

## Motion to Uphold Academic Freedom

The James Madison University Faculty Senate

March 2022

*WHEREAS* James Madison University (JMU) is an institution of higher learning in a democratic society that is accredited by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) to award baccalaureate, masters, educational specialist, and doctorate degrees;

*WHEREAS* as a SACSCOC-accredited institution of higher learning, JMU protects and preserves academic freedom by being “fundamentally committed to the open-ended pursuit of knowledge and the unfettered activity of inquiry and debate” (JMU Faculty Handbook);

*WHEREAS* The Faculty Handbook affirms faculty rights and responsibilities and upholds that the university and faculty within it are entitled to academic freedom;

*WHEREAS* Faculty are experts in their respective fields and academic freedom protects faculty in fulfilling their responsibilities to the university and their particular academic unit, college, and discipline;

*WHEREAS* Recent attempts in state legislatures across the country have sought to limit the discussion of “divisive concepts” in American history and society in schools, colleges, and universities and make such concepts a firing offense and reason for weakening tenure protections, which directly infringes upon the mission, values, and governing policies of the university and academic freedom;

*THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED* that the Faculty Senate of JMU resolutely rejects any attempts by bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any matter, including matters related to racial and social justice, and will oppose any such encroachment on faculty authority and disciplinary expertise;

*BE IT THEREFORE FURTHER RESOLVED* that, to preserve the mission and values of the university, the JMU Faculty Senate urges the JMU administration and Board of Visitors to reject any attempt from bodies external to the faculty to restrict or dictate university curriculum on any matter and oppose any legislation in the Virginia legislature that infringes on academic freedom and its expression.