

9/12/25 Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

This week has been a challenging one for higher education, highlighting the critical importance of being able to communicate across differences. As President Schmidt wrote in his note yesterday, “Violence, no matter the speech, is never the answer.” Thank you for helping our students navigate this moment and continue developing their ability to engage with those whose beliefs differ.

On a brighter note, as always, I’m happy to share great things happening across campus to wrap up this week. And now for today’s highlights!

- Dr. [Hyun Kang](#), assistant professor in the Department of Social Work, recently published three articles based on his work with a community-based project on cognitive interventions through daily activities. While the content is meaningful, as it illustrates how daily activities, when used as a non-pharmacological and multi-component intervention with social engagement, can play an important role in preventing dementia and promoting healthy aging, the work is notable as each article used a different research approach: [qualitative focus group interviews](#), a [quasi-experimental design](#) and an [experimental design](#).
- Furious Flower Postdoctoral Fellow [Gbenga Adesina](#) 's debut collection, "Death Does Not End at the Sea," has been longlisted for the [National Book Award](#). This is a significant honor, particularly for an author’s first collection. Congratulations!
- A team of undergraduate ISAT students recently won first place in the [American Water Works Association Student Water Challenge](#) at the [Virginia Water Environment Association Annual Conference](#). Teams from across the state were given five hours to study a real-world water quality problem and present a solution. The JMU ISAT team, who were advised by ISAT professor Robert Brent, beat out Engineering majors and graduate students from other Virginia institutions. Brent stated, “This accomplishment speaks to the quality of their holistic problem-solving ISAT curriculum. They were presented with information and design equations, which they had never encountered before. Yet, they had the skills to quickly master new information, find the relevant resources, and propose an accurate, well-reasoned, holistic solution.” Seeing faculty mentor students through this type of activity is always affirming.
- If you’ve ever wondered when food producers receive prestige for their culinary efforts, Anthropology assistant professor Dr. [Di Hu](#) recommends you check out “[Multiple Inequalities in Every Meal: Theorizing the Intersectional Erasure of Food Producers Both Past and Present](#),” which she co-authored with several colleagues, including James Beard Award winner Dr. [Psyche Williams Forson](#), in the July issue of the [Food, Culture, and Society](#) journal. Despite its recent publication, the article is already the sixth most viewed article in *Food, Culture, and Society* in the past year.

Please keep the good news coming in! I look forward to seeing more of the teaching, scholarship, awards and other accomplishments of you and your colleagues, so please send them to provost@jmu.edu.

Sincerely,

Bob