The College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences (CHBS) enables Radford University students to pursue liberal arts degrees and provides liberal arts components integral to enlightened professional programs.

The commitment of CHBS faculty to the liberal arts must remain strong, so that in conjunction with a number of programs in other colleges, CHBS can continue to offer students all the benefits of a liberal arts education. The liberal arts education equips students with the skills and cognitive habits necessary for active and productive citizenship. They learn to think critically, to write effectively, to speak compellingly, and to explore issues and problems from a variety of well-informed perspectives. A liberal arts education is liberating: it frees students from the culturally enervating and intellectually restricting results of hyperspecialization. A liberal arts education is higher education: it lifts the eyes of students above the walls of their homes, dorm rooms, and classrooms, elevating their minds. Without the breadth of skills and knowledge derived from a meaningful exploration of the liberal arts, humanity degrades, and the individual becomes the helpless quarry of the demagogue whose lifeblood is ignorance and whose easy prey is the trammelled mind. The liberal arts education improves students so that they can then improve their world and more fully appreciate their own lives.

All freshmen at Radford University begin their education by exploring courses in the university’s core curriculum. The CHBS faculty must be the guide who helps students find meaning in each of the three components of this core curriculum. First, the core curriculum is built around the CORE sequence. CHBS faculty members must be the instructors who provide quality instruction in these CORE courses. CBHS faculty members must also be the watchdogs who guard the mission of the CORE sequence: to impart the cornerstone skills of the liberal arts—grammar, logic, and rhetoric—in contexts appropriate for twenty-first-century students. Next, the core curriculum introduces students to the primary branches of knowledge—the humanities, mathematics, the natural sciences, the social and behavioral sciences, and the fine arts. Because the disciplines of the college compose the humanities and make up the bulk of the social and behavioral sciences, CHBS faculty members must use core curriculum courses to enable students to see from the unique perspectives of these disciplines, to understand the key findings of these disciplines, and to become involved in the practices of professionals in these disciplines. Finally, the core curriculum asks students to embrace being both members of a community and citizens of the world. When students survey these areas, they will be drawn primarily to courses taught by the CHBS faculty; therefore, CHBS faculty members must present the vistas that students will see when they develop responsible local and global outlooks. Core curriculum courses are foundational, offering introductions to fields of knowledge and imparting skills transferable to other areas of study and to real world situations. The university’s core curriculum endorses the value of a liberal arts education, and the CHBS faculty must ensure that these formative experiences are meaningful. In core curriculum courses, the CHBS faculty teaches students to
learn and to take possession of the learning process.

A liberal arts education transcends foundation courses. CHBS must make this possible by continuing to provide strong programs in core liberal arts disciplines, by sustaining meaningful interdisciplinary programs, and by suffusing professional programs with the sensibilities of the liberal arts. These vital programs urge students to invest in their educations, to seek knowledge and crave learning, and to make their intellectual endeavors part of their identity. They learn about themselves and define themselves at the same time. In fulfilling the requirements of their majors and minors, they also participate in the process of becoming professionals in their disciplines, exploring how experts in their fields work, while accomplishing meaningful research projects. CHBS must maintain its commitment to small classes, because small classes offer students significant and meaningful interaction with the faculty. CHBS must also maintain its commitment to small programs, because these small programs enable students to develop close-knit friendships, establishing support networks fused by shared intellectual interests and goals. In these small classes and programs, faculty and students become a community, comprised of scholars and scientists, thinkers and activists, teachers and learners. Finally, CHBS must maintain its commitment to hiring and retaining a learned faculty that is active enough to pursue scholarship and creativity, that is caring enough to offer personal and nurturing advice, and that is first and foremost dedicated enough to provide excellent teaching.

With small classes, small programs, a liberal arts focus, and a learned faculty dedicated to teaching, CHBS can serve all Radford University students from foundation to capstone, providing a unique educational experience that encourages independent and involved learners. CHBS must not only sustain these strengths but also improve its shortcomings. The CHBS curricula must continue to provide students with meaningful skills, knowledge, and experiences, but rigor must increase, and CHBS must support degrees that are appropriate for the disciplines of the college. CHBS must ensure that the allocation of faculty resources is sufficient for each of its programs to thrive. The college must also become better integrated, which entails creating more interaction and cross-fertilization among faculty and encouraging more students into upper-division courses outside their primary programs of study. Finally, the college must forge equally strong links with the other colleges of the university, ensuring that the comprehensive university achieves its ideal of offering breadth and depth of knowledge and skills even to students pursuing professional degrees.

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