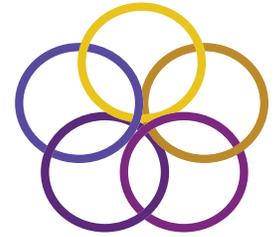


GENERAL EDUCATION

Engage, Educate, Enlighten



The View from Maury Hall



Photo by Allyson Taylor

Earlier this year, JMU contracted with Gallup, Inc., to survey our alumni. We asked them to rate themselves against the same criteria used in the Gallup Purdue Index, which seeks to measure the most important outcomes associated with a college degree—having a great job and a great life as measured by five dimensions of well-being. A few weeks ago, we received the results and I can't stop thinking about them.

As the JMU website boasts:

“On every dimension of well-being, our alumni scored far above the national average for graduates from all colleges and universities, and they also scored significantly above the average of alumni who graduated from the Top 100 colleges and universities in the US News & World Report rankings.” Specifically, JMU's undergraduate alumni are more likely than their peers to be employed full time for an employer (81% versus 71%) and to be engaged at work (48% versus 39%). However, it's the data on employment and the respondent's major that I especially noted. When asked “How closely related is your current work to your undergraduate major(s),” only 36% of BA/BS degree holders said their job was “completely related,” whereas the largest number, 42% of respondents, said their jobs were

only “somewhat related” and 22% said “not at all related.” I was not surprised to see this pattern. It corroborates what many other studies tell me: that America's knowledge-based economy requires people to change jobs frequently. A recent study by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, for example, says that a person with a bachelor's degree can expect to hold 10-14 different positions by age forty. And while the reasons for these changes are complex (e.g., you discover you hate your field, you follow a partner to a new place, quit to raise children, get down-sized, become an entrepreneur), we know that job changes begin as soon as five years after graduation. As an American Association of Colleges and Universities study argued, “it takes more than a major” to be successful.

That is my message from Maury Hall, too. The General Education program aims to cultivate the knowledge, skills, and dispositions that all JMU alumni will need to achieve well-being, regardless of their major(s). These include cross-cutting skills like critical thinking, writing, and quantitative reasoning, but also capacities like curiosity, empathy, and civic-mindedness. Now more than ever, students need to understand the value of a broad liberal education and the way it both supports and extends the narrow training they receive in their vocational fields.

Meg Mulrooney

To read the full JMU report from Gallup, visit https://www.jmu.edu/news/_files/galluppoll.pdf. Visit www.jmu.edu/gened and read this issue of our annual newsletter to learn about the way we prepare JMU undergraduates for lifelong success.

General Education Council

Since the late 1990s, the GEC has served as an advisory body to the program staff and a college-level C & I committee charged with curricular oversight of the general education program. Because of those two functions, it is made up of faculty representatives who are either elected or appointed by their respective units, as well as persons from key stakeholder offices. The GEC also has four subcommittees that manage some of the programs particular initiatives: The Gen Ed Student Conference, Grants, Distinguished Teacher Award, and General Education as Liberal Education. Thank you to the GEC's current members for their service:

Susan Barnes, EERE (COE)
 Drew Barrar, (SGA)
 Amanda Biesecker, ISAT (Cluster 3)
 Kathy Clarke, (L&ET)
 Anca Constantin, Physics (CSM)
 Kethera Fogler, Psychology (Cluster 5)
 Keston Fulcher, (CARS)
 Mary Gayne, History (Cluster 1)
 Phil Heap, Economics (COB, chair)
 Laura Katzman, Art History (CVPA)

Shelly Laurenzo, (CAP)
 Michael Moghtader, WRTC (CAL)
 Bayo Ogundipe, Engineering (CISE)
 Amy Paugh, Soc & Anth (Cluster 4)
 Cathy Snyder, Marketing (COB)
 Deb Sutton, Health Sciences (CHBS)
 Johnathan Walker, IDLS (Faculty Senate)
 Sian White, English (Cluster 2)
 Collin Williard, (SGA)



GenEd Night at the Forbes Center

The Program's teaching faculty will once again be treated to an evening of food, fun, and festivity. This year's performance will be *Guys and Dolls* (a musical), February 24, 2017. Look for your email invitation soon!

Our People

Meg Mulrooney
History
Associate Vice Provost
University Programs

Gretchen Hazard
Communication Studies
Cluster One Coordinator

Dennis Beck
Theater and Dance
Cluster Two Coordinator

Scott Paulson
Physics
Cluster Three Coordinator

Skip Hyser
History
Cluster Four Coordinator

Georgia Polacek
Health Sciences
Cluster Five Coordinator

Tanya Fitzpatrick
Administrative Assistant

Student Conference Success

– Skip Hyser, Cluster Four Coordinator and General Education Student Conference Coordinator

The 12th annual General Education Student Conference was a great success. Despite a dreary, rainy late September day, over 150 students presented research or projects produced in a wide-range of General Education courses. There were a number of parents and JMU students attending many of the panel sessions. Faculty nominated students to participate in the conference, and nearly all moderated the panel session with their students.

As usual, the conference had a wide range of presentations. For example, some session titles were: “The Literary and Visual Arts of Ancient Rome”, “Finding Rhetorical Power in Expertise: Writing the Research-Based Op-ed”, “Women’s Literature: Gender and Coming of Age Narratives”, “Understanding Culture and Controversy: The Madison Collaborative’s 8 Key Questions and World Heritage Monuments under Threat”, “Immigration and Refugee Resettlement: Global Concern, Local Issue”, “Creating YouTube Videos to Illustrate Sociology”, and “Listening to the Deep Past: Analyzing Historical Sources”. There were also presentations on diverse topics



such as the importance of indigenous languages in Latin American culture in recent times, women in revolutions in Iran and Argentina, oral history projects that analyzed social change in the 20th century, cross cultural encounters in the Atlantic world, population problems in our times, civil rights and race in America, business proposals for new products, digital storytelling and the 8 key questions, perspectives on early world history, American patriotism and liberties during war, literature about the human body, and various interpretations of artwork.

Five students achieved a fine honor at this year’s conference – they each made two presentations. This means two faculty independently nominated these students for outstanding work done in their General Education classes. This speaks volumes about these

students’ academic abilities. These five students are: Anna Aldridge, Rollin Buffington, Joellen Ceide, Catherine Pierce and Max Toglia.

The General Education Student Conference helps JMU communicate the continued importance of a liberal education and highlights the exceptional work accomplished by undergraduates in General Education courses. We are proud of the academic expectations in these courses, as these endeavors create an intellectual foundation for life. The conference concluded Friday evening with a fine banquet that honored the accomplishments of the student presenters, their parents and the faculty nominators. Dr. Kathleen Ferraiolo, recipient of the General Education Distinguished Faculty Award and associate professor in the Political Science Department, offered the keynote address.

Thank You! Let us extend a special thanks to faculty members who nominated students from their General Education courses and gave them the opportunity to share their academic achievements beyond the classroom.

Michael Allain
J. Chris Arndt
Tim Ball
Dennis Beck
Kevin Borg
Lori Britt
Sarah Brooks
Jessica Davidson
Chris Davis
Danielle DeRise
Kerry Dobransky

Sheila Fielding
T.J. Fitzgerald
Evan Friss
Michael Galgano
Mary Gayne
Shah Mahmoud Hanifi
Yongguang Hu
Lindsay King
Kirsten McCleary
Uchenna Onuzulike
John Ott

Aaron PeeksMease
Vanessa Rouillon
Cathy Snyder
Mary Thompson
William Van Norman
Jay Varner
Emily Westkaemper
James Zimmerman

Please join us in congratulating the student presenters:

| | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Stephen Aderton | Kaita Gurian | Safal Pokharel |
| Grace Albert | Jack Hartley | Hunter Pratt |
| Anna Aldridge | Tewfik Hassan | Melika Rahmani |
| Raven Archer | Nancy Haugh | Grant A. Rankins |
| Megan Baird | Kathryn Heisig | Sydney Remaily |
| Natalia Banks | Ryan Henderson | Justin Rissmiller |
| Rachel Barborek | Jessica Henry | Luke Robb |
| Matthew Best | Matthew Higgins | Emily Roebuck |
| Jillian Breault | Hunter W R Hines | Dana Rucereto |
| Julia Brennan | Brenna Houck | Rhiannon |
| Mikaela Briones | Rebekah Hughes | Saydlowski |
| Ida Britez | Iliana Ioannides | Audrey Schappler |
| Breanna Brown | Allison Jagers | Erin Scouten |
| Taylor Brunke | Sarah Johnson | Shannon Smith |
| Emory Bruno | Brooke Justis | Will Snoeyenbos |
| Rollin Buffington | Dean Kedir | Michael Sook |
| Peyton Burns | Aren Kiladjian | Kyle Sperber |
| Brittani Butler | Yvonne Kinsella | Max Spruth |
| Alex Bynum-Surratt | Tori Klier | Kevin Steiner |
| Tanner Camp | Richard Knab | Ryan Strand |
| Nora Cargile | Noboru | Jemma Stratton |
| Caitlin Carlson | Kobashigawa | Catey Susco |
| Michael Carlson | Joshua Koller | Jessie A. Swink |
| Catherine Carson | Robin Lauber | Qianyu Tan |
| Joellen Ceide | Kerri Lawlor | Mackenzie Tarlow |
| Lauren Chapman | Megan Lawton | Alyssa Thornton |
| Kaitlyn Chieh | Jazlynn Le | Max Toglia |
| Nicolette Chuss | Katherine Lerner | Megan Tolton |
| Amanda Coffman | Madison Lodholz | Melissa Toman |
| Samantha Cohen | Karlie Lorenz | Nicole Toven |
| Mikayla Comer | Julia Lucey | Erin Waddell |
| Victoria Corlett | Sophie McGinnies | Ashley Waite |
| Makayla Cornwell | Kyla McLaughlin | John Wallace |
| Ben Cotton | Taylor Mallory | Rebecca Ward |
| Breontae Crump | Caroline Mason | Samantha Webster |
| Marissa Cucinotta | Sarah Mason | Brian Wegemann |
| Kimberly Daliagon | Lucy Medley | Seb Weinhold |
| Julia Danisewicz | Jocelyn Medrano | Morgan White |
| Samantha Dyer | Katelyn Merriman | Emma Whitten |
| Caroline Edwards | Kristina Migo | Dominica Williams |
| Katelyn Farrah | Isaac Miller | Alexandra Wilson |
| Ann Farrell | Rachel Miller | Mackenzie |
| Allison Fisher | Paige Moody | Winston |
| Benjamin Ford | Brynn Morales | Adam Wright |
| Christian Ford | Erika Mountcastle | Jennifer Yavny |
| Emily Gaddy | Abigail Mumma | Kendra Yoder |
| Hope Gallagher | Daniela Nadal | Hannah York |
| Caris Giessler | Lauren Obaugh | Regen Zimmerman |
| Arisa Gordillo | Morgan Pennington | |
| Kendra Graham | Catherine Pierce | |

“I enjoyed presenting in front of my parents and peers at the GenEd Student Conference. The experience boosted my confidence and left me with a greater desire to perform well in my GenEd classes. The conference allows students to showcase their work and say thank you to parents and professors for all that they have done - which is something that has been missing from the educational process.”

Taylor Brunke is a sophomore accounting major

“The confidence I walked away with might have been the most rewarding part of the conference. It showed me that hard work does pay off. Overall, the GenEd Student Conference was one of, if not the most, rewarding academic experiences I have ever had. I am very thankful I had an opportunity to be a part of such a great event.”

Sophomore hospitality management major Max Toglia made two presentations at the 2016 conference.

“I was very grateful to be nominated for the GenEd Student Conference. It was very rewarding to spend weeks with my group on a paper and to then be able to showcase our hard work in front of others. The conference was a great way to show how many diverse classes the general education program at JMU has to offer and the valuable lessons students gain as a result of taking these classes.”

Tewfik Hassan is a sophomore computer information systems major

“I thought the GenEd Student Conference was a valuable experience because it gave students the opportunity to present assignments developed in class and it shows JMU is appreciative of students’ hard work. Perhaps most importantly, the conference brings to attention the different perspectives studied in class and how it translates into the real world.”

Junior history major Rollin Buffington made two presentations at the 2016 conference

“What I enjoyed most about the conference was being able to go back and reflect on the work I did in previous semesters. We don’t often do this, especially with GenEds. So it was nice to look over what I made and learned in the previous semesters and be able to reflect on my work and even add to it. I also enjoyed seeing what other people in my classes had made.”

Sophomore media arts and design major Catherine Pierce made two presentations at the 2016 conference

300-level Course Pilot

During the Spring 2016 semester, Prof. Ron Cereola, a member of the Summer 2015 grant project team, offered to pilot a 300-level course that he designed to meet the critical thinking outcomes as well as the integrative outcomes. It ran under the UNST390 designator and was restricted to incoming transfer students who had already completed at least 60 credits (junior standing). Program staff worked closely with University Advising, the Registrar's Office, and the College of Business to share information and encourage enrollment. Although only five students enrolled in the course, the pilot demonstrated the effectiveness and appropriateness of this approach to attaining critical thinking skills.

In Spring 2017, Prof. Cereola will pilot another version of UNST390 with a focus on tax preparation assistance for local community members (one section). Dr. Mary Gayne (History) will also pilot a version of her HIST150 course under the UNST390 designator (two sections). In keeping with emergent best practices identified by the AAC&U, pilots enable program faculty to consider course design, map outcomes to readings and assignments, identify feasible real-world projects, revise pedagogy, and consider the supervisory skills they might need for experiential learning. Formal conversations/meetings will be held in Spring to ascertain faculty interest, feasibility, and discuss potential course proposals. JMUdesign will be utilized to develop other pilots from existing courses.



Introduction to Women and Gender Studies

Introduction to Women and Gender Studies (WGS 200) has been approved as a Cluster Five Sociocultural course for the Spring 2017 semester. It provides cross disciplinary introduction to theories and scholarship in Women's and Gender Studies. The course examines the social construction of gender, how gender affects access to opportunity, and the experiences and contributions of women throughout history. Look for it in the General Education planner as a new addition to Cluster Five!

Honors and General Education

– A Long Tradition of Partnership. – *Bradley R. Newcomer, PhD, MBA, Dean of the Honors College*

Honors and General Education at JMU have a long tradition of partnership. As enrollments have grown at JMU, strains on departmental abilities to provide adequate general education coverage have increased. This has created unpredictable and unsustainable scheduling of honors general education courses in the past few years. Fortunately, this increased pressure on the general education system has given us the opportunity to reevaluate how we in Honors can partner with departments and the General Education program more effectively.

As an initial pilot project, the Honors College approached the Communication Studies Department this past semester. We asked this department to consider committing to deliver their traditional number of SCOM 123H course sections and seats as they have in the past few years (~200 seats annually). The change that we asked them to consider was how they might deliver these seats only in the fall semester beginning in 2017. SCOM seized this opportunity and redesigned their SCOM 123H course so that our incoming freshmen could be immersed in an academic experience unique to Honors. This newly redesigned course will also allow us to provide an initial cohort experience for incoming Honors College freshmen students. Finally, partnering with SCOM in this way will provide a more

sustainable and predictable set of fall semester Honors General Education courses and improve our ability to advise our students.

To begin a university-wide discussion about this pilot project, the Honors College and the General Education program held an information session on December 1st. We first discussed the current state of departmental support for honors general education courses. The new SCOM 123H course for the fall 2017 semester was then presented. An initial discussion of possible options for a predictable set of annual spring semester courses followed. Our goal is to continue these discussions during the spring semester and focus on developing a more sustainable plan for honors general education courses moving forward.

In closing, the Honors College is excited about the opportunity to create a more predictable and sustainable curriculum that improves student learning outcomes. We have the opportunity to improve the scaffolding of student learning throughout the Honors College curriculum, beginning with a series of coordinated Honors General Education courses. We look forward to seeing this initiative develop over the next few semesters. Stay tuned for further opportunities to engage in this discussion and partner with the Honors College and General Education program!

JMU'S Participation in The Multi-State Collaborative

– John D. Hathcoat and Nikole Gregg

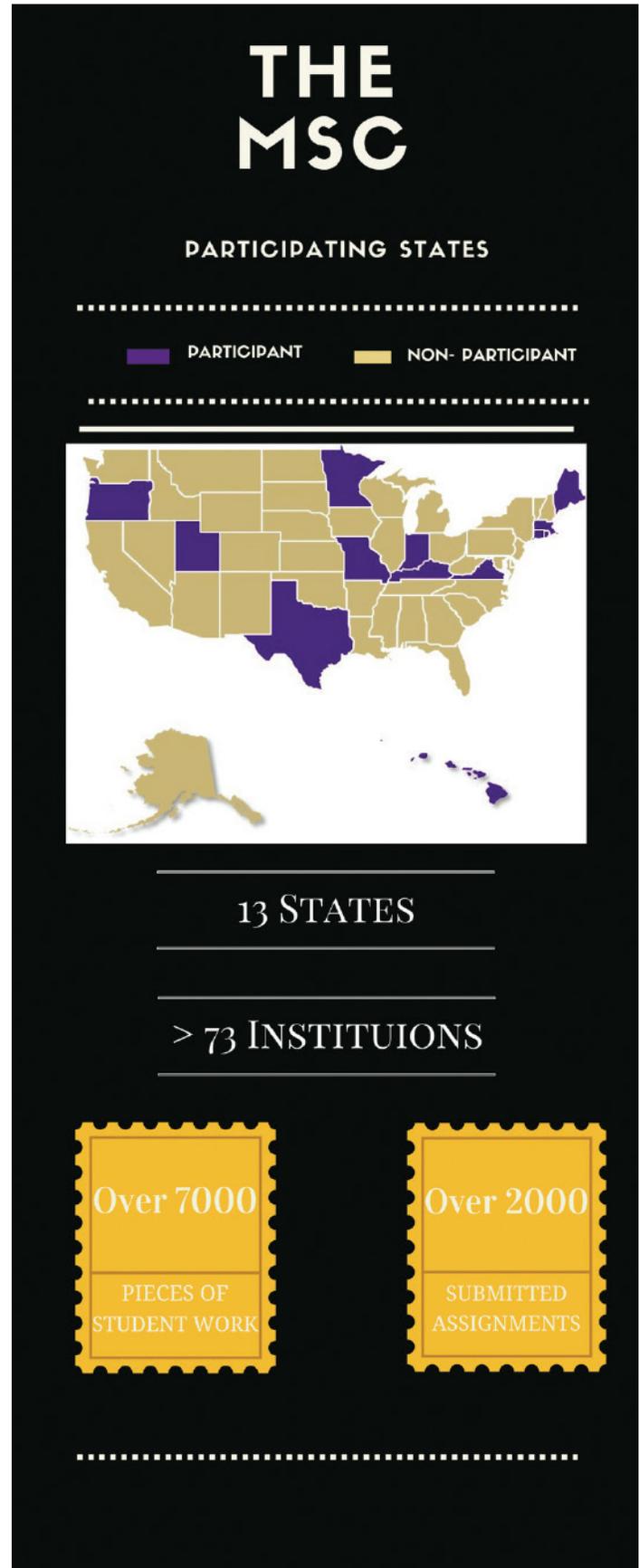
JMU is piloting a new, nationally recognized project referred to as the Multi-State Collaborative (MSC) sheeo.org. Institutions across thirteen states are currently participating in the project, with Virginia being the most recent participant. The MSC is jointly supported by the State Higher Education Executive Officers Association (SHEEO) and the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). The purpose is to sample work already used by faculty – such as projects, papers, and student research – and use them to describe learning at the institution level. Sampled work is scored using a common rubric by trained faculty members in the areas of critical thinking, written communication, and/or quantitative literacy. These outcomes are aligned with the mission of the general education curriculum at JMU. The Center for Assessment and Research Studies has therefore partnered with the General Education Program and the Center for Faculty Innovation to implement the pilot project. The rubrics for these learning outcomes, and nearly 30 other learning outcomes such as information literacy, integrated learning, and intercultural competence, can be downloaded for free from AAC&U's website AAC&U.

According to a recent article in *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (Chronicle of Higher Education), the motivation for this initiative partly stemmed from the national conversation about the value of a college degree. In 2006 a committee formed by the Department of Education released a report, which is often referred to as the Spelling's Report, about the future of U.S. higher education. With respect to student learning, the report concluded that "Despite increased attention to student learning results by colleges and universities and accreditation agencies, parents and students have no solid evidence, comparable across institutions, of how much students learn in colleges..." (p. 14). JMU, however, was held up as a model of accountability. In fact, Secretary Spellings commended JMU for systematically documenting students' learning.

Unfortunately, 10 years after the report was released other institutions across the country are still unable to address such challenges. The MSC aims to respond to such concerns by providing a common framework to describe student learning from "authentic" student work created in the classroom.

JMU is participating in the project to examine the extent to which faculty members find this information beneficial. Participating faculty at other institutions have reported some benefits from participation, such as using the rubrics to inform assignment design. This academic year five participating institutions in Virginia will collect senior-level student work that can be assessed for written communication, critical thinking and/or quantitative literacy. Once this work is collected it will be de-identified and scored by trained external raters over the summer. The information obtained from this project will provide additional evidence of student learning. Moreover, it will allow JMU to contribute further to the national conversation about higher education's value.

In the spring of 2017 we will seek volunteers for this initiative. To participate, volunteers will submit an assignment prompt along with student work consistent with the formerly mentioned outcomes. If you are interested in learning more about the project, you may contact John Hathcoat, Assistant Professor in Graduate Psychology and Associate Director of University Outcomes Assessment in the Center for Assessment and Research Studies at JMU.



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