

Madison Vision Teaching Award Revised Motion
James Madison University Faculty Senate
March 26, 2015

Whereas, the Faculty Senate endorsed a proposed Madison Vision Teaching Award during its January 2015 meeting as a student-selected award with three \$1,000 prizes, to be paid from funding allocated by President Alger in support of JMU's Vision Statement, and

Whereas JMU's Student Government Association (SGA) has fully bought into the concept and is willing to participate in promoting the award and selecting the award winners, and

Whereas SGA raised the concern, in conversations with Senator Rankin (English), that student effort to develop criteria and select winners would yield little return on an award that more or less approximates teaching awards that are already in place on campus, and

Whereas Senator Rankin and SGA theorized that better return would result if the winner(s) might teach a unique class during the academic year following selection, on the model of Ohio University's University Professor Award, the Madison Vision-type award currently offered by one of JMU's peer institutions, and

Whereas SGA feels that if winners were to teach such a course, the award would be more easily differentiated from existing teaching awards and be more meaningful to both faculty and students, and

Whereas Provost Benson is (1) willing to offer two winners a course release, a \$1,000 stipend each, and cover the associated costs of such a release to both winners' academic departments, on a two year trial basis beginning Fall 2015 at a total cost of about \$10,000 per year, and (2) will consider making the award permanent on this model if the two-year trial is a strong success, and

Whereas Senator Rankin, SGA, and Provost Benson have agreed in principle to run the two-year trial on the following model, which remains open to modification:

- During the fall semesters 2015 and 2016, all undergraduate students would receive an emailed description of the award to coincide with the pre-registration window for Spring 2016 and Spring 2017 classes, and SGA would promote the award through other venues.
- When students pre-register, they will have an opportunity to nominate professors in writing. Tenured, tenure-track, RTA, and adjunct faculty would be eligible, but not A&P faculty.
- The university would adjust the top 20-25 raw scores on the basis of how many students each nominee taught during the previous three semesters, in order to level the playing field between nominees who teach hundreds of students and those who teach only dozens.
- The receivers of the top eight (or so) adjusted scores would become finalists for the

award and would be contacted about their availability to each a course during the following academic year. If nominees accept their nominations, they would be asked to write up a short description of the proposed course.

-During Spring 2016 and Spring 2017, an undergraduate committee to be determined by SGA would interview the eight finalists and would be invited to observe their classes.

-On the basis of those observations and interviews, and taking into consideration the course proposals, this committee would rank-order the finalists. The top two would be declared winners.

-These two winners would each receive the \$1,000 stipend and would teach the proposed course during the following academic year (2016-17 and 2017-18) as part of their regular teaching loads.

and

Whereas SGA and Provost Benson believe that the award as newly envisioned represents a marked improvement over the award as previously imagined, and

Whereas the award as newly envisioned would allow students to directly influence the curricular offerings of the university, since the winner's unique course on any topic would presumably not otherwise be taught at the university, and

Whereas the award as newly envisioned would allow students to take a more direct role in engaging themselves in their own learning, and would also allow faculty winners to enhance their own engagement with students, and

Whereas the award as newly envisioned would contribute to ongoing discussions among faculty, SGA, the administration, and students about academic rigor, and

Whereas the award as newly envisioned differs principally from the January 2015 version of the award in (a) being offered to two winners and not three, on a two-year trial basis, and (b) incorporating the teaching of a course,

Be it resolved that the Faculty Senate of James Madison University endorses the award as it has been re-imagined.