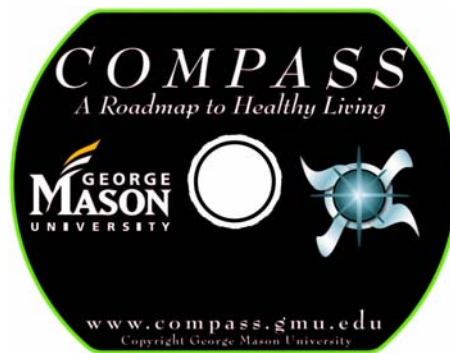


**Dear First-Year Student:**

A couple of weeks ago, you received the first edition of *Freshman Forum*. This resource is designed to provide occasional tips on how to make the most of your time at Mason during your first year. In *Freshman Forum*, you'll find suggestions about surviving many of the challenges all-too-often faced by first-year students. In fact, we hope that your accomplishments during this first year, and beyond, will account for much more than survival! We believe that you'll demonstrate success in ways that you may not have thought was possible.



**COMING SOON! The brand new and improved COMPASS CD-ROM!**

What helps throughout this process, particularly during the first year as you get your bearings, is some guidance and some connection to Mason resources. The *COMPASS: A Roadmap to Healthy Living* resource has tips and resources designed for you.

When you see this title, you may think that this is about exercise and nutrition because of the words "healthy living." While these topics are important, they are just two of the 31 topics that comprise this resource. *COMPASS* includes suggestions on stress management, time management, study skills, conflict resolution, alcohol, and career planning. Further, each of

the sections was prepared by a Mason faculty or staff member. For each of its topics, you'll find information, tips, two worksheets, and a link to local and national resources.

**How to obtain a copy the COMPASS CD-ROM**

- Request it online - go to [www.compass.gmu.edu](http://www.compass.gmu.edu)
- Send us an email at [healthyx@gmu.edu](mailto:healthyx@gmu.edu)
- Call us at 703-993-3697
- Stop by the Wellness Resource Center at Room SUB 1, Room 220
- Various campus events
- An occasional information booth at the JC

When requesting, please let us know your name and your campus mailing address, as well as if you need a standard size CD-ROM Mac

As we wrote in the first edition of *Freshman Forum*, *COMPASS* is available on-line. It's also available as a CD-ROM, working on both a PC and a Mac. Having the CD version – which is free! – allows you to access the many resources without an Internet connection. If you'd like a CD, just let us know – see the section in this edition about how you can get a copy.

You'll receive two more editions of *Freshman Forum* this semester; in these we'll highlight some suggestions about preparing for your final exams and other end-of-semester class responsibilities. We'll also talk about the important issue of stress management – something about which most of us can benefit from suggestions and advice. In this edition, we focus on the opportunities and challenges with the Thanksgiving break.

**UPCOMING EVENTS AT MASON**

Elaine Pasqua will offer an interactive campus presentation on HIV/AIDS and substance abuse on Tuesday, November 27th. See [Today @ Mason](#) for more information. This is an excellent program, and Mason students loved her presentation last year.

This week marks an opportunity for many of us to take some time off. While we had a short Fall Break last month, the Thanksgiving recess provides the time for some more time away from our traditional activities. Thanksgiving is a terrific opportunity for several things. For many people, it's a time to join together with family members, often to enjoy a traditional feast. This gathering and sharing of a meal – often with foods eaten only on special occasions such as this, is a time for renewing family relationships, sharing what is new, and having discussions on a wide range of issues. As a result of having been in college for three months, you are a different person; you have grown a lot, you see things a little differently, and you have new perspectives. Many family members want to hear about this, yet some won't quite understand the experiences you have had. This is an opportunity to have them join you as part of your collegiate experience, and to see some of the "new you."

Thanksgiving is also a time to catch up with family and friends. It's a time when you can share new experiences, and hear what has been happening in others' lives. You will find that a lot is different, yet a lot is the same.

Finally, Thanksgiving is an opportunity for some reflection; for many of you, it's the first time visiting home since coming to campus in August. This is a chance for you to reflect on how much you have learned and changed, and perhaps to ask others (family and friends) what they see in you that is new. It's a time for you to listen to your own reflections, and to chart some continued and new directions for when you return to Mason to finish the semester.

The *COMPASS* section on Interpersonal and Family Relationships has some good suggestions about interacting with friends and family members. It also helps you emphasize what is important to you. Check it out, and let us know what you think about it – email us at [healthyx@gmu.edu](mailto:healthyx@gmu.edu). We wish you a happy and healthy Thanksgiving holiday and break!