# THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

**THE VISITORS OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**

**Minutes of the Academic Excellence Committee**

The Academic Excellence Committee met on Thursday, November 17, 2022, in the Highlands Room of the Festival Conference and Student Center at James Madison University. Matthew Gray-Keeling, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

# Present:

Bell, Dickie

Gray-Keeling, Matthew White, Jack

Falcon, Chris Welburn, Craig



# Others:

Coltman, Heather, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Lovell, Sharon, Dean, College of Health and Behavioral Studies

Lovin, LouAnn, Interim Associate Dean, Science and Mathematics Maxwell, Paula, Associate Vice Provost, Faculty Affairs and Curriculum Neydon, Kali, Class of 2024, Geology

Ott Walter, Kathy, Speaker, Faculty Senate

Prins, Samantha, Dean, College of Science and Mathematics

Sparkman-Key, Narketta, Associate Provost, Inclusive Strategies and Equity Initiatives Whitmeyer, Steven, Associate Dean for Research and Scholarship, Science and Mathematics Woodruff, Celes, Interim Assistant Dean, Science and Mathematics

In his opening remarks, the chair acknowledged Transgender Awareness Week and expressed appreciation for the recent SOMOS Latinx Conference with keynote speaker Dolores Huerta. He invited Dean of the College of Health and Behavioral Studies Sharon Lovell to share brief remarks on the increasing interest in the college’s programs and the associated rise in applications.

# Approval of Minutes

On motion by Craig Welburn and seconded by Chris Falcon, the Academic Excellence Committee minutes of September 15 were approved.

# Academic Affairs Divisional Update

The Provost began her remarks with condolences for those impacted by the recent shooting at the University of Virginia and reiterated the mental health supports that are available for our faculty, staff and students.

Academic Affairs is addressing issues of affordability, accessibility and accountability by hosting an interactive workshop series for academic affairs leaders and faculty focused on increasing quality, access and inclusion.

The Provost is part of strong external networks to ensure currency with issues in higher education and highlighted organizations outside of JMU with which she is involved, such as the Sun Belt Provosts, the Virginia Provosts, and the Association of Chief Academic Officers.

The update concluded with a summary of significant research from faculty and students.

# Faculty Senate Speaker Report

Dr. Kathy Ott Walter, Faculty Senate Speaker, shared that the senate will focus on strengthening shared governance by making policy, handbook and procedural recommendations and will emphasize the COACHE and climate study recommendations when making those suggestions. She highlighted research, projects and service-learning collaborations between faculty and students in the Kinesiology and Finance departments.

# Curriculum Updates

Dr. Paula Maxwell, Associate Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs and Curriculum, presented a proposal to discontinue seven academic programs. She reported that these programs currently had no students enrolled and no students would be disadvantaged by their removal from our offerings. Identification of these programs was part of a curriculum review to ensure accuracy and efficiency in program offerings.

On motion by Chris Falcon and seconded by Jack White, the committee unanimously approved these academic programs for discontinuance:

Autism Spectrum Disorders – (Undergraduate Certificate) Autism Spectrum Disorders – (Graduate Certificate) Network/Information Security (Graduate Certificate)

Secure Computer and Database Systems (Graduate Certificate) Educational Technology Leadership (Graduate Certificate)

International Management of Non-Governmental Organizations (Graduate Certificate) Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication (M.S. degree designation only)

# Inclusive Strategies and Equity Initiatives

Dr. Narketta Sparkman-Key, Associate Provost for Inclusive Strategies and Equity Initiatives (ISEI), provided an overview of the area’s activities and introduced Academic Affair’s Strategic Plan Goal 2. This office focuses on fostering inclusive culture, supporting strategic planning, implementing inclusive hiring practices, addressing Task Force for Racial Equity Recommendations, collaboratively addressing themes from the climate study, cultivating safe spaces for all stakeholders and adjudicating faculty Title IX cases. ISEI worked collaboratively with DEI leaders throughout the division to evolve the AA Strategic Plan Goal 2 and its supporting objectives. Goal 2 states, "Centering evidenced-based anti-racist, anti-discriminatory and anti-harassment national best practices, Academic Affairs will foster an inclusive and evolving community that supports a thriving and supportive academic culture." ISEI’s work aligns with the Academic Affairs mission, JMU's strategic plan and the guiding principles for Virginia education as proposed by Governor Youngkin.

# College Spotlight: Science and Mathematics

Dr. Sam Prins, Dean; Dr. LouAnn Lovin, Interim Associate Dean; Dr. Steven Whitmeyer, Associate Dean; and Dr. Celes Woodruff, Interim Assistant Dean, highlighted new curricula in development, academic supports for student success within the college and involvement of faculty in outreach activities. The

college’s strong track record of externally funded and validated research and scholarship continues to involve students in original research experiences. Kali Neydon, Class of 2024, shared the impact of their research experiences on the development of their professional identity.

There being no further business, on the motion of Craig Welburn and seconded by Dickie Bell, the Academic Excellence Committee meeting adjourned at 2:41 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Gray-Keeling, Chair

Donna Harper, Secretary to the Board