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Proposal for an Organizational Change

Institution

Radford University

Nature of the Proposed Change

Radford University requests permission to establish an Honors College to replace the current Honors Academy. The new Honors College would maintain the current organizational structure of being located within the Office of Academic Programs, which is a division of Academic Affairs.

Background

In 1921, The State Normal and Industrial College for Women at Radford first instituted an honors distinction for graduates based on their academic performance.¹ Evidence for honors as an actual part of the curriculum can be found as early as 1957-58, when two honors courses were introduced. The 1962-63 school year witnessed the opening of the first honors residence hall, but the Honors Program itself was not officially founded until May 15th, 1980.² The 2001-02 undergraduate catalog notes the name change from Honors Program to Honors Academy. With the new name came an admissions requirement – previously the program had been open to any interested student.

In 2012, Radford University formed an ad hoc Honors Transformation Committee that was charged with changing honors education at the institution. Following a detailed report from external consultant, Dr. Robert Spurrier, the committee recommended developing a structure aligned with national guidelines for honors colleges. Along with this structural shift was a recommendation to consider changing the name to one that is more easily recognizable and consistent with existing naming norms. This committee was quickly followed by the 2013 ad hoc Honors Implementation Committee, which formally charted most of the recent changes to the program.

Using the plan developed by the 2013 Honors Implementation Committee, the Honors Academy has witnessed dramatic changes in the curriculum, faculty involvement, and student body. Curricular changes include an honors prefix with five stand-alone honors courses, which helped institute a curricular identity beyond the disciplinary honors courses. Faculty involvement has deepened through the appointment of eight honors faculty fellows, who both teach and mentor honors students. Finally, the admissions process has become more competitive, which has intensified student engagement and commitment. Honors freshmen are now required to live in the honors residence (Floyd Hall) and all honors students are required to participate in honors-specific programming throughout the year. Given the breadth and depth of these changes, the profile of the Honors Academy is now consistent with national criteria for Honors Colleges.

Colleges of the university are composed of academic units: departments, schools and interdisciplinary programs, except for the College of Graduate and Professional Studies. The proposed Honors College would be similar to the College of Graduate Studies and Research in

¹ Lewis-Smith, L. G. (1970). *Radford College: A sentimental chronicle through its first half-century*. Radford College Alumnae Association, Radford, VA.

² *Celebrating the Century* (2010). Retrieved from www.radford.edu/centennial/thismonth/index.html.

that it does not have its own faculty or departments but rather serves an administrative function that supports students completing the honors curriculum.

Purpose of the Proposed Change

The purpose of the proposed organizational change is to fully develop honors education at Radford University by elevating the Honors Academy to establish an Honors College.

Mission

Radford University serves the Commonwealth of Virginia and the nation through a wide range of academic, cultural, human service, and research programs. First and foremost, the university emphasizes teaching and learning and the process of learning in its commitment to the development of mature, responsible, well-educated citizens. Radford University develops students' creative and critical thinking skills, teaches students to analyze problems and implement solutions, helps students discover their leadership styles, and fosters their growth as leaders. Toward these ends, the university is student-focused and promotes a sense of caring and of meaningful interaction among all members of the University community. Research is viewed as a vital corollary to the teaching and learning transaction as it sustains and enhances the ability to teach effectively. Radford University believes in the dynamics of change and has a strong commitment to continuous review, evaluation, and improvement in the curriculum and all aspects of the University, so as to meet the changing needs of society.

The proposed Honors College reflects the university's continual commitment to providing a wide range of academic programs that emphasize the process of learning. The proposed change promotes a sense of caring for students seeking the benefits of an honors-level education and increases meaningful interaction among students and faculty in both teaching and research.

Rationale for the Proposed Change

The proposed Honors College would provide increased clarity for several important external audiences. Such clarity is vital for a range of stakeholders, including new students (e.g., prospective students, their families, and high school guidance counselors), honors alumni (e.g., with graduate programs and employers), and university benefactors.

Prospective Students

Well-qualified high school seniors and transfer students typically receive admission offers from multiple institutions. As such, accurate institutional communication is necessary to successfully recruit these honors-level applicants. The establishment of an Honors College at Radford University will more clearly articulate the depth and breadth of offerings provided to honors students. In turn, prospective students who learn about the strength of the honors experience should have increased matriculation and retention rates.

Employers and Graduate Programs

As college students approach graduation they often need efficient strategies to communicate their qualifications to potential employers or graduate programs. The proposed Honors College would allow our honors alumni to efficiently convey the depth of their educational experiences in their resumes or cover letters. Although such short-hand can never fully describe the richness of honors classes and the honors community, it can provide a tipping point for competitive jobs or graduate programs that have large applicant pools.

University Benefactors

Foundations and private donors have the potential to make a meaningful impact on the lives of students through grants and gifts. As with other external audiences, the Honors College would provide potential benefactors a more accurate understanding of what their donations could support. That is, honors activities at Radford University include the full range of residential, curricular, travel, research, mentorship, and community experiences. With the ongoing financial challenges across higher education, making the donor communications clear and affirmative would be a notable strength of the proposed Honors College.

Academic Programs

Although the Honors Academy does not offer a degree, certificate, or minor, it does provide a 27-credit curriculum to achieve the *Highlander Scholar* distinction at graduation. The honors curriculum comprises a first-year experience course (HNRS 103), numerous honors courses in the Core Curriculum (e.g., HNRS 201 and HNRS 202), upper-level honors seminars (HNRS 310), and preparation for the honors capstone (HNRS 300). The Honors College would continue to offer this breadth of courses, which allows students from any major the opportunity for an honors education within the requirements of their chosen discipline.

Space

The current Honors Academy is located in a suite of offices in Floyd Hall, which is the honors residence. This location includes space for the director, associate director, administrative specialist, and student workers. In addition, the suite includes a small conference room that is used to meet with prospective students, to hold meetings of the Honors Faculty Fellows, and for some small honors seminars. The suite is located at the entrance of Floyd Hall, which houses nearly all honors freshmen and a cohort of upper-level honors students. Floyd Hall also includes a full classroom that is used almost exclusively for honors courses. No new space would be necessary to accommodate the proposed Honors College.

Resources

The Honors College budget and organizational structure would be identical to the current provisions for the Honors Academy. The honors budget was expanded in 2014 to meet the goals outlined by the 2013 Honors Implementation Committee. This budget accommodates the administrative salaries, stipends for the Honors Faculty Fellows, and experiences for honors students (both inside and outside of the honors courses). This budget is administered by the Honors Academy within the structure of the Office of Academic Programs and Academic Affairs.

Administration

The current organizational structure of the Honors Academy will remain the same in the proposed Honors College. The Honors Academy is currently led by a Director (full-time, 12-month) and Associate Director (half-time reassigned to honors administrative work and a summer stipend). The Director reports to the Assistant Provost for Academic Programs. The Director manages the honors budget, maintains connections with other campus offices, leads selection and coordination of the Honors Faculty Fellows, oversees the honors admissions process, and conducts honors assessments. The Associate Director coordinates honors programming, facilitates outreach activities, and assists with daily operations. Because these two

positions were fully developed and budgeted in conjunction with the 2013 Honors Implementation Committee, no new leadership resources are necessary.

The Administrative Specialist who reports to the director and provides logistical support for the current Honors Academy will provide logistical support for the proposed Honors College.

The work of the honors administration is supported by two graduate assistants and two undergraduate work-study positions. These student workers provide clerical, data entry, and correspondence support for the office. The graduate assistants are paid from the budget of the College of Graduate Studies and Research. The work-study positions are paid from the Office of Financial Aid. Each of the student-worker positions is assigned to the honors office on an annual basis. This arrangement would continue in the proposed Honors College.

Faculty

No faculty positions are permanently located in the Honors Academy. The Honors Academy currently includes eight Honors Faculty Fellows who would continue in the proposed Honors College. Honors Faculty Fellows are selected in a competitive application process and serve three-year terms. The role of the Honors Faculty Fellow is three-fold: teaching, advising, and community-building. Each Fellow agrees to teach at least one honors course per year. Second, each Fellow is assigned 20-25 honors students for honors advising. Honors advising does not replace primary academic advising in the student's major, but provides an opportunity to mentor honors students on achieving an exceptional program of study (e.g., undergraduate research, internships, nationally-competitive scholarships). Finally, each Fellow participates in honors community activities and takes a lead role on one event per year. The funds for the Honors Faculty Fellows were included in the honors budget starting in 2014 and would continue going forward.

In addition to the Honors Faculty Fellows, numerous faculty from across campus teach honors classes, guide honors 'contracts' in non-honors classes, and mentor honors capstone projects. This ad hoc participation of faculty in the education of honors students would continue following the proposed name change.

Other Costs

The current Honors Academy budget includes funds that support a host of student experiences, including field trips for honors courses, honors-community events, and travel to honors conferences. The Honors Academy hosts over thirty honors events – both large and small – throughout the year. Many of these events are honors-specific (e.g., orientations, retreats), whereas others are open to the entire campus community (e.g., annual honors speaker). The honors budget also supports student and faculty to travel to the annual conferences of the National Collegiate Honors Council, the Southern Regional Honors Council, and the Virginias Collegiate Honors Council. The budget for these activities is in place now and would continue following the proposed change to Honors College.

Miscellaneous

Because the honors budget was expanded in 2014 to accommodate the goals of the Honors Implementation Committee, only minimal new costs are expected for the establishment of the Honors College. Miscellaneous expenses for the proposed organizational change include the costs for signage, new business cards, and replacing stationery. These costs are not projected to exceed \$500.

Budget

Radford University has adequate resources to support the proposed change. No new state support will be requested to initiate or sustain the establishment of the Honors College. The current budget of the Honors Academy would be reallocated to the budget for the proposed Honors College.

The below budget includes the previously allocated funds for the honors administration personnel (Director, Associate Director, and Administrative Specialist), stipends and course reassigned time for eight Honors Faculty Fellows, salaries for student workers, and support for student engagements (course activities, programming, and travel).

See Attachment 1 for the current organizational chart.

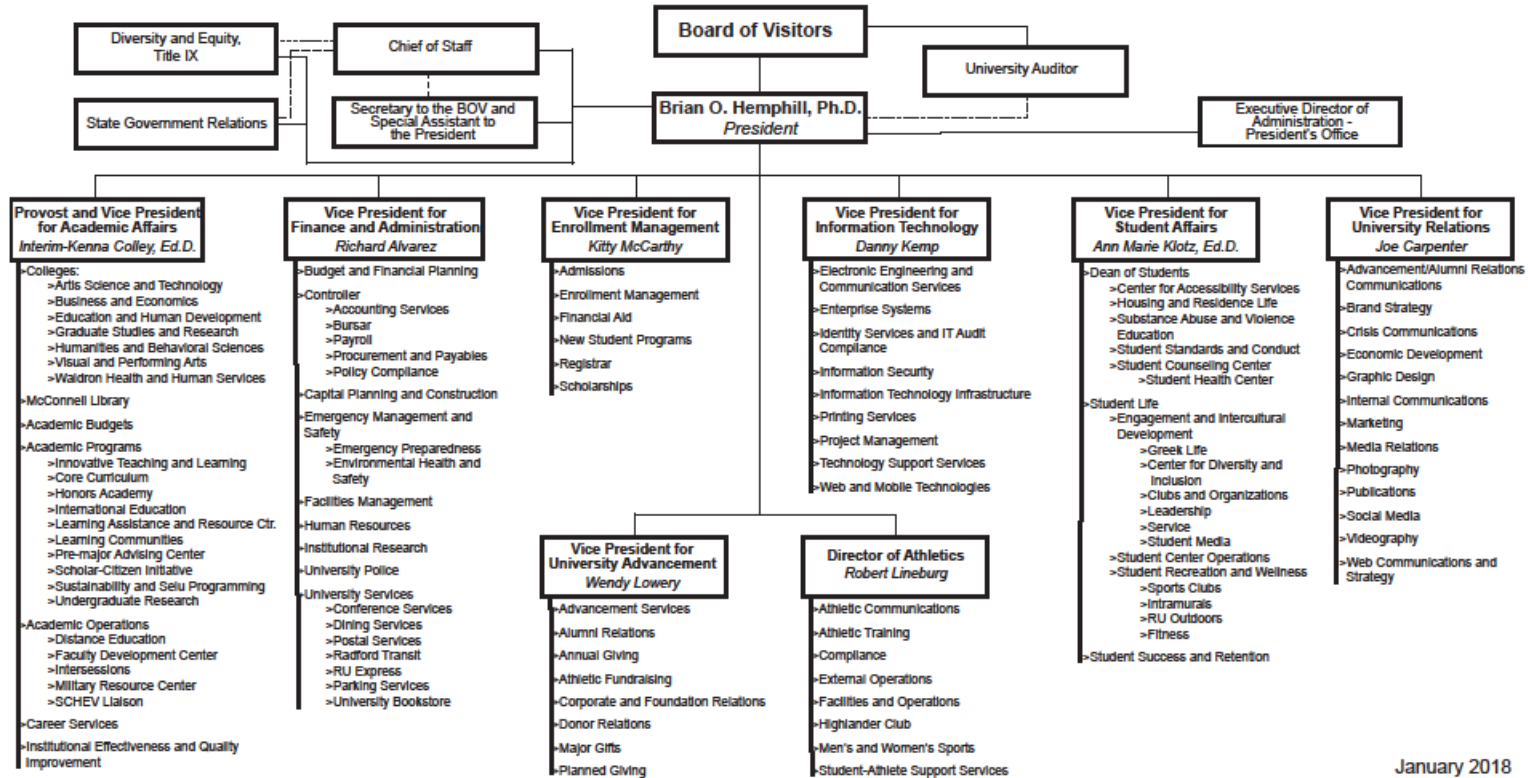
See Attachment 2 for the proposed organizational chart

New Academic Unit -
Existing Program Name - Honors College
Honors Academy

Expenditure Category	Current HDCT	Current Program Cost	New Unit HDCT	Proposed Budget			
				2018 - 2019	2019 - 2020	2020 - 2021	
Personnel Salary							
Director	1	\$121,574	1	\$121,574	\$121,574	\$121,574	
Fringe Benefits		\$20,041		\$20,041	\$20,041	\$20,041	
Associate Director	1	\$10,000	1	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000	
Fringe Benefits		\$765		\$765	\$765	\$765	
Administrative Specialist	1	\$29,146	1	\$29,146	\$29,146	\$29,146	
Fringe Benefits		\$13,362		\$13,362	\$13,362	\$13,362	
Faculty (Hon. Fac. Fellows)	8	\$59,267	8	\$59,267	\$59,267	\$59,267	
Fringe Benefits		\$4,534		\$4,534	\$4,534	\$4,534	
Personnel Subtotal	11	\$267,517	11	\$267,517	\$267,517	\$267,517	
Student Support							
Student Helpers/Workers	2	4000	2	4000	4000	4000	
Graduate Teaching Assistant							
Graduate Research Assistant	2	9000	2	9000	9000	9000	
Student Support Subtotal	0	\$0	0	\$0	\$0	\$0	

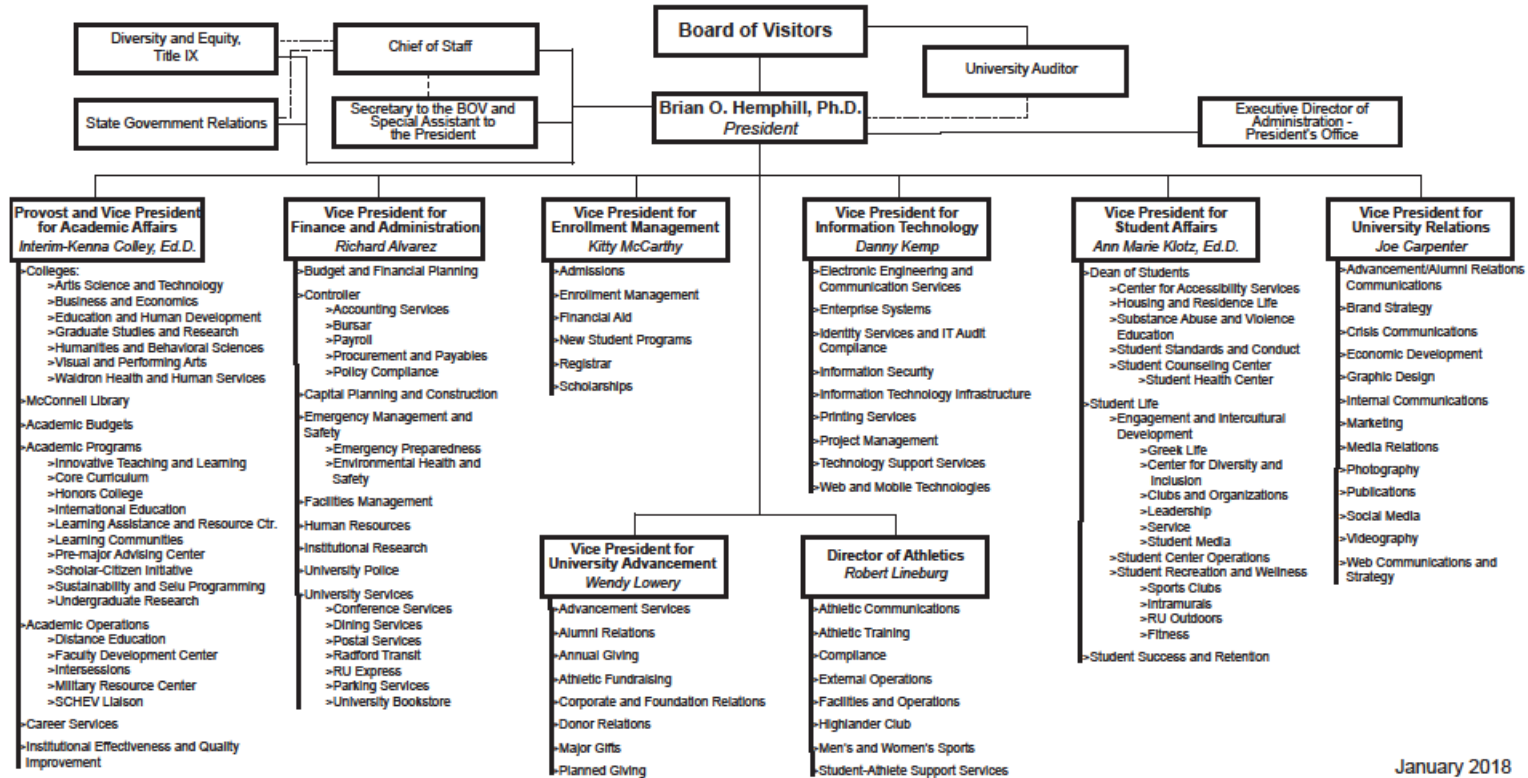
Operating Expenses							
	Office Supplies		\$8,230		\$8,230	\$8,230	\$8,230
	Instructional Supplies		\$9,942		\$9,942	\$9,942	\$9,942
	Travel		\$10,000		\$10,000	\$10,000	\$10,000
	Marketing		\$2,547		\$2,547	\$2,547	\$2,547
	Conference/Professional Development		\$13,812		\$13,812	\$13,812	\$13,812
	Other Costs		\$5,112		\$5,112	\$5,112	\$5,112
<i>Operating Expenses Subtotal</i>			\$49,643		\$49,643	\$49,643	\$49,643
Total		11	\$321,332	11	\$316,033	\$316,033	\$316,033

Attachment 1 Current Organizational Chart



January 2018

Attachment 2 Proposed Organizational Chart



January 2018