



FORGING A BOLD NEW FUTURE

RU 7-17

RADFORD UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN



2007-2017

Radford University's Strategic Plan is a ten-year blueprint to position RU as one of the nation's leading public comprehensive institutions. If RU is to realize the ambitious goals we have established, all members of the University community must collaborate to achieve this common purpose. Inspired by a century of excellence, together we will invest in this bold new plan to move our University to a new level of prominence.

Once approved; the Strategic Plan will be supported by operational and implementation documents that contain detailed goals and benchmarks.

August 23, 2007

INTRODUCTION

Radford University (RU) has not undergone a thorough and comprehensive review of its strategic plan since 1997. Upon becoming the sixth president of Radford University, Penelope W. Kyle established the Commission for the Future of Radford University (Commission) to begin the process of creating a new vision and supporting strategic plan for the University.

The work of the Commission focused on charting the future course of the institution. The Commission and its task forces, made up of members of the Board of Visitors, faculty, alumni, students, staff, and community and business leaders, studied RU's then-existing mission and researched the environmental forces forecasted to influence all of higher education during the next ten years to determine how Radford University could best serve its future students and the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Commission's efforts are captured in this strategic plan.

The Commission's "Days of Visioning," multiple open forums, and on-site Commission meetings provided many faculty, staff, students, and community members the opportunity to become part of the process and to share their hopes for RU's future.

Following the completion of the Commission's work, President Kyle appointed a drafting committee to review and synthesize the information submitted by the Commission and to develop a preliminary draft of the strategic plan. The Committee members recognized and embraced the strengths and traditions of Radford University, but agreed

that the plan should focus on change, on innovations, and even on distinct departures that will enhance learning experiences for students, improve faculty teaching and scholarship, improve the academic reputation of the University, and provide educational opportunities for the future citizens of the Commonwealth and beyond.

The strategic plan reflects the following planning assumptions:

- This strategic plan is an aspirational statement, with initiatives and action steps that will challenge and stretch the University community.
- The overarching criterion for including any proposal was "Will this initiative, objective or action step enhance RU's ability to meet its mission and achieve its vision?"
- Many "good ideas" were proposed, but incorporating all of them was not possible.
- The plan needed to be written clearly and concisely.
- An implementation schedule and a more detailed operational plan will be developed after adoption of the plan. The schedule will designate a responsible officer for each action step, as well as a date (or dates) on which assessment of progress toward accomplishment of the action step will be completed.
- It is recognized and accepted that implementation of the plan may require review and potential elimination of some programs and services.



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OUR 7-17 VISION

Radford University will be among the top 50 masters universities in the nation and will become increasingly known as a model for student-centered learning, transforming its students into graduates who will be among the most sought after by the nation's best employers and who will become leaders in their communities and chosen careers in the arts, business, education, health and human services, medical professions, the humanities, the sciences, and technology.

OUR MISSION

Approved by the Board of Visitors, May 10, 1991; revised and approved by the Board of Visitors, May 7, 1999.

Radford University serves the Commonwealth of Virginia and the nation through a wide range of academic, cultural, human service, and research programs. First and foremost, the university emphasizes teaching and learning and the process of learning in its commitment to the development of mature, responsible, well-educated citizens. RU develops students' creative and critical thinking skills, teaches students to analyze problems and implement solutions, helps students discover their leadership styles, and fosters their growth as leaders. Toward these ends, the university is student-focused and promotes a sense of caring and of meaningful interaction among all members of the University community. Research is viewed as a vital corollary to the teaching and learning transaction as it sustains and enhances the ability to teach effectively. Radford University believes in the dynamics of change and has a strong commitment to continuous review, evaluation, and improvement in the curriculum and all aspects of the University, so as to meet the changing needs of society.

OUR CORE VALUES

The vision and mission of this student-centered community of learners are driven by these core values:

We value, encourage, and support

- academic excellence;
- collegial working relationships among students, faculty, administrators, and staff;
- diversity and the richness it adds to our University;
- ethical behavior of all members of our University community;
- fiduciary responsibility by everyone who is part of our University family;
- a challenging academic environment;
- intellectual and artistic curiosity and creativity;
- education as a lifelong pursuit;
- academic freedom and debate;
- a global perspective in all faculty, staff, and students;
- a caring and nurturing faculty and staff;
- freedom of thought and expression;
- being an active partner in the viability of our region; and
- shared governance and participation at all levels within the University community.



Strategic Directive 1: Invest in People

The University will make academic excellence its highest priority by investing in faculty, students, administrators, and staff.



Goal 1.1 Strengthen the University's commitment to providing a high quality academic environment that attracts, challenges, retains, and graduates outstanding student scholars at the Undergraduate and Graduate levels by:

- Instilling in all students the thrill of inquiry, discovery, and the creation of new knowledge;
- Instilling in all students a broad based understanding of global, social, and economic issues;
- Inspiring in all students a strong sense of values, ethics, and civic engagement;
- Continuing to review, develop, and manage a dynamic, responsive, and vibrant portfolio of undergraduate, graduate, first professional, and applied doctoral programs that will attract and retain outstanding student scholars from diverse backgrounds and geographic locations;
- Implementing a holistically sound enrollment planning and management program which will include strategically targeted goals for student recruitment by type of student (graduate vs. undergraduate; first-time freshmen vs. community college transfer); status of student (full-time vs. part-time); location of student (main-campus vs. extended campus site); and degree program; and which will involve faculty directly in the planning and implementation of student recruitment efforts;
- Reviewing and revising, as appropriate, admission policies, procedures, and standards to ensure that prospective students are identified as being well prepared intellectually and highly motivated to succeed in an increasingly challenging and demanding educational environment;
- Developing strategies to support culturally-responsive curricular and co-curricular advising with particular attention to the needs of students that are first generation, nontraditional, from underrepresented populations, etc.;
- Increasing, through aggressive fundraising efforts, the resources available for both need- and merit-based financial aid to attract and retain outstanding student scholars from traditional and underrepresented populations;
- Placing an increased emphasis on assessing entering students' knowledge, skills, and abilities, and prescribing an appropriate initial curriculum that will better ensure success in degree programs;
- Increasing the use of direct value-added assessment by comparing students' skills, knowledge, and abilities upon entering RU and again during the senior year to measure learning gains that may be attributable to the institution's academic and student services programs;
- Increasing the use of post- graduation assessment to determine the extent to which alumni believe their RU education prepared them for their chosen careers or advanced academic study;
- Increasing the use of post graduation assessment to determine the extent to which employers believe RU graduates have the necessary skills, knowledge, and abilities for the job;
- Placing an increased emphasis on assessment findings to support program and curriculum review, modification, and/or development;
- Enhancing success-focused student advising; career guidance, and faculty-student mentoring;
- Improving graduation rates, retention rates, and the number of graduates per FTE faculty

member to a competitive level with other Virginia public institutions;

- Shifting the balance in student population to a smaller, highly qualified undergraduate student body, while increasing the students enrolled in dynamic post-baccalaureate portfolio of masters, first professional, and applied doctoral programs in such areas as Counseling Psychology, Pharmacy, Optometry, Occupational Therapy, and Physical Therapy; and
- Partnering with community colleges in the Commonwealth to develop additional articulation agreements that provide for a seamless student transition to RU and that maximize the number of students entering RU with degrees from the Virginia Community College System (VCCS).

Goal 1.2 Create a stimulating educational climate, enabling the institution to attract and retain a distinguished and diverse faculty, administration, and support staff dedicated to excellence by:

- Providing competitive packages for new faculty, including start-up resources, reimbursement of relocation expenses, and reassigned time to participate in a first year New Faculty Institute;
- Increasing expectations and support for faculty to work as partners with students in the learning process;
- Increasing faculty in targeted programs where necessary to become nationally competitive;
- Retaining the University's most successful faculty by creating an environment where workload is aligned with abilities and performance; by increasing named professorships and endowed chairs; by maximizing use of eminent scholars funding; and by funding strategically aligned institutes and research centers;
- Supporting faculty productivity and efficiency by enhancing instructional support services and ensuring a proper and pedagogically sound student-to-faculty ratio;
- Establishing expectations and standards of excellence in teaching, scholarship, and service, and using these standards when

evaluating faculty for promotion, tenure, and merit-based salary increases;

- Providing mentoring, remediation, or corrective action for faculty and staff who are not performing at an acceptable level;
- Ensuring that faculty and administrative compensation is performance-based and nationally competitive by continuing a process of salary review to eliminate (to the extent possible) egregiously misaligned salaries of meritorious employees as a result of salary compression or inversion;
- Ensuring, to the extent possible and complying with state guidelines, faculty, administrative, and classified staff salaries are competitive and comparable to those at peer institutions;
- Creating a campus environment where diversity of thought and personal background are highly respected and where the campus culture values and models inclusiveness in all that we do;
- Establishing collaborative relationships with public and private partners to develop educational programs and activities promoting awareness of increasingly diverse populations in the region, the Commonwealth, the nation, and the world;
- Developing and sustaining a curriculum in which RU students demonstrate an awareness of and appreciation for cultural differences and an understanding of relationships among peoples and nations;
- Implementing recruitment strategies, including training and support for search committees, so that RU will be well-positioned to hire and retain faculty, staff and administrators from underrepresented populations;
- Developing enrollment management strategies and initiatives to increase the diversity of our student body by enrolling more students from underrepresented populations; and
- Establishing responsibility for the oversight of matters related to diversity, cultural awareness and inclusion, and for assessing the achievement of institutional goals in these areas.

Strategic Directive 2: Invest in Programs

The University will foster distinctive programs that make learning and working at Radford University an exceptional and unique experience.



Goal 2.1 Ensure that undergraduate academic programs are rigorous and distinctive by:

- Revising, streamlining, and bringing into alignment our core curriculum (General Education) with processes and programs at institutions nationally recognized for academic excellence and broad-based student preparation that cultivates intellectual agility and fosters ethical and social responsibility. This will require setting a minimum expectation within the core curriculum of 24 hours of common coursework with a total of 42 hours in the overall core curriculum; providing faculty in the individual colleges with the opportunity to have a greater involvement in setting the expectation beyond the 24 hours of common coursework in order to better meet the individual college's educational and programmatic needs; and examining and revising the learning outcomes for the core curriculum;
- Enhancing and expanding RU's academic program review process to assess the quality of our academic degree programs; to identify mechanisms to improve the quality of education, research, and service; and to enable degree programs to better align their goals and plans with those of the individual colleges and University;
- Expanding RU's academic and discipline-specific program review process to include a thorough and rigorous review of academic programs and programs that support academics (e.g., Financial Aid, Registrar, Admissions, Academic and Career Advising) both within and outside Academic Affairs to ensure continuous improvement and quality assurance in all areas;
- Maximizing the educational potential of RU's academic offerings by minimizing or eliminating resource expenditures in programs and services that are not central to the educational mission of the University, thus providing essential resources to

strengthen our most prominent or potentially prominent programs;

- Providing campus-wide programs that bring students, faculty, administrators, staff and alumni together in a series of intellectual activities that could include focused readings, annual conferences, lectures, etc.;
- Continuing to enhance and transform the Honors Academy by attracting additional highly qualified students and by providing increased opportunities for participation by more of the University's best and brightest students;
- Eliminating the Bachelor of Science degree option in programs where it is not academically appropriate;
- Increasing the number of Bachelor of Arts degrees that require rigorous language requirements in appropriate disciplines;
- Identifying strategies and providing support for initiatives to expand learning opportunities offering exposure to global perspectives and appreciation for cultural differences;
- Increasing the number of programs achieving national accreditation or certification by requiring that every program eligible for accreditation or certification attain it; and
- Developing additional programs to encourage faculty and student collaboration in service learning and experiential education activities.

Goal 2.2 Ensure that graduate programs are rigorous and distinctive by:

- Developing a comprehensive philosophy of graduate education for RU;
- Restructuring the College of Graduate and Extended Education to be focused solely on graduate and professional programs;
- Ensuring that at least three graduate programs are ranked among the best nationally by a recognized and respected service (e.g., U.S. News and World Report, Princeton Review, Kaplan, and other national rankings);
- Pursuing the establishment of new advanced degree programs, including first professional

or applied doctoral programs in such areas as Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy, Pharmacy, and Optometry;

- Expanding degree offerings through strategic alliances, mergers, consolidations, and acquisitions with other public and private institutions;
- Increasing the selectivity of graduate admissions and providing competitive funding for recruitment and retention of academically talented and highly motivated graduate students;
- Setting appropriate faculty workloads for graduate teaching, research, and related activities; and
- Seeking funding for and establishing a state-of-the-art graduate and professional education center to provide graduate students with academic and support services.

Goal 2.3 Promote co-curricular services to enhance student experiences before and after graduation by:

- Developing and building state-of-the-art, apartment-style residence halls through public/private partnerships, strategic debt management, and other initiatives;
- Building a state-of-the-art Student Fitness and Wellness Center;
- Expanding living/learning programs that are congruent with academic excellence and community stewardship;
- Providing retail, dining, entertainment, and other services that today's student populations find appealing on campus and/or working with the City of Radford to provide such services for our students; and
- Maximizing opportunities for graduates to find employment in their chosen field by increasing interview opportunities, assessing post-graduation success, and increasing the effectiveness of the career services programs before and after graduation.

Goal 2.4 Provide a safe and secure environment for all faculty, staff, students and visitors coming to the University by:

- Regularly reviewing and enhancing the Comprehensive Campus Security Plan and periodically updating all evacuation and emergency procedures and plans;
- Continuing to educate and train faculty, staff, and students to acquire the basic skills necessary to make responsible decisions and to reduce personal risk; and

- Ensuring safety and security-related incidents are reported to the campus police department accurately and in a timely fashion.

Goal 2.5 Develop success and prominence in competition in intercollegiate athletics while ensuring that student athletes succeed in the classroom and graduate in a timely manner by:

- Creating a new strategic plan for Intercollegiate Athletics that clearly articulates the value RU places on athletics as a means for enhancing a sense of community and enhancing the over-all collegiate experience for all students;
- Fielding intercollegiate athletic programs that will routinely rank among the best in our conference;
- Hiring appropriate administrative and coaching staffs to ensure that athletic programs meet the goals set forth in the strategic plan for athletics;
- Pursuing private funding to enhance the athletic facilities, to fund full-time coaching staffs, and to fully fund student athletic scholarships;
- Creating the Radford University Athletic Foundation and maximizing contributions specifically designed to support intercollegiate athletics;
- Studying the feasibility of seeking funding for and constructing a multipurpose arena dedicated to intercollegiate athletics; and
- Recruiting student-athletes with the academic background and personal character to succeed in the classroom and after graduation in their chosen careers; and with the athletic skills to excel in their respective sports.

Goal 2.6 Explore non-traditional timing and delivery of academic programs that support the mission of RU by:

- Developing a plan to utilize summer months more effectively and to have more students treating summer as a "third semester";
- Expanding the number of study abroad opportunities and scheduling those opportunities throughout the calendar year to allow more students to participate;
- Increasing the use of courses and program offerings at extended-campus sites, where appropriate; and
- Increasing distance education offerings in disciplines where it is appropriate to do so.

Strategic Directive 3: Invest in Society: Globally and Locally

The University will create a community that is effectively connected with the world, the nation, the Commonwealth and the surrounding region.



Goal 3.1 Develop a strong relationship between RU and international communities by:

- Increasing conversational fluency in foreign languages and cross-cultural awareness among all students;
- Expanding study abroad, exchange programs, international internships, international volunteerism, international travel, international faculty research and scholarship collaboration, and faculty exchanges, and revising the scheduling of international opportunities to allow more students and faculty to participate;
- Exploring alternative uses of private donations, e.g. Kirk Scholars Program, to position RU as a nationally-recognized leader in international education; and
- Exploring the establishment of “Radford Houses” overseas to provide cost-effective living and learning space for use by RU students and faculty.

Goal 3.2 Develop a strong relationship between RU, the surrounding region, the Commonwealth, and the nation that fosters academic opportunities, good citizenship, ethical behavior, and civic engagement by:

- Creating partnerships and alliances that promote a strong, healthy, and economically sustainable Western Virginia;
- Conducting a comprehensive study of the economic impact RU has on the surrounding region and the Commonwealth;
- Strengthening relationships and partnerships with local, state, and national businesses, organizations, and research firms to provide increased research and internship opportunities for faculty and students; and
- Exploring the expansion of more summer residential academic programs for high school students to provide preparation and motivation for success at the University.

Strategic Directive 4: Invest in the Future

The University will engage all constituencies in raising the resources necessary to achieve its Strategic Directives, to explore new opportunities, and to ensure its successful future, through the combined efforts of the administration, faculty, and staff.



Goal 4.1 Increase financial resources to support academic excellence by:

- Continuing to be a strong proponent of achieving base-budget adequacy funding for higher education in Virginia;
- Increasing annual giving rates to at least 18% for alumni, 50% for faculty and staff, and 100% for the University’s senior

- administration, members of the Board of Visitors, the RU Foundation Board, the RU Foundation Real Estate Board, and other Boards of Directors that may be established;
- Bringing endowments to a level equal to or exceeding peer institutions through individual special giving campaigns, and through matching grants, and corporate contributions;

- Increasing funds awarded to the University through grants and sponsored programs;
- Developing stronger relationships with our elected representatives to Congress and with federal agencies to maximize federal funding;
- Continuing to review and realign, when appropriate, the University's organizational structure and resources to create a supportive, efficient, and responsive educational environment; and
- Ensuring that budget proposals for all University resources (E&G, auxiliary, private, sponsored programs, *etc.*) are consistent with and support the strategic directions of the University as established by the BOV.

Goal 4.2 Publicize RU's contributions to the region, the Commonwealth, the nation and the world by developing and implementing a comprehensive communications plan that supports the Strategic Plan by:

- Creating a cabinet level Chief Communications Officer for the University to provide leadership in all matters related to public relations, media relations, and publications;
- Creating an educational brand identity that will result in increased levels of public and private support and public esteem unsurpassed by any other comprehensive university in the Commonwealth;
- Informing the public about occurrences on the University campus, and about the successes of our community (faculty, staff, students, alumni, etc.) on a regular basis;
- Redesigning the RU website to enhance functionality, navigation, consistency, and public appeal;
- Developing a plan to emphasize the University's core values in all University communications; and

- Embarking on a "branding" campaign to communicate RU's identity consistently in all internal and external publications and communications.

Goal 4.3 Engage in comprehensive Master Facilities and Real Estate Planning that supports the University Strategic Plan by:

- Developing a comprehensive master plan for all University-owned facilities and real estate;
- Ensuring that all programs, all colleges and new initiatives, have adequate facilities, including but not limited to new classroom buildings, state-of-the-art laboratory facilities, and new buildings for the College of Business and Economics, the College of Science and Technology, and the College of Graduate and Professional Programs;
- Establishing facility guidelines for planning, designing, and constructing all new teaching/learning environments;
- Entering into public/private partnerships, where appropriate, to develop facilities that support the Strategic Plan; and
- Developing a plan for securing real property, when appropriate, to facilitate enhancing the University.

Goal 4.4 Provide the necessary technology to support the Strategic Plan as efficiently and effectively as possible by fully implementing a state-of-the-art integrated administrative computing system.

Goal 4.5 Establish high expectations by:

- Demanding excellence in all we do;
- Creating an open and inclusive institutional environment that will encourage everyone within our University and extended communities to become partners in the progress of the institution; and
- Making every action strategically focused and intentionally directed.

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