

STUDENT ACADEMIC SUCCESS WORKING GROUP

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

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Tyson Brown - Alumnus

Chrissy Donald - Student

Wilson Friend - Alumnus, Parents Council

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WORKING GROUP CO-CHAMP

First Name: Marquis McGee, mcmcgee2mx@jmu.edu

TITLE: Black Student Experience

PROBLEM:

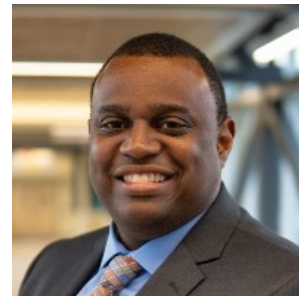
- JMU is situated in Virginia and the Commonwealth has a long and complex history related to slavery and segregation that has had long-term effects on the Black community well into the 21st century
- As recent as the 1970's, Madison College changed its name to James Madison University and its mission. As a result of these changes, white men, and later, other groups (BIPOC) of students were admitted.
- Although much progress has been made to support Black students, staff, and faculty (Furious Flower, AAAD, leadership representation, etc.) there is still a great need to build greater educational and professional opportunities for this group and others who have been historically excluded
- Over last 7 years, average Black/AA student retention rate is ~ 3% lower than the overall institutional average (87.69 vs 90.67)
- Lower retention rates are even more noticeable when examining intersections of student characteristics - for example Black Males who are first-generation and pell-eligible were retained at rate of 77.8% in 2018, compared to Black Females also first-generation and pell-eligible at 84.4% and institutional average for 2018, 89.2%.
- Over last 6 years, average Black/AA 6-year graduation rate is ~11% lower than the overall institutional average (71.68 vs 82.82)
- Black students feel they must sacrifice who they are in order to fit in at JMU
- Students feel as if they need to prove intellectually, they belong at JMU
- Black students often must endure microaggressions and gendered stereotypes
- There is not a coordinated effort to support Black students at JMU
- This piecemeal approach contributes to the lack of institutional focus on supporting Black students and their needs
- The current narrative is that Black students may need help as they are adjusting to financial, academic, and emotional stressors of their collegiate environment
- There is less of a focus on how Black students can leverage their intellectual and cultural assets to experience even greater success
- Important to recognize the diversity among the Black and African diaspora

See following pages for The Recommendation, Rationale and Success Measures

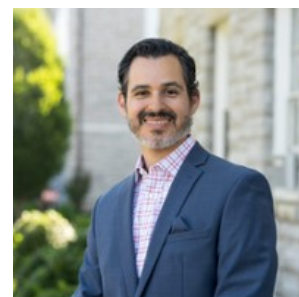
WORKING GROUP LEADERSHIP



Hakseon Lee,
Leadership Council



Marquis McGee, WG CC



Rudy Molina, WG CC



Fawn-Amber Montoya, WG CC

RECOMMENDATION:

- Purpose and Goal: Design and implement a comprehensive approach to maximizing the student success for black students at JMU. It is important that the framework of the strategy be based upon core principles. We've identified the following 4 principles as four constructs from which to begin:
 - ◇ Authenticate Blackness: Validation of Black student experience
 - ◇ Cultural Capital: Bring rich lived experiences and practices that enhance the greater community
 - ◇ Connectivity: Acknowledge they may be among a select few but they have a supportive group of people to create a sense of belonging
 - ◇ Inclusiveness: Focus on the Black and AA experience and allyship
- Programming
 - ◇ Prospective students
 - ◆ Focus on brand awareness
 - ◆ Balance local and Commonwealth and out of state
 - ◆ Align scholarship and financial packaging
 - ◆ Recruitment, Application, and Training of Ambassadors
 - Collaboration between Student Ambassadors, PAWS, and SMO
 - Professionals and student leaders involved in the interview process
 - ◆ Connect with Ambassadors, Madison Advising Peers (MAP), and faculty
 - ◆ Coordinate Instagram (IG) to show what Black experience is like at JMU
 - ◆ Showcase programs and services
 - ◆ Incorporate into yield strategy planning committee
 - ◆ Track leads and prospects
 - ◆ Partner with college access programs like AVID and host on-campus programming
 - ◆ Create or strengthen communication between JMU student organizations like Black Student Alliance and prospective/admitted students.
 - ◆ Explore event programming that focuses on black student recruitment
 - ◇ All Students:
 - ◆ A two-part event that brings students, staff, and faculty together to introduce students.
 - Part 1: formal program to introduce students to key personnel on campus with a targeted message of "you belong"
 - Part 2: outdoor "back to campus BBQ" with music, games, and food
 - ◇ First-Year Students and Transfer Students
 - ◆ Orientation and Weeks of Welcome: review programming schedule and curriculum to ensure that Black students and their families are recognized and properly engaged in the events and activities.
 - It will also be important to create a structured and consistent follow-up throughout the first year.
Invite Black alumni and other BIPOC alumni to meet and greet the new students.
 - ◆ Investigate the feasibility of creating a new line of service such as Peer Success Coaches:
 - Connect new students with the already established network of peer support at JMU
 - Purposefully hire and retain more black students as peer support to connect new students to services, events, activities, and other learning resources.

- ◆ Targeted outreach and communication campaign: Create outreach campaigns that resonates with the wide range of perspectives and experiences of the Black and African American student body
- ◆ Meet ups at extracurricular events: Invite students to participate in already established and new events that are meaningful to the targeted student body.
- ◆ Academic support and study session invitations: Invite black students to already established and new academic support sessions
- ◇ Undergraduate Students
 - ◆ Professional Mentorship: Create a formal network of Black and ally admin leaders, faculty, staff, and community members who believe and are active in supporting students in their academic and professional goals (**Note: Mentors should receive compensation for additional time dedicated to role. Often BIPOC faculty/staff are called to serve in role without anything taken off their traditional duties and responsibilities...often leading to burnout**).
 - ◆ Peer Mentorship: Using technology, connect new students with returning students who are willing to “show them the ropes” on how to be successful at JMU. There are at least two colleges (CISE and CVPA) that are currently using technology to facilitate this matching process. An institutional approach for Black students could be an effective way to pilot a broader application.
 - ◆ Transition (also referred to as bridge) programming for Undergrad students (FYR to SYR): Design and implement a summer program for returning students. The program could offer 1-2 courses with “wrap around” academic and co-curricular activities, creating a greater sense of community and belonging
 - The summer program should be for students who would benefit from programming that would ease the transition to JMU and build community among students.
 - Note: This program is not only Black students, but instead a more inclusive program that includes BIPOC, first-generation and other students
 - See MIT example: <https://ome.mit.edu/programs-services/interphase-edge-empowering-discovery-gateway-excellence>
 - ◆ Academic Foci: Partnerships with the academic departments to host a series of engagement opportunities into specific fields of study that would benefit from greater representation. This may also serve as a new opportunity for students who have not already been exposed to fields of study, but may have a new and developing interest in the field.
 - It will be important for academic units to establish recruitment strategies that align with the following disciplines and industries
 - Examples of such fields may include:
 - * Technology and Science (Computer Science):
 - ◆ See UIC example: <https://aan.uic.edu/student-engagement/uic-black-tech-scholars-program/>
 - * Arts
 - * Business
 - * Health Sciences
 - ◆ Other skill areas: In addition to the above academic fields, other topics of interest may be:
 - Leadership
 - Financial Education
 - Career exploration and match
 - Graduate and professional school

- ◇ Graduate students
 - ◆ Funding and space resources for a Summer Institute for Graduate Students
 - ◆ Job Shadowing and on-campus speaker events
 - ◆ Internships
 - ◆ Research proposal writing and Development
 - ◆ Research methodologies
 - ◆ Entrepreneurship exposure
 - ◆ Funding to attend conferences
- Web Assets
 - ◇ Resource Guide and Web Site: Create a dedicated web presence that features and highlights the programs, services, and initiatives that advance student success for Black students
 - ◇ Create a student success Dashboard that provides insight on the progress being made on key metrics.
- Assessment & Research
 - ◇ Cohort Model: Establish a cohort model that specifically monitors the black student body, including undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education (PCE) enrolled students
 - ◇ Focus on the Success: investigate the skills, approaches, and mindset of black students and other students of color who have experienced success at JMU. Leverage that information and share those strategies with new and returning students to maximize their success.
 - ◇ Enrollment, Retention and grad rates: Specifically track the enrollment, retention and graduation trends of Black students during any given semester as well as historical data to inform support interventions and success indicators.
 - ◇ Surveys: Analyze responses from new student and continuing student surveys to maintain a pulse of how students are experiencing JMU.

RATIONALE:

- There are programs and services that already benefit Black students at JMU, with a more comprehensive approach, the institution will harness its resources to connect with existing efforts and dedicate specific resources that the Black student body will maximize its positive impact.
- This recommendation is considered to be a short, intermediate, and long-term set of solutions. Depending on the specific section briefly described above, one part of the recommendation might be a short-term solution, where as a different aspect of the same recommendation might be a long-term solution.
- For example, Building an enrollment, retention, and graduation dashboard would be a project that could be completed within the next three months, whereas the Summer bridge program for graduate students may be a project that would require 12-24 months of planning.
- This recommendation is important because the black student body is small to begin with so creating a community of support and advocacy can go a long way to a group that has historically and currently being underserved. It's important to know that JMU, as an institution, fully supports their success and that it is number one priority demonstrated by the design and implementation of programs and services that are based in best and known practices in higher education.
- Most students, faculty, and staff at JMU are not black, but they can be allies. By having a comprehensive approach to their success, it makes it easier to see the connections between each of the projects and how we all can play a role in Black student success.

SUCCESS:

- Overall:
 - ◇ VPs will agree that this is an important topic and the SLT will support the efforts by allocating the needed resources and time to fulfill the spirit of this recommendation.
 - ◇ The implementation team will
 1. Categorize each of the features outlined in this recommendation based on short, medium, and long-term solutions.
 2. Create a dashboard that features the progress being made on the specific aspects proposed in this document
- Black student admission application percentages will match or exceed the rate observed by their JMU peers by year five
- Black student admission offer percentages will match or exceed the offer rate observed with their JMU peers by year five
- Black student admission yield (First-year and transfer) will match or exceed the rate observed with their JMU peers by year five
- Black student retention and persistence rates and degree progress will match or exceed the rate observed by their JMU peers by year five
- Black student graduation rates will match or exceed the rate observed by their JMU peers by year five
- Black students will report an increased sense of belonging to JMU when comparing the first cohort to the fifth cohort.