



RESEARCH & CREATIVE SCHOLARSHIP  
**QUARTERLY**

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April is always a time of celebration in academia. As we approach the end of the 2023-2024 academic year, we are excited to recognize our faculty and students' successes throughout the year. This month we celebrate our 33rd Annual Student Engagement Forum April 17-18, highlight faculty exploring the impact of science communication and shine light on a team of students and faculty researching crime analysis. We also offer a reminder of an upcoming change in grant search software. Finally, as we look to the summer months, be sure to mark your calendars for the Summer Institute in Research and Creativity May 13-17 for a week-long series of workshops dedicated to your summer project!

Jeanne Mekolichick, Ph.D.

Associate Provost for Research, Faculty Success & Strategic Initiatives

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## **Faculty Spotlight**

**Principal Investigator:**

Michael Meindl, MFA

**Department:**

**Contact:** [mmeindl@radford.edu](mailto:mmeindl@radford.edu)

**Title:**

*The Magic School Bus and the Reanimation of American Science Education*

**Sponsor:**

The National Science Foundation (in collaboration with Virginia Tech)



**Research Background:**

As a scholar, Michael focuses primarily on the relationship between media, science, and technology. He has presented at a variety of regional, national, and international conferences, including those sponsored by the Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S), the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT), the Society for Animation Studies (SAS), and the Popular Culture Association (PCA). He currently has two essays accepted for publication. One focuses on the representation of science and technology in both *Jaws* and *Mythbusters* and will be part of a collection of works celebrating the 50th anniversary of *Jaws*. The other explores the use of specific types of sources when doing history of animation research and will be part of a special “doing animation history” issue of *Animation: An International Journal*. Finally, he is working on a book-length analysis of early Disney animation technology. As a video artist, he has worked with the National Geographic Channel, providing motion-capture services, as well as the New York Public Library and the Carnegie Corporation of New York, filming special events (some of his footage has been shown to the United States Congress). He has also worked on commercials and short documentaries. Through his own production company, he is currently working on a feature-length documentary investigating the intersection between puppetry and the LGBTQ community. Since its inception in 2014, Michael has been a judge for the International Red Dirt Film Festival held in Stillwater, OK.

**Purpose of the NSF project**

In the 1990s, a crazy-haired teacher named Ms. Frizzle took America’s children on field trips inside the human body and to the outer reaches of space. The *Magic School Bus* (MSB) television series suggested new ways of getting children excited about science, captured in its catchphrase “Take Chances! Make Mistakes! Get Messy!” In contrast to the live-action format of a white-coated man performing demonstrations, MSB used animation to help viewers experience science in action,

venturing into unreachable environments and imagined worlds. Along the way, Ms. Frizzle encouraged her multicultural class to take risks, to fail, and to find patterns.

MSB was part of an informal science movement seeking to improve the nation's scientific literacy and broaden participation by girls and underrepresented minorities. This movement included television shows, hands-on museums, and computer games with MSB and other enterprises cutting across multiple media. Beyond their pedagogical and creative innovations, these efforts were experiments in how to pay for the nation's technoscientific future, utilizing public-private partnerships on a remarkable scale. Multimedia enterprises like MSB expanded storytelling collaborations with production teams that crossed professional backgrounds and national borders to create novel representations of science.

Our collaborative research uses a case study of MSB to investigate the rise and impact of multimedia informal science education. We combine archival research, oral history interviews, and media content analysis to ask:

1. How and why did MSB come into being as a multimedia enterprise?
2. How did MSB's scientific storytellers collaborate in hybrid public-private partnerships?
3. How did MSB use media-specific affordances to represent science in new ways?
4. What were MSB's wide-ranging impacts on the role of science in American life?

We use a case study approach to intervene in interconnected scholarly debates about children's education as a site for science; the benefits and pitfalls of informal science and edutainment; and the value of public investment in hybrid experiments with commercial partners.

The MSB enterprise reached tens of millions of children over decades, making it an ideal case for illuminating the efficacy of past efforts to enhance the participation of women and minorities in STEM; improve STEM education at the youngest stages of development; increase public scientific literacy and scientific engagement; increase partnerships between academia, industry, and others; and enhance infrastructure for research and education.

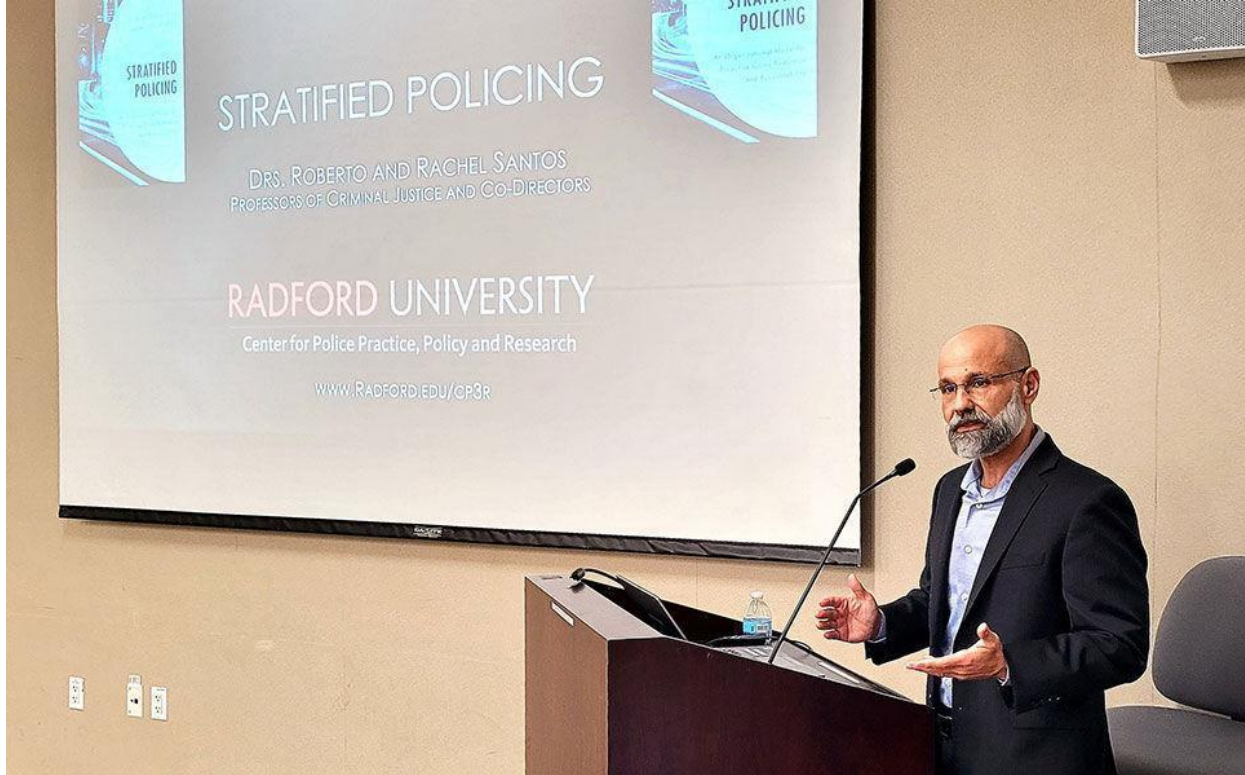
Our research will result in a book for a public audience. In the process, we will publish scholarly articles and popular essays. Oral histories with MSB's creators will provide the basis for a future documentary film. These products will inform educators, science communicators, children's writers, policymakers, and a concerned public how creative media can make an impact for the public good.

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## **Faculty-Student Success**

### **Crime (Analysis) Does Pay**

by Grace Bryant

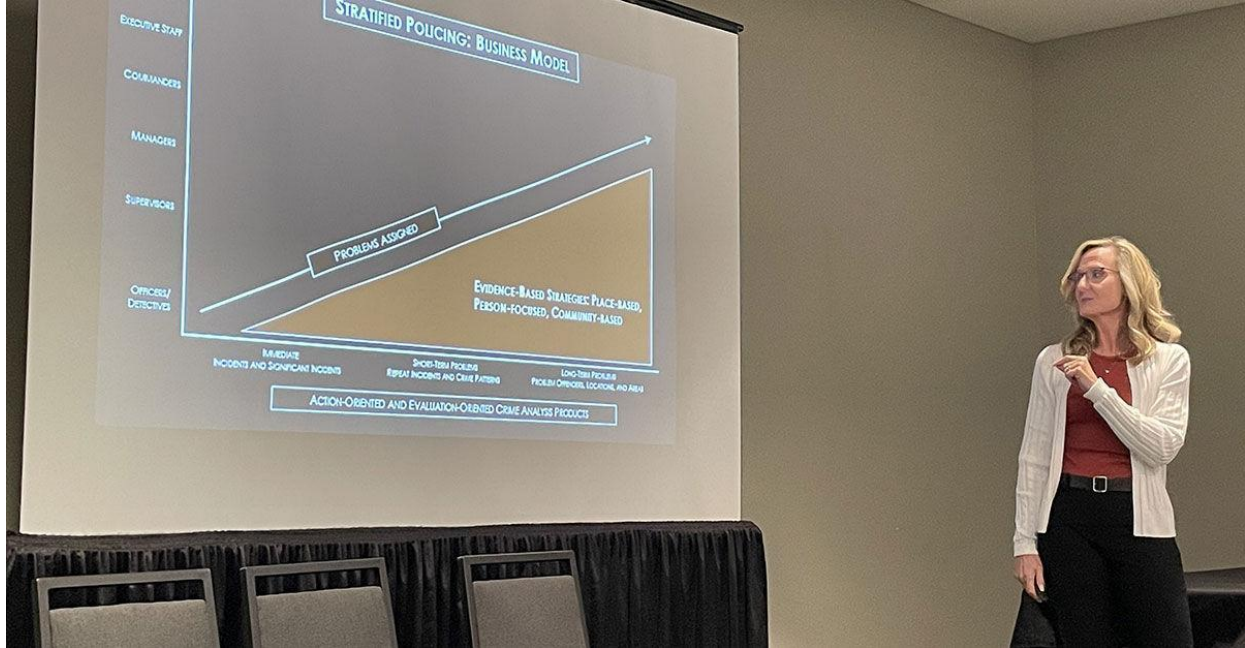


*Roberto Santos, Associate Professor of Criminal Justice and Co-director of Radford University's Center for Police Practice, Policy and Research*

Doctor Rachel Santos recently mentored six Radford University Criminal Justice undergraduates and three graduate students who presented their original research at the 2024 Carolinas Crime Analysis Association's annual training conference in Charleston, South Carolina. Dr. Rachel Santos delivered the keynote address, speaking about her work on [stratified policing](#) with Dr. Roberto Santos.

Drs. Rachel and Roberto Santos have fostered a truly beneficial environment for their students within the crime analysis and criminal intelligence minor and certificate program. When asked about the faculty-student dynamic during the research with her undergraduate students, Dr. Santos commented, "The students all did this on their own, with my guidance. I think it's important that they do crime analysis and criminal intelligence work independently since this is what prepares them for a job in the crime analysis field. So, my work with students in crime analysis is really about the students' creation of crime analysis products based on best practices in the field... so in the end they have a portfolio of work that can impress any future crime analysis/police employer in an interview."

[Working with undergraduates](#) interested in research may seem like a daunting task, but Dr. Santos concisely summed up the advantages when she stated that, "Faculty can benefit from student research by having them assist with aspects of the project that [aren't] too complex but [are] time consuming [and] meaningful for the student. Working together is really about exposing students to research occurring in the field, not just examples from textbooks and exercises they do in the classroom setting."



Rachel Santos, Professor of Criminal Justice and Co-director of Radford University's Center for Police Practice, Policy and Research

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## Finding Funding Opportunities

Sponsored Programs would like to inform our research community of a change being made with how our office supports the dissemination of funding opportunities from external grants. As many of you know, the office has used the ProQuest PIVOT database for the last 15 years as our primary source for finding funding opportunities. Effective later this spring, Sponsored Programs will no longer be supporting the PIVOT platform so we will be terminating our contract. You can still use PIVOT's search engine on their main home page to find funding; however, all accounts in PIVOT will be terminated. This is a strategic change made by the office, as we now have an enhanced support structure with Hanover Research, our external consulting firm.

Hanover will gladly support faculty with both grant prospecting and/or grant writing. We are excited about these expanded services as they will be extremely integral in supporting the needs of our grant writers. In addition to Hanover's support, Sponsored Programs will be taking on a more tailored, hands-on approach in our support for identifying potential sponsors leveraging other resources. While we feel this change was necessary, we would like to apologize to our current PIVOT users for this short-term inconvenience.

If you have any questions concerning this change, or how Sponsored Programs can best support your needs, please feel free to reach out to Tom Cruise, Director of Sponsored Programs, at [tcruise@radford.edu](mailto:tcruise@radford.edu)

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## Research Resources

**Grant-Writing Online Training**



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## Sponsored Programs and Grants Management

The **Office of Sponsored Programs and Grant Management (SPGM)** is pleased to offer a series of grant-writing modules to help support your needs as you begin the grant-seeking process. If you would like individual training, please do not hesitate to contact their office to schedule an appointment at [tcruise@radford.edu](mailto:tcruise@radford.edu).

- [Hanover Webinar: Grants 101 - So You Want To Write a Grant \[mp4\]](#)
  - [Hanover Webinar: Prospecting and Alignment \[mp4\]](#)
  - [Hanover Webinar: Re-submissions \[mp4\]](#)
  - [Hanover Webinar: Looking Beyond the NIH \[mp4\]](#)
  - [Hanover Webinar: Early to Mid-Career Faculty Grant-Seeking \[mp4\]](#)
  - [Hanover Webinar: Building Strong Collaborations \[mp4\]](#)
  - [CITI Training](#)
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## Did you know?



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## Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship

**Undergraduate Research Travel Awards** - The Office of Undergraduate Research and Scholarship (**OURS**) supports student travel to present original work at conferences. The maximum award is **\$750**. Applications are due through the OURS website four weeks before departure and reviewed on a rolling basis while funding lasts.

[www.radford.edu/ours-travel](http://www.radford.edu/ours-travel)

**Poster Printing** - large-scale posters for disseminating original work in all disciplines of undergraduate students, graduate students, or faculty are printed by OURS free of charge. Please provide at least 1-week notice (we can often turn posters around in a day or two if needed), and PDF submissions are open all year. To submit a poster to be printed or for help designing your poster, visit: [www.radford.edu/ours-posters](http://www.radford.edu/ours-posters)

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## Upcoming Events

# April 17th - 18th

## 33rd Annual Radford University Student Engagement Forum

April 17th through the 23rd Radford University will be celebrating its 33rd Student Engagement Forum with just over 400 students presenting the new knowledge they created over the past academic year. This event is open to the public.

The full program can be found here

Oral presentations will be taking place in the McConnell Library Ross Art Gallery on Wednesday April 17th from 9 am to 6 pm and poster presentations will take place Thursday April 18th from 11 am to 6:30 pm in the Artis Atrium in Reed-Curie and the Center for the Sciences Main Street Lobby. For additional information please contact OURS ([ours@radford.edu](mailto:ours@radford.edu) or Whitt 120).

Schedule at a Glance



# May 13th - 17th

## The Fifth Annual Summer Institute in Research and Creativity

Save the date for the fifth annual **Summer Institute for Research and Creativity, May 13-17**, free and open to all faculty and staff.

Do you have a dissertation chapter that wants to be an article? Do you have an idea for a textbook? Would your research benefit from support for grant writing? Do you just need a kick in the pants (i.e., productivity, creativity, and accountability coaching)?

Outside expertise this year will include publishing OER books and materials and using informal writing, like blogging, both to spark your academic writing and to get your ideas out to the public. Presentations will include campus superstars and outside experts, and you will leave the institute with tools (drafts, new contacts, timelines, research journals, etc.) that will help you accomplish your summer research and creativity goals. The Institute includes synchronous workshops (in person and on zoom), specialized tracks, time to work on your project, and asynchronous resources on D2L.

Participants will receive a certificate of completion for attending the workshops. Contact [hkeith1@radford.edu](mailto:hkeith1@radford.edu) for more information.

Registration

View upcoming research presentations and events



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