



JOHNSON STATE COLLEGE

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

to the Vermont State Colleges Board of Trustees

FEBRUARY 11, 2016



This is an exciting time at Johnson State College. Members of our seven task forces — enrollment and retention, academic quality, institutional effectiveness, information technology, integrated marketing, diversity and fundraising — are hard at work pursuing creative growth strategies and sharpening our institutional identity, highlighting the strengths of JSC's high-impact, liberal arts education. We are pursuing recognition by the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges as the state's premier public liberal arts college. Our new programs in Criminal Justice, Sport Management, Pre-Physical Therapy, and Health & Sport Psychology are attracting much interest from prospective students, and our numbers for fall continue to trend upward.

In recognition of our historical alignment with the liberal arts and high-impact educational practices — combined with growing bodies of research identifying this type of education as a priority for today's employers — we are pursuing recognition as Vermont's premier public liberal arts college from the Council of Public Liberal Arts Colleges (COPLAC). To this end, in March we will submit application materials that demonstrate a strong core of coursework in the arts and sciences, undergraduate research experiences, commitment to active citizenship and public service, and vibrant co-curricular opportunities.



Responding to societal demands for skilled professionals in a variety of fields with habits of mind grounded in critical inquiry and integration of knowledge is a goal that we strongly promote. As such, we believe that our blend of career-focused study with the breadth and depth of a liberal arts best prepares graduates for success in a rapidly changing world. This belief is well-documented in the 2015 American Association of Colleges and Universities (AACU) survey of employers by Hart Research Associates that validates our commitment to the liberal arts and affirms the high-impact practices we employ throughout our curriculum. Among the findings:

- Employers overwhelmingly endorse broad learning as the best preparation for long-term success. They believe that broad learning should be an expected part of college for all students, regardless of their chosen major or field of study.
- When hiring recent college graduates, employers place the greatest priority on a demonstrated proficiency in skills and knowledge across majors. Presented with 17 skills and knowledge areas, employers chose written and oral communication skills, teamwork skills, ethical decision-making, critical thinking skills, and the ability to apply knowledge in real-world settings as the most highly valued.
- Employers broadly endorse an emphasis on applied learning, which they believe improves learning and better prepares college students for career success.



REAFFIRMING THE VALUE OF INTERNSHIPS

The most recent graduate survey conducted by our Career & Internship Center found that 70 percent of respondents are either currently employed at the site where they completed an internship while at JSC (21 percent), received an offer at their internship site but declined it (24 percent), or reported being employed elsewhere because of the experience they gained through their internship (25 percent). The same survey found that 94 percent of respondents are either employed or continuing their education, and that 84 percent of respondents are now employed in Vermont.

With ongoing support from Union Bank, we have been able to establish a JSC Student Internship Fund that awards grants of \$200 to \$500 to help students cover the expenses associated with these experiences, including transportation to and from work sites.

JSC RECOGNIZED AS LGBTQ FRIENDLY

We are proud to have been recently designated one of the nation's top LGBTQ-friendly colleges in recognition of our inclusive, welcoming and respectful environment for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and questioning people. The recognition comes from the national nonprofit organization Campus Pride Inc., which publishes an online "Campus Pride Index" rating more than 200 U.S. colleges from one to five stars on their "LGBTQ-inclusive policies programs and practices in higher education."

JSC received an overall 3.5 star rating, earning the highest scores for housing and residence life, academic life, student life and campus policies related to LGBTQ issues. Among other things, we have an active LGBTQ student organization on campus, offer gender-neutral housing and restrooms on campus, sponsor educational and cultural programming related to LGBTQ issues, and this year launched a scholarship for transgender students in memory of a JSC alum.

Only two other Vermont colleges, Sterling College and the University of Vermont, are rated LGBTQ friendly by the organization. [The full report for JSC is available here.](#)

JSC STUDENT NAMED NATIONAL SAAC REP



JSC sophomore tennis player **Nicole Monick** has been appointed to the NCAA Division III Student-Athlete Advisory Committee (SAAC). Nicole will represent the North Atlantic Conference (NAC) and the North Eastern Athletic Conference (NEAC) on the committee, which consists of one student-athlete from each pair of conferences in the Div. III SAAC

program and at least one student-athlete from an independent Division III school.

Nicole's three-year term began at the close of the January 2016 NCAA Convention in San Antonio, which she attended, and continues through the January 2019 convention. Nicole will be one of 24 NCAA Division III student-athletes (12 male, 12 female) serving on the national committee. SAAC provides insight on the student-athlete experience and offers input on the rules, regulations and policies that affect NCAA student-athletes on campus.

HIGH SCHOOL GREENING SUMMIT AT JSC

The eighth annual summit at JSC brought teams of high school students together in November to present research projects they designed to make their school or local community "greener."

This year's summit featured five highly competitive teams from Lamoille Union High School, Enosburg Falls High School, Peoples Academy (Morrisville), North Country Union High School (Newport) and students in the Upward Bound program at Plattsburgh State University. Collectively, the teams were awarded \$4,250 to implement their proposals.

JSC ALUM NAMED A TOP P.E. TEACHER IN U.S.



Brian Godfrey '03 been named one of the top physical education teachers in the nation by the Society of Health & Physical Educators) America, the country's largest membership organization of health and P.E. professionals. Brian is now one of four teachers in the country to be nominated for SHAPE America's National Teacher of the Year.

Brian earned a B.S. degree in health sciences with a concentration in physical education at JSC, where he played on the men's basketball team and also met his future wife. He went on to earn a master's degree in educational leadership and policy study from the University of Vermont. He teaches at Richmond Elementary.

Brian created the Snow Motion Program, which makes skiing and snowboarding accessible to all children, wrote the "Snowboarding in P.E." curriculum for Burton Snowboards, and is helping to introduce snowboarding to P.E. classes around Vermont. He also is a strong advocate for integrating technology into P.E. classes.

FACULTY, STAFF & STUDENT HIGHLIGHTS

Former "Blue Man" **Isaac Eddy**, who joined JSC's Fine & Performing Arts Department this year, presented an 18-minute TED Talk this fall along with six other "thought leaders, intellectuals and innovators" in Manchester, Vt., as part of TEDxBattenkill.



His talk, "Extinction of Vulnerability: From Creative Opportunity to a Personal Exit Strategy," touches on his life as a member of the Blue Man Group and retirement after 12 years to pursue a career in teaching, now at JSC, and what we lose by connecting through social media only with those whose views we share. It is a thought-provoking talk that is well worth watching, which you can do here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9nRQaELvD-Q>

Patrick Rogers, newly named director of admissions at JSC, has received the 2015 Jerry E. Flanagan Service Award from the Consortium of Vermont Colleges. The annual award — the highest honor bestowed by the statewide organization of professional staff from 20 colleges and the Vermont Student Assistance Corp. — is given annually to a CVC member “who has shown exemplary leadership within the field of college admissions counseling in Vermont and has gone above and beyond in service for the Consortium.”

Patrick started as an admissions counselor at JSC in August 2005 after earning his B.A. in business with an A.A. in technical theater here. He steadily moved up the ranks, first becoming assistant director, then associate director and, in 2012, senior associate director. This December, he was appointed to the newly created position of director. He is a longtime advisor to JSC’s men’s and women’s rugby clubs and recently became advisor to the hockey club as well.

Environmental & Health Sciences **senior Melissa Segall**, who interned with **Dr. Tania Bacchus** (Environmental & Health Sciences) last summer, presented part of their summer research at the American Geophysical Union (AGU) meeting in San Francisco in December 2015 and at the American Meteorological Society (AMS) meeting in New Orleans in January 2016. Melissa is the lead author of the presentations, and Dr. Bacchus is coauthor. The two attended these conferences with funding from Vermont EPSCoR, which is covering the associated costs of attendance.

Environmental & Health Sciences **senior Nasser Abdel-Fatah’s** abstract, “Detailed Analysis of Climate Trends from the Northern Tier of Vermont from 2000-2014,” has been accepted for the Northeastern Geological Society of America meeting in Albany, N.Y., in March. He is one of Dr. Bacchus’ summer 2015 research assistants as well.

Rob Schulze (Education) will present on the topic of charter schools at the Council for Exceptional Children Expo this April in St. Louis. Rob is an assistant professor of special education at JSC.

Leslie Kanat (Environmental & Health Sciences) and his wife have been selected to participate in the 2016 Vermont Leadership Series, which trains people to advocate for those with disabilities.

Research by Dr. **Gina Mireault** (Behavioral Sciences), leader of JSC’s “laughing babies” project, was featured on the front page of the Nov. 23, 2015, *Wall Street Journal* with other top research in the field. [You can read the article here.](#)

As a result of other projects in the arctic, **Ken Leslie** (Fine Arts) was invited by the Ilulissat Art Museum in Greenland to exhibit his work and spend three weeks there as a visiting artist. While there, he led painting and bookmaking workshops for local

artists, and produced new works that will be on exhibition at JSC’s Julian Scott Gallery in March. Ilulissat is the largest city in northwest Greenland, situated on the mouth of the Icefjord, which produces more icebergs than any other glacier in the northern hemisphere.

An article by **Amy Welch** (Environmental & Health Sciences), “Web-Based Behavioral Intervention Increases Maternal Exercise but Does Not Prevent Excessive Gestational Weight Gain in Previously Sedentary Women,” appears in the Nov. 2015 online issue of the *Journal of Physical Activity and Health*. Dr. Welch is an associate professor of health sciences at JSC.

Elizabeth Powell (Writing & Literature), recently received two major national recognitions for her poetry. She won the 2015 Robert Dana-Anhinga Prize for Poetry for her second book of poetry, *Willy Loman’s Reckless Daughter: Living Truthfully under Imaginary Circumstances*. The award came from Florida-based Anhinga Press, one of the nation’s premier poetry presses, which will publish Powell’s book in 2016. In addition, poet Anna Maria Hong featured Powell’s title poem from that book, “Willy Loman’s Reckless Daughter: A Story in Couplets,” in a Nov. 20 Best American Poetry Series blog post titled “The Sonnet, Three Journals, and Four Graces.”



A series of paintings by **Joseph Salerno** (Fine Arts) is on exhibit at the Vermont Studio Center in Johnson through Feb. 6. The show features 100 small paintings titled “Dark Woods” that Salerno created on site by the woods near his home in Johnson. A review in the Jan. 20 issue of *Seven Days* concluded, “Salerno...said of the ‘Dark Woods’ series, ‘This group just took over.

I thought there was something magic in [them].’ For the viewer, these paintings may well have the same effect.”

Under the direction of **Amy May** (Fine Arts), JSC’s 21st annual ceramics “Throw-a-Thon” and holiday ceramics sale was a tremendous success. All proceeds benefit the nonprofit [Operation Smile](#), which provides free surgeries for children with cleft lips or palates in more than 60 countries. With generous support by the JSC community, and a matching donation, JSC donated the cost of seven surgeries this year, bringing the total number of surgeries donated by JSC to 47.

B.F.A. Studio Arts major **Ian Loller** spent 12 days visiting 48 locations in Lamoille County with his GoPro camera, documenting the county’s covered bridges, waterfalls and other sites, which he has compiled along with historical narration in a video blog for his class in Advanced Documentary Digital & Social Media, taught by **John Miller** (Fine Arts). You can [view one of his video blog entries here.](#)

