STRATEGIC GOAL #7: WELL-BEING

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

Well-being means building 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 (adapted from Gallup’s model of well-being) has outlined six dimensions 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 towards 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 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. 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, and 3) encourage and provide the time for their colleagues, faculty, and staff to engage in university initiatives that promote well-being.
Metrics:

**Metric #1 - Well-being Activities:** Increase and diversify the well-being activities available to students, faculty, and staff.

**Metric #2 - Mason Participation:** a) Increase the percentage of students, faculty, and staff participating in well-being activities; b) Increase the enrollment of students in academic courses and programs related to well-being.

**Metric #3 - Well-being Impact:** a) Participants of assessed well-being events will agree that they have a clear understanding of well-being and that they are likely to alter their behaviors to increase their well-being following the event; b) Well-being will be included in each unit-level annual goals and evaluations.

**Metric #4 - Compensation:** a) Regularly increase salaries for faculty and staff with positive performance evaluations; b) Increase the compensation for graduate assistants to more competitive levels. c) Regularly increase the amount of student scholarships/financial aid available.

**Metric #5 – Engagement, Purpose, Vitality, and Resilience:** Regularly measure and seek to increase faculty, staff, and student levels of engagement, purpose, vitality, and resilience.

Accomplishments to Date:

- The Center for the Advancement of Well-Being has been established and works with a 36-member committee comprised of faculty, students and staff.
- Well-being academic course work is available as a “pathway” through the Mason Core.
- The Gallup StrengthsFinder assessment was made accessible 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 also been held annually; Mason Strengths Academy was developed and implemented.
- Gallup measured undergraduate students and alumni well-being.
- The Mason Resilience Project provides 11 evidence-based resilience modules for faculty, staff, and students.
- Resilience Badging Challenge, the Well-Being Pathway in Patriot Experience, and the Well-being Team (peer educators) were created by University Life and implemented for students; Mindful Living LLC residential program was established by Center for the Advancement of Well-Being.
- HR and Center for the Advancement of Well-Being developed a Well-Being Certificate Program for faculty and staff.
- Creation of multiple affinity groups within Mason: Adult Caregivers Support Group, Educators and Employees of Color, Mason Administrative Professionals, Working Dads Group, and Working Mothers Support Group.
- HR and Payroll has developed and continues to provide workshops, seminars, and training series around the six dimensions of well-being in collaboration with groups around Mason. For example: Financial Well-being Seminar Series, Supervisor Series, Leadership Legacy, and Benefit and Retirement Planning sessions.
- The university has increased faculty and staff compensation by roughly 10% over the past five years.

Possible Next Steps:

- 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.
- Encourage faculty, staff, and students to take advantage of the wide variety of well-being activities.
- Identify and design initiatives that support students’ and employees’ engagement in Mason’s six domains of well-being: purpose/career, social, financial, community, physical, and psychological.
- Introduce a series of university policies and procedures that reference well-being.
- Continue to provide free Gallup’s StrengthsFinder assessment to new incoming students and new faculty and staff.
- Kick off Civility Initiative to promote and support civility throughout the Mason community.
- Explore ways in which to provide opportunities for faculty and staff to engage with students outside of the classroom through the Student Experience Redesign.
- Provide opportunities for students to be mentored in their first year at the university.
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. Mason strongly believes 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 all persons can thrive.

Through close collaboration between central administration and academic units, we will recruit and retain, develop, and mentor talented and diverse faculty, academic, 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 America’s most global city, Washington, D.C.

Increasing the diversity of our faculty and staff will entail sustained institutional effort. For this purpose, we must heighten a 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 faculty, staff, administrators, and graduate students who come from historically underrepresented groups to better reflect the diversity of our undergraduate student body, of which 48.7% are from historically underrepresented groups.

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

**Metric #2:** Increase diversity of the Mason faculty community by five percentage points by 2024.

*Current Status: As of FY17, the diversity of Mason’s faculty community has increased by 4.7 percentage points. (FY14: 14.9%; FY15: 15.5%; FY16: 15.2%; FY17: 19.6%)*

**Metric #3:** Increase diversity of the Mason faculty administrators by five percentage points by 2024.

*Current Status: As of FY17, the diversity of Mason’s faculty administrators has increased by 4.2 percentage points. (FY14: 17.4%; FY15: 17.6%; FY16: 18.9%; FY17: 21.6%)*

**Metric #4:** Increase diversity of the Mason graduate students by five percentage points by 2024.

*Current Status: As of FY17, the diversity of Mason’s graduate students has increased by 3.6 percentage points. (FY14: 23.7%; FY15: 24.7%; FY16: 25.4%; FY17: 27.3%)*

**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. Position will be a part of Mason’s Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning.
- CDE 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 civil rights legend and Mason faculty member Roger Wilkins.
- Waiver from search process was utilized to facilitate targeted opportunity faculty hires.

**Possible Next Steps:**

- 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 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.
STRASTRIC GGOAL #9: SUPPORT TEACHING AND SCHOLARSHIP EXCELLENCE

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

George Mason University has attracted a talented set of faculty members across all ranks and types of appointments. Moreover, we have an ambitious strategic agenda that is heavily dependent on our faculty community for success. In recognition of this, Mason is 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. They achieve this through teaching and mentoring, as well as having an impact on Mason's reputation for excellence and innovation in research, scholarship, and entrepreneurial activities.

To support this goal, Mason will strengthen its infrastructure in support of faculty success in teaching and learning; mentoring; scholarly writing; research development (e.g., grants, external funding, and seeding multidisciplinary partnerships); entrepreneurial activities (e.g., start-ups, patents, and related work); and 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, which serves as an integrated source of support for faculty.

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 their contributions that both enhance Mason’s reputation and help us meet our strategic goals. Recognizing faculty accomplishments through an expanded awards program will be an important component of this effort. 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: 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.

Metric #2: Faculty will report levels of departmental engagement at or above benchmark scores, as reported on the Harvard COACHE (Collaborative on Academic Careers in Higher Education) survey.

Metric #3: Faculty will report levels of departmental quality at or above benchmark scores, as reported on the Harvard COACHE survey.

Metric #4: Mason faculty scholarly products represent greater breadth and depth of faculty expertise for areas in which the institution has made strategic investments.

Metric #5: 100% of academic units and the Office of the Provost will have revised the Reappointment, Promotion, Tenure and annual review guidelines to provide increased clarity and transparency.

Metric #6: Mason will have clearly defined pathways to promotion for adjunct faculty, term faculty, tenure and tenure-track faculty in the Faculty Handbook, with supporting documents, policies, and practices on the Office of the Provost website.

Metric #7: 2021 and 2024 Quality Work Life Survey results for instructional/research faculty show continued improvement in Perceived Organizational Support, the degree to which faculty feel the organization values their contributions and cares for their well-being.

Metric #8: At least 90% of graduating students report satisfaction with education they received in their major.

Current Status: FY16, 91% of undergraduates, 94% of doctoral, 93% of masters, and 94% of law students reported satisfaction.

Metric #9: At least 85% of graduating students (doctoral, masters, and law) report satisfaction with mentoring.

Current Status: FY16 – 84% of doctoral, 71% of masters and 64% of law graduating students reported satisfaction.

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 from 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.
- Created the position of associate director of research development in April 2017. This role will be key in supporting Mason faculty as we enhance our research and scholarship programs and contributions.
- Created the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning in August 2017 to support instructors in their teaching and learning practices and digital innovations, whether faculty are teaching face-to-face, online, or hybrid courses.

Possible Next Steps:

- Explore multiple means to support faculty success in teaching, learning, research, scholarship, and career development.
- Expand faculty support through increased resources and programming in the Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning.
- 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.
- Developing 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.