Lindsey Piland

“COBE: More than Brick and Mortar”

After watching the construction of the new building on Radford University’s campus for one and a half years, it was finally time for staff and students to recognize all the hard work that was put into its creation. People gathered in the front of the new College of Business and Economics, or COBE, building Wednesday to listen to speeches and take a tour of the new structure. A ribbon-cutting ceremony took place to officially open the home for the nationally accredited College of Business and Economics.

In May 2010, Radford University began the construction on the $44 million 110,000-square-foot building. Located at the corner of Jefferson Street and Tyler Avenue, it is the campus’ “signature building for the 21st century.” It features state-of-the-art classrooms, conference rooms and break rooms, called breakouts. It also has the latest technology and financial research capabilities.

The COBE building opened for classes in August, at the beginning of the fall semester, and is the academic home of the university’s 1,500 business majors. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was hosted by President Penelope Kyle and the Radford University Board of Visitors. “I thought of moving my office up here, it’s so beautiful,” President Kyle jokingly remarked. “The building is home to hopes as well as dreams. Think of the young people here planning their future,” she said. “It’s a dream come true.”

In keeping with Radford University’s commitment to sustainability, the building meets criteria for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Silver designation by the U.S. Green Building Council. Student Ambassador, Laura Weston, was present at the ribbon-cutting ceremony and conducting tours of the building. “I think it’s going to be an ideal point for the college. I think people will drive by and see it and know they’re in Radford,” Weston said.

Guests who spoke at the ribbon-cutting ceremony Wednesday included Jim Cheng, Secretary of Commerce and Trade and Delegate Joseph Yost. “Great way to start the new year with a new building,” said Cheng. “It’s a wonderful recruiting tool to get students to come to Radford University. We want people to grow and thrive.”

As an alumnus, who received his bachelor’s and master’s degree inside the walls of Radford University, Delegate Joseph Yost reflected on his time spent at RU. “Radford University has a special place in my heart,” he said. Yost is currently new to the General Assembly and serves on the House Education Committee. “The newest building is more environmentally-friendly and technologically advanced than any university in the Commonwealth of Virginia,” Yost said. “It promotes growth, job opportunity and a place for camaraderie, fellowship and community.”

The new building was under construction for two years and supplied 700 people with jobs. Glave & Holmes and Ayers/Saint/Gross comprise the architectural team for the COBE building’s design and Whiting-Turner was the construction contractor. “The building reflects the values and philosophies of students and faculty,” said Faye Gilbert who is the dean of the College of Business and Economics. “It’s more than brick and mortar.”

The President said other buildings would be going up on Radford’s campus in the next few years. “We are on our way to building the Center for Sciences,” said President Kyle. It will be a $50 million 100,000-square-foot complex. In addition, there will be a $32 million 110,000-square-foot building for the Wellness Center. In the future, the College of Humanities and Behavioral Science will also be under one new roof. “The college will be under construction for the next few years,” Kyle said.

“The Commonwealth of Virginia recognized the need to support the ideas of tomorrow’s achievers,” said President Kyle. “We thank those who helped.”