

April 24, 2026 Highlights

Subject: Academic Affairs Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

April is quickly threatening to leave us behind. I hope the last few weeks of the semester are going well. The Board of Visitors is meeting this week, and we were able to share two major accomplishments at the Academic Excellence Committee meeting yesterday. The board approved the revised Faculty Handbook and also had a chance to see the revised General Education framework.

We've had a busy year and gotten a lot done – thanks to each of you. Your review, comments and critiques have made all of our efforts stronger. Thanks!

I hope you enjoy this week's set of accomplishments.

- The Breakthrough Prize in Fundamental Physics for 2026 was awarded to the [Fermilab Muon g-2 experiment](#). Dr. [Kevin Giovanetti](#), professor in the Department of Physics and Astronomy, made important contributions to this NSF-funded experiment, which successfully measured a fundamental property of the muon, its magnetic moment. This precise measurement provides a critical test of our best understanding of fundamental physics and a vital constraint on any future insights aimed toward developing a deeper understanding of physics. For over 10 years Dr. Giovanetti and his students developed and built instrumentation for the Fermilab experiment, carried out data collection, participated in calibration and tested key instrumentation.
- Congratulations to Dr. [Ben Selznick](#), associate professor in the School of Strategic Leadership Studies, on his recent publication “[Navigating \(and Hopefully Avoiding\) The College Closure](#)” in *Forbes*. The article explores the significant academic, financial and emotional disruption students and families face when a college unexpectedly closes. Featuring testimony from JMU faculty members in International Business and Marketing and the School of Integrated Sciences, the article further highlights how closures can upend students' educational plans, sense of community and well-being, often with lasting consequences. The author and contributors argue that while closures may be unavoidable in some cases, institutions have a responsibility to manage them transparently and with a strong focus on student support.
- The Furious Flower Poetry Center is blooming! [Gbenga Adesina](#), Furious Flower post-doctoral fellow in Black Global & Diasporic Poetry, has been shortlisted for the [Griffin International Poetry Prize](#) for his work *Death Does Not End at the Sea*. His work also won the [Anisfield Wolf Book Award](#) Prize for Poetry. This award is the *only juried American book prize* focusing on works that address racism and diversity. Furious Flower executive director [Lauren Alleyne](#) was awarded a [Rome Prize for Literature](#) from the [American Academy in Rome](#). As part of the fellowship, she will pursue independent work within a transdisciplinary environment with her cohort.

- Student journalists from the Breeze and Breeze TV took home 25 awards for excellence at the [Virginia Press Association](#) annual [awards ceremony for journalism and advertising](#). Their good work is overseen by [Blake Shepherd](#), who serves as the professional PR Marketing Specialist for The Breeze, and [Brad Jenkins](#), instructor in the School of Media Arts and Design and General Manager for the Breeze. You can see the [Breeze's coverage online](#).

Don't let the rest of the semester race by without emailing provost@jmu.edu with accomplishments – your own and those of your colleagues.

Sincerely,

Bob

