



Fall 2020 District Connections Guide

District Connections connects first-year students with the cultural and intellectual diversity of the nation's capital. The program offers first-year undergraduate students free access to faculty, staff, and peer-led activities designed to connect the first-year class to each other and to our vibrant city. The overall program and the details of each event are intentionally designed to include aspects that promote relationship building, enhance cultural awareness and understanding, foster pride in GW and D.C., and develop important skills such as utilizing public transportation and navigating the city.

This guide gives first-year students information about how to navigate D.C. and ways to get involved virtually. It also serves as a resource for when students are able to safely join the GW and D.C. community on campus.

What type of events does GWxDC host?

District Connections events tend to fall within one of the following categories: museum, local business, neighborhood, art, sports, fitness/wellness, speaker, or D.C. experience. These different categories provide new students with a plethora of options from which they can choose based on their own interests.

How will GWxDC change due to COVID-19?

Beginning in October, first-year students will receive an email newsletter each month with a list of virtual events for that month. Events, both free and paid, may be hosted or organized by other offices within GW or organizations outside of the GW community. Some of these events may include a debrief with peers and/or a GW staff facilitator in a post-event discussion. Events with these debriefs will be noted in the event description within the monthly email newsletter. The cost of some of the GWxDC opportunities will be covered by the University, but registration is required and spots will be limited. Continue to check your email for more information each month!

We also encourage you to check out the [University Calendar](#) for more information about other events coming up.

Will there be in-person GWxDC events in the spring?

The University has not yet made an official decision about the spring 2021 semester. GW will continue to closely monitor the latest data on COVID-19 cases locally and nationally and work closely with medical and public health experts to make that decision. Once announced, District Connections will make adjustments to their programming depending on the status of the spring semester.

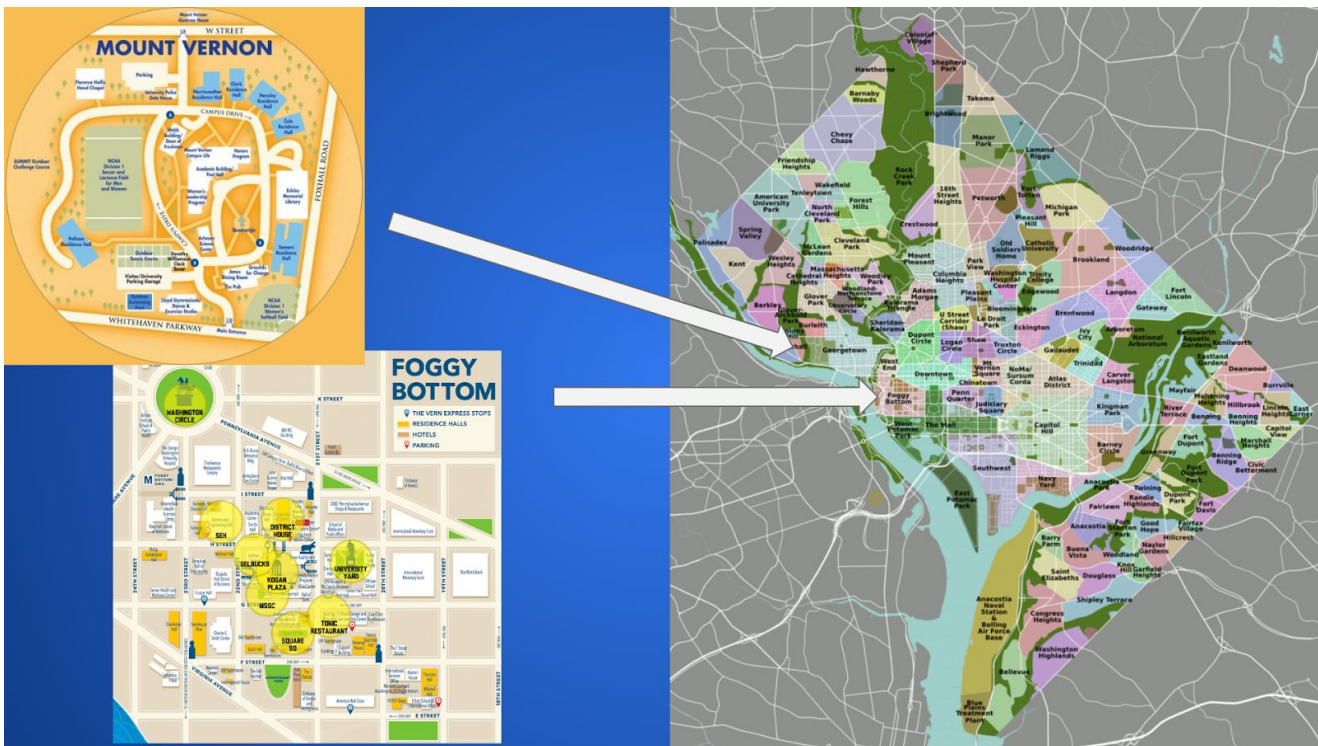
Visit our [website](#) for updates and more FAQs. If there are questions, please email us at gwxdc@gwu.edu.

Navigating D.C.

We want to help you get your bearings and understand a little more about how to navigate the wonderful city of Washington, D.C.

GW's campus

Whether you live on the Foggy Bottom campus or the Mount Vernon campus, life at GW means that you have the entire city of D.C. surrounding you. D.C. is divided into four quadrants centered around the Capitol Building. [Foggy Bottom campus](#) encompasses 18 city blocks and is located in the Northwest (NW) quadrant of D.C., which is the largest, followed by Northeast, Southeast, and Southwest. The [Mount Vernon campus](#) is also in the NW quadrant and is located in the Foxhall neighborhood, just past Georgetown.



Layout of the city

Streets that run from east to west are named by letters while streets running north to south are based on numbers, all centered around the Capitol Building. It may take a while to learn the streets on and around campus. If you're still confused, check out this [video](#)!

How to get around

From GW's campus, there are multiple ways to get around D.C. A few include the Metro train, Metro bus, the Circulator, Capital Bikeshare, dockless scooters, and rideshare apps.

WMATA

Public transportation in D.C. falls under the Washington Metropolitan Area Transit System Authority, otherwise known as WMATA. Metro Train and Metro Bus are the most popular forms of transit within the District and expand throughout the DMV area. To use the Metro, you need to purchase a [SmarTrip card](#) at the Metro station. On campus, just go down the escalators at the Foggy Bottom station to purchase a card. You can add money to the same card at a station or [online](#) so make sure to keep it. Make sure to register your SmarTrip card online in the event your card is misplaced or stolen. You can always transfer funds to your new card and deactivate your lost one.



[The Circulator](#) provides public transportation to the District's main attractions and neighborhoods at a cost of only \$1. The system consists of six distinct routes across Washington, D.C., and even into Rosslyn, VA. The Circulator services each stop every 10 minutes.

Capital Bikeshare

Utilize GW's partnership with Capital Bikeshare to purchase a \$25 annual membership. D.C. has many bike lanes throughout the city making it easy to explore via bike.

Dockless Scooters

You can utilize dockless scooters such as Lyft, Jump, Skip, etc. for quick trips around the city. The scooters are all over the city and you just need to download the apps to access them. Always be sure to wear a helmet and be aware of your surroundings and traffic when exploring.

Car-sharing or Rideshare Apps

Car-sharing rentals such as ZipCar and Car2Go are available throughout DMV and offer by the hour or by day rentals. Rideshare apps such as Lyft and Uber are also available to download.

Walking

Many areas within D.C. are walkable. You can enter an address into [walkscore.com](#) to see how the location is rated for walking and public transportation access.

Perks of Living in D.C.

D.C. has always had many activities for not only tourists, but also its residents. Once you move to D.C., you'll soon realize how much D.C. has to offer. Some of these activities are still available now, but with different restrictions and regulations due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Some may be temporarily closed. Be sure to look at their websites for specific details.

D.C. Neighborhoods

D.C. is made up of a lot of different neighborhoods that offer a variety of restaurants, business, and activities. It might take some time for you to get acquainted with the area, but there is so much to love about each one of D.C.'s neighborhoods. Take a look at the breakdown of the [neighborhoods](#) and what they have to offer.

D.C. Sports

The city has a lot of well-known sports teams. Due to COVID-19, most, if not all, games are not allowing patrons to observe games in-person. Keep an eye on the teams' websites for recent updates. Some of the popular teams in D.C. include:

- [Washington Nationals](#) (Men's baseball)
- [D.C. United](#) (Men's soccer)
- [Washington Football Team](#) (Men's football)
- [Washington Wizards](#) (Men's basketball)
- [Washington Mystics](#) (Women's basketball)
- [Washington Capitals](#) (Men's hockey)
- [Washington Kastles](#) (Tennis)

Elections and Inaugurations

As the nation's capital, there are a lot of events that take place in D.C. related to national elections and campaigns. Visit the [D.C. Board of Elections website](#) for more information about upcoming events. GW also encourages participation in elections and the world of politics through [GW Votes](#). Furthermore, the University hosts its own events in honor of the Presidential Inauguration every four years to celebrate the democratic process and come together as a community.

Every type of art, theater, and music

Throughout the year, productions for audiences of all ages grace legendary stages in D.C. Whether you're going to a local concert or enjoying a musical, the D.C. performing arts and music scene will provide you with plenty of options.

- [John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts](#), generally known as the Kennedy Center, is the busiest performing arts facility in the United States. Its offerings include opera, theater, dance, ballet, and music.

- [The 9:30 Club](#) has been at the forefront of the District’s music scene since its inception, and made its bones in the ‘80s hosting soon-to-shine acts including Chuck Brown, Red Hot Chili Peppers and The Police.
- [The Anthem](#) is the destination for memorable experiences—and is run by the team behind the 9:30 Club. As the Southwest Waterfront neighborhood’s cultural center, it features an acoustically advanced concert hall to host marquee performances by internationally celebrated artists as well as intimate shows with local favorites.
- [Union Stage](#), located at The Wharf, offers a wide range of independent acts.
- [Ford’s Theatre](#) is a working theatre, historical monument, and world-class museum and learning center. The site of Lincoln’s assassination in April 1865, Ford’s Theatre offers visitors the opportunity to immerse themselves in America’s past while revealing meaningful connections to today.
- [National Theatre](#) has been hosting theater-goers from its Pennsylvania Avenue perch for nearly 200 years. Today, the historic theater is home base for Broadway in D.C., hosting a number of well-known touring shows throughout the year.
- [The Lincoln Theatre](#), built in 1922, was a cultural center of D.C., predating and influencing Harlem’s renaissance. Washington natives Duke Ellington and Pearl Bailey were joined by nationally acclaimed artists such as Ella Fitzgerald, Billie Holiday, Nat King Cole, Cab Calloway, Louis Armstrong and Sarah Vaughn, who performed regularly on the storied stage.
- [The Arena Stage](#), which opened its doors in 1950, has been a pioneer of the Regional Theater Movement. Welcoming over 300,000 audience members annually, Arena Stage productions have received numerous local and national awards, including the Tony Award for best regional theater. Be sure to participate in their “Pay Your Age: An Under 30 Program” to get discounted tickets!
- AND MUCH MORE...

Farmer’s Market

There are nearly 30 [farmer’s markets](#) across D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. Enjoy these inclusive community spaces to find local food, improve your health, and support local farmers and food producers. View the [interactive map](#) to locate a farmer’s market in your area.

Food

One of the best parts about living in D.C. is the variety of international cuisine found around the city and its surrounding suburbs.

Free events and festivals year round

You can find amazing festivals and events taking place all year long in Washington, D.C. Here are some celebrations and festivals to look forward to:

- National Cherry Blossom Festival
- Passport D.C.
- D.C. Jazz Festival
- Smithsonian Folklife Festival

- Capital Pride
- Fourth of July
- Memorial Day
- National Christmas Tree Lighting
- Metropolitan Washington Restaurant Week
- D.C. Bike Ride
- H Street Festival
- Adams Morgan Day
- National Book Festival

Monuments

D.C. is full of memorials and monuments to presidents, wars, servicemen, and individuals. Many of the prominent monuments are located on the National Mall, making it a convenient spot to explore some of the most popular monuments in the city. Some notable monuments include:

- Washington Monument
- Lincoln Memorial
- Jefferson Memorial
- Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial
- Vietnam Veterans Memorial
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Memorial
- Korean War Veterans Memorial
- World War II Memorial
- AND MUCH MORE...

Museums

Washington, D.C. is in a league of its own when it comes to world-class museums, many of which are free to visit. Here are just a few museums you should visit during your time at GW!

- [National Gallery of Art](#) regularly features temporary exhibits that highlight distinctive artists in a range of mediums. The National Gallery of Art also hosts events throughout the year, including concerts, guided tours, gallery talks, and much more.
- [National Air and Space Museum](#) has the world's largest collection of historic aircraft and spacecraft, including Charles Lindbergh's Spirit of St. Louis, the Wright brothers' original 1903 flyer, astronaut space suits and a lunar rock sample. In fact, the collection has grown so large that there's a dedicated annex, the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Center, in Chantilly, VA.
- [United States Holocaust Memorial Museum](#) serves as a living memorial to the Holocaust. Its purpose is to educate its visitors on the dangers of hatred and the atrocities of genocide, and how society can confront challenges to freedom and human dignity.
- [National Museum of Natural History](#) is the world's largest natural history museum. The museum contains some of the most famous artifacts in the world. The Janet Annenberg Hooker Hall of Geology, Gems and Minerals has the supposedly cursed Hope Diamond on display.

- [National Museum of American History](#) presents America's history in all of its complexity. The museum's collection features more than three million artifacts, from Dorothy's ruby slippers in The Wizard of Oz to sheet music written by D.C. legend Duke Ellington.
- [National Museum of African American History and Culture](#) is the only national museum devoted exclusively to the documentation of African American life, history, and culture. It was established by Act of Congress in 2003, following decades of efforts to promote and highlight the contributions of African Americans. To date, the museum has collected more than 36,000 artifacts.
- [National Museum of the American Indian](#) has one of the world's most expansive collections of Native American objects, photographs, artifacts, and media. The NMAI is dedicated to bringing Native voices to life throughout its contemplative exhibitions and colorful activities.
- [The Library of Congress](#) is the research library that officially serves the United States Congress and is the de facto national library of the United States.
- [Smithsonian's National Zoo](#) is located in D.C.'s residential Woodley Park neighborhood. At the National Zoo, visitors can find all sorts of animals that don't subscribe to party lines. Lions, tigers, giraffes and the zoo's beloved giant pandas are just some of the 1,500-plus animals that call the 163-acre park home.
- [United States Botanic Garden](#) allows visitors to enjoy a living, indoor-outdoor museum with an impressive collection of plant life. Fan favorites include the charming 19th century hothouse conservatory and the butterfly garden.
- AND MUCH MORE...

Outdoor Activities

With its ample sidewalks, abundant national parks and miles of panoramic trails, Washington, D.C. has a lot of outdoor options that everyone can enjoy. Here are a few outdoor destinations and activities in the area:

- [Rock Creek Park](#)
- [Meridian Hill Park](#)
- [National Mall](#)
- [United States National Arboretum](#)
- [Tidal Basin](#)
- [Theodore Roosevelt Island](#)
- [Great Falls Park](#)
- [Kingman Island](#)

Political Activism

D.C. has been the home of large protest and human rights movements throughout history. The March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom saw Martin Luther King, Jr.'s powerful "I Have a Dream" speech at the Lincoln Memorial. Today, you can still see the spot where Dr. King delivered this speech. Other large protests in D.C. have included the 2017 Women's March, March for Our Lives, and the Million Man March. While in D.C., there are a lot of opportunities to engage in activism both on campus and in the larger community.

Additional Resources

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