

Dr. Laura J. Jacobsen
Candidate Biography

Dr. Laura J. Jacobsen is an experienced higher education leader with a strong commitment to student success, institutional growth, and community impact. Over the past 20 years in academia, she has led initiatives that increased enrollment, strengthened student retention, and secured more than \$3 million in funding to support scholarships, curriculum development, and institutional priorities.

Throughout her career, Dr. Jacobsen has remained deeply connected to both faculty and students. She has served in leadership roles across academic affairs, student success, enrollment management, and career development, including Associate Dean for Interprofessional Education, Dean of University Libraries, Director of the Center for Career and Talent Development, Administrator of Student Success, and Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research at Radford University. She has also worked extensively in faculty governance as Faculty Senate President and faculty representative to the Board of Visitors. While serving in administrative roles, she has remained active as a faculty member, previously directing the Mathematics Education Graduate Program and continuing to teach and mentor students.

A first-generation college graduate, Dr. Jacobsen is passionate about providing transformative educational opportunities for students. She has built over 50 strong partnerships across K-12 schools, higher education institutions, and employers, ensuring that students have access to meaningful academic and professional experiences. She believes that a university's success depends on fostering a culture of respect, transparency, and collaboration, where faculty, staff, and students feel heard and valued. Her leadership is centered on ethical decision-making, clear communication, and shared purpose, ensuring that strategic initiatives are implemented with both vision and integrity.

Dr. Jacobsen holds a Ph.D. in Curriculum and Instruction—Mathematics Education and an M.S. in Mathematics from Virginia Tech, as well as a B.S. in Mathematics from Roanoke College. She and her husband, Dennis, have a son, Daniel, who is a high school junior and plays baseball. Outside of work, she especially enjoys outdoor activities, including obstacle course racing and cycling, as well as spending time in the mountains or by the water with family and friends.