

# The GW Hatchet

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The editorial board calls on officials to add more days off in light of burnout. **Page 6**

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**Tracking COVID-19** Oct. 7 - Oct. 13 **Weekly COVID-19 cases: 9** **Weekly positivity rate: 0.10%** **Change in cases since previous week: -16**

## Post-COVID task force encourages GW to continue remote options

**ISHA TRIVEDI**  
NEWS EDITOR

A University-wide task force found the GW community is looking for a “culture of empathy” and continued remote options coming out of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the group’s report released last week.

The task force – which consists of 18 faculty, staff members and students charged with developing post-pandemic recommendations for GW – established four working groups in February focused on graduate and professional students, undergraduate students, faculty and staff and academic support personnel. Task force members conducted surveys, town halls and research over the course of almost nine months, releasing a culminating report with dozens of recommendations on upgrades to GW’s academic environment.

“The pandemic has required higher education institutions to adapt and innovate more rapidly and comprehensively than any other event in modern history,” the report states. “Transforming from the

long-time model of in-person classes and residential students to a virtual one necessitated a wide range of innovations and accommodations across the University.”

Here are some of the major recommendations from each of the four working groups:

### Faculty

The faculty working group recommended that officials create an option for professors to teach remotely, in person or in a hybrid format and invest in equipment and training for virtual teaching when appropriate.

“Faculty members also expressed that rigidity in policies, such as deadlines for grade submissions and dropping and adding classes, created obstacles to providing empathy and support,” the report states. “Teaching demand overwhelmed some faculty, especially adjunct and part-time faculty whose extra time preparing for virtual learning, was not compensated.”

The group also recommended that officials should extend the tenure clock – the period of time after which administra-

tors make a decision on whether to grant tenure – beyond the one-year pause currently in place because of pandemic-related research delays. Faculty said in April that they were concerned about the amount of research funding in the proposed Fiscal Year 2022 budget.

“The pandemic and post-pandemic era will likely last two to five years, and the University’s response needs to recognize that there is no ‘one and done’ solution,” the report states. “The institution should be mindful about setting in place the correct scaffolding that will allow us to rebuild better, but the process will need to be iterative and to evolve. We will need to adapt systems and solutions to the new realities as time goes by.”

The report recommends officials allow professors the option to continue virtual operations for office hours and faculty meetings to improve faculty’s work-life balance. University President Thomas LeBlanc has previously expressed support for increasing flexibility and offering virtual meeting alternatives for



GRACE HRONIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

Former Provost Brian Blake commissioned the 18-member task force in January to identify lessons learned from the pandemic.

meetings.

“Faculty members reported emotional overload due to COVID-related illnesses and death,” the report states. “Faculty also said they were overwhelmed by the amount of emails from students who required additional advising due to increased needs for learning support and work-life imbalances.”

### Undergraduate students

The undergraduate students working group found “strong” support for recording lectures and offering virtual student services, like office hours and health care.

“Students cited flexibility and accessibility as major advantages of the online platform,” the re-

port states.

The group also found students want the University community to continue a “culture of empathy,” which was fostered during the pandemic, stating that faculty empathy contributes to student satisfaction.

See **TASK FORCE** Page 5

## Undergraduate enrollment decline slows following end of 20/30 Plan

**ISHA TRIVEDI**  
NEWS EDITOR

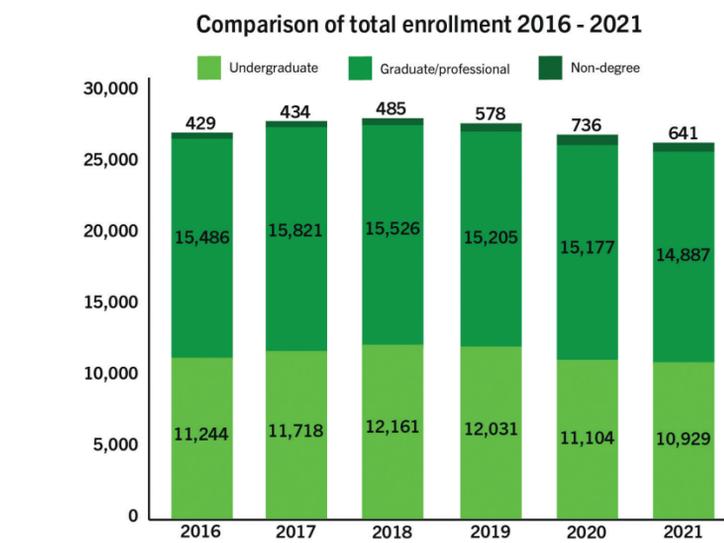
**YANKUN ZHAO**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

GW’s undergraduate enrollment fell by about 2 percent this year, slowing a multi-year decline precipitated by the effects of the pandemic and the now-obsolete 20/30 Plan.

Jay Goff, the vice provost of student enrollment and student success, said at a Faculty Senate meeting Friday that undergraduate and total enrollment fell by 1.6 percent and 2.1 percent, respectively. International enrollment fell more sharply – dropping 7.5 percent, which Goff attributed to pandemic-related travel restrictions – but officials bolstered enrollment levels by dramatically increasing the size of GW’s freshman class since last year.

“The big picture is that things look good, and that puts our enrollment on track,” Goff said. “We are very close to where we want it to be.”

University President Thomas LeBlanc had planned reductions in GW’s incoming class sizes as part of an initiative to reduce the undergraduate population by 20 percent over five years, but those plans were halted in April 2020 and declared “obsolete” by that November amid the pandemic and widespread faculty criticism. Officials accepted multiple rounds of waitlisted students to stabilize enrollment levels last year, but undergraduate enrollment ultimately



NICHOLAS ANASTACIO | GRAPHICS EDITOR

dropped by almost eight percent in fall 2020.

The number of residential freshmen rose by nearly 30 percent compared to last fall, nearly matching the class size in fall 2019, according to the new data. Officials enrolled 2,571 residential freshmen, narrowly surpassing their bolstered target of between 2,475 and 2,550 students.

Goff said enrollment for freshmen and residential students this fall was “on track” with officials’ increased targets, and graduation and retention rates “rebounded” to levels similar to before the COVID-19 pandemic.

Goff said the number of undergraduate transfer students decreased from 296 to 138 since last fall. Officials

had tripled the transfer acceptance rate last year as part of the efforts to stabilize enrollment when the pandemic hit.

“We had a very successful outcome in this in terms of we are a little bit heavier on the first-year students, and so we didn’t need as many transfer students to backfill and hitting that goal,” he said.

GW enrolled 26,457 total students this fall, slightly dipping below last year’s total by 560 students. Overall enrollment has dropped steadily by 6 percent since a peak in 2018, when more than 28,100 students were enrolled, according to institutional data. LeBlanc cited the peak as reason for implementing the enrollment cut.

Goff said officials will prioritize international student recruitment and outreach efforts after this year’s drop. He said domestic enrollment was “relatively stable,” decreasing by 1.3 percent.

“That will help us regain these numbers and get more actively engaged in the international community because we know that this is a very important part of our campus student body and part of our diversity efforts,” Goff said.

A total of 2,709 new undergraduate students enrolled at GW this semester – a nearly 20 percent increase from last year – surpassing officials’ target of 2,650, according to the data.

See **ENROLLMENT** Page 5

## Officials release roadmap for campus master plan

**ZACHARY BLACKBURN**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Officials presented potential concepts for the future of GW’s campus as they finish developing the Strategic Campus and Facilities Master Plan during a Faculty Senate meeting Friday.

Chief Financial Officer Mark Diaz and Scott Burnotes, the vice president for safety and facilities, reviewed design plans for a “reimagined” Kogan Plaza with a new student center and renovated library, an ambulatory care center near Ross Hall and additional space for health- and wellness-related activities near Potomac Square. University President Thomas LeBlanc said although administrators have not signed off on the concepts, they will likely need to approve the designs by the end of 2022 if they wish to implement them before GW’s developmental rights expire.

Under the 2007 Foggy Bottom Campus Plan that the University negotiated with the District, city officials granted GW the right to develop about 3.5 million square feet in real estate on the Foggy Bottom Campus. The plan, which expires in 2027, stipulates that the University must

build or receive approval to construct at least 70 percent of the square feet to retain the rights to continue development projects on the entire plot of real estate.

LeBlanc said the creation of a new ambulatory care facility across the street from the GW Hospital is the most developed idea among the designs, and its initial concepts include a “sky bridge” that connects the facility to the hospital. He said the current Medical Faculty Associates Ambulatory Care Center is “wholly inadequate” for the practice of modern medicine. The conceptual designs also outline the closure of H Street from traffic across from Kogan Plaza to clear space for pedestrian activity and events on campus.

The plans feature a potential renovation to Gelman Library and a new research and innovation building on the site, where the Nashman Center building was previously located until its demolition two weeks ago. Officials would construct new bridges and redesign pathways to the more elevated hills on the Mount Vernon Campus to enhance accessibility to people with physical disabilities under the proposed designs.

## Students report lack of hot water, low water pressure in two residence halls

**ACACIA NIYOGI**  
REPORTER

**TYLER KRAMBEER**  
REPORTER

Water-related issues in Shenkman and Amsterdam halls have caused students to use cold water for showers and dish-washing this month.

In a survey posted in a GroupMe chat for Shenkman Hall residents Tuesday, more than 50 students said they were living without hot water as part of widespread reports of hot water shut-offs, cloudy streams of water and low sink and shower pressure this fall. Baxter Goodly, the associate vice president for facilities planning, construction and

management, said students have filed nearly 50 FixIt tickets for water issues since Sept. 2.

The utility problems, which have plagued campus buildings in previous years, are the latest facilities issue that students have reported in a semester that has consisted of damages like mold outbreaks and water leaks across campus.

Goodly said Shenkman Hall residents have filed nearly 40 requests for water issues and Amsterdam Hall residents have filed 10 since returning to campus this fall. He said there are no widespread water issues in any residence hall, but officials have responded to individual cases where hot water generators have gone off-line, decreasing hot water availability in the building.

“Once the equipment was reset, domestic hot water temperatures were again stabilized,” he said in an email. “More often, calls for lack of hot water are local, in room issues where shower cartridges have failed. In these instances, replacement of the cartridge reestablished normal hot water temperatures.”

Goodly said officials are in the process of installing a new water control system in Shenkman within the next month, which would allow officials to monitor and troubleshoot water issues more quickly.

He said water shutoffs in Amsterdam Hall have been “largely unrelated” to operational issues but are instead scheduled shutoffs to perform maintenance, like fulfilling an Americans with Disabilities Act

request for an accessible shower and installing new laundry equipment. Goodly referred concerns about cloudy water to D.C.’s water quality website, which states oxygen bubbles in pipes are often responsible for cloudy water that comes out of faucets.

“Hot water can sometimes be cloudy due to dissolved gases in the water escaping as the water is heated,” the website states. “Cloudiness and air bubbles should naturally disappear in a few minutes.”

Gabriel Young, a junior living in Amsterdam Hall and a Student Association senator, said he’s faced hot water issues in his room since first moving in this summer.

“They said, ‘Oh, you just have to deal with it. You just have to

wait because people are gone from the building,’” Young said. “But even when everyone moved in, the shower still wouldn’t heat up fast enough.”

Young said officials replaced his faucet as a means to solve the issue after he filed two more FixIt reports, but he still has to wait five to 10 minutes for shower water to heat up.

“I just wish GW or even FixIt or the community coordinators would communicate the reasons for the water outages,” he said. “I would love to see them taking accountability for what’s been going on. I would also love to see FixIt communicate better as to when and why they need to fix things the way that they do.”

See **RESIDENTS** Page 5

# News

Oct. 18, 2021 • Page 2

## THIS WEEK'S EVENTS

### FLAVORS OF MIDDLE EASTERN FOOD AND FAMILIES IN ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Oct. 19 • 5 p.m. EDT • Free  
Tune into a discussion on how Middle Eastern families in the DMV area reflect their food and culture in family-owned businesses.

### ANTI-GENDER POLITICS IN THE POPULIST MOVEMENT

Oct. 20 • 11 a.m. EDT • Free  
Join the Institute for European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies for a book talk on ultraconservative anti-gender movements and feminist mass organizations.

## THIS WEEK IN HISTORY

Oct. 18, 1990

The University begins complying with a new District law to distribute recycling containers around campus for glass, aluminum and paper, The Hatchet reported.



FILE PHOTO BY LILLIAN BAUTISTA

Officials said they have been working since late last year to transition the files to a new platform.

## Geography department unable to access data as officials transfer files

ISHA TRIVEDI  
NEWS EDITOR

NICHOLAS PASION  
STAFF WRITER

Researchers in the geography department said they've been unable to access their research data for more than a month as officials have been working to transition the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences' online file storage system to an updated platform.

Officials said they've been working to transfer files from the previous, outdated system to the new storage platform since late last year but have found that two volumes of research data that the department uses have "possible data corruption," blocking access until their transfer. Department members said the technical difficulties have delayed federally funded research, coming at the cost of taxpayer dollars and limited graduate students' efforts to apply to higher degree programs.

"We understand the importance of these files to our faculty and the impact to their profession as well as the University and are genuinely exploring all of our options to restore as much as possible," Interim Chief Technology Officer Jared Johnson said in an email.

Johnson said the CCAS file storage system, the CCAS cloud, is "at the end of life" after eight years, and officials have been working since late last year to transition the files to a new platform by December. He said faculty reported that they couldn't access the data in August, though the data had not been corrupted and was not missing.

"We worked with the vendor to troubleshoot and perform system updates, but there was no improvement in performance," he said.

Johnson said IT staff worked during mid-September to migrate all faculty and departmental data to a "new storage solution," with the exception of 80 research volumes that were too big to migrate using the same procedure. Since then, Johnson said IT staff "successfully migrated" 78 of the 80 research volumes in early October to a new storage unit and restored full access to that data.

"We did not include these volumes in the larger migration due to this finding," he said. "Issues within these two volumes are likely what has been causing the performance issues for the entire system."

Johnson said the two remaining volumes had "possible data corruption," and IT staff met with faculty members who rely on the two volumes of data to understand how to prioritize their efforts to restore the data volumes. He said 18 people have access to the two remaining volumes.

The Columbian College Cloud is currently housed inside the University's Division of IT inside the Foggy Bottom Data Center.

Nikolay Shiklomanov, an associate professor of geography and international affairs, said he hasn't been able to access his research data and course syllabi stored on his research drive in the Columbian Cloud since late August.

"On our side, everything has collapsed, starting late August," he said.

Shiklomanov said the incident has forced faculty and graduate students in the

department to call the safety and reliability of the cloud into question, given how the drive has been inaccessible in recent weeks.

Michael Mann, an assistant professor of geography, said faculty in the geography department were informed of the possible data corruption, which he says "should be impossible" given that the University stores data in two different locations, Foggy Bottom and Virginia Science and Technology Campus data centers.

Mann said as of Thursday night, IT staff have restored some of their files, but because the files were lost at random, some faculty and students were disproportionately affected by the inaccessible data. He added that this semester's technical difficulties have cost the geography department "weeks if not months" worth of time.

"I personally have lost confidence in our cloud infrastructure and plan to migrate my data to a more secure platform," Mann said. "I hope other faculty are at least aware of the risks they face and plan to keep their own backups for their most important work."

Sonia Clemens, a second-year graduate student in the geography department, said she had to pause her research on permafrost thaw damage in countries near the Arctic Circle for more than a month since the semester began. She said she had to "remake" an entirely new database since she couldn't access the data she spent the spring semester compiling for her thesis on the geography of Antarctica.

"The work that I spent six months doing, I then had to do in two weeks," she said.

## Students express frustration with inconsistent, delayed Vex schedule

VARSHA RAMMOHAN  
REPORTER

Delays in the Mount Vernon Express shuttle schedule are causing students living on the Mount Vernon Campus to be late to class and work on the Foggy Bottom Campus.

In interviews, more than 20 students said the Vex's unpredictable schedule has caused them to add up to an hour to their commute schedule to account for delays. Officials attributed the long wait times to external vendor and driver shortages and said they are working with a ride share service to provide vouchers to students impacted by the delays.

Destiny Jackson, the director of transportation and logistics, said wait times for the Vex this semester are inconsistent and vary daily. She said officials are currently finalizing an agreement with a ride share service to provide vouchers to students who are impacted by the delays.

She said wait times were generally consistent prior to the pandemic, attributing this semester's delays to an external vendor and driver shortages. The University previously operated eight to 11 shuttles on a regular basis, but the number now varies due to vendor inconsistencies, she said.

"We believe that new leadership within the vendor's organization and driver shortages have caused the delays to shuttle consistency," Jackson said.

Sarth Khani, a freshman majoring in finance, said he takes the Vex about six times a day and has to get to the Vex at least 20 minutes before his next class to ensure that he will be on

time. He said he has been met with a long line when he arrives at the pickup location in front of Somers Hall each morning.

"I feel like I'm always late to class in the morning unless I get to the stop an hour before my class starts," he said. "You really need to plan ahead a lot more than you think because you just never know if it's going to be there when you leave your dorm."

Freshman Timothy Quintero said while he tries to give himself more than 15 minutes to wait for the Vex, he is often still late to class. He said wait times have improved slightly since September, but he still builds in expected wait times to adjust for delays.

"Now I can just kind of adjust my plans based on what's going on with the Vex, so I just kind of deal with it," he said.

He said a five minute Vex schedule would prevent him from being late to class and added that he hopes the University will increase communication with students about delays to the Vex and a rationale.

"I think if there are delays, GW should communicate more," he said. "It was very clear in the beginning that it was not running on the schedule, but every kid living here just had to accept that and deal with it. Some recognition that they are short staffed or Vex had broken down a couple times would really help."

Thanh Tran, a freshman who has not decided her major, said while all of her classes are on the Mount Vernon Campus, she takes the Vex about four times a week to get to her job on campus in Foggy Bottom.

She said she is often late to her job because the Vex is not at her pickup stop or does not leave on time.

Tran said it is especially unreliable on weekends, which makes it "stressful" on her schedule as she works in Foggy Bottom on the weekends.

"I always get to the Vex stop on the Vern around a half hour before my shift starts, but I'm usually always late because there's no bus waiting or it didn't leave on time," she said.

She said she also does not know when she will be returning home at night to the Mount Vernon campus because of inconsistencies in the Vex shuttle departure times. She works late at night and unreliable Vex schedules pose a safety issue, she said.

"One time, I was out at Foggy at around 1 a.m. and the Vex only ended up coming at 2 a.m.," she said.

"I think situations like that are really bad since it's dark out, and I almost Ubered home since that was the only option remaining."

She said Vex drivers will sometimes skip the stop near the Elliott School of International Affairs, which is near her place of work, adding even more travel time to her commute.

"It's frustrating since my work is right by Elliott, so walking from Tompkins, especially when I'm already late, is really inconvenient," she said.

Freshman Quinn Stefan said she has to plan "buffer room" in her schedule to account for delayed times in the Vex schedule. She said she leaves her classes and immediately goes to the Vex because she does not want to risk missing the shuttle and having to wait until the next one arrives.



SKYLAR EPSTEIN | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Officials said they are currently finalizing an agreement with a ride share service to provide vouchers to students impacted by Vex delays.

## GW's decision to split third round of stimulus in line with peers: experts

DANIEL PATRICK GALGANO  
STAFF WRITER

Experts in higher education administration said GW's decision to split the third federal stimulus package between students and institutional costs is in line with other colleges and universities.

Officials said earlier this month they will allocate \$12.5 million from GW's funding allocation under the American Rescue Plan for students who have faced financial hardship during the COVID-19 pandemic, while the remaining \$12.4 million will help offset institutional costs, like lost revenue from fewer housing payments during remote learning last year. Experts said uncertainty over how campuses would operate during the fall semester delayed universities' decisions on how and when they would allocate stimulus money.

GW's plan to allocate the funding comes five months after the U.S. Department of Education announced that the University would receive about \$25 million. The legislation required schools to spend at least half of the money on student-based grants.

President Joe Biden signed the \$1.9 trillion stimulus package into law in March, which provided the financial support to GW through

a third round of funding to the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund.

GW spent all of the \$9.1 million distributed under the CARES Act – which then-President Donald Trump signed into law last March – on student aid initiatives last May. Officials split the second round of stimulus between institutional costs and student aid last December under the Coronavirus Response and Relief Supplemental Appropriations Act.

Of GW's 12 peer schools, 11 have indicated they will split the third round of government stimulus evenly between institutional costs and student aid grants, with one yet to make a public announcement. Of those 11 schools, 10 are still in the process of distributing those stimulus funds, and some are still distributing aid from the second round of stimulus.

Experts said the stimulus funding would help officials cover unexpected expenses they encountered throughout the pandemic, given the loss of housing revenue and additional costs involved with teaching online.

Anthony Bieda – the former executive director of the Kentucky Association of Career Colleges and Schools, an organization that represents schools in Kentucky – said he



FILE PHOTO BY SOPHIA YOUNG | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

GW directed all of its stimulus funding from the CARES Act to student aid last May before splitting the second round's stimulus funds between student grants and institutional costs.

was "not surprised" that GW decided to split the government stimulus evenly instead of directing it all to

students. He said officials needed to allocate funding for institutional costs because of the University's

loss of revenue during the pandemic and the logistical costs involved with returning to campus.

# GW's solar panels lowered carbon emissions, saved thousands in energy costs

**ASHLEY KHOO**  
REPORTER

**MICHELLE VASSILEV**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

GW has prevented 90 passenger vehicles worth of yearly carbon dioxide emissions from being released into the atmosphere after installing solar panels on five campus rooftops last May.

Officials said the University has stopped 450 metric tons of carbon dioxide from entering Earth's atmosphere and saved more than \$50,000 since officials installed solar panels on the rooftops of six University buildings last May. Sustainability experts said the amount of carbon emissions the University has reduced is small compared to the amount of carbon released yearly, but installing solar panels is a critical first step to lowering GW's carbon footprint.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said the solar panels – which were constructed on top of the Smith Center, Lisner Auditorium, the School of Media and Public Affairs and Monroe, Fonger and Duques halls – are increasing solar electricity across the District and that the University is using the rooftop installations to their “maximum potential.”

“The University does its best with the space it has,” Nosal said in an email. “Consistent with GW's carbon neutrality target and its commitment to developing, piloting and demonstrating models for urban sustainability, GW pursued solar photovoltaic panels on multiple rooftops to increase renewable

energy on campus and provide an opportunity for innovation.”

Nosal said officials will install a rooftop solar system on Thurston Hall once the University finishes its current renovation of the residence hall by fall 2022.

Nosal said New Columbia Star, a solar energy company based in the District, owns the panel system on the University's rooftops. The D.C. Department of Energy and Environment helped fund the installation after making \$8 million available to install new solar capacity on commercial buildings and non-residential surface spaces in the District in 2017.

Nosal said the partnership with New Columbia Star builds on the University's 2015 Capital Partners Solar Project – a collaboration with Duke Energy Renewables, a renewable energy company based in North Carolina. She said the University will receive half its electricity from solar panels in three farms in North Carolina as part of its work with New Columbia Star.

The Board of Trustees voted in June 2020 to move up GW's timeline to become carbon neutral to 2030, 10 years earlier than the original deadline, and aspires to cancel out all greenhouse gas emissions the University has produced since its founding in 1821.

American University installed more than 2,150 solar panels on six campus buildings in 2011, and Georgetown University has a solar array of six row houses with carbon benefits equivalent to removing 44 cars off the road a year.

Nosal said Foggy Bottom's urban setting limits the amount of space for the University to install



DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said the urban setting of Foggy Bottom limits the space GW has to install solar panels.

“extensive solar arrays” on its campus, but GW will continue to expand its focus on renewable energy.

Sustainability experts said the University's rooftop installation is a critical first step in eliminating carbon dioxide from entering the atmosphere. The United States emitted 4.57 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide last year.

Scott Sklar, the sustainable energy director at GW's Environmental Energy and Management Insti-

tute, said the University should be “very proud of” installing solar panels as an economic choice.

He said the 450 metric tons of carbon dioxide that the University prevented from entering the atmosphere is equivalent to eliminating 100,000 miles of driving per year.

Sklar said administrators should provide professors with real-time data about GW's energy consumption, so faculty can share that information with students in urban studies and engineer-

ing classes. He said the University should also post signs along the streets on campus to promote its solar panel installations so students and professors are aware of GW's energy and financial savings.

Harvey Bryan, the former director of the Solar Energy Engineering Program at Arizona State University, said the 450 tons of carbon dioxide the University saved is “not that large” of a number compared to the millions of tons of carbon dioxide that are in the atmosphere.



FILE PHOTO BY PHEBE GROSSER | STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

The updated policy allows students to inform their professors of a religious holiday absence up to three weeks before the holiday rather than at the start of the semester.

## Updated religious holiday policy missing from hundreds of syllabuses

**CAROLINE ETGEN**  
REPORTER

**YANKUN ZHAO**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Despite an updated religious holiday policy that provides students greater accommodations in their classes, a majority of posted syllabuses have yet to reflect the changes.

Only about 20 percent of the syllabuses on Blackboard – 69 out of 353 documents – have updated their religious policy sections with the new changes while more than 216 syllabuses – 61 percent – still include the outdated policy. Officials said the policy, which went into effect starting this semester, recognizes more holidays and faiths and allows students to notify their faculty up to three weeks before the date of their religious observance instead of at the start of the semester.

The Faculty Senate passed a resolution proposing this policy last fall following pressure from the Student Association and students of faith for greater inclusivity and flexibility. The updated policy recognizes 30 additional holidays from 11 religions, like Jainism, the Bahá'í Faith and Ethiopian Orthodox Christianity, and increases flexibility for exam scheduling on holidays – the old policy recognized only six religions.

University spokesperson Crystal Nosal said interim Provost Chris Bracey instructed deans and associate deans in early August to forward the new religious holiday policy and the updated 2021-22 academic calendar to department chairs. She said students concerned about faculty adherence to the new policy or the

academic calendar should first raise the issue at the “departmental level.”

“The policy and calendar were distributed in August to ensure that faculty had time to plan their courses accordingly,” she said in an email. “By all indications, the policy and calendar, which reflect faculty and student input, have been well-received.”

Nosal declined to say how officials are keeping track of faculty who have updated their syllabuses with the new policy and how they're ensuring all students know about the changes.

The University's fall 2021 syllabuses bank posted on Blackboard shows that 19.5 percent of the syllabuses have the updated religious holiday policy, 61.2 percent continue to include the old policy and 19.3 percent lack any section about religious holidays and exemptions.

Zachary Nosanchuk, the Student Association's chief of staff, said while passing the policy is great “in the books,” many professors have yet to inform their students of the changes to religious holiday accommodations because they have not updated their syllabus. He said the new policy is a “big win” for students at the University because the changes assure more students of faith that they matter at GW.

“It's not them being ignorant or malicious, it's really just the lack of knowledge and lack of information that this is a new policy change, and it's an exciting one and it affects a lot of students,” he said.

He said he heard from some students this fall who emailed professors during the first week of

classes in accordance with the older requirement because they were unaware of the change. Nosanchuk said SA leaders have “brainstormed” ideas like asking Bracey, the interim provost, to send an email about the expanded accommodations and hosting a workshop encouraging professors to change their syllabuses to make the policy more well known. He said they have also considered posting a document to Blackboard with all the University policies that faculty should include in their syllabuses, like religious holidays and Disability Support Services, so they can share updates more easily and frequently.

Julia Kerrigan, the SA's assistant secretary for interfaith engagement and a member of GW's Interfaith Council, said she helped complete the new policy and religious holiday calendar. She said she's been “trying to get the word out” about the increased accommodations.

“The religious holiday calendar is posted on the provost's office, but I don't think it's very widely circulated and that is a goal of mine, to see it more widely circulated,” Kerrigan said.

She said while the new policy is more “accepting,” she said the extent to which students of faith have fully utilized the updated policy because faculty is unclear.

Rabbi Levi Shemtov, the founding director of Chabad GW, said the old policy mandating students to notify professors of their religious holiday observances during the first week of class was problematic, especially for new students who might not know the requirements because they just arrived

## Engineering professor to program satellite for detecting ice on Mars

**ETHAN FOX**  
REPORTER

**ISHANI CHETTRI**  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

**MICHELLE VASSILEV**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

An engineering professor is programming a satellite that will orbit Mars in search of ice underneath the planet's surface.

Roger Lang, a professor of electrical and computer engineering, said he received a \$100,000 grant from NASA earlier this month to devise a mathematical model that will program a satellite to orbit Mars and find ice under the planet's dust-like surface. Lang said if humans can discover water ice – ice made from vapor mixed with dust beneath Mars' surface – its presence can indicate whether humans on Earth have the potential to settle on Mars.

“If they could locate water, then they could do two things,” Lang said. “They could have water to drink and to grow plants and other things like that, and they could make oxygen to breathe from water, so water is an important resource for any colonization of Mars.”

Lang said he hopes to inform NASA scientists how deep the satellite can detect ice within the Martian layer before they launch the satellite in 2028. NASA developed a “treasure map” locating potential areas that could contain water ice and serve as human landing sites.

Researchers from two universities reported in August that ice on Mars melted a few centimeters below the surface and could potentially support microscopic life, according to EarthSky, a daily radio series that discusses science and nature.

Lang said the research project is an international

effort, including Canadian scientists who will build the satellite and NASA officials who will pay for the satellite's launch.

“Various teams around the world are working on these problems,” Lang said. “They're complicated problems, and so we like to come up with some design parameters for the radar, which have a good ability to see the ice.”

He said his team is currently using MATLAB, a digital programming platform engineers use to develop algorithms, to create the model that tests different electromagnetic wave frequencies and observe which levels can penetrate the Martian soil. He said if the electromagnetic waves bounce off the surface of Mars, that means the satellite has detected water ice.

Lang said the team will also consider the satellite's different-sized antennas, which will emit the electromagnetic waves, in their calculations for the model. He said the antenna will be too close to the surface of Mars if it is too long, causing waves to collide with each other and skewing the data on the location of ice.

“If you get them too close, one pulse comes out, bounces around and comes back, and then the other pulse follows it,” he said. “If it comes back too early, it may interfere with the first pulses' returns.”

Lang said his team will also analyze how rocks within the ice can scatter the signal from the satellite. He said researchers will spend the next six years testing all the different satellite and antenna designs.

“It takes a long time to do all of these designs and get all the finances and everything,” he said. “Then, the satellite has to be built which takes several years to test it and takes a long time to get to Mars, so these projects span generations.”

Jiaying Yang, a third-year doctoral student in electrical engineering, said he is helping Lang create computer programs to compile the data on the different types of surfaces on Mars. Yang said previous research about Mars assumes similar roughness across the planet's surface, but Lang's work will consider the varying levels of topography on the surface, potentially including rocks, pores and ice.

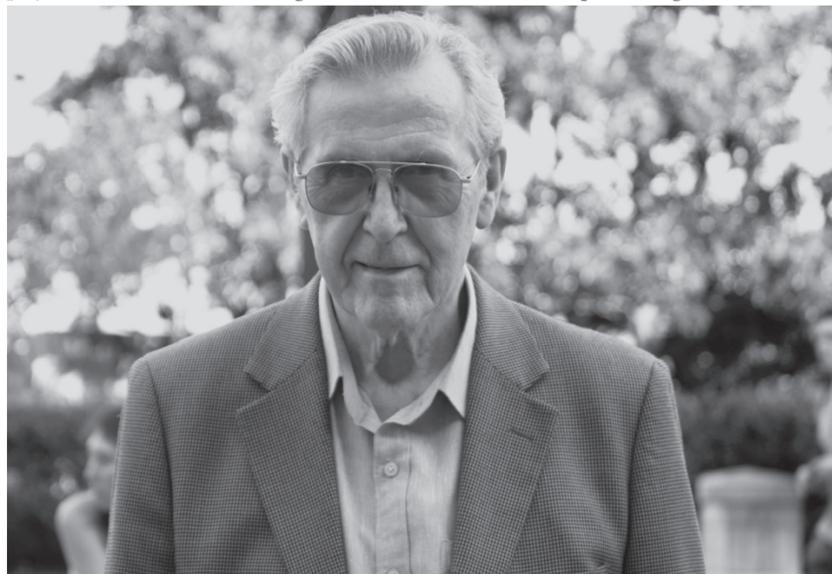
He said if the team can find a method to discover ice deposits on Mars, researchers can then dig them out and learn more about the planet's resources.

Experts in aerospace engineering said the inconsistent terrain on Mars' surface could cause some difficulty in building a model to detect the ice but could help advance scientists' understanding of the planet.

Ahmad Hoorfar, a professor of electrical and computer engineering at Villanova University, said Lang's model accounts for the variability of Mars' surface, with some areas dustier or rockier than others. He said the electromagnetic waves will first bounce off the top surface and then penetrate beneath the surface before detecting and bouncing off the water ice.

“You don't know exactly the composition of the material,” Hoorfar said. “It could be a really rough surface, so that would be difficult to do.”

Nilton Renno, a professor of space sciences and engineering at the University of Michigan, said Lang's research will help improve radar technology that can detect where brines, areas of water with high concentrations of salt, lie underneath the Martian soil. He said the research is “very timely” because detailed models of the Martian surface are essential for researchers to interpret the measurements that ground-penetrating radars collect.



ABIGAIL DALEY | PHOTOGRAPHER

Lang said the researchers will need to carefully examine the size of the satellite's antennas to prevent electromagnetic waves from colliding with each other, skewing the data.



RACHEL SCHWARTZ | PHOTOGRAPHER

WRGW currently produces one podcast, which is focused on athletics, but plans to introduce three more this semester.

## Students turn to podcasts to share campus information

HENRY HUVOS  
REPORTER

SAMANTHA SERAFIN  
STAFF WRITER

With the GW community back on campus, students have turned to podcasts to create personal relationships with students.

Students who have launched their own podcasts since the start of the pandemic said podcasts have served as a medium to allow them to highlight campus communities and discuss local and global current events through interviews with students and officials. Those involved in student organizations' podcasts said the shows have built a base of listeners to deliver information, forging unique relationships with student listeners across campus.

Here are some of the podcasts that students have launched on campus:

### Capital Peers Podcast

Senior Carrie Kowalyk, the producer for the Capital Peers Podcast, said members of Capital Peers, a student-run group in the Division of Student Affairs that promotes leading healthy lifestyles, began producing podcasts last May. The podcast is posted on the Office of Student Life's Vimeo, featuring students and officials and promoting wellness on campus – discussing topics like social well-being and helping distressed students on campus.

Kowalyk said Capital Peers turned to podcasts to communicate with students more effectively during the pandemic as they allowed

for in-depth, personal conversations, unlike other forms of social media like Instagram.

Kowalyk said limited funding from the University has kept the group from streaming podcasts on platforms like Apple Music or Spotify. She said posting the podcast on Vimeo acts as a "big barrier" because students have to check Capitol Peers' Instagram to find the Vimeo link, but each podcast episode still gets about 50 views.

"It's a bit harder to work with finances and get those things approved," she said. "So that's our next goal. But we do see views on Vimeo, and we get a decent amount when we share them on social media."

### Long Time No See

Senior Michael Kohler – the editor in chief of MediaFile, a student-run media news website at GW – launched his current events podcast, "Long Time, No See," on MediaFile in 2019. He said MediaFile's podcasts are posted on Spotify and include interviews with students and experts in various fields from around the country to discuss stories that aren't widely covered in the mainstream media, like the 2019 Hong Kong protests and D.C.'s opioid crisis.

Kohler said he enjoys podcasts because they publish personal, emotional discussions that cannot be conveyed properly in a written format.

"The whole point of this show is to basically have you scroll through your Spotify feed and see like, 'Oh, yeah, I haven't heard of that in a while. What's going on with that?'" Kohler said.

### WRGW Podcasts: Buff and Blue Revue

Senior Scott Rosenberg – the head of the podcast department at WRGW, which started recording podcasts in 2018 – said the organization currently has one podcast called "The Buff and Blue Revue."

He said the podcast is co-hosted by David Korn and Nick Porr, and discusses GW Athletics, featuring an interview with athletes on campus and a Colonial of the Week, who the athletic department names as an outstanding performer.

Rosenberg said WRGW plans to announce three more podcasts for the fall semester, and the podcast department has seen expansion in its number of listeners and the number of students interested in producing podcasts.

"It just allows us to be more creative with these things and hopefully brings in a bigger audience because people like to see things that are different," Rosenberg said.

Senior Katy Ronkin, the general manager of WRGW, said podcasts are a "huge outlet for creativity" when compared to other forms of communication with students like social media. She said the station releases the "Buff and Blue Revue" podcast every Sunday on Spotify.

Ronkin said the members of WRGW's podcast department are seeking to create an outlet for any students who want to either launch their own podcast or work on an existing show.

"I think the goal is that we just want to make it like an institution at WRGW and something that people know that if they have an idea for a podcast, we want to work with you and we want to make it happen," Ronkin said.

## Faculty hired during virtual year adjusting to in-person teaching

IANNE SALVOSA  
REPORTER

ISHANI CHETTRI  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS  
EDITOR

Two months after the GW community returned to campus, faculty who were hired during the virtual academic year said they are still adjusting to teaching in-person classes at GW for the first time.

At least 10 professors who joined the University during the COVID-19 pandemic said despite being in the midst of their second year at GW, they consider themselves "new" to campus life and are interacting with many of their students and colleagues in person for the first time. Faculty said they had to redesign their courses for in-person learning after last year's virtual instruction on top of ongoing concerns about contracting the coronavirus.

Eric Schluessel, an assistant professor of history and international affairs who started teaching at GW last fall, said transitioning back to in-person instruction has been "stressful." He said teaching in person has been "anxiety-inducing" because everyone is still learning to adjust back to post-pandemic life without the virtual element of teaching classes through a screen.

"It's strange, even moving around the halls again, being inside, going from class to class," Schluessel said. "We're all just getting used to being outside again, that is outside in the world."

He said he prefers teaching in person after

connecting with and motivating students became "inefficient" during online instruction. He said while he no longer has to wake up at 6:30 a.m. to teach an online class from Los Angeles like he did last year, he and his students feel worn out being back on campus even though their workload hasn't increased.

"Maybe I just got used to spending a lot more time online and on email during the pandemic," Schluessel said. "And maybe I just can't stop, but I'm tired. I know my students are tired."

Mackenzie Fama, an assistant professor in the department of speech, language and hearing sciences who joined GW faculty last fall, said she felt some "hesitancy" stepping onto campus this fall because of the uncertainty of the pandemic earlier this year. She said she attended faculty meetings within her department before classes started to familiarize herself with campus and acclimate to in-person interactions again after more than a year of virtual learning.

"I don't feel really like I'm still adjusting as a teacher but just as a person in the world with COVID," Fama said. "I am adjusting to being back on campus."

She said teaching remotely as her first experience at GW was "limiting" because she wasn't able to connect with students and developed new strategies for student engagement online. She said she's struggled to decide whether to attend University and faculty events for new professors because

she has to limit potential coronavirus exposure for her baby at home.

"If COVID wasn't a thing, and it was just about building networks in the University and getting to know people, then I might make decisions a little differently," Fama said.

Jay Daigle, a teaching assistant professor of mathematics, said students in his Calculus 1 course this semester are staying more engaged than they were during virtual instruction. He said he struggled to receive feedback from students in the same course last fall because most had their cameras off and barely responded in the Zoom chat.

He said he can spend less energy teaching class and dedicate more time to examples and answering questions, making in-person learning more effective.

"It's just been a dramatic improvement from having to lecture mostly to like a blank screen and just try to generate the energy for the class all by myself," he said.

Daigle said the typical energy from his students, which was missing during virtual learning, returned when they refilled the physical classroom. He said his students' visible excitement toward learning new class material in person makes a "huge" difference because he can find which parts of the class are confusing through students' questions and feedback.

"Teaching virtually was a necessity for a while, it was not pleasant and I hope I never have to do it again," he said.



GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR

Jay Daigle, a teaching assistant professor of mathematics, said he struggled to obtain feedback on his class in last fall's virtual setting.

## ANC explained: your most local form of government

ZACHARY BLACKBURN  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Eight Advisory Neighborhood Commissioners will gather this week to discuss homelessness, Metro stops and other policies that affect daily life in Foggy Bottom – but what exactly is an ANC?

The Foggy Bottom and West End Advisory Neighborhood Commission, known as ANC 2A, is one of 40 ANCs across the District that oversee the needs of their constituents at a neighborhood level. A total of eight commissioners in 2A serve single member districts encompassing a handful of city blocks, spanning a group of constituents from students living in residence halls on campus to President Joe Biden in the White House.

You've probably noticed changes on campus that went through the ANC – the Nashman Center's demolition last week, Thurston Hall's renovation and the construction of the GW Hospital's helipad all share the common thread of receiving input from the ANC.

But if you've never heard of the ANC, we've compiled everything you need to know about Foggy Bottom's hyperlocal governing body:

### What's an ANC?

ANCs serve advisory bodies to D.C. agencies on issues affecting neighborhoods, like traffic problems and liquor licenses. District agencies are required to

give ANC recommendations "great weight" when making decisions on local policy and are required to notify ANCs of programs that will affect the neighborhood.

Five ANC commissioners represent students living on campus – Commissioner and alum Yannik Omictin represents an area of campus that includes 1959 E St., Thurston and Mitchell halls, Commissioner Evelyn Hudson represents Shenkman and Amsterdam halls, Commissioner Jeri Epstein represents One Washington Circle Hotel and The Aston and Commissioner Adam Friend represents Townhouse Row, International House and Fulbright, JBKO, Munson and Madison halls.

The fourth commissioner is a student, junior Margaret McDonald, who represents a district solely encompassing on-campus constituents, known as 2A08. She represents The Dakota, District and Potomac houses, South, Strong, Guthridge, FSK and Lafayette halls, Building JJ, 2109 F St. and the small townhouses.

Adam Friend, a commissioner whose single member district includes JBKO and Fulbright halls, said ANC commissioners are the most local representation for residents and are necessary to advise larger D.C. agencies on what is happening in small neighborhoods.

"Our job in the ANC is to be the neighborhood's voice in advising the District government," Friend said. "Now, the word advisory is

very important in that we advise them – they could refuse our advice."

The District's website states that the city's ANCs range in size from two to 12 commissioners, and a total of 296 elected representatives – all unpaid and nonpartisan – serve in the District, with each single member district containing about 2,000 people.

Foggy Bottom's 2A08 seat, currently held by McDonald, sat empty for about six months earlier this year, leaving 10 residence halls without representation. Junior Margaret McDonald filled the seat in May, becoming one of the youngest elected officials in the District.

### Powers they have

Commissioner Trupti Patel – whose district includes much of the Foggy Bottom historic district, bounded by New Hampshire Avenue, K Street and Interstate 66-I – said her primary responsibility as a commissioner is to serve as an advisor to D.C. Council members, specifically Ward 2 Council member Brooke Pinto, and present constituents' issues to District officials.

"We make sure to amplify, elevate and escalate problems in the immediate SMD that we see, such as broken sidewalks, areas not being well lit," she said. "We use the concept of our 'great weight' to inform members of the Council what we think of legislative items that they're putting up to



FILE PHOTO BY DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

This week, commissioners will hear about a potential second entrance to the Foggy Bottom Metro station and details about GW's new dining plan.

vote on."

Commissioners have a say on many issues throughout the neighborhood – the ANC approved an agreement permitting the construction of a helipad on top of the GW Hospital and the University's application to house students in the One Washington Circle Hotel during renovations to Thurston Hall.

The ANC also has some power to directly help citizens in Foggy Bottom – they distributed \$12,000 in humanitarian grants to non-profit organizations in Foggy Bottom earlier this year, targeted to residents who have struggled financially during the pandemic.

### What's on the horizon

The Foggy Bottom and West End ANC's October meeting, which will be held Wednesday, will feature an update from Rep. Eleanor Holmes Norton, D-D.C., according to the meeting's agenda. GW officials will also present details about the University's new dining system, and Washington Metropolitan Area Transit Authority officials will update commissioners on a potential plan to build a second entrance to the Foggy Bottom Metrorail station.

The agenda states the ANC will consider several resolutions at the meeting, including recommendations regarding the District's en-

campment pilot program that's set to evict the E Street encampment near campus and a sexual harassment data collection bill the D.C. Council is considering.

The ANC has also been in ongoing dialogue with Flixbus to install a bus stop near campus that could transport students to New York City or Richmond, Virginia.

Patel said commissioners heavily rely on engagement from their constituents to learn the issues to address in their district. She said more students should get involved in local government, and students' voices will not be heard unless they advocate for themselves whenever possible.

## CRIME LOG

### LIQUOR LAW VIOLATION

Shenkman Hall  
10/10/2021 – 1:50 a.m.  
Closed Case  
GW Police Department officers responded to a report of an intoxicated female student. EMeRG paramedics responded to the scene, conducted a medical evaluation of the student and transported her to the emergency room for further treatment.  
**Referred to Division for Student Affairs.**

### STALKING, THREATS TO DO BODILY HARM, THREATENING PHONE CALLS

Off Campus  
Multiple – Multiple  
Open Case  
A male staff member reported he was the victim of stalking by a former male GW employee. The staff member reported receiving multiple threatening phone calls from the subject in reference to his termination.  
**Case open.**

### THEFT I/FROM BUILDING

Academic Center  
10/11/2021 – 3:05 p.m.  
Open Case  
A student reported her purse stolen after leaving it unattended in the hallway. The stolen bag was a black leather purse with a shoulder strap, which contained an iPad, MacBook Pro and wallet with debit cards and cash.  
**Case open.**

### THEFT II/FROM BUILDING

Mitchell Hall (7-Eleven)  
10/14/2021 – 12:08 a.m.  
Open Case  
GWPD officers responded to a report of a theft. Officers made contact with a female store employee who stated that a previously-barred male subject had entered the store and stolen consumable goods. Officers canvassed the area but were unable to locate the subject.  
**Case open.**

### PUBLIC DRUNKENNESS

Public Property on Campus (2200 Block of I Street NW)  
10/14/2021 – 11:37 p.m.  
Closed Case  
GWPD officers responded to a report of an intoxicated male student who was unconscious and breathing in an Uber. EMeRG paramedics responded to the scene. After medical evaluation, the student was taken to the GW Hospital emergency room.  
**Referred to DSA.**

—Compiled by Carly Neilson



DANIELLE TOWERS | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

The panel included the former deputy secretary general of NATO, two former ambassadors and other federal officials.

## Experts in U.S. nuclear policy talk arms control, disarmament

AIDAN TURLEY  
REPORTER

The Institute for International Science and Technology Policy hosted a virtual discussion on the current and future state of the U.S. arms control agenda Tuesday.

Former federal officials with experience in American nuclear policy debated the need for the reinstatement of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency – an independent government agency dedicated to arms control, disarmament, and nonproliferation – during the discussion. Sharon Squassoni, a research professor at the Elliott School of International Affairs, moderated the event.

Ambassador James Goodby, a fellow at Stanford University's Hoover Institution, said while ACDA, which existed from 1961 to 1999, had a negative role in the arms control agenda, creating an organization dedicated to

arms control-based research could be a better solution. He said he led the group that designed ACDA's integration into the State Department during the administration of former President Bill Clinton.

He said the group argued the agency would help the State Department acquire a team of technical experts that could deal with arms control. Goodby said he is unsure if a specific team focused solely on arms control agenda ever surfaced at the State Department, but a re-creation of one could still be a possibility in the current political environment.

David Koplow, a law professor at Georgetown University and the former deputy general counsel for international affairs at the Department of Defense, said the U.S. government should create a new agency dedicated to arms control, like ACDA, because it could re-emphasize the country's ongoing inter-

est in the cause. Koplow said ACDA successfully promoted the arms control perspective, ensuring its influence of national events.

Ambassador Robert Gallucci, a professor of the practice of diplomacy at Georgetown's School of Foreign Service, said he supports the return of an arms control agency, but he's worried that a research agency that doesn't frequently enact policies will lower the quality of policy debates.

He said ACDA was able to prescribe policy in instances of strategic nuclear strategy and nonproliferation.

Rose Gottemoeller, the former deputy secretary general of NATO, said the reinstatement of an agency like ACDA would prevent the U.S. from restraining the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. She said she is pushing for expanded technical capability and capacity in the State Department's T family – the bureaus of Arms Control Verification and Compliance, International Security and Nonproliferation and Political-Military Affairs – but limited instruments and hiring authorities are available to do so.

Amy Woolf, a specialist in nuclear weapons policy at the Library of Congress, said federal lawmakers should avoid using the term "arms control" in Congressional discussions, because many policymakers do not view arms control as a way to mitigate national security risks. She said the term can be polarizing and prevent productive conversations.

She said the arms control agenda is an "episodic and sporadic" issue for members of Congress, because arms control issues arise on occasion and are addressed with high intensity for short time periods through meetings, committee hearings and briefings.

## First-year student enrollment increased this fall, data shows

From Page 1

Goff said the freshman class consisted of students from 48 states, the two exceptions being Wyoming and North Dakota. He said officials enrolled a "very strong" freshmen class this fall similar to previous years in terms of GPA, standardized test scores and academic rankings.

He said officials recorded a 91 percent first-to-second year retention rate for the Class of 2024, higher than last year's 88 percent for the Class of 2023 and near the 92 percent for the Class of 2022 from the year before last. He said 9,864 undergraduates are living on campus this fall, and the entire residential student population numbers near 11,000.

Goff added that more than 70 percent of students who took a leave of absence last spring returned to GW this fall. He said enrollment also increased for male, first-generation, D.C. metropolitan area and traditionally underrepresented students.

Goff said administrators met the full need of the 379 Pell grant recipients this fall with awards totaling as much as \$6,495.

Interim Provost Chris Bracey said in his updates that officials have updated employee benefits for post-doctoral researchers based on feedback they received since officials announced late last month that they would be classified as trainees instead of staff. He said postdocs will continue to be eligible for base and matching retirement contributions and tuition re-

mission.

"We look forward to an ongoing dialogue with postdocs and the broader research community about supporting postdocs and recognizing their critical role within GW's research enterprise," Bracey said.

Bracey said officials assigned Gina Lohr, the senior associate vice provost for research, to serve as the provost's office liaison to the Virginia Science and Technology Campus.

"She will be the key administrative presence on the VSTC maintaining a physical presence on the campus, and filling a number of vital functions, first of which is communications," he said. "Gina will be the primary communications link between the provost's office and the VSTC administration."

## Shenkamn, Amsterdam hall residents concerned about water issues

From Page 1

Sophomore Lauren Gruening, a resident of Shenkman, said her room has lacked hot water for nearly two weeks. She said she filed a FixIt request after her shower took up to 25 minutes to heat up before the start of the semester, but said officials dismissed it, saying it would improve as other residents moved into the building in August.

"The water had been turned off once and they sent an email, but another time they shut off the hot water with no notice, so when I submitted a FixIt [it] got declined," Gruening said in a text message.

Izabella Riccione, a sophomore living in Shenkman, said she and her roommates have had to take cold showers, and water from the faucet has appeared cloudy.

"I couldn't shower because all we have is cold water," she said in an email. "My roommates had to take cold showers."

Riccione said she and her roommates suspected there was mold growth throughout their room after noticing it on their ceiling in early September, and officials evacuated them to a hotel for a week to clean the room. She said the combination of water and mold issues have created a stressful living situation and caused her roommate to suffer serious symptoms of mold-related illness, like stinging eye pain, bleeding from the eye and coughing.

"The whole situation has been extremely stressful and frustrating," Riccione said. "It feels like they really don't care about us or the mold and are uninterested in compensating anyone for these problems. All of us are paying outrageous housing prices to live in mold infested dorms. I am not

happy."

Ria Gupta, a sophomore who lives in Shenkman Hall, said she also has experienced problems with poor water pressure and cold water in her dorm.

"My roommate and I have really bad water pressure in comparison to our suites, and that's just been a problem that's always been there," Gupta said. "But recently the water just keeps going freezing cold. It will be like three days where we don't get hot water."

Gupta said other students in Shenkman dealt with similar water-related issues, reached out to community coordinators and submitted FixIt requests to express their concerns about the water quality. She said her hot water returned last week, but she is worried it may go out again.

"I am going to see if it stays," she said. "I know I am on the luckier side – for some people it is every other day for them."

## Post-COVID task force releases recommendations

From Page 1

LeBlanc made improving institutional culture one of his five strategic initiatives as president in an effort to eliminate the "fear-based" culture that administrators said was present among GW employees. But some faculty said the culture initiative, which was organized in April 2018, inadequately addressed those issues, and others said they didn't believe a culture problem existed at GW in the first place.

"We do not suggest spending more money on outside consultants," the report states. "We suggest bringing students and faculty together to develop further ideas for developing a culture of empathy and respect. This would replace or supersede the previous 'culture initiative.'"

### Graduate and professional students

The graduate and professional students working group recommended that officials work to build community among graduate students through investments in staff members who schools and colleges "find necessary for community building."

"In our town hall meetings and in survey responses, graduate students mentioned that group work was difficult to coordinate, that establishing connections with professors and faculty was difficult and that it was difficult to get a sense of community," the report states.

The report recommends that officials offer a virtual option for some classes and record lectures in the interest of accommodating graduate students' schedules. The group also requested officials to offer students universal high-speed internet to make virtual spaces more accessible.

"The pandemic underlined the fact that accessibility to online research resources is key to graduate education," the report states.

The report suggests that officials assess the net impact of the pandemic on improving diversity, equity and inclusion, and provide resources for the working group to also make that assessment.

"While the University as a whole has reportedly become slightly more diverse during the pandemic, the working group does not have access

to enrollment data specific to graduate students to evaluate the issue," the report states.

The working group also outlines that officials should be more transparent in their decision making and communications.

"Graduate students, faculty and staff express appreciation for communication by programs and schools during the transition to online learning but also expressed frustration at communications concerning financial aid, layoffs and technology changes," the report states.

Officials laid off 339 staff members last year as part of several budget mitigation strategies to limit the financial impact of the pandemic.

### Staff and academic support personnel

The staff and academic support personnel working group recommended that officials support telework with necessary equipment and software for staff, and it encouraged a "culture of hybridization" with options for remote work. The group also recommended officials identify a chief online learning officer within the University.

"Some aspect[s] of staff activities could be more online even without a movement toward hybrid and virtual classes; the likely reorganization of the classroom experience requires involvement of the staff and further coordination of resources and training," the report states.

The group called for officials to encourage innovation and creativity through an inclusive environment.

"Maintaining a highly functioning and effective University community is highly dependent on the encouragement, development and maintenance of an organizational culture that values strong relationships," the report states. "For academic support staff this is an important part of their work-life arrangement with the University."

The group recommended that officials revisit the possibility for a "staff council," which would provide feedback to administrators.

"Communication is the means by which all University stakeholders ensure that information is shared equitably and uniformly," the report states.

The report also states that officials should also work to ease issues during staff turnover.

## Officials should address student burnout problem

### STAFF EDITORIAL

Students are exhausted. With the transition back to campus and lingering dangers of the pandemic leaving many students experiencing burnout, the natural instinct is to look toward the next respite from the grind. In past years, students hanging by a thread could look to a few days off for fall break to catch up and restore themselves. But not this year. Amid unique stressors, fall break is just one day — and it's a Friday, a day that many students don't have classes anyway. That's not a real break and will not help students lower their berserk stress levels.

Obviously, the problem of students being overworked goes beyond getting short-changed on fall break — and fall break isn't the one solution, either. But students are demonstrably struggling right now, and the University can and should still take steps to give students just a little bit more breathing room.

It's been a long, stressful road navigating the change from in-person learning to virtual learning and then back to in-person learning since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020. Needless to say, students have made several major adjustments to both our academic and social lives. Many of us have also experienced the grief that COVID-19 has inflicted on the world close to home.

Coming back to school hasn't been the reprieve many of us expected, either.

Many of us have varying levels of comfort regarding coronavirus. It's fair to say none of us quite know where the balance between satiating our social appetites while still being safe from coronavirus sits at the moment. Masks add another layer of stress to the process of finding that balance. Not seeing each other's full faces when hanging out, or restricting hang out spots to outdoor settings when it comes to new people, is enough of

a burden to resist widening one's social circle. And because most of us have experienced limited social interactions since March 2020, we're relearning how to socialize, which also takes a toll. What used to be small, even joyous efforts like hanging out with a new person, or taking the time to pick out and wear a nice outfit to class, are draining us faster because our in-

person engines are just beginning to start back up after months of being turned off.

The point is, students are demonstrably burnt out. All of these little things would be pretty benign on their own, but in aggregate, they take a toll on students' bandwidth. None of this is necessarily administrators' fault. But the fact that so many students

are exhausted to the bone right now indicates that the University should do something — and fortunately, it has the capacity to take a handful of small steps that would make a big difference.

Giving students a meaningful break in the middle of the semester would be an incredible first step. Current seniors will remember 2018's four-day fall break, with the

University designating a Monday and Tuesday as days off. Since many people have Fridays off, that made a break that was brief on paper feel even longer. Those two days would be invaluable time to catch up on REM sleep or catch up on work. It could also make it easier for students to see family — especially family who students could not see a few months ago because the pandemic was worse at that point.

While it might be too late to make that happen this semester, the University is still well within its rights and powers to institute wellness days or something to that effect at one or more times between now and finals season in December. And it could do that for the spring, too — the University has complete control over class scheduling, we promise no one would complain if administrators picked a random Monday in November and told the student body to take a day for its own well-being.

Non-scheduled mental health days are key here too. Students who are burnt out to the point of needing a non-scheduled day to recuperate should also not have to worry about it tanking their grades. While many professors are lenient and understanding when it comes to missing class once or twice, others take a hardline approach. Students who are struggling should not need to beg their professors to let them take a day for their mental health, nor should they have to go through the phenomenal hassle of getting Disability and Support Services accommodations. Do-or-die attendance policies are about punishment, not pedagogy — and it's inappropriate to make students drag themselves to class mid-anxiety attack for fear of their grade being bumped down. In the interest of everyone's well-being and academic success, GW should take these small, meaningful steps to help students rejuvenate.



NICHOLAS ANASTACIO | GRAPHICS EDITOR

## CHC needs to make more resources available to queer students

Many students come to college with the goal of discovering who they are as individuals. Part of that discovery for queer students like myself comes with the territory of ensuring one's health and safety above all else.

David Ruff  
Opinions Writer

I'm making this assertion not to perpetuate antiquated stereotypes surrounding queer sexual activity but to underscore that HIV/AIDS is a real risk without care and proper proficiency in HIV/AIDS prevention. I would have hoped that the administrators overseeing the Colonial Health Center know this, but nevertheless, they have yet to use the wide array of tools in their arsenal to spread the word on prevention options and tactics.

Nearly 2 percent of D.C.'s population is living with HIV, though about 90 percent of those living with HIV are on remedial treatment making progress toward an undetectable viral load, meaning their viral load is so low that the virus cannot be spread to others.

Most queer college students come from high schools and families that don't provide inclusive, interdisciplinary sexual education. When I started my college education at GW, in a city with the highest concentration of LGBTQ+ folks in the country, I felt hopeful. Hopeful of finding like-minded individuals

and a community that supports and uplifts one another.

Last spring, while taking classes virtually due to the pandemic, I wanted to learn more about pre-exposure prophylaxis. PrEP has been proven to reduce the risk of contracting HIV from sex by about 99 percent. While I was not living on campus, my first inclination was to browse the CHC's website.

I swiftly typed "LGBTQ+" in the search bar and received a mere three search results. Under the Primary Care Services page, I found a section titled "LGBTQ+ Health," which consists of five succinct bullet-points of itemized services, devoid of comprehensive information. Under the Medical Care page, PrEP is listed as an example of non-urgent health care provided by GW, with no further guidance on the drug. If you're internet savvy, you might be lucky enough to land on a one-page PDF of tips and external resources for queer students from Counseling and Psychological Services. I arrived at the PDF by clicking on a hyperlink in the description of one of the three search results.

I built up the courage to discuss this matter with my parents and they supported my decision to learn more about PrEP. I made an appointment with an infectious disease doctor to get the rundown on the pill under my parents' health care plan. Unfortunately, that same luxury is not afforded to many students.

Without a health care plan, and thanks to greedy pharmaceutical giants, the out-of-pocket expense for a standard Truvada for PrEP prescription can come out to a whopping \$2,000 per month.

Students should be able to reach out and not be discouraged from taking life-saving medication because they didn't have all the information in front of them. I know that I was discouraged after countless hours of sifting through CHC's website and waiting on the phone — and I doubt that I am on my own, whether that be regarding PrEP or other services ambiguously publicized by CHC. This vital piece of information should be plastered on every hallway, highlighted in every newsletter, and spotlighted across every campus health event and conference — at the bare minimum.

The CHC needs to conduct interactive forums and publicize its services to raise awareness and foster conversations among the student population.

Students have to take matters into their own hands to disseminate crucial information about their health when we have a fully-funded health center that is supposed to do just that. I am by no means a public health expert, nor do I have all the right answers. Although, what I do know is that when I was ready to explore options to protect myself — the CHC was not there to guide and support me.

—David Ruff, a sophomore, is an opinions writer.

## GW must address misogyny on campus

A fellow classmate mansplained a paper to me during my first month at college. It was my own essay.

Yes. Sitting in my U.S. Diplomatic History lecture, the stranger sitting next to me asked me how I thought my first paper went, which was due a few days before. I told him I was confident about my essay, and he suggested we swap papers and read them. After looking over my paper for less than 90 seconds, he turned to me and said "I think it's brave of you to argue that President McKinley had a greater impact on the Spanish-American War than John Hay." Slightly confused, I tried to respond and clarify that he misinterpreted my argument. "Actually," he remarked, cutting me off mid-sentence, "you are arguing that because you mention..."

Maggie McKinney  
Opinions Writer

I was completely caught off guard. My classmate was explaining my own essay to me as if he wrote it — as if I wasn't smart enough to understand the nuances in the argument that I was making. He handed back my laptop looking almost proud of himself, as if he had somehow helped me understand a concept I was already familiar with. I was overcome with a sense of horror as I realized that although I wasn't used to this bla-

tant display of misogyny, plenty of other girls at GW were.

I spent my four years of high school at Notre Dame de Sion, an all-girls Catholic school in Kansas City, Missouri. I spent the latter half of my teenage years unafraid of speaking up in class, confident in my place in an academic setting and uninterupted by boys who were instilled with a sense of superiority over women. The all-girls environment at Sion, while benefiting me in countless other ways, left me unprepared for a co-ed higher education experience. Although I was blindsided, I am more upset at the fact that this is something many of my female classmates are used to.

During the six weeks I've spent as a college student, I have seen more women interrupted, talked over, dismissed and ignored in an academic setting than I have in the previous 18 years of my life. When discussing this with my female friends who graduated from co-ed public high schools, I am faced with a resounding yeah, that's just how it is. It's disheartening, especially when attending a university that prides itself on its diversity and inclusivity. Although GW has a majority female population, the University's academic culture ignores and perpetuates misogyny in the classroom, leaving male students with a sense of entitlement and female students like me feeling

out of place.

Women studying at GW deserve to be supported in every aspect of life while studying here, not just through extra-curriculars and organizations.

The academic community leaves unconscious bias against women unchecked and unaddressed. I have not had a single professor reprimand a male student who has interrupted me. While unintentional, it is a systemic failure that GW needs to address. Whether through quarterly rather than yearly mandatory staff and student bias training, hiring more female professors or bolstering Title IX services, it is imperative that GW focuses resources on protecting and supporting women in academics.

The University needs to implement more oversight, more resources and more punishment for those who commit gender-based discrimination in the academic setting, or else nothing will change.

I have experienced some of the most disheartening and humiliating displays of misogyny I have ever faced in my life during my first six weeks at GW. It is heartbreaking, discouraging and most importantly, eye-opening. Women deserve an equal place in the classroom, and GW has an obligation to make sure that place is protected on campus.

—Maggie McKinney, a freshman majoring in political science, is an opinions writer.

# Culture

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## THE SCENE

**GROUP ART SHOW – ALL HALLOWS**  
Thursday, Oct. 21 | WHINO | Free  
Get a jump on your fall festivities by attending an art gallery focused on traditions of the Celtic Festival of Samhain.

**MY LORD, WHAT A NIGHT**  
Friday, Oct. 22 | Ford's Theater | \$26-48  
Watch a play about the real-life friendship between Albert Einstein and renowned American singer Marian Anderson.

**RELEASED THIS WEEK:**

**NEW ALBUM: "JUNO" BY REMI WOLF**

## Late night coffee shops to fuel your study sessions

**NORA FITZGERALD**  
REPORTER

**STELLA LANUTI**  
REPORTER

The GW community is in the thick of midterm season, which means real estate for on-campus study spots is slim.

Instead of cramming into Gelman Library with the rest of GW's population, try an off-campus coffee shop to get your caffeine buzz and hunker down to get some studying done. We've rounded up five D.C. coffee shops and cafes open late where you can fuel your nighttime study sessions with cozier atmospheres and more coffee options than a Starbucks.

### All Day by Kramers – open until 10 p.m.

Located in Dupont Circle, Kramers is about a 15-minute walk from campus or just a block away from the Dupont Circle Metro station. You can sit at the outdoor patio, inside at the bar or in the sun-filled cafe in the back of the shop while enjoying the buzz of the bookstore attached to the cafe. Kramers has a full espresso bar serving all the coffee classics along with drip coffee. The Kramers Goober Pie (\$8) with peanut butter, graham cracker and chocolate ganache is an ideal late night study treat when paired with a cup of coffee. For



ELISSA DETELLIS | PHOTOGRAPHER

Urban Roast, a family-owned coffee shop in Penn Quarter, is a comfortable and convenient place to study with friends.

a break from studying, the cafe hosts jazz music Sunday nights from 6 to 8 p.m.

1530 19th St. NW. Open from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday through Saturday and from 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. Sunday.

### Tryst – open until 9 p.m.

Stop by Tryst anytime from

7 a.m. to 9 p.m. for the open, spacious, lounge-style seating, but stay for the coffee. Located in Adams Morgan, the hipster cafe offers both indoor and outdoor seating. But with occasional live music and huge comfy couches, indoor seating is an optimal place to study if you prefer a little background noise. The ambiance of the cafe

is warm and vibey with dim lights, mismatched furniture, walls adorned with paintings and jazz or indie music to set the mood. Tryst's handcrafted beverage menu features seven homemade flavor syrups. With their list of 13 iced or hot teas, coffees and specialty drinks, there is something for everyone. Fall drinks include brown

sugar apple pie latte (\$6) and fall spice latte (\$5.23). You can look forward to two of Tryst's signature animal crackers served with each drink.

2459 18th St. NW. Open 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Sunday.

### Urban Roast – open until 11 p.m.

For those looking for a comfortable and convenient place to study with friends, Urban Roast provides everything you need – plenty of seating, inviting staff and a buzzing ambiance. At this family-owned coffee shop, located just east of campus in Penn Quarter, you're welcomed by exposed brick walls and ceiling of warm yellow lights. Open from 8 a.m. to 11 p.m., Urban Roast offers everything from autumnal drink creations or to your simple drip coffee. The fall specials include an apple crisp macchiato (\$5.65), pumpkin spice sweet cream cold brew (\$5.25) and a peach cobbler cold brew (\$5.25). A variety of large tables, the bright lights and buzzing atmosphere make Urban Roast a fun spot for a group study session. You can order appetizers like spicy crab dip (\$16) to share as a study snack.

916 G St. NW. Open 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. Monday and Tuesday, 8 a.m. to 11 p.m. Wednesday and Thursday, 8 a.m. to midnight Friday, 10 a.m. to midnight Saturday and 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Sunday.



ABIGAIL DALEY | PHOTOGRAPHER

The key to a good haircut for Puglisi is "just listening to people," allowing customers to dictate exactly what they want.

## Treat yourself at these salons and spas near campus

**MEGHAN O'NEIL**  
REPORTER

As the semester reaches its midway mark, take some time out of your hectic schedule to treat yourself to some self-care.

D.C. has no shortage of salons and spas to get pampered at. Look no further than Western Market to find Puglisi's Hair Cuts, and venture just a few blocks from campus to find other salons and spas offering manicures, massages and facials.

Here's a list of a few local salons and spas to guide you on your next relaxing getaway from campus:

### For a complete spa day experience

Unwind and leave your stress behind with a visit to Unwind Wellness Center, located in both Adams Morgan and Georgetown. For Unwind's Signature massage, therapists will combine elements of Swedish and deep tissue styles to provide you with a half hour (\$60) or full hour (\$100) customized treatment session tailored to your specific needs. The spa also offers a selection of facials starting at \$60 that can be customized to each client. Voted the No. 1 massage and overall spa experience by Washington City Paper in 2020, Unwind is a reliable option for anyone looking for an activity at the intersection of comfort and luxury.

Adams Morgan: 1990 18th St. NW. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m.

Georgetown: 1054 Thomas Jefferson St. NW. Open daily from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m.

### For speciality nail art

For a high-quality manicure, Gloss Bar should be your first choice for its clean, light-filled salon creating a calm feel that's an escape from the hustle of the city. Gloss Bar specializes in gel (\$42) and dip powder (\$54) manicures, but you can still get a classic manicure (\$24). Their nail technicians are also skilled at custom designs, so you can leave with nails unique to you. Before heading to Gloss Bar, scroll through the salon's Instagram page to get a feel for their work.

825 O St. NW. Open Monday through Friday 10 a.m. to 7 p.m., and Saturday and Sunday 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

### For a stylish new haircut

Voted one of D.C.'s best Haircuts in 2019 by Allure Magazine, you can count on having good hair days after leaving Bang Salon. After taking the "stylist match quiz" on the salon website, you can book an appointment with the stylist that will work best for you. Appointments with one of the salon's knowledgeable stylists start at \$43 for men and \$54 for women. Bang Salon also offers hair coloring services, from lowlights starting at \$20 and highlights for \$130.

1519 15th St. NW. Open Monday through Friday 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### For a haircut specializing in curly hair

Specializing in curly hair, Fiddleheads is a boutique salon for anyone looking to freshen up their curls. Located just a quick walk from campus in Dupont Circle, it's a convenient spot to get a new cut. The salon's light purple walls, sparkling chandeliers and eclectic collection of artwork is a beautiful place to restore and reshape your curls. A curly cut without a cleanse starts at \$110 and a cut and cleanse is \$135.

1515 17th St. NW. Open Tuesday through Friday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m., Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.

### For a convenient visit to the barber shop

Puglisi Hair Cuts, located at 2000 Penn, has been a convenient spot for a quick haircut for nearly 60 years. This barber shop specializes in men's haircuts, shaves and kids haircuts with the average men's haircut starting at \$35. Owner Tony Puglisi immigrated to the United States from Italy in the 1960s when he joined the family barber shop business, DCist reported in 2019. Puglisi told DCist that the secret to a good haircut is "just listening to people," so when you visit Puglisi's you'll get the haircut you expect.

2000 Pennsylvania Ave. NW. Open Monday through Thursday 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., Friday 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., and Saturday 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Tips to re-energize and combat burnout

**ISABELLA MACKINNON**  
STAFF WRITER

The pressure of midterm season and academic fatigue of the in-person semester may be wearing on you, but take comfort in the fact there are ways to re-energize and re-focus.

Psychologists define burnout as the psychological response to chronic stressors, leaving those who experience the syndrome feeling exhausted, detached from their work and a lack of accomplishment, according to 2016 research published in the journal World Psychiatry. Finding extra time in your schedule to devote to your mental health may seem daunting, but we've compiled a list of simple tips to re-energize and refocus to hold you over until winter break.

### Find time for physical activity

Healthy habits like eating well, drinking plenty of water and exercise can go a long way for your mental well-being. Even if you can accommodate 15 to 20 minutes a day, physical activity decreases stress and anxiety and helps to improve sleep and concentration.

The Lerner Health and Wellness Center offers a weekly schedule of group fitness classes both in person and online. Semester passes for the classes are \$79 – providing access to mat pilates, Zumba, HIIT, weight training and more – while the cost of a drop-in class is \$14. For something more flexible, GW Campus Recreation's YouTube channel offers hundreds of free

workout videos of yoga, barre and pilates classes to follow at home.

### Get out for some fresh air

Fresh air and a change of scenery can give you a dose of vitamin D, improve your concentration and reduce stress. To stimulate your brain, consider taking 15 to 30 minutes out of your day to go for a brisk walk. Check out GW Campus Recreation's list of walking and running routes for a quick three-quarter mile pass around campus to a six mile stroll around the National Mall. For a fix of greenery, walk to Rock Creek Park in northwest D.C. or explore the free Smithsonian Sculpture Garden on Independence Ave.

### Schedule your break time

Stay focused for longer by working in incremental periods and budgeting in break time using the Pomodoro Technique to manage your time. This time management tool, created by consultant Francesco Cirillo in the 1980s, strengthens your concentration skills by designating segments of your work time for intentional relaxation in order to sustain your focus in the long run.

For this technique, choose a task you would like to get done and set a timer for 25 minutes to begin working on it. When the timer ends, do something else for five to ten minutes before resetting the timer for another 25 minutes and continuing to work. Every four intervals of 25 minutes,

take a longer break of 20 or 30 minutes.

### Set boundaries

As tempting as it is to check your email every waking moment, set a specific time when you can realistically power down for the day. Put your phone on do not disturb mode, set screen time limits for distracting apps or simply plug in your phone and computer across the room when you're done for the night.

The pandemic trained us to let work bleed into all aspects of our lives with everyone only a text or email away at all times. Pick a time and space to work that is separate from the space you use to relax and fill it with something you enjoy. Additionally, be realistic about the workload you can handle. Taking on extra assignments, activities and obligations may feel productive in the moment, but can stretch you too thin and cause you to burnout.

### Talk to someone

Burnout can usher in feelings of loneliness and inadequacy and you may feel it seeping into your academic performance and social life. Talking to a professional can help you address this and work to alleviate the burden of these emotions monopolizing your time and mental space.

A comprehensive list of mental health resources can be found here, which includes university services like psychological counseling, self help resources as well as outside services like telehealth websites Talkspace and Betterhelp.



PHOTO ILLUSTRATION BY GRACE HROMIN | SENIOR PHOTO EDITOR  
Scheduling frequent breaks while working on assignments can help strengthen your concentration and sustain your focus long term.

## GAMES OF THE WEEK



**VOLLEYBALL**  
vs. Saint Louis  
Friday | 6 p.m.  
GW faces off against the Billikens hoping to capture their third win of the season.



**MEN'S SOCCER**  
vs. Saint Louis  
Saturday | 1 p.m.  
The Colonials take on the Billikens as they aim for a playoff berth.

**NUMBER CRUNCH** 1.4

Women's volleyball's aces per set this season, up from its five-year average of 1.1.

## Sophomore swimmer looks to lead team to repeat success in A-10

**SUNIT CHAKRABORTY**  
REPORTER

After winning six gold medals at the A-10 Championship last year and helping the men's swimming and diving team to their fourth A-10 title in five years, sophomore Karol Mlynarczyk is setting his sights even higher this season.

Mlynarczyk said he intends to win a fifth A-10 crown and to qualify for the medley relay at the NCAA tournament and individually in the 100 backstroke and the 200 freestyle. He said he is hoping to qualify for the Polish national team at the biennial World University Games after they were postponed last year due to COVID-19.

Born and raised in Poland, Mlynarczyk said he started swimming when he was about seven years old. His school offered him a scholarship for swimming and by age 14, Mlynarczyk began competing in tournaments.

He quickly moved up the ranks in Poland, joining the Polish National Team in 2015 and earning a bronze medal in the 200m back at the 2018 Polish Winter National Championships. He also broke the Polish junior national records in both the 200m free and 400m free.

Mlynarczyk joined the Colonials in 2020, but said he started his recruitment process in 2018. Though he said he was entertaining big name schools like Florida State, Pittsburgh and Alabama at the time, he eventually settled on GW because of his "special relationship" with head coach Brian Thomas.

"No other coach from other

universities had this strong bond with me," Mlynarczyk said. "We used to talk like every two weeks. He was asking me, what was my performance, how I improved, how I'm feeling, how is my school going on so far and all this stuff."

Thomas said at first he suspected Mlynarczyk thought of GW as a backup school, but when Mlynarczyk came for an official campus visit in 2019, Thomas could tell he was going to be "unique."

Since joining GW last year, Mlynarczyk has earned six gold medals at the A-10 Championship, helping him become an A-10 Most Outstanding Performer and A-10 Most Outstanding Rookie Performer honoree. He even posted a time in the 100 back as part of the 400 medley relay that would've been fast enough to qualify for the NCAA Championship if he had swam the event individually.

Mlynarczyk said he used to spend a lot of time with his psychologist learning how to focus exclusively on himself during the meets so he could maintain a high level of performance.

"Even if you have other people swimming next to you, and you race them, you cannot focus on them because you don't have any input on how they can swim," Mlynarczyk said. "You can only focus on how you swim, so you shouldn't think about your time, neither their time nor how they swim, you can only have control over your stroke, how fast you can start, how fast you can turn."

Thomas said Mlynarczyk has great attention to detail and is "super communicative," which



FILE PHOTO BY SYDNEY WALSH | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR  
Since joining GW, Mlynarczyk has already earned a variety of awards, including A-10 Most Outstanding Performer and A-10 Most Outstanding Rookie Performer.

he said is an important trait given the 50 plus swimmers and divers between the men's and women's squads Thomas has to juggle on a daily basis.

Now that Mlynarczyk is a sophomore, Thomas said he is looking for him to continue growing as a leader. He said he has "learned to embrace the team aspect", which is something Mlynarczyk did not experience as a swimmer in Europe.

With the graduation of three

time A-10 All-Conference First Team member and four time A-10 Championship winner Emils Pone, Mlynarczyk said he is also looking to fill in the void left by Pone.

Thomas said this year's team has the best culture he's experienced in 17 years of coaching. Thomas used Mlynarczyk's performance at the 400 medley relay last season as an example for what the team aspect of swimming could help players

achieve

After coming away with a win on the road against Old Dominion Oct. 9, he said the team has remained focus on staying consistent with their training to hopefully obtain their ultimate goal of winning the A-10 Championship again and increasing exposure at the national level.

The Colonials will prepare for the next meet on the road against Pittsburgh Nov. 6 at 1 p.m.

## Lacrosse gears up for spring play after shortened season last year

**LIAM O'MURCHU**  
REPORTER

Lacrosse is looking to build on a shortened spring season last year after finishing with a .500 record.

Head coach Jennifer Ulehla said she is optimistic heading into her first "normal" season leading the Colonials. Although the Colonials missed their fall warmup slate last year, the team finished the season with a 6-6 overall record and 3-4 conference record, an improvement from an 0-7 record the year prior and the best conference showing in three years.

After her hiring in June 2019 in the months following the resignation of former head coach Tracy Coyne, the COVID-19 pandemic cut short most of Ulehla's debut season and resulted in an abbreviated second season.

Ulehla said the team finished their season strong last year despite multiple injuries that forced them to play a "crazy defense."

Now, the Colonials are returning 19 players from last year's squad and are welcoming 13 freshmen and two transfers. Ulehla said the newcomers bring along heightened athleticism and energy, as well as depth in the midfield, an area in which the team struggled last year due to injuries.

Ulehla also said she wants to see this year's seniors be successful in their final season, especially because of

the adversity they've faced and the changes they've embraced since she arrived in 2019.

Although the team is young, they are looking to compete in the Atlantic 10, which will return to its normal six-team championship tournament this year after only having four teams participate in the championship last spring due to the pandemic. Last spring, the Colonials fought through a bout of late season injuries to finish third in the A-10 South Pod, winning two of their last three games.

Senior attacker Sophia Watkinson said the team is "extremely excited" to build on last year's late-season success despite conditions that were "less than ideal." She said the team has made an effort to forge a strong culture to create a highly competitive environment in practice and raise the standard of play.

With more time spent together on and off the field, the team chemistry is building in a way it couldn't last year. Senior midfielder Tori Hampton said the senior class is putting an emphasis on instilling confidence within the "talented" incoming players and she said the team hopes to build off their talent "right away."

A member of the A-10 All-Rookie Team in 2019, Hampton was the only freshman to start in all 17 games and tied a team leading 30 goals, placing her second all time among freshmen on

the Colonial records list.

In addition to the influx of new players, the team is returning a key veteran in senior goalkeeper Megan Patrick. Her average of 10.58 saves per game was second best in the A-10 while her .438 save percentage was good for sixth in the conference.

On the offensive side, GW will look to replace the production lost with the graduation of midfielder Catie Perkins and attacker Ioanna Mantzouratos, both of whom started all 12 contests for the Colonials last season. Perkins recorded 20 goals and 12 assists while Mantzouratos racked up 23 goals and 8 assists.

After transferring from Drexel, Watkinson played in all 12 games, starting in 10 of them. She scored 19 goals to go along with her 3 assists, highlighted by a four goal outing against Davidson March 24.

Hampton, meanwhile, played in just four games before she suffered an injury that sidelined her for the remainder of the season. In the four games she played, she tallied a pair of goals and assists. Hampton said this year she wants to focus on being a greater presence in the midfield by winning more turnovers and pushing the ball forward in transition.

The Colonials wrap up their fall schedule with a trio of games against UMBC, Lafayette and American Oct. 24 on the road in Newark, Delaware.



FILE PHOTO BY SERENA LUM | PHOTOGRAPHER  
Although the Colonials are outshooting their opponents on average, they have converted on fewer than one goal per game.

## Men's soccer aims for conference playoff berth despite struggles

**ROMAN BOBEK**  
SPORTS EDITOR

Men's soccer is seeking to squeeze their way into the playoffs after a lackluster season so far.

The Colonials (3-9-2, 1-3-1 A-10) have lost four out of their last five games, earning just one tie through two halves of overtime against Massachusetts Oct. 9. GW currently sits at No. 11 in the A-10 standings, and the Colonials must win at least two of their last three conference games for a chance to earn the No. 8 seed in the A-10 Tournament.

Head coach Craig Jones said the team has "underperformed" in terms of their expectations before the season began. After vastly exceeding their No. 11 preseason rank last year and reaching the conference final, the Colonials came in with a No. 6 ranking heading into this season.

"We could have won more games than we have," Jones said. "We've deserved to win more games but that's just soccer so I think our record deceives the group a little bit or deceives others in terms of I think we're better than what our record is."

The Colonials have struggled to score goals down the stretch, netting just two goals in the past five games. Though the team has outshot their

opponents in games on average 12-11, they have a goals per game average of just .86 compared to their opponents' 1.43.

"We're lacking that little bit of confidence," Jones said. "When you're not winning games, you lack confidence to get in the box and score goals. So I think for us, we've got to be a little bit more committed to get numbers forward. We're creating chances, we just need to have a little bit of quality but if we weren't creating chances it's a much bigger problem."

In addition to the offensive woes, the Colonials have suffered defensive troubles as well. Last year, the Colonials conceded just five goals in the regular season through eight games. During this season, GW has given up 20 goals through 14 games. However, graduate student midfielder Sandro Weber said the team has improved in recent weeks as the Colonials have only conceded three goals to conference foes in the past three conference games.

"I think defensively, we made a pretty good job in the last couple of games," Weber said. "So we conceded a lot of goals, unnecessary goals, in the middle of the season. And that was one of our strengths last season in the spring, that we had a great defense. We couldn't really rely on

that in the middle of the season, but we've made progress with that."

Senior midfielder Cameron Mathewson, now in his fourth year with the team, said the team is a "very close-knit" group and believes "100 percent" that the team can rally to get the job done and make the playoffs.

"The team's had some good moments so far this season, but also we've had some unfortunate moments," Mathewson said. "We want to obviously improve and get into the tournament. The last three games, we've got to take it."

Despite the unsteady season, Jones said he can still rely on the team to stick together when the times are tough. Bolstered by the return of all 24 players on last year's roster and the addition of three freshmen recruits, the team has experienced and persevered through a lot of hardship together.

With three games left to play, the Colonials will have to turn their season around quickly for a bid into the A-10 tournament. Jones said he is "confident" the team can do what it needs to do to get in, especially with the next two games at home.

The Colonials will return to the Vern after a two game road swing against George Mason Wednesday. Kick off is slated for 1 p.m.



HATCHET FILE PHOTO  
Head coach Jennifer Ulehla said the team's new members are bringing increased energy and depth in the midfield.