

Academic Excellence and Student Success Committee

September 2026



Radford
UNIVERSITY



Academic Excellence and Student Success Committee

9:00a.m.**

September 17, 2026

Kyle Hall, Room 340, Radford, VA

DRAFT
Agenda

Call to Order	Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair
Approval of Agenda	Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair
Approval of Minutes o June 4, 2026	Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair
- o Academic Affairs Update - o Academic Affairs Overview - o Strategic Plan - o Questions & Conversations	Dr. Bethany M. Usher, <i>Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs</i>
o Faculty Senate Update	Dr. Courtney Watson, <i>Faculty Representative to the Board of Visitors</i>
o Other Business	Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair
o Adjournment	Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair

**** All start times for committee meetings are approximate. Meetings may begin either before or after the listed approximate start time as committee members are ready to proceed.**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair

Mr. William Davis, Vice Chair

Ms. Nancy Rice

Ms. Joann S. Craig

Ms. Jeanne Fishwick

Dr. Courtney Watson, (Non-Voting Faculty Advisory Representative)

Meeting Materials



Radford
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Academic Excellence and Student Success Committee Report

BETHANY M USHER

Provost and Executive Vice President for
Academic Affairs

September 17, 2026



Agenda

- Academic Affairs Overview
- Strategic Plan
- Questions and Conversation



Academic Affairs Overview

Division of Academic Affairs

Artis College of Science and Technology

College of Education and Human Development

College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences

College of Nursing

College of Visual and Performing Arts

Davis College of Business and Economics

Waldron College of Health and Human Services



Academic Affairs at Radford University cultivates an inclusive, experiential learning environment that ignites lifelong curiosity, and empowers graduates to lead thriving communities through service, research, and innovation.

Academic Affairs Strategic Priorities



**Develop a
Strategic
Curricular
Portfolio**



**Improve
Student
Success**



**Ensure
Experiential
and Work-based
Learning
Opportunities**



**Foster Multi-
Disciplinary
and Community
Collaboration**



**Support
Thriving
Faculty and
Staff**

Use technology and data wisely to improve outcomes

Academic Affairs Budget and Personnel

FY27 Total Budget: \$102M

E&G Personnel: \$92M (90%)

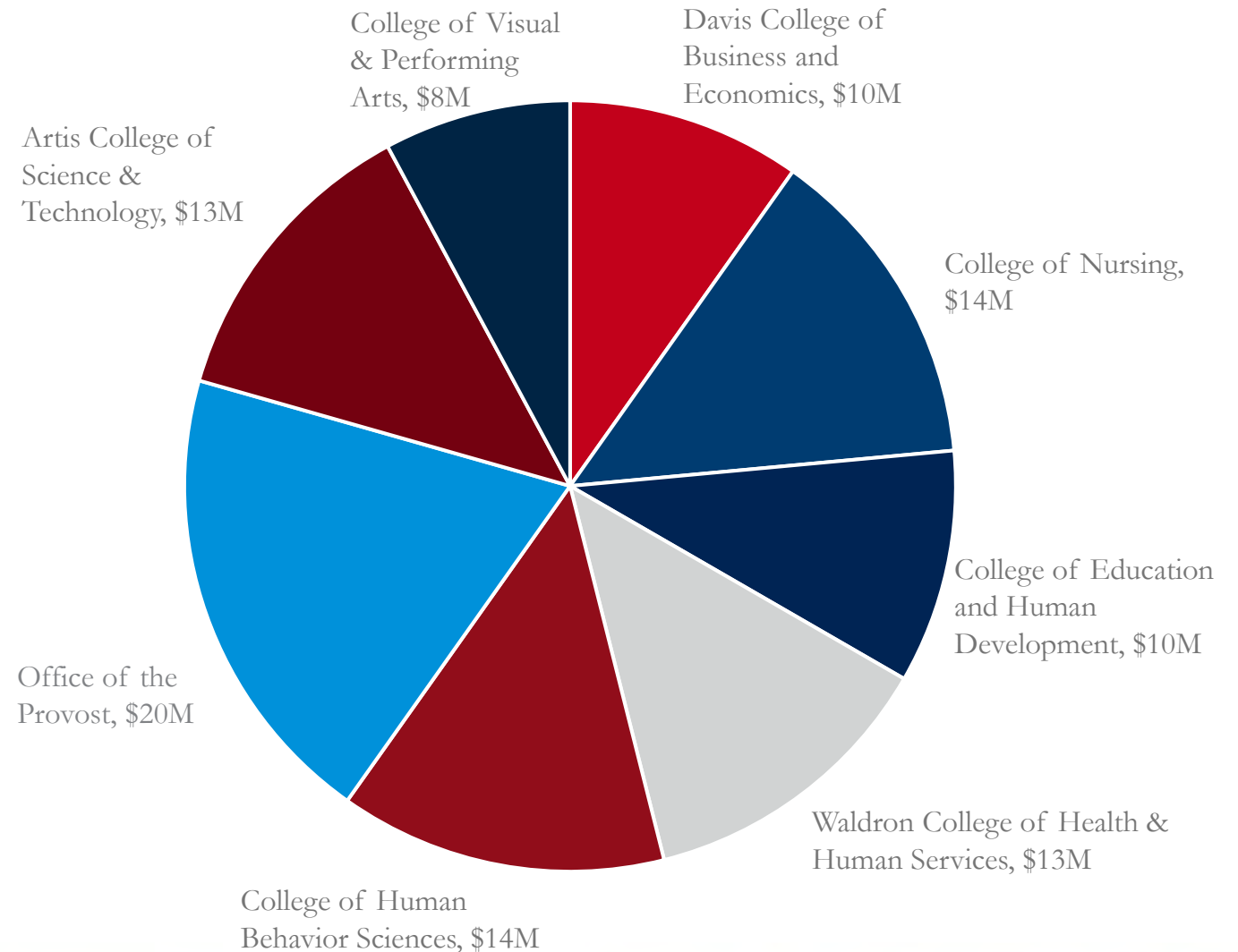
E&G Non-personnel: \$10.3 (10%)

Full-Time Employees: 676

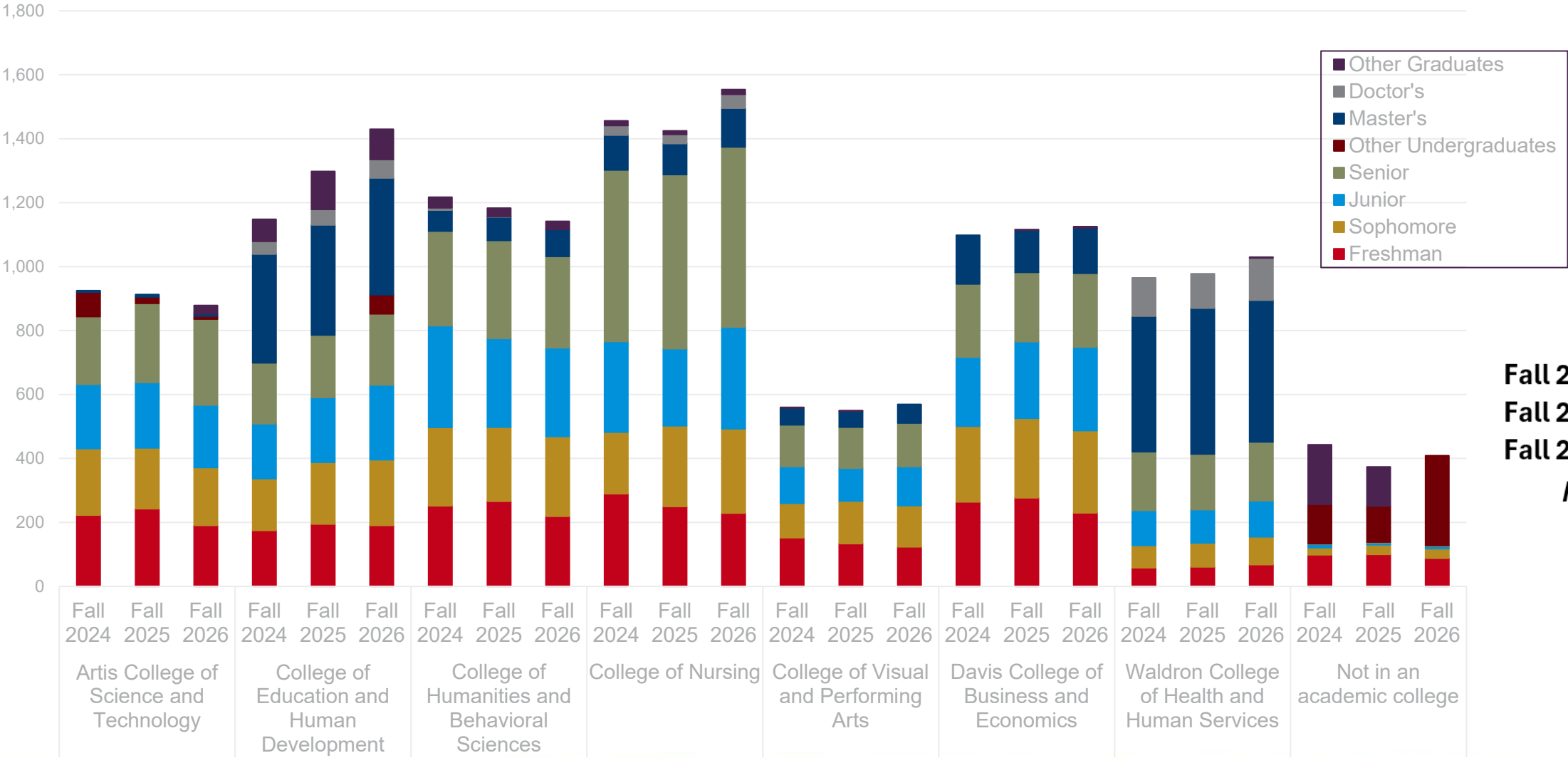
Teaching and Research Faculty: 438 (65%)

Administrative Professional Faculty: 132 (19%)

Classified Staff: 106 (16%)



Total Enrollment by College



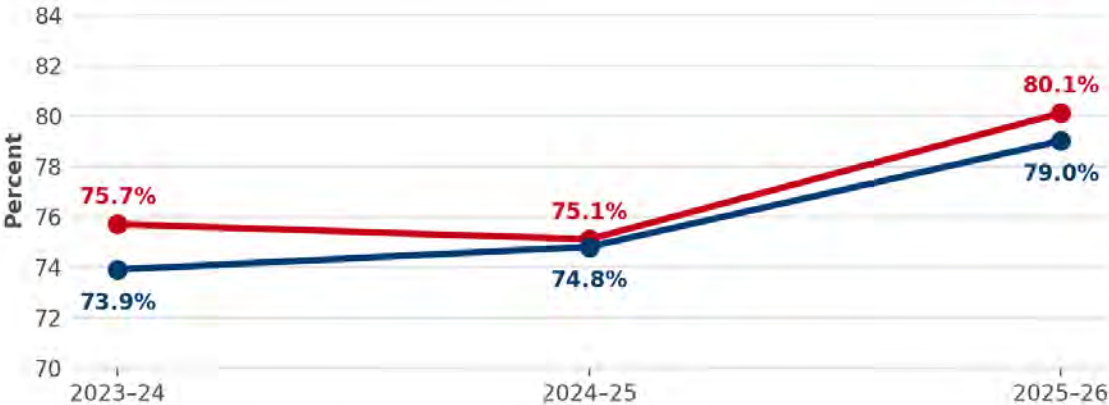
Fall 2024: 7,812
Fall 2025: 7,837
Fall 2026: 7,826
preliminary

Retention Update

Fall 2026 retention tracking as of August 31, 2026

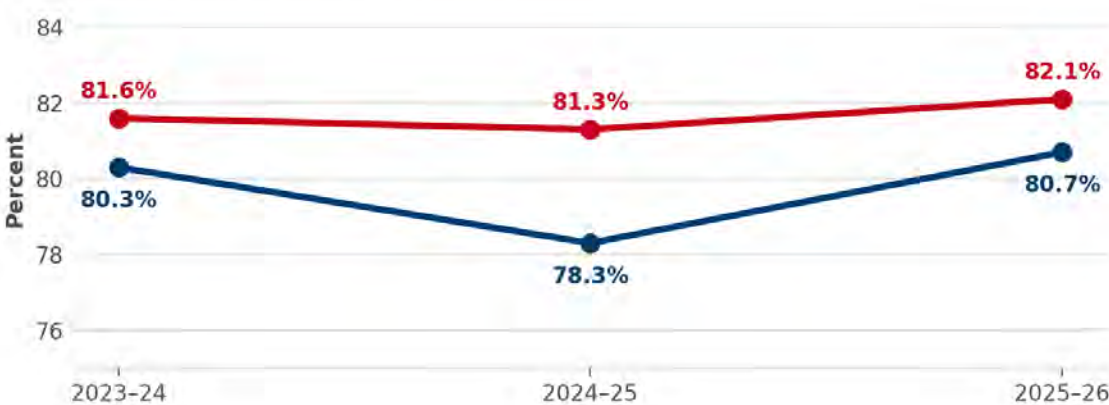
First-Time Freshman Retention

Fall-to-fall retention



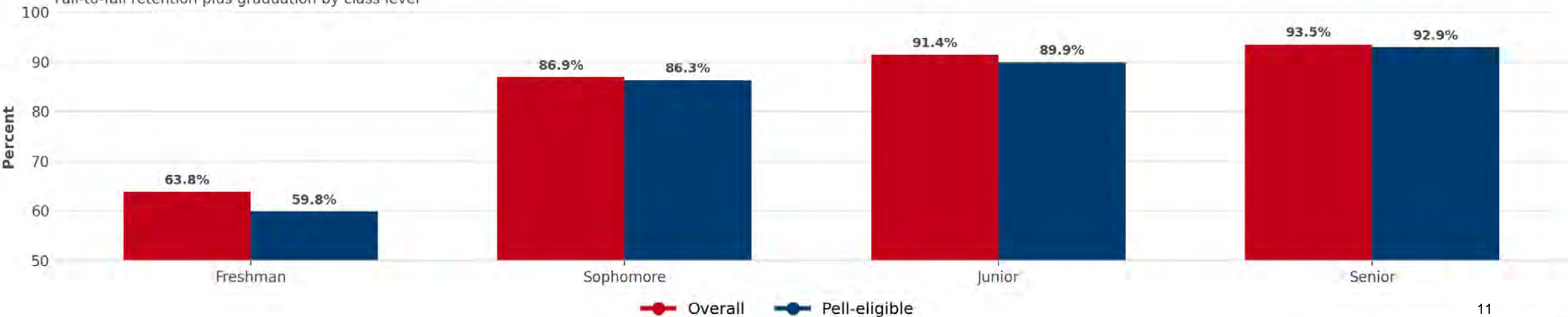
New Transfer Retention

Retention plus graduation

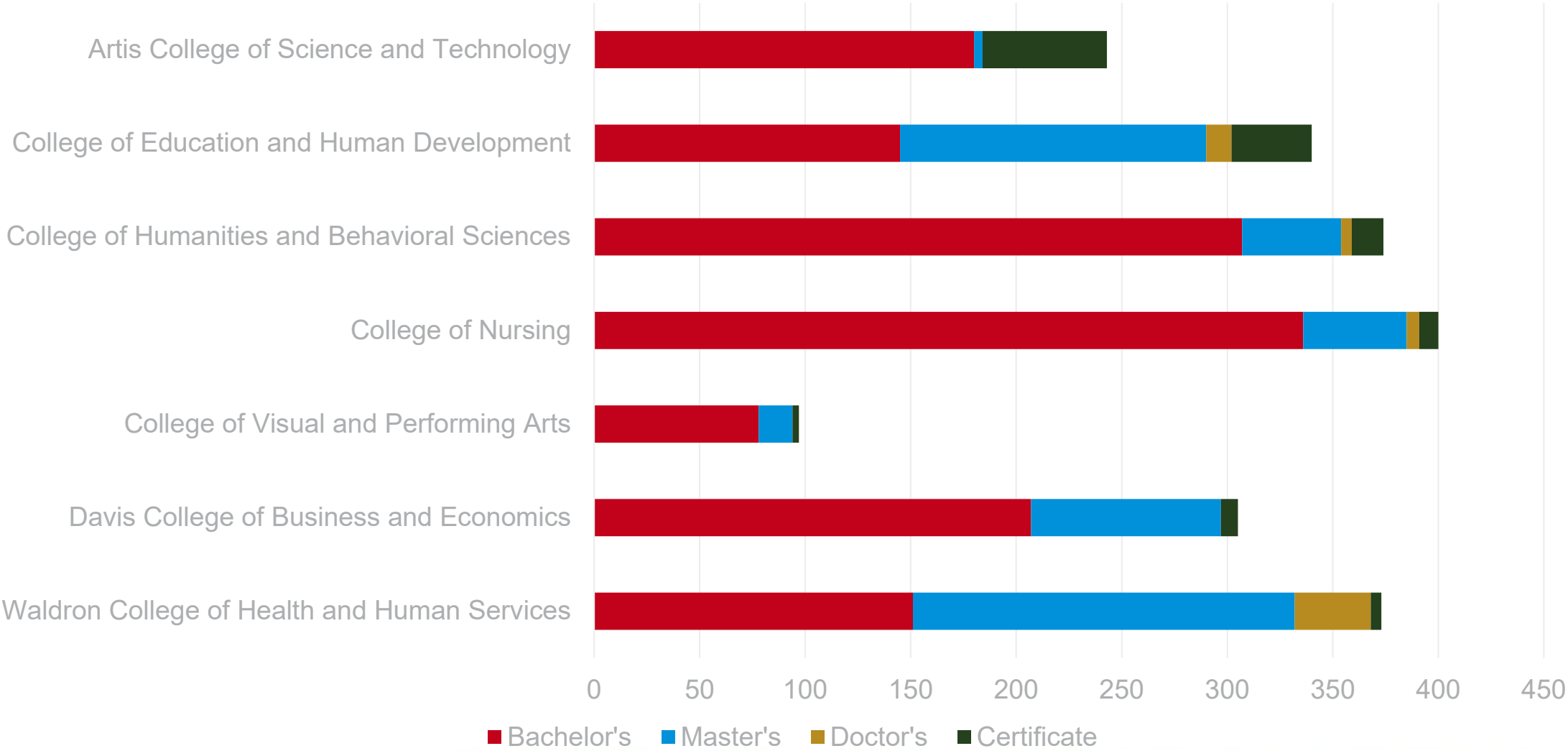


2025-26 Continuing Student Retention

Fall-to-fall retention plus graduation by class level



2,080 Degrees Conferred in 2025-2026



Academic Affairs Leadership

Artis College of
Science and
Technology
Interim Dean
Christine Small

College of Education
and Human
Development
Dean
Tamara Wallace

College of
Humanities and
Behavioral Science
Dean
Jeff Aspelmeier

College of Nursing
Dean
Wendy Downey

College of Visual and
Performing Arts
Dean
Rachel Williams

Davis College of
Business and
Economics
Dean
Donna McCloskey

Waldron College of
Health and Human
Services
Dean
Kenneth Cox

**Provost and
Executive Vice
President**
Bethany M. Usher

Executive Assistant
to the Provost
Karen Montgomery

Finance and
Administration
Director
Adam Neal

Academic Affairs
Associate Provost
Jeanne Mekolichich

Student Success
Assistant Provost
Jerel Benton

Curriculum and
Academic Quality
Assistant Provost
Jessica Stowell

Graduate Affairs
Assistant Provost
Agida Manizade

University Registrar
Katie Piper

Health Sciences
Assistant Vice President
Ashley Wells

Radford Online
Assistant Vice President
Adam Barger



The background of the slide features a large, faint, light red shield shape, which is the logo of Radford University. The shield is centered and occupies most of the slide's width and height.

Radford University Strategic Plan

Academic Affairs Strategic Priorities

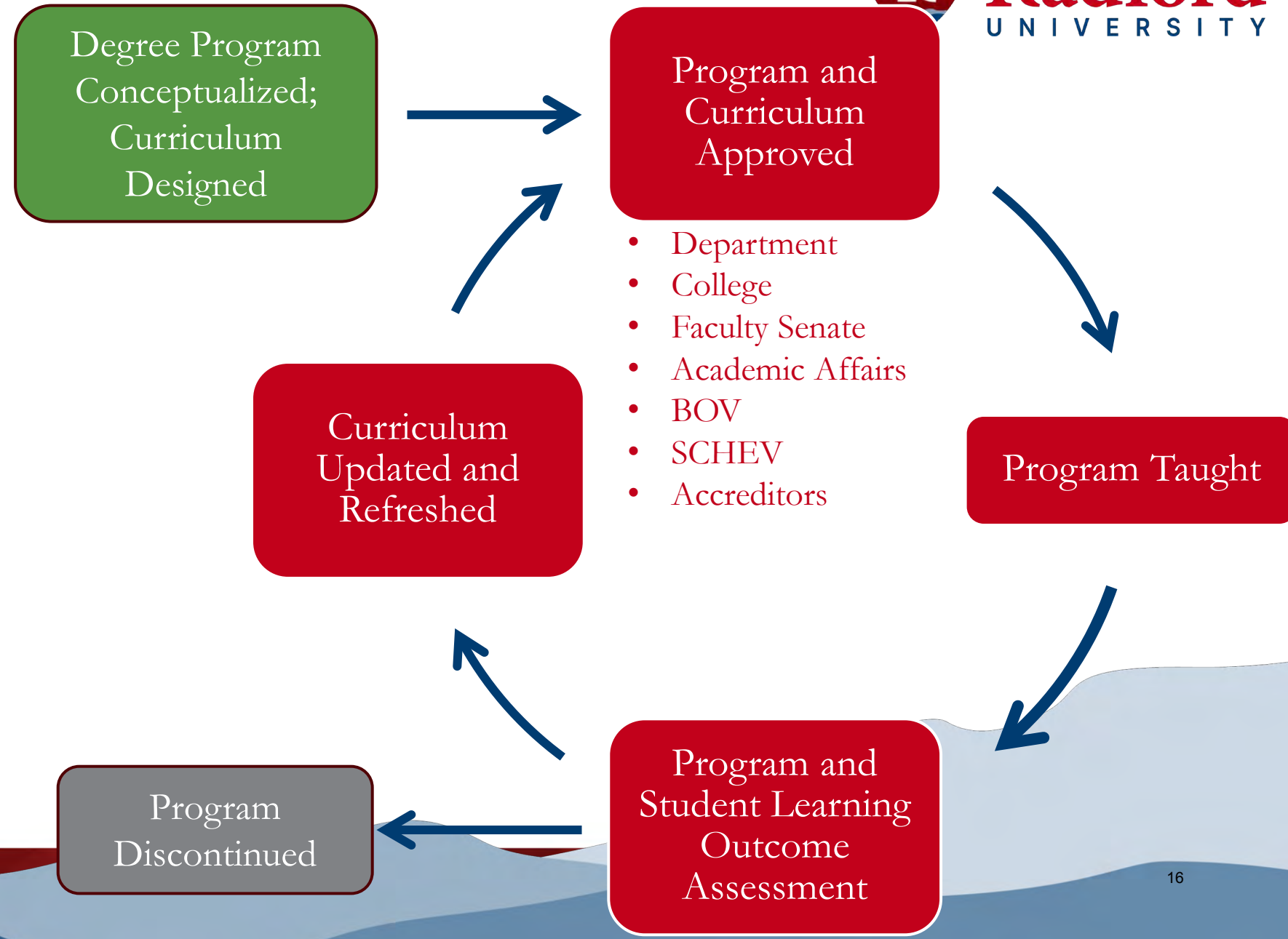
Develop a Strategic Curricular Portfolio

- General Education
- Health Sciences
- Online Education
- Graduate Education

Curriculum Lifecycle and Academic Portfolio Evolution

Program viability considerations

- Faculty Expertise
- Academic Coherence
- Program Design
- Student Learning Outcomes
- Mission Alignment
- Student Enrollment and Graduation Rates (SCHEV)
- Workforce Needs
- Student ROI
- University ROI



General Education launching Fall 2027



- RADF101 designed
- Initial courses designated
- Major guides being updated
 - 4 year plans
 - Transfer
- Simplified format enables:
 - Lean Online GenEd
 - Lean Roanoke Gen Ed
 - Transfer compatibility

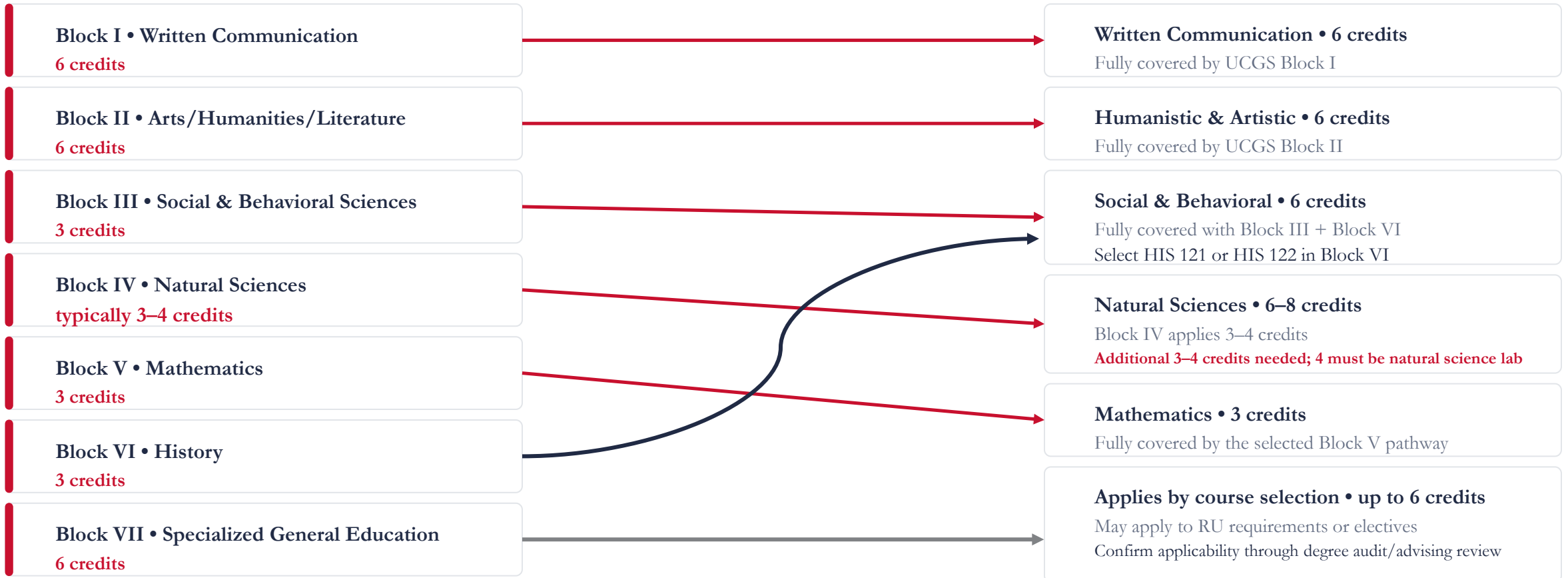
Inte- gration	Navigate Your Journey (3)
Inquiries 18 credit minimum	Social and Behavioral Inquiry (6)
	Humanistic and Artistic Inquiry (6)
	Scientific Inquiry (with lab) (6-8)
Competencies 9 credits	Mathematics (3)
	Written Communication (6)
Inte- gration	RADF101 Find your place here (3)

UCGS → New RU General Education

Credit-level map • Fall 2027 curriculum

UCGS REQUIREMENTS

RU GENERAL EDUCATION

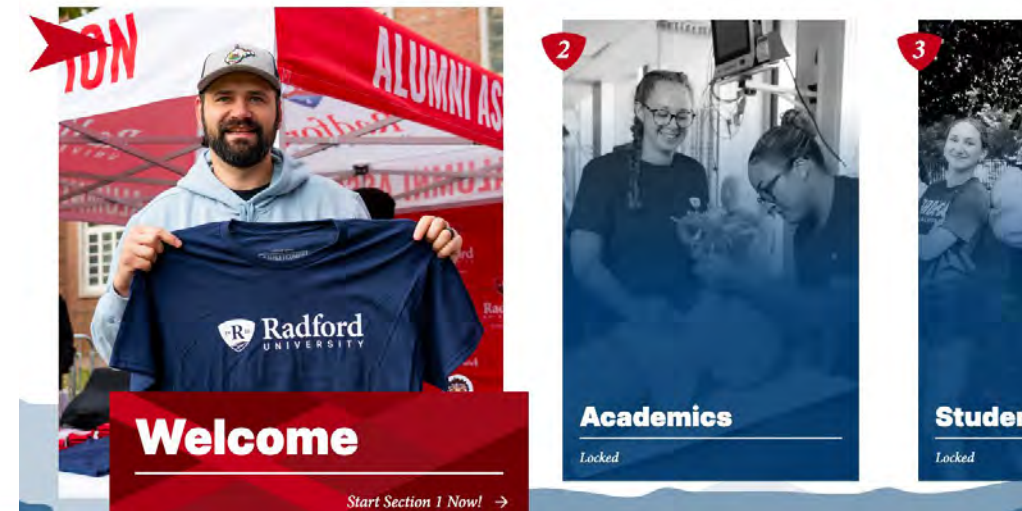


■ Direct application

■ Selection required

Graduate Affairs

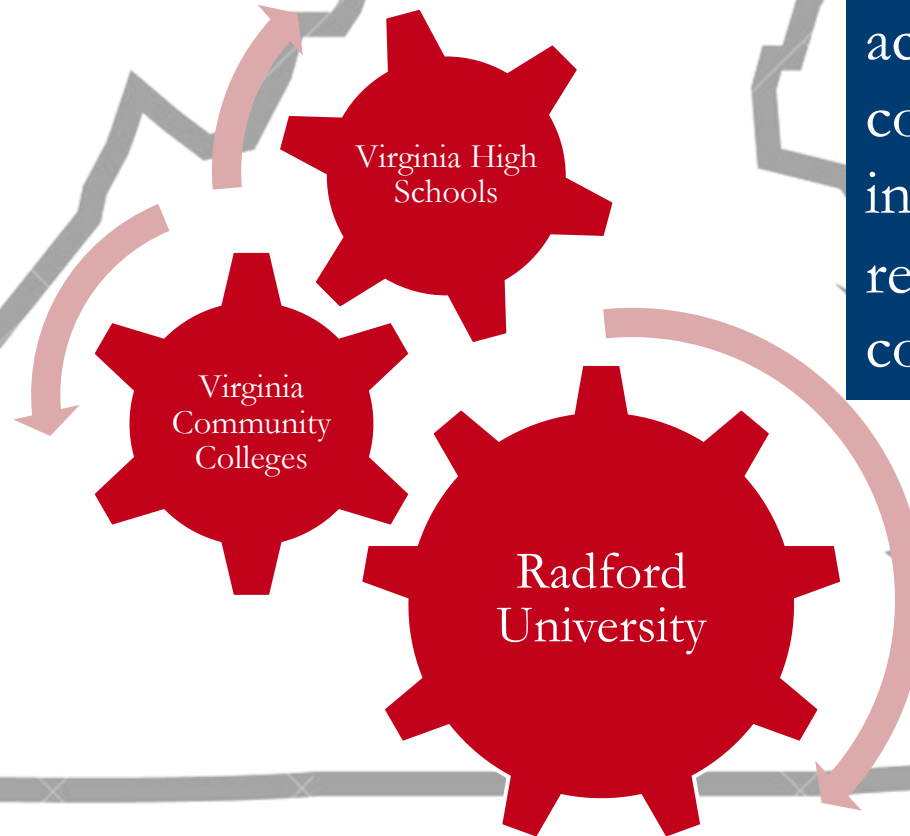
- Launched new interactive, online orientation
- Developed new leadership academies for professional development:
 - Leadership Academy
 - Teaching Academy
 - Research Academy
- Enhanced outreach to non-enrolled, active students resulting in increase in continuous enrollment.
- Expanded graduate student engagement.
- Developing graduate persistence measures.
- Increase in Graduate Assistantship pay



Virginia Center for Dual Enrollment Excellence

Statewide hub that expands affordable credentialing pathways for high school teacher.

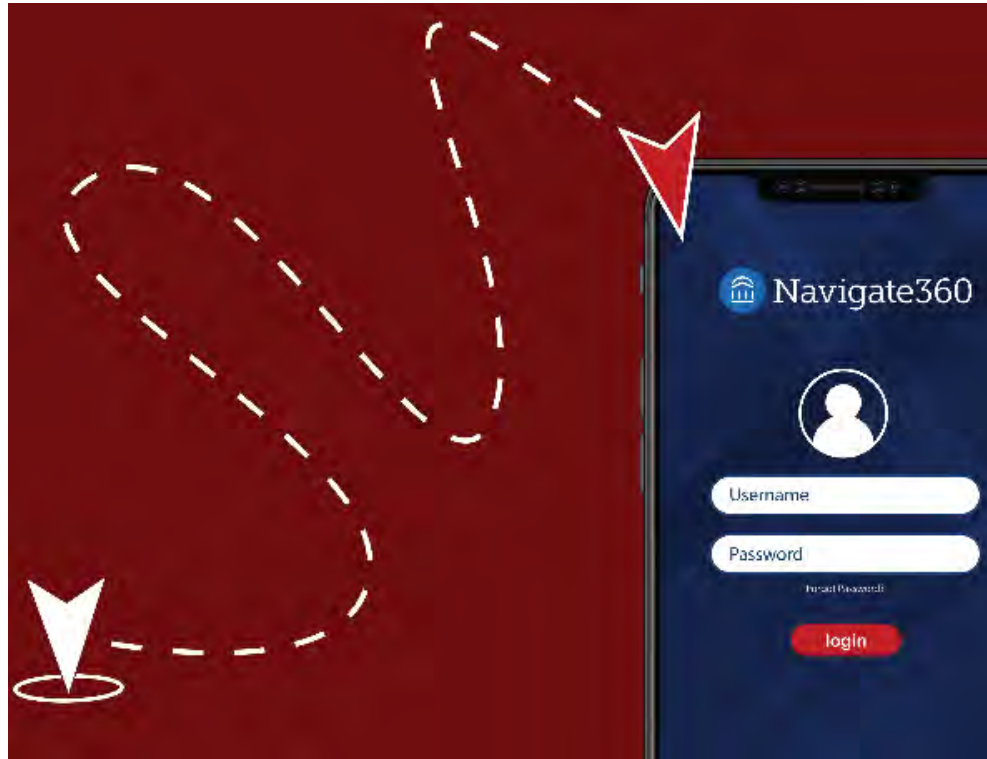
- **Math**
- **Biology**
- Humanities
- Psychology
- History
- Political Science
- Chemistry
- Communication



Ensure every Virginia student has access to rigorous college-level instruction, regardless of zip code.

Improve Student Success

New Student Support



Strong student engagement with
Navigate360



New Student Convocation: a
signature university-wide welcome

Honors College

- Record 151 new honors students this fall (up from the previous high of 148 in 2025).
- Cohort also includes a record 21 transfer honors students, up from 12 in 2024 and 2025.



National Recognition for Excellence in Academic Advising

- Solitaire M. Kelley, Director of University Advising awarded NACADA “Advising Administrator of the Year”
- Kristina Contreras, Assistant Director of Advising selected to participate in NACADA “Emerging Advising Leaders Program”



Ensure Experiential and Work-based Learning Opportunities

National Summer Research internships

Lily Backus (Physics): NSF Research Experience internship at the Naval Research Laboratory



Grace Addison (Chemistry) completed a Materials Science Engineering internship at NASA's Glenn Research Center



AI Innovation



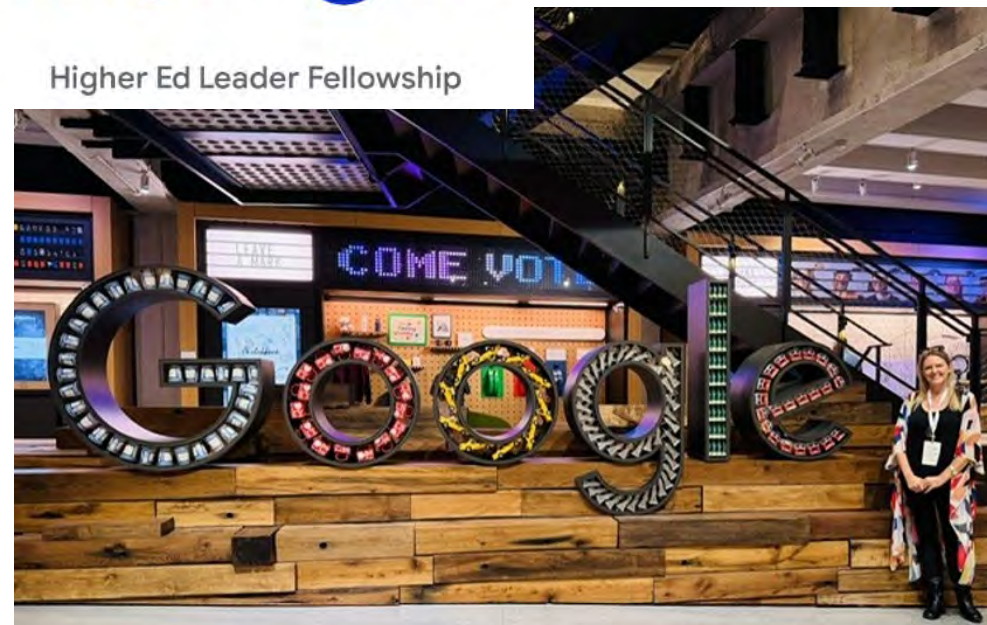
Join Radford's 'AI for Higher Ed' Funded
Learning Opportunity



All Radford faculty have access to ACUE's AI professional development modules; giving faculty a common framework for AI in teaching and scholarship.



Higher Ed Leader Fellowship



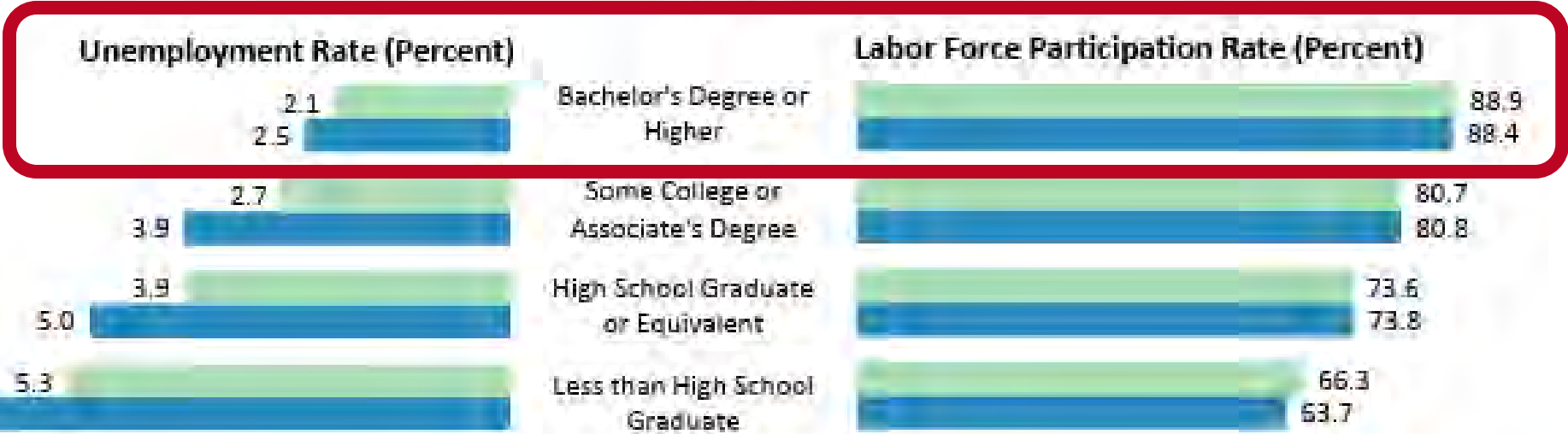
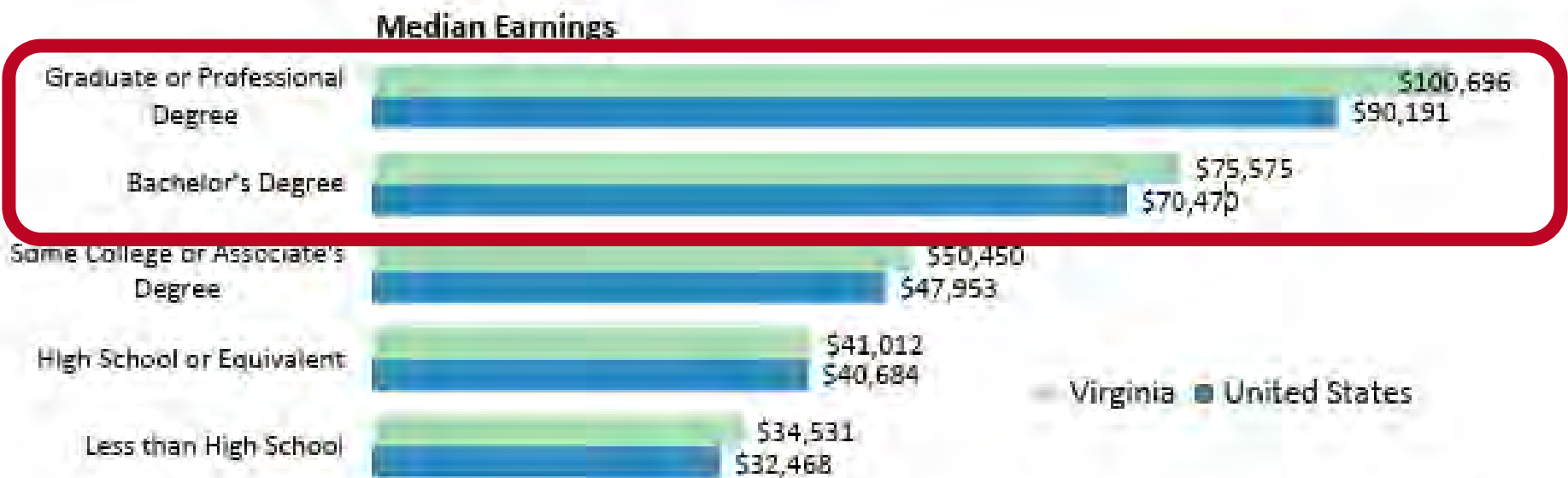
Dr. Sam Steidle: Google & GSV Ed Leader
Fellowship

Radford Career Commitment

- **Radford has 92-93% placement rate**
- Faculty and advisors completing VTOP training
- Expanded emphasis on career preparation in RADF101
- Creating curricular and co-curricular four-year plans
- Expanded internships and placements for current students
- Expanded support for new alumni
 - Career services advisors for young alumni
 - *Alumni mentoring*
 - *Additional educational/ skills training*



Higher Education Return on Investment In Virginia



Source: Federal Reserve Bank of Richmond from the American Community Survey

https://www.richmondfed.org/region_communities/regional_data_analysis/reports/educational_attainment



Foster Multi-Disciplinary and Community Collaboration



Governor's Schools @ RU



Summer Governor's Schools in Arts and Humanities in Radford



Summer Governor's School in Health Sciences in Roanoke



Academic Year New River Valley Governor's School in the Arts and Humanities.

Health Sciences Strategy

Recognized as the premier destination for
healthcare education and talent

Radford University
Health Sciences

Academic Programs
Primary, Allied, and
Mental Health

Center for Rural
Health

Health career pipeline
development

Community
collaborations for
education, research,
and service

Improving the health and well-being
of rural and underserved
communities





Health Science Building Project Vision

As an embodiment of **Radford University's** culture of care,
the Academic Health Sciences Building in Roanoke will **welcome, inspire, and empower** students, faculty, staff, and community members working to create healthy, thriving communities **in Southwest Virginia.**

By making well-being **visible**, encouraging academic **exploration**, and showcasing **interprofessional** education, the new facility will promote workforce development and inspire life-long learning in service of the **community** and **the Commonwealth.**

Project Drivers:

The new building will foster....



What makes the Radford Roanoke building project unique:

Stand-alone campus
for undergraduates and
graduates in Roanoke

*The Radford University experience
in Roanoke provides a very
different experience than being in
Radford*

- *more appealing to non-traditional students*
- *access to urban culture & amenities*
- *greater variety of professional exposure*

Place-driven opportunity
in Roanoke, to support better
health outcomes in
Southwestern Virginia

*Regional population of 315,000 –
the Roanoke Valley is a key nexus
of healthcare innovation in Virginia*

- *Carilion Clinic*
- *Anthem Health*
- *Virginia Tech*
- *HCA Virginia Health*
- *Wells Fargo*
- *Salem VA Medical Center*
- *Roanoke Blacksburg Innovation Alliance*

**Comprehensive Health
Sciences Program**
across a broad spectrum of
health professions

*Health Sciences programs coming
together to train future health
professionals to serve the commonwealth
of Virginia and rural communities*

- *Nursing, Respiratory Therapy,
Emergency Services*
- *Physician Assistant*
- *Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy*
- *Applied Biotechnology Science, Medical
Laboratory Science*
- *Public Health, Health Administration,
Social Work, Nutrition*

Support thriving faculty and staff

Research and Sponsored Programs



Record Proposals: 100 external submissions totaling \$25.9M+ (Radford University record)



Student Impact: 787 students supported in FY26 (Up from 327 in FY25 - 140% increase)



Faculty Engagement: 77 submitters (51% increase) and 57 awardees (19% increase) with ~1/3 being first-time Principal Investigators



Expanded External Partnerships: 35 active collaborations (25% increase)



External Award Growth: 64 new external awards (33% increase) secured with \$7.1M in total funding – total funding down \$1M

External Support Highlights



Radford University received a \$50,000 grant from the Jessie Ball duPont Fund to launch the Radford University Community History Research Collective



Radford University CARES mobile clinic received \$100,000 grant from AEP to support workforce development and community clinics



The College of Education and Human Development awarded \$130,000 state grant funding to support the Registered Teacher Apprenticeship Program

Board Items

Board Responsibilities for Academic Excellence and Student Success Committee



Approve establishing or closing academic degree programs

Approve establishing, merging, and closing schools and colleges

Approve Teaching and Research Faculty Handbook updates

Approve Faculty Tenure (Promotion notification)



Advocacy, Support, and Consultation

Notification of Academic program name changes

Notification of Academic Affairs updates and activities



Questions and Conversation

Faculty Senate Update

Dr. Courtney Watson, Faculty Senate President

2026-2027 Faculty Senate



Introduction: Who We Are

Faculty Senate Representatives

- Elected by each department or school
- 52 Senators
- Committees: Governance, Campus Environment, Resource Allocation, Faculty Issues, and Curriculum

Faculty Senate Executive Council

- Six elected council members
- President ex officio

“The purpose of the Faculty Senate is to enable the faculty to fulfill its function with respect to academic and educational policies and other affairs of Radford University. The Faculty Senate is intended to assure forceful and articulate representation of faculty interests and of the faculty view of the common good of the university community, in accordance with recognized principles of university governance.”

From the Preamble of the Constitution of the Faculty Senate

Current Items

- Supporting General Education Implementation
- University Policies Draft Review
- Faculty Morale Survey Data Analysis and Communication Plan
- Update at December Board of Visitors Meeting
- Academic Governance Revision Task Force
- University AI Initiatives
- Culture of Care Convocation Panel
- Town Hall Proposals: AI, State of the Sector, Center for Rural Health
- Communication, Clarity, Visibility of Shared Governance

Minutes



Radford
UNIVERSITY



**RADFORD UNIVERSITY BOARD OF VISITORS
ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE AND STUDENT SUCCESS COMMITTEE MEETING
June 4, 2026
KYLE HALL ROOM 340
RADFORD VA**

**DRAFT
MINUTES**

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

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

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. Tricia Smith, Interim 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 9:18am 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 June 4, 2026, agenda. Ms. Jeanne S. Armentrout so moved, Ms. Joann S. Craig seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair, asked for a motion to approve March 19, 2026, minutes. Ms. Joann S. Craig so moved, Mr. Jonathan D. Sweet seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

ACADEMIC AFFAIRS UPDATES

- Provost Usher highlighted many points of pride for our students and faculty:
 - Dean Donna McCloskey of the Davis College of Business and Economics has an impact on Radford University as well as the Radford Community
 - Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
 - Financial Success Center
 - Saxby's coffee shop will be run by students (in conjunction with Chartwell's)
 - Mock Trial Team
 - Ended season in to 20% nationally
 - Two Biology majors named Goldwater Scholars
 - Honors College graduates a record number of students (63)
 - Davis College Competitions
 - David College Innovation Challenge
 - American Marketing Association International Collegiate Conference
 - Radford College Fed Challenge (in Philadelphia)
 - RU opens CARES Mobile Health Clinic
 - In partnership with NRV Community Services, VA Dept of Health (NRV District) and Anthem HealthKeepers Plus
 - Grand Opening of Radford's Highlander Center for Character and Public Impact
 - We have just completed the second annual Summer Institute In Character and Public Impact Pedagogies which brings in community partners to talk about how our faculty and courses can best work with them for their and our students' benefit, how we can incorporate more problem/project/place-based learning into courses, and how we can incorporate more skillful habits (character) into the curriculum.
 - Associate Provost Jeanne Mekolichick named CUR Fellow
- **Developing a strategic curricular portfolio**
 - General Education
 - Curriculum lifecycle and Academic Portfolio
 - Health Sciences
 - Online Education
 - Graduate Education
 - CEHD
 - Hosted National History Day
- **Improving Student Success**
 - Fall to Fall retention – 82% (Overall Spring to Fall retention is 87%)
 - Quest Registrations – 1,561 (10 up from last year)

- Up trend in total graduates – 23% growth in total graduates over 3 years
- **Ensuring Experiential and Work-based Learning Experiences**
 - Record Engagement – 85% ExL and 83% WBL (went from 79% to 85% in the past year in ExL)
 - Undergraduate Experiential Exceeds Goal – 89% of undergraduates (our goal was 82%) participated in a research experience (up from 79% for the class of 2024)
 - Career ready and experiential education – Career Outcomes Rate: 92.22%, Knowledge Rate: 74.49%
- **Fostering Multi-disciplinary and community collaboration**
 - Healthy Lifespans equal or surpass Virginia benchmark
 - Held the first Health Care/Health Sciences Strategy meeting on campus. Hosted members from around the state.
 - Hired the new AVP Health Services, will start in August 2026
 - CARES Mobile Health Clinic opening
 - Highlander Center for Character and Public Impact opening
 - Radford Community Collaborations
 - RADS Talks
 - RU and Radford Reads
- **Supporting Thriving Faculty and Staff**
 - CUR Fellow – Dr. Jeanne Mekolichick
 - 2nd annual Academic Affairs Awards ceremony
 - Academic Affairs Leadership updates
 - Dr. Christine Small joins us as Interim Dean for Artis College of Science and Technology
 - Dr. Adam Barger, Assistant Vice President for Radford Online
 - Dr. Ashley Wells, Assistant Vice President for Health Sciences

RECOMMENDATIONS AND ACTION ITEMS

- Provost Usher discussed the process of Emeritus Faculty
 - Attachment A
- Provost Usher reviewed the action items
 - Changes to the T&R Handbook
 - Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair, asked for a motion to approve T&R Handbook change Section 4.1: College Governance. Mr. Jack Davis so moved, Mr. Jonathan Sweet seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.
 - Attachment B
 - Changes to the T&R Handbook
 - Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair, asked for a motion to approve T&R Handbook change 1.1.2, 4.1, 4.1.2, 4.1.3, 4.1.3.1, and 4.1.3.3: College of Graduate Studies and Research. Mr. Jonathan Sweet

so moved, Ms. Jeanne S. Armentrout seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

- Attachment C
- Recommendation to Approve the Discontinuance of the Master of Science (MS) in Data and Information Management (DAIM)
 - Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair, asked for a motion to approve. Ms. Jeanne S. Armentrout so moved, Mr. Jack Davis seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.
 - Attachment D
- Recommendation to Approve the Discontinuance of the Master of Science (MS) in Athletic Training (MSAT)
 - Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair, asked for a motion to approve. Mr. Jonathan Sweet so moved, Ms. Joann S. Craig seconded, and the motion was carried unanimously.

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

Mr. Jonathan Sweet had a question regarding Quest and what the expectations were.

- Dr. Jerel Benton explained that it gives our students the opportunity to stay in a dorm, register for classes, get the 'paperwork' done before classes start, and to meet other students, staff and community members

Another question inquired more about what the Highlander Center for Character and Public Impact did.

- Provost Usher explained that it was funded by the Educating Character Initiative at Wake Forest University and Lilly Endowment, Inc., the **Highlander Center for Character and Public Impact** offers opportunities across the curriculum and our campuses to build the virtues and skills necessary to solving wicked problems and building more resilient and flourishing people, communities, and ecosystems.

FACULTY SENATE REPORT

Dr. Matthew Close, Immediate President of Faculty Senate, delivered updates.

- Reviewed some of the progress that was made over the past year
- Talked about the Faculty Travel Survey
- Reviewed handbook edits
- Shared that the COACHE Survey results will be available next spring
- Talked about the updates to the University Internal Governance Committee

QUESTIONS / COMMENTS

- Dr. Close was asked what he knew now after serving as FS President that he didn't know before
 - He stated that you are highly invested because you represent all faculty. Meeting with the President and the Provost regularly to discuss insights, activities, problems and advise helped to manage all the meetings and answer the questions he needed to.
 - He also said, "I want to make this a place that is hard to leave".

- Mr. Jonathan Sweet asked a question about the travel survey and how far off the mark the funding was. Dr. Close stated that faculty get between 900-1200 a year for travel and if they have to go on an international trip it could cost up to \$5,000.
 - Provost Usher stated that we are working on more opportunities for professional development travel funding.

ADJOURNMENT

Dr. Betty Jo Foster, Chair, adjourned the meeting at 10:24am.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Montgomery
Executive Assistant to the Provost &
Sr. VP for Academic Affairs

End of Board of Visitors Materials

