

**Administrative and Professional Faculty Senate**  
**Business Meeting**  
**October 9, 2024 – 3pm**  
**McConnell Library 170/ RUC 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Board Room**

**Present:** Staci Allen, Doug Benedict, Sandra Bond, Avraham Boruchowitz, Ashlee Claud, Vanessa Conner, Cory Durand, Chat Hyatt, Debra Johnson, Kay Johnson, Mark Lambert, Eric Lovik, Andrew Price, Sean Ramsey, Jess Rothe, Tom Snediker, Malinda Tasler, Susan Trageser (Cabinet Liaison), Juan Urista, Paula Vaughan-Burroughs, Megan Viet

**Absent:** Tom Bennett, David Halpin

**Guests:** Damien Allen, Tonia Andrews, Carmella Carter, Dianne Clark, Princess Clark-Gaspard, Brandon Cohen, Connie Cook, Mary Fowler-Hughes, Mel Fox, John Harvey, Crystal Hubbard, Renee Huth, Christina Keller, Allison McCoy, Dinny McCoy, Margaret McManus, Shannon Moore, J. Renz, Scott Shull, Chris Stafford, Sue Teel, Bethany Usher, Margie Vest, Lisa Wade, Kimberly Wilson

1. **Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 3:01 pm by President Ashlee Claud.

2. **Approval of Minutes:** The minutes from September 11, 2024 were approved.

3. **Academic Calendar Proposed Changes. Guest Speakers: Bethany Usher, Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs; and Katie Piper, University Registrar:**

The calendar information is on OneCampus, and available at:

<https://www.radford.edu/registrar/academic-calendar-updates.html>

Rationale: We are trying to figure out how to make our processes better and improve student success. The calendars had 31 or 32 recognized start dates to a term, and discontinuity between semester terms. Calendars were not scheduled for 3 years out nor has there been campus discussion. Several programs run fast-track programs that overlap with other semesters in unexpected ways. We lose 200 or so students after the first semester, especially new freshmen and new transfer students. Some never come back from Thanksgiving, and others don't come back after winter break. Provost Usher asked Katie to make the calendars more efficient, and to put together 3 calendars with 15ish week semesters incorporating 7.5 week semesters.

Last year, we made state holidays Radford holidays to better match the public school schedules.

Fall semester ends on the same schedule as Virginia Tech's end of semester. Spring has three models. Many have feelings about January 5. The third model has graduation the day before Virginia Tech's graduation. We also avoided affecting the 9-month contract.

Q. Summer hours?

A. A full semester in summer doesn't shortchange the faculty and students. It is a full 7.5-week term with reduced time on both ends of the semester. Do Faculty need a full week between Summer A and Summer B? If not, we can contract the summer terms somewhat. Wintermester and Maymester have dwindled. We won't hold Wintermester at all.

Q. How much time is between the end of the summer session and beginning of the fall semester?

Q. It is a two-week difference for one option, shorter for another version. A short term is probably not feasible. The contract will still start August 10 for T&R Faculty.

Q. Students work between semesters. Will anything be offered differently for them? This is what they survive on for spring semester.

A. We are asking this during the survey. They would start later in August, and have May, June and August to work at a job. It doesn't change the number of weeks in class. We are concerned about students getting involved in outside jobs. If they go home and work at Target, they may decide it is easier to work than go to college. It's hard to manage the long-term investment.

Our sister institution academic calendar dates are all over the place. We are in the realm of what they are doing.

Q. The Odessa & Santa Monica Colleges cited are 2-year colleges. Are there any examples of a 4-year college with this model?

A. There is one in New Jersey, and Randolph College in Virginia. Montclair College has gone to 3 semesters. We will have to experiment. We are not doing this independently; Jerel Benton (Assistant Provost, Student Success) is involved. Our changes are student-centered, and not changing is an inadequate response. Community Colleges have had more flexibility.

Q. Have you looked at the Big South Conference institutions' start dates? This is a concern for Athletics. Women's soccer could come back to practice July 30. The coaches must be here, and housing and meals provided for the athletes before campus is open.

A. These proposals are shifting one week at the most from before. We need to identify these areas and address them. This will be added to the survey.

Q. In any of these models, is there still Summer A, Summer B, Summer C?

A. Summer also has 15 weeks with a 7-week semester in it. It's a new model for 2025-2026.

Q. (Follow-up) – Financial aid, trying to clarify what goes on in intercession.

A. We can consider going to 1 and 2. Jerel is excited about fall, spring & summer registration completed simultaneously to make financial aid work better for these students. Students can only be in 1 term at a time right now and can't take a 7.5-week term. With new schedules, students can take a mix for more flexible scheduling. Administrative benefits are also realized in terms of billing, etc.

Q. What do we know about causes of student loss between fall and spring semesters?

A. We don't know for sure. These are students in good academic standing. If they don't come back after Thanksgiving, it's less likely they'll come back in spring semester. There are correlations between engagement activities and whether students come back.

A cool thing for us to consider, which is on the survey, is whether we have a separate exam week with a separate exam schedule. Exams could be taken during their regular class period, with an exception process for students who need a longer period. Provost Usher noted Katie Piper told her a final exam period is not required. It's not built into the shorter sessions. Eliminating a final exam period lowers the stress of the students. The provost also

learned five weeks of winter break is not required, either. It started in the 1970s for schools on semesters to save on heating costs because of the energy crisis.

Q. When will the calendar be implemented?

A. (Katie) It will be in place for the 2025-2026 academic year. We will know what the model will be by November. We're collecting feedback right now. (Provost) We will build these out as three years, and take the feedback to make nuanced changes.

Q. Will students' room and board and fees go up? They'll be here longer, and we need to feed them longer.

A. It's the same amount of time. The time is shifted, but not the length.

[Provost left for another meeting.]

Q. Option 1 would end Winter Our Turn. New Faculty Orientation and RISE are at the beginning of the semester.

A. Put it in the feedback. I've heard most of the challenges with option 1. Some questions on the survey are specifically for students.

Q. That's good information about Admissions. How do students feel about it? Are there any concerns about affecting the Admissions model?

A. We've heard from some grad programs.

Q. How are you communicating with the students about the calendar models?

A. OneCampus, email, and at the Bonnie and the library. (Suggestion to use digital signage.)

Q. Montclair is migrating to 3 semesters on campus. Is Radford looking at this? Montclair has 12 months of housing for students.

A. I've been here 6 months after many of the conversations had already started. This is probably a good question for Bethany. I have the sense we're not trying to go to 7-week classes.

Q. Do you know if faculty/staff burnout was taken into account? If we start by the 5<sup>th</sup> or 12<sup>th</sup>, we will have to move in students early to run programs like the wellness center.

A. Put that in the feedback. Some things are non-negotiable, like a 15-week term, but we want feedback.

Q. If instruction goes up to the last day, how does that work for students having time to study for their last exam?

A. Submit feedback. There will probably still be a break.

Q. Are there any issues with community colleges (esp. NRCC) if we change?

A. I don't know. Hopefully people involved with transfers will give feedback. (Response: If we move our calendar, we are more in line with NRCC).

#### **4. Academic Calendar Forum Reminder:**

- Main Campus, October 10 at 1pm in Heth 43 or zoom (link found in announcement from The Office of the Provost)

- Website for Academic Calendar Updates:  
<https://www.radford.edu/registrar/academic-calendar-updates.html>
- Survey for feedback – Closes October 18
  - [https://radford.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV\\_1MqIFtuYlis14N0](https://radford.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1MqIFtuYlis14N0)

Katie – We held it today at RHEC. Encourage them to come in person.

- 5. Coffee with the President:** Tentatively on November 6. Submit big pictures questions to Ashlee.
- 6. Morale Survey Update:** Sean Ramsey will be running reports, working smarter, but not harder.
- 7. January AP Senate Meeting:** The January 8 meeting will probably be canceled. President Bret will probably be speaking to us during spring break.
- 8. Announcements:**
  - Highlanders Festival this weekend. Ashlee is at the clock stage all day.
  - Malinda – Women's soccer today.
  - Vanessa -- Annual Day of Gratitude in Kyle Hall, November 15.
  - Sean – If anyone has any commentary about the Zoom, send it to Ashlee.
- 9. Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

**Future Meeting Dates:**

- November 13
- December 11
- January 8