



Student Government of George Mason University

Vision and Priorities 2014 - 2015

GATHERED AND COMPILED WITH INPUT FROM ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES
ON BEHALF OF THE STUDENT BODY OF GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

RATIFIED BY THE 35th STUDENT SENATE on SEPTEMBER 11th, 2014

Mission Statement

“The Student Government of George Mason University advocates the interests of the student body, educates the University community with regard to the state of the institution, and represents the interests of each student. The Student Government of George Mason University will serve as a liaison to the administration, faculty, staff, and University community.”

An Introductory Note

The Student Government of George Mason University was established from an inherent need for student representation to university administration and the Mason community. As advocates of the student body, we seek to defend and enhance the rights, opportunities, and experiences of each student at George Mason University. The authority of the Student Government is derived from the students of George Mason University, as well as by the University’s Board of Visitors, and is collectively recognized by the University President and other university administrators.

The Student Government of George Mason University membership exceeds 75 students, who were either elected or appointed by those elected throughout the university at-large. Our Student Government is representative of the diverse, high-caliber students that attend our institution. The Student Government works relentlessly throughout each year to accomplish various tasks and initiatives that align with our seven working departments: University Services, University Life, Government & Community Relations, Multicultural & Diversity Affairs, Public Relations, Administrative & Financial Affairs, and Academic Affairs. Additionally, the Student Government is committed to student rights through the work of a student Attorney General.

The essential programs, policies, and traditions initiated and supported by the George Mason University Student Government are designed to continuously improve student life at the University. These programs include: What Do YOU Want Wednesday, Gold Rush, Mason Lobbies, the BIG Event, and more. Through our initiatives, Student Government has gained an accurate understanding of the opinions and concerns of the student body of George Mason University. The decisions and actions taken by our organization are governed themselves by a motto:

“Serving you, and the needs of the Mason Community.”

Compiled below is the forward looking vision and priorities of the George Mason University Student Government for the 2014 - 2015 academic year. We believe that the fulfillment and inclusion of these elements into our University will enable our organization to enhance the Mason experience, and successfully serve the needs of the student body and community.

Our Vision

1. To ensure the well-being and safety of all students

Outside of the classroom, the student body relies on the university for services that provide a level of convenience that does not interrupt daily routines within the Mason community nor hinder academic success. The Student Government of George Mason University has had a long-standing and fruitful relationship with those departments that pertain to Auxiliary Enterprises and University Facilities. Student Government is committed to continuing the work with administrators on issues including, but not limited to, parking, housing, dining, information technology, and health and safety. Student Government will accurately represent the voice of the student body by providing informative and educated suggestions to university administration and staff on how to better provide services that meet student needs.

2. To optimize academic and professional success

Students attend George Mason University, first and foremost, to receive a higher education. The Student Government seeks to ensure students that the educational process is operating at optimal ability, so that they feel they have received a worthwhile service while in pursuit of their degree. The Student Government will dedicate itself to being an architect within the bureaucratic structure of learning at George Mason University in order to advocate, on behalf of the student body, for all academic policies to be designed in such a streamlined and accessible way that will only help, and not hinder, the educational process.

3. To enhance a sense of community and belonging

With every year, the university raises the bar on the level of “Patriot Pride” exhibited across the Mason Nation, leaving students continuously yearning for more opportunities to express their Mason spirit in a traditional setting. As the University continues to trial new ways to harness student engagement, the Student Government will commit itself to advocating for policies and promoting programs that will provide students with an experience unlike any other. The Mason community should feel like home to each student during their time here and beyond. Student Government will make a conscious effort to collaborate with Mason Athletics, Student Involvement, the City of Fairfax and various registered student organizations across campus in order to achieve this.

It is abundantly clear that one of George Mason University’s greatest strengths is its accessibility to students hailing from a wide variety of cultures, identities, backgrounds, and circumstances. This institution has prided itself on having been ranked several times throughout the years as one of the most diverse universities in the country. It is potent that the University and Student Government embrace a shared commitment to inclusion. Student Government believes that taking steps forward to not only recognizing our increasingly diverse student population, but also engaging with the student body and the issues they care about is

part of our obligation to nondiscrimination. The organization will work to ensure that this reality is recognized throughout campus.

4. To generate a culture of a great Mason today

One of Mason's strong suits' is its ability to be forward thinking. Thoughtful planning and visioning can be attributed to George Mason University's successful walk on its course for greatness. While the Student Government stands strongly behind this initiative, it also believes that there is a responsibility to the student body to instill a culture among students that Mason is great *today*. While planning for the future is vital to the University's survival, those plans must not hinder the experience of students who are here today. Student Government holds fast to the idea that the most important students to George Mason University are the ones that are currently enrolled regardless of year, major, or campus. Student Government will commit itself this year to assuring students that their current interests are being served and prioritized and will not be hindered by plans for the future.

5. To be articulate and effective representatives for the student body

George Mason University has exponentially grown and evolved over the past 42 years into something bigger than it once was. However, there is one aspect that has remained constant - the value of student input. This organization of students elected by students has seen its voice expanded at the University's decision-making table and, thereby, has increased the voice of the student body with regards to institutional decision making. The Student Government of George Mason University is committed to continuing along this path. It is the organization's hope to increase its presence on university committees across all departments, be they pertaining to academics, university life, search committees for new faculty or administrators, or otherwise. The Student Government will make it a priority this upcoming year to seek out new partnerships with departments that it has not worked with in the past. The hopes of the Student Government is that it will be able to permeate all facets of the University's operating process so that it may, in essence, be well connected and influential on the key decisions that affect the day to day lives of all students.

In order to properly be stewards of the student body, the Student Government believes that it is a necessity that the student representative on the Board of Visitors evolves into a voting member of the Board. Today the financial burden of public higher education has fallen primarily on students and that burden is projected to only increase with every year. It is only just that the student population has a vote on the highest governing body of the institution. A degree is arguably the most valuable asset that a student will carry along with them for the rest of their lives. In the process of obtaining such an asset, students should be able to be assured that one of their own is having a say and a vote at the decision making table.

Thank You

Our University's motto, "*Freedom and Learning*," was derived from a commitment made to our students about the limitless possibilities and opportunities that George Mason University could provide to them throughout their academic endeavors. For this to be achieved, the student voice must not be silent or idle. The George Mason University Student Government is very grateful for the continued support of many university faculty, staff, and administrators; who without, our efforts would not be possible. We thank those members of the University and community, who are dedicated to the Mason student and their collegiate experience. Your willingness to solicit and incorporate student input into university activities and decision-making processes, exemplifies those values upon which George Mason University was founded.

Thank you for taking the time to read and consider our insights. Please do not hesitate to contact us throughout the year with any comments, questions, or concerns regarding the preceding pages. Together, we can achieve great things for our University, and its student body, for years to come.

Together for a better Mason,

The Student Government of George Mason University

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