

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
AGENDA FOR THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING
NOVEMBER 5, 2014
Robinson Hall B113, 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.**

I. Call to Order

II. Approval of the Minutes of October 8, 2014

III. Announcements

Provost S. David Wu

Mark Smith, Director State Government Relations

[Attachment A](#)

Kevin Jackson, Student Government, Mason Lobbies

Sr. Vice President J. J. Davis

IV. New Business – Committee Reports

A. Senate Standing Committees

Executive Committee

Academic Policies

Budget and Resources

Nominations

Nominees to serve as faculty representatives to the FY 2016 Strategic Financial Plan

Working Groups: Tim Leslie (COS) and Ana Stoehr (CHHS) Operational Effectiveness:

Academic and Administrative Group; Tom Owens (CVPA) and Stacia Stribling (CEHD)

Graduate/Undergraduate Enrollment Group.

Organization and Operations

B. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives

Mason Core Committee – Janette Muir, Chair

[Attachment B](#)

Synthesis or Capstone Experience

V. Other New Business

VI. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty

VII. Adjournment

ATTACHMENT A



PROPOSED

Public Positions on State Legislative and Budgetary Issues Faculty and Staff Public Comment Advisory

The purpose of this advisory is to help faculty and staff deal with requests for public comment, whether oral or written, on legislative and budgetary matters. At the outset, it is important to emphasize that the University respects the right of employees to communicate with government officials and others on matters of public policy. This advisory is designed to clarify roles and responsibilities and contemplates two general situations: first, requests for public comments from faculty and staff in their individual capacities or as members of outside organizations; second, requests for public support from the University.

With respect to the first situation, there is a tendency for people who hear or receive comments from faculty and staff to believe that if a person identifies himself as an employee of Mason that he is speaking on behalf of or with the approval of the University. That is often not the case. In fact, the President must approve official University positions. Accordingly, when faculty or staff members testify as individuals or as representatives of an organization other than Mason, we request that they inform their "audiences" that their comments are not intended to represent the views of the university. A simple caveat at the beginning of written or oral comments that states, "I am not representing the views of George Mason University" will suffice. Following this procedure will insure that faculty and staff can feel free to offer testimony. It will alleviate any concerns that their statements will be wrongly construed to be official positions of the University.

Faculty and staff not testifying on behalf of Mason should refrain from using University stationery to express their views. Likewise, faculty and staff are encouraged to adhere to University policies relating to the use of equipment, including but not limited to email, facsimile, and telephones. In addition, if testimony is given during a faculty or staff member's normal business hours, he should consider whether it is appropriate to utilize annual leave while away from the workplace.

With respect to the second situation, if faculty and staff believe it appropriate, they are encouraged to communicate in writing to their deans and/or department chairs any request for the University to publicly support a specific legislative or budgetary proposal. It would also be helpful to provide a recommendation with supporting reasons in any such communication. The dean or department head will determine if the matter should be referred to their vice president for further review and action. The vice president will, in turn, decide whether to forward the request on to the president for approval.

In the event a request for University public support is received with a response time of less than five business days, in addition to a department chair, dean or vice president, contact with the Office of the Vice President for Government & Community Relations would be appreciated.

If you have any questions regarding this advisory, please contact Mark Smith, Director of State Government Relations, at mesmith@gmu.edu or 804-786-2216.

As of September 2014



PROPOSED

Development of State Legislative and Budget Priorities

This Advisory outlines the development process for state legislative and budgetary priorities for George Mason University.

Goals of Priority Setting Process

The primary purpose of setting legislative and budget priorities is to ensure a well-planned and strategic approach to securing approval of legislative objectives and critical funding needs for George Mason University. Such planning will enable the university to dedicate an appropriate balance of staff resources to navigate through the legislative and agency processes.

Process to Establish Priorities

Vice Presidents for each respective area of responsibility will have full discretion to set internal review/approval processes for proposals to be considered for inclusion as a priority. Such processes may include requirements for supporting documentation, internal review exercises, and deadlines that may be necessary, in addition to the optional template and annual timetables noted below. Vice Presidents will advance those legislative and budget proposals that enhance the goals and mission of George Mason University to the Government Relations Council which will then advance the priorities to the President for final consideration.

The University will not support legislative or budget priorities that are advanced without following the process established in this advisory.

Legislative and budget proposals are ultimately submitted to state agencies in a variety of formats. Such formats change from year-to-year and are not always known in advance of required decision timelines (noted below). Each Vice President will provide direction on the format and level of detail for any such proposals originating in their area of responsibility. The Office of the Senior Vice President will format proposals in the decision brief template provided by the Department of Planning and Budget.

Annual Timetable

While the timetable for legislative and budget processes are subject to change each year, the following timetable will provide a general sense of the calendar of events, with the understanding that each Vice President may develop other internal deadlines.

Timeline	
June 1	Vice Presidents submit proposal(s) to Office of State Government Relations for GRC consideration
July 15	President's approval of proposed priorities
September	Executive Branch meetings
September - December	Legislative visits
Fall BOV Meeting	Board of Visitors informed of priorities
December	Governor announces budget recommendations
January	Budget Amendments submitted to General Assembly
January - March	Active role with General Assembly Session
March - April	Confer with Governor's Office in preparation for Reconvened Session

Recognizing that legislative and budget issues unique to George Mason may materialize past certain deadlines noted in the annual timetable, it is unlikely that Mason will be able to advance a proposal identified after November 1 in order to be approved for the upcoming state (July 1) fiscal year. The University will, however, continue to work with advocacy associations throughout the year on matters of mutual interest to universities and other relevant state agencies.

On a related topic, the University will work in tandem with many professional and advocacy associations on legislative initiatives of mutual interest. Please see additional information on taking [public positions on legislative and budgetary issues](#).

If you have any questions regarding this advisory, please contact Mark Smith, Director of State Government Relations, at mesmith@gmu.edu or 804-786-2216.

As of September 2014

ATTACHMENT B

Resolution for the Faculty Senate:

Students may take either a Synthesis class or Capstone Experience for their final Mason Core requirement. Units will recommend the option that works best for their specific majors.

Background:

The Mason Core committee took comments and suggestions from the University community regarding the change from synthesis to a capstone experience for every student. Based on feedback, the committee has approved the addition of a Capstone Experience so that units would have two available options to choose from for their students. The decision is now brought before the Faculty Senate for final approval.

Synthesis or Capstone Experience (catalog copy draft)

Synthesis or Capstone Experience Requirement (minimum 3 credits)

Students meet the final Mason Core requirement by completing either a disciplinary capstone experience or a Mason Core Synthesis course. Students should confer with their advisors to determine whether they will meet this requirement via a capstone experience or a synthesis course.

Prerequisite: Completion of both the Oral Communication and Written Communication (lower and upper level) requirements or permission of instructor.

Capstone Experience

The purpose of the Capstone Experience is to consolidate the knowledge and understanding gained in a student's major degree and Mason Core courses. Each department or program designates the capstone experiences available to students in those majors and programs. Learning outcomes for this course are determined by the local unit.

The Synthesis Course

The purpose of the synthesis course is to provide students with the opportunity to synthesize the knowledge, skills and values gained from the Mason Core curriculum. Synthesis courses strive to expand students' ability to master new content, think critically, and develop life-long learning skills across the disciplines. While it is not feasible to design courses that cover all areas of general education, synthesis courses should function as a careful alignment of disciplinary goals with a range of Mason Core learning outcomes.

Learning Outcomes:

The Mason Core Synthesis course must address outcomes 1 and 2, and at least one outcome under 3. Upon completing a Synthesis course, students will be able to:

1. Communicate effectively in both oral and written forms, applying appropriate rhetorical standards (e.g., audience adaptation, language, argument, organization, evidence, etc.)
2. Using perspectives from two or more disciplines, connect issues in a given field to wider intellectual, community or societal concerns
3. Apply critical thinking skills to:
 - a. Evaluate the quality, credibility and limitations of an argument or a solution using appropriate evidence or resources, OR,
 - b. Judge the quality or value of an idea, work, or principle based on appropriate analytics and standards

Required: One approved course.