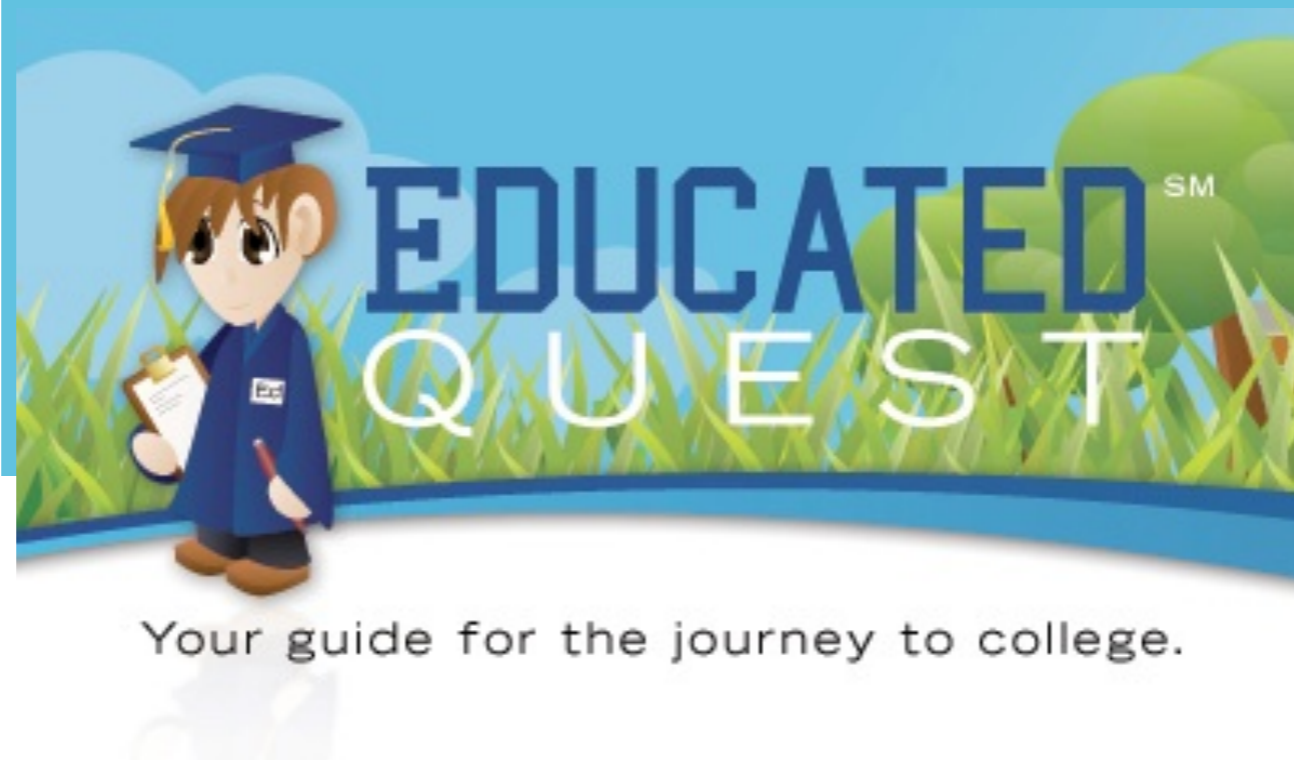


Profile: University of Mary Washington



Background

**Introduction to University
of Mary Washington**

Background

Fast Facts

- 1. The university is named for Mary Ball Washington, the mother of George Washington, first president of the United States.**
- 2. Mary Washington is the only public co-educational institution named for a secular woman in the U.S.**
- 3. During the summer of 2010, the university formed two new colleges, the College of Business and the College of Education.**
- 4. The main campus in Fredericksburg, the subject of this profile, has around 4,400 students.**
- 5. Mary Washington has earned high ranks for service in *Washington Monthly* as well as high ranks for value in *Forbe's* and *Kiplinger's* college ratings.**

About the University of Mary Washington

Founded in 1908, the University of Mary Washington was first known as the State Normal and Industrial School for Women in Fredericksburg. It was later renamed Mary Washington College in 1938, after Mary Ball Washington, the mother of George Washington, first president of the United States. In 1944, the college became the women's college of the University of Virginia. By 1972, the flagship university had become co-ed and so had the college, which was granted its independence by the Virginia General Assembly. Today, nearly two-thirds of the undergraduate students are women.

Now the only public co-educational institution named for a secular woman in the U.S, Mary Washington was granted university status in 2004. During the summer of 2010, the university formed two new colleges, the College of Business and the College of Education, which offer graduate and undergraduate degree programs not only in Fredericksburg, but also in nearby Stafford. A Dahlgren campus, also nearby, offers courses in the sciences and engineering in partnership with Old Dominion University, the U.S. Navy and other employers. While Mary Washington is a well-established public arts college that attracts students from within and outside Virginia, it is also the only four-year college for a region of 350,000 people including Fredericks-

burg, an independent city, Culpepper County, King George County, Spotsylvania County and Stafford County.

The main campus in Fredericksburg, the subject of this profile, has around 4,400 students. Mostly recently, the university posted a 68 percent four-year graduation rate, which was equalled or surpassed by only nine public colleges and universities, large and small, in the country.

The university markets its greatest strengths as being a rigorous liberal arts college where students are bound by an honor code and a strategic location, within an hour's drive of Washington D.C. and Richmond, Virginia. This provides access by car and mass transit to many employment, entertainment and recreational opportunities for students, faculty and staff. Mary Washington has earned high ranks for service in *Washington Monthly* as well as high ranks for value in *Forbe's* and *Kiplinger's* college ratings.

Competition



**What does it take to get in?
Who decides to go?
What other schools do
applicants consider?**

Competition

Fast Facts

- 1. In addition to submitted transcripts and test scores, students must write a supplemental essay that reflects upon the school's Honor Code.**
- 2. From 2006 through 2011, the university attracted an average of 4,600 applications for an average of 956 seats in the freshman class.**
- 3. Twenty percent of Mary Washington students come from outside Virginia.**
- 4. Median SAT scores, Critical Reading and Mathematics, have been around 1200.**

What It Takes to Get In

Mary Washington was one of the first public colleges to use the Common Application. The admissions process to apply is very straightforward. In addition to submitted transcripts and test scores, students must write a supplemental essay that reflects upon the Honor Code. Applicants do not need to declare a major.

From 2006 through 2011, the university attracted an average of 4,600 applications for an average of 956 seats in the freshman class, according to the University's Institutional Effectiveness Dashboard. However, the acceptance rate rose from 70 to 76 percent, while the yield rate declined from 31 to 27 percent. In 2011, according to the most recent Common Data Set, the university also offered 378 students a place on the waiting list. They admitted 120 of the 143 students who accepted that opportunity.

In addition, while the number of applicants has increased from just under 4,300 in 2006 to more than 4,800 in 2011, the percentage of out-of-state students dropped from 31 percent to less than 20 percent. The university became a more attractive option for Virginians while sister schools such as the University of Virginia, the College of William and Mary, Virginia Tech and

James Madison University attracted more interest from students in other states.

Yet, while the SAT range (Critical Reading and Mathematics) for the middle 50 percent of Mary Washington students is between 1030 and 1250, the median score is closer to 1200, higher than the median for James Madison but also around the median for entering freshmen at Virginia Tech, the University of Delaware and Rutgers University- New Brunswick. In looking at the university's most recent Common Data Set, 45 percent of accepted students scored above 600 on the Critical Reading section of the SAT, higher than most state-supported universities, though only 30 percent scored better than 600 on the math.

Students considering Mary Washington most frequently cross-shop the school against James Madison, George Mason University, Christopher Newport College and Longwood University, among the Virginia public institutions, and Elon University and the University of Richmond most often among the privately supported ones. Students also apply to the University of Virginia, William and Mary and Virginia Tech as well as St. Mary's College of Maryland and the University of Delaware. Mary Washington loses more applicants to James Madison University than

any other school, says Kimberly Johnston, the university's Dean of Admissions.

Johnston also hopes to raise interest in the university from out-of-state students. Currently, Maryland sends more students to Mary Washington than any other state, followed by Pennsylvania and New Jersey. It is difficult to attract students from neighboring North Carolina because their state-supported institutions charge lower tuition and fees than those in most other states. T

he school has also extended its international outreach, attracting students from Afghanistan and South Korea, among other countries. The university will begin its first Honor's Program this fall. It is built around a selection of honors-level courses. However, honors students are not offered honors housing as they are at other colleges and universities.

Completion

3

Freshman Retention Rate
Graduation Rates

Completion

Fast Facts

- 1. Mary Washington's most recent four-year graduation rate of 68 percent is quite impressive compared with other public colleges and universities.**
- 2. The six-year graduation rate is 75 percent, still high for a publicly-supported university.**
- 3. The freshman retention rate is 84 percent.**
- 4. Academic advising is handled through the faculty instead of professional advisors, which is the practice at larger schools.**

The Path to Graduation

While Mary Washington's most recent four-year graduation rate of 68 percent is quite impressive compared with other public colleges and universities, it has actually declined since 2004 when the rate was 76 percent, according to the university's Institutional Effectiveness Dashboard. The six-year graduation rate has declined only slightly from 77 to 75 percent. The median for other schools that Mary Washington applicants consider such as James Madison, Richmond, Elon and St. Mary's is around or over 80 percent.

Colleges and universities that have attained similar graduation rates have also been able to retain 90 percent or more of their freshmen class. This is not true for Mary Washington. Freshman retention rates have fluctuated between 83 and 87 percent since 2006; the rate is currently 84 percent.

This makes the high graduation rates more impressive, however, it also shows that a respectable number of entering freshmen found that the school was not for them, and that those students had to be replaced either with a larger freshmen class or more transfer students the next year.

According to *College Results Online*, a database managed by the Education Trust, a non-partisan, non-profit education policy

organization based in Washington D.C., the university reported a transfer-out rate of around 13 percent for 2010, the latest year data was available. This compared with just under eight percent for James Madison University, but around 28 percent for Christopher Newport.

One reason for the historically high graduation rates, says Fred Pierce, Associate Provost for Enrollment and Student Services is that most Mary Washington students have college-educated parents. They always expect their students to finish on time.

Students choose to leave Mary Washington for several reasons, adds Pierce. For some students, he says, it was not their first-choice school. These students demonstrated an academic performance that allowed them to transfer to a school that better fit their interests. Other students wish to pursue a major not offered by the university. But still other students found themselves homesick or believe that they had chosen the wrong learning environment, Pierce adds. Students also leave due to changes in their family circumstances, says Cedric Rucker, Associate Vice President and Dean of Student Life.

Dr. Pierce adds that the university is up for re-accreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS). Part of this process is to implement a Quality Enhancement Program, which includes, among many things a revised first year experience. Recruited from the business school at the University of Tennessee, Pierce believes that students should be engaged within the first six weeks of being on campus. “After that you may lose them,” he says.

A revised first-year experience will include the grouping of students into learning communities based on similar interests as well as peer mentoring in the First Year Seminar courses. While Mary Washington offers, and requires, students to take a First Year Seminar, a small-group topic-focused course taught by a faculty member, the peer mentoring element allows students to become more acquainted with the school as well as the demands of college, while giving students an opportunity to talk with someone outside of the faculty.

Other elements of the Quality Enhancement Program will address career services, access to classes and the availability and utilization of classroom space as well as new learning communities built around themes of common interest to students.

Mary Washington takes a different approach to freshman advising than many colleges. Instead of having professional advisors who do not teach work with the students, 65 faculty members each advise 15 students. Each advisor is trained in developmental advising. Students are matched with advisors based on a short survey where they indicate their three most likely majors as well as their pre-professional interests. This is another opportunity for freshmen to get to know a faculty member that would not be available at a larger university.

Dr. Pierce believes that the Quality Enhancement Program, among other initiatives, will help to improve retention as well as the graduation rate. A freshman retention rate of 90 percent combined with the school's excellent graduation rates would place Mary Washington among the fifty best-performing liberal arts colleges, public or private, in the country.

The University of Mary Washington is a DIY Rankings 50-50 School meaning that it admits more than half of all applicants while more than half of these who attend graduate within five years.

Costs

4

Tuition and Fees
Scholarships
Net Prices
Debt

Costs

Fast Facts

- 1. With an in-state tuition and fees around \$9,300 and out-of-state charges slightly under \$21,600, Mary Washington is a good value among public colleges and universities.**
- 2. The school has been able, on average, to meet 56 percent of a student's demonstrated financial need.**
- 3. Mary Washington is an excellent value for in-state students as well as out-of-state students who come from upper middle income families.**

Paying for School

With an in-state tuition and fees around \$9,300 and out-of-state charges slightly under \$21,600, Mary Washington is a good value among public colleges and universities. James Madison University, Mary Washington's main competition for students, charges around \$500 less for tuition and fees to in-state students, but asks out-of-state students to pay \$1,200 more.

The U.S Department of Education's College Navigator projects that in-state tuition and fees for the incoming class will rise to just over \$12,900 by the time they enter their fourth year. Out-of-state charges are projected to exceed \$25,000, still low for a state university.

While Mary Washington advertises a low sticker price, the university offers little in the way of financial aid, including need-based aid for out-of-state students. According to the university's Institutional Effectiveness dashboard, the school has been able, on average, to meet 56 percent of a student's demonstrated financial need, as determined through the Federal Free Application for Student Financial Aid (FAFSA). By comparison, other leading liberal arts colleges can meet as much as 100 percent of a student's demonstrated financial need.

Only Honors students can receive merit-based scholarship awards. These students are likely to rank very high in the the applicant pool. This means that recipients are likely to have not only excellent grades, but also SAT Critical Reading and Math scores of 1250 or better. However, says Kimberly Johnston, only five percent of the students in the next entering class, around 45 students total, will be enrolled as Honors students.

Mary Washington is also located in a state where there are several excellent private colleges and universities. Two, the University of Richmond and Washington and Lee University, advertise that they can meet 100 percent of a student’s demonstrated financial need. In addition, public competitors such as Longwood and Christopher Newport can offer larger discounts to prospective students who might rank lower in the Mary Washington applicant pool.

However, using data in *College Navigator* for Average Net Prices, total costs (tuition, fees, room and board, books, essentials) less scholarships and grants, for 2010-11, the most recent year available, presents these results on the next page

School Name	2010-11 Est. Total Costs, In-State Student	2010-11 Average Net Price \$75,000 to \$110,000	% Discount	2010-11 Average Net Price \$110,000+	Discount
University of Mary Washington	\$19,730	\$18,475	6%	\$19,061	3%
James Madison University	\$20,402	\$18,998	7%	\$20,109	1%
Longwood University	\$22,869	\$19,570	14%	\$21,577	6%
Christopher Newport University	\$23,112	\$20,419	12%	\$21,840	6%
University of Richmond	\$52,460	\$19,765	62%	\$35,160	33%
Washington and Lee University	\$53,082	\$22,023	59%	\$35,116	33%
Hollins University	\$42,685	\$23,939	44%	\$24,047	44%

While the public and the private schools were willing to discount more than Mary Washington, their average net prices were actually higher. In most cases, Mary Washington was the less expensive school, even when it offered no discount at all. However, averages are averages. Some students may qualify for more aid based on their personal circumstances. Richmond and Washington and Lee are also more likely to discount on the basis of need, while Hollins and the public schools may also discount on the basis of merit.

However, according to College Navigator, an out-of-state student would have paid a sticker price of around \$31,500 to attend Mary Washington in 2010-11. In that case, Hollins would have turned out to be the less expensive school for all students from families with incomes in excess of \$75,000, while Richmond and Washington and Lee would have been less expensive to families in the lower income bracket.

Another way to consider costs is to look at a school's debt-to-credentials ratio. Developed by Education Sector, the ratio is a measure of the average indebtedness that a student must take on to complete their degree. The lower the sticker price, the more generous the financial aid package, or the more likely students graduate on time, the lower the ratio will be. Here is a

comparison between Mary Washington and the schools in the previous table for the 2008-09 school year, the last year Education Sector had data available.

School Name	Debt-to Credentials Ratio 2008-09
University of Mary Washington	\$13,764
James Madison University	\$17,479
Longwood University	\$24,049
Christopher Newport University	\$17,364
University of Richmond	\$13,743
Washington and Lee University	\$14,774
Hollins University	\$31,131

This table, combined with the Net Price information shows that the University of Richmond works aggressively to put students, especially those from out of state, in the position where they have no more debt than they would have had they gone to Mary Washington. Otherwise, Mary Washington is the more attractive option from a standpoint of indebtedness.

However, the University of Richmond is also a more selective school. Most recently, that school accepted only one-third of their pool of around 9,400 applicants. Their SAT range was between 1190 and 1390. A student who ranked in the top quarter of the Mary Washington applicant pool would have ranked in the upper half, but not the upper quarter of the University of Richmond applicant pool. The Richmond financial aid package would have more likely been based on need than on merit.

The market value of the university's endowment, a major source for private scholarship funding, in fiscal year 2011 was approximately \$34 million, up \$3 million from fiscal year 2010 according to the National Association of College and University Business Officers. While that sounds small compared to schools such as the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech, it is actually quite respectable compared to other leading public liberal arts colleges and regional universities. For comparison, James Madison University has quadruple the number of undergraduates and an endowment of around \$58 million. Ramapo College of New Jersey and SUNY-Geneseo, both public liberal arts colleges with around 6,000 students have endowments of less than \$30 million combined.

In addition, a \$50 million fundraising campaign is underway to fund faculty chairs, new scholarships for each school: Arts and Sciences, Business and Education and renovations to the outdoor Amphitheater on campus.

Comforts

5

On-Campus Housing
Local Housing Market

Comforts

Fast Facts

- 1. Mary Washington provides housing to approximately 2,600 students, approximately 60 percent of all undergraduates, higher than most state-supported universities, but lower than smaller public and private liberal arts colleges.**
- 2. Freshmen are assigned to specific buildings, though they are allowed to rank their top three choices during a mid-June Open House.**
- 3. Students have a tremendous range of choices after freshman year, from residence halls in historic buildings to luxury apartments.**

Settling In

Mary Washington provides housing to approximately 2,600 students, approximately 60 percent of all undergraduates, higher than most state-supported universities, but lower than smaller public and private liberal arts colleges. However, this is a regional university that attracts transfer students from area community colleges. Those students are more likely to commute. While the university does not make formal guarantees, it is realistic for students who do not come from Fredericksburg or its environs to receive housing for all four years.

Freshmen are assigned to specific buildings, though they are allowed to rank their top three choices during a mid-June Open House. Two, Mason and Randolph have undergone modernization (being adapted for air conditioning, energy efficiency and Internet usage) and renovation, other dorms are showing their age. Two others, Alvey and Arrington, are air conditioned. The rest: Russell, Jefferson, Bushnell and Virginia, the only all-female dorm, are not. Weather in Northern Virginia is humid in the early weeks, so students who are assigned to live in a dorm that does not have air conditioning should bring a fan. All dorms are Wi-Fi enabled. Ethernet connections are available, too. Students are allowed to have compact refrigerators in their rooms, but not microwave ovens. However, all dorms have kitchens.

It is best to visit the [Residence Life Web site](#) to get a preview, including photos, of the standout features of the residence halls. Unique features and advantages of each hall are too numerous to list here. The older dorms are largely of the traditional corridor-style design where bathrooms are shared among students who live on a floor or wing. Amenity features include hardwood floors, high ceilings and parlor areas. While the older residences have character, many are showing their age. They also have the older radiator-style heating systems which are very difficult to regulate. Three: Bushnell, Jefferson and Virginia do not have elevators.

Students may choose their own roommates, provided that they choose each other, or they can allow the university to match them, based on a questionnaire. The highest percentage of roommate changes come from students who selected each other, says Chris Porter, the university's Director of Residence Life. Freshmen are also required to take one of the two larger meal plans. In later years, students may favor flex dollars which may be spent on and off-campus over meals in the dining hall.

Students can join living-learning communities, says Porter, or they can create their own. Athletes, for example, created a Physically Active Fitness Friends community around exercise.

Other communities have formed around international living, social justice, women's and gender studies and leadership. The university also participates in the Initiative to Educate Afghan Women, a Korean student exchange program and a British student exchange program, all of which bring new students to campus.

Mary Washington has eight upper-class residence halls, while Arrington and Virginia accommodate a mix of freshmen and upperclassmen. Sophomores, juniors and seniors also have the option of living in Eagle Landing, a modern luxury apartment complex, while juniors and seniors may also live in the Apartments at UMW, another complex across from campus.

Dorm room charges range from approximately \$2,400 per person per semester for students sharing a four-person room to over \$3,700 for a single room. Given that freshmen are required to take one of the two larger meal plans, [room and board charges](#) can easily exceed \$10,000 for the year, about average for a state university.

For the Apartments at UMW, charges range from around \$2,900 per-person per-semester to share a triple room unit to \$4,000 per-person, per-semester for a single room apartment.

For Eagle Landing, charges range from \$3,500 to \$4,100 per person per semester for double-room units on a school year or full-year contract.

Off-campus rentals in Fredericksburg range from \$500 to \$700 per person per month for a two bedroom apartment. The community is a bedroom community to Washington D.C., so rentals are likely to rise in price rather than fall.

There are no recognized fraternities or sororities on campus although there two organized chapters of Greek organizations off campus that are not recognized as student organizations by the university.

Community



Campus
Environs
School Spirit

Community

Fast Facts

1. **The Mary Washington campus was designed around the same architectural themes as the University of Virginia. Every building, excluding the Eagle Landings apartments, which uses the same color facade, follows the Georgian Colonial theme.**
2. **The campus end to end, can be covered on foot in less than 20 minutes.**
3. **Ball Circle made the national news in 2008 when Barack Obama and Joe Biden made their first public appearance together as the Democratic candidates for President and Vice President.**
4. **Fredericksburg is one of the few cities where Revolutionary War battles and Civil War battles were fought.**
5. **Fredericksburg is also around one hour from Washington D.C by train and less than an hour from Richmond by car, making it an ideal location from which to commute to internships in the nation's capital or to knock on doors in two capital cities when it comes time to graduate.**

Life On and Off Campus

Mary Washington has a thorough and thoughtful approach to bringing freshmen to campus. It starts with pre-matriculation communications that explain What We Are and Who We Are as a campus community. Last year, the university also formed Facebook groups for incoming students. The mid-June Open House to invite students to preview and select their residence halls and establish relationships with the various campus offices. A pre-orientation, Pre-Flight, gives incoming students a choice of four “tracks”: Great Adventures (outdoor recreation), Adventure Leadership, Soaring Through Service and The Justice Squad (social justice) as well as four days at the Wintergreen resort.

The Mary Washington campus was designed around the same architectural themes as the University of Virginia. Every building, excluding the Eagle Landings apartments, which uses the same color facade, follows the Georgian Colonial theme.

Currently, the university is renovating not only two dormitories, but also plans to open a new student center, more than double the size of the current one, by 2015. The campus has two dining halls, Seacobeck, which has three eating venues and the Campus Center which has three separate restaurants, including

Vochelli's, a pizza parlor that also delivers on campus. The Lee Center restaurant, Naturally Woodstock, serves healthy and organic food.

Residence halls, academic buildings and the dining halls are mixed together, but the campus end to end, can be covered on foot in less than 20 minutes. The university also opened a new indoor athletic complex this fall. The Simpson Library, however, is showing its age, though its "treehouse" stack of study cubicles become highly sought during exam weeks. Seacobeck Hall, the largest dining hall, is also showing its age inside though it offers indoor and outdoor seating in nice weather, rare for a college dining hall.

The grounds are immaculately kept. Adirondack chairs are scattered about open spaces, including Ball Circle, the largest green space on campus as well as Jefferson Square near the main entrance to campus. Named for Mary Washington's parent's--Ball was her maiden name--Ball Circle made the national news in 2008 when Barack Obama and Joe Biden made their first public appearance together as the Democratic candidates for President and Vice President.

The university foundation also acquired a strip shopping center across from the campus and next to the Eagle Landing apartment office and retail complex. Anchored by a Giant supermarket, the complex will add a new hotel. Students may take advantages of discounts at these shops as well as at Central Park a shopping complex located across I-95 which offers many chain restaurant and retail shopping options. Central Park may be reached by bus--it's a free ride with a student ID-- from campus as well as by car.

Incidents of crime have gone down on campus according to the [university's 2011 Annual Security Report](#). In 2010 there were two forcible sex offenses, down from six the previous year. There was only one robbery and two burglaries and no incidents of aggravated assault or auto theft. There were, however, 62 reported incidents of larceny on campus and one incident of arson in a dormitory. There were no arrests for liquor law violations on campus, down from 30 two years before and only nine arrests for drug law violations, down from 17 two years before. There were 167 liquor law violations referred for disciplinary action in 2010, with 112 persons being found responsible. There were 14 drug-related violations in 2010, up from only two two years before. None of the students involved were found responsible. The total numbers of incidents are very low for any

school. This may be partly due to the small number of students living on campus, around 2,500, relative to other state schools, as well as the student adherence to the university's Honor Code.

Fredericksburg, a nice downtown, has bars, coffee shops and stores that draw students, but it is more of a tourist town than a college town. Antiques and collectables are a major draw for the tourists. Fredericksburg is one of the few cities where Revolutionary War battles and Civil War battles were fought. The birthplaces of George Washington and Robert E. Lee are close by, while famous city residents have included Naval hero John Paul Jones and James Monroe, fifth President of the United States. The city is also home to Carl's, a frozen custard stand. Designed in the 1950's, Carl's sells only four flavors: chocolate, strawberry, vanilla and pineapple. While there are no places to eat inside or sit, lines can wrap the block on nice days.

However, Fredericksburg is also around one hour from Washington D.C by train and less than an hour from Richmond by car, making it an ideal location from which to commute to internships in the nation's capital or to knock on doors in two capital cities when it comes time to graduate. Students may also make arrangements with the school to live in university housing dur

ing the summer if they want to commute to D.C. for their full-time internship.

The university does not field a football team, however it competes in 23 varsity sports at the Division III (non-scholarship) level as well as 17 club sports. Mary Washington is also one of the few schools in the country that competes in men's and women's equestrian events. Rugby is also a popular club sport. This past season, the women's basketball team won 30 consecutive games before losing in the Elite Eight round of the Division III NCAA Tournament. The school also contends for the Capital Athletic Conference Cup as the best overall athletic program in its conference.

While Mary Washington has a relatively short history as a co-educational institution and there are several events that have bound the campus community. Each class has a Class Council that helps maintain traditions. Freshmen are welcomed in a Fall Honor's Convocation where students pledge to uphold the Honor Code and faculty participate in academic gowns and regalia, as they do at commencement. The first Thursday of classes is Devil and Goats Day, which is much like a summer camp competition of athletic and non-athletic events where every student participates. Devils are the students in the odd-

number year classes, Goats are the students in the even-numbered years. A fall Club Carnival showcases the work and accomplishments of more than 100 student organizations. The Historic Preservation Club hosts Ghost Walks through Fredericksburg.

While the university does not play football, it hosts a well-attended homecoming which includes a concert, welcoming events and a Mr. UMW competition sponsored by the residence halls. Representatives chosen by each hall compete to raise money for charity. A Miss UMW Competition takes place in the spring. Contestants are chosen based on their record of scholarship and community service. Junior Ring Day, which takes place in April, celebrates the unveiling of the design of the newest class ring. Unlike most schools, students can only buy a class ring during their junior year. The university also sponsors Alternative Break programs during the fall and spring semesters where students get involved in community services projects within and outside of Fredericksburg.

In 2011 the university was a major stop for the PBS Freedom Ride. A graduating senior was also chosen as one of the 40 students from across the country to retrace the 1961 Freedom Ride from Washington D.C. to New Orleans. PBS chose the uni

versity in part to honor the late James Farmer, a former university professor, who as president of the Congress on Racial Equality, was one of the original Freedom Riders. The university has established a memorial, a multi-cultural center and a scholarship program in Farmer's name.

Curriculum

Academics

Honors Programs

Experiential Learning

Curriculum

Fast Facts

- 1. While many liberal arts colleges require students to carry a four-course load each semester, Mary Washington requires five courses per semester to complete a degree.**
- 2. Every student must take advantage of an experiential learning opportunity.**
- 3. Mary Washington has several signature departments. It was one of the first universities in the U.S. to establish a Bachelor's degree program in historic preservation.**
- 4. Business is currently the most popular major.**

Academic Opportunities and Options

While many liberal arts colleges require students to carry a four-course load each semester, Mary Washington requires five courses per semester to complete a degree. Students may earn a Bachelor of Arts (BA), Bachelor of Science (BS) or a Bachelor of Liberal Studies (BLS). General education courses make up approximately one-third of the requirements to complete a degree and include:

- First Year Seminar (Three credits)--Freshmen only--This is a topical course taught by a faculty member. The seminars are limited to 15 students.
- Quantitative Reasoning (Six credits) These would be courses in computer sciences, mathematics and statistics, as well as quantitatively-focused classes within other major departments.
- Natural Science (Four to Six credits). This must be a two-course sequence, one course which must include a laboratory.
- Global Inquiry (Three credits). One course focusing on global interconnections related to economic, political, cultural, social, public health, or environmental issues.

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- Language. (Six credits). This could be fourth-semester competency in a language learned in high school or second-semester competency in a new language.
 - Arts, Literature, and Performance (Six credits). These courses focus on art, literature, or performance. One course must be taken in creative processes that teach students skills in art, writing, fine arts or the performing arts.
 - Human Experience and Society (Six credits). Two courses from two different disciplines that explore the forces shaping human activity, relationships, social structures, institutions, and intellectual systems.
 - Experiential Learning (Three credits). A faculty-supervised experience involving a significant experiential learning component designed to challenge students to go outside of the bounds of the typical classroom. This might include supervised research with a faculty member, study abroad, a scholarly paper, or an internship.

In addition, all BA/BS students must take four courses considered to be Writing Intensive (WI) and two courses designated as Speaking Intensive (SI). Any course designated as WI or SI, whether taken for general education, for the major, or as elec

tives will satisfy these requirements. BLS students must take three courses that are Writing Intensive and one that is Speaking Intensive.

Mary Washington has several signature departments. It was one of the first universities in the U.S. to establish a Bachelor's degree program in historic preservation. Given its location between Washington D.C. and Richmond, and its historical significance, history and political science/international affairs are also very popular. Other majors that the school considers to be among its "Big 10," are geography, foreign languages, computer science, biology, psychology, English and business, which is the most popular choice among the current students. The university also offers a very popular five-year Bachelor's-Master's program in education. Students apply to their major department during their sophomore year.

Given that approximate one third of the courses required to complete a degree are General Education courses and another third are usually devoted to the major, there are plenty of credits left to add a second major or minors or take free electives. Eighty five percent of all classes have fewer than 20 students; the largest classes most students will take will have between 35 and 40 students.

The academic rigor of this school is a source of pride as well as complaint on student review sites such as *Campus Discovery*, *College Prowler*, *Students Review* and *Unigo*. However, it has helped students find employment as well as gain admission into internationally respected graduate and professional schools. Mary Washington has had a chapter of Phi Beta Kappa, the nation's oldest and most prestigious academic honor society since 1971, the year before it became independent of the University of Virginia.

Mary Washington has a student-faculty ratio of 15 to 1, lower than most other publicly supported universities including James Madison, Virginia Tech, and the University of Maryland-College Park. However, the ratio is slightly higher than it is for smaller liberal arts schools such as St. Mary's College of Maryland, which has a ratio of 12 to 1. The ratio is calculated by counting all of the full-time faculty as well as one-third of the part-time faculty. About two thirds of the faculty are full time and about three quarters hold the doctorate or other terminal degree in their field.

Mary Washington students have given their professors an average rating of 3.66 out of 5 on [RateMyProfessors.com](https://www.ratemyprofessors.com). They hold their faculty, on average, in slightly less regard as students

at the University of Richmond (3.77) as well as students at Washington and Lee (3.88). However, Mary Washington students do not regard their teachers as highly as students at the University of Virginia (3.82), James Madison University (3.81) or the College of William and Mary (3.78) . They hold them in about the same regard as students at Longwood University (3.69) but in slightly less regard than students at Christopher Newport (3.73).

Connections

Alumni Relations
Career Services



Connections

Fast Facts

- 1. Mary Washington around 36,000 living alumni.**
- 2. The Northern Virginia/Washington D.C. area is the most popular work location for young alumni.**
- 3. Other metropolitan areas with a large alumni base include New York City, Boston, Baltimore, Richmond, Williamsburg, Charlottesville, Tidewater/Virginia beach, Maryland's Eastern Shore, South Florida and Southern California.**
- 4. Currently, 18 percent of alumni make some financial contribution to the university.**

Building a Network

Mary Washington around 36,000 living alumni says Mark Thaden, the university's Director of Alumni Relations. Approximately 21,000 reside in Virginia with 4,000 living within a 40 mile travel radius of Fredericksburg.

The Northern Virginia/Washington D.C. area is the most popular work location for young alumni. Other metropolitan areas with a large alumni base include New York City, Boston, Baltimore, Richmond, Williamsburg, Charlottesville, Tidewater/Virginia beach, Maryland's Eastern Shore, South Florida and Southern California. Thaden says that an effective regional alumni network needs 300 members within a 30 mile radius. There will be 12 alumni networks by the end of 2012, he adds. The university has also added an office of National Alumni Engagement. Member in the alumni association is free.

Online Mary Washington has a 3,100 member Facebook group and a 2,200 member LinkedIn group, both large considering the size of the alumni base. The university has also overhauled its Web site, including an online edition of its print magazine. New e-newsletters will be targeted to the alumni networks. Former athletes will have their own e-newsletter as well.

Like most schools, younger graduates return to join people with whom they had affinity in college. At Mary Washington athletes like to return to campus for events as do former members of the student government and Honor Council. Homecoming has become an expanded weekend series of events, says Thaden, including a morning Muffins and Mimosas networking session, an alumni vs. student beanbag toss tournament and entertaining lectures. An Alumni-Student dinner took place this year during the Alternative Spring Break. An alumni version of Devil-Goat Day is under consideration as are more activities that take advantage of the cultural and historic community in Fredericksburg. Designed along the same lines as other campus buildings, the [Jepson Alumni Executive Center](#) also hosts alumni gatherings, including weddings and special events. It is an impressive facility considering the size of the alumni base and the short history of co-education at the school.

Currently, 18 percent of alumni make some financial contribution to the university, according to the university's Institutional Effectiveness Dashboard, while, on average, 10 percent of the alumni at other leading public liberal arts colleges donate to their alma mater. The 18 percent figure is high not only compared to public peers, but also some larger state universities such as James Madison (eight percent), Virginia Tech (15 per

cent), University of Maryland-College Park (10 percent), and the University of Delaware (10 percent) and St. Mary's College of Maryland (12 percent) according to data these schools submitted to the 2012 *U.S. News* guide.. The alumni giving rate is also higher than Elon's (16 percent). However, the College of William and Mary has an alumni giving rate of 23 percent, the University of Virginia's rate is 22 percent, the University of Richmond's is 26 percent and Washington and Lee's is 46 percent. Davidson College, a leading liberal arts college in North Carolina entices 54 percent of its alumni to make contributions.

The comparison is not a criticism of Mary Washington, but rather an illustration that alumni enthusiasm for the school is relatively high compared to its peer schools as well as several other institutions that its alumni most likely considered. But it does raise a question about public liberal arts colleges: if alumni do not consider themselves members of a community that went to an "elite" school, for good reasons or for bad, then are they less likely to contribute than alumni who went to an "elite" school?

The career service office coordinates the internship process, helping students arrange for academic credits and by coordinating the contractual relationships between students, employers,

faculty and the academic department heads. The career center stipulates that no more than 30 percent of an internship can be clerical work. All but two academic departments grant graded credit for internships. The two that do not, geography and geology, grant credit but treat internships as pass-fail. Students must work nine to 10 hours per week for three credits and meet at least once every two weeks with a faculty mentor. Students may earn up to 12 credits for internship assignment though the assignments in each internship must be different. Students may earn credits for their summer internship experience, but must pay for the credits.

Mary Washington runs fall and spring career fairs. During the 2011-12 school year, 55 employers recruited in the fall, while 57 came in the spring, both high considering the size and liberal arts focus of the school. Ten employers also interviewed students on campus outside of these events. The career center sponsors a "Meet the Firm" program for accounting students, Federal Week where students in all majors can speak with recruiters from federal government agencies as well as a non-profit panel with alumni. Mary Washington ranks first among liberal arts colleges that send students to the Peace Corps.

Students are also invited to participate in job-related events that take place on other campuses. This past year, students attended a Start-Up job fair at George Washington University to interview with small, entrepreneurial companies as well as an Alumni Fair at Virginia Tech. The university also participates in the Selective Liberal Arts Consortium along with several Maryland public and private schools in the Baltimore-Washington area.

The majors in highest demand with employers are Computer Science and Business with an Accounting concentration. Education is popular, too, says Gary Johnson, Director of Career Services. Even in a down economy, less than five percent of Mary Washington graduates surveyed in 2009 were still seeking employment six to nine months after graduation. Typically 25 to 35 percent of graduates will continue their education after graduation either part-time while working or full time, adds Johnson.

Conclusions

Summing up



Conclusions

The University of Mary Washington is a tremendous value for a very good student who wants a liberal arts education without some of the traditional trappings at other schools such as football and fraternities. The university offers a rigorous academic program, much like the best private liberal arts schools. It has maintained exceptionally high graduation rates, although it has educated many students with significantly lower standardized test scores than those required for admission to the more selective colleges in Virginia and elsewhere.

Mary Washington does not have the resources to offer the scholarships that the more traditional and better-endowed private colleges, or the public University of Virginia or the College of William and Mary can offer to the excellent students. The appeal of this place is for the very good student who cannot get into these schools, but would normally be a strong candidate for admission to very good state universities such as James Madison, Virginia Tech, Delaware or Rutgers-New Brunswick.

For the in-state student who wants a private liberal arts education at a public school price, Mary Washington will be the best value. In addition, the combination of price and student success make this school a very attractive option to out-of-state students, even without a discount.

Mary Washington has an attractive location and a beautiful campus, especially for those who appreciate Colonial American his-

tory. However, the civic architecture, meaning the people who lead this school, the faculty, the honor system and the students does more to foster success. It is not known whether the ambitious initiatives now under way will make admissions more selective, but that is less important than an emphasis on community and student success that will reflect better on the student body and the university community as a whole.

This is a school where the administration knows the strengths, which are many, but continually realizes how to make things better for their students and alumni. Mary Washington students are very lucky to receive that kind of attention at a public school price.

To Sum Up: University of Mary Washington

Ed's Report Card

Freshman Retention	Four-Year and Six-Year Graduation Rates	Costs	Comforts	Community	Curriculum	Connections
B	A	A	B+	A	A	B+

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p><i>Low sticker price for a state university</i></p> <p><i>Excellent graduation rates</i></p> <p><i>Location is natural for students interested in working in Richmond or Washington D.C., especially to study history and politics</i></p> <p><i>Attractive Georgian Colonial campus, safe, easy to navigate</i></p> <p><i>Impressive variety of housing options for a liberal arts school</i></p> <p><i>Career development and experiential learning</i></p> <p><i>School has preserved honor code and other traditions in transition from women's college to a co-ed university</i></p>	<p><i>Mary Washington has low brand recognition within a region that has many distinguished public and private schools</i></p> <p><i>Limited institutional financial aid.</i></p> <p><i>Oldest residence halls are turn of the century, as in turn of the 20th century</i></p> <p><i>High transfer-out rate compared to James Madison, the strongest competitor for students</i></p> <p><i>Not a football-fraternity school. Those who want those activities should look elsewhere</i></p> <p><i>Fredericksburg is more of a tourist town than a college town</i></p>

The End

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