

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

**Meeting of
December 2, 2021
Merten Hall, Hazel Conference Room (1201)**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rector James Hazel, Secretary Simmi Bhuller, Visitor Ignacia Moreno, and Visitor Carolyn Moss.

ABSENT: Vice Rector Horace Blackman

ALSO, PRESENT: Visitor Edward Rice; Erin Rogers, Staff Representative; Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Faculty Representative; Steven Zhou, Graduate Student Representative; Natalia Kanos, Undergraduate Student Representative; Gregory Washington, President; Ken Walsh, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff; Mark Ginsberg, Provost and Executive Vice President; Carol Kissal, Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance; Brian Walther, University Counsel; and Scott Nichols, Secretary pro tem.

I. Call to Order

Rector Hazel called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes (Action Items)

- A. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for September 30, 2021
- B. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for November 19, 2021

Rector Hazel called for any corrections to the minutes for the Executive Committee meetings of September 30, 2021 and November 19, 2021. Hearing none, the **MINUTES STOOD APPROVED AS WRITTEN**.

III. Rector's Comments

- A. Executive Committee; Duties (Code of VA: §23.1-1306)

Rector Hazel stated that he enjoyed meeting with the Faculty Senate and with the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA), and thanked Melissa Broeckelman-Post and Steven Zhou (respectively) for the opportunity to speak with those groups. He reserved the remainder of his remarks for the full board meeting later in the day.

IV. President's Comments

Dr. Washington noted he would reserve the majority of his comments for the full board session, but took a moment to highlight the recent victory of the women's basketball team over University of Florida.

V. Closed Session

- A. Public Contract (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.29)
- 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)

Executive Committee

December 2, 2021

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Secretary Bhuller **MOVED** that the Executive Committee go into closed session under the provisions of Section 2.2-3711.A.29, for a public contract relating to the Arlington initiative; Section 2.2-3711.A.7, for consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation including briefings on:

Kashdan v. GMU

Agrawal v. GMU

Ganley and Surber v. GMU et al.

Morrison v. GMU

Morrison v. GMU et al.

Morris v. GMU

Inko-Tariah v. GMU

Alemu v. GMU;

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 Moreno. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

Following closed session, Secretary Bhuller **MOVED** that the Executive Committee go back into public session and further moved that by roll call vote the committee certify that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the committee. Any member of the committee who believes that there was a departure from the requirements as stated above, shall so state prior to the roll call, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgment, has taken place.

ALL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT RESPONDED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE BY ROLL CALL.

VI. Adjournment

Rector Hazel called for any additional business to come before the Executive Committee. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 8:09 a.m.

Prepared by:

Scott Nichols

Secretary pro tem

**BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Meeting of
December 2, 2021
Merten Hall, Hazel Conference Room (1201)**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rector James Hazel, Secretary Simmi Bhuller, Visitors Anjan Chimaladinne, Mehmood Kazmi, Ignacia Moreno, Carolyn Moss, Jon Peterson, Nancy Prowitt, Paul Reagan, Edward Rice, and Robert Witeck.

ABSENT: Vice Rector Horace Blackman, Visitors Juan Carlos Iturregui, Wendy Marquez, Dolly Oberoi, Denise Turner Roth

ALSO, PRESENT: Erin Rogers, Staff Representative; Melissa A. Broeckelman-Post, Faculty Representative; Steven Zhou, Graduate Student Representative; Natalia Kanos, Undergraduate Student Representative; Gregory Washington, President; Ken Walsh, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff; Mark Ginsberg, Provost and Executive Vice President; Carol Kissal, Senior Vice President for Administration and Finance; Matt Smith, Director of Accreditation; Kristen Wright, Director of Civic Engagement; Brian Walther, University Counsel; Anne Gentry, Associate University Counsel; and Scott Nichols, Secretary pro tem.

I. Call to Order

Rector Hazel called the meeting to order at 2:25 p.m.

II. Approval of the Minutes

A. Full Board Meeting on September 30, 2021 (ACTION ITEM)

Rector Hazel called for any corrections to the meeting minutes for the full board meeting on September 30, 2021 that were provided in the board meeting materials. Hearing no corrections, the **MINUTES STOOD APPROVED AS WRITTEN**.

III. Rector's Report

Rector Hazel stated that on November 19, the Executive Committee of the board met in recess of the full board to move forward with time-sensitive matters relating to the Arlington project. He advised that the committee approved five items on behalf of the board:

- Vacation of Easements with Arlington County
- Granting of Easements to Arlington County
- Agreement and Covenant to Maintain Stormwater Facilities with Arlington County
- Schematic Design for Arlington Expansion Building
- Interim Agreement with Mason Innovation Partners

He then spoke to funding for Mason and the gubernatorial transition, encouraging board members to be active and assist the Government Relations office with supporting Mason's funding requests if asked. He then noted several recent engagements in which he had participated on behalf of Mason. He proceeded to recognize Dr. Broeckelman-Post and Ms. Rogers to provide any comments on behalf of Faculty Senate and Staff Senate, respectively. Dr. Broeckelman-Post noted a recent Faculty Senate meeting with Dr. Washington that went well.

IV. President's Report

Dr. Washington provided an update, noting several highlights:

- Numerous positive outcomes including growth in enrollment and research of consequence.

- Mason's COVID-19 response, including:
 - Low case rate compared to other institutions.
 - A downward trend in cases compared to last year.
 - Low transmission rate within Mason classrooms.
 - Vaccinations administered on Mason's campuses.
- Efforts in improving faculty and staff success including increasing compensation, establishing an ombuds office, exploring dependent tuition coverage, flexible work-from-home schedules, and a campus-wide mental health initiative.

Secretary Bhuller asked if COVID boosters would be required for students and staff to be on campus. Dr. Washington stated that boosters were not required but were being encouraged.

V. SACSCOC Update (Matt Smith and Kristen Wright)

A. SACSCOC Update

B. Quality Enhancement Plan Overview (ACTION ITEM)

Matt Smith provided an update on Mason's reaffirmation of accreditation process. He noted that eight out of seventy-two standards at Mason were found to be noncompliant, and that most were minor items that were easily addressed, with some being clerical in nature. He noted that these eight standards were outlined in the meeting materials, and that Mason would submit a response for those in February 2022.

Kristen Wright provided an overview of the Quality Enhancement Plan, *Transformative Education through Anti-Racist Community Engagement*. She explained that the Quality Enhancement Plan is a requirement for the reaffirmation of accreditation process. Mason's Quality Enhancement Plan would include the establishment of the Office of Community Learning and Civic Engagement (CECIL), which would facilitate the embedding of community and civic engagement into academic and co-curricular experiences. She noted that the goal of this engagement is to help students understand themselves as agents of change, identify and disrupt racist practices, and work collaboratively towards positive social change.

Secretary Bhuller then **MOVED** that the board affirm its support for the university's Quality Enhancement Plan, *Transformative Education through Anti-Racist Community Engagement*. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Prowitt. Rector Hazel called for any discussion; there was none. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

VI. Committee Reports

A. Finance and Land Use Committee

Visitor Reagan outlined the items discussed in the Finance and Land Use committee meeting. He noted two action items to bring from the committee to the full board. He **MOVED** to approve the following items en bloc, as they are outlined in the meeting materials:

1. Resolution delegating authority for the retirement plans to the Senior Vice President (**ACTION ITEM**)
2. Schematic Design for Life Science and Engineering Building (**ACTION ITEM**)

The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Moss. Rector Hazel opened the floor for discussion; there was none. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

B. Research Committee

Visitor Prowitt highlighted the topics discussed during the Research Committee meeting, which included a presentation by Andre Marshall, Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact. This presentation

highlighted the *Accelerate 2022* event, the screening of the film *Picture a Scientist*, and updates on the Office of Technology Transfer. The committee also received a presentation from Dr. Michael Buschmann on AexeRNA Therapeutics. There were no action items from the committee to bring before the full board.

C. Audit, Risk, & Compliance Committee

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

- An update by Sharon Heinle, Associate Vice President and Controller, regarding the status of the audit of the university's financial statements by the Auditor of Public Accounts.
- A briefing by Kevin Borek, Vice President and Chief Information Officer, on actions being taken to establish an enterprise approach to IT governance and to strengthen important processes for managing IT service delivery and related risks. The committee concurred with University Audit's approach of monitoring the design and implementation of these actions. The committee has requested regular written reporting and further briefings on this matter from Mr. Borek in the future.
- A review of the annual report of approved waivers of contractual conflicts of interest.

Visitor Rice noted that due to several staff vacancies within its office, University Audit is co-sourcing audit work with third party accounting firms while the Human Resources office develops strategies to attract qualified applicants. Visitor Moreno affirmed her concern with staffing, noting the heavy workload and high quality of work accomplished by University Audit during the pandemic. There were no action items from the committee to bring before the full board.

D. Development Committee

Visitor Chimaladinne briefed the board on items discussed during the Development Committee meeting, including:

- An update on George Mason University Foundation (GMUF) activities by Chairperson Terri Cofer Beirne.
- An update on activities by the Office of Advancement and Alumni Relations by Trishana Bowden, Vice President for Advancement and Alumni Relations at Mason, and President of GMUF.
- A presentation on the Arlington campus Mason Square Initiative by Liza Wilson Durant, Associate Dean of Strategic Initiatives and Community Engagement.
- A faculty spotlight presentation by Duminda Wijesekera, Acting Chair of Cyber Security Engineering, highlighting research on automated transportation.

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

E. Academic Programs, Diversity, and University Community Committee

Secretary Bhuller noted items discussed in the Academic Programs, Diversity, and University Community Committee meeting, which included:

- An update on the fall 2021 semester by Provost Mark Ginsberg, including information related to COVID testing guidance for Thanksgiving and winter break, winter graduation options, and leadership transitions at the schools and colleges.
- An overview of current highlights at the Schar School of Policy and Government by Mark Rozell, Dean.
- An update on the Tech Talent Investment Program (TTIP) by Ken Ball, Dean of the College of Engineering and Computing, and Liza Wilson Durant.

Secretary Bhuller then **MOVED** that the board approve the following action items, en bloc, as they are provided in the meeting materials:

1. Program Actions (**ACTION ITEMS**)
 - a. New Degree Program: Master of Computing

- b. Degree Program Name Change: “BS Community Health” to “BS Public Health”
- 2. Faculty Actions (**ACTION ITEM**)
 - a. Election of New Tenured Faculty

The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Moss. Rector Hazel opened the floor for discussion; there was none. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.**

VII. Closed Session

Secretary Bhuller **MOVED** that the board go into closed session under the provisions of Section 2.2-3711.A.29, for a public contract relating to the Arlington initiative; Section 2.2-3711.A.7, for consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation including briefings on:

- Kashdan v. GMU
- Agrawal v. GMU
- Ganley and Surber v. GMU et al.
- Morrison v. GMU
- Morrison v. GMU et al.
- Morris v. GMU
- Inko-Tariah v. GMU
- Alemu v. GMU;

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 Witeck. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE**

Following closed session, Secretary Bhuller **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 committee who believes that there was a departure from the requirements as stated, shall so state prior to taking the roll call, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgment, has taken place. **ALL PRESENT BOARD MEMBERS RESPONDED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE BY ROLL CALL.**

VIII. Adjournment

Rector Hazel called for any additional business to come before the board. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 3:28 p.m.

Prepared by:

Scott Nichols
Project Coordinator
Office of the President