



JMU Task Force on Racial Equity

Athletics Subcommittee Recommendations - Part 2

Working Group:

Kevin White (*Co-Chair*) - Associate A.D. for Sport Programs

Catherine Crummett - Assistant Vice Provost Academic Affairs

Nakish Jordan - Alumna, Women's Basketball Letterwinner

Willie Lanier - Alumnus, Football Letterwinner

Michael Pineda-O'Donnell - Athletics Development Officer

Lisa Schneider - Director of Compliance

RECOMMENDATION:

Alumni Student-Athlete Summer Seminar

Problem:

JMU Athletics needs to find new ways to engage, utilize, and acknowledge their former student-athletes. As the Athletic Department transitions into the Sun Belt Conference and FBS Football, the support of alumni will be crucial. In order to engage alumni support, there needs to be action to promote a continued connection to JMU Athletics after graduation. The proposed opportunity affords alumni an opportunity to connect with their former sport program and engage with our current student-athletes and coaching staff.

Recommendation:

Our recommendation is a six-week sport-specific summer seminar that would entail a different alumni speaker each week. Each of JMU Athletics 18 sports would be expected to invite an alum to a conversation each week that would afford an opportunity for open discussion between current student-athletes and an alumnus who played for their program. The format of each session will include an approximate 20-minute dialogue on the student-athlete experience, followed by 30-minutes of extensive former student-athlete life/career experiences and advice. The final 10 minutes will be allotted for a Q&A between the current-athletes and alumni guest speaker. Each session can be delivered in person or virtually. Although each session is structured, an interactive dialogue between the alum and athletes is encouraged. The intent is that intentional and open dialogue will develop organically throughout each session. Affording the opportunity for our student-athletes to interact with individuals who had similar experiences is a critical resource. It is also a tremendous opportunity for our alumni student-athletes to stay engaged, share their story, and always feel a part of the JMU Athletics Family.

Rationale:

This program will allow JMU Athletics the opportunity to invest in their current student-athletes and connect with more alumni. JMU has 18 sports programs which will allow us to touch roughly 108 new alumni annually through this program. Over five years that's new engagement with up to 540 former student-athletes, affording JMU Athletics the opportunity to secure their expertise and knowledge towards cultivating donors and growing networks. The opportunities are limitless:

- Opportunity for alumni to provide insight on transitioning to the workplace
- Opportunity to become a mentor
- Opportunity to connect alumni to their sport program
- Opportunity to engage alumni in a different way that does not require a lot of time
- Opportunity to grow our donor base
- Opportunity for alumni to pass along skills and other knowledge they have gained
- Opportunity for alumni to serve as a valuable onboarding tool to a profession
- Opportunity for alumni to offer empowerment and encouragement

RECOMMENDATION:

Alumni Student-Athlete Summer Seminar

Success:

- Increase in alumni student-athlete experience
 - Mentors
 - Career panelists
 - JMU Athlete Network registration
 - Enhanced support for current student-athletes
 - Increase in giving
 - Increase in alumni event registration
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Example: Alumni Speaker

Willie Lanier, Jr.

www.linkedin.com/in/willie-lanier-jr-500a892/



Willie Lanier, Jr. is the CEO of Lanier United, a private diversified construction and real estate company. With more than 20 years of senior real estate development/ construction experience, Willie has participated in multimillion-dollar developments of student, luxury, senior and military housing, mixed-use, and single family properties.

He currently leads the charge to revitalize downtown Kansas City, Kansas with a transformational project consisting of apartments, fitness, commercial and convention center adjacent to the University of Kansas Hospital. Additionally, he has a development pipeline of over 600 apartment units between the Midwest and Mid Atlantic including a new off campus 380 bed student housing project near James Madison University.

During his time as a VP of Subcontractor Management at JE Dunn Construction, one of the top 5 healthcare builders in the country, he administered government contracts and programs, including DOD, DOJ, HUD and EPA. With a tremendous network and strong ties to community and political leaders, Willie has served as a construction lobbyist on Capitol Hill with a focus on transportation spending.

Willie is an active board member of the Greater Kansas City Community Foundation, Urban Land Institute - Kansas City, and on the board of the Hands and Hearts Auxiliary, the fundraising board of Children's Mercy Hospital located in Kansas City, MO. Additionally, he is on the board of Envision Lead Grow (Chair, Fund Development Committee).

Willie received a bachelor's degree from James Madison University and holds an Executive MBA from University of Missouri Kansas City. He was a member and Letter Winner on the JMU Football Team from 1986-1990.