



news

Newsletter for the College of Graduate and Extended Education

Spring 2006

Five-year Programs in Special Education Lead to Graduate Degrees

Radford's College of Education and Human Development offers Special Education Programs that prepare students to become teachers who are responsive and engaged professionals dedicated to their schools, their students, and their communities. To address the need for high quality services for students with disabilities, the School of Teacher Education and Leadership has an array of concentrations in the M.S. in Special Education, two five-year programs for qualified undergraduates, and a post-baccalaureate certificate in Autism Studies.

Radford University's M.S. in Special Education offers licensure and non-licensure options in four concentrations:

- Early Childhood Special Education (birth–5 years)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing (PreK-12)
- High Incidence Disabilities (Learning Disabilities, Mental Retardation, and Emotional and Behavioral Disabilities, K-12)
- Severe Disabilities (K-12, in collaboration with the Virginia Consortium for Teacher Preparation in Severe Disabilities)

Beginning at the undergraduate level, qualified students can enroll in a special five-year curriculum in Early Childhood Education/Early Childhood Special Education in Interdisciplinary Studies. These students complete the bachelor's degree, earn an

M.S. in Education, and complete two teaching licensures for public schools in both preschool general education through grade 3 and early childhood special education (birth–age 5, all disabilities).

The second five-year program is in High-Incidence Disabilities, Interdisciplinary Studies. This program leads to three teaching licensures (emotional/behavioral disorders, specific learning disabilities, and mental retardation) in grades K-12. Qualified RU undergraduate students complete a four-year curriculum with two concentrations, one in an academic content area and another in Special Education, and then they earn an M.S. in Special Education that culminates in the three teacher licensures.

A post-baccalaureate certificate in Autism Studies prepares general and special educators to teach and support individuals with autism spectrum disorders (ASD). The Certificate in Autism Studies is noted on the participant's official RU transcript after successful completion

of a sequence of three credit classes that total nine semester hours.

Special Education classes are also available to students who cannot attend classes in Radford. For example, a new master's degree cohort in high incidence disabilities starts in Roanoke in summer 2006 and the severe disabilities and early childhood special education concentrations, as well as the Autism Studies Certificate, are available through distance education technologies.

Students in special education programs have access to small classes taught by professors with extensive experience and a love for teaching; academic advising by faculty members in each specialty area; hands-on, applied assignments; intensive fieldwork experiences—many in fully inclusive schools; and cutting-edge technology used by professors and students.

To learn more about these, visit the College of Education and Human Development online: <https://eduweb.education.radford.edu/stel/sped/program.asp>.

IN THIS ISSUE

Five-year Programs in Special Education Lead to Graduate Degrees 1

Support Graduate Education through the Advanced Degree Alumni Fund 2

New Faces in the Graduate College 3

The Joy in Helping Students 3

Corporate and Professional Communication Program Prepares Graduates to Meet the Challenges of Today's Workplace 4



U.S. News and World Report lists Radford University for the second straight year as one of the top 25 public master's universities in the south.

In the *2006 Guide to America's Best Colleges*, Radford also moved up two spots from 51st to 49th in the category that includes 130 private and public institutions in the region.



Highlights from the Dean



Dr. Carole Seyfrit

This has been a great year for the Graduate College and I want to tell you about three especially successful areas: Recruiting efforts, student presentations at professional conferences, and the generosity of our alumni.

An aggressive recruiting strategy that combined television, print, radio, web and e-mail to advertise graduate education at RU started last year and is continuing this year. In addition, individual degree programs developed program-specific recruiting plans that included placing ads in professional publications, recruiting students at conferences, and creating brochures for targeted audiences. We can see the fruits of our recruiting efforts in the number of applications and the number of new students enrolled. Applications for Fall 2005 were up 26.2 percent. From Fall 2004 to Fall 2005, enrollment increased 13.2 percent and from Spring 2005 to Spring 2006, enrollment increased 7.6 percent.

Through the Student Presentation Travel Grants program administered by the Graduate College, 27 graduate students and 14 undergraduate students received travel support to present their research and

scholarly work at regional and national conferences. These numbers will be even higher by the end of the semester. The presence of RU students at such conferences as the National Reading Conference, Neuroscience 2005, American Mental Health Counselors Association, Industrial/Organizational Psychology and Organizational Behavior Conference, Experimental Biology 2006, American Astronomical Society, National Communication Association, and the Southern Sociological Society showcases outstanding student performance as well as the exceptional quality of RU's graduate and undergraduate programs.

The appeal to RU's Advanced Degree Alumni was so successful this year that the Graduate College created two new scholarships beginning in Fall 2006. One scholarship of at least \$1,000 will be awarded to a new full-time degree-seeking student and one scholarship of at least \$500 will be awarded to a new part-time degree-seeking student. With the continued help of our generous Advanced Degree Alumni, the goal is to increase the number of Advanced Degree Fund Scholarships awarded each year.

Support Graduate Education through the Advanced Degree Alumni Fund

The Advanced Degree Alumni Fund allows donors to make an immediate impact on current Radford University graduate students. A gift to the fund can increase support for university-funded graduate assistantships and scholarships and strengthen the infrastructure for scholarship and professional development for graduate students.

Your gift also helps determine the quality of RU's graduate programs. Every donor, no matter the size of the gift helps determine Radford'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 a call 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.



New Faces in the Graduate College



Rebecca Conner

Rebecca Conner is the Graduate College's new admissions technician. She is likely the first contact that prospective graduate students make with graduate admissions. Conner is responsible for processing applications and responding to student inquiries.

She received a master of public policy degree (M.P.P.) from the College of William and Mary and a B.A. in public and urban affairs from Virginia Tech.

Joseph Lawhorne is the new Graduate College advising coordinator with primary responsibility for providing admissions, registration, scheduling adjustment and problem-solving support to non-degree students.

Lawhorne comes to RU from Oxford, Mississippi, where he taught political science and served as chief academic adviser for the Political Science Department at the



Joseph Lawhorne

University of Mississippi. He earned both his B.S. in political science and J.D. from the University of Mississippi.

Melanie Penn has been hired as an administrative assistant providing support to the directors of Recruiting and Retention and Continuing and Extended Education. She tracks graduate assistantships and continuing education credits and provides administrative support to the college.

Penn is a native of the area. She has a B.S. in media studies from RU.

Richard Tillies, II joined the staff as a database specialist. He manages the College's data management systems.

Tillies has a B.S. in computer science from RU and is a graduate student working towards a M.S. in education with a concentration in information technology.



Melanie Penn



Richard Tillies, II

The Joy in Helping Students

by Christina Bauza '05

After being a stay-at-home mom for 14 years, Michele Dowdy '73 decided to return to the field of education and enrolled in RU's graduate program in counselor education. She completed the program and earned an M.S. in 1990. She again returned to RU as a graduate student in the educational leadership program, which she completed with a M.S. in 2005.

RU's program provided Dowdy with a variety of experiences and helped her expand the skill sets she needed to become an effective counselor. In her years of teaching, she found that she was most successful helping troubled children. "I chose school counseling because I enjoy helping students who need a little extra direction and assistance," she says. "The RU program provided excellent opportunities to learn the basics of the profession. For example, through the RU counselor education program I developed a clear understanding of the importance of establishing a strong comprehensive developmental school counseling program, and I got the practical experience to develop good individual and group counseling skills."

Dowdy currently serves as coordinator of school counseling services for Roanoke County Schools and puts her knowledge to work providing supervision, support and direction to approximately 60 school counselors in the school system. She has served as president of the Roanoke Area Counselors Association, the Virginia Career Development Association and the Virginia Counselors Association. She is a member of the American Counselor Association and the American School Counselor Association.





College of Graduate and Extended Education *news*

Corporate and Professional Communication Program Prepares Graduates to Meet the Challenges of Today’s Workplace

Communication is essential to every organization and is key to one’s individual success in any field. RU’s Master of Science in Corporate and Professional Communication program prepares students to succeed in their careers by providing a solid understanding of communication theory and practice.

Students receive the education and training they need to build a strong foundation of applied experience, analytical skills and communication expertise. The degree that they earn allows them to focus their studies in specific areas of interest and offers both theoretical and practical applications in professional and corporate communication careers. Graduates leave the program with the knowledge and skills they need to make valuable contributions in their fields and the demonstrated ability required to advance in their careers.

Christina Deatherage, a 1996 graduate of the master’s program in corporate and professional communication, thrives on change and communicating new and innovative ideas to her coworkers. The Wake Forest, NC, resident works in marketing for the personal computing division at IBM. Her team looks at how they market their product to each one of their key customer groups, including industry, distribution, communication, public and financial services. “I use a lot of communication skills, negotiation, interacting with different teams and also international communication skills,” says Deatherage. She says 85 percent of her job is working internally with her coworkers, and collaborating with different groups to get something done, “I’m communicating and influencing other people within our organization to do the right thing for our customers.”

Deatherage is a graduate of the IBM Leadership Excellence University. Less than one percent of the IBM population completes the program, which develops leadership potential of rising stars in the corporation. She views herself as a change agent. “I’d like to be in an executive position where I’ll have the ability to motivate and institute change. I can do little pieces of that now. I want to be the motivational person ... and be a leader within the company,” she says.

Graduates leave the program with the knowledge and skills they need to make valuable contributions in their fields and the demonstrated ability required to advance in their careers.

RU’s program offers both thesis and non-thesis options and can be completed in two years by full-time students. Those balancing work and family life can also be accommodated as part-time students. Internationally recognized faculty, who make scholarly contributions to the field and are dedicated to helping their students succeed, teach courses such as organizational communication, law and ethics, public relations and training and development. The program is competitive and provides a challenging environment that has helped many students have rewarding careers in many diverse fields, including healthcare, human services, training and development, corporate management, public relations, media, higher education and government. It also prepares students who choose to continue their education by entering doctoral programs.