

12/12/25 Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

Another semester has come and gone (well almost – good luck with grading!). We managed to get through exam week with only a small alteration to the schedule despite some marginal weather. We'll celebrate the graduation of almost 1,000 graduate and undergraduate students tomorrow, and the winter break awaits.

I'd like to offer a brief tip of the Provost's cap to a couple of events I attended last week. I got a chance to visit with the faculty members taking part in [ASPIRE](#), our new leadership academy for instructional faculty. We had a great discussion, and I want to encourage any of you that might be interested in taking on a leadership role to consider participating. The [Office of Faculty Success](#) will be seeking recommendations to include in the next cohort soon, so please let your dean know if you are interested.

Once again, I was able to enjoy the Holidayfest concert at the Forbes Center. This annual program celebrates this time of year with performances of contemporary holiday favorites. This year we got to hear the Wind Symphony and a number of our choral groups. If you missed the show this year, you're in luck: You can [view the livestream](#). Well done [Chris Cicconi](#), [Bryce Hayes](#), [Jo-Anne van der Vat-Chromy](#) and all the student musicians. Inquiring minds do want to know about Chris' sweater choice.

Let's wrap up this semester with highlights for just a few of your many accomplishments:

- The [Virginia Occupational Therapy Association](#) recognized Dr. [Amy Russell Yun](#), an assistant professor in the Occupational Therapy program, with the [2025 OT Award of Merit](#), its highest distinction. The award recognizes licensed occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants for outstanding contributions to the profession and is given for significant work in occupational therapy scholarship, education, and/or professional practice.

The [announcement](#) from VOTA stated, in part, "Dr. Russell Yun exemplifies excellence in education, scholarship, leadership, and community engagement. An active member of both VOTA and AOTA, she advances the profession through ongoing scholarship, presentations, and committee service, including her role on the VOTA Scope of Practice Committee." The awards committee also recognized her community collaborations and research in mindfulness, self-compassion, and co-occupations that reflect her commitment to wellness and inclusion.

- School of Communication Studies assistant professor Dr. [Ebenezer Aidoo](#) saw his co-authored article "[Economic Implications of AI on Media Industries: A Systematic Review](#)" published in the last issue of [Diginomics](#), an international, peer-reviewed journal that explores the transformative impact of digital technologies on business models, economic structures and organizational practices.
- At the 25th [Anniversary of Detachment 890 Celebration](#), Dean [Mark L'Esperance](#) accepted an award on behalf of the College of Education for their long-time support of

the [Air Force ROTC](#) at JMU. The guest speaker was Major General David Gaedecke, prior Vice Commander of 16th Air Force (Air Force Cyber) and JMU class of '92 alum.

- Associate professors and instructional designers in JMU Libraries [Nicole Wilson](#) and [Elaine Kaye](#) recently received international recognition for their work. They co-authored a chapter in [Pedagogy Opened: Innovative Theory and Practice](#) that earned an award for [excellence in open education](#). Check out the [JMU Libraries' news page](#) for more about the book and award.

You can send highlights for yourself and your colleagues even during the break by emailing provost@jmu.edu.

All the best to you and your families for the holidays. I hope you can find time for rest, rejuvenation and celebration. See you in 2026!

Sincerely,

Bob