**THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA**

**THE VISITORS OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**

#### Minutes of the Student Affairs Committee

The Student Affairs Committee met on Thursday, September 18, 2025, in Ballroom B of the Festival Conference and Student Center at James Madison University. Terrie Edwards, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

**Present:**

Edwards, Terrie

Hedrick, Heather

James, Kay Coles

Rexrode, Dave, Chair

Thacker, Nikki

**Absent:**

**Others:**

Allen, Dirron, Associate Vice President, Student Life and Involvement

Ball, Kelly, Associate Vice President, Access and Enrollment, Director, Admissions

Brenneman, Anne, Director, University Health Center

Bronaugh, Charlotte, Student Body President

Campbell, Kathleen, Assistant Vice President, Residence Life

Davidson, Kim, Director, Community Engagement and Volunteer Center

Kite, Tracey, Director, Family Engagement

Lonett, Carson, Assistant Vice President, Executive Advisor to the Vice President for Student Affairs

Miller, Tim, Vice President for Student Affairs

Molina, Rudy, Vice Provost

Onestak, David, Director, Counseling Center

Ouren, Casey, Director, Orientation and Transition

Stafford, Sydney, Student Representative to the Board of Visitors

Walther, Annie, Associate University Counsel, Assistant Attorney General

Wood, Melinda, Vice President, Enrollment Management

Dillard, Kara Dillard, Executive Director, Madison Center

Walther, Annie, Associate University Council

### Approval of Minutes

Terrie Edwards welcomed the board members back for the new year and shared that Tim Miller has been keeping her well-informed. She also introduced Heather Hedrick as a new member of the board. Additionally, she acknowledged Charlotte Bronaugh, the new Student Body President. She then thanked Sydney Stafford for returning for a second term and shared her appreciation of her work last year.

On the motion of Kay Coles James and seconded by Heather Hedrick, the April 10 minutes were approved.

Terrie reviewed the Student Affairs Committee charter. She informed the committee that all elements of the board presentations throughout the year would connect back to one of the responsibilities listed in the charter.

**Student Affairs Update**

Tim Miller recognized staff members who received Purple Star Awards.

Tim thanked Terrie for her commitment and desire to recognize staff members at each meeting. They will continue to do this at the beginning of each meeting.

Dr. Miller commended Terrie for her new role at the University of Virginia and thanked her for her commitment to the Board and Student Affairs Committee.

Tim then shared an update regarding student life on campus. He shared that we are one month and one day into the semester. He updated the room on how the welcoming of new students went in August. With 138 First Year Orientation Guides, 228 Resident Advisers, 27 Hall Directors and over 300 move-in volunteers, the team declared move-in to be a success.

Tim shared updates on several events that occurred during the first month of the semester. Highlights included Fentanyl Awareness and Prevention Day, which was hosted in collaboration with Athletics, Student Affairs, Administration and Finance, University Events, and First Lady Youngkin’s Office. Next was the Grand Opening of Potomac Hall. Over 70 individuals in attendance heard remarks and took a tour of the building. Student Affairs showed off UREC and JMU VALOR spaces during a visit from Fairmont University. Finally, the University Health Center and University Counseling Center will host an open house on September 23. This will give the campus community an opportunity to see behind-the-scenes into the spaces and meet the incredible staff that are innovating in their service to the JMU Community.

Tim discussed the pre-weeks of welcome programs hosted before Move-In. These programs bring students back 3-5 days before the typical move-in date. These programs offer an opportunity to form a community before the transition, allowing them to establish relationships and connections on campus.

At this point, 6,700 students have moved in and there are approximately 4,889 new students in their rooms.

Tim showed the Student Affairs Strategic Plan and reminded the board members of the wellness dimensions. The division is working on elements of the plan including digital well-being and employee engagement.

**Student Government Association Report**

Charlotte Bronaugh provided an update on the work of the Student Government Association (SGA), highlighting the strong leadership and commitment of the team as a whole in supporting school spirit, advancing their agenda, and delivering meaningful outcomes for the campus community. She shared insights into the responsibilities SGA members, including navigating complex university decision-making and serving as a bridge for student voices.

Over the summer, SGA collaborated with the Office of Public Affairs, welcomed a summer intern, and engaged faculty and staff to emphasize the university’s role as a support system. They also held summer meetings, with special recognition to the Community Engagement and Volunteer Center for planning a major upcoming event.

Charlotte is excited about the upcoming semester. She is leading an Alternative Fall Break trip and looking forward to continuing to highlight work from the SGA, campus, and upcoming events.

**Student Representative to the Board of Visitors**

Sydney Stafford introduced herself and reflected on goals from last year. She discussed how her goals reflected the Student Affairs Strategic Plan. Terrie Edwards appreciated this and shared her appreciation of this alignment in the room.

Sydney shared about the orientation events and her participation. She highlighted early opportunities for students to make new connections and explore campus, and how these opportunities set JMU apart. She shared about Panhellenic Sororities and IFC Fraternities that are navigating recruitment. She said there was a record-breaking number of 1,208 potential new members for panhellenic sororities.

She highlighted the Fall University Career Fair and the exceptional marketing for the event. She shared that it was a great opportunity for JMU students to meet with potential employers.

She concluded with a highlight of a student organization. She shared that SafeRides, a student-run, volunteer-based organization, provides free, non-judgmental rides home to students every Friday and Saturday night from 10 p.m. to 3 a.m. Their total ride count to date is 148,000.

**Student Affairs Partnerships**

Dr. Miller introduced the presentation as an opportunity to hear from a cross-divisional team who works to recruit, welcome, and acclimate students from CHOICES to the first week of classes.

Melinda Wood provided an overview of the recruitment process starting at college fairs where she highlighted staff members Roger Burke and Mahaley Broughman. She shared about how Admissions stayed connected through intentional touch points including letters, postcards, texts, and phone calls. This shows that consistent recruitment efforts in Admissions turn initial interest into long-term commitment to JMU.

Melinda continued by sharing that 70% of CHOICES attendees pay their enrollment deposit within a week of CHOICES. This is a critical conversion point for admitted students involving partners from across the university. CHOICES is a life-shaping decision moment where JMU’s academic strength, campus spirit, and community atmosphere become deciding factors for families.

Casey Ouren outlined the importance of The One Book and the New Student Checklist, which 97% of students and 86% of families reported as a vital transition resource. She shared about the Ghost Student Committee, a cross-campus support team, and how they work to reengage students who may have fallen off track. She shared that in 2025, 538 students were flagged through this process, and 85% were successfully reengaged.

Casey continued and shared how Summer Orientation and Weeks of Welcome build connection and belonging at JMU. 94% of students reported feeling a part of the JMU community, which is up 20% from before they attended. Tracey Kite shared that families are equally engaged, reporting that 93% felt like they were valued partners through the process. Through the narrative, the team reflected on the 47,000 student touchpoints across more than 200 events. These experiences accelerate community building and student success.

Tracey highlighted transition and informational events for families and students. This included Family Virtual Panels, where staff and current parents answered lingering questions after Orientation and helped prepare move-in. She described the First Year Send-Offs, where families in the same geographical area can meet other families and students, along with JMU administrators from Family Engagement, Admissions, Athletics and Student Affairs.

Kathleen Campbell emphasized how her team and partners across campus prepare for move-in and how their goal is to reflect hospitality and care. This is demonstrated by allowing families and students to choose their move-in time on a day that is best for their travel arrangements. During move-in, Kathleen shared that there were over 300 volunteers, not including Orientation and Transition or Residence Life Staff. Together, they helped unload cars, transport belongings, and create a smooth arrival experience for families and students.

The team concluded by highlighting how all of these efforts help families trust in JMU to care for and support their students and how JMU works together to recruit, retain, and build community for students and families.

**Panel**  
The panel consisted of Tallon Cummings-Watson, Hall Director, Malachi Drumgole, Orientation leader, Sofia Aikens, first-year student, and Bridget Aikens, parent.

Sofia shared her journey to JMU, noting that her decision was strongly influenced by her family’s deep connections to the university. Both of her parents and her sister are alumni, and her campus visits felt like home. Now a member of the Honors College and involved in music, she reflected on the welcoming environment of Harrisonburg and her excitement for academic and extracurricular opportunities. Her mother, Bridget, added a parent’s perspective, praising JMU’s move-in process, particularly the support of FROGS and volunteers, and highlighting how consistent communication, such as One Book reminders and timely emails, made the transition smooth.

Tallon, a Hall Director, emphasized that first-year students face challenges but have benefited from the Residence Life staff presence. He described how Resident Advisers (RAs) use intentional conversations (ICONs) to help students navigate time management, academics, and personal relationships, while also connecting them to resources like Madison Cares when mental health needs arise.

Malachi, an Orientation Peer Adviser (OPA), echoed the importance of small, daily interactions in creating belonging, noting that often students need someone to listen or guide them toward resources.

All panelists reflected on their best moments and memories. Bridget expressed joy in seeing students make lasting memories, including first-day photos on the Quad, which reassured her that Sofia is thriving. Sofia recalled the excitement of her first football game and the energy of the first week. Malachi shared a memorable karaoke moment with a student, which reinforced the impact of his role. Tallon described his hall cookout as a reminder of his “why” for becoming an RA.

There being no further business, on the motion of Nikki Thacker and seconded by Heather Hedrick, the Student Affairs Committee meeting adjourned at 2:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Terrie Edwards, Chair

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David Kirkpatrick, Secretary to the Board