Saying Goodbye

In March, Alan G. Merten announced he would retire as president of George Mason University effective June 30, 2012. Since becoming president in 1996, Merten has guided the university through an unprecedented period of growth, which saw the addition of more than 40 buildings, 8,000 students, and nearly 90 degree programs. Other highlights of his presidency include Mason being named the number one national university to watch by U.S. News & World Report and the men’s basketball team reaching the NCAA tournament’s Final Four in 2008.

A Viral Video Hit

Mason’s pep band, the Green Machine, has taken its show on the information highway. Just before the start of the Colonial Atlantic Association’s men’s basketball tournament, a video of the band performing an enthusiastic version of a Rage Against the Machine medley was posted on YouTube. With the news of being mentioned in various media outlets, the clip soon spread like wildfire, garnering about 500,000 hits in less than a week. By late March, the video had been viewed more than 1.2 million times.

Help with Redistricting Virginia

A team of Mason undergraduates took first place in part of the Virginia Redistricting Competition, a contest to redraw voting districts for Virginia. Mason’s team garnered a $2,000 award for redrawing Virginia’s House of Delegates districts. The statewide college competition was organized by Mason professor Michael McDonald and Quentin Kidd of Christopher Newport University. The teams used online redistricting software developed by the Public Mapping Project, a collaborative effort led by McDonald and Michael Altman of Harvard University.

Five years removed from its historic run to the Final Four, the Mason men’s basketball team once again earned a spot in the NCAA tournament, where it beat Villanova in its first game but then lost to top-seeded Ohio State two days later. The team finished 27-7 for the season and, at one point, won a school record 16 games in a row. Jim Larranaga was named Colonial Atlantic Association (CAA) Coach of the Year, and the team finished with the best regular season record in the CAA.

Mason received a $28.5 million Investing in Innovation (i3) grant from the U.S. Department of Education for the Virginia Initiative for Science Teaching and Achievement. The project’s goal is to improve science teaching and student learning throughout the Commonwealth. Donna Starring, director of Mason’s Center for Restructuring Education in Science and Technology and Human Development, was chosen to lead the project.

The School of Nursing in the College of Health and Human Services received a $1.6 million grant from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services to establish the Mason Partners for Access to Health Care (PATH) program. PATH will help improve access to primary and behavioral health care for Fairfax County residents who lack health insurance and suffer from diabetes and hypertension.

In a first, Mason was the site of the preseason training camp for the NBA’s Washington Wizards. Held over a week in late September and early October, the team practiced daily for the new season.

A yearly review of noteworthy events 2010–11

For more information about any of these stories or to stay current with Mason news and achievements, check out the stories on www.gmu.edu. Follow Mason on Facebook at George Mason University or on Twitter at @GeorgeMasonU.
Mason's Arlington Campus continues to grow with the opening of Founders Hall. The seven-story building houses the School of Public Policy, as well as parts of the School of Law and numerous administrative offices. It includes a 360-seat auditorium, a 460-seat café, a 660-space parking garage, 35 classrooms, and 256,000 square feet of office space.  

In the fall, Mason was the first university in the country to begin offering a degree for executives seeking to manage the country’s nearly 5,000 active, adult-assisted, continuing care, retirement, and related senior housing communities. The new major of senior in science in senior housing management is housed in the College of Health and Human Services.  

The Volgenau School of Engineering officially changed its name the year by dropping “information technology” from its moniker. The change reflects the school’s extensive growth beyond information technology and opens up opportunities for growth in the coming years. It was also announced that the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution will become the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution as of July 1, the first school of its kind in the world.  

A group of Mason sports management students spent three weeks in South Africa last summer studying the effect of the World Cup on its host country. While there, the 17 students, who were part of a sports management class, took in several soccer matches and attended daily lectures on the role of sport and tourism in South Africa.  

In December, Mason launched its Innovation website (innovation.gmu.edu) to capture many innovative ideas, programs, places and projects developed by its faculty, staff, students, and alumni.  

Mason's performing artists now have more room to sing and dance. In September, the 31,000-square-foot Donald and Nancy de Laszlo Performing Arts Building addition was officially dedicated. The facility, which is adjacent to the Center for the Arts building on the Fairfax Campus, has a rehearsal hall, studios, a student lounge, a performance medicine clinic, and additional storage for the growing Schools of Music and Dance.  

Mason psychology assistant professor Eden King won the 2011 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Award. Bestowed jointly by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and Dominion, the award is the highest honor for a faculty member in Virginia’s colleges and universities. King, who joined Mason in 2006, was recognized as a rising star in Virginia academia for excellence in teaching, research, knowledge integration, and public service.  

The new Biomedical Research Laboratory (BRL) on the Prince William Campus was dedicated in June. This facility provides Mason researchers with new opportunities to advance their work on the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of infectious diseases, and contribute even more to the national effort to fight bioterrorism. Mason’s BRL is one of 13 facilities that have been or are being built nationwide.  

It was announced last fall that Mason will team up with Prince William Campus was dedicated in June. This facility joined Mason in 2006, was recognized as a rising star in Virginia academia for excellence in teaching, research, knowledge integration, and public service.  

On May 21st, the McLean High School principal and Mason’s new Arlington Campus Chancellor Robert Silverman presented an investment of $110,000 to the McLean football program. The funds will be used to build a new athletic center. The donation is part of Mason’s new Arlington Campus Chancellor Robert Silverman’s $1 million commitment to Arlington County.  

Mason assistant professor of theater Dawn Naoum, who teaches a class on indigenous drama, is collaborating with the Washington, D.C.-based American Indian Community House to develop educational programming on the Navajo Nation. Her students will join her on a trip to the Navajo Nation this summer.  

The Mason Cricket Team captured the title as the best collegiate team in the country over spring break when they won the Chanderpaul Trophy—college cricket’s national title—in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. This is the first national title for the two-year-old squad.