



TO: Faculty and Staff in the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences
FR: Jeff Aspelmeier, Dean
DA: March 27, 2026
RE: Dean's Report

The T&R Faculty Handbook (1.4.3.1) outlines procedures for evaluations of deans. Part of that process includes the dean submitting a report of their activities over the past year to the college faculty. My report covers the time period from August 1st to present. Over the past 12 months, I served in the role of Interim Dean and, starting January 10th, Dean. During this time, I have been involved in the following activities that roughly fall within the four major responsibilities of the dean outlined in the Handbook (4.1.3.1):

1. Lead the faculty and staff of the college in developing and delivering undergraduate and graduate educational programs of the highest quality, consistent with the college's mission.

College Leadership Team

- Lead the Dean's office staff
- Collaborate with Directors, Chairs, Program Coordinators, HSC Liaison, and Advancement Officer to lead the college
 - Weekly Leadership Team Meetings (Set agenda, lead meetings)
- Leading the college's opening meeting (August, 21st)
- Starting in Spring 2026, I have been attending the meetings of the college's Administrative Assistants on a monthly basis to help establish opportunities for better communication and awareness.

Curriculum & Program Development

- Assisting with the development/approval/organization of the New Rivers Valley Governor's School for the Arts and Humanities and Arts
- Collaborated with Psychology faculty in the development of the proposal for the Master of Science in Clinical Psychology
- Review of proposals approved by the College Curriculum Committee

Community Building Initiatives

Strengthening our sense of shared identity across the college continues to be a priority reflected in the following efforts:

- Hosted the Alumni Awards Reception (October 9th)
 - This year's recipient of the Distinguished Alumni Award was Dr. Emma Violand-Sánchez (French Major, 1966)



- We also recognized the endowment of the Dr. Gwen O. Brown Scholarship, which was introduced by Dr. Sandy French and Dr. Matthew Franck
- Organized the Fall Speakers Series (with a lot of help from Kerie)
- Established the Spring Speakers Series (again with a lot of help from Kerie)
- Provided guidance to the new Chair in PHRE and Acting Chair in CRJU
- Continued to endorse the work of the Honors and Awards Committee in awarding college research grants and honors for Distinguished Teaching, Research, and Service Awards
 - College was able to increase the amount of funding available to faculty from \$10,000 to \$15,000 this year
- Established a new award for Outstanding Adjunct Teaching.
- Hosted the Dean's Scholar Reception recognizing outstanding students from each major in the college (May 9th, 2025)



2. Promote the overall excellence and welfare of Radford University.

Participation in University Leadership

- President's Leadership Council
- Member of the Academic Affairs Leadership Team
 - Attend and Contribute to Meetings
 - Participated in May, August, and Winter Leadership Retreats
- Member of the Deans Council
- Member of Academic Policies and Procedures Committee – Secretary
 - Member, Final Exam Working Group (survey development and reporting)
- Regular One-on-One meetings with Provost Usher
- Member of Roanoke Operations Team

3. Lead the college in obtaining and managing fiscal, human, and physical resources necessary to meet the college's vision, and curricular and programmatic goals.

Budgeting

- Allocate college budget
- Brought in \$80,754 in funding from the Equipment Trust Fund (ETF) requests submitted in March 2025.
- Requested \$165,000 in ETF for 2026 – 2027 budget year
- Brought in \$55,127 so far this year from One-Time Funding requests
- Have requested additional One-Time funding totaling approximately \$150,000 to support additional initiatives within the college

- Requested more than \$200,000 in funding for new initiatives for the 2026 - 2027 budget year (FY27)

Foundation/Fundraising

- STARS Fund – Raised a 5th year of funding for the Student Travel and Research Support (STARS) awards with the help of our partners in University Advancement and the generous contributions from alumni, faculty, staff, and other donors. Fall and Summer Campaigns raised over \$15,000 to support student travel this year. In all, STARS has raised approximately \$75,000 to support students since its inception.
- The college brought in \$320,900 in gifts over the past year, which included more than \$206,000 from a total of 18 first-time donors.
- The college had \$136,060 in funding to distribute through endowed scholarships this year.

Staffing

- Successfully Advocated for Faculty Positions.

- Searches

We have conducted the following searches within the college since my last report:

- Criminal Justice: Special Purpose Faculty Search (Pending)
- English: Director of Composition (Pending)
- Psychology: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in I/O Psychology (Ms. Kristen Jaramillo)
- Psychology: Tenure-Track Professor of Clinical Psychology/Program Director (Dr. David Richard)
- Psychology: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor for School Psychology (Ms. Shemiyah Holland)
- Sociology: Tenure-Track Asst. Prof./Director of African American Studies (Dr. Jocelyn Brown)
- Sociology: One Semester, Temporary Full-Time Assistant Professor (Dr. Jacob Robinson)

- Evaluation of Faculty and Staff

A sizeable portion of the dean's responsibilities involves reviewing and recommending faculty and staff, due in no small part to the fact that we are the largest college in the University. In the past year, I have processed the following:

- 82 Faculty Annual Evaluations
- 16 reappointment reviews for contingent faculty
- 7 chair/director reviews
- 5 endorsements for Research Faculty status
- 2 tenure and/or promotion recommendations
- 5 recommendations for Faculty Professional Development Leave
- 2 staff annual reviews

Building/Infrastructure

- Building maintenance issues, particularly HVAC issues, continued to take up significant time in the late spring, summer, and fall.
- Building emergencies: a water pipe froze and burst in the 1st floor entrance vestibule twice;

there was no real damage, and facilities did a wonderful job managing the problem and getting things cleaned up

- Allocated space to support the Highlander Center for Character and Public Impact

4. Represent the college to external and internal constituencies.

Community Partnerships

- Led the CHBS Alumni Advisory Board in collaboration with the Executive Board (Board Chair: Cynthia Price '24-'25, Lisa Throckmorton '25 – '2; Vice Chair: John Shehan '24 - '25, Kelly Gotoh Harms '25-'26; and Secretary: Lisa Throckmorton '24 - '25, Jane Elizabeth '25 - '26).
 - Fall and Spring Board Meetings (October 9th, Jan. 23rd)
 - Periodic Executive Board Meetings (member)
 - Continued efforts to connect individual members of the CHBS Advisory Board with individual faculty members to create opportunities to connect with students (currently 27 participating board members and 25 collaborating faculty)
 - Organized a Professional Development Panel Event focusing on success in seeking employment. The event included members of board (Kelly Gotoh Harms, Jim Bove, and Katelyn Dobbins) college faculty (Ben Wright, Riane Bolin, and Jon Zeitz), and 12 students from our college. Jan. 23rd, 2026.



Representing the College

I was honored to represent the college in the following events during the last year:

- Board of Visitors meetings
 - BOV Tour of Hemphill Hall (March 19th, 2026)
- Spring Highlander Days
- Fall Open Houses
- Family Weekend in September
- Day of Thanks celebration

- Faculty/Staff Service Recognition reception
- Martin Luther King Day of Service/Roadside Cleanup
- Quest
- ROTC Commissioning ceremony
- State of the University address
- Volunteer Summit
- Wicked Festival
- Speaker at Women's History Month Reception (March 5th, 2025)



Other Activities:

Teaching

In the past year, I have conducted the following instructional activities:

- Fall 2025
 - PSYC 491-03 – Topical Research in Psychology: Social Psychological Attitudes; 17 students
 - Led to 6 posters at the 13th Annual Psychology & Gender Research Symposium
- Spring 2026
 - PSYC 491-03 – Topical Research in Psychology: Social Psychological Attitudes; 15 students
 - 5 posters submitted to the Spring 2026 Student Engagement Forum
 - PSYC 698 – Professional Internship – 1 student (Ivy Philips) in the Experimental Psychology Master's Program.
 - Poster submitted to the Spring 2026 Student Engagement Forum
 - PSYC 488 – Honors Capstone Project – 1 student (Jessica Handy) – Psychology Major
 - Poster submitted to the Spring 2026 Student Engagement Forum

Other Teaching/Mentorship activities

- Chaired the Thesis of Zachary Lewis (Experimental Psychology Master's Program), who successfully defended his thesis project in August, 2025
- Chaired the Dissertation of Shantelle Linthicum (Counseling Psychology PsyD Program), who successfully defended her dissertation project in May, 2025.
- Chairing the Thesis of Ivy Philips (Experimental Psychology Master's Program); expected defense data Spring 2027.

Scholarship

Manuscript under review:

Whittington, A., Aspelmeier, J. E., & Raymond, J. (in Review). *Benefits, Post-Hike Challenges, and Mental Health Experiences of Long-Distance Hiking: A Mixed Method Study*. Submitted to the Journal of Outdoor Recreation, Education, and Leadership.

Manuscript in Preparation:

Dane, F., Pierce, T. W., & J. E. Aspelmeier (contracted and in preparation). *Evaluating research: Methodology for people who need to read research* (Fourth Edition). Sage.

Professional Presentations:

(Students Listed in Bold. Past students denoted with *)

Phillips, I., *Lewis, Z., & Aspelmeier, J. E. (2026, Feb.). *Social desirability or misperceptions: pluralistic ignorance within mental health attitudes*. Poster presented at the 2026 Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, Feb. 26-28th, 2025, Boston, MA.

*Dai, T., & Aspelmeier, Jeffery E. (2026, Feb.). *Pluralistic Ignorance in Academic Self-Efficacy as a Predictor of Study-Related Behaviors*. Poster presented at the 2026 Annual Convention of the Society for Personality and Social Psychology, Feb 26-28th, 2026, Chicago, IL.

Handy, J., & Aspelmeier, J. E. (2025, March). *Autistic characteristics and mental health: the buffering role of adult attachment*. Poster presented at the 2025 Annual Meeting of the Eastern Psychological Association, March 6-8th, 2025, NY, NY.

Professional Development

Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE): 2026 Development for Deans and Academic Leaders: Winter Session: Palm Springs, CA February 11 - 13, 2026.

College Goals

I am currently meeting with departments to learn more about their needs, strengths, challenges, and goals. The information I collect during these meetings will inform refinement of goals for the coming year. The following are goals that I have established thus far:

- Engage the College Leadership Team in strategic planning that is guided by the University Strategic Plan, Shaping Tomorrow – Together, and the strategic plan developed by Academic Affairs
 - Strategic planning will be the central focus of the Leadership Team retreat this summer, and we will bring this back to the college for review and feedback.
 - The college plan will help inform department planning as well
- Support the college through changes within the general education model
 - Establishing the optimal footprint in the general education curriculum which fits with the resources we have and with the college and departmental goals we have established
 - Managing the shift in demand for minors that is currently happening within REALx and is anticipated to continue within the proposed general education model
 - Develop a strategy to meet the expected staffing demands associated with the proposed general education model, including staffing ENGL 111/112, RADF 101, and potentially the Navigate Your Journey requirement.
- Refine/Expand Recruitment Efforts

- Increase outreach to local high schools
- Utilize the summer and academic year Governor's School Programs to expand our visibility; Students in these programs have the potential to "ambassadors" for RU within their home schools.
- Focus college communication plans on supporting recruitment
 - These efforts should include internal and external communication; utilizing our websites, social media, message boards, and email communication; updated materials for our recruiting events; developing program/faculty/student spotlights; and featuring our internship, project based, research, and professional experiences as well as employment and student success data (particularly important for our external communication)
- Efforts to Strengthen Retention.
 - Further develop our strong partnership with the Office of Student Success and the Highlander Success Center; Support targeted interventions for first-time-in-college and transfer students; build resources for advising support within the college.
 - Build student connections to programs, departments, and college through college events that utilize support from RISE QEP
 - Establish a college-level Student Advisory Board/Council; I was hoping to get this established this spring, but I will have to work on this over the summer to prepare for a fall launch.
- New Initiatives
 - Support the launch of the 1st cohort within the New River Valley Governors School in the Arts and Humanities; I will be working with Rachel Williams (Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts) and Roxanne Souma (Executive Director of the New River Valley Governors School).
 - Finalize the SCHEV proposal for the Master of Science in Clinical Psychology, for approval in July or September.
 - High School Dual Enrollment Credential Graduate Certificate Program
- Supporting Faculty and Student Scholarship
 - Continue to build college support for faculty scholarship and research; looking at options to increase the funding available next year
 - Utilize existing opportunities and develop new opportunities to showcase the product of faculty work and faculty-student collaborations
 - Continue to advocate for broader institutional support for research and scholarship
 - Support the work of centers with our college
 - Establish a Leadership Council among CHBS Centers to help encourage collaborations where possible and share strategies for success and addressing challenges; again, I was hoping to get this established this spring, but I will have to work on this over the summer to prepare for a fall launch.
- Strengthening Community Connections
 - Continuing engagement with the CHBS Alumni Advisory Board

- Capitalize on board's interest in mentoring students; expanding informal, formal, departmental, and college-wide opportunities for alumni to interact with students on a regular basis
- Utilize board members' networks to expand external relationships
- Explore expanding the role of the board to include consulting on policy/strategic planning.
- Utilize the board to seed departmental/program advisory boards where there is interest

Personal Goals

Additionally, I have some personal professional goals for the coming year. In August, I will be taking advantage of leadership training offered through the Council of Colleges of Arts & Sciences. Additionally, I will be scaling back on my teaching and student mentorship significantly. Although, I will continue to chair the master's thesis project for Ivy Phillips, who will be a second-year student in Experimental Psychology next year. In collaboration with Frank Dane (Emeritus Faculty from RUC) and Tom Peirce (Emeritus Faculty from Psychology), I will work on getting a new edition of our Evaluating Research textbook ready to go into production this summer. I also have data from recent studies that I would like to try to get submitted for publication, and I will be working on getting a contract for another edition of the SPPS textbook that Tom and I co-authored.

Summary

It truly has been an honor to serve the college as the interim dean and now as dean over the past year. This is a fantastic college, populated by amazing faculty, staff, and students, who are all doing important and impressive work. I love learning more about the incredible work that my colleagues do and how I can better serve them. The same goes for the many incredibly talented students we work with. It is an honor to be entrusted with advocating for our college. The success of this college is directly attributable to the strong leadership of the department chairs and school directors, the dean's office team (Kim, Riane, Stacey, and Kerie), and the admins within each of the departments and schools. I feel like my tenure as interim dean and short tenure as dean has been marked by some notable successes, but that was only possible with support of the college leadership team. I am grateful for their guidance and support, and I will continue to rely on that support in the future.

Respectfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeff Aspelmeier', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Jeff Aspelmeier