

UNIVERSITY LIFE IN REVIEW

SUCCEED

Freedom of Expression and care for community go hand-in-hand

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*Fraternity and
Sorority Life*
**Community
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Mason**

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**Harnessing
the Power of
Family**

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Cultivating *growth,* inspiring *innovation*

Friends of the Mason Community,

I entered fall 2023 mindful of the swirling energy that encapsulates each of our campuses. The spark that had dimmed during the pandemic has been reignited – students are connected, curious, and eager to engage. That great sense of vibrancy and vitality serves as my daily reminder to stay present and attuned to our students today, while we simultaneously charge forward, creating the Mason of tomorrow.

The past few years have brought unprecedented opportunities for staff within our division of [University Life](#) to zoom out, hit refresh, and examine

As Mason grows and evolves, we remain laser focused on our vision: Every Student Succeeds.

student needs in new ways. Now more than ever before we are leaning on digital solutions to extend our reach and our impact. We are aligning and re-engineering our work, placing students squarely at the center of our design.

The unique journey of every Mason student matters – and we seek to understand it – so that we can build and support structures that will enable their success.

And you may have heard the news – our enrollment has now surpassed 40,000 students! This remarkable achievement illustrates the influence and impact of a Mason education. At a time when colleges and universities across the globe are experiencing enrollment dips, Mason continues to expand. This is truly a testament to the resilience of our community and the confidence and support garnered from our many partners.

With this elation around Mason's record high enrollment comes a profound sense of responsibility. For University Life, this growth only underscores the urgency of our mission – to cultivate an **Inclusive Thriving Community** where freedom of expression and care for our community go hand-in-hand; **To Engage All Students** through transformative learning and leadership opportunities, empowering them to make an impact on our local community and on the world; to provide **Holistic Student Support Services** that enable well-being, safety, and success; and to optimize our outputs through **Organizational Excellence**, leaning on new technologies and approaches that will transform our work.

This 4th issue of *Succeed* is packed with stories that showcase the talent, grit, and resiliency of our students. It highlights the expertise of our staff and the possibilities that exist through partnership. We in University Life, bolstered by our many collaborators, are pushing ever forward to power Mason's future.

With gratitude,



Rose Pascarell,
Vice President for University Life



ROSE PASCARELL, VICE PRESIDENT FOR UNIVERSITY LIFE (CENTER) WITH MASON ALUMNI, NATHAN PITTMAN (BA '18) AND KEVIN MONNIN (BA '17; MED '20)

This issue of *Succeed* highlights our work in the following areas:

- ✓ Our dual commitments to social justice and freedom of expression;
- ✓ The enduring tradition of bench painting that has nurtured the growth of student organizations over the years;
- ✓ Inspirational stories of students who earned invitations to attend the Clinton Global Initiative University;
- ✓ Our engagement with a thriving international student community;
- ✓ Activation of the visionary Mason Square campus in Arlington, VA, paving a new path by fostering connections with the local community;
- ✓ The embodiment of community service by our Fraternity and Sorority Life organizations;
- ✓ Green Machine's memorable visit to the White House;
- ✓ Partnerships providing real-time growth opportunities for graduates of our Early Identification Program;
- ✓ The rise of a popular new sport, now with dedicated space at Mason;
- ✓ Our electrifying \$1 billion campaign, which promises to make the next 50 years of Mason's history even more impactful than the last.

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SERVING 4 CAMPUSES

425 full-time staff

1,000 total student staff including 51 Graduate Professional Assistants

Over 600 part-time non-student staff



FAIRFAX



MASON KOREA



SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY



MASON SQUARE



We launched a new partnership with the [TimelyCare](#) platform, augmenting Counseling & Psychological Services and [Student Health Services](#) with 24/7 access to virtual mental health care at no cost to students. As of October 2023, over **2,370** students have taken action in support of their mental health by registering for TimelyCare.



Mason has been [recognized by Campus Pride's "Best of the Best"](#) list of the top 40 colleges and universities for LGBTQ+ inclusion, the only school in Virginia with this distinction.

5 Star Premiere Campus rating from Campus Pride for 2023.



George Mason University was chosen by [Generation Hope](#) as **one of 13 institutions to receive the 2023-2026 FamilyU Seal**, recognizing significant strides by Contemporary Student Services and university partners in intentionally serving parenting students.

University Career Services held **7** career fairs engaging over

10,000 Mason students and alumni.

Over **3,700** students participated in **75** career development events across Mason's campuses. Nearly **1,000** students participated in over **60** Employer-led information sessions or networking events.

In 2022-2023:

University Life led

600 events

across all Mason Campuses with nearly **30,000** total engagements.

Students completed

77,625 actions

through the **Patriot Experience**, fostering expanded competencies in Global Citizenship, Career Readiness, and Well-Being.

The Stay Mason Student Support fund distributed

\$2,038,728

to eligible students via

932 awards

Residence halls have bounced back from 83% occupancy in Fall 2021 to

100% occupancy

for Fall 2023!

Student Success Coaches conducted over

6,900 student appointments

with nearly **3,000** unique students.

60 EVENTS took place on the newly activated Mason Square Plaza, with

2,400 total attendees,

including **950** visits from members of the Arlington community.

FREEDOM of EXPRESSION

and care for community
go hand-in-hand

Public institutions of higher education across the nation continue to be quizzed on their dual commitments to social justice and freedom of expression. How can a university community allow potentially polarizing, inflammatory (and perhaps inaccurate) speaker events to occur, while at the same time maintain a firm commitment to creating a just and caring community?

Surveys find that college students believe free speech is critical to democracy; yet students still hold expectations that their institution will curtail any speech that is considered offensive or hurtful. It can be hard to strike a balance.

At Mason, University Life strives to model how freedom of expression and care for community go hand-in-hand.

At the most basic level, the university's leadership has been clear in articulating that freedom of expression is a First Amendment right. Federal and state laws protect this right in all public institutions; higher education is no exception.





Mason, as a public institution, functions as the public square, and in the public square anybody can speak.

“We are bound by a commitment to allowing our community to passionately express their voices in a variety of ways, from protest and counterprotest to civic engagement and voting,” according to Vice President for University Life, Rose Pascarell.

Mason subscribes to the concept of the university serving as public square or home to a multiplicity of ideas and beliefs that are critical to a democratic society. There is no better place for this to occur than at a public university where dialogue, critical thinking, and the exchange of ideas are paramount. The notion that a group’s questionable narrative and language will be scrutinized is of great value in an educational institution.

Pascarell feels that the public square creates a vital learning experience for students, “Our society at its best is not about who yells the loudest; it’s about talking to each other and understanding where others are coming from.”

Historically, the Mason experience has been one where the freedom to gather and speak, regardless of viewpoint, has been central.

- Early meetings around LGBTQ support and activity on campus were met with protest; Pride Alliance-hosted drag shows drew in hecklers at the sidelines, arguing that drag artists were disrespectful and harmful to traditional notions of gender.

- Take Back the Night rallies against sexual assault involved students bravely marching through campus chanting anti-rape messages, while others tried to impede their movement and speech, offended at the notion that women would be openly talking about the details of their rape.

- Students advocating for pro-choice have stood up with their own bullhorns during anti-abortion rallies,

both sides having the opportunity to hear one another

- Student gun control advocates have staged counter-protests amid university-wide and community-involved Second Amendment activities.

- Supporters of the Black Lives Matters movement have staged die-ins in response to the murders of innocent people of color.

- And recently, Mason Students for Life and members of the Black, African Heritage, and Caribbean Coalition have been given a forum to voice their deep disagreement on the use of slavery imagery and narrative as a comparison to abortion.

In many of these instances, the voices heard are often dissident voices. Pascarell emphasizes that “a commitment to freedom of expression as a public institution ensures that all of these events can, will and should occur.”

“Our commitment is to all voices being heard.”

But there does come a price to this. Particularly when the national environment and political climate is rife with examples of incivility, and particularly when we are seeing an increase in hate crimes and bias incidents directed at marginalized communities.

Often times, free expression is used to call into question a group’s deeply held beliefs, experiences, and sense of self – all of which can seriously undermine student well-being. Maintaining a visible commitment to social justice, providing messaging, support, engaging in the revolutionary act of listening, and connecting students to available resources are just as important as a commitment to free expression.

“We try to get folks connected in a constructive, facilitated dialogue so that a minimum students understand what the impact is of their views and beliefs on other folks,” Pascarell said.

And Mason takes this commitment to hearing all voices one step further, by responding with care.

Freedom of expression at Mason is accompanied by a strong commitment to care for members of the community who might feel disparaged or even threatened by someone else’s words.

Even what some might consider hate speech or prejudiced expression is constitutionally protected so long as there is not an immediate threat to safety.

“But with that acknowledgment, we can still create dialogue between students so that the impact of hateful words can be fully understood,” Pascarell said.

Dr. Creston Lynch, Assistant Vice President for University Life, is dedicated to supporting the co-existence of students who bring to Mason a broad range of opinions and positions; this work is underscored by a core value: Diversity is Our Strength.

Under Pascarell’s and Lynch’s leadership, and in partnership with colleagues across every area of the institution, University Life has created an inclusive environment that lets students know Mason is a place that values them and the contributions they make to the campus community – even when people may say otherwise.

“The one thing we must do on the front end is create an inclusive environment where our students feel that, despite hearing things that are counterintuitive to their worldview, Mason is still a place that welcomes and affirms them. It’s essential that we have a record of inclusivity,” said Lynch.

This community of care is especially important given the current political environment that sees people talking past each other at even the highest levels of our government. At Mason, the commitment is to all voices truly being heard, and then acting upon what is heard.

“We try to encourage our students to find some common ground,” Lynch said. “How can you make the connection with someone else’s humanity so that you might be able to have dialogue when it’s appropriate?”

Lynch emphasizes that college campuses do not function in a bubble; opposing beliefs don’t just disappear once students step onto campus.

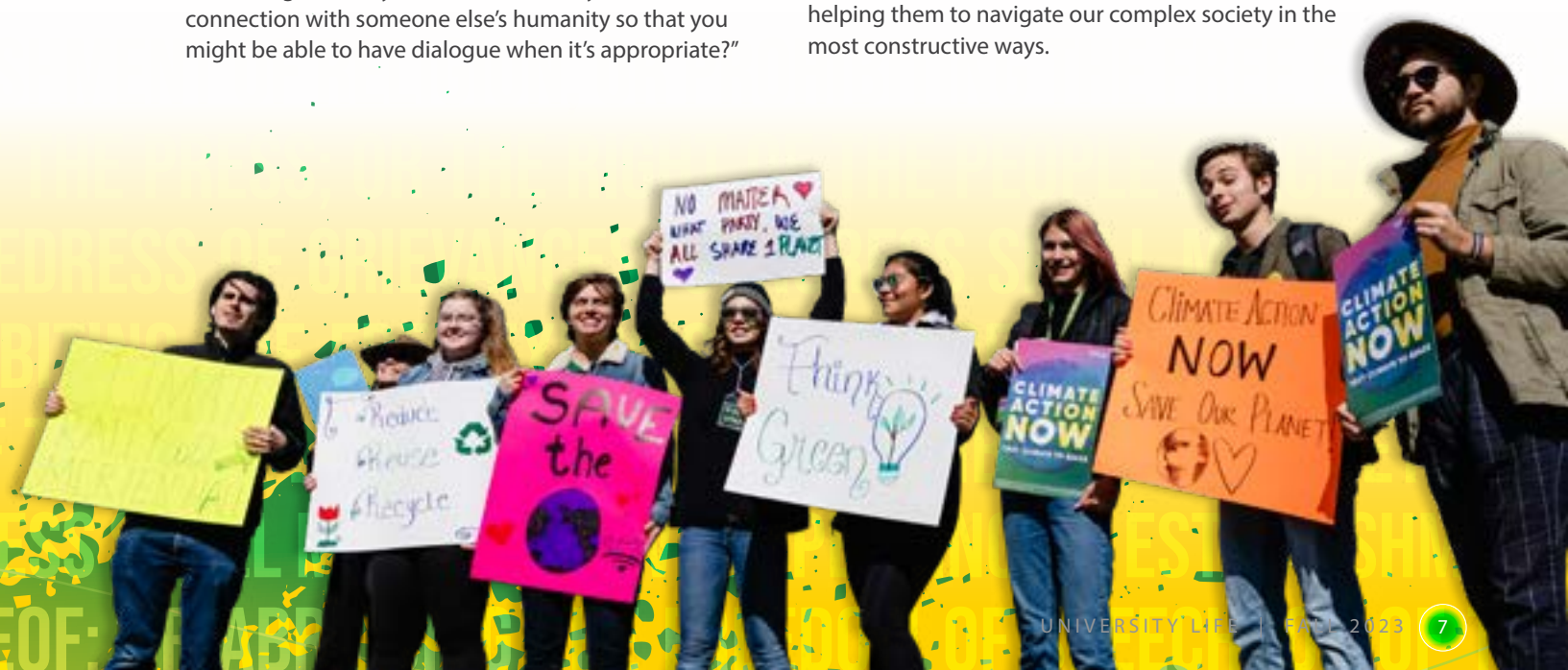
“It’s important for our students to understand that there are going to be opinions and positions in this world that not only challenge their beliefs, but possibly their entire existence,” he said. “Our focus has to include helping them to develop the activism and advocacy skills that will allow them to raise their voices and challenge those ideologies in hopes of creating a better world.”

The answer is working to help students learn to navigate these real-world scenarios by creating opportunities for dialogue, support, and the development of advocacy skills.

A few examples include:

- Meetings between University Life leadership and student groups as an ongoing forum for leaders to dialogue about students’ lived-experiences and concerns.
- Facilitated workshops on topics related to Freedom of Expression, Constructive Dialogue, and Creating Community, with introductions to these topics made during New Student Orientation.
- Collaborative efforts across University Life units aimed at helping students refine their career development and well-being practices.
- Intentional partnerships with faculty members to create experiential learning programs, connecting students to the community in meaningful and supportive ways.

Taken together, the twin values of free speech and a caring community create teachable moments that shape students both now and into the future. When students leave Mason, they will enter the workforce, and are not likely to have the ability to choose their colleagues. Mason provides the preparation and practice students need to learn how to operate alongside those holding deeply oppositional views to their own, ultimately helping them to navigate our complex society in the most constructive ways.



BENCH PAINTING

Unique tradition helps Mason student organizations

THRIVE



The excitement is real when it comes to Mason's decades-long tradition of awarding [Registered Student Organizations](#) the right to paint 55 benches that line the quad in front of the Student Union Building and the walkways between Fenwick Library, Horizon Hall, and Krug Hall.

With more than 450 authorized groups that students can join, the competition is fierce, friendly and rewarding. The bench painting day, held in early May every year, is a hallmark of creating community and a vibrant campus environment.



"The painting day is a party, there's music and food and our students are outdoors having fun and enjoying an event that makes Mason unique," said Ayleen Leonhardt, Assistant Director of Student Registered Student Organizations and Student Governance. "There's a real sense of belonging on that day and for the rest of the year because students and their groups have a chance to be seen on campus."
 "Students who come for orientation over the summer can see what's available and feel like they've made a connection to campus."

Groups must apply for the painting privilege by submitting a design and an explanation of how it fosters the group's mission statement and benefits the Mason community. The color explosions are a welcoming sight on warm days and a bit of cheer when the weather is less than favorable.
 "The designs and the thought put into this project are amazing," Leonhardt said, who noted she has not heard of any other college campus where a similar effort is undertaken. "I'm always amazed and impressed by how talented our students are."

M STUDENT PROFILE

Paul J. Wyche, Lake Mary, FL
 Cyber Security Engineering
 Expected Graduation / May 2025



Student government leader: 'No matter who you are, Mason is for you'

Hailing from Central Florida, more than 800 miles from Fairfax, Paul Wyche was drawn to Mason for its highly rated Cyber Security Engineering degree, a specialization offered by only a handful of colleges nationally.

And what Mason delivered once he stepped onto campus only reaffirmed his choice.

Wyche, now a junior, says his program's reputation has only gotten better since he began his Mason journey. His professional development skills have expanded, and he's had a top-notch social experience while getting involved with a variety of activities – from student government to serving as a Mason Ambassador, conducting tours for prospective and incoming students, Wyche has found meaningful ways to serve his Mason community. He also works on campus with Mason Recreation as Head Lifeguard and Swim Meet Manager at the Aquatic and Fitness Center.

In addition to bountiful opportunities for involvement, Paul points out Mason's inclusive culture, its ability for students to get involved in over 450 registered student organizations or start their own group, and the existing local, state, federal and private partnerships that can lead to internships and jobs.

"Mason is the land of opportunity," said Wyche, who won election as the student body president in spring 2023. "Almost anything you can think of, Mason either has it or can provide you with the opportunities and resources to

make it happen."

One resource Wyche highlights is the Mason Innovation Exchange, known as the MIX, which offers everything from virtual reality systems, laser cutting, 3D printing, sewing machines and more at no extra cost.

After graduation, Wyche hopes to stay in the D.C. metro area working for the federal government or private sector as a cyber security analyst. He'll always be a Mason proponent because of what the university has given him and the connections he's made to the community. Mason can be the answer to anyone's higher education and professional dreams, he says.

"If you want to go to an R1 (Tier 1 Research) institution with adjunct professors who have connections in the federal government and/or private sector, Mason is for you," Wyche said. "If you want to go to an institution that will work with you to make college as affordable as possible, Mason is for you. If you want to go to an institution that celebrates your differences and identity, Mason is for you. If you are the first generation of your family to decide to go to college but want someplace that has resources specifically catered to you, Mason is for you. If you want to be a leader amongst students and create real change on campus, Mason is for you."

"No matter who you are, where you're from, what your economic background is, Mason is for you."

MASON STUDENTS EMERGE FROM NATIONAL CONFERENCE INTENT ON

IMPROVING SOCIETY

To many, an interaction with former U.S. President Bill Clinton would be the highlight of attending an academic and leadership conference focused on developing innovative solutions to the world's pressing challenges.

That's why Pipa Pipa's response about meeting Clinton while attending the three-day event in Nashville, Tennessee is unique.

"It was 20 seconds that I'll always remember because it's not every day that you get to meet and talk to a president," said Pipa. "But the more exciting takeaway is the inspiration that I feel to make a difference in my

“The more exciting takeaway is the inspiration that I feel to **make a difference in my community** and the world based on what I learned and what I have a passion for.”

community and the world based on what I learned and what I have a passion for.”

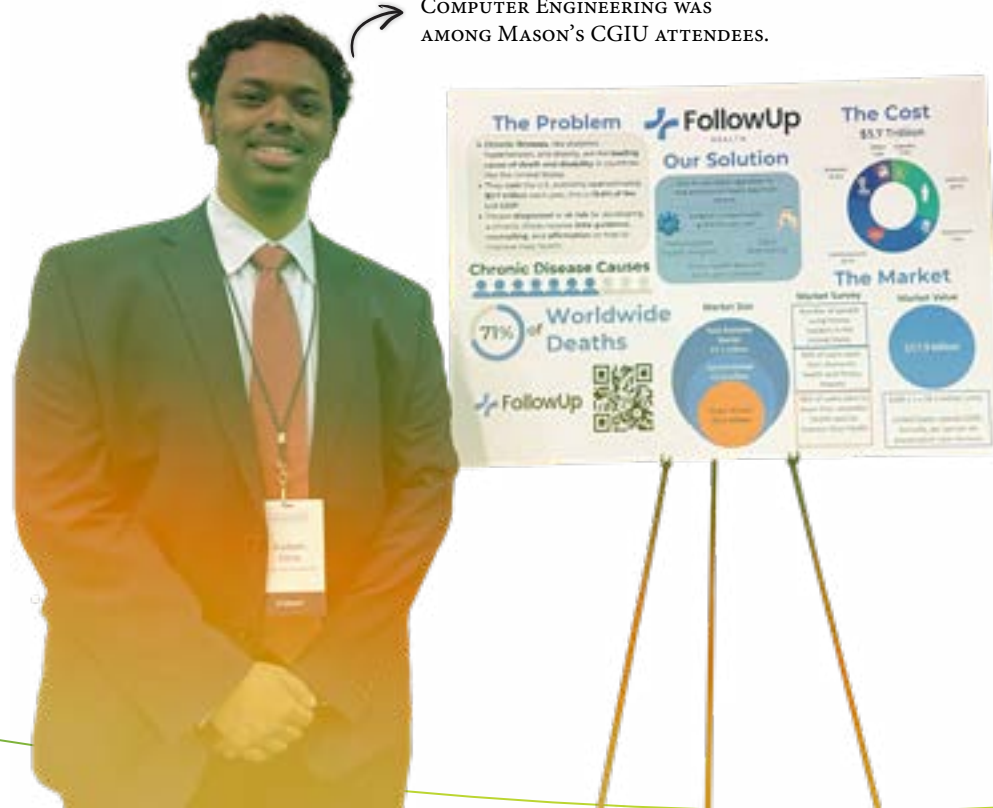
Pipa was one of four Mason students earning an invitation, selected from thousands of applicants, to pitch ideas and brainstorm how to positively impact society for the future at the Clinton Global Initiative University (CGIU) in March. The other Mason students were Aadam Dirie, Liam Keen and Ethan Mercado. Founded in 2007, the CGIU offers

training, mentorship and leadership tracks to help develop skills for the next generation of difference makers.

Pipa, a rising criminology, law and society major who expects to graduate from Mason in May 2024, went to the conference intent on finding a way to abolish the cash bail system in the nation's jails. After engaging with peers, they pivoted and emerged with an even bigger plan to address the vital need to help explain public policy to create change.

Pipa is now in the process of creating Justice – a non-profit organization that educates people about legislation and judicial rulings that affect underserved communities and minority populations. They are looking toward a future that now includes law or graduate

AADAM DIRIE, BS 2020 AND CURRENT MASTERS STUDENT IN COMPUTER ENGINEERING WAS AMONG MASON'S CGIU ATTENDEES.



school in order to establish a career in public service. Pipa said they owe that drive to Mason faculty who encouraged them to apply for the conference and to University Life leadership, who helped make it financially possible. The learning experience at Mason was also a critical component in helping shape goals to improve the lives of others.

"Mason has helped me turn thought into action," Pipa said. "I've been able to tailor my degree and take classes for everything I want to do to eliminate the disadvantages and inequity that so many people experience."

Meanwhile, Liam Keen, who is a sociology major, and Ethan Mercado, a criminology graduate, brought their push to destigmatize and prioritize men's mental health to the conference. The pair founded the Advancement of Men's Mental Health club at Mason and have grown the group to include more than 50 members in under a

semester. "The patriarchy puts a lot of pressure on men to not express their feelings, share emotions, and ask for help. Mens' feelings are valid, and they shouldn't have to always be seen as self-sufficient and self-reliant," Keen said. "There is a need to remove barriers and provide solutions."

Keen felt that the conference could have benefited from more human-centered advancements, a culture they've seen grow at Mason. Many scholars there were focused on entrepreneurial and business ideas. Still, Keen was thankful for the opportunity to make connections and learn at the conference thanks to the assistance from University Life.

"It helped to observe how others are doing things and how we might do things differently," Keen said. "It was a chance to take this general idea we have, bring it into focus, and then take it to the next level."

STUDENT PROFILE

Shivanan Singh, New Grant, Trinidad and Tobago
Master of Science Construction Engineering and Management / May 2023



How free virtual mental health services helped student develop healthy habits

While Shivanan Singh searched for jobs prior to his graduation, he began feeling stressed, uncomfortable, and panicky.

Virtual counseling sessions – available free to Mason students through University Life's partnership with [TimelyCare](#) – provided the help to calm Singh's angst and put him in a better state of mind.

Singh used an app on his phone to access immediate assistance with TimelyCare's 24/7 availability, and then he scheduled long-term weekly appointments.

"The sessions helped me navigate the process of finding employment, overcoming past fears in other jobs and develop healthier habits of accepting change," Singh said, noting he was informed of the service by University Life staff at the SciTech Campus. "It helped me to feel more confident in finding mental care that I regularly need."

TimelyCare is a vital virtual mental health and well-being platform specifically for college students, who can access on-demand support, health coaching, scheduled

counseling sessions, psychiatry appointments and self-care content that support students with schooling and life concerns.

The virtual services are easy to access, and work around college students' busy lifestyles, Singh said. He also had the ability to experiment with multiple counselors to find the right fit. The consistency, timeliness and variety of services were strengths in Singh's eyes.

"For Mason to provide this service, I feel like they care about their students, and that they want their students to be healthy and flourish in their academic endeavors," he said. "I am very thankful to Mason for providing this service."

Singh's advice to Mason students who are considering using TimelyCare for any type of trauma is simple:

"Try it," he said. "Although it may feel uncomfortable at first, be patient with the counselors and yourself, and soon you will acquire the care you seek. Do not give up on your mental health."

International Week engages students from around the globe

Mason's campuses serve as a home away from home for students, whether they hail from Virginia, out-of-state, or are one of roughly 3,400 international students from 127 countries who are a part of the vibrant global learning community.

The [Office of International Programs and Services \(OIPS\)](#), part of a greater university internationalization effort, makes it a point to celebrate cultures and bring people together to engage them socially, culturally, and professionally. OIPS supports international students' development, helps students understand American traditions, and serves as a resource if trouble develops in their home country.



"When the war started in my country, it was really tough for me emotionally. But thanks to the events organized by OIPS, I was able to make friends and feel like I belonged to the bigger Mason community. It felt like being part of a big family, which brought me comfort during such difficult times."



"Mason has given me the opportunity to meet people from different parts of the world. It has enriched my learning experience by allowing me to see new perspectives through other lenses."



"During the Candlelight Vigil for Turkey and Syria, our hearts at George Mason University united, transcending differences in race, religion, and opinions. Witnessing this solidarity event at your college, dedicated to your country, is a truly unforgettable and extraordinary experience."

BY THE NUMBERS

• **42 years:** Mason has sponsored [iWeek](#), which showcases activities, food and cultural awareness programs and events from their home countries.

In 2023:

- **482:** Students participated in the International Buddy Program, pairing students to build connections, explore opportunities and experience life outside of their normal bubble.
- **223:** Students participated in the International Flag Parade on Wilkins Plaza.
- **233:** Students, faculty and staff attended the Tastes Around the World.
- **1,000:** Mason community members attended the International Dance Competition.



STUDENT PROFILE

Marcara Wright, Henrico County, VA
Bachelor of Science Community Health
Expected Graduation / December 2024



On Mason's diverse campus, she helps students find their niche

Coming out of high school, Marcara Wright wanted to be part of a diverse college campus rich in different perspectives. As a Top 10 public university for diversity, Mason seemed the perfect choice.

Yet, enrolling at Mason posed a challenge: Where could she fit in?

Wright often heard the same question working as a Mason ambassador and taking prospective students on campus tours. She decided the best way to answer was to find out firsthand, so she got involved in helping Mason's diverse student body get connected.

Now a senior, Wright is president of BLACC Mason, the Black, African Heritage and Caribbean Coalition. And she works as a student ambassador in the university's Center for [Culture, Equity & Empowerment](#) (CCEE). Both entities support the work of student organizations representing marginalized communities on campus.

"I want to make sure we are being as inclusive as

possible," Wright said. "It's important that we have a voice and are being heard."

In addition to her on-campus work, Wright traveled with CCEE staff to South Africa this past summer to study social justice. She also has visited Kenya for research projects related to her major in community health. On her latest trip in July, Wright set up tick traps and learned about vector-borne disease.

The overseas experiences are invaluable as Wright wraps up her degree and applies to master's programs in public health. The trips have also given her more exposure to diverse cultures, making her better prepared to advocate for underrepresented students. With these experiences, she's better able to answer that question about fitting in on campus.

"People are definitely able to find their niche at Mason," Wright said. "It's all about people wanting to go out and explore the opportunities and resources."

Activating in Arlington:

How Mason Square charts a bold new path

Yard games. Yoga classes. Story times for children. Live musical performances. A reading cart stocked with daily newspapers.

These were among the unorthodox solutions the University Life team at [Mason Square](#) (formerly known as Mason's Arlington campus) implemented when students returned to campus for in-class instruction following the global COVID-19 pandemic. The urban campus located just outside of D.C. is a magnet for graduate-degree seekers or professionals furthering their education in some of the region's leading and most challenging careers.

The goal was to create a campus environment for students that was more than simply a spot for coming to class only for them to turn around and go right back home. And on top of that, university leaders tasked this typically student-focused engagement team with another challenge: How to get community members throughout the Rosslyn-Ballston corridor to buy-in and be a part of Mason Square even if they had no other natural tie to the campus?

"We knew we had to build a sense of belonging and have a profound switch to how the campus operated and what it provided for students," said Melissa Theiry, Director of Regional Campuses for University Life.

"We wanted to enhance the user experience for students as well as for our neighbors, and that led us to be intentional about place-making. We opened the campus to everyone."

University Life, along with a team of collaborators based at Mason Square worked to establish standing, weekly and special events to build a culture of inviting people to campus for recreation, entertainment, and cultural experiences.

Sophie Gorshenin, Assistant Director of Regional Campuses for University Life, said the programming had to be structured such that people could drop in and out as necessary. Catering to people's availability gives them the leeway to invest in activities without committing to an entire

prescribed or scheduled event. Many students have families or careers and are pressed for time.

"Every program on the plaza is come at your convenience, and people have responded favorably," Gorshenin said.

Gorshenin recalls initial yoga classes having only a handful of people. Subsequent classes captured more and more people, and afterward people would engage in conversations or have a coffee together."

"It was exciting to see," she said.

Fuse at Mason Square announced; what is it?

The exchange of ideas and interactions of a professional and personal nature on the plaza will soon get a massive boost with the expected 2025 opening of Fuse at Mason Square, a 345,000-square-foot cutting-edge tech, research and entrepreneurial center.

The campus, which is already home to the Antonin Scalia Law School, the Schar School of Policy and Government, the Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for

Peace and Conflict Resolution among other programs, will house a first-of-its-kind public-private partnership.

The new Fuse space will house Mason learning labs, private business developers, and commercial researchers, who will be rubbing elbows with each other across the building's footprint. The collaboration is ready-made for natural collisions, where students and faculty will be surrounded by industry experts, and those expert leaders will have direct exposure to new ideas, up-and-coming research, and future talent. It will be an ecosystem that fosters innovation.

"You're going to have people in the same hallways and classrooms and labs learning from each other and taking everything to the next level," Thierry said. "We are so excited to see the possibilities and impact that can have."

“Mason students will truly have access to some of the best and brightest in the world.”

M STUDENT PROFILE

Emily Crawford, Reno, Nevada
Masters of Public Policy with an
emphasis on education policy / May 2023



Support at Mason Square propels student's graduate experience

When entering Mason as a graduate student amid the COVID-19 pandemic and while working full time, Emily Crawford's campus involvement could have been seriously limited.

She chose the opposite course of action, diving in and becoming part of the community fabric at Mason Square in Arlington. She served as an ambassador for University Life and was vice president of the Graduate and Professional Student Association in addition to taking an aggressive course of classes.

"Getting involved gave me close confidants, advisors, and cheerleaders who supported me in ways I didn't even know I needed," Crawford said. "They gave me a reason to show up to campus and show up to class. I still look to them today for mentorship and friendship."

Crawford was able to work her way through graduate school accumulating zero student debt because of ample scholarship aid from Mason. She selected the university for its high-quality education and the high regard for its graduates. Crawford said Mason provides flexible

programs and learning plans for every type of student. The campuses are a focal point and create a close environment where "you won't feel alone in a sea of students."

Mason Square, Crawford said, is in the middle of Arlington's best food, restaurant, and entertainment scene, and its location on the metro line made it convenient and connected to northern Virginia and D.C. Crawford said Mason Square's plaza is a prime asset for students and the community.

"It is a welcoming space with areas to connect to technology and people pretty much all day every day," Crawford said.

She'll be able to do that even after her recent graduation. Her Mason experience helped her land a position as Director of Federal Advocacy with the Los Angeles-based firm, Vectis Strategies. While it is headquartered in California, Crawford will stay close to Mason.

"I am excited to stay in the Washington, D.C., area and grow my policy experience," she said.



Fraternity and Sorority LIFE

Fraternity brothers and sorority sisters commit to 'bettering our community and ourselves'

Alex Williams remembers taking part in the ALS Ice Bucket Challenge as a middle schooler, and he didn't expect to relive that happy memory when he enrolled at George Mason University. Yet, it wasn't long before Alex was standing in the middle of campus and getting pelted with water balloons by passersby who donated a few bucks.

It was silly. Sophomoric, even. But the nostalgic stunt raised money for ALS research, and it let people know that he and his Phi Delta Theta brothers were serious about making a positive impact in the community and the broader world.

"Working toward bettering our community and ourselves is the core principle of our organization," said Alex, now a junior and fraternity president. "It's a privilege that has given me more experiences and knowledge than I could have even imagined when I came to school."

The thought of college fraternities and sororities might fill your mind with caricatures of wild parties and

raucous behavior. What often goes understated about fraternity and sorority life, however, is a longstanding and ongoing commitment to community service.

About 1,000 students at Mason are involved in [40 different fraternity and sorority organizations](#), each with a charitable aspect of their mission. It made sense for the Phi Deltas to riff on the Ice Bucket Challenge with their Splash-A-Phi fundraiser, for example, because the fraternity's primary philanthropic goal is raising money and awareness to battle ALS. They also help Northern Virginia families affected by ALS with tasks such as lawn work and home maintenance.

Other fraternities and sororities at Mason have a different humanitarian focus, such as Chi Omega sorority's support of the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

"Every single organization does something different in their own way, but it all encompasses service and



TAU KAPPA EPSILON

\$10,000
raised for St. Jude
Children's Research
Hospital

Volunteered
to help package
200 meals
for food-insecure
people in
Washington D.C.

Partnered with a
D.C. neighborhood
that helped with
**voter
registration**

PHI BETA SIGMA

Volunteered
to help clean out homes
and move furniture for
refugees
coming to Northern
Virginia

PHI IOTA ALPHA



“It’s really helped me become a much more well-rounded person.”

education,” said Ella Jackson, President of the Alpha Kappa Alpha Chapter and Vice President of the National Pan-Hellenic Council of Black Fraternities and Sororities at Mason.

“I’ve come out a better person for it.”

Scope and scale of community service runs deep and wide

Fraternities and sororities at Mason undertake a wide variety of community service initiatives, from making hats for cancer patients to picking up trash along roads near campus:

- **Tau Kappa Epsilon** raised \$10,000 for St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.
- **Kappa Phi Gamma** volunteered with So Others Might Eat to package 200 meals for food-insecure people in Washington, D.C..
- **Phi Beta Sigma** helped FACETS clean out homes and move furniture for refugees coming to Northern Virginia.
- **Phi Iota Alpha** partnered with a D.C. neighborhood on a block party that included voter registration and STI testing.
- **Alpha Kappa Alpha** provided breakfast to residents at The Lamb Center, a day shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

“We bought the food. We cooked the food. We served the food. And people said, ‘thank you,’” Jackson said. “Oh, my goodness, my heart. That was powerful.”

While each fraternity and sorority has its own benevolent priority, they also team up for Founders Fridays when brothers and sisters from across campus come together for joint service projects. One of last year’s events involved spending a few hours at nearby Daniel’s Run Elementary School teaming up with the nonprofit Lands and Waters to remove invasive species, plant native trees and spread mulch in the outdoor living and learning spaces.

Students get to see the world from a new perspective through those hands-on experiences, said Phil McDaniel, Associate Director of Student Involvement.

“Leadership development is a big piece of our fraternities and sororities,” he said. “These types of opportunities allow for that to happen and help us create global citizens.”

Personal impact is immediate and ongoing

Avery Shippen didn’t know anybody when she came to Mason from Nashville, Tenn. By joining Chi Omega, she instantly added a few dozen sorority sisters into her phone’s contacts. It was nice to always see familiar faces around campus.

Beyond that, the sorority’s community service helped Avery settle in and get to know Fairfax as if it were her hometown. Chi Omega even raised enough money for Make-A-Wish to grant a local family’s wish for a pontoon boat.

“I absolutely loved my first-year experience because of fraternities and sororities life,” said Avery, now, Panhellenic Council’s assistant vice president of recruitment and a member of the Panhellenic Council’s executive board. “We’re not just parties. (A fraternity or sorority) is truly an organization where you meet people with the same values as you, who hope to achieve a lot.

“It’s really helped me become a much more well-rounded person.”

STAFF Spotlight

Yali Pan (She/Her)

B.A., Tourism English, Xi’an International Studies University, China, 2007
 M.A., International Education Policy, University of Maryland, College Park 2009
 Ph.D., International Education Policy, University of Maryland, College Park 2014



Associate Director for Engagement and Assessment, International Programs and Services

Q: What is one piece of advice you would give to students?

Jonathan: New students should give themselves some grace, be patient, and not be too hard on themselves early on. Current students should always remember their “why.” During the good days or bad days, they should never lose sight of why they are here at Mason.

Yali: The world is much more interconnected than ever before, so it is essential that our students develop intercultural communication skills and global competency. I would highly encourage our students to take advantage of all the global learning opportunities at Mason, whether it be taking a foreign language class, participating in a study abroad program, or simply making friends from other countries.

Q: What is the most interesting project you’ve worked on during your tenure at Mason?

Jonathan: Hands down, International Week! From the Flag Parade to the Registered Student Organization and Departmental events, all the way to the annual International Dance Competition. Coordinating International Week has been so much fun for me!

Yali: Working with my colleagues across campus on International Week (iWeek). When I first learned about iWeek, I was impressed by Mason’s commitment to celebrating our international community. I have been fortunate to work at an institution that truly values the immense contributions of our international community.

Q: What has been your proudest accomplishment while serving in your current role?

Jonathan: Coordinating all of the New International Student Orientations since 2019. I take the responsibility of welcoming new international students very seriously, and I am fully aware of how crucial my role is in setting the tone for their journey at Mason. In a way, I am the first friend some of the students will have both at Mason and in the United States.

Yali: Ensuring that the engagement team that I oversee works cohesively as a small but mighty team, with open communication and high team morale. I am so glad to bring care and empathy to work and see it making a difference in staff well-being.

Q: What are your hopes for future Mason students?

Jonathan: My hope is that more scholarship and job opportunities are created for international students so they can continue preparing for life after Mason whether that is in the United States or in their home countries. I also hope to one day have the support and funding to create an international student center or lounge on campus, where we can celebrate the diversity of our students.

Yali: I hope that students will take advantage of opportunities to develop global competency, whether by participating in study abroad programs, or participating in Office of International Programs and Services (OIPS) programs, such as the International Buddy Program. I hope there will be more funding available to help international students succeed, as international students are often not eligible for financial aid. Likewise, funding to help international students pursue internships or on-campus jobs while at Mason will help prepare them for the workforce.

Jonathan Carmona (He/Him)

BA, Global Affairs, George Mason University, 2015
 MA, Global Affairs, George Mason University, 2017

Assistant Director for International Engagement, International Programs and Services



GREEN MACHINE *takes the* WHITE HOUSE

For nearly four hours in the spring of 2023, the [Green Machine](#) entertained thousands at the White House Easter Egg roll. This special invitation came as a result of a recently established connection with the U.S. Secretary of Education's Special Projects Division.

The impressive student ensemble shared their passion for music at this prestigious event, and as always, brought the energy and fun! Ensemble members also had the opportunity hear from First Lady Dr. Jill Biden and President Biden when they addressed event attendees on the South Lawn.

The Green Machine strives for inclusivity in all they do.

Regardless of skill level, student members are welcomed as long as they have a positive attitude and come with a desire to participate and learn. The award-winning pep band has expanded their instrumentation over the past decade and a half, with strings, harp, guitar, keyboard, mallet percussion, auxiliary percussion, vocalists, rappers, and scratch deejays. In addition to providing a joyful experience for all who participate, Green Machine membership fosters important job skill development as students perform in high-visibility, high-pressure, professional settings.

And this all takes place under the guise of having a good time. Imagine that!



GREEN MACHINE'S CREATIVE APPROACH TO MUSICAL ARRANGEMENTS, DIRECTION, MEDIA DOCUMENTATION, AND PERFORMANCE HAS PRODUCED A SERIOUS BODY OF WORK THAT ATTRACTS THE ATTENTION OF ORGANIZATIONS LIKE THE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, THE WASHINGTON NATIONALS AND WIZARDS AND THE NATIONAL SYMPHONY, AS WELL AS THE SURROUNDING FAIRFAX COMMUNITY.



Corporate partners offer REAL-TIME EXPERIENCES to Early Identification Program graduates



By: Anne Reynolds, Director of Advancement Communication, Office of University Advancement and Alumni Relations

Mason's [Early Identification Program](#) (EIP) is one of the university's college access programs. Since 1987, it has provided academic enrichment, personal and social development, civic engagement, and leadership training opportunities to middle and high school students who will be the first in their families to attend college. EIP students come from minority and low-to-moderate income families, and often lack the academic preparedness and support structure necessary to achieve college admission or graduation. Mason partners with seven public school districts in Virginia and works with 750+ students in grades 8 to 12 and their families, taking a holistic approach to successfully navigate post-secondary education. Each spring, EIP students graduate from the program as they graduate from high school, and many of them matriculate at Mason.

"EIP exists to serve the community," said Khaseem Davis, EIP Director. "Our goal is to provide support to students that will enable them to overcome opportunity gaps that often impact under resourced communities. We work to fulfill the promise of education by making sure our students develop the skills to approach and succeed in a university setting, and beyond, so that they can develop—academically, socially, and personally—into productive global citizens. The very citizens our community needs."

The generosity of corporate partners has had a meaningful impact on EIP's ability to support EIP alumni at Mason.

As it serves the Northern Virginia community, the work of the EIP is made possible because of the generous support it receives from that community. Through its partnerships with public school systems, funding from individual donors, and corporate alliances, the program has been able to continue to grow and serve the needs of the students of Northern Virginia.

The generosity of corporate partners has had a meaningful impact on EIP's ability to support EIP alumni at Mason. In 2022, the university announced that it was one of seven schools chosen by the Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation to share more than \$1 million over three years in support of Hispanic students. Mason, which will receive \$50,000 per year as part of the Promesa: Hispanic Higher Education Initiative, appreciates the major gift, which supports EIP alumni who identify as Latinx and choose to study at the university.

Now, Mason is proud to announce that CACI International Inc, a \$6.7 billion national security company that provides expertise and technology to U.S.

government customers headquartered in Reston, Virginia, has made a gift of \$200,000 to establish the CACI Scholars program.

CACI has been a longtime friend to Mason. The company has been a generous sponsor of Mason's College of Engineering and Computing, and welcomes many Mason students as interns each year. CACI also employs hundreds of Mason graduates.

The CACI Scholars initiative will support 10 students who are alumni of the EIP program, enrolled at Mason, and pursuing degrees in computer science, electrical engineering, or mechanical engineering. These scholars are identified by EIP in their senior year in high school and are welcomed into a cohort-based model designed to support their long-term academic and career success.

Each of the CACI Scholars will receive an annual scholarship or book award to reduce the cost of tuition and related fees if the full need is not met through the student's financial aid package and/or through a [Mason Virginia Promise Grant](#), designed to close remaining financial gaps for standard undergraduate tuition after all other gift aid has been applied. They will receive a stipend to assist with the cost of at least one high-impact career readiness practice such as attending a conference, completing a certification, or conducting research.

They also work with a dedicated [Mason Success Coach](#) who will develop targeted strategies for exploring academic programs, engaging with the campus community, and meeting milestones for timely degree completion. Dedicated peer mentors will provide tailored support for first-generation student success, and each scholar will have access to a University 100 transition course to facilitate a seamless transition to Mason during the student's first semester.

Within CACI, each CACI Scholar is connected with a dedicated mentor who can provide first-hand knowledge of the industry and company. The scholars will be eligible for a paid internship experience at CACI in a job that is related to the student's degree program or area of interest.

CACI Scholars will also have access to cohort-based programming, hosted by EIP, CEC, and CACI, focused on academic success, identity exploration, sense of belonging, and personal and professional growth.

The goals of the program are ambitious - the hope is that participation in the initiative will result in the scholars remaining continuously enrolled in a full-time, degree-seeking program at Mason until completion of their degree, graduate from Mason within a six-year timeframe from the date of matriculation, develop key soft and hard skills necessary to succeed in a STEM-related career upon graduation, develop and utilize core academic success skills necessary to succeed in college and beyond, develop key competencies related to the



Through this partnership with Mason, we are empowering and building the next generation of STEM talent within our community. We realize that many of these students face obstacles in their pursuit of a college education and we want to help remove some of these barriers."

— Jeana Plews, CACI's Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.



success coaching relationship, develop strong, rooted relationships through peer and professional mentoring and cohort-based programming, and obtain a STEM-related position upon graduation as part of the next phase in their professional career.

Glenn Kurowski, CACI's Chief Technology Officer, is actively involved in the CACI Scholars' experience, and stressed the importance of widening the pipeline for workers skilled in technology. "I love working with students on their technical learning path, and love getting others in our company engaged with the next generation of talent," said Kurowski. "Experiential learning is the key to developing passion and engagement around your area of study – and that leads to a highly successful career."

"We are extremely excited about our partnership with Mason and the creation of the CACI Scholars program, which is the first of its kind. Through this partnership with Mason, we are empowering and building the next generation of STEM talent within our community. We realize that many of these students face obstacles in their pursuit of a college education and we want to help remove some of these barriers," said Jeana Plews, CACI's

Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

"A partnership like this truly complements the students' educational experience," said Davis. "Our EIP students have worked extremely hard to get to this point, to enrolling at Mason. This opportunity to work with CACI helps them to imagine what's possible on the other side of their university experience. It gives them something to keep working towards after college."

Plews understands how mentorship and exposure to industry can help to broaden the CACI Scholars' possible career paths. "We want to provide students hands-on opportunities to learn about CACI and the different technical career paths available as they work towards their degrees."

The first cohort of CACI Scholars was enrolled during the 2023 fall semester. Plews attended the May 2023, EIP graduation ceremony for the rising college students, and shares their high hopes. "The inspirational stories told by these Mason students and alumni of the program were moving and impactful. The CACI Scholars program will continue this momentum and ensure that future generations of technical talent have the same opportunities as previous awardees."

M STUDENT PROFILE

Kevin Velazquez-Lazaro, Arlington, VA
(Wakefield HS) High School Student
Expected Mason Entrance / Fall 2025



Program benefiting future Mason students provides an early look at University Life

Kevin Velazquez-Lazar explains his Mason experience as helping him become a better person and student, enriching his world-view perspective and allowing him to form connections for life.

All that and Velazquez-Lazaro, 16, isn't even formally enrolled in classes.

The Wakefield High School student has been exposed to the Patriot way through Mason's Early Identification Program, an office of University Life. Velazquez-Lazaro joined during his 8th grade year and has been active since, taking part in academic mentoring, a STEM session, a summer academy and an Institute for Excellence session during the 2023 summer.

The programs have put him on Mason's Fairfax campus and have had a profound impact.

"This helped me learn a lot about college life and how to create connections with those around me," Velazquez-Lazaro said. "This program pushed me to be more open as a person and have some good connections with people I knew, and thanks to this program I have created some nice relationships with friends, mentors, and even the director of the program."

"EIP can be a life-changer for many first-generation families, and I highly recommend this program. This program will help you in different aspects, not just the educational side, but also the personal, emotional, and business side of life and school."

Velazquez-Lazaro said entering Mason in Fall 2025 holds excitement for him as he will deepen the ties he's made and create more relationships with fellow students and mentors for years to come.

What's the Dill with Pickleball?



University Life and [Mason Recreation](#) celebrated the grand opening of Mason's brand-new pickleball courts this summer. The kickoff event was a tremendous success, showcasing learn-to-play sessions, drills, open play, and a ribbon cutting ceremony to kick off the event.

Invented in 1965, pickleball is a combination of tennis, badminton, and ping-pong. Using a badminton-sized court with a modified tennis net, players volley a plastic ball with holes back and forth over the net using paddles. It is now one of the fastest growing sports in the United States.

"University Life and Mason Recreation made this innovative and strategic investment to cultivate engagement and to support Mason's university-wide commitment to faculty, staff, and student well-being," said Associate Vice President of University Life, Dr. Pam Patterson. "These state-of-the-art pickleball courts are creating new opportunities for students, faculty, staff, and local community members to engage with one another due to the highly social nature of the sport."

"I think particularly in the last two years, that popularity has increased dramatically across more age groups, including college students," said Rose Pascarell, Vice President for University Life. "University Life's core goal is to create an inclusive, thriving community, and pickleball can really be at the center of that because it is truly a sport that is open to all," Pascarell said.

"One of the things we really encourage [for students] is interaction outside of the classroom. This is going to

be a perfect opportunity for interactions to take place more organically," said Paul Bazzano, Assistant Director of Competitive Sports & Athletic Training.

"We offer drop-in play on certain courts for more advanced players and courts assigned for a more beginner level, so folks play with others on their own skill level," said Lee Ann Houston, Assistant Director of Facility Operations.

"We are thrilled to have had the opportunity to transform our old tennis courts into these new and vibrant pickleball courts," Patterson said.

Mason's pickleball courts are behind the Recreation Athletic Complex (RAC) on Fairfax Campus. Memberships are required for use—those with facility memberships are also eligible to utilize the pickleball courts as part of their membership.



Learn more about the [pickleball courts](#) on the Mason Recreation website.



SCAN ME

POWER

Mason's FUTURE

In April, George Mason University launched [Mason Now: Power the Possible](#), a one-billion-dollar comprehensive campaign that will ensure Mason's next 50 years are even more impactful than its first 50.

Student success is at the center of the campaign's initiatives, which means the work of University Life is at the forefront. Several high-priority areas have been identified that will elevate University Life's ability to serve students as they create their futures

at Mason. Campaign goals will enable University Life to reimagine and implement comprehensive service delivery models for students to support their well-being, safety, and success, and will enhance institutional and community-wide partnerships that improve campus climate and support students from diverse populations. To learn more about the Campaign for George Mason University, visit gmu.edu/masonnow.

University Life Campaign Priorities:

- ✓ Expanding the Early Identification Program
- ✓ Fostering Student Mental Health and Well-Being
- ✓ Establishing a Basic Needs Center
- ✓ Responding to Emerging Needs of Contemporary Students
- ✓ Promoting Freedom of Expression and Care for the Community



Power What's Next: If we are to reach our full potential, we need a level of financial support that matches our ambitions. To make a gift in support of University Life and our students, visit ulife.gmu.edu or contact **Kaitlin Cicchetti, PhD, Director of Advancement for University Life** at koyler@gmu.edu



DONOR PARTICIPATION



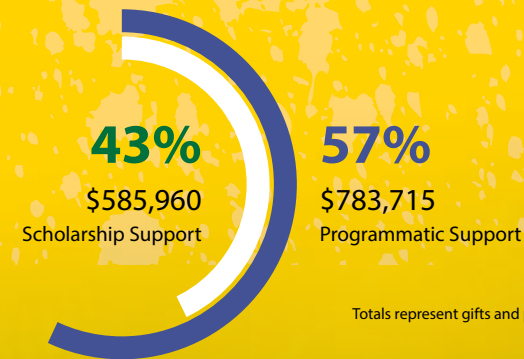
Percentages represent the amount donated from each constituency.

51
University Life initiatives received gifts



784
Donors

GIVING BY AREA OF IMPACT:



Totals represent gifts and pledges made in fiscal year 2023 (July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023).



Harnessing the power of

FAMILY

By: Anne Reynolds, *Director of Advancement Communication, Office of University Advancement and Alumni Relations*

Family ties brought Colonel Tom Johnson, USMCR (Retired), to George Mason University, and his dedication to Mason's community has made an impact on countless Mason families, thanks to two of his daughters.

Molly Johnson transferred to Mason in 2018, earned her bachelor's degree in early childhood special education in 2019, and her master's degree in elementary education in 2022. She is now a teacher with Fairfax County Public Schools. In 2021, Melissa Johnson came to Mason as a graduate assistant. She received a master's

“What’s wonderful is the support and the safety net that exists here.”

degree in higher education in May 2023 and is now the assistant director of new student programs at Mason.

During his daughters' Mason experience, Johnson has been an active member of the [Parent and Family Council](#) (PAFC). PAFC, administered by University Life, invites parents and families to participate in the university community and serves as a bridge between the university and prospective and current families.

“I wanted to learn more about the community and participate to the extent I could with what’s happening at the university,” said Johnson. “I brought a different perspective, coming from a 35-year career with the State Department and the military. My dad had been in the higher education business, and I wanted to get back to that, and this was my best opportunity to do so. That was the initial motivation, and I didn’t know how good it could be.”

The council comes together twice a year and meets with campus leaders such as President Gregory Washington, Vice President for University Life Rose Pascarell, and the Green Machine’s Director, Michael Nickens.

“The parents get a chance to ask questions and give input... and then during the course of the year we write articles for the website about different things: homesickness or tutoring needs” and other issues of interest to students’ families.

With the daughters’ graduations from Mason, the Johnson family has made other lasting contributions, creating two scholarships designed to assist a special group of Mason students.

The Dr. K. Richard Johnson Memorial Scholarship for Veterans was established in memory of Johnson’s father, a college professor who became the president of the National College of Education (later National-Louis University) in Evanston, Illinois, the oldest private

“It’s a chance to get insights into the place where your child is going to school.”

– Colonel Tom Johnson, USMCR



elementary teachers’ college in the United States. It provides scholarship support to veterans, with a preference for Marines and Navy Hospital Corpsmen who served with the Marines, who are seeking licensure in elementary or early childhood education.

Johnson and his daughters have also established the Colonel Tom Johnson Family Scholarship for Veterans to assist undergraduate students who are veterans—with a preference for Marines or Navy Hospital Corpsmen who served with Marines—with the expenses of unpaid internships. Recognizing the importance of internship experience, Johnson aims to make that experience possible for veteran students.

Johnson is enthusiastic about how Mason serves its students, including its military students. “What’s wonderful is the support and the safety net that exists here,” he said. And he encourages other families to become involved through the PAFC.

“It’s a chance to get insights into the place where your child is going to school... you’re going to find out an awful lot about Mason and how everything works.”



To learn more about the [Parent and Family Council](#) including how to join, scan the QR code:





BRINGING SOLUTIONS HOME

Mason and Capital Area Foodbank partner to address food insecurity

By: Anne Reynolds, *Director of Advancement Communication, Office of University Advancement and Alumni Relations*

In spring 2023, the George Mason University community came together on [Mason Vision Day](#) (MVD), a day of focused philanthropy, to mitigate food insecurity on its campuses. Recognizing that food security is an important component of student success, funds

“We started from a place of understanding...”

– Sabrina Tadele, *Director of Strategic Initiatives at CAFB*

raised on MVD helped to secure meal vouchers for on-campus dining, provide gift cards for local grocery stores, and to supply the university’s Patriot

Pantry, which is operated by the Student Support and Advocacy Center within University Life.

This year, University Life welcomed a new partner in these efforts: the Capital Area Food Bank (CAFB). CAFB is a hunger relief organization that works with community partners throughout the Washington metropolita region to provide access to food and opportunity to people struggling with hunger and food insecurity. As part of Mason’s MVD efforts, the food bank matched \$30,000 of the funds raised in the form of credits in its online ordering portal, thus offering access to a greater variety of foods.

CAFB is now extending its partnership with Mason through the introduction of home delivery of healthy groceries free of charge to students experiencing food insecurity and their households.

“We started from a place of understanding that students have a lot of demands being put on their time and on their resources and began with the simple premise that addressing food needs would increase their success rates,” said Sabrina Tadele, Director of Strategic Initiatives at CAFB.

CAFB has offered a similar service on certain community college campuses; the program is currently running at Prince George’s Community College in Largo, Maryland.

At Mason, CAFB will deliver to the university pre-boxed shelf-stable groceries and fresh produce on a biweekly basis for up to 60 students. These boxes will be delivered to students’ homes within a 15-mile radius of the campus. To accomplish the deliveries, CAFB has teamed with DoorDash, a technology company that delivers food, groceries, and household products from stores and restaurants in more than 25 countries around the world. DoorDash “has been very, very generous with nonprofits, including the whole national network of food banks,” said Tadele.

Mason staff will administer the operations of the program on campus, filling orders, and arranging for delivery to students. Equally important, Mason provides information to measure the impact of the program on students’ health and related academic outcomes.

“Evaluation is foundational for us,” said Tadele. CAFB conducts surveys with students at the beginning and end of each semester to measure the degree of a student’s food insecurity, as well as students’ subjective measures of well-being: physical health, mental health, and ability to focus in class. Mason will provide academic data with anonymized identifiers, including information on students’ enrollment intensity, time to graduation, and attrition and retention. “We spent a lot of time with our evaluation specialist designing the surveys the students will receive,” said Tadele. “We have to be able to understand whether it works or not.”

At the heart of the program is Mason’s and CAFB’s shared objective to help students take part in an economically thriving community on a larger scale. “One of our broader goals with these partnerships is that we want to give students the support they need to finish their programs and then earn living-wage jobs and be able to contribute to our local economy. It’s a cyclical effect,” said Grace Brown, CAFB Strategic Initiatives Manager.

She added, “I’ve been struck, in our conversations with members of Mason’s staff, how aligned our organizations are when it comes to food security for students. Making really holistic choices, because students are people, and they have a lot of different things going on, and making sure all their needs are met.”



UNIVERSITY LIFE AWARDS & ACCOLADES

2022-2023 University Awards

- **Civility Star Award**
Ethan Carter, Associate Director of Programs, Mason Recreation
- **Nancy Murphy Mason Spirit Award**
Lewis Forrest, Associate Dean of University Life, University Life
- **Goldie and Diane Hattery Awards for Excellence**
Justin Acuna, Coordinator of Maintenance, Mason Recreation
- **Outstanding Achievement Awards**
Christopher Rzengota, Associate Director of Behavioral Health Services, Student Health Services
- **Margaret C. Howell Award**
Philip Wilkerson, Employer Engagement Consultant, University Career Services
- **Exceptional Support Awards**
Leotie Yard, Assistant Director of Residence Life Housing and Residence Life
- **Patriot Pathbreakers Award**
Mason Square Plaza Activation Initiative Team
UL Team Members:
Sophie Gorshenin, Assistant Director of Regional Campuses, Mason Square
Melissa Thierry, Director of Regional Campuses for University Life, Mason Square
Additional Mason Square Team Members:
Toni Andrews, Kenneth Darby, Margaret Duke, Sara Hawes, Cathy Pinskey, Colin Stucki

2022-2023 University Life Staff Awards

- **UL Outstanding Service Award**
Jenny Sakran, Surveillance Nurse Practitioner, Student Health Services
Lisa Campo, Nurse Practitioner, Student Health Services
Lois Doyle, Lead Nurse, Student Health Services
Dennis Good, Assistant Director of Maintenance, Mason Recreation
Daylen Orlick, Associate Director of Family Programs, New Student and Family Programs
Rosalynn Holder, Budget and Finance Manager, University Life
Cameron Hoffman, Surveillance Nurse Practitioner, Student Health Services
Mary Horner, Administrative Assistant, Center for the Advancement of Well-Being
Kirk Vanderbrooke, Assistant Vice President of University Life, University Life
Aleksandra Melnikova, International Advisor, Office of International Programs and Services
Jenny Tolson, Athletic Trainer, Recreation
Jessica Viricochea, Administrative Assistant, University Life
- **UL Positive Impact Award**
Michael Galvin, Associate Director of Regional Campuses, University Life Science and Technology
Jeff Massetti, Assistant Director Residential Engagement, Student Involvement
Delishia Ashworth, Assistant Director for Substance Use and Recovery, Student Support and Advocacy
Nikki Harris, Senior Success Coach, Student Success Coaching
Allison Wallen, Success Coach, Student Success Coaching
Christiana Bellow, Success Coach, Student Success Coaching

- **University Life Partnership Award**
Dr. Alan Byrd, Dean of Admission, Enrollment Management
Dr. Al Fuyes, Term Associate Professor, School of Integrative Studies





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