
STRATEGIC GOAL #7: WELL-BEING

Become a model well-being university that supports and enhances well-being for all of its members.

Well-being is achieved through a life of vitality, purpose, resilience, and engagement. Becoming a well-being university is about using an integrated approach so that well-being evolves as a unifying force for all of our Mason community. We are building on our strengths to live well and with purpose, enabling all of our community members to thrive together while simultaneously contributing in meaningful ways to the university's overall mission. Mason has outlined six dimensions of well-being (adapted from Gallup's model of well-being):

1. Purpose/Career – finding meaning in what you do at Mason each day and motivations to achieve your goals; setting goals and working toward successful completion
2. Social – having supportive relationships and high-quality social connections
3. Financial – managing your economic life to reduce stress and increase security
4. Community – feeling safe on campus and having pride in your communities
5. Physical – having good physical health and enough energy to get things done daily
6. Psychological – having vitality/good psychological health and the resiliency to deal with adversity

Mason strives to create an environment conducive to well-being by providing opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to experience alignment among their core values, strengths, meaning, and purpose in life. Mason will become more competitive in attracting talent and more successful in retaining our faculty and staff by fostering a welcoming, supportive, caring, collaborative culture where individuals can be engaged in their learning and growth. Mason will provide opportunities for students inside and outside the classroom that support their learning while providing them with tools that enhance their well-being and resilience. This approach recognizes that each person's experience of well-being is highly individualized.

Overall, Mason will increase and diversify the well-being activities available to students, faculty, and staff and will increase the percentage of students, faculty, and staff participating in well-being activities. We will also seek to engage faculty and staff in the broader mission of Mason to increase their sense of meaning in their work. We will survey participants in well-being activities to ensure that these activities are producing the desired results. More broadly, we will regularly measure and reassess ways to increase faculty, staff, and student levels of engagement, purpose, vitality, and resilience.

For students, Mason will increase the enrollment in academic courses and programs related to well-being. Recognizing the particular importance of financial well-being within our student community, we will also regularly increase the amount of student scholarships/financial aid available, and we will increase the compensation for graduate assistants to more competitive levels.

For faculty and staff, we will include well-being in all unit-level annual goals and evaluations. We will also annually increase salaries for faculty and staff with positive performance evaluations, within the bounds of our status as a state institution. Finally, we will focus on positive culture change in support of well-being by ensuring that all Mason leaders and supervisors: 1) consider their own well-being while positively contributing to others' well-being; 2) model well-being; 3) encourage and provide the time for their colleagues, faculty, and staff to engage in university initiatives that promote well-being; and 4) engage in active goal-setting with faculty and staff.

Metrics:

Metric #1: Students, faculty, and staff will show continued gains in engagement levels, meaning and purpose, and their perceptions that Mason is positively contributing to their well-being, as measured by regular university surveys.

Current Status: Continue the tri-annual Quality Work-Life (QWL) Survey and expand data collection with regular mini-QWL surveys.

Metric #2: Continue to make progress in elevating faculty and staff compensation to the median of our peer group or above.

Current Status: Faculty and staff compensation increased by approximately 10% over the past five years.

Metric #3: Continue to expand portfolio of well-being development programs for all faculty and staff and improve access to those programs for all faculty and staff.

Current Status: In process, pending design of inventory and assessment tool.

Metric #4: Continue to increase student access to well-being programs by developing a portfolio of well-being noncurricular activities open to all students, as well as curricular tracks leading to an undergraduate minor or graduate certificate.

Current Status: Mason has a well-being pathway in the Patriot Experience, a Resilience Badge, and a well-being pathway in the Mason Core Engagement Series (ENCORE). SIS and CVPA offer academic minors in well-being open to all majors.

Representative Accomplishments to Date:

- The Center for the Advancement of Well-Being has been established and works with a 36-member committee composed of faculty, students, and staff known as the Well-Being University Learning Community.
- Well-being academic course work is available as a “pathway” through the Mason Core and is integrated into two minors available to students through the School of Integrated Studies and the College of Visual and Performing Arts.
- The Gallup StrengthsFinder assessment was made available and, thus far, more than 15,000 members of the Mason community have taken the assessment. A well-being conference open to both the campus and external community has been held annually; Mason Strengths Academy was developed and implemented.
- The Mason Resilience Project provides 11 evidence-based resilience modules for faculty, staff, and students.
- The Mindful Living LLC residential program was established by Center for the Advancement of Well-Being.
- Human Resources and Payroll and Center for the Advancement of Well-Being developed a Well-Being Certificate Program for faculty and staff.
- Multiple affinity groups were created within Mason: Adult Caregivers Support Group, Educators and Employees of Color, Mason Administrative Professionals, Working Dads Group, and Working Mothers Support Group.
- HR has developed and continues to provide workshops, seminars, and training series around the six dimensions of well-being in collaboration with groups around Mason.
- The tri-annual Quality Work-Life (QWL) Survey has continued to be administered since 2000 through HR & Payroll in collaboration with the QWL Committee to collect data on faculty and staff engagement, well-being, and job satisfaction.

Sample Future Initiatives:

- Continue to implement other compensation and non-compensation benefits valued by Faculty and Staff members (e.g. long-term disability; extended holiday break; and other initiatives)
- Develop a plan to increase and diversify the well-being activities available to students, faculty, and staff, and increase the percentage of students, faculty, and staff participating in well-being activities.
- Develop a plan to increase the enrollment of students in academic courses and programs related to well-being.
- Create assessments to evaluate the effectiveness of all well-being activities.
- Develop policies and procedures to ensure that well-being is included in all unit-level annual goals and evaluations.
- Develop survey tools and plans to regularly measure and reassess ways to increase faculty, staff, and student levels of engagement, purpose, vitality, and resilience.
- Continue to provide free Gallup StrengthsFinder assessment to new incoming students and new faculty and staff.
- HR & Payroll is facilitating a Civility Committee to strategically and positively impact community and social well-being.
- Explore ways in which to provide opportunities for faculty and staff to engage with students outside of the classroom through the Student Experience Redesign.

STRATEGIC GOAL #8: DIVERSE ACADEMIC COMMUNITY

Create an inclusive and diverse academic community that reflects the diversity of the National Capital Region.

At George Mason University, diversity is our strength. We believe that diversity enriches the educational and scholarly environment by bringing varied interests, perspectives, and experiences to the learning, teaching, research, and creative activities that make up our core mission. We include and embrace a multitude of people and ideas in everything we do, and we respect and celebrate our differences. We are committed to the creation of a fully inclusive campus where persons of all backgrounds can thrive.

Through close collaboration between central administration and academic units, we will recruit, retain, develop, and mentor talented and diverse faculty and professional staff. We will increase the scope of our hiring searches to broaden competition, and we will develop innovative personnel management strategies to recruit a workforce that is more reflective of our student population. It is essential that we leverage Mason's access to the cultural, political, academic, and employment resources of one of the most global cities in the United States—Washington, D.C.

Increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff will require sustained institutional effort. For this purpose, we must heighten our shared commitment to faculty and staff diversity. We have made significant progress through campus communications and events as well as via the advocacy of groups like the Mason Educators and Employees of Color. To further solidify this effort, we will establish a new cohort of Diversity Recruitment Advocates who will work to strengthen Mason's faculty recruitment efforts by serving as diversity champions in units across the university. The hiring of a director of Faculty Diversity Initiatives will provide a central point of contact and institutional champion for faculty diversity.

Improvement will require new procedures and practices. Revised search committee training is one step. The development of a workshop on implicit bias as it relates to recruitment will enhance this effort. In addition, the creation of unit-level diversity and inclusion committees designed to examine unit-specific ways to better recruit/retain diverse faculty will likely uncover new ideas on how to promote diversity. Finally, improvements to the search process through holistic application review and other measures should yield more diverse hiring results.

Metrics:

Metric #1: Increase the proportion of instructional and research faculty, staff, administrators, and graduate students who come from historically underrepresented groups to better reflect the diversity of our undergraduate student body.

Current Status: FY17 – Undergraduate 48.7%, 19.6% of faculty, 34.3% of staff, 21.6% of administrators, and 27.3% of graduate students are from historically underrepresented groups. (FY16: Undergraduate 47.1%, Faculty 15.2%, Staff 33.9%, Administrators 18.9%, Graduate Students 25.4%; FY15: Undergraduate 45.6%, Faculty 15.5%, Staff 31.5%, Administrators 17.6%, Graduate Students 24.7%;)

Representative Accomplishments to Date:

- Revamped and enhanced search committee education to support greater diversity hiring.
- A \$1 million investment has been made by the institution to bolster diversity and inclusion resources and provide training for those who require it.
- Mason has invested in an institutional membership with the National Center for Faculty Development and Diversity to provide professional development, training, and mentoring to graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and faculty.
- Mason Educators and Employees of Color is an employee affinity group open to all and designed to create community and be an advocacy/support resource for Mason employees of color.
- Director of Faculty Diversity Initiatives: A search is underway for a full-time position responsible for creating and coordinating initiatives and programs across Mason campuses in support of faculty professional development for diversity and inclusion. This position will be a part of Mason's Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning.
- The Office of Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics and HR have drastically reduced the number of employees with race/ethnicity information listed as "unknown." This has provided Mason with more accurate internal statistics.
- North Plaza was renamed "Wilkins Plaza" in commemoration of acclaimed journalist, civil rights legend, and Mason faculty member, the late Roger Wilkins.
- Search process waiver was implemented to facilitate targeted opportunity faculty hires.

Sample Future Initiatives:

- In conjunction with academic leadership, create/support unit-level diversity and inclusion committees designed to examine unit-specific ways to better recruit/retain diverse faculty.
- CDE and HR will implement an action plan designed to increase number of applicants who make it to the interview stage by creating workshops on conducting "holistic application review."
- Monitoring of applicant/interview pools will be increased for equity.
- HR and CDE will partner in development of workshop focused on implicit/unconscious bias as relates to the recruitment process.
- Diversity Recruitment Advocates—pilot cohort: Strengthen Mason's faculty recruitment efforts by building a cohort of knowledgeable champions from units across the university.

STRATEGIC GOAL #9: SUPPORT TEACHING AND FACULTY EXCELLENCE

Mason will provide an environment and resources to support faculty and encourage academic innovation and excellence.

The foundation of Mason's success is a world-class faculty. Achieving our ambitious strategic agenda will depend squarely on our ability to attract, retain, equip, and support talented faculty. Mason's new budget model, launched in 2016, is helping us to create a financial framework that will fortify our intellectual and academic core. Along with the growth in enrollment across all ranks and types of appointments, we are aggressively recruiting faculty members whose diverse areas of expertise will build on the remarkable talents in our faculty core. We are committed to providing an environment and requisite resources that ensure our faculty are fully equipped and appropriately rewarded for their impact on the quality of the student experience and the advancement of their fields.

To support this goal, Mason will strengthen its infrastructure in support of faculty success in teaching and learning; mentoring; scholarly and creative work; research development (e.g. grants, external funding, and seeding multidisciplinary partnerships); entrepreneurial activities (e.g. start-ups, patents, and related work); and faculty career planning. We will achieve this through a variety of targeted investments and programs that directly support faculty in these specific areas. Of particular importance will be growing the resources and programs of the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning and Faculty Affairs and Development, which both serve as an integrated source of support for faculty. We believe that by supporting faculty work, faculty levels of engagement and perceived organizational support will subsequently increase.

The other critical element to achieving our goal of supporting teaching and scholarship excellence is recognizing and rewarding faculty excellence for the breadth and depth of its contributions that both enhance Mason's reputation and help us meet our strategic goals. In addition, providing clearer guidelines for performance expectations, creating career pathways across different faculty appointments, and creating strategic recruitment and hiring initiatives will also be essential.

Metrics:

Metric #1: Instructional/research faculty will report increasing levels of job satisfaction.

Current status: pending design of measurement tool.

Metric #2: Instructional/research faculty will report increasing satisfaction in perceived organizational support.

Current status: pending design of measurement tool.

Metric #3: 100% of all faculty members will participate in at least one professional development activity annually that supports their teaching and learning, research and scholarship, writing, mentoring, or other career-related goals.

Current status: pending design of measurement tool.

Metric #4: Annual increase in faculty's satisfaction with renewal, promotion, and tenure policies, expectations, and reasonableness.

Current status: pending design of measurement tool.

Representative Accomplishments to Date:

- Four new Presidential Medal of Excellence Awards were established in May 2017.
- An Adjunct Faculty Task Force was established in spring 2015 and is working on implementing its recommendations that have been informed by a university-wide survey of adjunct faculty.
- A Term Faculty Task Force was established in spring 2017.
- New online adjunct faculty one-stop shop, the Adjunct Faculty Commons, launched in January 2017.
- The Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning was created in August 2017 to support instructors in their teaching and learning practices and digital innovations, whether they are teaching face-to-face, online, or hybrid courses.

Sample Future Initiatives:

- Expand faculty support through increased resources and programming in the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning.
- Use Faculty Initiatives/Engagement Working Group to create appropriate surveys and identify additional opportunities to increase faculty support and promote faculty engagement.
- Use Term Faculty Task Force to identify additional means of increasing term faculty support and engagement.
- Use Adjunct Faculty Task Force to identify additional means of increasing adjunct faculty support and engagement.
- Expand support for research and scholarship through institutional research initiatives (see Goals #10 and #11).
- Develop and clearly articulate pathways to promotion for all faculty across types of appointment.
- Review the renewal, tenure, and promotion processes to enhance their clarity and consistency.
- Develop Research Excellence Awards to recognize faculty members across Mason whose excellence in research provides leadership to their professions and enhances Mason's stature and reputation.