

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**BOARD OF VISITORS**  
**Academic Programs, Diversity, & University Community Committee**

**MINUTES**

Tuesday, November 19, 2024

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:** Chair: Lindsey Burke; Vice Chair: Nancy Prowitt; Visitors: Ken Marcus, Mike Meese, Nina Rees, Jeff Rosen, Marc Short; Staff Representatives: Provost Jim Antony, Sharnnia Artis, Rose Pascarell; Faculty Senate President: Solon Simmons; Staff Senate Chair: Jacquelyn Sims; Faculty Representatives: Cameron Harris, Melissa Broeckelman-Post; Student Representatives: Maria Cuesta, Carolyn Faith Hoffman

**ALSO PRESENT:** Rector Stimson, President Washington

**I. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lindsey Burke at 10:01 a.m.**

Chairperson Burke informed the Committee that Visitor Rosen requested to participate remotely. Citing the board's Electronic Meeting Participation Policy, Chairperson Burke **MOVED** to approve Visitor Rosen's electronic participation in the meeting. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Marcus. The **MOTION CARRIED**.

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

Chairperson Burke called for any corrections to the minutes from the September 17, 2024 APDUC Committee Meeting. Hearing no corrections, the meeting minutes stood **APPROVED** as written.

**III. New Business**

**A. Provost's Update**

***James Antony – Provost and Executive Vice President***

Provost Antony provided an overview of the enrollment numbers for Fall 2024, as well as the modality of those sections, both for undergraduate and graduate students. He highlighted the upcoming Winter Graduation on December 19, when approximately 3,300 students will receive their degree, and provided an update on the search for the dean of the College of Science. That search is currently in the recruitment phase, with interviews anticipated in the spring. He noted the work that is being led by Amarda Shehu, chief AI officer, including the formation of an AI Visioning Task Force that will be performing a comprehensive landscape analysis to help to foster a collaborative approach to AI. Provost Antony noted that he has completed his visit with each of the Colleges and Schools and that these meetings with faculty and staff have helped to shape several key focus areas:

- Communication: Fostering transparency and collaboration
- Research: Strengthening infrastructure
- The Budget Model Redesign: Creating transparent allocation strategies for the budget model through working groups focused on indirect recovery costs and the cost of space

He also provided the framework by which he is approving faculty and staff hires through the critical vacancy review process. He concluded his report with highlights of accomplishments by some of our students, faculty, and staff members.

**B. The Use of Standardized Tests in Undergraduate Education**

***David Burge – Vice President for Enrollment Management***

David Burge, vice president for enrollment management, discussed the impact of George Mason's test-optional admissions policy for new freshmen. Since the policy's adoption in 2007, high school graduate application submissions have increased each year, the high school GPA median has increased, and retention has consistently been better than it was before making the change. There has been an almost 19% decline in the number of Virginia high school graduates who take the exam since 2019 and fourteen other institutions in Virginia are test-optional as well, with most indicating that this will be an ongoing policy. For most freshmen applying to Mason, students are required to submit an official high school transcript, while standardized test scores, essays, and letters of recommendation are optional. There are some exceptions, including the Honors College and the College of Engineering and Computing, which have additional requirements.

**C. Institutional Neutrality Discussion Updates**

At the September 26, 2024 Full Board meeting, the topic of the Kalven Report and Institutional Neutrality was delegated to the Academic Programs, Diversity & University Community (APDUC) Committee to gather perspectives from the campus community. Chairperson Burke and Provost Antony are leading discussions with key groups, including deans, Faculty Senate Executive Committee, Executive Council (senior administrators), and student leaders. The ongoing discussions are focused on three main questions: Should George Mason adopt a stance of institutional neutrality? What are the potential benefits and challenges of this approach? Could there be a unique "Mason Way" that addresses the issue? Discussions with stakeholder groups are still ongoing.

**D. Program Actions and Faculty Actions**

Provost Antony provided an overview of both the Program Actions and Faculty Actions. Chairperson Burke called for a **MOTION** to approve the Program Actions and Faculty Actions en bloc; Visitor Marcus **MOVED**; Visitor Meese **SECONDED** the following program actions:

1. New Degree Programs
  - a. MED in Elementary Education
  - b. MED in Secondary Education
2. Conferral of Emeritus/Emerita Status

**MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

Yes – 7

**E. Announcements**

Announcements were acknowledged for the Committee's benefit. No further discussion was held.

**IV. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 a.m.

Approved 2/13/2025

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Parnell  
Secretary Pro Tem