

Motion to Recommend Changing the Word “Gate” into “Entrance” on Stone Structures and Signs That Lead to the JMU campus

The James Madison University Faculty Senate

October 25, 2018

WHEREAS:

James Madison University’ vision is to be the national model for the engaged university and to instill in students a commitment to being citizens of the world. This is largely accomplished by three areas of engagement, defined by JMU as engaged learning, civic engagement, and community engagement. Each of these contribute to a focus outward toward the world, ideas, and community.

Indeed, within Community Engagement, JMU notes that we, as an institution, are

Fostering mutually beneficial and reciprocal partnerships, ranging from local to global, that connect learning to practice, address critical societal problems and improve quality of life.

The promise of an open and inviting community of students, faculty, staff, and administrators who are seeking to engage the local is unfortunately challenged by the erection of “gates” that, from a philosophical and lexical perspective, indicate exclusion and closed communities.

Driving by the multiple entrances to the campus, one now sees stone structures that proclaim, as an example, JMU’s Lake Newman Gate. The word choice is, as noted above, unfortunate and exclusionary.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Faculty Senate recommends that JMU consider changing the word “gate” into “entrance” on stone structures and signs that lead to the JMU campus. If we wish to invite the community into our world and the promise of a better tomorrow, we need language that promotes inclusion, not exclusion.