



{Madison Perspectives}

A roadmap to success

Alumni association joins campus partners to help alumni stay engaged in the Madison Experience

BY JAMIE JONES MILLER ('99), *president, JMU Alumni Association Board*

In her Senior Convocation address to the Class of 2011, student speaker Kristin Alexander ('11) talked about the *JMU Mappy*, a tool given to students on their first day at JMU as a guide to getting around campus. Alexander said *Mappy* was more than just a map. She asked her classmates to look at *Mappy* as a reflection of their Madison Experience and as a guide for their undergraduate years. *Mappy* was later immortalized in the JMU video, "A Way of Life," as a challenge to students and alumni to reflect on our time at Madison — the memories we created, the knowledge we gained, the imprint we left on the community. The video asked us to consider how different our map of JMU might look today and how we can keep the Madison Experience alive for those who follow in our footsteps.

Alexander reminded her classmates that there is not a "*Mappy*" for post-college life.

I wondered, what if there were? The leadership of the JMU Alumni Association has taken on this very challenge. In the development of our strategic plan, we have created our own kind of *Mappy* — a guide for us to use to help alumni and students navigate the Madison Experience.

Whether you are a recent graduate or someone who has bled purple and gold for many years, this strategic plan "roadmap" will be used by the alumni association to enrich your Madison Experience.

Our guide starts with the primary mission of the JMU Alumni Association: To engage alumni and cultivate involvement and investment in JMU. The association aims to be a leading alumni association that, through university, student and alumni engagement, is an essential partner to the advancement of the JMU mission. We will do this by fostering relationships with students that

build lifelong commitments to JMU and positive identities as JMU alumni.

We will give alumni opportunities to be ambassadors for our alma mater and inspire investment in JMU. We will extend the reach, effectiveness and efficiency of the alumni association by building meaningful and lasting partnerships with JMU colleges, schools, departments and organizations. And finally, we will create and foster meaningful opportunities for alumni worldwide to serve JMU and to connect with the university, its students, and other alumni. We will help JMU become the model of an engaged university.

Several key components of this roadmap have already fallen into place. The Student Alumni Association, a philanthropic organization of student donors launched this summer, will provide opportunities for connections between JMU alumni and students. Many of our alumni chapters have accepted a Chapter Challenge to increase overall alumni giving beyond the more than 8,508 alumni donors who gave to JMU last year. Our alumni chapter leaders are stepping up to the plate as well, and more than 54 percent made a gift to JMU in fiscal year 2012–13.

And in keeping with the tradition of passing on the Madison Experience, the alumni association awarded more than \$67,000 in scholarships to 63 legacy students whose parents or grandparents are alumni.

This summer, the alumni association announced that it is a new partner with JMU Athletics and the Office of Alumni Relations to bring MadiZone to JMU alumni worldwide. This sponsorship will ensure that alumni will be cheering on the Dukes and experiencing the excitement of game day even if they can't be in Harrisonburg.

The award-winning JMU Leaders of Volunteer Engagement program, facilitated by the alumni association in partnership with host

{Student Philanthropy}

Hitting high notes

Student Alumni Association and Marching Royal Dukes members team up to fund Bill Posey Scholarship

BY JAMES IRWIN ('06)



(Left): Jamie Jones Miller ('99) strategizes with Student Alumni Association Vice President Josh Humphries ('16) at an alumni board networking session. (Above): JMU Alumni Association Board member Carol Benassi ('82) talks to SAA President Pratt Templeton ('14). (Inset): The 1787 Orientation Mappy.

programs across campus, is providing alumni with Madison-based, certified volunteer opportunities. These volunteer opportunities extend the JMU experience for graduates, benefit the university and strengthen ties between alumni and students.

Finally, events focused on career networking and building critical skills desired by employers will be complemented by on-campus programs like The Madison Collaborative which will transform JMU into a community recognized for producing contemplative, engaged citizens who apply ethical reasoning to confront the challenges of the world. The Class of 2017 was introduced to The Madison Collaborative during 1787 Orientation through a program called "It's Complicated: Ethical Reasoning in Action." This program, which will develop student critical thinking skills that can be tapped when facing difficult ethical decisions, will make JMU graduates stand out in the workplace.

We are Dukes from day one, but alumni for life. That's why the JMU Alumni Association's roadmap is based on the belief that alumni and students hold the key to the university's future through their support. We can't wait to see where it takes us. **M**

→ Follow Jamie Jones Miller ('99) @ JMUJamie.

The JMU Student Alumni Association, a society of student donors, is working to improve the culture of philanthropy at the university. In early fall semester the Student Alumni Association partnered with members of the Marching Royal Dukes to help raise funds for the Bill Posey Scholarship. In a three-week fundraising push, the two groups accomplished some remarkable feats:

- 196 students made a donation to the scholarship (by comparison, 270 students made a gift to JMU all of last year)*
 - 42 percent of Marching Royal Dukes members made a gift to the scholarship
 - \$2,950.98 raised in student gifts
 - 55 students made a gift of at least \$25, making them a benefit-level member of the Student Alumni Association.
- (*Does not include Student Duke Club members)



All students who donate to JMU are Student Alumni Association members and students who make an annual gift of \$25 or more are considered benefit-level members. The SAA hosts events on campus and facilitates networking opportunities between students and alumni. **M**

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