



2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY®

“Innovation happens when we’re willing to question assumptions, learn in real time, and move forward together with curiosity and purpose.”



ABOUT THE COVER
Inspirational & Forward-Looking

This cover design evokes a spirit of innovation and fresh thinking. The sky, rotated 90 degrees, symbolizes a shift in perspective — a core value of JMU X-Labs. The vibrant gradient, merging JMU’s signature purple with JMU X-Labs blue, conveys creativity, energy, and forward-thinking exploration. Together, these elements reflect JMU X-Labs’ role as a hub for bold, experiential learning and cross-disciplinary exploration.

Cover Photo Courtesy of James Madison University

Letter from the Executive Director

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Partners,

This past year marked a chapter of expansion and intention in the evolution of JMU X-Labs. What began a decade ago as a launchpad for bold ideas and unexpected collaborations is growing steadily into a strategic engine for disrupting the norm. The groundwork laid in JMU X-Labs’ early years continues to inform our momentum today, as we deepen our impact, broaden our reach, and stay fiercely committed to reimagining innovation itself.

What does innovation mean at JMU X-Labs? For us, innovation is a disciplined pursuit of the new — approached with curiosity, guided by integrity, and shaped through collaboration. It’s about venturing into unfamiliar territory across disciplines, experiences, and perspectives. Sometimes it’s messy. Often it’s uncertain. But within that uncertainty, we create the conditions for insight, experimentation, and meaningful progress.

When faculty and staff, students, industry partners, and university leaders collaborate across disciplines and perspectives, we create space for discovery, risk-taking, and new ways of thinking. This past year was full of that! The result isn’t always predictable, but that’s the point. Innovation happens when we’re willing to question assumptions, learn in real time, and move forward together with curiosity and purpose.

Throughout this report, you will see details about our expansion and intentions this past year. **We welcomed dynamic new team members who brought bold ideas and the drive to build systems that make it easier for faculty, students, and partners to plug into JMU X-Labs with clarity.** They’ve devoted countless hours to the hard, often invisible work of

making JMU X-Labs and innovation more accessible, more collaborative, and more impactful for everyone who engages with it. **We’re proud of the industry partnerships we’ve forged that defy convention — built on trust, shared vision, and a willingness to rethink everything.** Together, we’re co-creating a new model for what higher education and industry can achieve. This untapped space is especially promising and intriguing in too many ways to list.

Looking ahead, scaling our reach and amplifying our impact are imperatives. **Over the next decade, our resources and energy will be dedicated to building the infrastructure, partnerships, and systems that enable us to expand access, deepen engagement, and multiply our influence.** As our highest priorities, we will invest boldly in collaborations that drive transformation, champion inclusive innovation, and nurture a culture where possibility is embraced, resilience is built, and boundary-breaking ideas take flight.

Thank you to our partners, colleagues, and students for your continuous support and engagement. It’s delightful to reimagine and co-create with you.

To those just discovering what’s possible when you co-create with JMU X-Labs — welcome. We invite you to disrupt the norm with us.

Speaking of disruption, there are rumblings about a name change for our second decade. Stay tuned!

With boldness and anticipation,

Connie

Connie Frigo, Doctor of Musical Arts
Executive Director
JMU X-Labs

JMU X-Labs Team



Dr. Connie Frigo
Executive Director



Mikey Torres
Operations Manager & Esports Director



Cari Orebaugh
Program & Initiatives Manager



Melissa Gaines
Programs Assistant



William Domonoske
Lab Manager



Jamie Calcagno-Roach
Director of Faculty Development



Adrienne Hooker
Assistant Director, Engaged Learning



Dr. Masoud Kaveh
Assistant Director, Engaged Learning

PHOTO COURTESY OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

CELEBRATING 2024-2025

- ✓ Anthropology
- ✓ Biology
- ✓ Chemistry
- ✓ Communication Studies
- ✓ Computer Information Systems
- ✓ Computer Science
- ✓ Economics
- ✓ Elementary Education
- ✓ Exploratory
- ✓ Finance
- ✓ General Psychology
- ✓ Geography
- ✓ History
- ✓ Information Technology
- ✓ Justice Studies
- ✓ Kinesiology
- ✓ Marketing
- ✓ Mathematics
- ✓ Media Arts & Design
- ✓ Political Science
- ✓ Public Administration
- ✓ Quantitative Finance
- ✓ Secondary Education
- ✓ Special Education
- ✓ Sport & Recreation Management
- ✓ Writing, Rhetoric & Technical Communication

26
MAJORS
REPRESENTED

6
COURSES
DURING THE
ACADEMIC
YEAR

3
Fall 2024
Courses

3
Spring 2025
Courses

82
STUDENTS
ENROLLED IN
COURSES

18
FACULTY +
INDUSTRY
EXPERTS

X-LABS TEAM

5
Staff Members

1
Director of
Faculty
Development

2
Assistant Directors
of Engaged Learning

5
Innovation & Impact
Student Fellows

13 Department
Presentations,
→ **570**
Reaching Faculty Members

3
INDUSTRY
PARTNERS

First
Air Force One

Elucian

Dynamic
Aviation

ESPORTS

7
Esports Titles
Represented

111
Students Engaged
across 38 Majors

Raised nearly
\$5K
for Esports from
26 donors on
#JMUGivingDay

12
On-site
Regional & National
Competitions

About JMU X-Labs

JMU X-Labs was built 10 years ago on the belief that the most important problems of our time aren't going to be solved by one discipline alone. They require new ways of thinking, new combinations of people, and a lot of experimentation. At JMU X-Labs, there's no solo work; everything is done in groups so that different skills and perspectives combine for the best solutions. Think of it as a team-focused zone where everyone — students, professors, staff, and industry partners — work together to tackle real-world problems that need multiple viewpoints to solve.

Everything in JMU X-Labs starts with a problem to solve! From there, we follow a special problem-solving approach called design thinking. This process helps us understand who we're solving the problem for, brainstorm creative ideas, and keep testing and improving our solutions.

But what makes us truly unique — both at James Madison University (JMU) and across higher education — is that we do not operate like a

traditional academic department; we are within the Division of Research, Economic Development and Innovation (REDI) at JMU. With support from REDI and additional JMU partners we:

- Co-design experiential learning experiences with students and industry partners
- Empower students to lead, fail forward, and build real things — like 3D prototypes, policy briefs, and digital tools
- Treat faculty like collaborators, not just instructors - drawing on their expertise while connecting them to applied industry projects

Our courses have tackled problems ranging from drone disaster response, to food system resilience, to national security innovation - and our students haven't just learned, they've discovered solutions. Guided by our mission, we are eager to strengthen student, faculty and industry relationships, enabling us to discover a future where industry and higher education truly build together.

The "X" in JMU X-Labs represents the intersection of disciplines, expertise, and experiences where innovative solutions emerge. At JMU X-Labs we ground our work in:

OUR VALUES *Who we are*

- ✓ Inclusive Excellence
- ✓ Engaged Learning
- ✓ Community
- ✓ Impact Initiatives

OUR PRINCIPLES *How we work*

- ✓ Design Thinking
- ✓ Collaborative Innovation
- ✓ Systems Thinking
- ✓ Creative Inquiry

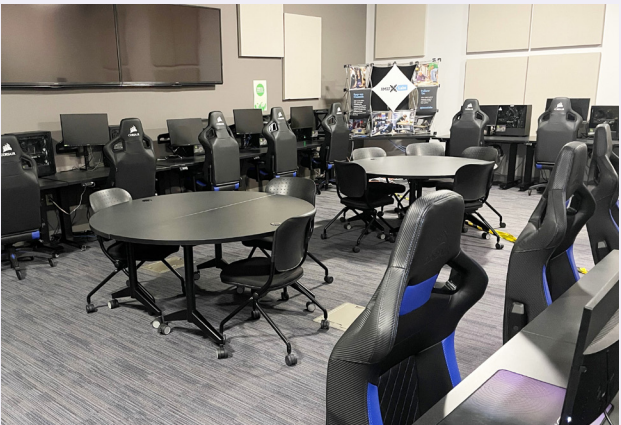
JMU X-Labs Spaces

JMU X-Labs courses are held in experiential learning environments that break the traditional classroom mold. Our unique spaces — The Lab, The Tank, The Esports Arena — are in Lakeview Hall.



THE TANK is the ultimate collaborative space. All tables and chairs are mobile, making reconfiguration for classes, workshops, or events easier than ever before. Mobile whiteboard tables flip upright for better visibility as teams brainstorm and design.

Both The Lab and The Tank are outfitted with non-tech design thinking materials — like whiteboards, markers, sticky notes, craft supplies, and more — for learners to use to experiment, visualize, and share their ideas.



THE ARENA is a high-end space designed to provide the ultimate gaming experience. As the primary training ground for JMU Esports, The Arena is equipped with 12 highly customized Dell stations, ergonomic Corsair gaming chairs, three large display screens for anything from streaming to presentations and a workspace for practices.



THE LAB is a space that ignites collaborative creativity and learning. During courses, JMU students, faculty and staff are empowered to bring their ideas to life in this hands-on Design Thinking Studio. Complete with three new Interactive Touch Dell monitors, microphones, and speakers installed in January 2025, our atmosphere allows for easy connection with virtual partners, consulting, and prototyping.

Industry Partner Engagement



JMU X-Labs in action at the inaugural Reimagined Internship Visioning Session.

Over the course of the year, the JMU X-Labs team developed a focused partnership strategy to co-create with forward-thinking industry partners eager to collaborate with higher education and invest in the next generation of problem solvers.

Industry Outreach

In February 2025, by invitation, leadership from JMU X-Labs, JMU Corporate & Foundation Relations, and Ellucian, presented to the Northern Virginia Technology Council Board Meeting on The Reimagined Internship program.

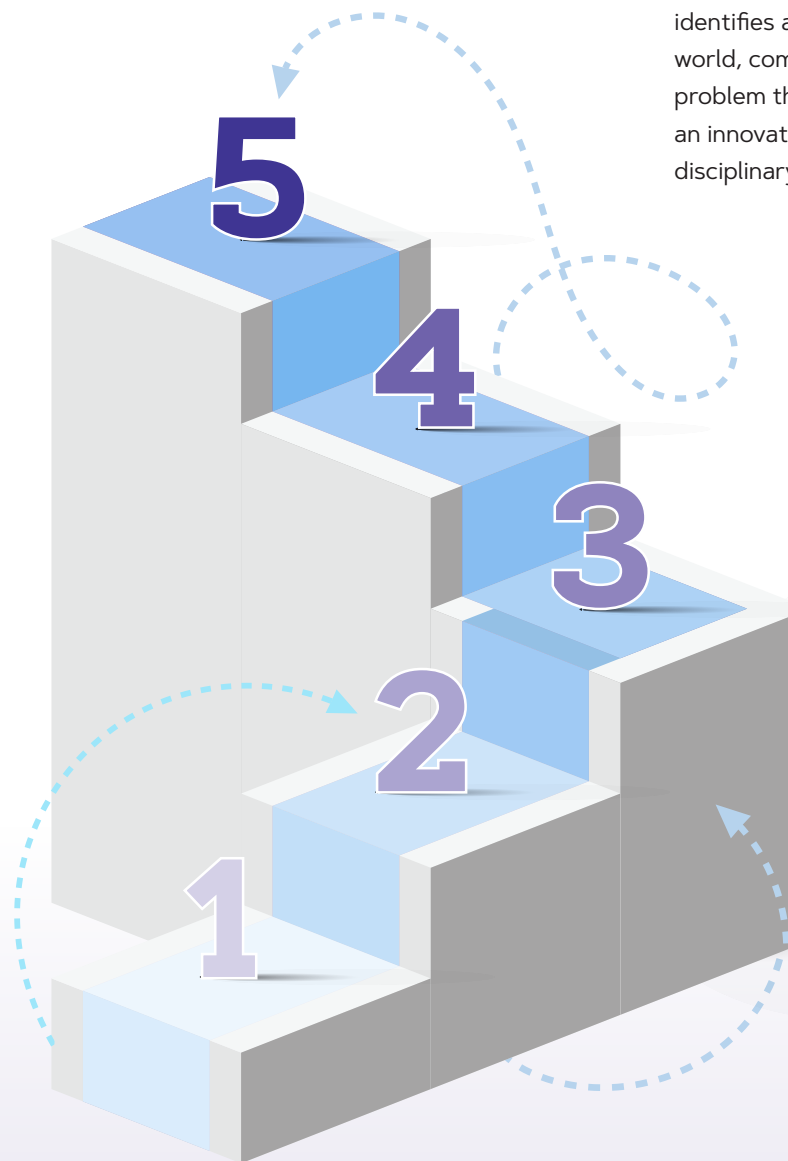
In May 2025, leadership from JMU X-Labs and the Division of Research, Economic Development & Innovation presented a webinar to the JMU Federal Dukes on our industry partnership program and ways to engage with us.

In June 2025, JMU X-Labs designed and launched the first Reimagined Internship Visioning Session for eight Northern Virginia Technology Council companies. During the 4-hour, interactive session, attendees:

- Reimagined the traditional internship model and explored new possibilities.
- Gained first-hand insights from Ellucian executives as they shared the remarkable success of their partnership in our pilot program.
- Engaged in a mini-design sprint to help them reimagine their company's internship model.
- Strategized with JMU leadership in innovation and workforce development to turn ideas into action.

Step by Step: Reimagine the Internship

This year, JMU X-Labs worked with forward-thinking companies to explore new models of customized internship programs.



STEP 1

Industry Partner Presents a Challenge

JMU X-Labs industry partner identifies a real-world, complex problem that needs an innovative, cross-disciplinary solution.



STEP 2

Custom Student Team Selected

A cross-disciplinary student team is chosen by JMU X-Labs through a tailored application and interview process, based on the challenge.



STEP 3

Students Enroll in a 15-Week Innovation Course

The student team tackles the problem in a 15-week design thinking course featuring JMU faculty and industry partner experts.



STEP 4

Students Present Prototypes and Insights

At semester's end, the student team presents their proposed solution and working prototype at a public showcase, alongside other JMU X-Labs courses.



STEP 5

12-Week Internship

The student team joins our industry partner as an established unit to take the prototype to launch.



Watch inaugural cohort students share their experiences.
Video courtesy of Ellucian.

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kp93xMH5Vfs





Students from The Reimagined Internship with Ellucian Year 1 engage with the teaching team.

The Reimagined Internship with Ellucian Year 2

SPRING '25 COURSE + SUMMER INTERNSHIP

JMU X-Labs Reimagined Internship was piloted and co-founded with Ellucian in 2024. Now in year two of the program, all partners — JMU X-Labs, Ellucian, faculty, and students — continue to be blown away by this transformative experience. In addition to the in-person Spring 2025 prep course at JMU, selected cohort students participate in a summer internship at Ellucian in Reston, VA.



Industry Partner: Ellucian

Ellucian



Course Challenge Statement: Students will gain hands-on experience in a cross-disciplinary software development team and learn the entire software development lifecycle, from problem identification to solution implementation, to solve a challenge supplied by Ellucian.



Teaching Team from:

Ellucian

Division of Student Affairs



Instructors:

LACEY GERARD, Director, Experience Design, Ellucian

JONATHAN STEWART, Director of Finance, IT and Assessment, Division of Student Affairs



About the Cohort:

The cohort is a product development team of Ellucian's future consisting of (2) product managers, (2) UX/UI designers, (5) developers, and (1) ethicist.

TALENT PIPELINE AT Ellucian

Summer 2024

Ellucian hired 10 JMU interns from JMU X-Labs Reimagined Internship Year 1.

Fall 2024

Ellucian hired 1 JMU X-Labs Reimagined Intern as full-time Associate Product Manager.

Summer 2025

Ellucian hired 21 JMU interns — 16 from JMU X-Labs Reimagined Internship Years 1 and 2 and 5 in traditional roles — totaling 40% of their corporate HQ interns.



Ellucian team members and The Reimagined Internship students from Years 1 and 2 work together during the summer 2025. Select members from Year 1 were invited back in new roles to continue their work with Ellucian.



Student Product Development Team:

ARUSHI CHAUHAN, Junior **Product Manager**
Quantitative Finance

KAVYA MEWAR, Junior **Product Manager**
Computer Information Systems, Finance

IMARIAH YEBOAH, Senior **UX/UI Designer**
Computer Information Systems, Media Arts and Design

REAGAN YOUNG, Senior **UX/UI Designer**
Media Arts and Design

WILLIAM KEPPEL, Junior **AI/ML + Back-End Developer**
Computer Science

SERGIO VAVRA, Sophomore **AI/ML + Back-End Developer**
Computer Science

ELENI HOUVARDA, Junior **Front-End Developer**
Computer Science

DIEGO NAVIA, Junior **Back-End Developer**
Computer Science

YAROSLAV KAMCHEV, Sophomore **Front-End Developer**
Computer Science

CLARE LANHAM, Sophomore **Ethicist**
Justice Studies

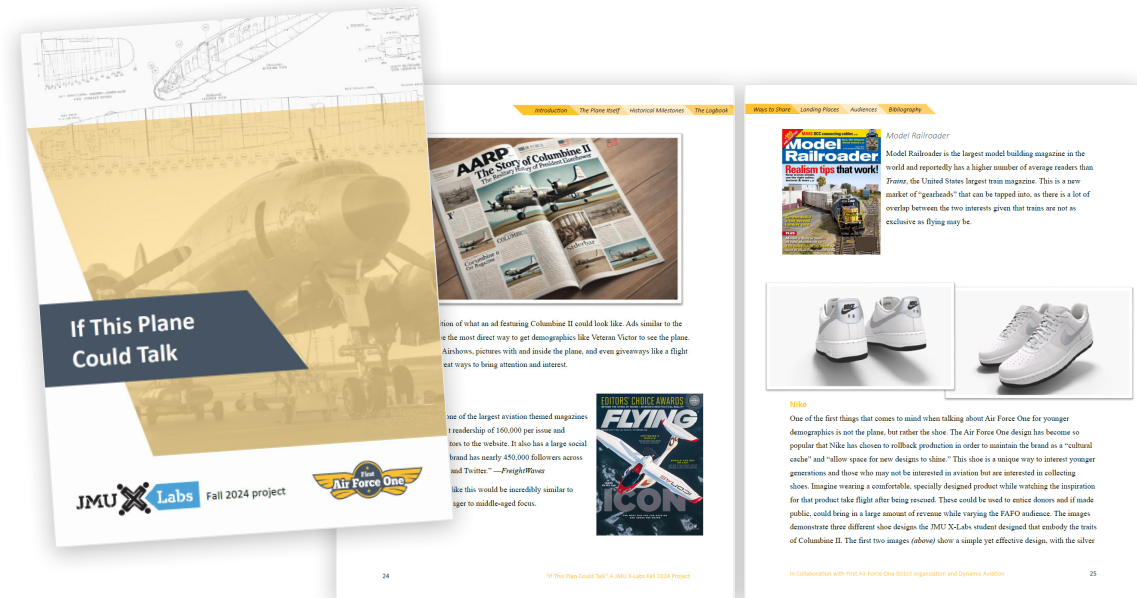


Above: The cross-disciplinary course team included JMU students and faculty, an external marketing consultant, and industry representatives.

Right: Students present at Dynamic Aviation at the conclusion of the First Air Force One Restoration Course.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY



First Air Force One Restoration (FALL '24)



Industry Partners: Dynamic Aviation,
First Air Force One 501(c)3

Dynamic Aviation



Course Challenge Statement: What are the best options to share the historic aircraft experience of First Air Force One, President Dwight D. Eisenhower's official plane, with people around the world?



Teaching Team from:
College of Arts & Letters
Silverback Strategies (external marketing consultant)
Division of Student Affairs



Instructors:

KEVIN BORG, Director of Public History Program, Professor

ADRIENNE HOOKER, Associate Professor, Media Arts and Design

ANDREW NELSON, President, Silverback Strategies

JONATHAN STEWART, Director of Finance, IT and Assessment, Division of Student Affairs



Number of Students Enrolled: 13



Majors Represented: 5 — History, Secondary Education, Communication Studies, Sport & Recreation Management, Media Arts & Design



Overview:

In December 2024 students presented their creative solutions to the First Air Force One Board and Dynamic Aviation team. This dynamic team — cross-disciplinary students, a cross-disciplinary teaching team, an external marketing consultant, and leaders from Dynamic Aviation and First Air Force One 501(c)3 — proved that when innovation and passion come together, the sky is the limit!

The Future of Esports
(FALL '24)



Course Challenge Statement: Students will explore how esports systems can be integrated and supported in Special Olympics activities.



Teaching Team from:
College of Business
JMU X-Labs
College of Integrated Science & Engineering



Instructors:
GUS HALLMON, Assistant Professor, Hart School
MIKEY TORRES, Esports Director, JMU X-Labs
RAAFAT ZAINI, Assistant Professor, Integrated Science & Engineering



Number of Students Enrolled: 14



Majors Represented: 4 — Information Technology, Computer Information Systems, Media Arts & Design, Sport & Recreation Management

3D Printing Real World Solutions
(FALL '24)



Course Challenge Statement: Students will identify their own real-world problem to solve, identify the target audience to educate about the problem, and design and develop a 3D prototype solution.



Teaching Team from:
JMU Libraries
College of Education



Instructors:
JAMIE CALCAGNO-ROACH, Director of Educational Technology Services, Associate Professor, Libraries
JOI MERRITT, Academic Unit Head and Professor, Early, Elementary & Reading Education



Number of Students Enrolled: 18



Majors Represented: 9 — Information Technology, General Psychology, Marketing, Media Arts & Design, Information Technology, Exploratory, Elementary Education, Computer Information Systems, Sport & Recreation Management

Who Cares About Small Farms Anyway
(SPRING '25)



Course Challenge Statement: Students will develop solutions to real issues faced by small to mid-size family-owned and operated farms in the Shenandoah Valley.



Teaching Team from:
College of Health and Behavioral Studies
Division of Research, Economic Development and Innovation
College of Integrated Science & Engineering
College of Science & Mathematics



Instructors:
DOUG HOCHSTETLER, Associate Dean, College of Health and Behavioral Studies
PATRICE LUDWIG, Interim Assistant Vice President for Research & Innovation
SAM MORTON, Professor, Engineering
SAM PRINS, Dean, College of Science & Mathematics



Number of Students Enrolled: 8



Majors Represented: 6 — Kinesiology, Writing, Rhetoric & Technical Communication, Public Administration, Information Technology, Economics, Anthropology

Workshop in Environmental Problem Solving
(SPRING '25)



Problem Sponsors: Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley, Blue Ridge PRISM, Potomac Conservancy, Renew Rocktown



Course Challenge Statement: Students will solve environmental and natural resource conservation challenges experienced by organizations and agencies.



Teaching Team from:
College of Arts & Letters
College of Health and Behavioral Studies
College of Visual and Performing Arts



Instructors:
ROB ALEXANDER, Associate Professor, Political Science
RAIHAN KHAN, Assistant Professor, Health Sciences
LISA TUBACH, Professor, Art



Number of Students Enrolled: 19



Majors Represented: 9 — Writing, Rhetoric & Technical Communication, Biology, Elementary Education, Geography, Anthropology, Special Education, Chemistry, Political Science, Mathematics, Sport & Recreation Management

Problem Solving

ENVT 400 – Spring 2025
As hosted by JMU



Innovation Summit: Solutions Showcase

During our Innovation Summit: Solutions Showcase in May 2025 we celebrated the work and discoveries made during this year's JMU X-Labs courses to JMU leadership, faculty, staff, students, and industry partners. Provost Kolvoord delivered opening remarks. This interactive event offered student teams an opportunity to highlight their work and answer thoughtful questions from the audience, leaving us all with fresh perspectives.

Left: Provost Kolvoord at Innovation Summit. Right: Students present at Innovation Summit.



Faculty Engagement

This year, the JMU X-Labs team expanded the ways faculty can engage with our work, building clear pathways for collaboration. Our programming expanded in depth and breadth, offering more opportunities for real-world problem solving, design thinking, and the co-creation of courses. In addition, JMU X-Labs Assistant Directors presented at department meetings across campus and JMU X-Labs participated in the Broader Impacts and Community Engagement Resource Fair coordinated by the Office of Research Development.

Light Engagement:

Weekly Open Tank Hours (Spring '25)

Every Friday morning, we hosted Open Tank Hours where we provided a complimentary space for faculty to advance their research, connect with faculty across campus, develop courses around challenge statements, and more.

Weekly Virtual Office Hours (Spring '25)

Curious faculty brought their questions to our weekly virtual office hours hosted by our Assistant Directors of Engaged Learning, Adrienne Hooker and Masoud Kaveh.



Above: Interim Assistant Vice President for Research & Innovation Patrice Ludwig leads the Design Thinking Workshop.

Moderate Engagement:

TEAM TEACHING UNPACKED:
Faculty Experiences from JMU X-Labs

A new brown bag lunch series brought together JMU X-Labs faculty in panel discussions to share their experiences in cross-disciplinary team teaching in JMU X-Labs. Through open discussion, the panelists shared the unexpected emotions, exhilarations, challenges, and pedagogical epiphanies integrated into each JMU X-Labs teaching experience.



Above: Attendees said an enthusiast "Yes!" to learning about JMU X-Labs during the first panel discussion.

PANEL DISCUSSION #1: February 28, 2025

- Samy El-Tawab, Director and Professor, Information Technology
- Raihan Khan, Assistant Professor, Health Sciences
- Erica Lewis, Professor, Nursing

PANEL DISCUSSION #2: March 28, 2025

- Dmytro Babik, Associate Professor, Computer Information Systems & Business Analytics
- Kevin Borg, Director of Public History Program, Professor, History
- Jonathan Stewart, Director of Finance, IT and Assessment, Student Affairs

PANEL DISCUSSION #3: April 17, 2025

- Current Spring 2025 JMU X-Labs Teaching Team for Workshop in Environmental Problem Solving Course
- Rob Alexander, Associate Professor, Political Science
 - Raihan Khan, Assistant Professor, Health Sciences
 - Lisa Tubach, Professor, Art

DESIGN THINKING SPRINT WORKSHOP:
March 4, 2025

Design thinking sprints are a foundation of JMU X-Labs courses. This interactive workshop, led by Interim Assistant Vice President for Research & Innovation Patrice Ludwig, gave faculty a primer on this signature feature. Faculty brought their curiosity and energy to the mini sprint to collaboratively tackle a real-world challenge by progressing through the key stages of empathy, defining the problem, ideation, prototyping, and testing.

Full Engagement: Propose a Course

To support all levels of experience and curiosity, the JMU X-Labs team developed a new course proposal system, along with essential information about JMU X-Labs courses and the resources provided when faculty teach in JMU X-Labs. Faculty can now use our step-by-step approach to collaborate on the development of unique cross-disciplinary, team-taught design thinking courses held at JMU X-Labs.

STEP 1

Contact Us

Contact us at jmuxlabscourses@jmu.edu to connect with JMU X-Labs Assistant Director of Engaged Learning Adrienne Hooker, Associate Professor of Media Arts and Design.

STEP 2

Understand the Unique Components of JMU X-Labs Courses

- A well-formed problem statement is the cornerstone of a JMU X-Labs course.
 - Students experience the process of innovation through problem-based learning
- Each course is team-taught from distinct fields of study and expertise.
 - Faculty and students are from different colleges
 - Student-centered approach
 - Courses often carry multiple titles
- Design thinking is the methodology used to facilitate the course.
 - JMU X-Labs provides a design thinking toolkit and Collaborative Pedagogy manual
 - JMU X-Labs provides the design thinking facilitator for the course
- (optional) External partners supply the problem statement and/or join the teaching team
 - JMU X-Labs will assist in making connections and executing contracts

STEP 3

Submit Course Proposal Form

By now, you will have worked with JMU X-Labs staff to develop your course idea, challenge statement, and cross-disciplinary collaborators. It's time to submit a course proposal form on our website.

Timeline for Forming a Course

JMU X-Labs courses typically take a minimum of 2-3 months from idea to being ready to launch for enrollment at the start of student registration. Work backwards accordingly from the below deadlines to better guarantee approval. Deadline by which all JMU X-Labs courses must be registered in Student Administration, faculty teaching teams assembled, and course information for marketing provided:

- Fall semester courses: March 1
- Spring semester courses: October 1



JMU X-Labs Raises Funds for JMU Esports

In February 2025, JMU X-Labs’ Innovation and Impact Student Fellows and Esports teams raised funds for JMU Esports as part of JMU Giving Day! We kicked off the day with support via video from Steve Arhancet, a JMU alum and co-CEO of Team Liquid - one of the largest and most successful esports teams in the world. Throughout the afternoon and into the night, supporters tuned into Twitch as we showcased our JMU Esports program in live broadcast run. Thank you to Steve and all donors for your support!

Above: JMU alum Steve Arhancet showed support via video for Giving Day.

Above left: JMU Esports kicks off Homecoming weekend by participating in QuadFest.

Left: Giving Day behind-the-scenes look in the production studio with Innovation & Impact Student Fellows Regan Elmore and Faith Forman.

GIVING DAY INFO:

- Raised \$4,735 for JMU Esports from 26 donors
- JMU Giving Day is 24 hours of generosity and JMU Dukes coming together to make a big difference for our students and community.

www.jmu.edu/jmuxlabs/esports

→ Connect with JMU Esports on Discord and follow streams on Twitch.

JMU X-Labs proudly sponsors JMU Esports, a vibrant gaming community of over 100 students from diverse academic backgrounds who build critical thinking, communication, digital literacy, and leadership skills. Esports are organized, team-based video game competitions within a global industry, typically viewed through streaming platforms like Twitch and YouTube or at live in-person events.

JMU Esports fields teams across seven game titles, competing in established leagues such as the National Association for Collegiate Esports (NACE), PlayFly Esports, and other leagues operated by game developers. The program includes Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Academy-level teams, along with dedicated Production and Marketing/Social Media teams. JMU is a member of NACE and participates in its annual national convention and business meetings to vote on legislation and engage with peer institutions.

Competitions and Tournaments

The Counter-Strike 2, League of Legends, Overwatch, Rainbow Six, Rocket League, Super Smash Bros, and VALORANT teams participated in 12 invitational tournaments and competitions at both regional and national levels this year. VALORANT varsity team won first place and Rocket League won second place at George Mason University’s The Bloom in March 2025. Adding to two NACE national championship wins from previous years, the Rainbow Six varsity team won second and third place at CollegiateR6’s winter and spring invitationals. They also competed through the semi-finals of the PlayFly Tournament of Champions in May 2025.

In Summer 2025, the JMU Esports Arena is undergoing a significant infrastructure upgrade to support program growth and enhance the student experience. Improvements include expanded electrical capacity, enhanced networking capabilities, and upgraded telecommunications — all of which will allow us to

double the number of PC stations from 12 to 24. These updates will increase the arena’s functionality for competitive play, production, and collaborative learning.

111 STUDENTS ENGAGED ACROSS 38 MAJORS

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Accounting■ Architectural Design■ Biology■ Biotechnology■ Business Management■ Chemistry■ Communication Studies■ Computer Information Systems■ Computer Science■ Engineering■ English | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Finance■ General Psychology■ Geography■ Health Sciences■ History■ Independent Scholars■ Information Technology■ Integrated Science & Technology■ Intelligence Analysis■ International Affairs■ Justice Studies■ Kinesiology■ Marketing■ Mathematics■ Media Arts & Design■ Middle Grades Education■ Modern Foreign Languages■ Music■ Nursing■ Physics | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Political Science■ Psychology■ Quantitative Finance■ Sport & Recreation Management■ Statistics■ Theatre■ Writing, Rhetoric & Technical Communication |
|---|---|--|

ESPORTS TEAMS

- Counter-Strike 2
- League of Legends
- Overwatch 2
- Rainbow Six Siege
- Rocket League
- Super Smash Bros.
- VALORANT

Innovation & Impact Student Fellows



Above: Our Innovation & Impact Student Fellows serve as ambassadors for JMU X-Labs throughout the year. On October 5, 2024, we opened our doors for the Explore JMU: Academic Open House where attendees got a first-hand look at what makes the Madison Experience so special - including JMU X-Labs! Our Innovation & Impact Fellows guided tours of our space and helped staff answer questions about our courses and programs. It was great to connect with prospective JMU families from the East Coast and beyond! Go Dukes!

JMU X-Labs’ Innovation and Impact Fellowship Program is a unique and practical learning experience where a diverse group of students collaborate to advance JMU X-Labs’ mission. JMU X-Labs offers a one-academic-year fellowship to five students to work with the JMU X-Labs team. The fellowship program provides valuable leadership and career experience, focused on innovation and collaboration, and allows students to serve as ambassadors of JMU X-Labs.

Program Goals

- Develop student leaders
- Provide meaningful learning opportunities and support professional development
- Gain experience in an innovation and entrepreneurial space
- Encourage peer learning and knowledge sharing through group and collaborative projects
- Cultivate and grow student leaders’ professional networks

Throughout the academic year, the Innovation and Impact Fellows work on a variety of projects and initiatives with

the guidance of the JMU X-Labs’ team, gaining valuable experience and exposure to real-world tasks.

Roles and Responsibilities of all Innovation Fellows

Perform individual roles while having awareness of the team’s goals and objectives: while each fellow has a unique role, they must perform their duties with an awareness of their team’s broader context and JMU X-Labs’ mission.

Ambassadorship: represent JMU X-Labs by giving tours, engaging with prospective students during Academic Open House and Choices days, and working at various

MARKETING AND ENGAGEMENT ASSISTANT



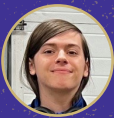
Regan Elmore
Senior Independent Scholars major
ROLE: Create effective marketing strategies and media content to engage university stakeholders, promote campus initiatives, and showcase the impact of JMU X-Labs’ programs and courses.

TECHNICAL COMMUNICATIONS ASSISTANT



Faith Forman
Senior Media Arts and Design major
ROLE: Increase awareness and understanding of JMU X-Labs programs and initiatives through strategic, effective and inspiring writing and digital content.

TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANTS



G Greygor
Sophomore Theatre major



Diego Navia
Junior Computer Science major



Luke Saunders
Senior Information Technology major
ROLE: Provide technical support and assistance to users of equipment in JMU X-Labs’ Tank, Lab, and Esports Arena; perform routine maintenance checks of equipment and technology for optimal performance and safety standards; work closely with operations manager and lab manager to optimize the technology and set-ups in each of JMU X-Labs three spaces.



Left: Technology Assistant Diego Navia creates custom JMU Esports coasters on our laser cutter to distribute at QuadFest.



Above: Student Fellows discuss the values of a strong team during a group exercise.

events in JMU X-Labs, like the Innovation Summit and JMU Esports open houses.

Project planning and presentations: prioritize and develop projects to provide innovative and cross-disciplinary feedback and solutions. Projects may involve research, data analysis, report drafting, or contributing to ongoing initiatives.

Cross-disciplinary collaboration: encourage peer learning and knowledge sharing through group and collaborative projects. JMU X-Labs believes that collaboration is crucial for fostering innovation and achieving collective success. Fellows are encouraged to contribute their diverse perspectives and ideas.



Left: Marketing & Engagement Assistant Regan Elmore promotes JMU X-Labs Fall 2025 courses to students at D-Hall.

A Look Ahead

We are ready for an inspiring and impactful upcoming year!

Inaugural Faculty Associates Program

In February 2025 we opened applications for our inaugural Faculty Associates for Cross-Disciplinary Pedagogy program, designed and directed by Jamie Calcagno-Roach, Director of Faculty Development in JMU X-Labs. Six faculty members were selected from a competitive application process to spend two years with JMU X-Labs to learn design thinking pedagogy, cross-disciplinary team teaching, and how to tackle real-world challenges in the classroom. The program will kick off in Summer 2025 with the faculty associates and the JMU X-Labs team attending the Teaching and Learning Studio of the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design (d.school) at Stanford University.

Fall '25 Semester Courses

REIMAGINING VIRGINIA'S FIGHT AGAINST ORGANIZED RETAIL CRIME

In partnership with the Virginia Office of the Attorney General



Course Challenge Statement: Students will develop solutions that help the Virginia Office of the Attorney General tackle organized retail crime across Virginia.

HOW DOES 3D PRINTING HELP US TELL THE STORY OF MONTPELIER?



Course Challenge Statement: Students will develop solutions to real issues faced by the now physically isolated Archaeology Department Lab at James Madison's Montpelier and its intersection with constituents and the Montpelier property.

HACKING WELL-BEING AT JMU

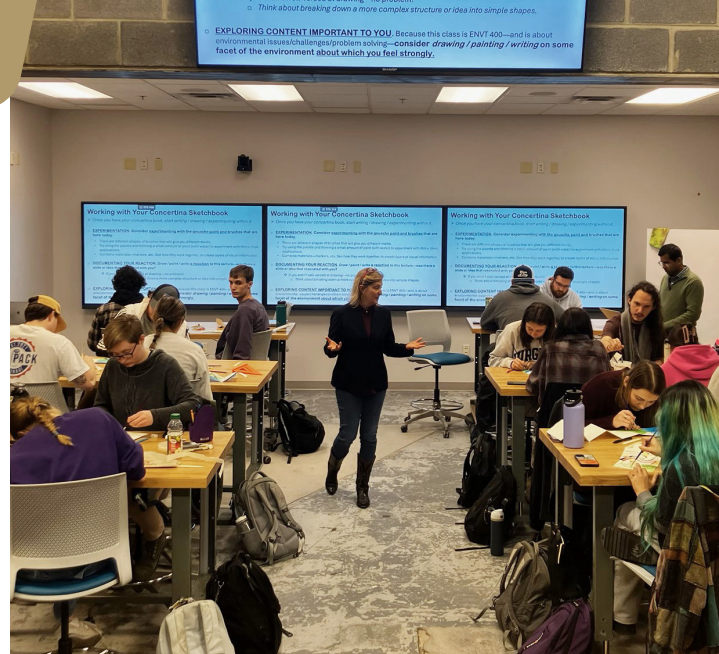


Course Challenge Statement: Students will reimagine the future of Health and Well-Being at JMU.

AI FOR GLOBAL IMPACT: TACKLING GRAND CHALLENGES WITH GENERATIVE AI



Course Challenge Statement: DARPA's mission is "to create technological surprise for U.S. national security." Students will develop ambitious DARPA-style proposals using GenAI as a transformative tool to imagine radically different futures for humanity.

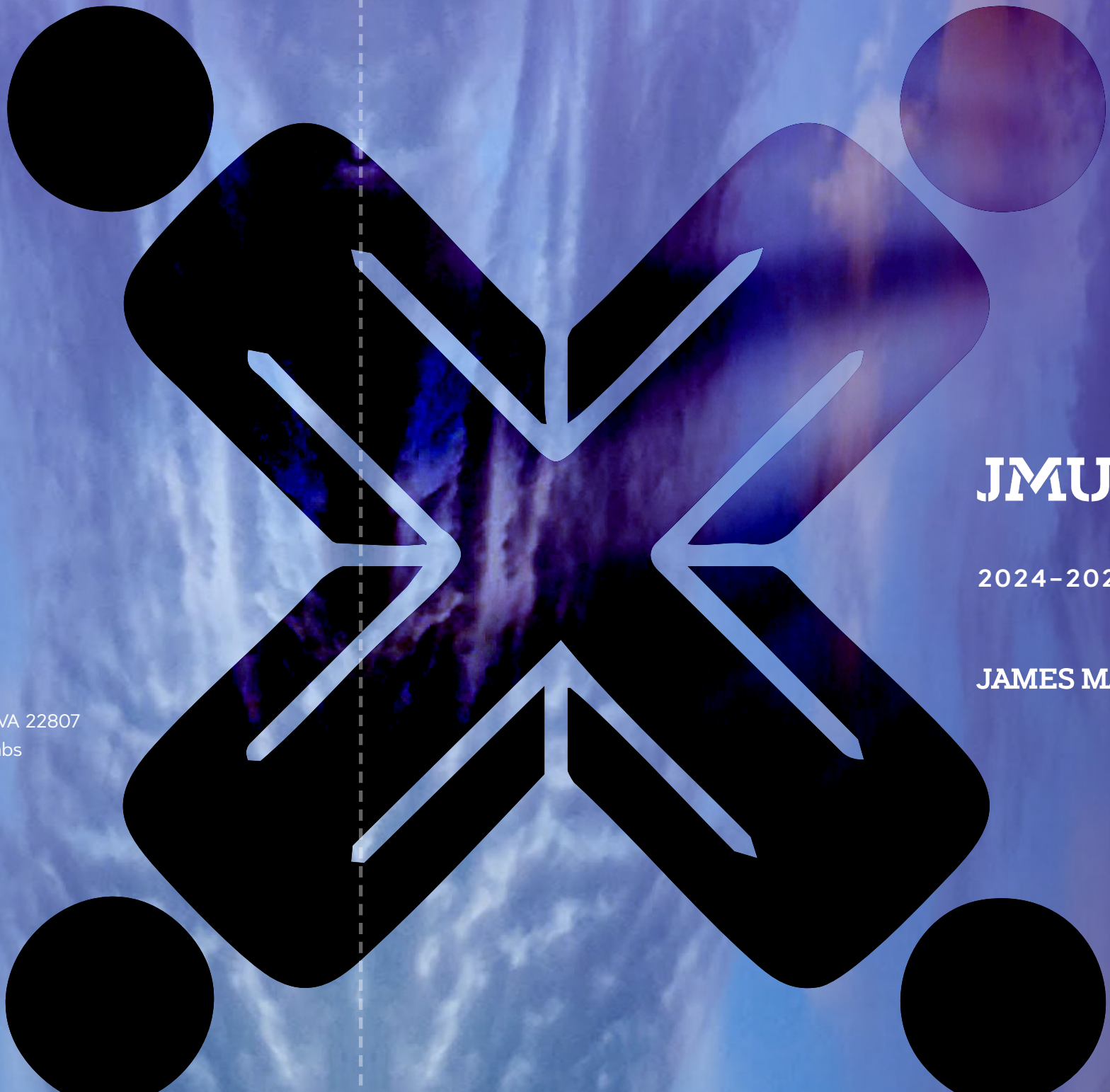


Workshop in Environmental Problem Solving students and teaching team engage in an activity during their Spring 2025 course in The Lab.

With Appreciation to our Valuable Partners

- **Mr. Charlie King**, JMU President, and **Dr. Bob Kolvoord**, Provost, for their investment and belief in JMU X-Labs' mission and work.
- **Division of Research, Economic Development and Innovation (REDI):** Special thanks to Dr. Anthony Tongen, VP, for his steady support; Dr. Patrice Ludwig, interim AVP, for her gifts of listening and problem solving, which continue to meaningfully shape JMU X-Labs; the administrative staff who keeps JMU X-Labs running smoothly; and the entire REDI team for their support in ways that are essential to our success.
- Our growing **JMU X-Labs team** for their insight, care, and excellence in fostering innovation and building community across JMU and industries.
- **Current and former JMU X-Labs faculty** for their intellectual openness, collaborative spirit, and a learner's mindset as we continue to discover and learn together.
- **Division of Academic Affairs:** JMU deans and department heads for their ongoing support of faculty teaching, research, and service in JMU X-Labs. Their partnership is essential to discovering the new, together and across disciplines.
- **Division of Advancement:** Corporate and Foundation Relations for the trusted partnership and mutual belief in reimagining everything; Principal Giving for supporting our Esports program; University Communications and University Marketing and Branding for consistently amplifying the work of JMU X-Labs on campus and beyond.
- **Division of Access and Enrollment:** We were honored to partner with Valley Scholars for workshops that support their learning journey.
- **Division of Student Affairs:** University Career Center for helping to advance our work-based learning efforts thoughtfully and strategically.
- **JMU X-Labs Innovation & Impact Student Fellows, Students in the Esports Program and JMU X-Labs courses:** Thank you for your bright minds, curiosity, and collaborative spirit. You enrich the daily life of JMU X-Labs. Your fresh perspectives and energy continue to shape how we grow and evolve.
- **Industry Partners: Dynamic Aviation, First Air Force One 501(c)3, Ellucian.** We value our industry partners whose collaboration sparks meaningful innovation for everyone involved and is redefining what's possible in partnerships between industry and higher education.





2024-2025 ANNUAL REPORT

JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

JMU X-Labs

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