



Radford
UNIVERSITY

Office of the Provost

THREADS

April 21, 2025

Message from Provost Usher

In conversation with faculty colleagues today as I was dashing from one thing to another, they reminded me that there were less than two weeks of classes left - and we all hyperventilated together. Like a ball rolling down a hill, the end of the semester picks up speed until it levels off and slows after commencement. I'm happy to see so much coming together, and the result of the hard work of you and our students.

Instead of writing a long piece, I'll return to celebratory student events and end of semester meetings, and give you the chance to do the same. Thank you, deeply, for all you are doing!

Bethany



Radford
UNIVERSITY

Center for Innovative
Teaching and Learning

Lunch and Learn with Provost Bethany Usher

Drop in to ask questions and engage in conversation about University initiatives and national conversations.

Feel free to bring your own lunch. No registration or RSVP needed.

Main Campus McConnell ILCB (3rd floor) | April 22 | Noon

RHEC Room 501E | May 1 | Noon



Radford
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Department of
Occupational Therapy

Happy Occupational Therapy Month!

April is occupational therapy month and we want to share our celebrations with you!

Occupational therapy is a holistic healthcare profession that helps people to engage in meaningful "occupations", or those things we do in our everyday life that 'occupy' our time. Occupational therapists work with individuals across the lifespan and support everyone's participation in life! We are excited to share the joys of this wonderful profession and celebrate OT awareness month every April through various awareness and advocacy activities.

This year, our students participated in a unique advocacy opportunity. Schools offering Occupational Therapy (OT) and Occupational Therapy Assistant (OTA) programs in Virginia joined together for a statewide campaign to introduce high school students to the OT profession. We're especially proud to highlight that several students in Radford's Master of Occupational Therapy program took part in this campaign. They connected with high schoolers in the New River and Roanoke Valley areas and are helping to inspire the next generation of occupational therapy professionals.

So far, the initiative has reached more than 800 high school students and staff in Virginia!



Accessible Documents Drop In

Do you have questions about making documents (Word, PowerPoint, or PDF) accessible? Don't quite remember from training where all the accessibility features are in Word, PowerPoint, or Adobe Acrobat? Struggling with alt text for images? Bring your documents, your laptop, and your questions to CITL, 270 McConnell Library, on Fri., 4/25, 11:30 AM-1:30 PM. Drop in any time between those hours and we'll help you.

Contact mwinfrey3@radford.edu for further information.



Please join students, staff, and faculty for an open discussion of:

“What is the **role of higher education** (including students, faculty, and leadership) in **encouraging freedom of expression, academic freedom, and the exploration of difficult ideas** in a political landscape **where these activities may be constrained?**”

Wednesday, April 23, 4-5pm

Ross Gallery, 3rd floor in McConnell Library

Coffee, tea, and bakery snacks will be served!

Common Grounds events are aimed at building our community's capacity to converse and collaborate across differences. This series is sponsored by the Civil Discourse and Freedom of Expression Working Group



2025 Honors Capstone Showcase

The Honors College invites the entire campus community to the 2025 Honors Capstone Showcase on **Sunday, April 27th** in Kyle Hall. Over thirty students will be presenting the outcomes of their honors capstone projects, with topics spanning 18 majors and every college. A full program of the speakers and capstone titles can be requested through the Honors College associate director, Dr. Jason Davis (jdavis319@radford.edu).

Spoken Presentations I – 1:15-2:15pm – Kyle 320

Poster Presentations – 2:00-3:00pm – Kyle Atrium

Spoken Presentations II – 3:00-4:00pm – Kyle 320



Night Against Procrastination

MCCONNELL LIBRARY

FLOORS 3 + 4



NIGHT AGAINST PROCRASTINATION



APRIL 22 FROM 6-10PM

RESEARCH HELP DESK

FLOOR 4

INSTRUCTION LIBRARIANS WILL
BE AVAILABLE TO ANSWER YOUR
RESEARCH-RELATED QUESTIONS

SOFT LOUNGE AND BALL PIT

FLOOR 4

LOUNGE IN ROOM 438, INSIDE
HARVEY CENTER
BALL PIT IN CHALKBOARD AREA
+ FINALS WEEK TIPS!

LOFI LOUNGE

ROOM ILC-B (380)

LISTEN TO SOME CHILL BEATS
AND WORK ON ASSIGNMENTS
IN THE COOLEST CLASSROOM
ON CAMPUS!

VENT-A-LATTE

FLOOR 4

FRUSTRATED WITH AN
ASSIGNMENT? JUST NEED TO
VENT? GRAB A COFFEE AND
LET'S CHAT!

FREE BREAKFAST FOR DINNER !

FLOOR 3

MCCONNELL LOUNGE
STARTS AT 6:00PM



Let your students know that it's time for the McConnell Library Stress Buster #38!

Tuesday, April 29, 2025

Events begin at 10am!

FREE
COFFEE &
TEA,
CRAFTS, &
STICKERS

IT'S TIME FOR THE
MCCONNELL LIBRARY
**STRESS
BUSTER
#38!**
**TUESDAY,
APRIL 29, 2025**
 Radford
UNIVERSITY | McConnell Library

AROMA-
THERAPY
MODELING
COMPOUND
WITH THE
RADFORD
UNIVERSITY
PEER HEALTH
EDUCATORS

1 PM - 3 PM


DROP-IN
CHESS
CHALLENGE

10 AM-
NOON

BUTTON
MAKING

3 PM - 6 PM

PETTING ZOO
1 PM - 3 PM

FILL YOUR
OWN SNACK
BAG

WHILE
SUPPLIES
LAST

DON'T FORGET OUR WEEKLY GAME NIGHT 6 PM - 8:30 PM!



HIGHLANDERS
RISE TOGETHER

Do any of these thoughts resonate with you?

- *If only I could get students to come to class!*
- *I would really like to see how other faculty are engaging with their students and I'd like to share my own ideas too.*
- *Am I reaching all of my students? Not everyone seems to be engaging with the class.*

In the RISE Faculty Institute, we will explore new ways of engaging our students, breaking down learning barriers (that you may not even be aware of!), and designing courses that aim to work for all students. If you are a passionate educator who is ready to take the next step in advancing your professional development or a new faculty member who'd like to build your pedagogical skill set, please consider participating in the next RISE Faculty Institute cohort.

The institute includes training in the spring 2026 semester, a summer course redesign workshop series, followed by a community of practice in the fall 2026 semester. To support participation faculty are granted a course reduction and stipend

[Learn more about his program](#)



The 2026 RISE Faculty Institute is currently accepting interested applicants; apply through the QR code or click [here](#).

News from Appalachian Studies



Appalachian Arts and Studies in the Schools brought nearly 60 students from Southwest Virginia high schools to campus April 2. The students, called AASIS scholars, and RU students who serve as AASIS mentors visited a criminal justice class in the department's mock courtroom classroom, toured the nursing program's Jo Ann Bingham Clinical Simulation Center and McConnell Library.



They also had time for lunch, browse the farmers' market outside the Bonnie and listen to some live music before heading home. About a half dozen of this year's AASIS scholars intend to join the mentors' ranks when they become RU students this fall.

Research in Appalachia & Honors Urban Regeneration

Students from the Research in Appalachia and Honors Urban Regeneration classes presented their research on the former Radford Foundry's history and future to the Radford Economic Development Authority on April 3. The group had already presented to the Appalachian Regional Commission's Appalachian Collegiate Research Initiative and at the Appalachian Studies Association annual conference. On April 16, they presented their research to the Radford Rotary Club. The foundry operated in various forms from 1896 until 2013, employing 1,500 people at its peak. The city is working to redevelop the 80-acre site. The classes researched the foundry's history, held focus groups with former foundry employees, surveyed neighbors of the former foundry site, researched similar brownfield developments and suggested several alternatives for the site's future.

Transforming the Foundry

Legend

- Concrete Pad
- Foundry Site
- Landfill
- Wastewater Pond

History

The Radford Foundry, established in 1892 as the Radford Pipe and Foundry, was an industrial facility in Radford, Virginia, that leveraged local resources such as water, limestone, sand, coal and iron to produce metal goods. Initially focused on manufacturing pipes and the famous chilled pipe, the foundry expanded its production over time to include a broad range of metal products, contributing significantly to the local economy and regional industrial growth. Foundries like Radford's played a crucial role in supporting sectors like infrastructure, defense, and automotive manufacturing, helping shape the economic landscape. Notable companies that controlled the foundry included the Virginia Iron, Coal & Coke Company in 1899, and the Lynchburg Foundry, which acquired it in 1905 for \$150,000. By the 1970s, the foundry employed around 1,500 people, becoming one of the largest employers in the area.

During World War I, the foundry experienced a surge in demand due to the closing of German ports and supplied cast iron pipe fittings for ammunition plants. In World War II, it supported the war effort by producing parts for Liberty ships, earning the prestigious Maritime "M" Award. During the Cold War, it contributed to the development of Polaris missiles and, by the 1960s, supported the U.S. space program by manufacturing iron components for spaceships including the July 1969 moon landing. In 1977, the foundry was sold to Intermet, shifting its focus to automotive parts, where it continued to innovate with advanced casting techniques to meet evolving industrial needs. The Radford Foundry's legacy is marked by its technological innovations, introducing advanced manufacturing processes that set it apart within the industry. Over the years, the foundry generated significant economic demand for water and electricity, a significant revenue source for the city. The facility also witnessed tragedies, including explosions that resulted in the loss of three workers' lives. Eventually, due to economic reasons, the foundry closed its doors in 2013. Classified as a brownfield, the site has environmental contamination from decades of industrial use. In 2023, the City of Radford purchased the site for \$250,000, aiming to explore economic redevelopment possibilities. Despite those environmental challenges, the site offers many things attractive to industry: substantial water and electricity, on-site railroad access, nearby interstate access, level riverfront land and talent from nearby universities.

Timeline:

- 1892: Founded as Radford Pipe and Foundry Company
- 1896: Panic of 1896
- 1898: Virginia Iron, Coal, and Coke Co.
- 1905: Bought by Lynchburg Foundry Co.
- 1972: Lagoon developed to clean wastewater
- 1975: Ductile iron pipe goes international
- 1977: Sold to Intermet
- 2000: Explosion kills 3
- 2010: Sold to Virginia Casting Industries
- 2012: Grade Radford LLC Explosion
- 2013: Foundry closes
- 2023: Radford City purchases Foundry property
- 2023: Radford City receives grant for cleanup

Challenges

Overall Site Challenges:

- Loss of biodiversity and history
- People's perceptions and misconceptions
- Gentrification of surrounding area
- Funding and timeline
- Making developments complementary

Section Specific Challenges:

- Recruiting industry
- Possible dependence on a single company
- Undevelopable
- Maintenance requirements
- Complex terrain/flooding
- Railroad separates site from Bisset Park
- Contaminants in retention pond

Solutions

Bio-Industry / Aquaponics / Hydroponics

Pros: Stable and growing industry, well-paying jobs, opportunity for expansion, green industry models

Challenges: Relatively small employment pool, distribution volatility

Public Venue / Amphitheater / Farmers' Market

Pros: Bigger area, attract tourism, wide range of use for events

Challenges: Weather dependent, possible noise pollution, further distance than original market, upkeep

Small Businesses

Pros: Tourism appeal, economic revitalization, unity for the community, revenue remains primarily local

Challenges: Limited market size, seasonal reliance, untested business

Honors 310: Urban Regeneration – Dr. J. Davis, G. Addison, K. Bartoli, N. Beach, A. Bryant, B. England, G. Gouyer, A. Green, C. Haas, J. Horton, A. Hunt, S. Ingram, C. Osorio, M. Pizzullo, J. Rosser, W. Sadler, K. Shapleigh, O. Sparks, M. Walton, J. Weiss

Appalachian Studies 495: Research in Appalachia – T. Thornton, W. Dotson, J. Meyers, L. Pendleton, C. Sneed, O. Tidd

QR Code: SCAN FOR MORE INFORMATION

Logos: Radford University, Appalachian Regional Commission, ARC

Award Celebrations

Highlander Research Blitz Winners!

Congratulations to all our graduate students who participated in the competition and to their

faculty mentors.

The 2025 Winners:

1st Place: MaKayla Dulaney – *Dating Apps and Attachment: Anxiety and Avoidance in Modern Romance*

2nd Place: Jeff Wolfe – *Understanding Cross-neurotype Communication*

3rd Place: Kalyn Stiles – *Balancing the Equation: Setting Boundaries for a Sustainable Life*

We look forward to next year's competition and encourage this year's participants and all other graduate students to consider engaging in this exciting event.

Outstanding Graduate Student Awards Winners!

Congratulations to all of the students who participated and their mentors who facilitated their success!

The 2025 Winners:

Graduate Assistant: Rachel Cayton

Graduate Student: Laura Bledsoe

Graduate Teaching Assistant: Morgan Gibson

Graduate Teaching Fellow: Carly Riggs

Doctoral Student: Haley Logan

Building Our Community

NATURE HIKE

Roanoke Star/Mill Mountain Park

May 3, 2025 11:30 – 1:30;

RSVP by April 28, rugsc@radford.edu



Reminder! Celebrate Virginia Volunteer Week at a State Park

Governor Youngkin has officially declared **April 20-26, as [Virginia Volunteer Week](#)**, recognizing the vital role employee volunteers play in our Commonwealth. We invite you to join us in celebrating by making a tangible difference in Virginia's beautiful state parks. Check out the Governor's inspiring message in this [short video](#) and see how your contribution can help preserve and enhance our state's natural treasures.

This year, we're thrilled to offer state employees exclusive volunteer opportunities at state parks across Virginia. Whether you're passionate about Earth Day, seeking a family-friendly activity or looking for a team-building experience, our parks have something for everyone. As a special thank you, volunteer parking will be provided **FREE** of charge. Your time and dedication will directly support the preservation of our beloved state parks.

To locate a state park in your area offering state employee volunteer opportunities, please check out the [list of state parks](#) and complete an application to volunteer. If there is not a state park near you, you can find additional volunteer opportunities at your local volunteer center! Click [here](#) to locate a volunteer center near you through [Serve Virginia](#).

Share your volunteering photos with us! We would like to feature employee volunteer photos in the Employee Experience magazine that is published quarterly. Submit photos [here](#).

Please note: Employees wishing to volunteer at any of these events do not need to complete a volunteer application. Employee volunteers should provide notice to each volunteer site that their hours will be worked during Virginia Volunteer Week. In return, the volunteer site will email a certified letter to the employee attesting to the volunteer hours and site worked. Employees who share their volunteer letters with us, will receive agency participation credit regarding the upcoming 2025 [Commonwealth of Virginia Campaign \(CVC\)](#).

If you have questions, please contact EmployeeEvents@dhrm.virginia.gov mailbox.

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