

# RADFORD UNIVERSITY

School of Communication

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To whom it may concern:

I am writing to strongly recommend Dylan Lepore as he begins his job search.

I have known Mr. Lepore since his second semester at Radford, when his strong work ethic and entrepreneurial drive earned him the role of editor in chief of The Tartan, Radford's student newspaper.

Shortly after, I was asked to serve as the paper's faculty advisor. I have seen Mr. Lepore grow as an editor, a journalist and a student leader. He has a knack for identifying and tackling new challenges. After the paper shifted from a broadsheet to a tabloid format, he taught himself Adobe InDesign and improved the look of the final project. He used his multimedia skills to create, not only an improved digital presence for the newspaper, but an in-depth "intranet" training resource for the staff. Over time he grew the staff and worked with them to plan the content, improve processes, and conduct circulation audits to boost readership.

Having such a complete understanding of the newspaper, both editorially and operationally, was critical. That's how Mr. Lepore and his circulation manager discovered that roughly half of the newspapers had been removed from campus newsstands around Sept. 18, 2019. He has been advocating for The Tartan in that case since and tackling challenges expected of full-time, professional media managers.

He has pursued the case with Freedom of Information Act requests, opinion columns, investigative reporting, and even consultation with attorneys. The Tartan was well-represented when it went from reporting on the news to becoming a story. Mr. Lepore has been a spokesman in ongoing articles about the newspaper theft reported by, among others, the Student Press Law Center, the Washington Post, The Roanoke Times, The (Charlottesville) Daily Progress, and the Washington Examiner. He is presenting a session on the case at the March 2020 Collegiate Media Conference in New York City.

While such demands could shift the focus from academics, Mr. Lepore regularly makes the Dean's List for his high GPA. He's also helping other student media organizations improve their digital footprint.

Did I mention that he can write, report, edit and is skilled with digital and social media? In his spare time (!), he is a freelance journalist, web designer and photographer, with a specialization in video games.

I have enjoyed working with him; he would make a great addition to any organization.

Sincerely,



Leigh Anne Kelley  
Instructor  
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