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

Minutes of the Student Affairs Committee

The Student Affairs Committee met on Thursday, September 12, 2024, in Ballroom B of the Festival Conference and Student Center at James Madison University. Terrie Edwards, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Present:

Edwards, Terrie, Chair
Eiland, Joanie
Rexrode, Dave
Thacker, Nikki

Absent:

James, Kay Coles

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
Davidson, Kim, Director, Community Engagement and Volunteer Center
Grossman Leopard, Jen, Director, Student Life
Lushbaugh, Wendy, Director, Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices
Miller, Tim, Vice President for Student Affairs
Mitchell, Bruce, Associate Vice President for Accessibility and Belonging
Onestak, David, Director, Counseling Center
Saylor, Chad, Deputy Spokesperson, University Communications
Stafford, Sydney, Student Representative to the Board of Visitors
Walther, Annie, University Counsel
Westly, Libby, Director, University Career Center

Approval of Minutes

On the motion of Dave Rexrode and seconded by Nikki Thacker, the minutes of April 18, 2024, were approved.

Opening Remarks

Vice Rector, Terrie Edwards, welcomed members and guests. She asked committee members to introduce themselves and share their “Why JMU?” Sydney Stafford joined the table and will give an update at the full

board meeting on Sept. 13. Terrie gave a review of the Student Affairs Committee responsibilities and shared that the committee agenda would reflect those responsibilities throughout the presentation.

Student Affairs Update

Tim Miller reviewed the committee's planned meetings for the semester and how they will align with committee responsibilities. The proposed topics are listed, and the committee is to anticipate a joint presentation with Academic Affairs and Student Affairs this year.

- September: Orientation and community impact
- November: Health and Well-being
- February: Student Life and Involvement
- April: Highlight partnerships and Dean of Students

Terrie requested that Dr. Miller begin their meeting by reviewing the last six years of work in Student Affairs under his leadership. Dr. Miller shared that this was a good reflection opportunity for him to look at the many great things that have happened at JMU through the work of the division. He shared that Student Affairs established a new mission, vision, and values for Student Affairs. The creation process engaged the whole division and allowed students to author the work.

He then shared: The realignment of areas in Student Affairs to allow AVPs to focus on their expertise areas, allowing the leadership team to lead boards at JMU, in the community, regionally, and nationwide. This team is connected to the campus, students, families, and Alumni. Dr. Kristina Blyer helped lead JMU through the COVID-19 pandemic and how that highlighted the value of Student Affairs.

Over the past six years, students have been the focus of Student Affairs work and decision-making, allowing the development and expansion of programs on campus such as The Pantry, JMU VALOR, Weeks of Welcome, the Yard, and many more. He shared about development and well-being experiences and initiatives for staff. He shared the great work of Dr. Jonathan Stewart and his leadership with the Student Affairs budget. Jonathan's efficient budget management has allowed Student Affairs to reinvest \$1 million back to the division. He shared about the development of partnerships across campus which has allowed for information sharing, collaboration on programming, and new pipelines to different parts of the university.

Dr. Miller closed with a personal accomplishment. During the COVID-19 pandemic, he developed a group for all Senior Student Affairs Officers across Virginia. This group meets every Friday to share what is happening around their campus and share resources. He created another group for Senior Student Affairs Officers in the Sun Belt Conference.

Terrie thanked Dr. Miller for his work and overview of the last six years. She said it was affirming and clear that what Student Affairs has accomplished contributes to the JMU culture and intentional efforts each day to grow our students.

Dr. Miller continued with division priorities for 2024-29, which began with the plan to grow the different pre-weeks of welcome programs. These programs allow students to move in earlier than their initial first-year move-in date, help them learn the campus better, and get a head start on finding their communities.

There is a priority to increase campus housing availability for upper-class students. Dr. Miller mentioned that it is a dream of his for all students to be required to live on campus for two years, but that for now, an increase in upper class student housing is the goal.



Establishing JMU as a leader in the Health Promoting Campus Network is another priority for the division, and JMU will be the first university in Virginia to sign the Okanagan Charter with an official adoption ceremony on October 8, 2024.

Completing the campus master plan to include new residence halls and developing and revitalizing additional student and belonging spaces is a priority for Student Affairs. Dr. Miller shared that there is a continual need to build spaces for students where there can be a break from the norm of the day and with a particular focus on a space for neurodiverse students.

Dr. Miller shared his belief that Student Affairs is one of the most fundable things on a college campus yet remains one of the most overlooked. Through Student Affairs, there is a priority to build a growth mindset among staff and to set the standard for collaboration across not only the university but the community. Dr. Miller shared that there is a responsibility that as our students enter the community, they should be active and respectful members of their communities.

The Student Affairs strategic plan includes four themes.

- Student learning and development
- Belonging
- Health
- Being the best place to work

Dr. Miller shared a few examples of the strategic plan in action through Career Experiential Learning and Transition (CELT). This included projects through the University Career Center, the office of Orientation and Transition, and the Community Engagement and Volunteer Center. Terrie shared that when the board visited students last year it was interesting that some students said they almost left JMU because they did not feel like they belonged, but that once they were connected to organizations and other students they were connected for life. Terrie shared that she is grateful for the efforts put forth by the Division of Student Affairs to help create places for students to make connections.

Dr. Miller then shared the Student Life Experience. The student life experience includes pre-weeks of welcome programming and successes with Residence Life move-in. Residence life has changed their method for move-in and now has student workers and volunteers working in shifts to center their well-being. This year the weeks of welcome attendance and participation numbers were just over 40,000 students. Nikki asked if these events were only attended by first-year students and the question was answered that some events were open to any students. Along with this, there were various events dedicated to getting involved and thousands of students participated in these events, such as Student Organization Night.

Dr. Miller then moved onto updates on the campus codes of conduct. Every year there is a review of the student handbook and the code of conduct. He thanked Wendy Lushbaugh and her team as well as Annie Walther for their efforts in the updates and organization of Title IX. The code of conduct has new focuses on disruptions of school functions; violations of federal, state, and local law ordinances; unlawful masking; erection of encampments and tents; and facility usage by affiliated and nonaffiliated persons and groups. The communication efforts for the updated code of conduct included a speech at new student convocation, an insert in the Campus Packs, Residence Life Hall meetings and door signs, email communication from OSARP and full-campus messages from Dr. Miller and Chief Matos, as well as the use of student communication platforms like Dukes Weekly and Potty Mouth.



Dr. Miller also shared some trends in student conduct over the previous three years. There was an even split between the use of adaptable resolution and adjudication processes for cases involving Title IX Sexual Harassment and Sexual Misconduct. Also, there has been an increase in OSARP's response to off-campus noise/nuisance behaviors by students. OSARP continues to see student alcohol violations at higher rates than any other policy; other violations often seen are failure to comply, drugs, and disruptive conduct. It has also been seen that students are not engaging in the accountability process – annually 25-29% choose not to come to a case review, but with a procedural approach change in 2023-24 the number of students failing to comply with disciplinary outcomes has decreased. With all of this, Dr. Miller shared that parent involvement has remained the same.

Student Government Association Report

Brielle Lacroix, the Student Body President, began her report by introducing herself and sharing her personal goals, growing as a leader and follower, learning more about JMU and the environment that it exists in, providing students with a positive example of an elected official that works for them, and holding herself accountable and open to change. Brielle also introduced her team and shared that their goal is to reinvent and modernize SGA processes.

Brielle shared the agenda for her term as president which included her platform and additional responsibilities she will perform. Her platform is focused on sustainability, community engagement, and student awareness of support services. Brielle also highlighted what she spent her time doing over the summer in her position. She worked with CELT, health and well-being, attended summer meetings with campus and community partners and was a First Year Orientation Guide. In August she spent her time welcoming Dukes to campus and her work in September thus far has been focused on creating community and supporting students.

Career, Experiential Learning, and Transitions (CELT)

Myles Surret began the discussion and updates for CELT which is comprised of the University Career Center, Office of Orientation and Transition, and the Community Engagement and Volunteer Center. The vision for CELT is for students to find their purpose in learning, community, and careers. In 2023-2024 CELT completed their strategic planning process in concert with the plan for Student Affairs.

Casey Ouren from Orientation and Transition shared updates and information about the orientation program, beginning with explaining the three phases of orientation. These phases are *The One Book*, orientation, and Weeks of Welcome.

1. The One Book is an online process for new Dukes to complete at home on their own time. It consists of two parts, the first being an online publication that mirrors a portal for students to work through a variety of steps to manage their transition to JMU. The second is an interactive set of modules that students use to complete the required processes to enter JMU and be prepared for the semester.
2. Orientation is a one-day orientation program in June or July. Most orientation days are offered here on JMU's campus, but there is a virtual option for those unable to attend in person. Students are invited to bring two guests to campus, and each student and guest are given schedules to guide them throughout the day.
3. Weeks of Welcome offers opportunities prior to the start of classes and continues for two weeks into the semester. Weeks of Welcome events and activities can help students begin the search for organizations people, and communities where they can find their fit.



Casey then showed a chart of data that illustrated students' sense of belonging. The graph shows percentages of students that strongly agreed or agreed with statements like "I feel a sense of belonging to JMU," "I see myself as a part of the JMU community," etc. The gold bar of the graph was prior to orientation and the purple bar was after orientation. The gold bar peaked in the high 80s for many questions, but the purple bar was peaking in the mid-90s, showing a positive increase across all questions.

Kim Davidson shared information about the CEVC which has been a cornerstone of JMU for nearly 40 years and works to connect students and faculty to communities in Harrisonburg and beyond. CEVC is focused on building collaborative relationships and focusing on mutually beneficial partnerships. Kim said that the aim is twofold: 1) to enhance student learning and 2) to advance community priorities. Last year the CEVC engaged over 3500 students in their office and 60 of those engagements were community partnerships and relationships in the community. Kim shared that the programs offered through CEVC offer opportunities for students to engage in a variety of ways whether the students or faculty choose to explore the opportunities through a one-time event or through an ongoing volunteer opportunity or through immersive sustained engagement opportunities. Kim also shared about Madison Community Scholars. Madison Community Scholars had 82 community positions this year, and students work approximately eight hours a week at no cost to the community partner. The students are improving their leadership, professional, and interpersonal skills, and participating in a supportive cohort experience. Students are eligible for Madison Community Scholars in two ways. The first is through federal work study and the second is through three scholarships.

CELT then hosted a student panel with Brevin Bugausan, Jedi Ragas, and Izzy Rhodes. These students all have experience with CELT, some as Madison Community Scholars or ongoing volunteer positions as well as positions with Orientation and Transition. Myles Surrett joined again to ask the panelists their questions.

Question 1: In the CELT strategic plan, we are working to enhance the student employment experience for your personal and professional career. With that in mind can you tell us how you grew in your goals?

All three students answered. Izzy shared that she had grown as a person in her role, as someone who used to lack confidence with public speaking and her work as an Orientation Peer Advisor, (OPA) which helped her find her confidence and a newfound motivation that she can apply to schoolwork.

Brevin shared that he is a biology major with a focus in environmental issues and conservation, so their volunteer opportunities have been able to let them combine their passions with an opportunity to meet new people and people outside of their major.

Jedi shared that she has been a Madison Community Scholar since her first semester of her first year and that she has worked with Empowerment3 all three of her years in the position. She has learned about accessibility and resources that are available in the Harrisonburg area.

Question 2: What does it mean on a day-to-day basis to be an OPA?

As an OPA, Izzy answered this question. She shared that she was assigned 18 to 22 students every day and could answer any questions about campus and what is offered at JMU to students and their families. She was able to give insight from an authentic student perspective and that she was a part of a family Q&A panel and was able to support many people as their student transitioned to college.

Question 3: Can you tell me about your current community partner assignment and what your role is day to day?

Jedi shared that her role has changed every year in Empowerment3. She started with a project in creating a community resource guide for wellness opportunities in the Shenandoah Valley. By creating



that guide, Jedi was promoted to the Student Executive Director for Communications in Empowerment3.

Question 4: What have you learned about Harrisonburg?

Brevin shared that they did not know much about Harrisonburg or JMU before becoming a student here and that learning about the environmental focus that the city has was important to him. He did not assume that JMU or Harrisonburg would be as focused as they are and that during his time here, he has been able to experience the community's passion for the environment.

Question 5: In the roles you are in, can you provide an example of a time you knew you were making a difference?

Izzy shared that she interacted with many students, some that were nervous and some that were excited. As an OPA, she had one student that was having a hard time finding her place within their group. She realized the student and herself had a lot in common and the student opened up and told Izzy that she was having a lot of problems back at home and was stressed that she was not there to be with her friends. Izzy told her orientation is what you make of it and that she was here for her even after orientation.

Jedi shared that one of the most moving parts of working with Empowerment3 is the one-on-one mentor aspect of it. Last year she was paired with a student who had some behavioral challenges that did not love the aquatics program in the beginning, so it was a struggle getting him engaged in the curriculum. She was able to learn some of his signs as he was nonverbal. By the end of the program, she was connected with his family and the participant, and he was fully engaged in the program.

Brevin shared that last year when he was giving tours at the Arboretum, he realized that they would not be able to facilitate enough tours without student staff. Brevin shared that it was important to him when he realized that he had a real impact on the functioning of the Arboretum.

There being no further business, on the motion of Terrie Edwards and seconded by Joanie Eiland, the Student Affairs Committee meeting adjourned at 2:29 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Terrie Edwards, Chair

David C. Kirkpatrick, Secretary to the Board