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RECOGNITION OF CHIEF DEBORAH CHEESEBRO

Deborah Cheesebro has steered the William & Mary Police Department for eight years with vision and integrity as associate vice president for public safety and chief of police. Her leadership and dedication have made William & Mary safer and more just, while her constant kindness, humility, and professionalism earned her our community's affection and respect.

Originally from Framingham, Massachusetts, Chief Cheesebro cultivated a commitment to service early on, working at a local grocery store as a teenager. She worked her way through school, earning a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from West Virginia State University, a master's degree in criminal justice with an education concentration from Michigan State University, and ultimately, a Ph.D. in organizational behavior and development with a concentration in human resources from Union Institute and University.

Chief Cheesebro began her career in criminal justice as a youth coordinator. Over 52 years of police service, including 22 years as a university police administrator, she has served her communities with distinction. In her own words, "the baseline of treating everybody with dignity, courtesy and respect, to me, is sacred. And to anybody going into this profession, that's what's expected."

In 2014, William & Mary wooed Chief Cheesebro to Williamsburg from Winston-Salem, North Carolina, where she had served as senior director of police, public safety and emergency management and director of police and public safety at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts (UNCSA). At William & Mary, Chief Cheesebro oversaw the police department and the offices of emergency management, risk management, and environmental health and safety.

A transformational leader, Chief Cheesebro modernized the police department. Focusing on fair and impartial policing, she pioneered a values-based approach to campus needs.

With Chief at the helm, the department's reputation and relationship with state and local agencies have soared. During her tenure, WMPD instituted revised procedures and processes, restructured the unit, elevated professional training and career development, and instituted regular joint exercises.

In 2019, she guided the department through accreditation from the Virginia Law Enforcement Professional Standards Commission. At William & Mary, we often say our goal is to be awesome, not perfect, yet Chief Cheesebro exceeds that standard. The department received a perfect initial audit.

Chief is a past president of the Virginia Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators. She is also a member of the International Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the International Association of Emergency Managers.

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Chief's unwavering compassion and bright sense of humor have won this community's trust and friendship. In 2019-20 W&M Diversity & Inclusion applauded "her efforts in recruiting and hiring police officers making the department more demographically similar to the W&M community and helping build tremendous relationships." In 2021, WMPD received the inaugural Building Connections and Bridging Difference Team Award.

At the end of the academic year, Chief Cheesebro will retire. Although her work family will miss her dearly, we know she will cherish spending half of each year in Michigan with her son and two grandchildren.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Board of Visitors recognizes Deborah Cheesebro's eight years of service at William & Mary, as well as her values-based leadership that modernized WMPD and placed community needs at the forefront of the department's work;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Visitors hereby expresses their deep appreciation for Chief Cheesebro's 52 years of police service, distinguished by an unwavering commitment to dignity, integrity and respect;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the Board of Visitors extends warmest wishes to Chief Cheesebro and her family as they look forward to more time together;

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, That this resolution be spread upon the minutes of the Board and a copy of the same be delivered to Chief Deborah Cheesebro with best wishes from a grateful Board for her years of dedicated service to William & Mary.