

Jefferson College picks new president

The interim leader was made permanent as the school transitions to more bachelor's degrees.



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A new president was selected Thursday to lead Jefferson College of Health Sciences and its 1,100 students as the school transitions from offering primarily associate degrees to a more traditional bachelor's degree institution.

Nathaniel Bishop, who has served as the Roanoke college's interim president since April, was appointed president by the school's board. Jefferson College is owned by Carilion Clinic.

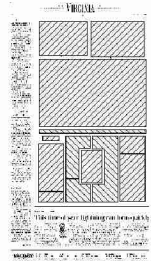
"The term interim denotes something temporary and we don't look at [Bishop] as a temporary fix," said Steve Musselwhite, chairman of the Jefferson College board. "We think he has the skill sets to move the college forward."

Bishop, 56, has been a Carilion vice president since spring 2002 and worked for the hospital system and health care provider since November 1997. Before joining Carilion, he had a 14-year career in law enforcement. He has a master's degree in

education and has a doctor of ministry degree.

Bishop's appointment comes as the college prepares to move out of the Reid Center and into newly renovated floors inside nearby Carilion Roanoke Community Hospital this summer in time for the fall semester. The \$8 million project includes gutting two floors and giving two other floors face-lifts, with new paint and other changes needed to convert former hospital patient rooms to office space.

As the school readies its new classrooms and offices, the academic curriculum also has undergone a makeover. In May, the college graduated its final associate degree classes for two programs, in nursing and in emergency health sciences. Any new students interested in earn-



ing degrees to be a nurse or paramedic in emergency medical services must attend Jefferson College for four years instead of two, earning a bachelor's degree.

In 2004, 72 percent of students were enrolled in an associate degree program. The college projects that in the fall, only 19 percent of students will be enrolled in an associate degree program, leaving 67 percent in bachelor's programs and 14 percent in master's level courses. In 2004, a master's degree wasn't even available at Jefferson College.

Additionally, enrollment has nearly doubled since 2004, when there were 600 students.

Carol Seavor retired as Jefferson College's president in April after eight years and is credited with implementing many of the changes that have moved the college in a new direction.

"My role is the implementation of a well thought-out plan that has already taken place," Bishop said. "But we are also evaluating and looking for new ways to improve and continue the

transition."

Bishop offered few specifics about any future plans, but said that several things are being evaluated including adding more master's degree programs, continuing to increase enrollment and working with the new Virginia Tech Carilion School of Medicine on interdisciplinary education goals.

The fate of the Reid Center is also being evaluated, Bishop said. He would not rule out the possibility that the building might be demolished and noted that a building permit had been issued for Carilion to do emergency repair work to the exterior brickwork.

The college's new space includes an expansion of its laboratory space

from four to seven. That includes a dedicated anatomy lab for students to learn by working with cadavers. Previously, students have done that work in the old morgue inside Community Hospital.

"I think there will be more changes in the future," said Lisa Allison-Jones, who took over as the college's dean of academic affairs June 1.

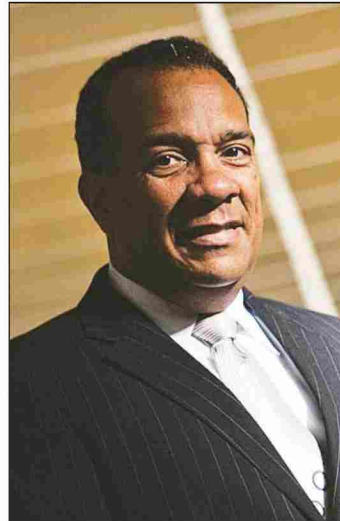
While the school doesn't offer any doctorate programs, Allison-Jones said its possible that it could offer one in the future with a doctorate of nursing practice being among the first to be considered.

Both Allison-Jones and Bishop said the growth and changes at Jefferson College in many ways mirror the growth and development of Carilion Clinic and the medical school.

"All of those things just sort of fell together to make the perfect environment for growth and development of education in health care," Allison-Jones said.

My role is the implementation of a well thought-out plan that has already taken place.

Nathaniel Bishop





SAM DEAN | The Roanoke Times

Aisha Phelps (from left), Kacey Brubeck and Sarah Smith work in a microbiology lab at the soon-to-be vacated Reid Center, which houses Jefferson College of Health Sciences. The fate of the Reid Center is being evaluated, but it's possible the building will be demolished.