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

Minutes of the Student Affairs Committee

The Student Affairs Committee met on Thursday, November 7, 2024, in Ballroom B of the Festival Conference and Student Center at James Madison University. Terrie Edwards, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:02 p.m.

Present:

Present: Edwards, Terrie, Chair
Eiland, Joanie
James, Kay Coles
Rexrode, Dave
Thacker, Nikki

Others:

Allen, Dirron, Associate Vice President for Student Life and Involvement
Blyer, Kristina, Associate Vice President for Health and Well-Being
Brenneman, Anne, Director, University Health Center
Campbell, Kathleen, Director, Residence Life
Grossman Leopard, Jen, Director, Student Life
Lacroix, Brielle, Student Government President
Lonett, Carson, Executive Advisor to the Vice President for Student Affairs
Miller, Tim, Vice President for Student Affairs
Onestak, David, Director, Counseling Center
Vass, Mary-Hope, Spokesperson, University Communications
Stafford, Sydney, Student Representative to the Board of Visitors

Approval of Minutes

On the motion of Dave Rexrode and seconded by Joanie Eiland, the minutes of September 12, 2024, were approved.

Student Affairs Update

Tim Miller opened with a moment of silence to honor the recent passing of a student. He then shared the state of the students, which included:

- Signing of the Okanagan Charter and appreciation of Dr. Kristina Blyer and all her work
- Halftime on the Quad, an event that started from a tragedy and is now a campus tradition
- First Thursday Night football game which was nationally televised on ESPN
- Fall break this year was expanded to include Wednesday

Dr. Miller shared about NASPA-VA Senior Student Affairs Officer (SSAO) Community of Practice. This group meets weekly on Fridays to discuss what is happening on campus, trends, policy, and collaborative opportunities. He shared about recent topics of conversation, including:

- Scooter safety
- Alcohol culture

-
- Policy
 - Community partnerships
 - The future of the field of student affairs
 - Contracts for services including TimelyCare, student online training contracts, and Lyft contracts for SANE exams (forensic exams performed after a sexual assault).

Dr. Miller also leads a monthly community of practice with SSAOs within the Sunbelt Conference.

Dr. Miller provided a report on current communication with students and families. The industry benchmark for open rate of education emails is approximately 35% and recent Student Affairs communication to new incoming students and their families had an 80% open rate for students and 78% for families and continues to remain high. In the weekly digest, the most clicked link so far this year was for Pack the Park: Color Run/Walk at UPARK during Weeks of Welcome.

Dr. Miller then shared the health and well-being highlights of the Student Affairs strategic plan. He shared data points from the Healthy Minds Study which showed a 10% decrease in flourishing between 2013 and 2023. There has been a decrease nationwide. JMU is above the national average by 3% and above peer institutions by 4%. The drop could be happening for many reasons including anxiety around global issues, COVID, social media, mental health and school shootings. Terrie Edwards reemphasized the importance and purpose of this effort belonging on the Health and Well-being committee.

Student Government Association Report

Brielle Lacroix, the Student Body President, presented her SGA Report which began with SGA Updates. Committee updates for SGA included membership, legislative and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, Justice, and Accessibility (DEIJA+). SGA is onboarding new members and hosting various events within the organization such as retreats, game nights, and mentor/mentee selection. The legislative affairs committee participated in voter registration efforts as well as a Dukes Debate event. SGA also collaborated with the Madison Center for Civic Engagement as part of their legislative efforts. The DEIJA+ committee has hosted a few events to learn more about indigenous culture and the indigenous roots within Harrisonburg.

SGA also had recent legislative updates, including their support in the signing and adoption of the Okanagan Charter. Brielle shared about a new newsletter SGA began to share about SGA events and updates. She encouraged all members present to subscribe to it.

Brielle shared updates from her time as president. First, the sustainability organization SustainJMU welcomed its first class of new members. She then talked about community engagement which included events like the JMU Homecoming Parade, which made a return after years of inactivity, the creation of Harrisonburg Renaissance maps to highlight places of interest in the area, and an initiative to get students to shop small and local.

Brielle also shared her efforts in student awareness and support. The SGA Instagram account has shared posts for first-year students to guide them through campus resources. The account has made over 35 posts with a reach of about 400 people per post and over 23,000 account views.

Student Representative to the Board of Visitors

Sydney Stafford is the Student Representative to the Board of Visitors. She began by introducing herself to those present and shared her goals for the year. This was Sydney's first time speaking to the committee and she shared she was thankful for the opportunity.

Sydney's focus is on belonging and its alignment with the Student Affairs strategic plan. Sydney has been working with Brielle and the rest of the SGA on events such as the 2026 Ring Premiere and the Homecoming Parade, and she has been working on the Presidential Search Committee and the SCHEV Student Advisory Committee. Sydney also shared

about her work with the Madison Center for Civic Engagement, including voter registration drives, Dukes Discourse and Dukes Debate, and various speaker events.

Health and Well-Being

Dr. Kristina Blyer presented on health and well-being at JMU. Health and Well-being at JMU focuses around six dimensions; environment, health, relationships, security, purpose, and learning. JMU is using a multi-level approach to health and well-being, focusing on caring for individual students, which is a university-wide effort. Dr. Blyer used the analogy of a frog in its pond to better understand health and well-being at JMU. When something is wrong, we should look at the environment where the issue is taking place.

This systems and settings approach is guided by the Okanagan Charter, which provides institutions with a common language and framework to become a health and well-being-promoting campus. With the support and efforts of Dr. Blyer, JMU was the first university in Virginia to adopt the charter. Following the adoption of the charter, JMU is committing itself to being a health-promoting campus by embedding health into all aspects of campus culture across the administration, operations, and academic mandates.

Counseling Center

Dr. David Onestak, the Director of the Counseling Center, presented the efforts and successes of the Counseling Center. Dr. Onestak shared that for each of the last 20 years over 90% of Counseling Center directors have seen an increase in students with severe psychological problems, the problem growing exponentially over the last two decades. He shared a statistic from Penn State University's Center for Collegiate Mental Health that states 36% of college students are currently receiving mental health treatment.

During the last academic year at JMU, clinicians provided JMU students with 195 crisis intakes, meaning students who were new to the Counseling Center and who were experiencing high-risk mental health crises. 24 of the crisis intakes created referrals to Sentara RMH for assessment of hospitalization.

The Counseling Center provides clinical services, consultation and crisis management, outreach and prevention, and training and education services. The Counseling Center offers daily walk-in hours from 10am-3pm, and added victim advocacy services in 2021. The Counseling Center also offers work-based learning experiences for both undergraduate and graduate students.

Dr. Onestak shared information about the Clinical Load Index (CLI) of the Counseling Center staff clinicians. The CLI is core of 100 would indicate that each clinician at the Counseling Center is responsible for 100 active clients in the academic year. The JMU counseling CLI is 107, which is higher than about two out of three schools that participated in the CLI calculation.

Dr. Onestak also shared the most commonly presented issues addressed by the Counseling Center. These include; generalized and social anxiety, mild to moderate depression, relationship issues, academic concerns, developmental issues, grief and loss, and uncomplicated trauma. The average number of sessions for students is between four and six, and the average mean is 5.6 sessions.

Client evaluations found that 100% of clients found the front desk staff to be welcoming, 99% thought their counselor seemed skilled and competent and 98% reported they felt their information would be kept confidential. The Counseling Center is not only a mental health resource for students, but it is also an academic resource, Dr. Onestak shared. 74% reported that counseling helped improve their academic focus and performance, while 70% indicated that because of counseling they were more likely to stay in school.

Counseling Center Assessment of Psychological Symptoms (CCAPS) is used when a student begins treatment with the Counseling Center and queries important symptoms for college students. The CCAPS is administered at the first, third, sixth, and ninth counseling sessions, tracking client progress in various clinical areas.



Dr. Onestak also shared that there are innovative services provided by the Counseling Center that utilize the natural world. The programs that are offered can integrate animal and natural elements into the sessions. Other universities have begun consulting with JMU's Counseling Center to learn more about how they can integrate similar programs into their centers.

Finally, TimelyCare is a service providing expanded mental health services to JMU students. It is free and also provides TalkNow, a 24/7 hotline that students can use as support anytime from anywhere. Students have access to 12 free scheduled counseling sessions every academic year.

JMU's utilization of TimelyCare was shared through a graph. The graph shows the number of visits by service and the time in which the visits occur. Individual counseling and psychiatry are the highest utilized services at 54% and 33%, and 43.8% of visits were accessed after business hours on evenings and weekends. These visits would not be available to students without TimelyCare. 73.8% of students chose to use video calls and 26.4% chose over phone sessions.

The student panel shared their experiences with staff at the Counseling Center, sharing that their empathy, calmness and professionalism show genuine care for students. The students' experience on campus showed that the demand for mental health support has increased and that mental health impacts the ability to succeed academically.

Terrie Edwards shared that Governor Youngkin's main focus is mental health initiatives.

There being no further business, on the motion of Kay Coles James and seconded by Dave Rexrode, the Student Affairs Committee meeting adjourned at 2:36 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrie Edwards, Chair

David Kirkpatrick, Secretary to the Board