

James Farmer Multicultural Center

ALUMNI NEWSLETTER

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JFMC Participates in Initiatives Supporting Mental Health

#UMWTogether & Outreach during COVID-19

When the national announcement of the COVID-19 pandemic occurred last March, leading to a fully remote learning environment, no one could have imagined the many life challenges and stressors that would come. Students, faculty, and staff experienced seismic shifts in everything considered normal, contributing to rising levels of anxiety, uncertainty, loss, and despair.

Adjusting to these many changes, challenges, and issues, the JFMC was committed to providing support and resources to help students cope with these new stressors that drastically affected how they were able to continue their education and cope with the rise of mental health issues. For many students, these stressors included feeling overwhelmed with remote learning coursework, issues with internet access, food and housing insecurities, financial woes, and uncertainty about the ability to remain in college.

To assist students, from April onward, we

- shared online articles and resources that provided valuable information on building resiliency and coping strategies to deal with the pandemic (e.g., [Experts Provide Mental Health Tips Amid Pandemic-Related Stressors - Higher Education \(diverseeducation.com\)](#));
- started a social media campaign that shared weekly motivational messages
- hosted weekly "Open Hours" chat sessions

With the start of the fall semester, the JFMC continued our outreach initiatives with the students. The JFMC began conversations with University partners in the Student Transition Program, Talley Center, Student Activities and Engagement, and Campus Rec/President's Council on Wellness, to explore other strategies for providing emotional resilience tools and resources to the student body at large. This collaborative effort led to a new endeavor, "UMWTogether," where we shared daily positivity messages, and activities that students could engage in that would allow for reflection and daily actualization of these new tools and coping skills

In addition to these initiatives, the JFMC was an active participant on campus-wide committees designed to address mental health wellbeing of the campus community. The JFMC team has also participated in several webinars focused on these topics. The mental health of our students and colleagues remains a priority for the JFMC. We will continue to explore and implement strategies to enhance wellness for everyone.

For information about upcoming events and programs at the James Farmer Multicultural Center, visit our website at students.umw.edu/multicultural or follow us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!



Share your favorite #UMWMultiFair Memories

Join us as we celebrate over 30 years of the Multicultural Fair at UMW. Throughout the week of April 5-April 10, we will be asking you to share some of your favorite #UMWMultiFair memories from your time at UMW. Please join us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

Giving Day 2021 #AllTogetherUMW

Last Giving Tuesday, you helped us raise over \$7,800 from 90 gifts. Help the James Farmer Multicultural Center continue to provide excellence in multicultural and social justice programming by joining us on Tuesday, April 13th and be #AllTogetherJFMC!

Go to givingday.umw.edu for more information.

Stay informed through our website and social media for updates on these initiatives.





James Farmer Legacy 2020 Centennial Celebration in Review

The James Farmer Multicultural Center is extremely honored to have participated in the planning and implementation of different events as part of the 2020 Farmer Centennial Celebration. This was a campus-wide, year-long initiative, led by co-chairs Dr. Juliette Landphair, vice president for student affairs and Dr. Sabrina Johnson, vice president for equity and access/CDO, to commemorate what would have been Dr. Farmer's 100th birthday on January 12, 2020. The theme for this celebration was "*Farmer Legacy 2020: A Centennial Celebration and Commitment to Action.*" Members of the campus and broader communities were invited to join in a period of reflection and call for action as we highlighted the life and legacy of Dr. Farmer and his significant contributions not only as a civil rights activist, but as an educator and scholar.

The celebration began with a soft launch that included the Social Justice Fall Break Trip from October 12 – 15, 2019. The goal was to travel the same route of the 1961 Freedom Riders from Fredericksburg (which was the first stop after they left Washington D.C.) to Birmingham, AL. A group of 45 students, five staff/faculty/administrators members, and 20 community members participated in this trip and had an opportunity to witness and learn more about the sites, history, and experiences of the Freedom Rides, and other significant landmarks and trailblazers of the Civil Rights movement, from a first-hand perspective.

In January 2020, the official launch of the Centennial Celebration included laying a wreath at the bust of Dr. Farmer in front of what is now called James Farmer Hall on the day of his birthday. On Monday, January 13, which was the first day of classes for the spring semester, the University hosted a birthday celebration that included remarks from University President, Dr. Troy Paino, the co-chairs of the Centennial Celebration committee, Jason Ford, SGA President, and Courtney Flowers, a student representative on the committee. Individuals who attended this event had an opportunity to respond to the questions, "What would Dr. Farmer fight for today?" and "What does Dr. Farmer's legacy mean to you?"



A celebratory wreath placed at the James Farmer statue for his 100th birthday celebration on January 12, 2020.

Other events that were sponsored as part of the celebration included a student-led tribute of the legacy of Dr. Farmer, a Farmer Film Series during the month of February hosted by the JFMC, various educational lectures by distinguished individuals, and an exhibit in Dr. Farmer's legacy entitled, "*James Farmer - In His Own Words, 1920-1999,*" hosted by the Hurley Convergence Center Gallery. There were several other events scheduled throughout the year, but the onset of the pandemic forced the cancellation of those events. At the end of the fall semester, Drs. Landphair and Johnson, along with Jason Ford, gave a presentation to the Mary Talks audience providing an overview of the year-long celebration. The title of their presentation was "*Farmer Legacy: 2020 & Beyond.*" [Watch the full version of this presentation on YouTube.](#)

We are very proud of the commitment, hard work, and campus-wide effort that was demonstrated to highlight and honor the life and legacy of Dr. Farmer. We will continue to identify and implement programs and activities that showcase his significant contributions to the Mary Washington community, as well as the country and world. **As Dr. Farmer once stated, "Words are not enough. There must be action."**

Join the JFMC for our Women's History Month Keynote Speaker: Dr. Mecca Jamilah Sullivan on Monday, March 22 at 6pm on Zoom.
[Register here for the Women's History Month keynote event.](#)