

Motion for Culture of Respect and Inclusion in the JMU Community

Last October, across Harrisonburg, some members of the James Madison University community displayed misogynistic, homophobic, obscene, and otherwise intolerant and demeaning banners and signs. Also on GameDay, some members of the JMU community experienced sexual harassment. Toxic, salacious, and violent messages and behaviors betray our values as an educational institution.

The JMU Faculty Senate calls on the JMU community to maintain a shared culture of respect and inclusion. During ESPN's visit to JMU, signs displayed in Harrisonburg trivialized social inequality, sexual harassment, and violence. JMU's 2017 appearance on *College GameDay* occurred during a week when news media reports were inspiring dialogue about sexism, in the wake of sexual assault allegations against film producer Harvey Weinstein, and about racism, as a result of NFL players' use of kneeling during the National Anthem as a form of political demonstration. Signs displayed by some JMU students mocked those current events in order to promote dehumanizing sexual innuendoes and stereotypes. The messages thus portrayed members of the JMU community as ignorant of or hostile to dialogue about social rights and equality.

Freedom of speech is essential to democracy, and the JMU Faculty Senate remains dedicated to the protection of free political expression. However, misogyny, homophobia, racism, and all forms of intolerance, indecency, and disrespect should be countered by a community-wide commitment to the value and dignity of all students, alumni, and faculty and staff members who call JMU home.