

# General Meeting for All W&M/VIMS Professionals & Professional Faculty

Coordinated by the Professionals & Professional Faculty Assembly  
May 17, 2011 Sadler Center

## GENERAL MEETING NOTES

The College of William and Mary's Professionals & Professional Faculty Assembly (PPFA), the 21-member body elected by the 475+ professionals and professional faculty (PPFs) at the College and Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS), held a general meeting for all PPFs on May 17, 2011, in the Sadler Center.

Provost Michael Halleran gave introductory remarks and then attendees joined round table discussions about professional development, benefits, morale, performance planning, and other topics.

Approximately 60 PPFs attended: 45 non-PPFA members and 15 PPFA members.

## ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS: INITIATIVES & COMMENTS

The May 17, 2011, round table discussions produced many excellent comments and ideas. Selected comments were gathered and appear further below. The PPFA reviewed the comments and identified these initiatives:

1. **Performance Planning and Evaluation policy and procedures for PPFs:** review, suggest improvements, and help offer some training sessions where applicable.
2. **Leadership development:** develop leadership for the PPFA; support and participate in campus leadership training initiatives for all employees.
3. **Tuition waivers:** investigate the possibility of expanding tuition waivers, such as to part-time permanent employees (on a pro-rated tuition waiver basis).
4. **Professionals/Professional Faculty policies and benefits:** provide improved communication and education about the policies and perhaps developing new incentives to employees.
5. **Best practices:** create a system to share best practices across campus – tie it to the strategic plan and business innovation efforts.
6. **Salaries:** research ways that we might help facilitate salary increases for staff.

At its July 13, 2011, meeting, the PPFA formed task forces to begin research on each initiative, and at a July 25, 2011, meeting, the PPFA's current and immediate past presidents reviewed these issues with Provost Halleran.

For FY2012, the PPFA has incorporated specific goals for the first four initiatives.

Any PPFs interested in helping work on these goals is encouraged to contact any PPFA member:  
<http://www.wm.edu/sites/proffaculty/governance/assemblymembers/index.php>

## Here are selected comments from the roundtables:

### Professional Development Round Table

- Learn how to inspire the people with whom we work: increase leadership and management training.
- Create a "management ladder" course package (classes/training that helps people get ready for promotion/upgrade positions)
- Investigate opportunities for cross campus committees and task forces.
- Schedule "professional development days" that offer targeted programs. Consider sabbatical options for professionals.
- Increase funding for professional development.
- Use technology (webinars, etc.) but also maintain opportunities for in-person training.
- Share best practices across institutions. Using Residence Life example: staff could spend time at another institution to learn about how another institution operates.
- Develop ways to help staff understand and value the other cultures across campus.
- Make professional development a larger component of employees' job descriptions, goals/objectives, and performance planning. Tie it to the strategic plan.
- Share communications about staff development opportunities happening in departments across campus; share costs for speakers, seminars, etc.
- Create professional development training partnerships with neighboring academic institutions or other organizations.
- Professional development training topic suggestions: emotional intelligence; creating and developing vision and strategy (i.e., how to engage all of the staff on topics being addressed across campus); supervision and performance management (how to communicate your expectations and how to provide constructive criticism).

### Morale Building Round Table

- Salary increases and resolving problems such as salary compression would be big morale boosters.
- Tuition waivers: permit employees to take their four free courses at any point, now just one per semester; consider allowing employees to transfer tuition waivers to other employees; offer tuition waivers for part-time employees.
- Offer a specific Professionals/Professional Faculty staff award.
- Expand partnerships with local organizations that offer discounts or other perks to W&M employees.
- Create Education/Idea/Knowledge exchange departments to share efficiencies and other best practices. This would help celebrate staff and departments who excel.
- Expand professional development opportunities.
- Increase internal communication about College issues (salaries, salary studies, parking fee increases, increase in student enrollment, etc.): consider a regular monthly email and webpages that keep employees informed, plus campus forums for discussions.
- Conduct exit interviews to learn why employees leave W&M.

### **General Topics Round Table**

- Lack of salary increases affects efficiencies and effectiveness if employees leave for other employment: loss of expertise, costs to hire and retrain, etc.
- Policy that permits outside salary offers to increase an individual's pay: this creates salary imbalances and morale problems.
- Good news was that graduate stipends were raised finally.
- Professional development: some offices have set aside money out of private funds for professional development.
- Streamline the hiring process for PPFs by making use of the People Admin system and incorporating other efficiencies in the paperwork and signature stages. Create online tutorials for the hiring process.

### **Benefits Round Table**

- Benefit changes: improve communication process to staff when benefits change. Many voiced uncertainty about changes in VRS retirement benefits, ORPs, etc.
- Tuition waiver: as noted in comments above, expand options for dependents, at other institutions, and for part-time employees.
- Training: improve training about PPF benefits, especially because some of us operate under one system, others under another (such as for sick leave and annual leave). Perhaps hold forums, create online tutorials...
- Child care: need less expensive options and additional spaces.
- Spousal hires: consider expanding opportunities for non-faculty employees.
- Parking fees: consider reducing fees; consider a flat % of salary rate.
- Transport: consider a van that transports employees between Williamsburg and VIMS.
- Wellness education or services, such as meeting with a dietitian.
- Expand domestic partner benefits, especially for health care insurance.
- Recognition of employees who have taken on additional workload and/or higher level of responsibilities due to hiring freezes, layoffs, and new initiatives.
- Restructuring: would appreciate an update on how this has worked at the College.

### **Performance Planning & Evaluation Round Table**

- Communication and training: need forums or other ways to review the policy, discuss the policies and procedures, and encourage its use.
- Cover sheet: needs to be updated to include position number; statement that the employee's signature doesn't indicate agreement; method of evaluation to be used in the coming year; etc.
- Clarify the role of the "reviewer" to improve the reviewer's opportunity to apply consistency throughout the department.
- Goals and objectives: departments need to be setting clear, measurable goals; then employees within those departments doing the same.
- Accountability: departments and employees (including supervisors) need to be held accountable for achieving the goals/objectives.