

FROM THE BRAFFERTON

What I Love About William & Mary

“What do you love about William & Mary?” a friend asked. “Oh, a lot,” I said. “I can’t cover the essentials in a few words. Ask me something else, easier.” “Don’t go into the tank on this one,” he shot back. “Try a few specifics.”

OK, OK, a few specifics: Why *do* I love William & Mary? Which W&M characteristics really wrap themselves around my heart?

For starters, I love walking down the marble steps of the President’s House in the cool of the morning and looking across at the ancient Wren Building and its oldest companion, the Brafferton. The beauty of the Wren Yard, like the astonishing loveliness of the entire campus, lifts my spirits. Invariably, too, the Wren Yard reminds me of the College’s part in creating our country and training its leaders. I, like them, get to walk in the yard and tread the floors of its iconic buildings. Reveling in this is a daily delight.

I love William & Mary sitting cheek-to-jowl with Colonial Williamsburg, working together to keep the wisdom of the past relevant today while also moving new mountains in our own time. Deep, historic roots coupled with striking contemporary accomplishments make a dynamite combination, an irresistible mix for me.

Now, you can’t live on deep, historic roots alone, but they do anchor us amid the swirling passions of the moment. And historic institutions that link deep roots with current excellence enjoy a primacy of place — a prestige — like nothing else.

I love being able to believe William & Mary is an indomitable, unstoppable force. After all, how many other institutions over 300 years old are still alive and kicking in this country? How many were in the paths of two wars and their

devastating aftermaths? How many have had to move from being private schools to public? William & Mary has developed amazing staying power over the centuries, along with the confidence that comes from succeeding no matter what.

I love the people of William & Mary. Extraordinarily smart, creative and hard-working people are now pushing the College’s juggernaut forward, with civility and good humor (as a colleague says — William & Mary: no jerks here). Our students take their academic work seriously, want to spend spring breaks helping others, give life to an enormous array of organizations, and play an equally enormous array of varsity, club and intramural sports while working the fitness center to within an inch of its life.

Our faculty teach countless hours in and out of classrooms while simultaneously doing meaningful research and helping

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lead the university and community. Our staff work doggedly hard to see that William & Mary’s trains run on time and its institutional needs are met, often with little recognition of their efforts except the personal satisfaction of jobs well done.

Our alumni for centuries have contributed in ways large and small to communities all across the commonwealth, throughout the country, and now increasingly to far corners of the world. Lavish buildings and rich endowments avail a school very little if it lacks good people. William & Mary is blessed with this indispensable element for success.



I love that William & Mary has become a research university of five schools without losing either its human scale or its commitment to educate *all* its undergraduates splendidly, not just a small cohort of honors students. When moving heavily into research, it’s easy for a university to grow so large and far-flung that it loses its sense of community.

It’s easy, too, for a research university’s professors to begin to view teaching undergraduates as an unfortunate price they pay to buy time for their research. William & Mary has grown sparingly, always with an eye on community and teaching. This is quite rare and wonderful.

I love William & Mary because it does so many things right.

Which of the College’s characteristics really wrap themselves around your heart? Think for a moment — why do you love William & Mary?

A handwritten signature in dark ink, reading "Taylor Reveley III".

W. TAYLOR REVELEY III
President
College of William & Mary