



Radford
UNIVERSITY

College of Humanities
and Behavioral Sciences

TO: Faculty and Staff in the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences
FR: Dr. Matthew J. Smith, Dean
DA: March 23, 2024
RE: Dean's Report

On November 3, the faculty, staff, and students of the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences hosted "**The CHBS Experience**," welcoming donors, colleagues, and prospective students to see Hemphill Hall fully activated. Colleagues from every program helped to showcase the amazing facility that we have called home since 2016 and promoted a better understanding of the range and depth of our academic and co-curricular programs. As dean, I was pleased to partner with University Advancement in making this "Day of Gratitude" event possible and grateful to our entire CHBS community for engaging with them and one another to extend our sense of pride.

I've also been grateful to see our community grow through the addition of our program in **African American Studies**. I am indebted to Dr. Fredrick Douglas Dixon for the work that he and his colleagues are doing to facilitate the growth of this new minor, support research initiatives through the Black Studies Center, and promote community through the RCATs initiative.

I'm also so pleased to see the **Center for Archives and Digital History** come into its own. The vision put forward by Dr. Sharon Roger Hepburn and her colleagues offers students a hands-on opportunity to learn history by reclaiming, preserving, and disseminating it. My thanks to Dr. Riane Bolin, Dr. Rachel Santos, and Dr. Roberto Santos for their partnership in redefining space within Hemphill Hall to facilitate a learning laboratory for students.

Of course, we also see previously introduced programs continue to flourish across the College and beyond. The **Wicked Initiative** started three years ago with a handful of colleagues teaching less than one hundred students; this fall the Wicked Festival, once again capably shepherded by Dr. Paige Tan, featured 15 colleagues from across the university teaching nearly 500 students. Moreover, Institutional Research has shown that students who have participated in a Wicked Problems course are 5.7% more likely to be retained than their peers who did not. Last fall, Dr. Tay Keong Tan took a group of these Wicked students to present before the United Nations' Principles for Responsible Management Education conference in Lisbon, Portugal, where they were hailed with recognition by an international audience.

But while there has been much to celebrate this year, there has also been unprecedented loss. Our community continues to heal in the wake of the passing of Dr. Robert Williams, Dr. Kevin West Bowers, Dr. Bob Reece, and two undergraduate students. Our College has been enriched by their

contributions to our academic and personal lives, and their impact will continue to reverberate well into the future.

In reflecting on the last year in greater detail, I wanted to share with you the following tasks that I have performed as dean:

Community Building Initiatives

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

- Raised a third year of funding for the Student Travel and Research Support (STARS) grants with the help of our partners in University Advancement, including Ms. Carolyn Clayton. In all, STARS has raised nearly \$50,000 to support students since its inception.
- Expanded a program to introduce individual members of the CHBS Advisory Board to individual faculty members in order to connect them to students in their courses (now up to 32 participating board members and 28 collaborating faculty)
- Provided guidance to the new Chair in ENGL/FORL
- Continued to endorse the work of the Honors and Awards Committee in awarding seed grants and honors for Distinguished Teaching, Research, and Service Awards
- Supported the faculty in Psychology as they continued with the work of discontinuing the PsyD program and executing a teach-out plan for the students currently enrolled
- Advocated for CHBS participation in the university plans for a common read in Fall 2023 using *How to be Perfect* across the curriculum

Academic and Resource Initiatives

The following academic initiatives helped move our programs forward:

- Encouraged faculty in the Department of English and the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures in proposing a new School of Writing, Language, and Literature (currently pending SCHEV approval)
- Led conversations with faculty, staff, and students across the university to welcome the Appalachian Studies minor home to CHBS in a new “APST 2.0” program
- Collaborated with President Danilowicz, superintendents from five local school districts and our chairs in opening the development of an Academic Year Governor’s School in the Arts and Humanities at Radford University



Dean Smith gathers with students in the CHBS Ambassadors program welcoming families during Parents' Weekend.

- Worked with Virginia Tech Dean Laura Belmonte and CHBS chairs to continue dialogues about forming VT-RU relationships for potential 3+2, 4+1, and 4+2 programs for graduate admission
- Supported efforts to further expand the services of the Social Media And Research Technology (SMART) Lab, notably with a government earmark proposal authored by Dr. John Brummette
- Led college's effort to identify strategies for "Faculty Redeployment" with five faculty programs in the fall, including the pilot of a Living and Learning Community in Criminal Justice headed by Dr. Stephen Owen

In addition, I brought together stakeholders to address these resource-related matters:

- Resourced \$10,000 in support for CHBS grants to individual faculty to underwrite several scholarly projects
- Conferred with Dr. Carter Turner, Senior Director of University Advancement, to secure a new endowed scholarship for the College by Drew and Nicole Robinson
- Advocated for resources like faculty lines, especially those vacated by retirements and resignations
- Conducted conversations to examine the viability of the minor in Peace Studies and offerings in Arabic and Russian

Searches

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

- Criminal Justice: Administrative Assistant (Amanda Dean)
- Communication: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor (pending)
- English: Administrative Assistant (Andrea Simpkins)
- English: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor (Dr. Michael Marberry)
- English: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor (pending)
- English: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor (pending)
- History: Assistant Professor in Virginia History (Dr. Anthony Guidone)
- Psychology: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in I/O Psychology (pending)
- Psychology: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in Social/Experimental (pending)
- Psychology: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor for School Psychology (pending)
- Sociology: Tenure-Track Asst. Prof./Director of AAST (Dr. Fredrick Douglas Dixon)
- Sociology: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor (pending)
- Sociology: Full-Time Temporary Assistant Professor (pending)

I have also collaborated on processes for selecting internal leadership positions involving the directorship of the Governor's School (Dr. Tay Keong Tan) and the Director of Women's and Gender Studies (pending). Beyond our college, I have served as a member of the following university-level searches:

- Vice President of Enrollment Management and Strategic Communications, Chair (Dr. Danette Gomez Beanne)
- University Registrar, Chair (Katy Piper)

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:

- 84 Faculty Annual Evaluations
- 27 reappointment reviews for contingent faculty
- 7 chair/director reviews
- 7 endorsements for Research Faculty status
- 6 tenure and/or promotion recommendations
- 5 emeriti recommendations
- 5 recommendations for Faculty Professional Development Leave
- 4 staff annual reviews



ESPN's Marty Smith is recognized with the CHBS Distinguished Alumni Award at a ceremony hosted by Dean Smith during Homecoming.

Administrative Duties

In addition to those vital personnel matters, I have collaborated with stakeholders to manage the following fiduciary, academic, and managerial duties:

Fiduciary Responsibilities:

- Consult with Ms. Stacey Griffin, Executive Secretary, to manage the College's \$10 million budget
- Confer with the chairs and director to develop Equipment Trust Fund requests
- Approve all spending requests across the College through Chrome River
- Build budget models of +1% and -3% in conjunction with internal stakeholders

Academic Responsibilities:

- Interface with Ms. Kristina Contreras, CHBS Lead Advisor in the Highlander Success Center, to review all academic petitions and suspension appeals
- Review all study away/abroad proposals
- Confer with the Director of the Governor's School and the Dean of the College of Visual and Performing Arts in managing Governor's School policies, personnel, and budgets, which included identifying a new administrative structure this year
- Approve the work of the CHBS Curriculum Committee, including all course revisions and program approvals in the college that flow through Curriculum

Managerial Responsibilities:

- Draft agendas for and preside over weekly meetings of the CHBS Leadership Team
- Meet with individual chairs and directors on a monthly and ad hoc basis to address matters in the departments and school (e.g., personnel issues, resource requests, schedules)
- Host semi-annual meetings of our 30-member CHBS Advisory Board and quarterly meetings of its executive officers and committees
- Promote the CHBS Advisory Board's Distinguished Alumni Awards and preside over its Homecoming ceremony
- Chair weekly staff meetings for Dean's Office for internal coordination
- Supervise Mrs. Kerie Hayes, the Assistant to the Dean, in planning the College's major events and managing its 144,000 square foot facility
- Coordinate with Dr. Kim Gainer, the Associate Dean, to manage projects, ongoing and ad hoc, including the College Ambassadors program and the Adjunct Faculty Handbook

University Committee Membership

As dean, I have represented the college on four standing university-wide leadership bodies:

- President's Leadership Council
- Academic Affairs Leadership Team (AALT)
- Dean's Council
- Academic Program Review and Enhancement Committee (APREC)

And I served on two additional committees in the past year:

- Civic Discourse and Freedom of Expression Committee, which developed programming on the Gaza crisis, among others, for the campus community
- Capital Campaign Steering Committee

Representing the College

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

- Board of Visitors meetings
- Highlander Days
- Open Houses
- Day of Thanks celebration
- Media and Society Roundtable
- Poli Sci Days
- Quest
- ROTC ceremonies
- State of the University address
- Veteran's Day ceremony
- Volunteer Summit
- Wicked Festival

Teaching

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

- Taught CINE 310 Genres: Form, Content, and Culture (3 credits) to 9 undergraduate students in Fall 2023
- Guest lectured on the topic of ethnography in COMS 605: Applied Communication Research for Mr. Michael Meindl in Spring 2024
- Delivered a guest lecture via Zoom to students at the University of Lynchburg
- Offered communication training to 50 Advocacy Day student representatives prior to their visit to Richmond and then journeyed to Richmond with them at the request of the Office of the President and VP for Student Affairs, December-January



The ROTC students and officers challenge Dean Smith to see how many chin-ups he can perform as they recruit at one of the fall Open House events.

Scholarship

A few projects came to fruition over the course of this academic year, including:

- Published the third edition of *The Power of Comics and Graphic Novels: Culture, Form and Context* with Bloomsbury and co-authored with Dr. Randy Duncan and Paul Levitz
- Edited and published four additional volumes in the Routledge Advances in Comics Series along with co-editor Dr. Christy Knopf of SUNY Cortland

In addition to those, I am still working on the following:

- Co-editing the Routledge Advances in Comics Series, with another three volumes in production
- Revising “Crisis Management: Arrowverse Crossovers as Media Consumption Strategy,” co-authored with Trevor Smith, for publication in *Small Screen Supers: Essays on Superhero Television*
- Awaiting the publication of the completed manuscript for “Mojo Rising: Critiquing Mass Media through Animation and Comics” with Michael Meindl and Matthew Turner in a chapter for the forthcoming *Futures of Cartoons Past: The Cultural Politics of X-Men: The Animated Series*
- Continuing co-curating duties on “Marvel: Universe of Super Heroes”; most recently at Discovery Place in Charlotte, North Carolina and about to open at Messe Basel in Basel, Switzerland; the exhibit has hosted more than 1,000,000 people since debuting in 2018.

Professional Service

I accomplished the following professional service projects this past year:

- Functioned as faculty mentor to one graduate students through the Comics Studies Society
- Served as an informal mentor to Dr. Lan Dong, Interim Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of Illinois Springfield

In all, it has been a productive year, and I have sincerely appreciated the opportunity to serve the College once again. Certainly, I am grateful to everyone who has demonstrated their support throughout this time.

Sincerely,



Matthew J. Smith, Ph.D.