



news

Newsletter for the College of Graduate and Extended Education

Spring 2005

The Benefits of Graduate Education at Radford University

What makes the Radford University community so special? The people and their desire to give back make it special. When asked why they are pursuing graduate education at RU, many students say they are inspired by the commitment among faculty and other students to apply their knowledge within their communities. RU's graduate programs, by their very nature, compel students

disciplines with choices of more than 30 programs of study. The presence of graduate programs provides the area with students like Mark and Jill Rexrode, who want to transform their knowledge into service for the community in which they live. Graduate education is important to the region and the commonwealth because it provides post-baccalaureate training and licensure required for many occu-

Application of new discoveries not only benefits others, but also stimulates economies that contribute to greater productivity, more jobs, and an improved quality of life in Virginia."

Programs such as business and communication enable students to combine theory with practical training. Bill Kennan, chair of the Department of Communication says, "In our program, students directly impact western Virginia through

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"greater productivity, more jobs, improved quality of life"

to feel a desire — perhaps even an obligation — to be change agents in the community, thereby benefiting the student obtaining the degree, as well as faculty, undergraduate students and the community.

In 1964, RU began offering the Master of Science degree. Today, graduate degrees are offered in 16

disciplines. The fields of social work, music therapy, counseling, nursing, communication sciences and education all require training and licensure leading to certification. Raymond Linville, chair of communication sciences and disorders, says, "Graduate education brings to Radford University an opportunity to contribute new knowledge.

the skills and knowledge they bring to their work as professional communicators. Our students work in this capacity with a variety of organizations that are for profit and not-for-profit, public and private. Their work directly impacts the success of the organizations they represent."

Donald Anderson, chair of the Department of Counselor Education,

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Highlights from the Dean

We want to hear from you



Dr. Carole Seyfrit

As part of Homecoming and Highlanders Festival activities, the Graduate Student Council sponsored a mixer for graduate students, graduate faculty and graduate alumni at the Flossie Martin Gallery. Current students had an opportunity to meet former students and talk about shared academic experiences and ask questions about post-degree life. Graduates shared success stories with their former faculty members.

When we talk with prospective applicants, they frequently ask what kinds of jobs they might get after completing an RU graduate degree. The successes of our graduate alumni are powerful tools in attracting students to

our programs. Highlighting alumni stories in the newsletter and other publications showcases graduate education at RU. In addition, many graduate programs are required to report alumni employment information for accreditation purposes.

Let us know what you are doing by sending an e-mail to gradcoll@radford.edu or submitting information to your program. You can find your program's website through the Graduate College site: www.radford.edu/~gradcoll. Several programs have online alumni sites or surveys (for example, see the websites for Art, MBA, and Educational Leadership).

We know there are thousands of graduate alumni stories to tell, so tell us.

Educational Leadership Program to Develop Alternative for Licensure in Virginia

Radford University, in partnership with Giles County Public Schools, has received one of five \$100,000 Virginia Department of Education leadership preparation grants. As part of the Principalship Education Plan, a collaborative project among Radford University, eight southwestern Virginia school divisions, the Western Virginia Public Education Consortium and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, RU's program will use the funds to create an alternative pathway for school leadership licensure in Virginia.

The existing state program for endorsement in administration requires a minimum of three years of successful K-12 teaching experience prior to beginning a graduate program in this area. RU is already established in this process and offers the master of science degree in educational leadership, which is designed to prepare professional personnel to fill positions as PreK-12 school principals or supervisors in Virginia.

"This grant will give RU an opportunity to be a leader in providing licensure for teachers with master's degrees who want to go into administration," says William Flora,

assistant professor of educational studies and joint grant coordinator with professor Robert McCracken.

McCracken says the goal is to "find teachers at the master's level who haven't considered school leadership as a career path, offer them the opportunity to consider that path and get them the content they need to pursue it." Each school division will be responsible for selecting participants for the program. Content modules in areas closely aligned with the standards for school administrators will be delivered in a combination of classroom, distance and online instruction. "Our intent is to use technology as much as possible," adds McCracken.

According to VDOE, the leadership preparation grants are designed to reform and strengthen educational leadership and establish principals and instructional leaders for the state's school systems. The Virginia General Assembly appropriated \$500,000 each year for fiscal years 2004-2005 and 2005-2006 to allow school divisions, institutions of higher education and other organizations to collaborate on providing essential leadership training and mentoring for principals, assistant principals, administrators and prospective school leaders.

Benefits of Graduate Education

(Continued from page one)

says, "Graduate education at Radford University extends the mission of the university, allowing it to be responsive to the full range of higher education and multiple levels of student educational, occupational and personal development. It extends professional development opportunities for students seeking to enter professions and expands the skills and knowledge of colleagues in those professions."

Students pursuing a master's degree embark upon focused research that is driven by the desire to go deeper, appreciating the contributions of others to the field while offering their own research and ideas for consideration. Faculty who teach graduate courses are challenged to keep up in their fields, particularly while supervising the research of their students. Carol Geller, graduate program coordinator in the special education department, understands the impact of graduate studies on the faculty. "Graduate education promotes and supports university faculty to seek new possibilities for innovative thinking," says Geller.

Based on the most recent enrollment reports, graduate students make up more than 10 percent of the total student population at RU and create a different demographic profile than the undergraduate. Typically experienced in their fields of study, they add breadth to the classrooms by engaging in conversations based on real life work experiences. Music department graduate program coordinator Bruce Mahin says, "The contributions our graduate students make to undergraduate education at Radford University is immense, not because they often serve as assistants to instructors but because they serve as great examples of students who are serious about their studies and excited about the possibilities their education will produce. I often observe them in casual conversation with undergraduate students between classes and feel sure that the interaction which takes place must have a very positive impact on the worldview undergraduates develop here. Graduate students are almost, but not quite, peers. They provide a nice center in the

Mark Rexrode had every intention of working in student affairs when he began his master's classes in counseling and human development. While making a last minute class change, he enrolled in a practicum class where he was assigned counseling hours in a local middle school. It was by chance that Mark realized how well he related to the students. Gradually, both his perspective and his concentration changed to school counseling. Since there are very few male guidance counselors in the area, Mark feels an obligation to help middle school age children with family issues and peer relationships, particularly boys, who need positive male role models. He now leads small groups that focus on male issues and



hopes that boys without father figures can look to him for guidance. Mark anticipates making a career out of coaching and counseling middle school students.

Mark's wife, Jill, is also a graduate student at RU. She wants to be a college professor and is working toward a master's degree in corporate and professional communication, which will prepare her for entering a doctoral program in this field. They both love the Radford community and credit the teacher-student relationships at the university as a primary source of their success in graduate school.

triangle formed by parents, faculty and undergraduates."

Radford University is proud to provide graduate programs in the disciplines of art, business administration, communication sciences and disorders, corporate and professional communication, counseling and human development, criminal justice, education, educational leadership, English, music, nursing, psychology, reading, school psychology, social work and special education. RU graduates exemplify the true meaning of the service-learning experience.



Graduate students like Ed Oakes provide faculty with tangible benefits. After graduating from RU in 1992 with a baccalaureate degree in computer science, Ed stayed at the university to work in academic computing. The challenge for him has been to keep up with the exponential changes in technology. He enrolled in the master's program in education with a concentration in information technology. Courses in the program provide insight into combining education and technology with a concentrated focus on improving student engagement. Ed says he chose this path because of the desire to give back to RU's students and programs directly by helping the faculty apply the latest technology in their own classrooms.



Criminal Justice: Questions and Answers

“Ripped from the headlines” has become a common phrase since the rebirth of television crime dramas. With the increasing popularity of programs such as CSI and Law & Order, there is heightened interest in the inner workings of crime and justice.



RU faculty Isaac Van Patten, Tod Burke, Steve Owen and Mary Atwell have teamed up to share their interests, expertise and research through “Criminal Justice: Questions and Answers,” a series of talks on current issues in criminal justice offered by the Department of Criminal Justice.

“We want to talk about topics of general interests—things that are in the newspapers and are interesting to the public. We hope that people who are considering our graduate program in criminal justice will come to the talks and hear from faculty who share the same interests and have done research on the topics,” said Atwell.

Van Patten, chair of the department, presented the first topic, “Sex Offenders in the Community: What Works and What Doesn’t” in December. His research interests include crime analysis, correctional counseling and organizational theory. He currently teaches a course on deviant sexual behavior and regularly collaborates with local criminal justice agencies to provide training and consulting.

Burke presented “Animal Abuse and Criminal Behavior: What’s the Connection?” in January. As a former police officer, Burke’s interests include school/campus violence, domestic violence, serial and mass murder and issues in

policing and forensic science. He is a regular commentator on criminal justice for many national and local media outlets and has been published in prominent legal journals.

“Popular Culture and Capital Punishment: What We See in the Movies” will be presented by Atwell on Wednesday, February 23 at 7 p.m. Her research interests include gender and legal issues and capital punishment. Atwell was selected for the 2002 Supreme Court Historical Society Seminar and recently received the 2004 Radford Foundation Creative Scholarship Award.

Owen will conclude the series with his presentation of “What’s Wrong with Our Kids? Issues in Juvenile Justice” on Monday, March 21 at 7 p.m. His areas of research include domestic violence, institutional corrections, crime prevention and criminal justice education. In his most recent publication, Owen discussed the rehabilitative uses of dogs in correctional facilities.

The Criminal Justice series is open to the public. Talks are held in seminar room 510E at the Roanoke Higher Education Center. For more information, please contact the College of Graduate and Extended Education at (540) 831-5724, or by e-mail at gradcoll@radford.edu.

RU Professor Examines Popular Culture and Capital Punishment



Criminal justice professor Mary Atwell has written *Evolving Standards of Decency*, a book that examines how popular culture portrays the death penalty. Atwell has taught classes on capital punishment and was inspired by the insight gained from discussions with students to write about the effects of popular culture on capital punishment. Some of the more thought-provoking conversations with her students have evolved from reading a novel or watching a movie that exposes the flaws in the criminal justice system and raises questions about race, class and the fairness of the death penalty.

"In my classes I try to give students insight in both the system and the human element. The film "Dead Man Walking" explores both. "A Lesson Before Dying," which is set

in Louisiana in the 1940s, brings out race issues. You see how a young, poor, simple, black man is caught up in the system, and you see the attitudes of the community, the family, the sheriff and the jailer," says Atwell.

Atwell's new book places stories about capital punishment in the context of the legal system. It is a provocative work that the author hopes will "instigate discussion" about the death penalty. *Evolving Standards of Decency* would be of particular interest to anyone studying justice issues, corrections or capital punishment.

Evolving Standards of Decency is Atwell's second book published by Peter Lang Publishing, Inc. *Equal Protection of the Law? Gender Justice in the United States* was published in 2002.

Your Gift to Radford University and National Rankings

As an alumnus, you have a stake in Radford University's future. The quality of that future will be literally determined by loyal supporters who, year after year, provide the financial basis for a quality educational experience. Every donor, no matter the size of the gift, helps determine Radford University's recognition by national ranking agencies. Alumni who give back to their alma mater are thought to possess a high degree of satisfaction with their college experience. As such, institutions such as U.S. News and World Report, factor this alumni participation into its national ranking. This recognition enhances the value and prestige of an RU degree.

When you receive your call or letter from RU, please consider making an annual gift. No matter the size, your participation will be counted among those who believe in the Radford experience.

We encourage you to also consider matching gifts as an easy way to double or even triple your gift to RU! Many employers will match charitable gifts as a benefit for their employees.

Check with your employer today to see if your gift to Radford University can be matched or visit our online lookup site: www.matchinggifts.com/Radford.





Faculty Notes



Debora Bays, special education professor, has been awarded a Virginia Department of Education grant that provided tuition assistance to persons

seeking employment as special education teachers under a conditional license in counties and cities in Region 7 (Bland, Buchanan, Carroll, Dickenson, Giles, Grayson, Lee, Pulaski, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Tazewell, Washington, Wise, Wythe, Bristol, Galax, Norton and Radford).

To be hired as a special education teacher with a conditional license, candidates must take a course that covers competencies in foundations of special education students and services. RU's course, EDSP 651: "Current Issues and Trends in Services and Programs for Exceptional Individuals," meets the state's required competencies for this license and was offered fall 2004 at the Radford campus and as a hybrid web-based course via WebCT.



William Flora, professor and graduate coordinator of the educational leadership program, has been hired as the executive director of the Virginia

Middle School Association (VMSA). Flora will represent the organization as an advocate for middle level educators at the state and national level while working directly with the VMSA board of directors to oversee the organization and advance goals of growing membership and expanding services.

VMSA is respected statewide for its service to teachers and administrators. The organization is focused on helping middle schools ensure achievement for all students and providing staff development that can help its members meet SOL challenges, grow professionally and be better informed about middle level issues in Virginia.



Donald Anderson, professor and chair of RU's Department of Counselor Education, has been appointed to two prominent positions with the American Counseling

Association (ACA), a nonprofit, professional and educational organization dedicated to the growth and enhancement of the counseling profession. Anderson will serve as co-chair of the ethics committee and is a member of the ACA Foundation Board of Trustees.

Anderson believes his new roles with ACA will enhance the stature of RU's graduate program in counselor education by providing more recognition and visibility for the university. ACA is the world's largest association representing professional counselors in various practice settings.

Student Notes



Jenna Ayers, Maria Giovenco, Alicia Summers, Lorin Moseley and Chris Dye, graduate students in counseling psychology, presented papers at the American Mental Health Counseling Association (AMHCA) Conference in July 2004. Ayers and Summers were elected as officers to the National Graduate Student Committee of AMHCA. Rebecca Loehrer, assistant professor of psychology, sponsored the students.

Left to right: Lorin Moseley, Chris Dye, Rebecca Loehrer, Alicia Summers, Maria Giovenco and Jenna Ayers.

Alumni Profile

Timothy Beatty '03

M.A., Educational Leadership



Timothy Beatty was teaching world history and coaching high school football when he decided to pursue a master's degree. He enrolled in RU's educational leadership program at the Roanoke Higher Education Center with the desire to become a school administrator. He began teaching in 1997 and believed the experience would be valuable to him as an administrator. Beatty graduated from RU with a master's degree in educational leadership in 2003. He is currently employed as an assistant principal at Heritage High School in Lynchburg, Va.

Q: Why did you decide to pursue graduate coursework in the field of public education administration?

A: I felt that I had gained enough experience as a teacher to empower other teachers as an administrator. I felt graduate coursework at RU would prepare me for the next step in the role of administration. I've found that it has well prepared me for the rigors of my position.

Q: What is your biggest challenge as a high school administrator?

A: My biggest challenge as an assistant principal at Heritage is having enough hours in the day to complete all of my tasks.

Q: What is the greatest reward as

a high school administrator?

A: I enjoy the ability to be an instructional leader, to improve student learning and to be an effective communicator with teachers and parents in the community.

Q: What are your long-term career goals?

A: I would like to, at some point, work on a doctorate. I would like to be head principal and perhaps toward the end of my career, move into the central office.

Q: Can you highlight some of your experiences as a graduate student at RU?

A: Radford's presence at the Roanoke Higher Education Center

provided me with the convenience necessary to reach my educational goals. The professors worked with the students in our program to ensure flexible scheduling to meet our needs. Most of the students had positions teaching or as administrators and we needed this kind of flexibility. The facilities were top-notch and we were able to incorporate state-of-the-art instructional technology tools in our presentations. The site director, Eulah Price, was instrumental in providing information about the program. Further, the professors all had prior administrative experience and were able to provide exceptional and practical applications that have well prepared me for my career.

Fulbright Scholar Comes to RU



Mohammad Al-Hamdani has begun his first semester at Radford University on a Fulbright Fellowship. He is working toward a master's degree in English.

Mohammad is from Yemen, a small country in the Middle East, where he earned his bachelor's degree in English from Sana'a University. After nine months of academic work and exams, Mohammad was awarded a fellowship to study

in the U.S. After completing his studies at RU, he hopes to work toward a Ph.D. or return to his country to teach English at Sana'a University in Yemen, where he received his undergraduate degree.

The Fulbright Program offers a prestigious opportunity for U.S. students to study abroad and international students to study in America. Its mission is to "increase mutual understanding between the people of the United States and other countries, through the exchange of persons, knowledge, and skills."



2004 Award Winners

The College of Graduate and Extended Education presents three awards each year to recognize and encourage excellence in research or creative activity by graduate students. Awards are given for a research-based thesis, a thesis or final project involving creative activity, such as music, art or creative writing, and for work not eligible for either of the first two categories, such as exemplary performance in course work, directed study, practicum/internship or graduate assistantship. Student winners receive a monetary award and plaque. A plaque is also presented to each student's faculty advisor.



Jeannine Marie Hoch received the research thesis category award for her thesis, "Psychological Issues and School-age

Children with Cleft Lip and Palate in Peru." Hoch designed a survey to document parents' perceptions of children with cleft lip and palate. The study makes important contributions to cross-cultural research and approaches to patient care. Her thesis advisor was Michael VanLue, assistant professor of communication sciences and disorders.

Robert Wynn received the award for exemplary performance for his primary care intervention project, "Primary Prevention of Type II Diabetes." Wynn's project, which included a poster presentation, combined child and parent involvement in an early intervention educational program designed to decrease incidence of diabetes and to foster a healthy lifestyle among children and adolescents. His advisor was Mary Hope Gibson, professor of nursing.

Elisabeth Arena was presented the award in the creative activity category for her thesis, "The Bone Garden: Drawings from the Imagination." She used creative inspiration and skill to tell a compelling and mysterious story in pictures and words. The project included designing and creating a book with original text, imaginative and highly detailed drawings, and intricate borders. Halide Salam, professor of art, was her thesis advisor.

Radford University does not discriminate in the administration of its educational programs, activities, admission, or employment practices. Inquiries should be directed to the Human Resources Office at (540) 831-5421 or (540) 831-5128 02-162(1/05)

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