

Substitute Motion Recommending the Use of Benchmarking Measure for Critical Core Outcomes
Referred by the Faculty Senate Executive Council

Motion:

Old Radford University should use the CLA+, a nationally validated assessment tool that uses performance-based tasks, to compare RU students with students at other universities and to track student performance over time.

New The Academic Affairs Division of Radford University should implement a three year trial of the CLA+ as an assessment measure. It is recommended that a minimum of 400 Radford students participate annually. Further, each year results should be shared through reports to the Faculty Senate.

Rationale:

Radford University currently does not have a valid, reliable, widely accepted measure of critical learning outcomes that can be used to track our success in helping students improve on those outcomes over time or compare our students' learning success with that of students at similar universities. Adopting the CLA+ would enable us to accomplish both those goals. Using such a measure should allow us to better demonstrate the value we add to students while they are at RU, more effectively test alternative core curriculum pedagogy and models, provide external constituencies a measure of student performance they view as valid and reliable, and reduce the amount of time faculty spend on assessment. It would also be invaluable in meeting the accreditation requirements for SACS and other accrediting bodies.

The assessment office would be responsible for developing procedures, administering the exam, analyzing results, and reporting those results back to the Curriculum Committee and other relevant parties.

Overview of the Council for Aid to Education (CAE) and the Collegiate Learning Assessment + (CLA+): Students today can no longer rely solely on mastery of discipline-based information. They need to be able to analyze and evaluate information, solve problems, and communicate effectively. Beyond just accumulating facts, they must be able to access, structure, and use information.

CAE has pioneered the use of performance-based tasks in the Collegiate Learning Assessment to evaluate critical thinking skills of college students. CLA+ measures critical thinking, problem solving, scientific and quantitative reasoning, writing, and the ability to critique and make arguments. Over 700 institutions—both in the United States and internationally—have used the CLA+ to benchmark value-added growth in student learning at their college or university compared to other institutions. With the CLA+, new student-level metrics provide