

AWARENESS & COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- Cheryl Beverly - Learning, Technology & Leadership Education, College of Ed.
- Alysia Davis - Director of Student Engagement, Honors College
- Barbara Hetzel - Associate Director, Title IX Office
- Kylie Mirabella - Alumna, Graduate Assistant
- Karen Risch Mott - Grant Writer
- Hannah Robinson - Alumna, Former Employee
- Xaiver Williams - Student
- Kerri Wilson – Admissions



Charles May, Leadership Council

TITLE: INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE

PROBLEM:

Currently, at JMU approximately 1.32% of learners are International. In addition, our population includes International faculty and staff, limited English Speakers and Non-native English speakers in the JMU and surrounding community. The number of campus visitors who have limited English proficiency is unknown, but there is a certainty that they are present. Having Inclusive Signage with multiple languages and communication norms represented begins to demonstrate JMU’s commitment to *Access, Inclusion, and Equity, and, hopefully, Belonging.*



Silvia Garcia Romero, WG CC

Another benefit of Inclusive Signage is in support of JMU’s efforts to acculturate our JMU learners, faculty, staff, and administrators to the diversity of persons, languages, and communication norms participating in our JMU culture. Inclusive Signage may be ‘invisible’ or a curiosity to English speaking populations but subconsciously they may absorb the commitment and representations of Access, Inclusion, and Equity. Inclusive signage welcomes persons to JMU on and off campus and provides information to aide in their accessing place, person, and service.



Khalil Garriott, WG CC

This recommendation builds on Awareness and Communications Working Group’s (AC WG) previous Translation of Vital Online and Print Information for English Language Learners (ELL) recommendation. The two AC WG recommendations regarding language and communication, are the beginning of a welcoming of persons to JMU.

See following pages for The Recommendation, Rationale and Success Measures

RECOMMENDATION:

The Communication and Awareness Working Group (AC WG) recommends:

1. The Communication and Awareness Working Group (AC WG) recommends that the costs and timing of the change to Inclusion Signage be determined and a phased rollout developed in response to the costs and timing.
2. The Communication and Awareness Working Group (AC WG) recommends that JMU develop and engage in a process that requires signage to be printed and posted throughout JMU campus, in multiple languages and other communicative norms.
 - ◇ AC WG recommends that signage used on JMU campus, as well as JMU off-campus signage, represent the variety of languages and communicative norms of our International learners and our diverse JMU and surrounding community.
 - ◇ AC WG recommends that all signage, on and off-campus, be translated into some of the more, languages spoken/ written/ read among our learners and community members.
3. The Communication and Awareness Working Group (AC WG) believes that examples of the different types of script used within our campus and global communities will help facilitate an awareness of and belonging to the diversity of peoples serving and served by JMU.
4. The Communication and Awareness Working Group (AC WG) recommendation includes signage which will inform a variety of audiences including current learners, faculty, staff and administrators, prospective learners and families, prospective employees, and the community at large. These audiences, if unable to read English proficiently, are currently being denied access to geographic and other information offered by signage used on our campus. This lack of access leads to a lack of inclusion and equity.
5. The Communication and Awareness Working Group (AC WG) recommends that JMU conduct, in partnership with a few International learners and faculty, an environmental scan to learn
 - what types of signage are used on campus and for what purpose,
 - areas in which signage is not posted but would be of service to those not familiar with JMU campus,
 - and
 - prioritize the signage in terms of importance to the functioning of the JMU community.
6. In case of inadequate funding, the Communication and Awareness Working Group (AC WG) recommends that existing signage is replaced with Inclusive Signage based on the priority ranking provided by the Inclusive Signage team (see #5 above)
7. The Communication and Awareness Working Group (AC WG) reminds JMU that direct translation may not accurately represent the intent of signage when transferred from English/American to the other languages and communication norms.
8. The Communication and Awareness Working Group (AC WG) recommends that JMU also design the images on signage to ensure they accurately represent the diverse communication norms and images of our JMU and global citizens.
9. The Communication and Awareness Working Group (AC WG) recommends that the signage team regularly review and create, up-date or replace signage as needed

RATIONALE:

1. Meeting the language and communication needs of JMU's current and future learners, faculty, staff, and local and global communities. As we work to increase the diversity and sense of belonging on JMU's campus, the different levels of language proficiency and communication norms must be available for access, inclusion, equity, safety and belonging.
 - a. Signage often provides information regarding access to campus, services, and persons. Signage also addresses issues of safety, health, and policies and procedures. The absence of such information in a language and/or communication style representing the diversity of our JMU, local and global citizens serves to exclude some of these citizens.
2. Prospective learners, families, employees, and local and global citizens who speak other languages and have other communication norms may not fully understand important information delivered through JMU signage on, and off, the JMU campus.
3. The PreK-12 Working Group has identified a need for the creation of a PreK-12 Directory to promote the various programs that serve BIPOC youth. In their recommendation, the PreK-12 working group makes the case for translating program information into various languages so that targeted populations can access the information.
4. The Communication and Awareness Working Group has identified a need for creation on bi-lingual or multi-lingual information be available on JMU's web pages. This allows access, inclusion, equity and a sense of belonging to develop in association with JMU.

SUCCESS:

A process for signage to be written in multiple languages and communication norms be developed, posted, and monitored. This process addresses the following:

1. JMU provide signage that includes multiple languages and communication norms
2. Signage with multi-lingual content replaces all current English/American only signs
3. Development and dissemination to all stakeholders, a policy and procedures that explains how the university will communicate through multi-lingual and communication signage
4. Develop and provide an education plan for any JMU citizens who need or desire an understanding of the rationale for multi-lingual and communication signage.
5. A process by which JMU can be notified about errors in signage and a need for additional language or signage.
6. All JMU signage, on-campus as well as off-campus, reflects the diversity of languages spoken at and by JMU community and global partners.