

Holocaust Statement [passed by Senate]:

On Wednesday, January 25, 2023, the Faculty Senate received a letter regarding the Holocaust-Centered Lecture Series event that is scheduled for today, Thursday, January 26, at 6pm at JMU. The Faculty Senate supports JMU's Jewish faculty's and the Harrisonburg Jewish community's concerns that their voices have not been heard or respected on the matter of the Holocaust-Centered Lecture Series event.

The administration and members of the Faculty Senate met late on Wednesday, January 25th to share concerns about the letter. The Senate will take steps to learn more about the events that preceded the writing and dissemination of this letter.

[The letter is available in this [Breeze](#) article.]

Holocaust Remembrance Resolution

Whereas the Faculty Senate supports JMU's Jewish faculty's and the Harrisonburg Jewish community's concerns that their voices have not been heard or respected on the matter of the Holocaust- Centered Lecture Series event;

Whereas the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/7 establishing 27 January as International Holocaust Remembrance Day urges every member nation of the U.N. to honor the memory of Holocaust victims, six million Jews, "one third of the Jewish people, along with countless members of other minorities," and encourages the development of educational programs about Holocaust history to help prevent future acts of genocide;

Whereas JMU began to formally organize a Holocaust Remembrance event in 2022 (this was preceded by informal events such as one in in 2019 in the School of Music);

Whereas the Faculty Senate supports the continued honoring of the International Holocaust Remembrance Day and its relevance to the mission of our institution's mission which reads: We are a community committed to preparing students to be educated and enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives;

Whereas there is widespread agreement that JMU's 2022 Holocaust event was an inclusive and respectful remembrance of the Holocaust;

Whereas at least two committee members for the 2023 event, conveyed that they lacked influence on the planning of the event, including its structure and selection of the speaker;

Whereas the Faculty Senate is concerned that a failure to understand the problems that beset the January 2023 Holocaust event might deter the university from successfully hosting a future Holocaust Remembrance event;

Whereas it is important for universities to acknowledge and model respectful and inclusive approaches to designing programs and events, especially those related to DEI events on campus;

Whereas the planning and delivery of this event and future similar events take place amidst a context of rising antisemitism concomitant with a Commonwealth-level imperative to address this specific issue;

Whereas it is difficult to build collaborative relationships when JMU administration denies basic facts related to communications and timelines regarding development of the 2023 event;

Whereas it is difficult to build collaborative relationships when JMU administration's media response to the anonymous letter was perceived as disingenuous and disrespectful;

Whereas it is difficult to build collaborative relationships when operating in a culture of intimidation emanating from the Provost's Office as outlined in the Resolution of Condemnation that was passed (4/13/23);

Whereas open conversations about Holocaust Remembrance at JMU can catalyze more positive, generative responses to antisemitism, which is an essential component of DEI mission delivery;

Be it resolved that JMU commit to sponsoring an annual Holocaust Remembrance Event.

Be it further resolved that the planning committee for a future Holocaust Remembrance event be intentionally selected and inclusive, comprised of faculty, staff, students, community members, and those identified as stakeholders of the event, like JMU and Harrisonburg Jewish community organizations and the local synagogue, local rabbis, Jewish organizations, including Chabad of the Shenandoah Valley.

Be it also resolved that future Holocaust Remembrance Events are clearly structured as commemorations and not celebrations.

Be it resolved that there be a collaborative effort between faculty with expertise on Holocaust Remembrance and with administrative offices in charge of organizing such events.

Be it resolved that similar collaborations be applied to other events that pertain to particular group identities,

Be it resolved that such collaborations will develop guidelines for both ad hoc and standing committee formation related to the planning of events arising from specific communities, and that these guidelines take into account the unique identities and expertise that should be represented on committees to make such events are successful and reflective of the stakeholders of said communities.

Be it resolved that such policy guidelines be published and applied to committee selection and event-planning related specifically to Holocaust Remembrance.

Be it resolved that such guidelines be created and followed in a timely manner for a January 2024 event.

Be it resolved that JMU engage in a practice of repair which works towards the restoration of trust by holding townhall(s) in Fall of 2023 for open dialogue about the 2023 event consistent with the approach of Truth Commissions.

Be it resolved that policy related to the Holocaust Remembrance event also includes clear pathways for accountability in the case that the established guidelines and procedures are not followed.