

CAS Dean's Report to the UFC – February 2025

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At the time of this report, we are still searching for tenure track positions in Computer Science and Biological Sciences. Both areas seem to be particularly challenging to hire this year, but we are hopeful. If those searches fail, we plan to pursue visiting positions for next year. Over the next several weeks, we will be interviewing candidates for the tenure-track position in Studio Art (sculpture) and the instructor position in Mathematics. Finally, the search for a position in the nursing program is just launching.

In January, we held an all-day retreat for a group of about 20 faculty in the humanities programs. In addition to a number of discussions about the changing demographics of our students and the impacts specifically on the humanities at UMW, there was lively discussion about the future of the humanities and how UMW can adapt. As a result of those initial discussions, working groups were formed to look at new interdisciplinary programs in the medical humanities and public health. Finally, a group of chairs submitted a UMW Impact Grant application to hold an all-day workshop to launch the planning of a Humanities Center. Many faculty in the humanities have been motivated by this initiative and we are excited to move forward.

The College of Arts and Sciences awarded \$64,000 for 45 spring semester projects involving 111 undergraduate students across 12 disciplines from biology to theatre, in order to purchase needed supplies and fund travel to present research results at regional and national conferences. On February 6, three UMW students presented their work to our state legislators at the inaugural event "Posters in Richmond" sponsored by the Network for Undergraduate Research in Virginia. They were: psychology majors Hannah Shipp ('25) and Ada Moses ('25) "Impact of Visual Distraction on Computer-Based Test Performance" with Dr. Marcus Leppanen, mentor; and biomedical Sciences major Mallory Thompson ('26) "Methionine restriction promotes immunogenic cell death in breast cancer cells" with Dr. Laura Sipe, mentor. Finally, we are making plans for our 19th annual UMW Research and Creativity Day Symposium on Friday, April 25th, the last day of classes. Events from oral presentations to art exhibits will be happening throughout the day all over campus, highlighted by our lunchtime poster session in the digital auditorium of the HCC at noon.

We are in heavy planning mode for our summer academic programming. This marks the fourth year for the Summer Enrichment Program which brings talented high school students onto campus for a week of learning and fun. We are starting to see positive impacts on our recruitment efforts as a result of this program. For current UMW students, planning is also underway for our summer research programs: the Irene Piscopo Rodgers Summer Science Institute, and the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences Summer Institute.

Finally, I enjoyed a celebratory dinner at the Army-Navy Club in DC in January with a small group of key donors who helped bring the Beyond the Classroom Endowment to our \$1M goal!