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ABET accredits JMU engineering on a fast track

Employers have been lauding the JMU engineering program since its first graduates hit the job market in spring 2012. Now, the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology, the leading accrediting agency for technical and engineering programs in the United States and around the world, has given its stamp of approval.

"It's an external assessment of our program and by getting it, it suggests Madison engineering is meeting the rigor that the engineering profession expects," says Kurt Paterson, head of the JMU Department of Engineering.

The accreditation puts Madison engineering with the best programs in the country and will benefit students and alumni seeking jobs, graduate school opportunities and licensure. "When you tell others around the world that your program is ABET accredited, it's understood what that means," Paterson explains.



The Accreditation Board for Engineering Technology has accredited the JMU School of Engineering on a fast track, aligning JMU's program with the best engineering programs in the nation.

And the program's youth is one of its strengths. "This is a curriculum designed in the 21st century for 21st century needs," Paterson adds, noting students get a heavy dose of design experience beginning in their freshman year. "I think the curriculum resonates with prospective students because it's very hands on. You learn engineering by doing engineering."

In addition to design, JMU engineering students take business courses and work on

projects requiring them to work with clients. During their sophomore year, the students meet with physically disabled children and their families, design mobility devices to meet their needs, such as custom bicycles, then build and deliver them. Such experiences, Paterson says, position JMU engineering graduates to be problem solvers who understand people while also having the technical knowledge required of engineers. **M**

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Behind the stage

Renowned Masterpiece Season performers mentor students

The Forbes Center for the Performing Arts' Masterpiece Season presents many renowned performers each year but it's not all just for show. The Masterpiece Season is as much an academic experience for JMU students as it is watching these legends of stage and song perform live. Recently, two such performers – Broadway legend Patti LuPone and country singer/songwriter and JMU alumnus Phil Vassar ('85) – took



time during their campus visits to work with budding artists from JMU's College of Visual and Performing Arts.

"The very first time she heard us play, she told us it was so beautiful

Country music star Phil Vassar ('85), inset, and Broadway star Patti LuPone met with and mentored JMU students in the College of Visual and Performing Arts.

she wanted to cry," says England McDaniels ('15), a music industry major and a violinist in the JMU Symphony Orchestra. "To have someone as talented and accomplished as Patti LuPone say something

like that at this stage in our careers is unbelievable. It really makes us feel like everything we've been taught and worked toward is really beginning to pay off." **M**

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