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Dr. Amy Rubens, Radford University's first Presidential Fellow, has big plans for her role for the 2019 fall semester.

The Presidential Fellows program, introduced by Radford President Brian Hemphill last October, provides one of Radford's faculty members with a temporary administrative position and an office space in Martin Hall, with which they can collaborate with university leadership to work on projects.

The key thing Dr. Rubens intends to implement during her fellowship is a new 15 credit Health and Humanities undergraduate minor, which she thinks will help expand health education beyond just the biological aspect.

It is an honor to receive this distinguished fellowship opportunity, and I am very excited to work with President Hemphill and his leadership team.

"Health, illness, disability, and caretaking cut across disciplines, and being knowledgeable in the cultural, socioeconomic, emotional, and political aspects of health-in addition to their biological bases-can prepare one for success in a variety of professional environments," Dr. Rubens said in an interview with The Tartan.

Dr. Rubens encourages the study of health from a variety of perspectives to get a better understanding of other people's points of view.

The minor will involve many classes that are already offered within the College of Humanities and Behavioral Sciences. The classes will come from several departments including philosophy, English, social work, and criminal justice.

"For instance, with a background in the health humanities, a Political Science major who wants to work in rural development may better understand health's role in economic growth, while a Criminal Justice major planning to enter law enforcement may be better equipped to handle

encounters with offenders who are dealing with addiction issues,” Dr. Rubens said.

Dr. Rubens hopes the minor will appeal to all students, regardless of discipline. However, she says that students studying clinical health sciences are not the target audience for the minor.

“However, if they are able to take an elective or two, they should consider enrolling in a course in the humanities, social sciences, or visual and performing arts that might help expand their understanding of the patient populations they want to work with,” Dr. Rubens said.

Additionally, Dr. Rubens believes this minor is a “natural complement” to the to the in-progress merger of Radford University and Jefferson College of Health Sciences. She thinks that it “strengthens Radford’s commitment to health and human services education,” and that it does so in an “innovative way.”

Dr. Rubens said, “It connects the clinical and allied health sciences with the liberal arts, which have a long, rich history at Radford.”

During her time in Martin Hall, she will also be assisting the administration with other projects related to the merger.

Dr. Rubens added she was “thrilled” when she found out she was accepted.

Dr. Rubens has a proven track record at Radford University and one that is focused on teaching excellence and student success.

“It is an honor to receive this distinguished fellowship opportunity, and I am very excited to work with President Hemphill and his leadership team,” Dr. Rubens said in an email sent out to the Radford campus. “I would like to also thank Dr. Rosemary Guruswamy, chair of Radford University’s Department of English, for motivating me to explore and pursue this endeavor.”

Dr. Rubens has been an Assistant Professor of English at Radford since 2015. During her tenure, she has also served as the co-coordinator of the University’s Graduate Certificate in Professional Writing and as a faculty partner of the Virginia Governor’s School for Humanities and Visual and Performing Arts.

President Hemphill said in an email, “Dr. Rubens has a proven track record at Radford University and one that is focused on teaching excellence and student success.”

Faculty members interested in the Presidential Fellows program must be full-time tenured or tenure-track. Applications must outline their proposed projects and explain how they fit with the university's Strategic Plan.

The window for applications is between Nov. 1 and Dec. 1 of each year.

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