



**RADFORD UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS  
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE MEETING  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2025  
KYLE HALL ROOM 340  
RADFORD VA**

**DRAFT  
MINUTES**

**COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT**

Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair  
Mr. William Davis, Vice Chair  
Ms. Jeanne S. Armentrout  
Ms. Joann S. Craig  
Mr. Jonathan D. Sweet  
Dr. Matthew Close

**OTHERS PRESENT**

Dr. Bethany Usher, Provost  
Dr. Bret Danilowicz, President  
Dr. Rob Hoover, Vice President for Finance and Administration  
Dr. Angela Joyner, Vice President for Economic Development and Corporate Education  
Ms. Penny Helms White, Vice President for Advancement and University Relations Communication  
Dr. Dannette Beane, Vice President for Enrollment Management and Strategic Communications  
Dr. Susan Trageser, Vice President for Student Affairs  
Additional Radford University administrators, faculty, and staff

**CALL TO ORDER**

Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair, formally called the meeting to order at 8:30 am in Kyle Hall Room 340 on the campus of Radford University.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair, asked for a motion to approve the September 11, 2025, agenda. Mr. William C. Davis so moved, Ms. Joanna S. Craig seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair, asked for a motion to approve June 5, 2025, minutes. Ms. Joann S. Craig so moved, Mr. Jonathan D. Sweet seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

## **ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATES**

Dr. Usher began by presenting an impressive array of academic points of pride, including full accreditation for School Psychology EdS program and the Nursing's JoAnn Bingham Clinical Simulation Center. Radford also hosted over 400 high-achieving high school students from across the Commonwealth, with the Arts and Humanities Gov Schools in Radford and the Gov School for Medicine and Health Sciences in Roanoke. Students and faculty from across the university spent the summer participating in conferences and research internationally, showing the impact of our programs.

Provost Usher presented an overview of the Division of Academic Affairs. With seven colleges, 656 employees, and a budget of \$98M, Academic Affairs is the largest division of Radford University.

The priorities of Academic Affairs are:

- Contribute to the economic and cultural well-being of the region and the Commonwealth
- Support undergraduate and graduate students across their educational journeys so that they meet their goals and contribute to being leaders of thriving communities
- Offer a portfolio of high-quality academic programs in multiple modalities aligned with our mission and that are regularly updated through a Curriculum Lifecycle process
- Engage all students in experiential education that prepares them to be successful in their first jobs and throughout their careers
- Offer undergraduate degree pathways from high school and community college to Radford University, including the Tartan Transfer with VCCS partners
- Offer accelerated and guaranteed admission graduate advanced degree pathways for Radford students and alumni
- Support the development of Radford University in Roanoke as the premier destination for health education in Virginia.
- Create an engaged, inclusive, and supportive community for faculty as teacher-scholars

Academic Affairs had three major responsibilities in the two-year plan, on which we were updated.

Improve academic programming:

- While over the two years, an initial review showed that the overall academic portfolio is the right fit for the needs of our students and the Commonwealth, it is a challenge to have curriculum that evolves. Faculty Senate approved a new Curriculum Lifecycle committee that will be responsible for supporting the curriculum lifecycle. Additionally, the new general education program will better meet the needs of our students. Because of SCHEV pressure and the changes needed to optimize the new general education program, the BOV may see several curricular change proposals this year
- In terrific news, we saw data from the Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond, showing the economic value of college graduates in Virginia

Increase retention and progression rates:

- We saw preliminary enrollment and retention rates (mirrored in the Enrollment Management presentation), showing the distribution of students, retention rates, and graduation numbers. While the total number of students has met our goal of stabilization (or slight increase), we see shifting patterns of enrollment (with increases in Education and Human Development, and Nursing). Retention rates remained stable, and we heard about the long-term plan to continue helping students persist and graduate

Reposition academic programs and administration to increase efficiency and effectiveness:

- We saw the ten-year pattern of student enrollment and faculty numbers, demonstrating that the university has appropriately been scaling the size of the faculty to meet the needs of our students. Of note, RU has significantly reduced reliance on part-time adjuncts, resulting in savings that can be used to support other areas of academic programming
- We welcome Dr. Rachel Williams as Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts, who started this summer
- There are four leadership positions with active searches underway in Academic Affairs, as Provost Usher continues to reposition the division to meet the strategic needs of the university. We expect to be welcoming these leaders over the next year
  - Dean, College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences
  - Assistant Provost, Graduate Affairs
  - Assistant Vice President for Health Sciences
  - Assistant Vice President for Radford Online
- Despite uncertainty with federal research funding, Radford continues to have good success in securing research funding that aligns with our mission (research and scholarship that engages students and supports the community)

Mr. William Davis asked if there was a special office or entity that worked with our colleges to help us with grants. Dr. Jeanne Mekolichick, who is over Sponsored Programs and Grants Management, shared with the committee that there are things in place to help departments and colleges seek out and apply for grants.

Dr. Betty Jo Foster stated how impressed she was with the 1-18 faculty/student ratio.

There were no Board items that require approval.

### **FACULTY SENATE REPORT**

Faculty Senate Update presentation provided by Faculty Senate President, Dr. Matthew Close.

Highlights from this report were:

- GenEd model rollout with starting timeline of 2027
- AI Core Team
- Internal Governance Review
- Faculty Morale Survey
- COACHE Survey (will report in Dec)

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair, asked for a motion to adjourn the September 11, 2025, Academic Excellence and Student Success Committee Meeting. Mr. Jonathan Sweet so moved, and Mr. William Davis seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 9:29am.