

RESEARCH

YEAR IN REVIEW



2024

A Message from Anthony Tongen

The past year has been one of transformative change for Research, Economic Development & Innovation (REDI). Elevated to a university division, REDI affirmed its core identity as an agent for faculty and student scholarship development and promotion, resource identification and community outreach. REDI is grateful for the opportunity to work closely with President Charlie King, and looks forward to building on our R2 success with President James Schmidt, while providing university-level services to all divisions at JMU.

The recently launched Office of Research Development (ORD) has grown a rich slate of programs guiding faculty and staff to funding resources, while the Office of Student Awards, Initiatives and Research (STAIR) has assembled a comparable array of options for students. Whether monitoring compliance or facilitating financial awards, the Office of Research Integrity (ORI) and Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP) continue to ensure that our faculty and students are responsible stewards of state, federal and university resources.

Prioritizing collaboration, REDI has built relationships with campus and external stakeholders, cultivating a robust network of opportunities for faculty, students, businesses and more. The Office of Economic & Community Development (OECD) connects employers with faculty expertise, internships and innovation spaces. The Office of Federal Relations and Communications (FRC) increases JMU's visibility in Washington, D.C. through advocacy with legislators. JMU X-Labs builds interdisciplinary teams of scholars, practitioners and students to tackle societal challenges.



I'm proud of the outstanding work done by the entire REDI division, and am excited to share how JMU research advances knowledge, spurs economic growth and motivates societal progress. For the latest JMU research news, follow @JMUResearch and #JMUResearch on Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn.

Best,

Anthony Tongen

Anthony Tongen
Vice President

JMU
Research, Economic
Development & Innovation

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*as of May 2025



By The Numbers

5 X-Labs cross-disciplinary, team-taught courses featuring **9** instructors from **5** colleges, **8** new and **2** returning external partners, and many students from majors across campus

79 travel grants awarded to graduate and undergraduate students to engage in research activities at conferences and other events

\$33,129,815
in external sponsored program funding

363 proposals were prepared and submitted by members of the JMU community, a 25% increase from the 290 proposals submitted the previous year

37.9 million gallons of gasoline/diesel reduced throughout the Commonwealth via Virginia Clean Cities initiatives

Engaged approximately **400**
JMU and community stakeholders in
a strategic planning process to shape
future economic and community
development efforts

Over **100** meetings between
the Office of Research Integrity and
student and faculty researchers
representing all colleges at JMU

1,000 state and local
IT leaders in attendance
at the Commonwealth of
Virginia Innovative Technology
Symposium where two JMU
projects received Governor's
Technology Awards



CASE engaged over **900** K-12
students through field trips, classroom
visits, summer camps and renewable
energy challenge events

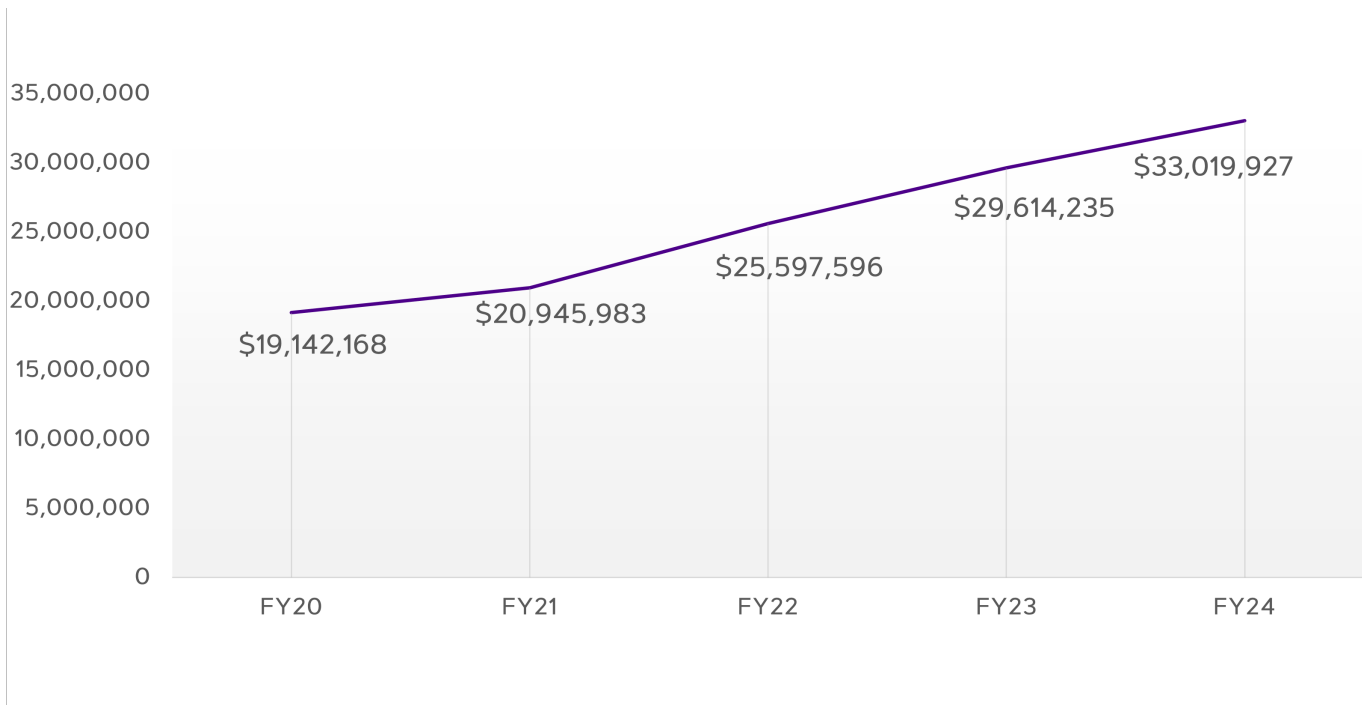
Readers from over **200** countries and regions
downloaded **87,291** *Journal of Conventional
Weapons Destruction* articles from the JMU
Scholarly Commons

Funding & Research Compliance Data

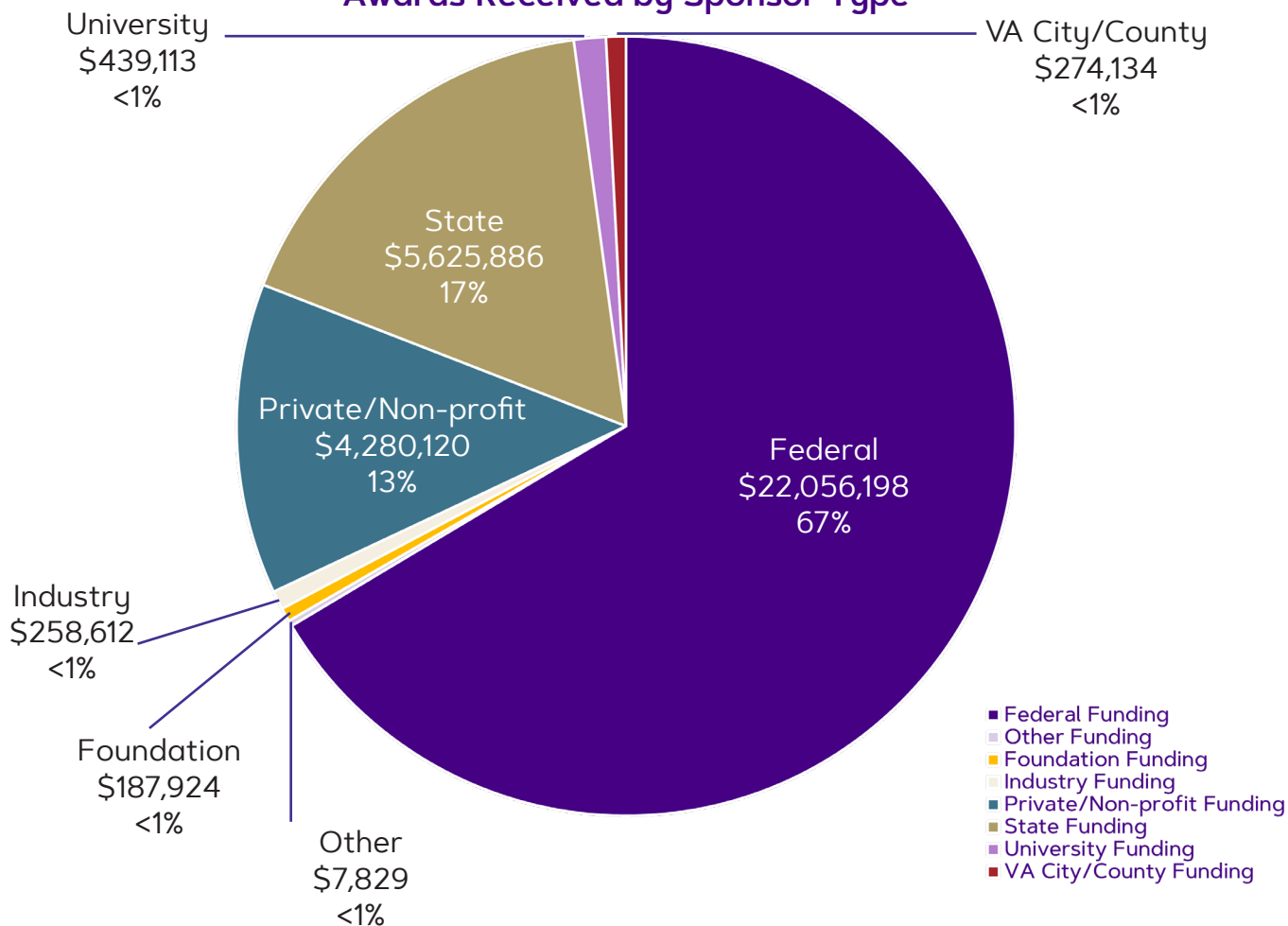
The REDI division supports all university divisions and community members in finding and applying for grants and other forms of external funding, enabling high-quality innovative projects and research. Intentional research development efforts (grant-writing workshops, agency site visits, trainings and institutes) generated the following growth from FY2023 to FY2024:

- 25% increase in proposals submitted
- 11.5% increase in proposals awarded
- 62% increase in requested amounts

3-Year Sponsored Programs Moving Average



Awards Received by Sponsor Type



Top Five Funding Agencies

- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (\$7,596,542)
- U.S. Department of Education (\$4,809,275)
- National Science Foundation (\$3,598,831)
- U.S. Department of Energy (\$2,462,598)
- U.S. Department of State (\$1,439,026)

Research Integrity Figures

- 23 – Biosafety Protocol Registrations (IBC)
- 41 – Animal Subject Research Protocols (IACUC)
- 138 – Financial Conflict of Interest Disclosures
- 558 – Lab Safety Follow-up Inspections
- 1124 – Human Subject Research Protocols (IRB)
- 3364 – CITI Trainings

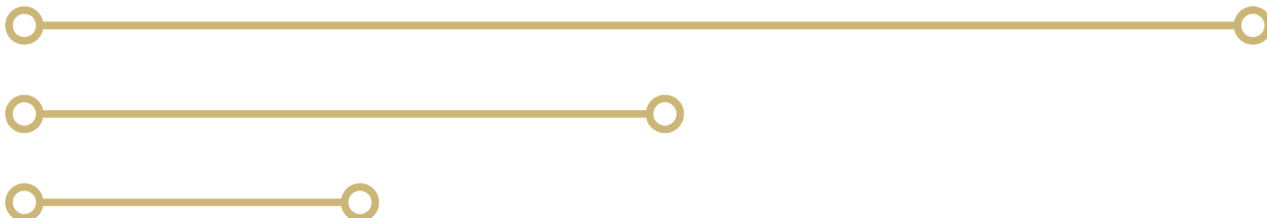
Established in June 2023, the **Office of Economic and Community Development (OECD)** aims to enhance university efforts in student success, research and economic engagement in the Shenandoah Valley and Virginia. Utilizing APLU and UEDA's framework of university-based economic development, OECD focuses on talent, innovation and placemaking. Key achievements in FY24 include:

- Leading JMU's University Economic Development Council (UEDC) in the development and implementation of an internal and external data collection process to identify university economic engagement accomplishments, strengths and opportunities
- Engaging university and community stakeholders to inform and develop a strategic plan
- Re-launching the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council under the leadership of a new executive director
- Coordinating the V-TOP initiative, a Commonwealth of Virginia program to expand regional work-based learning opportunities through regional collaboration.



Pictured left: Lorena Rodriguez, IT systems analyst at InterChange Group, Inc., and winner of the Dr. John Noftsinger Leadership Award, being recognized at the revitalized annual Tech Nite organized by the Shenandoah Valley Technology Council

The **Office of Federal Relations and Communications** coordinated a \$1,000,000 Congressionally Directed Spending request, supporting the Early Healthcare Workforce Development project. A partnership among the African, African American and Diaspora (AAAD) Studies Center, the College of Health and Behavioral Studies, and the College of Arts and Letters with Virginia public schools and medical districts, this program engages inventive, intergenerational support to address disparities in health outcomes. This work highlights JMU's commitment to federal engagement, workforce development, innovation in education and responding to regional needs in the healthcare sector.



JMU X-Labs 2.0 advanced collaborative, cross-disciplinary innovation through programs, courses and research. Partnering with Ellucian, the Reimagined Internship pilot program showcased mutually beneficial innovations at technology, process, collaborative, organizational, workforce and educational levels, while the annual Innovation Summit celebrated X-Labs 2.0 with a full house, highlighting impactful work by students, faculty and partners.



Pictured above: Students participating in the X-Labs Reimagined Internship pilot program in partnership with Ellucian

JMU Esports, under JMU X-Labs sponsorship, celebrated a strong year of growth, expanding its roster from 70 to 100 players across eight game titles in seven national leagues. With the addition of four new teams and three weeks of dynamic summer camps for JMU Valley Scholars and local students, the program showcased its impact and commitment to gaming excellence.

The **Office of Student Awards, Initiatives, and Research (STAIR)** excelled in supporting student research and securing awards. The First Year Research Experience program expanded, and STAIR launched the Research Training Master Series to enhance research skills. The office nominated its first successful Rangel Scholar, achieved the best Fulbright yield in four years, and secured two Boren Scholarships. Additionally, students received numerous travel grants, many were inducted into Alpha Lambda Delta honors society and Fulbright scholars were celebrated.



Members of the **Office of Research Development (ORD)** worked intensively with over 55 faculty members to support external funding applications with a potential value exceeding \$27 million, which contributed to the significant increase in proposals submitted by JMU faculty in FY24. ORD also facilitated a visit by a National Endowment for the Humanities program to JMU's campus as well as participated in two site visits in Washington D.C., meeting with representatives of the U.S. Institute of Peace and participating in the U.S. Department of Education's Institute of Education Sciences Innovations Day.

The **Office of Research Integrity (ORI)** kept up the momentum in FY24, with the following key accomplishments:

- Completed a successful Academic Program Review (APR)
- Successfully implemented a new electronic Research Administration system to better serve the research community
- Conducted a succession plan which involved evaluating roles and responsibilities to identify areas to shift responsibilities in order to better manage the high demands of the office regarding research compliance
- Generated a 3-year strategic plan to coincide with REDI's new appointment as a division.

ORI Attending Veterinarian Dr. Annette Hildabrand served as the JMU lead on the state-wide Task Force on Transparency in Publicly Funded Animal Testing Facilities. This involved attending and participating in the Virginia Animal Care and Use Program Consortium Meetings to provide subject matter expertise on potential state legislation impacting research universities.

The REDI team present a division overview to a packed room during the Center for Faculty Innovation's annual Faculty Welcome event.



The **Office of Sponsored Programs (OSP)** assisted faculty and staff submit proposals totaling \$132,609,472, an increase of 62% over FY23. More than 130 members of the JMU community received funding awards to support work in research, public service and other types of externally funded programs. Working with the colleges, OSP increased the number of new users by 64, up from 39 in the previous year. The College of Visual and Performing Arts saw substantial growth in sponsored programs funding, increasing more than 800% (an additional \$103,654), while both the College of Business (an additional \$104,646) and the Division of Student Affairs (growing to \$241,785) also saw increases.

Celebrating Research and Innovation



STAIR Interim Director Klebert Feitosa speaking at the Fulbright luncheon

Student Awards, Initiatives and Research (STAIR) hosted a Fulbright luncheon to celebrate the achievements of JMU alumni and scholars. The Fulbright program, which promotes international understanding and collaboration, has profoundly impacted participants through the transformative journey that prepares them to be better scholars. This event honored their dedication and growth, highlighting the invaluable experiences and opportunities that Fulbright provides, fostering a legacy of academic excellence and global engagement.

The 2023-24 Madison Celebration of Research and Scholarship featured lightning talks on a variety of topics from the Provost Award Winners for Excellence in Research and Scholarship. Attendees had an opportunity to meet new colleagues and catch up with friends during a networking session that featured college table displays of faculty scholarship.



A significant crowd turned out for the Innovation Summit and Esports Awards

A table-top scholarship display at the Madison Celebration of Research and Scholarship



X-Labs hosted their annual Innovation Summit and Esports Awards showcasing the cross-disciplinary collaborative work and research of its courses, Esports program, and Innovation and Impact Student Fellows program. Students delivered 3-minute lightning round presentations on climate change, medical innovations, coastal resilience, education technology and sustainability – all grand challenges that require disciplines and perspectives from traditionally separate fields to come together to discover creative solutions.

Economic Development

Building a Sustainable Workforce: Connecting university talent with regional employers

In FY 2024, the Valley Internship Experience Workgroup (VIEW) secured \$550,000 in SCHEV grant funds to support the development of work-based learning opportunities in the Shenandoah Valley through the Virginia Talent + Opportunity Partnership (VTOP). With representation from economic development, education, and industry, VTOP-VIEW was established with a group of 35 stakeholders from across the GO Virginia Region 8 footprint. Additional FY24 achievements include:

- Over 500 employers attended VIEW events and 23 paid internship positions were created, the largest increase across all nine Virginia regions.
- 15 local employers were nominated as 2024 Top VA Employers for interns.
- The VIEW project coordinator held over 100 meetings, attended 53 community events, delivered 34 presentations, and shared 96 social media posts.



Virginia Intern Day Event hosted
by VTOP-VIEW



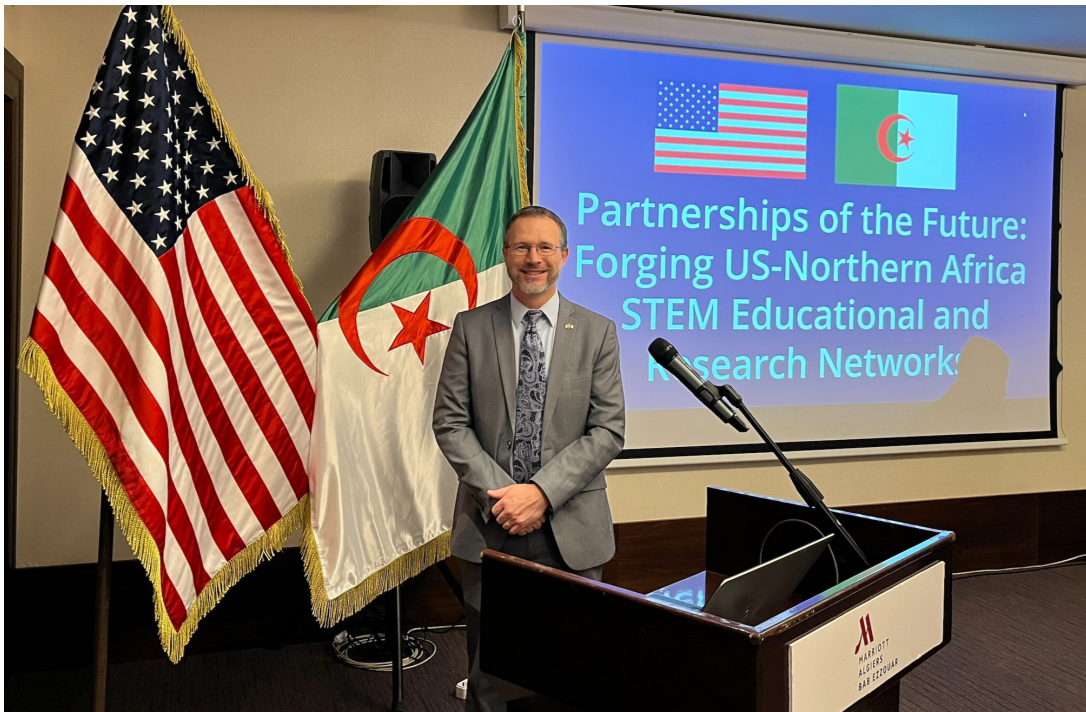
15 Shenandoah Valley employers
recognized by VTOP as Top Virginia
Employers for Interns

International Relationships

Growing Research through Global Collaboration

With ever increasing participation among faculty, students and staff in international research (in its varied definitions and expressions), REDI has been working with on campus and external partners to provide the relevant support. These efforts reached a critical pitch in FY24, with Associate Vice President for Research and Scholarship Besi Muhonja launching the International Research and Engagement Services (IRES) unit.

At JMU, global research partnerships are already established with institutions on almost all continents. IRES will support the pursuit of international research while advancing the university's global research profile. The unit makes programming and information about international research opportunities and policies accessible, creates research networking opportunities, fosters culturally responsive international research partnerships, assists with identifying and applying for external funds, and strengthens the university's international compliance function in collaboration with other offices in REDI and partners across university divisions.



A strong champion of this initiative, REDI Vice President Anthony Tongen (pictured above, presenting in Algeria), at the invitation of the U.S. State Department, traveled to South Africa, Namibia, Morocco and Algeria with Chief Research Officers from several APLU universities to discuss multidisciplinary research partnerships with African and U.S. government representatives and university leaders.



Federal Engagement

Harnessing JMU Expertise for the Public Good

Engaging with federal agencies and partners is a daily activity on JMU's campus and in Washington, DC. Advocating with Members of Congress and their staff, grant proposal development, hosting conferences and meetings, serving on review panels and advisory boards, and coordinating real-world projects and other learning opportunities for students are just a few examples of how JMU addresses a range of societal needs at the federal level.

Photos clockwise from top left:

- REDI joined former JMU Athletic Director (AD) Jeffrey Bourne and Old Dominion University AD Camden Wood Selig on Capitol Hill for meetings with congressional staff to advocate for student-athletes.
- REDI and the Office of Federal Relations and Communications provided assistance to the [Accountability in African Public Policy and Administration conference](#), co-sponsored by JMU's Department of Political Science and the Centre for the Study of Governance Innovation at the University of Pretoria, South Africa. [Third from left] is conference organizer and political science faculty Sombo Muzata.
- With campus partners, REDI brought back [JMU on the Hill in June](#), a networking event for alumni, friends and staff working in the federal government or the DC metro region.
- REDI Vice President Anthony Tongen (left) and Director of Federal Relations Ben Delp (right) share an update with Congressman Ben Cline (center) who serves the Sixth District of Virginia.
- Alleyn Harned and Russell Presnell of Virginia Clean Cities pose with fellow hosts during the 2024 Energy Independence Summit in Washington, DC.
- Director of the Center for Faith-based and Neighborhood Partnerships at the U.S. Department of Education Maggie Siddiqi visited JMU for a campus lecture.
- In May, JMU's Center for International Stabilization and Recovery (CISR) was acknowledged at the Congressional UXO/Demining Caucus celebration of International Mine Awareness Day on Capitol Hill. This event recognizes the tireless efforts of the humanitarian demining community and the U.S. Conventional Weapons Destruction (CWD) Program. In his remarks, Massachusetts Congressman Jim McGovern commended CISR's work in collaborating with the U.S. State Department's Bureau of Political-Military Affairs to produce the annual report on U.S. CWD efforts, [To Walk the Earth in Safety](#).





Pictured: Evan Friss

History Professor Evan Friss authored the *New York Times* bestseller *The Bookshop: A History of the American Bookstore*. In an era defined by digital screens, Friss said people seek out bookstores as not only a place to find books but also a place of refuge. Friss hopes his book will help readers “[develop or further their appreciation for how valuable bookstores have been and can be to American culture and life.](#)”

Steven Reich (History) received a [fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities](#) for his project, *Buzzards Over Texas: A Story of Race, Violence and the Search for Justice in the Jim Crow South*. Reich is spending the one-year fellowship period writing a book that reconstructs the history and fate of the people of Sandy Beulah, a settlement of Black landowners in east-central Texas that was destroyed by mob violence in the summer of 1910.



Pictured: Steven Reich



Pictured: Sombo Muzata

Three JMU faculty members received support from the [Carnegie African Diaspora Fellowship Program to partner with African higher education institutions](#). Amina Saidou (Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures) is collaborating with Cheikh Anta Diop University in Dakar, Senegal, to design and teach innovative courses on African cinema. Sombo Muzata (Political Science) continues to partner with the University of Pretoria, South Africa on research examining the links between public debt, corruption and illicit financial flows. Modjadji Choshi (Nursing, College of Health and Behavioral Studies) is working with the University of South Africa to provide an intensive two-week workshop for graduate students and junior faculty on research design and methodology.

In the 2023-24 academic year, CAL faculty published 15 books and 129 journal articles, book chapters and creative pieces.

College of Arts & Letters

Are appeals to a larger group more likely to result in a volunteer? This is a question asked by 2024 CoB Madison Scholar Angela Smith (Department of Economics). While bystander studies have been an ongoing feature in social science research since the mid-1960s, Professor Smith's work in experimental economics explores the dynamics of increasing group size on behavior in the volunteer's dilemma. Her research shows that although the individual propensity to volunteer decreases in larger groups, as is well known, the overall likelihood of obtaining at least one volunteer increases. This intuitive result that contradicts commonly accepted theoretical predictions has wide implications for social action, philanthropy, as well as leadership and administration.



Pictured above: Angela Smith



Smith presented her work at a CoB hosted luncheon attended by over 50 academics, including guests from the University of Virginia.



College of Business

CoB faculty authored or were co-authors on 82 peer-reviewed journal publications in 2023-24.

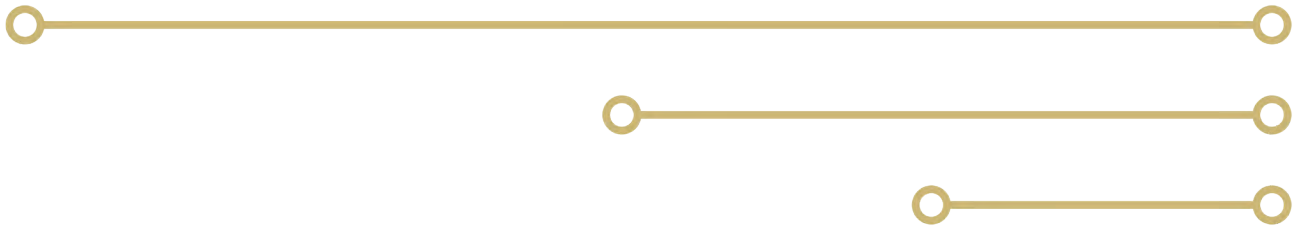
The College of Education is a leader in external grants and contracts, securing more than \$33 million since 2021.

College of Education

The JMU Lab School for Innovation & Career Exploration provides Rockingham County students in grades 9-12 deep engagement in solving community needs by applying high-level academic skills with community and industry experts. Leveraging the resources of James Madison University and Blue Ridge Community College, high schools have high-touch access to college, community organizations and the workforce through an innovative model that brings industries to lab school students. This innovation hub serves as a model for teaching and learning, functioning as a research and development site for pre-service, early career, teacher leaders and educational leaders to study and inform evidence-based practices, coaching/mentoring, teacher development and educational leader development across the Commonwealth. This \$8 million project is legislatively funded through 2028 with plans for future sustainability.



Dean of the College of Education Mark L'Esperance provides remarks.



State and local leaders gather on JMU's campus to launch the new lab school.

Four 21st Community Learning Center Grants, totaling \$887,865 annually, fund the Gus Bus for a total of \$2.6 million. The Gus Bus is a community literacy and academic enrichment program serving PreK-5th grade students in Harrisonburg, Virginia. Their mission is achieved through collaboration with faculty and students from the Morrison Bruce Center, the School of Nursing and the College of Education, providing family engagement and health-based activities that promote healthy habits for the young participants.

Dizziness and vertigo affect more than 30% of older adults, approximately 69 million Americans. One of the most common causes of age-related dizziness is vestibular dysfunction. JMU was awarded \$1,888,982 for a project that will utilize novel vestibular testing, developed in JMU labs, to enhance our understanding of vestibular function and impact clinical care of patients with dizziness. Funded over five years, the Nonlinearities in Human Vestibular Reflexes project is led by the Department of Communication Sciences and Disorders, and supported by the National Institutes of Health, specifically the National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders (NIH-NIDCD).



JMU Nursing students with Gus Bus participants.



CSD faculty conducting research in Health and Behavioral Studies lab space.

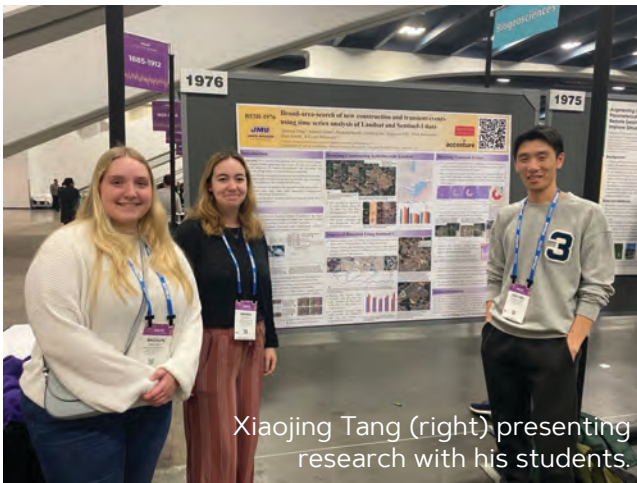
College of Health & Behavioral Studies

Faculty from CHBS academic units and the Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services submitted 73 grant proposals, 59 of which were funded for a total of \$8,993,125.

Cheng Li (ISAT program faculty in the School of Integrated Sciences) is part of a team led by the University of Maryland that received an \$11 million grant from the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA) to generate reliable and renewable energy for defense-related purposes. Li's team is exploring the potential of marine microbial fuel cells (MMFCs) for sustained applications in marine ecosystems. Li also collaborated with the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians to name a newly discovered species of cable bacteria, underscoring a commitment to blending indigenous heritage with scientific innovation and promote healthier aquatic ecosystems.



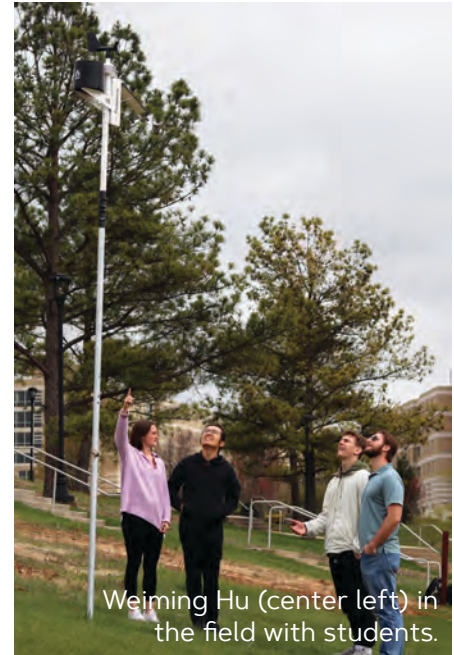
Geography Assistant Professor Weiming Hu received a \$144,000 grant from the California Department of Water Resources to develop Machine Learning solutions for Atmospheric River forecasting and water resource management in the Western United States. This project aims to enhance our ability to generate high-resolution, accurate, and calibrated regional forecasts, and transform the produced forecasts into actionable information to better help decision-making and water reservoir management.



Xiaojing Tang (right) presenting research with his students.



Cheng Li (center) with his research students.



Weiming Hu (center left) in the field with students.

Xiaojing Tang (Geography program faculty in the School of Integrated Sciences) received a \$687,000 grant from the NASA SERVIR program to build capacity to support the use of earth observations in sustainable land management in developing countries in West Africa. Tang also collaborated with Boston University and Accenture Federal Services on a \$778,000 grant from the IARPA SMART program. Three JMU students have participated in the research activities, resulting in two peer-reviewed papers and two presentations at the American Geophysical Union Annual Conference.



College of Integrated Science & Engineering

CISE faculty published 158 papers, 75 peer-reviewed journal articles or conference proceedings, 5 book chapters, 17 technical reports, 5 textbooks and 12 software systems, while securing \$1,743,000 in external funding.

Biology faculty Jaira Ferreira de Vasconcellos has funding from the National Science Foundation supporting her research focused on cancer cell culture and therapeutic drug resistance. She was also selected to participate in the National Institutes of Health's Programs to Increase Diversity among Individuals Engaged in Health-Related Research (PRIDE) and presented research at the PRIDE NIH summer institute. Vasconcellos received additional support through a STEM Education Grant Award from the Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers (SHPE). She has authored numerous presentations at national conferences focusing on human genetics and space biology research.

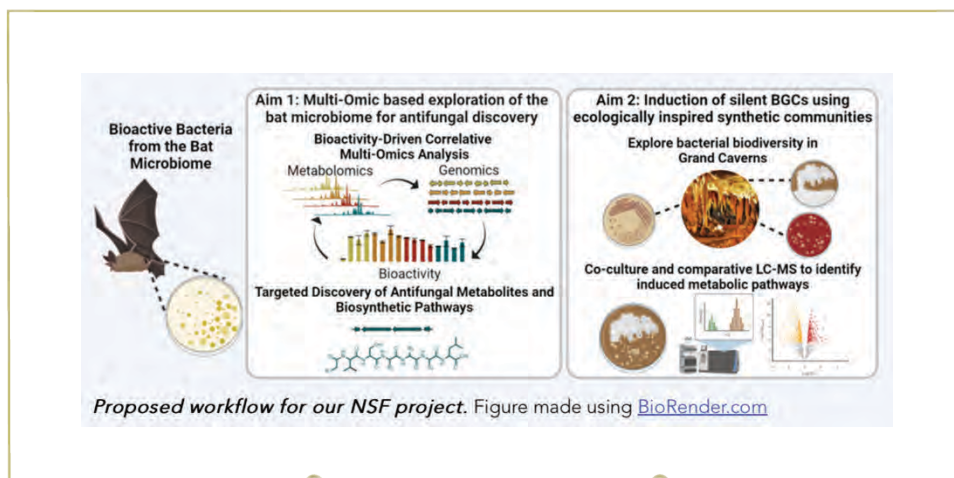


Pictured: Jaira Ferreira de Vasconcellos



Pictured: Lindsay Caesar

An NSF-funded project in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry supports Assistant Professor Lindsay Caesar's bat microbiome research. This work (pictured below) explores bacteria that live on the skin of bats as natural producers of antifungals that may help to protect certain bats against the fungal pathogen, *Pseudogymnoascus destructans*, the causative agent of "White Nose Syndrome," which has killed millions of bats in the last ~15 years. The project is a collaboration with Northwestern University, where the role of Caesar's lab is to investigate the chemistry of antifungal strains using a combination of mass spectrometry-based metabolomics, bioactivity-directed chemometric modeling and genomic data.



More than 350 CSM students were mentored by faculty advisors in original research, with over 400 students listed as presenters or co-authors at regional, national and international conferences. CSM faculty successfully secured almost \$4 million in grants.

College of Science & Mathematics

College of Visual & Performing Arts

The JMU ArtsMobile, a visual and performing arts studio on wheels, is designed to bring CVPA's exemplary arts and design programs out to local and regional communities in meaningful ways. Funded from a Madison Trust award and fostered under the Office of Creative Propulsion, [the ArtsMobile](#) is a commitment to foster arts engagement beyond campus borders.



Performing students from JMU's Opera Guild pose in front of the JMU ArtsMobile.

Music and Dance students rehearsing ahead of a scheduled performance at the Reina Sofia.



School of Art, Design and Art History (SADAH) Professor Laura Katzman curated *Ben Shahn, On Nonconformity*, [a retrospective exhibition for the Museo Reina Sofia in Madrid](#). Accompanying the exhibition in Madrid were 21 CVPA dance and music students who performed an original musical score for wind instruments composed by School of Music Director John Allemeier, and the dance *Happening* choreographed by Dean Rubén Graciani.

SADAH Director MiKyoung Lee and faculty members Rob Mertens, Ginny Soenksen, Hannah Sions and Anna Smith hosted the Hanbok, Korean international artist residency with Professor Jung Ok Um and Suntae Hwang. The residency included master classes, an exhibition *Hanbok Saenghwal: Korean Fashion Then and Now*, and international partners including the Embassy of Korea in DC.



Participating students from the masterclass pose with Professor Suntae Hwang and Jung Ok Um in Duke Hall.

Marigona Gashi, a student from Kosovo enrolled in JMU's Communication and Advocacy program, developed the [“Think Outside the Trash” project](#) to change attitudes and behaviors toward recycling in Kosovo. While working in the Urban Planning Department in Kosovo's capital Prishtina, Gashi observed that people don't think about recycling and the country lacked a sustainable recycling system, leading to overflowing landfills. To address this challenge, her project was implemented in three phases: 1) development of a guidebook designed for use in high schools, 2) workshops to help school staff learn how to approach and implement the instructions and creative activities, and 3) practicing recycling in schools. The project not only promoted academic connections, such as calculating the individual impact of recycling, but also helped to foster life skills, teamwork and problem-solving. Funding support was provided by JMU's Madison Trust.



Pictured: Marigona Gashi



Pictured: Yulin Yuan

Yulin Yuan ('24M), a Master of Fine Arts graduate from JMU's School of Art, Design and Art History, received a [2024-2025 Professional Visual Arts Fellowship](#) from the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts. Her award comes after three years pursuing her MFA, and she notes the SADAH community's impact on her career. "Recalling my first year, stating that I wanted to create a world based on Chinese immigrant experiences, I am glad I accomplished that with the help of everyone I came across, including faculty, students and peers," Yuan said. Her MFA education culminated with a solo thesis exhibition, [K\(now\)W\(ere\)](#), in the Duke Hall Gallery of Fine Art.

Yuan's impressive portfolio and experience earned her one of just nine Visual Arts Fellowships awarded to Virginia-based artists.

The Graduate School



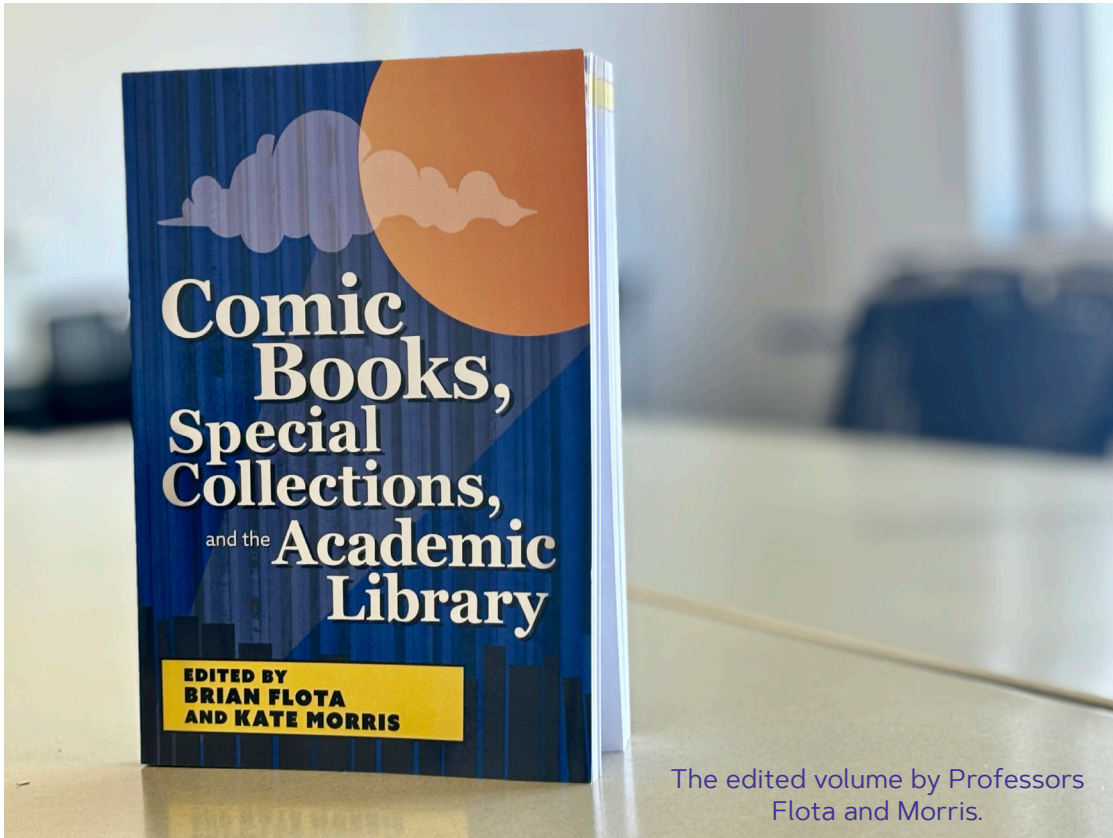
○ Parker preparing a snake for genetic testing ○

The Honors College's **Witherspoon Scholarship** is an endowed scholarship made possible by the generous donation of Margaret E. and Douglas F. Witherspoon, whose daughters, Laura ('12) and Catherine ('17), were members of the JMU Honors College. Each summer, the scholarship supports a first- or second-year student who seeks to complete an immersive summer research experience with a mentor, on- or off-campus. Naomi Minwalla ('26) was the 2024 recipient of the Witherspoon Scholarship. She traveled to Seville, Spain, to research the cross-cultural interpretation of symbols of power and to assist Dr. Yamilette Chacon, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Sociology, in facilitating the Warfare, Environment, Social Inequality and Pro-Sociability Biennial Conference (WESIPS).

The Honors Advisory Council established the **Honors College's Hillcrest Scholarship** to support summer enrichment experiences for outstanding students. Joshua Gunn ('25) was a 2024 recipient of the Hillcrest Scholarship. The scholarship supported travel to a field site in Manitoba, Canada, to conduct research on garter snake sex behavior and pheromone quality for his undergraduate thesis titled "Redefining Female Mimicry in Red-Sided Garter Snakes." Associate Professor of Biology Rockwell Parker, pictured above, serves as Joshua's capstone advisor.

In the past year, Libraries faculty and staff authored 4 books, 7 book chapters and 9 journal articles. They also delivered 53 conference presentations and produced 49 other scholarly or creative works.

JMU Libraries



The edited volume by Professors Flota and Morris.

Brian Flota (Associate Professor, Humanities Librarian) and Kate Morris (Associate Professor, Head of Special Collections) co-edited *Comic Books, Special Collections, and the Academic Library*, a scholarly monograph published by the Association of College & Research Libraries in December 2023. Receiving a prestigious “starred review” in *Library Journal*, this book offers best practices for acquiring, preserving, cataloging, teaching with, promoting and researching comics within the special collections units of academic libraries.

Yasmeeen Shorish (Professor, Director of Scholarly Communications) co-authored the final report for a Mellon-funded research project, [Collections as Data: Part to Whole](#), in fall 2023. This project explored the question of how to advance the responsible development and computational use of memory institution [collections as data](#). Professor Shorish and team are actively exploring international partnerships to advance collections-as-data community development on a global level moving forward.

JMU Libraries catalyzes the university-wide research enterprise by providing deep faculty and staff expertise, academic software, robust collections, publishing platforms and more. Items hosted on the JMU Scholarly Commons, the flagship platform for sharing JMU scholarship, were downloaded 1,079,407 times last year across 11,881 institutions worldwide.

Then-doctoral candidate Tatyana Titareva organized the **Gandhi Center's** second annual **Beitzel Symposium** focused on the topic of AI in Higher Education. Arianna Valentini, Analyst for The UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America, gave the **keynote presentation** on day one. REDI sponsored the day two keynote, delivered by Michael Trucano from the Brookings Institution.

Virginia Clean Cities added a staff member in Richmond to more effectively serve the eastern half of Virginia with community engagement, alternative fuel transitions and petroleum reduction activities.



Solar Home Tour

The **Center for the Advancement of Sustainable Energy (CASE)** led a successful 2024 Harrisonburg Solar Tour. Five hosts (three homes, one church and JMU's solar facility) shared their experiences harnessing the sun's energy and opened their spaces to more than 20 community members. Partnering organizations included the American Solar Energy Society, Climate Action Alliance of the Valley, Shenandoah Valley Electric Cooperative, Harrisonburg Electric Commission, and Virginia Clean Cities.

The **JMU STEM Center** furthered their commitment to reciprocal outreach by working with 20 faculty and 100 students to develop and facilitate STEM enrichment for over 400 students across Virginia. The JMU STEM Corps engaged 90 young children in STEM discovery and problem-solving through partnership with Boys & Girls Club while CSM and CISE faculty led STEM research experiences for 300 secondary students.



Photo by Ibrahim Azad, Spring 2024.

JMU STEM Corps and Boys & Girls Club partnership. Ethan Patel (Math and CS), Clean Water Challenge.

The **Center for Economic Education** was honored with the **Albert Beekhuis Award** in September. The Beekhuis Award is given to the nation's most outstanding Center for Economic Education by the Council for Economic Education. The Center was also recognized in November by the Southern Business Administration Association, winning their **Societal Impact Award** for efforts to promote financial literacy throughout the region.



From left to right: JMU Center personnel Lynne Stover (teacher outreach), John Kruggel (director), Nan Morrison (President and CEO for the Council for Economic Education), JMU's Lauren Shifflett (Associate Director)



Group photo from Accra training: Tochukwu Ngwa, left front and Emily Irungu, row 2, fourth from right

The **Center for International Stabilization and Recovery** and JMU faculty worked with Young African Leaders Initiative regional leadership center staff to prepare for their first alumni day of giving. SSLS PhD student Emily Irungu, and Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication M.A. student Tochukwu Ngwu, attended and made significant contributions to the final training and planning in Accra, Ghana.

Sara Finney, Associate Director at **CARS**, played a pivotal role in influencing the Council for the Advancement of Standards in Higher Education (CAS) by introducing new standards for student affairs educators in Program Theory and Implementation Fidelity, significantly elevating student affairs assessment practice.

The **JMU Center for Advancement Research in Education (JMU CARE)** expands its global partnerships, collaborating with leading child development research institutions, including the University of Helsinki, National University of Singapore and University College London, to advance interdisciplinary child development research worldwide.

JMU Diplomacy & Defense Lab students participated in "Operation Baltic Guardian," a simulation co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of State. The event was held at Dynamic Aviation in Bridgewater, VA.



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