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# SSN usage probed

■ University begins researching alternative identification numbers

by Lauren Kornreich  
Hatchet Reporter

The Student Association is taking preliminary steps this week to advocate its position against the University's use of Social Security numbers as a primary form of student identification.

SA President Kris Hart said he is encouraging students to request randomly generated identification numbers from the Office of the Registrar to replace Social Security numbers, which the University currently uses.

"This (service) has always been available," Hart said. "It's just that no one ever knew about it."

By Friday, the SA will send a blast e-mail over the SA listserv explaining the identification policy and risks of identity theft and providing a link to the forms needed to request a randomly generated number. Request forms can be found in the SA office in Marvin Center 424 and will be available at SA events.

"Hopefully this will trigger something within the administration to start thinking about using something else for student identification," Hart said. "This is our way to try to get them to move forward to find another way to identify students without putting their security in jeopardy."

According to the Federal Trade Commission, 27.3 million Americans have been victims of identity theft in the past five years, and half of the incidents occurred in the past year.

With the number of crimes on the rise, University Provost John Williams said senior administrators have had "early discussions" about whether GW should switch its means of primary identification.

Williams said GW security officials "recommended" that the University should not post Social Security numbers in public places.

Hart said he has been pressing the senior administration and the Board of Trustees to change the system since he began his term in May.

"It was frustrating," he said. "I was very concerned. I am in a good

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# Science depts. seek upgrades

■ Outdated, rundown facilities plague research, faculty hiring

by Caitlin Carroll  
Hatchet Reporter

Science students are using some of the oldest, most inadequate classrooms on campus, and administrators say renovations and new facilities are at least eight years away.

Michael King, chemistry department chair, said the science departments are more engaged in research than in the past but the University has run out of laboratory space to accommodate increased activity. Science departments are also having difficulty providing new faculty with adequate research space, and in some cases are unable to hire additional staff.

"I think we're in a situation in my department where we can't

bring in any new faculty, including replacing retired professors," said Robert Donaldson, chair of the biological sciences department. He added that GW provides a standard of 450 square feet of research space per professor, while most universities give professors closer to 1,000 square feet.

Donaldson also said about 10 percent of students wishing to register for a laboratory course in his department are turned away because of space restrictions.

Biology is one of the most popular majors in the Columbian College of Arts and Sciences, with 158 declared majors in fall 2002, when it was the school's fourth most popular major, behind psychology, political science and English. Other science departments include chemistry, physics, geology and biological anthropology.

Officials said Corcoran Hall, which houses the departments of

chemistry and physics, has a malfunctioning electrical system, among other problems. The University is currently working to improve the nearly 80-year-old hall's power supply. Corcoran Hall was the first building constructed by GW on the Foggy Bottom campus.

University President Stephen Joel Trachtenberg said building a new science facility would cost about \$50 million, which the University currently does not have available to spend. He said revenue from a mandatory summer session for rising juniors, which administrators are currently discussing, could help GW fund new science facilities.

"It's reasonable to say that, for academic affairs, this is a high priority among a number of high priorities, and therein lies the fundamental problem," said Craig Linebaugh, associate vice president for academic planning and special projects. "The resources that can be put toward

those initiatives are probably not sufficient to do everything we want to do."

He said science facilities have substantial ongoing costs, including "a lot more power, water (and) ventilation" than other types of buildings.

But the University has added several new facilities for other departments in the last few years, including the Media and Public Affairs and the Elliott School of International Affairs buildings, and it is constructing a new business school.

Trachtenberg said departments across the University are demanding new facilities, higher pay and more scholarship money, but it becomes a matter of the cost of the project, who makes the best case and which is in the greatest demand.

"If you have a hot coal in your

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Paul Goodman/Hatchet staff photographer

“Many people want to see a new Iraq, but we also want to see new roads in D.C.”  
—NAACP president  
Kweisi Mfume

Kweisi Mfume, president and CEO of the NAACP, addresses students in the Marvin Center Wednesday night.

# NAACP leader promotes justice

by David Levine  
Hatchet Reporter

Kweisi Mfume, president and chief executive officer of the NAACP, urged students to get involved in the affirmative action and civil rights movements in the Marvin Center Continental

Ballroom Wednesday night. Mfume said that universities should foster social activism.

"They don't exist just to give you a degree, they exist to get you to think," he said.

He encouraged people to be vocal when they see problems in the world, saying "It's OK to speak

up." Mfume has headed the NAACP since 1996, following a career that included 10 years as a member of the House of Representatives and seven in the Baltimore, Md., government.

GW's chapter of the NAACP hosted the event, which drew

about 225 people. Mfume told the group that problems such as racism and sexism "only continue to exist from the deafening silence of those who say 'You don't want to deal with that, you want to go to school and get a degree.'"

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Adam Levine/Hatchet photographer  
Students cross H Street between the Marvin Center and Kogan Plaza. GW is forming a committee to improve safety on the street.

# Street safety concerns UPD

■ University forms committee, city installs traffic lights

by Rachel Zavala  
Hatchet Reporter

The University formed a committee this week to explore ways to make the 2100 block of H Street safer after a car struck a student there late last month.

While the student sustained no serious injuries, the accident highlighted the potential dangers posed by a street that experiences a high

volume of pedestrian and vehicular traffic. Gelman Library, Kogan Plaza, two residence halls, the Marvin Center and the Academic Center are all located between 20th and 21st streets, leading students to often cross H Street mid-block.

"We have had a couple incidents each year. Not necessarily hits, but near misses," said University Police Chief Dolores Stafford, who will be heading up the committee.

She said drivers and pedestrians are responsible for creating the safety hazards.

"Almost every incident has been students stepping out into the street without looking both ways or when

they do not have the stop signal," she said. "You can see the cars driving faster than they should, certainly above the speed limit."

The seven-member committee, which will include Student Association President Kris Hart and representatives from several vice presidents' offices, will discuss measures that would make cars slow down and encourage students to use the crosswalk. A proposal will be presented to the city after two or three meetings, Stafford said.

She said she has no time frame as to when the results will be presented.

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