

**BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Full Board Meeting
Thursday, February 26, 2026
Merten Hall, Hazel Conference Room (1201), Fairfax Campus**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rector Michael Meese, Vice Rector Sumeet Shrivastava, Secretary Armand Alacbay, Visitors Anne Altman, Bruce Caswell, Tom Davis (virtual), Paul Misener, Trevor Montano, Jim Moran, Delbert Parks, Jon Peterson, Shawn Purvis, Jeff Rosen, George Schindler, Sean Spence, and Jennifer Taylor.

ABSENT: none.

ALSO PRESENT: Rachel Spence, Staff Representative; Solon Simmons, Faculty Representative; Nilima Mow, Graduate Student Representative; Jonathan Dubois, Undergraduate Student Representative; Gregory Washington, President; Ajay Vinzé, Interim Provost; David Drummey, Interim University Counsel; and Bridget Higgins, Secretary pro tem.

I. Call to Order

Vice Rector Meese called the meeting to order at 8:14 a.m.

Vice Rector Meese informed the Board that Visitor Davis requested to participate remotely from his location in the Caribbean for personal reasons. Citing the board's Electronic Meeting Participation policy, Vice Rector Meese **MOVED** to approve Visitor Davis's electronic participation in the meeting. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Rosen. The **MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

II. Elections & Approval of Committee Appointments

- A. Election of Rector (ACTION ITEM)
- B. Election of Vice Rector (ACTION ITEM)
- C. Election of Members-at-Large to the Executive Committee (ACTION ITEM)
- D. Committee Chair and Vice Chair Appointments (ACTION ITEM)
- E. Committee Member Appointments (ACTION ITEM)
- F. Appointment of Board Liaisons

Vice Rector Meese referred to the Board of Visitors (BOV) Bylaws as he described the composition of the Executive Committee and recognized Solon Simmons to present faculty concerns and those of the George Mason University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors (GMU-AAUP) specific to the BOV election and appointment process. Vice Rector Meese provided a detailed description of how appointments were made based on individual conversations with appointees, soliciting their interest, and where best to utilize their expertise. The draft slate was published on February 16 to allow time for feedback. New and existing members had the same voice in the election and committee appointment process.

Vice Rector Meese then recognized Visitor Peterson to make a motion.

Visitor Peterson **MOVED** to elect Michael Meese as Rector and Sumeet Shrivastava as Vice Rector, and nominate Anne Altman and Paul Misener as the two at-large members of the Executive Committee. The motion was **SECONDED** by Secretary Alacbay.

The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 16

Absent: none

Rector Meese congratulated the new members of the Executive Committee and recognized Secretary Alacbay to make the next motion.

Secretary Alacbay **MOVED** that the Board approve the following action items, en bloc, as provided in the meeting materials:

- Committee Chair and Vice Chair Appointments
- Committee Appointments
- Appointment of Board Liaisons

The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Montano.

Rector Meese directed the board's attention to the committee appointments and board liaisons listed in the meeting materials. As part of these appointments, the following individuals have been identified as chairs and vice-chairs of the standing committees (**ATTACHMENT 1**):

- Academic Affairs Committee
 - Chair: Armand Alacbay
 - Vice Chair: Jeff Rosen
- Athletics Committee
 - Chair: Trevor Montano
 - Vice Chair: Jim Moran
- Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee
 - Chair: Delbert Parks
 - Vice Chair: Sean Spence
- Development Committee
 - Chair: Sumeet Shrivastava
 - Vice Chair: Jennifer Taylor
- Finance and Land Use Committee
 - Chair: Jon Peterson
 - Vice Chair: Bruce Caswell
- Research Committee
 - Chair: Tom Davis
 - Vice Chair: Shawn Purvis

In addition, the following individuals were named as Board Liaisons:

- Athletic Liaisons: Trevor Montano & Jon Peterson
- Legislative Liaisons: Jim Moran & Delbert Parks
- Faculty Senate Liaison: Armand Alacbay
- Law School Liaison: Paul Misener & Jeff Rosen

The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 16

Absent: none

III. Recess of the Full Board Meeting

Rector Meese provided a brief orientation to assist new members, specifically explaining how any member may attend any meeting, but only participate in the committees to which they are appointed. The Board went into recess at 8:25 a.m.

IV. Reconvene

Rector Meese reconvened the meeting at 2:12 p.m. and reminded the board that Visitor Davis was approved for virtual participation at the start of the day.

V. Approval of the Minutes

- A. Executive Committee Meeting December 4, 2025 (ACTION ITEM)

Rector Meese called for any corrections to the Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for December 4, 2025 that were provided for review in the board meeting materials. Hearing no corrections, the meeting minutes stood **APPROVED AS WRITTEN**.

VI. Rector's Report

- A. Code of Conduct for Commonwealth Appointees

Rector Meese began by thanking Ambassador Bob Pence and former Rector Cully Stimson, who resigned on January 17, 2026, for their years of service to the Board. He also thanked President Washington and his wife Nicole for hosting a social for the Board at their home.

Rector Meese introduced Anne Altman ('82), Bruce Caswell, Tom Davis, Paul Misener ('93), Trevor Montano ('00), Jim Moran, Delbert Parks, Shawn Chambliss-Purvis ('99), George Schindler, Sean Spence, and Jennifer Taylor ('98) as the newest members of the Board of Visitors, noting that they are exceptionally talented and avid supporters of the university. He next welcomed Jonathan Dubois as the new undergraduate student representative and reintroduced Nilima Hakim Mow as the graduate student representative, Solon Simmons as the Faculty Senate President and faculty representative, and Rachel Spence as the Staff Senate Chair and staff liaison to the board.

Rector Meese responded to a recent question about his agenda for the university. He stated that the Board should be the strategic plan for the university, with members providing their unique perspectives and experiences to implement the plan and serve the needs of students, faculty, staff, and the citizens of our Commonwealth and not to advance individual agendas. He then reminded the Board of the Code of Conduct for Commonwealth Appointees, and their requirement to have civility as part of robust discussions especially with difficult issues.

The Rector's report concluded with several reminders for board members encouraging attendance:

- Thursday, March 31: Full Board Meeting with a budget presentation and a public comment session specific to tuition and fees.
- Tuesday, April 15: Board Committee Meetings
- Thursday, April 30 – Full Board Meeting with annual recognitions and associated guests.
- Thursday, May 14 – Spring Commencement

VII. President's Report

President Washington was recognized by Rector Meese. He welcomed new and current board members, commenting that few endeavors are greater than preparing the leaders of tomorrow, and reported the following:

- Ilia Malinin is a Mason student and an Olympic gold medalist. Like so many of our contemporary students, he is working while taking classes.
- Summarizing the status of the current year's Presidential Performance Metrics, Mason is enhancing the student experience, positioning new programs to help with research, utilizing the Grand Challenge Initiative and AI, managing costs, including those associated with a degree, and building partnerships.

- Higher education is enduring four simultaneous shocks:
 - Demographic: The shrinking of the traditional college-age population, changing racial and gender demographics, and the loss of international graduate students, continues to have an impact across all universities. George Mason is managing those challenges with the success of Direct Admission, the diversification of international programs, initiating earned admission, and expanding ADVANCE. The university's overall enrollment had a small decline due to the reduction of international graduate students; however, undergraduate enrollment increased slightly from last year.
 - Fiscal: The fiscal health of the university is good overall but faces the same headwinds with tuition pressure, reductions in international graduate student tuition, research cuts, federal and state funding volatility, and rising labor and deferred maintenance costs. The university has been chronically underfunded and the challenges are exacerbated with unfunded mandates and no tuition increase. Mitigating the challenges is increased revenue from the rise in overall credit hours from undergraduate students, earnings from the Patriot Investment Fund, and making permanent one-time resources granted by the state. The House and Senate budget proposals are promising and could provide the most state funding the university has received. The university's newly implemented budget model recategorizes funds at the academic unit level, providing deans the ability to make decisions from a profit and loss standpoint. Additional cost savings are being advanced university wide.
 - Political: There has been a rewriting of the social contract of higher education over many years with autonomy no longer presumed and public subsidy, research funding, and regulatory flexibility being tied to measurable economic return, ideological alignment, and visible accountability. George Mason continues to be one of the most scrutinized institutions in the country, with four open investigations and another federal inquiry that began in February. Changes from state and board governance will allow the university to better defend itself. Our core values, clarity in communication, coalition building with corporations, NGOs and other universities, along with courage will get the university through these challenges.
 - Technological: AI is reshaping higher education faster than governance can adapt. Institutions that handle the challenges deliberately will lead and not be reactive. Mason's Grand Challenge Initiative focuses on areas most important to the country and its survival. The university will also undertake a full enterprise systems audit to establish an Enterprise Architecture Strategy with the goal of scaling artificial intelligence to increase efficiency.

- Patriot Laboratories was incorporated on January 6, 2026 with its purpose to consolidate and expand Mason's classified research by leveraging the university's proximity to the Pentagon and government agencies.
- The hiring process has begun in several key leadership positions, including provost, chief financial officer, chief of staff, senior advisor to the president, and dean of the Scalia Law School.
- University leaders will be aggressively engaged with Board members, members of the General Assembly, and the Commonwealth's executive branch.

VIII. Committee Reports

A. Academic Affairs Committee

i. Program Actions

a. New Degree Program

- i. CEHD: BS in Hospitality, Tourism and Events Management
(ACTION ITEM)

b. New Degree Change

- i. Schar: BA in Government and International Politics to BA in Political Science (ACTION ITEM)

- ii. Faculty Actions**
 - a. Conferral of Emeritus/Emerita Status (ACTION ITEM)**

Secretary Alabay reported on the Academic Affairs Committee meeting, providing a summary of the presentations received by Interim Provost Vinzé and Vice President for Enrollment Management, David Burge.

Secretary Alabay **MOVED** that the Board approve the following action items as they are provided in the meeting materials:

- New Degree Program: CEHD: BS in Hospitality, Tourism and Events Management
- Degree Program Name Change: Schar: BA in Government and International Politics to BA in Political Science
- Conferral of Emeritus/Emerita Status

The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Peterson. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE**.

B. Research Committee

Secretary Alabay, in lieu of Chair Davis or Vice Chair Purvis, reported on the Research Committee meeting, providing a summary of the presentations received by Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact, Andre Marshall.

C. Finance and Land Use Committee

- i. Financial Matters**
 - a. FY 2027 Room & Board Rates (ACTION ITEM)**

Visitor Peterson reported on the Finance and Land Use Committee meeting, providing a summary of the presentations received by Interim Chief Financial Officer Dan Stephens and Chief Operating Officer Julie Zobel. Visitor Peterson emphasized the timing of the FY 2027 Tuition and Mandatory Fees vote, as it informs incoming students who will submit their deposits on May 1.

Visitor Peterson **MOVED** that the Board approve the FY 2027 Room & Board Rates as they are provided in the meeting materials.

The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Schindler. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE**.

D. Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee

Visitor Parks reported on the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee meeting, providing a summary of the presentations received by Interim Vice President and Chief Audit and Compliance Officer, Derek Butler, the Auditor of Public Accounts, Zach Borgerding, the Interim Vice President and Chief Risk Officer, Aurali Dade, and reports covering Audit, Enterprise Risk Management, Institutional Compliance, and IT Risk and Control Infrastructure. The Committee approved the Office of University Audit and Compliance Charter.

E. Development Committee

Vice Rector Shrivastava reported on the Development Committee meeting, providing a summary of the presentations received by the Interim Chair of the GMU Foundation, Jenny Herrera and Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Relations, Trishana Bowden. The Committee also received a presentation on Mason

LIFE by Dr. Alexandra Reed, with Mason LIFE student, Nominzul Otgonbayar, speaking of her experience in the program.

F. Athletics Committee

Visitor Montano reported on the first Athletics Committee meeting, providing a summary of the presentation received by Assistant Vice President and Director of Athletics, Marvin Lewis.

IX. Closed Session

- A.** Discussion or consideration of honorary degrees or special awards. (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.11)
- B.** Consultation with Legal Counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.7)
- C.** Acquisition of Real Property (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.3)
- D.** Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding the aforementioned items (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.8)
- E.** Personnel Matter (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.1)

Vice Rector Shrivastava **MOVED** that the board go into Closed Session under the provisions of:

- Section 2.2-3711.A.11 for discussion or consideration of honorary degrees or special awards;
- Section 2.2-3711.A.7 for Consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation including briefings on:
 - Morrison v. GMU et al.
 - Ochar v. Employment Enterprises, Inc. & GMU, et al.
 - Akerman v. GMU
 - Sei v. Pulis & Castillo
- Section 2.2-3711.A.3 for the discussion of potential acquisition of certain real property to further the mission of the University where discussion in open session would adversely affect the university's bargaining position and negotiating strategy;
- Section 2.2-3711.A.8 for consultation with legal counsel regarding the aforementioned items, Freedom of Information Act, Conflict of Interest Act, Virginia Public Records Act and federal investigations;
- Section 2.2-3711.A.1 for a Personnel Matter to discuss the performance of specific university personnel.

The motion was **SECONDED** by Secretary Alacbay. **MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

Following closed session, Vice Rector Shrivastava **MOVED** that the board go back into public session and further moved that by roll call vote the board affirm that only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements under the Freedom of Information Act were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting, and that only such business matters that were identified in the motion to go into a closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting. Any member of the board who believes that there was a departure from the requirements as stated, shall so state prior to taking the roll call, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgment, has taken place. **ALL PRESENT BOARD MEMBERS RESPONDED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 15

Absent: Visitor Rosen

As a result of the closed session, Rector Meese **MOVED** that the Board vote to approve Visitors Davis and Peterson to initiate the review of the presidential contract for future consideration by the Board. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Schindler.

The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 15

Absent: Visitor Rosen

Rector Meese then **MOVED** that the Board approve the following action items, en bloc:

1. Satisfactory Performance Rating based on the outcomes of the 2024-2025 presidential goals;
2. Presidential Performance Bonus based on the achievements from the 2024-2025 presidential goals in the amount of \$125,000 for President Gregory Washington; and (**ATTACHMENT 2**)
3. The 2025-2026 Presidential Goals. (**ATTACHMENT 3**)

The motion was **SECONDED** by Secretary Alacbay. The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 15

Absent: Visitor Rosen

Rector Meese thanked the Board for their attention and consideration. The meeting was recessed at 5:45 p.m.

Bridget Higgins
Secretary pro tem

Attachment 1: Board of Visitors Committee Roster (1 page)

Attachment 2: Resolution: Performance Bonus for President Washington (1 page)

Attachment 3: 2025-2026 Presidential Goals (8 Pages)

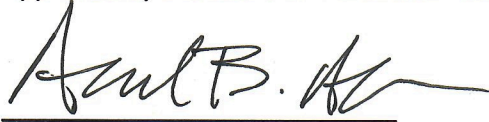
Attachment 4: Public Comments (10 Pages)

Board of Visitors		
2026-2026 Committee Appointments		
<u>EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE</u>	<u>ATHLETICS</u>	<u>DEVELOPMENT</u>
Michael Meese, Rector Sumeet Shrivastava, Vice Rector Armand Alacbay, Secretary Anne Altman, Member-At-Large Paul Misener, Member-At-Large	Trevor Montano, Chair Jim Moran, Vice Chair Tom Davis Jon Peterson Shawn Purvis George Schindler Jennifer Taylor	Sumeet Shrivastava, Chair Jennifer Taylor, Vice Chair Tom Davis Delbert Parks Jon Peterson
<u>BOARD LIAISONS</u>		
Athletic Liaisons: Trevor Montano & Jon Peterson	Staff Senate Chair: Rachel Spence	Staff Senate Chair: Rachel Spence
Legislative Liaisons: Jim Moran & Delbert Parks	Faculty Senate President: Solon Simmons	Faculty Senate President: Solon Simmons
Faculty Senate Liaison: Armand Alacbay	Student Representatives: Jonathan Dubois/ Nilima Mow	Student Representatives: Jonathan Dubois/ Nilima Mow
Law School Liaison: Paul Misener & Jeff Rosen	Faculty Representatives: Dominique Banville Ali Weinstein	Faculty Representatives: Bijan Jabbari (2/2) Niki Vlastara (1/2)
<u>ACADEMIC AFFAIRS</u>		
Armand Alacbay, Chair Jeff Rosen, Vice Chair Anne Altman Paul Misener Jim Moran Sumeet Shrivastava Sean Spence	Staff Representative: Marvin Lewis, AVP of Intercollegiate Athletics	Staff Representative: Trishana Bowden, VP of Advancement
	Staff Assistant: Jay Highsmith, (703) 993-3256	Staff Assistant: Nicole Pozinsky, (703) 993-8756
	<u>AUDIT, RISK, & COMPLIANCE</u>	<u>FINANCE AND LAND USE</u>
Staff Senate Chair: Rachel Spence	Delbert Parks, Chair Sean Spence, Vice Chair Bruce Caswell George Schindler Jennifer Taylor	Jon Peterson, Chair (1/2) Bruce Caswell, Vice Chair (1/2) Armand Alacbay (1/2) Anne Altman (1/2) Trevor Montano (1/2) Jeff Rosen (1/2) Sean Spence (1/2)
Faculty Senate President: Solon Simmons	Staff Senate Chair: Rachel Spence	Staff Senate Chair: Rachel Spence
Student Representatives: Jonathan Dubois/ Nilima Mow	Faculty Senate President: Solon Simmons	Faculty Senate President: Solon Simmons
Faculty Representatives: Shane Caswell (2/2) Tim Gibson (1/2)	Student Representatives: Jonathan Dubois/ Nilima Mow	Student Representatives: Jonathan Dubois/ Nilima Mow
Staff Representative: Ajay Vinz�, Interim Provost	Faculty Liaison: Mike Wetklow	Faculty Representatives: Debra Lattanzi Shutika (2/2) Maggie Daniels (1/2)
Staff Assistant: Sarah Parnell, (703) 993-5399	Staff Representative: Derek Butler, Interim VP and Chief Audit & Compliance Officer, (571) 921-7137	Staff Representative: Dan Stephens, VP Finance & CFO Julie Zobel, SVP & COO
Additional Participants: Rose Pascarell, VP of University Life Sharnnia Artis, VP of OACC	Additional Participants: Vin Lacovara, Inst. Compliance Leader Aurali Dade, VP Enterprise Risk Mgmt. Dan Stephens, VP Finance & CFO	Staff Assistant: Jessica Holtzman, (703) 993-3123
		<u>RESEARCH</u>
		Tom Davis, Chair Shawn Purvis, Vice Chair Armand Alacbay Bruce Caswell Paul Misener Delbert Parks
		Staff Senate Chair: Rachel Spence
		Faculty Senate President: Solon Simmons
		Student Representatives: Jonathan Dubois/ Nilima Mow
		Faculty Representatives: Igor Mazin (2/2) Anna Pollack (1/2)
		Staff Representative: Andre Marshall, VP of Research
		Staff Assistant: Yellia Seanor, (703) 993-6926

Performance Bonus – President Gregory Washington

In accordance with Section D.2 of President Washington's Employment Agreement and following evaluation of President Washington's performance for the previous academic year, the Board of Visitors is authorizing the maximum performance bonus of \$125,000.00 after meeting and/or exceeding his performance expectations as measured per his Employment Agreement as outlined in Section E.

Approved by the Board of Visitors on February 26, 2026.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Armand B. Alacbay", written over a horizontal line.

Signature

Armand Alacbay

Secretary of the Board of Visitors

AY 2025-2026 Goals George Mason University

The overall goals listed throughout this document build upon the general priorities of the strategic plan, which have been adapted based on current conditions and ongoing developments. It begins with a table of key performance metrics highlighting our accomplishments relative to the metrics that we deem most important for success.

Key Performance Metrics 2025- 2026

Priority	Weight	Metric	Status	Performance
Deliver a distinctive and inclusive student experience that fosters lifelong engagement.	25%	Manage cost by producing a balanced operating budget. Manage E&G deficit to less than \$10M.		
		Grow undergraduate enrollment by 1.3%.		
		Maintain graduate and law school enrollment to less than 7% reduction.		
		Grow Mason Korea enrollment by 1.5%.		
Expand the impact of Mason’s research, scholarship, and creative enterprise.	20%	Reduce research awards and/or expenditures by a maximum of 20%, in accordance with national reductions in research.		
Expand partnerships for economic and social impact.	20%	Maintain corporate support measured in corporate contributions and research.		
		Maintain or improve rankings and work with each dean or unit head to develop a comprehensive plan for rankings improvement for Board consideration and possible approval.		
		Maintain gifts at \$90M and restructure the campaign to accommodate the fiscal realities of the economy.		
Exemplify a university culture of access and inclusion.	10%	Maintain and evaluate student support and faculty development programs in alignment with state and federal law.		
		Maintain designation as a Minority Serving Institution.		
Invest in faculty and staff success.	15%	Maintain faculty and staff growth at approximately the same level as enrollment growth.		
		Continue investment in PatriotAI and develop additional tools to increase efficiency in faculty and staff workloads.		
Demonstrate excellence in timely communication and engagement with Mason stakeholders.	10%	Board of Visitors to conduct evaluation at end of AY 2025-26.		
		Proactively engage with stakeholders, including community members.		

Focus Areas:

1. Deliver a distinctive and inclusive student experience that fosters lifelong engagement.

Cultivate a high-quality experience that embodies Mason values and promotes student success, well-being, collaboration, and a lasting connection.

2. Expand the impact of Mason's research, scholarship, and creative enterprise.

Bolster the infrastructure and systems that support research and collaboration.

3. Expand partnerships for economic and social impact.

Strengthen partnerships, alumni relations, and community building and engagement informed by Mason's research, creative arts and pedagogical expertise.

4. Exemplify a university culture of access and inclusion.

Live a culture of belonging and inclusion and support the values of access, all-inclusive diversity, and opportunity at Mason.

5. Invest in faculty and staff success.

Ensure appropriate resources, processes, and technologies are in place that better support the faculty and staff experience.

6. Demonstrate excellence in timely communication and engagement with Mason stakeholders.

Conduct ongoing engagement to promote shared listening and dialogue.

There are a number of new challenges that have emerged over the past year that require our focus relative to meeting the goals outlined in our Strategic Plan. These include: (1) Challenges relating to maintaining and supporting foreign student enrollment. (2) Reduced administrative, research and programmatic support due to reductions in federal spending and indirect cost (IDC) return rates. (3) Proactively planning for and managing policy changes and related outcomes in response to evolving societal and political dynamics (e.g., diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI), freedom of speech, antisemitism, etc.). (4) Challenges related to the increasingly negative national public perception of higher education and the effects that perception has on our faculty and staff. Our goals this year address these areas, while meeting the general standards outlined in the strategic plan.

1. Deliver a distinctive and inclusive student experience that fosters lifelong engagement.

In addition to the broader items above, there are additional issues that must be addressed. These include the following: (1) Providing the highest-quality education leading to the best possible career outcomes in a revenue-constrained environment. (2) A mental health crisis among the students. (3) Inflation of labor costs, increased costs of services and goods, and fiscal challenges relative to the retention of key faculty and staff. (4) The recent NCAA settlement and the continuing changes in intercollegiate athletics. (5) Campus safety and security.

The following goals are developed to simultaneously address the long-term goals outlined in the strategic plan while incorporating the challenges outlined above.

- a. Develop and successfully implement a fiscal management plan that supports the campus through the 2025-2026 academic year. This must include the development of structural mechanisms (i.e., innovative financial distribution and expenditure strategies, maintenance and expansion of state support, and fundraising) to avoid significant budget disruptions and/or the implementation of significant reductions that are not debilitating to the university. *(President, Provost, Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Chief Operating Officer (COO), VP Government and Community Relations, VP Advancement and Alumni Relations, President's Special Advisor (PSA), VP Enrollment Management)*
 - a. Implement plan to level (remain flat or reduce by 5%) undergraduate student Cost of Degree (CoD). This can include, but is not limited to, the following: Increased financial aid and scholarships, flat to small increases in tuition and fees, leveraged external partner support, paid internships and work study, increased automation, and programs and initiatives that decrease time to degree. *(Provost, CFO, Chief of Staff (CoS), VP Enrollment Management, VP University Life)*
 - b. Build the future of graduate and professional education, and post-doctoral affairs. This includes examining our current institutional infrastructure and funding and financial support to improve the recruitment, retention, and support of graduate students and post-doctoral fellows and increase their academic and research achievements. *(Provost, CFO, CoS, VP Enrollment Management, VP University Life)*
 - c. Conduct feasibility analysis for establishing an internal bank. *(CFO)*
- b. Ensure that campus safety for students, faculty, and staff is prioritized and resourced, and that appropriate policies and procedures are developed, exercised, and implemented to maintain campus safety. Enforce the revised Code of Conduct and hold those who violate the code accountable for their actions in a timely manner. *(COO, CoS, VP University Life)*
- c. Develop and implement a plan for professional education programs that will support workforce needs in the region and Commonwealth, supporting the efforts to make Virginia a great place to live and work. *(Provost, PSA)*
 - a. Evaluate and, if appropriate, enhance the effectiveness of the Mason Career Academy.
- d. Implement a strategic plan for upgrading and improving the athletic and entertainment experience for students and student-athletes. *(Athletic Director)*
 - a. Establish policies and procedures that optimize new NCAA rules and guidelines that result from the House settlement or similar settlements, ensuring the institution can proactively adapt and maximize opportunities.
 - b. Expand attendance and participation at major athletic venues, particularly for men's and women's basketball, by 10%.
 - c. Break ground on the new Basketball and Academic Performance Center and secure the first major gift for that center. *(with President)*
 - d. Develop and implement a plan to restructure Athletics staff to achieve broad-based success across the department's strategic pillars. *(with Chief*

Italics represent primary unit responsible

Human Resource Officer (CHRO)

- e. Complete the next phase of a comprehensive plan for Board review and potential approval for the development of the western portion of the Fairfax Campus to include new athletic facilities; student, staff, and faculty housing; and potential opportunities with retail, restaurant, and entertainment venues. (*President, COO, PSA, Athletic Director, VP Government and Community Relations*).
 - a. Expand baseline development plans for the next phase of development to occur on the western portion of the Fairfax Campus, Mason Square, and/or SciTech Campus. Possible development could include but not be limited to student housing, faculty and staff housing, and consideration for other components (athletic facilities, entertainment venues, retail, and parking) depending on the specific needs and opportunities at each campus.
 - i. Expand the Mason 2050 plan to incorporate all three Virginia campuses. (*President, PSA, COO, CFO, VP Government and Community Relations, VP Enrollment Management*)
 - ii. Provide updated plan with associated financials and partnership opportunities to the Senior Leadership Team and the Board of Visitors. (*President, PSA, COO, CFO*)
 - iii. Initiate process for the establishment of Mason's first Living Learning facility on Fairfax Campus. (*President, Provost, PSA, COO, CFO, VP University Life*)
- f. Develop and launch an implementation and management plan for the Artificial Intelligence Initiative. The plan must include key milestones culminating in reaching yearly goals for the initiative. (*COO, Chief AI Officer*)
 - a. Launch agentic AI tools. Evaluate and expand the use of agentic AI to support our students, staff and faculty.
 - b. Develop and implement an Artificial Intelligence Technology Roadmap supporting student and faculty learning and research initiatives. The AI Technology Roadmap will align to the George Mason AI Strategy. The plan must include key technology implementation milestones culminating in reaching yearly goals. (*Chief AI Officer, COO, Chief Information Officer (CIO)*)
- g. Develop a plan, including specific majors and programs, leading to the launch of online certificate programs that support credentials for working adults. (*PSA, Provost*)
- h. Continue enhancement of student success initiatives. (*VP University Life, Provost, VP Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact (VPR), VP Government and Community Relations*)
 - a. Partner with the state government, along with nonprofit and other organizations, to grow the scope and capacity of behavioral health and associated human services in support of Mason's students.
 - b. Categorize and expand experiential learning opportunities, inclusive of internships, co-op experiences, entrepreneurship, service learning, community engagement, study abroad, and research apprenticeship opportunities for students that apply their knowledge, skills, and competencies in and beyond the classroom.

Italics represent primary unit responsible

- c. Continue implementation of the Patriot Connect project, a Salesforce-based student engagement platform. *(VP Enrollment Management)*
- i. Continue improvements to campus safety through investment in technology, required training, and utilization of reporting procedures to provide interventions and support as needed. *(COO, CoS)*

2. Expand the impact of Mason’s research, scholarship, and creative enterprise.

This year, Mason’s research enterprise must pause its expansion to manage the challenges presented by national changes to research support. Our efforts this year will center on supporting faculty who are managing the changing landscape. *(VPR, Provost)*

- a. Complete the restructure and relocation of the Office of Research Innovation and Economic Impact (ORIEI) to include implementation of shared services to advance core research administration, safeguarding development and economic impact support functions for the research enterprise.
 - a. The restructure should address the organizational needs of ORIEI along with the needs of individual researchers, local academic units, and the university as a whole.
- b. Execute the first phase of the Grand Challenge Initiative (GCI) investing in core components of in at least two of the six areas of research the committee has identified. Develop and launch an implementation and management plan for the GCI. The plan must include key milestones culminating in reaching yearly goals for the initiative.
- c. Provided funds are available, implement and evaluate the institutional research funding model.
- d. Increase harmonization, marketing, and penetration of Mason Enterprise into university, local, statewide and national entrepreneurship ecosystems. Continue implementation and development of a plan to gain additional federal and state resources through earmarks, funded partnerships and proposals. *(with VP Government and Community Relations and AVP Innovation and Economic Development (AVP IED))*
- e. Establish two new public-private research partnerships with the public or private sectors. *(with PSA)*
 - a. Apply for newly designed Carnegie elective ranking in Sustainability, providing better access to research, training and partnership opportunities.

3. Expand partnerships for economic and social impact.

Mason’s location and proximity to the federal government provide ripe opportunities for the university to accelerate impact to the local community. Our three campuses in Virginia are surrounded by organizations that not only serve the federal government but are also many of the largest employers in the Commonwealth and surrounding region. In a year in which many

Italics represent primary unit responsible

of these organizations are shrinking, our goal is to continue to leverage any potential opportunities for our students and faculty while simultaneously providing support to these companies and agencies.

- a. Build upon a successful campaign launch to grow the resources and partnerships needed for our university. (*VP Advancement and Alumni Relations, President*)
 - a. Maintain gifts of at least \$90M and restructure the campaign to accommodate the fiscal and operational realities of the economy and our staff.
 - b. Establish a campaign committee focused on key families who will lead the campaign.
 - c. Develop a plan to restructure Advancement and Alumni Relations to meet long-term objectives of the campaign.
- b. Grow the *Mason Virginia Promise* (a pathway toward a four-year degree or your own business for every Virginian who wants it) by adding two additional community college partners. (*Provost, CFO, PSA*)
- c. Continue to meet enrollment, graduation and fundraising targets established for the Commonwealth's Tech Talent Investment Program (TTIP). (*Provost, VPR, VP Enrollment Management*)
- d. Continue to develop a plan for Mason Korea to become a hub to expand Mason's global presence in Asia and beyond. (*Provost, President, PSA, CoS*)
- e. Establish public-private partnerships with at least three area corporations and expand our corporate-based coalition to support our Arlington Innovation Campus, ensuring that any partnerships mutually benefit George Mason. (*President, Provost, VP Enrollment, PSA*)
- f. Partner with K-12 school divisions to expand Mason's college and career-ready pipeline. (*VP Enrollment Management, VP University Life*)
 - a. Expand the Early Identification Program (EIP) to 1,150 students.
 - b. Increase the number of direct admission partner schools to at least 40.
 - c. Evaluate and, if necessary, finalize implementation plans for current lab schools.
- g. Complete the three-year conversion to the new visual brand expression. (*VP University Branding*)
- h. Develop a plan to streamline Mason's brand infrastructure (communications, marketing, digital strategy, events, trademarks/licensing) to maximize enterprise efficiency and impact. (Efficiency = productivity for cost; impact = growth of brand.) (*VP University Branding*)
- i. Expand Mason Enterprise's partnerships through the Entrepreneur-in-Residence Program, the Investor-in-Residence Program, and the Innovation Commercialization Assistance Program (ICAP) to expand access to tools and funding that draw global innovative partners. (*VPR, AVP IED*)
- j. Expand the innovation ecosystem for campus and local entrepreneurs with Mason as a hub and convener, using Fuse at Mason Square and the Innovation District at SciTech as catalysts. (*CoS, VPR, COO*)

Italics represent primary unit responsible

4. Exemplify a university culture of access and inclusion.

Mason embraces the opportunity to expand our leadership as the most diverse public university in Virginia and become an exemplar for inclusive excellence at the state, regional, and national levels. Toward that end, the following goals are identified:

- a. Maintain Mason's status as a Minority Serving Institution. (*VP Access, Compliance, and Community (ACC), All Units*)
- b. Maintain a Top 20 FIRE ranking for student free speech and open inquiry, and Best of the Best LGBTQ-Friendly Campus. (*VP ACC, VP University Life, President, Provost*)
- c. Review and adjust Access, Compliance, and Community (ACC) programs per changes in federal and state laws and regulations ensuring non-discrimination. (*VP ACC, President, Provost, VP University Life*)
- d. Expand yearlong programming initiative focused on civil discourse, dialogue and debate across differences, and freedom of expression to align with the Governor's focus on free speech and intellectual diversity plan and ensuring that no university process or practice contravenes George Mason's commitments to freedom of expression and diversity of thought. (*VP ACC, President, Provost, VP University Life*)

5. Invest in faculty and staff success.

George Mason is an institution known for its drive, innovation, and creativity. Toward that end, the following goals are identified (*President, Provost, COO, CFO, CHRO*):

- a. Implement and complete a search for a new Chief of Staff (*President*).
- b. Implement and complete a search for a new Chief Financial Officer (*President*).
- c. Create infrastructure improvements that allow institutional efficiency and effectiveness. (*CFO, COO, Provost, VP Enrollment Management*):
 - a. Develop and implement an updated six-year plan in accordance with the needs of the campus and the directions of the Commonwealth administration's revised six-year planning model.
 - b. Implement revised budget model.
 - c. Implement and modify the plan for managing overdue deferred maintenance.
- d. Develop a plan to move Mason toward membership in the prestigious Association of American Universities (AAU). (*President, CoS, PSA*)
 - a. Maintain or improve rankings to remain in the top 60 public universities in the country.
 - b. Produce an updated plan with metrics outlining performance to date.
 - c. Develop an honorifics and awards initiative aimed at recognizing faculty academics and service. (*Provost, President*)
- e. Address the remaining outcomes of the Gallup survey. (*President, Provost, COO, CHRO*)
- f. Establish and evaluate new hiring management process to replace the critical vacancy hiring initiative. The new process will be focused on maintaining Educational and

Italics represent primary unit responsible

General (E&G) spending in alignment with budget and university growth. (*President, Provost, CFO, COO, CHRO*)

- g. Complete a market assessment of faculty and staff salaries relative to compression, inversion, fairness, and cost of living. (*CHRO*)
- h. Continue implementation of the Strategic Plan to include the evolution of the living document, seeking input and guidance from the Board of Visitors for substantive changes to the Strategic Plan. (*PSA, CoS*)
- i. Establish a plan to expand TimelyMD to support faculty, staff and student mental health needs. (*COO*)
- j. Continue maturation of the Enterprise Risk Management program to include finalization of enterprise risk priorities for FY26, development and implementation of Mitigation Action Plans for the highest-ranked enterprise risks, and at least one tabletop exercise for the highest enterprise risks. (*COO*)
- k. Continue to enhance academic practices and decrease faculty and staff manual workload by digitizing processes and procedures. (*Provost*)

6. Demonstrate excellence in timely communication and engagement with Mason stakeholders.

During the year, there have been issues raised where Board members and others have not necessarily felt that they have been fully informed. Reinforcing the commitment to communications and maximum possible transparency with all stakeholders is designed to ameliorate those perceptions.

- a. Continue enhanced and frequent (e.g., monthly) dialogue with community leaders and members in town hall meetings and other forums to promote shared listening and dialogue. Work with community members and residents who live near the western portion of the Fairfax Campus to solicit ideas and feedback on the potential development of that area. (*President, VP Government and Community Relations*).
- b. Continue ongoing dialogue with students, faculty, and staff members to promote shared listening and dialogue. (*President*)
- c. Continue ongoing engagement with Board of Visitors (BoV) members in formal and informal settings to promote shared listening and dialogue. (*President*)
 - a. Expand communications by providing recurring communications (at least monthly) with BoV members to ensure they are updated with campus issues and events.

Public Comments
Received for February 26 Board of Visitors Meeting
As of 2/26/26 4:30 p.m.

Full Name:	Mason Affiliation	Written Comment
Colleen Vesely	Faculty	<p>I am disappointed that the current BOV is considering rewarding holdovers from the Youngkin BOV. After everything the Youngkin BOV did to harm this university, threatening institutional instability and eroding shared governance and academic freedom, why would this new BOV reward these bad faith actors with leadership roles?</p> <p>Meese and Alacbay are unacceptable choices for Rector/Vice Rector, respectively.</p> <p>The Mason community stood with President Washington and clearly rebuked the Youngkin BOV. It is beyond comprehension why Meese, Alacbay, and Rosen would remain in positions of power after the roles they played. This is unacceptable.</p>
Matthew Kelley	Faculty	<p>After everything the Youngkin BOV did to harm this university, threatening institutional instability and eroding shared governance and academic freedom, why would this new BOV reward these bad faith actors with leadership roles?</p> <p>Meese and Alacbay are wholly unacceptable choices for Rector and Vice Rector, full stop.</p> <p>The Mason community stood with President Washington and clearly rebuked the Youngkin BOV. It is beyond comprehension why Meese, Alacbay, and Rosen would remain in positions of power after the roles they played. This is unacceptable, and it is deeply unserious to even consider them.</p> <p>As part of the GMU AAUP, I strongly urge the BOV to reconsider its moves. We want fresh leadership, not rogues who engaged in bad faith actions that harmed the institution.</p>
Alexander Monea	Faculty	<p>We strongly reject BOV moves to elect Meese, Alacbay, and Rosen to any leadership positions on the board. These rogue members were complicit in destabilizing our institution and eroding shared governance and academic freedom. They politicized the board and cannot be rewarded for their bad faith actions. We stood with President Washington. We denounced these rogue actors. The VA General Assembly had to intervene through the courts to rein in these rogue actors.</p> <p>We strongly urge the BOV to position new members for leadership. We need a clean break, a fresh start in order to rebuild trust in leadership and institutional stability.</p>
Bethany Letiecq	Faculty	<p>Dear BOV Members:</p> <p>My lengthier comments were sent via email. Here I want to repeat -- in no way should the newly-constituted BOV reward bad faith actors--who served at the behest of Governor Youngkin and harmed our university--with leadership roles on the Board. Those Board members proved to be loyal to their political agenda, not to Mason. During their leadership, Vice-Rector Meese and Secretary Alacbay, alongside Visitors Rosen and Peterson, failed to take meaningful action when Rector Stimson went rogue. Indeed, they were complicit in taking actions that exceeded their authority, eroded shared governance and academic freedom, and betrayed the Mason community. These actions disqualify them from future Board leadership.</p> <p>I urge this new Board: do not reward bad faith actors with ongoing leadership roles.</p>

This is not a time to defer to returning colleagues in the name of collegiality or continuity. It is neither a rule nor a duty. And you will not be "acting apolitically" by supporting political ideologues in their bids for leadership. We need a fresh start with new leaders who can repair the damage done.

I hope you make the right leadership decisions at the start of your tenure to rebuild trust and stability with and for our campus community.

Thank you.

--February 21 letter included at the end of the Public Comments

Robbie Dieterich	Faculty	We fought to protect President Washington and GMU from a rogue board and political interference coming from the highest levels of government--and we won! Now is not the time for the newly-constituted BOV to capitulate to prior BOV members. Those bad faith actors, complicit in harming our university, do not deserve to lead the Mason Nation.
Elizabeth DeMulder	Faculty	We want new leadership, not rogues with political agendas. It's time for a fresh start! Under the direction of Rector Charles "Cully" Stimson—alongside Vice Rector Michael Meese and Secretary Armand Alacbay—the Board repeatedly overstepped basic governance boundaries and betrayed BOV commitments to shared governance and academic freedom, inflicting lasting reputational damage on George Mason. They failed to serve Mason, choosing instead to serve a political agenda harmful to the mission of our public institution of higher education. I urge the BOV to not reward bad faith actors with any leadership roles.
Elizabeth Krein	Staff	<p>It is incumbent upon this newly-constituted BOV to ensure that no Youngkin-appointed political ideologues serve in any capacity on the Board. Under the direction of Rector Cully Stimson—alongside Vice Rector Meese and Secretary Alacbay—the Board repeatedly overstepped basic governance boundaries and betrayed BOV commitments to shared governance and academic freedom, inflicting lasting damage on George Mason's reputation. They failed to serve Mason community, choosing instead to serve a political agenda harmful to the mission of our public institution of higher education. I urge the BOV not reward bad faith actors with any role on the BOV. There must be consequences for BOV members who did not fight for GMU by speaking out for the values held by our University.</p> <p>I fought to protect President Washington and GMU from a rogue board and political interference coming from the highest levels of government. We now have a governor who will allow the BOV to operate in their historical capacity. Now is not the time for the newly-constituted BOV to capitulate to prior BOV members. Those bad faith actors, complicit in harming our university, do not deserve to lead the Mason Nation.</p>
Martin Winkler	Faculty	<p>Dear Members of the GMU BOV:</p> <p>I am writing to express my hope that new BOV members will be elected only on the basis of their dedication to higher education in regard to freedom of research and teaching and learning, freedom of thought and expression, and freedom from any ideological or financial outside considerations.</p>
Laura Buckwald	Faculty	The people of Virginia sent a loud and clear message to the nation in November when they elected a Democratic Governor and an overwhelmingly Democratic House of Delegates. The message was that Virginians will no longer stand for Republican violations of the rule of law and capitulations to the extremist and authoritarian actions by the Trump Administration, which were supported by former Governor Youngkin. This includes installing new leadership in Virginia's university boards and a commitment to

academic freedom, freedom of speech on campus and shared governance. It is incumbent upon GMU's newly constituted BOV to ensure that no Youngkin-appointed political ideologues serve in leadership roles on GMU's Board. Under the direction of former Rector Charles "Cully" Stimson, along with Vice Rector Michael Meese and Secretary Armand Alacbay, the Board overstepped basic governance boundaries and betrayed BOV commitments to shared governance and academic freedom, inflicting lasting reputational damage on George Mason University. They failed to serve Mason, choosing instead to serve a political agenda harmful to the mission of our public institution of higher education. I urge the BOV NOT to reward bad faith actors with any leadership roles.

We want new leadership, not rogues with political agendas. It's time for a fresh start and you were appointed by Governor Spanberger to provide new and positive leadership to GMU's BOV. Do not capitulate to prior BOV members - they are bad faith actors who have been complicit in harming our university and do not deserve to have any leadership role in the Mason Nation. Thank you.

Denise Albanese	Faculty	It seems purely undemocratic that the BOV might be led by those representing a minority viewpoint--an undemocratic one, at that, one that's already shown itself willing to suspend the BOV's very charter and to expand its authority preemptively. Past leadership has taken aim at the very ability of Mason to succeed at its mission of broadly educating Virginians and of maintaining disinterested academic integrity and freedom, seeking to destroy all places where dissent from the dominant political order might occur. Please ensure that this iteration of the BOV returns to its lanes, and leaves the work of education itself to those employed to conduct it.
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Jessica Hurley	Faculty	I was shocked to learn that members of the previous board, who served Mason so poorly, are being slotted into leadership roles on the new board through a rushed process. I urge all of the board members to start as they mean to go on by taking the election of board leadership seriously and running a proper election with due consideration of whether these members' past performance warrant a leadership role.
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Amy Zhang	Faculty	It is incumbent upon this newly-constituted BOV to ensure that no Youngkin-appointed political ideologues serve in leadership roles on the Board. Under the direction of Rector Charles "Cully" Stimson—alongside Vice Rector Michael Meese and Secretary Armand Alacbay—the Board repeatedly overstepped basic governance boundaries and betrayed BOV commitments to shared governance and academic freedom, inflicting lasting reputational damage on George Mason. They failed to serve Mason, choosing instead to serve a political agenda harmful to the mission of our public institution of higher education. I urge the BOV to not reward bad faith actors with any leadership roles.
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Virginia Hoy	Faculty	Niki Haley was right--that Trump brought nothing but chaos. We have seen that play out nationally, globally, and, with the Younkin appointments to George Mason's Board of Visitors, that chaos infected our campus as well. I have taught at Mason for 20 years and have never witnessed the degree of contention and repressive tactics that have been implemented by the board on faculty and students in the past few years. Mason is, or at least has been, proud of the diversity on campus and the freedom faculty have enjoyed to research and teach without censure; however, since a certain Executive Order, which isn't a law passed by Congress, apparently we have had it all wrong. I am very proud of all the university's efforts at diversity and inclusion and want to see them restored. I want to see faculty share their talents and research with students to make them the thoughtful and active citizens they need to be in our complex world. That restoration is threatened by elevating holdovers from the Younkin administration to positions of power over the board's newest appointees. This is wrong. Governor Spanberger has been clear that the old regime is over and the new board members must correct the assaults on academic freedom and diversity committed by those with
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ideological, rather than fiduciary, commitments to the Mason community. I cannot say this strongly enough: Visitors Meese, Alacbay, and Rosen do not represent the best interests of George Mason and are not qualified to lead the university. They will only perpetuate the violations of the recent past.

Lori Rottenberg
Faculty

No rewards for rogue boards!

It is incumbent upon this newly-constituted BOV to ensure that no Youngkin-appointed political ideologues serve in leadership roles on the Board. They were improperly appointed against the will of the Virginia Senate and a judge's ruling. Furthermore, under the direction of Rector Charles "Cully" Stimson—alongside Vice Rector Michael Meese and Secretary Armand Alacbay—the Board repeatedly overstepped basic governance boundaries and betrayed BOV commitments to shared governance and academic freedom, inflicting lasting reputational damage on George Mason. They failed to serve Mason, choosing instead to serve a political agenda harmful to the mission of our public institution of higher education. I urge the BOV to not reward bad faith actors with any leadership roles.

We want new leadership, not rogues with political agendas. It's time for a fresh start!

We fought to protect President Washington and GMU from a rogue board and political interference coming from the highest levels of government--and we won! Now is not the time for the newly-constituted BOV to capitulate to prior BOV members. Those bad faith actors, complicit in harming our university, do not deserve to lead the Mason Nation.

Denise Hines
Faculty

It is essential that this newly reconstituted Board of Visitors ensures that no Youngkin-appointed political ideologues are placed in leadership positions. Under the leadership of Rector Charles "Cully" Stimson, together with Vice Rector Michael Meese and Secretary Armand Alacbay, the previous Board repeatedly overstepped fundamental governance norms and disregarded its commitments to shared governance and academic freedom, causing lasting harm to George Mason University's reputation. Rather than serving the interests of Mason, they advanced a political agenda that runs counter to the mission of a public institution of higher education. The Board must not reward such bad-faith conduct with positions of authority.

We need new leadership, not individuals driven by political motives. It's time for a true fresh start.

We worked tirelessly to protect President Washington and GMU from a rogue board and from political interference originating at the highest levels of government, and we succeeded. Now is not the moment for the newly formed Board of Visitors to yield to members of the prior board. Those who acted in bad faith and contributed to harming our university should not be entrusted with leading the Mason community.

David Robinson
Community Member

I've been collaborating with mason faculty for nearly 20 years, and I've never seen such a flagrant disregard for institutional responsibility as what the Youngkin-appointed Board of Trustees has done. The Board repeatedly overstepped basic governance boundaries and betrayed BOV commitments to shared governance and academic freedom, inflicting lasting reputational damage on George Mason. They failed to serve Mason, choosing instead to serve a political agenda harmful to the mission of our public institution of higher education.

Please BOV, do not reward Youngkin-appointees with any leadership roles.

Rod Turpin	Faculty	We fought to protect GMU from the most outrageous political interference from the highest levels of government. Now is not the time for the newly-constituted BOV to capitulate to prior BOV members. Those previous members are bad faith actors who actively and intentionally harmed our university for personal political gain. I would have never imagined the level of transparent corruption and complete disregard of institutional stewardship as what those board members have done. It would be grossly irresponsible to allow them to maintain leadership roles in any capacity.
Jessica Scarlata	Faculty	We fought to protect President Washington and GMU from a rogue board and political interference, and we won! In a moment when academic freedom and First Amendment rights are endangered, we need BOV leadership that will partner with us in protecting GMU from political interference. Under the direction of Rector Charles “Cully” Stimson—alongside Vice Rector Michael Meese and Secretary Armand Alacbay—the Board repeatedly overstepped basic governance boundaries and betrayed BOV commitments to shared governance and academic freedom, inflicting lasting reputational damage on George Mason. They failed to serve Mason, choosing instead to serve a political agenda harmful to the mission of our public institution of higher education. Do not reward bad faith actors with leadership roles.
Agnieszka Paczynska	Faculty	It is incumbent upon this newly-constituted BOV to ensure that no Youngkin-appointed political ideologues serve in leadership roles on the Board. Under the direction of Rector Charles “Cully” Stimson—alongside Vice Rector Michael Meese and Secretary Armand Alacbay—the Board repeatedly overstepped basic governance boundaries and betrayed BOV commitments to shared governance and academic freedom, inflicting lasting reputational damage on George Mason. They failed to serve Mason, choosing instead to serve a political agenda harmful to the mission of our public institution of higher education. I urge the BOV to not reward bad faith actors with any leadership roles.
Austin David Crockett	Student	Give student discounts at stores for students to have, as a way to help those struggling with tuition. People who are alumnis or locals pay full price, as they aren't going to the university as a student. Also, allow more European events like Oktoberfest (without beer, unless ID required) and remove foot washing stations at the bathroom. There are showers for that and it's a public restroom. Also, allow shuttles to drive people to DC from GMU. Please allow investigator jobs to be hiring on campus too, as it would be good practice for criminology majors trying to get into investigative careers to be able to investigate on campus, such as vandalism or cases of misbehavior needing investigating.
Declan William Rees	Student	Please hear the calls of students and divest from death. We warmly welcome you, the newly elected board, and we have faith that you will do good. Don't make the same mistakes Stimson made
Allison Parsons	Faculty	It is incumbent upon this newly-constituted BOV to ensure that no Youngkin-appointed political ideologues serve in leadership roles on the Board. Under the direction of Rector Charles “Cully” Stimson—alongside Vice Rector Michael Meese and Secretary Armand Alacbay—the Board repeatedly overstepped basic governance boundaries and betrayed BOV commitments to shared governance and academic freedom, inflicting lasting reputational damage on George Mason. They failed to serve Mason, choosing instead to serve a political agenda harmful to the mission of our public institution of higher education. I urge the BOV to appoint fresh leadership from new board members only.
K	Alumni	Please get rid of DEI. It's segregation based on self prescribed victimhood. Don't encourage that. Instead of funding DEI, put that money towards the food program at GMU, or making the tuition CHEAPER. Perhaps student clubs. Maybe another faculty member to replace

Dr. Kim.
Make tuition cheaper = more people = inherently more diversity.
This is a college. You should value intellectual thought far more than the color of someone's skin, or who they have sex with.
Jeez. Not that hard to wrap your heads around.

Griffin Crouch Student My name is Griffin Crouch, and I am a junior and Government major. I'm optimistic about this new Board and hope it can address the needs of students to ensure George Mason stays a high-performing institution. The key to that is treating students always as stakeholders in decisions that affect them, and Visitors working to hear student feedback first to rebuild trust from the past Board.

Former Rector Cully Stimson followed a policy of decisions by assumption and attack. I met with him and now Rector Meese in April 2024 to discuss an anti-DEI Resolution the Board was considering. It was rushed and full of incorrect assumptions that made bad policy. In a discussion with student leaders, Rector Stimson expressed a view that one of the targeted offices, the Bias Incidence Reporting Team, was there to "cancel" or launch anonymous accusations against students, which if true could be an issue. But, it is not actually in its power to do that. Its purpose was and is to offer students who felt they faced discrimination referrals and resources, and track the atmosphere on campus. It was especially something members of our Jewish community I spoke to prior to the meeting relied on to track anti-semitism, which Rector Stimson and Board did not show any awareness of.

That was a pattern; the Board under Rector Stimson would propose cuts and changes based on flat-out wrong assumptions, and then enable attacks on the faculty and staff who oversaw these resources that students relied on, as we saw over the summer. The same happened to programs that supported our African-American community, international students, LGBTQ+ students, and more. In this case, the BIRT was protected and the targeting was dropped, but many of those programs that built academic and professional success were limited, cut, or paused. That's what happens when students and stakeholders aren't part of the decision-making process from the start, and it hurts students and hurts George Mason.

But this is a different Board, and I'm looking forward to working with Visitors and seeing them work with students to help George Mason by supporting its students. To do that, leadership should not have gone to Visitors who stood by Rector Stimson's leadership and policy approach. This Board should work towards undoing the harm and rebuilding the trust of students so that as our current students with their current problems – affordability and not raising tuition/fees, peace of mind and safety from federal violence, expanding housing availability (especially on West Campus), a more vibrant student life, and more – can be the priority instead of afterthoughts. If this Board does that, our current students will be more engaged and active alumni like so many of our new Visitors, and will donate, participate, and be part of the George Mason community in their futures. That is the only way George Mason has long-term success, by including students as stakeholders from the start.

George Mason University Chapter Of the American To Members of the George Mason University Board of Visitors:
As leaders of the George Mason University Chapter of the American Association of University Professors, we write at a moment of great institutional consequence. As you know, after Mason endured bad faith actions of a Youngkin-appointed and highly politicized Board of Visitors, Virginia legislators intervened to "Stand with Mason" and stop a rogue board from destabilizing our institution. On the first day in office,

Governor Spanberger then appointed a newly constituted BOV. That transition is a rare, long-overdue opportunity to restore lawful, credible, and depoliticized governance at George Mason.

After all that we—faculty, students, staff, alumni, business leaders, community allies—have endured and fought to protect, we write with a clear request:

Returning members of the prior Board should neither seek nor accept leadership roles on the newly constituted Board.

We make that request to protect the legitimacy of the new Board and the institution it serves. A lawful transition requires transparent procedures, independent judgment by duly seated members, and an unmistakable break from the prior Board’s governance failures.

The remaining Youngkin-appointed members should not be rewarded with leadership for the record they helped create. Under the direction of Rector Charles “Cully” Stimson—alongside Vice Rector Michael Meese and Secretary Armand Alacbay—the Board repeatedly overstepped basic governance boundaries, inflicting lasting reputational damage on George Mason. What follows is a brief summary of conduct that reflects a failure of fiduciary stewardship, a disregard for shared governance and academic freedom, and a betrayal of the University community they were appointed to serve.

Over time, that Board normalized sustained intrusions into academic decision-making—including curriculum and academic policy—while applying pressure on faculty governance norms and advancing an ideological agenda without meaningful faculty participation or a defensible governance rationale. It also failed to confront conflicts of interest of a magnitude no prudent institution would tolerate—most starkly, the Rector’s simultaneous employment with an organization publicly urging actions that would harm George Mason, including calls to cut federal support, a conflict mirrored by Secretary Alacbay’s simultaneous employment with ACTA, an organization with a documented record of attacks on academic freedom, shared governance, and established accreditation processes.

These were not isolated lapses or good-faith disagreements. They reflected a pattern of treating board authority as an instrument for political ends rather than as a fiduciary trust. In that context, the GMU-AAUP’s vote of no confidence was not simply understandable; it was the predictable result of a Board that repeatedly chose politics over stewardship.

Given this history, we are deeply concerned with recent actions taken by the BOV, including an apparent pre-set committee slate, coupled with the prior Board’s documented pattern of acting after its authority had expired, raising serious concerns about whether this transition is a genuine reset or merely a rebranding. We summarize those concerns in three points:

1. A leadership and committee slate that appears to have been decided before the Board legally existed

We are deeply troubled by a procedural irregularity that cannot be dismissed as routine administration. As of Wednesday, February 19, our understanding was that few—if

any—of the twelve newly appointed Board members had been sworn in. Yet the agenda for Thursday’s organizational meeting reportedly included proposed committee assignments.

Under the Board’s bylaws, the Rector appoints committee chairs and vice chairs. Committee assignments that appear on an agenda before new members have even been seated necessarily imply that someone had already acted on the premise that (a) they would be Rector and (b) the Board would ratify an already-constructed internal power structure.

That is not how legitimate boards conduct an organizational meeting. It treats new members—appointed to bring a fresh start—as passengers rather than fiduciaries with independent judgment and equal standing.

If there is an innocent explanation, we welcome it and ask that it be made explicit and public: Who prepared the proposed committee slate, under whose direction, and on what authority—given that the new Board was not yet fully seated? The appearance that a “deal” preceded the Board’s first meeting is itself damaging.

2. UVA provides the baseline: leadership chosen by the reconstituted Board, in public view, after members are seated

This is not a novel governance issue; the solution is straightforward and widely understood.

This week, the University of Virginia’s reconstituted Board of Visitors—following Governor Spanberger’s appointments—met, deliberated, and then publicly elected new leadership. The board announced in open session that it had elected Carlos M. Brown as Rector and Victoria D. Harker as Vice Rector, effective immediately. UVA’s process underscores the basic norm: a board chooses its leadership when it is actually constituted and convened—not beforehand, not by presumption, and not by pre-arranged slates presented to members who have not yet taken office.

George Mason deserves governance that meets at least that baseline.

3. The record of the prior Board must not be forgotten

We cannot address leadership succession without speaking plainly about the Board that must now step back.

Under the direction of Rector Charles “Cully” Stimson, the prior Board of Visitors repeatedly met and took consequential action after it had lost the legal authority to do so. At the August 1, 2025, full Board meeting, the Board adjourned—a point Rector Stimson later acknowledged. That distinction is not technical; it is dispositive. Under Virginia law, an adjourned board cannot authorize the Executive Committee to act in its stead; only a board in recess may do so.

At the October 15 Executive Committee meeting, Rector Stimson acknowledged on the record that he understood the difference between adjournment and recess and that the Board had adjourned rather than recessed. Yet the committee convened and conducted business of significant institutional consequence anyway, despite objections that raised these exact concerns.

The December 4, 2025, meeting compounded this pattern. At that point, there was no legal basis for the Executive Committee to convene: the prior Board had adjourned; the full Board had been called and failed to convene for lack of quorum; the statutory and bylaw predicates were simply not present. Yet the meeting was held. Actions taken at meetings held without legal authority are, in the plainest terms, *ultra vires*—beyond the power of those who took them.

GMU-AAUP also documented at length Rector Stimson’s fundamental conflict of interest: his concurrent service as a Senior Advisor to the President of the Heritage Foundation and as a member of the George Mason University Board of Visitors. During his tenure, the Heritage Foundation published a report explicitly targeting George Mason University and recommending the withholding of federal funding from institutions the Foundation deemed noncompliant. Rector Stimson had a fiduciary duty of loyalty to this University. That duty was incompatible with simultaneous service at an organization actively working to damage the University’s financial standing.

We state this with full awareness of its gravity:

Board members who knowingly participated in meetings held without legal authority, knew or should have known that the body was acting beyond its lawful authority, and declined to hold the Rector accountable for documented conflicts of interest have, through those actions, disqualified themselves from leadership on the newly constituted Board.

That conclusion is not punitive. It is the ordinary logic of fiduciary governance. Leadership is not an honorific or a reward for seniority. It is a grant of added authority that must be earned by demonstrating respect for the legal and ethical constraints that make board authority legitimate in the first place. A Board seeking to restore public confidence cannot do so by elevating individuals who participated in the very conduct that damaged that confidence.

We recognize that the newly appointed members bear no responsibility for their predecessors’ failures. Governor Spanberger’s appointments were widely understood to signal that a new chapter is possible—and we agree. But that new chapter cannot credibly begin with continuity in leadership from those who presided over, enabled, or acquiesced in governance breakdowns of the magnitude described above. If the goal is institutional stability and legitimacy, the new Board’s first decisions must unmistakably reflect an institutional reset rather than a rearrangement of the same internal power structure.

For that reason, we ask you—respectfully but urgently—to exercise the independent judgment your fiduciary role requires. The organizational meeting of a newly constituted board is not merely ceremonial. The election of the Rector and Vice Rector, and the appointment of committee chairs and vice chairs, are among the most consequential governance decisions you will make. These decisions will signal to the University community, the Commonwealth, and your fellow Board members what kind of Board you intend to be: one that operates under law and accountability, or one that treats governance as a matter of presumption and prearrangement.

We also recognize the pressures that often accompany a transition. Newly appointed members are sometimes urged—explicitly or implicitly—to defer to returning colleagues in the name of collegiality or “continuity.” That dynamic is familiar. It is

neither a rule nor a duty. Each of you was appointed to exercise independent fiduciary judgment for this University, not to ratify outcomes shaped before you were seated.

Even if a returning member is elected to a leadership role over your objection, your responsibilities—and your authority—do not diminish. You can and should demand a clear public accounting of how Thursday’s agenda was prepared and by whom, and insist that the organizational steps of the meeting—including nominations, votes, and any proposed committee slate—be fully and accurately recorded in the minutes. Fiduciary duty does not end when a vote is lost; it continues in every meeting, every decision, and every act of oversight that follows.

Accordingly, we ask:

- That you decline to elect any returning Board member whose conduct reflects the pattern described above to leadership positions.
- That you insist on transparency regarding how Thursday’s agenda was prepared and by whom—particularly any proposed committee slate circulated before new members were seated.
- That you begin your service to this University as you mean to go on: with fidelity to the law, respect for institutional independence, and genuine accountability to the faculty and students of the Commonwealth.

We write with profound urgency—and with hope that this Board will choose the right path going forward. George Mason University is a remarkable institution. It deserves governance equal to its promise. Its people deserve that promise.

Respectfully submitted,

The Executive Committee of GMU-AAUP

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
Academic Affairs Committee

MINUTES

Thursday, February 26, 2026

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair: Armand Alacbay; Vice Chair: Jeff Rosen; Visitors: Anne Altman, Paul Misener, Jim Moran, Sumeet Shrivastava, Sean Spence; Staff Representatives: Interim Provost Ajay Vinzé, Sharnnia Artis, Rose Pascarell; Faculty Senate President: Solon Simmons; Staff Senate Chair: Rachel Spence; Faculty Representatives: Tim Gibson, Shane Caswell; Student Representatives: Jonathan Dubois, Nilima Mow

ALSO PRESENT: Rector Meese; Visitors: Bruce Caswell, Trevor Montano, Delbert Parks, Jon Peterson, Shawn Purvis, George Schindler, Jennifer Taylor; President Washington

I. **The meeting was called to order by Chair Alacbay at 8:35 a.m.**

II. **Approval of Minutes (Action Item)**

Chair Alacbay called for any corrections to the minutes from the December 4, 2025, Academic Affairs Committee meeting. Hearing no corrections, the meeting minutes stood **APPROVED** as written.

III. **New Business**

A. **Academic Affairs Committee Overview**

Chair Alacbay provided a more detailed overview of the role and responsibilities of the Academic Affairs Committee, referencing the committee bylaws. Interim Provost Vinzé provided an overview of the different types of action items that come before the Committee for approval, such as Program Actions, Faculty Actions, and organizational changes.

B. **Provost's Report**

Ajay Vinzé – Interim Provost and Executive Vice President

Interim Provost Vinzé shared brief background on his experience in faculty and academic leadership roles and reaffirmed his commitment to supporting George Mason's schools, colleges, faculty, and students during his interim service. The Committee received an enrollment update from Vice President Burge and noted strong performance in the latest U.S. News & World Report rankings for online master's programs. Notable student, faculty, and staff achievements were also highlighted. Vice President for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning Gesele Durham provided an overview of the two annual reports included in the Board materials, drawing attention to key data related to undergraduate retention, faculty retention, and broader indicators of faculty and student success.

C. **Program Actions and Faculty Actions**

Interim Provost Vinzé provided an overview of both the Program Actions and Faculty Actions.

Chair Alacbay called for a **MOTION** to approve the Program Actions and Faculty Actions en bloc; Visitor Shrivastava **MOVED**; Visitor Altman **SECONDED** the following program actions:

1. New Degree Program
 - a. BS in Hospitality, Tourism and Events Management
2. Program Name Change
 - a. Bachelor of Arts in Government and International Politics to Bachelor of Arts in Political Science
3. Conferral of Emeritus/Emerita Status

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

Yes – 7

D. Announcements

Announcements and Reports were acknowledged for the Committee's benefit.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Parnell
Secretary Pro Tem

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
Research Committee Meeting
MINUTES
February 28, 2026**

Present: Chair Tom Davis (virtual), Vice Chair Shawn Purvis, Secretary Armand Alacbay, Visitor Bruce Caswell, Visitor Delbert Parks, Vice President Andre Marshall, Faculty Representative Igor Mazin, Faculty Representative Anna Pollack, Secretary pro tem Yellia Seanor

Also Present: Rector Michael Meese, Visitor Jeff Rosen, Visitor Jon Peterson, Visitor Anne Altman, Visitor Jim Moran, President Gregory Washington, Faculty Representative Solon Simmons, Staff Liaison Rachel Spence, GAPSA President Nilima Hakim Mow, Student Representatives Jonathan Dubois

The meeting was called to order by Visitor and Secretary Alacbay at 9:36 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes (ACTION ITEM)

- a. It was **MOVED** by Secretary Alacbay to approve the minutes from December 4, 2025, Research Committee Meeting. Meeting minutes were approved.

2. New Business

- a. **Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact Update**
Dr. Andre Marshall, Vice President for Research, Innovation & Economic Impact, provided an overview of research at George Mason University and presented detailed financial and operational information. His report included year-over-year research funding trends, a breakdown of the university's FY2025 federal and nonfederal sponsored project portfolios, and the corresponding trajectory in external awards. He also provided an overview of the university's research workforce, including total faculty and researcher headcounts.
- b. Vice President Marshall outlined FY2025 proposal activity—specifically the number of proposals submitted, associated dollar values, total research expenditures, indirect cost recovery, and the staffing infrastructure that supports proposal development, award management, and compliance functions.
- c. Vice President Marshall also provided an overview of the Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact which included its organizational structure and headcount. He concluded by discussing research landscape headwinds, major research initiatives currently underway, and recent scholarly achievements across the university.

3. Discussion

- a. **Impact of Executive Orders:** In response to a question regarding estimated funding losses, Vice President Marshall noted that leadership anticipated challenges to maintaining the university's previous upward trajectory. Goals were adjusted accordingly, prioritizing the minimization of research activity loss.

He emphasized that significant initiatives underway position George Mason to lead both the commonwealth and the nation.

- b. **Indirect Cost Rate Outlook:** Committee members requested additional information on assumptions related to forthcoming changes in the IDC rate. Vice President Marshall indicated that adjustments are expected, though specific details remain unknown. President Washington added that, given the anticipated reduction in research projects and related resources, a comprehensive mitigation plan is in development.
- c. **Progress Toward Research Goals:** When asked about meeting research goals, Vice President Marshall explained that appeals supporting faculty were less successful than hoped, though no additional terminated awards are expected. He noted that despite national-level impacts—from Executive Orders to discretionary funding cuts—the university fared better than anticipated due to strong NIH and NSF award performance.
- d. **Comparison With Peer R1 Institutions:** In response to a question about peer trends, Vice President Marshall shared that other R1 institutions are similarly concerned and are adjusting to shifting federal priorities, particularly around indirect costs and evolving portfolios. Many are increasing engagement in philanthropic, industry sponsored, and foundation-funded research to mitigate impacts and preserve research growth.
- e. **IDC, Infrastructure, and Lab to Launch:** Asked about opportunities to leverage enabling technologies, Vice President Marshall said the university is planning for reduced funding availability and is seeking efficiencies across the research enterprise, including through strategic use of AI. He also highlighted the Commonwealth’s Lab to Launch initiative and noted that George Mason is the first university to license a technology through the program—a significant milestone.
- f. **Fuse Building and Research Acceleration:** In response to a question about Fuse’s role, Vice President Marshall described it as a vibrant hub that brings together faculty, labs, tenants, and Mason Enterprise to support startups and technology commercialization. He visits regularly to identify collaboration opportunities across industry and government.

4. Adjournment

- a. Secretary Alacbay if there was any additional business to be discussed.
- b. With no further comments or items of discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:08 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Yellia Seanor
Research Committee Secretary

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
Finance and Land Use Committee Meeting
February 26, 2026
Meeting Minutes
Approved 4.15.26

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Peterson; Vice Chair Caswell; Visitor Alacbay, Visitor Altman, Visitor Montano, Visitor Rosen, Visitor Spence; Faculty Representative Shutika, Faculty Representative Daniels; Interim Vice President Stephens; Senior Vice President Zobel

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: President Washington; Rector Meese; Visitor Davis, Visitor Misener, Visitor Moran, Visitor Parks, Visitor Purvis, Visitor Schindler, Visitor Shrivastava, Visitor Taylor; Faculty Representative Simmons; Staff Representative Spence; Student Representative Dubois, Student Representative Mow

I. Call to Order

Chair Peterson called the meeting to order at 10:20 am.

II. Approval of Minutes for December 4, 2025 (ACTION)

Chair Peterson called for any corrections to the minutes for the Finance and Land Use Committee Meeting for December 4, 29025. Hearing no corrections, the **MINUTES STOOD APPROVED AS WRITTEN.**

III. Committee Overview

Chair Peterson turned the meeting over to Dan Stephens, Interim Vice President for Finance.

Mr. Stephens provided an overview of the purview of the Finance and Land Use Committee.

- Annual Operating Budget development begins each fall with final votes in the Spring
- Major Capital projects review and approval
- Commonwealth and SCHEV Six-Year Plan review and approve

IV. Financial Matters

A. FY 2026 Q2 Financial Report (Dec 2025 vs. Dec 2024)

Mr. Stephens presented the FY 2026 Q2 Financial Report

- Revenues are trending below budget primarily due to lower net tuition and fees driven by decline in Out-of-State Graduate Students and International Enrollments
- Cost mitigation strategies will continue

- Auxiliary Enterprise surplus funds will be invested in critical capital and infrastructure needs

B. FY 2027 & FY 2028 Biennium Budget General Fund Request

General fund requests pending General Assembly approval were reviewed.

- \$14 million in potential operating appropriation support for FY 2027 and FY 2028 includes:
 - \$11 million of permanent general operations funding
 - \$2 million of increased student financial aid
 - \$1 million for technology infrastructure support in advancing AI research
- \$61 Million in capital appropriation in FY 2027
- \$28 Million in capital appropriations in FY 2028

Virginia State House and Senate budgets will be reconciled in March.

C. FY 2027 Budget Planning

An overview of FY 2027 budget planning was provided.

- George Mason is \$7,000 per in-state student FTE below the mean of five doctoral peer institutions equating to \$187 million less in financial resources
- George Mason continues to cover approximately 40% of the total VMSDEP wavers provided totaling \$9 million in the FY 2026 budget
- George Mason funded 50% of the FY 2026 3% employee compensation increase totaling \$9 million
- Mr. Stephens explained how the different types of students pay different rates, which increases the revenue impact of the decline in out-of-state and international enrollment
- Staff is recommending a tuition increase for FY 2027 and shared four tuition scenarios: 5%, 3%, 2%, and 0%
- With no tuition increase there would be a \$16 million shortfall; a 4% increase would balance the budget
- Leadership is pursuing budget mitigation strategies, which will need to be enhanced in the absence of a tuition increase

D. Credit Rating Update

Update on George Mason's credit ratings was provided.

- Staff met with S&P in February with a final report expected in March
- Standard & Poor's implied credit rating is AA-
- Moody's credit rating is Aa3

E. FY 2027 Room and Board Rates (ACTION)

Julie Zobel, Senior Vice President and COO presented the FY 2027 Room and Board recommendations:

- 4% housing rate increase of \$340
- 4% board rate increase of \$240
- Combined recommended increase is 4% or \$580

Current housing and dining challenges include:

- Occupancy is below historical averages
- Costs and needs continue to grow
- Lower housing occupancy decreases dining utilization

George Mason's room & board rates continue to be lower than peer institutions despite operating in a more expensive region.

V. Discussion

Ms. Zobel clarified, in response to Visitor Rosen's question, that dining rates are formulated based on the CPI where the product is sourced. She also clarified that housing fees cover the cost of housing and deferred maintenance.

President Washington stated that deferred maintenance is not an optional expense but is mandatory, while Chair Peterson noted that in the past, funds for deferred maintenance were not adequate.

Visitor Caswell expressed interest in the demand elasticity and how that relates to the room and board and tuition increases. He also expressed concern that increased tuition and fees would deter students from enrolling.

Visitor Spense inquired about the median student aid packet and whether the increase will fit into what we expect the students to receive in terms of their aid.

David Burge, Vice President for Enrollment Management, and Rose Pascarell, Vice President University Life, stated Mason want to maximize state, federal and institutional aid bundled into one package. Mason receives more than \$10 million from the SCHEV to increase retention rates of Pell eligible students. Mason Provides more than \$2 million in housing grants.

Shannon Jordan, Associate Dean and Chief Housing Officer, provided clarification on housing demand, price sensitivity, and increased housing competition.

President Washington noted that students who live on campus are more successful.

Visitor Moran encourages consideration of the higher cost of food, housing, and other services in the Northern Virginia area. Visitor Moran supports the committee's recommendation of an increase.

President Washington emphasized senior leadership's efforts to keep costs as low as possible. He notes there have been years with no increase or an increase below inflation. He clarified that Room and Board is an auxiliary enterprise and is not funded by state resources.

Chair Peterson stated SCHEV studies show that George Mason is the most efficient institution in the state. He is confident university dollars are being spent in an efficient manner.

Visitor Rosen requested an update on the anticipated state support, which President Washington noted would be included in his presentation later in the day.

Visitor Rosen stated the reason George Mason is successful in replacing out of state and international students with in state students is because tuition is affordable and reasonable and we need to be careful not to jeopardize that.

Chair Peterson put forth a **MOTION** for approval by the Board of Visitors of the FY 2027 Room and Board Rates, as detailed in the Board Book. Motion was **SECONDED**.
The **MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE**.

VI. Adjournment

There being no further business, Chair Peterson adjourned the meeting at 11:13 am.

Prepared by Secretary Pro Tem.
Jessica Holtzman

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
AUDIT, RISK, AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS**

**February 26, 2026
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Chair Parks, Visitor Caswell, Visitor Schindler, Visitor Spence, and Visitor Taylor

ABSENT: None

ALSO PRESENT: Rector Meese; President Washington; Interim VP Chief Audit & Compliance Officer Butler; Interim VP and Chief Risk Officer Dade; Associate Vice President for Institutional Compliance Lacovara; Auditor of Public Accounts Representative Borgerding; Committee Faculty Liaison Wetklow; Faculty Senate President Simmons; Staff Senate Chair Spence; Undergraduate Student Representative Dubois; Graduate Student Representative Hakim Mow; Interim Provost Vinze; Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer Zobel; Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Interest Marshall; Vice President for Enrollment Management Burge; Vice President for University Life Pascarell; Interim SVP and Chief Financial Officer Stephens; Associate Vice President and Controller Klock-Taube; Vice President and Chief Information Officer Madison; Vice President and Chief Branding Officer Alvin; Interim Special Advisor and Chief of Staff Owen; Interim University Counsel Drummey; and VP for Access, Compliance, and Community Artis.

I. Chair Parks called the meeting to order at 11:20 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

Chair Parks called for any corrections to the minutes of the May 1, 2025 Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee meeting. Hearing none, the **MINUTES STOOD APPROVED AS WRITTEN.**

III New Business

A. Review of Committee Roles, Functions, and Responsibilities

Mr. Butler discussed ARCC committee key responsibilities. In addition, Mr. Butler discussed Internal Audit key responsibilities as outlined in Office of University Audit (OUA) charter. These included annual adoption of the ARCC charter, review and approval of Office of Audit and Compliance Charter. Mr. Butler also discussed the OUA

AUDIT, RISK, AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

November 19, 2024

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organizational chart that included open positions and use of co-sourcing resources. Mr. Butler discussed a chart of audit projects performed over the last 18 months and mapping to key Enterprise Risks. Mr. Lacovara discussed the compliance program including federal sentencing guidelines, conflict of interest program, bringing on an anonymous reporting phonenumber this year, and working with key partners such as ERM and General Counsel.

B. Approval of Office of Audit and Compliance Charter

Chair Parks called for Approval of the Office of Audit and Compliance Charter. This was last approved at our meeting in November 2024. The charter continues to conform to the Institute of Internal Auditors' Global Internal Audit standards and the relevant directives of the Commonwealth's Office of the State Inspector General. No revisions were recommended at this time. The charter was approved.

C. Auditor of Public Accounts Examination Discussion

Mr. Borgerding from the Auditor of Public Accounts provided a recap of their audit of the financial statements for the year-ended June 30, 2024. Mr. Borgerding noted that there was an unmodified opinion issued, however, there was discussion on a management comment to ensure oversight of sponsored programs and emerging areas. He went on to note that there was concern over not being able to see certain deliverables associated with a vendor. He also noted that Mason procured a separate contract with the vendor that involved internally generated software, and that there was a separate finding around this topic. Ms. Klock-Taabe noted that there is a project underway to implement controls, in the meantime they have implemented surveys to help track internally generated software. Mr. Borgerding went on to note that better communication and coordination with GMU management was needed in this area. There was also discussion around the approval of the not-for-profit Patriot Labs that occurred in 2025. He went on to describe the current FY25 audit in progress and key areas of focus for the APA. The audit is designed to provide an opinion that the university's financial statements are fairly presented in all material respects. Mr. Borgerding noted that the goal was to provide results at the Committee's April 2026 meeting. Questions were addressed from the Committee members.

D. Enterprise Risk Management Update

Ms. Dade went over a brief history of the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) program. She noted that extensive planning activities have occurred over the past year. The Risk Register was developed and that peer benchmarking has occurred with other universities. The risk

AUDIT, RISK, AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

November 19, 2024

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rankings were updated via a process launched in the prior year. Ms. Dade discussed top risks for the university and how they are being monitored. She answered questions from the committee members.

IV. ARCC Charter and Regular Reporting

- No Changes were required to the Audit Risk Compliance Committee Charter
- Mr. Butler noted that audit summary report stands by itself and that he would be glad to answer any questions from the Committee.
- Mr. Lacovara stated there were no significant compliance risks
- Mr. Butler did note that he would be sending the ITS Open Issues to the ARCC Members that are FOIA Exempt.

V. Adjournment

Chair Parks adjourned the meeting at 11:50 am

Derek Butler
Secretary pro tem

**George Mason University Board of Visitors
Development Committee Meeting
February 26, 2026
12:30 PM – 1:12 PM
Merten Hall, Fairfax Campus**

MINUTES DRAFT – FOR COMMITTEE REVIEW

Attendees: Chairman Sumeet Shrivastava, Vice Chair Jennifer Taylor, Visitor Delbert Parks, Visitor Jon Peterson

Absent: Visitor Tom Davis

Guests: President Gregory Washington; Rector Mike Meese, Secretary Armand Alacbay, Visitor Anne Altman, Visitor Paul Misener, Visitor Trevor Montano, Visitor Jim Moran, Visitor George Schindler, Visitor Sean Spence, Visitor Jeffrey Rosen, Vice President Trishana E. Bowden; Michael Dockins, legal counsel; Niki Vlastara, faculty representative (virtual); Nicole Pozinsky, secretary pro-tem; Rachel Spence, staff liaison; Solon Simmons, full board faculty representative; Nilima Hakim Mow, student representative; and guest speakers Jenny Herrera, Dr. Linn Jorgenson, and Nominuzul Otgonbayar.

Call to Order

Chairman Sumeet Shrivastava called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m. He reminded the committee that the meeting is open to the public and that it is being streamed live GMU-TV. He also acknowledged that faculty representative Niki Vlastara was participating virtually.

Approval of Development Committee Meeting Minutes from April 17, 2025 (ACTION ITEM)

Chairman Shrivastava confirmed the committee meeting had reached a quorum. He called for any changes or edits to the April 17, 2025 meeting minutes. There being no corrections, the minutes were **APPROVED AS WRITTEN**.

Before proceeding to the next agenda item, he offered brief remarks welcoming new committee members and reflecting on his experience on the Board of Trustees of the Foundation, emphasizing the critical role board members play as ambassadors and advocates who help strengthen the university's resources and visibility.

Shrivastava called to the podium Jenny Herrera, Interim Chair of the George Mason University Foundation, to deliver an update regarding recent Foundation and Board of Trustees activities.

New Business

GMUF Update – Interim Chair Jenny Herrera

Ms. Herrera introduced herself as acting chair. She joined the board as a trustee in 2018 and stated that she is a proud alumna of the Costello College of Business. She expressed gratitude for the education and community that shaped her career and shared highlights of the Foundation's current winter cycle, which would conclude with the full board meeting in March.

The **Advancement & University Priorities Committee** discussed leveraging trustee connections with prospective foundation partners, supporting the Veterans and the Arts Initiative through the April Hylton gala, and expanding member engagement through hosting dinners, speaking opportunities, and inviting strategic partners to a Trustee-hosted reception.

The **Audit Committee** reviewed the fiscal year 2025 tax filings, including the forms 990 and 990-T. These comprehensive informational and tax filings reflect well on the foundation, its governance, and fiscal stewardship. The committee also discussed the Foundation's continuing enterprise risk management process.

The **Finance and Real Estate Committee** reviewed the mid-year financial results compared to budget. Revenue and expenditures are in line with budget expectations. The committee performed its annual review of the foundation's long-term debt obligations and insurance coverage.

The **Investment Committee** received the annual report on the Montano Student Managed Investment Fund. The fund returned a positive 21.75% for the 2025 calendar year, compared to their benchmark, the S&P 500, of a positive 17.81%. The presentation by the students highlighted sector allocation by weight, past performance analysis, risk and return analysis, and sector contribution to portfolio volatility.

The committee reviewed the mid-year investment portfolio results. Our advisors provided an endowment portfolio and performance update. The endowment returned 10.2% through December 31st and is currently valued at approximately \$283M. In addition to covering results and asset allocation details, our advisors led a discussion on public equity investments.

The restricted portfolio returned 3.84% through December 31st.

The **Nominating and Governance Committee** reviewed nominations for new trustees for fiscal year 2027. The committee advanced nine candidates for approval by the Full

Board, pending interviews and the candidates' acceptance of the nomination. We continue to work to fill board needs in the areas of expertise and a broader representation across George Mason's colleges and schools.

Moving on from committee business, Herrera recognized Trustee Lourdes Venes as an example of exceptional volunteer leadership. She noted that Venes, who has served on the Board of Trustees since 2018, leads with her heart, and brings a unique perspective as a parent of a George Mason alumna. As chair of the Nominating and Governance Committee, Venes has strengthened the trustee recruitment and onboarding process, contributing to the successful addition of eleven new trustees in the past year. She also plays a key role on the Executive Committee, helping to shape the Foundation's strategic direction in alignment with the university's priorities.

Herrera emphasized Venes's gift for connecting the right people with the university at the right time, whether by hosting guests at Mathy House events, inviting others to attend Arts by George, or meeting members of the George Mason community during her travels. Her strategic introductions have strengthened both the board and our advancement efforts.

Recently, Venes joined fellow trustees in meeting with the Center for Community Mental Health and was inspired to support its strategic planning efforts, prompting the Center to present to the full board. Herrera concluded by noting that Venes consistently steps forward—whether to assist a student in crisis, facilitate key connections, or offer her expertise—and remains a powerful example of the impact trustees make beyond committee responsibilities.

Shrivastava expressed appreciation for Herrera's leadership and acknowledged her willingness to step into the interim chair role on an accelerated timeline. No further questions were raised.

Visitor Parks offered brief comments praising the Foundation, describing it as a hardworking, passionate group whose dedication reflects the heart and culture of the university. He noted that his own appreciation for George Mason began through his work with the Foundation and expressed gratitude for having been welcomed into its volunteer community.

Before moving to the next agenda item, Chair Shrivastava acknowledged Visitor Montano, echoing Herrera's earlier remarks about his volunteer service and generous support that helped launch the Student Investment Fund. He thanked Montano for his contributions and for putting the initiative "on the map."

Shrivastava then invited Vice President Trishana Bowden to deliver her report. He noted that he and Bowden began working together shortly after her arrival at George Mason in March 2019 and expressed his appreciation for their longstanding partnership in strengthening and elevating the university's development enterprise. He then turned the floor over to her.

University Advancement and Alumni Relations – Vice President Trishana E. Bowden

Vice President Bowden opened her report by expressing appreciation for the university's dedicated volunteer leaders, noting that their passion for George Mason is one of the reasons she loves her work. She stated that her update represented highlights from the written quarterly report included in the committee materials and encouraged members to review it for full detail. Bowden shared that she recently had the honor to meet with newly appointed committee members during orientation and appreciated their thoughtful engagement. She emphasized the Development Committee's role in overseeing philanthropic efforts, guiding fundraising strategy, donor engagement, and campaign initiatives, and noted that the Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations provides regular quarterly updates to keep the Board informed.

Bowden shared that the Mason Now: Power the Possible campaign has raised \$620.3 million toward its \$1 billion goal, with strong donor engagement under President Washington's leadership. Bowden reported several significant recent gifts and commitments across academic units. Within the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the university received a \$600,000 planned giving commitment valued at \$1 million to support programming, a \$300,000 commitment to support a graduate fellowship in the Institute for Immigration Research, and a \$250,000 initial payment to support programming at the Center for Climate Change Communication.

The Antonin Scalia Law School has seen a number of major gifts, including \$550,000 from two institutional donors for the Law and Economics Center, as well as \$550,000 from three foundations for the C. Boyden Gray Center for the Study of the Administrative State. The College of Visual and Performing Arts reports several major planned gifts including a leadership gift from our very own Dean Rick Davis and his wife Julie Thompson, estimated at \$700,000, which will support arts initiatives and establish the Rick Davis and Julie Thompson Theater Scholarship Endowment. We also received a \$200,000 planned gift from Howard Kurtz and Howard Jaffe to support the Kurtz Theater Scholarship Endowment. Bowden noted that our beloved Sid Dewberry would be excited to know that we received two Steinway grand pianos for the Give Voice initiative, continuing George Mason's tradition as an All-Steinway School.

Bowden reported that the university has recently participated in several national initiatives, including George Mason's presence at the 2026 Consumer Electronics Show (CES) in January. Mason was one of only three universities represented at the global conference. We were joined by Jennifer Taylor, as well as four deans—the deans of the College of Engineering and Computing, the College of Public Health, the College of Science, and the Costello College of Business—along with Dr. Washington. The George Mason booth drew more than 400 visitors. Bowden highlighted that the president of the Consumer Technology Association, an alumna of the Costello College of Business, helped elevate the university's visibility. She added that the

week concluded with a well attended alumni breakfast and that George Mason plans to return to CES in 2027.

Bowden noted that in November, the Virginia Climate Center, housed in the College of Science, released the inaugural Virginia Climate Assessment, evaluating Virginia's changing climate and its impacts. Prior to its release, the college and Dean Cody Edwards hosted industry leaders and state and local legislators—including the commonwealth's Chief Resilience Officer, Greg Steele—at Fuse to discuss the report's findings.

Turning to alumni relations, Bowden reported that Homecoming activities in January were successfully moved indoors due to record cold temperatures. She thanked the facilities, athletics, University Life, and Alumni Relations teams for coordinating the rapid transition and noted that the day concluded with a men's basketball victory, 60–52. She reminded the committee that George Mason Giving Day will take place on April 2 and encouraged participation, emphasizing that the annual event continues to grow and supports programs across the university.

She concluded by introducing Todd Marrs, a new senior leader in Advancement, and expressed enthusiasm for his expertise and early contributions. She then transitioned to introduce the next speaker, Dr. Linn Jorgenson.

Mason LIFE — Dr. Linn Jorgenson

Dr. Linn Jorgenson, director of the Mason LIFE Program, presented an overview of the university's four-year inclusive postsecondary education initiative serving students with intellectual and developmental disabilities. She began by inviting a current Mason LIFE student, Nominuzul Otgonbayar, to speak. Nom described her academic coursework, work schedule, participation in campus events, and the independence she has gained in navigating campus and commuting during breaks. She noted that the program had helped her build confidence, develop through leadership roles, and integrate fully into student life.

Jorgenson explained that the Mason LIFE Program offers a certificate of completion and provides a combination of foundational academics, integrated university coursework, independent living skills instruction, and employment experiences. She highlighted the history of the program, which originated when a student expressed the desire to attend college at a time when no similar option existed, eventually evolving from an initial pilot of three students to a nationally recognized model attracting students from around the country. She emphasized that the program is fully integrated into George Mason University, collaborating with more than 85 faculty members across nearly all colleges and operating a residential program with 30 apartment style beds supported by 24/7 staff.

She described the program's numerous partnerships across campus and the community, including internships on Capitol Hill, employment with local hospitals, and involvement in student organizations such as the Green Machine and Greek life. She noted that these opportunities help

students build practical life skills, workplace experience, and personal independence, often requiring them to master public transportation and daily planning. Jorgenson also discussed national data showing that while only 44 percent of adults with intellectual disabilities are employed, 84 percent of Mason LIFE alumni secure employment—an indicator of the program’s strong outcomes. She emphasized the need to expand scholarship resources to increase access, given the costs associated with providing around the clock individualized support. She concluded with a program video and invited committee members to attend Mason LIFE’s 20th anniversary celebration on April 10.

Shrivastava thanked Jorgenson as well as student speaker, Nom, for their time and presentation.

Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Shrivastava adjourned the meeting at 1:12 p.m.

**BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Athletics Committee Meeting
February 26, 2026
Merten Hall 1201**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Trevor Montano, Vice Chair Jim Moran, Visitor Jon Peterson, Visitor Shawn Purvis, Visitor Greg Schindler, and Visitor Jennifer Taylor.

ABSENT: Visitor Tom Davis.

ALSO PRESENT: Rector Michael Meese, Vice Rector Sumeet Shrivastava, Secretary Armand Alacbay, Visitor Anne Altman, Visitor Bruce Caswell, Visitor Paul Misener, Visitor Delbert Parks, Visitor Jeffrey Rosen, Visitor Sean Spence, Visitor Jennifer Taylor; Faculty Representative Dominique Banville, Faculty Representative Ali Weinstein; Staff Representative Marvin Lewis; Graduate Student Representative Nilima Hakim Mow; Undergraduate Student Representative Jonathan Dubois; President Gregory Washington; Interim University Counsel David Drummey; Interim Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer Dan Stephens; and Jay Highsmith, Secretary pro tem.

I. Call to Order

Chair Montano called the meeting to order at 1:20pm.

II. New Business

Athletics Committee Overview

The Athletics Committee convened its first formal meeting under the leadership of Chair Montano, who welcomed members and framed the committee as the “fun committee,” underscoring the energy and visibility Athletics brings to the university. He introduced the committee members and provided an overview of the committee’s purpose, emphasizing its role in supporting the strategic direction, oversight, and advancement of the Athletics program. Chair Montano concluded by outlining the committee’s charge and expectations moving forward.

Athletics Director Update

Assistant Vice President and Director of Athletics, Marvin Lewis, opened his report by noting that establishing an Athletics Committee aligns George Mason with peer Commonwealth institutions and strengthens governance through enhanced structure and strategic oversight. He began by sharing a short video recapping sports and administrative highlights from the fall and winter seasons, followed by a review of student-athlete academic achievements from the fall semester.

Director Lewis then provided a competitive update on winter sports, noting key achievements and performance trends. He briefed the committee on the status of the Basketball and Academic Performance Center (BAPC), outlining recent progress and next steps in the project timeline. Turning to long-term planning, he discussed priorities for the West Campus footprint, emphasizing that the top capital priority remains the construction of a new baseball stadium. He concluded by summarizing national trends shaping the collegiate athletics landscape and previewing upcoming championship and tournament opportunities for George Mason teams.

Questions

At President Washington's request, Director Lewis provided additional detail on the current condition of Athletics facilities, including the significant challenges associated with the existing baseball field. This prompted a broader committee discussion regarding long-term facility needs across the department. Vice Chair Moran inquired about the potential introduction of football at George Mason and how such a program might influence alumni engagement and philanthropic support. Director Lewis acknowledged the interest but emphasized that the department's priority remains fully funding George Mason's 22 existing varsity programs before considering expansion. President Washington noted that the topic is worth evaluating as part of future strategic planning.

Visitor Peterson suggested that committee members participate in a campus-wide facilities tour to gain a firsthand understanding of the conditions across Athletics and other campus buildings, reinforcing the importance of informed decision-making regarding future capital investments.

III. Adjournment

Chair Montano adjourned the meeting at 2:02pm.