

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS  
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Meeting of  
Thursday, February 22, 2024  
Merten Hall, Hazel Conference Room (1201)**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Rector Horace Blackman, Vice Rector Jon Peterson, Secretary Michael Meese, and Visitor Reginald Brown.

**ABSENT:** Visitor Marquez.

**ALSO, PRESENT:** Visitors Lindsey Burke, James Hazel, Robert Pence Jeffrey Rosen, Charles Stimson and Robert Witeck; Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Faculty Representative; Will Gautney, Staff Liaison; Paul Wyche, Undergraduate Student Representative; Vikas Velagapudi, Graduate Student Representative; Gregory Washington, President; Ken Walsh, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President; Deb Dickenson, Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance; Anne Gentry, University Counsel; and Sarah Hanbury, Secretary pro tem.

**I. Call to Order**

Rector Blackman called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. He mentioned the adjusted approach to the meeting format, which aims to provide informative, on-time, read-ahead materials to facilitate focused discussions and questions/clarifications during meetings. Rector Blackman expressed appreciation to the Mason staff and committee chairs for accommodating the change and expressed willingness to make further adjustments as necessary.

**II. Approval of Minutes**

A. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for November 30, 2023 (**ACTION ITEM**)

Rector Blackman called for any corrections to the minutes for the Executive Committee Meetings for November 30, 2023. Hearing none, the **MINUTES STOOD APPROVED AS WRITTEN.**

**III. Rector's Comments**

Rector Blackman provided the following comments:

- Recognized former visitor, Dorothy (Deecy) Gray and extended appreciation for her years of service to the Board of Visitors and Board of Trustees.
- Relayed that there is a proposed amendment to the Document and Records Request Policy, which he and Visitor Witeck worked on. This amendment will be reviewed as an action item during the full board meeting. The purpose of the amendment is to operate transparently, minimize duplicate requests, and function with a coordinated approach. Discussion ensued, please refer to the video for specifics: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8557205/video/916036991>.
- Reminded the committee that one ticket for the Wizards vs. Celtics game on March 17 remained available for the Visitors. He thanked Vice Rector Peterson for providing this social opportunity between the Board of Visitors and the Board of Trustees.
- Notified the committee that a representative from the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) is slated to provide an opportunity to meet the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia's (SCHEV)

continuing education requirement on April 2, 2024, following the Public Comment session. Further details will be provided once they are finalized.

This concluded the Rector's Comments.

#### **IV. President's Comments**

Dr. Washington congratulated the men's basketball team for defeating the 16th-ranked Dayton Flyers the night before. He also mentioned that the women's basketball team won the evening before and has an impressive record of 21-5. Dr. Washington stated that he would reserve the rest of his formal comments for the full board meeting.

#### **V. Closed Session**

- A. Personnel Matter (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.1)
- B. Consultation with Legal Counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.7)
- C. Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.8)

Rector Blackman relayed that the committee did not need to go into closed session and would do so during the full board meeting.

#### **VI. Adjournment**

Rector Blackman adjourned the meeting at 9:13 a.m.

Prepared by:

Sarah Hanbury  
Secretary pro tem

**BOARD OF VISITORS  
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Meeting of  
Thursday, February 22, 2024  
Merten Hall, Hazel Conference Room (1201)**

**MINUTES**

**PRESENT:** Rector Horace Blackman, Vice Rector Jon Peterson, Secretary Michael Meese, Visitors Armand Alacbay, Reginald Brown, Lindsey Burke, Anjan Chimaladinne, James Hazel, Wendy Marquez, Nancy Prowitt, Jeffrey Rosen, Charles Stimson and Robert Witeck.

**ABSENT:** Visitors Dolly Oberoi and Robert Pence.

**ALSO, PRESENT:** Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Faculty Representative; Will Gautney, Staff Liaison; Paul Wyche, Undergraduate Student Representative, Vikas Velagapudi, Graduate Student Representative; Gregory Washington, President; Ken Walsh, Interim Provost and Executive Vice President; Deb Dickenson, Executive Vice President for Administration and Finance; Anne Gentry, University Counsel and Sarah Hanbury, Secretary pro tem.

**I. Call to Order**

Rector Blackman called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m.

Rector Blackman relayed that Visitor Oberoi requested to participate remotely due to her need to be in India for a personal matter. Rector Blackman approved the remote participation request in accordance with the Electronic Meeting Policy.

Rector Blackman noted that when members of the board participate remotely voting is accomplished by roll call.

Rector Blackman mentioned that there was an adjusted approach to the meeting format, aiming to provide informative, on-time, read-ahead materials to facilitate focused discussions and questions/clarifications during meetings. Rector Blackman expressed gratitude to the Mason staff and committee chairs for accommodating the change and expressed willingness to make further adjustments as necessary.

Rector Blackman stated that due to the truncated agenda timing, the board is only accepting written public comments through the form on the Board of Visitors website. Numerous written comments were received and provided to the Board. In addition, written comments will be accepted on the same form until the full board meeting adjourns (**ATTACHMENT 1**).

**II. Approval of Minutes**

- A. Full Board Meeting on November 30, 2023 (ACTION ITEM)**
- B. Special Full Board Meeting on December 14, 2023 (ACTION ITEM)**

Rector Blackman called for a motion to approve the meeting minutes for November 30, 2023, and December 14, 2023, that were provided for review in the board meeting materials. Visit Hazel **MOVED** to approve the minutes. The motion was **SECONDED** by Secretary Meese. Rector Blackman inquired if a roll call vote was required. Secretary pro tem Hanbury relayed that it is not as Visitor Oberoi was not present virtually. Rector Blackman called for any corrections to the meeting minutes. Hearing none, the **MINUTES STOOD APPROVED AS WRITTEN**.

**III. Rector's Report**

Rector Blackman began his report by recognizing former visitor, Dorothy (Deecy) Gray, by reading a letter (**ATTACHMENT 2**) he sent expressing appreciation for her valued service to the university.

- A. Board of Visitors Meeting Schedule for 2024-2025 (ACTION ITEM)**
- B. Board of Visitors Meeting Schedule for 2025-2026 (ACTION ITEM)**

Rector Blackman called for a motion to approve the Board of Visitors Meeting schedules for 2024-2025 and 2025-2026. Visitor Witeck **MOVED** to approve the meeting schedules. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Hazel. Rector Blackman opened the floor for discussion. Visitor Rosen noted that he was not available for either of the proposed February meeting dates and suggested that they be moved either a week forward or a week back provided those dates worked for everyone else. Rector Blackman proposed that both schedules be approved with the caveat that Visitor Rosen's suggestions be explored and voted on at the next meeting. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

- C. Document & Records Request Policy (ACTION ITEM) (ATTACHMENT 3)**

Rector Blackman recognized Visitor Witeck to present an amendment to the Document and Records Request Policy that was adopted by the Board on July 28, 2023. Visitor Witeck **MOVED** to amend the approved Document and Records Request Policy, as provided in the meeting materials. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Hazel. Rector Blackman opened the floor for discussion. Visitor Brown suggested that the following amendment be added at the end, "it is the expectation of the board that responses be handled as expeditiously as possible." Rector Blackman inquired if there were any objections to the amendment. **AMENDED MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

Rector Blackman reported the following items:

- Reminded the board that one ticket remained available for the Wizards vs. Celtics game on March 17. He thanked Vice Rector Peterson for generously providing this social opportunity between the Board of Visitors and the Board of Trustees.
- Notified the board that a representative from the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) is slated to provide an opportunity to meet the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia's (SCHEV) annual continuing education requirement on April 2, 2024, after the Board Public Comment session. Further details will be provided once finalized.

This concluded the Rector's Report.

#### **IV. President's Report**

Dr. Washington provided the following highlights:

- Commended Mason's men's basketball team for their win the night before against the Dayton Flyers.
- Provided an update on the 2023-2024 Presidential Performance Metrics (table located in the meeting materials):
  - Met all but three metrics and are on track to meeting two of those goals (growing cooperate support and fundraising).
  - The challenging area is the graduate growth at the Scalia Law School. Noting this metric will likely not be met due to two factors:
    - Graduating a large class of master's students.
    - Spring 2024 graduate and professional enrollment is down 1.1%.
- Performance Overview
  - Having an exceptional year like last year; already exceeding in certain areas (i.e., research).
  - Academic units continue to perform well relative to rankings.
  - There are still some challenges:
    - Cost pressures.
    - Student unrest.

- Risk Analysis
  - Taking this area seriously and will be an ongoing discussion.
  - Recognized and wished Julie Zobel well in her new role as Vice President and Chief Risk Officer, Risk, Safety, and Resilience, which reports directly to Dr. Washington. Applause ensued.

**A. Fact Pack**

Dr. Washington provided the following Fact Pack information:

- In 2023, Governor Youngkin brought in the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) to perform an analysis of all four-year institutions in the state, as well as Virginia's Community Colleges (VCCS) to measure performance.
- The Governor tasked all of the college presidents with ensuring every board member received the Fact Pack and that the presidents lead a discussion and overview of that information in a board meeting.
- Deep Dive | George Mason University Background Information:
  - Noted that the founding year of Mason is 1972 and not 1957 as listed in the Fact Pack. In 1957, Mason was a subsidiary of the University of Virginia and became a standalone institution in 1972.
  - Student Population (Headcount)
    - Mason's race/ethnicity makeup differs from all the other academic institutions in the state.
    - Mason has more Pell Grant students than the 4-year Virginian median.
- GMU: Key Metrics at a Glance:
  - Enrollment Volume and Composition:
    - +2.2% annual growth in enrollment over 10 years.
  - Financial Effectiveness:
    - Proudly relayed that Mason's cost of attendance has only marginally increased.
    - From 2019 to present there has only been a \$400 increase in the cost students pay to attend Mason.
- GMU's Overall Enrollment Trend (Chart A):
  - Mason is one of four colleges in the state that has growing enrollment in terms of four-year institutions.
  - Not only is enrollment at Mason increasing, but the university is also maintaining an 87% retention rate in the first year. Additionally, Mason boasts an impressive six-year graduation rate averaging around 69-70%, coupled with an admit rate close to 90%. It would be challenging to find such consistent performance not only within the state but across the country.
- GMU's Retention Rate of Students of Color Trending vs. White Students (Chart B):
  - There is very little difference between Mason's retention rates among students by race or ethnicity.
- Are Graduates Remaining in Virginia After School (Chart A):
  - Seventy-three percent (73%) of Mason's graduates remain in Virginia which is the second largest in the state and 3% higher than the state average for all public, four-year institutions. This represents Virginia's return on investment (ROI).
  - When students graduate and secure jobs within the state, they become taxpayers. Consequently, the money invested in their education circulates back to the state in the form of tax revenue.
  - Mason has almost 50% more out-of-state students residing in Virginia upon graduation than its state peers.
- Mason's cost of attendance has risen over time at a rate well below the cost of inflation.
- The number of Mason personnel has decreased on a per-student basis over the last ten years.
- Taxpayer Investment:
  - Per the data from the American Council of Trustees and Alumni:
    - The administrative cost per student at Mason is the lowest and has been consistently at the bottom for numerous years.
    - The administrative/instructional cost ratio at Mason is also at the bottom and has been that way for years.

- Fact Pack Results:
  - Mason leads Virginia in enrollment, opportunity, and upward mobility.
  - Mason's programs operate efficiently and at a relatively low cost.
  - Mason has the largest number of graduates and highest salaries, and greater than 70% remain in Virginia after graduation (2<sup>nd</sup> highest in the state).
  - Mason has the highest ROI in the state and the greatest human development initiative since reconstruction.
  - Visitor Hazel inquired about the state's plans for this data. Dr. Washington responded that the Secretary of Education would like for this information to help determine how institutions are funded. However, Dr. Washington is unsure about the eventual outcome.

Dr. Washington provided the following updates:

- Provost Search:
  - Over 150 candidates have applied for this position.
  - About 15 candidates participated in airport interviews.
  - Currently, the search is in the background check phase.
  - The goal is to provide campus engagement for two to four finalists.
  - There are no internal candidates.
- Campus Issues:
  - There continues to be student unrest surrounding the Israel-Hamas war.

This concluded Dr. Washington's report. Significant discussion ensued regarding the report, please refer to the video for specifics: <https://vimeo.com/showcase/8557205/video/916054611>.

## **V. Committee Reports**

### **A. Finance & Land Use Committee**

Visitor Rosen briefed the board on the topics presented and discussed during the Finance & Land Use Committee meeting, which included:

- The Finance and Land Use Committee was provided with a financial update and forecast for Fiscal Year 2024, as well as an update on the Fiscal Year 2025 Budget.
- The Fiscal Year 2024 Second Quarter All Funds Operating forecast was reported.
- The preliminary Fiscal Year 2025 Tuition and Fee increase ranges are based on the terms of Governor Youngkin's approval of the faculty incentive and retirement plan having been received in real time the morning of the meeting. Those ranges include in-state tuition and mandatory fee increases of up to 3% as well as a \$600-\$1000 increase in out-of-state tuition.
- Chairman Pence noted the outpouring of criticism against the cricket project by the surrounding Mason community.

There were no action items from the committee to bring before the full board.

### **B. Academic Programs, Diversity and University Community Committee**

Visitor Burke briefed the board on the topics presented and discussed during the Academic Programs, Diversity and University Community Committee meeting, which included:

- Interim Provost Ken Walsh highlighted increased student credit hour production and the Mason Direct Admission Program. He shared an overview of the Mason Korea Campus that is celebrating its 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in June and an updated projected timeline for the search for a new Mason Korea Dean.
- Interim Provost Walsh next led a discussion on the Promotion and Tenure Process, sharing the timeline and an overview of the number of cases over the past three years.
- Keith Renshaw, Senior Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education, shared an overview of the Mason Core and the process leading to recent changes, including details about the integration of the Just Societies category and its intended learning outcomes.
- Rector Blackman designated Visitors Meese and Witeck to collaborate with the administration regarding board oversight of the Just Societies' requirement and report back to the board at the May 2, 2024 meeting.

Visitor Burke **MOVED** to approve the Faculty Action Item: Conferral of Emeritus/Emerita Status as provided for review in the meeting materials:

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

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

Before presenting the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee report, Secretary Meese mentioned that, within the new meeting format, a Development Committee update was included in the meeting materials, despite them not having a meeting today. He thanked Trishana Bowden, Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Relations/President, for the update.

### **C. Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee**

Secretary Meese briefed the board on the topics presented and discussed during the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee meeting, which included:

- The Director of Financial Reporting, Nusrat Sultana, reported that the Auditor of Public Accounts' annual audit of the university's financial statements for the year ended June 30, 2023, is well underway and no areas of concern.
- Discussed the status of Mason's enterprise risk management program with Chief Risk Officer Julie Zobel.
  - The program is being re-focused more strategically after being paused to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - Given the higher strategic focus and need for more visibility, reporting oversight of the program was shifted from the Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration to the President.
  - While the assessment and socialization of enterprise risks is at an early stage, it appears that the highest risk priorities will likely include: funding resources, competition, global volatility, and cyber security.
- Reviewed the audit, compliance, and information technology status reports included in the meeting materials.

There were no action items from the committee to bring before the full board.

### **D. Research Committee**

Visitor Prowitt briefed the board on the topics presented and discussed during the Research Committee meeting, which included:

- Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact, Andre Marshall, reported the following highlights:

- Continued strong advancement in Mason’s research enterprise through the first 6 months of FY24, reflected in the 31% and 34% year-over-year increases in research expenditures and indirect returns, respectively.
- Mason’s full \$5.8M TTIP allocation for FY24 based on meeting and exceeding prior year state computing graduate production targets.
- Prestigious research awards from the Navy and NSF to the College of Science and a new inclusive entrepreneurship program from the Costello College of Business in partnership with the Shrivastava family.
- An Auditor of Public Accounts State-wide Single Audit Report published on February 15, 2024, contained no reportable findings related to Mason’s compliance with federal Office of Management and Budget requirements for R&D programs, a testament to GMU’s excellence in research administration and operations even in the face of unprecedented growth.

There were no action items from the committee to bring before the full board.

Rector Blackman conveyed that numerous written comments were received and are taken seriously by the board. Visitor Brown suggested that there be a listening session for the community in the near term to provide a forum to express views and have questions answered. President Washington expressed his concurrence. A member of the gallery asked if this could be held before the construction of the cricket stadium. Applause followed from the gallery.

#### **VI. Closed Session**

- A. Personnel Matter (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.1)
- B. Consultation with Legal Counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.7)
- C. Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.8)

Vice Rector Peterson **MOVED** that the Board go into Closed Session under the provisions of Section 2.2-3711.A.1 for a Personnel Matter, to discuss President Washington’s contract; Section 2.2-3711.A.7, for Consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation including briefings on:

Agrawal v. GMU  
Amison v. GMU et al  
Ganley and Surber v. GMU et al.  
Jeong v. GMU et al  
Morrison v. GMU et al.  
Wright v. GMU et al.  
Zahabi v. George Mason University et al.

and Section 2.2-3711.A.8 for Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice concerning the aforementioned items. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Stimson. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

Following closed session, Vice Rector Peterson **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. The **MOTION** was seconded by Visitor Hazel. **ALL PRESENT BOARD MEMBERS RESPONDED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE BY ROLL CALL.**



Yes – 13 – Visitor Brown recused himself and left the room for one topic.  
Absent – 2 – Visitors Marquez & Pence

Following the closed session, there was one action item. Rector Blackman **MOVED** to approve the written resolution of the Board of Visitors of George Mason University authorizing an increase in base salary for President Washington (**ATTACHMENT 4**). The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Witeck. Rector Blackman opened the floor for discussion. There was none. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

## **VII. Adjournment**

Rector Blackman called for any additional business to come before the board. Hearing none he adjourned the meeting at 2:29:03 p.m.

Prepared by:

Sarah Hanbury  
Secretary pro tem

- Attachment 1: Written Public Comments (55 pages)
- Attachment 2: Letter from Rector Blackman to Dorothy (Deecy) Gray (1 page)
- Attachment 3: Document & Records Request Policy (1 page)
- Attachment 4: Resolution: Increase in Base Salary for President Washington (1 page)

<p><b>1. Name:</b> Trent wahl <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> How is it possible that none of the surrounding communities have heard of the redevelopment of the west campus? A 10,000 capacity cricket stadium? This will have a major impact on the neighboring communities, and we have not seen anything in the form of approved plans, traffic and environmental studies, etc. and now construction starting in Spring 2024. What has been done in terms of design and impact studies and where can we see these items.</p>
<p><b>2. Name:</b> Geoff keller <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> As a community member buying my house, I signed up to live across from a college. As such, I am accepting of expansion of college services to support the student body at George Mason. The planned cricket stadium is not Being built for any purpose that would benefit a student. The infrastructure in the surrounding area cannot support an additional 10,000 people driving in and out of the campus. Additionally, it feels as if the project is being rammed through without much communication with the community or seeking input from them.</p>
<p><b>3. Name:</b> Bridget McCarthy <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> I am writing to question the lack of transparency and outreach to the local community regarding the proposed commercial MLC Cricket Stadium at Braddock Rd. Why are terms of the Ground Lease not public? Why is this the only MLC proposed stadium to be located in a urban, neighborhood oriented environment?</p>
<p><b>4. Name:</b> Brian Andrews <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Brecon Ridge Neighbor</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> It appears that the proposed Washington Freedom professional Cricket Stadium, as part of the redevelopment of the West Campus at GMU, is moving forward without the essential and customary studies in place for the overall feasibility of the stadium, traffic, parking, environmental, lighting, sound, crowd control and VDOT traffic and signalization etc. A comprehensive and pragmatic approach is essential for a well-balanced redevelopment process. It is also not evident that the proposed stadium development has been incorporated into the short and long term vision for the "student experience" that was emphasized in the Town Hall presentation of January 29th. The focus seems to be on the Cricket Stadium without the proper land use and facility layout for the entire West Campus being considered.</p>
<p><b>5. Name:</b> Geoffrey Keller <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> The board was given a presentation about the cricket stadium in November. It then voted to approve the land lease in December and more than half the board was absent or abstained from the vote. Shouldn't more time and consideration be given to such a large project? Shouldn't more of the board be on the record for how they voted on this topic that has significant impact to the neighborhoods surrounding campus?</p>

**6. Name:** Carol Petty **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** I am a faculty member at GMU, and I have worked for GMU since 2013. I do not agree with political interference in the design of curriculum nor in the designation of core requirements. The university faculty and our administration are quite capable of doing these things.

My question to board members who support interfering with this core designation: who are you trying to serve with this move? And, what, specifically, is wrong with young adults learning about a variety of perspectives on justice? There are multiple ways that human beings have thought about justice across time periods, social systems, etc. There are indeed different ways that social groups think about justice -- However, all social groups have a conception of justice. Why the opposition to expecting young people to understand these things?

I wrote additional commentary about political interference & higher education in the Baltimore Sun. If supporters of Academic Freedom are interested in that argument it is available here:

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/2024/02/02/sociology-fight/>

**7. Name:** Geoff Keller **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** As a resident of Brecon Ridge, we are concerned at the impacts this stadium will have on our community. One area we are increasingly concerned with is what appears to be a lack of parking planned to accommodate this venue. None of the drawings we have seen show parking that will be able to support thousands of guests. WE realize you advertise this as a temporary solution, but even a temporary solution will mean thousands of fans in attendance still. How will you ensure they are not using our streets for parking?

**8. Name:** Cynthia Pease **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** GMU please reconsider your step into the dark side of leasing your property with its State Tax Free Status to a private company who cares nothing for my community. GMU has always been a shining star for education and has enjoyed community support. Don't waste this good will on some private company who could care less about GMU and our neighborhoods.

**9. Name:** Eric Hagopian **Mason Affiliation:** Alumni

**Comment:** As alumni of GMU and local resident, I have always been very supportive of the campus modernizations and improvements. In hearing about the proposed partnership with a DC sports team and developer I have some concerns on a number of fronts. I live on Bentonbrook Dr just a few thousand feet from the West campus light and it's already over congested in this area anytime a large event takes place at the campus. It can literally take 20 mins to go .5 miles. Adding this plan into the mix would make the area unpassable. In addition, having a non GMU event can as always bring a number of people from outside the area or not affiliated with the school in our neighborhood. I can already sense I will find random people parking in front of my house posing an interesting policing challenge. Both for parking but also security as well. I wouldn't want strangers from across the DMV roaming or ruining our quiet neighborhood. I don't understand the desire for this without some dialogue with the community as a whole. I get economic growth but what about the value of my home after all of this? Please reconsider alternatives.

**10. Name:** Nick Sorden **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** Comments were sent via email.

**11. Name:** Tom Gene Wells **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** Dear Mason BOV,

As a graduate student, I am concerned about political interference into Mason's core curriculum. Academic freedom is critical to the health and well-being of our university, and Mason faculty--not political appointees--must retain control over Mason's curriculum. Political interference is antagonistic to the free flow of ideas that a liberal education is all about. Students must be allowed to hear diverse views and draw their own conclusions concerning issues of importance to our democratic way of life. So far, I am grateful that is the learning environment that I have experienced at George Mason University, and I very much want it to remain that way. I appreciate this opportunity to share my thoughts with the BOV and trust that they will be taken into consideration along with those expressed by others.

Sincerely,

Tom G. Wells

**12. Name:** Laura O'Brien **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** I am writing to you to express my concern over leasing land to a major league cricket team, the Washington Freedom, owned by Sanjay Govil, an entrepreneur who lives in Rockville, Maryland and operates his business from Maryland and allowing them to build a state of the art, 10,000 seat cricket stadium on the George Mason University campus.

I am a long-term citizen of Fairfax County and own a home near the GMU campus. My neighborhood entrance is directly across Braddock Road from the proposed site for the new stadium. I am supportive of investments made to support George Mason's stated mission... To be an innovative and inclusive ACADEMIC Community. I am unclear however, how the leasing of land, and commercial development aligns with and supports the mission of GMU. I am genuinely concerned about the negative impacts this stadium will have on traffic, parking, noise, light pollution, and the environment. I am also concerned with the lack of transparency, falsehoods and how this stadium and other planned commercial development is inconsistent with the charter of an institute of learning.

Universities are in the business of educating students and maintaining a campus focused on the students. They do not exist to compete with the private real estate industry. Being the landlord for a professional sports franchise is well outside the bounds of the university's charter. The Virginia State Constitution, Article X, Section 6.4 states that the land is to be used for literary, scientific, or educational purposes. In addition, the university already failed once in an attempt to operate a hotel and that should be warning enough to not try it again on an even larger scale.

My questions are:

- How does this stadium support GMU's mission of an innovative and inclusive academic community?
- Why has the university failed to heed their own word that stated improvements are required prior to any development?
- Why is the university not building the infrastructure required (parking spaces, bathrooms) to support a 10,000 seat stadium?
- Why is the university not doing an environmental study?
- Why haven't the disruption of wetlands and associated stringent requirements been addressed?
- How does GMU, Fairfax County, or Virginia benefit from a Maryland commercial enterprise leveraging the tax-exempt status of GMU to grow a private business?
- Why was there not a full board vote? (7 yes, 2 abstain, 7 absent)
- Why does the university claim it was an "unanimous" vote?
- Why has there been no community involvement?
- Why is the President or any George Mason employees not meeting with the community?

I appreciate your time and consideration in addressing my concerns.

Best regards,

Laura O'Brien

**13. Name: Gayle Fuller Mason Affiliation: Community Member**

**Comment:** I'm urging this committee to re-evaluate the decision to move forward with the construction of the 10,000 person facility at GMU. Community concern is high and there has been zero communication with those who will be most negatively impacted! The infrastructures to support such an undertaking is NOT in place according to the report done by this very University in 2017. Public opinion of the University is in serious jeopardy as details of this project continue to surface. Once the media begins to cover this story, and they will, it may be difficult to regain the trust of the community and our state! You have a responsibility to your neighbors and trust has been broken. All of the private neighborhoods, commuters, businesses, schools and churches along Braddock Rd and 123 will be negatively impacted by the traffic increase, watershed issues, noise issues and much more. PLEASE, slow down and do due diligence before it's too late!

**14. Name: Alisha Gardner Mason Affiliation: Community Member**

**Comment:** I am concerned about the lack of transparency by GMU to it's surrounding community regarding what seems to be an already planned and approved building of a 10k seat professional cricket field...disguised as an upgraded baseball field. Why will you not take public comment? It appears what GMU is pursuing is a misuse of benefits the university is provided but the state constitution and the tax payers of VA. Why the rushed push and secrecy? Where are the traffic & environmental studies? What about sanitation to handle this influx of traffic/people? What about parking? What about noise pollution? GMU has a lot to answer to it's surrounding community and tax payers.

**15. Name: Danny Gardner Mason Affiliation: Community Member**

**Comment:** As a concerned citizen, community member, neighbor of GMU and a VA state tax payer, I would like some visibility into the proposed professional cricket field that is being built under the disguise of and "updated baseball" field for the university. I am not familiar with any D1 university that has a baseball team with a 10k seat stadium. To start, the ground breaking of this "temporary" cricket field needs to haunt until you have engaged the community and provided a public forum for discussion and provided the necessary research regarding traffic, environmental concerns, noise pollution, parking, etc among other potential issues.

**16. Name: Sarah Rickless Mason Affiliation: Faculty**

**Comment:** Dear Mason BOV,

As a longstanding faculty member, I am concerned about political interference into Mason's core curriculum. This concern represents and aligns with the critical thinking abilities that students are at Mason to learn. Academic freedom is critical to the health and well-being of our university, and Mason faculty--not political appointees--must retain control over Mason's curriculum.

Sincerely,

Sarah Rickless

**17. Name: kathy cryblskey Mason Affiliation: Community Member**

**Comment:** i was horrified to learn of building plans which include a 12 thousand seat cricket area at the Campus Drive and Braddock Road intersection. Braddock Road is already congested. an arena this size will make traffic intolerable. Please forward me the traffic study which supports this new arena. please forward me the plans of all the building planned for GMU in the next 10 years - because the rumor is there are additional build-outs planned - is this rumor true? i live across the street from GMU. i expect my GMU neighbor to be forthright in their actions - because right now, it appears Mason is hiding information from the public.

**18. Name:** Robert Malloy **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** I have comments regarding the minutes from the BOV Special Meeting on December 14th. It appears that Vice Rector Petersen and Visitor Hazel left the meeting during or after the Closed Session as they participated in the vote to enter the session but were listed as Absent in a vote after the session. To prevent conjecture and provide transparency, the minutes should reflect the reasons for their departure and recognition of such by the Rector. Secondly, the minutes state that the vote to approve the ground lease was “unanimous” yet two members abstained. It would be more correct to state that the motion passed “unopposed” and not unanimous. Thank you.

**19. Name:** cheryl Russ **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** More details and information should be shared on GMU's intent to allow a Professional Sports team to share space on a State Run Campus and by pass all the Zoning, permit, environmental challenges they would face in the commercial Real Estate process. Saying this development is for the students has yet to be proven, mention of Men's Baseball but nothing to support Women's sports is obviously an oversight. As a local tax payer something is very disturbing, is this how my tax dollars are being used? What has the board done to research this? What have they done to make sure impact to the local area is minimized?

**20. Name:** Tara McDade **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** I am against the commercial stadium on GMU's west campus. TO THE BOARD OF VISITORS, please answer:

1. How long is your lease to the Washington Freedom?
  2. Where is a copy of your lease agreement to the Washington Freedom? Please release it with all terms to the public.
  3. Please release your parking plan to the public to see.
  4. How will you guarantee that our neighborhoods directly across the street will not be negatively impacted by traffic?
  5. How will you guarantee that our neighborhoods directly across the street will not be negatively impacted by noise?
  6. How will you guarantee that our neighborhoods directly across the street will not be negatively impacted by people trying to park in front of our homes?
  7. How will you guarantee the safety of all these pedestrians planning to attend these events?
  8. Can you guarantee that these events will not go later than a reasonable time in the evenings - disturbing our sleep?
  9. How will you guarantee these events will not be held the same time as other high-traffic events on other parts of nearby campus?
  10. When will you schedule your community outreach you promised would occur Fall 2023?
  11. How do you explain the VA tax exempt project to your tax paying residents that will need to pay for all the infrastructure support?
- Shame on your selfish, unexplainable actions.

**21. Name:** Sofie Strompf **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** I am writing in support of the new Just Societies Mason Core requirement. This new aspect of Mason Core is key in assisting students in obtaining learned perspectives. Students are consistently receiving new information and shaping new perspectives in the social aspects of university life. Just Societies will allow students to receive academic context relating to the same perspectives, leading to more well-rounded students with more developed, practiced critical thinking and analytical skillsets.

**22. Name:** Matthew Rodjom **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** My concern relate to the new professional cricket stadium on the west side of campus. I live in the north hill community next to Mason. Also I am legally blind. A 10k seat stadium would require large road and infrastructure changes to handle these new demands. After discussing with local officials they were not even aware of this project. What efforts is GMU making to improve the local traffic and sides for this new project? How is emtro supporting it?

Also, How does hosting a professional cricket team help the overall academic or student life. Cricket is not a NCAA sport. The baseball team would get to use it but their attendance was only about 115 per game. Why would the baseball team require a 10k seat stadium. In my opinion, GMU is going beyond its mission by hosting professional sports on there campous.

**23. Name:** Patricia Lubin (Patty) **Mason Affiliation:** Neighbor, resident of North Hill Subdivision

**Comment:** My husband, Jeff & I Have recently learned about the Professional Washington Freedom Cricket Stadium proposed to be built on the West Campus of George Mason University. And we are opposed to this project. GMU has not been a good neighbor to its surrounding communities by basically blindsiding us with this stadium project! We have lived in the North Hill community on Braddock Rd. For 20 years. We have watched GMU grow while our roads remain the same. It is very difficult to enter Braddock Rd. From North Hill now because of heavy traffic. We can only imagine what the traffic will be like if this stadium is built. We also believe attendee's to the cricket games will be parking in our North Hill neighborhood and walking to the stadium creating chaos on our streets. The lack of transparency concerning the continued growth of GMU in regards to this stadium is very upsetting. Will there be outdoor concerts held at this new venue? Will GMU acknowledge a noise ordinance at night? What time will the lights be turned off? There are many unanswered questions still to be addressed.

Thank-you for your consideration,

Best regards,

Patty & Jeff Lubin

5020 Oakcrest Dr.

Fairfax, VA. 22030

**24. Name:** Kristin Samuelian **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** Dear Mason BOV,

As a faculty member, I am extremely concerned about political interference into Mason's core curriculum. Academic freedom is critical to the health and well-bring of our university, and Mason faculty--not political appointees--must retain control over Mason's curriculum.

Sincerely,

Kristin Samuelian



**25. Name:** David Riso **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** GMU should not use state property and its special status as a state university to enable the commercial development of an enormous 10,000 seat cricket stadium to be built in the midst of residential communities without adequate infrastructure to support it. This allows unfair tax and regulatory benefits to a private enterprise unconnected with the educational mission of the university and places undue burdens on surrounding communities, who will be left to deal with light and noise pollution, traffic congestion on inadequate roads, and whose streets will become parking lots for fans. This is in addition to environmental impacts of this project on the sensitive Occoquan watershed. Moreover, the lack of meaningful opportunity for public comment beyond a perfunctory zoom meeting to announce the deal just a few weeks before groundbreaking on this rushed project shows a lack of interest by GMU in meaningful community input. All this leaves the impression that GMU cares more about this commercial development by a Maryland company than being a good neighbor to Virginians whose taxes support the school. The Cricket Stadium should be halted or at least paused for long enough to thoroughly assess and ameliorate its negative impacts.

**26. Name:** Suzanne Dowd **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** As residents in a neighboring community to GMU, we have always been proud of the school and its development over the past several decades (since the Final Four!). We are currently very concerned over the complete lack of transparency by GMU administration, impact to already increasing traffic on Braddock and Ox Roads, and pollution effects with regard to noise, lights, and the environment to the surrounding community. Please conduct and share these studies and plans before proceeding further...even with a “temporary” stadium.

**27. Name:** Courtney Brady **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** I am unable to attend the meeting however I would like to understand specific event parameters of the new stadium being built on Braddock road (George Mason Campus).

- Will there be police presence for any/all events?
- How will they address restroom access for events?
- Will there be [temporary] trash reciprocals to curb any littering around the surrounding area and how quickly will they be picked up? Who will be responsible for post event clean up around the surrounding area?
- Will there be a curfew on when events will end (similar to Jiffy Lube or Wolf Trap - i.e. Load-in may not start before 7am and all events must conclude by 11pm )
- If there are satellite parking locations, where will those be located and how often will shuttles be occurring
- Will additional crosswalks be added across Braddock Road?
- Will parking at University Mall get even more crowded as people try to park there and walk to the new venue?

These are just a few things I think should be addressed prior to breaking ground so residents of the surrounding area will know what to expect with the new venue. I am not in favor of this being built but am not sure what else to do to stop this process, in the meantime the university can put their best foot forward to try and inform the neighborhoods of what the new normal will be for the residences.

**28. Name:** Shelley Brennan **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** As a close neighbor of GMU's West Campus, I am extremely concerned about the 10,000 seat stadium that was approved at the last board meeting to be used by a major league cricket team. This large-scale commercial development literally across the street from our neighborhood will most certainly impact our community in several negative ways - including traffic, parking, noise, light pollution, loss of green space, etc. To date, I have seen no plans to address any of these concerns. When I read about the plans for this stadium, there are alarming discrepancies as well. GMU describes this as a "temporary" stadium while Sanjay Govil describes this as a site for the world cup and the start of a "whole township" - right in our backyard. How did the board see fit to approve such a stadium without engaging the surrounding community and having a plan in place to address concerns such as the ones noted above (parking, traffic, noise and light pollution, environmental impact, etc.)? Even if it is "temporary" - it is still a 10,000 seat outdoor stadium! What else is the stadium going to be used for beyond major league cricket and GMU baseball games? Why are there major discrepancies in what we are hearing from GMU and from Sanjay Govil? What else is GMU keeping from the public related to this stadium and plans for the commercial development of West Campus? I would strongly urge the board to halt all construction on this stadium until the community can be sufficiently involved and concrete plans can be put in place that will adequately address the community's concerns.

**29. Name:** Natalie Bohuslaw **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** My comments are to express my concern over the planned Washington Freedom cricket team that is planning to build a state of the art, 10,000 seat stadium at GMU. As a 25 year resident, I have been witness to the expansion of GMU and the traffic congestion and noise that it has brought to our peaceful community. We do not need more of the same. These events, will have a negative affect on our community and quality of life, with the additional traffic, parking, noise, light pollution, and environment. There has been a lack of transparency & falsehoods about how the stadium was planned and is inconsistent with the charter of an institute of learning. The Virginia State Constitution, Article X, Section 6.4 states that the land is to be used for literary, scientific, and educational purposes. Why has there been no community outreach & involvement? After all, we reside here & will be directly impacted by this decision. Our surrounding community cannot support this volume of visitors. We are already overwhelmed with traffic congestion, student parking issues, housing, campus activities, concerts, noise and crime in our neighborhoods. I am urging a halt to construction, until a proper & thorough assessment of the current plans are conducted.

**30. Name:** Michael Stark **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** As a Virginia taxpayer and resident in a neighborhood near George Mason University, I wish to express my serious concerns regarding the proposed development of a cricket stadium on campus. I am concerned how the owner of the Washington Freedom cricket team, Mr. Sanjay Govil, is able to gain approval to fund and build a 10,000 seat cricket stadium on university/state land. Mr. Govil has no known ties to the university and he both lives and operates his business in Maryland. Building on university/state land may benefit Mr. Govil due to favorable tax implications for him, but how does it benefit GMU, the state or Fairfax County other than to let an out-of-state commercial enterprise build on Virginia state land using corporate/private dollars?

How does this cricket stadium support the university's mission? Because the baseball team will be able to use it? The university should fund and support the baseball team within their respective athletics and capital improvement budgets. However, a sport that averages about 150 spectators a game does not need a 10,000 seat stadium to play in. Perhaps they just need further upgrades to their current stadium.

At the speed that this cricket stadium proposal appears to be moving, there is no way that proper traffic and environmental analyses have been done. Just because the land and roads are state-owned should not result in a waiver of thorough reviews of the potential impacts to traffic (e.g. vehicle and pedestrian traffic on Braddock Road, vehicles parking outside of GMU property on surrounding side streets, etc.) and a myriad of environmental factors (e.g. noise and light pollution during events, impact on soil and groundwater, utilities (electric, sewage, clean water, trash removal, etc.). Are there any plans related to surrounding roadway expansion and/or traffic control with 10,000 people entering and exiting this stadium at the same time? What would the impact be if there was an event at this cricket stadium and Eagle Bank Arena at the same time?

The lack of community involvement thus far is appalling. Whether it is required by state statute or GMU regulations or not, the fact is that the University is a part of this Fairfax community, as are the businesses and residents that surround it. To just approve this project because a Maryland businessman proposes using his own funds seems like the university is just following the dollars with little to no regard for the mission of the university, its students or the surrounding community.

Whether allowed by governing documents or not, the Board of Visitors vote of 7 yes, 2 abstain and 7 absent is not the way to conduct business...certainly not for a project of this size. Calling this a "unanimous vote" may be factually accurate, but not a good faith representation when less than half of the Board members vote in the affirmative.

I've heard comments that this may be "temporary" and that it will be a limited number of cricket games. I have trouble believing that a businessperson would make an investment of this nature for it to only be used a dozen times a year or temporarily use.

I respectfully request that the Board of Visitors stop this project immediately until a thorough analysis of all potential impacts can be completed, tangible benefits to the state, country and university can be made clear and input from the surrounding residential and business communities can occur. Thank you for your consideration.

**31. Name:** Daniel Klein **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** The Core-course leftist flag initiative ('Just Societies') is unjust and should be scrapped.

**32. Name:** Jason Long **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** My family and I have lived in the Brecon Ridge neighborhood directly across from the West Campus entrance for over 12 years. Over that time, we have seen the development of the West Campus in the form of construction of new athletic fields, parking areas and Campus Dr. As your neighbors, we are very supportive of GMU's mission and of responsible expansion and redevelopment of the West Campus area in order to improve the performance and experience of its student athletes. However, fast-tracking a private company to build their professional cricket stadium on GMU property does not fall within that realm. The primary use of this stadium is for professional and international cricket matches, and the primary beneficiary will be the Washington Freedom and its ownership. This was stated as much in the town hall presentation when it was described that the Washington Freedom would "allow" the GMU baseball team to use the facility. Cricket is not an NCAA sport, and any benefits to the athletic department will be negligible and are an afterthought.

While it has been spun that the BOV "unanimously" approved this project, I believe a better way to describe it is that a majority of the board did not vote for the project, with nine of the 16 members either abstaining or being absent for the vote.

The haste and lack of transparency in this project gives the appearance that some ethical corners may have been cut in order to deliver this on a timeline that is acceptable to the Washington Freedom. There have clearly been discussions on this topic for well over a year, and the first time anyone in the surrounding residential communities heard about it was at the January 29 town hall, where it was also mentioned that construction would start in the spring. This is wholly unacceptable and GMU needs to do better. The board needs to pause this project until meaningful community engagement can be done. Environmental and traffic impacts need to be studied and communicated with the surrounding neighborhoods. GMU has been a great neighbor for decades, it would be a shame for such a poorly thought out and executed plan such as this to ruin that. Thank you.

**33. Name:** Bryan Caplan **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** George Mason University is a public university, funded by Virginians with a wide range of political views about the nature of justice. The Just Societies Initiative is a thinly-veiled effort to teach far-left (or "woke") views of justice as the One True Position. Even people who agree with such views should ponder the justice of creating an official state-sanctioned orthodoxy and requiring all students to spend multiple classes feigning agreement with it.

**34. Name:** Mason Goad **Mason Affiliation:** Former Student

**Comment:** The "Just Societies" course requirements must be stopped. "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion" do not mean what they purport to mean. Read the literature that DEI advocates recommend. Their philosophy is unjust, unethical, and entirely deleterious to GMU and to society itself. Quit giving these snakes the benefit of the doubt.

**35. Name:** Robin Hanson **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** We in economics were only recently told of this, even though this seems to have been in the works for a long time. We were thus not given a chance to submit our courses for Fall start of it. I teach Law & Economics, for example, which seems more closely related to the them of "justice" than most of the approved courses listed. Suggesting that maybe organizers didn't want econ included?

**36. Name:** Ali Motamedi **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** The 'just societies' requirement is anything but just. Requiring that "students entering Mason in Fall 2024 or later... take two Mason Core courses that have the Just Societies flag" is wholly inappropriate. As Professor Caplan astutely noted in his own comment, "George Mason University is a public university, funded by Virginians with a wide range of political views about the nature of justice." Requiring that students be indoctrinated with the notion that left-wing perspectives of justice are the only valid perspectives on such matters not only betrays our university's motto of "freedom and learning", but also betrays the millions of Virginians who oppose such views and whose taxes are used to support George Mason University. For these reasons, and a myriad of others, the characteristically un-'just societies' requirement should be discarded in its entirety.

**37. Name:** Alex Tabarrok **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** It is a bad idea to politicize the university at any time but to do so at this time is especially short-sighted. The "Just Societies" initiative should be immediately scrapped.

**38. Name:** Allison Clifford **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** As a long time Fairfax County resident, I am very concerned on the decision for the University to negotiate an agreement to house a stadium/development without typical traffic and parking studies. Proper analysis should be done before any type of structure of this magnitude should be considered. Why should a private Maryland resident/business person get special treatment and forgo any of the typical commercial building approvals that Fairfax County and the greater DMV require? I also don't understand how a cricket stadium ties into a higher education institution.

**39. Name:** Mitze Thornhill **Mason Affiliation:** Parent of Student/Community Resident

**Comment:** As a Virginia and Fairfax County tax payer, parent of a GMU student, and resident in a neighborhood directly across from GMU, I am writing to express my great concern regarding the proposal and implementation of a 10,000 seat cricket stadium on campus. My community has just become aware of this project as it seems it has been kept under wraps and not widely shared with the surrounding communities located by GMU (why is this?).

I am not opposed to having cricket as a sport to be played at GMU, however, I am opposed to having an owner (Mr. Sanjay Govil) of the Washington Freedom cricket team who lives in Maryland and operates his business in Maryland be able to build on university land when it appears he has no known ties to GMU, and especially when he is making it well known what plans he has in the future on how to utilize that space which is more than just having some local cricket matches. How does this venture benefit the tax paying citizens, or the academia of GMU students?

My biggest concern is the lack of transparency, and what studies, if any, have been done to ensure adequate infrastructure would be in place (ie: parking, noise/light control, traffic flow to accommodate 10,000 people and their vehicles, safety for pedestrians). The residents in my neighborhood are already impacted by all events that take place at the Eagle Bank Arena which already has a 10,000 seat capacity. Braddock Road congestion on event days/evenings is unbearable as it is so we can only imagine what will happen when there is 20,000 seat capacity structures less than a mile from each other.

To say part of the plan is for the GMU baseball team to use the stadium is disingenuous. It has become apparent that the only person this benefits is Mr. Sanjay Govil as it clearly provides favorable tax benefits for him. I would rather see improvements be made to the current baseball stadium if the purpose and main goal is for the baseball team to have a more updated stadium.

There are so many questions that still need to be answered and to expect that the residents in the surrounding communities are just going to stand by quietly while another 10,000 seat structure is built less than a mile from Eagle Bank Arena without providing some input is not going to happen. The residents surrounding GMU are respectfully asking the BOV to put a halt to this project until we can get the proper county analysis done, and only until that is completed you can expect very little buy in on this venture from the residents surrounding GMU.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

**40. Name:** Salim Furth **Mason Affiliation:** Staff

**Comment:** The Just Societies requirement is unwise. It will predictably repeat the most common cliches of contemporary public life. Classes structured consciously around "justice" will likely be the least hospitable places to meaningfully debate competing views of justice. Students are smart enough to realize that the way to get an A in a class built around a particular viewpoint is to parrot that viewpoint. GMU would do better to focus on rigorous scholastic methods so that students are equipped to investigate and address difficult metaphysical questions in many future contexts. As someone who routinely works with GMU graduate students, I prize those who can write and work with data competently.

**41. Name:** Maribeth Malloy **Mason Affiliation:** VA taxpayer and resident

**Comment:** It is appalling that Paul Allvin is trying to soft pedal GMUs plan for a cricket stadium. He said today on Fox5 all we are planning is a temporary stadium which is totally disingenuous and false. Ironically, it is direct conflict with Sanjay Govil's comment in the Feb 15 Washingtonian magazine article where he said we are seeking to make this permanent. That article also state that the university plans to use the west campus development as a revenue source. That is NOT the university's job, as a reminder - that is education. The BOV should rescind the earlier vote.

**42. Name:** Denise Albanese **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** As members of the Board of Visitors, remember that you are VISITORS to Mason, entrusted with fiduciary oversight but not appointed because of your expertise on scholarly or pedagogical matters. In that capacity, please do not fail to honor Mason's commitment to academic freedom, which means faculty themselves have the ultimate right, responsibility, and knowledge to determine the content of university courses.

**43. Name:** Bethany Hammer **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** My comments today express my concern over leasing land to a major league cricket team, the Washington Freedom, owned by Sanjay Govil, an entrepreneur who lives in Rockville, Maryland and operates his business from Maryland and allowing them to build a state of the art, 10,000 seat cricket stadium on the George Mason University campus.

I am supportive of investments made to support George Mason's stated mission... To be an innovative and inclusive ACADEMIC Community. I am unclear however, how the leasing of land, and commercial development aligns with and supports the mission of GMU. I am genuinely concerned about the negative impacts this stadium will have on traffic, parking, noise, light pollution, and the environment. I am also concerned with the lack of transparency, falsehoods and how this stadium and other planned commercial development is inconsistent with the charter of an institute of learning. The Virginia State Constitution, Article X, Section 6.4 states that the land is to be used for literary, scientific, or educational purposes.

My questions are:

- How does this stadium support GMU's mission of an innovative and inclusive academic community?
- Why is the university not working with Fairfax County or the State of Virginia on improvements they stated are required prior to any development?
- Why is the university not building the infrastructure required (parking spaces, bathrooms) to support a 10k seat stadium?
- Why is the university not doing an environmental study?
- Why haven't the disruption of wetlands and associated stringent requirements been addressed?
- How does GMU, Fairfax County, or Virginia benefit from a Maryland commercial enterprise leveraging the tax-exempt status of GMU to grow a private business?
- Why was there not a full board vote? (7 yes, 2 abstain, 7 absent)
- Why does the university claim it was an "unanimous" vote?
- Why has there been no community involvement?
- Why is the President or any George Mason employees not meeting with the community?
- You keep trying to express its 3k seats but other presentations say 10k. Also, your spokesperson stressed "temporary". Why would Govil state he wanted it permanent and invest if it wasn't intended to become permanent.

I urge you to halt construction until a proper and thorough assessment of the plans are conducted. You're moving fast to cover your tracks and get this done! This is an unattractive way of conducting business.

**44. Name:** Glenda Patterson **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** I appreciate the programs, organizations and classes that I have been apart of that have contributed to this school being the largest and most diverse public university in Virginia!

**45. Name:** Donald J. Boudreaux **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** My colleague Bryan Caplan is correct: Because the taxpayers who fund state universities have amongst themselves a wide range of different views, almost all arguably legitimate, about the particular characteristics of a just society, any attempt by a state university to impose through its curricula one particular view (or one narrow range of particular views) of the specific features of a just society is illegitimate. Such an attempt is indeed unjust.

But there's also the matter of academic freedom.

The "Just Society" flag initiative amounts to the University prodding many of its faculty to express particular views that many of these faculty either do not believe to be valid or that believe to be valid but ones that students should come to on their own without being force-fed by their instructors. It is unjust, illiberal, and anti-intellectual to attempt in this manner to restrict debate and discussion in the classroom about the particular features of a just society.

**46. Name:** Christine M. Debolt **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** - What studies have been done on noise generated from this stadium during cricket matches but also the open-air concerts that have been minimally discussed?

- Mr. Govil stated at the January 29th meeting that there will broadcast quality lighting. What does that mean and what studies have been done regarding the impact on species known to be in this area? (e.g. bear, fox, eagles, amphibian and insect life in the wetlands and creeks, etc.)

- Where is the stormwater runoff study and potential mitigation plan?

- Where is the light/noise study and potential mitigation plan?

- What studies and plans have been done and what measures are to be put in place for wetlands and creeks?

- The creeks near this site run onto residential properties that are governed by a county RPA. How will this work affect their property?

-What is the estimated financial and/or tax benefits to the local community of this project?

-What traffic studies have been conducted regarding the stadium?

-Are the studies that have been performed based on a 3,000 or 10,000 seat stadium?

**47. Name:** Marian Salopek **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** What financial commitments did Mr. Govil make to GMU to secure approval of the stadium project?

What is the estimated tax revenue benefit to Virginia residents from this project?

What Virginia taxes will Mr. Govil pay as a result of this project?

**48. Name:** Sean Stromsten **Mason Affiliation:** None (PhD Stanford 2002)

**Comment:** If "what is a a just society?" is considered an open question, and multiple perspectives are considered, then this is a fine idea for a class. But if, as seems very likely, this is an attempt present current social justice orthodoxy as unquestionable truth, then it has no place at a self-respecting university. Shaming or silencing opposition is counter to the goals of broadening and deepening students' understanding, and of society becoming collectively less wrong over time.

**49. Name:** Dan Blau **Mason Affiliation:** Alumni

**Comment:** Please stop embarrassing GMU alumni with the very behavior that triggered a federal investigation into Mason's compliance with Title IX. Abolish all 'Just Society' courses and return to academic integrity.

**50. Name:** Robert Jasintha Clovengard **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** This is not a good use of resources.



<b>51. Name:</b> Patrick Cunningham <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member
<b>Comment:</b> This is a bad idea. Obviously we all want a just society, but this will create a conservative backlash, and further harm the prestige with which universities are held.
<b>52. Name:</b> Anonymous Virginia Citizen <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member
<b>Comment:</b> Since you are a state university, and this state has many different citizen viewpoints about what a just society is, you should not be pushing a single version of what YOU think is a just society on all of your students (and faculty), and by extension, the taxpayers. It is simply propaganda in the name of your preferred ideology.
<b>53. Name:</b> Eric Hammer <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> PhD Alumni
<b>Comment:</b> This proposal is deeply disappointing, both in its content and that it has gotten so far through GMU's administrative process without being put down. There are three clear outcomes of the proposal: a make work program for the highly ideological social science instructors students are increasingly avoiding, an increase in the time and money students must waste on undesired courses before graduation, and the further establishment of a single viewpoint orthodoxy on campus among both students and faculty. What about those outcomes is desirable from a social perspective, or even a perspective focused on the wellbeing of GMU as an institution? What is perhaps even more disappointing is that the administration has not recognized the obvious negative results of enacting this proposal. Either has not recognized, or the administration is pushing this proposal forward because those outcomes are in fact the intended goals. In either case, the administration is demonstrating it is not up to the task of properly running the university we call alma mater.
<b>54. Name:</b> Todd Cryblskey <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member
<b>Comment:</b> I'm writing in concern about the new Cricket/Baseball "Temporary" stadium. As a resident of Breckenridge, whose sole entrance/exit to our neighborhood shares the light on Braddock and Prestwick/Campus Drive, I would like to know what is being done from a traffic perspective to accommodate the new stadium and the additional traffic flow. According to the study done in 2017, any West Campus projects needed significant infrastructure upgrades. I am also concerned with parking. According to the current plans, removing a significant amount of the current parking lot to accommodate the new fields will force parking in the surrounding neighborhoods. I am also concerned with the lack of transparency and speed at which this project is being implemented circumventing standard protocols and community involvement.
<b>55. Name:</b> Todd Cryblskey <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member
<b>Comment:</b> My comment is to express concern with the new Cricket/Baseball "Temporary" stadium. My understanding from presentations by the current Cricket team owner, is that they plan on hosting World Cup qualifier matches this summer. These will be televised with jumbotrons, production quality lighting, and sound systems. The stadium boasts luxury suites and world class accommodations. How does GMU plan to support this endeavour given there is no current infrastructure to support any of this. No power, no sanitary facilities, no water/sewer, no parking, no traffic patterns. Why is GMU not working with the local surrounding communities to address any concerns with traffic, noise, parking, environment?
<b>56. Name:</b> Martin Small <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member
<b>Comment:</b> The proposed requirements appear to be a thinly-disguised means of promoting a particular, highly debatable concept of "justice" to students, one at odds with traditional and/or competing theories of justice. Anyone familiar with modern universities understands that there will be a heavy bias towards the particular theory of "justice" that aligns with the values of the overwhelmingly monolithic faculty. This is unworthy of a public university, or indeed any university dedicated to teaching students critical

thinking rather than promoting particular viewpoints popular with the faculty. GMU will decrease its own reputation as a center of learning if it proceeds with the proposal.

**57. Name:** David Bertoli **Mason Affiliation:** Professor at the University of Georgia

**Comment:** George Mason University is a public university funded significantly by the tax payer. Concepts of justice vary widely between political visions and cultures. Interpretations of Justice range from Plato's Republic to Augustine's City of God, to Edmund Burke, to Karl Marx and John Rawls. Not to mention the completely different visions of justice outside the "Western" tradition, for instance in Hinduism and Buddhism. The Just Societies Initiative seems aimed at prioritizing one vision of justice over the others. This would create a culturally and politically narrow intellectual landscape thus undermining the purpose of the university.

**58. Name:** Robert Malloy **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** As a Virginia taxpayer and resident of Fairfax County's Springfield District, I am opposed to the building of the temporary cricket stadium on West Campus. I request that the Board of Visitors halt the project until they 1) have public meetings where citizens can voice their opinions and 2) answer the public's questions. I have several issues with the actions being taken by the Board of Visitors and President Gregory Washington.

There is a Double Standard at work in the Old Dominion. The Capitals and Wizards are being held accountable to Virginia taxpayers, while the Cricket Team is getting a free pass courtesy of the GMU Board of Visitors and President Gregory Washington.

Neighborhoods near GMU are concerned about traffic, parking on residential streets, noise, lights, and environmental impacts, and want an opportunity to voice their concerns before ground is broken for the stadium. GMU is blatantly ignoring the traffic studies that were done years ago.

This is not about cricket. Cricket is a growing sport that is popular with many Virginia residents.

Neighbors of GMU are not opposed to the sport of cricket. Neighbors are opposed to the idea of building a commercial sports stadium on state-owned property.

GMU is sadly violating one of its own most important core values – integrity. GMU is granted tax exempt status and land use privileges by the Virginia state constitution to enable them to use the land for “literary, scientific, or educational purpose.” GMU is misusing its position by extending those privileges to a commercial enterprise and shielding them from local taxes and governance. This action is unethical in several ways: 1) GMU is using their status in a manner never envisioned in the constitution 2) GMU is depriving the local community of tax revenue and governance that it rightly has over commercial enterprises, and 3) GMU is unfairly competing with the private sector because they can offer state provided advantages that a private developer cannot.

The GMU Board of Visitors plans to use state-owned property for commercial development are unethical and is a misuse of the benefits granted to GMU by the Virginia state constitution.

The Board of Visitors do not appear to be aligned on the stadium project. After the closed-door session to discuss the cricket stadium, three of the Board members left the meeting and did not participate in the vote to approve the ground lease. One can only surmise that these members, who are well-versed in commercial real estate development, are not in favor of the stadium, but did not want to publicly go against the majority. They know well the risks and challenges involved in commercial development. I agree with them. GMU needs to stick to the business of education.

**59. Name:** Iain Murray MA(Oxon) MBA DIC **Mason Affiliation:** Community member and parent of student

**Comment:** The "Just Societies" initiative should be dropped. I fear that it will quickly turn into a vision of justice that would be approved of by Thrasymachus - that justice is the prerogative of the stronger party, in this case inevitably the educational and "social justice" establishment, which has in my experience little patience with criticism. Instead, students should be free to explore the question of justice \*if they so desire\* the traditional way - by taking philosophy courses.

**60. Name:** Robert Malloy **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** As a Virginia taxpayer and resident of Fairfax County's Springfield District, I am opposed to the building of the temporary cricket stadium on West Campus. I request that the Board of Visitors halt the project until they 1) have public meetings where citizens can voice their opinions and 2) answer the public's questions. I have several issues with the actions being taken by the Board of Visitors and President Gregory Washington.

The communications regarding the stadium are inconsistent and make it hard to trust what is being said by the representatives of GMU. The GMU spokesperson emphasized that the stadium is temporary. The Environmental Impact Report states that the temporary stands and fixtures will be removed by the cricket team after their matches this summer. But the GMU athletic director, Marvin Lewis, has said that this stadium will be "transformational" for the GMU baseball team by providing them a new stadium with lights and jumbotrons. That statement only makes sense if the stadium becomes permanent. The cricket team owner, Mr. Govil has also publicly stated that he is planning for a permanent stadium at the GMU site for the summer of 2025. GMU is misleading the public and the media by downplaying the scope of their plans by using the word "temporary." The word temporary is being used deceptively by GMU to pooh-pooh any concerns by local residents. Additionally, the temporary stadium is just the first step of a much larger commercial Town Center development on the university campus. At their Town Hall zoom call, GMU showed plans to build retail space, restaurants, a hotel, a theatre, and of course a permanent cricket field on state-owned property. GMU is showing that they cannot be trusted to tell the whole truth or be honest with the public.

Even the president of GMU cannot be trusted to do what he says. On February 14th, Gregory Washington posted an open letter to the public where he promised robust and open communication with the public. Seven days later, not a single public forum has been scheduled.

Once GMU moves tons of dirt for the new cricket stadium, I expect that only then will the messaging change from temporary to permanent. When the professional cricket team eventually tries to build a permanent stadium, they and GMU will justify building it on top of the temporary stadium as a cost saving measure. By approving the temporary stadium, the Board of Visitors are giving tacit approval for the eventual permanent stadium without having to stand up and take responsibility for it now.

**61. Name:** Robert Malloy **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** As a Virginia taxpayer and resident of Fairfax County's Springfield District, I am opposed to the building of the temporary cricket stadium on West Campus. I request that the Board of Visitors halt the project until they 1) have public meetings where citizens can voice their opinions and 2) answer the public's questions. I have several issues with the actions being taken by the Board of Visitors and President Gregory Washington.

To that end I sent a letter to Virginia Governor, Youngkin. I submitted that letter to the Board of Visitors comment forum for their meeting on February 22, 2024 via an email to bov@gmu.edu.

**62. Name:** Gerald Cook **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** I am writing concerning the proposed new stadium on the West Campus. I was a member of The George Mason faculty from 1985 to 2017, serving as the Earle C. Williams Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering.

While at Mason, in addition to my academic duties of teaching, research, and supervising graduate students, I also served for several years in an extracurricular position as Faculty Athletic Representative, working with Tom O'Connor who was Director of Athletics at that time. During those years the topic of Intercollegiate football was considered. It was determined by the department of athletics that in order to have a competitive team, football scholarships would be required for recruiting capable players. The cost of providing the football scholarships, when spread over the entire student body this, came to \$100 per year per student and would have been added to each student's annual activity fees. After much study and discussion this was brought before the student body for a vote. The student body voted against it because of the cost. Furthermore, it was noted that student attendance at basketball games at that time averaged less than 1000 per game.

Has any study been done to assess the interest of the GMU student body in cricket?

**63. Name:** Edmund M. Bedsworth, Jr. **Mason Affiliation:** Alumni / Neighbor

**Comment:** George Mason's lack of transparency, communication, and dialog with its neighbors is reprehensible. As a part of the State of Virginia, the University has shown nothing but contempt for those in the communities surrounding it. In President Washington's open letter, dated 14 February, he clearly states that the University is looking to expand, and grow its West Campus foot print. He admits the need for communication, and a robust, sustained and fruitful dialogue with stakeholders. However, we got 1) the Fairfax Campus Community and Advisory Board meeting where a single University spokesperson gave platitudes without substance and of course no chance for community stakeholders to speak; 2) Fox 5 DC's interview with Mr. Allvin where he failed to address any concerns and simply stated that this was a fast-moving opportunity; 3) this Board of Visitors meeting where again, no community voice may be heard. We await the dialogue.

In the meantime, we hear from Sanjay Govil in the July 13, 2023 Washingtonian article that he's in negotiations with GMU and that there is a second stadium that is planned to be next to this Professional Cricket Stadium. "And next to us – I cannot name the team – but there's going to be another professional team coming next to us."

Stop the lies, stop the hidden agenda, and as a public entity and a part of the State of Virginia; come clean with the full plan. The State of Virginia is responsible for transportation and in your own study from 2017, admitted that Braddock Road was at its breaking point. Even with commuting changes post pandemic, Braddock Road backs off frequently backs up from Ox Road passed West Campus Drive in the evenings. Please note this is not the primary direction of traffic at evening rush hour.

Changes on campus occur without thought to the impact of downstream neighbors. My home is on the East Fork of Popes Head Creek. When Campus Drive was added the water flow of the creek changed causing erosion on several of my neighbor's property. Has the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality reviewed your plans? Were the changes ever communicated with the community directly impacted by the changes?

I laughed the other day driving along Braddock Road and seeing electronic signage pointing those going to Eagle Bank Arena to use Campus Drive. I laughed as this was a new feature. Mason negatively impacts traffic on Braddock for nearly ten years and someone finally woke up and realized that most people attending events don't realize that Campus Drive would help. Seems odd that these appeared as negative opinion of the Professional Cricket Stadium grew.

One last concern, the University has shown its disdain for communication and we no longer trust the things being spouted. In President Washington's letter he mentions the broader plan to expand the west campus. Our assumption, barring open and honest communication, is that this includes the land at the corner of Braddock and Shirley Gate. The concern here is for health impacts. That land sits atop a large vein of asbestos. Again, we expect the State of Virginia to perform its required to diligence. I have been a supporter of GMU. I'm on the Dean's Advisory Board for the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. I volunteer for CHSS LinkUp and other events. I've mentored students and helped them prepare for interviews. I have supported the Diversity Scholarship Golf Classic for the last nine years. I contributed to the Howard Bloch Scholarship fund for a number of years prior to forming the Ed & Sally Bedsworth Memorial Scholarship fund. I made the sad decision to pause all financial support of GMU until the University proves that it is a good neighbor.

**64. Name:** Jack Salmon **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** I am writing to express my opposition to the proposed requirement for all new students at George Mason University to take two "Just Societies" core courses. This initiative, while seemingly well-intentioned, raises serious concerns regarding academic freedom, intellectual diversity, and the appropriate role of a state university in shaping students' viewpoints.

Firstly, the requirement appears to be rooted in a specific ideology, namely Critical Theory, which promotes a particular perspective on justice and inequality rooted in perceived social structures and cultural assumptions, rather than empiricism. While fostering respect for various viewpoints and backgrounds is crucial, imposing a singular viewpoint through mandatory coursework undermines the very principles of open academic discourse and critical thinking. Taxpayer-funded institutions like GMU should not dictate a narrow range of acceptable beliefs, especially on sensitive topics like social justice. Secondly, the "Just Societies" flag effectively pressures faculty to conform to a prescribed set of ideas. This runs counter to the fundamental principle of academic freedom, which ensures professors can present diverse perspectives and engage in open dialogue with students. Forcing instructors to adhere to a specific ideology stifles intellectual debate and risks creating an echo chamber rather than a space for genuine exploration and learning.

Finally, mandating these courses disregards the diverse range of viewpoints within the community, including taxpayers who contribute to the university's funding. Forcing students to adopt a particular view of a "just society" directly contradicts the values of inclusivity and respect for diverse perspectives that the initiative claims to uphold.

I urge you to reconsider this proposal and explore alternative approaches that foster open dialogue, critical thinking, and respect for diverse viewpoints on complex social issues. Instead of imposing a singular ideology, GMU should strive to create an environment where students can engage in meaningful discussions, challenge assumptions, and arrive at their own informed conclusions.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

**65. Name:** kathy cryblskey **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** will modular seating technology be used for the cricket stadium build-out?

**66. Name:** Stephen Jones **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** Dear committee,

As someone who is a legacy at Mason, I am appalled at the recent decision to unleash the compulsive diversity bureaucracy onto our campus. The highly debatable and fraudulent commandments in these programs are a breeding ground for conformist thought and political homogeneity.

The DIE (diversity, inclusion, and equity) agenda contains a plethora of seemingly innocent initiatives with disguised idea pathogens that span - not the spectrum of unity - but instead the spectrum of social divide. Diversity of skin hue, sexual orientation, and reproductive organ is encouraged but not diversity of thought. Inclusion is stipulated yet any criticisms of the diversity scrutinizers could jeopardize your reputation. Equity is upheld not for the purposes of fair treatment but for the purposes of having everybody nosedive with equal outcomes in all pursuits.

It proselytizes this trinity of fairness yet intends to teach still impressionable minds to interact with each other differently by dividing everybody up into collectives. Here the euphemism for this is, "Others from all walks of life." Additionally, society is taught as being an inherently corrupt hierarchy dominated by the designated oppressors whose members are dictated to acknowledge and repent for their alleged privilege. Underneath that are the oppressed who have been assigned the role of the victims. Blindly toppling this hierarchy is considered justice.

As a result, students will go into every field known to man spawning this ideology. Despite its political, social, and ideological bias the course is mandatory. Are we to conclude it's mandatory because it's supposedly correct? GMU should not waste time teaching students the fashionable protocol of elite colleges and conformist corporate America. Mason should instead be interested in orienting students with the old-fashioned and archaic words individualism, critical thinking, and patriotism.

If this university has anything to do with Patriot Pride, it will prescribe incoming students to take a course on founding father and delegate George Mason whose own concepts of diversity, inclusion, equity, and justice helped make possible the greatest country in human history.

Thank you.

**67. Name:** Peter Smoot **Mason Affiliation:** Interested bystander with no connection to GMU

**Comment:** I would strongly encourage GMU to include a diversity of intellectual traditions in the Just Societies curriculum. Specifically include classes which talk about the philosophies of the Enlightenment which lead to the Declaration of Independence and US Constitution.

Please also include classes which have evidence-based reviews of progressive policies. For example, a class might include a review of the experiences of various immigrant waves from 1620 to today with comparisons of the outcomes for various groups. One might also include, say, a review of affirmative action policies since 1970 with evidence-based reviews of their costs and effectiveness. Finally, we are often told "diverse organizations are stronger than non-diverse ones". A class drilling to the evidence behind this assertion (and, naturally, contradicting it) would be quite beneficial.

You want your students well equipped to enter the larger American community. One can't do that unless one is exposed to evidence and arguments both in favor of and in opposition to one's preferred viewpoint. Please make sure your diversity programs are truly diverse in thought.

**68. Name:** James H. Finkelstein **Mason Affiliation:** Professor Emeritus of Public Policy

**Comment:** Dear Member of the BOV:

My name is Jim Finkelstein. I worked at Mason from 1989 - 2016 in various academic administrative roles, the longest being the founding Vice Dean for the School of Public Policy, now part of the Schar School of Policy and Government. I am writing to express my profound concern regarding the unwarranted and inappropriate interference of certain BOV members in the curriculum, specifically a request by a BOV member to review the syllabi of courses approved for the Mason Core. In my 30+ years as an academic administrator at Ohio State, NYU, and Mason, such a request is unprecedented. It is especially concerning because the syllabi requested were solely those for the newly approved Just Societies requirement in the Mason Core. This echoes the concerns of certain BOV members regarding

DEI staffing and programming at Mason. There can be no doubt about the motivation for focusing on these courses.

But perhaps more important is the BOV's disregard for its only policies and procedures. At its July 28, 2023 meeting, the BOV adopted the following Document and Records Request Policy. The policy states: In order to facilitate the orderly transaction of business, and to make the most efficient use of administrative staff, it is the policy of this Board that all requests by individual members for University documents and records, subject to review by Counsel for disclosability, shall be directed to the Secretary of the Board of Visitors or to the Secretary pro tem in the absence of the Secretary of the Board of Visitors.

It appears that the request for these syllabi was not made in compliance with this policy. If that is true, the BOV should take action against the member who made this request.

Further, the BOV should know that in accordance with University Policy 4002, course materials, including syllabi, are owned by the creator, i.e., the faculty member. Neither the BOV nor the university administration have the right to publish these materials without prior permission of the faculty member. Publishing these syllabi in the BOV meeting materials violates university policy.

I urge the BOV to reaffirm the faculty's primary responsibility for the curriculum and prevent its members from unwarranted interference.

Respectfully,

James H. Finkelstein, Ph.D.

Professor Emeritus of Public Policy

**69. Name:** Andrea Mays **Mason Affiliation:** Academic at another state university

**Comment:** This is a terrible idea. Is the university a place for inquiry or indoctrination? Will the views presented in such a forum reflect the diverse views of the community of taxpayers who fund this institution?

**70. Name:** Catherine E Saunders **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** I am writing to express my concern at the Academic Programs, Diversity, and University Community Committee's inquiry into the Just Societies flag for Core Curriculum classes. While it is important for BOV committees to be informed about the academic work of the university, it is also important that members of the BOV respect faculty curricular-development processes (which in this case were both careful and extended) and faculty expertise regarding curriculum. This inquiry, and especially the associated examination of syllabi for individual classes, strikes me as overstepping that boundary.

**71. Name:** Geoff Keller **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** On your construction website it has recently been updated after Dr Washington's letter to the community came out. The files posted on that website have dates on them that imply they have been on the website since those dates. However, when we look at the code behind the site we can see that these files were only added in February of 2024. This is purposely misleading to make the public believe you have been transparent throughout this process. Please fix this on the website to reflect the dates you posted the items like every other website does.

**72. Name:** Shelley Reid **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** I have been involved in revisions to the Mason Core for five years. We have followed both the rules and the spirit of "faculty design the curriculum" throughout this process. Faculty from across the university have participated in focus groups, unit-level meetings, task forces, and committees; we had extensive discussions in Faculty Senate leading to a sequence of approval votes; and we have from that produced the best curriculum possible for Mason students. This curriculum was approved by the BoV in

its role of providing general oversight. There is no need for further consultation, delay, or revision to courses before they open for enrollment in fall 2024.

**73. Name:** Bob Bolster **Mason Affiliation:** North Hill resident

**Comment:** As a North Hill resident, adjacent to the GMU campus and less than a quarter mile from the proposed cricket/baseball stadium, I would like to know how many, if any, members of the Board of Visitors (BOV) live in proximity to GMU? Does the BOV have any skin in the game or is it their intent to make a decision impacting hundreds of families and then have no clue regarding the daily impact on adjacent neighborhoods.

Has anyone on the BOV attended a GMU baseball game? I've attended several. The average attendance is less than 100 people. This isn't Field of Dreams where if you build it, they will come. GMU does not need, nor can it fill a stadium of 3000 - 5000 people.

I would ask the BOV to exercise some common sense. The adjacent neighborhoods are adamantly against the project. The students are not supportive. It doesn't benefit the GMU community.

If you want to propose something that the local community and student body will support - upgrade Eagle Arena.

Bob Bolster

**74. Name:** Jen Watsky **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** I will email my comments as they exceed the character limit.

**75. Name:** Sarah Blake Semendinger **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** My comments today express my concern over leasing land to a major league cricket team, the Washington Freedom, owned by Sanjay Govil.

I am supportive of investments made to support George Mason's stated mission... To be an innovative and inclusive ACADEMIC Community. I am unclear however, how the leasing of land, and commercial development aligns with and supports the mission of GMU. I am genuinely concerned about the negative impacts this stadium will have on traffic, parking, noise, light pollution, and the environment. I am also concerned with the lack of transparency and how this stadium and other planned commercial development is inconsistent with the charter of an institute of learning. The Virginia State Constitution, Article X, Section 6.4 states that the land is to be used for literary, scientific, or educational purposes.

My questions are:

- How does this stadium support GMU's mission of an innovative and inclusive academic community?
- How is this stadium not a misuse of the property tax exemptions that GMU is provided by the state constitution and the taxpayers of Virginia?
- Why is the university not working with Fairfax City, Fairfax County or the State of Virginia on improvements they stated are required prior to any development?
- Why is the university not building the infrastructure required (parking spaces, bathrooms) to support a 10,000 seat stadium?
- How does GMU, Fairfax County, or Virginia benefit from a Maryland commercial enterprise leveraging the tax-exempt status of GMU to grow a private business?
- Why was there not a full board vote? (7 yes, 2 abstain, 7 absent)
- Why does the university claim it was an "unanimous" vote?
- Why was all discussion prior to the vote redacted from the minutes?
- Why has there been no community involvement?

I urge you to halt construction until a proper and thorough assessment of the plans are conducted.



<p><b>76. Name:</b> Scott Culberson <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Parent of prospective student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> My daughter has applied and been accepted for fall 2024 incoming freshman class. She is in the final days or finalizing college choice. It is with interest and concern what I hear about “just societies” orientation. GMU grabbed her interest because of commitment to diversity of thought and intellectual freedom. We are only considering institutions deeply committed to shunning indoctrination and woke virtue-signaling. Education means literally ‘to lead out of the darkness’. Your econ department has been a beacon for this sort of just, freeing intellectual pursuit. “Just Society” indoctrination, not so much. We hope you will reconsider and walk back this regressive over-reach.</p>
<p><b>77. Name:</b> Concerned faculty member <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Faculty</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Dear Mason BOV, As a faculty member, I am concerned about political interference into Mason's core curriculum. Academic freedom is critical to the health and well-being of our university, and Mason faculty--not political appointees--must retain control over Mason's curriculum.</p>
<p><b>78. Name:</b> Corinne Sorden <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> My comments were sent via email.</p>
<p><b>79. Name:</b> Krista Beenhouwer <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> GMU’s plan to leverage state-granted land for commercial gain, with no educational or scientific purpose, is an unethical move. The lack of planning, communications, and vague assurances are disingenuous. And the fact the BOV voted to proceed with seven (7) absent and two (2) abstaining is not an approval as far as reasonable people are concerned. If GMU needs a new baseball field, then fund it and construct it as a public college should...carefully and with fiscal responsibility. This unseemly attempt to woo business/cash with a commercial venture, sacrificing their primary responsibility to students, taxpayers and neighbors, is highly disappointing. It is not GMU’s role, as a public university, to enter into the sports arena construction business to possibly make a few quick bucks at the expense of their reputation. Stop the cricket stadium activity now and restart the process with a singular focus on whether this aligns with GMU’s mission, benefits the academic pursuits of the students, maintains a peaceful coexistence with neighbors, and represents an ethical, transparent and responsible use of taxpayer dollars and trust.</p>
<p><b>80. Name:</b> Richard Kain <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Member of the public, but pseudo student of two of your professors</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> I am avid fan, listener and reader of several of your faculty members. One of them alerted his readers to this proposed change. As the parent of two high School sophomores, naturally I was thinking of recommending they consider GMU until seeing this news. Why not stand out in the marketplace of colleges by accepting there may be different visions of justice? Challenge your students instead of indoctrinating? I am happy to pay private school tuitions to one of the few places remaining that does that. However, institutions which indoctrinate political beliefs not only won't get applications but in a just society should have their charitable status removed. I wish the board wisdom in your decision.</p>
<p><b>81. Name:</b> Jill Mobley <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> The decision by George Mason to place a stadium with the design potential to seat up to 35,000 people, as the one in New York State does, without any notification, public hearings, or adequate due diligence regarding its effect on the environment or existing infrastructure baffles the mind. George Mason intends to build a structure capable of seating tens of thousands atop existing parking areas with no intent to add additional parking. There is no benefit for the surrounding community in having a mega</p>

stadium used for cricket, a game that most have never heard of previously. Yet the surrounding community will bear the weight of this folly as they suffer increased traffic congestion, lose parking access in surrounding commercial areas as well as in their own neighborhood, and endure the noise pollution emanating from an open air mega stadium. George Mason's failure to plan should not deprive its neighbors of their right to quiet enjoyment of their property.

**82. Name:** Lynn Miller **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** As a Virginia taxpayer, an alumna of, and resident in a neighborhood near George Mason University, I wish to express my serious concerns regarding the proposed development of a cricket stadium on the Fairfax campus of GMU.

I am supportive of investments made to support GMU. Seeing the University grow and include various fields of study and opportunities for students is a great thing and coincides with the stated mission, to be an innovative and inclusive academic community.

I do not believe GMU should use state property and its special status as a state university to enable the commercial development of a 10,000 seat cricket stadium to be built in the midst of residential communities without adequate infrastructure to support it.

Utilizing the state's tax-exempt status for commercial use is unethical and goes against GMU's own mission statement.

Saying on your website that the stadium and GMU will conform to the county's noise and lighting ordinances is a falsehood. We see this with your openly flaunting the 2003 Fairfax County dark skies at night initiative and accompanying ordinance with the billboard that lights up the sky far above the 180 degree horizontal plane and partially blocks the view of the traffic signal at the intersection of Braddock and Sideburn Roads.

I request that you review the Virginia State Constitution, Article X, Section 6.4 that states that the land is to be used for literary, scientific, or educational purposes, remember the GMU mission statement, and recognize you are setting an example for the students in your charge. Do the right thing and communicate with the neighbors that will be affected, provide the needed infrastructure, mitigate environmental damage, and do not provide a tax-free land lease to a commercial entity.

**83. Name:** Bethany Letiecq **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** There appears to be a concerted movement to target the Just Societies "flagged" courses of the Mason core because they engage students to critically think about issues of diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) across a variety of disciplinary topics. This appears to coincide with recent Heritage Foundation pieces suggesting Mason has a "DEI" problem. A recent National Review pub focusing on the Just Societies flagged courses asked: "What do you suppose would happen if a GMU professor proposed a course on the theme that the most just society would be one with a minimal government?" (see <https://www.nationalreview.com/corner/core-education-at-george-mason-u-just-societies/>)

To the last point, I'd like to share with the BOV (and my Mason colleagues, students, alum, and the general public) more about the process for core course approval at Mason. The Mason Core Committee (MCC) was established to oversee all matters concerning the Mason Core. According to the MCC webpage (<https://masoncore.gmu.edu/about-mason-core/mason-core-committee/>), "For all foundation, exploration, and integration Mason Core requirements, the Committee will approve courses to fulfill these requirements." Specifically, "the Committee will develop procedures for assessing, reviewing, and recertifying courses that carry a Mason Core attribute. Utilizing Mason Core assessment data, the

committee will review and revise, as necessary, the overall structure and outcomes of the Mason Core. The Committee will review and approve procedures used to substitute or waive Mason Core requirements. The Committee will confer with the Faculty Senate Committee on Academic Policies when changes to Mason Core requirements impact the entire university and/or would be a substantive change to the university catalog. The Committee will provide an annual report to the Faculty Senate. The report shall include a) The courses approved for inclusion in or removed from the Mason Core, and b) Changes in the criteria for the Mason Core."

The MCC comprises 14 voting members: Eight faculty elected by the Faculty Senate for staggered three-year terms ensuring that at least 6 academic units are represented; four faculty appointed by the Provost; the Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education; and one student elected by the Student Senate.

You'll note that the majority of MCC members are faculty. That is because the Mason Faculty Handbook assigns the primary responsibility for the curriculum to the faculty, stating, "They [the faculty] have primary responsibility for such academic matters as unit reorganization, the design of programs, development and alteration of the curriculum, standards for admission to programs, and requirements in the major." This is in accord with the standards set forth by American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Since its founding in 1915, the AAUP has developed the standards and procedures that maintain quality in education and advance academic freedom and shared governance across US colleges and universities. According to the AAUP's Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities, "The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process."

The AAUP is likewise clear that it is inappropriate for governing boards to be involved in or require changes to university curricula. The university functions well when faculty, administrators, and governing boards each perform their prescribed roles and uphold their respective commitments. I urge the BOV to uphold its commitments to Mason and support the faculty in performing their roles and carrying out their responsibilities to ensure Mason remains the gem that it is.

**84. Name:** Samirah Alkassim **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** I'm concerned about potential overreach of powers from the BOV regarding faculty's syllabi, particularly those that enjoin a "just societies" perspective. Faculty are the experts in their academic fields. They are neither sheep adhering to an agenda nor conspiring to brainwash students towards specific political orientations. Let faculty do what they do best and leave their syllabi alone

**85. Name:** Alexander Monea **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** It would be unprecedented for the Board of Visitors to intervene in matters of curriculum at George Mason University and, in my opinion, would set a bad precedent going forward. Further, the BOV would be doing so while chasing a red herring. Despite attempts to politicize the 'just societies' course designation as part of the ongoing culture wars, the just societies course designation seems to me to be relatively banal and open-ended. Faculty were consulted at every step - I heard about the revisions to Mason Core and had my opinions solicited repeatedly in both faculty senate and CHSS meetings. While I can imagine an individual faculty member missing the information, the idea that whole departments were excluded from the discussion seems implausible. Also, the idea that our curriculum has to align with tax payers' beliefs seems like a bad standard to set for evaluating curriculum. We should and do teach many things that run counter to tax payers' firmly held and reasonable beliefs (on both sides

of the political spectrum and in terms of apolitical issues as well). University curriculum should be established by faculty experts on a discipline-by-discipline basis following proper procedures in our bylaws and handbooks. As far as I'm aware, the process for creating the just societies flag was done by the book. The just societies designation should only be changed by the book - i.e. by faculty experts on a discipline-by-discipline basis following proper procedures from our bylaws and handbooks.

**86. Name:** Bijan Namvar **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** We were told that GMU will be meeting with community by President Washington to discuss community concerns. Is GMU planning on having this meeting before or after ground breaking of the new stadium? If it's after it doesn't instill confidence the university is serious to work with the community..

**87. Name:** Shauna Rigaud **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** The "Just Societies" Tag was voted on by the faculty as part of years of demands from students who wanted a more inclusive curriculum. A group of faculty from various disciplines worked together to develop learning outcomes that would enhance our student's understanding of the world. The tag is representative of shared governance which is at the core of our academic standards and must be protected.

**88. Name:** Brendan Brown **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** 22 February 2023

4898 Oakcrest Dr, Fairfax VA 22030

Mr. Brendan Brown

Subject: BOV Approval of Professional Cricket Field

Dear GMU Board of Visitors,

My young family has lived in North Hill, just south of GMU and Braddock Rd, for over ten years. I graduated from GMU's School of Business with an MBA in 2016, a satisfied user of the GI Bill. I'm grateful I completed my degree at my hometown school, and I want to continue to enjoy raising our kids next to GMU. I want a positive view of Mason to be something that my family and neighbors feel proud to discuss with friends. It's at risk.

I am strongly opposed to the construction of the temporary cricket stadium on West Campus. Our family was shocked to discover through neighbors' word of mouth, that such a large construction project was seemingly approved outside the scrutiny of your neighbors. This project and stadium will negatively impact our daily lives, our neighborhood experience, and the public's impression of GMU. Mason's own master Transportation Plan calls out significant road and infrastructure improvements that are necessary for such a large capital improvement to the West Campus. And yet no improvements are approved or planned.

The Board of Visitors' approval of a ground lease to the Washington Freedom and its owner, Sanjay Govil, for a professional 10,000 seat cricket stadium, strikes me as such a monumental capital project, that it's shocking we haven't seen large billboard announcements and a public messaging campaign inviting residents to on-campus town halls. You must understand, no matter what the University is likely discussing internally, your immediate neighbors had no idea that this project was underway. The lack of transparency, community outreach, and GMU executives' apparent surprise at the recent public backlash, can only bring me to the conclusion that Mason and Mr. Govil have operated in a bubble, rushing to the conclusion of the plan and securing a large financial investment. Mr. Govil is taking advantage of the University's state land status and tax exempt status to fast-track his project and push the construction schedule in preparation for the Cricket World Cup friendlies in Summer 2024. Even if local permits and local engagement are not required, GMU's decision to not lead this project with deliberate, obvious, and

aggressive public outreach, confirms that GMU is satisfied to act on its own, without even inviting oversight from state and local governments, or the surrounding public. Our fellow Northern Virginians in Arlington are demonstrating what real public engagement looks like when a major sports team and facility is being considered for construction. We don't get that opportunity, because Mason is going alone.

As an alumnus, I am embarrassed. As a Fairfax County and Virginia taxpayer, I'm furious at another hush-hush government deal not open to extreme scrutiny and transparency. As your neighbor, I'm disgusted that the impact of such a large project would even be considered without a thorough, open, and accessible outreach to the residents around the GMU campus.

My family and our neighbors have seen the reactionary steps that GMU President Washington, Branding Officer Paul Allvin, and the public relations team have taken in the last few days – a press statement, a Fox 5 TV interview, and a rush to update the West Campus construction website. We're not fooled. The University is attempting damage control, trying to only emphasize the "temporary" status of the \$20 million investment by Mr. Govil. This is not a project that is "down the road."

Your neighbors deserve better, and a halt to this project. Mr. Govil, a Potomac, MD resident, has had your ear and your eyes with his investment. It's time to give your neighbors and Virginians an opportunity to engage and voice their concerns. Stop the project. Hold in person town halls. Be accountable.

I look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Brendan Brown

**89. Name:** Timothy Shaun Hammond **Mason Affiliation:** Public/Taxpayer

**Comment:** The imposition of political views under the guise of "the workplace" is not just fundamentally dishonest but authoritarian and illiberal. That is seeks to impose ill-ddfined, subjective and ultimately collectivist, Left-wing ideas is totalitarian. That the faculty are too cowardly and too weak to defend their political views and opinions in a competitive marketplace of ideas is pathetic. You have become a sad rabble of village priests forcing dogma on young people.

**90. Name:** Jen Watsky **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** Dear GMU BOV,

I am writing to provide an addendum to my previous letter regarding GMU's handling of the proposed cricket stadium project on its West Campus. In addition to my previous concerns, I want to highlight specific instances where GMU has unfairly used its position to shelter Mr. Sanjay Govil, the primary beneficiary of this project:

\* Exemption from Local Oversight: By allowing Govil to lease land from GMU for the stadium, the university shields him from local regulations and oversight that would otherwise apply to such development projects.

\* Lack of Transparency: GMU's involvement in the stadium deal lacks transparency, as evidenced by undisclosed meetings and undisclosed funding sources for events involving Govil, GMU President Gregory Washington, and others.

\* Civil Rights Violation: The university's approval of the stadium construction on Mason property effectively circumvents citizens' rights to exercise local oversight, governance, and taxation, as compared to similar developments in neighboring jurisdictions.

\* Neglecting Community Concerns: GMU has disregarded valid concerns raised by community members regarding traffic congestion, noise pollution, and other negative impacts of the stadium project.

\* **Prioritizing Personal Interests:** The cozy relationship between Govil, university officials, and cricket organizations suggests that personal interests are being prioritized over the well-being and interests of the broader community.

\* **Misuse of State Authority:** GMU's misuse of exemptions provided by the state demonstrates a disregard for the intended purpose of those exemptions and calls into question the university's commitment to ethical conduct and public accountability.

\* **Lack of Student Input:** The decision to proceed with the stadium project appears to have been made without sufficient input from the student body, whose interests should be a primary consideration for the university administration.

\* **Potential Financial Impropriety:** The financial arrangements and incentives involved in the stadium deal raise concerns about potential conflicts of interest and financial impropriety, particularly given the lack of transparency surrounding funding sources and expenditures.

\* **Failure to Consider Alternatives:** GMU has failed to adequately explore alternative options for meeting the needs of the university and the community, such as locating the stadium elsewhere or pursuing partnerships that align more closely with the university's educational mission.

\* **Disregard for Public Accountability:** The university's actions in facilitating the stadium project demonstrate a disregard for principles of public accountability and transparency, undermining trust in GMU's leadership and decision-making processes

These actions raise serious ethical concerns and warrant further scrutiny from all stakeholders involved.

Sincerely,  
Jen Watsky

**91. Name:** Maziar Namvar **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** Adequate planning has not been done for parking, traffic, and noise.  
Please provide information on how much parking is being created to provide for the stadium attendees  
Please provide information on what is being done to handle the increased traffic on Braddock Road, as well as the wait times for the red light signals at the intersection of Braddock Road and Prestwick Drive  
Please provide how you are going to prevent stadium attendees from parking in residential areas surrounding the stadium  
Please provide information on the maximum noise levels Created by the stadium, and the hours which that noise will be allowed.

**92. Name:** Lorraine Rowe **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** What is the maximum noise levels allowed from Stadium into nearby communities? What is the plan if noise levels are exceeded?  
How much money is GMU allocating to improve the roads before the first event is held at stadium? What are the new roads that will be constructed before the first event at the stadium? What road improvements have been committed too by GMU as part of new stadium?  
It is my understanding that the stadium is being built over an existing parking lot this decreasing available parking at GMU. How many net new parking spots has GMU committed to build before any event is held at stadium? What is the plan to protect communities becoming the new parking lot for stadium events?  
Will GMU ever be holding overlapping events at Eagle Areva and the new stadium? If so what is the traffic plan to minimize impact to traffic?

**93. Name:** Lawrence Hurvitz **Mason Affiliation:** Contributor

**Comment:** I just wrote a check for 500 to your university.  
I'm sorry I already mailed it.  
You will see no support from me in the future if you enact this policy.

**94. Name:** Trent Wahl **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** I am a Virginia taxpayer and resident of Fairfax County's Springfield District. I am opposed to the building of the temporary cricket stadium on the George Mason University West Campus. I contend that the George Mason Board of Visitors are violating my civil rights. I will explain why. In Northern Virginia, there are currently two professional sports franchises trying to build facilities for their teams. The owner of the Washington Capitals and Washington Wizards is seeking to build an arena in Alexandria. The owner of the Washington Freedom is seeking to build a stadium in Fairfax. In Alexandria, the local citizens are exercising their rights of local oversight, governance, and taxation. The owner must comply with local regulations that control development. In Fairfax, the local citizens are being prevented from exercising their rights because the team owner is leasing land from George Mason University which has the state-granted authority to circumvent much of the local oversight, governance, and taxation. Allow me to reiterate. George Mason University is not building the stadium. They are merely leasing a plot of land. The owner of the professional sports franchise is the one building the stadium. He is being shielded by GMU and is not required to comply with local regulations that control development. The George Mason University Board of Visitors by virtue of approving the construction of this stadium on Mason property, have taken away my right as a citizen to exercise the same oversight, governance, and taxation that the citizens of Alexandria are exercising. I contend that the George Mason Board of Visitors has overstepped their bounds in this instance. They are misusing the exemptions provided to them by the state and thereby violating my civil rights. I request that the Board of Visitors immediately rescind the ground lease for the stadium or at least halt construction until there is a ruling by the Virginia Attorney General.

**95. Name:** Alisha Gardner **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** Looking at the BOV website, meetings in November 2023, September 2023, July 2023, May 2023, April 2023, February 2023, and December 2022, all consistently had a twenty-minute allowance for oral public comments. I find it odd how there used to be time dedicated for oral comments during past meetings but now, assumingly because of the pushback from the community about the cricket/baseball stadium, the BOV suddenly nixed oral public comments.

Can you explain this?

Why are you afraid of hearing from the community?

How did this pet project of Mr. Washington's get approved?

Why didn't all board members vote?

The community deserves answers! Not lip service like the open letter.

**96. Name:** Maria Alejandra Romero Cuesta **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** The 'Just Societies' program is essential for students educations. It gives them a basis of worldview knowledge and perspectives that capacitates them to join the workforce. Moreover, it makes them an educated human and breaks stereotypes about average Americans who are not aware of whats happening around the world. This is coming from an international student who has lived in four countries and have had the opportunity to learn and adopt an international perspective. This has made me thrive in all the spaces I participate and has gotten me many job opportunities and offers in the United States and other countries. I only wish the same for all students at Mason. Therefore, I highly encourage you on

behalf of all students to really value this program that will not just benefit students, but the united states and the whole world. Thank you!

**97. Name:** Brian Reymann **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** I am President of the Brecon Ridge Community Council, a residential community off Braddock Road and .5 miles west of the West Campus entrance. Our community was caught by surprise by this enormous development that will have profound impact on traffic and our residents quality of life. The notion that the University needs such a large facility for cricket, a sport that is not part of the NCAA umbrella, is frankly absurd. It is clear that the owners of Major League Cricket (many of whom also sponsor National Collegiate Cricket Association) have found a willing partner in George Mason University to donate land for the primary benefit of a private entity. That a majority of the cricket field use will come Thursday through Sunday, from June through August, when school is out of session, supports this conclusion.

There is no need for any University in this country to have an on-campus 10,000 person stadium for cricket. Absolutely none. Remove the wealthy patronage of MLC and the proposal would be summarily rejected as farcical. Yet here we are.

The thought of thousands of cricket fans pouring into an already congested Braddock Road, 8 to 10 weekends a year all Summer long, is an irresponsible proposition that provides no benefit to anyone other than Major League Cricket.

Myself and our community are stridently against this project.

**98. Name:** Zayd Hamid **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** I served as the student representative on the Mason Core Committee from December 2021 to April 2022, facilitating the formulation and passage of Global Contexts and Just Societies through the Faculty Senate.

Serving in this capacity has given me unique, valuable insights into the importance of education policy administration and the importance of Just Societies content within the framework of general education. Just Societies content requires defining "key terms related to justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion as related to this course's field/discipline and use those terms to engage meaningfully with peers about course issues" and "articulate obstacles to justice and equity, and strategies for addressing them, in response to local, national, and/or global issues in the field/discipline."

This aligns neatly with the National Association for College and Employers' key career competency of Equity & Inclusion. This competency is one of eight identified as a critical capacity that employers expect modern employees to have. And it defines this competency as employees demonstrating "the awareness, attitude, knowledge, and skills required to equitably engage and include people from different local and global cultures. Engage in anti-racist practices that actively challenge the systems, structures, and policies of racism."

So, speaking as a former Mason Core representative and upcoming graduate, I support the inclusion of Just Societies within the general education curriculum to prepare future generations of students to succeed in the workforce. This will result in a higher return on investment for Mason graduates, preparing alumni to achieve positive career outcomes.

**99. Name:** Moloud Namvar **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** What commitments has GMU made to the professional league in exchange for the money they received for the stadium?

What is the money split between GMU and the professional league for revenue generated from the stadium project?



Were GMU students ever consulted on the desirability of this project over other initiatives that could benefit students?

**100. Name:** Jennifer Samaine Lockwood **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** George Mason University faculty members, which is to say professional educators and field specialists who have dedicated themselves to excellence in public education in the Commonwealth of Virginia, should determine the University's curriculum. Political appointees and state-level politics should not determine or influence the University's curriculum. Undergraduate students at George Mason deserve a general education informed by research-based best practices in higher education. A strong general education encourages curiosity, ethical conduct, critical thinking, and self-development. A strong general education offers real-world opportunities for the student to engage in meaning making across a range of disciplines using a range of methodologies. A strong general education introduces the skills of civil engagement with people across a range of identities and backgrounds. A strong general education equips all students to engage and thrive in local, regional, national, and global communities.

**101. Name:** Callie Largent **Mason Affiliation:** Part of the surrounding neighborhood

**Comment:** I recently became aware of plans to build a 10,000+ seat capacity open air cricket stadium, which is being funded by a Maryland businessman - unconnected to the university community - for the purposes of housing his professional DC cricket team. This in no way aligns with the educational mission of this Virginia university stated in its charter, nor does it fulfill what you claim is a "recreational void" in Fairfax. We have plenty of parks and recreational facilities. Cricket is not even a sport the university even engages in, and the stadium is certainly not "temporary" as you have asserted to assuage community members not to push back on this proposed development. No one in their right mind will spend millions to build a stadium they plan to subsequently tear down, and you have mentioned in other press releases the objective is for it to become something permanent that will also host "entertainment," which could include loud concerts that disrupt the peace of the surrounding neighborhoods. You are also pitching its development under the auspices that the baseball team can use the stadium, but you have funds for improvements to benefit student athletes directly.

What this comes down to is a Maryland businessman sees an easy way to exploit the university's tax-exempt status for the purpose of profitable commercial development as well as by-pass the county's normal approval processes. The university in turn sees dollar signs, i.e. funding it does not have to work to acquire. This is an incredibly appalling and unethical way to approach this project, and the quiet nature with which you have advanced this proposal demonstrates you anticipated public backlash, especially from surrounding communities that would be negatively impacted when it comes to traffic as well as noise and light pollution. We can already easily hear the announcer blocks away for the small events you hold at your outdoor stadium. I would not have purchased a home in Fairfax Villa so close to university land if I actually thought GMU would entertain building a large stadium for a DC team and push for disruptive commercial development that may stretch on for years much like the University One Housing Project. The Fairfax County police already went over there a couple times this week to ticket workers and students parking in the turn lane on to Braddock road which routinely impairs the flow of traffic when school lets out.

Lastly, the International Cricket Council (ICC) already attempted and failed to build a "temporary" stadium in Bronx, NY on public park land after backlash from the community and the potential for litigation. Community leaders actually listened to the people that would be impacted, and ICC found an alternate location that was more suitable. Reviewing GMU's master plan for development released in 2018, GMU asserted future development was aimed at increasing the capacity for 10,000 more students, not 10,000 stadium seats for cricket aficionados. By all means, add more educational buildings and

facilities that are in line with your stated educational vision, but a large cricket stadium for international competitions is absurd (and you know this). If you move forward with this highly unethical plan to develop the land on west campus despite the community opposition, I will be exploring avenues with lawyers through which I can fight this. I strongly suggest you re-examine the auspices under which you originally acquired the land you want a Maryland businessman to use for a cricket stadium and your previously stated intent to improve the land. You have certain moral and legal obligations to the entity from which you acquired the land, which should not be handed over to an out-of-state private developer.

**102. Name:** Rebecca Bushway **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** I support faculty control over their curriculum. As a doctoral student with an expectation of teaching in higher education, I have deep reservations about any board exerting influence over course content. Our faculty are experts in their fields. The BOV are not.

**103. Name:** Nichole Smith **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** I am concerned about the potential political interference from the BOV towards the faculty. Academic freedom is imperative to maintain the integrity of the university

**104. Name:** Alexia Ferguson **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** Masons curriculum should not be determined by political appointees but by staff who are with students on a daily basis and understand our needs! Faculty live the university mission and build curriculums that are reflective of university values, student identities, and experiences. Let Mason faculty determine the curriculum!

**105. Name:** Alexia Ferguson **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** Masons faculty recognize the lived experiences and identities of students. They acknowledge and advocate for the skills and outcomes that will help us succeed interpersonally and in our careers. They live the university mission. Masons curriculum must be determined by its faculty, not political appointees who have agendas that are not representative of student needs, values, and experiences!

**106. Name:** Alexia Ferguson **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** To create and push for a curriculum that does not teach students about our global society (language, culture, geographical politics, diverse identities) is to deny the realities that students have. Mason students come from all over the world, they have different races, cultures, speak different languages. To deny all students the opportunity to learn about these realities is a dismissal of most students and says they are wrong, they don't matter, they have no power. Masons faculty elevate student voices and experiences. They SEE us for the humans we are. Let Mason faculty control our curriculum!

**107. Name:** Elizabeth DeMulder **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** I support academic freedom and Just Societies.

**108. Name:** Virginia Hoy **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** I am a strong supporter of Just Societies classes.

**109. Name:** Rachel Dorsa **Mason Affiliation:** Staff

**Comment:** I strongly support not only the Just Societies curriculum but fully embracing DEI values throughout higher education. It is of absolutely no harm to any one to further educate with facts, allowing for greater dialogue and understanding. Questioning the expansion of resources, inclusion, and service to previously excluded people and spaces serves only to protect oppressive systems. We don't want oppressive systems.

**110. Name:** Carlos Chism **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** I am writing with concern about attempts from the Board to interfere with Mason's curriculum, which under the faculty handbook is determined by faculty, not the board.

<b>111. Name:</b> Robert B. Webb, Chair of North Hill Architectural Review Board <b>Mason Affiliation:</b>
<b>Comment:</b> Comments sent via email
<b>112. Name:</b> Susan Grunder <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student
<b>Comment:</b> I am supportive of GMU faculty and giving them the academic freedom to develop curriculum. I support the implementation of the Just Societies curriculum which was carefully developed for the wellbeing of our students. I am opposed to BOV overreach. Academic freedom is an essential foundation of any university.
<b>113. Name:</b> Sarah Jones <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member
<b>Comment:</b> I am in total support of GMU developing updated, state of the art athletic facilities on its West Campus. I will be your cheerleader, if that is what you are doing! My daughter runs track at William and Mary and we were recently in the Field House, which we had never visited previously despite both my husband and me being almost lifelong residents of Fairfax County. It's great that GMU has that indoor track, but it's really outdated. Our two younger kids participate in high school track. We would LOVE for GMU to update that facility, as part of a bigger sports facility update/growth process on the West Campus, including the cricket and baseball stadium. A complex of modern athletic facilities that are available to GMU students, other college students, and the huge high school and youth sports market in Northern Virginia could be a HUGE growth vehicle for GMU, enhancing its status as a rapidly growing university and a big part of the Northern Virginia community. In order for this to work, it has to be a win-win, though. If NOVA families knew that GMU was building a sports complex that would be available to NOVA families with kids who participate in sports - such as track families like ours who regularly travel to the Sports and Learning Complex in MD for meets, soccer families who travel to the SoccerPlex in MD, etc. - then there might be more community support for what it looks to me like GMU might be doing to build a bigger sports complex, with the cricket/baseball field as a start. Obviously better surrounding roads and parking facilities would be needed - just the assurance of that is important. Make this a true community growth project. Explain the long-term plan (if there is one - hopefully). Build ties with the NOVA community. Outreach, PR, Mason Nation - this is so do-able with good communications and community partnership. We have visited the sports facilities at Liberty University many times. Liberty has lots of money, but NOVA families are SO invested in sports for their kids. If GMU had solid sports facilities available to the larger community, that would be amazing for building ties with GMU as part of our community. It's a huge university right in our backyard, but we barely know it. Sports facilities would be a great bridge builder with the community, but it has to be well-planned and executed, including great communication. It totally can be done.
<b>114. Name:</b> Erin Fay <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student
<b>Comment:</b> I am strongly in favor of faculty independence and ownership of their course curriculum. I support the Just Societies core as integral to the development of a global, thoughtful, and civic-minded student body. Faculty academic freedoms are a foundation of higher education in the US.
<b>115. Name:</b> Eden Langston <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student and staff
<b>Comment:</b> As a PhD student I firmly believe that that the BOV and other institutional entities should have no influence on or in faculty coursework, curriculum development and course implementation. It is of the utmost necessity that faculty's academic freedom is protected and upheld by the institution. Just societies coursework had been developed and implemented with the well being of students in mind as well as for students ongoing participation in an ever evolving global society.
<b>116. Name:</b> GMU Coalition for Palestine <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student
<b>Comment:</b> DIVEST FROM DEATH. DIVEST FROM DEATH. DIVEST FROM DEATH.
<b>117. Name:</b> GMU Coalition for Palestine <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student

**Comment:** DIVEST FROM DEATH DIVEST FROM DEATH DIVEST FROM DEATH DIVEST FROM DEATH DIVEST FROM DEATH DIVEST FROM DEATH DIVEST FROM DEATH DIVEST FROM DEATH

**118. Name:** GMU COALITION FOR PALESTINE **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** DIVEST FROM DEATH

**119. Name:** Tim Gibson **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** As a Mason faculty member and the President of GMU-AAUP, I am deeply concerned by the BOV's request to review syllabi related to the new Just Societies requirement in the Mason Core. The review of curriculum stands far outside the proper remit of the governing board. Faculty experts, who have invested years into developing disciplinary expertise, set the curriculum at Mason. This is not a role that can be, or should be, played by political appointees.

In short, faculty, not appointed administrators or governance boards, should be in charge of Mason's curriculum. Faculty are professional academics and educators. We have spent years developing deep expertise in our disciplines. We conduct research that pushes knowledge forward, and we work with students every day. On these points, the 1966 AAUP Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities could not be more clear:

“The faculty has primary responsibility for such fundamental areas as curriculum, subject matter and methods of instruction, research, faculty status, and those aspects of student life which relate to the educational process. On these matters the power of review or final decision lodged in the governing board or delegated by it to the president should be exercised adversely only in exceptional circumstances, and for reasons communicated to the faculty. It is desirable that the faculty should, following such communication, have opportunity for further consideration and further transmittal of its views to the president or board...[In addition,] the faculty sets the requirements for the degrees offered in course, determines when the requirements have been met, and authorizes the president and board to grant the degrees thus achieved.”

I urge the Board to respect decades of tradition and practice in higher education that rightly gives authority over the curriculum to faculty with disciplinary expertise.

Sincerely,

Dr. Timothy Gibson

Associate Professor

George Mason University

President, GMU-AAUP

**120. Name:** Laura Buckwald **Mason Affiliation:** Faculty

**Comment:** It has come to my attention that the Board of Visitors has requested the syllabi for GMU courses for their review. This is a gross overreach of the BOV's authorities and purpose. Curriculum is developed by the faculty and the faculty alone because we are the experts in our field; the BOV members are not experts and do not have the qualifications to make judgments on the curriculum. As faculty work with students every day, we are in the best position to understand the needs of the students and how to prepare them to function well in the world they will be entering on graduation. You are therefore requested to cease efforts to examine any and all course syllabi.

<p><b>121. Name:</b> GMU COALITION FOR PALESTINE <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> We demand that the university divest from death immediately. Our demands are as follows;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Cease all investments in the the Industrials sector</li> <li>2. End all university trips to Occupied Palestine</li> <li>3. Halt all Corporate Partnerships with defense contractors</li> </ol> <p>As you silently brush past the pain and suffering of the Gazan people, we hold you accountable as genocidal actors committing violence against innocent Palestinians. We will continue to hold you all accountable until you take action and end your shameful acts against the people of Palestine. From the river to the sea, Palestine will be free.</p>
<p><b>122. Name:</b> Jennifer Simons <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> I would like to state my support for faculty academic freedom and the just societies curriculum. Faculty, not political appointees, should set the curriculum at Mason. The board's overreach regarding tenure and the just societies curriculum is disheartening and goes against the academic freedom I sought when enrolling at GMU</p>
<p><b>123. Name:</b> GMU COALITION FOR PALESTINE <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> We are calling for the university to take a moral stance as a higher public institution. It is imperative that our university takes immediate action to cease investments in the industrial sector and halt further corporate partnerships and research with defense contractors. We are calling for the university to redirect these funds towards university needs and student success. We must prioritize resources for scholarships, mental health services, infrastructure improvements, and academic programs that enhance student learning and well-being, thereby fostering a more compassionate and supportive campus environment. It's time to redirect our funds as more than 30,000 people have been killed and our institutions play a role in this genocide. From the River to the Sea, Palestine will be free.</p>
<p><b>124. Name:</b> Pavithra Suresh <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> The Just societies designation is essential for allowing GMU to remain a competitive university and for it to fulfill its mission.</p>
<p><b>125. Name:</b> A. Torres <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Staff and PhD student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> As a student, I support academic freedom and faculty's ability to control the curriculum. I also appreciate the opportunity to choose from a variety of courses that align with my values, interests, and research. As a staff member, I want to afford students the same opportunity to choose courses from a diverse curriculum, which the just societies curriculum provides. Institutions and faculty must have the opportunity to freely develop a curriculum that benefits the mission of university, without fear of overreach from the BOV that their academic freedom will be eroded.</p>
<p><b>126. Name:</b> Alexia Ferguson <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Mason has processes in place to create a baseline expectation and requirement for courses. This is a proven process that works. For a political appointee to make a decision on Mason curriculum is to undermine the authority and expertise of the faculty and staff that are making decisions on courses, accreditation of courses, promoting and tenuring faculty, etc. Political appointees have an agenda while Mason faculties mission is to support student growth and development. Political appointees should not have a vote in determine Masons curriculum!</p>
<p><b>127. Name:</b> Rachael Goodman <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Faculty</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Faculty should determine the curriculum at a university. Academic freedom and faculty governance are essential to a great academic institution.</p>

<p><b>128. Name:</b> Rachel Williams <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> I'm honestly very confused about what is going on in GMU classrooms that is apparently a cause for such concern. Students are never required to agree with anyone or adopt anyone's viewpoint; as a social scientist, I think it's important that students know that people think differently. Acknowledging different ideas helps people not be afraid of others and connect person-to-person. When I was an undergraduate, I encountered lots of viewpoints I don't agree with. However, doing so prepared me for the workforce and for being an adult who could engage kindly with others. I see that process continuing for me as a graduate student here, and I hope undergraduates are having the same experience.</p>
<p><b>129. Name:</b> Bev Shaklee <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Faculty</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Faculty should determine the content of the curriculum and provide a wide variety of intellectually challenging resources that focus on critical/creative thinking, that is the basis of a great university. Academic freedom and shared governance are the strengths of GMU. There should be no place for using the content of the curriculum as a political football, we are an open and diverse university, everyone should be welcome and our curriculum should mirror that openness.</p>
<p><b>130. Name:</b> Greg Eiden <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> concerned citizen</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Please don't do this. The words describing your "Just Societies" courses sound ok, however, we all know what these initiatives are all about. They are about running down traditional communities and interests in the name of diversity and inclusion. This sentence in your website is telling, "In the context of globalization and the diversification of our own nation, it has become essential for employees and citizens to be able to interact effectively with others from all walks of life". When has this not been the case? When have we done it perfectly (never!)? I only know Mason (by the way, here's a fun exercise, replace "Mason" with "Mao" in your website announcement of this and it reads much more accurately) through online reading. But it seems to be a fine American institution well worth fighting for by all of us. Respectfully, Greg Eiden</p>
<p><b>131. Name:</b> Ray LeBlanc <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> The "Just Societies" cluster is what makes Mason unique, strong and innovative. This cluster (along with all curriculum) should never be altered or changed on a knee-jerk political panic.</p>
<p><b>132. Name:</b> Deborah Eggermann <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> I just finished watching the live stream of the Finance and Land Use Committee meeting. First off, thank you Chairman Pence for raising the lack of transparency around the cricket stadium. Thank you BOV Marguez for requesting a Task Force related to this project. I am greatly concerned with the pace at which the cricket stadium project is being pushed through. If the Chairman of the Land Use Committee has not seen a copy of the lease yet and he in attendance at the special session meeting in December where the lease was voted on, how was the BOV able to vote on something they hadn't seen yet? President Washington and other GMU employees have made a huge point of stating the cricket stadium is TEMPORARY. I keep hearing that over and over again. There is an undertone that the community is blowing things out of proportion due to the "temporary" nature of the stadium. However, in the committee meeting this morning, President Washington made the point that this isn't really a cricket stadium, but it's a baseball stadium that will benefit GMU students. So....is this just a temporary cricket stadium or is this a baseball stadium that will provide long term benefits to the GMU students? It cannot be both of these things.</p>

Additionally, I question how the construction of a cricket stadium, primarily benefiting a Maryland-based commercial enterprise and billionaire, aligns with GMU's mission of fostering innovation and inclusivity in academia. The Virginia State Constitution mandates that university land be used for literary, scientific, or educational purposes, yet the proposed stadium appears to prioritize commercial interests over educational objectives. It's already been clearly stated that the cricket matches are not GMU sponsored events and that GMU is not responsible for them. If that is the case, how does this support GMU's mission?

The lack of collaboration with Fairfax County or the State of Virginia on required improvements and infrastructure raises concerns about the project's impact on traffic, parking, noise, light pollution, and the environment. Without proper planning and assessment, the stadium risks exacerbating existing challenges faced by the surrounding community and compromising the quality of life for residents and students.

Moreover, the absence of essential elements such as adequate parking spaces and addressing wetland disruptions underscores the rushed and incomplete nature of the project. The EIR obtained in October 2023 made no mention of 10,000 plus attendees - it only discussed 3,000 plus some luxury boxes. GMU's decision to enter into a partnership for the construction of a "temporary" stadium, with the intention of it becoming permanent, raises concerns about long-term planning and the university's commitment to transparency.

The absence of meaningful community involvement and engagement from GMU leadership further undermines public trust and confidence in the university's governance. I request that the Board of Visitors halt the project until they 1) have public meetings where citizens can voice their opinions and 2) answer the public's questions.

**133. Name:** Maureen Vora **Mason Affiliation:** Student

**Comment:** As a student, I value academic freedom and diverse discourse that includes an array of perspectives and viewpoints. I also appreciate having GMU faculty use their knowledge and skills to develop courses that build student skills surrounding discussion of complex topics.

**134. Name:** Rabia Dada-Oughton **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** We are supportive of the new development and the stadium, as long as decisions are made sympathetically to the existing surrounding communities. For example, the local residents should be considered when putting in place amenities (groceries, cafes etc), and given access to some of the new university amenities such as subsidised access to any health facilities etc. Additionally it would be a positive gesture to allow local communities who will be negatively impacted by the construction (families with children, dog walkers, people who use the spaces for exercise etc) access to a limited number of university facilities to mitigate the inconvenience. Do please also keep in mind that local residents have just lived through several years of construction on One University - any future construction should certainly take into account the noise, traffic and pollution it creates for the people who live here.

While we welcome improvements to the Mason campus, it is important for the University to consider how it contributes to and improves the lives of local residents.

**135. Name:** JR Fletcher **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** There are over 8 billion versions of what is a "just" society. The number of versions equals the number of humans on the planet. You cannot be so naïve to think your way is best for us all. Please be better.

<p><b>136. Name:</b> Jack Fedak <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> I want to emphasize the importance of members of the Board of Visitors engaging with students, faculty, and staff. Unlike some universities, we don't let representatives from any of those groups vote. When it comes to considering whether or not to override decisions made at other levels of the university, recognize that members of the Board of Visitors are making decisions that they will not be affected by. Listening to discussion in the APDUC committee today, I saw very little regard for this element of the role. The perspectives of those affected by decisions should be paramount in consideration. I appreciate Visitor Witeck, and sometimes Rector Blackman, for making this effort, but I have rarely seen any other members try during my time here.</p>
<p><b>137. Name:</b> Jhumka Gupta <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Faculty</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Dear Mason BOV, As a faculty member, I am concerned about political interference into Mason's core curriculum. Academic freedom is critical to the health and well-being of our university, and Mason faculty--not political appointees--must retain control over Mason's curriculum. Sincerely, Jhumka Gupta</p>
<p><b>138. Name:</b> Sheima Amara <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Divest now!!!! Divest from death.</p>
<p><b>139. Name:</b> GMU Coalition for Palestine <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Please consider divesting endowment funds from defense contractors and allocating funds towards ethical university programs</p>
<p><b>140. Name:</b> Tara McDade <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> You owe it to your community members to discuss the west campus development and stadium project during your meeting today!</p>
<p><b>141. Name:</b> Tara McDade <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Please have the president and BOV take the opportunity to listen right now to the community who has taken the time to show up at this meeting today. First time in ages that you are not taking oral comments. You are not being transparent.</p>
<p><b>142. Name:</b> GMU coalition for Palestine <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> Divest from death. Divest NOW!</p>
<p><b>143. Name:</b> Alisha Gardner <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> I am attending this meeting in person. I would like to know why you decided NOT to allow public verbal comment at this particular meeting. Why are you afraid to discuss the real reason behind the rush in constructing this cricket field? Who on the BOV is personally benefiting from this? Why did 2 BOV members that did attend the rushed special meeting chose to abstain to vote on this? What promises were made to the Mr. Govil that you can slow this down until this done correctly &amp; with community &amp; student involvement? Why is Mr. Washington opposed to creating a task force to research this construction? I will ask, again, how does a private, professional cricket stadium align with the university's objectives? The students I have heard from have literally NO interest in this stadium &amp; are actually opposed to it. - how do you explain this?</p>



<p><b>144. Name:</b> Edmund Bedsworth <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Donor, Alum, Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> In his 14 February letter, President Washington promised it was the “start of what we intend to be a robust, sustained, and fruitful dialogue.” The silence from GMU since has been deafening. When Board member Wendy Marquez proposed a committee to advance the discussion, President Washington stated it wasn’t necessary. Seems the silence from GMU will continue to deafen its neighbors.</p>
<p><b>145. Name:</b> Erin Mancini <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> The comment below is in response to the proposed Cricket Stadium  To date, George Mason has not actually conducted any community outreach. They have not engaged the community to ask their input despite repeatedly making claims to the media that they intend to do so. This is reflected in the closed-door nature of today's meeting not allowing oral comment - instead community members’ only recourse is to submit comments via a private submission form and attend the meeting silently.  When asked for comment, GMU continues to push the “temporary” nature of the immediate development plans and refuse to engage the community on the larger scale development that is clearly planned. The stadium’s initial usage, as described in their submission to the Department of Environmental Quality, is exclusively for cricket matches - there is no mention of George Mason Baseball. This is not about creating a space for George Mason students and athletics, it is about a businessman taking advantage of state-entity land for private profit.  This is an endeavor to put a private business on state-owned land circumventing the normal development process and gaining tax-exempt status for themselves. This means that they will not pay for the strain this will put on local infrastructure, traffic, and the community overall. This includes the fact that they have acknowledged they do not have the infrastructure for match attendees to park at the games and plan to rely on city garages, the metro, etc. All of which are funded by taxpayer dollars, something this development will not contribute to and instead will be shouldered by the local community.  On private land, development like this would require community impact hearings, in-depth traffic studies, etc. giving the community the chance to provide their input on major development. This development is intentionally skirting that approach in an attempt to avoid the community pushback that development sometimes receives, such as the proposed Monumental Sports Complex in Alexandria and the Casino in Tysons.  Finally, the President’s Open Letter from the 14th asks the community to embrace Cricket, but this is not about the sport. The community’s concerns are about putting a loud, open air stadium with 10,000 plus seats in an area that already experiences extreme congestion, and again, lacks the infrastructure to safely get people to and from the games.</p>
<p><b>146. Name:</b> Alisha Gardner <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> You have a very large group of community members attending this meeting. Please consider allowing our voices to be heard today.</p>
<p><b>147. Name:</b> Nathan Mancini <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member</p> <p><b>Comment:</b> As a longtime resident of northern Virginia and community member whose parents live across the street from this proposed stadium, I am disappointed in the Board’s decision to try and green light this project and rush it through. As I’m sure we all know, graduation season causes monstrous traffic for this area of Braddock road. To combine the potential for a 10k+ stadium in this area is dangerous and not well-thought out. The road cannot handle the traffic without significant alteration of the Braddock/123 interchange per a traffic study from 2017. Surely traffic issues have only intensified in the wake of the pandemic.</p>

As a real estate development professional, I'm disheartened by the lack of outreach and concern for the surrounding community GMU purports to support. This traffic would likely result in hundreds of cars forgoing paying for parking, defeating much of the revenue these lots and garages mean to generate. Instead, people will be parking along the streets in these nice quiet neighborhoods along Braddock. This is not only a nuisance, but a safety issue. Crime often follows these large gatherings as criminals know there will be unattended vehicles. These residents should not have to sacrifice their comfort and safety for this half-baked stadium. This will also cause undue stress on the many pets who live in these neighborhoods. This area of Fairfax is not the location for such a stadium. This stadium needs to support transit-oriented development and promote economic growth in the areas where the Metro and other public transportation is expanding. Everyone will be driving to these games and the Uber/Lyft lines will be outrageous, again causing people to park and queue in these quiet, safe neighborhoods. Given the expansion of the Prince William Campus, I am surprised that this was not located there. Please listen to the community and find a better solution than this.

**148. Name:** Payton Andrews **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** I am writing on behalf of a large constituency of the community in the area surrounding George Mason's West Campus who have expressed concerns with the upcoming Cricket Stadium development plan. I saw you covered the plans recently and wanted to share some points from the perspective of the community who has been excluded from these drastic development plans for their community.

To date, George Mason has not actually conducted any community outreach. They have not engaged the community to ask their input despite repeatedly making claims to the media that they intend to do so. There is actually a scheduled Board of Visitors meeting tomorrow (2/22) that is open to the public, but they will not be engaging in oral commentary from the public. Instead, community members' only recourse is to submit comments via a private submission form and attend the meeting silently.

When asked for comment, GMU continues to push the "temporary" nature of the immediate development plans and refuse to engage the community on the larger scale development that is clearly planned. The stadium's initial usage, as described in their submission to the Department of Environmental Quality, is exclusively for cricket matches - there is no mention of George Mason Baseball. This is not about creating a space for George Mason students and athletics, it is about a businessman taking advantage of state-entity land for private profit.

This same Environmental Impact Report paid for by the Washington Freedom and submitted to DEQ is only for the small scope of a 3,000 temporary stadium that will be deconstructed and torn down and converted into a baseball diamond at the end of those two months and there is no mention of cricket in the long-term. That is patently untrue given their intention to construct a permanent cricket arena on that site. (EIR page 11-13)

In a last minute meeting on Saturday night, almost a hundred members of the surrounding community gathered to learn about these planned changes. Community members are still encountering neighbors who have no idea about the development plans and share their concern.

This is an endeavor to put a private business on state-owned land circumventing the normal development process and gaining tax-exempt status for themselves. This means that they will not pay for the strain this will put on local infrastructure, traffic, and the community overall. This includes the fact that they have acknowledged they do not have the infrastructure for match attendees to park at the games and plan to rely on city garages, the metro, etc. All of which are funded by taxpayer dollars, something this development will not contribute to and instead will be shouldered by the local community.

On private land, development like this would require community impact hearings, in-depth traffic studies, etc. giving the community the chance to provide their input on major development. This

development is intentionally skirting that approach in an attempt to avoid the community pushback that development sometimes receives, such as the proposed Monumental Sports Complex in Alexandria and the Casino in Tysons.

Finally, the President's Open Letter from the 14th asks the community to embrace Cricket, but this is not about the sport. The community's concerns are about putting a loud, open air stadium with 10,000 plus seats in an area that already experiences extreme congestion, and again, lacks the infrastructure to safely get people to and from the games.

**149. Name:** Maribeth Malloy **Mason Affiliation:** VA taxpayer

**Comment:** Why is this board and President ignoring the elephant in the room. If you have nothing to hide you should not be afraid of speaking. This is a character building moment and it seems that today only Visitors Pence and Marquez displayed personal integrity and character.

**150. Name:** Alisha Gardner **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** "There is pressure on the expansion of the institution due to growth of students" How does taking a HUGE portion of GMU's land and turning it into a private professional cricket (or any sport) field help with the needed expansion for the growth of students? Clearly, a private sport, entertainment, township, etc is NOT the answer to the pressure of expansion. I'll ask the question again, how does this private cricket field (and the other planned projects) support the university's mission?

**151. Name:** Bethany Hammer **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** President Washington States in his letter to the community that he wants to have robust communication. Since that letter, there has been no communication only updates to websites with dates to make it look like it's been there forever. Additionally, there is a conflict as to the number of seats allowed in the stadium and whether or not that includes lawn seating. GMU sends out their communications guy to continue to reinforce the temporary aspect of the stadium structures even accentuating it, as though we're being a nuisance. However, in your own communications via zoom meetings, as well as, media relations, GMU Faculty and representatives and Mr. Govil have been quoted stating that the goal is for it to be permanent and include a town center. The community does not want this. The students do not want this, as was stated earlier today. And yet you continue to state that it's just "temporary". Explain how the community is supposed to trust anything you say?

**152. Name:** Anonymous **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** Are we filibustering going through all of this "How great Mason is doing"? You discuss tax payers returning and/or staying in VA and paying taxes yet Govil won't have to pay taxes and gets cheap land!

**153. Name:** Trent wahl **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** Can you comment on the financial gains GMU will receive by leasing state land to an out of state entity for a cricket stadium without going through county processes established by the state for land Development?

**154. Name:** Bethany Hammer **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** Do you know that I have a friend who got a PHD from Mason and she has NEVER received a request to donate!!!! Maybe do that to your entire alumni instead of taking money from professional teams.

<b>155. Name:</b> Laura O'Brien <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member
<b>Comment:</b> President Washington during his Fact Report at the February 22nd Board of Visitor meeting continuously referred to George Mason as an academic institution. Please explain how granting tax exempt status to a commercial, Maryland private corporation and building 10,000 seat professional cricket stadium enhances an academic institution.
<b>156. Name:</b> Kristin Marks <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Alumni AND community member
<b>Comment:</b> Have the decency to address the "temporary" cricket stadium. You talk about VA taxpayer's that are GMU grads. What about Govil not paying VA taxes as a MD resident and business owner in MD. The lack of transparency to communities surrounding GMU and that have supported GMU is shameful.
<b>157. Name:</b> Stephanie Dodman <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Faculty
<b>Comment:</b> There are innumerable reasons for the existence of the Just Societies requirement, not the least of which is the fact that George Mason University is a public university and as such has an inherent mission to serve the public good- AND that global leaders have a need to be able to engage with their teams globally to uphold fiduciary responsibilities to their stakeholders. Additionally, it was made clear in the meeting today that the Board's role is to certify that processes have been followed and are sound. The Core and JS already went through multiple and varied avenues of stakeholder feedback (including the BOV-twice). Therefore anything more at this stage certainly seems an overreach of the Board into curricular matters- which are the domain of the faculty who have been hired for their expertise. This would be a terrible precedent to set.
<b>158. Name:</b> Trent wahl <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member
<b>Comment:</b> This is a joke. You have now just pissed a whole bunch of people off. If you think this will go away quietly, you are mistaken.
<b>159. Name:</b> Daniel Afton Zatkovich <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member
<b>Comment:</b> No university should attempt to impose ANY top-down ideology on its students and administration. Any attempt to do so is fundamentally unjust.
<b>160. Name:</b> Bethany Hammer <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Community Member
<b>Comment:</b> We were in this meeting and a board member requests that there's a meeting opportunity where we can speak. President says yes. Person from the crowd says "before construction starts". President Washington just smiles and says nothing. The rector says "we will take that under advisement". To clarify, we want the opportunity to speak to board members and President Washington not some PR guy out lackey. Off it's such a great deal, stand in front of it with pride for your accomplishments. Why are you hiding?!?!?
<b>161. Name:</b> GMU COALITION FOR PALESTINE <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student
<b>Comment:</b> Could you please, can't stress this enough, just listen to the students for once. JUST THIS TIME LISTEN TO US, divest from death. Because you have blood stained on your hands!!!
<b>162. Name:</b> Jessica Hiltabidel <b>Mason Affiliation:</b> Student
<b>Comment:</b> By requiring students to complete Mason Core classes, the university is ensuring that its graduates are prepared with 21st century skills to compete in today's global society. The Just Societies flag provides students with opportunity and choice to take these required classes in their own content areas, in alignment with areas of interest and personal viewpoints while also recognizing the importance of developing critical skill such as communicating across lines of difference to engage meaningfully and to enact strategies for addressing obstacles. By attempting to politicize diversity, inclusion, and belonging, detractors fail to uphold GMU's mission as a "innovative and inclusive academic community committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world." I stand in support of the Mason Core

Committee as well as the many students, faculty, staff, and community members who understand the importance of this initiative.

**163. Name:** Jason Long **Mason Affiliation:** Community Member

**Comment:** Do not ignore your Finance and Land Use Committee Chairman. Robert Pence was right about undertaking such a large real estate venture when he said "Even though we don't have to do certain things, we ought to anyway." Delay the cricket stadium until proper engagement and studies can be done. Visitor Wendy Marquez is also correct in that a task force should be established to consider the feasibility of this. Thank you.

**From:** [Nicholas Sorden](#)  
**To:** [Board of Visitors](#)  
**Subject:** Board of Visitors Meeting - Public Comment Form - February 22, 2024  
**Date:** Sunday, February 18, 2024 4:23:23 PM  
**Attachments:** [GMU BOV 022224 Comments for Public Record.docx](#)

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Board of Visitors,  
Please find my comments attached. I kindly request these comments be added to the public record.

Thank you,  
Nick Sorden

Sent via [Superhuman](#)

## **George Mason University Board of Visitors**

### **Re: George Mason University Baseball & Cricket Stadium**

President Washington is presenting the current stadium project as temporary. However, it is merely the initial step in a much larger development plan. GMU & Govil envision creating a town center on campus, complete with retail stores, restaurants, an event venue, and a hotel. Mr. Govil has given interviews discussing multiple stadiums and the creation of a township similar to the Mosaic District on the West Campus. This grand vision appears more aligned with the agenda of real estate developers rather than an institution of higher learning. GMU and the BOV have kept the community in the dark. There have been zero meetings or town halls open to public comment.

### **GMU Charter & Tax Incentives**

Universities exist to educate students and foster an environment focused on their growth. Becoming the landlord for a professional sports franchise goes far beyond the boundaries of GMU's charter. The BOV must not permit the Town Center and stadium developments.

Another major concern is GMU's misuse of property tax exemptions granted by the state constitution. Additionally, GMU is circumventing local permitting regulations. The Stadium and Town Center plan effectively creates a business-friendly, regulation-lite, tax-exempt zone. By shielding the private business owner, Mr. Sanjay Govil (a Maryland billionaire), from Fairfax County oversight, GMU is saving him time and expenses and passing on their tax-exempt status, resulting in financial advantages for Mr. Govil. Unfortunately, this arrangement places the burden on the citizens of Fairfax County and the taxpayers of Virginia, who have no say in the development and will bear the costs of supporting the stadium and its associated infrastructure. The Fairfax BOS has clarified that no funds are available for the necessary road improvements to accommodate such a project.

### **Traffic**

The proposed stadium's location adjacent to major roadways raises significant concerns about traffic congestion and its subsequent effects on our daily commutes. Braddock Road, Route 123 (Chain Bridge Road), and Route 286 (Fairfax County Parkway) are already heavily congested during peak hours.

Adding a stadium, expected to draw thousands of spectators, will only exacerbate the existing traffic woes.

During game days and events, the influx of vehicles will undoubtedly strain the roadways, leading to prolonged travel times and frustrating delays for commuters and residents alike. The surrounding intersections, already prone to congestion, will face even more significant challenges in accommodating the increased traffic volume. Crossings such as Braddock Road and Route 123, as well as Braddock Road and Route 286, will become bottlenecks, impeding the smooth flow of traffic and causing gridlock.

Moreover, the stadium project's potential impact on neighboring communities should not be overlooked. Residential areas adjacent to GMU, such as Fairfax City and surrounding neighborhoods, will experience a surge in traffic as spectators seek alternative routes to access the stadium. Local streets ill-equipped to handle such an influx of vehicles will face increased congestion, noise pollution, and safety concerns. Additionally, the severe lack of parking for the stadium will lead spectators to park in neighborhoods, causing severe safety issues for the children who live in these communities.

While some argue that transportation planning and infrastructure improvements will address these issues, the reality is that our current roadways are already strained and insufficiently prepared to handle the additional traffic demand. Additionally, the EPA scores the West Campus area as having a low traffic efficiency score, meaning Federal guidelines discourage development in the area. Upgrading existing infrastructure to accommodate a stadium requires substantial financial investments and years of planning, ultimately falling on taxpayers' shoulders.

It is essential to recognize that the consequences of traffic congestion extend beyond mere inconvenience. Increased congestion contributes to heightened air pollution, impacting air quality and public health. The idling vehicles, stop-and-go traffic, and longer travel times associated with congestion result in elevated emissions of harmful pollutants, exacerbating respiratory conditions and posing health risks to residents, particularly vulnerable populations such as children and the elderly.

### **Impacts of Noise Pollution on Human Health & Wildlife**

The proposed stadium's proximity to residential neighborhoods raises significant concerns about the disruption caused by amplified noise during games and events.



The cheers of enthusiastic fans, amplified announcements, and the crowd's roar will reverberate through the air, penetrating the tranquility of nearby homes within a 5-10-mile radius. Residents who value their peace and quiet will undoubtedly suffer from sleep disturbances, reduced outdoor enjoyment, and an overall decline in quality of life.

Furthermore, the impact of noise pollution on human health should not be underestimated. Prolonged exposure to excessive noise levels can lead to stress, anxiety, and sleep disorders, with potential long-term effects on cardiovascular health. Children, the elderly, and those with pre-existing health conditions are particularly vulnerable to the adverse health impacts of noise pollution. Once characterized by their peaceful ambiance, our neighborhoods may become burdened by the persistent intrusion of stadium noise, honking horns, waste disposal, and shuttle buses, eroding the well-being of our residents.

In addition to the disruption faced by human inhabitants, the stadium project's noise pollution threatens our local wildlife. Fairfax County is home to diverse species of birds, mammals, and other wildlife that rely on acoustic cues for communication, mating, and survival. The sudden increase in noise levels caused by the stadium will disrupt their natural habitats, altering their behavior and potentially driving them away from critical feeding and breeding grounds.

Bird populations, in particular, are sensitive to noise pollution. Many species use vocalizations to communicate, establish territories, and find mates. The constant roar of the stadium could interfere with these critical communication channels, leading to decreased reproductive success and diminished biodiversity in the area. The reduced biodiversity has significant impacts on the nearby Occoquan Watershed. Noisy events can also cause birds to abandon nearby nesting sites, disrupting their natural life cycles and potentially threatening their long-term survival.

Moreover, mammals such as foxes, deer, and rabbits, which inhabit the wooded areas surrounding the stadium, may experience heightened stress and altered behavior due to the persistent noise. Increased noise levels can disrupt their feeding patterns, interfere with parental care, and lead to population shifts or even local extinctions.

### **Water Safety**

Another significant concern is the potential strain on wastewater infrastructure resulting from the increased demand generated by the stadium. Large-scale events

such as games and concerts require adequate restroom facilities and concessions, generating a substantial amount of wastewater. The existing wastewater treatment systems may not be equipped to handle the sudden surge in demand, leading to overburdened infrastructure and potential environmental contamination.

Furthermore, maintaining a cricket field, which typically requires intensive watering to keep the turf in pristine condition, raises concerns about water consumption. Cricket fields demand extensive irrigation to maintain the necessary moisture levels for optimal playability. Given the arid climate of Fairfax County and the growing concerns over water scarcity, the stadium's water demands may strain local water sources and exacerbate existing challenges related to water conservation.

Moreover, the potential impacts on nearby wetlands are of utmost concern. Wetlands provide critical ecosystem services, such as water filtration, flood mitigation, and habitat for diverse flora and fauna. The construction and operation of the stadium may encroach upon or disrupt these delicate ecosystems, leading to habitat loss, altered hydrology, and a decline in biodiversity.

Wetlands act as natural sponges, absorbing excess rainfall and helping to prevent flooding by storing and slowly releasing water. The stadium's construction and associated development may result in increased stormwater runoff, which can overwhelm nearby wetlands, leading to their degradation or destruction. The loss of wetlands not only diminishes the natural beauty of our region but also undermines the essential ecological functions they provide. To mitigate these environmental concerns, it is imperative that GMU and local authorities take proactive measures to address wastewater issues, water consumption, and wetland preservation in conjunction with the EPA.

### **Baseball Experience**

It is essential to consider the average attendance figures for the team's games, the impact on the athlete experience, and the disparity in size between a cricket field and a baseball field. These factors raise questions about the practicality and benefits of such a large stadium for the baseball program at GMU.

Currently, the George Mason baseball team attracts an average attendance of fewer than 200 spectators per game. This statistic suggests that a 10,000-seat stadium would far exceed the demand for seats, potentially resulting in vast sections of empty stands during games. The atmosphere of an empty stadium can be

disheartening for both athletes and spectators alike, detracting from the overall enjoyment and energy of the game.

For a student-athlete competing in Division I baseball, the experience of playing in a vibrant and engaged environment is crucial. The support and enthusiasm of a crowd can uplift and motivate players, fueling their performance on the field. However, an empty stadium would not only lack the desired atmosphere but could also have a demoralizing effect on the athletes. The absence of spectators and the resulting lack of energy can diminish the appeal of playing in such an environment, potentially impacting the recruitment and retention of talented athletes.

It is important to note that the average seating capacity of college baseball stadiums across the country is approximately 2,500 seats. This figure is reflective of the average attendance levels and the desire to maintain a balanced and engaging atmosphere for both athletes and spectators. A 10,000-seat stadium would significantly exceed this benchmark and make it one of the largest college baseball stadiums in the nation.

While it may seem enticing to have one of the largest stadiums, the size discrepancy between a cricket field and a baseball field must be taken into account. A cricket field is nearly twice the size of a standard baseball field, requiring a larger playing area. Constructing a stadium with a seating capacity intended for cricket matches would result in vast expanses of empty space surrounding the baseball diamond, further diminishing the intimacy and ambiance of the games.

Additionally, stadiums can inadvertently create an environment that attracts criminal activities. The influx of visitors, especially during high-profile events, may attract opportunistic criminals who seek to take advantage of large crowds, distracted individuals, and potentially lucrative targets such as vehicles and personal belongings left unattended.

## **Crime**

Panhandling, the act of soliciting money in public places, is a complex issue that can be influenced by various factors, including the presence of large crowds and increased foot traffic associated with stadium events. The concentration of people, the potential for increased disposable income among spectators, and the desire to capitalize on the opportunities created by a vibrant entertainment district can attract individuals engaged in panhandling activities.

It is essential for stakeholders, including stadium authorities, local law enforcement, and community organizations, to collaborate and implement

proactive measures to address these concerns. By doing so, we can ensure a safe and enjoyable experience for all stadium visitors while minimizing the negative impacts associated with panhandling and crime.

### **BOV Vote & Internal Communication**

Unfortunately, there has been a severe lack of public outreach and community involvement surrounding the approval of the stadium project by the Board of Visitors (BOV). The decision to move forward with such a significant undertaking, with minimal discussion or review, raises questions about transparency, accountability, and the meaningful engagement of stakeholders, particularly within the George Mason University (GMU) community.

First and foremost, the manner in which the BOV approved the stadium project is disconcerting. The fact that the vote was declared unanimous with only 7 in favor, 2 abstaining, and a significant number of members absent raises doubts about the thoroughness of the decision-making process. A project of this magnitude, with far-reaching implications for the university and the surrounding community, warrants a rigorous and inclusive review, allowing for diverse perspectives and a comprehensive evaluation of the potential benefits and drawbacks.

Equally troubling is the lack of proactive promotion of the stadium project internally to GMU staff and students. The absence of clear communication and engagement efforts by both the GMU administration and the BOV has left many members of the university community feeling uninformed and excluded from the decision-making process. Meaningful involvement of staff and students is crucial, as they are directly affected by the project's outcomes and should have the opportunity to voice their concerns, provide input, and contribute to shaping the future of their institution.

Furthermore, several important university committees were left in the dark regarding the stadium project. The absence of consultation with key committees responsible for campus planning, academic affairs, and budgetary matters raises questions about the level of transparency and collaboration within the university's governance structure. These committees play a vital role in ensuring that decisions align with the university's mission, values, and long-term strategic goals. Their exclusion from the deliberations surrounding the stadium project undermines the principles of shared governance and erodes trust among the university community.

The approval of the stadium project comes at a time when GMU is facing significant financial challenges, as evidenced by the reported \$35 million budget

deficit. The decision to invest substantial resources in a grandiose stadium raises concerns about the prioritization of funds and the message it sends to academic programs and departments that have recently experienced budget cuts. This allocation of resources may be perceived as a devaluation of core educational initiatives and a diversion from addressing the pressing financial needs of the university.

To address these concerns and ensure a more inclusive decision-making process, GMU and the BOV must take immediate action. Transparent public forums, open town hall meetings, and structured dialogues should be organized to allow for meaningful input and active participation from all stakeholders. This includes students, faculty, staff, alumni, and community members who will be directly affected by the stadium project. These forums should provide an opportunity for individuals to express their concerns, ask questions, and offer alternative perspectives, ensuring that decisions are made with a comprehensive understanding of the potential impacts.

Additionally, a comprehensive communication strategy should be implemented to inform and engage the GMU community. Regular updates, newsletters, and dedicated communication channels should be established to keep stakeholders informed about the progress of the project, as well as provide opportunities for feedback and input. Efforts should be made to reach out to various campus organizations, committees, and student groups to foster dialogue and encourage active participation in the decision-making process.

Moreover, the financial implications of the stadium project must be critically evaluated in light of the university's budget deficit and its impact on academic programs. A thorough assessment of the project's financial feasibility, potential revenue streams, and long-term sustainability should be conducted. This evaluation should be transparent and include input from financial experts, faculty members, and administrators to ensure responsible use of university resources and alignment with the institution's educational mission.

The stadium project poses potential conflicts with the George Mason University Board of Visitors (BOV) Bylaws. These conflicts primarily arise in relation to the mission statement, membership provisions, and committee responsibilities outlined in the Bylaws.

Firstly, the mission statement of George Mason University emphasizes its commitment to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world through innovation and inclusivity. The stadium project, however, may raise concerns regarding its

alignment with this mission. As a comprehensive research university, George Mason University aims to prioritize academic pursuits and the advancement of knowledge. The construction of a stadium, while potentially beneficial for certain aspects of campus life, may divert resources and attention away from the core academic mission of the university. This misalignment could be seen as conflicting with the BOV's responsibility to direct the affairs of the university in accordance with its mission.

Secondly, the membership provisions specified in the Bylaws may be relevant to the stadium project. The Bylaws state that any member of the Board who fails to attend Board meetings without sufficient cause or fails to complete the required educational programs may have their office vacated. If a member of the Board supports or promotes the stadium project but fails to fulfill their attendance or educational requirements, their position could be at risk. It is important for the Board to ensure that all members fulfill their duties and obligations as stated in the Bylaws, regardless of their stance on the stadium project.

Additionally, the appointment of non-voting advisory representatives, such as student and faculty representatives, may be affected by the stadium project. The Bylaws specify that two university students are appointed annually to serve as non-voting advisory representatives on the Board. These representatives participate in all standing committees and meetings of the Board. However, their involvement in discussions and decision-making related to the stadium project may have been limited. The Board would need to consider whether the stadium project falls within the purview of the non-voting student representatives and whether their inclusion in closed sessions, as determined by the Rector, is appropriate.

Moreover, the committee structure outlined in the Bylaws may need to be revisited in light of the stadium project. The Bylaws establish various standing committees responsible for specific areas, such as Academic Programs, Finance and Land Use, Audit, Risk, and Compliance, among others. These committees play a crucial role in the governance of the university. If the stadium project significantly impacts areas such as finance, land use, or compliance, it may necessitate the establishment of a dedicated committee or the revision of existing committees to address the project's unique considerations. The Board would need to assess whether the current committee structure adequately addresses the complexities and implications of the stadium project. It is essential for the Board to carefully evaluate and address these conflicts to ensure that the project aligns with the university's mission and remains in accordance with its governance framework.

## Request for Information

I want to request further information regarding the details of the land lease agreement for the stadium project at George Mason University (GMU). Specifically, I am interested in obtaining information on the following aspects:

1. **Revenue Generation:** Provide details on the expected revenue that GMU is projected to generate from the stadium project. It would be helpful to understand the anticipated financial benefits that the university stands to gain from this endeavor.
2. **Revenue Allocation for Mr. Govil:** Is there any information available regarding the expected revenue or financial benefits that Mr. Govil, the Maryland billionaire, is set to receive from the stadium project? Understanding the distribution of financial gains between GMU and Mr. Govil would provide clarity on the nature of their agreement.
3. **Other Benefits:** Besides financial gains, Are any additional benefits or considerations being awarded to Mr. Govil as part of the stadium project? Are there any additional benefits or considerations being awarded to GMU President Washington or the BOV as part of the stadium projects? It would be valuable to know if there are any monetary or non-monetary advantages or provisions that have been agreed upon between GMU, the BOV, and/or Mr. Govil.
4. **Maintenance Responsibility:** Who will be responsible for the maintenance and upkeep of the stadium? It is important to determine whether GMU or Mr. Govil will bear the responsibility for ensuring the proper maintenance and functioning of the facility.
5. **Ticketing and Scheduling:** Who will be responsible for managing the ticketing process and scheduling of other events, such as concerts, at the stadium? Understanding the party accountable for these logistical aspects would help ascertain the level of involvement and control that GMU and Mr. Govil have in the stadium's operations.
6. **Additional Land Leases:** Has the GMU Board of Visitors (BOV) agreed to any other land leases that still need to come to light? I would like to know if there are any undisclosed agreements related to land leases that may have an impact on the stadium project, the university, or the surrounding communities.
7. **Future Land Leases:** Is the BOV currently engaged in discussions or negotiations to grant additional land leases for other projects? Is the BOV actively recruiting other commercial enterprises to take advantage of the tax-exempt privileges or exceptions to county guidelines? Obtaining information

on any ongoing talks regarding future land leases would provide insight into GMU's potential expansion or development plans.

8. Traffic Studies and Transportation Improvements: Will GMU or Mr. Govil be responsible for funding traffic studies or making transportation improvements necessary for accommodating the stadium and its associated activities? If the Fairfax BOS has no jurisdiction over this project and GMU has avoided all public comment, why should Fairfax County residents be responsible for infrastructure improvements? Is the GMU BOV prepared to subsidize local property taxes to insulate the community from the societal impacts of this project and ensure funding is not redirected from county schools to support this project? Understanding the financial responsibility for these infrastructure considerations would help assess the overall impact and feasibility of the stadium project.
9. Restrictions on Govil's Plans: Has GMU placed any restrictions or limitations on Mr. Govil's plans for the stadium or his future plans for a township? Knowing if the university sets any specific guidelines or conditions to ensure that the project aligns with the institution's mission, values, and overall campus environment would be beneficial.

Please provide as much information as possible on these topics to gain a comprehensive understanding of the land lease agreement for the stadium project at GMU.

As outlined above, there are multiple conflicts between the university's mission and the plan to partner with an out-of-state professional sports team on state property. I request your intervention to halt the stadium project and redirect GMU's focus back to its core mission of education.

Respectfully,

Nick Sorden





Rector and Visitors

4400 University Drive, MS 3A1, Fairfax, Virginia 22030  
Phone: 703-993-8700; Fax: 703-993-8707

February 13, 2024

Ms. Dorothy Gray  
1881 North Nash Street, #2101  
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Dear Deecy:

On behalf of the Board of Visitors of George Mason University, thank you for your valued service to the University and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Your years of commitment to the Board of Visitors, George Mason University's Foundation Board and your outstanding commitment to education have proven to be a great benefit to Mason, the president, and the students, faculty and staff of the institution.

If I can be of assistance to you now or in the future, please do not hesitate to reach out. As a colleague and partner in service, I wish you well in your future endeavors.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Horace L. Blackman". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Horace L. Blackman  
Rector

HLB/smh

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**BOARD OF VISITORS**

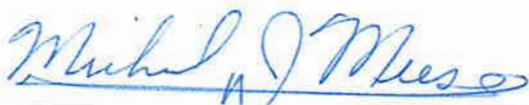
**DOCUMENT AND RECORDS REQUEST POLICY**

In order to facilitate the orderly transaction of business, to promote transparency and to make the most efficient use of administrative staff, it is the policy of this Board that all requests by individual members for University documents and records, subject to review by counsel for disclosability, shall be directed to the Secretary of the Board of Visitors or to the Secretary pro tem in the absence of the Secretary of the Board of Visitors.

Furthermore, these requests, and the University's responses, will be shared by the Secretary (or Secretary pro tem) with all members of the Board of Visitors as soon as practicable, and if possible, within 48 hours of receipt. It is the expectation of the board that responses be handled as expeditiously as possible.

This policy shall remain in effect until or unless amended or repealed by BOV decision.

Adopted by the Board of Visitors on February 22, 2024.



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Michael J. Meese  
Secretary  
Board of Visitors

RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS OF GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY  
AUTHORIZING INCREASE IN BASE SALARY FOR PRESIDENT WASHINGTON

WHEREAS, President Dr. Gregory Washington entered into an employment agreement with George Mason University (“University”) first dated March 3, 2020, as amended (“Employment Agreement”), and has served as University president since July 1, 2020; and

WHEREAS, in accordance with Section D.1. of the Employment Agreement, any increase in Base Salary requires approval by the Board of Visitors;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED:

Effective December 10, 2023, the Board of Visitors approves a performance-based merit increase of 2% to President Washington’s annualized Base Salary to \$787,653.57, to be paid from State and Other Funds as specified in Section D.1 of the Employment Agreement, in conformance with the University-wide performance-based salary increases for faculty.

Approved by the Board of Visitors on February 22, 2024.



Signature  
Michael J. Meese  
Secretary of the Board of Visitors