Welcome to the Mason community, Ángel Cabrera. Currently the president of the Thunderbird School of Global Manage-
ment in Glendale, Arizona, Cabrera was officially introduced as Mason’s next president by the Board of Visitors in December. 

In summer 2011, after years of planning and fund raising, Mason’s new state-of-the-art 32-inch Ritchey-Chrétien telescope was installed in the Research Hall observatory on the Fairfax Campus. It’s estimated that compared with Mason’s previous telescopes, the new instrument increases the number of stars that can be observed by about two billion. In addition to being used for astronomy course work, the observatory is available to the community, offering observing sessions twice a month.

A group of students lobbied local government officials last year to have a polling place brought to Mason. The work of the several Patriot Leaders and student government members resulted in the creation of University Precinct, which comprises primarily the Fairfax Campus.

The laboratory of Mason neuroscientist Daniel N. Cox was awarded the 2011 J. Shetley Horning Research Award for its work investigating how the shape and structure of a neuron’s dendrites can impact function. In addition to Cox, who is the graduate program director in the School of Systems Biology, the research team comprised two graduate students, a postgraduate student, and a high school student whom Cox mentored through Mason’s Aspiring Scientists Summer Internship Program. This is the second time a Mason unit has received the award.

In 2011, alumnus James W. Hazel and his wife, Sally, of Okton, Virginia, pledged $2 million to Mason to create a need- and merit-based endowed scholarship fund to benefit undergraduate students. To be called the Hazel Scholarship Endowment, the gift is the largest ever pledged to the univer-
sity by one of its graduates and creates one of the largest endowments at the university.

Last May, Paul Hewitt was introduced as the ninth men’s basketball head coach in the program’s history. He arrived at Mason after coaching Georgia Tech’s team for 11 seasons, a span that included a run to the NCAA championship game in 2004. Hewitt has also coached at St. Bonaventure, Fordham, University of Southern California, and C.W. Post, and headed up the USA Basketball Under-19 Team. His first team at Mason finished 24-6.

The partnership between Mason and the Smithsonian Con-
servation Biology Institute continues to grow with the recent groundbreaking on a project to add classrooms, laboratories, dining and events facilities, dormitories, and study halls to the Front Royal, Virginia, facility. When the expansion is complete in fall 2012, the Smithsonian-Mason School of Conserva-
tion Biology will be able to admit 80 full-time graduate students and 60 graduate students and professionals a semester.
Milestones

In 2011, Popular Science magazine named Mason scientist Alessandra Luchini as one of its “Brilliant 10,” which is a list of top scientists in the country under the age of 40. Luchini was selected for her groundbreaking work with nanoparticles that capture and concentrate rare disease biomarkers in blood or urine to improve the diagnosis and treatment of cancer and other diseases.

Mason recently acquired the entire collection of 7600 Memphis television series. The collection was a generous gift from C-SPAN, with the cooperation of Brian Lamb, its founder and chief executive officer. The collection will be kept in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences and will be the focus of a new center to explore media and politics.

Now in the College of Health and Human Services is the Department of Nutrition and Food Studies, which has a mission to educate students on the role of food and nutrition in improving health and well-being. Classes are held in the new Nutrition Kitchen Lab located in space that was previously a diner in downtown Fairfax City.

Washington Post columnist and Pulitzer Prize winner Steven Pearlstein joined Mason’s faculty last fall as Robinson Professor of Public and International Affairs. Pearlstein teaches classes involving economics, public affairs, and politics, while continuing to write a weekly column for the Washington Post and moderating its online(handle).

Mason senior graduate student Arpitha Nepal has been keenly involved in helping the country share a name with Nepal. In 2008, she cofounded Samriddhi, the Prosperity Foundation, which, with 95 full-time employees, is dedicated to individual freedoms, economic prosperity, and entrepreneurship in Nepal. A Fulbright scholar, Nepal is still involved with the organization and hopes to see it grow.

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