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[Graduate Researchers]

Six graduate researchers participate in conference

Students showcase works at Virginia Council of Graduate Schools forum

Six JMU graduate students presented their research at the Fourth-Annual Graduate Student Research Forum sponsored by the Virginia Council of Graduate Schools in Richmond at the Library of Virginia. The annual research forum showcases graduate student research and scholarship across Virginia. It also highlights the benefits of graduate education to the economic, social and civic development of the commonwealth. Attendees included members of the Virginia General Assembly and their staff members, industry representatives, professors and administrators, and the general public.

JMU graduate students were among more than 60 students showcasing their work. The JMU students and their topics included: Jennifer Becker on "Motor Recovery Approaches Used to Rehabilitate Central Nervous System Dysfunction in Adult Patients after Stroke;" Sarah Coffey on "Caregivers and Stroke — Identifying Needs to Create Normalcy and Sustain Quality of Life on a Daily Basis;" William Shelly on "Determination of Diagnostic Predictors of Heart Failure;" Anna More on "Felix Mendelssohn Bartholdy: Reviver and Reconciler;" Jeffrey Borowiec on "Dead End Kids on a Leaky Boat: An Examination of Irish Punk;" and Daniel Kitchie on "Could Lithuania be a Valuable U.S. Ally? A Comparative Statistical GIS Analysis." M

[Madison Quotient]

Return on investment

BusinessWeek gives College of Business graduates a nod for skill sets

While layoffs, salary freezes and unemployment statistics dominate today's business headlines, the JMU College of Business is being recognized for continuing to prepare graduates for success.

JMU is No. 3 on the public schools list and fourth out of all business schools in the 2009 *BusinessWeek* "50 Best Undergraduate Business Schools" rankings, which are calculated by comparing annual tuition and median starting salaries for 2008 graduates.

"Number one, you want a place that's going to help you be prepared to enter the business world. At the same time, you're concerned with what kind of costs you're going to incur," says Bob Reid, dean of the College of Business. "Versus what you spend on tuition at JMU, the return on investment is very high."

Affordable tuition alone doesn't translate into a high ROI, Reid adds. Schools must provide a high quality education that gives graduates the skills needed to contribute to successful companies. "We're continuously working to improve our program. In the last two years we've reduced the size of the college slightly, bringing our student/faculty ratio to 25 to 1, in an effort to improve the student experience," says Reid. "We devote a lot of time, attention and resources to the program. Recruiters time and time again tell us, 'We really like the quality of your graduates.'

"Our students' technical skills are as good as or better than you get at other places, their interpersonal skills are far superior, their leadership skills are superior, and that's why companies hire our graduates."

Recruiters and CoB faculty now recognize that coveted set of soft skills as the "Madison Quotient." According to a recent Leadership IQ study of more than 300 U.S. companies and organizations, almost half of newly hired employees fail within 18 months, due mostly to poor interpersonal skills and lack of motivation. "The Madison Quotient means employers are going to get a better return on their investment by hiring a JMU graduate," says Reid. "Lower turnover rates mean companies spend less on recruiting, hiring and training, and the soft skills JMU students have help them become productive employees more quickly." M

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MADISON QUOTIENT

Recruiters and professors recognize CoB graduates' interpersonal, technical and leadership skills as the 'Madison Quotient.'

✳ Read a white paper about the Madison Quotient at www.jmu.edu/cob/.

Management professor Bob Eliason emphasizes employment preparedness in his classroom and in the 12-credit COB 300 course he team-teaches. "Leadership skills are critical," he says.