

**BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, December 4, 2025
Merten Hall, Hazel Conference Room (1201), Fairfax Campus**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rector Charles Stimson, Vice Rector Michael Meese, Secretary Armand Alacbay, and Visitor Jeffrey Rosen (virtual).

ABSENT: Visitor Robert Pence.

ALSO PRESENT: Visitor Jon Peterson; Solon Simmons, Faculty Representative; Rachel Spence, Staff Representative; Isaiah Grays, Undergraduate Student Representative; Gregory Washington, President; James Antony, Provost and Executive Vice President; Anne Gentry, University Counsel; Dan Stephens, Interim Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer; and Bridget Higgins, Secretary pro tem.

I. Call to Order

Rector Stimson called the meeting to order at 1:01 p.m.

Rector Stimson informed the Board that Visitor Rosen requested to participate remotely, specifically for caretaker responsibilities in Colorado.

Citing the Board's Electronic Meeting Participation policy, Rector Stimson **MOVED** to approve Visitor Rosen's electronic participation in the meeting. The motion was **SECONDED** by Vice Rector Meese. The **MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

II. Approval of the Minutes

Rector Stimson called for any corrections to the Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for October 15, 2025 provided for review in the meeting materials. Hearing no corrections, the meeting minutes stood **APPROVED AS WRITTEN.**

III. Rector's Report

A. View from the Bridge

Rector Stimson expressed the importance of the meeting so that the Committee could address the work of the university. He concluded with reminding the board of the Holiday Reception at the Mathy House on Friday, December 5; Winter Commencement on Thursday, December 18; and filing of the annual financial disclosure required in January 2026.

IV. President's Report

Rector Stimson recognized President Washington who highlighted four areas of focus at the current stage of the strategic plan.

- Enhancing Student Experience
 - Enrollment had a small overall decline compared to last year as a result in the reduction of more than 500 students in the international, graduate, and law school area; 80% of the international students came from India. Fiscal impact was mitigated as undergraduate enrollment and total credit hours increased.

- The Direct Entry program continues to provide the same student quality as those admitted by traditional means and provided 25% of the entering freshman class. SCHEV is moving forward to bring the idea statewide.
- By using Mason Korea and local embassies, Mason can diversify international programs if international students cannot get to Virginia from their country.
- Earned Admission, a program focused on students with some college but no degree, will be coming in the next two years.
- Expanding ADVANCE will build on the 50% of Mason's undergraduates that come from a pathway of community colleges. This reduces the overall cost of their degree, reducing their debt load far more than if tuition were held at zero over five years.
- External factors will have an impact on enrollment: new General Assembly, new governor, managing community expectations, managing investigations and legal issues, along with additional unknown factors. Mason is resilient and focused on solutions.
- The Grand Challenge and AI Focus
 - \$15 million has been invested over five years to successfully prepare Mason faculty to move forward with the Grand Challenge initiatives with AI at the core.
 - Mason is ready to scale its AI programs to address changes, challenges of AI, and how to utilize it. The goal is for Mason students to be a learning class and not a scrolling class.
- Managing Cost, Including Cost of Degree
 - There are several stressors to Mason's budget, totaling \$25 million:
 - Executive Orders and policy changes at state and federal levels;
 - Unfunded mandates with no tuition increase. For the first time, the university has been depending on state support more than tuition. Mason cannot rely on state funding with the current strain on the Commonwealth's budget.
 - \$7.1 million has been lost due to the reduction of graduate and international student tuition.
 - \$7 million has been lost due to the reduction of research expenditures (Indirect Cost Return).
 - Two unfunded mandates, Virginia Military Survivors and Dependents Education Program (VMSDEP), has increased from last year by \$1.8 million and compensation to employees could cost the university \$8-9 million.
 - Increased revenue has helped to mitigate these stressors.
 - Revenue increased by \$3.5 million from overall credit hour growth as undergraduates take more courses.
 - The Patriot Investment Fund generated \$5 million in fees due to favorable trading revenue.
 - Mason leaders are working to make permanent the one time funds received from the state.
 - Strategy going forward:
 - The budget model implementation helps leaders use their resources better, allowing deans and leaders of academic units to make those decisions.
 - Plan for enrollment to grow 1-1.5% with faculty and staff growth of 1% per year to manage the stress in the system.
 - Continue to advocate for an increase in state subsidy support.
 - Manage spending growth to keep costs minimal.
 - Diversify funding streams, investing in high-growth return areas for when the country settles.
- Partner or Perish
 - Investigations

- Mason is not running away from engaging with ongoing investigations. We have responded vigorously, truthfully, and engaged the community. Initial negotiations have begun.
- The Faculty Senate resolution opposing the Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education and any settlement of OCR or DOJ Investigations that Compromise Institutional Autonomy has been sent to the Office of University Council and will be utilized to reach a reasonable settlement.
- Mason will continue to follow its core values while maintaining effective positioning, which might require that some things will cease in order to be compliant with the law. Mason leaders have tried to communicate clearly so students know they are the priority with Mason providing a positive environment along with learning and growth opportunities for them.
- Leadership Changes
 - President Washington celebrated Provost James Antony for his impact on George Mason University. The provost and three other positions are in transition, with national searches on the horizon. Visitor Rosen asked if a board member would participate in the provost search. President Washington affirmed that a board member will be added to the search committee noting that Visitor Hazel previously participated in Provost Antony's search.
 - New appointments will be made to the Board of Visitors by the new governor with significant time spent by President Washington to build those relationships.
 - President Washington will engage with the newly-elected General Assembly and Executive Branch members with a priority topic addressing how Mason can help meet the needs of their constituents.

Rector Stimson thanked President Washington for his leadership during these difficult times and expressed appreciation to Provost Antony for his professionalism and overall BOV engagement during his time at Mason.

V. Strategic Plan Update

Rector Stimson recognized Whitney Owen, Interim Special Advisor to the President and Chief of Staff, who presented an update of the Strategic Plan:

- Ms. Owen provided an overview of the plan, consisting of five priorities (Mason Student Experience, Research, Partnerships, Access and Inclusion, and Faculty and Staff), supported by fifteen strategies, 66 actions, and over 200 tactical items. The plan is managed internally by University Business Consulting.
- Mason is currently in year four of the five year plan, ending in FY27 and is on track with implementation with 60% of actions completed or at completion percentages of 60% or higher.

Discussion ensued:

- Vice Rector Meese asked if preliminary planning has begun for the strategic plan beginning in 2027. Ms. Owen responded that senior leadership has commenced discussion of the next planning cycle. Committees and work groups will begin to focus on the next plan in 2026. Vice Rector Meese suggested having a timeline and the five objectives ready for the Board to discuss in April to allow for high-level input and an opportunity for new members to be a part of the process.
- Rector Stimson requested that Board appointees be provided a strategic overview during their introductory session.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Academic Affairs Committee

Secretary Alabay reported on the activities of the Academic Affairs Committee that met in the morning, and provided a summary of the presentations by Provost Antony and Keith Renshaw, Senior Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education.

Secretary Alabay **MOVED** that the Executive Committee approve the following action items, en bloc, as provided in the meeting materials:

- Program Actions
 - New Degree Programs
 - MS in Quantum Science and Engineering (ACTION ITEM)
 - PhD in Cybersecurity (ACTION ITEM)
 - Organizational Change
 - College of Public Health: Renaming the “Department of Health Administration and Policy” to the “Department of Health Administration, Policy, and Informatics.” (ACTION ITEM)
- Faculty Actions
 - Conferral of Emeritus/Emerita Status (ACTION ITEM)
 - Elections of New Tenured Faculty (ACTION ITEM)

The motion was **SECONDED** by Vice Rector Meese. Rector Stimson opened the floor for discussion of which there was none.

The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 4

Absent: Visitor Robert Pence

B. Finance and Land Use Committee

Secretary Alabay, in the role of in-person chair while Chair Rosen participated virtually, reported on the activities of the Finance and Land Use Committee that met in the morning, and provided a summary of the presentations by Dan Stephens, Interim Senior Vice President and Chief Financial Officer; Christopher Ackerman, Vice President and Chief Human Resource Officer; and Michelle Lim, Deputy Chief Human Resources Officer.

Visitor Rosen **MOVED** that the Executive Committee approve the the State Six-Year Operating Plan presented in the Board Book, revised to reflect that the FY27 and FY28 tuition increases as assumed to be in a range between 0-3%, targeting the lower end of the range to the extent practical and feasible.

The motion was **SECONDED** by Vice Rector Meese. Rector Stimson opened the floor for discussion of which there was none.

The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 4

Absent: Visitor Robert Pence

C. Research Committee

Vice Rector Meese reported on the activities of the Research Committee that met in the morning, and provided a summary of the presentations by Andre Marshall, Vice President of Research, Innovation and Economic Impact; Ken Ball, Dean of the College of Engineering and Computing; and Marc Sassville, Executive Director of the Rapid Prototyping Research Center.

Vice Rector Meese **MOVED** that the Executive Committee approve the Patriot Labs Affiliation Agreement, as provided in the meeting materials.

The motion was **SECONDED** by Secretary Alabay. Rector Stimson opened the floor for discussion of which there was none.

The **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE. (Attachment 1)**

Yes: 4

Absent: Visitor Robert Pence

VII. Committee Representative Updates

A. Athletics

Marvin Lewis, Assistant Vice President and Director of Athletics, provided an update on Mason Athletics.

The 2024-2025 year was historic – the first time Mason won five conference championships in thirty years. Momentum is strong, with success in women’s volleyball, men’s soccer, men’s wrestling, men’s and women’s basketball, and men’s and women’s cross country. There will be fifteen nationally televised men’s and women’s basketball games on CBS, NBC, and ESPN. Mason will celebrate the 20th anniversary of the men’s Final Four at the December 13 game against Old Dominion University.

Athletics updates included:

- The five-year strategic plan was introduced in summer 2025 and will be referenced in future committee meetings. Goals include building partnerships with academic units, utilizing academic diversity to attract talent, and leveraging our regional presence to become Northern Virginia’s team.
- Power the Possible’s campaign will provide a basketball and academic performance center, a sports performance ecosystem, and other resources for athletes.
- A consultant has been hired to determine facility locations and community impact from the development of West Campus.
- The national landscape of intercollegiate athletics is in constant change and Congress has shown interest in providing guardrails.

Discussion ensued

- Secretary Alabay asked how the Collegiate Sports Commission (CSC), who manages the House v. NCAA settlement framework, impacts Mason. Mr. Lewis replied that the CSC has created a participation agreement that would need to be signed by either the defendants or those, like Mason, who have opted into the House settlement. Virginia’s Attorney General, as well as six other attorneys general wrote a letter to the CSC with their concerns and asked that more time be spent with stakeholders before institutions sign.
- Rector Stimson asked what the impact would be if Mason could manage to build a world class fieldhouse. Mr. Lewis replied that it would help attract students and employees and plant the flag for Northern Virginia. Mason will need to prioritize their D-1 students, while integrating academic units, and provide a community use component.

B. Audit, Risk, and Compliance

Vice Rector Meese provided an update on Mason audit, risk, and compliance topics and thanked outgoing Chief Audit and Compliance Officer, Ed Dittmeier, for his ten years of service to the university and welcomed Derek Butler in the interim.

Vice Rector Meese received briefings on the following:

1. The Auditor of Public Accounts gave an Unmodified/Clean opinion on Mason's FY24 financial statements.
2. Cybersecurity matters were addressed by Charmaine Madison, Vice President and Chief Information Officer; Matt Dalton, Chief Information Security Officer; and Christine Zanellato, Executive Director of Enterprise Strategic Governance.
3. Several routine updates were mentioned:
 - The Annual Report of Approved Conflict of Interest Waivers was approved in accordance to established procedures.
 - Improvements to enterprise risks and procedures, specifically ethics training completion and institutional policy management.
 - Eight different reports and memos have been issued, as well as reviewing memos for the coming year.

C. Development

Sumeet Shrivastava, Chair of the Board of the GMU Foundation; Trishana Bowden, Vice President of Advancement and Alumni Relations; Jenn Robinson, Associate Vice President, Alumni Relations and Executive Director of the Alumni Association; and Scott Hine, President of the George Mason University Alumni Association (GMUAA) provided development updates.

- Mr. Shrivastava provided an update on Trustee engagement, along with Veterans in the Arts and Grand Challenge initiatives. Audited statements received a clean opinion, finance and real estate is on track, and investment returns totaled 15.4% for FY25.
- Ms. Bowden provided a Mason Now campaign update and celebrated the opening of the Fuse building as a great event to host the governor, community, investors, and the business community. Rector Stimson thanked Ms. Bowden for her leadership and setting a great tone for her team.
- Ms. Robinson and Mr. Hine provided an overview of the relationship between the Office of Alumni Relations (OAR) and GMUAA. OAR consists of state employees that are responsible for alumni engagement strategy, initiatives, programming, and events. GMUAA is a 501(c)(3), staffed by unpaid volunteers that focus on alumni engagement, student engagement, partnerships and sponsorships, and volunteerism. Ms. Robinson and Mr. Hine updated the Committee on FY25 alumni engagements and highlighted that alumni participation and donation rates have tripled since 2023.

Discussion ensued:

- Rector Stimson remarked that U.S. News and World Report's national average of alumni giving is about 7.7% with Mason at a 2.5% giving rate. He then asked what is accounted for in the engagement metric. Ms. Robinson described their engagement ratings range from alumni opening an email, to attending an event, to volunteering, to philanthropy. Mr. Hine added that GMUAA has been engaging freshmen students in recent years.
- Mr. Simmons asked if deans and department chairs work with OAR and GMUAA to celebrate the success of their alumni. Ms. Robinson described Patriot Pride Spotlight in the monthly alumni newsletter and inviting alumni to speak to students to tell their stories. The best way to inspire students is to see themselves in someone else. GMUAA also has a Celebration of Distinction, the longest-running celebration of alumni at Mason. Mr. Hine added that each academic unit has an alumni chapter which works closely with their respective dean.

VIII. Closed Session

- A.** Consultation with Legal Counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.7)
- B.** Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding the aforementioned items (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.8)

Rector Stimson conferred with counsel about any legal matters that require a closed session. Anne Gentry, General Counsel, indicated there were none.

Rector Stimson then asked if there was any additional business to come before the Executive Committee. Hearing none, the meeting was adjourned at 2:52 p.m.

Bridget Higgins
Secretary pro tem

Attachment 1: Affiliation Agreement: Patriot Labs (8 pages)
Attachment 2: Public Comments (6 pages)

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
Academic Affairs Committee**

MINUTES

Thursday December 4, 2025

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair: Armand Alacbay; Vice Chair: Jeff Rosen; Visitors: Mike Meese; Staff Representatives: Provost Jim Antony, Sharnnia Artis; Faculty Senate President: Solon Simmons; Staff Senate Chair: Rachel Spence; Faculty Representatives: Shane Caswell, Tim Gibson; Student Representatives: Isaiah Grays, Nilima Mow

ALSO PRESENT: Rector Stimson, President Washington; Visitors: Pence, Peterson

I. The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Armand Alacbay at 9:03 a.m.

Chairperson Alacbay informed the Committee that Visitor Rosen requested to participate remotely due to caregiver responsibilities. Citing the Board's Electronic Meeting Participation Policy, Chairperson Alacbay **MOVED**; Visitor Meese **SECONDED**. Visitor Rosen's remote participation was **APPROVED**.

II. Approval of Minutes (Action Item)

Chairperson Alacbay called for any corrections to the minutes from the September 10th, Academic Affairs Committee Meeting. Hearing no corrections, the meeting minutes stood **APPROVED** as written.

III. New Business

A. Provost's Update

James Antony – Provost and Executive Vice President

Provost Antony opened with a personal update, noting that he will remain in his current role through February before moving to the University of San Diego, where he will serve as provost, and reaffirmed his commitment to continuity and a smooth transition.

He then provided updates on several academic initiatives, highlighting the website where up-to-date information on all the taskforces and working groups can be found. He noted that the dean search for the Antonin Scalia Law School is underway, shared that the Schar School of Policy and Government has been accepted as a full member of the Association of Professional Schools of International Affairs, and recognized the continued contributions of the University Libraries' Special Collections Research Center. He also provided updates on student, faculty, and staff achievements.

B. Higher Education Academics

Provost Antony provided the committee with an update on the Academic Planning Process that the Office of the Provost holds each year with the Schools and Colleges, which will focus on enrollment, attrition, time to degree and course modality information. He also outlined the Academic Program Review process for evaluating the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of its academic programs. He noted that APR includes a seven-year comprehensive review cycle for units without external accreditation and that insights from these reviews inform curricular improvements, strengthen program goals, and ensure programs remain responsive to student and market needs.

Keith Renshaw, Senior Associate Provost for Undergraduate Education provided an overview of the Mason Core, reviewing the historical development of Mason’s general education requirements, describing the current structure of foundational, exploration, and integration categories, and highlighting state and accreditation parameters that guide the Core. He then summarized recent developments, including the establishment of dedicated Mason Core leadership in 2022, the creation of baseline course standards, new professional development for instructors, a systematic assessment cycle, and ongoing work toward a recertification process for courses in the Mason Core. Looking ahead, he noted current efforts to revise student learning outcomes in several categories and to refine the vision of the Mason Graduate to ensure alignment across the curriculum and equitable achievement for transfer students.

C. Program Actions and Faculty Actions

Provost Antony provided an overview of both the Program Actions and Faculty Actions. Chairperson Alacbay **MOVED** to approve the Program Actions and Faculty Actions en bloc; Visitor Meese **SECONDED** the following program actions:

1. New Degree Programs
 - a. MS in Quantum Science and Engineering
 - b. PhD in Cybersecurity
2. Organizational Change
 - a. College of Public Health: Renaming the “Department of Health Administration and Policy” to the “Department of Health Administration, Policy, and Informatics.”

MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.

Yes – 3

D. Announcements

Announcements and Reports were acknowledged for the Committee’s benefit. No further discussion was held.

IV. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sarah Parnell
Secretary Pro Tem

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
Finance and Land Use Committee Meeting
December 4, 2025
Meeting Minutes
DRAFT**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Chair Rosen; Visitor Alacbay, Visitor Peterson; Interim Vice President Stephens

ABSENT: Committee Faculty Representatives: Daniels and Shutika

ALSO PRESENT: President Washington; Rector Stimson; Vice Rector Meese; Visitor Pence; Faculty Representative Simmons; Staff Representative Spence

I. Call to Order

Visitor Alacbay called the meeting to order at 10:19 a.m. Per the Board's policy for electronic participation in meetings, Visitor Alacbay **MOVED** that the committee approve Chair Rosen's electronic participation in the meeting. Motion was **SECONDED**. The **MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY**.

II. Approval of Minutes for April 10, 2025 (**ACTION**)

Visitor Alacbay called for any corrections to the minutes for the Finance and Land Use Committee Meeting for April 10, 2025. Hearing no corrections, the **MINUTES STOOD APPROVED AS WRITTEN**.

III. Financial Matters

Visitor Alacbay turned the meeting over to Dan Stephens, Vice President for Finance.

A. Financial Audits Update

Mr. Stephens presented an update on the FY 2024 Financial Statement Audit and the FY 2025 Unaudited Financial Statements

i. FY 2024 Financial Statement Audit Status

- George Mason received an unmodified opinion on its FY 2024 financial statements, which concluded in October 2025.
- There were two significant deficiencies related to internal process controls over internally-generated software and interdepartmental communication and accountability.
- The university will implement process improvements in FY 2026 to address the internal control findings.
- FY 2024 revenues increased by 12.7% primarily driven by non-operating increases for state appropriations and capital, growth in tuition revenues offset by increased financial aid, and an 18% grants and contracts increase.

- FY 2024 expenses increased 7.9% driven by increased compensation and growth in revenues and expenses associated with the acquisition of real estate assets.
- ii. FY 2025 Unaudited Financial Statements
 - FY2025 Unaudited Financial Statements show decreased revenue of \$27 million (2%) driven by increased financial aid surpassing tuition increases, grants and contracts decreased by 6%, and decreased capital appropriations.
 - Expenses increased by \$10 million (1%) due to increased compensation.
 - FY 2025 audit planning began in November 2025 and is expected to conclude by June 2026.
 - Comparing the 2024 audited financial statement and the 2025 unaudited financial statements, the university is healthy with total assets and deferred outflow of resources at \$2.5 billion, up 1%. Total liabilities and deferred inflows of resources are at \$1.1 billion, a reduction of 5%.

B. FY 2026 Q1 Financial Report – Draft Actuals

Mr. Stephens presented the FY 2026 Q1 Financial Report – Draft Actuals.

- FY 2026 Q1 year-to-date Education and General (E&G) operation results are on target to meet the FY 2026 Budget, with revenues trending in alignment with the budget.
- Expense variance of 24% is in alignment with what is expected for the first quarter, and compensation costs are on target.
- Scholarships & Fellowships are showing 44% of the expenses. This is on track with the early recognition of tuition and fees.
- In FY 2026, a total operating surplus of \$16 million is planned, driven by auxiliary and other related activities.
- Total operating revenue is 44% of budget, and operating expenses are in alignment at 30% of budget.
- Slightly lower positive net tuition and fees due to lower graduate and foreign student enrollment.

C. Approval of State Six-Year Operating Plan (**ACTION**)

Mr. Stephens reviewed the Six-Year Operating Plan.

- The FY26-FY32 plan and narrative were submitted on July 3, 2025.
- The plan was presented to Op-Six Members on August 26 and received positively, with follow-up responses to additional questions submitted on October 15, 2025.
- The main categories of requests are in student success, faculty and staff success, and expanded impact of research, scholarship, and creative enterprise.
- The final decision package submission in September was reduced from the original July six-year plan general fund request; FY27 was reduced to \$47 million (48%), and FY28 was reduced to \$63 million (55%).

- The Secretary of Education gave her support for making one-time FY26 appropriations final, providing requested support for VMSDEP aid, and providing approximately \$2 million to support AI initiatives.
- Six-Year Fiscal Plan Assumptions FY26-FY32 revenue drivers are:
 - FY25 base state operating appropriations held constant.
 - FY26 increased state appropriations of one-time \$13M.
 - Overall 1.67% projected student FTE enrollment growth.
 - Tuition rate increases in FY27 and FY28, with no increase from FY29 through FY32.
 - State Salary support for compensation increases.
- The Six-Year Plan is a planning exercise that does not bind the Board to final decisions surrounding revenue and expense parameters contained within, but requires Board approval to complete the process.
- Tuition and Fees scenarios for FY27 will be brought before the Board and public in the spring, with final approval anticipated at the May meeting.
- Six-Year Fiscal Plan Assumptions FY26-FY32 expense drivers are:
 - State-approved compensation increases.
 - Increased fringe benefit costs.
 - Increased funding from university resources for student financial aid.
 - Inflationary cost increases across all non-personnel categories.
 - Additional facility-related operating costs for academic facilities.
 - Other mission-critical strategic investments in instructional and student success services.
- Staff recommends approval by the Board of Visitors of the State Six-Year Operating Plan as detailed in the Board Book.

D. Foreign Gifts and Contracts Reporting

At Chair Rosen's request, an overview of George Mason's federal reporting process and requirements for foreign gifts and contracts was presented by Mr. Stephens.

- Foreign gifts and contracts with a value of \$250,000 or more are to be reported to the U.S. Department of Education.
- Reporting is required under Section 117 of the Higher Education Act of 1956 to maintain eligibility for participation in federal student aid programs.
- Reporting is on a calendar year basis and due twice a year.
- Information is reported via the Department of Education's Foreign Gifts & Contracts reporting portal.
- Reporting fits into four main categories:
 - Student accounts
 - Office of Sponsored Programs
 - Contracts, Academic or Non-academic
 - Gifts
- July 2025's report submission was presented, showing a total reported amount of \$8,430,189.

IV. Operational Matters

Mr. Stephens called on Christopher Ackerman, Vice President of Human Resources and Chief Human Resources Officer.

A. Workforce Planning Update

Mr. Ackerman provided a workforce planning update.

- George Mason's total workforce is 12,417, including a large student employee base.
- Information in the workforce plan informs efforts to strengthen workforce efficiency, refine staffing models, and improve the employee-to-student ratio through disciplined workforce planning.
- Benefited staff levels remain steady, but management is continuously pursuing opportunities for realignment for operational enhancements and reimagine roles for greater efficiency.
- 20% of the workforce is approaching retirement eligibility, creating opportunities to reshape staffing without reductions.
- George Mason mirrors national patterns with a growing Millennial and Gen Z workforce and a sizeable retirement group.
- George Mason outperforms national turnover benchmarks, indicating institutional stability.
- Negative net hiring trends over the past two fiscal years reflect disciplined workforce stewardship, with departure reasons align with national benchmarks.
- Almost one-third of key leaders across George Mason are at or near retirement eligibility.
- Current supervisory spans of control generally meet minimum expectations, indicating a stable structure with room for continued alignment.
- Forward strategy centers on modernization, structural alignment, and workforce efficiency.

Mr. Ackerman turned the floor over to Assistant Vice President for Total Rewards, and Deputy Chief Human Resources Officer, Michelle Lim.

B. Retirement Plan Investment Policy Update

- Retirement plans remain well-managed with competitive structures.
- Plans with Fidelity and TIAA remain strong and well-diversified.
- Investment Policy Committee continues to strengthen governance, transparency, and plan performance while reducing cost.
- Replacing underperforming funds and reviewing cybersecurity improves plan quality and reduces participant risk.

Mr. Stephens opened the floor for questions.

Rector Stimson noted during SCHEV training that George Mason's Fact Pact is used as an example to other universities, highlighting that George Mason does more with less. He credits Dr. Washington and his team for these achievements.

Vice Rector Meese commented that the structured retirement that was done two or three years ago has put Mason in a better position now. Given the eligible population, he encouraged Mason to revisit the program.

Chair Rosen raised his concerns that the tuition assumptions in the Six-Year Plan are not accurate comparisons, based on some Board members' intention to keep tuition flat, and produce a distorting effect. He stated it may be a more cautious and fiscally sensible approach to use the same assumption of zero for all six years.

President Washington clarified that in the 2023 submission of the Six-Year plan, George Mason did include a tuition increase in the first two years and zero for the outyears, as the Commonwealth recognizes that it is not realistic for an institution to not raise tuition. At some point, tuition must be raised due to the continued unfunded mandate that must be covered by the institution. Further, from a fiscal perspective, it is problematic not to follow the framework outlined by the state.

Chair Rosen clarified that tuition increases raise relatively small amounts of money but have big impacts on the perception of the sticker price. From a planning exercise, if flat tuition is assumed across all years, it is more consistent year-over-year. Keeping the planning assumptions to have no tuition increase does not preclude the Board from making a different decision about a tuition increase when the time comes.

Visitor Peterson asked over the past years how many years there was no tuition increase.

President Washington answered that, on average, over the last five years, tuition had increased twice. The leadership team's philosophy has been to raise tuition as little as possible, but pragmatically, it is not possible to never raise tuition and still meet the goals and outcomes expected by the Commonwealth. Unlike appropriations, tuition is permanent funding to support permanent positions and presents an important framework in hiring faculty and staff. President Washington noted leadership's track record of success in serving as responsible fiscal stewards, managing to achieve positive outcomes despite continued resource challenges.

Visitor Peterson suggested noting that the tuition increases could be up to three percent, in order to address Chair Rosen's concerns.

Visitor Peterson put forth a MOTION for approval by the Board of Visitors of the State Six-Year Operating Plan, with the amendment that in fiscal years 2027 and 2028, the increase in tuition be stated as up to three percent, with the latter years being at zero increase. Visitor Alacbay **SECONDED** the motion. The **MOTION WAS CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

V. Adjournment

There being no further business, Visitor Alacbay adjourned the meeting at 11:32 am.

Prepared by Secretary Pro Tem.
Jessica Holtzman

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
Research Committee Meeting
MINUTES
November 20, 2025**

Present: Michael Meese, Chair; Armand Alacbay, Vice Chair; Jeff Rosen (virtual)

Also Present: President Gregory Washington; Rector Stimson

The meeting was called to order by Chair Michael Meese at 11:38 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes (ACTION ITEM)

- a. It was **MOVED** by Visitor Meese to approve Visitor Rosen’s electronic participation in today’s meeting. Motion was approved.
- b. It was **MOVED** by Visitor Meese to approve the minutes from the May 1, 2025, Research Committee Meeting. Meeting minutes were approved.

2. New Business

a. **Office of Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact Update**

Dr. Andre Marshall – Vice President for Research, Innovation & Economic Impact reported the following highlights:

- i. **Latest numbers on research funding trends.** He noted that with only four months of financials, the numbers reflect the continued stresses of government reductions in funding as well as the recent government shutdown.
- ii. **Sponsored project expenditures.** George Mason has grown from \$101M in 2015 to over \$204M in 2025, which is more than double in 10 years. He noted that the recent decline in awards will impact future growth and that the university’s challenge is to sustain momentum while diversifying funding sources.
- iii. **Developing a set of metrics for research activities and support.** He noted that more on this topic will be addressed at the February 2026 board meeting.

b. **Patriot Labs Affiliation Agreement (ACTION ITEM)**

Ken Ball, Dean of the College of Engineering and Computing, and Lt. Gen. (ret) Marc Sasseville, Executive Director of the Rapid Prototyping Research Center, shared the Patriot Laboratories, Inc. 501(c)(3), affiliation agreement to establish an independent and affiliated applied research entity.

- i. Dean Ball noted that the Board approved in September a Resolution to establish an independent and affiliated entity (tentatively named ‘George Mason University Patriot Laboratories’, or ‘Patriot Labs’ for short) which

could serve as critical infrastructure to one day support the establishment of a University Affiliated Research Center (UARC) or Federally Funded Research and Development Center (FFRDC). This entity would enable the university to scale and achieve a level of prestige in applied research commensurate with other notable universities and supports the institutional goal of eventual inclusion in the Association of American Universities (AAU). He then requested approval of the affiliation agreement which would allow for an independent and affiliated applied research institution at George Mason University.

- ii. It was **MOVED** by Visitor Meese to approve the affiliation agreement. Visitor Armand Alacbay provided a **SECOND**. The Motion was approved by the Research Committee.
- iii. As all Board members were in attendance, the agreement was advanced to the full committee which approved and advanced to the full committee for approval.
- iv. Roll call was held. The agreement **PASSED UNANIMOUSLY**.

3. **Adjournment**

- a. Chair Meese asked if there was any additional business to be discussed.
- b. With no further comments or items of discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 12:01 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Yellia Seanor
Research Committee Secretary

**AFFILIATION AGREEMENT BETWEEN
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY AND PATRIOT LABORATORIES, INC.**

THIS AFFILIATION AGREEMENT ("Agreement") dated as of _____, 2025, is by and between GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY, an institution of higher education and agency of the Commonwealth of Virginia (the "University"), and PATRIOT LABORATORIES, INC., a Virginia nonstock corporation (the "Corporation"). The University and the Corporation are collectively referred to herein as the "Parties."

RECITALS

- a. The Corporation is a Virginia nonstock corporation that was established in 2025 to support and benefit the University and exists and operates as a separate, independent entity with its own officers and governing board.
- b. The Corporation was created for the purpose of promoting applied engineering research focusing primarily, but not exclusively, on U.S. national security, intelligence and defense related issues.
- c. The Corporation is a tax-exempt charitable organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the United States Internal Revenue Code and is classified as a publicly supported organization under Internal Revenue Code sections 509(a)(3) and 170(b)(1)(A)(iv) and must abide by both federal and Virginia laws and regulations applicable to such types of entities.
- d. The Corporation has been established to advance the University's mission and goals, and the University desires an affiliation with the Corporation to make available certain facilities, resources, and services to the Corporation for its use.
- e. The University and the Corporation desire to set forth the basic terms of their relationship.

NOW, THEREFORE, in consideration of the mutual commitments herein contained, and other good and valuable consideration, the receipt and sufficiency of which is hereby acknowledged, the Parties agree as follows:

1. Relationship between the Parties

- (a) Pursuant to Section 23.1-1301 of the Code of Virginia, the Board of Visitors of the University is vested with the authority to manage the funds of the University, make regulations and policies concerning the University, appoint the President of the University, appoint all professors, teachers, staff members, and agents of the University and fix their salaries, and generally direct the affairs of the University.
- (b) The Corporation is a separately incorporated Virginia nonstock corporation and is an organization described in Internal Revenue Code section 501(c)(3) classified as a publicly supported organization under Internal Revenue Code sections 509(a)(3) and 170(b)(1)(A)(iv).

(c) The University is responsible for the compensation and evaluation of all University personnel. The Corporation is responsible for the compensation and evaluation of all its personnel. The Corporation agrees that it shall endeavor to provide a benefits and compensation plan for its employees that as nearly as practical matches that of the University.

(d) The Corporation agrees that it will provide the University with (i) a copy of its articles of incorporation and bylaws, as well as any amendments to such organizational documents; and (ii) a list of all directors, officers, and staff members and their relevant contact information including e-mail addresses and telephone numbers. The Corporation also agrees that, upon request by the University, it will review its annual operating budget, capital budget, and long-term program and funding plans, including any planned issuance or use of indebtedness, with the University before presenting any such budgets or plans to its Board. The University acknowledges that the Corporation's Board has full power and authority with respect to the Corporation's annual operating budget, capital budget, and long-term program plans, including any planned issuance or use of indebtedness. Both Parties also acknowledge the importance of considering impacts to and limitations on the University's debt rating when making financial decisions, ensuring alignment with the University's financial objectives, its goal of maintaining favorable borrowing terms and capacity, and its ability to meet the Commonwealth's debt rating standards required of covered institutions pursuant to Virginia's Higher Education Restructuring Act. Additionally, the Corporation will adhere to predefined parameters and guidelines set forth by its Board, and available for review by the University upon request, in making decisions related to debt issuance or utilization, ensuring responsible and strategic financial management.

(e) The Corporation agrees that it shall remain in good standing with the Virginia State Corporation Commission.

(f) The President of the University, or his or her designee, shall be responsible for communicating to the Corporation the University's priorities and strategic and long-term plans, as approved by the University's Board of Visitors.

2. Corporation Board

(a) The Corporation is an independent Virginia corporation with authority to appoint directors to serve on its Board in accordance with its articles of incorporation and bylaws. The Corporation's Bylaws shall provide that at least one employee of the University, designated by the President of the University, shall serve as a full voting member of the Corporation's Board of Directors.

(b) The Corporation represents that the officers and directors of the Corporation were provided a copy of this Agreement and its Board authorized the due execution of this Agreement on behalf of the Corporation.

(c) The Corporation agrees to provide, upon request from the University, a listing of the board members and officers of the Corporation.

(d) The Corporation agrees to provide, upon request from the University, copies of the

approved minutes of all regular and special meetings of the Corporation's Board.

3. Fundraising Activities

The Parties acknowledge that the University is responsible for any fundraising activities of the University. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the solicitation of governmental grants and research contracts by the Corporation shall not be considered fundraising activities of the University.

4. Dealings with Third Parties

(a) The University and the Corporation acknowledge that each is an independent entity, separate from the other, and neither shall hold itself out as being part of, controlled by, or acting on behalf of the other. Both Parties agree to take reasonable measures to ensure that third parties understand that the University and the Corporation are separate and independent entities. With respect to marketing, advertising, publicity, correspondence, contracts, and other formal means of communication, the Corporation will use its full corporate name to avoid confusion on the part of the third parties. All correspondence, solicitations, activities, and advertisements concerning the Corporation shall reflect the Corporation, the University, and the relationship between them appropriately.

(b) The Corporation shall prepare and timely file all of its tax returns and reports including information returns required under federal, state, and local laws. At the request of the University's Chief Financial Officer, the Corporation shall provide copies of all tax returns, financial statements and reports. The Corporation shall use its taxpayer identification number and its tax-exempt status in connection with purchases and sales by the Corporation, gifts to the Corporation, interest, and other income of the Corporation, and any other activity of the Corporation.

5. Liability

(a) The Parties acknowledge that the University, the Commonwealth of Virginia, and the employees and agents of either will not be liable for any of the Corporation's contracts, torts, or other acts or omissions, or those by the Corporation's directors, officers, employees, or other staff. Further, the Parties acknowledge that neither the Corporation nor its directors, officers, employees, or staff are protected by the University's or the Commonwealth of Virginia's insurance policies or self-insurance plans in connection with the Corporation's activities, and the University and the Commonwealth will not provide any legal defense for the Corporation or any such person in the event of any claim against any of them. Nothing herein shall be deemed a waiver of the sovereign immunity of the Commonwealth of Virginia or require the University to indemnify, defend, or hold harmless the Corporation for claims brought against the Corporation. If requested, the University shall provide a certificate of insurance of coverage under the Commonwealth of Virginia Risk Management Plan.

(b) Corporation agrees to indemnify and hold harmless the Commonwealth of Virginia, University, and its directors, officers, employees and agents (together the "George Mason Indemnified Parties") from and against any liability arising out of any act,

omission or willful misconduct by Corporation and its directors, officers, employees and agents. In the event of any such claim against the George Mason Indemnified Parties by any third party, the University shall promptly notify Corporation in writing of the claim. Corporation shall not be responsible for the indemnification of any George Mason Indemnified Party arising from any grossly negligent or intentionally wrongful acts by such George Mason Indemnified Party.

(c) Each Party shall provide written notice and furnish, as soon as reasonably practicable, to the other Party, copies of all papers and official documents received in respect of any liability or indemnity claim. To the extent that the University employees or agents might be involved, the University shall reasonably cooperate with Corporation at Corporation's expense, in providing witnesses and records necessary in the defense against any liability.

6. Non-Discrimination

The Corporation agrees that it shall maintain a non-discrimination policy that is consistent with the University's Equal Opportunity/Affirmative Action Statement.

7. Charges for Services

The Parties agree to reimburse each other for the cost of services provided. To the extent that a rate schedule exists for these services, the appropriate rate will be charged. To the extent there is no rate schedule charge set for a service, the charged rate will be mutually agreed upon by the University and the Corporation. All business transactions shall be entered into by each side freely and independently.

8. Use of Facilities, Resources, Services, and Marks

(a) Subject to a separate written agreement to be executed by both Parties, the Parties agree that, in exchange for fair and adequate consideration, each Party may use the other Party's facilities, resources, and services (other than legal counsel), subject to availability and the policies and procedures applicable to such facilities, resources and services.

(b) The Parties agree to negotiate in good faith and enter into a separate written agreement regarding each Party's license and use of the other Party's names, marks, logos and slogans.

9. Support Services

The University and the Corporation may enter into such written agreements, as necessary or appropriate, to permit the University to provide transition support services to the Corporation as may be required from time to time. The Corporation shall compensate the University for all such services.

10. Accounting Reports

(a) The books and records of the Corporation shall be kept in accordance with

generally accepted accounting principles.

(b) The Corporation shall provide the University's Chief Financial Officer with a copy of the annual audited financial statements of the Corporation within thirty (30) days of issuance of such statements.

(c) The Corporation shall promptly disclose to the University any foreign gifts or contracts received on behalf or for the benefit of the University. This disclosure shall include all necessary information required for compliance with federal regulations, including but not limited to the amount, source, and purpose of the gift or contract.

11. Audit

(a) The Corporation shall have an Audit Committee, which reports to the Board of Directors of the Corporation, and which is comprised of individuals who are independent and separate from those who manage or administer the Corporation. Minutes from the Audit Committee meetings of the Corporation will be provided, upon request by the University.

(b) The Corporation at its expense shall have an annual audit performed by an external independent Certified Public Accountant (CPA) firm, and within six months of the Corporation's fiscal year end, shall provide copies to the University of its audited financial statements and management letter indicating any auditor concerns, if any, regarding financial and management matters, and suggestions for correction.

(c) The Audit Committee shall evaluate rotating the independent CPA firm or the audit team if a new CPA firm is not selected at least every five years.

(d) The chair of the Audit Committee of the Corporation shall file an annual certification letter with the University stating that the procedures in (a)-(c) above have been followed.

(e) The Corporation agrees to participate in the University-related corporation internal audit program. All costs of both the annual audit and the internal audit work performed for the Corporation shall be paid by the Corporation.

12. No Partnership or Joint Venture

No provision of this Agreement shall be deemed to create a partnership or joint venture between the University and the Corporation.

13. Dissolution

Should the Corporation cease to exist or cease to be an organization described in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code, the Corporation will transfer its assets to the University, or, any one or more affiliated entities with the University that are organized and operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Section 501(c)(3) and 170(c)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code. If none of the University or its affiliated entities are then so described, the Corporation will distribute its assets and property to one or more organizations that are organized and

operated exclusively for charitable and educational purposes within the meaning of Sections 501(c)(3) and 170(c)(2)(B) of the Internal Revenue Code. The Corporation agrees to transfer such assets and property in a manner that furthers the best interests of the University, as determined by its Board in consultation with the University.

14. Term and Termination of Agreement

The term of this Agreement shall be from the most recent date of execution between the Parties' signatures and shall continue until December 30, 2030, and shall automatically renew for five-year periods, unless terminated (a) without cause upon ninety (90) days prior written notice from the terminating Party to the other Party, or (b) for cause in the event a Party defaults in the performance of its obligations and fails to cure the default within thirty (30) days after receiving written notice of such default from the terminating Party.

15. Waiver

Failure of either Party to enforce any of the provisions of this Agreement shall not be construed as a waiver of that, or any other, provision or any later breach thereof.

16. Notices

Any notice under this Agreement shall be deemed given when deposited in the mail, postage prepaid, and addressed as follows:

If to the Corporation:

Chief Executive Officer and President
Patriot Laboratories, Inc.

If to the University:

President
Office of the President
George Mason University
4400 University Drive, MS 3A1
Merten Hall, Suite 5000
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

With a copy to:
University Counsel
Office of University Counsel
George Mason University

4400 University Drive, MS 2A3
Merten Hall, Suite 5400
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

or to such other person, at such addresses, as either party may designate for itself and so notify the other party in writing.

17. Entire Agreement; Amendments

This Agreement constitutes the entire agreement between the Corporation and the University concerning the subject matter, and it supersedes all prior written or oral agreements concerning this subject matter. This Agreement may not be amended except by written document executed by both Parties.

18. Governing Law

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia, regardless of its choice of law doctrine.

[Signatures Follow on Next Page]

IN WITNESS THEREOF, the Parties have executed this Agreement as of the date written above.

PATRIOT LABORATORIES, INC.

GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

By: _____
(Authorized Officer)

By: _____
(Authorized Officer)

Date: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: Chief Executive Officer and President

Title: President

Public Comments

Received for December 4 Executive Committee Meeting

As of 12/4/25 4:30 p.m.

Full Name:	Mason Affiliation	Written Comment
James H. Finkelstein	Professor Emeritus	<p>The Executive Committee meeting scheduled for December 4, 2025, violates both the BOV Bylaws and Virginia law. Rector Stimson has misrepresented the spirit and plain language of both.</p> <p>When I started at Mason over 30 years ago, the Board’s practice was straightforward and consistent with basic parliamentary procedure. During the academic year, BOV meetings were simply adjourned. If business arose between regularly scheduled meetings, a special meeting could be called, with the expectation that a quorum would be available. There was no need for the Executive Committee to act on behalf of the full board, because the board itself could meet.</p> <p>Summer operated differently. Board members recognized that vacation schedules might make a quorum difficult. The solution, entirely consistent with Robert’s Rules of Order, was to place the board in recess at the last meeting of the spring semester. That deliberate act—going into recess rather than adjourning—allowed the Executive Committee to meet and act only during that defined recess period, and only because the full board could not practically convene.</p> <p>Against this backdrop, what occurred on August 1, 2025, is crucial. At the properly convened BOV meeting that day, Rector Stimson concluded the meeting at 1:20 p.m., stating that the meeting “is adjourned” and striking the gavel. There was no motion to go into recess, no vote on it, and no indication that the board was anything other than adjourned.</p> <p>The Executive Committee later recognized the importance of distinguishing between adjournment and recess. At its October 15, 2025, meeting, the committee did not adjourn; instead, its final action was to go into recess. Rector Stimson asked, “Is there any business to come before the Executive Committee before we recess?” Hearing none, he recessed the meeting at 1:53 p.m. He clearly understood and used the terminology intentionally.</p> <p>Visitor Rosen then implicitly acknowledged on the record that the wording of the August 1 minutes mattered. At the October 15 meeting, he stated: “With regard to the full board meeting minutes at the very end, it says the meeting was adjourned. It’s been pointed out to me that it would be more consistent with the bylaws if it were, ah, recessed. I don’t remember if the rector used either word or how that played out at the meeting, but I wanted to flag that, uh, that perhaps the word should be recessed if, uh, that’s what we did.” In doing so, he effectively conceded that, under the bylaws, an adjournment on August 1 did not place the board in recess and therefore did not authorize subsequent Executive Committee action on behalf of the full board.</p> <p>Despite this knowledge, Rector Stimson now proceeds as if the board is properly in recess, even though he knows it is not. Visitor Rosen has tried to hold him accountable and to urge the board to address these violations lawfully. Rector Stimson is moving forward with a December 4 Executive Committee meeting that cannot legally take place because the full board was adjourned on August 1, not recessed.</p>

Let me be absolutely clear: Rector Stimson knows he violated the bylaws and state law. He confirmed this on October 15 when he recognized the inconsistency between what actually happened on August 1 and what the bylaws require. He understands the legal difference between an adjournment and a recess. Still, he is now making that violation worse by trying to hold another illegal Executive Committee meeting under false pretenses.

This is not just an innocent mistake or a minor procedural error. It is intentional misconduct by a Rector who is willing to manipulate board procedures to protect himself from the consequences of his actions. When a Rector blatantly ignores the governing documents he promised to uphold, he loses his moral authority to lead.

Do not allow the Rector to knowingly break the law and the BOV's own bylaws to shield himself from the repercussions of his earlier violations.

Claude Van Sant	Faculty	At GMU, we value free speech, academic freedom, AND institutional autonomy: no compact, no settlement!
Laura Buckwald	Alumna	<p>The Executive Committee meeting of GMU's Board of Visitors scheduled for December 4, 2025 violates both Virginia state law and the BOV's own bylaws. The BOV no longer has a quorum and at the last BOV meeting in August, the Board was adjourned and therefore cannot legally meet.</p> <p>The Board intends to sign the Trump Administration's unconstitutional and immoral "Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education" on behalf of GMU without the consent of GMU administrators, faculty and students who will be directly impacted by this "compact". This compact conditions federal funding for the university on the surrender of institutional autonomy and involvement of faculty in shared governance and violates the core principles of every American university: academic freedom, freedom of speech on campus, shared governance, institutional independence, and the preservation of higher education as a public good.</p> <p>Rector Stimson's blatant violation of the law by calling this meeting is yet another example of the Board's illegal, immoral and nakedly ideological behavior which led to the Vote of No Confidence in the BOV. This Board is acting in its members own personal interests, not the interests of GMU and any decisions made by the BOV on December 4 should be considered illegal and therefore null and void.</p>
Anonymous	Faculty	<p>When I joined GMU's faculty in 2017, I was proud to have become a member of an institution with a reputation for respect for internal governance and ideological impartiality. The current BOV's actions - particularly its perceived failure to defend the institution and the President from external attack - have damaged that reputation.</p> <p>It is unclear what the purpose of calling a meeting of the BOV without the quorum required for official university business may be, it surely represents a failure of judgement as to the further reputational harm that this will cause, as there are many who will see simply calling the meeting as an action taken by a 'rogue board'.</p> <p>One can only assume that this meeting will not involve any actions that will pressure university leadership to pursue any 'Compacts for Academic Excellence', or settlements with outstanding legal cases. I invite the Board to join the growing chorus of the many constituencies who care for Mason in saying - No Compact, No Settlement! We value free speech, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy at George Mason University.</p>

Jessica Hurley	Faculty	The board does not have quorum and cannot conduct any business on behalf of the university, including entering into any kind of agreement or settlement with the federal government.
A. S. H.	Faculty	No Compact, No Settlement! We value free speech, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy at George Mason University.
Robin Washburn	Student	My name is Robin Washburn, I'm a freshman student, Undergraduate Representative, and student organizer here. With the recent attacks on DEI and the nationwide threatening of transgender people and healthcare, I've been consistently worried and disappointed by this board's enabling of this towards our students. As a trans student who will be here for the next few years, I would feel a lot safer at a university who protects and supports its trans students. At the most base level, continuation and protection of the LGBTQ+ Resources Center will help this, but I feel that our ACC Department could also use renewed support. There is a thriving queer and trans community here at Mason, and to lose that would be an absolute travesty.
Tehama Lopez Bunyasi	Faculty	No Compact, No Settlement! We value free speech, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy at George Mason University.
Hanaan Kazia	Student	No Compact, No Settlement! Protect free speech and academic freedom at GMU!
Alqasem Hasan	Student	No compact, No settlement! We value free speech, academic freedom, and institutional autonomy at George Mason University.
Matthew Kelley	Faculty	I write both as faculty and as a linguist to remind the Board that choice of words does, in fact, matter in performative speech acts like ending a meeting. There is an obvious semantic difference between "recess" and "adjourn," and they sound markedly different from each other, so there can be no confusing them when uttered. The Board is in violation of its bylaws by performing the wrong speech act on August 1, 2025, closing with Rector Stimson saying, "At that, this meeting is adjourned." Because the Board is adjourned and not in recess, the December 4, 2025 meeting is illegitimate and should not happen.
Alexander Monea	Faculty	I don't understand how our Rector is able to call these meetings without a quorum of board appointees and seriously question the ethics and legality of his doing so. This university should NOT sign any sort of compact with the Trump administration to resolve the pending investigations. These compacts are extortion mechanisms and, from what I understand, the legal proceedings against our university have no merit. Further, Trump reneges on agreements all the time. Any compact we sign will be one sided - we will have to abide by terrible restrictions and the administration will feel free to violate their end of it whenever they find it politically or financially expedient to do so.
Isabella Sadahire	Student	My name is Isabella Sadahire and I am a freshman at George Mason, majoring in forensic science. I would like to discuss the UPAS program that provides college students with free Metro access. While I am aware that there is only one Metro stop near George Mason, the Vienna Metro station, part of the allure of George Mason is the job market and internship opportunities in DC. It is also heavily encouraged for students to take advantage of the opportunities in DC. However, having to pay for the Metro can be a financial roadblock for many students. Implementing UPAS, even if only for students that have gotten jobs or internships in DC, could help break down those barriers and make George Mason even more accessible and innovative.
Jessica Scarlata	Faculty	The BOV is currently lacking, by a long shot, the quorum required to conduct business. In flouting VA state law and its own by-laws, the BOV is demonstrating its contempt for transparency, shared governance, and democratic process. This BOV does not have the authority to enter into any sort of agreement with the Trump administration. These agreements are extortionist and will not protect us. Signing a compact/settlement with the excuse that doing so will somehow protect Mason from the federal government's attacks on higher education is either woefully naïve or a cynical exploitation of the current

Catherine Saunders	Faculty	<p>situation to impose restrictions on academic freedom and institutional autonomy. No compact, no settlement, and no business without a quorum.</p> <p>I am concerned that the meeting scheduled for Dec. 4, 2025 cannot legitimately take place, since, as reflected in the minutes of the Aug. 1, 2025 meeting, the BOV adjourned (rather than recessed) at the end of that meeting. It is essential that the BOV and its Executive Committee follow proper parliamentary procedure. The Dec. 4 meeting does not meet that standard, which raises questions about the legitimacy of any actions taken during the meeting.</p>
A concerned GMU Alumni and taxpayer.	Alumni	<p>I urge the Board to refrain from taking any binding actions at this time. As affirmed by the Virginia Supreme Court’s recent refusal to vacate the injunction blocking unconfirmed appointees, the Board currently lacks a legal quorum and therefore cannot act on behalf of the university.</p> <p>Any discussions with federal agencies or consideration of DOJ compacts should be postponed until a fully confirmed Board of Visitors is seated. GMU deserves decisions made by a lawful and representative governing body. Anything else is a gross violation of the sitting legal code as stated by the state of Virginia.</p> <p>To protect academic freedom, institutional autonomy, and the university’s long-term stability:</p> <p>No Business. No Compacts. No Settlements without a LAWFUL QUORUM!!!</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Bethany Letiecq	Faculty	<p>The following is the resolution passed by the GMU Faculty Senate on 12.3.2025. The faculty do not want a settlement that compromises academic freedom and institutional autonomy.</p> <p>Resolution Opposing the Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education and Any Settlement of OCR or DOJ Investigations That Compromises Institutional Autonomy</p> <p>WHEREAS the “Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education” offers colleges and universities preferential consideration for federal funding in exchange for significant concessions in academic freedom, institutional integrity, and autonomous governance, thereby subordinating core academic values to federal oversight; and</p> <p>WHEREAS the Compact’s promise of “excellence” masks a fundamental shift of authority from university faculty and governing boards to federal agencies, effectively transforming voluntary compliance into a binding regime of external supervision that undermines institutional independence; and</p> <p>WHEREAS the U.S. Department of Justice’s “standstill” agreement with the University of Virginia, together with similar Office for Civil Rights (OCR) settlements at Columbia, Brown, and UCLA, demonstrate the dangers of such arrangements: negotiated in secrecy, without faculty consultation, they impose years of federal monitoring and mandatory reporting that chill free inquiry, constrain legitimate academic debate, and erode shared governance; and</p> <p>WHEREAS these agreements, while claiming to preserve academic freedom, in fact invite the federal government to sit in judgment of university speech, curricula, and research, creating a precedent in which administrative convenience takes precedence over the faculty’s constitutional and professional responsibility to govern the academic enterprise; and</p>

WHEREAS the Compact and similar settlements blur the constitutional distinction between voluntary funding conditions and compelled oversight, transforming what were once collaborative relationships between universities and the federal government into supervisory arrangements inconsistent with both the Higher Education Act and the principles of institutional autonomy; and

WHEREAS genuine “excellence” in higher education arises not from compliance with government-imposed standards but from the faculty’s independent pursuit of truth, the open exchange of ideas, and the self-governance essential to intellectual innovation and democratic society; therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED that the George Mason University Faculty Senate calls upon the President of George Mason University and the Board of Visitors to decline to sign the “Compact for Academic Excellence in Higher Education” or any similar agreement that conditions federal funding on the surrender of institutional autonomy or faculty governance; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate urges the administration not to enter into any settlement with the Department of Justice or the Office for Civil Rights that mirrors the University of Virginia’s “standstill” agreement or other such arrangements that place the university under continuing federal supervision; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the George Mason University Faculty Senate affirms that any substantial compact, agreement, or memorandum of understanding with governmental or private entities that would materially affect the university’s curriculum, research priorities, academic standards, financial obligations, institutional mission, or data governance must be subject to transparent deliberation and meaningful faculty consultation through GMU’s established shared governance processes before execution; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate affirms its commitment to the core principles of academic freedom, shared governance, and institutional independence as essential to both the mission of George Mason University and the preservation of higher education as a public good.

Denise Albanese	Faculty	I am utterly opposed to any compact under any circumstances. And particularly when the BOV does not have a quorum and is therefore acting illegitimately.
Stefan Michael Wheelock	Faculty	Political agendas should NEVER be weaponized against the scholarly pursuit of truth at Mason. The idea of liberal education was founded on both the promotion of academic freedom and the diversity of voices across the scholarly and disciplinary spectrum. There should be no compact or settlement with activist attempts to police either professors’ teaching or their scholarly production.
Micah French	Student	My name is Micah French and I’m an Air Force veteran. I think this boards response to DEI initiatives is a senseless attack on my fellow students and shameful to our campus. I’d recommend all members resign.
Griffin Crouch	Student	<p>My name is Griffin Crouch, and I'm writing as a 3rd-year student at George Mason. I've met Rector Stimson, Vice Rector Meese, and other members of the Board before. The conduct of this Board and especially Rector Stimson concerns me because it puts a political agenda over the needs of students, faculty, staff, and the Commonwealth of Virginia, and betrays their fiduciary duties.</p> <p>The best course of action for George Mason, our students, and the Commonwealth of Virginia would be for Rector Stimson to step down from the Board of Visitors. The arguments, lawsuits, and accusations between the Rector and Board and Virginia's legislature have brought political issues to every corner of this campus, and contributed to an atmosphere of fear, uncertainty, isolation, and distrust. The Board and especially Rector</p>

should resign and let the political drama happen in the political arenas instead of bringing harm to our campus.