

12/6/24 Academic Affairs Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

As we bring this semester to its crescendo, I want to thank you for the great work you've done throughout the semester. I know we'll finish with a flourish (even surviving slightly chillier East Campus!).

- College of Business faculty are tying their research to practice. Associate Professor of Marketing [Dr. Janna Parker](#) took part in a webinar titled "Social Media Platform Bans of Direct Selling: What Consumers Think," which was devoted to the collaborative research among Janna and colleagues at the University of Texas at Tyler and St. Edward's University. The research was funded by a \$5,000 grant from the [Direct Selling Association's \(DSA\) educational foundation](#) (DSEF) and focused on consumers' perceptions of a given platform's power when companies and business models are excluded from it. Janna and her co-authors also have a paper accepted on the topic at the upcoming American Marketing Association Winter Educator's Conference and have been invited to submit their research to the newly established, peer-reviewed *Journal of Direct Selling Research*, which will launch in 2025. The journal's audience includes members of Congress and their staff as well as other policymakers, state government/regulators, 4,000 company executives in the DSA membership and DSEF Fellows.
- Associate Professor [Dr. Heidi Pennington](#), from the Department of English, had a chapter included in the collection [Life Writing and the Nineteenth Century Literary Market](#), published by the [University of Edinburgh Press](#). The analysis in "[Biography in Bits and Pieces: Selling Ethel Dickens in the Periodical Press](#)" emerged from her ongoing book project on the life and work of literary typist and playwright Ethel Kate Dickens. A review of the book by scholar David Amigoni describes it as "An original, important new collection, bringing together some of the most distinguished scholars of Victorian life writing."
- Two senior members of the College of Business faculty—[Dr. Bill Ritchie](#), CSX Professor of Business Management, and [Dr. Bob Richardson](#), Associate Professor in the School of Accounting—recently published a paper in the form of an experiential exercise in which students are provided with opportunities to learn how accounting and audit practices can be augmented using Geographic Information Systems (GIS). "[Geographic Information Systems: A Scavenger Hunt for Accounting and Auditing](#)" was published in the *Journal of Emerging Technologies in Accounting* and incorporated valuable contributions from noted geographer Joseph Kerski. The paper demonstrates to students how GIS can assist with basic tasks such as the collection of accounting data, verification of assets, risk assessment and internal controls.

- At the [Council for Exceptional Children's Division on Career Development and Transition](#) international conference in late October, [Dr. John McNaught](#), director of [Training and Technical Assistance Center](#) in the [College of Education](#), was awarded the [Donn Brolin Award for State/Province Leadership and Services](#). The award goes to an individual who has provided significant leadership and service in transition to a state or province.
- Assistant Professor of Applied Mathematics [Dr. Zev Woodstock's](#) article, "Splitting the Conditional Gradient Algorithm," was accepted to the [Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics Journal on Optimization](#), a top publication in the field. Co-authored with Sebastian Pokutta, a [preprint of the paper](#), which proposes a novel generalization of the conditional gradient (CG / Frank-Wolfe) algorithm, is available online.

It is always the right time to share teaching and scholarship highlights for you and your colleagues. Please email provost@jmu.edu so we can continue to showcase your work.

Sincerely,
Bob