

HR & PAYROLL

George Mason University Human Resources & Payroll End-of-the-Year Newsletter

December 2013

ON A MISSION...

Mason in 2014 and Beyond!

"A public, comprehensive, research university established by the Commonwealth of Virginia in the National Capital Region, we are an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world."



As one year closes and we start to prepare for another, we ask you, "What is *your* mission?" Here at Mason, at home and in your community, what are the goals and objectives that will guide your personal mission in 2014? Your colleagues in HR & Payroll want to help you achieve your goals and may have resources to help. Whether it is offering learning opportunities to advance you professionally; life planning seminars for personal growth, navigating your benefits so you and your family can live a healthy, stable life; assisting during stressful situations; facilitating your work/life fit through eldercare, dual career or relocation and referral services; whatever your life's mission, we want to help! We're just a phone call (3-2600) or short walk away in suite 4100 of University Hall.

We would also like to thank you for your ongoing commitment to the university and your broader community. Mason faculty and staff are truly exceptional people modeling exemplary behavior to the students we ultimately serve, indeed making us a "university for the world".

We hope you have a happy, healthy holiday season and a joyful 2014.

-Your HR & Payroll Colleagues



Like us: [facebook.com/workingatmason](https://www.facebook.com/workingatmason)



Follow us: twitter.com/workingatmason

TIAA-CREF Faculty/Staff Book Scholarship Recipients

Congratulations to Ryan Piluzza, International Credential Evaluator, Admissions and Rebecca Stone, Operations Administrator, DoIT – Operations, our 2014 book scholarship recipients!

The scholarship was created from the endowment Mason received when it won the TIAA-CREF Raise the Rate contest in 2010. Private donations and funds from the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources award also make up the scholarship. The scholarship fund is sustained by awarding scholarships based upon the investment results from the account.

Mason full-time and part-time faculty or classified staff members who are enrolled in a degree program at Mason are eligible for this scholarship. The next cycle of Faculty/Staff Book Scholarship applications will begin in June 2014. Details about the scholarship are available on the [Faculty/Staff Book Scholarship](#) page.

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Make 2014 the Year of Professional Development!

Visit HR & Payroll's Learning and Professional Development page to find a learning opportunity that will help you achieve your goals.

January's Highlights: Crucial Conversations Making Change Work Public Speaking

Other offerings include a customer service certificate program at three levels, a new supervisor series, technical training to enhance HR skills, and much more!

Information on these programs, applications, course calendars and registration can be found at <http://hr.gmu.edu/learning>.

Check out our blog at masonlapd.wordpress.com.



Be well.

Follow us on [Facebook](#).



Your Money and Benefits

W-2s

We are on track to have 2013 W-2 forms available on-line in mid-January. After the new year, additional details will be available on the W-2 hot line at (703) 993- 2311. Please check your email and the [HR & Payroll homepage](#) after break for the latest information and access your electronic W-2 when they're available. Doing so means you can receive your W-2 earlier than the paper copy, it helps reduce costs for the University, and it's much more sustainable, particularly if you combine it with electronic filing. Thank you for helping us continue to promote a paperless work environment!

Please note: W-2's will be mailed by January 31, 2014 to employees not electing to retrieve W-2's online via PatriotWeb.

If you are a foreign national employee and receiving a tax treaty benefit, your tax documents may include a W-2, a 1042, or both. If you have any questions, please contact International Tax at inttax@gmu.edu.

W-4 Federal Tax Filing Status Exempt

If you claimed exempt from federal withholding on your W-4 for 2013, your exemption expires on February 17, 2014.

Please be sure to complete a new W-4 for 2014 by visiting the [Payroll website](#) (links to the 2014 tax forms will be posted once they have been released by the IRS), or by certifying your claim of exemption online, via the Tax Forms page of Patriot Web.

SOCIAL SECURITY WAGE BASE TO RISE TO \$117,000 IN 2014

The Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) taxable wage base for 2014 increases to \$117,000 from \$113,700 in 2013.

The maximum 2014 OASDI portion of the Federal Insurance Contributions Act tax payable by each employee is \$7,254, or 6.2 percent of the wage base. Employers match the employee amount with an equal contribution.

Tax Savings Limits for 2014

The IRS **did not** change the limits for 2014. Participants under age 50 can contribute up to \$17,500 in the [Supplemental Retirement Plan \(403\(b\)\) program](#) and the [Virginia Deferred Compensation Plan \(DCP\) \(457\(b\)\)](#). Participants age 50 and over can contribute \$23,000 in each plan. If you wish to change your contribution to your 403 (b), please complete a [403\(b\) salary reduction agreement](#) and return to the Benefits team at MS 3C3. Any changes you wish to make to your 457 must be done by contacting ICMA-RC directly at

InvestorServicesCommonwealthofVA@icmarc.org

NOTE: In 2014 the record keeper changes from ING to ICMA-RC. For details, please visit the [Benefits website](#).

Winter Break Pay

A reminder that there is a semi-monthly pay date over winter break on Tuesday, December 31. HR & Payroll will be closed.

The first bi-weekly payroll of 2014 (for hours worked between 12/15/13 and 12/28/13) will be processed during the winter break, in order for faculty and staff to receive paychecks on Friday, January 3rd. Please be sure to submit time sheets for this payroll before the 6pm deadline on Sunday, December 29th, as late submissions will not be processed until the following bi-weekly pay period.

Please note: Direct deposit of pay is a condition of employment (University Policy 2201). If you are not already on direct deposit, you'll need to sign up by 5:00pm on Thursday, December 19, for your pay to be sent electronically to your bank during winter break. If you don't sign up by this deadline, paper pay checks can be picked up after the winter break, beginning on Thursday, January 2, 2014 in the HR & Payroll department.

Reminder: 9-Month Faculty Paid Over 9 months

Additional deductions will be taken from your pay starting with the first paycheck in March 2014 to continue health insurance and other benefits premiums for the summer months.

UNUM and Optional Minnesota Life Insurance Premium Changes

If you are a UNUM or Minnesota Life Insurance participant, you may see a premium increase in December for coverage beginning 1/1/14 due to any age band increase or salary changes that may have occurred in 2013.



Social Security Statements are now [on-line](#). Check your status once a year as hard copies are no longer being mailed.

Keep Up to Date

Home Address

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

1. Log in at <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>
2. Select Personal Information
3. Select View Address(es) and Phone(s)
4. Verify your permanent address.
If it is not correct, select Update Address(es) and Phone(s)
5. Then insert a new permanent Address

If your health insurance plan is through Mason you also need to update your permanent address in EmployeeDirect. If you changed states, you may need to complete a new state withholding form. Please contact HR & Payroll for more details.

Emergency Contact Information

Please make sure your emergency contact information is up-to-date in Employee Self Service (ESS) as well.

1. Log in at <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>
2. Select Personal Information
3. Select View Emergency Contacts
4. Verify your emergency contact information. If it is not correct, select Update Emergency Contacts.
5. Insert updated information.

Federal Reporting Data

Please make sure that your federal reporting data (e.g. race, gender, veteran status) is up to date in ESS as well.

1. Log in at <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>
2. Select Personal Information
3. Select Update Ethnicity, Race or Veteran Status
4. Make any additions/changes

Please be sure to check your paystub each pay period by visiting Employee Self Service (ESS) at <https://patriotweb.gmu.edu/>.

Supplemental Retirement Accounts

We want to take this opportunity to inform all Mason employees that they are eligible to participate in 403(b) Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA) accounts through TIAA-CREF or Fidelity Investments and a Commonwealth of Virginia 457 Deferred Compensation Plan.

Although Mason will no longer automatically enroll new (or rehired) benefits eligible classified staff or faculty who select the VRS Hybrid Plan, in the 403(b) Tax-Deferred Annuity (TDA) program, all employees, regardless of classification, are eligible to have a 403(b) and/or a 457 account. For information on universal availability, please see the [Universal Availability Notice](#).

Additional information is available on the [Benefits website](#).

Hybrid Plan

For all classified staff and an option for faculty, the Virginia Retirement System (VRS) will have a new retirement plan beginning in January 1, 2014, called the Hybrid Plan. Current VRS participants will have an opt-in period through April 30, 2014. If you are not currently enrolled in VRS, you will not be directly affected by the Hybrid Plan. You may want to learn more about it, however, if you are a supervisor or a hiring manager as it will impact all new employees hired on or after January 1, 2014.

For more information, please visit the [Benefits website](#).

Virginia College Savings Plan

A 529 College Savings Plan allows you to put aside money for future higher education expenses. Money invested in an Internal Revenue Code Section 529 plan grows tax-free and may be withdrawn tax-free if used for qualified higher education expenses.

For more information, please visit the [financial page](#) of the Work/Life website. For details and enrollment materials please visit the [Virginia 529 PrePAID site](#) and review the [program overview](#) which describes the Virginia 529

PrePAID program and the other 529 savings programs.

NOTE: [Open enrollment](#) dates for the Virginia 529 PrePAID program run from 12/1/13 through 3/31/14.

Employer-Provided Health Coverage

The Affordable Care Act requires employers to report the cost of coverage under an employer-sponsored group health plan. This reporting is for informational purposes only, to show employees the value of their health care benefits so they can be more informed consumers. The amount reported does not affect tax liability, as the value of the employer contribution to health coverage continues to be excludible from an employee's income, and it is not taxable.

Qualifying Events

If you are having a baby or planning to adopt, getting married or divorced, or if your child is becoming self-supporting, you may be able to make mid-year changes to your insurance and flexible spending accounts. Certain qualifying mid-year events permit specific election changes with supporting documentation. Your enrollment or election change request must be submitted within 60 calendar days of the qualifying mid-year event, and must be consistent with the event.

4 Remember...

Turnover Deadlines for VSDP Family/Personal Leave and Excess Annual Leave

A reminder to classified staff that there are limits to the amount of Annual leave that can be carried over from year-to-year. For excess classified Annual leave, VSDP Sick, and VSDP Family/Personal leave purposes (for both classified staff and faculty enrolled in VSDP), the leave year runs from January 10-January 9. Unused VSDP Sick and Family/Personal leave will be replaced with a new allotment of leave if not used by January 9, 2014. New VSDP Sick and Family/Personal Leave will be awarded on January 10. If your Annual leave balance exceeds the maximum as of January 9, 2014, *you will lose that portion that exceeds the limit.* The limits as defined by the state Department of Human Resource Management can be found on the [leave chart](#). *Things to keep in mind:* 1) Any unused Annual leave may be donated in 8-hour increments. Please complete a [leave donor form](#) before January 9, 2014 and submit your completed form to HR & Payroll office at MS3C3; 2) The 12-month faculty leave year ends each year on June 24th; and 3) Full time 12-month faculty may carry over 21 days of Annual leave.

Extended Absences

If an employee will be out for an extended period due to a serious or chronic medical condition or he/she needs to take care of an immediate family member (child, spouse, parent) with such a condition, there are resources available for benefits eligible employees. These resources vary depending upon your start date, employment classification, and the choices you have made on voluntary benefits. Employees may use appropriate leave to bring their hours up to their regular work week. For example, Annual and VSDP Family/Personal leave may always be used. If the employee has a medical condition, then Traditional Sick Leave or VSDP Sick Leave may be used until exhausted. If the employee is taking care of a family member, up to 1/3 of the employee's Traditional Sick Leave or VSDP Sick Leave balance may be used for this purpose while the employee is on an official FMLA leave.

The Benefits team is happy to help you navigate the procedures and rules for the use of FMLA and VSDP. Contact us at 3.2600 or email benefits@gmu.edu.

Military Family & Medical Leave Act

The National Defense Authorization Act amends the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 (FMLA) to permit a "spouse, son, daughter, parent, or next of kin" to take up to 26 workweeks of leave to care for a "member of the Armed Forces, including a member of the National Guard or Reserves, who is undergoing medical treatment, recuperation, or therapy, is otherwise in outpatient status, or is otherwise on the temporary disability retired list, for a serious injury or illness." The NDAA also permits an employee to take FMLA leave for "any qualifying exigency (as the Secretary [of Labor] shall, by regulation, determine) arising out of the fact that the spouse, or a son, daughter, or parent of the employee is on active duty (or has been notified of an impending call or order to active duty) in the Armed Forces in support of a contingency operation." For more information on FMLA, please see University Administrative Policy No. 2215, [Family Medical Leave Policy](#).

NOTE: Mason faculty and staff continue to be called up for reserve or active duty. Information on how leave, benefits, and pay are affected by military service is available on the [military leave page](#) of the Benefits website.



INCLEMENT WEATHER / EMERGENCY CLOSURE REMINDER

University closings, late openings, or other weather related changes in the University's schedule will be announced on Mason's switchboard 703.993.1000, Mason Alert, GMU-TV, the [university's homepage](#), and local media outlets.

For more information, please see the university [inclement weather/emergency closure policy](#).

CHECK YOUR BENEFICIARIES!

This may be a good time to review beneficiaries on your insurance and other plans. Circumstances change – marriage, the birth of a child, divorce, etc. Please check with your retirement and life insurance vendors on a regular basis to ensure that your beneficiary wishes are current.

HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

The [2013-2014 Holiday Schedule](#) is now available! This should give you plenty of time to plan your vacation for next year.

EXPECTING OR ADOPTING?

If you are planning to have a baby or adopt a child in 2014, please call the Benefits team. We would like to share a "New Parent Packet" with you providing helpful parenting resources, a hand-made Mason baby hat (custom made by "UHallNeedleworks") and information on how Mason can lend a hand at this special time. Let us help with the details while you enjoy this wonderful new chapter in your life.

Note: Interested in joining UHall Needleworks? Email hr@gmu.edu.



A new Mason Patriot wearing the very first hat knit by UHall Needleworks.

YOUR WELL-BEING: Employee Relations

Acceptable Use of State Electronic Resources

A friendly year-end reminder that state electronic equipment (desktops, laptops, tablets, smart phones, etc.) is for conducting professional business, despite the fact that they "travel everywhere" with us. All users have a responsibility to ensure they use these appropriately. Mason's Policy 1301, [Responsible Use of Computing Policy](#), and DHRM Policy 1.75, [Use of Electronic Communication and Social Media](#) both provide some guidance on this matter.

Preventing Workplace Violence

George Mason University strives to provide faculty, staff, students, and visitors a safe place in which to work, study and live. As such, George Mason University takes a zero-tolerance approach to workplace violence. While violence in the workplace is rare, it can take many forms; some are obvious, while others are more subtle. All faculty and staff are expected to report suspicious or threatening behavior to the Police or Human Resources. Please also watch the Workplace Violence video on the [Employee Relations website](#).

Reporting Fraud, Waste, and Abuse

The State Fraud, Waste and Abuse Hotline provides the opportunity for citizens and state employees to anonymously report suspected incidents of fraud, waste, or abuse that may have occurred in any state executive agency or university. State employees are encouraged to first report fraud, waste, and abuse to their agency's management, however, the Hotline provides an alternative way of reporting concerns. The Office of the State Inspector General administers the Hotline. Governor Robert F. McDonnell signed Executive Order Number 52 (2012), expanding the Hotline program, which was first implemented in October 1992. The new Hotline program is now also open to the citizens of the Commonwealth. For detailed information explaining the complete Hotline process, please visit our [Employee Relations website](#).

Child Abuse and Neglect Reporting

While everyone should be concerned about child abuse and neglect, certain individuals are required by law to report suspected instances. In 2012, the Virginia General Assembly (SB 239) added "any person employed by a public or private institution of higher education" to the list of "mandated reporters" set out in §63.2-1509 of the Code of Virginia. 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. For more information, visit our [Employee Relations website](#).

Drug and Alcohol Policy

The abuse of drugs and alcohol by employees is incompatible with the goals of George Mason University. The illicit use of drugs and alcohol could create a serious threat to the safety and welfare of the university community, as well as undermine the productivity of the workforce. Those in need of assistance in dealing with drug and alcohol related problems are encouraged to seek the confidential help of the Human Resources & Payroll Employee Relations team. Employees with Mason health care may also utilize the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Contact information is available on the [Employee Relations website](#). The complete policy is available at [Employee Drug and Alcohol Policy](#).

Employee Assistance Program

Part of the Mason benefits package for benefits eligible employees includes an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). The EAP is linked to your health insurance provider with one for Kaiser Permanente, one for COVA Care and COVA HDHP, and one for COVA HealthAware. The EAP is a wonderful resource if you are working through a challenging situation. Your EAP can assist you with confidential counseling, education, and referral on a range of issues including work/life balance, financial stability, mental health, and more. Your EAP is available 24/7.

Questions? Please contact your Employee Relations Team at 3.3878.

YOUR WELL-BEING: Work/Life and Reward & Recognition

FIND YOUR WORK/LIFE FIT AT MASON

LIFE PLANNING SEMINAR SERIES

Join us for the upcoming 2014 spring seminar series on topics including, **self-esteem, stress management, financial matters. Mason benefits and more.**

For a full list of topics and to register, please visit [HR & Payroll Learning and Professional Development](#).

SAVE MONEY, HAVE FUN

Visit the [work/life discount page](#) for special deals just for you!

CAREGIVING MADE EASIER

Faculty, staff, and graduate students have complimentary access to SelectPlus which offers two programs; ***Sittercity***, which offers individual in-home caregivers including babysitters, nannies, pet sitters, tutors, and house keepers, and ***Years Ahead***, which offers a nationwide network of senior care providers. Get started at <http://www.selectplus.com/georgemasonu>.

Important note: Mason does not own, sponsor, or endorse selectplus.com. It is your responsibility to carefully screen and check the references of any caregivers, including those who are listed on selectplus.com, before you retain their services.



CELEBRATE MASON!

The Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York is one of the premiere venues in the country, and Mason will be there for the 2014

Atlantic 10 Men's Basketball Championship


March 12 through the 16th. Order your tickets today!

The All-Session Ticket Package Early Bird special is \$170 (\$266-regular price) and includes a commemorative Mason A-10 t-shirt. This offer expires on Dec. 31, 2013.

[Click here](#) to purchase the all-session package or contact the Mason Athletic Ticket Office at (703) 993-3270.



GREEN OFFICE

 The Green Office program is a simple certification process that recognizes offices for reducing their environmental footprint. Offices can earn a status of bronze, silver, gold, or platinum based on the sustainable actions that they choose to implement.

For more information on how to have your office Green Office certified, contact Giulia Manno at gmanno@gmu.edu.

Congratulations to Mason's Green offices:

**History Department
Office of the Ombudsman
Orientation and Family Programs and Services
Office of Diversity, Inclusion and Multicultural Education**

REWARD & RECOGNITION

SO MANY WAYS TO SAY “THANK YOU!”

Mason is committed to recognizing its outstanding faculty and staff. The Reward & Recognition team has many ways to say, “Thanks! You’ve done a great job!” Check out the many choices at

Reward & Recognition.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

Do you know a superstar?

Make sure they get the recognition they deserve by nominating them for Mason's Employee of the Month. Additional information can be found at <http://hr.gmu.edu/awards/everyday.php#empl>

If you have any questions or comments after reading the newsletter, please contact us!

Human Resources & Payroll

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

Follow us as “Working at Mason” on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)!

As a thank you for reading this year's newsletter, we are offering you a chance to win a

FREE GIFT!

Just e-mail worklife@gmu.edu by January 3, 2014
with the correct answers to the four questions below
and your name will be entered into a drawing
to win a fun prize!

- 1) Who will be the new record keeper in 2014 for both the Hybrid Plan and the 457?
- 2) George Mason University takes a zero-tolerance approach to _____.
- 3) In order for faculty and staff to receive paychecks on Friday, January 3rd, (bi-weekly payroll 12/15/13-12/28/13), when are timesheets due to Payroll?
- 4) What is your mission for 2014?