

## Higher Education

### Four Presidents Highlight Local College Plans

Programs Unveiled For School Year

By **EMILY SHARRER**

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**HARRISONBURG** — Going green and continued partnerships with area businesses and schools are in the cards for the area's four institutions of higher education for the coming year.

At a Harrisonburg-Rockingham Chamber of Commerce-sponsored breakfast Monday morning, James Madison University President Linwood Rose, Eastern Mennonite University President Loren Swartzendruber, Bridgewater College President George Cornelius and Blue Ridge Community College President John Downey highlighted programs and plans for the upcoming year.

School starts at BRCC on Aug. 22, Aug. 29 at JMU, Aug. 30 at EMU and on Sept. 6 at BC.

#### Green, Tech Initiatives

By serving vegetables from campus gardens in dining halls, using solar panels to satisfy 2 percent of the campus' overall energy needs and encouraging students to ride bikes, EMU is continually focused on reducing its carbon footprint.

Swartzendruber says greening the campus is a top priority going into 2011-12. All future campus buildings will adhere to the U. S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy Environmental Design, he said.

At BC, Cornelius' top priority is producing more technology- literate graduates. Early this fall, he expects to receive a survey from a group of faculty and staff known as BC 2.0 that will appraise technology needs in the classroom.

"My principal concern is ensuring our students are technologically savvy and have the skills and knowledge they need when they leave here," Cornelius said.

#### Local Partnerships

Rose was proud to report that this year, JMU had the most in- state applicants of any Virginia university. Approximately 13,000 of the 26,000 applicants to the university were Virginia residents.

JMU's enrollment for the coming school year is projected to reach more than 18,700 students, up slightly from about 18,600 last year.

For 2011-12, Rose says JMU will continue to contribute to the local economy by creating jobs and using local construction companies for future projects.

During the upcoming year, Downey says that BRCC will maintain its goal of showing young students, from elementary school through 12th grade, what kinds of opportunities are available through the community college.

Giving information to middle and high school guidance counselors and offering campus tours are two main ways Downey says the university will partner with area schools.

"Getting kids exposed to a wide variety of careers is very important," he said. " The more they can see those careers in action, the better they can prepare."

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