

University of Mary Washington

James Farmer Multicultural Center Advisory Committee

Academic Year of Fall 2022 - Spring 2023

Meeting Date: September 28, 2022

Meeting Location: Zoom

Members in Attendance: Melissa Jenkins (COE), Marisa Martinez-Mira (Chair, Modern Languages and Literatures), Sarah Morealli (Secretary, Earth and Environmental Sciences), Marion Sanford (JFMC Director), Sayan Sarkar (COB), Desmond Villalba (Chemistry and Physics), Cameron Zakreski (Student representative), Sara Zhou (Student representative)

Members Absent: Alicia Tisdale (Assistant Director of Financial Aid, USC representative),

Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 3:33 pm

Meeting Business:

1. Welcome to new members: We welcomed two new student representatives Sara Zhou and Cameron Zakreski. Both students are exceptional leaders who participate in several diversity-based clubs and organizations.
2. Approval of Minutes: The minutes associated with the August 31st, 2022 online meeting were approved.
3. JFMC Director's Report: Dr. Sanford provided an update on several JFMC programming events. A brief description of each program is provided below. More information can be found within the *James Farmer Bulletin (FB)*.
 - a. Cultural Programming Updates:

We are half-way through **Latino Identities Month** (September 15th - October 15th).

- Yesterday's UMW Jazz Ensemble performance had a full audience.
- On Sunday, September 25th, LSA & JFMC hosted a field trip to the *Presente! A Latino History of the United States* Exhibit at the Smithsonian Museum of American History.
- Flag week events will be postponed due to weather.

UMW's observance of **Disability Awareness Month (DAM)** kicks off on October 1st in the HCC at 7 pm.

- Student leaders from the DiversAbility Club, Delta Alpha Pi, and Talk to the Hands will be present to facilitate the kick-off celebration.
- Other DAM events are planned throughout October. More information will be published in the *JFB*.

The **2022 Gender and Sexual Minorities and Allies (GSMA) Celebration** also kicks off in October. The theme this year is Gayming. More information will be provided in the *JFB*.

The last week in October marks the beginning of UMW's **Asian Cultural Celebration**. This year, the Taste of Asia event will open the celebration. It includes food from local Asian restaurants, a fashion show, and performances. The event costs \$3 or 3 canned food items for the UMW community. The food is donated to the local food pantry or the Gwen Hale Resource Closet.

After October, the JFMC will focus on the **Jewish Cultural Celebration, Native American Cultural Celebration, and Kwanzaa**. More information about these celebrations will be released in the future.

b. Social Justice Initiatives

- The rescheduled **Social Justice Leadership Summit**, took place in September. 76 students were registered.
- The second film in the **Human Rights Film Series** will be presented in November.
- On October 4th, Congresswoman Abigail Spanberger will visit UMW to discuss the importance of civic engagement.

c. Diversity and Inclusion

Drs. Shorter and Sanford are communicating with 4 cultural Alumni Affinity Groups: Black Alumni, Jewish, LGBTQ+, and Multicultural Alumni. Each group is trying to connect and engage with current students.

d. RISE Peer Mentoring

- The Academics 101 Workshop/Panel was held on Sept 7. The Panel was well-received and provided an opportunity for students to engage with faculty and staff.
- Skate Night was cancelled. Instead, they participated in a ghost tour of downtown Fredericksburg.
- The next RISE event will focus on Time Management.

e. Diversity Peer Educators/Farmer Fellows

The Farmer Fellows facilitated 20 Diversity and Inclusion sessions and have received training to facilitate student Safe Zone sessions. 2 Farmer Fellows will have monthly meetings with DEI Student Athlete representatives, a group of 35 student athletes who represent the different athletic programs across campus.

4. Old Business

- a. Safe Zone: Mindy Erchull (Interim-Director of the Safe Zone) shared the Safe Zone events calendar.
- b. Governor Youngkin has issued a mandate on Transgendered Students in Virginia public schools at grades K through 12. The mandate requires public school students to use bathrooms and locker rooms that correspond to the gender they were assigned at birth. In addition, students will need parental permission to change their name and the pronouns they wish to use at school. This mandate is one of several new state policies that effect DEI training and outreach.

Marisa shared several articles/links that discuss the mandate.

- An article from *The Hill* which reports that the school districts of Alexandria, Fairfax, Arlington, and Falls Church City, and Prince William will continue to generate and implement policies that affirm to a student's preferred gender.
- An article from the *Washington Post* questions the legality of the mandate.
- A Virginia public comment forum where you view how Virginia residents are responding to the mandate and post your opinion.

There have been protests at several high schools within in the region where students staged walk-outs.

Any impacted student may enroll in UMW in the future; therefore, the Committee found it valuable to discuss how the mandate may affect UMW. Several possible scenarios were mentioned, as well as some realities even our current students face.

5. Future Meetings: The new meeting will occur on Wednesday, November 2nd from 3:30 - 4:30.
6. Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 4:31 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Sarah A. Morealli