Madison Future Commission
Student Life and Student Success Committee
Section 1: Introduction

The co-chairs of the Madison Future Commission Student Life and Student Success (SLSS) committee began work together by first appointing a number of student, staff and community members to the committee in order to ensure diversity of representation on this team. Concurrently the chairs met to develop a strategy for completing the assigned task. A timeline was developed, and the chairs began collecting documents and information to support the charge.

There was a great deal of positive momentum that resulted from the Madison Future Commission kick off meeting in October 2012. The SLSS co-chairs wanted to leverage this enthusiasm and opted to meet in November of 2012 rather than wait for the final work of the External Scan and Internal Audit committees. The SLSS met in November with the following intended outcomes:

- Welcome and charge from Dr. Warner
- Overview of how to use Sharepoint
- Review of the MFC process and timeline
- Activity to define key terms to guide our future work
- Look at upcoming tasks and opportunities for the committee
- Team building and motivation

This initial meeting proved to be a crucial key to the success of the SLSS committee. From the start the group was cohesive and committed to the success of the university strategic planning process.

At subsequent meetings between January and April 2013 the committee refined what Student Life and Student Success means at JMU, then used these terms and definitions and supporting data from other MFC committees to identify the major Core Qualities related to SLSS.

The committee chairs began the definition process by providing a structure that outlined student life and student success in two main foci: each as related to the *institution* and the *student.* (See addendum)

The work of the Internal Audit and External Scan committees was considered. Additionally, the committee was assigned to teams to review "Why Madison" transcripts from each constituent group. These data were reviewed, categorized, and analyzed in context to the SLSS definitions. Additionally, SLSS co-chairs reviewed work of other committees as it was shared, and presented this progress with members of the SLSS committee. This was crucial to informing the work of the SLSS committee.

The review and analysis of this deep body of work provided a solid foundation for the SLSS committee to identify and refine a number of Core Qualities and Attending Goals for submission to the University Planning Team.

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Section 2: Key Strategic Issues

Working in Favor of Mission	Undetermined	Working Against Mission
A diverse student population and diversity in faculty and staff benefit all students educationally and sociologically, and helps to prepare these students for the changing world of work.	JMU is interested in increasing the diversity of students enrolling at the institution.	JMU faces challenges in supporting the expanding and different needs and goals of a more diverse student body.
		Classroom challenges • Hours of classes for non-traditional students. • Academic integration of international students which is affected by cultural differences. • Academic accommodations for students with physical and learning disabilities.
		Student Life challenges • Current policies in conflict with the religious and cultural needs of diverse students. • Orientation and continuing support for veterans and first-generation students. • Social integration of international students. • Accommodations for students with physical disabilities.
		Accessibility • Affordability for low socio-economic and underrepresented students. • Opportunities for more students to study abroad. • Legal challenges for students on visas and undocumented students.

Issues - Engagement

Working in Favor of Mission	Undetermined	Working Against Mission
JMU students report high levels of involvement and satisfaction with their JMU experience (e.g., NSSE; Continuing Student Survey; etc.)	JMU's Vision is to be the model for the engaged university: engaged with ideas and engaged with the world.	Understanding of the value of a college degree (i.e., engagement with ideas) and the value of service (i.e., engagement with the world) appear to be declining nationally.
Students have many opportunities to be involved in and out of the classroom in ways that contribute to their academic and career development.	Curricular and co-curricular activities at JMU help students find meaning and purpose in their lives and contribute to a more focused engagement with the university.	JMU lacks a framework to help faculty and staff design high impact educational practices that result in deep learning inside and outside of the classroom.
Exposure to faculty outside the classroom is essential to student success. JMU faculty		Faculty members are not always rewarded for informal engagement with students; also, JMU first-year students

and staff are recognized as being committed to student learning and development.		report less out-of-class contact with faculty than their national peers (NSSE).
	The Harrisonburg area is rich in cultural, historic, and geographic opportunities for JMU students.	Some students tend to stay within the comfort zone of "the JMU Bubble," particularly as first- and second-year students.

Issues - Sustainability

Working in Favor of Mission	Undetermined	Working Against Mission
There is growing interest on the part of the city and county to partner with JMU in linking bike/pedestrian trails, making access and egress more sustainable while making the community more welcoming to students, and vice versa.	Many students (current and prospective) are interested in how the university engages in sustainable practices and what students can do to contribute.	Parking and transportation for some students (as well as faculty and staff) continues to fall short of meeting demand.
JMU has committed resources (e.g., staffing, space, funding) to increase awareness, best practices, and educational opportunities related to sustainability.	Sustainability encompasses economic development, environmental stewardship, and social justice.	Although economic development and social justice are addressed at JMU, these issues do not receive the same level of attention as environmental stewardship.

Issues - Technology

Working in Favor of Mission	Undetermined	Working Against Mission
Technology has the potential to make higher education more affordable, accessible (anywhere, anytime), and innovative.	Many JMU students appear to be very "tech-savvy," and adaptable to rapidly changing disruptive technologies.	Changes in technology may represent increased costs to students and to the university.
		Technology has the effect of discouraging the amount of time some students spend in the face-to-face social dimensions of student learning and development.
	Technology will continue to impact student life and success.	Technology presents the potential to negatively impact student life (e.g., learning vs. "looking things up"; plagiarism; games; etc.).

Section 3: Student Life and Student Success Core Qualities and Attending Goals

Strategic Issue	Core Quality	Attending Goal
Diversity	To prepare global, enlightened citizens, JMU will be an environment that promotes inclusiveness, accessibility, and a supportive community for all students, faculty, staff, and constituents.	By Fall 2015, competencies for self-knowledge and appreciation of human diversity will be identified for students; by Spring 2016, interventions will be established and implemented to help students develop these competencies. By Fall 2016, new and enhanced structures (e.g., programs, services, resources, personnel) will have been initiated to ensure that all underrepresented student populations receive the support they need to thrive at JMU. By Spring 2015, JMU should increase merit and need-based scholarship offerings to incoming international, graduate, transfer, and multicultural students to increase diversity on campus. This should include merit-based scholarships to attract highly competitive students to JMU, and need-based scholarships to out-of-state and international students to equate their tuition charges to in-state tuition. To keep retention of these students at high levels, these scholarships should be annually renewable for students in good academic standing.
Engagement	To enhance their academic, career, civic and personal learning and development, JMU will challenge and support our students through meaningful engagement with the campus, alumni, the community, and beyond.	By Spring 2016, the logistics and curriculum for an Engagement Course will have been established, with a pilot program to be conducted in Fall 2016; by Fall 2017 all new/incoming students will participate in the Engagement Course during their first year at JMU. By Fall 2016, new and enhanced structures (e.g., website, personnel, resources, campus office) will be created to coordinate and advertise existing student engagement opportunities, while serving as the initial point of contact to develop new opportunities and partnerships with students, faculty/staff, alumni, the community, and beyond.
Technology	To improve communication, reduce barriers to success, increase access to student services, programs, and resources, and enhance students' technological literacy, JMU will make effective and innovative use of technology.	By the end of Fall 2014, every unit will have conducted a needs assessment to determine the effectiveness of current practices for utilizing technology to provide information, student services and programs, including identifying opportunities to enhance services and programs through innovative technology utilization. Throughout the planning period, units will plan and implement strategies for educating students on the appropriate, effective, and innovative use of technology.

Section 4: Dreaming Big

The concept of "Dreaming Big" was the most significant source of motivation to the Student Life and Student Success committee as it completed its charge. The dream big message consistently voiced by President Alger was acknowledged and the committee took this challenge seriously. Through a series of exercises the SLSS team brainstormed then refined a long list of big dreams. Most of these dreams are evident in the Attending Goals submitted as part of this report. The committee lists the following items as the most significant contributions to the Dream Big concept:

- Creation and implementation of curriculum for an "Engagement Course". This course would provide the foundation and catalyst for preparing our students to be engaged as students and as citizens; with ideas and the world. The course would be a requirement for all students during their first year at James Madison University. The SLSS committee envisions this Engagement Course going much deeper than a traditional freshman seminar; incorporating concepts such as the Madison Collaborative work on ethical reasoning, civic engagement, study abroad, community service and importance of a liberal arts education.
- Compulsory study abroad, internship or service learning components are integral to engagement of JMU students.
- Competencies for the self-knowledge and appreciation of human diversity will be identified for students. Interventions will be established and implemented to help students develop these important competencies.
- Significantly increase merit and need based scholarships offerings to incoming international, graduate, transfer and multicultural students to increase diversity on our campus. Renew these scholarships annually in order to retain students who remain in good academic standing.
- Intentional incorporation of the American Association of Colleges and Universities *High Impact Educational Practices.* Require that all JMU students successfully complete at least four of the ten recommended practices as a condition for graduation.

Section 5: Enrollment Narrative

The SLSS committee discussed enrollment at length, with the majority of the discussion centering on how enrollment impacts diversity and vice versa. The committee as a whole concurred that the institution has a great deal of work to do in order to recruit and retain a more diverse student body. With a projected 7% increase in overall campus headcount by 2020, the committee contends that a focus on recruiting and retaining more international and multicultural students will be key for our success. While more students may mean more diversity, JMU cannot simply rely upon natural growth to increase the diversity of our student body. The university must take intentional and meaningful steps to attract and retain diverse students.

Increased growth at the university will also impact general areas at the university that while not directly tied to diversity, will certainly affect daily study, life, work and access.

Such considerations include:

- Identifying resources to increase scholarships and grants so that JMU can attract and retain the best and brightest in and out of state students
- Growth in the Graduate School to add a dimension of academic maturity and more opportunities for research and teaching support
- Find ways to offset decreasing state and federal funding
- Faculty and staff will need to be hired to support increased enrollment
- Additional space for classrooms, faculty and staff offices, study, dining, and recreation will need to be considered
- Review and definition of the academic class day and week
- Support for learning and development- as enrollment increases, so will demand for additional academic support
- Need for continued growth in technology infrastructure and support

Section 6: Engagement Narrative

The SLSS committee submitted a Core Quality focused solely on engagement. The proposed university vision statement **"to be the model for the engaged university: engaged with ideas and the world"** was a recurrent topic of consideration in all of our meetings. The committee discussed at length the concept of engagement, how it might be defined, identified, and ultimately measured. The result of this work is the following Core Quality submitted for consideration:

> **To enhance their academic, career, civic and personal learning and development, JMU will challenge and support our students through meaningful engagement with the campus, alumni, the community, and beyond.**

The SLSS concluded that one exciting route to realizing this vision is the creation of the proposed Engagement Course, compulsory for all new JMU students.

"Students who talk about substantive matters with faculty and peers, are challenged to perform at high levels, and receive frequent feedback on their performance typically get better grades, are more satisfied with college, and are more likely to persist. While these and other educationally purposeful activities are positively linked to desired outcomes for *all types of students*, historically underserved students and those who are less well prepared *tend to benefit even more"* (Cruce et al. 2006; Kuh et al. 2006).

Structuring a common course for all new students will increase the likelihood that they (students) will engage in productive work and activities. An engagement course will provide instructors with ongoing and frequent opportunities to give students feedback regarding the quality of their work early in their college experience.

In a 2007 article in Peer Review, George Kuh writes:

"For example, results from experimental items added to the Web version of NSSE in 2005 show that students who participated in a first-year course specifically designed to enhance their academic skills or social development enjoyed significant advantages over peers who did not have such an experience. Specifically, they

- were more challenged academically;
- reported more active and collaborative learning activities;
- interacted more frequently with faculty;
- perceived the campus environment as being more supportive;
- gained more from their first year of college;
- were more satisfied overall with the college experience. "

The concept of a First Year Seminar has been widely discussed at JMU over the years. The SLSS committee believes that considering a common course from the broad foundation of engagement with the university, ideas and the world rather than simply an introduction to college and academic life would make a significant and meaningful contribution toward the vision of becoming the model for the engaged university.

References

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Addendum

1. Meeting minutes November 7, 2012. Results of exercise to define Student Success and Student Life at JMU, and listing how they are demonstrated.

2. Definitions gleaned from meeting organized into table related to *Institution* and *Student*

3. SLSS committee laid definitions over the key concepts gleaned from Why Madison Listening Tour that resulted in the Supported/Contradicted table

4. High Impact Educational Practices

Student Success includes:
-blending & ranking academics & other student activities
-love of learning; desire for growth – mastery of material
-feel <u>connected</u> to, <u>integrated</u> into and have the ability to contribute to "our" community (local & around the world)
-self-exploration – Who am I? How do I grow?
-basic competencies – speaking/writing
-completion of programs
-institutional support
-balance & sustainability (personal, physical, environmental)

Student Success is:
-JMU is seen as a service but not so much as a process?
-Well rounded development: academic, social, QEP, accountability, critical thinking
-4-year degree
-Inside/outside class integration of knowledge & experience & application/reflection
-are we creating students that meet the JMU Mission Statement?
-lifelong passions/friendships learning to be a happy/productive adult

Student Success is necessary because:
-it is our mission (statement)
-supports diversity
-bridges curriculum & non-academics
-expectation from parents/families & government
-education is right/privilege

Student Success means:
-Attainment of a greater physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual capacity in order to better address the challenges of diverse, complex, and inter-connected (local, regional, global) communities.
-Holistic development
-skills not just grades
-retention & graduation
-ability to find/define self
-accountability
-responsibility for actions
-taking risks & learning from mistakes
-managing failure
-educating students to be engaged & productive alumni
-successfully transitioning from K-12 to adulthood
-having psychological & physical well being

Student Life includes:
-exposure to new experiences & thoughts (& reflection)
-trying new things

-develop self-responsibility & efficacy
 involvement →ownership→responsibility (class and outside)
-leadership & followship
-encountering ambiguity, accepting ambiguity & appreciating
 diversity

Student Life is:
-physical places on campus
-holistic engagement/balance (academics, life stressors of
 students, socio-economics, diversity, hometown,
 home/outside obligations, students with no families,
 international students
-meeting each student where they are
-conflict skill development/millennial
-majority traditional students
-preparation for future – life skills – adolescent to adult
-outside of classroom passions (connecting the
 dots/integration)

Student Life is necessary because:
-provides/promotes life skills outside the classroom
-expectation of more than just classes/degree
-provide small-school feel

Student Life means:
-all aspects of the student experience (inside & outside the
 classroom, on/off campus, intentional/unintentional, now
 and in the future)
-aspiring to have the ability, will & energy to interact
 productively & sustainably with others and with the world
 around us
-Including: recreation, diversity, overcoming obstacles,
 academic experiences, athletics, living in community
 (campus, local, global), including faculty, staff, students &
 alumni, school spirit, social relationships, personal needs,
 cultural competence

COMMONALITIES AMONG THE GROUPS:
-Balance
-Community
-Responsibility
-Holistic
-Sustain
-Development
-Expectations
-Diversity
-Connections
-Engagement
-Mastery of Skills – lifelong
-Experiential

Student Life and Success Committee:
Definitions and Descriptions
(Revised 1/18/13)

The institution

STUDENT LIFE

At James Madison University, Student Life refers to ***programs, services, and resources*** that:

- support the student experience in and beyond the classroom.

- create opportunities for students to apply their learning.

- maintain physical health through recreation and athletics.

- promote living in community (on and off campus).

- provide student employment opportunities for earning while learning.

- create opportunities to practice good citizenship.

- foster student health and wellness in regard to knowledge, learning and prevention as well as individual diagnosis and treatment.

- identify and design physical space for student interaction, assembly, and activity.

STUDENT SUCCESS

At James Madison University, Student Success refers to ***programs, services, and resources*** that:

- reflect and support JMU's mission of preparing students to be educated and enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives.

- bridge and balance curricular and co-curricular efforts, extending academic and experiential learning with application and reflection.

- help students make successful transitions into, through, and out of the university.

- provide institutional support for timely retention, progression, and completion of academic programs.

- promote and celebrate greater understanding of and appreciation for human diversity and sustainability.

The student

STUDENT LIFE	STUDENT SUCCESS
Through JMU Student Life, ***students encounter***:	***Characteristics of successful students*** at JMU include:

STUDENT LIFE	STUDENT SUCCESS
• Exposure to new experiences and thoughts (reflection).	• Attainment of greater physical, intellectual, emotional, social, and spiritual capacity to better address the challenges of diverse, complex communities.
• Exposure to peoples and individuals different from themselves.	
• Development of self-responsibility and self-efficacy, and self-control.	• Ability to effectively prioritize and balance academic, social, and personal expectations and commitments.
• The ability, will, and energy to interact productively and sustainably with diverse others and with the environment.	• Acceptance of risk taking and learning from mistakes as necessary aspects of life-long learning.
• Development of life skills.	• Continuing development of basic and advanced competencies (knowledge, skills, attitudes, etc.).
• Involvement and engagement beyond the classroom.	
• Leadership, followership, and ownership (levels of responsibility).	• Love of learning, desire for growth, and mastery of material.
• Ambiguity and means for managing it.	• Self-exploration/ability to find and define self.
• Conflict skill development.	• Responsibility and accountability for choices, actions, and behaviors.
• Development of coping skills and management of emotions.	• Use of critical thinking to make informed decisions and contributions.
	• Institutional ties long after graduation (alumni).

Student Life Student Success Definitions
(reviewed alongside "Why Madison" Listening Tour Transcripts)

SUPPORTED	CONTRADICTED
Identified definitions supported by listening tour: • Involvement and Engagement in Madison community (internships, service, organizations, arts, etc.) • Close human relationships with faculty and staff (research, class size, 1:1 attention- in and out of classroom) • Programs that develop professional collaboration and critical thinking • Importance of Diversity- exposure, understanding, access, appreciation • Engagement across the Madison experience- students, faculty, staff, families, Harrisonburg • Development of alumni that give, connect and care • Holistic learning experience- curricular and co-curricular- learning happens in a wide variety of place and through a wide variety of experiences • Faculty and staff model collaboration and teamwork • Variety of leadership and followership opportunities • Build employability skills- graduates are well prepared for jobs and citizenship	Identified definitions contradicted by listening tour: • Concept of "getting to yes" can make faculty and staff feel that saying no, even when appropriate, is not supported • Need to define what the "engaged" university means at JMU. Term is used in a variety of contexts • Existing student services are sometimes taken for granted and under appreciated • Need to define what diversity means at JMU. Sometimes it is specific, and sometimes it is too broad. Need to be more intentional with opportunities to expose students to differences and to attract and retain diverse students, faculty and staff • Expectations of students being held responsible and accountable for behaviors and self-management are inconsistent • Advancement- why does our student satisfaction rate not translate to higher levels of giving? • How do we better engage transfer and off campus students? • Connect current students with alumni • Community expectations need to be defined- sometimes we see evidence of negative community behaviors • Difficulty delivering the Madison

	experience due to rapid growth
	• Need to ask Why NOT choose Madison? What students are we not attracting, targeting and recruiting? Are we missing important audiences?
	• What about the disengaged students? Who are they, how do they cope at Madison?
	• Future of graduate programs- expansion, satisfaction, experience

High-Impact Educational Practices

First-Year Seminars and Experiences
Many schools now build into the curriculum first-year seminars or other programs that bring small groups of students together with faculty or staff on a regular basis. The highest-quality first-year experiences place a strong emphasis on critical inquiry, frequent writing, information literacy, collaborative learning, and other skills that develop students' intellectual and practical competencies. First-year seminars can also involve students with cutting-edge questions in scholarship and with faculty members' own research.

Common Intellectual Experiences
The older idea of a "core" curriculum has evolved into a variety of modern forms, such as a set of required common courses or a vertically organized general education program that includes advanced integrative studies and/or required participation in a learning community (see below). These programs often combine broad themes—e.g., technology and society, global interdependence—with a variety of curricular and cocurricular options for students.

Learning Communities
The key goals for learning communities are to encourage integration of learning across courses and to involve students with "big questions" that matter beyond the classroom. Students take two or more linked courses as a group and work closely with one another and with their professors. Many learning communities explore a common topic and/ or common readings through the lenses of different disciplines. Some deliberately link "liberal arts" and "professional courses"; others feature service learning.

Writing-Intensive Courses
These courses emphasize writing at all levels of instruction and across the curriculum, including final-year projects. Students are encouraged to produce and revise various forms of writing for different audiences in different disciplines. The effectiveness of this repeated practice "across the curriculum" has led to parallel efforts in such areas as quantitative reasoning, oral communication, information literacy, and, on some campuses, ethical inquiry.

Collaborative Assignments and Projects
Collaborative learning combines two key goals: learning to work and solve problems in the company of others, and sharpening one's own understanding by listening seriously to the insights of others, especially those with different backgrounds and life experiences. Approaches range from study groups within a course, to team-based assignments and writing, to cooperative projects and research.

Undergraduate Research
Many colleges and universities are now providing research experiences for students in all disciplines. Undergraduate research, however, has been most prominently used in science disciplines. With strong support from the National Science Foundation and the research community, scientists are reshaping their courses to connect key concepts and questions with students' early and active involvement in systematic investigation and research. The goal is to involve students with actively contested questions, empirical observation, cutting-edge technologies, and the sense of excitement that comes from working to answer important questions.

Diversity/Global Learning
Many colleges and universities now emphasize courses and programs that help students explore cultures, life experiences, and worldviews different from their own. These studies—which may address U.S. diversity, world cultures, or both—often explore "difficult differences" such as racial, ethnic, and gender inequality, or continuing struggles around the globe for human rights, freedom, and power. Frequently, intercultural studies are augmented by experiential learning in the community and/or by study abroad.

Service Learning, Community-Based Learning
In these programs, field-based "experiential learning" with community partners is an instructional strategy—and often a required part of the course. The idea is to give students direct experience with issues they are studying in the curriculum and with ongoing efforts to analyze and solve problems in the community. A key element in these programs is the opportunity students have to both *apply* what they are learning in real-world settings and *reflect* in a classroom setting on their service experiences. These programs model the idea that giving something back to the community is an important college outcome, and that working with community partners is good preparation for citizenship, work, and life.

Internships
Internships are another increasingly common form of experiential learning. The idea is to provide students with direct experience in a work setting—usually related to their career interests—and to give them the benefit of supervision and coaching from professionals in the field. If the internship is taken for course credit, students complete a project or paper that is approved by a faculty member.

Capstone Courses and Projects
Whether they're called "senior capstones" or some other name, these culminating experiences require students nearing the end of their college years to create a project of some sort that integrates and applies what they've learned. The project might be a research paper, a performance, a portfolio of "best work," or an exhibit of artwork. Capstones are offered both in departmental programs and, increasingly, in general education as well.