



GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY KEY FACTS FOR 2016

Overview

Since its founding in 1972, George Mason University has grown into a major educational force and earned a reputation as an innovative, entrepreneurial institution. The university has gained national distinction in a range of academic fields, including public policy, STEM, information technology, economics, law, performing arts, and bioscience. With its strategic location just minutes from Washington, D.C., Mason has built strong alliances with government agencies, businesses, and the community. It is recognized as the premier research university for the Northern Virginia Region.

Mason has campuses in Fairfax, Arlington, and Prince William counties. Mason also operates a site in Loudoun County and has partnered with the Smithsonian Institution to offer a Global Conservation Studies Program in Front Royal, Virginia. Each location has a distinctive academic focus that plays a critical role in the economy of its region.

Return on Investment

- In 2015 *The Economist* return on investment study placed Mason at the 96th percentile among U.S. institutions. It lists the expected salary of Mason bachelor's graduates to be \$49,801 compared to an actual of \$57,000 as reported by the Department of Education.
- A Brookings Institution analysis found that, in a comparison of mid-career salaries, a Mason education added 20 percent to the value of a degree.

Enrollment and Student Populations

- Mason is the largest public institution in the Commonwealth of Virginia, with 34,112 students. Of the 33,925 enrolled on our campuses, in-state students account for 81 percent of enrollment; 43 percent (of those reporting race) are from underrepresented racial/ethnic groups, and 8 percent are international; 22,304 are degree-seeking undergraduates, and 5,893 undergraduates (26 percent) live in campus housing. Thirty-five percent (5,331) of the undergraduate students reporting parent/guardian education are first-generation college students.
- Mason enrolled 3,181 new freshmen in fall 2015, the largest freshman class in its history. New transfers numbered 2,386, representing 43 percent of new degree-seeking undergraduate students. Of the new transfers, 1,854 (78 percent) came from the Virginia Community College System and other Virginia public two-year colleges.
- Mason's total enrollment has increased by 14 percent over the past 10 years. More than 80 percent of degree-seeking undergraduate students attend full time.
- In FY 2015, 61 percent of Mason students received some form of financial aid, including 30 percent who received Pell Grants. Sixty-two percent of in-state undergraduate students graduated with some debt, and the average student loan balance for 2013-14 was \$24,344. The

default rate for Mason graduates is 1.6 percent compared to the national average of 7.6 percent for four-year public institutions.

- Mason has 168,552 living alumni, with 108,545 of them residing in Virginia.
- Approximately 1 in 10 students (3,214) is affiliated with the military, including veterans, active duty personnel, military dependents, reservists, and guardsmen.

Inputs and Outputs

- In the past 10 years, the average high school GPA of entering freshmen has improved from 3.41 to 3.66. In the same period, the first-year retention rate has increased from 85.9 percent to 87.2 percent. Mason's six-year graduation rate has increased from 56.1 percent to 69.2 percent over the most recent 10-year period.
- Mason awarded 8,342 degrees in 2014-15, which is more than any other public institution in the commonwealth. Additionally, Mason awarded 473 postbaccalaureate certificates.

Finance

- Appropriations from the Commonwealth of Virginia make up roughly 27 percent of the university's educational and general budget. Mason's educational costs per student are about 63 percent of its peer institutions.
- Since FY 2012, Mason has reduced operating costs by more than \$29 million and reallocated those funds to high-priority program needs, while reducing \$197 million in capital costs by scaling back the scope and de-authorization of certain projects, in total implementing \$226 million in budget efficiencies and cost control measures.

Research

- Mason is a high research activity doctoral institution. Research funding is typically around a \$100 million enterprise annually, with 79 percent of funding coming from federal sources. Research activity at Mason supports more than 1,250 jobs in the region, directly and indirectly. Research activities range widely but include such cutting-edge fields as cybersecurity, nanoscience, neuroscience, personalized medicine, modeling and simulation, and transportation policy. Approximately 30 percent of Mason's federally sponsored research comes from defense and intelligence agencies. The comparable numbers for other agencies are as follows: 16 percent from the National Science Foundation; 15 percent from the Department of Education; 15 percent from the National Institutes of Health; and 10 percent from NASA.

Economic Impact

- The university's presence supported 11,618 full-time equivalent, private-sector employees in the region and contributed \$1.14 billion dollars to the economy in FY 2012. Statewide, the FY 2012 economic impact was \$1.56 billion and 16,023 jobs.

Office of Federal Government Relations

Contact: Kerry Bolognese, Director of Federal Government Relations, at 703-993-7710 or kbologne@gmu.edu