

**Report to the Radford University Faculty Senate on the  
Scholar Citizen Quality Enhancement Plan: “Create, Connect, Contribute”**

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## **Objectives of This Report**

1. To provide an overview of the Scholar-Citizen concepts as they have been developed thus far including a working definition of Scholar-Citizenship at RU, a draft set of desired learning outcomes, possible links to existing courses and co-curricular programs, and a proposed means for gaining and acting upon faculty feedback.
2. To begin an informed dialogue about the Scholar-Citizen QEP at RU and about the impact this initiative could or should have on students, faculty, and staff.
3. To lay the foundation for follow-up meetings, the first scheduled for Sept 22, where Senators will be able to meet in a small group setting with members of the Writing Team to ask questions; register concerns; and offer ideas, solutions, and/or resources.

## **The Quality Enhancement Plan**

As a member institution of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC <<http://sacscoc.org>>), Radford University is committed to the requirements applied by the Commission on Colleges as described in the Principles of Accreditation 2010 <<http://sacscoc.org/pdf/2010principlesofaccreditation.pdf>>. SACSCOC requires institutions to submit a QEP as part of the materials necessary for reaffirmation of accreditation.

The Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP), submitted four to six weeks in advance of the on-site review by the Commission, is a document developed by the institution that (1) includes a process identifying key issues emerging from institutional assessment, (2) focuses on learning outcomes and/or the environment supporting student learning and accomplishing the mission of the institution, (3) demonstrates institutional capability for the initiation, implementation, and completion of the QEP, (4) includes broad-based involvement of institutional constituencies in the development and proposed implementation of the QEP, and (5) identifies goals and a plan to assess their achievement. (SACSCOC, Principles of Accreditation 11)

## **Development of RU's Scholar-Citizen Quality Enhancement Plan**

The Scholar-Citizen initiative evolved out of a broad university dialogue that began during the summer and fall of 2010 with the appointment of a QEP Leadership Team. This leadership team, made up of faculty and administrators, oversaw the theme selection process which took place over a six-month period in late fall 2010 and early spring 2011, involved multiple campus forums, and concluded with a recommendation to President Kyle and her Cabinet that adoption of the Scholar-Citizen best fit Radford's mission, strategic plan, and current culture. In May 2011, the QEP Writing Team (QEP-WT) was constituted and charged with developing and submitting a 5-year Scholar-Citizen QEP.

A draft of the QEP describing the student learning outcomes, actions to be implemented, an assessment plan, and allocation of resources is currently in development and requires broad-based input from faculty, students, administrators, and staff. Because the QEP addresses enhancing student learning and the environment supporting student learning, faculty play a primary and critical role in the QEP's development. To this end, the Writing Team is pursuing the following opportunities for faculty involvement and professional development:

1. Meeting with the Faculty Senate on a regular basis as a means of disseminating drafts and receiving feedback.
2. Designing a website with current drafts, research, and meeting minutes and with the capability for receiving comments from the campus community. In the meantime, a D2L site has been established for T&R and A&P faculty that contains meeting minutes, research and resources, as well as copies of reports and draft documents.
3. Constituting an Advisory Group made up of individuals, primarily faculty, who have extensive experience and knowledge about the ideas of Scholar-Citizenship and in the content, processes, and methodologies that will be developed as part of the QEP. Those interested in serving in this capacity, please contact Dr. Erin L. Webster Garrett ([ewebster2@radford.edu](mailto:ewebster2@radford.edu); 831-52034) or Mr. Timothy Filbert ([tfilbert@radford.edu](mailto:tfilbert@radford.edu), 831-6529).
4. Working with the Provost to sponsor attendance of up to two faculty members at the October AACU working conference, “Educating for Personal And Social Responsibility: A Twenty-First Century Imperative” (Oct. 13-15, 2011, Westin Long Beach, CA). Those interested in attending should send a letter of interest to the interim Director via email <[ewebster2@radford.edu](mailto:ewebster2@radford.edu)> that comments on their desired outcomes for the conference and how and why these outcomes might be important to the QEP. The deadline for letters of interest is Thursday, 22 September, by 5 p.m.

## **Scholar-Citizen, a Working Definition**

Radford University Scholar-Citizenship is defined as active or scholarly participation in the complex, multicultural, and ever-changing world by connecting, engaging, and applying academic skills and disciplinary knowledge to the challenges facing local, national, and global communities.

The Scholar-Citizen initiative reflects Radford’s “commitment to the development of mature, responsible, well-educated citizens” and embraces Radford’s identity as an institution that “develops students’ creative and critical thinking skills, teaches students to analyze problems and implement solutions, helps students discover their leadership styles, and fosters their growth as leaders” (*7-17 Mission Statement: Forging a Bold Future*). In 2009, these ideals were identified as central values of the RU community with the development and implementation of a new general education curriculum, the Core Curriculum, the mission of which is to produce graduates who “possess a love of learning and a range of intellectual skills that enable them to meet the challenges and realize the promise of living in a complex, multicultural, and ever-changing world” (*Core Mission*).

The Scholar-Citizen QEP is a transformative opportunity for students to meaningfully synthesize connections between academic learning and their own experiences in order to deepen their understanding of fields of study and to broaden their own points of view. A strong theoretical underpinning for the Scholar-Citizen QEP theme flows from contemporary research on the development of individual and group *deliberative virtues*. “Deliberative virtue” is a general term that designates skills, habits, and character traits that promote informed, responsible deliberation and decision-making. The QEP seeks to better equip RU students with group deliberative virtues by integrating critical thinking, ethical reasoning, and civic engagement throughout their Radford experience.

The Core Curriculum provides an important intellectual foundation for the QEP. The QEP would advance the central ideals of the current Core Curriculum by supporting and developing courses and co-curricular opportunities that call upon students to apply in the context of real-world issues the skills developed in the Core sequence. These opportunities might occur in specially

designated courses within a student's program of study, beginning with specially tagged University and College Core A courses in ethical reasoning, deliberative communication, and national and international perspectives and perhaps concluding with a capstone course in the student's major his or her senior year. In addition to these classroom-based experiences, the Scholar-Citizen objective could be supported by enhanced opportunities for community-based research, service learning, and co-curricular experiences such as the Alternative Spring Break program, internships, and study abroad.

While not every RU student would opt to follow the Scholar-Citizen sequence throughout his or her academic life, the QEP seeks to promote a broad campus culture that fosters our sense of how we can live our lives in ways that best contribute to the world around us. Each RU student would be exposed to the ideals of the QEP through the Core Curriculum courses and, hopefully, courses in his or her major, and would additionally have multiple opportunities and venues for developing the skills, competencies, and dispositions associated with deliberative virtues and with Scholar-Citizenship.

## **Proposed Scholar-Citizen Learning Outcomes**

GOAL 1: Radford University students will demonstrate competency in complex problem solving.

Radford University students will be able to:

- a. analyze contemporary issues.
- b. solve problems in the context of contemporary issues.
- c. apply ethical reasoning to contemporary issues.

GOAL 2: Radford University students will be able to integrate learning across courses, over time, and between campus and community life.

Radford University students will be able to:

- a. evaluate changes in their learning over time in ways that reveal broadened perspectives.
- b. demonstrate a developing sense of ethics, values, and sense of social responsibility.

GOAL 3: Radford University students will demonstrate a commitment to civic engagement.

Radford University students will be able to:

- a. apply learning from others, self, and environment to develop informed perspectives on social issues.
- b. participate in public problem solving, community service or creation of scholarly or creative works in addressing contemporary social issues.

GOAL 4: Radford University Students will be able to communicate in ways that take into account other's perspectives.

Radford University students will be able to:

- a. apply deliberative communication strategies such as active listening, negotiation or consensus building, and communication across difference in addressing contemporary issues.
- b. practice civil discourse when working through controversy.