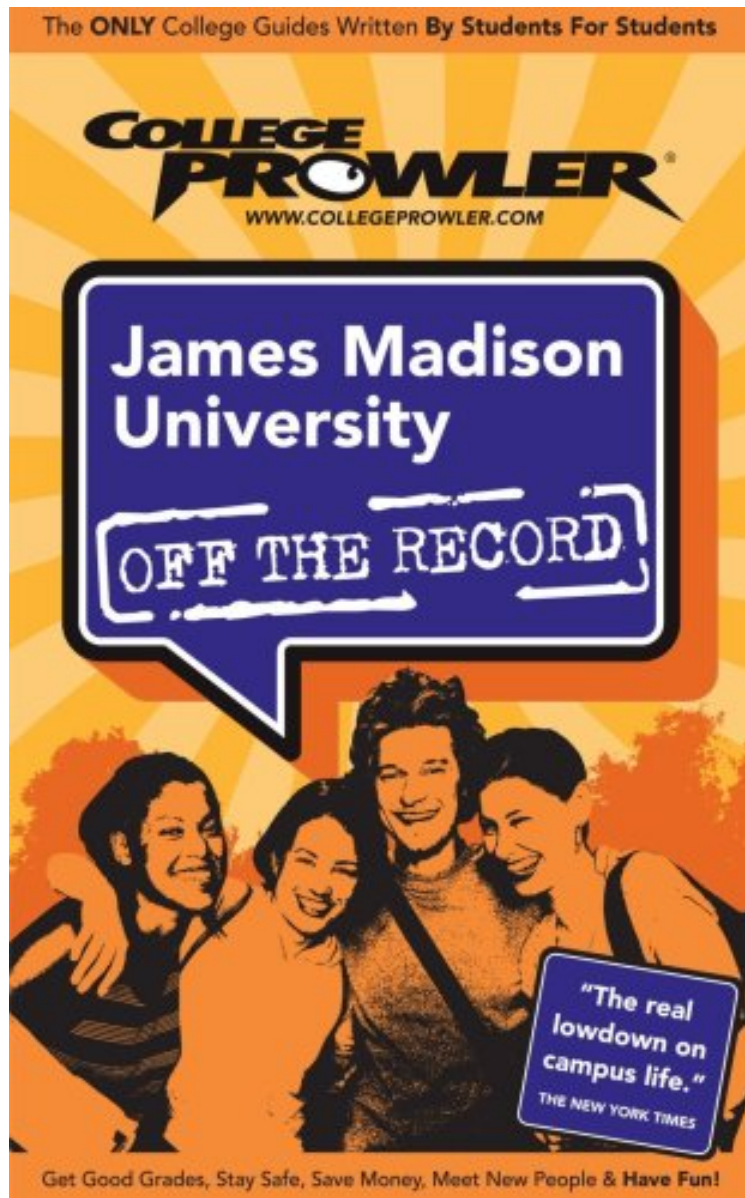


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## James Madison University: Off the Record - College Prowler

*Sylva Florence*

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**Sylva Florence : James Madison University: Off the Record - College Prowler** before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised James Madison University: Off the Record - College Prowler:

Introduction from the Author Three schools in three years I've got quite the track record. I started on the West Coast my freshman year, the logical choice for a native Westerner, and here I am in Virginia two years later. West Coasters would say, James Madison, that sounds like a nice school, and although they're right, most don't know any details. Still, they have heard of the name. That counts for something, right? East Coasters know exactly what that something is. They know about the national awards JMU has acquired, the breathtaking landscape of the campus, and the admirable surroundings to match. Easterners have heard all about JMU's reputation for academic greatness, and some have witnessed the University's growth from a small, all-women's college, to a blossoming university. JMU's increasingly difficult admissions process is testimony to one thing: a great many people want to be here. You bought the book, so you're at least considering it, right? At JMU, the grub is decent, the surroundings are breathtaking, the parties are kickin', the teachers are knowledgeable, and the gym is spectacular. However, what it really comes down to is the people. Madison isn't a school that exists solely to crank out tomorrow's elite, like the next Bill Gates or the future president of the United States; however, each year JMU grads step out into the real world, and they are successful. Whatever they put in the shepherd's pie and grilled cheese at D-Hall, it's working. It's hard to convey with numbers and words on a page what makes up a university. Maybe this guidebook's stats will at least begin to pencil in the basics. Deciding where to go to college is like learning to drive. Learning might involve some arguing with your parents, and steering down windy roads is a given, but once the process is all over, you feel darn good navigating your own course. I'm not here to make that decision for you, or to tell you that JMU will be the catalyst to your success; however, I hope this guidebook will live up to its title, and will at least point you in the right direction. If that direction changes several times, hang in there. If life really is a highway, the trick is finding the right exit to get off. Maybe you will wind up on I-81, taking exit 245 to James Madison University. Sylva Florence James Madison University

"This is the kind of information kids really want to know before they pick a college." --Michelle Slatalla, The NY Times, March 9, 2006 "...get viewpoints on a variety of topics from the student body, which is where the Prowler gets its roar." --Melissa Kaplan, Boston Globe, May 23, 2004 "There is information on which schools have packed computer labs, which dorms are studious or riotous, ..." --Ben Gilbert, The Washington Post, April 27, 2004

About the Author Welcome to College Prowler During the writing of College Prowlers guidebooks, we felt it was critical that our content was unbiased and unaffiliated with any college or university. We think it's important that our readers get honest information and a realistic impression of the student opinions on any campus that's why if any aspect of a particular school is terrible, we (unlike a campus brochure) intend to publish it. While we do keep an eye out for the occasional extremist—the cheerleader or the cynic—we take pride in letting the students tell it like it is. We strive to create a book that's as representative as possible of each particular campus. Our books cover both the good and the bad, and whether the survey responses point to recurring trends or a variation in opinion, these sentiments are directly and proportionally expressed through our guides. College Prowler guidebooks are in the hands of students throughout the entire process of their creation. Because you can't make student-written guides without the students, we have students at each campus who help write, randomly survey their peers, edit, layout, and perform accuracy checks on every book that we publish. From the very beginning, student writers gather the most up-to-date stats, facts, and inside information on their colleges. They fill each section with student quotes and summarize the findings in editorial reviews. In addition, each school receives a collection of letter grades (A through F) that reflect student opinion and help to represent contentment, prominence, or satisfaction for each of our 20 specific categories. Just as in grade school, the higher the mark the more content, more prominent, or more satisfied the students are with the particular category. Once a book is written, additional students serve as editors and check for accuracy even more extensively. Our bounce-back team—a group of randomly selected students who have no involvement with the project—are asked to read over the material in order to help ensure that the book accurately expresses every aspect of the university and its students. This same process is applied to the 200-plus schools College Prowler currently covers. Each book is the result of endless student contributions, hundreds of pages of research and writing, and countless hours of hard work. All of this has led to the creation of a student information network that stretches across the nation to every school that we cover. It's no easy accomplishment, but it's the reason that our guides are such a great resource. When reading our books and looking at our grades, keep in mind that every college is different and that the students who make up each school are not uniform. As a result, it is important to assess schools on a case-by-case basis. Because it's impossible to summarize an entire school with a single number or description, each book provides a dialogue, not a decision, that's made up of 20 different topics and hundreds of student quotes. In the end, we hope that this guide will serve as a valuable tool in your college selection process. Enjoy!