

## **Realizing Inclusive Student Excellence (RISE) Executive Summary Radford University**

Radford University's next Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is Realizing Inclusive Student Excellence: Highlanders RISE Together. The RISE QEP grew out of concerns about racial and ethnic equity gaps along with low retention and graduation rates for all students and is closely related to the student success goal in Radford's Strategic Plan. Strategic plan strategy C for the Student Success Goal is to examine courses with high DFW (grade of D, failed or withdrawn) rates and to determine a strategy to improve course outcomes. Strategy D is to engage with nationally recognized experts in diversity, access, and equity literacy; and Strategy E is to institute an expectation of continuing pedagogy education for all faculty.

Examination of 100- and 200-level required courses and their success rates were disaggregated by race. The results of the equity gap analyses point to durable racial inequities in students' experiences in required 100- and 200-level courses. Namely, White students have an advantage in successful completion of these required 100- and 200-level courses and Black students have the worst outcomes.

The seed of the RISE program was the success of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute-funded (HHMI) Inclusive Excellence REALISE (REALising Inclusive Science Excellence) grant. REALISE is a program including faculty development and student support to create inclusive academic environments in biology, chemistry and physics. The RISE QEP is an opportunity to scale up the inclusive pedagogy training for faculty in order to increase student success and sense of belonging across the university. Implementation of inclusive teaching practices and active learning along with an increase in students' sense of belonging will help to close equity gaps in student performance and increase all students' performance.

Instructors of 100- and 200-level required courses will be targeted for invitation to participate in the RISE Faculty Institute (FI). Each year, 20 full-time faculty will participate in the year-long FI. The Institute includes a semester and summer of workshops and modules followed by a semester implementing what they have learned in a redesigned course and engaging in a community of practice (CoP). The CoP continues after the formal end of the Institute as a source of support and continued professional development for faculty members. In addition to the classroom elements of the plan and based on the research and student input to the plan, we have designed RISE Community Action Teams (R-CATs) to address sense of belonging outside the classroom. These groups will provide activities and events based in each College with the goal of creating a greater sense of campus community.

Radford has identified one student success outcome: 1) Undergraduate students who take the RISE- redesigned 100- and 200-level required courses will show significant increases in course success; and two student development outcomes A) Students in RISE Faculty Fellows courses will exhibit evidence of behavioral and affective academic belonging and B) Students will exhibit behavioral campus belonging.

To achieve these goals, Radford University has broad-based support of its stakeholders, allocation of sufficient resources, and a well-designed assessment plan to ensure continuous improvement. Radford has also identified an organizational structure to manage the plan with a QEP Program Director, QEP Assessment Director, Advisory Committee, and a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Instructional Designer. The Program and Assessment Director positions will report to the Office of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement (IEQI) director, who reports to the President, demonstrating the importance of these activities to Radford University. For more information about Radford's QEP, contact Dr. Jessica Stowell, Director of Institutional Effectiveness and Quality Improvement at [jstowell1@radford.edu](mailto:jstowell1@radford.edu).