

CAL Diversity Council Minutes October 18, 2017

Appointed Members:

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

Members:

Jennifer Byrne	byrneje@jmu.edu	Political Science
Stephen Chappell	chappesx@jmu.edu	History
Beth Eck	eckba@jmu.edu	Soc/Anth
Frances Flannery	flannefl@jmu.edu	Phil/Rel
Adrienne M. Hooker	hookeram@jmu.edu	SMAD
Yenisei Montes de Oca	montstesyx@jmu.edu	Foreign Languages
Elizabeth Pass	passer@jmu.edu	WRTC
Isaac Woo	woocw@jmu.edu	SCOM
Gregory Wrenn	wrenngj@jmu.edu	English

Sitting Members:

Chris Arndt arndtjc@jmu.edu Interim Dean of CAL

In attendance: Heather Scheuerman, Stephen Chappell, Beth Eck, Frances Flannery, Adrienne M. Hooker, Yenisei Montes de Oca, Elizabeth Pass, Isaac Woo, Gregory Wrenn, Chris Arndt, and David Owusu-Ansah and Art Dean (invited).

1) The Council reviewed its mission, which is to serve as an advisory and informational body on matters related to diversity, access, and inclusion (See: <https://www.jmu.edu/cal/diversity/cal-diversity-council.shtml>). As such, agenda items relate specifically to diversity and inclusion issues that are brought to the attention of Council members.

2) To facilitate the ease of the dissemination of information, the Council decided that the Dean's Office will send out the minutes after they are approved.

3) The Council reviewed the following news and announcements:

a) the Council will be sending a letter to the new Provost that advocates for a campus climate study;

b) the 8KQ of the Madison Collaborative for Ethical Reasoning and Action could be used as a good first week activity (<http://www.jmu.edu/news/academic-affairs/2016/12/12-19-eight-key-questions-structuring-course-experiences.shtml>);

c) This is another link that references the policy on disruptive behavior in the classroom (<https://www.jmu.edu/counselingctr/resources/faculty-staff/pages/disruptive.shtml>);

d) OSARP: RJ practices are completely voluntary (<https://www.jmu.edu/osarp/restorative/index.shtml>);

e) JMU recently applied for and received INSIGHT into Diversity magazine's Higher Education Excellence in Diversity Award (<http://www.jmu.edu/news/2017/09/07-diversity-award.shtml>); and

f) Heather Scheuerman met with James Robinson, Art Dean, and David Owusu-Ansah to discuss September's minutes and to clarify the purpose of existing resources. The Silent Witness Program is an anonymous reporting system meant for those who have witnessed a crime on campus (https://www.jmu.edu/publicsafety/silent_witness_form.shtml). The Office of Equal Opportunity is working with an external organization to create a pocket guide to free speech and peaceful assembly. In addition, this Office is working on creating an anonymous reporting system for bias-related incidents that do not fall under the rubric of traditional forms of crime. The proposed name is "Not @ JMU." This reporting system will hopefully give people the tools to understand how to navigate procedures when encountering bias-related acts. Updates regarding the development of these resources will be disseminated when received. It was also suggested that the *Beacon* could be used to advertise these developments.

4) The Council discussed how some faculty have responded to the September minutes. Specifically, there are members of the campus community who are not all in agreement about initiatives to enhance diversity, which sometimes dovetail with concerns about new "engagement" language. A discussion ensued that identified how diversity and inclusion have been empirically shown to enhance academic excellence and promote student success (e.g., see [Bowman 2014](#)). In addition, a suggestion was made to encourage departments with this range of opinion to have the Office of Access and Inclusion facilitate dialogue so that all faculty can come to a common understanding of the range of diverse opinions that exist on campus to promote a positive working environment.

5) The Council also reviewed recent improvements to the CAL website. Joe Fitzgerald updated the website so that information related to diversity can now be found under the "Diversity and Inclusion" tab (<https://www.jmu.edu/cal/>). In addition, the Council is currently working on updating CAL Diversity Resources. Suggestions for what to include reflect: a) a link to the *Beacon* under the CAL diversity tab; b) a link to the Access and Inclusion website; c) links to Diversity-related grants and awards (e.g., IDEA, Faculty Senate mini-grants, Provost Diversity Council funding); and d) a link to the university task force on diversity.

6) The Council discussed a general theme of misperception and misinformation in relation to how the University responds to issues concerning diversity that involve the institution or that occur on campus.

a) For instance, many were not aware of the response the University had to its recent ranking by the Brookings Institution as the #1 laggard institution (See: <https://www.brookings.edu/research/ladders-labs-or-laggards-which-public-universities-contribute-most/>). JMU's response highlights some concerns with the methodology of the study and the data that was used. Regardless of the methodological flaws of the study, the Council discussed that the report could be used as an opportunity to grow and reflect upon issues relating to socioeconomic diversity on campus. For instance, the program

that encouraged lunches among first generation faculty and students, which stemmed from an IDEA grant awarded to Frances Flannery, and the Centennial Scholars program could be expanded upon to increase inclusion of underprivileged or traditionally marginalized students. Moreover, departments can think of creative ways to try to help students of lower socioeconomic status by promoting professionalization experiences and work study opportunities. The University could also design surveys that are sensitive to the variety of students that attend JMU by having questions that do not make certain assumptions about the background of students. Last, the Center for Faculty Innovation (CFI) could serve as an excellent resource for faculty who wish to alter their syllabi or pedagogy to be more inclusive of marginalized voices.

b) In addition, many were not aware of the stickers that Identity Evropa (a designated hate group) placed on JMU light poles (<http://www.whsv.com/content/news/White-supremacist-group-places-propaganda-at-local-universities-449467333.html>) and the misogynistic signs and sexual victimization that surrounded College Game Day (<http://www.whsv.com/content/news/JMU-responds-to-degrading-signs--451332263.html>) (<https://thetab.com/us/jmu/2017/10/17/i-want-to-rape-you-jmu-women-share-their-experiences-with-sexism-at-college-gameday-4875>). The official response to the latter event significantly differed from what was reported in the WHSV article and also occurred in the Breeze, which many faculty could have missed (http://www.breezejmu.org/opinion/lte-jmu-s-response-to-offensive-college-gameday-signs/article_8a6f9034-b412-11e7-ac8b-5751c45472c0.html).

The Council discussed how there is a need for improved communication about certain incidents and how JMU responds to them, especially as these responses as portrayed in the media are not corrected and undermine JMU's commitment to issues related to diversity, inclusion, and respectful treatment of all community members.

7) The Council will revisit discussing the [Social Justice Retreat](#) that was conducted by CFI at a later date.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather L. Scheuerman