

**Joint Multicultural Affairs Committee (JMAC)  
2020-2021 Year-End Report**

**JMAC 2020-2021 Membership**

**FACULTY**

Yeonka Kim, CBA (Chair)  
Tisha King-Heiden, CSH  
Sarah (Giannini) Pember, CSH (Recorder)  
Christine Schwartz, CSH  
Megan Strom, CASSH  
Louise Zamparutti, CASSH

**UNIVERSITY STAFF**

Kathy Thoen

**STUDENTS**

Kyle Kum  
Meagan Rain  
Ian Carroll

**EX-OFFICIO (non-voting members)**

Antoiwana Williams  
Barbara Stewart  
Dina Zavala

This document serves as a final report for the project, activities, and actions of the Joint Multicultural Affairs Committee (JMAC) for the 2020-2021 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 the updated Bylaws of JMAC from the previous year's committee). Highlights of these are listed below.

**1. Charges for this year:** We reviewed the 2019-2020 annual report, including the recommendations provided by the previous year's committee. We identified areas to pursue this year and added new agendas based on our discussion throughout the year.

*Note.* All the meetings were virtually held on Webex and recorded for the members who couldn't attend.

- a. Follow up of the diversity training module as needed
- b. Continue to collaborate with the SEI Committee
- c. Hold a panel discussion JMAC planned in Social Justice Week last year
- d. Collaborate with Diversity and Inclusion (D&I, message from Chancellor)
- e. Identify other areas we can pursue for this year

**2. Diversity training:** We checked the status of diversity training with the D&I office. Barbara shared feedback from students and equity liaisons with JMAC. Representatives from groups across UW campuses have been instructed to wait "until we know what we know" due to the Executive Order on diversity training. We discussed that we hope for an official response to come from the system level. The UW System was working to hire a chief diversity officer at the system level, who would likely be the one to push a statement through.

**3. SEI Discussion:** We discussed the previous year's collaboration with the SEI committee and the current status of the new SEI. Tisha checked to see if JMAC needs to provide any additional support with the SEI committee and updated us. The progress was stopped due to COVID-19, but Faculty Senate accepted it. Since the new SEI (Learning Environment Survey) was piloting along with the traditional SEI this academic year, we did not take further action to support it.

**4. Social Justice Week:** We planned to re-hold a panel discussion session titled, "Perspectives on SEI at UWL: Is this tool a valuable service or an ineffective relic?" that had been accepted to Social Justice Week (SJW) 2020. However, the event was canceled again. There will not be a full SJW until Spring 2022 because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We will consider participating in the SJW with a timely topic when it is held again.

**5. Collaboration with Diversity and Inclusion (D&I) and Office of Multicultural Students Services (OMSS):** Barbara, Dina, and Antoiwana updated JMAC on their DEI efforts on campus. Several major topics we discussed are provided below.

- a. Collaborating with HR and Student Services, pilot programs for mentoring underrepresented staff would be launched. JMAC also discussed that it would be helpful

for students and faculty. Sarah offered to provide additional support for this initiative from her previous experience on a mentorship program.

- b. Equity liaison 101 training/program was implemented. A training module on Canvas will be offered for the current and next year's equity liaisons in Fall 2021.
- c. Regarding the UWL policies workgroup, Dina would update JMAC if there are any areas JMAC can support.
- d. Barbara planned to work with the Native American Student Association (Meagan Rain) so that the Chancellor can formally approve the Land Recognition Statement (<https://www.uwlax.edu/campus-climate/resources/land-recognition/>).
- e. More support for faculty/instructors to meet the needs of students with disabilities were suggested (e.g., tips/suggestions from CATL).
- f. We discussed inclusive hiring processes/practices. JMAC members suggested ideas including 1) reviewing the language of the job announcement concerning inclusivity, 2) working with departments (develop questions for the interview process, consider diverse committees, include AAO and legal aspects in position descriptions), and 3) collecting information for all applicants with information on their needs on support from the UWL campus.
- g. OMSS provided various supportive activities for students of color, undocumented students, those affected greatly by the pandemic, and seniors who graduated (e.g., financial resources, workshops focusing on health and wellness, videos and photo booth to celebrate graduation, career readiness).
- h. D&I collaborated with IComm to offer more events and activities related to DEI throughout the year, such as updates on Asian American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month. JMAC recommended integrating inclusivity efforts with the broader La Crosse community.

**6. Retention of people of color:** As a follow-up of the UWL large group equity liaison meeting, Yeonka (also an equity liaison of the Management Department) shared information on the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and racial distress (stress and trauma) on students, faculty, and staff of color.

- a. Support resources were shared and encouraged to share with departments.  
Counseling & Testing: <https://www.uwlax.edu/counseling-testing/outreach-request/>

**7. Campus Climate:** Collaboration took place with Amanda Goodendough, Director of Campus Climate, to identify relevant topics we can support for the campus. She updated JMAC on hate/bias incidents and made a presentation on student activism and recommendations on integrating DEI, social justice, and activism. JMAC members also reviewed her policy memo on those topics and identified two areas for further discussion: 1) Adapt UWL's Admissions application to put the onus of diversity and inclusion on every student and 2) Fully integrate social justice, activism, and anti-racism understandings into all orientation activities. See #8 and #9 for more detailed information on each project.

**8. Admissions:** Corey Sjoquist, Director of the Admissions Office, was invited to meet with JMAC and discussed possible ways to adapt UWL's Admissions application to put the onus of diversity and inclusion on every student. Corey provided an overview of infrastructure and

processes in admissions. He suggested promoting diversity and inclusion by adding language in the ‘welcome to UW-L’ letter and booklet. He also updated JMAC that all UW System campuses use the first essay prompt, but the second prompt is only used by UWL and UW-Madison. JMAC suggested changing the second essay prompt and provided a compiled list of sample questions to the Admissions team by integrating a part of Amanda’s proposed language as well (Christine Schwartz, Kathy Thoen, Kyle Kum, Louise Zamparutti, Megan Strom, Sarah Pember, and Yeonka Kim). A few major actions and the following discussions are provided below.

- a. The Admissions Office adopted our recommendations and updated the second prompt (see Appendix B). We also asked him if other UW campuses are working toward similar goals and essay prompts. The campuses have very different views regarding the application essay that range from campus leaders recommending eliminating the essay to UW-Madison and UW-La Crosse incorporating a second essay. Corey mentioned he did not expect the UW campuses would come to a consensus regarding the addition of a second essay prompt; however, he is encouraged that UW-La Crosse would be a leader in the UW System with our new second essay prompt.
- b. The Admissions Office is exploring an expanded publication provided to admitted students at time of admission. One topic they plan to consider for that publication is a reference to UW-La Crosse’s values and an extension of our second essay prompt.
- c. After we reviewed the new second essay prompt the Admissions Office selected, we discussed how the second part of the new prompt (“OR...” ) gives the option of not engaging with diversity, equity, and inclusion. We suggested changing the second option to better align with UWL values, eliminating the second question option, or making one question that integrates the two options to the Admissions Office. As a follow-up from Corey after Yeonka discussed it with him, he mentioned the new second essay prompt as shown in Appendix B would be used for this next application cycle without any changes. When JMAC convenes again next year, he is willing to meet with the committee to continue the conversation and explore opportunities for Admissions and JMAC to collaborate.

**9. Student Orientation Program:** The second project JMAC worked on was identifying ways UWL could fully integrate DEI, social justice, activism, and anti-racism understandings into all orientation activities. Yeonka collected information on Student Orientation Programs from Vitaliano Figueroa (Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs), Sarah Joslyn (Coordinator of New Student and Family Programs, Student Life Office), and Lilli Minor (Interim Coordinator of Student Wellness). The JMAC members reviewed the programs, including the new student orientation schedule booklet (See Appendix C for the 2019 version provided in person since the new student orientation was virtually offered in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic) and bystander intervention guide (See Appendix D).

- a. We found the new student orientation schedule includes Awareness Through Performance (ATP) and “How to Help a Friend” related to the DEI topics. UWL 100 Bystander Intervention Facilitator Guide provides sections on hate and violence prevention that seem to align most closely with what we do in JMAC.
- b. We discussed several options, including panel discussions, guest speakers about recent events/how to be advocates, and introductory information on DEI (by Campus

- Climate) during the orientation program. Also, we suggested using TV screens with phrases or questions, or anything else to emphasize the importance of these topics and how to be a good campus citizen at the beginning of the semester or regularly.
- c. Tisha updated JMAC on a conversation with AJ Clauss (Interim Direct of Campus Climate) about this topic. ATP will not be provided in Fall 2021 due to COVID-19, but it is planned for Spring 2022. We discussed how the student orientation program was well organized to welcome students and adding another activity might make new young students overwhelmed. They might also want to have the autonomy to explore opportunities to develop their relationships and find resources. A recommendation is provided below.

This year's committee recommends continuous collaboration with D&I, OMSS, Campus Climate, Admissions, and Student Affairs for next year's committee. We also suggest continued support for multicultural faculty, staff, and students during this challenging time. Some of the recommendations from this year's committee will carry forward for the next year. Below is a list of specific recommendations.

- a. Continue work on revising the updated second essay prompt with Admissions Office
  - Discuss a way to change the second question in the second essay prompt with Corey.
  - Explore ways if we can use the revised admission prompt as an assessment tool to see how well we as a university are meeting the pillar of D&I that UWL claims (e.g., use it as a metric to assess students' growth and learning outcomes related to DEI through pre- and post-responses).
  - See if the second essay prompt could be used as a capstone question in the NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement) survey.
- b. Support the development of scaffolding of social justice/diversity and inclusion activities to promote and build campus citizen/campus community rooted in inclusion
  - Identify how we can incorporate DEI values into the first-year seminar (FYS 100); invite Timothy Dale, First-Year Seminar Coordinator, to our meeting to discuss this topic.
  - Explore other possible opportunities to promote DEI.
    - i. Louise brought Dr. Paula Houston, Chief Equity Officer at University of Washington School of Medicine, who presented *Social Identities, Privilege, & Intersection* on campus. She can collaborate with JMAC to provide this opportunity to campus again.
- c. Explore how the UWL community might integrate inclusivity efforts with the broader La Crosse community for staff, students, and faculty of color.

## 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**

### **New Second Essay Prompt in Admissions**

“UW-La Crosse values diversity, equity, and the inclusion and engagement of all people in a safe campus climate that embraces and respects the innumerable different perspectives found within an increasingly integrated and culturally diverse global community.

Please respond to ONE of the following: How will your life experiences, commitments, and/or characteristics advance these values and enrich the UW-La Crosse campus community? OR Tell us why you are interested in attending UW-La Crosse and what aspects of the campus are especially important to you.”

## **Appendix C**

[\*\*New Student Schedule Booklet 2019.pdf\*\*](#)

## **Appendix D**

[\*\*UWL 100 Bystander Intervention Facilitator's Guide.pdf\*\*](#)