

TO: Faculty Awards Committee: Anna Lee Stewart Award  
Radford University Foundation

I have been an educator, in one way or another, my entire adult life. As both of my parents were educators, I always thought that it was normal to grow up and become a teacher. My father was first a junior high science teacher, and then a Professor of Education here at Radford University. My mother was an elementary school teacher, and later an Associate Professor of Accounting at New River Community College. I am delighted that I was able to follow in my parents' footsteps and work in the field of education, with the goal of transforming lives and bettering the knowledge and advancement of others.

I watched my mother play tag with her seventh graders and share stories of their escapades in class. Later in her career, I saw her spend many late nights meticulously grading college accounting papers and providing feedback on each one so they knew exactly why they received the grade they did. I witnessed the care and affection she showed to each of her students. I observed her as she looked for the good in every one of them, even at times when it was difficult to see.

All of this made a huge impact on me. While I do not feel I could ever reach the same levels of excellence as my mother, I always strive to be the same kind of teacher and offer support to my students and those whom I assist in my current position. I believe every faculty, staff, and student deserves respect and fair treatment. I believe there are some who need additional instruction and consideration of my time. I believe that if someone is going through a difficult time that they need and deserve some compassion and care. I want each person to leave my classroom or office with more knowledge than when they arrived, and know that they can always reach out to me for further assistance and support.

I think my philosophy has grown, not only by observing my mom, but also through my background in teaching special needs students in grades 1-8. I developed a student-centered philosophy and was committed to giving students the tools they needed to succeed. I saw a number of students struggle in "regular" classrooms while wanting to complete the work correctly; so much so, that they would sometimes cry to and with me over a concept they just could not grasp. When I watched their struggles and saw some teachers who, truthfully, did not want to be bothered, my heart broke. I decided I never wanted to be one of "those" teachers.

In 2012, I left my position of thirteen years as Associate Professor of IT at New River Community College so that I could care for that special mother of mine. Her health had declined and she could no longer take care of herself. Thus, I left my position to devote my time to her. After she passed away, I re-entered the work force.

I was first hired as a Blackboard (LMS) administrator. I helped launch Blackboard as a new LMS system with American National University. I developed templates and added instructor materials for over 500 course offerings and approximately 1,500 sections of face-to-face courses that year. I was also the primary support and trainer for Blackboard at ANU for the year I was with them. Since the 33 campuses were located in six states, I had to develop and deliver web training and develop instructor training articles. That experience, plus my teaching experience in IT, paved the way for my current job responsibilities.

In May 2015, I was privileged to join Radford University as an IT Trainer. Once here, I began learning the aspects of the D2L LMS and am now one of the backup administrators for the system. One of my major responsibilities is to assist instructors and students with D2L issues they may have. I work with instructors to develop their courses and suggest ways they can accomplish their goals in an activity, quiz, or course. I assist them in setting up features in their courses that may be new to them, such as groups, group discussions, and rubrics for grading. As part of my administrative role in D2L, I copy course material to 70+ sections of UNIV 100, to ensure consistency and to save the students the cost of a textbook. I was involved in setting up

our Continuing Education site and helped convert courses from our main instance to the new CE instance. I now am responsible for adding users and course shells to that instance, troubleshooting any issues, and doing administrative maintenance of it. Over the past year, I was also involved of establishing the new D2L instance with the IMPACT program, and assisted with the setup of that D2L instance.

Currently, I am involved in the merger of JCHS, and have assisted in the setup and training of Office 365 groups that they use for communication, and am working with the JCHS staff and faculty in transitioning courses from Blackboard to D2L. I am part of the team setting up training for their faculty in D2L, Windows 10 and Office 2016.

I am responsible for most of the training needs on campus related to Microsoft Office and Office 365. I hold scheduled sessions of classes throughout the year – to include teaching up to five classes during Our Turn – and provide one-on-one training and assistance to instructors and staff across the campus. For example, this spring, we are addressing the training needs for Facilities Management employees, in Windows 10, plus other training in the future for these employees.

Another aspect of my job involves assisting with the research and testing of new technologies delivered to the campus. We conduct testing to ensure that when the technology is rolled out to the campus, it goes as smoothly as possible. I am also one of the trainers to write knowledge base articles for faculty, staff, and students.

In April of 2016, I added the role of IT support person for the Davis College of Business and Economics to my list of responsibilities. In this role, I assist instructors with their D2L needs and issues, and am responsible for troubleshooting classroom and office computer issues for all faculty and all offices. I have been a liaison between DCOBE administration and our other departments for computer problems and issues in Kyle Hall. In this way, I can quickly address the issues and, many times, correct the problem. If I cannot correct it, I assign it to the correct group in a timely manner. I assist faculty and staff with any IT needs they may have, whether it is a technology failure or just assistance to set up the classroom and podium computer, in a way the instructor can do his/her job in the most efficient, easiest way, so they can concentrate on instruction. I have worked over the past year with the administration in DCOBE to plan and upgrade some existing technologies, coordinate meetings and assist with addressing concerns during the planning of these upgrades and updates. I have been active in assisting our new dean as a technology advisor with purchases of new equipment, and becoming familiar with programs here at Radford U. I attend college meetings, in order to assist with the technology and to give any technology updates to the faculty and staff.

Lastly, I am fortunate enough to be able to teach University 100 classes for our New Student Programs. Teaching UNIV 100 has been a very enjoyable experience for me. It has allowed me to continue to teach the students while here at RU, but it has also taught me much about this campus and the services we offer.

My philosophy of ensuring the best instruction and accessibility to my students has carried over into my more technical role. I help instructors outside 8-5 working hours, if possible, since I know many do instructional planning on the weekend. I assist them with tasks because I want them to be successful and comfortable with the technology they are using. The more successful they feel, the better job they will do in the classroom, office, or other areas and will be able to be more innovative and efficient in their roles. The more I assist instructors, the more I assist the students.

I am so thankful to be part of the Radford University experience. I have grown in so many ways, and know I will continue to grow in knowledge, in spirit, and in friendships being forged. I am truly humbled to have been nominated for this award.