

From: William & Mary President's Office president@wm.edu
Subject: Affirming privacy and safety at W&M
Date: April 28, 2026 at 8:36 AM
To: Giro-Martin, Nico ngiromartin@wm.edu



Dear President Giro-Martin,

Thank you for sharing the outcomes of the recent student referendums regarding public safety software and privacy protections. My highest priority as a president is protecting every student's ability to come study here, together, in safety and belonging. With the violence we are seeing in our country and around the world, the task of safeguarding a university campus has become at once more urgent and more challenging.

Let me begin by saying how much I appreciate the way the authors worked through the Student Assembly's established processes to raise matters of privacy and due process. Our values of excellence, integrity, and belonging are evident in the principled concerns they raise and in their recourse to student governance. I take these concerns very seriously and commend our students for being attuned to them. As a public university, William & Mary steadfastly upholds the right to freedom of expression. I will continue to affirm this [commitment](#). I invite you to share this reply with the student body.

Here is William & Mary's approach: while the practices and tools of public safety evolve, the tenets that guide them should endure. As we seek to safeguard those who learn, live, and work here, we are guided by the following principles:

1. William & Mary has an open campus, consistent with our identity as a public university. Our openness is something we cherish and feel pride in. It defines us as a learning community. The President's Aides described this to me recently as a "hold the door open" culture.
2. William & Mary firmly upholds student and employee privacy, in compliance with state and federal law. Virginia state law contains significant privacy protections and we adhere to them. For example, automatic license plate recognition systems are allowed under Virginia law, but the data generated can only be used to investigate Virginia crimes, missing persons or human trafficking. Sharing data with federal agencies or out-of-state law enforcement investigating other matters requires a court order. We do not use any facial recognition technology on this campus.
3. William & Mary will be transparent about the approaches and tools we use to safeguard the campus and uphold principles 1 and 2 above.

I am grateful to Associate VP Cliff Everton for meeting with students who have raised concerns this spring, to discuss the tools and practices W&M uses to keep our

community safe. I know he welcomes your questions as they help him and his team serve our community more effectively. As a result of these conversations, the Public Safety team has created a list of [FAQs](#) that they will update as questions arise. In addition, they have created a [Flock Portal](#) to support full transparency.

I am grateful for the thoughtful conversations the Student Assembly has convened on these topics. Questioning new technologies in this way exemplifies the critical thinking we cultivate. I expect no less from W&M students.

With gratitude and respect,

Katherine A. Rowe
President