

The GW Hatchet

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Tracking COVID-19
Sept. 16 - Sept. 22

Weekly COVID-19 cases: 25

Weekly positivity rate: 0.24%

Change in cases since previous week: -37

Thousands expected at conclusion of bicentennial celebration, officials say

ISHA TRIVEDI
NEWS EDITOR

GW will cap off its bicentennial this weekend with a three-day celebration comprising nearly 20 events, headlined by a postponed Commencement on the National Mall for the classes of 2020 and 2021.

The weekend celebration, called "Our Moment, Our Momentum: GW Centuries Celebration Weekend," marks the end of GW's eight-month bicentennial celebration that began in February with a virtual gathering of alumni and top University leaders. The weekend will include campus tours, open houses for GW's various schools and featured programs like an alumni reception and a "Bicentennial Bash" — a gathering for GW community members in Kogan Plaza in the evening after Commencement.

This week's Commencement on the National Mall will mark the University's first in-person ceremony since 2019.

Officials moved Commencement online for the classes of 2020 and 2021 due to public health concerns tied to the COVID-19 pandemic. GW was the only one of the five largest universities in the District to hold its Commencement online for the Class of 2021, and some seniors held small independent gatherings at the Mall this spring to celebrate the occasion.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said more than 21,000 people are registered to attend Commencement — including 5,000 recent graduates and 15,000 additional guests, including faculty and alumni. Nearly 12,000 people are registered for the Bicentennial Bash, she said.

"This weekend is a great time for our community members to come together and show their pride in GW, our impact and our community," Nosal said in an email. "Especially after the previous year and a half, this celebratory weekend gives the GW community a chance to gather together and deepen a sense of belonging, connection



Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., will deliver the keynote address at the ceremony and receive an honorary degree.
GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

and commitment."

Nosal declined to say how much money officials hope to fundraise from the weekend's events and how much money they spent on the events.

Officials postponed three events on the Mount Vernon Campus scheduled for this weekend, including a tour of campus, a tailgate hosted by the athletic department and the "Vern Harvest," according to an email sent to GW community members Friday.

"Unfortunately, due to overwhelming interest, we are over capacity for the events scheduled to be held on our beautiful Mount Vernon Campus," officials said in the email.

The weekend also leads into the Board of Trustees' open meeting next Tuesday, when officials expect to provide an update on the Colonials moniker renaming deliberations, Board Chair Grace Speights said.

"I don't expect any vote or decisions then because we are just starting to do that," Speights said in an interview earlier this month.

University President Thomas LeBlanc said in January that he expected the Special Committee on the Colonials Moniker to finalize its renaming recommendations — which

would precede the Board's consideration — by the end of the past academic year, but officials declined to say in July if the committee met the target.

Officials announced updated COVID-19 protocols last week for those participating in the weekend's events, requiring attendees to wear masks outdoors and indoors and present proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test from the previous 72 hours.

"Protecting the health and safety of our community during the weekend is the University's top priority," the announcement reads. "The updated safety protocols will be required for all attendees at events on- and off-campus as part of the celebration."

Alumna and Sen. Elizabeth Warren, D-Mass., will deliver the keynote address at Commencement and will receive an honorary Doctor of Public Service along with former Board Chair Nelson Carbonell.

Anthony Fauci, the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases who received an honorary Doctor of Public Service from the University in 2015, will also receive the president's medal at the ceremony — the highest honor that can be bestowed by the Univer-

sity president.

Cindy Liu, an associate professor of environmental and occupational health, and Andrew Maurano, an associate clinical professor of emergency medicine, will also receive president's medals at the ceremony for their work during the pandemic.

"I am thrilled that during this historic in-person event we will have the privilege of honoring three heroes of the pandemic, including Dr. Fauci and two of our very own University community members, Professors Cindy Liu and Andrew Maurano," LeBlanc said in an email last month. "They represent the many scientists and frontline workers who have led us through the most challenging days of the pandemic."

Lonnie Bunch, the secretary of the Smithsonian Institution who served as the Commencement speaker at the virtual ceremony in May, will also receive a Doctor of Humane Letters honorary degree at the in-person event.

Commencement on the Mall will coincide with the Women's March rally for abortion justice, where demonstrators will march from Freedom Plaza to the Supreme Court starting one hour after Commencement.

Officials shift from diversity audit to internal review

YANKUN ZHAO
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

In a reversal of the University's plans to conduct an external audit of campus diversity last academic year, officials said they will instead review GW's diversity, inclusion and equity later this fall through a primarily internal process.

As part of the new process outlined at a Faculty Senate meeting last month, administrators said the Office of the Provost will conduct a comprehensive review to assess and improve campus diversity, with recommendations orchestrated from within the University rather than an outside firm as previously planned. Although the review will replace the diversity audit that former Provost Brian Blake initiated in January, officials will still develop a "diversity action plan" to track progress in implementing diversity on campus and the broader D.C. area.

Blake, who left GW this summer, announced earlier this year that officials would use an external firm's recommendations to help form their action plan with reforms in areas like faculty composition and financial aid. The University repeatedly delayed the diversity audit after its original deadline set for this past spring because the outside consultant firms, which officials narrowed down to two in June, requested more information than officials had anticipated.

Interim Provost Chris Bracey said officials reviewed the proposals submitted by the final two firms earlier this year and decided instead to pursue an internal review similar to academic program reviews common at higher education institutions. He said the firms' proposals failed to deliver on the "concrete" and "tailored" recommendations that the University could implement in the short- and long-term.

"What we're doing is something more akin to a program review, like an academic program review," Bracey said in an interview. "It's a more familiar way of reviewing the performance of a programmatic set of activities, like pushing to improve diversity among the faculty, students and staff."

Bracey, who first announced the reversal of the diversity audit at the August Faculty Senate meeting, said officials will work with campus diversity, equity and inclusion leaders to collect data on areas of progress and improvement. The data will help officials form a set of recommendations to implement in the action plan, he said.

He said officials will invite an "outside reviewer" to visit campus and evaluate the observations and recommendations to determine if they are accurate, valid and appropriate. He said the provost's office will then review the final report before implementing key recommendations.

Bracey said officials will post their findings on a website once the review process is complete as part of efforts to maintain transparency during the audit. He said officials have yet to finalize a review timeline but estimated that the process will last at least a year.

"It's pretty exciting and ambitious, but we haven't finalized a timeline yet," he said. "That's also something that would need to be discussed and coordinated with [the Faculty Senate's appointment, salary and promotion policies committee]. These are sort of comprehensive review processes so we want to make sure that we do it right."

See LAGUERRE-BROWN Page 5

Students say lack of Vern COVID testing center is inconvenient, worrying

ALEXANDRA KICIOR
REPORTER

Despite housing nearly 700 students this fall, the Mount Vernon Campus is the University's only campus lacking a COVID-19 testing site.

More than 10 students living on the Vern said in interviews they are worried about the public health risks associated with symptomatic students traveling three miles on the Vex to the Foggy Bottom Campus to get tested. But officials and experts said given the high vaccination rates on campus, traveling from the Vern does not present a significant risk for coronavirus transmission.

Ray Lucas, the University's COVID-19 coordinator, said officials have not traced any coronavirus cases back to exposures on the Vex.

He said officials are considering adding a coronavirus testing center to the Vern, but no immediate plans are in place. Students with symptoms should abide by GW's mask mandate and take the Vex to get symptomatic testing at the Colonial Health Center in Foggy Bottom, he said.

"This is no different than general guidance from the health department as people with symptoms often need to leave their home for access to testing or other healthcare services," Lucas said in an email.

Students said more frequent travel to Foggy Bottom to meet the University's new biweekly coronavirus testing requirement has become uncomfortable and inconvenient.

Freshman Kailey Christensen, who lives in West Hall, said spending 15 minutes commuting on the Vex worries her while she sees

other students on board coughing and showing potential symptoms for the coronavirus. She said students have continued to pack onto the Vex until the vehicle reaches maximum capacity, even when riders are visibly symptomatic.

"When people are on the bus and they're coughing and it's really crowded, it makes me a little bit scared," Christensen said. "There's been a few people in my dorm who've had COVID, and they've been quarantining, and they had to come here to get their COVID test, so I feel like they're just spreading it to other people."

Charlotte Elburn, a freshman living in West Hall, said she traveled to Foggy Bottom two weeks ago to get a test because she had a cough and sore throat.

Though she tested negative, Elburn said she was worried about exposing others to the virus on the Vex before receiving her results, often sitting within three feet of other commuters.

"When I had to go to Foggy, I had to be on the Vex where it's really crowded, and I double mask, but there is no telling if you're going to end up sitting right next to someone, and it was hard to not cough in the public area," Elburn said.

Professors who teach on the Vern said students should not have to risk exposure to the virus to use transportation between campuses.

Mark Ralkowski, an associate professor of philosophy and honors who teaches on the Vern, said after commuting on the Vex for 10 consecutive school years, he decided to drive or bike to Foggy Bottom this year as long as the Vern lacks testing.

Ralkowski said academic leaders on the Vern, like the directors



Ray Lucas said officials have not traced any cases to exposure on the Vex.
GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

of the Honors Program, the Women's Leadership Program and the University Writing Program, have been requesting on-site testing on the campus since this summer.

"The request has been made over and over again and has not been met," Ralkowski said.

Experts in public health said it's unlikely that students will contract coronavirus while riding the Vex considering the biweekly testing

requirement and the high vaccination rate on campus.

Aimee Palumbo, an assistant professor of instruction in epidemiology and biostatistics at Temple University, said travel on the Vex between GW's campuses does not pose any public health risks considering that 97 percent of GW's student population was vaccinated as of Sept. 15.

Gerald Keusch, a professor of

medicine and the associate director of the National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratory at Boston University, said the Vern doesn't need to have its own lab to process tests.

"If the testing is done on the campus in D.C., presumably where the labs are, your shuttle system can carry your samples to it rather than having students bring their nose to it," Keusch said.

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THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

GERMAN ELECTION ANALYSIS: TWO U.S. EXPERTS REFLECT ON THEIR ON-SITE VISITS

Sept. 29 • 10:30 a.m. EDT • Free
Join experts on German politics as they discuss the results of the election of Germany's new chancellor and governing coalition.

ICMA: TRACHTENBERG YOUNG ALUMNI IN MUNICIPAL GOVERNMENT PANEL

Sept. 30 • Noon EDT • Free
Tune into a panel hosted by the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration as young government officials offer advice for entering local government.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Sept. 29, 1986

The Student Association plans to open its meetings to the public in an effort to gain wider recognition of its role in student government, The Hatchet reported.



FILE PHOTO BY GABRIELLE RHOADS | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
Pictured here in November 2020, the E Street homeless encampment is one of three across the District that city officials hope to shut down as part of the program.

D.C. officials pilot program to shut down E Street homeless encampment

ZACHARY BLACKBURN
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

D.C. officials have unveiled a pilot program that would shut down three of the city's major homeless encampments and connect residents to housing, but critics say the plan lacks clarity and thoughtfulness.

The program seeks to provide apartment vouchers to aid residents in finding permanent housing at encampments located along E Street near campus, in NoMa and at New Jersey Avenue and O Street NW before permanently closing the encampments for health and safety reasons. Local advocates have criticized the plan for its lack of details, like the apartments' quality and location, raising concerns that planned evictions could "criminalize" unhoused residents who decide to remain at their more familiar encampments.

Wayne Turnage, the District's deputy mayor of health and human services, said city officials hope to house and increase outreach to more than 100 residents of those encampments during a public meeting about the program Wednesday. The program will cost the city about \$4 million, according to NBC Washington.

"Once we've matched those who will accept housing to an acceptable unit, then three of those sites, we know for certain that we will be closing those sites for future encampments," he said during the meeting. "The primary concern in each of those three sites is public safety and health."

Several aspects of the program remain unclear based on the limited information that District officials have provided about the

apartment units, encampment eviction enforcement and expanded outreach efforts. Some activists worry that the designated no-tent zones that could replace the encampments through the program could criminalize homelessness as information about policy enforcement remains unclear.

Turnage said city officials haven't completed plans to close and evict residents from the E Street encampment because the District shares jurisdiction over the land with the National Park Service. City officials are collaborating with NPS to begin finalizing the plans for the encampment's closure, he said.

District officials plan to close down an encampment in NoMa soon as part of the program, permanently clearing homeless people who do not accept housing assistance from the government, DCist reported. The first stage of the program started last month at the NoMa encampments and continued at the two other encampments last week, according to the program flyer.

Turnage said the District will grant priority to encampment residents in D.C.'s waitlists for one-year apartment vouchers. He said city officials anticipate that some residents will initially decline housing offers because of mistrust of government officials, but he hopes an increase in case management outreach will convince them to take advantage of the vouchers.

"I have a belief in my viscera that 90 to 95 percent of them will accept housing, but those who don't, they will have to move from that encampment site, and hopefully we can work with our

outreach team and convince them that they should go into housing," he said.

Jamal Weldon, the program's manager within the Deputy Mayor's Office of Health and Human Services, said at the public meeting that the pilot will help connect encampment residents with housing through an accelerated process instead of the typical waitlist for apartment access.

He said officials decided to remove the three encampments because they're some of the largest in D.C., with more than 100 residents in total and some of the worst "health and safety risk factors," like hygiene issues caused by a lack of accessible showers.

"We have looked at this pilot program as an opportunity to house anywhere upwards of 100 residents that are currently living on the streets in these various encampments in less than a 90-day period," Weldon said.

Weldon rejected criticisms from activists who said the tent bans that officials could enforce through pilot program will criminalize homelessness, saying the decision is necessary to protect the safety of encamped residents and people who live nearby.

"It's not about criminalizing encamped living, but if there are areas which have been established as high health and safety risk factors to both the encamped residents as well as the community at large, then we at DMHHS are charged with the responsibility of hearing those factors and working on a way to address them in a manner that makes that area safer for all," he said.

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Officials still implementing plans to eliminate single-use plastics

MICHELLE VASSILEV
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Officials have not said how many GWorld vendors have stopped using single-use plastics more than six months after officials committed to begin phasing them out on campus.

Officials said GWorld vendors are required to find "available alternatives" for items like plastic utensils, straws, wrappers and bags in compliance with GW's new policy to eliminate single-use plastics announced in June. In interviews, more than 10 GWorld vendors said officials never alerted them about the policy, and some businesses will continue distributing plastics to customers, while others have instituted their own initiatives to cut down on plastic use.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said officials are working to help GWorld vendors comply with the University's policy, and most of these businesses are in agreement with the University's commitment to ban single-use plastics.

"GW Dining is actively working closely with our retail tenants to bring them into compliance with the single-use plastics policy," Nosal said in an email. "Most of the tenants are on board, though some are working through existing inventory, and once expanded, will utilize other alternatives to plastics where possible."

Nosal said GWorld vendors like Carvings and Uptowner Cafe have made "great strides" in moving away from single-use plastics. She said Carvings switched all their plastic straws to compostable ma-

terial and implemented a new filtered water filling station as a way to encourage students to use reusable water bottles.

Nosal said the University's commitment to eliminate single-use plastics involves four simultaneous steps. She said these stages will include phasing out plastics in campus operations, eliminating plastics in community partners and businesses, focusing on "engagement and lifestyle choices" and generating dialogue with researchers and community partners about alternative solutions to single-use plastics.

Nosal said the University will continue working with GWorld vendors to encourage them to support the policy.

The University has already replaced plastic bottles with glass bottles or cans and plans to install at least one bottle-filling station in each University building.

Nosal declined to say how many GWorld vendors have completely eliminated single-use plastics.

In interviews, staff and managers from 11 GWorld vendors said the University has not informed them of their initiative to decrease plastics at restaurants around campus, while two said they received emails from the University to decrease plastic use.

Miguel Robago, the manager of Peet's Coffee, said Peet's implemented its own initiatives, independent from the University, to lower their supply of single-use plastics, now offering discounts to students who bring their own reusable cups. He said Peet's also sells reusable cups and provides customers with paper straws.

He said the University did not reach out to Peet's staff about eliminating single-use plastics. He said the business will continue using plastics, like coffee cup lids.

"We haven't heard anything from them and we just recently opened back up again in August," Robago said.

Judenal Mathks, the manager of District House's Chick-fil-A, said he hasn't been part of any communication with the University about eliminating single-use plastics since he started as manager this past month. He said Chick-fil-A is still using plastics like lids for their drinks, and any decision to remove plastics must come from the Chick-Fil-A company at large.

"We are a franchisee from Chick-fil-A, so we actually have to be in compliance with Chick-fil-A, so whatever decision that we take, we have to make sure truthfully is in compliance with that," he said.

Jeremy Pollok, the owner of Tonic, said the University first emailed the restaurant several months ago to inform them of GW's policy restricting GWorld vendors from using single-use plastics. Pollok said he also received an email late last week from the University, reminding Tonic about GW's since-use plastic policy.

He said last week's email stated a University staff member would contact Tonic to ensure they are in compliance with the single-use-plastics elimination policy. He also said the email included information about who Tonic should notify if they have any questions about how to eliminate single-use plastics.



CAMILLE DESANTO | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Officials said they don't have a timeline for when they expect to eliminate all single-use plastics across campus in alignment with the new policy.

Residential community slow to return after RA program's elimination: students

ABBY KENNEDY
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

LAUREN SFORZA
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

This fall marks the University's first semester with community coordinators living in residence halls in place of resident advisers – a transition that students say has been slow to rebuild community between residents returning to campus.

For the first time in recent memory, residence halls will lack RAs after officials eliminated the position, substituting the program with a rollout of new student employment positions and assigning one residential staff member per residence hall to handle RAs' previous responsibilities. More than 10 students said although the community coordinators living in residence halls have focused on student outreach, campus residents have struggled to revive the same connections they once forged with RAs in the past.

Stewart Robinette, the assistant dean of students, said 25 community coordinators work and live in residence halls across campus, in addition to two Fraternity and Sorority area coordinators who moved onto campus in late June and early July.

He said learning about the University and "creating a welcoming environment" during the COVID-19 pandemic have been the most significant challenges for community coordinators so far.

"We have received very positive feedback," he said in an email. "We are finding that students especially appreciate that our staff members are able to resolve issues or provide answers in the moment, rather than having to pass them onto someone else."

Robinette said residential staff have handled students' conflicts, college transition issues and "after hour needs," advised student organizations and assisted students isolating because of the coronavirus.

Jessie Lee, the community coordinator for Madison Hall, said her daily responsibilities include answering students' questions through email or over the phone and connecting with students walking through the residence halls. She said although her office is located in Amsterdam Hall, she tries to make time to walk through Madison Hall to meet with students face to face and ensure they know where they can find her for help.

Clare Fritsch, a freshman living in JBKO Hall, said she has never talked to her community coordinator since moving in at the start



DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Officials announced in February they were canceling the Resident Adviser program after pausing it during the pandemic.

of the semester. She said her community coordinator hosted a donut social for students during her first week on campus, but she did not

feel an opportunity to connect with her coordinator.

Pietro De Ferrari, a sophomore living in District House, said while

community coordinators reach out to students through regular emails, his interaction with community coordinators remains minimal.

GW Hospital records hundreds of emergency flights since helipad opening

ZACHARY BLACKBURN
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Nearly two years after the GW Hospital opened its helipad for emergency medical transports, officials say the platform has helped hundreds of patients receive quick medical care.

GW Hospital data shows about 220 flights have arrived to the helipad in the past 22 months since the site's opening. Hospital officials said the helipad has helped save lives, and residents say it has caused minimal disruptions despite a multi-year community debate over noise and safety concerns leading up to its 2018 approval from the D.C. Council.

GW Hospital spokesperson Susan Griffiths said about 10 patients have been transported to the hospital by helicopter each month, which aligns with the hospital's projections for its use before construction.

"The George Washington University Hospital is honored to provide lifesaving care to individuals throughout the D.C. region through our helipad and critical care services," she said in an email.

Griffiths said helipad landings are reserved for patients who are facing imminent danger from illness or injuries, including gunshot wounds and heart failure, according to hospital data from November 2019 through June 2020.

"Flights come from around the D.C. region," she said. "All of these patients were critically injured or ill and required emergent, high-level care."

The helipad was the subject of intense debate before its construction, when some neighbors voiced

concerns that loud choppers transporting patients could wake residents in the middle of the night. A 2017 GW Hospital study found that the noise levels helicopters cause was similar to ambulance sirens.

Griffiths said the hospital provides semi-annual reports with data on the frequency of the helipad's use and late-night flights to the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission as part of an agreement with commissioners. The agreement, meant to soothe noise and safety concerns of Foggy Bottom residents, limits the number of yearly flights to 175 and requires the hospital to notify the ANC of any late-night flights within 72 hours after they happen.

The most recent helipad usage report available on the ANC's website is from the first six months of 2020. Griffiths did not return a request for updated information.

Flight-specific data is publicly available for 77 flights from the helipad's November opening through June 2020, with information about landing time, patient diagnosis and reason for each flight. Seventeen of the flights occurred between the hours of 11 p.m. and 6 a.m., under the 25 percent threshold that the hospital must remain below to comply with the neighborhood agreement.

The data shows that four gunshot wound victims and 10 stroke victims were flown to GW during the eight-month period, as well as five unspecified "trauma" victims.

Jeri Epstein, the chair of the ANC, said the helipad's quick response capabilities make it a necessary addition to the hospital, which



FILE PHOTO BY EMMA CAAMANO

The helipad was the subject of intense debate before its construction over concerns that choppers could wake residents in the middle of the night.

is one of two Level 1 trauma centers in the District.

"The fact that we could be saving somebody's life by providing an emergency landing for a helicopter and getting that person the medical attention he or she needs, to me that that is overwhelmingly important," she said.

Epstein said D.C. experiences significant helicopter traffic, and a handful of additional flights and more noise each week is worth sav-

ing lives.

Marina Streznewski, the former president of the Foggy Bottom Association who led the group during the debates over the helipad, said the benefits of saving lives greatly outweigh concerns about noise.

"It continues to save lives," she said. "It was, as far as I'm concerned, an absolute no-brainer. It was constructed to save lives. Period, end of story."

Barbara Kahlow, the secretary-

treasurer of the West End Citizens Association, said the hospital has not done a "sufficient" job at providing details about the frequency of the helipad's use to the Foggy Bottom community. Kahlow said several residents have experienced "objectionable" noise from helicopters during the early morning hours, but WECA members want to see more data before deciding whether they should urge hospital officials to shut down the helipad.



GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

Sophomore Jackie Dioses said GW should offer more assistance with filling out the FAFSA because of the questions' complexity.

Officials should clarify recent FAFSA changes, experts say

DANIEL PATRICK GALGANO
STAFF WRITER

After Congress expanded eligibility for the Free Application for Federal Student Aid last June, higher education experts said officials should launch an informational outreach campaign to prevent confusion over the changes.

Federal officials and higher education institutions will no longer consider questions on the FAFSA asking whether applicants have registered with the Selective Service — a federal database of those eligible to be drafted into military service — or if they have been convicted on drug-related charges. Half a dozen experts in higher education policy said the updates to FAFSA will increase access to higher education but may lead to more confusion for new students registering for aid since the required eligibility questions will still appear on the form.

The 2021 FAFSA Simplification Act — signed into law by then-President Donald Trump in December 2020 as part of the Consolidated Appropriations Act 2021 — mandated that the U.S. Department of Education decrease the number of questions on the FAFSA from 108 to 36 and expanded student eligibility for federal Pell Grants.

"Twenty million students and their families are in the middle of what is likely the strangest first semester of college in a century," then-Sen. Lamar Alexander, R-Tenn., a sponsor of the legislation, said in a statement last September. "Almost everything has changed for students, except for one

thing — students still have to answer 108 questions on the dreaded FAFSA form."

The form, which will open Friday, will still include the two eligibility questions because the legislation came "too late" for the FAFSA to be changed, according to an ED release. ED officials issued a letter to higher education leaders in June advising student aid offices to disregard applicants' answers about drug-related convictions and Selective Service registration while the questions remain on the form.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal did not return a request for a comment on the changes to the form this year.

Jackie Dioses, a sophomore majoring in political science, said she wishes GW communicated the FAFSA changes to the student body so she could better prepare to complete the form. She said she has to gather a lot of family financial information to complete the form, making accurately completing it particularly "confusing."

"This is probably something that should be made a little more clear," Dioses said. "They should just send a quick email to keep us informed."

The Office of Student Financial Assistance's website posts GW's financial aid policies, a glossary of financial terminology and a guide to financial literacy. But the office's Financial Education Resource List, which outlines resources for students to gather and submit financial information, was not functional and displayed an internal error message as of Sunday.

Annabelle Manzo, a sophomore majoring

in women's, gender and sexuality studies, said filling out the FAFSA is a "stressful experience" because officials do not offer enough support and financial literacy resources for students to complete the form.

"I am a first-generation college student, so that comes with a lot of anxiety around these sorts of things," Manzo said. "There's this fear of doing it wrong and then not being able to get aid, which is very important because we don't have the finances for me to go to college without it."

Experts in higher education said the changes made to the FAFSA helped separate a family's financial and academic status from their student aid packages. But they said federal and university financial aid offices need to clarify, through announcements and individual communication, that students not registered with the Selective Service or who have had past drug-related convictions are still eligible for financial aid.

ED officials and experts said students with drug-related convictions and those not registered with the Selective Service may have been ineligible for financial aid in previous years.

Jill Desjean, a policy analyst at the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators, said even though the questions shouldn't affect application status, officials will still "flag" FAFSA applicants and flash an error message on their portal, stating they may be ineligible for aid without a drug conviction or without Selective Service registration.

SA online textbook exchange program will alleviate costs, students say

HENRY HUVOS
REPORTER

TARA SUTER
STAFF WRITER

Students said a centralized location for used and online textbooks could alleviate yearly expenses as the Student Association prepares to kickstart its online textbook exchange program.

The SA Senate voted last week to establish a textbook exchange program for students to buy or trade through Google Sheets, where users can view textbooks available for rent or purchase from other students. More than 10 students said the initiative could help them locate less expensive alternatives to textbooks instead of spending hundreds of dollars on new class materials each semester.

SA Sen. Gabriel Young, CCAS-U, who sponsored the Hippo Community Library resolution said the textbook exchange portal would help students connect with each other and either lend or sell their books after struggling to pay expensive textbook prices from markets like the GW Campus Store or Amazon. He said he hopes the Hippo Library could be available for students to use by the upcoming spring semester.

"There are some people who do not even have a job, or they're using their work-study funds to just pay off for school," Young said. "This will allow students to save money and put money back into students' pockets."

Young said members of the SA's undergraduate education policy committee will post a Google Form link next month to the SA's social media for students to submit their textbooks, post their selling points and share their contact information. SA members will then transfer the form's data to a Google spreadsheet that all students can view and

use to contact the person selling the book they hope to buy, he said.

Young said he drafted the resolution to address a few complaints he heard about textbook affordability in conversations with students during his office hours since last year. He said the financial aid office's website states that students — especially those in STEM programs like biology or neuroscience — may spend upwards of \$1,400 per semester on textbooks and school supplies, which may not be affordable for the average student.

He said each box in the spreadsheet will state the associated class for each textbook, links to online PDFs and contact information for students willing to give away these textbooks. He said centralizing textbook resources will help students save time typically spent on finding required reading for class.

"I want this to be a resource that is continually updated so that students in the future will be able to use it, and it will be a good system for future academic people to use as well," he said.

More than 10 students said the spreadsheet's features, like information about used textbooks and free PDFs, could help them avoid costly textbook prices as they work to seek out more affordable ways to obtain class materials.

Sophomore Natalia Perez, an international affairs major, said she has searched through Reddit for free textbook links and asked her friends to borrow materials to avoid paying for costly textbook prices. She said even with financial assistance from her parents, paying high prices for textbooks that she'll only use for six months is hard to justify.

She said the SA's online community library will ease the process of finding free online textbook alternatives and pinpointing affordable

options.

Sophomore Sara Ragsdale, a philosophy major, said paying for textbooks forces her to make "difficult" budgeting decisions, like whether she can buy groceries. She said in addition to the community library, professors could assign more affordable materials and fewer textbooks to alleviate some of the costs, citing classes that require students to purchase almost 10 books in total.

"A lot of it is sort of the professors — I have two classes that require nine textbooks apiece, and that is absurd," Ragsdale said.

Freshman Keely Busby, who is majoring in American studies, said they spent nearly \$200 on textbooks for a single class this semester. They said they would like to see professors make required textbooks, specifically workbooks, more readily available online, through systems like the Hippo Community Library.

"If there's a workbook, they can make that available to us through the campus website or University Student Center or the library," Busby said.

Senior Lauren Lafond, a political science major, said she struggled to buy textbooks in the past because professors prefer newer editions, which are often more expensive than previous versions. She said purchasing used textbooks, which are often cheaper than new ones, can sometimes be a challenge if a professor requires an edition released more recently.

She said officials offering more textbooks for rent through Gelman Library would make them more accessible for students. She said the Hippo Community Library will not impact her much since she is a senior and it won't go into effect until the spring, but it's a great idea to alleviate textbook costs among students.



FILE PHOTO BY DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

SA Sen. Gabriel Young, CCAS-U, said STEM students in particular have spent large amounts on textbooks.

Organizers plan in-person events to promote monthlong Latinx celebration

SAMANTHA SERAFIN
STAFF WRITER

As this year's monthlong Latinx Heritage Celebration returns to in-person programming after hosting virtual events last year, organizers said they're hoping to inspire students to learn about historic Latino traditions and values through social and educational events.

The Multicultural Student Services Center launched the celebration Sept. 15, featuring educational sessions, panel discussions and social events to highlight this year's theme – "Honoring our Roots. Embracing our Future." Leaders from student organizations involved in the celebration said they hope events will help students in the Latino community reflect on their roots through group discussions and help students across campus learn about their cultures.

The MSSC organized an advisory committee, composed of student organization leaders, faculty and campus partners, to help plan the celebration's events. The center provides "logistical support" for Latino organizations to promote awareness through their events, according to its website.

Junior Claudet Miranda – the president of GW Casa Blanca, a student organization creating a safe space for students belonging to and interested in the Latino cultures – said the organization will hold multiple social events throughout the month including, "Conchas con Cafe" last Wednesday, which featured painting, hot chocolate and traditional Mexican sweet bread.

Miranda said the organization will host a game night Thursday, where students can enjoy food and drinks while playing games like Loteria, a Mexican game similar to Bingo. She said events like these will allow other students interested in the Latino community

to learn more about their cultures and get to know other students with similar interests.

"Anyone who wants to learn about our culture is welcome to come and enjoy themselves and get to know the importance of this month and what it means to us," Miranda said.

She said she hopes the Latinx Heritage Celebration events remind Latino students that they have a "safe space" on campus through outlets like Casa Blanca's affinity housing in District House. Miranda said she hopes to highlight resources, like educational events, that the organization plans to provide during the celebration.

"I want them to understand that they always have a place to come, and I want them to meet other people, build solidarity within the community and spread that to other orgs as well," Miranda said.

She said GW Casa Blanca will partner with other student organizations for events, like Allied in Pride and Alianza, throughout the celebration to support LGBTQ+ and Afro-Latino students.

"We want to close that gap between any discrepancies that there may be within our community and really try to build a strong presence here at GW," Miranda said.

Karla Madera Tejada – the event coordinator for Alianza, an organization that promotes the sisterhood and togetherness of Afro-Latina women – said members helped organize a vision board event at the celebration, where students could visualize how they could grow at GW and embrace their cultural roots to reflect on their Latino identity. Tejada said students gathered in person at the University Student Center Thursday to create their vision boards on Canva and listen to Latino music.

"Anyone should attend these events, even if it's not Alianza's events," she said. "We would love



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SYDNEY WALSH | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
This year's celebration, which runs until Oct. 15, is titled "Honoring Our Roots. Embracing Our Culture."

for anyone to be there, not just Latinx students, but I would recommend for everyone to join in to learn about our culture and our beliefs."

She said the Latinx Heritage Celebration helps Latino students meet one another and discuss issues they face at the University, like the lack of Latino professors. Tejada said Latino students struggle to visualize themselves in a collegiate faculty position when they attend a predominantly white institution like GW.

"LHC is very important, especially for your Latino community here at GW because we're so small," she said. "Being here at a PWI and away from home is a very good way to get together, find a

community and be able to relate to the struggles and the problems we face every day."

Veronica Castillejo – the president of Lambda Pi Chi, a Latina-based but not Latina exclusive sorority – said the organization is hosting events that will address topics like life as a first generation student in line to keep with this year's theme. She said Lambda Pi Chi hosted a virtual event Tuesday called Latinas of Excellence, which featured a panel of chapter alumni to speak on navigating college life as a first-generation student.

"Latinas of Excellence allows undergraduate students to gain insight on the experience and knowledge of alumni as it pertains to specific fields and themes," she

said in an email.

Castillejo said Lambda Pi Chi will also host Real Conversations, a series of yearly discussions about humanitarian conditions at the U.S. southern border, in the MSSC Tuesday. She said she hopes the events will provide a space for students to think critically about national issues facing members of the Latino community and reflect on their own life experiences.

About 15,000 migrants settled at the southern national border in Del Rio Texas last week, setting up camps surrounded by border agents and state troopers, illustrating the growing humanitarian crisis where migrants were seen sleeping in the dirt without food and water.

IN BRIEF

Officials create COVID testing standby line, accept external PCR tests

Officials are creating a standby line for asymptomatic COVID-19 testing and will soon offer weekend symptomatic tests after students raised concerns about appointment availability.

Administrators said the new standby line at the Foggy Bottom asymptomatic testing trailer will be available for individuals with an "urgent" need to access campus who could not make an appointment. Officials are offering 2,600 asymptomatic coronavirus testing appointments per day.

"The standby line is not a replacement to making an appointment," officials wrote in the email. "If you access the standby line, please be prepared to wait longer than you normally would for a routine surveillance test."

The announcement to expand coronavirus testing comes after students said they faced extended delays for scheduling appointments. The University doubled its testing requirement for vaccinated individuals earlier this month, requiring students to be tested every 15 days to continue accessing campus.

Officials also announced students can now submit external PCR test results in lieu of using GW's in-house testing center.

For GW to accept the test results, officials said students should submit results in the Colonial Health Center portal no later than two days before their next required test date. The external lab must be approved by federal health officials under the Clinical Laboratory Improvement Amendments, and officials will not accept rapid antigen tests.

Officials said symptomatic testing at the CHC will soon include weekend hours, but it remains unclear when the expanded hours will go into effect.

— Lauren Sforza

GW Law launches strategic planning process with Deloitte

NICHOLAS ANASTACIO
STAFF WRITER

GW Law officials have begun developing the school's next strategic plan to assess the future of the law school and prioritize faculty guidance in academic and administrative affairs.

The law school launched its strategic planning process earlier this month at its first faculty meeting of the fall semester and has selected Deloitte, a professional consulting firm, to help administrators gauge faculty and other stakeholders' perspectives to craft recommendations to implement. Law school Dean Dayna Bowen Matthew said officials are devising the new strategic plan to help the school make the best use of its resources and move forward more "confidently," prioritizing its top goals and strengthening its programs.

"The strategic planning process will present an opportunity for the law school to decide what to prioritize, based on an assessment of the extent to which different programs can help students by taking advantage of existing strengths of the law school and our location in Washington, D.C.," Matthew said in an email.

Matthew stepped into the role as dean of the law school in July 2020, becoming the first woman in the school's history to hold the position. Matthew has prioritized building connections with students and faculty amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic while supporting diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives at the school, like classroom in-



Deloitte will leverage interviews with faculty and stakeholders alongside other data to inform recommendations for the law school, officials said.

clusion training, to increase representation among faculty and students.

"The goal of this process is to harness the ideas and energy of different groups in our community to help chart a path forward," she said.

Before Matthew began her term as dean, law school professors passed a resolution in June 2020 promising to implement anti-racism initiatives among faculty, like bias training and discrimination reports. As part of new policies outlined in the resolution, officials put forward plans to increase the number of faculty and staff of color, and faculty proposed new courses and conducted classroom conversations with a greater focus on race in the United States.

Roger Trangsrud, a professor of complex litigation and civil procedure, said he views Deloitte as "professional" and "organized" in its involvement with the current strategic plan. Trangsrud, who led the previous strategic planning process, said the last strategic plan was more internal and involved a large committee of faculty and staff instead of an outside firm, and he expects the current plan to extend beyond this academic year.

Michael Abramowicz, the senior associate dean for academic affairs at the law school and a professor of law, said the school's decision to enlist Deloitte will help officials assess the school's future. He said administrators will consider the input they receive

from faculty interviews to craft a final plan of recommendations.

"The dean was aware of processes at other schools that used consultants that had produced very good results for those schools, and we chose to go that route," he said. "Increasingly, universities are looking to consulting firms to help them in a variety of decision-making tasks."

Joan Meier, a professor of clinical law, said she believes administrators, with the help of Deloitte, are consciously thinking about the future of the school and faculty through this planning process.

"I have not felt this much input in past years as I have since this team has arrived," Meier said.

Townhouse Row residents to return from hotels after nearly a month off campus

ZACHARY BLACKBURN
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Townhouse Row residents will return to their residential buildings on campus next week nearly a month after they were relocated to local hotels because of water leaks and mold growth in their rooms.

The University scheduled returning students' move-in dates for Monday, Wednesday and Friday of next week after True North, a licensed mold assessment company, completes air quality tests and provides written clearances for residents to reoccupy the townhouses, according to an email sent to residents and their families Friday and obtained by The Hatchet. The air quality inspections took place Wednesday and Thursday

and will continue Monday and Tuesday, according to the email issued by the Division for Safety and Facilities and the Division for Student Affairs.

"We want you to know once again that we really appreciate your patience and understanding through this situation," the email reads. "We realize that your temporary move was sudden and unexpected, and it has altered your back-to-school routines greatly."

One hundred seventy-five students living in Townhouse Row have spent the last three weeks living in hotels off campus after they were evacuated earlier this month when officials received reports of "environmental concerns" in the buildings. Some building residents said they visited the hospital after experiencing cold- and flu-like symptoms,

like nasal congestion, fevers and fits of coughing up blood, earlier this month after spotting mold growth in their rooms on campus.

The email states that True North completed air quality tests in the townhouses belonging to Sigma Chi and Alpha Phi, and residents in those buildings may return Monday.

Officials established "tentative" move-in slots for residents in Beta Theta Pi and Alpha Delta Pi scheduled for Wednesday following testing that was completed Thursday, according to the email. Officials said they will confirm the move-in dates for these chapters by Monday.

The University also assigned Friday as a tentative move-in date for members of Sigma Kappa, Kappa Delta, the National Pan-Hellenic Council and Sigma

Delta Tau, whose buildings will be tested Monday and Tuesday, the email states. Officials said they will confirm Friday's move-in by Wednesday.

Building clearance notification may take two to three days after air quality testing, according to the email. The email states that professional movers will help residents transport their belongings from the hotels back to Townhouse Row.

Inspectors contacted by the University previously discovered water damage and mold throughout Townhouse Row, according to a separate email sent to building residents last week and obtained by The Hatchet. The water damaged ceiling boards and wallboards in the buildings, where True North employees also detected mold growth following

thermal imaging and moisture analysis, the email states.

The email states officials would remove the ceiling boards and wallboards and check the space behind them for any more potential water damage or mold growth, which would be "abradely cleaned" with an "anti-microbial agent" and a vacuum equipped with a high efficiency particulate air filter.

"While findings varied in each townhouse, True North has identified multiple areas of water damaged wallboards and ceiling boards, which in some cases have been impacted by suspected mold growth," the email reads. "These wallboards and ceiling boards will be removed and the space behind them inspected for any additional water damage and mold growth."

CRIME LOG

THEFT II/FROM BUILDING

Mitchell Hall (7-Eleven)
9/20/2021 – 7:44 p.m.
Open Case
GW Police Department officers responded to a report of theft. Upon arrival, officers made contact with a female employee who said a male subject stole orange juice from the store.
Case open.

THEFT II/FROM BUILDING

Duquès Hall
9/16/2021 – 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Open Case
Two male staff members reported basic tools, like wrenches and screwdrivers, stolen from their lockers.
Case open.

THEFT II/FROM BUILDING

University Student Center
9/21/2021 – 2:25 p.m.
Open Case
A staff member reported her purse stolen after leaving it in the University Student Center restroom. The purse contained basic items like an ID, wallet and credit cards.
Case open.

THEFT II/FROM BUILDING, UNLAWFUL ENTRY

Mitchell Hall (7-Eleven)
9/21/2021 – 6:19 p.m.
Open Case
GWPD officers responded to a report of theft. Upon arrival, officers made contact with the complainant, who stated that a male subject who had previously been barred from campus had stolen multiple cell phone chargers.
Case open.

UNLAWFUL ENTRY

Mitchell Hall (7-Eleven)
9/21/2021 – 9:04 p.m.
Closed Case
GWPD officers responded to a report of a previously barred male subject entering the store after stealing cell phone chargers. Upon the officers' arrival, the subject fled the scene and officers later apprehended and arrested him. EMeRG responded and transported the subject to the GW Hospital emergency room.
Subject barred.

THEFT II/FROM MOTOR VEHICLE

2028 G Street/LLC (Garage)
9/22/2021 – 6:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m.
Open Case
A staff member reported money stolen from his vehicle.
Case open.

ARMED CARJACKING

Off Campus
9/22/2021 – 9:43 p.m.
Closed Case
An armed male subject carjacked the spouse of a staff member. Shortly thereafter, Metropolitan Police Department officers recovered the vehicle in Northeast.
Referred to MPD.

UNLAWFUL ENTRY

Science and Engineering Hall (Garage)
9/22/2021 – 11:48 p.m.
Closed Case
GWPD officers responded to a report of a female subject asleep in the garage. Upon arrival, they discovered that the subject had been previously barred from campus property. The subject was issued an updated bar notice and escorted off GW property.
Subject barred.

—Compiled by Carly Neilson

SNAPSHOT CAMILLE DESANTO | ASSISANT PHOTO EDITOR



More than twenty miles of city roads were closed this past Saturday for the fourth annual D.C. Bike Ride.

Laguerre-Brown to head diversity review, soliciting feedback from GW community

From Page 1

Caroline Laguerre-Brown, the University's vice provost of diversity, equity and community engagement, said Bracey determined using local expertise on campus was a "better approach" to study campus diversity after reviewing the proposals from external firms earlier this year. She said he developed a proposal with the Office of Diversity, Equity and Community Engagement to conduct a comprehensive review of the University's efforts to "impact" diversity and inclusion in the GW community.

Laguerre-Brown said officials conducting the review are meeting with "various stakeholders" to receive feedback on the draft proposal to ensure that they have the wider University's support behind the endeavor.

"We are committed to ensuring that

this review process is successful and informative and leads to sustainable and impactful action," she said in an email.

She said the draft proposal of the review includes focus groups and interviews, an assessment of current policies and practices and an external review by a select board of scholars working on diversity, equity and inclusion nationally. She said the draft proposal "prioritizes" the GW community's voices and experiences and includes "significant involvement" from students, faculty, alumni and the Board of Trustees.

"This independent evaluation will be critical in informing our efforts moving forward," she said.

Joseph Cordes, a professor of economics and the co-chair of the Faculty Senate's fiscal planning and budgeting committee, said Bracey's diversity review proposal is better than Blake's

plans for the diversity audit because the review doesn't prioritize outside consultation first. He said while faculty supported Blake's plan, they also recognized that GW has the resources and talented staff, like Laguerre-Brown, who can guide diversity reform at GW.

"A lot of people were puzzled that the approach was going to be to bring in an outside consulting firm to do the audit rather than to review the audit that we could do on our own," he said.

Cordes added that many faculty members were pleased with Bracey's reversal because the current proposal appears more "consistent" with the University's standard program review process.

"The major change that Provost Bracey made is that we're going to start internally and then we're going to bring in outside eyes, which is a good way to do it," Cordes said.

Homeless encampment pilot program lacks clarity on housing options, advocates say

From Page 2

The Deputy Mayor's Office of Health and Human Services did not return a request for comment.

Yannik Omictin, a member of the Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission whose single member district includes the E Street encampment, said he's glad officials want to house individuals experiencing homelessness, but the program lacks clarity. He said missing details have made activism and organizing more difficult for local advocates without plans established for housing location and apartment conditions.

"We didn't know the details of

this program until the program was underway, and that to me is not good practice, especially if you're not reaching out to commissioners in whose single member districts the program will be run," Omictin said.

Omictin said some encampment residents may be skeptical of accepting housing if details remain unclear, especially if previous city programs have failed to supply them with housing in past years.

"What we're facing is a system that has failed unhoused people in the past," Omictin said. "And when a new program is rolled out or a new option is offered, and there's no clarity on what that what that really means, what it looks like in practice, absolutely it makes unhoused residents feel like

they can't trust it."

More than 500 people, including Omictin and ANC commissioners Margaret McDonald and Trupti Patel, have signed a letter to D.C. officials, calling on them to end any attempts to create no-tent zones across the District.

Omictin said he doesn't know what the eviction process could look like for encampment residents whom officials could overlook, and officials have not offered a solution for those situations.

"What if there comes a time when they schedule the encampment eviction, and there are a good amount of people who haven't been asked, and then they just go forward with eviction?" he said. "Where do those people go? What happens then?"

Puerto Rican governor talks political career, law school experience

AIDAN TURLEY
REPORTER

The governor of Puerto Rico discussed the lessons he learned throughout his career before, during and after Law School in an in-person discussion at the School of Media and Public Affairs Wednesday.

Governor Pedro Pierluisi shared his experience about raising a family, balancing his law education while working as Puerto Rico's chief prosecutor and governing the nation during the pandemic. The event featured introductions from President Thomas Leblanc and Law School Dean Dayna Matthew, and kicked off the GW Law Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration in conjunction with the Latino Law Association.

Pierluisi said watching his father work as Puerto Rico's Secretary of Housing inspired him to take an interest in politics early in his childhood. He said his father's leadership and determination in a position which worked to ensure affordable housing for the Puerto Rican people made him determined to pursue public service himself.

"I always thought I would end up serving in government," he said. "I didn't have a plan except that I knew I wouldn't hesitate to take advantage of any opportunity which would arise allowing me to serve them people."

Pierluisi said while his time at the Law School was fulfilling, his experience included difficul-

ties like learning how to improve his English and managing his young family after getting married straight after completing his undergraduate degree. He said he refused two job offers from the Puerto Rican government as he thought the relocation would be difficult on his family.

"I still speak English with an accent as you can notice, but it was still quite rusty then," he said. "So it was a challenge to go to class and they would call on you – and I guess they still do – to talk about case law and whatever."

Pierluisi said during his time at the Law School, he won the Lyndon B. Johnson scholarship in Congress to work for the assistant to the Puerto Rican Resident Commissioner Baltasar Corrada del Río. He said the experience with the resident commissioner was his first interaction in public service, which pushed him to pursue the position one day and represent Puerto Rico.

He said he served in Congress as Puerto Rico's Resident Commissioner from 2009-2017, and ran for the governorship in 2016 but lost to a tight race.

"I thought that my political career was over when that happened because I was already in my late fifties," Pierluisi said.

He said he was launched back into politics when the former Puerto Rico Governor Ricardo Rosselló resigned in 2019 amidst revelations about vulgar and homophobic comments he had made in a Telegram group chat, and was appointed to be Secretary of State in the



ANTHONY PELTIER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Pedro Pierluisi interned at the congressional office of the then-resident commissioner of Puerto Rico during his time at GW.

last minutes of Rosselló's governorship. He said he was appointed his governorship the day after that, which was a decision that hadn't been ratified by the legislature and led to his removal as governor five days later.

"I was out of a job, so once that happened I said I may as well run for governor," Pierluisi said. I'm ready. So I ended up running and

running in the middle of the pandemic, and I tell you that's really different."

Pierluisi said he's proud of his current accomplishments as governor including getting the nation to rank as the second highest vaccinated place of any state or territory in the US as 75% of Puerto Ricans are fully vaccinated. He said he introduced vaccination mandates for

schools and businesses and will continue to expand the mandates to new sectors like tourism, health-care, and entertainment.

"One thing I didn't say at the beginning that I should have said is that one thing that I learned in law school is a way of analyzing that you can use not only in law, and that it's going to be with you forever," he said.

Opinions

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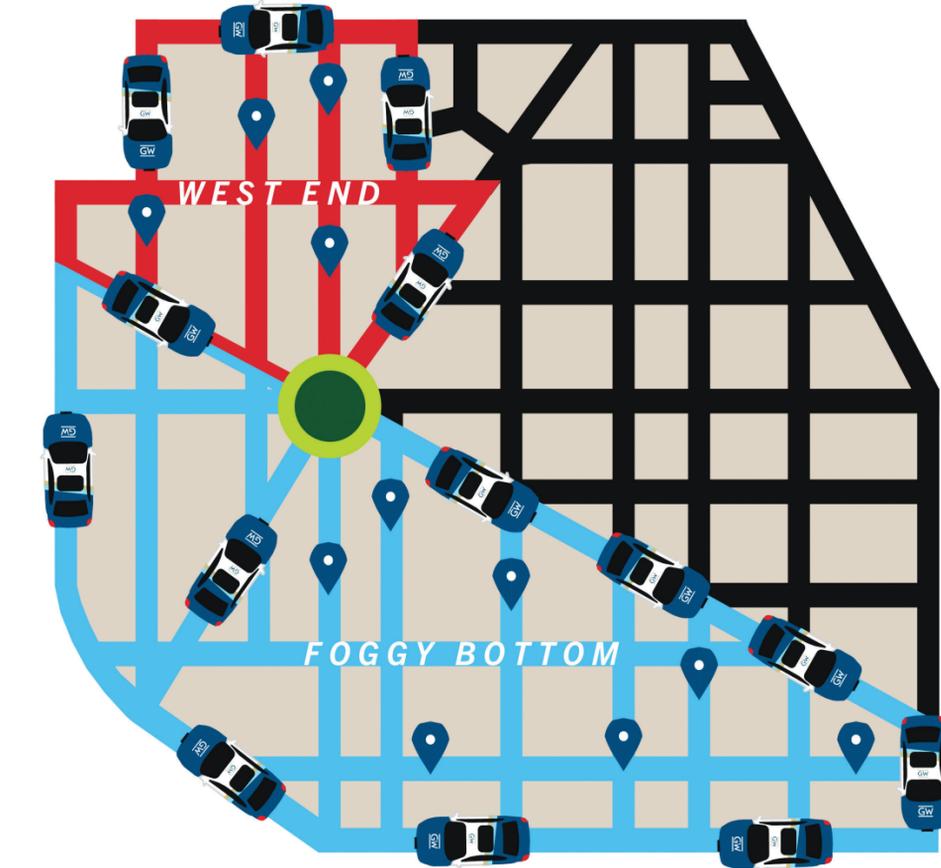
SafeRide expansion exemplifies effective collaboration between SA, officials

STAFF EDITORIAL

SafeRide is coming to the West End, DuPont Circle and the Lincoln Memorial. After advocacy from the Student Association, the program that offers rides for students to get across campus if they feel unsafe or unable to get home is expanding to three off-campus locations. The SA has been working with administrators for months on this expansion, and their efforts now mean that more students will have the option to call a ride if they find themselves feeling unsafe as they travel home. The policy exemplifies how the SA and administrators can collaborate on issues that impact students despite tensions between students and officials.

Students complained that SafeRide, previously known as 4-RIDE, had several issues that had little to do with the distance the service covered. Some had complained of unwelcoming drivers and long wait times, and one student had even reported unwanted romantic advances from a driver. In the reincarnation of 4-RIDE as SafeRide in 2019, the University updated the GW Rider app so that students could track each SafeRide vehicle.

GW's campus and Foggy Bottom tend to be fairly safe places, but in the year 2019 there were still more than 1,000 crimes reported to GW Police Department, with nearly 50 of those reports being for stalking or sexual assault. Even still, the number of crimes does not account for people, especially women, feeling unsafe or threatened. This could be an even bigger consideration for people who live further from campus, including in the many apartment buildings in the West End or DuPont Circle. The long walk back home means more time in a less controlled and less familiar environment. Even if the overall risk to someone's safety is low, it is still not zero, and people do not



NICHOLAS ANASTACIO | GRAPHICS EDITOR

deserve to have to feel threatened making their way to or from campus.

But people will only use SafeRide if they know about it, and if its use is normalized as a legitimate and common option for staying safe. This is especially important given the tepid attitudes

that students seem to have had about SafeRide and its predecessor 4-RIDE program. The University and the SA should widely publicize this change and highlight its benefits to ensure students know to take advantage of its benefits.

But students also have a responsibility to only use the service

when necessary. Not wanting to walk home alone, feeling unsafe or being too intoxicated to make it home safely are examples of reasons to take SafeRide. But people should not be hailing a SafeRide car just because they don't feel like walking halfway across campus for no other reason. If people frivolously use the

expanded SafeRide for convenience rather than out of necessity, it will cause people who are hailing one of the cars for a legitimate safety reason to face a longer wait to get picked up, almost defeating the purpose of SafeRide.

The SA and administrators have been collaborating on the SafeRide expansion since the summer. Both the SA and the GW officials they worked with deserve credit – in a productive, non-antagonistic fashion, they worked together to deliver for the student body. SA Vice President Kate Carpenter deserves special praise here – she spearheaded the effort, and in helping to make this happen, is fulfilling a campaign pledge of hers to actualize small changes that make a substantial difference.

The relationship between the student body and administrators is generally a frosty, standoffish one. Being able to make constructive criticism of the University, like the SA often does, while simultaneously working closely with individual administrators on specific issues seems like an incredibly productive and responsible approach to student advocacy that the SA is uniquely suited to undertake.

When endorsing SA candidates, including Carpenter, the Editorial Board noted the importance of delivering on campaign promises and working meaningfully with the University—which SA leaders have done here. As a result of their constructive engagement with administrators, more students will have a way to get back to their residence halls or apartments safely if they are ever in a situation where they feel unsafe or in need of assistance. Not only is this a positive outcome for students, but it shows how the SA can and should continue to deliver for the GW community through productive dialogue with officials.

GW should have been prepared for the surge in COVID tests

Earlier this month the University announced that community members will need to get tested for the coronavirus every 15 days instead of once per month. Students who do not get tests in time will have their access restricted to some buildings and facilities—but a shortage of testing appointments left students waiting days to schedule an appointment or get results back. The University finally added testing appointments at the Foggy Bottom Campus – a change that was absolutely necessary – but the University should have been prepared to conduct more tests before announcing the new twice-monthly testing policy.

Yeji Chung
Opinions Writer

Frustration with testing delays was widespread, with students finding themselves unable to book an appointment for a week even when faced with serious situations like roommates showing severe COVID-19 symptoms. Some students with symptoms bought their own take-home tests at CVS Pharmacy, which can cost up to \$125, because no tests were available. That is an absolutely unreasonable amount of money for students to have to spend because the University could not do its job. Some who did not decide to buy their own test had to wait five to six days to be able to find an available slot at the

Foggy Bottom testing center.

Now, after a week of chaos, the University is expanding the number of asymptomatic testing appointments to 2,600 per day. With this new expansion in capacity, the facility can accommodate 75 people every 15 minutes. Officials are also adding a standby line for asymptomatic tests, where students can walk in and get tested on a first-come, first-served basis. The University is also accepting external PCR coronavirus tests, as long as they're legitimate, and planning on increasing the availability of symptomatic tests at the Colonial Health Center, possibly expanding to operate on the weekends.

But the burden of managing these expanded asymptomatic tests is mainly on one testing center, the medical trailer in Lot 3. The University should consider options like expanding testing centers to local medical centers in addition to accepting external PCR tests.

Administrators should also explore ways of reimbursing those students who had to pay for their own coronavirus tests, because having to foot the bill for a test that costs up to \$125 because of poor logistical planning by GW is unacceptable. Officials should cooperate with local hospitals to distribute a reasonable number of appointments at each testing center so students can not only get tested, but also receive results back on time. The University should also consider granting conditional late exemptions for students whose

appointment schedule collides with class time.

Students should also do their part and not ditch their appointments. No-shows are reported to be more than 100 per day – those are spaces that could have been filled by someone who needs a test.

The University is not experiencing a coronavirus crisis, but it does have a fair few cases – which is somewhat concerning. Although the cases have been decreasing since their peak on Sept. 8, with 45 positive cases on one day, cases have generally been ticking up since August. The University should have foreseen a need for more testing and built up the testing capacity accordingly before sending students scrambling. Now that the University has belatedly expanded testing, it needs to consider further steps like affiliating with non-GW testing centers or granting conditional exceptions. The last thing we want is another lockdown and return to virtual classes – and an outbreak that would send us back to that status could be exacerbated by students not being able to get tested if they have been exposed to the coronavirus. The University made a mistake and has taken the first steps to fix it. To prevent outbreaks on campus and a return to virtual instruction, it's imperative that officials take every measure possible to ensure community members have adequate testing.

—Yeji Chung, a Junior, majoring in political science, is an opinions writer.

SA finance committee should be more transparent

Each year, the Student Association's finance committee allocates about \$1.6 million of SA fees to various student organizations. Without them, organizations and events from the Program Board's fall comedy show to EMErg medical services could not operate. Unfortunately, the committee works largely under a veil of obscurity. In violation of the SA's bylaws requiring that "minutes, agendas, committee documents, and other materials" be made public and the repeated promises of SA leaders to increase transparency, students will search in vain for any documents that shed light on the decisions of the finance committee – or any committee for that matter. As a result, students have practically no insight into how and why their money is spent.

Sam Swinson
Opinions Writer

This is tragic in two senses. Not only does it deny students the transparency that they deserve, it also denies the SA the opportunity to showcase the efforts of its most impactful committee. With students back on campus and student organization activity warming back up, there is no better time for the SA, and specifically, the finance committee, to make good on its pledges of transparency and release the documents, like committee minutes, necessary for compliance with its bylaws.

The SA has reaffirmed its commitment to transpar-

ency for more than a decade, and for good reason. Transparency and responsibility are crucial traits in any government, student or otherwise. Particularly when dealing with the allocation of such a large amount of student money. But despite all these promises, the SA rarely, if ever, makes concrete steps to improve transparency, which is why you still can't find publicly available committee minutes.

It is a shame it hasn't happened yet because students deserve to know the process that granted \$137,590 to the Student Bar Association in 2020 fiscal year, and another \$101,535 to the Medical Center Student Council. These amounts dwarf nearly every other allocation. There are good procedural reasons for these allocations. They are two of six organizations that represent entire graduate schools, and the finance committee is obligated to give them 100 percent of the student association fees from the students of these schools. But I only know that because I was present when this was discussed. On its own, one may think it odd or even suspicious that .05 percent of the orgs are receiving 20 percent of the general allocations budget, and even on its own, this policy is not above criticism.

The reason why committee minutes, finance or otherwise, haven't been released to the public likely doesn't have anything to do with maleficent senators gleefully misappropriating 1.6 million dollars in student funds. Rather, it's more out of embarrassment for how bad the committee minutes

have been in prior years.

I joined the finance committee my freshman year because I thought I could help make the committee more transparent. While we initially lacked guidance, by the second semester we had learned enough to realize and fix these problems. Then the pandemic hit and dashed those immediate aspirations, but there's no reason this kind of effort can't happen again, and there's never been a better time.

We wanted to make these minutes public because although the meetings are frequently chaotic due to a generally loose enforcement of rules of order during discussion and voting, the committee itself asks questions, deliberates and makes decisions in a manner fitting for a committee with such an important responsibility. Denying students transparency will only continue to eat away at students' trust in the SA.

I am asking the SA to stop breaking the existing transparency clauses within its bylaws. Specifically, by-law 501 section 2, requiring SA minutes to be released to the public. That's a necessary but insufficient step to rebuilding student trust. The road to transparency and student trust is long, and won't be finished by the SA merely fulfilling its written obligations. But it's a relatively easy first step. The SA has reason to be proud of the finance committee. It does good work. Let students in on that secret as well.

—Sam Swinson, a junior majoring in political science, is an opinions writer.

The GW Hatchet

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Cost — Single copies free. Additional copies available for purchase upon request.

Culture

Sept. 27, 2021 • Page 7

THE SCENE

WES ANDERSON MOVIE NIGHTS AT WESTPOST
Wednesday, Sept. 29 | Pentagon Row Plaza | Free
Catch a free screening of Wes Anderson's "Rushmore" at Pentagon Row.

ADAMS MORGAN COMEDY SHOW
Thursday, Sept. 30 | Town Tavern DC | Donations accepted
Watch local artists perform at a stand-up comedy show presented by Capital Laughs, a D.C.-based comedy group.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

NEW SINGLE: "FOR TONIGHT" BY GIVEON

DC Fashion Week showcases emerging designers at Saturday show

ANNA BOONE
CULTURE EDITOR

CLARA DUHON
CONTRIBUTING CULTURE EDITOR

DC Fashion Week held its 35th season this weekend with three shows featuring more than 40 designers debuting looks ranging from simple patch-work denim dresses to elaborate headpieces and gowns.

The week started with the Washington Menswear Collection on Friday followed by Saturday's Emerging Designers Showcase and concluding with the International Couture Collections Showcase Sunday. Each event was co-emceed by executive director and founder of DC Fashion Week Ean Williams and Miss D.C. USA 2021 Sasha Perea.

We headed to The Hilton Washington DC Capitol Hill Hotel Saturday to view the Emerging Designers Showcase Saturday. From simple denim streetwear to elaborate 80s-inspired looks, here's a taste of what designers brought to the runway.

Phoebe Jacqueline

Phoebe Jacqueline's collection lit up the stage with refined, chic designs influenced by Swedish and Greek architecture and culture. These feminine pieces range from dresses to kimonos and combine soft neutral solid colors with light floral designs to create a fairytale-like feel throughout the collection. All of Jacqueline's pieces are



Designers showcased styles ranging from simple denim streetwear to elaborate 80s-inspired looks on the runway Saturday.

SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

created with recycled or dead stock material, making her line completely sustainable.

Love Allie

Hiari Strong, the designer and curator of fashion company Love Allie, presented a collection that screamed high fashion with abstract silhouettes that seemed to swallow the models in looks that you aren't likely to see on the

streets. One piece even featured a basket of grains incorporated onto the front of a dress.

Rossemay's Creations

With her Latin-inspired designs, Rosa María Rodríguez's Rossemay's Creations collection was one of the most eclectic of the night. Her pieces featured mixed patterns like houndstooth and animal print and materials like lace and velvet.

Rodríguez started her work as a fashion designer when she lived in Argentina and expanded her work to include teaching others how to sew.

Unchained

Designer Emily Butterfield said she was inspired by fashion in the TV series Game of Thrones when she created her collection of chain-mail accessories for her brand Un-

chained. From chain neck ties and head pieces to draping shoulder adornments and garters, Butterfield handcrafts chain metal to create magnificently intricate fashion.

"On a tactile level, her work plays with the satisfying weight of metal draped on the human form," Perea, the co-emcee, said. "On a symbolic level, she experiments with the way Chinese combine, adorn, hide, accentuate, inhibit and release us."

EJE Intl. Designs

Erika Evans began her career as a hair stylist, and gained inspiration for her current fashion pieces through international work as a hair stylist in cities like Tokyo, Paris and Amsterdam. Outlandish fashionable gas masks, glasses and head pieces matched with colorful coats and sweatshirts made up her EJE INTL. Designs collection that drew design influence from the "youth of the 90s and early 2000s."

The motto of Evans' line is "never be afraid to stand alone," which embodies the avant-garde nature of her wild designs.

DJSLifestyles

This collaborative fashion project by designers Orlando Ortiz and Derrick J. Sellers titled the 1988 Berlin Limited Edition Collection ended the night's show with a bold and cohesive theme that showed off 80s fashion. Metallic fabrics, ski goggles, oversized clutches and cowboy hats created looks that felt like camp versions of costumes from the original Star Wars movies.

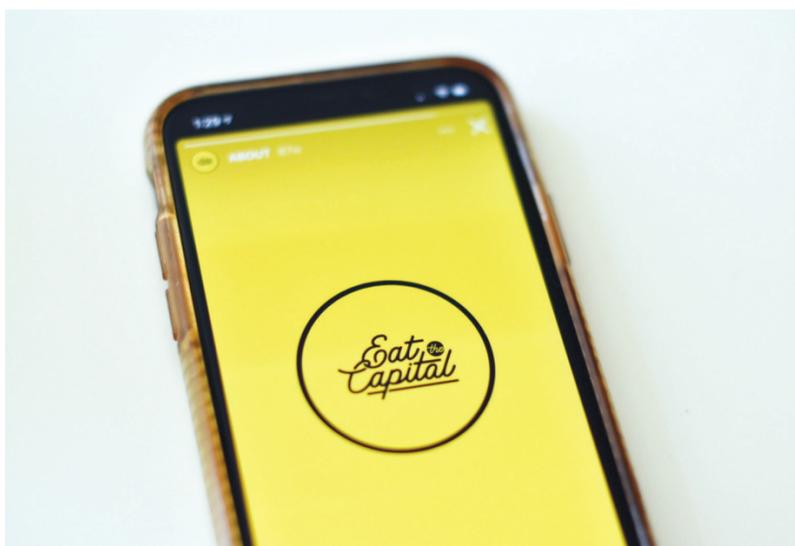


PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Danny Kim's days are now filled with creating content for his own pages and assisting restaurants in developing their social media presence.

Eat the Capital founder's journey from engineer to food influencer

DAVID BROTHERS
REPORTER

Danny Kim started working full time as an engineer straight out of college in 2017. Four years later, he spends all his time running one of the District's most popular food accounts.

After deciding he didn't want to work in an office setting for the rest of his career, Kim dove into creating his brand, Eat the Capital, which is a multi-platform social media company highlighting D.C.'s vibrant restaurant scene. With more than 120,000 followers on Instagram, 66,000 followers on YouTube and 47,000 followers on TikTok, Kim posts regular content about the food he eats in D.C. and the local chefs who make it.

Eat the Capital started as Kim's personal food account during his senior year at the University of Maryland. He would post pictures for fun to document the foods he tried when he visiting the District.

"It started as an interest, a hobby," Kim said. "I actually did free work for two to three years, and then eventually I got in front of a lot of people where I grew the page."

It wasn't until 2019 that Kim officially branded the account Eat the Capital and truly launched his business.

Kim said when he first decided to make the jump from full-time engineer to full-time food influencer, he was living with his mom and using money he saved up from engineering to support himself while he built

his brand.

But Kim said it wasn't an easy start. When he still didn't have a large following, Kim said restaurant owners would get annoyed when he called for interviews or filmed his experience.

"I got yelled at by restaurants for soliciting or calling them to ask if I can take photos at their place," Kim said. "I could have easily quit and then gone back to my engineering job. But I just kind of stuck my head down and was stubborn about what I wanted. And eventually, things figured themselves out when people start seeing you as a genuine person."

As an outsider to the D.C. restaurant scene and food industry, Kim said he was only really able to build trust and connections as he gained followers.

"Over time the page just grew traction to the point where restaurant owners were respecting my page," Kim said. "Slowly over time the word got around and the page went from 30,000 to 70,000 and now it's at 127,000 followers."

Kim said TikTok, more than Instagram, has been an effective tool to help support local businesses. He said restaurants have reached out after their business is featured in a TikTok video saying that their sales increased by as much as 50 percent in just one week following the video.

"I've been doing that for the past year now, just helping out local restaurants," he said. "I think a lot of people,

because everybody wants to do the same, they go and support whatever I showcase."

He's also found success on Facebook, where followers will send him messages with recommendations for spots to try. The group is made up of a local D.C. community of foodies who regularly discuss their favorite restaurants and is a resource for people to find their next bites.

"You don't really see people commenting and talking to each other in the comments, so there's no real communication happening between the followers," Kim said. "I wanted that type of conversation to happen so I created that Facebook group."

Between creating content for his own pages and assisting restaurants in developing their own social media presence, Kim's days are packed and often entail a variety of tasks.

"We'll have days where we're either shooting content by going to a restaurant and sharing an actual experience, or it's talking to restaurant owners and seeing how we can help them," Kim said. "Another day, like I'll be shooting with a chef a video for the TikTok page."

After multiple years of consistent effort to build his page to where it is today, Kim said he is still "not really successful yet."

"The key really is not quitting," Kim said. "Whatever it is that you want to do, if you just keep doing it and believe in yourself, then you can do it."

The best vegetarian tacos in the District, ranked

GABRIELLA SPINA
REPORTER

D.C. is home to excellent street tacos, but finding vegetarian options that compare to their carnivorous counterparts can be difficult.

We visited four taco shops in D.C. to find out which had the best vegetarian taco. Stop by one of these taco spots the next time you're looking for a plant-based bite.

No. 4: Jaco Juice and Taco's Vegan Veggie Taco

The house-like storefront of Jaco Juice and Taco is set back from the street at 1614 Wisconsin Ave. NW in Georgetown allowing space for a handful of tables to fill the brick-laid area in front of the restaurant.

This vegan veggie taco (\$4.50) is packed to the brim with a simple combination of fresh vegetables and tomatillo salsa, allowing Jaco Juice and Taco's fresh ingredients to shine.

The warm flour tortilla cracked under the weight of roasted potatoes when folded, spilling out charred red peppers, caramelized onions, pico and guacamole. Sautéed kale and spinach added color and a fresh hearty element to a taco. As a vegetarian, I couldn't try the shop's famous homemade chorizo taco, but the vegan veggie's potatoes packed enough satiety to replace a meat option.

Jaco Juice and Taco scored high for fresh ingredients, but the vegan veggie lacked depth of flavor. The peppers' natural sweetness

was the most notable flavor, but my taste buds were left disappointed as the perfectly crisp potatoes did not carry a distinct flavor profile.

No. 3: Taqueria Xochi's Nopales Tacos

It's not the neon sign that attracts Taqueria Xochi's massive line, but the atmosphere and food inspired by homemade Mexican dishes that keep the taqueria packed.

Located at 924 U St. NW in the U Street corridor, Taqueria Xochi's small brick storefront is painted hot pink and complemented by a neon blue with "Taqueria Xochi" written in cursive letters.

I was originally overwhelmed by the simple nature of the nopales taco (\$13 for 3 tacos) with just cactus and some root vegetable shreds as toppings, the price seemed steep. But the quality of the ingredients became more evident with each bite.

The cactus maintained its crunch and paired perfectly with the soft tortilla. Taqueria Xochi's menu is limited in meatless options, but authentic preparation wins this joint its third-place position.

No. 2: Chipotle Sweet Potato Hash from Chaia Taco

Chaia is a two-story restaurant located near the Georgetown canal at 3207 Grace St. NW. The interior is decorated with light wood and white painted brick with ample natural light, making for a vibrant space

to enjoy your tacos.

The chipotle sweet potato hash taco (\$4.50) is wrapped in a slightly-charred fresh corn tortilla. The natural sweetness of the potato marries the warmth of the chipotle seasoning, creating a layered flavor profile in each crispy bite.

The arugula pepita salsa had a thick and creamy consistency and a beautiful bright shade of green atop a mountain of potatoes. Feta cheese adds the final salty component to the tacos, and the dish is tied together with fresh sprigs of cilantro for additional flavor and crunch.

No. 1: Bandit Taco's Tofu Taco

Bandit Taco has a tiny storefront in between Dupont and Logan Circles at 1946 New Hampshire Ave. NW. This taco spot is ideal for a quick lunch break with quick service and a casual atmosphere. Patrons are invited to sit on colorful metal chairs or outside at picnic tables lined with string lights.

With a side of outstanding sweet fried plantains, these tofu taco (\$4.25) from Bandit Taco rocketed into first place.

Bandit Taco stole the show with its to-die-for packed veggie taco. Two thin charred corn tortillas held a pile of fried-to-order crispy tofu, sweet corn and mixed peppers and crunchy scallions. Poblano sauce oozed out of each bite, but the tortilla never felt soggy. And for the plantains, thick cut and pan-fried before being doused in honey.



Bandit Taco stole the show with its to-die-for packed veggie taco, served with a side of outstanding sweet fried plantains.

CAMILLE DESANTO | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

GAMES OF THE WEEK



SWIMMING AND DIVING

vs. Virginia Tech
Saturday | 10 a.m.
GW begins its non-conference slate at the Smith Center.



MEN'S SOCCER

vs. Saint Joseph's
Saturday | 3:30 p.m.
The Colonials return to the Mount Vernon Campus for a match against the Hawks.

NUMBER CRUNCH 12.17

Volleyball's player points per game average, down from its five-year average of 15.04.

Men's water polo graduate student prepares for last season of career

NURIA DIAZ
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

After a disjointed water polo season last year, graduate student utility player Andras Levai is aiming to make the most of his final season with the Colonials.

The Colonials (5-6, 3-0 A-10) have opened up conference play with three straight victories, turning their luck after falling into a six-game losing streak early on in the non-conference slate. Levai has proved vital to the team's offense as he leads the team with 29 goals.

Levai has started all ten games while maintaining a 39.2 percent shooting average. He was named the Mid-Atlantic Water Polo Conference Player of the Week for his performance at the Princeton Invitational, marking the fourth award of his sterling career as he racked up 10 goals and six steals across three games.

Levai said he comes from a long line of water polo players as both his father and grandfather played for KSI SE, the same club team in Budapest, Hungary where Levai started his career. He was named team captain during the 2016 and 2017 seasons, helping the team claim two consecutive national championships. He registered 45 goals and 73 assists in a span of 17 games, along with 33 steals in his final season.

In addition to his club team, Levai played with Hungary's junior national team for two years. He said was "honored" to represent his country and would do it again if the opportunity was presented. He said he fit right in on the U.S. water polo scene, which he said is more suited to his counterattacking and swimming

style compared to the static and physical nature of European play.

The Hungarian native is the sole graduate student on the team and the last member of the team remaining from the 2017 and 2018 NCAA tournament runs. He said stepping into a leadership role in his final year at GW has been a "tough challenge," but said his experience as a team captain for KSI has prepared him.

"It really puts a lot of pressure on your responsibility, but after a while, you get used to it," Levai said. "And you actually just love the feeling of sometimes people relying on you, and you have the responsibility to push people and try to get the best out of them. That's the same thing over here."

Head coach Barry King said Levai has evolved in an "exponential" manner by supporting and learning from older players throughout his time at GW, allowing him to step into his leadership role this year. He said Levai's "wealth of experience" has served him well as the team tries to find its rhythm after a disorganized season last year.

"He has a way better understanding of what I want, and how I want us to behave and just how the team should function than anybody else," King said.

Senior attack player Henry Maas said in addition to being the "best player" on the team, Levai always has the best attitude, making sure the team is staying focused even when the team is struggling.

"Andras is the sort of player that every day when you get in the pool with him, he makes you a stronger and harder athlete," Maas said. "He really teaches you



GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

Levai said his most memorable time playing for the Colonials came during GW's comeback victory over Princeton in 2018, overcoming a five goal deficit.

resilience."

Levai said he was grateful for the NCAA rule extending his eligibility after missing out on much of his senior season due to scheduling issues caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. He said he thought he was "never going to play again." Now that he has another season, Levai said he plans on making the most out of it and helping the team go out on a high note.

Levai has seen a lot in his

lengthy and storied career at GW.

In the 2018 season, Levai proved to be essential during the MAWPC Championship as he recorded two goals to help the Colonials secure an overtime victory over Bucknell. He was named to the All-Tournament Second Team after netting a career-high 72 goals overall and 67 assists during the season.

But he said the most memorable moment for him was GW's comeback win over Princeton

during their 2018 NCAA run. Levai scored three goals in the second half to help the Colonials overcome a five-goal deficit and defeat the Tigers in a 14-13 overtime victory.

"When I'm done after this year, I want the team to keep on winning championships," Levai said. "I want them to become the leader I am trying to be and just play with passion. Even in the easier games, just come out hard and play for each other."

Men's and women's cross country notch record-setting season starts

WILL MARGERUM
STAFF WRITER

Both the men's and women's squads won their first two meets of the year, becoming the first teams in program history to win both of their first two team events in a season.

The women's team swept the top six spots at Mount St. Mary's 5K Duals Sept. 3 to claim its first team win since 2015. Graduate student Margaret Coogan came in first with a time of 18:33.78 followed by a second place finish from graduate student Peri Pavlicic.

Freshman Olivia Syftestad, claimed third in her first collegiate race to help the Colonials register the first perfect team score in program history.

Syftestad has made an instant impact on the team as a first-year, scoring in both of the meets thus far. She was named the Atlantic 10 Rookie Performer of the Week on Sept. 8, after placing third at the Mount St. Mary's Duals in her GW debut. She is the first individual honoree for women's cross country since Suzanne Dannheim was named the performer of the week in 2019.

Syftestad followed up her performance with a ninth place finish at the James Madison University Invitational Sept. 17, earning another rookie performer of the week nod for a second straight time. The Chicago native said she did not expect

to make an immediate impact on the squad, considering the presence of six graduate students already on the roster.

"It's weird being 18 and running with girls who are like 23 and people who just know what they want to do with their lives," Syftestad said. "It feels like we're on completely different paths but I just love how we're able to come to practice each day. Everyone has that shared desire to just get better and work hard."

Syftestad and freshman Megan Gonzalez are the only first years in the men's or women's programs to feature in both of the meets so far this year.

Head coach Terry Weir said the team held only one workout before the meet. He said he went into the event hoping to evaluate the fitness level of the team and get them back in the swing of competitive running.

Instead, the program walked away with two wins and a perfect score. Weir said the depth of the women's team this year is "probably the best we've ever had."

The men's team also finished first in the event with a score of 25, winning its first meet since 2018. Senior Thomas Sand, a transfer from South Alabama, placed second in his GW debut with a time of 15:53.30.

Junior James Glockenmeier and sophomore Kevin Conlon both finished within six seconds of Sand to boost the Colonials' score and secure

the victory.

The men's and women's units followed up their opening meet successes by marking another achievement in the record books at the JMU Invitational on Sept. 17. The men came close to earning their own perfect score by nearly locking in the top five spots, finishing in first, third, fourth, fifth and tenth places en route to a team score of 23.

Glockenmeier won his first career individual race, winning the 8K with a time of 25:43.50 to lead the way for GW. Four days later, Glockenmeier was named the A-10's men's performer of the week. Sand's time of 26:01.50 was fast enough to finish in third place.

Pavlicic's time of 19:02.30 was the best among the women's team in the 5K and third best across all runners. Four other Colonials finished inside the top 10, giving them a team score of 31 and a second consecutive win.

Weir said he is trying not to place pressure upon her as a first year runner, but that her performance thus far is "a great place to start."

Upon his arrival at GW in 2011, Weir has overseen a steady buildup of the program since the men's and women's teams finished 13th out of 14 teams in the A-10 Championship in the same year. The women's cross country nabbed a second place finish at the A-10 Championship in 2020 - its highest in program history.



FILE PHOTO BY SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

Head coach Chrissy Schoonmaker said the team has been receptive to her leadership and "eager to be coached."

Softball seeks to qualify for NCAA tournament for second time

ROMAN BOBEK
SPORTS EDITOR

Softball is seeking to qualify for an NCAA tournament bid as they work through the fall slate.

Last year the Colonials took home both the A-10 regular season and A-10 Championship crown and earned the program's first berth into the NCAA tournament under the leadership of former head coach Shane Winkler. The team said they're using the fall slate this season to hone their craft for a chance to repeat their feat.

Graduate student utility player Alessandra Ponce said the team doesn't feel like they have to prove anything anymore after last season's performance.

"We already won," Ponce said. "We know we're capable of that. So just building on the culture, we've established that championship mindset and just continuing to progress forward and have new goals of going further in the NCAA tournament, building upon records and stats and everything that we already have."

Graduate student outfielder Olivia Vinyard said the team is using the fall slate to get back in the groove

and taking the time for "fine tuning the little things."

"It's also a lot about making sure everyone feels comfortable and confident going into our spring season," Vinyard said. "These games are a way for us to get to know one another, feel comfortable playing with one another. And also it's just a reminder of how much fun we had last season and it just gets us even more excited for this upcoming season."

The squad added two new players this year in freshman utility player Gabby Polsky and freshman infielder Taylor Puig. Ponce said the team is in a "special position" this season because the arrival of the new coaching staff has allowed the team to have a fresh start and build their cohesion together all at once.

Junior utility player Maggie Greco said the team has had to be adaptable over the years and that the arrival of a new coaching staff "hasn't been a problem whatsoever."

Now that everyone has filed in back on campus, head coach Chrissy Schoonmaker, who was named to the position over the summer, has had the chance to meet everyone on the team and begin laying her plan into motion. She

said the team has been "super receptive" and the players have "bought in" to her program.

Schoonmaker said the team is working on all aspects of the game right now in training and practice. She said the team is specifically focusing on their angle to the ball when fielding, making sure they turn their hips and get a "good jump off the bat" to minimize mistakes.

On the offensive side, she said they've been working on their body position when they're up to hit. She also said she's been experimenting with moving around the infielders and outfielders so she can see the players get opportunities at different positions and evaluate the team's capabilities as a whole.

Schoonmaker finalized her coaching staff with the addition of assistant coach Brian Burgamy Sept. 10. He joined assistant coach Teresa Fister and volunteer assistant coach Avon Meacham. Schoonmaker said she "slept a lot better" after completing her staff because she has "a lot of trust" in them.

Schoonmaker said the team is not out to rewrite history, instead they are looking to the future which she has dubbed "Mission 64."



FILE PHOTO BY DEAN WHITELAW

Head coach Terry Weir was hoping for the team to get back into competitive running, and GW's program earned two wins and a perfect score.