



VALLEY SCHOLARS

Fall 2022 Newsletter

A STRONG START TO THE YEAR

Valley Scholars participated in a variety of engaging programs on JMU's campus during the Fall 2022 semester. Tenth graders learned about JMU services during a campus scavenger hunt. Eleventh graders explored potential majors with students and faculty members during JMU's Fall Academic Open House. Meanwhile, twelfth grade students, many of whom have already been accepted to universities across Virginia, explored the financial aid process and completed college applications. Multiple cohorts attended workshops presented by partners from both the College of Education and the College of Health and Behavioral Studies. No matter the topic, Valley Scholars brought their enthusiasm and willingness to learn to program days...even in the rain!



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Text by Valley Scholars staff; photos by Valley Scholars and University Marketing & Branding staff

CLASS OF 2027 STEPS UP

In August, Valley Scholars welcomed its 9th Cohort to the program, resulting in 45 new scholars joining the program this academic year.

In their first semester, students and families experienced what Valley Scholars and JMU have to offer. Participants came to orientation with their families and connected with other scholars in their cohort for the first time.

As the semester continued, scholars met with their JMU student-mentors weekly,



navigated the low-ropes course at UREC's TEAM challenge course on the coldest day of the year, supported each other, set goals, and, of course, savored eating at D-Hall! These young scholars are full of potential and grit, determination and wisdom that belies their age, and energy...lots of energy. Welcome to the Valley Scholars Program, class of 2027!



WHY ENROLL IN AP/DE COURSES?

An important requirement of the Valley Scholars Program is taking rigorous courses in preparation for college. We expect that all Valley Scholars include Honors, Dual Enrollment (DE), and Advanced Placement (AP) classes in your schedules starting in high school. In 9th grade you can be recommended for Honors classes. These classes are accelerated, meaning they are taught at a faster pace, and there is more course-work. If you have not been recommended for an Honors class, ask your school counselor if you might qualify to take one or more of these classes. Dual Enrollment classes allow you to earn high school and college credit simultaneously through a local community college. You will earn college credit by completing the DE class at your high school with a satisfactory grade (determined by the college you attend). Advanced Placement classes are college-level courses taken in high school. After passing the class, college credit is earned by "sitting" for and earning a satisfactory grade (determined by the college you attend) on a national exam. AP and DE courses help prepare you for college by challenging you academically and exposing you to college-level work.

Valley Scholars provides financial assistance for dual enrollment course fees and AP exams.

Here are a few more reasons you should enroll in AP/DE courses:

- Earning college credit in high school reduces the number of classes you have to take once you get to college. This frees up your schedule to take other classes of interest.
- AP/DE courses are weighted higher than regular courses when calculating GPA.
- College admissions will factor in whether you took advanced classes when considering your application.
- Taking rigorous courses in high school shows colleges that you are willing to challenge yourself and that you are prepared for college-level work.





HOME STRETCH FOR CLASS OF 2023

When President Alger came to JMU, he quickly acknowledged a need to better engage the local community in reducing barriers to higher education. Focusing on first-generation, financially-eligible, academically motivated students, he championed a new initiative for local middle and high school students now known as The Valley Scholars Program. In 2014, thirty-five students from local, partnering middle schools were accepted into the first Valley Scholars' cohort. Over the next five years, students participated in a multitude of programs and in 2019, the majority of those students entered their freshman year at JMU. Students explored and were

accepted to a variety of majors including computer science, engineering, business, kinesiology, and social work to name a few. Some chose double majors or gained a coveted internship while others experienced international travel for the first time through study abroad programs visiting Italy, Belgium and France. Now, nine years after their acceptance, fourteen students will graduate from JMU, with another nine slated to graduate within the next year, with two more graduating from other universities. We know they will continue to accomplish great things and positively influence our world, and look forward to celebrating their success in May.

MAPPING OUT THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

While it's important to start thinking about college early, the application process itself begins during your Junior year. It might help to plot out the application tasks listed below on a calendar or planner. Write down testing and application deadlines first, and work backward to allow enough time to prepare for those deadlines. We encourage you to contact your academic coach, high school counselor, or college-access provider if you have questions about the college application process.

Junior Year - 11th Grade

Spring

- Take SAT/ACT tests. Ask your school counselor about fee waivers.
- Start narrowing down your college choices.
- Start looking at scholarships; ask your academic coach for suggestions if you aren't sure where to search for them.

Senior Year - 12th Grade

Summer

- Finalize the list of colleges you will apply to.
- Review application requirements and deadlines for each college.
- Start creating/gathering/requesting the things/information you will need for applications:
 - Essay Supplements
 - Resume (a comprehensive list of all your accomplishments during your high school years, including extra-curricular activities, work experience, honors and awards, and volunteer experience)

Senior Year - 12th Grade

Fall

- Write, edit, and re-write admission essays. Ask teachers, Valley Scholars academic coaches, or counselors for help with revising your essays.
- Request letters of recommendations, transcripts, and SAT/ACT scores.
- Complete the FAFSA with your parent or guardian by the end of October.
- Submit early-action applications by November. Make sure to check exact due dates for each school.
- Apply for other scholarships/aid

Spring

- Review the financial aid award letter from each college.
- Respond to your chosen college by confirming your acceptance with them.

23 students in the Valley Scholars Class of 2023 have been offered early acceptance to JMU.
Congratulations!

MADISON SCHOLARSHIP HUB

The Madison Scholarship Hub (<https://jmu.academicworks.com/>) is a helpful tool to locate JMU scholarship opportunities to assist with additional college costs. The scholarship names, award amounts, and application deadlines are listed on the main page of the Hub. Review the scholarship criteria to make sure you meet the qualifications for each scholarship opportunity, as they are all different. Deadlines vary by departments and scholarships, so make sure to keep track of the due dates and any supplemental materials that you may need to submit.

All Valley Scholars seniors must apply to the **Centennial Scholars Program** before the February 1st due date. You will find the application conveniently listed on the Madison Scholarship Hub. Though your financial aid package will not change as a result of acceptance into The Centennial Scholars Program (CSP), the program will help build your academic and leadership confidence. CSP will support and empower you during your college journey, as well as provide you with many resources for life at JMU. Remember to review the application as soon as possible to allow time to answer its supplemental questions.

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Welcome to **Madison Scholarships Hub**, aka 'The Hub', James Madison University's Scholarship application portal.

Below you will find a listing, with a brief description, of JMU Foundation scholarships. Most scholarships are designated as "auto-match." These opportunities have pre-determined qualifiers in place that allow the system to "auto-match" applicants to these opportunities based on your student record. Auto-match opportunities are noted with "none" in the Action column. You will be notified if you have been selected for a scholarship once the scholarship end date has passed and reviewing has been completed.

Certain scholarships require additional information from the applicant in order to be considered; these opportunities are noted with "Apply" in the Action column. If you click on the name of the opportunity, the system will show the full description and additional information/questions that have to be answered/provided in order to apply for this opportunity. **You should do this prior to applying as it will be helpful to ascertain if you meet all requirements.**

You may search for various scholarship criteria or qualifications by using the search bar below. Enter words such as "junior", "financial need", "Rockingham County", etc. to help narrow your results.

Award	Name	Actions
Approx. \$1350	Ola Belle Garber Cline Scholarship Fund An endowed scholarship established by Donna Burcham Fowlkes '72 and J...	Deadline 01/27/2023
In-state Tuition & Fees, Room & Board	Centennial Scholars Program The Centennial Scholars Program provides financial assistance and a...	Deadline 02/01/2023
Tuition & Comprehensive Fees, Room & Board	GYO Campus Teaching Fellows For incoming students from the following districts: Harrisonburg City...	Deadline 02/01/2023

MAKING SENSE OF FINANCIAL AID TERMS

Direct Subsidized Loan

Money lent by the federal government that must be paid back with interest. This loan does *not* accrue interest while the student is enrolled in school.

Direct Unsubsidized Loan

Money lent by the federal government that must be paid back with interest. Interest accrues immediately after disbursement.

EFC (Expected Family Contribution)

Determined by family size and household income and calculated by the FAFSA; this is where financial aid starts.

FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid)

Application that must be filled out before each academic year the student will be in school; determines eligibility for grants, loans, and work-study. A student is not considered for financial aid until this application is submitted.

Federal Pell Grant

Federal grant given to students who demonstrate financial need determined by the EFC on the FAFSA.

Federal Work-Study

Provides part-time jobs through the university to students who demonstrate financial need.

Grant

Money awarded to students based on financial need. Does not require repayment.

Scholarships

Money awarded to students based on merit (skill or ability). There might also be a needs-based component. Does not require repayment. Often requires an application.

REDDIX CENTER OPENS TO SUPPORT FIRST-GEN STUDENTS AT JMU

The Fall 2022 semester saw the opening of the Reddix Center for First Generation Students at JMU. The Reddix Center is located on the second floor of the Student Success Center and is open to all first-generation students attending JMU. The Reddix Center provides a comfortable place to study, meet with classmates and mentors, and relax between classes. Additionally, refrigerators, microwaves, and color printers are available for student use. Already, a sense of community is building among student visitors to the Center. Valley Scholars attending JMU are encouraged to stop by the Reddix Center regularly for study sessions or just to take a break.

Reddix Center hours are Monday through Thursday 8:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. and Fridays 8:00-3:00 p.m. The Reddix Center can be reserved Monday-Thursday between 4 p.m. and 7 p.m. for small groups, community events, and meetings.



12% of incoming students at JMU in 2022-23 are first-generation college students.

You are considered a first-generation college student if your parent or guardian did not graduate from a 4-year institution. However, the Reddix Center welcomes any student with limited prior exposure to or knowledge of the college experience!



Valley Scholars can only offer this once in a lifetime opportunity to students because of YOU, our community partners and donors. Please accept our sincere appreciation for all you do for the future of students and the Valley Scholars Program. Thank you!

