



General Education Improvement 2024-2025

The Faculty Senate Executive Council and the Director of Undergraduate Curriculum together with the Office of the Provost are convening a process to guide and launch a review of the REAL Curriculum and the status of General Education at Radford University on an expeditious timeline between September 2024 and May 2025.

This process aims to identify near-term improvements to the REAL Curriculum that will preserve its successful features and address some of its deficiencies. We hope that this process can begin our consideration of a bridge into a more substantial revision of General Education that might, in coming years, follow the conclusion of the strategic planning process that is also currently underway.

Our goal is to identify steps forward that are actionable, make a real impact on student experience, and are straightforward and minimally disruptive in their implementation. Our goal is also to lay the groundwork for productive conversations about the future of general education at Radford University, which will hopefully both shape and be shaped by the unfolding strategic planning process, by building community and capacity around issues of shared commitment and concern.

The process described here adopts an open style, inviting and including perspectives from as many T&R and A&P faculty and staff as are willing and able to participate. Our hope is to refresh and energize our ongoing conversation as colleagues over the best means of providing General Education to Radford University students. The activities described below welcome perspectives from partners and constituents across our campuses. And this process can be adjusted as we work together to achieve some near-term improvements to the REAL Curriculum as our current mechanism of General Education.

We hope that you will share your perspectives and join us over the coming months in this effort to improve the REAL Curriculum and General Education at Radford University.

Register for a Listening Session

https://radford.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_5t2G6oMrXw3niCO



Share Feedback on REAL & Gen Ed

https://radford.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b1qkFgZbWFSCYTk



Overview

This process includes the services of an expert facilitator and coach external to Radford University, Dr. Jennifer Hart of the American Association of Colleges and Universities (see her biography below), who is assisting with:

- initial meetings to gather insights and build common ground among T&R faculty, A&P faculty and staff colleagues;
- listening sessions in Radford and in Roanoke to gather perspectives on the REAL Curriculum and General Education, including a listening session with students;
- a professional development workshop to improve our understanding of general education; and
- coaching a General Education Improvement Task Force—to be convened by mid-November 2024—to collect data, collate and report findings, and make recommendations to Faculty Senate and the Provost, by February 21, 2025.

Each Listening Session will provide a forum in which between 25 and 30 participants will work with Jennifer Hart to identify and share their perspectives about the REAL Curriculum and the purposes and structures of General Education overall. **T&R Faculty, A&P Faculty, and Staff who work in relation to the REAL Curriculum and General Education are encouraged to register for one of the sessions.** If more registration requests are received than the planned capacity, we can schedule additional sessions as needed during October or early November.

During the November professional development workshop, Jennifer Hart will provide an overview of prevalent models for general education within contemporary U.S. higher education and insights from the Listening Sessions and meetings with campus partners. Dr. Hart will also share her review and evaluation of the REAL Curriculum, recommendations for improvement of General Education at Radford University, and other topics or activities to assist us in considering revisions that might improve our offering and oversight of General Education.

Outcomes

Expected outcomes from this process include:

- improved understanding of general education pedagogical principles and curricular design among Radford University T&R faculty, A&P faculty and staff;
- improved willingness of faculty members to participate in the task force that will be charged with making recommendations for revisions to the REAL Curriculum and general education;
- conveyance of the task force with appropriate membership and charges; and
- workable proposals from the task force to revise General Education at Radford University.

Facilitator Biography

[Dr. Jennifer Hart](#) is Chair and Professor of History at Virginia Tech and works as Senior Scholar emphasizing general education in the Office of Curricular, Pedagogical, and Digital Innovation

at the American Association of Colleges and University. Author of *Making an African City: Technopolitics and the Infrastructure of Everyday Life in Colonial Accra* (Indiana UP, 2024) and *Ghana on the Go: African Mobility in the Age of Motor Transportation* (Indiana UP, 2016), Hart's scholarship connects histories of transportation, mobility, and urban development to questions of technology, power, and identity. She is the North American President for the International Society for the Scholarship on Teaching and Learning in History, a member of the Executive Council for the African Studies Association, and a member of the Africa Initiative Steering Committee for the Society for the History of Technology.

Dr. Hart has written about general education for *Inside Higher Ed*, in "[Are We Taking Gen for Granted?](#)" May 25, 2022.

Timeline

- **September 23, 2024:** Faculty Senate Executive Council (FSEC) met with Dr. David Beach, Director of Undergraduate Curriculum, and Dr. Jennifer Hart to provide initial context for this process, to learn about Dr. Hart's process of facilitation and coaching in the work of general education review, and to discuss appropriate documentation to be provided so that she might conduct a review of the REAL Curriculum and the status of general education at Radford University, to evaluate its merits and disadvantages within the context of best practices in general education pedagogy, curricular design, and administrative process.
- **September 30, 2024:** FSEC met with Jennifer Hart to discuss procedures for beginning the process of review and improvement and to determine dates and times in October to schedule Listening Sessions in Radford and in Roanoke and in mid-November to schedule a professional development workshop in Radford for the General Faculty.
- **October 2, 2024:** Provost Bethany Usher and Assistant Provost Jessica Stowell met with Jennifer Hart to discuss perspectives on the process of review and improvement and to set goals and aims for the expected proposals from the task force to be empaneled in November.
- **October 3, 2024:** Jennifer Hart will attend Faculty Senate to be introduced, to describe her process of facilitation and coaching, to share her initial perspective on how our faculty might work together to achieve improvements to the REAL Curriculum, and to address initial questions from the General Faculty.
- **October 8, 2024, 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m.:** Listening Session in Radford, Library ILC B
- **October 8, 2024, 12:30 p.m.–1:30 p.m.:** Jennifer Hart will meet with REAL Council
- **October 10, 2024, 12:30–2:00 p.m.:** Listening Session in Roanoke, RUC 619
- **October 16, 2024, 2:00–3:30 p.m.:** Listening Session in Radford, Kyle Hall 201
- **Date TBD:** Listening Session with Students
- **November 11, 2024, 10:00–11:30 a.m.:** Professional Development Workshop in Radford, on General Education Best Practices and the REAL Curriculum, Kyle Hall 340
- **November 14, 2024, or sooner:** The membership composition and scope for the General Education Improvement Task Force will be finalized and introduced to

faculty and elections for its membership will open. The composition of the task force will be determined by Faculty Senate in consultation with the Provost and Dr. Hart and will be limited to 7 or 8 members.

- **November 22, 2024, or sooner:** Elections will be completed to empanel the General Education Improvement Task Force, which will be charged with recommending appropriate near-term revisions to general education at Radford University.
- **Before end of Fall 2024 Semester:** The General Education Improvement Task Force will convene and be charged, and will receive initial coaching from Jennifer Hart to provide consultation on their process and expected outcomes.
- **During January and February 2025:** Dr. Hart will provide two additional coaching sessions to the task force and/or will provide consultation to the task force in a manner preferred by its members and as agreed upon by Dr. Hart.
- **February 21, 2025:** The task force will report its recommendations to Faculty Senate for deliberation and to the Provost for initial review. This will allow Faculty Senate and relevant governance bodies to evaluate and act on the recommendations before Faculty Senate business concludes on **May 1, 2025**.

Share Feedback and Participate

This process will achieve the greatest success if we combine our insights and experiences to develop a clear picture of the REAL Curriculum in its current state, and to consider together what might be possible to improve within this model of General Education. Please share your thoughts through the questionnaire linked below and through your participation in one or more of the activities described below.

Share Feedback

Please share your perspectives about General Education and your experiences with the REAL Curriculum. The questionnaire [linked here](#) collects anonymous, briefly stated responses to three questions:

- What should General Education ideally accomplish as part of an undergraduate program of study?
- What do you like about the REAL Curriculum?
- What are the main challenges of the REAL Curriculum?



We hope that you will share feedback through this questionnaire and that you will participate in the activities described below.

Share feedback at this link:

https://radford.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_b1qKFgZbWFSCYTk

Participate

Apart from submitting the questionnaire—which we hope you will do!—there are three main ways to participate in this process:

1. In October, **attend a Listening Session** to share your perspective and listen to the perspectives of others.
2. On November 11, **attend the professional development workshop** on General Education.
3. If you are eligible, **consider being nominated to serve on the General Education Improvement Task Force**, which will be empaneled in mid-November 2024 and conclude by February 21, 2025.

Listening Sessions

We are holding at least three Listening Sessions to gather perspectives on the REAL Curriculum and General Education, in Radford and in Roanoke.

- **Listening Session 1, in Radford:** October 8 (Tue), 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m., Information Literacy Center Room B (floor 3, McConnell Library)
- **Listening Session 2, in Roanoke–RUC:** October 10 (Thu), 12:30–2:00 p.m., RUC 619
- **Listening Session 3, in Radford:** October 16 (Wed), 2:00 p.m. – 3:30 p.m., Kyle Hall 201

Each Listening Session will provide a forum in which between 25 and 30 participants will work with Jennifer Hart to identify and share their perspectives about the REAL Curriculum and the purposes and structures of General Education overall. T&R Faculty, A&P Faculty, and staff who work in relation to the REAL Curriculum and General Education are encouraged to register for one of the sessions. If more registration requests are received than the planned capacity, we can schedule additional sessions as needed during October or early November.



Register for a Listening Session at this link:

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Professional Development Workshop on General Education

The General Faculty and all A&P Faculty and Staff members who substantially interact with General Education are invited to attend a workshop to develop our expertise in general education design and generate ideas for improving the REAL Curriculum.

- November 11 (Mon), 10:00–11:30 a.m., Kyle Hall 340 (Radford City campus)

Facilitator and coach Dr. Jennifer Hart will provide an overview of prevalent models for general education within contemporary U.S. higher education and insights from the Listening Sessions and meetings with campus partners. Dr. Hart will also share her review and evaluation of the REAL Curriculum, recommendations for improvement of General Education at Radford University, and other topics or activities to assist us in considering revisions that might improve our offering and oversight of General Education.

General Education Improvement Task Force

By November 14, 2024, guidelines for establishing a General Education Improvement Task Force will be finalized and introduced to faculty and elections for its membership will open. The composition of the task force will be determined by Faculty Senate in consultation with the Provost and Dr. Hart and will be limited to 7 or 8 members.

Elections will be completed to empanel the General Education Improvement Task Force by November 22, 2024. The group will be charged with recommending appropriate near-term revisions to general education at Radford University.

The General Education Improvement Task Force will convene before the end of the Fall 2024 semester to be charged, and will receive initial coaching from Jennifer Hart to provide consultation on their process and expected outcomes. During January and February 2025, Dr. Hart will provide two additional coaching sessions to the task force and/or will provide consultation to the task force in a manner preferred by its members and as agreed upon by Dr. Hart.

The task force will report its recommendations by February 21, 2025, to Faculty Senate for deliberation and to the Provost for initial review. This will allow Faculty Senate and relevant governance bodies to evaluate and act on the recommendations before Faculty Senate business concludes on May 1, 2025.