

BROADSIDE

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MASON MADNESS RETURNS



Relive the madness on p. 14

PHOTO BY TEDDY MEYER | ASST. PHOTOGRAPHY EDITOR

Theater Department Gives New Twist to Shakespeare

SARAH BUCHANAN
Broadside Correspondent

The Theater Department is performing Ken Ludwig's "Shakespeare in Hollywood", a fun comedic take on what would happen if Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Nights Dream* met old school Hollywood. Shakespeare's king of the fairies, Oberon, and his goofy assistant Puck are literally transported into the 1934 movie set of *The Midsummer Nights Dream* and manage to turn things upside down in a way only they could manage. As people fall in and out of love and are transformed into donkeys, a hilarious mayhem ensues.

Because the play is based on both historical figures and fictional characters, the cast did a lot of research on the original movie version of Shakespeare's play and other films from the Golden Age of cinema. Mason student and actor Joshua McCreary, who plays the role of movie mogul Jack Warner, said, "It was a challenge playing characters that actually existed" but that it was a "smooth process and a fun play."

Faculty director Mary Lechter said that she focused on the original 1934 production and played with how the "magic of Hollywood" and the "magic of *A Midsummer Nights Dream*" could collide and combine.

She and her cast explored many of the parallels and echoes between the actual and fictional worlds including the similarity of the relationships between Oberon and Puck and Jack Warner and his

assistant Daryl.

The sets for Shakespeare in Hollywood were also inspired by the movie *The Midsummer Nights Dream*. Designer Dana Maier has previously worked on Mason's Theater Department's "Trojan Women" where she filled the stage with sand for an impressive effect. Audiences should look forward to her ideas, especially for Jack Warner's Hollywood Mansion Garden and Graumann's Chinese Theater. Other elements of the set include a magic forest and pieces of a Warner movie set.

Shakespeare in Hollywood promises high energy and hilarious acting. The cast is talented and excited about the upcoming performances.

"Shakespeare in Hollywood" will be performed in TheaterSpace, a black box studio located on the bottom floor of the Performing Arts Building.

Performances are on weekends starting Thursday, Oct. 23 at 8 p.m., and ending with a matinee at 2 p.m. on Sunday, Nov. 2. A limited number of free student tickets are available at the Center for the Arts Box Office.

You can also purchase tickets at the CFA or at the door. Prices start at \$10 for students, faculty, staff, and seniors, and \$12 for general admission.

For more information, visit www.gmu.edu/departments/theatre/.

State Forces University Budget Cuts

Virginia's Budget Reduction Affect George Mason University Faculty and Staff

SONYA HUDSON
Asst. News Editor

Tuition costs should not increase until next fiscal year. Faculty, however, might need to worry.

Governor Tim Kaine announced a seven percent budget reduction for the state, which affects Virginia's universities and their budgets. Provost Peter Stearns and Senior Vice President Maurice Scherrens held an open forum about Mason's budget reduction plan in response to the state's reduction plan Tuesday, Oct. 14. Scherrens started the forum with a joke he accredited to Provost Stearns. To the faculty members filling the Johnson Center Cinema, Scherrens said, "Peter always sees the humor in these kinds of events. This was his idea, not mine, but he said, since we have to reduce the staff by about 100, those of you who showed up have now volunteered to be the reductionists." The punch line had the faculty laughing.

Jokes aside, the budget cuts will result in some lost positions, but layoffs are not absolutely necessary. Each unit or department has the authority to reallocate its funds however it sees fit. Each unit will receive two percent or less budget reductions. The units will have to reduce services provided and leave vacant positions unfulfilled. There is no requirement to layoff staff but layoffs could happen, depending on each unit and its restructuring plan.

The university's budget cuts for the 2008-2009 school year affects faculty and staff positions, non-personnel spending, salary increases, higher education research funds and other sources of funds. The university will have to eliminate discretionary spending, restructure organization and defer equipment and system upgrades. These necessary

budget reductions result in a \$10 million cut.

This \$10 million cut is probably a permanent reduction in the amount of money the state will give to the university. The state provides 37 percent of the university's budget. The rest of the budget is paid for through tuition.

Despite the large percentage of the budget that is provided by tuition revenue, Kaine mandated that individual universities couldn't raise tuition costs for this fiscal year to offset budget cuts.

Future tuition increases are guaranteed. The percentage increase in next year's tuition depends on the state's 2010 budget. Stearns acknowledged that tuition has been increasing 8 to 10 percent a year for the last several years. There are limits on how much to increase tuition, for marketing and recruiting purposes. To remain competitive with other schools attracting students, Mason cannot raise tuition too much. Stearns said he is doubtful that tuition would rise above 10 percent. "Given the human impact and the PR impact, this would be undesirable," said Stearns.

Stearns and Scherrens reminded the forum that reductions in the budget had occurred in past years including 1984, 1991, 1992, 1995, 2003 and 2008. Reductions have already been announced for 2009 and will most likely occur in 2010.

University President Alan Merten conveyed his message through Scherrens, "This is in no way going to paralyze the university."

"This is not a time to be frivolous but also it is...not a time to close doors," said Scherrens.

A question and answer period followed official comments and included concerns about construction, maintenance, enrollment targets and faculty

concerns.

Regarding construction, many people wondered how so much money is spent on construction when the budget has been reduced so greatly. Scherrens quickly addressed the concerns. "Construction funds are just a different color of money," said Scherrens. Scherrens explained that all current construction projects have already received funds and been paid in full. It is not an option to take money from construction and redistribute it in the budget.

The maintenance of campus buildings, like those in construction, is an expensive service. The state no longer supplies any funds for maintenance for new buildings. The new buildings in construction currently, will have maintenance funded 100 percent through tuition. Maintenance of renovated buildings is covered in the budget already.

With maintenance now dependent on tuition, the university is focused on meeting enrollment targets. "Last year we had a significant increase for new out-of-state students. It's quite conceivable to me that we might reverse that pattern this year," said Stearns. "Market factors are going to make out-of-state tuition even more obviously burdensome than in-state."

Stearns suggested the university might try to keep out-of-state tuition increases down more than in-state tuition increases. More Virginia students will help reach the enrollment targets in a numerical sense but will not provide the budget help like out-of-state students.

Faculty members at the forum were concerned about their own futures at Mason. Stearns tried to clarify the problem of salary increases. "The Governor's budget message deferred the November raise until July 1, 2009. That was



PHOTO BY LAURA FOLTZ

Provost Peter Stearns and Senior Vice President Maurice Scherrens held a forum to address the upcoming budget cuts at Mason with regards to the construction plans.

slated to be two percent," said Stearns. As of now, no one knows if that will actually be the case or not, it depends on the 2010 budget.

Faculty members also asked questions regarding contracts for term faculty, travel approvals and research dependent on match funds by the university but did not

receive definite answers, given the amount of uncertainty in the budget situation.

Nearing the end of the forum, one faculty member asked if contacting legislatures about the loss in money for the budget would benefit the university. Stearns answered that to contact a legislature would not hurt if the concerns

addressed were more long range issues. The provost explained that the Commonwealth of Virginia has reduced higher education funding more than most states and that the state has not funded Mason at the level of other universities in Virginia.

BROADSIDE

WOMEN'S SOCCER

vs.

William & Mary

Friday, October 24th, 7:00 p.m.

George Mason Stadium

FREE Mason Umbrella

Admission is **FREE** with your valid Mason Student ID.