

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**  
**MINUTES OF THE FACULTY SENATE MEETING**  
**APRIL 28, 2021**  
**Electronic Meeting\***, 3:00 – 4:15 p.m.

**Number of Attendees: 142**

**Senators Present:** Alan Abramson, Karen Akerlof, Matt Andre, Ann Ardis, Alok Berry, Lisa Billingham, Virginia Blair, Melissa Broeckelman-Post, Meagan Call-Cummings, Eric Claeys, James Conant, Richard Craig, Shannon Davis, Elizabeth (Betsy) DeMulder, Daniel Garrison, Tim Gibson, Mark Ginsberg, Victoria Grady, Kenneth Griffin, Larry Kerschberg, Timothy Leslie, Tamara Maddox, Kumar Mehta, Daniel Menascé, Robert Pasnak, Maury Peiperl, Marvin Powell, Keith Renshaw, Greg Robinson, Pierre Rodgers, Esperanza Román Mendoza, Catherine Sausville, Jessica Scarlata, Zachary Schrag, Joe Scimecca, Solon Simmons, Suzanne Slayden, Cristiana Stan, Benjamin Steger, Kun Sun, Rebecca Sutter, Matt Theeke, Susan Trencher, David Wong, Thomas Wood, John Zenelis, Jie Zhang

**Senators Absent:** Robert Baker, Ken Ball, James Bennett, Carol Cleaveland, Rick Davis, Edward Gero, Dimitrios Ioannou, Aditya Johri, Brett Josephson, Germaine Louis, Fernando Miralles-Wilhelm, Alpaslan Özerdem, Rachele Holmes Perkins, Ken Randall, Mark Rozell, Gregory Washington,

**Visitors Present:**

Julia Adams (Adjunct – UNIV 100), LaShonda Anthony (Director, Academic Integrity), Lester Arnold, Vice President, Human Resources/Payroll), Kevin Borek (Vice President and Chief Information Officer, Information Technology Services), Trishana Bowden (Vice President, Advancement and Alumni Relations/President, GMU Foundation), Laurence Bray (Associate Provost for Graduate Education), Lisa Breglia (Senior Associate Dean, Undergraduate Academic Affairs, CHSS), Emily Brennan-Moran (Assistant Professor, Communication), Alecia Bryan (Admin Faculty / Associate Director of Development / CHSS Development & Alumni Relations), Felicia Carr (Assistant Dean, Strategic Communications and Marketing, CHSS), Hyunyoung Cho (Chair, Faculty Assembly, George Mason University Korea), Jamie Clark (Asst. Prof/Sociology and Anthropology), Aurali Dade (Interim Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact), Vanna DeAngelis (Human Resources Operations Specialist, College of Science), Deb Dickenson (Vice President for Finance, Fiscal Services), Kathleen Diemer (AVP, Advancement), Kim Dight (Executive Director, Finance and Human Resources, CHSS), Bill Dracos (Associate Vice President for Business Services), Gesele Durham (Associate Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning), Kim Eby (Associate Provost, Faculty Affairs and Development), Kim Edwards (Head, Database Integrity and Analysis, Access and Resource Management, University Libraries), Greg Farley (Director, University Sustainability, Facilities), Kimberly Ford (Director of Personnel Operations/Office of the Provost), Samuel Frye (Faculty Rep for Capital Planning), Cynthia Fuchs (Director, Film and Video Studies), Erin Geiger (Assistant Director, Child Development Center), Charlotte Gill (Associate Professor, Department of Criminology, Law and Society), Danielle Gilson (Director of Employee Relations), Marcy Glover (Ops Manager/Office of the Provost), Renate Guilford (Associate Provost for Academic Administration), Pallavi Rai Gullo (Director, Graduate Academic and Student Affairs, Office of the Provost), Sharon Heinle (Associate Vice President and Controller, Fiscal Services), Molli Herth (Program Manager, Faculty Affairs and Development, Office

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of the Provost), Julie Hunt (Director of Classification and Compensation, Human Resources/Payroll), Jessica Hurley (Assistant Professor, English), Rachel Jones (Associate Professor and dept chair, Philosophy), Rebecca Jones (Associate Professor, STEM Accelerator, Chemistry and Biochemistry), Ibrahim Kargbo, (CHHS), Carol Kissal (Senior Vice President), Laura Kosoglu (Associate Professor and Associate Department Chair, Civil Engineering), Misty Krell (Dir Academic Affairs, School of Integrative Studies), Jamie Lester (Associate Dean of Faculty Affairs/Strategic Initiatives, CHSS), Kimberly MacVaugh (Librarians' Council Secretary), Christopher Magee (Social Sciences Librarian / Librarian / University Libraries), Karen Manley (Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Planning), Rebecca McCrory (Associate Director of Family Programs / New Student and Family Programs / University Life), Jenna McGwin (Associate Director, Operations and Initiatives, Dean's Office, CHSS), Doug McKenna (University Registrar), Shora Moteabbed (Assistant Professor of Business, School of Business), Janette Muir (Associate Provost, Academic Initiatives & Services), Jacquelyn Nash (Associate Director, Undergraduate Education), Leah Nichols (Executive Director, Institute for a Sustainable Earth), Cheryl Oetjen (Associate Professor), Amanda Ogisi (Associate Director, Academic Integrity, University Life), Cindy Parker (Associate Professor (Term), School of Business), Shernita Parker (Asst. VP. HR Strategy & Talent Management), Sarah Parnell (Interim Operations and Administration Manager, Office of the Provost), Megan Reichelt (Theater and Dance Librarian, University Libraries), Shelley Reid (Stearns Center), Marguerite Rippy (Associate Dean, Grad Academic Affairs CHSS), Pallab Sanyal (Associate Professor, ISOM, School of Business), Catherine Saunders (Term Professor of English), Michele Schwietz (Associate Dean for Research, CHSS), Sheena Serslev (Associate Director, Institutional Assessment), Olga Shchepina, (Associate Director, Post Award Services, Dean's Office, CHSS), Pam Shepherd (Communications Director, Office of the Provost), Cliff Shore (Chief Procurement Officer, Purchasing and Accounts Payable), Matt Smith (Director of Accreditation, Office of the Provost), Kevin Stagl (Assistant Director and Assistant Professor, Psychology), Rene Stewart O'Neal (Associate Vice President for Strategic Budgeting & Planning), Frank Strike (Vice President, Facilities), Dan Taggart (Director, Human Resources and Employee Relations, College of Science), Katie Turcotte (Deputy Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Relations), Girum Urgessa (Associate Professor, CEIE), Bethany Usher (Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education), Mohan Venigalla (CEIE), Ken Walsh (VP/Chief of Staff - Office of the President), Kyle Warfield (CDE), Wendy Watkins (Associate University Auditor), Bob Weiler (Associate Dean, Academic Affairs, Global Health, CHHS) Preston Williams (Presidential Communications Manager), James Willis (Chair, Criminology, Law and Society), Catherine Winkert (Associate Director, Finance and Administration, CVPA).

- I. **Call to Order:** Chair Shannon Davis called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.
- II. **Approval of the Minutes of March 24, March 31 and April 7, 2021:** The minutes of the March 24, March 31 and April 7, 2021 meetings were approved.
- III. **Opening Remarks – Shannon Davis, Chair**
  - Congratulated Senator Danny Menascé for recognition as recipient of the David King Teaching Award.

#### IV. Special Orders – Election of Faculty Senate Chair 2021-2022

Chair Davis opened the floor for nominations for election of Faculty Senate Chair (2021-2022).

Senator Keith Renshaw nominated Senator Melissa Broeckelman-Post, who accepted the nomination.

Senator Zachary Schrag nominated Senator Tim Gibson, who declined the nomination.

With no other nominations, Chair Davis moved to vote by acclamation for the one nominee for Chair of the Faculty Senate -- Senator Melissa Broeckelman-Post.

The motion passed.

#### V. Committee Reports

##### A. Senate Standing Committees

*Executive Committee* – Shannon Davis, Chair

- Coffee and Connect with Faculty Senate Executive Committee: Chair Davis invited Senators and General Faculty for the coffee chat on Friday April 30, 9:00-10:00 am.
- Faculty Senate Calendar 2021-22 (distributed March 31, 2021)  
The [senate calendar](#) is available on Faculty Senate website.
- Announcement and welcome of Mason Korea Faculty representatives:
  - Dr. Hyunyoung Cho, Faculty Chair for the Faculty Assembly at Mason Korea.
  - Prof. Kent Zimmerman, Vice-Chair.

*Academic Policies* – Suzanne Slayden, Chair

[Annual report](#)

Three-Year Academic Calendar - Fall 2022-Summer 2025

- Committee discovered some errors in the 3-year calendar (Fall 2022-Summer 2025) and will be presenting corrected calendar at the first meeting in Fall 2021.
- Committee discovered an error in Spring 2022 calendar and has corrected it. The corrected calendar (below) was presented for approval.

There was no discussion on the motion.

The motion passed.



# University Academic Calendar

## Spring 2022 Calendar for Approval

SPRING SEMESTER		Spring 2020 <sup>1</sup>	Spring 2021	Spring 2022
15 Week Session	MLK Day (university closed)	Mon. Jan 20	Mon. Jan 18	Mon. Jan 17
	First Day of Spring Classes	Tue. Jan 21	Tue. Jan 19	Mon. Jan 24
	Last Day to Add (census)	Tue. Jan 28	Tue. Jan 26	Mon. Jan 31
	Last Day to Drop	Tue. Feb 11	Tue. Feb 9	Mon. Feb 14
	Unrestricted Withdrawal Period	Wed. Feb 12 – Mon. Feb 24	Wed. Feb 10 - Mon. Feb 22	Tues. Feb 15 – Tues. Mar 1
	Spring Recess (no classes)	Mon. Mar 9 – Sun. Mar 22	Mon. Mar 8 - Sun. Mar 14	Mon. Mar 14 – Sun. Mar 20
	Mid-term evaluation period (full-semester 100-200 level classes)	Mon. Feb 17 – Fri. Mar 27	Mon. Feb 15 - Fri. Mar 19	Mon. Feb 21 – Fri. Mar 25
	Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduates only)	Tue. Feb 25 – Mon. Apr 6	Tue. Feb 23 - Mon. Mar 29	Wed. Mar 2 – Mon. Apr 11
	Dissertation/Thesis Deadline	Fri. May 8	Fri. Apr 30	Fri. May 6
	Last Day of Class	Mon. May 11	Mon. May 3	Sat. May 7
	Reading Day(s)	Tue. May 12	Tue. May 4	Mon. May 9 – Tues. May 10
	Examination Period	Wed. May 13 – Wed. May 20	Wed. May 5 - Wed. May 12	Wed. May 11 – Wed. May 18
	University Commencement	Fri. May 22	Fri. May 14	Fri. May 20
	Degree Conferral	Sat. May 23	Sat. May 15	Sat. May 21
7.5 Week Session I	First Day of Classes	Wed. Jan 15	Wed. Jan 13	Tues. Jan 18
	Last Day to Add	Fri. Jan 17	Fri. Jan 15	Thur. Jan 20
	MLK Day (no classes)	Mon. Jan 20	Mon. Jan 18	Mon. Jan 17
	Last Day to Drop	Tue. Jan 21	Tue. Jan 19	Mon. Jan 24
	Unrestricted Withdrawal Period	Wed. Jan 22 - Mon. Feb 3	Wed. Jan 20 - Mon. Feb 1	Tues. Jan 25 – Sun. Feb 6
	Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate only)	Tues. Feb 4 – Mon. Feb 10	Tues. Feb 2 – Mon. Feb 8	Mon. Feb 7 – Sun. Feb 13
	Last Day of Classes	Wed. Mar 4	Wed. Mar 3	Tues. Mar 8
	Examination Period	Thu. Mar 5 – Fri. Mar 6	Thu. Mar 4 – Fri. Mar 5	Wed. Mar 9 – Thurs. Mar 10
	University Commencement	Fri. May 15	Fri. May 14	Fri. May 13
	Degree Conferral	Sat. May 16	Sat. May 15	Sat. May 14
7.5 Week Session II	Spring Recess (no classes)	Mon. Mar 9 – Sun. Mar 22	Mon. Mar 8 – Sun. Mar 14	Mon. Mar 14 – Sun. Mar 20
	First Day of Classes	Mon. Mar 23	Mon. Mar 15	Mon. Mar 21
	Last Day to Add	Wed. Mar 25	Wed. Mar 17	Wed. Mar 23
	Last Day to Drop	Fri. Mar 27	Fri. Mar 19	Fri. Mar 25
	Unrestricted Withdrawal Period	Sat. Mar 28 – Thu. Apr 9	Sat. Mar 20 – Thu. Apr 1	Sat. Mar 26 – Thurs. April 7
	Selective Withdrawal Period (undergraduate only)	Fri. Apr 10 – Thu. Apr 16	Fri. Apr 2 – Thu. Apr 8	Fri. Apr 8 – Thurs. Apr 14
	Last Day of Classes	Fri. May 8	Fri. Apr 30	Fri. May 6
	Examination Period	Mon. May 11 – Tue. May 12	Mon. May 3 – Tue. May 4	Mon. May 9 – Tue. May 10
	University Commencement	Fri. May 22	Fri. May 14	Fri. May 20
Degree Conferral	Sat. May 23	Sat. May 15	Sat. May 21	

- Provided updated fiscal data, and in particular E&G data (see below).
- Shared data about the changes in Fall FTE versus the changes in annual expenses. Five colleges have both reduced their annual expenditures and had increased FTE last Fall from students. CHSS / CVPA are experiencing a much different fiscal profile with reduction in student FTE and a higher expenditure. (see below)
- This is a data release plan for college specific data that incorporates the Faculty Senate Budget and Resources Committee in the release plan (starting Fall 2021)

## All Funds Approach - Data

- Tracking include FTE; Tuition (IS/OS; UG/GR); Research Indirects; Employment profiles for Staff, Admin, and Classified; and Faculty Mix
- E&G Carryforwards Planning (previously: fund balances, dated Mar 4)
  - Total across ALL colleges
    - Committed: \$74.9 million
    - Contingency: \$28.9 million
    - Uncommitted: \$2.4 million (most colleges are zero)
- Research Indirect Balances (Beta, dated July 1, 2020)
  - Total across ALL colleges: ~\$24 million
  - Allocated / Spent in AY 2020-21 through March: ~\$25.2 million
- Data Release plan incorporates Faculty Senate B&R starting in Fall 2021



Changes in Fall FTE (X) vs Changes in Annual E&G Expenses (Y)  
from 2019-20 to 2020-21



*Faculty Matters – Solon Simmons, Chair*

[Annual report](#)

- Invited feedback and suggestions for the President’s Innovation Commission is working on Faculty and Staff big ideas project.

*Nominations – Melissa Broeckelman-Post and Richard Craig, co-chairs* [Annual report](#)

- Slate of nominees for the GMU Foundation Board of Trustees
  - Ketih Renshaw (CHSS)
  - Scott Glaberman (COS)
  - Peter Streckfus-Green (CHSS)

Senator Broeckelman-Post shared that the committee received five nominations. In keeping with our bylaws, the committee was charged with narrowing this down to a slate of three. Because this is a committee that originates from outside of the Senate, the Board of Trustees will choose one of the three elected to serve on the committee for the next two years.

Nominations from the floor were invited.

- Senator Gibson nominated Professor Chris Kennedy.

Senators voted in breakout room. The three nominees elected by the Faculty Senate:

- Keith Renshaw (CHSS)
- Chris Kennedy (COS)
- Scott Glaberman (COS)

The Board of Trustees will choose the faculty representative from the three elected nominees.

*Organization and Operations – Lisa Billingham, Chair*

[Annual report](#)

- Establishment of the Ombudsperson office will happen over the summer.

**B. Other Committees/Faculty Representatives**

- Drawing attention to several annual reports provided by various university standing committees, Chair Davis noted that additional annual reports have been added since the circulation of the agenda.
- Chair Davis invited representatives to provide context to their report or provide any updates.
  - *Effective Teaching Committee*: Senator Wood provided updates on plans for the committee for Summer 2021.
  - *Master Planning Committee*: Senator Schrag drew attention to Sci-Tech campus plans and report from Capital Planning Steering Committee indicating a \$30 million expansion plan for Life Sciences and Engineering.

- *Gift Acceptance Committee*: Senator Abramson shared that there is ongoing debate about anonymous gifts and by being anonymous, these potentially not triggering a review. The other point of debate was about reputational implications of gifts – especially those that could negatively impact a university’s reputation. As the policy is being reviewed for revision, any suggested changes should be sent to Senator Abramson.

Academic Appeals	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
Academic Initiatives	Link to annual report
Admissions	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
Adult Learning and Executive Education	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
Athletic Council	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
Effective Teaching - Tom Wood, Chair	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
External Academic Relations	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
Faculty Equity and Inclusion	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
Faculty Handbook Revision	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
Grievance	Link to annual report
Mason Core	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
Multilingual Academic Support	Link to annual report
Recreation Advisory	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
Research Advisory	Link to annual report
Salary Equity Study	<a href="#">Link to annual report</a>
Technology Policy	Link to annual report
University Promotion, Tenure and Renewal Appeal	Link to annual report
Writing Across the Curriculum	Link to annual report
Updates from Faculty Representatives	<a href="#">Appendix A</a>
Capital Planning Steering Committee	
Faculty Conduct Working Group - <a href="#">Final Report – March 3, 2021</a>	
Master Plan Steering Committee	
Outstanding Achievement Awards Committee	
University Naming Committee	

## VI. New Business

### *Faculty Success Initiative – Revised Charge*

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#### **Faculty Success Initiative – Revised Charge**

How can we prepare faculty to be successful in the post pandemic university? The initiative will build on existing data regarding supports for and structural constraints to success (e.g., evidence from COACHE survey) as well as additional input from the Faculty Senate with the goal of shaping action plans. The initiative will determine the most pressing concerns from faculty and will create a mechanism by which the Senate

holds the administration accountable to addressing its top concerns within a reasonable amount of time.

This initiative will be led by a three-member subcommittee from the Executive Committee (Shannon Davis, Solon Simmons, and Richard Craig) tasked with:

- Partnering with Office of Faculty Affairs and Development to review recent COACHE information and following up with faculty from across the university to triangulate their most pressing concerns (during Fall 2020);
- Partnering with Administration (Provost, President, Senior Vice President) to determine timeline and methods by which the administration will work to address the faculty concerns, including the accountability structure between the administration and the Senate (by April 2021);
- Creating a public-facing reporting/accountability structure for the Initiative.

#### Next Steps

- Develop dashboard metrics that are agreed upon by faculty and administration.
- Determine accountability processes
  - o Public dashboard
  - o Expectation of administration documenting change over time to General Faculty via Faculty Senate that includes an explanation of deviations (both in positive and negative directions)
    - University level and college/school level
    - Opportunity to increase President's accountability to BOV, Provost to President, deans to Provost, and chairs to deans

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Chair Davis clarified that she expects the next Faculty Senate Chair would step into her role after May 14, 2021.

*LMS Guidelines Report (Draft Policy 3014 Distance Education)* [Appendix B](#)  
 Charlie Kreitzer (Executive Director, Online Operations, Academic Innovation and New Ventures) was not able to be with us today, If you have questions, comments, concerns, feedback on that policy, he asked that you email him directly at [ckreite@gmu.edu](mailto:ckreite@gmu.edu) .

*George Mason University's Statement of Expectations for Graduate Students (draft)*  
 Laurence Bray, Associate Provost for Graduate Education [Appendix C](#)



Associate Provost Laurence Bray provided the context and background of the current draft, stressing that it is version 12 and is a product of input from various stakeholders. She noted that it is being presented for review by the Faculty Senate and invited questions and comments.

Discussion:

- Senator suggested that in the sections about redress it was important to empower student organizations such as GAPSA to represent the students in situations that involved mediation, fact-finding and investigation.

Associate Provost Bray: Noted that the current document represents only the Phase 1 and aims to put in place guidelines for expectations. Subsequent efforts will address the processes to practice when those expectations are not met.

## **VII. Announcements**

- Provost Ginsberg
  - Thanked faculty for all their efforts and contributions over the last academic year.
  - Shared outlines four types of commencement plans including in-person plans based on relaxations on outdoor in-person gatherings.
  - Board of Visitors meeting will be taking up 3 important items – a) Revisions to the Faculty Charter, b) Proposed revisions to the Faculty Handbook, and c) Joint resolution from Faculty and Staff Senates on undertaking feasibility study for dependent tuition benefits.
  - Provided updates on vaccination clinics for Faculty, Staff, Students, and Contractors.
  - Fall 2021 registration updates – about 75% of prospective class registrations will be on campus face-to-face or in hybrid form.
  - Expressed concerns about behavioral and neurological impact of COVID, and shared plans for task force to examine the impact on faculty, staff and students.
- Lester Arnold, Vice President for Human Resources/Payroll
  - Update on Faculty Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion/Chief Diversity Officer
    - Search started in January and more than 120 candidates applied for the role.
    - Search committee identified top 15 and interviewed 10 candidates.
    - Currently narrowed down to 5 – the candidates will interview with members from the ARIE Task Force, in addition to a follow up discussion with the Search Committee, as well as Ken Walsh, chief of staff. Through this process, the pool will be narrowed to 3 candidates.
    - Virtual campus visits are planned over first two weeks of May. The finalists will be speaking with Executive Council, with the Deans' Council as well as an open forum for faculty staff and students.

- Following feedback from all involved, final decision is expected to be made by third to final week of May.
  - Update on Faculty compensation initiative:
    - First phase looking at internal equity with a focus around pay practices related to gender, race and ethnicity has been completed.
    - The second phase is ongoing in collaboration with the academic units.
      - Launched a pilot with the College of Science to conduct market assessments and establish tools and guidelines to show that we have a competitive salary structure for I/R faculty moving forward.
      - The goal is to work very closely with the deans and their design committees. The design committees are actual faculty members that will participate in this process, as we identify appropriate salary surveys and we develop market ranges based on benchmarked disciplines.
      - The next step would be to wrap up our pilot with the College of Science and start engaging our other academic units, between now and this summer, with a desire that will have our new structures in place by Spring/ Summer of 2022.
    - The third phase, based on work and outcome of Phase 2, would be making appropriate salary adjustments.
- Aurali Dade, Interim Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact – Update on Short- and Long-Term cyber infrastructure planning.
  - Mason formed an advanced computational infrastructure working group last May (Chaired by Aurali Dade and Dean Fernando Miralles) to advise on investments that the university should make in hardware, software and staffing to fully support the research and educational mission of the university. This group is composed of nine faculty from College of Science, College of Engineering and Computing, CHSS, Schar and CHHS who use advanced computational resources, as well as Jayshree Sarma, Mason's director of research computing, and the university's chief information officer Kevin Borek.
  - Group surveyed faculty to understand the needs.
  - Draft of a long-range planning document that has been shared broadly with the College of Engineering and Computing and the College of Science, at this point, as well as the Steering Committee.
  - Dr Elise Miller-Hooks and Dr. Jayshree Sarma led a team to propose a successful major research instrumentation grant from the National Science Foundation that will bring \$1.1 million in high performance computing hardware.
  - Additionally, through the Tech Talent Investment Program, Mason will receive approximately \$13 million over the next several years to purchase high performance computing hardware, create visualization laboratories,

and make physical improvements to our data center and networking capabilities.

- Based on the funding available, this week Dr. Sarma has ordered \$3.35 million worth of high-performance computing to add to the \$850,000 that was installed last fall.
  - Dr. Sarma is also producing a 18 month to 5 year planning document that will be vetted with the faculty.
- Greg Farley and Leah Nichols, Mason Sustainability Council [Appendix D](#)

*Greg Farley provided the following text for inclusion in the minutes:*

The Mason Sustainability Council (MSC) is an institution-wide initiative that will advance university sustainability outcomes through prioritization, direction, coordination, and support for synergistic sustainability efforts. The MSC is a means of actualizing Mason's commitments to sustainability and inclusive excellence, which include making Mason carbon-neutral, enabling our campuses to become living laboratories, and developing a culture of sustainability within our community. It is the University's synergistic response to the largest challenges of our time.

It asks faculty to contribute ideas to campus operational sustainability, and asks operational planning to consider faculty needs and desires, research, and teaching when making improvements to our campus and processes. Done well, this synthesis should produce a 'living lab' on each of our campuses – sustainably operated spaces that both take direction from faculty expertise, and promote new research and teaching opportunities "close to home."

The MSC launched in November of 2020, and is chaired by the Provost and the Senior VP for Finance and Administration. It is co-coordinated by ISE Director Leah Nichols, who represents academic sustainability, and me; I represent operational sustainability. The MSC is led by a 20-person Executive Leadership Board that is 50% faculty and academic leadership, and 50% operational leadership. That body also includes undergraduate and graduate student representation.

Over the winter and into the spring, we have been working to establish guiding principles and goals for the MSC. We've recently finalized a draft of those ideas, which we will ask Faculty Senate leadership to share with you, and we are now seeking to engage key stakeholders for feedback and suggestions. We're here today because Faculty Senate is a key constituency and we want your ideas.

We would welcome a conversation with FS, and we'd like to know the best way to do that.

If there is a Sustainability group or committee, can we sit down with them (this summer?)

OR

Should we come back and engage with the full Senate, or a focus group of this body, for a fall discussion?

In the meantime, please look over the draft Guiding Principles document, and if you have feedback, please send it to [sc@gmu.edu](mailto:sc@gmu.edu)

## **VIII. Remarks for the Good of the General Faculty**

On behalf of the Faculty Senate, Senator Danny Menascé, Senator Keith Renshaw, and Senator Brockelman-Post expressed thanks to Chair Davis.

Chair Davis thanked Senators and added her remarks:

This has been both the longest and shortest two years of my life. I begin by thanking my family Frank, Alex, and Miles for their patience, good humor, and the daily reminder that walking together strengthens relationships, especially during difficult times. I thank my cats for their participation and engagement with my work, including during many of the meetings I've had since I've been working from home. I thank my department, Sociology and Anthropology, especially my chair Amy Best, for their support as I navigated the fine line of serving the University in this role as Faculty Senate Chair. I thank Meg Caniano, Senate Clerk, for her organizational magic and generosity of spirit. I thank the leadership team you elected, the Executive Committee, for their service and counsel. And I thank you, the Senate.

In the past two years, I have had the chance to work with so many people, from whom I have learned much. From my service as co-chair of the Presidential Search Committee and position on the Board of Visitors, to the Gift Acceptance Committee, Assessment Council, Academic and President's Council, Faculty Senate of Virginia, and the AIRE Task Force, among others, I have been fortunate to work with students, faculty, administrators, and community members. And all of those opportunities have reinforced one key point: I have never been so proud to be a member of the George Mason faculty as I am right now.

In the years leading up to my election as Faculty Senate Chair, there was the re-emergence of a shaky but real foundation for true shared governance here at Mason. We saw this through the engagement of the administration with faculty on the creation of the gift acceptance policy. Over the last two years we have built on this foundation and have watched it become more solid and secure. We now have a set of procedures through Human Resources by which faculty who are accused of misconduct can have due process, including an appeals process. We have affirmed the faculty's role in governance around presidential searches. We have expanded the membership of the Faculty Senate to include those faculty who have been heretofore disenfranchised and we have expanded the definition of the General Faculty to include all full-time faculty at all Mason campuses. We have done good work.

Shared governance is messy, as we have seen over the last few years. It requires a substantial amount of dedication to be informed, engaged, and willing partners in focusing on the common good. The common good is the education of our students and the contributions of our scholarship and creative activities to the many publics which we serve. Our advisory role to the

administration in service of the common good is both a joy and a serious responsibility for which we will be held accountable by our community, and we have met that responsibility to date admirably.

It is up to you to continue to work on behalf of the General Faculty, respecting our diversity of thought and experience, to ensure that our students remain the core of our mission. It is up to you to continue to engage in respectful, productive dialogue that asks difficult questions but does not foreclose the possibility of partnership and collaboration. The Faculty Senate **is and always will be** the voice of the faculty when working with the administration on issues that affect the University. It has been an honor and privilege to serve you and the General Faculty as our primary representative to the administration on critical issues. I look forward to seeing how, under Melissa's leadership, you partner with the administration to shape the university in years to come.

**IX. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kumar Mehta  
Secretary

## Appendix A

### Reports from Faculty Representatives to Committees

#### **Capital Planning Steering Committee (Submitted by Samuel Frye, Faculty Senate Representative April 20, 2021)**

##### **Capital Planning Yearend Report**

Prepared for Faculty Senate by Samuel L. Frye

Wednesday, April 28, 2021

#### **Capital Planning Framework**

Tobi Walsh, Assistant Vice President for Capital Strategy & Planning is piloting several process improvements for capital planning and more will be shared once those pilot studies are complete.

#### **Master Plan**

The Phase One report is in review with the Steering Committee and will be available in May. The date of the next Town Hall is still to be determined, but will likely be in May, during which updates will be provided on:

- Infrastructure
- Environmental
- Transportation and parking
- Wayfinding
- Campus development history and heritage
- SWOT analysis

If there are concerns you feel have not been addressed, please notify Sam or a member of the Steering Committee so your comments can be included in the draft report. You can also view videos of previous town hall on the master plan [website](#).

#### **Projects**

The Life Sciences and Engineering Building was approved for \$30M expansion and reprogramming in February 2021, but the project was on hold temporarily (Dec – Feb) pending alignment with the Master Plan. Reprogramming includes transitioning many of the undergrad spaces into graduate spaces. To be clear, this does not mean that all undergrads will be pulled from the building, but rather, a realignment of programs with the developing vision for the SciTech campus.

#### **Master Plan Steering Committee (Submitted by Shannon Davis, Zachary Schrag and David Wong – Faculty Senate Representatives – April 21, 2021) - [link to report](#)**

**Outstanding Achievement Awards Committee (Submitted by Cristiana Stan, Faculty Senate Representative – April 15, 2021)**

Report from the Outstanding Achievements Awards Committee

Spring 2021

The Outstanding Achievements Awards Committee received 42 nominations for the following awards:

Adjunct Faculty Service Award – 3 nominees

David W. Russell Quill Award – 5 nominees

Exceptional Support Award – 14 nominees

Faculty Alumni Award – 6 nominees

Staff Alumni Award – 2 nominees

Outstanding Achievement Award – 12 nominees

The nomination packages were reviewed by 5 committee members between March 12 – 19, 2021.

The committee met on March 19 in a virtual meeting chaired by Beth Barrody. All committee members agreed that the number of outstanding applicants was overwhelming and praised the dedication and achievements of GMU employees.

The committee discussed the efficiency of the online scoring system and scoring criteria. Some recommendations were made for a better alignment of scoring criteria and nomination package.

Respectfully submitted by Cristiana Stan, Faculty Senate Representative to the Outstanding Achievements Committee, 2020-2021.

**University Naming Committee (Submitted by Karen Akerlof, Faculty Senate Representative – April 7, 2021)**

**University Naming Committee Report**

Faculty Senate Committee member, Karen Akerlof, [kakerlof@gmu.edu](mailto:kakerlof@gmu.edu)

During its March 2021 meeting, the University Naming Committee welcomed the Campus & Committee Engagement Committee members of the Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Task Force. One of the primary action items for the Naming Committee is reviewing current university names to be able to identify which need to be retired or swapped (naming, removing and renaming) and the needed evaluation criteria and process. In order to effectively work with members of the ARIE Task Force, a subcommittee that includes representatives from both the University Naming committee and the ARIE Task Force will be established to reassess current university policies and make recommendations. The next meeting of the University Naming Committee will be May 12, 2021 at 2:00 pm.

## Appendix B



Policy Justification – Policy 3014: Distance

Education Date: April 15, 2021

The adoption of the Distance Education Policy is part of a comprehensive approach for scalability, continuity, and quality design that supports George Mason University's mission and commitment to providing access to excellence through high-quality educational experiences. Inherent in this commitment to quality is a recognition of the responsibility to support, in a systematic way, the needs of both faculty and students relative to teaching and learning at a distance. Establishing standards and expectations provides clear guidelines as Mason's online programs continue to grow. The policy defines distance education in accordance with the requirements articulated by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) in 34 CFR 600.2 as amended, the Commonwealth of Virginia (8VAC41-30-10) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

We invite faculty to submit written feedback on the implementation of University Policy 3014: Distance Education. Please submit feedback to [ckreitze@gmu.edu](mailto:ckreitze@gmu.edu) by May 15<sup>th</sup>, the conclusion of the Spring 21 semester.

If you need any additional information, please feel free to contact me directly!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "C. Kreitzer".

Charles R. Kreitzer  
Executive Director for Online Operations  
Academic Initiatives and Services, Office of the Provost





# Policy 3014: Distance Education [DRAFT]

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## Responsible Office:

Office of the Provost

## Procedures:

N/A

## Related Law & Policy:

[34 CFR 600.2 \(as amended 7/1/2021\)](#)

[Virginia Administrative Code 8VAC40-31-10](#)

["Distance and Correspondence Education: Policy Statement" from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges \(SACSCOC\)](#)

[University Policy 1308 – Information and Communications Technology](#)

[Accessibility University Policy 3004 – Verification of Student Identity in](#)

[Distance Education University Policy 3005 – Faculty Credential](#)

[Evaluation and Documentation University Policy 3011 – Credit Hours](#)

[Mason Faculty Credentialing Manual](#)

[George Mason University's Quality Assurance Guidelines for Online Courses](#)

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## I. Scope

This university policy provides institution-level standards for the George Mason University's distance education programs and courses, broadly outlining expectations for academic quality and student engagement. This policy applies to all for-credit undergraduate and graduate courses, both fully online and hybrid, at

George Mason University.

The goal of online education at George Mason University is for all students to have the opportunity to learn from a world class, R1 institution by providing access, flexibility, and equity students need to excel.

## II. Policy Statement

The University defines distance education in accordance with the requirements articulated by the U.S. Department of Education (USDOE) in 34 CFR 600.2 as amended, the Commonwealth of Virginia (8VAC41-30-10) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

*"Distance education"* is the delivery of online teaching and learning activities using University-approved technologies, including plug-ins and publisher resources, within the Learning Management System (LMS) to deliver instruction synchronously or asynchronously to students who are in different locations from faculty.

The LMS is used to,

1. Support regular and substantive interaction between students and faculty;
2. Verify student identity ([University Policy 3004](#));
3. Provide instructional continuity; and
4. Ensure course accessibility requirements ([University Policy 1308](#)).

To be considered an online program at George Mason University, all courses required for program completion, including any required general education courses, shall be offered in the fully online delivery format outlined below. Additionally, courses must be offered frequently enough to enable online students to progress through and complete the program in a timely manner. Any on-campus requirements must provide added educational value that cannot be achieved online. Information regarding any required face-to-face, on-ground work (e.g., internships, residencies, practicums, specialized laboratory work, etc.) must be made available to students prior to enrollment.

Mason categorizes types of distance education as follows, which are based in part on guidance from SCHEV:

- *Fully (100%) online course:* A course in which all of the learning activities are supported using University-approved technologies, including plug-ins and publisher resources, within the Learning Management System (LMS). Therefore, face-to-face sessions such as orientation, laboratory, exam review, and/or in-person exams shall not be required as part of a student's graded activity. Fully online courses are taught through two delivery modes:
  - *Synchronous Online:* Synchronous courses specify a required time in which faculty and student meet live, in-real-time. Courses have a set time in which students must participate each week. Synchronous courses allow for real-time communication, providing space for faculty and student-led discussions and interaction. Synchronous courses must include the required meeting time at the point of student registration.
  - *Asynchronous Online:* Asynchronous courses do not have a required time in which students and faculty must meet; though, asynchronous

courses may include optional, live meetings or office hours. While there are weekly deadlines,

schedules are flexible. Information regarding proctored exams and/or the use of webcams must be outlined in the course syllabus.

- *Hybrid course:* A course in which a majority (more than 50% but less than 100%) of the planned learning activities occur using University-approved technologies, including plug-ins and publisher resources, within the Learning Management System (LMS), when the students and instructor are not in the same place. Mandatory face-to-face sessions shall occur between 2% and 50% of the planned instructional time.

Courses which meet face-to-face for more than 75% of the planned instructional time are categorized as “on-ground” or “in-seat” courses and not as distance education.

Courses offered through distance education must demonstrate “regular and substantive” interactions; faculty shall use a variety of instructional strategies and resources to facilitate an engaging learning environment. In accordance with 34 CFR 600.2 as amended, the university defines “regular and substantive interaction” as instructor-driven interaction that is “engaging students in teaching, learning, and assessment, consistent with the content under discussion,” and includes, but is not limited to, the following:

1. Providing direct instruction;
2. Assessing or providing feedback on a student's coursework;
3. Responding to student questions; and
4. Providing information, content, and asynchronous activities through announcements, e-mail, media, and/or other relevant technologies.

Other interactions that may be considered “substantive” include:

1. Leading and facilitating discussion forums or group discussions; and
2. Providing and engaging in other instructional activities outlined by a program's accrediting agency.

In alignment with [The Glossary of Education Reform](#) and standard practices in higher education, the University adopts the following definition of “direct instruction”:

**Direct instruction** refers to instructional approaches that are structured, sequenced, and led by qualified instructors and/or the presentation of academic content to students by those qualified instructors. See [University Policy 3005](#) and the [Mason Faculty Credentialing Manual](#) for information regarding instructor qualifications.

Examples of direct instruction include intentionally sequenced modules using University-approved technologies, including plug-ins and publisher resources, within the Learning Management System (LMS), instructor-created or instructor selected

videos, and synchronous class sessions.

“Regular interactions” between faculty and students shall provide the opportunity for substantive interactions with the student on a “predictable and regular basis commensurate with the length of time and the amount of content in the course; and monitor the student’s academic engagement and success, ensuring that an instructor is responsible for promptly and proactively engaging in substantive interaction with the student when needed, on the basis of such monitoring, or upon request by the student.”

### III. Responsibilities

Faculty have primary responsibility for the content, interaction, quality, and effectiveness of the curriculum, regardless of instructional modality. Faculty shall engage students on a regular and substantive basis (as defined above) per 34 CFR 600.2, as amended.

In conjunction with faculty, department chairs, school directors and college deans, the Office of the Provost is responsible for coordinating the development and implementation of distance education at the University, working with program leadership in maintaining compliance with federal, state, institutional policies, and regulations related to distance education, identifying new distance education opportunities, and coordinating with units to ensure quality and continuous improvement.

The Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning provides support for faculty members engaged in distance education courses. Support may include training and development, centrally managed learning resources, instructional design, and other support services and resources. The center also provides Online Course Quality Assurance guidelines for online courses and provides course reviews and recommendations to faculty and academic units.

As with all teaching modalities, faculty are responsible for delivering course-accessible content and must meet the qualifications for instruction established by the University for on-campus courses, as required by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges, [University Policy 3005](#), [University Policy 1308](#), and Mason's [Faculty Credentialing Manual](#). Faculty who teach distance education courses are selected in the same manner as those teaching on-campus courses. These faculty shall be responsible for acquiring the skills necessary to effectively teach course content and related material in an online learning environment.

### IV. Compliance

College/school-level administrators will ensure compliance with this policy through existing processes, including:

- Analysis of student course evaluations;
- Annual faculty evaluations;
- Academic Program Review; and
- Alignment with George Mason University's Quality Assurance Guidelines for Online Courses

The Stearns Center for Teaching and Learning provides Quality Assurance guidelines, professional development, and course development support to ensure high quality program design.

The Office of the Provost is responsible for ensuring availability of student services in programs that use technology to serve the University's distance education students.



## Appendix C

### GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY'S STATEMENT OF EXPECTATIONS FOR GRADUATE STUDENT AND FACULTY INTERACTIONS

#### General

George Mason University ("Mason") strives to promote a collegial, transparent, and productive environment for our faculty and graduate students. Mason is committed to providing graduate students with a welcoming, safe, and professional environment in which to work and study that is free of exploitation, intimidation, and harassment.

Graduate students are members of a scholarly community. They should be treated in a civil, collegial, and respectful manner by faculty and staff and should likewise treat faculty and staff in the same way. This document provides guidance regarding the expectations for interactions between faculty and graduate students in order to work towards that goal.

Additionally, per Mason Policies 1201, 1202, and 1203, Mason is committed to preventing discrimination based on any of the protected classifications described in those policies. Nothing in this document shall be construed as being contrary to or inconsistent with Mason policies or procedures or applicable laws, nor does it create any legal rights. Colleges, Schools, and Departments may have additional guidelines to suit domain-specific needs.

For the purposes of this document, graduate students are defined as full-time or part-time students pursuing a Master's degree or Doctoral degree, as well as students pursuing a postgraduate diploma or certificate.

#### I. Expectations of Graduate Students:

Graduate students are expected to:

- Adhere to all College and University policies and procedures.
- Treat Mason faculty, staff, and other students in a respectful and collegial manner.
- Devote an appropriate amount of time and effort, consistent with guidance from their local academic unit, toward completing the advanced degree within the allotted time.
- Uphold ethical norms in any research and scholarship undertaken and provide accurate and honest reporting of research results, research methodology, and scholarship in accordance with Mason policies on research integrity (<https://oria.gmu.edu/>).
- Attend new student orientations offered through a student's program, College/School and/or Mason.
- Proactively solicit academic and/or professional guidance from faculty and staff as needed.

- Proactively participate in any assigned mentor-graduate student relationship.
- Comply with the Code of Student Conduct (<https://studentconduct.gmu.edu/our-process/university-policies/code-of-student-conduct/>) and the Honor Code (<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>).

## **II. Expectations for Faculty and Graduate Program Administrators Working with Graduate Students**

### **a. Educational Experience and Degree**

Consistent with Student Code of Conduct and DHRM policy 2.35, *Civility in the workplace*, civility is the responsibility of all members of the Mason community. Graduate students should be treated in a respectful and collegial manner by Mason administrators, staff, and faculty. Discussion of any student among academic colleagues should be of a professional nature, should focus on the student's academic success and well-being, and should not be made in a discriminatory or derogatory manner.

Graduate program administrators should ensure that students are provided with the requirements of their respective academic or professional development program. Graduate students shall not be exploited or be coerced into performing tasks unrelated to the requirements of their individual academic or professional development program or those described in their assistantship/employment agreements. Graduate students may refuse to perform tasks unrelated to the requirements of their individual academic or professional development program or described in their assistantship/employment agreements without the fear of reprisal.

Graduate program administrators should inform graduate students (prospective and currently enrolled) at the outset of their program of the published time limit for degree completion and the "average time to degree" for their respective program.

Graduate program administrators should provide graduate students with information regarding available opportunities and financial support including grants, awards, scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, and their selection and eligibility criteria.

Graduate program administrators and faculty should not violate graduate students' religious beliefs and practices in the performance of their work in the graduate program.

Faculty should recognize graduate students as co-authors and co-owners of scholarly works and intellectual property to which they have made a substantial contribution of ideas or research work regardless of other benefits or compensation that may have been provided.

Faculty should give graduate students credit and recognition for innovation(s) and intellectual and/or creative ideas developed by the student.

Faculty should give graduate students due credit and recognition for curriculum developed by the student, including but not limited to instructor on record, acknowledgement on syllabi, and other accepted academic norms.

Faculty mentors are encouraged to provide any assigned doctoral and/or thesis advisees an academic evaluation at least once per year. All faculty are encouraged to provide feedback concerning a graduate student's academic performance and progress towards an advanced degree as appropriate. Specifically:

- i. Although students are responsible for knowing Mason administrative and Academic Policies, faculty are encouraged to notify graduate students of deficiencies in their academic performance. This notification may be provided through grades or other means. When appropriate and if remedial measures are possible, faculty and program administrators are encouraged to provide recommendations and requirements needed to remedy their deficiencies.
- ii. It is encouraged that evaluations of student academic performance and progress be as factual and specific as possible and be shared with the graduate student within a reasonable period of time.

Faculty and/or graduate programs are encouraged to provide doctoral students a written evaluation of performance on qualifying and comprehensive examinations, upon unsatisfactory performance or upon request, when such exams are required by the degree program. In the event of major examination failure or other unsatisfactory performance, it is encouraged to provide reasoning for such assessment in a clear, written evaluation to the graduate student.

When a local academic unit intends to terminate a student from a graduate program for academic reasons, they must proceed in accordance with guidelines and policies established by Mason (including [Graduate policies, Academic Termination AP.6.6.2](#)) and, if applicable, academic programs.

- i. Local academic units should have public guidelines for the termination of a graduate student from an academic program.
- ii. Local academic units should make publicly available the description of the academic exception request and appeal process by which a graduate student may challenge the academic program termination.

#### **b. Advising, Mentorship, and Guidance**

Advising, mentorship, as well as academic and professional guidance, that is offered by faculty and/or graduate program administrators to graduate students is expected to be respectful.

- i. Academic advisors and mentors and those graduate students assigned to them are encouraged to coordinate to ensure that the students receive regular feedback and guidance concerning their academic performance and professional development through a mutually agreeable schedule of conferences.
- ii. Graduate students should have their progress toward achieving an advanced degree evaluated through criteria that are understood by the graduate advisor and students. Guidance and feedback are encouraged to be factual and specific, and shared with the student within a reasonable period of time. For doctoral programs, as well as those master's programs that require a thesis or capstone project, administrators and assigned mentors/advisors are encouraged to consider having annual written progress report(s) required of students with a response from the assigned mentor and advisor.

As applicable, graduate students should be provided with accurate information when selecting a committee/dissertation chair and other members of their thesis/dissertation committees. The process by which students select a chair and members of thesis/dissertation committees should be made publicly available to students.

If a graduate student wishes to change their committee/dissertation chair, then the local academic unit should work with them to find an alternative faculty member, if possible. Moreover, if a graduate student's committee/dissertation chair leaves Mason once the student's work is underway, the local academic unit, in consultation with the student, should provide the student with a new committee/dissertation chair.

### **III. If Expectations are Unmet**

If a graduate student feels that another member of the university community is not meeting the above- described expectations, they should speak with their advisor, mentor, local academic unit representative(s) and/or College/School's Dean's Office regarding their concern(s). If a faculty member or graduate program administrator feels a graduate student is not meeting these expectations, they are encouraged to speak with their College/School's Dean's Office or, in the alternative, the Office of the Provost regarding their concern(s).

Students, faculty, and/or graduate program administrators may also utilize the appropriate university channels or procedures for reporting conduct that is inconsistent with University policies or this document, including:

- Program Directors or equivalent: all concerns related to program policies and degree requirements or conduct of other students
- Department Chairs or equivalent: all concerns related to course delivery, instructors, staff, and academic/research facilities

- Compliance, Diversity, and Ethics (<https://diversity.gmu.edu>): issues relating to protected class discrimination (Title VII) or gender/sexual misconduct (Title IX: <https://diversity.gmu.edu/title-ix> and <https://diversity.gmu.edu/title-ix/sexual-or-interpersonal-misconduct-report-form>)
  - Disability Services: for reasonable accommodation due to a disability ( <https://ds.gmu.edu/>)
  - Employee Relations: treatment of a graduate teaching assistant, graduate research assistant, graduate professional assistant and graduate lecturer by faculty and staff (<https://hr.gmu.edu/employee-relations/>)
  - Office of Research Integrity and Assurance (<https://oria.gmu.edu/>): issues relating to research misconduct
- o Please refer to Policy 4007 for issues related to research misconduct: <https://universitypolicy.gmu.edu/policies/misconduct-in-research-and-scholarship/>.

Contact [resolve@gmu.edu](mailto:resolve@gmu.edu): For complaints about online course or program

## Mason Sustainability Council

The Mason Sustainability Council (MSC) is an institution-wide initiative that will advance university sustainability outcomes through prioritization, direction, coordination, and support for synergistic sustainability efforts. These efforts will benefit from and be informed by faculty, staff, research, and student expertise, as well as best practices to further establish Mason as an institutional leader in higher-education sustainability and social and environmental justices. The MSC is a means of actualizing Mason's commitments to sustainability and inclusive excellence, which include making Mason carbon-neutral, enabling our campuses to become living laboratories, and developing a culture of sustainability within our community.

The MSC is co-chaired by Provost Mark Ginsberg and Senior Vice President for Administration & Finance Carol Kissal, co-coordinated by Greg Farley, the Director of the Office of Sustainability (OoS), and Leah Nichols, the Executive Director of the Institute for a Sustainable Earth (ISE), and charged with:

- recommending, and advising on, opportunities for sustainability efforts across the University;
- aligning the work of the MSC with Mason's strategic priorities, goals, and mission, and coordinating MSC work with Mason's annual operating and capital planning processes;
- developing goals, targets, and metrics, in consultation with OoS and ISE, to guide the work of the MSC;
- translating concepts into action in the respective departments and colleges of its members;
- ensuring appropriate delegation of information, tasks, and resources;
- and communicating with Mason leadership, when appropriate, to share high-impact and high-value concepts, projects, and/or findings.
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The recently constituted MSC has identified the following five high-level guiding principles for sustainability (GPS) and associated action items to guide their work toward achieving these objectives. The council is seeking feedback from key stakeholders in the Mason community.

### Mason's Guiding Principles for Sustainability

1. Center social and environmental justice at the heart of Mason sustainability.

2. Foster an engaging culture of sustainability inclusive of all members of the Mason community and fundamental to the values of our graduates.

3. Ground all Mason decisions – operational, academic, and co-/extra-curricular – in sustainability, and ensure transparency and accountability.

4. Mitigate our impact on the global climate and local environments, while prioritizing resilience and resource responsibility, to promote the wellbeing of people and the planet.

5. Strive to be a recognized local, national, and world leader for our excellence in sustainability.

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### GPS-1. Center social and environmental justice at the heart of Mason sustainability.

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- a. **Engage and educate** the Mason community to ensure everyone understands that **social and environmental justice are integral to sustainability**.
- b. Make strong connections between the MSC and the **Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence (ARIE) Task Force**, and other groups on campus that are working on social and environmental justice, to align and integrate efforts.
- c. Enable, support, and leverage work at Mason's institutes, research centers, and offices throughout the university on the **implementation** and critical **study** of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) (SDG).
- d. Promote the development of **minors in course curricula** that are associated with the UN SDGs, inclusive of at least one course that looks at the goal from a social and environmental justice perspective.

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### GPS-2. Foster an engaging culture of sustainability inclusive of all members of the Mason community and fundamental to the values of our graduates.

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- a. Translate a social and environmental **culture of justice and sustainability** into Mason's value proposition. Ensure all in the Mason community see that this is who we are as an institution. Ensure that all faculty, staff, and students have a positive impact on justice and sustainability.
- b. Keep **social justice co-equal with environmental justice**; work to address them simultaneously by collaborating with other Mason partners.
- c. Make sustainability a **visible and significant** part of Mason's infrastructure and culture.
- d. Encourage and support all members of the Mason community to **embrace behaviors** that lead to sustainable outcomes as they live, work, or visit Mason.
- e. Build sustainability through policy direction and by **incentivizing** and **enabling** the work of faculty, staff, and students.
- f. **Recruit** and **engage** students in sustainability initiatives.

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### GPS-3. Ground all Mason decisions – operational, academic, and co-/extra-curricular – in sustainability, and ensure transparency and accountability.

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- a. **Engage voices** at Mason – including faculty, staff, and students – early and often to participate in decision-making for sustainable campuses and communities. Work with other Mason units and groups (*e.g.*, Office of Sustainability, Institute for a Sustainable Earth, Anti-Racism and Inclusive Excellence Task Force, and research institutes and centers) to **coordinate, leverage, and amplify** collective efforts.
- b. **Seek out and utilize** relevant Mason faculty, staff and students when **research, design, or assessments** are needed to achieve sustainability goals.
  - i. Remove barriers, provide support for, and encourage faculty to utilize Mason campuses as **living laboratories** for sustainability research and/or to pilot innovations.
  - ii. Create **curriculum opportunities** for students to conduct analyses and propose design solutions to address specific Mason sustainability needs and goals, including community collaboration, support and/or benefits.
- c. Include in the **legislative session** a priority for a sustainability agenda through budgeting and planning at Mason and with the state. Develop processes to ensure that sustainability is always a part of these conversations, from the beginning and considered throughout.
- d. Incorporate sustainability into all of Mason’s **strategic planning** – including in Mason’s Master Plan, Mason’s Strategic Plan, return-to-work plans, surveys, curriculum redesigns, co-curricular and extra-curricular programming, college and department strategic plans, etc. Work with local governments to incorporate Mason sustainability initiatives into **local and regional planning** (*e.g.*, assess and address affordable housing needs in Mason’s planning processes).
- e. Incorporate sustainability into the personnel process– including **recruitment, hiring, pay equity, and workload expectations**.
- f. Include specific sustainability requirements in **contracts and budgets**, such as:
  - i. Outline sustainability features and items in projects as budget line items, and **provide funds** for those items as a priority;
  - ii. Review bidding procedures to **incentivize firms** through bonus points toward higher building and design standards;
  - iii. Ensure that language in proposals and requests includes **sustainability requirements and performance metrics**.
- g. Address **purchasing** policies and material purchase agreements. Assess progress and collaborate to create guidelines for sustainable procurement practices, at the institution, peer-group, and statewide levels.
- h. Integrate sustainability into Mason’s **co-curricular and extracurricular** planning, programming, purchasing, and activities – including Residence Life programs, athletics and Mason Rec events, campus tours, orientations, career services outreach, and university trainings. Establish sustainability principles to ensure **green purchasing** and **zero-waste** efforts at events.



- i. **Explore** and **emulate** sustainability models at other leading universities and institutions.

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#### **GPS-4. Mitigate our impact on the global climate and local environments, while prioritizing resilience and resource responsibility, to promote the wellbeing of people and the planet.**

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- a. **Assess and evaluate** where Mason stands in relation to peers and best practices for campus and institutional sustainability. Advance and commit to specific benchmarks. Disseminate assessment results (e.g., AASHE STARS) and implement best practice policy shifts throughout operational and academic administrative offices.
- b. Develop a **Climate Action Plan** that commits Mason to and outlines a strategy to achieve carbon-neutrality, aiming for a nearer target date to align with peer institutions and the best available science.
- c. Create **green revolving funds** to support various sustainability initiatives.
- d. Develop policy and best practices to ensure new buildings have **attain higher certification levels** (e.g. USGBC's LEED Gold or Platinum, WELL Building Certified). Ensure that sustainability is part of the early planning phase for building design and construction and recognized as a priority throughout. Review bidding procedures, incentivize firms through points, and retain sustainable features. Revise Mason's Design Manual to be more sustainable.
- e. **Maximize energy efficiency, increase use of renewable energy sources**, and improve Mason's physical plant to get closer to **carbon neutrality goals**. Incorporate energy use and savings into building design processes before construction begins. Expand energy efficiency retrofits, retro-commissioning, explore power purchase agreements (PPAs) to increase renewables as a percentage of our purchased electricity; and assess potential to eliminate natural gas as energy source.
- f. **Minimize water use** on all campuses. Incorporate water use and savings into planning processes. Improve storm-water management; implement water-saving technologies and circular strategies, increase wastewater and rainwater reuse, and facilitate behavioral change toward conservation.
- g. Develop programs to **reduce the need for commuting** to, from, and between campuses and to **reduce the carbon-emissions of commutes**. Capitalize on innovative solutions like telework, and work with local and regional governments on complex capital planning to address single-occupancy vehicle commuting and implement alternative modes of transport, including bike riding.
- h. **Optimize Mason's vehicle and shuttle fleet** by developing a replacement and purchasing policy with deadlines for transition to alternative vehicles, particularly electric vehicles (EVs). Pair with shuttle route optimization, and support for necessary charging infrastructure, staff training for EV maintenance, as well as fleet management and governance changes to support policy oversight and adherence.

- i. Assess waste streams. Identify and support strategies to reduce and divert waste to closed loop systems to **achieve zero waste**. Reduce waste through purchasing and policy changes. Build up composting as a percentage of waste diversion. Ban the sale of single-use plastics and ensure more sustainable access to drinking water.
- j. Develop programs to **minimize use of harmful chemicals** in operations and in laboratories. Evaluate best practices and reduce herbicide, pesticide, refrigerant, and solvent use where feasible. Assess and report usage for all annually. Create green cleaning and green lab policies and guides with the help of Housekeeping staffs and researchers.
- k. Assess the **landscapes** on Mason's campuses and develop strategies to **improve biodiversity**, support the **health of ecosystems**, and highlight and **preserve historical and cultural sites**.

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## **GPS-5. Strive to be a recognized local, national, and world leader for our excellence in sustainability.**

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- a. Ensure that sustainability is fully integrated into **Mason's identity** in the upcoming brand-refresh exercise that the university will initiate spring 2021. Establish a reputation that integrates across academic, co-curricular, and operational sustainability.
- b. Highlight concrete accomplishments that demonstrate our commitment to excellence in sustainability by developing a **central narrative** for research, teaching, and campus operations.
- c. Leverage and amplify OoS and ISE's efforts and inventories of sustainability initiatives, research, and curriculum to establish widespread **internal knowledge of and unified communication about** Mason sustainability.
- d. Leverage OoS's GIS map of sustainability initiatives on campus to create a **virtual tour** of Mason sustainability.
- e. Map Mason's sustainability mission and brand onto the federal effort to seek recognition and funding.