

04/17/26 Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

We had a chance to celebrate our Academic Affairs Administrative Professionals this week. I want to give a tip of the Provost's cap to all those that support us administratively. If you have someone that helps support you, please take the opportunity to say thank you. While Administrative Professionals Day is April 22, any day is a good day to say thank you.

The semester is coming to a crescendo, and I relish this time of year, with lots of opportunities to see the great work you and your students have done. From the Grad School and Honors showcases to unit and college events, I'm looking forward to learning from you and your students. This time of the year is not without its unique stresses (there's no crueller month in the academic calendar than April!), but it also has its own special rewards. And hey, April 15 is in the rearview mirror for another year...

And that's not all we have to celebrate this week. Read on to learn more about your colleagues' accomplishments.

- Drs. [Debbie Sturm](#) and [Stephanie Crockett](#), professors in the Department of Graduate Psychology, recorded "Curriculum After Crisis: What Disaster-Impacted Counselors Teach Us" for the [Association for Counselor Education and Supervision](#) (ACES). ACES includes [Home Study webinars](#) as professional development resource for ACES members to access archived webinars, earn CE credits for recorded trainings, and complete home study CE courses.
- The next president of the [Association of College & Research Libraries](#) (ACRL) is [Yasmeen Shorish](#), associate dean for research & scholarly communications and professor in JMU Libraries. ACRL, the national association for academic libraries and library workers, is the largest division of the [American Library Association](#). You may recall I recently appointed Yasmeen to serve as special advisor to the provost on artificial intelligence, based on her experience and research in AI. The [ACRL press release](#) cited among Yasmeen's accomplishments her work on the project team for "[Responsible AI in Libraries and Archives](#)," funded by an [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) grant, to support ethical decision-making for AI projects in libraries and archives (2022-25).
- Faculty in the Department of Health Sciences are researching how listening to music might help students with ADHD improve their academic performance. Dr. [MD Towfiqul Alam](#), assistant professor of Health Sciences; Dr. [Raihan Khan](#), assistant professor of Health Sciences; Dr. [Sojib Zaman](#), assistant professor of Health Sciences; and Dr. [Catherine Zeman](#), professor of Health Sciences, co-authored "[Music Listening While Studying and Academic Performance Among College Students with Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder](#)," published in [Psychiatry International](#). They determined one size does not fit all and not everyone can benefit from listening to music while studying. Also, depending on which music genre they listen to, there can be a negative effect on academic performance.

- This year's [Geohazards Technical Forum](#) was organized by associate professor of Geology and Environmental Science Dr. [Yonathan Admassu](#), who also serves as the director of the [Center for Engineering Geoscience and Geohazards in Appalachia](#). The conference attracted over 110 attendees from government, industry and academia, and 12 exhibitors from the geotechnical industry displayed their products. Of the 27 lectures and 10 posters presented, one oral presentation and all posters were delivered by students. One JMU undergraduate GES major presented a poster, while three others served as student volunteers.
- I'm delighted to recognize the two winners of this year's [Provost Award for Administrative Excellence](#), which was established by the [Academic Affairs Administrative Staff Advisory Council](#). [Marissa Zane](#), who serves as office manager for the Physician Assistant Studies program, and Department of Geology and Environmental Science office manager [Whitney Sites](#) were awarded for the teamwork, service, creativity and leadership they contribute to their offices. They were both also lauded for their commitment to professional development. Congratulations, again, on your well-deserved recognition!

Before heading out of the weekend, send some of your achievements to provosta@jmu.edu.

Sincerely,

Bob

