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JMU SWOT ANALYSIS

2025

Presidential Working Paper

The Office of Planning, Analytics, and Institutional Research



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Executive Summary

This report summarizes the results of a community-wide SWOT analysis conducted at the request of the JMU Board of Visitors. It explores key university strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats for decision-makers to consider when crafting the university's strategic direction. The analysis was conducted from February to May 2025.

SWOT Item Development Process

To generate the SWOT elements, information was collected from 14 leadership and advisory groups through surveys and discussions (See Appendix A). Approximately 2,000 different SWOT elements were proposed by these groups and thematically analyzed by PAIR staff. Recommendations were refined by the University Planning Team, President King, Division Heads, and the Board of Visitors Governance Committee. The final set of elements included 12 strengths, 12 weaknesses, eight opportunities, and nine threats.

Next, a survey was conducted among all university constituents, including students, faculty, staff, community members, alumni, and board members. Respondents rated their agreement and perceived importance of each generated SWOT element. The survey was conducted over the first two weeks in April, yielding 4,800 total responses, 2,715 were complete.

Key Findings

Strengths

The survey validated JMU's strength in preparing students to succeed professionally. This item received high agreement and importance among respondents.

All the strengths received strong levels of agreement and importance among respondents, supporting their inclusion in the analysis.

The survey validated JMU's strength in preparing students to succeed professionally

Weaknesses

Many of the weaknesses are related to compensation, the endowment, and workload.

Given that most of the responses used to generate the SWOT elements came from faculty and staff, this is not surprising. However, issues of compensation and workload remain relevant, especially given JMU's recent unplanned enrollment growth over the past four years. As additional pressures related to local housing costs and other basic needs make it difficult to recruit and retain qualified employees, opportunities exist to be intentional in addressing these continued weaknesses.

Although the perceived over-prioritization of athletics was included as a weakness, faculty (and employees in general) agreed more strongly than alumni and donors with this item, illustrating the need to consider further how to evaluate and communicate the role athletics plays at the institution.

Opportunities

Respondents showed the strongest support for expanding relationships and collaborations both within the university and with external partners. This opportunity was further explored through conversations with JMU offices that facilitate economic and community partnerships.

Although using artificial intelligence and emerging technologies to enhance teaching and productivity was recognized as an opportunity, respondents did not Faculty agreed more strongly than alumni and donors with a perception that athletics is overprioritized.

consider it as significant compared to other listed opportunities. Interestingly, older respondents were more likely to view technology as an opportunity than their younger counterparts.

Threats

The top threats regarding agreement and importance focused on state and federal funding. These threats may have been particularly relevant given the timing of this analysis, which coincided with the change in presidential administrations.

The threat of changing student demographics challenging JMU's ability to meet evolving needs did not receive strong agreement or importance. This issue may require further investigation through a gap analysis to assess the actual capacity of JMU to meet these needs versus the perceived capacity.

Like the opportunity related to artificial intelligence, respondents did not consider AI to be a significant threat to teaching and learning compared to other threats. However, younger respondents were more likely to view AI as a potential threat, whereas older respondents tended to see it as an opportunity. Despite being listed as both an opportunity and a threat, it would be prudent for university leaders to assess how AI will influence the university's practices, even if it is not a top strategic priority.

Possible Strategies

The University Planning Team reviewed the SWOT results and conducted a cross-SWOT analysis, combining strengths and weaknesses with opportunities and threats to develop potential strategic initiatives. From this analysis, three general strategies emerged, each of which, if addressed, may provide JMU with a competitive advantage over its peers.

Strategy 1: Improving Student and Employee Well-being

Opportunities exist to position JMU as a national model for promoting a culture of well-being, fostering relationships with external partners and alumni, and creating a competitive advantage in recruiting and retaining a diverse, high-quality student and employee body. The signing of the Okanagan Charter emphasizes JMU's commitment to health promotion across campus culture. This approach supports existing student success strategies, such as the Quality Enhancement Plan, which aims to increase student attainment and retention.

Opportunities exist to position JMU as a national model for promoting a culture of well-being

Strategy 2: Creating New Academic Programs that Leverage Regional Strengths

When considering ways to increase and improve upon the current academic offerings, there are opportunities to develop innovative programs that will provide JMU with a competitive advantage both within the state and nationally. JMU can leverage its reputation as a state-wide leader in producing nurses and teachers by working with localities and school districts to meet needs more effectively through ideas like satellite healthcare campuses and residency-based scholarships for teachers. Additionally, JMU's desirable location offers opportunities to develop niche programs that capitalize on the region's strengths. For example, JMU could offer a competitive alternative to existing institutions by developing programs in manufacturing, tourism, or agriculture. These initiatives position JMU to make the most of its strengths and opportunities, driving future growth and excellence.

Strategy 3: Increasing Community-Focused Work-Based Learning Experiences

The SWOT analysis confirms that JMU's ability to prepare students for professional success is a significant strength. To further enhance this area, JMU can expand external partnerships to increase work-based learning experiences (WBLEs), which improve students' job-related skills and serve community needs. Additionally, JMU may help address local needs such as transportation, housing, and childcare through student learning experiences and faculty research. JMU's location, commitment to engaged learning, and strong graduate outcomes position the university well to create a quality institution-wide WBLE program that benefits students and the community.

Method

From February to May 2025, the Office of Planning, Analytics and Institutional Research (PAIR) conducted a university-wide SWOT analysis to explore key university strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The SWOT analysis was conducted in two phases.

Phase One: Identification of Key SWOT Elements

During the first phase, the Executive Director of PAIR collected information from 14 leadership and advisory groups (see Appendix A) to inform the key SWOT elements for JMU.

Each group was sent an online survey with several open-ended items (see Appendix B). After providing input via this survey, each group had the opportunity to discuss the results at an in-person or virtual session, adding new ideas and reacting to the initial responses that were themed by PAIR staff. There were 172 responses to the survey, plus several dozen more comments that arose from the discussions. Approximately 2,000 specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were generated during this process.

Approximately 2,000 specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats were generated during Phase One.

The survey and discussion results were compiled and thematically analyzed by PAIR staff to identify common themes. These themes were then refined by the <u>University Planning Team</u> (UPT), a group of approximately 30 faculty, staff, and students from across all university divisions. The UPT's recommendations were then reviewed and refined further by President King and Division Heads. The

Board of Visitors Governance Committee then reviewed and improved the elements before Division Heads gave final approval on March 25th. The final elements included 12 strengths, 12 weaknesses, eight opportunities, and nine threats.

Phase Two: Gathering Widespread Stakeholder Input

Over two weeks in early April, the university surveyed all constituents, including students, faculty, staff, community members, alumni, and board members. The survey asked respondents to provide their level of agreement and perceived importance of each SWOT element for JMU to consider in its future planning. Agreement was rated on a four-point scale (Agree, Somewhat Agree, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree). Importance was rated on a four-point scale (Very Important, Somewhat Important, Minimally Important, Not Important at All). Respondents could select "No basis to judge" if they could not offer an informed answer for an item.

To increase survey completion, respondents were shown two randomly assigned SWOT elements, either Strengths or Weaknesses (internal components) and Opportunities or Threats (external components). After completing all items for the two randomly assigned elements, respondents were asked if they wished to continue answering or end their survey and submit their responses. Approximately 47% of respondents chose to answer items about all four SWOT elements.

Once the survey concluded, the University Planning Team conducted a cross-SWOT analysis to consider ways the internal elements (strengths and weaknesses) interacted with the external elements (opportunities and threats). These interactions yielded initial strategies that may be further explored when developing the strategic plan (See Appendix C).

Sample

The survey yielded 4,800 responses, with 2,715 completed surveys (56% completion rate). Table 1 shows the breakdown of respondents by affiliation with JMU.

Approximate margins of error were calculated where the overall population could be

estimated. The total number of alumni was estimated at 160,000, total employees were estimated at 4,535 (fall 2024 figures), and students were estimated at 22,000. Although the margin of error for students remained below 5%, the total number of student responses was lower than expected. While the student

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voice may not be heard as loudly as we would like in this process, this is the first time students were included in a SWOT survey sample. As the strategic planning process continues, it will be important for student input to continue to be gathered and used.

The largest number of responses was from alumni and parents/family of JMU students. Among current employees, full-time staff (classified) were the largest group, followed by A&P faculty and full-time instructional faculty. The margins of error for these employee groups were between 4.5 and 5.7% (See Table 2). This SWOT survey overlapped with the COACHE survey, a large-scale survey for instructional faculty. Messaging for the SWOT had to be adjusted to accommodate the COACHE survey, which may have led to smaller responses from this group.

Respondents were asked to share ways they had engaged with the university over the past year (current employees and students were not asked this question). Table 3 contains the frequency of responses to this question. The most common ways respondents engaged were from campus visits, attending athletic events, and making financial donations. Financial donors indicated they primarily supported academics, athletics, and student scholarships (see Table 4). Additional tables about the respondent sample are found in Appendix D.

Table 1Survey Respondents by Affiliation with JMU*

Affiliation with JMU	Count (Completed)	Count (Total)	Margin of Error (CI 95%)**
Alumnus	1,251	2045	+/- 2.15
Parent/Family of JMU student or alumnus	1,026	1595	
Employee (Current)	770	1040	+/- 2.67
Community Member	255	334	
Student (Current)	225	557	+/- 4.1
Former or retired employee	114	173	
Community Leader	41	55	
Affiliate	26	38	
Board of Visitors Member	11	13	
Other	79	117	
No connection to JMU	0	15	

^{*}Respondents could select more than one affiliation.

^{**}Margins of error were approximated using estimates for population size. They should not be considered exact.

Table 2Survey Respondents Based on JMU Primary Employee Type

Employment Type	Count (Completed)	Count (Total)	Margin of Error (95%)*
Full-time staff (classified)	250	359	+/- 4.5
Administrative and Professional Faculty (A&P Faculty)	202	265	+/- 4.8
Instructional Faculty (Full-Time)	200	232	+/- 5.7
Part-time staff (e.g., general wage or temporary)	48	73	
Student Employee	37	61	
Part-time faculty/Adjunct	26	39	
Visiting Faculty	2	2	
Other	2	3	

^{*}Margins of error were estimated using data from the JMU Fact Book FS-01 based on Fall 2024 figures.

Table 3 Ways respondents have engaged with JMU^*

Types of Engagement	Count (Completed)	Count (Total)
Visited the campus	1,396	2,174
Attended an athletic event	1,063	1,648
Made a financial donation to the university	779	1,096
Attended a performance or speaker	367	504
Engaged with a JMU faculty/staff on a potential/actual community project or partnership	211	306
Attended an alumni event on-campus	182	258
Attended a regional alumni chapter event	159	219
Served on an advisory board, committee, council, or donor group associated with the university	120	150
Hired a JMU graduate	105	155
Provided an internship or other work-based learning experience to a JMU student	90	134
Other than this survey, I have not engaged at all with the university over the past year	152	326
Other	148	224

^{*}Current employees and students were not shown this question

Table 4Sources of donor support

Sources of donor support	Count (Completed)	Count (Total)
Academics (e.g., support of a specific college or program)	387	500
Athletics	411	582
Student scholarships	246	329
Capital improvements (e.g., buildings and equipment)	63	76
Other	94	142

SWOT Survey Results

This section of the report focuses on the results of the broad constituent survey. A similar format is followed for each SWOT element. First, certain element statements are highlighted with a brief discussion of their specific results. These statements garnered particularly high or low levels of agreement or importance, or there were significant differences in how certain stakeholder groups responded to the item. The SWOT elements are then presented in a scatterplot that illustrates the relative combination of agreement and importance among all respondents (N=2,715). The scatterplot identifies each item with a label (e.g., S1, S2). A table with the scatterplot labels and the full item statement is provided to reference more easily the information in the scatterplot. The label does not reflect a ranking of items by agreement or importance.

Response totals differ by item as responses marked "No basis to judge" are omitted. This provides a better sense of those items that elicited stronger reactions from respondents and may provide better insights into the areas seen as more important for future consideration.

Strengths

All strengths received high levels of agreement and importance from respondents. All elements received at least 88% of respondents marking "agree" or "somewhat agree" with the statement, and 91% marking that the element was "very important" or "somewhat important" for JMU to consider in its strategic planning. Because all strengths received similar ratings, only one strength is highlighted below. Following the

discussion of the item, all strengths are shown in a scatterplot (Figure 1) and then listed in Table 5 for reference.

Strength 11

JMU prepares students

to succeed

professionally

Ninety-nine percent (99%) of all respondents felt that JMU preparing students to succeed professionally was "very important" to consider in its next strategic plan. Specifically, 96% of alumni and respondents who stated they had hired a JMU graduate in the past year agreed with the statement (97% of all respondents agreed).

Figure 1
Scatterplot of Strengths Based on Agreement and Importance

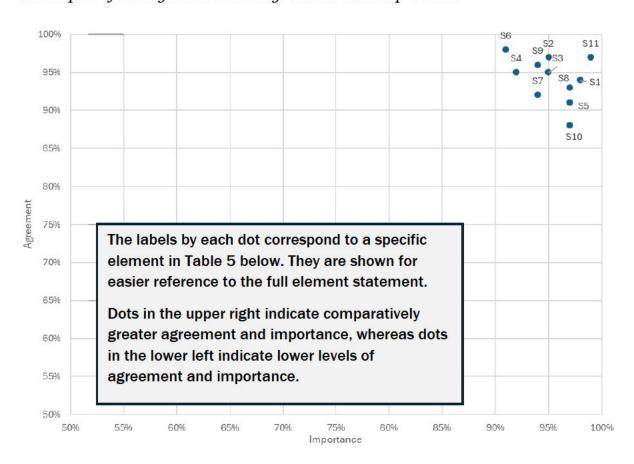


Table 5Strength Statements with Agreement and Importance Percentages

Label	abel Element		Very or Somewhat Important	Total N*
S1	JMU provides a high-quality education that prepares students for becoming educated and enlightened citizens.	94%	98%	1995
JMU fosters collaboration, relationships and a supportive environment between employees, families, the wider community, alumni, and students.			95%	1905
S3	JMU serves and supports many aspects of student life in addition to academics.	95%	95%	1944
S4	JMU's growing national reputation positions the university well for the future.	95%	92%	2024
S ₅	Faculty actively engage with students in and out of the classroom, produce meaningful scholarship, and strive for excellence in teaching.		97%	1633
S6	JMU is in a desirable location and has a beautiful campus with many well-maintained facilities and spaces.		91%	2081
S7	JMU's strong dedication to fostering engaged learning, civic engagement, and community partnerships ensures meaningful and impactful experiences for students.	92%	94%	2301
S8	Our employees (both faculty and classified staff) are		97%	2311
S9	New facilities contain state-of-the-art technology and equipment as well as appropriate and functional classrooms and spaces.		94%	2079
S10	At JMU, everyone cares about student success.		97%	2377
S11	JMU prepares students to succeed professionally.	97%	99%	1989
Retention and graduation rates are very strong for our size and institution type. **				

^{*}Total N represents the total responses for the Agreement items. For brevity, total N for the Importance items is not shown, but in all cases, the totals are very similar to those shown for the Agreement items.

^{**}S12 was not included in the survey, but it is a known strength of JMU that can be quantified and demonstrated factually.

Weaknesses

The underlying theme with the weaknesses is resources (or lack of resources). Themes related to burnout are prevalent, from the number of staff not keeping pace with student growth to continued concerns about compensation and endowment size. These results also saw differences among respondent types, with alumni often differing significantly from faculty and staff in their agreement and perceptions of item importance. The results for specific weaknesses are highlighted below. Following the discussion of specific items, all weaknesses are visualized in a scatterplot (Figure 2) and then listed in Table 6 for reference.

Weakness 1

Compensation remains a concern to faculty and staff despite recent efforts

Respondents noted that compensation remains a concern. This item received the highest levels of agreement and importance. As expected, employees rated this item higher than other groups, with over 97% agreeing and saying it was very or somewhat important. Fewer parents (82%) and alumni (88%) agreed that compensation is a weakness that should be addressed, though these percentages are still high.

Weakness 4

The endowment is increasing but remains insufficient to fully meet the financial needs of the university

Like the results about compensation, respondents consistently agreed that the endowment remains insufficient. Eighty-nine percent (89%) agreed or somewhat agreed with this statement, and 88% believed it to be an important consideration. These findings should indicate support for the next comprehensive campaign, one that emphasizes growing the endowment to support a variety of university needs.

Weakness 10

Personnel are not being added at a rate to adequately support recent student enrollment growth and additional workload responsibilities Overall, 84% of respondents agreed that this element was a weakness. This figure increased to 88% among current employees and 91% among instructional faculty (full-time). Among all employees, 92% thought this was a very or somewhat important weakness to address, compared to 94% of instructional faculty. These findings suggest that faculty perceive this issue at a higher rate than other groups, but not by a significant amount. Additional analysis may yield important information to help diagnose the extent to which this is happening and identify strategic solutions.

Weakness 11

There is a perception that athletics is being over-prioritized

This element received the lowest overall agreement (62%) and importance (57%) among all respondents, but the percentage who agreed varied among groups. Only 37% of the 308 respondents who donated to athletics in the past year agreed or somewhat agreed with this statement, and only 55% of overall alumni agreed. However, agreement increased to 77% of current employees (83% of instructional faculty). Thus, further analysis might focus on enhancing communication with various groups if perception and reality are at odds.

Figure 2
Scatterplot of Weaknesses Based on Agreement and Importance

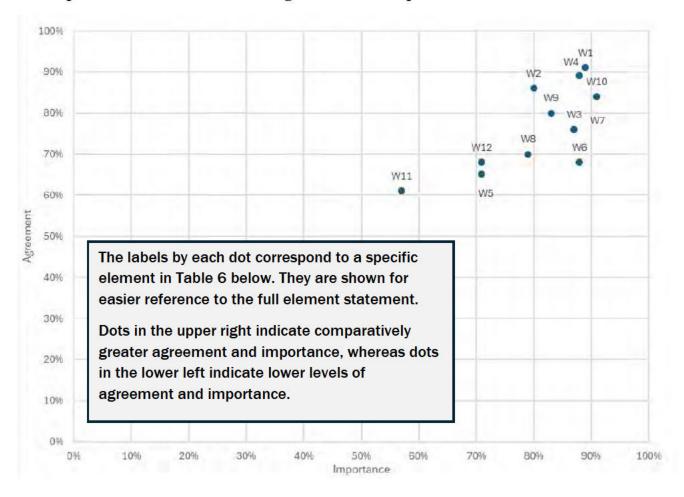


Table 6Weakness Statements with Agreement and Importance Percentages

Label	Element	Agree or Somewhat Agree	Very or Somewhat Important	Total N*
W1	Compensation remains a concern to faculty and staff despite recent efforts.	91%	89%	1045
W2	There are perceived inequities in workload expectations and faculty/staff accountability among units and divisions.	86%	80%	952
W3	Scholarships and financial aid are insufficient to continue attracting and retaining a high-quality and diverse student body.	76%	87%	1420
W4	The endowment is increasing but remains insufficient to fully meet the financial needs of the university.	89%	88%	1136
W5	Students of different backgrounds have disparate experiences at JMU.	65%	71%	1307
W6	While improving, there is a perceived lack of transparency among senior leaders that has led to a loss of trust.	68%	88%	1182
W7	At times communication across divisions and the campus is ineffective.	76%	87%	1251
W8	There is limited infrastructure and financial support for faculty to conduct research.	70%	79%	812
W9	Certain older facilities are not adequate to meet current needs, lacking new technology and containing restricted or insufficient spaces.	80%	83%	1511
W10	Personnel are not being added at a rate to adequately support recent student enrollment growth and additional workload responsibilities.	84%	91%	1289
W11	There is a perception that athletics is overprioritized.	62%	57%	1866
W12 Employees of different backgrounds have disparate experiences at JMU.		68%	71%	914

^{*}Total N represents the total responses for the Agreement items. For brevity, total N for the Importance items is not shown, but in all cases, the totals are very similar to those shown for the Agreement items.

Opportunities

The opportunities presented in the SWOT analysis were wide-ranging, including concrete and abstract statements. Opportunities to expand relationships garnered the most support, while the opportunity to effectively use artificial intelligence and technology to improve teaching and productivity saw the lowest agreement. The results from certain opportunities are highlighted below. Following the discussion of specific items, all opportunities are shown in a scatterplot (Figure 3) and then listed in Table 7 for reference.

Opportunity 1

JMU can expand relationships and collaborations within the University and with outside partners and alumni to advance its mission

Rated the highest combined opportunity among all respondents, JMU will likely see broad-based support for efforts to expand its community partnerships. This element saw high levels of agreement among all respondents, 97% showing agreement and 94% indicating it was very or somewhat important to consider in future planning.

Opportunity 4

The changing demographics of college-going students, particularly underrepresented students, affords JMU the opportunity to increase access to higher education and diversify JMU's student and faculty/staff populations.

This element, along with Opportunity 3, saw comparatively lower rates of agreement and importance. Overall, 84% agreed with the statement, though the rate was slightly lower for parents/family (79%). Employees and students were more likely to see this element as very or somewhat important (85%), while only 70-75% of other groups, like alumni or parents/family, responded similarly. The item's wording may have also been confusing, with terms like "underrepresented" and "demographics" requiring more definition.

Opportunity 3

JMU can use artificial intelligence responsibly and take advantage of emerging technologies to enhance teaching and productivity

Among the opportunities, this element scored the lowest in agreement and importance. Only parents/family scored substantially higher in agreement relative to the overall (89% to 83%) and importance (84% to 76%). Students rated the importance of this item as the lowest (60%), however, the small student sample size makes this finding somewhat less reliable. Agreement and importance rates were positively correlated with age, as agreement and importance rates

increased with each age group. Sixty-eight percent (68%) of younger respondents (Age 18-30) agreed with this statement compared to 89% of respondents aged 61 or older. Also, just 54% of younger respondents thought this was a very or somewhat important element to consider in planning, versus 88% of older respondents. As JMU considers these results to establish its competitive advantage in higher education, these findings suggest that age demographics matter when determining how to manage the change that accompanies new technology.

Figure 3

Scatterplot of Opportunities based on Agreement and Importance

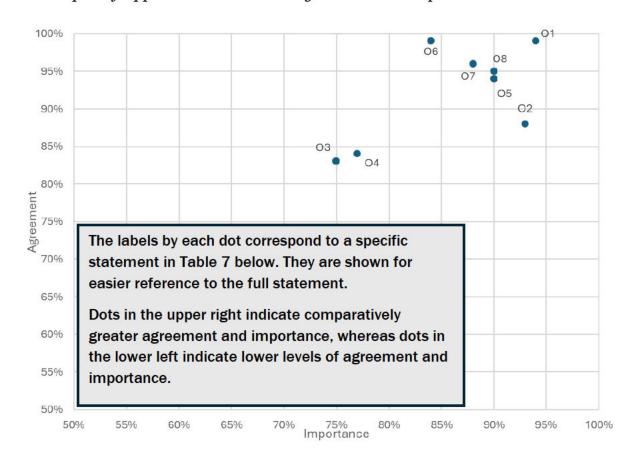


Table 7Opportunity Statements with Agreement and Importance Percentages

Label	Element	Agree or Somewhat Agree	Very or Somewhat Important	Total N*
O1	JMU can expand relationships and collaborations within the University and with outside partners and alumni to advance its mission.	99%	94%	2107
O2	JMU's high enrollment, growing national reputation, and careful fiscal stewardship has positioned it well to overcome future challenges facing higher education.	88%	93%	2044
О3	JMU can use AI responsibly and take advantage of emerging technologies to enhance teaching and productivity.	83%	75%	2035
The changing demographics of college-going students, particularly underrepresented O4 students, affords JMU the opportunity to increase access to higher education and diversify JMU's student and faculty/staff populations.		84%	77%	2008
O ₅	The changing environment provides leadership opportunities to explore new approaches and practices.	94%	90%	2045
O6 JMU can increase its research profile while maintaining a strong focus on liberal arts education, creating its own niche as a national research university.		99%	84%	1989
O7 JMU has the opportunity to realize and define our identity as a university.		96%	88%	2117
The increasing institutional capacity, number and maturity of alumni provide an opportunity to further develop private support and fundraising efforts.		95%	90%	1992

^{*}Total N represents the total responses for the Agreement items. For brevity, total N for the Importance items is not shown, but in all cases, the totals are very similar to those shown for the Agreement items.

Threats

The top threats focused on the uncertainty over federal or state policy and funding. Respondents were more divided over other threats, such as the possible impact of changes to the Athletics funding model. Like the opportunity to capitalize on artificial intelligence and new technology, respondents showed relatively low levels of agreement that artificial intelligence poses a threat to teaching and learning. The results for specific threats are highlighted below. After discussing specific items, all threats are shown in a scatterplot (Figure 4) and then listed in Table 8 for reference.

Threat 2

General fund support from the state is uncertain

Threat 4

The future of existing and future federal research funding is uncertain

Threats two and four both address the concerns many feel about federal and state funding uncertainty. As a public research institution, a large percentage of our operating funding comes from the state. Further, our ability to grow our national footprint as a research institution and offer financial assistance to students largely depends on our ability to secure and disburse federal grants and loans. Sentiment over state funding was consistent across respondent groups. The threat of federal research funding uncertainty indicated higher agreement and importance among faculty, students, and alumni, with parents/family less likely to agree.

Threat 3

Changing student demographics will challenge our ability to plan for and meet evolving needs and expectations.

This threat received the lowest combined ratings from respondents. The University Planning Team reviewed the item, and members felt that the wording was perhaps confusing to those who answered it. Input from the UPT's student representative indicated that students may have disagreed with the wording, causing many to answer counter to actual views (or not at all). Further analysis should be conducted on this subject to specify how demographics are changing and how the university is prepared to help support student needs moving forward.

Threat 9

Changes to the Athletics landscape (NIL rules, transfer portal, funding model) negatively affect our ability to have consistent success across university athletic programs. This threat received modest levels of agreement (80%), but low levels of importance (64%). Notably, only 59% of full-time instructional faculty agreed that this threat was important (72.5% of employees overall), and 34% said it was very or somewhat important to address. However, among donors, 89% agreed that changes to the athletics landscape posed a threat to the success of our athletics programs, and 80% stated it was important for the university to address.

Threat 8

The rise of artificial intelligence will disrupt our approach to teaching and learning, including the programs we offer.

This threat received low levels of agreement and importance across all major groups of respondents. While students did indicate higher levels of agreement with this threat, lower response rates make it difficult to state that students generally are more concerned with the threat of artificial intelligence than other stakeholders. The results for this threat differed by age, though not as much as the technology-related opportunity. While 71% of respondents aged 18-30 agreed or somewhat agreed with this statement, 75% of respondents over the age of 60

felt the same. However, 75% of younger respondents viewed this threat as important compared to 84% of older respondents. When comparing responses to technology as an opportunity versus a threat, younger respondents were more likely to view it as a threat. Older respondents, however, were more likely to see it as an opportunity.

Figure 4Scatterplot of Threats Based on Agreement and Importance

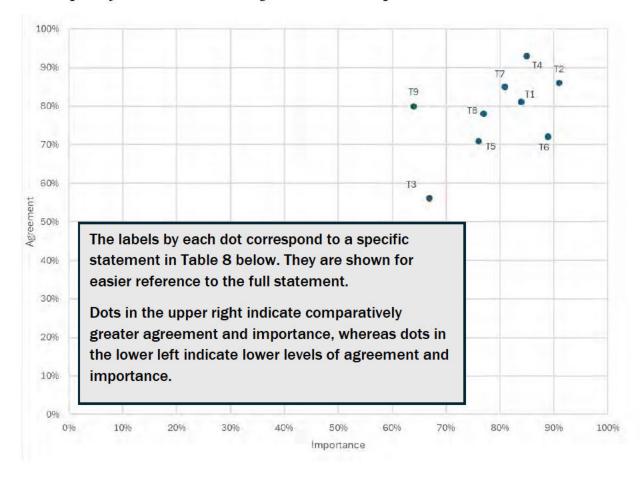


Table 8Threat Statements with Agreement and Importance Percentages

Label	Element	Agree or Somewhat Agree	Very or Somewhat Important	Total N*
T1	Federal policies and implications related to higher education and associated initiatives may affect JMU's ability to effectively carry out its mission.	81%	84%	1863
T2	General fund support from the state is inadequate and uncertain.	86%	91%	1419
Т3	Changing student demographics will challenge our ability to plan for and meet evolving needs and expectations.	56%	67%	1701
T4	The future of existing and future federal research funding is uncertain.	93%	85%	1774
Т5	There is less interest in pursuing higher education, particularly a four-year degree, because of cost, practicality of alternative credentials, and concern over the perceived value of a degree.	78%	77%	1974
Т6	It will become more difficult to recruit and retain enough essential staff and faculty to meet the demand of courses and services.		89%	1618
Т7	Rising housing costs and low inventory will make it more difficult to recruit new faculty/staff and for students to find affordable housing options.	85%	81%	1772
Т8	The rise of artificial intelligence will disrupt our approach to teaching and learning, including the programs we currently offer. 71%		76%	1880
Changes to the Athletics landscape (NIL rules, transfer portal, post-House vs. NCAA settlement funding model) challenges our ability to have consistent success across university athletic programs.		80%	64%	1501

^{*}Total N represents the total responses for the Agreement items. For brevity, total N for the Importance items is not shown, but in all cases, the totals are very similar to those shown for the Agreement items.

Community Partnerships

One limitation of the initial SWOT element development process was the challenge in identifying efficient opportunities to speak directly with community members about their perceptions of JMU's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. Even without widespread initial engagement, partnerships between JMU and various stakeholder groups surfaced as both a strength (S1, S7) and an opportunity (O1). Further, with a few exceptions, community members who completed the survey responded similarly to other stakeholder groups. The open-ended comments from non-employee community members were analyzed to ensure no additional ideas from this stakeholder group were overlooked. The results did not yield new themes, but some specific types of partnerships were referenced. Several examples of these partnerships included:

- Making open spaces/venues available for larger acts/concerts
- Partnering with foreign universities for study abroad opportunities
- Adding to the relationships with organizations in the Shenandoah Valley Region
- Scaling partnerships with businesses and Xlabs (as an example)
- Leveraging the alumni base to support internships and hiring
- Developing partnerships between the local schools and various academic programs (music was cited as an example), providing opportunities for JMU students to engage in schools beyond those in the College of Education.
- Working with the community to identify and help alleviate the stressors/needs locally.

To further identify SWOT elements related to community partnerships and needs, the PAIR Executive Director met with three areas on campus who work directly and regularly with community constituents and Virginia legislators to better understand the needs and considerations of these critical partners. The supplementary analysis is provided here.

Government Relations

The PAIR Executive Director spoke with JMU's State Government Relations Office to better understand the needs and opportunities presented to JMU through the legislative process. The State Government Relations Office reported the following information based on years of conversations with state-level leaders, including members of the General Assembly, the Governor's Office, and others. In general, the office reports that the university has an excellent reputation in Richmond for producing productive graduates, having exceptional fiscal management of the university, and a strong athletics program. The office reports that JMU is seen as a leader in producing professionals who meet Commonwealth needs, such as teachers and nurses.

However, there is the sentiment in Richmond that JMU could further meet the needs of the state by developing new programs that offer specialties in healthcare. Opening satellite healthcare campuses in rural and high-need areas could lead to new opportunities for healthcare students to gain professional and clinical experience while expanding services to these locations. Similarly, programs to incentivize teacher education in high-need areas may be an opportunity to combine JMU's strong history of educating teachers with additional Commonwealth needs. Further, it has been suggested that JMU's physical location could lend itself to academic programs that take

advantage of the region's natural resources and expertise (e.g., tourism, manufacturing, poultry science, agrotourism, fermentation, organic farming).

Work-based learning (WBL) received a high level of attention early in the current Governor's term, and JMU was able to take advantage of several grants that were made available to help institutions scale these efforts. As legislative priorities shift to other issues, the university is at a point where we need to consider

JMU's physical location could lend itself to academic programs that take advantage of the region's natural resources and expertise

how we pursue further WBL development. Cooperative learning experiences, for instance, offer one avenue for exploring new partnerships between industry and academic programs. However, challenges must be overcome for any expansion of workbased learning experiences to be successful. For example, JMU's proximity to large metropolitan areas offers numerous opportunities for students, but the distance often requires students to find housing, which may be unattainable.

Finally, the recent federal workforce reductions offer an opportunity to hire highly skilled and educated professionals to fill various needs at JMU, both in and out of the classroom.

Local Community Engagement

The PAIR Executive Director also met with members of the Community Engagement and Volunteer Center (CEVC) to better understand the common concerns and needs of the community organizations with whom they partner. This office connects students, faculty, and staff with community organizations for mutual benefit. For instance, an organization may need mentors for a youth program or need assistance with marketing its services to its desired population. CEVC identifies faculty who teach a Community Engaged Learning course and are looking for direct experiences (mentoring) or indirect projects (creating a marketing product) that enhance student learning and advance community priorities. Approximately 60% of CEVC students are engaged with the community through academic courses. 40% are connected through co-curricular volunteer and paid community engagement opportunities.

The conversation with the CEVC team yielded insights into the current strengths and weaknesses of community partnerships, along with the opportunities and threats affecting this area. First, community organizations often face significant challenges in providing services that effectively meet the needs of their target populations. While CEVC is a helpful conduit that eases this strain, there is an opportunity to streamline communication among university stakeholders and community partners to make these connections easier. Thus, while the level of community engagement between JMU and Harrisonburg-Rockingham County has grown over the years, the infrastructure to facilitate meaningful and efficient contact can be strengthened. This weakness is exacerbated by a perception that the university's messaging about its engagement vision is unclear, making communication between community partners and the university more difficult.

The community has also identified community barriers that hinder many from thriving. These areas include affordable and accessible childcare, transportation, and housing. A lack of these basic needs threatens the well-being of the community JMU serves and the workforce the university relies on to provide an excellent educational experience to students.

Certain fields, such as marketing and communication, as well as healthcare areas like occupational therapy, nursing, and social work, offer numerous opportunities for engagement. Many healthcare-related partnerships are facilitated through the Institute for Innovation in Health and Human Services (IIHHS). This institute is an interdisciplinary community-engaged hub that offers several community-embedded programs, such as the Suitcase Clinic and Gus Bus, and helps organizations secure funding, like 21st Century grants. This institute exemplifies the strong partnerships between JMU and the community that exist when resources are intentionally focused towards serving areas of need.

In some instances, the university's offerings do not align with the needs of campus partners. Staff at CEVC describe areas like grant-writing, research, and program evaluation as areas of need for which it is difficult to find students to fill these needs through volunteer work or class projects. Additionally, community organizations have difficulty filling the needs for after-school programs and early education volunteer opportunities. Finally, because the demographics of the Harrisonburg community differ from those of JMU, there are often gaps between the community needs and JMU

skillsets. For example, there is a strong need for interpreters within the community, but the JMU population cannot always fill that need.

Opportunities exist to provide more community access to JMU's physical spaces. As one concrete example, comments in the SWOT survey referenced the challenges that parking often presents to those trying to attend an event on campus.

The community has also identified community barriers that hinder many from thriving. These areas include affordable and accessible childcare, transportation, and housing. A lack of these basic needs threatens the well-being of the community JMU serves and the workforce the university relies on to provide an excellent educational experience to students.

Economic and Community Development

Finally, the PAIR Executive Director met with members of the Office of Economic and Community Development team. According to its website, JMU's Office of Economic and Community Development (OEDC) identifies opportunities and activates partnerships to resource economic engagement in the region and the Commonwealth. This office also connects partners to expertise, research, and scholarship, fostering collaborations that advance the talent pipeline, innovation support, and community quality of life.

OECD supports several centers and programs that contribute to regional development, including the regional economic development organization, the Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP), the Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center (SVSBDC), Research to Impact (R2I) - the University's intellectual property, research commercialization and licensing support unit, the regional Shenandoah Valley Technology Council (SVTC), and regional implementation of a statewide internship expansion program - Virginia Talent & Opportunity Partnership (V-TOP). OECD leads the University Economic Development Council (UEDC) and coordinates the university's APLU Innovation and Economic Prosperity (IEP) designation process. The office helps individuals and organizations find and pursue grant opportunities to help advance economic and community needs in partnership with JMU. They serve as project managers to help support campus and community partners through the processes required for project success.

Like CEVC, communication is a continuing area of improvement at JMU—in this case, communication includes external awareness of JMU's positive impact, capabilities, and procedures for partnership formation. Business culture is so different from that of academia that the pace of institutional procedures and expectations can sometimes stifle innovation and inhibit partnership progress. Further, the complexity of JMU as an

organization often results in established partnership relationships without broad awareness across the institution, which can lead to partner confusion. Thus, there is a need to consolidate and share contacts and contact engagements to facilitate holistic partnerships beyond one-to-one relationships.

While communication within the broader JMU community may be a weakness, the OECD team sees their collaborative nature, expanding network, and awareness of local, regional, and Commonwealth

Communication and education are key to growing partnerships and changing the narrative that JMU is not sufficiently investing in the local community.

economic and community development needs and trends as a strength. The staff spoke at length about their ability to connect ideas to appropriate networks in the region.

The uncertainty around federal funding remains a threat to this group; however, they often seek state and private funding sources to advance projects. One of the challenges they regularly face is educating potential partners that JMU itself does not regularly have funding to grant to local and regional organizations; rather, OECD can facilitate partnerships and processes to enhance and complement efforts (e.g., student talent expertise, faculty expertise, assessment, and grant process facilitation). This makes the current climate an opportunity for JMU to showcase the variety of ways it can partner. Again, communication and education are key to growing these partnerships and changing the narrative that JMU is not sufficiently investing in the local community.

JMU's role as a research institution is still developing. OECD was initiated as an office two years ago. Additional time and support are needed for OECD to refine processes, procedures, and cultivate partnership projects. The foundation for connecting partners is there, but time is needed to improve communication, streamline processes, and educate community partners about how JMU can help foster innovation and spur economic growth.

Cross-SWOT Analysis

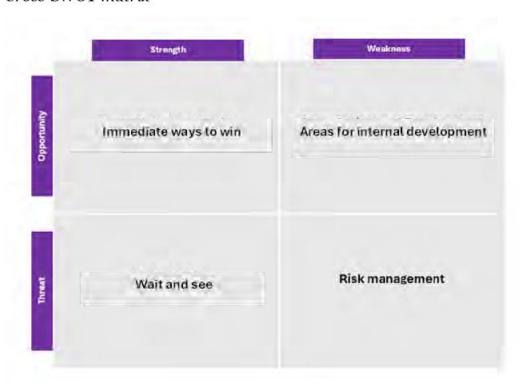
After the survey data collection ended and conversations occurred with community-serving offices, the UPT conducted a cross-SWOT analysis. This analysis combines the internal and external SWOT elements (e.g., strengths and opportunities, weaknesses

and threats) to begin to develop strategic priorities and identify where JMU holds a competitive advantage over other institutions.

The UPT used the matrix in Figure 5 to conduct the cross-SWOT analysis. Groups were tasked with combining SWOT elements to begin producing strategies that fit within each quadrant of the matrix. Once strategies had been identified, the UPT discussed which of them, if successfully executed, could lead to JMU holding a competitive advantage within the field of higher education. Finally, the group identified the strategies they felt were most important for JMU to pursue as a new strategic plan is developed.

Figure 5

Cross-SWOT matrix



This matrix was produced by EAB and used with their consent

Appendix C contains a comprehensive list of the strategies identified by the UPT. Table 9 provides the strategies the UPT felt the university should prioritize in its next strategic plan. The list is in order of the number of votes each strategy received from individual UPT members.

Table 9Cross-SWOT Strategies by Priority

Priority Rank	SWOT Combination	Strategy
1	W10/W1-T7	Address barriers to hiring and retaining employees (to include housing, childcare, etc.).
T2	O5-W1	Explore different practices for compensation and incentives for all employees, regardless of classification
T2	S6/S5/S8 - O1/O6	Specialize in academic programs that capitalize on our regional strengths (e.g., tourism, agriculture, fermentation, agrotourism, poultry science, manufacturing, organic farming)
T2	S8/S3/S2- T6/T3	Embed health and well-being into all aspects of faculty/staff and student life.
5	T5-S11	Focus communication to highlight benefits of JMU beyond a degree (professional skills developed, Gallup data, post-grad results
T6	T6-S8	Build a strategic budget that prioritizes salary and compensation
Т6	W4/W8-T4	Work toward new sources of external funding, given the uncertainty of state/federal funding, to include research
T8	O2-W10	Align staffing (all) growth with enrollment growth and planning
Т8	O1-W3/W4	Pursue external partnerships to grow endowment/scholarships to attract and retain high-quality students and diverse student populations

The strategies in Table 9 provide the beginning step towards establishing JMU's new strategic direction. The next section of the report synthesizes these strategies into three potential priorities that illustrate how the SWOT results can help set new institutional priorities and articulate our competitive advantage among other universities regionally and nationally.

Potential Strategic Directions

The cross-SWOT analysis yields multiple strategies that converge in three key areas: enhancing student and employee well-being, developing new academic programs that leverage our regional strengths, and creating more opportunities for community-based work-based learning experiences. If prioritized, these strategies offer opportunities for JMU to develop or bolster its competitive advantages over other universities within the Commonwealth and national landscape.

Strategy 1: Improving Student and Employee Well-being

One of the top strategies identified by the UPT was to "embed health and well-being into all aspects of faculty/staff and student life." This strategy builds upon the university's commitment in recent years to take a systems approach to improving wellness across multiple dimensions of student and employee life. It touches upon several SWOT elements that highlight our commitment to fostering a supportive environment between JMU constituents (S2), serving

and supporting many aspects of student life (S3), fostering engaged learning, civic engagement, and community partnerships (S7), and employing a dedicated, caring, and knowledgeable workforce (S8).

By taking advantage of these strengths, JMU can mitigate multiple threats identified through the SWOT analysis. Specifically, improving student well-being helps to address the evolving student needs and expectations that accompany changing student demographics (T₃). Improving employee well-being, one dimension of which is security (i.e., meeting basic Being a national model for health and well-being creates a competitive advantage for JMU as we look to recruit and retain a top-quality, diverse student and employee body

needs), can offset multiple weaknesses and threats, such as compensation (W1), housing concerns (T7), and difficulties recruiting and retaining enough essential staff and faculty to meet demands (T6). Opportunities abound to make JMU a national model for well-being, expanding upon relationships and collaborations with external partners and alumni to advance this cause (O1).

Further, being a national model for health and well-being creates a competitive advantage for JMU as we look to recruit and retain a top-quality, diverse student and employee body (O4). We are currently the only institution in Virginia to sign the Okanagan Charter, highlighting our commitment to being a health-promoting campus and embedding health into all aspects of campus and culture. By being a leader in health promotion among the Commonwealth's public higher education institutions, at a time when more students and employees are seeking support for aspects of health and well-being from their institutions and employers, JMU can take advantage of our strengths to expand health-related partnership opportunities, all while mitigating current threats to students' and employees' basic needs.

Finally, JMU's dedication to the health and well-being of all students and employees bolsters student success initiatives like the Quality Enhancement Plan. Noted as a cross-SWOT strategy, we can build upon the early successes of our QEP to implement strategies that increase the attainment and retention of current and future students (O4, S3, S12).

Strategy 2: Creating New Academic Programs That Leverage Our Regional Strengths

JMU is one of the top producers of nurses and teachers in the Commonwealth. Current efforts to expand our College of Health and Behavioral Studies to grow our healthcare programs illustrate our awareness of this strength. However, as the university continues to look for innovative programs that expand opportunities for future students and professionals, the SWOT analysis highlights opportunities to capitalize on our location to determine future academic offerings, turning our strength into a competitive advantage within the region.

JMU already offers several strong healthcare and education programs. Based on additional information from our government relations office, there may be opportunities in both education and healthcare to collaborate with localities and school districts across the state to develop initiatives like satellite healthcare campuses and

There may be opportunities in both education and healthcare to collaborate with localities and school districts across the state to develop initiatives like satellite healthcare campuses and residency-based scholarships for teachers.

residency-based scholarships for teachers. JMU may be able to guide future academic production by using our strengths as a top producer of key helping professions to expand outreach and partnerships with communities across the state (S11, S7, W3, O1).

JMU's desirable location was lauded as a top strength (S6). However, within this space, JMU has an opportunity to take better advantage of the surrounding area, including the local expertise (O1), to generate research programs

that leverage regional strengths (O6) or produce cooperative learning experiences that facilitate new corporate partnerships (O1). JMU may find success by focusing on the niche areas of the Shenandoah Valley to develop new programs, offering a competitive alternative to students wishing to study agriculture, tourism, or manufacturing at an institution that offers a strong balance of teaching and research.

Strategy 3: Increasing Community-Focused Work-Based Learning Experiences

JMU touts its strong graduate outcomes, including its high graduation rates and graduate outcomes (S11, S12). Stakeholders on the SWOT survey validate the inclusion of S11: JMU prepares students to succeed professionally, as both a current strength and an important element to consider for the next strategic plan.

To further capitalize on its ability to graduate students who can find a successful first outcome (i.e., employment, military, graduate studies), there may be opportunities to

expand existing external partnerships to increase work-based learning experiences (WBLEs) that improve students' job-related skills while serving various needs within the local community and beyond. As noted earlier, opportunities to generate satellite healthcare campuses may enable JMU students to get valuable experience in underserved regions. Conversations with the Community Engagement and Volunteer Center (CEVC) illustrated opportunities for additional partnerships to fill local needs.

Findings from the SWOT analysis and discussions about community engagement highlight the difficulties in meeting students' basic needs, both locally and for those pursuing internships away from JMU. The proximity to Washington, D.C. and Richmond enables several opportunities for summer internships. However, the distance to these metropolitan areas poses a challenge, as many students may have to locate additional housing to fulfill their internships (T7).

Many institutions, particularly those in more urban settings, have strong work-based learning programs for students. However, JMU's desirable location, strong graduate outcomes, and commitment to engaged learning position us well to develop a systematic and comprehensive work-based learning program.

Additional strategies emerged from the cross-SWOT analysis focusing on work-based learning and its potential benefits. Experiences like internships and student teaching are clear examples of engaged learning, a stated strength of JMU (S7). Locally, recent efforts within the community have highlighted areas of need such as transportation, housing, and childcare—areas that may yield partnership opportunities to offset these needs through learning experiences for JMU students (S2, O1) and research opportunities for JMU faculty (S5, W8, O1, O6).

Many institutions, particularly those in more urban settings, have strong work-based learning programs for students. However, JMU's desirable location (S6), strong graduate outcomes (S12), and commitment to engaged learning (S7) position us well to develop a systematic and comprehensive work-based learning program. A fully developed program could provide access to high-quality, meaningful work-based learning experiences that develop job-related skills. Additionally, by focusing on local work-based learning opportunities, we can utilize new and existing community

partnerships (O1) to address unmet needs that hinder effective staff recruitment and retention.

Concluding Thoughts and Next Steps

It is an exciting time at JMU, as the university prepares to embark on a new comprehensive campaign, campus master plan, and university strategic plan. The university has an opportunity to align these planning initiatives, using the comprehensive campaign to provide a vehicle for strategic initiatives to come to life. The potential strategies resulting from the SWOT analysis illustrate the synthesis of the major themes that emerged from thousands of individual thoughts and ideas. However, they represent just a few ideas shared by many passionate and dedicated stakeholders. Elements deemed less important by survey respondents may still require significant attention. For instance, the continuation of Reengineering Madison over the next several years means that we cannot ignore the role of technology and artificial intelligence in our university work. New technology, particularly at JMU, will upend processes and change cultural norms. Whether the goals of Reengineering Madison require inclusion in the next strategic plan is less important, perhaps than maintaining a constant finger on the pulse of the project and its impact on the processes and procedures many of us rely upon.

Following this analysis, the next steps may involve conducting a gap analysis to gather data that either supports or refutes the SWOT findings, thereby clarifying the strategies most likely to achieve effective results. Further investigation into the opportunities and threats may involve assessing the political, economic, social, and technological factors that could affect the university now and in the future. As we begin the process of developing a new strategic plan, the university stands poised to leverage its strengths, address its challenges, and seize new opportunities, ensuring a transformative and prosperous future for its many stakeholders.

Appendix A

List of SWOT stakeholder groups

Academic Council

Academic Unit Head

Alumni Association Board

Associate Deans

Division Heads

Employee Advisory Committee

Faculty Senate

Graduate Student Association

LGBTQ Employee Group

Professors-in-Residence

Student Government Association

University Planning Team

VALOR Advisory Board

Women for Madison Executive Council

Appendix B

SWOT Idea Generation Survey

SWOT Idea Development Survey

The purpose of this survey is to develop an initial set of JMU strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats that may influence JMU's strategic planning initiatives over the next five to seven years. This SWOT is being conducted at the request of the Board of Visitors and with the support of President King and JMU Division Heads.

All verbatim responses will be made available to the University Planning Team but no names will be collected and any other information collected will not will be associated with individual responses. The University Planning Team will use the responses to this survey to identify common SWOTs (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) that will be reviewed by Division Heads. These common "SWOTs" will then be shared in a survey to the wider JMU community for additional feedback later this spring. A final report will be prepared and shared with JMU senior leaders, the Board of Visitors, and JMU's next president.

Assuming you use the same computer and browser, you may complete the survey over the course of multiple sessions, but it is recommended that you complete the survey in one sitting. The survey may take about 15-20 minutes depending on your responses.

Thank you,

Chris Orem Executive Director for Planning, Analytics, and Institutional Research and University Planning Team Facilitator

Page Break

For this survey, you are being asked to provide input because of your involvement one or more of a number of JMU leadership and advisory groups. Please check the groups to which you belong that help inform your responses to this survey. This item is optional and will only be used to understand representation of respondents. This item will not be connected with responses to any other question.

connected with responses to any other question.
Academic Council
Academic Unit Head
Alumni Association Board
Associate Deans
Division Heads
Employee Advisory Committee
Faculty Senate
Graduate Student Association
LGBTQ Employee Group
Professors in Residence
Student Government Association
University Planning Team
VALOR Advisory Board
Women for Madison

The four questions that follow ask for your thoughts on JMU's current strengths and weaknesses as well as the external opportunities and threats that may help or hinder our ability to meet our mission into the future. If you have ideas to share, but aren't sure which SWOT component to place it in, that's okay. Just write it in the area you think it works best. The location of ideas may be adjusted to the most appropriate area when analyzed. For each component, an example is provided -- these are intended as examples of the recommended specificity only and not reflective of actual strengths, weaknesses, opportunities or threats. They are not meant to influence your ideas in any way.

Strength 1	
Strength 2	
Strength 3	
Strength 4	
Strength 5	
Strength 6	

40

Page Break

2. KEY WEAKNESSES: Looking ahead 5-7 years, what are JMU's key weaknesses that may limit our ability to meet our mission as a higher educa institution? Please provide 2-7 specific responses, such as "limited for research that hinders our ability to attract top faculty."	
○ Weakness 1	
O Weakness 2	
○ Weakness 3	
O Weakness 4	
○ Weakness 5	
○ Weakness 6	
○ Weakness 7	
3. KEY OPPORTUNITIES: What external influences, trends, and/or opportunity help JMU better achieve its mission in the next 5-7 years? Please list 2-7 esuch as "population growth in key recruitment areas."	
Opportunity 1	
Opportunity 2	
Opportunity 3	
Opportunity 4	
Opportunity 5	

ding	-7 years? Please list 2-7 examples, such as "decreasing state as a proportion of our budget."
	reat 2
O Th	reat 3
O Th	reat 4
O Th	reat 5
O Th	reat 6
O Th	reat 7
d of Bl	ock: Default Question Block
irt of E	Block: Additional Thoughts Block

Appendix C

Cross-SWOT Analysis Results

This appendix provides a comprehensive list of strategies developed during the University Planning Team's cross-SWOT analysis on April 18, 2025.

Strengths-Opportunities

SWOT combinations	Strategy
S6/S5/S8 - O1/O6	Specialize in academic programs that capitalize on our regional strengths (e.g., agriculture, fermentation, agrotourism, poultry science, manufacturing, organic farming)
O1-S1/S11	Expand opportunities for Work-Based Learning Experiences to help develop job-related skills and increase job attainment success among graduates
O4-S3/S12	Build upon early successes with our student success interventions (QEP) to increase attainment and retention of underrepresented students.
O8-S4	Launch a comprehensive campaign that builds on our national reputation
O1/O6- S1/S4/S10/S11	Solidify our identity in the context of our evolution from a liberal arts institution to an R2

Strengths – Threats

SWOT combinations	Strategy
S8-T6	Embed health and well-being into all aspects of faculty/staff and student life.
T ₅ -S ₁₁	Focus communication to highlight benefits of JMU beyond a degree (professional skills developed, Gallup data, post grad results
T6-S8	Build a strategic budget that prioritizes salary and compensation
T5-S4	Leverage affordability of JMU (Out-of-State costs) to continue strong enrollment
S2-T1	Emphasize how we contribute to the greater good (defining identity) while still being affordable (value)

S11-T6/T7	Increase Work-Based Learning Experiences that address community needs (housing, childcare, etc.)
S11-T1	Minimize dependency on admissions, employment, and resources from the DMV region.
T7-S8	Increase affordable on-campus housing opportunities for faculty/staff
T3-S5	Educate faculty on the changing student demographics and provide training to help develop connections with students

Weaknesses-Opportunities

SWOT combinations	Strategy
O5-W1	Explore different practices for compensation and incentives for all employees, regardless of classification
O1/O8- W3/W4	Increase philanthropy to grow endowment/scholarships to attract and retain high-quality students and diverse student populations
O2-W10	Align staffing (all) growth with enrollment growth and planning
O1- W3/W4/W8	Grow beyond one-to-one relationships and partnerships to more holistic ones

Weaknesses-Threats

SWOT combinations	Strategy
W10/W1-T7	Identify barriers to hiring and retaining employees (to include
	housing, childcare, etc.) and develop means to address them
W4/W8-T4	Work toward new sources of external funding given uncertainty of
	state/federal funding to include research
	Provide employment opportunities for those affected by federal job
	cuts
W10-T7	Provide opportunities to use student workers to help offset basic needs (e.g., childcare)
W1-T2	Leverage changing leadership to increase general fund appropriation to support compensation

Appendix D

SWOT Survey Respondent Details

Table 10Length of time since graduating from JMU (Alumni only)

Time since graduating from JMU	Count (Completed)	Count (Total)
Less than five years	161	302
Between five and ten years	124	240
More than 10 years	961	1,485
Total	1246	2027

Table 11Length of Employment at JMU

	Count	Count
Length of Employment	(Completed)	(Total)
Less than one year	54	81
One to five years	207	274
Between 5-10 years	137	197
More than 10 years	325	410
Don't know	5	7
Total	728	969

Table 12 *Employee Responses by JMU Division*

JMU Division	Count (Completed)	Count (Total)
Academic Affairs	297	354
Administration and Finance	99	156
Student Affairs	67	91
Athletics	61	84
University Advancement	45	56
Research, Economic Development, and Innovation (REDI)	24	26
Enrollment Management	16	22
President's Office	11	13
Other	74	106
Don't know	6	18

Table 13Respondents by student level

Student Level	Count (Completed)	Count (Total)
First-year student	41	127
Sophomore	30	92
Junior	40	110
Senior	57	129
Post-Bac/Non-Degree/Certificate-seeking student	3	3
Graduate and/or professional student	47	76
Don't know	1	1
Other	5	10

SWOT Analysis

Dr. Chris Orem

Executive Director for Planning, Analytics, and Institutional Research



Agenda

Process and Results

Community Feedback

Cross-SWOT analysis

Potential Strategies

The SWOT analysis occurred in two phases:

Phase 1:

Open-ended feedback from leadership and advisory groups

Phase 2:

Survey to all employees, students, alumni, and community groups

Phase 1:

Idea generation 14 leadership and advisory groups

200+ participants

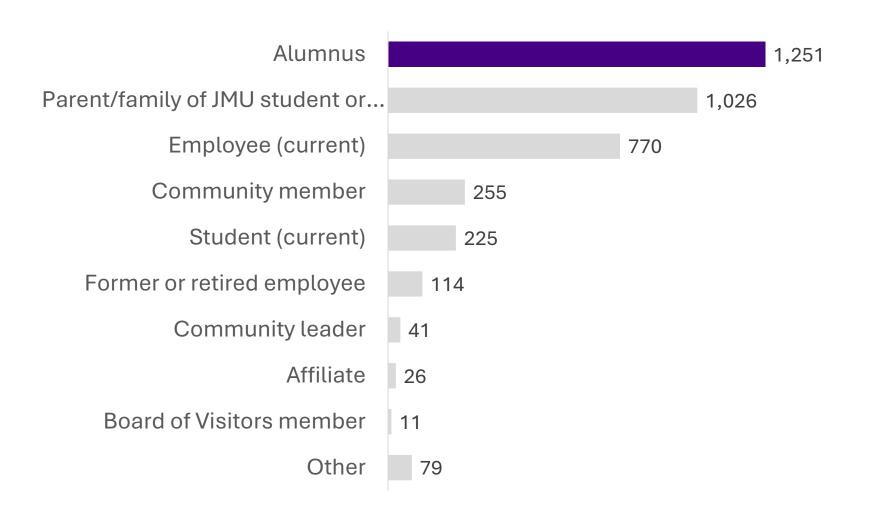
2,000+ ideas

Phase 2: Survey

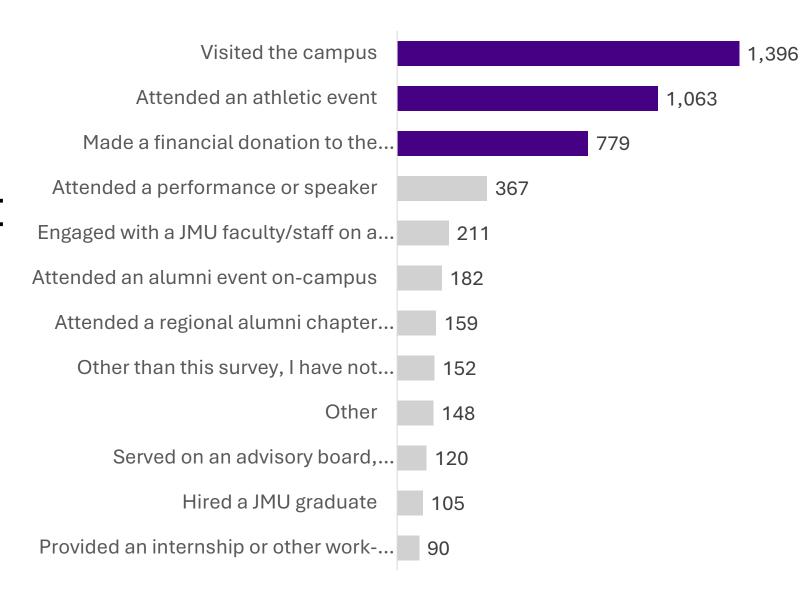
4,800 total responses

2,715 complete responses

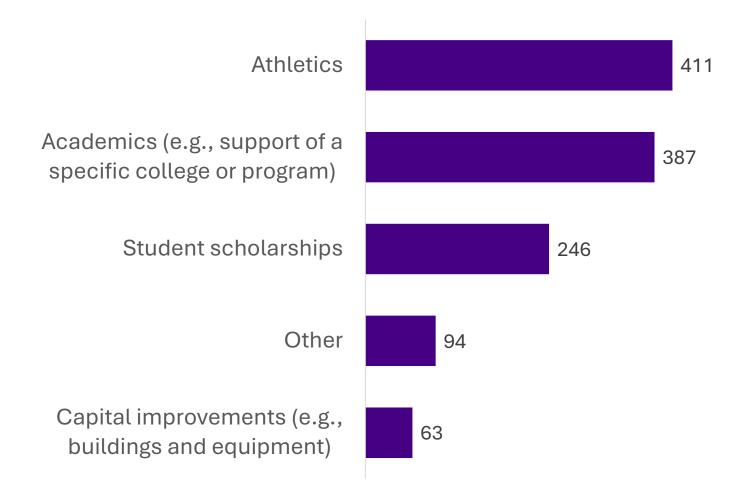
How are you affiliated with JMU?



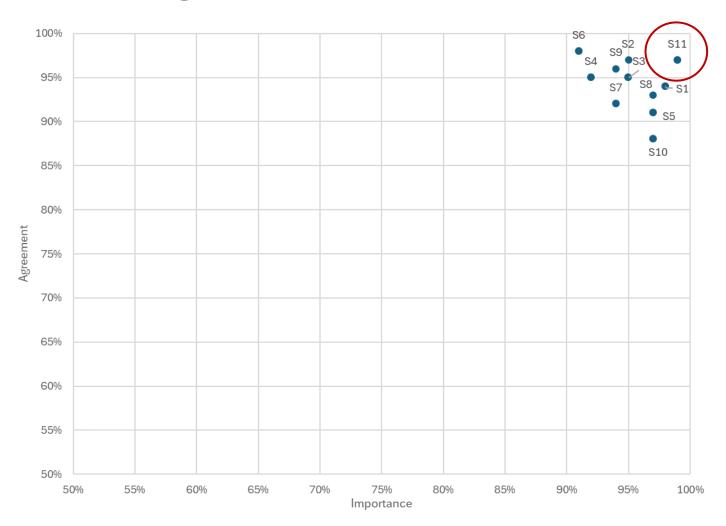
How have you engaged with JMU over the past year?



What did your financial donation support?



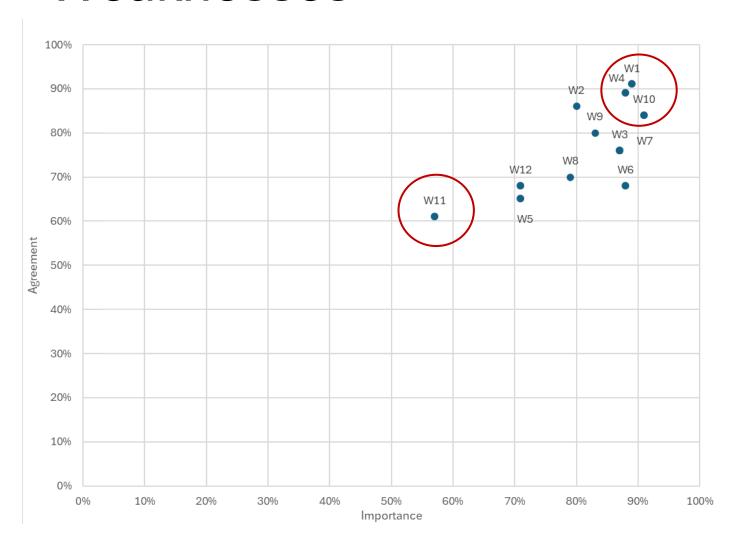
Strengths



Respondents largely agreed with the strengths that were presented and felt all were important to consider in future strategic planning.

S11: JMU prepares students to succeed professionally

Weaknesses



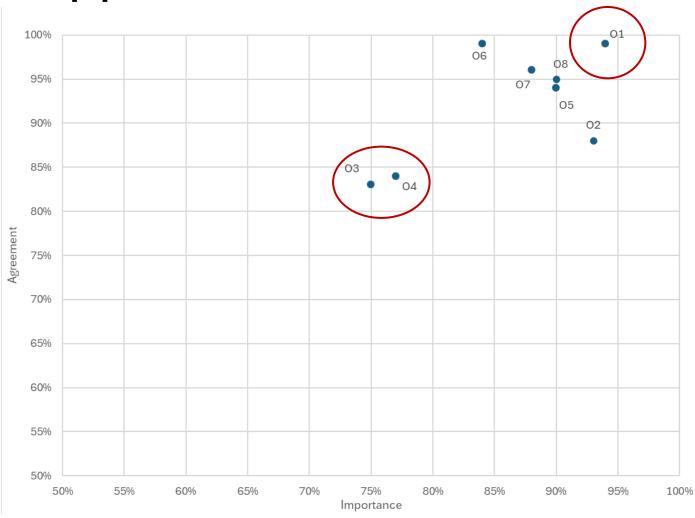
W1: Compensation remains a concern to faculty and staff

W4: Endowment is increasing but remains insufficient to fully meet the financial needs of the university

W10: Personnel growth not keeping pace with student growth and additional workload responsibilities

W11: There is a perception that athletics is over-prioritized

Opportunities

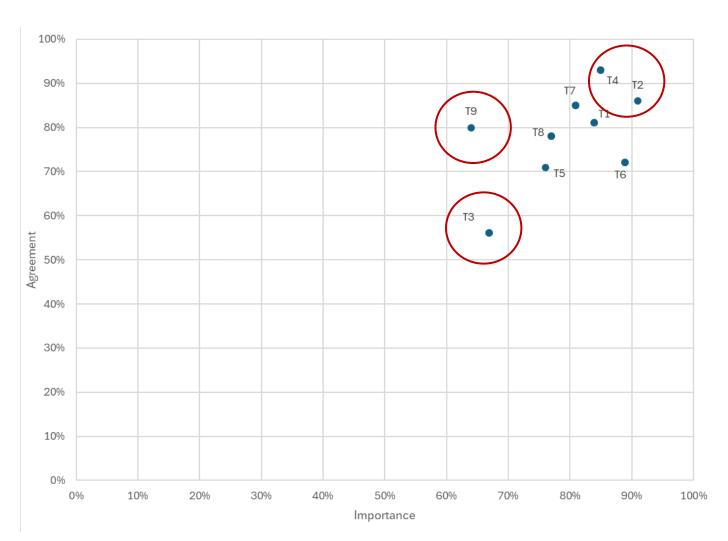


O1: JMU can expand relationships and collaborations with external partners and alumni

O3: Changing demographics are an opportunity to increase access to certain student groups

O4: Artificial intelligence and new technology are an opportunity to increase productivity and teaching

Threats



T2: General fund support from the state is uncertain

T4: The future of existing and federal research funding is uncertain

T3: Changing student demographics will challenge our ability to plan for and meet evolving needs and expectations

T9: Changes to the athletics landscape will negatively affect our ability to have consistent success

Community Feedback

Government Relations

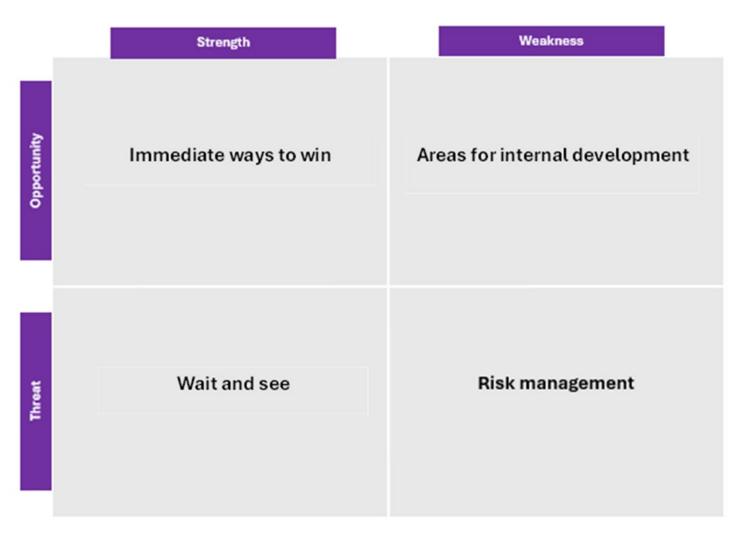
 Community Engagement & Volunteer Center

 Office of Economic and Community Development

Themes from Community Feedback

- Consider new programs that leverage regional strengths
- Expand opportunities in healthcare and education to support underserved community needs across the state
- Resource new work-based learning experiences and partnerships that serve unmet local community needs
- Threats to basic needs exist within the local community (e.g., childcare, transportation, housing), the solutions for which may serve as the basis for emerging partnerships

Cross-SWOT



Source: EAB

Strengths	Weaknesses	
Develop academic programs that capitalize on our regional strengths	Address barriers to hiring and retaining employees (to include housing, childcare, etc.) Work toward new sources of external funding, given the uncertainty of state/federal funding, to include research	
Embed health and well-being into all aspects of faculty/staff and student life Focus communication to highlight benefits of JMU beyond a degree (professional skills, post-grad results) Build a strategic budget that prioritizes salary and compensation	Explore different practices for compensation and incentives for all employees Increase philanthropy to grow endowment/scholarships to attract and retain high-quality, diverse students	

Opportunities

Key Strategies

Threats

Potential Strategies

- Improve student and employee well-being
- Create new programs that leverage regional strengths
- Expand work-based learning experience opportunities to build upon successes

Questions?



Reckoning with Relevance

State of the Sector



Public Perception

Our Messages Mostly Reach the Small Group We've Already Convinced...



Overall Best Sellers Rank: #403,974

Customer Reviews:





Jeff Selingo, Michael Horn Listen Score: 42/100

Instagram Followers: 512



Daily News Subscribers: **250,000**

Readers with Master's: 83%

...While the Broader Public Is Often Exposed to Less Flattering Portrayals



YouTube Views: 438K

Nightly Viewership: ~7M





TikTok Views: 3.4B

Reviews: 2/10 (2K ratings)





Netflix Views: 2.6M (since 2023)

Rotten Tomatoes: 88%

For Every Positive Headline...

84% of college students rate their education as highly or somewhat valuable

Belief in Value

~90% of recent grads said their college prepared them for their next career step

...There's a More Negative Indicator

Only **7%** of college students agree institutions offer a good value for what they charge

Confidence in ROI

Only 44% of alumni felt their degree was worth the student loan debt



Underlying Drivers of Variation

- How questions are worded (e.g., your vs all institutions, value vs valuable)
- When students are surveyed (e.g., pre- vs post-graduation)
- Respondent demographics and majors



Negativity Has An Outsized Impact

- Each additional negative word in a headline boosts click rates by 2.3%
- People are more likely to remember and give negative news a greater weight

Non-Consumers Not Budging on Skepticism

Four Key Mindsets of Students Opting Out of College

Gates Foundation Focus Groups and Survey (n=1,625)

"Where is the ROI?"

> "It's not for me"



"Cost-conscious explorers"

"Why change the status quo?"

Concerns About Value Not Trending in the Right Direction

Changes in Non-Consumer Attitudes Between 2022 and 2023



Decrease in importance scores¹ for all the reasons to get a college degree



Increase in concerns about debt and cost as reasons to not go to college



Increase in value placed on job training, licenses, certificates, and trade school

Respondents were asked to assess how important (e.g., very, somewhat) eleven different reasons for getting a college degree were.

For Gen Z, "Vibes" Trump Rational Decision Making

Why Use Publicly Available ROI Data...

















...When You Can Just Watch TikToks?

 $64\frac{0}{0}$ Of Gen Z use TikTok as a search engine

17% Of U.S. teens ages 13 to 17 use Tik Tok "almost constantly"

Warnings About Debt and Career Outcomes





Success Stories About Skipping College

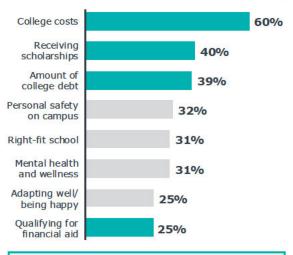




Top Parental Priorities: Costs and Careers

Costs Dominate Parents Top Concerns for Their Students

Responses with 20% or more; Parents could select up to 5 responses; n=1,524

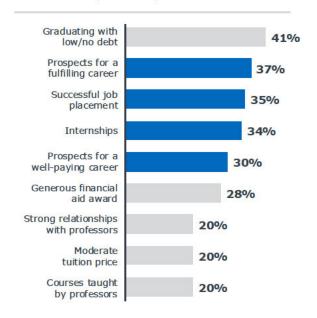




At least half of parents say "affordable" or "manageable" means little to no debt.

Parents See Careers as Key Indicators of Higher Ed's Value

Responses with 20% or more; Parents could select up to 5 responses; n=1,524



What Students, Parents, and Employers Value

What Donors, State
Officials, and Federal
Officials Value

A Surprising Fertile Common Ground

- Provable ROI and impact
- Workforce alignment and development
- Economic growth and social mobility
- Post-graduation outcomes and salaries
- Relevant credentials and curricula
- Career exploration and preparation
- Hands-on, experiential learning opportunities
- Practical solutions and technological innovations

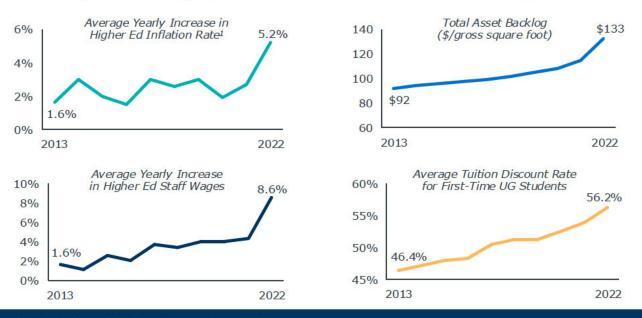


Sustainable Business Models



Converging Challenges Squeeze University Budgets

Inflation, Discounting, Operational Costs Worsen Simultaneously



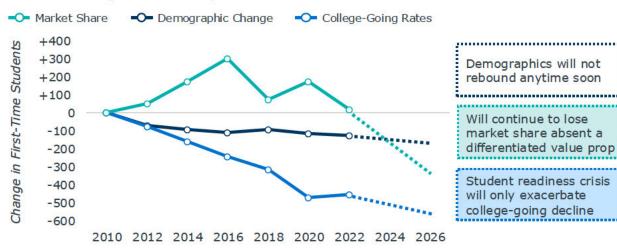
A Short-Term Lifeline Comes to an End

Pandemic relief funding (\$75.3B in total) prevented short-term financial disaster in 2021 and 2022. But with certain restrictions and a deadline to spend/plan by June 30, 2023, most institutions could not use their share of funding to address longstanding financial challenges.

¹⁾ From the Commonfund Institute's Higher Education Price Index © 2024 by EAB. All Rights Reserved. eab.com

A Bleak Undergraduate Enrollment Outlook for EAB University

Cumulative Change From 2010, by Enrollment Force



Strategies to Counteract Downward Trends



Build student and parent affinity earlier in the K-12 pipeline



Convince 18-year-olds to choose college at the point of matriculation



Grow your pool of adult students without a degree

Good for You, Good for Them



Institutional Benefits

- Increased market share by defending your "backyard" and building local affinity
- Improved student readiness prior to arriving on campus

Increased pipeline diversity by expanding recruitment pool





Constituency Benefits

- Positive early life and education experiences shape long-term upward mobility
- Strong K-12 schools help attract and retain local residents
- Improved high school and college graduation rates fuel the workforce and economy

Rutgers Future Scholars Program Starts Building the Pipeline in Middle School



Enables social mobility by serving local, first-gen, low-income students



Begins shaping student and family views in the 7th grade



Builds lasting relationships over the course of **five years**



Tailors program to meet distinct developmental needs at each grade level



Incentivizes enrollment via scholarship guarantee

7th-8th Grades



9th Grade

10th Grade

11th Grade

12th Grade

Boos

Boost Confidence

- Campus tours
- · Leadership skills

Develop Core

Success Skills

- Study habits
- STEM exploration
- · Grit and resilience

Deepen Readiness

- SAT prep
- Financial literacy

Explore Career Options

- Internships
- Resume workshops

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Apply to College

- Application, essay support
- FAFSA support

Year-round support via after-school mentorship, tutoring, seminars, and 3-6 week summer program on campus.

Higher High School Graduation Rates



21%

Higher high school graduation rate for active RFS¹ students compared to non-RFS students

Higher College Retention Rates



88%

First-year retention rate for the RFS Class of 2018, compared to a national average of 77%

Higher College Enrollment Rates



90%

Percent of RFS students who enroll in college, with 70% doing so at Rutgers

Higher College Graduation Rates



70%

Six-year graduation rate for RFS students, compared to a national average for first gen-students of 24%



Rutgers Future Scholars made college attainable. They placed us on campus to learn from Rutgers professors and **showed us that we were capable** of going to college...**the staff became family** and were truly invested in our well-being and futures."

-RFS Graduate



Artificial Intelligence

3

Increase Competitiveness

i.e., Grow Revenue

Long-Term Vision: Building AI-Ready Graduates

Faculty incorporate AI into curriculum and research; prospective students seek out the institution as desired destination to prepare for an AI future.

More Immediate Vision: Enhancing Faculty (and Student) AI Literacy

Enable small-scale experimentation with AI as pedagogical tool as well as force transforming curriculum.

Preparing Students for the New Era of Work

Increase Financial Sustainability

i.e., Reduce Costs

Long-Term Vision: Scaled Productivity Gains

Deploy AI enterprise-wide, eliminating lowvalue activities, enabling a greater output of work, and ultimately reducing operating costs.

More Immediate Vision: Individual or Team-Based Productivity Gains

Pinpoint areas where AI enables greater individual or team efficiency, laying groundwork for wider adoption.

Boosting Administrative Efficiency with AI



Meet Ithaca Insights, AI Chatbot for Prospective Students

Ithaca Insights provides prospective students tailored information about Ithaca College, courses, and campus

 Ex: Requirements for majors, academic advising, housing, general wellbeing, campus information, town information

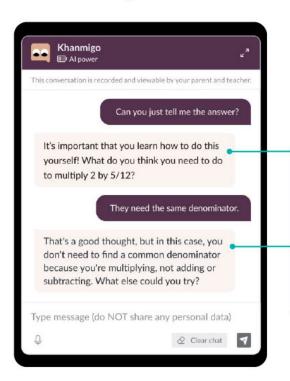
Future Roadmap: Ithaca is exploring adding new areas of support to Ithaca Insights, like career services and student engagement

Application Development

- Built using OpenAI's API and trained using RAG with Ithaca's Student Data Lake House¹ and public webpages
- Only costs 1K/month to run on OpenAI via Azure

The Tutor That Never Sleeps

Khan Academy Launches Conversational AI Tutor Personalized to Students



Case in Brief: Khanmigo, AI Tutor

- Khanmigo supports real-time, one-on-one tutoring personalized to students.
- The conversational AI operates on GPT-4 and is trained on Khan Academy's learning content.

How Students Can Use Khanmigo



Coach writing



Serve as a debate partner



Assist with coding



Converse with historical figures

Additional guardrails prevent Khanmigo from outright giving students answers when they are struggling and ensure Khanmigo always keeps an encouraging tone.

Honors 3035: Large Language Model Development and Deployment for Real-World Applications



Taught by both practitioners and faculty



20-30 students from a range of disciplines

Course Teaches Students Key Skills for GenAI Future



Project-Based

Consists of multiple projects, some provided directly from companies



Team-Based

Students are split into teams, reinforcing the communication skills needed in the GenAI economy



Local Economy Focus Projects tackle problems relevant to local employers



Deep GenAI Familiarity

With little technical background, students learn how to manipulate LLMs to achieve desired goals



Graduates Prepared to Shape GenAI Uptake

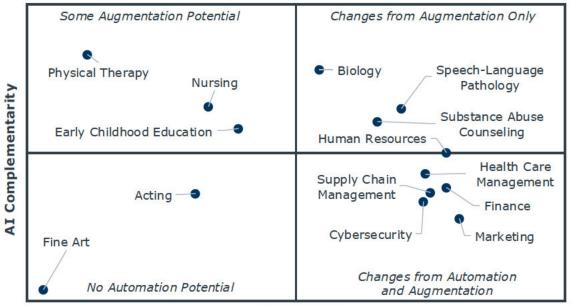
Course completers have gone on to work at companies such as:



SPACEX

Some Fields Need New Skills, Others New Tech

AI Exposure and AI Complementarity Scores for Select Fields



AI Exposure

AI Exposure: How relevant GenAI will be to the work of a particular field

AI Complementarity: The degree to which AI will augment rather than automate tasks Some Augmentation Potential

Peripheral Opportunity for Use

- Teach students how GenAI can support administrative tasks
- E.g., for physical therapy, use GenAI to help with patient scheduling; key therapy practices won't change

No Automation Potential

Little to No Opportunity for Use

- Teach GenAI basics like email editing; few field-specific¹ uses available
- E.g., for acting, using GenAI to find auditions

Changes from Augmentation Only

Supporting Skills Exposed

- Teach students how GenAI could support tangential responsibilities
- E.g., for speech pathology, GenAI can help design treatment plans; key treatment methods won't change

Investment Priority

Changes from Automation and Augmentation

Core Skills Exposed

- Teach students how to use fieldspecific GenAI tools while spending more time on human tasks
- E.g., for finance, more time communicating briefings, engaging clients, etc.

AI Exposure

Uses for GenAI where the tech will be able to automate or augment a task that is, at least in some way, unique to the work of that field

Six Year Plan: 2026

Biennia	Priority	Project Title	Gei	neral Fund	Bon	nds	High Func		Tot	al	Project Type
2026	1	Blanket Property Acquisition	\$	_	\$		\$	3,000,000	\$	3,000,000	ACQUISITION
		Johnston Hall Renovation		00.400.000	•			0,000,000			NEW CONSTRUCTION
2026		and Expansion Johnston Hall Renovation and Expansion Furnishings	\$	30,100,000	\$	<u>-</u>	\$	<u>.</u>	\$	30,100,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2026		& Equipment College of Health and Behavioral Studies Expansion	\$	1,780,000 119,260,000	\$	<u>.</u>	\$	<u>.</u>	\$	1,780,000 119,260,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2026		Festival Renovation and Addition	\$	-	\$	28,840,000	\$	-	\$	28,840,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2026		Moody Hall Renovation and Expansion	\$	49,130,000	\$	-	\$	<u>-</u>	\$	49,130,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2026	7	Keezell Hall Renovation	\$	37,270,000	\$	-	\$	_	\$	37,270,000	RENOVATION
2026		Physics and Chemistry Building Addition	\$	70,190,000	\$	-	\$	<u>-</u>	\$	70,190,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2026		E-Hall Renovation and Addition	\$	-	\$	-		\$14,170,000	\$	14,170,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2026	10	Parking Deck - 1000 Stall	\$	-	\$	20,000,000	\$	18,260,000	\$	38,260,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
		SUBTOTAL 2026 - 2028	\$	307,730,000	\$	48,840,000	\$	35,430,000	\$	392,000,000	

Six Year Plan: 2028

Biennia	Priority	Project Title	General Fund	Bonds	Hi	gher Education Operating Funds	Total	Project Type
2028	11	Blanket Property Acquisition	\$ -	\$ -	\$	3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	ACQUISITION
2028	12	College of Health and Behavioral Studies Expansion Furnishings and Equipment	\$ 10,910,000	\$ -	\$	<u>-</u>	\$ 10,910,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2028		Moody Hall Renovation and Expansion Furnishings and Equipment	\$ 5,220,000	\$	\$		\$ 5,220,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2028	14	Keezell Hall Renovation Furnishings and Equipment	\$ 2,990,000	\$ - -	\$	<u>-</u>	\$ 2,990,000	RENOVATION
2028	15	Physics and Chemistry Building Addition Furnishings and Equipment	\$ 3,230,000	\$ -	\$		\$ 3,230,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2028	16	New Multi-Use Building Housing/Academic Phase 1(COB 2)	\$ 55,796,000	\$ 83,684,000	\$	<u>-</u>	\$ 139,480,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2028	17	Roop Hall Renovation	\$ 52,300,000	\$ <u>-</u>	\$	-	\$ 52,300,000	RENOVATION
2028	18	Sheldon Hall Renovation	\$ 25,760,000	\$ -	\$	-	\$ 25,760,000	RENOVATION
2028	19	Bluestone Pedestrian Bridge	\$ -	\$ -		\$12,990,000	\$ 12,990,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2028	20	UREC Addition - Kinesiology	\$ 29,500,000	\$	\$	-	\$ 29,500,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2028	21	Parking Deck - 1,000 Stalls	\$ -	\$ 38,230,000	\$	-	\$ 38,230,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
		SUBTOTAL 2028 - 2030	\$ 185,706,000	\$ 121,914,000	\$	15,990,000	\$ 323,610,000	

Six Year Plan: 2030

Biennia	Priority	Project Title	General Fund	Bonds	Hi	igher Education Operating Funds	Total	Project Type
2030	22	Blanket Property Acquisition	\$ _	\$ _	\$	3,000,000	\$ 3,000,000	ACQUISITION
2030	23	New Multi-Use Building Housing/Academic Phase 1- Furnishings & Equipment	\$ 7,410,000	\$ -	\$	<u>-</u>	\$ 7,410,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2030	24	Roop Hall Renovation	\$ 3,460,000	\$ -	\$	-	\$ 3,460,000	RENOVATION
2030	25	Sheldon Hall Renovation Furnishings and Equipment	\$ 2,110,000	\$ -	\$	-	\$ 2,110,000	RENOVATION
2030	26	Parking Deck - 750 Stalls Bluestone/Duke Drive	\$ -	\$ 41,320,000	\$	-	\$ 41,320,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2030	27	Intersection Improvement / Park	\$ -	\$ -	\$	7,320,000	\$ 7,320,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2030	29	Bridgeforth Stadium Expansion		\$ 172,710,000			\$ 172,710,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2030	29	Union Renovation and Addition	\$ -	\$ 66,840,000	\$	-	\$ 66,840,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2030	30	New Academic Building	\$ 103,870,000		\$	<u>-</u>	\$ 103,870,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
2030	31	New Multi-Use Building Housing/Academic Phase 2(COB 2)	\$ 48,908,000	\$ 73,362,000	\$	-	\$ 122,270,000	NEW CONSTRUCTION
		SUBTOTAL 2030 - 2032	\$ 165,758,000	\$ 354,232,000	\$	10,320,000	\$ 530,310,000	
				. ,				
		SIX-YEAR BUDGET TOTALS 2026 - 2032	\$ 659,194,000	\$ 524,986,000	\$	61,740,000	\$ 1,245,920,000	