

## 5/9/25 Academic Affairs Highlights

Colleagues,

We've reached final exams and it's time for the highlights e-mail to go on hiatus until mid-August. Please keep submitting your accomplishments to [provost@jmu.edu](mailto:provost@jmu.edu)! They will make delightful summer reading for us until we share them in the fall.

Thanks for reading the weekly missives and for your submissions and feedback. It's our pleasure to send these out every week, and I'm really like learning about all of the cool things happening across Academic Affairs.

In the spirit of going out with a bang, we're super-sizing the highlights list this week:

- Congratulations to Dr. [Ali Anwar](#), assistant professor of Marketing, for his election to the [American Marketing Association's \(AMA\) Sales Special Interest Group \(SIG\)](#) leadership team as their Vice Chair, Communication & Membership. The AMA Sales SIG is the flagship organization in the professional selling discipline and provides members with programs designed to enhance selling and sales management scholarship, teaching and practice in an inclusive and collegial environment. He will continue the group's mission of effectively disseminating Sales SIG communication by overseeing their social feeds to recruit new members.
- Professor of Art History Dr. [John Ott](#) published the article "[Not Acceptable to the People': The Racial Biases of New Deal Murals](#)" in the Spring 2025 issue of [American Art](#), the scholarly journal of the [Smithsonian American Art Museum](#).
- The [Geography program](#) in the [School of Integrated Sciences](#) hosted a [NASA DEVELOP](#) project during Spring 2025. A team of four, including a JMU undergraduate, worked on a 10-week project collaborating with the [City of Harrisonburg Public Works](#) entitled "[Assessing Land Change and Urban Heat Islands for Future Tree Planting in Harrisonburg, Virginia](#)". Geography assistant professor Dr. [Xiaojing Tang](#) served as the science advisor for the group. The team presented their results at a close-out meeting at [NASA Goddard Space Flight Center](#) and at a hand-off meeting at JMU to their partners at the City of Harrisonburg Public Works.
- The [Virginia Archaeological Technician Certification Program](#) has earned the [Society for American Archaeology's Excellence in Public Archaeology Programming Award](#) with its 25-year commitment to formally training volunteers in archaeology. The program is a partnership among the [Archeological Society of Virginia \(ASV\)](#), the [Council of Virginia Archaeologists](#) and the [Virginia Department of Historic Resources](#). This citizen science-based archaeology program reframes archaeological practice for the public. Professional archaeologists from Virginia's universities, agencies, museums and non-profits provide the required courses and training opportunities in laboratory and field work. The statewide program, which has 92 graduates and a current enrollment of 160, has successfully increased advocacy for cultural heritage and descendant communities, making archaeology more visible to the public. It is co-directed by Dr. [Carole Nash](#), Professor of Integrated Science and Technology and Geography, and Mr. Bruce Baker, a program graduate and

member of ASV.

- There is always excellent faculty-guided undergraduate research going on in the College of Science and Mathematics! Dr. [Chris Hollinsed](#), lecturer in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, recently co-authored "[Understanding Cation-Anion Ionic Bonding in Tetramethylammonium Salts: Insights from Density Functional Theory and X-Ray Crystallography](#)" in the open access journal [ACS Omega](#) with Chemistry student Abigail Taber.
- School of Media Arts and Design Associate Professor [Nefin Dinç](#) screened her internationally acclaimed documentary film "[Antoine The Fortunate: One Man at the Crossroads of Empires](#)" at Columbia University.
- Business librarian and assistant professor [Valerie Linsinbigler](#)'s co-authored book [Instructional Design for Teaching Information Literacy Online: A Student-Centered Approach](#) was published by the [American Library Association](#). Writing with colleagues from other Virginia universities, the text takes a learner-centered approach to designing online information literacy instruction. The authors offer scenarios, learning activities, examples, worksheets and more, using the classic instructional design model ADDIE to frame the process and the universal design for learning framework, the community of inquiry model, and asset-based pedagogy to address the social and emotional needs of diverse online learners.
- [Edith J. Carrier Arboretum](#) Education Coordinator [Katie Rankin](#) recently completed work to earn the status of a [Virginia Certified Environmental Educator](#) from the [Virginia Association for Environmental Education](#). Her capstone project concentrated on bringing learners to the arboretum as part of their [Meaningful Watershed Educational Experience](#), through which participants use hands-on methods to understand the relationships between human systems and natural cycles.
- Five Intelligence Analysis majors presented at the [2025 Intelligence Studies Consortium Symposium](#) to 130+ students, faculty and intelligence professionals from across the country. Two students shared their research, entitled "The Fall of the Assad Regime on Iranian Defense & Intelligence Capabilities," which explored the regional ripple effects of the Syrian government's collapse, particularly on Iran's intelligence infrastructure and strategic posture. The three others presented "Dangerous Friends: Russian-Iranian Drone Cooperation." Their research analyzed the evolving strategic alliance between Russia and Iran through drone technology. Appreciation goes to their mentors – IA assistant professors Dr. [Philip Baxter](#) and Dr. [Giangiuseppe Pili](#) and associate professor Dr. [Tim Walton](#) – whose mentorship helped shape the students' research and sharpen their analytical focus. "Having our [undergraduate students selected to present at a symposium](#) that typically features graduate-level work from universities in the D.C. area and Northeast speaks volumes about their dedication and the strength of their research," said Baxter.

I hope your summer is restful, rejuvenating and engaging. Thanks for all you've each done this year to make it a successful one.

Sincerely,

Bob