

# Kosovo and JMU Partnerships Committee

## Final Report

### Spring 2024

**Chair(s):** John Hulsey

**Members:** Bob Kolvoord, Michael Stoloff, Kristopher Wiley

**Charge:** The Committee on Kosovo and JMU Partnerships plan of work includes the following activities:

- Develop and approve strategic plan and budget for 2023-2024.
- Assess current context and opportunities to engage in feasible and high-impact partnership activities with two-preferred higher education institutions in Kosovo, the University of Prishtina and International Business College – Mitrovica.
- Integrate JMU-Kosovo Partnership activities with other existing global activities, particularly related to other post-conflict contexts.

#### **Summary of Current Year Activity:**

1. **Engage and Support Graduate Students from Kosovo (Champion Michael Stoloff).**

James Madison University continues to be a popular destination for students from Kosovo who are seeking graduate degrees.

JMU received nine graduate admission applications for Fall 2024 from individuals who are citizens of Kosovo. These include applications for the following programs: Public Administration, MPA (4 applications); Communication and Advocacy, MA (2 applications); Music Education, MA; Psychological Sciences, MA and Kinesiology, M.S.). Of these, six were admitted and two were placed on waiting lists. It was unclear at the time of this writing how many students will enroll; most, if not all, were seeking graduate assistantships.

Compared to previous years, applications from students from Kosovo reached a new high number this year. Last year, seven students from Kosovo completed applications for admission to four different programs: Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication, MA (two students), Communication and Advocacy, MA, and Public Administration, M.P.A.

With respect to graduate admissions, a “pipeline” has been established between graduate students from Kosovo and JMU. Note that JMU received nine graduate admission applications during a year when the Kosovo Graduate Assistantship was not advertised. In April a decision was made to select a recipient for the Kosovo Graduate Assistantship for Fall 2024, but all applications were received prior to this decision. In May, the Kosovo Graduate Assistantship was used to fund a student’s second year at JMU. This student had a one-year assistantship during 2023-24, but needed funding to complete their program during 2024-25.

All three students who started programs in Fall 2022 have now successfully completed their second-year experiences. As of May 2024, 11 students from Kosovo will have

completed graduate degrees. With the successful completion of their programs, 15 students from Kosovo are expected to become alumni by May 2025.

Every student that we have enrolled from Kosovo have made excellent progress in their programs, graduated on time, and they have achieved post-graduation success. These students regularly take advantage of professional development opportunities available at JMU. They are among the graduate students at JMU who most vocally express their appreciation for all that they have been getting to experience at JMU.

Graduate students, faculty and staff participated in a celebration of Kosovo's 16<sup>th</sup> Independence Day on February 16, 2024. A news story about our students from Kosovo and the event at JMU that celebrated Kosovo's 15<sup>th</sup> Independence Day appears at <https://www.jmu.edu/news/grad/2023/04-25-jmu-where-students-from-kosovo-earn-their-masters-degrees.shtml> .

2. **Collaboration between the Master's Program in Florence and the Faculty of Law at the University of Prishtina (Champion EUPS in Florence, Chris Blake, Caterina Paolucci).**
  - a. **EUPS Student Internships in Prishtina.** In Summer 2024 (May-June), two EUPS students are completing an internship in collaboration with the Center of Transitional Justice at the Faculty of Law at the University of Prishtina. With the support of EUPS faculty and faculty from the Center, they are carrying out two distinct research projects about Kosovo. One project is on post-conflict justice and the other on Kosovo's process to join the EU.
  - b. **University of Prishtina and Faculty Engagement in Florence.** In the fall of 2024, the EUPS program will host four students selected from the School of Law at the University of Prishtina to participate in political science workshops organized by JMU's M.A. program in Florence. These students will stay for about a week and interact with their JMU peers, both academically and socially. The collaboration will be much easier now that students from Kosovo have access to Visa-free travel into the Schengen zone.
  
3. **College of Education Activities (Champion Kristofer Wiley)** The College of Education continues work to integrate multiple site relationships in Kosovo into its curriculum, faculty efforts, and student experience.
  - a. **Student and Public School Educator Engagement.** In July 2024, Chris Hass will teach at the Summer University alongside University of Pristina partner Blerta Mustafa. Five COE students will accompany them and participate in the Summer University. Hass is wrapping PISU into a longitudinal research study on future teaching practice and growing a community of PISU alums year to year to inform both teacher training and practice in the field.
  - b. **Virtual Learning,** Chris Hass and Blerta Mustafa are developing a curricular plan to conduct virtual exchange between their university students and the intention is to roll it out in Fall of 24.