ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT, HEALTH CARE, AND TECHNOLOGY TRAINING

Ann S. Ferren

EDITOR’S NOTE: This article continues the series about the public service/outreach services provided to various constituencies in the commonwealth by Virginia’s universities.

Radford University improves the quality of life of its students and the citizens of Virginia through a variety of public service programs and partnerships. Since its founding in 1910 as a teacher training school, the university has reshaped itself to also address economic development, health care, and technology training in Southwest Virginia.

With growing concerns about the delivery of health care to rural areas and to underinsured citizens, the Waldron College of Health and Human Services has positioned itself regionally to provide direct service, health information, and continuing education opportunities for both citizens and health-care professionals. A mobile healthcare unit offers full diagnostic services in Craig County and will soon add Carroll County. On campus, the Radford University Clinics make a wide range of services—e.g., speech and hearing services, medical screening, nutrition education, counseling, music therapy, and therapeutic recreation—available to the community. For those seeking the latest health and medical information, the George Harvey Health Information Resource Center provides both on-site and Web access to electronic databases appropriate for both individuals and health professionals. Annual conferences on gerontology and alternative medicine target regional healthcare providers. For additional information, call 540/831-7660 or visit www.radford.edu/~wchs-web/.

Serving small business owners and new entrepreneurs, as well as experienced professionals, the Business Assistance Center (BAC) contributes to the economic development of the region through its varied training, workshops, and counseling services. The Small Business Development Center provides general consulting and specialized services to minority and women-owned businesses. Businesses seeking marketing strategies or assistance with logistics can access research and training at the International Trade Development Center. A full range of workshops on critical management skills to enhance organizational and individual performance is available through the Training and Development Center. The Governmental and Nonprofit Assistance Center promotes “best practices” in accountability and management for public-sector organizations. In the past year, BAC programs provided over 1,750 hours of consulting assistance to over 200 businesses and conducted 90 workshops/seminars/conferences. For additional information call 540/831-6056 or access the BAC website at www.runet.edu/Outreach/bac/bac.html.

Recognizing the critical need for continuing professional development for teachers and school administrators, the College of Education and Human Development maintains a Teaching Resources Center with the latest textbooks, specialized teaching materials, and technology resources. As one of 10 sites in Virginia for State Textbook Evaluation, the center makes copies of all K-12 textbooks available for review. As one of 75 NASA Educator Resource Centers in the country, it makes interdisciplinary materials available for preview and copying for classroom use by K-12 teachers in the region. Teachers can attain free materials—e.g., maps, atlases, posters, lesson plans, books, and computer programs—provided by the Virginia Geographic Alliance. The center is also a preview site for several computer software companies and offers workshops and individualized help for in-service teachers. After-hours and weekend hours make the center accessible to teachers, administrators, and parents. For additional information call 831-6284 or access www.runet.edu/~trc/.

The College of Information Science and Technology sponsors the Technology Training Center, a collaborative of the university’s technology training and technology outreach activities. Faculty, students, staff, and the community can access multimedia instruction, basic office technologies, and customized training. Among the training opportunities are those offered by the BAC’s Technology Testing and Training Program, which provides Web-based training and Microsoft MCSE and MOUS certification programs in addition to customized training for individuals and organizations.

Recognizing the importance of all aspects necessary for a good quality of life in the region, Radford University complements its public service activities by making many programs accessible to the community, including the cultural arts, the Radford Museum, the Selu Conservancy, the Planetarium, and M C O N N L Library.

Visit www.radford.edu for more information and a calendar of events.

ANN S. FERREN is the former vice president for academic affairs at Radford University.