George Mason University is the best public university in the national capital region.

An innovative, entrepreneurial institution that prepares its students to succeed in the workforce and meet the needs of the region and the world, Mason has strong academic and research programs, which concentrate on producing successful students and accomplished alumni with a global focus. The university also has a reputation for forward-thinking academic offerings. Following is a sampling of some faculty, programs, students, research and innovation that show why Mason is the best.

MASSON FACULTY

Uncovering New Risk Factors for Pregnancy
While losing a child is every parent’s worst nightmare and a subject no one wants to think about, Panagiota Kitsantas, assistant professor of biostatistics and epidemiology, studies infant mortality in an attempt to help prevent it. In her recent study, she found that women who had experienced a previous child death (defined as the death of a child from birth to 18 years of age) were more likely to suffer an infant death or deliver a premature or low-birth-weight infant in a subsequent pregnancy.

Preventing the ‘Uncommon’ Cold Virus
Common colds typically cause a week of sneezing, aches and pains, but what if that cold turned out to be something more? Human adenovirus type-3 is known as the "uncommon cold" because the symptoms of the infection are similar to those of the common cold, which is caused by the rhinovirus. The symptoms of the uncommon cold are typically much more severe and can even be fatal. Determined to stamp out this devastating infection, Mason bioinformatics researcher Don Seto collaborated with the University of Hong Kong, Guangzhou Children’s Hospital, the South China Institute of Technology and the Graduate School of Chinese Academy of Sciences to develop a DNA-based vaccine that has effectively protected mice from the infection.

Locating the Criminals
David Weisburd, professor of criminology, won the 2010 Stockholm Prize in Criminology for focusing on the places where crimes occur, not just the criminals that commit them. His findings show that if the police target crime in certain "hot spots," criminals won't (or can't) simply move the criminal activities around the corner to another location. Focusing on places where crime is concentrated enables police to target their efforts more effectively. While police have generally organized their patrols by neighborhoods or precincts that span several city blocks, a "hot spot" can be a single street segment, a cluster of addresses or even a single building.
MASON PROGRAMS

Video Gaming as a Career
Playing video games would be the first step to a new career for students who pursue a Bachelor of Fine Arts in Computer Game Design. The degree is the only such four-year degree program offered in the commonwealth of Virginia and the Washington, D.C., area, and recognizes the high demand for game designers. Students can take courses including critical games studies, games and society, game theory, game programming, visual and audio design and interactive storytelling. Currently, more than 600 students are enrolled in these classes.

Caring for Baby Boomers
The U.S. Census Bureau projects the nation’s older population will double to 71.5 million by 2030 as baby boomers age. Created in response to this population shift, the new Partnership for Education in Gerontology (PEG) at Mason will prepare the nursing faculty to train students to manage the unique needs of older adults. Approximately 24 nursing faculty members from Northern Virginia nursing schools, including Mason, underwent an extensive training program that will help them better teach undergraduate students how to care for aging adults. Graduates from schools across the region are benefitting from this faculty education program as nurse-educators incorporate new PEG content into course materials and training.

Preparing Today to Plan Tomorrow’s Events
The Washington, D.C., region is home to myriad events from small social gatherings or weddings to major conferences and festivals. Mason’s Bachelor of Science in Tourism and Events Management provides students with the skills and knowledge critical to surviving in the multi-billion-dollar tourism and events management industries. Courses in heritage and cultural tourism, resort management, wedding planning and unique internship opportunities make Mason a top destination for students interested in becoming tourism and events management professionals.

MASON STUDENTS

Student Activist Makes a Difference
For University Scholar Whitney Burton, rubbing elbows with influential world leaders and listening to the likes of Bono and Al Gore isn’t just a dream. As a freshman, Burton landed the opportunity to do just that when she won a seat at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. The speech that sent Burton to Davos was on eradicating poverty through economic programs such as microfinance, a system of providing financial services to the poor. Since then, she has founded Mason ChangeMakers, an organization dedicated to promoting social entrepreneurship, and she is an editorial assistant for the Innovation Journal, a joint publication of Mason, Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Political Pursuits
Government and politics major Andres Chovil began his political pursuits even before enrolling at Mason. Chovil represented Alaska as the youngest delegate from the state at the Democratic National Convention in 2008. He started working for the Obama campaign early on by making
phone calls and knocking on doors to get a good turnout for the primary in his community of Chugiak, Alaska. He’s kept up his political involvement as an intern for Sen. Mark Begich of Alaska, helping with research and with the Senate’s Democratic Steering and Outreach Committee. At Mason, he serves as philanthropy chair for his fraternity, raising money for programs such as Food for Others and assisting Student Health Services. Future plans include running for a seat on the fraternity’s executive board and seeking a summer internship on "The Daily Show with Jon Stewart."

In the Money
Juniors Brittany Burkhart and Dani Miller can pretty much write their own ticket if they decide to go into professional fund raising. As sophomores, the students defied all odds in organizing an auction that netted more than $10,500 for Mason scholarships. The project was so successful that it is being repeated this year, with a new group of students leading the charge while Burkhart and Miller act as advisors.

From the “Late Show” to the Radio
Washington, D.C., area sports radio fans may know Mason senior Grant Paulsen as 106.7 the Fan’s voice at FedEx Field and Redskins Park. Brought on as the radio station’s full-time ‘Skins reporter at the start of the 2010 season, Paulsen, a communication major, interviews players, attends press conferences, and files audio reports from all of the team’s games. Some may also remember Paulsen as David Letterman’s roving reporter during Super Bowl XXXVI in 2002, a job Paulsen got after a “Late Show” producer caught wind of Paulsen appearing occasionally as a pre-teen sportscaster on D.C.’s Channel 9 News.

MASON RESEARCH
Getting on Board with Genocide Prevention
More than 60 years after the atrocities committed by Nazis, Andrea Bartoli, professor and director of the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, believes the world is still struggling to understand genocidal trends and respond to threats appropriately. As director of the Engaging Governments on Genocide Prevention program, Bartoli trains government officials from United Nations member states in genocide prevention methods and involves the participants in an international genocide prevention network. Bartoli has experience as both as scholar and as mediator, working with a variety of peacemaking processes in Africa, the Balkans, Central America and other regions.

Securing Cyberspace
At a time when people are constantly on the move, it’s necessary to ensure the safe transmission of information, an important strategic and operational corporate and governmental asset. The first academic center in security at a U.S. university, Mason’s Center for Secure Information Systems (CSIS) provides an environment committed to encouraging expertise development in both the theoretical and applied aspects of information systems security. CSIS is one of the National Security Agency’s original Centers of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Education and in 2008 was named one of the National Centers of Academic Excellence in Information Assurance Research.
**Sunny, with a Chance of Global Warming**
Mason Communication Professor Edward Maibach, along with several other faculty members, recently received a grant from the National Science Foundation that will allow for an in-depth look at how meteorologists can educate their viewers about climate change. Ultimately, the team hopes to answer key research questions supporting efforts to activate TV meteorologists nationwide as an important source of informal science education about climate change.

**Preventing Concussions in High School Sports**
Reports of players sustaining major concussions have become all too common. Hoping to keep players safe, Shane Caswell, associate professor of athletic training and director, focuses his research on the prevention of traumatic brain injury in sport. In his most recent study working with student athletes, Caswell found that concussions are actually increasing across several girls’ and boys’ sports. He hopes that understanding the risks and trends of concussions among girls’ and boys’ sports may contribute to better detection, treatment and prevention of concussions.

**MAISON INNOVATION**

**Stargazing**
The Mason community will soon be able to search for planets and galaxies beyond ours when a **32-inch diameter mirror telescope** is installed to complete the George Mason University Observatory. The telescope will be the largest on-campus telescope in the region and will be used for educational and research purposes.

**Creative Sustainability**
Transforming a used shipping container into a prototype for a **zero-carbon mobile exhibition gallery**, students in the School of Art created one of the first spaces on campus that aligns with Mason’s commitment to zero emissions. The students ripped out all the original wood and rusty bolts inside the 31-year-old shipping container. They repurposed used shipping pallets to replace the floor and chose a paint for the walls that contains no harmful volatile organic compounds. Working with collaborators on and off campus, the students installed custom skylights made from recycled frosted glass. As a stand-alone, student-managed exhibition space, the shipping container allows for many creative exhibition opportunities.

**Out of the Classroom, Into the Field**
Tucked into the rolling landscape near Shenandoah National Park, the 3,200-acre Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute is home to endangered animals and the scientists who study them. Through the **Smithsonian-Mason Global Conservation Education Studies**, Mason students live and study at the institute, where the zoo cares for and conducts research on more than 30 critically endangered species. Combining traditional classroom learning with field work makes this program a truly innovative partnership.

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