

REPORT OF THE DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS AND HONORS COMMITTEE

December 21, 2020

Members:

Molly Brown, Harold Butner, Mike Davis, Michael Klein, Carole Nash, Samantha Prins (chair), Wren Stevens, and Emma Thacker.

Charge:

The Distinguished Speakers and Honors Committee (DSHC) was charged with continuing the work initiated by the Academic Affairs Distinguished Speakers and Honors Committee during 2018-19. Specifically, the DSHC was charged to spend the 2020-21 academic year looking into the remaining recommendation from the April 2019 report:

- Recommendation #3: Policy around the granting of Honorary Doctorates

Updates:

Communication with the Provost's office indicated that the next step in advocating for policy change was outside the purview of this committee. As the committee had no clear tasks to discuss or otherwise attend to, we did not meet in fall 2020.

Appendix: April 2019 report

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ACADEMIC AFFAIRS DISTINGUISHED SPEAKERS AND HONORS COMMITTEE

April 12 2019

Members:

Sonya Baker, Molly Brown, Mike Davis, Michael Klein, Carole Nash, Mark Piper, Samantha Prins (Chair), and Emma Thacker.

Charge:

Provide recommendations to the President and the Senior Leadership Team for speakers and awards, including:

- Constitution Day Speaker
- Madison Vision Series Speakers
- Commencement speakers
- Honorary doctorates (working in collaboration with Academic Affairs representative to the University Honorary Doctorate Committee)
- Madison Public Good Award

The committee will review past practices and speakers/awardees to understand the historical context of these activities at JMU, as well as existing policies and practices related to each bulleted item. The goals and purposes of each of these will be clarified, streamlined and made consistent. Timelines will be established for making recommendations for each bulleted item. Processes will be established for receiving nominations and proposals, evaluating proposals, and submitting recommendations to the appropriate member of the Senior Leadership Team and the President.

Recommendations:

1. Recommend that a webpage be hosted by Provost's office that contains all awards above the college level available to the JMU academic community as well as speaker opportunities and other events for which the JMU community's input is desired. This could represent a more extensive listing placed at the existing <https://www.jmu.edu/academic-affairs/awards/index.shtml>

At present the extensive list would include the following:

Faculty Endowment Awards:

- Alger Family Faculty Endowment
- Jacob and Jane Ford Faculty Support Endowment for Excellence in Teaching
- Goodman Faculty Fellowship Endowment for Excellence in Teaching
- Shirley Hanson Roberts ('56) and Richard D. Roberts Endowment for Faculty Excellence

Endowed Chairs and Professorships:

- Betty Coe ('64) and Paul J. Cinquegrana Presidential Chair of Faculty Teaching Excellence and Research
- Mengebier Professorship

Awards for Faculty and Staff Excellence and Distinguished Activities

- Distinguished Service Award
- Distinguished Teacher Award
- Madison Scholar Award
- Provost Awards for Excellence
- SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Awards
- Provost Faculty Diversity Curriculum Grant
- Distinguished Career Achievement Award in Inclusion

Speakers, Honorary Doctorates, Awards for External Individuals, and Visiting Scholars:

- Madison Public Good Award
- Constitution Day Speaker
- Madison Vision Series Speakers
- Undergraduate commencement speakers for May and December ceremonies
- Graduate commencement speakers for May and December ceremonies
- Honorary Doctorates
- Visiting Scholars

It is recommended that this webpage include:

- A preamble describing how the awards and opportunities reflect the values of JMU.
- Brief description of emphasis and criteria for each award/event.
- Brief description of eligibility criteria.
- Nomination deadline for each award/event.
- Links to original source for these awards, events (see Appendix). It is not the intention to duplicate the content of existing webpages or documents but rather to collate the information for transparency purposes. Ideally, this page would require little ongoing maintenance once established. In the case where criteria for events, speakers, awards does not currently exist on another webpage, this webpage or a sub-page should provide the criteria and process. Examples of this would be the criteria and process for commencement speakers, the Madison Public Good Award, and the Distinguished Career Achievement Award in Inclusion if this is to be a recurring award.

2. Recommend that the nomination and selection process for the **Provost's award for excellence in Part-Time Teaching** continue to be supported by the Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI) but that other options be explored in the future.
 - a. Members of this committee engaged in discussions with Dr. Cara Meixner, Director of the CFI, and Dr. Andreas Broscheid, Assistant Director of the CFI and point-person on this award, to explore an alternative home for this award. The award does not currently align well with CFI's mission. Dr. Meixner suggested waiting until the Academic Affairs Strategic Planning process has been completed, particularly as it pertains to part-time faculty, before deciding on the best long-term nomination and selection unit for this award.
 - b. This committee engaged in conversation with the Faculty Senate Steering Committee to explore the possibility of the newly created Faculty Senate Adjunct Affairs (FS AA) Committee overseeing the Provost's Award for Part-Time Teaching. The outcome of these conversations is three-fold:
 - this possibility could be explored further in the future once the FS AA committee is more established,

- there are concerns of the FS AA committee having sufficient continuity in membership to best support the award's task and whether the committee would have the time to advocate on behalf of part-time faculty if they added this award to their mandate, and
 - the adjunct faculty on this committee would need to receive additional remuneration for this additional task.
3. Recommend that, as consistent with publicly available practices at peer institutions, that the University **Honorary Doctorate** committee contain a representative from each of the JMU colleges including the Honor's college and the Graduate School.
- a. Recommend that nominations be solicited from the entire JMU community and that the process for nominations be publicly available (see Recommendation 1). College representatives on the committee could solicit nominations from their respective colleges.
 - b. Timeline: Nominations and vetting for May ceremony must take place prior to October 31 for presentation at the November BOV meeting. Nominations and vetting for December ceremony must take place prior to March 31 for presentation at the April BOV meeting.
4. Recommend that The Graduate School's Executive Committee be asked to identify 3 potential graduate **speakers for both the May and December Graduate Commencements**. These 3 nominees should be ranked by preference in order to facilitate efficient decisions should earlier choices be unavailable. Nominations should be provided to the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs.
- a. The goal of this recommendation is to increase the participation of graduate faculty and graduate students in this process.
 - b. The Executive Committee is well poised to identify speakers with ties to JMU that represent students from all 7 colleges.
 - c. The Executive Committee should not be charged with determining the suitability of nominees with respect to cost; however, see Recommendation 6.
 - d. Criteria for nominations: Nominations are solicited for speakers at the May and December undergraduate commencement ceremonies. All nominations must include a link to a publicly available video of the nominee speaking. Speakers at these events should preferably be JMU alumni or otherwise have a direct connection to JMU. Speakers will be asked to challenge students in preparation for their next steps and to provide advice.
 - e. Timeline: Nominations should be given to the Provost by Dean of the Graduate School for presentation to Senior Leadership by January 1 for May Commencement and July 1 for December Commencement.
5. Recommend that the Faculty Senate be encouraged to nominate up to 5 **undergraduate commencement speakers** per year.
- a. The goal of this recommendation is to increase the participation of faculty in this process.
 - b. Faculty Senate Process: The Faculty Senate Speaker will ask for nominations from JMU faculty through the Faculty Senate Speaker Canvas site (currently 1250 faculty subscribers). These nominations will be given to the Faculty Senate Steering Committee whose members will select 5 nominations from those submitted.
 - c. Timeline: Nominations should be given to the Provost for presentation to Senior Leadership by January 1 for May Commencement and July 1 for December Commencement.

- d. Criteria for nominations: Nominations are solicited for speakers at the May and December undergraduate commencement ceremonies. All nominations must include a link to a publicly available video of the nominee speaking. Speakers at these events should preferably be JMU alumni or otherwise have a direct connection to JMU. Speakers will be asked to challenge students in preparation for their next steps and to provide advice.
 - e. The Faculty Senate, any members thereof, or individual faculty should not be charged with determining the suitability of their nominees with respect to cost; however, see Recommendation 6.
6. Recommend that any committees which provide nominations for commencement speakers, including those named in Recommendations 4 and 5, be provided with feedback on their nominees' suitability in order to prevent repeat nominations of candidates who are not viable as speakers due to cost, political views, etc.
7. Recommend that a task force or committee be formed to investigate what the ideal **Visiting Scholar** model is for our institution. We suggest the charge to this group include:
- What are the objectives of a visiting scholar program at our institution?
 - What other visiting speaker or scholar models currently exist on campus?
 - What models exist at peer institutions?
 - What model best meets the objectives at this institution and complements or builds on other unit or college efforts?
- a. This task force should include representatives from the existing Visiting Scholar program and representatives from all colleges
 - b. This recommendation comes from lively discussions of the merits of a variety of models that would address different objectives. Such models might include:
 - The existing Visiting Scholars format which is run from CAL and brings in approximately 6 speakers per year and may have high impact on a smaller targeted group of faculty, staff and students.
 - The visiting scholar as a funded one-semester sabbatical model for an external faculty member who can engage units from across campus in discussions, share expertise, and then advocate for JMU upon return to their home institution and regular academic life.
 - The visiting scholar as a short-term visitor, similar to a Madison Vision Series speaker, perhaps with selection based on a rotation through the colleges with a possible theme determined by the Provost.
8. Recommend **clarification of award language**:
- For Goodman, Ford, Alger, Madison Scholar, and Roberts awards:
 - Clarify the meaning of 3-5 years of service by stating the semesters that JMU employment would have begun for those eligible for the next nomination round. E.g. for the 2020-2021 award year, 3-5 years of service would indicate joining JMU in Fall 2015-Fall 2017.
 - Clarify that the nominee must be full-time instructional faculty at the time of nomination.
 - Recommend the intentional inclusion of RTA faculty as eligible for awards e.g. "Full-time Instructional Faculty including Tenure-Track and RTA".
 - Recommend that the Deans develop a common understanding of the following eligibility criteria for the Roberts Award: "Candidates who have not received a high-level award

(\$5,000+) in their college within the last three years will be given preference.” Questions to explore would be whether prior recipients of other Endowment or SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award be eligible. It is recommended that to the extent that is appropriate, this understanding be advertised on the website.

- Members of this committee discussed the above recommendations with Dr. Herb Amato.
 - Recommend use of inclusive, non-binary, language. Examples of existing binary (“his/her”) language include:
 - Description of Madison Scholar award at <https://www.jmu.edu/academic-affairs/awards/index.shtml>
 - Description of Mengebier Professorship at <https://www.jmu.edu/academic-affairs/awards/mengebier-additionalinfo.shtml>
 - Clarification of the Ford Faculty Support Endowment for Excellence in Teaching language. Endowment title suggests that teaching is the area of emphasis; however, criteria could be interpreted to emphasize scholarship or creative activity.
 - This committee recognizes that teaching and scholarship can be one in the same, but recommends some level of clarification.
9. Recommend for the **Betty Coe ('64) and Paul J. Cinquegrana Presidential Chair of Faculty Teaching Excellence and Research award:**
- a. Applications will be submitted to President’s Office as this is a Presidential Chair.
 - b. Final selection and announcement of winner by December 15 rather than January 15 in order for winner to be known prior to nomination deadline for other major awards.
 - c. As letters of support are required from each Dean, each college must develop a process for soliciting and receiving nominations to the Dean’s office prior to the submission deadline to President’s office.
 - d. Should an AUH in their last year of administrative appointment apply, they should have letters of support from the Dean (as stated) and another AUH in the respective college (as a proxy for the AUH letter of support).
 - e. The community should be made aware of this award sooner rather than later.
10. Recommend that the nomination process for **Madison Vision Series (and Constitution Day) speakers** be added to the respective webpage: <https://www.jmu.edu/president/mvs/index.shtml> along with a “submit nominations” link. This link should also be featured on the webpage in Recommendation 1.
- a. Each spring, faculty and SGA should be asked to submit potential speakers for the following year. Perhaps SGA might recommend via an article in *The Breeze*.
 - b. The nomination process should be explained on the website:
 - Nomination Process:
 - Any member of the JMU community may submit nominations for this award through the website at any time.
 - Vetting of nominations as well as selection of speakers is made by the Provost, President, the Executive Advisor for the President, a representative from Communications and the Executive Director for the JMU Center for Civic Engagement.

- Timeline: Two potential speakers for each of fall and spring semesters will be identified prior to the end of the previous spring semester.

11. Recommend that the nomination and selection process for the **Madison Public Good award** be placed on the President's Office website to include at least the following information:

- Criteria:
 - An annual national award recognizing contributions to the public good that reflect James Madison, in particular:
 - Personification of Madisonian ideals
 - Extraordinary contributions to American civic life
 - Distinguished record of engaged citizenship and serving the public good
 - Acknowledgement and encouragement of the unique role of education in protecting freedom and sustaining democratic republican government.
- Nomination Process:
 - All members of the JMU community are invited to submit nominations for this award through the website at any time.
 - Nominations will be vetted by the Executive Advisor for the President with selection of winner by the Provost, President, Executive Advisor for the President and Executive Director for the JMU Center for Civic Engagement.
- Timeline for award in fall:
 - Finalize artist to develop the art work by preceding October 1 (1 year earlier).
 - Finalize recipient by March 1 of preceding spring semester.
 - Schedule attendance at an engagement event in fall semester of award receipt.
 - If and only if the recipient is a suitable Vision Series speaker, they could be scheduled to receive award and give a Madison Vision Series talk in the following spring semester (of award year).

APPENDIX: LINKS TO CURRENT PUBLICLY AVAILABLE INFORMATION

Faculty Endowment Awards:

- [Alger Family Faculty Endowment](#)
- [Ford Faculty Support Endowment for Excellence in Teaching](#)
- [Goodman Faculty Fellowship Endowment for Excellence in Teaching](#)
- [Shirley Hanson Roberts \('56\) and Richard D. Roberts Endowment for Faculty Excellence](#)

Endowed Chairs and Professorships:

- Betty Coe ('64) and Paul J. Cinquegrana Presidential Chair of Faculty Teaching Excellence and Research
- [Mengebier Professorship](#)

Awards for Faculty and Staff Excellence and Distinguished Activities

- Distinguished Service Award. [Recipient list.](#)
- Distinguished Teacher Award. [Recipient list.](#)
- Madison Scholar. [Recipient list.](#)
- [Provost Awards for Excellence.](#)
- SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Awards. [Winner and nominee list.](#)
- [Provost Faculty Diversity Curriculum Grant.](#)
- Distinguished Career Achievement Award in Inclusion.

Speakers, Honorary Doctorates, Awards for External Individuals, and Visiting Scholars:

- Madison Public Good Award.
- Constitution Day Speaker.
- [Madison Vision Series Speakers.](#)
- Undergraduate commencement speakers for May and December ceremonies.
- Graduate commencement speakers for May and December ceremonies.
- [Honorary Doctorates.](#)
- [Visiting Scholars.](#)