

## 9/26/25 Highlights

Dear Colleagues,

Apologies for the late arrival – it has been a week full of distinctive and interesting events, programs and activities. In other words, a pretty typical week in Academic Affairs!

I want to give a tip of the Friday e-mail cap to two events I attended recently. We're at the end of another very successful [I-Week](#), and I want to acknowledge the incredible staff of the [Center for Global Engagement](#), both for I-Week and their work in bringing the world to JMU and bringing JMU to the world. I-Week is a great time to recognize the important contributions of all of our international faculty, staff and students. Thanks to JY Zhou and everyone in CGE!

Earlier in the week, I attended the grand opening of the Military Science Cadet Physical Development Center in Memorial Hall. Wow. This innovative facility was designed to support the physical and emotional fitness of over 200 Army and Air Force cadets, but its reach will go far beyond that. Through a partnership with JMU's Department of Health Sciences, the Department of Military Science will facilitate research that helps guide improvements for cadets' development. This is a great example of a collaborative partnership between Military Science, the College of Education, the University Health Center, JMU Facilities Management and many others. Thanks to Lt. Col. Andy Bryant, Dean Mark L'Esperance, Vice Presidents Towana Moore and Tim Miller, and AVP Jason McClain for helping make this facility a reality for our JMU cadets.

And there's more to share! Let's get to your highlights.

- Faculty in the College of Integrated Science and Engineering taking their role as a teacher-scholar well past graduation! Associate professor of Geography Dr. [Galen Murton](#) recently co-edited and published a special issue the journal [Territory, Politics, Governance](#) titled "[Revisiting the Frontier: Colonial Legacies and Lived Realities of Himalayan Border-Worlds](#)" with JMU alumnus Dr. Arjun Sharma (2004, Accounting Information Systems), who is currently a Research Fellow at Maastricht University (Netherlands).

A workshop conversation at Yale University in March 2021 grew into a research panel at the 2022 Himalayan Studies Conference, which was hosted by current JMU visiting assistant professor of Geography Dr. [Nadine Plachta](#), then evolved into this collaborative publication. The journal includes articles on the [international migration of black-necked cranes](#) by Dr. Sharma, the [transformation of trade practices between Tibet and Nepal](#) by Dr. Murton, and the [environmental politics of citizenship along rivers in South Asia](#) by Dr. Plachta.

- Congratulations to Dr. [Mark Rankin](#), professor of English and Fellow of the Royal Historical Society, for his recent election as President of the [Renaissance English Text Society](#) (RETS).

- Please join me in congratulating [Rose Gray](#), office manager and administrative assistant in the English department. She was recently named a finalist for the 2025 [Admin Awards Loyalty Award](#) for the Washington D.C. and Mid-Atlantic region.
- JMU faculty are taking active roles in advancing AI. Dr. [John Hathcoat](#), an associate assessment specialist and associate professor in the Department of Graduate Psychology, is co-leading the [Community of Practice \(CoP\) related to Generative AI \(GenAI\) in Assessment](#). The CoP was announced at [The Assessment Institute in Indianapolis](#), the nation's oldest and largest event focused on assessing and improving higher education.

If you enjoy reading these highlights, send in some for you and your colleagues! You can email [provost@jmu.edu](mailto:provost@jmu.edu) any time. And keep an eye out for more teaching, scholarship, awards and other accomplishments.

Sincerely,

Bob