

Jonathan Alger
Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Office of Vice President and General Counsel
Winants Hall, Room 402
7 College Avenue
New Brunswick, NJ 08901-1258

January 30, 2012

Dear President-Elect Alger,

Welcome to James Madison University! Because you have been a longstanding advocate for diversity and gender equity, we are writing to introduce our group to you. The **Madison Caucus for Gender Equality** <http://www.jmu.edu/caucusgenderequality/> updates the historic Faculty Women's Caucus that was initiated in 1973 to address discrimination against women in the campus workplace. In Fall 2011, dedicated JMU citizens gathered to discuss how we might reframe the activism of the original caucus for the 21st century. We have revised our constitution, changed our name, and identified goals and activities to guide us. Our mission is:

1. To raise awareness of gender issues across the university
2. To promote equal opportunities for leadership in offices, programs and units
3. To foster a family-friendly work environment through effective policies that not only address family leave, but child care, elder care, and partner benefits
4. To highlight exemplary policies, programs, practices, and individuals in higher education that represent enlightened approaches to balancing career and family demands.

Toward these goals, the Caucus has several working groups that seek to provide educational opportunities and create an intellectual environment supportive of gender equality and to advocate for university initiatives and policies that affirm existing practices and institute new ones. The Caucus reaches out to all full-time employees on campus, understanding that gender-based workplace bias affects women and men, staff as well as faculty. The Advocacy committee has initiated an investigation into best practices at peer institutions, a workload survey of JMU faculty and staff, and a professional development fund. The Dominion Lecture committee plans our annual lecture, which the Provost's Office supports; this year's speaker will be Joan C. Williams, Professor of Law at UC Hastings. And the Networking committee organizes social events for the Caucus members.

We would welcome an opportunity to discuss some of our projects with you when you visit campus this Spring. In the meantime, we look forward to collaborating with you to make the university a more pluralistic and diverse community at all levels.

Sincerely yours,

The Madison Caucus Steering Committee:

Meg Mulrooney, University Studies (Chair); Melissa Aleman, Communication Studies; Stephanie Baller, Health Sciences; A.J. Morey, Cross Disciplinary Studies; Kathy Ott-Walter, Health Sciences; Kathy Sarver, Charitable Planning; Shari Scofield, University Unions; and Maureen Shanahan, Honors Program