
**THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
THE VISITORS OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**

Minutes of the Academic Excellence Committee

The Academic Excellence Committee met on Thursday, April 20, 2023, in the Highlands Room of the Festival Conference and Student Center at James Madison University. Matthew Gray-Keeling, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:06 p.m.

Present:

Bell, Dickie	Falcon, Chris
Gray-Keeling, Matthew	Welburn, Craig
White, Jack	

Others:

Blackstone, Bethany, Dean, Honors College
Campfield, Jennifer, Assistant Vice President, Academic Initiatives and Planning
Coltman, Heather, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Herod, Maribeth, Rector
Lewis, Jolie, Associate Director of Transfer Student Success, University Advising
McCleary, Kristen, Speaker Pro Tempore, Faculty Senate
McDaniel, Kate, Transfer Advising Coordinator, University Advising
Molina, Rudy, Vice Provost, Student Academic Success and Enrollment Management
O’Fallon, Michael, Associate Vice Provost, Academic Affairs Policy
Ott Walter, Kathy, Speaker, Faculty Senate
Splann, Griff, Class of 2024, Biology BS, Pre-Med and Honors Interdisciplinary Studies minors
Yennerell, Nicholas, First Year, Exploratory

Approval of Minutes

On motion by Jack White and seconded by Dickie Bell, the Academic Excellence Committee minutes of February 9, 2023, were approved.

Academic Affairs Divisional Update

Provost Heather Coltman delivered the divisional update. She related significant hires in two areas: David Kirkpatrick as the Executive Director for the Madison Center for Civic Engagement and JY Zhou as the Executive Director for the Center for Global Engagement. Both were appointed after competitive, national searches. She also provided a general update on Fall 2023 instructional faculty hiring, reporting that over half of current searches have been successful and most are wrapping up soon. The provost reported that an email highlighting Academic Affairs faculty and staff achievements is going out weekly, and issues are archived on the Academic Affairs website. Provost Coltman concluded with comments related to the condemnation resolution recently passed by Faculty Senate, in which she acknowledged some faculty’s feelings of discontent and emphasized the uncertainty that frequently accompanies institutional change. She

highlighted a series of Academic Affairs achievements that have contributed to the natural maturation of the university and reaffirmed her office's commitment to collaboration, transparency, and shared governance.

Bridge to Madison

Dr. Rudy Molina, Vice Provost for Student Academic Success and Enrollment Management, and the transfer advising and student success team from University Advising shared an update on the Bridge to Madison pilot, an innovative collaboration between JMU and Blue Ridge Community College, launched in Fall 2022 with 27 students in the first cohort. The program gives a select group of students who were waitlisted for admission to JMU an opportunity to attend their first year of classes at Blue Ridge while living on campus at JMU. The students live in Chandler Hall, have a meal plan, work out at UREC, attend athletics events, and join clubs. Students live the life of a first-year JMU Duke while strengthening their academic achievements through their community college enrollment. Nicholas Yennerell, a first-year student in the program, highlighted the challenges, successes, early outcomes, lessons learned, and next steps from the pilot year of the program.

Academic Affairs Strategic Plan

Jennifer Campfield, Assistant Vice President for Academic Initiatives and Planning, shared an overview of the Academic Affairs Strategic Plan (AASP). This included a review of the mission, vision, and values and three strategic goals created by the Academic Affairs Strategic Planning Committee as well as the objectives, Key Performance Indicators, and Action Items developed to support the division's progress toward goal achievement. This strategic plan is the division's first comprehensive strategic plan developed through a large-scale collaborative process involving faculty and staff from throughout the division. Colleges and other units are continuing to align their work with the AASP. The plan will be reviewed and updated annually, and the division will engage in another strategic planning process after the next university strategic planning process is completed.

College Spotlight: Honors

The committee was briefed by Dr. Bethany Blackstone, Dean of the Honors College, on the philosophy, history, and status of the Honors College. The college currently serves more than 1,100 undergraduate students pursuing majors in all academic colleges with an interdisciplinary minor curriculum and opportunities for enrichment and engagement and. Honors saw 40+ percent year-over-year increase in applications from incoming first year students for Fall 2022 and Fall 2023, receiving more than 2,500 applications for this fall. Griff Splan, '24 Biology major, shared how his experiences in Honors courses and as president of the Madison Honors Leadership Council have shaped his JMU experience and prepared him for post-graduate success.

Faculty Handbook Update

The multi-phase review and suggestion process used by the faculty, the Faculty Senate speaker, the provost and the president for revisions to the *2023-24 Faculty Handbook* was shared by Dr. Michael O'Fallon, Associate Vice Provost for Academic Affairs Policy. Twenty-two final recommended changes were proposed to the committee; all were part of the "Faculty Employment Policies and Procedures" section.

On a motion by Chris Falcon and seconded by Craig Welburn, the committee approved the changes to the Faculty Handbook.

Faculty Senate Speaker Report

Dr. Kathy Ott Walter, Faculty Senate Speaker, shared a synopsis of recent senate meetings and an update of resolutions and motions under consideration and approved by the members. The speaker also highlighted a variety of activities and achievements in the Department of Philosophy and Religion and the Department of Educational Foundations and Exceptionalities including faculty and student led exhibitions, presentations, and community engagement.

There being no further business, on the motion of Craig Welburn and seconded by Chris Falcon, the Academic Excellence Committee meeting adjourned at 2:18 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Gray-Keeling, Chair

Donna Harper, Secretary to the Board