

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 25, 2022
RE: Dean's Report

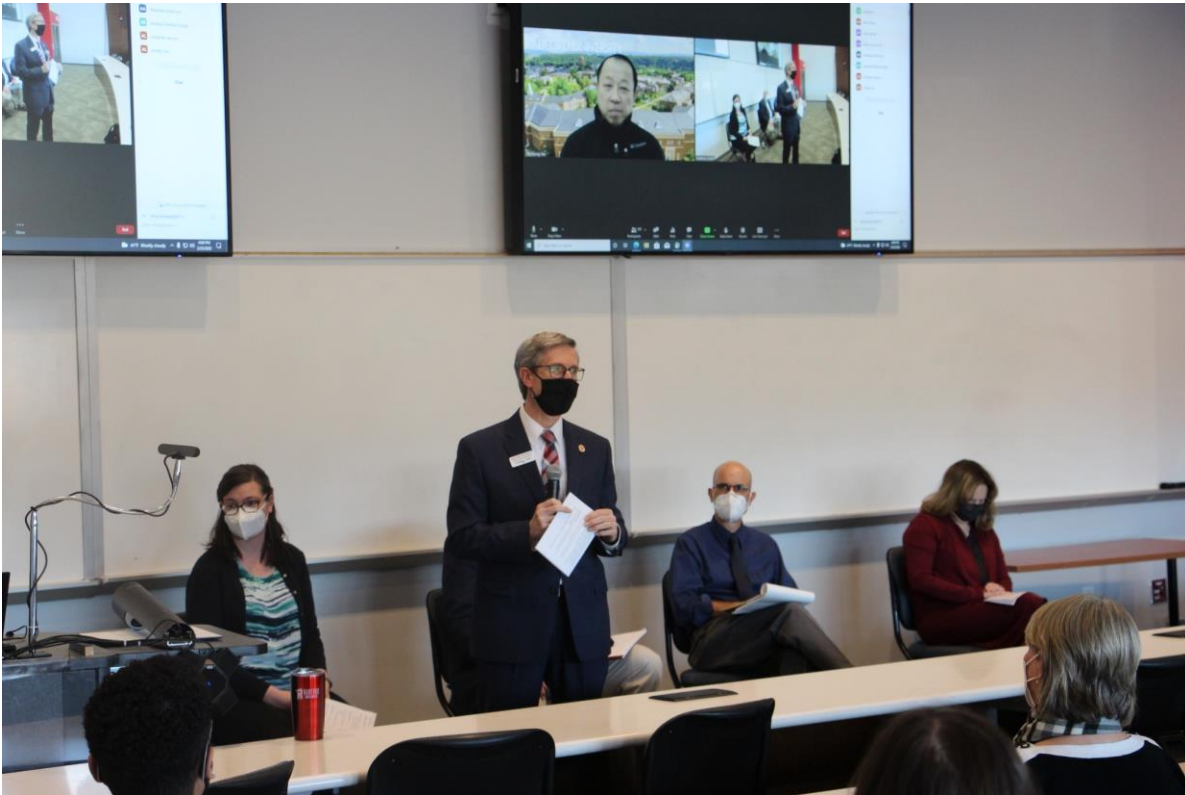
My tenure as Interim Dean began in the spring of 2018 and continued until I was appointed Dean of the College on February 25, 2020, following a national search. During my interview, I spoke about three pillars upon which my tenure as Dean would be built: a prioritization of students and their educational needs, a desire to recognize people for their contributions, and an expectation of ownership for one's larger responsibilities within one's role. Two years on, I believe those pillars are evident in the work cited below.

One of the projects that I think best illustrates the direction in which our College is moving is the **Student Travel and Research Support (STARS)** initiative. Thanks to the support of our alumni and friends, we have raised over \$16,000 to support student travel, and faculty guided more than 30 students to scholarly events held from Atlanta to Hawai'i! We are already beginning to make appeals to raise more money to support student research heading into our next academic year.

Community Building Initiatives

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

- Convened a seminar series to discuss *Strategies for Recruiting Students to the Humanities* that welcomed guests from CITL, Enrollment Management, and Career and Talent Development
- Arranged for a "Townhall on Ukraine" within 36 hours of the Russian attacks that featured contributions from Drs. Oyos, Tan, Walton, and Yankle, and Mr. Martin
- Expanded a program to connect individual members of the CHBS Advisory Board to individual faculty members in order to connect them to students in their courses (now up to 16 participating board members and 16 collaborating faculty)
- Provided guidance to the new School Director, a new Chair, and three new interim chairs
- Visited with each academic program in spring
- Continued to endorse the work of the CHBS Mentoring Group and the Honors and Awards Committee



Nearly 50 people gathered in HH 1016 and another 147 joined in online as faculty from across CHBS addressed the invasion of Ukraine by Russian forces in a townhall forum.

We also took steps to promote community by refashioning spaces within Hemphill Hall, including these initiatives:

- Dedicated the Endowment Fund Wall (across from Starbucks) to recognize donors, inform students of scholarship opportunities, and encourage future donations
- Supported the establishment of “The Work Place” in cooperation with Industrial-Organizational Psychology faculty and the Department of Psychology
- Assisted Dr. Paul Thomas in locating the newly launched Center for Humanities and Interdisciplinary Research on the fourth floor
- Welcomed Public Radio WVRU to new studios and offices in Hemphill Hall and included them in events like Open Houses and Highlander Days
- Moved the offices of the ROTC cadre from Russell Hall to the first floor of Hemphill Hall in order to bring all CHBS programs under one roof

Academic and Resource Initiatives

Additionally, the following academic initiatives helped move our programs forward:

- Worked with faculty, chairs, and administration to establish a new administrative structure for FORL and ENGL
- Coordinated efforts to build a pipeline between majors in the Davis College of Business and Economics and PHIL 310 Professional Ethics for them to earn their upper-level writing intensive credit
- Collaborated with our Pre-Law faculty to coordinate the participation of 28 university departments in the proposal for the new interdisciplinary Legal Studies minor
- Advocated for the creation of a co-curricular Mock Trial Team supported by faculty in the Department of Criminal Justice
- Commissioned an external consultant to evaluate the proposal for an African-American Studies minor prepared by the Department of Sociology
- Approved external consultants to review a revised curriculum in Spanish instruction
- Supported a multidisciplinary effort to further expand the services of the Social Media And Research Technology (SMART) Lab
- Introduced graduate faculty in Criminal Justice and Communication to redefine GTA training opportunities
- Directed College leadership in revising schedules to adapt to pandemic protocols

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

- Reinvested \$95K in reclaimed FY2022 travel money into technology upgrades throughout Hemphill Hall
- Resourced \$20,000 for CHBS grants to individual faculty to underwrite 14 scholarly projects, including one that will investigate food insecurity on campus
- Conferred with the Office of Advancement—especially our gifts officer, Dr. Carter Turner—to launch strategies for College fund-raising goals and priorities that have brought in \$220,000 in annual support for the College
- Advocated for resources like faculty lines, especially those vacated through retirements and resignations
- Worked to create a social media intern position within the Dean’s Office to enhance communication to alumni and prospective students



With the support of the Department of Criminal Justice, the co-curricular Mock Trial Team launched under the coaching efforts of Mr. Don Martin.

Searches

In my view, the single most important administrative task we undertake is the hiring of colleagues, as these decisions impact our students for years to come. As such, time collaborating with departments on searches is time well spent, including the following searches conducted within the College since my last report:

- Criminal Justice: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in diversity (pending)
- Criminal Justice: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in methods (pending)
- Political Science: Chair (Dr. Chapman Rackaway)
- Political Science: Full-Time Temporary Instructor (Mr. Johannes Grow)
- Psychology: Full-Time Temporary Assistant Professor (Dr. Erin Kerfoot)
- Psychology: Full-Time Temporary Assistant Professor (Dr. Michael Love)
- Psychology: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor in experimental (Dr. Matthew Eckard)
- Psychology: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor for PsyD (pending)
- Psychology: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor for PsyD (pending)
- Psychology: Tenure-Track Assistant Professor for RUC (pending)
- School of Communication: Director (Dr. Jennifer Walton)
- School of Communication: Special Purpose Faculty (Mr. Christopher Hull)



Industrial-Organizational Psychology faculty and students gathered to celebrate the opening of "The Work Place" in Hemphill Hall.

We've also collaborated on processes for selecting internal leadership positions in the Criminal Justice and Philosophy and Religious Studies programs. Beyond our college, I have served as a member of the following university-level searches:

- Associate Vice President for University Relations (Becky Brackin)
- Assistant Provost for Budget and Academic Operations (Tim Channell)
- Dean of the Artis College of Science and Technology (pending)

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:

- 115 Faculty Annual Evaluations
- 45 reappointment reviews for contingent faculty
- 14 tenure and/or promotion recommendations
- 10 chair/director reviews
- 5 recommendations for the Honors Faculty Fellows program

- 5 emeritus recommendations
- 3 recommendations for Faculty Professional Development Leave
- 3 staff annual reviews

Administrative Duties

In addition to those vital personnel matters, I've 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 \$11 million budget
- Confer with the chairs and director to develop Equipment Trust Fund requests
- Approve all spending requests across the College through Chrome River

Academic Responsibilities:

- Interface with Ms. Sarah Bradbury, CHBS Lead Advisor in the Academic Success Center, to review all academic petitions and suspension appeals
- Review all study away/abroad proposals, of which CHBS has the most in the university
- 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
- Approve the work of the CHBS Curriculum Committee, including all course revisions and program approvals in the college that flow through Curriculog



Adapting to pandemic protocols, we continued to welcome prospective students and their families to campus and recruit the next generation of Highlanders.

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 departmental and school matters (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 to improve internal coordination
- Supervise Ms. Kerie Benson, 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 four ad hoc committees in the past year:

- Capital Campaign Steering Committee
- Course Minimums and Faculty Workload Committee (appointed co-chair in August)
- Multidisciplinary Program Working Group
- SACS-COC Reaffirmation Academic Advisory Committee

Representing the College

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

- Appalachian School of Law Memo of Understanding Signing Ceremony
- Board of Visitors meetings
- Crossroads Antiracism
- Centers of Influence Visit, Fort Knox, KY
- Hemphill Hall dedication
- Highlander Days
- Highlander Con
- Open House events
- Partners in Excellence celebration
- Poli Sci Days
- Quest
- ROTC ceremonies
- Summer Research Celebration
- State of the University address
- Superhero Smackdown
- Taubman Museum collaboration
- Veteran's Day ceremony
- Volunteer Summit
- Wicked Festival

Teaching

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

- Taught COMS 439/539: Communication and Leadership (3 credits) to 13 undergraduate and 7 graduate students in Spring 2021
- Taught COMS 460 / ENGL 414: Graphic Storytelling (3 credits) to 13 undergraduate students in Fall 2021
- Offered communication training to the Advocacy Day student representatives prior to their visit to Richmond at the request of the Office of the President and VP for Student Affairs, December-January



Thanks to support from the CHBS Advisory Board, the Endowment Fund Wall now recognizes more than 30 scholarships that support students within the College.

At present, I am working on one additional instructional activity and planning another:

- Teaching COMS 439 /539 Communication and Leadership (3 credits) to 13 undergraduate and 3 graduate students in Spring 2022
- Planning a new topics course in “Communication and Philanthropy” with Vice President Wendy Lowery for delivery in Fall 2022

Scholarship

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

- Presented “Grassroots Comics in India: Activism through Diffusion of Innovations” along with my collaborator, Dr. Randy Duncan, at the Comics Studies Society Conference in August 2021 and then published a version of the same in *New Area Studies*, 2 (1)
- Reviewed a book proposal, *A New Gnosis: Comic Books, Comparative Mythology, and Depth Psychology*, for Palgrave Macmillan
- Edited two volumes in the Routledge Advances in Comics Series
- Appeared as the featured guest on *The Captioned Life* podcast on October 15, 2021

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

- Co-editing the Routledge Advances in Comics Series, with another five volumes in production
- Completing the manuscript for my twelfth book project, *The Power of Comics & Graphic Novels: Culture, Form, and Context (3rd edition)*, for Bloomsbury
- Revising “Pilgrimage to Hall H: Fan Agency at Comic-Con” a chapter for *Comics and Agency* with De Gruyter
- 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*

- Submitting a roundtable proposal, “Behind the Curtain: Curating Comics Exhibits” to the Comics Studies Society for consideration in their August 2022 conference
- Participating in ongoing discussions and planning of the grant-funded research group, “Storming the Con,” which anticipates a large-scale ethnography project at Comic-Con International in 2023
- Anticipating participation in a documentary film, *Life in the Comics*, by Dr. Robert Lemieux of McDaniel College, pending funding approval by the National Endowment for the Humanities
- Continuing co-curating duties on “Marvel: Universe of Super Heroes”; currently in Columbus, Ohio, the exhibit has hosted more than 900,000 people since debuting in 2018

Professional Service

I accomplished two major service projects this past year:

- Completed my tenure as President of the Comics Studies Society. The Society has more than 300 members internationally, and I was responsible for coordinating the business of this learned society, including chairing its Executive Board meetings, serving on the conference planning committee, overseeing recruitment efforts for a new interest group for academic librarians, and coordinating an agreement with Michigan State University to co-sponsor a conference tri-annually.
- Served as the external reviewer for the Communication Studies program at Longwood University, reviewing their programmatic report, visiting their campus in November, and producing a report for their dean.

In all, it’s been 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,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Matthew J. Smith". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Matthew J. Smith, Ph.D.



As part of the Centers of Influence visit at Fort Knox, KY, in summer 2021, Dean Smith rappelled from a 60-foot tower in order to experience the training our ROTC cadets undergo.