

VALLEY SCHOLARS

SUMMER 2024 NEWSLETTER



SENIOR EDITION



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS



DESIGN FOR LEARNING

This spring, 10th-grade Scholars took a shot at Engineering Design with JMU's Center for STEM Education & Outreach. Dr. Brent Cunningham and current JMU engineering student volunteers led students in the design and testing of "Rube Goldberg machines", which are created to perform a task by setting off a chain reaction.

With the guidance of engineering students, Dr. Cunningham asked scholars to analyze provided resources, generate and illustrate a well thought-out design on paper, and physically construct a mechanism to perform a

task while meeting established design constraints. By the end of the program and several rounds of adjustment, each team successfully developed a multi-action machine.

Through this program with Dr. Cunningham and his students, our scholars were able to utilize their own creativity to explore engineering principles as well as elements of design methodology, problem solving, and critical thinking skills. This program also provided Valley Scholars the opportunity to interact with current JMU Engineering students, allowing them to engage in conversation about the campus culture, majors, and JMU student experience.

FLOAT CLUB

11th-grade Valley Scholars put their boating skills to the test at the end of April with the UREC Adventure Canoe Program. Along with UREC and Valley Scholars staff, students paddled canoes five miles on the Shenandoah River. While rowing techniques, teamwork, and safety were the concepts of the day, this new program also provided students an opportunity to responsibly explore the natural environment of the Valley from a new perspective.



SCHOLARS VOLUNTEER FOR BETTER COMMUNITY HEALTH

Valley Scholars turned out for not one, but two volunteer opportunities this year with Project GROWS, a nonprofit educational farm located in Verona. Students learned about their mission of ensuring healthy food access for Augusta County while getting hands-on farm experience including harvesting. Valley Scholars participate in at least one volunteer activity per school year, giving back to the communities that support their journey.

WHAT'S THE SCENARIO?

Near the end of the Fall semester, 9th-grade Valley Scholars participated in an interactive program presented by staff members from JMU's Ethical Reasoning in Action.



Valley Scholars were introduced to the Eight Key Question Framework (Fairness, Outcomes, Responsibilities, Character, Liberty, Empathy, Authority, and Rights) and were invited to share on the board words or ideas they associate with each Key Question. Following this exercise, groups of students discussed scenarios they might encounter in real-life situations, using the Eight Key Question Framework. Valley Scholars engaged in a lively, thoughtful conversation and enjoyed the opportunity to learn from each other's perspectives and viewpoints.





ENDOWMENT SECURES SCHOLARSHIPS FOR FUTURE FIRST-GEN STUDENTS

Generous gifts from donors over the past several years have provided countless opportunities for our students, including scholarships for 91 scholars currently at JMU. This year, the Donna L. Harper ('77, '86) Scholarship Endowment for Valley Scholars was established to honor Harper's 47-year career at JMU and her commitment to Valley Scholars. Harper retired from her position as vice president of Access and Enrollment Management, where she led the recruiting of all prospective students to JMU. On Giving Day, February 22, 2024, 100 donors met a 24-hour challenge, securing an additional \$50,000 gift from philanthropists Carly Fiorina (member of the JMU Board of Visitors) and Frank Fiorina toward the endowment.

DONNA L. HARPER ENDOWMENT

"Donna Harper...exemplifies the very best of JMU: commitment, service to others and leadership," said Carly Fiorina in an interview earlier this year. "It is our hope that the Donna Harper Scholarship we are establishing will allow many other students and their families to benefit from Donna's example and all that the JMU experience provides."

Because of donors' continued and generous support, this year we are preparing to welcome the 11th cohort of students and will start the school year with 203 Valley Scholars working their way towards being the first in their families to graduate college.

ALGER MADE DREAMS A REALITY FOR FIRST-GEN STUDENTS

Valley Scholars and the JMU community said good-bye this spring to President Jonathan R. Alger, who announced plans to take on a new role as President of American University in Washington, D.C. after twelve years as president of JMU.

Alger established Valley Scholars in 2014, after founding a similar program

during his time at Rutgers University. As a result of his vision to reduce economic barriers for local students, Valley Scholars has seen two cohorts graduate college, 91 students currently enrolled at JMU, and over 200 scholars on their journey to college.

President Alger recognized the program's largest graduating class to date during his final address to Valley Scholars high school graduates on May 1, 2024. Students have greatly benefited from the expanded and enhanced academic programs during Alger's leadership.



THANK YOU, PRESIDENT ALGER



CONGRATULATIONS HIGH SCHOOL CLASS OF 2024!

WE ARE EXCITED TO CONGRATULATE MEMBERS OF THE 10TH COHORT OF VALLEY SCHOLARS ON THEIR GRADUATION AND SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF THE VALLEY SCHOLARS PROGRAM. THIS FALL, 25 NEW STUDENTS WILL BE ATTENDING JMU, WITH AN ADDITIONAL 9 ATTENDING OTHER COLLEGES OR UNIVERSITIES.





LILIANA

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UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA



EMELY

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



FEODOR

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



STEVIANE

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



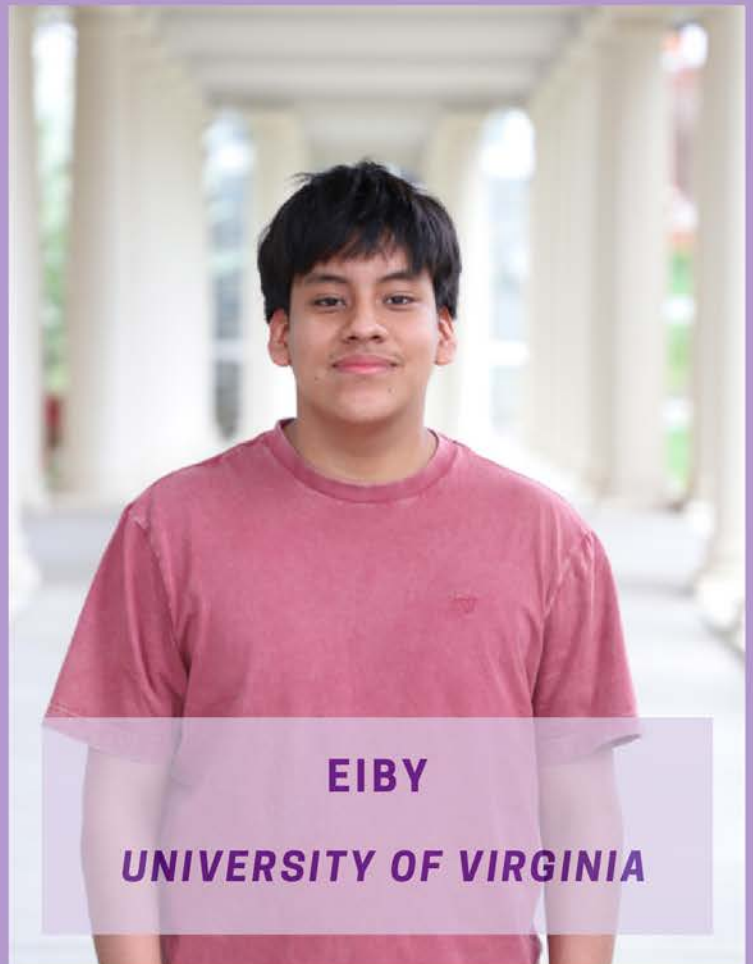
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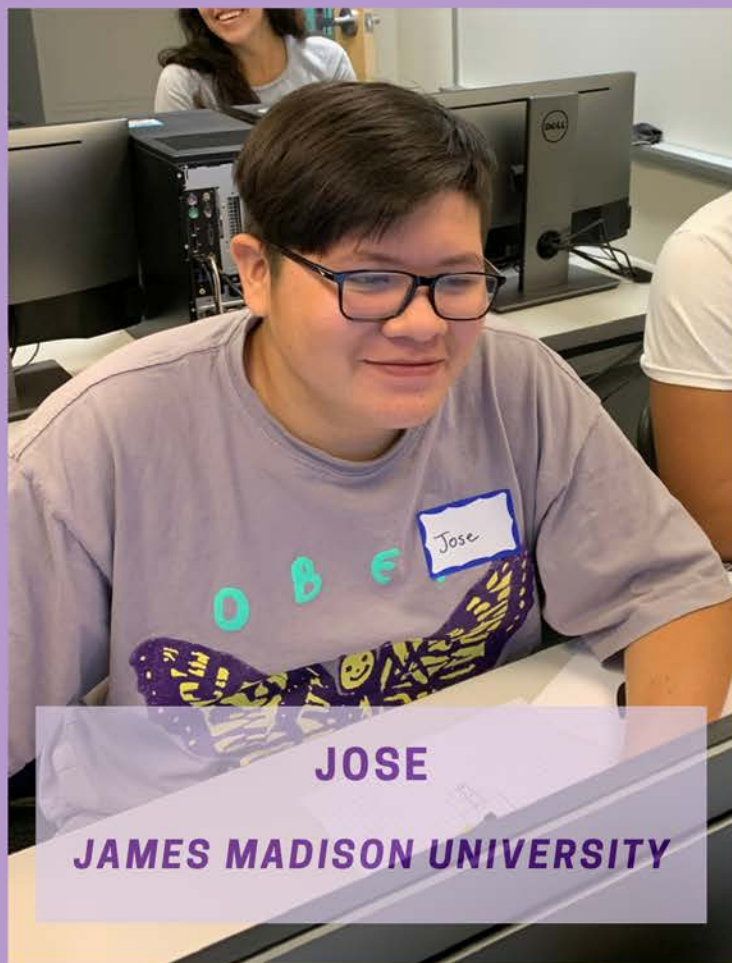
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RANDOLPH MACON COLLEGE



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JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



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VIRGINIA TECH



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JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



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**BLUE RIDGE COMMUNITY
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**LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY
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**THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS,
CAMPUS PARTNERS, PROGRAM
PARTNERS, AND VOLUNTEERS WHO
MAKE VALLEY SCHOLARS AND OUR
UNIQUE PROGRAMMING POSSIBLE!**

