



**Radford**  
UNIVERSITY

Davis College of  
Business and Economics

## Message from Dean Donna McCloskey

This year marked a clear shift from rebuilding to results. Across the Davis College of Business and Economics, we moved from plans to progress, delivering on our commitment to provide high-quality, applied educational experiences that prepare students to graduate on time, with a job and ready to lead.

At the core of that work is our commitment to Challenge, Cultivate, Connect. We are challenging students through experiential learning that mirrors the real world—from SMIPO managing a \$1.8M investment portfolio with a 22.9% return to pitching ventures in IdeaFest and Innovation Challenge, competing nationally and engaging directly with industry leaders. We are cultivating talent through intentional programming like the SPARK Center, the Truist Emerging Leaders Certification and the Davis Fellows program, all designed to build not just knowledge, but professional identity and confidence. We are connecting—at scale—through alumni engagement, employer partnerships, and high-impact experiences like Shadow Day, Business of Sports, student trips, and expanded high school outreach that is building our future pipeline while giving our current students meaningful leadership opportunities.

Equally important, we have been intentional about creating moments that build community, reinforce expectations and celebrate outcomes. Events like BizExpo, Shadow Day and Business of Sports bring the outside world into Kyle Hall, while Career Launch celebrations and the Pre-Commencement Breakfast reinforce what success looks like and communicate our expectations. These are not just events; they are part of how we operationalize Challenge, Cultivate, Connect and create a culture where students show up, engage and see themselves as future professionals.

We also leaned into what differentiates us: applied learning powered by innovation and analytics. The launch of the AI Sandbox created a hands-on, ethical, and career-focused AI ecosystem, with hundreds of students earning certifications, engaging in AI Week, and gaining practical experience with enterprise tools. At the same time, we reintroduced the Center for Applied Analytics to ensure our students are not just learning about data but using it to inform decisions. From classroom integration to certifications and real-world problem solving, we are embedding analytics and innovation as core competencies across the curriculum.

Importantly, this progress aligned with AACSB expectations and our strategic plan. We advanced our strategic plan in alignment with the university's direction and ensured that our investments—

financial, human, and physical—are directly tied to student success and career outcomes. That alignment is also reflected in our momentum externally, including significant growth in fundraising and the transformational \$2.5M gift establishing the Virginia Credit Union Financial Success Center, which will extend our impact across campus and into the region.

The throughline across all of this work is simple: we are building a college where students don't just learn business, they practice it. Every initiative, every partnership and every resource is focused on one outcome: preparing our students to step into the workforce with confidence, capability, and a clear sense of purpose. That's what it looks like to challenge, cultivate and connect—and we're just getting started.

## AI Sandbox – Samantha Steidle

### Purpose

Launched in Summer 2025, the AI Sandbox at Radford University's Davis College of Business and Economics (DCOBE) is a generative AI hub in Kyle Hall. Its mission is to empower the DCOBE community to lead responsible AI initiatives with integrity while building professional networks that drive career success. The Sandbox provides enterprise-grade AI tools, structured learning pathways, and an innovative community within an institutionally governed, ethical framework. A faculty task force (Dan Farhat, Mike Chatham, Dale Henderson and Luke Liska) guide governance and pedagogical direction.

Located in Kyle Hall at the second-floor atrium entrance, the Sandbox gives all DCOBE students and faculty access to Claude, ChatGPT, Perplexity, and BoodleBox within a FERPA-compliant environment. BoodleBox integrates 30+ AI models from OpenAI, Anthropic, Google, Perplexity, and Meta, with token-reduction technology enabling up to 96% lower usage costs and 90% lower energy consumption than standalone deployments — aligning with Radford's sustainability goals.

A paid work-study opportunity giving DCOBE students hands-on, resume-building experience supporting Sandbox initiatives, facilitating events, and modeling responsible AI use. In 2025–2026, Annie Pinto-Kossa and Ava McGhee delivered 200 open office hours, making expert AI support accessible across all disciplines.

The DCOBE AI Club, formally approved in 2025–2026 as a student-led community for AI innovators, offers VIP event access, career networking, and peer mentorship. AI Week — February 6–13, 2026 — was Radford's first campus-wide AI immersion, embedding literacy into existing courses via certifications, 25+ BoodleBox modules, and 600+ AI Olympics activities.

### Activities and Metrics

Across 2025–2026, the AI Sandbox achieved measurable impact in student engagement, tool adoption, faculty development, and regional outreach:

- **100+ industry certifications** earned through Microsoft, Udemy, Anthropic, and Google.
- **800+ BoodleBox memberships** activated, providing access to 30+ enterprise AI models in a FERPA-compliant environment.

- **600+ AI Olympics activities** completed during AI Week (February 6–13, 2026).
- **200 open office hours** delivered by AI Ambassadors to support peers college-wide.
- **150+ presentation attendees** from speaking engagements at New River CC, Virginia Western CC, and RBTC.
- **50+ AI sources and tools** shared; 25+ literacy modules created in BoodleBox.
- **19 conference attendees** — 8 students & 11 faculty — at RBTC's "Disrupt Up" AI Conference.
- **2 pilot AI bots** built for academic advising and entrepreneurial start-up support.

## Looking Forward

Goals for 2026–2027 span certification growth, expanded programming, deeper employer connections, and a significant increase in student work-based learning hours:

- 300+ total certifications — growing the portfolio beyond Anthropic to additional platforms.
- Second annual AI Week — Spring 2027, with guest speakers and a prompt-a-thon in partnership with local businesses.
- 10+ employer connections formalized through regional conference participation and partnership agreements.
- At least two AI conferences with sponsored student travel.
- Additional custom AI bots developed for students and faculty.
- 1 AI Pedagogy Toolkit peer-reviewed and distributed to DCOBE instructors.
- 1 AI in Business event co-hosted with RBTC, engaging regional business leaders, educators, and students.
- 1,000 open office hours — expanding Ambassador Program from 200 hours through additional staff positions.
- End-of-semester capstone project requirement added to the AI Ambassador Program.

## Center for Applied Analytics – Zachary Collier

### Purpose

Formerly the Center for Innovation and Analytics, the Center for Applied Analytics underwent a leadership change in October 2025. This year has focused on transitioning to a reimagined strategic plan now being put into action. The Center webpage was created and published on the Davis College of Business and Economics website. Additionally, the Center hired two Federal Work Study students to assist with the Center's activities.

### Activities and Metrics

- The kickoff luncheon held on March 11, 2026 with guest speaker Dr. Ben Trump, President of the Society for Risk Analysis. Approximately 70 students, faculty, and staff were in attendance.
- The Certiport registration was renewed for the next academic year, supporting students in INSY 281 with Microsoft Excel certification tests and now also MGNT 440 with Project Management Institute certifications.

In addition, The Center’s space underwent a refresh, including surplus removal of outdated furniture, improved storage organization, the conversion of the back office into a meeting room, and the redesign of the main room into an open, collaborative space for students and faculty.

## Looking Forward

- Dr. Collier will attend the annual INFORMS Meeting of Analytics Program Directors (MAP-D) in Washington DC in April. This meeting brings together directors of analytics programs from across the country and internationally to discuss trends and best practices in analytics education.
- Dr. Collier and Center work study student Romy Polanah Kehlenbeck will present a talk at the upcoming Appalachian Research in Business Symposium (ARBS) on the application of AI tools for e-waste recycling.

## Davis Fellows – Luke Liska

### Purpose

The Davis College Fellows is a program of excellence for distinctive business students in the Davis College of Business and Economics. The program showcases the diversity, uniqueness, talent and drive of Davis College’s top students, while supporting excellence with resources, guidance, incentives and opportunities to enhance student achievements. By participating in the program, students get valuable learning experience in the four domains of business education: Business Knowledge, Professional Development, Leadership and Community, and Global Citizenship.

Davis College Fellows are rewarded for outstanding performance. Through active engagement with courses and learning opportunities in and out of class, students acquire points which are used to earn benefits to further enhance their professional and academic experience.

### Activities and Metrics

<b>Fall 2025 – Spring 2026 Past Events</b>		
<b>Date</b>	<b>Type of Event</b>	<b>Notes</b>
September 19, 2025	Inaugural Meeting	-
October 10, 2025	Advisory Board Mixer	-
October 13, 2025	Davis Fellows Podcast	Guest: Zach Bahn
November 6, 2025	Fall '25 Truist Global Capitalism Lecture Series	Guest: William “Bill” McNulty
November 12, 2025	Food City Internship Visit	Partners: Luke Goodie – Business Analyst, KVAT Food Stores; Keyla Carter – Recruiter, Food City/KVAT
December 3, 2025	Davis Fellows Podcast	Guest: Zachary Collier
January 21, 2026	Food City Distribution and Corporate Center Visit	Met with employees from the distribution center and support center

March 2-4, 2026	Charlotte, NC Alumni Excursion	Dale Ardizzone – COO, INSP Tyler Swarmer – Director, KPMG Collin Beckham – Senior Manager, Epic Games Gavin Shuck – Managing Director, Truist Michael Clegg – Managing Partner, Qworks Group Jorge Andres – CBS News Anchor
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<b>Spring 2026 Upcoming Events</b>		
Date	Type of Event	Notes
March 26, 2026	Truist Global Capitalism Lecture	Attending
April 23, 2026	Award Ceremony for Graduating Davis Fellows	8 students graduating
TBD	National Bank of Blacksburg Visit	Lara Ramsey - President
TBD	Roanoke Gas Company Visit	Waylon Spencer - Manager

<b>Recruitment of Davis College Fellows</b>		
Recruitment Term	New Students	Applicants
Fall 2024	7	7
Spring 2025	3	(Invited)
Fall 2025	13	29
Spring 2026	5	(Invited)

**Fall 2025 Graduating Davis Fellows (1)  
Members as of Spring 2026 (39)**

Current Major(s)	Count
Business Exploratory	9
Marketing	7
Management	6
Finance	5
Accounting	3
Marketing, Management	3
Marketing-Sales	2
History, Economics	1
Information Systems	1
Management, Foreign Languages	1
Marketing, Finance	1

- Attended Open House & Highlander Day (future) to promote Davis College Fellows
- Continued email campaign with Admissions to attract incoming students
- Fall Alumni Magazine Article with Neil Harvey (Media Services Specialist)
- Fall 2025 Recruitment Meeting (via email) with Mallory Griffith (Director of Recruitment Communications) and Alba Alvarez (Director of Operations for Enrollment Management)
- DCF Individual Development Meeting (Met with all active Davis Fellows Members)
  - Discussion of goals as a DCF student and their progress in reaching them
- Excursion Meeting with Laura Turk (Executive Director for Alumni Relations)
- Excursion Recruiting (via Email/Phone)
  - Keyla Carter – Recruiter, Food City/KVAT
  - Lara Ramsey – President, National Bank of Blacksburg
  - Waylon Spencer - Manager, Roanoke Gas Company
  - Dale Ardizzone – COO, INSP
  - Tyler Swarmer – Director, KPMG
  - Collin Beckham – Senior Manager, Epic Games
  - Gavin Shuck – Managing Director, Truist
  - Michael Clegg – Managing Partner, Qworks Group
  - Jorge Andres – CBS News Anchor
  - Brendan Horgan – President, SunBelt Rental
  - John Fosu – Director, Anthem
  - Danielle Wilson – President, CRG
  - Time Buhler – EVP, F2 Strategy
  - Tariq Bokhari – Executive Director, Carolina Fintech
  - Ryan Tallent – Complex Market Manager, Walmart

## Looking Forward

The Davis Fellows program will continue to build on its strong foundation of alumni engagement and experiential learning. Next spring, fellows will travel to Washington, D.C. during spring break to connect with Alumni and local business leaders. In addition, we are launching the Davis Fellows Podcast, a new platform designed to connect fellows with alumni and local professionals, highlight career journeys, and share insights across business fields. The first two episodes have been filmed and are currently in the editing stage, with plans for release in the near future. Together, these initiatives will expand the program’s reach and create new, accessible ways for fellows to engage with alumni and envision their future careers.

## Governmental and Nonprofit Assistance Center (GNAC) – Vilson Dushi

### Purpose

The Governmental and Nonprofit Assistance Center (GNAC) supports government and nonprofit professionals across Virginia by providing professional development, workforce training, and experiential learning opportunities for students. While the focus is on Virginia government, GNAC

also supports Maryland Government Finance Officers Association (MDGFOA). GNAC has also received requests from government entities in Connecticut and Nevada.

GNAC also provides meaningful opportunities for students, including:

- Year-round part-time employment
- Experiential learning opportunities that help students meet graduation requirements (internships)

In addition, GNAC offers monthly in-person professional development courses. These 1½-day courses allow GNAC to showcase its programs while providing practical training for government and nonprofit professionals. Whenever possible, Radford University faculty facilitate these courses, sharing their expertise directly with practitioners.

As Director of GNAC, I attend two annual conferences hosted by the Virginia Government Finance Officers' Association (VGFOA). During these conferences, I present the RU/VGFOA certificate to members who have completed the program's course requirements. These events also provide valuable opportunities to engage with attendees and highlight the educational programs and resources available through Radford University.

## Activities and Metrics

### **GNAC: Joint RU-VGFOA Certificate Program**

- Conducted 9 live workshops with 135 participants
- Delivered 10 online workshops with 295 participants
- Fourteen participants completed the 10-workshop certificate program

### **GNAC: Support for the TAV Program with UVA**

- Conducted 7 online workshops with 226 participants
- Workshops support the RU-TAV Accounting Certificate, which consists of three 1½-day classes

### **GNAC: Support for MDGFOA**

- Conducted 3 online workshops with 8 participants

GNAC has also offered opportunities and funding to faculty to help expand training offers by developing online workshops, including:

- *Arthur Carter - Cyber Security in the Public Sector*
- *Zachary Collier - Risk Management*
- *Thomas Cruise - Grants Reporting and Auditing*
- *Abhay Kaushick - Cash Management & Banking*
- *John Travers - Leadership*
- *Robert Warren - Grants Reporting and Auditing*

This model not only provides valuable continuing education for professionals across Virginia but also highlights the depth of expertise within Radford University's faculty. By engaging faculty

members as instructors, GNAC serves as a bridge between academic knowledge and real-world public sector practice. Participants gain access to current research, best practices, and practical tools that can be immediately applied in their organizations.

At the same time, these programs enhance the visibility and reputation of Radford University as a trusted partner in professional education and workforce development. By connecting faculty expertise with the needs of government and nonprofit professionals, GNAC helps demonstrate the university's leadership in preparing and supporting the public service workforce throughout the region.

## Looking Forward

The agreement with VGFOA expires this year and we have agreed to extend it one more year. We are working on updating our aging content. Thanks to our faculty, we have been able to update many of the courses, but we still have quite a few that are either in the process of being updated or will soon be assigned.

## High School Engagement – Andy Travers

### Purpose

Radford University's High School Engagement strategy brings together partnerships with Junior Achievement (JA) and Jobs for Virginia Graduates (JVG) to create a coordinated, high-impact pipeline between regional high schools and the Davis College of Business and Economics. Activities are held on campus with DCOBE students serving as facilitators and mentors, gaining valuable experience in presentation, leadership, and applied learning—directly supporting the college's experiential learning mission.

### Activities and Metrics

To help develop the partnership with JVG Coordinators, I have presented at the JVG State Conference in the Fall of 2025 (Richmond).

On February 12, 2026 the JVG Ignite Event was hosted in Kyle Hall. Thirteen high students from 5 participating schools (Unity Reed, Buchanan Co. Tech, Mechanicsville, William Monroe, Tazwell County) competed. Three faculty, Dale Henderson, Jennifer Elias and Donna McCloskey, served as judges. With the support of Admissions, we were able to provide \$1000 RU scholarships to the winners of the event in each category.

Our relationship with Junior Achievement (JA) grew this year. As summarized below, DCOBE hosted 146 high school students for on-campus workshops including time management, team building, personal branding and personal finance. These experiences are designed to expose students to Radford University and campus life, connect prospective students with current student mentors, deliver enrichment aligned with JVG competencies and expand JA's footprint across Southwestern Virginia

Spring 2025 – Spring 2026 Events*		
Date	School Partnership	Number of Student Attendees
2/4/2025	Radford High School	13
2/25/2025	Salem High School	23
3/4/2025	Bristol High School	Canceled due to weather
9/16/2025	Wythe Co. and Rural Retreat Schools	37
9/26/2025	Roanoke Burton Tech	32 (8 area schools)
9/30/2025	Salem High School	20 students
2/17/2026	Floyd High School	21 students
2/24/2026	Wythe County High School	Postponed due to weather
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>8+ high schools</b>	<b>146 students</b>

\*Excludes events hosted off campus

7/14-7/16/25	Roanoke Library, JA Stock Market Challenge	13 students (4 area schools)
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This initiative could not flourish without the key partnerships

- Internal – Radford Venture Lab Team, Macie Rice
- External – Junior Achievement (JA) of SW VA, Keri Garnett SWVA JA President
- External – Jobs for Virginia Graduates (JVG), JVG is the Virginia branch of the Jobs for Americas Graduates (JAG) nation-wide program, Daryl Clemons State Director, Antonio Rice JVG President

## Looking Forward

The High School Engagement initiative is positioned for continued growth and increased strategic impact. We intend to further leverage Radford University students as facilitators and mentors, enhancing both recruitment and experiential learning outcomes. This integrated approach positions Radford University not just as a destination, but as an active partner in preparing the next generation of students for college, careers, and long-term success. In addition to maintaining these relationships, there may also be opportunities to participate in the Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA) regional competition.

## SPARK Center – Melanie Butler

### Purpose

The SPARK Center at Radford University's Davis College of Business and Economics (DCOBE) is your one-stop resource for all things Davis College. We provide guidance on advising, class registration, DCOBE events, and general information about BBA/BS and MBA programs. Our goal is to support DCOBE students with the information they need—and if we don't have the answer, we'll connect them with someone who does.

We strive to help the students be the best that they can be as we support them with events, provide communications to keep them up to date with all things happening in the college and work to build connections outside the classroom. As we fulfill RU’s Culture of Care, we provide a safe space for students to come with questions or just to hang out. Being a welcoming spot in the building is the ultimate goal because it draws students in and builds connections.

## Activities and Metrics

<b>Term</b>	<b>Event / Activity</b>	<b>Participation / Notes</b>
<b>Spring 2025</b>	Highlander Days (Q&A with Macie Rice)	—
<b>Summer 2025</b>	Quest Orientation Support	All sessions
	Naming & Branding of SPARK Center	Completed
<b>Fall 2025</b>	Settle In September	Week of daily events
	Donuts with the Dean	35 students
	Planner Workshop	6 students
	Meet Your Major (ACTG, ECON, FINC, INSY, MGNT, MKTG)	78 students
	Coffee with Your Career Coach	7 students
	Games & Snacks Friday	5 students
	BizExpo	230 students
	Career Launch Celebration (Nov 12)	5 students
	Advisory Board Mixer (Oct 10)	8 students
	Food City Internship Mixer	1 student
	MBA Recruiting Activities	Multiple dates
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>375 students</b>
<b>Spring 2026</b>	Shadow Day	128 students
	Career Launch Events (March)	4 students
	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>132 students</b>

## Looking Forward

Plans for the remainder of the semester include March and April Career Launch events and Registration Palooza on April 20, partnering with Highlander Support Center to support and incentivize student course registration.

## Student Managed Investment Portfolio Organization (SMIPO) – Abhay Kaushik

### Purpose

The Student Managed Investment Portfolio Organization (SMIPO) continues to provide Radford University students with hands-on experience in portfolio management, financial analysis, and professional development. SMIPO manages a real investment portfolio on behalf of the Radford University Foundation and operates in a manner similar to a professional investment firm.

Over the past year, SMIPO expanded student participation, strengthened industry connections, delivered strong portfolio performance, and enhanced career opportunities for students interested in finance, investment management, and consulting.

### Activities and Metrics

SMIPO continues to emphasize the principle of growing the portfolio while protecting the principal invested by the Radford University Foundation.

The portfolio generated strong risk-adjusted returns, demonstrating the effectiveness of the student-led investment process.

SMIPO currently has approximately 30 active student participants managing the portfolio. Students are organized into nine sector teams, each consisting of one Sector Head and at least 2 Analysts

Students conduct fundamental research, valuation analysis, and sector outlook assessments before presenting buy and sell recommendations.

### *Investment Decision Process*

This structured process mirrors the decision-making framework used by professional investment management firms.

- SMIPO meets every Tuesday and Thursday in the trading room.
- Attendance and participation are mandatory.
- Students present formal investment recommendations.
- Members ask questions and debate investment theses.
- A majority vote determines whether a transaction is executed.

Portfolio Growth (March 2025 – February 2026)	
Metric	Value
Portfolio Value (March 2025)	\$1,491,271.08
Portfolio Value (February 2026)	\$1,833,239.58
Annual Return	22.93%

*Industry Exposure and Professional Networking*

A major objective of SMIPO is to connect students with leading financial institutions and industry professionals. In April 2025 (14 students) and March 2026 (11 students) the students participated in the Global Asset Management Education (G.A.M.E.) Forum in New York City

During the trip to New York City, SMIPO students had the opportunity to visit major financial institutions including Goldman Sachs, BNY and Bloomberg.

*Homecoming Alumni Event*

SMIPO hosted several events designed to strengthen alumni and industry relationships. During Homecoming Weekend, SMIPO organized a networking Meet & Greet event that brought together Current SMIPO members, SMIPO alumni, and Advisory Board members.

*Foundation Board Presentation*

In June 2025, SMIPO students presented the portfolio performance to the Radford University Foundation Board. The presentation was well received, and board members expressed strong appreciation for the work being done by SMIPO students.

*Guest Speaker Event*

SMIPO hosted William McNulty, who served as the keynote speaker for the Truist Global Luncheon Series.

*Student Presentations and Governance*

SMIPO students presented the portfolio and investment strategy to the SMIPO Advisory Board in April 2025 and September 2025

These presentations provided students with valuable experience in presenting investment strategies to their Board Members and receiving feedback.

*Career Outcomes and Student Success*

Participation in SMIPO continues to translate into strong career outcomes for students.

Students completed internships at organizations including BNY Mellon, Radford University Foundation and Lindamood Financial Group. Many SMIPO students receive job offers before graduation, demonstrating the value of the program in preparing students for careers in finance and consulting.

## Looking Forward

SMIPO will continue to focus on:

- Enhancing portfolio research and investment strategies
- Expanding industry partnerships and alumni engagement
- Increasing student participation and leadership opportunities
- Providing career development and networking opportunities

The organization also plans to continue participating in national finance conferences and hosting industry professionals on campus.

## Truist Leadership Program – Benjamin Biermeier-Hanson

### Purpose

The primary charge for the Truist Leadership Faculty is to recruit for and conduct The Truist Emerging Leaders Certification. The two-day workshop, offered each semester, is leadership development program that helps students understand their strengths and communication styles while developing their personal ‘leadership purpose.’ The secondary charge is to oversee a grant program for faculty to infuse ethics and leadership into their courses.

### Activities and Metrics

This past year saw a total of 57 participants in the program (27 students participated in Spring 2025 and 30 participated in Fall 2025). Notably, students at both the undergraduate and graduate level engaged across academic programs. In Fall 2025, most students came from the Department of Psychology and students from across Davis College of Business and Economics majors, with additional representation from Political Science, Physics, and Communications. The spring saw a majority from Davis College of Business and Economics, with students also participating with majors as varied as Computer Science to Music. Several graduate students participated as part of the Office of Graduate Affairs’ Professional Development program.

### Looking Forward

The next workshop is March 27-28<sup>th</sup>, 2026. Recruitment for the Spring 2026 workshop has begun, with logistics and space support from Jennifer Reece and Grace Bryant. Finally, I conducted an RFP process for integrating ethical leadership into new or existing courses last spring. This resulted in one award being given (to Mr. Andy Travers). I will repeat this process again this spring cycle.

Dr. Dayna Hayes (Chair, Psychology) and Dr. Niels Christensen (Director, Honors) continue to be strong partners and advertise the workshop to their students. Graduate students are notified about

the workshops through the Office of Graduate Affairs. These partners are continuing to advertise and spread the word for the program. We will continue to explore new ways to reach additional students across the university and will report on future certification numbers.

## Venture Lab – Macie Rice

### Purpose

Radford's Venture Lab is a bridge between idea and concept launch. The Venture Lab was developed to work with students from all disciplines to map and facilitate the pathway from initial thoughts to fruition. With the growth of our MakerSpace ecosystem and entrepreneurial activity by students at Radford University, we seek to provide students with a way to discover and grow "Value in Their Ideas." The Venture Lab is designed to counsel students as they formalize, develop, and strengthen innovation efforts. This service is free of charge to students and no equity is taken by Radford.

### Activities and Metrics

#### *Guest Speakers & Fireside Chats*

- Hosted Dan Crawford, local Sierra Club Chair, for the first Fireside Chat of the season (30 students attended)
  - Led discussion on Social Entrepreneurship and Activism for ENTR 350
  - Facilitated conversation on Project Management with focus on local onshore wind energy projects
- Welcomed an inspiring guest speaker session followed by a hands-on workshop with Jessica Hall, Founder of 27Dyes (10 students)
  - Students gained practical insight into creativity, marketing, and small business operations through experiential learning

#### *K-12 & Community Engagement*

The Venture Lab Brand Ambassadors support our high school engagement programs by offering interactive workshops in Conflict Management, Lean Business Principles and Building Your Brand on LinkedIn

#### *Signature Events & Innovation Initiatives*

- IdeaFest 2025
  - Over 40 student groups participated (100+ Radford University students)
  - More than 60 posters showcased innovative business ideas
  - Engaged campus community in feedback and collaboration (Over 800+ responses)
- Career Fair – Fall 2025
  - Headshots professionally taken and sent to RU students
  - 3-5 Radford University students participated in setting up
  - 130-150 Radford University students participated in taking headshots
- Launched the new Think. Try. Thrive. Table: 6 prompts, over 50 Radford University students participated

- Created by Venture Lab Brand Ambassadors
- Designed to spark entrepreneurial thinking through quick prompts and activities
- Successfully activated student creativity and engagement

### *Student Engagement & Venture Lab Impact*

- Over 50 students utilized prototyping and creative supplies
- Top prototyping tools used:
  - #1 Vinyl (Cricut)
  - #2 3D Printer
  - #3 Creativity Cart

### *Student Entrepreneurs updates:*

- Radford University student Leoul Meaza, a Computer Science major, launched [Repeti](#), a science-backed web app designed to improve long-term learning retention. (Currently assisting the student)
- Dana Jett to plan a Micro-Business Workshop sponsored by the ELC (Entrepreneurship Living-Learning Community) and the Venture Lab. The workshop will guide students through the fundamentals of starting an online business using platforms such as Etsy, Depop, and other digital marketplaces. (Currently assisting the student)

## Looking Forward

The Venture Lab will host the Innovation Challenge, bringing together students to pitch creative ideas and innovative solutions to real-world problems. The event will provide participants with an opportunity to develop entrepreneurial thinking, collaborate with peers, and present their ideas to a panel of judges. Students will compete for recognition and potential prizes while gaining valuable experience in idea development, pitching, and problem-solving.

## DCOBE Committee Updates

### Undergraduate Curriculum Committee

#### *Charge 1: Design a way to pilot Radford 101 in Fall 2026*

**Accomplishments:** Because learning outcomes for Radford 101 have not been finalized at the university level, we decided to employ the \*71 “special topics” mechanism to set a placeholder in the catalog. A 171 course didn’t exist at the college level, so we created a new course proposal for COBE 171 with the following description:

“This course is a 100-level special topics introduction to business. The specific subject matter may vary by instructor and semester, but the course is designed to expose students to foundational ideas, concepts, and practices that are central to the study of business. Topics may draw from areas such as management, marketing, accounting, finance, operations, information systems, entrepreneurship, or the business environment more broadly.”

This course will be taught in Fall 2026 as a pilot Radford 101. In the future, as learning outcomes stabilize at the university level, we will create a new course for Radford 101.

### *Charge 2: Resolve Math Placement Problems*

Accomplishments: We have met with members of the math department to identify the core issue: DCOBE students are taking Math 100 instead of the course designed for business students, Math 125. We lowered the requirement to Math 100 two years ago. This is leading to staffing problems in the math department and leaving our students underprepared in quantitative skills. Economics majors (both BBA and BS) face additional challenges because they are required to take Math 126, which sometimes means having to retake Math 125 after completing Math 100. We have one short-term solution and one long-term solution.

Short-term solution: DBCOBE, Math, and Advising will work together to create an advising protocol that puts students into appropriate classes or encourages them to take a placement exam. This is currently underway.

Long-term solution: DCOBE and Math will work together to design a new DCOBE-specific course that all business majors will take. Some departments have expressed reluctance, but we are still in discussions.

### *Charge 3: Integrate career preparation into the curriculum*

Using the NACE career competencies as a guide, we have identified “Career & Self Development” and “Professionalism” as the only areas not yet addressed in the curriculum. The committee has done preliminary for on creating 1-credit modules to embed in the curriculum.

#### *Module 1: Professional Identity*

This module helps students cultivate a strong sense of professional self. Learners assess their strengths, growth areas, and long-term aspirations while developing strategies for gathering and applying feedback. Emphasis is placed on building a positive personal brand, articulating one’s value, and advocating ethically for oneself and others within an organization.

#### *Module 2: Professionalism*

This module focuses on the daily behaviors that signal professionalism and reliability. Students learn how to manage their time, follow through on commitments, maintain high standards of work, and contribute meaningfully to organizational goals. The module reinforces that strong performance and consistent preparedness are key drivers of career advancement and organizational trust.

#### *Module 3: Career Initiative and Lifelong Learning*

This module encourages students to adopt a growth mindset and a proactive approach to career development. Learners explore how curiosity, initiative, and strategic networking expand professional opportunities. The module emphasizes lifelong learning, including formal education, informal skill development, and participation in training or professional events.

The dean’s office would be responsible for providing faculty for these sections. The target implementation date is fall 2027.

#### *Charge 4: Suggest default syllabus language for acceptable AI Use*

Several teams are working on this at the university level, but in the event that we have nothing by fall, we suggest the following, which was borrowed and adapted from peer institutions:

*AI tools can be powerful aids to learning when used appropriately. However, acceptable use varies by course and assignment, and it is the instructor who defines what is permissible. Students are responsible for ensuring that any use of AI follows the instructor's guidelines. Using AI outside those boundaries may constitute academic misconduct. Students should seek clarification whenever they are unsure about what is permitted.*

## Graduate Curriculum Committee

This year, we made meaningful progress in strengthening the MBA student experience by intentionally building community among and across cohorts. We relaunched the MBA Student Association, with its first meeting held in the second week of October, reestablishing an important student-led forum for engagement and connection. To further support communication and resource sharing, we also created a dedicated D2L shell for all MBA students, designed as a centralized “one-stop shop” that includes tools such as a discussion board to foster ongoing interaction.

In support of enrollment growth and strategic partnerships, we developed a targeted list of Virginia institutions without MBA programs as potential partners for +1 pathway agreements. Through a comprehensive review of 42 colleges and universities across the Commonwealth, the list was refined to nine strong candidates: Christopher Newport University; Norfolk State University; Virginia Military Institute; University of Virginia's College at Wise; Bridgewater College; Ferrum College; Hollins University; Southern Virginia University; and Washington and Lee University.

We also contributed to academic quality and continuous improvement efforts by supporting the Assurance of Learning Committee in updating assessment processes and documentation. On the curricular front, we resubmitted the Innovation Certificate through Curriculog and advanced new course development to strengthen program offerings. This included the submission of FINC 681: Investment Analysis and MGNT 626: Human Capital Management: Creating and Leading a High Performance Workforce.

## Policies and Procedures Committee

The P&P Committee has developed updates/clarifications to the Policies and Procedures Manual (with the plan to be voted on by faculty at the next College meeting) addressing the following areas:

- Evaluation of faculty teaching (minor update to evaluation rubric; codification of Chair role in addressing cases when a faculty member does not fulfill basic teaching responsibilities)

- Evaluation of faculty professional contributions (clarification regarding weighting of types of contributions; clarification of the discussion of authentic journals)
- Evaluation of faculty service (addressing the case of service which earns a course release)