

## 4/10/26 Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

Happy Friday. Apologies for a slightly later version of the Friday email: We wanted to put it after many of the inauguration activities. First, a tip of the Provost's cap to everyone that has been involved in those activities this week (especially the AI panelists from this morning – well done!). This is a rare event on campus (just my third), and we've been privileged to have interesting and enjoyable programming over the past several days. It was also great fun, especially for those of us with some JMU miles on our tires, to see former presidents Rose and Alger back on campus. It was a reminder of where we've been as an institution as we consider where we're headed.

As I mentioned last week, I've been thinking a lot about change. The events this week have reinforced that, as did my trip to Asia last week. Whether it's the tremendous changes that South Korea and Vietnam have seen over the last few decades or our own transformation here on campus, I'm reminded that while change can be hard and the process brings anxiety and risk, it also imbues organizations (and organisms) with energy and purpose. We're stretched to imagine something different, and we realize a lot of satisfaction when we make that our new reality. And then we do it all over again (Is this the human hamster wheel?).

We're on the precipice of substantial change at JMU as our new strategic plan comes into focus, and I suspect it will both be daunting and inspiring, in equal measure. It will also bring us into communion with the JMU faculty that took us from Madison College to James Madison University (Carrier), built out the East Campus and expanded our enrollments (Rose), and brought us to national recognition and built our focus on civic engagement (Alger). I wonder what JMU faculty and staff in 30 years will say about this moment in the institution's history?

Okay, back to Earth. Please enjoy this week's highlights from your peers.

- At the 2026 [Music Teachers National Association](#) (MTNA) Conference Gala, held in celebration of the organization's 150th anniversary, Dr. [Paulo Steinberg](#), professor of Piano, was recognized as an [MTNA Foundation Fellow](#). The MTNA Foundation Fellow designation recognizes individuals who have made significant and lasting contributions to the music profession, reflecting Dr. Steinberg's ongoing commitment to piano pedagogy and performance.
- Dr. [Matthew Brigham](#), associate professor in the School of Communication Studies, published "[It's All Fun and Games Until Someone Loses an Eye \(-Test\): On the Presence and Consequences of an Argument Scheme that Re-Works Our Notions of Evidence and Support](#)." The article, included in [Studies in Debate and Oratory](#), explores the "Eye Test," an argument scheme commonly employed in sport communication, which claims that a good faith watching of two teams or athletes, for example, provides its own evidence as to which is superior.
- The Learning Centers faculty members [Rodolfo "Rudy" Barrett](#), associate director of the University Writing Center (UWC), and [Dr. Joni Hayward Marcum](#), lecturer and digital literacies coordinator in the UWC, authored chapters ( [Ch. 12](#) & [Ch. 25](#) respectively) in

[Writing Centers and AI: Generating Early Conversations](#), published by the [WAC Clearinghouse](#). The clearinghouse is an open-access publishing collaborative, producing articles and books of interest to the writing-across-the-curriculum community as well as the larger writing studies community.

- Dr. [Nate Wright](#), professor of Biochemistry, and collaborators are having a great week! He and colleagues from several other institutions coauthored “[Delivery of Pleckstrin-Homology Domains Suppresses PI3K/Akt Signaling and Breast Cancer Metastasis](#),” available in the latest issue of [Advanced Science](#). In addition, a paper co-authored by Nate; Dr. [Kris Kubow](#), associate professor of Biology; several colleagues; and five undergraduate Biology students was published in the [Journal of Biological Chemistry](#). The result of their work is “[Obscurin A localizes near the cell membrane to modulate stress fiber dynamics and cell migration](#).”

It has been a whirlwind week, which is nothing new for us in April. I hope you are able to relax a bit this weekend and recharge for the push to the end of the semester. Be sure to let us know what you and your colleagues are accomplishing by emailing [provost@jmu.edu](mailto:provost@jmu.edu).

Sincerely,

Bob

