

4/18/25 Academic Affairs Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

I had a chance yesterday to attend our first JMU Remembrance Day ceremony, which recognizes students, staff and faculty who've passed away in the last year. It was a very moving event and a reminder that we should cherish every minute of our time on the planet. I hope that as you wrap up another busy week, you can take the opportunity to pause, take a deep breath and catch a moment to reflect. In the meantime, spring appears to finally have the upper hand and the Valley flora have put on their finest. Equally impressive are some highlights from your colleagues:

- Congratulations (and thank you!) to the instructional faculty who received and responded to the [COACHE](#) survey. JMU had a response rate of 54.1%, bettering the overall response rate for participating universities by more than 5%. We also outperformed our cohort and our 2020 rates. Thanks for contributing to this valuable assessment of faculty satisfaction. You'll be hearing much more about this as we receive results from Harvard this fall.
- Dr. [Alexa Quinn](#), assistant professor in the College of Education, and [Lauren Shifflett](#), assistant director for the Center for Economic Education in the College of Business, co-presented about teaching economics in elementary classrooms using the children's television show "[Bluey](#)" at the Virginia Council for the Social Studies Summit in Richmond. Their presentation highlighted examples and a market simulation lesson from their article in the peer-reviewed journal [Social Studies and the Young Learner](#) titled "Bluey-conomics: It's Not All About the Money."
- Dr. [Cheng Li](#), assistant professor of Integrated Science and Technology, is modeling the core values of being a teacher-scholar. Building on his background in microbial fuel cell research, Dr. Li is leading a group of undergraduate students [to design a stackable fuel cell system](#). Their research is part of a multi-university initiative funded by a \$7.8 million Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency grant. A student on the team appreciates this out-of-the-classroom opportunity because it "gives you a realistic sense of what a research career is like."
- Dr. Ed Brantmeier, director of global engagement research and special projects in the College of Education, was an invited member of the external academic program review team for the globally renown [Kroc Institute for International Peace Studies](#) at the University of Notre Dame.
- Over 150 undergraduate students, faculty, and staff from 12 accredited social work programs in Virginia and the Human Services program at Blue Ridge

Community College attended the 2025 [Rally in the Valley](#), an annual statewide social work student conference. The conference, which was established in 1980 by JMU and EMU, was hosted by JMU in partnership with Eastern Mennonite University and Virginia Union University and featured a keynote from Dr. [BJ Bryson](#), professor of Social Work and associate dean of the College of Health and Behavioral Studies.

Keep sending your – and those of your colleagues – highlights! I'd love to feature even more awards and other accomplishments, so email them to provost@jmu.edu.

Sincerely,

Bob