

February 21, 2023

Dear fellow JMU faculty member,

Recent and ongoing events at JMU (including but not limited to the *Hiring Guidelines* debacle, the related Faculty Senate *Resolution on Administrative Transparency, Shared Governance, & Faculty Hiring* the recent introduction at the Faculty Senate of the *Resolution Regarding Transparency and Accountability of A&P Appointments within the Division of Academic Affairs*, the *Resolution of Condemnation of Recent Actions of JMU's Provost*, and the results from the COACHE survey) raise serious concerns about the state of shared governance at JMU.

Shared governance forms the part of the bedrock on which faculty rights rest, because shared governance is intertwined with other fundamental academic values that are necessary for the free exercise of academic processes. An environment that is hostile to shared governance undermines academic freedom: it chills faculty speech by separating, silencing, and disciplining faculty who speak their minds. Shared governance is also intertwined with tenure, since the decline of tenure and the growing reliance on non-tenure-track positions, at JMU and across the country, reduces the number of faculty members who are free to speak their minds. So shared governance, along with the interdependent (non-corporate) values of academic freedom and tenure, must be at the heart of the university.

But shared governance at JMU is under threat from administrative forces that invoke managerial models of decision-making that – because they are incompatible with the core university mission of free and unfettered teaching, research, and creativity – are inappropriate in an academic community.

Advancing shared governance requires vigilance. It also requires a forum for meaningful discussions among faculty. Unfortunately, faculty conversations at JMU, and at universities across the state and country, are siloed. Too often, JMU faculty do not know what is happening across campus. Too often, we do not even know what is happening in other departments in our own colleges. Too often, faculty members, especially non-tenured and non-tenure-track, feel reluctant to speak candidly on official university websites. This lack of free, open, and widely accessible discussion is both a symptom and a cause of the unhealthy state of shared governance at JMU.

By way of dealing with this problem, the JMU AAUP is taking three steps. All are in keeping with the AAUP's mission, which is **"to advance academic freedom and shared governance; to define fundamental professional values and standards for higher education; to promote the economic security of faculty, academic professionals, graduate students, postdoctoral fellows, and all those engaged in teaching and research in higher education; to help the higher education community organize to make our goals a reality; and to ensure higher education's contribution to the common good."**

- 1) To facilitate and promote conversation among JMU faculty, discussion that is free and open to all of us, our chapter has set up a forum/discussion board at <https://aaupjmu.com/>. Check it out. Anonymous comments are possible.
- 2) We are hosting a [JMU AAUP Social/Discussion](#) on Friday February 24 from 3-5:30 pm at Pale Fire.
- 3) Because clarity on the nature of shared governance is vital, we have posted a short tutorial on the nature of shared governance on our website: [The AAUP wrote the book on shared governance](#)

Sincerely,
JMU AAUP

Questions/comments?

Email us at aaup.jmu@gmail.com

Visit our website at <https://aaupjmu.com/>