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

Minutes of the Academic Excellence Committee

The Academic Excellence Committee met on Thursday, September 12, 2024, in the Highlands Room of the Festival Conference and Student Center at James Madison University. Nicole Palya Wood, Chair, called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

Present:

Bell, Dickie	White, Jack
Bolander, Jeff	Wood, Nicole Palya
Galati, Tom	

Others:

Bywater, Jim, College of Education
Frana, Phil, University Studies
Hart, Marissa, School Counseling MEd/EdS; Class of 2025
Kolvoord, Bob, Interim Provost and Vice President, Academic Affairs
Marland, Simon, Visual and Performing Arts
Martinez, Isaiah, Integrated Science and Technology major; Class of 2025
Morrison, MacKenzie, Elementary Education; Class of 2025
Pohland, Bonnie, Economics and International Affairs double major; Class of 2026
Rooker, Sam, Intelligence Analysis major; Class of 2026
Shepard, Eric, Chemistry and Biology double major; Class of 2025
Shoemaker, Stella, Theatre major; Class of 2026
Trainer, Brendan, Accounting major; Class of 2026
Valentin, Abigail, Nursing major; Class of 2024
White, Siân, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Letters
York, Emily, College of Science and Engineering

Approval of Minutes

On motion by Dickie Bell and seconded by Tom Galati, the Academic Excellence Committee minutes of April 18, 2024, were approved.

Chair Nicole Palya Wood introduced two new committee members, Tom Galati and Jeff Bolander.

Academic Affairs Divisional Update

After welcoming the committee, Provost Kolvoord delivered the divisional update. He provided updates on new faculty within the division and discussed the five priorities of Academic Affairs for the year. They include:

- Core Curriculum Reform;
- Artificial Intelligence;
- Reengineering Madison;
- Shared Governance; and
- R2/National University Status

He also shared that the Ed.D. in Education, approved by the Academic Excellence Committee in the spring, had received full approval from JMU's accrediting agency, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

Artificial Intelligence in Teaching and Learning Panel

Provost Bob Kolvoord moderated a panel comprised of four pairs of faculty and their student, who discussed their experiences working together with artificial intelligence in the classroom. Faculty/student pairs included:

- Dr. Jim Bywater, Assistant Professor of Learning, Technology and Leadership Education, and MacKenzie Morrison, Elementary Education, Class of 2025
- Dr. Phil Frana, Professor of Interdisciplinary Studies, and Sam Rooker, Intelligence Analysis major, Class of 2026
- Dr. Simon Marland, Assistant Professor of Sound Design and Stella Shoemaker, Theatre major, Class of 2026
- Dr. Emily York, Associate Professor of Integrated Science and Technology and Isaiah Martinez, Integrated Science and Technology major, Class of 2025

Each pair responded to prompts related to AI impacts in the classroom, the success and value of AI projects and assignments; academic integrity and artificial intelligence, and how students were prepared for AI's use in their careers. Committee members asked questions related to students' comfort with using AI in the classroom and in the workplace.

Work-Based Learning Experiences Panel

Dr. Siân White, Associate Dean, College of Arts and Letters and co-chair of the Work-based Learning Experience (WBLE) Committee, moderated a panel of five students who answered questions about their recent work-based learning experiences. Students included:

- Marissa Hart, School Counseling MEd/EdS; Class of 2025
- Bonnie Pohland, Economics and International Affairs double major; Class of 2026
- Eric Shepard, Chemistry and Biology double major; Class of 2025
- Brendan Trainer, Accounting major; Class of 2026

-
- Abigail Valentin, Nursing major; Class of 2024

Students responded to questions about their WBLEs by describing their experiences and shared examples of something they learned in class that benefited them in the workplace. Students also spoke about what they discovered during their work-based learning experience that most surprised them.

Chair Nicole Palya Wood asked each student if they felt prepared for their work-based learning experience based on the grounding they received in their classes; students agreed that they did, providing examples from internships, clinical experiences, and laboratory work. Jack White asked students if they interacted with students from other institutions completing WBLEs. Several students said that they had, and they felt more advanced than some of their peers. White suggested that successful experiences like this expand the footprint of JMU.

Topics of Interest for Future Meetings

Provost Kolvoord informed the group that, at upcoming meetings, there would be several curriculum and instruction (C&I) proposals to review. He mentioned that neither the divisions of Enrollment Management or Research, Economic Development, and Innovation were featured at committee meetings and suggested including them at a future meeting.

Chair Wood stated that it would be advantageous for the Academic Excellence Committee to have a joint meeting with Student Affairs regarding topics they share in common, such as disability services.

Chair Wood said that they had heard from extraordinary students during the meeting, which the committee enjoys, but that they would also like to hear about things that were not going as well so that the committee could act as problem solvers.

There being no further business, on the motion of Jeff Bolander and seconded by Tom Galati, the Academic Excellence Committee meeting adjourned at 2:31 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Palya Wood, Chair

David Kirkpatrick, Secretary to the Board