Radford University
2014 Six-Year Plan - Part II
August 4, 2014 – Update

A. Institutional Mission

Requested:

> *Institutional mission – please provide a statement of institutional mission and indicate if there are plans to change the mission over the six-year period. Any changes to institutional mission must be formally submitted to SCHEV for review and approval.*

Response:

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

The size of the new freshmen class has been consistent for the past four years and is not expected to substantially change. The University's growth is projected through the retention of continuing students and the graduation of smaller cohorts.

    a.

2. **Enhance Student Success, Retention and Graduation:** The University is employing several strategies to strengthen student success programming, target improvements in the retention rate, and provide options for students to obtain a degree in a timely manner. Various levels of programs and services are offered by the University due to the diverse mix of students served by the Institution. Of the 1,986 new freshmen in fall 2013, 38.7 percent were first generation students, an increase of 4 percent points over fall 2012. Additionally, 28 percent of the new freshmen cohort were minority students, an increase of 4 percent over fall 2012.

    a. The University recently partnered with Noel-Levitz, LLC. to provide technical and consulting support to further student retention efforts. Noel-Levitz will make recommendations, in consultation with the University, on programming opportunities and will assist with determining the feasibility of the Demonstration of Ability program identified in the 2012 Six-Year Plan. Funding will be used to implement retention initiatives recommended through the collaboration with Noel-Levitz. The initial engagement is for a period of three years and dependent upon the performance, the university may engage them for an additional term.

      The retention dimension of the partnership with Noel-Levitz was initiated in August 2013 with a pilot administration of the College Student Inventory (CSI) in selected sections of UNIV 100 and BIOL 160. The CSI provides information about students' academic motivation, coping skills, and receptivity to support. Group debriefs were conducted in the classes so that students might become aware of their strengths and weaknesses. New freshmen will be taking the CSI during Quest in summer 2014, and both group and individual debriefing sessions are planned. In November 2014 freshmen will take the Mid-Year Student Assessment (MYSA) to gauge their growth after one semester and pinpoint areas in which assistance is

b. Continue to enhance academic advising - Empirical evidence asserts that strong advisement is one of the most powerful predictors of student retention. The University seeks to improve advisement processes and services by employing additional professional advisors, supporting them with strong professional development, designing and implementing metrics to assess the efficacy of advising efforts, and transforming a part-time administrative position overseeing advisement to full-time.

These advisors will replace graduate students who currently function as part-time advisors. As noted in 2a, one of the seven strategies included in the strategic plan for retention is improving the quality of advising. Specific actions in the plan include enhancing technological support for advising (e.g., by implementing a Constituent Relationship Management product); developing advising learning outcomes for students; changing the way that Quest (New Freshman Orientation) faculty advisors are trained and expected to assist students; and developing an online module to train and assess faculty who advise.

c. Cultivate engagement activities (undergraduate research, QEP, etc.) - In addition to quality advisement, another strong predictor of student retention relates to engagement in learning. Students who are highly engaged in learning activities seek to remain at university, try harder in their classes, and more readily connect learning to anticipated careers and life experiences. Activities highly correlated with engagement include study abroad, participation in meaningful internships, collaborative research, and organizing of the curriculum to enhance connections across classes and disciplines. The University seeks to transform the strong undergraduate curriculum into an even more engaging student experience.

Learning communities that take advantage of the power of the cohort to enhance retention have been identified as among best practices in retention. As indicated in 2a, "develop additional learning communities" is one of the seven retention strategies identified in the strategic plan. Based upon what was learned, Academic and Student Affairs are partnering in fall 2014 to offer the new "Biology Connections" living/learning community. Residential Life has set aside 48 spaces in Stuart Hall to accommodate incoming biology majors who will take UNIV 100, BIOL 131, and in some cases, BIOL 160 together. Since Stuart includes a classroom, non-lab courses will be offered in the building. In addition, Stuart already houses the advising center for the College of Science and Technology, and the advising coordinator has agreed to advise all of the students in the program. Residential Life staff will develop programming with a biology theme, and biology tutoring will be offered in the building.

Biology Connections will rely upon courses, services, and facilities that already exist, so the program will be offered at virtually no additional cost to the University. The program will be carefully assessed and has the potential to serve as a model for future residential learning communities.

  i. The University is in the process of hiring a new Director for the Honors Program. The program was evaluated and restructured by a faculty committee during 2012-13.   The revised program will serve highly capable students w

preference for entrepreneurship, and a positive career trajectory. The plan that was recommended by the Task Force and vetted by a variety of community partners pulls from a best practice analysis of several successful career and personal development programs.

The plan that has emerged proposes to revise the traditional Career Services program into something that reaches throughout the University and into the broader community of employers and alumni locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. The foundation of this proposed program hinges on: visibility, integration, cultivation, and accountability. Visibility refers to making career and personal development central to the university community so that each student is aware and engaged. Integration refers to creating a campus-wide model that makes personal and career development a central rather than peripheral concern. Cultivation refers to the creation of networks that engage students, faculty, staff, and those in the community who can assist in accelerating student personal and career development. Accountability means that RU will engage in quantitative and qualitative assessment of progress to inform strategic direction and future development.

This investment will create a new leadership that can focus on careers, leadership development, personal and professional development, and innovation and entrepreneurship. It will require, for example, career counselors embedded in all academic colleges, individuals located in Virginia regions who will build networks and create opportunities for students, and individuals who work internationally to create exciting global opportunities for students.

This is an ambitious program but it will place RU among the national leaders in developing successful graduates who compete with anyone on a local, regional, national, and global level.

3. **Move Faculty Salaries towards the 60**thent a cenilgp.. Tiks

percent) of the University's new freshmen live on campus and are full-time. In addition to being a "best value", also recognized by the Princeton Review this year, the use of state general fund support is an integral component of the University's ability to provide financial aid assistance to low and middle income students. Other strategies utilized by the University include the use of institutional resources to augment state general fund support for student financial assistance, increasing work opportunity programs, and focusing efforts on private fundraising. The University continues to evaluate and implore all strategies to assist low and middle income students with defraying the total cost of attendance to the extent possible; however, the institution's large in-state undergraduate population (94.6 percent) continues to be very dependent upon state general fund support to serve these populations. Requested funds were derived from SCHEV's projections to maintain existing support and address the increasing number of eligible need-based students.

5. **Develop STEM-H programs in Science and Technology - <u>M.S. in Data and Information Management:</u>** The Master of Science in Data and Information Management (DAIM) is designed to produce professionals whose skill sets allow them to manage massive amounts of data that, increasingly, must be collected, protected, managed, and processed effectively. According to an IBM survey, CIOs rank big data analytics as the number one driver of innovation and market growth. The DAIM program will educate technologists who can design, develop, and manage scalable systems and processes to control, protect, deliver and enhance the value of data and information assets. The DAIM program will encompass database administration, data warehousing, data mining, and data security while applying algorithms for efficiently analyzing, searching, retrieving, and transforming large data Ton Revies

applicants for 25 slots). The institution proposes to double the size of the program in order to accept a second cohort. Resources needed to expand this program and maintain accreditation include additional T&R and administrative support staff positions, base operations for instructional delivery, leased facilities and a one-time investment in equipment and facility nt ing-up

create an economic engine for the Commonwealth and reinforce K-12 student success. The purpose of the MILL (http://gameslab.radford.edu/) is to design

school districts while continuing their own education in a high-need STEM discipline. Providing courses online will also ensure that all teachers, regardless of the area of the Commonwealth they call home, will have the ability to enhance their own education and obtain a Masters level degree in earth and environmental science. Program development is scheduled to initiate during 2013-14 with the first cohort enrolling in fall 2014.

11. **Funding for Base Operations** is necessary to support insufficiently resourced programs and support services for existing students and departments. The University has historically had a very lean work force which is somewhat attributed to our unique "mid-sized" student population; RU is the only public institution in the state of this size. As enrollment grows, staffing levels need to be assessed to maintain services, safeguard continuity of operations, ensure compliance, and develop succession plans. Funding will be used to hire additional staff, provide professional development opportunities to ensure appropriate training is acce

improve efficiency. New graduate programs and growing enrollments require additional resources to maintain accreditation standards and ensure appropriate educational materials are available to students. Additionally, the increased use of electronic subscriptions combined with annual industry standard inflationary escalators continues to limit resources to support teaching, learning and research. Also, as the University's enrollment approaches 10,000 students, this becomes a price point change for many subscription services which will also impact the cost of services.

14. **Technology Enhancements** - funding will be used to deploy state-of-the-art technology and infrastructure, extend technical support hours of operation, and replace equipment that has exceeded its useful life.

15. **O&M of New Facilities – Center for the Sciences** - Funding will be used to support operation and maintenance of plant for the new Center for the Sciences building coming online during fiscal year 2015. Funds will be used to appropriately maintain and service the new facility and to provide basic staffing levels for operation and maintenance functions.

16. **Utilities:** Funding will be used to cover utility cost increases and to implement energy savings initiatives.

17. **Fringe benefit increases** – estimates for rate changes in fringe benefits and health insurance are included given the University's required fund split and the potential impact on tuition and fees.

18. **Explore and initiate online degree programs: Interdisciplinary M.S. in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness** – The online/hybrid Master of Science degree in Homeland Security and Emergency Preparedness will provide students with an integrated skill set to promote effective emergency management and planning, including politics and policy, emergency planning and emergency management (i.e., National Incident Management System (NIMS), National Response Framework (NRF), Incident Command System (ICS)), GIS, crisis communication, and behavior of communities and individuals during/after disasters. Coursework will include classes (many already existing) in Criminal Justice, Political Science, Communication, and Geospatial Science, with potential additional coursework from Psychology and History. See this link on employment, including listing as a "50 best jobs" and 22 percent growth through 2018: http://money.usnews.com/money/careers/articles/2010/12/06/best-jobs-2011-emergency-management-specialist

The planned new College of Humanities and Behavior Sciences building includes a fully equipped Emergency Management Center, which will provide faculty and students with a unique teaching/learning/research space. In addition to degree-seeking students, we anticipate hosting professional development opportunities for

iii. Additional summer school course offerings are planned, both on main campus and online, to provide students with more choices to graduate in a timely manner. By encouraging students to complete degrees earlier, this helps reduce the amount a student needs to borrow over the span of their education.

a. <u>Student Success Center:</u> The University has engaged the services of Noel-Levitz, LLC. to assist with the strategic evaluation of enrollment management tactics, assess existing retention programs, and recommend new approaches to improve the retention rate of the University. This will be accomplished through the use of analytic tools that will assist University administrators to make informed data driven decisions for improving student performance. A three year agreement has been established for the University to partner with the Noel-Levitz team.

b. <u>First Year Success Program:</u> The University has developed learning communities targeted to increase student engagement across multiple curriculums through a central theme/topic. Most notably, the University will implement yoked freshmen orientation and general education classes this upcoming fall 2013 to enhance student engagement in the curriculum. Integrated semesters will

developing tools for students to take their academic success and expand that knowledge base in their communities and personal lives. Examples include service-learning activities in the immediate area and region, experiential learning activities in on and off-campus location, collaborative research activities, as well as other community focused activities. The University reallocated resources to assist with implementing this initiative.

b. Advising support: The University is currently hiring five full-time professional academic advisers to provide enhanced advising and support services for students. In addition, an electronic advising tool, SSP – Student Success Plan, was developed to assist students with identifying and developing career goals, improving communication with their advisor and tracking their progression towards degree completion. These combined initiatives will provide more opportunities to ensure academic success and identify potential issues early on so appropriate intervention can occur, thereby aiding timely degree completion.

c. Career preparation – The University has employed a new internship position in Northern Virginia to assist with identifying and expanding career preparation opportunities for students. As resources are available, additional positions will be hired to continue this effort throughout the state, most notably in the Richmond and Tidewater areas. These areas are locations where a significant majority of the institution's student population matriculates. This will allow students to complete internships in their local community and thus aids in reducing their cost of education.

d. Undergraduate research initiative – Initiated during 2012-13, this program provides students and faculty the opportunity to collaborate on research projects related to programmatic instruction. These opportunities provide students with an educational experience unmatched in a classroom setting. Additionally, student retention and degree completion will improve as more students are able to cultivate interest and dedication to their program while developing a long-term relationship with the Institution.

e. During 2012-13, two task force committees were formed to evaluate the University's international education and study aboard program, and the honors academy. New directors for each program are currently under search and once hired, these directors will form new directions for each program.

f. The University implemented a "First Six-Weeks Program" which offered activities that focused on engaging students early on and making connections to the University. The retention rate of the fall 2012 new freshmen cohort increased one percentage point over fall 2011 which is a positive early indicator of this program's success.

4. **Faculty salary inequities** – in 2011-12, the Provost's Office conducted a salary study that identified teaching and research (T&R) faculty positions with salary inequities which included positions below the 10th percentile in their peer group. The University has worked to resolve these inequities by reallocating resources to the extent feasible; however, there is still work to be done related to the University's ranking in comparison to the SCHEV peer group. Currently, the average salary is at the 22nd percentile of the peer group and is well below the State's now codified goal to reach the 60th percentile. In recent years, several star faculty members were recruited by other institutions, both in-state and out-of-state, with more substantial offers and start-up funds. This is a critical issue for the University and will continue to be a strategy in order to be able to retain and recruit the best and brightest faculty. Movement towards the 60th percentile continues to be a high priority for the University.

5. **Student Financial Aid:** Radford University strives to maintain affordability and access for low and middle income students through reasonable tuition and fees, the use of state general fund and institutional resources to provide student financial assistance, student work programs, and focused private fundraising efforts. The University continues to evaluate and implore all strategies to assist low and middle income students with defraying the total cost of attendance.

    With a large in-state undergraduate population (94.6 percent), the University is very dependent upon state support to assist financially deserving students. Commonwealth grant funds are distributed to low and middle income students through an awarding formula that is approved by SCHEV annually. To supplement state grant aid, the RU Highlander Grant program was established primarily to assist financially deserving students after state grant funds are exhausted. The University has appropriated $1.9 million in the student financial assistance program for this purpose. Increases and adjustments to the awarding formula for the state grant program have provided more students access to Commonwealth and Highlander Grant dollars. In 2011-12, 506 low and middle income students received Highlander Grant awards to defray their cost of education. Approximately 97 percent of the available funding supported these two high-need populations.

    The Institution's student employment program compliments the Federal Work Study program and provides additional part-time employment to defray educational costs for the participating students. Currently, more than 800 student work study and work scholarship positions are available. Over the past two years, 36 positions, a 4.6 percent increase, were added by reallocating resources to provide more opportunities to our students. Additionally, the University's dining and bookstore contractors offer over 350 permanent and seasonal positions for which students can apply.

    Another strategy the University is employing to assist students with affordability is to offer early graduation options through opportunities for course completion during intercessions. In 2012-13 the Institution offered a pilot five-week online

Wintermester session between the fall and spring semester. Nearly, 190 students enrolled in online courses offered during Wintermester. The session was specifically designed to help students progress more quickly in their degree programs by providing a variety of course offerings. All instruction was conducted online and allowed RU students to take a class while at home celebrating the holidays. It also provided the opportunity to hold a part-time job during the winter break which further assists with affordability. The University will continue to offer the Wintermester intersession in the future due to the program's ability to allow students to progress more rapidly toward degree completion, utilize technology and teaching resources year-round, assist with the retention of students, and expand the growth and development of Radford University's online learning opportunities.

Additionally, summer school course offerings, both on main campus and online, are providing students more choices to graduate in a timely manner. Scholarships were also offered to students taking multiple summer school classes as a means to encourage students to complete coursework earlier. The summer session scholarship offerings further aided in the reduction of student loan borrowing while simultaneously facilitating an opportunity for students to reduce their time to degree. Incremental general fund support has been used to develop more online course offerings to assist with affordability and timely graduation.

Lastly, a campus-wide affordability speaker series created dialog on ways to reduce direct student expenses. One specific action taken as a result of this series was to recruit faculty members to author e-books for use in the CORE (General Education) program. The books are nearly complete and will be made available to students at very affordable cost.

6. **Funding for base operations** is necessary to support safety and security enhancements, departmental restructuring to create efficiencies and align responsibilities with the fully implemented ERP system, and ongoing campus infrastructure improvements. The University continuously reallocates resources, to the highest extent possible, in order to address funding deficiencies and adequately support growing program demand as well as aging infrastructure.

7. **Online course development:**

   a. Funding allocated by the state has been used in conjunction with internal resources to increase the University's **development and expansion of online courses** in recent years. Online course offerings include individual courses, entire academic programs, and the recently piloted Wintermester intercession. Early data suggest the increased offerings are being well received by the student body. In fact, enrollment in online courses has increased significantly (192 percent) over last few years as demonstrated in the chart below.
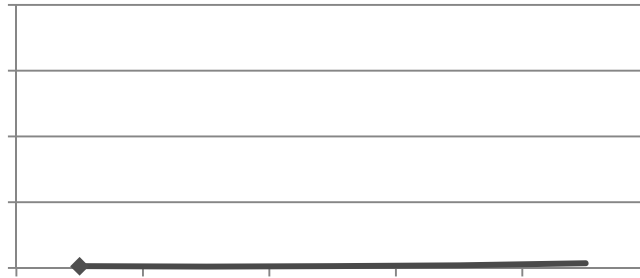
Distance Education/Online Courses				
Academic Year	Sections	Students	Credits	Change in Credits	Percent Change
2008 09	129	575	3,268		
2009 10	102	1,099	4,971	1,703	52%
2010 11	139	1,182	5,911	940	19%
2011 12	196	2,127	9,631	3,720	63%
2012 13*	348	3,305	17,262	7,631	79%

*Final data for 2012 13 not yet available

b. Academic Affairs is revising the baccalaureate degree program in **interdisciplinary studies to be delivered online**. The program will be specifically designed to meet the needs of students seeking to complete a degree from previous credit earned. This program is scheduled to begin in fall 2014.

c. **Online Master of Business Administration (M.B.A.)** – The University will offer the online M.B.A. program in addition to the existing traditional program supported on campus. The online program will differ from the on-campus program in a minimal, but important way. The online program will feature additional coursework in analytics. An instructional designer will work with faculty to convert existing course materials. The online delivery of this degree is scheduled to begin in fall 2014.

8. **The Master of Science in Education with a concentration in Mathematics program** supports high school teachers to improve their mathematics content, pedagogy, and assessment related to teaching Algebra I, Algebra II, AFDA,

12.   **<u>Technology</u>** – The University has utilized emerging technology to create efficiencies and reduce operating cost. The University also investigated and implemented technology enhancements to improve business processes and system security. Some examples include:

    a. Completed the multi-year Banner ERP project on time, under budget and within scope while delivering enhanced system functionality and operational efficiency. Continue to enhance features and functionality of the Banner ERP system and other ancillary systems to provide information for strategic decision making.

    b. Enhanced software for student-owned computers, classrooms and labs needed for research and instruction.

    c. Migrated student email to Microsoft Live@EDU to provide students with more storage space and functionality while reducing hardware and operating cost.

    d. Performed a business process analysis for fixed assets and preparing to

14.   **Other** – resources were used to support campus-wide unavoidable cost increases for utilities, fringe benefit and health insurance rate changes, contract escalators, and equipment replacement cycle escalators.

E. Capital Outlay

Requested:
> *Capital outlay – note any capital outlay projects that might be proposed over the Six-Year Plan period that could have a significant impact on strategies, funding, or student charges. Do not provide a complete list of capital projects only those projects that would be a top priority and impact E&G and NGF costs.*

Response:

A majority of the capital projects identified in the University Six-Year Capital Outlay Plan are renovations of existing facilities which do not require the same level of resources as new construction. The University has three new construction projects in progress which have been considered in the 2013 Six-Year Plan.

The nongeneral fund portion of the operation and maintenance cost for the new Center for the Sciences building is included in the proposed tuition increases in the 2013 Six-Year Plan. Additionally, costs associated with the new Student Fitness and Wellness Center have also been considered in the projected increases of the comprehensive fee. Reallocation of existing resources will be used to assist with mitigating the cost increases needed for operating the new Student Fitness and Wellness Center.

In looking ahead, the construction of the New Academic Building, Phase I and II will require incremental funding to support the operation and maintenance cost of the facility in the next biennium. The impact is expected to align with cost associated with bringing a general academic facility online as there are no "extraordinary" energy functions identified.

Proposed projects for athletic facilities and the expansion of intramural fields is expected to utilize existing reserve balances and if needed, debt service. Debt service payments are projected to be covered from current reserve contributions and modest fee increases. Currently, Athletics has no capital debt service payments; however, the University is at a point where major infrastructure projects are required to modernize and update athletic facilities. This will require Athletics to undergo a capital needs assessment an update the long-term maintenance plan for athletic facilities. Private fundraising efforts have also been implemented to support several athletic projects.