



# the Human Community

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## The View from Maury Hall

By Meg Mulrooney, Associate Vice Provost, University Programs



Photo by Allyson Taylor

My dad was a construction worker, and I inherited his love of building projects. If you look closely at this 1909 image, you might recognize the front door to what is now Maury Hall. The photographer has captured the ritual laying of the building's corner stone, which was incorporated into the northern porch support. Newspaper accounts tell us that "an immense throng of people" turned out for the ceremony, led by the local Masonic Lodge, and that people across the state hailed the event as a harbinger of higher education place in Virginia's Progressive future. If I crane my neck in just the right way, I can look out and see that porch and I know the cornerstone is still there, a powerful symbol of the hopes and dreams attached to the institution as a whole.

Construction projects still dot this campus—some essential, some controversial, some tangible, and some conceptual. It might interest you to know that we

tinker with the General Education program on a regular basis. Since I arrived in 2005, thirteen entirely new courses have been added, five have been removed, and others have changed designations (such as PHYS becoming ASTR). The foundation of the program changes, too. I'm speaking here of the learning outcomes that undergird the entire edifice. And then there are the myriad embellishments ...

But I won't belabor the matter any more. In this year's newsletter, you'll learn about some

of the projects currently underway in General Education. You already know that we have a brand new website; in October we added a new video to the homepage, and we are developing new advising pages and tutorials for students and faculty. You'll also learn more about the removal of the Gs from program course prefixes, new Study Abroad opportunities, and more. If you have any questions or comments, please send a note to [gened@jmu.edu](mailto:gened@jmu.edu).

Sincerely,

Meg Mulrooney

Photo courtesy of JMU Special Collections



## Save the Date

Friday, Feb. 27, 2014

## GenEd Night

at the Forbes Center

hosted by the  
General Education Program

Teaching faculty will once again be guests of the GenEd program and enjoy an evening of food, fun, and festivity. (Performances are: Tony-award winning musical, Sweet Charity, or JMU's own brass band) 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

# Happy Anniversary: The General Education Student Conference Celebrates its Tenth Year

The 2014 General Education Student Conference was a fine success for several reasons. For the first time, the conference was held in Rose Library on Friday afternoon of Family Weekend – October. The library was a beautiful venue to celebrate the 10th anniversary of the conference. Over 80 students participated -- the most in the history of the conference – and there were 22 panels of presenters representing courses from all clusters. As usual, there was a wide range of presentation titles such as “Restorative Justice”, “Rethinking College Experience and Thought”, “You are Nothing Until You are Talked About”, “Pop Culture and Body Image”, “Debunking the Belief of a Model Minority”, and “Voices from Long Ago: Listening to and Learning from Sources”. There were also panel presentations on diverse issues like writing to make a point, the viability of national tests, primary sources in history, pop culture and technology as well as an enthralling discussion about the General Education program in



Maria Restrepo Chavez, pictured above, was nominated by two professors for excellent work in two different clusters. She says, “Overall, I believe the conference is a great way to showcase student work. I believe this conference is what General Education classes are all about. It’s a way to show students, parents and educators that a liberal arts education is worth it.”

*Photos courtesy of JMU Photography Services.*

Scotland from the perspective of student participants.

The General Education Student Conference helps JMU communicate the continued importance of a liberal education and highlight the exceptional work done by undergraduates in General Education courses. The conference

concluded Friday evening with a fine banquet that honored the accomplishments of the student presenters. Dr. David Daniel, recipient of the 2014 General Education Distinguished Faculty Award, offered a humorous and thoughtful keynote address on the importance of a liberal education.

Rose Library offered unique spaces, like the second-floor lounge area shown here, that facilitated discussion between presenters and audience members.



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## Please join us in congratulating the student presenters:

Melissa Allen  
Corey Allikas  
Kevin Amrein  
Leilani Bartell  
Peter Belechak  
Miajah Brabham  
Katie Brendli  
Colleen Calpin  
Alicia Campos  
Rebecca Ciafre  
Michael Comer  
Lauren Como  
Ben Cronin  
Jessica Crowley  
Samantha D'Addario  
Margo Deihl  
Kenna Dickard  
Jude Doiron  
Chloe Donnelly  
Erin Durham  
Lauren Field

Alexandra Flood  
Matt Fracasso  
Alanna Furey  
Cary Gentry  
Amanda Godby  
Madeleine Grap  
Laura Gyamfi  
Arrianna Hamrah  
Evan Hunsberger  
Diego Jauregui  
Olivia Jewell  
Hannah Jones  
Elizabeth Karras  
Aaron Kline  
Rachel Knotts  
Haley Lawrie  
Conner Lewis  
Amanda Libero  
Lani Maddox  
Craig Manning  
Chase Maszle

Noah McClelland  
Clare McGowan  
Olivia Meyer  
Laura Mills  
Amanda Morris  
Rachel Nelson  
Allison O'Donnell  
Taylor O'Donnell  
Sara Padilla  
Lucia Petillo  
Jacqueline Pirrung  
Seth Rapkins  
Jordyn Renaghan  
Maria Restrepo Chavez  
Katelyn Richardson  
Joanna Richter  
Mallory Roach  
Kyle Rothemich  
John Schengber  
Madison Schrantz  
Casey Schroeder

Taylor Sheppard-Brown  
Anne Sherman  
Garrett Simkins  
Stephanie Smith  
Kelsey Smoot  
Jamie Surrick  
Taylor Szeligowski  
Lauren Teter  
Catherine Torres  
Alyssa Trainum  
Amanda Trenchard  
Lia Verdi  
Bria Washington  
Meadow Wiggington  
Haley Winter  
Ryan Yarnoff  
Shae Yeager  
Elizabeth Zulauf

**The conference was a rewarding experience and boosted my confidence in public speaking. It was an honor and an incredible learning opportunity to share research and work done in my General Education classes with the audience. It was a special moment for my family – a proud parent moment – as they witnessed my hard work in these classes.**

**– Margo Deihl.**

Ms. Deihl made presentations in both the 2013 and 2014 conferences.



Short caption here, Short caption here, Short caption here, Short caption here, Short caption here, Short caption here about 18-20 wds

**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.

Cindy Allen  
Chris Arndt  
Terry Beitzel  
Rebecca Brannon  
Daisy Breneman  
Larry Burton  
Stephen Chappell  
Andrew Connell  
Christian Davis  
Kerry Dobransky  
Allison Fagan  
Sheila Fielding  
T.J. Fitzgerald  
Evan Friss

Michael Galgano  
Susan Ghiaciuc  
Douglas Harrison  
Joanne Hartog  
Yongguang Hu  
Scott Lunsford  
Paul Mabrey  
James McGinnis  
Cathryn Molloy  
Uchenna Onuzulike  
John Ott  
Steven Reich  
Michael Seth  
Debra Sutton

Jay Varner  
Shanil Virani  
Emily Westkaemper

We also recognize the faculty members who volunteered to serve as moderators for panel sessions:

Cindy Allen  
Chris Arndt  
Terry Beitzel  
Daisy Breneman  
Stephen Chappell  
Kerry Dobransky  
Sheila Fielding

T.J. Fitzgerald  
Michael Galgano  
Susan Ghiaciuc  
Joanne Hartog  
Yongguang Hu  
Skip Hyser  
Paul Mabrey  
Uchenna Onuzulike  
Steven Reich  
Michael Seth  
Debra Sutton  
Jay Varner  
Emily Westkaemper

## GenEd's Summer Semester in Scotland

During the summer of 2014, a group of twenty-four students took 12 credits towards their General Education requirements while in residence at the University of Edinburgh and the University of St. Andrews. In Edinburgh, students took Scottish Literature (Cluster 2) and Global Politics (Cluster 4). As experiential learning is a fundamental part of the program, Scottish short stories and poems by Robert Burns came to life during nightly ghost tours of Edinburgh's haunted underground vaults as did politics during debates between locals about the pro and cons of Scottish independence just two months before the actual vote. In St. Andrews, students took Geology (Cluster 3) and Micro-Sociology (Cluster 5). Studying the environment and rock formations in the Highlands required demanding coursework as well as waterproof clothing and hiking boots. To JMU students, their time in the Scottish capital and at St. Andrews, one of the UK's most prestigious universities, proved a life changing experience.



GGEOL students on a field trip to Dunnottar Castle and Culter Castle. Photo courtesy of Dr. Jennifer Chambers, Dept. of Earth and Environmental Sciences, St. Andrews' University.

### SAGE Grants

Cosponsored by the Office of International Programs, Study Abroad General Education (SAGE) grants provide funds for faculty members to travel overseas and make plans for a new version of an existing General Education course. Last year's recipients were Prof. Mike Renfroe (BIO) for a version of GBIO103 to run in St. Croix, Virgin Islands, and Profs. Kim Duvall and Jaime Kurtz (PSYCH), who proposed a version of GPSYC160 to run in Sweden. Thanks to everyone who applied for the 2015 grants. The deadline was November 28, 2014 and awards will be announced soon. For future planning, consult the SAGE webpage at [www.jmu.edu/international/abroad/faculty/sage.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/international/abroad/faculty/sage.shtml).



The beach at St. Croix, where GBIO 103 students will go snorkeling to explore reef life.

Photo courtesy Dr. Mike Renfroe, Biology Department.



### It's TRUE: We're Removing the 'G'!

We are removing the G from the course prefix in all General Education courses. The proposal to remove the G from program courses came out of our 2011-2012 APR, and conversations last year confirmed positive support for the idea. In the late 1990s, the G was a positive symbol of the faculty-designed learning outcomes that made our program and the courses in it distinctive. However, the G has since become a negative symbol for many students and some external stakeholders, who mistakenly interpret the 'general' in general education as 'easy' or 'remedial.'

Multiple offices are already working together to make this administrative (not curricular) change effective for Summer and Fall 2015. The Registrar's office is making behind the scenes changes in Peoplesoft, and the Office of Academic Policy and Curriculum Development is covering the majority of catalog changes. We are working closely with other offices like Career and Academic Planning and University Advising to inform advisors and students. Each academic unit is responsible for changing the unit's publications, such as advising worksheets, brochures, and websites.

In removing the G, we expect to see consistency in the course prefixes across the program. We also expect that these courses will no longer cause transcript confusion for JMU students and alumni applying to graduate and professional programs. Most importantly, we expect that this change will promote more accurate perceptions about the academic rigor of General Education courses, their alignment with the disciplines, and the continued value of a liberal education. For more specific information about the G removal, please see [www.jmu.edu/gened/nomoregs.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/gened/nomoregs.shtml).

## Summer Grants

The summer grants program is uniquely designed to strengthen and encourage collaboration among faculty teaching General Education courses. We welcome proposals from groups of faculty (at least three per proposal) engaged in collaborative course modification, improving alignment across multiple sections of the same course, integrating new pedagogies, or other similar projects.

Last summer, the program funded three faculty projects. Under the leadership of Meredith Conti, the first grant pursued greater alignment of student learning outcomes across multiple sections of a single course, IEA 210: Introduction to Theatre, located in Cluster Two's Visual and Performing Arts area. A second

grant, from Wellness faculty in Cluster Five and guided by Julie Wallace-Carr, worked to develop a bike and pedestrian safety module that would be shared across all courses within the area. Tim Ball led the third grant, originating in the human communication area of Cluster One. Faculty developed, through a collaboration across all six JMU colleges, a new Communication Rubric that has the potential to align academic expectations for presentations across disciplines. All three grant proposal directors shared final reports for their efforts during a Fall meeting of the General Education Council. It was a humbling experience to see the commitment of JMU faculty peers to improving pedagogy within General Education.

**Do YOU have a collaborative project in mind? Faculty members teaching within the General Education program are encouraged to consider applying for grants for Summer 2015. The call for proposals for grants should go out in early December 2014. Check the program website for updates.**

## General Education Council

Under the leadership of current chair Phil Heap (Economic), GEC has shifted its structure in the last year to include four subcommittees: The GenEd Student Conference, Summer Grants, Distinguished Teacher Award, and General Education as Liberal Education. The last subcommittee is particularly interested in projects designed to promote faculty and student engagement with the program, to correct students' misperceptions about academic rigor, and to assert the value of a liberal education in the face of increasing vocationalism. The GEC continues to function as a college-level C&I committee charged with curricular oversight of the general education program and also serves an advisory body to the program staff. Thank you to the GEC's current area representatives:

**Thad Herron**  
SCOM (Cluster 1), on leave Fall 2014

**Amanda Biesecker**  
ISAT, (Cluster 3)

**Bernie Kaussler**  
Political Science (Cluster 4)

**Jana Walters**  
Kinesiology (Cluster 5)

**Laura Katzman**  
Art History (CVPA rep)

**Michael Moghtader**  
WRTC (CAL rep)

**Susan Barnes**  
(COE rep)

**Eric Pappas**  
ISAT (CISE rep)

**Claire Lyons**  
Psychology (CHBS rep)

**Matt Rutherford**  
(COB rep)

**Debbie Warnaar**  
Chemistry (CSM rep)

**Donna Sundre**  
(CARS)

**Mary Morsch**  
(CAP)

**Kathy Clarke**  
(L&LT)

**Johnathan Walker**  
IDLS (Faculty Senate)

**A. Kathy Corena**  
(SGA)

**Emilia Otero**  
(SGA)



Provost Dr. A. Jerry Benson congratulates Susan Halsell, Dr. Nicholas Swartz and Ms. Laura Blosser. Photos by Steve Zumbro

## Provost's Award for Excellence in Academic Advising

This award is given each year to individuals who have made extraordinary contributions to the University through advising. The 2014 recipients are: Dr. Nicholas Swartz, in the Department of Political Science, recognized with the Provost Award for graduate advising; Ms. Laura Blosser, in the Department of Health Sciences, recognized with the Provost Award for departmental advising; and Susan Halsell, in the Biology Department, recognized with the Provost Award for freshman advising.



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Please consider making a gift to the General Education Program at JMU. Your gift enhances academics, provides support for scholarships, and helps attract and retain top-quality faculty members and students.

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