonably good terms," Cordes said.

Faculty have argued that officials could allocate more money for research by tapping the University's \$1.8 billion endowment.

But Demetri Morgan, an assistant professor of higher education at Loyola University Chicago, said doing so is not always straightforward because a large part of university endowments come from donors who specifically request that their donations be used for costs like scholarship funds or financial aid. Morgan said choosing to redirect the money from these funds for other purposes, like research, would mean GW leaders would be breaking the law.

Morgan said higher education leaders are dealing with a "great enrollment crash" as overall declining birth rates in the United States indicate that the pool of prospective college students will eventually become smaller. He said as a result, allocating money for a surplus could be more "prudent" than using it for research to start preparing for a potential decrease in enrollment.

"A lot of institutions are needing to think about how they're going to reorient themselves to navigate this enrollment decline in terms of investing in different programs, different strategies to buffer themselves," he said.

Morgan said in general, faculty members will be more closely affiliated to their field of study rather than their university because a professor can always continue doing their research at a different institution if necessary. But administrators like board members are "locals to the institution" and can't leave as easily as faculty can, which can help explain why faculty members want to prioritize research, he said.

"And so I think that different cultural perspective on what's most important creates a challenge for faculty to really understand the more long-term investing and prudent approach of trying to safeguard the institution," he said.

Justin Thompson, a senior associate dean and chief operating officer at the University of Virginia,



FILE PHOTO BY SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Faculty have lobbied officials to tap into the University's \$1.8 billion endowment to allocate more money for research.

said directing money for a surplus could allow officials to direct more money for research in the long term because it provides GW with financial flexibility.

"Inevitably, those investments – some portion of future investments from this so-called surplus – will be made in faculty research, so it's not really a debate about research or not research, as a matter of research now or research and other investments later," he said.

Thompson said deans' requests for research funding could likely always exceed what University leaders can provide because faculty can always benefit from obtaining more research funds. But

he said especially given the "uncertainty" during the COVID-19 pandemic, GW leaders are likely interested in being more cautious, opting to direct money for a surplus.

"I don't hear anybody saying that research is not a good investment or that leaders there shouldn't be making it," he said. "I think it's the case that there are competing potential investments, either near term or future."

Robert Kelchen, an associate professor of higher education at Seton Hall University, said GW is in a unique position as officials and faculty debate over the budget because many universities across the country

aren't even in a position to allocate money toward a surplus because of the pandemic's financial impact.

"Maybe the 200 wealthiest universities in the country can, but much of higher education took massive hits over the last year, and instead of investments you're talking about just trying to minimize cuts," he said.

Kelchen said University leaders at GW should still consider allocating more funds for research to avoid the possibility of losing faculty members who maintain GW's strong research capacity to other universities.

"If you don't invest in researchers, you might lose some of your top faculty members," he said.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR
Student leaders said they coordinated a Zoom meeting with MSA organizations at Georgetown, Howard and American universities to unify Muslim students around the DMV.

Ramadan celebration goes virtual with new MSA programming

ABBY KENNEDY
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Muslim Student Association leaders organized online discussions and distributed meals to students for Ramadan this year.

The Muslim Student Association coordinated and created new events and initiatives like sending out free Ramadan care packages and distributing free Iftar meals to plan for an entirely virtual month of celebrations during April and May. MSA leaders said they hope this year's programming helps normalize respectful conversations between Muslims and non-Muslims about the month-long festival.

The MSA hosted events for Ramadan like a kickoff ceremony and discussion sessions via Zoom to help members of the Muslim community connect with one another and replicate in-person traditions in some capacity.

Ramadan, a monthlong festival with prayer and fasting during the daylight hours, is considered one of the holiest Islamic months and is intended to be a time for Muslims to give to charity and strengthen their relationship with God.

Aleena Fayaz, a freshman representative on the MSA, said discussion sections led by members for this year's virtual celebration intend to help normalize respectful questions for non-Muslims to ask about Ramadan to those who observe the holiday. She said answering these questions through discussion sessions and educating non-Muslims helps eradicate ignorance around Ramadan and Islamophobia.

"You should be able to ask if you want to ask me, 'Hey can you eat this? What time do you break your fast? Do you have to fast? What are the exemptions and stuff?' I want to be very open to those questions and then make you not feel bad about answering me," Fayaz said. "I don't want there to be this fear of asking because that's how we kind of eradicate all this ignorance around Ramadan and Islamophobia as well."

Fayaz said she is celebrating Ramadan from her home in Texas and has been attending a series of discussion sessions hosted by the MSA for Muslims and non-Muslims to discuss "facts versus fiction" about Ramadan. She said Ramadan looks different for her than during pre-pandemic years because she can't meet up with groups of friends who observe Ramadan to break fast together anymore.

Fayaz said she and another member took over the MSA's Instagram story for a series sharing a day in their life of balancing fasting with studying.

She said the Multicultural Student Services Center created a holiday provision this year that allows students to request an exemption from class when they are fasting and participating in Ramadan. She said the exemption is reassuring to know that students who celebrate the month can take time off from classes to focus on fasting and prayer if needed.

Mehrun Huda, a junior and Ramadan coordinator for the MSA, said she focused on providing free Iftar meals – the evening meals

that Muslims end their daily Ramadan fast with at sunset – to students observing the month on campus. She said the meals were provided to students at the Marvin Center on Saturday and Sunday nights during the entire monthlong celebration, marking the meal service's first year in action.

She said she sends out a weekly email to let students know where and when to pick up their meals, and a MSA volunteer distributes them from the Marvin Center. She said contacting students has been difficult because most events are virtual and students are "tuned out" and busy with finals.

Simra Ahmed, one of the five event directors who create ideas for events to host during Ramadan for the MSA, said as a part of the Ramadan kickoff event this year, the group coordinated a Zoom meeting with MSA organizations at Georgetown, Howard and American universities to unify Muslim students from different institutions around the DMV area.

She said the event included a speaker and breakout sessions mixing students so they could get to know one another through games and activities. She said the MSA would like to continue the event when students can meet in person in the future.

Ahmed said the MSA still had leftover funds that they raised to spend on Ramadan this semester because members didn't need to purchase resources for in-person events. The group decided to start a Ramadan care package program with the extra money in February, sending students snacks and candy.

SEAS research finds disinfection ineffective against Norovirus

LAUREN SFORZA
CONTRIBUTING
NEWS EDITOR

A professor from the School of Engineering and Applied Science discovered that a stomach virus can survive and continue to spread despite common sanitation practice.

The study, published last month with the National Institutes of Health, found that the norovirus – a highly contagious gastrointestinal virus – is resistant to disinfectant practices like ultraviolet light treatments and detergent solutions. Danmeng Shuai, an associate professor of civil engineering and the lead researcher of the study, said his results indicate that common decontamination procedures like using ultraviolet light to kill viruses in water-supply plants and cleaning surfaces with common household detergents may be ineffective.

The norovirus is considered the leading cause of foodborne illnesses, leading to anywhere from 19 to 21 million cases of vomiting and diarrhea illnesses in the United States each year, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Shuai said the norovirus has more "protection" against outside stressors, like disinfectants and ultraviolet light, because it travels in vesicles that conceal it more so than other viruses that travel freely.

He said vesicles are like sacs outside of the cell that hide clusters of the norovirus inside them and make the virus more resistant to forms of disinfection like

ultraviolet light. Ultraviolet light can be used to kill viruses in drinking water – a sanitation method that may really be ineffective following Shuai's discovery of the protective vesicles.

Shuai said Mengyang Zhanag, a doctoral student in SEAS, conducted experiments on norovirus particles by comparing how long single free and clustered virus particles survived against stressors like detergent. Shuai said Zhanag and the other researchers used ultraviolet lights, detergents and freeze and thaw cycles to test the strength of the norovirus at a lab at the NIH.

Researchers shined ultraviolet light at varying strengths for different amounts of time on groups of virus clusters like the norovirus and free viruses to see which was more resistant, according to the study. Shuai said the virus clusters were more resistant to ultraviolet light, suggesting that ultraviolet disinfection may not be an effective method of killing the norovirus, which is commonly found in water supply plants that hold drinking water.

Shuai said they found that viral vesicles concealing the norovirus are "really, really robust," and that the norovirus will survive even under extreme temperature changes since the vesicles did not decay in the freezing temperatures.

The researchers also found that the virus clusters in vesicles were 2.16 times more resistant to disinfection than the free viruses, according to the study.

He said this is just a "pioneer study," and research-

ers still need to test other compounds like chlorine and ozone, which may be able to break down the virus.

Nihal Altan-Bonnet, a researcher at the NIH and the co-leader of the study, said when multiple variants of the norovirus travel together in a vesicle, one variant of the virus may not be able to make a specific enzyme, but the other variants can make it for the benefit of the entire vesicle.

Mengyang Zhanag, a doctoral student at SEAS, said she was able to join the research team as a member of the GW/NIH Graduate Partnership Program.

Zhanag, who joined the program in October 2019, said the work has helped her explore her interests in both biology and environmental engineering. She said environmental engineers often do not conduct these projects on virology because recognizing virus problems is not typically studied in their field.

Experts in biology and food sciences said the norovirus spreads in densely populated settings and has a protein code, making it more resistant to disinfectants than other viruses that are enveloped in a cell membrane, like the coronavirus.

Christiane Wobus, an associate professor of microbiology at the University of Michigan, said alcohol-based hand sanitizers do not inactivate the norovirus. He said hand sanitizers are meant to dry out a virus cell's membrane and break it open, but the norovirus's protein code outside its membrane blocks this function.



FILE PHOTO BY ERIC LEE
Experts said the norovirus can be susceptible to certain compounds like chlorine for disinfection, but only to very high concentrations which are typically toxic and "corrosive" to surfaces.

Professor leads project to increase energy equity for low-income communities

ZUHA HAMEED
REPORTER

A research professor in the Elliott School of International Affairs is developing new technology that can bring cleaner and more affordable power to low-income communities in the District by next calendar year.

Robert Orttung, the director of research for Sustainable GW, is working on a pilot project with members of four schools at GW to develop microgrids – smaller self-functioning versions of a typical electrical system – that can provide electricity to households even when the main electrical grid goes down during a storm. He said he hopes to implement the technology in the District next year and eliminate the high cost of energy for low-income and minority groups in Wards 7 and 8.

“It’s possible to have clean energy to the extent that we can facilitate the uptake of more clean energy throughout Washington D.C., and then if the models work, then maybe in other cities as well,” Orttung said. “Lots of people are working on this topic, but we can contribute to that researching. Then I think that’ll help make the world a better

place at the end of the day.”

Orttung said his team received a \$150,000 planning grant from the National Science Foundation for this research last year. He said the team is seeking to take an interdisciplinary approach to the project with help from the School of Engineering and Applied Science, Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, the School of Business and GW Law.

Orttung said SEAS engineers are working to develop and implement the new microgrids in the District, and CCAS researchers are focusing on the sustainability aspect of the project, which involves promoting renewable energy. He said law school participants are looking at how to make the District’s policies more inclusive of new technology like the microgrid system, while the business school professors are producing finance models that examine potential returns on investment and investors.

“That all fits into our broader agenda of sustainability, which is just promoting renewable energy and that kind of thing,” Orttung said. “So what we’re trying to do, the basic idea, is to integrate all these different things.”

Orttung said he hopes to implement the pilot program as early as next calendar year and spread it to other communities in the District and possibly other cities if it is successful in providing cleaner and cheaper energy.

Orttung said the research team’s largest accomplishment so far has been defining “energy justice” by three components – who is able to participate in defining the energy system, the outcomes of the system and the ability to change the system. He said increasing energy justice should take these factors into account to produce a more balanced system in the future.

Orttung said the research team created an advisory committee last year composed of seven community members that meet monthly. He said the advisory committee consists of representatives of non-governmental organizations working on energy justice, investors and people involved in technology and policy.

He said the members work together to provide recommendations on the structure of the project and how GW should use its resources to best serve the community.



ANTHONY PELTIER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Orttung said professors in four GW schools are managing various aspects of the project based on their areas of expertise.

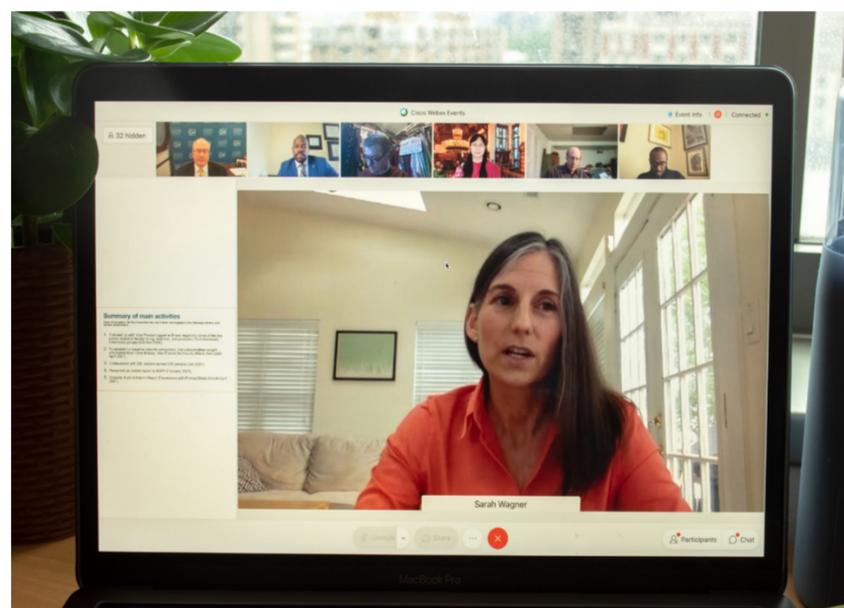
Payman Dehghanian, an assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering and the director of the GW SmartGrid Laboratory, said he is working with Orttung to develop the microgrids for the pilot project.

Dehghanian said his team will integrate microgrids into local communities, so the electrical grid will become more resilient to natural disasters like

lightning storms. He said the microgrid technology will allow residents to use solar electricity during the day and have battery solutions in the night.

Experts in engineering said community engagement is necessary when implementing this new technology because community members are the ones that will face the effects of any changes in energy distribution.

Eilyan Bitar, an associate professor at the School of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Cornell University, said improving energy equity requires education about energy systems. He said the research team’s advisory committee can be a “great vehicle” for hearing the voices of the community and including them in the process of addressing energy injustice issues.



DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Wagner said the group identified issues with inconsistency in faculty recruiting, hiring and mentoring practices and expressed a need to cultivate a University-wide culture that prioritizes diversity, equity and inclusion.

GW needs more minority faculty, Faculty Senate subcommittee says

ISHA TRIVEDI
NEWS EDITOR

YANKUN ZHAO
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Members of the Faculty Senate’s diversity, equity and inclusion subcommittee said increasing representation of underrepresented minority faculty remains a work in progress at a senate meeting Friday.

Subcommittee members compiled baseline data on faculty composition, hiring, departures, promotions and tenure status from the past five years and found that GW’s share of URM faculty – which includes African Americans, Latinos and Native Americans – is insufficient. The group said officials need to streamline the University’s faculty hiring and recruitment processes while cultivating a wider diverse, equitable and inclusive culture among the GW community.

The group said they will hold focus groups with minority faculty members to develop qualitative data about their experiences that the senate and provost’s office can use as guidance for new policies.

“Our focus is faculty – that is, to strengthen diversity, inclusion and equity at the faculty level,” the subcommittee’s presentation from the meeting states.

The group formed under the senate’s committee on appointments, salaries and promotion policies in response to a senate resolution passed in July calling for the University to support diversity, equity and inclusion in hiring practices. An informal group of Columbian College of Arts and Sciences department chairs launched a call earlier this year for officials to implement a “cluster hire” of underrepresented faculty

and increase funding to the Africana studies program.

Sarah Wagner, a member of the subcommittee and an associate professor of anthropology, said the group first met with Caroline Laguerre-Brown – the vice provost for diversity, equity and community engagement – to determine key concerns for underrepresented faculty. Laguerre-Brown identified issues with inconsistency in faculty recruiting, hiring and mentoring practices and with the need to cultivate a University-wide culture that prioritizes diversity, equity and inclusion, Wagner said.

Wagner said the subcommittee members also spoke to Chris Bracey, the vice provost for faculty affairs, to compile the baseline data on faculty composition. URM faculty made up less than 16 percent of new faculty hires and about 12 percent of departures over the past five years, Wagner said.

She said the results indicated that among URM faculty, only 7 percent of assistant professors were promoted to associate status, and only 11 percent of URM associate faculty were promoted to full professors over the past five years period.

“We want to be careful about how we’re interpreting these numbers,” she said. “Nevertheless, what the numbers, especially for promotion from assistant to associate professors, do tell us is that there simply aren’t enough underrepresented minority faculty here at GW. The numbers are strikingly low.”

Wagner said the total number of full-time faculty have increased over the past five years, driven by a 17 percent increase in non-tenure-track faculty and an uptick in specialized faculty. But the number of tenured

and tenure-track faculty has fallen by more than 5 percent during the same period, which is “not insignificant” because fewer URM faculty are currently tenure-track than White full-time professors, she said.

Officials’ data on faculty salaries between minorities and non-minorities this year revealed that full professors of color make slightly less than non-minority full professors while minority associate and assistant professors on average earned more than their non-minority counterparts.

Shaista Khilji, a subcommittee member and professor of organizational learning, said at the meeting that the subcommittee held focus groups with diversity, equity and inclusion leaders across GW’s 10 schools in January and asked them questions about areas of improvement and past successful initiatives.

She said the school officials identified common challenges like the absence of a University-wide strategy to support diversity, equity and inclusion and a lack of attention given to nurturing “internal talent” through a University-wide policy for mentorship for faculty of color. The leaders said this in turn leads to high rates of turnover among faculty of color, Khilji said.

Khilji said the focus groups also identified a challenge with a lack of accountability and secrecy around the decision-making processes within faculty hiring committees. Some diversity, equity and inclusion leaders said diversity advocates are not always part of these committees, and when they are included, they are not required to complete training to promote consistency in their work, the subcommittee’s report states.

New Student Orientation to hold programs on National Mall

From Page 1

She said orientation will include programming on the National Mall, so students will have a “book-end moment” to reflect upon when they graduate in the same place at the end of their undergraduate years.

“There’s been a lot that’s been lost throughout the course of the year, and I don’t know that we’re going to be able to gain all of that back,” she said. “But what we can do is have intentionality and care at the entry point to their physical experience to campus.”

Stewart Robinette, the assistant dean of students for campus living and residential education, said officials will implement a new “neighborhood model” in residence halls next fall, which will support and foster community among students within their room, floor, residence hall and outside to the general D.C. neighborhood.

Robinette said professional staff members called community coordinators will answer students’ questions and share bulletins and emails about events to help them stay engaged in their cam-

pus community as part of the neighborhood model.

The neighborhood model will replace the previous Resident Adviser program with the implementation of professional staff members with similar responsibilities. After officials canceled the RA program earlier this semester, more than half a dozen students said the decision could run the risk of damaging the residential community.

Robinette said community coordinators will also act as an extension of the orientation team and will help students transition into college and residence hall life. He said they will help students with aspects of the learning and living experience, like creating a college schedule and cooking with their kitchen gas stove, to create a more enjoyable campus life.

Luca Greenspun, a freshman majoring in public health, said he’s spent the past school year completing virtual classes from his home in Bethesda, Maryland, which is 20 minutes from campus. He said he has been able to build community within his major and meet other students through Zoom, but he still feels socially disconnected.

Greenspun said he tried to visit campus and meet with other students outside to build a sense of community. He said he found friends as part of the Naval Reserve Officers Training Corps and through group work during classes.

He said next year he hopes administrators will understand that members of the Class of 2024 will be entering with the academic experiences of sophomores but with the social experiences of freshmen.

Maria Fugel, a freshman majoring in nutrition science, said living in an apartment five minutes off campus left her feeling like she missed out on the community building experiences that come with living in a residence hall.

Fugel said she completed virtual classes from her home in New York in the fall and moved to an apartment off campus in the spring because she was unsure if officials would bring more students back to residence halls for the semester. She said moving to D.C. allowed her to meet more students than when she was living at home, but it was still difficult to meet new people in a virtual environment.

Rising juniors eye Foggy Bottom apartments this fall

From Page 1

The majority of students who lived in the District during the spring semester lived outside of residence halls in light of the pandemic, with about 2,300 living off campus and 1,500 residing on campus.

Sophomore Evan Rothkoff, who received an exemption last month, said he wanted to live off campus because of cheaper rates and increased space available with apartments.

“Instead of being in a 600 square foot box, I am in a 1500 square foot apartment for a hell of a lot cheaper than GW is,” Rothkoff said. “So it’s just the idea of wanting my own space, and I can do that easier than I could do it if I was at GW.”

The average rent for a single bedroom apartment in Foggy Bottom is \$2,500 a month, a 7 percent decrease from last year, according to rental website Zumper.

Yearly housing rates

for the next school year, not including dining, range from \$11,610 in a two-person studio apartment in The Aston, which is limited to juniors and seniors, to \$16,400 in a two-bedroom, four-person unit in District House.

Some rising juniors said they struggled with website connection issues while attempting to apply for exemptions, which they blamed on overload problems as hundreds of students filled out the application simultaneously. Officials said in an email to students shortly after the start of the exemption process that the increased web traffic with more student applicants than expected caused “minor delays” while the system processed the requests.

Rothkoff said he waited more than an hour for the website to properly submit his application for an exemption, but he could eventually submit his application and received approval for his request minutes later.

Sophomore Isabel Balderson said she completed the application

process in a matter of minutes. Balderson, who recently renewed a lease on a Foggy Bottom apartment for next year, said she shares her unit with two other students and requested a residency exemption after finding that her current lease is more affordable for her than a residence hall unit.

She said she wanted to live off campus to have more freedom from the University’s COVID-19 restrictions, which officials have started loosening this past semester. Administrators started allowing groups of up to 50 people to gather outdoors last week and permitted students to have one campus cohort guest in their room in early March.

“I assume there’s still going to be limitations on on-campus housing stuff, like hanging out in other dorms that you’re not living in and the amount of people you can live with,” she said. “At the apartment there’s more freedom, so I guess there’s not too many benefits to living on campus.”

Essay: I'm concerned about the climate

I'm worried about the climate. Every couple of days, my mind becomes completely consumed with the impending doom that is sure to arrive in the next couple of years in the form of constant wildfires, unsurvivable heat and rising ocean levels, to steal my supposedly carefree twenties away from me.

I stay up into the early hours of the morning, Googling some variation of "Is there hope for climate change," and "Biden climate change plan good?" I replay images of old, stuffy men in the distance, making decisions to benefit their self-interest as they drill further and further into the ground to exploit the Earth for oil. I fret over every piece of waste I encounter, wondering whether I should trash it or wash it and hope it qualifies for the recycling bin. What if I wash the aluminum foil I heated leftover lasagna on, does it become recyclable then? The anxiety is crippling.

Shreeya Aranake
Contributing Opinions Editor

What's worse is the guilt. The guilt is parasitical, feeding on a constant feeling of helplessness. Though I did not have any say in being born, nor did I have any part in presiding over the industrial revolution, I harbor the guilt of climate change like it's a part of a shady past I'm ashamed of.

But my existence and its carbon footprint are not excused just because I don't mean to cause environmental harm. I attend a University that has profited from fracking. I live in and, up until recently, have gladly reaped the benefits of the Global North, the group of countries that is



By Staff Cartoonist

responsible for 92 percent of excess global carbon emissions. Easy access to refrigerators and air conditioners are just a fraction of the benefits of living in a developed country, but they come at the expense of a more volatile environment.

Doom, doom, doom. That's what you get if you Google "climate change" and for a

good reason. I lived through California's wildfires last summer, and I can't seem to shake the trauma of living in a hellish orange atmosphere lasting day and night for days on end. Nor can I shake the image of ashes gathering on my car window, getting in my hair and on my clothes every time I stepped outside during that

horrid couple of weeks.

Sometimes I feel as though our generation is divided into two groups – those who are passionate activists and those who are overwhelmed by the mere thought of the crisis. I'm afraid to say that I've been a part of the latter group, but I'm hoping to transition into the former as I continue to educate

myself about ways to reduce my own carbon footprint and get involved with advocacy groups. The main drive for this transition? Googling "Climate change solutions."

The Sunrise Movement and other young climate activist groups have championed the phrase "climate justice," which I'm quite drawn to. The idea that we're using the climate crisis as an impetus to change the current world order to one where we take equitable care of people around the globe and the planet sounds both appealing and exciting.

It is also important to remember that we all have our role to play. Journalists reporting on climate solutions are telling young people that there's hope. Scientists are studying the climate crisis closely and are letting us know what exactly we're currently facing and could be facing in the near future. Even if some of us don't feel particularly trained in a career field, there are always volunteer opportunities that are doable for anybody right here in the D.C. area.

I'm not looking to give up on the climate yet. I know there are going to be tough years ahead, but I know our generation can handle its burdens. The most important thing to remember is that we're going to survive for, at the very least, the rest of this century, and that still means something to me. Governments around the world are getting more serious, the press can't seem to get enough of climate reporting and those signs bode well for our engagement with climate solutions.

—Shreeya Aranake, a junior majoring in history, is the contributing opinions editor.

Introducing The Hatchet's Volume 118 editorial board

STAFF EDITORIAL

It's been quite a year. A lot has happened at GW, in the District and to college students across the globe, and when big things happen that affect students, the editorial board tries to make sense of it all and spark discussion.

In the past year, we've demanded the resignation of University President Thomas LeBlanc. We've recapped the good, the bad and the ugly of GW's 200-year history. We called on GW to institute a vaccine mandate months before that decision was made. And we've endorsed candidates for the Student Association's top jobs. Each week, we inform the community, challenge our readers' preconceptions and advocate for the well-being of students.

As the new editorial board takes over, we wanted to take this opportunity to explain our role on The Hatchet and to introduce this volume's members.

Every week, the editorial board meets to discuss an issue or event relevant to GW students, D.C. or higher education. Sometimes, opinions editor Andrew Sugrue and contributing opinions editor Shreeya Aranake will choose the topic beforehand. Other times the full group will come to an agreement on what topic to address. Through discussion and debate, the editorial board hammers out a consensus view on the topic at hand. Sugrue and Aranake then co-write the weekly staff editorial reflecting that view, and it becomes the official stance of the paper.

We do not operate using any hard-and-fast editorial philosophy, but there are a few common threads that run through most of what

we write. We tend to advocate strongly for policies and decisions that would improve students' experiences at GW, like extending the Pass/No Pass policy and prioritizing students in the allocation of COVID-19 relief funds. We do not shy away from criticizing administrators, many of whom regularly read the Hatchet. We are, after all, students first. We aim to inform our readers, offer a nuanced perspective based on the collection of our own unique experiences and to stand up for what will make students' lives better.

This volume's editorial board consists of seven Hatchet staff members. In convening this year's editorial board, Sugrue and Aranake aimed to assemble a group of diverse, experienced and insightful editors to represent the paper.

No member of the news section sits on the editorial board, and there is a strict divide between the newsroom and the editorial board. Additionally, if a conflict of interest ever arises for a member of our editorial board – like belonging to a student organization that we're writing about – then they will recuse themselves from that piece.

Our editorial board encompasses a wide range of identities and experiences, but we are also cognizant that we do not necessarily represent every single background or point of view of the student body. We will not shy away from controversy or voicing an unpopular opinion – but if we call it wrong, we'll fix it. Part of honestly and thoughtfully weighing in on important issues is also knowing when past positions need to be up-

dated or changed based on new information. Last year, as protests over the police murder of George Floyd sparked a renewed national conversation about racial justice, we officially retracted a previous editorial board's stance that the GW Police Department should hire armed police officers. Earlier this year, after then-Student Association President Howard Brookins was accused of sexual misconduct, we officially rescinded our prior endorsement and demanded that he resign from his post. When we get it wrong, we'll make it right, and if we need to change our view based on new facts or events, we'll do that too.

Fundamentally, our goals are to advocate for students and to make our readers think hard about the issues our community is facing at any given moment. We do not ask that you automatically adopt the stances we hold just because we hold them. Rather, we aim to challenge our readers' priors and present fresh perspectives for your consideration. We invite disagreement and productive dialogue.

If you strongly disagree with a position we stake out in a staff editorial, we encourage you to write a letter to the editor. If you want to offer a different perspective on something we cover based on your own experience or expertise, we would be thrilled to consider an op-ed submission from you.

Volume 118's editorial board is looking forward to the year to come, and we hope you can count on us for perspectives that challenge your preconceptions, introduce new points of view and stick up for students.

Calls to abolish police ignore the harsh reality of crime

A movement calling to abolish the police has been growing throughout the country, including on college campuses like GW's. After a series of high profile police killings of Black Americans, including George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the idea that we must reform our police system has become apparent – which is why reform has garnered bipartisan support. Some proposals, like curbing the power of police unions, ending no-knock warrants and ensuring police are not the only ones responding to mental health emergencies, are reasonable solutions. Other proposals, however, are anything but.

Jack Elbaum
Columnist

Calls to abolish the police fall into this latter category. In fact, it is still baffling that this is a proposal that people have taken seriously at all. Students must resist efforts to abolish the police because it would hurt its intended beneficiaries and would doom the United States to be the world's next utopian failure.

First and foremost, abolishing the police would hurt vulnerable populations living in low-income and high-crime neighborhoods the most. It is for this reason that polls show those who live in these communities do not want police to go away but instead want a greater police presence. In Chicago's low-income neighborhoods, for example, only 5 percent

of residents say they would like the police to spend less time in their neighborhood, while 68 percent say they would like the police to spend more time. This should not be surprising, as most of the people who live in high-crime neighborhoods are not criminals. As a result, they have the same desire for safety as anybody else.

Taking away the police in these neighborhoods would pave the way for unnecessary loss of life. Last year, the murder rate increased by 30 percent in major cities across the nation, and it increased 19 percent right here in D.C. One of the reasons for this may have been the disempowerment of law enforcement. In total, almost 1,300 additional people were killed. Based on this, it is hard to imagine just how much more it would increase if we simply got rid of the police. While abolishing the police may attract support in activist circles, it does nothing to protect human life in the real world. Many students at GW who would like to abolish the police are too removed from the actual threat of crime to have the policies they support impact them in any real way. In other words, it is the height of privilege.

The typical reply to the argument laid out above is that crime rates are simply exacerbated by over-policing and that, in short, community resources are the answer to the root problem. This argument makes a rash assumption – that crime can actually be fully stopped if only there were enough of these

community resources to distribute to residents. It is true that we should invest in better mental health resources for underserved communities, but the truth is that there will always be crime and there will always be people who victimize others. The idea that we can simply get rid of police, when we know dangerous people will always threaten the lives of others, is a recipe for disaster. Given this basic truth, it is impossible to see how the abolition of law enforcement could solve more problems than it creates.

At the root of calls to abolish the police is a dedicated rejection of unfortunate realities in our society, which leads advocates of abolishing the police to propose utopian solutions. After all, it may be great to live in a world without crime, but that would necessitate that we live in a world without crime. Unfortunately, a world totally without crime is not possible.

It is undeniable that some type of police reform is needed. But attempting to completely take away the police – which is such an important mode of protection for law-abiding citizens – is not high-minded or noble, no matter how appealing one can make it sound in a class paper. Rather, it will hurt the people it is attempting to help and put us on the path to become yet another failed utopian project. Thoughtful citizens at GW and beyond must reject it.

—Jack Elbaum, a freshman majoring in international affairs and economics, is a columnist.

2021 COMMENCEMENT GUIDE

What to expect from the second virtual Commencement

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

For the second year in a row, GW's seniors won't be graduating on the National Mall.

Instead, they'll sit in front of computers in their own homes to watch their name flash across a screen for a brief moment of recognition. But unlike last year, GW is the only university in the D.C. area that isn't planning on holding some form of an in-person Commencement ceremony this May.

With that added sting, it might be hard for seniors to fully enjoy the virtual itinerary administrators have planned for this bicentennial year.

From themed Zoom backgrounds to what officials promise will be "an exciting, engaging, 'Only at GW'" virtual Commencement ceremony, here's what administrators have planned:

College and major-specific virtual celebrations will begin Wednesday, and you can find the full detailed schedule of commencement celebrations on GW's commencement website. But the main event, a University-wide Commencement celebration, will be held Sunday at 1 p.m.

Administrators chose the 14th Secretary of the Smithsonian, Lonnie G. Bunch III, as the main Commencement speaker. Bunch previously served on GW's faculty as a professor of museum studies and history from 1990 to 2000 and

was also the founding director of the National Museum of African American History and Culture. Bunch will also be given an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters, but he has asked to formally receive it when the University is next able to hold an in-person celebration on the National Mall, according to a University release.

Bunch will be joined by former chair of the Board of Trustees Nelson Carbonell, who will receive an honorary Doctor of Public Service. Carbonell is an alumnus from the Class of 1985 and served as chair of the Board from 2013 to 2019.

The celebration will be livestreamed on the University's Commencement website starting at 1 p.m. and will be posted on the website as a video afterwards for students to watch or rewatch on their own time.

Friends, family and professors of the graduates are also encouraged to record short, 15-second videos congratulating seniors on their accomplishments, which will be included throughout the virtual Commencement ceremony.

Seniors and their loved ones can also use the "Watch Together" option that creates a video chat with friends and family to watch the University-wide Commencement celebration as well as school-specific celebrations as if they were gathered together. To use this feature, seniors have to cre-



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY LILLIAN BAUTISTA | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Graduates' families, friends and professors are encouraged to record short congratulatory videos for seniors, which will be included in the virtual Commencement ceremony.

ate a "Watch Together" account and generate a code that can be shared with the people they want to watch with. A maximum of six devices including desktops, laptops, tablets and phones are able to log into each video chat room.

Administrators have also created a variety of ready-to-use digi-

tal graphics for students to "celebrate anywhere." These GW- and graduation-themed graphics are available for free download and use and include graphics for yard signs, cake designs, Zoom backgrounds, GIFs, Facebook frames and Instagram lenses. Seniors will also be mailed "celebration boxes,"

with GW-branded paraphernalia. Despite a hard postponement of an in-person Commencement Celebration, administrators maintain that they plan to hold traditional ceremonies on the National Mall for both the classes of 2020 and 2021 individually "when it is safe to do so."

Viral social media moments from the past four years

ISABELLA MACKINNON
STAFF WRITER

The graduating seniors have lived through their fair share of memorable viral pop culture moments.

Indulge in the nostalgia and reflect on how simple some moments on the internet felt to us all just four years ago.

For the graduating class of 2021, we've compiled some standout cultural moments that went viral while you were in college.

2017

GW's a cappella group, the GW Sirens, went viral for singing "Quiet" at a Women's March in D.C. The video garnered 21 million views on Facebook and the group was invited to perform on "Full Frontal with Samantha Bee."

An awkward moment at the Oscars gained buzz with the Best Picture award mistakenly going to "La La Land" and then being revoked and rightfully awarded to "Moonlight," but not before creators of "La La Land" had begun their acceptance speeches.

2018

During the second semester of this year's seniors' freshman year, social media users everywhere hopped out of cars to do the "In My Feelings" challenge to the Drake song, starting a dance with the lyrics "Kiki, do you love me?"

Facebook founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg testified in a joint

hearing before Senate committees and went viral when Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch asked how the social media platform made money and Zuckerberg replied "Senator, we run ads."

2019

During their sophomore year, School of Media and Public Affairs Associate Professor Dave Karpf went viral on Twitter after tweeting a photo of an email he received from New York Times columnist Bret Stephens, who was offended by a separate tweet in which he was likened to a bed bug by Karpf. The email was carbon copied to then-Provost Forrest Maltzman.

One of 2019's most out-of-this-world events occurred when more than 2 million people RSVP'd to a Facebook event planning to "Storm Area 51, They Can't Stop All Of Us." The plot was an effort to uncover what the government might be hiding in the classified area.

2020

Unsurprisingly, the rundown for 2020 feels like it is at least three years long. We could tell this year was off to a bad start when, within the first three months, fears circulated of a third World War, President Donald Trump's impeachment trial began and news of a virus began circulating.

With everyone spending ample time indoors in quarantine, TikTok exploded as a social media and content sharing platform. Trends circulated at warp speed with millions of

creators recreating dances to Doja Cat's "Say So" and Megan Thee Stallion's "Savage."

Last year's presidential election produced a treasure trove of memes, from Democratic candidate Bernie Sanders' campaign video in which he states "I am once again asking you for financial support" to former President Trump's interview with a visibly dissatisfied Jonathan Swan of Axios.

2021

This year's seniors' graduation year started off with a bang six days into the year when an insurrection protesting the election results stormed the U.S. Capitol on the day of the election certification. President Trump's involvement in inciting this riot promptly resulted in the permanent suspension of his infamous Twitter account.

The viral moment from this year's inauguration came in the form of Sanders, who showed up to the prestigious event in a practical brown coat and vibrant, knitted mittens with a manila envelope tucked under his arm. The vaccine rollout has triggered comparisons and jokes on social media pitting the three U.S. distributors — Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson & Johnson — against each other, and people shared their best coping mechanisms to deal with the side effects. Most hyped up the Pfizer vaccine and made fun of the other two. Most notably, videos have circulated of people of all ages aggressively windmilling their arms post-vaccine to stave off the soreness.

Social media circulated the "Distracted Boyfriend" meme, showing a boyfriend admiring another girl while holding his his visibly upset girlfriend's hand.

Social media users hopped out of cars to do the "In My Feelings Challenge" to Drake's song, dancing while their cars kept moving.

An Instagram post of a picture of an egg broke Kylie Jenner's record for most liked Instagram photo, racking up over 50 million likes.

The first presidential debate made headlines for the vitriolic display on behalf of both candidates, contributing to memes during the 2020 presidential election.

The COVID-19 vaccine rollout has triggered jokes around the best coping mechanisms to deal with side effects, like windmilling

2017

An awkward moment at the Oscars gained buzz when the Best Picture award went to "La La Land" instead of "Moonlight."

2018

Fame came to lovable icons, like the Philadelphia Flyers' quirky mascot, Gritty.

2019

SMPA Associate Professor Dave Karpf went viral on Twitter after likening New York Times columnist Bret Stephens to a bed bug.

2020

TikTok exploded as a social media platform with trends circulating at warp speed, recreating dances to Doja Cat's "Say So" and Megan Thee Stallion's "Savage."

2021

A viral moment came from this year's inauguration when Sen. Bernie Sanders showed up to the prestigious event in a brown coat and vibrant, knitted mittens with a manila envelope under his arm.

NICHOLAS ANASTACIO | GRAPHICS EDITOR

Seniors reflect on their college experience

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

All college students have lost a year of their normal college experience, but the Class of 2021 has taken an especially hard blow, losing what should have been a

memorable last year on campus.

Last spring brought an abrupt end to their time as undergraduates, and for many seniors, it was the last time they set foot on campus. So before GW's seniors head onto the rest of their lives, we asked them to answer a few questions about their college experiences

that have been capstoned by a pandemic.

We posed open-ended questions asking seniors to reflect on their college experience, come up with their best advice for incoming freshmen and to take a guess about what the world will look like 10 years from now.

With mixed emotions, here's what they said:

Reflect on your college experience. What is your main takeaway from the past four years?

"Should've gone to a cheaper school, would've had the same job prospects anyway (none)."

"College is what you make of it. Little comes to you on a silver platter — make your own opportunities and luck."

"Live like you're spending the rest of college on Zoom, starting tomorrow."

"Cherish your time here, at some point you'll look back and want more of it."

"Although GW wasn't perfect, I'm so grateful for all the academic and professional experiences I've had at the school. I really feel like GW gave me the opportunity to take part in a lot of unique experiences and position myself very well for a future career."

Drop one or two sentences with your best advice for incoming freshmen.

"Trust no one, they are all trying to take your money or your job."

"Embrace your first year residential community! My strongest friendships are all from there."

"Write like a person. Never, ever be afraid to speak up and be wrong."

"Focus less on internships as a freshman. Focus more on getting to know D.C. outside Foggy Bottom, Georgetown, the mall, downtown, Capitol Hill and Chinatown. It's a big city!"

"No, you don't know more about politics than your professors who work on the Hill just because you watch John Oliver's show."

Take a stab at predicting the future of politics, technology, culture, media, etc.

"Hopefully in a more just, safe world. It's up to you guys! I bet you'll do incredible things."

"There won't be a future, we'll all be underwater or nuked."

"Ten years from now, Netflix will not be the most dominant streaming service."

"The next Democratic president after Biden will be Andrew Yang, not Kamala Harris."

"GW will still be a real estate company."

"2030 politics: most of the current socialists will have completed their transformation into rank-and-file Republicans by this point."



SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Nationals Park is currently operating at 25 percent capacity, keeping distance between guests to maintain a safe environment as the pandemic continues.

Group activities for a last hurrah in the District

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

As graduating seniors wrap up their time in Foggy Bottom, it's time to plan a last hurrah with your friends or family to reminisce on your experiences living in the nation's capital.

From enjoying a pedal boat ride on the Washington Harbor to attending one final Nationals game, here are some fun group activities to enjoy with your friends or family to close out your college experience.

Potomac Paddle Club

Take a pedal boat ride with your friends to catch a final glimpse of the District's most iconic landmarks and attractions.

Potomac Paddle Club, located in the Washington Harbour, offers private group "Cycleboat" rides (\$45 to \$55) in which a group of eight to 16 passengers pedal on their own bike seats as the captain of the boat navigates the ride down the Potomac River. Passengers sit at a bar with 10 bike seats, so not everyone needs to paddle the entire time if you bring more people than there are bike seats.

Each 90-minute boat ride travels from the Washington Harbour in Georgetown to Columbia Island Marina near the Pentagon for a short break, before returning to the Harbour. Customers are encouraged to bring their own alcoholic beverages and coolers aboard the boat. While liquor is not permitted, you and your friends may bring hard seltzers, beer

or wine to toast to your last adventure in the District.

The Chocolate House

If you and your chocolate-loving friends are looking to splurge a little for your last hooray, check out The Chocolate House for a large variety of artisan chocolate from brands all around the world.

Located between Adams Morgan and Dupont Circle, the chocolate shop sells luxurious truffle boxes (\$25.50 to \$49), along with bars and confections (\$8.50 to \$30), including vegan chocolates for non-dairy consumers. You and your friends can opt to visit the store to shop for chocolates in person or purchase the chocolate online. Regardless of the option you choose, the chocolate would make for a lovely addition to a celebratory picnic or an at-home chocolate tasting experience.

Rock Creek Park

Plan an excursion away from the city and enjoy some greenery in the nation's third oldest national park. Composed of 32 miles of hiking trails, historical Civil War fortifications and outdoor activities like horseback riding and biking, Rock Creek Park provides a lovely corner of nature to take an adventure with your friends.

For history buffs, the Milkhouse Ford Hike winds through historical attractions like a Civil War fort, a poet's cabin and a creek crossing that people used to drive through in the 20th century. For walkers or hikers looking for a scenic

trail, try the Three-Mile Rolling Meadows Bridge Hike for the serene creek views.

Nationals game

Catch one final Nationals baseball game with your friends and family to celebrate your graduation. The Nationals' schedule contains a number of home games at Nationals Park over the next few months, facing off against teams like the Orioles, Rays and Mets.

The park provides discounted tickets for groups of 13 or more, making this an attractive opportunity for seniors with a big family or friend group to take advantage of. The Nationals Park currently operates at 25 percent capacity, spacing out guests and creating an overall safer environment in light of the ongoing pandemic.

Brunch Cruise

Enhance the typical D.C. brunching experience by cruising along the Potomac River as you and your friends enjoy your meal. Odyssey D.C.'s two-hour Premier Brunch Cruise (\$81.90) offers unlimited beverages, an expansive brunch buffet and scenic river and landmark views to see from the glass-enclosed deck or outdoor observation lounge.

Opt for a table reservation (\$106.90) by the window for the best views or upgrade your ticket to include creative cocktails (\$127.80) if you're looking to make the most out of your experience. Tables can hold up to 10 diners, so the getaway is a compelling option for the whole friend group.

Champagne cocktails for your grad party

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

Popping a bottle of champagne is a rite of passage for any new grad, and after a year like this, everyone deserves some bubbly. Treat yourself and your newly vaccinated grad party guests to one of these festive choices to celebrate the close of your college experience.

For a twist on a classic flute of champagne, try out one of these cocktails to toast with at your celebration this year.

'Mimosa Cocktail' from the Spruce Eats

½ ounces orange liqueur (triple sec)
1 ½ ounces fresh orange juice
3 ½ ounces chilled champagne
Orange slice for garnish



Pour orange liqueur into a champagne flute. Add the fresh orange juice and top with chilled champagne. Garnish with an orange slice.

'Moscow Mule Mimosa' from Delish

½ cup sugar
1 lime
4 ounces vodka
4 ounces ginger beer
4 ounces Prosecco
2 ounces orange juice



Run a slice of lime around the rim of the glass and dip the rim into the sugar. Divide the vodka, ginger beer, prosecco, orange juice among the glasses, garnish with a lime wedge and enjoy!

'Pomegranate Champagne Spritzer' from Tasty

½ pomegranate
½ lemon
½ cup of water
1 bottle of champagne



Cut the pomegranate in half and tap it with a spoon over a bowl to extract the seeds. Squeeze half a lemon over the seeds and pour half a cup of water into the bowl. Spoon the mixture into an ice cube tray and freeze the cubes for an hour. When it comes time for the toast, add a cube to your glass and pour champagne over top.

'Dole Whip Mimosas' from Delish

¼ cup sugar
Pineapple wedges
1 cup pineapple juice
½ cup coconut milk
1 bottle champagne
1 generous scoop or squirt whipped topping



Run the pineapple around the rim of the glass and dip the rim into the sugar. Set aside. In a separate glass, mix together the pineapple juice and coconut milk until completely combined. Pour into the champagne glasses and fill the remainder with champagne. Top with your choice of whipped topping and a fresh pineapple wedge.

'Champagne Cosmopolitan' from Inspired Taste

½ ounce vodka
½ ounce triple sec
½ ounce cranberry juice
½ ounce lime juice
Dash of simple syrup
Ice
2 ounces chilled champagne



In a cocktail shaker, combine vodka, triple sec, cranberry juice, lime juice and ice. Shake until cold and add simple syrup until sufficiently chilled. Strain into a chilled martini glass and top with cold champagne.

Bottomless brunches to celebrate Commencement

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

To celebrate Commencement, get your vaccinated friends together for a boozy brunch with bottomless cocktails.

Most restaurants around D.C. have brunch menus, but not all restaurants offer bottomless cocktail options. Without much of the usual excitement that is packed into senior year, you deserve to take full advantage of an endless stream of mimosas.

So if plenty of good food and alcohol sounds like your ideal celebratory brunch, here are a few places to book a reservation:

Fainting Goat

Fainting Goat is a new-American fare restaurant with a short and straightforward brunch menu with a \$22 option of bottomless mimosas, bloody marys or sangria. You can personalize your mimosa with juice options of orange, white cranberry or mango. There is a 90-minute service limit on your bottomless drinks with a required purchase of one entree. It might be hard to choose which dish to pair with your drinks with options like goat cheese fondue (\$14) with fredo peppers and grilled bread, steak and eggs (\$29) with chimichurri and crispy potatoes or a waffle (\$15) with whipped mascarpone and orange zest.

1330 U St. NW. Brunch runs from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday through Sunday.

Duke's Grocery

As a campus favorite, Duke's Grocery is a convenient option for your celebratory brunch. For \$24 you can sip on mimosas or house-spiced bloody marys for 90 minutes. Meanwhile, you can munch on dish-



Fainting Goat customers can pair their bottomless mimosas and bloody marys with dishes like cheese fondue or steak and eggs.

es from its English-inspired menu. If you're in a breakfast mood, try the "proper English brekkie" (\$20) which comes with all of the traditional fixings like banger sausages and beans. There's also a vegetarian version of the full English breakfast for \$18. Other options include truffle mac and cheese (\$13), smoked salmon (\$9) or the "brunchie burger" (\$14) with charred red onion and a sweet chili sauce.

Foggy Bottom location at 2000 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Brunch runs from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Kitsuen

This Japanese restaurant only offers mimosas for their \$25 bot-

tomless option but you get the benefit of choosing among a fusion of classic American brunch favorites and Japanese flavors for your celebratory brunch. During your 90 minutes of bottomless mimosas, try dishes like its kara-age biscuit sandwich (\$12) with chili fried chicken, house pickles and spicy mayo, french toast sticks (\$8) with matcha tea syrup, pork belly buns (\$12) with house pickles and fried garlic chili or the omurice runny egg omelette (\$15) with spiced fried rice.

1362 H St. NE. Brunch runs from noon to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Ambar

Ambar is a Balkan restaurant

that offers an all-inclusive bottomless brunch for \$39 per person. The restaurant requires the whole table to participate in this option to enjoy and there is a two-hour limit, but with an extensive food and cocktail menu, it's definitely worth the fee. As far as drinks go you can choose from traditional, peach lavender, mango hibiscus or mixed berry mimosas as well as the house bloody mary. The bottomless menu includes charcuterie, sliders, egg dishes, spreads, flatbreads, soups, salads and sweets with standout dishes like beef prosciutto benedict and fried walnut-crust chicken slider with pickled fredo peppers

and apple-wasabi slaw.

523 8th St. SE. Brunch runs from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Agora

This Greek restaurant has two bottomless brunch options to choose from, depending on whether you're more in the mood for food or drinks. For \$40 you can enjoy both bottomless drinks and food, or for \$20 you can opt for just bottomless drinks. For both options diners have a two-hour limit and can choose from mimosas, bloody marys or liquor mixed drinks. Agora's brunch food menu includes items like baklava french toast (\$10 a la carte), smoked salmon (\$10 a la carte) with labneh and cucumbers and truffled eggs (\$8 a la carte). If you opt for the all-inclusive choice, its selection of dips and cheeses are a great option to graze on while sipping your cocktail.

1527 17th St. NW. Brunch runs from 11 a.m. to 3:45 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Mission

Mission is a Tex-Mex staple in D.C., and its bottomless brunch won't disappoint. For \$26.99 you can enjoy 90 minutes of bottomless margaritas, mimosas, Bud Lights or bloody marys. To avoid drink sharing, the restaurant requires everyone at the table to participate and order a food item. You can choose from the menu's selection of starters like beef empanadas (\$11), brunch items like the chicken tinga brunch bowl (\$14) and lunch items like Mexican Chile wings (\$13). And for those with a sweet tooth, you can end your meal with churro bites or tres leches, both \$10.

1606 20th St. NW. Brunch runs from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

GAMES OF THE WEEK



BASEBALL
vs. Richmond
Saturday | Noon
GW duels Richmond in a
doubleheader Saturday.



WOMEN'S ROWING
at A-10 Championship
Saturday | 8 a.m.
The Colonials begin the race for the
A-10 title this weekend.

NUMBER CRUNCH **.598**

Softball's 2021 overall slugging percentage, up from its five-year average of .444.

Men's rowing gears up for IRA National Championship after postponed season

NURIA DIAZ
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

After finishing their final regular season, the men's rowing team is gearing up for the Intercollegiate Rowing Association National Championship at the end of the month.

The Colonials endured a postponed season after the COVID-19 pandemic pushed the fall 2020 races to the spring. After competing in just four competitions all season, men's rowing looks to end on a high note at the IRA National Championship ahead of the program's termination following the end of the 2020-21 season.

"We've been trying to focus really hard on staying intrinsic, and focusing on the family we have inside the team, and not trying to get distracted by being cut, COVID and temptations to make poor decisions," head coach Eric Gehrke said. "But really staying inside the program and making sure everybody's committed to each other, and putting down our best spring season we can considering everything."

The team competed in their first race April 19 where the first Varsity Eight and second Varsity Eight collected wins over Navy Lights and Jacksonville. The first and second Varsity Eight also swept Saint Joseph's and Drexel April 24.

Gehrke said he has placed an emphasis on their own process and execution rather than the opponent because the team knows

they can "hang" with the better teams. He said the team is training further into the season than they are accustomed to, but the team is "amped" for the opportunity to still compete.

Despite dropping their races to Navy May 2, all three Varsity Eight squads posted wins over Holy Cross the same day to earn the sweep. The first Varsity Eight also finished second overall at the Dad Vail Regatta Saturday while the second and third boats claimed first and third place in their grand finale competitions, respectively.

"We have been executing quite well, we're 5-2 in our top two boats, which is as good as GW has ever done," Gehrke said. "We've been ranked in the top 10, top 12 all season, which is really good for GW."

The last time the Colonials competed at the IRA Championship was in 2019. The first Varsity Eight put on a historic showing, winning the Third-Level Final to mark the best finish in program history at No. 13 in the nation.

Gehrke said the coaching staff has also focused on adhering to the COVID-19 protocols set by both the athletic department and the D.C. guidelines to return to the championship. He said it presented a challenge due to the large roster, but the team is doing their part to remain compliant.

"We've got fairly high expectations of ourselves, no matter what the consequences are around us," Gehrke said. "So the team is really handling themselves very



HATCHET FILE PHOTO
The Colonials' last visit to the IRA Championship in 2019 saw the first varsity eight finish No. 13 in the nation, its best finish in program history.

respectfully in terms of their own professionalism about training and executing."

Sophomore Aidan Rowland said one of the major challenges for the team was fitting their high-level training into the pandemic. He said the team was only allowed to train in single boats rather than as a

group, but it allowed him to acquire new individual skills.

Rowland said the overall team effort has become a big motivating factor after GW announced the discontinuation of the program. He said the squad will look to build off their recent success ahead of the IRA Championship and cement the

program's legacy.

He said his experience on the rowing team ultimately allowed him to grow as an individual at GW during the pandemic. He said he takes pride in the team's ability to make something out of their final season and hopes to conclude it on a successful note.

Women's rowing prepares for A-10 Championship

NURIA DIAZ
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

ROMAN BOBEK
SPORTS EDITOR

After two years off the water, women's rowing is preparing for the A-10 Championship beginning May 15.

The Colonials rode out a postponed season after the COVID-19 pandemic delayed the fall 2020 slate to the spring. After competing in just four races all season, women's rowing looks to replicate its historical second-place finish at the 2019 A-10 Championship this time in 2021.

"I think we've been working on really just trying to stay focused on the simple things and the things that we can control this year," head coach Marci Robles said. "There's just been so much out of our control and you know, disruptive. And so just keeping the blinders on and making sure that we are focusing on what's directly in front of us."

Robles said the team has been doing a "phenomenal job" following the COVID-19 guidelines in order to retain their season. Initially, the team had to train in smaller boats in groups of four or pairs instead of the championship size of eight. She said she's proud of the team for demonstrating their commitment to one another.

"I think that speaks volumes to the care and the commitment that these athletes have put into just making sure that they're managing every day in a way that's responsible," Robles said. "Again it's a big team

and we all train together and so knowing that everybody's actions, no matter how small, have an impact on the group."

She said she has also placed an emphasis on prioritizing mental health and staying connected as a team over the summer given the myriad of challenges they have faced amid the pandemic.

"I think we spent a lot of time processing, having something taken away so abruptly," Robles said. "I think it has certainly inspired a lot of gratitude for the opportunities that we do have now."

The Colonials have aimed to take full advantage of the season now that they're back in action. Despite falling to No. 12 Rutgers, all three squads defeated Saint Joseph's in the season opener with the first Varsity Eight winning by a margin of six seconds March 27. Two weeks later, the first and second varsity boats finished second behind Rhode Island but overcame Massachusetts and Saint Joseph's yet again.

Senior Alexa Miller-Smith said she was "pleased" with how the teams stacked up against conference foes Massachusetts and Rhode Island. She added the team has gotten faster since their last meeting and is "optimistic" about closing the gap in the A-10 Championship.

GW was also swept by Navy in all three contests April 17 but bounced back against George Mason. The first Varsity Eight topped the Patriots May 2 by a healthy margin of 20 seconds while the second Varsity Eight and

the Varsity Four each won by more than 30 seconds.

"I think it's always nice to have a couple more races, just ironing out the racing plan and getting a couple more practice runs under your belt," Miller-Smith said. "But I honestly think that we've done a really good job about making the most of the races we have had."

She said though the condensed slate of races this year has limited their competition, the squad has been able to practice against each other to simulate the competitive atmosphere when they're not racing against other teams. The team is excited to see who will be in the final lineup come this weekend.

Senior Emma Peelle said the complications presented by the pandemic make it harder to predict who will come out on top in the A-10 and added it could be "anyone's race." She said the team is feeling confident ahead of the championships this weekend after taking down George Mason and rebuilding their cohesion as a team.

"As a collective, the team just was a little bit more relaxed and confident and that really translated onto the water," Peelle said. "We had some really good solid pieces, and it really is just a testament to all the training we've been doing and having that behind our backs, just building our confidence for future races to come."

The Colonials will set out on the Cooper River for a chance at the A-10 title Saturday in Pennsauken, New Jersey.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO
Head coach Terry Weir said the team was more consistent toward the end of the season and he's excited for what the future holds for the men's and women's squads.

Men's and women's track and field close out season

ISHANI CHETTRI
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

NURIA DIAZ
CONTRIBUTING
SPORTS EDITOR

Men's and women's track and field put on a strong showing at the A-10 Championship May 2.

The women's team set a program high of 24 points, while the men's team scored the second most points in program history with 10. Overall, each squad finished in 10th place by the end of the competitive weekend.

"They didn't get this chance last year so to come full circle and be able to get out there and compete was great," head coach Terry Weir said. "The main thing I took away from it is just how good this conference is getting. And I know some of our performances that we had this past weekend, a couple years ago that would win some races, or win some jumps, or be all-A-10 or definitely score."

On the women's side, senior Kathryn Nohilly finished third in the 1500 meter race, while senior Margaret Coogan earned fifth place and set a personal record time of 4:30.09. Nohilly also received all-conference honors to become the fourth Colonial in program history to do so.

"Sports are a lot more fun when you feel like you're setting new records and succeeding," Nohilly said. "And so that's what we did. And I think what led to that has really been our teamwork and just

supporting one another through all the weirdness of this year."

Weir said Nohilly's success also depended on her consistency throughout her training. He said she's had "very little hiccups" since she contracted mono back in her sophomore year and has made the most of her limited opportunities during the pandemic.

Nohilly said the onus to prepare for the meets has been on the athletes themselves much of this season, since most of the men's and women's runners were not on campus in the fall, instead opting to train at home.

"The coaches are sending you your workouts and your training plans," Nohilly said. "It's up to each individual to basically carry that out. And our team did a really good job of that, which I think is part of the reason that we were able to have so much fun when we came back to school."

In addition to her third-place showing in the 1500 meter race, Nohilly also grabbed fourth in the 3000 meter steeplechase event.

"Right now, she's on the cusp of making the NCAA national meet in that, so we're hoping we get another race or two in there to solidify that, but she's having a fantastic year," Weir said. "I couldn't be happier for her, and I think she's just scratching the surface, honestly."

On the men's squad, sophomore Miles Grant broke his previous school record to notch a new record of 1.92 meters in the

high jump, while setting another personal best in the triple jump with a distance of 12.67 meters. Sophomore Ryan Fowkes also placed fourth in the 1500 meter race, while the relay team took eighth in the 4x800 meter race.

"It was a lot of fun because, I mean, it's been a weird season," Grant said. "And it's just been really nice to be able to compete and get back out on the tracks."

Grant said although the postponed season limited his ability to train ahead of the championships, it also allowed him to be more flexible with his individual workouts, something that Weir said Grant capitalized upon fully.

Weir said the team has shown more consistency at the end of the season overall. Looking forward to next year, he said he's excited for what the season holds as the younger members of the men's and women's squads look to grow from their experiences.

"I just thought all of our first-years have handled this fantastic and a lot of that has to do with our senior leadership that we've had," Weir said. "So I'm really excited we get a whole year of competing again and some sort of normalcy. I'm really excited to see what both teams do next year."

Both squads will prepare for the Charm City Last Chance Tuesday as they exit conference competition and look to earn bids to the NCAA championship meets beginning June 9.



FILE PHOTO BY DEAN WHITELAW
All three women's rowing squads fell to Navy last month but completed a sweep against George Mason last week.