SGA Diversity Ad hoc Committee: Diversity Awareness at JMU
Wolfe Street Communications
Christie Deane, Kimia Favagehi, Jaclyn Finn, Sara Hardiman, Mary Ross, Jake Ruefer
James Madison University, SCOM 461: Public Relations Campaigns

Background of Issue
The Diversity Ad hoc Committee, a branch of SGA that deals directly with issues of diversity on James Madison University’s campus, was founded in 2014. The committee “seeks to spread the concept of diversity by collaborating with various other student clubs and organizations on campus.”

The Diversity Ad hoc Committee is striving to build upon the organization’s reputation and presence on James Madison University’s campus. Presently, the organization lacks visibility and recognition from JMU students and faculty. Expressing dissatisfaction with the committee’s current situation, the Diversity Ad hoc Committee hopes to expand outreach and support from the JMU community through a diversity awareness campaign.

Research Questions & Hypotheses

- **RQ1:** What factors influence JMU student engagement with campus groups?
- **RQ2:** How do JMU students view diversity on campus?
- **RQ3:** What is the current level of involvement of JMU students in campus diversity-related groups?
- **RQ4:** What is the level of cultural intelligence among JMU students?
- **RQ5:** What communication channels do JMU students use most?

Methods

**Sampling:** Wolfe Street Communications utilized an online survey as well as focus group sessions to gather primary research data on the JMU student body. The survey was conducted online using a non-random sample of students. All research participants were readily accessible volunteers between the ages of 18 and 23. The first focus group consisted of three members of the Diversity Ad hoc Committee, and the second group consisted of seven members of the larger body of SGA. Member participation was requested based on organization affiliations.

**Procedure:** The survey was made up of 61 questions and was distributed using the SONA research participation pool and the JMU email system. The questionnaire utilized a variety of question types including yes and no, multiple choice, choose all that apply, Likert scale style, and demographic. During the focus group, six questions were asked that encouraged participant conversation on diversity and diversity-related issues on campus. All research questions were based on secondary research while cultural intelligence was evaluated using the Cultural Intelligence Scale.2

Results

- **RQ1:** 86.5% of JMU students are currently involved in one or more campus organizations. 1) Connection with other people (N=286), 2) Sense of belonging (N=222), and 3) Friends are a part of the same group (N=212) are the most important factors for students when joining an organization.
- **RQ2:** 45% of white students view JMU as welcoming to minority students.
- **RQ3:** 25% African Americans, 25% Asians, and 22.2% of Hispanics feel the same way. Females are more involved than males in diversity-related organizations.
- **RQ4:** JMU students report their level of cultural intelligence just beyond neutral on the Cultural Intelligence scale (M=4.74, SD=1.10). Of all the factors, cognitive, has the lowest mean value (M=3.77, SD=1.28).
- **RQ5:** JMU students’ preferred method of communication is Facebook. Their second preferred method of communication is the organization’s website.

Opportunities
- Prevalence of diversity issues in today’s political climate
- Widespread support for diversity awareness
- Success of similar diversity campaigns on other campuses
- Potential for partnerships on campus

Threats
- Lack of diversity on JMU campus
- Low moderate level of cultural intelligence among JMU students
- No longer considered a “standing committee” within SGA
- Non-minority students at JMU feel relatively unaffected by the issue

SWOT Analysis

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Positive message that unites students of all backgrounds</td>
<td>• Weak social media platform</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Relatively new organization (blank slate)</td>
<td>• Limited communication channels</td>
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<tr>
<td>• One of few organization of its kind on JMU campus</td>
<td>• Does not have widespread visibility on campus as a committee</td>
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<td>• Part of a larger organization (SGA)</td>
<td>• No formal research conducted by the committee</td>
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<td>• New and improved language for the committee’s mission statement</td>
<td>• Ineffective use of relationship with SGA</td>
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References

1. SGA Diversity Ad hoc Committee (2014, Oct 2). [Student Survey Results](https://www.facebook.com/groups/sgadiversityadhoc/)

Chart 1: Student Involvement in Diversity Groups

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involved (N=212)</th>
<th>Non-Involved (N=105)</th>
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Chart 2: Cultural Intelligence of JMU Students

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metacognitive</th>
<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Motivational</th>
<th>Behavioral</th>
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