



Faculty Emeritus
Association

A photograph of a university campus at sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm, golden glow over the scene. In the foreground, two people with backpacks are walking away from the camera on a paved path. The path is lined with trees, some of which have yellowing leaves, suggesting autumn. A street lamp is visible on the left side of the path. The background shows a grassy area and more trees under a hazy sky.

Faculty Emeriti Association Newsletter

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From the President's Desk

By Kay Knickrehm

President, Faculty Emeriti Association

Hello Everyone,

This is my final letter as president of the JMU Faculty Emeriti Association. I could say that this makes me sad, but that would be a lie. I have enjoyed serving as president, but I am ready to relinquish this incredibly powerful position to the extremely capable Steve Smith. You will enjoy having someone in charge who is **actually organized**.

I want to thank everyone for their kind support during my tenure in office and especially in this last year as I have struggled to balance obligations with the care of my husband who was suffering from Fronto-temporal dementia. This organization has long provided companionship and comfort.

Soon after I retired in 2009, our son was diagnosed with leukemia. Steve and I had barely started interacting with the association (primarily the wine group!) when our son required a bone marrow transplant. We had to move to Richmond for a year to care for him in isolation. Mary Lou Wylie organized a monthly delivery from members of the association of a care package. People I had never met sent useful gifts. Every month, opening that box, felt like Christmas. I could not believe how thoughtful people were. We received packets of note cards and stamps, games to occupy us, snacks to cheer us up, soothing CD's to listen to,, and audio books. It was truly amazing and people were so generous. I knew then that I wanted to give back to this group. If you are ever in need of support, this organization will help.

I urge all the members who are local to join one or more of our interest groups. As I have noted many times, all those people who seemed really annoying in committee meetings (for those of you who are Catholic, I am convinced that time spent in committee meetings counts as time served in purgatory) turn out to be absolutely delightful human beings when you each have a glass of wine in your hands!

Thank you again for your kindness and support.

Kay



A Letter From the President Elect

By Steve Smith

President Elect, Faculty Emeriti Association

Greetings friends,

This may be a bit unusual for the President-Elect to have a letter in the Faculty Emeriti Association newsletter, but I think it's appropriate.

First, I'd like to sincerely thank our outgoing President, Kay Knickrehm. Kay has done a superior job in keeping us together, engaged and informed. Not only has she done this while she has dealt with personal family tragedy, but she has done it for 4 YEARS! That is truly going beyond the call of duty, and since it will be sometime in October or November until the next FEA newsletter comes out, I thought it was appropriate for me to highlight and recognize her now. I can guarantee you that I will not be serving a 4-year term—only 2-years. That will be plenty. From the bottom of my heart, thank you Kay for all of the time you have given to the Faculty Emeriti Association over the past 4 years.

I'd also like to thank the Nominating Committee for putting forth the slate of FEA officers that included me as President-Elect, Terry Wessel as Vice President, Jack Butt as Secretary, and Tom Benzing and Brad Roof as co-Treasurers. We also have a terrific Board of Directors who are volunteering their time and energy for you. That's a wonderful group of leaders and we look forward to serving the Faculty Emeriti Association with gusto.

During the past year, we have moved from the Advancement Division (now Philanthropy & Engagement) to the School of Professional and Continuing Education (SPCE) under the leadership of Nick Swartz and Sarah MacDonald. We are excited about our partnership and look forward to their ideas regarding how we can become an even stronger organization for the 400 FEA members.

By serving you, we want your input and your ideas---as well as your engagement. Please share your wisdom and suggestions with any of us on the Board. With 4 major events annually and 12 interest groups providing well over 100 gatherings each year, there are ample opportunities to get together. Like Kay says in her President's letter in this issue, you're able to have deserved fun without all the committee meetings.

Thanks for your support and I look forward to serving as your President for the 2026-28 term of office. Go Dukes!

Steve



News, Events, and Opportunities

Inauguration of James Schmidt & New Strategic Plan

[View Full Plan Here](#)

JMU gathered at 2 pm on April 8 for the inauguration of James C. Schmidt as the seventh president of the university. After the ceremony at the Atlantic Union Bank Center, there was a celebration on the Festival lawn featuring food, games and music.

The president has unveiled the university's new strategic plan. The plan includes the following (abbreviated) goals for 2040:

- Improve retention to 95%
- Lift graduation rate to 75%
- Achieve 98% career outcomes
- Reach top 50 public university status
- Reduce acceptance rate to 54%
- Grow enrollment to 30,000 students
- Expand housing to 60%
- Grow economic impact to \$2B
- Raise research spending to \$75M+
- Award 80 doctorates yearly
- Increase giving to \$75M



JMU President Emeriti Linwood Rose, President Jim Schmidt and former President Jon Alger.

Future Events Venue

We are aware that those with mobility issues have had considerable difficulty getting to our luncheons. We are pleased to announce that whenever available we will be moving these events to the Duke Club room in the stadium. We will schedule when there is ample parking available in the deck. We are able to do this thanks to the efforts of Dean Nick Swartz to secure additional funds for our use from the university.

Thank you, Nick!

Interest Group Survey

Interest Groups have always been an important part of the Faculty Emeriti Association. It's a good chance to socialize, try new flavors and restaurants, discuss a good book, go to performances, and make new friends in smaller group settings.

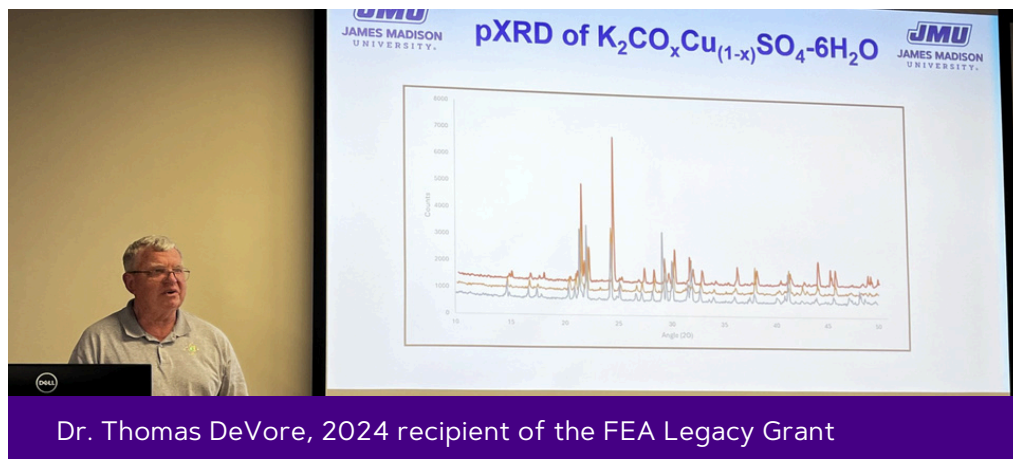
If you are interested in:

- Joining an interest group
- Exploring interest groups other than one that you are already involved in
- Have ideas of other interest groups that you think the FEA should start
- Have interest in joining a private FEA members social media group for updates ...

Please complete [this survey](#) by **May 25th, 2026**.

Note if you are already satisfied with your current interest group involvement, you do NOT need to complete this survey.

News, Events, and Opportunities



Dr. Thomas DeVore, 2024 recipient of the FEA Legacy Grant

Legacy Award

The 2026 Faculty legacy award recipient is **Holly Yanacek** from the college of Arts and Letters. The legacy award is given each year to an outstanding, tenured faculty member and rotates among the colleges. The award amount is \$5,000, half of which comes from donations by the retired faculty and half from the President's office. I am pleased to announce that our new president will continue to support this grant. Thank you, Dr. Schmidt.

Dr. Holly Yanacek is the Research Development Associate for the College of Arts & Letters and a tenured Associate Professor of German in the Department of World Languages & Cultures.

Her research focuses on 19th- to 21st-century German-language

literature and culture, emotion studies, narrative theory, gender studies, care ethics, animal studies, and posthumanism.

Her publications include the monograph *Rethinking Feeling* (Bloomsbury, 2026), and the co-edited volumes *Animals, Machines, and AI* (DeGruyter, 2021) and *Keywords for Today* (Oxford UP, 2018). Holly is also a published literary translator from German to English.

Holly's research has been supported by Fulbright, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), the German Historical Institute, the JMU College of Arts & Letters, and the Madison Caucus for Gender Equality. She is thrilled to have the opportunity to help CAL colleagues secure grants to pursue their research, scholarship, and creative work.

Recovering Waste Heat Using the Dehydration/Rehydration of Tutton Salts

By: Thomas DeVore, Ph.D.,
Professor of Physical Chemistry

More than 50% of the energy produced by burning fossil fuels in industrial processes is lost as waste heat. Recovering this lost heat would greatly reduce the amount of fuels consumed each year.

While several approaches have been suggested, one of the more promising is through the reversible hydration/dehydration of a metal salt hydrate. Dr. DeVore's lab has been investigating the thermal properties of several potassium Tutton salts.

His presentation will address how his lab synthesizes the compounds using solution methods, powder X-ray diffraction, and ATR-FTIR to establish the dehydration pathways, and how the use of differential scanning calorimeters measure the enthalpy change for each decomposition step. He will share recent results.

News, Events, and Opportunities

FEA trip to Shenandoah Musical

Come join your friends in FEA as we travel up to Shenandoah University in Winchester to the Shenandoah Summer Music Theatre to experience a matinee performance of Beautiful: The Carole King Musical on Wednesday July 29th.

Beautiful: The Carole King Musical is a Tony and Grammy-winning jukebox musical detailing the true story of Carole King's rise from a Brooklyn teenager to a legendary songwriter and solo artist. The show features her iconic hits—including "You've Got a Friend" and "Natural Woman"—alongside songs by Gerry Goffin, Barry Mann, and Cynthia Weil. We have secured tickets at an excellent price but need to pay for them by mid-May.

Click [this link](#) to secure your reservation for this fun bus trip.

The price of a ticket, most of which will not require any stairs, plus transportation from JMU is \$55 per person. We will meet the JMU from lot R10 at 12:30 for a 1 pm departure, arriving 15 minutes before the 2:30 showtime. We'll return after the show and anticipate a 6m arrival back to JMU.

Please contact Elizabeth Ihle at 540-421-5257 if you have questions about the trip.



Bus ride to the Smithsonian Mall

FEA to the Smithsonian Mall

A happy group of FEA members and their friends journeyed to the Smithsonian Mall on Wednesday, April 15, for a few hours of museum-going. Traffic was heavy, and it appeared that the DC streets were already prepping for the nation's 250th birthday this summer. The weather was perfect.

A number of participants visited the National Gallery of Art which had special exhibits on American art and on Mary Cassatt, an American-born Impressionist painter, who spend most of her life in Paris. She was famous for painting the everyday lives of women and children and was a friend of painter Edgar Degas. The National Gallery has a substantial number of Cassatt's paintings.

Spring 2026 FEA Luncheon

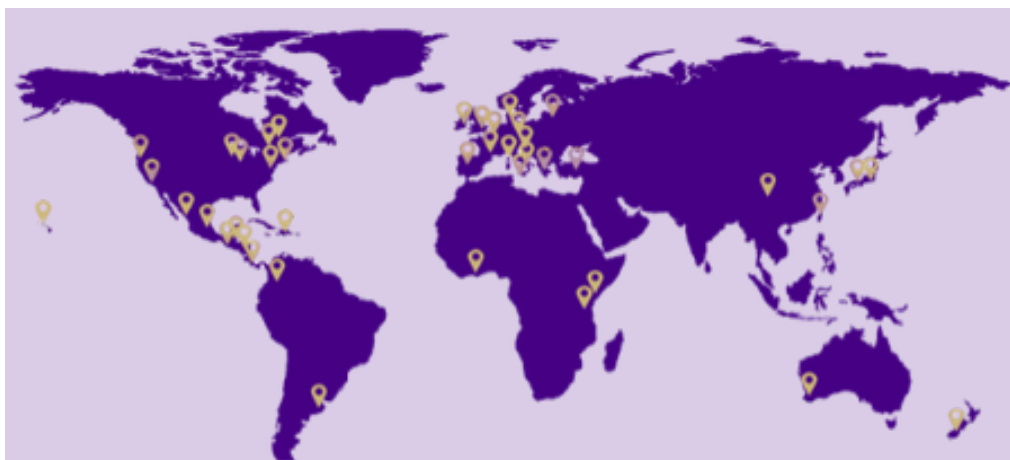
Speaker: Kathleen Sensabaugh, Director of the Study Abroad Programs.

Katie addressed an audience of 40-plus at the Presidents Hall (D-Hall) on March 17. She shared some of her personal history, including her high school “exchange student” experience in England and her graduate work in International Justice and Transformation at the University of Cape Town in South Africa.

Her return to JMU led to several positions within the Study Abroad Programs. In her eight years, the programs have expanded beyond the “Semester Abroad” opportunities in London, Antwerp, Salamanca, and other locations that existed when many retirees were on campus.

Today, 1,450 participating students from more than 100 degree programs have access to these same semester-long opportunities, as well as short-term (3- to 10-week) programs across 40 countries worldwide. JMU also participates in the International Network of Universities, offering exchange experiences at 18 different universities in Japan, Taiwan, South Korea, Indonesia, Australia, and more [see photo].

Katie also invited FEA members to contact her regarding the Lifelong Learning Institute and to check out @jmglobal on Instagram. The expansive nature of the Study Abroad Programs may open doors for those who love world travel. **Thank you, Katie.**



JMU's Established Study Abroad Programs



Spring Luncheon gathering.

Dues are Due Soon!

The James Madison University Faculty Emeriti Association has around 400 members who have paid lifetime or annual membership dues.

As it states in our by-laws, all members (except Honorary members) are asked to either pay an annual or lifetime fee.

The annual membership dues are **\$25** and the lifetime dues are **\$250** (for those newly retired faculty, I'm betting that you live longer than 10 years and would benefit by choosing the lifetime route!) and are requested by **July 1, 2026.**

Notices will be distributed (you may have already received it) shortly and we would appreciate payments by the July 1 deadline. Credit cards payments are encouraged. Many thanks.

Remembering & Welcoming

Faculty Emeriti Passing:

We are saddened to have lost the following Faculty Emeriti Association and retired faculty/staff members since the last newsletter:

Alexander Henry Frank de Jonge, a professor and author, died peacefully at his home in Lancaster, VA, on Tuesday, January 20, 2026. Professor de Jonge was formerly the head of the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department at JMU.

Professor Emeritus of Psychology, **Dr. Wayne Engel**, died Thursday, December 25, 2025, in Harrisonburg at the age of 93. In addition to his work at JMU, Dr. Engle is the former President of the Virginia Psychological Association.

Condolences are extended to the families of all of our departed Faculty Emeriti and retired faculty/ staff.

A Brief Tribute to Steve Knickrehm

(1950-2026) By: Kay Knickrehm

Many of you knew Steve, who passed away at the age of 75 in January. The majority of his years at JMU were spent in Administration and Finance, where he, at one time or another, oversaw planning and analysis, the operating budget, HR, risk management (including the campus police) and real property and new construction.

What many don't know is how dedicated he was to the academic mission of the university. At the time he was hired, the professional administrators were called administrative faculty and they occupied positions that otherwise could have gone to instructional faculty. Steve took this appellation seriously. He voluntarily taught a course every semester he was at JMU, ultimately teaching courses in political science, public administration, management, and health sciences. And of course, he did this on top of working full time in administration. When he first came to JMU in the 1980s, he discovered that faculty salaries were tied to a peer group established by the State Council on Higher Education. The average faculty salary could not go above a certain percentage of the average salary for the peer group.



Steve Knickrehm (1950-2026)

Every time people would advocate for higher salaries, they were told that we were bound by our peer group and there was nothing to be done. Steve immediately saw that there was indeed a solution.

He set about getting us into a different peer group. First he researched comparable institutions all over the country and then he chose the ones with the highest salaries. Then he talked SCHEV into redoing our peer group, arguing that JMU had progressed to a new level. SCHEV agreed and as a result, faculty salaries rose. When Steve was about five years away from retirement, he talked his boss, Charlie King, into allowing him to transition to full-time teaching. Charlie agreed with the stipulation that Steve work on some special projects in the summers. His position was given to Health Sciences as a freebie.

As a side note, when Steve left Administration and Finance, the things that he was managing alone, went to three people. I realize that I am prejudiced but he was truly a good person and dedicated to JMU's mission.

Remembering & Welcoming

New FEA Members:

The Faculty Emeriti Association welcomes the following new members who have recently retired, been granted Faculty Emeriti status by the Board of Visitors and have a complimentary membership to the Faculty Emeriti Association for the remainder of the academic year. Congratulations and welcome aboard!

Jeannie Corey
Professor, College of Health & Behavioral Sciences; School of Nursing

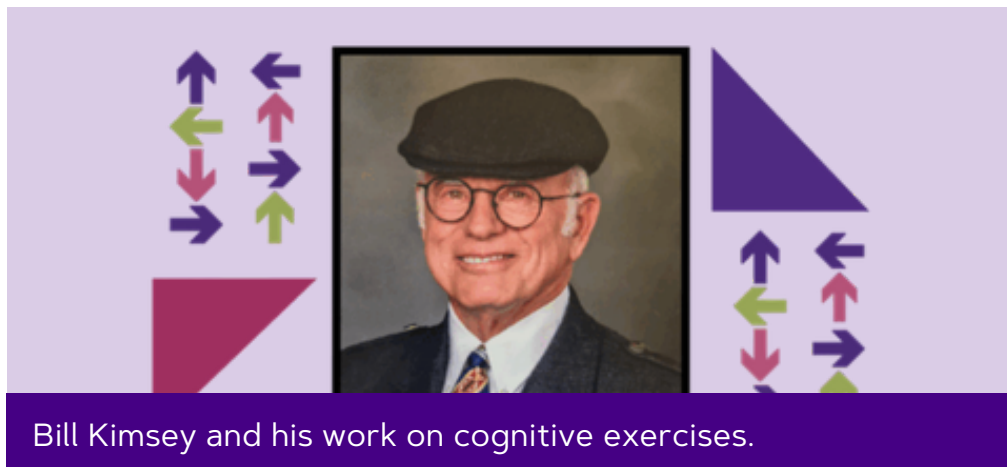
Joseph Taylor
Professor, College of Visual & Performing Arts; School of Music

Kathy Sarver
Division of Philanthropy & Engagement; Planned Giving

Debbie Jordan
Division of Philanthropy & Engagement; Advancement Information Services

Regan Byrne
College of Visual & Performing Arts; Forbes Center

Christy Morgan: Division of Athletics; Head Field Hockey Coach



Bill Kimsey and his work on cognitive exercises.

Spotlight on Our Members

Bill Kimsey has shared the following website for anyone interested in cognitive exercises designed to improve thinking and memory.
[Read More Here](#)

Congratulations to **Dr. Bill Sanders** who is celebrating his 100th birthday on June 12. Here's to enjoying the benefits of a life well lived!