

2/6/26 Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

Congratulations, we actually made it through a full week of classes. Here's hoping we can extend the streak next week...

I want to give a tip of the Provost's cap to the opening of the Arts at 131 Grace Street facility this week. If you haven't gotten a chance to see the new home of the [Office of Creative Propulsion](#) (thanks Kathryn Nusa Logan) and the [Madison Art Collection](#) (thanks Ginny Soenksen), you're in for a treat. Congrats to Dean Rubén Graciani and everyone in the College of Visual Performing Arts for this exciting addition to the arts on campus.

Start your weekend off with another treat: reading about your colleagues' accomplishments.

- The debut poetry collection of Furious Flower Visiting Fellow [Gbenga Adesina](#), "Death Does Not End At The Sea," has been selected as a finalist for the [PEN Voelcker Award](#), and it is the only debut book on the list. Other finalists include past winners of the Whiting Award, Guggenheim Fellowships, the Pushcart Prize, and the American Book Award. Nice work!
- The teacher/scholar relationship continues past graduation! School of Communication Studies professor Dr. [Toni Whitfield](#) and associate professor Dr. [Alison Bodkin](#) have a new publication co-authored with a former SCOM grad student. You can find "[#MeToo is still on the menu: Reflections and Reckonings on Restaurant Culture](#)" in the latest issues of [Food Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal](#).
- Congratulations go to Dr. [Andy Markelz](#), associate professor in the Department of Educational Foundations & Exceptionalities, as he begins his term as president of the [Teacher Education Division](#) (TED) of the [Council for Exceptional Children](#). With more than 5,000 members nationwide, TED is the leading professional organization for higher education faculty, researchers and teacher educators dedicated to preparing the next generation of special education professionals.
- Assistant professor in the Sport & Recreation Management program Dr. [Jonathan Oliveira](#) is building on his past success. Last fall, he founded the [Brazilian Scholars for Sport Management](#) (BRASSM) and recruited more than 15 Brazilian scholars in Sport Management who work in the US and Canada as initial members. This year, he was the PI on a grant proposal with colleagues from multiple institutions offered by the [International Centre for Sport Studies](#) (CIES). Their project, "Leveling the Pitch: Women's Pathways to Leadership in Brazilian Football and the 2027 FIFA Women's World Cup Legacy" was awarded the [FIFA Research Scholarship](#), one of the most competitive and prestigious sport grants worldwide.

When you can, please take a moment to send highlights – for yourself and your colleagues – to provost@jmu.edu. And look for more good news next week.

Sincerely,

Bob