

George Mason University 2022 Legislative and Budget Priorities

Financial Aid

The Commonwealth was very supportive of additional financial aid for Mason students during the 2021 Regular and Special Sessions. Even with the recent increase, Mason lags in the necessary funding to address the unmet need goals of the Commonwealth for Mason students. The challenge is made more difficult when considering that as Mason’s enrollments have increased, the number of students applying and qualifying for financial aid have increased -- 24 percent of Mason undergraduate students are first generation and 29 percent are eligible for federal need-based Pell Grants. During the 2022 legislative session, Mason will seek \$7.85M in the first year and \$8.25M in the second year for undergraduate financial aid.

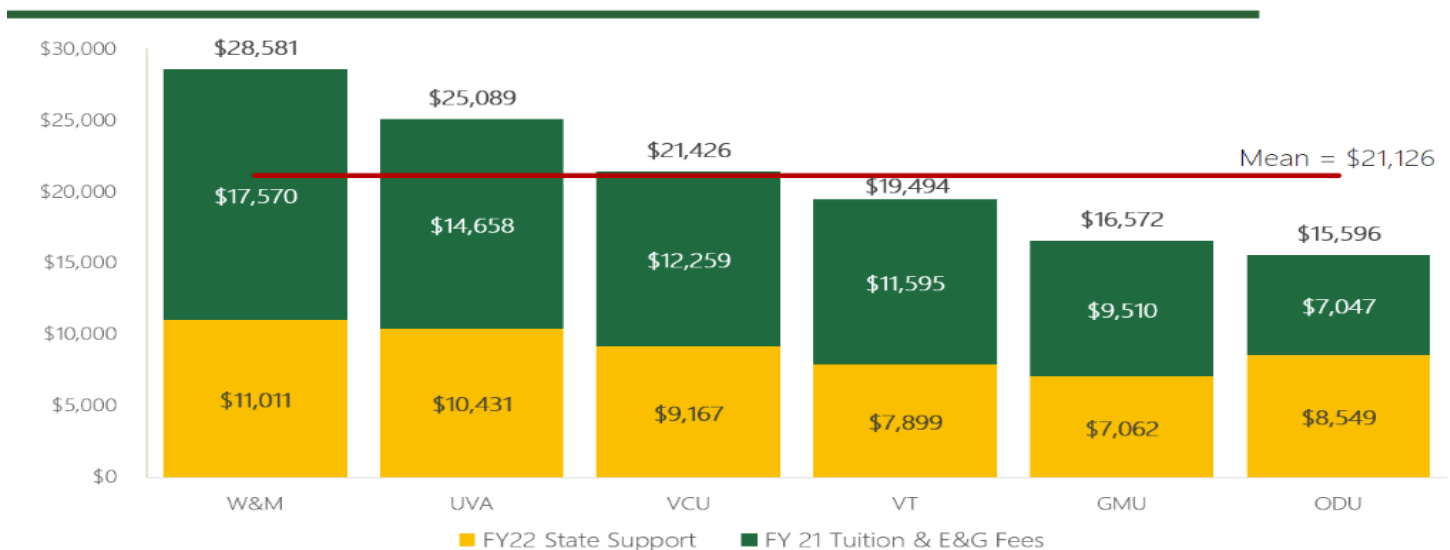
Compensation

George Mason University is grateful for the support of the Governor and the General Assembly for additional compensation appropriated for faculty and staff in FY22. Regular salary increases and competitive compensation are critical for Mason to retain and recruit talented faculty and staff. The university continues to address the challenges of being located in one of the highest cost of living regions in the United States. Mason also must continually contend with the large number of nationally ranked universities and private sector research organizations in Maryland and Washington, D.C. who are hiring away Mason faculty and staff. Mason will work with the Administration and the General Assembly to seek a minimum increase of three percent for the FY23 compensation adjustment. An increase of one percent has a \$5M impact on the general fund (for faculty and staff). Mason’s matching share for every one percent of teaching faculty increase equals \$1.35M.

Disparity Funding

The university has been and continues to be committed to the Commonwealth’s higher education goals for enrollment growth, two-year transfers, and educational program development to support economic growth. Over the past decade, Mason has been a major contributor to the Commonwealth’s growth of in-state enrollment. The current enrollment is more than 39,000 students -- which includes Mason’s largest freshman class in 2021-22 of more than 4,000 students. In addition, Mason continues to welcome the largest transfer student body from two-year institutions numbering more than 3,000 students per year. The Governor and General Assembly have made incremental increases in the base budget for Mason (and ODU) in recent years, but Mason still lags in the average funding level per in-state undergraduate student appropriation as compared to the other Virginia doctoral institutions. Mason will be seeking an additional \$9.1M each year in the upcoming biennial budget. See details on chart below.

Doctoral Institutions Funding Disparities Remain



Capital Outlay

As mentioned above, George Mason University has experienced significant enrollment growth over the past ten years. In comparison, Mason's enrollment has grown during this period by more than two times the total student enrollment at the University of Richmond. Mason has consistently been recognized by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) for effective utilization of classroom and laboratory space. With this enrollment growth, Mason is in critical need of additional academic space and improvements to its technology infrastructure. The top three projects on the current capital outlay six-year plan include:

- **Student Innovation Factory Building:**

This 60,000 square foot building will be a one-story open warehouse space designed to accommodate capstone coursework for science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) students. The learn-by-doing pedagogies associated with STEM programs require increased need for dedicated, secure, weatherproof project space to store equipment and works in progress. Mason is requesting \$30M in the 2022 session.

- **Improve Telecommunications Infrastructure (Phase 3):**

This capital outlay project will be the culmination of a multi-phased upgrade to the telecommunications infrastructure across the University's 119 buildings on all campuses. This project is in response to the student enrollment growth and outdated equipment. Mason is seeking \$14.25M in general funds and \$9.75M in 9(D) bonds in the 2022 session.

- **Interdisciplinary Science & Engineering Building:**

Due in large part to enrollment growth and aging facilities, Mason is seeking approval for a 150,000 square foot interdisciplinary science and engineering building on the Fairfax Campus. Currently, Mason exceeds specialized instructional spaces at twice the recommended SCHEV standards for utilization. This space will address some of the past and anticipated enrollment growth needs at Mason as well as respond to strategic initiatives such as the Commonwealth's Tech Talent Investment Program (TTIP). This five to seven story building will require approximately \$150M in bond authorization.

- **George Mason University 50th Anniversary Commending Resolution:**

George Mason University will celebrate its 50th anniversary on April 7, 2022. As part of the celebration, Mason will seek a commending resolution from the House of Delegates and the Senate of Virginia during the 2022 legislative session.