

## **Motion Regarding Negative Impact of Pandemic on Mother-Scholars, Parent-Scholars, and Scholar-Caregivers**

**Whereas** it is well-documented that COVID-19 is disproportionately and negatively impacting mother-scholars — and parent-scholars as well as scholar-caregivers more broadly — in multiple ways, taking a serious toll on their scholarly productivity, mental and physical health, and quality of life (CohenMiller 2016, Flaherty 2020, Kramer 2020, Minello 2020, Stanford University Office of Faculty Development 2020).

CohenMiller, Anna. "The Mother-Scholars' Work-Life Integration." *Inside Higher Ed*, 19 Sept. 2016, [www.insidehighered.com/blogs/university-venus/mother-scholars-work-life-integration](http://www.insidehighered.com/blogs/university-venus/mother-scholars-work-life-integration).

Flaherty, Colleen. "No Room of One's Own: Early Journal Submission Data Suggest COVID-19 Is Tanking Women's Research Productivity." *Inside Higher Ed*, 21 Apr. 2020, [www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/04/21/early-journal-submission-data-suggest-covid-19-tanking-womens-research-productivity](http://www.insidehighered.com/news/2020/04/21/early-journal-submission-data-suggest-covid-19-tanking-womens-research-productivity).

Kramer, Jillian. "The Virus Moved Female Faculty to the Brink. Will Universities Help?" *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 6 Oct. 2020, [www.nytimes.com/2020/10/06/science/covid-universities-women.html?fbclid=IwAR2plRa-8erYXY5j0rR1zVeGrBjPANOel\\_h0e2rEdHhsvMBVqwFr84YtoT](http://www.nytimes.com/2020/10/06/science/covid-universities-women.html?fbclid=IwAR2plRa-8erYXY5j0rR1zVeGrBjPANOel_h0e2rEdHhsvMBVqwFr84YtoT).

Minello, Alessandra. "The Pandemic and the Female Academic." *Nature World View*, Nature Publishing Group, 17 Apr. 2020, [www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01135-9](http://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-020-01135-9).

Stanford University Office of Faculty Development. "Gendered COVID-19 Faculty Experiences." *Stanford University*, Office of Faculty Development, Diversity and Engagement, 2020, [facultydevelopment.stanford.edu/diversity-engagement/faculty-networks/faculty-womens-forum/gendered-covid-19-faculty-experiences](http://facultydevelopment.stanford.edu/diversity-engagement/faculty-networks/faculty-womens-forum/gendered-covid-19-faculty-experiences).

**Whereas** there is a serious lack of childcare at a time when it is most needed. While the offering of child-minding services by the College of Education (COE) is most appreciated, the Young Children's Program (YCP) never opened in Fall 2020 due to major problems encountered in the Summer. YCP is still currently suspended, and after a nearly two month long gap in communication, a recent letter from YCP Director Dr. Reece Wilson, dated 10/28, stated that the upper administration is still in the process of "exploring the feasibility of a partial or full opening in January of 2021." While Dr. Wilson confirmed in this email that the program will reopen again, "when that will be is impossible to know at this time."

**Whereas** in a university-wide faculty survey (<https://www.dropbox.com/s/5fiu73j7kxpus6w/Child%20Care%20Survey%20Report.docx?dl=0>) administered by the JMU faculty senate in late February 2020, 366 faculty members, or 69.45% of those surveyed, indicated that it was "very important" (the highest level) to have "childcare services on or near campus" as an employment benefit. The next highest group (11.39%), which indicated "very unimportant," elaborated on their reasons for this choice in the qualitative feedback section at the end of the survey — with the primary factor being prohibitively expensive costs of childcare being currently provided at JMU, which made other more affordable regional childcare centers preferable. Multiple respondents indicated that if costs were lowered or priced competitively with regional childcare providers, they would have a much higher preference for JMU-provided childcare. Yet others indicated that their preference would be much higher for JMU-provided childcare than what they indicated on their survey choices if the program extended childcare to children between 0 to 2 years 10 months old and provided

year-round care. Note that this survey was conducted prior to the pandemic, and that demand for childcare provided by JMU has only increased since.

**Whereas** the JMU Strategic Plan Structure, goal 8A, states that “The university will support and seek to identify tools and resources to assist faculty and staff in achieving reasonable work-life integration” ([https://www.jmu.edu/jmuplans/\\_docs/Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.jmu.edu/jmuplans/_docs/Strategic_Plan.pdf)), and faculty have strongly indicated a persistent — and increasing — need for affordable, reliable childcare specifically, and overall support of faculty parents and caregivers more broadly in order to achieve “work-life” balance.

**Whereas** when one group of faculty and staff suffer specific harms (or shoulder specific burdens) disproportionately then the entire community of faculty and staff, and the joint mission to educate students, suffers.

**Whereas** in an open motion, “Motion to Recommend JMU Expand Child Care Facilities on Campus,” ([https://www.jmu.edu/facultysenate/\\_files/childcare\\_motion.pdf](https://www.jmu.edu/facultysenate/_files/childcare_motion.pdf)) it was clearly stated by the COACHE Task Force (May 2017) that among JMU employees, “dissatisfaction with child care policies and benefits has been an issue for at least 15 years.” The motion also cites Governor Northam’s executive order number thirteen (June 26, 2018), which strongly advocates for greater support for “state employees’ ability to access and afford early care and learning for their children,” arguing that the provision of such services is crucial for employee recruitment and retention purposes. While two and half years have elapsed since the passing of this executive order, the motion’s resolution to “urge the JMU administration to seize this political opportunity” has only gained more currency and urgency with time.

**Be it therefore resolved that** the administration is strongly encouraged to prioritize expanding and supporting childcare services, above and beyond those currently run through the College of Education (COE), by redirecting resources from non-academic sources to meet these needs. In other words, the administration is strongly encouraged to provide these identified “resources to assist faculty and staff in achieving reasonable work-life integration.” ([https://www.jmu.edu/jmuplans/\\_docs/Strategic\\_Plan.pdf](https://www.jmu.edu/jmuplans/_docs/Strategic_Plan.pdf))

**Be it therefore resolved that** colleges, departments, and academic units are also encouraged to support mother-scholars, parent-scholars, and scholar-caregivers among their full- and part-time faculty through creative and flexible approaches to teaching and service assignments during and in the aftermath of the current crisis. Such measures may include a one-year service exemption (staggered if necessary); fewer preps (teaching multiple sections of the same course); hiring or assigning work-study students or undergraduate TAs to help set up Canvas course shells, moderate online discussions, or other technical but time-consuming aspects of online learning; creating internal or college-wide research grants specifically designed to support summer childcare costs, or otherwise help parent- and caregiver scholars affected by COVID re-dedicate time to their research. Any measures adopted should be designed to support both full- and part-time faculty, and care should be taken not to overburden adjunct faculty caregivers.