



# IMPACT REPORT

## 2024-2025





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# Executive summary

The Union at James Madison University (JMU) continues to serve as the vibrant heart of student engagement, embodying the spirit of community and connection described by the Association of College Unions International (ACUI). As the “living room” of the university, The Union remains a central hub for students, faculty, staff, alumni and visitors, offering essential services, fostering engagement and adapting to meet evolving campus needs.

## Key highlights from the academic year

### Community support and resilience

The Union played a critical role during campus emergencies, including providing shelter and resources during a nearby residence hall fire and remaining open during university closures. Staff also supported student organizations across joint spaces like Memorial Hall.

### Student development and employment

A strong emphasis was placed on student employment, with guided reflection and skill development. The addition of an A/V tech team significantly enhanced support for student-led events and organizations.

### Facility enhancements and space reimaging

- Renovated and repurposed spaces, including the former Interfaith Chapel into a mixed-use and creative “messy” space
- Upgraded Taylor Down Under (TDU)
- Installed a facility-wide fire prevention system
- Introduced the “Little Library” and a renovated Spiritual Life space



- Displayed international flags in collaboration with the Center for Global Engagement and Facilities Management, symbolizing global inclusivity
- Supported the renovation of the fifth floor dining space of The Union into the Spiritual Life center
- Preparing to repurpose study spaces for broader use following the completion of the library renovation

### **Support during library renovation**

The Union continues to provide alternative study and gathering spaces throughout the Carrier Library renovation and expansion, ensuring continuity in students' academic and social life.

### **Emerging opportunities**

- Launching student entrepreneur pop-up initiatives within The Union
- Upgrading outdoor patio areas and improved landscaping

The Union continues to evolve as a student center supporting students, fostering community and adapting to meet the growth of the university. Through strategic enhancements, responsive services and a commitment to student development, The Union has reinforced its role as a vital, inclusive and innovative space. Looking ahead, new opportunities promise to further enrich the campus experience. The Union remains not only a place of gathering but a catalyst for connection, creativity and growth at JMU.



## Event support

During the 2024–2025 academic year, bookings (scheduled space use) reached their highest level since 2018–2019. However, further growth is constrained by high demand in the evening hours — most student groups reserve spaces after 5 p.m., and many rooms are already booked multiple times each night.

Overall usage remains lower than pre-2020 levels, due in part to a cultural shift away from physical advertising (such as posters in TDU and the Warren 2nd floor lounge) toward digital and social media platforms. Additionally, many departments now hold fewer in-person daytime meetings, favoring virtual formats instead.

While all meeting spaces remain open for group study and relaxation during the day, this informal use is often underreported and not accurately captured. A new process is being implemented this academic year to improve daytime usage data collection.



# 47,650

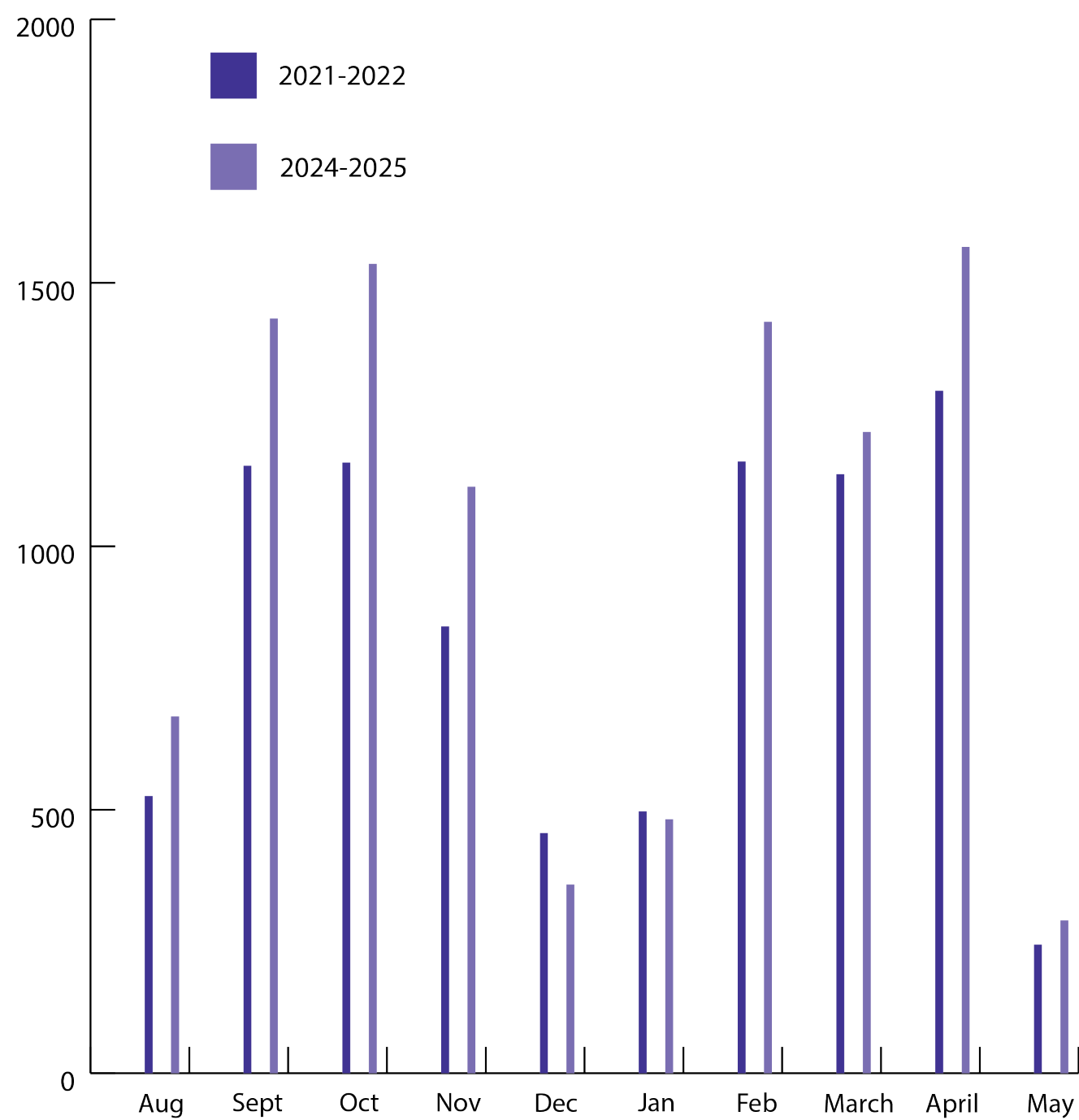
**RESERVATION HOURS SUPPORTED**



# 10,099

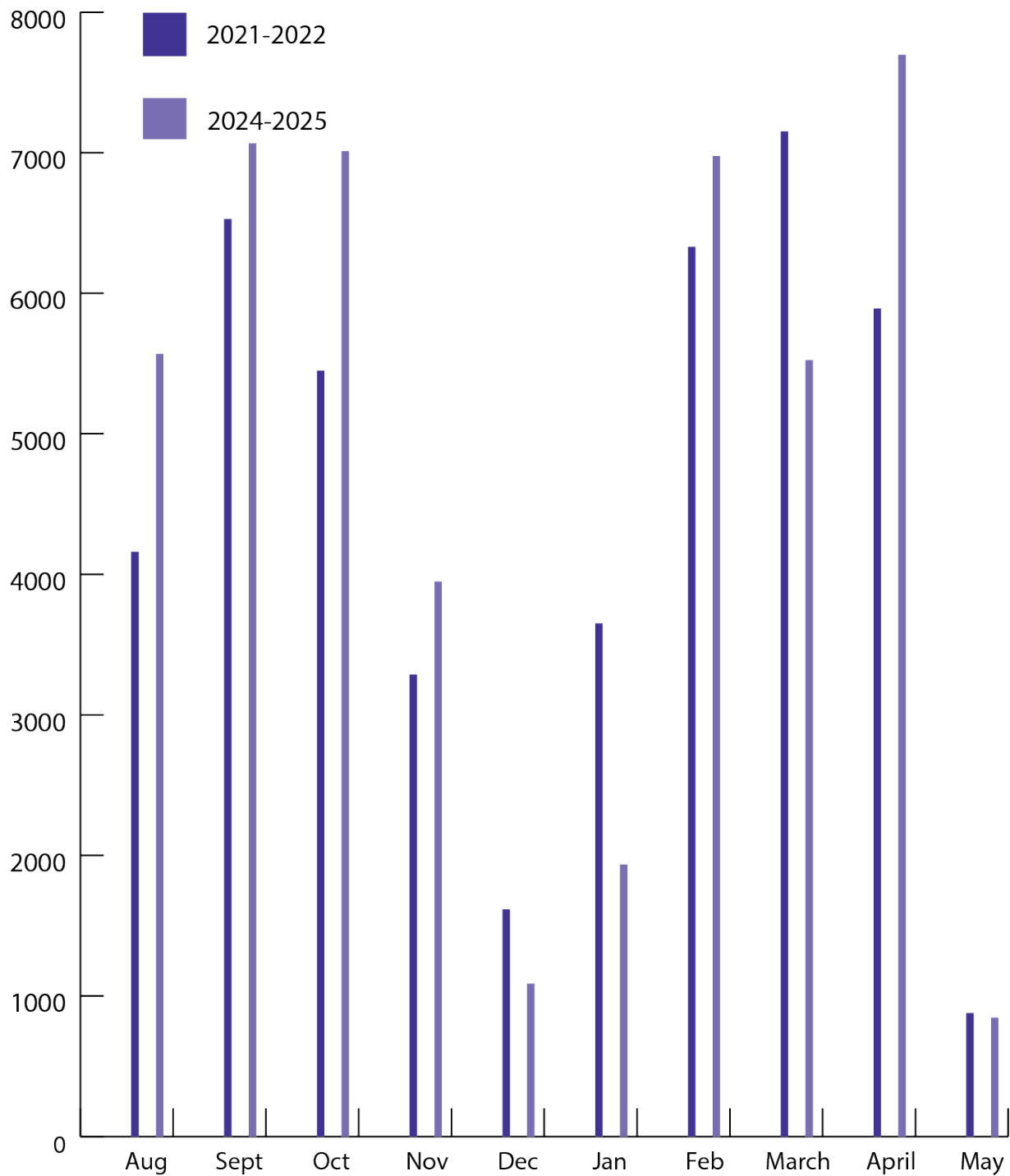
**TOTAL BOOKINGS**

# Monthly bookings

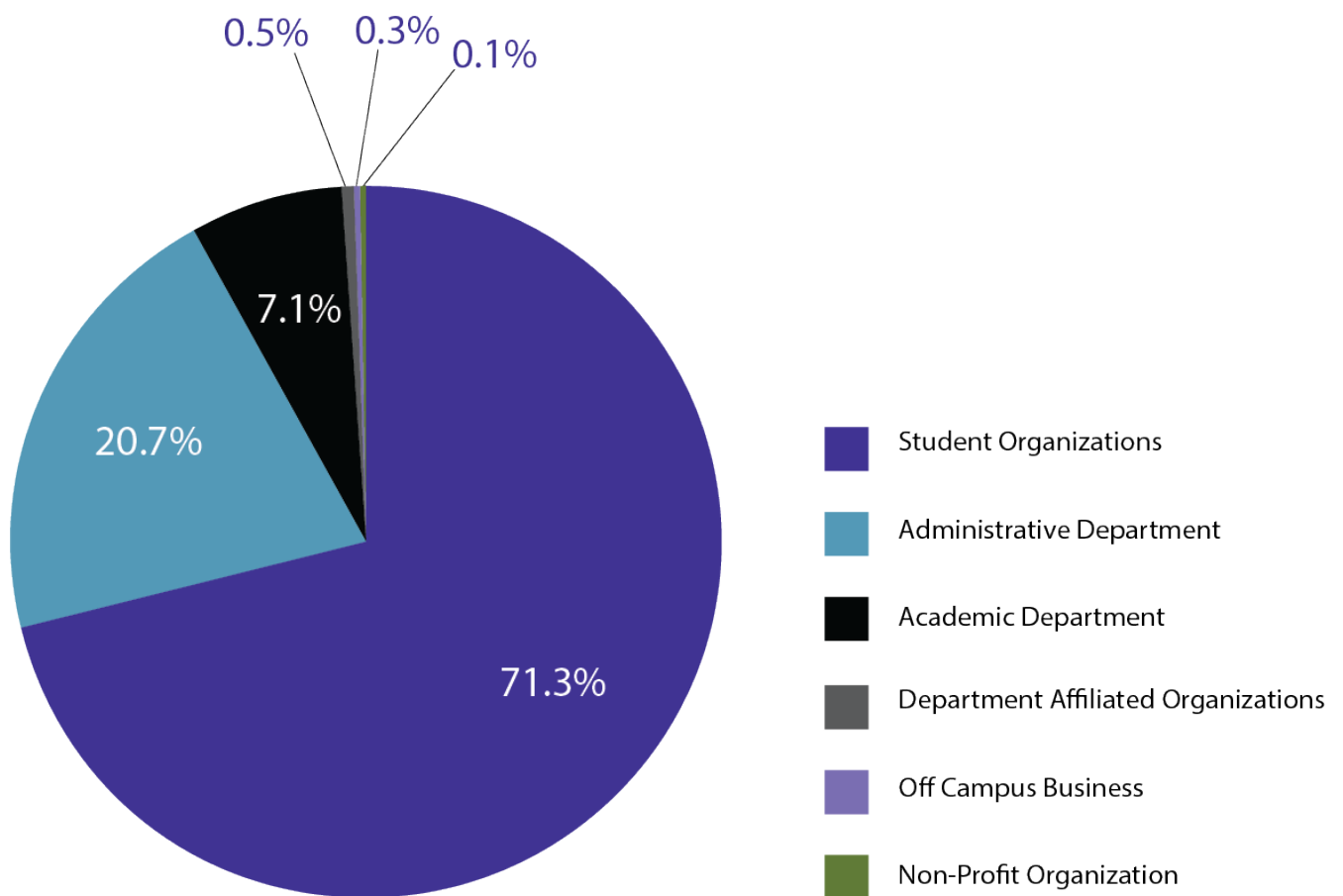




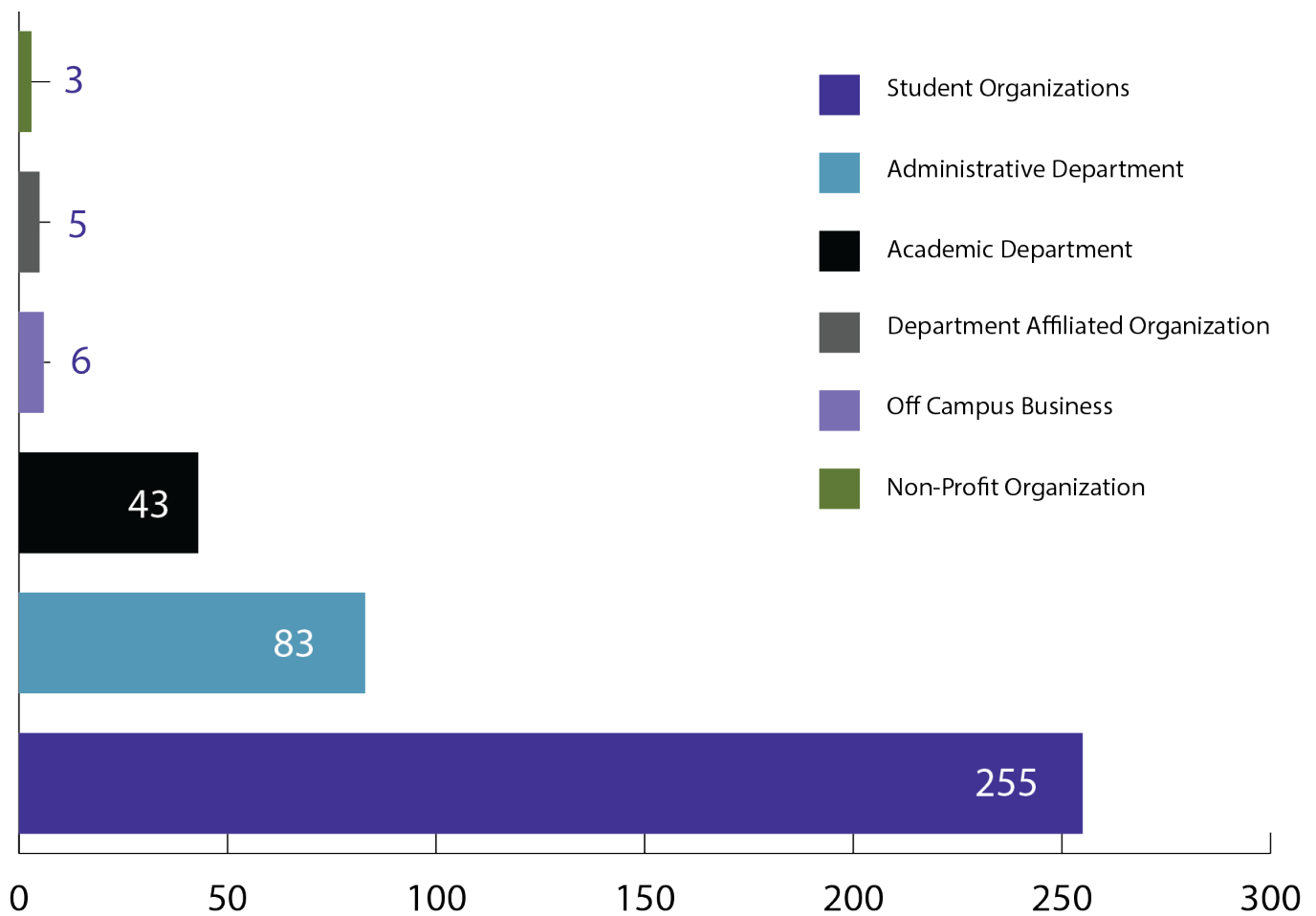
# Monthly reservation hours



# Reservations by organization type



# Unique Union users by group









# Student Life programming

**224** BOOKINGS

**878** PROGRAMMING  
HOURS

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## Major events supported

**547** BOOKINGS

- Back to School Bash
- JMU Academic Open House
- Homecoming
- International Week
- CHOICES admissions
- Spring Welcome
- Weeks of Welcome
- Crafternoon
- MLK Breakfast
- SGA Senate Meetings
- Student Leadership and Involvement Tea Time
- UPB Movies



# Top 5 most used spaces

#1

Taylor 303



#2

Taylor 311



#3

Taylor 203



#4

Taylor 306



#5

Taylor 304





# Building numbers

The Union student staff conduct a building walkthrough every 30 minutes during operating hours. During this process, they inspect the building for facility safety, monitor ongoing events and complete physical headcounts in common spaces. **Below is a summary of the occupancy counts in our common spaces throughout the year.**



**Taylor Down Under**  
**54,507**

**Second Floor Lounge**  
**23,116**



**Airport Lounge**  
Warren fourth floor

**18,117**

## Third Floor Lounge

**10,673**



## Living Room

Warren fourth floor

**1,930**

## Serenity Center

Warren fourth floor

**1,214**



## Interfaith Chapel

Taylor fourth floor

**559**

# Notable events

## Support for the Garber Hall fire

On Feb. 13, 2025, a fire occurred in Section A of Garber Hall at approximately 9:12 p.m. During the incident, TDU was used as an impromptu gathering space for students displaced by the fire.

In the absence of professional staff, The Union Event Operations Manager, Kendall Hewitt, stepped in to serve as the building coordinator. She, along with other team members, collaborated with Student Affairs leadership to provide support and ensure students were as comfortable as possible.

The team also provided audio support for announcements and worked to maintain access to the space for first responders throughout the night.

## Greek Sing support in Memorial 6110

During March and April, The Union team adapted hours to support Greek Sing practice events held in Memorial Hall 6110, which was selected as a space ahead of this popular traditional event. Although this space is typically a general-use classroom with a fixed setup, it was selected due to the lack of multiple large, open area spaces.

Due to concerns about improper use of the space, our team intervened to ensure that furniture was moved safely and appropriately. After each event, the furniture was returned to its designated setup. All Greek Sing practices in Memorial 6110 were managed. This included 31 additional reservations and over 120 hours of student labor within a single week.



## Student-led Quad support

This past year The Union student-led A/V team began providing support for events held on the Quad, including Halftime on the Quad, the Campus Tree Lighting and The Big Event. Our responsibilities included staffing, setup, live event support and strike. The team managed these additional duties while continuing to meet obligations in Union-supported spaces.



# Professional involvement

## Conferences

- **Joe** – VA Student Union Drive-in Conference
- **Barb and Joe** – ACUI Regional VI Conference, Ohio State University
- **Barb and Joe** – ACUI National Conference, New York
- **Barb** – Presented at ACUI Regional and National Conference
- **Barb** – Construction and Renovation Seminar
- **Barb** – New Dukes in Germany Program Assistant Director 2025

## Volunteerism

- **Joe** – Member of the Conference Planning Team for 2025 ACUI Region VI Conference.
- **Megan** – Advisor of Phi Mu, Student Life, Student Employee Committee

## Search committees

- **Barb** – Student Life, Coordinator of Student Organizations (Chair)
- **Megan** – Audio/Visual Production Specialist (Chair)



# THE Union





# Student employment by the numbers

**46** **TOTAL**  
STAFF MEMBERS

**23** **RETURNING**  
**STAFF**

**13,265** **LABOR**  
**HOURS**

**2** **AUDIO**  
**VISUAL**  
ASSISTANTS

**30** **EVENT**  
OPERATION  
ASSISTANTS

**1** **AUDIO**  
**VISUAL**  
MANAGERS

**13** **EVENT**  
OPERATION  
MANAGERS





# Student employment

## Student hiring successes

- Completed all hiring paperwork with zero errors or I-9 conflicts.
- Hired two new first years which is typically a little more challenging to hire due to interview process, hiring paperwork and move-in requirements.

## Student hiring challenges

- Students were not provided with information about housing for training until the day before they arrived.

# Audio/Visual team expansion

As the first A/V Manager, Hunter Newman was able to focus his full attention on building The Union A/V team. That responsibility meant many hours coordinating bookings, passing his connections to the new assistants and walking his team through every aspect of working at The Union, especially supporting student events in TDU. Hunter worked continuously, coordinating with student groups and acting to ensure their events were supported. Not only did he and his team handle the day-of needs of the groups on stage, but was also a promoter, booking agent and venue manager for TDU, much of which went beyond his job description. His team shared that he created an incredibly fun environment that has provided them with both professional development and skill growth. Hunter was incredibly active in the unique

community of acts that frequent TDU. Additionally, Hunter and team assisted in supporting Grafton-Stovall Theater and the Memorial Hall Auditorium. We were able to successfully hire two new A/V Assistants to support Hunter and the growing need for production support within Union-supported spaces.



# Our end of the year celebration



Two staff members received honors for their work at The Union during the Student Life EOY Celebration. **Ava Lambo** was the recipient of the Well-Being Champion Award and **Lily DeBruycker** received the Peer Mentor Award. **Andrew Cali**, who is also a Union employee, received the Integrity in Action Award for his work with the University Program Board.

# Operations updates

## Welcome, Jacey Mae!

- Jacey was born to Megan Kite, Coordinator for Union Event Services, Dec. 4, 2024. This created an opportunity to elevate high-performing student employees to support the position vacancy during Megan's four-month leave.
- Megan's student assistant reviewed diagrams and manager reports, as well as facilitated weekly informational manager meetings and communicated weekly reminders to entire student staff.
- Megan created a hiring timeline plan for use in preparing for the 2025–2026 hiring process. This resource was shared with the Student Employment Committee to assist with a smooth and efficient hiring process.
- Two Scheduling Assistant positions were created to assist with entering the master employee schedule as well as routine weekly scheduling to support Grafton-Stovall Theater, Memorial Auditorium, CHOICES, Greek Sing and any additional needs within Union-supported spaces.

## Opportunities

- After concerns communicated by our manager team we were able to have a third party conduct a group interview with the team to assess needs, concerns and goals. After reviewing the information, Joe and Megan were able to relieve students of additional duties and create three promoted student positions for those who wanted additional responsibilities with an increase in pay.



- All new and current positions (two schedulers and one assistant) were able to receive a promotion.
- Event processes were streamlined more efficiently by collaborating with Union Scheduling, with forms sent to the departmental email, rather than to Megan directly. This is ongoing.

## Challenges

- Student employee responsibilities increased, leading to staff being overwhelmed and a request for a pay increase.
- Two student managers resigned, requiring other team members to fill in for those hours.
- Their departure required many managers to work together to cover 40 hours of shifts per week.



# Capital improvements

## International and student engagement initiatives

- International flag display
- In collaboration with Facilities Management and the Center for Global Engagement, flags representing currently enrolled students' countries of origin were installed prior to International Week.
- **Completed: Sept. 2024**
- Impact: Celebrates campus diversity and promotes global awareness

## Little Free Library, Warren 3rd Floor Lounge

- A Little Free Library was installed to encourage book sharing and casual reading among students.
- **Completed: March 2025**
- Impact: Promotes literacy and community connection in student spaces

## Visual and aesthetic enhancements

- Mural updates made to Taylor 4th Floor and Warren 2nd Floor Lounge
- Updated murals were installed to improve the visual environment and provide a refreshed, welcoming atmosphere for students.
- **Completed: Summer 2024**
- Impact: Enhances cultural and visual appeal in high-traffic student areas

## Taylor 304 meeting room refresh

- The room received new paint, wainscoting and carpeting.
- **Completed: Dec. 2024**
- Impact: Provides a cleaner, more modern meeting and study environment

## **Taylor 305 meeting room refresh**

- Wainscoting was added to prevent damage to the walls, a recurring issue.
- **Completed: Dec. 2024**
- Impact: Protects facilities and reduces long-term maintenance needs

## **Technology and AudioVisual upgrades**

- TDU A/V system enhancements
- TDU was upgraded with new speakers, subwoofers and a new mixing station to better support events.
- **Completed: Sept. 2024**
- Impact: Improves sound quality and reliability for student entertainment.

## **Grafton-Stovall Theater audio system upgrade**

- A digital mixing station, upgraded wireless microphones (expanded from four to eight units), and a digital stage box for wired microphones were added to Grafton-Stovall Theater. Work also included installation of a conduit from the stage to the projection booth.
- **Completed: Jan. 2025**
- Impact: Supports more complex and higher-quality events and performances

## **Warren 302 TV replacement**

- A failed TV unit was replaced with a new digital display.
- **Completed: Feb. 2025**
- Impact: Maintains functional student lounge space and meeting resources

## Renovations and functional repurposing

- Spiritual Life space (former Aramark dining area)
- The old dining space was reimagined into a new Spiritual Life space.
- **Completed: Spring 2025**
- Impact: Provides a dedicated welcoming space for reflection, worship and community programming

## Preventive maintenance safety

- Facility-wide fire prevention system update
- A major project in Fall 2024 involved replacing the outdated fire alarm system with a modern one.
- **Completed: Dec. 2024**
- Impact: Ensures campus safety and compliance with fire codes

## TDU pool table repair

- Pool tables were repaired and re-covered.
- **Completed: Jan. 2025**
- Impact: Restores a popular recreational amenity for student use

## Taylor 405 piano maintenance

- The piano was repaired and tuned, bringing it current with deferred preventive maintenance.
- **Completed: April 2025**
- Impact: Preserves the instrument quality for performances and practice



# Looking ahead

The following are scheduled building updates and notable projects to be addressed in the coming year.

## Chiller replacement

The replacement of the chiller for The Union HVAC system is in the design and review phase with JMU Engineering. This new unit will maintain capacity for the existing building structure. Ongoing issues with the HVAC control system will require additional funding to resolve.

## JMU letters update

The JMU letters on The Union Lawn will receive a new concrete pad and sidewalk this summer to reduce wear and tear on the surrounding landscaping.

## Solar patio tables

Additional seating with solar charging capabilities will be added to The Union Patio. This project, initiated by the SGA, is being facilitated by Facilities Management.

## Recarpeting

The third-floor lounge and the stage area of TDU will be re-carpeted this summer.

## Painting projects

The Warren fifth floor hallway and the Taylor second floor hallway will be repainted this summer. Additional touch-up work will be completed where the fire alarm pull stations were removed.

## Elevator maintenance

The elevator in Taylor Hall continues to experience issues that significantly affect building operations. Replacement parts are no longer manufactured and are often refurbished. In addition, the elevators cannot accommodate stretchers, presenting challenges during medical emergencies.

## **Water intrusion issues**

Water continues to intrude at the patio joint connecting Warren, Grafton-Stovall and Taylor Halls. Plans are in place to replace the expansion joint material this summer. Additional leaks have been noted in the Taylor 400 office suite, and the source is under investigation.

## **Union Ballroom and Warren 256 tech upgrades**

A/V systems in the Union Ballroom and Warren 256 are scheduled for upgrades this summer. Improvements include streaming capabilities, wireless presentation and multiple microphone inputs — up to eight in the Union Ballroom and up to four in Warren 256. The Union Ballroom will also support multi-input presentations on three screens.

## **Student employment development**

We are committed to creating a formal development plan for our student employees, incorporating Iowa G.R.O.W and NACE competencies. We also aim to enhance our skills in assessing student employee development. Our goal is to serve as a model for Student Life student employee development.









THE  
Union

**JAMES MADISON**  
UNIVERSITY®

**The Union**

MSC 3506, 170 Bluestone Drive  
Harrisonburg, VA 22807  
540-568-5555 Phone  
[theunion@jmu.edu](mailto:theunion@jmu.edu)  
[www.jmu.edu/union/index.shtml](http://www.jmu.edu/union/index.shtml)  
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