

# Academic Governance at Radford University

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## Contents

Purpose and Principles of Shared Governance	3
Academic Governance	4
Procedures for Standing Academic Committees	5
Membership on committees	5
Terms of service on committees	5
Timeline for constituting and convening committees	6
Election of officers	6
Designated Administrators	6
Guidelines for Designated Administrators	7
Reporting Responsibilities	7
Parliamentary Authority	7
Attendance	7
Meetings	7
Minutes	7
Confidential Discussions and Documents	8
Pathways for Proposals	8
Academic Proposals	8
Proposal Initiation	8
Review & Approval	9
Categories of action	9
Timeline	9
Appeal	10
Academic Shared Governance Committees	10
Curriculum and Program Committees	10
Academic Policies and Procedures	10
Academic Program Review	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

Core Curriculum Advisory Committee	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Graduate Affairs Council	11
Professional Standards, Activities and Awards Committees	12
Administrative/Professional Faculty Grievance Panel Board	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>
Faculty Appeals	12
Faculty Awards	13
Faculty Grievance	14
Intellectual Property	15
Scholarly Activities	15
Student Evaluations of Faculty	18
Amending the Shared Academic Governance Document	19
REFERENCES	20
Appendices	<b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b>

## Purpose and Principles of Shared Governance

“Shared governance is a system of open communication aimed at aligning priorities, creating a culture of shared responsibility for the welfare of the institution, and creating a system of checks and balances to ensure the institution stays mission-centered” (Bahls 2014).

At Radford University, shared governance addresses issues related to the core academic mission and also the administrative functions and policies related to implementing that mission. Radford University is strongly committed to shared governance that includes all stakeholders because the resulting decisions will be better-informed and more sustainable than ones derived from one individual or from a cadre representing only one constituency. Decisions and recommendations that are best for the welfare of the university as a whole are based upon processes in which individuals listen to all ideas, respect competing concerns, and evaluate alternatives.

Certain fundamental principles are vital in order to foster a healthy system and culture of shared governance. An open and effective system of shared governance will:

- clearly delineate pathways for decision-making,
- clearly identify participants in decision-making,
- clearly describe the scope of the role played by each participant in decision-making,
- allow for open discussion in which participants will feel free to voice their perspectives
- regularly review shared governance

### **Academic Governance**

This document addresses Academic Governance, which is primarily under the purview of faculty and the Provost. This document describes the organization of academic governance, identifies the participants, and outlines the processes to be followed.

This document also is intended to foster something less tangible than structures and procedures but equally important: a culture of transparency and trust in which all stakeholders—administrators, faculty, staff, and students—are encouraged to share the knowledge and insights that will allow the University to address complex issues and adapt to changing needs. In addition to the above, an open and effective system of academic governance will be receptive to change. This university continues to evolve—embracing new populations of learners, incorporating new technology, and responding to new or changing disciplines. Therefore, procedures for amending the Academic Governance system can be found in the Overview of Shared Governance document, allowing this to be a living document for a university that is continually renewing itself.

#### Constituent elements in Academic Affairs

Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs

Academic Affairs Leadership Team

Faculty Senate

Deans

College Curriculum Committees

Departments

Department Curriculum Committees

Other standing academic affairs committees described below

## Procedures for Standing Academic Committees

The term 'committee' refers to both 'committee' and 'council' and encompasses bodies on the department, college, and university level. Membership on an academic governance committee may include representatives from other than the Academic Affairs division.

### **Membership on committees**

Unless otherwise noted and except for individuals representing specific units or offices, appointed committee members are selected in the following fashion:

Student appointments are made by the SGA Senate.

Faculty appointments are made by the Faculty Senate Executive Council.

Administrative and professional faculty appointments are made by the AP Senate.

When individuals are representing specific units or offices, appointments are made by the appropriate vice president.

Persons who serve by virtue of position may appoint a designee.

### **Terms of service on committees**

Unless otherwise indicated, terms of service on university level academic governance committees are two years for all non-student members beginning on the Monday two weeks prior to the fall semester. To ensure continuity, terms of non-student members should be staggered.

The term of appointment for students is one year.

Members, whether student or non-student, may be reappointed or reelected.

If a substitute is appointed or elected to complete the term of any committee member, the

substitute's term shall expire at the end of the original term.

### **Timeline for constituting and convening committees**

All appointments to university level academic governance committees are to be submitted to the Designated Administrator and to the Assistant Provost for Budget and Academic Operations no later than four weeks prior to the start of the fall semester. Upon approval of the Provost, confirmation letters will be sent out two weeks prior to the fall semester.

These committees must convene and elect officers no later than the end of the fourth week of the fall semester. Committees that meet only as business dictates must convene by the deadline to elect officers.

### **Election of officers**

Unless otherwise indicated, the following officers of academic governance committees are elected annually by the members of the committee:

chair  
vice chair, and  
recording secretary

Election of university wide academic governance officers will be reported by the newly elected chair to the Designated Administrator and the Assistant Provost for Budget and Academic Operations, who will post that information to the Shared Governance website.

### **Designated Administrators**

For each committee, a designated administrator has been identified. Designated administrators are chosen because the committees' charges fall under their purview. They are responsible for facilitating the business of the committees. They convene or designate a convener for the first meeting of the committee, serve as a resource for the committee, and receive and forward the committee's annual reports. Designated administrators will be thoroughly familiar with the Academic Governance Document as it applies to their designated areas of responsibility.

## ***Guidelines for Designated Administrators***

Guidelines for Designated Administrators are described in the [Overview of Shared Governance at Radford University](#).

### **Reporting Responsibilities**

Academic Governance committees, except for the Faculty Appeals and Faculty Grievance shall provide an update of activities to the Designated Administrator by the Friday of the first week of spring semester. The committees' annual reports are due to their designated administrators by the Friday of the week following spring semester's final exams. Designated Administrators are responsible for forwarding all reports to the Assistant Provost for Academic Operations to be posted on the Shared Governance website.

### **Parliamentary Authority**

Robert's Rules of Order, in the form of its most recent edition, will govern all committee proceedings. Additionally, committees that have or develop internal policies for carrying out their responsibilities will submit those documents and any subsequent revisions to the appropriate Designated Administrators for review and approval. A copy of these documents is to be filed with the Designated Administrator and forwarded to all committee members.

### **Attendance**

All members are expected to attend meetings of their respective committee. In the case of excessive absences, the appointing senate/official will be asked to appoint someone who can and will attend regularly. Committee members may identify substitutes for a particular meeting. Substitutes retain the voting rights of the committee members. Proxy votes, however, are not acceptable, as per Robert's Rules.

### **Meetings**

Except when personnel matters are being considered, all committee meetings are open to the public. Observers may request permission of a committee to make statements. A quorum shall be based on a majority of the voting membership of the committee, excluding any membership positions that are vacant after the end of the fifth week of the fall semester.

### **Minutes**

Each shared governance committee will keep and share the minutes with the members of the

committee and the appropriate administrators on the University sanctioned cloud platform. Copies of the minutes and supporting documents will be maintained by the designated administrator or designee for the current and previous academic years at a minimum.

### **Confidential Discussions and Documents**

Procedures for handling of confidential discussions and documents are described in [Overview of Shared Governance at Radford University](#).

## **Pathways for Proposals**

### **Academic Proposals**

This document specifies pathways for making collaborative decisions about proposals for changes in curriculum, programs, or academic policies, procedures, and structures. Since stakeholders are constantly seeking to improve curriculum and operations, the Academic Affairs division has established review and approval routes for proposed changes, including as appropriate the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC).

### **Proposal Initiation**

Proposals may be initiated by any potential stakeholder in the action. However, the pathways identified for review and approval of proposals for courses and department-level programs start first at the relevant department curriculum committee to allow faculty who will be responsible for implementing the changes to have their voice heard first. The pathways for proposals for university-wide academic changes begin with one of the shared governance committees, or the Faculty Senate. Copies of the initial proposal may also be sent simultaneously for information purposes to other constituencies in the approval pathway. For some actions, specific formats may be required, e.g. new course proposals. If not, the proposal should at a minimum include a title for the proposed change, a description of the change and the contact information for the initial author(s) as well as a rationale for the change. If appropriate, include an analysis of the impact of the proposal on affected stakeholders, programs and offices. When changes are proposed to senate handbooks, constitutions, and/or bylaws, specify the sections and language to be altered. If the proposal includes any fiscal impacts, a budget should also be included.

## **Review & Approval**

Included in this document are the pathways required for review and approval of various proposals. The academic pathways reflect committee charges within the shared governance structure as identified in the Teaching & Research Faculty Handbook, the AP Faculty Handbook and this document. They also reflect the decision-making authority of administrative officers in these two documents.

## **Categories of action**

Each constituent in a pathway (committee, senate, or administrator) in a pathway may take one of the following types of actions with respect to a proposal:

Review and Recommend: constituents shall review the proposal, may call in the proposer or other affected parties, and will recommend approval as submitted, approval subject to recommended changes, or rejection of the proposal. The recommendations may include separate consideration of related actions. If a proposer does not agree with any parts of a recommendation, they may attach comments to be included in the proposal's documentation as it moves forward.

Approve: the constituents have the authority to approve or disapprove the proposal. If the proposal is approved it is forwarded, along with any comments and recommendations received, to the next constituent, if any. If the proposal is not approved, it shall not be forwarded. If the proposal contains amendments (changes in wording, deletions or additions), the proposer may withdraw the proposal within ten class days. All constituencies in the path up to this point shall be notified of the decision and the rationale for the decision. In the case of disapproval, the proposer may seek an appeal following the appeal process described below or may revise and resubmit the proposal in light of any recommendations.

## **Timeline**

The initial author(s) of the proposal is responsible for tracking the progress of the proposal and ensuring the proposal proceeds through each step in the pathway, including any suggestions or recommendations already made. Constituents with a role in reviewing and recommending or with approval authority shall have up to 30 calendar days during the fall and spring semesters to fulfill their function. Faculty Senate, however, has 60 calendar days during the fall and spring semesters to allow for review by sub-committees and full review by the Senate. Proposals intended to be considered by Faculty Senate must be delivered to Faculty Senate Executive Council no later than March 1. If no action is taken within the specified time period, the

proposal shall be forwarded to the next constituent with an indication that no action was taken at the previous level.

Proposals that must be approved by the Board of Visitors and/or state level authorities have their own timelines; author(s) should be cognizant of timelines and deadlines of the authorizing board/council/agency and submit proposals with sufficient lead-time to insure timely action.

### **Appeal**

The author(s) may appeal the decision to disapprove in full or in part. The appeal shall be to the approval authority who disapproved. The appeal shall be in writing with a rationale that responds to the reasons for disapproval. The appeal has to be submitted within ten class days. The authority who disapproved has ten class days following receipt of the appeal to respond. If the appeal does not result in a change in the decision at this level, the proposer has ten class days to appeal to the next level up of approving authority, up to the President. The approving authority has ten class days to respond to the appeal. The decision at this level shall be final.

## **Academic Shared Governance Committees**

The committees described in this section have charges related to:

curriculum or academic standards and processes  
the status of faculty (e.g., appointment, reappointment, and tenure)  
faculty awards, sabbaticals, or intellectual property

To be considered an Academic Shared Governance Committee, each committee must qualify under at least one of the above criteria according to the committee's description.

### **Curriculum and Program Committees**

The charges for committees in this group have work related to creating, modifying, and discontinuing programs, courses and graduation requirements.

### ***Academic Policies and Procedures***

#### **Charges:**

Reviews and recommends academic policies and procedures, such as:  
class attendance,

final examinations,  
withdrawals,  
probation and suspension,  
grading scales,  
admission and registration,  
academic advising  
graduation.

Pathways Note: Opportunity for comment on proposed actions from this committee should be extended to the Student Government Association and Faculty Senate prior to submission to the Provost.

**Membership Composition:**

Dean from each undergraduate college, the School of Nursing and the College of Graduate Studies,  
one teaching faculty from each undergraduate college and the School of Nursing (appointed by Faculty Senate Executive Council),  
one Faculty Senator from the Faculty Senate Executive Council (non-voting),  
one undergraduate and one graduate student, appointed by SGA,  
Registrar and one support staff from the Registrar's Office (both non-voting),  
Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success and Strategic Initiatives, and  
the Assistant Provost for Budget and Academic Operations (non-voting).

**Length of term:**

Deans or designees: by position  
Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success and Strategic Initiatives: by position  
Faculty: 2 years; may be reappointed to subsequent terms  
Students: 1 year; may be reappointed

**Designated Administrator:** Assistant Provost for Budget and Academic Operations

***Graduate Affairs Council***

**Charges:**

Recommends policies and procedures concerning the following specific areas as they relate to graduate programs:  
admissions,

recruitment and retention,  
academic standards (including advising, transfer credit; class attendance, student expectations, experiential learning experiences, etc.),  
student financial aid,  
program and curriculum development and revision,  
graduate faculty membership, and  
student research and creative activity.

**Membership Composition:**

One faculty member from each graduate program, either the program area leader/director or, in the event that this person cannot serve, a program faculty representative selected by the department chair or college dean,  
one faculty member from Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee (non-voting)  
Dean and Associate Dean of the College of Graduate Studies  
Registrar,  
Dean of the Library, and  
One graduate student, appointed by the Designated Administrator.

**Length of term:** Reappointed annually

**Designated Administrator:** Dean of the College of Graduate Studies

**Professional Standards, Activities and Awards Committees**

The charges for committees in this group have work related to upholding and recognizing professional and academic standards and achievements.

***Faculty Appeals***

**Charges:**

Hears appeals of recommendations or decisions related to evaluations, non-reappointment (including those resulting from post-tenure review), tenure, promotion, and termination for cause.

The Committee shall report its findings and make its recommendations to the Provost. If the appeal is of the Provost's recommendation, the Committee shall report its findings and make its recommendations to the President of the University, who has final decision-making authority.

**Membership Composition:**

Ten elected tenured faculty members consisting of:

Three members from the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences,  
one member from the College of Business and Economics,  
two members from the College of Education and Human Development,  
one member from the Waldron College of Health and Human Services,  
one member from the College of Visual and Performing Arts, and  
two members from the Artis College of Science and Technology

One alternate from each college elected from a department other than that of the principal representative(s).

**Terms and Appointment:** Members and alternates serve three-year terms.

**Designated Administrator:** The President of Faculty Senate shall convene the first meeting of the committee no later than the Friday of the fourth week of the fall semester

***Faculty Awards***

**Charges for University Awards:**

Establishes and publicizes criteria and solicits nominations from faculty, staff, and students for the following University awards:

Donald N. Dedmon Distinguished Teaching Professor Award,  
the Distinguished Creative Scholar Award,  
the Distinguished Service Award,  
the Distinguished Faculty Advising Award,  
the Anna Lee Stewart Award for Contributions to Faculty Development Award, and,  
the Award for Administrative Professional Excellence.

Notifies the nominees and requests that they provide information appropriate to support their nomination.

Establishes a deadline for the submission of these materials.

Offers advice to nominees in the preparation of their supporting materials.

Reviews the nominees' materials and recommends to the President the recipient of each award.

### **Charges for SCHEV Awards:**

Solicits nominations from faculty, staff and students for the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) Outstanding Faculty Awards Program in accord with the criteria and procedures annually established by SCHEV. The Provost notifies faculty nominated and requests information appropriate to submit to SCHEV.

Reviews the nominees' materials and submits a slate of nominees to the Provost. Completed nominations selected by the Provost will be submitted to the State Council of Higher Education through the Provost's office.

Offers advice to nominees in the preparation of their supporting materials.

### **Membership Composition**

The most recent winner of each award employed at the university, including the SCHEV award, the Executive Director of the Radford University Foundation, or designee

Assistant Provost for Budget and Academic Operations (non-voting)

For any undergraduate college or the School of Nursing without a representative, the Dean of that college will appoint a previous award winner.

**Designated Administrator:** Provost

### ***Faculty Grievance***

#### **Charges:**

Hears grievances regarding an employment matter directly and adversely affecting the professional well-being of a member or members of the teaching and research faculty, which is not related to evaluation, reappointment, tenure or promotion, or termination for cause, and which is not covered by other University policies, procedures, or regulations.

Pathway Note: The Committee shall report its findings and make its recommendations to the Provost. If the grievance is of the Provost's actions, the Committee shall report its findings and make its recommendations to the President of the University, who is the final decision-making authority.

#### **Membership Composition:**

Ten elected tenured faculty members consisting of:  
three members from the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences,  
one member from the College of Business and Economics,  
two members from the College of Education and Human Development,

one member from the Waldron College of Health and Human Services,  
one member from the College of Visual and Performing Arts, and  
two members from the Artis College of Science and Technology  
One alternate from each college elected from a department other than that of the principal representative(s).

**Designated Administrator:** President of the University; the President of Faculty Senate shall convene the first meeting of the committee no later than the Friday of the fourth week of the fall semester

**Terms and Appointment:** Members and alternates serve three-year terms.

### ***Intellectual Property***

#### **Charges:**

Recommends standards and procedures appropriate for the implementation of Radford University's Intellectual Property policy

Recommends amendments to the policy as needed to the Faculty Senate for its consideration and possible action.

#### **Membership Composition:**

One faculty member from each of the undergraduate colleges and the School of Nursing appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Council.

One representative appointed by the Vice President for Information Technology, and

One representative appointed by the Vice President for Finance and Administration

**Designated Administrator:** Provost

### ***Scholarly Activities***

#### **Charges:**

Provides recommendations regarding policies related to research and scholarly activities, research support, sponsored programs, and the Faculty Professional Development Leave program.

Reviews and makes recommendations regarding applications for Faculty Professional Development Leave.

Reviews and makes recommendations regarding SEED grant applications.

**Membership Composition:**

Dean of the College of Graduate Studies,  
one tenured faculty member from each undergraduate college and the School of Nursing  
appointed by Faculty Senate Executive Council, and  
Director of Sponsored Programs and Grant Management (non-voting).

**Designated Administrator:** Provost

***REAL Council\****

**Charges:**

Review, maintain, and administer process, procedures, timeline, competency criteria, and templates for REAL designations of courses.

Review, maintain, and administer process, procedures, timeline, and templates for REAL alignment of majors, minors, and certificates.

Annually review programming activities approved by the Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education to fulfill the Personal and Professional Development area.

Periodically review assessment results related to REAL learning goals and outcomes for degree majors, minors, and certificates and make subsequent recommendations to Faculty Senate Executive Council.

Partner with the Executive Director of Faculty Development to identify strategies to support faculty development related to the REAL curriculum.

Review an annual report on the status of General Education (could include, but is not limited to, information such as: progression to degree, resource capacity and concerns, student impact, and advising support), compiled by the Executive Director of General Education, and makes subsequent recommendations to Faculty Senate Executive Council.

On an annual basis, review report, provided by the Assistant Provost for General Education, that details updates and changes to REAL major, minor, and certificate alignment and course designations and rotations from departments, and make subsequent recommendations to Faculty Senate Executive Council.

Make recommendations regarding:

Review and make recommendations to Faculty Senate about the learning goals and outcomes for REAL knowledge areas and Cornerstone and Foundation courses.

Review REAL proposals for majors, minors, and certificate alignment.

Approve:

Review proposals for REAL course designations.

Review proposals for courses to fulfill Foundational course requirements within the REAL curriculum.

Review course proposals for Writing Intensive course designation within the REAL curriculum.

#### **Membership Composition:**

Two faculty from each undergraduate college and the School of Nursing (staggered 3 year terms),

The Assistant Provost for Undergraduate Education (non-voting),

two undergraduate students (non-voting), appointed annually by Student Affairs, and

a representative from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Quality Improvement (non-voting).

Students are appointed annually by the Vice President for Student Affairs. The representative from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement is appointed by the Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement. Faculty members are elected by their respective undergraduate colleges. Nominations for faculty members must be received by colleges no later than close of business on Friday of week 10 of the spring semester. Voting must conclude no later than the close of business on Friday of week 12 with the results being communicated to the Provost during week 13 of the of spring semester. In the case of faculty membership vacancies, new members would be elected by their college to fulfill the remainder of the original terms.

**Operating Rules:**

- Offering departments decide criteria or standards for determining whether students have successfully achieved learning outcomes for courses (including Foundational and Cornerstone courses), majors, minors, and certificates.
- Course designation decisions can be appealed to the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee for recommendation to Faculty Senate, which has final approval.
- The review process for course designations and major, minor, and certificate alignment occurs as part of academic program review.

**Designated Administrator:** Provost

***Student Evaluations of Faculty*****Charges:**

Reviews and recommends policies for student evaluation of faculty in the T&R Handbook (see section 1.4.1.3).

Reviews and recommends revisions to the student evaluation survey.

Recommends procedures for the implementation of student evaluation of faculty.

Pathways: Recommendations from this committee require the opportunity for comments from the SGA and the Faculty Senate prior to submission to the Vice President for Student Affairs and the Provost.

**Membership Composition:**

One representative from each undergraduate college and the School of Nursing appointed by the Faculty Senate Executive Council,  
one student appointed by SGA,  
one representative from the Office of Institutional Effectiveness & Quality Improvement, and  
one representative appointed by the Vice President for Student Affairs.

**Designated Administrator:** Provost

## Amending the Academic Governance Document

The [Overview of Shared Governance at Radford University](#) includes procedures for amending this document.

## REFERENCES

Bahls, Steven C. 2014. *Shared Governance in Times of Change: A Practical Guide for Universities and Colleges*. Washington, DC: AGB Press.