

Partnerships between JMU and African Countries
Rwanda Subcommittee
Fall 2023 Report

Membership

Chairs: Bryan Zugelder & Monica Smith-Woofter

Members: Rory DePaolis, Bernd Kaussler, Joseph Kush, Paul Mabrey, Somba Muzata, Jean Michel Habineza, David Shonk, Cara Meixner, Besi Muhonja, John Hathcoat, 3 graduate students (2 from CAL, 1 from COB)

Charge

The Rwanda subcommittee supports and coordinates 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.

Fall Activity

Graduate Student Recruitment & Retention: New graduate students from Rwanda matriculated to JMU in the areas of Public Administration (2) and Sport and Recreation Management (1). Co-chairs of the subcommittee and Oris Griffin, from the College of Education, helped facilitate the matriculation and student hiring processes for the students in partnership with the Center for Global Engagement.

Ministry of Education MOU Development: Co-chairs worked with the new Minister of Education, through iDebate Rwanda, to develop a draft MOU for participation in the Teacher Leadership program. In partnership with the President's Office, an invitation by JMU to the Minister of Education was provided for the Minister to meet with stakeholders from the Harrisonburg area and with university administrators that included REDI leadership, CARS leadership, COE leadership, Academic Affairs leadership, President's Office, and Rockingham County Public Schools' leaders. The planned visit was for the week of November 29; however, due to last-minute request of the Minister, the visit was postponed until spring 2023.

Establish Priorities: During the first fall meeting of the subcommittee, held on September 21, 2023 in Memorial Hall, Jean Michel Habineza, CEO of iDebate Rwanda attended via Zoom and briefed the subcommittee on the priorities of the Rwanda government. The three priorities shared were established to facilitate the work of the subcommittee including: 1) tourism and sports management, 2) education, and 3) health care. Each of the subcommittee members represents these areas of focus.

During October, subcommittee members shared these priorities with colleagues within their respective departments, colleges, and units to prepare for updates at the November subcommittee meeting, held on November 10 in Memorial Hall. During the November 10 meeting, Jean Michel Habineza attended in person, as he was visiting colleagues in the DC area. The

subcommittee recommended that iDebate Rwanda serve as the implementation partner for the work of the subcommittee to leverage the strengths, connections, and relationships with governmental officials. iDebate Rwanda has the physical space and infrastructure to host JMU visitors and to facilitate meetings with appropriate governmental and organizational leaders.

Several actionable items were established by the committee to include partnership with iDebate Rwanda as follows:

- Study Abroad experiences (Sport & Recreation Management/Social Work/SCOM)
 - Summer opportunities through CGE
- Internships (Sport & Recreation Management/SCOM)
 - March 2024 Ball Season
- Faculty exchanges (Education)
 - Teacher leadership online learning
 - Teacher leadership in-person symposium
 - Teacher leader exchanges
- Assessment of Programming (CARS)
 - To evaluate effectiveness of partnerships
 - Rwanda Higher Education Council
- Potential Grant Funding (all subcommittee members)
- Research (Psychology/Mental Health, Education/SCOM)
- Student Recruitment Initiatives (CGE)
 - Education/training for Rwanda students to come to JMU
- Debate Training, Research, and Curriculum (Madison Center for Civic Engagement/SCOM)
- University relationships
 - University of Rwanda (Education)
 - African Leadership University (Education, Sport & Recreation Management, Public Administration)

Future Work

- Continue recruiting graduate students to JMU programs
- Execute pending MOU with College of Education
 - Anticipated summer 2024 start date of teacher leadership program
- Plan logistics for study abroad experiences
- Establish a Sports Management Advisory group to help facilitate spring 2024 International Basketball Event
- Identify Rwandan school leaders to collaborate with CoE global conversations