

James Madison University | Virtual Meeting | **Wednesday, February 3, 2021**

In Attendance: Emily Becher, Tiffany Brutus, Matthew Higgins, Wesley Howdysshell, Donna-Marie McMillan, Jason Saunders, Tiffany Runion, Amy Sirocky-Meck, Ashley Skelly, Brad Striebig, Mathew Lovesky, Shelly Newman, Katie Sensabaugh, Donna Crumpton

Called to Order: 1:03 PM

Welcome and Introductions: Co-chairs welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced President Alger and Mike Davis as guest speakers

President Alger

- Communication is important and updates are pushed out in real time.
- Professional development is a priority and still encouraged by administration even when budgets become more restricted.
- The general Assembly is working on the state budget but JMU is cautiously optimistic and currently has no plans to reduce salaries or implement furloughs because faculty and staff are a priority.
- Looking carefully at spring enrollment and the impact to budget projections, JMU has processed millions in student refunds due to Covid.
- Still experiencing a significant cost associated with Covid
- The Madison Scholarship was important in retaining students during tough economic times
- Higher Education budget initiative currently in Richmond to increase funds – JMU has an enrollment growth initiative making the case for increased funding for JMU.
- Covid 19 Update
 - Increased testing
 - Reentry testing was interrupted by winter weather
 - The fact that people can get Covid twice or develop Covid fatigue are ongoing concerns
 - VA Department of Health sets vaccine guidelines. JMU is doing anything they can to help facilitate vaccine distribution, volunteering space, parking, people
 - Appointed a Covid related group to look at how Covid has affected JMU over the past year and how things will change. Please share ideas.
 - Not all employees have the same resources at home (internet, computers)
- Diversity Taskforce – large working group that incorporates many people throughout JMU and the community. Working on developing short, medium and long-term recommendations as they arise and have already started making recommendations.
- JMU is going through some big changes – Will now be a Masters Level Institution as ranked by Carnegie-Mellon moving to a national research institution though not trying to be an R1 school.
- Questions, answers, and discussion
 - Faculty must accommodate students with a positive Covid contact or Covid positive result; this has also helped improve how faculty accommodate students in other areas.
 - JMU must adhere to the first Amendment. Faculty need to provide their point of view and have the freedom to express views. Administration is supportive of expression and academic freedom and considers civil discourse important. Thoughtful disagreements are important and education should always stand for information literacy, what is real and what is not.
 - Discussed the general impact of Covid on the workplace and how people do their jobs
 - Every division is different but there are key jobs that need to be filled.
 - People are tired and stressed but he wants us to be a model of resilience for the JMU community.

Approval of the December 2020 Minutes: Motion made by Amy Sirocky-Meck, seconded by Jason Saunders

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New Business:**Covid-19 Impact/Update from Center for Global Engagement:** Katie Sensabaugh

- 70+ short term programs in 50 countries with 1400-1500 students participating every year.
- CGE functions like a small college, dealing with applications, acceptance, enrollment, and support
- Plan one year in advance
- Cancelled all summer programs but looking at how to offer an international experience
 - International virtual internship
 - Semester in London offered online
 - Virtual exchanged with students around the world
- Some in person programs with a small number of students in Florence but many not willing to take the risk.

Multiple people will be rolling off the EAC at the end of the academic year

- Open positions
 - Co-Chair (AP Faculty)
 - Secretary – “Minutes Maven”
 - Webmaster (Maybe?)

Committee nominations request will go out next month

Updates

- **Faculty Senate:** Ashley Skelly: President Alger covered most items discussed at the Faculty Senate.
- **University Planning Team (UPT):** Will not be meeting for the remainder of the semester
- **Compensation Advisory Council (CAC):** Talking about childcare and looking over all the information gathered from other schools.

Announcements:

Meeting Adjourned 2:47PM

Submitted by: Wesley Howdyshell

Approved by Committee:**Future Meetings:**

February 3rd - virtual meeting with President Alger

March 3rd

April 7th - Art Dean, Executive Director, Campus and Community Access and Inclusion and Ireti Akinola, Recruitment Specialist

May 5th

Mission of the EAC

As an advisory committee reporting to the President of James Madison University, The Employee Advisory Committee fosters open, honest and productive communication between employees and the university administration with an emphasis on matters of concern to all employees. The EAC fulfills its mission by assuming additional responsibility for the following activities:

- Providing feedback and advice to the Senior Leadership Team regarding issues that impact JMU employees and facilitating two-way communication with the campus community through electronic and verbal methods.
- Facilitating staff employee participation on University Committees and Commissions.
- Sponsoring the annual JMU Employee Appreciation Event each May