

Faculty Senate Diversity Initiative

The purpose of this initiative is to involve faculty in addressing the problem of insufficient diversity in faculty ranks. This proposal provides a mechanism for faculty to help increase the number of diverse faculty who hold a teaching position at JMU or elsewhere. The initiative focuses on identifying students from underrepresented populations who have the talent (and in whom we can nurture a desire) to take up an academic career. This initiative is meant to supplement, not replace other diversity initiatives.

Initially, we will focus on programs in which JMU offers a master's degree so that JMU can play a bigger role in credentialing the student for a teaching and research career. The responsibility to identify and nominate candidates for this program will lie with departments. We want to protect departmental prerogatives in the identification of candidates while also increasing faculty diversity.

Here is the process:

- Departments identify undergraduate students from underrepresented groups who have the potential to take up an academic career. Departments nominate students for the program.
- The Provost's office reviews nominations. The Provost approves/rejects nominations of candidates for the program.
- If nominations are approved, students receive the following tangible benefits.
 - A grant that covers the cost of tuition for the master's degree program.
 - One of the existing compensated student work/study positions within the department.
 - The option to participate in any open CFI teacher/scholar training seminar the candidate elects to participate in.
 - An invitation to participate in the JMU Graduate School Thrive program.
 - Department help in gaining admission to a terminal degree granting institution.
 - After enrollment in the terminal degree program, an invitation to participate in JMU's Preparing Future Faculty program.
- If the nomination is approved, the student would typically receive the following intangible benefit.
 - Opportunities to do research and publish with existing JMU faculty during the Master's degree program. This can build research relationships that may continue when the student graduates with a terminal degree and is working for tenure.

This program has three main purposes: a) help students from unrepresented populations better understand their personal potential and career options, b) reduce the financial and career risk typically inherent in the pursuit of a terminal degree and professional career, c) increase the number of students from underrepresented populations who obtain a terminal degree and take up an academic career.

Whereas the Faculty Senate believes this program, in conjunction with other initiatives and programs, will help expand the number of faculty from underrepresented populations at JMU and/or other universities,

Be it therefore resolved that the Faculty Senate endorses implementation of the Faculty Senate Diversity Program described above.