

## News You Can Use

Welcome back for the Fall 2008 semester. The Office of Institutional Research recently conducted several research projects that we would like to share. We hope that what we learned from these studies can be useful to you.

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### PictureIt JMU

In 2006 the Office of Institutional Research began a qualitative research study of the JMU undergraduate experience by inviting 18 new freshmen to share their experiences using digital photography and in-depth discussions. It was a marvelous experience, as OIR learned much about freshman and their first year at JMU. A major purpose of this project is to help JMU faculty and staff to understand better what it is like to be an undergraduate at JMU. With increased understanding of how they change and their daily concerns we hope that all JMU faculty and staff can find ways to enhance their interactions with students inside and outside of the classroom.



We are now beginning the third year of the four-year study. The students will soon be taking pictures of their junior year experiences. How they have changed! The pictures from last year can be found at <http://www.jmu.edu/jmuweb/students/>. We will continue to collaborate with staff from several JMU offices to help us understand what the students tell us about their JMU experiences. We consulted with the Center for Research Studies (CARS) and the Institute for Visual Studies to assess the impacts of the study on

### If You Teach First-Year Students

- Most first-year students have two objectives: making friends and finding where and how they fit in, so don't be surprised if they are not totally interested in your class.
- Over half of the first-year students will change their major at least once, most of them during their first year.

the students and learn more about what they are telling us about JMU. In March and April, selected images taken by the students were featured in the Prism Gallery in the Festival. We plan to update you twice annually on what we are learning from these students.

At the end of last year we surveyed the students about their experiences so far in the project. The responses were very encouraging. The full report can be viewed at:

<http://pictureitjmu.pbwiki.com/PictureIt+Summary+2007-08> .

Below are some comments from the students about their experiences in the project.

“Our pictures can tell stories. We can show ourselves in our work without being in it. There is more to photography than you would think. PictureIt has been more than getting a small stipend but rather an experience to go outside of my expertise and listen and learn new things in something I am interested in but a novice in.”

“I’ve learned that a lot of us are going through the same situations and learning the same lessons. It’s been an advantage for me to meet up with peers that I don’t know entirely too well, yet they still seem to feel the same way I do on a lot of the parts of college, and it serves as a kind of gentle support.”

“I love interacting with the staff because not only are they really friendly and outgoing, their [sic] is a warmth to them where they genuinely want to see you and get to know you. I love how every time I see one of them they remember what I have said in previous meetings, in fact sometimes it is even stuff I have forgotten that I once said. Overall it has been wonderful working with them.”

### Alumni Employment Survey

Annually OIR conducts an employment survey of graduates within two months of their graduation and then two years after their graduation. The major focus of these surveys is to gain information about the types of employment they have found or graduate school

education they are pursuing. The survey also investigates how well they believe they were prepared by JMU for employment/graduate school and as citizens. Annually the results are provided to academic departments and students to help them gain a better understanding of what to expect upon graduation.

A searchable database of employment and graduate school attendance can be viewed at:

<http://oirsacs.jmu.edu/alumni/alumempl.asp>.



### Alumni Survey Highlights

- Seventy-nine percent of bachelor level graduates were employed full-time within two years of graduation with a median salary of \$42,000.
- Eighty percent were employed in a professional position, and 83 percent obtained the position within six months of graduation.
- Thirty-five percent were either attending graduate school or had graduated.
- The mean full-time salary (with 20 or more respondents) ranged from \$51,507 in Computer Information Systems to \$31,722 in Theatre & Dance.

Source:

[http://www.jmu.edu/instrsrch/statsum/2007\\_08/2007-08toc.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/instrsrch/statsum/2007_08/2007-08toc.shtml)

## Faculty Salary Peer Group

In June 2007 Dr. Rose, three vice presidents and two members of the OIR staff met with SCHEV staff and representatives from several State agencies to negotiate a new faculty salary peer group for JMU. The peer groups are used to set targets for JMU's annual faculty salary average. The Commonwealth's stated goal is to bring each publically supported institution to the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile of its faculty salary peers. The new peer institutions were approved by SCHEV in July.

Below is a list of JMU's new peer institutions and their salaries for 2007-08. These data are taken from the IPEDS annual Staff Survey. In 2007 the average peer salary, excluding JMU, was \$73,564 while the 60<sup>th</sup> percentile was \$76,875. JMU's average was \$68,192. See more peer information here:

<http://oirsacs.jmu.edu/PerfMeasures/peerAcademics.asp>

Institution	2007 Salary
Boston College (MA)	104,501
St. John's University-New York (NY)	94,941
Hofstra University (NY)	93,588
Loyola Marymount University (CA)	89,275
Fairfield University (CT)	82,877
The University of Alabama (AL)	82,063
Rowan University (NJ)	80,974
Marquette University (WI)	78,749
Texas Christian University (TX)	77,226
Bloomsburg Univ. of Pennsylvania (PA)	73,404
Duquesne University (PA)	72,800
Miami University-Oxford (OH)	72,643
Baylor University (TX)	72,185
Ohio University-Main Campus (OH)	70,383
Univ. North Carolina-Wilmington (NC)	69,926
Appalachian State University (NC)	69,073
Gonzaga University (WA)	68,253
<b>James Madison University (VA)</b>	<b>68,192</b>

Institution	2007 Salary
Illinois State University (IL)	64,311
University of Northern Iowa (IA)	64,134
College of Charleston (SC)	62,275
Eastern Illinois University (IL)	62,026
Western Washington University (WA)	61,076
Truman State University (MO)	57,884
University of Wisconsin-La Crosse (WI)	57,476
Univ. Wisconsin-Eau Claire (WI)	57,058
<b>Peer Avg. JMU Not Included</b>	<b>73,564</b>
<b>Standard Deviation</b>	<b>3,311</b>
<b>SCHEV 60th percentile</b>	<b>76,875</b>

## JMU Performance Measures

Change typically occurs slowly in higher education institutions, making year-to-year comparisons difficult. However, it is important to look for change as it can lead to important issues to address. The Office of Institutional Research annually monitors more than 100 separate measures of JMU's performance in 11 categories. Most of the measures extend back to the early 1990s.

You are invited to view these measures at: <http://oirsacs.jmu.edu/PerfMeasures/Index.asp>.



## Institutional Performance Standards

Over the years several efforts have been undertaken by the SCHEV and the General Assembly to

encourage accountability by monitoring the performance of Virginia's higher education institutions. The 2006 General Assembly adopted Institutional Performance Standards (IPS) that are used to "certify" that institutions are meeting important objectives of the Commonwealth.

<http://www.education.virginia.gov/Initiatives/HigherEducation/Restructuring.cfm>

Of the 25 performance standards, JMU is required to report on 22. At this time JMU has performed exceptionally well on all standards for which it is responsible and for which SCHEV has created measures. Last January Dr. Warner gave a PowerPoint presentation to the JMU Board of Visitors on JMU's performance. The PowerPoint presentation may be viewed here.

<http://www.jmu.edu/jmuplans/ips/bov0108IPS.pdf>

The State Council at its May meeting certified that JMU met all the financial and administrative standards and was recommended for certification. See Page 55 in the Council minutes to review JMU-specific data.

<http://www.schev.edu/SCHEV/AgendaBooks/2008May/AgendaBookMay08.pdf>

### Statistical Summary

For more than 30 years the Office of Institutional Research has produced a Statistical Summary of the most important information requested by members of the JMU community. Since 1995-96 the Statistical Summary has been posted on OIR's website. The data for these tables come from many sources and are posted as soon as they have been cleaned and judged by OIR to be official. Some data are available as early as August and some are gathered and reported in March. You are encouraged to view the Statistical Summary for updated information.

<http://www.jmu.edu/instresrch/statsum.shtml>



### Welcome Elaine Smith

OIR is pleased to welcome Elaine Smith as our office manager and to assist with the facilities inventory and the many questionnaires we complete annually. Elaine has many years of JMU experience and comes to us from the Copy Center on the west campus where, among other duties, she was responsible for checking the copyrights on coursepacks for students.



Please visit our website for further information. As always, suggestions and comments are welcome.

Thank you.

<http://www.jmu.edu/instresrch>