

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
Academic Affairs Committee**

MINUTES

Wednesday, September 16, 2026

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair: George Schindler; Vice Chair: Sean Spence; Visitors: Armand Alacbay, Paul Misener, James Moran, Jeffery Rosen; Staff Representatives: Provost Marion Underwood, Sharnnia Artis, Pam Patterson; Faculty Senate President: Solon Simmons; Staff Senate Chair: Rachel Spence; Faculty Representative: Esther Park; Student Representatives: Griffin Couch, Nilima Mow

ALSO PRESENT: Rector Shrivastava, Vice Rector Altman, President Washington

ABSENT: Visitor James Dyke, Faculty Representative Tim Gibson

I. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson George Schindler at 10:00 a.m.

Chairperson Schindler informed the Committee that Visitor Rosen requested to participate remotely due to travel. Citing the Board's Electronic Meeting Participation Policy, Chairperson Schindler **MOVED**; Visitor Moran **SECONDED**. Visitor Rosen's remote participation was **APPROVED**.

II. Approval of Minutes (Action Item)

Chairperson Schindler called for any corrections to the minutes from the April 15, 2026 Academic Affairs Committee meeting. Hearing no corrections, the meeting minutes stood **APPROVED** as written.

III. New Business

A. Provost's Update

Marion Underwood – Provost and Executive Vice President

Provost Underwood provided her first report to the Committee, highlighting the University's conferral of more than 10,000 degrees during the 2025–26 academic year, continued recognition as a Military Friendly School, and several leadership transitions within the Office of the Provost. She reviewed priorities focused on student success, academic pathways, career readiness, and preparing students for a rapidly changing higher education environment, including the impact of artificial intelligence.

B. Enrollment Update

David Burge – Senior Vice President for Enrollment Management and Student Achievement

David Burge, vice president for enrollment management and student achievement, reported beginning-of-term enrollment of 40,252 students, as of September 6, 2026.

Undergraduate enrollment increased modestly while graduate enrollment declined, primarily due to reduced international enrollment. He highlighted continued success in transfer recruitment and growth through direct admission initiatives. Committee discussion focused on opportunities to expand direct admission across the commonwealth and strengthen student recruitment and retention efforts.

C. Higher Education Academics

Amarda Shehu – Vice President and Chief Artificial Intelligence Officer

Dr. Amarda Shehu presented a proposed AI Fluency Designation that would integrate artificial intelligence competencies into undergraduate academic programs across disciplines. The proposed designation would prepare students to effectively understand, apply, and evaluate AI within their fields of study. Committee members discussed the evolving role of AI in higher education, faculty engagement, and the importance of developing workforce-ready graduates who can apply emerging technologies thoughtfully and effectively.

D. Faculty Actions

Provost Underwood provided an overview of the Faculty Actions.

Chairperson Schindler called for a **MOTION** to approve the Faculty Actions en bloc; Visitor Moran **MOVED**; Visitor Moran **SECONDED** the following faculty actions:

1. Election of New Tenured Faculty
2. Conferral of Emeritus/Emerita Status

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

Yes – 6

E. Announcements

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

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Parnell
Secretary Pro Tem