



2014-2024 STRATEGIC PLAN

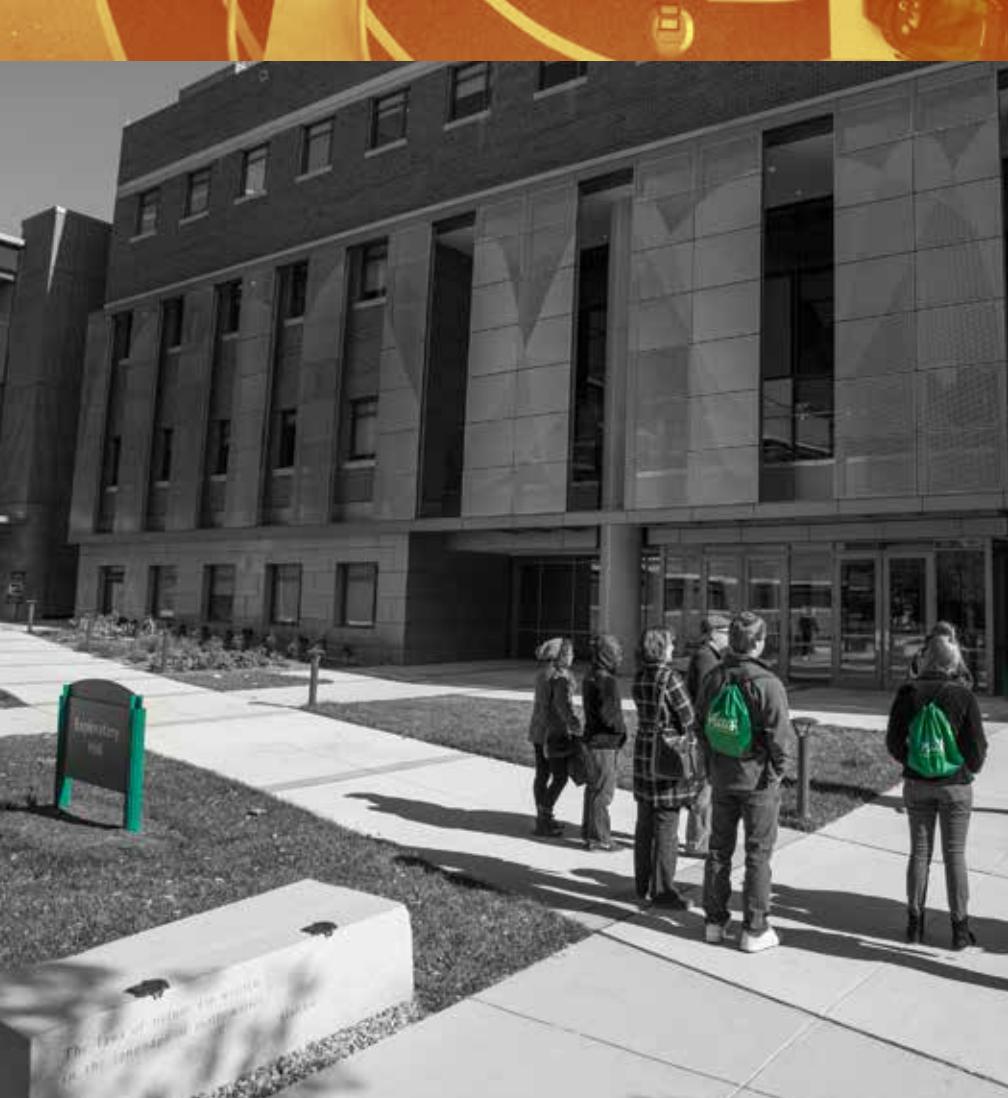


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Dear Patriots:

I am pleased to share the new strategic plan for George Mason University. The plan offers our response to a fundamental question: How will George Mason University best serve our students, our community, and the broader global society over the next decade? Our innovative and entrepreneurial attitude and our culture of diversity and accessibility have served us well over the past four decades. These characteristics—which we now call the Mason IDEA—will continue to be our most important asset over the next decade.

The world of 2014 is far different from the one the university's founders faced in the 1970s. New technologies have reshaped the way we work, live, and learn; the world has become more interconnected and interdependent than it has ever been; human talent and innovation have become central drivers of economic competitiveness; new disciplines have emerged and old ones have been redefined. A college degree is practically required for a good job in virtually every sector. And cutting-edge research has almost become a prerequisite for economic competitiveness.

These trends have raised the expectations we have of our universities. Universities must provide opportunities for more and more diverse students to succeed; they must produce talent to drive productivity in a new economy and engaged citizens to sustain a thriving democracy; they must offer lifelong learning to help people adapt to changing times and scholarship to help us understand our world and our place in it; they must produce ideas to fuel innovation, solutions to tackle complex problems, and enterprises to seize new opportunities.

Yet while expectations grow, universities are faced with important structural challenges. Declines in state funding over the past 15 years have pushed public university tuitions to levels that are threatening access and affordability. Reductions in federal research funding, as a result of national fiscal imbalances, are threatening current levels of innovation and research. Increasingly, universities—public or not—must compete to earn revenue and must rely on philanthropy to support investments in student access, program quality, research, and service. They must be more innovative and entrepreneurial, more open to new approaches, and more willing to partner with other entities.

This strategic plan, which is grounded in our recently adopted strategic vision, offers a roadmap for the future: university-wide goals, a framework to help us make choices on how to achieve those goals, and metrics to assess our progress.

Crafting Mason's new vision and strategic plan has been an extensive undertaking. This 10-year plan is the result of more than a year's worth of work by 150+ members of the Mason community who engaged in serious study, discussion, and conversation around the future of the institution. Through our work and the feedback received by more than 3,000 members of our internal and external communities, we have developed a set of goals and initiatives that build on our strengths and strategically position Mason to make the greatest impact possible on the lives of our students, our community members, our faculty and staff, and our world.

Our new mission statement defines our university as an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to making the world more prosperous, free, and just. Our strategic plan draws a picture of a university that in many ways reflects the future of higher education. The goals and initiatives set forth in this plan are ambitious and achievable. Moreover, the plan is actionable—a living document that will naturally evolve as it is implemented over the course of the next decade. I welcome your feedback on our plan as we enter the implementation phase of the process. Your energy, voices, and ideas are key to our success.

Thank you for your dedicated commitment to George Mason University.

Ángel Cabrera
President

The Mason Vision

Since its birth less than a half-century ago, George Mason University has grown impressively in size, stature, and influence. Now a standard-setter among modern public universities, Mason's reach is both deep and broad, extending from Virginia, as the commonwealth's largest public university; throughout the United States, where its location near Washington, D.C., affords unique types of audiences, resources, and opportunities; and around the world, through its groundbreaking research on complex global problems and an expanding international student body.

From the outset, Mason has not been content to coast or merely follow. Instead, it has crafted a new path; it has embraced new ideas and remained adaptable to the evolving needs of its community. A spirit of innovation and acceptance of wide-ranging viewpoints and cultures are ingrained in our community. In view of today's complex global challenges and rapid pace of change, George Mason University is in a unique position to capitalize on its strengths and make an even greater impact—producing the very kinds of leaders, professionals, scholars, ideas, and solutions that our world needs.

As we chart our future course, we have asked the following question: How can George Mason University become not necessarily the best university in the world, but the best university *for* the world? That is, what can Mason do—or do better—to produce the types of graduates, scholarship, and service-oriented action that will best serve society? This question framed the work of creating a bold and far-reaching vision and strategic plan. After extensive community-wide discussion and input from all parts of the Mason family, a new vision was constructed with the mission, values, and commitments that define our institution and the work we do, providing inspiration to propel Mason forward. Our vision further provides a foundation upon which our strategic plan has been constructed.

The university's primary responsibility is to advance society through education, research, and engagement with others. Our vision and strategic plan speak to this responsibility, building upon the successes of our past and creating an environment at Mason that is inclusive, inspirational, and focused not only on the needs of our institution, but also on the needs of those we serve. The strategic planning document that follows outlines the components of our vision—our mission (who we are), values (what we stand for), commitments (what we are committing to), the Mason IDEA (how we define ourselves), and the Mason graduate (whom we help develop).

These foundational aspects of the vision precede the strategic plan, which comprises 12 areas of action that are focused in four key areas. Our plan lays out how we will strategically move forward in ways that positively impact our students, our community, our faculty and staff, and our world. Each of these areas is explicated via initiatives, narratives, and metrics that highlight areas of attention and action.

The past year of vision and strategic planning has reinvigorated our community and confirmed our belief that George Mason University's greatest days lie ahead. The details that follow provide a launching pad for propelling us into this bright future.





THE MASON IDEA

Innovative = We question current thinking and try new ideas. We honor time-tested academic principles while striving to create new forms of education that serve our students better and new paths of research that can uncover solutions to the world's greatest challenges.

Diverse = We bring together a multitude of people and ideas in everything we do. Our culture of inclusion, multidisciplinary approach, and global perspective make us more effective educators and scholars.

Entrepreneurial = We put ideas into action. We educate students to create, as well as carry out jobs; become agents of positive change; and add value through government or business, for-profit or nonprofit organizations, academia or the arts. We pursue discoveries that can make a difference in the world. We help our community thrive socially, economically, environmentally, and culturally.

MOTTO

Freedom and Learning

MISSION

A public, comprehensive, research university established by the Commonwealth of Virginia in the National Capital Region, we are an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world.

OUR VALUES

Our core values capture the guiding principles for how we work with each other and how we make decisions when we are at our best. They are the foundation of the type of community we want to build together. These seven values are listed and explained below.

› Our students come first.

Our top priority is to provide students with a transformational learning experience that helps them grow as individuals, scholars, and professionals.

› Diversity is our strength.

We include and embrace a multitude of people and ideas in everything we do and respect differences.

› Innovation is our tradition.

We strive to find new and better ways to deliver on our mission while honoring time-tested academic values.

› We honor freedom of thought and expression.

We protect the freedom of all members of our community to seek truth and express their views.

› We are careful stewards.

We manage the economic and natural resources entrusted to us responsibly and sustainably.

› We act with integrity.

We hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards as educators, scholars, students, and professionals.

› We thrive together.

We nurture a positive and collaborative community that contributes to the well-being and success of every member.

33,917

fall 2013 enrollment

3,011

fall 2013 freshman class

6,023

students living on the Fairfax Campus





THE MASON GRADUATE IS...

...an engaged citizen:

- ethically oriented and committed to democratic ideals
- respectful of individual differences, rights, and liberties
- knowledgeable of important issues affecting the world
- focused on the well-being of others, today and tomorrow
- committed to building a just society

...a well-rounded scholar:

- thinks critically and creatively and demonstrates professional competence
- possesses an inquisitive nature
- appreciates science, humanities, and the arts
- skilled as a communicator
- committed to lifelong learning

...prepared to act:

- innovative, resourceful, and entrepreneurial; ready to do or create a job
- interested and practiced in working with individuals from other cultures, backgrounds, and perspectives
- equipped to make positive and meaningful changes in society

8,173

total number of 2013
graduates

153,366

total graduates worldwide

COMMITMENTS

› Learning innovation

We will apply new and emerging learning technologies, environments, and methods to improve learning effectiveness and student completion, and to better serve the evolving needs of students, working professionals, and public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

› Research of consequence

We will expand research as a central element of our mission; we will translate our discoveries into interventions and applications with social, cultural, and economic impact.

› Economic and cultural engine

We will act as a catalyst for the economic and cultural vibrancy of our region, as a growing source of talent in high-demand disciplines, as an incubator of business and social enterprises, as a hub of lifelong learning, arts, and athletics, and as a research and learning partner for public, private, and nonprofit organizations.

› Engagement with the world

We will prepare our students to thrive in a global context by infusing global awareness, citizenship values, and learning opportunities across all fields, and we will partner with other organizations in solving global problems where our impact will be highest.

› Sound investment

We will be a valuable investment for our students, taxpayers, and donors by focusing on outcomes, operational efficiency, and affordability. Specifically, we will

- Expand the number of graduates, the career prospects for our graduates, the impact of our research, and the value we provide to our community.*
- Be sensitive to trends in household income in making decisions about tuition and financial aid.*

› Enriching work environment

We will invest in recruiting, retaining, and developing talented and diverse faculty and academic and professional staff. We will prioritize the well-being of our community and create a vibrant campus life in which all members can grow and thrive.

› Foundation for the future

We will aggressively seek additional sources of funding through higher levels of philanthropy; expanded online, certificate, and executive education programs; research grants; and the commercialization of intellectual property.

We will also increase our engagement with alumni, strengthen the Mason brand nationally and internationally, and effectively communicate Mason's value to stakeholders throughout Virginia and the National Capital Region.





Art
History

Museum

ROUSSEAU

DU

CENTRALE

A University *for* the World

George Mason University is an innovative and inclusive academic community committed to creating a more just, free, and prosperous world. As a public research university in one of the most important political, economic, and intellectual hubs in the world, we accept our responsibility to serve others: to help our students succeed, to enrich the life of our community, and to contribute to solving some of the most complex global problems of our time. This is why our vision and strategic plan insist in defining our goal as striving to be the best university *for* the world.

While we hope to be recognized for our achievements, our goal is not to move up on a reputation scale or media ranking, but to create the most value we can for those who invest in us and those we serve. We want to help our students succeed professionally and grow as engaged and productive citizens committed to building a better society. We want to help our community to be a better place to live. We want to be a great investment for Virginia's taxpayers, our students, our partners, and donors. We want to be a place where diverse and talented faculty and staff can thrive personally and professionally. We want to produce scholarship, ideas, and inventions that are relevant to society. We want to deliver the type of education, graduates, research, ideas, and experiences that will make the greatest possible difference in the world.

When the namesake of our university attended the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787, he was among three lone dissenters who refused to sign America's founding document. George Mason risked friendships and personal reputation to question the conspicuous absence of a declaration of individual rights in the Constitution. He questioned conventional thinking, stood on his principles, and, because of that, his ideas eventually led to the adoption of the Bill of Rights. In some ways George Mason's life and historical role are captured by our academic culture: our commitment to question the conventional thinking of our day; our responsiveness to the needs of the society we are part of; and our commitment to building a freer, more just world.

As we perpetuate these traditions of questioning, responding, and acting—applying them in a 21st-century context—a robust academic and financial foundation will be vital. On the academic side, our plan calls for innovative programs, learning modes, and pathways. It sets up growth goals in enrollments and completion and a commitment to the career readiness of our graduates. It also calls for an expanded

research agenda to benefit our students and the innovation needs of our community.

At the same time, we consider it our responsibility, as a public institution and as a university, to be a sound investment to each of our constituents. We have proven ourselves in this area already, given the high educational value we deliver at a relatively low cost and with comparatively few resources. Our goal is to cement ourselves as the highest return-on-investment (ROI) in Virginia for students and the commonwealth.

In order to achieve these goals we will need to be even more entrepreneurial in how we generate new resources and more effective in building a strong philanthropic foundation for the future. Gifts from alumni, friends, and organizations will fund immediate strategic initiatives as well as procure a stable financial foundation for our future, so we can continue to offer a high ROI. To fulfill our commitments spelled out in our vision regarding student access and success, it will be especially crucial to create an innovative tuition and funding model—one that enables us to welcome students from a wide range of backgrounds while not leaving those same students saddled with debt upon graduating.

Following on the legacy of our namesake—George Mason—and grounded in our unique characteristics—the Mason IDEA—we will make true on our promise to be the best university *for* our students, *for* our community, *for* faculty and staff, and *for* the world.

Strategically Planning for Our Future

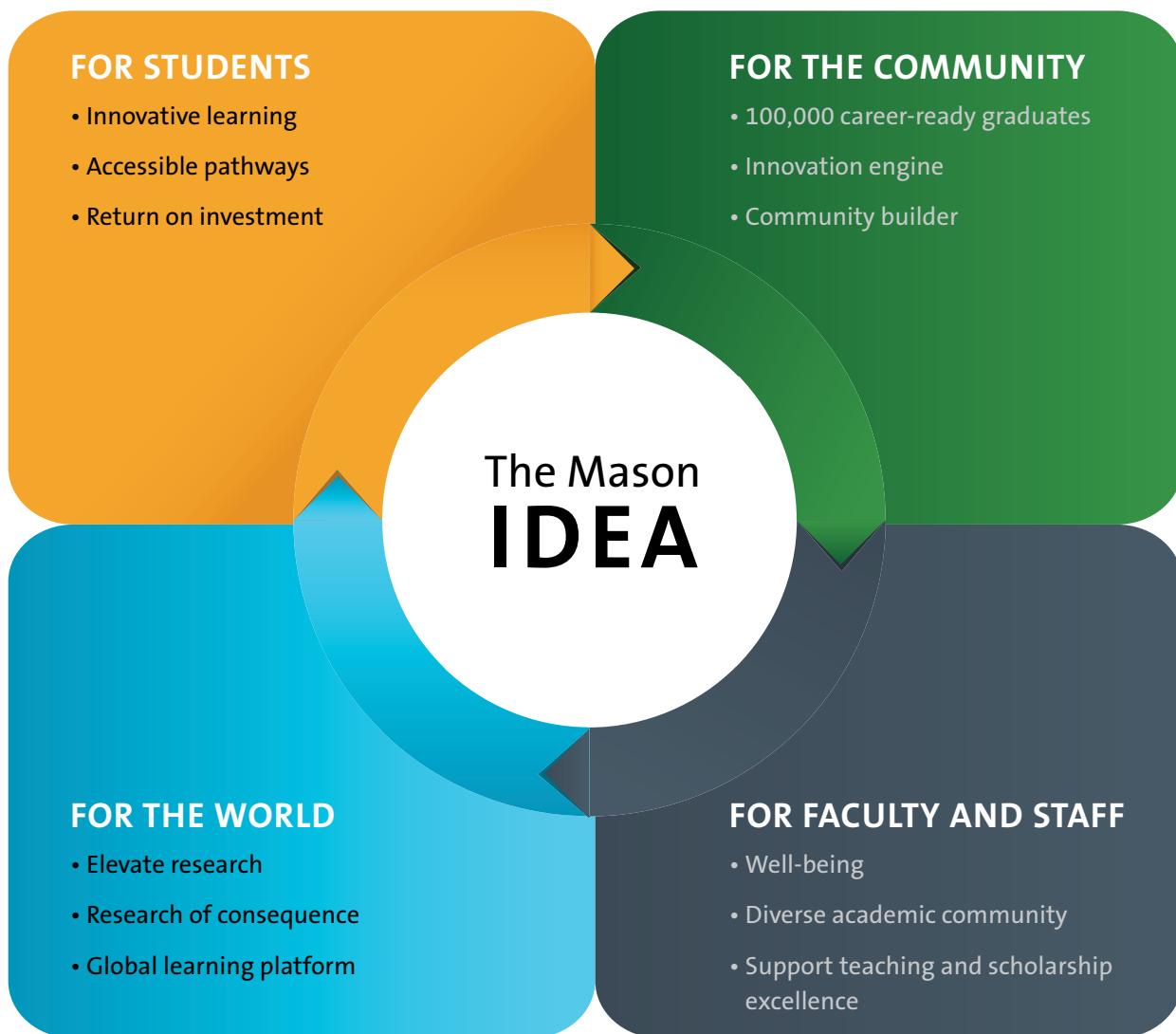
How do we become a university *for* the world?

Our mission statement provides our response to the why question: Why do we exist as an academic institution? Our vision—our commitments for the future—in turn responds to the what question: What kind of university are we trying to build over the next decade?

Our mission and vision, created by the Mason community, provide the foundation from which our strategic plan developed—a plan that begins to address the how question: What specific goals, initiatives, and metrics will allow us to succeed?

The common thread weaving together mission, vision, and strategic plan is the notion that Mason will find innovative ways to best serve the needs of our stakeholders—our students, our community, our faculty and staff, and our world. Our goals are not centered around our needs or self-centered aspirations, but are rooted in the value we create for others.

That basic idea is reflected in the structure of our strategic plan.



Each of these areas is supported by goals, initiatives, and metrics that are designed to direct our actions toward positively impacting our stakeholders, inspiring new ways of thinking, and moving Mason forward as we face the challenges and opportunities of an increasingly complex world.



The image is a collage of three photographs. The top photograph shows a person in a white lab coat and safety goggles working at a lab bench, surrounded by glassware and equipment. The middle-left photograph shows two students in a classroom setting, one holding a small object and looking at it closely. The middle-right photograph shows a person in a green t-shirt with the number '13' on the back, sitting at a desk and writing in a notebook. The right side of the collage has a vertical yellow bar.

GOALS FOR STUDENTS



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

All students will be exposed to a Mason signature learning experience, which is experiential, global, and technology-enriched.

Through the assessment of student learning outcomes, we will ensure that we are effectively delivering on our promised transformative learning and that we are doing so in an effective, scalable way.

Innovative Learning

Deliver a transformative signature Mason Learning Experience that is experiential, global, and technology-rich.

INITIATIVES

- › Provide opportunities for experiential and integrative learning in all programs. This can include research, field work, internships, co-op (paid professional experience related to a student's course of study), and service learning.
- › Provide opportunities for all students to take part in a meaningful global experience. Examples are study abroad, an internship with an international organization, or an online course with international students.
- › Create new and innovative physical and virtual learning spaces.

WHY

In the 21st century, we have seen and will continue to see game-changing innovations in how we teach and learn, how we apply new technologies and paradigms, and how we deliver more education, more options, and more quality.

We know that learning is most effective when it is embedded in experiential and collaborative contexts, when it puts individuals in charge of their own learning, and when it can be adapted to the diverse needs and strengths of learners. We know that knowledge becomes actionable when individuals are practiced at combining multiple perspectives and disciplines in problem-solving, decision-making, or creative situations. And we know that people are better able to deal with an increasingly interconnected world when they learn to interact productively with individuals, organizations, and contexts that are culturally different from their own.

Our commitment to innovation must manifest itself first and foremost in an ongoing exploration and application of new forms of learning that can prove more effective, transformative, and scalable. Our experience with student research, experiential learning, integrative capstones, individualized projects, and global experiences shows how effective these types of experiences can be. Our challenge for the years ahead will be to make those experiences available in all our programs, to all our students.

Not all learning innovations will be driven by technology, but many will be. Online education is growing as a complement to classroom-based learning, and at times as an alternative to meet the disparate needs of an increasingly diverse student population. Features such as asynchronous discussions, self-assessments, simulations, collaboration, and adaptive delivery are among the myriad possibilities already transforming how we learn.

We do not believe classrooms will disappear any time soon, but their use and design will be quite different. As technology begins to offer better ways to deliver content, learners are demanding physical spaces where they can interact with other learners and with faculty, where they can put their new skills into action, limit distractions, and contextualize their learning socially. When classrooms are organized to facilitate student engagement, learning is deeper and more effective. The classroom of the future, the awkwardly termed "flipped classroom," will change the role of learner and instructor and will set up new design parameters for how we build learning spaces.

Accessible Pathways

Provide multiple pathways and delivery formats to serve the needs of different students.

INITIATIVES

- > Create new collaborations with Virginia community colleges and other institutions to facilitate affordable access.
- > Strengthen pathways for international student access.
- > Create online pathways for students to complete the general education requirements in high-demand disciplines and to extend our reach to students who cannot attend class at our campuses.

WHY

The vast majority of college students in the United States are nontraditional. Of the almost 19 million undergraduate students, only about one-third are full-time students attending a traditional four-year institution. Another third attend a community college, with the balance split between part-time students and students attending for-profit institutions. At a time when a college education is more necessary than ever, the traditional model of higher education is only serving a fraction of those who need a degree. As an innovative and inclusive academic community, Mason is committed to serving a diverse student body, including those who do not fit easily the profile of traditional programs.

Mason's unique relationship with Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA) provides a clear illustration of this commitment. Since 1991, about 36,000 NOVA transfer students have attended Mason. In 2013, NOVA transfers accounted for 1,661 students; more than half of those students were from minority groups. The joint Pathway to the Baccalaureate program with NOVA and Mason's own Early Identification Program in partnership with school districts in the region have helped thousands of minority, immigrant, low-income, and first-generation college students attain a college degree.

Our commitment to accessibility requires that we look for additional, innovative partnerships and that we create and expand new pathways that are adapted to the diverse needs of our students. As we work to expand student diversity, we will pay particular attention to increasing international student enrollment. The internationalization of our campuses will contribute to the global learning experience of our students and will nurture invaluable social capital to benefit our community economically and culturally. Expanding our existing pathway programs, partnering with outside organizations, and establishing new and innovative arrangements will be instrumental in increasing the numbers of international students on our campuses.

Online education has quickly become an effective medium of delivery and an increasingly popular gateway to higher education. About a third of college students are taking at least one online course, and the trend is growing. Research and the marketplace have shown that online learning can provide educationally sound and flexible choices to students; it can help customize learning experiences and pathways, and adapt to the needs and backgrounds of adult learners. We see online education as an increasingly important method for facilitating degree completion and an effective delivery method for specialized graduate programs designed to meet the needs of many of our students who are simultaneously working and balancing family demands while pursuing a degree. We believe we can become a leader in online learning in Virginia, the nation, and the world.



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

The number of programs with alternative pathways will increase, as well as the number of students coming through these various pipelines.

3

GOAL

Return on Investment

Enable all graduates to pursue meaningful lives and successful careers.

INITIATIVES

- > Adopt a tuition policy that supports a quality education while delivering best-in-class return on investment for students.
- > Create systems to assess and showcase workplace competencies.
- > Establish innovative partnerships with employers to support career readiness and strengthen career-support services for students and alumni.

WHY

Universities across the nation are facing decreases in federal and state funding, restraints on tuition increases, and spreading concern about college affordability. In this era of shifting priorities, institutions of higher education are under increased pressure to educate more and increasingly diverse students, deliver better outcomes, and reduce costs. They are also under pressure to demonstrate the benefit they provide.

Since the turn of the century, Mason has managed to maintain its costs steady while improving quality. Reductions on state funding have shifted the financial burden to students and their families, who have seen tuition double. Yet Mason tuition and fees remain lower than the other research universities in the commonwealth, and students continue to graduate with the best employment opportunities, below average student loans, and one of the lowest loan default rates in the nation.

In order to continue to deliver on our promise of quality and innovation, and given current budgetary pressures at the state level, we anticipate that students and their families will continue to bear the lion's share of the cost of their degree. Our commitment to them is that we will continue to deliver best-in-class return on students' investment and that changes in tuition policy will stay true to that basic value proposition.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Greater than 80 percent of Mason graduates will be employed within six months after graduation. Mason will establish partnerships and more financial aid and scholarships that provide affordable ways for students to complete a Mason education.

Mason will strive to have its graduates pay back their debts at rates that exceed national levels.

At Mason, we do not accept the false dichotomy between the personal and intellectual growth associated with a liberal education and the development of skills that are valued in the marketplace. Our definition of a successful graduate is one who is a well-rounded scholar, an engaged citizen, and someone who is prepared to act, to do or create a job. By working closely with employers, we are committed to identifying the skills and competencies needed for career success and setting in place career support systems to ensure that graduates are competitive.



GOALS FOR THE COMMUNITY



100,000 Career-Ready Graduates

Produce the talent needed to drive economic growth in our region over the next decade.

INITIATIVES

- > Increase enrollment of high-potential students who contribute to our diversity.
- > Increase graduation rates, including raising the six-year graduation rate to 78 percent.
- > Create new programs in high-demand disciplines and diverse delivery formats. These will include Mason online and partnerships with Northern Virginia Community College and local industry.

WHY

Earning a postsecondary degree or credential is no longer just an opportunity for a talented few; rather, it is a prerequisite for the growing jobs of the new economy. Over this next decade, employment in jobs requiring education beyond a high school diploma will grow more rapidly—of the 30 fastest growing occupations, more than half require postsecondary education.

The United States has been outpaced internationally in higher education participation. While the United States ranks ninth in the world in the proportion of young adults enrolled in college, we have fallen to 14th in the world in our share of certificates and degrees awarded to adults ages 25 to 34—lagging behind Korea, Canada, Japan, and other nations.

Acknowledging these factors, President Obama set a new goal for the country: that by 2020, America would once again have the highest proportion of college graduates in the world. In turn, Governor McDonnell set a goal for Virginia of 100,000 more degrees earned during the same period in order for the commonwealth to stay competitive.

In Virginia, the passage of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 (also known as the Top Jobs Act) underlined the role higher education is expected to play as a driver of the commonwealth’s competitiveness. Institutions of higher education are asked to grow the number of graduates—especially in high-demand areas such as STEM-H fields, to focus on the employability of graduates, to leverage new technologies, and to increase resource efficiency college access and affordability.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

We will increase the number of Mason graduates in high-demand fields, online degree programs, and historically underrepresented groups. We will raise our six-year graduation rate to 78 percent. We will grow both our in-state and out-of-state enrollment.

Mason’s history shows that enrollment growth is perfectly compatible with improvements in quality. In fact, Mason has grown into Virginia’s largest public university in number of students while increasing virtually all indicators of quality. Our growth trajectory has not ended yet, and we are committed to helping achieve America’s and Virginia’s goals—by educating 100,000 career-ready graduates by 2024.

To achieve this ambitious goal, we will need to increase our efforts to recruit highly talented students in Virginia, the United States, and the rest of the world, particularly for programs in high-demand STEM-H fields that will contribute to the economic vitality of our state and region. At the same time, we will be focusing on retention strategies to improve graduation rates and reduce the time it takes to attain a degree.

Innovation Engine

Contribute to the economic vitality of the region by driving innovation and creating learning partnerships with private and public organizations.

INITIATIVES

- > Create spaces and networks of innovation, collaboration, and business acceleration and incubation.
- > Create a university-wide executive education center that offers high-quality, nondegree, and custom programs for public and private organizations and professionals.
- > Strengthen culture, programs, and systems to encourage and support faculty and student entrepreneurship.

WHY

Universities form an important pillar in the competitiveness of the United States. Our own data show a strong correlation between the number and quality of research universities and national competitiveness. The most dynamic and innovative hubs in the world are anchored by world-class universities that serve as magnets and factories of talent, as engines of innovation and as incubators of new products and ideas. Innovation and entrepreneurship are two of Mason's strengths and are emphasized in the Mason IDEA. Mason is ideally positioned to become an engine of innovation as well as the region's go-to place for executive, professional, and continuing education.

Our focus on entrepreneurship is not new. For the past 17 years, the Mason Enterprise Center (MEC) has supplied small business owners with counseling, training, networking, mentoring, and temporary office space. Mason also coordinates Virginia's network of small business development centers. More recently, we have helped incubate new enterprises in cyber security, proteomic medicine, and computer games. Supporting high-growth start-ups, particularly in sectors of strategic importance in the National Capital Region, will become an increasingly important function at the university.

Mason is also committed to helping existing organizations meet their talent development needs. Our disciplinary mix and our traditional relationships with industry and government make us an optimal partner to design and deliver customized programs that can help grow the professional, technical, managerial, and leadership talent organizations need to succeed. These programs can also provide additional resources to the university and open up employment opportunities for our graduates.

Our work in driving innovation and entrepreneurship in our region must be grounded on a strong entrepreneurial culture among our faculty and students. Our goal is to develop robust programs to support student entrepreneurs and to develop inventor-friendly systems to attract and support faculty entrepreneurs.



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

More than 100 enterprises will be incubated, supported, or accelerated. Revenues from intellectual property licensing will account for more than 1 percent of sponsored research. Revenues from executive education programs will account for 10 percent of the Educational and General budget.

Community Builder

Contribute to the cultural vitality of our community through regional partnerships and commitments to the arts, athletics, and community engagement.

INITIATIVES

- > Achieve Carnegie Community Engagement classification.
- > Partner with regional constituencies to plan future developments that enrich our communities.
- > Strengthen our role as a meeting point for the enjoyment and engagement of art and athletics.
- > Be the region's hub for lifelong learning.

WHY

Mason has become an integral element in the fabric of our community, a meeting point that enriches our lives intellectually and culturally. We want to take our engagement with our community to an even higher level.

The Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching provides a useful framework to assess a university's effectiveness in engaging with its community. It is based on the understanding of a "mutually beneficial exchange of knowledge and resources in a context of partnership and reciprocity." We have accepted the challenge to increase the value we bring to our community and to earn the Carnegie classification as a measure of our accomplishments in this area.

A more intimate relationship with our community will not only enrich the community but will benefit our students as well. It will offer additional opportunities for research and scholarship, for experiential learning, for artistic and athletic performance, and for development of values of citizenship and social service. It will also generate a greater understanding and appreciation for what we do and will motivate further philanthropic investments in the university.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

The number of people engaged in Mason's cultural, athletic, and lifelong learning activities will double from the current level. The number of community partnerships will increase, as well as the number of alumni actively engaged with the university.

Mason's artistic performances and athletic events have contributed significantly to Northern Virginia's quality of life. The convenience and relatively moderate cost of these kinds of entertainment offerings make the university a cultural hub for the local communities. The Osher Lifelong Learning Institute and similar initiatives in Arlington and elsewhere extend the university's learning mission to seniors who are interested in maintaining an active intellectual life. Over the next decade, these efforts will be strengthened and further developed as we continue to work to make Northern Virginia one of the best places in America to live.

GOALS FOR FACULTY AND STAFF



Well-being

Become a model well-being university that allows all of its members to thrive.

INITIATIVES

- > Bring compensation of faculty, staff, and graduate assistants to competitive levels.
- > Establish a university-wide center for the advancement of well-being.
- > Build curricular and co-curricular programs that help students achieve well-being outcomes.
- > Provide our communities and alumni with access to well-being assessment and practices.

WHY

At Mason, we believe that “we thrive together”—shared success is one of our core values. In addition, to achieve our ambitious plans for the future, Mason must attract and retain talented administrators, faculty, and staff. To do so, we must provide an environment in which all members can personally thrive while they simultaneously contribute in meaningful ways to our overall mission. By fostering a welcoming, supportive culture, we will become more competitive in attracting talent, more successful in retaining our employees, and more healthy and productive as a community.

Similarly, an enriching learning environment extends far beyond the classroom. Student learning occurs throughout the university experience, and ensuring that the full university environment is conducive to learning and personal development is critical to fulfilling our educational mission.

While we are proud to be recognized by organizations such as *The Chronicle of Higher Education* or AARP as a great place to work, there is more to be done as we strive to increase the well-being of all members of our community.

In terms of compensation, overall faculty salaries are below the median of our peer group and our stipends for graduate research assistants are comparatively low. Closing these and other gaps in our compensation systems will be a top priority over the next years.

But well-being goes well beyond compensation. A new university-wide center for the advancement of well-being will provide a focal point for our efforts and a source of innovation and energy in promoting positive change. We will seek to be a community-wide resource of well-being for the benefit of our faculty, staff, and students as well as members of our community.

We will rely on cutting-edge research to identify best practices and to develop metrics to help us deliver on our promise to become a model well-being university.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

The university will reach or exceed the median for its peer group in comparative compensation data across faculty and staff groups. Career, social, financial, physical, and community measures of well-being will be developed.

Diverse Academic Community

Create an inclusive and diverse academic community that reflects the diversity of the National Capital Region.

INITIATIVES

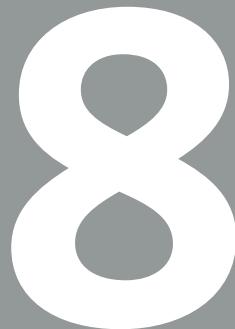
- > Recruit, retain, and advance diverse faculty across disciplines and ranks.
- > Build a diverse administration and staff.
- > Promote an organizational culture where diverse members of our community can thrive.

WHY

Diversity, one of our foundational values, is a key element in the Mason IDEA (innovative, diverse, entrepreneurial, accessible), which defines who we are as a community. We believe that a diversity of opinions, cultures, and perspectives is what provides vibrancy to an academic community. Diversity is a source of innovation, energy, and growth. For us, “diversity is our strength.”

Mason’s student body is highly diverse. For example, in our most recent class of transfer students, students in traditionally underrepresented groups were the majority. We have been consistently recognized for the diversity of our student body by organizations such as the *Princeton Review* and have also been singled out for the high graduation success rates and outstanding academic performance of our students from typically underrepresented groups. Mason has developed a welcoming culture that values and celebrates difference, and students choose us because of this defining feature. We are committed to building on this success and working to ensure that diversity continues to be our strength.

Unfortunately, Mason employees are less diverse than the students we serve. To address this imbalance, we are making an explicit commitment to build a more diverse faculty and staff. For faculty, we will expand our recruitment and retention efforts across disciplines and ranks. For staff, we will similarly endeavor to promote diversity at every level. In both cases, we will work to promote an organizational culture that recognizes and celebrates diversity. By providing a welcoming environment, we can improve retention and recruitment for individuals from a variety of backgrounds, and, in doing so, we will become stronger, more effective, and better prepared to serve our culturally rich student body.



GOAL

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Diversity metrics by faculty ranks and staff groups will increase by 50 percent in underrepresented groups.

Support Teaching and Scholarship Excellence

Provide an environment and resources to support and encourage academic innovation and excellence.

INITIATIVES

- › Reward and promote innovation and excellence in scholarship, teaching, and global and community engagement.
- › Create flexibility in faculty roles and rewards to support strategic plan initiatives.
- › Improve support and infrastructure for innovation and excellence in teaching and scholarship.

WHY

Teaching and scholarship are the lifeblood of higher education and a strong, dedicated faculty is the heart from which learning flows. While this truth has remained static for millennia, the form in which knowledge is transferred has undergone dramatic change over the past several decades. Technology has radically altered the educational landscape by simplifying access to information, creating asynchronous learning opportunities, and challenging face-to-face models of instruction. Traditional lecture methods of teaching, while efficient, have been shown to be the least effective as a means for learning. Entering students expect participative learning environments that actively engage them in the acquisition of new knowledge.

These dramatic changes have forced universities to constantly reassess how learning takes place on physical and virtual campuses. Faculty have had to adjust to new demands from students, employers, and universities. Integrating new technologies, managing new learning behaviors, and seeking to produce graduates for future jobs that do not currently exist have challenged faculty throughout the nation and the world.

At Mason, we seek to empower faculty with the tools they need to respond to these challenges and continue to provide their outstanding service of educating future generations of citizens. Further, we want to create more mechanisms to recruit, retain, and reward faculty who are leaders in the development of innovative teaching and learning.

First, we will focus on faculty development as a core priority. We will expand our opportunities for faculty to develop expertise in online education delivery, experiential learning techniques, and other pedagogical best practices. Distance learning, flipped classrooms, and other innovations require thoughtful examination of teaching methods and learning outcomes, which will need to be explored and evaluated. Finally, we will improve flexibility in faculty roles to ensure our commitment to developing a faculty body that can provide our students with transformational, innovative learning experiences while expanding our commitment to scholarship.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Faculty receiving national recognition for innovation and excellence.



GOALS FOR THE WORLD

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GOAL

Elevate Research

Expand research and enhance standards of scholarship across disciplines.

INITIATIVES

- > Achieve Carnegie Very High Research classification.
- > Improve research infrastructure including faculty support, space, and start-up funds.
- > Increase PhD graduates and decrease time to degree.

WHY

World-class research universities attract world-class talent; they produce scientists, inventors, and entrepreneurs who can drive innovation; they promote economic development by attracting investment and job creation; and they produce new insights that address pressing world problems and improve human life.

Northern Virginia is one of the nation's most dynamic regional economies. A large and growing technology sector, a major aerospace industry, and a plethora of businesses that serve the federal government combine to form a vibrant and growing economic environment. The future of this knowledge economy will be significantly influenced by Mason's growth as a research university.

Expanding our research will require that we invest in both our researchers and our infrastructure. We will need to attract additional private and public funds, build labs, provide attractive start-up packages, attract more researchers, and increase the number of PhD graduates.

By boosting our capabilities and by strengthening our connections with the public and private sectors, Mason is poised to join the ranks of the most research-intensive universities in the United States and become a source of knowledge, insight, and innovation for the region, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the world. Carnegie's "Very High Research" classification is reserved for universities of this caliber and is one of the measures by which we will define our success.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

We will increase sponsored research funding. We will see a measurable increase in research productivity and impact metrics: citations, business and policy transfer effectiveness, and media and public opinion influence.

Research of Consequence

Strategically focus on multidisciplinary domains of great societal and economic consequence where we can make a difference.

INITIATIVES

- > Invest in research areas of great societal, economic, and global consequence.
- > Create at least five multidisciplinary institutes.
- > Translate discoveries from our research to society.

WHY

We are committed to not just increase the knowledge that we generate, but to deepen the impact of that knowledge on our society and our planet. We are committed to producing not only research of quality, but also of consequence, and to make efforts to translate research into solutions to important problems faced by our society.

In order to play an active role in solving some of our society's most pressing problems, we need to pursue a multidisciplinary approach. The great challenges of our time require cutting-edge thinking that integrates knowledge across the academic areas. Innovation often happens at the intersection of disciplines—when different ideas, perspectives, and fields come together to create approaches that are unthinkable from a narrow disciplinary lens. We therefore plan to align research efforts around complex problems spaces—whether in health care, the environment, or peace and security—where an interdisciplinary approach will create the greatest benefit.

In order to foster the multidisciplinary environment we value, we intend to create interdisciplinary institutes focused on important themes and global issues. The institutes will serve as facilitators, allowing Mason faculty from different fields to jointly explore research solutions to these major issues.

We will also promote the translation of research discoveries into business, government, or societal applications. Given our commitment to impact, we believe that research should be used to make a difference in our communities and the world.



WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

Research productivity and impact measures will be put in place.

12

GOAL

Global Learning Platform

Create partnerships and other arrangements to support student and faculty mobility and collaboration.

INITIATIVES

- > Build a global learning platform through partnerships and other forms of presence to support student and faculty mobility.
- > Create a “U8” network of universities in key international hubs, committed to collaborating in joint global problem solving.
- > Cultivate a global mindset in our student body, faculty, and staff.

WHY

Globalization has brought us closer together and has made us more interdependent. The most effective people in today’s global environment possess a global mindset that allows them to connect and engage productively with individuals and organizations across boundaries.

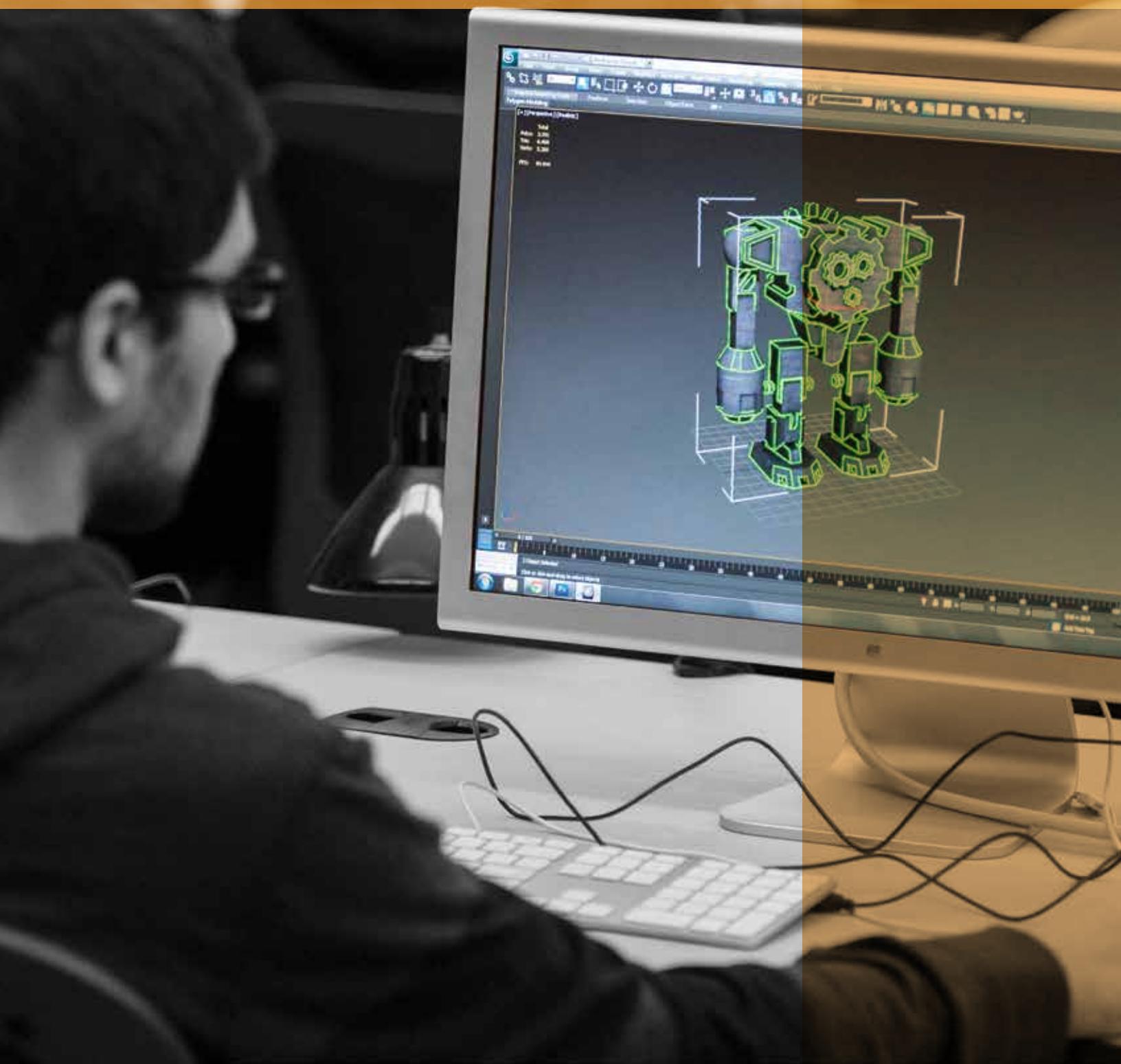
Mason is committed to building a community that fosters global learning, builds global understanding, and seeks global impact. To do so, we will create strategies and initiatives that deepen the global mindset of our students and expand the global reach of our faculty. We will provide additional learning opportunities that strengthen global understanding and build global connections. For this purpose, we will build on the existing Global Problem Solving Consortium to create a U8 network of universities in key international hubs. We will use this network to provide global learning opportunities for our students and global research opportunities for our faculty while we work together with the other members of the consortium to seek solutions to significant global problems.

Beyond the U8, we will seek to build a broad global learning platform that expands our global presence and provides opportunities for student and faculty mobility. Mason’s existing relationships and programs, such as the China 1+2+1 dual degree program and the embryonic Songdo operation, provide a strong base from which to expand our global operations.

WHAT SUCCESS LOOKS LIKE

More Mason students will be studying abroad. The number of Fulbright scholars and faculty engaged in international projects will increase. Ties with partner institutions will strengthen. More students, faculty, and staff will embrace the global mindset.

THE NEXT STEPS





The Next Steps

The university-wide strategic plan provides the framework and context for our actions over the next 10 years. With our goals and priorities now defined, our next step is to prepare for implementation. Each college and school is already working on its own strategic plan in support of the university-wide goals. The university's overarching plan provides a common framework and a shared narrative, but leaves ample room for each college and school within the university to provide its own response to the specific challenges it faces.

STRENGTHEN OUR RESOURCES

The foundation of all our plans will be the leveraging and strengthening of our resources in support of the 10-year goals. Specifically, we will need enhanced physical and technology assets, financial resources, social capital, and brand value. Several initiatives will support these efforts.

First, we will develop a 10-year campus master plan that outlines how we will leverage our physical assets in support of our strategic goals. In keeping with our inclusive approach, we will not only evaluate the needs and priorities of internal units and programs, but we will also seek input from local government and business groups. The input received from these important external stakeholders will assist in guiding the design of our future campus.

Second, given the increasing importance of information technology in delivering education, supporting computing-based research, and managing the business affairs of the university, we will also develop a technology plan in support of the strategic goals.

Third, we will design a new budgeting system to better align resources, performance, and goals institution-wide. A variety of budgeting systems and philosophies exist in higher education, each creating their own sets of internal incentives and ways to interpret and compare financial resources. A process is under way to ensure that our budget system rewards the kinds of innovative, entrepreneurial initiatives that will be critical to achieving our goals.

Fourth, we foresee philanthropy playing an increasing role in securing resources for our future. While the “silent phase” of a capital campaign is currently under way, the overall financial goal has yet to be determined. Now, guided by the priorities of the strategic plan, we will develop a comprehensive campaign plan with the goal of securing support for our current needs and strategic initiatives while building an endowment for the future.

Finally, as important as these tangible assets are, we will need to invest significantly in developing key intangible assets—namely social capital with our community and our alumni, and an attractive, compelling, strong brand that supports recruitment, fund-raising, and knowledge of Mason.

GETTING STARTED

Prior to the official launch of the strategic plan, we need to ensure that we have the appropriate personnel and organizational structure to achieve our goals. We have spent much of the past year building a new team and adjusting our structure to align with our new priorities. This process will continue through the current academic year and will help to position us for success in the initial stages of the new strategic plan.

We also need to begin solidifying our financial resources. The resource needs noted above will require sustained effort and we should not wait for the official commencement of the plan to begin our work. Seeking efficiencies from our current operations, identifying new sources of revenue, bolstering our fund-raising activities, and addressing existing financial challenges are essential to providing a strong foundation for the launch of the plan. These efforts have already begun and will accelerate over the coming months.

While all of our 10-year goals are highly important, not all of our objectives can be achieved simultaneously. In choosing which goals to pursue first, we will prioritize those initiatives with the greatest short-term impact. The success of these initiatives can then be used to fund and support the development of longer-term projects.

We will also focus on promoting innovative, entrepreneurial solutions to existing challenges and objectives. Initiatives that do not require a significant up-front investment of resources will also receive priority in our initial planning process.

FINAL THOUGHT

As we enter a new chapter in Mason’s already illustrious history, we are blessed by an impressive array of assets. We are part of a vibrant public university that provides outstanding value to our students, our community, and the Commonwealth of Virginia. We are well-known not only for our scholarship and our academic excellence but also for the creative, entrepreneurial manner in which we have grown. We produce world-class research and our faculty members are frequently sought out by private companies and governments for their expertise, analysis, and insight. We find ourselves located in one of the most dynamic regional economies in the nation and enjoy excellent support from our local community. As we move forward, our aspiration to be the best university *for the world* is solidly grounded in the confidence of past success. We face the future with enthusiasm and energy. Now, it’s simply time to get to work.



APPENDICES



APPENDIX A

Strategic Planning Process

During the August 2012 Planning Conference, hosted by the Board of Visitors, the president of the university was charged with crafting a new strategic vision for George Mason University, in collaboration with faculty and key internal and external stakeholders, and in alignment with existing policies and frameworks in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The goal of the strategic vision was not only to provide a vision for the university's future beyond 2014 (when the prior strategic plan is set to expire), but also to create a decision-making framework and foundation for the strategic plan.

Throughout the 2012-13 academic year, eight working groups, whose members were broadly inclusive of the university community, focused on gathering input related to the issues identified during the planning conference. The working groups solicited feedback from more than 3,000 individuals and through review of internal and external reports. Their work culminated in a set of working group reports, which translated the input into a thoughtful analysis of the issues and a set of proposed strategic commitments to move the university forward. Based on the information in the working group reports, the steering committee crafted the final strategic vision and supporting document.

The Board of Visitors approved the strategic vision during its March 20, 2013, meeting. This approval included the institution's new mission, values, and commitments (which are subject to approval by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia and the legislature under the Virginia Code). The elements of the strategic vision created a framework from which strategic planning could begin. Thus, the Board of Visitors charged the president with producing a strategic plan prior to the expiration of the current strategic plan in June 2014.

During the late spring, summer, and fall of 2013, members of the strategic planning committee incorporated the work from the strategic vision and solicited input from the George Mason University community related to the issues set forth in the August 2012 and August 2013 planning conferences. Nine working groups explored key cross-cutting themes, and two academic forums and nine public town halls provided further input to the plan. This information-gathering period culminated in the final strategic plan, which translates the input into a thoughtful analysis of the issues and provides a set of proposed strategic goals, initiatives, and metrics to move the university forward.

APPENDIX B

Strategic Planning Committee

Michelle Marks, Chair <i>Vice Provost for Academic Affairs</i>	Sarah Nutter <i>Acting Dean, School of Management</i>	FACULTY REPRESENTATIVES FROM COLLEGES AND SCHOOLS	Peter Winant <i>Director, School of Art, College of Visual and Performing Arts</i>
Ángel Cabrera, ex-officio President	Rose Pascarell <i>Vice President, University Life</i>	Mark Addleson <i>Associate Professor, School of Public Policy</i>	WORKING GROUP ON GLOBAL INITIATIVES
Peter Stearns, ex-officio Provost	Stephanie Payton <i>Chair, Staff Senate</i> <i>Administrative and Budget Specialist, Orientation, Family Programs and Services, University Life</i>	John Dale <i>Associate Professor, Sociology and Anthropology, College of Humanities and Social Sciences</i>	Co-Chair: Supriya Baily <i>Assistant Professor, FAST TRAIN, College of Education and Human Development</i>
Thomas Calhoun <i>Vice President, Facilities</i>	James Pfiffner <i>University Professor, School of Public Policy</i>	Penelope Earley <i>Professor, College of Education and Human Development</i>	Co-Chair: Anne Schiller <i>Vice President, Global and International Strategies</i>
Charlene Douglas <i>Chair, Faculty Senate</i> <i>Associate Professor, College of Health and Human Services</i>	Thomas Prohaska <i>Dean, College of Health and Human Services</i>	Cara Frankenfeld <i>Assistant Professor, Global and Community Health, College of Health and Human Services</i>	John Dale <i>Associate Professor, Sociology and Anthropology, College of Humanities and Social Sciences</i>
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Kim Eby <i>Associate Provost, Faculty Development</i> <i>Director, Center for Teaching and Faculty Excellence</i>	Josh St. Louis <i>Graduate and Professional Student Association Representative</i>	Mara Schoeny <i>Assistant Professor, School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution</i>	Steve Harris-Scott <i>Graduate Student, History, College of Humanities and Social Sciences</i>
Jordan Foster <i>Student Body President</i>	Michael Summers <i>Professor and Director, School of Physics, Astronomy, and Computational Sciences, College of Science</i>	Rainer "Ray" Sommer <i>Associate Professor, School of Public Policy</i>	Yehuda Lukacs <i>Associate Provost, International Programs</i> <i>Director, Center for Global Education</i>
Linda Harber <i>Associate Vice President, Human Resources</i>	June Tangney <i>Professor, Psychology, College of Humanities and Social Sciences</i>	Anthony Stefanidis <i>Associate Professor, Geography and Geoinformation Science, College of Science</i>	Lisa Pawloski <i>Chair and Professor, Nutrition and Food Studies, College of Health and Human Services</i>
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Kathryn Seipel McQuiston <i>Graduate and Professional Student Association Representative</i>			



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