

**THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
THE VISITORS OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY**

Minutes of the Academic Excellence Committee

The Academic Excellence Committee met on Thursday, September 14, 2023, in the Highlands Room of the Festival Conference and Student Center at James Madison University. Lara Major, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:04 p.m.

Present:

Bell, Dickie	Falcon, Chris
Major, Lara	Payla Wood, Nicole
White, Jack	

Others:

Alger, Jonathan, President
Caulfield, Megan, Class of 2024, Engineering major
Christman, Jack, Class of 2023, Bachelor of Science, Chemistry
Coltman, Heather, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs
Forsyth, Jason, Associate Professor, Engineering
Herod, Maribeth, Rector
Kolvoord, Bob, Dean, College of Integrated Science and Engineering
Oliver, Amber, Class of 2024, Computer Science major
Ott Walter, Kathy, Speaker, Faculty Senate
Wachter, Brian, Class of 2024, Dietetics major
Whitmeyer, Steve, Associate Dean, College of Science and Mathematics
Wilcox, Mya, Class of 2024, Public Administration major, Honors Interdisciplinary Studies and Spanish minor

Approval of Minutes

On motion by Jack White and seconded by Dickie Bell, the Academic Excellence Committee minutes of April 20, 2023, were approved.

Academic Affairs Divisional Update

Provost Heather Coltman delivered the divisional update which began by observing a moment of silence to remember four members of the Academic Affairs division who recently passed away. The provost provided some context to establish how JMU and Academic Affairs arrived at where we are today and then spoke about where we are going as we move toward our vision to mature and thrive as an R2 institution. She emphasized the professional educational components that complement JMU's traditional liberal arts offerings in preparing students for the workforce, and she praised the excellent work of faculty in preparing our students for a fast-paced and vibrant world.

College Spotlight: Integrated Science and Engineering

Dean Bob Kolvoord shared an update on the College of Integrated Science and Engineering (CISE). The college has seen dramatic growth in the number of majors over the last decade, up 37%, almost double the growth of the next highest college. The dean provided a list of undergraduate and graduate degrees offered in CISE to help committee members understand what is housed in the college. CISE features majors that combine theory with application, and faculty focus on connecting students with challenging real-world problems. Megan Caulfield, a senior engineering major demonstrated working to solve a real-world problem as part of an honors thesis project using passive haptic learning to help teach parents of deaf children how to write in Braille. Senior computer science major, Amber Oliver, shared an overview related to her work-based learning experience at Fannie Mae which resulted in a full-time job offer. The committee also heard from Associate Professor, Jason Forsyth, about the impact of undergraduate research and the value of the teacher-scholar model.

Work-Based Learning Experiences Panel

Steve Whitmeyer, Associate Dean in the College of Science and Mathematics and co-chair of JMU's Work-based Learning Experiences Task Force, moderated a panel discussion with two current undergraduates and one recent graduate related to their work-based learning experiences. The committee heard from Jack Christman, Brian Wachter and Maya Wilcox, who completed work experiences at Merck & Co., Inc., Warren Memorial Hospital and with the Commonwealth Office of the Governor, respectively. They shared summaries of their experiences including how they obtained these opportunities, some highlights of their learnings and what most surprised them about their workplace experiences.

Faculty Senate Speaker Report

Kathy Ott Walter provided the speaker's report and shared an update of motions recently considered and approved by the members of the Faculty Senate. The speaker highlighted a variety of activities and achievements in Health Professions and Accounting and included information on faculty scholarly work, student-led research, presentations and community engagement, and the collaboration between the School of Accounting and faculty in the Department of Foreign Languages, Literatures and Cultures in supporting the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program.

Topics of Interest for Future Meetings

The committee and Provost Coltman discussed topics of interest for future meetings including interdisciplinary undergraduate research and scholarly research by faculty.

There being no further business, on the motion of Chris Falcon and seconded by Nicole Payla Wood, the Academic Excellence Committee meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Lara Major, Chair

Donna Harper, Secretary to the Board