

Midyear Report, Dec. 2023 JMU Campus History Committee

Membership

Member	Role/Representing
Meg Mulrooney	Chair, History
Ruthie Bosch	CoE & Hispanic Caucus
Tiffany Cole ('10M)	Spec. Colls
Leonard Richards ('13, '14M)	CoE
Monyette Martin ('93, '96M)	Admissions
DeAndre Powell	CMSS
Carole Nash ('83)	CISE/DEI leaders
Cassidy Angelo ('21M)	SOGIE
Karen Risch Mott ('20M)	Advancement
Christina Wulf ('10M)	ODS
Craig Short	Finance
Debra Sutton	Faculty Senate
Gavin Wilkerson ('22)	Student reps
Marina Curry (HIST)	

- **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 committee met by Zoom in September; in person in October; by Zoom in November; and not at all in Dec. A MS Teams site provided collaborative space. New members this academic year: Richards, Short, Wilkerson.

- Committee members Mulrooney, Bosch, and Cole provided a campus history tour in August for ~25 new freshmen in partnership with CVEC for Dukes Making a Difference. <https://www.jmu.edu/csl/serve/dmad.shtml>
- Mulrooney provided a guided tour for 7 post-doctoral students invited to visit JMU for the new Be a Part of the Change program led by Narketta Sparkman-Key.
- Mulrooney provided a guided tour to multiple groups of JMU administrators, faculty, and students.
- For the October meeting, Craig Short arranged for members to tour the famed “tunnels” with Gary Shears. No ghosts were sighted.
- In November, the committee heard about an exciting card deck created by Kelly Giles in Libraries; she joined the meeting to share a digital version of this trivia/timeline game and we brainstormed ideas to share it more widely in spring.
- Mulrooney, Cassidy, and SOGIE staff prepared a session for the Queer Teach-In to provide some general information about LGBTQ+ experiences on this campus and the origins of LGBTQ+ support services ca. 1975 to 1990.
- Planning got underway for Wilkerson and an intern to begin a SOGIE oral interview project to gather more information about early support services.
- Led by Martin, planning began for spring panel featuring alumni from various decades (70s-90s) who participated in the Contemporary Gospel Singers. The CGS was established ca 1968 but expanded under the Carrier administration as part of an intentional recruitment strategy for Black students. The CGS provided a space where Black students felt welcomed and many members were involved in other early Black student organizations, including early sororities and fraternities as well as the BSA.
- Mulrooney interviewed Deborah Tompkins Johnson about her experiences as a student leader at Madison 1974-78 and as a BoV member; Cole, Risch Mott, and Mulrooney met with DTJ again to view some of her scrapbooks. Other conversations with alumni are also planned.
- Mulrooney met with Carissa Henriques to consider next steps for the exhibit in Wilson Hall, A Sense of Place. They inspected the space, noting some minor damage and the need for edits to label copy; they sent forward a request and budget for updates.

Future Work (for spring 2024) Planned:

- Hosting alumni panel on the role of the Contemporary Gospel Singers for African American History Month and/or Women’s History Month.
- Developing supplemental content (“Evergreen PPTs”) for A Sense of Place; these would be rotating topics of general interest and may include buildings like Wilson Hall, landmarks like the big rock in the Quad, or interesting or notable individuals like Althea Loose Johnston (early faculty and women’s basketball ball coach, state champs!) or Inez Ruiz, a Puerto Rican woman who attended in the 1940s and co-founded the Spanish Club.
- Proposing a session for May Symposium.

- Providing more JMU campus history tours.
- Considering development of a formal oral history project.
- Augmenting spring Bluestone Reunion (class of '74) programming with a presentation on the history of Madison and (possibly) a StoryCorps-type booth for alumni to record personal histories.
- Supporting the recruitment of a history intern who will begin oral interviews for SOGIE.