

## 2/21/25 Academic Affairs Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

Well, it seems like the weather gods continue to taunt us! Thanks for your patience as we navigate what Mother Nature is pushing our way. Please know that we're working hard to keep the safety of faculty and staff at the forefront as we consider delay/closing decisions. The Ides of February are behind us and in fact, all of February will be behind us by the time you get next week's newsletter!?!

In the meantime, here's the latest interesting and noteworthy accomplishments from you and your colleagues. While I'm not supposed to have favorites, please allow me to bring your attention to the Simms School item below. I had a chance to be at the opening of that exhibition, and it was a wonderful convening of Harrisonburg and JMU around this unique place. It's great that some elements are now available digitally.

- Congratulations to Dr. [Ben Selznick](#), associate professor in the School of Strategic Leadership Studies. Selznick, along with co-authors Adrianna Kezar of the University of Southern California's Pullias Center for Higher Education and K.C. Culver of the University of Alabama on their recent publication. "[Sustained Professional Development for VITAL Faculty: Engagement and Benefits](#)" is the third report in a series focused on understanding if and why visiting faculty, instructors, adjuncts, lecturers, research and clinical faculty – VITAL – faculty do or do not participate in sustained professional development programs. This series can be helpful for educational developers and others who plan, lead and evaluate professional development programs and activities.
- Dr. [Stephen Gerome](#), instructor of Spanish in the Department of World Languages and Cultures, worked with his SPAN 435. Translation Strategies students to create a Spanish-language version of a 15-minute recorded narrative about Harrisonburg's history. "Rocktown History," which includes a recording and video, will be shared with Spanish visitors to the region.
- If you'd like more local history, check out "[Voices of Simms: Memories of the Lucy F. Simms School](#)." This interactive digital exhibit featuring highlights from oral histories was installed at the [Lucy F. Simms Continuing Education Center](#) in February 2025. Sponsored by the JMU President's Office Madison Vision Fund, the exhibit was designed and created by [Grover Saunders](#) from JMU Libraries, with video editing support from Mariam Ismail, graduate student in Communication and Advocacy, and Kirsten Mlodynia, JMU Libraries Digital Projects Specialist. Editorial support was provided by Department of English Professor Dr. [Mollie Godfrey](#) and Dr. Seán McCarthy of Montclair State University.

- As part of the SCOM 652. Environmental Justice: Advocacy and Perspectives seminar last semester, Communication Studies Associate Professor Dr. [Matthew Brigham](#) and two SCOM graduate students served as co-editors for an Open Educational Resources (OER) book titled *Introducing Environmental Justice Advocacy*. This collection, designed to support teaching environmental justice at the undergraduate and graduate levels, features original chapter contributions from seven graduate program alumni. The volume is now publicly available, thanks to the support of [Liz Thompson](#), JMU Libraries Instruction and Educational Resources Coordinator and early advocate of OER.
- Earlier this month, Professor of Graduate Psychology Dr. [Debbie C. Sturm](#), with a colleague from Oregon State University, presented “[Impacts of Climate Change on Your Clients and Your Practice: A Roadmap to Resilience](#),” an invited continuing education webinar. The webinar was sponsored by the [National Board for Certified Counselors](#) and the Policy, Advocacy, and Research in Counseling (PARC) Center. More than 1,200 participants from an international audience attended.

I look forward to receiving more of your teaching and scholarship highlights, awards and other accomplishments for you and your colleagues. Please email submissions to [provost@jmu.edu](mailto:provost@jmu.edu). I look forward to sharing more good news next week.

Sincerely,

Bob