



# Committee on Academic Affairs

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# Provost's Report

## Committee on Academic Affairs

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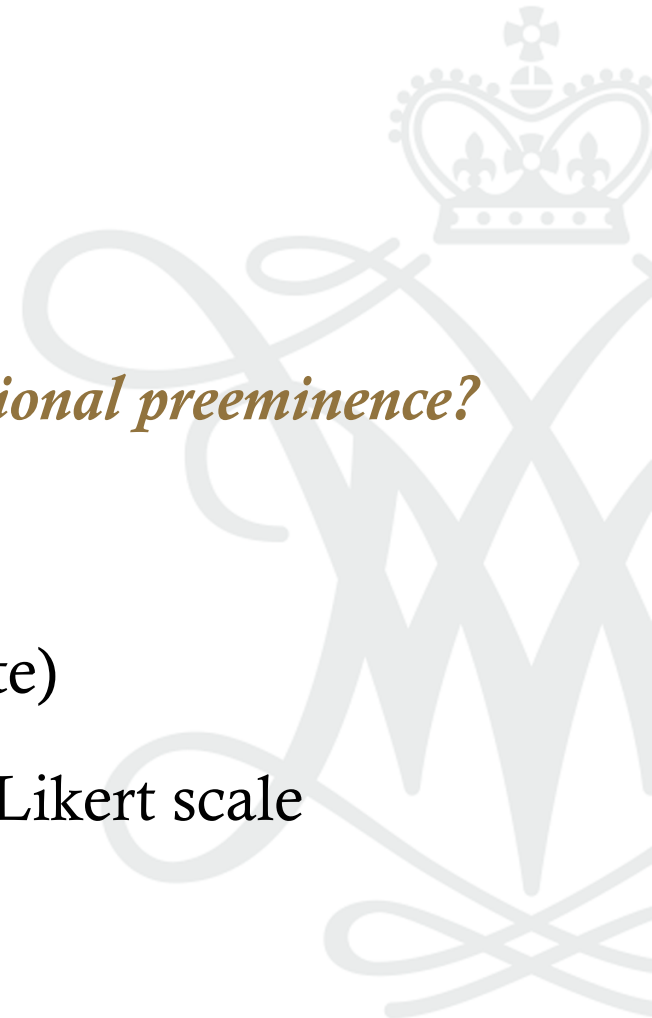
Board of Visitors  
February 2025

# STUDENT SURVEY OVERVIEW

- Preparing for the next strategic plan:

*What are student perspectives on academic excellence and national preeminence?*

- Fall student survey
- ~1100 student responses (both undergraduate and graduate)
- Includes both student comments and student ratings on a Likert scale



# STUDENT SURVEY:

## ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE & NATIONAL PREEMINENCE

**Q1:** “How would you define academic excellence at W&M?”

**Q2:** “What makes William & Mary a nationally preeminent university?”





# HOW WOULD YOU DEFINE ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AT W&M?

*Four main themes from student comments:*

Solving Real  
World Problems

Commitment to  
Learning, Curiosity,  
Critical Thinking

Rigor and High  
Standards

Faculty  
Engagement and  
Support

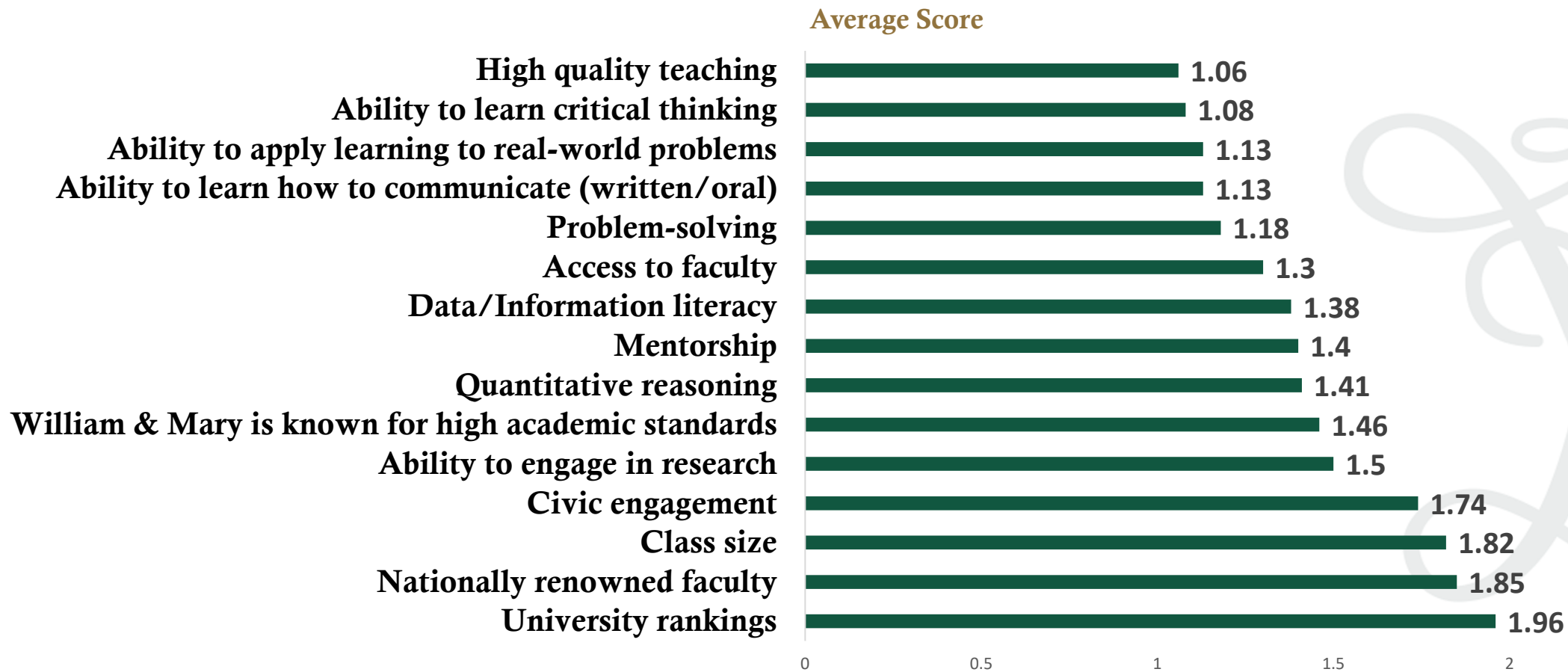


# ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

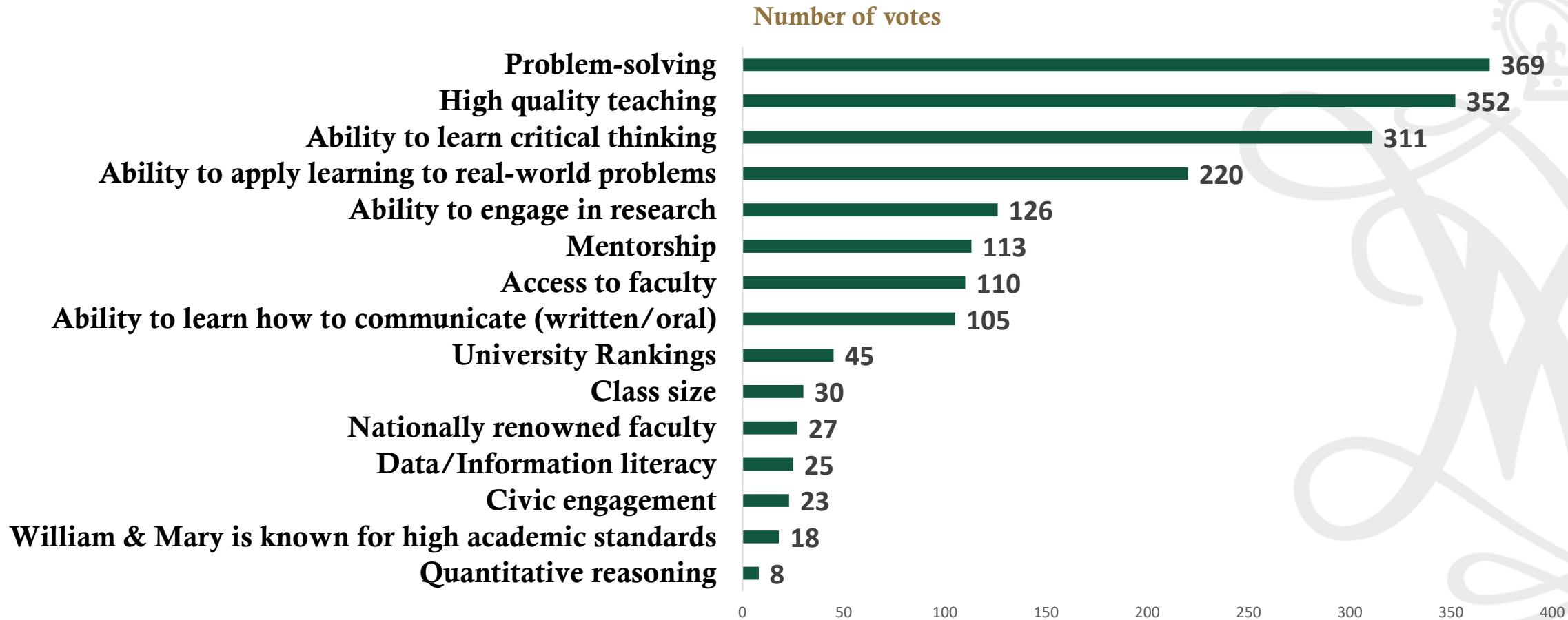
## SURVEY PROMPTS FOR LIKERT RESPONSES

1. Ability to apply learning to real-world problems
2. Ability to engage in research
3. Critical thinking skills
4. Ability to learn how to communicate (written/oral)
5. Access to faculty
6. Civic engagement
7. Class size
8. High quality teaching
9. Data/Information literacy
10. Nationally renowned faculty
11. Mentorship
12. Problem-solving skills
13. Quantitative reasoning
14. University Rankings
15. W&M is known as an institution with high academic standards

# PLEASE INDICATE HOW IMPORTANT EACH OF THE FOLLOWING COMMON MEASURES OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE ARE TO YOU?



# IDENTIFY THE TOP TWO FEATURES OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE THAT ARE IMPORTANT TO YOU





# WHAT MAKES WILLIAM & MARY A NATIONALLY PREEMINENT UNIVERSITY?

*Four main themes from student comments:*

High  
Academic  
Standards

Distinguished  
Faculty

Research  
Opportunities

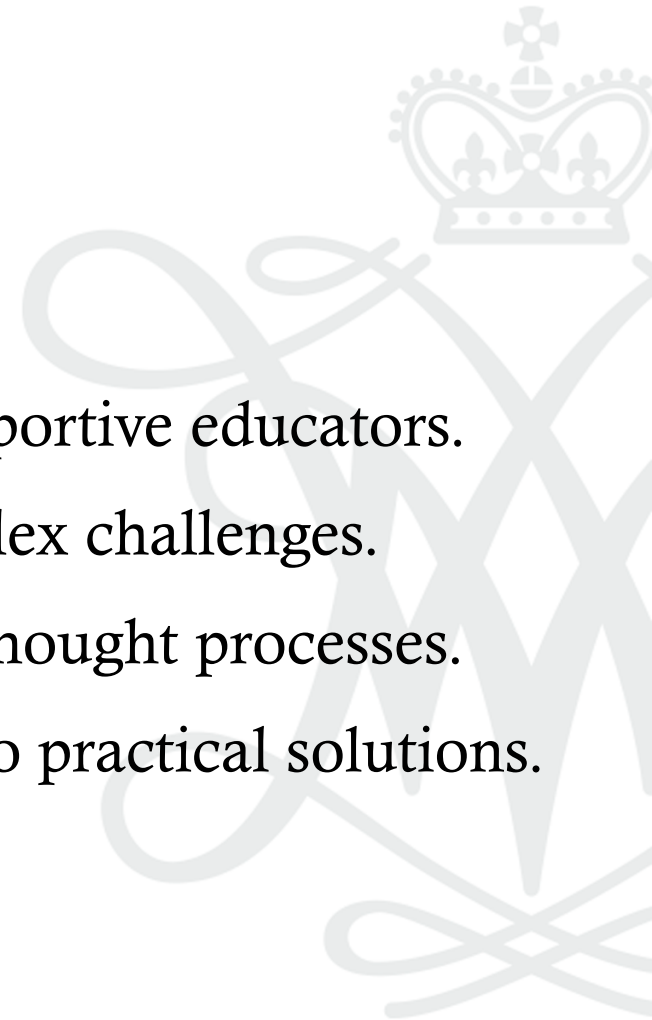
Post-  
Graduation  
Success



# SURVEY SUMMARY

## TOP STUDENT PRIORITIES FOR ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE

- **High-Quality Teaching:** Engaging, knowledgeable, and supportive educators.
- **Problem Solving:** The ability to approach and resolve complex challenges.
- **Critical Thinking:** Developing independent and analytical thought processes.
- **Real-World Application:** Translating academic learning into practical solutions.



*Groundwork for Strategic Planning*  
**NOVEMBER 2024**  
**RECAP**





# WHAT DO WE MEAN BY NATIONAL PREEMINENCE?

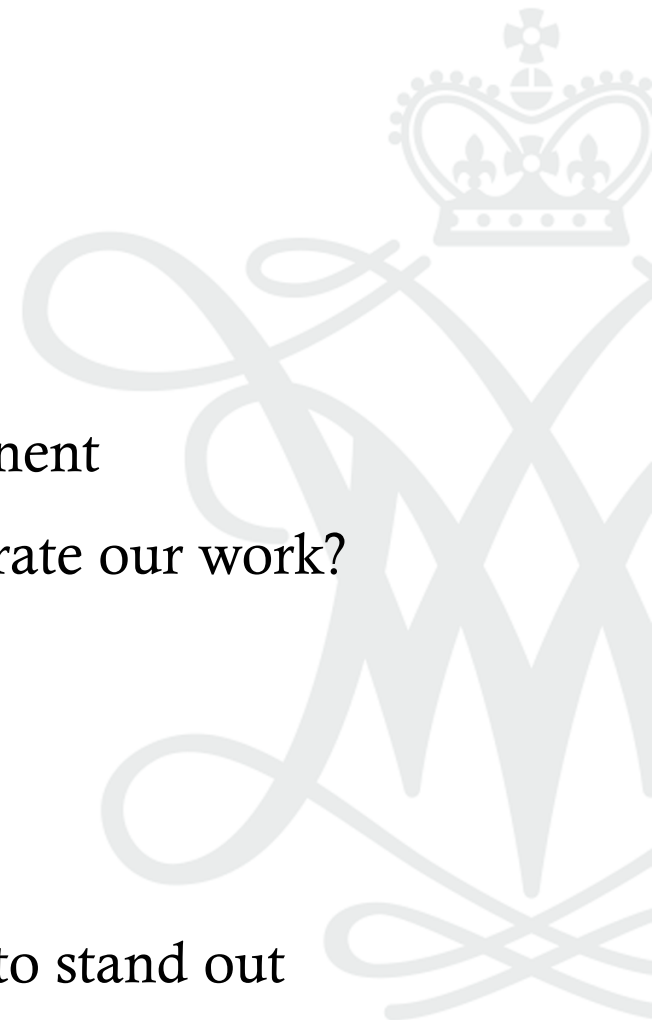
- Value and impact
- Relevance: contributing to matters of national consequence
- Brand awareness and favorability with our most important audiences: students, faculty, alumni, business leaders, investors (legislators, donors)
- Competitiveness: leader among national, elite peers

*We noted that **prominence** (national awareness) is foundational to national **preeminence** (value, impact, relevance, leadership, competitiveness)*

# ACROSS THE COMMITTEES WE IDENTIFIED:

## *Challenges to prominence and preeminence*

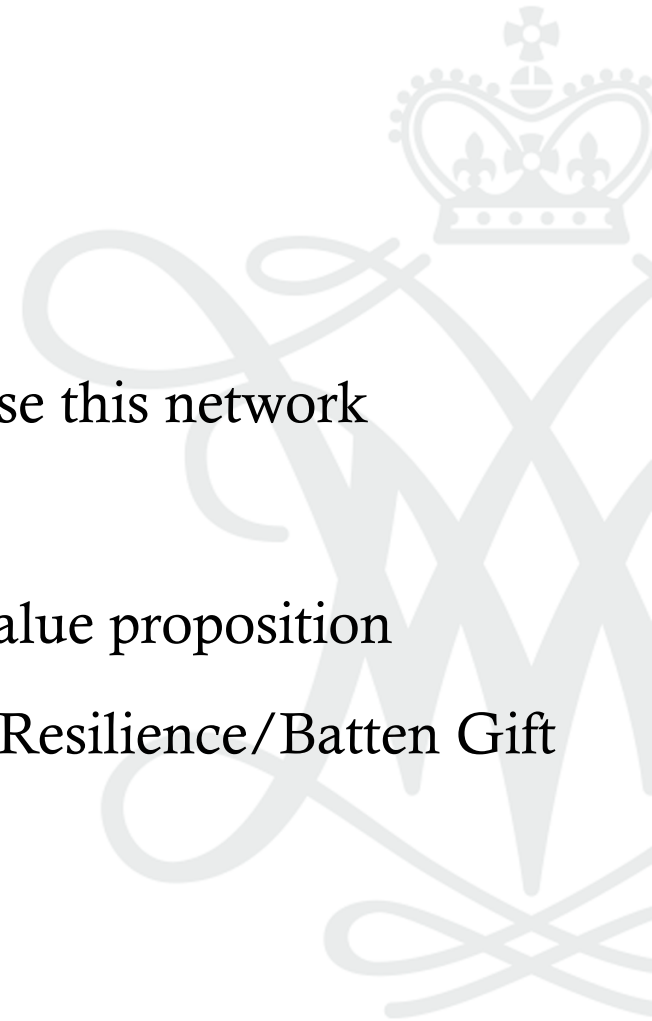
- Resources
  - If a school is under resourced, they are not nationally preeminent
  - How do we unlock resource creation institutionally, to accelerate our work?
- Competition
  - Post 2026 HE landscape is much more competitive
  - Universities with resources make noise and rise to the top
  - Schools that are nationally preeminent have done something to stand out



# ACROSS THE COMMITTEES WE IDENTIFIED:

## *Areas of excellence we can build on*

1. Vision 2026 success: Data, Water, Democracy, Careers
2. Strength of our graduates across industries: celebrate success and use this network
3. Unique identity and values with prospective undergraduate market
4. Press forward with future-oriented innovations that ensure a high value proposition
5. Nationally relevant news: Bray School (WaPo/TODAY) | Coastal Resilience/Batten Gift (WaPo/National AP) | Better Arguments/Democracy (WSJ)
6. Strong reputation in South, NOVA & D.C.

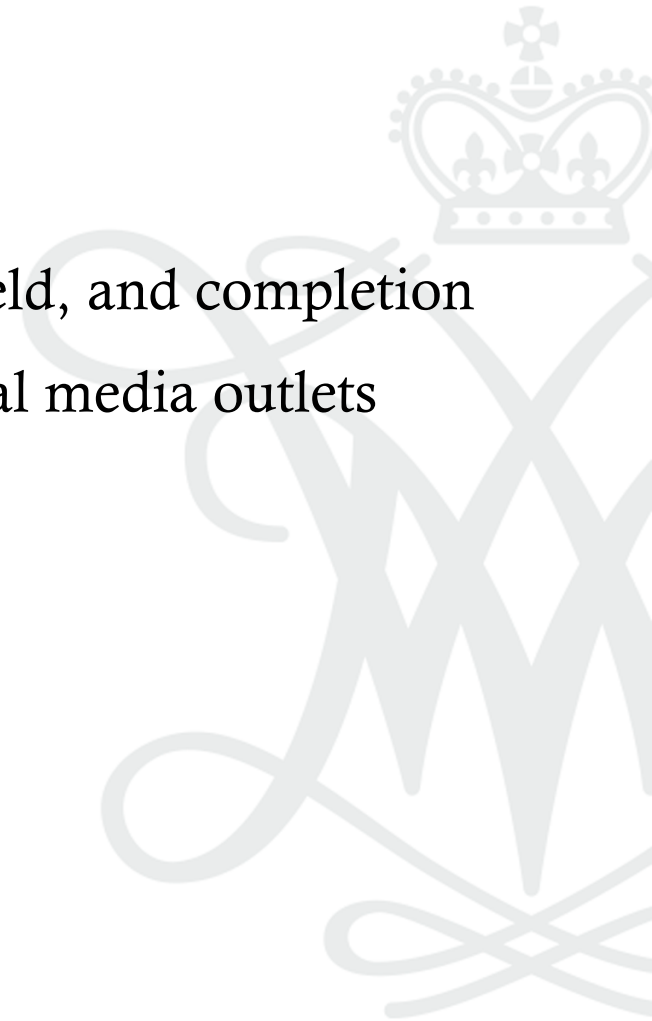




# ACROSS THE COMMITTEES WE IDENTIFIED:

## *Measures to benchmark and track*

1. Enrolling students from all 50 states; undergraduate demand, yield, and completion
2. Research citations in national publications / mentions in national media outlets
3. Net-promoter scores across constituencies
4. Alumni engagement
5. Reputation in West Coast, Midwest, Northeast
6. Public peer group
7. Rankings that align with university identity and strategy





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# William & Mary Board of Visitors

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