

11/21/25 Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

Thanksgiving Break beckons, so I'll keep this short today. We had a good Board of Visitors meeting last week – we were able to share more about research and scholarship/creative activity across campus and featured the work of a number of students and their faculty mentors. We also got good feedback from board members on the strategic plan work to date. As a reminder, please self-nominate if you'd like to join in on [the Vision Teams](#) who will be the critical next step in this process, moving us from concept to concrete plans for implementation. Nominations will be open through 5 p.m. on Wed., Dec. 3.

Best wishes to you and your families for a restful and rejuvenating holiday. See you in December as we wrap things up for the fall term.

Here is some good news to take into the weekend and break.

- Dr. [David Hembry](#), assistant professor of Biology, and a colleague will be published in the upcoming [Encyclopedia of Evolutionary Biology, vol. 1](#). Their work, "[Biogeography of Interactions](#)," will be available in early 2026, but you can read the abstract now.
- Congratulations to Dr. [David Shonk](#), professor and director of the Hart School of Hospitality, Sport and Recreation Management, who co-edited a book that was just published. The second edition of [Policy and Governance in Sport Issues, Organizations, and Practical Application](#) provides a broad overview of the governance structures of sport organizations as well as policy issues pertaining to sport governance.
- A full circle moment! An associate professor in Health Professions, Dr. [Ana Abad-Jorge](#), Ed.D., MS, RDN, FAND, and alum Sarah Kobayashi (M '25) presented their recent research at the 2025 [Food and Nutrition Conference and Expo](#) meeting, hosted by the [Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics](#) (AND). They were also featured at the final conference session.

During the closing, they shared their professional stories, highlighting Dr. Abad-Jorge's mentorship and Sarah's success as a young professional. They also shared that in 2024, Sarah received an AND [Academy Foundation Grant](#) to support her master's thesis research – the same grant Dr. Abad-Jorge received years ago when pursuing her doctoral degree. AND created a [video you can view online](#).

- Dr. [Lori Britt](#), professor and director of the School of Communication Studies, co-authored [Facilitative Leadership: Building Capacity for Divisive Times](#) with Waveland Press. This book introduces a four-phase framework—self-awareness, intention, growth mindset, and responsive behaviors—to guide leaders in building dialogue and collaboration across difference. The volume includes twelve case studies demonstrating facilitative leadership in practice. Congratulations!

- JMU Department of English faculty continue to be recognized in the academic and popular press. Dr. [Sofia Samatar](#), associate professor in the Department of English, recently had her book *The Practice, The Horizon, and the Chain* featured in a [NY Times piece on books about Dark Academia](#). The book was also cited in the NY Times feature on the [Best Science Fiction and Fantasy](#) of 2024. If you'd like to read these or other NY Times articles, remember you [can access them at no cost](#) thanks to [JMU Libraries](#).

Thanks for sending in highlights for yourself and your colleagues. Please keep sending them my way, and the more details the better! Email me at provost@jmu.edu.

Sincerely,

Bob