

**Joint Multicultural Affairs Committee (JMAC)
2021-2022 Year-End Report**

JMAC 2021-2022 Membership

FACULTY

Richard Breaux, CASSH
Elizabeth Crosby, CBA
Christopher Hathaway, CASSH
Astrid Lorena Ochoa Campo, CASSHe
Sarah Pember Giannini, CSH
Megan Strom, CASSH (Chair)
Louise Zamparutti, CASSH

ACADEMIC STAFF

Reg Hawkins
Kelsey Jones (Fall 2021)
Michele Overgard
Victoria Rosin (Spring 2022)

STUDENTS

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EX-OFFICIO (non-voting members)

Antoiwana Williams
Barbara Stewart
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This document serves as a final report for the project, activities, and actions of the Joint Multicultural Affairs Committee (JMAC) for the 2021-2022 academic year.

While the Chancellor did not give the committee a charge, JMAC supports and initiates discussions of issues important to the university community (Please see **Appendix A** for JMAC bylaws). Highlights of these are listed below.

1. Charges for this year

We reviewed the 2020-2021 annual report, including the recommendations provided by the previous year's committee. We agreed to follow the report's recommendations incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) values into First Year Seminar (FYS) 100.

2. Context: Campus Climate

Former Director of UWL Campus Climate, Amanda Goodenough, presented to JMAC on December 18, 2020 her recommendations for incorporating Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), social justice, and activism through several initiatives. These are included in **Appendix B** below. The JMAC committee for the 2020/2021 academic year addressed some of her recommendations, and included in their year-end report that the 2021/2022 could "Support the development of scaffolding of social justice/diversity and inclusion activities to promote and build campus citizen/campus community rooted in inclusion"; specifically, this report recommended that the 2021/2022 committee "Identify how we can incorporate DEI values into the first-year seminar (FYS 100); invite Timothy Dale to our meeting to discuss this topic." In light of the vision and mission of JMAC, coupled with UWL's strategic plan (see **Appendix C**), the committee decided to move forward with these recommendations.

3. First Year Seminar (FYS) 100

JMAC invited the director of FYS 100, Dr. Tim Dale, to our October 22, 2021 meeting to learn about the course, instructor preparation, and where DEI values currently exist in the course. Here is what we learned:

- The course is divided into modules representing different weeks of the semester; each module is a different topic
- People from across campus gathered to determine what should be included regarding Diversity and Inclusion
- Equity is an embedded concept in the class
- Week 4 includes a "Belonging" video featuring UWL students
- Week 8 focuses on Diversity on a College Campus
 - Focuses on why the university has diversity and inclusion as part of the mission; includes inclusive excellence material
 - Includes a "Diversity Matters" video that does not feature UWL students

Dr. Dale said that he was open to receiving feedback on incorporating DEI values into FYS 100.

3a. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

FYS 100 currently has the following Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs):

1. Examine enduring questions and how they may be studied
2. Participate effectively in class discussions and collaborative projects
3. Employ strategies that contribute to success in college
4. Explain the purposes and value of a liberal arts education

JMAC noticed that there are no SLOs addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Thus, we created the following SLO to address these values based on what peer and aspirant institutions do in similar first-year student courses (see **Appendix D**):

Describe how one or more of your identities (for example, racial, gender, sexual, class, linguistic, or ability-related identities*) intersect with lived experiences of inclusion and exclusion.

**One or multiple of the identities we've listed here – not all.*

3b. Assessment of new SLO

Given that course SLOs must be assessed in some way, JMAC created an essay prompt for the “Belonging” module and two essay options as a final FYS 100 assessment:

Possible assessment for the “Belonging” module

How will an increased understanding of diversity and individual differences (for example, racial, gender, sexual, class, linguistic, or ability-related identities*) help you in your life and career?

**One or multiple of the identities we've listed here – not all.*

Possible final assessment for FYS 100

Option 1: Imagine you are writing a survival guide for incoming college students. Building on your experiences in this course and other courses you are taking, what strategies, lessons, or advice would you include in your guide? Why would you include them? How do your suggestions connect to one another? To what extent have you followed your own advice and where might you make improvements in the future?

Option 2: Imagine you are writing a survival guide for incoming college students. Building on your experiences in this course and other courses you are taking, what strategies, lessons, or advice would you include in your guide? Who is your guide written for? Who is visible in your guide? Who is invisible?

3c. Instructor training to teach to new SLO and assessment

Finally, JMAC discussed the importance of preparing all FYS instructors to address DEI values. In this light, we invited Dr. Kate Parker, the Interim Director of the Institute for Social Justice,

CATL Inclusive Teaching Specialist, and Chair of the UWL English Department to our March 2, 2022 meeting. She offered valuable feedback regarding our proposed SLO and assessment essays (which is reflected in the final versions above), and also with regards to faculty training for the FYS. She expressed her willingness to collaborate with CATL to create this kind of training if it were something the FYS steering committee was interested in. JMAC concluded, based on Dr. Parker's input, that DEI values need not be the focus on the instructor's materials in FYS 100; rather, they should be embedded in all aspects of the course.

3d. Reactions and feedback to JMAC recommendations

Following our March 2, 2022 meeting, JMAC's chair, Dr. Megan Strom, contacted Dr. Dale to offer him updates on our progress regarding the incorporation of DEI values into FYS 100. Dr. Strom sent an email to Dr. Dale with JMAC's final recommendations on April 8, 2022. Provost Morgan then requested a meeting with Drs. Dale, Parker, and Strom to discuss these final recommendations. This is the feedback from Provost Morgan and Drs. Dale and Parker from the April 20, 2022 meeting:

- FYS 100 is in a difficult position in that some see it as a “captive audience”; the director receives numerous requests from people across campus to include their information in the class; it is not possible to accommodate all of these requests
- FYS 100 cannot adequately cover DEI values due to time restrictions and would not do justice to these values by doing a cursory “nod” to them and moving on to the next topic
- FYS 100 instructors are not likely able to do justice to this kind of teaching in the sense that one single training will not prepare them to handle sensitive conversations in the classroom; it is important to not do more damage to students by taking on more than the instructor is prepared to do
 - Dr. Parker cited research that says that doing **no** DEI work in the classroom is better than claiming it will be a component of the course and covering it poorly / inadequately
- FYS 100, a credit-bearing course, should not cover the same SLOs that an entire General Education category covers; people might wonder why the General Education category exists if the SLO is covered in FYS 100
- Curriculum is to be determined by the faculty; complications of JMAC being a committee comprised of faculty, staff, and students
- Dr. Dale has already reworked the diversity module of FYS 100 for Fall 2022
- Provost Morgan is concerned about the optics of FYS 100 not being able to incorporate JMAC's current recommendations

In short, it does not appear that Dr. Dale, in his capacity as the director of FYS 100 and in conversation with Provost Morgan, will incorporate any of JMAC's suggestions this year.

4. JMAC recommendations for 2022/2023 academic year

The 2021 Campus Climate survey results that the Center for Transformative Justice presented in Spring 2022 are important reminders of why JMAC, and, indeed, other organizations at UWL, must continue promoting equity and diversity. Overarching findings from the survey are that

underrepresented students do not perceive a strong institutional commitment to diversity, and that there is a concern about a sense of belonging reported by underrepresented students (please see the full report [here](#)). For this reason, the committee offers the following recommendations for the 2022/2023 committee:

1. Serve as an advisory group for the inclusion of DEI values in FYS 100, for example:
 - a. though faculty training
 - b. moving the Diversity module to earlier in the semester, potentially as part of the “Belonging” module
 - c. considering “invisible” diversity and intersectionality
2. Determine role of JMAC vis-à-vis other UWL entities
 - a. This may require meeting with representatives from the Division of Diversity and Inclusion and/or the Institute for Transformative Justice, just to name a few
3. Make this role clear in documents / publications
 - a. For example, make sure JMAC bylaws match the statement from the Division of Diversity & Inclusion website: JMAC “Advises the Vice Chancellor for Diversity & Inclusion on the implementation of Inclusive Excellence, acts as an advisory committee to the Office of Multicultural Student Services, and advises the Chancellor of any racial/ethnic related concerns.”
4. Explore other possible opportunities to promote DEI values
 - a. Consider revisiting the 2020/2021 committee’s work on the Admissions essay prompts
 - i. Explore ways that the revised admission prompt could be used as an assessment tool to see how well UWL is meeting its pillar of D&I and its strategic plan (e.g., use it as a metric to assess students’ growth and learning outcomes related to DEI through pre- and post-responses).
 - ii. See if the second essay prompt could be used as a capstone question in the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) survey.

Appendix A

Bylaws of the Joint Multicultural Affairs Committee

The bylaws of the Joint Multicultural Affairs Committee (JMAC) at the University of Wisconsin- La Crosse (UWL) outline the institutional vision, the committee mission, the roles and duties, and the membership of the committee.

VISION

JMAC envisions UWL as an inclusive campus community that attracts and retains diverse students, faculty and staff, and where diversity and inclusion:

- are integral to the achievement of excellence;
- enhance the university's ability to accomplish our academic mission; and
- are prioritized through the commitment of human and financial resources.

(Adapted from <http://www.uwlax.edu/diversity-inclusion/>)

MISSION

In service to the institution, this shared governance body advises the administration on campus diversity, campus climate, and equitable outcomes for faculty, staff, and students of color. JMAC addresses the institutional barriers that prevent the full and equitable participation of faculty, staff, and students of color. JMAC uses the definitions of diversity, equity, and inclusion as [defined by UW System](#).

JMAC has an explicit and intentional focus on race/ethnicity rather than other elements of diversity. Committee members and the campus community recognize that we have yet to achieve equitable outcomes for persons of color. JMAC understands that improving the experience of domestic, international, indigenous, or undocumented persons of color benefits all UWL community members.

ROLES/DUTIES

While diversity includes several facets of identity and experience, JMAC is necessarily and explicitly focused on institutional barriers that prevent the full and equitable participation of persons of color. To achieve these goals, duties and responsibilities of JMAC include:

Assess

- Identify institutional deficiencies regarding campus-wide matters of equity and diversity;
- Solicit, study, review, and disseminate all available and pertinent information relating to equity and diversity, especially as it pertains to race and ethnicity;

Advise

- Advise, consult with, and make recommendations to the Chancellor regarding equity and diversity for persons of color on campus;

- Provide guidance to senior administration regarding campus-wide equity and diversity matters, including, but not limited to, equitable outcomes for students, faculty and staff of color (such as retention and graduation rates, campus climate data, retention and promotion rates), acknowledging the unique challenges faced by people of different racial and ethnic groups and intersecting identities;
- Provide annual updates to the Faculty Senate, Academic Staff Council, University Staff Council, and Student Senate regarding equity and diversity on campus; and

Advocate

- Serve as a resource to campus units that advance equity and diversity efforts on campus (e.g., Office of Multicultural Student Services, Campus Climate, Affirmative Action).
- Advocate for institutional support, including human and financial resources, for these units, in furtherance of the mission and vision stated above.

PROCEDURES

Membership of JMAC shall consist of seven faculty, three academic staff, one university staff, the Vice Chancellor for Diversity and Inclusion, Director of Equity and Affirmative Action, Director of Multicultural Student Services, and three students. Representatives from various campus offices and organizations can serve as non-voting ex-officio consultants to JMAC as necessary.

In the fall of each academic year, the committee shall elect a chairperson and secretary. The chairperson shall preside over all meetings and provide guidance to committee members in achieving the duties and responsibilities of JMAC. The secretary shall record minutes and disseminate materials as needed to facilitate the duties and responsibilities of JMAC. The committee shall report directly to the Chancellor.

The bylaws and procedures may be amended with a simple majority of the current membership. Any proposed amendment(s) shall be distributed in writing to all committee members, to be presented, discussed, and voted upon in a subsequent meeting.

Bylaws approved December 6, 2019

Appendix B

Original recommendation:

“Build and implement a mandatory 3-credit 2nd year seminar course focused on social identities, power and positionality, activism, and anti-racism. As stated in the Education Trust report (2020), “college graduates must be taught about systemic racism and how the work they do after college can disrupt these systems.” At UWL, this effort should span the entire academic curriculum, however, a foundational course is necessary for students to engage in critical self reflection of social identities, recognize the role power plays in organizations and systems, learn concepts and language to find their place in the world, and develop passion to cultivate a more just and equitable future.

This 2nd year seminar could be housed within a department like Ethnic & Racial Studies, to bring to the forefront an important discipline often relegated to the fringes. With two lead colecturers operating from a justice-oriented pedagogy (Dunn et al., 2018, as cited in Walker, 2018), the course content would be co-created by compensated adjunct faculty from within and beyond the UWL community, who have lived experiences with racism and activism, or proven track records of anti-racist resistance.

This course can follow the blueprint that allowed the current first-year seminar course to become a mandate, while modeling the structure of Educational Foundation’s discontinued course, Understanding Human Differences (EFN 205), which consisted of a 1-credit lecture with a 2-credit discussion. Just as the exchange of knowledge should take a decolonized approach within the discussion component, so too, should the physical classroom: chairs arranged in a circle to foster horizontal learning among the cohort. When all students engage in improving society, student activists will no longer be disproportionately burdened with the responsibility of activism.”

Source: Amanda Goodenough, “Student Activist Resistance in the Academy: Policy Memorandum”, 31 August, 2020.

Appendix C

[UWL Strategic Plan](#) (see “Achieving excellence through equity and diversity”), specifically:

- “Reduce gaps in first-to-second year retention between not-first-generation and first-generation students. The current retention rate of not-first-generation students is 87%.”
- “Reduce gaps in first-to-second year retention between not Pell eligible students and Pell eligible students. The current retention rate of not Pell eligible students is 86%.”
- “Reduce gaps in first-to-second year retention between students in the majority race/ethnicity group and students of color. The current retention rate of the majority race/ethnic group is 86%.”

Appendix D

Peer institutions¹ with similar programs

- [Appalachian State University](#)
 - developing creative and critical thinking abilities
 - cultivating effective communication skills
 - making local-to-global connections
 - and understanding responsibilities of community membership
- [SUNY College at Cortland](#)
 - “Understand and value new viewpoints (diversity, equity and inclusion)”
- [Rowan University](#)
- [University of Minnesota-Duluth](#)
- [University of Mary Washington](#)
- University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire: possibly the [Bluegold Living Communities](#)

(Peer institutions that **do not** have similar programs: Montclair State University; Salisbury; University of Northern Iowa; West Chester University of Pennsylvania; SUNY College at Brockport; Winona State University)

Aspirant institutions with similar programs

- [College of Charleston](#)
- [SUNY College at Geneseo](#)
- [The College of New Jersey](#)
- [Truman State University](#)'s Truman Symposium that is paired with a [Self and Society seminar](#).

(Aspirant institutions that **do not** have similar programs: James Madison University)

¹ UWL peer and aspirant institutions [here](#).