



Candidate Statements

Staff Senate Elections Fall 2009

Fairfax Campus Candidates

Dan Dowdy

Dan Dowdy is currently working for George Mason's Information Technology Unit's Desktop Support Department at the Fairfax campus. He is currently enrolled in GMU's Office of Continuing Professional Education through the Volgenau School of Information Technology and Engineering. He is currently enrolled in certification classes for CompTia, Microsoft and Cisco. Mr. Dowdy donates his time and resources to the advancement of HIV research via IBMs World Community Grid. He enjoys golfing, playing pool, and bowling in his spare time. Membership in George Mason's Staff Senate will advance his professional growth and help fulfill his social responsibility to the community.

Sarah Duval

I have been at George Mason University since 2003. I started off as a music student and wage employee and have worked my way up to serving as an academic advisor in the School of Art. Six years ago, Mason gave me a fresh start and I am truly grateful for all of the opportunities I have had at this university. As a way to contribute to an organization that has provided so much for me, I would like to serve as a staff senator. I believe due to my work experience, I will be a strong advocate for Mason staff and non-student wage staff. One area I would like to affect change on is the sense of community among the young professionals on campus. I would like to see networking and community service events put in place. I believe creating a strong and supportive community for young professionals will further establish Mason as one of the best places to work.

Kim Hilton

I began my second career at George Mason University in the Purchasing Department in 2007. My current job as Office Manager for Student Centers is fun, fast-paced and rewarding. In both of my positions, I have enjoyed working with faculty, staff and students.

This year, I am excited to be co-chairing the Vendor Fair Committee for the upcoming Faculty-

Staff Enrichment Day that will be held October 28, 2009. This month, a new Mason Chapter of the International Association of Administrative Professionals will be initiated as well. I am a Mason Chapter Founding Member and will be appointed the co-secretary/treasurer for this new professional organization.

I graduated from Mason in 2007, with a BS in Psychology. I am excited about all the changes that are transpiring all over campus and I want to be a Staff Senator so that I can help our campus keep moving towards a united close-knit community. Staff and Faculty members, as well as students, need to continue to be invited and encouraged to participate in campus events which will help to instill a “family” atmosphere. I am also very interested in working with Dining Services so that staff and faculty continue to have a place to eat and enjoy a nutritious meal year round. Together, we can help Mason achieve a world class atmosphere for our students, as well as our staff and faculty members.

Karen Manley

My name is Karen Manley and I'd like your support in the upcoming Staff Senate election. Many of you know me through my work in the Office of Institutional Assessment. I've been an employee at Mason for almost two years. Now that I'm settled into the Mason community, I'm ready to get more actively involved. I believe it is particularly important in the current fiscal environment to have leadership that is committed to advocating for the needs and well-being of Mason's staff.

I've spent many years in advocacy positions. Prior to coming to Mason, I worked as a FEMA disaster assistance employee in Texas for evacuees from Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. I spent over a year helping individuals work through the bureaucratic process to get the assistance they needed. I also spent several years in the military community advocating for the rights of military spouses. If given the opportunity, I believe these experiences would serve me well on the Staff Senate in helping continue to make Mason a great place to work.

Dionne Paul-Wiggins

My name is Dionne Paul-Wiggins and I am the current Event Coordinator for the Training and Technical Assistive Centers. I have been with GMU for almost 2 years. Before working at GMU I worked for the American Academy of Physician Assistants and attended graduate school at night. I graduated with a bachelor's of Science in Business Marketing in 2002 from Old Dominion University. In 2007 I graduated with a Master's in Tourism Administration from George Washington University. I currently reside in Manassas Va, with my husband and 2 year old daughter.

Coming from a mostly corporate and non-profit background, I feel I have the unique ability to share how other organizations deal with their staff. Since arriving in 2008, I have been interested in all ways that GMU supports its staff as an integral part of the university. There

have been some instances where I did not feel that GMU was treating its staff appropriately (no water stations, no coffee stations, etc.). However, there have been many opportunities where GMU has really impressed me on an event or service that was being offered to staff. I am the type of person who wants to know WHY something is the way it is, and if it is not working, can it be changed. I would love to see GMU move toward a more open communication between staff and the higher ups. I would love to get behind the scenes and use my time here on Mason, as an employee who made a difference at Mason.

Melanie Pflugshaupt

I feel that I am a strong candidate to be part of the Staff Senate at George Mason University and I'm excited about the possibility to make a meaningful contribution in this capacity to progress the university's important work. The Staff Senate's mission to engage GMU staff in becoming active participants in our "community" resonates with my personal belief to constantly strive toward improving oneself. I appreciate and value GMU's commitment to promote communication between Administration and staff by addressing the needs of the University in a positive and engaging manner.

I am creative and resourceful and have held many leadership roles with previous employers. I value team relationships and utilizing a variety of ideas to solve problems and create social value, all with well rounded individuals who care about their community and working environment.

I am fairly new to George Mason, having started in February of 2008, but I grew up in Fairfax City and have watched the campus grow to become the dynamic University that it is today. Our diverse community attracts so many talented students and Faculty and I'm honored to be part of an environment so rich in cultural perspectives. As GMU continues to grow, I feel my voice could be an important one in shaping our future and I'm confident I can bring a unique viewpoint to build and strengthen our programs. I welcome the opportunity to learn more about the challenges we're facing and to elaborate on how my qualifications can complement the Staff Senate.

I was born in Washington, DC to immigrant parents and raised in Fairfax City. I attended public schools in Fairfax City as well as Northern Virginia Community College in Annandale. I worked for 23 years in the banking and mortgage industry, working my way up from a credit clerk to operations manager. Throughout my career I was fortunate to have worked with a diverse group of people and am proud of the relationships that I made and still maintain. When the opportunity to switch careers presented itself, I was thrilled. I had done my research on GMU and found that it was one of the top places to work in terms of a supportive work culture and flexible schedules. And it came at a time in my life when I was ready for a change and new challenge. My daughter was entering her freshman year here at Mason, and I felt that the opportunities for personal growth as an employee were limitless.

In addition to a daughter of my own, my husband has 2 pre-teen sons, keeping us active in sports and school. We also enjoy biking, gardening, hiking and camping and have had the chance to travel with our family to many beautiful places. My husband and I also are active participants in the annual Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure and the Ashburn Farm United Methodist Church race on Thanksgiving Day, which benefits Humble Place, an orphanage in Uganda, Africa. I normally run the 5k but this year I completed the 10k, which was a proud moment for me!

I appreciate your consideration towards my candidacy.