

# George Mason University Budget Priorities

## 2023 General Assembly Session

### Financial Aid

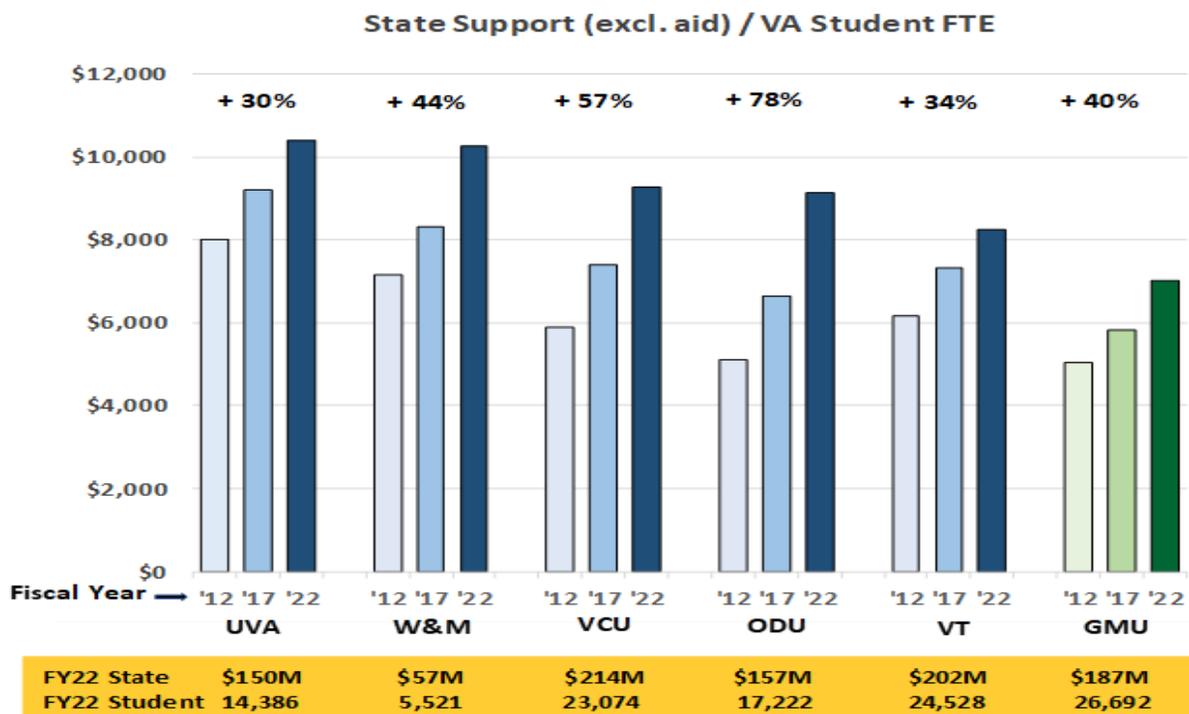
George Mason University is grateful to the Governor and General Assembly for approving a significant increase in financial aid funding in both years of the biennium during the 2022 legislative session. Mason’s appropriation was approximately \$6 million in the first year and nearly \$27 million in the second year. This funding is critically important for Mason’s student body where 24 percent are first generation and 29 percent are eligible for federal need-based Pell Grants, which is greater than the state average. Leadership at Mason will work with state decision-makers to maintain this funding in FY24.

### Compensation

During the 2022 legislative session, the Governor and General Assembly took historic action by approving compensation increases in both years of the biennium at levels not seen in a generation. The 5 percent pay increases each year will help Mason retain and recruit high-quality personnel. Mason will continue to work with the Commonwealth going forward to address compensation and benefit needs in one of the highest cost of living regions in the United States. Mason’s personnel challenge is more daunting when competing against the university-rich adjoining jurisdictions of Washington D.C. and Maryland.

### State Funding Support Disparity

George Mason University is seeking \$18 million in state support to address the long-standing in-state undergraduate state appropriation disparity. While there have been incremental increases in state support over the past decade for Mason, it has been at a lower rate than most of the other Virginia doctoral institutions (see chart below). When state and tuition funding are combined, Mason is nearly \$5,000 per in-state student FTE below the mean of the other five Virginia doctoral institutions.



## Capital Construction Funds

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 two projects on the current capital outlay six-year plan include:

**Student Innovation Factory** – 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 2023 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. Planning and line funding for this project is approximately \$7.4M.

## Maintenance Reserve Appropriation

The University is requesting an approval of \$12 million to aggregate the critical deferred maintenance on facilities. This is the first phase of a three-phase effort to address the deferred maintenance shortfall from the annual allocation of maintenance reserve. The funds will be used on a number of E&G buildings on all campuses. If approved, the funding will be used on the following types of projects:

- Replacement of aging roofs
- Repairs to existing firewalls
- Replacement of failing electrical equipment, fire alarm systems and generators
- Replace HVAC equipment that have reached their useful life
- Replacement of elevators and lifts at the end of their useful life

Mason is the largest public four-year institutions in the Commonwealth. Despite serving the largest number of students, the annual maintenance reserve allocation is an average of 64 percent less than our next closest peers. The University buildings are nearing a 30-year average age. This is the age that most major systems need to be repaired or replaced. Further delay will add to the overall cost of maintenance.