Biographical Sketch

John M. Mason received an Associate Engineering degree ('70, Allentown) and Bachelor of Science in Transportation ('72, Harrisburg) from Penn State and continued his education at Villanova ('77 MS) and Texas A&M ('81 PhD) in civil engineering. He began his career in consulting engineering. During his consulting career, he earned his professional engineering license. In 1987, John joined the civil engineering faculty at University Park. He rose to full professor and later served as both the Director of the Larson (formerly Pennsylvania) Transportation Institute and Associate Dean of Engineering. In 2008, he accepted the position of Vice President for Research, Associate Provost and President of the Research Foundation at Auburn University.

At Auburn, John serves on the President's Cabinet, connecting with university leadership, trustees, public officials, faculty, students and alums. He is responsible for a $20 million operating budget and $130 million in research awards annually.

John and his wife, Michelle, have been long-standing philanthropic supporters of Penn State, participating in the Grand Destiny campaign and establishing an endowment at Penn State Harrisburg. They are members of the President's Club. As Director of the Larson Institute, John initiated and administered a fundraising campaign to create the Larson Endowment.

John serves on public, private and foundation boards. He has also received numerous leadership awards from technical and professional societies. In 2012, he was honored with an Alumni Achievement Award from Penn State Harrisburg.

For 24 years, John, his wife and daughter lived in State College as active members of the community.

Position Statement

I am fully committed to performing all the functions expected of a trustee, and I take very seriously the associated responsibilities. The heartbreak of recent events at our alma mater is felt by us all. What is needed now is transparent, capable and thoughtful leadership on the Board to guarantee that comprehensive reforms are initiated soon and completed in a timely manner.

As an undergraduate student, I attended different campuses, gaining an appreciation of the benefits of our geographically distributed university. It is important that those avenues to individual growth are continued. Ensuring quality academic programs is critical to Penn State's long-term success.

Our incoming students and their family members face serious financial challenges in securing an education. Strong, enthusiastic and articulate conversations must take place to ensure future students access to an affordable and preeminent education. Predictable financial resources from the public sector and ongoing philanthropic efforts must remain at the forefront of the University leadership's deliberations and subsequent actions.

The attraction, retention and reward of high-quality faculty is critical because they are essential for Penn State's continued national prominence. Diversity, in all of its dimensions, is essential to foster inclusiveness across all levels of the University. Given the excellent research reputation of Penn State, entrepreneurial efforts must continue to be enhanced with a dedicated vision.

I have the background, the experience and the knowledge that are required to perform in a leadership role that not only sustains Penn State's reputation but also advances it in today's difficult times.