

College of Education – A brief History

HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY

The turn of the twentieth century brought with it a new public interest in education in Virginia. The public began to focus on many necessary school improvements including the need for better trained school teachers. As a result, in 1904 the Virginia General Assembly passed a bill to establish a new teacher training school for women.

After a bitter four-year battle to persuade the state to establish the new teachers' school in Harrisonburg, a bill was passed and signed into law on March 14, 1908, establishing the State Normal and Industrial School for Women at Harrisonburg. Harrisonburg residents were so excited that they mobbed the train depot when Senator Keezel and Representative Good returned from the General Assembly. A parade including the Daily News Band, firefighters in bright red uniforms and various local dignitaries and committee members marched through crowds of cheering citizens. A university was born.

In early January 1909, Julian Burruss, first President of the State Normal and Industrial School for Women at Harrisonburg, recommended to the Board of Trustees that Cornelius J. Heatwole, dean of the Education department of Florida State College for Women and a native of Rockingham County, be named to head Normal's Department of Education. At its inception, the Department of Education was emphasized as being the "most important and characteristic department of a Normal School. A special effort would be made to make all courses in the department as practical as possible and to impress upon the teacher the importance of the work she is about to undertake, the honor and nobility of the profession, the responsibility of the teacher as a member of society, and her duty to her pupils, patrons, and fellow teachers." [Dingledine, R. *Madison College: The First Fifty Years*, 1959.] Though expressed differently today, this focus remains central to the mission of the College of Education.

Over the years the institution changed its name a handful of times, reflecting the changes in its curriculum and focus. In 1938 the school became Madison College and then James Madison University in 1977. Our school is named for James Madison, father of the constitution, one of our young republic's finest statesmen, and one of the earliest proponents of public schools, higher education, and teacher training. James Madison University is the only university in the land bearing his name.

HISTORY OF THE COLLEGE AND ITS PROGRAMS

While teacher education has been a primary focus of our institution since its inception, the academic unit now known as the College of Education had its beginnings at the Normal School in 1927 as the new Education and Psychology Department. The Department mainly oversaw the courses of study associated with education, including classes in psychology, but the roots of several of the college's programs go back much farther.

Psychology courses were also offered from the very first year at the Normal School. Although in the early years psychology classes were primarily associated with teacher education, the program of Psychology broadened in size and scope through the years.

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

Physical Education classes were offered in the first year at the Normal School but not for credit. Students were simply expected to take part in some sort of approved physical exercise each day. The program quickly expanded to include classes for pre-teachers to learn physical games and exercises they could teach to children in varying grade levels. Today, there is an entire school devoted to providing an "understanding of the disciplines of human physical activity, sport, and recreation." (University Undergraduate Catalog 1999-2000 p. 191).

In the 1950's, President G. Tyler Miller instituted a major restructuring of all of the programs of study at Madison College by grouping the programs together into "Divisions." The Division of Teacher Education now encompassed the Department of Education and Psychology, the Directed Teaching Program (the beginnings of student teaching) and a campus training school where students observed methods of teaching in action. Over time, the Divisions were renamed "Schools" and the name "School of Teacher Education" eventually became the "School of Education."

As time passed, new programs developed and flourished. Military Science first appeared in the School of Education in 1976 with six courses. Today the Department of Military Science offers two- and four-year programs rich in leadership experience, leading to commissioning as officers in the U.S. Army, Army Reserves, or National Guard. Military Science graduates may also serve four years in diverse specialty areas such as engineering, communications, law enforcement or aviation.

With changes in programs, the name of our unit continued to evolve. In 1979, the School of Education became the School of Education and Human Services housing such programs as Elementary, Secondary, and Special Education, School Administration, Physical and Health Education, Trade and Industrial Education, Psychology, Military Science, Home Economics, Speech Pathology, the Child Development Clinic, and the Educational Media Lab.

Another restructuring took place in 1986 when the "School" of Education and Human Services became the "College" of Education and Human Services. Dr. Julius Roberson, heretofore the Director of the "School," temporarily filled the leadership position of the new College. The following year, Dr. Frank Luth became the Acting Dean in a one-year appointment. Then, in 1988, Dr. Jean Ramage was hired as the first permanent Dean of the College of Education and Human Services.

In 1989, the College acquired another new name, the College of Education and Psychology. The College of Education and Psychology (CEP), headed by Dr. Ramage, housed the departments of Psychology, Military Science, Early and Middle Education, Special Education, Educational Resources and the Center for Vocational Education. Physical Education and Sport had moved out of the College, in this same year, to the College of Health and Human Services. The program returned to the CEP, however, in 1995 with a more modern name tag, the Department of Kinesiology.

In 1991, Dr. A. Jerry Benson became the second Dean of the CEP. Under his leadership, in 1995, the various education programs and offices were brought together as a unit forming the School of Education. It was the first department under the umbrella of the College to become a "School."

In 1995 "the Bachelor of General Studies" was added to the College. This program is primarily for adults returning to school to achieve a college education. Renamed in 1997 as the Bachelor of Individualized Study, the program is individualized according to the goals, needs and time schedules of each student.

In 1999 Jerry Benson was appointed Interim Dean of the College of Integrated Science and Technology (CISAT) and, in 2001, became Dean of that College. With his departure, Dr. John Gilje was named Interim Dean of the CEP. In Fall 2001, Dr. Gilje became Dean of Research, and Associate Dean, Dr. Sharon Lovell, was named Interim Dean of the College of Education and Psychology.

During 2000, JMU President Linwood Rose affirmed that educator preparation was one of the core missions of the University. In recognition of this, the College of Education and Psychology was restructured during Summer 2001. The School of Psychology and the School of Kinesiology and Recreation Studies left the College and were incorporated into CISAT. The College was renamed the College of Education (COE) and consisted of the School of Education, Department of Military Science, and the Adult Degree Program. Dr. Lovell served as the College's Interim Dean until the Fall 2003 semester.

During the Fall 2003 semester, the "School of Education" was renamed "Education Programs." The COE, therefore, consisted of the Education Programs, The Department of Military Science, and the Adult Degree Program. Dr. Phillip Wishon joined the College of Education as its first permanent (rather than "acting" or "interim") Dean, and guided the College successfully through its NCATE and state reviews earning reaccreditation for all programs in the Professional Education Unit. Within Dr. Wishon's tenure as Dean, the College of Education was reorganized into five departments: Military Science; Early, Elementary and Reading Education; Learning, Technology and Leadership Education; Middle, Secondary and Mathematics Education; and Exceptional Education. In 2006, the Adult Degree Program was relocated to the College of Graduate and Outreach Programs.

In commemorating JMU's Centennial in 2008, the College of Education and James Madison University celebrated 100 years of service to the citizens of Virginia. In a proclamation honoring its centennial, the college affirmed the importance of advancing "a compassionate concept of education, of leadership and of society...and of denouncing all dehumanizing aspects of human discourse" (2008-*Affirmation of a Cause in the College's Centennial year: Cultural and Global Competence*).

We have a history that stretches back to the founding of JMU. We prepare young people to be leading contributors to their professions and to improvement of society, and we educate adults who want to achieve higher educational and career goals. As in the past, the challenges and changes that lie in the future will only serve to strengthen our academic programs and the students who participate in them.