

James Farmer Multicultural Center Faculty Advisory Committee Minutes

February 19, 2021

Online Meeting

Members Present:

Dr. Marion Sanford – Director of JFMC;
Dr. Melissa Wells (Education) – Chair;
Dr. Alexandra Dunn (Business) – Secretary;
Dr. Suzie Kim (Art History);
Dr. Mehdi Aminrazavi (Classics, Philosophy, & Religion);
Dr. Marisa Martinez-Mira (Modern Languages & Literature);
Makayla Ferrell (Student representative);
Andy Chen (Student representative)

Absent: N/A

Approval of minutes: The minutes were presented from the previous meeting on November 13, 2020 and approved unanimously.

Student Representative Updates: No report

Director's Report:

- **Cultural programming:**
 - January 2021: MLK Celebration
 - Events for this celebration went well!
 - Information about the events can be found here:
<https://students.umw.edu/multicultural/programs/dr-martin-luther-king-jr-celebration/>
 - The MLK Jr. Day of Service was rescheduled from January to Saturday, February 27. It will be from 1:00 – 3:00 pm
 - Students can register here: bit.ly/mlkdayumw
 - More information about the event can be found here:
<https://students.umw.edu/multicultural/programs/dr-martin-luther-king-jr-celebration/>
 - Those who participate this year will receive a long sleeve t-shirt
 - February 2021: Black History Month Celebration
 - Black History month has been a success! We've had some sort of programming almost every day of the month.
 - More about the events can be found here:
<https://students.umw.edu/multicultural/programs/black-history-month-celebration/>
 - There were four cultural meals over the course of the month which have also been a success
 - March 2021: Women's History Month Celebration

- The events are going to highlight strong women who have been able to get messages across in various ways and have refused to be silenced
 - More about the events can be found here: <https://students.umw.edu/multicultural/programs/womens-history-month/>
 - The fourth showing of the Human Rights Film Series will be during March. It will be held on Thursday, March 4 at 5:00 pm and will show a documentary on the Women’s March
 - The registration link can be found here: <https://students.umw.edu/multicultural/jfmc-human-rights-film-series/event-registration-human-rights-film-series-the-womens-march/>
 - The keynote speaker is Dr. Mecca Jamilah Sullivan. She will speak on Monday, March 22 at 6:00 pm
 - The registration link can be found here: <https://students.umw.edu/multicultural/programs/womens-history-month/event-registration-womens-history-month-keynote-mecca-jamilah-sullivan/>
- **Social Justice initiatives:**
 - The Social Justice and Leadership Summit will be held once again on Saturday, March 13 from 12:00 – 5:00 pm
 - The theme is “Keep That Same Energy”, which makes reference to building on past themes from the summit such as continuing the pursuit of justice and taking action.
 - JFMC is continuing to reach out to high school students and community colleges for participants
 - This year, they are anticipating about 125 students (high school and UMW students). The first 75 UMW students who register will have their registration covered by UMW.
 - Five UMW faculty will be facilitating breakout sessions. The link to register will be live on the JFMC website soon.
- **RISE Peer Mentoring program:**
 - The mentoring program hosted a welcome back social on Monday, February 1
 - There was already one workshop conducted this semester and two others are scheduled for other dates in the semester.
 - The first event was focused on choosing a major. Mentors shared what factors went into choosing their majors and how they made decisions.
 - The upcoming events will focus on study abroad and finding internships.
 - There will also be a group event in mid-March, which will be a walking tour of historic downtown FXBG.

- There are some preliminary numbers that were shared about the academic performance of RISE participants.
 - Fall GPA semester average: Mentees (~45 students): 3.05; Mentors: 3.54
 - Fall cumulative GPA: Mentees: 3.05; Mentors: 3.29
 - This highlights the effectiveness of the RISE peer mentor program. The JFMC will continue to collect data and share more information about the impact and effectiveness of the program in future meetings.

Old Business:

- Follow up on *James Farmer Bulletin* initiative to faculty and staff
 - Dr. Sanford shared an article that was written by students and appeared in the *Blue and Gray* about how students felt UMW did not support the programs and events sponsored by the JFMC
 - The article can be found here:
<http://blueandgraypress.com/2021/02/06/umw-needs-to-promote-multicultural-clubs-more/>
 - Students were trying to make a point that if diversity, inclusion, and equity as well as education about these topics are important to UMW, that there should be resources that support making these events and initiatives a priority. Students highlighted that there is not enough staff, budget, or support for initiatives and that the university could do better.
 - After this article went live, questions were asked about how faculty receive information about JFMC events. Dr. Sanford shared that a listserv has been created and faculty received an email giving them the option to opt into receiving weekly emails with events sponsored by the JFMC.
 - It was stated that all faculty should receive these emails and be made aware of the JFMC events. It was also recommended and asked if faculty would consider offering extra credit for attendance at events or building in another type of incentive into the course to encourage attendance.
 - This opened up a discussion with the committee about what we could do or recommend to faculty and UMW about how to proceed.
 - Thoughts from the JFMC FAC about student requests:
 - The committee recommends putting all faculty on the listserv to receive the *James Farmer Bulletin*. The rationale for the recommendation is as follows:
 - Rather than asking faculty again to opt into the listserv, the committee thinks a better alternative is to send an introductory email to all faculty. The introductory email will contain an explanation for why the faculty are going to start receiving these emails and then give faculty the option to opt out at any point.
 - Currently: about 100 UMW faculty get the email (they have signed up for the newsletter). This will create more

awareness and it still gives faculty the option to not receive the information if their inboxes are overcrowded.

- The committee also recommended asking the VP for University Relations and Advancement for support in sharing JFMC events on the larger UMW social media accounts (e.g., the main UMW Instagram account).
 - Melissa Wells, chair of the JFMC FAC, will follow up with University Relations to suggest ways to promote these events and talk about the email going out to faculty about the listserv.
- Two other recommendations from the committee included
 - Partnering with President's Council on Wellness to promote JFMC events as wellness events
 - Having staff or students involved in JFMC go to the sources and spread information. Students and staff members could consider popping into Zoom classes to introduce the JFMC and talk about upcoming events at the beginning of various classes so that more people hear about the events.
- Staff representation on JFMC FAC
 - The committee revisited a motion passed at a previous meeting. The motion said the committee would explore adding one staff member for a 2-year term to the JFMC FAC based on university regulations.
 - The committee discussed what this would look like and made the following decisions:
 - The staff position will start as a non-voting position on the committee.
 - Dr. Sanford would continue to be an *ex officio* member and remain with no voting rights. Dr. Sanford will continue giving perspectives and providing information without voting.
 - Faculty considered the language below and voted on a motion to revise the faculty handbook to consider a nonvoting staff member:
 - The committee consists of five faculty members appointed as described in section 2.7.2. The committee also includes, as a non-voting *ex officio* member, the Director of the James Farmer Multicultural Center or designee, and a non-voting staff representative. In addition, two students appointed by the President serve as non-voting members.
 - Rationale: The James Farmer Multicultural Center is made up of three staff members, each with the capability to provide insight into the programming and planning of the center. SAC will assist with appointing one staff member for a 2-year term. The staff position will remain non-voting as we implement this new structure. It is worth noting that the two student representatives also serve on the advisory committee in a non-voting role. At the end of the first two-year term, the committee may choose to revisit the non-voting status of the staff member.

- The motion passed unanimously

New business:

- Dr. Sanford provided an update on JFMC mental health and well-being efforts and support for the students and the campus.
 - a. In the summer and fall, the JFMC sent out weekly motivational messages, as well as light-hearted and humorous messages, etc. In the fall, they partnered with the STP program, Talley center, SAE, PCOW, and Campus Rec to send out daily messages and activities, as well as tips on how to build resiliency. This initiative was called UMWTogether.
 - b. This group is currently sending weekly messages emphasizing resiliency and community in the *SAE Weekly*. These same messages will start appearing in the faculty/staff *EagleEye* newsletter. University Relations will also start posting these messages on various UMW social media sites.
 - c. The JFMC is also part of other campus efforts trying to build an on-going and consistent support to help deal with the stress and well-being of the campus community. The doctors and scientists are predicting that we will be dealing with results of the pandemic for several years. Many of the efforts to address mental health and well-being is to communicate resources to ensure people do not feel isolated and alone.

Announcements:

- Mehdi Aminrazavi has organized a one-day event on March 30 called Religion, Democracy, and Violence. It is a panel discussion from a variety of religious leaders that will talk about the relationship between these ideas. Mehdi will send out more information as it is available.

Next meeting:

- Friday, March 19 at 3:00 pm via Zoom

The meeting was adjourned at 4:19 pm.