

VIRGINIA:

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF FAIRFAX
Civil Division

FILED
CIVIL INTAKE
2025 JUN 24 A 8:58
CHRISTOPHER J. FALCON
CLERK, CIRCUIT COURT
FAIRFAX, VA

)
L. LOUISE LUCAS, President *Pro Tempore*)
of the Senate of Virginia, and AARON R.)
ROUSE, RUSSET W. PERRY, R. CREIGH)
DEEDS, ADAM P. EBBIN, SCHUYLER T.)
VANVALKENBURG, JENNIFER D.)
CARROLL FOY, SADDAM AZLAN)
SALIM, and KANNAN SRINIVASAN,)
Members of the Senate of Virginia,)

)
Plaintiffs,)

)
v.)

)
CHARLES STIMSON, Rector of the Board)
of Visitors of George Mason University,)

)
and)

)
THOMAS E. GOTWALD, President of the)
Board of Visitors of Virginia Military)
Institute,)

)
and)

)
ROBERT D. HARDIE, Rector of the Board)
of Visitors of the University of Virginia,)

)
Defendants)

)
)

Case No. CL 2025_____

2025-09205

COMPLAINT FOR DECLARATORY RELIEF AND INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

Plaintiffs, L. LOUISE LUCAS, President *Pro Tempore* of the Senate of Virginia, and AARON
R. ROUSE, RUSSET W. PERRY, R. CREIGH DEEDS, ADAM P. EBBIN, SCHUYLER T.
VANVALKENBURG, JENNIFER D. CARROLL FOY, SADDAM AZLAN SALIM, and KANNAN
SRINIVASAN, Members of the Senate of Virginia and the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee,

state as follows in support of their Complaint:

1. This is a complaint to enforce the constitutional prerogatives of the Virginia General Assembly.

2. Two core constitutional powers of the General Assembly are at issue here. Article VIII, Section 9 of the Constitution of Virginia authorizes the General Assembly to create and maintain a system of higher education in the Commonwealth, with each institution to be governed by a Board of Visitors. By statute, the members of those Boards of Visitors are, as pertinent here, appointed by the Governor “subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.” Va. Code § 23.1-1300(A). Those appointments thus implicate the General Assembly’s constitutionally enshrined confirmation authority, as set forth in Article V, Section 11 of the Constitution of Virginia. If the General Assembly “refuse[s] to confirm” a gubernatorial appointment, then that appointee cannot take or continue in office.

3. In February and April of 2025, Governor Youngkin appointed eight individuals to the Boards of Visitors of the University of Virginia (“UVA”), George Mason University (“GMU”), and the Virginia Military Institute (“VMI”). The Governor submitted those appointments to the General Assembly for confirmation on May 30, 2025.

4. The General Assembly promptly refused to confirm those appointments, which failed even to pass a threshold committee vote. More specifically, on June 9, 2025, the Virginia Senate Privileges & Elections Committee voted 8-4 to refuse confirmation of each of the appointments at issue here. That should have been the end of the matter: Pursuant to settled Senate rules and practice, rejection by the Privileges & Election Committee is a rejection by the Senate, because (absent extraordinary circumstances not present here) confirmation cannot move forward in the Senate after

such a rejection. And because confirmation would require affirmative approval by both the Senate and the House of Delegates, the Senate’s action here undoubtedly constitutes a “refus[al] to confirm” Governor Youngkin’s appointments by the General Assembly.

5. Rather than respect this clear separation of powers principle enshrined in the Constitution and laws of the Commonwealth, Governor Youngkin and the Executive Department have chosen nullification, advising the Rectors of UVA’s and GMU’s Boards of Visitors and the President of VMI’s Board of Visitors that the rejected members may still serve despite the General Assembly’s refusal to confirm their appointments. In so doing, Governor Youngkin and the Executive Department have refused to recognize the rejection of those appointments by a coequal branch of government, in open defiance of the Constitution of Virginia and 50 years of tradition in the Commonwealth.

6. The Executive Department’s actions leave the defendants here—who bear responsibility for determining whether to seat the now-rejected appointees—in an untenable position and eagerly in need of this Court’s guidance. Likewise, Plaintiffs have no choice but to bring this action to protect and vindicate the Virginia Senate’s constitutional and statutory authority, as well as to protect their own votes from gubernatorial nullification. This Court therefore should issue a declaratory judgment stating that the General Assembly’s rejection of the appointments at issue prevents them from serving, and it should enjoin the defendants from permitting the rejected nominees to serve on those Boards.

Parties

7. Plaintiffs AARON R. ROUSE, RUSSET W. PERRY, R. CREIGH DEEDS, ADAM P. EBBIN, SCHUYLER T. VANVALKENBURG, JENNIFER D. CARROLL FOY, SADDAM AZLAN SALIM, and KANNAN SRINIVASAN (the “Voting Members”) are Members of the Senate of

Virginia. Each Voting Member serves on the Senate Privileges and Elections Committee (the “P&E Committee”), and Senator ROUSE is the Chairman of that Committee. Each Voting Member voted to refuse to confirm the rejected nominees. Their eight votes were sufficient to defeat those nominees because the full Committee comprises 15 Senators. Because the Governor and the Executive Department have continued to insist that the rejected nominees can serve, they have nullified the Voting Members’ votes and, in turn, the authority of the P&E Committee, which was delegated to it through the rules and procedures of the Senate. The Voting Members therefore have a direct and substantial interest in the outcome of this litigation. Indeed, their injury could not be more stark: their votes were sufficient to, and did in fact, cause the rejection of nominations for which the Voting Members are tasked with reviewing in exercising the General Assembly’s constitutional prerogatives. That authority has been nullified by the actions of the Governor and the Executive Department.

8. Plaintiff, L. LOUISE LUCAS is the President *Pro Tempore* of the Senate of Virginia and Chair of the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee. She joins this suit in her official capacity to protect the legislative prerogatives and constitutional authority of the Virginia Senate, as the continued service of the now-rejected appointees effects a nullification of the General Assembly’s actions.

9. Defendants ROBERT D. HARDIE, and CHARLES STIMSON are sued in their official capacities as Rectors of the Boards of Visitors of UVA and GMU, respectively. Defendant THOMAS E. GOTWALD is sued in his official capacity as President of the Board of Visitors of VMI. Defendants are sued nominally, and Plaintiffs do not accuse them of any wrongdoing. On information and belief, Defendants will be represented in this action by the Attorney General of Virginia, who has publicly

advanced an interpretation of the law that would, despite the principles and authorities discussed below, somehow permit the rejected appointees to continue to serve until sometime in 2026.

Jurisdiction and Venue

10. This Court has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to Va. Code Ann. § 8.01-184, which provides for declaratory judgments to determine the rights, status, and legal relations of parties, and *id.* § 8.01-620, which authorizes Circuit Courts to award injunctions.

11. This Court has personal jurisdiction over the Defendants because, on information and belief, they reside in this Commonwealth, and because each of the Defendants has transacted business within this Commonwealth within the meaning of Va. Code Ann. § 8.01-328.1.1.

12. Venue is proper under Va. Code Ann. §§ 8.01-261.15.c and 8.01-263 because one of the Defendants, Charles Stimson, serves as the Rector of George Mason University, which is located within Fairfax County, Virginia, and the constitutional questions presented affect the governance of that institution.

Statement of Facts

I. The Powers of the General Assembly and the Senate

13. The Senate of Virginia was created by the Virginia Constitution of 1776 and is authorized by the Constitution of Virginia as the upper chamber of the General Assembly pursuant to Article IV, Section 2 of the Constitution of Virginia.

14. Legislative power of the Commonwealth is vested in both the Senate and the House of Delegates pursuant to Article IV, Section 1 of the Constitution of Virginia.

15. Article VIII, Section 9 of the Constitution of Virginia authorizes the General Assembly

to create and maintain a system of higher education in the Commonwealth.

16. Using that power, the General Assembly has authorized the creation of multiple institutions of higher education in Virginia by legislative enactment. The relevant institutions here are:

- The University of Virginia, *see* Va. Code Ann. § 23.1-2200;
- George Mason University, *see* Va. Code Ann. § 23.1-1500; and
- Virginia Military Institute, *see* Va. Code Ann. § 23.1-2500.

17. Each of the relevant enactments provides that the Board of Visitors of each institution **“shall at all times be under the control of the General Assembly.”** *See* Va. Code Ann. §§ 23.1-1500.1, 23.1-2200.1, 23.1-2500.1 (emphasis added). Among other things, the Boards of Visitors are delegated authority by the General Assembly to regulate the institutions, manage the funds and budget of the institutions, appoint professors and fix their salaries, and set tuition. *E.g.*, Va. Code Ann. § 23.1-1301.A.1-5.

18. Consistent with the General Assembly’s ongoing control of Virginia’s institutions of higher education, Members of the Boards of Visitors at issue here are appointed by the Governor “subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.” Va. Code Ann. § 23.1-1300(a).

19. The Constitution of Virginia also provides the consequences when the General Assembly refuses to confirm one of the Governor’s appointments:

No person appointed to any office by the Governor, whose appointment is subject to confirmation by the General Assembly, under the provisions of this Constitution or any statute, shall enter upon, or continue in, office ***after the General Assembly shall have refused to confirm his appointment***, nor shall such person be eligible for reappointment during the recess of the General Assembly to fill the vacancy caused by such refusal to confirm. Const. of Va., Art. V, § 11 (2025) (emphasis added).

20. The General Assembly thus possesses the sole power to create institutions of higher education in the Commonwealth of Virginia; used that power to create UVA, GMU, and VMI; and explicitly provided that those institutions would remain under the control of the General Assembly. Critical to that Constitutional and legislative oversight, the General Assembly retains the power to reject any appointment to those Boards of Visitors, and no appointee may continue to serve on those Boards of Visitors from the moment the appointment fails to obtain legislative confirmation.

II. The 2024-25 Special Session and the 2025 Regular Session of the General Assembly

21. On April 17, 2024, Governor Youngkin called the General Assembly into special session pursuant to Article IV, Section 6 of the Constitution of Virginia. *See* Ex. 1.

22. The General Assembly first met for that special session on May 13, 2024. That same date, it organized itself for the special session by adopting House Joint Resolution No. 6001 which, *inter alia*, authorized the General Assembly to take up in its special session “(iv) the election of judges and other officials subject to the election of the General Assembly; or (v) appointments subject to the confirmation of the General Assembly. . . .” H.J.R. 6001, 2024 Special Session I (May 13, 2024) (attached hereto as Exhibit 2).

23. The General Assembly opened its regular session on January 8, 2025. *See* Ex. 3. The 2025 regular session adjourned on February 22, 2025. *Id.*

24. Although the regular session adjourned, the special session did not. Indeed, on April 11, 2025, the General Assembly further amended its special session authorization to allow members to take up certain matters in addition to the items (including consideration of appointments) set forth in the original special session authorization. H.J.R. 6004, 2024 Special Session I (Apr. 11, 2025) (attached

hereto as Ex. 4).

25. The General Assembly remains in special session to this day. There has been no adjournment *sine die*.

III. The General Assembly's Refusal to Confirm the Appointments at Issue

26. On February 26, 2025—shortly after the conclusion of the General Assembly's regular session—Governor Youngkin appointed Jonathan Hartsock and Stephen Reardon to the VMI Board of Visitors, with the appointment subject to General Assembly confirmation pursuant to Va. Code Ann. § 23.1-1300. *See* Ex. 5.

27. Because those appointments had not yet been acted on by the General Assembly, the appointees were (consistent with historical practice) seated on the VMI Board of Visitors. Illustrating the urgency of the constitutional issues presented here, those appointees immediately began participating in significant official actions as Members of the Board: Just two days after their appointments, the VMI Board of Visitors, including Messrs. Hartsock and Reardon, voted not to renew the contract of VMI's Superintendent, Maj. Gen. (Ret.) Cedric T. Wins. *See* Dan Rosenzweig-Ziff, *VMI board won't renew contract of first Black superintendent*, The Washington Post (Feb. 28, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/education/2025/02/28/vmi-board-cedric-wins-contract-racism/>.

28. Also on February 26, 2025, Governor Youngkin appointed Charles J. Cooper, William D. Hansen, and Maureen Ohlhausen to the GMU Board of Visitors, with the appointments subject to General Assembly confirmation pursuant to Virginia Code § 23.1-1300. *See* Ex. 5. Those new members, too, began promptly participating in meetings, with Ohlhausen and Cooper first participating in a board meeting on February 27, 2025, *see* Ex. 6, and Hansen first participating in a meeting on April

1, 2025, *see* Ex. 7.

29. On April 11, 2025, Governor Youngkin appointed Kenneth Cuccinelli to the UVA Board of Visitors, Caren Merrick to the GMU Board of Visitors, and Jose J. Suarez to the VMI Board of Visitors, with the appointments subject to General Assembly confirmation pursuant to Virginia Code § 23.1-1300. *See* Ex. 8. Mr. Cuccinelli was appointed to replace U. Bertram (“Bert”) Ellis, a previous appointee of Governor Youngkin’s whom the Governor had subsequently removed from the Board. Again, the appointees promptly began participating in board meetings, with Suarez first participating in a meeting on April 16, *see* Ex. 9; Merrick on April 17, *see* Ex. 10; and Cuccinelli on April 29, *see* Ex. 11.

30. On May 30, 2025, the Secretary of the Commonwealth, Kelly Gee, formally communicated the appointments (and sent the required disclosures to aid the General Assembly’s review) to Senator ROUSE, who is the Chairman of the P&E Committee. *See* Ex. 12. The P&E Committee is responsible for considering gubernatorial appointments.

31. The Senate promptly considered and refused to confirm those appointments. On June 6, Senator ROUSE introduced a Senate Joint Resolution No. 6001 (“SJR6001”), which, if passed, would confirm the appointments of Hartsock, Reardon, Cooper, Hansen, Ohlhausen, Cuccinelli, Merrick, and Suarez. The bill was referred to the P&E Committee on that same date. On June 9, 2025, the P&E Committee voted 8-4 not to report SJR6001 to the floor of the Senate. *See* Ex. 13. Each of the Voting Members voted not to report SJR6001. *See* Ex. 14.

32. Under Article IV, Section 11 of the Virginia Constitution, “[n]o bill shall become a law unless, prior to its passage . . . it has been referred to a committee of each house, considered by such

committee in session, and reported.” The failure to report SJR6001 to the floor was therefore a refusal to confirm these appointments. (Although the Senate could, in theory, “discharge” the P&E Committee from considering SJR6001, that step would require a majority vote of the Senate, *see id.*—a nonsensical proposition when the majority of the P&E Committee and the majority of the Senate are from the same political party. Likewise, although the Senate Rules allow for reconsideration of Committee actions, a motion for reconsideration must be “made by a Senator voting with the prevailing side”—meaning that one of the Voting Members who voted against the rejected appointees would have to switch their vote. *See* Virginia Senate Rules Section XIV, ¶¶ 48(a)-(b). That is not a remotely plausible scenario, *especially given that the Voting Members are plaintiffs in this lawsuit*, and certainly not a reason to understand the P&E Committee’s action as anything other than a refusal to confirm the appointments at issue here. Indeed, no motion to reconsider has even been attempted in the General Assembly since the “massive resistance” to school desegregation in the 1950s.)

33. Indeed, in the 2025 regular session of the General Assembly, 224 bills and resolutions failed in Senate committee without action on the floor of the Senate or transmission to the House of Delegates. The same logic applies to confirmations: the P&E Committee’s rejection of the appointments at issue is a refusal by the General Assembly to confirm the appointments.

IV. The Governor and Executive Department’s Rejection of the General Assembly’s Actions

34. The Governor has sought to nullify the General Assembly’s rejection of his appointments. The day after the General Assembly rejected these appointments, the Governor’s spokesman gave a statement to the Washington Post in which he asserted that the General Assembly had not validly refused confirmation of the appointments at issue here. *See* Laura Vozzella & Dan

Rosenzweig-Ziff, *Virginia Senate Democrats reject Youngkin's university board picks*, The Washington Post (June 10, 2025), <https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-va/2025/06/10/youngkin-cuccinelli-virginia-university-boards>.

35. The next to advance a nullification rationale on the Governor's behalf was the Attorney General of the Commonwealth, Jason Miyares (the "Attorney General"). After Scott Surovell, the Majority Leader of the Senate, sent the Defendants (among others) a letter making clear that the General Assembly had rejected the appointments at issue, the Attorney General responded, claiming that "the authority to refuse a confirmation . . . rests with the General Assembly as a whole, not a Senate committee," and that "[t]he recommendation of a Senate committee cannot be elevated to an act of the General Assembly." *See* Ex. 15. The Secretary of Education of the Commonwealth, Aimee R. Guidera, later sent a letter to Members of the Boards of Visitors of all Virginia institutions of higher education echoing the Attorney General's conclusion and rationale.

36. The Attorney General's assertion, however, fundamentally misunderstands the General Assembly's legislative process, in which agreement of *both* Chambers of the General Assembly is necessary to take legislative action, and in which both Chambers rely on their constituent committees to review legislation. A committee's refusal to report a bill to the full Senate is not a mere "recommendation," such that bill nonetheless proceeds to the full Senate for a vote. Rather, a committee's rejection of the bill is—absent special circumstances not present here—the end of the road. The Attorney General's position, by contrast, would mean that no appointment has been "refused" by the Senate unless and until the full body votes it up or down. That is inconsistent with settled practice, and it is not how the Senate has chosen to conduct its legislative business.

37. To this day, the Governor and the Attorney General continue to insist that the appointees at issue are eligible to serve—and indeed are still serving—on the Boards of Visitors of UVA, VMI, and GMU.

COUNT I – DECLARATORY RELIEF

38. All preceding paragraphs are incorporated herein.

39. An actual controversy exists between the branches of the government in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

40. Plaintiffs seek a declaratory judgment establishing:

- a. Constitutional Authority of the General Assembly: That the Virginia General Assembly possesses exclusive constitutional authority to confirm or refuse confirmation of gubernatorial appointments to university Boards of Visitors, and that such authority may be exercised through committee action without requiring full legislative floor votes.
- b. Immediate Legal Effect of Refusal: That the General Assembly’s refusal to confirm the appointments on June 9, 2025, immediately terminated the eligibility of the appointees at issue to serve on their respective Boards of Visitors pursuant to Article V, Section 11 of the Constitution of Virginia.
- c. Prohibition on Continued Service: That rejected appointees are constitutionally prohibited from “enter[ing] upon, or continue[ing] in, office” following the General Assembly’s refusal to confirm their appointments.
- d. Prohibition on Reappointment: That rejected appointees are constitutionally ineligible for reappointment during the current recess of the General Assembly to fill vacancies caused by the refusal to confirm.
- e. Board Member Duties: That Board of Visitors members who knowingly permit continued service by rejected appointees would violate their constitutional and statutory duties, constituting grounds for removal under Virginia Code § 23.1-3100.
- f. Legislative Supremacy in University Governance: That Virginia’s public universities operate “under the control of the General Assembly,” and that Boards of Visitors must comply with legislative confirmation requirements as a fundamental aspect of democratic governance and accountability.

COUNT II – INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

41. All preceding paragraphs are incorporated herein.

42. Allowing rejected appointees to continue serving violates the Virginia Constitution and undermines the General Assembly’s constitutional role in university governance, causing irreparable harm to:

- a. The constitutional separation of powers and legislative authority over public institutions;
- b. The integrity of the confirmation process established by the Virginia Constitution and Code;
- c. Public confidence in the rule of law and proper governance of taxpayer-funded institutions; and
- d. The accountability mechanisms designed to ensure qualified, independent governance of Virginia’s public universities.

43. No adequate remedy exists at law to address ongoing constitutional violations by public officials acting in contravention of clear constitutional mandates.

44. The public interest strongly favors enforcement of constitutional requirements and ensuring that Virginia’s public universities operate under lawful governance structures as mandated by the Virginia Constitution and Code.

45. Plaintiffs therefore request that the Court enter a permanent injunction:

- a. Prohibiting Defendants from allowing Kenneth Cuccinelli and the other seven rejected appointees to participate in any Board of Visitors activities, meetings, votes, or decisions;
- b. Requiring Defendants to immediately cease any recognition of the rejected appointees as Board members;
- c. Prohibiting Defendants from treating the rejected appointees as having any authority, voting rights, or official capacity with respect to their respective Boards of Visitors; and

- d. Requiring Defendants to comply with Article V, Section 11 of the Virginia Constitution and Virginia Code §§ 23.1-1300 and 23.1-2200 regarding Board composition and General Assembly confirmation authority.

WHEREFORE, the Plaintiffs, L. LOUISE LUCAS, AARON R. ROUSE, RUSSET W. PERRY, R. CREIGH DEEDS, ADAM P. EBBIN, SCHUYLER T. VANVALKENBURG, JENNIFER D. CARROLL FOY, SADDAM AZLAN SALIM, and KANNAN SRINIVASAN, request that this Court:

1. Exercise jurisdiction under §§ 8.01-184 and § 8.01-620 of the Code of Virginia to resolve the legal questions presented;
2. Enter declaratory judgment as set forth in Count I establishing the constitutional and statutory requirements governing Board of Visitors appointments and the legal effect of the General Assembly's refusal to confirm the appointees;
3. Enter permanent injunctive relief against Defendants as set forth in Count II prohibiting Defendants from allowing the rejected appointees to serve in any official capacity; and
4. Grant such other and further relief as this Court deems just and proper.

Dated: June 24, 2025

Respectfully submitted,

Sens. L. LOUISE LUCAS, AARON R.
ROUSE, RUSSET W. PERRY, R.
CREIGH DEEDS, ADAM P. EBBIN,
SCHUYLER T. VANVALKENBURG,
JENNIFER D. CARROLL FOY,
SADDAM AZLAN SALIM, and
KANNAN SRINIVASAN
By Counsel

WILLKIE FARR & GALLAGHER LLP
1875 K Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20006

By: /s/ Mark T. Stancil

Mark T. Stancil, Esq., VSB #44572

Donald Burke, Esq, VSB #76550

John B. Goerlich, Esq. (motion for admission *pro hac vice* forthcoming)

Telephone: 202-303-1000

Facsimile : 202-303-2000

Email: mstancil@willkie.com

Counsel for Plaintiffs

EXHIBIT 1

**GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA**

Glenn Youngkin

PROCLAMATIONS

[Back to Proclamations](#)

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Executive Department

Proclamation

In accordance with the provisions of Article I , Section 6, and Article, Section 5, of the Constitution of Virginia and the powers thereby vested in the Governor to call a Special Session of the General Assembly upon application of two-thirds of the members elected to each house or when the interest of the Commonwealth may so require,

I, Glenn Youngkin, Governor of Virginia, do hereby summon the members of the Senate and the House of Delegates, constituting the General Assembly of Virginia, to meet in Special Session commencing the 13th day of May, Two Thousand and Twenty-Four for the purpose of completion of the 2024-2026 biennial budget and amendments to the 2022-2024 biennial budget.

Given under my hand and under the Lesser Seal of the Commonwealth at Richmond, this 17th day of April in the year Two-Thousand and Twenty-Four in the 248th year of the Commonwealth.




Governor


Secretary of the Commonwealth

[Return to top](#)



GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA
Glenn Youngkin

Select Language | ▼

[Governor.Virginia.gov](#)

[Virginia.gov](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Translation Disclaimer](#)

[FOIA](#)

[Contact](#)

EXHIBIT 2

2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6001

Limiting legislation to be considered by the 2024 Special Session I of the General Assembly and establishing a schedule for the conduct of business coming before such Special Session.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, May 13, 2024

Agreed to by the Senate, May 13, 2024

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That during the 2024 Special Session I of the General Assembly, summoned by proclamation of the Governor on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 to begin Monday, May 13, 2024 at 12:00 PM, pursuant to the provisions of HJR 428, 2024 Regular Session, except with unanimous consent of the house in which the legislation is offered, no bill, joint resolution, or resolution shall be offered or considered in either house during the Special Session other than (i) Budget Bill(s) and revenue bills; (ii) single-house commending and memorial resolutions; (iii) bills, joint resolutions, or resolutions affecting the rules of procedure or schedule of business of the General Assembly, either of its houses, or any of its committees; (iv) the election of judges and other officials subject to the election of the General Assembly; or (v) appointments subject to the confirmation of the General Assembly; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That after the Special Session is convened for the first time, each body may recess from time-to-time until reconvened with at least 48 hours' notice by the respective call of the Speaker of the House of Delegates and the Chair of the Senate Committee on Rules; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That for the purposes of this resolution:

"Budget Bill(s)" means a general appropriation bill introduced that authorizes the biennial expenditure of public revenues for the period from July 1, 2022, through June 30, 2024, or July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2026; and,

"Revenue Bill(s)" means any bill, except the Budget Bill and debt bills, that increases or decreases the total revenues available for appropriation; and it be

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the 2024 Special Session I of the General Assembly shall be governed by the following procedural rules:

Rule 1. Neither house shall receive, consider, or vote on any committee amendment or floor amendment or amendment of the other house to the Budget Bill(s). No engrossment of the Budget Bill(s) shall be required in either house, and any conferences on the Budget Bill(s) shall consider, as the basis for their deliberations, the enrolled Budget Bill(s) transmitted to the Governor at the close of the 2024 Regular Session.

Rule 2. Neither house shall consider such Budget Bill(s) earlier than 48 hours after introduction, unless both houses respectively determine to proceed earlier by a vote of two-thirds of the members voting in each house. A report shall be issued concurrently with the introduction of the Budget Bill(s) that enumerates all changes to such Budget Bills compared to the enrolled versions of House Bill 29 and House Bill 30 of the 2024 Regular Session.

ENROLLED

HJ6001ER

EXHIBIT 3

JANUARY 2025

2025 Regular Session

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8 (1) General Assembly convenes at noon; Last day to file legislation creating or continuing a study or VRS bills	9 (2)	10 (3) All requests for drafts, redrafts, and corrections to DLS by 5:00 p.m.; Budget amendments due to Senate Finance and Appropriations by 5:00 p.m.	11 (4)
12 (5)	13 (6) Prefiling ends at 10:00 a.m.; Joint Assembly; Budget amendments due to House Appropriations by 5:00 p.m.	14 (7) Special and continuing joint order to hold elections for any judicial seat, commission, or office elected by the General Assembly	15 (8)	16 (9)	17 (10) All bills and joint resolutions filed with clerk by 3:00 p.m.; VRS impact statements due for bills filed by the first day of session	18 (11)
19 (12)	20 (13)	21 (14)	22 (15)	23 (16)	24 (17)	25 (18)
26 (19)	27 (20)	28 (21)	29 (22)	30 (23)	31 (24)	

Virginia General Assembly Session Calendar

FEBRUARY 2025

2025 Regular Session

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1 (25)
2 (26) Committees responsible for the Budget Bill to complete work by midnight	3 (27)	4 (28) Amendments to the Budget Bill(s) available by noon; Each house to complete work on its own legislation except the Budget Bill	5 (29) Each house may consider only legislation and amendments of the other house, except the Budget Bill	6 (30) Houses of introduction to complete work on the Budget Bill	7 (31) Last day to confirm gubernatorial appointments made during the recess	8 (32)
9 (33)	10 (34)	11 (35) Committees responsible for revenue bills of the other house to complete work by midnight	12 (36) Last day for each house to complete work on the Budget Bill and revenue bills of the other house and appoint conferees	13 (37) Special and continuing joint order to hold elections for any judicial seat, commission, or office elected by the General Assembly; All requests for drafts, redrafts, and corrections for joint commending and memorial resolutions to DLS by 5:00 p.m.	14 (38) Requests to remove co-patron status to clerk by 3:00 p.m.	15 (39)
16 (40)	17 (41) All joint commending and memorial resolutions filed with clerk by 5:00 p.m.; Last day for any committee action on legislation by midnight	18 (42) All requests for drafts, redrafts, and corrections for single-house commending and memorial resolutions to DLS by 5:00 p.m.	19 (43)	20 (44) All single-house commending and memorial resolutions filed with clerk by 5:00 p.m.; Last day to put bills in conference	21 (45) Only conference reports and certain joint resolutions may be considered	22 (46) Adjournment Sine Die
23	24	25	26	27	28	

Reconvened Session is scheduled for April 2, 2025.
Prefiling for the 2026 Regular Session begins November 17, 2025.

Virginia General Assembly Session Calendar

EXHIBIT 4

2024 SPECIAL SESSION I

ENROLLED

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 6004

Relating to the scope of business that may come before the 2024 Special Session I of the General Assembly of Virginia and the procedural rules applicable to such session.

Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 22, 2025

Agreed to by the Senate, April 2, 2025

RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That notwithstanding the limitations established by House Joint Resolution No. 6001 of the 2024 Special Session I of the General Assembly, any (i) Budget Bill or revenue bill; (ii) single-house commending or memorial resolution; (iii) bill, joint resolution, or resolution affecting the rules of procedure or schedule of business of the General Assembly, either of its houses, or any of its committees; (iv) matter relating to the election of judges and other officials subject to the election of the General Assembly; (v) appointment subject to the confirmation of the General Assembly; or (vi) bill or joint resolution addressing the impacts upon the Commonwealth, its budget, and its services due to layoffs, firings, or reductions in force by the federal government, changes to federal government programs, actions of the Department of Government Efficiency, and other actions affecting the Commonwealth relating to the federal budget may be offered and considered during the 2024 Special Session I of the General Assembly; and, be it

RESOLVED FINALLY, That the procedural rules contained in House Joint Resolution No. 6001 of the 2024 Special Session I of the General Assembly governing the 2024 Special Session I shall not be applicable beginning on February 22, 2025, except that neither house shall be permitted to consider any Budget Bill earlier than 48 hours after introduction, unless both houses respectively determine to proceed earlier by a vote of two-thirds of the members voting in each house.

ENROLLED

HJ6004ER

EXHIBIT 5



Governor of Virginia

An official website Here's how you know

English ▼



Find a Commonwealth Resource



GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

Glenn Youngkin



For Immediate Release: February 26, 2025

Contacts: Office of the Governor: Peter

Finocchio, Peter.finocchio@governor.virginia.gov

Governor Glenn Youngkin Announces Additional Administration and Board Appointments

RICHMOND, VA— Governor Glenn Youngkin today announced additional administration and board appointments.

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

- **Brendan Cury**, *Press Assistant*

EDUCATION

- **Hannah Hughson**, *Communications Advisor*

NATURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

- **Sigrid Lampe**, *Coastal Resiliency Policy Assistant*
- **Grayson Shultz**, *Executive Assistant and Project Manager*

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

SMALL GRAINS BOARD

- **Matthew Harris** *of Hartfield, Manager, Harris Farms, Inc.*

EDUCATION

BOARD OF REGENTS OF GUNSTON HALL

- **Alice Barganier Longshore** *of Montgomery, Alabama, Member, The National Society of The Colonial Dames of America in the State of Alabama*

BOARD OF VISITORS OF GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

- **Charles J. Cooper** *of Bonita Springs, Florida, Chairman and Founding Partner, Cooper & Kirk*

- **William D. Hansen** of *McLean, President and CEO, Building Hope*
- **The Honorable Maureen Ohlhausen** of *Annandale, Partner, Wilson Sonsini*

BOARD OF VISITORS OF NORFOLK STATE UNIVERSITY

- **D.J. Jordan** of *Prince William County, Senior Vice President, Pinkston*

BOARD OF VISITORS OF OLD DOMINION UNIVERSITY

- **Florencia M. Segura, MD, FAAP,** of *McLean, Pediatrician, Einstein Pediatrics*

BOARD OF VISITORS OF VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

- **Jonathan Hartsock** of *Lexington, Deputy Chief of Staff and District Director to Representative Ben Cline; Lieutenant Colonel, U.S. Army (Retired)*
- **Stephen G. Reardon** of *Richmond, Attorney at Law, Spotts Fain PC*

STATE HISTORICAL RECORDS ADVISORY BOARD

- **The Honorable Chaz Haywood** of *Rockingham County, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Rockingham-Harrisonburg*

HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE AND RELATED DISORDERS COMMISSION

- **Laura Marshall** *of Richmond, Partner, McGuireWoods LLP*

BOARD OF MEDICAL ASSISTANCE SERVICES

- **Ashish Kachru** *of McLean, CEO, DataLink Software*
- **Joye B. Moore** *of Chesterfield, Owner, JOYEBELLS, LLC*

BOARD OF NURSING

- **Jeanell Webb-Jones, MSN, RN, AMB-RN,** *of Barboursville, RN Care Coordinator, UVA Health System*

COMMONWEALTH NEUROTRAUMA INITIATIVE ADVISORY BOARD

- **Cara Meixner, PhD,** *of Harrisonburg, Professor of Graduate Psychology, James Madison University College of Health and Behavioral Studies*

TRANSPORTATION

AEROSPACE ADVISORY BOARD

- **Yiannis E. Pangelis, Ph.D.,** *of Norfolk, Research Professor, OERI Chief Technology Officer, and Interim Executive Director, Virginia Institute for Space Flight & Autonomy, Old Dominion University*

METROPOLITAN WASHINGTON AIRPORTS AUTHORITY

- **Paul F. Sheridan, Jr., of McLean, Attorney,**
Latham & Watkins LLP

#

[Return to top](#)



GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA
Glenn Youngkin

Select Language | ▼

[Governor.Virginia.gov](#)

[Virginia.gov](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Translation Disclaimer](#)

[FOIA](#)

[Contact](#)

EXHIBIT 6

**BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, February 27, 2025
Merten Hall, Hazel Conference Room (1201), Fairfax Campus**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rector Cully Stimson, Vice Rector Michael Meese, Secretary Armand Alacbay, and Visitor Bob Pence.

ABSENT: None.

ALSO, PRESENT: Visitor Horace Blackman, Visitor Charles Cooper, Visitor Maureen Ohlhausen, Gregory Washington, President; Rachel Spence, Staff Liaison; Carolyn Faith Hoffman, Graduate Student Representative; Anne Gentry, University Counsel; and Scott Nichols, Interim Secretary pro tem.

I. Call to Order

Rector Stimson called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

II. Approval of Minutes

A. Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for December 5, 2024 (ACTION ITEM)

Rector Stimson called for any corrections to the Executive Committee Meeting Minutes for December 5, 2024, that were provided for review in the board meeting materials. Hearing no corrections, the meeting minutes stood **APPROVED AS WRITTEN**.

III. Rector's Comments

Rector Stimson announced that Governor Youngkin had appointed three new board members, two of whom were in attendance and had been sworn in that morning, Charles "Chuck" Cooper and Maureen Ohlhausen. He noted that the third new board member, Bill Hansen, was being sworn in that morning in Richmond.

IV. President's Comments

Rector Stimson recognized President Washington to offer comments. President Washington indicated he would also reserve his comments for the full board meeting.

V. Board Self-Evaluation

Rector Stimson recognized Gesele Durham to present on the board self-evaluation survey results. Dr. Durham provided an overview of the survey results, noting the following:

- The survey was sent to all board members, and received an 11/16 response rate, 69%.
- Respondents were generally positive on items measuring individual board member roles, with some concerns expressed about the volume and arrangement of meeting materials.
- Regarding meeting structure and effectiveness, concerns were expressed regarding information sharing, climate, and goal setting processes.
- She then outlined feedback specific to the board's standing committees:
 - APDUC: feedback noted an exceptional chair, strong participation, and good communication, with a desire to better prioritize topics for meetings.
 - Finance and Land Use: strengths included focused efforts on understanding the budget, dedicated committee members, and improved clarity. Areas for improvement included financial support for

- the Law School, need for clearer reporting on the budget, delivery of timely budget information, and requesting better context and prioritization of capital projects.
- Audit, Risk, & Compliance: Strengths included effective leadership from the chair and communication from Ed Dittmeier.
 - Research: Strengths included collaboration between the chair and VP and valuable research from professors. It was requested for presentations at the full BOV meeting to be more strategic and concise and a need for greater knowledge in high-impact research and federal grant funding was expressed.
 - Development: Strong leadership from the chair was cited. Concerns included the effectiveness of the head of development and a need for stronger leadership in fundraising.
- Board members indicated the following as the highest priority strategic issues, in priority order: financial sustainability, long-range planning, new academic offerings, and ensuring the success of the president.
 - Board members noted the following ways that board effectiveness could be enhanced: greater transparency, maintaining separate committee meetings, using a consent agenda, asserting legal prerogatives, developing a long-term vision, continued campus visits, and increased collaboration.
 - Members noted the following items to eliminate from discussion: debates about funding for the law school, DEI-related programs, and reduce Research Committee briefings to twice per year.
 - Members expressed a desire to add the following discussion topics: strategic planning for West Campus, admissions policies and fundraising strategies, leveraging GMU's advantages compared to other regional institutions, and a long-term university vision.
 - Additional information was requested on the following topics: detailed breakdown of DEI staffing, costs, and curriculum integration; fiscal impacts of tenure appointments and athletic coaching contracts; and trends in program enrollment and yield rate changes.
 - Members noted the following ways the board can make its work more effective: increased social interactions, expand standalone committee meetings, and encourage board members to raise issues before meetings to allow staff to prepare.

VI. Closed Session

- A. Gifts, Bequests, and Fundraising Activities (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.9)
- B. Consultation with Legal Counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.7)
- C. Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.8)
- D. Personnel Matter (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.1)

Vice Rector Meese **MOVED** that the committee go into Closed Session under the provisions of Section 2.2-3711.A.9 for discussion on gifts, bequests, and fundraising activities to discuss a philanthropic naming opportunity; Section 2.2-3711.A.7 for Consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation including briefings on:

Akerman v. GMU
Cerankosky et al. v. Washington, et al.
Jeong v. GMU
Morrison v. GMU et al.
De Raspide Ross v. Mason
Wright v. GMU et al.
Zahabi v. GMU et al.

Section 2.2-3711.A.8 for Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice concerning the aforementioned and subsequent items and pending investigations; and Section 2.2-3711.A.1 for a Personnel Matter, to discuss the performance of specific university personnel. The motion was **SECONDED** by Secretary Alacbay. **MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

Following closed session, Vice Rector Meese **MOVED** that the committee go back into public session and further moved that by roll call vote the committee affirm that only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements under the Freedom of Information Act were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting, and that only such business matters that were identified in the motion to go into a closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting. Any member of the committee who believes that there was a departure from the requirements as stated, shall so state prior to taking the roll call, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgment, has taken place. **ALL PRESENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS RESPONDED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

VII. Adjournment

Rector Stimson called for any additional business to come before the Executive Committee. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 8:54 a.m.

Prepared by:
Scott Nichols
Interim Secretary pro tem

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
AUDIT, RISK, AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE
OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS**

**February 27, 2025
MINUTES**

PRESENT: Chair Oberoi, Vice Chair Alacbay, Visitors Blackman and Meese.

**PRESENT
VIRTUALLY:** Visitor Brown.

**ALSO
PRESENT:** Rector Stimson; Visitors Cooper, Ohlhausen, Pence, and Peterson; President Washington; Provost and Executive Vice President Antony; Vice President for Enrollment Management Burge; Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration Dickenson; Faculty Liaison Douthett; Special Advisor to the President Healy; Graduate Student Representative Hoffman; Vice President and Chief Information Officer Madison; Vice President for Research Marshall; Associate University Counsel Schlam; Faculty Senate President Simmons; Staff Senate Chair Spence; Vice President of Finance Stephens; Vice President for Facilities Strike; Director of Financial Reporting Sultana; Associate Vice President and Controller Klock-Taube; Executive Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Chief of Staff Walsh; Interim Senior Vice President and Chief Risk Officer Zobel; Chief Audit and Compliance Officer Dittmeier; Deputy University Auditor Butler; and Associate Vice President for Institutional Compliance Lacovara.

I. Chair Oberoi called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Chair Oberoi **MOVED** that the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee approve Visitor Brown's electronic participation in this meeting due to a personal matter. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Meese.

MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY VOICE VOTE.

II. **Approval of Minutes**

Chair Oberoi called for any corrections to the minutes of the November 19, 2024 Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee meeting. Hearing none, the **MINUTES STOOD APPROVED AS WRITTEN.**

III Old Business

A. Auditor of Public Accounts Examination Update

Director of Financial Reporting Sultana briefed the Committee on the current status of the Auditor of Public Accounts' examinations.

- The agreed-upon procedures engagement of Intercollegiate Athletics' Statement of Revenues and Expenses required under NCAA Bylaws was completed in December 2024; there were no findings.
- The Auditor's procedures to support the Single Audit of the Commonwealth's compliance with requirements applicable to federal student financial assistance programs were completed in February 2025. The audit resulted in three findings. Detailed corrective action plans were provided to the Auditor; these action plans are expected to be completed by December 2025.
- The annual audit of the university's financial statements for the year-ended June 30, 2024 began in January 2025 and is expected to be completed for the Committee's May 2025 meeting. As of February 27, 2025, no potential findings have been communicated by the Auditor.

IV New Business

A. Competition Risk Update

Provost and Executive Vice President Antony provided an overview of the high priority enterprise risk related to competition. He discussed the competitive landscape with a focus on the more than 50 universities with a presence in the DMV (District of Columbia, Maryland, and Virginia) area. Among other things, he noted the potential competitive impacts on student enrollment, particularly in graduate education where there might be programmatic overlap with other institutions. He discussed the monitoring of other universities by his office in collaboration with the Deans and plans to act proactively related to programmatic offerings, value propositions for students, competitive responses, and potential partnerships. He also discussed collaborative strategies for managing faculty and staff poaching that might occur.

The Committee discussed with Dr. Antony several aspects related to addressing competition, including: the contrasting nature of the risks associated with varied institutions with limited branch campuses in the District of Columbia and institutions with more fulsome offerings, including sister Virginia institutions; the potential for promising partnership opportunities with these institutions; the university's strengths in placing recent graduates in certain employment sectors; the ongoing need for continuing analyses of market segmentations, opportunities, and

strengths; and strategies to buttress the value proposition for faculty and staff, limiting susceptibility to potential poaching, including easing affordability and commute concerns through potential future campus development activities, investing more deeply in research infrastructure, and reducing bureaucracy where possible to make faculty work lives easier; among others.

It was also suggested that relevant management be briefed regarding competition and antitrust laws, particularly related to potential faculty and staff poaching activity and potential partnership activity.

The Committee also discussed the advantages of the university's programs with community colleges to streamline admissions and transfer experiences; pathways for easing undergraduates into graduate degree programs; brand recognition with the large number of graduates employed in companies in the region; and the collaboration with other organizations and companies leveraging the size and scale of the university's sponsored research programs and the ability to tailor graduate-level programs; among others.

V. Reports

Chair Oberoi asked for the highlights of the reports received by the Committee to be discussed:

- Office of University Audit Summary Report.
Mr. Butler reported that two reports and seven memos had been issued since the prior Committee meeting, and that multiple projects remain in progress. He also reported that the three investigations that had been in progress at the last Committee meeting were now completed.
- Enterprise Risk Management Program Summary Report.
Dr. Zobel reported that action plan owners continue to make progress towards the mitigation strategies. The three top risks remain funding resources, competition, and cybersecurity.
- Office of Institutional Compliance Summary Report.
Mr. Lacovara reported that action plans were progressing to address the compliance and ethics enterprise risk.
- Information Technology Risk and Control Infrastructure Program Update.
Dr. Madison highlighted the report in the Committee's materials, including a recent review of Gramm-Leach-Bliley Act-related IT policies, the stand-up of two project governance teams, enhancements in change and configuration management, and processes for categorizing systems and developing security plans.

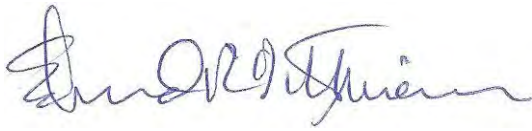
VI. Adjournment

Chair Oberoi adjourned the meeting at 9:30 a.m.

AUDIT, RISK, AND COMPLIANCE COMMITTEE

February 27, 2025

Page 4

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Edward R. Dittmeier". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Edward" being the most prominent part.

Edward R. Dittmeier

Secretary pro tem

Approved May 1, 2025

**GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY
BOARD OF VISITORS
Research Committee Meeting
MINUTES
February 27, 2025**

Present: Visitors Nancy Prowitt, Chair; Horace Blackman, Vice Chair; Lindsey Burke

Absent: Visitor Anjan Chimaladinne; Faculty Representative Igor Mazin; Student Representative Maria Cuesta

Also Present: President Gregory Washington; Rector Cully Stimson; Vice Rector Michael Meese; Visitors Maureen Olhausen, Armand Alacbay, Bob Pence, Jon Peterson, Charles Cooper; Faculty Senate Chair: Solon Simmons; Faculty Representative Tara Chaplin; Staff Senate Representative Rachel Spence; Student Representative Carolyn Faith Hoffman

The meeting was called to order by Chair Nancy Prowitt at 9:45 a.m.

I. Approval of Minutes (ACTION ITEM)

It was **MOVED** by Visitor Prowitt to approve the minutes from the December 5, 2024, Research Committee Meeting. Approval of the meeting minutes was approved.

II. 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; Renewal of George Mason's R1 status; Major faculty research gains; details about a new partnership with Systems Engineering Research Center and the Acquisition Innovation Research Center, and an overview of the new state-of-the-art Life Sciences building on the Science and Technology campus which features highly specialized instructional labs, classrooms, and workspaces to serve an increasingly multidisciplinary curriculum focused on science, technology, engineering, and health sciences
- ii. How the university is providing critical support in response to the Trump administration's Executive Orders since January 20, 2025, and their impact on research.

Vice President Marshall's remarks were followed by questions and discussion.

1. Student Representative Carolyn Faith Hoffman asked how much of an impact the reduced research funding and paused impacted programs will have on admissions, specifically for graduate students.
 - a. Vice President Marshall noted that to date, the university has 14 paused or ended projects out of 700 active awards. He noted that it is uncertain just how deep the impact will be and because of that uncertainty, PIs are conservative in trying to manage their spending which will impact graduate students.

- b. Provost Antony followed up by stating that currently there is not a dramatic impact on admissions and that the graduate students are a priority.
- 2. Visitor Nancy Prowitt noted that the university received three grant awards yesterday and went on to say that it is important to emphasize just how important research is at George Mason.
- 3. Visitor Horace Blackman asked Vice President Marshall to look at how much of the university's sponsored research is federally funded vs foundation funded. He is interested in learning what the university is getting in terms of awards and what's is backlogged. He suggested that Vice President Marshall and his team categorize what is already awarded and multi-year but not delivered and then go through the back log to identify risk assessment in order to understand what risk profile looks like. Visitor Blackman then suggested that the university double down on collaborative sponsored research with community.
- 4. Rector Cully Stimson said that he agreed with Visitor Blackman on risk assessment being key.
- 5. Faculty Representative Tara Chaplin asked if Vice President Marshall felt that the effect of uncertainty will lead to few grant submissions.
 - a. Vice President Marshall said the university is encouraging faculty to keep submitting for awards. He noted that the university is trying to provide structure around the uncertainty by dividing projects into three areas: 1) Paused; 2) Ended; and 3) Impacted. He said the research team is working to respond to individual PIs and academic units that have been impacted. He went on to say that there is a lot of uncertainty that is happening and we don't know where it will end but we have our core values, mission, culture, our purpose. This is a period in time but it shouldn't stop us from moving forward.
- 6. Student Representative Hoffman then noted that she has been inundated with fear and concern from graduate students regarding their funding and research. She said she knows there is a plan but that students do not and that there is chaos in the graduate space. She asked if the university would be more transparent with the student researchers, noting that "we owe the students more information."
 - a. President Washington replied by saying it is difficult to give that information because grants come from outside sources, many from the federal government, and no one knows that the future looks like. He said the university has a plan for managing students, however. As particular grants are affected, the university gets those students information immediately. President Washington noted that a large number of students haven't been told anything because they haven't lost their funding.
 - b. Faculty Chair Solon Simmons requested that those Board members who have influence to please convey the impact these Executive Orders are having on students and George Mason's ability to compete with other universities.
 - c. Visitor Prowitt commended university leadership for looking into all avenues to be as ready as we can. She noted that research leadership is a point of pride and that research is an area that is in a treasured position. She promised that board members will continue to advocate as much as they can.

III. **Adjournment**

Chair Prowitt asked if there was any additional business to be discussed. With no further comments or items of discussion, the meeting was adjourned at 10:18 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Yellia Seanor
Research Committee Secretary

George Mason University Board of Visitors

Development Committee Meeting

February 27, 2025

10:30 a.m. –11:25 a.m.

Merten Hall, Room 1201, Hazel Conference Room

Attendees: Chairman Jon Peterson, Visitor Robert “Bob” Pence, Visitor Dolly Oberoi, Visitor Reginald “Reg” Brown (virtual participation)

Absent: Vice Chair Anjan Chimaladinne

Guests: Rector Charles “Cully” Stimson; Vice Rector Michael J. Meese; Secretary Armand Alacbay; Visitor Horace Blackman; Visitor Lindsey M. Burke; Visitor Maureen Ohlhausen; Visitor Jeffrey A. Rosen; Visitor Charles Cooper; Visitor Nancy Gibson Prowitt; Anne Gentry, Legal Counsel; President Gregory Washington; Vice President Trishana E. Bowden; Susan Allen; faculty representative; Rachel Spence, staff liaison; Carolyn Faith Hoffman, student representative; Nicole Pozinsky, secretary pro-tem; and guest speakers Brian Drummond, Marvin Lewis and Darius Maddox.

I. Call to Order

Chairman Jon Peterson called the meeting to order at 10:35 a.m.

Peterson expressed that Visitor Brown wanted to participate electronically due to a personal matter. He took a vote, and the motion was PASSED.

IV. Approval of Development Committee Meeting Minutes from December 5, 2024 (ACTION ITEM)

Peterson confirmed the committee meeting had reached a quorum. He called for any changes or edits to the December 5 meeting minutes. There being no corrections, the minutes were **APPROVED AS WRITTEN**.

Peterson called to the podium Brian Drummond, secretary for the Board of Trustees for George Mason University Foundation (“foundation”), who delivered an update regarding recent foundation and Board of Trustees activities.

IIV. New Business

A. GMUF Secretary for the Board of Trustees – Brian Drummond

Drummond began by stating that at the end of January, a group of representatives attended the foundation leadership forum hosted by the Association of Governing Boards. On the evening of February 6, the trustees had the opportunity to spend some time with Provost Anthony. The foundation is currently in its winter board cycle, which finishes with its upcoming full board meeting in the first week of March. The seven committees focused on the following.

The **Advancement and University Priorities Committee** continues to demonstrate strong leadership through active engagement and philanthropic support. Committee members serve as ambassadors across various schools, colleges, and units through advisory board participation and representation at university and community events. The committee is strategically focusing on cultivating connections to support campaign initiatives. Board participation in the campaign currently stands at 84% with efforts underway to achieve 100% participation by April 3.

The **Audit Committee** reviewed the fiscal year 2024 tax filings, including the forms 990 and 990-T. These comprehensive informational and tax filings reflect well on the foundation, its governance, and fiscal stewardship. The committee also discussed the Foundation's continuing enterprise risk management process.

The **Finance and Real Estate Committee** reviewed the mid-year financial results compared to budget. Revenue and expenditures are in line with budget expectations. The Committee performed its annual review of the foundation's long-term debt obligations and insurance coverage.

The **Investment Committee** received the annual report on the Montano Student Managed Investment Fund. The fund returned a positive 29.05% for the 2024 calendar year, compared to their benchmark, the S&P 500, of a positive 25.71%. The presentation by the students highlighted sector allocation by weight, past performance analysis, risk and return analysis, and sector contribution to portfolio volatility.

The committee reviewed the mid-year investment portfolio results. CornerStone Partners provided an endowment portfolio and performance update. The endowment returned 6.9% through December 31st and is currently valued at approximately \$238M. In addition to covering results and asset allocation details, CornerStone Partners led a discussion on private investments.

The restricted portfolio returned 4.2% through December 31st.

The **Nominating and Governance Committee** reviewed nominations for new trustees for fiscal year 2026. The committee advanced 12 candidates for approval by the Full Board, pending interviews and the candidates' acceptance of the nomination. We continue to work to fill board needs in the areas of expertise and a broader representation across George Mason's colleges and schools.

Trustee Engagement

Trustee Butler has issued an inspiring challenge to George Mason community through his company, Technatomy, with a generous \$50,000 gift to the Military, Veterans, and Families Initiative (MVFI) in December. Butler aims to motivate others to match his contribution. His personal story and commitment to veterans' causes will be highlighted during Mason Vision Day on April 3.

Drummond shared Butler's story and emphasized that he continues to champion MVFI through his active leadership - —recently attending a roundtable discussion and planning a future gathering focused on mental health support.

Peterson asked Drummond for a brief explanation of what the George Mason University Foundation does.

Drummond explained that the foundation is the financial backbone of the university. It includes volunteers from various areas of the community and real estate investment and athletics. The foundation goes into the community to find people who want to be part of George Mason and who wish to support it.

B. University Advancement and Alumni Relations – Vice President Trishana E. Bowden

Vice President Trishana E. Bowden introduced Marvin Lewis, the assistant vice president and director of Intercollegiate Athletics. She noted that approximately a year ago, Lewis presented to the Development Committee and has returned to share the Athletics case for support.

C. Athletics Update – Marvin Lewis, Assistant Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics

Peterson asked Lewis to share a brief overview of his background with the new members in the room.

Lewis narrated the following series of PowerPoint slides (24 slides)

1. Intercollegiate Athletics Update – TITLE SLIDE
2. Agenda
3. Student-Athlete “Spotlight”
4. Darius Maddox – Men’s Basketball
5. Athletics Strategic Plan: Playbook of Greatness
6. Athletics Strategic Plan: The Process and Framework
7. Athletics Strategic Plan: Mission Statement
8. Athletics Strategic Plan: Purpose Statement
9. Athletics Strategic Plan: Core Values
10. Priorities, Goals, and Objectives
11. Video
12. Athletics Case for Support
13. Mason Athletics Now: Power the Possible
14. Power Basketball Greatness: Competitive Comparison – Conference
15. Power Basketball Greatness: Talent Recruitment and Development
16. Build and Modernize – Student-Athlete daily travel experience
17. Build and Modernize- Basketball and Academic Performance Center
18. Power Patriot Pathways: From Champion to Career
19. Power Sports Performance Ecosystem
20. Power New Opportunities
21. Power a New Mason Athletics – Join our Journey
22. Power a New Mason Athletics- Vision for the Future
23. How Can You Help Us...Power the Possible?
24. Questions – FINAL SLIDE

Lewis shared two significant initiatives: the athletics strategic plan and the fundraising case for support. Before discussing the key initiatives, Lewis emphasized that his north stars are our student-athletes—“students are why we do this work.” He introduced one of Athletics' brightest stars, Darius Maddox, a senior on the basketball team.

Maddox shared that he was raised in Bowie, Maryland, and was recruited by Division I programs, ultimately choosing Virginia Tech. After a couple of successful years at Virginia Tech, some personal and family issues led him to transfer programs to a more inclusive and close-to-home environment, ultimately choosing George Mason. In May 2025, Maddox will graduate with a bachelor’s in art and integrated studies with a concentration in social justice. As a student-athlete, Maddox hopes to continue to use his platform to be a positive influence.

Lewis asked if there were any questions for Maddox. Visitor Blackman lightheartedly asked what the plan is for VCU next time and stated that Darius did not need to answer the question.

Lewis continued to discuss the strategic plan for the Athletics Department: the mission is to inspire and transform lives through the power of sports. The strategic plan is not

just about winning titles. It is about winning hearts and minds, sparking ambition and saving lives. The goal of the strategic plan is to unite communities through support and resources. He showed a two-minute video about the strategic plan for Intercollegiate Athletics.

Lewis asked if there were any questions about the strategic plan before moving forward to the case for support.

Visitor Prowitt stated that the video was great and noted that these efforts will not only bring in recruits but also money and opportunities for the University to get the greatest bang for its buck and visibility in championship teams.

Chairman Peterson commented that if you look around the country at the elite universities, you will find a combination of great athletics and great academics. We have the academic side we just need to bring the other side up to match. There are a lot of young adults who go to a school so that they can go and watch or participate in the athletic program. Peterson noted that he is unsure if there are many students who come to George Mason because of our athletics programs, and we have an opportunity to change that.

Visitor Blackman commented that Athletics does not give themselves enough credit for what they have, and he gives them an enormous amount of credit for their efforts. The only difference between what he saw at a recent visit to Duke and what he sees here is infrastructure and money. He emphasized that the guts of what Mason does are in the same league; we just don't have the infrastructure or the money. The nucleus of what we need to do is already here.

Lewis thanked Blackman for his comments and went on to discuss his four priorities for the case for support.

- Basketball Greatness: since basketball represents George Mason's most visible programs, he wants to see them compete in the NCAA Tournament.
- Patriot Pathways Program: programming to educate student-athletes outside the classroom in life skills, financial education, and leadership development, to better compete with elite institutions like Maryland or Georgia Tech for athletes.
- Sports Performance Ecosystem
- A.D. Opportunity Fund

Lewis discussed how now the basketball program is spread between six locations across campus for athletic training, sports medicine, academic resources, the locker room, classes, and eating and activities. This puts the program at a competitive disadvantage for recruiting. He reiterated why the new basketball and academic performance center will be beneficial and will play an integral part in the success of student athletes and the basketball program. \$15 million needs to be raised. Lewis said that he is building a team of development staff members to help build relations and connect with potential donors.

Lewis listed six areas that are vital in building the Patriot Pathways program.

- Academic excellence
- Life skills
- Leadership development
- Well-being and belonging
- Career readiness
- Civic engagement

Lewis said that he wants to ensure that every student athlete has an internship or a traditional student abroad experience. A vision that Lewis has is to create an international service trip where 40 or 50 student-athletes across all sports go abroad from 7 to 10 days, then come back and be able to tell people about their experience. Opportunities like that will cost anywhere from \$100,000 to \$150,000 per year.

Lewis talked about two areas where the program sees the largest gaps: mental health and nutrition. Currently, he said, Intercollegiate Athletics does not have a nutritionist. With 500 student-athletes focused on peak performance, you have to have an expert making sure they are eating right and taking care of their bodies, he said. From a mental health perspective, Intercollegiate Athletics has a great relationship with Counseling and Psychological Services on campus, however, there are 1.5 staff members supporting athletics. The industry average is one mental health counselor for 150 student-athletes. They need another two or three mental health counselors to support George Mason's student-athletes. Lewis described the student-athletes' stresses: in addition to the day-to-day concerns of being a student, a basketball player's wins and losses are on TV, and his successes and failures on social media. The student-athletes are telling the Athletics Department that these are priorities for them, and the university wants to take care of them.

Lastly, Lewis discussed the A.D. opportunity fund. He wishes to secure resources so he can put dollars into practice create a competitive advantage, and take advantage of opportunities to partner with other units on campus. He wants to leverage George Mason's campus and regional expertise. He discussed how Intercollegiate Athletics intends to bring the program from good to great. The total goal for the Athletics Department's fundraising case for support is \$35 million. Traditionally, he said, athletics represents 10 to 20 percent of any university fundraising campaign. \$35 million is not 10 percent to 20 percent. Lewis stated his belief that we can not only get there but that we need to exceed this \$35 million number to take the program from being good to great. Not just great for one year, but consistently.

Lewis concluded by stating their vision and purpose, which is to empower transformational experiences and to power a championship culture and community. The purpose is to unite communities. Lewis emphasized how great George Mason student-athletes are, using Maddox as an example. He reported that this past fall, the Athletic Department had a 3.32 GPA. They had 78 Provost Scholars, ten more than what they'd had in the past (Provost Scholars have earned a 3.75 GPA or better). Fifty percent of student-athletes were on the Dean's list. George Mason student-athletes are getting it done in the classroom, he said.

Lastly, he concluded, Mason Nation needs to give. The evolving landscape of intercollegiate athletics is only getting more challenging. Resources are not just a hope; they are an

expectation. We have to fundraise and generate more revenue to support these student-athletes. He closed by asking for people to give and then opened the floor to any questions.

Rector Stimson commented that there are a lot of visitors on the board who either were college athletes or are parents of college athletes. One of the main takeaways from their tour of West Campus was their negative reaction to the Field House. He offered kudos to the program's success despite the Field House which does not have air conditioning. He asked what the new Field House is going to cost.

Lewis responded that it would be \$750,000 to \$100 million.

Visitor Blackman commented that it's not just about a field house. When visiting Duke, he took notes on what it looked like, and he appreciated what they did in terms of track and field. There were seven stadiums and facilities right there. There was a five-story building that was dedicated to athletics. There were two levels of study halls. There is a lot of support for students there. If we are going to go to the NCAA and build a sustainable infrastructure for championship-level athletics, that is the benchmark, not the pie in the sky.

Visitor Pence commented that he would like to address this from the point of view of a grandparent of three recruited D1 athletes and one D3. The oldest was recruited to play for the women's lacrosse team in Colorado. She fell her senior year, and within 15 minutes, the health facility knew she had a torn ACL, and they could immediately start doing what they needed to do. He continued by stating that these kids and their parents know what these athletic facilities are like, which is a material consideration in where they go to school. Pence also shared that he has a grandson who was recruited to play baseball at Roanoke. The Roanoke baseball facility makes our facility look like a mudflat. It doesn't make recruiting impossible, but it makes it extremely difficult. He stressed the importance of the student athletic experience, even for the kids who don't play – for the students who go and watch those games, is infectious and makes everyone want to attend. We need to elevate our games to that level. Student-athletes should get the best mental and physical health and conditioning.

Peterson commented that we can do better and we need to execute. He thanked Lewis for putting together a plan and believes that we are in the right position to support athletics better in the future than what was done in the past.

IIIV. Old Business

Peterson called for any topics of "Old Business" to be discussed. There were none.

IVV. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, Peterson adjourned the meeting at 11:32 a.m.

**BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Full Board Meeting
Thursday, February 27, 2025
Merten Hall, Hazel Conference Room (1201), Fairfax Campus**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rector Cully Stimson, Vice Rector Mike Meese, Secretary Armand Alacbay, Visitors Horace Blackman, Reginald Brown (virtual), Lindsey Burke, Charles Cooper, Dolly Oberoi, Maureen Ohlhausen, Bob Pence, Jon Peterson, Nancy Prowitt, and Jeff Rosen.

ABSENT: Visitors Anjan Chimaladinne and Bill Hansen.

ALSO, PRESENT: Solon Simmons, Faculty Representative; Maria Cuesta, Undergraduate Student Representative; Carolyn Faith Hoffman, Graduate Student Representative; Rachel Spence, Staff Liaison; Gregory Washington, President; Gesele Durham, Vice Provost for Institutional Effectiveness and Planning; Amarda Shehu, Associate Vice President of Research and Chief AI Officer; Anne Gentry, University Counsel; and Scott Nichols, Interim Secretary pro tem.

I. Call to Order

Rector Stimson called the meeting to order at 12:30 p.m.

Rector Stimson informed the Board that Visitor Brown requested to participate remotely due to a personal matter, more specifically, for travel outside the DC region to attend a special event honoring a longtime family friend.

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

Rector Stimson then welcomed Rachel Spence, who was recently elected as Chair of the Staff Senate, and accordingly now served as the Board of Visitors Staff Liaison. He also welcomed Bridget Higgins, Mason's new Executive Coordinator to the Board of Visitors and Secretary pro tem.

II. Approval of Minutes

A. Full Board Meeting Minutes for December 5, 2024 (ACTION ITEM)

Rector Stimson called for any corrections to the Full Board Meeting Minutes for December 5, 2024, that were provided for review in the board meeting materials. Hearing no corrections, the meeting minutes stood **APPROVED AS WRITTEN.**

III. Rector's Report

A. View from the Bridge

Rector Stimson noted several items:

- Thanked Dr. and Mrs. Washington for hosting the annual holiday reception at the Mathy House.
- Noted the Winter Graduation ceremony, where Maureen Scalia received an honorary degree and he praised the remarks made by the graduation speaker, George Schindler of CGI.
- He shared that he and Dr. Washington had met and communicated regularly since the previous board meeting.
- Vice Rector Meese met with the Graduate and Professional Student Association general assembly to discuss the role of the Board of Visitors and answer questions.
- He attended a prep meeting for the Finance & Land Use Committee with committee chair Bob Pence and Deb Dickenson, EVP for Finance and Administration.

- Noted the APDUC and Finance & Land Use committee meetings that occurred on February 13 and the value of holding committee meetings before the full board meeting day, noting their potential to save time on full board days. He encouraged non-committee members to view the meeting recordings online in advance of full board meetings.
- On February 13, the Scalia Law School hosted the *Scalia Dialogue*, where Supreme Court Justice Amy Coney Barrett engaged with Visitor Brown, Eugene Scalia, and a former law clerk of Justice Barrett.
- He expressed disappointment that the Virginia General Assembly did not confirm four board members, despite their qualifications and distinguished service: Kenneth Marcus, Marc Short, Farnaz Thompson, and Nina Rees. He noted that this decision negatively affects the university, board, leadership team, and community. He emphasized that board members serve as volunteer advocates, playing key roles in fundraising, networking, and representing the university to state and federal governments. He cautioned that it may discourage future board member service due to fears of "petty politics" (as noted by Governor Youngkin). He concluded by thanking the former members for their service and friendship.
- He shared that the Governor had appointed three new board members, with a fourth appointment being imminent.
 - He introduced Charles "Chuck" Cooper as one of the most distinguished attorneys in the country, having clerked for Justice William Rehnquist, served in the Justice Department as Deputy Assistant Attorney General in the Civil Rights division and as Assistant Attorney General for the office of Legal Counsel. He was a partner at two law firms before founding his own firm, Cooper & Kirk. Visitor Cooper thanked Rector Stimson for his comments and noted he looked forward to working with the board's distinguished members.
 - He then introduced Maureen Ohlhausen as an attorney and partner at Wilson Sonsini in the Antitrust and Competition division, having previously served on the Federal Trade Commission, including as Acting Chairman. She clerked on the DC Circuit Court, has been an adjunct professor at Scalia Law School, where she also received her law degree. Visitor Ohlhausen thanked Rector Stimson and shared she looked forward to supporting Mason.
 - He spoke to the appointment of William D. Hansen, who could not be present. Visitor Hansen was the Deputy Secretary of Education under President George W. Bush, as well as working in the Department of Commerce and Department of Energy. He is now the President and CEO of Building Hope, a nonprofit for charter school facilities, finance, and services. He is also a graduate of Mason.
- He noted several reminders for the board members and encouraged attendance where appropriate:
 - March 27: Opening of the Life Sciences and Engineering Building.
 - April 1: Board meeting to include public comment session on tuition and continuing education session.
 - April 17: Board committee meetings.
 - April 25: Hylton Performing Arts Center 15th Anniversary Gala.

B. Board of Visitors Meeting Schedules

1. Schedule for 2025-2026
2. Schedule for 2026-2027

Rector Stimson pointed to the proposed meeting schedules in the meeting materials and asked board members to review these schedules and provide their feedback to him and board staff, noting the vote for approval would take place at the May 1 meeting.

C. Board Self-Evaluation

Rector Stimson turned to the board self-evaluation, noting it was required to be completed every two years. He recognized Gesele Durham to present on the survey results. Dr. Durham provided an overview of the survey results, noting the following:

- The survey was sent to all board members, and received an 11/16 response rate, 69%.

- Respondents were generally positive on items measuring individual board member roles, with some concerns expressed about the volume and arrangement of meeting materials.
- Regarding meeting structure and effectiveness, concerns were expressed regarding information sharing, climate, and goal setting processes.
- She then outlined feedback specific to the board's standing committees:
 - APDUC: feedback noted an exceptional chair, strong participation, and good communication, with a desire to better prioritize topics for meetings.
 - Finance and Land Use: strengths included focused efforts on understanding the budget, dedicated committee members, and improved clarity. Areas for improvement included financial support for the Law School, need for clearer reporting on the budget, delivery of timely budget information, and requesting better context and prioritization of capital projects.
 - Audit, Risk, & Compliance: Strengths included effective leadership from the chair and communication from Ed Dittmeier.
 - Research: Strengths included collaboration between the chair and VP and valuable research from professors. It was requested for presentations at the full BOV meeting to be more strategic and concise and a need for greater knowledge in high-impact research and federal grant funding was expressed.
 - Development: Strong leadership from the chair was cited. Concerns included the effectiveness of the head of development and a need for stronger leadership in fundraising.
- Board members indicated the following as the highest priority strategic issues, in priority order: financial sustainability, long-range planning, new academic offerings, and ensuring the success of the president.
- Board members noted the following ways that board effectiveness could be enhanced: greater transparency, maintaining separate committee meetings, using a consent agenda, asserting legal prerogatives, developing a long-term vision, continued campus visits, and increased collaboration.
- Members noted the following items to eliminate from discussion: debates about funding for the law school, DEI-related programs, and reduce Research Committee briefings to twice per year.
- Members expressed a desire to add the following discussion topics: strategic planning for West Campus, admissions policies and fundraising strategies, leveraging GMU's advantages compared to other regional institutions, and a long-term university vision.
- Additional information was requested on the following topics: detailed breakdown of DEI staffing, costs, and curriculum integration; fiscal impacts of tenure appointments and athletic coaching contracts; and trends in program enrollment and yield rate changes.
- Members noted the following ways the board can make its work more effective: increased social interactions, expand standalone committee meetings, and encourage board members to raise issues before meetings to allow staff to prepare.

Rector Stimson noted that he, Visitor Blackman (as former rector), and Vice Rector Meese would discuss the findings and ways of improving board processes. Solon Simmons asked if non-voting board participants were included in the self-evaluation process, to which Dr. Durham replied that it was only distributed to board members. Dr. Simmons then asked if there was interest in engaging the faculty, staff, and students to contribute to the process. Rector Stimson responded in the affirmative, and asked Dr. Durham if SACS COC or SCHEV would allow for that. She responded that there was nothing that prohibited that type of engagement. Rector Stimson also noted a desire for future survey to include the specific timeline for which the survey covered.

IV. President's Report

Rector Stimson recognized President Washington for his report. President Washington reported the following:

- Graduated the largest class in the university's history and enrolled the largest, most academically competitive incoming class. He noted a slight decline in graduate enrollment of 1.1%, largely due to national graduate enrollment trends.
- Achieved leading online rankings, with Mason ranking in 9 of 13 categories—the highest among Virginia institutions.

- The preliminary reconciled budget from the General Assembly is highly favorable for Mason, potentially marking the best budget year ever, pending its passage.
- Research expenditures are on an upward trend, underscoring a thriving research enterprise.
- It may be a challenge to meet the year's \$110 million fundraising goal, but noted that the current number of \$40.3 million does not include several large gifts that were recently received, and that most large gifts tend to be made in the spring. He further noted that Mason has raised over \$100M annually five times in its history, with four of those years being within the last five years. He commended the efforts of the Advancement staff.
- He spoke to the impact of recent executive orders:
 - Roughly 25 executive orders potentially affecting George Mason.
 - The orders that affect Mason are divided into three categories:
 - DEI
 - Country of origin (to include immigration status and foreign aid support)
 - Government agency restructuring
 - A comprehensive compliance review is underway, including revising website language to ensure consistency with programs and Mason's institutional values. He noted that Mason leadership believes Mason is currently compliant, and has been for the last year. He further noted the need to review language in programs and initiatives aligns with what those programs and initiatives actually do.
 - Going forward, Mason intends to "play the long game" by establishing systems to prepare for future executive orders rather than only reacting to current ones. It will also be important to expand external partnerships that support Mason, and to be prepared for constant change and work quickly and collaboratively to respond.
- "Grand Challenge" problems represent the most critical needs of the planet and our society and areas where the university will allocate its limited funding.
 - Six key grand challenges have been identified to drive the university's future research and impact:
 - Advancing 21st-century education for all.
 - Building a climate-resilient society.
 - Driving responsible digital innovation and sustainable cyberinfrastructure.
 - Improving human health, well-being, and preparedness.
 - Pioneering space exploration, research, and collaboration for humanity.
 - Strengthening peace, trust, and engagement in democracy.
 - Planned investments total \$15 million over the next five years to support talent, projects, seed funding, and necessary infrastructure.
- He then spoke to the recent *House v. NCAA* settlement relating to student athlete compensation and how it impacts Mason.
 - The settlement requires a 10-year payment schedule for back damages of \$2.8 billion across all NCAA institutions. This amounts to \$400,000 each year for Mason, totaling \$4 million. Going forward, institutions are required to share revenue with student athletes.
 - For Division I institutions, there is a revenue-sharing cap of about \$20.5 million per institution, broken down approximately as follows:
 - 70% for football (not applicable to Mason).
 - 15% for men's basketball.
 - 10% for women's basketball.
 - 5% for all other sports.
 - Specific estimates include an additional \$1 million in compensation for men's basketball this year, potentially rising to about \$3 million over the next three years. Overall additional athletic costs for all Mason sports expected to reach between \$7–9 million over three years.
 - Adjustments in coaching salaries are also under consideration to retain top coaching talent.
 - Emphasized the importance and benefit of opting into this process, which is required for retaining Division I status.

- Provided an overview of key elements of Mason’s long-term planning vision, *Mason 2050*.
 - Mason will be a fully vertically integrated university meeting the needs of an evolving DC, Maryland, and Virginia region while actively mitigating global grand challenges. This includes redesigning the Fairfax campus, expanded residential components at Mason Square, and a community-integrated SciTech Campus.
 - The long-range vision aims to grow the student body to approximately 45,000 on-campus students, plus an additional 15,000–20,000 online students.
 - Key capital projects include:
 - Renovating EagleBank Arena to upgrade locker rooms, training facilities, and event spaces.
 - Constructing a pedestrian bridge across Ox Road at University Drive.
 - Developing a Living-Learning Village, likely integrated with the Costello College of Business, to alleviate student housing shortages.
 - Expanding faculty housing at the Science and Technology Campus.
 - Renovating Vernon Smith Hall at Mason Square to provide more affordable housing for students.
 - Upgrading athletic facilities with plans for a high-performance training center, a redesigned baseball field, and a redesigned Center for the Arts.
 - Detailed planning sessions are scheduled with board members over the coming month to review project estimates and timelines.

Discussion ensued:

- Carolyn Hoffman asked about the Law School’s webpage on DEI being taken down. President Washington responded that while programs were being reviewed, the original webpages had been taken down as a precautionary step, and that once they were updated, they would be put back online.
- Visitor Rosen asked if the plan was for the university to comply with the recent executive orders in order to protect federal funding. President Washington responded that upon a cursory review, it is believed that Mason is compliant. He continued that if noncompliance was found, then plan was to utilize the outlined mechanisms to bring them into compliance.
- Visitor Peterson commented that Mason was fortunate to own nearby land, which provides options and opportunities. He recommended establishing some initial ground rules for the land early on, in order to be more unified and prevent “false starts” during later stages of potential projects.
- Vice Rector Meese asked how the proposed capital projects aligned with the Strategic Plan that was approved two years prior. President Washington responded that the Strategic Plan outlined the flexibility to accomplish projects of this nature, and that these projects do not represent a change to the plan.
- Visitor Prowitt emphasized that these projects are investments for the future.
- Visitor Blackman remarked that Mason is far behind the market when it comes to investments in athletics. Citing Visitor Prowitt’s comments about investing for the future, he noted that when Mason went to the Final Four in 2006, the athletics budget was \$11 million, but the economic return on that accomplishment was around \$700 million.

V. AI Update

Rector Stimson recognized Amarda Shehu, Associate Vice President of Research and Chief AI Officer to provide an update on Mason’s AI initiatives. Along with Charmaine Madison, Vice President and CIO, Dr. Shehu reported the following:

- Mason’s AI Taskforce, launched in Fall 2024, consists of over seventy members, bridges academic and non-academic units, and brings together faculty, students, and staff to guide the future of the university in all aspects of our AI Strategy
- Emphasized the institution's holistic approach to integrating AI across student outcomes, faculty outcomes, and operational efficiencies and outlined the guiding principles for AI use.
- Introduced four AI initiatives at Mason:

- **Integrate AI:** A strategic partnership with Microsoft and Cloud Force to embed AI capabilities throughout the institution. Described plans to build a robust AI ecosystem by establishing foundational security measures, providing a comprehensive AI toolkit, and promoting AI literacy among users. Emphasized that the platform's secure and scalable design will support accessible and high-performance AI services.
- **Inspire with AI:** Advance AI literacy as a core university outcome for all students, faculty, and staff. Noted that one AI course has been operational since 2024 and a pilot course for building AI agents is scheduled for 2025. Mason currently offers more than 100 active core and interdisciplinary AI-related courses across its colleges and schools.
- **Innovate AI:** Positions Mason as a leader in AI research and innovation, and provided examples of high-impact projects:
 - AI-enhanced mixed reality training for emergency response.
 - Conversational agents aimed at improving mental health outcomes.
 - Applications of large language models to foster K-12 mathematical competencies.
 - AI-driven conservation efforts.
- **Impact with AI:** Outlined efforts to forge strong partnerships with industry and government, including the AI-in-Gov Council that collaborates with public sector technology providers to develop AI solutions for all levels of government. Identified FUSE as a key model for community engagement and a hub for educational activities in AI.

Visitor Oberoi offered her support and assistance in connecting Mason with local industry to educate and upskill the region's workforce in AI.

VI. Committee Reports

A. Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee

Visitor Oberoi reported on the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee meeting, providing a summary of the presentations received by Nusrat Sultana, Provost James Antony, and reports covering Audit, Enterprise Risk Management, Institutional Compliance, and IT Risk and Control Infrastructure.

B. Research Committee

Visitor Prowitt reported on the Research Committee meeting, providing a summary of the presentation received by Andre Marshall (Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Impact).

C. Development Committee

Visitor Peterson reported on the Development Committee meeting, providing a summary of the presentations received by Brian Drummond (Secretary, GMUF Board of Trustees) and Marvin Lewis (Assistant Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics).

D. Academic Programs, Diversity, and University Community Committee

1. Program Actions
 - a. Degree Program Closure
 - i. MS Marketing (**ACTION ITEM**)
2. Faculty Actions
 - a. Conferral of Emeritus/Emerita Status (**ACTION ITEM**)
 - b. Elections of New Tenured Faculty (**ACTION ITEM**)
3. Antisemitism Resolution (**ACTION ITEM**)

Visitor Burke reported on the activities of the February 13 APDUC Committee meeting, providing a summary of the presentation given by Provost Antony. Visitor Burke then **MOVED** that the board approve the following action items, en bloc, as they are provided in the meeting materials:

- Degree Program Closure: MS Marketing
- Conferral of Emeritus/Emerita Status
- Elections of New Tenured Faculty

The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Prowitt. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 12

Absent: Visitors Brown, Chimaladinne, and Hansen

Visitor Burke continued her report, sharing that the APDUC Committee held an initial conversation on the Antisemitism Resolution, and that following the conversation Visitor Rosen worked with Mason leadership to revise and clarify the resolution language. She recognized Visitor Rosen to address that effort. Visitor Rosen reported the following:

- Following the initial draft review at the APDUC committee meeting, discussions were held with university staff, including Rose Pascarell and Sharnnia Artis. These additional discussions resulted in a revised resolution with two pages of “whereas” recitals of actions the university has already taken, and four “resolved” paragraphs, with those four provisions being:
 - **Publication of a Fact Sheet:** The university will publish a fact sheet on antisemitism that aligns with its existing nondiscrimination policies, ensuring consistency in addressing discrimination. This measure is intended to elevate the treatment of antisemitism to the same standard as other discrimination issues.
 - **Guidance and Training:** Mason employees will receive specific guidance on antisemitism as part of their annual training. Applicants will be provided with access to the university’s nondiscrimination policies.
 - **Non-Sponsorship of Antisemitic Events:** The university will refrain from sponsoring or formally endorsing any events that are announced as being antisemitic.
 - **Discrimination Policy Enforcement:** A clear policy will be established to prohibit discrimination based on Jewish ancestry or Israeli national origin, with violations managed through established disciplinary processes.
- He noted that the resolution builds on the university’s past efforts and addresses the rising issue of antisemitism on campuses, aligning with recent federal actions. He further noted that it explicitly states that free expression rights are not affected and that the resolution complies with state and federal guidelines, including federal Executive Order 14188. He added that some comments received spoke to the IHRA definition of antisemitism, but that Mason already utilizes this definition per Virginia law, the Department of Education, and the State Department.

Visitor Rosen then **MOVED** that the board adopt the revised resolution as it is provided in the meeting materials. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Pence. Rector Stimson called for discussion on the motion. Discussion ensued:

- Several participants, including Ms. Hoffman, President Washington, and Visitor Blackman expressed concerns about what constituted an “endorsement” or “sponsorship” of an event by the university, noting that it could be too broad and potentially be applied to discussions about Israel and Palestine, educational trips, courses, or academic discourse. In response, Visitors Rosen, Pence, and Cooper said the resolution is narrowly tailored to apply to events with an explicitly antisemitic stance, and that the meaning of the university sponsoring or endorsing an event is clear at face value.
- Some participants, including President Washington, Dr. Simmons (on behalf of the faculty), and Ms. Cuesta questioned if the resolution could have an impact on free speech or academic freedom. Visitor

Rosen emphasized that the resolution does not curtail free speech or academic freedom, but only prevents the university from aligning itself with positions that are antisemitic.

- Visitor Blackman, Visitor Oberoi, and Secretary Alacbay asked questions relating to the clarity or consistency of the resolution, such as what problem the resolution addresses, or if the language could be clearer, particularly if more specific examples of an “official sponsorship” could be included. Vice Rector Meese and Visitor Rosen both offered responses, with Vice Rector Meese pointing out that the revisions in the new version of the resolution addressed the clarity issues. Visitor Rosen expressed that people understand what an “endorsement” means, and that an exhaustive definition or list of examples is not practical, as people may try to find ways around them.

Following the discussion, Rector Stimson called for the vote. The **MOTION CARRIED BY MAJORITY ROLL CALL VOTE (Attachment 2).**

Yes: 8

No: 4

Abstain: 1 – Secretary Alacbay

Absent: Visitors Chimaladinne and Hansen

E. Finance & Land Use Committee

Visitor Pence provided a summary of the Finance & Land Use Committee meeting on February 13. He then **MOVED** that the board approve the FY2026 Room and Board Rates as they were provided in the meeting materials. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Burke. **THE MOTION PASSED BY MAJORITY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 12

No: 1

Absent: Visitors Chimaladinne and Hansen

Visitor Rosen brought the board’s attention to the upcoming vote on tuition and fees in May, and advised the board to review the budget options in the meeting materials in advance of that vote, so that they may advise staff if there is any data they require for that decision. He expressed his view that there should not be a tuition increase this year.

XI. Closed Session

- A. Gifts, Bequests, and Fundraising Activities (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.9)
- B. Consultation with Legal Counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.7)
- C. Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.8)
- D. Personnel Matter (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.1)

Vice Rector Meese **MOVED** that the board go into Closed Session under the provisions of Section 2.2-3711.A.9 for discussion on gifts, bequests, and fundraising activities to discuss a philanthropic naming opportunity; Section 2.2-3711.A.7 for Consultation with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation including briefings on:

Akerman v. GMU
Cerankosky et al. v. Washington, et al.
Jeong v. GMU
Morrison v. GMU et al.
De Raspide Ross v. Mason
Wright v. GMU et al.
Zahabi v. GMU et al.

Section 2.2-3711.A.8 for Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice concerning the aforementioned and subsequent items and pending investigations; and Section 2.2-3711.A.1 for a Personnel Matter, to discuss the performance of specific university personnel. The motion was **SECONDED** by Secretary Alabay. **MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

Following closed session, Vice Rector Meese **MOVED** that the board go back into public session and further moved that by roll call vote the board affirm that only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements under the Freedom of Information Act were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting, and that only such business matters that were identified in the motion to go into a closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting. Any member of the board who believes that there was a departure from the requirements as stated, shall so state prior to taking the roll call, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgment, has taken place. **ALL PRESENT BOARD MEMBERS RESPONDED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Absent: Visitors Brown, Burke, Chimaladinne, Hansen, Oberoi, Ohlhausen, and Pence.

A. Adjournment

Rector Stimson called for any additional business to come before the board. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 4:36 p.m.

Prepared by:
Scott Nichols
Interim Secretary pro tem

Attachments:

1. Written Public Comments for February 13 and February 27 Meetings
2. Antisemitism Resolution

Public Comments

Received for February 13 and February 27 Board of visitors Meetings

Full Name:	Mason Affiliation	Written Comment
Joseph jarjourah	Student	Anti-Zionism is not racist in any way. And I would repeat that a million times, Zionism is not related to any religion or race. It is related to a belief that killing Palestinians and being on the oppressive side of a genocide is okay and normal. Being an Anti-Zionist is not in any way causing hatred to a Jewish community but proving a point that Palestinian lives matter. That in fact the idea of proposing that Anti-Zionism is even possibly racist is actually racist towards Palestinians. Because it clearly states that their lives don't matter just because of an incorrect ideology.
Kay Linwood	Community Member	I am deeply disturbed by the pure lack of knowledge an institution holds around an extremist political ideology like Zionism. If you know this as a university and ignore it for financial reasons, remember that no amount of money can buy us out of hell. Condemning students, the ones who pay you for education, for speaking against a humanitarian atrocity is downright atrocious. May you realize the horrible side of history that George Mason University will fall into should it continue to perpetuate violence against students and stand as an institution that upholds the denial of genocide. Shame.
Jane Doe	Faculty	Antizionism is not racism. Antizionism is not racism. Antizionism is not racism.
Fairouz Ouikhlfen	Student	Recommendation for consideration of the alternative, Jerusalem Declaration on Antisemitism (https://jerusalemdeclaration.org/) referenced in this explanatory +972 article (https://www.972mag.com/ihra-antisemitism-israel-inversion-projection/). +972 describes itself as "an independent, online, nonprofit magazine run by a group of Palestinian and Israeli journalists." The university would be committing a fallacy to ignore or override the views of civically engaged Israeli citizens and adjacent reporters such as Democracy Now's Amy Goodman, without careful and unpolitical analysis. Zionism is a political movement involving American Christians in addition to numerous other backgrounds. In aligning it with features students or faculty cannot change about themselves without reasonable distress (ethnic markers, physical appearance, names, ancestry, nationality, or heritage), the university will politicize the fight against hate.
Declan Rees	Student	Conflating criticisms of Zionism as racist will only make the campus less safe. Zionism, unlike the Jewish faith, is an ideology. It is young, only coming into the world stage in the 20th century. It's creation was an attempt to answer the "Jewish Question" and many of its founding members cooperated with known Nazi sympathizers during the holocaust. In its innate principles it pushes for the development and maintenance of Ethno-state in the holy land, an area where many different peoples call to. The subjugation and genocidal aggression to the native Palestinian population sense the Nakba, especially in the past year, has been demoralizing. If you try to make it impossible to criticize the state of Israel or the ideology of Zionism you will be putting countless students in danger. I cannot express it more fervently, do not do this
Robert Zigmund	Staff	I am writing to oppose Jeff Rosen's proposal regarding criticism of Zionism. This proposal is a disgraceful and authoritarian attempt to censor our students in their opposition to genocide.
sara babb	alum	Anti-Zionism is anti-Apartheid. Do not conflate anti-semitism with anti-Zionism. Protect the right to fight for human rights. Reject the proposal of defining anti-zionism as racism. The truth is that zionism is racist and led to a genocide of Palestinians.
Laurie B.	Concerned citizen	Anti-zionism is Not racism!
Ryan Nary	Community Member	I am an Arlington resident and thus I share neighborhood space with GMU's Ballston campus. I want to express in the strongest possible terms my opposition to GMU adopting the IHRA definitions of antisemitism, which dangerously conflates criticism of Israel with antisemitism.
Sofia Nicholas	Student	Anti-Zionism is just and necessary. It is resistance to the hegemonic powers trying to steal Palestinian land and life. Anti-Zionism is not antisemitic and conflating the two is dangerous.
Siwar Masannat	Alumnus	The conflation of Zionism with a protected identity, on the one hand, and with Judaism as a religious identity, on the other, is not only erroneous but also dangerous. Zionism is a settler colonial ideology and systematic practice that has resulted in the genocide and successive mass displacement of Palestinians for more than seventy years. Zionism endangers Jewish people and Palestinians alike, and many Jewish people in our GMU community oppose Zionism based on the facts gathered by international agencies and bodies that have found Israel to be guilty of ethnic cleansing, genocide, apartheid, war crimes and torture based on meticulously gathered evidence and verified testimonies. Criminalizing the brave and conscientious actions of students, staff, and faculty who critique and oppose settler colonialism and genocide endangers them, their educational journeys and livelihoods. GMU, this is a shameful and unconscionable measure meant to stifle dissent against genocide and dispossession at a moment of heightened US fascism. Do better.
Stephen D'Alessio	Student	I am writing to oppose the measure from Jeff Rosen to equate all criticism of Zionism with antisemitism. As a George Mason student it is important to me that we oppose antisemitism and make sure that students of all backgrounds are welcomed and empowered. However, all criticism of Zionism is not antisemitic and the rights of students who want to fight for Palestinian rights need to be respected as well. Please oppose this proposal.
Anonymously	Alum and CVPA Board Member	I strongly oppose the proposed adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance(IHRA) Working Definition of Anti-Semitism which conflates Zionism with anti-semitism. Leader across universities and institutions across the country are wary of this definition because of its intention to suppress criticism of Israel. It would shameful and misguided for GMU to adopt a policy which will in turn suppress free speech and any anti-Israel criticism which is not a criticism of Jewishness.
K Hoffman	Community Member	As an institution of higher learning, the inclusion of anti-Zionism in a definition of anti-Semitic activities is a far reach. Please remove all mentions of Zionism in your DEI initiatives.

		<p>Claiming that Zionism is a Jewish identity is an insult to many Jewish people. That's like saying that all Christians identify as MAGA Republicans. No religion is a political monolith and this argument is exactly why the USA is predicated on the principle that we must separate church and state.</p> <p>GMU should encourage debate about politics and support free speech when bad policies are harming people. Stepping on the free speech of students in the USA in order to defend a foreign state's willful acts of genocide and apartheid is not a smart decision. Do better, GMU.</p>
Anonymous	Staff	<p>Anti-Zionism cannot be equated to racism or anti-semitism. To think so is to be greatly uninformed. Recognizing the livelihood and rights of the Palestinian people is not anti-semitism (see work by scholar Edward Said to learn more). Criminalizing, punishing, or otherwise preventing pro-Palestinian speech is suppression, and it is especially harsh coming from a university that lauds itself for its diversity and inclusion.</p>
Ruby Hayes	Student	<p>Comment regarding the antisemitism resolution: The safety of Jewish people and keeping anti-Semitism off campus is important. However, anti-Zionist beliefs are not inherently anti-Semitic. Being anti-Zionist is to oppose the State of Israel that has been occupying Palestinian land and killing thousands of Palestinians for decades.</p>
Jacqueline Green	Alumna	<p>Hello, I am writing to urge you to vote NO on the resolution brought forward by Jeffrey Rosen to criminalize critiques of Zionism and genocide both on and off GMU campus.</p> <p>This resolution, if passed, would open the door for school officials to harass and persecute students and student organizations with whom they disagree, or based on their race, religion or ethnicity. Based on the violent assault on student peace protests during the 2023-2024 school year, this is likely to embolden further harassment and persecution of peace and human rights activists, and those who oppose genocide and apartheid.</p> <p>Students have the right to freely advocate and express their opinions, particularly in academic settings that are intended for free thought and inquiry. For example, targeting students for supporting Palestinian rights is a serious violation of freedom of speech, as enshrined in the first amendment of the constitution. If passed, this resolution would violate those rights. Historically, resolutions like this have been disproportionately used against minority and marginalized communities, and particularly targeted against Palestinian-American, Arab-American and Muslim-American communities.</p> <p>The ACLU has responded to resolutions like this across the country in the "Open Letter to Colleges and University Leaders: Reject Efforts to Restrict Constitutionally Protected Speech on Campuses." (https://www.aclu.org/documents/open-letter-to-colleges-and-university-leaders-reject-efforts-to-restrict-constitutionally-protected-speech-on-campuses).</p> <p>Like the ACLU, I urge you to vote NO on this resolution and protect ALL GMU students' right to free speech both on and off campus.</p> <p>Thank you for your time.</p>
Roxanne Freeman	Student	<p>Anti-zionism is not anti-Semitism and the suppression of pro Palestine voices is a violation of our rights to free speech.</p>
Omar Abaza	Student	<p>The definition of Zionism, a noun, "a movement for (originally) the re-establishment and (now) the development and protection of a Jewish nation in what is now Israel." The same thing is real that is now wanted by the International criminal court for crimes against humanity. This decision alone, by definition, would be considered anti-Zionist. So you gonna be able to talk about the ICC ruling without being called anti-Zionist? They Can't Criticize Israel without being called anti-Zionist? How is it that students can criticize the American government but not the Israeli one? This is all, besides the fact that Zionism is founded by The British government and the ethnic cleansing of the native people Palestine.</p>
Anonymous	Alumni	<p>It is unacceptable to criminalize free speech on any US campus. We have the right to a voice and we the right to be heard, please don't let your decision betray the values and foundational principles of our beautiful university.</p>
Jude Schroder	Community Member	<p>I advise the board to swiftly reject Jeffrey Rosen's proposed resolution regarding "antisemitism." Anti-Zionism is not antisemitism, and yet this resolution dangerously equates the two. This resolution will not make GMU safer. In fact, it will silence and exclude anyone in support of Palestinian liberation and autonomy. Furthermore, there are many, many Anti-Zionist Jewish people, however, this resolution mischaracterizes "Jewish identity" as Zionist. If this resolution passes, it would solidify GMU's institutional stance that it is in support of genocide and willing to punish anyone who dares to question the atrocities committed against the Palestinian people. This resolution hides behind language of DEI. I urge the board to consider the students, faculty, and community members it would be silencing and excluding with this resolution.</p>
Jill DeWitt	Alumni	<p>This resolution is a violation of free speech. The board should be ashamed of even considering an anti-human rights restriction on the freedom of students, faculty, and staff to support a free Palestine. This action would make me ashamed to be an alumni and I will never donate to any institution that restricts free speech.</p>
Janet Freeman	Alumni	<p>It is unconstitutional to bar free speech. Please reject Rosen's proposal.</p>
Kristin Samuelian	Faculty	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Like all people of good will, I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p>

S Hamdani	Faculty	Discussing policies of any state is fundamental to the principles of free speech and intellectual inquiry fundamental to society and to any university mission. Doing so does not constitute racism of any kind, or antisemitism. I therefore oppose this resolution for censoring any discussion of the state of Israel's policy with regard to the human rights or right to self-determination of Palestinians.
Michael Chang	Faculty	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Like all people of good will, I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p> <p>Thank you, as always, for taking action. As we just learned from our victory blocking three additional partisan extremists from the BOV, we have a lot of power when we join together and fight!</p>
Eli Nguyen	Staff	<p>Forbidding any criticism of Zionism is a flagrant disregard for our right to free speech. In the current political climate protecting our fundamental rights should be of the utmost importance. No ideology is above critique, no ideology warrants being held away from any discussion. Who does it benefit to prohibit critique of an ideology? What other ideologies are given this same privilege?</p> <p>As a student of the Jimmy and Roslyn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution I think it's imperative that we are able to have open discussion about political ideologies and their geopolitical consequences. Restricting this by prohibiting anything that may be construed as criticism of Zionism as a political ideology is reckless, and a restriction on the academic study being done at Mason. It's alarming to me that GMU, a school which prides itself on its diversity and open mindedness would consider a resolution that so clearly seeks to negate its own core values.</p>
Samirah Alkassim	Faculty	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p> <p>I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. This resolution must be rejected, and I urge all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Once this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry is behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p>
Angelica Zayid	Student	Antisemitism and Zionism are not the same. Supporting Palestinians is about advocating for equality, not discrimination. No matter their faith—Jewish, Muslim, Christian, atheist, or otherwise—people should treat each other with love and respect. There is nothing antisemitic about expressing concern for the thousands of innocent children caught in the crossfire.
Benjamin Steger	Faculty	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Like all people of good will, I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p>
Rose Cherubin	Faculty	<p>I strongly reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I strongly support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. Criticism of the current state of Israel is not equivalent to criticizing the idea of a Jewish state, for the idea of a Jewish state does not imply adherence to the current state's policies, and can include the recognition of a Palestinian (also a semitic group) state alongside it. Indeed, many Israelis support the idea of a Jewish state and a Paletstinian state coexisting, and strongly oppose their own government's policies.</p> <p>In its current form, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry behind us, we can move ahead to crafting just and effective language that include ethnic identity and shared heritage in Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p>
Alexander Monea	Faculty	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p>

		Like all people of good will, I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.
Ella Duncan-High	Student	Anti-Zionism is not racism. Protect free speech. How dare you try and silence students on campus.
Carlin Decker	Staff	On the Topic of the recent resolution proposed by Jeffery Rosen, to criminalize criticism of Zionism, this resolution should be struck down. Being critical of a nation or a political philosophy it practices is a form a free speech protected under the First Amendment. Limiting the community's freedom of speech is a direct violation of their First Amendment rights.
Ellen Gurung	Alumni	I am writing to express my frustration about the recent GMU Board of Visitors Resolution regarding the condemnation of students who engage in anti-Zionist language, behavior, and activism. Zionism is not an integral part of Jewish identity nor should be considered antisemitic as explained by numerous Jewish activists. Israel is a colonial project that is currently responsible for an ongoing genocide against Palestinian people, and with GMU having such a large West Asian/Middle-Eastern population I would hope that GMU would consider the many students whose family and friends are deeply impacted by the atrocities that Israel is committing. As an alumni I will not financially support GMU in any donation or fundraising activities if this resolution is put in place. This is not the first time that GMU has worked to shut down leftist student activism efforts and I am ashamed to call GMU my alma mater.
Anonymous Staff Member	Staff	I would like to put forth a condemnation of Jeffrey Rosen's resolution to classify criticism of Israel as hate speech. Israel and Judaism are not one and the same. Judaism is a beautiful and ancient faith. Israel is a nation, which should not be exempt from the same criticisms other nations face. Jewish people do not unilaterally support Israel, and for the university to criminalize the discussion of the topic is to decide for those people what is acceptable speech from Jews. The university also runs the risk of having to enforce penalties for "antisemitism" on community members who are Jewish. This initiative is such a misstep from the University, please do not try to prevent our university from being a forum for such important conversation.
Mackenzie Liu	Student	As a Jewish individual, Israel is a key part of my identity. The prayers I say everyday mention Israel and its people. I'm a proud Zionist who believes that the Jewish people have the right to live in Israel. The harassment I have received on campus for the past year and a half has been nonstop. Often acts of anti-semitism like calling the Star of David offensive is stated to be anti-Zionist by people on this campus. My friends and I have been called countless names that are inappropriate and harmful. Again they were disguised under the name of anti-Zionism. I was left in tears one day after painting the star on one of Wilkins Plaza paintable walls. Six people yelled and circled around me, but claimed they were anti-Zionist and not anti-Semitic. The student government DEI committee has shown clear bias and refuses to acknowledge anti-semitism. Instead their meeting notes consist of anti-Zionist and anti-Israel rhetoric. The chairs of the committee even labeled a presentation on antisemitism as something that didn't involve them. Being a Zionist goes beyond the Jewish community. I have friends who are not Jewish and have received anti-Semitic harassment for supporting Israel. This further proves that the Jewish people and Zionism are linked. The climate on campus has been extremely hostile for Jewish and Zionist students. Our voices are being silenced by people who think we shouldn't exist or that a Jewish student born in Israel is a colonizer. We have been left out of student government meetings and communications about anti-Zionist legislative decisions.
Elizabeth DeMulder	Faculty	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Like all people of good will, I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p>
Betty Aquino	Community Member	I've heard that Mason is considering a proposal to criminalize the criticism of Zionism on campus and I am deeply concerned by this proposal as it infringes on the students right to free speech.
Grace Larsen	Student	Please pass it, I often don't feel safe on campus because I am an open Zionist. I have received antisemitic messages, snide remarks, and have been given long glares at GMU.
Laura Buckwald	Faculty	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee meeting.</p> <p>I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. However, this resolution is not about protecting students and faculty from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing and blocking free speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. The policies of any nation need to be open to free discussion and debate. Any criticisms of Israeli state policies have nothing to do with antisemitism, just as criticisms of U.S. policy do not make one anti-American.</p> <p>As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate free speech and inquiry behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>

Hannah Landsberger	Alumni	I am deeply concerned about the antisemitism resolution and urge the committee not to approve it. The conflation of all Jewish people with the state of Israel is a dangerous and incorrect assumption to codify into policy on campus, and will be used to restrict free speech and students' rights to protest. As a Jewish descendant of Holocaust survivors, I can testify to the fact that the duty to protest injustice, including against governments that are executing a genocide not dissimilar to the one that my grandparents survived, is a critical part of Judaism. Students, including Jewish students, must not have their right to protest curtailed.
Ana	Student	Mason is suppressing Arab and Palestinian students, prohibiting them from criticizing Zionism, which is a belief system that is accountable for the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people. This complacency in conflating Zionism with racism will tarnish Mason's already tumultuous history. Students should have the right to oppose a system that negatively impacts their homes as well as work towards disclosure and divestment. George Mason has praised itself for its diversity and consistently brands students of color on its websites; however, it appears to lack the resources and commitment to support these students adequately. This proposal, even being considered, highlights how Mason falls short in its alleged pursuit of genuine equity; approving it will only further isolate students. Regardless of administrative decisions, students will persist in making their voices heard.
Elizabeth Ann Kelly	Community Member	Zionism is an idea, not an identity. Just as criticizing our own government is a basic part of freedom of speech, criticizing another government or the actions of another nation is a basic part of freedom of speech. Students must be free to criticize the philosophy of Zionism and the actions of the government and nation of Israel (and the actions of all other governments and nations).
Emily Haines	Community Member	<p>I am writing to express concern and opposition to the proposal before the Board of Visitors that suggests adding Zionism protection to university policy as part of the University's protections from antisemitism.</p> <p>I personally have family and friends who are Jewish and who have even been harassed, so I am completely sympathetic to the desire to protect Jewish students and community members from antisemitic attacks. However, Zionism is very specifically a political ideology, not an identity, and it must be open to debate on a college campus where difficult ideas are meant to be discussed. Zionism is an ideology that can be extremely harmful, and has inherent racist and colonial roots, asserting that Jewish people have an absolute right to land that Palestinian people already owned before they arrive, and even that violence is acceptable to secure that land. The University's place in such debate, if it has one, is only to ensure all sides are respectful and that discussion is around beliefs and actions, not ad hominem attacks on who someone is that cannot be changed- Zionism is not unchanging, it is a political position. The assertion that Zionism is central to many Jewish people's identity, therefore Zionism must be protected, is a false equivalence. Many Catholics believe deeply that abortion is murder and define themselves as pro-life, but we do not consider pro-choice rhetoric, even against the Catholic Church establishment, to be anti-Catholic hate speech no matter how deeply held those beliefs may be. Zionism is the same. Just because it uses religious reasoning does not place it above reproach.</p> <p>It may be uncomfortable to allow such discussions on campus, but it doesn't make them less important to have, and groups that are already being silenced elsewhere such as Arabs and Palestinians, and even pacifists like Quakers, need academic spaces to be protected venues for free speech.</p> <p>The University, in specifically protecting Zionism, would be taking a racist and biased position itself under the guise of protecting one group from another. Please, reject this proposal, and use other methods to protect your Jewish students and faculty from direct antisemitism, without silencing legitimate criticism of a foreign government's ideology.</p>
Laura Dempsey	Community Member	<p>It's come to my attention that this board is considering criminalizing the criticism of Zionism. This nationalistic movement should not be above criticism, just like we love and honor our country enough to criticize if we should be able to do so for a foreign country too.</p> <p>It's dangerous when institutions of knowledge put guardrails on intellectual criticism. It goes against the very essence of your mission and purpose as a university.</p>
Kieron Rust	Community Member	<p>I am deeply concerned by the proposal to ban criticism of Israel and Zionism from campus. Students are expressing legitimate concerns about the actions of a state's government, and their conduct in war, which led to an arrest warrant in the ICC. This is vastly different from hatred based on religion, which we all condemn. These two things are not the same.</p> <p>Countries can still be criticized even when they are deeply tied to religious minorities. We spoke out against Saudi Arabia over the Khashoggi murder, which was not only protected speech, but encouraged. Calling out Israel's deeply immoral conduct is no different.</p> <p>Protect student's right to protest. Protect free speech.</p>
Pua Ali'i Lum	Community Member	There is no greater disservice to humanity than to conflate lies about antisemitism. Regardless of how many lies, court cases, threats and removing/revoking visas of students standing with Palestinians', human beings, rights. In some cases, they are Palestinians who are constantly suffering at the hands of Zionism Yt supremacy. You can't make a lie the truth. Shame on you.
Jackie Jones	Community Member	The least Jewish thing you can do is not share opinions and argue the points of founding principles of Zionism. Withholding love is a form of abuse and not caring about the rights and humanity of other's is anti-Jewish. We all should be standing tall in solidarity with Palestinian's.
Anne Komer	Community Member	I'm of Jewish descent and I do not support the genocide and lands stolen from the Palestinian people. There's a difference between antisemitism and anti-Zionism, and that distinction is a very important one. It is of utmost importance that we do not swing from no hate speech against a people who Hitler tried to ethnically cleanse to no hate speech against a government that is ethnically cleansing another people.

Concerned Community Member	Community Member	<p>To the Board of Visitors at GMU,</p> <p>I am writing as a concerned local community member and family member of a GMU alum about the proposal to revise University Policy Number 1201 ("Non-Discrimination Policy") to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on and off campus. I think that the proposal should not be approved on the basis of protecting GMU students' 1st Amendment right to freedom of expression. To me, this proposal to adopt the IHRA definition of antisemitism seems concerned about protecting a specific political position and not at all about protecting Jewish students, faculty, and staff.</p> <p>For example, indeed it would be antisemitic to "[a]ccus[e] the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust," as stated in the IHRA examples of antisemitism. It also would indeed be antisemitic to "[hold all] Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel." Accusing Jews as a people or Israel as a state of making up the Holocaust are examples of antisemitism because they show exaggeration and stereotyping of the entire Jewish community.</p> <p>However, there are several contemporary examples listed in the IHRA definition of antisemitism that are notably not antisemitic. It is extremely alarming to hear that GMU might implement a rule to punish students who are actually exercising their 1st Amendment right to freedom of expression by adopting this definition and its examples. For instance, it would NOT be antisemitic or denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination to "[claim] that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavor." The State of Israel does not represent Jewish people as a whole, so it would not be antisemitic to criticize Israel as a racist endeavor. Students, faculty, and staff raising concerns about Israel, for example about Israel being a modern colonialist state or "a racist endeavor", would not be antisemitic because it does not attack Jewish people, and instead is criticizing the government and history of Israel. It's conveniently vague that another IHRA example of antisemitism is "[a]pplying double standards [to Israel] by requiring of it a behavior not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation." Who or what decides what is a double standard, and what is or is not expected of "any other democratic nation"? This does not seem like something that can be objectively enforced.</p> <p>I also have concerns about the language used in the proposal. It's interesting that instead of Jewish people being explicitly the center of the intended expanded protections, the word "Zionist" is used. While white supremacists do use phrases like "Zionist" to spread antisemitism (for example, "Zionist-controlled government"), Zionist does not equal Jewish. There are many Zionist Christians in the world who are not Jewish. There are many Jewish people in the world who do not identify as Zionist. There are many Jewish people around the world, but especially here in the DC area, who are critical about Israel who would be labelled as antisemites by this change. Again, this proposal seems concerned about protecting a specific political position and not at all about protecting Jewish students, faculty, and staff on and off campus from actual antisemitism.</p> <p>I urge the Board of Visitors to reject this proposed change. There are better ways to protect Jewish students, faculty, and staff that do not need to revolve around the idea of protecting "Zionists" more than the Jewish community as a whole.</p>
Allan Gluck	Community Member	<p>Evaluating whether an act is genocide is objective. Applying the definition of the act of genocide to what Israel has done is objective, affirmed by the international criminal court and numerous other organizations and countries. Thus, to say that Israel is undertaking genocide is in no way antisemitic, and in fact denying this is antisemitic for it is antisemitic to think that Jews condone genocide.</p>
Mariam C	Alumna	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>As an alumna of GMU, I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>From my years at the university, both in and off campus, I know that George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism is dangerous and allows fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots - especially if endorsed by a university that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Nezha Selloum	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social</p>

		<p>progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Kelby Gibson	PhD candidate and GTA	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Like all people of good will, I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p>
Terri Ginsberg	Community Member	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Like all people of good will, I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p>
Community Member	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism is dangerous and allows fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots - especially if endorsed by a university that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
James H. Finkelstein	Emeritus Professor of Public Policy	<p>I'm Jim Finkelstein, Professor Emeritus of Public Policy and was the founding Vice Dean of the School of Public Policy, now part of the Schar School.</p> <p>According to the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), the first Principle of Trusteeship is to “Embrace the full scope of your responsibilities.” The foremost of these responsibilities is to “Fulfill your fiduciary responsibilities. As a fiduciary, you are charged with acting on behalf of the public to further the best interests of the organization on whose board you serve.” I am concerned that at least one member of the Board of Visitors (BOV) may not be upholding this responsibility.</p> <p>On February 11, 2025, Dr. Lindsey Burke reposted a multipart tweet by her Heritage Foundation subordinate, Jay Greene, in which he strongly advocated for reducing the NIH indirect cost recovery rate. Earlier, she shared a February</p>

7, 2025, tweet by Elon Musk:

“Can you believe that universities with tens of billions in endowments were siphoning off 60% of research award money for ‘overhead’? What a ripoff!”

Dr. Burke’s engagement with these posts suggests support for a policy that would significantly cut Mason’s federal funding—a conservative estimate places the loss at over \$2 million per year if such changes were enacted. It is difficult to see how advocating for such cuts aligns with Mason’s best interests.

This is not the first time Visitor Burke has used X to express views that, in my view, conflict with her duty of care and fiduciary responsibility as a member of the Mason BOV and chair of its Academic Programs, Diversity, and University Community Committee.

I urge Dr. Burke to step down from the BOV to uphold the integrity of the board and protect the university. This move would serve the best interests of Dr. Burke, the university community, the Commonwealth, , and even the Heritage Foundation.

Respectfully,

James H. Finkelstein, Ph.D.
Professor Emeritus of Public Policy
Schar School of Policy and Government

Bethany Letiecq Faculty

Dear APDUC Committee Members,

As the president of the GMU chapter of the American Association of University Professors and a Professor in CEHD, I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting. This resolution is an overreach of the BOV and threatens both free speech and academic freedom.

Like all people of good will, I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling if not repressing critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians.

As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th.

Thank you for your consideration.
Bethany Letiecq, President, GMU-AAUP

Sammy Alqasem MD resident

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.

George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism is dangerous and allows fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots - especially if endorsed by a university that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.

I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.

Natalie Johnson Community Member

Protect freedom of speech. Do not adopt Jeff Rosen’s proposal to ban all anti-Zionist speech. Zionism is a racist colonial ideology that is predicated on the genocide of Palestinians. Anti-Zionism is NOT anti-Semitism. If you ban anti-Zionist speech, then you are trampling free speech and making all students less safe, especially Palestinian, Arab, and Muslim students.

Nora Mona Community Member

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth,

		<p>fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism is dangerous and allows fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots - especially if endorsed by a university that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Alison OConnell	Alumni	<p>Dear Board of Visitors,</p> <p>The IHRA definition of antisemitism is flagrantly untrue, racist, seeks to suppress free speech, and is in itself antisemitic.</p> <p>Kenneth Stern, who drafted it, says he regrets creating it because of how it has been weaponized by the right to suppress free speech, especially on college campuses: https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2019/dec/13/antisemitism-executive-order-trump-chilling-effect</p> <p>Many Jewish organizations, including but not limited to, J-Street, T’ruah, Diaspora Alliance, Jewish Voice for Peace and Partners for Progressive Israel oppose this definition.</p> <p>Conflating all Jewish people with Zionism and the state of Israel is both inaccurate and antisemitic. The first anti-Zionists were Jewish people, long prior to 1948. Many Jews today are anti-Zionist and seeking to suppress their voices does not make this any less true. Yes, even Jewish people with family in Israel, who have lived in Israel, visited Israel - many of them also conclude the state of Israel is committing apartheid and genocide, and therefore oppose it.</p> <p>It is also appallingly racist and very transparent to try to suppress Palestinian students and professors from speaking honestly about their own experiences of colonization, racism and oppression.</p> <p>This Resolution is a shameful move on the part of Mason, and as an alumni I strongly encourage you to vote against it.</p>
Michael Beer	spouse is alumni. I am also a Virginia taxpayer	<p>As a person of Jewish heritage, and relatives who were killed and hostaged on Oct 7, as well as the descendant of Holocaust victims, I ask you to oppose the proposal by Jeff Rosen to criminalize and/or stigmatize criticism of Zionism on campus. Many many Jews are critical or oppose Zionism. Are you seriously going to equate (or link) antisemitism with anti-zionism? And please don't refer or promote the IHRA definition of antisemitism, which also equates criticism of Zionism with Judaism. Academic freedom is coming under attack by the Trump administration. LGBTQ, immigrants, gender studies, racism/ethnicity studies, people with disabilities and DEI. The issue of Israel and Palestine is a canary bird in the coal mine. Stand firm for academic freedom and the universal right to free speech and assembly as guaranteed under Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.</p>
Anonymous	Student	<p>Restricting students' free speech against the genocide against thousands of innocent Palestinians is a deeply disturbing proposition by a body meant to reflect the student voice. The IHRA's Definition of Antisemitism has a prominent history of being weaponized to silence criticism of Israel, and it's profoundly disappointing to see this institution do the same.</p>
Anonymous	Community Member	<p>Zionism, the idea that Jewish people have a right to all land that exists in a certain part of the Levant is highly damaging to not only to all non-Jewish people but as well as all Jewish people all over the world. By trying to legitimize this claim you are legitimizing all claims of old lost land, are we supposed to go back to the borders of the 16th century and entertain such nationalism? I think not.</p> <p>Even worse, if you were to legitimize such claims you are condemning the people that live in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank to being ethnically cleaned and removed from where they live, which will result in lives lost and extreme unnecessary agitation.</p> <p>Also, in suppressing the freedom of speech of people against Zionism is against human rights, especially the right of freedom of speech. To be against Zionism is not to be against Jewish people, in fact it's a standpoint that is rooted in creating a better world, as validating nationalistic claims to ethnically cleanse and settle land is highly anti-human.</p>
Q Garcia	Community Member	<p>Freedom of speech and expression is a foundational right in this country, and should be upheld by our collegiate institutions. Of course hate speech should not be tolerated, but trying to broaden the definition of “hate speech” for political purposes is an insult to all of us, and threatens our right to speak up against injustice. We are not claiming that Jewish community members should be attacked for their identity and beliefs, hate speech should continue to be banned. But broadening the definition of hate speech to include all good faith critiques of Israel as a settler-colonial nation, is not only false, but immoral and a threat to our freedoms.</p> <p>Many Jewish community members and leaders have differing views and opinions around Israel, and to reduce the Jewish community to one stance is anti-Jewish and hateful in itself.</p>

		<p>A commitment to honest and open dialogue about the issues of our time is desperately needed on our college campuses, and I urge you to rethink your assertions and definitions of hate speech and anti-semitism. Your current plans do not reflect American or Jewish values and instead threaten other groups of people being directly impacted by ongoing wars and displacement. This move seeks to divide us further, by silencing and forcing out voices that you don't agree with, further marginalizing already intentionally marginalized groups.</p> <p>It is your responsibility to advance truth and honesty in your rules and policies, not to punish students for views you disagree with.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
Grace Nina	Community Member	<p>Freedom of speech Freedom of assembly</p> <p>Respect our rights</p>
Anonymous	Faculty	<p>Please do not double down on policies that conflate criticism of Israel or Zionism with antisemitism. Almost every Jewish person I know feels less safe because of ISRAEL's actions over the last 15+ months, not because of Palestinians'. Equating antizionism and antisemitism makes Jews LESS safe, not more safe. The IHRA definition of antisemitism is counterproductive and compromises Jewish safety. Never again means never again for anyone.</p>
Jessica Schwalb	Student	None
Quinn Chapman	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism is dangerous and allows fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots - especially if endorsed by a university that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Evelyn Rose Johnston	Staff	<p>As a member of the now protected identity of "Zionist", and a member of the GMU SSI board, I am happy to see that anti Israel hatred will not be tolerated. Students Supporting Israel at GMU fully supports this decision by the Board of Visitors, and will make SURE we are accepted into every space on campus. This prestigious university should no longer allow the violence that stems from the palestinian community to prosper on our campus. palestinians and pro palestinians are EXTREMELY violent, and full of terror and hatred. I personally am glad to see that they are no longer allowed to spread their filth and their lies about a FAKE genocide. They started a war, and now they cry because they can't finish it. Ban kuffiyehs next. Those rape rags are a filthy symbol for terrorism.</p>
Zahra Hilmi	Community Member	<p>This is an extremely dangerous motion that not only violates free speech, but censors hundreds of students, faculty, staff, and more. GMU claims to be an institution that values its students and diversity, while simultaneously suppressing those it promises to uplift. GMU only cares about its image, and if this motion passes, GMU will be forever remembered as an institution that sides with the oppressor, only using its power to uplift itself and that takes advantage of its students.</p>
Sara Sallaj	Community Member	<p>Everyone in the United States has the right of free speech. Calling out complicity in genocide is in our rights and shame on George Mason University for trying to take that away from us. Shame on you George Mason, I would never want to represent a University as disgusting and dishonest as this one.</p>
Susu e	Student	<p>GMU needs to ACKNOWLEDGE the Palestinian community at gmu and support the movement for the HUMAN RIGHTS of Palestinians</p> <p>DONT PROTECT people who call for VIOLENCE towards Palestinians</p>
Ashley	Faculty	<p>GMU needs to ACKNOWLEDGE the Palestinian community at gmu and support the movement for the HUMAN RIGHTS of Palestinians</p> <p>DONT PROTECT people who call for VIOLENCE towards Palestinians</p>
Chad	Staff	<p>GMU needs to ACKNOWLEDGE the Palestinian community at gmu and support the movement for the HUMAN RIGHTS of Palestinians</p> <p>DONT PROTECT people who call for VIOLENCE towards Palestinians</p>
Alex	Community Member	<p>GMU needs to ACKNOWLEDGE the Palestinian community at gmu and support the movement for the HUMAN RIGHTS of Palestinians</p>

		DONT PROTECT people who call for VIOLENCE towards Palestinians
President	Student	GMU needs to ACKNOWLEDGE the Palestinian community at gmU and support the movement for the HUMAN RIGHTS of Palestinians
Fear God	Staff	DONT PROTECT people who call for VIOLENCE towards Palestinians GMU needs to ACKNOWLEDGE the Palestinian community at gmU and support the movement for the HUMAN RIGHTS of Palestinians
Sheima Amara	GMU Alumna	DONT PROTECT people who call for VIOLENCE towards Palestinians Removing students' abilities to critique government and political organizations is terrifying. This is a public institution that prides itself on diversity, encourages political dialogue and criticism, and understands the sanctity of protecting our constitutional rights. This would be a disastrous mistake for the university and university students of all backgrounds and ideologies.
Conner Moses	Student	I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression. George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift. I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.
Elisabeth Bodin	Student	These ongoing resolutions are not what will protect Jewish students on campus. As a part-Jewish student on campus, I have witnessed a rise in anti-semitism with deep concern - and yet I think there are better ways to address the issue. Criminalizing certain discourse surrounding Israel and its policies to "protect" against this does not just go against free speech, it unfairly conflates all Jews with the decisions made by a state that they may or may not have ever stepped foot in, and may even lead to condemnation of Palestinian students practicing their own cultural identity or discussing concerns for their people if the rules are made too vague. Jewish and other students should be permitted the capacity to engage with Zionism critically; as a modern political ideology, it is just as applicable for discourse - positive or negative - as any other belief. It is of course inappropriate to harass Jewish students for their views on what is happening in Palestine - and it is also inappropriate to bar Jewish students from stating views that may descent from the popular on notions of Zionism. It is also odd to me that to protect Mason's student body, more is not being done to combat certain perceivable threats to the Jewish student population here at GMU. I specifically refer to an incident of a student dressing a nazi, something that makes me and others feel unsafe, but the university decided was "protected" under free speech. How come to dress and present one's self as those who would kill us is protected by free speech, but diverse discussion on a political belief from the 19th century is not? There are several other incidents I can think of where hate speech was left protected by the university - from anti-Trans protestors to some certain missionary folk with a history of harassing non-Christian students on campus. George Mason tries to present itself as an institution where any can be whoever they want, and discuss what they must to make the world a better place; what does it mean for the university when political speech is controlled, but dangerous symbolism and hate speech are allowed to flourish?
Denise Albanese	Faculty	I write to enter my objection to Visitor Rosen's resolution, due for consideration at the meeting on the 13th of February. It is demonstrable that anti-semitism is a real danger and that, horrifyingly, it is on the rise in the US: as I do with all forms of discrimination, I want to register my detestation of it. However, the proposed resolution risks obscuring this real danger by eliding it with a legitimate (if, to some, unpalatable) position concerning the rights of Palestinians. There is real work to do at Mason concerning myriad forms of anti-discrimination. This resolution, however, does nothing to advance that work. I urge you to vote no.
Sojourner Davidson	Community Member	To whom it may concern, I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. The proposal is an assault on free speech and a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.

		<p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism is dangerous and allows fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots - especially if endorsed by a university that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the negative effects this proposal would pose to freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Anonymous	Community Member	<p>I strongly disapprove of any attempt whatsoever to criminalize the criticism of Zionism. This is a reprehensible thing to do.</p> <p>I'd like to draw to your attention that numerous credible human rights and humanitarian organizations have cited, using primary sources, countless human rights violations committed by Israel, in the name of Zionism. Here are two particularly powerful, in-depth, primary-resource-filled reports that I read through, and that you should also read through:</p> <p>280-page report from Amnesty International: "Israel's apartheid against Palestinians: Cruel system of domination and crime against humanity" - https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/5141/2022/en/</p> <p>296-page report from Amnesty International: "'You Feel Like You Are Subhuman': Israel's Genocide Against Palestinians in Gaza" - https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/mde15/8668/2024/en/</p> <p>While there are articles floating around out there that try to argue against these points, keep in mind that QUALITY matters over QUANTITY. A high-quality, in-depth, primary-source-filled report is exponentially more valuable than a false claim repeated numerous times. And as a higher education institution, you should know and understand this very well.</p> <p>Criminalizing the criticism of Zionism will disproportionately hurt some of the most marginalized members of the GMU community who care deeply about human rights & social justice.</p>
Anonymous	Alumnus	<p>As an alumnus of George Mason University, one of the things I most appreciated about GMU in my time as a student was the space it gave to Students Against Israeli Apartheid, empowering it to speak out freely against the genocide of Palestinians and the racist, colonial ideology of Zionism. That this proposal to ban such speech is even being considered is utterly disgusting to me, and makes me ashamed to have attended this university.</p>
Grace Venes-Escaffi	Alumna	<p>After 16 months of publicly broadcasted genocide, it disappoints me as a George Mason alumna to think that my alma mater would contemplate passing such a harmful resolution based on protecting supremacist ideology. Anti-Zionist Jewish people from around the world have been saying for decades that association with Zionism is a desecration of their faith. This resolution posits that for many Jewish people support Zionism and Israel are integral part of their identities and that those identities will be protected under anti-discrimination policy - “many” is first arbitrary and second not representative of any majority. By the logic of “many” as stated in this resolution, if a sizable number of students identified as white supremacists this too should be protected ideology. I think we can all agree supremacy of any kind is not conducive to the progress we hope to see and facilitate in our educational environments.</p> <p>Anti-Zionism is Anti-Racism. Israel is a genocidal apartheid state, the global audience has seen it with their own eyes. To silence its criticism is to silence truth, and minimize the severity of the many human rights violations which make up Israel's history.</p>
M S	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors to adopt the IHRA's definition of anti-semitism that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism is dangerous and allows fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots - especially if endorsed by a university that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms</p>

		would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.
Catherine Saunders	Faculty	<p>To the APDUC Committee:</p> <p>I am writing to express concern about the Antisemitism Resolution that you will be considering during your meeting today. While I appreciate that antisemitism, along with islamophobia and other forms of stereotype-based discrimination, is currently increasing in the United States, I worry that this resolution will have the unintended effect of suppressing academic inquiry and free speech, including the speech of Jewish faculty, students, and staff who are critical of the policies of the present Israeli government. There is also a very real possibility that curtailing opportunities for civil, in-depth, discussion of all the issues and ideas surrounding Israel, Palestine, and American policy toward the conflicts in that region will ultimately increase conflict and expressions of antisemitism by forestalling the possibility of difficult dialogue that could lead to greater understanding and decreased instances of stereotyping. While I'm sure the proposed resolution is well-intentioned, it ultimately strikes me as antithetical both to the university's mission and to its intended purpose.</p>
Anonymous	Alumni	I am concerned that this policy would prohibit any criticism of the Israeli government's actions against the Palestinian people. While antisemitism should be condemned, this should not be done in a way that excludes the plight of Palestinians.
.	Community Member	Don't support the IHRA definition
.	Student	Anti-Zionism is not Racism in the same way DEI is not anti-white
Ellie Fox	Student	<p>I'm president of Jewish Voice for Peace at George Mason University, and I urge against the adaptation of the APDUCC Antisemitism resolution.</p> <p>First, insisting that Zionism is an integral part of Jewish identity plays into the antisemitic trope that Jews have split loyalty between the United States and Israel. This is an unacceptable basis for University policy, and the Board of Visitors should be ashamed.</p> <p>Any antisemitism that happens to overlap with anti-Israel rhetoric (example: the usage of the term Zionist Occupied Government) could be taken care of with an antisemitism policy that doesn't equate antizionism with antisemitism by default. The examples of antisemitism to be given in the IHRA fact sheet, are far too broad and will be weaponized exclusively against the Palestine solidarity movement at George Mason University. I know this because the University has not taken action on actual examples of antisemitism from evangelical Christian protestors and Nazi cosplayers, being protected under free speech. I ask, what about our free speech? Will Jewish Voice for Peace be prosecuted for hurting the feelings of Zionists by calling out Apartheid conditions in Israel?</p> <p>This resolution must rejected, and we must shift away from the IHRA Definition of Antisemitism to policies that will serve jews and the rest of the student body.</p>
Sara van der Horst	Alumni	As an alumna of George Mason University, I would like to register my opposition to the proposed anti-semitism resolution. To conflate Jewish identity with the state of Israel is a reductive and false assertion that is offensive to many Jews who do not feel an affiliation with Israel or the project of Zionism. While I am opposed to harassment based on identity, that is not the same as criticism of Israel as a state. To stifle criticism of a state and its actions seems to me to be contrary to the university's stated commitment to upholding the first amendment rights of its community members. I strongly urge the board to uphold its commitment to free speech by voting against this resolution.
Wonmai Punksungka	Student	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Like all people of good will, I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p> <p>Thank you, as always, for taking action. As we just learned from our victory blocking three additional partisan extremists from the BOV, we have a lot of power when we join together and fight!</p> <p>Also - hot off the GMU-AAUP presses - we want to call to your attention a two-part article we just published in Academe, the AAUP's blog, entitled "The Transformation of George Mason University's Board." Part 1 provides some historical context and focuses on the Antisemitism resolution. Part 2 discusses the University of Chicago's "Shils Report" and how the BOV's fascination with this report could affect GMU professors, particularly with regard to the report's recommended (and, in our view, exceedingly narrow and rigid) criteria for tenure and promotion. Indeed, the Board's upcoming discussion of this report is an ominous sign that visitors may soon try to exert influence over GMU's tenure process. We urge you to read both of our Academe blog posts when you have time.</p> <p>Sincerely, The GMU-AAUP Executive Committee</p>
Norma Rantisi	Professor, Concordia University	<p>Dear APDUC Committee Members,</p> <p>I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p>

		<p>Like all people of good will, I reject antisemitism and antisemitic ideologies, and I support including protections based on ethnic identity and shared heritage in GMU's anti-discrimination policy. But this resolution is not about protecting faculty and students from discrimination. It is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. As such, this resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th. Then, with this politicized attempt to criminalize legitimate speech and inquiry behind us, we can get to the real work of including ethnic identity and shared heritage into Mason's anti-discrimination policy.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Norma Rantisi</p>
Madeline Portnoy	Staff	<p>As a Jewish staff member at this institution, I am writing to strongly object to Visitor Rosen's proposed resolution (titled "Antisemitism Resolution") under consideration at the February 13th APDUC Committee Meeting.</p> <p>This resolution is not about protecting Jewish students, staff, and faculty from discrimination - it is about chilling critical discussions of Israel and Israeli state policy and stigmatizing speech that supports the human rights of Palestinians. This policy will be used to discriminate against anyone critical of the state of Israel, even Jews like myself. This policy also uses arbitrary examples of antisemitism, rejecting the lived experiences of Jews in modern, historical, and societal contexts.</p> <p>This resolution must be rejected, and I call on all Board members on the APDUC Committee to vote "NO" when the resolution comes up for debate on February 13th.</p>
Anonymous	Student	<p>Greetings to the board,</p> <p>I am a student and TA at GMU. But first and foremost, I am a Jew who loves her culture, religion, and is not ashamed of her ethnicity. I am a proud Zionist. I fear that many of my peers do not know much about Jewish people or Zionism. I know some of these students very well and yet they never ask me anything about Zionism or even about Israel. These students claim to be fighting for peace but refuse to do the hard work that peace entails. Communication, compassion, reevaluation and understanding. But I am committed to the work because I truly wish to see a day where Israelis and Palestinians, Jews and Arabs see themselves as friends, as family who recognize just how much we both have in common. History shows us that Jews are indigenous to the land but that we aren't the only ones! By protecting the rights to include Zionists in this discussion of peace you protect peace itself. You give others the opportunities to learn, to ask questions. You give me the opportunity to learn, to coexist, to grow! Thank you for protecting your Jewish students and thank you for protecting peace. I encourage you to ask more questions. To learn more about the side you don't understand. I beg of my fellow TA's and faculty on campus to be a role model for your students. You know what it means to cross reference. You know the importance of concession, of an open mind. Show your students this. Do your research talk to real people, real Jews, real Zionists in person. Zionism is inherit to Jewish people. It is a part of us. Israel is a part of us. Zionism does not mean war nor does it mean evil. It is our indigenous right to live on the land that we come from. The land that our ancestors dreamed of in the diaspora. To discriminate against any other indigenous people would not be tolerated on a liberal college campus. Why do you make an exception for Jews? Why have you not talked to us? What are you afraid you'll learn?</p> <p>Peace is not one sided.</p> <p>Thank you</p>
Martha Molinaro	Student	<p>I am in the Arabic department. Many of the people here are Palestinians. Over the past year, some of them have pretty much had their bloodlines wiped out and all of them have lived their entire life under the oppressive chokehold of Zionism in all its real world applications. It is absurd to say that they cannot criticize or protest the very ideology that has been used to systemically oppress their entire people and kill their families and community members. It is also absurd to say that allies of all faiths and ethnicities and nationalities cannot criticize an ideology (Zionism), which is separate from an identity. With such large Palestinian, Arab and Muslim populations on your campus, it is your job to protect them instead of marginalizing them further in this environment where their rights and even some students' visa and immigration statuses are under attack. The defense of this policy seems to be that it is fighting anti-semitism, which not only equates Judaism with Zionism, but erases the very people most impacted by Zionism, Palestinians. Their voices should be THE center of conversations about Zionism, as its victims. Prohibiting them from voicing their own struggles only succeeds in cutting productive conversation entirely. Additionally, the school already has policies against discrimination based on identity or religion, including anti-semitism. Instead of enforcing those policies, you are changing the definition of anti-semitism in order to target another vulnerable community whose genocide Mason has helped fund for 15 months, essentially scapegoating them and their allies for the scourge of anti-Jewishness in this country while simultaneously promoting negative stereotypes of the Arabs as hostile Jew-haters. That is so deeply wrong I don't even know where to begin with it. Even if you don't name Palestinians in this policy to obscure its intentions, we know what you are doing because it is obvious who will be realistically most affected by this, and who is being targeted by policies like these being adapted at schools across the nation. We in the Mason community must keep the Heritage Foundation, Project Esther, and other anti-democratic, anti-immigrant, and anti-DEI policies off of our campus.</p>
Serena Abdallah	Student	<p>I am writing to you regarding the proposed resolution to change the definition of antisemitism, which will include critiques of Zionism. This is a very concerning matter, as the ability to critique and analyze governments, ideologies, and ways of thinking is part of an academic environment, and this resolution will impact academic integrity and freedoms at our university.</p> <p>Last year, President Washington sent us an email that claimed hate speech is also free speech, and that people have differing opinions and beliefs, and I sent an email back that hate speech can incite real acts of violence against people and should be addressed as such. Hatred towards Jewish people and targeting someone simply because they are Jewish is wrong. Zionism is separate from this, especially as it is used as a means to punish and control people, not just Palestinians, but people all over the world who do not agree with a Zionist ideology.</p>

		<p>Freedom of speech is not speech without consequences - just as prejudice towards Jewish people is wrong, so is the admonishing of a person's character by labeling them as an antisemite because they speak out against or debate the treatment of people by the Israeli government and their military. Just because some people conflate Judaism with Zionism, does not mean they always coexist in the same spaces or conversations. Unless you want to tell me that just because some people conflate Islam with terrorism, it means the two must always be banded together? That is something that I'm sure many members of the student body would not be pleased to hear.</p> <p>While I would have loved to take this opportunity to argue my own politics, I assure you, that is not my intention. Because if it starts with conflating critiquing Zionism with antisemitism, then where does it end? This will spread into other areas of knowledge and discussion, and people who may support this resolution could realize it has seeped into something that now silences and demonizes them as well. Again, I reiterate that it is true that freedom of speech is not speech without consequences - but are you leaving us with freedom?</p>
Evan Belcher	Mason Alumnus	<p>As a proud Mason alum who is passionate about the stated values of the university, particularly its protection of free speech and diversity, I vehemently oppose this proposed resolution.</p> <p>By adopting the overbroad IHRA definition of anti-semitism, this University would knowingly have a chilling effect on productive and vital conversations regarding Israel and Palestine. In its breadth, the definition obscures and trivializes the very real problem of anti-semitism, conflating it with mere criticism of the state of Israel. Criticism of the government of Israel is no more inherently anti-Semitic than criticism of the US government is anti-Christian or criticism of Saudi Arabia's government is islamophobic. We can — and must — allow discourse critical of any government to stand at face value, without assuming or inventing ulterior motive. Adopting this resolution would align this University with a dangerous double-standard.</p> <p>In addition, it would materially oppress Palestinian-Americans in the student body, faculty, and wider community, whose lived experience over the past year and a half — not to mention the 75 years prior — have been filled with deep personal loss and cultural trauma. They should share the rights enjoyed by all others, to speak about their trauma (and indeed, name its cause) without fear of official reproach or retaliation. In the same vein, other pro-Palestinian advocates (many of them Jewish) should be able to express their views without fear.</p> <p>Finally, as the arc of history bends towards justice with the recent ceasefire deal and issuance of ICC arrest warrants for both Hamas and Israeli leaders for their respective atrocities, it is important that Mason leadership take a strong stance towards free and open debate rather than one-sided sanctions. Mason should position itself as an impartial champion of civil liberties, freedom, and diversity in this time.</p> <p>As a proud and active member of the Mason community, I ask that you thoroughly consider the above and reject this resolution.</p>
Christopher Lowder	Faculty	<p>In regards to the Antisemitism Resolution, board members often said "not intended" with the reading of the text. However, it has been interpreted by a large number of faculty, staff, and students that it might indeed impact speech. This would be a chilling effect on speech. First Amendment and 14th amendment protections not only protect the intention, but the real world impact. If enough folks read this resolution as prevention speech, even if not intentional, this chilling effect is unconstitutional. With the current writing of the text, this chilling effect would be unconstitutional and could open the university up to legal action in regards to suspension and termination of faculty.</p>
Hannah Wing-Bonica	Alumni	<p>As a GMU Alumnus, I am concerned about antisemitism and do not want students to experience discrimination for being Jewish. However, I believe that this resolution should not be approved as it prevents students from protesting against the state of Israel. A recent investigation by Amnesty International concluded that Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians in Gaza. Students should not have their right to protest against Israel's war crimes taken away.</p>
Hannah Landsberger	Alumni	<p>I want to address Visitor Rosen's assertion that the antisemitism resolution will not restrict free speech on campus. The equation of criticism of the government of Israel with antisemitism will absolutely be used to restrict the free speech of students who are advocating for Palestinian rights. He claims that Anti Zionism sentiment will be allowed as long as it is not being used to target Jewish students. Who will make this distinction? Who will decide if a protest against the government of Israel is actually antisemitism? The definition is so vague as to allow any acts of free speech critical of Israel to be labeled as antisemitic. This will be used to shut down peaceful protest, academic debate, curriculum that features Palestinian history, and funding for student organizations that support Palestinian students. It is very clear to me that this resolution is actually an anti-Palestinian resolution in disguise as an antisemitism resolution. In addition, the proposed "wordsmithing" he is asking for will take up valuable time and energy from the board and from the DEI offices that are under so much stress because of the current executive orders. I do not see a productive definition of antisemitism arriving from such "wordsmithing"; in fact I worry that this will be used simply to create loopholes that will allow anti-zionism and support of Palestinian rights to be more restricted on campus. I would urge the board to not pass this resolution in any form.</p>
Anonymous	Alumnus	<p>Criticizing a government (no matter the religion of the country itself) does not ever equate to hate speech towards a religion or ethnicity. Those are separate things. We should be able to criticize the actions of a government. Criticizing the government of Pakistan has never meant "hating Muslims" or Islamophobia. It's the same idea here. Students on campus should be able to speak up for the rights of Palestinians and not be punished for it. Do not encroach on their first amendment right.</p>
Anonymous	Community Member	<p>This is a blatant violation of freedom of speech.</p> <p>It is absolutely fine to be critical of a murderous intolerant ideology (Zionism) and this has no relation whatsoever to one's opinion about Jews in general. Zionism is actually a disgrace to Judaism, which is the oldest Abrahamic religion.</p>
Anonymous	Community Member	<p>Anti-zionism is not racism! As a Jewish community member, Zionism is a despicable ideal that should never be accepted and should instead be condemned. Banning anti-zionism is against the students freedom of speech and protects nobody but Israel's interests. Zionism doesn't keep us Jews safe</p>

Martin Lucius Bonica	Alumnus	<p>I am a George Mason University alumnus, having graduated from the College of Humanities and Social Studies in 2012.</p> <p>I am writing to express concern over the vague and problematic wording of the upcoming Resolution of the Board of Visitors pertaining to the implementation of University Policy 1201. I believe that the lack of clarity in this resolution's language will lead to the restriction of students' free speech and right to protest actions taken by the State of Israel, and it will disenfranchise Palestinian students.</p> <p>In the resolution, it is acknowledged that University Policy 1201 (the non-discrimination policy) uses International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of antisemitism. Referring to the IHRA's Working Definition, its definition in regards to the State of Israel is clear. In regards to antisemitism:</p> <p>"Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that leveled against any other country cannot be regarded as antisemitic."</p> <p>However, the resolution adds additional criteria to the definition of anti-semitism, beyond the scope of the IHRA's Working Definition:</p> <p>"RESOLVED, this board directs that the factsheet shall include the following statement: 'In some cases, Zionism or Zionist has been used as a proxy for Jewish or Israeli. If used as a proxy for Jewish or Israeli, discrimination or harassment (including any of the examples listed on this factsheet of discriminatory treatment or discriminatory harassment) that targets Zionism or Zionist would also violate University Policy 1201.'"</p> <p>There is no formal definition of anti-Zionism in the IHRA's working definition, nor is there one in this resolution. This oversight leaves room for abuse of this resolution to categorize any criticism of the State of Israel as "anti-Zionism", and therefore prohibit it as antisemitism.</p> <p>I urge the board to revise this language with reference to a working definition of anti-Zionism, to make clear the implications of this resolution. Failing to do so would jeopardize the right to legitimate free speech by students and faculty of George Mason University, and disenfranchise Palestinian students.</p>
Matthew Kelley	Faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech rights at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV resolution.
Samirah Alkassim	Faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech rights at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV resolution!!!!
Christina Eagle	Student	Protect academic freedom and free speech rights at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV resolution.
Terrence Lyons	Faculty	<p>Please vote no on Visitor Jeffrey Rosen Antisemitism Resolution and protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason.</p> <p>Terrence Lyons, Professor, Carter School</p>
Julia Holcomb	Faculty	I have taught at Mason since 2002, and I have always been grateful for the academic freedom that has protected my teaching. I'm writing to urge you to protect that academic freedom. Oppose the BOV resolution.
Thomas Stanley	Faculty	The BOV resolution is a serious infringement of academic freedom and promotes a climate that supports the most pernicious claims of anti-semitism. George Mason University does not need this resolution. It does not protect Jewish students, faculty, or staff. It only shields the state of Israel from well-earned condemnation and criticism.
Elizabeth Sampson	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p> <p>Take good care,</p> <p>Liz</p>
Jim Best	Community Member	By the thousands Israeli citizens strongly exercise the right to protest the policies and actions of their own government. Does that make Israeli citizens antisemitic? The proposed GMU policy adopting the IHR a definition of antisemitism would not be acceptable to Israelis. Why are we considering to impose a conflicted definition on Americans?

Jackie Jones	Community Member	<p>To Whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns on the assault on free speech and We The People's first amendment rights. I fully believe as a U.S. citizen, that we need to protect and support democracy not for just some but for everyone.</p>
Mandi Gauthier	Community Member	<p>The IHRA definition of antisemitism which conflates antizionism with actual antisemitism is a grave mistake. The Palestinian Holocaust is happening in real time as millions are being ethnically cleansed off their land. The public should be able to criticize the Israeli government's genocidal actions without being antisemitic! This will be a major mistake and a slap in the face of human rights everywhere.</p>
Rani Abba	Community Member	<p>Dear GMU BOV,</p> <p>As a Jewish community member and a parent of a student attending GMU, I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This is totally appalling and even dangerous because Zionism should never be conflated with Judaism. Zionism is but a racist ideology based on supremacy, and thus it should not in the least be compared to or conflated with a noble religion such as Judaism. Jeff Rosen's outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Gus Kan	Parent of 2 students attending GMU	<p>Greetings,</p> <p>I am writing as the dad of 2 GMU students and as a community member of Jewish faith, to express my deepest concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for GMU's Board of Visitors that would criminalize criticism of Zionism on campus. This is an appalling proposal that is very dangerous, as it conflates Zionism with Judaism. The fact is that Zionism is an ideology that many consider extremist and racist per its basic documents and principles, while Judaism is a faith that calls for equality and love between all people no matter what their differences are. Jeff Rosen's proposal is not more than an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. All institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, and it's crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity and freedom of expression.</p> <p>While GMU prides itself in its diverse student population, it shockingly continues to harm and marginalize its own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is well documented as a colonialist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Anonymous	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I believe Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors would redefine the term antisemitic in a narrow and dangerous way. This proposal would place any criticism of the State of Israel and the ideology of Zionism under the definition of antisemitism. Not only does this conflate all Jewish people with this country and ideology, but it further alienates the Palestinian and Arab student communities, who also have been deeply impacted by the conflict.</p> <p>I consider antisemitism to be a very serious matter. The identity of all Jewish people should not be confused with the actions of the state of Israel or the colonialist ideology of Zionism. Like the opinions of any other country or ideology, students should have the right to voice opposition or their perspectives on what they see as unethical violations of human rights.</p> <p>This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their</p>

		<p>views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I believe students should have the right to voice concern about a country, whose Prime Minister and Defense Minister both face charges of war crimes from the ICC along with a warrant for their arrests. Likewise, I believe the students have the right to criticize the human rights violations committed by Hamas. I believe Universities should allow for open dialogues and foster critical thinking and learning. This proposal would be a step in the opposite direction of such ideals.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Karyn Pomerantz	Community Member	<p>I am writing to oppose your repression of pro Palestinian demonstrations and activities. Your repression is seriously complicit with Trump and his allies' political maneuvers. Criticism of Zionism, a political ideology and practice, in no way is the same as anti-semitism, and you are promoting anti-Semitism by claiming this to be so. I urge you to welcome the students you've thrown off campus and to provide spaces for people to promote anti-racist and anti-genocide politics. You expose the role of the university by playing into the hands of the US government by repressing any opposition. As a retired public health educator, I emphasize how dangerous racist policies and actions are, harming the health and well-being of tens of thousands of people. It is reminiscent of the German fascists barring Jewish, women, and foreign scholars from working in German universities. Let's not repeat this.</p>
Sima Bakalian	Community Member	<p>To Whom It May Concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my deep concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason University's Board of Visitors, which seeks to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This alarming proposal is a direct attack on free speech and a blatant violation of our First Amendment rights. Institutions of higher learning should be spaces of intellectual growth and tolerance, where diverse perspectives, ideas, and identities can flourish. Universities serve as pillars of social progress, making it imperative that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse, and freedom of expression.</p> <p>Despite George Mason University's commitment to diversity, this proposal actively harms and marginalizes its own students. By seeking to censor any criticism of Zionism across all university departments, it suppresses necessary political discourse and silences voices advocating for justice. Zionism, as a colonialist and racist ideology, is rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Conflating anti-Zionism with antisemitism, as outlined in the IHRA definition, is not only misleading but also dangerous—it allows fascism and white supremacy to take hold, particularly if such a stance is endorsed by an institution that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression." Furthermore, adopting the IHRA definition will not make Jewish students safer. Instead, it weaponizes accusations of antisemitism to shield a political ideology from criticism while ignoring the real threats posed by white supremacy and far-right extremism, which are the primary drivers of antisemitic violence.</p> <p>This proposal is not just an attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it threatens the fundamental rights of all individuals to voice their opinions freely. Academic spaces should empower marginalized groups to challenge dominant narratives, not suppress activism and silence those who seek change.</p> <p>I urge you to recognize the serious implications of this proposal, which undermines freedom of expression, critical thinking, and diverse discourse—cornerstones of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization, and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p> <p>Sincerely, Sima Bakalian</p>
Lana Shami	Concerned Parent	<p>We've had enough of this injustice!</p>
Elisabeth Chan	Alumni	<p>Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.</p>
Alexander Hilert	Alumni	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing today as Jewish alumni of George Mason to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. Equating antisemitism with anti-Zionism is both false and dangerous and would seek to silence the legitimate voices of students calling for justice on this pressing issue. As a Jewish person, it is of course important to condemn antisemitism, but it is unfair to explicitly single out this issue as Muslim, Palestinian, and other groups simultaneously face discrimination. The IHRA definition of antisemitism is hostilely criticized by organizations like the ACLU and Jewish Voice for Peace because it is the wrong approach to fighting antisemitism and serves to legitimize the actions of the state of Israel and curb legitimate efforts at protest and international solidarity with Palestine which has faced decades of brutal occupation and oppression. This proposal would have devastating effects on students just seeking to exercise their free speech rights on campus. I urge the Board of Visitors to reject this proposal.</p>
Angela Barajas	Student	<p>Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution!</p>
Dr. Vicki Kirsch	Faculty	<p>As a Jewish faculty member, I have been on the receiving end of anti-semitic actions several times on campus from other faculty and from administrators. I also felt unsafe on campus during the campus protests and attended a meeting with the President in which information was shared and security vowed to do more to protect our students with no protection for the faculty. Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.</p>

Dr. Vicki Kirsch	Faculty	I inadvertently submitted an earlier note suggesting that the board vote against the anti-semitism clause -- this IS NOT WHAT I MEANT TO DO. I very much support the inclusion of anti-semitism in GMU protections. As I said earlier, I have felt threatened and unprotected on campus. I have been treated unfairly by the ombudswoman and ignored in various workshops on inclusion. Thank you.
Alexander Pellegrino	Community Member	<p>I've been a Fairfax resident for years and love attending events at Mason.</p> <p>I'm writing to express my opposition to Jeff Rosen's proposal.</p> <p>I received my undergraduate degree in biology from another VA public institution - William and Mary. And I got my master's in forestry from Yale.</p> <p>At each institution I saw how free speech for white supremacy was given a free pass while free speech for criticizing powerful institutions like Israel was suppressed. And I've seen universities bravely stand up to be on the right side of history.</p> <p>You have a chance to do the right thing.</p>
Benjamin Dreyfus	Faculty	As a Jewish faculty member who is concerned about rising antisemitism, I am writing to OPPOSE the BOV resolution on antisemitism. The IHRA definition can be used to silence criticism of the Israeli government, which is legitimate political speech (whether or not I agree with it), while doing nothing to address actual antisemitism. Our Chinese and Chinese-American students have a right not to be discriminated against because of their Chinese background, and not to be personally targeted or harassed because of the actions of the Chinese government; however, they have no reasonable expectation that they can avoid hearing criticism (even very harsh criticism) of the Chinese government (and likewise for our Russian students, Iranian students, etc.). The same is true for our Jewish and Israeli students and the Israeli government.
Chad Morris	Former faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Nada Moustafa	Student	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution
Ron Abott	Community Member	Protect academic freedom and free speech at GMU! Vote NO on the (so called) BOV antisemitism resolution!!
Shelley D. Wong-Pitts	Faculty retired	I urge you to protect academic freedom and free speech. Vote 'NO' on the Resolution to direct the University publish a factsheet on IHRA. The IHRA definition of anti-Semitism that includes criticism of the State of Israel is totally one-sided, ignoring the problems of anti-Palestinian discrimination. This dangerous policy hurts Palestinian Christians Muslims and those who have other faith traditions.
Professor Molly Dragiewicz	alumni	It is totally unacceptable for George Mason to attack its own academics' and students' academic freedom. GMU alumni do not accept the Board's extremist efforts to silence and censor staff or student speech. The US is turning the page from democracy to authoritarian dictatorship and no university can be part of the assault on democracy and free speech. Board members pushing extremist political positions should resign or be removed immediately for failing to uphold university values and integrity.
Courtney Baker	Faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution
Trish Doherty	Alumni	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Zachary Schrag	Faculty	Because it is not a federal executive agency, George Mason University cannot "adhere" to presidential executive orders, which are exclusively directed at such agencies. The true intent of this resolution is that the university anticipate and cater to the wishes of the president, quite apart from any legal duty. Such obedience in advance is not part of the university's mission.
Kristin Samuelian	Faculty	I am deeply concerned about the potential erosions to academic freedom academic freedom and free speech at Mason in the BOV antisemitism resolution. I urge you to vote NO on the resolution.
Esther S. Merves, Ph.D.	Community Member	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution. The idea that criticism of any government, person, or policy would be against university policy is anti-American -- and certainly against the ethos of a university, let alone a public university. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Ana Edwards	Community Member	<p>Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.</p> <p>Upon first read of the GMU BOV Resolution On Antisemitism, my overarching concerns are related to equity,</p>

interpretation and enforceability.

1) Does the GMU BOV have similar documented commitments rebuking anti-Muslim, anti-Arabic or anti-Palestinian discrimination? Or for specifically identified ethnic, national, racial, religious, gendered or otherwise minoritized groups? If not, why not?

2) The conflation in this document, of criticisms of Zionism or the policies of the nation/state of Israel with antisemitism, and the subjective nature of interpreting and determining such, is highly problematic. In fact, the IHRA "working definition" and accompanying explanations (<https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism>) work a bit harder to avoid this conflation than does this resolution.

3) Regarding "BE IT RESOLVED paragraph 11," the dependence of this directive upon the definitions and decisions of a single organization seems problematic. What if IHRA changes it's "fact sheet?" Would GMU routinely review and update this resolution? Is there a similar reliance on organizational definitions and determinations for handling description of other groups facing discrimination? Would they also be routinely reviewed and updated?

4) Regarding "BE IT RESOLVED paragraph 14," how is the first sentence in this directive not a contradiction to the second, specifically under "(2)"? ...especially since, typically, a university staff or faculty sponsor is required for any such activity on campus.

"RESOLVED, this board directs the University, to refrain from sponsoring or endorsing any organization, event, or other activity whose position or posture is antisemitic under the IHRA definition. This directive applies solely to institutional or governmental endorsement or sponsorship by the University and its administrative units and shall not (1) restrict the individual speech or academic freedom of faculty members, students, or independent student and faculty organizations (2) prevent the University from recognizing, providing resources to, or allowing access to facilities for any organization, event, or individual based on any viewpoint, position, or posture expressed or taken by the organization, event, or individual;"

Finally, for now, as troubling as are the above stated issues is the manner in which this resolution is apparently a response to a perceived political problem. Therefore, I reiterate: Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.

In hopes of clarity, peace, equity and progress,

Ana Edwards

Sarah Ovink	Faculty at Virginia Tech	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Please vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Rita Rowand	Community Member	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Dr. Kurt Brandhorst	Faculty	I urge you to support academic freedom and common sense by rejecting the IHRA definition of anti-semitism. This definition as elaborated here: https://holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definition-antisemitism involves a fundamental equivocation of political and racial-religious categories. As such it is flawed and should be rejected as either a bad-faith gesture or poor thinking.
Sarah Ochs	Student	Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution; protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason.
Dr. Pamela Nice	Community Member	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Harry J Foxwell	Faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV anti-semitism resolution.
Nathalia Peixoto	Faculty	Help protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Please vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Rev. . Dr. David M. Hindman	Citizen of Virginia and Taxpayer	<p>I am strongly opposed to the pending BOV Resolution on Antisemitism for the following reasons:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The IHRA definition of antisemitism is a politicized, inaccurate and misleading definition of antisemitism, in that it conflates antisemitism with any criticism of Israel as a nation state, thereby diminishing free expression and violating the First Amendment. There are other definitions of antisemitism that more accurately describes true attacks on Jews. 2. Language Regarding Zionism is unnecessarily ambiguous. If a complaint is made that someone's criticism of Zionism is antisemitic, how will the University determine whether "Zionist" was used as a proxy for "Jewish" or "Israeli"? This could lead to inconsistent application or even suppression of legitimate political speech. 3 The directive has great potential for conflict with academic freedom. As a former campus minister at a state institution and as an academic, I believe this strikes at the heart of a core university value. 4. The resolution ignores inconsistencies in the treatment of protected classes; by specifically mandating updates to University Policy 1201 to clarify protections for "Jewish and Israeli identity," it does not similarly mandate clarifications for other protected groups. Also, given the reality that 20% of Israelis citizens are Palestinian Arabs, it unnecessarily ignores the fact that not all Israelis are Jews. 5. The resolution references Executive Orders 13899 and 14188, as well as Virginia Chapter 471 (2023), but does not reference other anti-discrimination laws that apply to higher education institutions. This selective inclusion raises questions about whether the resolution is politically motivated rather than a neutral anti-discrimination measure. 6. The resolution directs the University to use the IHRA definition for "tracking and reporting antisemitic incidents in

		<p>the Commonwealth," but it is unclear what reporting mechanism will be used, whether this applies only to George Mason University, and whether the University is expected to report incidents outside its jurisdiction.</p> <p>7. The resolution mandates that applicants for admission from outside the U.S. receive a copy of University Policy 1201. This is an unusual requirement, as non-discrimination policies are typically provided after admission, not during the application process. There is no clear justification for singling out international applicants in this way.</p> <p>8. The resolution states that antisemitic conduct violating university policy should result in "appropriate consequences," including suspensions, expulsions, and terminations, and requires the University President to report these actions to the board each semester. This level of board oversight in individual disciplinary actions is atypical and could interfere with standard disciplinary procedures. It is unclear whether similar reporting is required for other forms of discrimination.</p>
Mona Saleh		<p>The language of this proposed resolution creates ambiguity. If a complaint is made that someone's criticism of Zionism is antisemitic, how will the University determine whether "Zionist" was used as a proxy for "Jewish" or "Israeli"? This could lead to inconsistent application or even suppression of legitimate political speech.</p> <p>The directive that the University "refrain from sponsoring or endorsing any organization, event, or other activity whose position or posture is antisemitic under the IHRA definition" could be problematic.</p> <p>While the resolution states that this does not apply to faculty members, students, or independent organizations, it could still be interpreted in ways that deter legitimate academic discussions. For instance, educational programs or conferences discussing Israeli policies critically might be affected.</p> <p>The resolution specifically mandates updates to University Policy 1201 to clarify protections for "Jewish and Israeli identity," but does not similarly mandate clarifications for other protected groups.</p> <p>Including Israeli identity as a protected category is unusual, as national origin is already covered under non-discrimination policies. This might create inconsistencies in how different national identities are treated under university policy. This language creates ambiguity. If a complaint is made that someone's criticism of Zionism is antisemitic, how will the University determine whether "Zionist" was used as a proxy for "Jewish" or "Israeli"? This could lead to inconsistent application or even suppression of legitimate political speech.</p> <p>In sum, freedom of speech is a First Amendment right. Criticizing any government's policies is a right included within that amendment. This proposed resolution would be taken to extremes and would lead to the silencing of critical voices—a very unAmerican and unconstitutional action.</p>
Wally Grotophorst	Retired faculty	Vote NO on the antisemitism resolution. While no one should want to encourage or condone antisemitism, the fact that this resolution comes to Mason as a political act suggests it should be rejected. There are a number of "ism's" that we need to reject but it isn't necessary to enumerate them all or single out particular ones. Doing so reduces the impact of a more general statement on what our overarching values should be.
Rebecca Bushway	Student	Equating the natural reaction to genocide to a hatred of an entire race of people is disingenuous. This is not a resolution to protect Jewish students; it is a license to persecute Palestinian ones.
Michele Greet	Faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Lindsey Stoneking	Virginia Educator	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Karen Grace	Faculty	I strongly support protecting academic freedom and free speech at Mason. I encourage a vote of NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution, which does not, in fact, protect anyone (including me, a Jewish faculty member) from antisemitism.
Gigi Est	Former GMU student, attorney.	I am writing this message to say NO to the BOV antisemitism resolution. We must protect free speech at all costs, not undermine it, criminalize it, and police it. This is an absolute constitutional violation and must be avoided. Students and their ideas and their true HUMANITY must be protected from bad faith efforts of censorship.
Darlene Mitrano	Community Member	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Deborah Pritchett, Ph.D.	Community Member	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Peter Streckfus	Faculty	The revised language for this proposal goes further than the tabled proposal in its aggressive suppression of academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Joan Henry	Community Member	Vote NO! If this passes, it will send a strong message to the best and brightest of our youth why they should not apply to, or attend this university. GMU will lose faculty, endowment dollars, damage its reputation, and lower its academic ranking. GMU will become known as Liberty "University's" NOVA campus. In its most basic form, the resolution is redundant of all existing law, totally unnecessary, and a thinly veiled threat from the governor's office. (I am a former public school history teacher, and the wife of an academic at a major university with integrity.)
Jennifer Hitchcock	Former faculty member	Please protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason, and vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Mallory Brown	Community Member	<p>To Whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing this comment in opposition to the adoption of the IHRA definition of anti-semitism to the GMU policies. Anti-Semitism is at large these days with prominent figures like Elon Musk and politicians at CPAC giving the Nazi Salute, and organized Nazis flooding the streets of Cincinnati. However, criticism of Israel and Zionism at its core is not anti-Semitic, it is anti-fascist. Israel is continuing to commit genocide and to align ourselves as Jewish people with</p>

		<p>Israel in these actions; to say that “to criticize Israel is to criticize us” condemns us to be aligned with genocide.</p> <p>In my Judaism and in my humanity, I refuse to accept this. The IHRA definition of anti-semitism does not represent me, and I am extremely opposed to it. It serves far more to repress freedom of speech on campus than it serves to protect myself and Jewish students from anti-semitism. Bringing the Zionist state of Israel into the discussion of what constitutes an act of antisemitism only serves to obfuscate real acts of hate. Witnessing swastikas and sieg heils on the US stage threaten me. Protests for a free Palestine do not.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration and I implore you to come to a definition of anti-semitism that leans on the lived experience of oppression and does not lean on defending a colonial entity or suppressing public dissent against genocide.</p>
Anonymous	Student	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Dr. Brian Turner	Virginia citizen	Protect academic freedom and free speech at George Mason University! Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution. Adoption of this resolution will necessarily have a profound chilling effect on legitimate academic debate, particularly about the nature of the State of Israel and of Zionism. For a BOV to intrude beyond its legitimate concern for protecting the community from discriminatory behavior into academic discussions that are necessary to understand matters as complex as conflict in the Middle East is, to my mind, a violation of the Board's responsibility to citizens of Virginia and the mission of GMU.
Lisa Lister	Faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Alexandra Harrison	Parent of students	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution. It's appalling that a university which is supposed to be a bastion of free speech, intellectual discourse, academic exploration, and preferably non-biased, FACT-based study and education prefers to waste its time looking for ways to limit free speech and further the agenda of a foreign country.
Kathleen Ramos	Faculty	I am writing to ask that the Board of Visitors vote responsibly and ethically to protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. I urge you to Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Rosemarie M. Esber, Ph.D.	Community Member	Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution. George Mason University would make a terrible decision by preventing students, professors, and the community from protesting apartheid genocidal occupying Israel's crimes against humanity by adopting and enforcing the biased and faulty IHRA definition. The International Court of Justice has found Israel responsible for apartheid and plausible genocide. Adopting this resolution will make GMU complicit by silencing protests against war crimes and crimes against humanity. Uphold international human rights and humanitarian law equally but not silencing protests and by maintaining freedom of speech at GMU!
Katherine Gordon	Community Member	My grandfather was a Polish Jewish Holocaust survivor and I am appalled that the BOV is trying to silence pro-Palestinian students and community members like myself under the guise of “antisemitism.” You know what’s antisemitic? GENOCIDE. The genocide in Gaza and the West Bank is the most well documented genocide in history and it is also the most antisemitic act possible. As Jews, when we say “never again,” we mean never again for anyone. I have a right to criticize Israel, the murderous apartheid regime that has been oppressing Palestinians since 1948. That is my Judaism- Israel does NOT represent me or my Jewish values, in fact it is antithetical to Judaism. I urge you to protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Laura Buckwald	Faculty	Academic freedom and free speech are fundamental to students' college learning experience and a healthy democracy. Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason by voting NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Laura Wilkinson	Higher Ed Faculty at another Virginia Public University	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution, please.
Jessica Sun	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>As a Catholic in opposition to Christian Zionism and Christian Nationalism, I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Ilia Sheikholeslami	Student	The board’s pursuits to essentially stifle the opinion of President Washington is an inherently political and ideologically driven decision - despite how much the board wishes to frame it otherwise. The assertion that an institution should not be able to speak out and adopt a position on issues may sound good on paper, but what happens if the ideals of the institution are threatened? This hyper conservative board has sought to undercut and defund George Mason’s DEI

		<p>programs - despite overwhelming outcry and objection from both the student body and faculty - and this move seems to be a way to make President Washington complicit in the board's efforts. You cannot legitimately state that this board is not pursuing institutional neutrality for non-political reasons - it is inherently political, no matter how you frame it! The worst part is that the board has failed to engage with the student body effectively in pursuing this policy. The only student group that was consulted was the President's Student Advisory Group - a body that is not representative of the entire student population. There are countless students and student groups alike that object to this policy, and countless more that aren't even aware this policy exists! This decision is not being made in the interests of the student body or this institution. It is being made to favor conservative interests groups so as to impose their will upon our leadership. What's to stop them from going beyond university leadership? George Mason is simply a testing ground for these groups to play around with after all.</p>
Dylan Krinberg	Fairfax County resident	<p>It is shameful that universities, what should be a place of dissertation and critical discernment, are still just money pits with shameless ulterior motives to silence voices that go against their unethical investments. It comes as no surprise from George Mason University, the namesake of a slave owner and human trafficker, to continually side with what's makes a profit over its students and the greater humanity at large.</p>
Frank Munley	Tax payer in Virginia	<p>Protection of Palestinian rights is not antisemitic!</p>
Jacob Janzen	Community Member	<p>I've received word from Jewish Voice for Peace-DC that GMU is trying to censor advocacy for Peace with Justice for Palestinians. I don't know the details, but student misconduct should be dealt with individually based on their infraction. Suspending an entire organization or passing resolutions to silence advocates is shameful. It seems to fit a pattern of people who refuse to see the tragedy that has been unfolding as a result of Zionism.</p>
Joseph Crosbie	Community Member	<p>Free Palestine!</p> <p>End suppression of free speech!</p> <p>End US support for the genocidal Israeli apartheid state!</p> <p>It is completely unconscionable that a nation which styles itself "Land of the free" supports this kind of activity</p>
Sabahat Hussain	Community Member	<p>Do not trample the free speech. These students are exposing the on going genocide, which is happening at the expense of tax payers hard earned money.</p>
Connor Celum	Community Member	<p>Pro-Palestinian speech is free speech.</p>
Dorothy Gudgel	Community Member	<p>A university is supposed to be the safest place for the free expression of all diverse points of view; as pertaining to the Israel/Palestinian conflict, Palestinians absolutely have the moral right to not only freely express their views in public forums, but to have their right to free speech protected by university authorities. Not to protect their 1st amendment rights is to fail abysmally the sacred role of the university in our society! Shame on GMU for censoring the Palestinians in public discourse with the GMU community.</p>
Rebekah Cohen	Student	<p>All we want is peace.</p>
David Copper	Concerned citize	<p>What is going on? Freedom of Speech no longer practiced on your campus? All I can say to you is SHAME on you and your associates</p>
Ayesha Khan	Community Member	<p>Stop censoring Palestinian voices!!! It is their right to exercise their freedom of speech!!! This is America not Israel!!! You are going against your own constitution!!</p>
Haleema Yahya	Community Member	<p>Speaking out against war criminals and genocide is not a crime, you should be proud of your students and not censoring them, let alone penalizing them. Divest from Israel now!</p>
Maria Lynne Booth	Community Member	<p>Please do not criminalize pro Palestinian speech! Pro Palestinian speech should be allowed - it harms no one! It is not anti-Semitic to oppose the policies of the state of Israel. Please please do not prohibit speech. It will not help resolve this conflict by suppressing the voices that are opposed to is the state of Israel's policies.</p>
Jose R. Castro	Former Grad Student	<p>It is unconscionable that a University of Higher Learning would infringe on freedom of speech. When people are dying in Palestine ,every day, at the hands of genocide and ethnic cleansing perpetrated by Israel, humanity needs courage to stand up and protect those with no voice. Humanity does not need cowardly university administrators that are puppets of the Pro Israel Lobby and Zionist fanatics. It is time that George Mason University grow a spine and demonstrate moral conscience.</p>
Jessica Snowmam	Concerned Virginian	<p>I am writing to condemn George Mason University's stifling of free speech and right to protest. The people of the Palestinian Territories have endured decades of occupation and violence at the hands of the Israeli government. Even today, Palestinians in the West Bank are forced out of their homes by settlers protected by the IDF and told to never return. To say that this legitimate criticism of a far right-wing government is antisemitic has to be the most baffling statement I have ever heard and a total insult to the Jewish people. You might as well be supportive of Apartheid South Africa while you're at it.</p>
Norman Ferry	Community Member	<p>Since the Gazan COUNTER resistance against the IDF , on October 7th, Gaza has been flattened . Over a half million Palestinians have bee killed. This fact has to be expressed. Zionism is a genocidal movement rejected by most Jews. Please allow for a complete discussion of this horror. America has blood on its hands .</p>
Margaret Belsan	Community Member	<p>Quoting from The American President move which speaks my thoughts America isn't easy. America is advanced citizenship. You've gotta want it bad, 'cause it's gonna put up a fight. It's gonna say, "You want free speech? Let's see you acknowledge a man whose words make your blood boil, who's standing center stage and advocating at the top of his lungs that which you would spend a lifetime opposing at the top of yours." You want to claim this land as the land of the free? Then the symbol of your country cannot just be a flag. The symbol also has to be one of its citizens exercising his right to burn that flag in protest. Now show me that, defend that, celebrate that in your classrooms.</p> <p>Then you can stand up and sing about the land of the free.</p> <p>This is what a University should stand for. Be courageous.</p>

Dr. M. Colleen McDaniel	Adjunct Faculty at Northern Virginia Community College	<p>George Mason University's mission is to be a public research university that creates a more just, free, and prosperous world. The university's motto is "Freedom and Learning." Their values on their website include: "Empower students to be socially conscious leaders committed to democratic and civic engagement," and "Engage Mason's diverse, global and multicultural community to enrich the educational environment, promote mutual respect and civility, and develop global citizens." By banning Pro-Palestinian speech on campus, the university would be in direct violation of its own mission statement, values, and motto.</p> <p>There is a disgusting irony in teaching our students to challenge what they have been taught, to speak freely and openly, to interrogate popular narratives, and then to turn around and attempt to stifle their cause for a free Palestine.</p> <p>As a community college faculty member who prepares many of my students to move onto George Mason, I stand firmly against the restriction of or any intervention to prevent students at George Mason from using their voices and leaning into their power in any way, but especially to speak up against the abhorrent violence being committed against Palestinians.</p> <p>This country has a long legacy of college students taking a lead in global social justice. Students across the country have played a uniquely powerful role in anti-war efforts, the fight against systemic injustice, and the end of global oppressions.</p> <p>The decision of George Mason to do anything but listen is appalling and antithetical to the very foundations of higher education and academic integrity. I could NEVER suggest my students move on to a university that silences them. And if this resolution passes, I will be continuously vocal about this injustice to my students and colleagues at my own and other institutions so that students can make a truly informed decision about attending George Mason. I will let them know that George Mason is adversarial to its students and does not practice academic freedom nor integrity. George Mason must reject this resolution and support its students in practicing their right to speak out for the liberation of Palestinians and against war.</p> <p>Students MUST be given the space on campus to speak freely against violence and injustice anywhere in our world. To stifle that is to promote violence, injustice, and oppression globally.</p>
Lindsey Parnas	Community Member	As a proud Jewish person who is fervently pro-Palestine, anti-Semitism is not the same as being pro Palestine. You are criminalizing one expression of semitism aligned with tikkun olam- healing the world- and thus you are the one narrowing the scope of Judaism and targeting Jews. Judaism is a faith based on the importance of open political beliefs and helping the oppressed. I heavily advise you stop this action
Amber Spalek	Alumni	I am strongly opposed to Jeff Rosen's proposal that would criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. As a Jewish alumna, this is an outrageous assault on free speech and first amendment rights. From my time at Mason, I was proud to experience an environment of tolerance and growth, and it is unacceptable that this would be threatened on Mason's campus.
Maha Armaly	Community Member	Freedom of thought and speech in academia is essential for human progress and academic integrity.
Aouicha Hilliard		<p>To the Board of Visitors:</p> <p>I will not address all the contradictions in Visitor Rosen's Resolution. Rather, as a (retired) Professor of French Literature and International Studies, I will focus on the damage students would suffer, were this resolution approved.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. This is a flagrant violation of freedom of speech. To prevent students from discussing ideas—at a university, no less—is absurd; it prevents them from acquiring the very skills they are there to get: sharpening their thinking so as not to fall prey to demagoguery or indoctrination. 2. The language of the resolution will perpetuate antisemitism, not diminish it. By associating Zionism and Judaism, the resolution implicitly endows Judaism (a religion of peace and love) with the characteristics of Zionism—a European ideology from the 1890s, which promotes the conquering and settling of Palestinian land. 3. If approved, this resolution will also increase anti-Israeli sentiment, since Israeli passports would clearly be favored, above other nationalities. Its goal is to muzzle criticism of Israel; it aims to stifle the free discussion of ideas, not to end discrimination in ALL areas of concern. <p>If I still had a child of college age, I would feel dressed if he or she were attending a university that adopted a policy like this.</p> <p>I urge you to reject this resolution.</p> <p>Sincerely, Dr. Aouicha Hilliard</p>
John Mutzberg	Community Member	Speaking up for Palestinians is not antisemitism. Request input from Jewish Voices for peace please. If a group of religious extremists is stealing land and persecuting the indigenous peoples that is terrorism whether they are Isis or Zionists.
KEVIN M MCCARRON	Community Member	<p>To whom this Will concern,</p> <p>I am a Veteran (honorably discharged from the U.S.M.C. and decorated for combat service in the Persian Gulf War). My undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina @ Chapel Hill was in Political Science, and my graduate degree (University of Maine) was in Economics. I lived in Washington, DC for over 20 years, and I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p>

		<p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Maryam Rashid	Alumni	I’m deeply troubled that GMU is equating antisemitism with pro Palestine speech. This is disgraceful, racist, and an ugly attempt to silence voices.
Ahmed AbdulRahman		<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Beth Baker	Community Member	<p>I am writing with great concern for the suppression of free speech at George Mason and in higher education. As a Jewish tenured professor at another university, I am appalled at Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Joelle Younes	Community Member	We must protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Kathleen Brewster	Community Member	I am in shock that an institution of higher learning is trying to ban free speech rights for people expressing pro-Palestinian support. Pro-Palestinians are pro-human rights and are NOT antisemitic.
Amber Wixtrom	Community Member	Please protect free speech by refusing to ban pro-Palestine speech on campus. Palestinian students and those who support their Palestinian friends have a right to speak out against injustice against their people.
Lindsey Lim	Community Member	<p>Dear GMU,</p> <p>I'm a Virginia tax payer and community member residing in Alexandria, previously in Clarendon. Why are you prohibiting criticism of Zionism which is a political ideology? Are you prohibiting criticism of communism, liberalism, conservatism? Many Orthodox Jews, including inside Israel, don't support Zionism precisely because it goes against their religious belief of waiting for the Messiah to re-establish Israel. Would you criminalize Jews who criticize Zionism for going against their religious believes?</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would</p>

		<p>aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus.</p> <p>This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a political ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Fred Lavy	Community Member	Students should have free speech to support suffering Palestinians and to denounce genocide. Do you not allow free speech?
Jack R Leff	Colleague from SW VA	As a Jewish academic I am dismayed to see this biased resolution on antisemitism be put before the board without due process. The IHRA definition of antisemitism does not protect against antisemitism and instead focuses its efforts to protect Israel from legitimate academic criticisms. If I were to apply to present at a conference or other scholarly forum at GMU as a political researcher who is often critical of Israeli policy, this resolution would define my contributions as antisemitic despite being obvious protected academic speech from a Jewish scholar. Vote no on this resolution that would target Jewish scholars in addition to just being an obviously racist attack on our Palestinian colleagues who speak up against ethnic cleansing.
Roxanne Arnon	Community Member	Pro-Palestinian speech on college campuses is not anti-Semitic. I am a Jewish community member and it is vital that students have this right to speak up on the behalf of Palestinian people who are struggling and work to divest from Israel.
Stefani Evans	Concerned member of the Fairfax Community	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my opposition to a resolution before George Mason University's Board of Visitors that aims to ban all criticism of Zionism, a political ideology, on GMU's campus. This outrageous resolution represents a blatant assault on free speech at GMU, within the Fairfax community and within the United States of America. This resolution is a part and parcel of the attacks on higher education, the poor, women's rights, LGBTQ rights, black and brown lives, and the Palestinian Solidarity Movement. It directly undermines George Mason University's ability, as an institution of higher education, to foster and inclusive environment where diverse perspectives and ideas can thrive.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse faculty, staff, and student body and its commitment to "creating a more just , free and prosperous world." Yet the resolution in front of the Board seeks to snuff out and repress pro-Palestinian organizing and speech, by falsely conflating criticism of Israel and Zionism with Anti-Semitism.</p> <p>Zionism is a political ideology that has fueled the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians from their homes and lands. It has robbed the American people of billions of dollars in taxpayers dollars that have been used to bomb Palestinian women and children and arm Israeli soldiers instead of being used here at home for health care, education, food, and the well being of everyday Americans.</p> <p>The conflation of antisemitism with anti-zionism and criticism with the state of Israel does nothing to keep Jews nor Americans safe. Instead, it obscures our ability to combat real antisemitism and puts a target on the backs of Palestinians, everyday Americans and anyone, including Jews, who speak out for Palestinian freedom.</p> <p>The resolution poses a grave threat to freedom of speech and expression at George Mason University and if it passes would lead to the stifling of dissent, discrimination, and violent repression on university campuses across the country. It would be a dark day for George Mason University and American democracy if this resolution is to pass. I urge to find the courage to speak out and oppose this resolution not only for today but for the future of our children, our children's' children and our democracy.</p> <p>Sincerely, Stefani Evans</p>
Elicia Yoffee	Alumni	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>My name is Elicia Yoffee and I am an alumna of the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution. I am also an American Jew.</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p>

		<p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
TAQWA JAMEEL MUHAMMAD	Community Member	Check the definition of SEMITIC...it includes Arabs. No country, group or individual has the Right to subject another to GENOCIDE. Freedom of Speech is a corner stone of Democracy. Institutions of Higher Learning have a historic experience of speaking Truth to Power. President Jimmy Carter labeled Israel treatment of Palestinians as APARTHEID.
Mohammed Ahmad	I have 3 kids who graduated from GMU	Why would anyone get banned from expressing their opinions and to know the truth about the occupation
Ann von Lossberg	relative of student	How can a university censor one group, the Palestinians? All they ask for in Israel and here is equality. Please show everyone that you value and protect discourse and free speech in your university.
Sally Andrews Gudas	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>As a Quaker whose faith community has had close ties to Palestine since the late 1860s and before, it is with sadness and concern that I read the proposal of Jeff Rosen that the Board of Visitors at George Mason is considering that would make criminal ALL criticism of Zionism on campus. Zionism is not Judaism, and criticizing Israel is not anti-Semitic. The narrative the Zionists have been pushing for more than 100 years has brought us to this point. You are playing with fire as you propose this attack on free speech – a horrific violation of first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. If the Board of Visitors takes this action, it will show it is not serious about providing an equal voice and protections to all its students and faculty and will also be guilty of discrimination against Palestinian students.</p> <p>It has been curious that those who drafted this proposal are fighting against free expression on US campuses and peaceful protest but are not openly concerned about the actual genocide going on in Gaza. You are concerned about protected speech, and the students protesting on your campus are calling out the genocide and killing and humanity of Israel to Palestinians. Actual killing - not just speech.</p> <p>I grew up 5 miles down Braddock Road from GMU and attended summer school there many years ago. I have been proud of the diverse area northern Va has become and that George Mason has mirrored this diversity. This proposal will also harm the very Jewish students you are falsely claiming would be victims of anti-Semitism. This proposal seeks to silence and censure any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians.</p> <p>I hope that you will open your eyes and learn about the oppression of Palestinians. Actually, I hope you will take time sit down with our Jewish brothers and sisters in the DC Metro Chapter of Jewish Voice for Peace who I follow closely.</p> <p>If you go forward with this plan, we will know that what happened is that money and power are in control at George Mason, and not the principles and mission of the University; we will know that you have sold freedom of expression to the highest bidder.</p> <p>If you vote for this proposal, we will also know that you are erroneously conflating criticism of Israel with anti-Semitism. As a state taxpayer, some of my taxes go to your University, I urge you to vote against this proposal. You owe this state a fair system at GMU.</p>
Mariam C	Alumna	<p>As an alumna holding multiple degrees from GMU, I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism is dangerous and allows fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots - especially if endorsed by a university that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p>

		<p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Andrew C	Alum	<p>I'm an alumnus of Mason, and I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism is dangerous and allows fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots - especially if endorsed by a university that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Jenai McKee	Friend of a GMU student	<p>I am writing as a VA resident and friend of a GMU student who is concerned about how public universities in my area react to pro-Palestine organizing on their campuses. Students and other members of the campus community should be able to express their views without censorship, especially in the case of protesting a genocide and the occupation of Palestine by Israel. Please do not ban pro-Palestine speech at GMU; instead, listen to the demands of these students who are just trying to speak up for the safety and rights of Palestinians. Please also rescind any punishments made against students who have spoken up or organized for Palestine. Thank you for your time and consideration!</p>
Dalal Musa	Alumnus	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am an alumnus of GMU (BSW 1998) and alarmed at Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. Rosen's proposal seeks to silence any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments.</p> <p>I have seen GMU become increasingly reactionary over the past 20 years, yet this is a new low. This proposal is an utterly intellectually dishonest attack on free speech and student and faculty's first amendment rights.</p> <p>George Mason University's student population is diverse and a source of strength. Many of your students and alumni are Middle Eastern, specifically Palestinian. I cannot believe current students feel safe or welcome with this kind of political agenda threatening them. Further, many Jewish people are strong anti-Zionist activists. Caving in to the lie that to criticize Israel and Zionism is anti-Semitic completely degrades the integrity of GMU.</p> <p>Arabs are Semitic by the way.</p> <p>The truth, which Rosen seeks to hide and distort, is that Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent expulsion, exploitation, and extermination of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-Zionism and is part of the reactionary right political agenda. Students and faculty must be able to discuss these geopolitical realities which are among the most urgent issues of our day.</p> <p>If GMU truly "honor freedom of thought and expression," this proposal will be thrown in the garbage where it belongs.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
David Wolinsky	Parent of graduate	<p>I am an old Jewish grandpawho spent many years thinking about where all the "good people" and good nations were during the Holocaust, when the larger part of his mother's family was exterminated along with 50, 000 other Greek Jews and many millions more. A university, of course, is neither a nation nor an individual -- but for most of my life (lots of folks with advanced degrees) I expected more, even, from them.</p> <p>I also know the terror inside most Jews of all generations --in Israel in the form of "they want to push us all into the sea." Now, please look unflinchingly at Israel's attempt "to prevent that", by destroying Palestinian land and life wholesale. Do not "compare" that to the atrocities of Oct.7. Compare it to some on campus feeling threatened by demonstrations in defense of Palestinian life, and to donors who threaten you.</p> <p>Mason has joined universities that, so far, have abandoned claims to dialog, learning, and humane values, punishing protesters and in some cases expelling students. Please reverse course and remove your name from the academy's Wall of Shame.</p>
Tuqa Nusairat	Alumni	<p>To whom it may concern,</p>

		<p>I am writing to express my profound concern over Jeff Rosen's proposal to George Mason's Board of Visitors, which seeks to criminalize any criticism of Zionism on campus. This alarming proposal constitutes a direct attack on free speech and represents a serious violation of our first amendment rights. Higher education institutions are meant to embody tolerance and intellectual growth, cultivating spaces where a wide range of perspectives, ideas, and identities can flourish. Universities play a key role in shaping social progress, making it vital that they preserve the values of inclusivity, open debate, and the freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University boasts a diverse student body but continues to harm and marginalize its own students through proposals like this one. This measure aims to stifle any discussion or critique of Zionism across all University departments. Zionism, rooted in colonialism and the violent dispossession of Palestinians, is a subject that warrants open discussion, not censorship. To equate antisemitism with anti-Zionism is a dangerous oversimplification that could embolden white supremacy and fascism, particularly when supported by an institution that claims to uphold "freedom of thought and expression." This proposal is an attack on the fundamental rights of all students to express their views without fear of retribution. Marginalized communities depend on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and push for change, yet the University's actions are actively suppressing the voices that should be championed.</p> <p>I urge you to reflect on the dire consequences of adopting this proposal, which seeks to undermine the core values of freedom of expression, critical thought, and diverse discourse that are integral to higher education. Censoring these freedoms will not only degrade the educational experience but also set a perilous precedent for increased censorship, marginalization, and the erosion of democratic principles within academic institutions.</p>
Natalie Johnson	Community Member	I urge you to protect free speech on campus and reject the proposal to criminalize all criticisms of Zionism on campus. Zionism is settler colonial genocidal ideology. How in the world can you have witnessed the last year and half of the US-Israeli genocidal war against the Palestinian people and then think it's necessary to criminalize speech that critiques the ideology undergirding that death machine? How can you live with yourself? At the bare minimum you should at least protect freedom of speech on campus which means students must be free to engage in all forms of critiques of Zionism. Do the right thing. Reject Jeff Rosen's proposal.
Duncan Price	Parent	I am outraged that George Mason wants to ban "Pro-Palestinian" speech. I assume this is because there is a continued false assertion that "pro-palestinian" is anti-semitic. This continued false narrative is pure and simple propaganda from AIPAC, ADL, Netanyahu etc. Why students are prevented from supporting a group of people who have been under occupation for decades, with no rights, and more recently subjected to ethnic cleansing, is beyond me. Is George Mason cowering to forces that control funding? At a minimum you are preventing free speech. Worse you are doing it on the basis of false claims of anti-semitism. My family is Jewish by the way.. We know anti-semitism we see it. Supporting Palestinians does not equal being anti-semitic. Wake up from the propaganda. I am very disappointed that George Mason is even considering this. If this goes into effect I will support all legal efforts against the university. My child is strongly considering leaving George Mason for another school because of this. A stain on the university is what this has become.
Ronald Field	Community Member	Institutions of higher education should value free speech.
William F. Simonds, MD	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>As a practicing physician and strong supporter of human rights, I am writing to express my grave concern regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism and the State of Israel on campus.</p> <p>Anti-Zionism is NOT anti-Semitism, and conflating the two is (in fact) anti-Semitic, since it would hold all Jews everywhere responsible for the State of Israel's multiple violations of human rights against the Palestinians living under brutal military occupation.</p> <p>Judaism is a wonderful faith- the modern State of Israel is a violent and oppressive Golden Calf.</p> <p>Elevating the IHRA definition of anti-semitism would be WRONG since its examples conflate anti-semitism with anti-Zionism, and thus tends to criminalize criticism of the Jewish state.</p> <p>This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of students' first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism (and Israel's brutal apartheid state, as assessed by Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch among others) within ALL University departments.</p> <p>Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, and is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education.</p>
Abby Steckel	Community Member	<p>Dear Board of Visitors,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation</p>

		<p>of students' first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal, which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Rebecca Helgersen	Alumnus	Please do not equate antizionism with antisemitism- they are not the same thing. Being pro Palestine does not make one antisemitic. As a GMU alumnus, I want to be proud of my school and degrees from there, and do not want my school to be censoring pro Palestine speech and actions.
Joanne Heisel	Community Member	If you carefully follow what Israel is doing to the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank, I think you would be quite sympathetic to the pro-Palestinian voices on your campus. They are truly standing up for the underdogs in this extremely lopsided David and Goliath struggle. Israel is clearly and without a doubt the oppressor!
Nadia A Carrell, PhD	family of student	<p>I am writing to urge you to reject Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. By restricting discourse which is essential in an academic setting George Mason is sending students into the world under prepared for life and service to their communities, country, and world</p> <p>Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous.</p> <p>If you label everything as anti-semitism you are emptying it out of meaning.</p>
Kirsten Wittkowski	Community Member	I am a concerned community member that lives in the immediate vicinity of GMU. The resolution worries me because it references Executive Orders 13899 and 14188, as well as Virginia Chapter 471 (2023), but does not reference other anti-discrimination laws that apply to higher education institutions. This selective inclusion raises questions about whether the resolution is politically motivated rather than a neutral anti-discrimination measure. Please protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason: Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Dale Scott Rothman	Faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
JoLillian Zwerdling	Community Member	<p>I am a Jewish DC resident, born and raised in the DMV and I am writing to express my dismay regarding Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Israel on campus. This proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression, especially right now at a time when the current presidential administration is trying to violate these principles and rights.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal, rather than protecting Jewish students, seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Israel within ALL University departments. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous for students of all backgrounds (including Jewish students)-- it allows fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish students' educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Caolan Eder	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>As a Jewish community member who grew up participating in GMU's workshops for young people, I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to</p>

		<p>express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Heather Gottlieb	Alumni	<p>Subject: Protect Free Speech and Academic Freedom at George Mason University</p> <p>Dear Members of the Board of Visitors,</p> <p>I am writing to express my deep concern regarding the ongoing suppression of pro-Palestine advocacy at George Mason University. The suspension of Students for Justice in Palestine, the barring of two Palestinian students from campus, and the proposed resolution to ban pro-Palestine speech directly undermine the university's commitment to free expression, academic freedom, and the principles of open dialogue that are fundamental to higher education.</p> <p>As a public institution, George Mason University has a legal and ethical obligation to uphold the First Amendment rights of its students. Silencing political speech—especially in response to pressure from external entities—sets a dangerous precedent that threatens the integrity of the university and the democratic values it should uphold. Regardless of one's stance on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is imperative that students be allowed to express their views, organize peacefully, and engage in meaningful discussions without fear of censorship or reprisal.</p> <p>I urge you to reject any resolution that seeks to ban pro-Palestine speech and to reinstate Students for Justice in Palestine as a recognized campus organization. Furthermore, I call on the university to ensure that Palestinian students, like all members of the Mason community, are treated fairly and without discrimination.</p> <p>I hope you will take a stand for free speech and academic integrity by opposing efforts to suppress student activism. Thank you for your attention to this urgent matter.</p> <p>Sincerely, Heather Gottlieb Alumni, Class of 2005</p>
Leah Zahniser	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>Censoring students who are fighting against genocide is deplorable. You know you will be on the wrong side of history. You are equivalent to the administrations that shut down protests for Vietnam, for civil rights, for gender equality, against the South African Apartheid, ETC.</p> <p>The antisemitism argument has never ever ever worked. To favor Zionist Jewish students and censor non-Zionist Jewish students (like me) is antisemitic.</p>
Mohamed Khelil Bouarrouj	Alumni	<p>I think it is absurd to establish a definition of prejudice whereby political actions are shielded from criticism due to spurious smears of bigotry. The cynical use of antisemitism to silence critics of a nation state is obvious.</p>
S Jahangeer	Community Member	<p>Censoring pro-Palestine students is trampling on their first amendment rights. You should be ashamed. This must stop.</p>
Anonymous	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Virginia Donaldson	Concerned citizen	<p>I am writing to express my opposition to a resolution before George Mason University's Board of Visitors that aims to ban all criticism of Zionism, a political ideology, on the GMU campus. This outrageous resolution represents a blatant assault on free speech and is part a parcel of the Right's war on higher education and the Palestine solidarity movement. It directly undermines George Mason University's ability, as an institution of higher education, to foster an environment where diverse perspectives and ideas can thrive. George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student body and it's commitment to, "creating a more just, free, and prosperous world." Yet this resolution seeks to silence pro-Palestine organizing and speech by falsely conflating criticism of Israel and Zionism with antisemitism. Zionism is a political ideology that has fueled the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians from their</p>

		homes and land. The conflation of antisemitism with anti-Zionism and criticism of the state of Israel does nothing to keep Jews safe. Instead, it obscures our ability to combat real antisemitism and puts a target on the backs of Palestinians and anyone, including Jews, who speak out for Palestinian freedom and an end to an active genocide. This resolution poses a grave threat to freedom of speech and expression at George Mason University and would further right-wing efforts to crush dissent on university campuses across the country. I urge you to oppose it.
Alex Joseph	Community Member	I am a Jewish student, and an ardent advocate of free speech, expression and assembly. Students should not be repressed for their beliefs, especially when they are standing up to apartheid and genocide. Anti-Zionism is not anti-semitism.
Nance Fayyad	Community Member	<p>Dear George Mason Board of Visitors and all concerned,</p> <p>I am writing you with deep concerns regarding your attempt to limit freedom of speech on the University's campus. I don't need to school you on one of our most sacred bill of rights, or do I? It doesn't matter whether we agree with a particular idea or speech. What matters is our right to freely express ourselves without fear of censorship or retribution. Universities above all places is where freedom of speech and the free exchange of ideas is paramount, Your plans to ban pro- Palestine speech on campus is doing the very opposite! Just because someone is representing a Palestinian perspective does not make that an offensive speech or an antisemitic one.. Palestine and Israel are not mutually exclusive subjects. Talking about one's right to live free like everyone else in the world, is not "antisemitic" speech for example. How did we get to a place where we are banning ideas and words? What are we afraid of? How can we ever resolve differences if we are banned from freely expressing ourselves?</p> <p>What a dark stain it will be on your University if you do this! Do not give in and sellout on the very essence of what Universities should represent.</p> <p>You owe it to your students and faculty to continue to uphold the free flow of ideas and speech.</p> <p>My nephews and nieces graduated from George Mason and all are now successful, outstanding citizens of their communities and the world.</p> <p>They did not face the kind of threats to our freedoms as we face today.</p> <p>Do the right thing by your students and staff and be the University I hope to send my children to one day.</p> <p>Stop this shameful resolution and protect freedom of speech, all speech on George Mason's campus.</p> <p>Sincerely, N. Fayyad</p>
jane eyre	conscientious citizen	Adopting the BOV statement is not only opening a can or worms, but it says undoubtedly that this academic institute is really a sham that claims to teach students to be upright citizens respecting and upholding democratic values while indulging in sucking up to Israel and the political parties carrying out their evil and immoral activities in a genocide that speaks volumes of their barbarity. This surely is on par with the actions in the Book of Kings claiming to follow the one true God.
Mark Schek	U S Citizen	<p>There is absolutely no legal mechanism to arrest pro Palestinian student.</p> <p>The U S is not at war with the Palestinians, and Palestinians have not declared war on the U S.</p> <p>No emergency decree has been issued.</p> <p>Therefore prohibited speech of one group is a prohibition to all groups.</p> <p>I'm Jewish. My religion tells me to expand scholarship and Discourse.</p> <p>Zionism is not Judaism. It's a new idea with no basis in the Jewish 5000 year history..</p> <p>Please don't subvert my religion, please.</p>
Pom Trutna	Community Member	<p>What side of history are you trying to be on, truly? The HRC, ICC, Amnesty International, Doctors w/out Borders and countless other humanitarian organizations recognize that what is happening in Gaza and Palestine is genocide.</p> <p>Violating the free speech of your students will not change any of that. Degrading yourself and demoralizing your staff, student body and fellow institutions by kowtowing to right-wing Zionists who betray the fundamentals of Judaism, will further stain your legacy.</p> <p>Do what is right by humanity and deny the IHRA of anti-semitism. You will look back at this time and cringe if you betray Jewish students and Muslim students alike by conflating any criticism of Israel with anti-semitism. Stand on the right side of history. Reject the IHRA.</p>
Daniel Delos	Alumni	<p>It's come to my attention that GMU is trying to censor pro-Palestine/anti-Genocide organizing by threatening suspensions and expulsions of students and faculty. This is a farce. No matter what the IHRA claims, protesting genocide and ethnic cleansing is NOT antisemitism. Protesting Israel's state policies is NOT antisemitism. This conflation of antisemitism and Israel's state policies is actually a form of antisemitism itself. Particularly towards the many other Jews who are opposed to these policies, including in the country of Israel itself.</p> <p>As a GMU graduate, it makes me ashamed that this point even needs to be argued. I strongly urge you reconsider this policy and allow students the freedom to organize around causes that they, like most Americans and the vast majority of the world consider vitally important.</p>
Daniel Thomas (DT) Schatten	Community Member	As a GMU MFA graduate who was simultaneously an employee, student, member of the AAUP, and member of GMU's Jewish community until my graduation in 2023, I strongly and entirely condemn the IHRA's proposed definition of antisemitism, as it reflects a view of Judaism defined solely by the European powers willing to relocate us from our homes to anywhere but where we were prior to the 1920s, all for the sake of denying their complicity in the German Holocaust. The weaponization of my race against Arabic people will always fail, because I know I do have a birthright - to Eastern Europe, from where my great-grandparents were exiled in the face of extermination, and Mr. Rosen's obfuscation of this obvious fact for his political and real-estate-based agenda is shameful and genocidal. We the Jews, as with all other oppressed and marginalized people, face one single enemy: the boot of fascism, which currently takes the form of boots such as yours, Mr. Rosen.

KellyYeong	Community Member	Protect academic freedom and free speech for all. Vote no to BOV . I support all individuals rights!
Sam Raya	Community Member	George Mason is better than prohibiting freedom speech. Please retract your decision to proof to the community how the school is keeping its principals during these unusual days we are facing as a nation. Your decision will affect my decision to send my four kids to George Mason.
Susan Mah-Leung	Community Member	Resolution to ban Pro-Palestinian speech on campus is not only racist, it goes against the First Amendment of the Constitution and most definitely would be a backward step in history for George Mason.
Alfred Lupton	Community Member	This absurd resolution is financed by a foreign government that is a direct threat against free speech . Why is a foreign entity like Israel dictating our constitutional rights, If you vote in favor of this resolution you will be responsible for the death of free speech and be a "useful idiot " in what is looking like "Fifth Column. Vote NO.
Johanna Hermanson	Student	Please vote no on the BOV antisemitism resolution. The existing statements are enough to protect all populations. Should you choose to move forward with the statement, then you must craft statements for every protected group on campus.
Melinda Scott	Alumni	Calling for the genocide of Jewish people - which is what "river to the sea" and "globalize the infitada" means - is not "free speech". Our founding fathers, who were readers of the Old Testament, never would have fathomed that the First Amendment would be used to call for the murder of Jewish people. I fully support incorporating IHRA's definition of Antisemitism in light of world events and what has been happening on college campuses. The failure of professors to teach about the Islamic Colonization of the Middle East has led to outrageous acts of Antisemitism. GMU should be ashamed of tabling the resolution.
Dr. Safiya Samman	Parent of Alumni	I urge the university to allow free speech by allowing the occupied people Palestinians to tell their stories and stand against occupation by an apartheid Zionist government of Israel . I also emailed my urgent request to you
Amy Freeman	Community Member	You support Israeli and Jewish rights. I do, too. But where's your protection for freedom of speech against Israel's actions? Your support of Palestinian rights? Your compassion over the carnage in Gaza? You are complicit.
Elizabeth smith	A reader of profs' books	I've read books by some of your professors. Shame!
Jessica Hurley	Faculty	I am a Jewish faculty member at Mason and I believe strongly that conflating Jews with Israel and especially with Zionism is itself antisemitic ("All Jews believe X" and "Jews belong to Israel more than to the US" are both deeply antisemitic tropes). I am horrified that these antisemitic tropes are being incorporated into Mason's official policy and urge the board to vote "no" on the so-called "Resolution on Antisemitism" and to remove the IHRA definition from Policy 1201.
G. Chesler	Faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech rights at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV resolution.
Walter Heinecke	Virginia citizen	Dear Members of the BOV at George Mason: Please Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution. Zionism is a reflection of the Israeli State. As a citizen I should be free to be critical of any nation even our own. Being anti-Zionist does not equate to Being anti-Semitic. Making the changes that Member Rosen is advocating for is an unconstitutional abridgment of our rights to free speech. This is a slippery slope, what is next a resolution to prevent citizens from making critical comments of Russia?
Katey Funderburgh	Student	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Sammy Alqasem	Community Member	To whom it may concern, I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression. George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift. I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.
Manuel Blanco	Community Member	This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.

Anonymous Sophomore Student	Student	<p>Dear Members of the Board of Visitors,</p> <p>I am an out-of-state student at George Mason University, and I chose to invest in this institution by paying for room and board because I believed in the value of our school. However, the increasing cost of on-campus housing raises significant concerns regarding affordability and fairness for students.</p> <p>Currently, I pay approximately \$15,000 per academic year to live in a shared apartment-style dormitory. My unit, which is approximately 1,400 square feet and shared with three other students, collectively generates around \$60,000 annually for the university. Comparatively, if this apartment were rented in the local housing market, the total cost would likely range between \$1,300 and \$2,000 per month. Yet, each of us is paying a similar amount individually while sharing the space. Furthermore, our housing contracts only cover the academic year, and students are required to pay additional fees to remain on campus over winter break—an added burden, particularly for those who may not have another home to return to.</p> <p>I respectfully ask whether the Board has personally toured and evaluated on-campus housing before determining its cost. Have you considered the financial strain that a housing price increase places on students? In my home state, the minimum wage remains \$7.25 per hour. Even with a summer job paying approximately \$9 per hour after taxes, I would need to work at least 40 additional hours just to cover the proposed increase. Many students do not have the financial flexibility to absorb these rising costs.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the real impact of these decisions on students who are already working tirelessly to afford their education. I invite you to experience GMU housing firsthand, even for just one night, to better understand the conditions and value of what we are being asked to pay for.</p>
Susan Fraiman	UVA Faculty Member	I'm extremely concerned, actually fearful, about the status of academic freedom and free speech at George Mason should the proposed "antisemitism" resolution succeed. I know it would have a chilling effect on those speaking out for peace and justice in the Middle East--is, indeed, calculated to suppress this speech. I urge you in the strongest possible terms to vote NO on the BOV resolution.
Tyler Martinez	Student	I strongly oppose the BOV motion to alter the definition of antisemitism at GMU to include the IHRA working definition of antisemitism. The policies of the state of Israel are not equivalent to the views of all Jewish people. I encourage the board to vote no on the antisemitism resolution,.
Michele Ren	Faculty at Radford University	As a Jewish person myself, I understand that ZIONIST does not apply to me and does NOT stand in for "Jewish." Please do not curtail free speech in this way.
Jake Fox	Resident of Virginia	I'm writing to urge the GMU Board of Visitors to reconsider the current resolution defining antisemitic speech on campus. Antisemitism is repugnant. However, the ambiguity of language defining "proxy" verbiage is unclear and represents a threat to important speech on a campus. Please vote "no" on the resolution, and pursue a longer discussion to develop clear standards on discriminatory speech that will not have a chilling effect on important speech. Thank you!
Paul Thomas	A concerned person	Please vote no on the BOV antisemitism resolution. The resolution provides no mechanism for determining when "Zion" and "Zionism" are deemed as proxies for Jewish. The creates the opportunity for inaccurate and arbitrary enforcement of the policy. Note also that no government should be immune from criticisms for its policies. Efforts like this are meant to shield Israeli government from criticism by deeming such criticism as antisemitic.
Stockton Maxwell	Community Member	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution. Antisemitism should not be supported but the resolution may unintentionally restrict free speech or allow the university to restrict criticism of political positions in the US and abroad.
Jae-Lynn Tavarez Brown	Student	<p>DEAR BOV, BOT, GMU ADMIN,</p> <p>We are writing to you on behalf of the student body at George Mason University (GMU) to demand immediate action regarding the ethical implications of the University's investment practices. Specifically, we urge you to disclose and reconsider investments tied to companies or entities implicated in human rights violations against civilians, and take steps to ensure that GMU's investments align with its mission and core values.</p> <p>As stated in the university's mission, "the pressures we face today may be different from the past, but our core values remain the same and continue to guide our actions." These values—putting our students first, striving for innovation, acting as careful stewards, nurturing collaboration, embracing diversity, honoring freedom of thought, and acting with integrity—are the foundation of our identity as a community. GMU has long prided itself on its commitment to uphold the highest ethical standards in education and scholarship. It is within this framework that we must evaluate the ethical implications of the university's financial decisions and contributors.</p> <p>In light of these core values, we call on the Board to conduct and disclose a thorough and transparent review of the University's investment portfolio to identify and divest from any holdings linked to companies or entities that are complicit in human rights violations against civilians. This includes, but is not limited to, companies involved in the production of weapons or military equipment used in violent conflict zones where civilians are targeted and oppressed. We believe that review and divestment from these entities is not only a moral imperative but also crucial to maintaining the integrity and reputation of GMU as an institution that upholds the principles of justice, humanity, and ethical conduct.</p> <p>This issue is not theoretical; as the most diverse institution in the Commonwealth, GMU is home to students whose identities and experiences span the globe, including in regions where human rights violations persist as a harsh reality. Their families are facing genocides and violent conflict in Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, Myanmar, Lebanon, Sudan, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other areas of violent conflict around the world, often in direct proximity to the entities that profit from the violence. These students, who already carry the emotional weight of their loved</p>

ones' safety on a daily basis, are forced to contend with the knowledge that the institution they attend is complicit in the perpetuation of these harms. They wake up each day worrying whether their family members have been caught in airstrikes or forced into displacement, while simultaneously navigating the challenges of their academic pursuits. This emotional and psychological toll is compounded by the alienation they experience on campus, where they are confronted with the disconnect between GMU's values and its financial, and institutional practices.

The potential consequences of inaction are profound. Alumni, faculty staff, students, and friends of the GMU community contributed over \$26 million in Fiscal Year 2024 to the University, and we have concerns that the future of these contributions will be threatened as the GMU community becomes increasingly aware of the ethical concerns surrounding the university's investments and contributions from companies actively complicit in human rights abuses against civilians. Current and future alumni play a great role in the success and development of this university, but many, including our current matriculating student population, do not want to fund an institution that remains silent in the face of genocide and continues to work with corporations that are exacerbating it. This is reflective of the coalition of student organizations that have coalesced around this letter and its demands. The university's failure to act in this matter risks alienating the very community it seeks to engage and

Isabelle Eker Student

DEAR BOV, BOT, GMU ADMIN,

We are writing to you on behalf of the student body at George Mason University (GMU) to demand immediate action regarding the ethical implications of the University's investment practices. Specifically, we urge you to disclose and reconsider investments tied to companies or entities implicated in human rights violations against civilians, and take steps to ensure that GMU's investments align with its mission and core values.

As stated in the university's mission, "the pressures we face today may be different from the past, but our core values remain the same and continue to guide our actions." These values—putting our students first, striving for innovation, acting as careful stewards, nurturing collaboration, embracing diversity, honoring freedom of thought, and acting with integrity—are the foundation of our identity as a community. GMU has long prided itself on its commitment to uphold the highest ethical standards in education and scholarship. It is within this framework that we must evaluate the ethical implications of the university's financial decisions and contributors.

In light of these core values, we call on the Board to conduct and disclose a thorough and transparent review of the University's investment portfolio to identify and divest from any holdings linked to companies or entities that are complicit in human rights violations against civilians. This includes, but is not limited to, companies involved in the production of weapons or military equipment used in violent conflict zones where civilians are targeted and oppressed. We believe that review and divestment from these entities is not only a moral imperative but also crucial to maintaining the integrity and reputation of GMU as an institution that upholds the principles of justice, humanity, and ethical conduct.

This issue is not theoretical; as the most diverse institution in the Commonwealth, GMU is home to students whose identities and experiences span the globe, including in regions where human rights violations persist as a harsh reality. Their families are facing genocides and violent conflict in Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, Myanmar, Lebanon, Sudan, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other areas of violent conflict around the world, often in direct proximity to the entities that profit from the violence. These students, who already carry the emotional weight of their loved ones' safety on a daily basis, are forced to contend with the knowledge that the institution they attend is complicit in the perpetuation of these harms. They wake up each day worrying whether their family members have been caught in airstrikes or forced into displacement, while simultaneously navigating the challenges of their academic pursuits. This emotional and psychological toll is compounded by the alienation they experience on campus, where they are confronted with the disconnect between GMU's values and its financial, and institutional practices.

The potential consequences of inaction are profound. Alumni, faculty staff, students, and friends of the GMU community contributed over \$26 million in Fiscal Year 2024 to the University, and we have concerns that the future of these contributions will be threatened as the GMU community becomes increasingly aware of the ethical concerns surrounding the university's investments and contributions from companies actively complicit in human rights abuses against civilians. Current and future alumni play a great role in the success and development of this university, but many, including our current matriculating student population, do not want to fund an institution that remains silent in the face of genocide and continues to work with corporations that are exacerbating it. This is reflective of the coalition of student organizations that have coalesced around this letter and its demands.

Bruna Laurent Student

DEAR BOV, BOT, GMU ADMIN,

We are writing to you on behalf of the student body at George Mason University (GMU) to demand immediate action regarding the ethical implications of the University's investment practices. Specifically, we urge you to disclose and reconsider investments tied to companies or entities implicated in human rights violations against civilians, and take steps to ensure that GMU's investments align with its mission and core values.

As stated in the university's mission, "the pressures we face today may be different from the past, but our core values remain the same and continue to guide our actions." These values—putting our students first, striving for innovation, acting as careful stewards, nurturing collaboration, embracing diversity, honoring freedom of thought, and acting with integrity—are the foundation of our identity as a community. GMU has long prided itself on its commitment to uphold the highest ethical standards in education and scholarship. It is within this framework that we must evaluate the ethical implications of the university's financial decisions and contributors.

In light of these core values, we call on the Board to conduct and disclose a thorough and transparent review of the University's investment portfolio to identify and divest from any holdings linked to companies or entities that are complicit in human rights violations against civilians. This includes, but is not limited to, companies involved in the

production of weapons or military equipment used in violent conflict zones where civilians are targeted and oppressed. We believe that review and divestment from these entities is not only a moral imperative but also crucial to maintaining the integrity and reputation of GMU as an institution that upholds the principles of justice, humanity, and ethical conduct.

This issue is not theoretical; as the most diverse institution in the Commonwealth, GMU is home to students whose identities and experiences span the globe, including in regions where human rights violations persist as a harsh reality. Their families are facing genocides and violent conflict in Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, Myanmar, Lebanon, Sudan, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other areas of violent conflict around the world, often in direct proximity to the entities that profit from the violence. These students, who already carry the emotional weight of their loved ones' safety on a daily basis, are forced to contend with the knowledge that the institution they attend is complicit in the perpetuation of these harms. They wake up each day worrying whether their family members have been caught in airstrikes or forced into displacement, while simultaneously navigating the challenges of their academic pursuits. This emotional and psychological toll is compounded by the alienation they experience on campus, where they are confronted with the disconnect between GMU's values and its financial, and institutional practices.

The potential consequences of inaction are profound. Alumni, faculty staff, students, and friends of the GMU community contributed over \$26 million in Fiscal Year 2024 to the University, and we have concerns that the future of these contributions will be threatened as the GMU community becomes increasingly aware of the ethical concerns surrounding the university's investments and contributions from companies actively complicit in human rights abuses against civilians. Current and future alumni play a great role in the success and development of this university, but many, including our current matriculating student population, do not want to fund an institution that remains silent in the face of genocide and continues to work with corporations that are exacerbating it. This is reflective of the coalition of student organizations that have coalesced around this letter and its demands.

Michael Friedman	Concerned citizen	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Marlia Abongnelah	Student	<p>DEAR BOV, BOT, GMU ADMIN,</p> <p>We are writing to you on behalf of the student body at George Mason University (GMU) to demand immediate action regarding the ethical implications of the University's investment practices. Specifically, we urge you to disclose and reconsider investments tied to companies or entities implicated in human rights violations against civilians, and take steps to ensure that GMU's investments align with its mission and core values.</p> <p>As stated in the university's mission, "the pressures we face today may be different from the past, but our core values remain the same and continue to guide our actions." These values—putting our students first, striving for innovation, acting as careful stewards, nurturing collaboration, embracing diversity, honoring freedom of thought, and acting with integrity—are the foundation of our identity as a community. GMU has long prided itself on its commitment to uphold the highest ethical standards in education and scholarship. It is within this framework that we must evaluate the ethical implications of the university's financial decisions and contributors.</p> <p>In light of these core values, we call on the Board to conduct and disclose a thorough and transparent review of the University's investment portfolio to identify and divest from any holdings linked to companies or entities that are complicit in human rights violations against civilians. This includes, but is not limited to, companies involved in the production of weapons or military equipment used in violent conflict zones where civilians are targeted and oppressed. We believe that review and divestment from these entities is not only a moral imperative but also crucial to maintaining the integrity and reputation of GMU as an institution that upholds the principles of justice, humanity, and ethical conduct.</p> <p>This issue is not theoretical; as the most diverse institution in the Commonwealth, GMU is home to students whose identities and experiences span the globe, including in regions where human rights violations persist as a harsh reality. Their families are facing genocides and violent conflict in Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, Myanmar, Lebanon, Sudan, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other areas of violent conflict around the world, often in direct proximity to the entities that profit from the violence. These students, who already carry the emotional weight of their loved ones' safety on a daily basis, are forced to contend with the knowledge that the institution they attend is complicit in the perpetuation of these harms. They wake up each day worrying whether their family members have been caught in</p>

		<p>airstrikes or forced into displacement, while simultaneously navigating the challenges of their academic pursuits. This emotional and psychological toll is compounded by the alienation they experience on campus, where they are confronted with the disconnect between GMU's values and its financial, and institutional practices.</p> <p>The potential consequences of inaction are profound. Alumni, faculty staff, students, and friends of the GMU community contributed over \$26 million in Fiscal Year 2024 to the University, and we have concerns that the future of these contributions will be threatened as the GMU community becomes increasingly aware of the ethical concerns surrounding the university's investments and contributions from companies actively complicit in human rights abuses against civilians. Current and future alumni play a great role in the success and development of this university, but many, including our current matriculating student population, do not want to fund an institution that remains silent in the face of genocide and continues to work with corporations that are exacerbating it. This is reflective of the coalition of student organizations that have coalesced around this letter and its demands. The university's failure to act in this matter risks alienating the very community it seeks to engage and s</p>
Marlia Abongnelah	Student	<p>The potential consequences of inaction are profound. Alumni, faculty staff, students, and friends of the GMU community contributed over \$26 million in Fiscal Year 2024 to the University, and we have concerns that the future of these contributions will be threatened as the GMU community becomes increasingly aware of the ethical concerns surrounding the university's investments and contributions from companies actively complicit in human rights abuses against civilians. Current and future alumni play a great role in the success and development of this university, but many, including our current matriculating student population, do not want to fund an institution that remains silent in the face of genocide and continues to work with corporations that are exacerbating it. This is reflective of the coalition of student organizations that have coalesced around this letter and its demands. The university's failure to act in this matter risks alienating the very community it seeks to engage and support.</p> <p>We understand that disclosure decisions are complex and multifaceted. As such, we are writing to urge the Board to prioritize this matter and extend ourselves and members of the student community to engage with the Board in reviewing how our University's ethical guidelines are being upheld, and we wish to stress the importance of a transparent process of review and reform in actualizing our University's mission and core values.</p> <p>As students who have made an academic, professional, and financial investment in this institution, we feel as though it is our right to understand who is investing in our community. The voices of GMU's student body are united in this call for action, and we are more than willing to engage in further discussions or offer support in working towards these goals. It is imperative that we address this issue with urgency and commitment, fostering an environment where ethical practices are at the forefront of development, and student voices are centered in the expansion and sustenance of the George Mason University community.</p> <p>Sincerely, GMU STUDENTS</p>
Anonymous	Concerned American	Please do not punish students for protesting the Palestinian genocide. It is never too late to support restorative justice for victims of genocide. It is morally right to oppose such atrocities.
Evelyn Mirabel Hogan-Hunt	Student	Comments sent via email.
Elizabeth smith		I have read books published by your professors.
Michael Gordon	Community Member	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
David Finkel	I am the managing editor of the social justice journal AGAINST THE CURRENT againstthecurrent.org	Suspending students and organizations that speak up for Palestinian rights has nothing to do with combating antisemitism. It's an attack of freedom of speech, the right to organize, and the human rights of all people. The suspensions of students and organizations must be rescinded immediately.
Mary Jo Baumann	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of first amendment rights.</p> <p>Institutions of higher education should foster environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression".</p> <p>This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should</p>

		<p>uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal. It breaks my heart to think that you are enabling the fascist agenda of the current political administration!</p> <p>Sincerely, MJ Baumann</p>
Nadia Behizadeh	Concerned member of the academy	<p>As a professor, I have serious concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors. This proposal would criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and foster environments where diverse perspectives can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression. This proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights.</p>
Taylor T.	Repro justice advocate	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors to use fear to criminalize and punish all criticism of Zionism on campus. As a Jew who rejects and actively criticizes Zionism, it's clear that this is an attempt to shut down free speech, violate first amendment rights, and target organizing and solidarity with people asking for an end to apartheid. It's outrageous. Higher education has a tremendous role to play in pushing back against repression and should seek, especially in this moment of anticipatory of obedience to fascism, represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides and markets itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments.</p> <p>Any good historian of Zionism, who studies its foundational texts such as Herzl and Jabotinsky along with its concurrent opposition when it was growing its movement, can see its colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. It's in the archives. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Karla Rosales-Barrios	Ally and Activist	<p>How is it even remotely possible that in 2025, we continue to have to fight for the right for freedom of expression, free speech, and the duty to resist the powers that be without being targeted and silenced via censorship? It is even more outrageous that the argument is based on the false premise that any person who challenges, questions, or speaks out against the horrors subjugated people, in this particular case, Palestinian people living under a Zionist anti-Muslim occupation! Our United States government has spent billions of tax payer dollars to fund horror, death, destruction and we not only have the right but the duty to speak out! This act has zero to do with anti-semitism and it is simply outrageous that any institution of higher learning has the gumption to shut down dissent and conflate it with anti-semitism. How dare you. Protect Free Speech. Protect Freedom of Thought and Expression. Protect students' rights to use their voice and intellect to bring different perspectives to the myriad of issues. Stand up for all students' rights!</p>
Sharon Wheeler	Community Member	<p>At some point, which is rapidly approaching,, you cease to be a University and become a diploma factory, not even competitive with on-line diploma mills.</p> <p>At the very least, look at the works of Jewish scholars,. Shame on you for celebrating ignorance.</p>
Carol Strauss Sotiropoulos	prof emerita, Northern Mich University: wrote numerous letters of recommendations for students seeking admission to George Mason	<p>I am Jewish, the daughter of Holocaust survivors, a former resident of Israel, and I stand in COMPLETE OPPOSITION to the IHRA definition of anti-semitism. This definition equates anti-semitism and anti-zionism and should therefore never be used as a measure for determining whether an action or words are anti-Jewish. In fact, this definition should be deplored. To be anti-zionist does not mean one is anti-semitic. In fact, hundreds of thousands of Jews are, like myself, anti-zionist. Anyone deserves the right to criticize Zionism, to criticize Israeli policies and conduct. The exercise of this right does not mean one is anti-semitic. I hope I have been as clear as possible here.</p>
Lillian Leibel	Student	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing today in opposition to a resolution before George Mason University's Board of Visitors that aims to ban criticism of Zionism, a political ideology, on GMU campuses. This resolution is a blatant assault on free speech, as well as a silencing tactic directed towards the pro-Palestinian movement. It undermines the diversity of thought and people that GMU prides itself on, and undermines GMU as an institution for higher education. Zionism is a political</p>

Nancy L. Wallace Nelson	concerned US citizen who believe in First Amendment rights	<p>ideology detached from religion. Zionism is not equivalent to Judaism, and criticism of a national state's ideology does not equate to hate speech. As someone with Jewish loved ones, this false equivalency does more to endanger Jewish lives by equivocating Judaism with a violent, colonialist ideology and apartheid state. As a GMU student, it frightens me that my university would limit free speech and debate, the very thing that universities are supposed to foster. Anti-zionist speech and pro-Palestinian protest are not hate speech, period. In addition, this resolution is an extension of the Right's attack on education. If pro-Palestinian students are not safe from censorship, who is? Will LGBTQIA+ books be next, or classes on critical race theory? This is the goal of the extreme Rightwing party that is currently occupying the highest parts of our United States government. I urge you, as a passionate student at GMU, the university I've come to love, to please oppose this resolution.</p> <p>I am shocked and alarmed that your well-regarded educational institute is shutting down all pro-Palestinian commentary, and endangering the freedom of speech that should be protected by higher education. First of all, being pro-Palestinian is NOT antisemitic. Palestinians ARE Semites, so that IDF actions against Palestinians ARE themselves antisemitic. Secondly, if you study the Torah which teaches that all beings are the face of God, you know Israeli assault on Gaza this past year is NOT Judaism. It is political, and is illegal by all international standards. If you want to read good information for further education, please have your entire board read "Being Jewish After the Destruction of Gaza Reckoning" by Peter Beinart.</p> <p>Meanwhile, I hope that you will NOT comply with any of Trump's poorly-written ICE orders regarding your foreign students. You owe ALL of your students protection. Emergency alerts should be issued to all students if an ICE raid does happen. And "know your rights" campus workshops are imminently necessary right now.</p> <p>Sincerely, Nancy Wallace Nelson</p>
Kathy Bartolomeo	Community Member	<p>We need to protect all our students. Let them know when ICE is on campus. Teach everyone to know their rights. Training must be provided. Also, please train the Title 6 officers as to what the difference is between antisemitism and anti-zionism. We all should have the right to dissent. Alumni need to be heard for their concerns in protecting all students.</p>
Cortney Green	Alumni	I do not accept this as it threatens academic freedom.
Alexandra Davidson	Alumni	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>As a proud Jewish alumni (MS, Conflict Analysis and Resolution, 2007) I'm writing to you because Mason means so much to me and I my own education at Mason would have been much lesser were this policy in place when I was a student.</p> <p>I am writing to express my concern about the proposal for Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus.</p> <p>I'm concerned about its impact on free speech and that it violates students first amendment rights. Colleges need to be about tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive.</p> <p>Mason prides itself on its diverse student population yet this proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every person to learn diverse perspectives and to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>Please consider the grave consequences of this proposal. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, Alexandra Davidson, MS 2007</p>
Sky Minkoff	Community Member	<p>Greetings,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our First Amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression. Intellectual freedom is a fundamental component of institutions of higher learning.</p> <p>Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. As a Jewish student, I affirm that zionism is fundamentally violent, racist, eugenicist, and genocidal. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". Equating zionism with Judaism is an attack on Jewish people, especially the >50% of Jewish college students who oppose the violence and racism of zionism.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Patricia Korey	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would</p>

		<p>aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Ali Mili	Community Member	if free speech is not protected in academia, where can it be?
Dolores Pino	Civil Rights Attorney	<p>February 26, 2025</p> <p>To Board, Faculty, Administrators of George Mason:</p> <p>As a Practicing Attorney in the Civil Rights field, I am very concerned to learn of Jeff Rosen’s misguided proposal that would criminalize criticism of Zionism on the George Mason campus.</p> <p>This very misguided proposal would needlessly restrict free speech and is a gross violation of every student’s First Amendment constitutional rights.</p> <p>Institutions of higher education, including George Mason, MUST stand up for tolerance and growth, and promote learning environments on campus with thriving, diverse perspectives, ideas and identities.</p> <p>This very misguided proposal would needlessly censor important criticism of Zionism within all University departments.</p> <p>Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is false, and harms the fundamental free speech and free thought rights of all persons on campus.</p> <p>I very strongly urge you to reject this very misguided proposal as obviously violative of the essential, fundamental right to free speech for all.</p> <p>George Mason should promote critical thinking for all, not censor criticism of "Zionism" or criticism of a state's lethal violence against persons within its territory, e.g., Israel's illegal military operations, Genocide of, and system of Apartheid against the non-Jewish people living in illegally occupied Palestine.</p>
Polly Parkinson	Community Member	<p>I am deeply concerned about Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of first amendment rights. Do you realize that almost half of all Jews do not support Zionism? Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Please uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression. Students and community members should be able to exercise free speech without being labeled criminals. Please protect free speech on campus by not adopting the Rosen proposal. Thank you</p>
Nada Moustafa	Student	<p>DEAR BOV, BOT, GMU ADMIN,</p> <p>We are writing to you on behalf of the student body at George Mason University (GMU) to demand immediate action regarding the ethical implications of the University’s investment practices. Specifically, we urge you to disclose and reconsider investments tied to companies or entities implicated in human rights violations against civilians, and take steps to ensure that GMU’s investments align with its mission and core values.</p> <p>As stated in the university’s mission, "the pressures we face today may be different from the past, but our core values remain the same and continue to guide our actions." These values—putting our students first, striving for innovation, acting as careful stewards, nurturing collaboration, embracing diversity, honoring freedom of thought, and acting with integrity—are the foundation of our identity as a community. GMU has long prided itself on its commitment to uphold the highest ethical standards in education and scholarship. It is within this framework that we must evaluate the ethical implications of the university’s financial decisions and contributors.</p> <p>In light of these core values, we call on the Board to conduct and disclose a thorough and transparent review of the University’s investment portfolio to identify and divest from any holdings linked to companies or entities that are complicit in human rights violations against civilians. This includes, but is not limited to, companies involved in the production of weapons or military equipment used in violent conflict zones where civilians are targeted and oppressed. We believe that review and divestment from these entities is not only a moral imperative but also crucial</p>

		<p>to maintaining the integrity and reputation of GMU as an institution that upholds the principles of justice, humanity, and ethical conduct.</p> <p>This issue is not theoretical; as the most diverse institution in the Commonwealth, GMU is home to students whose identities and experiences span the globe, including in regions where human rights violations persist as a harsh reality. Their families are facing genocides and violent conflict in Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, Myanmar, Lebanon, Sudan, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other areas of violent conflict around the world, often in direct proximity to the entities that profit from the violence. These students, who already carry the emotional weight of their loved ones' safety on a daily basis, are forced to contend with the knowledge that the institution they attend is complicit in the perpetuation of these harms. They wake up each day worrying whether their family members have been caught in airstrikes or forced into displacement, while simultaneously navigating the challenges of their academic pursuits. This emotional and psychological toll is compounded by the alienation they experience on campus, where they are confronted with the disconnect between GMU's values and its financial, and institutional practices.</p> <p>The potential consequences of inaction are profound. Alumni, faculty staff, students, and friends of the GMU community contributed over \$26 million in Fiscal Year 2024 to the University, and we have concerns that the future of these contributions will be threatened as the GMU community becomes increasingly aware of the ethical concerns surrounding the university's investments and contributions from companies actively complicit in human rights abuses against civilians. Current and future alumni play a great role in the success and development of this university, but many, including our current matriculating student population, do not want to fund an institution that remains silent in the face of genocide and continues to work with corporations that are exacerbating it. This is reflective of the coalition of student organizations that have coalesced around this letter and its demands. The university's failure to act in this matter risks alienating the very community it seeks to engage and s</p>
Dolores Pino	Civil Rights Attorney	<p>February 26, 2025</p> <p>To George Mason Administration:</p> <p>Part Two of my comment submission today</p> <p>Here is my suggestion for what you should do instead of restricting people's right to free speech on campus:</p>
Gregory Perkins	Community Member	<p>I am compelled to present my concerns in regard a proposal by Mr. Jeff Rosen to Board of Visitors of George Mason University attempting to criminalize all criticism of the Netanyahu government or Zionism at the school. I consider this to be an dangerous assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Higher education should foster diverse perspectives and ideas. Universities have a crucial responsibility to their students and community to uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression. George Mason cannot claim to uphold and promote student and faculty diversity while persecuting or marginalizing GMU students for their unpopular opinions or criticism of prevailing political policies.</p> <p>Rosen's proposal attempts to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is cynical and intellectually and morally dishonest. This intentionally dishonest view is an attack on the many Jews who oppose Zionism or the policies of the Israeli government as well as a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students. It violates the constitutional rights of all members of the community to free expression. Universities have an obligation to uplift divergent voices.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Dolores Pino	Civil Rights Attorney	<p>Part Two of my submission today:</p> <p>Instead of restricting free speech on campus by falsely conflating anti-zionism with "anti-semitism," please hold a week or week-end long, campus-wide and community-wide, educational teach-in on the history of "Israel"/occupied Palestine, for students and community, including showings of the excellent, highly informative, 4-part documentary film titled, "Al-Nakba," Parts 1 -4, as well as the excellent 2012 documentary film titled, "Roadmap to Apartheid," narrated by Alice Walker.</p> <p>Here are links to these excellent, important documentary films:</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H7FML0wzJ6A</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yI2D5Fsd9Ilg</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5SKECszenmA</p> <p>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0m__A7MIDrk</p> <p>https://www.imdb.com/title/tt2124900/</p> <p>Thank you very much for your time and attention to this important matter.</p>

Anne Erde	Interested retired professor	Our job as teachers is to support free speech and help our students work through complex issues. Please stand up for your students, faculty and staff. Thank you.
Marta Guttenberg MD	Community Member	Universities have in loco parentis obligations towards students. Choosing to suspend or punish students for First Amendment protected activities and, intentionally or not, placing them at risk for homelessness, arrest, visa loss, or possible deportation is a blatant violation. Return to the tradition of Alma Mater that has characterized GMU heretofore.
Lauren Cattaneo	Faculty	As a Jewish faculty member, I strongly oppose the resolution related to antisemitism that is to be considered at the Feb 27 BOV meeting. I believe that the resolution threatens academic freedom, and that in the end it actually exacerbates the vulnerability of Jewish students, staff, and faculty. First, the IHRA definition of antisemitism is overly broad. As such, it risks targeting those who are engaging in debate or education related to the complex issues in Israel and Palestine; this risk not only threatens academic freedom, but it also is likely to have a chilling effect on exactly the kind of conversations and education that are desperately needed around these topics. The IHRA definition was never meant to be applied in this way, as its authors have made clear. Whatever the intentions behind it, I believe the resolution will lead to the targeting of speech that is not only allowed, not only protected, but is vital for the very cause the resolution purports to advance. Second, as a Jewish person, I strenuously disagree with the resolution's singling out of antisemitism as distinct from other forms of discrimination against marginalized groups. This singling out is particularly glaring at a time when initiatives combatting discrimination against other marginalized groups are actively under threat. I believe that Jewish students, faculty and staff should be protected alongside – not over and above – students, faculty and staff with other minoritized racial, ethnic and religious identities. These efforts should be combined and connected, and any educational or informational materials should discuss the issues in tandem. I believe elevating the safety of Jewish people over and above other minoritized groups is not only morally wrong, but that in the end it serves only to isolate, further marginalize and open the Jewish people to more attack. I would like to see anti-discrimination resolutions and educational materials that include Jewish people alongside other groups that have historically been targets of discrimination, including, among others, Muslim students, faculty, and staff. Along these lines, I strongly agreed with the statement of the graduate student representative, Carolyn Faith Hoffman, who at the 2/13 BOV meeting highlighted the need to address the rise in antisemitism since October 7, but argued that the resolution will only "further division and misunderstanding of the Jewish people." That is the last thing we need. Please reject this resolution.
Aeris Phan	Student	Comment was sent via email with aphan33@gmu.edu
X. Amy Zhang	Faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Shane Porambo	Washington State resident	Yes, I just like to say that I support students to have the full right of expressing their freedom of speech on your campus without any retaliation. I have watched over the last year and a half many acts of war and I am hoping that US can use it's strength to bring peace, prosperity and hopefulness wherever it goes. I'm also praying daily for peace on both sides of the conflict that surrounds Palestine. Sincerely yours, Shane Porambo
Rana Saed	Retired communications professional	To whom it may concern, As an American, I am horrified to have to write this letter. The year is 2025. We are in the United States of America. The only nation in the world that has speech protections under the First Amendment and yet here we are. Witnessing live before our eyes the fragility of this amendment and where? On academic campuses of all places! The very spaces where free speech should be honored, endorsed and protected. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression. I'm deeply concerned regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Is this what we have become as a nation? Is this what American academia is heading towards? Does George Mason university value Israel more than its own students? Does it value Israel more than our First

		<p>Amendment? Does it value Israel more than the right of students to speak up against injustices? And finally, this question that should make you think deeply. Do you accept that students who speak up for Palestine deserve to be protected on your campus?</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. Moreover, this will dilute real anti-semitism making universities less, not more, safe for Jewish students.</p> <p>This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Rosemarie Pace	Peace activist, former college professor	<p>I am horrified to read about George Mason's (and so many other institutions of higher education) disgraceful position regarding Palestine and antisemitism. Believing in the humanity of Palestinians and opposing the genocide by Israel against Palestinians is NOT antisemitic. It is far more antisemitic to defend the barbarism of Israel toward its Palestinian residents and neighbors. Rightfully criticizing 76 years of occupation, oppression, death, and destruction is the only moral thing to do anywhere and anytime. You should be a leader in defending free speech and academic freedom and in promoting basic human decency rather than a defender of censorship and bigotry. Show some courage and basic morality. I know money talks and you're probably looking more to the mighty dollar than human rights, but that great American way must come to an end, and you can help make that happen right now. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.</p>
Sherry Paris	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a violation of first amendment rights. Protect free speech. Do not suppress speech or repress protest.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Rachel Jones	Faculty	<p>I write as a faculty member who has taken Mason students on educational visits to the Ravensbrück and Auschwitz-Birkenau memorial sites, and who teaches material that explores questions of remembrance, memorialization, and bearing witness in relation to the genocide of the Jewish people perpetrated by the Nazi regime, as well as its genocidal killing of other groups including the Roma and Sinti peoples and those deemed sexually deviant, and the torture and killing of peoples with disabilities. It is because I work with students on these issues that I strongly oppose the proposal to frame Mason's institutional approach to antisemitism on the basis of the IHRA Working Definition.</p> <p>The equivocation between antisemitism and criticisms of the actions and policies of the state of Israel in the IHRA definition creates a climate of fear, in which those who wish to be actively involved in combatting antisemitism yet who may also wish to raise criticisms of the actions and policies of the state of Israel are less likely to speak up and participate, lest merely raising such criticisms exposes them to the charge of antisemitism and potential disciplinary action.</p> <p>Silencing, excluding or quietening such voices represents a serious loss to the ongoing work of tackling antisemitism. Its chilling effect works directly against the kinds of nuanced and complex conversations that are needed to educate about antisemitism, its long history and continued present, and to allow our students to work through these issues in informed and ethically responsive ways in the kinds of conversations that so many of our colleagues - and our students - here at Mason are adept at facilitating.</p> <p>For sure, the IHRA definition leaves room for interpretation of individual acts and speech, but this is also what contributes to the uncertainty and fear: the alignment between antisemitism and criticisms of the actions and policies of the state of Israel (as well as critiques of Zionism) at multiple points in the definition produces the impression that any such criticisms are likely to be equated with antisemitism. Thus, when those who wish to raise such criticisms do speak, they are more likely to begin from a defensive position, feeling the need to prove they are not antisemitic before they can contribute. This is particularly silencing for members of our community who wish to support Palestinian rights while also standing against antisemitism. It is not conducive to creating an inclusive environment for meaningful campus conversations.</p> <p>The proposed resolution amounts to an anti-discrimination policy that produces its own silences and exclusions. Furthermore, tasking Mason's office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion with embedding the IHRA definition across the University's operations when other modes of discrimination are not addressed in similarly extensive ways sends a message that other forms of discrimination are not as important. It is not helpful to generate policies that create a hierarchy of discriminations or exclusions.</p> <p>In the preface to "If This is a Man," Primo Levi suggests that, when carried through to its logical conclusion, the</p>

		<p>premise that “every stranger is an enemy” results in the concentration camps. To fully dismantle this logic, we need to contest it wherever it manifests and whomever it is directed against. We did in fact have a Mason Core (‘social justice’) category that would have been a good place to address differing forms of discrimination and exclusion, including but not only as they manifest in antisemitism, Islamophobia, racism, misogyny, homophobia, transphobia, and ableism, without hierarchizing or equating them and with an attentiveness to their specificities and their sometimes overlapping histories. Again, Mason faculty and students are adept at navigating such complexities. It would be helpful if the BOV would help us to preserve and nurture the space for such truly inclusive and transformatory educational conversations.</p>
Samantha Parsons	Alumni Class of 2016	<p>Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason! Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution! The resolution emphasizes the protection of First Amendment rights while also directing the University to apply the IHRA definition of antisemitism, which has been criticized for potentially limiting speech critical of Israel. The resolution states that it will use IHRA as a “tool and guide,” but also directs the University to track and report incidents based on it, raising concerns about whether speech will be policed in a way that could infringe on academic freedom and free expression. No public university should be policing critical thinking in this way!</p>
Catherine Saunders	Faculty	<p>Please vote “no” on the BOV resolution on anti-Semitism. While it is important to protect all members of the university community from harassment based on protected characteristics, the provisions in this resolution seem unlikely to achieve that purpose. If you feel that the anti-bias training and other educational efforts directed at specific portions of the university community need to be strengthened, then I suggest that you direct the professional staff charged with creating such training and educational materials to create additional materials that address a broad range of possible expressions of bias rather than singling out any particular protected group or subgroup. That approach would be more effective, and would encourage all involved in the production of such materials to think about how to protect the expression of a variety of possibly-controversial viewpoints.</p> <p>Alternatively (and I think better), I hope the BOV will consider sponsoring opportunities for students faculty, staff, and BOV members to gain experience in discussing difficult topics in a productive manner. That strikes me as far more likely to reduce campus tensions and increase understanding than the activities mandated in the present resolution.</p>
Isabella Majarowitz	Student	<p>Dear Board of Visitors, Board of Trustees, and GMU Administrators,</p> <p>We are writing to you on behalf of the student body at George Mason University (GMU) to demand immediate action regarding the ethical implications of the University’s investment practices. Specifically, we urge you to disclose and reconsider investments tied to companies or entities implicated in human rights violations against civilians, and take steps to ensure that GMU’s investments align with its mission and core values.</p> <p>As stated in the university’s mission, “the pressures we face today may be different from the past, but our core values remain the same and continue to guide our actions.” These values—putting our students first, striving for innovation, acting as careful stewards, nurturing collaboration, embracing diversity, honoring freedom of thought, and acting with integrity—are the foundation of our identity as a community. GMU has long prided itself on its commitment to uphold the highest ethical standards in education and scholarship. It is within this framework that we must evaluate the ethical implications of the university’s financial decisions and contributors.</p> <p>In light of these core values, we call on the Board to conduct and disclose a thorough and transparent review of the University’s investment portfolio to identify and divest from any holdings linked to companies or entities that are complicit in human rights violations against civilians. This includes, but is not limited to, companies involved in the production of weapons or military equipment used in violent conflict zones where civilians are targeted and oppressed. We believe that review and divestment from these entities is not only a moral imperative but also crucial to maintaining the integrity and reputation of GMU as an institution that upholds the principles of justice, humanity, and diversity.</p> <p>This issue is not theoretical; as the most diverse institution in the Commonwealth, GMU is home to students whose identities and experiences span the globe, including in regions where human rights violations persist as a harsh reality. Their families are facing genocides and violent conflict in Palestine, Syria, Ukraine, Yemen, Myanmar, Lebanon, Sudan, Haiti, the Democratic Republic of Congo and other areas facing violent conflict around the world, often in direct proximity to the entities that profit from the violence. These students, who already carry the emotional weight of their loved ones’ safety on a daily basis, are forced to contend with the knowledge that the institution they attend is complicit in the perpetuation of these harms. They wake up each day worrying whether their family members have been caught in airstrikes or forced into displacement, while simultaneously navigating the challenges of college. This emotional and psychological toll is compounded by the alienation they experience on campus, where they are confronted with the disconnect between GMU’s values and its financial, and institutional practices.</p> <p>The potential consequences of inaction are profound. Alumni, faculty staff, students, and friends of the GMU community contributed over \$26 million in Fiscal Year 2024 to the University, and we have concerns that the future of these contributions will be threatened as the GMU community becomes increasingly aware of the ethical concerns surrounding the university’s investments and contributions from companies actively complicit in human rights abuses against civilians. Current and future alumni play a great role in the success and development of this university, but many, including our current matriculating student population, do not want to fund an institution that remains silent in the face of genocide and continues to work with corporations that are exacerbating it. This is reflective of the coalition of student organizations that have coalesced around this letter and its demands. We are more than willing to engage in further discussions.</p> <p>Thank you, GMU Students</p>

Robert Malone	Community Member	I am writing out of concern regarding the proposed adoption by the University of the IHRA definition of antisemitism. I feel that this overly broad definition can be used to sanction members of the University community who express support for the rights of Palestinians and/or criticism of the Israeli Government. Although the proposed resolution expresses support for free speech such definitions of antisemitism have been used to suppress pro-Palestinian expression elsewhere. At the very least it can chill such speech by self-censorship on the part of those who don't want to be labeled racist. But racism can also be directed toward Arab peoples and we must be as sensitive to that as we are to racism toward Jews. I hope the BOV will refrain from taking this unnecessary action. Thank you.
Shawn Loescher	Family friend of a student	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>As a retired military between I am writing to express my grave concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech rights guaranteed in the US Constitution that I swore to defend. This is a gross violation of Americans first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression. George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous and anti-semitic, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift. I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Rula khoury	Community Member	Free Palestine
Jena Musmar	Alumni	<p>The adoption of the IHRA definition of antisemitism is false and dangerous. As many other universities have begun adopting the definition, we've seen an increasingly hostile environment in response to criticisms of illegal occupation and apartheid. As a DC-metropolitan area school known for public policy, we know and hold true that every government is worthy of receiving criticism and upholding human rights. It is what makes a democracy. Jewishness and Judaism are distinct in their belief in social justice. As an alumna and Arab-American, I sincerely believe equating criticism of Israeli crimes against humanity with antisemitism is factually incorrect and dangerously portrays the Jewish people as those who condone genocide, apartheid, and occupation.</p> <p>I, nor should the Board of Visitors, adopt this definition for those reasons. It inaccurately protects an internationally recognized apartheid state, sacrificing GMU student voices, livelihoods, and families in doing so. The same students whom make GMU the most diverse university in Virginia.</p>
Jane	Faculty	Antizionism is not antisemitism.
Shirin Wertime	Sibling of alumnus and friend of many alumni	As a Northern Virginia resident, sister of a George Mason University alumnus and friend of many alumni, I urge the university to reject the inclusion of the highly problematic IHRA working definition of antisemitism in University Policy 1201. To quote the April 2023 Joint Letter sent to UN Secretary-General António Guterres by Human Rights Watch and other civil society groups "the IHRA definition has often been used to wrongly label criticism of Israel as antisemitic, and thus chill and sometimes suppress, non-violent protest, activism and speech critical of Israel and/or Zionism, including in the US and Europe." I vehemently reject this definition and its application in a public university setting.
Abigail Weber	Community Member	<p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights, which GMU has a legal as well as moral responsibility to uphold as a public university. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression. In particular, this is troubling to me as someone who cares about the protection and support of the Jewish community on college campuses. While this policy appears at first glance to protect Jewish students, in actuality it will harm them by making antisemitic harassment more difficult to report and follow through, limit their ability to engage in community with each other and with G-d, and shut down discussion that could lead to greater understanding across diverse groups.</p> <p>Under the IHRA definition, students would be open to spurious claims of antisemitism based on their political and ideological discussion. This would have ramifications for all students, but I am particularly worried about the Jewish students this policy claims to protect. The phrasing of the IHRA definition leaves it open to being exploited with bad faith reports. This means that anti-Zionist Jews, or even Jews who are simply trying to learn and explore new perspectives outside of those their parents espoused, could face claims of antisemitism that, while obviously false, will impact their school career. Furthermore, if the office is flooded with exaggerated reports, more aggressive incidents of antisemitism may be lost in the numbers.</p> <p>This is also troubling to me as someone who cares about the protection and support of Jewish community on college campuses. The Jewish faith processes problems and grows closer to G-d: through open discussion, argument, dissent, and education. Limiting discourse on campuses, especially for Jewish issues, will ironically make it more difficult for Jewish students to safely process and develop their opinions and beliefs without fear of reprisal. While the policy aims to only penalize speech that is harmful, discriminatory, or harassing, history has shown us that such wide and permissive phrasing means that honest attempts at understanding and discussion can be read in bad faith. While I am</p>

aware that “Zionist” has been used as a paper-thin proxy for Judaism as a whole, using such broad language opens the door for bad faith readings. These reports do not protect Jews; they shut down conversation and turn our community from one of shared growth and collaboration to a divided, dogmatic mess. Making antisemitism and anti-Zionism synonymous silences anti-Zionist Jews and shuts down discussion that is academically stimulating, community building, and, for many Jews, a sacred act of understanding and communing with G-d and others.

We know that antisemitism flourishes in the absence of truth and knowledge. The first thing the Nazis did was suppress the history of Jewish accomplishments, writings, and community through censorship. Anti-Zionism is a part of Jewish history, too. The Israel/Palestine conflict is already polarizing, with fear and grief deeply felt on both sides. Shutting down routes to empathy, mutual education, and political action will only exacerbate the existing us-vs-them framework. It is the job of universities to prepare young people to face a diverse world and tackle the challenges it presents. What are we teaching when we isolate groups from each other and block off the path to deeper understanding and empathy?

Please adopt the Jerusalem Declaration, which offers greater specificity to fight antisemitism and protect free speech.

Dominique Hannon	Student	<p>To correlate Zionism with the Jewish identity is wrong. Zionism is a political view regarding the state of Israel and the state of Palestine. To be Jewish is a religious and cultural identity and is not nor has ever been directly intertwined with Zionism. There are Jewish people who are not Zionist, nor do they feel Zionism represents their views and values. Does this make them anti-Semitic, then? It does not. To be Israeli is a national identity, and like all national identities and their corresponding nation-states, is to be subject to criticism. We see this worldwide, every day: Americans are criticized for the involvement in continued imperialism and settlers colonialism across the world, i.e. the global US military bases. To give another example, the British face criticism from Irish Republicans regarding the continued control of Northern Ireland. In both these examples, the national identity received critique because of the relation to the nation. Israeli citizens are not exempt from critiques of their country any more than any other country in this world and on this campus.</p> <p>Choosing to adopt the entirety of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of Anti-Semitism is choosing to say that George Mason University views Zionism as intangible from Judaism, which is harmful to the Jewish population on campus whom do not share the Zionist viewpoint and political identity. Political identities can be respected, yes, but should not be shielded from critique. Just as student democratic groups on campus can choose to not engage and include student republicans and vice versa, student organizations and groups on campus also have the right to not engage with those who identify as Zionist. The International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance Working Definition of Anti-Semitism is also flawed and highly opinionated regarding the correlation of criticism of Israeli State Policy with Anti-Semitism. No nation is exempt from criticism of its policies. Additionally, the right to self determination regarding the state of Israel is something that has been discussed and examined prior to the foundation of the state of Israel - just as there are Americans who believe the Indigenous population of America do not have a right to self determination on this continent, people can disagree with the Zionist viewpoint on self determination of the Israeli population.</p> <p>Anti-Semitism is a real and genuine issue for not just George Mason but universities and institutions across the world, but intertwining Zionist, Israeli, and Jewish identities is not a solution and in fact, can lead to further incidents of Anti-Semitism as those who have critiques of Zionism as a political movement and the state of Israel may believe in the Israeli propaganda of correlating Judaism with Zionism and begin to directly associate all Jewish people with Israel and Zionism.</p> <p>To reiterate: Zionism is a political viewpoint. Political view points are not free from critique. Zionism is not the same as Judaism. Nation states and national identities are not free from critique.</p>
Michael Rivera	Faculty	<p>Dear Members of the Board of Visitors,</p> <p>I am writing in my capacity as a Resident Advisor at George Mason University to express my deep concerns over the proposed \$350 increase in housing costs. While I understand that adjustments to housing fees might be deemed necessary for fiscal reasons, I must highlight that this increase appears inconsistent with the recent performance issues we have encountered in on-campus housing management.</p> <p>In our daily operations, we consistently face challenges with slow maintenance responses and delays in addressing facility requests. Such delays not only affect the quality of student living conditions but also undermine confidence in the value of the services provided. It has been noted in the past that the current profit margins are considered acceptable despite these ongoing maintenance issues. In light of this, raising the cost of housing cannot be justified without a corresponding commitment to robust improvements in facilities and maintenance services.</p> <p>For the additional cost to be truly warranted, it is imperative that the university guarantees efficient responses to facility requests and a clear plan to upgrade the dorms are essential. These improvements will ensure that the increased fees are directly linked to an enhanced living environment for students. Moreover, financial aid specifically earmarked for housing should be expanded to students who struggle to meet the higher costs—especially for those out of state. I know many who struggle with paying for housing on this campus that love living on campus; these are the people that we should be ensuring that can live on campus This assistance would help safeguard those whose academic performance and well-being might otherwise be compromised by an unmanageable financial burden.</p> <p>I respectfully urge the Board to consider these factors carefully and explore alternative solutions that balance fiscal responsibility with the undeniable need for improved service quality. Thank you for your attention to this matter and for considering the perspectives of those who are closely involved with the day-to-day challenges our students face.</p> <p>— Michael Rivera</p>
Amy	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a</p>

		<p>gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>As a Jewish community member, I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Brenna Jornet	Community Member	Zionism is a political ideology that has led to the destruction and death of thousands. It's a fact. Judasim is an ancient diverse religion and conflating the two is dangerous and unfair.
Community Member	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This outrageous proposal is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of our first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p>
Ariana E	Community Member	ANTIZIONISM IS NOT (!!!) ANTI SEMITISM. The deliberate attack on Jewish student is antisemitism, criticizing the current state of Israel is not!! Israel is committing genocide against Palestinians and occupying their land, if you can't see that it is clear genocide then there is something wrong with you. Again, ANTI ZIONISM IS NOT ANTI SEMETIC!!!
John		Anti-Zionism is not Antisemitism. DEI is not Anti-White Racism.
.		End Nationalism. End Racism. End Fear. End Hate.
.		Bring back Gunston
Robert Tate	parent of recent GMU graduate and community member	<p>Honorable Board of Visitors members:</p> <p>I write as a parent of a recent GMU graduate and a northern Virginia resident and Commonwealth taxpayer. I am also a Jewish American who is deeply distressed at policies and practices adopted at many universities across the country that are discouraging and suppressing faculty and student speech and organizational activity that is critical of Israeli government policies and practices.</p> <p>Both the IHRA definition of antisemitism--which we must all condemn and combat, along with anti-Palestinian, anti-Arab and anti-Muslim discrimination--and the resolution supporting its use by GMU have justifiably been criticized as overbroad. If adopted they predictably will chill academic freedom and legitimate and educative, as well as hateful or discriminatory, activity at Mason, inhibiting and undercutting a critical purpose of higher education.</p> <p>I urge you to protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.</p> <p>Very respectfully submitted, Robert Tate McLean</p>
Benjamin Steger	Faculty	My comments were sent via email as they exceeded the 4,000 character limit.
Mary Frazier	Non-GMU Student	<p>I am extremely concerned about Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors which aims to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. This proposal, which seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments, is an outrageous and gross violation of our first amendment rights to free speech. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their</p>

very own students. Zionism is a colonialist and racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinian people. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.

I strongly urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential to higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.

Sophie Dasmalchi Student

Dear Board of George Mason University,

I write to you this letter as a senior here at George Mason, and I hope that you will consider my statement with an open mind and relinquish any preconceived notions you may have.

It was at this very school where I learned the importance of student involvement in politics; Through a general education course I was required to take, I learned it was a student’s responsibility to engage in political activism; The Civil Rights protests of the 1960’s, the Vietnam War protests of the 70’s, Black Lives Matter in 2014, and now, the anti-genocide of Palestine movement. All these movements were met with backlash from their respective educational institutions and yet history looks upon these actions fondly as fundamental occurrences in the human rights space. The educational institutions that once suppressed these students were required to backtrack and publicize statements of change.

Last week, you circulated a civic engagement survey to gauge the level of political activism in your students. Simultaneously, you are pushing for legislature that violates the first amendment rights of these same students. I’m sure the irony of this dichotomy is not lost upon you.

I am not writing to argue that antisemitic rhetoric has a place on our campus as the discrimination or harassment of any person based on race or religion should indeed be quashed. However, I worry that antisemitism and anti-Zionism have been conflated and your proposed legislature will actively silence Palestinian voices. Let us forget the current federal investigation on George Mason University for alleged Title VI violations – National Origin Discrimination Involving Religion.

Every week, I attend class at the Sci-Tech campus. As I walk to class, I gaze up at the world’s flags pinned to the windows and banisters that line the halls- a representation of the diversity you actively boast and profit on. Yet the absence of the Palestinian flag is palpable. You cannot claim to implement these changes to remain neutral on the Israel-Palestine conflict when the Israeli flag hangs and the Palestinian flag is excluded. The erasure of Palestine pervades throughout our campus- this legislature is no exception.

I implore you to protect the first amendment rights of our students and consider amending the legislature to protect pro-Palestinian speech and allow for the political criticism of Zionism on campus.

Thank you for your consideration,
Sophie Dasmalchi, Current GMU Student

Sara Bollag Community
Member

To whom it may concern,

I am a Jewish community member and nearby resident to GMU and I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen’s proposal for George Mason’s Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus. Myself and my local Jewish community have been organizing around the simple message that anti-zionism does NOT equal anti-semitism, and this false equivalence only works to silence the legitimate and necessary call for Palestinian rights and freedoms. The proposal at hand is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.

George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize their very own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy, the real perpetrators of anti-semitism, to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to “honor freedom of thought and expression”. This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.

I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.

Thank you for your consideration.

Emma Harris	Student	Institutional Neutrality seems like a half baked attempt to silence students, professors, and other academics. Right now human rights are on the chopping block and we as an institution should be well within our right to attend a university with stances on them, especially as the most diverse public school in this state. That term was coined in the 60's. We do not need to go back to the 60's. This is not the school I applied to. I applied and got into a school dedicating to serving its students and advocating for their rights, as the DOE is up in the air. This is utterly disgraceful and shameful to even consider as a policy, I do not know how this board sleeps at night knowing they are willing to sacrifice their morals and dignity to save face from potential backlash. It's pathetic. Do better. We are the future. You do not want lawmakers who hold 'neutral' stances, that is not a thing anymore. There are Nazi's. Wake up.
Eva Bollag	Community Member	<p>To whom it may concern:</p> <p>I am writing to express my strong disagreement with the proposed resolution regarding antisemitism on campus. While I absolutely condemn all expression of antisemitism it is widely known that the IHRA definition of it flawed (and its original author publicly stated that he never intended to be used in the way Mr. Rosen is using it here). Zionism is a political ideology - every institution which respects freedom of thought should be able to distinguish the difference between antisemitism and anti-zionism, between criticism of an ideology and hate. While I fully support not to allow expressions of hate on your campus this resolution is a veiled attempt to suppress expression of free thought. I urge you to vote "NO" on proposed resolution.</p> <p>Thank you, Eva Bollag</p>
Ellie Fox	Student	GMU is given some discretion in how it enforces IHRA. The Antisemitism Resolution being considered is the most punitive option available, being supported by Mason Hillel and the JCRC of Greater Washington. These groups aren't interested in Jewish safety, rather, they want material support for Israel to go unchallenged. Conflating anti-Zionism and antisemitism only makes the fight against antisemitic hate harder and puts student activists at risk. The resolution should not be passed.
Burton S Bollag	Community Member	<p>Hello,</p> <p>As a Jewish community member living near GMU, I am writing to express my concerns regarding Jeff Rosen's proposal for George Mason's Board of Visitors that would aim to criminalize all criticism of Zionism on campus.</p> <p>Please understand that anti-zionism and does NOT equal anti-semitism, and this false equivalence only works to silence the legitimate support for Palestinian rights. The proposal at hand is an assault on free speech and is a gross violation of first amendment rights. Institutions of higher education should represent tolerance and promote growth, fostering environments where diverse perspectives, ideas and identities can thrive. Universities are indicators of social progress, making it crucial that they uphold principles of inclusivity, open discourse and freedom of expression.</p> <p>George Mason University prides itself on its diverse student population yet continues to harm and marginalize its own students. This proposal seeks to silence and censor any criticism of Zionism within ALL University departments. Zionism is a racist ideology rooted in the violent dispossession and displacement of Palestinians. Equating antisemitism to anti-zionism is dangerous, allowing fascism and white supremacy, the real perpetrators of anti-semitism, to strengthen their roots, especially if endorsed by a University that claims to "honor freedom of thought and expression". This is not only a direct attack on Palestinian and Arab students; it endangers the fundamental rights of every individual to express their views freely. Marginalized groups rely on academic spaces to challenge dominant narratives and advocate for change, yet the University continues to repress activism and silence the very voices that it should uplift.</p> <p>I urge you to consider the grave consequences of this proposal which seeks to undermine freedom of expression, critical thinking and diverse discourse which are essential attributes of higher education. Suppressing these freedoms would not only diminish the educational experience but would also set a dangerous precedent for censorship, marginalization and the erosion of democratic values within academic institutions.</p> <p>Thank you for your consideration.</p>
Tami Adejumo	Student	<p>Good evening. I would just like to highlight the importance of DEI to many students on campus. This program has benefited many students from different backgrounds where circumstances like financial disparities, ethnicity-linked struggles, and identity group related discrimination have been heavily prevalent. The various DEI programs that exist at George Mason University have aided me and many other students on campus in feeling more welcome and accepted on campus. Therefore, the maintenance and legislation of anti-discriminatory policy as well as programs that continue to support minorities, identity groups and students in peculiar circumstances, regardless of the name of the program would still be beneficial.</p> <p>Thank you for your time and work.</p>
Mary Griffin	Foundation for Individual Rights and Expression	A comment has been submitted via email. Thank you for your consideration.
Virginia Hoy	Faculty	Academic freedom is fundamental to the concept of a university. The Board of Visitors' antisemitism resolution violates this valuable ideal.
Tim Gibson	Faculty	<p>Dear BOV members,</p> <p>Please protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution!</p> <p>Rationale for a NO vote on the Visitor Rosen's Resolution on Antisemitism (from GMU-AAUP, written with the assistance of AI)</p>

1. Contradiction Between Free Speech Protections and IHRA Implementation

The resolution emphasizes the protection of First Amendment rights while also directing the University to apply the IHRA definition of antisemitism, which has been criticized for potentially limiting speech critical of Israel. The resolution states that it will use IHRA as a “tool and guide,” but also directs the University to track and report incidents based on it, raising concerns about whether speech will be policed in a way that could infringe on academic freedom and free expression.

2. Ambiguous Language Regarding Zionism

The resolution states: “In some cases, Zionism or Zionist has been used as a proxy for Jewish or Israeli. If used as a proxy for Jewish or Israeli, discrimination or harassment (including any of the examples listed on this factsheet of discriminatory treatment or discriminatory harassment) that targets Zionism or Zionist would also violate University Policy 1201.”

This language creates ambiguity. If a complaint is made that someone’s criticism of Zionism is antisemitic, how will the University determine whether “Zionist” was used as a proxy for “Jewish” or “Israeli”? This could lead to inconsistent application or even suppression of legitimate political speech.

3. Potential Conflict with Academic Freedom

The directive that the University “refrain from sponsoring or endorsing any organization, event, or other activity whose position or posture is antisemitic under the IHRA definition” could be problematic.

While the resolution states that this does not apply to faculty members, students, or independent organizations, it could still be interpreted in ways that deter legitimate academic discussions. For instance, educational programs or conferences discussing Israeli policies critically might be affected.

4. Inconsistencies in the Treatment of Protected Classes

The resolution specifically mandates updates to University Policy 1201 to clarify protections for “Jewish and Israeli identity,” but does not similarly mandate clarifications for other protected groups.

Including Israeli identity as a protected category is unusual, as national origin is already covered under non-discrimination policies. This might create inconsistencies in how different national identities are treated under university policy.

5. Selective Inclusion of Executive Orders and State Laws

The resolution references Executive Orders 13899 and 14188, as well as Virginia Chapter 471 (2023), but does not reference other anti-discrimination laws that apply to higher education institutions. This selective inclusion raises questions about whether the resolution is politically motivated rather than a neutral anti-discrimination measure.

6. Unclear Scope of Tracking and Reporting Antisemitic Incidents

The resolution directs the University to use the IHRA definition for “tracking and reporting antisemitic incidents in the Commonwealth.”

It is unclear what reporting mechanism will be used, whether this applies only to George Mason University, and whether the University is expected to report incidents outside its jurisdiction.

Anonymous	Student	<p>Dear Members of the Board of Visitors,</p> <p>I am writing to bring attention to ongoing issues within the College of Science, particularly within the Departments of Chemistry and Biochemistry. These concerns highlight a broader problem of disorganized leadership that directly impacts student success and accessibility.</p> <p>First, there is a lack of flexible/ADA accommodations in labs. Lab design excludes chairs, where neighboring institutions (such as the NOVA community college) do not have this issue. This creates unnecessary barriers for students with disabilities. Second, there is no clear or consistent method for students to make up missed labs. This disproportionately affects students with legitimate emergencies and accommodations. Third, I have observed grad TAs complaining about the system and how difficult these labs are set up to be. Chemistry at this institution specifically is set up to be a “weed out” course.</p> <p>Leadership and better standardization of accommodations should be focused on to address these systemic issues. Especially with the selection of a new COS dean soon, I urge the Board to push for reforms that will foster a more inclusive and well-managed learning environment for all students.</p> <p>Thank you.</p>
Maryann Germaine	Community Member	<p>Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.</p> <p>Ambiguous Language Regarding Zionism: The resolution states: “In some cases, Zionism or Zionist has been used as a proxy for Jewish or Israeli. If used as a proxy for Jewish or Israeli, discrimination or harassment (including any of the examples listed on this factsheet of discriminatory treatment or discriminatory harassment) that targets Zionism or Zionist would also violate University Policy 1201.”</p> <p>Zionism is a political ideology. GMU cannot mandate protecting any political ideology as part of identity. Are you planning on issuing mandatory fact sheets on Black Lives Matter, Libertarianism, or any other set of political beliefs?</p>

This is a dangerous attempt to expand the word's meaning, and will increase antisemitism against those of the Jewish faith.

The resolution references Executive Orders 13899 and 14188, as well as Virginia Chapter 471 (2023), but does not reference other anti-discrimination laws that apply to higher education institutions. This selective inclusion raises questions about whether the resolution is politically motivated rather than a neutral anti-discrimination measure.

The resolution attempts to balance free speech protections with the enforcement of the IHRA definition but contains contradictions that could lead to legal and practical challenges. The most significant issues include potential First Amendment conflicts, inconsistencies in how discrimination protections are applied, and ambiguity in defining and enforcing antisemitism under IHRA.

As a community member I further oppose political indoctrination of GMU students and the risk of escalated and inappropriate disciplinary actions, such as the egregious, aggressive use (and expense) of Fairfax County Police used to intimidate students under no criminal charges, instead only an accusation (unproven) of graffiti against genocide. Shame on GMU. Community members demand free speech is properly protected for all on campus.

VOTE NO.

Michael Zdanovich	Faculty	Protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Judy Baho	Community Member	This university should honor freedom of speech and protect students rights to protest
Manal Khalid	Student	Many students across campus believe that the GMU administration has to restructure regulations, processes, and policies that tend to increase sentiment of biases against Palestinian students around campus and limiting free speech and cultural practices of both Palestinian and Muslim students. Many Muslim students and people of Arab/palestinian descent feel as if recent changes and policy changes by the Mason Administration has created a hostile environment for these students and groups. This population of students and humans take up most of this university yet they are still not fully heard and tend to feel isolated and excluded on this campus.
Julia Shadur	Faculty	I am writing to argue for the BOV to protect academic freedom and free speech at Mason. Vote NO on the BOV antisemitism resolution.
Andrey Arcidiacono	Student	Written comment emailed to bov@gmu.edu

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

WHEREAS, George Mason University is committed to providing equal opportunity and an educational and work environment free from any discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, ethnic or national origin (including shared ancestry and/or ethnic characteristics), sex, disability, military status (including veteran status), sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, age, marital status, pregnancy status, genetic information, or any other characteristic protected by law;

WHEREAS, the university is and must remain committed to adhering to State and federal law, including, but not limited to, Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Chapter 471 of the 2023 Virginia Acts of Assembly, and will adhere to U.S. Presidential Executive Orders 13899 and 14188;

WHEREAS, the university is also committed to protecting the First Amendment rights of students, employees, and visitors, and will address any Prohibited Discrimination (defined in University Policy 1201), including Prohibited Discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics and National Origin without diminishing or infringing any right protected under the U.S. Constitution, including the First Amendment, laws of the United States, and laws of the Commonwealth of Virginia;

WHEREAS, the university revised University Policy Number 1201 ("Non-Discrimination Policy") on August 27, 2024, to include reference to the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of antisemitism and contemporary examples of antisemitism consistent with the United States Constitution and the Constitution of Virginia;

WHEREAS, University Policy Number 1201 requires the Office for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (ODEI)¹ to utilize the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) Working Definition of antisemitism² and contemporary examples of antisemitism to the extent that they might be useful as evidence of discriminatory intent;

WHEREAS, the university uses the IHRA definition as a tool and guide for training, education, recognizing, and combating antisemitic hate crimes or discrimination and for tracking and reporting antisemitic incidents in the Commonwealth;

WHEREAS this board recognizes that the ODEI considers usages of terms that could be used as a proxy for a protected characteristic(s) in considering discriminatory intent. This includes usage of terms such as "Zionism" or "Zionist" as a proxy for shared Jewish ancestry or Israeli National Origin. If these terms are used as a proxy for "Jewish," "Israeli," or the similar, analysis of discriminatory intent is used in the same manner that is stated within University Policy 1201, consistent with the IHRA definition and contemporary examples.

¹ If ODEI's name changes at any time, the successor office shall automatically comply with the contents of this Resolution without amendment by this Board of Visitors.

² ODEI shall use the IHRA Definition adopted May 26, 2016, unless relevant federal or state law mandates an update.

WHEREAS, the university has clarified and specified that both Jewish (shared ancestry) and Israeli identity (National Origin) are Protected Characteristics under University Policy Number 1201;

WHEREAS, the university updated the Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Statement to reference the IHRA definition;

WHEREAS, the university updated the ODEI "Equal Opportunity Report Form" to list Presidential Executive Orders 13899 and 14188, and Chapter 471 of the 2023 Virginia Acts of Assembly under "Related Laws and Policies;"

WHEREAS, the university updated the ODEI "Equal Opportunity Report Form" and the ODEI and University Life "Bias Incident Report Form" to include "shared ancestry or ethnic characteristics" and "Actual or Perceived Ethnicity/Ancestry;"

WHEREAS, this board and the university are committed to the principles of academic freedom and the expression of individual viewpoints, while ensuring that individuals and groups are not harassed, intimidated, discriminated against, or threatened, in violation of State and federal law;

WHEREAS, the purpose of this Resolution is to ensure that measures being taken by this Board and the university are consistent with applicable State and federal law while also ensuring that the university is addressing a marked increase in antisemitism across the United States and the world;

WHEREAS, the University has already taken steps that, according to the Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington and Mason Hillel, "exemplify strong leadership and demonstrate much-needed commitment and compassion for Jewish members of their community"; and the University endeavors to continue that example;

WHEREAS, George Mason is participating in the sixth cohort of Hillel International's Campus Climate Initiative in an effort to assess the climate for Jewish students and develop a campus-specific action plan to enhance Jewish students' sense of belonging; AND

WHEREAS, George Mason is in its second year as a member of the Academic Engagement Network whose goal is to envision a world where American higher education welcomes, respects, and supports the expression of Jewish identity and robust discourse about Israel.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED AS FOLLOWS:

1. RESOLVED, this board directs that the university publish a factsheet on Shared Jewish Ancestry/Israeli National Origin discrimination, including the IHRA definition and contemporary examples. The method of promulgation will be consistent with the universities' other non-discrimination policies and that method will be reported to the Board.
2. RESOLVED, this board directs the university to ensure all Mason employees (defined as anyone who receives a paycheck from Mason) receive guidance on IHRA during required in-person or online Equal Opportunity trainings through the ODEI; and that applicants for

admission to the university be provided with access to University Policy 1201 during the application process; AND

3. RESOLVED, this board directs that the University, and each of its colleges, schools, departments, and official academic units refrain from officially sponsoring or formally endorsing in advance any event, activity, or outside organization whose planned or announced position is antisemitic. This directive applies solely to institutional endorsement or sponsorship in advance by the University and its academic units, and shall *not* (a) restrict the individual speech or academic freedom of faculty members, students, or student or faculty organizations on campus, (b) prevent students or faculty from gaining access to university facilities for events, activities, or organizations because of the constitutionally protected viewpoint or position taken by such individuals or student or faculty organizations; nor (c) impact the University's decision to recognize a student organization because of the constitutionally protected viewpoint or position taken by such organization. Nothing anywhere in this resolution shall be interpreted to infringe on rights protected by the United States or Virginia Constitutions, including but not limited to the First Amendment of the United States Constitution or Article I, Section 12 of the Virginia Constitution; AND
4. RESOLVED, this board declares that the University seeks to prevent unlawful antisemitic discrimination or violence in *any of its forms and manifestations*, and will have no tolerance for Prohibited Discrimination on the basis of actual or perceived Jewish shared ancestry or Israeli National Origin. Prohibited Discrimination that violates university policy shall result in meaningful consequences following established disciplinary processes for students, faculty or staff. The President of the university shall provide this board with a report of all findings of violations of Policy 1201 at the end of each academic year, and as otherwise requested by the board.

Adopted: 2-27-25


A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'C. Stimson', is written over a horizontal line.

Charles Stimson
Rector
Board of Visitors
George Mason University

EXHIBIT 7

**BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Full Board Meeting
Tuesday, April 1, 2025
Merten Hall, Hazel Conference Room (1201), Fairfax Campus**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rector Cully Stimson, Vice Rector Mike Meese, Secretary Armand Alacbay, Visitors Horace Blackman, Reginald Brown, Lindsey Burke, Anjan Chimaladinne, Charles Cooper (virtual), William Hansen, Dolly Oberoi, Bob Pence, Jon Peterson, and Nancy Prowitt.

ABSENT: Visitors Maureen Ohlhausen and Jeff Rosen.

ALSO, PRESENT: Solon Simmons, Faculty Representative; Maria Cuesta, Undergraduate Student Representative; Rachel Spence, Staff Liaison; Gregory Washington, President; Anne Gentry, University Counsel; Deb Dickenson, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration; David Burge, Vice President for Enrollment Management; Rose Pascarell, Vice President for University Life; Marvin Lewis, Assistant Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics; and Scott Nichols, Interim Secretary pro tem.

I. Call to Order

Rector Stimson called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

Rector Stimson informed the Board that Visitor Cooper requested to participate remotely due to his principal residence being more than 60 miles from the meeting location.

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

Rector Stimson then welcomed Visitor Bill Hansen who was appointed by Governor Youngkin in February and was attending his first meeting of this board. He noted that Visitor Hansen was the Deputy Secretary of Education under President George W. Bush, and is also a graduate of Mason.

II. Closed Session

- A.** Gifts, Bequests, and Fundraising Activities (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.9)
- B.** Discussion or consideration of honorary degrees or special awards. (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.11)
- C.** Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.8)
- D.** Personnel Matter (Code of VA: §2.2-3711.A.1)

Vice Rector Meese **MOVED** that the board go into Closed Session under the provisions of Section 2.2-3711.A.9 for discussion on gifts, bequests, and fundraising activities to discuss a philanthropic naming opportunity; Section 2.2-3711.A.11 for discussion or consideration of honorary degrees or special awards; Section 2.2-3711.A.8 for Consultation with Legal Counsel regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice concerning the aforementioned and subsequent items and pending investigations; and Section 2.2-3711.A.1 for a Personnel Matter, to discuss the performance of specific university personnel. The motion was **SECONDED** by Secretary Alacbay. **MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE.**

Following closed session, Vice Rector Meese **MOVED** that the board go back into public session and further moved that by roll call vote the board affirm that only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open

meeting requirements under the Freedom of Information Act were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting, and that only such business matters that were identified in the motion to go into a closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting. Any member of the board who believes that there was a departure from the requirements as stated, shall so state prior to taking the roll call, indicating the substance of the departure that, in his or her judgment, has taken place. **ALL PRESENT BOARD MEMBERS RESPONDED IN THE AFFIRMATIVE BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Absent: Visitors Chimaladinne, Ohlhausen, and Rosen.

Rector Stimson then **MOVED** that the board approve the awarding of honorary degrees at a future date to the individuals discussed in closed session for that purpose. The motion was **SECONDED** by Vice Rector Meese. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 10

Absent: Visitors Chimaladinne, Oberoi, Ohlhausen, Pence and Rosen.

Rector Stimson then **MOVED** that the board approve the awarding of the Mason Medal at a future date to the individual discussed in closed session for that purpose. The motion was **SECONDED** by Vice Rector Meese. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 12

Absent: Visitors Ohlhausen, Pence and Rosen.

Rector Stimson then **MOVED** that the board adopt the resolution (**ATTACHMENT 1**) to rename the University's School of Computing to the Long Nguyen and Kimmy Duong School of Computing in recognition of their past and present support. The motion was **SECONDED** by Vice Rector Meese. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 13

Absent: Visitors Ohlhausen and Rosen.

Vice Rector Meese then **MOVED** that the board approve the Personnel Matter as discussed in closed session and authorize the President to execute such documents necessary or desirable to carry out the purposes and intent of this resolution consistent with the terms discussed in closed session. The motion was **SECONDED** by Secretary Alabgay. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 12

Abstain: Rector Stimson

Absent: Visitors Ohlhausen and Rosen.

Rector Stimson then **MOVED** that the board approve handling the Investigatory Matter as discussed in closed session and authorize the President to promulgate such documents necessary or desirable to carry out the purposes and intent of this resolution consistent with the discussion in closed session. The motion was **SECONDED** by Visitor Prowitt. **MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY ROLL CALL VOTE.**

Yes: 12

Abstain: Visitor Brown

Absent: Visitors Ohlhausen and Rosen.

III. FY 2026 Tuition and Mandatory Fees Presentation

Rector Stimson recognized Executive Vice President (EVP) Deb Dickenson, to provide the FY 2026 tuition and mandatory fees presentation. Along with David Burge, Vice President for Enrollment Management; Rose Pascarell, Vice President for University Life; and Marvin Lewis, Assistant Vice President and Director of Intercollegiate Athletics, EVP Dickenson reported the following:

- George Mason University Achievements:
 - Rankings & Value:
 - GMU ranks #1 in Virginia for value, upward mobility, and internships.
 - Emphasis on innovation, affordability, and career outcomes strengthens the value of a GMU degree.
 - Mason Career Plans Survey reported that the Class of 2024 had an 85% positive career outcome rate with a median salary of \$70,000. Many graduates remain in the D.C. area, benefiting local and state economies.
- Budget and Financial Challenges
 - George Mason is underfunded compared to peer institutions in the Commonwealth:
 - Mason's majority revenue source is tuition and the second largest is from state appropriations; however, appropriations per student are the lowest among peer institutions. FY2025 in-state tuition remains competitive despite a \$6,000-per-student funding gap compared to peer institutions when state and tuition funding are combined. Top Mason leadership continue their advocacy in Richmond to close the gap.
 - SCHEV identified a \$22 million funding disparity for Mason's faculty salaries. Mason leaders are advocating for a performance-based funding model to address the issue.
 - Challenges persist in maintaining quality services, upgrading tech and infrastructure, and supporting staff due to budget constraints.
 - Financial Aid and Affordability (David Burge)
 - Federal, commonwealth, and outside scholarships contribute positively to the University's revenue.
 - Financial aid comes from federal, commonwealth, GMU, and outside scholarships. GMU institutional aid often involves tuition discounting for need-based students.
 - According to the JLARC report of net price from 2014-2023, the net price, which is the total cost minus the average amount of federal, state/local, or institutional aid, for full-time, in-state students has decreased 15% since 2014 due to increased aid. Mason serves 10% more needy students than any other institution in the commonwealth. Pell grant recipients increased 15% in the past year with the federal government's change of methodology.
- Operational Efficiency (EVP Deb Dickenson)
 - GMU is among the most efficient universities, with lean staffing and operations. Mason has fewer employees per student compared to its peers, partly due to investments in efficiency and process improvement; however, this level of leanness is unsustainable. Investments must be made in people and infrastructure in order to retain staff and improve efficiency.
 - GMU faces funding challenges not seen by other Virginia institutions like UVA and Virginia Tech. These schools benefit from higher state funding and operate in lower-cost regions, depending less on tuition funding and allowing them to expand more aggressively. Mason is also seeing increased competition by UVA and Virginia Tech in Northern Virginia.
- Commonwealth Budget:
 - The final state budget is under negotiation between the legislative conference budget and the governor's amendments with final passage anticipated in early spring or possibly into June. Mason's FY26 funding allocation is favorable but below amounts requested.
- Discussion ensued:
 - Visitor Brown asked about the delta between the legislative and the governor's budget proposals. EVP Dickenson responded that for operational funding it is about \$1.2 million. VMSDEP is \$4 million. The governor's budget is higher but it is one-time funding. On deferred maintenance the governor's budget is \$8 million lower.
 - Rector Stimson asked if other Virginia schools with a Northern Virginia operation pay a cost-of-living adjustment to their faculty. EVP Dickenson replied that she did not believe they pay a

COLA, but they are paying a substantially higher compensation base and have flexibility in location so faculty can work remotely and live in lower-cost areas.

- EVP Dickenson continued her presentation, advocating for the following tuition recommendation in order to invest in faculty, staff, and systems:
 - 2.5% tuition increase for in-state undergraduate students in FY26, excluding JD law tuition. Flat dollar increases recommended for out-of-state tuition.
 - For context, the Virginia Tech board approved a 2.9% tuition increase and increased fees. Their proposal includes an amendment that it is contingent upon the final Commonwealth budget.
 - Visitor Peterson asked about how much Virginia Tech's fees increased. EVP Dickenson replied that the fees increased between 0.4 -2.7%, with the supplemental athletic fee at the higher end of the range.
- Tuition dollars at work
 - 84% of tuition goes toward instructional categories; other categories are institutional support, operations and maintenance, and student services.
 - Student Fee Recommendation (Rose Pascarell)
 - Vice President Pascarell advocated the Mandatory Student Fee (MSF) increase by \$96 per student (2.5% increase) for in-state and out-of-state students. The comprehensive fee covers services and programs all students can access, including infrastructure and overhead.
 - A student representative is part of the MSF Committee to increase transparency in how fees are used. Students recommended that Mason's consultant look into the mandatory student fee and additional course fees. The undergraduate representatives also asked to look into cohort pricing similar to William and Mary.
 - Current fees expanded support for Green Machine, University Life services, staffing for the new student activities building, and eSports funding. There are planned investments in athletics and technology improvements for FY26.
 - Athletics (Marvin Lewis):
 - Mason's athletics have had a historic year. The men's soccer program won its first Atlantic 10 regular season championship, the women's track program won its first A-10 championship since 2014, the men's basketball program won the A-10 regular-season championship and advanced to the NIT, and the women's basketball program won their first A-10 championship and advanced to the NCAA tournament.
 - Athletics are underfunded if the University is to keep pace with the expenses of a competitive program with 22 varsity sports and 500 student athletes with an annual budget around \$30 million. Mason Athletics has the second lowest student fee in the Commonwealth, which has grown about 3% annually over the last 10 years, compared to many peer institutions, whose athletics fees have grown 6% annually over the past 10 years. While Mason's athletics budget is around the median for the A-10, Mason has 3 to 4 more sports than peers, along with supporting 150 more student athletes.
 - Discussion ensued about alumni giving:
 - Visitor Brown asked how much money for athletics is raised from alumni versus outside groups compared to peer schools. Vice President Lewis responded that other schools bring in more ticket sales and media rights because of their recent successes. Visitor Brown requested Mason focus on alumni and outside fundraising so that alumni and not current students are sharing the responsibility of revenue generation. Vice President Lewis added that they have hired two development specialists to maximize the University's fundraising capacity. In order to support those programs, they will better leverage support of the basketball program but additional revenue streams will be needed to support the other 21 athletic programs.

- President Washington added that the University's fundraising is on par with peer schools that are a similar age. The issue is that alumni are not financially at a place in life where they can give. Visitor Blackman commented that infrastructure investments would lead to higher levels of giving and attract greater talent. He also noted the additional cost from the *House v. NCAA* settlement. EVP Dickenson added that UVA and Virginia Tech are able to support athletics with a lower student fee due to a large endowment and revenue-generating real estate gifts, as well as higher tuition, appropriations, and more selective student base. Visitor Prowitt asked that Vice President Lewis reshare his presentation from the February 27 board meeting.
- Visitor Peterson highlighted that no other school can claim as many A-10 championships as Mason has this year. Vice President Lewis responded to an earlier question, noting that Virginia Tech recently raised their student fees by \$300 to offset the increase in athletics.
- Vice President Lewis continued his presentation. Football and non-football average athletic fees have had an annual growth of 6% annually, whereas Mason's athletic fees have only increased by 3% annually.
 - Vice Rector Meese confirmed that 23% of the student fees go to athletics.
- Most athletic facilities were built in the 1980s and are used by varsity, intermural, club, recreation, and community sports and remain in constant use.
- A major priority is increased student engagement with athletics through spirit activities to build pride and tradition, through subsidy of student tickets, employing student workers, and signature events.
- Athletics serves as the front porch and heart of the community, and Mason needs a strong athletic department.
- Further discussion ensued:
 - Rector Stimson asked about expanding Mason's residency requirements, increasing the requirement to two years, and the benefits to the University student experience. Vice President Lewis noted the goal of focusing on housing across all campuses, and that increased student housing on campus would only strengthen the Athletics' relationship with Housing and University Life.
 - Visitor Peterson asked about the competition from schools with upgraded academics and athletics that can offer the full college experience and its impact on our admissions. Vice President Lewis replied that more vibrant athletic departments attract students, which is why he recommends we enhance our athletics department, enhance visibility, and create the community students want.
- EVP Dickenson continued her presentation, noting the current status of the University's budget process. Room and board rates were approved at the February 27 board meeting, a student town hall discussion was held on March 20, and that the full budget presentation to include the tuition and fees proposal will be presented at the Finance & Land Use committee meeting on April 10.
 - Visitor Burke asked if there was an overall "dollar at work" infographic. EVP Dickenson said they could look at adding one to the April 10 meeting materials.

Rector Stimson thanked EVP Dickenson for her presentation.

IV. Public Comments

There were 3 registrations for oral public comment and 28 written comment submissions (**ATTACHMENT 2**).

Following the oral comments outlined in Attachment 2, Rector Stimson thanked the registrants for their input and stated that board members read and value their comments. He then recognized Visitor Brown, who made remarks about the board taking proactive and not activist stances on major issues, fulfilling their fiduciary duty by anticipating future challenges and acting decisively. He stated that internal disagreements were the “Mason Way,” but there is a commitment to finding unified solutions.

Visitor Brown continued by saying that Mason’s diversity is its strength. Mason is not diverse specifically because of DEI policies, but rather because of affordable tuition, workforce-aligned academic offerings, and a welcoming culture. Mason is inclusive because of its insistence on tolerance and opposition to hate. He emphasized that the board’s intent was to clearly reject all forms of hate, including antisemitism and discrimination against LGBTQ students. The intent of the antisemitism resolution was in opposition to hate.

Mason promotes equity through access and affordability to the middle class, not by “putting a thumb on the scale.” He referenced his opposition to tuition increases as a symbolic stance for maintaining accessibility and called for increased alumni and business engagement to help fund student support and institutional goals. Visitor Brown urged a focus on system-wide challenges, not individual DEI programs. Mason is a place for diverse voices, both politically and culturally.

Rector Stimson thanked Visitor Brown for his comments and recessed the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

V. Lunch Recess

VI. Board Continuing Education

Pursuant to Code of Virginia § 23.1-1304

PRESENT: Rector Cully Stimson, Vice Rector Mike Meese, Secretary Armand Alacbay, Visitors Horace Blackman, Lindsey Burke, Charles Cooper (virtual), William Hansen, and Jon Peterson.

ABSENT: Visitors Reg Brown, Anjan Chimaladinne, Dolly Oberoi, Maureen Ohlhausen, Bob Pence, Nancy Prowitt, and Jeff Rosen.

ALSO, PRESENT: Solon Simmons, Faculty Representative; Maria Cuesta, Undergraduate Student Representative; Gregory Washington, President; Anne Gentry, University Counsel; William Troutt, Association of Governing Boards Consultant.

Rector Stimson reconvened the meeting at 12:15 p.m.

Rector Stimson informed the board that the purpose of the session is to provide an additional opportunity to meet the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia’s (SCHEV) continuing education requirement under § 23.1-1304. The continuing education session was specifically designed for this Board with the assistance of the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), and in consultation with SCHEV.

Rector Stimson then recognized Dr. William E. Troutt, a consultant from the Association of Governing Boards (AGB), and former president of Belmont University and Rhodes College to lead the discussion. Dr. Troutt also chaired the American Council on Education as well as the National Commission on the Cost of Higher Education.

Dr. Troutt began the discussion by describing U.S. higher education is in widespread distress with an environment marked by rapid and ongoing change. Despite challenges, Mason continues to advance in key areas: enrollment growth, student satisfaction, graduate employability, research output and rankings, and

regional economic impact. He praised Mason's president and board for its innovative spirit and how it is "fighting above its weight class."

Dr. Troutt reviewed the roles and responsibilities of a governing board, noting that effective board governance means asking the right strategic questions, as universities grow in the direction of those questions. He presented the following:

Three Key Roles for Board Members:

1. Fiduciary Leadership:

- Duties of care (act in good faith), loyalty (act in university's interest), and obedience (ensure alignment with mission and in compliance of laws and regulations).
- Asking good oversight and insightful questions:
 - 1. Oversight Questions: Are we compliant? Is the budget sound?
 - 2. Inquiry Questions: What can we learn? What is the mission impact?
 - 3. Insightful Questions: Will this program help advance the university's mission?
- Assuring compliance and minimizing enterprise risk.
- Delegating operational administrative duties and respecting the differences between the Board's role and administrative responsibilities. It is important to distinguish between administrative and governance roles, with a clear understanding about who decides what: some decisions are delegated solely to the president, others require board approval or collaborative input, some decisions rest solely with the board.
- Protecting the future from the present.
- Discussion on these topics included:
 - 1. Secretary Alacbay praised the presentation, noting that it was in alignment with Virginia Code § 23.1-1304. He noted that in Virginia board members' statutory duty is to the citizens of the Commonwealth, not solely to the university. This public obligation sometimes requires decisions that conflict with institutional interests, such as the Board's vote on tuition may benefit the institution financially but negatively impact students or construction projects might serve the university's growth but must be evaluated in light of broader community interests. Secretary Alacbay then asked Dr. Troutt how to reconcile those conflicting responsibilities. Dr. Troutt responded that there are very important nuances but ultimately a board member is to be loyal to this university.
 - 2. Vice Rector Meese asked how to balance a board wanting to make changes to the strategic plan that is revised every 3-5 years and the board changing every year by 25% or more? Dr. Troutt suggested looking at how the board engages its new members, focusing on principle and not particulars.

2. Ambassadorial Role:

- Board members represent the university positively and help foster external relationships. They advocate and promote the university's mission and value.
- Every board member should engage in active investment in the university and encourage others to engage and contribute as well.

3. Strategic Leadership:

- Focus on big-picture issues and long-term planning. Boards bring broader perspectives, contributing value that complements on-campus viewpoints. Campus conversations are vital, but boards provide "40,000-foot" strategic vision.
- Key Strategic Questions for the Board:
 - 1. What are the highest aspirations for George Mason University?
 - 2. What constraints need to be addressed or mitigated?

3. How can the board structure its time to collaborate with the president on major strategic issues?
 1. Discussion ensued:
 1. The Rector and Dr. Troutt discussed the frequency of full board and committee meetings, with six full board meetings and potential stand-alone committee meetings between full board meetings. Dr. Troutt recalled Vice Rector Meese's question about board action continuity and added that committees are where the most important work is done and can be the solution to turnover of board members.
 2. Secretary Alacbay asked if big picture discussions are typically plenary session full board or a distinct committee. Dr. Troutt replied that the Rector could call an ad hoc committee on the future of the university, with a cross section of committee and board members or it could be done as a full board.
 3. Rector Stimson noted that a significant constraint in public boards is the requirement that if more than two board members discuss a business matter, it must be a public meeting. Dr. Troutt agreed that this is a disadvantage, making it difficult to have more broad-range conversations.
 - Nurture a good board culture, based on mutual respect, openness, and trust. Seeing each other outside of board duties will build those relationships.
 1. Dr. Solon Simmons asked about how the board can best work with the talent and insight of the non-voting faculty, student, and staff representatives. Dr. Troutt replied that it is important to have two-way, candid dialogue with faculty, student, and staff representatives so that there is healthy communication between the board and the university family.
 2. Visitor Blackman commented that board culture matters tremendously. A presidential search required the board to heavily rely on student, faculty, and staff representatives because they had a perspective that no one else had.
 3. Vice Rector Meese added that the representatives he has worked with do not hesitate to share their thoughts. He also praised President Washington for inviting the board to the basketball games and other events to facilitate relationships outside the board structure.
 4. Visitor Jon Peterson praised Dr. Simmons for bringing multiple faculty perspectives to the meetings.

Enterprise Risk Management in Higher Education

Dr. Troutt continued:

- Risk planning is largely handled by administration.
- Risk oversight is a shared responsibility between the board and the president.
- Ideally, a risk governance partnership should be in place. Effective governance is more than task delegation—it involves a fusion of strategic thinking.

Dr. Troutt recognized President Washington about the state of Risk Management at George Mason. President Washington outlined the following:

- The University has a direct approach to managing risk. The president meets on a weekly basis with a dedicated team to discuss the top 10 risk list. Risks are ranked in two broad categories: **impact** – potential damage to the institution and **likelihood** – the probability of occurrence. Special attention is given to risks categorized as **high impact and high likelihood**. This focused approach allows efficient use of limited resources and supports proactive risk mitigation.

- Current Top Risks:
 1. Funding & resources
 2. Competition
 3. Cybersecurity
 4. Governance risk
 5. Campus safety and security
- Organizational Approach:
 - The institution uses a risk management model aligned with Fortune 500 companies.
 - Cross-functional collaboration is encouraged to avoid siloed risk responses.
- Discussion ensued:
 - Visitor Blackman added that clarifying governance (board oversight) and management (administrative execution) roles in risk processes avoids confusion and inefficiency. Effective risk management requires: de-siloed communication, clear incident command and control structures, established executive responsibilities, and resource availability across scenarios. Dr. Troutt agreed that boards avoid micromanagement during crises and not engage in direct incident response.
 - Secretary Alacbay praised the University's chief auditor and noted that the Audit, Risk, and Compliance Committee recently added "Risk" to its name and function. He asked about opinions about the function of that committee in regards to governance.
 - Visitor Blackman emphasized the critical importance of maintaining independence of the audit committee and the auditor's reporting directly through the committee to the board.
 - Visitor Meese pointed out that the Chief Risk Officer reports directly to President Washington. President Washington added that he shares the responsibility with the chief auditor. Visitor Blackman highlighted that Mason was the first university in the Commonwealth to have a Chief Risk Officer.
 - Visitor Peterson praised the quality of lawyers serving as board members, and asked when it comes to the University's legal issues, how do they manage their involvement in what's best for the university. Dr. Troutt responded that the board should use its best judgement, informed by the president's perspective. Ultimately, it comes back to duty, loyalty, and care. Rector Stimson added that as a lawyer, they have to "stay in their lane" as they are not university counsel.

Dr. Troutt thanked Dr. Washington for his feedback and provided a more generalized list of risks facing higher education institutions, referencing a Deloitte Insights article, "Significant risks facing higher education: Getting to the roots of risk" (**ATTACHMENT 3**):

- Increased Competition
- Faculty and Staff Attrition
- Declining State Support
- Uncertainty Regarding Federal Support
- Student Activism
- Student Mental Health Issues
- Cyber Security Threats
- Natural Disasters
- Evolving Academic Program Demand
- Institutional Agility

Discussion ensued:

- Dr. Washington and Dr. Troutt discussed the competition George Mason faces. Dr. Washington noted that there are 23 institutions whose core operations are within 50 miles of campus, with a total of 121 institutions represented when including satellite operations. It is the most competitive educational region in the country. Low lease rates make operating in the region cost effective. As a result, Mason must compete with other institutions for students and faculty.
- Secretary Alabay asked Dr. Washington how the University works with SCHEV to avoid overlap from competitors. Dr. Washington replied that SCHEV oversees public institutions but not private ones, despite some private institutions receiving state funding via VTAG funds, resulting in private schools receiving more funding per student than public schools, without equivalent oversight.
- Visitor Blackman added that with Amazon's HQ2 deal, the state allocated \$175 million to three public universities (including UVA and Virginia Tech) to set up in Northern Virginia, creating internal competition among state-funded institutions. Institutions now must rely heavily on branding and differentiation to compete. GMU is facing aggressive recruitment competition from UVA and Virginia Tech, with top faculty being targeted.
- Dr. Washington described state support as increasing, but continues to be 10-15 years behind. The University runs a \$1.5 billion budget with state appropriations of close to \$400 million. Recently, Mason was averaging \$200 million in state support for a \$1.3 billion budget. Visitor Blackman commented that the state supported 82% of Mason's budget when he was a Mason student in 1988 and the support as gone as low as 20%.
- Visitor Hansen commented on the federal funding situation. He does not expect major financial cuts to Pell Grants or major student aid programs like Title I or Special Education; however, structural changes in aid delivery are anticipated, potentially shifting federal subsidies away from middle and upper-income students toward disadvantaged and non-traditional students, including less-than-half-time enrollees. He expects that focus may shift away from loan forgiveness and more toward reforming how subsidies are distributed. He expected the greatest risk for funding cuts or restructuring is in federal research grants. Research funding continues to be "the bread and butter" for many higher ed institutions and is seen as vulnerable under current trends.
- Vice Rector Meese added that tuition from international students, who tend to pay full price, is impacted with international students having more difficulties getting visas, impacting international student enrollment.
- Rector Stimson added historical context on student activism, noting that current events are serious and should not be excused, particularly after October 7; however, labeling them "unprecedented" is historically inaccurate. Today's activism is far less intense than in the 1960s, which saw widespread violence. Understanding the scale and intensity of past movements can better inform current responses. Visitor Blackman separated activism from bad behavior, and the need to protect students and infrastructure.
- Dr. Simmons asked about a scenario where an activist's actions draw federal attention, followed by disparate disciplinary responses, triggering faculty reaction, national media attention, campus unrest or panic, especially among senior faculty. Visitor Blackman emphasized the importance of protecting freedom of expression, even controversial opinions (e.g., DEI, political comments) with so much fear in the system. There is fear that immigration status or freedom may be affected by speaking up. Vice Rector Meese replied that it is a judgement call for University leadership (e.g., president, campus police) to make, balancing expression with the safety of 40,000+ community members. Rector Stimson praised the judgement of President Washington during a past security situation involving students and federal concerns, noting that he stood behind the president's decision. Dr. Simmons reiterated his concern that a federal action could be unpredictable and disruptive, regardless of board's preparations. Rector Stimson reiterated Visitor Brown's remarks on the board's proactive approach and how board members care deeply about the university, its reputation, and its fiscal health.
- Ms. Cuesta added that it is difficult for her, as an international student, to know her rights of expression. Secretary Alabay added that as part of the board's governance role, that he is concerned that University policies are clear, unambiguous, and consistently enforced. Policies related to speech are content-neutral

and designed to protect freedom of expression. Action becomes disciplinary or "actionable" when speech is combined with conduct that can be categorized as harmful or disruptive. Vice Rector Meese stated he is sensitive to Ms. Cuesta's situation and despite limits on influence over federal decisions, by enacting measured, preemptive steps, George Mason has likely reduced federal scrutiny, lessening the chance that student speech or actions (particularly by international students) would invite severe consequences.

- Visitor Blackman remarked that student mental health issues are mirrored in the armed forces and veterans and asked Ms. Cuesta what she has seen. Ms. Cuesta responded that the political climate, economic instability, and general life circumstances are having a significant impact on students' mental health, and these challenges are often outside the university's control. The university is actively working to provide mental health support, doing its best under current circumstances and that funding mental health programs needs to continue.
- Secretary Alacbay asked about the University's situation regarding substance abuse. Dr. Washington responded that Mason's students tend to be older and a little more mature so while there are issues, it is not to the same extent as other institutions. Substance abuse is treated like other mental health issues, with expanded staff and virtual support which works very well.
- Visitor Peterson asked about the risk about the reclassification of student athletes. Rector Stimson praised Dr. Washington's governing board membership and for keeping the board up to speed on the NCAA settlement and NIL's impact on the University. Dr. Washington provided specifics that these settlements will cost \$7-9 million dollars more per year.
- On the topic of cybersecurity, Visitor Blackman commented that universities are vulnerable to cybersecurity issues due to their openness. Doxing (publishing personal information online with malicious intent) is becoming a common threat, affecting students, faculty, and board members. The motive behind attacks has expanded from simple financial gain to social and political harassment. The university must pivot from only protecting servers and networks to safeguarding individuals: protecting personal data, promoting cyber hygiene, and educating the entire campus community on defensive practices. He noted that the CIO and auditing team do an excellent job and are attentive for potential attacks.
- Vice Rector Meese praised the University for its institutional agility with adding or subtracting programs, with SCHEV being the only constraint. The youth of the University keep programs from becoming entrenched.
- Rector Stimson added another important risk is the University's Korean campus and the cultural and legal differences that complicate global operations. Dr. Troutt supported the concern and added that hiring good people would mitigate that risk.

Providing Leadership in Times of Transition

Dr. Troutt continued:

Board Leadership Transition

- Dr. Troutt asked about term lengths and systems to provide continuity during board leadership transition. Rector Stimson noted that a rector's term is for two years and former rectors routinely talk to one another.
- Visitor Blackman highlighted the critical role of the Vice Rector in ensuring smooth board operations with shared leadership, open communication, and joint action on major initiatives. This leadership model was cited as a key contributor to board stability over the past eight years.

Administrative Transition

- Dr. Troutt mentioned that a change in a president is a significant challenge to institutions. He asked how the process is done at George Mason.
- Visitor Blackman spoke to the stakeholders in a presidential search: the board, students, faculty, staff, the trustees, and the community. The most recent search committee was co-chaired by the faculty senate chair and vice rector, and included student, faculty, and staff representatives and board members. He noted the challenges experienced between the faculty and relating to the faculty handbook and the University's charter and how that impacted the dynamic surrounding an open search or closed search, with the faculty preferring an open search. Dr. Simmons agreed and added that a compromise was reached with the help of his students to respect the confidentiality of the candidates but members of the faculty senate could vet and meet the candidates. This approach was supported by the Faculty Senate and the board.
- Rector Stimson noted that this topic by no means represents an impending change, but emphasized it was one of the few topics approved by SCHEV for discussion.
- Visitor Blackman asked about succession planning and if there is a model that universities could adopt to prevent the disruption of a presidential search. Dr. Washington noted that after the departure of the last president there was a 50% turnover in senior leadership. Other institutions actively recruit senior leaders as soon as the announcement of a presidential departure is announced. Visitor Blackman added that the University made efforts to retain leaders during the last transition. Dr. Troutt did not have good examples of how other institutions have successful solutions to this problem. Rector Stimson inquired if higher education institutions could adopt key man life insurance policies, as private corporations do. Dr. Troutt had not heard of such a policy in higher education. Vice Rector Meese added that with a strategic plan, the board could keep operating during a transition, and welcome new members or leaders with supportive onboarding. Visitor Blackman responded that picking the interim president is also a significant decision, as that person could be in the role for about a year.

Dr. Troutt concluded that when boards are at their best, there is strong collaboration between board members and the chief executive. He commended the board on its governance and its choice of the university president, encouraging them to continue supporting the president in all possible ways.

Rector Stimson thanked Dr. Troutt for his presentation and engagement and adjourned the meeting at 3:15 p.m.

Prepared by:

Bridget Higgins
Secretary pro tem

Attachment 1: College of Engineering and Computing, Renaming of School of Computing Resolution

Attachment 2: Public Comments (20 pages)

Attachment 3: Deloitte Insights article, "Significant risks facing higher education: Getting to the roots of risk"

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF VISITORS OF
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

WHEREAS, Dr. Long Nguyen and Ms. Kimmy Duong, renowned entrepreneurs, have been generous benefactors of George Mason University and its College of Engineering and Computing; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Nguyen and Ms. Duong have been active community members who have provided philanthropic support of engineering, information technology, and computing in the National Capital Region; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Nguyen is a past member of George Mason's Board of Visitors and the Board of Trustees of the Academy for Government Accountability; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Nguyen and Ms. Duong each received the university's highest honor, the Mason Medal, in 2016 and 2023, respectively, for their sustained support of the University; and

WHEREAS, the Engineering Building on the Fairfax Campus was named Long and Kimmy Nguyen Engineering Building in recognition of Dr. Nguyen and Ms. Duong's gift of \$5 million in 2009; and

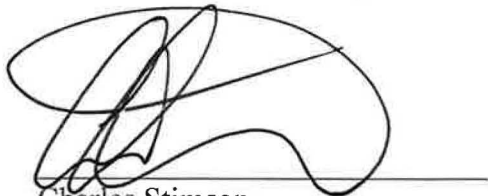
WHEREAS, since 2018, the Kimmy Duong Foundation has awarded scholarships to more than 140 George Mason University students; and

WHEREAS, the Kimmy Duong Foundation pledged a \$20 million donation to the George Mason University Foundation that will have a \$36 million impact to George Mason University to support the School of Computing and Virginia's Tech Talent Investment Program; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Nguyen and Ms. Duong are known in the National Capital Region as the founder, and former Chief Financial Officer of Pragmatics, an internationally renowned Software Development and Consulting Services company; now

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED THAT the University's School of Computing be renamed the Long Nguyen and Kimmy Duong School of Computing in recognition of their past and present support.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be entered into the minutes of the George Mason University Board of Visitors this day, April 1, 2025.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Charles Stimson', is written over a horizontal line.

Charles Stimson
Rector
Board of Visitors
George Mason University

Oral & Written Public Comments

April 1 Board of Visitors Meeting

Oral Comments provided on Tuesday, April 1:

Tim Gibson, Faculty

Thank you. My name is Tim Gibson. I am a faculty member at Mason and President of the Virginia Conference of the American Association of University Professors. I am speaking today to urge the board of visitors to renew their commitment to building a university free from discrimination, exclusion and inequality. I'm calling on the board to recommit to Mason's fundamental belief in the value of diversity, equity and inclusion. I am calling on the board to refuse the destructive path of your colleagues at UVA, Virginia Tech, and VCU. Let's be honest, by limiting their campus DEI office, the governing boards at UVA, Virginia Tech and VCU are sending a clear message. They want to send Virginia back to a time where discrimination and mistreatment based on race, gender, and sexuality went unremarked and unchallenged. It seems that these governing boards pine for the days where hiring committees were not encouraged to recruit a diverse pool of qualified applicants. Complaints about sexual or gender-based harassment were met with hostility and indifference. This is shameful. We are standing today in the Commonwealth of Virginia, a state with the scourge of racial segregation and gender-based exclusion in education remains in the living memory of many Virginians. We need to be clear about this. To rollback diversity and inclusion programs and policies in Virginia today is to capitulate to the very same social and political movements who put up massive resistance to school desegregation in 1960's and 70's. The opponents of equality and racial justice are still here. They want the Confederate statues to go back up. They want Toni Morrison books out of schools and they want the police body cameras turned off. It seems these boards across the Commonwealth apparently want us to go backward as well but we are not going back. Not without a fight. One final point. You can say that racial and gender-based discrimination is a thing of the past or that systemic racism and sexism do not exist and that racism is about individual preferences in such a way that it makes sense to talk about reverse racism about white Virginians. You can say that but you would be living in a fantasy world. You would be a science-denier, much like those who deny climate science or the science of vaccines. The stubborn persistence of racism, misogyny, and homophobia in American life in the domains of education, housing, employment, and medicine continues to be one of the most consistent findings in social science research year after year, study after study. Please do not be a denier. Please do not join with or reproduce ideologies that distort the continuing material reality of systemic racism and gender-based harassment in America's higher education. Please take a stand for principles and values of openness, diversity, equity and inclusion and join us so that we can all get to the important work of building a better Mason for all students, no matter who they are, where they came from or what they believe. Thank you.

Darbyshire Burge, Student

I know the primary topic of today's meeting is around issues surrounding tuition, fees, and funding. But I would like to emphasize that these are not just about the rates that students pay. We need students to show up in the first place and not just show up but continuing to return semester after semester. As a member of various communities across campus, whose services would fall under the ambiguous category of diversity, equity, and inclusion, I want to make it clear to this board the importance of serving the diverse body of Mason students and the financial health of this institution. George Mason's commitment to diversity of voice, identity, and perspective is why I sought my education here and why I continue to return semester after semester. I chose Mason because I felt that it chose me back. Support services like the LGBTQ+ Resource Center, Disability Services, and the newly renamed office of Access, Compliance, and Community have provided me the space to thrive as a student and become a leader in my community. Without them I would not have shown up in the first place. In the words of Dr. Gregory Washington, with a 90% acceptance rate our diverse student body is a portion of those who seek us out, not those who enroll under exclusive rules of admissions. Inclusivity means including all students and all programs and services for all students even when they are focused on particular populations. This approach has worked. We are the most diverse public University of Virginia. We have 48% ethnic minority enrollment. We are a top-ranking university on the campus pride index. If the current threats against DEI initiatives at universities across the country including VCU, UVA, and Virginia Tech, if they take hold at Mason, what will happen to the student population? If we are to maintain the student body, thus maintaining the \$518 million dollars in revenue from tuition and fees the University gained in 2024, we need to maintain the services that make people like me seek out Mason year after year. If Mason bows to the politicized whims of the same state that has denied us adequate funding time and time again, almost half of what is allocated to our peers per in-state student, why

do we think cutting vital services to the very students who make up an estimated 35% of this University's 2025 revenue would put us in any better financial standing? Even if we cut these programs, sacrificing the core tenants of what George Mason University stands for, will that truly close the gap between our funding and the state average? Will that save enough money to offset the decline in the student body when people like me to move on to a university that will stand up for its diverse population? It does not make sense to sacrifice the needs of our diverse student body in the name of a bottom-line that has long been held up by these exact communities. As a university that has spent time and resources branding itself as altogether different, I implore you to prove your students their tuition, whatever the cost, is going toward programs that respect and recognize them as they are. Thank you.

- Bethany Letiecq, Faculty

Good morning. I thank you for the opportunity to speak to you today. My name is Bethany Letiecq, the current president of the GMU Chapter of the American Association of University Professors. I'm here to express my deep concern about the political interference and erosion of academic freedom we are witnessing at Mason. This interference now includes the forced inclusion of the IHRA working definition of anti-Semitism into our nondiscrimination policy, UP 1201, and we can only assume a forthcoming resolution following UVA, Virginia Tech, etc., to the dismantling of the diversity, equity, and inclusion infrastructure here seemingly at the behest of Governor Youngkin. Before any action is taken, I am pleased to be able to provide perspective regarding DEI, what it really is and why it is under attack across the Commonwealth. Last month I was in the company of Kimberly Crenshaw, a pioneering legal scholar of civil rights, critical race theory, and racism and the law. During our meeting she reflected on how historical legal milestones such as the 1954 Brown versus Board of Education Supreme Court decision and the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 laid the foundation for today's DEI initiatives. Looking back, one can see how the DEI infrastructure was erected in response to histories of segregation and exclusion based on race, gender, sexual orientation, and disability. DEI is deeply rooted in the historical experience and present-day discrimination endured by black people in America. Crenshaw is clear, anti-DEI efforts must be understood within the framework of anti-black racism. Take for example anti-DEI euphemisms, like focusing on merit while discounting that structural racism exists. Scholars fear these euphemisms are being used by people who seek to undo 70 years of racial progress and that these euphemisms are really signals used to convey support for old-school racism and racialized segregation without even mentioning race. Victor Ray, a sociology professor, recently shared couching bigotry and concern about qualifications, which only seemed to apply to nonwhite people, is just a socially acceptable way to launder racist disdain. He argues further that attacks on DEI in his opinion, are not only racist but segregationist and dismantling DEI will likely widen the racialized gaps in education and the workplace. DEI is not just about infrastructure. It is also an idea. It is a way to understand the world we live in and explore or even imagine a different world where we work toward a stronger, more connected multiracial democracy. Threatening to cut DEI root and branch out of not just the institution but out of our minds is an affront to the Mason way which espouses the freedom to teach, learn, and conduct research unburdened by the dictates of the powerful. Today I urge you to stand up for us, stand with us, stand for DEI, and commit to the free exchange of ideas and upholding the economic freedom rights of all who come to Mason to make the world a better place. Thank you.

Written Comments received during the period of March 17 – April 1, 2025:

Full Name:	Mason Affiliation	Registration Type	Phonetic	Accommodations?	Written Comment
Autumn Krist	Student	Provide written comment only.			<p>The wave of universities dismantling DEIA programs across Virginia is concerning and GMU should absolutely not follow suit. Now is the time to stand up and protect our commitment and work to protect diversity, equity, inclusion, and access. Most of the critiques against DEI are rooted in racism and a want to return to segregation era policies. The critiques are a disgusting show of racism and bigotry that we need to fight against however possible. GMU has a rich culture full of diverse perspectives and people and consistently boasts about it: High rates of first gen students, almost a third of our population being people of color, high amounts of immigrants. Students, faculty, and staff are proud of this diversity and we need to preserve it, especially as GMU continues to boast its diverse population.</p> <p>Do what you can to protect Office of Access, Compliance, and Community and DEI on GMU's campuses. This is a priority for students on campus. Please find a way to maintain our commitment to DEI and protect the students of color on campus.</p>
Kristin Samuelian	Faculty	Provide written comment only.			<p>Dismantling DEIA at Mason is not only short-sighted; it is fiscally irresponsible. Mason is one of the key economic drivers of the region, and it is so because our policies of diversity, accessibility, and inclusive excellence have for decades allowed students from Fairfax County and beyond to receive a high-quality education and enter the workforce. It is incomprehensible to me why any business leader would want to put a stop to this when it is working so well. I am nearing retirement age, and I do not work in a unit that will be directly impacted by the dismantling of DEI--at least not as directly as many other units at the University. But I live in Fairfax County, and I have an interest in the healthy economy and infrastructure of this region. Dismantling DEI at Mason will ultimately be disastrous to both. I urge the BOV not to take this foolish and short-sighted step.</p>
Tim Gibson	Faculty	Register to make oral comments.		No	<p>Drawing on a recent GMU-AAUP letter, I am writing to urge the Board to retain GMU's commitment to the principles of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Put bluntly, the current Anti-DEI movement must be understood within the history of anti-Black racism in America. Shamefully, anti-DEI euphemisms (e.g., "DEI hire") are deployed by those who seek to undue 70 years of racial progress. The transformation of diversity, equity, and inclusion into "DEI" code words allows opponents of racial justice to signal their support for old-school racism and racialized segregation without even mentioning the word race. Victor Ray, a sociology professor, agrees: "Couching bigotry in concern about 'qualifications' (which only seems to apply to non-White people) is just the socially acceptable way to launder racist disdain." Recent research confirms this argument. According to Folberg and colleagues (2024), while some argue that the anti-DEI backlash is motivated by race-neutral concerns, such as merit and fairness, their research involving over 1,000 people suggests that critiques of DEI are best explained by anti-Black racism. Ray (2025) argues further that attacks on DEI are not only racist, but segregationist, as dismantling DEI will widen the racialized gaps in education and the workplace by further excluding people of color. Please step back from the brink and preserve Mason's commitment to making education accessible and inclusive for all.</p>

G. Chesler	Faculty	Provide written comment only.	The tenants of diversity, equality, and inclusion support all students while ensuring a safe and equitable workplace for faculty and staff. To remove any affiliated programs, research, and educational efforts is a project of disinformation, white supremacy, and ableist bias that harms the future path of all GMU students whom we promised to educate well. It also denies the expertise of educators and undoes faculty self governance--the bedrock principle of this University.
Vincent Ba Nguyen	Student	Provide written comment only.	At the time of writing, March 25th, George Mason's About page reads that the University is "fueled by differences" and that it "strives to create an inclusive environment that celebrates everyone for who they are." Hearing statements echoing these sentiments during orientation, and now seeing the university wants to eliminate their recently renamed Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (now named the Office of Access, Compliance, and Community per an email from the Office of the President) alongside moving to restrict professor's messages--removing the entire reason college is currently distinct from high school, that freedom of staff speech--should alarm all who want the university to retain what prestige it still has, alarm all who pour money into an institution supposed to raise them. Please, do not bring this university back into the 20th century---do not betray the students who see you as the way to the world, who have paid for a chance at a better life with their time only to be sent away now.
Laura Buckwald	Faculty	Provide written comment only.	As a GMU graduate and faculty member, I strongly object to the BOV's proposal to dissolve GMU's Office of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Community Partnerships. What makes Mason special is the diversity of its student body and faculty. A proper college education includes the widening of one's perspective on the world through the experience of engaging with people from different places and backgrounds. Eliminating this office will tell non-white students that they are not welcome at GMU and will degrade the value of a Mason degree. Also, whether research is "permissible" needs to be determined by the expert faculty, not the BOV.
Courtney Wooten	Faculty	Provide written comment only.	Mason is a campus built around diversity, which is one of the strengths of our institution. Removing any DEI support on campus will jeopardize Mason's ability to recruit and retain diverse faculty, staff, and students and diminish the positive impact it has had on Virginia's economy and its status as a strong and growing R1. Do not threaten the institution's bedrock mission by removing DEI from our campus.
James H. Finkelstein	Professor Emeritus	Provide written comment only.	<p>These are some of the most challenging times for our nation's universities. Never before has a President of the United States actively sought to undermine the foundation of American higher education—especially one who is himself a graduate of an Ivy League institution, as are three of his five children. As the President of the University of Pennsylvania recently stated, “The American higher education system is one of America's greatest strengths. A social contract has long enabled U. S. colleges and universities to serve individuals, communities, and government for the good of all. This contract has been a cornerstone of innovation and opportunity in our society.”</p> <p>Yet, despite this legacy, the Trump administration's decision to freeze \$175 million in funding to his alma mater, the University of Pennsylvania, suggests that “familiarity breeds contempt.” This same disdain appears to be echoed by certain members of George Mason University's Board of Visitors (BOV)—eight of whom are Mason alumni—who seem determined to orchestrate a hostile takeover of the institution. Their actions include</p>

pressuring the administration to amend the university's non-discrimination policy, ignoring established policies and state statutes to pass a resolution on antisemitism, and likely joining other Commonwealth institutions in dismantling all remnants of diversity, equity, and inclusion.

My greatest fear is that this BOV will yield to anticipatory compliance, bending to the Trump administration's intimidation and implicit threats of withholding federal research funding. Instead of acting as true fiduciaries for the university, many on the Board seem set to readily enforce Executive Orders, even as they are contested in the courts. This capitulation would not only compromise the university's autonomy but also undermine its core mission of fostering critical inquiry and inclusive excellence.

Ironically, these actions are silencing the very free speech that many of these individuals claim to defend. By stifling diverse perspectives and constraining academic freedom, they risk dragging us back to the mid- 1960 s—a time when universities routinely suppressed free expression, academic inquiry, and student rights. Those restrictions gave rise to the Free Speech Movement, a powerful response to censorship and institutional overreach.

If history has taught us anything, it is that efforts to suppress academic freedom and silence dissent inevitably fuel movements that demand justice and reform. George Mason University's legacy—and its future—depend on the courage to resist this backslide and protect the foundational principles of free inquiry, diversity, and inclusion that define American higher education.

James H. Finkelstein
Professor Emeritus of Public Policy

Darbyshire Burge	Student	Register to make oral comments.	Dar-buh-shy-er	No	<p>I know that the primary topic of today's meeting centers issues surrounding tuition, fees, and funding, but I would like to emphasize these concerns are not just in the rate that students pay. We need students to be showing up in the first place. And not just showing up, but continuing to return semester after semester. As a member of various communities across campus whose services would fall under the ambiguous category of "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion", I want to make it clear to this board the importance of serving the diverse body of Mason students in the financial health of this institution.</p> <p>George Mason University's commitment to diversity of voice, identity, and perspective is why I sought out my education here and why I continue to return semester after semester. I chose Mason because I felt that it chose me back. Support services like the LGBTQ+ Resource Center, Disability Services, and the newly renamed Office of Access, Compliance, and Community have provided me the space to thrive as a student and become a leader in my community. Without them, I wouldn't have shown up in the first place. In the words of Dr. Gregory Washington: "With a 90 percent acceptance rate, our diverse student body is a portrait of those who seek us out, not those whom we enroll under exclusive rules of admissions. Inclusivity to us means including all students, and opening all programs and services to all students, even when they are focused on particular populations."</p> <p>And this approach has worked. We are the most diverse public university in Virginia. We have 48% ethnic minority enrollment. We are a top-ranking university on the Campus Pride Index. If the current threats against DEI initiatives seen in universities across</p>
------------------	---------	---------------------------------	----------------	----	--

					<p>the country take hold at Mason, what do you think happens to our student population? If we are to maintain our student body, thus maintaining the \$518 million dollars in revenue from tuition and fees this university gained in 2024, we need to maintain the services that make people like me seek Mason out year after year. If Mason bows to the politicized whims of the same state that has denied us adequate funding time and time again, almost half of what is allocated to our peers per in-state student, why do we think cutting vital services to the very students who make up an estimated 35% of this university's 2025 revenue would put us in any better financial standing? And even if we do cut these programs- sacrificing the core tenets of what George Mason University stands for- will that truly close the gap between our funding and the state average? Will that truly save enough money to offset the subsequent decline in our student body when people like me move on to a university that will stand up for it's diverse populations? It doesn't make financial sense to sacrifice the needs of our diverse student body in the name of a bottom line that has long been held up by these exact communities. As a university that has spent ample time and resources branding itself as being "all together different", I implore you to prove to your students their tuition -whatever the cost- is going towards programs that respect and recognize them as they are.</p>
Autumn Krist	Student	Provide written comment only.			<p>George Mason University has the broadest range of backgrounds represented on campus of all Virginia public colleges. It facilitates the growth of students through merit based opportunities that teaches us personal responsibility and supports our wellness. It is the most efficient infrastructure we have to facilitate the opportunities of our talented students. Without it, GMU will be less effective at meeting the needs of all people who are working hard to earn their degrees. The Office of Access, Compliance, and Community facilitates the wellness and responsibility of all students. To ensure the equal opportunity of all, we need to ensure the Office of Access, Compliance, and Community is supported as best as possible.</p>
Matthew Kelley	Faculty	Provide written comment only.			<p>Say no to uniformity, inequity, and exclusion! Say yes to diversity, equity, and inclusion!</p> <p>Anti-diversity politicians and their operatives on university boards argue that the anti-DEI backlash is motivated by race-neutral concerns like merit and fairness, but it is nothing more than anti-Black racism. Attacks on DEI are segregationist. Mason was founded as a public university after desegregation, and I condemn in the strongest possible terms any attempts made to drag Mason back into a history that it was fortunate to miss the first time around.</p>
Bethany Letiecq	Faculty	Register to make oral comments.	LaTeek	No	<p>I will share my comments in-person at the meeting. Thank you.</p>
Evelyn Jacob	Community Member	Provide written comment only.			<p>I oppose dismantling DEI, especially in the name of neutrality. The anti-DEI resolutions passed sometimes in secret and always without democratic process at Virginia's universities will ruin what were once outstanding centers of learning accessible to all. Protect Mason; protect DEI.</p>
Shelley D. Wong	Faculty	Provide written comment only.			<p>As a faculty of education emerita associate professor, who has worked to prepare teachers for PreK-12+adult education, I am opposed to efforts to dismantle Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. My lifelong mission has been to develop inclusive learning communities of students of all abilities who can respect each other and problem-solve. My specialization is Teaching English to</p>

Speakers of Other Languages and Bilingual and World Language Education. We need to value the home languages of our students and to take an additive perspective as we teach English which values multilingual and transnational communication awareness. We need bilingual personnel in every field and yet the anti DEI ideology, an assimilationist approach, seeks to stamp out the home languages and cultures of our students and to replace them with English. Although many try to claim that DEI is a form of "reverse-racism" nothing could be further from the truth. Anti-DEI backlash is best understood as anti-Black racism and anti-immigrant xenophobia. It is clearly an anti-women as well as anti-LGBTQ ideology. How can you be against equity? We need more critical perspectives and more empathy, more diversity and more inclusion --not one upmanship, bullying and exclusion.

Courtney Brkic	Faculty	Provide written comment only.	I have taught at George Mason for more than two decades. In that time, it has been my privilege to work with hundreds of students. George Mason's diversity has always been one of its superpowers, setting our university apart from many other institutions. It has made us better, not just in a moral sense, but in an academic, creative and research one. As such, we have provided educations to brilliant out-of-the-box thinkers, gifted students from groups that have been severely underrepresented in higher education and innovators of tomorrow who see things just a little differently. The Mason Way has historically meant to embrace them all and to create thoughtful space in which they and all other students can flourish. I urge the Board of Visitors with all my heart not to dismantle DEI.
Claudia Cabello	Faculty	Provide written comment only.	<p>GMU students directly benefit from diversity initiatives on campus. They get academic and community support, connect with role models and mentors, and go on to improve the lives of Virginians. Inclusion benefits everyone and creates a more peaceful and just society.</p> <p>I unequivocally reject any attempts by this BOV to imitate the suppression of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access that their peers have installed at UVA and Virginia Tech. Instead, I urge them to set an example of what a courageous BOV might look like, by holding themselves accountable to the University's core values instead of a political agenda motivated by a desire to punish and exclude.</p>
Julia Holcomb	Faculty	Provide written comment only.	<p>I unequivocally reject any attempts by this BOV to imitate the suppression of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access that their peers have installed at UVA and Virginia Tech. Instead, I urge them to set an example of what a courageous BOV might look like, by holding themselves accountable to the University's core values instead of a political agenda motivated by a desire to punish and exclude.</p> <p>I have been proud to be a Mason Patriot since 1998. Patriots all deserve a university which prizes and protects diversity, equity, and inclusion.</p>
Peter Pollak, P. E.	Community member and former GMU Adjunct Faculty membership M	Provide written comment only.	<p>Statement for George Mason University Board of Visitors Meeting, 4/1/25</p> <p>A GMU Nikola Tesla Center for Innovative Technology (NTC4IT) is needed to develop ideas Nikola Tesla had more than 100 years ago. The world is being re-electrified to meet twin challenges of energy and environment.</p> <p>The "Age of Aluminum" that Nikola Tesla foresaw is now upon us, and his predictions about aluminum superseding copper as the 'Material of Electrification' is creating a tsunami of new</p>

opportunities for innovation to meet these global challenges.

Peter Pollak, P. E.
(703) 376-1611
Retired GMU Adjunct Faculty Member
(ECE 590, Energy, Environment & Smart Grids)
Former GMU Consultant for DOE Funded "Vids for Grids" Project

Amy Zhang	Faculty	Provide written comment only.	The anti-DEI resolutions passed sometimes in secret and always without democratic process at Virginia's universities will ruin what were once outstanding centers of learning accessible to all. Protect Mason; protect DEI
Angela Barajas	Student	Provide written comment only.	I unequivocally reject any attempts by this BOV to imitate the suppression of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access that their peers have installed at UVA and Virginia Tech. Instead, I urge them to set an example of what a courageous BOV might look like, by holding themselves accountable to the University's core values instead of a political agenda motivated by a desire to punish and exclude.
Carlos Chism	Faculty	Provide written comment only.	I condemn the recent move by BOVs throughout Virginia to dismantle DEIA, and I am writing to urge Mason's BOV not to visit the same destruction on our university. Anti-DEIA must be understood within the framework of anti-Black racism. The dismantling of DEIA offices and programs is nothing more than an attempt to disguise a White supremacist agenda by stealing and twisting the language of civil rights. As Victor Ray, a sociology professor, has stated: "Couching bigotry in concern about 'qualifications' (which only seems to apply to non-White people) is just the socially acceptable way to launder racist disdain." Attempts to dismantle DEIA do not help our diverse student body; instead, these attempts only hurt students and their ability to learn. Dismantling DEIA at Mason would have a chilling effect on faculty research and student learning; if the Board actually values the mission of the university and believes our students come first, you will break with the BOVs at other VA universities like VT and UVA.
Beverly D Shaklee	Faculty	Provide written comment only.	<p>The current trend among BOVs throughout Virginia to dismantle DEI programs, offices, curricula, and initiatives is at best woefully misguided and at worst against the will of faculty, staff, and students. Trying to disguise their actions as a form of "neutrality" or simply doing what is best for Mason, they have proven over and over that they neither respect nor are even interested in what the wider Mason community has to say. The BOV does not have Mason's best interests in mind when they suppress speech and learning. Dismantling DEI programs literally tells our students, faculty and community they are NOT welcome at Mason; there is no place to celebrate the diversity of our community. The BOV will stand in shame if they move forward with the effort to dismantle DEI.</p> <p>I unequivocally reject any attempts by this BOV to imitate the suppression of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access that their peers have installed at UVA and Virginia Tech. Instead, I urge them to set an example of what a courageous BOV might look like, by holding themselves accountable to the University's core values instead of a political agenda motivated by a desire to punish and exclude.</p>
Alok Yadav	Faculty	Provide written comment only.	Those on the BOV who are inclined to suppress DEI programs and initiatives need to show where and how encouraging equity (for example) has harmed someone at George Mason--and, further,

that such harm cannot be remedied by modifying the specific program or initiative at issue. Any move simply to ban or prohibit DEI strikes one as the imposition of a regressive political agenda--something that has no place in a public university in the 21st century (and carries echoes of the resistance to diversity, equity, and inclusion in public education during the segregationist agitations against the civil rights movement in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s). Operating by fiat and diktat, by force majeure, rather than by reasoned argument and evidence, is how tyrannies operate (even if it is the tyranny of a majority on a politically-appointed board!): I would hope that the BOV has enough self-respect and enough respect for the integrity of institution to act in accordance with due deliberation and sufficient reason and not with the juvenile brazenness of persons who wish to impose their political prejudices on others and think the trust that has been given to them is there for them to abuse.

virginia hoy

Provide
written
comment only.

I have taught at Mason for almost 18 years and have been proud of our very diverse campus and the climate of tolerance we have worked to provide for our students. As I have written the Board in the past, our diversity is our strength as we prepare students to participate in a diverse world. I would hope that the Board recognizes that DEI initiatives at Mason and elsewhere affirm a commitment to appreciate and treat fairly all individuals, regardless of religion, race, or gender, allowing all to achieve their full potential.

Denise Albanese

Faculty

I am not surprised at the efforts by the Board of Visitors to overstep its mandate; it's not the first time, nor will it be the last. But before it takes a step, I beg its members to provide direct, empirical, and objective evidence of the harms done by DEIA policies, and to whom, in what form, and with what effects, as a basis for their actions. Without such evidence, they have nothing but a reactive and ideological basis for their proposed actions--the very thing they accuse universities of. Universities are bound to more rigorous standards of proof and evidence than can be found in popular discourse and right-wing agit-prop. As custodians of a public good, the members of the BOV ought to be honor-bound to act on disinterested and well-founded evidence rather than sentiment or belief. I also note that "Ability" is part of of DEIA: does the BOV also propose to violate the Americans With Disabilities Act? What of case law on protected classes?

Keith Clark

Faculty

Having been a faculty member for over thirty years, I write to express my grave concern regarding the Board of Visitors' attempts to snuff out efforts to make George Mason University a more inclusive university, efforts that reflect our state's--and nation's--rich heterogeneity. The University's policies and goals to make our institution more equitable in terms of faculty, staff, and student body have been measured and prudent, not hastily implemented or unfairly beneficial to any single group; such measures have scrupulously avoided bias. If anything, one might argue that these policies have been a bit excessive in their caution and deliberation. GMU has been intentional and committed to maintaining standards of fairness and excellence which have seldom if ever been practiced historically, despite professions of "merit" and "fairness."

GMU, reflective of the DMV locally and our country's multicultural history, is a vibrant tapestry of hues, colors, ethnicities, genders, sexualities, and perspectives. However, in our current political climate, forces antithetical to difference have been empowered in their attempts to re-homogenize our institution, under the fallacious pursuit of "anti-divisiveness" and "neutrality." Indeed, the breathtaking, deliberate speed with

which anti-difference forces are moving to undo and reverse gains that made our University the “state’s most diverse” is singularly shocking and deplorable.

It is grotesquely ironic that, 35 years after the Old Dominion elected the nation’s first African American governor, GMU is now the epicenter of a calculated and pernicious crusade against difference. My courses in African American literature have been enriched by the presence of a rainbow of students and their unique, divergent perspectives, attesting to the inestimable value of diversity. To invoke the title of preeminent American author Ralph Ellison’s 1952 novel Invisible Man, the forced “dismantling” is nothing more than an attempt not simply to make underrepresented communities invisible; it is, ultimately, an attempt to erase blackness, brownness, and anyone else considered unfit and underserving. In keeping with GMU’s proud history, I hope that the Board will act in accordance with the University’s principled commitment to inclusive excellence.

Dr. Keith Clark
Distinguished University Professor
March 31 2025

Colleen Vesely Faculty

I condemn the recent move by BOVs throughout Virginia to dismantle DEI, and I am writing to urge Mason’s BOV not to visit the same destruction on our university.

The current trend among BOVs throughout Virginia to dismantle DEI programs, offices, curricula, and initiatives is at best woefully misguided and at worst an installation of White supremacy against the will of faculty, staff, and students. Mason’s current BOV has made clear their goal to suppress research, teaching, learning, and administrative programs that are at odds with the political agenda of Governor Youngkin and his appointees. While they may try to disguise their actions as a form of “neutrality” or simply doing what is best for Mason, they have proven over and over that they neither respect nor are even interested in what the wider Mason community has to say. The BOV does not have Mason’s best interests in mind when they suppress speech and learning.

I unequivocally reject any attempts by this BOV to imitate the suppression of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access that their peers have installed at UVA and Virginia Tech. Instead, I urge them to set an example of what a courageous BOV might look like, by holding themselves accountable to the University’s core values instead of a political agenda motivated by a desire to punish and exclude.

I support DEI and am asking the BOV to stand up for the Mason Way.

James F. Sanford Faculty

As part of the celebration of my 35th year of teaching at Mason in 2009, I was asked to identify way or ways that Mason had changed over the years. In response, I went to my first two years’ grade books and identified the four most frequent surnames on my rosters. They were Adams, Brown, Miller and a less common name of a set of twins in my classes. In 2009, the most common surname at Mason by far was Lee, primarily because of a large number of Korean and Korean American students. In those 35 years, Mason became a far better university in part because of the increase in diversity of its students. Any attempt to limit or decrease diversity is a step toward returning to the homogeneous student body of 60 years ago. Please overcome (a very apt verb) your political inclinations and support maintaining and increasing

a diverse student body and work place. Future Mason students will be the better for it. Thank you!

BOV at other Virginia universities, including UVA and Virginia, have dismantled Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offices. If similar actions are taken at George Mason to remove DEI programs on campus, how will George Mason ensure that all its students and faculty can be successful? The BOV passed a resolution at the end of February that contains instructions for the ODEI successor office, highlighting the importance of having such an office.

Good morning, esteemed members of the Board of Visitors, President Washington, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and guests.

My name is Aniya Coffey, currently a freshman here at Mason. Today I am here to address an essential matter that not only shapes our university’s future but also speaks directly to the very heart of our mission as a minority-serving institution—our dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion.

George Mason University proudly stands as an institution committed to providing access and opportunity to all. Our mission statement explicitly emphasizes fostering a diverse, inclusive, and innovative learning environment. As a minority-serving institution, this commitment is not simply a statement of values but a guiding principle—one that underpins every facet of our community.

Recently, changes have been made to our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offices on campus—changes that impact how these crucial areas of support and advocacy function. As we navigate these shifts, it is critical that we acknowledge both the concerns and the opportunities that come with them.

DEI offices are more than administrative units; they are the backbone of our efforts to create an environment where all students, regardless of their background, can thrive. These offices empower our students, advocate for equitable policies, and facilitate cultural understanding. They create safe spaces, foster collaboration, and build networks of support essential for our diverse student population.

As a young Black woman, an aspiring leader, and an Ambassador for the Black Student Alliance, I have experienced firsthand the importance of having institutional structures that champion inclusivity. For me, the Black Student Alliance is more than just an organization—it’s a community, a source of empowerment, and a vital support system. It is a place where I feel seen, valued, and understood. It provides the opportunity to celebrate my identity while connecting with others who share similar experiences.

Having this space has been instrumental in helping me find my voice and navigate my journey here at Mason. It has allowed me to contribute positively to this university, knowing that I belong. It’s what motivates me to encourage other students to find their own sense of community and pride within this institution.

Yet, as these changes unfold, I cannot help but feel a deep concern shared by many of my peers. When shifts are made to the structure of DEI offices, it creates a chilling question: Will our registered organizations for affinity groups be next?

These organizations—whether they are cultural, religious, LGBTQ+, or other affinity-based groups—play an irreplaceable

Jenna Krall	Faculty	BOV at other Virginia universities, including UVA and Virginia, have dismantled Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offices. If similar actions are taken at George Mason to remove DEI programs on campus, how will George Mason ensure that all its students and faculty can be successful? The BOV passed a resolution at the end of February that contains instructions for the ODEI successor office, highlighting the importance of having such an office.
Aniya Coffey	Student	<p>Good morning, esteemed members of the Board of Visitors, President Washington, administrators, faculty, staff, students, and guests.</p> <p>My name is Aniya Coffey, currently a freshman here at Mason. Today I am here to address an essential matter that not only shapes our university’s future but also speaks directly to the very heart of our mission as a minority-serving institution—our dedication to diversity, equity, and inclusion.</p> <p>George Mason University proudly stands as an institution committed to providing access and opportunity to all. Our mission statement explicitly emphasizes fostering a diverse, inclusive, and innovative learning environment. As a minority-serving institution, this commitment is not simply a statement of values but a guiding principle—one that underpins every facet of our community.</p> <p>Recently, changes have been made to our Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion offices on campus—changes that impact how these crucial areas of support and advocacy function. As we navigate these shifts, it is critical that we acknowledge both the concerns and the opportunities that come with them.</p> <p>DEI offices are more than administrative units; they are the backbone of our efforts to create an environment where all students, regardless of their background, can thrive. These offices empower our students, advocate for equitable policies, and facilitate cultural understanding. They create safe spaces, foster collaboration, and build networks of support essential for our diverse student population.</p> <p>As a young Black woman, an aspiring leader, and an Ambassador for the Black Student Alliance, I have experienced firsthand the importance of having institutional structures that champion inclusivity. For me, the Black Student Alliance is more than just an organization—it’s a community, a source of empowerment, and a vital support system. It is a place where I feel seen, valued, and understood. It provides the opportunity to celebrate my identity while connecting with others who share similar experiences.</p> <p>Having this space has been instrumental in helping me find my voice and navigate my journey here at Mason. It has allowed me to contribute positively to this university, knowing that I belong. It’s what motivates me to encourage other students to find their own sense of community and pride within this institution.</p> <p>Yet, as these changes unfold, I cannot help but feel a deep concern shared by many of my peers. When shifts are made to the structure of DEI offices, it creates a chilling question: Will our registered organizations for affinity groups be next?</p> <p>These organizations—whether they are cultural, religious, LGBTQ+, or other affinity-based groups—play an irreplaceable</p>

role in enhancing student life, providing much-needed support systems, and allowing students to celebrate their identities freely and safely. The prospect of their functions being diminished, restricted, or restructured is a terrifying possibility for many.

It is not just about preserving tradition; it is about ensuring that George Mason University continues to be a place where diversity is celebrated and empowered and Included. If we are to fulfill our mission as a minority-serving institution, our commitment to DEI must be unwavering. Change is inevitable, but it must always be guided by the principle of progress.

But DEI offices do not only support students of color. They empower all students by nurturing cultural competency, promoting empathy, and providing educational resources that enrich our entire campus. In a world that is increasingly interconnected, George Mason University’s commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion is our competitive edge.

If we are to fulfill our mission as a minority-serving institution, our commitment to DEI must be unwavering. Change is inevitable, but it must always be guided by the principle of progress. As we refine our DEI structures, we must ensure that their presence remains impactful, their resources accessible, and their

Karen Grace	Faculty	I condemn the recent move by BOVs throughout Virginia to dismantle DEI, and I am writing to urge Mason’s BOV not to visit the same destruction on our university. Anti-DEI must be understood within the framework of anti-Black racism. The dismantling of DEI offices and programs is nothing more than an attempt to disguise a White supremacist agenda by stealing and twisting the language of civil rights. The BOV does not have Mason’s best interests in mind when they suppress speech and learning.
Jessica Scarlata	Faculty	<p>The current trend among BOVs in the state of Virginia to dismantle DEI programs, offices, curricula, and initiatives is shameful. At best, it is woefully misguided and at worst a politically motivated attempt to stall and reverse any hard-fought progress made towards making universities more equitable within Virginia. Mason’s current BOV has made clear their goal to suppress research, teaching, learning, and administrative programs that are at odds with a narrow and exclusionary political agenda. While they may try to disguise their actions as a form of “neutrality” or simply doing what is best for Mason, they have proven over and over that they do not respect the students, faculty, and staff at the university; they are not interested in our expertise; they do not care when we speak from a position of knowledge and research. In short, the BOV does not have Mason’s best interests in mind when they suppress speech and learning.</p> <p>Anti-diversity politicians and their operatives argue that their hostility towards diversity, equity, and inclusion is motivated not by racism, but by race-neutral concerns like merit and fairness. However, research suggests that critiques of DEI are best explained as a form of anti-Black racism. Attacks on DEI are segregationist. Mason was founded as a public university after desegregation.</p> <p>I unequivocally reject any attempts by this BOV to imitate the suppression of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access that their peers have installed at UVA and Virginia Tech. Instead, I urge them to stand up for the Mason Way and to set an example of</p>

what a courageous BOV might look like, by holding themselves accountable to the University’s core values instead of a political agenda motivated by a desire to punish, erase, and exclude.

Isabella
Majorowitz

Faculty

Hello members of the Board of Visitors. Today I am submitting a comment regarding the recommendations for tuition increases in FY2026 and FY2027. While I am grateful that GMU continues to prioritize access and affordability when it comes to tuition despite ever-increasing budgetary constraints, I believe that more could be done to make out-of-state tuition more affordable. As an out-of-state undergraduate student, my tuition is almost \$25,000 more than the tuition for an in-state student. I know that tuition for out-of-state students tends to be higher because more students come from in-state, but this university has also attracted a good number of international students. I am lucky enough to have received a sizable scholarship that helps lower this cost, but I have other friends who are out-of-state students that still struggle to pay for their education even with financial aid. Just like me, they came to GMU because of the academic opportunities, especially my friend who came all the way from New Mexico for GMU's forensic science program. I understand that these proposed tuition increases are minimal at 2.5% and would go towards critical infrastructure investments, but I think there's a way to fund the critical infrastructure, programming, and services of this university while also reducing the cost for out-of-state students. One way would be to reduce or end investments in defense manufacturers such as Boeing, Lockheed Martin, Northrop Grumman, and General Dynamics. None of these companies are in danger of going bankrupt without an investment or partnership from GMU, so divesting from them could allow for the reallocation of funds towards the various expenditures highlighted in the presentation, from academic support to faculty wages to facilities/buildings. As GMU contends with continuous underfunding from state and federal policymakers and budgets, divestment represents an opportunity to redirect funding away from death-dealing companies and towards life-affirming and student-supporting activities and services. Thank you for your time!

Hiram Mbulu

Student

Ladies and gentlemen of the Board of Visitors,

My name is Hiram Mbulu. I am the president of Collegiate Black Men and a peer mentor of the Black Male Success Initiative (BMSI). I stand before you with a clear message: choose wisely. I ask you: do you choose to submit to the threats sent by the Dear Colleague letter? Or do you choose the voices of those you are entrusted to serve—faculty and students, whose dedication and investment form the very foundation of our institution?

Consider the words of Winston Churchill: "The price of greatness is responsibility." What is your responsibility? As the appointed individuals before me, is your responsibility to make decisions based on personal beliefs or to pass blame for the decisions you make to those in higher positions? According to your bylaws, "The George Mason University Board of Visitors ('Board') shall generally direct the affairs of the University in accord with the powers and duties assigned by law." So I ask: Who are our main and direct stakeholders? They are the students, the faculty, and the alumni who fuel our legacy. When their needs go unmet, the consequences are profound: our brightest faculty may seek tenure and opportunity elsewhere, our current students may decide to withhold alumni donations—funding crucial to our future. Do current alumni lose interest in supporting a school that does not align with their interests? I urge you to weigh these factors carefully.

As an African-American student here and representing 150+ African-American students in the student organization I lead, we've benefited immensely from the DEI initiatives set up to support historically underperforming students. DEI initiatives you agreed on as the Mason Way—programs meant to support student needs—how is that exclusionary? It isn't. I call upon you to defend the student support initiatives. Challenge, don't submit.

Thank you.

Sarah Fischer	Faculty	I am writing in support of our campus DEI efforts. Mason has an incredibly diverse student body in every sense of the word. I've taught students who were born in other countries, served in the military, were working parents, transferred from community colleges, came straight from high school, of all ages and ethnicities, all in the same classroom. I appreciate our campus efforts to be inclusive of students who have veteran status and have disabilities. I appreciate our campus efforts to be a welcoming institution for students who have a diverse range of sexual orientation and gender identity. And, I appreciate the work that our administrative colleagues do to address discrimination. The campus is stronger and has a rich educational environment because of these efforts. I urge the board to stand up for Mason and stand up for DEI.
Tehama Lopez Bunyasi	Faculty	I unequivocally reject any attempts by this BOV to emulate the suppression of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access that their peers have installed at UVA (my alma mater) and Virginia Tech. Instead, I urge them to set an example of what a respectable BOV might look like: a guardian of excellence and a body accountable to its own University's core values. The anti-DEI resolutions passed sometimes in secret and always without democratic process at other Virginia universities will ruin what were once outstanding centers of learning accessible to all. Protect Mason; protect DEI; protect freedom of speech; protect academic freedom. We are a democracy!
Janet D.	Faculty	Opposing DEI is nothing new: Anti-Black racism has a long history in Virginia. Stop these racist moves now and uphold your commitments to all students at Mason, especially those most marginalized by a politics of segregation and hate.
Concerned Citizen	Community Member	I unequivocally reject any attempts by this BOV to imitate the suppression of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access that their peers have installed at UVA and Virginia Tech. Instead, I urge them to set an example of what a courageous BOV might look like, by holding themselves accountable to the University's core values instead of a political agenda motivated by a desire to punish and exclude.
Lauren Cattaneo	Faculty	<p>I write to express my strong objection to the current trend among BOVs throughout Virginia to dismantle DEI programs, offices, curricula, and initiatives, and to call out the Mason BOV for repeatedly overriding the values of the institution and the will of faculty, students and staff in favor of a nakedly political agenda. While the BOV may try to disguise their actions as a form of "neutrality" or simply doing what is best for Mason, they have proven over and over that they neither respect nor are even interested in what the wider Mason community has to say. The BOV does not have Mason's best interests in mind when they suppress speech and learning.</p> <p>I unequivocally reject any attempts by the Mason BOV to imitate the suppression of diversity, equity, inclusion, and access that</p>

their peers have installed at UVA and Virginia Tech. Instead, I urge them to set an example of what a courageous BOV might look like, by holding themselves accountable to the University's core values instead of a political agenda.

Shree Deepkumar Student

To The Board of Visitors,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the issues that matter most to the GMU community. I have spent 4 years in one of GMU's undergraduate programs, and have played an active part in the GMU community, including running an on campus RSO for 3 years.

First, I want to express my concerns over the impact a further tuition hike would have. George Mason's reputation for excellent education offered at competitive costs draws students from in and out of state. However, the validity of this reputation in recent years becomes questionable in comparison with similar Virginian universities. VCU and JMU are two colleges that are close to GMU in a ranking of Virginia's colleges published by widely-read news outlet US News. The cost of college for an in-state, on campus undergraduate student is \$30,988 at VCU and \$33,276 at JMU. From information available on GMU's own website, the projected cost of attendance for a similar student is \$35,250. A further tuition hike will tarnish GMU's reputation for cost-effectiveness and will drive future students away,.

Second, Mason has a reputation for being welcoming to all students, far beyond many other Virginian colleges. This reputation is harmed by the recent rebranding of Mason's DEI focused offices. It is my fear that this rebrand will culminate in the complete removal of the DEI programs and initiatives that draw many students from marginalized communities to enroll at Mason. The rebranding of Mason's DEI focused offices sends a clear message to prospective students: We welcome everyone, until it stops being convenient.

Please take action to ensure that GMU remains the top choice for future students, both in and out of state. It is my sincere hope for the Mason community to continue to grow, both in number and diversity.

Sincerely,
Shree Deepkumar
Mason Student and Community Member

Andrey Student
Arcidiacono

In 1972, the Board of Visitors of George Mason University declared it their duty to “establish policies that will encourage the participation of students in shaping the character and quality of the institution.” Two years later in 1974 the BOV adopted its bylaws which read:

“The Board may extend authority to the student body of the University providing for the establishment of a Student Government.”

For fifty years these words have remained the same and it has been the role of the student body of this University to decide their student representatives and how those representatives are chosen. In Nevada this long held principle is so sacred that it is protected by state law. While numerous states also protect students' ability to form student governments in their state law, in Virginia and at George Mason, all governing authority is vested by law in the Board of Visitors.

The Board of Visitors often chooses to delegate its authority to

various collegial officers and employees such as the President, or to collegial bodies, such as the Faculty Senate or the Honor Committee. The BOV has likewise delegated its authority to establish a student government to the student body. But more than just allowing for the student government's establishment it has directly empowered it. Whereas Virginia law requires that governing boards of state universities appoint at least one student on the board as a non-voting advisory member, this Board has taken a step further, and has chosen to trust the decision of picking two student representatives directly to the student body through their student government elections. Instead of this board appointing students directly, as it had done in the past, it chose to empower students who are accessible and accountable to the student body by being elected to student governments. Placing this much trust in the student body is unique among Virginia universities and it makes Mason special.

I am writing to you today because I believe it is that same trust between the student body and this university which is at stake. The division of University Life has initiated a project to establish a new undergraduate student government and has made it clear that it will only support student government elections that are held under this new structure. The division of University Life believes that a decline in students engaging with student government has made it necessary for them to intervene and impose new structural changes that they believe will improve student government. There was a similar proposal made by students in 2020 which was considered by and ultimately decided against by students. Despite these proposals being brought up and considered in 2020, University life claims in their listening sessions that the structure has not been evaluated since 2007. Immediately after this student-led effort to amend the structure was decided against by the 41st Student Senate in 2020. Dean of Students Juliet Blank Godlove sponsored a research project in the fall of 2022 with the research question "Why are most students at Mason not engaging with Student Government?" After this research project concluded the division of University life formed a working group of 8 students from student government to amend the structure. Administrators have granted the student government and the student body a limited role in deciding the new structure of this student government. At the meetings of the working group, certain demands by University life were communicated to be "non-negotiable." I am a member of this working group and as we were told on the first meeting "The question is in the details." It has been made clear that it is not our place to question the "bones" of the structure. Students have not been allowed to decide whether or not academic seats will increase engagement. Or whether making the organisation a single body will make it more cohesive and efficient. Continued in p2

Continued from part 1:

Students have not been allowed to decide whether or not academic seats will increase engagement. Or whether making the organisation a single body will make the organisation more cohesive and efficient. Student government loses all meaning if it cannot be viewed as the legitimate voice of the students. This student government doesn't make decisions about enforcing the code of student conduct, or allocating tens of thousands of dollars to student organizations. It's only meaningful power is its ability to represent the student voice. Will the Board of Visitors accept a student government which values institutional priorities over students needs? Students won't engage with token systems of representation where important decisions can be overruled by

Andrey
Arcidiacono

Student

administrators and are beholden to them rather than their peers. Student government can speak best for students when it is governed by them.

The University needs to clearly define and delineate the roles and responsibilities that students and student government should have in the campus governance system. We're shaping a student government whose purpose is to include students in decisions made at this University and I think we are killing the very spirit that this institution proclaims it instills by taking the decision to form a student government away from the students.

How can we possibly encourage students to get involved in student government when they are not being involved in the decision to shape that same student government?

I ask that this BOV enforce their bylaws and maintain that the student body alone has the authority to establish or amend its student government. The Board of Visitors, which delegated the authority to establish a student government to the student body, must direct the division of University Life to allow students to decide the whole structure of their student government and not limit students to deciding parts of the structure that are not in conflict with their demands.

Very Respectfully,
Andrey Arcidiacono
Senator of, 42nd, 43rd, and 45th Student Senate of George Mason University

In 1994 the associate Vice President and Dean of Student Services Kenneth Bumgarner, the Chair of the Student Governance Advisory Committee reported to President George W. Johnson in a memo: "Students, administrators and faculty often have very different opinions on what is broken and how to fix it. Some administrators and faculty still subscribe to the notion that students should play no role in decisionmaking at the University. Some students have exaggerated notions as to the power students should wield in university governance. The Committee believes that the solution lies between these two poles. Some time and experimentation may be necessary before the most suitable means for obtaining greater student participation are found. But if all sides display flexibility and willingness to compromise, I expects that a workable system can be developed which will increase the sense of community and common purpose among the diverse individuals which make up George Mason University"

I write to express my dismay at the Board of Visitors' recent attempts to purge the concept of "diversity" from Mason's curriculum. This move strikes me as not only wrong and regressive, but as counter to what the University is designed to do. Among the governing board's many offenses against enhancing the University's quality of life, its worst offense, in my opinion, are its efforts to do away with a "liberal" or "humanistic" education." To be clear, I am not referring to a political ideology, as some might mistakenly assume. By liberal education, I mean the space which provides for the free exchange of ideas—and most importantly, the space for students to freely develop informed perspectives on both humanity and our material world. At the heart of a liberal education is diversity; without "diversity" in the curriculum, establishing a broadened outlook is difficult (and perhaps, impossible). In my mind, education does its best work when it is able to cultivate in students a two-pronged appreciation for a multitude of perspectives: in one way,

Stefan Michael Wheelock	Faculty	
-------------------------	---------	--

education introduces them to the rich mosaic of opinions on race and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, ability and disability, science and religion. In another way, a humanistic (or liberal) education emphasizes the value diversity plays in lifting up competing opinions, ideas, outlooks, and thought which, taken together, strengthen students' commitment to advancing the cause of human dignity.

Education is at its worst when it caves to soundbites that accuse universities of either "propagandizing students" or indoctrinating them in "leftwing" causes. This misses what classroom engagement does. As a professor in Africana studies and English literature, my job is not to proselytize to students but to introduce them to a fact-based history. Often with students, this history is compelling enough to speak for itself. From here, students can decide, on their own what to do (and how to act). At the heart of any effort to pursue a more just vision for society (and equity) is standing up for a historical sense which is truthful and right. In an era where misinformation and soundbites prevail, the decision to embrace a historically sanitized and narrowly ideological approach to the past (and present) encourages the kind of social regression that harms mutual human understanding and potentially hamstring democracy's advance.

The lives our students lead is shaped by what they learn. Our students represent a diversity of subject positions and understandably wish to see the concerns which directly affect them reflected in the University's curriculum. In short, students better engage the academic side of college life when they can clearly see the stakes for their own wellbeing. If Mason is about the education of the entire person, then it should foster a curriculum which more comprehensively engages the span of the human experience. The goal is to imagine a pluralistic society, not a provincial and chauvinistic one. As a school situated in one of the most diverse regions in Virginia, Mason shines when it shows its appreciation for cultural diversity in its classrooms.

SW

Kerry Smith

Student

DEI initiatives in places of higher education like here at Mason have protected students and faculty, making our campus a productive, inclusive, and safe place to learn. I strongly oppose any resolutions by this BOV to dismantle DEI. I ask you this: are you here as political appointees that enact your ideological beliefs or are you representative of the entire Mason community? Who do you represent? Whose interests are you advocating for? If those questions fail to inspire reflection, I then ask: how do you want to be remembered? Political positions and ideological stances derive from personal experience and systems of belief. Have you never benefited from diversity? Has equity challenged your social position? Has inclusion made you angry or vengeful? Why? Why do the notions of diversity, equity, and inclusion challenge you and your belief system? As many of you associate with the heritage foundation, I can even make a religious claim. Is the Jesus and religion you associate with side with the oppressor or the oppressed? As a student and someone who cares about this university, I'm at a loss. I don't know what or who could convince you. In a world where empathy is rare, equity will feel like an attack on those most privileged by the marginalization of others. Standing up for others and defending those who are marginalized is hard when your own power is on the line. I hope each of you can see beyond your own circumstances and positions and look to truly hear and learn what the people of Mason are saying when it comes to DEI.

Natalia Acevedo	Student	Maintaining the Office of Access, Compliance, and Community is crucial for George Mason University to uphold its commitment to supporting all students. This office upholds the principle that all students from a broad range of backgrounds have earned their place at GMU through merit-based admissions. Dissolving the ACC would be fiscally irresponsible as it would compromise the university's infrastructure and negatively impact its established business model, while contradicting its core values. I urge the Board of Visitors to acknowledge the value of this office and maintain its operations.
Kelby Gibson	Graduate student and instructor of record	I urge the board to stand up for DEI at Mason. Board members offer plenty of lip service about their role being to do what's best for Mason and yet time and time again over the last few years the board members have shown they are more interested in playing politics to gain favor with their far right buddies rather than actually listen to the Mason community and trust the experts. A few months ago, vice rector Meese attended a GAPSA meeting and claimed that he trusts the experts— The actions of Meese and other visitors show that is simply not true. At the following board meeting Meese and many other visitors voted yes on a resolution that the Mason community, including experts from different fields covering a variety of aspects of the resolution, by and large asked them to vote no on. This board has a chance to do what's right, so do it. We should be protecting DEI at Mason. Since you all seem to have a warped understanding of that term, I suggest you defer to the experts on the topic. They would agree it's worth protecting.
Jecenia Cordova	Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Fairness, accessibility, and equal opportunity are guaranteed for all students, professors, and staff by the Office of Access, Compliance, and Community (ACC) -Maintaining DEI is a leadership choice that stands for honesty and dedication to Mason's basic principles -ensuring equitable opportunities for everyone is a fundamental responsibility -if we Weaken DEI initiatives it would would harm Mason's reputation as a leader in access and excellence -if we take back DEI efforts that sends a message that Mason is moving backward instead of forward -GMU needs to think about it's students and faculty, because their rights and opportunities matter
	Student	Please keep tuition affordable. With all of the government overhaul, no doubt many families are thrust into financial uncertainty. Keep George Mason accessible financially.
Antonio Sandoval Duarte	Student	What will happen to DEI programs?
	Student	Please Board of Visitors, listen to students about the concerns we've had because sooner or later, these attacks in DEI will only get more aggressive. You need to side with the students because we make the university what it is and our complaints are valid as we have evidence to back it up.
Max LaBoy	Student	Don't get rid of DEI. :(
Evelyn Tomaszewski	SOCW 659 Students	<p>April 1, 2025</p> <p>Dear Members of the Board of Visitors,</p> <p>Thank you for this opportunity to present public comments. The following is written by students in SOCW 659 and submitted on their behalf.</p> <p>From the start, as students, we hear terms like "Mason Nation"</p>

and “Mason Community”, and that we “Thrive Together”. While started as marketing slogans – these are truly taken in by students and faculty and staff (and alumni) as an opportunity to connect and forge relationships.

As students in a Mason master’s level social work class, we discussed “why diversity, equity, and inclusion”, and here are some of the answers: It ensures we hear different voices, increase access to education for everyone, that ensuring inclusive resources helps to ensure that all have equal access to university services and programs, enables different learning styles, reduces barriers, promotes empathy, and shifts perspective. And promotes innovation.

To reduce or eliminate a visible and necessary offices or programs or commitments to diversity, equity, and inclusion will diminish the commitment made by students, faculty, staff, and alumni to build a stronger Mason and Grow and Thrive Together. It will negatively impact the high ranking of Mason, and specifically, the programs within the College of Public Health such as social work. And as an R1 university, lack of DEI will result in loss of faculty and students and funding.

The GMU Board of Visitors must vote YES in support of diversity, equity, and inclusion through affirming policy, administration and staffing, and fully resourced programming. This will support, build, and sustain our well-earned and respected space as the most diverse university in Virginia.

Thank you,

Arielle Gradney (student)
Catherine Van Wert (student)
Evelyn Tomaszewski, MSW (Instructor)

Significant risks facing higher education: Getting to the roots of risk

From campus protests to cyberthreats, higher education leaders should employ a robust enterprise risk management system to safeguard the institution from a broad range of risks

ARTICLE • 29-MIN
READ

• 18 DECEMBER
2024

• Deloitte Center for Government
Insights

American higher education institutions are increasingly vulnerable to a variety of risks that require robust protective measures. Some of the key challenges currently faced by these institutions include the potential reclassification of student-athletes as employees, declining enrollment numbers, escalating student mental health concerns, high faculty and staff turnover, more frequent and severe natural disasters, heightened student activism, cybersecurity threats, and more. All these factors collectively strain resources and jeopardize institutional stability.

Once limited to the commercial and government sectors, US colleges and universities are increasingly adopting enterprise risk management (ERM). ERM instills a broad approach to risks, replacing siloed practices with integrated ones. As a result, senior leaders, risk management professionals, and boards of trustees gain a panoramic view of risks and their interrelatedness, and they can develop more integrated and effective approaches to identifying, mitigating, and managing risk.

This report focuses on the significant risks—and drivers of those risks—facing American colleges and universities over the next one to three years. It is not intended to be an exhaustive list of every possible risk and risk driver. Rather, the risks covered here are those that most institutions should at least consider or address more vigorously.

Background

This report discusses our perspective on the most significant risks and risk drivers that we believe stakeholders in institutions of higher education should consider. Our perspective is informed by a variety of stakeholders whose viewpoints range from operational to strategic, as it is critical to gather insights across the entire spectrum (figure 1).

Figure 1

Spectrum of stakeholders that informs our perspective on the most significant risks facing higher education



Source: Deloitte analysis.

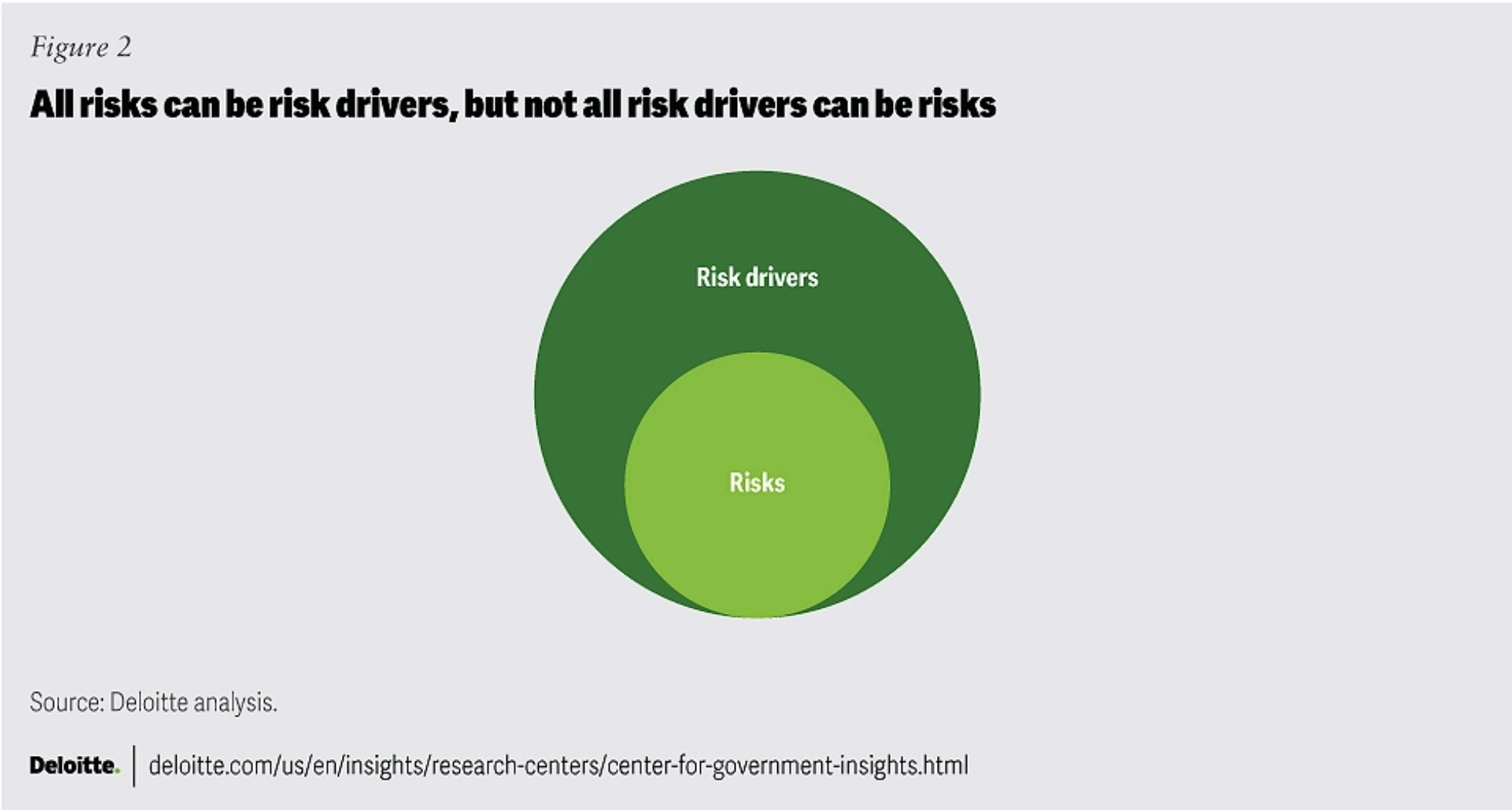
Before we dive into the discussion around the significant risks and risk drivers, it is critical that you, the reader, understand how we have defined them. As we will discuss, clarity on definitions is not only important for reading this report but is also a critical foundational element of effective risk management.

Risks and risk drivers

“Risk” is a term that is often defined inconsistently. Given this, we utilize the following definitions for “risk” and “risk driver” to frame our perspective.

- **Risk** is defined as a state of uncertainty where the answer to “Did the risk occur?” can be a binary yes or no, with some possibilities being undesirable outcomes.
- **Risk drivers** can either be:
 - Continuous factors, often referred to as “trends,” that influence the likelihood or impact of a risk
 - A risk that could influence another risk’s likelihood or impact

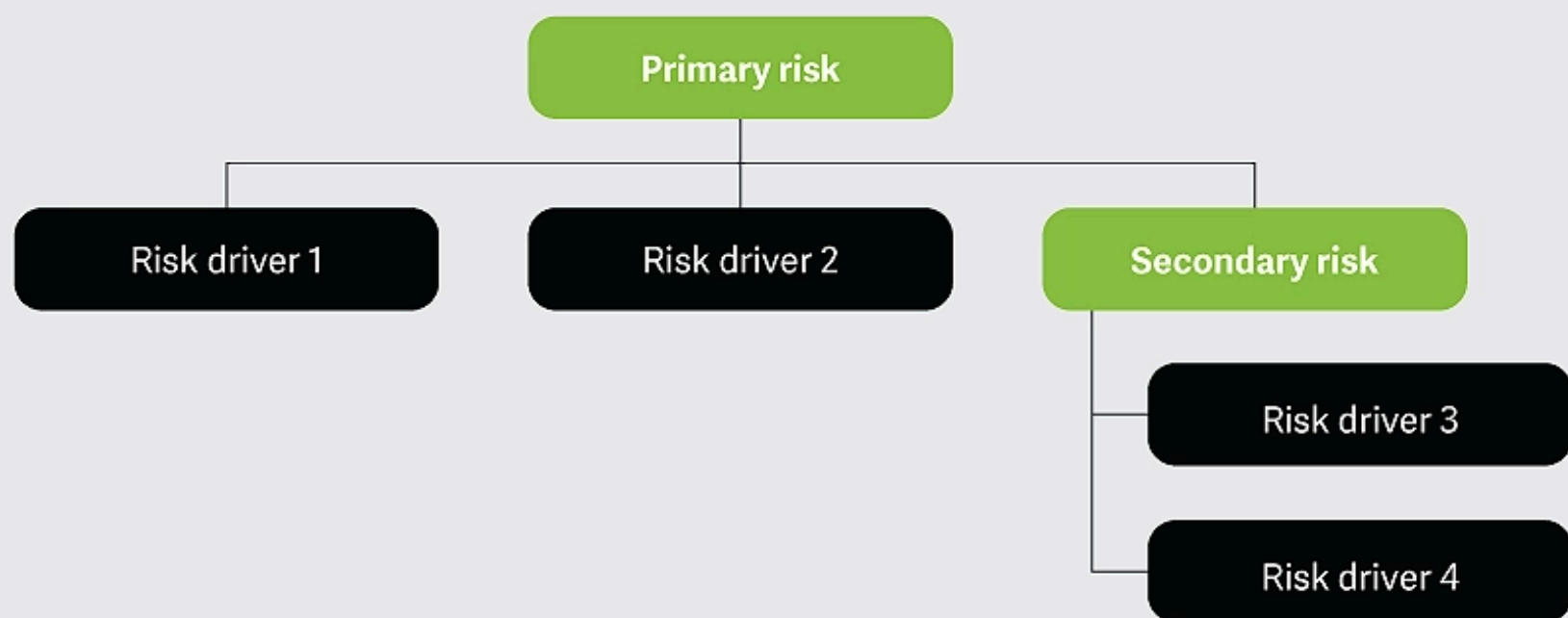
We recognize that definitions of risks and risk drivers are not distinct, which may make this complex and challenging to comprehend from the outset. While all risks can be risk drivers, not all risk drivers are actual risks (figure 2).



Risks can have both risk drivers and secondary risks. A primary risk can have direct risk drivers—risk driver 1 and risk driver 2 (figure 3). Additionally, it can have a secondary risk, which itself has direct risk drivers—risk driver 3 and risk driver 4.

Figure 3

Risks can have both risk drivers and secondary risks



Source: Deloitte analysis.

Deloitte | deloitte.com/us/en/insights/research-centers/center-for-government-insights.html

We present these definitions not only to contextualize our perspective but also because we contend that consistency in defining risk is critical for an ERM program, as it is a core enabler for leadership to effectively prioritize resources for response efforts. More specifically, when an ERM program defines risk and the level of granularity consistently, an analysis of risk can be performed to identify the risk drivers influencing an institution's total risk exposure, thus leading to optimized allocation of resources to response efforts.

The following discussion regarding significant risks and risk drivers utilizes the definitions outlined above, which is important to note because some risks and drivers may be framed or classified differently than is commonplace today.

Part 1. Significant risks facing higher education institutions

As mentioned earlier, this is not a compendium of all risks posed to institutions. It is a group of significant risks that are likely over the next one to three years, many of which are traceable to or exacerbated by the risk drivers discussed in Part 2.

Risk of cyber breaches

Digitalization of transactions, processes, records, and even relationships has caused institutions (and most other organizations) to rely heavily on information technology systems. This reliance has generated benefits such as improved efficiency, better communication, and enhanced data management. However, it has also introduced significant risks to data privacy and security.

The problem is serious and getting worse. From March 2022 to March 2023, the average cost of a cybersecurity breach reached US\$3.7 million.¹ Ransomware attacks—in which cybercriminals encrypt an institution's data and demand a ransom for the decryption key—have targeted organizations across sectors and have surged.² According to the “2024 state of ransomware in education” report by Malwarebytes, ransomware attacks against higher education institutions rose from 68 in 2022 to 116 in 2023, a 70% increase.³

Unsurprisingly, cybersecurity is ranked first on the annual EDUCAUSE Top 10 list of issues facing colleges and universities.⁴ In response, institutions are focusing on more robust identity and access management, considering zero trust security frameworks, and turning to virtual chief information security officers, among other tactics.

Common cyber risk drivers:

Inadequate security practices: Weak or outdated password policies, lack of multi-factor authentication, poor security configurations, and other issues leave systems vulnerable to hackers.

Bifurcation of academic versus administrative IT practices: Research and academic IT practices differ from administrative IT practices. These policies and practices can sometimes be bifurcated across academic and administrative factions, resulting in vulnerabilities.

Unintentional errors and lack of training: Insufficient awareness may lead to an employee accidentally sending confidential information to the wrong recipient or revealing sensitive or confidential information on social media. Faculty and staff need training on everything from passwords to

multi-factor authentication and beyond.

Insider threats: Disgruntled, terminated, or opportunistic employees can harm the institution or exploit access to the school’s data or funds for personal gain.

Vulnerable systems: Several factors are increasing the vulnerability of systems, including a large number of legacy, on-premise IT systems combined with the lack of vulnerability management systems and the prevalence of “bring your own devices,” all contributing to increasing vulnerabilities on campus.

Third-party risks: Partners, vendors, or others can take advantage of access or vulnerabilities due to insufficient due diligence and vetting of their employees or failure to exercise the institution’s right to audit.

Scams: Phishing and social engineering can trick people into revealing personal information about themselves, senior leaders, or trustees or into sharing intellectual property or sensitive organizational information.

Common strategies to help mitigate cyber risk

Mandating user-level tools: Establish policies and procedures regarding strong passwords and multi-factor authentication.

Educating employees: Regularly train employees on leading cybersecurity practices and how to recognize phishing attempts, scams, impersonations, and other tactics aimed at obtaining access to systems.

Encrypting sensitive data: Encrypt data at rest and in transit to protect it from unauthorized access. Use encrypted communications for the most sensitive and valuable data.

Updating software: Keep software up to date with the latest security patches and use accurate software inventories to keep abreast of updates and phaseouts.

Developing disaster recovery, incident response, and data-backup plans: Create and regularly update disaster recovery, incident response, and data backup plans to address and mitigate breaches and reduce the number of false notifications.

Faculty and staff attrition

Faculty and staff attrition, whether voluntary or involuntary, exposes institutions to loss of expertise and institutional knowledge, which can create knowledge gaps and undermine quality and efficiency. High attrition increases recruitment and training costs and diverts resources from other priorities. It can result in discontinuity of education and mentorship, impacting student satisfaction and learning outcomes. High turnover tends to diminish morale and engagement among remaining faculty and staff, who may feel overburdened and insecure in their jobs. Persistent attrition can damage the institution’s reputation and make it less attractive to prospective faculty, staff, and students.⁵ It can also be a symptom of other, perhaps deeper, problems.

The percentage of full-time, exempt staff members who left their jobs nearly doubled over two years—from 7.9% during the academic year of 2020 to 2021 to 14.3% during the academic year of 2022 to 2023.⁶ A survey of 4,782 employees conducted in September 2023 by the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources found that key reasons for employees leaving included better pay and benefits (45%), lack of career advancement opportunities (30%), and dissatisfaction with institutional leadership (25%).⁷ Job satisfaction was the strongest predictor of retention, with higher satisfaction associated with a lower likelihood of employees seeking other employment.⁸

Risk of attrition drivers

Inadequate remote work opportunities: Lack of remote work options can lead to turnover as faculty and staff seek more flexibility and enhanced work/life balance.

Lack of career advancement opportunities: Lack of promotion and other career advancement and enhancement opportunities generate dissatisfaction and prompt employees to leave for positions with clearer pathways to professional growth.

Uncompetitive pay and benefits: Inadequate compensation and benefits have been frequently cited as primary reasons for faculty and staff leaving their positions.

Strategies to help mitigate the risk of attrition

Promoting work/life balance: Implement flexible work arrangements, including remote work options and flexible scheduling, and provide support, such as child care, for working parents.

Enhancing compensation and benefits: Explore enhanced salary and benefits to confirm that they remain competitive by benchmarking against peers as well as adjacent industries. Offer comprehensive benefits packages that meet the diverse needs of employees.

Fostering professional development: Provide clear pathways for career advancement and professional growth while investing in programs to enhance knowledge and skills.

Improving workplace culture: Create a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture where employees feel valued and recognized.

Student activism risks

Student activism primarily refers to assemblies by students, faculty, or other stakeholders to advocate for social, political, or environmental change. Assemblies include protests, sit-ins, and other gatherings aimed at influencing university policies, raising awareness of specific issues, or advocating for broader societal changes. Activists can also demand the resignation of leaders or faculty members, “canceling” speakers, or divestiture of endowment funds in a certain company or country. Handled poorly, activism can lead to disruption of student life and campus operations, safety and security hazards, legal and compliance issues, and reputational risk.

The spring of 2024 saw an increase in student activism across the country.⁹ The news media headlines were riddled with examples of students setting up tent encampments to protest and counterprotest foreign conflict. Election cycles also heighten political awareness among students and faculty, generating further advocacy around issues such as voter rights, policy changes, and candidate support.

Colleges and universities anticipate more demonstrations during the 2024 to 2025 academic year; in response, administrators are revising rules on free speech and demonstrations. Many of the revised rules include time, place, and manner restrictions on assemblies. For example, the University of South Florida requires approval for tents, canopies, banners, signs, and amplifiers and bans activity after 5 p.m. and during the last two weeks of a semester.¹⁰ Many others have set similar policies.¹¹

Student activism risk drivers

Lack of communication: Failure to affirm the institution’s commitment to education and order on the one hand and to free expression on the other can create a void that enables activists to control the conversation.

Lack of enforcement of clear policies: While many colleges and universities have announced policies and rules around student activism, some may not have made them clear. University leaders have the right and responsibility to prohibit aggressive, destructive, or unlawful behavior that disrupts learning or threatens safety. To that end, policies should specify potential consequences for such conduct.

Mission and campus culture: Colleges and universities serve to foster learning through the exploration of ideas with a diversity of thought and active debate. In this setting, colleges and universities may struggle with managing the fine line between appropriate and instructive self-expression, with potentially harmful and nonproductive behaviors.

Strategies to help mitigate the risks posed by student activism

Navigate free speech issues carefully: Public colleges and universities are legally required to uphold First Amendment freedoms (including the right to speech and assembly) on their campuses. Private universities are not, although many have promised students to support free speech. Policies that enable leaders, students, and other stakeholders to navigate this landscape can help to mitigate the risks.¹²

Guard institutional reputation: Leaders need to balance the interests of multiple stakeholders while guarding the institution’s reputation when addressing risk events arising from activism. Prospective and current students value their freedom of expression, while parents, alumni, donors, and the public may more highly value campus order and safety. Tracking stakeholder sentiment by listening to stakeholders and monitoring social media will enable leaders to gauge the effect of various policies and contemplated responses.

Manage potential backlash: Failure to manage backlash contributed to administrators at top schools having to resign in the aftermath of campus demonstrations. In addition to adroit management of student activism, leaders should establish and maintain ongoing, trust-building communication with all stakeholders. Student activists generally constitute a relatively small percentage of the student population and an even smaller percentage of all stakeholders. So, cultivating the support of those larger percentages—including student government—can cushion the institution and its leaders and reputation from backlash.

Natural disaster risks

Natural disaster risks encompass the effects of events like floods, earthquakes, hurricanes, tornadoes, wildfires, and other major disasters. Climate change may heighten these risks by causing more frequent and severe weather events that threaten campus infrastructure and the safety of students, faculty, and staff. These risks can affect the operations, infrastructure, and financial stability of institutions. Potential impacts involve damage to campus buildings, requiring costly repair and recovery efforts, and disruptions to academic schedules.

Statistics indicate that natural disasters are becoming more frequent and serious in magnitude.¹³ For example, severe storms have resulted in the largest number of billion-dollar climate disasters in the last decade, with 99 total events.¹⁴ Weather patterns, including El Niño, La Niña, North Atlantic Oscillation, and Pacific Decadal Oscillation,¹⁵ can increase natural disaster risks on campuses by intensifying weather events such as

rainfall, flooding, and storms. The development of expensive infrastructure in or near vulnerable areas also increases the risk of loss from natural disasters.

Natural disaster risk drivers

Failure to gauge potential impacts: An institution’s location impacts the likelihood and significance of this risk. Many colleges and universities in the United States are close to the coast, rendering them vulnerable to tropical storms, rising sea levels, and flooding.¹⁶ Institutions in California and the Midwest may see an increase in the number and duration of wildfires.¹⁷

Unprepared campus and local infrastructure: Inadequate or poorly maintained campus-level or state or local infrastructure can amplify risks associated with natural disasters by compromising emergency response capabilities, thus increasing vulnerability to hazards and hindering effective communication and evacuation efforts.

Deferred maintenance: As colleges and universities fall behind on deferred maintenance of their campus infrastructure, the rising frequency and severity of natural disasters could lead to less resilient infrastructure and increased financial loss.¹⁸

Strategies to help mitigate natural disaster risks

Review resources and standards: Resources such as [Ready.gov for Campus](#), US [Department of Education’s natural disaster resources](#), and the Federal Emergency Management Agency’s [Higher Education Program](#) can enable risk-related and operational functions to prepare the institution and stakeholders for extreme weather events. At the more local level, institutions need to review available resources, the roles of first responders, evacuation plans, and lessons learned from responses to past natural disasters.

Evaluate the financial impact: The case for comprehensive preparedness can be clarified by evaluating the potential financial impact on the institution. While disaster preparedness can be costly, natural disasters have inflicted billions of dollars in damages on facilities. Impacts include the cost of repairs and rebuilding, lost tuition revenue, and increased operational costs due to prolonged closures and recovery efforts. Higher education institutions should use scenario analysis and tabletop exercises to understand potential impacts and craft optimal responses.

Inform stakeholders: A detailed communication plan is crucial in any crisis. It should define roles and responsibilities, establish primary and backup communication channels, consider all stakeholders including students, faculty, and staff, and cover communications before, during, and after a natural disaster.

Lend a hand: As an important part of the community, the college or university can build goodwill and trust by, at minimum, having plans that will reduce or not add to burdens placed on local response resources. If possible—and only within proper legal, safety, and commonsense boundaries—staff, faculty, and leadership should assist the community in appropriate ways, such as offering transportation or temporary housing to disaster victims.

Classification of student-athletes as employees

On July 12, 2024, the Third Circuit Court in *Johnson v. National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA)* ruled that student-athletes are not barred from being considered employees under the Fair Labor Standards Act. As a result, colleges and universities may be required to classify student-athletes as employees. Significant legal, financial, and operational implications may emerge for institutions, athletic programs, and student-athletes. This classification creates the need to develop an onboarding infrastructure to reduce the administrative burden on campus human resources departments and to address the legal, compliance, financial, and tax implications for the institution.

The *House v. NCAA* class action lawsuit challenges the NCAA’s restrictions on student-athlete compensation. The outcome of ongoing settlement negotiations will likely impact student-athletes’ employment status.¹⁹ The settlement estimates a US\$135,000 annual salary for football and men’s basketball student-athletes.²⁰ Moreover, increased unionization efforts among some segments of student-athletes, primarily in football and men’s and women’s basketball, could occur.²¹

Student-athlete reclassification risk drivers

Scope and legal rules regarding an athletic program: Specific risks to the institution will depend upon the status and finances of their athletic programs and the applicability of legal developments and emerging rules driven by case law, settlements, and legislative changes, including:

- NCAA rule changes allowing student-athletes to profit from their name, image, and likeness²²
- National Labor Relations Board’s stance on classifying student-athletes as employees under the National Labor Relations Act²³
- Court rulings challenging the traditional amateurism model (*NCAA v. Alston* and *NCAA v. House*)²⁴
- Legislative proposals introduced to redefine the relationship between student-athletes and their institution and to reclassify them as employees²⁵

Stakeholder and public sentiment: Increased media focus on the financial issues surrounding student-athletes has amplified support for their reclassification as employees and moved public sentiment toward institutions treating student-athletes more equitably. That generally means recognizing the academic and athletic demands placed on student-athletes and financially rewarding their contribution to their schools.

Strategies to mitigate student-athlete reclassification risks

Clarifying the impacts: Engage legal experts, such as the institution’s Office of General Counsel and outside counsel, to clarify the applicability and implications of employment law and labor relations to position the institution to respond fairly and judiciously.

Reviewing policies: Thoroughly review existing human resources policies and processes to identify gaps where updates are needed for student-athletes classified as employees.

Collaborating internally: Partner with the athletics administration, HR leadership, and the Office of General Counsel to understand potential impacts and develop a strategic response, with a focus on financial matters and institutional mission.

Evolving related programs: Develop practical and ethical supportive programs such as recruiting, onboarding, and policy training for coaches, training staff, athletics administrators, and student-athletes.

As previously noted, we are not attempting to present a comprehensive review of all risks, as they are too many, varied, and unique to each institution to be fully covered here. Rather, we are presenting considerations to approach risks and risk management by identifying each risk to the institution along with the context in which it is occurring, institutional-level drivers, and potential steps to take in response.

Part 2 takes a similar approach to risk drivers. These factors pervade the environment, potentially driving risks that impact every college and university. It can be helpful to consider risks to the institution as those that are unique to that institution, while risk drivers span the entire sector.

Part 2. Significant risk drivers to higher education institutions

Thinking and working at the level of risk drivers enables college and university leaders and risk managers to effectively address risks. It helps them to identify the factors contributing to an increase or decrease in risk, such as increased politicization of higher education leading to a change in regulatory priorities.

Understanding risk drivers also enables risk managers to develop a panoramic view of the risk landscape. This allows them to clearly see the interrelatedness of risks and strategically allocate resources to manage them. All of this supports ERM, resulting in improved efficiency and effective risk management.

Managing risks at institutions has become far more critical and complex than in the past. The nature and number of risk drivers reflect the increased complexity of the ecosystem, characterized by heightened economic pressures, diminished trust in institutions, rapid climate change, proliferating technology, evolving regulatory and compliance demands, and a more diverse applicant pool and student body.

Evolution in Department of Education regulation

In June 2024, the US Supreme Court overturned “Chevron deference,” named for the landmark *Chevron USA Inc. v. Natural Resources Defense Council* (1984) case. The 2024 decision may reduce the interpretative deference of the courts to federal agencies by obligating courts to determine whether an agency’s actions are consistent with the words of the statute and the intent of Congress.²⁶ By the same token, the “Chevron doctrine” in effect directed courts to reject agencies’ interpretation of statutes unless there’s clear authorization from Congress to accept them.²⁷ While the impact on higher education remains to be seen, the decision may limit federal agencies, including the US Department of Education (ED), authority to issue and enforce broad regulations.²⁸

In addition, in June 2023, the Supreme Court ruled against using race in college admissions decisions, leading many colleges and universities to reevaluate their affirmative action, legacy admissions, and athletic recruiting policies and practices.²⁹ Also, the ED published three updates on its expectations under its extensive October 2023 [Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment regulations](#). These regulations, slated to take effect on July 1, 2024, apply to institutions participating in Title IV Federal Student Aid programs.³⁰ Collectively, these two regulations strive to require colleges and universities to provide student and financial information to ED to evaluate the effectiveness of their programs. Given that most colleges and universities participate in the Title IV program, adherence to these regulations will be compulsory for institutions going forward.

Taken together, these rulings from the Supreme Court will alter how ED regulates higher education, which may place long-standing practices in higher education at odds with new or revised regulations. This will require colleges and universities to quickly pivot their processes and operations. Though the full impact of these rulings on higher education is still unclear, they will influence how the Department of Education regulates the sector. Colleges and universities will need to maintain a flexible relationship with the department to adapt to probable changes in the future.

Risks linked to evolving ED regulation

New legislation: Given the potential change in the enforceability of ED guidance, legislators may look to codify standards in legislation. Federal legislation could differ from the current guidance issued by ED.

Loss of Title IV funding: Reduced clarity in ED requirements for receiving Title IV funds may lead to legal action, potentially affecting other areas as well.

Strategies to navigate the evolution of ED oversight

Legal guidance: Evaluate more often the necessity and timing of the institution’s need to obtain guidance from attorneys and legal experts in its decision-making and policymaking processes.

Legal monitoring team: Establish a dedicated team or individual to monitor and respond to legal and regulatory developments.

Strengthen compliance programs: Implement robust compliance programs to enhance adherence to regulatory requirements.

Regular compliance training: Conduct periodic training sessions for faculty and staff on regulatory changes and compliance obligations.

Proactive communication strategy: Develop a proactive communication strategy to manage public perception and maintain stakeholder trust in the institution’s leaders and decision-making, while seeking ways to reach underrepresented applicant populations.

Data-reporting processes: Confirm processes are in place to collect data and report to ED in a timely manner to comply with Financial Value Transparency regulations.

Decline in US population growth

The United States has seen a reduction in the growth rate of the demographic inclined to pursue higher education. This can strongly impact enrollment rates, financial resources, and strategic planning. Economic instability and job insecurity, which render people less confident about their financial futures and tend to lower birth rates, are fueling this.³¹ There are also changes in social norms, with more people delaying marriage and childbirth to focus on careers and personal goals. The high cost of living, child care, and education itself further discourages parenthood.³²

The anticipated “enrollment cliff” in 2025 largely relates to a steady decline in the national birth rate over the past 17 years, with births falling by 23% from 2007 to 2022.³³

Population in large and moderate-sized US counties grew, while that of small counties declined over the last few years.³⁴ Specifically, from 2022 to 2023, the population in counties with over 100,000 people averaged a growth of 0.76%. In fact, the population in counties with fewer than 10,000 people decreased by 0.27% on average, compared with a 0.35% decrease the previous year.³⁵

Risks commonly linked to population decline

Enrollment decline: With fewer students enrolling, colleges and universities face decreased tuition income, affecting their financial stability and necessitating budget cuts. This can impact faculty, staff, and resources available for students and potentially lead to merger and acquisition activity.

Recruitment challenges: As college enrollment declines, the pool of students available for employers to recruit also decreases. Consequently, companies may need to adjust their recruitment strategies and invest more in training and development to bridge the skills gap. Moreover, institutions may have to work harder to protect their educational missions and reputations.

Reduced role in the local economy: Institutions play a crucial role in their local and regional economies. Declining enrollment can lead to reduced economic activity—and employment—in the college or university and the surrounding community, affecting local businesses and services.

Strategies to help navigate the decline in population

International recruitment: Develop strategies to attract international students and build global partnerships.

Study-abroad initiatives: Create and promote study-abroad programs and international exchanges.

Industry collaboration: Collaborate with local industries and major employers to gauge what expertise and skills they are seeking and how the college or university might help them address their training and development needs.

Adult education: Engage nontraditional audiences by creating flexible pathways for adult learners to complete their education and adapting academic offerings to support populations beyond the 18- to 24-year-old demographic.

Overdependence on tuition for revenue

Tuition dependence is defined as the ratio of net tuition revenue to total revenue. High tuition dependency—defined as 60% or greater reliance on tuition and student fees for core revenues—puts an institution’s finances at risk, given even small downturns in enrollment and retention.³⁶ The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic may have exacerbated this issue, yet pandemic-related aid may have masked longer-term financial issues, with closures of private colleges becoming commonplace as a result.³⁷

Data from the 2022 Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System reveals that about 25% of institutions are tuition-dependent.³⁸ Tuition dependency is rising among public and private institutions, with a higher percentage of core revenues being derived from student tuition and fees. Moreover, non-tuition sources of revenue are also under pressure. [Giving to colleges and universities is declining](#), with the most recently available data showing inflation-adjusted giving down 5% in 2023.³⁹ Even amid reduced federal stimulus funding, state support for higher education was up 10% in fiscal 2024,⁴⁰ but that is expected [to decline](#) in the future.⁴¹

Risks commonly linked to tuition dependency

Budget shortfalls: During even small downturns in student enrollment and retainment, budget shortfalls are typically the first sign of overdependence on tuition and fees. Unless that overdependence is addressed, it can lead to deficits that must be funded.

Insolvency: An increase in the time needed to pay operating expenses—or a default on debt—generally indicates even more pressing financial problems.

Layoffs and program closures: Unless they are well-rationalized, layoffs of faculty or staff, as well as partial or complete closing of programs (or a school within a university), indicate financial problems that can lead to bankruptcy or the closing of the whole institution.

Strategies to help navigate tuition dependency

Boost fundraising efforts: Step up fundraising activities, particularly planned giving among active alumni and major or repeat donors.

Grant acquisition: Apply for research and other grants and actively recruit faculty and researchers with a proven record of successful grant applications and grant-funded research.

Tuition reset: Consider a properly implemented tuition reset, which means reducing the “sticker price” for tuition. Several regional institutions have used resets with good results, particularly when they emphasize their brand and value rather than the reduced tuition.⁴²

Expense reduction: Reduce operating expenses, particularly by automating all that can be automated, consolidating or eliminating redundant processes and activities, or making the difficult decision to discontinue academically valuable but unprofitable programs or activities.

Asset utilization: Maximize revenues from the institution’s existing asset base, for example, by renting out facilities when possible.

Declining student mental health

Concerns over student mental health have intensified since the pandemic, with increasing numbers of students experiencing stress, anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and similar challenges. Often exacerbated by academic pressures and financial strain, mental health issues can impair academic performance and engagement in campus life.⁴³ In severe cases, students could harm themselves or others.⁴⁴

[More than 60% of college students meet the criteria for at least one mental health problem](#), which is a nearly 50% increase since 2013.⁴⁵ A recent survey of more than 3,600 students found that 70% of respondents have struggled with mental health since starting college.⁴⁶ Only half that number (37%) sought mental health resources at their colleges. The reasons? Negative past experiences or concerns about the effectiveness of care, social stigma, cost, and uncertainty about how to access those resources.⁴⁷

The “Student mental health landscape” report by Wiley, which surveyed more than 2,500 students, found that more than 80% are facing some level of emotional difficulty, with more than 25% citing significant struggles.⁴⁸ Challenges included balancing school with work or family (59%), paying for tuition (50%) and living expenses (49%), and uncertainty about how to prepare for a career (41%).⁴⁹

Risks commonly linked to student mental health

Student transfer and dropout: Declining mental health can result in students dropping out or transferring to another school, which can impact an institution’s enrollment, ranking, and reputation.

Declining student success: Declining mental health can negatively impact grades and graduation rates, which could diminish the institution’s rankings and reputation and generate additional financial strain and emotional suffering for students.

Student safety and security: Declining mental health can potentially increase instances of safety events, including violence toward oneself or others.

Strategies to navigate declining student mental health

Counseling services expansion: Expand the availability of on-campus and telehealth counseling services, for example, by partnering with local providers to address rising demand when needed.

Peer-mentoring initiatives: Develop peer-mentoring and support programs and formally work to increase students’ engagement with one another, with faculty, and with the institution.

Mental health awareness: Deploy mental health literacy and awareness campaigns to reduce any stigma associated with anxiety, depression, and other conditions.

Faculty-training programs: Train faculty and staff to recognize mental health warning signs and symptoms and the next steps to take. (Nearly half of students in the Wiley survey noted that extra support from their instructors had a positive impact on their mental and emotional health.)⁵⁰

Early-detection systems: Use early detection systems, including mental health screening tools and predictive analytics. These tools can detect potential mental health challenges based on academic performance, visits to the infirmary, and other indicators.

Wellness programs: Promote wellness programs and support in areas such as nutrition, exercise, relationship management, and stress reduction.

Evolving demand for program offerings

Demand for program offerings changes due to shifts in student interest and sentiment toward certain degrees, certificates, majors, minors, and specializations influenced by marketplace needs for skills and expertise. Institutions need to understand and prioritize students’ preferences to retain high enrollment, student satisfaction, and national or regional reputation and rank.

Science, technology, engineering, and mathematics, as well as business and occupational courses, are now widely sought after due to their higher labor market returns despite potentially higher short-term psychic costs (a type of social cost that reflects the stress or reduction in quality of life) for students. Education, social sciences, and humanities have experienced the largest losses in bachelor’s degrees, while business and health professions have increased the most.⁵¹

Institutions are modifying programs and majors to attract prospective students and to meet local, regional, and national employment needs. Schools are also adopting course-sharing models to expand their academic offerings and create new programs to better meet student needs while saving money.⁵² Some institutions have achieved higher rates of enrollment and retention by offering microcredentials—short-term, skills-focused training that enables students to demonstrate competency in a focused area.⁵³

To remain relevant, most colleges and universities must evolve and adjust program offerings to fit current market needs.⁵⁴ That applies to course delivery as well. Demand for online course offerings has increased immensely as students have prioritized flexibility to help manage their family or work responsibilities.⁵⁵

Risks commonly linked to evolving demand for program offerings

Reduction in public financial support: Institutions may face potential challenges in securing funding if they do not adapt their program offerings to align with evolving student interests and market needs.

Postgraduate employment: Students may encounter limited career opportunities if their academic programs do not adjust to provide the skills and knowledge required by the labor market.⁵⁶

Program closure: If colleges and universities misalign their courses with student preferences, they may experience under-enrollment and suboptimal use of resources, such as faculty time and classroom space.

Student transfer and dropout: Institutions may see a decrease in positive student sentiment and educational experiences if they fail to keep pace with changes in demand.

Strategies to help navigate the evolving demand for program offerings

Labor market analysis: Monitor and analyze labor market data to identify emerging fields and skills in current, near-term, and future demand.

Pipeline preparation: Prepare a pipeline of offerings and identify resources needed to support new programs and courses geared to emerging academic interests and career paths.

Interdisciplinary programs: Promote and develop interdisciplinary programs that combine multiple fields of study to foster innovation and well-rounded education.

Faculty development: Offer continuous professional development opportunities to enable faculty to stay current in their fields and deliver relevant course material.

Collaborative partnerships: Establish partnerships with other educational institutions, industry, and community organizations to expand program offerings and provide students with additional learning opportunities.

Lack of institutional agility in decision-making

Institutional agility refers to an institution’s ability to adapt and respond to internal and external change. Colleges and universities benefit from agility in various dimensions, including curriculum adaptability, operational flexibility, technology adoption and integration, financial resilience, strategic responsiveness, and stakeholder engagement. Institutions that exhibit low levels of agility find it hard to navigate challenges and seize opportunities, thus increasing their exposure to negative developments.

Inside Higher Ed’s “2024 Survey of College and University Presidents” found that the primary challenge for presidents today (25% of respondents) relates to financial constraints on their university.⁵⁷ While a limited budget can work against agility, updating management methods and decision-making processes costs relatively little out of pocket. In addition, lack of agility itself increases financial vulnerability.

For example, agility can be undermined by high staff turnover, which in turn can be minimized through better management, working conditions, and career pathing (as well as improved pay and benefits). Employee engagement provider Culture Amp suggests that, across sectors, 18% of North American employees are looking to move into new roles in 2024,⁵⁸ so monitoring employee sentiment may be valuable.

Artificial intelligence promises to impact higher education. Inside Higher Ed’s survey also found that 50% of presidents are optimistic about AI’s impact on higher education, but only 18% say their institution has adopted or published policies governing the use of AI.⁵⁹

Risks commonly linked to a lack of agility

Vote of no confidence: Institutional leaders are more likely to experience a vote of no confidence if their organizations fail to keep abreast of the times due to bureaucracy, lack of vision, or failure to execute change management effectively.

Faculty and staff attrition: Similarly, faculty and staff are more likely to leave an environment in which getting things done becomes unnecessarily challenging.

Board executive action: If the institution falls behind its peers and its brand suffers due to sclerotic management, the board becomes more likely to take executive action that supersedes the institution’s administration.

Reduction in alumni and donor financial support: Alumni and donors become more likely to reduce financial support when they see that rigid and unresponsive leaders have failed to navigate change amid disruption.

Strategies to help navigate the lack of agility

Agile budgeting model: Institutions need to use a flexible budget model that enables shifts during the budget cycle and builds agility in planning and budgeting.

Change management skills: Leaders often need to improve their change management skills, particularly in today’s environment of rapid evolution and diminished trust in institutions.

Frequent leadership assessments: Increasing the frequency of leaders’ external, internal, and self-assessments to identify areas requiring improvement, mitigate biases in decision-making, and determine necessary adjustments.

Higher education disruptors: Institutions need to identify the forces most likely to disrupt the higher education environment—such as AI, demographic change, and diminishing views of its value—and respond accordingly.

Mission-driven communication: Leaders should communicate with stakeholders about their commitment to the institutional mission while recognizing the need to adjust strategy to fulfill that mission in today’s environment.

Deferred maintenance

Deferred maintenance is defined as the backlog of activities to perform if facilities and equipment (including IT systems) are to reach or extend their anticipated useful life and market value. This causal factor is often overlooked due to its perceived mundanity and misguided attempts to save money. Moody’s states that as of 2024, higher education institutions face a total of US\$950 billion in deferred maintenance costs for facilities over the next 10 years.⁶⁰ In 2020, the backlog of deferred maintenance was estimated at up to US\$100 per square foot.⁶¹

Decisions made decades ago about facilities are producing a sharp uptick in the need for reinvestment. Life-cycle investments to address the needs of facilities built in the 1970 and 2005 waves of construction will place high pressure on institutions. [Those two construction surges are generating equipment and system life cycles that will overlap in about 10 years.](#)⁶²

Due to their low visibility and slow-motion impact, it is relatively easy to give maintenance of existing facilities lower financial priority than building new facilities. However, maintenance cannot be deferred over the long term without incurring serious risks. Moreover, space is growing, but space utilization is declining.⁶³ Institutions are building new facilities and expanding their footprint rather than reinvesting in current facilities, which can be a recipe for trouble.

Risks commonly linked to deferred maintenance

Injury or health risks: Exposure to toxic, dangerous, or fatigued materials, poor ventilation, lack of sufficient heating or cooling, off-gassing of volatile organic chemicals, or equipment malfunction can jeopardize the safety of students, faculty, and staff.

Disruption of classes or operations: The preceding conditions can lead to disruptions in classrooms, labs, or housing or the closure of facilities.

Cyber breach: Frequent software patching, neglecting to update it, or failing to maintain a proper software asset management program can increase the risk of cyber breaches.

Financial losses: Deferred maintenance may lead to higher insurance premiums or legal actions due to accidents, incidents, or inspections involving facilities and equipment. Moreover, poorly maintained facilities and equipment may lead to higher operating expenses due to reduced productivity and energy efficiency.

Strategies to navigate the risks of deferred maintenance

Asset inventory evaluation: Inventory all physical assets of the institution (including IT systems and software) and evaluate and prioritize the assets worth investing in based on their age, condition, value, expected lifespan, cost to maintain, and strategic value to the institution.

Maintenance and succession planning: Create a maintenance plan and a succession plan for facilities and equipment based on the foregoing considerations and on a cost-benefit analysis.

Footprint reduction strategy: Consider reducing the institution’s physical footprint, potentially by selling or leasing assets to other organizations, a step that may yield financial benefits.

Tech-enhanced maintenance: Adopt technologies to improve the efficiency of maintenance and repairs, such as diagnostic devices and embedded monitoring and notification tools that flag when maintenance or replacement is or will be needed.

Politicization of higher education

The politicization of higher education refers to the increasing influence of political ideologies, agendas, and conflicts on academic institutions. Politicization can impact an institution’s governance, curriculum, research, and learning environment, as well as student life, enrollment, and retention. The allocation of research grants and funding can be influenced by political considerations, which may skew the focus of academic research.

Politicization can affect institutions in many ways. Special-purpose funding through student financial aid is a crucial source of revenue, but it can extend the federal government’s influence over colleges and universities beyond research. It entails compliance with a variety of federal reporting requirements on issues such as teacher preparation and gender equity in athletics.⁶⁴ Similarly, political pressures can lead to changes in the curriculum, where certain subjects may be emphasized or de-emphasized based on ideological leanings.⁶⁵

As seen in campus protest policies, allowing for free speech while maintaining an inclusive environment can become difficult and characterized by debates over what constitutes hate speech versus protected speech.⁶⁶ In addition, issues related to race, gender, and other dimensions of identity can become highly politicized, influencing campus policies and the learning experience.⁶⁷

Risks commonly linked to politicization

Uncertainty around public funding: The influence exerted by government bodies through policymaking and appointments can create uncertainty around public funding.⁶⁸

Student activism: Polarization and conflict on campus generated by political forces and student activism can disrupt campus life and lead to calls for disinvestment, “canceling” speakers, or changes to the curriculum.

Decline in applications: Applicant, parental, or student sentiment resulting from news reports, educational experiences, social media, or word of mouth shaped by the political climate or a school’s reputation may lead to decreased applications or enrollment.

Faculty or staff attrition: Politicization at an institution and its resulting reputation regarding ideological beliefs and priorities can lead to turnover of the institution’s leaders⁶⁹ and attrition in faculty and staff.⁷⁰

Strategies to help navigate the risks of politicization

Building trust: Engaging with student and community groups and the full range of stakeholders to build trust and promote civil discussion while emphasizing that education remains the fundamental purpose and mission of the institution.

Active dialogue: Leaders should use protests as educational opportunities and consider dialogue with protesters, even those violating policies.⁷¹

Consistent policy enforcement: Once clearly defined and well communicated, institutions should ensure that policies are applied consistently and fairly without discrimination based on personal viewpoints.

Collaborative response strategies: Colleges and universities should develop viable strategies in collaboration with student government, faculty, and other key stakeholders to respond to politicization, including pressures to divest endowment funds in certain countries or companies.

Getting to the roots of risk

Each section above includes considerations for responding to the identified risk or causal factor. This should be considered a broad yet practical template for actions that will go deeper than populating a risk register and rating risks. Those are necessary and useful steps, but they cannot address the driver or cause of a risk and cannot enable the most efficient risk management methods and allocation of resources.

Addressing institutional risk drivers can enable higher education institutions to address the risk and its financial, operational, legal, compliance, reputational, and other impacts across the institution.

The following steps can help legal, compliance, and risk managers to better support the leadership in executing their risk-related roles and responsibilities:

- Identify and assess not only specific risks and risk drivers but also how they could impact all functions, facilities, and stakeholders.
- Develop and evaluate a range of responses to risks based on their financial, operational, legal, reputational, and other impacts, and provide steps to take to address the causes of those risks.
- Monitor how shifts in the political environment could impact the risk environment given the potential for regulatory and legislative change, as well as in the overall risk landscape.
- Consider the following elements of risk management in light of your institution's risks, risk drivers, risk profile, and current approaches to managing risk:
 - **Risk methodologies:** Periodically refresh your approaches to identifying and assessing risk and risk drivers; for example, internal surveys supplemented by interviews and external research can deliver more robust assessments than any single method.
 - **Risk management tools:** Technological tools for monitoring and assessing risks, such as data analytics and risk sensing, have improved significantly in recent years. Governance, risk, and compliance systems have also improved and assisted in integrating the various aspects of the system, such as business continuity, controls, and vendor and document management, among others.
 - **Techniques:** Certain techniques can improve both efficiency and effectiveness of risk management. These include segmenting risks and risk drivers and accelerating prioritization of risks by focusing on those that have intensified or diminished the most, or those on which stakeholders in surveys and interviews exhibited the most divergent views.
- Migrate toward true ERM. Colleges and universities should consider adopting or improving their ERM capabilities in the near term. Today's risks and risk drivers demand in-depth approaches. Risk cannot be managed in silos nor by the risk management functions alone. They are too widespread and interrelated for those approaches to work. ERM enables leaders and risk managers to integrate risk management across the organization, instill risk awareness and procedures into everyone in the organization, and get to the roots of risk.

Navigating the heightened risk landscape

It is no exaggeration to say that the risks that colleges and universities now face have never been more numerous or potentially damaging. Demographics, economics, politics, regulations, technologies, and other factors have created a risk landscape that challenges even the most well-funded and seemingly secure institutions. Even these institutions are experiencing challenges, while those at the opposite end of the spectrum are struggling to survive.

Legal, compliance, and risk managers and the leaders and boards they support will likely see little if any, diminishment in risk. The risk drivers are too numerous and deeply rooted for that to occur. This means that those charged with managing risk and supporting the leadership will need to exercise constant vigilance, sound judgment, and deep commitment to their students, faculty, staff, community, and all other stakeholders in the educational mission.

Continue the conversation

Meet the industry leaders



Cynthia Vitters
[Government and Public Services Enterprise Risk Management practice leader | Managing director | Deloitte and Touche LLP](#)



Roy Mathews
[National Higher Education practice leader | Principal | Deloitte Consulting LLP](#)



Jake Braunsdorf
[Senior manager | Deloitte & Touche LLP](#)

BY
Cynthia Vitters
United States

Joseph Lord
United States

Jake Braunsdorf
United States

Endnotes

1. Alcino Donadel, “[How much does a data breach hurt a college or university’s wallet?](#)” *University Business*, Aug. 8, 2023.

[View in Article](#)

2. US Cyber Threat Intelligence Integration Center, “[Ransomware attacks surge in 2023](#),” Feb. 28, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

3. Andy Viano, “[Cyberattacks on higher ed rose dramatically last year, report shows](#),” *EdTech Magazine*, June 12, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

4. Susan Grajek and the 2023 to 2024 EDUCAUSE Top 10 panel, “[2024 EDUCAUSE Top 10: Institutional resilience](#),” EDUCAUSE Review, Oct. 16, 2023.

[View in Article](#)

5. Michelle Ferraino, “[Understanding turnover in higher education: Causes, consequences, and solutions](#),” National Association of Student Personnel Administrators, accessed Dec. 10, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

6. Kathryn Palmer, “[Limited remote work options a big driver of staff turnover](#),” Inside Higher Ed, Sept. 14, 2023.

[View in Article](#)

7. Jacqueline Bichsel, Melissa Fuesting, Diana Tubbs, and Jennifer Schneider, “[The College and University Professional Association for Human Resources 2023 higher education employee retention survey](#),” CUPA-HR, September 2023.

[View in Article](#)

8. Ibid.

[View in Article](#)

9. Richard Fausset, “[From free speech to free Palestine: Six decades of student protest](#),” *The New York Times*, May 4, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

10. University of South Florida Administrative Services, “[Activities, signage, and use of public space](#),” Aug. 26, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

11. Declan Bradley and Garrett Shanley, “[We looked at dozens of colleges’ new protest policies. Here’s what we found](#),” *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, Sept. 12, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

12. United Educators, “[Addressing demonstrations on campus](#),” September 2022.

[View in Article](#)

13. Penny Gusner, “[Natural disaster facts and statistics 2024](#),” Forbes Advisor, June 7, 2023.

[View in Article](#)

14. National Centers for Environmental Information, “[Billion-dollar weather and climate disasters](#),” Dec. 12, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

15. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Climate.gov, “[El Niño and La Niña \(El Niño-Southern Oscillation\)](#),” Nov. 14, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

16. US Environmental Protection Agency, “[Climate change indicators: Coastal flooding](#),” Sept. 6, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

17. James MacCarthy, Jessica Richter, Sasha Tyukavina, Mikaela Weisse, and Nancy Harris, “[The latest data confirms: Forest fires are getting worse](#),” World Resources Institute, Aug. 13, 2024; US EPA, “[Climate change indicators: Wildfires](#),” July 23, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

18. Ben Unglesbee, “[A ‘hidden liability’: Colleges face up to US\\$950B in capital needs, Moody’s says](#),” Higher Ed Dive, Aug. 27, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

19. Ralph D. Russo, “[Damages to college athletes to range from a few dollars to more than a million under settlement](#),” Associated Press, July 27, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

20. Justin Williams, “[House v. National Collegiate Athletics Association settlement takes next step toward schools paying athletes](#),” The Athletic, *The New York Times*, July 27, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

21. *The Washington Post*, “[College athletes are unionizing. Could this change sports?](#)” March 13, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

22. Husch Blackwell, “[NCAA adopts changes to transfer rules and name, image, and likeness rules](#),” April 24, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

23. Office of Public Affairs, “[NLRB General Counsel Jennifer Abruzzo issues memo on employee status of players at academic institutions](#),” National Labor Relations Board, Sept. 29, 2021.

[View in Article](#)

24. Supreme Court of the United States, “[NCAA v. Alston et al.](#),” October 2020; Justin Williams, “[House v. NCAA settlement granted preliminary approval, bringing new financial model closer](#),” The Athletic, *The New York Times*, Oct. 7, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

25. CUPA-HR, “[Congress introduces legislation on employee classification of student-athletes](#),” June 18, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

26. Nina Totenberg, “[Supreme Court just made it harder for federal agencies to regulate in sweeping ruling](#),” National Public Radio, June 28, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

27. Richard Pierce, “[Major questions doctrine hands power to judges after Chevron](#),” Bloomberg Law, Feb. 21, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

28. Coral Davenport, Christina Jewett, Alan Rappeport, Margot Sanger-Katz, Noam Scheiber, and Noah Weiland, “[Here’s what the court’s Chevron ruling could mean in everyday terms](#),” *The New York Times*, June 28, 2024; Natalie Shwartz, “[Education Department could face ‘stronger and new challenges’ post-Chevron, Moody’s says](#),” Higher Ed Dive, July 11, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

29. Sarah Wood, “[What the Supreme Court’s affirmative action ban means for college admissions](#),” US News & World Report, Aug. 8, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

30. Husch Blackwell, “[Financial Value Transparency and Gainful Employment reporting delay and guidance](#),” April 10, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

31. The Pew Charitable Trusts, “[The long-term decline in fertility—and what it means for state budgets](#),” Dec. 5, 2022.

[View in Article](#)

32. Beth Ann Mayer, “[Americans aren’t having kids because it costs too much, new study says](#),” *Parents*, Feb. 29, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

33. Brady E. Hamilton, Joyce A. Martin, and Michelle J.K. Osterman, “[Births: Provisional data for 2023](#),” National Vital Statistics System Vital Statistics Rapid Release, April 2024.

[View in Article](#)

34. US Census Bureau, “[More counties saw population gains in 2023](#),” press release, March 14, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

35. Ibid.

[View in Article](#)

36. James Shewey, “[Tuition dependency and the impacts of declining enrollments](#),” Riggs, Counselman, Michaels & Downes, July 10, 2019.

[View in Article](#)

37. Michael K. Townsley, PhD, “[For struggling tuition-dependent private colleges, it's basic economics,](#)” Stevens Strategy, June 12, 2023.

[View in Article](#)

38. Ibid.

[View in Article](#)

39. Emily Haynes, “[Giving to colleges was down 5% in 2023, even as very large gifts increased,](#)” *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, Feb. 21, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

40. Doug Lederman, “[State support for colleges grew as stimulus funds ebbed,](#)” Inside Higher Ed, Feb. 1, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

41. Liam Knox, “[State higher ed funding is still rising—for now,](#)” Inside Higher Ed, May 8, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

42. Kathryn Palmer, “[Regional colleges saw biggest application gains after tuition resets,](#)” Inside Higher Ed, Oct. 12, 2023.

[View in Article](#)

43. Ashley Mowreader, “[Survey: Getting a grip on the student mental health crisis,](#)” Inside Higher Ed, Aug. 19, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

44. Mary Ellen Flannery, “[The mental health crisis on college campuses,](#)” National Education Association, March 29, 2023.

[View in Article](#)

45. Ibid.

[View in Article](#)

46. Erudera, “[Survey finds 70% of US college students struggle with mental health, few seek help,](#)” June 11, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

47. Ibid.

[View in Article](#)

48. Wiley, “[Mental health issues on the rise among college students post-pandemic,](#)” press release, March 11, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

49. Ibid.

[View in Article](#)

50. Ibid.

[View in Article](#)

51. Michael T. Nietzel, “[The five most significant 10-year trends in college majors,](#)” *Forbes*, July 24, 2022.

[View in Article](#)

52. Jon Marcus, “[At the edge of a cliff, some colleges are teaming up to survive,](#)” *The New York Times*, Oct. 6, 2022.

[View in Article](#)

53. Hanover Research, “[Top higher education trends for the 2023 to 2024 academic year,](#)” Aug. 11, 2023.

[View in Article](#)

54. Olivia Robertson, “[What is happening to US higher education?](#)” Vanderbilt University, April 4, 2024.

[View in Article](#)

55. Madeline Fitzgerald, “[How online learning is reshaping higher education,](#)” US News & World Report, Feb. 15, 2022.

[View in Article](#)

56. Burning Glass Institute and Strada Institute for the Future of Work, “[Talent disrupted: College graduates, underemployment, and the way forward,](#)” February 2024.

[View in Article](#)

57. Inside Higher Ed, “2024 Survey of College and University Presidents,” accessed Dec. 10, 2024.
[View in Article](#)

58. Lucy Buchholz, “Eighteen percent of American employees are considering leaving their current roles in 2024,” Unleash, Dec. 15, 2023.
[View in Article](#)

59. Inside Higher Ed, “2024 Survey of College and University Presidents.”
[View in Article](#)

60. Unglesbee, “A ‘hidden liability’.”
[View in Article](#)

61. Gordian, “State of facilities in higher education, 7th edition,” accessed Dec. 10, 2024.
[View in Article](#)

62. Ibid.
[View in Article](#)

63. Gordian, “State of facilities in higher education, 8th edition,” accessed Dec. 10, 2024.
[View in Article](#)

64. American Council on Education, “US higher education: A brief guide,” accessed Dec. 10, 2024.
[View in Article](#)

65. Anemona Hartocollis, “Florida eliminates sociology as a core course at its universities,” *The New York Times*, Jan. 26, 2024.
[View in Article](#)

66. American Council on Education, “Preparing for a potentially tumultuous fall on campus,” accessed Dec. 10, 2024.
[View in Article](#)

67. Ibid.
[View in Article](#)

68. Associated Press, “Anatomy of a political takeover at Florida public college,” March 30, 2023.
[View in Article](#)

69. Susan Svrluga and Danielle Douglas-Gabriel, “After Harvard and Penn resignations, who wants to be college president?” *The Washington Post*, Jan. 12, 2024.
[View in Article](#)

70. Sneha Dey, “Layoffs and upheaval at Texas universities spur fear as lawmakers continue diversity, equity and inclusion crackdown,” *The Texas Tribune*, April 19, 2024.
[View in Article](#)

71. American Council on Education, “Preparing for a potentially tumultuous fall on campus,” accessed Dec. 13, 2024.
[View in Article](#)

Acknowledgments

The authors would like to thank the following Deloitte colleagues for their contributions to this article: **Cole Clark** and **Tiffany Fishman** of Deloitte Services LP, and **Jesse Goldhammer** of Deloitte & Touche LLP.

Cover image by: **Sofia Sergi**; Getty Images

EXHIBIT 8



GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA

Glenn Youngkin



For Immediate Release: April 11, 2025

Contacts: Office of the Governor: Peter

Finocchio, Peter.finocchio@governor.virginia.gov

Governor Glenn Youngkin Announces Additional Administration and Board Appointments

RICHMOND, VA— Governor Glenn Youngkin today announced additional administration and board appointments.

ADMINISTRATION APPOINTMENTS

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

- **Rafael Struve**, *Deputy Communications Director*

ADMINISTRATION

- **Gina Pomering**, *Special Assistant*

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

EDUCATION

BOARD OF VISITORS OF GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

- **The Honorable Caren DeWitt Merrick** *of Alexandria, former Secretary of Commerce and Trade, Commonwealth of Virginia; board director, investor, and Co-Founder and former Executive Vice President, webMethods, Inc.*

BOARD OF VISITORS OF UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA AND AFFILIATED SCHOOLS

- **The Honorable Kenneth T. Cuccinelli, II** *of Spotsylvania, Senior Fellow for Immigration and Homeland Security, Center for Renewing America; former Principal Deputy Director, United States Citizenship and Immigration Services; former Acting Director and Acting Deputy Secretary, US Department of Homeland Security; former Attorney General of*

Virginia; former Virginia State Senator, 37th District

BOARD OF VISITORS OF VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE

- **José J. Suárez, M.Eng., P.E.,** *of Saint Augustine, Florida, President and CEO, JS Consulting*

HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

ADVISORY BOARD ON MASSAGE THERAPY

- **Michael C. Tramonte** *of Falls Church, President, Northern Virginia School of Therapeutic Massage*

VIRGINIA INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COUNCIL

- **William Ritter** *of Midlothian, CEO, Poolhouse Agency*

INDEPENDENT

VIRGINIA FOUNDATION FOR THE HUMANITIES AND PUBLIC POLICY

- **Aparna Madireddi** *of Leesburg, Managing Partner, South Asian Business Council of Virginia*

VIRGINIA LOTTERY BOARD

- **Charles W. King** *of Rockingham County, Retired JMU Senior VP and CFO, Currently, Interim President, James Madison University*

LABOR

FAIR HOUSING BOARD

- **Jay Som** *of Hanover, Attorney*

REAL ESTATE BOARD

- **Dr. Bernice Travers** *of Richmond, Strategic Planning and Development Consultant*

VETERANS AND DEFENSE AFFAIRS

BOARD OF VETERANS SERVICES

- **Jeri D. Prophet** *of Virginia Beach, Chief Executive Officer, IntellecTechs, Inc.*

#

[Return to top](#)



GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA
Glenn Youngkin

Select Language | ▼

Governor.Virginia.gov

Virginia.gov

Privacy Policy

Translation Disclaimer

FOIA

Contact

EXHIBIT 9



BOARD OF VISITORS

201 SMITH HALL, LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA 24450-0304

VMI Board of Visitors Special Meeting Minutes April 16, 2025

A special meeting of the Virginia Military Institute Board of Visitors was held Wednesday, April 16, 2025, at 2 p.m. for the purposes of discussing the May 2025 board meeting agenda and electing a board president to serve the unexpired term of the previous president. The meeting was conducted virtually using video conferencing technology. Notice was posted on vmi.edu and the Commonwealth Calendar pursuant to state law. A recording of the meeting is available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h098kitkaSM&t>.

Members Present

Ernie Edgar '87
Hugh Fain '80
Conrad Garcia
Teddy Gottwald '83
Jonathan Hartsock '00
Jamie Inman '86
Bill Janis '84
Terry McKnight '78
Meaghan Mobbs
Nancy Phillips
Stephen Reardon '84
Jose Suarez '82
Kate Todd
Damon Williams '90
Maj. Gen. James Ring '88

Members not present

Jim Joustra '76

Others present

Maj. Gen. Cedric Wins '85
Patrick O'Leary '90
Col. Bill Wyatt

In the absence of a board president (due to resignation), Damon Williams, called the meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. Attendance was taken by roll call.

A motion was made by Conrad Garcia, seconded by Terry McKnight for Damon Williams, a board vice president, to preside over the meeting in accordance with the Board of Visitors bylaws. The motion passed unanimously.

Williams recognized and welcomed the board's newest member, Jose Saurez '82.

Maj. Gen. Wins informed the board of an employee's death, SFC Dylan Cate '10, that occurred in barracks during the early morning hours. The cause of death was not known, but foul play is not suspected.



Williams called for any additions or changes to the May 1 – 3, 2025, board agenda. There were none.

Williams then called for nominations for board president. Terry McKnight nominated Damon Williams. Bill Janis nominated Teddy Gottwald. A discussion about whether the board should move into closed session to discuss the nominations. The board stayed in open session.

Maj. Gen. Wins discussed the qualities he believed a board president should embody including character, courage, and commitment.

Maj. Gen. Ring asked each nominee to say a few words and the nominees discussed their interest and plans for serving as board president. Williams highlighted his tenure on the board and said he would bring stability during this time of transition. Gottwald said there's a lot of work to do between now and June and the board should work on a list of priorities for the new superintendent. Gottwald also mentioned, if elected, he would not serve beyond June 30.

A roll call vote on the election of president was taken. The vote was as follows:

Voting for Teddy Gottwald: Edgar, Garcia, Gottwald, Harsock, Inman, Janis, Mobbs, Phillips, Reardon, Suarez, Todd.

Voting for Damon Williams: Fain, McKnight, Williams.

Having obtained the votes of a majority of the members present, Teddy Gottwald was elected serve the unexpired term of the previous board president which ends on June 30, 2025.

Conrad Garcia suggested the Executive Committee should meet to fill the vacant vice president. It was pointed out, however, the bylaws state Executive Committee vacancies can only be filled at a regularly scheduled meeting.

Prior to adjournment, Kate Todd suggested having the superintendent search firm speak to the full board at the scheduled board lunch on May 2, 2025.

The board adjourned at 2:43 p.m.

EXHIBIT 10

**BOARD OF VISITORS
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY**

**Special Full Board Meeting
Thursday, April 17, 2025, 9:30 a.m.
Merten Hall, Hazel Conference Room (1201), Fairfax Campus**

MINUTES

PRESENT: Rector Cully Stimson, Vice Rector Michael Meese, Secretary Armand Alacbay, Visitors Blackman, Reginald Brown (virtual), Lindsey Burke, Charles Cooper (virtual), William Hansen (virtual), Caren Merrick, Maureen Ohlhausen, and Jon Peterson.

ABSENT: Visitors Anjan Chimaladinne, Dolly Oberoi, Bob Pence, Nancy Prowitt, and Jeff Rosen.

ALSO, PRESENT: Gregory Washington, President; Rachel Spence, Staff Liaison; Carolyn Faith Hoffman, Graduate Student Representative; Anne Gentry, University Counsel; Scott Nichols, Interim Secretary pro tem and Bridget Higgins Secretary pro tem.

I. Call to Order

Rector Stimson called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m.

Rector Stimson informed the Board that several board members requested to participate remotely:

- Visitor Cooper due to his principal residence being more than 60 miles from the meeting location in Florida.
- Visitor Hansen due to a personal matter, specifically, out of town for work travel in Georgia.
- Visitor Brown due to a personal matter, specifically, work obligations in Washington, DC.

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

Rector Stimson then welcomed Caren Merrick, who was recently appointed to the board by Governor Youngkin.

II. Committee Appointments (ACTION ITEM)

Rector Stimson announced that Visitor Hansen will serve as the second Legislative Liaison, joining Visitor Peterson in that role.

Rector Stimson then **MOVED** that the board approve the following committee appointments:

- Academic Programs, Diversity, and University Community Committee:
 - Visitor Cooper
 - Visitor Hansen
 - Visitor Ohlhausen
- Finance & Land Use Committee: Visitor Merrick
- Development Committee: Visitor Merrick
- Research Committee: visitor Hansen
- Executive Committee: Visitor Ohlhausen for the vacant Member-at-Large seat.

The motion was **SECONDED** by Vice Rector Meese. **MOTION CARRIED BY VOICE VOTE**.
Absent: Visitors Anjan Chimaladinne, Dolly Oberoi, Bob Pence, Nancy Prowitt, and Jeff Rosen.

III. Adjournment

Rector Stimson called for any additional business to come before the Board. Hearing none, he adjourned the meeting at 9:36 a.m.

Prepared by:
Bridget Higgins
Secretary pro tem

Scott Nichols
Interim Secretary pro tem

EXHIBIT 11



THE RECTOR AND VISITORS OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA

April 29, 2025

The Board of Visitors of the University of Virginia met as the full Board in open and closed session at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 29, 2025. Robert D. Hardie, Rector, presided.

Present in the meeting room were: Daniel M. Brody, The Honorable Kenneth T. Cuccinelli II, Marvin W. Gilliam Jr., Stephen P. Long, M.D., John L. Nau III, The Honorable L.F. Payne, Amanda L. Pillion, Rachel W. Sheridan, David F. Webb, Porter N. Wilkinson, Douglas D. Wetmore, Michael J. Kennedy, Lisa R. Kopelnik, and Gregory D. Perryman (incoming student representative).

Participating by Zoom: Carlos M. Brown from Richmond VA, Robert M. Blue from Richmond, VA, and David O. Okonkwo, M.D., from Pittsburgh PA.

Members absent: The Honorable Paul C. Harris and Paul B. Manning.

Also present were James E. Ryan, Jennifer W. Davis, Brie Gertler, Michael H. Rosner, M.D. (Zoom), Susan G. Harris, Clifton Iler, Megan K. Lowe, Dave W. Martel, Augie Maurelli, Margaret G. Noland, Abby Self, and Debra D. Rinker.

Presenters were Jennifer W. Davis, Jason Lineen, and Brie Gertler.

The meeting was held in the Pavilion Boardroom at the Boar's Head Resort. Rector Hardie called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone. He reviewed the agenda and called on Jennifer W. Davis to introduce the action items.

Action Item: Signatory Authority for Academic Division Contracts

Ms. Davis reminded the Board that they are required to approve the execution of any procurement contracts where the contract value is expected to exceed \$5M per year. She reviewed three such contracts with the Board: 1) renegotiated Workday contract to provide a cloud-based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution serving the Academic Division, Medical Center, Community Health, and the University Physicians Group; 2) delegated authority for a system implementation partner firm who will assist with the Workday ERP harmonization for the Medical Center, Community Health and UPG; and 3) delegated authority for CavFutures contract to provide general business advisory, consulting, educational and marketing services to both current and former UVA students in connection with students' names, images or likenesses and other commercial marketing and publicity opportunities.

On motion, the Board approved the following resolution:

SIGNATORY AUTHORITY FOR ACADEMIC DIVISION CONTRACTS WITH WORKDAY, A SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION FIRM, AND CAVFUTURES THAT EACH EXCEED \$5 MILLION PER YEAR

RESOLVED, the Board of Visitors authorizes the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer to execute the contracts on behalf of the Academic Division with 1) Workday to provide cloud-based Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) solution services; 2) a system partner firm who will assist in the Workday ERP implementation to fully align pan-university Academic, Medical Center, Community Health, and University Physicians Group (UPG); and, 3) CavFutures for general business advisory, consulting and educational and marketing services.

Action Item: Property Acquisition of the Federal Executive Institute

The Federal Executive Institute closed on February 28, 2025, and the property was determined at that point to be surplus to the needs of the federal government. In March, the General Services Administration (GSA) issued a notice of surplus determination, with the specific requirement that proposals be limited to nonprofit academically oriented institutions. The University learned that the City of Charlottesville was also interested in the property, and administrators reached out to the City to see if there was an interest in exploring a joint partnership. The University asked GSA if the two entities could file a joint application, and their response was they would not accept a joint proposal. As a result, between the end of March and mid-April, University officials considered what could potentially make sense on the FEI property, and came to an understanding with the City that both entities would make proposals. GSA indicated that there were other parties interested as well as the City and UVA. UVA officials wrote a letter of support for the City School Project Grant application.

On or around April 21, UVA and the City submitted separate proposals, with the University's application contingent upon approval by the Board of Visitors. The language of the proposed Board resolution was prescribed by GSA. On motion, duly seconded, the Board approved the following resolution:

ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY: FEDERAL EXECUTIVE INSTITUTE

WHEREAS, certain real property owned by the United States of America, located in the County of Albemarle, State of Virginia has been declared surplus to the needs of the Federal government and is subject to assignment for disposal for educational purposes by the Secretary of Education, under the provisions of §203(k) of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended ("Act"), 40 U.S.C. §550(c), and rules and regulations promulgated pursuant thereto, more particularly described as follows:

- The property is located on approximately 13.344 wooded acres and includes four primary buildings, swimming pool, parking lots, and auxiliary structures. All real property improvements, furniture, fixtures and equipment are being requested with this application.
- The Main Building, Pendleton Hall, Pamela B. Gwin Hall, Fitness and Administrative facility, as well as the axillary storage/warehouse structures and all current contents, including, but not limited to, audio visual equipment, commercial kitchen equipment, maintenance equipment, dining, offices and residence space furnishings, are all requested to remain on-site for the efficient transfer of property and to expedite the

initiation of a new program within three months of property conveyance. The planned programming will utilize the facility, furnishings and equipment in their 'as is' condition – no new construction or renovation is currently planned; and

WHEREAS, the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia shall make application for the Secretary of Education for, and secure the transfer to it, of the above-mentioned property for said use upon and subject to such exceptions, reservations, terms, covenants, agreements, conditions and restrictions as the Secretary of Education, or his authorized representative may require in connection with the disposal of said property under said Act and rules and regulations issued thereto;

RESOLVED, the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia has legal authority and is willing and in a position financially and otherwise to assume immediate care and maintenance of the property, and that the Executive Vice President & Chief Operating Officer is herein authorized, for and on behalf of the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia, to do and perform any and all acts and things which may be necessary to carry out the foregoing resolution including the preparing, making and filing of plans, applications, reports and other documents; the execution, acceptance, delivery and recordation of agreements, deeds and other instruments pertaining to the transfer of said property; and the payment of any and all sums necessary on account of the purchase price thereof including fees or costs incurred in connection with the transfer of said property for surveys, title searchers, real estate proposals, recordation of instruments or costs associated with escrow arrangements; together with any payments necessary by virtue of nonuse or deferral of use of the property; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, if the applicant is unable to place the property into use (or determines that a deferral of use should occur); it is understood and agreed the Rector and Visitors of the University of Virginia will pay to the U.S. Department of Education for each month of nonuse beginning (12) months after the date of the deed, or 36 months where construction or major renovation is contemplated, the sum of $1/360^{\text{th}}$ of the then current fair market value of the property for each month of nonuse; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, if submission of the Application for a Public Benefit Allowance Acquisition of Surplus Federal Real Property for Educational Purposes is approved, a copy of the application and standard deed conditions will be filed with the permanent minutes of the Board of Visitors.

Closed Session

At 12:25 p.m., Mr. Gilliam read the closed session motion below, and after approving the motion by unanimous voice vote, the Visitors met in closed session. Mr. James Ryan, Ms. Jennifer Davis, Ms. Brie Gertler, Dr. Mitchell Rosner, Ms. Susan Harris, Mr. Clifton Iler, Ms. Margaret Noland, Ms. Debra Rinker, Ms. Megan Lowe, Mr. Dave Martel, Mr. Augie Maurelli, and Ms. Abby Self were present for the closed session.

"Mr. Rector, I move that the Board of Visitors go into closed session to consult with legal counsel and obtain legal advice regarding compliance by the University with civil rights laws and regulations and presidential executive orders, and potential and actual litigation and investigations involving governmental agencies; to discuss job duties and assignment of specific employees; and to discuss acquisitions of real property for public purposes and the investment of public funds where public discussion would adversely affect the bargaining position and negotiating strategy of the

Medical Center and the University. The relevant exemptions are Va. Code § 2.2-3711 A (1), (3), (6), (7), (8), and (22).”

At 4:26 p.m., the Board resumed in open session, and, on motion by Mr. Gilliam, which was duly seconded, certified that the deliberations in closed session had been conducted in accordance with the exemptions permitted by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act. Ms. Harris called the roll, and all members present voted in the affirmative: Mr. Hardie, Mr. Brown, Mr. Brody, Mr. Cuccinelli, Mr. Gilliam, Dr. Long, Dr. Okonkwo, Mr. Payne, Ms. Pillion, Ms. Sheridan, Mr. Webb, Mr. Wetmore, Ms. Wilkinson, and Mr. Kennedy. The certification motion was as follows:

“I move that we vote on and record our certification that, to the best of each member’s knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements, and which were identified in the motion authorizing the Closed Session, were heard, discussed or considered in Closed Session.”

In open session, on motion duly seconded, the Board approved the following resolution by unanimous voice vote:

ADVANCING FREE INQUIRY AND VIEWPOINT DIVERSITY AT UVA

WHEREAS, the University of Virginia has made progress on implementing the directives of the Board of Visitors' March 7 resolution on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and additional work remains to be done to ensure and advance open inquiry at the University and to best prepare students to become citizen-leaders ready to serve our community, the Commonwealth, and beyond; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Visitors and President Ryan agree on the need to strengthen efforts to ensure that the University is a truly inclusive and welcoming community where all individuals are valued and free to express a wide range of ideas and perspectives;

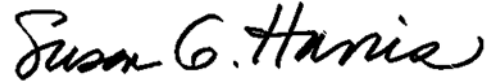
RESOLVED, to be consistent with the law, the Board of Visitors formally rescinds the portions of the September 2020 resolution entitled “Board of Visitors Support for Racial Equity Initiatives” that endorsed pursuit of numerical goals for the composition of students and faculty; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, the President, Interim Provost, and an appointee of the Faculty Senate shall report to the Board at the next regularly scheduled board meeting on work being done to ensure an intellectual climate and campus culture where all students, faculty, and staff are able to express politically diverse views, engage in constructive discussion across differences, and respond to competing perspectives in good faith; and

RESOLVED FURTHER, the Board of Visitors and President shall establish a Working Group comprised of members of the Board of Visitors, administrators, faculty, and a student representative to consider non-partisan efforts to promote open inquiry, constructive conversation across differences, and development of a civic mindset.

On motion, the meeting was adjourned at 4:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan G. Harris". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Susan G. Harris
Secretary

SGH:ddr

These minutes have been posted to the University of Virginia's Board of Visitors website.
<http://bov.virginia.edu/public-minutes>

EXHIBIT 12



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Governor

Kelly Gee
Secretary of the Commonwealth

May 30, 2025

TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA:

Pursuant to Sections 2.2-106, 2.2-107 and 2.2-406 of the Code of Virginia, I am reporting the list of gubernatorial appointments.

Supporting documentation, including resumes and statements of economic interests, will be provided to the Privileges and Elections Attorney in the Division of Legislative Services to serve your review. My office is always happy to provide any of this information directly to you as well.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can be of any assistance as you review these appointments.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly Gee".

Kelly Gee
Secretary of the Commonwealth

CABINET

Juan Pablo Segura of **Richmond**, Virginia, Secretary of Commerce and Trade, to serve at the pleasure of the Governor beginning March 26, 2025, to succeed Caren Merrick.

Stefanie Taillon of **Richmond**, Virginia, Secretary of Natural and Historic Resources, to serve at the pleasure of the Governor beginning March 26, 2025, to succeed Travis Voyles.

AGENCY

Emily Anne Gullickson of **Richmond**, Virginia, Superintendent of Public Instruction, to serve at the pleasure of the Governor beginning March 14, 2025, to succeed Lisa Coons.

Matthew Hanley of **North Chesterfield**, Virginia, Superintendent of the Virginia State Police, to serve at the pleasure of the Governor beginning February 26, 2025, to succeed Gary Settle.

BOARD APPOINTMENTS

ADMINISTRATION

State Board of Elections

Rosalyn Dance of **Petersburg**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 24, 2025, for a term of four years beginning February 1, 2025, and ending January 31, 2029, to succeed herself.

Chris Stolle of **Virginia Beach**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 26, 2025, for a term of four years beginning February 1, 2025, and ending January 31, 2029, to succeed Donald Merricks.

AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY

Racing Commission

Stephanie Nixon of **Ashland**, Virginia, Member, appointed May 8, 2025, for a term of five years beginning January 1, 2025, and ending December 31, 2029, to succeed herself.

Small Grains Board

Matthew Harris of **Hartfield**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 19, 2025, for a term of three years beginning September 1, 2024, and ending August 31, 2027, to succeed Michael James Downing.

AUTHORITY

Opioid Abatement Authority

Debbie Ritter of **Chesapeake**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 11, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed James Holland.

COMMERCE AND TRADE

Virginia Small Business Financing Authority

John Scheib of **Virginia Beach**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 25, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Juan Reintsch.

COMMONWEALTH

Virginia LGBTQ+ Advisory Board

Marilyn Renee Culver of **Richmond**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 5, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Joanna Keller.

COMPACTS

Breaks Interstate Park Commission

Jessica Savage of **Grundy**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 11, 2025, for a term of four years beginning February 24, 2025, and ending February 23, 2029, to succeed Curtis Mullins.

Education Commission of the States

Emily Anne Gullickson of **Richmond**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 14, 2025, to serve at the pleasure of the Governor beginning March 14, 2025, to succeed Lisa Coons.

Interstate Compact on Educational Opportunity for Military Children

Emily Anne Gullickson of **Richmond**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 14, 2025, to serve at the pleasure of the Governor beginning March 14, 2025, to succeed Lisa Coons.

Stakeholders' Advisory Committee to the Chesapeake Executive Council

William Noftsinger of **Henrico**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 26, 2025, for a term of four years beginning January 1, 2025, and ending December 31, 2028, to succeed himself.

EDUCATION

Board of Directors, New College Institute

Mark Crabtree of **Martinsville**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 4, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2026, to succeed Richard Hall.

Jay Dickens of **Martinsville**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 4, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2026, to succeed Hubert Harris.

Eric Jones of **Annapolis, Maryland**, Member, appointed March 6, 2025, for a term of four years beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed himself.

Board of Education

Beth Ackerman of **Rustburg**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 11, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Meg Bryce.

Board of Regents of Gunston Hall

Alice Barganier Longshore of **Montgomery, Alabama**, Member, appointed on February 24, 2025, for a term of five years beginning October 26, 2024, and ending October 25, 2029, to succeed Anne Monfore.

Board of Visitors of George Mason University

Charles Cooper of **Bonita Springs, Florida**, Member, appointed February 25, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Marc Short.

William Hansen of **McLean**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 24, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Nina Rees.

Caren Merrick of **Alexandria**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 4, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Farnez Thompson.

Maureen Ohlhausen of **Annandale**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 25, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Kenneth Marcus.

Board of Visitors of Norfolk State University

Darrell Jordan of **Woodbridge**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 24, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Lionell Spruill.

Board of Visitors of Old Dominion University

Kedar Lavingia of **Midlothian**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 30, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Stanley Goldfarb.

Florencia Segura of **McLean**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 24, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Brian Campbell.

Board of Visitors of University of Virginia and Affiliated Schools

Kenneth Cuccinelli of **Spotsylvania**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 26, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2026, to succeed U. Bertram Ellis.

Board of Visitors of Virginia Military Institute

John Hartsock of **Lexington**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 24, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Quintin Elliott.

Stephen Reardon of **Richmond**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 24, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed John Clifford Foster.

Jose Suarez of **Saint Augustine, Florida**, Member, appointed April 7, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2025, to succeed Thomas Watjen.

State Historical Records Advisory Board

Chaz Haywood of **Rockingham**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 21, 2025, for a term of three years beginning November 1, 2024, and ending October 31, 2027, to succeed Brittany Jones.

HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

Advisory Board on Art Therapy

Barbara Baer of **Richmond**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 19, 2025, for a term of four years beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Holly Zajur.

Advisory Board on Athletic Training

Chris Casola of **Forest**, Virginia, Member, appointed May 6, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2026, to succeed Michael Goforth.

Advisory Board on Massage Therapy

Michael Tramonte of **Falls Church**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 9, 2025, for a term of four years beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Dawn Hogue.

Advisory Board on Midwifery

Story Jones of **Fairfax**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 24, 2025, for a term of four years beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Ami Keetts.

Advisory Board on Service and Volunteerism

Christine Harris of **Norfolk**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 18, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Adria Merritt.

Alzheimer's Disease and Related Disorders Commission

Laura Marshall of **Richmond**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 20, 2025, for a term of four years beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Karen Garner.

Board of Long Term Care Administrators

Charles Gaskins of **Henrico**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 9, 2025, for a term of four years beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Ann Williams.

Board of Medical Assistance Services

Jason Herzog of **Richmond**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 15, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning March 8, 2022, and ending March 7, 2026, to succeed Timothy Hanold.

Ashish Kachru of **McLean**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 19, 2025, for a term of four years beginning March 8, 2025, and ending March 7, 2029, to succeed himself.

Joye B. Moore of **Chesterfield**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 19, 2025, for a term of four years beginning March 8, 2025, and ending March 7, 2029, to succeed herself.

Jeffrey Rich of **Virginia Beach**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 27, 2025, for a term of four years beginning March 8, 2025, and ending March 7, 2029, to succeed Patricia Taylor Cook.

Board of Nursing

Jeanell Webb-Jones of **Barboursville**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 24, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Robert Scott.

Board of Social Work

Marshall Pattie of **Staunton**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 11, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Ruth Ann Smulik.

Commonwealth Neurotrauma Initiative Advisory Board

Cara Meixner of **Harrisonburg**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 20, 2025, for a term of four years beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Raighne Delaney.

Radiation Advisory Board

William Anderson of **Forest**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 20, 2025, to serve at the pleasure of the Governor beginning February 20, 2025, to succeed Drexel Harris.

Virginia Addiction and Recovery Council

Rebecca Holmes of **Abingdon**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 15, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Jim Lagraffe.

Virginia Interagency Coordinating Council

William Ritter of **Midlothian**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 9, 2025, for a term of three years beginning October 1, 2024, and ending September 30, 2027, to succeed Heather Rogers.

INDEPENDENT

Board of Trustees of the Virginia Retirement System

John Clifford Foster of **Richmond**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 14, 2025, for a term of five years beginning March 1, 2025, and ending February 28, 2030, to succeed Michael Disharoon.

Virginia Foundation for the Humanities and Public Policy

Aparna Madireddi of **Leesburg**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 7, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Roger Cheeks.

Virginia Lottery Board

Charles King of **Harrisonburg**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 7, 2025, for a term of five years beginning January 15, 2025, and ending January 14, 2030, to succeed Cynthia Lawrence.

JUDICIAL

Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission

Nancy Parr of **Chesapeake**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 28, 2025, for a term of four years beginning January 1, 2025, and ending December 31, 2028, to succeed Timothy Coyne.

LABOR

Board for Barbers and Cosmetology

Rita Gregory Lampkin of **Williamsburg**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 19, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Shauna Powell.

Fair Housing Board

Jay Som of **Mechanicsville**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 13, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Owen Morgan.

Real Estate Appraiser Board

Heather Fox of **Mount Sidney**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 16, 2025, for a term of four years beginning April 3, 2025, and ending April 2, 2029, to succeed Harry James.

Valerie Kelsey of **Fredericksburg**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 16, 2025, for a term of four years beginning April 3, 2025, and ending April 2, 2029, to succeed Kelvin Bratton.

Michael Small of **Henrico**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 16, 2025, for a term of four years beginning April 3, 2025, and ending April 2, 2029, to succeed Jean Gannon.

Real Estate Board

Bernice Travers of **Richmond**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 3, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2022, and ending June 30, 2026, to succeed Doug Roth.

Virginia Board of Workforce Development

Lara Overy of **Williamsburg**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 25, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2025, to succeed John Smith.

Stephanie Reed of **Lynchburg**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 3, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Lara Overy.

PUBLIC SAFETY AND HOMELAND SECURITY

Advisory Committee on Sexual and Domestic Violence

Sabrina Dorman-Andrew of **Elkton**, Virginia, Member, appointed May 8, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2027, to succeed Toni Zollicoffer.

Board of Juvenile Justice

Penny Schultz of **Virginia Beach**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 11, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2025, to succeed Tyren Frazier.

E 9-1-1 Services Board

Jennifer Warshawsky of **North Chesterfield**, Virginia, Member, appointed May 8, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2028, to succeed Julie Henry.

TRANSPORTATION

Aerospace Advisory Council

Christopher Goyne of **Charlottesville**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 19, 2025, for a term of two years beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2026, to succeed himself.

Yiannis Papelis of **Norfolk**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 23, 2025, for a term of two years beginning July 1, 2024, and ending June 30, 2026, to succeed David Bowles.

Medical Advisory Board for the Department of Motor Vehicles

James Constans of **Chesterfield**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 13, 2025, for a term of four years beginning October 1, 2024, and ending September 30, 2028, to succeed Surbhi Bansal.

Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority

Paul Sheridan of **McLean**, Virginia, Member, appointed February 24, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning October 12, 2024, and ending October 11, 2030, to succeed Jeff Goettman.

Motor Vehicle Dealer Board

Jeff Ryer of **Williamsburg**, Virginia, Member, appointed April 9, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2025, to succeed Larry N. Rush.

VETERANS AND DEFENSE AFFAIRS

Board of Veterans Services

Jeri Prophet of **Virginia Beach**, Virginia, Member, appointed March 17, 2025, to serve an unexpired term beginning July 1, 2021, and ending June 30, 2025, to succeed Melissa Watts.

EXHIBIT 13

2024 Special Session I

SJ6001

Governor; confirming appointments.

Status
Failed

Patron
Introduced by: Aaron R. Rouse (Chief Patron)

Summary As Introduced |
Confirming Governor's appointments; May 30. Confirms appointments of certain persons made by Governor Glenn Youngkin and communicated to the General Assembly May 30, 2025.

Bill Versions

Senate	Introduced	PDF
--------	------------	-----

History

6/6/2025	Senate	Presented and ordered printed 24200593D
6/6/2025	Senate	Referred to Committee on Privileges and Elections
6/9/2025	Senate	Failed to report (defeated) in Privileges and Elections (4-Y 8-N)

EXHIBIT 14

2024 Special Session I

SJ6001 Governor; confirming appointments.

06/09/2025 Senate: Failed to report (defeated) in Privileges and Elections (4-Y 8-N)

Committee:

Votes

YEAS--DeSteph, Sturtevant, Durant, Cifers--4

NAYS--Rouse, Deeds, Ebbin, VanValkenburg, Carroll Foy, Perry, Salim, Srinivasan--8

ABSTENTIONS--0

EXHIBIT 15



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Office of the Attorney General

Jason S. Miyares
Attorney General

202 North 9th Street
Richmond, Virginia 23219
804-786-2071
FAX 804-786-1991
Virginia Relay Services
800-828-1120

June 11, 2025

Bishop Kim W. Brown, Rector
Norfolk State University

Thomas E. Gottwald, President
Virginia Military Institute

Suzanne S. Obenshain, Rector
James Madison University

Todd P. Haymore, Rector
Virginia Commonwealth University

William Lee Murray, Rector
University of Mary Washington

Valerie K. Brown
Virginia State University

Christy T. Morton, Rector
Christopher Newport University

Charles E. Poston, Rector
The College of William & Mary

Marquett Smith, Rector
Radford University

P. Murry Pitts, Rector
Old Dominion University

Terri Thompson, Rector
Virginia Community College System

Ronald O. White, Rector
Longwood University

Charles Stimson, Rector
George Mason University

Robert D. Hardie, Rector
University of Virginia

Edward Baine, Rector
Virginia Polytechnic and State
University

Dear Rectors of Virginia's Institutions of Higher Education:

The Office of the Attorney General is aware of a June 9, 2025, letter addressed to you from Senator Scott A. Surovell regarding appointments made by Governor Glenn Youngkin to certain of your institutions' boards of visitors.¹ In it, Senator Surovell incorrectly claims that "the General Assembly has refused to confirm" these appointees. This false statement appears designed to mislead you into thinking that the General Assembly as a whole has taken action when in fact it has not. Citing no authority for his claim, the Senator goes on to offer you guidance that is legal in nature.

The Attorney General, not Senator Surovell or any component of the General Assembly, is the chief executive officer of the Commonwealth's Department of Law and counsel to Virginia's public institutions of higher education. Code §§ 2.2-500; 2.2-507. It is true that gubernatorial appointees to your institutions'

¹ This Office is also aware of a June 11, 2025 letter from the Clerk of the Senate, sent at the direction of the Chair of the Senate Committee on Privileges and Election, appearing to imply that the Committee's action is the final word on this matter. Notwithstanding the Committee's action, for the reasons stated in this letter, the appointees mentioned remain members of the boards of visitors to which they were appointed.

boards of visitors are subject to confirmation by the General Assembly.² Code § 23.1-1300. Each remains in his or her respective office until either (1) confirmation of the appointment is “refused by the General Assembly” should the legislature be in session, Va. Const. art. V, § 11, or (2) until “thirty days after commencement of the next session” if the appointment is made when the legislature is in recess. Code § 2.2-2830. As neither of these circumstances exists with respect to the appointees referenced in the letter, it is this Office’s conclusion that each of those eight appointees remain members of the respective board of visitors. Indeed, absent these circumstances, “[m]embers appointed by the Governor to the governing board of a public institution of higher education shall continue to hold office until their successors have been appointed and qualified.” Code § 23.1-1300.

To conclude that a confirmation has been refused, a finding must be made that it has been “refused by the General Assembly.” The plain language of Article V, § 11 thus requires more than action by a single committee of one house of the General Assembly. Article IV, § 1 makes clear that “[t]he legislative power of the Commonwealth shall be vested in a General Assembly, which shall consist of a Senate and House of Delegates.” The authority to refuse a confirmation thus rests with the General Assembly as a whole, not a Senate committee. As this Office has noted, the “concept of bicameralism is firmly entrenched in our history.”³ And where, as here, a constitutional provision expressly calls for bicameral action, the plain language of the Constitution must be given effect. *See Thomson v. Robb*, 229 Va. 233, 241 (1985).

The recommendation of a Senate committee cannot be elevated to an act of the General Assembly.⁴ Therefore, at this stage, it is premature to conclude, as a matter of law, that the General Assembly has refused the pending confirmations. Accordingly, I advise you that the eight appointees referenced in Senator Surovell’s June 9, 2025, letter remain members of the boards of visitors of the institutions to which they were appointed. Each of these appointees continues to be fully vested with the rights and responsibilities conferred upon a member of a board of visitors.

Although Senator Surovell makes other questionable assertions in his letter, I address herein only the issue of continued board membership given the exigency of the matter. As your counsel, the Attorney General’s Office will continue to monitor this and related issues as they develop and advise you accordingly.

United in service to our Commonwealth, I remain

Very truly yours,



Jason S. Miyares
Attorney General

² Appointees to the board of visitors of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University need only be confirmed by the Senate. *See* Code §§ 23.1-1300; 23.1-2601. No such appointees were addressed by Senator Surovell.

³ 1984-85 Op. Va. Att’y Gen 289, 291 (citing generally I A.E. Dick Howard, *Commentaries on the Constitution of Virginia* 465 *et seq* (1974)).

⁴ Moreover, I understand that, here, there are additional foundational questions as to whether the matter was properly before the committee.