

DIRECTIONS

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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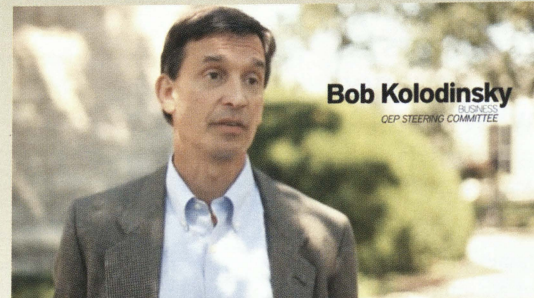
Students learn to put ethical reasoning into action

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.

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." ❧