

# The GW Hatchet

What's inside

**Opinions**

The editorial board breaks down how GW should spend its COVID-19 relief.  
Page 5

**Culture**

Read our rundown about the best meal prep delivery services to meet your needs.  
Page 6

**Sports**

Men's and women's swimming and diving find their sea legs as competition returns.  
Page 7

## Hill becomes first candidate to begin campaign for SA president

**MAKENA ROBERTS**  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

**SAMANTHA SERAFIN**  
STAFF WRITER

The current Student Association president became the first to announce his campaign for the SA's top spot for the next term Tuesday.

SA President Brandon Hill – a junior who previously served as executive vice president and assumed the presidency last month – is running on a platform to improve course affordability, student inclusivity in governance and internal operations in the SA. Hill said he will work with members of the SA Senate and officials to help students regain stability following the COVID-19 pandemic and expand cultural resources on campus outside of the Multicultural Students Services Center.

"I think I am someone who doesn't take myself too seriously and still takes the work I do seriously," Hill said. "And that's how you add personality to the work that we do and allow students to feel comfortable bringing issues to you and believing that you'll actually act upon them, rather than them shouting into an empty hole."

Hill is required to gather at least 250 signatures during the candidate registration period from Feb. 24 to March 3 and be approved by the Joint Elections Commission to qualify as a candidate. The senate approved legislation in November that cut the number of required signatures in



COURTESY OF BRANDON HILL

Hill touted achievements related to student refunds for dropped courses and Pass/No Pass policies as part of his record of listening to student voices.

half for candidates to run this year.

Hill said the relationships he has built with officials throughout his time in the SA will give him an advantage if elected as president because he "won't have to start from the ground up."

He said he has built a "super collaborative" relationship with Mark Diaz, the executive vice president and chief financial officer. He said they have worked together to advocate for financial policies for students in the past, like extending the timeline for when students can receive a refund after dropping a course.

"Having those powerful and strong relationships with administrators just makes it more of a collaborative effort rather than a fight," Hill said.

Hill said in his three years in the SA, he served on the student engagement committee where he collected "anecdotal data" from students on the Mount Vernon Campus to gauge interest in providing lockers for those students on Foggy Bottom. He said as a Columbian College of Arts and Science senator, he established the Black Senators Caucus, which he said has sparked the creation of other caucuses in the body.

He said as the executive vice president, he worked with officials to increase the amount of refunds a student can receive if they drop a course and implement an optional Pass/No Pass policy for students during virtual instruction.

"I think these are all issues that have been driven by the students and for the

students," Hill said. "And they all start with students expressing concern or students raising their voices."

Hill said he hopes to work with administrators to ensure financial support policies implemented due to the pandemic will remain in effect in the future. He said officials should continue to allow students to register for classes with an outstanding tuition balance of up to \$2,500 instead of reverting back to a previous threshold of \$1,000.

"The University has been doing some really positive things to impact the student experience," Hill said. "They've been deemed as temporary, so I want to make sure that the University doesn't rubber band back in terms of the financial policies that were implemented this year."

## SA Senate approves Catherine Morris as executive vice president

**MAKENA ROBERTS**  
CONTRIBUTING NEWS EDITOR

The Student Association Senate confirmed Catherine Morris, the senate's chief policy adviser, as executive vice president in a special senate meeting Sunday.

SA President Brandon Hill presented SA Sen. Kate Carpenter, U-at-Large and a Hatchet photographer, last week as his pick for executive vice president after he ascended to the presidency and left the EVP spot open, but the senate rejected his nomination. Morris said she learned "what is possible in the SA," like advising on legislation and facilitating meetings with administrators, while working under the "phenomenal leadership" of Hill and former SA EVP Amy Martin, who held the position in the 2019-20 school year.

"They push me to be a better advocate and a better student leader," she said. "I'm excited to have the opportunity to follow in their footsteps of leadership."

Morris previously served as an undergraduate Columbian College of Arts and Sciences senator, a finance committee aid and as the vice chair of the finance committee. She said she is looking forward to continue advocating for students during the remainder of the term, "in a time when students need it the most."

"This is a time we recommit to student advocacy," Morris said. "This is when we decide the future

of this organization. This is our time to lead, to be truthful and to be transparent. I believe we can do it together."

Hill, the SA president, said Morris has been a "lifesaver on the senate staff" as a senior policy advisor this year and had an "instrumental role" in facilitating the GW's community's access to The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post and The New York Times. He said Morris' values like integrity, honesty and professionalism are of "dire" need to the SA and the University.

"As a friend, a colleague and a fellow [School of Media and Public Affairs] student, I have full faith in Morris' abilities to serve over a divided body of students," Hill said. "Morris knows that we get nowhere from wishing each other the worst and making backdoor deals."

Hill said at last week's senate meeting that he was "disgusted" by the "backdoor deals" some senators had been making in an attempt to deny Carpenter, his previous pick, the position.

Senators also unanimously approved a piece of legislation endorsing a faculty petition that calls on the University to "commit itself" to diversity, equity and inclusion through hiring "a cluster" of faculty of color. An informal group of faculty is circulating a petition to administrators to hire 18 minority faculty members, primarily in CCAS.

## Experts say GW diversity audit must focus on strengths and weaknesses

**CARLY NEILSON**  
STAFF WRITER

**EVA CHILLURA**  
REPORTER

Experts said the University-wide external diversity audit officials announced late last month could lead to campus-wide improvements in diversity and inclusion if it can effectively reveal both GW's strengths and weaknesses.

Administrators said they will use the findings to create an action plan to improve GW's financial aid policies, the GW Police Department's interactions with staff and students and diversity in the University's hiring practices. Experts in diversity in higher education said a diversity audit can provide data about GW's potential shortcomings to help officials choose where they need to allocate the most resources needed to address issues of diversity, equity and inclusion.

Nine of GW's 12 peer schools, like Syracuse University and the University of Rochester, have conducted a university-wide pulse or temperature surveys to gauge student and faculty opinion on diversity within the schools. Other institutions, like New York University, have imple-

mented similar diversity assessments using third-party audits to improve campus climate.

Officials said in late January they would complete the audit by late spring and will use the "coming weeks" to find an external party to conduct the audit.

Lisa Coleman, the chief diversity officer at NYU, said administrators implemented an assessment called "Being@NYU" in 2017 to assess diversity, inclusion, equity and belonging by surveying students, faculty and staff across all of NYU's campuses globally.

She said officials hired three external firms – Rankin and Associates, Helios Education Foundation and the Center for Diversity Education and Inclusion at the University of Maryland – to conduct the survey and report the findings to the institution.

Coleman said GW officials should not approach the diversity audit "looking for problems" but searching for goals.

Coleman said the assessment found overwhelmingly "positive" results and highlighted key areas of improvement, with 83 percent positive responses and 17 percent negative. She said NYU officials developed 12 "themes," or areas

of development based on the negative responses, with three committees to tackle the 12 areas.

She said the assessment also allowed NYU officials to localize the negative responses to specific departments and "borrow" successful practices from some departments and apply them to others lacking in mentorship or innovation. Officials were able to identify exclusionary conduct, problems with program recruitment and retention discrepancies in the climate assessment, she said.

Faculty members have recently been calling for officials to hire more diverse faculty at GW. An informal group of department chairs and program directors began circulating a petition earlier this month calling for officials to implement a "cluster hire" of underrepresented faculty members.

Ron Idoko, the diversity and multicultural program manager at the University of Pittsburgh, said Pitt has conducted several "climate assessments," both campus-wide and program-specific. He said these surveys try to assess feelings of inclusion on campus from both students and faculty to find identity groups who "may require more engagement."



GRACE HROMIN | ASSISTANT PHOTO EDITOR

GW's medical enterprise has administered 8,600 vaccines to D.C. residents over the age of 65 and to health care personnel.

## Students to be eligible for vaccine in D.C.

**ISHA TRIVEDI**  
ASSISTANT NEWS EDITOR

Administrators said D.C. health officials will treat out-of-state students living in the District as city residents when they become eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine.

Lynn Goldman, the dean of the Milken Institute School of Public Health, said at Friday's Faculty Senate meeting that officials are also examining vaccine regulations for Virginia and Maryland to help facilitate access to the vaccine for GW community members. William Borden, the chief quality and population health officer for the Medical Faculty Associates, said vaccinations for health care workers at the GW Hospital are "largely complete for those who want them."

GW launched clinical trials for Moderna Inc.'s COVID-19 vaccine last August, and the GW Hospital was named a distribution site for Pfizer's vaccine in December. A group of hospital employees became the first to receive the vaccine that same month.

Borden said officials

are "actively developing" events to support community vaccination, increase access to the vaccine and address racial and geographic disparities in the District's vaccine distribution. These disparities have continued as Wards 4, 5, 7 and 8 – where Black residents make up more than half of the population – continue to have the highest number of COVID-19 cases.

Borden said officials so far have delivered a total of 8,600 vaccinations – which officials are delivering at the Lerner Health and Wellness Center – to D.C. residents over the age of 65 and health care personnel.

He said while hospital officials are currently limited to vaccinating patients who live in the District, they are working to figure out how to vaccinate Medical Faculty Associates patients who live outside of the District and "hope that will change soon."

Arthur Wilson, the chair of the senate's executive committee, said at the meeting that officials are working to compile the quantitative and qualitative data of a faculty survey of University

President Thomas LeBlanc's leadership. He said the qualitative results of the survey are currently "somewhere between 300 and 500 pages" so he expects the results "might come a few days after" Feb. 22, when the results were originally slated to be released.

LeBlanc also said after several officials took a pay cut last April to mitigate the financial impact of the pandemic, the salaries have been "restored" to their June 2020 levels, but officials did not receive any bonuses in fiscal year 2020. He said officials have not had any conversations about taking bonuses in fiscal year 2021.

Blake, the provost, also provided a report on the University's core academic indicators and outlined how academic metrics like GW's enrollment levels and yield rate have been affected by the pandemic.

Faculty senators unanimously voted to approve a slate of members as the executive committee nominating committee, which will work to nominate the members for the executive committee in the 2021-2022 session.



FILE PHOTO BY JACK FONSECA | SENIOR STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

GW joins nine of its peers in conducting a university-wide probe of diversity at the institution.