

1/22/26 Academic Affair Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

Welcome back! I hope you each had an enjoyable and relaxing break.

The Friday highlights email was so ready to get going for the Spring term that we're sending it out early!

This is the time of year that I review Tenure and Promotion applications, and I'd like to offer a tip of the Provost's cap to all those who submitted their dossiers this year. The breadth and depth of your accomplishments in teaching, scholarship/creative activity and service are impressive, and it's been a pleasure to learn more!

We've got a big semester ahead and you'll be hearing from me about the different initiatives, but let's kick 2026 off with highlights of some of your many accomplishments:

- A great start to the year! Dr. Doug Hochstetler, associate dean in the College of Health and Behavioral Studies and professor of Kinesiology, received the [2026 Distinguished Administrator Award](#) from the [National Association for Kinesiology in Higher Education](#) (NAKHE). This [honor](#) goes to a higher education kinesiology or physical education administrators who, through the application of administrative/managerial skills, has made significant contributions to the profession/and or related fields, both within and beyond the higher education community.
- Artificial intelligence in higher education continues to be a timely and popular research topic, as shown by Dr. [Chelsey Bahlmann Bollinger](#), associate professor in the College of Education, and Dr. [Ben Selznick](#), assistant professor in the School of Strategic Leadership Studies. They recently published "[Training Educators, Not Chatbots: Preparing AI-Responsible Teachers](#)" in [Forbes](#). The piece explores what higher education can and should be doing in the age of AI, particularly how educators can integrate AI into communication and literacy instruction responsibly. Selznick and Bahlmann Bollinger emphasize that teacher preparation programs should help future educators strike a balance: leveraging AI tools while preserving human connection, fostering relationships and exercising professional judgment.
- If you'd like to read the article and learn more, don't forget that [JMU Libraries](#) provides access to 60+ magazines at no cost to you (or your students). Visit the [JMU Flipster subscription page](#) and log in with your JMU eID to get started.
- Speaking of JMU Libraries, two recent books by JMU librarians demonstrate their expertise and leadership in information literacy. [Valerie Linsinbigler](#), assistant professor and business librarian, co-authored [Instructional Design for Teaching Information Literacy Online: A Student-Centered Approach](#). Professor and collection development librarian [Malia Willey](#) co-edited [Teaching Information Literacy by Discipline: Using and Creating Adaptations of the Framework](#). See the [JMU Libraries' news page](#) for more information about these books.

- [*Practical Assessment, Research, and Evaluation*](#) published “[Educational Measurement and Equity: The Evolution of Our Graduate Program](#) in their latest edition. The work was co-authored by faculty from Graduate Psychology—Dr. [Sara Finney](#), professor, and Dr. [Brian Leventhal](#), associate professor—and faculty from JMU Libraries—[Elaine Kaye](#), associate professor, and [Nicole Wilson](#), associate professor. The three-year project included the creation and evaluation of a faculty professional development course aimed to create a culture within an educational measurement graduate program that acknowledges the history and current practices of the field and supports faculty and students in using assessment and methods for good rather than harm.
- Assistant professor of Music Education Dr. [Rachel Grimsby](#) co-authored chapters in two handbooks recently published by [Oxford University Press](#). The first, “Re-emergence of Pre-pandemic Issues for Women in Academia: Music Teacher Educator Mothers’ Perspectives” was published in [Motherhood in the Music Education Academy](#). The second, “Music Education from the Child’s Perspective” was published in [The Oxford Handbook of Special Music Education and Music Therapy](#).
- Even if you’re good at collaboration, Dr. [Ray Enke](#), professor of Biology, may have you beat. His current project, [BioDiversity and Informatics for Genomics Scholars \(BioDIGS\)](#), includes a team of 150 researchers from dozens of institutions, including many students, who are working to map the soil microbiome of the entire United States.
- Their paper, [Unearthing Soil Biodiversity Through Collaborative Genomic Research and Education](#), announced the group’s preliminary activities in [Nature Genetics](#) journal last month. The work includes co-authorship by five JMU students, five former Harrisonburg High School (HHS) students, and a retired HHS Biotechnology teacher, all of whom participated in the project as part of an ongoing course-based research project Ray’s BIO 480. Advanced Molecular Biology Lab.

Make it your new year’s resolution to email highlights featuring yourself and your colleagues to provost@jmu.edu.

Sincerely,

Bob