

# JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

## TASK FORCE ON RACIAL EQUITY

# WORKING GROUP

## AWARENESS & COMMUNICATIONS WORKING GROUP

### WORKING GROUP MEMBERS:

- Cheryl Beverly - Learning, Technology & Leadership Education, College of Ed.
- Alysia Davis - Director of Student Engagement, Honors College
- Barbara Hetzel - Associate Director, Title IX Office
- Kylie Mirabella - Alumna, Graduate Assistant
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- Hannah Robinson - Alumna, Former Employee
- Xaiver Williams - Student
- Kerri Wilson – Admissions



Charles May, Leadership Council

**TITLE:** Pipeline Program From Four-Year HBCU Graduates Into The Graduate School Admittance at James Madison University

### PROBLEM:

This recommendation addresses a three-fold problem: 1) Black people continue to be marginalized and shut out from opportunities they deserve. This includes access to education. 2) James Madison University needs to diversify its student population, which should be reflective of the demographics in America today. 3) JMU’s Graduate School deserves more resources and to be set up for future success as it begins realizing [the vision of its new dean](#).



Silvia Garcia Romero, WG CC

### RECOMMENDATION:

**The creation of a new program accepting recent grads from four-year historically black colleges and universities (HBCUs) into [The Graduate School](#) at JMU.** Specifically, keep the pipeline within the Commonwealth of Virginia, in an aim to meet the workforce needs of the commonwealth, by [partnering with any \(or all\) of Virginia’s five HBCUs](#): 1) Hampton University; 2) Norfolk State University; 3) Virginia State University; 4) Virginia Union University; or 5) Virginia University of Lynchburg.



Khalil Garriott, WG CC

For the purposes of this recommendation, the working group leaves it open-ended as to which of the five universities mentioned above makes the most strategic sense as a partner. However, we’ll point out that with JMU’s heavy and engaged alumni base in Richmond, Virginia, partnering with Virginia Union University (located in Richmond) could be most sensible.

*See following pages for The Rationale and Success Measures*

**RATIONALE:**

A collaborative approach between JMU and a Virginia HBCU would utilize the strengths of both institutions while also providing quality educational experiences for Black students. It would be [a mutually beneficial relationship](#).

Those seeking higher education at the graduate level deserve to have James Madison University on their resume/CV. In fact, [as TGS dean Linda Thomas said](#), “I think graduate education is the future. We can add the JMU brand to graduate education.” As JMU’s national ascent continues in earnest, the value of a JMU degree will rise. Its name cache will be more meaningful in the coming years, and that will increase the chances of TGS students becoming gainfully employed after finishing their studies.

Additionally, the more varied life experiences we all encounter, the better off we’ll be as people. After the “comfort zone” feel that [some undergrads at HBCUs describe](#), graduate school choice is a chance to diversify one’s educational experience and, if it’s right for their individual situation, to try something new. The Madison Experience would feel “new” to many who do their undergrad studies at HBCUs.

JMU currently has productive partnerships with two HBCUs: Howard University and Morgan State University, whereby fellows come to JMU for the [Preparing Future Faculty Program](#). Please don’t view this idea as “reinventing the wheel”; instead, let’s build off the existing PFF blueprints that have been successful with those two HBCUs. Even though both of those HBCUs are outside of Virginia, the relationships developed between our institution and theirs should be leveraged to our advantage. Build off those existing relationships to have our contacts at Howard and Morgan State connect us with people within their walls who can see this idea to fruition (i.e., their admissions offices, their registrars, their academic unit heads who can recommend their best and brightest in the classroom, their academic advisors who know which students want to attend graduate school, etc.).

**SUCCESS:**

The following are measures of success for this recommendation:

- With many HBCUs offering a small and intimate student experience, an opportunity exists to tap into JMU’s more expansive alumni database: more than 150,000 total living alumni around the globe. A success measure would be the total number (or percentage) of people who did their undergraduate studies at an HBCU, then came to JMU for grad school/doctoral programs, and then became JMU alumni themselves.
- Another success measure would be how many of these people leverage the existing JMU alumni network to find jobs after finishing graduate school/Ph.D. programs.
- Another success measure would be how much financial aid (and to how many students) JMU can offer to these grad students in the pipeline program.
- Another success measure would be ensuring that a certain percentage of HBCU grads are admitted into—and attend—JMU during each academic year.
- For JMU, such a partnership also would serve as a student recruitment tool for Black graduate students who are underrepresented. This success measure could be easily tracked by the Office of Admissions. Further, another success measure would be how many faculty members (among both institutions) [conduct research opportunities benefiting each university](#).
- After this “pilot program” launches, we recommend that JMU apply this same blueprint to other four-year universities with high incidence of racial diversity for the same type of engagement. That would be another success measure.