As universities across the country adapt to a changing world, Mason is setting the pace and building the university for the future. We do this by creating an inclusive and accessible environment for all students, in person and online; by listening to our industry and community partners and aligning programs to meet demand; and by supporting research that will improve lives. Take a look at what we accomplished in 2019.
Innovators Made Here

As universities across the country adapt to a changing world, Mason is setting the pace and building the university for the future. We do this by creating an inclusive and accessible environment for all students, in person and online; by listening to our industry and community partners and aligning programs to meet demand; and by supporting research that will improve lives. Take a look at what we accomplished in 2019.
George Mason University is building the university for the future on our established foundation of providing access to excellence, generating innovation, and supporting the economic vitality of our region and the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Mason’s future has never been brighter. More students are attracted to Mason each year, with enrollment now topping 38,000, including about one-third of students who report they are striving to become the first in their families to earn a four-year degree. Sponsored research expenditures reached an all-time high last year. You can read in these pages how Mason is on the leading edge of research at the Institute for Biohealth Innovation, the Institute for a Sustainable Earth, and our new Institute for Digital InnovAtion. Our faculty and students are addressing Parkinson’s disease rehabilitation, finding climate crisis solutions, and developing wearable technologies to improve our lives.

In addition, Mason alumni and the community have supported the university in record numbers in recent years, strengthening Mason and our region.

Mason is an economic driver for Virginia and is the largest producer of tech talent in the state. The commonwealth demonstrated its strong confidence in the university by committing to invest $235 million over the next 20 years to help Mason meet the expanding workforce needs of Virginia’s tech sector, including Amazon’s new HQ2.

Strategic initiatives under way on each of our Virginia campuses demonstrate our commitment to building for the future. With the major investment from the state, and philanthropic support, Mason
will construct a 400,000-square-foot building on the Arlington Campus to house our Institute for Digital Innovation (IDIA) and host programs associated with our new School of Computing. IDIA will anchor an “innovation district” that will bring together more than 200 Mason faculty from across the university, as well as outside public and private entities. Talent attracts talent. This diversity of expertise and perspectives will fuel innovation.

On the Fairfax Campus, our new six-story, state-of-the-art academic building is on schedule to open in spring 2021. It will be a major centerpiece of academic life on our flagship campus.

And on the Science and Technology Campus, we continue to study the feasibility of opening the first medical school in Northern Virginia, to address a physician shortage and maximize Mason’s science, technology, and health capabilities.

Building the university for the future is not only structural. It’s also programmatic. We are reaffirming our commitment to access and equity by growing online education offerings for students of all backgrounds, including those who aspire to return to college or who need to earn a credential to further their careers. We continue to grow our ADVANCE Program with Northern Virginia Community College, which has been cited as a national model for streamlining pathways to a four-year degree. Our ongoing Student Experience Redesign Project is finding new ways to serve the varying needs of our students and provide the optimum Mason experience from admission through graduation.

Mason continues to serve as the bridge between talent and opportunity. In 2019, the university joined the prestigious American Talent Initiative, a collaboration of the nation’s top 120 four-year institutions that are successfully graduating low-income students and aspire to do more. In this report, you’ll read about Eddie Adams, a formerly homeless cellist who has thrived at Mason, and tech prodigy Dolica Gopisetty, one of the youngest Amazon Web Services-certified solutions architects in the country. You’ll read about criminology, law and society major Karen Escobar and her involvement with Generation Hope, a nonprofit founded by a Mason alumna that helps teen parents earn their college degree.

I admiringly refer to Mason as a trampoline to life success. No matter how many strategic initiatives we tackle, we will never lose sight of the fact that the best way to build Mason’s future is to build the futures of others.
Virginia invests in Mason, tech talent

In November, Governor Ralph Northam announced Mason will receive $235 million from the state as part of the Tech Talent Investment Program. The funding will support Mason’s role as a producer of graduates in high-demand fields and spur the expansion of the Arlington Campus.

The Commonwealth of Virginia signed memoranda of understanding (MOU) with 11 universities. The first of two Mason MOUs calls for the state to invest $125 million in Mason to produce a total of 7,538 master’s graduates in computer science and related fields over the next 20 years. Mason will match these dollars for a total investment of $250 million. The second MOU calls for the state to invest $110 million in Mason to confer a total of 8,410 bachelor’s degrees in tech fields over that same period. All funding is subject to state appropriations.

In all, Mason will produce about 30% of 25,000 additional graduates in tech fields over the next two decades to serve regional and state employers, including Amazon.

The state funding will support the expansion of Mason’s Arlington Campus, which will include the Institute for Digital InnovAtion, the anchor of an “innovation district” inspired by similar districts established around the country by research universities and their partners, which will contribute to economic growth and job creation along the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor.
PREPARING STUDENTS FOR HIGH-DEMAND JOBS

We are the commonwealth’s largest producer of tech talent

When Deb Crawford, vice president for research, innovation, and economic impact, assembled the data for the state’s pitch to bring Amazon to Northern Virginia, the numbers were eye-opening.

Mason has more than 6,000 undergraduate students majoring in computing fields such as computer science, computer game design, and information systems—substantially more than any other Virginia public university.

Virginia is already ranked third as the state with the highest concentration of tech workers in the country by Cyberstates.org, and the arrival of Amazon promises to add 25,000 more jobs by 2030.

Liza Wilson Durant, the associate dean for strategic initiatives and community engagement at the Volgenau School of Engineering, knows a thing or two about Mason’s effort to expand computing and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) programs. For the past several years, she has helped prepare students for high-demand jobs in Northern Virginia’s bustling technology industry.

Mason has more undergraduate students majoring in computing than any other Virginia public university.

“Mason has been working for the past decade, and the past six years in earnest, to really deliver on the tremendous tech demand of the flourishing tech economy of Northern Virginia,” she says. “We’re 8,000-strong in our computing programs, including both undergraduate and graduate students. So, for us, it was the right time, the right place.”
Mason was among the first universities in the region to launch a digital technology credential program intended to make sure that all students—regardless of their major—possess the digital skills needed to compete in today’s technology-driven economy. The credential is being championed by the Greater Washington Partnership through its Collaborative of Leaders in Academia and Business Consortium, a group of 12 universities and 14 companies.

In addition, Mason plans to build on its online presence, allowing working adults the opportunity to complete a college degree or digital credential while also keeping degrees accessible and affordable to community college students who transfer to Mason through programs such as the ADVANCE Program partnership with Northern Virginia Community College.
The Arlington Campus
Celebrating our past, planning our future

George Mason University has been a positive presence in Arlington since 1979. University, state, and regional leaders commemorated the 40th anniversary of the Arlington Campus in November 2019 at an event that celebrated the achievements of the first 40 years and looked forward to the even more promising future as the campus serves as a hub for regional innovation.

Ardine Williams, Amazon’s vice president of people operations and Amazon HQ2 workforce development, said that the region’s abundance of tech talent was why Northern Virginia was selected as the site of its second headquarters. Williams also lauded Mason for its major additions that will produce even more job-ready graduates. “You’re not just keeping pace, you’re setting the pace,” she said.

Mason Interim President Anne Holton referenced the “glorious past and present and our exciting future” and Mason’s consistent role within the community over that 40 years. She recalled the origin of the campus in the old department store building next door, its current home in Van Metre Hall, Vernon Smith Hall, and Hazel Hall, and the upcoming Institute for Digital InnovAtion. She cited the extraordinary work that has been done on the campus by the Schar School of Policy and Government, the Scalia Law School, the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, and the School of Business.

“We like to think that Mason has grown up throughout Northern Virginia, helping lead the community and being led by the community. We have a lot to be proud of right here, right now, on this Arlington Campus,” Holton said.
At the heart of the expanded campus will be a state-of-the-art, 400,000-square-foot building that will be home to Mason's new School of Computing, as well as the Institute for Digital InnovAtion (IDIA), which will house cutting-edge facilities and programs that engage more than 1,200 entrepreneurs, researchers, technologists, and business leaders who will fuel the region's innovation engine.

Mason has help in the effort with partners like Growth4VA, a broad, bipartisan coalition founded by the Virginia Business Higher Education Council. It includes state business, education, and political leaders who see education as the state’s top competitive asset.

IDIA will support and promote research and development, economic growth, and job creation, while drawing on the university’s strong relationships with its partners in the region, including private, nonprofit, and public-sector entities.

“This campus will integrate business, community, research, and education to launch a true innovation district,” said Liza Wilson Durant, the associate dean for strategic initiatives and community engagement in the Volgenau School of Engineering. “Our vision is for people to live, work, learn, and play here.”
MAKING A DIFFERENCE OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM

Working to eliminate Virginia’s teacher shortage

TEACHERTrack @ Mason, a new program in Mason’s College of Education and Human Development, aims to help mitigate the teacher shortage by encouraging junior and senior high school students in Northern Virginia to embrace teaching as a profession. In addition to being one of the first public institutions in Virginia to offer four-year undergraduate degrees in teacher preparation in elementary education, special education, and childhood education for diverse learners, Mason is leading an exploration for the commonwealth about the causes of and possible solutions for the state’s teacher shortage.

Empowering future business leaders

The Business for a Better World Center, launched by the School of Business in November, is based on the vision that business is a force for good in the world, leading the charge to address the world’s most pressing problems. The center will provide a living laboratory for addressing global goals and a model for solving complex challenges, with a focus on the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
Law students gain valuable courtroom experience, advocate for immigrants

The Antonin Scalia Law School currently has nine clinics that give students practical experience working with real clients on actual legal cases, all under the guidance of experienced practitioners. The clinics have a classroom component and a practical component, where students are conducting research, arguing in court, or assisting clients in additional ways.

In fall 2019, the Law School launched a yearlong Immigration Litigation Clinic, where law students represent immigrant clients who need legal assistance by helping with asylum applications, completing legal research, gathering case evidence, attending dockets, and representing them in court.

Students in the Innovation Law Clinic, also new this year, worked with a nonprofit trying to get fully incorporated and secure tax-exempt status, and a client developing a technology that requires patent work.

“One reason I decided to go to law school was to take my interests and skills and direct them toward helping people—here we can help people be as successful as they can in their endeavors.”
—Third-year law student Samantha Levin
CELEBRATING
STUDENT SUCCESS
EDDIE ADAMS

A path to center stage

School of Music sophomore Eddie Adams has become an inspiration to thousands who read about his life story in the April 2019 Washington Post article “Amid a life of poverty and torment, the cello became his instrument of survival.”

Adams, who came to Mason in spring 2018, is working on a bachelor of music degree in performance. He relies on scholarship support and financial aid to cover tuition, as well as books, fees, and basic living expenses. His mentor, Mason’s director of strings June Huang, encouraged him to study and practice despite challenges at home.

Adams taught himself to play the cello with the help of online videos. Since starting at Mason, he has embraced many opportunities and his musicianship has flourished. He has appeared at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., performed as a soloist with the Mason Symphony Orchestra and the Washington Sinfonietta, and participated in the Bach Cello Suites Festival at the Sandler Center in Virginia Beach.

THIS FALL, TOTAL ENROLLMENT AT MASON IS UP NEARLY 2% TO MORE THAN 38,000 STUDENTS, BECAUSE OF SPIKES IN BOTH UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE ENROLLMENT. THE NEARLY 2% INCREASE IN GRADUATE ENROLLMENT MARKS THE FIFTH CONSECUTIVE YEAR OF GROWTH.
MIKE FASIL

Boosting his tech skills

School of Business alumnus Mike Fasil, BS Information Systems and Operations Management ’19, was among the first group of Mason graduates awarded the new generalist digital technology credential at Spring Commencement.

Mason is among the first universities in the region to have launched a digital technology credential program intended to make sure that all students—regardless of their major—possess the digital skills needed to compete in today’s technology-driven economy.

Fasil first learned about the program last fall and concluded that adding the data analysis minor necessary for the digital technology credential was well worth it. Following graduation, he started a job with a local firm as a business technology consultant.

KAREN ESCOBAR

A determined single mom

Criminology, law and society major Karen Escobar took a seat in Fenwick Library, cracked open a book and powered up her laptop. But the junior was not there just to study; she was being videotaped by a crew from ABC’s Good Morning America, which was producing a segment on a local nonprofit, Generation Hope.

Generation Hope, which was started by Mason alumna Nicole Lynn Lewis, MPP ’06, provides financial aid and mentoring to help teen parents become college graduates and children enter kindergarten at higher levels of readiness.

Escobar, a first-generation and transfer student from Northern Virginia Community College, aspires to become a lawyer. In addition to her studies and caring for her four-year-old daughter, the 21-year-old works full-time as an administrative assistant.

DOLICA GOPISETTY

An Amazon prodigy

This summer, Mason information technology major Dolica Gopisetty had her head in the clouds—cloud computing, that is. In June, Gopisetty, who at 20 is one of the youngest AWS-certified solutions architects in the country, was on a panel of students discussing cloud computing at the Amazon Web Services (AWS) Public Sector Summit in Washington, D.C.

Those at Amazon were so impressed they invited her to be a keynote speaker at AWS’s “IMAGINE: A Better World, A Global Education” conference in Seattle, Washington. She was the only student among the eight keynote speakers appearing. She was also a speaker at the launch of the new cloud computing bachelor of science degree that is a partnership with Mason, AWS, and Northern Virginia Community College.
ENHANCED SERVICES

Improving the student experience

Beginning this fall, Mason students have access to enhanced services designed to meet the needs and expectations of today’s student. These new practices and policies help ensure that every student has access to excellence in a transparent and responsive environment.

Key features of Mason’s overall Student Experience Redesign include the following:

• “Mason Initiation,” which transforms the way students experience their first year at the university, includes changes to UNIV 100 classes and additional activities during the Preamble.

• The Mason Student Services Center, located on the lower level of SUB I on the Fairfax Campus, has simplified the way students seek assistance with questions about financial aid, enrollment, and billing. Other administrative offices will eventually be integrated into the center.

• Salesforce, a constituent relationship management platform, is being used to centralize student information for greater development of student support and engagement services.

Future initiatives include the Mason Care Network, a student-centered coaching team that will help students meet their academic and personal goals. The network will serve incoming freshman and transfer students, in tandem with major advisors in each of the colleges.

“WITH SUCH A LARGE AND DIVERSE STUDENT POPULATION, IT'S ABSOLUTELY CRITICAL THAT WE PROVIDE A CONSISTENT AND ROBUST EXPERIENCE FOR OUR STUDENTS.”
—PROVOST S. DAVID WU
ADVANCE

A more cost-effective path to a four-year degree

It has been a successful year for the ADVANCE Program, the transformational partnership between Mason and Northern Virginia Community College. Nearly 700 students are enrolled, 18% above the program goal for fall 2019. Mason enrolls almost twice as many transfer students as any other Virginia four-year institution.

Recognized by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition with the 2019 John N. Gardner Institutional Excellence for Students in Transition Award, ADVANCE is a national model for a seamless transfer from community college to a four-year degree, saving students time and money. The program was also honored as Partnership of the Year by Education Dive.

The program has received a number of grants to help support activities, including $1 million from the Strada Education Network and scholarship support from the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation.

ADVANCE has also partnered with the organization InsideTrack, which will provide professional student success coaches for 125 students per year.
ONLINE CLASSES

Meeting students where they are

One million Virginians have some college credit but no undergraduate degree. This is the reason Mason, a founding member of the Online Virginia Network and a partner with Wiley Education Services, is expanding its online offerings.

A return to college can happen for a variety of reasons. Students might need to re-skill or up-skill or might want to complete a degree that, for whatever reason, was unfinished. Mason provides an extensive catalog of online undergraduate and graduate classes and plans to expand to 15 online graduate programs over the next few years in partnership with Wiley.

English major Jamie Gergen, who worked in information technology for 20 years, says he had reached a professional standstill. Without a bachelor’s degree, he struggled to get interviews after losing his job in 2016. He chose Mason because of the university’s location, reputation, and its mission to promote equal access for all students. Online classes were a bonus.

Gergen says he also enjoys the “learn-at-your-own-pace” structure of online learning. The flexibility allows Gergen to attend class at any time and set his own schedule if he’s out of town or has an appointment.

“Online educational tools are learning how to build in mentoring experiences, learning how to bring in virtual internships [and] learning to build community in the online space,” says Michelle Marks, Mason’s vice president for academic innovation and new ventures. “What’s available now is helping us create an authentic, web-based experience for online learners.”

MASON IMPACT

A bold and challenging approach to academics

Crucial to the university’s commitment to offer every student a transformative learning experience, Mason Impact offers all students opportunities designed to help them develop problem-solving, critical thinking, and communication skills while tackling significant global questions and challenges in the context of research, creative activities, civic engagement, entrepreneurship, and study-abroad experiences. Students who successfully complete Mason Impact projects or participate in study abroad earn special transcript notations highlighting their experiences.
SCHOLARSHIPS AND FELLOWSHIPS

Broadening student opportunities

During the 2018-19 academic year, Mason students, supported by the Office of Fellowships, earned 22 prestigious scholarships and fellowships that allowed them to continue their education through financial help and experiential learning in the United States and abroad.

Winners included juniors Karen Therrien (Honors College, neuroscience), Benjamin Concepcion (Honors College, physics and mathematics), and Brieann Sobieski (biology), each of whom received Goldwater scholarships; junior Patrick Grady (Honors College, government and international politics), who earned a Truman Scholarship; junior Katie Russell (Honors College, environmental and sustainability studies), who received a Udall Scholarship; and Laura Hillard (Honors College, global affairs, economics) who earned a Fulbright award and a Boren Scholarship.

“There is no better place to see Mason’s commitment to access to excellence than in our nationally competitive fellowship winners,” says LaNitra Berger, senior director of fellowships in the Honors College.

Berger adds, “We succeed in helping students, many of whom are first generation or from underrepresented backgrounds, to excel academically. We also cultivate their drive to improve the world through research, social activism, and public service. Our fellowship winners have a sense of purpose that should make us all proud to be part of the Mason Nation.”
A LEADING RESEARCH UNIVERSITY

Finding real-world solutions

George Mason University reported a record high of $176 million in sponsored research expenditures for fiscal year 2019, making strong progress toward the university’s strategic goal of $225 million by 2024.

Mason’s reported sponsored research expenditures were 32% higher in 2018, and expenditures in 2019 trended even higher.

“With the momentum of the past few years, we are well on our way to achieving the goal we set for ourselves in the strategic plan,” says Deb Crawford, vice president for research, innovation, and economic impact. “This continued growth highlights the accomplishments of our faculty and supports Mason’s recognition as one of the nation’s Tier 1 research universities.”

The $176 million total includes funds provided by federal and state government entities, industry, nonprofit organizations, and the university itself.
HUMANITIES

Record funding from NEH

Last fall, the Chronicle of Higher Education recognized Mason as the eighth highest recipient of National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) funding in the past decade, with 37 projects receiving a total of more than $5.8 million. All of the projects fall within the university’s College of Humanities and Social Sciences (CHSS).

“The 10-year total for NEH funding to CHSS faculty is a great example of how Mason has been punching above its weight for many years in advance of our recent reclassification as a Tier 1 research university,” says Ann Ardis, dean of the college.

A significant portion of Mason’s NEH funding, nearly $5.1 million, was awarded to the Department of History and Art History. By itself, the department received more funding than the entire humanities portfolios at top research universities such as Yale, Princeton, and Columbia, among others, and—if ranked based on its funding alone—would come in at No. 13.

In the past 10 years, the Roy Rosenzweig Center for History and New Media, housed in the Department of History and Art History, brought in 61% of the university’s NEH funding.

“A major portion of the scholarship done at Mason is this kind of research,” says Brian Platt, chair of the Department of History and Art History.

OPIOID CRISIS

Advancing science and practice in community health

The National Institutes of Health (NIH), through the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), has awarded $15 million in grant funding over five years to establish a Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network (JCOIN) Coordinating and Translation Center at Mason.

“The team at Mason and our partners will provide opportunities to advance science and practice,” says University Professor Faye S. Taxman, who leads the center. “We intend to break new ground in building the next generation of workforce scientists and clinicians.”

Rebekah Hersch, associate director for research development at Mason, and Danielle S. Rudes, associate professor of criminology and law, and deputy director of Mason’s Center for Advancing Correctional Excellence, will join experts from other universities as part of the center’s team. In total, 19 Mason faculty and staff members with extensive experience working with populations affected by both mass incarceration and substance abuse policies will be associated with the center.

Mason joins 11 research institutions named to JCOIN, which is part of the NIH’s Helping to End Addiction Long-term initiative, an aggressive, transagency effort to speed scientific solutions to stem the national opioid public health crisis.
To address critical public health needs in Northern Virginia and beyond, the College of Health and Human Services launched the Population Health Center in October.

“The Population Health Center is a hub where researchers, faculty, students, care providers, and community partners come together to develop innovative approaches to research, interprofessional care, and professional development to improve public health. Experiential learning opportunities are available for all involved, with the goal of moving the needle on the health of the populations we serve,” says Dean Germaine Louis.

Located on Mason’s Fairfax Campus in Peterson Family Health Sciences Hall, the center facilitates partnerships between academia and the community and houses state-of-the-art facilities for telehealth, research, and clinical care.

The 10th Mason and Partners (MAP) Clinic, a no-barrier free facility, will be located there, as will the Kaiser Permanente Community Wellness Hub. Funded by a grant from Kaiser Permanente, the hub is where co-located community partners will be able to provide resources to address access to housing, food, and prescriptions. The Claude Moore Scholars Program, an initiative to build a career-ready workforce of students who are pursuing higher education for health career pathways, is also located in the center.
Noted conservation biologist Thomas Lovejoy has enjoyed a brilliant career that has carried him all over the globe while cementing his status as among the world’s foremost experts on biodiversity within the Amazon. The Commonwealth of Virginia became the latest to formally recognize his achievements with its decision to honor Lovejoy as one of two recipients of the 2019 Virginia Outstanding Scientist award.

Lovejoy, a University Professor within Mason’s Department of Environmental Science and Policy and the scientific director for Mason’s Institute for a Sustainable Earth, is the first Mason faculty member to receive the honor.

“It’s a great honor to be recognized by the commonwealth and be the first of what I anticipate will be a number of George Mason scientists highlighted in this way,” says Lovejoy.

He was one of two state scientists recognized for their “globally significant contributions” to their field, according to an official release.

“Lovejoy was selected for the Virginia Outstanding Scientist Award for being one of the founders of the thriving scientific field of conservation biology and discovering the potentially devastating effects of global warming on biodiversity,” according to a statement from Governor Ralph Northam.

Lovejoy’s career has been dedicated to conserving biotic diversity to sustain vital ecosystem functions and services. He was recognized with Mason’s Beck Presidential Medal for Excellence in Research and Scholarship in 2018 for his outstanding research and mentorship of the next generation of environmental science and policy leaders.
A MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH TO RESEARCH

New institute focuses on sustainability

In February, George Mason University formally launched its second multidisciplinary institute, which is tackling one of the toughest issues facing the world—the planet’s future. More than 500 faculty members are a part of the new Institute for a Sustainable Earth and working to address a broad number of issues, including the problem of global climate change.

The institute draws on Mason’s deep talent from a number of disciplines—including natural sciences, communications, computational and data sciences, humanities, law, engineering, and social sciences—to conduct research, meet with policy makers, and leverage existing university partnerships with governments, nonprofit organizations, and the private sector to make change. These scholars will share the results of their work with key policy makers and decision makers in the hopes of erasing the divide often seen between academia and the real world by jointly devising lasting sustainability remedies.

Thomas Lovejoy, University Professor in Mason’s Department of Environmental Science and Policy and accomplished conservation biologist, serves as the institute’s scientific director. Aurali Dade, Mason’s associate vice president for research, development, integrity, and assurance, serves as the institute’s executive director and leads operational strategy. An advisory council consisting of internal and external thought leaders provides guidance and support.

“We want to integrate with the world of policy in the Washington, D.C., area and globally,” says Lovejoy. “It’s one thing to recognize the challenges and to come up with possible solutions. It’s another thing to really make that happen.”

This institute follows on the success of the Institute for Biohealth Innovation (IBI), which supports all biohealth-related research activities at Mason. The IBI connects more than 200 Mason researchers with potential collaborators, both within the university and externally, to advance human health research. This research community collaborates with external organizations to develop and deliver new technologies and interventions in fields such as cancer, infectious diseases, brain and behavior, injury and performance, reproductive and family health, and cardiovascular and metabolic studies.

Mason’s third multidisciplinary institute is already in the planning stages. The new Institute for Digital InnovAtion is a university think tank that will harness Mason’s faculty and student communities to advance research and grow the digital innovation economy. IDIA will be the center of innovation in Arlington, welcoming more than 1,200 entrepreneurs, researchers, and business leaders from the public and private sectors to anchor the Arlington Innovation District in the bustling Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor.

THE INSTITUTES WILL DRAW ON MASON’S DEEP TALENT FROM A NUMBER OF DISCIPLINES.
MANY VOICES ARE HEARD
NEWSMAKERS ON CAMPUS

Access to a diversity of views

*Washington Monthly* named Mason among “America’s Best Colleges for Student Voting 2019.” One reason Mason students are such engaged citizens is because newsmakers drop by campus to discuss major issues.

1. As the featured speaker at Spring Commencement, **United Nations Deputy Secretary-General Amina J. Mohammed** called on Mason graduates to be “the leaders and torchbearers our world so desperately needs.”

2. **Award-winning author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie** was on campus to discuss her book *We Should All Be Feminists*, which was this year’s Mason Reads pick.

3. **U.S. Supreme Court Justice Elena Kagan** was the featured Roger Wilkins Lecturer in November during her most recent visit to Mason.

4. **Former CIA Director David Petraeus** and **former U.S. National Security Advisor Susan Rice** discussed diplomacy and military affairs with students at a Schar School of Policy and Government-sponsored forum in November at the Fairfax Campus.
KATHERINE G. JOHNSON
Honoring a ‘Hidden Figure’

Katherine G. Johnson overcame institutional racism and sexism to help put the first men on the moon and carve a path for women and people of color in science and space exploration. Now students at George Mason University will know her story every time they step onto the Science and Technology Campus.

Mason named its largest building on the campus, formerly Bull Run Hall, Katherine G. Johnson Hall after the trailblazing NASA mathematician whose story captivated millions in the Oscar-nominated movie *Hidden Figures*.

Johnson, 100, was unable to attend, but family members, including her daughters Katherine Moore and Joylette Hylick and grandson Troy Hylick, attended on her behalf, joined by roughly 200 friends, university officials, and guests in the Verizon Auditorium at Colgan Hall.

“We hope renaming the building on the Science and Technology Campus after Katherine Johnson will be a constant reminder to encourage and inspire students, particularly those in the STEM fields, that anything is possible if you work hard and are prepared,” says Joylette Hylick.

Johnson worked at NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, Virginia, for 33 years, performing complex calculations and flight path analysis for U.S. spacecraft in the early years of the space program, including for the Apollo 11 flight to the moon in 1969. She worked on the space shuttle program before retiring from NASA in 1986. NASA facilities have been named in Johnson’s honor, and she received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2015.

“The impact that she made on the space program is immeasurable, and it is fitting that this building, which houses science and technology programs, should bear her name,” says Julian Williams, Mason’s vice president for compliance, diversity and ethics.
ENSLAVED PEOPLE OF GEORGE MASON

Looking at all aspects of the university’s namesake

When the heart of the university’s Fairfax Campus is dramatically remade two years from now, a thought-provoking new memorial will be at its center. The Enslaved People of George Mason memorial, to be located on Wilkins Plaza near the statue of George Mason IV himself, will provide a more complete account of the complicated legacy of Mason, a founding father who championed individual freedom while also owning slaves.

The memorial, scheduled to be completed in 2021, will honor two of the more than 100 people enslaved at Mason’s home of Gunston Hall—a 10-year-old girl named Penny and Mason’s manservant, James. The memorial is designed to place the hidden voices of the enslaved in dialogue with the traditional voice of George Mason, while creating a space for students and others to reflect and share their own voices.

“The three elements provide a space for us to think about the past, the present, and what it means to engage in difficult dialogue,” says Mason history and School of Integrative Studies professor Wendi Manuel-Scott, codirector of the Enslaved People of George Mason project. “Our intention here is to give visitors an opportunity to see the fullness of George Mason, the enslaved laborers he held, and their contributions to who we are as a nation.”

In addition, four quotes will be added around the bottom of the George Mason statue to convey his conflicted role in American history.

Wilkins Plaza is an apt home for the memorial and the Mason statue—the late Robinson Professor Roger Wilkins was a civil rights leader known for his insightful writing and speaking about the history of race in America. A fountain that will also be part of the memorial will be embedded with a quill and a Wilkins quote: “We have no hope of solving our problems without harnessing the diversity, the energy, and the creativity of all our people.”
SPENCER CREW

Smithsonian turns to Mason for leadership

Robinson Professor Spencer Crew worked tirelessly for years as a guest curator at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African American History and Culture to bring together some of the museum’s most powerful displays. In June he was selected to succeed his good friend, Lonnie G. Bunch III, as the museum’s interim director after Bunch was tapped to head the Smithsonian Institution. Crew took a leave of absence from Mason this fall as Smithsonian officials started a national search for Bunch’s permanent replacement. “I just feel honored that [Bunch] would ask me to take on that responsibility,” says Crew. “It’s such an important place, and I’m really excited to be able to help.”

ATTRACTING TALENT

New voices bring new perspectives

Mason welcomed a number of new leaders this year. Here are a few of them:

Lester L. Arnold Sr. joined Mason in July as the new vice president for human resources and payroll. Arnold brings to Mason extensive experience in higher education and the public sector, most recently as chief human resources officer and associate vice chancellor at Winston-Salem State University in North Carolina.

Carol Dillon Kissal joined Mason in March as the new senior vice president for finance and administration. She comes to Mason from Emory University and Emory Healthcare, where she was chief financial officer and vice president of finance since 2014.

Robert Matz was appointed dean of Mason Korea in February, where he leads and manages all aspects of the campus’s programs and operations. Prior to this role, he served as interim dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Alpaslan Özerdem is the new dean of the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution and professor of peace and conflict studies. Prior to joining Mason in August 2019, he was associate pro-vice-chancellor for research at Coventry University in the United Kingdom.

Dietra Trent is serving as Mason’s chief of staff during Interim President Holton’s tenure. An accomplished public official with a wealth of experience, she served as Virginia’s secretary of education under former governor Terry McAuliffe, deputy secretary of education under former governor Tim Kaine, and director of constituent services under former governor Mark Warner.
RABIA CHAUDRY, JD ’00

Fighting for justice

Millions of people were captivated by the murder mystery involving Adnan Syed and Hae Min Lee after Rabia Chaudry, JD ’00, took the case to NPR and the hit podcast *Serial* was born.

Syed, who was convicted of murdering his high school ex-girlfriend, Lee, was sentenced to life in prison. Chaudry, a family friend, has been advocating for his innocence for two decades. In March, she brought the story back to the national stage with the HBO documentary series, *The Case against Adnan Syed*. Chaudry was an executive producer and also appeared on the show.

“I’m not just trying to help a wrongfully convicted person get out of prison,” Chaudry says. “We’re trying to show communities of people who have very little understanding and exposure to the criminal justice system what’s actually happening on the inside.”

M. BRIAN BLAKE, PHD INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ’00

An academic leader

In October M. Brian Blake, PhD Information Technology ’00, the provost and executive vice president for academic affairs at Drexel University, was appointed George Washington University’s new provost and executive vice president for academic affairs.

As the highest-ranking academic officer at Drexel, Blake led academic programs across 15 schools and colleges for more than 25,000 students.

The Volgenau School of Engineering advisory board member has also held faculty positions at Georgetown University, the University of Notre Dame, and the University of Miami.

Over the course of his career, Blake has served as advisor for 15 postdoctoral fellows and graduate students and more than 30 undergraduate researchers. He has coauthored more than 200 journal articles, books and book chapters, and refereed conference and workshop papers, and he is editor-in-chief of *IEEE Internet Computing*. 
Olympic hopeful

Former Mason cross-country and distance standout Bethany Sachtleben, BS Finance ’15, won the silver medal in the women’s marathon at the Pan Am Games in Lima, Peru—her first major international competition. The former walk-on, whose name dots the Patriot record books, says it is a moment that will stay with her forever.

“I just felt really proud of myself for running a pretty smart race and proving I can compete here, that I can be a strong runner,” she says.

Sachtleben, who is a volunteer assistant coach for Mason’s women’s cross-country team, credits that strength to her time at Mason and her symbiotic relationship with Patriots cross-country and track-and-field coach Andrew Gerard. The alternate patience and tough love Gerard provides are why Sachtleben, who lives in Fairfax and works as a financial operations analyst at a tech company in Tysons Corner, Virginia, sticks with Gerard as her coach and continues to work with the Mason team.

Next for Sachtleben are the Olympic trials on February 29 in Atlanta, Georgia.

He helped Mason grow and thrive

Few figures in Mason history have served in as many roles as Joseph A. Heastie, MPA ’84. He has been a student, Board of Visitors (BOV) member, and Alumni Association Board president, and he has led Mason efforts related to diversity and access. At Mason’s Spring Commencement, Heastie received the Mason Medal, the university’s highest honor, for his many years of service.

In less than 20 years, Heastie earned a master of public administration at Mason (attending graduate school as a father of two with a full-time government IT job) and served two stints on the Board of Visitors, chairing key committees as secretary, vice rector, and rector. Then came time on Mason’s Alumni Association Board, including a term as president.

Heastie played an important role in the university prioritizing access to higher education. He chaired the BOV’s Equal Employment Opportunity and Affirmative Action Committee. After Heastie’s second BOV term, former Mason President George W. Johnson asked him to help develop what became the Diversity Advisory Board. That group brought together minority executives and business owners in Northern Virginia to raise scholarship money for minority students and to pair working students with career-relevant jobs tied to their majors.
Giving makes an impact

Together, we are Mason. That phrase—the theme of Mason’s annual Giving Day—captures the spirit that is leading year by year to increased giving and alumni engagement at Virginia’s most diverse and innovative public university.

In 2019 donors to Mason gave more than ever before—a total of nearly $125 million for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019. That record was due in great measure to an extraordinary bequest establishing the Allison and Dorothy Rouse Endowment at the Antonin Scalia Law School. Valued at more than $50 million, the Rouse bequest will support in perpetuity as many as 14 endowed faculty chairs.

The dedication of Van Metre Hall on the Arlington Campus, formerly known as Founders Hall, recognizes the generosity of the Van Metre Companies, a Fairfax-based residential and commercial real estate development firm. In 2009 the company donated 37 acres in Loudoun County. Now valued at more than $20 million, the land will be sold to support university programs.

James Hoch and his family helped establish the Mary Hoch Center for Reconciliation at Mason’s School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, named for Hoch’s late wife. The gift funds operating expenses as well as research that incorporates “insider reconcilers”—people in conflict areas whose understanding of local context and social structures helps to facilitate reconciliation.

Thanks in part to the attention and momentum generated by the successful completion in 2018 of the Faster Farther campaign, the total number of donors to Mason increased by 11% over the last year to 12,800. About 40% of donors, nearly 6,000, are alumni.

It was also a year of leadership transition. In March, Mason welcomed Trishana Bowden as the new vice president for advancement and alumni relations and president of the George Mason University Foundation. Effective July 1, Terri Cofer Beirne, BA Government and Politics ’88, became chair of the foundation’s Board of Trustees. Beirne was also honored by the Alumni Association as the Alumna of the Year.

The pace of fundraising does not slow, with efforts under way to raise $125 million over the next several years to match state funding to expand the Arlington Campus as part of the Arlington Innovation District initiative. New partners and supporters will surely emerge, as the entire region is invited to embrace the message that—together—we are Mason.
## TOTAL GIFTS AND PLEDGES

**$124.7 million**

## ENDOWMENT BALANCE

**$113.0 million**

### GIFTS AND PLEDGES BY PURPOSE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Dollars (Millions)</th>
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<td>Faculty</td>
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<td>Students</td>
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<td>Other</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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### GIFTS AND PLEDGES BY SOURCE

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<td>Students</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

GMU.EDU @GEORGE MasonU
LASTING LEGACY

Art gallery naming puts focus on couple’s impact

As founding chair of the School of Art advisory council, Gardner Gillespie led the effort to draft the school’s vision statement. He wrote, “The School of Art is founded on the premise that art both reflects and inspires a creative society, improving the human condition while describing the world both as it is and could be.”

That inspiring vision was the focus of the April dedication of the Gillespie Gallery of Art at the Art and Design Building. The gallery naming recognizes the generosity of Gillespie and his wife, Stevie, who last year established a $1 million scholarship fund for School of Art students.

Rick Davis, dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, described the gift as “a lasting legacy that will have a transformative impact on the School of Art and, most importantly, on the lives of the Gillespie Scholars.”

UNPAID INTERNSHIP SCHOLARSHIP

Support helps level the field

Interning is a rite of passage that helps launch many students on their desired career path. Yet internships are often unpaid, costs to students are high, and not every student can afford to take one on. Through the Unpaid Internship Scholarship, established with a grant from the University Life Parents Fund, undergraduate and graduate students can receive direct support to pursue unpaid internships in their chosen fields.

Bolstered by support from Alumni Association board members, the fund has raised more than $84,000 through 2019, providing scholarship support to 75 students.
Creating success in an innovation economy

George Mason University is a dynamic research university in a region that includes thousands of advanced industry employers essential to the Commonwealth of Virginia’s success in the 21st-century innovation economy. Mason is refining its operational and financial models to develop the infrastructure necessary to continue leading as an engine for innovation and growth in our region, the commonwealth, and the nation.

To accommodate its thriving education, research, and innovation-commercialization programs, the university is developing new academic, research, and innovation facilities on its Fairfax, Science and Technology (SciTech), and Arlington Campuses. The Core Campus Project on the Fairfax Campus, which replaces Robinson Hall, will bring needed innovative classroom space to the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Katherine G. Johnson Hall addition on the SciTech Campus will support the instructional needs of students in mechanical engineering, forensic science, bioengineering, and computer game design. The expansion of the Arlington Campus, with a new mixed-use facility that will house the graduate programs for the planned School of Computing, anchors the Rosslyn-Ballston Corridor, and complements existing graduate programs offered by the Antonin Scalia Law School, the School of Business, the School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, and the Schar School of Policy and Government.

Mason’s commitment to continue to accrue operational and administrative efficiencies and our constant innovation in the delivery of affordable, high-quality education and research programs attractive to students, employers, and sponsors, make us confident that we will continue to attract a diverse and talented student population, that our research and innovation programs will continue to grow and prosper, and that we will successfully navigate the changing landscape ahead.
University Leadership and Administration

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