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## **STRATEGIC GOAL #4: 100,000 CAREER-READY GRADUATES**

*George Mason University will help meet the demands of the commonwealth, the region, and the world for dynamic, creative, collaborative thinkers, doers, and problem-solvers.*

A truly “career-ready graduate” is one who has mastered the art of learning how to learn, and has a broad base of knowledge and skills, along with the habits of mind that set the stage for a lifetime of growth and change. Employers tell us that our students must be prepared to meet the demands of a dynamic workforce, where today’s career paths are seldom linear nor static. Earning a postsecondary degree is a prerequisite for the growing jobs of the new economy. Over the next decade, employment in jobs requiring education beyond a high school diploma will grow more rapidly—at the same time, our civil society needs graduates who are capable of critical thinking, who are engaged citizens, and who are ready to provide leadership in settings public and private, local, national, and international.

Over the past 50 years, Mason has grown to become the largest public research university in Virginia. In fact, over the past several years, Mason has been responsible for the majority of enrollment growth in the commonwealth. The combination of our graduates’ impressive learning and employment outcomes, our growing portfolio of programs, and our location in the dynamic Northern Virginia region have resulted in Mason becoming a destination university for students from around the country and around the world. While we have grown we have also seen consistent increases in external rankings and virtually all indicators of academic quality.

As a result, we stand as a major source of talent and energy for the region. Mason graduates make up the majority of the region’s public school principals and vice principals. They are prevalent in the ranks of the technology and aerospace companies that help drive the local economy. They are leaders in government contracting and consulting. They are a large contingent within the ranks of the federal government. In sum, Mason graduates have made a substantial contribution in the emergence of Northern Virginia as one of the most vibrant, culturally rich regions in the country.

Our trajectory continues, and we are committed to serving our community by educating 100,000 career-ready graduates, including undergraduates, master’s and doctoral students, and certificate holders by 2024. We will increase our efforts to recruit highly talented students in Virginia, the United States, and the rest of the world. We will monitor emerging trends in particular fields, while emphasizing flexibility and breadth as attributes of a well-educated graduate. We will pursue innovative pathways for access to the university and degree programs that serve a broad and changing population, including degree-completion programs. At the same time, we will focus on retention strategies to improve graduation rates and reduce the time it takes to earn a degree.

## Metrics:

**Metric #1:** Award 100,000 degrees and certificates by FY24.

*Current Status: As of FY17, Mason has awarded 35,716 degrees and certificates. (FY14: 8,877; FY15: 8,815; FY16: 8,901; FY17: 9,123)*

**Metric #2:** Increase six-year undergraduate graduation rate to 75%.

*Current Status: As of FY18, six-year graduation rate is 71%. (FY14: 67%; FY15: 67%; FY16: 69%; FY17: 70%)*

**Metric #3:** Increase the four-year graduation rate of community college transfer students to 75%.

*Current Status: As of FY17, the four-year graduation rate for community college transfer students is 72%. (FY14: 68%; FY15: 70%; FY16: 71%)*

**Metric #4:** 90% of alumni survey respondents agree that Mason helped them grow personally and professionally, or similarly, one year after graduation.

*Current Status: In FY17, 71% of undergraduate alumni report they are prepared for current work and 83% are prepared for further study; 84% of graduate alumni report they are prepared for current work and 89% report they are prepared for further study. Response rate for 2015-16: Undergraduate = 16%; Graduate = 23%. (FY14: Undergraduate Alumni 78% and 82%, Graduate Alumni 87% and 87% (response rate: UG 15%, GR 28%), FY15: Undergraduate Alumni 72% and 83%, Graduate Alumni 83% and 88% (response rate: UG 17% GR 27%), FY16: Undergraduate Alumni 71% and 82%, Graduate Alumni: 83% and 88% (response rate: UG 21%, GR: 31%)*

## Representative Accomplishments to Date:

- Increased new student undergraduate enrollments every year for the past five years while increasing in all major measures of academic quality.
- Launched INTO partnership.
- Launched Wiley partnership.
- Launched Online Virginia Network.
- Developed and expanded early alert intervention program to flag at-risk students.
- Early Identification Program recognized by ACT's College and Career Readiness campaign as a Career Preparedness Exemplar.
- ADVANCE Initiative launched in FY17 is expected to improve four-year graduation rates.

## Sample Future Initiatives:

- Implement outcomes from Student Experience Redesign initiative.
- Increase investments in high-potential and diverse students.
- Implement ADVANCE program.
- Expand online pathway programs through current partnerships and develop new partnerships and programs.
- Expand international student and nonresident recruitment efforts.
- Develop a plan to create meaningful certificate programs in high-demand fields.
- Partner with local employers to create new nondegree and degree programs.

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## STRATEGIC GOAL #5: INNOVATION ENGINE

*Contribute to the economic and civic vitality of the region by driving entrepreneurship and innovation and by creating learning partnerships with private and public organizations.*

The most dynamic and innovative hubs in the world are anchored by world-class universities. They serve as magnets and factories of talent, as engines of innovation, and as incubators of new products and ideas. Our data show a strong correlation between the number and quality of research universities and national competitiveness. With Mason's elevation in 2016 to the top tier of research universities, it is more important than ever for Mason to encourage and facilitate the translation of promising inventions and research outcomes into innovative products and commercial startups. Mason is ideally positioned to become an engine of innovation as well as the region's go-to destination for executive, professional, and continuing education.

Our focus on entrepreneurship is not new. For the past 20 years, the Mason Enterprise Center has provided small business owners with counseling, training, networking, mentoring, and collaborative office space. Mason also coordinates Virginia's network of Small Business Development Centers. Mason has invested in curriculum development, on-campus facilities, and co-curricular programs designed to foster the creation of entrepreneurial and social/cultural impact ventures, and it is committed to building an entrepreneurship program that will earn Mason a spot among the top 50 entrepreneurship universities by 2024. We continue to incubate new enterprises in fields such as cybersecurity, proteomic medicine, and computer game design. Supporting high-growth startups, particularly in sectors of strategic importance in the National Capital Region, has become an increasingly important function of the university.

Mason is also committed to helping existing organizations meet their talent development needs. Our broad disciplinary mix and our relationships with industry and government make us an optimal partner to design and deliver customized programs that can help grow the professional, technical, managerial, and leadership talent organizations needed to succeed. These programs can also provide additional resources to the university and open employment opportunities for our graduates.

Our work in driving innovation and entrepreneurship in our region must be grounded in our strong entrepreneurial culture among faculty and students. To foster this culture, we will invest in and develop infrastructure that supports faculty and student entrepreneurs at every stage of their startup trajectory.

We also will strengthen our ability to serve local business. We will increase our assistance for new enterprises, especially those in regionally significant sectors and those that connect to our research expertise. We will grow our executive education operation to better serve the management and training needs of regional business. Finally, we will expand our programming and support for social enterprise as part of our public mission.

## **Metrics:**

**Metric #1:** More than 100 new companies will be started by Mason faculty and students.

*Current status: As of FY17, 15 new companies have been started by Mason faculty and students. (FY14: 3; FY15: 6; FY16: 4; FY17: 2)*

**Metric #2:** More than 200 student teams will have participated in an entrepreneurship training (e.g. Mason Innovation Lab, Mason Summer Entrepreneurship Accelerator program, I-Corps program, Virginia Serious Game Institute Excellerator, etc.)

*Current Status: As of FY17, 36 Mason teams have participated in an entrepreneurial training program. (FY14: 4; FY15: 8; FY16: 10; FY17: 14)*

**Metric #3:** 1,000 Virginia companies will be incubated, supported, or accelerated annually by a Mason-run entrepreneurship program.

*Current Status: In FY17, 943 Virginia companies were incubated, supported, or accelerated by a Mason-run entrepreneurship program. (FY14: 991; FY15: 954; FY16: 964)*

**Metric #4:** Annual executive and professional education revenues will increase to \$50 million.

*Current Status: As of FY17, executive and professional education revenues yielded \$7.0 million. (FY14: \$6.9 million; FY15: \$7.9 million; FY16: \$7.2 million)*

## **Representative Accomplishments to Date:**

- Established Office for Entrepreneurship and Innovation in 2016, and hired an assistant vice president to lead a university-wide initiative focused on elevating Mason to a top-50 entrepreneurial university by 2024.
- Mason received a National Science Foundation (NSF) five-year, \$500,000 I-Corps Site grant to support modest proof-of-concept funding for up to 30 faculty-led and student-led startup teams each year.
- The number of dedicated on-campus facilities/entities that support student/faculty entrepreneurship and social impact ventures across all academic units increased to five. MIX@Fenwick is the newest facility and opened on the Fairfax Campus in June 2017.
- Launched the Mason Summer Entrepreneurship Accelerator, an eight-week intensive business launch program.
- Mason incubated 19 game startups between 2014 and 2017 at the Virginia Serious Game Institute.
- Between 2014 and 2017, 17 entrepreneurial teams participated in the Mason Innovation Lab.
- The Mason Enterprise Center advised 1,163 regional entrepreneurs between 2014 and 2017.
- The entrepreneurship minor was re-launched in 2015 as a university-wide minor managed by the School of Business, and 29 students were enrolled in the program during FY17.

## **Sample Future Initiatives:**

- Continue ongoing capital campaign to provide sustainable funding for programing and facilities that support Mason's faculty and student entrepreneurs.
- Develop a plan to strengthen our support for business incubation, particularly in sectors of strategic importance in the National Capital Region.
- Design and implement programming and policies to support Mason entrepreneurship efforts in general, and the five-year NSF I-Corps Site award in particular.
- Design and implement executive education five-year plan.
- Design and implement Social Impact five-year plan.
- Host the NoVA Maker Faire for the first time in March 2018.

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## **STRATEGIC GOAL #6: COMMUNITY BUILDER**

### ***Contribute to the cultural vitality of our community through regional partnerships and commitments to the arts, athletics, and community engagement.***

At Mason, we are committed to our mission of public service to the community.

In addition to educational, research, and economic development contributions, we aspire to be a source of cultural vitality whereby our presence enriches the life of the community around us. As a source of knowledge, innovation, and entertainment, we have much to offer—and by engaging our community we have much to gain.

Mason has become a source of diverse and meaningful community engagement. Our arts programs, festivals, and cultural events annually attract hundreds of thousands of attendees. In fact, Fall for Book by itself brings in more than 20,000 visitors during the course of the annual four-day event. Our athletic events similarly bring large numbers of spectators to our Fairfax Campus while also gaining significant regional and national television audiences. Our youth camps and community classes bring people of all ages to our facilities across the region. Our recreation and health facilities are popular with both community members interested in personal fitness as well as teams that rent our facilities for practice or competition. We are also a regular destination for top-flight entertainers who perform at our EagleBank Arena and two performing arts centers. Political figures hold rallies and give speeches in our facilities. Finally, we are a frequent host for community groups that enjoy our university setting as a location for their conferences, meetings, and events.

We also seek to reach out to the community and make contributions beyond the bounds of our campus borders. Our research centers share their knowledge and insights with the community through many events and symposia, including the high-profile Greater Washington Economic Conference. Washington Post–Schar School polls have quickly become an important source of political and campaign information for the greater Washington, D.C., area and the nation as a whole. Community trainings and outreach offer health, education, and legal services that are essential to our region's well-being. Through capstone projects, service learning, and organizations, our students are powerful agents of change who collaborate with groups and individuals in the surrounding area. More broadly, we will deepen our commitment to sustainability and positive environmental impact through a variety of current and future initiatives.

To advance our contribution to the community, we will strive to enhance these points of engagement while discovering additional ways to bring us closer together. We will continue to build our arts and cultural programming and will look for ways to upgrade our facilities in the process. We will grow our athletics programs, especially our flagship men's and women's basketball operations, through increased investments in teams and facilities. We will continue to expand our youth camps and community classes to serve local interests while also building learning pathways for those interested in pursuing a Mason degree. We will continue to offer our recreation and health facilities for use by the local community. We will seek new ways to engage with our community beyond the bounds of campus by: sharing our knowledge through events and publications; expanding our services in health, education, and other areas of expertise; and increasing opportunities for our students to engage in service learning and other forms of community collaboration.

We will continue to be a welcoming place for political figures, community organizations, and other visitors who wish to engage our faculty, staff, and students or who simply enjoy our setting as host for their activities. We will expand faculty and student civic engagement through several ongoing initiatives. Finally, we will engage our community to better understand how we can contribute to the cultural vitality of our region.

## Metrics:

**Metric #1:** Increase by 30% the number of community members engaged in Mason's full range of on-campus and off-campus community activities.

*Current Status: FY17: Ticketed - 263,386; Unticketed - 184,486. (FY15: Ticketed - 262,276; Unticketed - 150,111; FY16: Ticketed - 243,432; Unticketed - 170,447)*

**Metric #2:** Increase the number of students enrolled in curricular and noncurricular community engagement programs.

*Current Status: Pending design of measurement tool.*

**Metric #3:** Increase faculty and staff engagement in the community through the development of courses, new community organization partnerships, not limited to or including community classes and other activities.

*Current Status: Pending design of measurement tool.*

## Representative Accomplishments to Date:

- Fall for the Book has grown to 20,000 attendees.
- Athletics Community Relations mandate of student-athlete service to community partners averages 900 hours of community service each year.
- Eagle Bank Arena hosted over 500,000 attendees in 2016.
- Annual zero waste Green Game achieved with Athletics/Sodexo/Office of Sustainability.
- Campus Kitchens with Sodexo formed, sending leftover food to shelters and food banks.
- Mechanical Engineering capstone classes with students solve problems for clients.
- Center for Climate Change Communication coordinated coursework with local TV meteorologists.
- The Virginia Initiative for Science Teaching and Achievement STEM education grant promoted hands-on, problem-based learning that empowers teachers and engages students.
- Community Engagement Council created and developed software to collect information about community projects.
- Veterans and the Arts Initiative at the Hylton Performing Arts Center is now in its third year and growing.
- Mason Community Arts Academy (formerly Potomac Arts Academy) offers performing and visual arts classes for all ages to several thousand area residents annually. Mason Game and Technology Academy does the same for video games and simulation.
- Arts Alive! at the Hylton Center is a day-long festival of Prince William County artists and ensembles, attended by more than 2,000 patrons.
- The university's status as an Ashoka U Changemaker Campus was renewed.

## Sample Future Initiatives:

- Launch and communicate the existence of an online portal to track community engagement on campus.
- Design and implement civic engagement components of Mason Impact.
- The Family Series, a program of low-cost performances for the whole family successfully piloted at the Hylton Center, will expand to the Center for the Arts in the 2018-19 season.
- Implement and measure initiatives in the 2017-20 strategic plan of the Athletics Department that prioritize community and campus outreach.
- Implement men's and women's basketball strategic plans through increased investments in programs and facilities.
- Launch Individual Program Initiatives (e.g. faculty members in the Division of Health and Human Performance/School of Recreation, Health, and Tourism receive grant money to fund students in the master's degree in exercise, fitness, and health promotion to work in the community as athletic trainers).
- Explore community partner managers with university employees acting as "account managers" for our large community partners.
- Develop a baseline for doubling number of students and faculty engaged with the community.
- Evaluate our youth camps and community classes to evaluate local interest while also building learning pathways for those interested in pursuing a Mason degree program.
- Conduct community outreach to identify other areas of possible engagement.
- Create a community engagement center to support civic engagement programming to promote critical thinking and global awareness among Mason students, faculty, and staff.