

General Meeting – Live Questions

Follow Up Questions for Chris Ackerman

September 3, 2025

Workplace Culture

Q: When it comes to workplace culture, what core values and practices should every unit and department at George Mason consistently uphold?

A: According to *Meaningful Work: How to Ignite Passion and Performance in Every Employee*, three C's are essential:

- **Community** – fostering genuine relationships and belonging
- **Contribution** – helping employees see the impact of their work
- **Challenge** – encouraging growth through learning, problem-solving, and stretch projects

HR's Organizational Development & Learning (ODL) team is available to consult with leaders on building and sustaining positive culture. [See intake form for more information.]

Hiring

Q: Are there plans to grow the Talent Acquisition team?

A: Yes. We will launch an **Executive Recruitment function** by year's end to support senior and hard-to-fill searches, providing concierge-level service at significant cost savings compared to external firms. Mason Temps will continue to expand, and options for added unit-level recruitment support are under review with potential adoption in 2026.

Q: Does the university support hiring internally?

A: Yes. We support **internal mobility** through internal-only searches where appropriate, creating growth opportunities for current employees while maintaining a competitive, policy-aligned process to attract the best talent.

Training

Q: How often must HR personnel complete training on GMU and DHRM policies?

A: HR personnel complete the same required trainings as other employees, with additional training depending on duties.

Q: Why can't some supervisor training be required? Bad supervisors won't self-select into training.

A: HR is addressing this by expanding outreach, partnering with unit HR leaders to identify supervisors, and ensuring training is completed.

Q: Many supervisors lack resources to lead effectively. What is HR doing?

A: ODL offers multiple programs:

- **Supervisor Boot Camp** – offered three times per year in flexible formats
- **Emerging Leaders Supervisor Series** – offered every fall and spring
- **Leadership Legacy Program** – offered annually in-person
- **Workplace Coaching** – four free sessions available to all employees
- **LinkedIn Learning** – access to extensive leadership content

Supervisory effectiveness is also measured in the performance appraisal form. Employee Relations supports units with guidance and accountability.

Q: Is there an HR “bootcamp” for new HR Liaisons?

A: Not currently. HR Liaisons receive targeted communications, HR News (weekly), and attend quarterly/ad hoc meetings for updates.

Q: Will HR lead on initiatives to better support neurodivergent and differently abled faculty, staff, and students?

A: This will be taken back to HR teams for further discussion and strategy development.

Employee Relations

Q: Will supervisors be held accountable for Gallup survey results?

A: Engagement with Gallup survey data has increased significantly since 2022, with 9 out of 10 colleges now involved. HR has conducted consultations, data presentations, retreats, and custom reports. A framework for action-planning workshops will be promoted following the 2026 survey. With the addition of an HR Senior Communications Specialist, resources and marketing will expand to ensure supervisors are supported.

Q: How is Mason addressing low morale, burnout, and well-being?

A: Current initiatives include:

- Faculty & Staff Enrichment Day (Oct. 16)
- Participation in the **Mental Health and Well-Being Taskforce**
- **Patriots Thriving Together** and Well-Being resources
- Programs from the Center for the Advancement of Well-Being
- Department-level action planning with 2024 survey results
- Free **Workplace Coaching** sessions for all employees
- Recognition and appreciation initiatives

Future initiatives: partnering with I/O Psychology students to explore a “**Certified Well-Being Departments**” program in Fall 2025.

Q: How should employees report a toxic workplace?

A: Employee Relations remains the point of contact. We are reviewing service-level expectations and plan to embed a customer service model to rebuild trust.

Class & Compensation

Q: What happened to the promised salary increase for lower-salary employees?

A: This was addressed directly by the President in his presentation.

Q: Why should employees trust that this compensation study will be different from past efforts?

A: Partnering with a consulting firm, this study is designed to create **long-term, sustainable compensation models** that support retention, competitiveness, consistency, and compliance — ensuring lasting organizational impact.

HR Liaisons

Q: Will there be funding or scholarships for HR Liaisons to attend professional conferences?

A: Yes, this is under global review and additional resources will be announced soon.

Q: Can we have an in-person strategic meeting with all HR Liaisons?

A: This is being explored and updates will be shared in the coming months.

Q: How can someone join the HR “council” you mentioned?

A: More details will be made available in the coming months as we shape this initiative.