

**BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Full Board Meeting
Tuesday, March 31, 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, Paul Misener, Trevor Montano (virtual), Jim Moran, Delbert Parks, Jon Peterson, Shawn Purvis, George Schindler, Sean Spence, and Jennifer Taylor.

ABSENT: Visitor Jeff Rosen.

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

Rector Meese called the meeting to order at 9:01 a.m.

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

II. Approval of the Minutes

A. Executive Committee Meeting February 26, 2026 (ACTION ITEM)

Rector Meese called for any corrections to the February 26, 2026 Full Board Meeting Minutes provided for review in the meeting materials. Hearing no corrections, the meeting minutes stood **APPROVED AS WRITTEN.**

III. Opening Comments

Rector Meese began by outlining three goals for the day: receive the tuition and fees presentation for FY27 and corresponding public comments as required by Virginia Code, accomplish necessary Board business in closed session, and provide the Board with a Mason facilities tour. He then recognized Jonathan Dubois, Undergraduate Student Representative, who briefly outlined his role as a student representative and welcomed the newest members to the Board.

The Rector's comments concluded with several reminders for upcoming events:

- Wednesday, April 15 – Finance and Land Use and Academic Affairs Committees
- Thursday, April 16 – Grand Opening Celebration of the Activities Building
- Thursday, April 23 – 2026 Scholarship Celebration
- Thursday, April 30 – Full Board Meeting with annual recognitions and associated guests.
- Thursday, May 14 – Spring Commencement with Retired General David Allvin as speaker.

Board members were informed they would receive communication from the Facility Security Officer and were encouraged to follow through with timely completion.

IV. FY 2027 Tuition and Mandatory Fees Presentation

Dan Stephens, Interim Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, was recognized by Rector Meese to provide the FY27 tuition and mandatory fees presentation. Mr. Stephens reported the following:

- George Mason University continues to be a top national research university while providing greater access and higher earnings.
- Budget and Financial Challenges
 - George Mason continues to be underfunded by \$7,000 per in-state student Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) compared to the mean of peer institutions while prioritizing access and affordability in the most expensive region in the commonwealth.
 - Student Aid has increased by almost \$200M since FY16, with university and state aid covering the increase. The average net price for students has decreased by 15% during the same time period, and for students earning less than \$110K, the net price decreased by 20%.
- Operational Efficiency
 - George Mason has the lowest level of employees per student in the commonwealth, putting the burden on staff. Peer universities are funded to support more employees while operating in lower-cost regions.
- Commonwealth Budget & Rising Costs
 - General Assembly budget negotiations are underway with Mason benefitting from a continuation of one-time funding in both House and Senate versions. The compromise budget is anticipated to be completed between late April to early June, followed by the Governor's review.
 - To offset the cost of unfunded mandates, such as the Virginia Military Survivors & Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP) and employee compensation increases, the university would need to raise tuition by approximately 5%.
 - To offset the rising cost of employee benefits (primarily health insurance), and higher utility expenses, the university would need to raise tuition by approximately 4%.

The following tuition recommendation for FY27 was provided to support direct instruction, academic and advising assistance, financial aid, institutional operations and maintenance, and student services advocacy:

- FY27 Tuition Increase
 - In-State:
 - Undergraduate & Graduate: 3.5% increase
 - Law: no change
 - Out-of-State:
 - Undergraduate: 1% increase
 - Graduate: 1.4% increase
 - Law: no change
 - George Mason was the only university in the commonwealth that did not raise tuition the last fiscal year and is \$4,000 below the mean of the university's R1 doctoral peer institutions. These institutions also plan to propose tuition increases for FY27.

Rose Pascarell, Vice President for University Life, continued the presentation by providing the following Mandatory Student Fees recommendation to support student activities and services, health and well-being, athletics and recreational programs, transportation, and maintenance and operation of auxiliary services and facilities:

- FY27 Mandatory Student Fee Increase:
 - 3.5% increase in all student categories to maintain student service levels and fund state-mandated compensation increases.

- After combining tuition and fees, Mason has the lowest net price compared to our peer R1 institutions in the commonwealth and provides the highest value.

Discussion ensued:

- Visitor Parks inquired if Mason is asking for more state funding than last year. Mr. Stephens replied that Mason is asking the state for more resources to cover increased costs, but the fundamental issue is the state adopting a funding formula that addresses the number of students the university serves. Dr. Washington added that the state should support in-state students equally, regardless of where they attend in the commonwealth. Mason has received significant increased state support over the last five years, reducing the funding gap, but more work needs to be done.
- Visitor Moran asked how the GI Bill and VMSDEP work together. Dr. Washington responded that VMSDEP is an additional benefit that Virginia created and that Mason supports given the large number of veterans in the capital region. He added that the state, which made the commitment, should cover the cost. Rector Meese remarked that as the parent of three military dependents, the post 9/11 GI bill provides for a total of 36 months of college, which would have been divided between his children. It is valuable to take care of military family members with VMSDEP.
- Visitor Davis inquired about the budgetary impact from the restriction of visas for out-of-country students. Mr. Stephens responded that an international student generates two to three times the resources than an in-state student, requiring Mason to enroll more students to offset the reduction. Visitor Moran questioned if it was possible to charge international students more than out-of-state students as they likely have the resources. Mr. Stephens responded that the university does not want to price themselves out of competition.
- Visitor Caswell requested an explanation for holding out-of-state graduate students to a 1.4% tuition increase. Mr. Stephens responded that the goal of the university is to be affordable for all students. Rector Meese requested a chart of the tuition and fee decisions from the past five years to be included in the Finance and Land Use Committee presentation on April 15.
- Secretary Alacbay asked how the university balances enrollment targets with its corresponding infrastructure. David Burge, the Vice President of Enrollment Management, replied that the university operates on a complex system of targets that interact with the state and Mason's multiyear budget forecasting along with strategic use of financial aid to achieve revenue goals.
- Mr. Simmons inquired about the difference between the numbers for Mason's enrollment versus FTE. Mr. Stephens responded that the lower FTE number is due to the high level of part-time Mason students. Dr. Washington added that a large percentage of part-time students are working young people that are able to benefit from Mason's flexible programs; a student that needs support and assistance, which makes FTE a misleading number.
- Visitor Spence asked how the deficit is covered and how operating on reduced resources impacts education quality. Mr. Stephens replied there are reserves normally used to sustain noninstructional facilities that may have to be used to cover operational deficit. Dr. Washington added that the commonwealth allows the university to use any surplus from auxiliary enterprises to offset losses on the E&G budget. The university uses these resources before reserves, which are primarily used for large capital investments. In response to the budget's impact on academic fitness, Interim Provost Ajay Vinzé replied that the university's slim margins impact response to pressure from other institutions that try to poach our faculty.
- Visitor Purvis inquired what the end goal for the budget is in five years. Dr. Washington replied that the goal is to get slightly on the deficit side of a balanced budget in order to keep tuition and fees low. Visitor Purvis followed by asking what the university plans to do with the results from the adoption of a Profit & Loss (P&L) model. Dr. Washington replied that the university aspires to build enough fidelity into the budget to be able to make program decisions. The stress on revenues will increase with the federal government constraints, requiring Mason to be more efficient.
- Visitor Peterson asked Dr. Washington specifically about the levels of pay for faculty and staff. Dr. Washington responded that the most underpaid groups at Mason are classified staff, trades, and facilities

support. The university continues to cover the shortfall and the Board can best assist by soliciting for additional resources from the Commonwealth of Virginia so the university does not need to raise tuition and fees.

V. Public Comments

Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 23.1-307, there were 2 registrations for oral public comment and 8 written comment submissions (**ATTACHMENT 1**). No oral comments were provided on tuition.

Rector Meese thanked the registrants for their comments and informed the Board that oral and written comments will be included in the public record.

VI. 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 regarding the aforementioned items (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.8)
- C.** Personnel Matter (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.1)

Rector Meese recognized Vice Rector Shrivastava, who **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.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 Visitor Moran. **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 approve the awarding of honorary degrees at a future date to the individuals discussed in closed session for that purpose. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Davis.

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

Yes: 15

Absent: Visitor Rosen

Rector Meese then **MOVED** that the Board approve awarding of the Mason Medal at a future date to the individuals discussed in closed session for that purpose. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Davis.

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

Yes: 15

Absent: Visitor Rosen

Rector Meese recognized Visitor Davis, who **MOVED** that the Board approve the Resolution Authorizing a Second Amendment to President Gregory Washington's Employment Agreement (**ATTACHMENT 2**). The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Altman.

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

Yes: 15

Absent: Visitor Rosen

Rector Meese congratulated Dr. Washington on his contract extension which garnered applause.

VII. Lunch Recess

Rector Meese recognized Julie Zobel, Senior Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, who provided a brief overview of the campus facilities tour.

Rector Meese informed the Board that the tour is part of the public meeting and that members of the public are invited to attend. The rector recessed for lunch at 11:55 a.m.

VIII. Reconvene

Rector Meese called the meeting back to order at 12:45 p.m. at the Southside Courtyard.

IX. Campus Facilities Tour

- Pascal Petter, Associate Vice President of Auxiliary and Business Services, provided a briefing of Southside Dining Hall and described the need for renovating the kitchen and dining spaces with work occurring over the summer and completed for the start of fall classes.
- Following lunch, Alex Iszard, Associate Vice President of Planning, Design, and Construction, led the group to two chemistry labs in Planetary Hall, built in 1987, and described the need for an Interdisciplinary Science and Engineering Building to address a critical specialized instructional laboratory deficiency identified as part of Mason's recent 20-year Master Planning study.
- Ajay Vinzé, Cheryl Druehl, Interim Dean, and JK Aier, Senior Associate Dean, provided a tour of the Costello College of Business in Enterprise Hall highlighting that the college has significantly outgrown their current Fairfax campus spaces and proposing a new building in the center of campus.
- The group proceeded by bus to Liberty Square Residence Hall, where Rose Pascarell, Vice President of University Life, provided an overview of student housing facilities across all campuses. With the two-year live-on campus requirement beginning in the fall, more housing will be needed. Shannon Jordan, Associate Dean and Chief Housing Officer, provided a tour of Liberty Square, an apartment style, upper class dorm that students are increasingly requesting with competition from off-campus offerings, such as The Main. Of Mason's 6,100 beds, 5-8% are single occupancy.
- The bus tour continued with Rose Pascarell providing an overview of Mason's recreation centers and the collaboration between Mason Recreation and Intercollegiate Athletics. Alex Iszard noted the Student Activities Building, a temporary building that will house Green Machine and other student activities with an exterior life of ten years. Marvin Lewis, Assistant Vice President and Director of

Intercollegiate Athletics, described the BOV approved Basketball and Academic Performance Center addition to the Recreation and Athletic Complex (RAC), which will offer dedicated basketball locker rooms, sports medicine spaces, weight room, and the academic resource center to support tutoring, classrooms, nutrition, and offices.

- Board members took the opportunity to view the interior of the Field House, built in 1982. Mr. Lewis described how the building is heavily used by Athletics, ROTC, Recreation, and rentals. The facility is in need of significant repair, as Mason's needs have grown beyond the current building. A new facility is required to support all stakeholders and compete at the A10 Conference level.
- The final stop on the bus tour was Mason's baseball field which lacks lights, bathrooms, concessions, and is oriented in the wrong direction. Creating new baseball facilities at another West Campus location would elevate the game-day experience, while creating a shared facility for Mason Recreation and the community using a public-private partnership.

X. Campus Tour Debrief

The Board returned to Merten Hall where Rector Meese thanked Julie Zobel, Marvin Lewis, and their colleagues for the tour. He then opened the floor for discussion.

XI. Adjourn

Hearing no discussion, Rector Meese adjourned the meeting at 3:17 p.m.

Bridget Higgins
Secretary pro tem

Attachment 1: Public Comments (9 pages)

Attachment 2: Resolution: Second Amendment to President Washington's Employment Agreement (1 page)

Public Comments
 Received for March 31 Executive Committee Meeting
As of 3/31/26 5:00 p.m.

Registration Type:	Full Name:	Phonetic Pronunciation of Name:	Mason Affiliation:	Written Comment:
Provide written comment only.			Faculty	Considering ongoing concerns related to human rights, environmental responsibility, and lack of intellectual property protection in China, what framework does the University use to assess the appropriateness of academic collaborations with Chinese institutions and the recruitment of Chinese students? How are institutional values, reputational risk, and compliance considerations weighed in determining whether such collaborations should proceed? Is it all about money?
Register to make oral comments.	Elisa Wolf	Ee-liss-ah	Student	Written comment will be emailed prior to adjournment on March 31, 2026 as clarified above. Thank you.
Register to make oral comments.	Bethany Letiecq	La-Teek	Faculty	Comments sent via email.
Andrew Boese	Student	Hello, I am Andrew Boese, the current Clerk of, as well as the former IT Liaison for, Student Government. I am also an Applied Computer Science Major. I find how difficult it is to find resources that George Mason University spends our precious fee and tuition money on irritating. Examples of such as the LGBT Resource Center, Subject Librarians, Student Involvement, Student Support and Advocacy Center, and more. I would like the BOV to work on having a centralized place on the website and/or on Patriot Web to find these resources.		
Benjamin Katz	Student	Greetings esteemed members of the Board, My name is Benjamin Katz and I am a junior studying Government and International Politics here. As an elected representative for the undergraduate student government, I'm disappointed by the Board for continuously refusing to consider the idea of shared governance with more of the people that we are supposed to represent. One of my biggest priorities being a representative is ensuring that my efforts in student government reach as many people as possible. There has been a consistent issue of disconnect between the undergraduate student government and the rest of the undergraduate student body. However, I believe better outreach with our current connections has begun helping to foster an environment built on stronger connections to the rest of the student population. These problems I feel are similar to the ones that both students and faculty share with the Board of Visitors, and as such I would implore you all to reconsider adding a voting student representative to your board. This would help better bridge the connections that you have with the university and		

		would provide a fresh perspective on these issues that I believe impact students the most.
Matthew Kelley	Faculty	<p>I write to call on the Board of Visitors to support and lobby for collective bargaining rights for all higher ed workers in the 2027 legislative cycle and to take such steps as necessary to do so starting now. The university will not succeed if students have poor learning conditions, and our working conditions are student learning conditions. Collective bargaining is necessary to ensure good working conditions for faculty, staff, and, especially grad student workers.</p> <p>I call on you to demonstrate your commitment to the success of the university. Support collective bargaining for all higher ed workers today today!</p>
Elisa Wolf	Student	My written comments are emailed to bov@gmu.edu since they exceed 4,000 characters.
Griffin Crouch	Student	<p>My name is Griffin Crouch, and I'm a Junior studying Government & International Politics. The number one reason I came to George Mason was because it had an affordable price for a good education, and we need to keep that Mason promise.</p> <p>Mason stands out in the higher education landscape as a high-performing, R1 research institution that keeps student costs low. But every time tuition and student fees increase, that promise becomes a little more false - more students have to find a way to get another scholarship, work a 2nd, 3rd, or 4th job, or extend their degree schedule (increasing overall costs) because they can't make ends meet and manage workloads for each semester. Even if it would mean a higher upfront cost for the next class of students, this Board should look to keep the Mason promise of affordability through cohort pricing with fixed-rates for tuition and fees for four years. Over the summer, they should study options with the University admin. for what the costs will be of outright cohort pricing, an opt-in price, a gradual rollout, fixed/caps on rises, or other options that will help the Board make an educated decision on it in the Fall. That way, the next generations of Mason grads starting next fall can know the price upfront, and not have to worry about having to cover a surprise increase in costs that leaves some students falling through the cracks. Financial security is built on financial stability, and during a time where the price of everything is going up and housing and energy are in greater demand, to keep the Mason promise of affordability we need to make sure that GMU's tuition and fees won't be a surprise increase, and that our promise of affordability lasts all four years.</p>

Subject: Public Comments for GMU Board of Visitors meeting 3/31/2026
Date: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 at 2:08:24 PM Eastern Daylight Time
From: Elisa Wolf
To: Board of Visitors, Office of the President
CC: ELISA W
Attachments: GMU (Complaint Status Update-Wolf-Bluestein) 4.3.24.pdf

Hello,

My name is Elisa Wolf.

I am a doctoral candidate in Education Research Methods at George Mason University's College of Education and Human Development. In April 2022, I filed a Clery Act complaint with the US Department of Education (ED) against George Mason University on behalf of myself and two other GMU student victims of sexual violence after being raped by a graduate student peer and having my educational and civil rights denigrated by GMU employees.

Our federal Clery Act complaint includes 54 pages of supporting documentation that suggests political conflicts of interest, denial of victims' First Amendment rights and chilling of campus speech, failure to comply with federal Clery Act and Title IX-related laws, inhumane and inappropriate reporting mechanisms that required rape victims to complete 'property crime' forms to communicate our sexual assaults to campus police, lack of due process and unequal treatment of respondents and complainants, and blatant witness coaching.

At the time my Title IX complaint was under review by GMU's Title IX Office, the same Title IX administrators were misrepresenting GMU's Title IX and Sexual Misconduct Policies in legal depositions on behalf of the Commonwealth of Virginia, were failing to provide an educational environment free from potential retaliation, were failing to enforce safety mechanisms such as no-contact orders, and were failing to notify the university community of substantive changes such as temporarily requiring Non-Disclosure Agreements as part of the GMU Title IX process. Only after I advocated with the Virginia chapter of the ACLU and the ACLU threatened to FOIA GMU, did GMU silently remove the *illegal* NDA requirement from its Policy 1202 Misconduct process. Federal law mandates the university community be informed of such changes.

Our documentation suggests more than a decade's worth of potential noncompliance and

lack of prioritization of campus safety related to sexual violence. GMU employee's attempts at gaslighting victims into thinking we are confused about our rights or the federal responsibilities of the institution are in direct contradiction to the values they publicly espouse and create undue harm among survivors. Every single one of the above arguments in our federal complaint is supported by documentation, including ample instances where the university prioritizes its reputation over the actual lives and bodies of its student body.

On April 3, 2024, I was provided a status update by the Clery Group at the U.S. Department of Education that confirmed GMU had been notified that they are under complaint federal review and that I am the primary complainant (i.e., the Clery Group provided a formal letter indicating there is an ongoing investigation). This complaint is still under active investigation. George Mason University's President, General Counsel, Board of Visitors, and Title IX Office were contacted by ED as a part of the April 3, 2024 status update.

Additionally, the [U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Education and Workforce](#) contacted GMU via a [letter](#) in June 2024 to alert them that they were under investigation due to [public](#) allegations against a law professor no longer employed by GMU. Multiple individuals related to this complaint are involved in [ongoing legal disputes](#). As someone still serving on the Education and Workforce committee, I welcome [Representative Foxx to](#) contact me regarding GMU's continued egregious violations of Title IX and the Clery Act.

Importantly, there is a lack of state reporting mechanisms available for Virginia's student victims of campus sexual assault. The [Virginia Office of the State Inspector General](#) conducted a [Virginia Higher Education Institutions Clery Act performance audit report](#) in 2023. However, OSIG's 2023 Clery review also suggests they are neither fully investigating the processes and procedures in place at Virginia IHEs, are not trained in understanding the mechanisms of federal law, survivor trauma nor institutional supports, nor are they conducting their research and accompanying investigations to gain a clear or accurate understanding of how Virginia IHE's are following or failing to follow federal laws aimed at maintaining safety on Virginia's college campuses or for Virginia students at-large. Due to the structure of other state agencies, Virginia students have nowhere to turn within the state when our educational institutions break the law.

Additional reporting on issues related to sexual assault, misconduct, campus safety, and related culture at GMU:

- [The Atlantic](#),
- The Washington Post (student response after the hiring of [Justice Kavanaugh](#))

[immediately after his appointment](#); lawsuit [about conversations of a sexual nature](#)),

- [NBC Washington](#),
- [GMU's Fourth Estate](#) (and [here](#)),
- The Wall Street journal ([hee](#), [here](#), [here](#))
- Additional GMU Title IX cases under investigation at The [U.S. Department of Education](#) are available through the DOE's website.

Two immediate resource providers I would like to publicly thank and highlight for actionably supporting Virginia student victims of sexual violence are:

- [Restore Dignity](#) *This organization is incredible and leads the way in providing immediate assistance with a low-barrier-to-entry model while also providing financially accountable methods. For student victims looking to remain enrolled in your university, I highly suggest getting in contact with Restore Dignity.
- [Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance](#) *This organization can provide limited funding support for legal services and/or provide referrals for survivors looking for legal support.

Our universities cannot claim that they are “All together different” or that they are policymaking with the larger community in mind when they fail to maintain basic federal compliance that leaves 50% of the undergraduate community and nearly 60% of the graduate student body at increased risk of sexual assault. We deserve better.

I want to personally thank [Restore Dignity](#), the [Virginia Sexual and Domestic Violence Action Alliance](#), and a contingency of my peers, mentors, professors, and providers at George Mason University and beyond who have encouraged me and given me hope.

Concerned students, parents, legislators, and community members may reach me at elisa.j.wolf@gmail.com.

Concerned GMU Board of Visitor Members and administrators may contact me at ewolf4@gmu.edu.

I hope to meet with the BOV and GMU administration during the upcoming Full Board during its regularly scheduled Full Board Meeting on April 30, 2026.

ATTACHED: U.S. Department of Education Clery Group Status Update [April 3, 2024]

LINKED: Clery Act Complaint Against George Mason University [April 4, 2022]
<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1rvhqrueAyYe-UmMCAhTdptVJnEROoL7O/edit?usp=drivesdk&oid=112664953216589436180&rtpof=true&sd=true>

Regards,
Elisa Wolf



April 3, 2024

Via Electronic Mail

Thomas Bluestein, J.D.
Assistant Vice President for Equity and Access Services
Title IX and ADA Coordinator
George Mason University
4400 University Drive
Fairfax, VA 22030

Dear Mr. Bluestein:

As you know, Ms. Elisa J. Wolf filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education (the Department). The complaint alleged that George Mason University (GMU; the University) violated several provisions of the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act (*Clery Act*). These allegations arose primarily under the sexual violence prevention and response provisions of the *Clery Act* that were added by Section 304 of the Violence Against Women Reauthorization Act of 2013 and are related to the University's handling of certain alleged incidents of sexual violence that Ms. Wolf experienced during her enrollment. When the Department's Clery Group receives a complaint of this type, we carefully consider the allegations, gather factual and documentary evidence, and conduct an assessment prior to determining an appropriate course of action. Recently, Ms. Wolf contacted our office to request an update on her case. In line with our standard practice, we are issuing this letter to similarly advise the institution that our assessment is active and ongoing. The case raises several complex issues that require careful analysis. Ms. Wolf has continued to cooperate with our staff during the conduct of the assessment. At this point in the process, we anticipate that it may be necessary to request additional documents and information from GMU. If this need arises, our staff will contact you and Mr. Fowler. Your anticipated cooperation is appreciated and will serve the interests of all concerned to ensure that the assessment is completed as soon as possible.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "James L. Moore, III". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and "M".

James L. Moore, III
Senior Advisor
Clery Act Compliance and Campus Safety Operations
U.S. Department of Education

*Thomas Bluestein, J.D., Assistant Vice President
George Mason University
Complaint Assessment Status Update
Page #2*

cc: Gregory Washington, Ph.D., President, GMU
president@gmu.edu

Anne Gambrell Gentry, J.D., University Counsel, GMU
ouc@gmu.edu

Eric Fowler, Clery Compliance Officer, GMU
efowler@gmu.edu

Good morning. My name is Bethany Letiecq. I am a Professor and President of the GMU chapter of the American Association of University Professors. The AAUP is the premier professional organization advancing academic freedom and shared governance, and promoting the economic security of higher ed workers. And we champion the common good.

Today I want to talk about collective bargaining. As you likely know, the General Assembly, after being lobbied by universities, excluded faculty, graduate students, and most staff from the bill.

The reason: Lobbyists claimed our inclusion would raise tuition and harm students. That's rich, given tuition is likely rising without CB and given faculty and staff have dedicated their careers to our students and are deeply concerned about student debt. And many faculty, especially adjuncts and graduate instructors, are barely getting by, many earning less than \$30k/year. We are carrying the burdens of our institution's inability to garner adequate state funding year over year.

And I want to push back on the lobbyists' claims. Research examining the relationship between faculty collective bargaining and tuition rates is inconclusive, although some evidence suggests unionized states may experience slower tuition growth. **One reason: union advocacy often focuses on increasing public funding to keep tuition affordable.**

But there's another reason to support unionization – there is a relationship between collective bargaining and academic freedom.

Academic freedom is core to a strong university. Without it, faculty cannot teach difficult truths, pursue research that challenges power, oppose political interference, or speak openly about institutional failures without fear of retaliation. When academic freedom is undermined, students suffer too. Public trust declines. And the democratic mission of higher education is weakened.

Mason is not immune. Most Mason faculty are now off the tenure track and facing precarity. And their freedom to speak, dissent, and take intellectual risks is constrained by their job insecurity. The AAUP warns that this is exactly how academic freedom is hollowed out: not always through overt censorship, but through the constant threat of nonrenewal.

That is why collective bargaining matters. It's a safeguard. It gives faculty enforceable rights. Due process. Job protections. Shared-governance protections with actual force behind them. **And research shows clearly that faculty are best able to exercise academic freedom when those protections are explicit, durable, and enforceable.**

We just need to get to the bargaining table.

So Today, GMU-AAUP calls on you to publicly support collective bargaining for all and to direct the administration to do the same. Together, we can fight to beat back tuition costs, while strengthening faculty voice and our university. Thank you.

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS OF GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
AUTHORIZING SECOND AMENDMENT TO EMPLOYMENT AGREEMENT WITH
PRESIDENT GREGORY WASHINGTON**

WHEREAS, President Gregory Washington entered into an employment agreement with George Mason University dated March 3, 2020 with a First Amendment dated June 10, 2022 ("Employment Agreement"), and has served as President of George Mason University ("University") since July 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, Section D.1 of the Employment Agreement requires approval by the Board of Visitors of any salary adjustments; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Visitors desires to modify President Washington's Employment Agreement as set forth below;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

1. The Board of Visitors hereby delegates to the University's Rector the authority to negotiate and execute an amendment to the Employment Agreement consistent with the following terms:
 - The Term of the Employment Agreement shall be extended to June 30, 2031;
 - Discussion of the Renewal of the Employment Agreement will commence in January 2030.
 - President Washington's annualized base salary shall be increased to \$870,000 to be paid from both state funds and Other Funds as specified and defined in Section D.1 of the Employment Agreement;
 - President Washington shall be considered annually for a bonus of up to \$125,000;
 - President Washington shall receive an annual accrual of \$50,000 to fund a stay bonus to be paid at the end of the Term;
 - In Section 10 of the Employment Agreement, the University has agreed to establish or cause to be established one or more deferred compensation plans in which the President may participate. The contribution under the deferred compensation plan established in Section 10 shall be \$200,000 each fiscal year during the Term of the Employment Agreement.
 - The benefits, travel, automobile, club and professional memberships, moving, legal services, and housing sections shall be updated to take into account inflation and current benefit practices.
 - The termination provisions of the Employment Agreement shall be updated.

2. The Board of Visitors hereby delegates to the University's Rector the authority to further negotiate additional terms and execute an amendment to the Employment Agreement.

Approved by the Board of Visitors on March 31, 2026.



Armand Alacbay
Secretary of the Board of Visitors