

## Notes from the Provost

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Hello all,

Once again, I'm delighted to share with you some recent achievements from your colleagues. My email could be much longer! This is just a sample of the prodigious work going on within Academic Affairs.

- Associate Professor of English Sofia Samatar was recently nominated for a [PEN America Literary Award](#). This is incredibly high praise and recognition of her recent book *The White Mosque*. She will be travelling to New York in March for the awards ceremony.
- Professor Bill Ritchie's Supply Chain Management class, along with JMU's [ASCM Supply Chain Club](#), which he advises, are participating in an experiential learning exercise with Mihert Medical Supply. The students inventoried donated medical equipment and supplies that are now on their way to Samara University Hospital in Afar, Ethiopia. Professor Ritchie's class is tracking the shipment with remote sensing technologies through its arrival and use at the hospital.
- Masoud Kaveh Baghdaborani, Assistant Professor of Physics and Astronomy, and coauthors published "Polarization Conversion of Light Diffracted from InP Nanowire Photonic Crystal Arrays" in *Advanced Optical Materials*.
- Oliver Hyman, Lecturer of Biology – with students Andrew Loudon (BIO M.S.) and Emma Bales (BIO B.S.) – recently published "Metabolite assemblages on skins of eastern hellbenders (*Cryptobranchus alleganiensis*) differ with management area and captivity" in *Diseases of Aquatic Organisms*.

The biggest news coming out of the Provost Office this week is the publication of our [Academic Affairs Strategic Plan \(AASP\)](#) with an initial set of Action Items and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). My thanks again go to the committees of faculty and staff who devoted their efforts to the plan's development, which began in 2019. On this site, you can see the three strategic goals that will drive AA decision making over the next few years, along with the objectives that articulate how we'll reach those goals, which are now augmented by new Action Items and KPIs that allow us to track and benchmark our progress. I look forward to hearing your feedback on the AASP.

Another example of excellent work I'm proud to showcase is the new [Academic Affairs Administrative Professional Welcome Program](#). This resource, developed largely by the [AA Administrative Staff Advisory Council](#), offers new administrative professionals – and their supervisors – in our division a one-stop collection of valuable information about joining JMU and Academic Affairs.

In previous emails, I've said that I want to hear from AA faculty and staff with questions, and you responded! There were a couple of recent questions I thought would be interesting and relevant to the entire community, so I'm sharing those here:

**Q:** *Is the provost aware that when JMU computing mandates that all computers on campus be upgraded to Windows 10 or later this means that some specialized software running on*

*those computers also requires an upgrade. Many research labs use specialized computer software for their niche research which is proprietary (expensive). When JMU plans to upgrade the hardware, there needs to be money, lots of money, to upgrade software. I'm glad to hear that there is \$2M for this as announced in the early Feb email. Were specialized software upgrades budgeted in when that number was calculated?*

**A:** The recent allocation of one-time equipment funds was distributed to colleges based on requests submitted by the academic units and college deans. The equipment purchased with these funds will be left to the discretion of each academic unit/college per the approval of the academic unit head and dean. If software updates are required for aging equipment or computers, this information needs to be shared with the AUH and dean so that these needs can be prioritized accordingly.

**Q:** *Have you ever considered doing visits with different units for staff within Academic Affairs? I appreciate the college visits, but what about other parts of Academic Affairs that are not tied to teaching faculty.*

**A:** Absolutely! I'm continuing my visits to various areas on campus and would love to see staff and A&P faculty as well. Going forward, I'll ensure that non-college areas are included in these stops.

Please keep your questions coming! You can email [provost@jmu.edu](mailto:provost@jmu.edu) or submit a question anonymously through the [Ask the Provost](#) option online. I look forward to hearing from you!

Sincerely,  
Heather

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