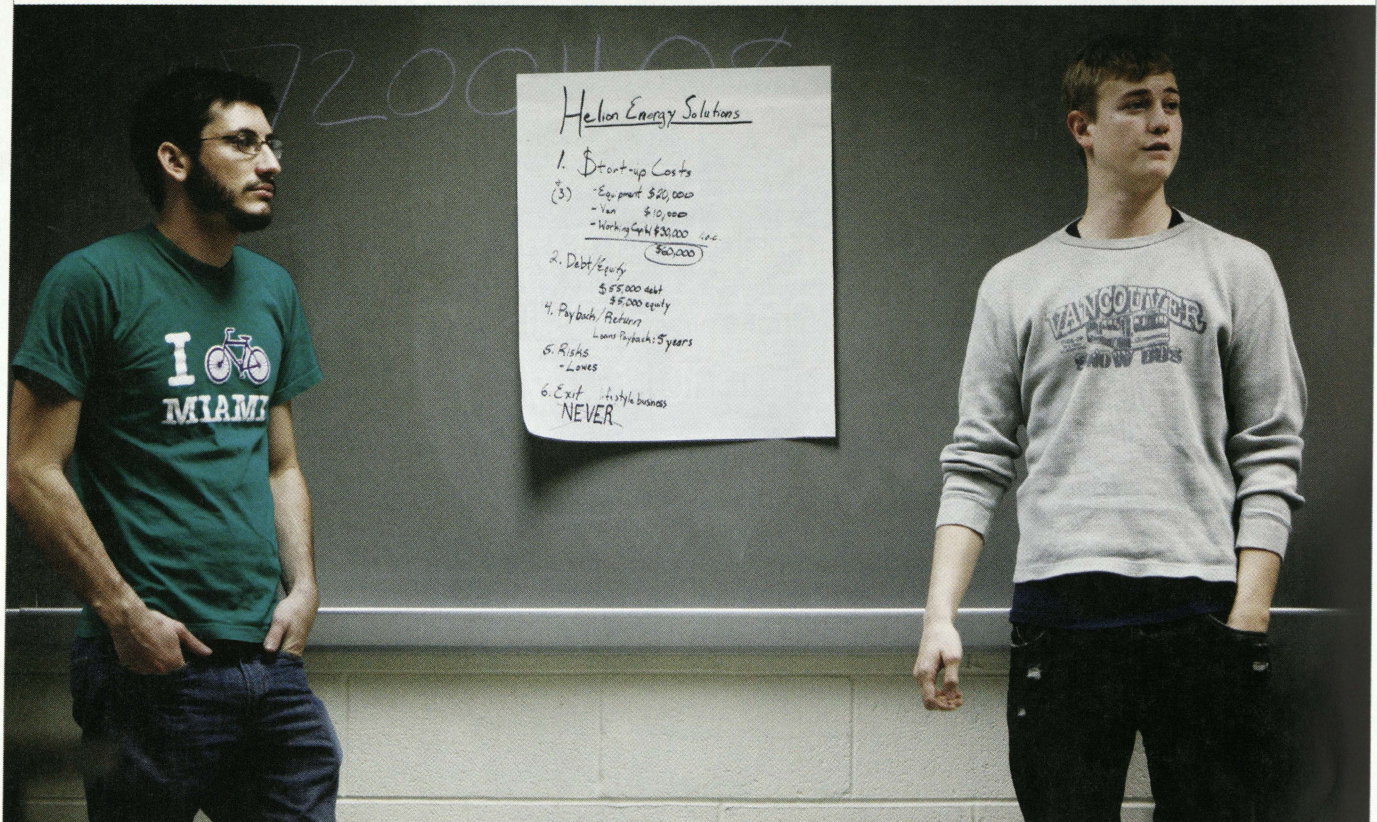


ESSAY

Who is the JMU entrepreneur?

Undergraduates (of all majors) think differently — and act earlier BY CAROL HAMILTON ('97M)



Excited whispers and gestures make the classroom buzz with energy and expectation. Students huddle in small groups debating current social and industry trends, challenging economic conditions, and emerging technologies — disruptive forces that create chaos ... and opportunity.

JMU is fostering a growing network of entrepreneurs who see risk as an opportunity, and who also see ambiguity as an invitation to rewrite the rules and create new business models that solve today's problems.

These students represent all majors on campus and bring talents and expertise from their disciplines, generating a powerful collaboration for examining problems, testing assumptions and proving the viability of a new product or market. In the College of Business Venture Creation class, Jake Rasmussen ('12), integrated science and technology major, brings a new design for solar panels developed in his ISAT course. He works diligently with Ian Burpo ('12), an international business major with a passion for social entrepreneurship, and Bret Ervin ('12), a management major with a penchant for sales. As a team they develop a plan, Green Heat, to bring an affordable product to local farmers to reduce energy consumption and production costs. These students — who are now brand new alumni — love a challenge and are driven to succeed.

JMU entrepreneurs are also competitive and persevere to achieve their goals. In 2011 management majors Amber York ('12) and Michelle Carter ('12) designed, manufactured and sold an iPhone accessory that they developed in the Entrepreneurship class taught by William Wales. In the spring 2012 Venture Creation class, they worked with Matt Long ('12), a political science major, and Anthony Frye ('12), a justice studies major, to scale the product for a larger market. Alumnus Terry Bandy ('80) anchored the team as a seasoned business professional and entrepreneur, talking to the team weekly to challenge their assumptions and guide them to resources. Pricelesspocket.com was born.

Entrepreneurially minded undergraduates are attracted to JMU because of the friendly campus; the high level of engagement among professors, students and alumni; and the breadth and quality of education afforded by a highly regarded liberal arts institution.

To a degree unprecedented in higher education, JMU faculty members eagerly join forces across disciplines, sharing their expertise and resources to spark innovation in the classroom, in student organizations and in the community. JMU faculty members model and encourage collaboration — a critical factor in entrepreneurial success.

Max Siegler ('10) and Chris Hite ('10) discuss Helion Energy Solutions, their concept for providing home and business energy audits.

ESSAY



Carol Hamilton ('97M) and alum entrepreneur John Rothenberger ('88) developed the Venture Creation course, which produces a new business launch each year.

'JMU faculty members eagerly join forces across disciplines, sharing their expertise and resources to spark innovation in the classroom, in student organizations and in the community.'

— CAROL HAMILTON, *director JMU Center for Entrepreneurship*

The close ties created through the Madison Experience beckon alumni to return. John Rothenberger ('88), serial entrepreneur and founder of SE Solutions, was a marketing major who didn't fit the mold. After graduation, he became the top salesman for a small company and learned the ropes. At age 28, he started a computer hardware business and discovered entrepreneurship as his career. After discovering his path, he wanted JMU students to test their own entrepreneurial aspirations earlier in their careers. So in 2005, he partnered with me to offer MGT 472 Venture Creation as an opportunity for undergraduate entrepreneurs of all majors to learn to think differently, to discover an entrepreneurial career path and to launch a business following graduation. Thanks to this immersion experience, students are accelerating their career paths by two years because they are making informed choices to enter the start-up, the mid-sized company or the corporate world.

Some are even starting businesses. Statistically, new ventures are launched 10 or more years following college graduation. From the Venture Creation class alone, JMU averages one new business launch per semester. Rothenberger's dream has come true ... and this is only the tip of the iceberg.

In January, Andrew Mortillo ('13) and Gilbert Welsford ('12) started the Society for Entrepreneurs on campus. Thirteen

members were selected through a group interview process to identify students with a personal passion, the entrepreneurial drive, a strong work ethic and a commitment to start a venture during

their college careers or following graduation. The Society for Entrepreneurs invites JMU entrepreneurs to share their stories and give critical feedback to students' endeavors. Cory Suter ('06) used the SOE think tank to test his latest endeavor, Direct Congress, an online voting platform to develop public policy. SOE members carefully read the business plan, met to develop their questions, conducted research, and then hammered Suter with questions and suggestions during two hour-long teleconferences. Suter was thrilled. A Harrisonburg native, Suter started BioNeighbors, a green-roofing business in Philadelphia, a few years after graduation, based on the business plan he developed in the 2005 Venture Creation class. He sold BioNeighbors to the employees in 2011 and is now pursuing his doctorate in economics at Temple University while launching Direct Congress. Suter is a serial entrepreneur in the making.

The passion and enthusiasm among JMU students are enticing more alumni to return to campus. They are serving as

board members, mentors, speakers and conspirators in creating real-world learning opportunities for students. These alumni bring hard-earned experience and vibrant professional networks into the JMU entrepreneurial ecosystem. Thanks to alumni, JMU hosts an Entrepreneur-in-Residence program, the COB 300 Business Plan Competition, the JMU Challenge, and tours to businesses in New York and San Francisco, to name a few.

Alumni are actively participating in initiatives like the JMU Alternative Fuel Lab, the Wind Energy Center, the arboretum, and the Forbes Center for the Performing Arts. These alumni are deeply committed to JMU. They value their Madison Experience and want to give back. They help students develop and test ideas, tap resources, secure internships and jobs, and make connections around the globe. Their contributions are adding exponential value to the JMU learning experience.

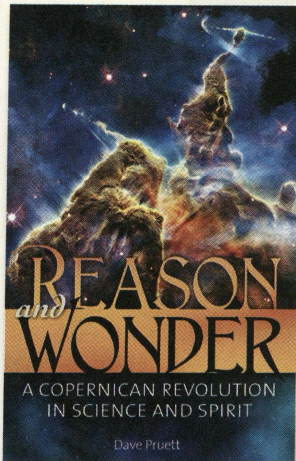
So who is the JMU entrepreneur? He or she can be found in any major and usually doesn't fit the mold of the surrounding culture. These entrepreneurs see the world differently and pursue opportunities using the resources at hand. Most of them are intense competitors and relish a challenge. They pursue their dreams with passion and determination. They value opportunities to learn, connect and achieve. They dream big and give generously. They are ... JMU. **M**

About the Author Carol Hamilton ('97M) is director of JMU's Center for Entrepreneurship and a lecturer in management. She has been part of the team-taught College of Business 300 gateway course that leads to the business plan competition. Hamilton joined the JMU faculty in 2002. In 2005, she co-developed the Venture Creation course with serial entrepreneur, John Rothenberger ('88). It is the first course in the College of Business open to all majors and the first to routinely assign alumni entrepreneurs to anchor venture teams. Hamilton earned her M.B.A. with a concentration in entrepreneurship at JMU in 1997. She then worked as a management analyst for the JMU Small Business Development Center. In 1999, she co-founded Valley Microenterprise Alliance, a local nonprofit, microlending program.

Mixed Media

BOOKS
MUSIC
& FILM

{Books}



Reason and Wonder: A Copernican Revolution in Science and Spirit

BY DAVE PRUETT, JMU PROFESSOR OF HISTORY; PRAEGER, 2012
ISBN: 978-0-313-39919-0

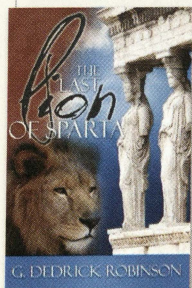
An outgrowth of C. David Pruett's JMU Honors Program course, "From Black Elk to Black Holes: Shaping Myth for a New Millennium," *Reason and Wonder* embraces the insights of modern science and the wisdom of spiritual traditions to "re-enchant the universe." The new "myth of meaning" unfolds as the story of three successive "Copernican revolutions" — cosmological, biological and spiritual — offers an expansive view of human potential as revolutionary as the work of Copernicus, Galileo and Darwin. According to Praeger press, Pruett sets out a revolutionary new understanding of our place in the universe, one that reconciles the rational demands of science with the deeper tugs of spirituality. When Copernicus, Galileo, and Kepler — all deeply religious — dislodged the Earth from the center of the universe, science and religion separated. Darwin's theory of evolution brought outright divorce. But now, as Pruett writes, a third scientific revolution promises the reconciliation of reason and faith by bringing a new dimension of spirituality to the scientific understanding of our place in the cosmos.

* www.abc-clio.com/product.aspx?isbn=9780313399190

The Last Lion of Sparta

BY G. DEDRICK ROBINSON,
JMU PROFESSOR EMERITUS
OF GEOLOGY
OAKTARA PRESS, 2011
ISBN-10: 1602901872

The Last Lion of Sparta is set in ancient Greece and shares the story



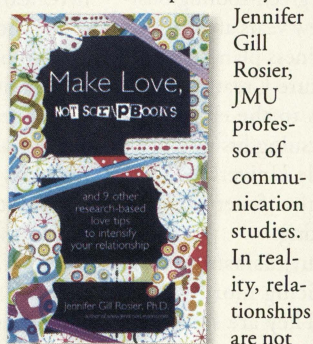
of a young king and queen's most unlikely romance as they struggle to revive a once respected nation after centuries of decline and decay. A rockier start to a relationship is hard to imagine. Forced to watch the hanging of her husband, Agiatis is certain her own death is near because of her involvement in her husband's failed reforms. Instead, King Leonidas II of Sparta commands her to marry his son, Cleomenes. Who could have guessed that she would mold him into the greatest reformer in Sparta's long history, as well as her mightiest warrior? Surrounded by enemies and a rising Roman superpower, will Agiatis' love and encouragement be enough?

* www.oaktara.com/bookpage-thelastlionofsparta

Make Love Not Scrapbooks

BY JENNIFER GILL ROSIER,
JMU PROFESSOR OF COMMUNI-
CATION STUDIES
LULU.COM, 2011
ISBN-13: 978-0557458028

"If relationships were easy, everyone who wanted one would have one. There would be a 0 percent divorce rate. Couple's therapy would not exist. A book like this would be completely unnecessary. And, we would all be happily connected to another person," says



Jennifer Gill Rosier, JMU professor of communication studies. In reality, relationships are not easy. Whether you feel like your relationship is perfectly fine, needs a little assistance, or is on its last leg, this book offers nine research-based tips to intensify relationships. The personal stories shared offer practical advice for enacting the advice provided. Steve

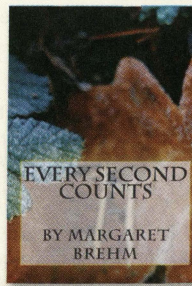
McCornack, author of *Reflect and Relate* and associate professor of communication at Michigan State University, says, "It is rare to find a book that depicts relationships so honestly, provides so much in a way of valid and useful information, and yet is fluid, conversational and engaging."

* www.makelovenotscrapbooks.com

Every Second Counts: The Clock's Ticking

BY CATHERINE UDELL BREHM,
aka "MARGARET" BREHM ('90)
CREATESPACE, 2012
ISBN-13 978-1467995474

Catherine Udell Brehm ('90) from Alpharetta, Ga., debuts her first novel after writing a draft for the Young Writers Program, Nanowrimo. Her main character, Sierra, has the perfect life. She's surrounded by people she loves, including her best friend, Lena, and her trustworthy father. Then, they turn on her. With no



idea what is happening, Sierra uncovers the truths that they've been hiding from her since her birth. But with this newly discovered knowledge, life can't go on like it did before. Sierra must choose — and her decision affects everything. Even her own survival.

The Seventh Deception

BY G. DEDRICK ROBINSON,
JMU PROFESSOR EMERITUS
OF GEOLOGY
SALVO PRESS, 2011
ISBN-10: 160977020X

The Seventh Deception: A Novel of the Nazi Atomic Bomb is a historical novel set in 1942. The race is on for nature's most powerful secret. Under the leadership of Nobel laureate Warner Heisenberg, the Nazis are out in front. Only Berlin physicists and double agent Anton Breker stands between them and world domination. He must walk a fine line as he works to subvert Nazi atomic bomb research by day, while at night, he has an affair with his best friend's wife.

* www.gdedrickrobinson.com

