



CAL Diversity Council 2018-2019 report

April 26, 2019

This year the Council was highly productive in reaffirming its commitment to diversity, access, and inclusion. The Council advocated again for an external, comprehensive campus climate study; critically examined how institutions of higher education engage with diversity; and sought to highlight issues affecting the campus community that directly related to diversity, access, and inclusion.

Appointed Members:

Chair: Heather L. Scheuerman scheuehl@jmu.edu Justice Studies

Members:

Liam Buckley	bucklelm@jmu.edu	Soc/Anth (FA18)
Jennifer E. Byrne	byrneje@jmu.edu	Political Science (FA18/SP19)
Jessica B. Davidson	davidsjb@jmu.edu	History
Diana Galarreta	galarrdf@jmu.edu	Foreign Languages
Adrienne M. Hooker	hookeram@jmu.edu	SMAD
Bill Knorpp	knorppwm@jmu.edu	Phil/Rel
Elizabeth Pass	passer@jmu.edu	WRTC
Lisa Porter	porte2ll@jmu.edu	Soc/Anth (SP19)
Mark Richardson	richardm@jmu.edu	Political Science (SP19)
Mary Thompson	thompsmx@jmu.edu	English
Isaac Woo	woocw@jmu.edu	SCOM

The Council met on 9.17.18; 10.15.18; 11.26.18; 1.14.19; 2.18.19; 3.18.19; and 4.15.18.

The following reflects a summary of the Council’s goals and efforts it undertook to fulfill these goals. As these goals are fundamental to the mission of the Council, they remained largely unchanged from the previous academic year.

1) GOAL: Revisit the mission and role of the Diversity Council and spread information regarding diversity to the College.

- The Council reemphasized its mission, which is to serve in an advisory and informational capacity to faculty and administration regarding diversity, access, and inclusion. Various

members of the Council fulfilled this role by composing minutes and serving as representatives of the CAL Diversity Council at Diversity Chairs Meetings.

- In light of its mission and charge, the Council:
 - Invited Abe Goldberg, founding director of the James Madison Center for Civic Engagement and Associate Professor of Political Science, to its [September 2018 meeting](#) to present on JMU's participation in a project on civic engagement that has a campus climate component.
 - Approved of the creation of a Canvas site so that diversity-related reports and materials could be available to members who needed to reference information and share this information with their respective departments.
 - Discussed ways to prioritize diversity, access, and inclusion by ensuring that faculty are familiar with strategies to increase faculty diversity. To that end, the Council convened a separate meeting (Friday, March 1st) in response to Dean Aguirre's suggestions at its February meeting regarding hiring best practices. From this gathering, the Council invited David Owusu- Ansah, Associate Provost for Diversity, to its March meeting and reviewed the best hiring procedures and policies that are currently in existence at James Madison University (JMU).
 - Provided an update concerning the status of temporary handicap parking passes on campus. James Robinson, Director of the Office of Equal Opportunity, and Towana Moore, Associate Vice President, worked to make this policy more accessible. Parking Services will now extend the amount of time that a person can have a temporary handicap permit from two to six weeks. The passes will be distributed in two-week increments and can be renewed three times, which is meant to prevent the potential abuse of these spaces. In addition, the policy regarding only one permit per year will be abandoned. More than one instance of requiring a temporary handicap permit will need to be approved by the Director of Parking Services. Last, if a person needs the permit for longer than six weeks, they will need to go to the DMV for an official handicap permit.
 - Discussed general issues reflective of campus climate.
 - One such event, which affected the Korean and East Asian community at JMU, occurred on Monday, October 1st. This event encompassed JMU Dining Services posting a photo of Ramen Bar at D-Hall using an image that reflected the rising sun flag that Japanese military used during World War II. This image represents Japanese imperialism and various violent and sexual atrocities that were committed throughout the late 19th century and World War II. After Dining Services was notified, the picture was removed the next day and an apology was provided to those faculty who alerted Dining Services to this issue. A formal statement, however, was not made.
 - Another issue reflected a Faculty Senate motion to "expand the use of Faculty Senate Treasury funds. [...] The new motion, if passed, would allow for using Faculty Senate Treasury funds to make gifts to families (e.g., a gift card) who are expecting new members through birth or adoption)" (Faculty Senate Communications). The Council raised several concerns regarding this initiative, but a consensus on the matter was not reached (please see [October 2018 Minutes](#)). Ultimately, this Senate resolution did not pass.

- Invited Meg Mulrooney to its October meeting to present her research regarding campus history and its relation to diversity (please see [October 2018 Minutes](#)).
- Discussed the meaning of diversity and how it is implemented at JMU by examining James M. Thomas' (2018) article, "Diversity Regimes and Racial Inequality: A Case Study of Diversity University." This study put forth the idea of a diversity regime, or "a set of meanings and practices that institutionalizes a benign commitment to diversity, and in doing so obscures, entrenches, and even intensifies existing racial inequality by failing to make fundamental changes in how power, resources, and opportunities are distributed" (Thomas 2018: 141).
- Invited Jackie Hieber, Assistant Director for Sexual Violence Prevention & Survivor Advocacy, and Arianna Sessoms, Prevention Coordinator to its [November 2018 meeting](#) to present on the Green Dot Program.
- Discussed various topics that future iterations of the CAL Diversity Council may wish to pursue at its [April 2019 meeting](#). These issues reflect:
 - Helping faculty navigate issues related to campus expression
 - Improved communication between administration and faculty regarding various campus initiatives (e.g., external campus climate study) and suggestions (e.g., implicit bias training for all faculty)
 - Retention of diverse faculty and staff
 - Collaborating with Student Affairs regarding campus climate
 - Assisting faculty in navigating issues related to mental health and transiency of students
 - Examining the results from the campus-wide Task Force on Diversity and Inclusion
 - Defining diversity
 - Implicit bias training
 - Spousal hires in relation to retaining faculty
 - Creating a central repository to share information across departments, colleges, and university offices regarding diversity, access, and inclusion.

2) GOAL: Advocate for the needs for an external campus climate study to understand how perceived climate relates to diversity, access, and inclusion.

- The Council discussed how previous campus initiatives (the civic engagement study, NewPoint Strategies' diversity and inclusion focus groups, etc.), which tap into diversity and inclusion, do not reflect a comprehensive campus-wide study that uses a probability sampling strategy that would produce generalizable results.
- As such, the Council revisited a proposal for an external, comprehensive campus climate study, which the Provost's Gender and Sexuality Taskforce also supported. Despite some concerns that were raised (please see [November 2018 minutes](#)), the Council voted to approve of a proposal organized by the Task Force on Inclusion to advocate again for an external, comprehensive campus climate study.

3) GOAL: Promote diversity among the campus community and identify challenges facing diverse populations.

- Prompted by a discussion of the concept of “diversity regimes” (Thomas 2018), the Council discussed how “diversity” is not clearly defined at JMU. Some define diversity differently on campus and others focus specifically on inclusivity. Moreover, the Council recognized that moving away from race equity issues often leads to the adoption of tolerance for groups who have traditionally enjoyed a privileged status.
- The Council discussed issues regarding the underrepresentation of marginalized groups at JMU.
 - In regard to students, even though there has been an increase in Hispanic, multi-racial, and bi-racial students, the African American student population at JMU has remained rather stagnant. For instance, 19.6% of the population of Virginia is African American. While Old Dominion University overrepresents African American students, with 31% identifying as Black/African American, JMU underrepresents this demographic group with 4.68% identifying as Black/African American.
 - Public opportunities for the discussion and presentation of information regarding campus history are needed to better educate the campus community regarding how diversity is articulated at JMU.
 - In regard to faculty, suggestions for best practices to increase faculty diversity, in addition to those already utilized at JMU, were discussed. As part of this discussion, the Council invited Rob Alexander, Associate Professor of Political Science, to its February meeting to converse about his department’s use of a diversity advocate in recent faculty searches. Various issues arose with the implementation of this position in the department centering on clarifying the role of the advocate, service workload, and lack of training and support (please see [February 2019 minutes](#)).
 - This discussion highlights the need for clarity and faculty feedback in implementing hiring “best practices” (please see [February](#) and [March 2019 minutes](#)).
- Minutes consistently included relevant campus events related to diversity.

4) GOAL: Act as a liaison between university offices, departments in CAL, the Office of Access and Inclusion, the Diversity Council Chairs Committee, and the Dean of CAL.

- Various Council representatives shared announcements with CAL from the Diversity Council Chairs Committee via the composition of CAL Diversity Council minutes. Due to a teaching conflict, Heather Scheuerman, Chair of the CAL Diversity Council, could not attend the Diversity Chairs meetings. As such, she assisted in composing meeting minutes, which included notes from the Diversity Chairs Council meetings, in collaboration with the following representatives:
 - Elizabeth Pass (WRTC) – September 2018
 - Adrienne Hooker (SMAD) – November 2018
 - Mary Thompson (English) – January 2019
 - William Knorpp (Phil/Rel) – February 2019
 - Adrienne Hooker (SMAD) – March 2019
 - Isaac Woo (SCOM) – April 2019

These representatives were primarily responsible for composing meeting minutes for the CAL Diversity Council meetings and incorporated notes from the Diversity Chairs Council meetings, excepting when the Diversity Chairs Council did not meet. The Diversity Chairs Council did not meet in October 2018, February 2019, and April 2019. Heather Scheuerman was responsible for the composition of the CAL Diversity Council's October minutes.

- Dean Aguirre attended all meetings of the CAL Diversity Council, with the exception of its April meeting due to a scheduling conflict. Associate Dean, Dietrich Maune, served as Dean Aguirre's representative during this meeting.
- The Council summarized and distributed the information discussed in Diversity Council meetings to every CAL faculty member. Heather Scheuerman also posted this information on the [CAL Diversity website](#). Moreover, various meetings involved the presence of other campus representatives:
 - Abe Goldberg (Center for Civic Engagement) – September 2018
 - Meg Mulrooney (Associate Vice Provost) – October 2018
 - Jackie Hieber and Arianna Sessoms (University Health Center) – November 2018
 - Rob Alexander (Political Science) – February 2019
 - David Owusu-Ansah (Associate Provost for Diversity) – March 2019

In summary, the Council extended upon and met its goals for the 2018-2019 academic year. Council representatives helped to further the mission of this important institutional body by promoting awareness and discussion of issues relating to diversity, access, and inclusion at JMU. Going forward, the Council suggests that new iterations of this committee work together to highlight important topics relating to campus expression, disseminating information to faculty, hiring and retaining diverse faculty and staff, campus climate, and student mental health.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather L. Scheuerman
Chair of the CAL Diversity Council 2018-2019