

CAL Diversity Council Minutes January 14, 2019

Appointed Members:

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

Members:

Jessica B. Davidson	davidsjb@jmu.edu	History
Bill Knorpp	knorppwm@jmu.edu	Phil/Rel
Diana Galarreta	galarrdf@jmu.edu	Foreign Languages
Adrienne M. Hooker	hookeram@jmu.edu	SMAD
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

Sitting Members:

Robert Aguirre aguirrrd@jmu.edu Dean of CAL

In attendance: Heather L. Scheuerman, Jessica B. Davidson, Bill Knorpp, Diana Galarreta, Adrienne M. Hooker, Elizabeth Pass, Mary Thompson, Mark Richardson, Isaac Woo, and Robert Aguirre.

1) Heather Scheuerman welcomed the council back and made the following announcements.

- a. The sign-up sheet for minutes and Diversity Chairs meetings for Spring 2019 was reviewed.
- b. Another Montpelier trip is being planned through the Office of Access and Inclusion.
- c. A request was made to nominate or self-nominate Council members to serve as Chair of the Diversity Council for the 2019-2020 academic year. Nominations need to be received no later than the March meeting.

2) The council turned its attention to “old business,” namely analyzing James Thomas’ [“Diversity Regimes and Racial Inequality: A Case Study of Diversity University.”](#) *Social Currents* 5(2): 140-156.¹

Council members identified the following key points in Thomas’ work:

- Thomas’ point that diversity is poorly defined and that merely accounting for “demographics” among faculty and students is inadequate; instead, Thomas proposes assessing how diversity is articulated by an institution (“climate”);
- Thomas further suggests that rather than seeking to “decentralize” the “silo-ed” culture of academics, we should be *centralizing* our diversity efforts;

¹ A diversity regime is 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 recommends that each department be asked to define what “diversity” means; that the institution compile an inventory of inequities; that institutions create centralized offices for racial equity; and that equity work be more widely shared among faculty.

Council members then discussed the article, including the following observations:

- the problems identified by Thomas resonated with most of the group; the problem that “diversity” is not clearly defined struck many as similar to JMU;
- Dean Aguirre recommended we resist Thomas’ binary (“demographics” vs. “climate”) when thinking about diversity; instead, adopt a “both/and” approach or mentality; the council was encouraged to make use of research done by OIR’s office (in particular, to contact Joy McBride with queries).
- examples of good practices for increasing diversity within faculty: hiring practices; included: (1) visit to search committee from representatives from Office of Access and Inclusion; (2) possibility of creating a diversity advocate in each department who would sit in on every search; (3) increasing breadth of advertising of positions; (4) making positions more attractive (pre-sabbatical leaves); (5) expanding searches to four candidates; (6) expanding searches to two years.

3) Due to time constraints, the Council will discuss the following at a forthcoming meeting: a) proposal for cross-disciplinary studies; and b) issues relating to public expression and campus dialogue.

Future Meetings:

Dates:

Monday, Feb 18th

Monday, March 18th

Monday, April 15th

Time: 4:00-5:00pm

Location: Harrison 1131

4) Mary Thompson served as the representative for the January Diversity Chairs Council meeting. Key highlights are as follows:

a. Conversation with Kevin Powell

Art Dean introduced writer, would-be politician, and media-figure Kevin Powell as a visiting “scholar.” This is his second visit to JMU. Powell is at JMU for the first of four week-long visits (January 15; February 3; March 11; and April 14) this Spring 2019 semester. He will attend the Valley Scholars meeting on February 3 and will deliver the keynote address at the Diversity Conference in March.

Powell spoke for several minutes on a range of topics. He began with the value of listening to stories from our own community—including food service workers, bus drivers, and housekeeping staff—as a way of appreciating institutional memory and diversity. He spoke about a need to study masculinity from a feminist-informed awareness. He also spoke about a need for empathy as the goal of an intersectional awareness, such that we recognize we are not free while others endure oppression.

A discussion ensued regarding how to go about building skills “interrupting” oppressive acts and how “coming from a place of love” could be conveyed. The Council noted how there is a danger that being silenced for too long can lead to individuals speaking out of anger. A suggestion was made to place value on “meaningful disagreements,” so as to ensure that marginalized voices become recognized, and “re-engagement” with individuals who become aware of their engagement in oppressive acts.

Upcoming events:

- 1) "I Never Saw Another Butterfly" International Holocaust Remembrance Day 2019
Concert: Sunday, January 27, 2019: 2:00 pm
Lecture Session: Monday, January 28, 2019: 11:00 – 12:30 pm
- 2) The LGBTQ & Ally Education Program has a new identity! We are now *SOGIE* (Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity & Expression) *Programming*, which is a part of the Well – Health Promotion & Well-Being. To go along with that, the program space in the Student Success Center, Room 1310 will now be called the *Lavender Lounge*. Stop by the space to study or just hang out and relax! Join us for our *Spring Open House* on **February 6th from 11:30am-1pm** to see *the Lavender Lounge*, meet some of our staff, and grab some snacks! Questions? Contact iwerksjl@jmu.edu.
- 3) Anyone planning to attend the AACU Diversity, Equity and Student Success Conference on **March 28 – 30th** (<https://www.aacu.org/conferences/dlss/2019/registration>). Multiple people from the same institution can get a discount, so it would be good if we could coordinate. Please let Renee Staton know if you or someone you know plan to attend.
- 4) Below is the information for the Collaboratory happening next Tuesday. The poster is also attached. We want to get this out to as many students as possible, please pass it along to anyone you can think of with a listserve/other means to reach students.

Event title: Inclusivity Collaboratory

Date: **January 22**

Time: **9am-4pm**

Location: Student Success Center 1075

The Inclusion Task Force presents *Safe Space: Inclusivity Collaboratory*. Drop by at any time to discuss inclusion and exclusion at James Madison University. All members of the University community are welcome; faculty are encouraged to bring students, colleagues,

or whole classes. The event will feature an array of activities (e.g., art stations, discussion groups, reflection cards, one-on-one conversations) through which ideas, opinions, and visions can be expressed. Refreshments will be available throughout the day.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Thompson &

Heather L. Scheuerman