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

Volume LXI No. 3

Minutes of the Meeting of February 14, 2025

The Visitors of James Madison University met on Friday, February 14, 2024 in the Festival Conference and Student Center Board Room on the campus of James Madison University. Suzanne Obenshain, Rector, called the meeting to order at 8:30 am.

PRESENT:

Bell, Dickie	James, Kay Coles
Bolander, Jeff	Obenshain, Suzanne, Rector
Caudle, Larry	Rexrode, David
Edwards, Terrie, Vice Rector	Smith, Steve
Eiland, Joanie	Stoltzfus, Michael
Fiorina, Carly	Thacker, Nikki
Galati, Tom	White, Jack
	Wood, Nicole Palya

Stafford, Sydney, Student Representative to the Board, 2024-25
Kirkpatrick, David, Secretary

ALSO PRESENT:

King, Charles, President
Carter-Hoyt, Malika, Vice President for Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
Kolvoord, Bob, Interim Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Langridge, Nick, Vice President for University Advancement
Miller, Tim, Vice President for Student Affairs
Moore, Towana, Vice President for Administration and Finance
Roan, Matt, Director of Athletics
Tongen, Anthony, Vice President for Research, Economic Development, and Innovation
Wood, Melinda, Vice President, Enrollment Management
Vass, Mary-Hope, Assistant Vice President, Communications and University Spokesperson
Ott-Walter, Kathy, Speaker, Faculty Senate
Knight, Jack, University Counsel

CONSENT AGENDA

On motion of Mr. Galati, seconded by Ms. Wood, the Consent Agenda was approved which included the minutes of November 8, 2024.

Tim Miller, Vice President, Student Affairs and Towana Moore, Vice President, Administration and Finance provided updates to the Board on the Garber Hall fire that occurred the evening of February 13, 2025.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Excellence Committee

Nicole Palya Wood, Chair, presented the report of the Academic Excellence Committee. The minutes of the November 13, 2024 meeting were approved. (Attachment A)

Ms. Wood reported on the following topics from the committee meeting:

- 1) Divisional Update;
- 2) College of Health and Behavioral Studies;
- 3) Curriculum Updates; and
 - a. On motion of the committee, seconded by Mr. Bell, the full board approved the new Master of Arts in Physical and Health Education Teacher Education.
 - b. On motion of the committee, seconded by Ms. Edwards, the full board approved the new Bachelor of Arts in Dance and Bachelor of Fine Arts in Dance.
- 4) Committee Charter Changes.

On motion of Ms. Wood, seconded by Ms. Edwards, the report of the Academic Excellence Committee was accepted.

Advancement and Engagement Committee

Michael Stoltzfus, Chair, presented the report of the Advancement and Engagement Committee. The minutes of the November 7, 2024 meeting were approved. (Attachment B)

Mr. Stoltzfus reported on the following topics from the committee meeting:

- 1) Funds Raised to Date;
- 2) VP Updates;
- 3) Alumni Chapters and Affinity Groups;
- 4) Madison Trust;
- 5) Impact of Scholarships; and
- 6) Being the Change Podcast.

On motion of Mr. Stoltzfus seconded by Mr. Caudle, the Advancement and Engagement report was accepted.

Athletics Committee

Dickie Bell Chair, presented the report of the Athletics Committee. The minutes of the November 7, 2024 meeting were approved. (Attachment C)

Mr. Bell reported on the following topics from the committee meeting:

- 1) Sports Update;
- 2) Intercollegiate Athletics Program Report;
- 3) Student-Athlete Disciplinary Report;
- 4) Student-Athlete Health/Wellness Update;
- 5) Development Report; and
- 6) Future Agenda Items

On motion of Mr. Bell, seconded by Mr. Smith, the Athletics report was accepted.

Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee

Jeff Bolander, Chair, presented the report of the Audit, Risk and Compliance Committee. The minutes of the November 7, 2024 meeting were approved. (Attachment D)

Mr. Bolander reported on the following topics from the committee meeting:

- 1) Annual Report;
- 2) Office of Research Integrity Presentation;
- 3) Internal Audit Work Plan Status Report; and
- 4) Charter Approvals.

On motion of Mr. Bolander, seconded by Ms Wood, the Audit, Risk and Compliance report was accepted.

Finance and Physical Development Committee

Steve Smith, Chair, presented the report of the Finance and Physical Development Committee. The minutes from the November 7, 2024 meeting were approved. (Attachment E)

Mr. Smith reported on the following from the committee meeting:

- 1) Financial Review;
- 2) Annual Investment Review;
- 3) Reengineering Madison Update;
- 4) Differentiated Housing Rates;
- 5) Land Conveyance.
 - a. On motion from committee, seconded by Mr. Bolander, the board approved the conveyance of the aforementioned land from the City of Harrisonburg.

On motion of Mr. Smith, seconded by Mr. Bell, the Finance and Physical Development report was accepted.

Governance Committee

Jack White, Chair, presented the report of the Governance Committee. The minutes of the November 7, 2024 meeting were approved. (Attachment F)

Mr. White reported on the following from the committee meeting:

- 1) SWOT Update;
- 2) JMU Board Self-Evaluation
- 3) Reviewed the JMU Board Manual revisions and updates which the committee approved in November;
 - a. On motion from committee, seconded by Ms. Edwards, the board approved the November changes to the board manual.
- 4) Student Handbook Review; and
- 5) Board Retreat – June 5-6, 2025

On motion of Mr. White, seconded by Michael Stoltzfus, the Governance report was accepted.

Student Affairs Committee

Terrie Edwards, Chair, presented the report of the Student Affairs Committee. The minutes from the November 7, 2024 meeting were approved. (Attachment G)

Ms. Edwards reported on the following topics from the committee meeting:

- 1) Committee Charter Changes;
- 2) Student Affairs Update;
- 3) Student Government Association Report;
- 4) Student Representative to the Board Update; and
- 5) Office of Student Accountability and Restorative Practices.

On motion of Ms. Edwards, seconded by Mr. Stoltzfus, the Student Affairs report was accepted.

FACULTY SENATE UPDATE (Attachment H)

Kathy Ott Walter, Faculty Senate Speaker provided an update from the Faculty Senate and background information on the Faculty Senate's roles. In addition, several faculty members were recognized. The upcoming priorities for the Faculty Senate are shared governance, Academic Affairs policy, AP position clarification, appeals and grievance procedures, the faculty involvement for the upcoming provost search, and faculty retention.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE BOARD UPDATE (Attachment I)

Sydney Stafford, student representative to the board, provided the following updates:

The upcoming goals of this position: participating on the presidential search committee, improving student engagement, educating and informing students, and working to collect student feedback on the JMU presidential search.

PRESIDENTS REPORT

President Charles King presented information on the following (Attachment J):

- Major university events were recognized to include winter commencement, ROTC commission: winter commencement had 870 graduates and 4,842 guests; keynote speaker was Attorney General Jason Miyares ('98); five graduating ROTC cadets were commissioned as active duty second lieutenants; ROTC guest of honor/speaker was Jack White.
- Acknowledged First bowl win at Boca Raton Bowl against Western Kentucky University (most wins for JMU and only Virginia team to win a bowl).
- Head football coach Bob Chesney won the Virginia State Coach of the Year and the Bear Bryant Award.
- 2025 fall applications to JMU: 44,782 (total); 44,072 (first year); 710 (transfer); total applications is a seven percent increase from 2024.
- FAFSA updates: Department of Education (ED) implemented a robust beta testing process for the 2025-26 FAFSA; shifted opening date for '25-'26 FAFSA to Dec. 1; beta testing successful; JMU receiving downloads from ED for '25-'26.
- JMU rankings (US News and World Report):
 - #24 Best Online Master's in Information Technology Programs; #25 Best Online MBA Program; #38 Best Online MBA Program for Veterans; #33 Best Online Master's in Nursing Programs; #12 Best Online Master's in Nursing Administration Program.
- Several faculty members were recognized with awards and recognitions:
- Rudy Molina (SAS), Joy Brittain (SAS) and Amanda Sawyer (COE): JMU, in partnership with Staunton City Public Schools (SCS), was recently awarded the Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs (GEAR UP) grant for \$2.3 million; supports student success and aims to close the learning gap for first-generation and low-income families in the Shenandoah Valley.

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- Stephen Marrin (CIST) won the International Studies Association Lifetime Award. He is the tenth person to ever receive the award.
 - Xiaojing Tang (CISE) was selected for a \$700,000 grant from NASA through their Land Cover and Land Use Change program.
 - Art Dean (Office of Inclusive Excellence and Engagement) was honored at the Ole School Alumni Scholarship Group Black History Month Celebration.
 - LTC Andrew Bryant (Military Science): JMU ROTC is one of 10 schools in the Mid Atlantic Army ROTC Brigade with a notable 100% active-duty rate for recently graduated ROTC students.
 - Economic and Community Development: Harrisonburg Innovation Hub
 - JMU's 1000 sq. ft. anchor tenant space completed in January
 - Programming topics at the Hub will include housing, transportation, childcare and workforce development.
 - Upcoming legislative priorities include: Fast Flex Nursing Program, Johnston Hall, New Residence Hall, Cox Bill (Athletic Legislation), Governor's 2025 Budget, General Assembly dates (Jan. 8-Feb. 2), and the Legislative Reception Jan. 28, 2025.
 - Capital Projects: Campus Housing. Ikenberry/Potomac Hall; 461-bed dorm; six stories; 128K sq. Ft.
 - Capital Projects: Carrier Library. 177K sq. ft.; 56K sq. Ft. added space; completion date is Jan. 2026; open to students Aug. 2026.
 - Additional Capital Projects: Johnston Hall and CHBS expansion.
 - Reengineering Madison updates: new ERP selection in progress, demos completed in January; Okta goes live March 15-16; CRM work continues with Advancement going live in April.
 - Richmond Legislative Reception:
 - On Jan. 28, JMU hosted its second annual Legislative Reception at the Library of Virginia.
 - This event offers a valuable opportunity for statewide elected officials, legislators, legislative staff, and other state leaders to connect with university and student leaders, as well as proud alumni, and learn about the important work being done at JMU.
 - Among the 218 guests were many legislators and distinguished leaders, including Governor's Chief of Staff, Attorney General and Lt. Governor.
 - JMU Athletics Update:
 - JMU posted the highest federal graduation rate in Sun Belt with six programs posting a perfect GSR.
 - Women's soccer won league championship.
 - JMU women's basketball sits in first place undefeated in Sun Belt competition and has the nation's eighth-longest winning streak and is 13-0.
 - JMU men's basketball sits in second place and has won six straight games in the Sun Belt.
 - Presidential Transition:
 - Together with the Division Heads, we are actively preparing for the presidential transition.
 - The President's Office will be the primary point of contact for the presidential transition, including the announcement and all materials provided to the incoming president. We will make sure the incoming president is prepared and well informed of operations as we work with each division.
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- With input from our incoming president, we will also work with our campus community to provide opportunities for introductions and connections to appropriate stakeholders.
- The President's Report will always conclude with future items. The following items are being considered for the next board meeting: 2025-2026 tuition and fees, comprehensive campaign and Master Plan.

GENERAL ASSEMBLY UPDATE (Attachment K)

Caitlyn Read, Assistant Vice President, State Government Relations provided an update a General Assembly update.

- There is about a week left until General Assembly adjournment.
- Updates on state budget, state policy and advocacy:
 - JMU's 2025 budget request: veteran support, expanded nursing program, retain campus officers, Johnston Hall renovation and expansion, new residence hall.
 - 2024-2026 policy timeline: Jan. 17 was the last day to file bills, crossover was early, reconvened session April 2.
 - State policy themes: athletics, student affairs, AI, nursing pipeline, mandatory trainings, reporting and data aggregation.
 - Number of bills filed: 1,991; number of bills tracking: 89.
 - Advocacy activities: JMU leadership visits, JMU legislative reception, JMU Student Lobby Day.

NAME, IMAGE AND LIKENESS UPDATE AND POST-HOUSE PLAN (Attachment L)

Matt Roan, Director of Athletics provided update on Name, Image and Likeness (NIL) and Post-House Plan.

- NIL background: The NIL era began in 2021; Senate Bill 223 signed into law by Gov. Youngkin in 2022; HB1505 signed in 2024.
- NIL at JMU: Montpelier Collective launched in May 2023 to raise awareness for local charitable causes by pairing with community-minded JMU student-athletes.
- House background: Grant House, Arizona State swimmer, brought antitrust lawsuit against NCAA seeking damages for what could have been earned; settlement of all similar cases; students-athletes who competed from 2016-24; \$2.8 billion in damages to be paid to student-athletes over 10 years. Results in an approximately \$325,000/year impact to JMU.
- Future model: roster limits and scholarships, revenue sharing (\$20.5 million cap with 4% escalator), NIL.
- JMU will take a values-driven approach: uniquely JMU, securing future success, fiscal and legal responsibility.
- House limits and Title IX: Part I participation; Prong I substantial proportionality.
- Financial aid: definition (tuition, room and board, books cost of attendance, and academic awards (Alston)); Title IX proportionality; all programs maintaining at least current scholarship funding using two-plus year averages; "scholarship enhancement" via revenue sharing.
- NIL and Honors 1 (JMU's unified approach): JMU Dukes Exchange, access to student-athlete licensing, education to assist efforts, leveraging learnings and mindset.
- Expectations going forward: potential lawsuits, new classes being formed; possible federal solution to standardize rules across state boundaries.

TEST-OPTIONAL ADMISSION (Attachment M)

Melinda J. Wood, Vice President, Enrollment Management, presented information on Test-Optional Admission:

- Provided recap on enrollment cliff and potential decline in future applications.
- Role of standardized test scores: academic success in the first semester/year; higher test scores linked to higher college GPAs; identify top applicants at the most selective institutions (Ivy Plus).
- Advantages of test required admission: identify students at risk in first year; enable rural students to stand out when access to AP, IB, and dual enrollment courses are limited; declining student readiness accelerated by COVID-19.
- Disadvantages: test scores not a primary factor; long history of strong retention and graduation rates; all Virginia public institutions are test-optional; Virginia Tech is test-optional until 2028, JMU's top competitor; a test-optional policy will make JMU an outlier among peers and cross-applicant schools, potentially impacting recent enrollment gains and causing a significant budget deficit.
- Competitors and admission test policy: cross applicant institutions, peer institutions, Virginia public and private institutions, Research 2 institutions, Common Application.
- Application and admit rate trends: admit rate peaked at about 83% in 2021; goal is to select the very best and brightest students and meet enrollment goals.
- Fall 2025 test required scenario: current admission policy vs. test required admission policy.

Rector Obenshain then called for the board to move into Closed Session. Terrie Edwards made the following motion.

“I move the Board go into closed session to discuss the following matters:

1) Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.1 of the Code of Virginia, I move we go into closed session to discuss personnel matters involving promotions, performance, retirements, hiring, resignations, salary adjustments, and status changes of faculty members, university administrators and appointees;

2) pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.3 of the Code of Virginia, to discuss the disposition of publicly held property located in Harrisonburg, Virginia; and

3) pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.7 to consult with legal counsel pertaining to actual or probable litigation; and

(4) pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.8 to consult with legal counsel for the provision of legal advice by such counsel.”

(5) pursuant to Section 2.2-3711.A.11 regarding the discussion or consideration of honorary degrees or special awards.

The motion was seconded by Dickie Bell and the Board moved into closed session. Following the closed session, Ms. Obenshain then stated the following:

During the closed session, the board discussed only matters lawfully

exempted from open meeting requirements and only those types of matters identified in the motion for the closed session.

RECORDED VOTE: the following is an affirmative recorded, member by member vote:

Bell, Dickie	Obenshain, Suzanne, Rector
Bolander, Jeff	Rexrode, David
Caudle, Larry	Smith, Steve
Edwards, Terrie, Vice Rector	Stoltzfus, Michael
Eiland, Joanie	Thacker, Nikki
Fiorina, Carly	White, Jack
Galati, Tom	Wood, Nicole Palya
James, Kay Coles	

Ms. Obenshain then asked if there were any motions to come forward.

On motion from Terrie Edwards, seconded by Kay Coles James, approved the Personnel Action Report.

On motion from Steve Smith, seconded by Larry Caudle, approved the Presidential Home located at the 900 block of Forest Hill Road and Locust Hill Drive.

On motion from Nicole Palya Wood seconded by Tom Galati approved the honorary degree recommendation.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, on motion of Terrie Edwards, seconded by Steve Smith, the Board voted to adjourn. The meeting was adjourned 1:25pm.

Suzanne Obenshain, Rector

David C. Kirkpatrick, Secretary