



## 2024 Year End Report

The Staff Emeriti Association just completed its tenth successful year as an approved JMU organization! SEA is sponsored by the Office of Human Resources, with Director Chuck Flick providing funding and staffing support. We greatly appreciate our HR connection and especially the support given by the Director, his assistant Amanda Thomas, and Julie Byers the benefits specialist. Kathy Sarver, Director of Planned Giving, serves as our liaison to the Development Office. Kathy regularly attends our Steering Committee meetings and membership events. We are grateful for her advice and support.

The Steering Committee meets regularly throughout the year to work on the association's goals, and to plan events for the membership. The current SEA Steering Committee members are Christina Updike (chair), Donna Burch, Alma Hale-Cooper, Judy Marshall, Judy Powell, Paula See, Louise White and Milla Sue Wisecarver. Their dedicated leadership and vision are greatly appreciated. In 2024, two committee members completed their terms of office: Rosemary Brenner and Gail May. The SEA thanks them for their service.

**Purpose:** The Staff Emeriti Association is a multifaceted organization open to all retired full-time classified employees who have earned Emerita/us status and are approved by the JMU President. The organization provides an opportunity for Staff Emeriti to continue to be engaged with colleagues and to maintain ties to the University. SEA is a professional and social organization that encourages the engagement of Staff Emeriti through a wide variety of activities.

**Goals:** The Steering Committee identified that there was a lack of awareness of the Staff Emeriti designation both on campus and in the community and a need for an Association to maintain contact with these retirees. Our focus this year was to continue to increase awareness on the JMU campus by highlighting the process for being granted the designation and to provide quality programming to engage the membership. The following goals were identified for the Association and accomplished during the year:

**Communicate with Administrators:** A letter providing information on the Staff Emeriti designation outlining the nomination procedure was prepared and emailed to all academic and non-academic unit heads during spring and fall semester. The email letter includes a link to the SEA brochure (<https://www.jmu.edu/staffemeriti/files/sea-informational-brochure.pdf>). All Director level administrators received the biannual communication. With these efforts, there has been an increase in staff emeriti nominations submitted by supervisors for qualifying retirees

and approved by the President. Ten years ago, there were 120 staff emeriti. There are now 320 staff emeriti; 23 were added in 2024.

**Increase Awareness for members, for the campus community, and regionally:** The Staff Emeriti Association website was maintained and updated throughout the year ([Staff Emeriti Association - JMU](#)). The website includes Steering Committee meeting minutes; the Association's purpose and Bylaws; event news and photo gallery; the Staff Emeriti Policy with eligibility requirements and the nomination process to receive the designation; Staff Emeriti benefits; and links to other on-campus events. An updated Welcome Message by Christina Updike, Steering Committee chair opens the website. The staff emeriti mailbox was used for member communications and for individuals to submit questions and comments. ([staffemeriti@jmu.edu](mailto:staffemeriti@jmu.edu))

During the year, all new Staff Emeriti receive a mailing consisting of our brochure, a letter from the Steering Committee chair, and a response card requesting contact information and permission to contact along with a self-addressed stamped envelope. The response card queries communication and participation preferences. The responses are used to plan activities each year. The President's Office sends the Chair of the SEA Steering Committee a copy of the Staff Emeriti approval letters signed by the President. This facilitates the SEA mailing a new member packet in a timely manner and adding that member to the SEA database.

A Staff Emeriti Association column is a regular feature in JMU's Madison Magazine, which is published three times a year. The SEA article highlights our activities throughout the year. We send copy for the article and photographs for each issue to the editors.

During the year, informational emails are sent to the membership. These included event invitations, how to order tickets for faculty-staff appreciation days at athletic events, reminders of JMU's virtual vehicle registration for staff emeriti permit parking, and other policies that affect retirees, such as a new JMU IT policy on security using Okta Verify instead of Duo.

**Organize events for the Association:** The SEA continued our monthly Dutch-treat luncheon series, which has increased member participation by having more frequent events for networking. Several luncheons were combined with a speaker, tour, or learning component. Eight SEA events were planned January – June and September – December. They were enthusiastically attended this year:

**January** guided tour of the renovated JMU Convocation Center complex followed by lunch at the Taste of Thai restaurant in Harrisonburg.

**February** networking lunch at Romano's Italian restaurant in McGaheysville.

**March** guided tour of the JMU Plecker Center and Bridgeforth Stadium followed by lunch at El Charro Mexican restaurant in Harrisonburg.

**May** guided tour of Dynamic Aviation in Bridgewater.

**June** luncheon with address by Vice President Towana Moore on the "State of the University" at JMU's E-Hall Montpelier room, sponsored by the Office of Human Resources.

**September** networking luncheon at Cracked Pillar, Bridgewater.

**October** ice cream social at Smiley's Ice Cream in Bridgewater.

**December** Holiday luncheon at Cross Keys Vineyard, Mount Crawford.

For the year, we had a total of 292 attendees; an average of 36 per event. Our highest attendances occurred at the luncheon with Vice President Moore's address (44) and our Holiday luncheon (51). Enthusiasm for the continued development of the SEA was expressed by attendees throughout the year.

**Pursue a volunteer activity:** SEA is aware of the Madison Plan's commitment to volunteerism and set a goal to carry out at least one volunteer activity at JMU to give back to the University. In 2023, the SEA adopted The Pantry as their new volunteer activity. SEA support is in the form of monetary donations and needed supplies to help alleviate student food insecurity on campus, which affects 38% of the student body. This project was promoted at all our events, as well as through informational emails to our members, and instructions on "how to donate" are on our website. During 2023, the SEA made individual gifts totaling just over \$2500 and this year individual gifts totaled \$3530. Over the past two years, the SEA has also donated over 100 pounds of supplies. Jeremy Hawkins, Assistant Director of Off Campus Life, thanked the SEA for their "generous donations that have a significant and lasting impact on the lives of countless students at JMU."

In October, the SEA Steering Committee members hosted a table at the JMU Retirement Fair, handing out brochures and answering questions from supervisors about the staff emeriti nomination process and from staff approaching retirement. In December, SEA Steering Committee members attended the annual HR sponsored Staff Retirement Recognition Brunch where staff and administrative professionals who retired in 2024 were recognized for their service at JMU. Christina Updike, SEA Chair, made remarks during the program regarding the benefits of the staff emeriti designation and the activities of the Staff Emeriti Association.

**Goals for 2024-2025 are:**

1. Continue to focus on membership development through increased communication and engaging the membership in new activities.
2. Coordinate our volunteer activity. The SEA has adopted JMU's The Pantry. Support will be in the form of monetary donations and needed supplies. This project will be promoted at all SEA events, through informational emails to the membership, and on the SEA website.
3. Maintain awareness of the SEA on the JMU campus and in the community.

All Steering Committee members will return to serve in 2025; however, a few will be completing their terms of office in June 2025. During the year, other SEA members will be cultivated to serve next year.

Respectfully submitted:

Christina Updike (chair), Donna Burch, Alma Hale-Cooper, Judy Marshall, Judy Powell, Paula See, Louise White and Milla Sue Wisecarver.

March 24, 2024