

## Memorandum

October 18, 2012

**Date:** October 18, 2012

**To:** *Mission, Values and the Mason Graduate Working Group Members:*

Peter Pober, Chair	Cathleen Lewandowski
Alison Bowers	Nance Lucas
Kim Eby	Michael Nickens
Jordan Foster	Rose Pascarell
Linda Harber	Stacey Remick-Simkins
Carma Hinton	Padhu Seshaiyer
Eden King	Stephen White

**From:** President Ángel Cabrera and Professor Sarah Nutter, Presidential Fellow

**Subject:** Your Working Group's Charge for Strategic Visioning Process

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Thank you for agreeing to join this important Working Group to help shape the ideas and priorities for our new strategic Vision and to position the University for the future. Your work will be instrumental in crafting our new Vision and will also provide important input to the strategic planning process that we will embark on next year.

### The Context for Your Work

As you know, we have embarked on this strategic visioning process to clarify who we are and guide our future. Our new Vision will include a concise and memorable mission statement, a set of values describing the “The Mason Way” of doing things, a profile of the attributes we wish all of our graduates to share (“The Mason Graduate”), as well as a set of our shared commitments for the next decade. This new Vision and the supporting materials we develop through this process will be the foundation for our next strategic plan and our new comprehensive capital campaign. We will present the Vision document to the board in March 2013 for their approval and immediately thereafter begin the strategic planning process. This is an exciting time for the University and a great opportunity to get all of our constituents united behind a powerful and distinctive Vision for Mason.

The Mission, Values and Mason Graduate Working Group will be responsible for a critical component of this strategic visioning work— *identifying concepts that should be captured by our mission statement, our core values, and signature characteristics of a Mason Graduate*. Ultimately, we will ask you to draft a report summarizing your work. Your work, which is integral to three components of the Vision document, will be used by the Steering Committee to develop the final mission statement, “The Mason Way”, and “The Mason Graduate.” The materials we send to the board will synthesize the output from all the Working Groups, making it integral to the Vision document and the strategy work itself.

## **The Structure of the Work**

Your group, chaired by Peter Pober, Professor of Communications, is expected to meet regularly through the end of the semester to accomplish its tasks and draft your report. You will be asked to consider the following questions as part of this topic:

1. What are the concepts that should be captured by our mission statement?
2. What are the guiding principles or values that we rely on when we are at our best?
3. What can we learn from George Mason's work and ideals that are consistent with our unique history and values?
4. What should be the signature characteristics of a Mason graduate?

The group will work to gather input from a variety of sources—external and internal data sources, and from the community at large—faculty, staff, students, alumni, and the community to answer these questions. Mason Leads will assist in your effort to identify our guiding principles or values. Some of the ways you should consider gathering data from the community include:

- Review of relevant internal and external data and reports
- Focus groups with faculty, staff, and students
- Interviews with key individuals inside and outside the university
- Discussions at departmental, school, faculty and student governance meetings
- A “town hall” meeting with specific constituent groups to get input on these questions
- Online discussions

You will be supported in your work by our Project Manager, Carrie Klein (email: [cklein7@gmu.edu](mailto:cklein7@gmu.edu), phone: 703-993-5399).

## **Timeline**

The Steering Committee will collect all the Working Group inputs before the start of the spring semester, then work to incorporate them into our Vision document. These will be shared back out with the community in February for additional input and reactions, then revised and prepared for the board. We recommend that you think of your work in terms of five brief phases:

1. Clarifying the questions you need to answer
2. Gathering internal and external data and reports
3. Reaching out to engage the community on this issue
4. Consolidating your inputs
5. Drafting your final report and proposed commitment(s)

We want to thank you in advance for your work and for taking on this responsibility on top of an already busy semester. We know that your engagement with the topic and your outreach to the community will be of immense value for the task we have at hand.

## Format and Outline for your report

The format of your report will include a 1-page executive summary, which will describe the concepts that should be captured by our mission statement, our core values, and signature characteristics of a Mason Graduate. The remainder of the report will provide supporting description and analysis related to each issue. In addition, you are welcome to briefly raise any issues that were not addressed or do not have the same immediacy as your key issues but should not be overlooked in the strategic planning process.

The report should not exceed 20 pages, excluding appendices. Please format your document to be single-spaced, with double-space between paragraphs, 12-point Times New Roman font, 1-inch margins, and a footer that indicates your Work Group and page number.

Please use the following outline for your report:

- 1) Executive Summary
- 2) Mission Statement Concepts
- 3) Core Values
- 4) Signature Characteristics of the Mason Graduate
- 5) Additional issues to consider going forward that are beyond scope of this vision process
- 6) References
- 7) Appendices

## Working Group Email Contacts:

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