MEETING NOTES
Monthly Meeting of Strategic Planning Task Force
Thursday, March 16, 2017
Heth Hall, Lower Level, 043

Present
Jack Call, Co-Chair
Kenna Colley, Co-Chair
Holly Cline, Faculty Representative
Dave Sallee, Faculty Representative
Skip Watts, Faculty Representative
Sandra Bond, Administrative and Professional Faculty Representative
Eric Lovik, Administrative and Professional Faculty Representative
Karen Montgomery, Classified Staff Representative
Patti Williamson, Classified Staff Representative
Nancy Artis, Alumni/Community Representative
Jeff Price, Alumni/Community Representative
Stephanie Ballein, At-Large Appointment
Irvin Clark, At-Large Appointment
Angela Joyner, At-Large Appointment
Danny Kemp, At-Large Appointment
Ebenezer Kolajo, At-Large Appointment
Chad Reed, At-Large Appointment
Sherry Wallace, At-Large Appointment
Richard Alvarez, Administrative Representative (Vice Presidents)
Kitty McCarthy, Administrative Representative (Vice Presidents)
Joe Scartelli, Administrative Representative (Vice Presidents)
Ken Cox, Administrative Representative (Deans)
Margaret Devaney, Administrative Representative (Deans)
George Low, Administrative Representative (Deans)
Ashley Schumaker, Administrative Liaison

Absent
Jacinda Jones, Student Representative
Aaron Sarmiento, Student Representative
Vicki Bierman, Faculty Representative
Jerry Kopf, Faculty Representative
Carter Turner, Faculty Representative
David Ridpath, At-Large Appointment
Also in attendance were the following Subgroup Co-Chairs:
Brad Bizzell, Strategic Enrollment Growth; Joe Carpenter, Brand Identity; Mike Chatham, Budget; Bruce Cunningham, Philanthropic Giving and Alumni Engagement; Leslie Daniel, Challenges and Opportunities; Jane Machin, Brand Identity; and Cassidy Urista, Student Success

The meeting began at 1:00 PM with a review of the February 21, 2017 meeting notes by Task Force Co-Chair Jack Call. Dr. Call asked that Task Force members review the provided document and advise regarding any suggested edits prior to approval. With no suggested edits, the notes were approved.

The Challenges and Opportunities Subgroup White Paper was briefly discussed by the Task Force. Nancy Artis made a motion to accept the white paper as submitted. Dr. Joe Scartelli seconded the motion, and it passed. A copy of the document is provided as Attachment A. In accepting the document, it was noted that the content of the draft document was discussed in detail by Task Force members as part of the February 21, 2017 meeting.

Professor of Management and Department Chair Iain Clelland gave a presentation regarding sustainability. A copy of Dr. Clelland’s presentation and handout are provided as Attachment B, Part 1 and 2. Following Dr. Clelland’s presentation, there was general discussion among Task Force members.

Task Force Co-Chair Kenna Colley provided an update on the overall strategic planning process. She noted that all subgroups need to meet with President Hemphill in the near future. Dr. Colley advised subgroups to connect with Ashley Schumaker if they need to schedule a meeting with the President in order to provide an overview of subgroup progress and major initiatives. Dr. Colley highlighted upcoming deadlines, specifically May 15, 2017 for the overall template and July 15, 2017 for the budget template. Drs. Call and Colley encouraged subgroups to submit templates once completed rather than waiting until the deadline. Dr. Colley encouraged subgroups to engage in backward planning in order to ensure that deadlines are met. It was noted that a majority of the templates should be submitted by the established dates; however, a few additional submissions can occur early in the Fall 2017 semester. The final process update was a call for recommendations for the writing team. It was noted that any recommendations should be submitted in the coming weeks as the writing team will be assembled in early May in order to accomplish a majority of their work over the summer months.

Dr. Colley requested that subgroup co-chairs provide updates regarding their work to date:

- Joe Carpenter and Dr. Jane Machin provided an update for the Brand Identity Subgroup. A handout was distributed and is provided as Attachment C. The subgroup is focusing on the current customer base, which includes students, faculty, and staff among others. It was noted that students serve in the important roles of future advocates and donors. Through the planning efforts, it has been decided that, by 2023, the subgroup wants students to indicate that attending Radford University was the best decision ever.

- Dr. Joe Scartelli provided an update for the Academic Excellence and Research Subgroup. He highlighted the two surveys that were distributed to all students, faculty, and staff earlier in the day by Ashley Schumaker on behalf of the Task Force and the respective subgroups. He noted that several responses have already been received. Such responses have been
focused on input around the concept of signature programs. Dr. Scartelli also discussed the upcoming campus forums, which will be structured in the same manner as the surveys.

- Kitty McCarthy provided an update for the Strategic Enrollment Growth Subgroup. She noted that the five groups within the subgroup are working individually in order to complete the template process. She also noted that their work is overlapping with the data analytics focus.

- Dr. George Low provided an update for the Economic Development and Community Partnerships Subgroup. He highlighted the data collected from campus and community forums, as well as the survey of economic development leaders in the region. He highlighted an on-going subgroup discussion around the University’s role in economic development as a partner in all activities, including the coordination of functions and connections for students and faculty.

- Dr. Holly Cline provided an update for the Philanthropic Giving and Alumni Engagement Subgroup. She noted that all groups within the subgroup have met to develop specific plans. She noted that additional meetings are needed before information can be compiled and the templates can be completed.

- Richard Alvarez and Mike Chatham provided an update for the Budget Subgroup. It was noted that the subgroup was unable to meet prior to Spring Break, but would convene later in the month.

- Dr. Cassidy Urista provided an update for the Student Success Subgroup. She noted that the group has concluded the process of defining student success and is now in the process of formulating specific goals and strategies. Dr. Urista indicated that continued work will be driven by survey results and forum feedback, which will be available prior to the next Task Force meeting.

Ashley Schumaker noted that an e-mail notification was distributed to all students, faculty, and staff with two survey links, a link for the Academic Excellence and Research Subgroup and a combined link for the Philanthropic Giving and Alumni Engagement Subgroup and the Student Success Subgroup. She noted that interested individuals were asked to complete the surveys by March 30, 2017. She also noted that campus forums will be held on March 27, 2017 at 2:00 PM and March 28, 2017 at 10:00 AM in The Bonnie Auditorium.

Ashley Schumaker reminded Task Force members that there will be a monthly meeting on April 13, 2017 from 1:00 PM to 3:00 PM in Heth Hall, Lower Level, 043.

Ashley Schumaker noted that an e-mail will be distributed to all Task Force members requesting availability for the remaining monthly meetings to be held from May through October. She advised that the August meeting will be held before Fall 2017 classes begin. Therefore, a conference call option will be provided for the May, June, July, and August meetings. She noted that all future meeting dates, times, and locations will be confirmed prior to the April 13, 2017 meeting.
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES AT RADFORD UNIVERSITY
WHITE PAPER

Process

Radford University has begun the critically important strategic planning process with an overall Task Force and seven subgroups. The Challenges and Opportunities subgroup was charged with developing a white paper describing the challenges and opportunities facing the university. The white paper is therefore constructed mainly to inform other subgroups.

The subgroup, which included students, faculty, staff, and administrators, began by brainstorming challenges and opportunities and discussing how to accomplish our task. Data was collected from the wider university via two campus-wide forums, at which spoken and written input were collected, and an online survey. Including the campus and community was a critical step in this process. All of the data was distilled and developed into this white paper.

As we analyzed the data for themes, the challenge of understanding the connectivity amongst the subgroups became obvious. Many emergent themes impact multiple subgroups thus earning their own Overarching Themes section. The remaining sections are organized into the identified subgroups, namely: Brand Identity, Academic Excellence and Research, Student Success, Strategic Enrollment Growth, Economic Development and Community Partnerships, and Philanthropic Giving and Alumni Engagement.

Overarching Themes

A number of overarching themes emerged. These include (1) understanding the needs and expectations of diverse stakeholders, (2) evolving external and internal cultural climate, (3) economic challenges, (4) administrative efficiencies, (5) the impact of technology on core components of our mission, and (6) issues related to infrastructure.

One of our challenges is trying to understand and meet the possibly conflicting needs of our stakeholders. Important stakeholders are the students and their parents; faculty and staff; alumni; employers; accrediting organizations; and regional, state and federal governments. Communication with these stakeholders presents challenges. Email alone may not be meeting the needs of the current population (for example, campus social and entertainment events need to be better communicated to increase attendance). Staying up to date on and utilizing available technologies including social media and other internal means of communication are other ways to inform our stakeholders. The following paragraphs detail further challenges facing these various stakeholders as well as possible opportunities for working with them more effectively through evidence-based practices that foster success.

Twenty-first century American universities face a variety of cultural challenges, and Radford University is no exception. The anti-intellectualism displayed by some may place more emphasis on one of higher education’s goals, preparing students for a career, while devaluing other equally important outcomes such as learning to think, valuing diversity, having a global view, or
becoming outstanding citizens. For example, the fine arts and humanities may be less valued than more explicitly career-oriented and technical fields. Radford University will need to address these challenges and the ongoing shift in cultural values.

The internal culture of Radford University has challenges based on perceptions. Some students feel faculty are not as committed to student success or engaged with extracurricular activities as they would like and perceive that some faculty are only on campus long enough to teach classes and meet required office hours. On the other hand, some faculty believe some students are not as committed to academic excellence as they would like. The most recent Faculty Morale Survey, conducted in 2014, found morale was exceptionally low compared to benchmark universities. The Radford University community must work to improve morale and counter these perceptions.

Across Virginia, as well as the rest of the United States, universities compete for scarce resources. The cost of higher education is rising, but funding from the state is declining, resulting in a university even more dependent on tuition for its ongoing expenses. This situation leaves Radford University with challenges including increasing costs for students and families, and inadequate support for faculty, staff, and administrative activities. Radford University may need to implement new, more entrepreneurial financial management models to solve these problems, increase revenues, and reduce costs. Moving to new revenue models may be challenging within the current laws, policies, and bureaucracy. In addition, some faculty believe that some college/departmental generated revenue needs to go back to the college/department that generated it, rather than into the overall budget.

One area of discussion raised the possibility of different tuition and fee models. Differential tuition and/or fees according to major, discounts for students from neighboring states, and fee differentials for various amenities need to be analyzed. Radford University should also consider different rates for different delivery options, such as online courses, and for out-of-state students within the southern Appalachian region. Another area to evaluate is the use of fees versus tuition. Increasing enrollments, expanding continuing education, and providing services, should be explored as ways to increase revenue. Another option for increasing enrollments/revenues is exploring additional online/hybrid courses and degree programs, competency based education, and other models directed to meet the needs of today’s diverse student populations.

Other options to increase revenue include increasing sales of internal services such as printing, charging fees for and increasing the year-round use of facilities, and creating a “Big Ideas Think Tank.” Using intellectual property to generate entrepreneurial ventures and provide revenue to the university should be explored. Accessing Radford University’s faculty, staff, and students’ expertise and scholarship can both enhance academic and organizational performance and save costs on external consultants. Finally, opportunities exist to analyze our current cash flows to identify ways to better utilize current resources and potentially support one-time funding to allow for long-term savings (e.g., green technology).

While there is an on-going effort to improve efficiencies, an analysis of current procedures should occur to identify additional opportunities for efficiencies and develop streamlined innovative business processes. This includes maximizing efficient use of space allowing for greater opportunities for instruction, administrative needs, and internal and external events. Conducting an analysis of our need for energy and other utilities could lead to greater
efficiencies, reduced costs, and a more sustainable physical environment. Radford University can be a leader in green building efforts.

Radford has an opportunity to be a leader in using technology to enhance teaching, learning, and administrative functions. The university could provide students with above average technology skills and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of learning. Technology can also be used to reduce costs and improve administrative efficiency. Evolving technology represents tremendous opportunities, but needs to be managed in a way that lessens the negative disruption to faculty, staff, and students, and to foster positive change in innovative ways.

Cybersecurity represents a risk to the university from cyber-attacks, but it also represents opportunities for expansion of academic programs for career opportunities for our information technology students. Due to our position as a state and regional leader in cybersecurity education, we have an opportunity to publicize how we meet this critical state and national need. In addition to cybersecurity, other security issues provide both risks and opportunities. An awareness of and preparedness for physical security should be foremost (e.g. flooding, chemical accidents, campus shootings, sexual assault, or other violent crime), with projects such as the Emergency Operations Center providing opportunities for students to learn crisis management.

Accessibility in all its varieties is yet another challenge facing Radford University. These varieties range from the physical campus environment to access to online and electronic content. Some of the campus’s older buildings and hilly topography challenge students, faculty, and staff with disabilities, while accessing online courses can present challenges not only for students who have visual and auditory disabilities but also students who live in rural areas without broadband Internet access. Radford University has the opportunity to improve access to a college education through changes to facilities and technology, and through universal design. These opportunities extend to the dining halls, with greater availability of allergen-free and gluten-free options.

**Brand Identity**

A university’s brand is dependent on its identity. While Radford University recently concluded a rebranding exercise, and is currently rolling out the new campaign, this subgroup heard a message that many in our community do not relate to our current brand and brand portrayal. Hence, some members of this subgroup have determined that resetting or establishing a brand message and identity that the community may connect with is a significant opportunity. Our objective is to steer our brand identity towards the best aspects of who we are and who we want to be.

Positive comments from surveys and open forums pointed out: faculty involvement in student success; small class sizes and one-to-one faculty-student interaction; favorable image of many academic programs; relatively small campus providing a feeling of tightknit community; helping students discover their voice, vocation, and passions; employers that like the ‘roll-up the sleeve and get to work’ attitude of our students; and the associated external validation of our students’ readiness. Some of the negative perceptions are that Radford University is a party school, is not academically rigorous and anyone can get accepted, and the campus is in the middle of nowhere with little for students to do besides outdoor activities.
Radford University's brand should address these perceptions head-on rather than indirectly. We have high quality programs and should make an effort to identify gems and showcase them in our branding campaigns. Radford University is the optimum size for many students: large enough to provide opportunities across multiple high-quality academic programs and many service and social organizations, but also small enough to provide one-on-one interactions. Our size and location make transformation possible with academic programs that develop highly sought-after world class skills with practical experience in solving real world problems in our local context. These programs provide service opportunities that develop informed citizens and social activities that develop interactive collaborative skills. A rich on-campus, social environment exists for those who care to take advantage of it, with such activities such as Homecoming and Highlander Days. Our location enables us to be a center for leadership and service to stakeholders in Virginia, West Virginia, and the Appalachian region. It also allows for a wide variety of outdoor opportunities for students and faculty.

**Academic Excellence and Research**

One of our biggest challenges is to change the perception that Radford University is not an academically excellent university. Developing a balance between increasing enrollment and fostering retention and academic reputation is necessary. Radford must decide how to define excellence for students, faculty and the university as a whole, creating synergy among teaching, research, and public service. The expectations we place on students are a component of academic excellence. Increased expectations can challenge students to perform at a higher level which will result in better prepared graduates. We must consider what knowledge and competencies are represented by a Radford University degree, from the goals for the core curriculum to the accreditation standards for given majors.

Rethinking Quest and University 100 using a data-driven approach could provide more individualized instruction and support. If we do that well, we can provide students with a richer learning experience and therefore a higher chance of success. Additional academic preparation through Quest, summer bridge programs, and/or University 100 could help ensure student readiness and thus student excellence. Exit surveys and interviews from graduating students could provide feedback and mentoring for entering students.

Radford could become more successful with our student population by adjusting traditional pedagogies to newer instructional models, including a Universal Design for Learning (UDL). UDL is “a framework to improve and optimize teaching and learning for all people based on scientific insights into how humans learn,” which considers multiple means of engagement, representation, action, and expression (CAST.org). Faculty development in instructional delivery and universal design for learning can facilitate the development of innovative pedagogies.

We can also achieve excellence by encouraging the greater use and documentation of a variety of High Impact Practices (HIPs), as described by the American Association of Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) LEAP Initiative. Such practices include undergraduate research, internships, writing-intensive courses, service learning, learning communities, and other pedagogies, many of which Radford University already provides.
Another opportunity is to become a leader in interdisciplinary study. We find ourselves in an increasingly interdependent world with new and intriguing connections between traditionally divergent disciplines. Radford University has the opportunity to develop and enrich interdisciplinary collaborative projects and programs, which enhances our academic reputation, increases opportunities for research, and contributes to the region. The challenge is to identify existing and potential programs, which are/could become signature programs (e.g., education and nursing) and centers of excellence (e.g., DHS and NSA National Center of Academic Excellence in Cyber Defense Education or Allied Health and the Center for Governmental and Non-profit Accounting). Creating centers of excellence that integrate research, academic programs, and public service would distinguish Radford University as a unique institution of higher learning.

Radford University also has an opportunity to differentiate itself by focusing on high value research that can be applied to regional needs and connected to undergraduate and graduate education through the scholarship of teaching and learning. However, we lack consensus on what research is/should be in our institutional context, and how it should be balanced with faculty commitments to teaching and service. Thus, we have the opportunity to better define the types of research appropriate to our institution and have that research be integrated with the teaching and service missions of the university.

Changing societal expectations with regard to traditional university models also challenge academic excellence. Accrediting agencies and governmental bodies drive change through new standards and mandates; we must respect this need for change while setting our own course. For example, SCHEV and SACS encourage alternative forms of credentialing and degree completion, including outcome-based education and competency testing, as well other forms of determining credit hours, and our competing institutions are seizing these opportunities.

New models of completion may increase our ability to serve non-traditional students including veterans and other student populations with particular needs. Non-traditional students are attracted to accelerated degree programs and inter-professional certificates and certification programs, as well as individualized programs. Radford University has developed a number of certificate programs in the past few years, and marketing these programs presents a significant opportunity as does developing new certificate programs in high-demand areas.

**Student Success**

Student success faces many challenges in higher education, and Radford University is not immune. Factors such as academic readiness (or preparedness), university engagement, and finances have a direct impact on student success and retention. Specifically, on Radford University's campus, additional resources and infrastructure are needed to create and sustain programs that promote matriculation and persistence.

Radford University needs to address the diverse learning needs of our students. Some students are more prepared than others for the rigor of academia. Keeping classes small and having small breakout groups in larger classes can foster faculty-student and peer-to-peer connections, which enhance success. In order to better serve our students, we must have systems in place to identify the underprepared students early so that we can connect them to available resources and on-campus support. We must fully fund and staff campus support offices to meet the specific needs
of our students (for example, the Learning Assistance and Resource Center (LARC) currently cannot provide enough tutors to meet the needs of students in high demand core courses such as economics).

Another challenge regarding the university’s ability to adequately meet the academic needs of a diverse student body is the one-dimensional method some faculty use to deliver instruction: lengthy lectures accompanied by multiple choice assessments. Our faculty may fully understand their content; however, some may not be skilled in a variety of pedagogies to meet a wide range of learning styles. Research indicates that today’s students respond more positively in learning environments in which they are highly engaged and active participants. Radford University has an opportunity to enhance faculty teaching through its Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning (CITL) and Technology Support Services within the Division of Information Technology. Specifically, our faculty can receive professional development on effective pedagogical practices for today’s learners using on-campus resources. Faculty with expertise in instructional design, differentiation, and learner development could provide ongoing professional development for our campus community.

Radford University could also increase the use of high impact practices to engage a larger and more diverse group of students. We do utilize several high impact practices on our campus such as internships, student research, scholar-citizen initiatives, and study abroad. However, a small percentage of our students are engaged in these activities. We know that participation in such activities produces more positive learning outcomes for students. In addition, these students could develop mentoring relationships with faculty and/or alumni being a part of a research team or participating in an internship. Mentorship, engagement, and access to support services provide numerous benefits. All of these factors are key to a student’s success and retention, and making these more available to a wider population is an opportunity.

Another challenge that most universities like Radford University must address is the declining funding from the state for student financial aid, grants, and scholarships. As a result, many students are forced to work part-time jobs to support themselves, and in some situations, their families, while they are in school. Some Radford University students work as many as 30 hours/week, which does not allow adequate time to study and prepare for courses. Their work schedules often limit which courses they can take as well as the amount of time they can participate in high impact academic experiences or social activities that engage them in the university. Employment opportunities for these students on and in close proximity to campus may help.

Another financial challenge Radford University students experience is not having enough money to purchase materials essential to their success. Not having textbooks and other material goods essential to classes, or enough money to repair or replace a personal computer, are examples of some of the financial hardships our students experience. We must create opportunities for students to be able to access the materials and resources they need to be successful. For example, computer labs and other public computer spaces need to be continuously analyzed to ensure every student has access to a computer and software that is needed for their curriculum. Perhaps lab fees could be expanded to provide needed material goods for classes (e.g., canvasses for art), with variations by discipline.
Campus engagement is vital to student success. New students coming to campus often need a full year to learn how to navigate the campus environment, balance school and social time, and develop strong study habits. The sophomore year is when students begin to feel comfortable engaging in extra-curricular activities. At Radford University, a second-year experience for residential sophomores could be created during the second-year housing contract. Students who live and work on/near campus and stay involved in campus activities lead more robust campus lives and thrive better than students who commute and have heavy off-campus obligations.

**Strategic Enrollment Growth**

Identifying, reaching, and maintaining a targeted size and student profile is critical to the short and long-term stability and success of Radford University. With competition from other Virginia and online institutions, Radford University must develop a comprehensive enrollment strategy that identifies and targets select populations of potential students. Determining our target market will help focus recruitment efforts. We can become known for empowering students to succeed and become their best selves. We should also identify other forms of social and intellectual “capital” that students gain from a Radford University experience and market these benefits, in addition to the increased salary associated with a college degree.

To some extent the university faces a dilemma—increasing enrollments while enhancing its academic reputation. The question hinges in part on how selective Radford University will be in admitting students. One option is to continue to use the existing admission standards, which require that appropriate supports are in place to help students succeed. A second possibility is to lower admissions requirements, and provide the higher levels of support required to help students with potential succeed. A final path is to raise the bar, making it harder to get into Radford, thereby enhancing selectivity, creating a stronger academic reputation.

To attract transfer students, Radford University should nurture connections at all levels in the community college system so their faculty and counselors are aware of and champion our programs. Radford could gain a unique competitive advantage by providing face-to-face advising and information about program requirements to first year community college students who are interested in transferring later to a four-year institution. Some students who transferred from community colleges with associate degrees have shared (1) their bachelor’s degrees took longer than two additional years because they were unaware of specific program requirements, (2) they have had to delay completing their degrees because some departments did not offer courses regularly, and (3) some departments did not acknowledge completed general education requirements because the community college was delayed in processing completion of an associate’s degree. Solutions for delays should be explored and eliminated or minimized whenever possible.

In addition to, and sometimes overlapping with the community college students, other groups are opportunities for targeted recruitment efforts. These include veteran groups in specific geographic areas, homeschool students, employees who are seeking to use life experiences to enhance and fill gaps in their educational credentials, and adult learners wanting a career change.

Attractive educational opportunities are needed for effective recruiting. Attractive websites and website support to maintain these is needed. New and enhanced traditional and innovative
programs can include the following: competency based education, accelerated and/or individualized degree programs; new or enhanced graduate and undergraduate programs in emerging fields; expanded online program options, including hybrid courses with intensive on-campus opportunities; and inter-professional certificates, certification programs, and recertification programs.

**Economic Development and Community Partnerships**

As a comprehensive regional university, our state mandate is to use our physical and intellectual resources to not only educate traditional students but to enhance the region in multiple ways. Our challenge is identifying ways we can meet this mandate within our resource constraints in a way that not only enhances the region but also enriches our academic mission and helps define our identity. Specifically, we must develop strategies that address the commonwealth’s plan for economic development by supporting the creation of new businesses, jobs, and capital investment, thereby increasing growth. These strategies must focus on the priorities of the various federal, state, and regional funding sources while avoiding the duplication of existing efforts. They should also target the outcomes most valued by the communities we serve.

The lack of internal and external information about our current outreach programs as well as many of the needs of the surrounding area should be addressed by conducting an internal scan of the current state of partnership efforts. This scan can serve as a platform for building new initiatives. New opportunities for Radford University to contribute to southwest Virginia can arise from an external scan of the region’s needs. In doing so, we should balance the needs of the City of Radford with those of the larger region.

Currently, individual faculty develop service-learning projects for courses that could form larger community partnerships. These activities should be coordinated at the university level. The Scholar Citizen Initiative office provides funding for many of the projects. Integrating community needs with opportunities for faculty and student engagement creates synergy between learning for students and public service. Community partnerships that provide a service and real-world experience such as community enrichment activities for families (e.g. science fairs, planetarium shows, or live theatre) foster better use of campus facilities and generate new revenues as well as take advantage of the university’s unique resources and capabilities.

State and regional economic development has relied heavily on recruiting existing companies to the region. Because the number of successful businesses within the region has declined, starting and growing new businesses have become significant needs. This requires outreach initiatives that target the critical components of entrepreneurial growth. Providing credit and non-credit educational programs, which offer the knowledge and skills needed to start, manage, and grow a business, may increase the number of new businesses and enhance the success rate of those startups. Radford University could then work with partners to enhance the availability of financing, as well as provide assistance and training in obtaining capital.

Virginia’s strategic plan for economic development stresses the importance of a more highly educated workforce. Radford University can provide technical assistance, education, and data collection and analysis to enhance the growth of existing businesses and the workforce. Regional economic growth can be facilitated by providing training and technical assistance to increase
local companies’ ability to embrace globalization and engage in international trade. Using the higher education centers (Abingdon, Martinsville, and Roanoke) as spaces to deliver professional development and outreach services will help meet the needs of our region. Developing educational programs and experiences that attract professionals from other countries and arranging for local companies and professionals to participate in study abroad should also be embraced. Broader arts and humanities programming can also enhance the attractiveness of the region to companies looking for locations.

Radford University could develop initiatives that enhance the quality of life in the region and therefore help attract and retain employers. These opportunities can be framed within the context of existing colleges, such as the improvement of medical care, mental/behavioral health care, public education, arts, and recreation and tourism. A unique opportunity is to enhance the area and town/gown relations, and to improve outdoor recreation, and facilities. The university and city might benefit mutually from the establishment of an Interdisciplinary Economic Development Council.

**Philanthropic Giving and Alumni Engagement**

Strategically identifying and engaging/reengaging past donors, retired faculty/staff, current faculty/staff, current students, alumni, corporations and others is an opportunity. This might occur through the targeted use of social media in areas of interest, sightseeing trips designed for alumni, networks for staying in touch with classmates, support services for alumni (such as job placement assistance), engagement of alumni in student recruiting, and letting alumni tell “our story” through our marketing.

The university should strategically identify major areas of giving, diversify revenue sources and find innovative ways to engage alumni. The size of the Radford University alumni base is a factor in regard to the level of fund raising we can expect. However, there are innovative ways to increase the level of alumni engagement that will lead to increased philanthropic giving.

Some constituencies may not give to Radford University because of financial constraints, a feeling of disenfranchisement, or concern over the use of their donations. An opportunity exists to educate alumni on how donations are prioritized and used, plus the control they have on their individual donations. Also, it is important to understand what the various potential contributors value. Endowments and scholarships need to be solicited with vigor to allow for more affordable tuition, increased enrollment, and ultimately a larger alumni base. Donors with special interests could foster globalization projects, as with the Kirk Scholars program. Corporate sponsorships could have a profound impact on revenue and the brand of the university.

Some individuals prefer to give their time and talents as opposed to their treasures. Radford University needs to identify these people and find ways to channel their contributions to benefit the university. When alumni come back to campus, we should find opportunities to bring them into our classrooms. They can share what motivates them to remain engaged and to support their alma mater. By engaging alumni in multiple ways, financial contributions are likely to follow.
Conclusion

As discussed in this white paper, Radford University has challenges and opportunities specific to brand identity, academic excellence and research, student success, strategic enrollment growth, economic development and community partnerships, and philanthropic giving and alumni engagement, as well as some overarching themes impacting all of the above. It should be emphasized that the university is well positioned to overcome whatever challenges that may exist and to take advantage of the many opportunities that have been presented. Such growth will position Radford University at the forefront of regional comprehensive universities in the nation.

This white paper is intended to document the challenges and opportunities facing the university and to help guide the strategic planning process. While subgroups for each of the key areas of the strategic plan will gather their own data and further expound on what is included in this document, establishing specific strategic goals to address the current challenges and opportunities will be critical to the future success of the university.

It is the desire of the members of the Challenges and Opportunities subgroup that this white paper will serve both as a source of data and a reminder for the other subgroups as work continues to shape a strategic plan that will take Radford University to heights never before realized while accomplishing its mission, following its vision, and standing by its core values.

Reference

Appendix A

The following bulleted lists are provided as a synopsis of what is captured in the white paper.

**Challenges**

- Understanding the needs and expectations of diverse stakeholders
- Evolving external and internal cultural climate
- Economic challenges
- Issues related to infrastructure
- The number of people/agencies we have to answer to as a university
- Current environment of anti-intellectualism
- Values of internationalism
- Need for inclusivity
- Culture of Radford University
- Competition for scarce resources
- Cost of instructional resources is rising
- Funding from the state and federal government is declining
- Inadequate support for faculty, staff and administrative activities in some areas
- Need for one time funding: invest in opportunities that will impact the University’s long term performance
- Idea of revenue generation will require a culture shift for many
- Finding ways to move to revenue models within the current laws, policies and bureaucracy
- Faculty perception that upper administrative positions are paid at a higher percentile than faculty positions
- Perceived inequities between colleges and departments across the university
- Accessibility in all its varieties
- Cybersecurity
- Geographic location of the University
- Our current brand and brand portrayal
- Perception that RU is a party school
- Perception that RU is not academically rigorous
- Developing a balance between increasing enrollments/retention and academic reputation
- Faculty development in instructional delivery and universal design for learning
- Identify existing and potential programs, which are/could become signature programs and centers of excellence
- Lack consensus on what research is or should be in our institutional context
- Changing societal expectations with regard to traditional university models
- Academic readiness of some students
- Restrictions on providing remedial coursework
- Financial challenges
- Meet the diverse learning needs of our students
- Many of our campus support offices are under-resourced and unable to meet the specific needs of our students
- One-dimensional method some faculty use to deliver instruction
- Students are forced to work part-time jobs to support themselves
- Social scene at Radford may be inadequate for certain students
- Differing opinions on what Radford University’s student profile should be
- Lack of internal and external information about our current outreach programs
- Size of the RU alumni base
Opportunities

- Understanding the needs and expectations of diverse stakeholders
- Evolve external and internal cultural climate
- Optimize the use of technology in core components of our mission
- Increase internationalization by pursuing study abroad options
- Recruitment of international students
- Recruitment of more diverse faculty, staff and student populations
- Analyze different tuition and fee models
- Differential tuition according to major
- Discounts for students in the region who are not Virginia residents
- Fee differentials for various amenities
- Different tuition rates for online courses and for out-of-state students
- Generate more credit hours
- University facilities and intellectual capital could be used to facilitate research
- Strategies for using intellectual property
- Increase sales of internal services
- Fees for the use of facilities
- Increase the year-round use of facilities
- Develop new technology and intellectual property
- Expand continuing education
- Expand clinical services
- Creation of a “Big Ideas Think Tank”
- New entrepreneurial financial management models
- Use Radford University’s faculty, staff and students’ expertise and scholarship
- Enhanced communication and greater transparency
- An analysis of current procedures should continue in order to identify inefficiencies and develop streamlined innovative processes
- Cultivate Cybersecurity academic program

- Increase faculty involvement in student success
- Help students discover their voice, vocation and passions
- Brand should address the unfavorable elements of existing climate
- Pave the way to reinforce the favorable elements of existing brand
- Anchor a brand campaign around traditions and traditional activities
- Steer brand identity towards who we are and who we want to be
- Change the perception that Radford University is not an academically excellent university
- Create synergy among teaching, research and public service
- Provide additional preparation through Quest or summer bridge programs
- Utilize feedback and mentoring from the exiting students to help new, entering students
- Adjust traditional pedagogies to newer instructional models and alternate delivery methods where appropriate
- Encourage greater use of High Impact Practices
- Increase Undergraduate research
- Increase Internships
- Provide writing-intensive courses
- Provide service learning
- Provide Learning communities
- Become a leader in interdisciplinary study
- Focus on high value research
- Incorporate Outcome-based education into the curriculum
- Incorporate Competency Based Education into the curriculum
- Increase our ability to serve not only non-traditional students but also veterans and other student populations with particular needs
• Offer an accelerated degree programs
• Offer inter-professional certificates
• Offer more certification/recertification programs
• Offer Individualized programs
• Develop systems to identify students who are having difficulties early so they can connect to available resources and on-campus support
• Deliver information in multiple ways or differentiate to meet the intellectual needs of a wide range of learning styles
• Increase student research
• Scholar-citizen initiatives
• Create a faculty/student mentor program
• Increase opportunities for campus activities engagement
• Increase access to a variety of support services
• Provide additional social and entertainment opportunities for students
• Increase student engagement in the academic community
• Provide opportunities for peer to peer connections
• Establish community clinics (e.g., Nursing)
• Enhance university centers/clinics that integrate training, research and outreach (e.g., COSD, Center for Assessment and Psychological Services)
• Establish charter schools
• Enhance relationships with community colleges
• Develop new or enhanced graduate and undergraduate programs in emerging fields
• Expand online program options, including hybrid with intensive on-campus opportunities
• Increase summer opportunities
• Increase out-of-state tuition waiver options for graduate students

• Use our physical intellectual resources to not only educate traditional students but to enhance the region in multiple ways
• Conduct an internal scan of the current state of partnership efforts
• Develop service-learning projects for courses that could form larger community partnerships
• Start and grow new businesses
• Target the critical components of entrepreneurial growth
• Provide credit and non-credit educational programs
• Work with partners to enhance the availability of financing
• Provide technical assistance, education, and data collection and analysis to embrace globalization and engage in international trade
• Use higher education centers as spaces to deliver professional development and outreach services
• Provide educational programs and experiences that attract professionals from other countries
• Develop initiatives, such as the arts, that enhance the quality of life
• Enhance the area and town/gown relations
• Enhance outdoor recreation
• Establishment of an Inter-Disciplinary Economic Development Council
• Strategically identify major areas of giving
• Diversify revenue sources
• Find innovative way to engage alumni
• Educate alumni on how donations are prioritized and used
• Pursue with more vigor endowments and solicitation for more student scholarships
• Embrace globalization with international online learning and corporate engagement
• Engage/reengage past donors, retired faculty/staff, current faculty/staff,
current students, alumni, corporations and others
• Develop strategic partnerships to achieve economic development and outreach goals to include federal, state, regional, city, county, and university economic development agencies, commissions, programs, and departments.
Appendix B

Members of the Challenges and Opportunities Subgroup

Angela Devore  Director of the Disability Resource Office
Anna Devito  Associate Professor in Health and Human Performance
Bernard Keen  Student in Social Work
Deborah Lowe  Receivables Tech in Student Accounts
Jennifer Mabry  Associate Professor in Psychology
Jerry Kopf  Professor in Management
Laurie Cubbison  Professor in English
Maneesh Thakkar  Associate Professor in Marketing
Mike Biscotte  Director of Facilities Planning and Construction
Ned Okie  Professor in Information Technology
Paul Ely  Assistant Director of Capital Outlay Projects
Richard Bay  Professor in Art
Robyn Toran  Student in Athletic Training
Tammy Wallace  Associate Dean, College of Education and Human Development
Danny Kemp  Co-chair, Vice President for Information Technology & CIO
Leslie Daniel  Co-chair, Associate Professor in Special Education

Our subgroup uncovered challenges and opportunities related to the efficient administration of the university. These are not specifically strategic issues, but addressing the following will support Radford University’s strategic plan.

An analysis of current procedures should occur to identify inefficiencies and develop streamlined innovative processes, leading to savings in time and money. Red tape, insufficient staffing, and administrative roadblocks are perceived as creating inefficiencies for faculty, staff, and students. The process for paying vendors, processing paperwork, and other administrative tasks is not always clear in terms of who is responsible and what needs to be completed. The approval for various tasks, such as travel, should be reassessed to identify the best, most efficient levels of delegated authority and responsibility.

Maximizing efficient use of space allows for greater opportunities for instruction, administrative needs, and internal and external events. Conducting an analysis of our need for energy and other utilities will lead to greater efficiencies, reduced costs, and a more sustainable physical environment. Radford University can be a leader in green building efforts.

An opportunity exists for more seamless integration of academic and non-academic calendars and activities. Conflicts arise between academic and non-academic departments when the scheduling of various activities conflicts with the academic calendar. Examples include the scheduling of events which cross two class blocks (e.g. a 3:00-4:00 meeting on a Tuesday), the scheduling of certain facilities and human resources tasks in relation to the first or last day of the semester (e.g., tearing down apartment offices during exam week), and the availability of support during Wintermester (e.g., librarian support at the end of December when students are in the midst of projects).
SUSTAINABILITY: PROPOSED ACADEMIC PLATFORM AND BRAND

Presentation Handout to RU 2018-2028 Strategic Planning Task Force
03-16-2017
ROLE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

- "Too narrow a focus on the present can come at the expense of the past and future, of the long view that has always been higher learning's special concern... Universities nurture the hopes of the world."

- "An overly instrumental model of the university misses the genius of its capacity... It diminishes its role as an asker of fundamental questions in a world hurrying to fix its most urgent problems. We need both."

Drew Gilpin Faust, President Harvard University
WHAT IS MEANT HERE BY "SUSTAINABILITY?"

- The ability to continue a defined behavior indefinitely. For a sustainable future, implies a necessary equilibrium state between the following systems (SEE):

  (1) **Social**: A social system's ability, such as a country, to function at a level of social well-being indefinitely.

  (2) **Economic**: Support a level of economic transformation indefinitely.

  (3) **Environmental**: Maintain rates of renewable resource harvest, pollution creation, and non-renewable resource depletion that can be continued indefinitely.
SUSTAINABILITY AS OUR BRAND

- **Brand Identity** - Strategic vision focusing on sustainability and a strategic plan that promotes building stronger connections and educational value across disciplines from which new programs emerge. Sustainability as a brand identity arises from our strengths and creates unique value not offered elsewhere in the Commonwealth.

“Prosperity, People, and Planet!”

- **Existing Elements**
  1. Talented faculty and staff in relevant disciplines
  2. A spectacular rural setting that is rich with environmental resources
  3. Themed living/learning communities in our residence halls.
  4. Corporate Park and Selu Conservancy potential for field stations/centers/projects
  5. A physical plant cited as one of the most dedicated to sustainable practices
  6. A city and community which desires to work with us to achieve common goals
  7. A “Maker” Community of Faculty & Students
SUSTAINABILITY AS OUR ACADEMIC PLATFORM

- Our future graduates face a world full of complex, inter-related issues (social, economic, environmental) both in their careers and in their lives.
- Many organizations are looking for graduates with collaborative and innovative problem-solving skills, appreciation of different talents and expertise in their co-workers, and understanding of their communities, both local and global.
- Disciplinary programs excel at development of critical thinking skills but do not provide sufficient scope for a signature brand at a university in RU's situation.
- Need to integrate design thinking knowledge and methods as a central learning outcome (e.g., like oral and written communication).
- Most signature academic program proposals are college level, not university level.
- Sustainability domains provide a university-level platform upon which to build a signature academic emphasis as well as facilitation of broader collaboration across disciplines without discounting their individual value.
- Student engagement, community service, and action-based problem solving are all enhanced with this academic platform where they can choose from a menu of possible projects of interest.
PROPOSED ACADEMIC PLATFORM

**Sustainability** – Achieving Beneficial States
- Social
- Economic
- Environmental
- Global Scholar Citizens
- Sustainable Solutions Demonstration Center
- Selu Conservancy Development

**Transdisciplinary** – Integrative Pedagogy and Research
- Cooperative Problem Solving
- Communication Skills
- AA Oversight/Support
- Grad/UG Grant Funding Committees

**Design Thinking** – Action Building
- Unique Problems
- Creativity
- Unique Solutions
- Innovation Lab / Maker Community
- Core Curriculum SLOs

**Critical Thinking** – Evidence Building
- Existing Disciplinary Expertise Development
- Data Analytics Center
- Ethical Integrity
- Targeted College Facilities
FACULTY AND STUDENTS PARTICIPATE ON A VOLUNTARY BASIS SUPPORTED BY INCENTIVES

• Unique Differentiation: Cross-College & Community Developmental Focus on Systems; Integrative, Synthetic, and Interdisciplinary Cognitive Frames/Skillsets/Competencies/Values. Moving beyond Critical Thinking

• Academic Reward System to Align Activities with New Strategic Plan: Research publications & grants, course content and applications (syllabi), outreach activities, and faculty/staff hiring integrating IIDT/Sustainability content/practices/criteria will receive priority support with resources and incentives.

• Academic Structure – Office of Sustainability Advancement (SVP Position) to coordinate implementation and management within Academic Affairs. Formal Academic Collaboratives to be formed enhancing interaction between colleges, disciplines, and development of brand and academic reputation

• Community Outreach – Incentives provided for joint sustainability-related education, service, and economic development initiatives
THE STAKEHOLDERS

- Academic Affairs – Coordination and Support for Cross-Campus Sustainability Advancement of Transdisciplinary Initiatives
- CGSR – Graduate Sustainability Collaborative
- Core Curriculum – Revision of University and College Core to include primary SLO’s of Design Thinking, Interdisciplinary Design, and Sustainability
- Academic Collaboratives – Committees which provide teaching and research awards for transdisciplinary proposals
- Community Collaborative – Committees comprised of representatives from public schools, government, NGOs, economic development agencies, and RU colleges
- Informal Faculty/Student Maker Community – Creation of RU Innovation Lab including fast casual food facility for enhancing social interaction across students/faculty from different disciplines
- Targeted Facilities – Disciplinary-based facilities which become centers of excellence to develop deep expertise and critical thinking
THE ASK: FUNDING

• Sources: Signature Academic Program Support from Richmond, Corporate Partners, Alumni, Grants, Fee-based Certificate Programs, K-12 Summer Camps
• Strategic Incentives: Faculty/Student Transdisciplinary Teaching and Research Grants
• Core Curriculum Faculty Positions: Design Thinking, Creativity, Innovation
• Information Systems Infrastructure: Connectivity, Data Storage, Data Analytics Lab with Software & Servers, Web-based Data Visualization Dashboards
• Facility/Equipment Additions: On-Campus Innovation Lab, Selu Conservancy Field Station & Educational/Economic Horticultural Greenhouse Facility, RU Corporate Park Sustainable Solutions Demonstration Center
MEMORANDUM

TO: RU Strategic Planning Task Force
FROM: The Undersigned
DATE: February 21, 2017

SUBJECT: Support Request for a Proposed Signature Sustainability Brand and Academic Programming Focus in 2018-2028 RU Strategic Plan

This memorandum is an invitation to provide your support for the proposed Sustainability Model below as a platform on which the 2018-2028 Strategic Planning Task Force can build an action plan. Please indicate your support by providing your written or electronic signature on the following page by March 3. This memo and your signatures of support will then be distributed to the strategic planning task force.

1. Transdisciplinary - Integrative Pedagogy and Research
2. Critical Thinking - Evidence Building
   - Deep Expertise
   - Data Analytics
   - Ethical/Integrity
   - Targeted Facilities
3. Design Thinking, Action Building
   - Unique Problems
   - Creativity
   - Innovation
   - Core Curriculum 3LOs

“The concept of sustainability calls for a comprehensive systems understanding adequate to the complexity of coupled systems; the pursuit of systems integrity across the main domains, temporal and spatial scales; the understanding of cascading effects and dynamics; and the transformation of individual actions and governance regimes (Gibson 2006; Clayton and Radcliffe 1996; Kates et al. 2000).” ¹ Higher education needs to align its academic programming and structure to prepare our graduates for this rapidly emerging future. An enhanced set of competencies needs to be delivered. Employers are seeking graduates with collaborative and innovative problem-solving skills, confidence in the face of complex challenges, and an ability to contribute to not only knowledge, but action.²

In the context of the current strategic planning process underway at Radford University an academic programming platform is also required to develop a signature brand for the university beyond individual academic units. How will we be unique in providing and communicating our educational value for students, parents, alumni, sponsors, and the regional community? We believe development and implementation of the above academic platform and brand can be attractive for recruiting, retention, placement, teaching, research, and community outreach.

² Source: https://www.aacu.org/leap/presidentstrust/compact/2013SurveySummary
We, the undersigned, support the above "Sustainability" platform as a signature brand and academic platform for Radford University in 2018-2028.

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Source: [https://www.aacu.org/leap/presidentstrust/compact/2013SurveySummary](https://www.aacu.org/leap/presidentstrust/compact/2013SurveySummary)
We (I), the undersigned, support the above “Sustainability” platform as a signature brand and academic platform for Radford University in 2018-2028.


Email or campus mail by March 3 to: Dr. Iain Clelland (Campus Box 6954) iclellan@radford.edu

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Branding Subcommittee: Progress and Planned Timeline

Goals:
1. To identify the features and benefits of an ideal brand positioning for Radford in 2023
2. To update team on other subcommittee progress
3. To ensure we clearly differentiate Radford future positioning from competitors
4. To ensure we capitalize on the pride & good colleges, departm
5. To identify target audience insights currently and in future.
6. To identify potential activities, programs and processes to help move from current to future.
7. To agree the most promising growth opportunities based on current equity.
8. To provide guidance to optimally allocate resources among features and benefits that best meet the target needs

Activities:
- Converged on key features & benefits of ideal positioning
- Individuals to review a key competitor and a key Radford department or college or office
- Investigate target needs and identify most compelling attributes & benefits to address the needs of each target
- Map out path from current to future
- Identify current programs & policies that support the new positioning as well as possible new
- Finalize future brand positioning and path to achieve it
- Prioritize those activities that promise to be most feasible and viable to quickly build the new branding
- Wrap-up session and presentation to sub-committee

Timeline:
- Jan 27
- Feb 24
- Mar 31
- Apr 28
- May 15
- May 26

Task Force Meeting
- Branding Meeting
- Writing Team
- Draft Plan
- Proposed Plan
- Introduction

Work completed during meeting
Work completed between meetings