

SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 402

Commending Deborah Cheesebro, Ph.D.

Agreed to by the Senate, February 22, 2023
 Agreed to by the House of Delegates, February 23, 2023

WHEREAS, Deborah Cheesebro, Ph.D., the Associate Vice President for Public Safety and Chief of Police at The College of William and Mary, who has greatly served the university's students and faculty for more than eight years, will retire in 2023; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Cheesebro's training for a career in law enforcement included a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from West Virginia State University, a master's degree in criminal justice from Michigan State University, and a doctoral degree in organizational behavior and development from Union Institute and University; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Cheesebro was notably the first female Chief of Police in the history of The College of William and Mary (W&M); prior to joining the university in 2014, she served as senior director of police, public safety, and emergency management and as chief of police at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and as deputy director of the Department of Police and Public Safety at the University of Michigan; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Cheesebro oversaw the W&M Police Department (WMPD), including 24 sworn police officers, in her capacity as Chief of Police and was later promoted to also serve as Associate Vice President for Public Safety, incorporating her existing responsibilities with overseeing the offices of emergency management, risk management, and environmental health and safety; and

WHEREAS, during her tenure at W&M, Deborah Cheesebro was instrumental in revitalizing the culture of the police department and modernizing its operations, largely by revising policies and procedures, including recruiting, hiring, and promotional processes; enhancing training and career development for officers and staff; and emphasizing the qualitative aspects of the department's responses to the community's needs; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Cheesebro spearheaded several initiatives to improve the WMPD's ability to respond to emergencies, including an overhaul of the department's emergency communications center and the integration of all safety-related offices under the Office of Public Safety; and

WHEREAS, Deborah Cheesebro fostered strong ties between the WMPD and neighboring agencies and supported university police departments across the Commonwealth; in 2020, she served as the president of the Virginia Association of Campus Law Enforcement Administrators; and

WHEREAS, of her many noteworthy accomplishments, Deborah Cheesebro was most proud of the community-based culture she instilled in her department and the relationships she built with W&M students over the years; and

WHEREAS, in her retirement, Deborah Cheesebro looks forward to spending more quality time with her husband, son, and grandchildren, a fitting reward for one who has dedicated more than a half-century to ensuring others' safety and security as a law-enforcement officer and administrator; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED by the Senate, the House of Delegates concurring, That the General Assembly hereby commend Deborah Cheesebro, Ph.D., the Associate Vice President for Public Safety and Chief of Police at The College of William and Mary, on the occasion of her retirement; and, be it

RESOLVED FURTHER, That the Clerk of the Senate prepare a copy of this resolution for presentation to Deborah Cheesebro, Ph.D., as an expression of the General Assembly's admiration for her contributions to the Commonwealth and best wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement.

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