

The GW Hatchet

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Bunch calls on graduates to lead with empathy in virtual Commencement address

ISHA TRIVEDI
NEWS EDITOR

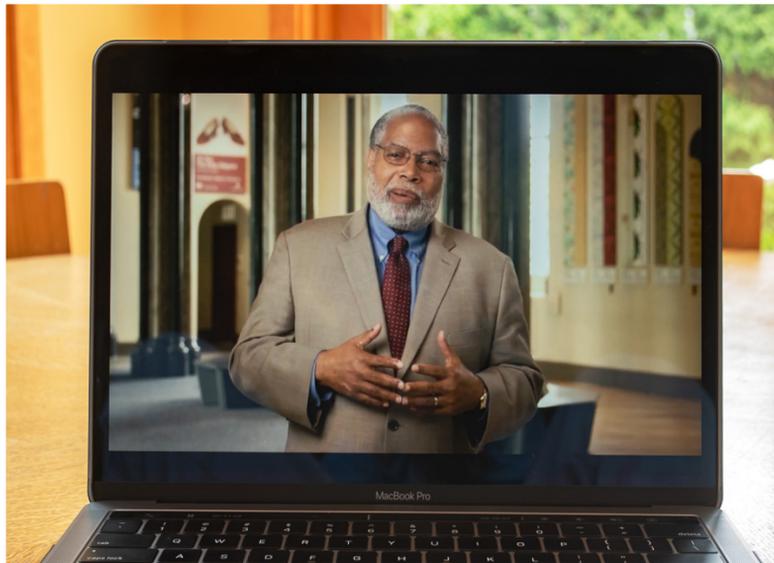
YANKUN ZHAO
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Standing in the halls of the Smithsonian Castle, former professor Lonnie Bunch thought back to a time when a stranger protected him from a mob of White teenagers carrying baseball bats and rocks at the age of 13.

Bunch, the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution and the first Black person to hold the title, said the incident showed him the impact of standing up for what's right in the face of adversity and taught him to never stereotype others. Bunch said the stranger's willingness to defend him demonstrated that there are times when everyone, no matter how strong, fast or smart, can benefit from the "sustenance, inspiration and guidance" of others.

"At that moment, I learned that help comes from unlikely places and that generosity of spirit binds our humanity, irrespective of race, religion or background," Bunch said.

Addressing the graduating Class of 2021 as the University's first virtual Commencement speaker, Bunch told GW's newest alumni to use their education and empathy to contribute to making the United States a better, kinder place.



DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Bunch will receive a Doctor of Humane Letters honorary degree when officials eventually hold an in-person Commencement ceremony.

Graduates had attended the University remotely for more than a year amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and GW was the only college in the District to hold their Commencement virtually. Officials plan to invite both the Class of 2020 and Class of 2021 back for in-person ceremonies on the National Mall at a future date when "it is safe to do so."

Bunch acknowledged the added burdens graduates endured over the past year because of the pandemic and the national reckoning on racial and social injustice.

"Moments of adver-

sity are part of the human condition," he said. "What matters, though, is how we respond to these moments. Adversity, like your education, can prepare you for the world, can instill empathy, inspire action."

He urged graduates to seek and accept help whenever needed, especially from the friends they made and professors they learned from at GW, because no one is an "island."

Bunch, a former museum studies and history professor between 1990 and 2000, also encouraged graduates to support each other and their commu-

nities during these hard times. He cited Studs Terkel, a famous oral historian he met during his time in Chicago, as someone who headed toward the direction of "doing good" through his advocacy for the "voiceless" in history.

"If you have that commitment to do good, you'll be able to handle adversity, you'll be able to embrace the ambiguity and change that life is all about."

Bunch will receive a Doctor of Humane Letters honorary degree when officials hold an in-person ceremony.

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Graduates celebrate Commencement with small gatherings

ABBY KENNEDY
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

TARA SUTER
STAFF WRITER

Class of 2021 graduate Frederico Michelin's Commencement day will not take place on the National Mall this year, but instead of graduating before a crowd of thousands, he'll gather with friends to watch their college years conclude online.

Michelin, a sociology major, said he started planning for his own National Mall experience to celebrate Commencement in September under the assumption that Commencement would most likely be held online because of the COVID-19 pandemic. He said the recent increase in the number of vaccinated people across the country impacted his decision to bring his parents from New York to D.C., celebrate with a dinner and participate in small celebrations with friends.

"It definitely has allowed me to invite my parents to come down, a celebratory dinner and it's also allowed me to kind of plan with my friends what we want to do with whether that's outside or inside," he said.

Michelin is one of more than half a dozen graduates who said in interviews they planned small gatherings with other vaccinated friends and family members

to celebrate their virtual Commencement under COVID-19 guidelines after officials announced the event would be hosted online in March, drawing "mixed" reactions from students. Graduating seniors said they're organizing celebratory dinners, watch parties and photos with friends and family around campus to celebrate their accomplishments and create memories with some form of personal gathering.

Michelin said he also enjoyed seeing the Commencement-themed structures placed around campus for students to visit and take pictures with in their Commencement attire.

"I just kind of understood that it would be online and just I was fine with it," Michelin said. "I wasn't really expecting much from them to give us anything. I think what was nice is that they did decorate campus."

Officials said in a release last month they would be unable to host a gathering on the Mall because of the National Parks Service's restrictions on large gatherings. In the release, officials also said after having conversations with students, graduates and families they heard "repeatedly" that students would rather wait to hold Commencement on the Mall when they could invite as many friends and family as possible.

See **GRADUATES** Page 5

Board of Trustees approves fiscal year 2022 budget

ISHA TRIVEDI
NEWS EDITOR

YANKUN ZHAO
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The Board of Trustees passed the budget for the upcoming fiscal year at a meeting Friday.

The budget approval comes on the heels of ongoing disagreements between faculty members and University leaders over which areas of funding to prioritize in the FY 2022 budget. Faculty have argued that officials should direct more funds to research endeavors to make up for lost opportunities during the pandemic, but administrators have said they view the upcoming fiscal year as a "transition year," looking to allocate money to a surplus to invest in the University's long-term well-being.

"Even with the faculty concerns around the schools or college-level funding - and that's the place where the deans actually have dis-

cretion - research-related travel and the dean's research funding were prioritized in the target," Board Chair Grace Speights said in an interview Friday. "So you know we feel that there is a priority that has been given to research."

Joe Cordes, the co-chair of the Faculty Senate's fiscal planning and budgeting committee, said the budget includes expanded funding available for faculty merit pay increases but also limits use of departmental funds for expenses like research.

Cordes said there is no formal limitation on the use of departmental funds, which include unrestricted gifts from donors, but they are recommending that faculty defer their requests of the funds in the upcoming fiscal year since they are subject to an "overall spending constraint."

He said the decision to increase funding for merit increases while recommending departmental fund restrictions appears to be an "in-

ternal contradiction" but is part of a "tradeoff" that financial leaders often have to make when building budgets.

Trustees also approved a new policy to assess institutional risk when considering naming opportunities and introduced Bruno Fernandes, the University's new treasurer and vice president of finance, during the Board meeting. Richard Jones, the president of the GW Alumni Association, also announced he would be stepping down and will be replaced by Christine Brown-Quinn, an alumna of the School of Business and a member of its Board of Advisors.

The Board adopted a resolution of appreciation for Pamela Jeffries, the School of Nursing dean, who will depart at the end of June to head the nursing school at Vanderbilt University.

"She has modeled exemplary administrative leadership throughout her tenure and has worked to mentor future academic leaders within

the school and University-wide," Madeleine Jacobs, the Board's academic affairs committee chair, said at the meeting. "She has provided extensive service to the University, and we express appreciation and gratitude to Dean Jeffries for her distinguished years of service and her dedication and commitment to GW."

Trustees also recognized two retiring longtime GW staff members with resolutions of appreciation, honoring William Carnago, the director of Board operations, who will retire after 21 years of working at GW and Beth Nolan, the senior vice president and general counsel, who was named general counsel emerita and is retiring after 14 years.

The Board approved updates to the Code of Academic Integrity and Code of Student Conduct to establish a greater "restorative" and "educational" approach for low-level academic violations, like eliminating permanent records for those violations.

Officials said the changes will allow them to address these lower level cases in an "educational" way while increasing consequences for repeat offenders.

The revisions also include an increase in representation among academic panels and other minor changes to the Code's language for clarification and efficiency. The Student Association and Faculty Senate approved the Code's changes in March.

The Board also approved the nominations of Adam Conner, Pamela Lawrence and Sam Shekar as new trustees for four-year terms beginning this June and extending to May 31, 2025.

"On behalf of the committee, we're excited to welcome this group of outstanding individuals and look forward to the opportunity to meet with them and actually to see all of you in person at an upcoming meeting," trustee Mark Chichester, the chair of the Board's governance and nominations committee, said.

Remote learning, regulations were key for limiting COVID-19 cases: officials

MICHELLE VASSILEV
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

SEJAL GOVINDARAO
STAFF WRITER

More than a year after the University transitioned to remote learning as the COVID-19 pandemic triggered deaths and infections across the District, officials said GW effectively maintained a safe year on campus.

The University recorded fewer than 750 positive coronavirus cases in the GW community since they began testing on-campus students weekly in August, logging about a 0.5 percent overall positivity rate. Experts in public health and biology said mandating mask-wearing around campus, contact tracing and isolation were successful measures in preventing the spread of the virus on campus through student gatherings.

The University faced an uptick in coronavirus cases in October and another spike in March due to Greek life activity and small gatherings. Local residents said they worried off-campus residences would accelerate

the spread of the virus in the surrounding community.

The University tested a total of nearly 87,500 individuals with the highest positivity rate on campus reaching 2.19 percent, GW's coronavirus dashboard shows. Lynn Goldman, the dean of the Milken Institute School of Public Health who advises administrators on GW's response to the pandemic, said deciding against a full reopening in the fall was the biggest challenge the University faced.

"While we had done much planning, it wasn't clear until mid-August that our test lab would be fully operative," Goldman said in an email. "More critically we saw a rise in cases nationally in summer 2020 that we felt was indicative that it would be difficult if not impossible to operate safely with a fully reopened campus in fall."

Scott Burnotes, the vice president of the Division of Safety and Facilities, said administrators limited access to campus "as much as possible" by encouraging online instruction for students. He said officials worked to ensure that trans-

mission rates remained low by regularly testing students, faculty and staff and abiding by Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines.

"We required everyone on campus to wear a mask when in public areas or in the presence of others, we practiced social distancing and encouraged everyone to follow CDC recommendations for handwashing and coughing/sneezing hygiene," Burnotes said in an email. "We also have strict isolation and quarantine protocols for anyone that tested positive or was exposed to a positive case."

After closing campus last March, administrators decided to keep classes remote for the fall, granting housing to just 500 students. Officials kept classes virtual but expanded capacity to host 1,500 students this spring.

Officials announced that they plan to open campus to "the fullest extent possible" next semester, and the University will require all returning faculty, staff and students to get vaccinated prior to their arrival on campus.

Public health and biolo-



FILE PHOTO BY KATE CARPENTER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Administrators will require all faculty, staff and students to get vaccinated prior to their arrival on campus this fall as GW moves closer to normalcy.

gy experts said universities were able to limit outbreaks through comprehensive testing and quarantining infected students.

Ellen Stein, the director of the University of Illinois at Chicago's Contact Tracing and COVID-19 Epidemiology Program, said GW's

decision to test students weekly was "excellent," especially since the testing regime was implemented in combination with a contact tracing program.

"Weekly is an excellent testing regimen if paired with a contact tracing program that can then follow

up on those positive cases, rapidly interview them about who they may have had close contact with and then notify those individuals who are exposed to begin quarantine," Stein said.

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News

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THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

KOREA POLICY FORUM, MULTILATERAL COOPERATION IN NORTHEAST ASIA IN THE BIDEN ERA

May 17 • 9 a.m. EDT • Free
The GW Institute for Korean Studies will host a discussion on what regional cooperation between the United States and Northeast Asia will look like in the Biden era.

THE CHANGING ROLE OF AGENTS IN HOLLYWOOD

May 19 • 4 p.m. EDT • Free
Join CCAS alumni as they talk about the evolution of talent representation in Hollywood and how agents play a key role.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY The Board of Trustees announces the School of Public Policy and Public Administration will be renamed after former University President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg, *The Hatchet* reported.
May 21, 2007

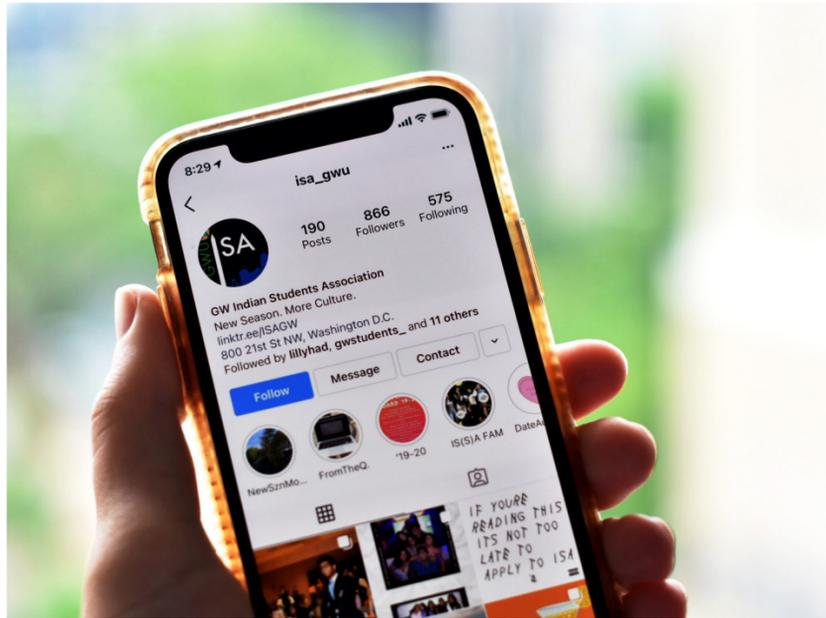


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Ranade, ISA's director of programming, said spreading awareness about the COVID-19 crisis in India has helped with her own personal grieving process.

Students turn to activism as COVID-19 pandemic creates health crisis in India

NICHOLAS PASION
STAFF WRITER

SEJAL GOVINDARAO
STAFF WRITER

In light of India's recent devastating COVID-19 case surge, South Asian students are turning to activism to aid the country through the crisis, while simultaneously grappling with their own grief.

Members of the Indian Student Association said they're working to address the pandemic's severity in India with awareness and fundraising initiatives, connecting with marginalized communities in the country through remote communication and organized activism via social media. India's COVID-19 cases currently surpass 24 million, and the virus is now spreading into villages where health care is difficult to find, surrounding the urban areas most impacted by the pandemic's first wave.

Deisha Brahma, the president of the Indian Student Association, said ISA is currently in the planning stages of their activism campaign, which the organization launched Saturday. Brahma said she hopes the

campaign can raise money for student and international aid organizations to uplift Indian voices who are impacted by the crisis and typically overlooked by Western countries.

Brahma said the ISA is working to direct the campaign work toward the more rural communities in India because they tend to have less access to medical materials like gloves and masks.

Brahma said ISA's campaign will focus on raising money for four different organizations, the Transgender Welfare Equity and Empowerment Foundation, Khalsa Aid, Indian Muslim Relief and Charities and a verified grassroots GoFundMe providing aid to crematorium workers.

Sneha Ranade, ISA's director of programming, said she and other students have connected with family in India through WhatsApp to relay first-hand stories about living through the pandemic. The family members and students communicate through a large group chat, allowing students to stay connected and ask how to best raise awareness at GW and in the United States.

Ria Christina Vargis, a

freshman studying engineering, said her biggest concern was how the Indian government's mishandling of the pandemic, India's overwhelmed health care system, a lack of vaccines and high population density expedited the spread of the virus. She added that the new COVID-19 mutation in India is deadly, and thousands of bodies are cremated everyday – a representation of the massive loss of life in the country.

She said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Bharatiya Janata Party, currently ruling in India, has not provided people with the proper coronavirus resources like oxygen cylinders. Vargis said Modi's "ignorant" behavior has cost the country tens of thousands of lives.

Vargis said she had a loved one who passed away in India due to the lack of oxygen cylinders.

Harita Iswara, a junior studying international affairs and political science, said her parents did not know the gravity of the pandemic in India until hearing first-hand accounts from family about what her uncle, who contracted the coronavirus, was going through.

Jeffries leaves School of Nursing with legacy of diversity, research

MICHELLE VASSILEV
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

After joining the University as the second dean in the nursing school's relatively short 11-year history, Pamela Jeffries is stepping down and leaving behind a legacy of diversity, collaboration and research.

Jeffries, who served as dean for six years, said she accomplished her goals of leading the school into the top 25 ranked nursing schools in the nation, increasing its diversity, creating a doctoral program and more than doubling its student enrollment during her tenure. Pamela Slaven-Lee, the associate dean for academic affairs, will replace Jeffries after she leaves her current position in June and starts as dean of Vanderbilt University's School of Nursing in July.

Jeffries assumed her position in 2015, five years after Jean Johnson, the school's first dean, founded the school. University President Thomas LeBlanc thanked Jeffries for her tenure at the Board of Trustees meeting Friday.

Trustee Madeleine Jacobs, the chair of the Board's academic affairs committee, said Jeffries

has modeled "exemplary leadership" and has provided "extensive service" to the University.

As dean, Jeffries said she boosted enrollment from 500 students in 2015 to nearly 1,200 students today. She said this increase in students called for "aggressive hiring plans," leading her to enlist more than 20 new faculty members during her time as dean.

Jeffries said she placed a strong emphasis on ensuring diversity with a "fair and equitable" hiring process. She said all faculty applicants had to submit a diversity, equity and inclusion statement before their interviews, and all professors went through implicit bias training.

She also appointed Sandra Davis, the school's first assistant dean for diversity, equity and inclusion, three years ago and started an advisory council for diversity, equity and inclusion that issued a survey about the school's climate to ensure it was inclusive for faculty and staff.

Jeffries added that she implemented a PhD nursing program in 2018 after developing the school's research base and adding

more researchers, checking off another goal she had set for the school when assuming the position of dean in 2015.

Jeffries said she also focused on encouraging collaboration across the school to foster community with a "strength-based culture" in which all her faculty and staff completed Strengthfinders 2.0, a program that identifies an individual's top five strengths.

Jeffries said she had "no intent" to leave the nursing school, but the position at Vanderbilt will allow her to be closer to her family in the Midwest while providing the opportunity to work at "a highly reputable school."

Jeffries said she expects a "seamless" transition over to Slaven-Lee who has been her "right-hand person" as the associate dean for academic affairs and is fit to lead the nursing school forward.

Ashley Darcy-Mahoney, an associate professor of nursing, said Jeffries' time as dean of the nursing school was "quite impressive" because she had the vision to grow research and innovation even when the school was so young at just 11 years old.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

Jeffries said her new position at Vanderbilt University will allow her to be closer to her family in the Midwest while providing the opportunity to work at "a highly reputable school."

Students advocate for D.C. statehood bill despite slim odds in Senate

RIO MATSUMOTO
STAFF WRITER

A bill granting D.C. statehood faces slim odds as it awaits a potential Senate vote later this year, but GW students are continuing to advocate for the admission of the District into the Union.

The House of Representatives approved a bill, named H.R. 51, for the second time in a year last month with a 216 to 208 vote to make D.C. a state named "State of Washington, Douglass Commonwealth," after abolitionist Frederick Douglass. Some students are advocating for statehood to city and federal officials through phone banking in an effort to advance the bill's prospects as the University breaks for summer.

The bill has stalled in the Senate after passing the House due to bipartisan opposition to the bill, but some D.C. officials remain optimistic about the likelihood of its passing. Del. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C., the District's non-voting representative in the House who introduced the bill in Congress, said she is optimistic about D.C. being granted statehood soon because of increased support from the public.

"Fifty-four percent of the American people support statehood according to a detailed national poll, bringing us close to statehood in the near future," she said in an email.

Norton said she introduced the bill to grant the city further autonomy, like the ability to deploy the National Guard and give residents voting representation in Congress. D.C. lacks the power to deploy its National Guard without approval from the federal government, which critics say was especially detrimental during the Jan. 6 storming of the Capitol, when the Army initially denied the District's request for deployment.

"I introduced our D.C. state-

hood bill to assure that the District has two senators like every other jurisdiction and that Congress can no longer interfere and seek to overturn D.C.'s local legislation," she said.

Teresa Klugewicz, the president of the GW chapter of Students for D.C. Statehood, said the bill would greatly benefit the D.C. population, nearly half of which is Black, because it doesn't receive sufficient representation to protect their voting rights.

"Black individuals are receiving the back end of the economy in D.C. and facing homelessness and a lot of other disadvantages," she said.

Klugewicz said the GW chapter is lobbying with 51 for 51, an organization that aims to remove the filibuster, a rule that requires most Senate legislation like the statehood bill to be approved with a 60-vote majority to end debate instead of a simple majority of 51 votes. Klugewicz said she's hopeful continuous lobbying and advocacy efforts by grassroots campaigns and college organizations will push D.C. statehood forward within the next year.

She said statehood is unlikely to pass the Senate this year, saying refusals from officials like moderate Sen. Joe Manchin, D-WVa., to demand statehood means the party will be unable to push the bill through the Senate. Manchin spoke out against the statehood bill because he wants to see the measure incorporated through a Constitutional amendment because of concerns that the bill may not be constitutional.

Manchin also said he will not support the abolition or altering of the filibuster rule in an op-ed in the Washington Post. Support from 10 Republican senators would be needed to bypass the filibuster, but none have signaled support for D.C. statehood.

Republican attorneys general



FILE PHOTO BY ARIELLE BADER

Political science experts said Republican opposition makes the prospect of the Senate passing statehood legislation this session unlikely.

from 22 states wrote a letter last month to President Joe Biden calling the D.C. statehood bill unconstitutional and "unsound" because of concerns that residents would have unfair access to the federal government because of their proximity to the district. They also promised to pursue legal challenges to the bill if it is ever passed by Congress and signed by Biden.

"We assure you that we will challenge any attempt to provide the District of Columbia with the actual benefits of statehood if Congress passes it and the president attempts to sign it into law," the letter states.

Political science experts said

Republican opposition makes the prospect of the Senate passing statehood legislation this session unlikely.

Howard Schweber, a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, said he doesn't think the Senate will vote for the bill due to the existence of the filibuster rule, but he does believe the bill is constitutional because the space around the nation's capital isn't restricted from statehood. Critics claim the statehood bill is unconstitutional, and statehood can only be achieved through a constitutional amendment.

"There is a provision of the Constitution providing that there shall

be an area to serve as the capital that shall not be part of a state, but there's nothing in the Constitution that says that the boundary of the area needs to be what is currently the District of Columbia," he said.

Schweber called the "no taxation without representation" slogan "compelling," but he doesn't think the Republican Party will vote for the addition of Democratic congressional representatives, given that more than 75 percent of D.C. residents are registered Democrats. The slogan, referring to District residents' lack of representation in Congress despite paying federal income taxes, has been stamped onto D.C. license plates since 2000.

Professors say their mental health has declined throughout academic year

DANIEL PATRICK GALGANO
STAFF WRITER

As the University's second fully online semester comes to a close, faculty say stress from the COVID-19 pandemic has caused their overall mental health to decline over the past academic year.

Half a dozen faculty members said learning and teaching have become more difficult over the past year, taking a toll on their mental health given the virtual environment and stressors from the pandemic. Some faculty said the switch to the virtual learning environment has also forced a professional and emotional disconnect from the GW campus and community, while others said they thought administrators poorly communicated plans for the future and failed to formulate clear academic policies, which contributed to their anxiety.

Shira Robinson, an associate professor of history and international affairs, said faculty operated with an intense professional and personal pressures throughout the pandemic because of a fear of contracting the coronavirus, caregiving and family responsibilities, isolation amid virtual learning and overall uncertainty about the future.

"People have been living under an existential, low-grade or high-grade stress level since last March," Robinson said. "People were worried about getting sick, people were worried about their family members being sick or themselves being sick,

people were worried about money if they or their parents lost a job."

Robinson said the number of students who need or ask for extensions or accommodations for assignments has climbed significantly, contributing to the pressures that faculty face with grading and class organization that caused her to experience delays in grading. She said the number of cases requiring accommodations or extensions have gone from a few students per lecture before the pandemic to almost 50 percent of the classes – about 20 to 40 of her students total.

"More students were struggling than I've ever seen before," she said.

Benjamin David Hopkins, a professor of history and international affairs and the director of the Sigur Center for Asian Studies, said he has felt "total alienation" from GW as an institution throughout the pandemic because he hasn't seen an "acknowledgement" by GW leadership for the work faculty do and the support they give to students.

"I would characterize staff and faculty morale as generally low, and I think that is in part the consequences of the pandemic, which everybody's struggling with," Hopkins said. "I think it's in part, a consequence of the institutional culture at GW – the institutional alienation and disconnect – I think is widespread amongst both faculty and staff."

He said officials also changed due dates for faculty annual reports, which has

served as another stressor on faculty. He said the reports are a sizable document compiled by faculty outlining their research and accomplishments for the year, generally due to department chairs by early June, but Hopkins said officials unexpectedly advanced the deadline for most faculty to mid-April.

"I think a lot of faculty feel we get these kind of bland, multi-paragraph emails from the GW leadership that say, 'We appreciate you,' and that's the level of support that we've been given through the pandemic, which I think is almost bordering on insulting," Hopkins said.

Kathryn Kleppinger, an associate professor of french and francophone studies and international affairs and the Faculty Association's treasurer and secretary, said the announcement about annual reports "really impacts" faculty and department chairs because it disrupted the predicted faculty workflow and overall evaluation schedules. She said officials told faculty they moved up the due dates for the reports to determine faculty raises and wage increases earlier than usual, but it also caused more stress for professors.

"We're essentially being told that we should be happy because this is good news, but it threw a wrench in many colleagues' work flow plans without any specifics on the benefits of doing so," Kleppinger said in an email.

Kleppinger said some of the stress and mental health issues from faculty stem

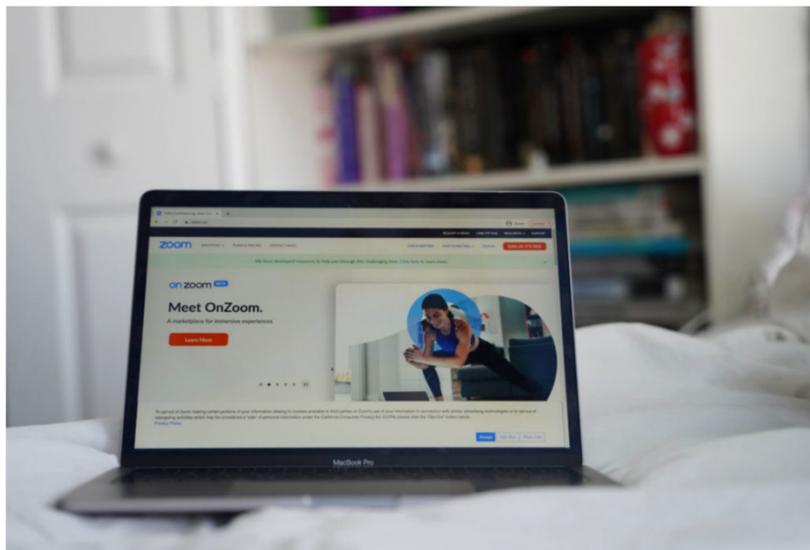


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY CAMILLE DESANTO | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Faculty said they've felt added pressure to help students throughout the pandemic, but they are hopeful to return in person for the fall semester.

from a lack of communication on policy and future planning by administration officials.

"I asked President LeBlanc in a faculty meeting, I actually asked him a question point-blank, 'What is the fall going to look like for us?' and I got the same: 'We're in a holding pattern and waiting to hear what D.C. tells us,'" she said. "There's a lot of unknowns and it's like 'How do you want me to teach?'"

Officials have consistently maintained that campus will reopen in the fall semester "to the fullest extent possible."

David Rain, an associate professor of geography and international affairs, said the state of mental health

among faculty and staff is "a lot worse" compared to the beginning of the pandemic due to the general feeling of "isolation" and separation from campus.

"It's like a 'Groundhog Day' situation," Rain said. "You wake up, you go for a walk and you work on your quizzes and you read your emails and it's just the same everyday."

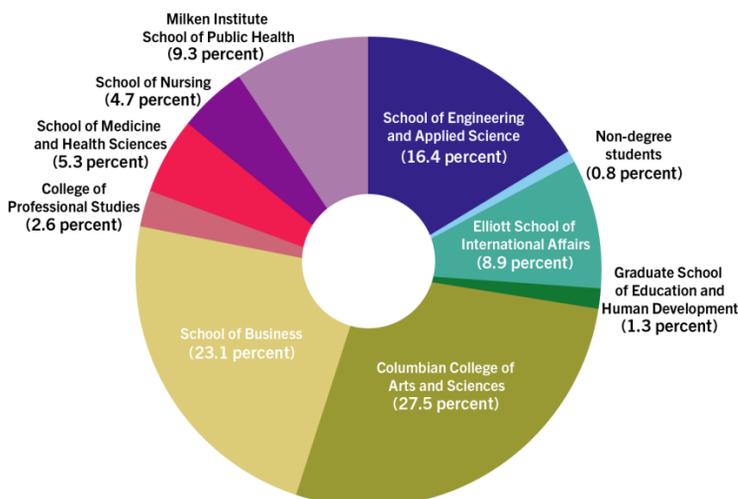
Rain said faculty morale and mental health should improve as faculty can start returning to work in their offices and communicate directly with students during the summer and fall. He said "we've all lost our central place" and hopes that more faculty will be able to return in person to

their departments during the summer and fall semesters.

Rain said he was "very upbeat" about the University's plans for the summer and fall so far. He said he's "cautiously optimistic" about the future at GW, given the general loosening of coronavirus restrictions in places like Maryland and the District and the recent Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidance on mask-wearing, which says masks aren't needed for fully vaccinated people indoors and outdoors.

"I hope – fingers crossed – that we will go back to a more normal situation, probably early in the fall," Rain said.

Breakdown of academic integrity cases by school*



*Data is from fall 2014 to Feb. 4, 2021

NICHOLAS ANASTACIO | GRAPHICS EDITOR

Academic misconduct cases rise at GW, nationwide after virtual year

LAUREN SFORZA
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

The number of academic integrity reports rose this year amid the virtual learning environment.

Christy Anthony, the director of the Office of Students Rights and Responsibilities, said the number of academic integrity cases, like cheating and plagiarism, has increased throughout the past year during the COVID-19 pandemic. Academic integrity experts said this rise could be attributed to students' increased stress levels during online instruction and professors' use of online proctoring technology with remote learning.

"We have seen an increase in academic integrity reports during the pandemic," Anthony said in an email. "Whether this is due to increased faculty attention on academic integrity or an actual increase in violations is not clear, either from our data or from national/international research on academic integrity in remote learning environments."

Anthony said cases in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences make up nearly 28 percent of the academic integrity reports filed during the last seven years, with cases in the School of Business trailing behind at 23 percent. Reports from the School of Engineering and Applied Science ranked third with 16 percent, and the seven other schools each totaled less than 10 percent.

Anthony declined to share the number of academic integrity cases by year.

The business school academic integrity reports

tripled to 40 cases in the 2019-20 academic year, compared to the 11 cases in the 2018-19 academic year.

Anthony said officials don't have indications that remote learning over the past year has driven the increase in academic integrity violations. She said trends show that students continue to decide against cheating or plagiarizing but find themselves more likely to cheat while "overwhelmed" with stress due to the circumstances brought forth by the pandemic.

"For this reason, we continue to encourage students to plan ahead, seek help and support and ask faculty for clarifications about assignment expectations," he said. "We've also found more students in academic integrity cases benefitting from support resources like counseling to help manage the attending stress and challenges related to the pandemic."

Anthony said the new changes to the Code of Academic Integrity, which the Board of Trustees approved last Friday, includes different sanctions for academic violations, like lessening the consequences for first-time offenders. The Faculty Senate passed a resolution in March to update the Code of Academic Integrity to implement more "educational" ways of addressing academic misconduct cases, like reducing the consequences for less severe cases and increasing the consequences for more severe cases.

Experts in academic integrity and ethics said cases have risen nationwide because students are stressed due to online learning from

the pandemic and professors have more access to technology tracking programs that allow them to report academic misconduct cases more easily.

Camilla Roberts, the president of the International Center for Academic Integrity and the director of the Kansas State University Honor and Integrity System, said academic misconduct reports have more than doubled at Kansas State this year compared to two years ago. She said when students are stressed or under pressure, they may feel like they have no other option but to cheat on an assessment to pass the class.

"If it's easier to cheat or to take a shortcut, then they're more likely to do it," she said. "And when you have the Internet right at your hands and you're taking an online test, it's easier than if you're in a classroom and your students try to be sly about pulling out a phone or something."

She said the rise of online testing programs like LockDown Browser may have contributed to the number of academic misconduct cases reported because they can electronically track when a student leaves the online test and how much time they spent on one question. She said more professors are using LockDown Browser to catch students cheating, which they cannot use for an in-person written exam.

"Professors are being more vigilant because they realize that it could be easier for students to do this and so they're checking things more, but then there's also a lot of metadata in online testing," Roberts said.

Fall study abroad plans remain in flux

YANKUN ZHAO
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

As universities across the country begin to announce their decisions for fall study abroad programs, officials have yet to make a formal announcement on whether they will run programs in the fall.

After suspending the programs following the outbreak of COVID-19 last spring, officials said they're still exploring options for safe study abroad programs in the fall. Experts in international education said many institutions have resumed fall travel plans while others continue to suspend them based on travel restrictions and COVID-19 risks in other countries.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said officials are still exploring the "potential for return" to study abroad programs in the next academic year as they continue to monitor health and safety concerns globally. She declined to provide further details about whether programs could resume, how many students are currently registered and what changes officials could implement in the programs in light of the pandemic.

"We are anticipating a transition year for study abroad opportunities and cannot answer specific questions until a more detailed announcement is made to the community," she said in an email.

Provost Brian Blake announced in January that the Office of Study Abroad would suspend

opportunities this summer, citing the ongoing pandemic and vaccine rollout during the time. Officials canceled all study abroad and non-essential international travel this academic year.

Study abroad directors at other universities said the likelihood of program offerings returning next fall largely depends on school policy and the health and travel recommendations from government and health organizations.

With increased vaccinations worldwide, they said the return to normal study abroad programming is slowly underway, and the likeliest destinations to welcome students back next fall include Europe and some parts of Asia and Latin America.

The State Department travel advisories currently list about 80 percent of countries under "Level 4: Do Not Travel," the highest warning in the four-tier system.

Sylvie Burnet-Jones, the interim director of education abroad at the University of Colorado at Boulder, said her school resumed its study abroad programs for this past semester with about 75 students compared to the nearly 2,000 students last spring. She said programs in Spain and Italy have remained the most popular at her institution during the pandemic, but the limited offerings have also piqued students' interest in locations like South Korea and Denmark.

The GW Institute for Korean Studies will launch a virtual summer

study abroad program this month for students interested in learning about Korean culture and history, offering online site visits and lectures on topics like colonization and the Cold War.

Scott Marshall, the president and chief executive officer of Semester at Sea, said his program currently plans for their multi-national voyages to return this fall, but because of the pandemic, he plans to mandate vaccines and reduce the scope of the itinerary that normally spans across continents.

He said he anticipates a "pent-up demand" for study abroad from students once the pandemic passes and travel restrictions are lifted, especially beginning in 2022, which will help programs recover quicker.

The European Union recently announced that they plan on letting vaccinated U.S. tourists visit beginning this summer. Several European countries, like Greece, Croatia and Iceland, have already begun admitting vaccinated travelers.

Gina Lopardo, the director of education abroad at Seattle University, said her school recently suspended study abroad opportunities for the fall semester because of its strict travel policy compared to other institutions that have allowed non-essential travel to resume. She said announcing their cancellation decision now also prevents students from committing to programs that may have non-refundable components, like deposits.



FILE PHOTO BY WILLIAM STRICKLETT | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
The State Department travel advisories currently list about 80 percent of countries under the "Level 4: do not travel," the highest in the four-tier system.

Rising junior launches bid for Foggy Bottom's local governing body

ZACHARY BLACKBURN
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

A rising junior announced her campaign to fill a vacancy on Foggy Bottom's local governing body last week.

Margaret McDonald, a history major, filed to represent students on the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission last week, pledging to promote progressive changes like pedestrian safety and police reform. If elected, McDonald will fill the vacancy in the ANC that has left much of GW's campus without representation since January after former commissioner James Harnett graduated from the University.

"The things that matter the most are being passionate and having a plan to make tangible change in a community, which is something that I believe I can and will be doing with this position," McDonald said.

McDonald said they will push for increased pedestrian safety, expanded access to menstrual products with additions to public restrooms in the District and limited police presence in Foggy Bottom by way of defunding the police with recommendations to

the D.C. Council. The seat, which covers single-member district 2A08, encompasses District and Potomac houses, South, Guthridge, Lafayette and Strong halls, Greek life townhouses and the F Street House – University President Thomas LeBlanc's campus residence.

McDonald, the president of the progressive student organization Persist GW, said past struggles they have experienced, like financial difficulties and growing up as an LGBTQ person in Oklahoma, gives them the ability to lead all students at GW and not just those coming from privileged backgrounds.

"Being able to understand the struggle that other students would come from a lower income background, I can very much relate to that," they said. "And I especially just want to be able to advocate to Council members in D.C. and the faculty at GW."

McDonald said one of their main priorities includes banning cars from H Street, which will improve traffic safety on campus and foster a tighter sense of community among students and pedestrians. McDonald said they were initially inspired by Harnett, the former commissioner, to close H Street to cars and open it up to pedes-

trians, which Harnett said he advocated for when he was commissioner.

"It's important that students can feel safe on campus and be able to walk without being scared that they're going to get hit by a car," they said. "But at the same time, I think it's good for any college campus to have a spot where students can just walk around and feel comfortable and feel safe."

McDonald said they want to expand access to menstrual products to protect menstrual health through food stamp programs, especially for those experiencing homelessness and people with lower incomes who may struggle to purchase menstrual items. They said menstrual products need to be immediately available to everyone regardless of gender.

McDonald said they will lobby the D.C. Council to defund, and eventually abolish, the police by growing the voices of other student leaders who advocate for police abolition. McDonald said the presence of police at protests is in itself an instigation of violence, and they said abolition is necessary.

"Defunding the police in D.C. is really important to me, especially after all the violence that we saw occurring



COURTESY OF MARGARET MCDONALD

McDonald said one of their main priorities includes banning cars from H Street, which will improve traffic safety on campus and foster a tighter sense of community among students and pedestrians.

that police members were instigating at the protest this past year," they said. "I think it's really important that we push for a general defunding of police in D.C., and I really want to advocate for that to Council members."

Harnett, the ANC's former chair who represented 2A08 as a student, said he knew McDonald before graduating and believes they could be a "great" commissioner because he believes

they have a clear plan for change in Foggy Bottom. Harnett said he was excited when Yannik Omicton, a senior and ANC commissioner, reached out to Harnett to tell him McDonald was interested in running.

"When Yannik Omicton reached out to me to tell me that Margaret was interested in running for the ANC, it felt like a perfect fit," he said. "Her advocacy with Persist meshes very well with the

sort of vision that I have for the neighborhood."

Harnett said he is excited by McDonald's platform, especially their plan to limit car access to H Street.

"I'm really excited that she's being bold and setting out a really comprehensive vision for what progressive priorities should look like on campus and how she's going to be playing a big part in making that happen," he said.

Virtual commencement caps historic year

From Page 1

In his opening remarks, University President Thomas LeBlanc told graduates it was a "joy" to see them find their passions through "times of change and challenge."

"Today is the end of one chapter and just the beginning of the next," LeBlanc said. "It is just the beginning of the many years that you will spend creating a better world driven by the pursuit of knowledge, the quest for innovation and your own ideals and desire to serve others."

Officials also conferred an honorary Doctor of Public Service degree to former Board of Trustees Chair Nelson Carbonell. Carbonell received a full scholarship to attend GW and received his bachelor's degree in electrical engineering in 1985, serving as Board chair from 2013 to 2019.

"Nelson A. Carbonell Jr. is not only an exceptional businessman and entrepreneur – he's also a tireless advocate for the George Washington University," LeBlanc, who was hired by a search led by Carbonell, said. "His longtime commitment to the University including his leadership for the Board of Trustees and extraordinary philanthropy, has been transformational, advancing research, academic excellence and student success."

Carbonell said he was honored to receive the degree and "never could have imagined" when he was an undergraduate at GW the impact the University would have on him.

"I only hope I can give back to GW all that GW has given to me and to make my alma mater proud," he said. "Today and every day, I am proud to say I am an alumnus of

the George Washington University."

The ceremony was also interwoven with clips of GW's mascot celebrating Commencement, photos of the Class of 2021 throughout their time at GW and short messages of advice from alumni like journalists and politicians.

"I would say this – don't be afraid to fail," alumnus Sen. Mark Warner, D-Va., said in one of the video clips.

Provost Brian Blake said in his remarks that the graduating class's "incredible achievement" first began when they accepted their offer of admission to the University.

"When you decided on GW, you chose an education unlike any other in the world," Blake said. "You chose to be a member of a diverse and vibrant community of scholars populated by students, faculty and staff contributing unique perspectives and experiences that often were unlike your own."

Board Chair Grace Speights said as graduates leave the University and become future leaders, they will have the support of their friends, family and the GW community.

"The world is changing rapidly, and we need leaders to help guide us to a better future," she said. "You are those leaders. It is a great responsibility, but you are not alone."

LeBlanc closed the ceremony by conferring degrees to the class of 2021 along with the deans of GW's 10 schools.

"Graduates, you have earned this moment," LeBlanc said. "You are prepared to succeed and to lead. May you carry your GW education and your commitment to serve others and to have a positive impact on our world with you every day."



FILE PHOTO BY ALEXANDER WELLING

The Board also approved a new policy at its meeting Friday on naming that establishes a vetting process to consider institutional risk before naming campus spaces or University positions after donors.

Board of Trustees receives Marvin Center renaming recommendations

ISHA TRIVEDI
NEWS EDITOR

Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights said trustees have received recommendations from the Marvin Center naming task force but have yet to start the consideration process.

Speights declined to provide a timeline on when the Board may reach a decision on the Marvin Center's name and said officials will consider the recommendations "as soon as possible." The completion of recommendations comes nearly a year after the Board approved a framework for considering name change requests for University buildings last June and later established two committees last July to consider the renaming requests for the Marvin Center and the Colonial moniker.

Speights said Univer-

sity President Thomas LeBlanc planned to share the recommendations on the Marvin Center name first before handing over those for the Colonials moniker. The special committees charged with assessing the two renaming requests released historical materials that catalogued the development of the moniker and the racist legacy of former University President Cloyd Heck Marvin last year.

"I think the president reported we would start with the Marvin Center first – that's the first report we got, and then the Colonial moniker," Speights said in an interview.

The Board also approved a new policy on naming at its meeting Friday, establishing a vetting process before naming campus spaces or University positions after donors. The policy states that of-

ficials reserve the right to revoke the name of a building or academic position if the name's continued use could risk the University's reputation.

The policy requires Board approval for naming opportunities that could pose "substantial reputational risk" to the University associated with academic positions, programs or buildings and requires administration approval for names of lecture series, fellowships and landscaping.

"Over the course of the year, the committee and the administration discussed the types of information gathering, review and approvals that should precede associating any name with the excellent name and reputation of the University," Mark Chichester, the chair of the Board's committee on governance

and nominations, said at the meeting.

Officials will also take "due diligence" before recommending naming opportunities for groups like corporations to avoid the appearance of commercial influence or a conflict of interest, according to the policy.

The policy states that the University can revoke a naming opportunity from a donor if the donor does not fulfill the obligations outlined in their gift agreement or if the Board determines that a continued use of the name may "compromise the public trust or reputation of the University."

"The proposed policy changes shift Board approval of naming opportunities from a dollar threshold to one of assessing institutional risk," Chichester said.

University managed safe campus throughout pandemic: experts

From Page 1

She said positivity rates on university campuses can fluctuate throughout the semester, but over the last two weeks, UIC's highest percent positivity rate was 0.55 percent compared to GW's seven-day rolling average of 0.06 percent.

Stein said it's hard to tell what would have happened if GW had opened campus for in-person learning this semester, but GW's percentage positivity rate with remote learning was relatively low.

"The fact that you've had a low percent positivity shows that GW

selected a safe course," Stein said.

Other universities faced higher percentage positivity rates, with the University of Notre Dame facing a 20.6 percent rate and the University of Alabama recording 29 percent positivity at the beginning of their semesters in person in late August. GW's positivity rate in late August reached 0.86 percent, and its peer institutions Georgetown and Northeastern universities recorded 0.32 and 0.28 percent positivity rates, respectively.

Stein said universities are finding it difficult to make concrete plans for the fall semester since it's still unclear how the pandemic

will develop in the summer. She said universities need to be prepared "to pivot" and adjust their plans according to the information they receive about the virus in the next few months.

Stein said the question of whether GW's choice to mandate the vaccine was the right one is "tricky." She said schools require vaccination for many other diseases like measles, but institutions should be careful that imposing a vaccine requirement doesn't turn people away from vaccination.

"Sometimes by making things mandatory, it can turn some people off who may otherwise have been convinced to go and get their

vaccines," Stein said. "I think right now, we want to focus on encouraging as many people as possible and educating them to get their vaccines."

Zandrea Ambrose, an associate professor of microbiology and molecular genetics at the University of Pittsburgh, said universities now implement "rigorous" coronavirus policies, because they have much more information available to them, like CDC guidelines, than they did at the start of the pandemic.

"I think our knowledge is very different now, so I think we tend to go by CDC guidelines," Ambrose said. "There's a committee

of faculty and staff that put out directives, basically make the policies and change them as needed."

Ambrose said the University of Pittsburgh, one of GW's peer schools, said remote learning has been particularly hard on professors who lead classes that depend on using lab materials in person.

"I think many of us who work in laboratories, definitely myself and all of the people working in my lab have been vaccinated," Ambrose said. "So I'm hoping that we can get back to sort of working in a normal situation where more people can be within the lab at one particular time or all day as needed."

Humanities Center advanced interdisciplinary research in first year

SAMANTHA SERAFIN
STAFF WRITER

The virtual Humanities Center has provided professors and students opportunities to collaborate on interdisciplinary humanities research since its founding last fall.

Faculty involved with the center said the virtual space allowed professors to foster and advance their ongoing research projects in the humanities, like investigations into historical crises and upheavals, through University's funding and student assistants. They said the center's inaugural annual theme of "Culture in Crisis" was partly inspired by the pandemic and incorporates scholars' work examining societies that have been "under pressure," like those that have experienced plagues and political crises.

Jamie Cohen-Cole, the co-director of the center and a professor of American studies, said he and Lynn Westwater, the other co-director and a professor of Italian, created the center to "rectify missing components" of the University's research profile, especially since all of GW's market basket schools have humanities centers. Cohen-Cole said creating a center to connect humanities researchers at GW has been a decades-long conversation but a lack of funding prevented the formation of one until the past year.

"This is an idea which is neither new to GW nor new to universities generally," Cohen-Cole said. "The effort was to fill a hole that GW has that other universities have well represented."

Cohen-Cole said he and Westwater presented the idea for the center to the Office of the Vice President for Research last year after the office announced funding opportunities for faculty who were doing research related to the

pandemic. He said they launched applications to select researchers to become involved once officials approved funding for the center last summer by following a procedure similar to other competitive applications that the OVPR uses.

Eleven humanities professors were selected as fellows and received \$1,000 each in research funds, and a paid undergraduate research assistant who could help out for up to 60 hours per semester was also recruited. Cohen-Cole said the center's fellows presented their work-in-progress projects to each other virtually throughout the past year by participating in biweekly virtual center gatherings and invited an outside speaker to present their insight on these humanities topics earlier this year.

"We want to have a kind of broad umbrella that a lot of people could participate in but also have an organizing approach, so that people who are working in one or another subfield of the humanities would have a common basis for a conversation," Cohen-Cole said.

He said he hopes the center will increase its "footprint" among undergraduates next semester to include student fellows and more paid research assistants. Cohen-Cole said hiring research assistants is contingent upon the funding the center receives and would allow students to gain valuable research experience.

"We are committed to the idea that research could be something that could be done both by professors and also done by students," he said.

Cohen-Cole said while informal face-to-face conversations have been limited, the center benefited from more virtual networking opportunities as part of the online environment.

Humanities research consisted of less than 1 percent of the University's expenditures in 2019.



Wald said people often underestimate the "transformative" value humanities scholarship contributes to the production of critical thinking.

University community members have expressed concerns that the University's strategic plan, which has been made "obsolete" due to the pandemic, over-emphasized greater STEM research and overlooked GW's strengths in humanities research.

Gayle Wald, a professor of American studies and member of the steering committee, said people often underestimate the "transformative" value humanities scholarship contributes to the production of critical thinking, like ideas about race, sexuality and gender. She said humanities scholars require much less funding than researchers in other academic fields because travel and access to archives make up the

majority of expenses as opposed to experiment and lab costs.

"A \$5,000 grant, which would barely buy a piece of equipment for a chemistry lab, goes a really long way in supporting someone who needs to visit archives," Wald said.

Three professors with projects in the center said the virtual space allowed them to approach humanities research with an interdisciplinary angle by exchanging feedback with each other, and they could work with other humanities scholars outside of their specific fields of study through the virtual learning environment during the pandemic.

Trevor Jackson, an assistant professor of history and a Hu-

manities Center fellow, said the grant to conduct research and hire a research assistant provided by the Center helped him complete the final chapter of his book "Capitalism and Impunity: Exceptions in Economic History." He said his research assistant helped him sort through countless volumes of digital bank data archives during the pandemic, which he would not have been able to do on his own while teaching classes.

"I had to change tactics and use digitized material while teaching, and so that meant one person trying to go through 50 volumes of handwritten bank data would just be impossible," he said. "So having a research assistant to help me with that was invaluable."

FILE PHOTO BY GRAEME SLOAN

SEAS professor studies how to speed up turnaround times for COVID-19 tests

NICHOLAS PASION
STAFF WRITER

A professor from the School of Engineering and Applied Science hopes to implement a model that will speed up the turnaround time of test results in the University's COVID-19 lab this summer.

Erica Gralla, an associate professor of systems engineering, said she has been conducting research at the University of Maryland since the start of the pandemic. During her research, she found that back-end testing issues that arise in the lab, such as removing swabs from test tubes, are tedious and slow the output of test results. Gralla said she plans to work with her students this summer to gather data about GW's COVID-19 lab so she can carry over her research from UMD to the GW lab and speed up the turnaround times for coronavirus tests at the University.

"We plan to adapt the models to represent the process at GW's lab," Gralla said in an email. "The steps and their sequence are similar but not exactly the same, and the lab will also have slightly different processing times for each step."

Gralla said she used online discrete event simulation models in her research, which show the flow of people and testing samples through the testing process from the time individuals arrive at a testing location

to the time labs return the results. She said this software model tracks people until they get tested, and then it switches to track the time samples take for processing.

"At that point, we track the sample instead," Gralla said. "It waits until a batch of samples is ready for transport to the laboratory. Then the entire batch goes on the laboratory steps."

Gralla said the UMD lab conducts Polymerase Chain Reaction tests, and labs took three to 10 days to return test results at the beginning of the pandemic. Clinics that send their PCR tests to labs for processing can still take more than a week to return results, according to Healthline.

Gralla said increasing turnaround times for test results can decrease coronavirus transmission rates because infected individuals will know to quarantine themselves sooner.

Gralla said once testing samples arrive to labs in containment tubes that hold the nasal swab, scientists at the lab must begin "deswabbing" – removing the swab from the tube – to analyze the virus particles and provide a test result. She said her research found that pulling the swab out of the test containment tube serves as the main bottleneck in the UMD COVID-19 testing lab, since it is "tedious and manual."

She said her model predicts the UMD lab will be

able to double the number of tests it can process weekly if the individuals performing them at testing locations throw out the used testing swabs instead of placing them in the containment tubes. Gralla said before testing sites dispose of the swab, they need to dip the swab in the containment tube, which holds a biohazard liquid that will remove the live parts of the virus.

"After the swab is swirled in the liquid that preserves the sample in the tube, it is no longer a biohazard and can be safely thrown out," she said in an email.

Patti Gravitt, a professor of epidemiology and public health at UMD who conducted lab research with Gralla, said a faster and more robust testing system will give officials more information to determine when communities will experience higher transmission rates, which will influence public policy decisions like when to reopen the economy.

"What we want the testing system to do for COVID is one to provide real time surveillance, so we can identify on a population level when we're starting to move to more community transmission or less community transmission," Gravitt said. "And that helps us to make good policies of when we need to be more restrictive or less restrictive in terms of the



COURTESY OF ERICA GRALLA AND GW SYNERGY

Gralla said increasing turnaround times for test results can decrease COVID-19 transmission rates because infected individuals will know to quarantine themselves sooner.

economy opening up."

Gravitt said the discrete event simulation model could be compared to other laboratories to examine what other elements of the testing process researchers could improve.

Paul Yager, an adjunct professor of global health, chemistry and oral health sciences at the University of Washington, said rapid antigen tests can serve as a quicker alternative to nucleic acid tests, which are commonly conducted at drive-in sites where tests are sent to a lab. He said these tests

offer less "sensitivity" and accuracy but could be a possible solution to maintaining speed with accuracy in the testing process.

Coronavirus tests vary in response time, with molecular PCR tests, also known as nucleic acid tests, taking anywhere between 48 to 72 hours to return, antibody tests taking three to five days and rapid antigen tests taking less than half an hour to produce results, according to Healthline. The University's COVID-19 lab offers PCR tests.

Yager said making a

faster test a "part of everyday life" can help slow the spread of the virus and is the only way of knowing when it is safe for people to join group activities.

"The only way to really know that for sure is take a sample of their noses or nasal cavities and find out the virus is present in their noses at that moment," he said. "Any delay between the time in which you test and the time in which someone performs an activity like visiting someone in the nursing home, the bigger the uncertainty."

Graduates celebrate commencement with vaccinated friend groups

From Page 1

Mari Guerra, a public health major, said she flew to D.C. from Connecticut, where she lived during the entire academic year, to celebrate Commencement with her small group of fully vaccinated friends to take group graduation pictures together around campus after being fully vaccinated. She said being vaccinated was a priority for her before she planned any type of small group gathering or celebration with friends.

"It really does make you feel better, because it's a level of protection that you didn't have before," she said. "But you know, the risk of getting COVID and the concern is always there."

Guerra said she wished she had seen better communication between administrators and the graduating class about plans for Commencement. She said administrators emailed graduating students a survey asking whether

they would prefer an in-person or remote ceremony, and she doesn't know of many who selected the remote option, also noting the long span of time between the survey's release and Commencement's cancellation.

"They want to hear from our opinions, but it was just a lot of time between there so I wish there was maybe more communication," she said. "Even between professors and the school to let us know maybe during classes or just even more check-ins and stuff like that too as well could have improved that. It's just very hard virtually to do things."

Adriana Tapia said she lived in D.C. this year and is having friends and family fly in to celebrate with planned events like kayaking in the Tidal Basin, hiking, going out to brunch and taking pictures on the Mall. She said she decided to organize graduation plans because everyone she will be celebrating with will be fully vaccinated.

"This entire week has just been like a graduation week," she said. "Everyone's in town and they've been staying here at our place. So it's just been like a week of mini-celebrations."

Tapia said she thought it was "preemptive" of officials to call off graduation, but she appreciates the effort to still celebrate the Class of 2021, even if in smaller ways like sending students boxes with Commencement-related merchandise.

"I will say the boxes caught me by surprise," she said. "They sent out little graduation boxes and mine just got to Seattle yesterday. That was like a nice little touch. I did not expect that at all. I would've preferred a graduation over a box, but yeah."

Adriana Feijoo, a political science major, said she will celebrate partially in D.C. and partially at her home in Illinois, where she plans to hold an outdoor celebration to watch the Commencement ceremony on Facebook Live with a small group of family members.

She said as a first generation student, graduating will be an especially "sentimental" experience, and although she can't walk across the stage, she is still excited to celebrate with her family in a small group.

"I'm a first gen student, so graduation is a big deal for my family," she said. "So it's a little disappointing that we don't get to walk across the stage, but it's still super sentimental. So, even if it is online and just a slideshow or something, it's still a big deal. So I'm excited."

Feijoo said while she's been living on campus during the spring semester, she has attended celebrations that her friends hosted, like a rooftop dinner in D.C. and a day to take pictures around campus. She said she feels safer knowing she can celebrate her and her friends' accomplishments with a low risk of contracting the virus.

"One of my friends is having a rooftop grad party with like 15 people and everyone is vaccinat-

ed," she said. "So I think it makes me personally feel safer going to something where I know people are vaccinated and I know people are really trying to keep things outside, which is also really helpful."

She said it was "disappointing" that GW was one of the only schools in the DMV area to have no element of in-person Commencement. Georgetown University administrators announced their decision last month to hold an in-person Commencement at Nationals Park, and American University will hold an in-person ceremony at Bender Stadium, where graduates will receive a link to sign up for a 15-minute procession to walk across the stage.

She said although she is disappointed in the decision to stay virtual for commencement, she understands GW is trying "their best," and she's trying to stay positive moving forward toward a master's degree from the University of Maryland next year.

It's time for the Senate to pass D.C. statehood

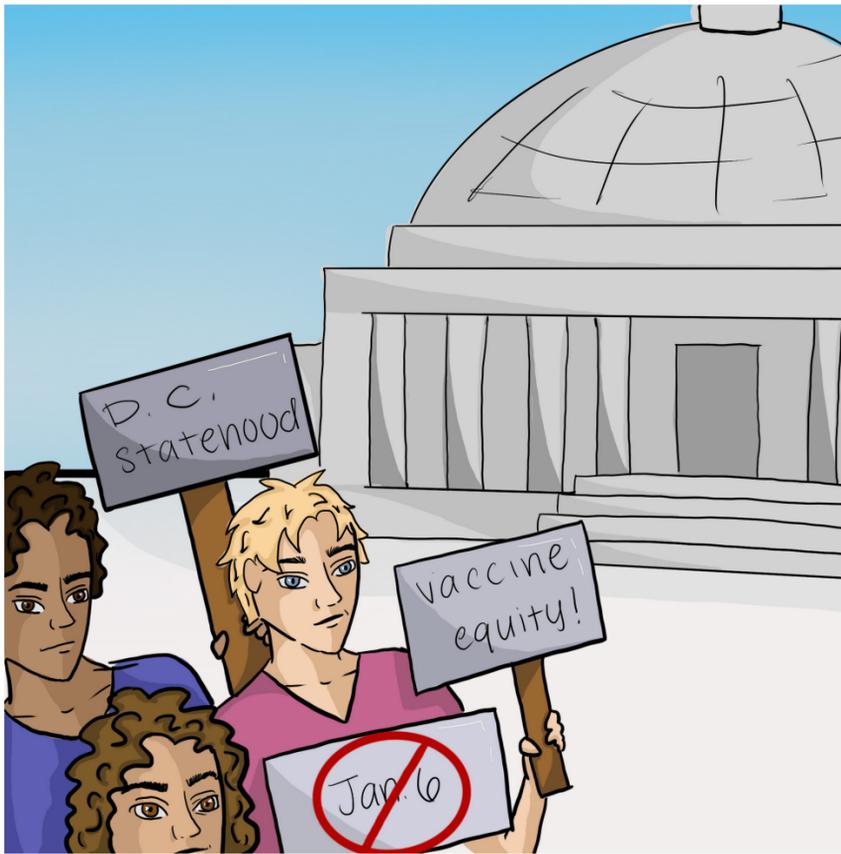
STAFF EDITORIAL

Over the past few months, D.C. statehood has come closer than ever to becoming a reality. The U.S. House of Representatives passed a bill last month that would make the District the 51st state, and pressure is building on the evenly split U.S. Senate to take up the legislation.

Arguments for D.C. statehood have always been ironclad and persuasive. It is, for example, a clear racial justice issue, and taxation without representation is just plain unfair. But between not being able to defend itself from the Capitol riot and being shortchanged with COVID-19 assistance, D.C.'s traumatic year has made even clearer what was already true: D.C. needs to be a state, and GW students should join those advocacy efforts.

When the U.S. Capitol was sacked by extremists, it took hours for the National Guard to respond. As rioters smashed windows and disrupted the peaceful transfer of power, Mayor Muriel Bowser urgently requested support from the D.C. National Guard — which is controlled by the White House and Defense Department, not the District. At first, the White House flat-out denied the request, before eventually ordering deployment. Then-acting Secretary of Defense Chris Miller admitted to Congress last week that it took two hours and a frantic call from then-Vice President Mike Pence — who had been whisked out of the building as rioters threatened to hang him — for him to finally give the green light for deployment.

Had D.C. been a state, it would have been Bowser's decision, not that of the man who sparked the riot, whether or not



By Staff Cartoonist

to deploy emergency personnel. That could have saved lives and stopped the most galling attack on the seat of U.S. government since the War of 1812.

But the Capitol riot is not the only instance in the past few months alone where the tug-of-war between the District and the federal government may

have cost lives. As coronavirus vaccines began to roll out to states, D.C. found itself shafted by the allocation plans. Because the federal government doled out doses based on the number of residents and not the city's commuter-adjusted population, the District was stuck splitting its doses

between the 700,000 residents of the city and the hundreds of thousands of Virginia and Maryland residents who come here to work during the day. This partially contributed to the garish disparities in vaccination rates early on between affluent, mainly White wards and lower-income, predominantly Black

wards. D.C.'s citizens — a plurality of whom are Black — have been subjected to years of purely political and unnecessarily partisan rationales for denying them a say in their own government. For statehood to pass, 60 out of the 100 U.S. senators need to support the bill. Currently, four Democratic senators remain undecided on the bill, while all Republican senators are opposed to statehood. Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., and the entire Senate GOP have declared their opposition to statehood. Among the Republican caucus, opposition stems from a handful of spurious claims that are merely an excuse to not give representation to a city that happens to skew Democratic.

There are plenty of ways for students and the entire GW community to advocate for D.C. statehood. For one, we can call the senators from our home states who don't support statehood and encourage them to do so. If you are from Maine, West Virginia or Arizona, at least one of your Democratic senators has yet to throw their weight behind the bill. If you are from a state with one or more Republican senators, then it's time to make some calls to their offices as well.

As students, we are guests here in the capitol, and it's important that we give back to the D.C. community we're so lucky to be a part of. Students must treat statehood as the moral imperative it is and continue fighting for adequate representation for the place we call home during our time at GW.

Students should engage in advocacy to respond to India's COVID-19 crisis

As an Indian American, I've been feeling conflicted about the progress that the United States has made in immunizing ourselves against COVID-19 in comparison to the horror India is facing. At the same time I can stroll into the doctor's office to get my second dose of the vaccine, my fellow Indian Americans and I have family members whose lives are at risk if they step outside of their homes. The dichotomy between the two situations underscores the experience of reaping the privileges that come along with residing in a rich country while still feeling deeply connected to one with fewer resources.

Shreeya Aranake
Contributing Opinions Editor

Coronavirus infections continue to rage on in India. Only 10 percent of the Indian population has been inoculated with at least one dose of a coronavirus vaccine, as opposed to 47 percent of the American population.

Meanwhile in the United States, lawmakers are having a hard time trying to herd their constituents into a CVS or Walgreens to get a dose of vaccines that are simply lying around, and some that are even going to waste. Ohio Governor Mike DeWine even announced that five vaccinated residents have the chance to win \$1 million in an effort to incentivize unvaccinated individuals to get a shot.

Needless to say, it's hard to feel elated about the United States' progress while seeing the horrific headlines updating the world on the second wave of the pandemic in India. But there are actionable steps that the Indian diaspora can take that could make a positive impact on India both in the short- and

long-term.

There are ways in which the GW community can and should respond. Donations to nonprofit organizations, like Direct Relief and the American India Foundation, are crucial to alleviating the lack of resources needed to combat the virus, like oxygen cylinders and ventilators. Several organizations are also focusing on donating to India's marginalized communities, who are projected to be hit harder by the virus. Using social media stories and posts can be useful to spread the word and make it easier for friends and family to contribute.

But it is also important that the Indian diaspora at GW, especially those of us who hail from upper-caste Hindu backgrounds, engage in discussions that address the extent to which Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government played a significant role in the negligent handling of the first and second waves of the pandemic in India.

Modi and his allies have been downplaying the true extent of the pandemic, and have even gone to the lengths of changing laws to choke off foreign aid. If the diaspora intends to both alleviate the current crisis and prevent a similar one, it needs to constantly engage with the political developments in India by speaking to Modi-supporting friends and family. We also need to acknowledge the diversity within the Indian American and South Asian community so that our beliefs about Indian politics can come from a place of greater awareness rather than inheriting the biases that our parents might have. Those of us who do hail from more privileged backgrounds must educate ourselves on caste politics, through books and long-form articles, so that we are cognizant of how our

privileges in India made way for our lives in the United States.

Similar to former President Donald Trump's response to the coronavirus, many have accused Modi of being more obsessed with projecting a rosier narrative of the government's handling of the pandemic than acknowledging the true severity of the situation and acting to help those who are dying of the disease. India's solicitor general, Tushar Mehta — a member of the Bharatiya Janata Party — called those who are asking for oxygen "cry babies," while Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan claimed that India was better prepared to beat COVID-19 this year than 2020 just last week.

This is most definitely not the first time Modi's governance has harmed marginalized groups in India, and the continuing support he and his party receives from upper-caste Hindus who have immigrated to America is troubling. If we are to combat this support, it is important that many of us confront our own biases so we don't pass the ones that we might have inherited from Modi-supporting family members on to our children.

The short-term help we can provide to India is dependent on how much money we can give. This effort is well underway, as wealthy Indian Americans who work in tech and business sectors generously donated millions of dollars that will help expand hospital capacity and oxygen production. To avoid a crisis like this one in the future, it is crucial that each of us engage in discussions that think critically about Indian politics and Modi's government in particular.

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

Officials must ensure all fall classes have in-person option

University President Thomas LeBlanc said last week that the administration was "actively planning for an in-person fall." This comes a few weeks after the administration announced that they will require all students and faculty who will be on campus in the fall to be fully vaccinated so that students can have as much in-person instruction as possible. Officials have said they expect to offer remote options to accommodate the "varying needs of our community" but have yet to make an official announcement on class settings for the fall.

Jack Elbaum
Columnist

The University has every right to impose this vaccine mandate, and administrators should allow us to return to normal in the fall rather than relegating students to their residence halls to attend any virtual classes whatsoever. The efficacy of the vaccine and the adverse consequences associated with online school make it clear that it would be unacceptable for any classes this fall to be held completely online.

Most importantly, in-person classes will not present any type of significant risk because everybody on GW's campus will be vaccinated in the fall. These vaccines are extraordinarily effective — during initial trials, the Pfizer vaccine was shown to be 95 percent

effective, the Moderna vaccine was shown to be 94.1 percent effective and the Johnson & Johnson vaccine was shown to be 74.4 percent effective at protecting against symptomatic disease in the United States, as well as 100 percent effective against severe cases. Moreover, as of April 26, only 9,245 people — out of more than 95 million who were fully vaccinated — contracted COVID-19. This means that fewer than 0.01 percent of Americans who have been fully vaccinated were infected with the virus. The science is clear: Once someone is fully vaccinated, they are essentially immune to COVID-19.

For this reason, officials from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced Thursday that fully vaccinated people can return to most of their normal activities with no masks and no social distancing. The CDC says fully vaccinated people no longer have to wear masks indoors, nor do they have to quarantine or get tested for COVID-19 if they come in contact with someone infected with the virus. These reams of data, along with CDC guidelines, should eliminate any concerns GW might have about reopening. A review of 130 studies on COVID-19 transmission rates in schools showed that they did not create community outbreaks.

The mental health of both adults and teenagers has significantly worsened during the COVID-19 pandemic. If we want to curb these

numbers, then returning to some semblance of normalcy must be a top priority. The community's mental health is on the line if administrators don't allow students to return to fully in-person classes.

The educational consequences of in-person learning are also dire. I can speak from personal experience that focusing on class material is much harder in a virtual setting than during in-person classes. According to one survey from Digital Promise, as many as 79 percent of students said staying motivated was a problem in the online environment. That same survey found that the percent of students who were "satisfied" with their course dropped by nearly a third, while the amount of students who were "dissatisfied" more than tripled. At this point, it is quite clear that educational quality suffers when students are forced to "learn" in an online format.

Considering what has been laid out, it is extremely hard to see why there could be any reason to keep students online for even one class next semester. The science is clear when it comes to the efficacy of vaccines, and the data is clear when it comes to the mental health and educational consequences of remaining online. Vaccines are the cure to this pandemic, and administrators should make sure to treat them as such.

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

Culture

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THE SCENE

WASHINGTON, D.C. VIRTUAL CAREER AND JOB FAIR

May 25 • Free • Online Registration
Participate in online interviews with nationally recognized employers to find your next job.

ALEXANDER VON HUMBOLDT AND THE UNITED STATES: ART, NATURE AND CULTURE

May 22 • Free • Smithsonian American Art Museum
Discover more than 100 pieces of artifacts in an exhibition on the influential explorer.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

NEW ALBUM: "THE OFF-SEASON" BY J. COLE

Corcoran senior explores racism in the medical industry in thesis film

CLARA DUHON

CONTRIBUTING CULTURE EDITOR

Racism within doctor-patient relationships in the medical industry takes center stage in one theatre student's senior thesis film.

Hannah Rose Sturgis, who majored in theatre and journalism and mass communication, wrote, edited and starred in the one-woman film "Blood Real Red." The film follows Lady, a young Black woman in Delaware, for more than a decade as she encounters doctors who discriminate against her because of her race. The project is part of this year's installment of NEXT, the Corcoran School of Art and Design's annual display of seniors' end-of-year projects.

Sturgis said she had planned to perform her project live as a play but ended up making it into a film because of the pandemic.

Lady's doctors ignore her pain, caused by an unspecified illness and play into hurtful stereotypes, like telling Lady she should use birth control at age 15 even after she made clear she was not sexually active. The film also explores intergenerational trauma, as Lady observes her mother expressing doubts about Lady's doctors, having already gone through her own discriminatory experiences with physicians.

Sturgis said Lady initially internalizes the racism she faces to a point at which she becomes

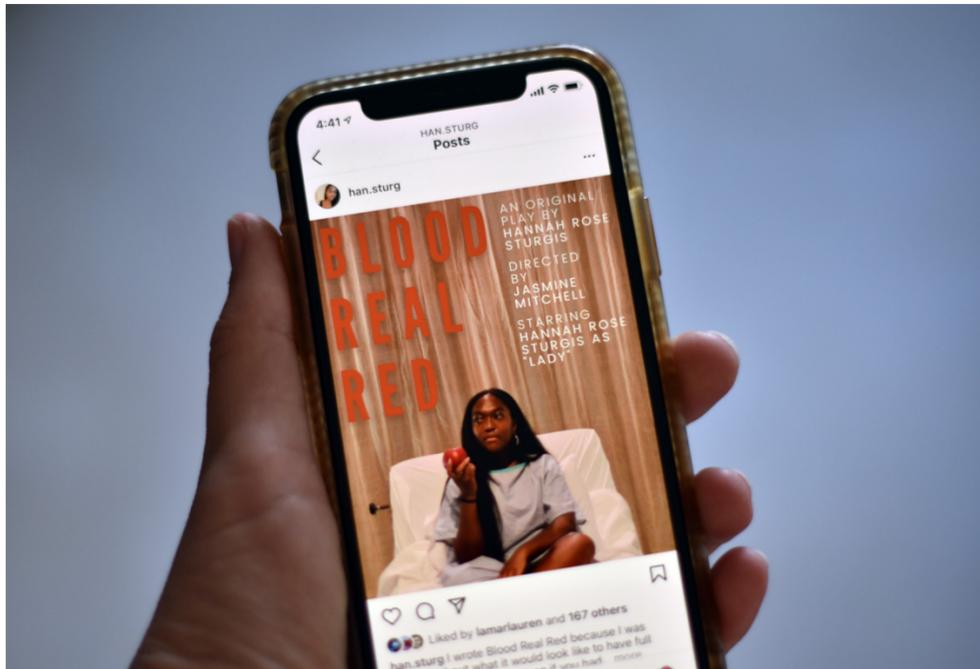


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Sturgis said the character Lady is loosely based on her own experiences and conversations she's had with other Black women.

"numb" to it. She said Lady blames herself for inviting the stereotypes and discrimination the doctors wrongfully project onto her, like thinking her doctor was insistent that she go on birth control because she presented herself as too "slutty."

Sturgis said Lady comes to un-

derstand the ways in which racism infiltrates her life, as the film shows Lady facing racism from both medical practitioners and in her daily life.

Sturgis said Lady's character is loosely based on her own experiences, but she developed the character after reflecting on con-

versations she's had throughout her life with friends and recent advice from medical professionals who are Black women. She said the issues of medical discrimination and racism is "constantly" on her mind, which led her to tell the story of a Black woman neglected by her doctors.

Sturgis said her personal experience with the medical industry has been "isolating," and even though Black women can stick up for themselves in the doctor's office, they are disproportionately called "aggressive" or said to be "over exaggerating" their pain. She said when she's asked her doctors explanatory questions, she's seen a "horrifying" lack of empathy from physicians who won't respond to her and have made her cry.

Sturgis said the film is very personal to her, not only because she drew on her own experiences while writing the play, but because she also stars in it. She said she learned from Sandra Davis, associate professor and assistant dean for diversity, equity and inclusion at the school of nursing about how racism can affect people mentally to the point where they don't always recognize racist incidents.

Sturgis said she hopes viewers of the film will do what Lady's doctors failed to — listen to her. She said she wants her audience to walk away from the film having "stepped" into someone else's experiences and learned from them.

She said performing in a virtual setting was difficult, but she used her understanding of how to run a play online that she gained after performing in a virtual production of Antigone with The Program of Theatre and Dance, which streamed online last fall due to the pandemic.



ANTHONY PELTIER | PHOTOGRAPHER

Ask for a few toppings at Thomas Sweet to make your own personalized combination.

Ice cream spots around the District for hot summer days

ANNA BOONE

CULTURE EDITOR

CLARA DUHON

CONTRIBUTING CULTURE EDITOR

As summer approaches, the season of eating ice cream every day is upon us.

If you've ever experienced the brutal heat and humidity of a D.C. summer, you've probably felt the magic a cold scoop of ice cream has as a remedy to cool off. So if you ever find yourself in search of ice cream this summer, reference this list of our favorite spots for a good scoop.

From the national favorite, Jeni's Ice Creams, to our campus gems Bon Matcha and Captain Cookie and the Milkman, here are a few ice cream shops to check out this summer:

Moorenko's Ice Cream Cafe

Moorenko's doesn't use the term "ultra-premium" in its slogan as a marketing gimmick — the cafe makes its ice cream using 17 percent milk fat, qualifying them as truly "ultra-premium." Check out their smooth and rich ice cream flavors, like Wild Blueberry and Salted Caramel with Pralines. The spot also offers a blackberry and mango dairy-free sorbet, making it a great spot to take vegan friends. Moorenko's also adds new and special flavors season-

ally to serve in addition to the classic flavors.

720 C St. SE. Open Monday through Thursday 2 to 7 p.m., Friday 2 to 9 p.m. and weekends noon to 9 p.m.

Jeni's Ice Creams

You can find this brand at most grocery stores and at locations around the country, but it's still a D.C. favorite. With specialty flavors like Middle West Whiskey & Pecans and Lemon & Blueberries Parfait, Jeni's Ice Creams is a solid spot for your next scoop. Its waffle cones made in store are also no joke — you'll be greeted by their scent when you walk in the door. The chain also refrains from using synthetic flavorings and dyes, so customers can munch on only natural flavors.

1925 14th St. NW. Open Monday through Wednesday 11 a.m. to 11 p.m. and Thursday through Sunday 11 a.m. to midnight.

Southwest Soda Pop Shop

Located at the Wharf, Southwest Soda Pop Shop is the best place to find novelty ice cream creations. The shop has rich additions like brownie chunks and gummies, classic ice cream flavors and enticing ice cream specialties that combine ice cream, cookies and toppings for an extravagant and satisfying dessert. Customers can stick to the standard ice cream cone or create their own ice cream cookie

sandwich, banana split or "cake explosion," which is a piece of cake with the choice of two ice cream scoops and three toppings.

1142 Maine Ave. SW. Open daily from noon to 7 p.m.

Bon Matcha

The worlds of soft serve and matcha collide to make a delicious flavor at Bon Matcha, located in Foggy Bottom. This ice cream and matcha tea stand is located about a block from the Marvin Center, so it makes a great study break. If you're looking to try a new flavor, try ordering a scoop of misuguru, a classic Korean flavor that is a traditional blend of fire-roasted nuts and whole grains, ground into a powder.

1928 I St. NW. Open Wednesday through Saturday from 1:30 to 7:30 p.m.

Larry's Homemade Ice Cream

Just north of Dupont Circle, this ice cream shop flaunts signature flavors of ice cream like Fred & Ginger, made with peach, brandy and ginger; Key West Chocolate Fever with orange and rich chocolate and Halva, flavored with tahini. The shop also offers baklava and other treats to satisfy your sweet tooth.

1633 Connecticut Ave. NW. Open Monday through Thursday from 3 to 9 p.m., Friday through Saturday from 2 to 11 p.m. and Sunday from 2 to 10 p.m.

Upcoming summer concerts in and around D.C.

ANNA BOONE

CULTURE EDITOR

With the vaccine rollout underway and COVID-19 restrictions loosening, it's time to start thinking about which concerts you'll want to hit this summer.

We've compiled a comprehensive list of mainly outdoor concerts occurring in and around D.C. this summer and early fall so you don't have to dig through Google. Most indoor concert venues only have shows scheduled starting in September, but these locations are ideal for outdoor concerts.

From Green Day and Weezer at National Park to Firefly Festival, a day trip away, headlined by artists like Lizzo, Billie Eilish and The Killers, here are a few upcoming concerts you can put on your calendar:

Nationals Park

This stadium is good for more than baseball — it also makes the ideal, spacious concert venue. In between baseball games this summer, Nationals Park will be hosting three concerts, all rock, punk rock and alternative music with big names like Green Day and Def Leppard. Concert guests will be expected to wear a mask at all times inside the stadium but will not be required to have the vaccine or a negative COVID test, and capacity will be limited per D.C. guidelines.

• July 13 — Guns N' Roses • Aug 8 — Hella Mega Tour: Green Day, Fall Out

Boy and Weezer • Aug 9 — The Stadium Tour: Mötley Crüe and Def Leppard

1500 S Capitol St. SE. Tickets range from \$30 to \$750 depending on concert and stadium area.

Merriweather Post Pavilion

Merriweather Post Pavilion is an ideal outdoor concert venue located in Symphony Woods, a huge plot of land in Columbia, Maryland, about a 50-minute drive from the city. If you can snag a Zipcar or ride, this venue is hosting a huge selection of concerts ranging from hard rock to jazz. Since COVID-19 guidelines are subject to change, the venue will "follow guidance from local and state health department officials in place at the time of the show," according to the website.

• July 2 — W3 Festival: Kix, Slaughter, Heaven's Edge and The Iron Maidens • July 3 — W3 Festival: Queensryche, Accept, Winger, Steven Adler, Steelheart, Bulletboys, Hurricane and Enuff Z'nuff • July 4 — W3 Festival: Night Ranger, Warrant, Great White, Lita Ford, LA Guns, Faster Pussycat, Bang Tango and Little Caesar • Aug. 12 — Luke Bryan • Aug. 19 — Zac Brown Band • Aug. 20 — Wilco + Sleater Kinney • Aug. 21 — Dave Matthews Band • Aug. 26 — Kenny Chesney • Aug. 31 — Alanis Morissette • Sep. 4 and 5 — Capital Jazz Fest • Sep. 18 — Daryl Hall & John Oates • Sep. 23 — Dierks Bentley • Sep. 28 — Pet Shop Boys &

New Order

10475 Little Patuxent Parkway. Columbia, Maryland. Tickets range from \$15 to \$167 depending on the concert.

DC JazzFest at The Wharf

DC Jazzfest is an annual event with the backing of a nonprofit organization. While the festival is only for a few days every year, the nonprofit aims to provide music education throughout the year to "underserved communities," through the DCJF Education Program. The festival will be free to the public and hosted at The Wharf's main pier. Along with standard COVID-19 safety guidelines as per D.C. guidelines, the festival provides guests, artists and community members with a page of COVID-19 resources on its website.

Sept. 1 through 5
• Regina Carter • Maria Schneider Orchestra • The Spanish Harlem Orchestra • Orrin Evans Presents "Terreno Comum" • Lakcia Benjamin Presents: "Pursuance" • Cyrus Chestnut • Allyn Johnson • Afro Blue • Jenny Scheinman • Laurin Talese • Immanuel Wilkins • The String Queens • Carr/Keys • The Michael Bowie Trio • The EJB Quartet (Reigning DCJazzPrix Champions) • Ernest Turner Trio • Vox Sambou • Chuck Redd

Main Pier at The Wharf, 760 Maine Ave. SW. Free entry but donations to the DC Jazzfest Education Program are encouraged.



FILE PHOTO BY GRAEME SLOAN

DC Jazzfest will be hosted on The Wharf's main pier and is open to the public.

GAMES OF THE WEEK



BASEBALL
vs. Georgetown
Tuesday | 4:30 p.m.
GW duels Georgetown in the last home game of the regular season.



SAILING
at Women's Nationals
Wednesday | all day
The Colonials kick off the Women's Nationals this week in Annapolis, Maryland.

NUMBER CRUNCH **.413**

Baseball's 2021 slugging percentage, up from its five-year average of .376.

Sailing concludes final season with trio of national competitions

WILL MARGERUM
STAFF WRITER

Sailing is competing in a trio of national championships to round out the program's final season as a varsity sport.

After the conclusion of the Intercollegiate Sailing Association Singlehanded National Championship, the teams are now looking ahead to the Women's Nationals on May 19 and 20, the Team Racing Nationals on June 1 and 2 and the Coed Nationals on June 7 and 8.

"It's a great thing in this year that's been very difficult both with COVID and with the streamlining process that athletics went through for us to be competing in not just one nationals but multiple," junior Mikaela Smith said. "It's really impressive and it's something that we're all very excited about."

The remaining regattas will mark the end of an era for the program, which will lose its varsity status because of the University's streamlining efforts announced last summer. Despite the end of the program, junior Matt Logue said that he is trying not to let the looming change affect his mindset on the water.

The Colonials had three sailors hit the water in the Singlehanded National Championship May 1 and 2. Senior Soenke Jordan led the way for GW with a 17th place finish in the men's division, while juniors Michael Ehnott and Matt Priebe took home 20th and 26th respectively.

The Singlehanded Championship is normally held during the fall but was pushed back to the spring of 2021 because of the pandemic. The event also requires qualification, but the competition

was amended to an open, bring your own boat format, according to the ICSA website.

Junior Charlotte Rose of Jacksonville University won the women's title while Georgetown University sophomore Thomas McCann finished atop the men's division.

Sailing, which is concluding its ninth year and final year at the varsity level, captured its highest finish in program history at the ICSA Sperry Women's National Championship in 2019 at fourth overall. The 2020 season was cut short as the squad worked through growing pains of a younger roster.

Junior Sarah Hardee said dealing with COVID-19 protocols this season has been difficult, but the team has been "very lucky" to avoid any outbreaks within the program. On top of the protocols, a number of student-athletes on the sailing program opted-out of the spring season due to the circumstances of the pandemic.

Travel restrictions and concerns over contracting the coronavirus led the Colonials to a limited slate that included just nine events in the spring. During the spring of 2019, the program's last full campaign, sailing competed in 21 meets.

Prior to the Singlehanded Championship, the team kicked off its season with a meet at St. Mary's College of Maryland that also featured Boston College March 6 and 7. In the last Singlehanded Championship held in 2019, Seahawks sophomore Leo Boucher won the men's division while Eagles junior Sophia Reineke triumphed in the women's division.

The Colonials' first unit, comprised of Jordan, Logue, junior Allison Forsyth and sophomore



FILE PHOTO BY ARIELLE BADER

The COVID-19 pandemic pushed the Singlehanded Championship from this past fall to earlier this month.

Ruby Gordon, notched the best overall score on the first day. Senior John Deruff said early-season regattas are important for the team to prepare itself for national championship competitions and he's glad the group still had some opportunities to test themselves despite a condensed schedule.

GW continued to enjoy strong form throughout the month of March, with its second unit taking first place at the Seahawk Colonial Showdown March 20. A week later,

the Colonials nabbed the top spot on the podium again at the Aaron Szambecki Team Race. The first boat, skippered by Logue, Jordan and Priebe, topped St. Mary's, Jacksonville and Old Dominion en route to the win.

The Navy Quad Races April 10 and 11, the last tune-up before championship meets began, proved more difficult for the squad. GW placed fourth and seventh out of nine entrants in the fleet race and finished third and fifth in the team

racing format.

During the MAISA Qualifiers April 17 and 18, the women finished in fourth place overall to earn an automatic berth to the College Sailing Women's Nationals. The Colonials' coed team did not earn an automatic bid to the Gill College Sailing Coed Nationals but was awarded an at-large place in the tournament, giving the sailors a prolonged chance to practice and make the most out of their final season of varsity status.

Women's tennis wraps up season with deep A-10 Tournament run

ALEC RICH
STAFF WRITER

Following a canceled fall slate, women's tennis rebounded this spring with a winning record and capped off the year with a semifinals appearance at the A-10 Tournament.

After going more than 11 months without competition, the Colonials resumed play in late February. The squad notched a 10-6 record, earning its highest winning percentage since 2012 and the No. 4 seed heading into the A-10 Tournament. With just nine players on the roster, head coach Torrie Browning said a key to the team's success this year was the willingness of athletes to support one another and take on leadership roles.

Leveraging that mentality at the tournament down in Orlando, Florida, the Colonials bested division rivals La Salle and Fordham before falling to VCU April 30, marking the team's most successful season finish since losing in the semifinals to Richmond in the spring of 2019. Armed with a mix of both veteran players and new additions, including three freshmen, Browning said the combination of talent culminated in a "special" team that had the ability to make a deep run.

One of those veteran players, graduate student Alexis Nelson, said she was "proud" of the team's ability to bounce back amid the hurdles of the pandemic and

succeed at the tournament.

Browning said the team also had to adjust to the heat difference of playing outdoors in Florida. Typically playing indoors in temperature-controlled environments throughout the season, Browning said the switch could have created trouble for the team.

The looming anxiety that accompanied the pandemic and the potential for match cancellations was also difficult, according to freshman Stella Wiesemann.

"In a time like this there's a lot of uncertainties and sometimes we didn't know if the next match would get canceled," Wiesemann said. "At the beginning of the semester, we had issues with that, and other teams obviously had difficulties too, so just having this kind of uncertainty was a little bit challenging."

The team endured cancellations against Loyola University Maryland March 17 and Fordham April 17 after the game was postponed from March 28. Despite the cancellation, the squad still got to play against Fordham, defeating the Rams in the quarterfinals of the A-10 Championship.

Although the main tennis season typically takes place in the spring, one of the team's biggest challenges this year was the inability to prepare during the fall semester. In a normal year, the team would have used the fall to train, build chemistry and participate in

various tournaments from September to October.

But last fall, no players returned to campus since the slate was canceled, which created a situation this spring where Browning said the team was delayed in playing practice sets and matches against one another by several weeks. Instead, the team spent that time catching up on all the conditioning and training they'd missed.

But for some of the more experienced players on the team, including Nelson, the one silver lining from the virtual fall was the notion of growth through self-accountability. Nelson said the experience of knowing what to expect once the team got together put her at an "advantage" during the months she spent preparing.

The preparation paid off for Nelson as well as Wiesemann, who led the team with nine wins apiece in singles play. On the doubles side, the pair of Nelson and freshman Lindsay Thompson set the pace for the squad with eight wins.

As the squad looks ahead to a more normal season beginning this fall, Browning said several areas the team will focus on include mental toughness, shot selection and overall training. She said those efforts will only be aided by the team's renewed access to outdoor spaces, namely the Mount Vernon campus, where the squad did not get to practice this year.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO

During her final season on the softball team, Sidney Bloomfield notched career highs in batting average and slugging percentage.

Graduating student-athletes bid farewell to GW

NURIA DIAZ
CONTRIBUTING
SPORTS EDITOR

The Colonials are sending off their senior classes of athletes as they trade in their buff and blue uniforms for caps and gowns.

Despite facing truncated seasons and completing their senior year in a virtual setting, GW's graduating student-athletes are leaving behind impressive legacies. We asked a few star athletes to reflect on their time at GW and share what being a part of GW Athletics meant to them.

Here are some of the standout performers of the graduating class of 2021:

Ioanna Mantzouratos: Lacrosse

Mantzouratos racked up 88 points over the course of her career, including 59 goals and 29 assists. She finishes with a .450 shooting percentage and .809 shooting percentage on goal overall. The attacker earned a spot on the A-10 All-Conference All-Rookie Team her debut year, setting new GW freshman records with 23 goals, 18 assists, 41 points and 46 shots. In her final season, Mantzouratos tallied a season-high five goals and nine shots on net against American.

Ryan Doorhy: Men's track and field

Doorhy set a personal

record in his final season during the Atlantic 10 Championship, finishing with a time of 1:58:49 in the outdoor 800 meter race. In his freshman year, Doorhy placed 51st at the cross country Mount St. Mary's Duals 5K with a time of 17:04.02. He also set personal records in the indoor mile at the VMI Winter Relays with a time of 4:28.08 and the 1500 meter race at the Mason Spring Invitational with a time of 3:59.51 during his sophomore year.

Sidney Bloomfield: Softball

During her final season, Bloomfield set career highs with a batting average of .450 and a slugging percentage of .510. She notched eight hits in 14 at bats across five games on the road to the team's 2021 A-10 title victory to earn a spot on the All-Championship Team. In her sophomore year, she set career highs of 52 hits and 11 RBIs to aid the Colonials' A-10 title run and earn a share of the championship with Fordham in 2019.

Gabriele Simonti: Men's water polo

In his abbreviated senior season, Simonti notched six goals and two assists. The Italian center also tied a career-high four steals against La Salle in the MAWPC semifinal. During his first season with the Colonials in 2019, he accumulated 40 goals and

41 steals as well as 30 field blocks to match a single-season program record. He was recognized on the GW Athletics Academic Dean's list in the Spring of 2019 in addition to the ACWPC All-Academic Team.

Youssef Ragab: Men's swimming

In his final season, Ragab notched fourth place in the 100 meter breast to help the Colonials win their fourth A-10 Championship in five years. He was named to the A-10 All-Conference First Team in his sophomore and junior campaigns at GW, earning gold medals in the 800 meter free relay both years at the A-10 title meet. In his debut year in 2017, he broke into the all-time GW top ten in the 100 and 200 meter breasts and the 200 and 400 meter individual medley events.

Sydney Welch: Volleyball

Welch amassed 965 digs over the course of a four year career, notching 70 digs and 10 service aces in her final condensed season. The defensive specialist posted double-digit digs three times, including a season-high 11 against La Salle Feb. 19 and tied a career high four service aces against Howard in February 2020. As a freshman in 2017, she played in all 32 matches in her debut season, leading the squad and finishing fifth overall in the A-10 with 469 digs.



FILE PHOTO BY ALEXANDER WELLING

The team faced a few cancellations throughout March and April but was able to play against the Fordham Rams, winning in the quarterfinals of the A-10 Championship.