

Junior kinesiology major Paul Roberson ('14) captured this image of the Quad at night.

BEST WISHES PRESIDENT ALGER!

President Alger: May your presidency be inspirationally successful as you carry out James Madison University's outstanding reputation for highly personal administrative interaction with students and faculty and staff members.

VIRGINIA ALIOTTI ('57, '67M)
JMU Professor Emerita of French
Strasburg, Va.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Read more well wishes for President Jonathan R. Alger (on Page 32 of this issue). Then, leave your own special note at www.jmu.edu/inauguration/your-comments.shtml

PICTURE PERFECT

I wanted to submit this picture of the night-time JMU Quad for consideration in *Madison* magazine. As a proud alumnus, I think this image demonstrates just how pretty our university really is. The photo was taken by Paul Roberson ('14), a junior kinesiology major who is concentrating in exercise science. He is from Colonial Beach, Va., and is a friend of my daughter, Jessica Nicole Bowen ('14), a junior nursing major. Thank You!

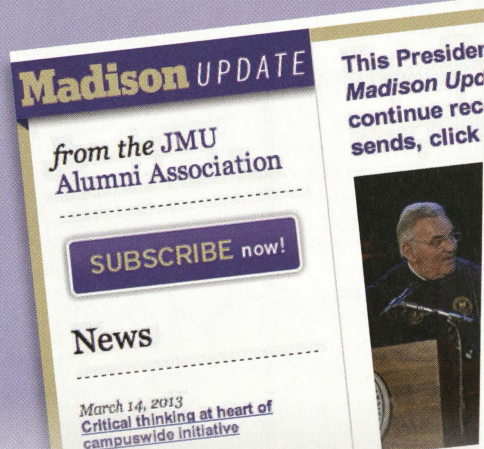
W. DANNY BOWEN JR.
Roanoke, Va.

President Jonathan R. Alger's vision of the Engaged University means every member of the Madison community is connected!

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{Editor's Note}

Minds ignited by learning

Attentive readers of *Madison* will notice that much ink is spilled in this issue covering the inauguration of Jonathan R. Alger, James Madison University's sixth president. Is this an inordinate amount of attention paid to what is essentially an administrative transition? Some may argue yes. Although with the turmoil that often accompanies senior executive transitions, such a smooth transition is news indeed.

Yet, at a time when voices in the public dialogue daily call into question the purpose and direction of higher education, the executive responsible for steering an institution where change is the norm ought to be paid much attention. As our society becomes ever more reliant on a knowledge economy populated by educated and enlightened citizens to survive, what happens at Madison in the next few years may become a model for the rest of higher education — at least if Jon Alger has his way. So you will read much in this issue about a new excitement in the Madison community sparked by its new leadership. Coverage of Madison Week when President Alger was inaugurated reveals a positive exuberance rarely captured in the news lately.

But please make no mistake: While the pomp and circumstance make for great images and headlines in a magazine, these proceedings were held in celebration of the teaching and learning that goes on daily at Madison. For instance on Page 22 read how art and art history professor Aderonke Adesanya and her students are exploring diversity through African dress and culture. And on Page 26 learn how physics and astronomy professor Anca Constantin and one of her students are using a \$10,000 Jeffress Memorial Trust grant to identify properties of galaxies that host water megamasers suitable for measuring distances from Earth to the galaxies they reside in.

While the fireworks on this issue's cover were set off to culminate the Madison Week celebrations this year, let their explosions symbolize the minds ignited by learning on the campus illuminated by their fiery trails.

— ANDREW D. PERRINE ('86), executive editor