



Professional &
Continuing Education

ADULT DEGREE PROGRAM

Greetings to our graduates, your families and friends and to my colleagues at James Madison University.

My name is Melissa Maybury Lubin and I have the absolute pleasure to serve as the dean of Professional & Continuing Education at JMU. It is an honor to be with you today—both in person to receive your diploma and virtually to share this message in celebration of our Spring graduating class of 2021.

In Professional & Continuing Education, our graduates are students in our Adult Degree Program. These graduates are earning their Bachelor of Individualized Studies degrees where each student can choose tracks that match their career aspirations or individually design their concentration based upon their own professional and personal experiences. This year's concentrations have a broad range including Accounting and Integrated Business Analysis, Sociology, Early Childhood Education and Communication. Today is an extraordinary moment in time for our graduates who have persevered through an incredibly challenging year—they inspire all of us to stay the course until you get to the finish line.

As adult learners, our graduates juggle responsibilities in their lives that our somewhat more traditional students have yet to encounter. Here's just a few interesting facts about some of this year's graduates:

- 10 students reentered JMU through Return to Madison—a program designed to assist JMU alumni who started college but never finished to finally complete their degrees
- One student started his JMU education almost 40 years ago and was able to complete his degree in just one semester
- Six students are graduating in our program's first Early Childhood Education track, where students with associate degrees from community colleges can complete the remainder of their bachelor degree online and obtain social mobility in their careers
- One graduate studied at home alongside her 13 year old twins who were also attending school online due to the pandemic
- And two of our graduates have a 4.0 GPA!

Balancing the demands of college, work and life is not easy. These interdisciplinary degrees are hard earned and well deserved.

I'd like to take a moment now to personally thank our adult degree program graduates for the many unique gifts they bring to JMU. We are better because of YOU!

- Your personal and professional experiences bring reality to the classroom discussions
- Your eagerness to direct your own learning brings great diversity in thought and action, creating new learning outcomes for both students and faculty
- Your problem-centered approach to learning inspires you to apply what you've learned in the classroom the very next day in work and life
- and your intrinsic motivation reminds us all that earning a degree does more than position you for a new or better job or greater income: it gives you the satisfaction of finishing what you did not complete years ago.

You did it! You are a graduate! You are JMU!

In closing, I'd like to also thank the family, friends and loved ones who are behind every one of our graduates. For every graduate in our program, there are many more people in their lives who celebrate this accomplishment. Thank you for your support because they could not have done it without you!

Congratulations to all and Go Dukes!

Yours respectfully,

Dean Melissa M. Lubin, Ph.D.