Welcome to the HR and Payroll year-end newsletter. The newsletter contains helpful hints to assist you in preparing for the next calendar year. Reading this newsletter could help you save on taxes, ensure you receive your 2007 W-2 and provide useful tips on a variety of topics. We hope you find the newsletter a helpful resource. Enjoy!

Payroll Updates

W2s are accessible online
In 2007, we launched W-2 access on line and it was a huge success. 70% of the Mason community opted to receive their W-2 online via PatriotWeb. Our goal this year is to have W-2s accessible on line as of January 4, 2008. As we did last year, paper W-2s are available upon request by sending an email to the W-2 hotline at W2info@gmu.edu or you may leave a message on the W-2 hotline at (703) 993 9100 and a paper form will be mailed to you. Thank you for helping us continue to promote a paperless work environment.

Limited Use Only for Paper Timesheets
Timesheets can be a complicated topic. As you know, timesheets are electronically submitted via Patriotweb.gmu.edu. Paper timesheets are only supposed to be used to amend a timesheet that has already been submitted via Patriotweb. Currently, many people are using paper timesheets if they miss the submittal deadline. As a result, Payroll is receiving hundreds of paper timesheets.

Payroll is instituting a process to address late timesheets. Should you miss the submittal deadline, please alert your timesheet approver. Depending upon the circumstances, your timesheet approver will either call Payroll to have the timesheet submitted on your behalf or your approver will submit it for you and then complete the approval process for your timesheet.

Beginning January 1, 2008, any paper timesheets that are not amending time already submitted electronically will be returned to the department and the employee will not be paid.
We don't want anyone to find themselves in this situation. So whether you are a timesheet submitter, approver, or both, please remember to contact your timesheet approver if you miss the submittal deadline.

Additional information on timesheets and the approval process can be found at http://hr.gmu.edu/time/. For specific information on the approval process, please see the Approvers Quick Reference Guide.

Is your permanent address updated?
Please make sure your correct mailing address is on file with HR & Payroll. An updated permanent address in the HR & Payroll system is very important. To verify your address and update if necessary, please follow these steps:

1. Go to https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/
2. Log in using your G# and 6 digit pin number
3. Select Personal Information
4. Select View Address(es) and Phone(s)
5. Verify your PERMANENT address. If it is not correct, Select Update Address(es) and Phone(s)
6. Then Insert a new PERMANENT address

If your health insurance plan is through Mason you also need to update your permanent address in EmployeeDirect at https://edirect.virginia.gov/. Please also remember to update your new address with your retirement plan vendors TIAA-CREF, Fidelity Investments or GreatWest.

Is your emergency contact information updated?
Please make sure your emergency contact information is up-to-date in Employee Self Service as well.

2. Log in using your G# and 6 digit pin number
3. Select Personal Information
4. Select View Emergency Contacts
5. Verify your emergency contact information. If it is not correct, select Update Emergency Contacts.
6. Insert updated information.

W-4 Federal tax filing status exempt
If you claimed an exemption from withholding on your W-4 for 2007, your exemption expires on February 15, 2008. Please be sure to complete a new W-4 for 2008 by visiting http://hr.gmu.edu/payroll/

Note: This does not apply to non-residents and international visa holders who have completed their W-4 at the Office of International Program and Services (OIPS) at George Mason University.
Benefit and Retirement Plan Update

IRS Updates Benefit Limits
The IRS has updated the annual limits to certain retirement plans for 2008. The Social Security Taxable Wage Base has increased from $97,500 to $102,000. Pre-tax employee contribution limits for 403(b) and 457(b) plans have remained the same as 2007 limits, $15,500 for employees under 50 years of age, and $20,500 for those age 50 and older. If you would like to increase your retirement contributions you should complete a salary reduction agreement form located at http://hr.gmu.edu/forms/benefits/gmu403bSalaryReductionAgreement.pdf and mail the completed form to Human Resources & Payroll at MS 3C3.

Qualifying Events Affect Your Health Insurance and Flexible Spending Accounts
Having a baby? Getting married or divorced? Child becoming self-supporting? Affirmative answers to these and other questions may allow you to make mid-year changes to your insurance and flexible spending accounts, but only if you notify Human Resources & Payroll within 31 days of the event’s occurrence. Coverage changes are effective the first of the month following our receipt of the enrollment election form. Failure to notify us within the 31-day deadline may result in loss of insurance for the new dependent or possible exclusion by the state from health care coverage for up to three years.

They grow up so fast!
Dependent children are no longer eligible for health coverage at the end of the calendar year in which they turn age 23. If your child will be age 23 by December 31, 2007, HR & Payroll has contacted you about reducing your membership effective January 1, 2008 and offering COBRA coverage to your dependent. For more information, please check out: http://www.dhrm.virginia.gov/hbenefits/eligibilityrulesforcoverage91707.pdf

Leave Information

The 2007-08 Holiday Schedule can be found at: http://hr.gmu.edu/benefits/holidays.shtml
This should give you plenty of time to plan your vacation schedule.
Turnover Deadlines Approaching for VSDP Family/Personal Leave and Excess Annual Leave

There are limits to the amount of annual leave that can be carried over by classified staff from year-to-year. For excess annual leave, VSDP Sick, and VSDP Family and Personal leave purposes, the year runs from January 10-January 9. Unused VSDP Sick and Family and Personal leave will be replaced with a new allotment of leave if not used by January 9, 2008. New VSDP Sick and Family and Personal Leave will be awarded on January 10. And, if your annual leave balance will exceed the maximum (see chart below) as of January 9, 2008, you will lose that portion that exceeds the limit. The limits as defined by the Department of Human Resource Management (DHRM) are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years of Service</th>
<th>Accrual Rate per Pay Period</th>
<th>Maximum Carryover</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 5</td>
<td>4 hours</td>
<td>24 days (192 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-9 Years</td>
<td>5 hours</td>
<td>30 days (240 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-14</td>
<td>6 hours</td>
<td>36 days (288 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-19</td>
<td>7 hours</td>
<td>42 days (336 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20-24</td>
<td>8 hours</td>
<td>48 days (384 hours)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25+ Years</td>
<td>9 hours</td>
<td>54 days (432 hours)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Any unused classified annual leave may be donated in 8-hour increments. Please complete a leave donor form before January 9, 2008 at: [http://hr.gmu.edu/forms/leave_sharing.doc](http://hr.gmu.edu/forms/leave_sharing.doc) and submit it to the HR & Payroll office at MS 3C3.

Speaking of Vacation -- What About 12-Month Faculty?

Annual and sick leave for 12-month faculty was changed earlier this year from an annual award system to an accrual system. As part of that process, all 12-month faculty have to submit timesheets recording any leave taken. If no leave is taken during a pay period, a timesheet is still submitted without recording any time taken. Should a faculty member not submit a timesheet for 6 consecutive months, their leave accrual will stop.

Because the policy went into effect on June 25, 2007, the first six month deadline regarding timesheets will occur on December 25th. Because of the holidays and winter break, the deadline will be extended to January 25, 2008. Please be sure to submit your timesheets if you haven’t already. Timesheets are submitted via Patriot Web at [https://patriotweb.gmu.edu](https://patriotweb.gmu.edu).

Military Leave

Mason faculty and staff continue to be called up for reserve or active duty. Information on how leave, benefits, and pay are affected by military service is available at [http://hr.gmu.edu/gen-info/military.php](http://hr.gmu.edu/gen-info/military.php).

The Staff Senate, in partnership with HR & Payroll, launched Mason Military Outreach (MMO) this fall as a way to reach out to the Mason community in support of those of members of the community who are being deployed, returning from deployment or have family and loved ones in the military. MMO currently is conducting regular care package drives and a website is under development. For information, please contact MMO at mmo@gmu.edu.
**Family And Medical Leave Act Of 1993 (FMLA)**
FMLA provides for up to 12 weeks annual unpaid leave for employees who have serious or chronic medical conditions or who need to take care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, parent) with such a condition. The leave is unpaid; however, employees may supplement their pay by using leave they have accrued in an appropriate category. For example, annual and comp leave may always be used. Community service leave may not be used. If the employee is the person with the medical condition, then Traditional Sick Leave and VSDP Sick Leave may be used until exhausted. If the employee is taking care of a family member, up to 1/3 of the employee’s traditional sick leave or VSDP sick leave balance may be used for this purpose. If an employee is part of a two-GMU employee family (i.e. a married couple), the two employees share the 12-weeks between them.

For more information, please see University Administrative Policy No. 2215, Family Medical Leave Policy, at [http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/2215adm.html](http://www.gmu.edu/facstaff/policy/newpolicy/2215adm.html)

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**Work/Life Program Update**

**Eldercare Services**
The eldercare services program, launched in the fall of 2006, has been well received. The program consists of three components – resource and referral, a seminar series, and a support group. For information in any of these areas, please contact Patrice Winter, our Eldercare Coordinator, at 3-1802 or via email at ecare@gmu.edu or check out the eldercare website at [http://eldercare.gmu.edu](http://eldercare.gmu.edu). If you are presently a caregiver, may be one in the future, or if you’d just like information on better preparing yourself for your own future, please don’t miss out on this helpful resource.

**Faculty/Staff Discounts**
At HR & Payroll, we are constantly working to partner with vendors to offer you discounts. As a Mason employee you receive discounts from several vendors throughout the area. Please visit [http://hr.gmu.edu/worklife/discounts](http://hr.gmu.edu/worklife/discounts) for a list of the vendors.

**Healthy You**
Make the right choices to reach your health, wellness, and weight management goals this holiday season. For ideas and information, check out the work/life web site at [http://hr.gmu.edu/worklife/health](http://hr.gmu.edu/worklife/health)

Please check the work/life website often for new opportunities to help balance your career at Mason with your personal life and needs.
Stay in the Loop and Bee Connected!
To stay in the know and take advantage of the plethora of opportunities you have as a member of the Mason community, please don’t forget to read eFiles every Monday and consider taking a spin through Today at Mason, the Mason Gazette, and The Broadside.

Fitness Flier
To help you plan for a new and healthy you for the new year, we have created a “Fitness Flier” for you at the end of the newsletter. Make a plan to “Get in Shape in 2008”! Enjoy!
Plan For A Happy, Healthy New Year!

‘Tis the season for eggnog, rum balls and watching football and basketball. But, it’s also a good time to start planning your fitness program for 2008. If enjoying a more active lifestyle is on your list of New Year's resolutions, early preparation will help.

Take advantage of fitness centers located on or close to the campus of your choice. Facilities include an Olympic-size pool, gymnasium, group classes, day care centers and more.

**Mason Athletic Facilities**
http://gomason.cstv.com/facilities/gema-facilities.html

**Fairfax Campus:**
Aquatic and Fitness Center
http://aquatics.gmu.edu/
(703)-993-3939

**Prince William Campus:**
Freedom Center
http://www.freedom-center.com/
(703)- 993-8444

**In the works!**
**Arlington Campus:**
Arlington Sport and Health Clubs
(703)-522-1702

**Other Opportunities!**
WeightWatchers at Work
Look for upcoming sessions including information http://hr.gmu.edu/training/

Note: Special pricing will be available in 2008! Watch eFiles for more info!

Work/Life Website
http://hr.gmu.edu/worklife/health

CommonHealth
http://www.commonhealthva.com/commonhealth

Revolution Health
https://www.revolutionhealth.com/commonhealthva

Make a commitment to be a healthier you!