Human Resources & Payroll

July 1, 2011 – June 30, 2012

Annual Report

Welcome to HR & Payroll!

How can we help you?

(from left, Kim Young, Monica Williams, and Robin Lee, Customer Service Associates)
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Message from the CHRO

Dear Mason Colleague,

I am pleased to present the Human Resources & Payroll Annual Report for fiscal year 2011-12 for your review and information. It has been an exciting time as Mason undergoes significant change. As we said good-bye to some long time colleagues and senior leaders, we’re also welcoming new colleagues to Mason. It’s a great time to reflect on the role of change in our lives both professionally and personally.

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.  
-Margaret Mead

Here at Mason, we are that group of thoughtful, committed people. And we are changing our corner of the world one day at a time. Thank you for being that change...for taking the time with a student, colleague, or visitor. Thank you for all that you do to make Mason our caring community.

While some things have changed, others remain as they always were. Our outstanding faculty and staff continue to bring national recognition to Mason as a place to work. Last fall, the university was recognized for the second time with the Alfred P. Sloan Award for Business Excellence in Workplace Flexibility. The American Heart Association included Mason as a Fit Friendly Company in May of 2012, for the fourth consecutive year. The Chronicle of Higher Education recognized Mason for the fifth consecutive year in July of 2012 as part of their Great Colleges to Work For Program, including a return to The Chronicle’s Honor Roll.

Great leadership is another hallmark of life at Mason. We experienced Dr. Merten’s move to President Emeritus, the retirement of two deans and our Chief of Staff, Tom Hennessey, as well as the departure of Morrie and Sandy Scherrens to South Carolina. However the excitement of great leadership continued with the arrival of our 6th President, Dr. Ángel Cabrera and his wife, Dr. Beth Cabrera. During Dr. Cabrera’s listening tour, he has reached out to all of us as, together, we build a shared vision for Mason’s future. We also welcomed Frank Neville as the university’s new Chief of Staff. Their addition to Mason’s energetic and collegial community has marked the continuation of our amazing journey and our good fortune to continue to have such remarkable leadership.

Change, both at work and personally, can be challenging but it is also life affirming, exciting, and provides room for endless possibilities. To that end, please remember that your HR & Payroll team is here to assist you at any point in your career at Mason. If you have a question, or you’re not sure how to proceed, please call our caring Customer Service Center staff at 3.2600. They will be able to help you find the answer you seek.

I am glad to work at Mason as our collaborative culture makes so many things possible. This past year we have partnered with so many of you on a wide array of topics: Administrative/Professional faculty handbook, Leadership Legacy, Presidential search, enhanced retirement programming, and many more projects. I’d like to thank everyone who took the time to serve on a committee, assist us with a project, or in many ways large and small, dedicate time to advancing Mason.

With every good wish for a productive, healthy, and happy year.

Sincerely,
Linda H. Harber

December 2012
Onboarding

We were thrilled this past year when the College & University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA-HR) bestowed Mason’s onboarding processes with an Innovation Award for “advanc[ing] the human resource profession or contribut[ing] to the overall excellence of the profession.” Linda Harber and Pat Donini accepted the award at the CUPA-HR Conference in September in Boston. The $3000 donation from Ellucian that came with the award will go to the Faculty/Staff Book Scholarship.

Relocation Packets

While we still have paper relocation packets, this past year we moved most of the information online and created an enhanced relocation site. Additionally, a team of your colleagues have been working on a Request for Proposal (RFP) process to identify local moving companies who can partner with the university to strengthen relocation assistance for new faculty and staff coming to Mason as well as assisting current faculty and staff with their own local moves.

The NEW Center and Orientations

The Human Resources & Payroll team is committed to supporting new employees so they feel welcomed, prepared, and excited about their new job at Mason. This year, 545 employees were welcomed through the New Employee Welcome Center and 500 new employees participated in three different types of employee orientations. Chart 1 in the appendix shows that the total number of new employees participating in orientations has continued to increase over the past three years.

The NEW Center provides an initial point of contact for new classified and faculty members. Orientations are tailored to each individual employee group – classified staff, administrative/professional faculty, and adjunct faculty. Instructional and research faculty are oriented annually through the Office of the Provost and receive small group benefits orientations by the Benefits Team in HR & Payroll. Our goal is to provide each new faculty or staff person with a personal experience tailored to their needs.

Classified Employee & Administrative/Professional Faculty Orientation

Learning & Professional Development continues to partner with Benefits, Equity and Diversity Services, Environmental Health & Safety, University Police and Staff Senate to present Classified Employee Orientation and Administrative/Professional Faculty Orientation. A total of 283 new classified staff and 97 new administrative/professional faculty members attended their respective orientations in FY12.

Adjunct Orientation

The Human Resources & Payroll Department partners with nine schools, the Provost, Registrar, Center for Teaching & Faculty Excellence and ITU to welcome new adjunct faculty to Mason through Adjunct Orientation. In FY12, a total of 120 adjunct faculty were welcomed during the spring and fall orientations. The event was also switched from a weekday event to a Saturday morning brunch. One adjunct faculty member stated, “This was one of the most efficient, organized orientations I have ever attended.”

Customer Service Center and the New Employee Welcome (NEW) Center

Our presence on campus this past year has filled a need for our employees by providing a convenient, friendly, positive point of contact to address their questions, concerns, or new employee needs. Since arriving on
campus, our workflow and interactions with all employees has dramatically increased and the metrics gathered are astounding!

Our current customer service staff (2 full-time and 1 part-time employee) have enthusiastically kept pace with a number of your questions and HR & Payroll needs including:

- 22,985 telephone calls
- 18,487 faxes and pieces of mail to HR & Payroll
- 2,261 email responses
- 6500 estimated walk-in customers (25 people per day on average with peaks periods numbering 100 people per day)

Parking Services and the Photo ID department continue to be integral partners with the HR & Payroll Service Center Team. The NEW Center also partners with departments and organizations to bring interesting information and opportunities to our new faculty and staff. One partnership with Mason Recreation, resulted in new faculty and staff initiating 92 complimentary one-month fitness memberships. The NEW Center’s follow-up survey responses consistently rank us at 94% and higher in both areas of Overall Experience and One Stop Shop convenience. Our NEW Center and HR & Payroll Customer Service Center Team strive to be the embodiment of our Mason culture; welcoming, professional, and highly efficient.

Your life at Mason

Compensation and Classification
Compensation remained at the forefront of everyone’s mind. The economy continues to present challenges and the state hasn’t authorized a pay increase since 2007. While the state did not provide funding for increases in FY12, Mason was able to set aside funding for the “Mason Increase” raises for faculty, staff, wage, and student wage. In August 2011, we processed pay increases for more than 5000 employees. A significant feature of the Mason Increase was that faculty and staff earning less than $35,000 received a 3.25% increase, whereas those earning more than $200,000 received a 1.25% increase.

Benefits
Through collaborative efforts and strong customer service, the benefits team continues to focus on building an attractive benefits portfolio and enhancing Wellness and Work/Life programming. The benefits team strongly supports the core values of Mason to create and maintain a workplace that provides respect, dignity and fairness to all employees.

The benefits team’s primary objective is to ensure that Mason faculty and staff are offered market competitive and cost effective benefit programs. Utilizing a best practice approach, the benefits team proactively researches, analyzes and develops the benefits package in collaboration with work/life and learning to enhance Mason’s ability to attract and retain a high performing workforce. This effort is critical because it affects employees’ financial security as well as their health and welfare. Additionally, the benefits team is responsible for compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. In addition to the many benefits Mason provides, faculty and staff also have the opportunity to purchase voluntary benefits. Benefits offered include: university sponsored retirement plans and life insurance plan, medical and dental insurance, deferred compensation, flexible spending accounts, optional life insurance, family medical leave, disability insurance, long term care insurance, employee discounts, and paid leave (annual, sick, etc.).
A Commitment to Service

Over the past year, the benefits team received a steady stream of phone calls, emails, and walk-in visits from faculty and staff requesting assistance with benefits-related issues. We challenge ourselves to be creative, and to identify options and resolve questions expeditiously. We are also mindful of our multi-generational workforce. The Pew Research Center reports that over the next 19 years, 10,000 baby boomers will be eligible to retire every day. It is important to us to ensure that Mason is ready for this change in the workforce and be flexible to accommodate this trend.

Some examples of the year’s activities include:

- 25 participants in the new Faculty Transition Leave Program, initiated in the fall 2010
- 276 Individual retirement counseling sessions including wealth management advice
- 171 Workers Compensation claims filed
- 163 Short term disability claims filed
- 157 Family Medical Leave Act notifications received
- 69 Service Retirements

Data trends can be found in the Appendix (Charts 2 and 3).

We are seeing increases in most categories. It is important to note that out of the 163 short term disability claims and the 157 Family Medical Leave Act claims, there were 72 (44%) and 90 (57%) stress-related claims respectively. In a 2011 study by the American Psychological Association, it was found that anxiety levels in the United States are the highest they have ever been in the past seven decades, with money and work woes topping the list.

The Benefits Team has always believed in building relationships with faculty and staff. We work very hard to build a lasting and trusting relationship with new faculty and staff from their first day at the university, throughout their time at Mason, and beyond.

In addition to working with current employees, the team also provides consultation to potential hires and new employees on various programs offered at Mason. This includes a detailed benefits orientation as well as an overview of work/life programs, academic opportunities, flexible work options and much more.

The benefits team views themselves as creating a bridge between medical practitioners and the employer. Whatever the individual situation, we approach the employee with compassion and help them manage their issues.

A Commitment to Wellbeing

The Benefits Team continues its commitment to integrate safety and wellness as part of the culture at Mason. These efforts have resulted in numerous positive outcomes benefitting our employee population resulting in a decrease of lost work days and the creation of a structured plan for the employee to return to full duty. This past year 100% of workers injured were successfully returned to their jobs after an average of 37 transitional work days. This is reduced from last year’s average of 43 days.

1 Spouses/partners are welcome to join the retiring faculty or staff member during retirement planning sessions.
Absenteeism has a significant impact on total costs at Mason. While most recent cost-management efforts have focused directly on health care benefits, studies show that managing absence may actually be more effective in the long term. The Benefits team’s approach goes well beyond simply tracking absence. We partner with departments, supervisors, employee relations, and Environmental Health and Safety to understand why and where absence occurs and try to best address the underlying causes.

The benefits team’s comprehensive absence management approach includes:

- Proactive customer service that focuses on the needs of the department/unit and the employee
- Effective approach to return to work (transitional periods, flexible work arrangements, temporary placement etc.)

**National Focus**
Affordable Health Care Act – Commonly referred to as health care reform and will continue to have impact on Mason’s health insurance plans.

Virginia State Budget – The deficit and underfunding of the Virginia Retirement System implies possible changes to the defined benefit and defined contribution plans.

The future of Social Security Benefits and the 2% 12-month extended tax deduction to employee taxes heightens the importance of encouraging Mason faculty and staff to save for their retirement future through a 403(b) and/or 457(b) account.

**Payroll & HRIS**

**Key Accomplishments**
Key highlights in FY12 for the Payroll Department include the processing of in excess of 196,000 payments exceeding a gross pay amount of $347,500,000, with employee and employer tax payments in excess of $73,700,000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fiscal Year</th>
<th>Total Number of W-2s Prepared</th>
<th>Number Accessed Electronically</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>12,656</td>
<td>8,779</td>
<td>69.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>11,791</td>
<td>7,733</td>
<td>65.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>10,985</td>
<td>7,294</td>
<td>66.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1042-s tax forms were prepared and issued to 624 nonresident aliens, compared with 427 in the previous tax year, or a 46% increase. We expect this number to continue rise in the upcoming years.

In April, the Payroll Department was recognized by University Business Magazine as a “model of efficiency” for the successful rollout and participation percentage by employees in our on-line W-2 program. This was the first national recognition bestowed on the Payroll Department and we want to thank all of Mason’s faculty and staff who made it possible by accessing W-2s online!

**Policy, Procedural or Legal Changes**
Technical system upgrades of the HR & Payroll system were tested and implemented. These upgrades ensure the university remains compliant with federal and state changes as well as remaining up-to-date with vendor
issued system enhancements. In May, after months of testing, a major Banner system release was installed. Changes continue to be made to meet reporting requirements for the Virginia Retirement System and other benefit plans.

The Payroll Department continues to be involved in key initiatives that provided enhanced financial reporting. In FY12, both multi-year encumbering and fringe chargeback were rolled out. Unfortunately multi-year encumbering was not able to fulfill our expectations and was removed after 2 months. The fringe chargeback methodology will now charge fringe benefit costs based on a derived rate. While this has no direct impact on our employees, it will benefit the university in cases where fringe benefit costs are recoverable. During FY 12 and into FY13 we are undergoing an audit by the Defense Contract Audit Agency so that the new fringe rate is certified.

In addition to these initiatives other items of note include:

- Monitoring pending tax legislation related to employee FICA rate
- Key participant in COOP (Continuation of Operations Plan) including table top exercises
- Rollout of training courses taken tracked in Banner
- Implementation of 2 new state and 1 county withholding tax to accommodate remote employees
- Modifications to online paystubs in employee self service
- Salary increases and contribution rollout for grandfathered VRS participants

**Resources/Partnerships**

During the year, the Payroll Team continued to partner with various departments within the university to implement new processes, improve existing ones, and enhance customer service. Programs and areas of note include:

- Provost Office
  - Graduate Student Health offerings
  - Global and International initiatives
- ITU
  - Identity Management
  - Banner upgrades
  - Oracle 11g upgrade
- Finance
  - Fringe Chargeback
  - ARMICS Audit
  - Banner Security
  - 990 reporting for the GMU Foundation

**Reward & Recognition**

For 16 years, Mason’s award winning Reward and Recognition program has created fun and ever changing ways for faculty and staff to say, “Thanks for a job well done!” (Appendix). This past year, was another example of creativity in action.
Thanks for a Job Well Done

To start off the year, an annual Coffee and Conversation event was held in the Center for the Arts lobby for our three year service employees. Dr. Merten spoke about the “goings on” around Mason and answered questions from employees. We distributed the custom home-made Mason Cookie that was such a hit last year! The cookies are a sweet and new tradition at our university service events.

The Reward and Recognition program includes formal recognition including the annual achievement awards ceremony in the fall and service awards in the spring. At the fall achievement awards ceremony, supervisors, co-workers, family and friends celebrate the outstanding work of our awardees. This past year, 26 exceptional individuals were honored at the “I’ve Got the Music in Me” award ceremony.

Director of Athletic Bands Michael "Doc Nix" Nickens was the recipient of the “Spirit of Mason” award. There was a surprise performance by The Green Machine in support of Doc Nix. The Green Machine keeps a busy performance schedule, participating at Mason academic events, men’s and women’s basketball and football games, local community functions, and various professional sporting events.

The first-ever Faculty/Staff Book Scholarship was presented to Sandra Price. After her touching remarks about the impact of the scholarship on her life, there wasn’t a dry eye in the room.

Attendance at the ceremonies has steadily increased to over 400 cheering fans!

University Service Awards

University Day is traditionally the day we celebrate employee service and present awards for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30, 35 and 40 year service employees. 2012 however, marked a major milestone as Mason presented for the first time a 45 year service award to Professor Don Gallehr!

This year we recognized 568 employees. On April 9, 2012, we hosted a luncheon in Dewberry Hall recognizing the 5, 10 and 15 year service employees as well as our corporate sponsors. On April 10, 2012, we hosted a breakfast at the Mason Inn recognizing the 20, 25, 30, 35, 40 and 45 year service employees. Recipients received a pin and certificate through fifteen years of service. Employees with twenty years of service or more also received a gift.

Recipients with 40 and 45 years of service were given the opportunity to sit and answer questions about their 40 and 45 years of service here at Mason. The interviews were put onto a DVD and shown at the awards ceremony. It was a moving tribute to these remarkable faculty members.

40-Year Service Recipients:
Stephen Saperstone, Louis Buffardi, and B. Joseph Lieb
**Employee of the Month**

In June, Dr. Merten recognized his last Employee of the Month, Joy Staulcup from Campus Planning. Although it was a surprise to him, many of the former Employees of the Month had gathered nearby to thank Dr. Merten for his steadfast support of faculty and staff at Mason.

Dr. Cabrera celebrated his first employee of the month, Heather Madnick, in July continuing this special Mason tradition.

**Other Types of Recognition**

Recognition is frequently an everyday event at Mason. The number of awards given by supervisors is staggering and shows just how committed Mason is to recognition. In FY12, 353 Immediate Impact Awards, 1760 gift cards and 120 days of recognition leave were awarded to our hardworking co-workers! Of the total impact awards, 26% were from centrally supported funds and the balance came from departmental funds. ([Appendix, Chart 4](#))

**Recognition in Learning & Professional Development**

In June, Learning & Professional Development held its fifth annual Faculty-Staff Professional Development Recognition Ceremony. The ceremony recognizes those who have completed the New SUPERvisor Series, Administrative Professional Certificate Program, Experienced Supervisor Leadership Seminars, Mason Links, and Customer Service Certificate Programs: General, Advanced, and Subject Matter Expert. In addition to a certificate, graduates receive continuing education credits given through the Office of Continuing and Professional Education. To date, 348 faculty and staff members have received certificates.

**Developing Your Career Journey**

**Employee Relations**

The mission of the Employee Relations team is to provide confidential assistance to faculty and staff and their supervisors to help identify and resolve work related problems or proactively avoid potential problems. We do this through a variety of services, including coaching, consultations, policy interpretation, problem solving, dispute resolution, mediation, facilitation, and many more. Among the key ingredients in a positive work environment are communication, trust, ethical behavior, fairness, acceptance, and appropriate conflict
management. The Employee Relations staff supports all members of the university community in promoting this standard. (Appendix, Charts 5 and 6)

Civility within the Mason Community
We have continued to build upon last year’s efforts to raise awareness of the importance of civility in the workplace. Employee Relations team members have met with employees individually and in larger group settings to coach and advise on ways to respond to incivility. Additionally, we continue to seek opportunities to work with teams across campus to discuss the real and perceived challenges to practicing civility in the workplace. In an effort to learn more about what is happening on other campuses, we brought together our colleagues from Virginia Tech, UVA, James Madison, VCU, ODU, Mary Washington, William & Mary, and Longwood to learn more about what they are doing around this issue and share best practices. These discussions are helpful as we strive to promote and foster a culture of civility at Mason.

Bullying
The issue of bullying remains one that is important to the work the Employee Relations team does to maintain a healthy and productive workplace. Building on their research conducted on the topic during 2010-2011, Linda Harber, Pat Donini and Shernita Parker co-authored a chapter in Dr Jaime Lester’s book: Workplace Bullying in Higher Education. Dr. Lester’s book (and the chapter) seeks to look more closely at this phenomenon in the higher education environment; as to date, most research and writing on the topic relates to the private sector or grades K-12.

Last year’s outreach to the university community led to us talking more about the topic, encouraging people to seek resources and information. In partnership with our colleagues in Learning and Professional Development, we will be working to create classes focused specifically on empowering faculty and staff with the tools to be more effective in dealing with workplace bullies and supporting victims.

Conflict Resolution
Conflict exists in all areas where individuals interact, including the workplace. The presence of conflict is not inherently negative or problematic, but healthy management of the conflict is essential. The employee relations team is here to assist faculty and staff dealing with conflict, and offers resources such as formal or informal mediation, coaching, problem solving, work flow analysis, and more. Often just talking about the situation at hand is helpful to view the conflict with a new perspective. The past year has seen an increase in employees seeking advice on resolving workplace conflicts and receiving training on how to do so.

Background Investigations
On June 25, 2012, Mason joined other major universities by incorporating background checks for all new salaried faculty and staff and employees transferring into a new position. Senior administrators approved the new process as part of Mason’s continuing efforts to ensure good hiring practices. This expansion also includes volunteers and staff at camps that involve minors.

Policy 2221 (Criminal Background Investigations) has been updated to reflect the changes. Details are available on the background check website.

HR Law Updates
Every year there are new developments in HR law, and the employee relations team seeks to identify and understand new laws, and to communicate these changes to university employees. For example, the law for Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting was updated this year. In 2012, the Virginia General Assembly added "any person employed by a public or private institution of higher education" to the list of "mandated reporters". Mandated reporters, including all Mason employees, are those persons who, in their professional or official
capacity, are required to report instances of suspected child abuse and neglect to the local Social Services Department or to the Department of Social Services (DSS) Toll-free child abuse and neglect hotline at 1.800.552.7096.

The EEOC released new guidance on Criminal Background Checks this year. In addition to other topics, the guidance discusses best practices on the lawful use of arrest and conviction records for employment purposes. The employee relations team practices strict confidentiality when dealing with background investigation results. The team also works hard to be sure every employee is treated fairly and that laws, such as Title VII, are not violated.

**Administrative/Professional Faculty Handbook Update**

The Administrative/Professional Faculty Handbook underwent a review conducted by a university-wide committee comprised of members from Auxiliary Enterprises, Equity & Diversity Services, Fiscal Services, Human Resources & Payroll, Intercollegiate Athletics, ITU, School of Law, Library, Office of the Provost, Registrar’s Office, University Counsel, and University Life. The committee held open forums on each campus for feedback in the early spring and the revised administrative/professional faculty handbook was approved by the Board of Visitors in March 2012.

**Resources**

The Employee Relations office has a number of resources available to employees in addition to those listed above: information on topics such as the Employee Assistance Program, Housing Assistance, Social Services, and Work/Life; we collect data from Exit Interviews to continue to monitor the employee experience. Our staff members continue to work in conjunction with Learning and Professional Development to present training on performance management, the grievance procedure and other relevant topics throughout the year. This past year, we also offered several Employee Relations open forums, providing an overview of resources for attendees.

**The Faculty/Staff Experience**

The Employee Relations team’s focus this past year has been on helping people adjust and respond to change in both their personal and professional lives. We have seen more people using our services to seek advice on resolving workplace conflicts, and more needing conflict resolution training and skill building. By dealing with issues with clear and direct communication and civility, partnering with university units on police/community relations, campus assessment and intervention, and emergency operations, and remembering to take a moment to breathe, we can continue to resolve issues with civility, step by step.

**Talent Acquisition**

Mason has seen an 8.4 percent increase in job postings form 2010 to 2011 (please see Appendix, Chart 7). This is up 22.3 percent from 2009 when unemployment was at an all time high and the US economy faced the height of the recession. We anticipate the number of jobs posted will increase for calendar year 2012 by more than 11 percent.

As outside advertising per job posting increased 34% from 2009 to 2011 we also observed more than a 70 percent increase in the average number of applicants per job during this same time frame. This shows that many applicants are discovering our postings using the national job boards including HigherEdJobs and The Washington Post. In addition, Human Resources & Payroll has taken on central contracts with The Post to increase cost saving per posting. With the increase in job postings, we have utilized an outside advertising agency to cut normal turnaround times in half without an additional charge to the university.
Most vacant positions appear on the university’s Human Resources & Payroll jobs site, and departments handle the majority of the search process themselves. For some senior level administrative positions however, an outside search firm was frequently employed. This past year, Human Resources & Payroll provided support for some senior level openings with expert recruiting assistance thereby saving departments the high cost of engaging a search firm. This assistance included creating a position description/leadership statement, developing and placing strategic advertisements, screening applications, and participating in search committee meetings and the initial round of phone interviews. As a result, the university saw a cost savings.

The team also works with candidates to keep them informed and engaged as the interview process continues. This outreach is perhaps the most critical aspect of a nationwide search.

**Partnerships**

**Mid-Atlantic Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC)**
Through the sharing of information and resources, Mason continues to partner with the Mid-Atlantic Higher Education Recruitment Consortium (HERC) to attract outstanding faculty, administrators, and staff. Employment decisions often involve two careers. Through our collaboration with HERC, we are able to utilize their dual career section that provides additional assistance and support for trailing spouses or partners.

**Military Spouse Employment Partnership Program**
Through our collaboration with the Military Spouse Employment Partnership Program begun in 2012, Mason’s Human Resources team was able to promote the university’s job opportunities at the Hiring Our Heroes - Military Spouse Career Forum and Job Fair in Washington DC held in January.

Mason appreciates that military spouses have much to offer and reaped the benefit of hiring Rosemary Brown, a military spouse, as a Human Resources Assistant this past February.

George Mason University was the first institution in the Commonwealth of Virginia to partner with this program.

**Work Reimagined**
This year Mason signed a pledge with AARP to recruit new faculty and staff across all age groups as part of the “Work Reimagined” program. Through the innovative partnership of AARP and social media firm LinkedIn, Mason can share information and employment opportunities with experienced potential employees.

**Work/Life**
The Work/Life team continues to support programs, develop resources, and partner with others to enhance the work/life experience at Mason. Ongoing projects include the work/life discount program, flexible work options, life planning seminars, resource and referral (for eldercare, dual career, and relocation), retirement connection and participation in Wellness by Mason. This past year the team:

- Increased the number of offerings in the life planning seminar series to include two sessions per month during most of the academic year
- Expanded access to the life planning seminar series by creating a video library of sessions. With the speaker’s permission, the session is taped for viewing anytime on-demand. The library is available by logging in to http://mymasonhr.gmu.edu using your email user name and password. Select “Life Planning Videos” from the left-hand menu.
- Collaborated with colleagues in Facilities to bring additional lactation spaces to the Fairfax campus. One lactation room is located in University Hall Room 5600; a new on-line calendar can be used to schedule this space. Other spaces are also available in the HR & Payroll office through the use of an
old-fashioned and yet innovative idea. Rather than permanently etching windows in University Hall which would limit the number of lactation spaces, portable curtains were created to permit any University Hall office or conference room to be a private space.

- Partnered with the ITU to develop a one-stop flexible work website (coming soon!)

The most amazing accomplishment for the team however was when Mason was named as one of only 15 institutions of higher education in the nation to receive a $100,000 award from the American Council on Education and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation to further develop retirement options for faculty. The award wouldn’t have been possible without the support of our faculty and our many colleagues who contributed to the process. It is our plan that the research and projects undertaken through this wonderful opportunity will allow us to eventually expand options for staff as well. Additional information on this prestigious award is in our Retirement Connection section.

**Wellness by Mason**

This year marked the dedication of the first wellness trail on the Fairfax campus – the Yellow Birch Trail. The trail begins across from University Hall and follows Patriot Circle. Each 2/10ths of a mile is marked with a Wellness by Mason sign. We would like to thank our partners who sponsored the placement of the signs and Facilities Management who both sponsored and created the signage. Our partners included:

- Auxiliary Enterprises
- Center for Consciousness and Transformation
- Center for the Study of Chronic Illness and Disability
- CHHS Alumnae Chapter
- Department of Global and Community Health
- Department of Rehabilitation Science
- Mason Dining
- Mason Recreation
- Parking & Transportation
- Office of Sustainability
- Student Health Services

The trail was inaugurated at a ceremony in April 2012. You can view it at [http://newsdesk.gmu.edu/2012/04/walking-trail-opens-on-fairfax-campus](http://newsdesk.gmu.edu/2012/04/walking-trail-opens-on-fairfax-campus)

Let the Wellness by Mason sunflower lead you to wellness opportunities. We invite you to follow Wellness by Mason on its [website](http://newsdesk.gmu.edu/2012/04/walking-trail-opens-on-fairfax-campus) or on [Facebook](http://newsdesk.gmu.edu/2012/04/walking-trail-opens-on-fairfax-campus).

**CommonHealth**

CommonHealth, a comprehensive wellness program is offered to all benefits-eligible employees at Mason. The program includes telephonic coaching for smoking cessation, a pre-natal program, and a 50% WeightWatchers reimbursement. Other aspects of CommonHealth are available to all Mason employees including fitness center discounts, the state discount on WeightWatchers, and triannual on-site training.

CommonHealth also provides training online, for those faculty & staff members who have busier schedules. We invite you to visit their website at [http://commonhealth.virginia.gov](http://commonhealth.virginia.gov) or contact Mason’s on-site coordinator, Bridget Peabody at 3.6764.

**Mentoring**

Mason offers a wide array of mentoring opportunities for faculty and staff. They include leadership development, networking meetings for department chairs, one-on-one mentoring as part of a professional development program, and observorships that extend from three months to an academic year. The goal of Mason mentoring is to provide faculty and staff with a unique experience, tailored to their individual needs.
Leadership Legacy

Leadership Legacy is a partnership program sponsored by Mason Leads and Human Resources & Payroll and is designed for full time faculty and staff committed to furthering their leadership development. The program is co-facilitated by experienced Mason leadership scholars and senior university leaders and includes self assessments, reading materials, case studies and leadership coaching. The Learning and Professional Development team assists by handling the logistics of each meeting and serving as the contact for participants. In addition, our HR staff provided input while planning the program and participated in curriculum and evaluation meetings, coaching, nominations, and alumni committees. HR staff also co-facilitated two sessions.

In FY12 the first two Leadership Legacy cohorts completed the program; 26 participants in the fall 2011 cohort and 25 in the spring 2012 cohort. The third cohort started in September and will complete the program in April of 2013. The committee has also been holding alumni events for the first two cohorts.

Conversations with Chairs

Human Resources & Payroll partners with Kim Eby, the Associate Provost for Faculty Development and the Director of Teaching & Faculty Excellence to facilitate Conversations with Chairs. During these sessions, new department chairs meet, generate ideas and receive support, as well as offer resources to each other. There are two sessions held each year, and in FY12 there were a total of 25 participants who attended the sessions. In FY13 Learning will continue to help facilitate these meetings.

Mason Footsteps and Mason Horizons

In FY 12, Mason Footsteps (for Administrative/Professional faculty and classified staff) and Mason Horizons (for tenured faculty) had limited participants in the program. In the coming year we hope to highlight the program to increase and encourage more participation.

Mason Footsteps

Mason Footsteps is an observership for administrative/professional faculty and classified staff who are contemplating their next career steps. This program includes either a project or a write up for the faculty or staff member to complete over the course of 3-6 months. The observers may be involved in any office that is of specific interest and the assignments may vary greatly in terms of content.

Mason Horizons

Mason Horizons is also an observership but for tenured instructional and research faculty who are curious about their future options. The tenured faculty member can be nominated for the program or self nominate. They are able to shadow administrators for departments in which they are interested in order to more deeply understand administrative processes.

Let’s Plan for the Future: Learning & Professional Development

Learning and Professional Development continues to find new and innovative ways of meeting the professional development needs of Mason employees. In FY12, the Learning team hosted a professional development expo for Employee Learning Week. Over 20 different teams from several departments at Mason came together to showcase the many professional development opportunities offered to Mason faculty & staff.

In order to better meet the needs of employees seeking professional development, the Learning team categorizes many of its workshops within programs or series. Leadership programs range from basic supervisory skills to leadership theories. These programs include the Administrative Professionals Certificate Program, New SUPERvisor Series, and Experienced Supervisor Leadership Seminars. The leadership
programs are designed as a continuum so that employees at all levels at Mason have opportunities to learn and grow. There have been 149 employees recognized for completing at least one of these certificate programs.

In addition, over the last five years, our customer service program has grown into three levels – general, advanced, and subject matter expert. This program begins with employees improving their own customer service competencies and leads to improvement of their team or department. Over 400 employees are currently enrolled in the Customer Service Certificate Program.

Learning & Professional Development also strives to meet the needs of employees through individual and team development. Custom trainings and retreats provide teams and departments with an opportunity to have our trainers customize workshops based on a needs assessment. Our most popular sessions include Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, customer service training, and StrengthsFinder.

Mason Links continues to grow, providing Mason workers with English language learning opportunities and drawing on resources and volunteer efforts of the entire Mason community. This past semester, 18 New Century College students provided 238 hours of tutoring to 50 employees, including tutoring on weekends. In addition, Mason Links also had its first independent study/teaching assistant. Four employees completed the High Advanced English class and can now go on to take classes at the English Language Institute and George Mason University.

The Learning team continues to provide instruction and assistance related to Mason policies and procedures. These include Classified and Administrative/Professional Faculty Orientations, EPAF Training, E-Verify, Code of Ethics, and Search Committee Training. The trainers also provide one-on-one assistance in these areas.

Maintaining Your Mason Lifelong Connection
(Separation/Retirement)

Pre-retirement Seminar
The sixth annual Pre-Retirement Seminar was held in April of 2012. Presenters from the Social Security Administration, Fidelity, TIAA-CREF, the Virginia Retirement System, and Mason provided programming for faculty and staff within five years of retirement. The work/life team provided the future retirees with workshops before and after the seminar, presenting life planning seminars on Medicare and Social Security. In response to customer feedback, in FY13, HR & Payroll will be holding two Pre-Retirement Seminars; one in the fall and one in the spring.

Retirement Connection

New Retirement Transition Initiative
We are pleased to announce that we will be expanding our retirement transitions programs. On June 18, 2012, George Mason University was awarded $100,000 for best practices in faculty retirement transitions funded by the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation for demonstrating “cutting-edge approaches to supporting faculty before, during and after their retirement transitions.” Mason is one of 15 colleges and universities in the country to receive this prestigious recognition and only one of six in the doctoral/research category. The university plans to utilize the award to develop a retirement coaching program, training current and retired faculty and others to provide one-on-one retirement transitions coaching for Mason faculty and eventually Mason staff. The new retirement transitions program will provide assistance in the social and psychological aspects of planning a lifestyle which
supports health, fulfillment of life meaning and purpose, as well as a supporting the individuals’ continuing development for an enriching and purposeful lifestyle, following retirement.

**Continued Connection to Mason**

The university continues to encourage Mason retirees to stay connected through programs and events, work/life discounts, the annual holiday party, and Faculty, Staff and Retiree Appreciation Day at Mason basketball. Mason retirees receive a complimentary parking decal for one year as part of their Retirement Connection package. In 2011, HR & Payroll partnered with Parking & Transportation to arrange for retirees with 15 years or more service to continue their Mason parking after their first complimentary year for just the administrative cost of a hangtag (currently $15; budget and space permitting). We hope this opportunity will encourage our retirees to come back to Mason for events, to work part-time, volunteer, or continue their life-long learning.
APPENDIX

Chart 1

Orientation Attendance, 2011-12

Orientation Attendees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Orientation</th>
<th>FY10</th>
<th>FY11</th>
<th>FY12</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrative/Professional Faculty Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Adjunct Faculty Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified Employee Orientation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chart 2

Benefits Trends

Retirement Counseling Sessions

Service Retirements
Chart 3

Short Term Disability and FMLA Cases

![Bar chart showing Short Term Disability and FMLA cases from FY07 to FY12.](chart3.png)
Chart 4

Mason’s Recognition Culture

Recognition by the Numbers

Legend

Formal: Service awards and Outstanding Achievement Awards
Informal: Recognition leave, Impact Awards, Presidential Citations, Gift Cards, and Non-Monetary Gifts
73 exit interviews were received from 426 departing employees, a 17.1% response rate.

Exit Interviews by Employee Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employee Type</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Admin/Prof</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inst/Res</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classified</td>
<td>45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wage/Other</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Leading Reasons for Leaving Given by Exit Interview Respondents *

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Another job Private sector</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>27.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Another job Public sector</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Opportunity for Advancement</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>32.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compensation/Cost of Living</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>20.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change in Career</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relocation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working Conditions</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retirement/Return to School/End of Contract/Other</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>31.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Respondents checked more than one reason for departure.

Stay Interviews are a growing trend among many organizations. Unlike the exit process, stay interviews include questions that focus on the positives in the workplace. Supervisors can learn what’s working and how to better utilize the strengths of their employees. This is one way to increase satisfaction and motivation and retain talented employees.

Sample questions that might be used in a stay interview include: What do you look forward to each work day? What do you want to learn? How can I best support you?
Primary issues brought to Employee Relations:

- Questions/Consults 51%
- Workplace Coaching 10%
- Informal Mediation 7%
- Performance Improvement 28%
- Separations 4%
- Criminal Background Check C related 2%
- Camp/Worklife 6%
- Misc. Issues 19%
- Attendance 5%
- Standards of Conduct related 8%
- Perf Eval/EWP 4%

Significant Actions Taken:

- Support Provided
  - Questions/Consults 51%
  - Performance Improvement 28%
  - Informal Mediation 7%
  - Workplace Coaching 10%
  - Separations 4%

Not included in the chart above are referrals to the Employee Assistance Program and other community based resources. Also not included are the Executive Coaching sessions provided via Leadership Legacy.
Chart 7

Talent Acquisition

Average Number of Applicants per Job Type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Classified</th>
<th>Administrative/Professional Faculty</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Total/Average Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 - as of 6.30.12</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Number of Applicants per Job Type and Year

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Classified</th>
<th>Administrative/Professional Faculty</th>
<th>Faculty</th>
<th>Total/Average Totals</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>27,244</td>
<td>45,900</td>
<td>7,747</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>27,159</td>
<td>11,539</td>
<td>8,706</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012 as of 6/30/12</td>
<td>9,186</td>
<td>6,034</td>
<td>2,575</td>
<td>17,795</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Legend

Green hatch: Classified
Gold hatch: Administrative/Professional Faculty
Solid Green: Faculty
Solid Gold: Total/Average Totals