

{Guest Editor's Note}

It's complicated.

"It's Complicated." That's what first-year students discovered when they could send only two available rescue teams to six devastated population centers during a hypothetical Category 5 hurricane scenario presented to them during Orientation Week. In small groups, students offered a variety of thoughtful reasons to send the rescue teams to one devastated area or the other. Some victims had no way to escape while others refused mandatory evacuations.

Does that play a role in whether to save them? Most students said yes. "But why?" Challenged to explain themselves students engaged in deeper critical thinking by weighing ethical values such as liberty, empathy and responsibility.

"Awesome." "Truly significant." "Incredibly rewarding." That's what students and facilitators said of beginning the fall semester — and for students their academic career — at JMU with an all-too-realistic hurricane rescue problem.

Addressing ethical problems is not new at JMU. Doing so with a structured set of

ethical considerations — *Eight Key Questions* — is. Over the past two-and-a-half years, JMU faculty and staff members, and administrators, along with student representatives, designed a program to positively affect the entire university. The resulting program identifies *Eight Key Questions* that, when asked, will lead to deeper and more robust discussions and deliberations about what to do when faced with tough decisions.

'JMU emerges as a leader of public universities squarely addressing today's complex problems.'

"The Madison Collaborative: Ethical Reasoning in Action" is JMU's bold and innovative program designed to permeate the university — from general education to the majors and student life programming — with ethical reasoning skills.

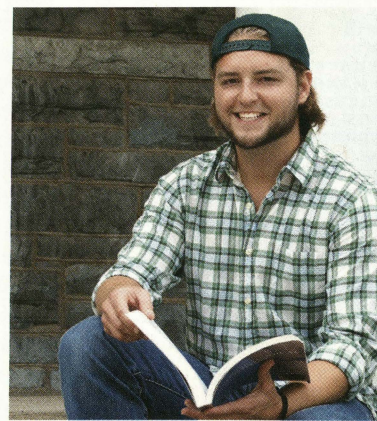
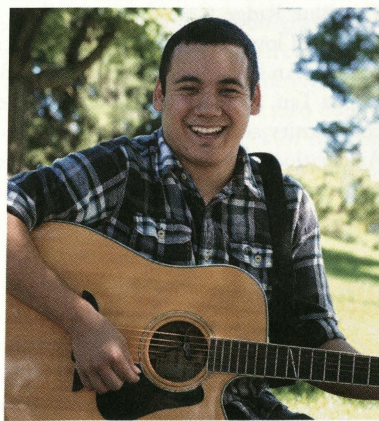
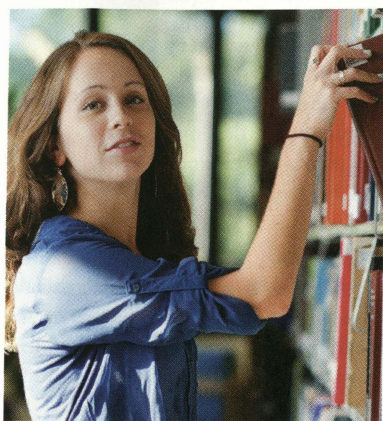
The "It's Complicated" sessions during this fall's Orientation introduced the *Eight Key Questions* to ask when facing complex

situations. The Madison Collaborative will develop a broad spectrum of projects to follow "It's Complicated." By creating a comprehensive curriculum of ethical reasoning, JMU emerges as a leader of public universities squarely addressing today's complex problems. (Learn more about the Madison Collaborative on Page 32.)

To be the national model for the engaged university is President Jonathan Alger's challenging aspiration for JMU. I believe that a disciplined ethical reasoning skill set may become JMU's signature asset for productive engagement. As an alumnus, parent, current student or friend of Madison, I hope you are as excited as we are about our new effort to Be the Change that we wish to see in the world. In a time when much of the public questions whether higher education and society, more broadly, have lost their course, JMU steps forward to lead the way to a brighter — and more ethically thoughtful — future.

— WILLIAM "BILL" HAWK
Chair, The Madison Collaborative: Ethical Reasoning in Action

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