WILLIAM & MARY
ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEW SCHOOL AT WILLIAM & MARY

WHEREAS, William & Mary seeks to lead the nation in the evolution of liberal arts and sciences for the 21st century;

WHEREAS, William & Mary seeks to maintain and expand excellence in teaching and research in the rapidly evolving and closely interrelated fields of applied science, computer science, data science, and physics;

WHEREAS, the computing methods of these fields comprise essential competencies for citizenship and professional life – and thus for liberal arts and sciences education – in the 21st century;

WHEREAS, the integration of existing departments and programs in those fields will increase external recognition of William & Mary's growing standing in those fields in the Commonwealth and beyond, and help to attract and retain outstanding faculty, staff, and students;

WHEREAS, W&M's prowess in data science is emerging as a catalyst for innovation in research and teaching and a key driver of the W&M Vision 2026 Data Initiative;

WHEREAS, W&M student demand continues to blossom in these fields;

WHEREAS, multiple regional and national studies have shown the workforce needs for talented professionals (broadly educated, proficient in Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and related technologies) who can think critically and ethically with data at scale;

WHEREAS, in Spring 2022, the Provost established an ad-hoc design work group including the chairs of the departments of applied science and computer science, representation from each of the university's four schools, and representatives from the Arts & Sciences Dean's Office to explore the possibility of a new unit;

WHEREAS, in Fall 2022, the heads of the departments of applied science and computer science and the program in data science brought forward to the Provost a proposal for a school to include those fields;

WHEREAS, in Winter 2022, the Provost established a fifteen-member university-wide steering committee, co-chaired by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Sciences and the Vice Provost for Academic Affairs, to review the proposal and explore various possibilities for establishing an academic unit including computing, data science, and applied science;

WHEREAS, in Spring 2023, while the steering committee's work was ongoing, the faculty of the department of physics voted unanimously to join the new school, should such school be established, or to be part of a significant restructuring within Arts & Sciences;

WHEREAS, the steering committee's efforts included research of organizational models at other universities, faculty surveys, extensive faculty discussion, engagement with faculty governance bodies, and town hall meetings with students and with faculty;

WHEREAS, the report of the steering committee for the computing, data science, and applied science initiative discussed, with particular emphasis on resource implications and the need to promote interdisciplinary teaching and research, various advantages and disadvantages of different organizational structures associated with establishing a new school;

WHEREAS, based on surveys of faculty, staff, and students, the report also noted several key features that would be desired in a new school;

WHEREAS, the Thomas Jefferson National Accelerator Facility ("Jefferson Lab") is a national laboratory specializing in nuclear physics, and the creation of a new High Performance Data Facility at Jefferson Lab expands its mission to include high-performance computing and data science and marks an incredible moment of opportunity for William & Mary and the Commonwealth of Virginia to lead with distinctive excellence in these areas, consistent with growing student interest and expanding workforce needs;

WHEREAS, as detailed in the Provost's report "Establishing a New School at William & Mary," the proposed school would reorganize existing units and include initially the departments of applied science, computer science, and physics and the data science program; that the resource requirements would be modest in relation to the substantial advantages of reorganization; and that interdisciplinary work across the university can be promoted through coordination as recommended in the report of the steering committee; and

WHEREAS, a home for the school (ISC IV) has generously been funded by the Commonwealth and is under construction at the heart of campus;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the William & Mary Board of Visitors approves the establishment of a school that will initially include the existing departments of applied science, computer science, and physics, and the program in data science, and that will also serve as a center for collaboration across these fields, the university, and the region.