



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

W&M Staff Liaison Report

Submitted by Taylor Locks, PPFA President

On behalf of Professional and Professional Faculty Assembly (PPFA) and Staff Assembly (SA)

September 2023

William & Mary employees have been working hard to prepare our campus community for the start of a new academic year. From Facilities Management to Student Affairs, and every department in between, our employees have been instrumental in ensuring a smooth opening to the year.

Employees are enthusiastic about the changes happening at W&M, especially the opening of the Performing & Fine Arts Center and the introduction of our new food service provider, Aramark. The addition of mobile ordering and Column 15 coffee in our campus cafés has been very popular. Employees are also looking forward to the continued work on the Housing and Dining Master Plan and the improvements it will bring.

Employees are grateful for the additional recognition leave we received this summer and the flexibility provided in its use. Work-life balance is essential to the health and wellness of all our employees. Making time for rest, family, hobbies, traveling, and other activities outside of work creates happier, healthier, more productive employees. We believe that is a goal worth striving for.

While there is an overall positive atmosphere on campus, there are some areas of concern. A few that have risen to the top are vacancies in leadership positions, recruitment and retention challenges, and the health of the campus community.

Concerns have been raised to assembly leadership about William & Mary's ability to attract and retain talent in upper management and senior leadership roles. These concerns seem to be escalated by the departure of several key university leaders, followed by the departure of their successors in interim roles. We understand the importance of hiring the best candidates, but operating with multiple, extended vacancies in critical positions is not sustainable.

Hiring challenges are not exclusive to leadership positions. Many employees have expressed frustration due to processes and practices that, they believe, hamper recruitment and retention of talented employees. Some concerns expressed include inadequate market research, inconsistent salaries across similar positions, lack of recruitment tools, and departure of high-performing employees due to an inability to compete with counteroffers. While we are

sensitive to the fact that University Human Resources has been without consistent leadership and understaffed for some time, it is important to share the concerns being reported from multiple departments. Leadership from SA and PPFA appreciated the chance to share feedback with the compensation working group last spring and hope for similar opportunities to improve the employee experience.

Finally, we are seeing rising concerns about the health and wellbeing of employees across campus. There has been a significant increase in the rise of self-reported COVID-cases and other diseases, such as RSV and the flu. Some departments have expressed interest in reimplementing mitigation strategies, such as plexiglass shields, in high-traffic reception areas. Our assemblies will keep a pulse on this topic as the fall semester progresses and William & Mary continues to follow guidance from the CDC and our assemblies will keep a pulse on this topic as the fall semester progresses.

This year, both assemblies welcomed new and returning elected members to our rosters and leadership positions. This year the Professional and Professional Faculty Assembly PPFA is focused on implementing strategies to increase and enhance opportunities for PPFs to connect with one another, discuss pressing issues, seek advice or mentorship, and collaborate across departments. SA is planning to examine its assembly structures to ensure it can best serve the needs of staff throughout campus, while continuing to spearhead projects that benefit all. PPFA and SA are working together to identify key areas for collaboration, and we look forward to updating you on our work throughout the year.