

Motion to Recommend JMU Expand Child Care Facilities on Campus

The James Madison University Faculty Senate

February 2019

WHEREAS: Multiple entities have researched and advocated for providing on-campus child care facilities. The JMU Administration has declined establishing a facility because of space limitations, other financial priorities, and limited beneficiaries for the cost. However, the Institute for Women's Policy Research reports that the number of student parents is growing in all regions and at all institution types. It estimates that student parents now make up 26 percent of the total undergraduate student body. The Findings and Recommendations of the COACHE Task Force (May 2017) note among JMU employees, "Dissatisfaction with child care policies and benefits has been an issue for at least 15 years." The COACHE Task Force emphasizes the potential benefits to various JMU constituencies as

- "Recruitment and retention of faculty, staff, and students with small children.
- Family involvement and enhanced connection and loyalty to JMU.
- Less absenteeism.
- Increased employee satisfaction.
- Increased productivity and availability of colleagues."

Governor Northam issued Executive Order Number Thirteen on June 26, 2018 that established the Virginia Advisory Commission on Quality Child Care and Education. The Commission's mandate is to "explore the feasibility of providing an evidence based early care and learning program for young children of state employees working on and around Capitol Square in Richmond." The Governor explains that

"State employees across the Commonwealth struggle with the access to and affordability of quality early care and learning environments for their children. Childhood is a time of development and discovery for parent and child alike. Having a reliable, safe, and nurturing environment where young children can grow and explore individual potential is key to a parent's ability to be a productive member of the workforce. In order to compete to recruit and retain talented young employees, the Commonwealth must support state employees' ability to access and afford early care and learning for their children."

The Center for American Progress estimates that 47% of Virginians live in child care deserts where there are more than three children for every licensed child care slot. Five of the ten largest Virginia state agencies by number of employees are public universities. Given their regional dispersion throughout the state and high concentrations of state employees, Virginia's public universities, colleges, and community colleges are uniquely positioned to help the State address the lack of licensed daycare while simultaneously addressing the needs of their employees and students.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED the JMU Faculty Senate urges the JMU administration to seize this political opportunity when the goals and needs of the state align with the goals and needs of the University to advocate for the expansion of the Commission's mandate to include public universities, colleges, and community colleges and for the state to increase its direct financial support for affordable, on-campus childcare facilities.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that JMU investigate interim solutions to this situation while the foregoing is under state consideration.