

2/7/25 Academic Affairs Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

Happy Black History Month! I hope you'll be able to take advantage of the variety of [programming](#) happening around campus. You can also check out a repository of history resources, books, films and more in [Centering and Celebrating Black History](#), created by our colleagues in JMU Libraries.

Thanks for your efforts in getting the semester up to full speed. The volume of activity on campus is increasing and soon prospective Class of '29 students will be visiting. We'll hope to keep the weather interruptions to a bare minimum!

And now, more highlights you've submitted.

- A [research project](#) conducted this summer by faculty and students in the [Madison Acceleration Laboratory](#) (MAL) resulted in significant results! Scientific Coordinator at MAL and Professor of Physics Dr. [Adriana Banu](#) was contacted by the [James River Institute for Archaeology](#) Principal Archaeologist [Nick Luccketi](#) with a request to use the MAL photon beam to irradiate a suite of copper artifacts at the Elizabethan Gardens which were excavated from the "lost" Roanoke colony to determine if they were of European or native Indian origin

Dr. Banu, with support from MAL Lab Manager Dr. [Tilda Pendleton](#), worked with two junior physics majors to do the analysis. They were able to identify that a Copper band was most likely of European origin. Luccketi reported that "The site where the band was found contains only Native American artifacts, and therefore [is] evidence of contact between Raleigh's colonists and the Roanoac Indians. [...] So, the band seems to be a very key piece in the story of Raleigh's attempt to establish a permanent English settlement in the New World."

- Dr. [Kenson Hiatt](#), Assistant Professor in Graduate Psychology and incoming Program Director for the Clinical Mental Health Counseling program, was recently interviewed by the editor of the [Journal of Humanistic Counseling](#) (JHC), the flagship journal of the [Association for Humanistic Counseling](#) (AHC). Listen to Dr. Hiatt discussing his published article, "[Compassion-supported Development: A Humanistic Approach to Counseling Supervision](#)" in [this podcast](#).
- College of Education Associate Professor Dr. [Amanda Sawyer](#) and Instructor [Dan Sawyer](#) collaborated with three graduate students to create the manuscript "[Chatting with ChatGPT: Artificial intelligence assisting with Interdisciplinary Mathematics Lessons.](#)" The article was published in The Evolution of Technology in Mathematics special issue of [Maryland Council of Teaching of Mathematics' Journal](#).

- Dr. [Steven Woodruff](#), Assistant Professor of Engineering, oversaw a capstone project resulting in eight Engineering students being selected for [NASA's 25th annual Space Launch Challenge](#). Read more about the [hands-on experience the challenge provides](#).
- Congratulations to Dr. [Michael Gubser](#), Professor in the Department of History, who received a \$5500 [Franklin Grant](#) from the [American Philosophical Society](#) (APS). The award will support his research on the history of solidarity.

Please keep sending those teaching, scholarship and award highlights and other accomplishments for you and your colleagues to provost@jmu.edu. I look forward to sharing more good news next week.

Sincerely,

Bob