

11/07/25 Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

Recently, I've been attending a number of presidential tour events where President Schmidt is meeting with parents and alumni. I've gotten to meet a number of folks, and I've been struck by their appreciation of your effect on both alumni and current students. While we sometimes only spend a semester with a student, the impacts of that experience can carry on for a lifetime. Sometimes, teaching at this time in the semester can feel like a bit of a slog: Please know that the work that we do matters both now and in the future.

I've also been thinking a lot about change, and I got the chance to share my thoughts with Dr. [Eric Magrum](#), an assistant professor in the Department of Kinesiology and faculty associate at the [Center for Faculty Innovation](#). We talked about change and the evolution of JMU in my 30+ years on campus in the most recent edition of the CFI [Faculty Lounge Podcast](#) – this is a really cool series (well done Eric and CFI!). Please let me know what you think.

On to this week's highlights!

- Frequent readers of this column may remember the [March 7 highlight](#) about an article on presidential transitions co-authored by Dr. [Raafat Zaini](#), assistant professor of ISAT. His most recent work – again co-authored with Dr. Kristin Tichenor – builds on their original article. “[The Do’s and Don’ts of the Presidential Transition Period](#),” in [University Business](#), provides a more practical lens, outlining specific actions that help institutions navigate a change in leadership while preserving trust, clarity, and long-term success.
- Also building on past work is professor and academic unit head of the Department of Political Science, Dr. [Kerry Crawford](#). Her new publication, “[Grappling with a Weapon: The Politics and Policies of Conflict-Related Sexual Violence at the United Nations Security Council](#),” began in 2024 as a book chapter slated for publication by the [United States Institute of Peace](#), prior to the institute’s de facto closure in March 2025. Despite the closure, the [Peace Research Institute Oslo](#) and the intrepid scholars of the [Missing Peace Initiative](#) found a way to release the planned book as published papers on PRIO’s website. Release of the first tranche of papers coincided with the 25th anniversary of the passage of [UN Security Council Resolution 1325](#) and the adoption of the [Women, Peace and Security agenda](#).
- Dr. Jonathan S. Jones, assistant professor in the Department of History, recently published his first book, [Opium Slavery: Civil War Veterans and America’s First Opioid Crisis](#). Published by [UNC Press](#), which states, “Drawing from veterans’ firsthand accounts as well as mental asylum and hospital records, government and medical reports, newspaper coverage of addiction, and advertisements, Jonathan S. Jones unearths the poorly understood stories of opiate-addicted Civil War veterans in unflinching detail, illuminating the war’s traumatic legacies.”

- A new book by associate professor of Education Dr. [Andy Markelz](#) presents and celebrates the many roles of a special education teacher through poetry, personal stories, and expert instruction. From [Bloomsbury Publishing](#), [Heart and Science: Teaching Special Education](#) highlights how successful special education teachers require heart, as well as the science of evidence-based practices, to provide services for students with disabilities.
- [McGill-Queen's University Press](#) recently published the first monograph by Department of History associate professor Dr. Colleen Moore. [The Peasants' War: Russia's Home Front in the First World War and the End of the Autocracy](#) is based on research conducted in Russian archives now inaccessible to foreign scholars. The text investigates how peasants leveraged their wartime service to negotiate with the state for improved rights and privileges and how they used this power to shape the contours and legitimize the authority of the world's first socialist state.
- JMU Libraries publishes the [International Journal on Responsibility](#) (IJR), an open access and peer-reviewed journal. Dr. [Diana Meza](#), assistant professor in the College of Education, serves as the journal's editor. The most current volume, "[The Spanish Language, Language Variations, Cultures and Responsibility](#)," is IJR's first ever semi-bilingual volume. This issue:

"reflects an intentional and profound commitment to linguistic inclusion, cultural diversity, and the shared responsibility of scholars to broaden the scope of academic dialogue beyond the boundaries of English. The essays collected here invite us to reimagine bilingualism not only as a communicative skill but also as a moral, social, and institutional responsibility."

"representa un compromiso intencional y profundo con la inclusión lingüística, la diversidad cultural y la responsabilidad compartida de ampliar los horizontes del diálogo académico más allá de los límites del inglés. Los ensayos aquí reunidos nos invitan a reimaginar el bilingüismo no solo como una habilidad comunicativa, sino como una responsabilidad moral, social e institucional."

I continue to hear that people enjoy reading about what is going on with their colleagues across campus. If you've got something to share from your peers or yourself, please submit it to provost@jmu.edu.

Sincerely,

Bob