



FROM THE BRAFFERTON

# State of the University 2015

BY W. TAYLOR REVELEY, III  
William & Mary President

**A**ccording to the wisdom of the ages at William & Mary, we do not live in the shadows of the giants of American history whom we helped to shape and who helped to shape us. We stand on their shoulders, reaching higher, looking farther and leading the way forward.

In recent months, a team of William & Mary undergraduates won the “World Cup of Science” within weeks of a W&M alumna coaching the U.S. women’s soccer team to an actual World Cup championship. We also launched an online M.B.A. program with a strikingly innovative curriculum, introduced a new general education curriculum that puts W&M at the cutting edge of undergraduate education rooted in the liberal arts, and announced the most ambitious fundraising and alumni engagement campaign in William & Mary’s 323-year history.

These and like initiatives come as no surprise, because leadership and achievement are in William & Mary’s DNA. Our alumni and alumnae have led for hundreds of years, and continue to lead in all walks of life, including, to mention a few, the arts, athletics, business, education, entertainment, government and science.

During Homecoming and reunions in October, we launched the public phase of a \$1 billion fundraising effort, aptly named For the Bold: The Campaign for William & Mary. No public university as small as W&M ever has tried to raise as much in a single

campaign, and no school — public or private — without a medical or engineering school has attempted so ambitious a goal. For the Bold focuses on people. Scholarships — especially need-based scholarships — and funding for our faculty represent two-thirds of the campaign goal.

At the time of campaign launch, we had already surpassed \$532 million — more than the total for our previous campaign, which ended in 2007. The \$532.55 million raised included an anonymous commitment of \$50 million, the largest gift the university has ever received. The gift’s main thrust is scholarships for very able students at our business and law schools.

Perhaps the greatest aspiration of the campaign is to raise W&M’s alumni giving percentage to 40 percent by 2020. Currently we stand at 27.1 percent, which is one of the very best among leading public universities. Among private universities, achieving 40 percent would put William & Mary behind only three schools — Princeton, Dartmouth and Notre Dame. It would make clear the enormous respect and affection W&M’s graduates have for alma mater.

Why is this campaign so important to William & Mary’s future? Because we continue to struggle with the constraints imposed by an enormous gap between our quality and the resources we have to sustain it. U.S. News & World Report most recently ranked William & Mary 113th in financial resources among national universities. This yawning gap between our quality (34th) and our financial resources is by far the largest among the U.S. News top-50 national universities.

In order to do more with less, William & Mary is now among the universities doing the most to ensure efficiency and effectiveness in all phases of our operations. We should not and will not ask alumni and friends for their support without demonstrating our own commitment to reducing costs wherever we can without compromising quality. In the past year, we consolidated information technology teams from across the university, formed a procurement cooperative with other universities to drive greater savings when we purchase goods in mass, and made significant changes to licensing agreements in order to increase revenues.

We also launched the implementation of a university-wide system (Constituent Relationship Manager or CRM) to avoid the costly maintenance of isolated databases and to cease inefficient efforts to connect them. The CRM will enhance communication efforts that begin before students even apply to W&M and continue throughout their lives as alumni. We have been taking steps to reduce campus energy consumption for years and are now creating a green revolving fund to support improvements — expensive LED light bulbs that last for 10 years, for example — that both reduce energy consumption and have a measurable return on investment.

On the academic side, we have implemented a system of internal budget reallocation to help fund our highest priorities. We have also added more full-time purely instructional positions for exceptional teachers

who carry a heavier classroom load than full-time faculty members who are also expected to do significant research. We are also well along in exploring how we might create a cost-effective new program to provide our students an opportunity to study engineering and design. This would not be a new school; rather it would coordinate and enhance activities already in place in applied science, computer science, math and other areas across the university, with emphasis on innovation, problem-solving and a capacity to communicate across engineering disciplines.

There is no shortage of demand for a William & Mary education in its many forms. Nearly 15,000 high school seniors applied for one of the 1,500 spots in W&M's Class of 2019. This was the 11th consecutive year we received a record number of undergraduate

## “Amid the myriad challenges facing higher education in the United States these days, the Alma Mater of the Nation is moving forward powerfully.”

applications. Of the students who enrolled, 81 percent of those with a class rank graduated in the top 10 percent of their high school classes, and the SAT middle 50th percentile was 1260-1460. They hail from across the commonwealth and around the globe; 28 percent are students of color.

At the beginning of the academic year, U.S. News ranked W&M as the top public university in the country for undergraduate teaching, behind only Princeton, Dartmouth and Brown.

According to another report, W&M was also ranked first among public universities in the U.S. in the percentage of undergraduates who study abroad. Nearly 50 percent of our students study abroad or conduct institutionally supported international research.

In each of the last two years, according to National Science Foundation data, William & Mary was first among the top 20 national universities, and the highest-rated public university for producers of alumni who go on to earn Ph.Ds.

In a new Princeton Review book about “Colleges That Create Futures,” W&M was among the 50 featured universities and the only one in Virginia.

In April, four W&M students were named Goldwater Scholars, the prestigious award for math, science and engineering. We were one of only 10 institutions nationwide, including MIT and Stanford, to receive the maximum four awards, and the only institution in Virginia to earn that distinction. Two physics students were among just 15 U.S. undergraduates selected to serve an internship at CERN, the European physics facility where the Higgs boson was discovered.

In September, an interdisciplinary team of eight W&M students won the undergraduate grand prize in the iGEM Grand Jamboree competition, also known as the “World Cup of Science.” More than 250 teams from five continents competed, and we had the only North American team to win a grand prize. Majors on the W&M team ranged from mathematical biology and biology to computer science, chemistry, and neuroscience.

W&M's Virginia Institute of Marine Science celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2015. Professor of Marine Science Debbie Steinberg received the commonwealth's Outstanding Faculty Award, bringing

W&M's total to 38 winners since the award's inception in 1987. This is more than any other college or university in the state.

In addition to being a place of superior teaching, W&M has also become a center for research that includes undergraduates in their professors' scholarship to a degree rare among research universities, if indeed equaled anywhere else. For example, the seeds of AidData, housed at William & Mary, started a dozen years ago as an undergraduate's senior thesis. Today, AidData brings together professors, graduate students and undergraduates to answer important questions and raise new ones regarding the distribution of international development aid. Over the past year, a W&M professor in applied science led a collaboration with colleagues at Oxford University that partially unraveled the mystery of the molecular mechanisms of silk. It's an important first step toward a set of new uses for this ancient material in applications including — but not limited to — high-tech implantable medical devices. Over the summer, a history professor took a pair of drones to Nigeria to study the ruins of medieval African metropolises to find clues about what caused people to desert these long-inhabited places. (He thinks it was the bubonic plague.) Also this year, a professor in Hispanic studies received two grants, including one from the National Endowment for the Humanities, to continue her research on what is known as the “Tillet Tapestry,” a 104-foot-long embroidery chronicling the Spanish conquest of the Aztecs.

Tribe athletes have the highest graduation rate for athletes of any public university in the country — and the highest in Virginia by a wide margin. Meanwhile, women's gymnastics won the 2015 Eastern College Athletic Conference title. Men's basketball, men's and women's cross country, football, women's soccer, men's swimming and diving, and men's and women's tennis all won Colonial Athletic Association titles in the last year. We now hold a conference-record 124 crowns.

In recent years, three challenges faced by American society as a whole — sexual violence, mental illness and race relations — have received very focused attention on college and university campuses.

In September, a W&M Task Force on Preventing Sexual Assault and Harassment produced its report with recommendations in four areas: campus climate, prevention and education, training for faculty and staff, and investigation and adjudication. The task force report, now available on the university's website ([www.wm.edu/sites/sahp/](http://www.wm.edu/sites/sahp/)), describes our progress over the last year and provides a road map for continued progress.

Our Task Force on Race and Race Relations is hard at work on the state of race relations on campus, including how better to educate our community about racial insensitivity and discrimination and prevent both. The task force is also working on how to more effectively recruit a racially diverse faculty and senior administration, and on better ways for those who have experienced racial insensitivity or discrimination to make this known and seek remedies.

We are also committed to providing heightened mental health services (see page 58). Construction will start soon on a new, expanded Wellness Center located in the center of campus.

In short, amid the myriad challenges facing higher education in the United States these days, the Alma Mater of the Nation is moving forward powerfully. We are breaking important, new ground in the 21st century, the fifth century in which there has been a College of William & Mary in Virginia.

For the entire 2015 report, visit [presidentsreport.wm.edu/2015](http://presidentsreport.wm.edu/2015).