

ANNUAL REPORT

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY
POLITICAL SCIENCE DEPARTMENT
ALUMNI BOARD

2020-
2021



Dear Alumni, Students, Faculty and Friends,

As President of the JMU Political Science Alumni Board for the 2020-2021 cycle, it is my pleasure to provide this annual report of our activities from August 2020 - August 2021.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, we spent another year operating virtually as a board. All quarterly board meetings during this term were via Zoom and our programming for students and alumni was also virtual. We enjoyed a board of 17 alumni members, as we expanded the board at the end of the previous term. We're grateful to have excellent faculty participation from the political science department, a representative from University Advancement, and also student representatives.

The Board continues to execute on its mission in three core focus areas with committees formed around each: Student Outreach, Alumni Engagement and Fundraising. Highlights of the year included our new fundraising efforts for the Transfer Student Scholarship, our most successful Giving Day in support of the Washington Semester Scholarship, a robust virtual Alumni Day and other virtual events to engage students and alumni. Thank you to the many alumni volunteers for making this programming possible!

It has been an honor serving on this board the last several years and the last year as president. I look forward to continuing to support the efforts of this board and to watch how the programming evolves to meet the needs of students and alumni.

Very respectfully,

Jamie Lockhart, President
BA, Political Science (2008)

Alumni Engagement Committee

Chair: Kirsten Kazlauskas

On March 22, 2021 at 7 PM, the board held its annual, early career event: Next Steps: Strategies to Advance your Career from Fellow Dukes, a networking program for early-career JMU graduates seeking advice on the next phase of careers in politics, policy, government, non-profits, and related fields.

Given COVID, the event took place virtually via Zoom. The event consisted of 5-6 breakout rooms, each assigned to focus on a specific topic such as “Getting the most out of networking events” and “Navigating your career during a pandemic.”

Each virtual room was led by 2 established alums with the goal for participants to get to know each other and make new contacts. Participants rotated among all of the rooms so that they connected with all of the table leaders and discussed all of the topics.

Speakers included: Sierra Stanczyk, Stephen Gunther, Allison Skeer, Nicole Schlichter, Bennett Resnik, Christopher Mulkins, Angela Norcross, John C.K. Cosgrove, Jeff Sadosky, Sara Morgenstern, Michelle Woods Matthews, David Allen, Kenneth Gilliam, Jr, Adam Zuckerman, Brian Coy, Caitlin Van Sant.

While we missed hosting this event in-person, we found we were able to attract numerous excellent alumni speakers as a result of the event taking place on Zoom. Moreover, we opted to schedule this event on the eve of JMU Giving Day and used the opportunity to make a pitch for giving back to the university as the event closed just a few hours before Giving Day kicked off at midnight. We hope that this prompted a few additional donations from individuals who were less likely to engage with the university prior to this outreach. Either way, the timing was useful in that it garnered additional momentum and allowed faculty and board members the opportunity to highlight some key programs and initiatives.



**Monday,
March 22, 2021
7:00 PM (EDT)**



**Next Steps: Strategies to Advance your
Career from Fellow Dukes**

Are you in the early stages of your career?

If so, the JMU Political Science Alumni Board would like to invite you to participate in Next Steps: Strategies to Advance your Career from Fellow Dukes, a virtual networking program for early-career JMU graduates seeking advice on the next phase of careers in politics, policy, government, non-profits, and related fields.

Register Here: <https://rb.gy/gxtamn>

Alumni Engagement Committee

Chair: Kirsten Kazlauskas

Election 2020: Policy and Governing Challenges & Implications

December 15, 2020 7 - 8 PM

Co-hosted event with MetroDukes

After the 2020 election, we co-hosted a virtual roundtable discussion with the MetroDukes to discuss the policy priorities, challenges, and implications of the 2020 Presidential election. In a moderated discussion led by Dr. David Jones, we heard different perspectives from professionals affiliated with both political parties who have previously experienced a Presidential transition.



Their range of professional experiences and diverse points of view encouraged a respectful yet frank exchange of views, as well as insights into the process of the peaceful transfer of power. Although we had hoped for more robust attendee participation given the intense public interest around the 2020 election, we attracted approximately the same number of people who would have attended an alumni event at the JMU Washington Center. Given the political nature of the conversation and that some speakers were not keen to have their political affiliations advertised, we found that speakers were more likely to agree to participate if they were introduced to the audience during the event -- and not specifically named in the marketing in advance.

Finally, upon reflection, we experienced similar attendance challenges for both events from current students / early career alumni. When appropriately targeted and asked to share their experiences to help others, established alumni are generally keen to speak about their professional trajectories and current work. Although we achieved sufficient participation for both events to proceed and be successful, we found it difficult to reach younger demographics, even at virtual events with few barriers to participation. Solutions to connecting with this group should be further explored looking ahead.

Student Outreach Committee

Chair: Greg Bahou

Alumni Day: Friday, November 13, 2020

On Friday, November 13, the JMU POSC Alumni Board hosted its annual Alumni Day. The Board prepared multiple events bringing dozens of Alumni to talk about career opportunities and provide advice as students prepare to seek their first internship or job out of college. Over 30 alumni participated in sessions and nearly 100 students over the course of the day.

Due to COVID-19, all events were virtual via Zoom.

Programing was as follows:

- 9:00am: Government & NGO Career Panel
- 11:00am: Lunch Speed Networking
- Noon - 3:00pm: 1-on-1 resume review (20 minute sessions with an Alumni of student's choice)
- 3:00pm: Private Sector Career Panel
- 4:30pm: Evening Speed Networking



Registration was available on our website.

Student Outreach Committee

Chair: Greg Bahou

Student Mock Interviews: Wednesday, Feb 17, 2021

We hosted a Virtual Mock Interview event on Wednesday, February 17th from 10am to 4pm.

The committee created job requisitions for entry-level positions in three career areas: federal government, private sector, and non-profit. There was also an internship requisition for freshmen and sophomore students. The students applied to one of the mock job requisitions and then signed up for a 30 minute mock interview via Zoom.



MOCK INTERVIEW DAY 2021

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17
Slots from 10:00am - 4:00pm
Business attire recommended

PRACTICE YOUR INTERVIEW SKILLS WITH DISTINGUISHED ALUMNI!

INTERNSHIPS	FULL-TIME POSITIONS
Capitol Hill Internship	OMB Policy Analyst
Client Training Internship	Management Consulting
	Non-Profit Program Assistant

Register: juposboard.com/upcoming-events

Each interviewer was in their own breakout room via Zoom, and the moderator placed the students in the interviewers' breakout room. Students were paired with interviewers in the same industry as the job they applied to. The first twenty minutes was the actual interview, and the last ten minutes was for feedback/mentoring the student.



MOCK INTERVIEW DAY

ALUMNI BOARD

Fundraising Committee

Chair: Caitlin Havron



End of Year Challenge 2020

For our End of Year Challenge in 2020, we featured a new scholarship to support transfer students into the Political Science Department. It is a need-based award that assists students transferring to the university with their final two years of study.

The scholarship will cover \$1,500 of tuition for one year, and is renewable for one additional year. We were thrilled to raise \$10,014.54 for the scholarship at the end of 2020. Our original goal was a modest \$6,000, taking into consideration the financial hardships so many Americans are facing due to the repercussions of the COVID-19 pandemic. We reached that goal by December 10th and continued to push in hopes of providing additional assistance for transfer students.



Fundraising Committee

Chair: Caitlin Havron

Giving Day 2021

JMU celebrated Giving Day on March 23, 2021 and we were successful raising our greatest amount to date! The Washington Semester Fund received \$17,873 in donations from 131 gifts. The prior record for funds received was in 2018 (\$14,540), which we exceeded by almost 23%. Our board had a 100% participation rate with \$4,825 in total contributions.

One of the tactics we used was offering a challenge gift. The Political Science Alumni Board generously funded up to \$4,500 in challenge donations. For up to 90 first-time donors to JMU who give to the Washington Semester scholarship fund on JMU Giving Day on March 23rd, the Board's challenge will add \$50 to each first-time gift received.



"Increase the impact of your donation with a \$50 bonus -> and help us drain the bank by getting to 90 new donors! Tell your friends about this challenge. Give what you can, no matter what the amount, because every gift matters! GIVE NOW at <http://bit.ly/3rcsfMs> and then pick JMU Washington Semester in the Funding Designation dropdown menu on the top right of the page. Whether this is your first gift or not, know that your gifts today are making a difference!"

Additional Efforts

Texting Newly Admitted Students



In February and April, JMU POSC Alumni Board members texted newly admitted students to congratulate them on their admission to JMU and offer to answer their questions about the department. Here's a sample message:

Hi, this is {name}, a JMU alumnus {class year} of the Political Science Department. Congrats on being admitted to JMU! I would be happy to chat with you if you have any questions about JMU. I {majored/minored} in {major/minor} and now I work {in the field of ... / or / for [organization name with web site if appropriate]}. Let me know if we can connect or I can connect you with a student or professor.



Partnerships

In addition to partnering with MetroDukes for an event, our board sought out other opportunities to partner with fellow alumni organizations with shared goals.

Newly formed in 2019, the JMU Federal Dukes mission is to create stronger ties between alumni serving in the government, military or employed by its industry partners. We marketed the Federal Dukes "An Insider's View of the Federal Government: Tips and Tricks" event on January 12th and have been in touch about working together.

Over the last year, our board was also in touch with Paula Bowens, President of the JMU Black Alumni Chapter. A co-hosted event didn't work out for the last year, and we look forward to keeping in touch about working together.

Alumni Members

- Austin Adams
- Meagan Allen, Vice President
- Greg Bahou, Student Outreach Committee Chair
- Michael Comer
- Caitlin Havron, Secretary/Communications Director, Fundraising Committee Chair
- Donna Harris-Aikens
- Kirsten Kazlauskas, Alumni Engagement Committee Chair
- Tommy Keefe
- Ronny Lau
- Jamie Lockhart, President
- Aaliyah McLean
- Dave Rexrode
- Jasmine Rountree
- Judith Russo

Outgoing Members

- Jason Goodfriend
- Sean Lowry, Past President
- Jamie Miller

Incoming Members

- Chris Bast
- Gianluca Grignoli
- Josh Humphries
- Ricardo Piñeres

Student Members

- Sydnie Marshall
- Corey Coldren





What meetings looked like in 2020-2021

