

3/7/25 Academic Affairs Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

Happy Friday. This message is coming to you from 5 miles up as I head to a conference. The perspective you get from high above the surface of the Earth is remarkable (yes - I'm a window seat junkie!). It's a good reminder to seek the bigger picture when you can and remember how everything is connected, especially in the current moment.

We'll give the weekly email a break next Friday as spring break will be upon us. In the meantime, please enjoy this week's collection of cool stuff happening across campus.

- You can now see parts of our planet that have never been shown before, thanks in part to Department of Biology Assistant Professor Dr. [Kelsey Reider](#). She served as a scientific advisor for a remote expedition featured in "[Americas](#)," a new documentary series exploring nature from pole to pole. Kelsey spent a month on a small patch of flat rock at 17,500 feet above sea level with a film crew to capture footage for a sequence in "The Andes" episode.
- Two JMU faculty members were awarded grants to create open textbooks through a [competitive statewide grant](#). Dr. [Sri Upadhyay](#), Associate Professor of Psychology, and Dr. [Chris Johnson](#), Associate Professor of Computer Science, each received a grant designed to "provide support for the time it takes to integrate existing open or no-cost materials into a course." See [more online](#).
- Associate Professor of French Dr. [Dorothee Polanz](#) was honored with the 2024 [Harold Jones Award for Best Essay](#) in the journal [Symposium](#). Her article "[From Myth to Meme: Reinventing \(Yet Again\) Marie Antoinette in the Age of Streaming](#)" delves into the 2022 Canal+/PBS/BBC biopic [Marie Antoinette](#).
- Institutions searching for new leadership can get guidance from Assistant Professor of ISAT Dr. [Raafat Zaini](#). He and co-author Dr. Kristin Tichenor provide recommendations for governing board members and senior leadership teams going through a presidential transition in the [University Business](#) article "[Presidential Turnover: How to Plan for the Inevitable](#)."

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

Sincerely,
Bob