

DIRECTIONS

## JMU will be the national model for an engaged university

*Renew your connections to Madison and help JMU reach its next level of excellence*

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s I reflect on these first few months as president of James Madison University, I realize how fortunate I have already been to have experienced many “Madison moments” — moments that illustrate the strong sense of community and engagement that makes JMU

a distinctive place to learn, teach, work and live. Just to name a few: Summer tours of campus laboratories where undergraduates were working alongside faculty members on cutting-edge research. A reception where new faculty members shared their excitement with each other about JMU’s educational mission. A spontaneous choral rendition of *Happy Birthday* at the opening staff meeting in Wilson Hall. Hearing the inspiring stories of our Centennial Scholars and their families who have overcome many challenges in search of a bright future.

Listening to alumni who get choked up as they describe how JMU instilled in them a love for learning and service that lasts for a lifetime. Standing on the field for the first time with the Marching Royal Dukes and soaking in the glorious majesty of their talent and teamwork.

**A community that combines a commitment to learning with a conviction that all humans are interconnected has the potential to solve any issue, no matter how intractable. And belonging to such a community is an act of faith in that combination.**

I am sure each of you can come up with your own list of cherished Madison moments.

What can these shared Madison moments tell us about our mission and our future? I think they remind us that by creating an inclusive learning community in which everyone feels valued and respected — and a part of something larger than themselves — there is virtually no limit to what we can accomplish. A community that combines a commitment to learn-



ing with a conviction that all humans are interconnected has the potential to solve any issue, no matter how intractable. And belonging to such a community is an act of faith in that combination. That is precisely why my vision for the university is to make it a national model; I believe it is our duty to bring broader attention to JMU and the power of this combination so that it can spread. Given the challenges we face in society today, we need to do it now.

**“Embracing both longstanding traditions and a willingness to evolve sets Madison apart,” says JMU President Jonathan R. Alger.**

So you may be wondering, how? How do we elevate James Madison University to the status of a national model? The excellent leadership of the past, decades of thoughtful and dedicated work by faculty and staff members, and achievements of students and graduates year after year have brought us to a point from which the university can now enter into a new phase of even greater accomplishment. To build on that momentum, we will follow an intentional process that began this summer, just after I assumed office. In this *Madison Special Report*, you will notice that much of the content is about our “Why Madison?” Presidential Listening Tour, which began in August and will last into the spring. While I enjoy *Madison*

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magazine for its typically outward-looking portrayal of the university community and its place in the world, this issue's somewhat inward reflection on the question "Why Madison?" is thoughtfully timed. As we work together to elevate our university even further from the regional to the national stage, it's important for all of us to know why. After reading this issue you may want to answer the question "Why Madison?" for yourself. Once you do, you may find yourself with a renewed sense of connection to the Madison family and a desire to engage with your university to help take it to that next level of excellence.

I have met thousands of people on and off campus so far during the "Why Madison?" tour. And it has been most gratifying to learn that nearly everyone wants to be engaged. In fact, engagement has emerged as the predominant theme in what I am hearing during the tour. This is very important because engagement is what powers the combination I describe above. No matter how committed to learning a community might be, without engagement there is no cultivation of human interconnectedness. Madison community members are engaged with ideas and with the world.

For instance, in this issue you will read about the geospatial analysis course offered by JMU faculty members to high-school students across the Commonwealth of Virginia and beyond. You will learn that our students have made the Harrisonburg Big Brothers Big Sisters program the largest in all of Virginia because of their volunteerism. You will read about JMU faculty and staff who have designed the Madison Collaborative, a major new initiative that will reach every student at JMU and teach them ethical decision-making skills, a necessity for understanding human interconnectedness. You will hear from members of the Technology Alumni Group, who have been coming to campus for years to expose JMU professors and students to ways in which concepts they are teaching and learning play out in real-world, real-time applications. These instances of engagement are only a few of many in the Madison Experience.

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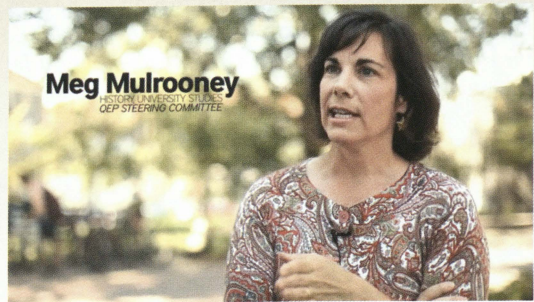
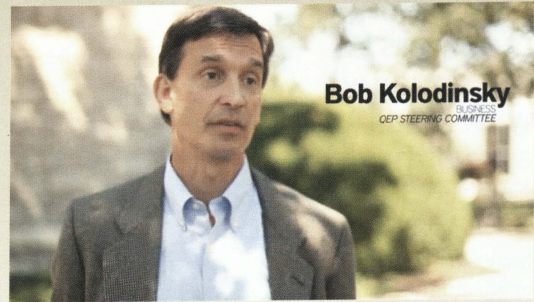
## Students learn to put ethical reasoning into action

**Multi-disciplinary team from across campus comes together to build center for ethical reasoning**

BY ANDY PERRINE ('86)

During recent "Why Madison?" Presidential Listening Tour events on campus faculty and staff members remarked to President Alger that JMU has a culture of "yes." Innovation in developing new curricula and programs is encouraged, and Alger heard this repeatedly.

It is no wonder that early reviews of the Madison Collaborative: Ethical Reasoning In Action include the descriptor "ambitious." For 18 months a multi-disciplinary faculty and staff team assembled a plan to teach every single JMU student ethical reasoning skills and how to put them into action. From Freshman Orientation and programming in the residence halls to advanced courses in the majors, JMU students will be steeped in learning how to apply ethical reasoning in their personal, professional and civic lives. The reasons to engage in this massive enterprise are many. Bob Kolodinsky, management professor and director of the JMU Gilliam Center for Free Enterprise and Ethical Leadership, says, "If you look at the news on a daily basis there are scandals in business, politics – in all aspects of life. Every university needs a center like this, and it is a way for JMU to stand out. We can develop a reputation for it and it can become



Professors Bob Kolodinsky, Meg Mulrooney and Lori Pyle discuss the impact of teaching ethical reasoning at [www.jmu.edu/QEP](http://www.jmu.edu/QEP).

part of our identity."

Meg Mulrooney, history professor and associate dean for University Studies, says, "JMU is well positioned to make this work because among the many traditions on this campus, one of the things we have done since the beginning is promote civic engagement. Ethical reasoning skills are essential to citizenship." ❧

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In this issue you also will read that the university plans to inaugurate me as its sixth president on March 15, 2013. I hope you can join us for all or part of a weeklong series of events celebrating the university community and the legacy of James Madison, the man.

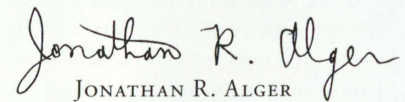
### **'Madison community members are engaged with ideas and with the world.'**

At the inauguration I will begin putting forward plans for how we can take our university to the national stage. You might be intrigued to know that President James Madison also understood the power of a community that combines a commitment to learning and a conviction that all humans are interconnected. In his *State of the Union* address on Dec. 5, 1810, Madison pitched Congress on the idea of creat-

ing a national university in Washington, D.C. In making the pitch, he proclaimed:

*"Such an institution, though local in its legal character, would be universal in its beneficial effects. By enlightening the opinions, by expanding the patriotism, and by assimilating the principles, the sentiments, and the manners of those who might resort to this temple of science, to be redistributed in due time through every part of the community, sources of jealousy and prejudice would be diminished, the features of national character would be multiplied, and greater extent given to social harmony. But, above all, a well-constituted seminary in the center of the nation is recommended by the consideration that the additional instruction emanating from it would contribute not less to strengthen the foundations than to adorn the structure of our free and happy system of government."*

Congress, in its infinite wisdom, never went for President Madison's idea. So let's do him the honor of putting such a place on the national map. James Madison University can be the institution President James Madison dreamed of creating. The journey has been, and will continue to be, one of great reward and excitement. Let's dream big together. Will you join us?



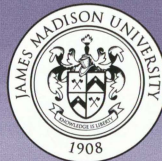
JONATHAN R. ALGER

President

James Madison University

\* Learn more about President Alger's listening tour discoveries at [www.jmu.edu/whymadison](http://www.jmu.edu/whymadison)

## MADISON FAMILY!



*Join in the inauguration celebration for*

# Jonathan R. Alger

SIXTH PRESIDENT OF JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY

**Make plans to be on campus March 15, 2013, to celebrate President Alger and renew your connections to Madison.**

**A weeklong series of events will celebrate the university community and the legacy of Founding Father James Madison, JMU's eponym.**

**LEARN MORE AT [WWW.JMU.EDU/INAUGURATION](http://WWW.JMU.EDU/INAUGURATION)**