

# RADFORD UNIVERSITY



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November 2022

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**Welcome** to the second installment of the Radford University RCS Quarterly Newsletter. We are delighted to share grant opportunities, spotlight resources, celebrate colleagues and students, and highlight upcoming events. During this month of gratitude, we reflect on those that inspire us, offer critique with care, lift up our work, and give generously of their time and energy so that we may thrive. Thank you all for the investments you make in your projects, students and one another to advance discovery, knowledge, beauty, innovation, and our community. We hope this newsletter helps connect you to colleagues and opportunities so that you may flourish. And, we welcome your input if you have feedback or great ideas to share. Please let me know what you think at [jmekolic@radford.edu](mailto:jmekolic@radford.edu). I look forward to hearing from you!

Jeanne Mekolichick, Ph.D.  
Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success &  
Strategic Initiatives

## Faculty Spotlight

**Dr. Alexander Eaton, Assistant Professor, Department of Chemistry at RUC**

Project Title: *Synthesis of Non-burning Capsaicin Derivatives*



Capsaicin, the active component of chili peppers, is a spice commonly found in many foods enjoyed worldwide. Even though some may find the spice painful to consume, studies have shown capsaicin is effective in pain treatment. Capsaicin creams are available over the counter and used for the management of pain caused by neuralgia, rheumatoid arthritis, or muscle sprains and strains. However, due to capsaicin causing a burning sensation on the skin, non-burning creams containing capsaicin prodrugs show the potential to provide pain relief without the unpleasant burning sensation. Capsaicin palmitate cream, which has previously been marketed, is being redeveloped by Chorda Pharma, a small startup business in Roanoke, VA. To create a more potent, non-burning capsaicin cream, alternative molecules are being explored and synthesized. As part of Dr. Eaton's research with Chorda Pharma, dicapsaicin esters will be synthesized by undergraduate students at Radford University Carilion. These derivatives have the potential to deliver capsaicin in a higher concentration while still not causing a burning sensation. Synthesizing capsaicin palmitate and dicapsaicin allows student researchers to familiarize themselves with techniques, glassware, chemicals, and instrumentation. The current synthesis and TLC analysis is being performed in the chemistry lab at RUC, with other products being analyzed using instrumentation available at the Radford University Chemistry Department.

## Faculty–Student Success

In late September 2022, **Research Rookie Lauren Griffin**, a sophomore majoring in Cybersecurity, received an invitation from her research mentor, **Dr. Shawn Smith, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice** to present her research on digital literacy for persons under the age of 18, to the **1st annual Cybersecurity, Education, and Research Conference of the Commonwealth and Coastal VA**, held at the College of William and Mary. Lauren and Dr. Smith used resources like the **SMART Lab** to investigate the Twittersverse relating to the mass shootings of Robb Elementary School and the Buffalo shooting of 2022.



## Internal Funding Opportunities

**URSCI Mini-Grant Program** The Undergraduate Research, Scholarship, and Creative Inquiry (URSCI) mini-grant initiative is designed to enhance the course experience through the purchase of instructional supplies/materials associated with infusing URSCI into courses—which also enhance career readiness skills. Applications will be accepted **on a rolling basis until January 13, 2023**. You can download the application at the Research & Creative Scholarship website: <https://www.radford.edu/content/research-creative-scholarship/home/faculty-resources.html>

**SEED Grant Program** SPGM would like to remind all faculty who are interested in internal funding to be sure to check out our SEED Grant Program. We are accepting applications from September 15 through April 15, 2023. Please visit our website for more info: <https://www.radford.edu/content/sponsored-programs/home/internal-funding.html>

## Research Resources

Carilion Clinic is accepting applications to its **Research Acceleration Program (RAP)**. The program is open to all Carilion Clinic employees seeking funds for clinical, biomedical, or behavioral research projects. In keeping with its Vision 2025 Research and Innovation Strategy, applicants are encouraged to pursue research opportunities that deepen its academic partnership with Radford University Carilion (RUC). You can find detailed information at the Carilion Clinic RAP website, linked [here](#). The deadline for applications is 5pm on December 5.

Radford University offers a week-long **Summer Institute in Research and Creativity** each May, in which faculty explore resources to support their research, plan and gain tools for completing summer research projects, hear about publishing possibilities, and gain the support of their colleagues. Topics change annually—if you have specific interests, feel free to share them with Heather Keith, Executive Director of Faculty Development ([hkeith1@radford.edu](mailto:hkeith1@radford.edu)).

## RCS Survey Highlights

In Spring 2022, we conducted a faculty Research & Creative Scholarship Survey. Over the course of our newsletters this year, we will share data from the survey. In this issue, we look at the results when we asked faculty to respond to the question: *Please finish this sentence: “In my discipline, research and creative scholarship is defined as…”* The word cloud below visually shares the results:



Of the 101 colleagues who responded to this question, they focused primarily on the products of their work (55%) and secondarily on the activity of inquiry, discovery, and creativity (23%). These responses offer a window into our collective thinking.

## Did you know...

The Research & Creative Scholarship team has been collecting data to capture the research interests and special projects of faculty from colleges and departments across the university. We are putting this data together in an effort to make faculty aware of the work being done by their university peers, as well as facilitate potential research and creative collaborations across disciplines. If you would like to share your research focus and current projects for this purpose, please email Rhonda Hawley at [rhawley@radford.edu](mailto:rhawley@radford.edu).

## Welcome Katie Davis to Sponsored Programs!

Sponsored Programs and Grants Management is pleased to announce the addition of our newest employee. Katie Davis joined our office on November 10 and will be managing grants for the College of Education and Human Development. Katie is no stranger to the Radford University community. She previously served for over 8 years as an Administrative Assistant in the Department of Music, where she was also the recipient of the Presidential Service Award for 2022. Katie is looking forward to working with faculty and staff on supporting their grant accounting and reporting. She can be reached at [cda-vis222@radford.edu](mailto:cda-vis222@radford.edu) and at 540-831-7762. Please join us in welcoming Katie to SPGM!

## Upcoming Events



**Research & Creative Scholarship Connections** The next faculty meet-up in our Research & Creative Scholarship Connections series is scheduled for February 2023. The focus will be international research, and collaborations and opportunities at Radford University. Ismael Betancourt, Chief Global Officer & Assistant Provost for Global Education and Engagement, will lead the event. Keep an eye out for details!

**Weekly Writing Jams** Need a change of location to jump-start the writing of your book manuscript, grant proposal, poetry, or journal article? Faculty Development and McConnell Library are pleased to host weekly "Writing Jams" from **10:00am-12:00pm** on **Fridays** in the McConnell Lounge (to the left of the main lobby, with the vending machines). Writing Jams offer a quiet place to write in the presence of other dedicated writers. Bring your laptops or other writing materials. Please contact Heather Keith at [hkeith1@radford.edu](mailto:hkeith1@radford.edu) or Laura Jacobsen at [ljacobsen@radford.edu](mailto:ljacobsen@radford.edu).

**Carilion Clinic TriNetX Training** Carilion offers instructor led, focused training for an in-depth, step-by-step learning experience building patient cohorts and delving into Analytics. Dee Myers will facilitate sessions on the following dates:

- November 17, 2022, 1:30--3:30pm
- December 14, 2022, 9:30--11:30am
- March 24, 2023, 1:30—3:30pm
- April 7, 2023, 9:30—11:30am
- April 20, 2023, 1:30—3:30pm
- May 3, 2023, 9:30—11:30am
- May 18, 2023, 1:30—3:30pm

Please contact [HART@carilionclinic.org](mailto:HART@carilionclinic.org) with the subject 'TriNetX Training' for training outside of the scheduled sessions.

For a full listing of upcoming research presentations and events, please visit Radford's new Events Calendar:

<https://calendar.radford.edu/all/categories/Academics>

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Research and Creative Scholarship