Change of status from F-2 to F-1

VERY IMPORTANT: Start this process as soon as possible because F-2 visa holders cannot attend school while the change of status is pending. It may take as long as 5 or 6 months, possible longer. Check this USCIS website to see how long the processing of applications is taking:
https://www.visapro.com/Vermont-Service-Center.asp
It may be faster to leave the USA, apply for an F-1, and re-enter in initial status.

Retain copies of all documents sent to and received from the US Citizenship and Immigration Service.

things you’ll need:
- Copy of I-94 (download at https://i94.cbp.dhs.gov/I94/request.html)
- Copies of your immigration documents (Passport with photo page, expiration page, visa page)
- Form I-20- from Randolph College
- Form I-901 receipt Available online at: https://www.fmjfee.com/i901fee/desktop/index.jsp?view=desktop
- Copies of financial documents (Proof of Finances for tuition, fees and living expenses)
- Copies of the immigration documents of the original F1 Visa holder (Passport with photo page, expiration page, visa page; I-94; I-20; EAD card if F-1 is on OPT)

1. Check that you have a current F2 visa and passport. Your form I-94, which lists your arrival and departure dates, also lists an expiration date for your stay. If you have expired documents, you will not be able to change your status without leaving the country, in most circumstances.

2. Get your new F-1 SEVIS I-20 from Randolph College.

3. Use the SEVIS ID number located on the top right side of your I-20 form to fill out your SEVIS I-901 form and pay the required fee of $200. You may fill out the I-901 form and pay your fee online.

4. Write a letter explaining why you wish to change your visa status from F2 to F1. Include details of your study plans. The letter should state that you are requesting to change from F-2 to F-1, the reason why you want to change status, and that you have followed all the F-2 regulations. Your signature should be at the bottom.

5. Fill out form I-539 to change your nonimmigrant status from F2 to F1. The filing fee is
$290. The form asks for information such as your name, address, arrival date, current visa status, your I-94 number and passport details.

6. Gather all your supporting documentation. Include your original I-20 form from Randolph, the receipt for your SEVIS I-901 fee, your letter explaining your study plans and your completed I-539 form. Include photocopies of your immigration documents such as your F2 visa, your passport picture page, your current dependent I-20 form, your I-94, and financial documents that show you have the funds to cover your education and living expenses. Include photocopies of the immigration documents of the original F1 Visa holder.

7. Keep copies of all forms, receipts and immigration documents for your records and store them in a safe place.

8. Mail your documents to the USCIS office below. The USCIS recommends that you mail your documents at least 60 days before the expiration date on your current F2 visa.

USCIS Vermont Service Center
Attn: I-539
75 Lower Welden Street
St. Albans, VT 05479

In humanitarian cases, USCIS will consider expeditious handling of the COS for no extra fee. However, it is rarely granted.