

Kosovo and JMU Partnerships Committee
2022-2023 Academic Year
Midyear report

Membership

Chair: Vesna Hart

Members: Herb Amato, Mike Davis, Bob Kolvoord, John Hulse, Michael Stoloff, Kristofor Wiley

Committee charge:

- Develop and approve strategic plan and budget for 2022-2023
- Re-establish feasible and high-impact partnership activities with two-preferred higher education institutions in Kosovo, the University of Prishtina and International Business College –Mitrovica.
- Integrate JMU-Kosovo Partnership activities with other existing global activities, particularly related to other post-conflict contexts.

Midyear report:

I. ENGAGING AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL IN KOSOVO

Engage and support graduate students from Kosovo (Champion: Michael Stoloff). James Madison University has become a popular destination for students from Kosovo who are seeking graduate degrees. For Fall 2022, nine students from Kosovo completed applications for admission to seven different programs. Four of these students were recommended for admission by the programs to which they had applied. One student started the Communication and Advocacy, M.A. program, with support from our Kosovo Assistantship. Second student also started the Communication & Advocacy, M.A. program and third student started the Public Administration, M.P.A., with support from their respective departments. The fourth student, who was admitted to the Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication, M.A., deferred his admission to August 2023 to give himself more time to complete his undergraduate degree program and secure an assistantship. This academic year, two students from Kosovo are expected to successfully complete their graduate programs: one in the M.Ed. in Equity & Cultural Diversity program and another student is expected to complete the M.S.Ed. in Adult Education/Human Resource Development.

All the students we have enrolled from Kosovo have made excellent progress in their programs and they have achieved post-graduation success.

We will continue to promote our graduate programs to prospective students from Kosovo.

II. FACULTY AND STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

1) **Continue successful academic activities between EUPS and Faculty of Law, University in Prishtina** (Champion: EUPS in Florence, Chris Blake, Caterina Paolucci)

Per the work plan for 2022-2023, the EU Policy Studies concentration of the M.A. in Political Science plans two interactions involving University of Prishtina, Kosovo:

- **Continue successful academic activities between EUPS and Faculty of Law, University of Prishtina** (Champion: EUPS in Florence, Chris Blake, Caterina Paolucci)
 - **EUPS Student Internships in Prishtina.** This academic year 2022-23, of the activities planned between EUPS and UP that were suspended last year because of the pandemic, we would like to try and resume the **EUPS student internship program in Prishtina**. In the fall the internship possibility has been introduced to the new EUPS cohort, and some interest has emerged. In particular, two-three students have expressed a preference for an internship with University of Prishtina.
We have consequently worked to create the conditions for sending two EUPS students to University of Prishtina in late spring (May 2023), to conduct research on EU-Kosovo relations. The students would work with the Center of Transitional Justice under the supervision of Prof. Remzije Istrefi of the Faculty of Law, with whom we have reached an agreement in this regard.
 - **University of Prishtina Students and Faculty Engagement in Florence.** Another activity we would like to resume after last year's pandemic-induced suspension, is the **faculty and student academic and cultural learning and engagement**, which was very successful in the past in bringing faculty and students from Kosovo to Italy allowing them to experience JMU's academic and social context through the JMU Florence branch.
This fall, we have agreed with Prof. Istrefi that we will try to bring over a few students and a few faculty members from University of Prishtina's Faculty of Law (a total of 5 people) to participate in a political science workshop at JMU Florence. They would stay for about a week and interact with their JMU peers, both academically and socially. They would be introduced to University of Florence and EUI faculty/students as well, to allow them to increase the usefulness of the experience.

2) **College of Education activities** (Champion: Kristofor Wiley)

The College of Education will support a delegation from the COE to visit preferred partner universities in Kosovo, as well as local public and private schools, March 4-10, 2023. This visit was initially planned for Spring 2020, was interrupted by global pandemic while the virtual work had continued. Visit to the universities and local schools, as well as deeper in-person interaction with peers in Kosovo will be informative

from intercultural perspective as well as help define the collaborative programming. The delegation will include:

- Melanie Shoffner, Professor of English language literacy and COE site director for Kosovo
- Chris Hass, Assistant Professor, Early, Elementary and Reading Education
- Kendal Swartzentruber, Education Coordinator, Virginia Department of Education, Region 5 Training and Technical Assistance Center
- Two graduate students
- Kristofor Wiley, Associate Professor and Global Engagement Liaison at COE
- Vesna Hart, Director of Global Learning and Partnerships, Center for Global Engagement

The objectives for this visit are:

- Develop ways of cooperation with English Department at University of Prishtina (they educate two tracks: interpreting and English language teachers); not a part of Faculty of Education at University in Prishtina
- Explore possible research areas with professors in Faculty of Education, and other collaborative options with Arlinda Beka (Fulbright Researcher at JMU, Fall 2019) including visiting and setting up potential partnership with a public school(s)
- Review prior and develop new activities with IBC-M, Mitrovica
- explore opportunities with Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, U.S. Embassy in Kosovo
- Promote JMU graduate programs to prospective students in Kosovo

III. STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIP

Memorandum of Understanding with the University of Prishtina has been signed. Addendum that addresses specific activities between EUPS, JMU and Faculty of Law, University of Prishtina is under development.

IV. IDENTIFYING POSSIBLE SOURCES OF FUNDING

- 1) **Collaborate with UP and IBC-M on any open grant opportunities** (Champion: CGE/Vesna Hart with relevant centers, faculty, and staff)

Grant applications and other external funding will be considered pending available funding opportunities and compatible interests and expertise among JMU and Kosovo preferred partner institutions.

Submitted by Vesna Hart, Kosovo and JMU Partnerships Committee Chair