



JMU Research, Scholarship & Creative Endeavors

Volume 6, Issue 4

Greetings! With the Class of 2025 settled on campus and the fall 2021 semester underway, Harrisonburg is thrumming with energy. We look forward to supporting all new Dukes on campus, both faculty and students, and hope you enjoy the latest issue of scholarly achievements and news.

ICYMI, we are excited to announce the newest member of the R&S team, Dr. Besi Muhonja, who began service on August 2nd as the inaugural Associate Vice Provost for Scholarship, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (AVPSDEI). This position will encourage and cultivate a broad array of scholarship across all areas of JMU while promoting diversity, equity and inclusion in research and scholarship. Muhonja also holds a faculty appointment in the Department of English as professor of African, African American and Diaspora (AAAD) Studies and Women's, Gender and Sexuality Studies. [Check out a recent Q&A with AVPSDEI Muhonja.](#)

Our congratulations to Director of Student Fellowships Advising, Dr. Meredith Malburne-Wade, who recently received a Fulbright International Education Administrators Award. The award will be hosted in Germany this fall, and consist of seminars and campus visits to learn about the German higher education system and establish global relationships. [Learn about Fellowships Advising and the Fulbright award](#)

Issue Update - Vol. 6, Iss. 1: Remember our piece on research innovations earning JMU faculty three patent awards? Don't miss last week's story on one of those innovations – "[Tiny shrews proving efficacy of JMU professors' invention](#)" – to hear about how JMU innovations are impacting research, education and citizen science.

Office of Research & Scholarship
James Madison University

Student Research Ice Cream Social



After a year and a half of virtual meetings and distance education, R&S returned to in-person programming on July 13th with an [ice cream social for faculty and students](#) working on summer research projects. According to Dayna Henry, Coordinator of Student Research, the event was intended to give participants “an opportunity to network with others, reflect on their summer [inquiry] experiences, and take some time to celebrate their work with R&S staff.” The R&S team welcomed over 80 guests to the Hall of Presidents Room in D-Hall, making sure that everyone had the room to be safe, enjoy treats, and have meaningful conversations.

Faculty Grant Awards

For a monthly listing of recent faculty grant awards, please [visit the JMU Office of Sponsored Programs website](#). Here are some notable awards from April and May 2021:

Lauren Alleyne (Furious Flower Poetry Center) received \$5,000 from the Virginia Humanities to support the fifth legacy seminar, which celebrates living Black writers whose careers have been marked by creative distinction and critical acclaim.

Kelly Atwood (Graduate Psychology) received \$94,399 from the Health Resources and Services Administration to increase access to quality substance use and behavioral health services for residents of Page County, Virginia.

Jennifer Coffman (School of Integrated Sciences) received \$41,563 from the Institute for International Education to provide Swahili language instruction, as well as regional expertise and intercultural communication skills via overseas programming in Tanzania and Kenya.

Erin Piker (Communication Sciences and Disorders) received \$4,026 from the American Academy of Audiology Foundation to systematically examine the complex relationship between a physical vestibular stimulus and subjective perception across a wide range of stimulus frequencies.

Robert Prins (Engineering) received \$176,389 from George Mason University to study, understand and detect concealed malicious manipulations in the manufacturing parameters of 3D objects.

Ahmad Salman, Samy El-Tawab (School of Integrated Sciences), and Nathan Sprague (Computer Science) received a \$75,682 award from George Mason University to build an

2022 Madison Trust



Assistant professor of physics Masoud Kaveh Baghbadorani presented his idea for next-generation energy storage devices, “Beyond Traditional Batteries,” in the 2020 funding event. Madison Trust is an initiative of University Advancement managed by JMU’s [Corporate & Foundation Relations](#) office.

JMU faculty – Madison Trust is an opportunity to present your expertise, research or innovative idea to dozens of investors who are primed to hear your proposal and respond positively. Think of a certain TV show but without “sharks.” Instead, you’ll be with JMU alumni and friends who believe in and are ready to invest in fellow Dukes. These attendees pledge significant support in advance.

Register now for an upcoming one-hour information session on Zoom:
[Thursday, Sept. 9, 2 p.m.](#) or [Wednesday, Sept. 15, 10 a.m.](#)

When you attend, you’ll find out more about:

- how and when to submit your proposal,
- preparing for this event, including tailoring a presentation for this audience, as well as
- previous faculty and staff projects and programs successfully funded through Madison Trust.

Since 2014, Madison Trust has provided \$835,275 to 67 worthy projects. To learn more about them, please visit the [Madison Trust website](#).

Education Faculty Awarded Fellowship Supporting Community Project

Department of Educational Foundations and Exceptionalities faculty members Ruthie Bosch and Laura Desportes were awarded the Mosier Fellowship to undertake a community project in partnership with the College of Health and Behavioral Studies. The focus of the fellowship award is the Mobile Home Park Community Project, a collaboration between the College of Education, College of Health and Behavioral Studies, On The Road Collaborative and Divine Unity Community Church. The project’s stated objective is to “develop a community center within a Mobile Home Park to support outreach to Skyline Middle School students who are unable to participate in On The Road Collaborative after-

school activities due to childcare responsibilities for younger siblings.” A project overview identifies the following benefits to community stakeholders:

- Mobile home park community – Narrowing the achievement gap and a reduction of the need for increased services and support
- JMU preservice teacher and other clinical program participants – Experience with a highly diverse, high-needs population
- Harrisonburg community – A successful community-based support model for Latinx families in other MHPs in the city

The Mosier Fellowship was established through a gift from Eugene and Georgia Mosier, honoring his father and mother, Earl and Ruth Mosier, and their long history of involvement and contributions in education and psychology. The fellowship is awarded bi-annually to faculty from the College of Education or the College of Health and Behavioral Studies.

SMAD Professor Awarded Inclusion Imperative Fellowship

From the College of Arts and Letters

Morgan Smalls, a [school of] media arts and design professor at James Madison University, was awarded a University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) [Inclusion Imperative Visiting Faculty Fellowship](#). Smalls will spend the Spring 2022 semester in residence at the Drescher Center for the Humanities at UMBC, where she will conduct research that explores “HBO’s *Insecure* and Black Women in the Media.” This research will use popular culture as an entryway to conversations on race, class, gender and power in television and digital media spaces.

The increase of Black women content creators like Shonda Rhimes, Mara Brock Akil, Ava Duvernay and Issa Rae has contributed to greater visibility of Black women behind and in front of the screen. Smalls seeks to examine if and how shows like Rae’s *Insecure*, which focuses on two millennial, African American female best friends and airs on HBO, challenge stereotypical portrayals of Black women.

STAD Professor Publishes Scholarship Demonstrating Radical Transformation of Post-Communist Czech Theatre Community



Professor Beck (left) poses backstage after a performance of *Hamilton* with Leslie Odom, Jr., the actor who originated the role of Aaron Burr. He was visiting School of Theatre and Dance alumna, Anna-Lee Craig, who is the deck audio technician for the show and has been in that position since *Hamilton* premiered at the Public Theater in New York City.

In the spring 2021 issue of *Theatre Journal*, professor of theatre Dennis Beck published two pieces: [Becoming Object: Reimagining the Human on Czech 'New Theatre' Stages](#) and [Making Something Happen Despite Borders and Critics: A Conversation with Artistic Leaders of Prague's Archa Theatre, Ondřej Hrab and Jana Svobodová](#). In "Becoming Object," Beck explores how Czech New Theatre uses material and digital elements to blur the boundary between human and inhuman, subject and object, allowing performer and audience to question their ideas of autonomy, agency, objecthood, character, humanity and more. A continued focus on Czech theatre's innovative practices appears in "Making Something Happen Despite Borders and Critics." Crediting Ondřej Hrab and Jana Svobodová, the artistic directors of the Archa (Ark) Theatre and Archa.lab in Prague, with contributing significantly to moving the nation's theatre community past its communist-era isolationist practices, Beck interviews the artists about their experience creating *Ordinary People*, a documentary work co-developed with Chinese choreographer Wen Hui. Featuring untrained actors and incorporating multimedia elements, the show hinges on the pivotal year 1989 and examines the similarities of experience living in the Communist systems of China and what was then Czechoslovakia. Hrab and Svobodová compare the show's reception at the 2019 Avignon Festival and their homeland, noting that international critics seemed better equipped to handle *Ordinary People's* dramaturgy, which does not rely on a previously written play. Beck continued to investigate these themes in "After the Avalanche: Czech Theatre's Search for the Meaning of Alternative," which was published late last year in *Staging Postcommunism: Alternative Theatre in Eastern and Central Europe after 1989*, edited by Vessela Warner and Diana Manole.

Honors Student Conducts Summer Research with Chemistry Mentor

From the Honors College:

Deaquan Nichols is the recipient of the 2021 Witherspoon Scholarship. This award, offered for the first time this year, supports a first- or second-year Honors College student in an immersive summer research experience with a faculty mentor.

A first year Biophysical Chemistry major, [Deaquan's research this summer focused on the proteins involved in photosynthesis](#). His experiments [under the close guidance of Oleksandr Kokhan in the Chemistry Department] tested the speed of electron transfer between photosynthetic proteins and their photosynthesizers, which leads to photosynthesis. He attempted to accelerate this electron transfer by placing aromatic amino acids along the expected electron transfer pathways. This work has the potential to significantly advance future efforts to develop reliable processes for artificial photosynthesis.

Marketing Faculty Publishes Two Articles on Professional Sales

In 2020, professor of marketing John "Andy" Wood published two articles that explored one of his key research areas, professional sales. [Indications that a Course in Sales Leadership Enhances Early Sales Career Success](#), which appeared in *Marketing Education Review*, documented Wood's findings that a sales course combining experiential learning and managerial training had both positive curricular effects as well as meaningful student outcomes. Wood also co-authored [Relationship of Collegiate Resiliency to Early Career Success in Professional Sales](#) with Joseph M. Derby, assistant professor of marketing. Available in the *International Journal of Curriculum Development and Learning Measurement*, this article examines the roles of resiliency and extraversion in early-career sales, with the research suggesting that resiliency is the critical

factor for recent college graduates going into the field of sales.

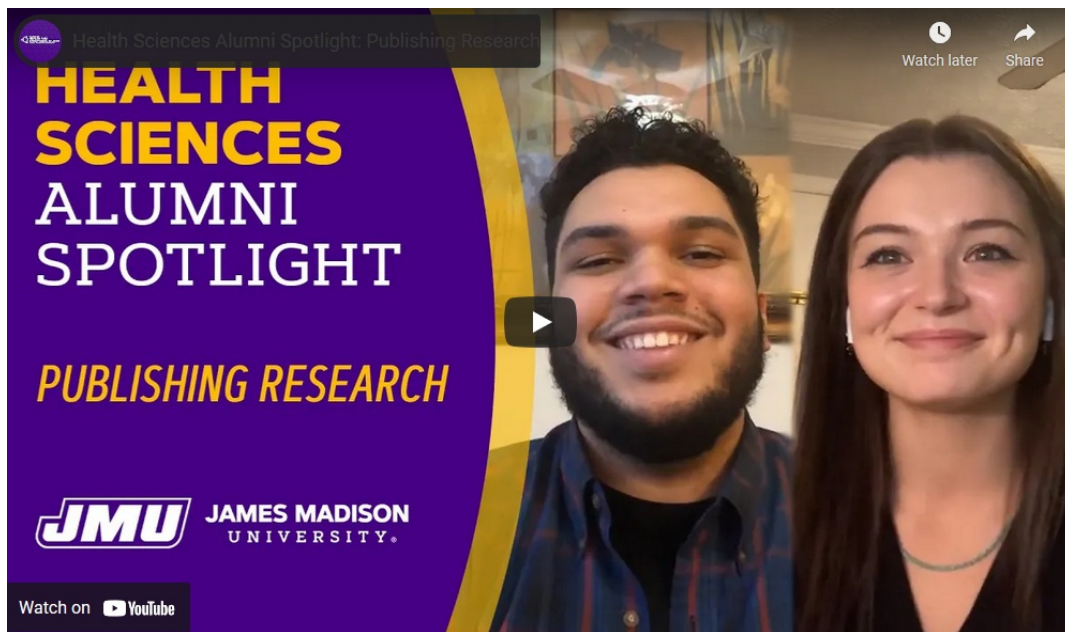
ISAT Program Hosts Solar Workshop with Iraqi University

From the College of Integrated Science and Engineering

JMU's Integrated Science and Technology Program (ISAT) is capitalizing on new ways to connect – [collaborating on a joint workshop](#) with scholars and professionals across the globe at Al-Mustaqbal University in Babil, Iraq.

Over 50 participants joined as Karim [Altaii, ISAT professor] and Malik [Mustafa Mohammed, Al-Mustaqbal University] shared their knowledge of the significance of solar energy in Iraq. “We might not need it here in Harrisonburg, but Iraq is a different story,” said Altaii. “Iraq faces electricity shortages. At the same time, Iraq receives a great deal of solar energy. I hope we planted a seed for participants to think about how they can make their lives better.”

VIDEO: Health Sciences Alumni Publish Research



From the College of Health and Behavioral Studies

Health sciences alumni Sarah Alvarez and Anthony Walton [published their research](#) in *The Journal of Consumer Health on the Internet*. They worked with professor Stephanie Baller to investigate the security risks associated with wearable fitness devices.

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