

The GW Hatchet

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More than 70 students, faculty encounter apparent mold, water damage across campus

ISHA TRIVEDI
NEWS EDITOR

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Junior Luc Saint-Genies experienced itchy eyes and a cough for about a week after moving into his Shenkman Hall unit last month. After he received treatment for an infection and cold-like symptoms at the Colonial Health Center, he said he and his roommates found what appeared to be mold in the vents around their stove.

Saint-Genies said they explained their findings to a CHC nurse, who told them mold was likely the reason for their symptoms and suggested they temporarily relocate. But he said when he initially called the Campus Living and Residential Education office to ask about alternative places to stay, the staff member “fully dismissed” his concerns and said students would be evacuated if they were in danger.

“I do love GW, but it just feels a little bit like we’re not being listened to whatsoever,” Saint-Genies said. “Despite their own recommendations from the CHC, we’re being ignored.”

The Hatchet performed an at-home mold test on material in the fan above his stove and confirmed the substance as mold.

Saint-Genies is one of 75 GW community members who said apparent mold growth and water leaks in their campus buildings have given way to illness, relocation and an overflow of FixIt tickets in recent weeks. Similar maintenance issues have persisted on campus



COURTESY OF SIMON KAPLAN AND EDY KOENIGS
Students and faculty have reported apparent mold in buildings across campus, including The Dakota (left) and Building GG (center and right).

for years, but residents said officials have been slow to respond and accommodate their living situations as several students have developed coughing fits, severe congestion and allergic reactions.

Saint-Genies said he and his roommates decided to find other living arrangements on their own, staying with friends while they continue to wait for the apparent mold in their room to be removed. He said officials eventually granted him and his roommates alternative housing at the River Inn Sunday, nearly a week after they initially reported their concerns to officials.

“We decided to go look in common areas where mold grew, and we opened vents, and we saw some there,” he said. “And then more specifically, in the kitchen area, there is a sig-

nificant buildup in and around the kitchen, quite prominent and even visible with the naked eye.”

Scott Burnotes, the vice president for safety and facilities, said in an interview earlier this month that all of the University’s buildings were “safe to occupy” and aligned with expert COVID-19 reopening guidelines – some of which recommend that universities inspect their unoccupied buildings before reopening to identify potential mold growth. Earlier in the week, faculty senators had introduced a resolution criticizing “misinformation” about publicized HVAC upgrade timelines. The resolution passed (LINK) Friday.

Nearly 200 Townhouse Row residents were evacuated to local hotels last weekend and multiple students visited the hospital

with flu-like symptoms. On Friday, officials confirmed they had observed what “appeared to be mold” in two of the units and mold assessors would inspect all residential buildings over the next two to three weeks.

“GW Safety and Facilities personnel are following up on all FixIt tickets in Shenkman and other buildings,” Burnotes said in an email. “We encouraged students concerned with anything they may have observed to submit a FixIt ticket, so the tickets have been filed and received at a variety of times.”

Burnotes declined to share the total number of requests, the cause of the reported mold outbreaks and the buildings where those requests were made, aside from Shenkman Hall.

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Interim president to replace LeBlanc in January

ISHA TRIVEDI
NEWS EDITOR

University President Thomas LeBlanc will step down months earlier than planned as the former chancellor of Washington University in St. Louis begins as interim president starting Jan. 1, Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights announced.

Speights said at a Faculty Senate meeting Friday that trustees decided to appoint Mark S. Wrighton to serve as interim president for up to 18 months as the Board searches for a long-term replacement for LeBlanc. She said LeBlanc, who announced his retirement after a faculty-wide survey showed widespread dissatisfaction with University leadership, had told the Board that he was “flexible” and would be open to leaving earlier if desired.

“We also felt that the University needed to be in the strongest possible position to attract the best talent,” Speights said in a message to the University community Friday. “It is clear that there is work to be done for us to be in that position, especially working together to strengthen shared governance and collaborative planning.”

Speights added that officials will start the search for a president in “early spring.”

Speights said in the meeting officials were “concerned” about finding a talented long-term candidate for LeBlanc’s replacement because of the large number of presidential searches ongoing at universities nationwide and because of negative media attention GW has received recently.

Officials had previously declined to provide any updates on the presidential search process.

Speights said GW has seen a “problem” with shared governance in recent years and a lack of trust between trustees, the senate and administrators.

“It is our hope that by taking this time, we will have a chance to get, for lack of a better way of saying it, our house in order for the next president,” she said in an interview.

Wrighton said that he looks forward to working with student leaders to improve the student experience and with faculty to find a “common understanding” of shared governance.

“Our objective is to prepare the institution for a new president by coming to both an understanding and implementing that understanding,” he said.

Wrighton will take a sabbatical at Washington University during his time as University president, according to a Washington University release. He plans to return to the District “several” times throughout the fall to meet with student leaders to discuss ways to involve the student body in priorities like improving shared governance and student life, he said.

“I have a glimpse of what a great environment George Washington University has, and I look forward to learning a lot more,” Wrighton said.

Faculty Senate calls for transparency from officials about HVAC upgrades

ISHA TRIVEDI
NEWS EDITOR

YANKUN ZHAO
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

The Faculty Senate passed a resolution Friday urging officials to release more information about the status of HVAC upgrades that were made across campus buildings to block the spread of the coronavirus after they said administrators have spread “misinformation” about ongoing maintenance.

The resolution, which passed with one abstention and one vote in opposition, calls for the University to provide a list of campus buildings and their corresponding level of alignment with expert guidelines with the GW community. The

resolution comes after officials released a statement in June indicating that updates to GW’s HVAC systems were complete – but senators said in the resolution that two senate committees were told otherwise in a confidential presentation with Scott Burnotes, the vice president of safety and facilities.

Eric Grynawski, a faculty senator and member of the senate’s physical facilities committee, said officials should follow the precedent set by former University President Steven Knapp, who provided data to the senate outlining the condition of campus infrastructure during his own presidency. But he said this was at a time when HVAC upgrades were not a primary concern, prior to the pandemic.

“So when we’re asking for the comprehensive assessment, we’re just asking for things that are traditionally provided to the Faculty Senate,” he said. “As a matter of course, this is information that the Faculty Senate has the right to know because it is essential to the education, teaching and research mission of the University.”

Grynawski said officials should disclose this information to the GW community to allow students, faculty and staff who are immunocompromised, have family members who are immunocompromised or are unvaccinated to decide what precautions to take.

“It’s important for individuals like myself who have unvaccinated kids at home and worry about bringing the virus home

to them or people who have a spouse or family members when certain types of health conditions for the virus might be particularly dangerous to them,” he said.

Grynawski also showed a photo at the meeting of an office in the American studies building with an air conditioning unit that had mold “dripping” down the wall.

“So there are visible signs that the University had not undertaken the study or done the work, especially the inspections of the air filters which they said they did,” he said.

Several students who were evacuated from Townhouse Row last Sunday visited the hospital with symptoms that appear related to mold exposure after officials detected

“biological growth” in the buildings. Dozens of students have also found mold growing in nearly 10 residence halls across campus, with some also visiting the hospital for symptoms that appear to be related to mold exposure.

Phil Wirtz, a faculty senator and professor of decision sciences and psychology, said neither Chief Financial Officer Mark Diaz nor LeBlanc signed off on recent University announcements regarding updates to GW’s HVAC systems.

He said the apparent lack of oversight may have contributed to the “miscommunication.” He said an “additional pair of eyes” may have helped clarify officials’ statements.

See [BRACEY](#) Page 3

Fundraising totals stabilized in fiscal year 2021 after previous year’s drop

DANIEL PATRICK GALGANO
STAFF WRITER

GW’s fundraising totals have stabilized after declining by millions of dollars from a recent peak in fiscal year 2019.

Fundraising totals dropped by 17 percent between fiscal years 2019 and 2020 – a downturn that dipped far below the national average of 0.2 percent that year – but slightly increased last fiscal year. Experts in higher education fundraising said GW’s incoming change in leadership could be an opportunity for administrators to push for increased donations.

Fundraising totals tallied \$122.6 million in fiscal year 2019 and \$102.5 million in fiscal year 2020. The data showed total fundraising at GW had a slight uptick to \$105 million in fiscal year 2021, which ended June 30 and included nearly the first five months of the bicentennial celebration.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said the average alumni gift amount increased by 30 percent since fiscal year 2019 and officials have seen an increase in retention among faculty, staff and alumni donors.

She added that during fiscal year 2020, which ended on June 1, 2020, officials launched GW Cares, a 90-day fundraising initiative that created two new emergency relief funds for students and health care workers.

“We limited fundraising efforts beyond this initiative to be sensitive to our community,” Nosal said.

Higher education institutions nationwide have recently faced difficulty meeting revenue and fundraising goals. Officials worked to close a \$180 million budget gap in fiscal year 2021, which led to extensive financial mitigation measures.

Nosal said the University received the largest single alumni donation in GW’s history at \$22 million in Oc-

tober, and officials raised nearly \$30 million for scholarship programs in fiscal year 2021, the second-highest year ever for scholarship fundraising.

“As GW enters its third century, we are excited about new initiatives planned to generate increased support for student scholarships, and we hope to be able to share more details about those plans this fall,” Nosal said.

The University’s most recent large-scale fundraising campaign ended in 2017, raising almost \$1 billion under former University President Steven Knapp.

The recent fundraising totals are cast against the backdrop of a university that has faced the impacts of the pandemic and conflicts between administrators and community members.

Amid faculty dissatisfaction, University President Thomas LeBlanc announced in May that he would retire. Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights announced at a Faculty Senate meet-



HATCHET FILE PHOTO
Higher education institutions nationwide have faced recent difficulty meeting revenue and fundraising goals, according to a Chronicle of Higher Education report.

ing last week that LeBlanc would be leaving his office in January, and Mark S. Wrighton, the former chancellor at Washington University at St.

Louis, would take over as interim president on Jan. 1.

Experts in higher education said a turnover in University leadership could help

boost fundraising revenue if the new president can develop a detailed strategic plan that outlines their specific goals for fundraising.

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THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT WEBINAR: DR. RACHEL MORAN
Sept. 14 • 3 p.m. EDT • Free
Tune into the IDDP's Research Spotlight Webinar Series as Rachel Moran discusses how the Vietnamese community combatted misinformation during the 2020 election.

TRACHTENBERG RESEARCH SEMINAR
Sept. 15 • 11:30 a.m. EDT • Free
Join the Trachtenberg School of Public Policy and Public Administration for Dominic Bearfield's presentation on objectivity and public sector hiring.

THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Sept. 14, 2009

First Lady Michelle Obama promised to speak at Commencement if GW community members complete 100,000 hours of community service, The Hatchet reported.



DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Students who are deaf or hard of hearing can request Communication Access Realtime Translation services through the Disability Support Services office.

Captioners for hard-of-hearing students remain online this semester

ABBY KENNEDY
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Captioning accommodations for deaf and hard-of-hearing students are remaining online this fall despite GW's in-person reopening.

Officials said they alerted about 13 students on September 3 that their Communication Access Realtime Translation providers, who offer captioning and interpretation services for hard-of-hearing and deaf students, would remain online this fall. Students who rely on CART services during classes said GW's communication was last-minute and left their professors without the proper equipment to accommodate virtual captioners.

Maggie Butler, the director of Disability Support Services, said an "industry-wide" shortage in providers willing to work in person during the COVID-19 pandemic drove the University's decision to keep these workers online.

She said DSS purchased more licenses for Ava, a line of live and "highly accurate" captioning software that deaf and hard-of-hearing students can use for online classes. She said officials also equipped professors with lavalier microphones to enhance the sound quality of the captioning software for CART providers who caption lectures and discussions.

"DSS welcomes the opportunity to work collaboratively with students to improve services that support their access and well-being," Butler said in an email.

CART services act as a real-time speech-to-text translation that's typically generated by someone using a stenograph, a typing device that uses shorthand and

transcribing software, according to the National Association of the Deaf website. These providers will provide captions remotely while deaf or hard-of-hearing students take classes in physical classrooms.

Students who are deaf or hard of hearing can request CART services if they are approved for DSS accommodations for their classes, group discussions and University events, the DSS website states.

Nora Hoffman, a junior majoring in political science and English who is hard of hearing, said DSS sent her an email three days before classes, stating that CART providers would operate remotely this fall – a notice that she said was "frustrating" to receive just before the semester kicked off.

"I feel that DSS could have communicated this information earlier than they did," she said. "It was very sudden, and we had been under the impression that our providers were going to be in person."

Hoffman said she opens a Zoom meeting in her in-person classes for the captioner to attend her class remotely and transcribe. She said DSS ordered extra adapters for students to plug into their computers and receive sound from a microphone while captioning on a Zoom call.

She said CART providers can face some technical issues with remote learning, struggling to hear other students sitting far away from the microphone during discussion. She said most of her professors did not have microphones the first week of in-person classes, which made it difficult for captioners to understand the professor.

"Only one of my professors had access to a microphone as of Friday the 3rd, and even then, captioners struggle to understand what they are saying because they cannot see the board and do not have context for the class beyond what the course is," she said.

You Lian Weiner, a senior majoring in public health who is hard of hearing, said professors were unprepared because of GW's late communication and lacked the proper equipment, like microphones and clear masks, to accommodate students with CART providers during the first week of classes. She said the providers are much less effective online than in person because it is more difficult to capture all the voices in the class when only the professor has a microphone.

She said CART providers before the pandemic were normally seated in the classroom and able to hear students and professors more clearly to caption the class.

Weiner said DSS provides clear masks and microphones for professors with deaf and hard-of-hearing students to read lips, but her professors had not picked them up from staff after the first week of classes. Interim Provost Chris Bracey said at a Faculty Senate meeting Friday that DSS had provided clear masks to classrooms where professors teach deaf or hard-of-hearing students.

"I wish DSS would utilize a bit more administrative power to compel professors to take DSS more seriously and be more proactive about it," Weiner said. "I don't think all the responsibility should fall on the student to request accommodations, equip professors with technology and also teach them how to use it."

Digital studio with audiovisual technology opens in Gelman Library

ISHANI CHETTRI
CONTRIBUTING NEWS
EDITOR

Students and faculty now have access to a digital studio where they can check out advanced audiovisual equipment.

Officials said the CREATE digital studio, which opened at the start of the semester, is a digital technology center that includes a full audiovisual production suite, 3D and large-format printing, high-powered multimedia editing computers, AV equipment for check-out and a virtual reality space. Geneva Henry, the dean of libraries and academic innovation, said the studio will help students, faculty and staff create "high-quality" videos, podcasts and interactive experiences to effectively communicate their ideas and research into the world.

Henry said "experienced multimedia professionals" will provide workshops on a variety of digital media, like graphics and podcasts. She said staff will work one-on-one with students and faculty on classroom assignments and projects.

"I encourage all GW students, faculty and staff to drop by CREATE Digital Studio and attend one of more than a dozen workshops to learn more about shooting and editing video projects, creating impressive graphics, recording a professional podcast and much more," she said in an email.

Ten workshops at the CREATE studio are currently posted on the GW Libraries website, including three scheduled for this month – a pre-production video planning tutorial, a walkthrough for "on-the-go" video recording and a

lesson on Adobe Premiere Pro.

Henry said the studio's development began in 2019 with help from GW Information Technology, which sought to provide students, faculty and staff with free access to Adobe Creative Cloud at about the same time. She said construction of the space kicked off in early 2020 when the University transitioned to online learning, but officials postponed the construction until the summer and built a smaller space than originally planned due to a "freeze on funding for construction" amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Officials enacted a hiring freeze and budget cuts that gave way to staff shortages and employee burnout among GW Libraries staff as a part of pandemic budget mitigation efforts.

She said officials prioritized purchasing the most "useful" technology for student use, like computers, but had to use furniture from other areas of the library for the space as part of the "scaled back" version of the studio's plan.

"We look forward to reviewing how students and faculty use the space and their feedback to expand CREATE Digital Studio's space and services in the future," she said.

The CREATE digital studio is currently open on the weekdays from 12:30 p.m. to 6 p.m. and is closed on the weekends.

Kari Lim, a clinical supervisor in the Department of Speech, Language and Hearing Sciences, said she learned about the studio during the pandemic when she was looking for resources to make recordings available for her students. She said she visited the space when in person

classes resumed last month.

Lim said she used the audiovisual suite, but she still had some difficulty learning how to use the new equipment. She said the space wasn't "user-friendly" yet but added that it's still "outstanding" because of the range of available equipment.

Lim said the lack of training at the studio means that other faculty members will likely face a learning curve like she did. She said staff at the studio are "spread thin" she spent hours on her own to become more proficient in the recording technologies offered in the space.

Allie Collier, a student lab assistant in technology at CREATE and a first-year graduate student studying fine arts, said she started working at the studio to gain more experience creating graphic design projects and helping others do the same. She said she was already familiar with the design software used in the lab, like Adobe Creative Suite, but the CREATE staff trained student workers on the studio's programs and equipment in case they weren't familiar with it already.

Owen Desburg, a student lab assistant in technology at CREATE and a freshman majoring in international affairs, said he expects that classes that are "highly technical" with computers will utilize the studio's equipment and software, more so than many of his classes like Introduction to International Affairs. He said the space is still a helpful place to work because it's quiet, accessible to everyone and fosters students' ability to think outside the classroom setting with the new technology and equipment.



DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Construction on the CREATE design studio began when classes moved online last year.

Milken professor creates online map tracking contraceptive care access

MICHELLE VASSILEV
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

NICHOLAS ANASTACIO
STAFF WRITER

Researchers at the Milken Institute School of Public Health published an online interactive map earlier this month to measure the accessibility of contraceptive care service providers throughout the country.

The U.S. Contraception Workforce Tracker – an online map released by the Fitzhugh Mullan Institute for Health Workforce Equity which studies health care disparities – breaks down the types of contraceptive service providers like gynecologists and nurse midwives on the county and state level. Candice Chen, the project's lead researcher and an associate professor of health management and policy, said she hopes the map will direct patients to better contraception access and guide policymakers who can address unequal training practices on contraception distribution among health care providers.

Viewers looking to access contraception through the publicly accessible online map can browse through every provider, like physician assistants, within each state

and county in the nation. The map also includes the population of reproductive age women in each state and the number of contraceptive providers per 10,000 women of reproductive age.

Chen said the data shows that pediatricians prescribe a much lower quantity of pills, hormonal patches and vaginal rings compared to other health care providers. She said a lack of these prescriptions can reduce pediatric patients' access to contraception and disadvantage adolescents because of difficulties like unintended pregnancies and unfavorable economic situations.

She said the map is based on her study – published in the American Journal of Obstetrics and Gynecology last month – that found that 73.1 percent of gynecologists prescribe the pill, hormonal patches and vaginal rings, but only 23.4 percent of pediatricians prescribe these same contraceptives. The study considered reproductive age to be between 15 and 44.

She said the map shows that the number of contraceptive providers per 10,000 women of reproductive age dips in geographically larger states taxed with higher populations.

Qian Luo, an assistant research



DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Chen said her team used data from the proprietary database IQVIA to provide detailed information on the types of contraceptive care services available across the nation.

professor of health and policy management who developed the user interface for the online map,

said he and Chen hope to update the map yearly as long as they have the necessary funding from

their anonymous donor, which allows for continued access to IQVIA's prescription claims.

CRIME LOG

LIQUOR LAW VIOLATION

District House

09/05/2021 – 12:09 a.m.

Closed Case

GW Police Department officers responded to District House for a noise complaint. Upon arrival, officers made contact with the community coordinator, who explained that a large party was taking place in a room. Officers made contact with the male residents and observed a large number of people drinking alcoholic beverages.

Referred to Division for Student Affairs.

PUBLIC DRUNKENNESS

Public Property on Campus (2200 Block of H Street)

09/05/2021 – 2:48 a.m.

Closed Case

GWPD officers observed an intoxicated female student being assisted by another student because she was unable to stand. EMeRG responded to the scene, conducted a medical evaluation and transported her to GW Hospital's emergency room for further treatment.

Referred to Division for Student Affairs.

LIQUOR LAW VIOLATION

Amsterdam Hall

09/06/2021 – 2:17 a.m.

Closed Case

GWPD officers responded to a report of an intoxicated female student. EMeRG also responded to the scene, conducted a medical evaluation and cleared her from further medical treatment.

Referred to Division for Student Affairs.

LIQUOR LAW VIOLATION

Mount Vernon Campus

09/06/2021 – 3:08 a.m.

Closed Case

GWPD officers arrived at the Mount Vernon Campus and made contact with D.C. Fire and Emergency Medical Services officials, who explained they were on campus to transport an intoxicated male student to receive medical attention.

Referred to Division for Student Affairs.

THEFT II/BICYCLES

Mount Vernon Campus (Garage)

09/06/2021 – Unknown

Open Case

A male student reported that his bike was stolen from the Vern's garage during summer break.

Case open.

HARASSMENT (VERBAL OR WRITTEN)

Public Property on Campus (2200 Block of I Street)

09/07/2021 – 7:10 p.m.

Open Case

A male student reported harassment by an unknown male subject.

Case open.

SIMPLE ASSAULT

District House

09/09/2021 – 6:46 p.m.

Open Case

A female student reported that she was the victim of an assault by an unknown female subject. The reported assault took place near the District House food court. GWPD officers canvassed the area for the subject but did not find her.

Case open.

—Compiled by Carly Neilson



FILE PHOTO BY ALEXANDER WELLING

Speights said the University has struggled to establish shared governance between trustees, faculty and the administration in recent years, and the Board is ready to commit to a "fresh start."

Faculty Senate discusses report on shared governance, drawing support from Speights

YANKUN ZHAO

ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights and a group of faculty senators outlined and discussed their expectations for shared governance between trustees, faculty and the administration at the Faculty Senate meeting Friday.

Senators discussed a report on how to strengthen the future of shared governance at GW so trustees, faculty and administrators can reach a mutual understanding of how to collaborate during major University decisions. Board of Trustees Chair Grace Speights said trustees spent the summer meeting with outside consultants to discuss how the University should approach shared governance following an email in May, stating that she had been "troubled" by some professors whose discourse did more to "foment discord" than contribute to civil dialogue.

Speights' criticism in May came on the heels of University President Thomas LeBlanc's announcement that he would step down after one more year as president – a role that many faculty said failed to include professors in decisions like the 20/30 plan to increase STEM enrollment and a culture survey to assess institutional culture.

Faculty senators Shaista Khilji, Kim Roddis and Arthur Wilson presented the report on shared governance, which recommends establishing "clear and frequent" channels of communication between faculty, the Board and the administration and a

"joint effort" toward the University's internal operations, like the budget, strategic planning and the presidential search.

"We want to create buy-in and help GW engage in joint planning because joint thoughts and joint action are critical in our understanding of shared governance," Khilji said at the meeting.

Khilji said faculty senators completed an earlier version of this report last year, sharing it with LeBlanc and former Provost Brian Blake last fall while emphasizing concerns about shared governance and University decision-making. Wilson said Blake took no further action in response to faculty's concerns after October, and he shared the earlier report with Speights in May.

Khilji said she started work on the updated version this summer with Khilji and Roddis to lay the "groundwork" for a discussion on shared governance and its future at GW. She said the senate's executive committee and standing committees added feedback to the report this August.

"We also agreed that this version should also articulate our understanding of shared governance based on the statements of government and colleges, and finally, it should operationalize to offer specific and concrete steps for moving forward," she said.

Speights said the University has struggled to establish shared governance between trustees, faculty and the administration in recent years, and the Board is ready to commit to a "fresh start"

to unite the three groups moving forward. She said the Board met with consultants from the Association of Governing Boards of Colleges and Universities and the American Association of University Professors this summer to discuss how GW should approach shared governance.

She said officials will continue formalizing a plan through town hall meetings, a survey and a task force co-chaired by trustees, faculty and administrators before the three groups reach an "understanding" about shared governance in May.

"There's also been an issue of lack of transparency, and we understand that, and we have heard you," Speights said. "The Board spent a lot of time over the summer thinking about the issue of shared governance and how we could move forward together – the three constituents – to make this an even better University, and the Board I can tell you is committed to doing that."

Faculty said they were "encouraged" by Speights' shared governance update, but some expressed concerns with Speights' announcement of the selection of Mark Wrighton as the University's interim president. Some senators said they were worried about how the University would build on its concept of shared governance after trustees decided to make the presidential decision without consulting professors.

Faculty previously voiced the need for more representation in the last presidential search because of a lack of

diversity on the search committee in 2016. The senate unanimously passed a resolution last month to expand the faculty consultative committee that will advise trustees through the presidential search process.

Sarah Wagner, a faculty senator and a professor of anthropology, said while she appreciated Speights' comments at the meeting, a "dissonance" exists between those comments and her failure to consult faculty prior to the selection of an interim president.

"We are excited for a new president, we are very encouraged by her words, but when they come out the other side of the mouth in which we've had no consultation of a really important decision, the implication might be it could possibly undercut the success of an incoming interim president, and we don't want that," she said.

Miriam Galston, a faculty senator and an associate professor of law, said faculty should instead give Speights the "benefit of the doubt" in the decision to choose an interim president because the Board has had to move forward during a pandemic with a replacement for LeBlanc. She said the Board needs to work on building its relationship with faculty, and as a result, spreading the decision before its announcement would have been "destructive."

"I agree it doesn't look good," she said. "But I would like us to try and take a generous point of view that it's not that she was trying to ignore shared governance."

Nearly 100 mold-related FixIt tickets remain unaddressed

From Page 1

Officials laid off dozens of employees in Facilities Planning, Construction and Management – which oversees maintenance issues like mold growth – last summer as part of broader efforts to mitigate the financial impact of the coronavirus pandemic. Officials ended a freeze on most hirings this summer but have also declined to comment on when they plan to refill positions in these departments.

Students across campus said they submitted FixIt requests to address potential mold but often waited days for officials to respond, and some requests have yet to be answered. More than 90 FixIt tickets related to ongoing mold issues remain open as of Saturday afternoon, according to records provided by a facilities staff member, who spoke with The Hatchet under the condition of anonymity because of concerns of retribution from the University.

In interviews, more than 70 students living in 10 residence halls said they identified apparent mold or water leaks in their rooms. The students included residents of Shenkman, Amsterdam, JBKO, Munson, Guthridge, Francis Scott Key and Somers halls, The Dakota and 1959 E St.

Student concerns over mold growth across campus follow years of maintenance issues at GW, including water leaks and multiple relocations from buildings like Guthridge Hall.

When Junior Hannah Longbottom called the emergency FixIt hotline Thursday to report apparent mold in her 1959 E St. air conditioning unit, she said staff told her to avoid her room as much as possible until they could inspect it.

"I was basically told don't breathe it in," Longbottom said. "And I'm not really sure how that's possible considering it's in my AC unit, so it's pumping out the air. I don't know if they wanted me to hold my breath or something."

Chesca Potter, a sophomore living in Shenkman, said one worker said he felt "lightheaded" after opening cabinet doors to remove mold growth under her sink last week.

"Three of my roommates are sick," she said. "I don't know if it's from the mold or just a cold. It's not COVID, they got tested, but then when you open the drawers under the sink, you get lightheaded, it hits you."

Students and faculty said they have been met with mold growth, water leaks and flooding for years in offices inside multiple academic buildings along G Street – including the anthropology and American

studies department buildings and Building GG, which houses the psychology department – when they returned this fall.

More than 10 faculty in the psychology department complained of mold, flooding and rats and demanded a new building in 2019. D.C. officials fined the University \$1,037 for failing to keep the building's sewer line free of obstruction.

The Board of Trustees approved \$10 million in expenditures on top of GW's budget funding to revamp buildings that required "immediate investment," like modern heating and cooling equipment in Building GG.

But students and faculty in the building say they're still facing some of the same issues.

Simon Kaplan, a cognitive neuroscience master's student, said when he returned to his office in Building GG last December, his chair, desk and AC unit were "coated" with mold.

Tom Guglielmo, an associate professor of American studies, said of the eight offices in his department's townhouse, at least three have had water leaks and mold growth in recent weeks, some of which were significant enough for officials to move a professor to a different office.

"The bottom line is even though they've been responsive to these individual cases, the broader problem really is unacceptable," he said.

Bracey urges faculty to rely on University contact tracing

From Page 1

"We still have found ourselves in buildings that aren't up to speed," Wirtz said. "There has been a serious miscommunication – and let's just leave it at that – that has, in fact, questionably led to the hospitalization of some of the people for whom we are fundamentally responsible as our first responsibility."

More than 70 GW community members have been met with mold growth and water leaks in campus buildings after returning to in-person activities this semester – including multiple professors in Building GG, which houses the psychology department. More than 10 psychology professors and graduate students in 2019 complained of sewage pipe bursts, mold and pests, demanding a new building.

Miriam Galston, a faculty senator and an associate professor of law, said at the meeting that Burnotes, the vice president of safety and facilities, told her that he wasn't aware that Building GG was being used as a classroom.

Interim Provost Chris Bracey delivered an update about the University's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, saying students have reported "a few" complaints about faculty mask non-compliance, like not wearing masks properly over the nose and instructing without masks within six feet of students. He added students have reported feeling "uncomfortable" about faculty instructing without masks while walking

around the classroom.

The University currently permits faculty to lecture without a mask in a classroom if they are more than six feet away from students. Bracey said officials have developed a "review, tracking and enforcement process" that allows for "escalation" of repeat offenders as a result of the complaints.

"I encourage you all to remind your colleagues to abide by the mask mandate when in class because the students are paying attention," he said.

He said officials also distributed masks to all schools and deans, who will then distribute them to all academic departments on campus.

Bracey said the Campus COVID Support Team, which is responsible for GW's contact tracing, will provide faculty with an "informative" notification but won't notify all students if someone in the class tested positive for the coronavirus.

He said CCST will only inform close contacts of exposure because the positive student may not have been in a classroom during relevant periods, not everyone in the class may have been in close proximity to the student and the student can identify those who would constitute "close contacts." He said this process allows CCST to dedicate its resources to those who are most likely to have been exposed and in close contact.

"Not every person in every class will be contacted about a potential exposure, but every faculty member will be informed that someone in the class has tested positive," he said.

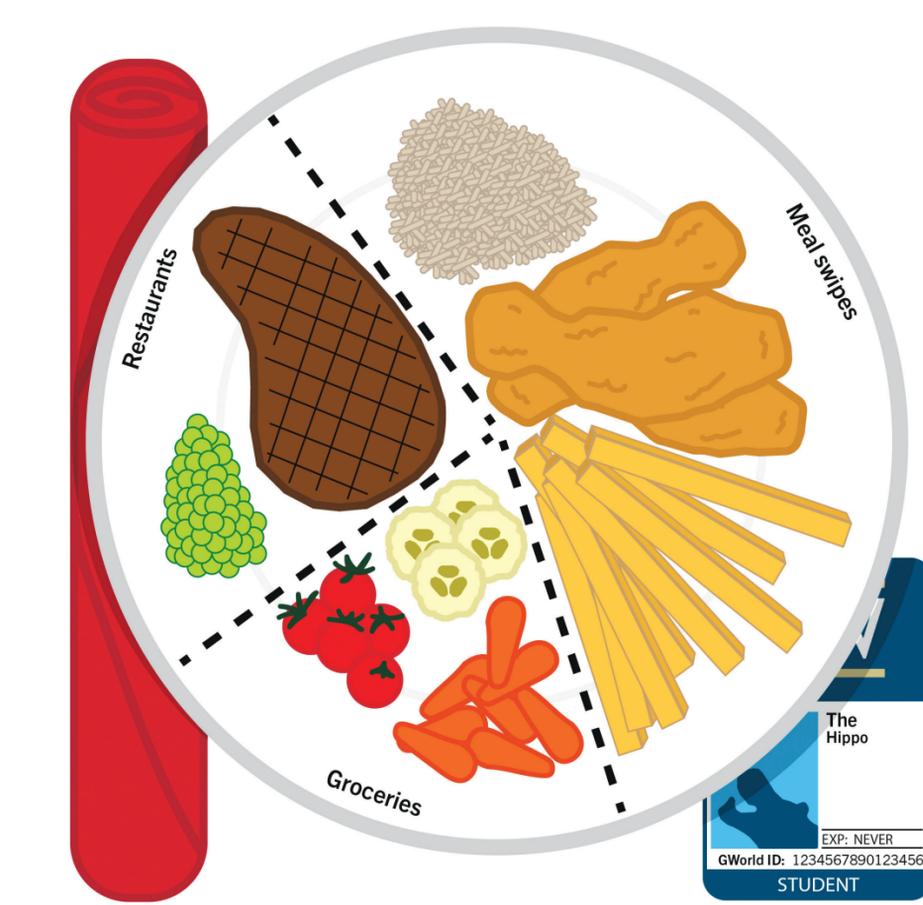
Dining overhaul is a positive step for sustainability, community

STAFF EDITORIAL

It's been a long time coming, but GW is finally getting dining halls again. Over the next few years, three all-you-can-eat dining halls will be constructed in District House and Thurston and Shenkman halls. GW's current dining plan offers freedom of choice but is also pricey and fragmented, leaving many students unable to afford enough food or adhere to dietary restrictions. The University's new dining plan on paper seems like a positive step that could give students the opportunity to eat healthy and affordable food sustainably—but GW should make sure it actually ends up being reasonably priced in practice.

The new plan should be an innovative and meaningful step toward making GW more sustainable in the long run. Chief Financial Officer Mark Diaz and Dean of Students Cissy Petty said in an email to the GW community last month that the dining halls will operate through a partnership with Chartwells Higher Education, a college dining hall company. In an interview with *The Hatchet* last month, Diaz said that the University chose them because they are also committed to abiding by the University's policy to eliminate single-use plastics, which bodes well. Under the current plan, GW can't mandate restaurants around campus to reduce plastics or ask them to buy local ingredients because they belong to larger companies that do not have the same type of relationship that a University has to a company that provides dining halls.

The University should insist that the food will be sourced locally to reduce the environmental impact caused by the transportation necessary to import food from larger farms, encourage sustainable agriculture and benefit the local community



NICHOLAS ANASTACIO | GRAPHICS EDITOR

by supporting farmers in the area. Buying ingredients from local grocers, streamlining food sources and enforcing policies like banning single-use plastics are just some of ways that GW can reduce its carbon footprint through the new dining plan.

Dining halls also provide a sense of community, especially

for incoming freshmen, who are entering the big and chaotic GW environment for the first time and trying to form friendships. The first couple semesters of college can be tumultuous, and dining halls can become a place where students get acquainted with their peers. As of now, with the exception of students living on the Mount Vernon

Campus, who have easy access to Pelham Commons, students have to decide which restaurant to eat at for many of their meals. This is can be a lonely endeavor because each student is constantly going to different vendors. But the new plan will encourage students to eat their meals in one of the three dining halls, where they are likely to see

the same peers continuously. The dining halls can provide refuge for students with varying schedules because they will serve as a reliable source of food at any time of day.

GW tends to be a fairly fragmented place socially, with students self-sorting into small groups or student organizations. There is very little school spirit binding everyone together, which can make it hard to feel camaraderie with other students. More opportunities for students to meet people outside their immediate social circles seems like a great way to foster more of a sense of community at the University.

As students welcome these long-awaited changes, the University must still ensure that the new dining plan ends up being affordable in practice. Officials said the cost of GWorld could see a "single-digit increase," which is promising, but could still end up being hundreds of dollars. The so-called «Pelham Plan» seems like the closest point of comparison among current dining options. That plan is a hybrid of regular GWorld dining dollars and meal swipes at Pelham Commons—which is similar to a traditional dining hall—and costs \$5,200 per year. That's a pretty solid chunk of money, which could hit lower-income students especially hard, and GW should clarify what price increases students may have to deal with.

Almost everyone at GW has either personally struggled to consistently afford good-quality food, or knows someone who has. Over the next few years, as dining halls are phased in, it looks like that could finally change. If GW makes sure the new system is actually affordable for students, University dining will become a community-building experience instead of a culinary free-for-all.

GW should move large lecture classes online

GW's indoor mask mandate and vaccine requirement have previously been successful in limiting breakthrough cases and campus-wide outbreaks, but the recent increase in COVID-19 cases prompted GW to introduce bi-monthly testing to prevent further infections. With the rapid spread of the Delta variant and the potential for more evasive variants to proliferate, potentially compromising the efficacy of vaccines, it is crucial that GW takes all necessary precautions to protect its students, faculty and staff. Moving to a hybrid system would reduce the likelihood of having to move GW's operations fully remote while providing more adequate protection to GW's most vulnerable community members.

Michael DiFabrizio
Opinions Writer

Switching to hybrid learning would allow for a significant portion of classes to introduce social distancing, a practice that has been proven to reduce transmission of the coronavirus. Classes near maximum seating capacity could move into larger lecture halls, while the largest classes on campus would be taught online. This would allow for a noticeable reduction in the amount of close contact between students, faculty and staff, meaning a decreased likelihood of students unknowingly spreading the virus. As

coronavirus vaccines are not 100 percent effective at preventing transmission, with some studies finding that their efficacy is decreasing, minimizing unnecessary contact between students should be the University's top priority.

Such a change would benefit immunocompromised students, as GW mandate who must currently choose between prioritizing their own safety or their academic competitiveness. As some members of the GW community are still unvaccinated, albeit less than five percent, immunocompromised students should not be compelled to attend crowded lectures that may jeopardize their health. Especially considering that a few dozen professors have been granted accommodations for reasons not limited to health concerns, it would be unjust to not at least consider a transition to a hybrid system. Moving GW's largest classes online would allow for these students to distance themselves from others in their in-person classes, creating a more equitable learning environment.

If case numbers continue to rise, GW could eventually have no other option but to limit its in-person instruction. Undoubtedly, transitioning into hybrid learning would be much easier to execute if it is conducted early in the semester. With classes just getting started, students can still add and drop courses for another few

weeks. Moving to a hybrid system now would allow for students to alter their schedules based on their preferences regarding in-person versus online instruction. If GW decides to wait, or if an outbreak forces classes to suspend in-person activity, the transition will be much more tumultuous, as students and faculty will be busier and a significant change in schedules would be more difficult to navigate at that point. Allowing the coronavirus to spread unabated throughout campus could even force a full-scale closure of campus akin to that of the March 2020 campus shutdown, a situation undoubtedly less favorable than reverting to a hybrid system.

With the Delta variant accounting for nearly all of new coronavirus cases, despite comprising less than one percent of cases just five months ago, it would be unwise to rule out the possibility of a more dangerous variant overtaking Delta and causing an exponential rise in case numbers. While a fully in-person semester is certainly optimal, it is undeniably better to have some classes in-person rather than none at all. Moving GW's largest classes online will allow for increased social distancing, a more equitable learning environment for immunocompromised students, and a lower likelihood of a campus reclosure in the future.

—Michael DiFabrizio, a junior majoring in political science, is an opinions writer.

Closing the Confucius Institute but not the RSC sets a double standard

Following years of external pressure, fueled by the rising tide of neo-Cold War and anti-China rhetoric in the United States, administrators decided to close the University's branch of the Confucius Institute. The Confucius Institute is a cultural institute, which operates branches at more than 500 schools worldwide that promote Chinese language and cultural events. Since the establishment of the first Confucius Institute in the United States in 2004, the institution has been under scrutiny for its potential threat to academic freedom as a result of it being previously funded by the Chinese government. Not only have administrators failed to publicly provide evidence that GW's Confucius Institute specifically transgressed academic freedom, but the timing of the closure, following legislation passed by the U.S. Senate in 2021 barring the Department of Defense from funding universities with Confucius Institutes, suggests it was done to protect University funding from the U.S. military.

Karina Ochoa Berkley
Columnist

On the other hand, the University has continually reaffirmed its support of the Regulatory Studies Center, a research center at GW that receives millions of dollars from the fossil fuel industry and is equally, if not more, guilty of transgressing academic freedom for its role in propagating climate denial that serves the interests of

its funders. It is possible that administrators have reasons beyond the forfeiture of military funding to close the Confucius Institute. But, if this is the case, administrators must justify their continued support of the RSC as it appears to be transgressing academic freedom just as seriously as the Confucius Institute was accused of doing.

The way administrators are seemingly applying a double-standard treatment of these two University centers raises important questions about the transparency of administrative research funding decisions, the politicization of University research choices and the protection of academic freedom. If administrators hope to maintain any claim to objective governance or transparency, they must close the RSC for the center's own subversion of academic freedom and provide the GW community with an evidence-based rationale for the Confucius Institute's closure.

While administrators have failed to comment on the reason for the closure of the Confucius Institute, the timeline closely follows that of other universities who have closed their Confucius Institutes following legislation barring the Department of Defense from providing federal research funding to universities that host Confucius Institutes.

According to a 2015 Vice News report, which ranks GW as the fourth "most militarized" school in the country, measured by ranking which schools have the "closest relationships with

the national security state," GW could have a lot of defense money to be afraid of losing.

Compared to the Confucius Institute, the case for abolishing the RSC is backed by similar—I believe more—compelling evidence. First, the RSC receives more outside funding than the Confucius Institute used to. Since 2013, the Confucius Institute has received \$3.4 million from the Chinese government. Over that same period, the RSC has received a combined total of \$5.1 million from Koch, ExxonMobil and Searle Freedom Trust. In fact, all of the money Charles Koch gives to the RSC puts GW in the top ten of colleges accepting Koch money. This is especially troubling given the Kochs' role in subverting academic freedom at GW and beyond.

As long as the University continues to apply undisclosed standards of acceptable academic research funding, the University cannot claim that the Confucius Institute was closed due to concerns about academic freedom alone. It is time administrators lift their veil of non-disclosure and transparently provide the student body with their rationale for the closure of the Confucius Institute. And if the University purports to have a true interest in academic freedom, it needs to justify its support of the RSC. But if it can't, then the University should close the RSC under the same precedent.

—Karina Ochoa Berkley, a junior majoring in political science and philosophy, is an opinions columnist and the assistant copy editor.

Culture

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THE SCENE

REFLECTING BACK TO THE FUTURE
Sept. 17 • Free • Pyramid Atlantic Art Center
Attend the opening of Pyramid Atlantic's 40th anniversary exhibition, featuring edited prints, pulp paintings and art books.

VEGAN FOR BEGINNERS
Sept. 18 • \$4 • Online
Learn the basics of vegan eating by attending an online workshop featuring a live cooking demo.

RELEASED THIS WEEK:

NEW ALBUM: "STAR-CROSSED" BY KACEY MUSGRAVES

How the pandemic changed GW's food truck scene

DAVID BROTHERS
REPORTER

Food trucks are typically a staple for hungry students in transit to class, but after 18 months of an empty university, you won't be able to find the familiar crew of trucks around campus.

During the pandemic, food trucks in D.C. struggled to stay afloat, dwindling the selection of trucks in the District and on campus. Students may see some of their favorite food trucks like Tasty Kabob and Yumpling lined up on 22nd Street but notice Swizzler and Tempo di Pasta's absence in front of the University Student Center.

Trucks like Soultarian and the Roaming Coyote, which are reopened in Potomac Square, have offered quick meals for the GW community since 2019, when Potomac Square was transformed from an empty parking lot into an outside area with public tables and seating. Soultarian's owner and executive chef Christopher Arnold said he is excited to be back with business as usual and see some familiar faces.

"I've noticed a lot of my old customers who were freshmen are then appearing now as juniors, and they're all happy to see me back on campus," Arnold said. "They said I'm their favorite food truck, so I still retained a lot of the old students and some of the staff members that frequent my truck."

Soultarian, which sells vegan



SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

GW's partnership with Curbside Kitchen will bring new additions to campus' daily food truck lineup.

street food, returned to campus last Thursday. Arnold said he continued operating his food truck outside of Foggy Bottom during the pandemic, but he is nevertheless excited to keep serving plant-based meals to students.

"We're glad to be back on campus and we're going to keep pushing our plant-based foods as long as you guys want us around," he

said.

Potomac Square was previously operated by TwentyTables, an D.C.-based app that worked with food vendors to make low cost meals more accessible. But after TwentyTables terminated its partnership with GW during the pandemic and went out of business, the operation of the Potomac Square trucks was handed to the food truck company

Curbside Kitchen in partnership with Chartwells Higher Education, GW's new dining partner.

Some new trucks will also be coming to Potomac Square like Memaw's Table. Named after the granddaughter of the owner and chef Terese Harris, Memaw's Table will serve Cajun food, including chicken and waffles, shrimp and grits and red beans with rice.

Although some of the most well-known food trucks on campus remain parked on H Street, others have left altogether.

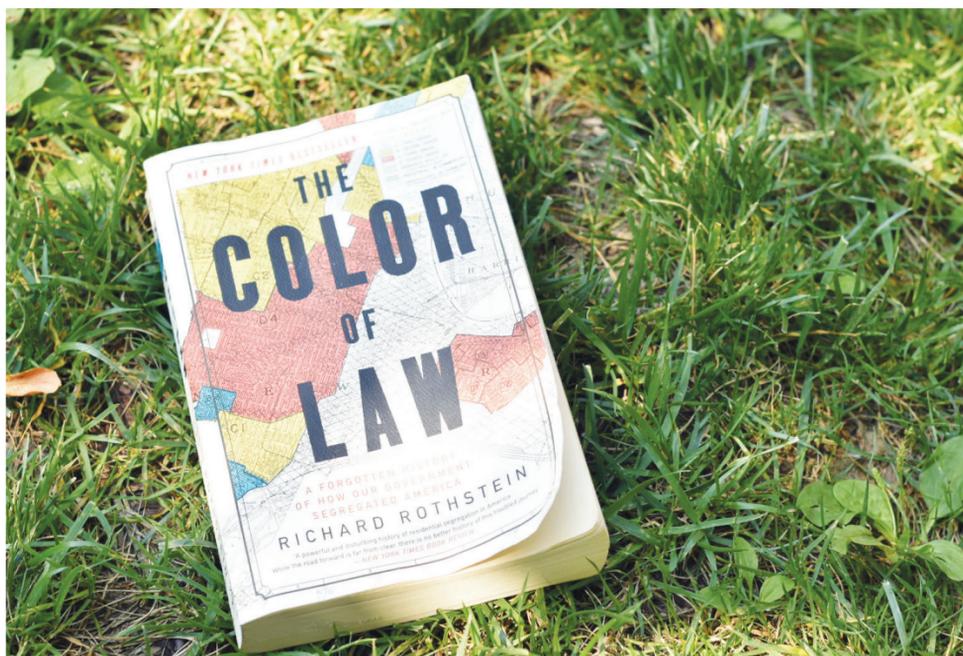
Rolling Cow, a Korean food truck, was popular for its large portions of Korean-spiced meats, but the truck halted operations at the start of the pandemic.

Tasty Kabob's general manager, Matt Dang, said his team is still doing licensing paperwork to comply with D.C. regulations, but he expects to be back open between Sept. 17 and 20. Dang said early in the pandemic, Tasty Kabob moved to serving through DoorDash, GrubHub and UberEats exclusively.

"It was very challenging because as a mobile food vendor, that was our main source of income so we had to come up with different ways to ask for the revenue stream," Dang said. "When the student campus shut down, we had to be creative to where we would have to serve food."

Now that students have returned to campus, Dang said he is ready to serve the community that has supported them for so many years.

"We grew up with you through freshman year all the way to grad school," Dang said. "We are very appreciative of everything that the community has done throughout the many years we have been on campus, so we want to continually thank them for the years of support, and without you guys, we wouldn't be where we are today."



SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

"The Color of Law," a historical nonfiction book, details actions taken by local, state and federal authorities to further housing segregation well into the late 20th century.

The Hatchet's favorite books to carry you through the fall semester

GW HATCHET STAFF

Textbook readings, journals and news articles might be piling up on your to-do list, but don't let that stop you from picking up a book to read for pleasure.

We asked our staff what their favorite book of the summer was and why other people should give it a read.

"Unaccustomed Earth" by Jhumpa Lahiri

Short story collection
Shreeya Aranake | Contributing Opinions Editor

This collection of short stories includes themes and storylines highlighting the experiences of Indian Americans. It explores the experiences of older Indians who immigrated to the United States and the feelings of their children who grew up here. This mixture of perspective parallels the mixed cultural environments of the characters in these short stories.

"I loved this short story collection, because it magnifies the heartbreaking realities of growing up and growing apart from the people you're supposed to be the closest to. It's also an incredible portrait of the tumultuous nature of first and second generation immigrant identities."

"Writers and Lovers" by Lily King

Romance/coming-of-age
Grace Miller | Design Editor

A struggling writer in Boston, Casey Peabody, navigates her way through the unpredictability of life just after her mother's death. She experiences passion and romance with old and new lovers, but not-

ing seems to work out all while contemplating the significance and purpose of her writing.

"Writers and Lovers" is a beautiful portrait of grief and struggle written so honestly that it just seems like a snapshot of someone's life. The writing is mature and the character arc you witness is both heart-wrenching and heartwarming. It's brutally relatable and the captivating story arcs have you not wanting to put it down."

"The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America" by Richard Rothstein

Historical nonfiction
Anna Boone | Culture Editor

Rothstein details actions taken by the local, state and federal government to further housing segregation well into the late 20th century. He also examines how the private sector played a role in pushing the Black community into economically shallow multi-family housing communities while white people enjoyed the benefits of single-family neighborhoods with accessible community resources.

"This non-fiction book about the history of housing segregation in this country is a vital read. It deconstructs naive assumptions about the state of predominantly Black communities that exist today and underscores the pervasive racism that existed in private and public sectors following the Civil Rights Movement."

"The Poppy War" by R.F. Kuang

High fantasy
Nuria Diaz | Contributing Sports Editor

Young Fang Runin, known as Rin, grows up poor as she was orphaned by the previous war. She focuses on studying to get into an elite military academy, where she develops a gift for Shamanism that allows her to call upon the vengeful Phoenix God.

"The book builds upon the character arcs to present the horrors of war and the bleakness of human nature. Overall, the book's narrative pushes the reader out of their comfort zone to confront a reality many chose to ignore. The book holds a beautiful dark fantasy world that will keep you hooked until the end."

"Golden Gulag" by Ruth Wilson Gilmore

Nonfiction
Karina Ochoa Berkley | Assistant Copy Editor

"Golden Gulag" gives an eye-opening analysis of the circumstances surrounding the unreal incarceration rate in U.S. prisons, with a 450 percent increase since 1980 alone. Gilmore focuses specifically on California prison systems and analyses the systematic forces at work in this crisis.

"Gilmore, a professor at the City University of New York graduate center, provides one of the first cumulative, critical analysis of the political economy of super incarceration in California. The book analyzes how the proliferation of mass incarceration in California is not only symptomatic of global and local political and economic forces, but that the political consensus that prisons are a solution to social ills is incorrect."

Third annual DC Comedy Festival hits stages this week

CLARA DUHON
CONTRIBUTING
CULTURE EDITOR

After pandemic-delays, comedians from around the nation will take center stage next week at the third annual D.C. Comedy Festival.

The event, which will take place at several locations throughout the District, will feature open mics, dinners and headliners, from Monday to Saturday next week. The festival will host about 50 comedian performers and will be held at venues including Dupont Underground and Busboys and Poets over the course of the week.

Grace Jung, a Los Angeles-based comedian performing at the festival, said she was initially accepted to perform at the event last year, but it was canceled and rescheduled due to the pandemic. She said she remains "cautious" of the virus but is looking forward to being back on stage after not being able to perform during the pandemic.

"I've been on the road again since early this year," Jung said in an email. "I noticed that the audience has been missing us just as much as we've been missing them."

Three comedians from the D.C. metro area came up with the idea for the festival as a way to showcase comics of all levels. The event is

aimed to engage the public with the comedy community and provide an educational workshop for comedians to network with each other and help them build their brand. The festival will also raise money for Dupont Underground – an art organization that exhibits non-conventional artwork from a diverse range of artists.

Jung said the festival will be her first time performing in D.C. She said she is "fond" of the District, which she said is well-known for being home to great comedians, and is eager to get to know the D.C. crowd at her performance Monday at Dupont Underground.

"Each crowd is different and some of that depends on the city," she said. "D.C. is an interesting city. It's just a bit south of New York where I grew up. I think we'll vibe."

D.C.'s comedy scene includes groups like Underground Comedy in Dupont Circle, Capitol Laughs – which sets up weekly performances at Toni-con campus – and DC Improv, which is scheduled to host a comedy festival at the Kennedy Center later this month.

Dan Kapr, a Pittsburgh-based comedian scheduled to perform on Monday night, said he is looking forward to seeing friends at the festival and returning to the

stage now that he performs less frequently due to the pandemic.

"My stand-up is mostly a combination of absurdist humor and stuff about dealing with anxiety," he said in an email. "I do a lot of one-liners. I've been told that I seem nervous on stage which is such a compliment."

Rachel Fogletto, a comedian based in Philadelphia, said she is looking forward to participating in the DC Comedy Festival for the first time. Fogletto, who will perform on Monday, said she started traveling more for her comedy shows a few years before the pandemic began and wanted to partake in the festival to network and perform with other comedians from around the country in front of a live audience.

"For the most part, audiences have been really cool and appreciative, I think especially since the luxuries of going out were unavailable for a while," she said.

Tony Woods, a comedian known for his role as a mentor to Dave Chapelle, will headline the festival's finale show next Saturday night.

Tickets are on sale through the day of each event and range from \$10 to \$25. Guests must show proof of vaccination or a COVID-19 negative test, and masks must be worn at all times.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR
Tickets are on sale through the day of each event and range from \$10 to \$25.

GAMES OF THE WEEK



SOFTBALL
vs. Coppin State
Saturday | 1 p.m.
The Colonials play their first game under head coach Chrissy Schoonmaker against the Eagles.



MEN'S SOCCER
vs. William and Mary
Tuesday | 7 p.m.
GW kicks off its four-game road trip at William and Mary.

NUMBER CRUNCH **.538**

Men's Water Polo's save percentage, up from its five-year average of .508.

Women's soccer returns to regular season seeking first win in Atlantic-10 play

NURIA DIAZ
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

After an irregular season, women's soccer is returning to the field seeking to qualify for the A-10 tournament.

The Colonials (0-6-2) remain winless through the non-conference slate thus far, falling into a consecutive set of ties and losses within the first eight games of the season. The team began the season with high expectations, recognized as the No. 4 seed in the A-10 preseason poll. Last year the Colonials narrowly missed the A-10 playoffs after failing to get a win over Davidson in the final game of the season. This year, after a grueling non-conference slate, the team will look to turn the corner in A-10 play.

"We're trusting the process, we're believing in the playbook," head coach Michelle Demko said. "We're showing up on a daily basis. I think that's important. Once you lose that it's a slippery slope, so the fact that they continue to want to show up, want to get better individually and collectively, I think it's fantastic."

The Colonials have struggled in front of net, averaging a .057 shooting percentage with 477 percent on frame, amounting to just five goals. The squad has also been outscored by a margin of 16 goals. Demko said the team has zeroed in on consistency, speed of play, and compact lines as major points of focus during team practices.

The Colonials return this season with a pool of new recruits composing six out of the 11 starting positions on the field. Demko said the incoming players have been constantly looking toward the

coaching staff to help them improve their performance to continue building on the program.

This year's defensive backline is filled with mostly new players as only three defenders have returned from last year's roster in sophomore Margaret Rabbitt, junior Haley Curtis, and senior Madi Coyne. However, Rabbitt did not see action in her first year and Curtis made just four starts last year.

Freshman defenders Maggie Mockenhaupt, Summer Beesley, Alicia Window, Emma Midock, Sarah Patton, Amelia Booth and graduate student defender Cammie Dopke were all added during the summer offseason to revitalize the depleted 2020 roster. Demko said the new-look backline has been working on their communication to minimize opportunities for their opponents to score.

"It's unfortunate that we've given up some goals where we've been caught kind of being ball fixated, and not kind of picking up on where the runners are," Demko said. "But like I said, those are things that we can fix, and we can solve."

A transfer from UConn, graduate student forward Sophia Danyko-Kulchycky said she came to GW because of the culture and coaching staff. She said it was "refreshing" to play under the new COVID-19 guidelines that allow the players to feel more comfortable and united.

Taking a central role in the Colonials offense, Danyko-Kulchycky leads the team with 13 shots on goal while her 672 shot on goal percentage trails just behind senior midfielder Maria Pareja with 80 percent on frame. She has tallied one goal and one assist through



FILE PHOTO BY PHEBE GROSSER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER
The Colonials began the season with new recruits holding a majority of the starting positions, and the team has been winless so far despite its strong placement in the A-10 preseason poll.

seven games played.

"We're still getting used to playing with each other, we're still getting used to, you know, different formations," Danyko-Kulchycky said. "We're still experimenting because really the most important thing this season is conference. That's what we're all looking forward towards."

Danyko-Kulchycky said the team is focusing on their "box mentality" to improve the team's finishing and play in front of the

opposing net. She said it's been helping them get better each game and is excited to see the direction the offense is going.

Redshirt junior goalkeeper Tamaki Machi said she has been working on her communication with the backline both on and off the field as they build chemistry with one another. Machi has averaged a .677 save percentage this season, recording 42 saves through 700 minutes of play.

Demko said the team is

disappointed they don't have more wins to show for their performance but she recognizes they have a difficult nonconference schedule to prepare them for A-10 play. She said she is nevertheless "joyful" to be spending time with the team and continuing to work on honing the edges of the team.

Following a 4-0 defeat to Pennsylvania Sunday afternoon, the Colonials will hit the road for their first match of A-10 conference play against VCU 2 p.m. Tuesday.

Pandemic downtime enabled athletes to focus on academics

NURIA DIAZ
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

A record number of student-athletes were named to the Atlantic 10 Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll this past academic year.

The Atlantic 10 named 274 GW student-athletes to the Atlantic 10 Conference Commissioner's Honor Roll in the 2020-21 academic year, recording a combined 3.5 GPA throughout the pandemic, according to an Athletic Department release. Student-athletes said extra downtime during virtual classes and assistance from their academic advisers enabled them to focus on their academic work during the pandemic.

"The emphasis that we put on success isn't just limited to the gym," junior gymnast Hannah Munnely said. "It goes to all aspects of our life, especially in the classroom. We're students first, athletes second. We really just take that mindset with us everywhere."

Twenty-six teams held at least a combined 3.0 GPA during the spring, with 257 student-athletes obtaining at least a 3.5 average. Nearly 50 student-athletes recorded a 4.0 GPA, while 378 student-athletes held a 3.0 GPA

and above overall, according to the release.

Men's tennis led all GW sports programs in the spring with a combined 3.91 team GPA, followed by gymnastics with a 3.82. Women's soccer registered a 3.74 mark, followed by golf with a 3.71 and women's cross country and track with a 3.67.

The A-10 Commissioner's Honor Roll selection includes only student-athletes with a cumulative 3.0 GPA in conference-sponsored sports during the academic year. The honor was given to 14 schools last academic year, amounting to a total of 3,849 student-athletes to top the previous record by 88 students.

Sixteen gymnasts were named to the Women's Collegiate Gymnastics Association Scholastic All-American list. The Colonials placed 14th overall among a pool of 75 schools across the nation, leaping 26 ranks from the previous year, according to an August Athletic Department release.

Senior gymnast Deja Chambliss, a first-time honoree, said the extra downtime during the pandemic allowed her and her teammates more opportunities to concentrate on their schoolwork. The team

worked in study groups to help each other with assignments, she said.

She said participating in gymnastics taught her how to be disciplined from a young age, which has helped her manage her academics in between the hours spent at gymnastics practice and her classes.

Munnely, who earned the WCGA Scholastic All-American award for the second time, said gymnastics made her more adaptable, helping shape her studying habits and work ethic in school despite the struggles she may have had in a particular subject.

Munnely said she sought help from her academic adviser after struggling with an art history exam and learned how to properly write and structure a college paper.

Chambliss said she also made use of the resources provided by the Carbonell Center which offers networking services, mentorship and financial literacy programs, and one on one career coaches. She said one of those career coaches, Julia Brown, helped students with "professional competencies" to assist the transition to life after being a student-athlete because gymnastic sports "won't last forever."



GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR
Athletics staff said many of the volunteers were stepping into roles that were usually handled by someone else.

Athletics volunteers say pandemic roles created 'camraderie' among staff

NURIA DIAZ
CONTRIBUTING SPORTS EDITOR

When the pandemic threw a wrench into the usual routine for the Athletic Department, volunteers stepped up to ensure the 2020-21 season could flow without interruption.

A regular season would have been composed of student and local workers who are paid by the hour to help staff games, but officials said they asked GW's athletic personnel to serve as volunteers to assist with athletic operations because they were already included in the University's testing cohorts, which was limited to GW staff. Volunteers said they didn't feel pressured to take shifts and their work over the course of the pandemic allowed them to feel a sense of camaraderie with other workers.

"Volunteers were asked to staff virtually every aspect of the operation: from broadcasting to camera work, checking in student-athletes and staff at the testing site, verifying clearance to be in certain spaces, working the scorers table at basketball games and other events," Sereno said in an email. "It was a heavy lift and the Athletics Department as a whole exceeded expectations and thrived in the face of adversity."

Sereno said he estimates about 75 volunteers worked this past year in shifts usually ranging from two to four hours. He said some

volunteers worked as many as five shifts per week primarily led by baseball head coach Gregg Ritchie.

Among Ritchie's roles was checking people's temperatures at the Smith Center before admitting them entry. Ritchie said he took the opportunity to focus on personal growth and ensuring that the season could be held safely.

"You can take the opportunity here to grow yourself, whether it's impacting people in a better way by doing the right thing, and protecting everybody whether by being considerate, and healthy and being safe," Ritchie said. "But at the same time, you're having to work with more dynamic groups that you may not have worked with before, and in different ways. So you had to be very adaptable."

Equipment and Gameday Manager Matt Eliot said he never felt any pressure to volunteer and that volunteering was set up in such a way to encourage everyone to pitch in whenever they could find the time.

"There was a feeling that we were all pitching in together, to enable our student-athletes to be able to compete, which is why we're all here to support them," Eliot said. "So I think we all felt that it was kind of incumbent on all of us to pull together to find a way to make things happen."

Eliot said one of the challenges of the year was that there weren't any students on campus or other employees

they could hire due to the COVID-19 testing protocols put in place. He said many of the volunteer

Officials implemented a hiring freeze on most positions last March to address the pandemic's impact on the University's finances.

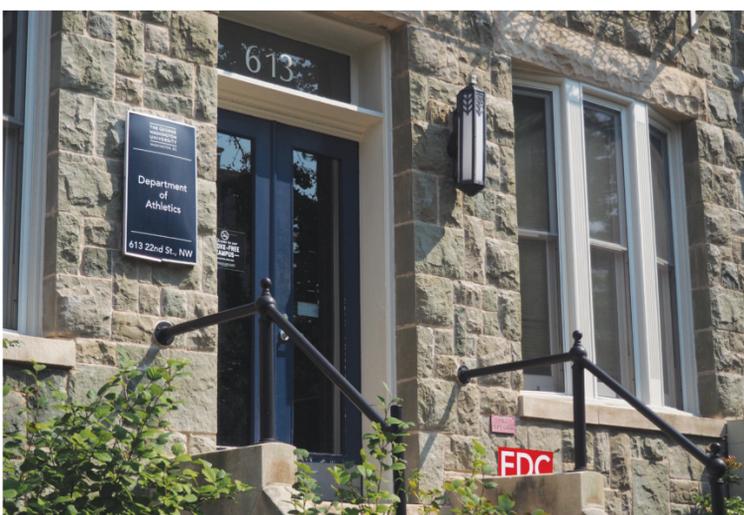
Not only did the volunteers have to step into different roles, but Eliot said they also dealt with a multitude of sports competing at the same time. Soccer and volleyball held their seasons during the spring when normally they would compete in the fall.

"In particular our facilities and event staff really did heroic work in enabling us to be able to do this because they had twice as many people with twice as many events in a way with the same resources," Eliot said.

Eliot said his work also allowed him to regain a sense of camaraderie with his colleagues which he had lost during the early stages of the pandemic.

"There's a lot more fun and a lot more closeness and togetherness out of sitting in a baseball press box together with people than you do in a group zoom," he said.

Ritchie said the department prioritized functioning with all of the athletic staff working together to carry on the season as regularly as they could during the pandemic. He said the pandemic allowed not only the department but also student-athletes to open their minds to becoming more adaptable and aware of their actions affecting everyone.



GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR
The A-10 Commissioner's Honor Roll selection includes student-athletes with a cumulative 3.0 GPA in conference-sponsored sports during the academic year.