

Recommendation Form Worksheet

TITLE Leadership Messaging / Visibility of Expectation

PROBLEM

James Madison University has had a Supplier Diversity initiative for over seventeen years, yet many faculty, staff and decision makers are either not aware of it or do not feel an expectation to support it. The committee anticipates that one could ask numerous individuals in leadership roles, faculty, and staff and there would be little awareness of the program beyond individuals that actively place physical orders and it would be rare to find individuals that have retained information regarding our specified goals.

It will take consistent university leadership support to develop a culture of supplier diversity expectation throughout the organization. The importance of utilizing diverse vendors must be better communicated from all level of leadership across all divisions of the university.

A best practice in Supplier Diversity initiatives and in Change Management is the mobilization of active and visible executive sponsorship. Supplier Diversity and specifically an expectation for the use of diverse business partners must become a normal part of leadership discussions throughout the organization.

RECOMMENDATION This recommendation supports a realization that our current program was never handled through a process of Change Management and grew instead through piece meal action that has not been successful in establishing a cultural/thought shift. While multi-faceted, all items relate to communications and awareness of expectations across campus.

- 1) Have all leadership begin to include “business partners” as a component of all communication related our diversity and inclusion program “Diversity of faculty/staff, students **and business partners.**”
- 2) All leadership should have some knowledge of the university’s supplier diversity vision (to be established – see additional recommendation) and goals to reflect buy-in and awareness of the program.
- 3) Include a Supplier Diversity section in every Beacon issue, so that individuals all across campus have an opportunity to receive Supplier Diversity news.

RATIONALE Supplier Diversity was introduced piece meal through Commonwealth of Virginia expectations. For years the program has been championed as only a Small business (race and gender-neutral program). Procurement Services has implemented new efforts, outreach, communications, and reporting, as the Commonwealth of Virginia

program expanded, but the program has never been readily and consistently discussed by University or Departmental Leadership in an attempt to set expectation.

This recommendation of consistent leadership communication is a simple step to make a huge impact. People across campus are more likely to take to heart information coming from their leadership, rather than simply another department on campus.

Leadership support and consistent leadership communication is well documented as a best practice for Supplier Diversity programs and Change Management initiatives regardless of organization size or type.

SUCCESS

- All faculty and staff will have at least a basic knowledge of the JMU Supplier Diversity Program and goals.
- Externally our diversity program will be recognized as including diverse business partners.
- Departments will be more open to providing opportunity to diverse firms.
- Usage of diverse firms will increase and JMU will have greater success in meeting our goals, specifically related to usage of women and minority owned firms.