



20  
23 STRATEGIC DIRECTION

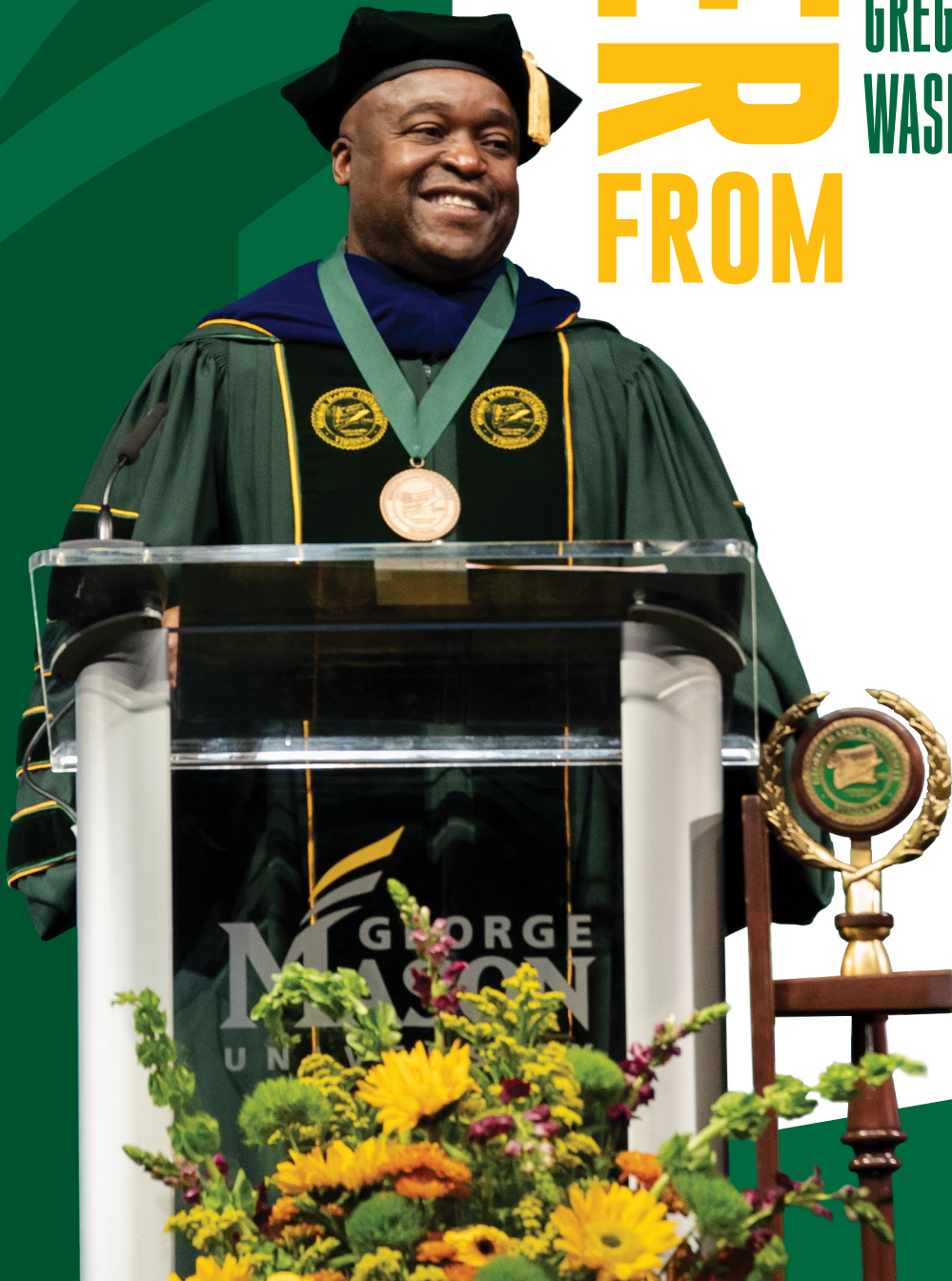
TO  
GETHER  
WE  
CAN  
DO  
IT

MASON IS

ALL  
TOGETHER



# LETTER PRESIDENT GREGORY WASHINGTON FROM



Dear Fellow Patriots and Friends of Mason,

2022 marked our 50th anniversary as George Mason University. In our first half century as a university, Mason has grown remarkably, into the largest, most diverse, and most innovative public research university in the Commonwealth of Virginia, ranked America's No. 1 young university. Yet, even as we celebrate all we and our predecessors have accomplished, we must turn our attention to the next half century and beyond, because a new and very different world is fast emerging, and the future of higher education belongs to those universities that can best adapt. Mason has the raw materials, community goodwill, and vision to become a university of choice in the world to come. What we need is a plan.

Those we educate today and tomorrow will face multiple existential threats that are unprecedented in the human experience. But they will also benefit from opportunities and human advances that will be without precedent, all while leading America's first-ever society without an ethnic majority. Indeed, the world we are entering will be fundamentally different than the one we are leaving. To adequately prepare future generations, society needs universities that are poised to be, as we say at Mason, *All Together Different*.

This plan is a blueprint to give Mason the capacity to be such a university. It contains the often underappreciated but vital steps necessary to meticulously create university infrastructure and human capacity to lead in the unfolding world. This plan will give Mason the operational capacity to fulfill its aspirations to:

- welcome 5,000 more students onto our campuses, and an additional 5,000 online;
- recruit hundreds of next-generation faculty and staff, as up to 40 percent of our personnel retire over the next decade;
- increase our national leadership in academic disciplines beyond current national rankings; and
- tackle the world's intertwined grand challenges so that we may leave a healthier planet and people, thriving economies, and more just societies to the generations to come.

Our ability to offer accessible and affordable education, with minimal achievement gaps, is a distinctive and defining characteristic of Mason. We prepare learners for the future through inclusive and high-quality education and by committing to a diverse, inclusive, and welcoming environment. Mason has the highest graduation and admissions rates among a diverse group of ethnicities and is the first to have accomplished this both regionally and nationally. We pride ourselves on meeting the challenges that others won't in a new model that emphasizes success and flexible planning, strategic partnerships, and an enhanced focus on mental health and well-being.

Our future depends on considering how all our Mason community stakeholders can make a lasting impact in shaping the future. This involves making a concerted effort in equipping our students, faculty, and staff to succeed, and collaborating with business, alumni, and community partners to not only build a lasting connection to Mason, but to also drive economic and social impact. Everyone and anyone should see themselves reflected in this plan.

Okay, fellow Patriots. Let's get to work.

Sincerely,

Gregory Washington, PhD  
President, George Mason University

**The largest, most diverse, and most innovative  
public research university in the Commonwealth of Virginia,  
ranked America's No. 1 young university**

**R1  
RESEARCH  
INSTITUTION**

with one of the fastest  
growing portfolios  
in the nation



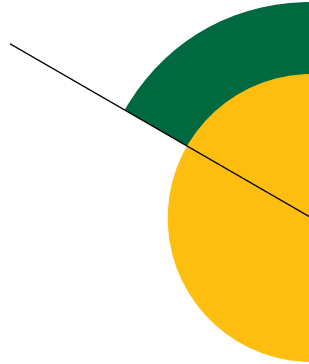
**1  
of  
8**

in the world for  
forensic science  
research facilities



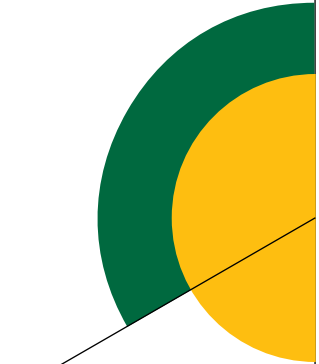
**1  
in  
3**

undergraduates is  
a first-generation  
student



**2  
out of  
3**

alumni work and live  
in the Washington, D.C.,  
region



**39,607 STUDENTS**



**7,596**

**FACULTY & STAFF**

**4 CAMPUSES** INCLUDING ONE **SIN KOREA**



# THE FOUNDATION OF OUR PLAN: STAKEHOLDER FEEDBACK

Mason's strategic planning process commenced with the collection of feedback from our community constituents. The comprehensiveness of these outreach activities allowed us to gain a holistic understanding of perspectives in shaping the future of Mason. A total of 35 individuals were interviewed across schools and departments at Mason, as well as external affiliated community members. Additionally, 24 focus group sessions were conducted across various groups. The participants engaged included faculty, staff, students, alumni, donors, and industry leaders. In addition to these activities, we disseminated a survey to the broad Mason community and held two town hall sessions to share progress and solicit input across phases of the process. A complete list of interview participants and focus group/town hall sessions is included in Appendix A of this report. A survey was also distributed to the Mason community, yielding a total of more than 2,000 respondents.

Analysis of all collected stakeholder data uncovered many themes that informed the strategic direction and priorities for this plan.

## IMPROVING THE MASON EXPERIENCE FOR FACULTY, STAFF, AND STUDENTS

Providing a premier student experience—improving student services and offering ever more transformational learning opportunities to better prepare students to meaningfully impact their communities postgraduation—was noted as a key focus area for Mason. Faculty and staff attraction, recruitment, and retention were identified as a leading priority,

with emphasis on mitigating compensation inequities and cultivating a culture that encourages and celebrates collaboration and innovation across schools, disciplines, and units.



## GROWING MASON'S RESEARCH ENTERPRISE

As the largest public research university in Virginia, Mason is among an elite group of institutions known for performing at the Carnegie Research 1 status (R1, Doctoral Universities—Very High Research Activity). Mason achieved this status after it became a focus of the 2014 strategic plan, and the importance of maintaining it and expanding multi- and

transdisciplinary research efforts to effectively solve the challenges of the future and create lasting global impact was a recurring theme. As Mason grows its research enterprise, focus on support and investment in the infrastructure and partnerships to foster collaboration and innovation will be needed.

## ADVANCING DIVERSE, EQUITABLE, AND INCLUSIVE PRACTICES

Mason is recognized as the most diverse and accessible public university in Virginia. The Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Task Force has played an instrumental role in propelling Mason forward to strive for an inclusive and equitable campus environment. Continuing this work to advance diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) at Mason and its goal of becoming an exemplar for anti-racism and inclusive excellence is clearly important to the Mason community.



## DEFINING AND PROMOTING MASON'S BRAND AND VALUE

Mason is building a national brand identity, one worthy of the university it has become and poised to grow with the university in the future. Mason began branding efforts as a run-up to its 50th anniversary as an independent university in 2022, to reenergize the university community, alumni, and supporters, and to reintroduce Mason to industry leaders and the broader audience in a new light. We are seeking to establish a unified

identity that leverages Mason's distinct characteristics, many of which are singular in the regional market, and to position the university as a national leader in qualities that matter now and into the future, namely our best-in-category diversity, across-the-board academic success, and top quality doctoral-level education.





## BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS AND PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY, INDUSTRY, AND THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

Mason's geographic location and strong relationship with local community colleges are key strengths and drivers for increased student enrollment. Surrounded by industry leaders in the nonprofit sector, commercial sector, government contracting, and the federal government, we are positioned to build and leverage relationships and partnerships with the community, industry, and government to transform the way students learn, support curriculum development and experiential learning, drive research and innovation efforts of our faculty, and facilitate expansion of our fundraising.



## CREATING SUSTAINABLE PATHWAYS FOR GROWTH

As Mason embarks on this strategic journey, we will need to consider the level of resources required to support our future direction. Consideration for facilities, information technology, talent, and operational frameworks, as well as funding and support from donors, alumni, and the Commonwealth will need careful assessment and planning to attain our mission objectives and build a lasting foundation for continued success. While we are not resourced at even the median level of other Virginia public universities, we will not have the resources to do everything we want to do, so we must find ways to focus our efforts and our resources on the things we must do.

*call us different  
because we are  
we celebrate different*

# WHO WE ARE

*our*

George Mason University is described as *All Together Different* because of our distinctive mix of world-class academics, student diversity, and youthful audacity. In just 50 years, Mason has become Virginia's largest, most diverse, and highest ranked institution for innovation by rejecting the traditional university model of exclusivity. The youngest-ever university to attain top-tier research university status, we welcome all students who are academically prepared for a rigorous academic experience. Mason is proud to maintain graduation rates that surpass the national norm, with nearly nine in 10 new alumni reporting career advancement within six months of graduating. Mason is proud to be *All Together Different*.



*different in where we come from  
how we think  
but the same  
dreams for tomorrow  
merging different points of view*

# OUR CORE BELIEFS

Our core beliefs lie at the heart of our organization, and they are what we hold in common to drive our collective decisions as an institution. They inform our core values, shape our vision, and catalyze our mission.

- ▶ We believe in inclusivity over exclusivity.
- ▶ We believe in advancing our mission by being willing to take risks, not avoiding them.
- ▶ We believe our best work is only possible when we apply our diversity of origin, identity, circumstance, and thought.
- ▶ We believe talent is equally distributed among people, but opportunity is not. At Mason, education is opportunity's great equalizer.
- ▶ We believe we grow wiser and stronger from examining our full truths, no matter how complicated, messy, or discomfoting they might be.
- ▶ We believe we are strong enough to work, live, and study together, even when we disagree.
- ▶ We believe no problem is unsolvable.

## OUR CORE VALUES

Our core values serve as our guiding principles and distinctive beliefs for Mason. The pressures we face today may be different from the past, but our core values remain the same and continue to guide our actions.

## 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.

## INNOVATION IS OUR TRADITION

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

## WE ARE CAREFUL STEWARDS

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



## **WE THRIVE TOGETHER**

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

## **DIVERSITY IS OUR STRENGTH**

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

## **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 ACT WITH INTEGRITY**

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



# OUR VISION



# YOUR WORLD, TRANSFORMED

## OUR VISION AND PURPOSE

As a public, comprehensive, research university established by the Commonwealth of Virginia, George Mason University aims to provide access to excellence. Our goal is to provide opportunities for those who seek a quality education in a manner that positions them for excellence in life. We strive to remain affordable and accessible to anyone who wants a quality education while leveraging our talents to solve the world's most pressing challenges.

Mason was recently recognized as the nation's number one university under 50 years old and one of the country's fastest growing public research universities. We have always prided ourselves on putting students first. Our diverse student body is what sets us apart and is reflective of the demographics that the world is likely to see in the coming future. Most of our students are from disenfranchised communities, three in 10 are first-generation, and thousands are past traditional college age. Our students have a vision for a better life for themselves, their families, and their communities. As we look toward the future, we want our learners

and community to see Mason as the place to achieve their version of success, whether through degree programs, certificates, or meaningful connections with faculty, staff, alumni, peers, and partners. Further, Mason's graduates can serve as an engine of economic activity for Northern Virginia and beyond, and at the same time provide a pathway to opportunity for all.

Mason is a university that can provide an elite experience for anyone who seeks it. While many universities achieve success by being selective, we succeed by being inclusive. We admit like an open university, graduate like an elite university, and research like a flagship university. The branding effort concluded that Mason is *All Together Different*. We believe this extends to how we think about who we are.

This journey begins with a vision and a purpose that align with Mason's identity.

## OUR PURPOSE

TOGETHER, WE ENABLE YOUR FUTURE  
SUCCESS THROUGH THE ADVANCEMENT  
AND SHARING OF KNOWLEDGE





OUR

# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The strategic priorities that follow provide direction to the planned achievements of the university during the upcoming years. These priorities arose from the feedback obtained in the stakeholder engagement process, informed by the university's activities and core values.

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**Deliver a distinctive and inclusive student experience that fosters lifelong engagement.**

Cultivate a high-quality experience that embodies the Mason values and promotes student success, well-being, collaboration, and a lasting connection.

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**Expand the impact of Mason's research, scholarship, and creative enterprise.**

Bolster the infrastructure and systems to support research, creativity, and collaboration

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**Expand partnerships for economic and social impact.**

Strengthen partnerships, alumni relations, and community building and engagement informed by Mason's research and pedagogical expertise.

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**Exemplify a university culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.**

Live a culture of belonging and inclusion and address disparities to support the values of access, diversity, equity, and inclusion at Mason.

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**Invest in faculty and staff success.**

Ensure appropriate resources, processes, and technologies are in place to better support the faculty and staff experience.

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# STUDENT EXPERIENCE





# Deliver a distinctive and inclusive student experience that fosters lifelong engagement.

Cultivate a high-quality experience that embodies the Mason values and promotes student success, well-being, collaboration, and a lasting connection.

At Mason, our goal is to provide a well-rounded, transformational experience for all learners from the day they arrive until the day they graduate and beyond. At Mason, learners come in all forms, whether as a traditional or nontraditional student, alumni engaging in lifelong learning opportunities, staff broadening their knowledge and skillsets, or faculty expanding their expertise through pedagogy and research. The Mason student experience is one that allows learners to explore the unfamiliar, visit new worlds, and find their passion. Our student experience encompasses providing academic programs that are not just courses of study, but rather pathways to the accomplishments that learners strive to attain, the global problems they would like to solve, and the life they want to live. Students become accustomed to working and collaborating across cultures and diversity of origin, identity, circumstance, and thought. The goal of this priority is to ensure we provide the necessary support for our learners to thrive in and beyond the classroom and maintain a lifelong engagement and connection to the Mason community.

The outcomes we aim to achieve through this priority are:

- ▶ Improved overall health and well-being of students
- ▶ Improved lifelong Mason connection postgraduation
- ▶ Increased efficiency in student services infrastructure
- ▶ Improved degree completion and on-time graduation
- ▶ Improved recognition and ranking for Mason's academic programs



## STRATEGY 1:

### Enhance the academic experience for all learners to thrive throughout their lives.

Actions:

- 1.1 Expand opportunities for interdisciplinary learning that expose students to diverse ranges of perspectives and equip them with the ability to contribute to a free and just society.
- 1.2 Provide students with the skillsets and competencies needed to thrive by shaping curricula that is mindful of employer, industry, and global/national challenges.
- 1.3 Expand the portfolio of experiential learning opportunities, including internships, entrepreneurship, service learning, community engagement, study abroad, and research opportunities, for students to apply their skills and competencies in and beyond the classroom.
- 1.4 Integrate anti-racism principles and practices within the Mason learning experience.
- 1.5 Strategically leverage and invest resources to continue to build a portfolio of choice through online and hybrid programming.

## STRATEGY 2:

### Improve the student engagement experience within the Mason community.

Actions:

- 2.1 Fortify lasting connections for Mason learners through expanded opportunities for lifelong mentoring, networking, and high-quality relationships.
- 2.2 Leverage the Mason master plan to expand existing facilities and establish new facilities on all campuses to enhance the student experience.
- 2.3 Collaborate with registered student organizations to foster participation and engagement in the Mason experience, both virtually and in person.
- 2.4 Redesign, modernize, and/or expand athletic and entertainment facilities to provide for an enhanced experience for our students.

“Mason is the most innovative institution in our state. In recent years, we have created more new academic programs than all the other Virginia institutions combined. And we have the discipline to close programs when it is necessary to move on.”

—President Gregory Washington



### STRATEGY 3:

#### Build a dynamic alumni engagement strategy.

Actions:

- 3.1 Connect current and future alumni to share experiences, obtain career support, and maintain involvement in the Mason community.
- 3.2 Develop alumni programs that engage with and allow articulation between domain and general levels to enhance lifelong connections and build networks.

### STRATEGY 4:

#### Modernize the student services experience.

Actions:

- 4.1 Invest in a one-stop-shop approach for students to manage all administrative tasks at the university.
- 4.2 Provide a holistic student support framework, inclusive of advising, coaching, and mentorship opportunities, that builds on strengths to create an enriched learning and sustained experience.
- 4.3 Strengthen learning, well-being, mental health, and accessibility services for learners.
- 4.4 Facilitate exchange of relevant data among student-serving units throughout the student life cycle to best support Mason learners.
- 4.5 Develop and implement strategies for direct entry to Mason with or without an application.

“ You’ll leave Mason with a degree, real-world experience, allies, and mentors. But know that graduation is not the end; it is only the beginning. As you think about the number of Mason alumni, I want you to think about the fact that you have reached where you are today with [help from] family and friends and professors and counselors and others. But now, you get this new family. You get this family that has walked in your steps. That means no matter where you go now, or what industry you join, there is probably an alum. It means no matter where you settle, there is a location with an alum nearby that you can count on. ”

— Sumeet Shrivastava, MBA '94, former president of Mason's Alumni Association (2020–22)



# RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP, AND CREATIVE ACTIVITIES

# Expand the impact of Mason's research, scholarship, and creative enterprise.

Bolster the infrastructure and systems to support research and collaboration.

Mason is the youngest research university to attain top-tier research status. Our position as an R1 institution that is both accessible and diverse is unique and provides key opportunities to generate new and progressive solutions to the world's most pressing challenges. We want to support the growth of our community members who engage in research, scholarship, and creative endeavors. This priority focuses on growing our enterprise, enhancing the support structures for faculty and students, and recognizing the achievements and impact to our communities.

The outcomes we aim to achieve through this priority are:

- ▶ A 50 percent growth in funding for research, scholarship, and creative activities
- ▶ Increased research productivity
- ▶ Expanded/improved support for interdisciplinary and translational research



## STRATEGY 1:

### Grow Mason's research and creative portfolios.

Actions:

- 1.1 Improve internal and external funding models and incentives to support and encourage research, scholarship, and creative activity.
- 1.2 Establish public and private research collaborations, in alignment with Mason's values, to address the grand challenges, create community and global impact, and increase funding.
- 1.3 Increase the number of tenured and tenure-track faculty to align desired capabilities with existing and future priorities for research, scholarship, and creative activities.
- 1.4 Increase the recruitment of and support for doctoral students and postdoctoral fellows across the university to increase research, scholarship, and creative productivity.
- 1.5 Establish a formal Graduate Division to support faculty research, scholarship, and creative activities.

## STRATEGY 2:

### Provide the support structures needed to fuel growth.

Actions:

- 2.1 Assess and address existing policies, procedures, and technologies that support research administration, including those that would enable cross-college or multicollege collaboration.
- 2.2 Improve guidance and support for junior faculty, postdoctoral fellows, and students seeking grant opportunities.
- 2.3 Assess and realign course loads to enable faculty to grow research portfolios.
- 2.4 Leverage the George Mason University Master Plan to build and expand space for faculty to conduct research.
- 2.5 Explore establishing a unit in the Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact that would specifically support research in the humanities, humanistic social sciences, and creative and artistic activities.

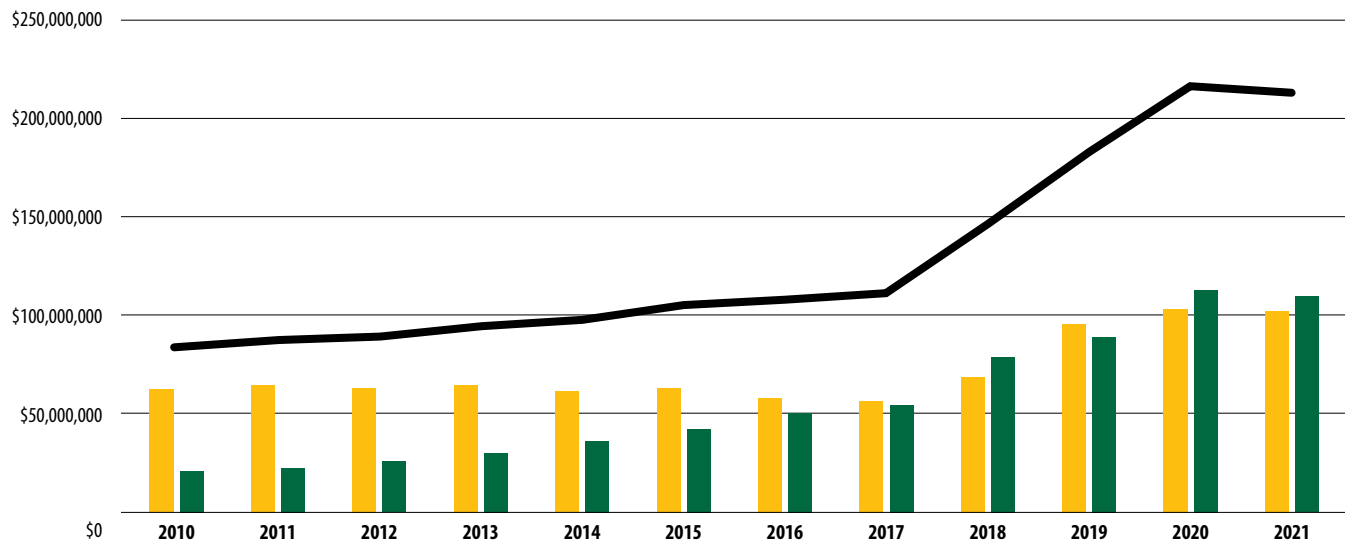
## STRATEGY 3:

### Promote recognition of Mason's research, scholarship, and creative enterprises.

Actions:

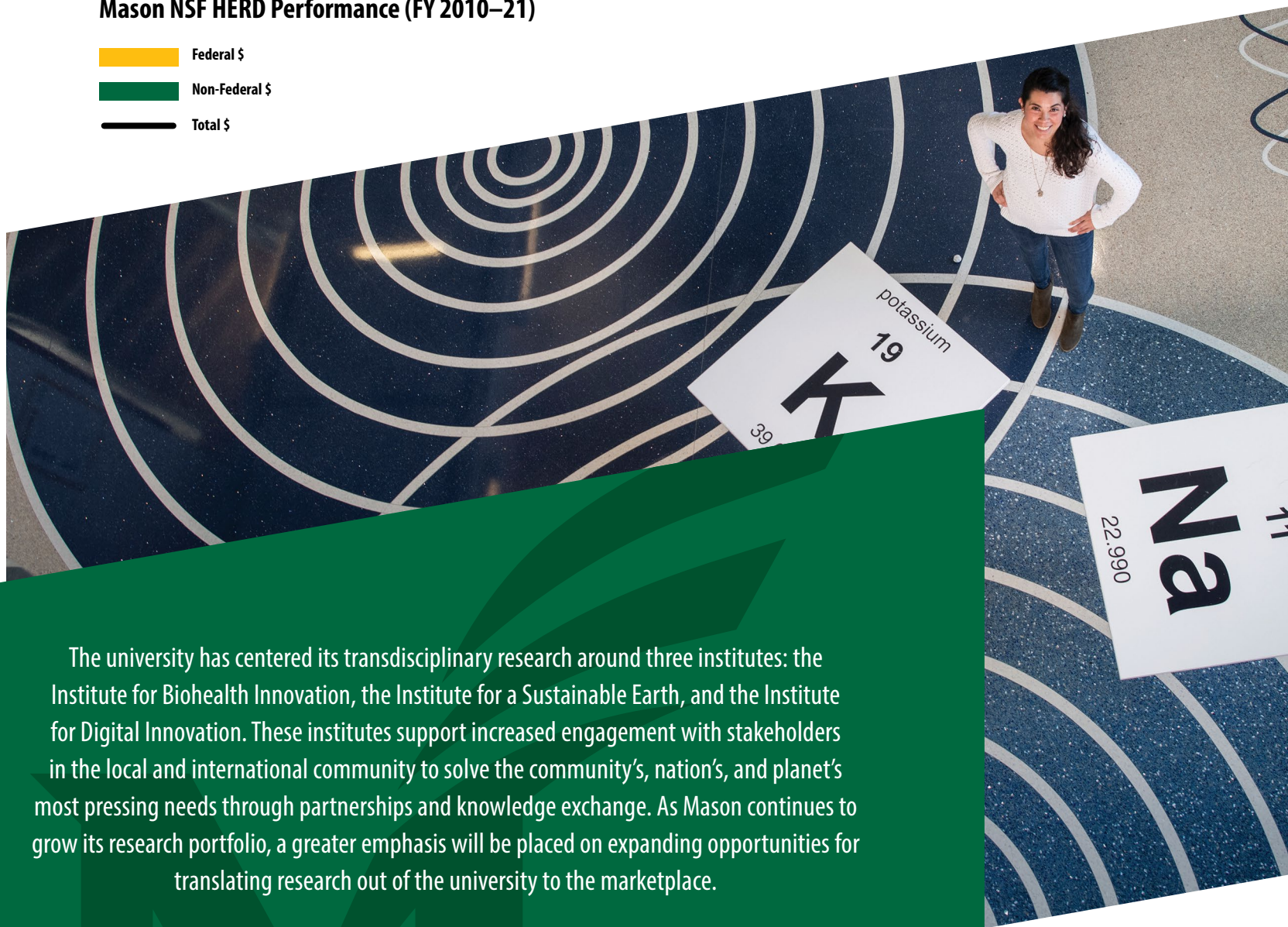
- 3.1 Disseminate, recognize, and publicize the value of the full range of Mason's research and creative output.
- 3.2 Create an infrastructure for nominating faculty, staff, and students for internal and external honorifics.
- 3.3 Develop, embrace, and institutionalize a way of talking about the intrinsic value of research, scholarship, and creative activities at Mason, especially as it relates to building reputation across the full range of disciplines at our university.
- 3.4 Strengthen capabilities and partnerships for effective translation and commercialization of research, scholarship, and creative activities, as appropriate.





### Mason NSF HERD Performance (FY 2010–21)

- Federal \$
- Non-Federal \$
- Total \$



The university has centered its transdisciplinary research around three institutes: the Institute for Biohealth Innovation, the Institute for a Sustainable Earth, and the Institute for Digital Innovation. These institutes support increased engagement with stakeholders in the local and international community to solve the community’s, nation’s, and planet’s most pressing needs through partnerships and knowledge exchange. As Mason continues to grow its research portfolio, a greater emphasis will be placed on expanding opportunities for translating research out of the university to the marketplace.

A woman with dark hair, wearing a yellow dress with a blue floral pattern, stands with her arms crossed, smiling. She is positioned on the left side of the frame. In the background, the White House is visible, slightly out of focus. The scene is set outdoors during the day, with a clear sky. The overall color palette is dominated by the yellow of the dress and the white of the building, with a teal-green gradient overlay on the right side of the image.

**PARTNERSHIPS FOR**  
**ECONOMIC**  
**AND SOCIAL IMPACT**

# Expand partnerships for economic and social impact.

Strengthen partnerships, alumni relations, and community building and engagement informed by Mason's research and pedagogical expertise.

Mason's location and proximity to the federal government provide ripe opportunities for the university to accelerate impact to the local community. Our three campuses in Virginia are surrounded by organizations that not only serve the federal government but are also many of the largest employers in the Commonwealth and surrounding region. As we consider a distinctive academic experience for our students, our research strengths and impact to our communities, and the more than 250,000 Mason alumni in the region, we focus this priority on forging and strengthening those relationships that bring value to our community and those we serve. Our goal is to engage with businesses and other industry partners to meet workforce demands and positively contribute to the economic and social viability of the Commonwealth, our region, and the world.

The outcomes we aim to achieve through this priority are:

- ▶ Diversified funding mechanisms/sources
- ▶ Enhanced regional and global partnerships
- ▶ Decision on the establishment of a medical school
- ▶ Increased collaboration of faculty, researchers, students, and the community
- ▶ Addressed/met workforce demands with Mason graduates



# MASON'S

INTERNATIONAL/EMBASSIES

**180+**  
EMBASSIES  
AND MISSIONS

**1,000**  
INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATIONS

**700+**  
STUDENTS  
AT MASON KOREA



MASON KOREA

TECHNOLOGY AND DATA

**NOVA**  
IS HOME OF THE  
CLOUD



**70%**  
OF THE WORLD'S  
INTERNET TRAFFIC



SCITECH CAMPUS

LIFE SCIENCES AND HEALTH CARE



**NOVA**  
**BIOHUB**



# FOUR-CAMPUS SETTING

**150K**  
EMPLOYED  
IN THE  
**HEALTH CARE**  
SECTOR



**M** MANY MASON GRADUATES

**DEFENSE/INTELLIGENCE**



**TOP 5**  
AEROSPACE  
AND DEFENSE  
CONTRACTORS

**5%** OF  
FEDERAL CONTRACT  
**DOLLARS** GO TO  
FAIRFAX COUNTY



**M** MANY MASON GRADUATES

**NONPROFIT AND GOVERNMENT**

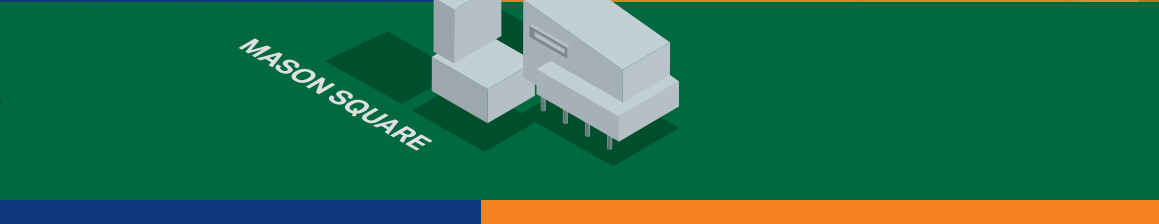
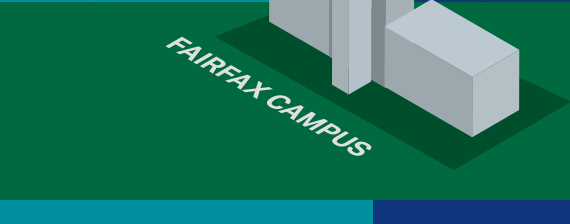


**LARGEST CUSTOMER**  
IN THE **WORLD**

**3<sup>RD</sup>** LARGEST  
CLUSTER OF  
NONPROFITS



**M** MANY MASON GRADUATES



## STRATEGY 1:

### Expand national and global partnerships to broaden Mason's reach.

Actions:

- 1.1 Launch a comprehensive fundraising campaign to grow the resources and partnerships needed for our university.
- 1.2 Utilize our alumni network to build partnerships and amplify our impact in solving global challenges starting with inequality, sustainability, digital innovation, and biohealth.
- 1.3 Utilize Mason Korea as a hub to expand Mason's global presence.
- 1.4 Strengthen partnerships to make global engagement more accessible to all students.
- 1.5 Upgrade and expand health sciences partnerships, funding opportunities, and capabilities—to include the continued efforts toward establishing a medical school.
- 1.6 Consolidate and develop the appropriate infrastructure to expand and manage our growing global presence.

Our recent investments in Mason Square and the Science and Technology Campus drive us toward our goal of serving as the hub for economic growth and impact in this region. Expanding the footprint of the university and providing state-of-the-art labs and classrooms will bring together scholars, students, and industry to help drive the region's economic growth, serve the surrounding communities, and prepare graduates to fill emerging workforce needs. Mason will also be positioned to produce 25,000 additional graduates in computer science, computer engineering, and software engineering through the Commonwealth of Virginia's Tech Talent Investment Program (TTIP).



## STRATEGY 2:

### **Expand community outreach activities and programs to drive impact and add value in the communities we serve.**

#### Actions:


- 2.1 Enhance the vitality of our region and accelerate how we solve grand challenges through investments in our campus hubs that unite scholars, artists, students, researchers, policymakers, and business developers.
- 2.2 Inspire K-12 students to actively pursue higher education by intensifying already successful outreach efforts.
- 2.3 Enhance the public's perception of Mason's strengths in research and education through brand awareness campaigns.
- 2.4 Stimulate community engagement at Mason through the promotion of intellectual, cultural, and athletic programs.
- 2.5 Expand access to affordable education by fortifying existing, and creating new, partnerships with Virginia community colleges via the Mason Virginia Promise.

## STRATEGY 3:

### **Strengthen and build relationships with partners to support workforce demands and drive economic growth.**

#### Actions:

- 3.1 Engage and empower the alumni network to strengthen the talent pipeline between learners and employers.
- 3.2 Meet existing and future workforce demands and provide experiential, internship, and lifelong learning opportunities for Mason learners by establishing partnerships with federal, state, and local governments and businesses.
- 3.3 Provide entrepreneurial development opportunities to Mason learners by leveraging partnerships with Small Business Development Centers and the Mason Enterprise Center.
- 3.4 Through continued investment in Mason Enterprise, develop a robust innovation corridor through Mason's three U.S. campuses, incorporating industry, university, and incubator partners, and positioning Mason as the lead convener.



As the Commonwealth's population continues to grow, health care needs and challenges must remain a priority for the vitality of our community. It is time for Virginia to commit itself to establishing its next public medical school designed and optimized for the 21st century, that can be stood up relatively quickly and economically, with a focus on clinical training. This medical school would serve to ensure the best environment for students to study, work, and live; improve the region's economy; and solve the deficit of primary care doctors in Virginia. Mason will lead the efforts for establishing a medical school.



# DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION





# Exemplify a university culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

Live a culture of belonging and inclusion and address disparities to support the values of access, diversity, equity, and inclusion at Mason.

Providing pathways to increase equity and inclusion across campuses is key to enhancing the Mason experience and reaffirms our commitment to further advance diversity, equity, and inclusion. Mason embraces the opportunity to expand our leadership as the most diverse public university in Virginia and become an exemplar for anti-racism and inclusive excellence at the state, regional, and national levels. We will continue diversifying our students, faculty, and staff, leveraging the work and initiatives underway through the Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Initiative and the Mason Virginia Promise. These initiatives, along with a strong foundational governance structure, will help Mason educate and maintain an inclusive environment that affirms and respects diversity of origin, identity, circumstance, and thought across all facets of the university.

The outcomes we aim to achieve are:

- ▶ Maintained affordability of, and accessibility to, a Mason education
- ▶ Faculty and staff demographics that mirror student demographics
- ▶ Increased support structures to retain students of diverse backgrounds
- ▶ Minority Serving Institution (MSI) designation
- ▶ Improved engagement among faculty, staff, and students in DEI initiatives
- ▶ Expanded funding for research, scholarship, and creative activity in DEI topics

## STRATEGY 1:

### **Achieve and sustain a diverse and inclusive population of students, faculty, and staff.**

Actions:

- 1.1 Serve as a national exemplar through the advancement of ARIE initiatives.
- 1.2 Execute a comprehensive recruitment and retention plan that addresses inequities for faculty, staff, and students.
- 1.3 Improve access and affordability through expanded financial assistance and partnerships within the Mason Virginia Promise.
- 1.4 Increase opportunities and resources to foster equitable experiences among the communities most in need (e.g., marginalized, those with disabilities, veterans, students of color, etc.).

## STRATEGY 2:

### **Be a community resource that can share knowledge and insight on diversity, equity, and inclusivity issues.**

Actions:

- 2.1 Expand programs and funding that support the advancement of research, scholarship, and creative activities in DEI and anti-racist topics.
- 2.2 Establish Mason as a state, regional, and national resource for the advancement of diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism.
- 2.3 Incorporate Mason's commitment to furthering the DEI mission into our brand.

## STRATEGY 3:

### **Refine Mason's governance structure, policies, and accountability measures to ensure diverse, equitable, and inclusive practices.**

Actions:

- 3.1 Institute new, and refine existing, policies and procedures to be consistent with Mason's DEI mission, vision, and values.
- 3.2 Enhance and sustain the institutional infrastructure that effectively supports progress and accountability in achieving DEI goals.
- 3.3 Formalize the engagement of faculty, staff, and students into relevant governance structures.

George Mason University's Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Initiative has a mission to develop and implement effective systems, practices, and traditions that eradicate racist practices and bigotry at the university. Our focus over the next few years is to implement the ARIE goals, which include enhanced DEI training and learning, community engagement, policies, curriculum and pedagogy, and research.



The Mason Virginia Promise (MVP) extends the success of the ADVANCE Partnership with Northern Virginia Community College to other community colleges in the Commonwealth. We admit 90 percent of the students who apply and are committed to ensuring a pathway toward a bachelor's degree or a business for every Virginian who wants it. Whether through one of our degree programs or Mason Enterprise's 27 Small Business Development Centers, we will provide an innovative higher education model, allowing for increased access and opportunity to attend school and serve as the beacon of hope for Virginians.

# FACULTY<sub>AND</sub> STAFF SUCCESS



# Invest in faculty and staff success.

Ensure appropriate resources, processes, and technologies are in place to better support the faculty and staff experience.

As one of the largest employers among colleges and universities in the Washington, D.C., region, Mason strives to provide a positive and meaningful work experience for all employees. As we chart our path forward, it is imperative that our faculty and staff have the support and structures needed to continue to be successful educators, researchers, scholars, contributors, and administrators. This priority will focus on attracting and retaining a strong workforce and investing in infrastructure and resources to support Mason's faculty and staff.

The outcomes we aim to achieve are:

- ▶ Improved faculty and staff recruitment and retention rates
- ▶ Increased staff development and upskilling opportunities
- ▶ Equity in compensation, benefits, progression, and promotion
- ▶ Improved and streamlined effectiveness of administrative infrastructures



The university cultivates versatile, critical thinkers with a desire to learn and improve their communities. To do that, we are committed to faculty excellence, enabling instructors, researchers, and leaders to reach professional and organizational goals.

## STRATEGY 1:

### **Be a work culture and workplace environment that attracts and retains top talent.**

#### Actions:

- 1.1 Ensure total compensation and benefit packages are competitive and equitable for faculty and staff talents.
- 1.2 Leverage our size and scale to create flexibility with job classifications and benefit offerings.
- 1.3 Establish a framework of continuous recruiting, leveraging streamlined talent identification and recruiting progress supported by staff and technologies.
- 1.4 Expand the recognition of faculty and staff across all disciplines for their contributions to their fields and the community.
- 1.5 Enhance the performance management framework to expand career pathing, professional development, and succession planning for a more fulfilling work experience for faculty and staff.
- 1.6 Strengthen existing offices and programs to create awareness, communication, training, and other opportunities to consistently reinforce Mason's values-based culture.
- 1.7 Through partnerships or direct engagement, establish workforce and affordable housing for faculty and staff.



## STRATEGY 2:

### Enable faculty and staff success through effective modernization of Mason's technology, process, and sustainable infrastructure.

Actions:

- 2.1 Support Mason's strategic priorities and financial success by implementing a redesigned budget model.
- 2.2 Strategically invest in the improvement of Mason's administrative, academic, and research operations and supporting technologies.
- 2.3 Improve reliability, validity, and accessibility of Mason's data used for decision-making.
- 2.4 Leverage existing, and establish new, initiatives and funding to further Mason's sustainability and climate objectives.

Mason lags behind its peers in faculty and staff compensation. One of our goals is to continue efforts to address and mitigate inequities in compensation over the next two to three years. A critical success factor in these efforts will be to correct the Commonwealth funding disparity between Mason students and students at other Virginia universities.



# FROM STRATEGIC PLAN PRIORITIES

The strategic priorities provide a broad picture of Mason's strategic direction, but in order to guide progress against that strategic direction over the next five years we will follow a robust roadmap that details how we will implement the strategic plan. This roadmap will serve as a living document, and also as a guide for dashboarding progress over the period. Supporting each of the five priorities as laid out in this plan, we will outline key initiatives and specific actions that Mason will execute over the course of the next few years. The roadmap outlines the tactical steps, responsible parties, timing, and key performance indicators to measure progress against the priorities, strategies, and actions noted in our strategic plan.

Guided by stakeholder feedback and in collaboration with University Business Consulting (UBC), Attain Partners facilitated working sessions to develop the initial roadmap. The purpose of these sessions was to align on relevant tactics necessary to implement each of these initiatives, and to resource load those tactics. Insight gathered from these feedback sessions support the iterative refinement that is needed to execute our roadmap. Essentially, this roadmap allows Mason to:

- ▶ Identify the planned tactics for the stated outcomes related to each strategic priority, strategies, and actions
- ▶ Incorporate an accountability framework that integrates SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) indicators of performance for the short- and longer-term
- ▶ Communicate operating priorities, roles, and responsibilities over time, with line of sight to management and leadership
- ▶ Engage the community to ensure continual feedback loops and adjustments

Because it will be a living document continuously updated over the life-cycle of the strategic plan, the detailed implementation roadmap will be presented separately.

## Strategic Plan PRIORITIES

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▶ Deliver a distinctive and inclusive student experience that fosters lifelong engagement.

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▶ Expand the impact of Mason's research, scholarship, and creative enterprise.

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▶ Expand partnerships for economic and social impact.

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▶ Exemplify a university culture of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

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▶ Invest in faculty and staff success.

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# OUTCOMES

FY23

FY24

FY25

FY26

FY27

Strategic Plan OUTCOMES

## MASON STUDENT EXPERIENCE INITIATIVE

- Improved overall health and well-being of students
- Improved lifelong Mason connection postgraduation
- Increased efficiency in student services infrastructure
- Improved degree completion and on-time graduation
- Improved recognition and ranking for Mason's academic programs

## RESEARCH INITIATIVE

- 50% growth in funding for research, scholarships, and creative activities
- Increased research productivity
- Expanded/improved support for interdisciplinary and translational research

## PARTNERSHIPS INITIATIVE

- Diversify funding mechanisms/sources
- Enhanced regional and global partnerships
- Decision on the establishment of a medical school
- Increased collaboration of faculty, researchers, students, & community
- Addressed/met workforce demands with Mason graduates

## DEI INITIATIVE

- Maintained affordability of, and accessibility to, a Mason education
- Faculty and staff demographics that mirror student demographics
- Increased support structures to retain students of diverse backgrounds
- Minority Serving Institution (MSI) designation
- Improved engagement among faculty, staff, and students in DEI initiatives
- Expanded funding for research, scholarship, and creative activity in DEI topics

## FACULTY AND STAFF INITIATIVE

- Improved faculty and staff recruitment and retention rates
- Increased staff development and upskilling opportunities
- Equity in compensation, benefits, progression, and promotion
- Improved & streamlined effectiveness of administrative infrastructures

# Appendices

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Vice President for University Life

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**Sumeet Shrivastava**

President, Alumni Association (2020–22)

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**Veronica Mata**

Student Body Vice President



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### FOCUS GROUPS AND TOWN HALL

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Faculty Senate

President's Council/Executive Council

Alumni/Donors

Graduate and Professional Student Association (GAPSA)

Staff Senate

ARIE Task Force

GMU Foundation Board of Trustees

Student Body Officers

Assistant Professors

International Students

Student Experience Redesign Committee

Athletics

Mason Innovation Commission

Tenure (Associate/Professors) Faculty

Classified Staff and Administrative Faculty

Mason Korea

University Auxiliaries

College of Visual and Performing Arts

Mason Online

University Libraries

Dean's Council

Off Main Campus

University Life

Town hall sessions held November 30, 2021, and March 29, 2022

**20  
23** **STRATEGIC DIRECTION**

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