

How JMU Has Changed: Faculty, Staff and Administrators

Dr. Frank Doherty, JMU's Director of Institutional Research, will be retiring in June 2018 after 31 years at JMU. He has witnessed enormous changes during his tenure and has overseen the collection and reporting of data to the university community, the federal government and the Commonwealth of Virginia. This Research Note, and two others to follow, will summarize many of these changes. The first note, "[How JMU Has Changed – Students](#)," is available on the Office of Institutional Research's (OIR) website. This current note focuses on the faculty, staff and administrator changes since 1987. It will be followed by research notes on: changes in the facilities and finances of JMU; and finally, changes in students' and graduates' attitudes about themselves and JMU. The data for these notes will be drawn from official reports and data compiled by OIR since the early 1970s. Where possible, we attempt to use the data for 1987-88, 2002-03 (the 15th year of these data), 2016-17 and occasionally 2017-18. It is our hope that you will find these notes to be informative and useful.

Changing Higher Education Landscapes

National Landscape

One clear conclusion from these studies is that JMU has certainly undergone change in 30 years, but such change is simply part of the broader higher education landscape. Precipitating a lot of change has been the increase in students requiring higher skills as well as population growth. Total enrollment for Virginia institutions has grown sharply from 353,000 in 1987 to nearly 600,000 by fall 2016. But, it isn't just the number of students that has changed significantly. Institutions are far more diverse. In 1987, 54% of students were female, compared to 58% in 2016. In 1990, Caucasians comprised approximately 77% of all students while in 2014 the Caucasian percentage had decreased to approximately 60%.

Very few could have predicted how learning and communication technology would change in a relatively short period. Thirty years ago, most institutions had few computers for faculty and staff and virtually none for students. The Internet and mobile devices, of course, did not exist. The way faculty, staff and students learned was very different in most disciplines. Instead of staying up late typing a paper on an electric typewriter, students now work on their laptops and submit their papers online. They may still stay up late, but *how* they do research, write the papers, and submit them are profoundly different.

The need for medical and mental health student services has also exploded, perhaps more than anyone could have foreseen in 1987. Many students have difficulties responding to the pressures to do well in college, get a good job, make friends, build a compelling resume, etc. In the most recent data from the Center for Collegiate Mental Health (CCMH), nearly half of all students have sought counseling. Nearly one-third have taken a medication for mental health concerns. Further, the CCMH data suggest that for each 1% increase in enrollment at a university the counseling service will experience a 5% increase in the number of clients requesting services. This means more staff and more resources are required.

Students' and parents' expectations for colleges to provide a high-quality education along with increased prospects for employment in great jobs have also greatly expanded, increasing the competition for students. Due to the Internet, more students apply to many more colleges and universities. In 1987, 11% of the enrolled JMU freshmen applied to

five or more colleges, while in 2017 43% applied to five or more. At highly selective institutions, such as JMU, students now expect expansive advising and career services, competitive sports, many dining options, recreation centers and financial aid offices. This highly competitive environment requires enhanced admissions staff, increased marketing, highly competitive athletic teams, increased financial aid options, etc.

Along the way, demands on higher education institutions, such as JMU, to prove their value have grown on multiple fronts. The states, the federal government, and accreditors have dramatically increased the accountability information they expect institutions to provide electronically. The State Council for Higher Education in Virginia (SCHEV) began collecting unit-record data (headcount, financial aid, admissions, degrees conferred, and course performance) on each student in 1992. SCHEV now maintains data sets that exceed hundreds of millions of records. The federal government is now considering developing their own student database for all secondary students in the country.

There has been a significant increase in demands for accountability for student learning, graduation and job acquisition. "Return on investment" is a term heard throughout higher education. Institutions have scrambled, and added staff, to prove that their graduates learn and are employed. In 1987, U.S. News and other college rating guides were just beginning to publish ratings of institutions. Now other publications have jumped on the ratings bandwagon. These publications rate graduate education, online education, business schools, medical schools, and on and on. As these types of ratings expand, institutions must invest hundreds of person-hours in gathering and reporting data. Some of these publications' data requirements can be 50 pages or longer. This dynamically changing higher education landscape has required institutions to significantly expand services for students, faculty, staff and the communities they serve. Health centers, wellness centers, multi-cultural student services, services for veterans, financial aid offices, information technology support, academic support services (tutoring, career counseling, disability services), institutional support services (accounting, business offices, registrars, institutional research offices, planning offices, attorneys, human resources and training, fund raising operations, etc.) have had to increase staff to support the many additional expectations.

While one might expect that states would increase support for their public institutions to keep up with demands, state support has actually spiked downward during this time period. In real dollars, the Commonwealth reduced its appropriations per student by more than 50% since 1987. Institutions in Virginia and across America, including JMU, have increased tuition and fees to cover shortfalls in revenue and respond to the much greater demands for services. The pressures on institutions to raise funds have skyrocketed.

The JMU Landscape

The forces at work nationally have significantly affected James Madison University. To serve the needs of the Commonwealth and its citizens, JMU is a much larger and more complex institution than it was 30 years ago. In 1987, there were 22 academic departments in five colleges with 450 full-time faculty. In 2016-17, the number of academic departments (organized into eight colleges) had grown to 44 with 980 full-time faculty. In 1987, there were five STEM-focused academic departments (Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Geography, Math and Computer Science, and Physics). In 2016, there were ten (Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Computer Science, Engineering, College of Education Programs [approximately half of undergraduates take STEM-related courses], Geology and Environmental Science, Integrated Science and Technology, Mathematics and Statistics, and Physics). The number of degrees conferred in health-related majors increased enormously. The number of degrees conferred in Health Science increased from 16 in 1986-87 to 441 in 2016-17, while the number of nursing graduates increased from 35 to 231. The number of degrees in Computer Information Systems and Computer Science increased from 88 in 1986-87 to 316 in 2016-17. It follows, then, that JMU's academic programs and departments are much more complex and costly, requiring additional faculty and staff to manage and support the larger numbers of students.

The dramatic increase in students and programs occurred during a time of rapid improvements in technology. In 1987, each department had two or three computers. Few faculty had a computer on their desk. In 1987, the

Educational Resources Department (that offered majors in Educational Leadership for K-12 schools) had no computers. Now all faculty have one or more computers and many have additional devices, such as iPads. The chalk board has become the Smart Phone. Wireless Internet service is now available in all facilities and across most of the outdoor venues. Many departments have increased the number of support faculty (often known as Administrative and Professional) to manage and maintain the services required by students, faculty and staff.

But JMU hasn't just grown in size and complexity, it has grown in quality and performance. The four-, five- and six-year graduation rates continue to improve. In Fall 1983, the four-, five- and six-year graduation rates for the 1,682 freshmen were 55%/73%/76%. The most recent rates (Fall 2017) were 68%/82%/83% — all historical highs.

Faculty and Staff Changes Since 1987

The number and types of faculty and staff have grown to serve the greater number of students enrolled as well as the types of programs and services offered. Below and in the next pages, we will describe the changes in the number of faculty, administrators and staff, and many of the reasons behind these changes. Because there are so many changes, we chose those that were most noteworthy.

Instructional Faculty

Instructors are on the front line of educating JMU students. As the university has grown and changed, faculty have also had to adapt. There have been many important changes in JMU's instructional faculty since 1987. Since 1987, the number of faculty has more than doubled. Professors increased by 146%, associate professors increased by 89%, assistant professors increased by 103%, and instructors/lecturers increased by 61%. There have been 18 different college configurations since 1987. The College of Business is the only college that has not changed names. In 1987, the typical department consisted of 15 full-time faculty, and the average was 26 in 2016. In 1987, 71% of the full-time faculty had an earned doctorate compared to 75% in 2016. The top four sources of doctorates in 1987 were the University of Virginia, Ohio State University, Indiana University and the University of Tennessee. In 2016, the top four were the University of Virginia, Virginia Tech, Indiana University and UNC Chapel Hill.

There has been a concerted effort to reduce the student-to-faculty ratio to enable students to have more contact with faculty – again, JMU has been improving as it has been growing. The ratio declined from 19 students per FTE faculty in 1997 to 16 students per FTE in 2017. The percentage of total fall 2015 credit hours taught by full-time faculty was approximately 79%. This percentage has changed very little since fall 1991. Several offices have been developed to support instructional faculty, including the Center for Faculty Innovation, International Education, Research and Scholarship, and the Center for Instructional Technology.

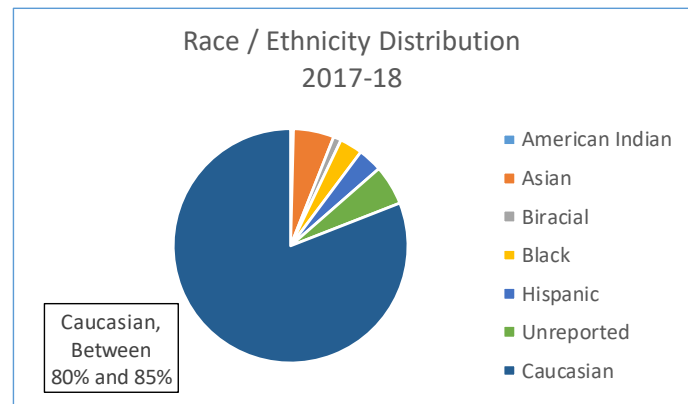
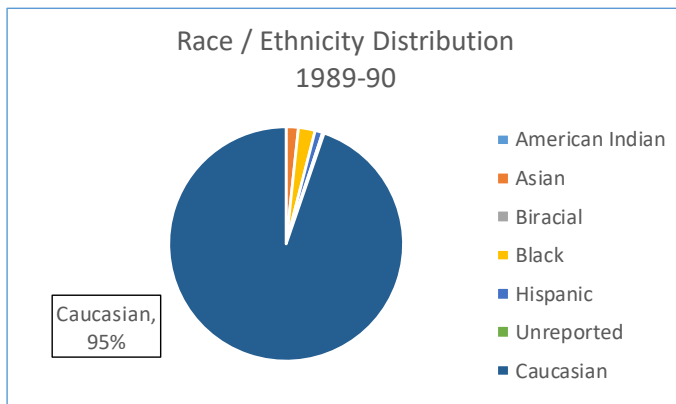
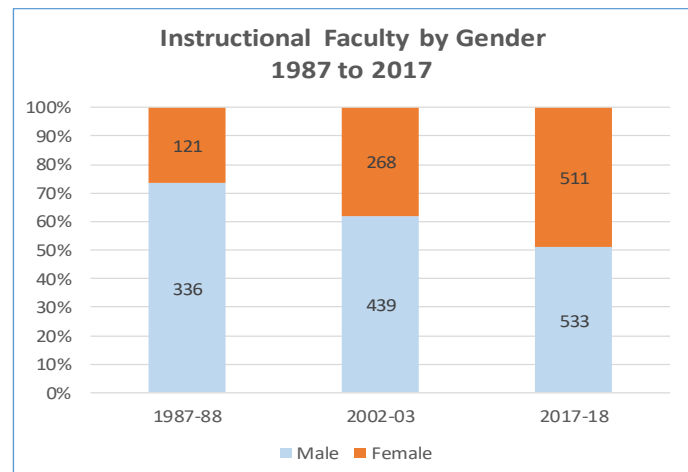
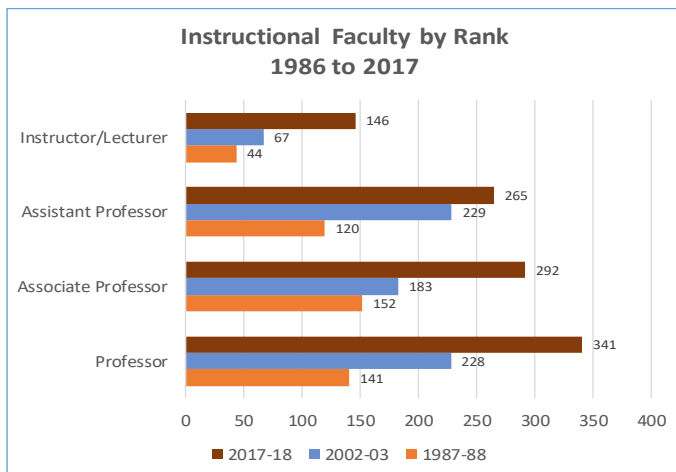
Gender and Race/Ethnicity Diversity

For more than 40 years, JMU has made significant efforts to increase the diversity of its faculty and staff. It should be noted that diversity is multi-dimensional, not just gender and race. In 2017, the university is much more diverse by gender and race/ethnicity. There has been a dramatic growth in the number and percentage of faculty who are women. In 1987, 26% of faculty were women. In 2017, women represented 49% of all faculty.

The number of women in senior leadership roles increased dramatically between 1987 and 2017. In 1987-88 the Provost and all but one dean were males. In 2017, the Provost, all three vice provosts, and three of the eight college deans are women. In 1987, five of the 28 academic department heads were women compared to 23 out of 44 departments in 2017.

JMU is more racially and ethnically diverse than it was in 1989, but the changes in how the Commonwealth and federal government defined race and ethnicity changed twice since 1987. Between 1987 and 2004, faculty and students who

were biracial or did not wish to respond had no suitable options, thus they were defaulted to “Caucasian” by the computer systems. Beginning in 2005, students could choose either “Not Specified” or “Biracial.” In 2010-11, the two-question race/ethnicity format was adopted that includes “Multi-Race” and “Not Reported.” Even though comparisons between 1989 and 2017 are problematic at best, it appears that the percentage of Caucasian faculty decreased from 95% to between 80% and 85%. Fifty-six instructional faculty did not report their race/ethnicity.

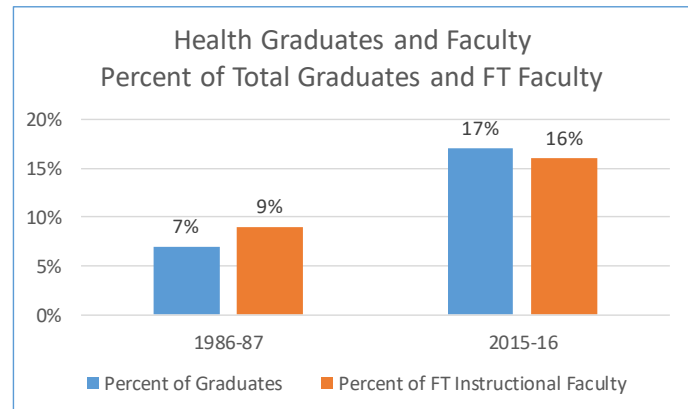
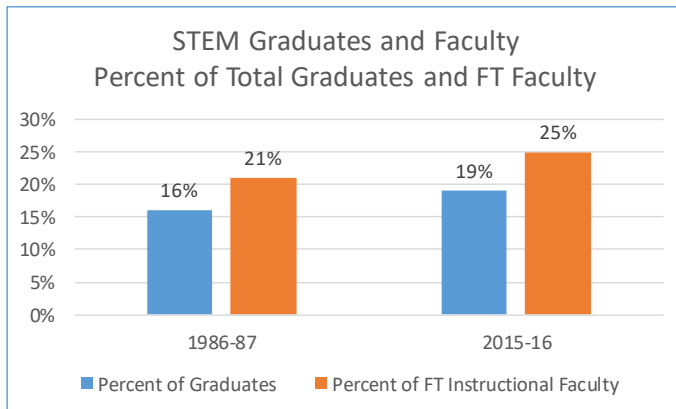


Higher Cost Programs

JMU's academic programs have followed the trends established by the marketplace, the federal government, and the Commonwealth of Virginia. Over the last 30 years, the proportions of JMU's degrees conferred and faculty in STEM and Health have increased. Since 1986-87, STEM/Health graduates have grown from 23% of total graduates to 36%, while the percentage of full-time faculty devoted to STEM/Health has grown from 30% to 41%. STEM/Health programs and facilities are larger and more expensive than many other disciplinary areas, thus increasing the pressures on the budget and facilities.

One driver in the increase in the cost of instruction has been the shift in the number of students and faculty to high cost programs. We define a “high cost” program as one that requires large investments in equipment and facilities, not necessarily compensation. High cost programs at JMU primarily exist in the colleges of Science and Mathematics, Health and Behavioral Studies, Integrated Science and Engineering, Arts and Letters (Media Arts and Design) and Visual and Performing Arts. Since 1989-90, the number of full-time faculty in these programs grew from 165 to 467

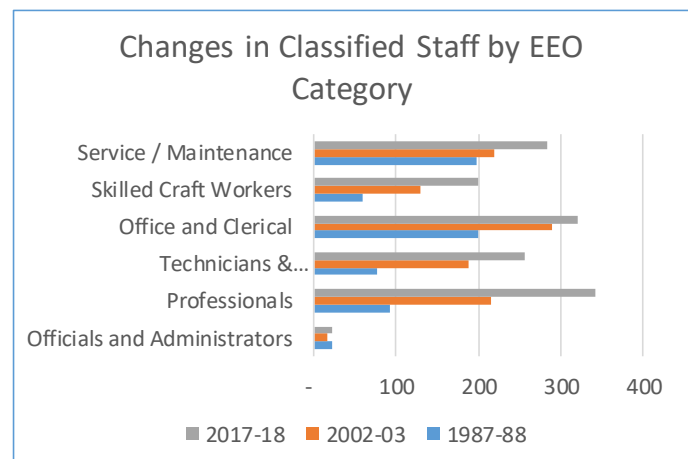
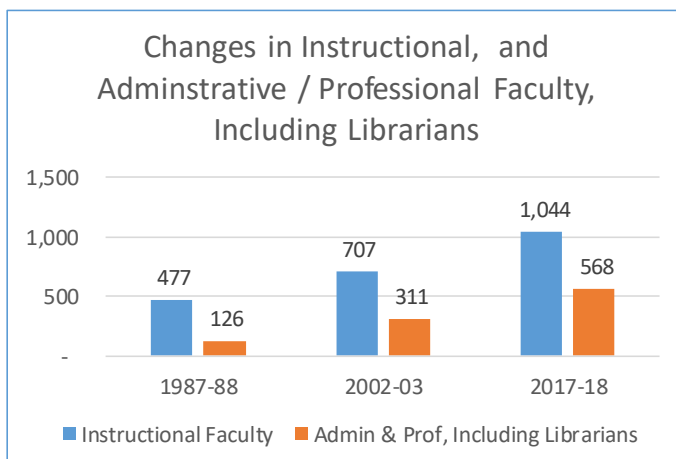
(183%). Instructional faculty in the College of Business, which is considered to be high cost in terms of compensation, grew from 88 to 140 (59%). Faculty in other academic departments grew from 217 to 304 (40%).



In some ways, however, the data on faculty have remained relatively stable. Sixty-one percent of new tenure-track assistant professors were awarded tenure within seven years. A large majority of faculty not earning tenure at JMU earned it at other institutions. This tenure percentage has varied little over the last 25 years. In 2017, 30% of faculty had worked at JMU five years or less. This percentage has changed little since 1990 when it was 32%.

Full-Time Staff

It takes a lot of people to run an institution as large and complex as JMU. Since 1987, more than 175,000 unique students have attended JMU. Since 2003, more than 6,000 unique full-time faculty, administrators and classified staff have worked at JMU. Since 1987, more than 4,000 unique full-time instructional, administrative and professional faculty have worked at JMU. The first chart below displays the changes in full-time instructional, and administrative, and professional faculty (including librarians) since 1987. The second chart displays the changes in classified staff by EEO¹ category.



¹ Definitions of all EEO categories can be found through this link:

https://www.tarleton.edu/finadminweb/hr/compensation/Pay_Plan_Narrative/EEO%20Categories%20and%20Definitions.doc

Changes in Executive Leadership

Over these 30 years, JMU has enjoyed remarkable stability in its executive leadership, particularly presidents Ronald Carrier (1971 to 1997), Linwood Rose (1998 to 2012), and Jonathan Alger (2012 to present). The latest study from American College on Education found that the average tenure of presidents is 6.5 years. Each president has been committed to developing and enhancing the university's academic programs and culture of innovation, all the while caring for each student, instructional faculty member, staff member, and administrator. In addition to the three presidents, there have been three provosts, two vice-presidents for administration and finance, and two vice-presidents for student affairs.

Changes in Administrative and Professional Faculty

Earlier in this research note we described the major ways in which the higher education landscape has changed in the last 30 years. The two charts on the previous page show that JMU increased the types of faculty and staff to enable the institution to respond to the changed educational landscape. Below is a list of several non-instructional departments that had to increase professional and administrative staff to meet demands and expectations.

- The Admissions Office increased the number of professional faculty from six in 1989-90 to 20 in 2017-18. The increased challenges of managing more than 24,000 applications have required additional staff to read each application and to visit college fairs up and down the eastern seaboard. In addition to recruiting trips to off-campus college fairs and reading each application, the Admissions Office offers daily admissions tours of the campus. Approximately 58,000 potential students and parents attend these sessions and tours annually.
- The JMU Counseling Center serves students who need short- and long-term counseling. The center experienced annual 10% increases in demand for well over a decade. The office has implemented many creative services for students, but the nature of counseling is still human connection. The number of professional staff in the Counseling Center increased from six in 1989-90 to 16 in 2017-18, an increase of 63%, which is far less than the increase in the number of clients that the Center's clinicians serve each year.
- Academics is challenging for most students, especially when what students need to know and do is far more complex than in 1987. When asked on the annual First-Year Student Survey about those areas they felt well prepared from high school, more than half said they were *not* well prepared for: science, time management, mathematics, study habits, musical skills and foreign languages. Fifty-three percent said they were likely to need special tutoring or remedial work. JMU's academic departments have always found ways to provide assistance to struggling students, but as the number of students grew and learning requirements increased, the Learning Centers were established in the early 2000s to provide instruction and tutoring across many subject areas. Since moving to the Student Success Center in 2014, the number of Learning Center visits increased from 24,000 in 2013 to 44,600 in 2016. In 2017-18, the Learning Centers employed 9 full-time instructional faculty.
- The Americans with Disability Act (ADA) and the heightened understanding of special learning needs led to the development of the Office of Disability Services, which began serving students in the early 2000s. These services were instituted because students now come to college with many complex learning needs. The number of full-time professional staff grew from one in 2002 to four in 2017-18. These services did not exist in 1987.
- The critical need to raise support for our students to off-set the dramatic reductions in support from the Commonwealth has resulted in significant increases in fund-raising efforts, not only at JMU, but throughout higher education. JMU's endowment is now more than \$92 million, up from \$2.5 million in 1987. Annual giving increased from \$1.3 million in 1987 to \$18.0 million in 2017. Because JMU is limited in the number and amounts of institution-funded financial aid that can be offered, other Virginia institutions with whom JMU competes for students (UVA, W&M, VT) have significantly higher endowments from which they can draw to

attract these students. To address this critical need, the university has grown the University Advancement professional staff from 3 in 1989-90 to 42 in 2017-18.

- Other smaller offices added professional staff to handle many types of operations. Some of these smaller offices include Audit and Management Services, Human Resources, Research and Scholarships, Institutional Research, Registrar, Center for Multicultural Student Services, Center for Global Engagement, Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships, and Access and Inclusion.
- Throughout its growth and development, JMU has maintained a focus on efficiency at every level. Among comprehensive institutions in the Commonwealth, JMU ranks leanest at \$1,552 per Full-Time Equivalent Student spending on institutional support in FY 15-16. CENSEO Consulting said that, “Administrative staff are lean but very effective; benchmarking and industry standards denote that JMU exceeds expectations in a number of areas.”

Changes in Classified Staff

- Other types of units and services increased staff to handle many important functions that students, parents, and JMU employees demand. For example, professionals, technicians and paraprofessionals have grown by more than 200% since 1987. The dramatic increases in technology and related areas are due to the more sophisticated nature of how JMU must deliver services. More than half of the technicians and paraprofessionals in 2017 were in information technology positions. On the other hand, several employment categories (Office/Clerical and Service/Maintenance) have grown less than 50% even though the student population has doubled.
- There has been a significant growth in technology-related staff across the campus. Staff with a job code of “Information Technology Specialist” grew from 117 in 2003-04 to 171 in 2017-18. One would expect that growth in Information Technology Specialists would occur in areas such as Computing Support and Classroom Technology Services, but other departments also have needs for dedicated staff in these areas, such as Card Services, the College of Business, Math Department, and Office of the Registrar. As computer technology has become highly integrated into all areas of the campus, it is not surprising to see growth in these departments.

Change through the Eyes of Long-Term Faculty and Staff

The numbers show how much JMU has changed in the last 30 years, but how has this change affected those employed at JMU during most of this period of time? We asked current and recently retired faculty, staff and administrators, with at least 25 years of service, to tell us how they believe JMU has or has not changed. More than 50 individuals responded. Below are some broad interpretations of their responses.

How JMU Changed

Two major forces, and a few minor ones, have driven change in the last 30 years.

Technology is a major driver of change. Respondents spoke of how little technology existed 30 years ago and how the continual introduction of technology has led to many changes, most for the good, but there have been some unintended consequences. Many functions have been automated providing more time for other tasks. Communication between departments and staff has been enhanced through technology but with the subsequent loss of personal contact. Email and texting has replaced face-to-face communication. Sometimes the ability to get some things done leads to pressures to do even more at a faster rate. Many faculty, staff and students want things to be done faster due to technology. Students, faculty and staff can and do communicate with colleagues, friends and family almost instantaneously.

Enrollment growth, and the subsequent growth of the facilities and campus, is also an important driver of change. The respondents said that enrollment and campus growth has led to increased challenges to get to know people outside of their immediate department and areas. In 1987, all instruction occurred in the Bluestone area. As the campus grew, respondents praised the quality of the facilities and grounds while at the same time bemoaned the increased time it takes to get from one place on the campus to another. Some respondents expressed concerns or lack of understanding about the growth in non-faculty positions in many areas of the campus. Improved technology and the workforce has resulted in changes in how instruction is delivered. One respondent asked when people had last seen and used a chalkboard. Some respondents said that they were expected to teach larger classes due to the influx of students. Changes in the workforce requirements for graduates have forced some faculty to change their teaching methods and curricula rapidly.

As you read the responses you feel a sense of both pride at what they have observed and experienced but also a sense of loss. There is a recognition that change can be good, for example, increased technology that helps areas do their jobs faster and more efficiently. On the other hand, the rapid growth of students, the campus and technology has resulted in a feeling of loss for those who responded to the survey - loss of individuality and a feeling of closeness to people that the tiny version of JMU may have provided.

How JMU Did Not Change or Changed Little

In reading responses about what has not changed at JMU you get a sense of pride in what has not changed.

Despite the dramatic increase in the size and complexity of JMU, there remains a strong commitment to students, what has been termed “The JMU Way.” Faculty – new and not so new – are devoted to student learning and research. Respondents noted that there is a “basic kindness” of faculty, staff and students toward each other. Holding doors for others is embedded in the culture. There is a sense of pride in being a part of JMU. Several respondents said JMU students are basically “well-behaved and pleasant.”

The respondents are still amazed at the beauty of the campus and the continued commitment to outstanding buildings and grounds. There continues to be a strong stewardship of limited financial resources.

There continues to be a strong commitment to collaboration and collegiality. Turnover is not high in most areas of JMU, and it appears that collaboration and collegiality contribute to JMU being a good place to work and learn.

Student Perceptions

How have students’ opinions about JMU’s people changed since 1987? The Continuing Student Survey has been conducted annually for more than 40 years. Fortunately, many of the same questions have been asked all these years. Below are students’ responses toward selected perceptions of JMU and satisfaction with aspects of JMU. A remarkable thing about these responses is that in many ways the perceptions of and satisfaction with JMU have improved.

Student Perceptions of JMU As:	1987	2016
Good	88%	86%
Friendly	88%	86%
Challenging	83%	78%
Supportive	74%	77%
Level of Satisfaction (Very Satisfied or Satisfied)		
Attitude of the faculty toward students	92%	96%
Out-of-class availability of faculty	79%	96%
Instruction in the major	81%	92%
Concern for the individual	79%	70%
Availability of advisor	63%	87%
Attitudes of non-teaching staff toward students	68%	96%
JMU in general	98%	95%

Summary Thoughts

JMU in 2017-18 is an enormously different and more complex institution than it was in 1987-88. But in some ways it is not.

Changes:

- JMU is more racially and ethnically diverse than it was in 1987. Even though comparisons between 1989 and 2017 are problematic, at best, due to federal changes in race/ethnicity definitions, it appears that the percentage of multicultural faculty increased from 5% to between 15% and 20%.
- There has been a dramatic growth in the number and percentage of faculty who are women. In 1987, 26% of faculty were women. In 2017, women represented 49% of all faculty.
- The number of women in senior leadership roles increased substantially between 1987 and 2017. In 1987-88, the Provost and all but one dean were males. In fall 2017, the Provost, all three vice provosts, and three of the eight college deans are women. In 1987, five of the 28 (33%) academic department heads were women compared to 23 out of 44 (52%) departments in 2017.
- The student-to-faculty ratio improved from a high of 19 to 1 in 1997 to 16 to 1 in 2017.
- The business and regulatory environments in which higher education and JMU exist changed dramatically. JMU increased the number of professional faculty to manage the greater demands for technology, accountability and student services. These demands came mostly from the Commonwealth, the Federal Government and accreditors.
- Higher education institutions exist in a much more highly competitive environment for students. The expectations of students and their families for additional academic programs and services has caused institutions, such as JMU, to add or expand academic programs and services. These expanded programs and services include the Counseling Center, the Office of Admissions, the Learning Centers and University Advancement.
- The dramatic increases in technology and related areas are due to the more sophisticated nature of how JMU must deliver services. More than half of the technicians and paraprofessionals in 2017 were in information technology positions. It seems as if every few months another important process has been automated with the resulting learning curve. On the other hand, several employment categories (Office/Clerical and Service/Maintenance) grew less than 50% even though the student population more than doubled.
- JMU's academic programs and departments are much more complex and costly, requiring additional faculty and staff to manage and support the larger numbers of students. Over the last 30 years, the proportions of JMU's degrees conferred and faculty in STEM and Health have increased. Since 1986-87, STEM/Health graduates have grown from 23% of total graduates to 36% while the percentage of full-time faculty devoted to STEM/Health has grown from 30% to 41%. STEM/Health programs and facilities are larger and more expensive than many other disciplinary areas, thus increasing the pressures on the budget and facilities. One driver in the increase in the cost of instruction has been the larger proportion of faculty in high cost programs.
- Many academic departments and colleges have grown so large that it has been necessary to increase the leadership to manage these areas. For example, in 1987, the average academic department averaged 15 full-time faculty and one department head, and in 2017 the average was greater than 20, and most had program coordinators to provide leadership in different parts of the curricula.

Current and retired faculty and staff with at least 25 years of service mentioned the following as major changes.

- Enrollment growth, and the subsequent expansion of the facilities and campus, has been the most important driver of change. Enrollment and campus expansion have led to increased challenges to get to know people outside of their immediate department and areas. In 1987, 100% of all credit hours were taken in the Bluestone area (42% in 2017).
- Little technology existed 30 years ago and the continual introduction of technology has led to many changes, most for the good but with a few unintended consequences. Many functions have been automated and provide more time for other tasks. Sometimes the ability to get things done more quickly leads to pressures to do even more things.
- Advances in technology and the more complex workforce have resulted in changes in how instruction is delivered. Workforce requirements for graduates have forced some faculty to change their teaching methods and curricula rapidly. In 1995, JMU developed a highly interactive “Classroom of the 21st Century.” Now virtually every learning space could be considered a “Classroom of the 21st Century.”
- The rapid growth of students, the campus, and technology resulted in a loss of individuality and closeness to people. Long-term employees feel more isolated and less connected to the institution than 30 years ago.

Changed Little or Remains the Same

After examining all the things that did change in the last 30 years, one might begin to wonder if anything stayed the same. Some answers can be found in the numbers, but far more are found in the people.

Current students and long-time employees seemed to summarize well what has not changed.

- Students continue to view JMU as good, friendly, challenging and supportive.
- Student levels of satisfaction with JMU’s people remains very high in attitude of the faculty toward students; out-of-class availability of faculty; instruction in the major; concern for the individual; availability of advisors; attitudes of non-teaching staff toward students; and JMU in general.
- Despite the dramatic increase in the size and complexity of JMU, there remains a strong commitment to students, “The JMU Way.”
- Faculty, new and not so new, are devoted to student learning and research. There is a “basic kindness” of faculty, staff and students toward each other.
- There is a culture of pride in being a part of JMU. Several respondents said JMU students are basically well-behaved and pleasant.
- Students, faculty and staff are still amazed at the beauty of the campus and the continued commitment to outstanding buildings and grounds.
- Many respondents said that there continues to be a strong commitment to collaboration and collegiality. Turnover is not high in most areas of JMU, and it appears that collaboration and collegiality contribute to JMU being a good place to work and learn.

JMU’s faculty, administrators, and staff are very different in many ways, but it appears that there are important common characteristics and actions that have, thankfully, remained the same. To change and improve in so many ways is amazing, but what is more amazing is the constancy of the culture of caring for students and each other.

Questions about this research note can be directed toward Dr. Frank Doherty at dohertyf@jmu.edu.