

Campus History Committee

Midyear Report – Fall 2021

Membership

Chair: Meg Mulrooney

Members:

Meg Mulrooney (chair), Department of History and Office of the Vice Provost for Faculty and Curriculum

Ruthie Bosch, Department of Educational Foundations and Exceptionalities; Hispanic Faculty Caucus

Tiffany Cole ('10M), JMU Libraries

Mike Davis, Office of the President

Monyette Martin, Access and Enrollment Management

Towana Moore, Administration and Finance

Carole Nash ('83), School of Integrated Sciences

Karen Risch Mott ('20M), University Advancement

Sheila Smith, University Advancement

Christina Wulf, Student Affairs - Office of Disability Services

Representative TBD, Student Affairs - Center for Multicultural Student Services

Representative TBD, Student Affairs - Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Expression

Charge:

- Develop the Campus Commemorative Landscape mapping project to inform and make recommendations with regard to naming plans and commemorative opportunities moving forward.
- Examine the JMU story that is told by or in various publications, offices and groups (e.g., the Student Ambassadors) about the history of campus and develop ways the story being told to our various constituents (including current and prospective students, parents, alumni, the community, etc.) can be more inclusive and complete

Summary of Current Semester Activity

- The early part of the semester focused on planning and executing the building rededication ceremony on the Quad. During this moving ceremony, the university re-named three buildings for Drs. Joanne and Alexander Gabbin, exemplary faculty members and administrators (Gabbin Hall); Dr. Sheary Darcus Johnson, the first Black alumna of Madison College (Darcus Johnson Hall); and Doris Harper Allen and R. Walker Lee, two exemplary staff members and respected community leaders (Harper Allen-Lee Hall). That event occurred on Sept. 24, 2021.
- The committee determined that this academic year's work would entail several elements carried forward from the recommendations made in the Dec. 2020 Campus History final report:
 - Support the project led by committee members Ruthie Bosch and Karen Risch Mott to develop an exhibit for Memorial Hall interpreting the experiences of the 13 Black students that integrated the site, then Harrisonburg High School, in 1965. The first phase of this project is underway and involves background research, followed by oral histories with participants.

- Offer “alternative” campus history tours to beta-test content.

Future Work Planned

- Create several short slide decks documenting early or “first” Latina and Asian American students that enrolled at this institution. These would be displayed on the monitors already installed inside A Sense of Place, the campus history exhibit in Wilson Hall, to extend the information already present.
- Add information/narratives relevant to the experiences of other BIPOC “firsts” to an existing digital tour of campus sites
- Host a panel discussion with alumni who belonged to the Iota chapter of Delta Sigma Theta, Inc; Iota chapter (1971) is the first Black sorority on campus and members will mark the 50th anniversary in 21-22.
- Offer “alternative” campus history tours in spring to beta-test content; coordinate with Admissions and/or Orientation to offer to prospective students.