

Personal Statement for Consideration of Reappointment as Dean

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OVERVIEW OF LEADERSHIP AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

I am honored and humbled to serve as Dean of the Volgenau School of Engineering since August 2012. I believe that I have provided strong and effective leadership for VSE as well as for the university. My style of leadership is collaborative, and I take pride in always maintaining a cheerful and positive attitude. Today, the Volgenau School is one of the strongest academic units at George Mason University, and has contributed significantly to advancing the strategic goals of the university. Every department and program is thriving, and our success is due to strong teamwork and the widespread involvement and contributions of our faculty and staff members, led by a strong administrative team of department and program chairs and associate deans. I would very much like to continue guiding the Volgenau School for another term as dean. We are extremely well-positioned to build on the achievements of the past five years, which have provided an exceptional foundation for future success under the long-anticipated new budget model that was installed in July 2016. With unit revenue in future budgets now tied directly to student enrollment, VSE's successful launching of five new degree programs and continued expansion of existing programs will result in a stable, predictable, and growing revenue stream to support the school's various programs and initiatives.

As a case in point, our FY '17 budget revenues have increased by approximately \$5,000,000 over our FY '16 budget. This allowed us to hire 34 new faculty members for the 2016-17 academic year, representing a net increase of 30 faculty members. These hires were spread across all of our departments and programs, and will allow every department and program to improve the quality of education for our students, to grow research, and to advance their own strategic goals. I have also strongly supported the growth of new revenue streams for VSE through contract courses (both credit and non-credit), executive education programs, judicious use of new course fees such as the engineering fee (which generates over \$4,000,000 of additional funds for support of student laboratories and other resources), and new state appropriations that come directly to VSE such as the Veterans' Cybersecurity Pathway program (totaling more than \$500,000).

When I joined Mason as the new VSE dean, I offered a clear, compelling, and consistent vision for the future of the school: to join the ranks of the nation's top tier of engineering schools as a comprehensive school of engineering. I would also emphasize that this was, and continues to be, a shared vision with widespread support from the VSE faculty, staff, and students. In fact, I have been told numerous times that this vision was a primary reason why I was hired. Consequently, my first priority was to establish a mechanical engineering program. At the time of my hiring, Mason was the only research university in the U.S. with an engineering program that did not include mechanical engineering (among the top 125 ranked engineering programs). Given that mechanical engineering is (and has been since around the year 2000) the largest engineering

discipline in the U.S., an engineering school would not be widely considered to be comprehensive without a mechanical engineering program. It proved to be a significant nearly-three-year effort to gain SCHEV approval of another mechanical engineering program in the Commonwealth of Virginia, but that approval came in 2015. With the addition of mechanical engineering, Mason and VSE now have a clear pathway for growing vigorous new research programs in energy, advanced manufacturing, materials engineering, aerospace engineering, and other multidisciplinary areas as faculty members are hired to meet the burgeoning student enrollment in the BSME major.

Along with the new BSME major, I also strongly supported the effort of the Department of Bioengineering to develop a new doctoral program. Approval for the new Ph.D. in Bioengineering was obtained from SCHEV effective spring 2015. Establishing a graduate program in bioengineering was an essential step for the department to support faculty research and future faculty recruiting efforts. For us to compete with other research universities in any engineering field, we must be able to ensure a steady supply of strong graduate student research assistants for our faculty members. Today, the bioengineering faculty have nearly \$20,000,000 in research funding, with most of this funding coming from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Investment in biomedical and healthcare related fields aligns very closely with Mason's strategic goals and will provide vital support for building a strong and lasting partnership with Inova Health System.

The other new academic programs that were approved during my time as dean are the BS in Cybersecurity Engineering (CYSE), the MS in Data Analytics Engineering (DAEN), and the MS in Biostatistics. Both the cybersecurity and data analytics degree programs were developed with considerable input from our industry and advisory board partners, after I challenged the VSE leadership team of department chairs and associate deans to consider how Mason could deliver unique and distinctive programs in these hot-topic areas. Working with faculty groups and all of the VSE departments, proposals for these programs were submitted to SCHEV after advancing through the various stages of approval internally. The DAEN program was approved by SCHEV effective fall 2014 and the CYSE program was approved effective spring 2015. The MS in Biostatistics was approved by SCHEV effective fall 2013. This degree program is opening up new career opportunities for students and new research opportunities for faculty members in the Department of Statistics in the healthcare area and will complement the master's and doctoral programs in statistical science.

A clear and shared vision of success for VSE based on expanding faculty and staff rosters, research, and resources, driven by enrollment and budget growth that, in turn, is driven by strategic additions of new programs and continued investment in existing programs, very strongly aligns with the Mason strategic plan and goals. In particular, VSE has led the way with regard to the Mason goal of 100,000 career-ready graduates and the student enrollment growth that is needed to achieve this goal. Over the next five years, VSE will play a critically important role in the achievement of Mason's research goals, in particular to solidify Mason's classification as a top-tier R1 research university by eventually passing the \$250,000,000 mark for research expenditures. VSE has already greatly expanded opportunities for students for experiential learning and this research goal will greatly expand those opportunities. Every year of my deanship, I have submitted my Unit Administrator Activity Report to the Mason Faculty Senate that clearly describes this vision. I

have also regularly discussed this vision and addressed any questions about VSE's future direction in various faculty meetings and also at the dean's luncheons with faculty.

If I am reappointed as dean, one of my highest priorities for my second term will be to continue the process that we have begun this year to distribute more budget authority and responsibility at the department and program level. This goal, which I have held since 2012, has only now been made practical and implementable with the deployment of Mason's new budget model. This will further empower all of our faculty and staff to have a greater voice in the decision-making and leadership that will propel VSE and Mason to success in achieving our shared goals, while recognizing and leveraging the unique differences between the various disciplines and departments. Furthermore, it will increase the level of transparency and accountability tremendously with regard to decision-making and deployment of budgetary resources.

With regard to research budgets, research centers, and investment in research, my goal is to similarly empower our faculty researchers with the support and partnership of our new Vice President for Research, Dr. Deb Crawford. As Mason begins to re-examine its research budget and processes, such as the indirect cost rate and IDC distribution policies, at the dean's level VSE will be highly engaged and advocating for new policies that will create an environment where research will flourish. Towards achievement of this goal, I have created a new Associate Dean for Research position with Dr. Art Pyster serving in this role. Once again, earlier decisions made in anticipation of the launch of the new budget model have made this possible. I have tasked Dr. Pyster to focus on faculty success in their research programs by identifying and addressing existing barriers at Mason for growing research, and strengthening existing programs or creating new programs such as incentivizing and supporting the proposal writing and submission process. As with all major initiatives, this will be done with as much input and engagement as possible from our department and program chairs, center directors, and the entire faculty and staff.

I would now like to provide a brief quantitative summary of my major accomplishments as dean of VSE thus far. These achievements have all been made in full partnership with our faculty, staff, students, and other stakeholders. Most notably, as discussed above, we have added five new academic programs that are greatly expanding opportunities for our students and providing a path to expanding research into new areas, which is a top priority of the university's current strategic plan. These new programs meet rapidly growing demands by both students and employers. VSE now offers 10 different Bachelor's degree programs, 17 Master's degree programs, and seven Ph.D. degree programs.

In its first year, the mechanical engineering program enrolled 136 new students, while the cybersecurity engineering program enrolled 105 new students. Current enrollments for the Fall 2016 term in these programs are 220 and 183, respectively. More than 240 students are enrolled in the master's degree program in data analytics engineering. Our undergraduate student enrollment has been growing at a very significant pace, averaging nearly 15% growth per year over the past four years. Again, this aligns strongly with the university's strategic plan. This fall semester, we have approximately 6750 students enrolled in all of our degree programs. While I have been dean, our total student enrollment (by FTEs) has increased more than 55%. Enrollment in our new programs accounts for more than 10% of this total. VSE is now the second largest college or school by enrollment at Mason.

In order to accommodate the large growth in student enrollment, while also improving quality and expanding our research portfolio, we have hired 58 new full time faculty members and instructors over the past four years while I have been dean. We now have approximately 200 full-time faculty members and 175 part-time faculty members, and more than 300 staff members.

We have completed a full renovation of a classroom to convert it into a modern state-of-the-art engineering laboratory, and we are planning a significant expansion of space at Mason's Science and Technology Campus for our mechanical engineering, bioengineering, civil, environmental, and infrastructure engineering, electrical and computer engineering, and information sciences and technology programs to allow for continued growth. Faculty research productivity is beginning to increase significantly, due to a number of new initiatives such as revised school faculty teaching load policies, increased graduate student research assistant stipends and benefits (to attract the best graduate students), and greatly increased startup packages for new faculty. In FY15, 185 research grants and awards were received with a total value of \$21,065,451, representing a 36.9% increase in awards over the previous fiscal year. These awards were a result of 268 proposal submissions with a value of \$84,837,469, corresponding to a 37.4% increase in proposals submitted and a 25.3% increase in value over the previous fiscal year.

As one of 12 deans at George Mason University, I am a member of the university's senior leadership team, and I work closely with both President Cabrera and Provost Wu to advance the strategic vision of the university. I also work very closely with my fellow deans on a variety of initiatives, multi-disciplinary collaborations, and issues related to our academic programs and policies. I have also had extensive interactions with the non-academic departments at Mason, especially facilities, finance, enrollment management, admissions, communications and external relations, information technologies, advancement, global engagement, and even athletics. I have developed and maintain excellent working relationships with faculty leaders and administrators throughout the university. I embrace a philosophy of supporting the other Mason units as strongly as I can, and I encourage my department chairs to adopt the same philosophy when dealing with their fellow chairs as well as departments in other units. For example, we have reached out to the other units many times to form multidisciplinary teams and collaborations and programs.

As dean of engineering, I am also deeply engaged with the broader university community and its various stakeholders and constituents, including numerous corporate, government, and community partners. In my four years as dean, I have developed close personal relationships with many members of Mason's governing Board of Visitors. I have also worked closely with Virginia's political leaders, both at the state and federal levels, to advance economic development opportunities, advocate for educational and research program support, and to garner support for other initiatives that are important to the community. As the senior engineering dean in the Commonwealth of Virginia, I organize and lead a delegation of my fellow Virginia deans each year in visits to Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. to meet with our state's congressional delegation to advocate for greater support of higher education. I am also chair of the Virginia Micro-Electronics Consortium (VMEC), and support other partnerships among Virginia's universities.

In assessing my leadership of the Volgenau School and major accomplishments to date, I believe that I have done exactly what I said I would do at the time I was hired. Furthermore, I believe that

every major decision and major initiative was made in a collegial, collaborative, and fully transparent manner, with a high level of engagement from our faculty and staff members, advisory boards, industry partners, and other stakeholder and constituent groups. The hallmark of my initial term as dean is the growth of new and existing programs to create exciting new opportunities for our students and faculty members alike. During my time as dean, VSE has had very productive years in a relatively poor budget environment. We have reinvigorated our VSE alumni. We successfully attracted additional financial support for our programs and people through philanthropy and annual giving, and have laid the groundwork for even more engagement with our corporate friends and partners in the future. We continue plans to decentralize more administrative functions in the future, which will empower the departments and faculty to take increasing ownership of their programs. We increased the number of opportunities for VSE faculty and administrators to meet, exchange ideas, and socialize together. Our future holds great promise.

EXAMPLES OF SUCCESSFUL LEADERSHIP

New Programs

VSE continues to build upon its solid foundation and traditional strengths in the computing sciences and information technology by developing and nurturing new academic programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, with corresponding research programs of high value. Since 2012, VSE has made enormous progress towards its goal of becoming a truly comprehensive engineering school, with strong programs representing the core engineering disciplines adding to its IT legacy.

As noted previously, VSE successfully gained BOV and SCHEV approval and launched new B.S. degree programs in mechanical engineering and cybersecurity engineering, new M.S. programs in biostatistics and data analytics engineering, and a new Ph.D. program in bioengineering. VSE has also been extremely successful meeting its goals for student enrollment growth. In fact, student enrollment has far exceeded expectations, with a significant shift to out-of-state students (especially in computer science) that will greatly benefit us financially under the new budget model. As we expand marketing of our programs and solidify our dual-enrollment agreements with NOVA, these enrollment figures will increase dramatically.

Faculty/Staff Support and Advancement Activities

As dean, I advocate continually for new ways to increase faculty and staff compensation and startup packages, in order to be able to recruit and retain the highest quality faculty and staff. The numbers of endowed positions (endowed faculty chairs and professorships, and junior fellowships) must be greatly increased. This is a major focus of our commitment to raise \$30 million for Mason's 'Faster, Farther' campaign. VSE is well-positioned to raise significant philanthropic funds to provide additional support for our faculty, students, and programs. VSE over the recent past has been one of the top fundraising units on campus, and that continues to be the case. The Dean and the Dean's Advancement team make hundreds of personal contacts and visits each over the academic year, and also attend numerous special events including fundraisers, alumni events, and corporate functions.

In the area of advancement, VSE has also had major successes during my term as dean. Working closely with the VSE advancement team and the CEIE department's leadership team and advisory board, we have secured gifts and pledges totaling over \$3.2 million to establish the Eleanor and Bill Hazel Endowed Chair in Civil Infrastructure Engineering. This is the largest endowed faculty chair in the history of George Mason University. We have also established the Beck Family Foundation Endowed Faculty Fellowship in Engineering, the first endowed fellowship position at George Mason University designated for junior faculty. Many more donations were secured to provide for student scholarships and to support other student programs. Over the past four years, the School of Engineering has been one of the top performing units at George Mason University in advancement.

Student Support and Activities

Students are always my highest priority. VSE's leadership team has worked very strenuously to provide our students with the highest quality experience at Mason. We have hired additional staff in our undergraduate office, improved our student advising, strongly support our student organizations, and most importantly we have created new programs with high demand and embrace the continuous improvement ethos of ABET for all of our academic programs. We prepared for a successful ABET Computing Accreditation Visit in Fall 2015, following our successful ABET Engineering Accreditation Visits in Fall 2012. All programs reviewed received the full 6-year accreditation status with no weaknesses cited.

We have created new student events, such as our inaugural student-focused entrepreneurial forum with Dr. Ernst Volgenau in spring 2015. We have encouraged our students to be active participants in research, and we have very significant VSE student participation in OSCAR and the Honors College. Our spring semester Student Research Showcases have had record participation and engagement with employers. We have also engaged our advisory boards to help strengthen student programs and support these through financial support as well as mentoring, and identifying internship opportunities. A significant part of our fund-raising through our advancement office is focused on supporting student scholarships.

Our new academic programs are probably our best examples of creating new opportunities for our students. Our BS Cybersecurity Engineering program is the "first-of-its-kind" in the nation – the first cyber program to focus on cyber-physical systems at the design stage to incorporate cyber into designs with a systems approach for resilience. Our partnership with industry is unique and benefits our students as well as our local community. The U.S. Army Cyber P3i will enable the next generation of military students and veterans to enhance their cyber skills and will advance Mason's reputation as a military and veteran-friendly university. These are just a few examples of the many ways that we are embracing innovation and creating new opportunities for our students.

VSE has also launched a new initiative to make internships and cooperative education more accessible to greater numbers of students. Formal courses to grant academic credit for internships and coops have been approved, and the school's advisory board has formed a task force to work with companies to match students with paid positions, to find industry mentors for students, and to establish and implement best practices for student work assignments.

Research

The long vacancy with the Vice President for Research position has not been conducive to growing research. VSE is facing a critical shortage of space to support its research activities, including laboratories and office space for research faculty (including post-doctoral researchers) and graduate research assistants. With the hiring of a permanent Vice President for Research, we look forward to securing new resources and an improved university infrastructure to promote the growth of research throughout campus. Recently, we have made significant strides toward acquiring new space for our faculty researchers. We were able to acquire offices in the Nguyen Engineering Building previously designated as lease space, as well as a large research laboratory previously assigned to another unit. We also were able to obtain significantly more new space and commitments for even more space at the Science and Technology campus.

One threat to increasing research funding and awards, and an area of considerable concern to many VSE faculty members, is research compliance, especially with regard to export controls and classified research. Fears of federal regulations and violations could lead to an overly risk-averse posture by the university. This could result in faculty members declining to pursue funding with any types of restrictions. Since funding for restricted and/or classified research is a relatively large part of VSE's research portfolio, over-regulating these projects could stifle growth of federally funded research. VSE administrators and faculty played an important role in 2014-15 working with the central administration to develop new policies that protect the university and its faculty members from the consequences of non-compliance without being unduly burdensome.

Dr. Art Pyster, who is filling our newly created position of Associate Dean for Research, has had an immediate positive impact on growing our research programs and is working closely with our VPR Dr. Deb Crawford as one of her key strategic partners to strengthen research support on campus. Our research efforts are improving. In FY '16, the number of new research awards increased by 5.6% from 144 awards to 152 awards, while the dollar amount of new funded contracts and grants increased by 10.4% from \$17,450,990 to \$19,267,970. As of September 2016, our one-year rolling total of research expenditures was \$18,409,349, the highest it has been since federal sequestration went into effect in March 2013. This represents an increase of more than 10% over the past year in research expenditures. With our new Associate Dean for Research developing new strategies to increase research productivity and success, working together with our new VPR, I am quite confident that we are at a real turning point in research and should see our research expenditures begin to rise steadily and significantly. Finding space for new research laboratories, especially for our new tenure-track faculty, will be a top priority for the coming years.

Another initiative that we have launched this past year is the renovation of a wing in Bull Run Hall at the S&T campus, as VSE is developing its strategy to grow research and program capabilities at the S&T campus. Working with the Mason facilities team, we have obtained final approval of our plans and the renovations are underway. We have been aggressively seeking philanthropic gifts to support this project, as a part of the Mason Faster Farther Campaign, including artist's renderings of the renovated space and a short campaign video. We have also worked very closely with Dr. Crawford to help finalize plans for the build-out of the IBI building and its cleanroom. We are coordinating our campaign activities to support our S&T campus projects with Dean Rick Davis and CVPA, working cooperatively and collaboratively to promote each unit's success.

Faculty and Staff Engagement

I have continued to expand opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to interact with me and the other associate deans, as well as with each other. The Fall Faculty/Dean luncheons are now in their third year, and participation in these luncheons has steadily increased every year. These luncheons provide an informal setting for faculty and staff to discuss any topics at all that may be of interest or concern to them. They also bring together faculty and staff from different programs and different ranks, providing an opportunity for faculty to become more familiar with their colleagues from other departments and programs. Last year, to provide additional opportunities for regular faculty and staff gatherings, we instituted weekly afternoon faculty “coffee hours” that we conducted during the spring semester. These, too, have proven to be so popular that we are continuing that new tradition this year, for the entire academic year (fall and spring).

We also held our first ever late-summer “Welcome Back BBQ Luncheon” for all VSE faculty and staff. This provided a great opportunity for our new faculty to meet their colleagues, and for our faculty and staff members to gather together at the start of another new academic year. The excitement of the new year was evident, and this event was very successful. We intend to make this an annual event from now on. I am constantly looking for ways to expand opportunities for these informal interactions with faculty and staff throughout the year.

I have also formed new “Working Groups” to bring faculty together in multi-disciplinary research areas for better planning, collaboration, and coordination. The first two working groups are in Cybersecurity, and Robotics and Autonomous Systems. So far these working groups have been very well received and participation has been enthusiastic. VSE will continue to seek new ways to support the free flow of ideas and to encourage greater collaboration among our faculty, as well as with faculty in other academic units and research centers.

Another new initiative intended to improve communications between VSE departments with each other and the VSE deans, introduced in fall 2014, is the “All-Hands Advisory Board Meeting.” This is a co-located meeting of all members of the advisory boards of every VSE department and program, open to all faculty members as well, with the active participation of the VSE department chairs and program directors. Assessment of the effectiveness of these meetings for advancing VSE’s mission and strategic planning have been very favorable.

Diversity & Inclusion

I am proud of my record of being very proactive in support of diversity and inclusion. I have a strong and deeply held commitment to diversity and inclusion at every level, and a record of accomplishment throughout my career to demonstrate this commitment. I was one of the first engineering deans nationwide to sign on to the Engineering Deans Council Diversity Pledge, agreeing to develop a School-wide diversity plan to support and promote diversity in the engineering profession. I also was invited by President Cabrera to be the deans’ representative on the Mason Diversity and Inclusion Leadership Council. I have taken this responsibility very seriously, and I have been a very active and energetic supporter of Mason’s diversity and inclusion activities.

Communications and Public Relations

When I joined Mason as the new dean of engineering, I frequently heard the refrain that Mason was a “best-kept secret.” This seems to have been true. Even many of my fellow engineering deans throughout the nation knew very little about George Mason University in general, or our engineering programs specifically. Even though we have many areas of excellence, we have not been effective in promoting our brand and proactively managing our reputation. To rectify this, I appointed the first-ever Director of Communications for VSE, Ms. Martha Bushong. Martha has been a tremendous asset to VSE and Mason, and has greatly increased awareness of our programs, faculty and staff, industry partners, and most importantly our students. Martha has recently produced and published the third VSE Annual Report. These reports have been widely distributed, including to the entire roster of deans of engineering in the U.S. and other key academic and industry leaders. This is an important step in enhancing our reputation.

STEM Outreach

We have greatly expanded our STEM outreach activities, and I have appointed the first-ever Director of Outreach Programs in the School of Engineering. An early achievement was to attract the Greater DC Regional FIRST Robotics competition to Eagle Bank Arena. We also are developing some very innovative outreach activities to broaden participation in STEM fields by women and members of underrepresented groups. One such program is being developed at Mason in conjunction with our new mechanical engineering program, led by Dr. Oscar Barton, Jr. BSME students will be required to participate in the National Academy of Engineering’s Grand Challenges Scholars Program (GCSP). I was invited to join a small group of other academic leaders from around the nation to a NAE GCSP commitment signing at the White House in spring 2015. Among approximately 65 GCSP proposals, Mason’s was held out as being a model for community college engagement in the U.S. Other new initiatives that I have championed as dean include expanded global programs, such as a new energy systems engineering degree program to be offered at our campus in Songdo, Korea. We are also exploring new programs in China, Spain, and the Middle East. These are just a few examples of our international outreach.

Service Leadership as Dean

I believe that professional and community service is extremely important for all faculty members, and in this regard I strive to lead by example. Service supports many worthwhile activities, but it also provides great visibility for our programs throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia and National Capital Region, as well as nationally and internationally. Service also affords us with additional opportunities to provide leadership that can influence and shape the future of education in the service of society. I have been highly engaged in service to Mason, the community, and our profession.

A few examples of my service to Mason are listed here. I was the lead organizer of the Provost’s Multidisciplinary Research Symposium and Seed Grant Competition, with Deans Avruch and Rozell helping as co-organizers. This required a considerable amount of time and planning, and my staff also contributed greatly to this highly successful effort. I also contributed to many of the

university-wide searches for new administrative positions, serving on the search committees for our new VP for Research and AVP for Entrepreneurship and Innovation, chairing the search committee for the Dean of the School of Business, and attending many presentations and meetings with candidates for other positions. I regularly serve on a variety of university committees, and currently serve on the Mason Space Allocation Committee. Previous committee or board memberships include the Mason Board of Trustees, Mason Gift Acceptance Committee, Research Policy Committee (ORED 2.0), Budget Steering Committee, and Strategic Planning Steering Committee. I also represent Mason's interests as a Board Member for Masonvale Housing, Inc.

Externally, I am now serving in several national elected leadership positions within ASME, ASEE, and ABET, giving great visibility to VSE and Mason. Within ABET, I am now serving in my third year of a five year elected term as a Commissioner on the Engineering Accreditation Commission, an ABET Team Chair, and a member of the ABET EAC Criteria Committee, which is developing and promulgating the next revisions to ABET EAC general criteria. Within ASEE, I serve on the Engineering Deans Council, I am an elected member of the ASEE Public Policy Committee, an organizer of the ASEE Public Policy Colloquium, a member of the ASEE Bylaws and Constitution Committee, and I serve on the Executive Committee of the ASEE Southeast Section as an elected member and Section Campus Representative Coordinator. Within ASME, I serve on the Committee on Education, and the Honors Committee as Chair of the Church Medal and Sparks Medal committees (both of these awards are for educational activities in engineering). I also am active in the National Society of Professional Engineers and the Virginia Society of Professional Engineers, and VSE hosts monthly meetings of the VSPE Northern Virginia Chapter. These professional service positions provide great visibility for Mason's engineering programs and help us to build our brand and reputation. I will continue to serve in all of these positions during the current academic year.

I am now the senior engineering dean in the Commonwealth of Virginia. As such, I lead the annual delegation of deans at the ASEE Public Policy Colloquium, working with our Federal Government Relations Director Kerry Bolognese to arrange visits with Members of Virginia's Congressional Delegation to advocate for stronger support of higher education and research among other issues. I am also the Chair of the Virginia Microelectronics Consortium (VMEC)'s Executive Committee and I have successfully broadened the scope of VMEC's activities to benefit many more of our faculty in research related to microelectronics, semiconductor manufacturing, and micro/nano technology.