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## R.I.S.E. Peer Mentoring Program Graduates First Cohort

As the first cohort of R.I.S.E. (Resources Inspiring Student Excellence) Peer Mentoring Program mentees prepares to graduate, we want to take a moment to highlight the accomplishments and successes of this initiative. The program began in 2012 as a direct result of extensive work and the strategic planning of a committee under the direction of Dr. Marion Sanford. Designed to assist first-year, underrepresented students in their transition to the UMW community, R.I.S.E. provides support to its mentees/mentors through academic and personal development workshops, community service opportunities, cultural immersion trips, and social activities. Ms. Greta Franklin, the associate director of the James Famer Multicultural Center and coordinator of the program said, "It's been rewarding to see the mentees from the first cohort of R.I.S.E. grow and develop as students. My hope is that the relationships they developed and knowledge they gained while participating in R.I.S.E helped them to feel more confident about their ability to be successful college students. I'm proud to see that the students are performing very well academically and socially. It's going to be a special moment to see them graduate in the spring." The success of R.I.S.E. is undeniable. Accomplishments include: increased retention rates, higher GPAs and more involvement of its members within the campus community, ease of transition into a college setting, overall increase in satisfaction of the UMW experience, and a greater sense of community and support. With tools gained as R.I.S.E. members, we know these graduating seniors are prepared to become productive citizens in their careers, communities, and world.



## 2016 Martin Luther King, Jr. Keynote Speaker



The Office of the President and the JFMC are proud to sponsor the 2016 MLK keynote speaker, Donzaleigh Abernathy. At the tender age of seven she joined her father, Ralph David Abernathy, for parts of the 50-mile march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama. Her father and Martin Luther King, Jr. were close friends and leaders in the civil rights movement. Ms. Abernathy witnessed the growing movement – saw the making of decisions and heard the conversations that shaped American laws and society. That upbringing gives her a powerful voice in today's discussion of race and equality. Along with being an activist and author, she's had recurring roles on television programs including, *The Walking Dead*, *Lincoln Heights*, *Dangerous Minds*, *House*, *24* and *Amazing Grace*. Ms. Abernathy has also worked for the Center for Disease Control's HIV/AIDS Awareness Program, Amnesty International, and for Artists for a New South Africa. Ms. Abernathy's visit and presentation will be Wednesday, January 20, at 7 p.m. in Dodd Auditorium.

## JFMC Hires New Assistant Director



We are excited to announce the new addition to the James Famer Multicultural staff, James Bland. Mr. Bland, the new Assistant Director of the JFMC, graduated from Longwood University in 2012 with a degree in Communication Studies and concentration in Public Relations and Organizational Communication.

When asked about what he's looking forward to while at UMW, Mr. Bland responded, "I am looking forward to working with students and the JFMC staff as we create a campus environment that not only supports and tolerates cultural differences, but one that also appreciates and celebrates the differences that make each of us unique." Mr. Bland stated his goals as the Assistant Director are to, "create opportunities for students to actively engage in the campus community, while supporting their academic, personal, and social development."

## Civility Series Promotes Respect for Differences

As part of UMW's on-going commitment to creating a more pluralistic, accepting, and safe community, various campus partners have created the One Campus, One Community Civility Series. This year-long series of forums will address issues of conflict resolution and civility, and will promote diversity among all members of the UMW community. So far the UMW community has debated the pros and cons of anonymous social media websites like Yik Yak, and pondered if American culture is conducive to the tolerance and acceptance of feminist ideals and principles. We encourage you to join the conversation and weigh in with your thoughts around diversity and civility at UMW and our greater communities, by following the hashtag: #OneUMW.



## Upcoming Fall 2015 Events

- Jewish Cultural Celebration Keynote Speaker, Rabbi Charles Feinberg: November 4, 7 p.m. — Lee Hall, 411
- Civility Series: "Cultural and Racial Tolerance: Whose Country is it?" November 11, 6:30 p.m. — Lee Hall, 411
- JFMC Human Rights Film Series Presents: "Heart of Sky, Heart of Earth" November 17, 6 p.m. — Lee Hall, 412
- Kwanzaa: December 3, 6 p.m. — Faculty/Staff Dining Room, Seacobeck Hall



Native American Cultural Keynote Speaker, Dr. Kevin Gover: November 18, 6 p.m. - Lee Hall, 411

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