



WILLIAM & MARY

CHARTERED 1693

**Report of the W&M Staff Liaison representing the
Professional and Professional Faculty Assembly (PPFA) and Staff Assembly (SA)
September 2022
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The fall semester brings forth renewed excitement not only for our new and returning students but also for our staff, professional, and professional faculty community. We are witnessing employees and students attending more in-person events with enthusiasm. People seem to be ready and willing to engage with others. Investments in equipment to support hybrid meeting rooms and classrooms allow for better fixability and more involvement, especially for those not on the main campus. These investments allow staff, professional, and professional faculty to share and fellowship in ways never supported before. Continuing these practices will further support the sense of belonging the staff, professional, and professional faculty need.

Brought forth from the July '22 Staff Liaison report, the leadership from Staff Assembly (SA) and Professional and Professional Faculty Assembly (PPFA) would like to continue to capitalize on preexisting relationships to achieve common goals for our staff/employee community. The past is behind us, and we now must work towards a positive intent of flourishing, inclusion, and equity for our staff, professionals, and professional faculty. With that in mind, the theme for the coming year is support and development. Both SA and PPFA continue to work on refining the process for the Development Support Fund. Revised initiatives include:

- Ensuring an improved process for communicating fund availability to eligible staff.
- Ensuring equity in the application process.
- Ensuring improved data tracking for funds available and funds previously received.
- Establishing equitable division of funds between assemblies.
- Creating an impact reporting statement to share with university leadership.
- Establishing partnerships/mentorships to assist individuals with the application process

The use of new technologies such as Zoom and Microsoft Teams adds to staff stress levels. Although these technologies have tremendous benefits, they are also a great burden if misused. Constituents report daily schedules being filled with almost back-to-back Zoom and Teams meetings, which, unfortunately, leaves very little time for self-reflection or to perform assigned tasks. Creating guidelines or a policy describing the proper use of these technologies should be explored. Perhaps a renewed focus on the core of jobs and duties with the ability for employees to truly say, no, I can't take on another thing, considering other resources to achieve business needs. We also know from many articles published there is a lingering push/pull regarding telework in business & industry. Outside of the classroom and on the business side of the university, that is also being felt. There is a strong push to use a telework day as a quiet, focused

day toward productivity. And we want to continue to recognize that telework is not an option for all work of the university and its employees.

With employee mental health and engagement in mind, the assemblies would like to refresh ideas previously shared in the July '22 report. These ideas include:

- Setting guidelines/restrictions on scheduled meetings. A weekly “Planned Pause,” every Friday or every Monday, for example.
- Hiring and maintaining a temporary pool of employees to assist in jobs when there are often short-term needs across the campus.
- Refining more rapid hiring processes to better retain highly qualified applicants.
 - We have received positive feedback that the HR team’s improvements are having a positive impact on morale and productivity.
- Assessing reasons employees are leaving W&M through a consistent exit interview process.
 - The exit interview form exists on the HR website, but it is not proactively tracked or widely used by many departments. Useful data could be tracked and reported to support future employee retention initiatives.

With respect to retention issues, the staff has raised concerns about the continuity of executive leadership with the departure of Christopher Lee, and now the recent announcement of Amy Sebring leaving. The departure of Amy was a surprise to many of the staff, and the concerns are warranted as she made significant positive changes in her time as COO and her management style was appreciated and respected. We wish her all the best, and we are prepared to move forward with positive intent to continue the momentum she set and work closely with the interim COO as we move into the upcoming year.

The Housing & Dining Comprehensive Facilities Plan is a significant endeavor to maintain a safe and healthy living and learning experience for the campus community. This helps us prioritize our efforts and resources while understanding there are good things to come. It will provide balance to our campus priorities and additionally provide hope and positivity to students and employees.