

MYMADISON



Alex LaMar ('12), second from left on front row, served as a First-Year Orientation Guide and says, "A community like JMU isn't just rare, it's one-of-a-kind."

M@dison

JMU's friendly inclusiveness and Alex's success

My daughter received an exceptional education and path to success

BY KATHY LAMAR ('12P)

Our family is standing in the kitchen, saying good-bye as we had many times, while Alex gathers her things to head back to JMU. It's the end of Spring Break 2012, and a teary-eyed Alex says, "Mom, do you realize this is the last time I'll be driving back to JMU?" My daughter's emotions move me to tears. My Alex, a College of Business senior (and now proud Class of 2012 graduate), was at this moment nearing the end of her Madison Experience.

Where did the last four years go? Wasn't it just four weeks ago we moved Alex into Potomac Hall to start her adventure as a freshman? Wasn't it just three weeks ago we assisted with her move into newly constructed Shenandoah Hall? Alex loved JMU's campus life so much, she wanted to live on campus during her sophomore year. Wasn't it also just two weeks ago we moved her into the "Berry Patch" — Bayberry Lane in Copper Beech — with her buddies? It surely feels like it was only a week

ago that we drove to Harrisonburg, Va., to settle Alex in for her last year at JMU.

As we arrived on campus after Spring Break in March, Alex again teared up. "A community like JMU isn't just rare, it's one-of-a-kind," she said. "I've had the greatest times of my life here, and the best is yet to come."

I wasn't certain it was possible for it to get any better! Alex's prior three years were filled with so many learning opportunities, leadership activities and awesome memories.

Freshman year (2008-09)

JMU celebrated its centennial anniversary, and we had the most memorable Family Weekend of Alex's four years. Participating in Alex's Business Statistics Class — the first year JMU offered the classroom opportunity for parents to sit in a class and share in their student's education. We also enjoyed "Science on a Sphere," especially knowing that JMU was the first university to



(Left): JMU parents Kathy and Jim LaMar ('12P) and their daughter, Alex at Spring Commencement. (Above): Alex celebrates with classmates at a home football game. "JMU's philosophy of inclusiveness ... has extended through Alex's four-year Madison Experience," says Kathy LaMar.

'JMU's philosophy of inclusiveness – known as 'all together one' – has extended throughout Alex's four-year Madison Experience.'

– KATHY LAMAR ('12P)

Dukes Band. Thunder sticks! We experienced why JMU's food is ranked fifth in the nation by dining in the infamous D-Hall! Alex loved her JMU freshman year!

Sophomore year (2009-10)

Alex strongly desired to be involved in opportunities outside of her educational experience in the classroom. As a sophomore she was accepted to MYMOM — the Make Your Mark On Madison leadership group. She also served as an Outrigger Peer Educator. She traveled with JMU buddies to Atlanta, Ga., on an Alternative Spring Break Trip to have fun and give back. The group assisted the elderly in a community and worked with autistic children. Most notably for Alex — she applies for and is selected a Student Ambassador. She so much enjoyed fostering other students' love for JMU. This year, Alex makes an important move educationally and changes her major from marketing to computer information systems in JMU's highly acclaimed College of Business. Right move? Absolutely.

Junior year (2010-11)

Alex makes another big move, physically, from campus residence life to an off-campus apartment. She's excited! Her interest in leadership deepens, and she applies for and becomes a FROG (First-Year Orientation Guide). She enjoys giving back and offering the same inviting warmth and school spirit she experienced as a freshman. Alex thrives in her new computer

acquire this fascinating technology for environmental and educational research. The Dukes were ranked No. 1 in the nation in Division I-AA. Our family took in four exciting games in Bridgeforth Stadium and loved the stimulating sights and sounds of the Marching Royal

information systems courses. She participates in JMU's annual Business Career Fair. Thanks to JMU's incredible "Recruit-A-Duke" program, sponsored by the Career and Academic Planning services, Alex interviews for and lands an internship with Accenture in Washington, D.C.

Could parents be prouder?

Senior year (2011-12)

The last year? Really? Alex blinked and suddenly found herself holding on to each day's memory. She continued activities with Student Ambassadors, Outriggers, FROGs, Small Group buddies, and enjoyed her classmates. Last-time visits to D-Hall and E-Hall, Carrier and Rose Libraries, the Quad, Bridgeforth Stadium and Showker Hall all became more important. She distinctly remembers leading her final campus tour for potential incoming JMU students and their families — the campus memories are endless. JMU's philosophy of inclusiveness — known as "all together one" — has extended throughout Alex's four-year Madison Experience.

JMU professors and staff provided Alex an exceptional education, a friendly, inclusive environment for growth and opportunities to seek employment. Alex received two job offers and accepted a position with KPMG at its Business Intelligence Unit in New York City. We feel assurance toward her future success is quite a treasured ending to an unforgettable journey.

Congratulations on a successful, memorable four-year Madison Experience, Alex! Yes parents, you can be even prouder each day!

About the Author Kathleen "Kathy" Ann LaMar ('12P) is a 1988 graduate of the Wharton Evening School, University of Pennsylvania, and harbors a secret passion for writing. She is employed by the Downingtown Area School District. Health and fitness are very important to her. She captains a USTA tennis team (4.0 level), which competed at 2012 PATD Championships with an undefeated season record. Kathy and her husband, Jim, a 2004 Penn State University alumnus, live in Coatesville, Pa., where he is self-employed as a computer consultant. She says, "We are thrilled with Alexandra's successful journey through JMU, culminating in her Bachelor of Business Administration Degree — cum laude!"

Why Madison?

Why is Madison a special place?

Why does Madison matter to you?

Why does Madison matter to the world?

I want to know your answers to these important questions as James Madison University enters a new era. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to learn why Madison matters to you.

JMU's sixth president, Jonathan Alger, is currently conducting a listening tour – "Why Madison?" – to hear from JMU alumni, students, parents, donors and friends and learn about James Madison University, the Madison community and the Madison Experience.

Find the presidential listening tour schedule, see coverage from the receptions, follow the tour's progress, keep up with President Alger's reflections and offer your own ideas about why Madison matters.

www.jmu.edu/whymadison



Jonathan R. Alger

JONATHAN R. ALGER, PRESIDENT



Why Madison?

PRESIDENTIAL LISTENING TOUR 2012