



HUMAN RESOURCES & PAYROLL

JULY 1, 2007 – JUNE 30, 2008

ANNUAL REPORT



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Message from the CHRO

I am pleased to present the third annual report of the Human Resources & Payroll Department. What a busy and exciting year it has been at George Mason University. The Human Resources & Payroll staff works very hard to support our “up and coming university.”¹

As always, we remain dedicated to our mission to be an employer of choice in the greater Washington metropolitan area. We are proud of this year’s recognition of the efforts of Mason’s faculty, staff, and students. But our most valued recognition is from the faculty and staff we serve. The energy and excitement of the faculty, staff, and students defines Mason. It is what has, does, and will always make Mason a special place to learn and work.

Our energy is derived from working with our faculty and staff throughout their entire working life cycle – as new employees receiving relocation packets, onboarding at the NEW Center, and attending orientation programs to current faculty and staff who are dealing with the myriad of issues that arise throughout their career cycles through to retirement issues – pre-retirement planning and exciting new programming in development for staying connected after retirement through the Retirement Connection.

I would like to thank the Mason community for partnering with Human Resources & Payroll this past year. There are so many people to thank including the Mason administration, our HR liaisons, the Counsel’s office, the Office of Equity and Diversity Services, the Office of the Provost as well as the many others who provide us with information, data, and essential support to help us serve the Mason community.

Linda H. Harber
October 2008

¹ *U.S. News & World Report*, “America’s Best Colleges in 2009” issue ranked Mason the #1 national university to watch on its list of up and coming schools. 8/22/08

Overview

Human Resources & Payroll supports the lifecycle of faculty and staff at Mason. From onboarding to retirement, HR & Payroll endeavors to assist faculty and staff with timely information, resources, and guidance to ensure that Mason employees have the tools they need to have a life in balance at Mason.

Additionally, we continue to manage a wealth of data behind the scenes. Maintaining both data accuracy and security is a key responsibility of HR & Payroll and one we take very seriously. Our continual reexamination of business processes and additional audit procedures have resulted in error reduction, increased timeliness in payroll processing, and the automation and streamlining of a range of Human Resources & Payroll processes.

This past year has been an exciting one for Human Resources & Payroll. Our highlights included:

- An expansion of our on-boarding process to include a new Administrative/Professional Faculty orientation.
- Electronic W-2 availability by January 4, a full two weeks earlier than in 2007.
- An update of the Telework and Flextime policy to the Flexible Work Policy and the introduction of the Summer Flex Policy.
- New recognition awards including the Safety Recognition Award, the “We Flip for You” award of a Mason portfolio, and the Ben & Jerry’s ice cream “Cream of the Crop” award. A “Get Cozy with Cosi” award, a gift card to Cosi restaurants, was specifically developed for our Arlington colleagues at the suggestion of someone from the Arlington campus.
- Dr. Merten presided over our first training recognition ceremony for both graduates of the new SUPERvisor Training Series and those who partnered with us to offer the SUPERvisor series training.

New programs, policies, and initiatives would never be possible without our university partners. This past year we were privileged to work with a number of university colleagues including:

- I/O Psychology on a retention study for new employees
- University Life’s International Education and Programs department to expand Mason Links, our education program for Mason workers
- The College of Health & Human Services on our Eldercare & Life Planning Services program
- University Services including Parking Services and the Photo ID Office for on boarding new employees
- ITU Administration for Customer Service Week
- The Office of Equity & Diversity Services, University Counsel, and the Office of the Provost on a range of employee relations matters
- Professor Cindy Parker’s students in MGMT 421, Advanced HR, who designed our Summer Flex promotional materials
- The School of Management’s enthusiastic participation in implementing eHR

We also encourage Mason students to partner with us as well. We continue to have intern/volunteers who provide indispensable assistance to our training team. Our work/life team has benefitted greatly from the assistance of a BIS student as they work to develop a retiree volunteer program. Further, Mason students play an invaluable role managing the paper flow in the office and providing back-up support to our Customer Service Center. And we were delighted to welcome recent Mason graduates to our full-time staff as well.

We welcome input and suggestions from the Mason community on how we can best be of service to our colleagues. Your insights and observations are of great value to us as we move ahead. The future of Mason is directly tied to the caliber of its faculty, staff, and students. We consider ourselves most fortunate to work with such a talented, enthusiastic, and engaged group.

Classification & Compensation

<http://hr.gmu.edu/class-n-comp>

The Classification and Compensation team has several areas of responsibility. We provide information and guidance to University managers on compensation policy and procedures including supporting the work of the Salary Review Committee. We also stay abreast of new developments in Federal and State laws and ensure that the University complies with changes such as the recent increase in minimum wage.

In conjunction with Training and Employee Relations, we assist departments in job design, organizational structure and managing the resulting changes. Changes in work assignments or job design can also involve reclassification of positions and/or salary changes. This year we were involved in significant changes in five departments/schools.

A growing area in Classification and Compensation is workforce analysis. We will be providing data and analysis on turnover, retirement and salary trends to support development of new initiatives to recruit and retain high quality employees.

Other initiatives and achievements in Classification & Compensation for the past year include:

A. eHR Implementation

For a number of years now, the Mason community has been using eWork as the recruitment and applicant tracking software. Human Resources & Payroll, together with PeopleAdmin and a number of partner departments, began implementing Position Description and Performance Management modules for classified positions. The website is now called eHR.

The Human Resources & Payroll department purchased the software in order to automate many of the paper-driven aspects of the position and performance management processes. The eHR implementation will allow departments to automate the creation and approval workflow associated with a variety of different position actions.



Barbara Hansen, Workforce Planning and Budget Analyst

The eHR system is designed to benefit departments by facilitating faster processing of position description changes and approvals as well as providing up-to-date access to information regarding all of the department's positions and employee reviews. Employees, supervisors, and their reviewers need to be able to see their relevant documents. Security is a key element to these modules to ensure that individuals only have access to the files that they need to see.

During the transition to eHR, recruitment of vacancies, viewing applicants and hiring proposals etc. will function in the same way as they have in the past. Administrative, professional, instructional and research faculty positions remain unaffected.

B. Salary Increases & Salary Structure

The recent downturn in the economy combined with the high cost of living in the Washington metropolitan area continues to pose a challenge for the university in maintaining a competitive salary structure for employees.

To help respond to the high cost of living in the area, employees' average salaries have steadily increased over the past 6 years.

C. Salary Review Committee Activity

The Salary Review Committee reviews pay increases greater than 10% or \$10,000 for non-wage staff and greater than 25% for wage staff. The Classification & Compensation team provides staff support to the committee. In FY'08, 112 salary increase proposals were reviewed; 99% were approved.

Salary Review Committee			
By Executive Unit		By Employee Type	
Executive & Finance	13	12-month Instructional Faculty	10
ITU	4	12-month Research Faculty	13
Provost	80	9-month Instructional Faculty	30
Development / Relations	11	9-month Research Faculty	1
University Life	4	Administrative/Professional Faculty	31
		Classified	22
		Wage/Other	5
Grand Total	112	Grand Total	112

D. Turnover Rates/Separations

Reducing the turnover rate for classified employees is a priority for the university. In FY'07, the turnover rate for Mason's classified staff was 17.5% compared to the overall Commonwealth turnover rate of 11.0%.² In FY'08 the turnover rate for classified employees remained at 17.5%. The following chart shows the turnover rates for all benefited employees over the past three years.

	Classified	Administrative/ Professional Faculty	Instructional Faculty
Turnover Rate			
FY2006	19.8%	14.0%	24.8%
FY2007	17.5%	15.8%	11.3%
FY2008*	17.5%	14.5%	9.6%
* As of 7/2008			

In FY2008, 451 employees voluntarily or involuntarily separated from the university. Further analysis of the separations reveals that:

- 52.4% were classified employees,
- 62.2% were of the Generation X & Y age groups (43 years of age or younger), and
- 67.3% worked at Mason less than 5 years.

As of July 2008, employee statistics show that the average age of classified employees is 42 years, compared to 49 years for instructional faculty and 45 years for administrative/professional faculty. This same data shows that, on average, classified employees have fewer years of service compared to the other two groups.

² Virginia JLARC Status Report -July 14, 2008

	Classified	Administrative/Prof. Faculty	Instructional Faculty
Number of Employees 7/08	1386	627	1316
Average Age	42	45	49
Average Years of Service	6.6	7.4	9.6

E. Performance Management

Last fall, the Compensation & Classification team processed 1,730 performance evaluations for administrative/professional faculty and classified employees. 98% of classified employees were rated as solid achievers or higher by their supervisors. Over 97% of administrative/professional faculty were rated as demonstrating the ability to fully meet the standards of the university or higher.

In 2007, 100% of classified performance evaluations were received in Human Resources & Payroll. In contrast, only 80% of the administrative/professional faculty evaluations were received. Our goal is to increase this number to 100%. Ensuring that all administrative/professional faculty are evaluated is important to the upcoming Southern Association of Colleges & Schools (SACS) accreditation.

The following chart shows the evaluation score distribution rates for the past three years.

Summary of Classified Evaluation Data						
	FY2008		FY2007		FY2006	
Rating	#	Percent	#	Percent	#	Percent
Extraordinary Achiever	280	22.2%	260	22.4%	249	22.3%
High Achiever	675	53.6%	591	50.9%	566	50.8%
Solid Achiever	280	22.2%	277	23.9%	274	24.5%
Fair Performer	23	1.8%	31	2.7%	22	2.0%
Unsatisfactory Performer	1	0.1%	1	0.1%	5	0.4%
Total # Rated	1259		1160		1116	

Summary of Administrative/Professional Faculty Evaluation Data						
	FY2008		FY2007		FY2006	
Rating	#	Percent	#	Percent	#	Percent
Generally Superior	349	74.1%	294	73.3%	266	73.1%
Fully Meets Standards	110	23.4%	102	25.4%	89	24.5%
Demonstrates room for growth and improvement	11	2.3%	4	1.0%	9	2.5%
Unsatisfactory Performance	1	0.2%	1	0.2%	0	0.0%
Total # Rated	471		401		364	

Reward & Recognition

A. Overview

Mason's award winning Reward & Recognition program was once again extremely active this year. The vibrancy of this program demonstrates the importance of Mason's recognition culture.

The Reward & Recognition program includes formal recognition in the form of the semi-annual Achievement Awards ceremonies. At each ceremony supervisors, co-workers, family and friends celebrate the excellent

work of our awardees. Over the past year, 50 exceptional individuals were honored. Attendance at the ceremonies has steadily increased to over 300 cheering fans!

In addition to the formal ceremonies, supervisors award Individual Impact Awards year round. In FY2008, 308 impact awards were given by supervisors to employees for such things as project completions, pitching in when vacancies occurred, and excellent teamwork. Of the total impact awards, 47% were from centrally supported funds and the balance came from departmental funds.

Mason was honored to have 6 individuals receive the Presidential Citation for rendering a life saving service. Thanks to these employees, others are here today.

Early in 2008, the Virginia Department of Accounts made some changes to the procedures governing the reporting and purchase of the various gift cards available from Reward & Recognition. As a result, we are now required to record and track each gift card including who receives it and report the cash value as income in compliance with IRS tax regulations. This initiated several changes to the gift card program. Although, the gift card amount will now appear on W-2's, Mason is covering the cost of the taxes and not the recipient employee.

Two additional changes to the program were also made. Employees are limited to no more than 2 gift cards in a calendar year and student wage employees are no longer eligible for gift cards. In light of this, Reward & Recognition has created additional non-monetary recognition options.



In spite of these new restrictions, our employees received more than 950 gift cards this fiscal year!

B. "New" Rewards & Recognition

We always aim to be flexible and tailor new awards in response to feedback from the University community and changing times. Since student wage employees are no longer eligible for gift cards, we sought non-monetary ways to thank employees for a job well done. New awards were created such as the "Cream of the Crop" award - a free pint of Ben and Jerry's ice cream or the "We flip for you" - a portfolio with Mason's logo. Our co-workers in Arlington are close to a popular restaurant called Cosi. We were able to purchase \$20 gift certificates to Cosi for use by Arlington supervisors.

In addition to the creation of new awards, FY2008 also saw the introduction of *The Mason Star*, Reward & Recognition's new newsletter. A sample page can be found in the appendix.

One of the most popular forms of recognition is Recognition leave. Using the "Snow What Fun It Is" and "Walking on Sunshine" programs, supervisors granted more than 1300 ½ days off in recognition leave this fiscal year, up from 809 ½ days last year! Additionally nearly 255 additional days of recognition leave were awarded to our hardworking staff.

C. University Service Awards

The University Service Award recognizes employees who have served George Mason University and/or the Commonwealth of Virginia for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 or more years of service. These awards are presented in April during the annual University Day breakfast. Recipients receive a pin and certificate through twenty years of service. Employees with twenty-five years of service or more also receive a gift. In the past, these employees received a pewter item

Helga Yunker, Office Manager



engraved with the Mason logo. This year we worked with a vendor to provide many more options such as silver and crystal items, art work, clocks, golf bags and jewelry. Recipients logged in to a website and were able to select their own gift. The recipients' responses were enthusiastic as they were able to select a gift that had meaning for them.

Training & Development

<http://hr.gmu.edu/training>



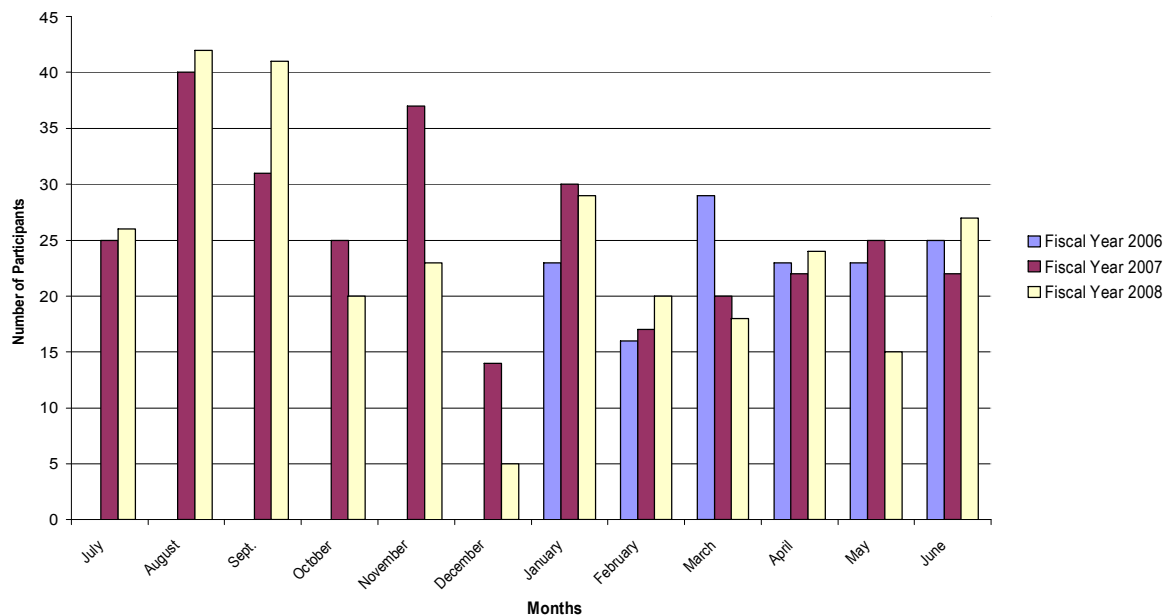
Robyn Madar, Lori Ann Roth, Jeannette Allen, and Rick Holt

The Training & Development area continues to expand its offerings and provide a wide variety of development opportunities to Mason's faculty and staff. From technical training such as Electronic Approvals, I-9, and eWork to skills-based training such as the New SUPERvisor Series and customer service workshops to events such as Faculty-Staff Enrichment Day and Pre-Retirement Planning Day, the Training & Development staff is on the move! We're proud and excited about our FY2009 agenda, which includes the roll-out of a Customer Service certificate program, Administrative/Professional Faculty orientation, Advanced Management Seminars, and more.

A. Onboarding

Classified orientation continues to prove a successful method of welcoming and introducing new staff to the Mason community. Our orientation facilitator maintains contact with the new staff to support them through the HR & Payroll decisions they make in those first weeks. New this year, the orientation team has

Orientation Participants



partnered with the Industrial & Organizational Psychology department, which is conducting a retention study with the voluntary participation of new staff members. The data collected in this study will help us create strategic retention plans and assist us in continually adapting the onboarding process to best serve the needs of our new staff members.

Also new in the onboarding process is the development of an orientation program for administrative/professional faculty, which was piloted in FY2008 and will officially roll out in FY2009.

For FY2009, we look forward to expanding the online wage employee orientation modules and continuing to provide an excellent onboarding experience to our new classified staff and administrative/professional faculty.



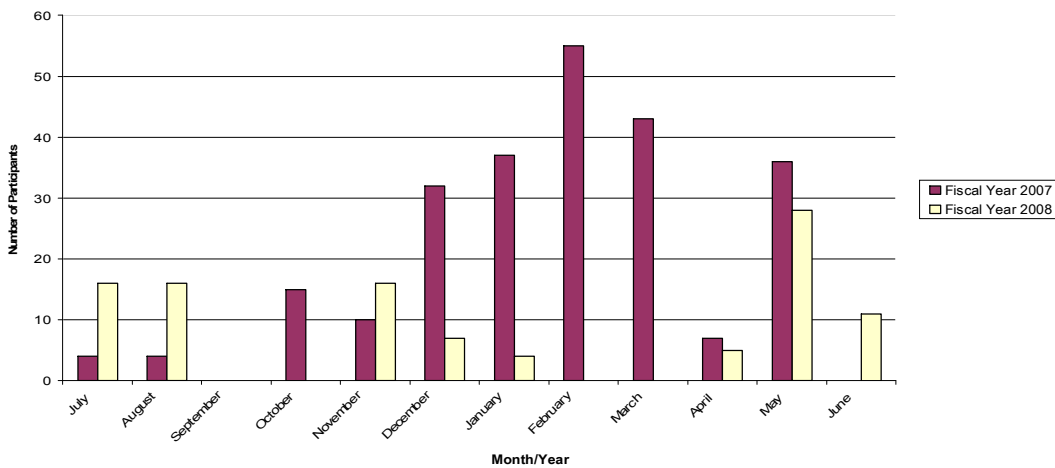
B. New SUPERvisor Series

Dr. Merten was in attendance at the recognition ceremony which was held for the New SUPERvisor Series graduates in April 2008. Fourteen participants – the first group of graduates - completed this very comprehensive series of classes, projects and mentoring. Also, an intensive formative evaluation process was completed by participants to determine the quality of the format and classes in the series. It was determined that the mentoring program was very helpful and that supervisors could complete the series in six months. The evaluation also was instrumental in identifying the next step for professional leadership development which will be titled, “The Advanced Management Seminars” coming in spring 2009.

C. Search Committee Training

Search Committee Training participation leveled off during FY2008 from the previous year. This was a result of departments having made a significant effort in FY2007 to take advantage of best practices in recruiting and hiring. New information added to the presentation this year includes an overview of “Reasons Not Hired” and “Examples of Behavioral Interviewing Questions”.

Search Committee Participants



D. Electronic Approval (EA) Training

EA training moved from a primarily one-on-one training to the classroom setting in FY2008. EA training is need-based and fluctuates based on key hiring times and turnover of existing administrative staff. The current training maximizes trainer time and provides hands on training for participants. Follow-up support is offered to

all participants through trainer office calls. As a result of feedback from participants, HR & Payroll developed a Quick Reference sheet to be used during EA submission.

E. Lunch & Learn

This year, the Lunch & Learn programming was driven by suggestions from faculty & staff. Subject matter for the one-hour lunchtime seminars included financial, health, and career development topics. The most popular workshops were “7 Hot Books Coming Out Soon” presented by the Fairfax County Public Library System, “Negotiation for Women”, and personalized nutrition advice. Due to low enrollment, Lunch & Learn workshops were not held at the distributed campuses in FY2008. A total of 190 faculty & staff attended Lunch & Learn seminars in FY2008. Attendance trends vary based on the workshop topic; an attendance analysis reveals that the most popular topics for Lunch & Learn seminars are health and self-development in scope. We are using this data analysis to develop the FY2009 roster of Lunch & Learn offerings.

F. Mason Investment Series

In partnership with the Benefits team, the Mason Investment Series was introduced in the fall of 2007. Vendors such as TIAA-CREF, Fidelity Investments, Great West, and Chevy Chase bank presented on investment topics once monthly. A total of 42 people attended the six Investment Series Seminars, with the most popular workshops focusing on retirement savings. For the FY2009 series, expanded offerings are planned, including a presentation on US Savings Bonds and topics such as “Tax Smart Ways to Save” and “Five Habits of Highly Successful Investors”.



G. Health & Wellness Programs

CommonHealth, the Employee Wellness Program for the Commonwealth of Virginia, continues to offer quarterly workshops on a variety of wellness topics. Like the Lunch & Learns, interest varies based on the topic. Topics this year included “Sharpening Your Brain” and “Back Savers”. A very successful initiative in FY2008 was the administration of 280 free flu shots at Faculty-Staff Enrichment Day.

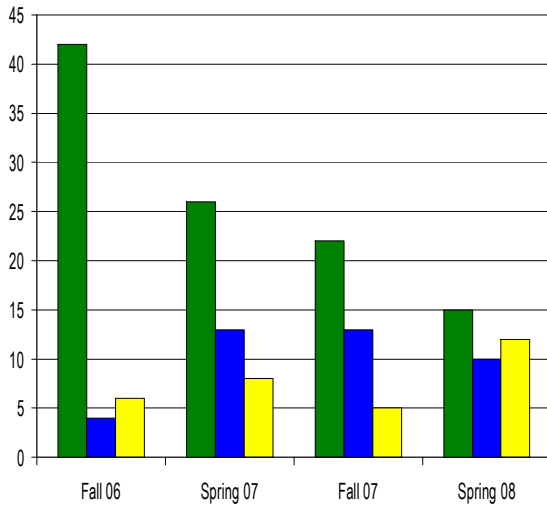
Weight Watchers at Work was given a large attendance boost in January due to the Commonwealth’s new 50% reimbursement pilot program. Over 20 people attend *Weight Watchers at Work* meetings at Mason, and the Spring 2008 group lost a combined total of over 268 pounds!



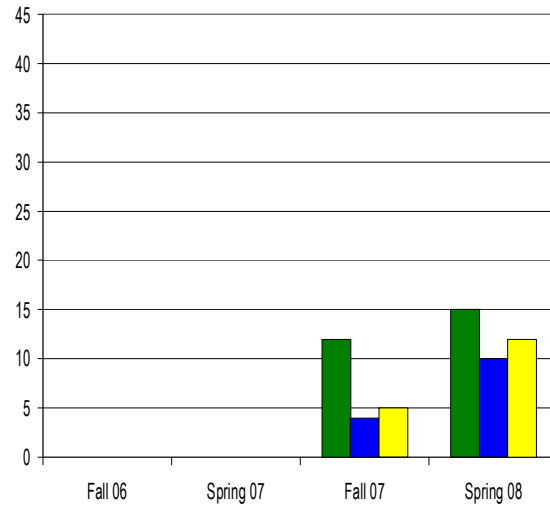
H. Mason Links

Training & Development has partnered with University Life’s International Education and Programs department to expand the Mason Links services. Mason Links is a growing education program for Mason workers, drawing on the resources and volunteer efforts of the entire Mason community. Jeannette Allen was hired in August 2007 as the Mason Links Coordinator. In the spring 2008 semester, we met our goals as each student who began the program completed it. This past semester, the learning lab was staffed with three experienced and bilingual work-study student tutors, which allowed tutees to have a more one- on-one experience and has led to increased participation in the lab.

Started Mason Links Program



Completed Program³



Green – Classroom
 Blue – Tutored
 Yellow – Learning Center



I. Faculty-Staff Enrichment Day 2007

This year's Faculty-Staff Enrichment Day was developed based largely on the feedback provided by the 2006 attendees and focus groups. The theme was "The Mason Experience: An Enlightened Past, an Exciting Present, and a Brilliant Future". Dr. Peter Stearns kicked off the day's events, which included free flu shots, an expanded vendor fair, door prizes, sessions on topics such as "Sitting at Your Desk and Other Workplace Hazards", "Coaching", "Mason's Center for the Arts", and an endnote by Tom Calhoun and Larry Czarda. This year, a second Faculty-Staff Enrichment Day was held at Prince William Campus with events and speakers tailored to the PW community. The FY2009 event planning is already in full swing, with a new format and a focus on sustainability and community in the works.

J. Pre-Retirement Planning Day

The second annual Pre-Retirement Planning Day for faculty and staff within five years of retirement was held in April 2008. Presenters from the Women's Institute for a Secure Retirement, TIAA-CREF, VRS, Fidelity, DHRM, and George Mason University provided programming on topics ranging from "Your Retirement Plan and How it Works" to "50 Things I Want to Do...." Participants networked over breakfast, lunch, and snacks, and took away valuable learning and ideas.



K. Customized Training

All of our workshops can be customized to meet the needs of individual departments. Customized training in the areas of teambuilding, the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, communication skills, dealing with difficult patrons, professionalism at work, and customer service was delivered to 192 people in FY2008. Our customized training services have expanded each year since FY2006, with a growth in the number of customized trainings conducted, more attendees, and expanded offerings. For FY2009, we have several customized offerings already being developed, and will continue to expand our needs assessment services and customized training offerings.

L. Meeting Facilitation & Support

³ Data not available for Fall 2006 and Spring 2007.

Meeting facilitation & support is another available service of the Training & Development team. When facilitating a meeting, we take care of meeting logistics and assist with facilitating the meeting itself. In FY2008, 258 meeting participants benefited from these services at 9 meetings. HR Liaisons meetings, Dr. Scherrens' Roundtable facilitated discussions, and town hall meetings are examples of this type of meeting. We partner with Mason's videoconferencing office to offer video-conferenced and web-streamed meetings where possible and also use our in-house videotaping & editing capabilities to archive meetings for those unable to attend.



M. Retreat Facilitation or Training

Retreats are a wonderful way for a department to take time out of a busy year for reflection, training and planning for the next year. The Training & Development team offers retreat support from team building and ice breaker exercises, to a custom workshop or full day retreat facilitation. We can also locate resources, locations or speakers for a specific topic for the retreat. Some of the departments who have taken advantage of this free service include ITU Leadership, Research & Economic

Development, Career Services, School of Management, and the JC Library Circulation team.

N. Intern Program



The Training & Development team continues to act as a laboratory for student interns and volunteers. While our intern/volunteers gain Human Resources and general office experience, we have been able to continue to revise and formalize our intern selection, onboarding, and training processes, sharing our resources with others in the Mason community seeking interns.

O. Testimonials

"HR's Training and Development consultants have assisted the ITU with respect to several goals, one of which is to provide all managers with annual training in a Four Pillars skill area. Consultants serve on the steering committee and provide assistance in assessing needs, planning the program, and conducting follow up activities. A second goal, new this past year, may even be more important to the progress of the ITU, namely the goal to create a cadre of managers throughout the organization who are highly skilled coaches. T&D not only helped plan the project but also conducted several of the training activities. The wrap up at the end of the year was the most effective wrap up I've ever participated in, largely due to the involvement of T&D."

Joy Hughes

Vice President and CIO, Information Technology Unit

"I have been very impressed with the level of service provided by the training group. We have used their services on several occasions for internal trainings and the facilitation of town hall meetings with large groups. All of my interactions with the training staff have been positive; the group is knowledgeable and professional and have always been willing to customize their sessions to meet the needs of our group. The past year has been a challenging one for OSP as we have gone through a major reorganization, but the training group has provided advice on how to best manage the process, especially in terms of our external communication plan and internal team building activities. I am pleased that we have such excellent resources on campus and would highly recommend them to other units."

Michael Laskofski, Director, Office of Sponsored Programs

“During fiscal year 2008 the State required Mason to develop and deliver a training course on business ethics. Training & Development reviewed documents and interviewed Fiscal Services staff in order to understand content needs, then quickly developed an interactive 1 hour program that included case studies and resulted in lively discussion and positive participant evaluations. The program was delivered by members of both departments to more than 200 employees in 10 departments.”

Elizabeth A. Brock, Associate Vice President and Controller



Part of the HR & Payroll Team with Gunston

Work/Life

<http://hr.gmu.edu/worklife>

Work/Life and Communications is all about creating opportunities and building relationships within the university and beyond. In Fiscal Year 2008, work/life adapted to the changing environment by continuing popular initiatives, modifying others, and introducing some new opportunities.

The highlights included:

- Flexible Work Options update and promotion
- University recognition
- A new line of Work/Life Resources
- A change in the focus of Eldercare Services



Rick Holt, Training and Patrice Winter, Eldercare & Life Planning

A. Flexible Work Options Update and Promotion

The Telework and Flextime policy was updated and renamed Flexible Work. The focus of the update was to highlight the lesser known flexible work options including compressed scheduling, remote work, and job sharing. Additionally, flexible work forms were consolidated and streamlined.

In light of gas costs, traffic congestion, the environment, work/life balance, and continuity of operations, a major priority during FY2008 was to find ways to highlight Flexible Work and encourage faculty and staff to “test drive” the array of flexible work options available. The cornerstone of this initiative was to develop a Summer Flex policy. Throughout late winter and early spring of 2008, the policy was crafted.

In April, students from Cindy Parker’s MGMT 421, Advanced HR class participated in a promotional flyer contest. The selected flyers were used to promote Summer Flex which ran from July 1-August 16, 2008.

Work/Life surveyed all Summer Flex participants – both employees and supervisors – to gather feedback on how Summer Flex was received around the university.

B. University Recognition

Mason is a great place to work! And because Dr. Merten encourages all of us to tell the Mason story, we spent some time in the last year doing just that. And, thanks to our outstanding faculty, staff, administrators, and students, we have a terrific story to tell.

- In September 2007, Mason was recognized by the AARP as a Best Employer for Workers Over 50. Mason ranked #8, the highest ranked newcomer to the list. Dr. Merten accepted the award at a ceremony in New York City on September 26, 2007. Among its industry peers, Mason stood out in recruiting, workplace culture, benefits, and opportunities for retirees.
- In July 2008, Mason was recognized by the *Chronicle of Higher Education* through its inaugural 2008 Great Colleges to Work For Program. Mason ranked in ten out of twenty-seven categories:
 - Connection to Institution and Pride (Employees have a strong sense of loyalty to the institution)
 - Disability Insurance
 - Engagement Index (The emotional connection employees have to an organization)
 - Healthy Faculty-Administration Relations (Senior leadership communicates with and respects faculty members)
 - Internal Communications (Ideas are fully considered and issues debated for better results)

- Perception & Confidence in Fair Treatment (Confidence in fair treatment, particularly regarding compensation and performance)
- Policies, Resources, and Efficiency (Institution is well run and prepares employees to be effective)
- Respect and Appreciation
- Supervisor or Department Chair Relationship (Supervisor makes expectations clear and solicits ideas)
- Work-Life Balance (Policies give employees the flexibility to manage their personal lives)

So, to help us tell the Mason story, if you see a survey come your way this year, we hope you'll take a few minutes out of your busy day to help us spread the word. Mason is a collegial, caring, and collaborative community, full of truly interesting and special people. Our warmest thanks for everything you do, every day, to make it that way.

C. A New Line of Work/Life Resources

FY2008 saw the beginning of bringing work/life "concierge style" services available for faculty and staff either on campus or through the web. Sittercity.com and TireVan are examples of bringing lifestyle services to Mason faculty and staff.

Sittercity.com – Launched in February 2008 through a corporate arrangement, Mason faculty, staff, and students have complimentary access to the sittercity.com database (an annual retail subscription normally approaches \$100). At sittercity.com, the Mason community can look for in-home caregivers providing child care, senior care, pet care, home care, and tutoring. Sittercity makes it simple and fast to find local care providers. The University has its own personal program page. Because there is a monetary cost to Mason participating in the Sittercity.com program, we have been monitoring the membership rates with great interest. We will continue to promote Sittercity.com across the university and in both the New Employee Welcome (NEW) Center and in our relocation packages to alert faculty, staff, and students of this available resource.

In addition to utilizing Sittercity.com as a prospective customer who is looking for in-home caregiving, the Mason community can also utilize Sittercity.com as a potential sitter providing sitter services to the Mason community or beyond. In fact, one can search within the database for someone who has a Mason affiliation.

TireVan – Launched in March 2008, TireVan can install new tires at a 20% installation discount to Mason faculty, staff, and students. Tires are purchased on line through the TireVan website and they then can be installed either at home or at the office. Currently, installation can be done on the Fairfax campus in Lot P (near the Field House) and on the Prince William campus in the small parking lot at the end of Bull Run Hall. TireVan also regularly comes to the Arlington, Fairfax, and Prince William campuses to conduct Tire Inflation Days where TireVan technicians check tire pressure and tread for free.

D. A Change in the Focus of Eldercare Services

Since its inception In September of 2006, the Eldercare Services program has provided resource and referral information to faculty and staff who care for an elder loved one. Eldercare Services is a partnership between Human Resources & Payroll and the College of Health and Human Services. The program is comprised of three parts – resource & referral, the eldercare seminar series, and an eldercare support group.

Resource and referral services are offered to Mason faculty and staff targeted specifically to the location where caregiving services are needed – locally, regionally or around the nation. Resources are targeted to the specific needs of the elder loved one and the caregiver. In addition, a comprehensive resource room is available with a wealth of information available on a host of eldercare issues.

FY2008 saw some adaptations and changes to the program. To broaden the audience for the seminar series and encourage life planning for a lifetime, it was renamed the Life Planning Seminar Series. The view from the work/life perspective is that planning can start at any age for a healthy, productive work/life segueing into a healthy, productive retirement. In addition to caring for our elder loved ones, we all should plan to care for ourselves and lay the groundwork for those who will care for us as we age. We invited our Mason retirees and the retirees who are affiliated with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) to join us.

The Seminar Series for 2008-09 will reflect this new purpose. We will still have an abundance of topics addressing eldercare but we plan to intersperse this with sessions that reflect the care needs of the caregivers as well as sessions that will help all ages plan for a successful work and life balance.

It was with this focus in mind that the Eldercare Support Group was also modified. Attendance at the monthly meetings was waning. Patrice Winter, our Eldercare Coordinator, modified the sessions and introduced a short program to the beginning of each meeting called --- Care for the Caregiver. Topics such as reflexology and restorative breath and relaxation were added to the meetings. After the short 20-30 minute program, attendees can discuss issues of interest as caregivers of elders.

E. Communication

1. New Work/Life Newsletter - In January 2008, a new Work/Life newsletter, *The Work/Life Wheel* was introduced (a sample page is located in the appendix). The newsletter highlights work/life topics such as health & wellness, fitness, and sustainability. It also features information on the array of discounts available to Mason faculty and staff.
2. Year-end newsletter – The third annual year-end newsletter was electronically communicated to all faculty and staff in December 2007. The newsletter includes timely and important information on payroll and benefits of particular interest to faculty and staff as the calendar year ends.
3. Targeted emails – A range of information regarding payroll and benefits was distributed via targeted emails this past year. Targeted emails were used to distribute information on a particular topic such as the availability of electronic W-2s, benefits open enrollment communication, and information for 9-month faculty on both faculty summer deductions and deferred pay. In addition, targeted emails are used as reminders such as advising 12-month faculty that they need to file timesheets at least once in any six month period in order to continue to accrue leave. Targeted emails are one way to ensure that faculty and staff receive important information that directly impacts their work/life.
4. HR Liaisons – Our HR liaisons continue to play an important role in the delivery of HR & Payroll information and services. They also provide perspective, sharing their views on how to improve the delivery of information and services. We have continued our regular communications with our liaisons through our “Instant HR & Payrolls”. These email communications promote HR & Payroll initiatives, policies, and procedures as well as share information on upcoming events.

F. Benefits Committee

The HR & Payroll Benefits Committee provides support to the department by reviewing vendor solicitation requests, work/life offers, and benefits proposals.

In 2007-08, the Benefits Committee approved:

- TireVan

- Waiting for You

Information on both TireVan and Waiting for You can be found on the discount page of the Work/Life website.

G. Work/Life Initiatives

1. New Discounts – From a work/life perspective, it's sometimes not what you earn, but what you keep. Making dollars go further is part of the purpose of work/life. During FY2008, we added a number of discount opportunities to the work/life website including discounts on entertainment, dining, goods, and services.
2. Commuter Choice – In FY2008, the Commuter Choice program was moved from Human Resources & Payroll to Parking & Transportation Services. Their comprehensive efforts in the area of van pooling, car pooling, and public transportation made moving Commuter Choice a natural choice, consolidating all transportation services in one specialized area. Human Resources & Payroll continues to support and promote the program in orientation programming and through work/life.
3. Mason Military Outreach (MMO) – Launched last year as a partnership between the Staff Senate and Human Resources & Payroll, MMO is now a stand alone organization. Work/Life supports the initiative whenever possible assisting in organizational plans for the future including potential lunch & learn sessions.



Jennifer Irvin, HR Consultant

H. In the Works

- Work with colleagues university-wide to augment health & wellness initiatives.
- Continue to recalibrate Eldercare Services to address both a wider audience of all ages and a wider initiative – caring for an elder loved one AND planning now for our own healthy and productive work/life and retirement.
- Develop an expanded Retirement Connection to include volunteer, social, and employment opportunities for Mason retirees.
- Continue to expand concierge-style services to Mason faculty and staff.

Payroll/HRIS
<http://hr.gmu.edu/payroll>

Payroll/HRIS continues to be on the move with lots of new projects and collaborations. This was a banner year for improving processes, sharing ideas, and building new relationships.

Some basic numbers can help tell the story. During the FY2008, Payroll/HRIS:

- Issued 10,895 W-2 Forms
- Issued 317 1042-S statements and accompanying returns
- Issued over 200,000 payments
- Collected and remitted over \$64.3 million in payroll taxes and filed accompanying returns and statements
- Processed 24,000 EA's
- Processed over 40,000 transactions systematically to update addresses and salary groups



*Sue Tinsman,
Payroll and HRIS Director*

A. Electronic W-2s

One of our major initiatives continues to be in the area of electronic W-2 forms. This year, electronic W-2 forms were available to all university employees via PatriotWeb on January 4, 2008 - a full two weeks earlier than in 2007. Electronic W-2's save time and money, as forms no longer need to be printed and mailed.

Because the electronic W-2s were delivered sooner, there was ample time remaining to resolve any questions or discrepancies prior to having to send the information to the IRS. The W-2 hotline continued to provide a means for employees to funnel questions and receive answers in a quick and courteous manner.

By receiving W-2's electronically in a format that facilitated submitting their tax returns, faculty and staff could receive their refunds much faster.

B. Tax Payments

Taxation of university employees who are working outside of Virginia was addressed in 2007. As a result, we established withholding arrangements in 16 additional states. In order to facilitate tax deposits, reporting and compliance, tax payment processing has been outsourced to ADP. ADP is a recognized leader in payroll tax services and through their services, the university will ensure its compliance in multistate taxing issues.

C. Banner Highlights and Enhancements

Payroll/HRIS had several projects this past year addressing data accuracy and process redesign.

1. The promotion and tenure upload processes were enhanced to include the employees' new job title in the upload
2. Implemented a new Admin/Faculty Leave accrual program
3. Eliminated the paper e-PAF forms for early terminations

D. Banner Self Service/PatriotWeb Enhancements and Highlights

Submission of timesheets for those who had forgotten was previously handled via a paper form. With modifications to Employee Self Service (ESS), we have eliminated this requirement. Employees now have the ability to complete the missing time sheet online, have it approved by their supervisor and the transactions updated into the Banner system.



Phase two of the automation of regular email communication regarding timesheets was completed to include two additional reminders sent each pay period. These include an additional email for employees to submit their timesheets as well as updates to supervisors regarding who on their staff has not submitted a timesheet and/or whose timesheets need to be approved.

Catalina Wheat, Payroll Specialist

E. Partnering Efforts at Mason

Payroll/HRIS continued to partner with both our internal customers and external organizations. These invaluable partnerships allow the department to share and expand its knowledge base. Partnerships included:

1. Working on taxation issues with the Foundation, Finance, and more extensively with the Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS).
2. Partnering on reconciliation issues with the finance team.
3. Creating and monitoring audit reports and taking steps to minimize errors for the regular and summer term upload of positions.
4. Rewriting of the benefit balancing reports to ensure accurate data selection and ease of monthly benefit balancing
5. Further enhanced Banner security and partnered with ITU to include HR datamart access.

F. Partnering Efforts Beyond Mason

Payroll continued to serve as a resource for other institutions that converted to Banner or had Banner software issues.

Jon Cruziger, Webmaster



G. Other Projects

System and process documentation continues to remain a priority for Payroll/HRIS. Documentation was reviewed and updated as needed.

Disaster recovery continues to be documented and regular communication exists between Payroll/HRIS and ITU to continue testing of the Prince William hot site fallback program.

Payroll/HRIS looks forward to building upon its successes, resolving outstanding issues, and continuing to collaborate with both Mason partners and colleagues from around the Commonwealth.

Employment

<http://hr.gmu.edu/ework>

<http://jobs.gmu.edu>

Expanding Mason's recruitment efforts is critical to the mission of the university. Mason cannot continue to grow and become a world class research university without increasing the number of skilled faculty and staff. During FY2008, HR & Payroll continued to spearhead strategic recruitment plans, including partnering with outside vendors to advertise specific vacancies and promote Mason employment in general. In addition, the employment staff continues to advertise all positions for the university, maintain the recruitment website, provide information regarding advertising with outside vendors and serve as liaisons with outside vendors.

A. Employment Metrics

During FY2008, approximately 725 jobs were posted on eWork. Classified positions continue to comprise about half of all the posted positions, with wage/student wage, research, instruction and administrative/professional faculty positions making up the other major categories. A small but growing number of graduate assistantships and adjunct positions are also posted on the site. The average time to fill for classified positions (posted and filled within FY2008) was 57.3 days. This is one day longer than the time to fill during FY2007.

Mason continues to attract a large number of first time applicants. This year, we had 19,926 new applications created in eWork, just under the number from FY2007. Just shy of the four year anniversary of eWork, we have a total of 68,244 unique applications in the system!

B. Communication

Since we implemented the changes recommended by the eWork work group last year, the HR & Payroll team produced a number of resources to help university users. During FY2008 we created a new page on the HR website: <http://hr.gmu.edu/eWork/>. The new page includes at a glance summaries of the classified and faculty recruitment processes. In addition to short summaries, we also posted detailed training manuals that explain how to use eWork for faculty and classified searches. Both of these manuals are over 50 pages and contain screen shots to help first time and periodic eWork users through the entire recruitment process.



Neil Paz-Cruzat,
Employment Assistant

In addition to providing information about eWork, the recruitment staff created several resources regarding outside advertising options. We updated the list of frequently used outside advertisers, which can be found at <http://hr.gmu.edu/eWork/AdOptions.pdf>, adding both new vendors and updating cost and schedule information. We also distributed a new newsletter to HR liaisons that features new or inexpensive outside advertising options. Samples of these fliers are in the appendix.

C. Outside Advertisers

During FY2008, HR & Payroll renewed several existing contracts with outside advertisers and signed additional contracts in an effort to use the university's advertising dollars more effectively. In November we renewed our contract with the *Washington Post*, which allows us to post 99 jobs on their website at any given time. Normally a single positioning on the *Washington Post* website costs \$395. With our package, Mason is paying an average of \$28 per online ad. A similar contract with HigherEdJobs.com and Monster.com also allows Mason to advertise at greatly reduced prices. Normally, ads with HigherEdJobs.com cost \$155 but Mason departments are able to post for only \$30 an ad. Departments can also utilize Monster.com for \$290

per ad instead of the regular single ad price of \$395. Finally, we signed a contract with *The Chronicle of Higher Education* that gives us a discount of 15% on the first 24 print ads.

Not only has the recruitment department worked to save the university money, but we have actively promoted Mason as an employer of choice. In September, we advertised in the *Washington Post* mega jobs section and highlighted the importance of work/life balance at Mason. We also placed an ad in the annual August Almanac edition of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, spotlighting the research of a current faculty member and the opportunities for new faculty at Mason. Finally, new this year, was an ad in the Style section of the *Washington Post* on Administrative Professionals Day. A copy of this ad is in the appendix.

D. In the Works

We have two major initiatives planned for FY2009. Mason is a member of the mid-Atlantic Higher Education Recruiting Consortium (HERC). This organization unites schools in the mid-Atlantic region (MD, DC, and northern VA) in order to attract qualified staff and faculty members, especially those in dual-career households. The HERC website will go live this fall.

In a continuing effort to brand Mason as an employer of choice, HR & Payroll is working with other departments, including University Relations and Creative Services, to begin an online Washington Post



*Michelle Lim, Faculty Liaison
and Mira Halilovic, Payroll Supervisor*

branding campaign. The goal of the campaign is to increase awareness of Mason as an employer of choice within the local community and to reach passive job seekers. The proposed campaign will include a three month online promotion of Mason with approximately 3.5 million impressions (about 1 million impressions per month) in the News and Style sections of the Post website that will appear primarily during the typical work day (8 am to 6 pm, Monday through Friday). We are awaiting budget approval for this proposal.

Benefits & Absence Management

<http://hr.gmu.edu/benefits>

The Benefits & Absence Management team is constantly working to support our workforce by increasing faculty and staff understanding of their comprehensive benefit package through communication, education, counseling and support. Our goal is to reach diverse members of the Mason community and provide the information they need during every step of their employment/life cycle.

A. Communication

To increase employees' understanding and appreciation of their benefits and total compensation package, the Benefits team worked to refine the online enrollment processes for retirement in the ORP and deferred compensation plan, provided easy access to benefits programs offered to employees via the web, made all Open Enrollment information accessible online and provided information utilizing multiple methods of communication. Some of the ways we reach employees are:

- Benefits orientation sessions for new faculty and staff
- Benefits information on the HR & Payroll web site
- Financial education and pre-retirement seminars
- Monthly on-site availability of our deferred compensation vendor
- Benefits spotlight and member handbook e-mailed for Open Enrollment
- eFiles
- Instant HR & Payrolls (listserv communications with our department HR liaisons)
- Benefit staff visiting the Arlington campus on a regular schedule and the Prince William campus based on requests



Sammy Camper, Workers' Comp

B. Benefit Program Counseling

The Benefits team provided consultation to potential hires and new employees on various programs offered at Mason. This includes a detailed description of the benefits package offered as well as an overview of work/life programs, academic opportunities, flexible work options offered and much more. 290 new classified employees were oriented in 2007-08. 234 new faculty members were oriented in 88 group sessions. Translators were used in both classified and faculty orientations when necessary (languages included Spanish, Korean, Arabic, Italian and Russian).

C. Open Enrollment

1. Unum Long Term Disability (LTD) Open enrollment – UNUM LTD open enrollment is held annually in November to permit participants to make enrollment changes. LTD insurance from UNUM LTD is designed to protect income if someone becomes medically unable to work. Full-time faculty and staff who have traditional sick leave (non-VSDP) are eligible for this optional insurance.

UNUM LTD Open Enrollment Statistics		
Year	Total Enrollment	Enrollment Changes
2005-06	948	43
2006-07	925	55
2007-08	817	34

During FY2008, the Benefits team actively communicated the availability of LTD insurance during new faculty orientations to ensure that incoming faculty were apprised of this important benefit. During the past academic year we had 67% of new faculty enroll in LTD insurance coverage.

2. Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) Continuous Open Enrollment

New faculty can choose between the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) and the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP). Within the ORP is a choice between two vendors – Fidelity Investments and TIAA-CREF. VRS is a defined benefit plan with vesting at five years of service. The ORP has a defined contribution of 10.4% with immediate vesting.

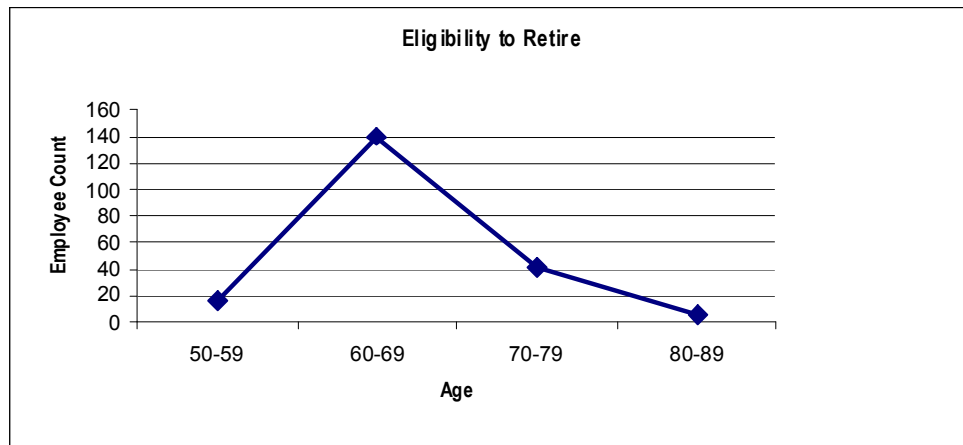
In past years, switching from one vendor to another was only permitted during an annual open enrollment period. This past year we began offering continuous open enrollment within the ORP. This meant that participants could switch from one vendor to another at any time. As a result, the number of vendor changes increased from previous years. As has always been true, participants can switch between investments at any time. Fund activity change rates increased for the third year in a row. In addition, during FY2008 the Benefits Team began a process of online enrollment for the ORP plan. This helped to add emphasis to Human Resources & Payroll's paperless goal and also assists our new faculty with a quick and easy method of enrolling with a retirement vendor.

3. Health and Flexible Reimbursement Account Open Enrollment

Health and Flexible Reimbursement Open enrollment was held from mid-April to mid-May. This year, there was a less than a 1% premium increase in the rate for 2008-09. The rate increase was minimized by an Employee Premium Insurance Credit (EPIC) set by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Further, the wellness plan was enhanced for expectant moms for the new plan year. Once again, employees can use the EZ® Reimburse Card for eligible medical expenses with no annual fee. This past open enrollment, the benefits team held two detailed information and Q&A sessions on each of the three campuses. Additionally, a video presentation was online which detailed plan changes, and open enrollment was promoted electronically to eligible faculty and staff directly as well as through eFiles and via the HR & Payroll website.

D. Retirement Counseling

During FY2008, 41 employees retired, down from 46 retirements in the previous year. However, as demonstrated by the graph below, there are a large number of employees in the 60-69 age group who will be eligible to retire in the near future. Consequently, sustained increases in retirements for the coming years can be anticipated. As a result, the Benefits team made a conscious decision to provide opportunities to increase faculty and staff knowledge about their retirement plans and the various programs offered through retirement vendors. To that end, the Benefits team, in partnership with the Training & Development area, held a series of investment related workshops addressing such topics as “How Much Should you Save for Retirement” and “Understanding your Investment Choices.”



Note: Retirement eligibility determined by the number of employees who either are age 50 with 5 years of service or age 65+.

1. Individual Retirement Counseling – TIAA- CREF and Fidelity Investments continue to offer free one-on-one retirement counseling to faculty and staff. These sessions include a review of all retirement plans (ORP and 403(b)) in which participants have assets.

Individual Retirement Counseling Statistics ⁴	
2005-06	161
2006-07	224
2007-08	227

One-on-one counseling is available by contacting TIAA-CREF or Fidelity directly.

TIAA-CREF - 1-800 -842-2776

Fidelity – 1-800- 343-3548

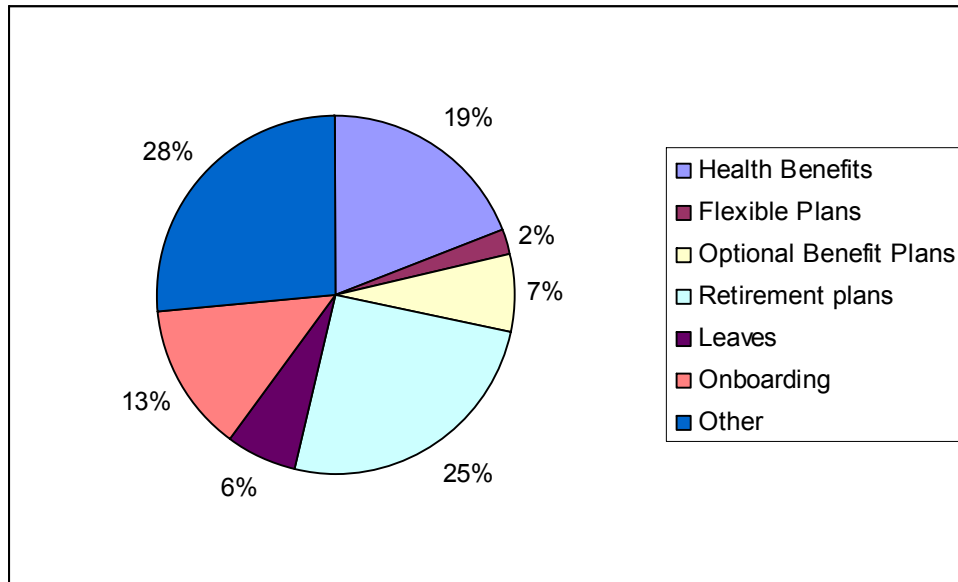
2. Service Retirement Counseling – The benefits team provides pre-retirement counseling to faculty and staff anytime upon request. Retirement counseling is always offered 90 days or more before actual retirement date and includes assistance in preparing retirement paperwork, detailing retirement benefit options, and outlining retiree health care including answering questions on the coordination with Medicare and Non – Medicare participating plans. Pre-retirement counseling is open to prospective retirees and their spouses/partners as well.

E. Other Benefit Related Counseling

Each member of the Benefits teams averages 37 daily contacts with faculty and staff (including phone calls and walk-ins), a significant increase from last year's average of 16 contacts. Reasons for the increase include the growth of the university, employees' increased interest in and awareness of their benefits package, and their desire to ensure that they fully understand and take full advantage of their benefits opportunities.

The chart below reflects some of the diversity of the questions and queries that the benefits team is contacted on:

⁴ Total includes both Fidelity Investments and TIAA-CREF one-on-one counseling sessions.



F. Absence Management Program

1. Short Term Disability (STD) Leave – During FY2008, STD claims were managed by the benefits team. The benefits team worked to improve communication to supervisors regarding claim status and encouraged employees to maintain contact with their departments. STD leaves involve a range of reasons but generally revolve around pregnancy or medical issues (surgeries, injuries, illness, etc.)

Short Term Disability Statistics	
2005-06	84
2006-07	75
2007-08	92

2. Long Term disability Leave (including Long Term disability – working) - Mason’s return to work ratio has been very positive within the last year averaging 99%.

Long Term Disability Statistics (Employees that rolled into Long Term Disability)	
2005-06	2
2006-07	3
2007-08	1
Long Term Disability – Working (Employee numbers for employees on LTD but are working part -time)	
2005-06	0
2006-07	1
2007-08	0

2. Family Medical Leave (FMLA) – FMLA claims are processed by the benefits team. The benefits team has worked hard to improve communication with supervisors and employees and to simplify the claim notification process. FMLA leaves can include intermittent FMLA where the employee works while taking FMLA. Intermittent leave is frequently used for caregiving purposes. This past year there was an increase in caregiving related FMLA particularly by adult children for their older parents.

Family Medical Leave Statistics Reported to Human Resources	
2006-07	33
2007-08	54

4. Other Leaves – This category includes all academic leaves, military leave, personal leaves and sick leave for faculty.

Other Leave Statistics	
2005-06	81
2006-07	77
2007-08	73

G. Educational Workshops

Please refer to the Training and Development section for an overview of workshops and “Lunch and Learn” sessions conducted over the course of the fiscal year.

H. Investment Policy Committee

Human Resources manages this committee which oversees the fund choices in the Optional Retirement Plan (ORP) and the Cash Match Program. The committee meets three times a year and includes annual meetings with each of the approved ORP and Cash Match vendors (TIAA-CREF & Fidelity Investments).

I. In the Works

- New federal legislation in the area of 403(b) and 409(a) accounts
- Mason Footsteps, a professional development program providing faculty with “shadowing” opportunities of senior administrators
- Developing retirement transitions
- Assisting with graduate student health

Employee Relations

http://hr.gmu.edu/emp_relations

The goal of the Employee Relations (ER) team is to support a positive work environment for faculty and staff at Mason. One way the ER team does this is through confidential assistance to university faculty and staff and their supervisors to help identify and resolve work related problems or proactively avoid potential problems. In addition to providing support for work related issues, the ER team distributes information on a wide variety of topics to help members of the Mason community deal with stresses outside the workplace. The ER team also partners with other departments throughout the university and the state to make Mason as safe a workplace as possible.

A. Employee Relations Metrics

During FY2008, the volume of work handled by the ER team increased for the second year in a row. This year there were over 500 events, approximately 100 more than during FY2007. The number of contacts includes work with both staff and faculty members. Since FY2006, the ER team has seen a significant increase in the number of faculty members seeking assistance. In response to that demand, we partnered with the Office of the Provost to create a new position and the search for a Faculty Employee Relations Partner is under way. The Faculty Employee Relations Partner will be the primary point of contact for faculty members with work related issues and will be in place in the next few months.

B. Coaching

Coaching is another resource available to faculty and staff at Mason. Through this program, the ER team matches employees who have work-related problems with trained coaches. This year, 11 employees were placed with coaches, dealing with issues ranging from preparing for difficult conversations to building relationships and improving management skills. In addition, the ER team developed the "Coaching Corner," a page on the HR & Payroll website that provides employees and supervisors with helpful tips. A coaching tip of the week is also available on E-Files. In the planning stages is an expansion of the coaching program to enable long-term coaching client partnerships.

C. Other Resources

Over the course of the past year, employees have faced stress on a variety of fronts, including the uncertain economic situation and ongoing military conflicts. In an effort to provide support for challenges outside of the workplace, the ER team has publicized other resources. For example, both Kaiser and COVA Care have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) that can help employees deal with issues outside the workplace, such as financial or substance abuse problems. Please contact the ER team for information and assistance regarding the EAP programs. The ER team is also on the cutting edge of researching and providing information regarding emerging topics in the employee relations field, such as instances of bullying in the workplace. HR & Payroll also offers training on a variety of topics including performance evaluations, coaching, standards of conduct and handling difficult communications and others as needed.

D. Exit Interviews

Exit interviews continue to be an important source of information on how to continue to make Mason a great place to work. We use the data collected to understand why people leave the university and draw on that information to develop creative ideas to improve retention. This year our response rate increased slightly, but it is still below 30%. Analysis of the exit surveys returned indicates that most people leave Mason to pursue employment elsewhere, especially in the private sector. Those who provided a rationale for leaving Mason indicated that financial concerns, such as low compensation and the high cost of living in the area, are important factors more than 20% of the time.

To make the exit interview an even more valuable tool, please help us increase our response rate by encouraging faculty and staff in your department to fill out exit interviews when they leave. To see a breakdown of the results for your department, please contact Dan Taggart at 3-1275 or dtaggart@gmu.edu.

E. Criminal Background Checks

FY2008 was the second full year the criminal background check policy has been in place. The number of checks run remains steady, with just over 300 checks for finalists for positions in selected (covered) departments and positions. The number of problems encountered remains under 4%. Since its inception, the HR staff has worked hard to ensure that this process flows smoothly. In the past year, the average time from start to finish decreased by over a day. For more metrics, please see the appendix. If your department is interested in running criminal background checks on new hires once a contingent offer has been made, please contact Meena Rajan at mrajan1@gmu.edu or 3-2606.

F. Safety

Maintaining a safe work environment is one of the most important goals of the ER team. This year, the Chief Human Resources Officer and Director of Employee Relations continued to lead the University-wide workplace violence committee. Departments represented on the committee include Counseling and Psychological Services, University Life, University Counsel, Environmental Health and Safety and the University Police. The group created a workplace violence policy and a plan to react to such violence if it were to occur. The ER team partners with other units to deal with emergencies should they happen. For example, the ER Director is part of the Campus Assessment and Intervention Team, to help assess the needs and impact on the faculty and staff population should a student situation warrant concern. The team is also part of the ER listserv that connects them to other Employee Relations departments at other public universities throughout the state. This allows the team to share ideas and advice with other professionals in the area.

G. Employee Relations Monthly Meeting

A monthly meeting is held to coordinate decision making on critical faculty/staff employee relations matters. Membership on this committee includes the Director of the Office of Equity and Diversity, University Counsel, the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, the Chief Human Resources Officer and the Employee Relations Director. Monthly briefings are also provided to the Senior Vice President and the Provost as needed.



Meaghan Doherty, Customer Service

H. Employee Relations Intern Program

The Employee Relations internship provides experiential learning through participation and observation in employee relations events as well as experience working in an office environment. Employee Relations interns work with the Director of Employee Relations and Employee Relations Specialist on current employee relations events. Interns also work on short term employee relations projects and assist with administrative program support. Intern projects change from semester to semester based on each intern's specific interests within the field of employee relations and the Team's needs.

I. In the Works.

In the upcoming year, the ER team will expand the coaching program and train new coaches. The new roster of coaches will include some executive coaches, who will be able to work with senior level faculty and staff. The exit interview form and process will be updated to collect more specific data, and encourage more employees to submit forms when they leave the university. Finally, the ER team looks forward to introducing the Mason community to the new Faculty Employee Relations Partner.

New Employee Welcome (NEW) Center

During FY2008, the first full year of the NEW (New Employee Welcome Center), over 500 new employees stopped by on or around their first day of work. At the NEW Center, new Mason faculty or staff members receive one-on-one attention to complete benefits, payroll, and tax forms; enroll for direct deposit of their paycheck; and receive a Mason photo ID, complimentary pass to the university's Aquatic & Fitness Center, and temporary parking pass.



Jacquie Lowe, NEW Center

A. Resources

The NEW Center allows employees to fill out all of their new hire paperwork in one place with assistance from the HR & Payroll staff. Beginning in January 2008, in response to a change in Federal law, Mason automatically enrolls all new employees in a 403(b) plan unless they choose to opt-out. The NEW Center began providing information and paperwork so employee can make an informed decision about saving for their retirement. Nine-month faculty members are also given the option of being paid over 9 or 12 months and are given the appropriate paperwork when they visit the NEW Center.

B. Retention

The NEW Center saves new employees and their departments time; in the past new faculty and staff had to visit three different departments around campus to fill out paperwork and obtain a parking pass and photo ID. Furthermore, realizing that the first months of a new employee's career at Mason are critical to their retention and productivity, we start building an affinity between the new employee and the Mason community by providing a welcome packet full of useful information about the university's culture and the wider northern Virginia area.

Customer Service Center

The Customer Service Center continues to be the "face" of HR & Payroll. The staff in the Customer Service Center handles a wide variety of questions on everything from benefits to work/life and everything in between! The Center's customers are very diverse and include applicants, employees, former employees, and students.

Customers can walk-in, call on the phone, or email. It's a busy place but the customer service staff is knowledgeable, flexible, and friendly. The Customer Service Center team always tries to take the time to ask follow up questions so they can provide accurate information or make a referral to the correct person to provide assistance. The customer service team is dedicated to being a resource for faculty, staff, and the public.



Maria Sutton, Customer Service

Accomplishments

Human Resources & Payroll “In the News”

- “Use Recognition Program to Recruit and Retain Star Performers,” *HR on Campus*, October 2007 featuring Lucy Cummings and Linda Harber.
- “Generation Gaps: Millennials may be out of touch with the basics of workplace behavior,” *HR Magazine*, January 2008, featuring Lori Ann Roth and Linda Harber.
- “Bag That Big Bag!” *Good Housekeeping’s Quick & Simple*, 10/7/07 featuring Patrice Winter, our Eldercare & Life Planning Coordinator, in a discussion on the type of handbag to carry to avoid neck and shoulder strain. Heavy handbags were also the subject in the April 2008 issue of *Woman’s World* magazine.
- Patrice was also quoted in *Woman’s World* magazine in May 2008 on the subject of ways to reduce back pain and in *HR Magazine* in September 2008 on eldercare programs on campus.

Professional Accomplishments

- Linda Harber and Ilse Riddick spoke at the CUPA-HR national conference and Expo in November 2007, Baltimore, MD, with a presentation entitled, “From Apples to Orchards: Comp Blossoms.”
- Linda Harber serves on the Advisory Board of *HR On Campus*
- Pat Donini continues to serve as the Agency Dispute Resolution Coordinator for the Department of Employment Dispute Resolution. Pat also served this year on the University wide Leadership Steering Committee in preparation for the inaugural MasonLeads events.
- Lori Ann Roth spoke at the Metro DC ASTD conference in September 2007 and conducted a webinar for the ASTD local meeting in May 2008 on the topic of “CPLP for professional development”.
- Lori Ann Roth participated on the national ASTD work product rating team for the new certificate entitled, “Certified Professional in Learning & Performance” in September 2007 and March 2008.
- Shira Goodfellow and Laurie Jones presented at the Mid Atlantic Banner Users Group conference at Virginia Tech.
- Laurie Jones presented on Mason’s use of Banner’s mass add functionality to Banner Users at the annual Summit conference.
- Rick Holt was asked to present “The Power of Charm” at the Virginia Library Association Para-professional Forum in Richmond, VA.
- Dan Taggart spoke as part of panel presentations on “Coaching in the Workplace” at the Virginia Interagency ADR Council Brown Bag meeting in July 2007 and for the Northern Virginia Mediation Service at their Monday Night Forum in October 2007.

- Ian Reynolds spoke on “Effective Communication and Dealing with Difficult People” at Arcadia University for the Library Management Institute.

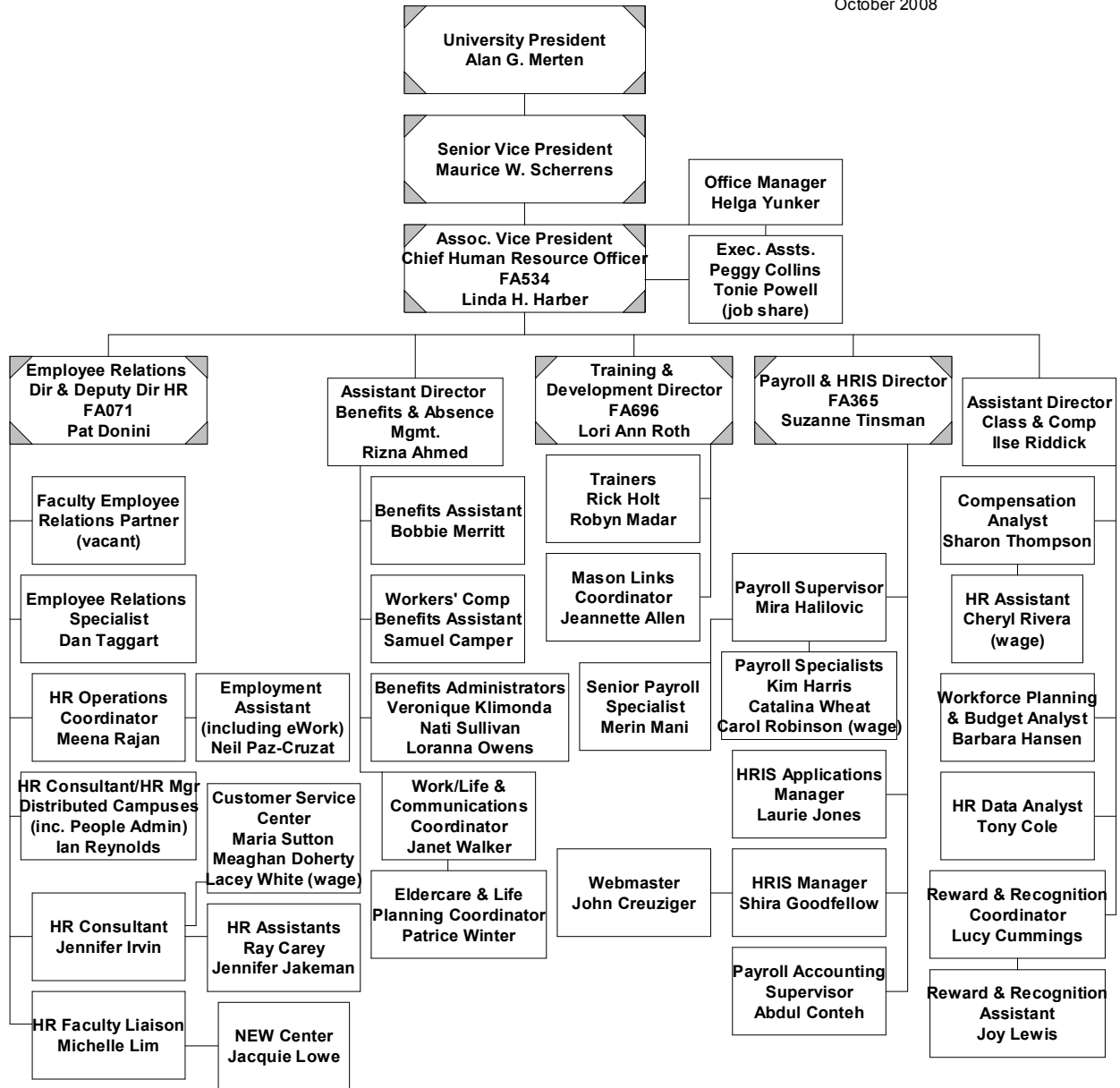
Appendices

1. HR & Payroll Organization Chart
2. Mason Star Recognition Newsletter Sample Page
3. Work/Life Wheel Newsletter Sample Page
4. Recruitment and Retention: Advertising Options You May Not Know About (Parts 1 and 2)
5. Administrative Professionals' Day Advertisement, *Washington Post*, April 2008
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Human Resources & Payroll Organization Chart (Appendix1)

Human Resources & Payroll

October 2008





The Mason Star

FEBRUARY 6, 2008

HUMAN RESOURCES & PAYROLL



AARP Honors Mason as Among Best Employers for Workers Over 50!

Fairfax, VA. – George Mason University has been named one of the 50 best places to work for persons 50 years of age and older by AARP. AARP is a nonprofit, nonpartisan membership organization that helps people 50+ have independence, choice and control in ways that are beneficial and affordable to them and society as a whole.



According to the AARP, Mason ranked eighth in the organization's annual ranking, the highest of any public or private entity in Virginia, and the highest ranked college or university in the United States. Mason's entry into the AARP's top 50 list marks the first time in the organization's history that a first-time honoree has been placed among the top ten best places to work.

"Our institution is honored to be recognized by the AARP," says Merten. "Maintaining a vibrant and productive workplace is something that we take very seriously because the end result is an institution of higher learning that is efficient and that serves its students and region well." (*Mason Gazette*, 9/25/07)

Calling all Superstars!



It's time to start thinking about the superstars in your office and consider nominating an employee or colleague for an Outstanding Achievement Award! We are accepting nominations for the Outstanding Achievement Award, Exceptional Support Award, David W. Russell Quill Award, Team Excellence Award and Margaret C. Howell Award. The nominations are due in Human Resources by Friday, March 14th. The ceremony is scheduled for Tuesday, May 6th in Dewberry Hall. For a detailed list of these awards, please go to <http://hr.gmu.edu/awards/>. Nomination forms are found on the HR webpage <http://hr.gmu.edu/awards/>. Completed nominations should be sent to the Reward and Recognition Coordinator at MS 3C3. For more information, please contact the Reward and Recognition office at 3-2739.

Important Notice of Change

Recent IRS and Virginia Department of Accounts changes have required us to reevaluate our gift card procedures. Effective immediately, employees may only receive up to two (2) gift cards per calendar year.

Be on the  out for new and improved programs to follow.

Snow What Fun it is ½ Day Off Leave



Jack Frost's been nipping at our noses! Please let your faculty and staff who supervise others know that now through February 29th they can give their classified employees a morning or afternoon off with a ½ day off "Snow What Fun It Is" bonus award! Employees who have a solid achiever performance evaluation or above and have received no more than 5 days of recognition leave are eligible! The department head authorizes the "Snow What Fun It Is" leave by emailing, faxing, or mailing a list of recipients and their G numbers, along with his/her signature to awards@gmu.edu. Please visit hr.gmu.edu/awards to see the latest in recognition.



The Work/Life Wheel

Volume 1, Issue 1

January 2008

Welcome to the Work/Life Wheel!

A Helpful Resource in Your Career at Mason...

Work/Life is a concept that most of us understand. You have work and then you have your life outside of work. A generation ago, workers were encouraged, sometimes mandated, to keep them separate. But today, things are different. Mason understands that's everyone is a multi-faceted individual – we are workers, friends, neighbors, sons & daughters, perhaps spouses, partners, and siblings. Our lives are made of many pieces and it helps to know that Mason cares about the juggling act that comprises the wheel of our lives. The objective for all of us is to keep that wheel rolling along. And HR & Payroll Work/Life can offer you some tools, tips, and resources to do just that.

In 2008, we will be promoting three major initiatives – health & wellness, flexible work, and life planning resources – everything from financial planning, to how to exercise at your desk. Stay tuned to e-Files and future editions of the Work/Life Wheel for additional information on work/life resources and opportunities. And don't forget to check out the work/life website at <http://hr.gmu.edu/worklife>. This edition of the Work/Life Wheel will address Health & Wellness resources.

continued on page 2

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Welcome to the Work/Life Wheel
- 2 Health & Wellness Information
- 3 Mason Military Outreach
- 3 The Work/Life Website – Something for Everyone!
- 4 Sittercity.com Is Coming!

Telework works!

Top Ten Reasons for Supervisors to Support Telework

10. Telework contributes to employee recruitment and retention.
9. Reduces absenteeism and present-eeism (present-eeism is defined as those employees who are at work while being too stressed or distracted to be productive).
8. Increases employee productivity due to fewer interruptions and distractions. Here's a [Telework Testimonial](#) that speaks to the benefits of telework for employees and their supervisors.
7. Improves work/life balance for employees boosting employee and department morale.
6. Expands departmental reach when combined with flextime to increase the office hours or coverage of your department.
5. Provides continuity of operations during a power outage or other emergency.
4. Takes a vehicle off the roads, saving gas costs and contributing to a reduction in congestion and pollution as well as freeing up a parking space on campus (particularly helpful during this time of construction).
3. Can be managed using outcome-based goals instead of visually checking employees' productivity.
2. Is not a "forever" commitment. Should be reviewed and reassessed on a regular basis, every three to six months.
1. Dr. Merten is a huge proponent of telework and flextime.

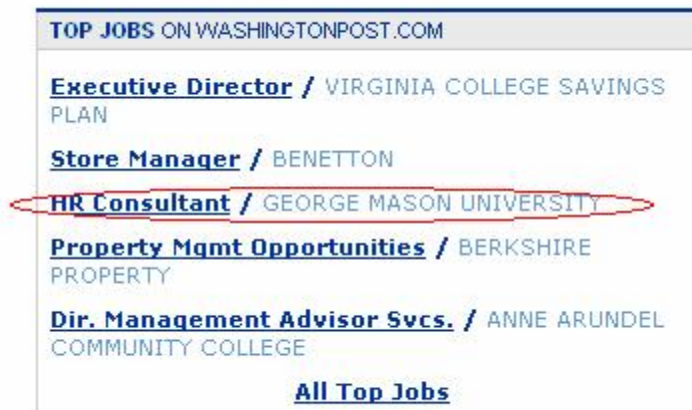
For more information on flexible work options, please see hr.gmu.edu/worklife



Recruitment and Retention Advertising Options You May Not Know About

Did you know that there are some low-cost and no-cost options available to advertise for hard to fill positions?

For example, all classified and faculty positions are automatically pulled from eWork and posted on the **Washington Post** jobs website at no cost to the department. But, to increase visibility on the Post's site, for only \$350, your job can be featured as a "TOP JOB." A Top Job is promoted on the front page of the Post jobs website (see the item circled in red below). As Anne, our contact at the Washington Post says, Top Jobs "have a 3 times higher application/click-through rate than regular jobs." That means a lot more visibility for your open position!



Mason also has an agreement with **HigherEdJobs.com** through October 10th that allows us to post an unlimited number of jobs on their website for a set fee. This means departments can post positions **AT NO COST** to you. So, give it a try. HR will renew this deal for another year if departments find it helpful and hiring managers are using it. We are also exploring a contract with **InsideHigher.com** which will allow departments to post automatically at no cost (similar to the Washington Post program).

Other Online Options

Location	Cost
Craig's List	\$25
Virginiajobnetwork.com	\$198
Chronicle of Higher Ed online	\$250
Diverse Issues online	\$150
Hispanic Outlook online	\$195*

- Up to 500 words

We're here to help you get the visibility you need! Please don't hesitate to call Meena at 3-2606 or Neil at 3-2609 with questions or if you need assistance.



Recruitment and Retention

Advertising Options You May Not Know About – Part II

Do you have hard-to-fill positions in your school, college or department? Are you concerned that external advertising costs far too much? Below are some new options for advertising hard-to-fill positions.

The Examiner, one of the area's local papers, now offers online 30-second videos to promote open positions. Just provide us with text and 48 hours, and the Examiner will take care of the rest. The cost for placing your video on the Examiner website for 7 days is just an additional \$99 when you place a print ad with them at the same time. To view a sample ad, go to http://www.examiner.com/washington_DC-jobs.html.

CareerBuilder.com is a website affiliated with major newspapers throughout the country and has over 20 million unique visitors each month. To promote their website, CareerBuilder has offered Mason a deal allowing us to post 30-day ads at a discounted rate of \$250 for the next several months. Normally ads cost \$419, so that's a savings of almost \$200. To view sample ads, check out their website at <http://www.careerbuilder.com/>.

Indian Country Today is another resource for departments looking to expand the diversity of their applicant pools. ICT includes both a national paper published once a week and a website (<http://www.indiancountry.com>). Prices for print ads vary by length (\$16.65 per column inch) while online ads are a set rate of \$150. The March 5th paper has an Education section and the deadline for ads is Feb 26th. The Education section, in particular, will reach tribal colleges and universities throughout the country with Native American studies programs.

We are here to help you get the visibility you need. Please feel free to call Meena Rajan at 3-2606 or Neil Paz at 3-2609 with questions about the options listed above or if you need assistance with any other advertising needs.

Mason's Administrative Professional Day Ad (Washington Post, April 23, 2008)

**Mason thanks its
administrative professionals.**



**Catch the Mason spirit.
Come join our team.**

Great careers begin at
jobs.gmu.edu.



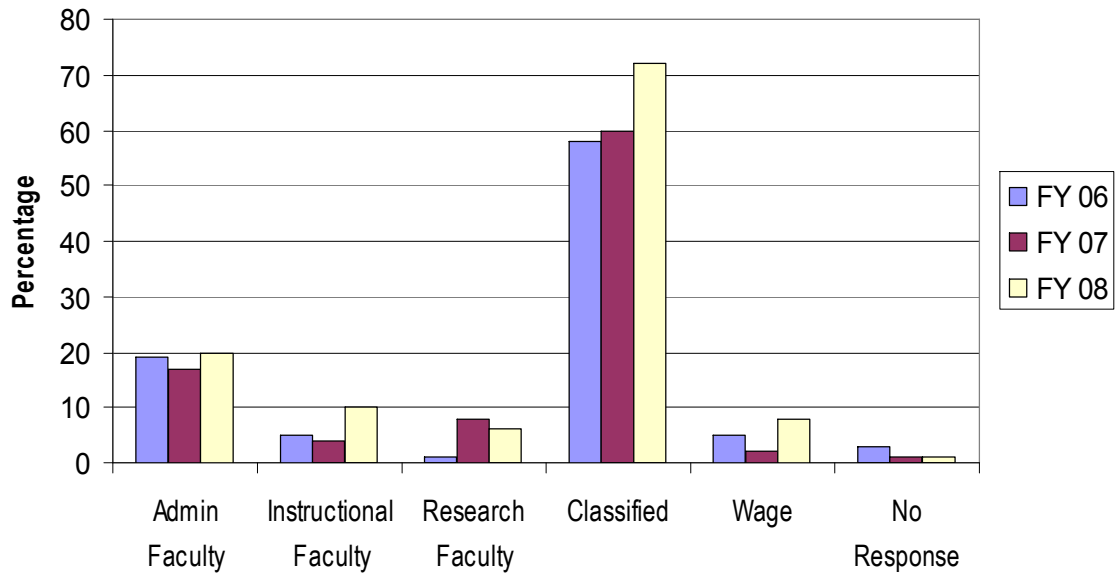
**GEORGE
MASON
UNIVERSITY**

Criminal Background Check Statistics

(Does not include Freedom Center or Hemlock Overlook)

	From:	3/30/2006	6/25/2006	6/25/2007
	To:	6/24/2006	6/24/2007	6/24/2008
Total Number of Checks Run:		71	307	301
	Basic	65	291	289
	Financial Package	6	16	12
Total Misdemeanors on Background Checks:		7	16	9
Total Felonies on Background Checks:		0	2	1
Applications Changed after check:		2	1	0
Pre-Adverse Action Letters Sent:		0	3	8
Adverse Action Letters Sent:		0	2	1
Applicants Not Hired Due to Check:		1	4	1
Applicants Not Hired for Other Reasons:		0	4	3
% Not Hired due to Background Check		1.41%	1.30%	0.33%
% Pre-Adverse Action Letters to Total Checks		0.00%	0.98%	2.66%
Average Time for Applicant to Initiate (Max):		1.36 days (13)	4.51 days (66)	4.17 days (56)
Average Time for HireRight to Complete Check (Max):		3.39 days (25)	2.94 days (16)	2.0 days (20)
Average Time for Entire Background Check (Max):		4.79 days (27)	7.47 days (67)	6.21 days (58)

Exit Interviews By Employee Type



Exit Interviews: Reasons For Leaving

