

**Partnerships Between JMU and African Countries Committee
Rwanda Subcommittee
Spring 2022 Report**

Membership

Chair(s): Mike Davis, Neil Marrin

Members: Felix Wang, Besi Muhonja, Rory Depaolis, Jean Michel Habineza, Cara Meixner, Nelson Girinshuti, Renee Jorgensen and Clemence Mbabzi

Charge: The Rwandan subcommittee supports and coordinates the efforts to expand JMU partnerships with governmental and higher education institutions in Rwanda by focusing on identifying, growing, and maintaining university partnerships. These efforts include faculty development and exchanges, student study abroad experiences and internships, and institution-to-institution collaborations.

Summary of Current Semester Activity:

- **iDebate Rwanda** – Despite not being able to visit Rwanda to work with our iDebate partners we have remained in close contact during the 2021-2022 Academic Year. This outreach includes one of our co-chairs serving on their board, members of the committee performing outreach to iDebate students and staff applications to JMU undergraduate and graduate programs and the further exploration of teacher and assessment trainings.
- **Graduate Student Outreach** – JMU currently has two graduate students from Rwanda with a third student joining us in the Fall. Given the challenges related to undergraduate financial aid, the best opportunity for us to attract students from Rwanda is in graduate education. The Provost's Office in cooperation with the President's Office will sponsor one or two of the graduate students in the Fall.
- **University Partnerships** – We continue to maintain close contacts with Davis College, African Leadership University and several other institutes of Higher Learning in Rwanda. Obviously the pandemic has created a challenge for these partnerships, but members of the committee have worked hard with individual faculty and staff to strengthen the connections.
- **Nonprofit Partners** – Nonprofit partnerships have continued to grow in Rwanda. Luckily many of our nonprofit partners have leadership in the United States so we have been able to continue work with Kids Play International and Shooting Touch. Both of these relationships hold tremendous potential for student internships and other projects.

- **Governmental Partnerships** – Prior to the pandemic, JMU worked with iDebate Rwanda to create an MOU that would allow the Ministry of Education to conduct assessments in K-12 schools. There is a new Minister of Education, but the project remains of interest to them.

We also had the opportunity to visit the Rwandan Embassy in Washington, DC and had a wonderful meeting with the Rwandan Ambassador to the United States and several other government officials.

Future Work Planned: We are looking forward to reconnecting with our partners in Rwanda in a wide range of ways in 2022-23.

- **Fall 2022 Visit** – In October, a contingent from JMU will be visiting Rwanda to pursue the following initiatives:
 - Teacher training/curriculum development: Faculty and students from the College of Education will work with K-12 administrators and teachers to develop effective teaching techniques.
 - Debate workshop: Students and coaches from the JMU Debate Program will engage in a debate workshop designed for coaches affiliated with iDebate Rwanda.
 - Secure partnerships: Given that this is our third visit to Rwanda we are reaching the stage where the formalization of relationships seems prudent. We will pursue internship with the Rwandan International Olympic Committee, The Ministry of Sport and NBA Africa.
- **Partnerships with Non-Profits/HEI:** We would also like to formalize some of the relationships with our potential non-profits and higher education institutions.