



Office of Media and Public Relations

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Recently ranked in the top five "Up-and-Coming Universities" by U.S. News & World Report, George Mason University is an innovative, entrepreneurial institution that prepares its students to succeed in the work force and meet the needs of the region and the world. Mason has strong academic and research programs, which concentrate on producing successful students and accomplished alumni with a global focus. The university also has a reputation for forward-thinking academic offerings.

Following is a sampling of some faculty, programs, students, research and innovation to keep an eye on at Mason.

MASON FACULTY TO WATCH

Uncovering New Risk Factors for Pregnancy

While losing a child is every parent's worst nightmare and a subject no one wants to think about, **Panagiota Kitsantas**, assistant professor of biostatistics and epidemiology, studies infant mortality in an attempt to help prevent it. In her recent study, she found that women who had experienced a previous child death (defined as the death of a child from birth to 18 years of age) were more likely to suffer an infant death or deliver a premature or low-birth-weight infant in a subsequent pregnancy.

Preventing the 'Uncommon' Cold Virus

Common colds typically cause a week of sneezing, aches and pains, but what if that cold turned out to be something more? Human adenovirus type-3 is known as the "uncommon cold" because the symptoms of the infection are similar to those of the common cold, which is caused by the rhinovirus. The symptoms of the uncommon cold are typically much more severe and can even be fatal. Determined to stamp out this devastating infection, Mason bioinformatics researcher **Don Seto** collaborated with the University of Hong Kong, Guangzhou Children's Hospital, the South China Institute of Technology and the Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Sciences to develop a DNA-based vaccine that has effectively protected mice from the infection.

Locating the Criminals

David Weisburd, professor of criminology, won the 2010 Stockholm Prize in Criminology for focusing on the places where crimes occur, not just the criminals that commit them. His findings show that if the police target crime in certain "hot spots," criminals won't (or can't) simply move the criminal activities around the corner to another location. Focusing on places where crime is concentrated enables police to target their efforts more effectively. While police have generally organized their patrols by neighborhoods or precincts that span several city blocks, a "hot spot" can be a single street segment, a cluster of addresses or even a single building.

MASON PROGRAMS TO WATCH

Video Gaming as a Career

Playing video games would be the first step to a new career for students who pursue a **Bachelor of Fine Arts in Computer Game Design**. The degree is the only such four-year degree program offered in the Commonwealth of Virginia and the Washington, D.C. area, and recognizes the high demand for game designers. Students can take courses including critical games studies, games and society, game theory, game programming, visual and audio design and interactive storytelling.

Caring for Baby Boomers

The U.S. Census Bureau projects the nation's older population will double to 71.5 million by 2030 as baby boomers get older. Created in response to this population shift, the new **Partnership for Education in Gerontology (PEG)** at Mason will prepare the nursing faculty to train students to manage the unique needs of older adults. Approximately 24 nursing faculty members from Northern Virginia nursing schools, including Mason, underwent an extensive training program that will help them better teach undergraduate students how to care for older adults. As early as fall 2010, graduates from schools across the region may benefit from this faculty education program as nurse-educators begin to incorporate new PEG content into course materials.

Preparing Today to Plan Tomorrow's Events

The Washington, D.C., region is home to myriad events from small social gatherings or weddings to major conferences and festivals. Mason's **Bachelor of Science in Tourism and Events Management** provides students with the skills and knowledge critical to surviving in the multi-billion dollar tourism and events management industries. Courses in heritage and cultural tourism, resort management, wedding planning and unique internship opportunities make Mason a top destination for students interested in becoming tourism and events management professionals.

MASON STUDENTS TO WATCH

Student Activist Makes a Difference

For global affairs student and university scholar **Whitney Burton**, rubbing elbows with influential world leaders and listening to the likes of Bono and Al Gore isn't just a dream. Burton recently landed the opportunity to do just that when she won a seat at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. As the only American to be chosen from 59 young scholars from 40 different countries, Burton's speech that sent her to Davos was on eradicating poverty through economic programs such as microfinance, a system of providing financial services to the poor.

Athletic Trainer Works with Injured Dancers

Stephanie Symons, a graduate student in the School of Recreation, Health and Tourism, is the first point of contact for injured dancers who come into the performing arts medicine clinic. The clinic makes Mason one of only a handful of universities that offer a performing arts medicine clinic. As a nationally certified and state licensed athletic trainer, Symons develops therapeutic

exercises and other treatments to help rehabilitate the dancers. Symons is also involved in consultation work on injury prevention.

Political Pursuits

With plans to get a law degree and one day run for Congress, government and politics major **Andres Chovil** has already begun his political pursuits. Chovil represented the state of Alaska as the youngest delegate from the state at the Democratic National Convention in Denver. He started working for the Obama campaign early on by making phone calls and knocking on doors with a goal of getting a good turnout in his community of Chugiak, AK for the primary on Super Tuesday. The next thing he knew, he was wrapped up in a whirlwind of convention activities.

eHarmony for Clouded Leopards?

Jilian Fazio, who is working on a master's degree in Environmental Science and Policy at Mason, is trying to conserve the clouded leopard population. This particular species of leopard has been called secretive or shy, and therefore finding a "love" connection for these leopards can be tricky. Fazio uses grant money to develop a test that looks at behavioral and personality traits to help match up leopards for more successful reproduction.

MASON RESEARCH TO WATCH

Getting on Board with Genocide Prevention

More than 60 years after the human atrocities committed by Nazi Germany, **Andrea Bartoli**, professor and director of the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, believes the world is still struggling to understand genocidal trends and respond to threats appropriately. As director of the Engaging Governments on Genocide Prevention program, Bartoli trains government officials from United Nations member states in genocide prevention methods and involves the participants in an international genocide prevention network. Bartoli has experience as both a scholar and as mediator, working with a variety of peacemaking processes in Africa, the Balkans, Central America and other regions.

Securing Cyberspace

At a time when people are constantly on the move, it's necessary to ensure the safe transmission of information, an important strategic and operational corporate asset. The first academic center in security at a U.S. university, Mason's **Center for Secure Information Systems (CSIS)** provides an environment committed to encouraging expertise development in both the theoretical and applied aspects of information systems security. CSIS is one of the National Security Agency's original Centers of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education and in 2008 was named one of the National Centers of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Research.

Sunny, with a Chance of Global Warming

Mason Communication Professor **Edward Maibach**, along with several other faculty members, recently received a grant from the National Science Foundation that will allow for an in-depth look at how meteorologists can educate their viewers about climate change. Ultimately, the team

hopes to answer key research questions supporting efforts to activate TV meteorologists nationwide as an important source of informal science education about climate change.

MASON INNOVATION TO WATCH

Stargazing

The Mason community will soon be able to search for planets and galaxies beyond ours when a **32-inch diameter mirror telescope** is installed to complete the George Mason University Observatory. The telescope will be the largest on-campus telescope in the region and will be used for educational and research purposes.

A European Opera House on Campus

Modeled after intimate 19th-century European opera houses, a new performing arts venue is rising on Mason's Prince William Campus. The **Hylton Performing Arts Center** is scheduled to open in spring 2010. The 86,000-square-foot center will provide a state-of-the-art setting for major touring artists and local performers, and will feature a reception space, an art gallery and two theaters. The center is named for the Cecil D. and Irene V. Hylton Foundation of Dale City, Va.

Accommodating More Than Just Students

A campus that is visited by more than 3 million people each year and hosts world-class academic conferences requires top-notch accommodations. By summer 2010, the **Mason Inn Conference Center and Hotel** will offer 148 guest rooms including a 20,000 square foot meeting space. This LEED-certified building is centrally located on the Fairfax Campus between the Center for the Arts, the Patriot Center and the Recreation Athletic Complex.

Searching for Better Beef and a Greener Cow

Mason bioinformatics researchers **John Grefenstette** and **Lakshmi Matukumalli** are working to find ways to develop cattle that consume fewer resources, produce less greenhouse gases and provide higher quantities of more tender beef and milk in order to create more sustainable food production in a world challenged by global population growth. The researchers analyzed the DNA sequence of a Hereford cow and examined the differences among DNA samples (polymorphisms) taken from cows in 17 different breeds of cattle. The results are expected to increase the quality and efficiency of meat and dairy production and create "greener" cows.