

## 2014 Strategic Plan, George Mason University: Executive Summary

George Mason University strives to become the leading public university in the National Capital Region, through dynamic expansion of its educational programs and a growing emphasis on research aimed at broad societal needs.

Over the next six years, George Mason will build explicitly on key existing strengths, including deep interactions with the region, a commitment to entrepreneurial flexibility and responsiveness to opportunities for innovation, a strong valuation of diversity, efficient use of resources, and ambition for further improvement. The University will encourage a positive symbiosis between research and teaching, strive to maintain accessibility for students of varied backgrounds, and enhance the imaginative use of technology in education and administrative processes – thus directly addressing key educational challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

While remaining open to unexpected opportunities, the University will emphasize seven principal goals:

1. Raise the profile as a nationally-ranked research university

This goal seeks to accelerate existing trajectories, maintaining current areas of recognized strength and adding further spires of excellence in and among a number of key units. The university will seek to grow levels of funded research by at least 70%, striving for a ranking among the top 100 institutions in this category, while enhancing technology transfer. It will expand support for doctoral students to more fully competitive levels and modestly expand the number of PhD programs.

2. Emphasize the commitment to teaching and maintain access for an increasingly talented student body at all levels.

Mason will maintain a pattern of definite but moderate enrollment growth at about 1.5% annually within the Virginia campuses, consistent with continued improvement in the credentials of incoming students, and it will expand available on-campus housing. It will provide funding for faculty planning toward educational innovation. By expanding honors activities and undergraduate research, it will take educational advantage of the research emphasis. It will improve competitive financial aid levels and work to enhance retention even further, as the University commits to maintaining its accessibility to students of varied socioeconomic backgrounds. Creative co-curricular programming and cross-curricular themes such as critical thinking will additionally improve the educational climate and the levels of student engagement. Expansion of assessment will facilitate tracking the outcomes of the University's principal educational goals.

3. The University will build on its history as an institution that embraces its diversity.

Mason will improve its recruitment of and support for faculty and staff diversity to more closely mirror the ongoing diversity of the student body. It will also work to ameliorate competitive conditions and educational support for the faculty and staff in general.

4. The University commits to an innovative program of lifelong learning opportunities as a vital contribution to the region.

This goal builds on established Mason traditions but adds important new elements, in addressing demographic changes and labor force needs. The University will remain responsive to changing training demands, particularly in its Masters Degree programs and Distance offerings, and will expand undergraduate opportunities for adult students. Improved utilization of the distributed campuses is vital in these areas. Mason will also introduce new programs for senior citizens.

5. The University will develop more fully its leading role as a global university, through diverse international partnerships and the extension of global and environmental awareness in all educational programs.

Mason's global commitment will depend on improved coordination among various global activities, including study abroad and a growth in the numbers of international students. Expansion of the Ras al-Khaimah campus will combine with vigorous programs with China, South Korea, Russia, and Vietnam, along with concerted approaches regarding Latin America, Africa and other parts of Asia. Emphasis on collaborative dual degrees will expand. A growing commitment to sustainability will inform both curricular efforts and campus planning, with advances toward the achievement of carbon neutrality.

6. Mason will build further its university community and its connections to the wider regional community.

Interactions with alumni will expand, along with sustained outreach to the community and improved communication of the university mission. The University will maintain its focus on the welfare of its students, staff, and faculty, and its commitment to fostering the highest ethical standards in leadership and policy alike.

7. The University will establish the capacity needed to achieve these goals.

The University will develop an infrastructure (facilities, on-campus housing, technology, athletics, regional campuses and support services) that supports the achievement of its educational plans. A Strategic Implementation committee is established to relate the 2014 goals to more specific planning efforts. Mason will work to build further public funding while also moving toward greater support through private giving. It will introduce a variety of imaginative measures, consistent with the University mission, to earn additional revenues.

The 2014 plan calls for a challenging mixture of enhancing existing trajectories and establishing targeted innovations in such areas as faculty diversity, adult education, distance learning, and sustainability. The commitment to leadership in key sectors of research and education, global presence and regional service sets an ambitious but attainable agenda for the near future.