NEW ACADEMIC YEAR NEWSLETTER

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  HUMAN RESOURCES & PAYROLL  2014-2015

Thriving Together at Mason

by Linda H. Harber, Vice President of Human Resources & Payroll and Faculty/Staff Life

As we begin the new academic year, your colleagues in Human Resources and Payroll want to wish you the best and encourage you to continue to build upon Mason’s collaborative, creative culture. Whether you are new or have been here for many years, we invite you to explore the many ways Mason helps build community and encourages us to thrive together.

Please start your journey by taking a few minutes to review this New Academic Year Newsletter. In it you will find some timely information on many different opportunities at Mason -- everything from flu shots to Faculty-Staff Enrichment Day, discounts to DMV2Go, mentoring programs to VRS Member Benefit Profiles (MBP), and more!

We are also taking an opportunity to share a few HR & Payroll procedural reminders including the flexible reimbursement account filing deadline (9/30/14) and a reminder to update your personal information and beneficiaries.

New to Mason

If you are new to Mason, come by our NEW (New Employee Welcome) Center. Here we can assist incoming salaried faculty and staff with new hire paperwork, temporary parking pass, Mason ID and get you signed up for an Orientation session. Whether you are a faculty member (including new adjunct faculty), classified staff or a wage employee, everything you need to get started is available through the NEW Center! Visit us online at hr.gmu.edu/welcome.

Work/Life Opportunities

For faculty and staff already familiar with Mason, we encourage you to take advantage of the many offerings the university has available to you; including a range of work/life opportunities. Flexible work options, commuter assistance, eldercare, resource & referral, outstanding training opportunities and a robust and comprehensive reward & recognition program, all exist to help support your positive Life/Work connections.

Thrive Together

As we all engage in our own journeys towards physical, social, financial, career and community well-being, we hope you include Human Resources & Payroll in your toolkit for overall wellness. Let’s thrive together at Mason. We are only a phone call (703-993-2600) or email (hr@gmu.edu) away. You can also visit us online at hr.gmu.edu. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Above photo: Mason’s new Provost and Executive Vice President, Dr. S. David Wu, leads a Who’s Walking Wednesday walk.

Making Mason Magic

Vice President of Human Resources & Payroll and Faculty/Staff Life (above) and seven other Mason administrators, served up some cool treats to faculty and staff at this summer’s Making Mason Magic: Summer Smooth event.

Mason in the News

Mason continues to receive regional and national recognition as a great place to work. See page 5 for more information.
Physical Well-Being

**WE THRIVE TOGETHER**

by Patrice Winter, Assistant Professor (CHHS) and Life Planning Coordinator (HR&P)

Mason takes your physical well-being seriously. There have been several new initiatives and on-going collaborations between departments including Mason Recreation, Center for the Advancement of Well-Being, Student Involvement, School of Music and Mason Dining, to name a few, that aim to support faculty and staff in their steps toward physical wellness and well-being. Most recently there have been:

- Who’s Walking Wednesdays
- Resolution Solution Challenges
- Yoga for Well-Being
- Recipe for a Healthier Heart with CommonHealth
- De-Stress at Your Desk
- Desk Exercises for Wellness
- De-Stress Your Life through Music
- Using Flexibility to Help you Thrive
- Design Me a Work-Out
- Fit for Fall: A Healthy Summer Social
- Weight Watchers at Work

**Upcoming Opportunities**

Check hr.gmu.edu throughout the year for more opportunities like:

- Happy Heart Walk: Sept. 24
- Winter Wellness Day: October 9
  (Flu Shots & Financial Wellness Info)
- Who’s Walking Wednesdays
- Life Planning Seminars with a special focus this year on financial well-being
- Weight Watchers at Work

Social Well-Being

**DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH**

by Wendi C. Carroll, Life/Work Connections Specialist

There are several ways Mason helps support your social well-being. From fun events on campus to offering unique lunch time possibilities, expressing your distinctive interests at work while connecting with other like-minded individuals is a win-win for everyone!

- Association of Black Faculty, Administrators, and Staff
- Center for the Advancement of Well-Being
- GMU Toastmasters
- Green Patriots
- International Association of Administrative Professionals
- Mason Needleworks
- Working Dads Group
- Working Mothers Support Group

Check out http://hr.gmu.edu/worklife/lunch for more information.

**NATIONAL EMPLOYEE WELLNESS**

This past June Mason was a proud supporter of National Employee Wellness Month. But, your wellness is important to us every month, so be sure to select “Health, Wellness & Well-Being” under “All Categories” whenever you visit:

**Holiday Schedule**

You work hard and deserve some time to rest and relax. It’s never too early to start your holiday planning! For details on the holidays for the rest of 2014 please visit the holiday schedule.
Financial Well-Being

WE ARE CAREFUL STEWARDS
by Kerry Ross, Director of Benefits and Faculty/Staff Well-Being

Healthy finances are a cornerstone of personal well-being. It is important to be saving for long-term goals like:

- Paying off student debt
- Buying a car
- Buying a home
- Saving for your kids’ or grandkids’ college education
- Planning for retirement

Be sure to take advantage of on-campus individual consultation sessions offered by TIAA-CREF, Fidelity, and ICMA-RC. For dates and times, visit the Benefits website at hr.gmu.edu/benefits.

On Campus Financial Workshops

This fall we are bringing in some great resources to help you increase your financial know-how. Attend an on-campus or on-line seminar and enjoy the satisfaction and confidence that comes along with strengthening your financial IQ!

- Building a Better Budget
- Confident Investing In Any Market
- Fabulous Finds for Less
- Saving for Your Ideal Retirement

Check hr.gmu.edu this fall for details.

Financial and Benefits Reminders

Check Your Beneficiaries

Circumstances change - marriage, birth of a child, divorce etc. Please check with your retirement and life insurance vendors periodically to ensure that your beneficiary wishes are current.

Virginia Retirement (VRS) and VaLORS
If you are in the VRS or VaLORS (law enforcement), your annual Member Benefit Profile (MBP) for the earning period ending June 30, 2014, will be available online (varetire.org) at the end of August. Your MBP outlines projected retirement benefits, your member contribution account should you leave state employment before retirement, and life insurance benefits.

Is Your Personal Information Current?
Since getting paid and staying “in the know” are important to your financial well-being, make sure all your information is correct and up-to-date in Patriot Web and People Finder.

- Permanent Address and Phone Number
- Cellular Phone Number
- Emergency Contact Information
- Veteran Status
- Ethnicity and Race Info
- Name, Department, Title etc.

FRA Expense Deadline: 9/30/14
If you had a dependent care or medical flexible reimbursement account, be sure to file a 2013/14 plan year reimbursement claim through Anthem by September 30, 2014. Eligible expenses had to be incurred during the plan year, July 1, 2013 - June 30, 2014.
Career Well-Being

WE ACT WITH INTEGRITY

by Lori Ann Roth, Director of Learning and Professional Development

There are several opportunities on campus to enhance your professional profile and increase your overall career satisfaction.

- New SUPERvisor Series
- Experienced Supervisor Leadership Seminars
- Leadership Legacy Program
- Mason Advisor Certificate
- Customer Service Certificate
- HR Liaison Certificate
- Administrative Professionals Certificate
- Faculty-Staff Enrichment Day
- Custom trainings, retreats, and facilities

Find out more at hr.gmu.edu/learning

Performance Evaluations

While informal feedback can and should be given throughout the performance year, the start of the new academic year heralds the beginning of the formal evaluation process for administrative/professional faculty and classified employees. Employee Relations is offering several sessions this September and October that provide a refresher on the process. The presentation, which is geared towards both employees and supervisors, discusses Mason’s classified employee and administrative/professional faculty performance evaluation processes from first draft to final signatures. Participants learn how to make the most of the performance evaluation meeting. Supervisors gain tips on writing and conducting effective evaluations and aligning employees’ efforts with departmental expectations. A new presentation discussing the Self-Assessment process will also be offered this fall. For more information or to register for a Performance Evaluation refresher, please go to http://hr.gmu.edu/learning and click on the course calendar tab.

Workplace Coaching

We all face difficult situations from time to time. Finding ways to effectively address those situations makes work more fulfilling, reduces stress, and makes us all more productive. Employee Relations offers a number of resources to faculty and staff which can help you find the answers you seek.

Workplace coaching is a service in which a trained peer from within the Mason community helps a faculty or staff member address a workplace issue they are facing. Coaching can help you clearly identify the issue, clarify perceptions, identify potential solutions and develop a way to implement them.

Our coaches are members of academic and nonacademic departments who have been trained in coaching skills and workplace issues. Whether you are a faculty member, a supervisor, or a classified staff member, we have a coach to meet your needs. If you would like to sign up with a coach, please complete our intake form. Send your completed form to Employee Relations via our confidential fax number (703-993-4275) or email (emplrel@gmu.edu). All requests for coaching and the contents of your coaching sessions are kept strictly confidential.

For more information, review our brochure, visit us online (hr.gmu.edu/emp_relations) or contact the Employee Relations Team at 703-993-3878.

Employee of the Month

Employee of the Month ceremonies celebrate faculty and staff who exemplify career well-being at Mason. Interested in nominating someone for Employee of the Month? If so, go to hr.gmu.edu/awards for more information.

Faculty/Staff Book Scholarship

Every year, Mason offers a competitive, $250 book scholarship for faculty or classified staff pursuing a degree at George Mason. The scholarship was created four years ago with a $25,000 endowment from TIAA-CREF’s 2010 Raise the Rate contest.

“We are delighted that the faculty/staff book scholarship can help support the professional development and career well-being of our faculty and staff pursuing a degree at Mason,” says Linda Harber, Vice President of Human Resources & Payroll and Faculty/Staff Life. “Our Mason culture strongly supports employee lifelong learning.”

This year the scholarships were awarded to Joanne Carter and Alex Seals. Joanne has worked for Mason for nearly 30 years and is currently a Pre-Award Research Administrator in the Office of Sponsored Programs pursuing a degree in Accounting. Alex started as a wage employee at Mason when he was 17-years-old and is now a Database/Application Administrator in ITU pursuing his degree in Computer Science. Congratulations Joanne and Alex and good luck!

If you would like to contribute to the book scholarship fund, please visit http://giving.gmu.edu.

- Click on the “Make a Gift” link.
- Enter your contact information.
- Go to Gift Options.
- In the “Other” box, type in #160033, Raise the Rate.
Community Well-Being

**WE HONOR FREEDOM OF THOUGHT AND EXPRESSION**

by Janet Walker, Life/Work Connections Manager

**Mason in the Spotlight**

Mason has been recognized this year by leading national organizations including The Washington Post, The Chronicle of Higher Education, the American Heart Association, and World at Work.

- In 2014, The *Chronicle of Higher Education* recognized Mason for the seventh straight year in its Great Colleges to Work For Program.
- In 2014, Mason was recognized as a Top Workplace by *The Washington Post*.
- In 2014, the American Heart Association recognized Mason as a Fit Friendly Company for the sixth consecutive year.
- Mason was awarded the Alliance for Work-Life Progress Seal of Distinction by World at Work for the third consecutive year in 2014.

Mason is indeed a great place to learn and work but no one says it better than our tremendous faculty and staff:

"Mason has been a place of change and variety; there is always something new to try, a new challenge... a new direction... look for those opportunities and equally important, do what you can to make sure Mason stays the sort of place where these opportunities are able to arise."

— Michael Randy Gabel, Professor, New Century College

"I have the biggest family of anyone at the university. I truly feel that my co-workers and management are like my family."

— Glenda Weston-McCray, Administrative Office Specialist, Facilities

**Summer Smooth**

Over 30 different departments came together this summer to offer their time and talent to ensure their fellow co-workers had a "smooth" day during Making Mason Magic: Summer Smooth. This is just one example of how the university continues to work together to make Mason a magical place to work.

**Planning for Life After Mason**

The Next Steps

Next Steps: Plan for Your Retirement is an all-day seminar on the Fairfax campus that covers Social Security, Medicare, state health insurance for retirees and information about the retirement plans; VRS, TIAA CREF, and Fidelity. Held twice each year, the fall seminar will take place on Friday, November 7 from 8:30am - 4:00pm in room 1201 of Merten Hall.

Retirement Transition

This past year, Human Resources & Payroll offered Mason faculty an opportunity to take part in a retirement transitions coaching pilot program. The program, funded by the ACE/Sloan Faculty Retirement Transitions Award, assists faculty in planning ahead for a retirement lifestyle which supports meaning, purpose, health and vitality.

This dynamic program will be offered once again during the 2014 – 2015 academic year. If you are faculty and planning to retire within five years, definitely consider participating!

For information and to register, please contact Kathy Haldeman at khaldem1@gmu.edu or 703-993-2040.

**Opportunities to Enhance Your Community Well-Being**

- 9/11 Day of Service at Mason
  g11day.onmason.com
- Alumni Weekend: 9/19-9/21
  alumni.gmu.edu
- Volunteer in your community with School Assistance & Volunteer Service Leave. See "Giving Back" at hr.gmu.edu/worklife
- Spring Into Well-Being (Spring 2015)
- Annual Victims’ Rights Run & Walk (Spring 2015)

**Stay Connected**

Stay up-to-date on all things HR & Payroll when you follow us on Facebook and Twitter
@WorkingatMason.

As winter approaches, remember university closings, late openings and other weather related changes in the University’s schedule will be announced on the Mason switchboard (703-993-1000), Mason Alert, GMU-TV, www.gmu.edu, and local media outlets.