

Same-sex Domestic Partner Benefits Resolution
(Based on resolution adopted by The College of William & Mary Faculty Assembly on
September 24, 2013)

Whereas over 300 colleges and universities across the country, both public and private, are now granting same-sex domestic partner benefits to their faculties as a routine part of their compensation package, and

Whereas state institutions of higher education in Virginia suffer from a distinct disadvantage in attracting and retaining qualified scholars and teachers by not offering such benefits, and

Whereas the cost of such benefits has proven to be small, and

Whereas same-sex domestic partner benefits are already offered by many corporations within the Commonwealth, in businesses such as information technology and financial services vital to the growth of the Commonwealth, and in multinational corporations whose business the Commonwealth desires,

the Faculty Senate of James Madison University resolves that all benefits associated with employment at James Madison University should be extended to all employees as appropriate to their employment status, without regard to sexual orientation or gender identity. Benefit equality specifically includes, but is not limited to, same-sex domestic partner benefits.

We urge the state universities in the Commonwealth to eliminate the existing discrimination in benefits as soon as possible.

Resolution Regarding Intercollegiate Athletics

(McGraw Proposal)

The Faculty Senate of James Madison University believes that academics must remain at the core of the University's mission, which is that "we are a community committed to preparing students to be educated and enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives." While athletics can help to provide a more meaningful collegiate experience for some of our students, we exist primarily because of our core responsibility to educate students. Our University's utmost priority must be academic quality. As recently restated by the Madison Future Commission, "we are dedicated to exemplary learning experiences because they are the essence of our mission." Whatever decisions are to be made with respect to athletics should always be made with the understanding that academic quality is our primary emphasis.

The Faculty Senate believes that the culture of our University should be primarily focused on academics, and are concerned about a possible erosion of our efforts to create an academic culture emphasizing rigor and scholarly pursuits. The Senate urges the administration to think in a deep and nuanced way about the effects athletic decisions may have on the culture of our University.

The Faculty Senate is concerned with the rising cost of education, and with ensuring that our students receive a quality educational experience for the tuition and fees required of them. We believe that the current practice of allocating 17% of our students' tuition and fees is too high, and does not maximize the student's academic experience for the amount charged. We urge the administration to work towards a long-term strategy that will seek ways to reduce the financial burden of the University's athletic programs currently passed on to our students.

The Faculty Senate regrets some of the past decisions of the University that have committed too many resources towards athletics, and have undermined the primacy of academics at JMU. While we recognize that decisions made in the past cannot be undone, we urge the administration to learn from the lessons of history about the long-term effects of committing resources towards athletics.

We commend the administration for the unprecedented transparency demonstrated in its decision-making process, and we are deeply appreciative of the invitation to participate in the discussion of this matter. We are encouraged by this administration's demonstrated desire to work collaboratively with the faculty on issues of concern to the University.

Therefore, the Faculty Senate recognizes the complexity of the decisions facing the JMU administration in balancing the interests of many constituent groups in a rapidly-changing athletic environment. We recognize that the University's President and Board of Visitors have been entrusted with making these decisions, but the Faculty Senate urges the administration to keep the above principles at the forefront as they make these difficult decisions.