



Richard Bland College

of WILLIAM & MARY

Office of the President

MEMORANDUM

TO: Chair, House Committee on Appropriations; Chair, House Committee on Education, Chair, Senate Committee on Education and Health; Chair, Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations

FROM: Debbie L. Sydow, Ph.D., President

RE: Progress Report: Exploring and Expanding Partnership Opportunities

DATE: July 1, 2022

Virginia Code Title 23.1 (6), Chapter 28, requires Richard Bland College to file annually on or before July 1 a report to the Chairs of the House Committee on Appropriations, the House Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Education and Health, and the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations regarding the institution's progress in exploring and expanding partnership opportunities for shared services and academic programming with other higher education partners.

In accordance with this requirement, Richard Bland College (RBC) respectfully submits the following progress report.

Background

As highlighted in a February 22, 2022, Richmond Times-Dispatch article, Richard Bland College's student enrollment has grown twenty-one percent (21%) over the last four years (2017-2021). The article notes that this growth is in stark contrast with the unprecedented fourteen percent (14%) decline in Virginia's community colleges and significant enrollment decline among nine (9) of the Commonwealth's seventeen (17) public four-year colleges over the same time period.

Bucking the enrollment trend is just one way that RBC stands apart from other institutions of higher education in Virginia. By being entrepreneurial and establishing strategic partnerships, as appropriate, to achieve its mission and strategic goals, RBC has managed not only to survive, but to thrive, in the challenging fiscal landscape of the last decade. Step by careful step, RBC has painstakingly evolved as a new model of higher education in the Commonwealth, restructuring to ensure that all resources are directly aligned with student success and employment.

Today RBC is a selective, residential, two-year institution that is dedicated to providing each student a personalized Guided Pathway to Success (GPS) and to connecting each student to meaningful work experience through an innovative "earn and learn" model offered in partnership with the Commonwealth Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CCAM).

Auxiliary Services

RBC manages an auxiliary services enterprise designed to supplement College operations. The most significant functional areas (98%) of the enterprise are dining, catering, and student housing. The enterprise is further supported through cash sales, facility rentals, bookstore and vending commissions.

Recent historical data, up to the COVID-19 pandemic, show that auxiliary enterprise operations have consistently generated a surplus in revenue of 11% (2017) up to a high of 25% in 2020 (+\$998,223). The transition to virtual learning and related mitigation strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic reduced surplus revenue in FY2020-22, significantly impacting residential housing and dining.

Dual Enrollment

Dual enrollment allows students taught at home or through a public/private high school to take college-level courses that will earn them college credits while completing their diplomas. RBC's dual enrollment program gives students an edge by allowing them to earn college credits or obtain an associate's degree while, at the same time, completing high school coursework. RBC offers three unique ways to access dual enrollment courses:

1. Students can take a virtual course(s) anywhere they have an internet connection.
2. Students can take their course(s) in an RBC classroom with a college professor; this mode is known as the Middle College program.
3. Students can take their course(s) in a high school classroom with a high school teacher who has the educational credentials to teach at the college level.

In partnership with two county school divisions in northern Virginia, RBC enrolled over 850 students in dual enrollment courses in the 2021-22 academic year. Partnerships with Governor's schools in Petersburg and Fredericksburg, private schools throughout the Commonwealth, and school divisions in central Virginia enabled RBC to provide dual enrollment courses to an additional 700 students. During the 2021-2022 academic year, RBC enabled more than 1,500 students to earn college credits, with over 3% (47 students) graduating with an associate degree.

The number of high school students taking dual enrollment courses through RBC has grown dramatically since its inception. Over the past decade, the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia (SCHEV) reports that from 2011-12 to 2021-2022, dual enrollment increased 365 percent (from 326 to 1507 students). Further, the growth in dual enrollment students has increased overall student enrollment for RBC, generating almost half a million dollars of revenue over the past two academic years. The dual enrollment program at RBC has enabled thousands of students to reduce their time in college, save money on tuition, and accelerate their careers.

Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education

The Federation for Advanced Manufacturing Education (FAME) is a proven industry-led apprenticeship model that combines classroom learning with paid, on-the-job experience and skill development in high demand fields across industry sectors. The Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) program administered under the FAME model is the country's premier advanced manufacturing education and development program. It is managed and supported by the Manufacturing Institute, serving over 400 companies and 34 chapters nationally.

In the spring of 2021, through a GO Virginia grant and in collaboration with the Commonwealth's Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CCAM), RBC launched the first FAME Chapter in Virginia to help fill the Commonwealth's gaps for Advanced Manufacturing jobs and careers. This “earn and learn” model allows students to gain paid on-the-job experience with one of the College's twelve (12) industry partners while completing classes to obtain their associate's degree. Industry partners include Amsted Rail, AMPAC Fine Chemicals, BluePrint Automation, Civica Rx, Coesia, EPT Connectors, Niagara Bottling, Phlow, Sabra Dipping Company, Jewett Automation, Phillip Morris USA, and Concrete Pipe & Precast.

Through the FAME Chapter, RBC's partnership with CCAM helps local manufacturers by hiring competent local students, and it helps students by providing them good-paying jobs that result in little to no college debt, and accelerating their careers in high-demand fields. RBC's FAME partnership also connects businesses to higher education in a meaningful way, attracting technically skilled students who bring unique life experiences that add to the diversity of the campus and the workforce.

Lab School

The Code of Virginia defines a college partnership laboratory school as a “public, nonsectarian, nonreligious school in the Commonwealth established by a public institution of higher education or private institution of higher education that operates a teacher education program approved by the Board.” Lab Schools test and develop new educational models, incubate new ideas, and allow teachers to train in a live classroom environment. Unfortunately, there are currently no Lab Schools operating in the Commonwealth.

RBC is developing a plan to establish an 11th-12th grade residential STEM-focused college laboratory school specializing in computer science, unmanned systems, and logistics. The RBC Lab School will offer innovative, immersive learning experiences that help prepare high-ability students, teachers, and teachers-in-training for high-demand STEM disciplines. RBC's Lab School will partner with Virginia State University and CodeRVA. This unique public-private partnership will develop new pedagogies and practices for teaching STEM content and applied learning to high-performing high school students, particularly students in Petersburg and the surrounding region.

In collaboration with FAME and other industry partners, this model will give students a competitive edge for high-paying technical jobs in the Petersburg region. Students will graduate from RBC's Lab School with their high school diploma (Standard or Advanced) and up to 60 college credits, with stackable credentials in UAS, GIS, logistics, project management, leadership, and a STEM associate's degree in Computer Science. In addition, the program will further develop the habits of mind and workplace discipline to help students excel in college and, ultimately, in their career fields.

RBC's Lab School proposal has been estimated to generate over \$2 million of new revenue within the first academic year.

RBC will not be able to execute on any of the partnerships listed in their proposal unless it is one of 20 schools selected by Governor Youngkin's administration.

Global Student Success Program

RBC's Global Student Success Program (GSSP) is sponsored by Navitas, an Australian company that is a respected leader in international recruitment and education. Navitas focuses on supporting college and university partners' international reach and strategic goals. Navitas provides its partners with access to resources and expertise to help drive large-scale initiatives that deliver tangible, lasting benefits to students, faculty, staff, and local communities. For example, RBC sought out a partnership to add diversity to the campus, and Navitas found RBC to be a unique addition to their limited portfolio of higher education partners, RBC is Navitas' only two-year college partner.

Asia has been the dominant region for recruitment, and GSSP students have consistently graduated with honors and transferred to top colleges and universities in North America. Asian countries such as South Korea, China, Taiwan, Singapore, Thailand, and Malaysia are most attracted to the pathway that RBC provides to high-ranking universities. The partnership adds cultural diversity to the general student population, and international students excel academically, becoming RBC success stories year after year.

RBC's partnership with Navitas was established in the 2017-18 academic year. From a modest beginning with three international students to the present, the program has provided almost 3,500 credit hours to 115 full-time equivalent students and realized over \$3.5 million in new revenue. RBC has experienced nearly 100% retention in this program, and of the students who have graduated, almost 100% have transferred to the top 100 schools in North America. In addition, these international students have ranked faculty satisfaction at 100% and overall college experience at 83% in the most recent student survey conducted by Navitas. Although the pandemic impacted the GSSP program, significantly curtailing student travel, this partnership will continue to expand as RBC adapts to immigration policy changes and strategizes to improve recruitment techniques and support services. RBC and Navitas have set a goal of 400 international students by 2027.

Public-Private Partnership Innovation Park

RBC is pursuing authority to develop an innovative business park on underutilized campus property. Known as the Public-Private Partnership Innovation Park, or P3iP, this 185-acre parcel of undeveloped land surrounding the main campus will complement regional and statewide economic development efforts by attracting businesses in emerging industries that would be enhanced through a relationship with RBC. Specifically, RBC would provide student interns and student workers to support P3iP companies. The property is close to interstate 95 and 85, close to a rail line, and will have direct access to high-speed broadband fiber optic cables. The property will remain state property and will be utilized by businesses for specified periods of time through ground lease agreements.

The first partnership under the P3iP umbrella is expected to be DroneUp, a Virginia Beach headquartered company and a pioneer in unmanned aircraft systems. Of many potential site locations, RBC was selected as the Virginia training site for DroneUp's pilot training academy. DroneUp has a multimillion-dollar contract with Walmart to provide drone delivery services nationwide, and their commitment will require them to train thousands of pilots over the next 36 months.

Through this unique partnership, DroneUp will lease land from RBC to construct a temporary training structure on campus. In addition, DroneUp will rent campus housing, office and classroom space. Students will reside on campus in residential units and earn nine college credits for the specialized training they receive. Training will be year-round in cohorts of ten to thirty students. A permanent research and development building will be designed for future construction in the P3iP.

Development of the P3iP master plan is currently underway. Already approved for tier 2 certification, engineering work has begun to transition the land to tier 4 certification. By mid-summer, an architectural firm will begin the park's design, including parcels for lease, roads, access points, and construction standards.

The master plan will be completed in the fall of 2022 and ready for development. Once completed, the master plan will be submitted to the W&M Board of Visitors with a request to authorize the RBC Foundation to engage in long-term ground leases for P3iP development. Businesses selected for the park will sign a long-term ground lease and formally commit to a relationship with RBC. In addition to the lease, RBC will receive income from room and board usage and rentals of classrooms or other spaces on campus.

The benefit of the P3iP park to RBC will be substantial. In addition to rental revenue, students will receive valuable work experience in emerging industries and be better prepared for the job market while, at the same time, earning their associate's degree. In addition, P3iP businesses will create new high-paying jobs in Dinwiddie, Prince George County, and the Petersburg region, resulting in additional tax revenues.

RBC-VSU School of Technical and Professional Studies (TPS)

Following an extensive feasibility study by Huron Consulting, RBC and VSU have partnered to jointly establish an online school of technical and professional studies to meet market demands of the Petersburg region and the state. Specifically, the Virtual TPS School aims to serve the adult learner market, including degree completers, those seeking career changes, military personnel, and students seeking educational flexibility. The Virtual TPS School will provide courses directly connected to labor market demand for occupations expected to grow in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Virtual TPS School will offer competitively priced degrees and non-traditional offerings such as certificates and micro-credentials to provide options for students who hope to obtain necessary credentials as quickly and cost-effectively as possible to accelerate entry to high-paying jobs.

As a diverse residential two-year college and an HBCU, RBC and VSU have solid track records of delivering high-quality education to historically underserved audiences. The Virtual TPS School will continue to focus on the underserved while broadening the audiences that each partner institution currently addresses. This partnership can potentially be a significant new source of revenue for RBC after the first six years of operation.

Research and Innovation / Grants

In 2022 RBC established a new Office of Research and Innovation in an attempt to secure grant funds to more fully support its mission and strategic priorities. As of the time of this writing, RBC has submitted ten grant proposals to secure funding from federal government agencies, congressional offices, foundations, and other well-known grantors. Those ten submitted grant

applications total over \$22 million of awards that would positively impact FY2023 resources. This aggressive initiative is expected to yield at least \$2 million in FY2023 alone, and much more in the years to follow.

Due to RBC's diverse student population and its extensive system of support for first-generation and underrepresented students, the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Post-Secondary Education designated RBC as an eligible institution under Title III and Title V of the Higher Education Opportunity Act. Accordingly, in June 2022, RBC submitted two Title III proposals:

Through the Competitive Preference Priority grant opportunities, the *Upward Bound Math and Science (UBMS) Program* was designed and solicited to serve 60 at-risk students under an agreement with Petersburg City High School. The program would provide rigorous academic and social interventions, enrichment activities, and social services to support projects designed to prepare high school students for post-secondary education programs that lead to careers in math and science. The award of this grant to RBC would yield \$285,000 per annum in new revenue for each of five years.

RBC also developed and submitted a proposal to help student veterans through a *Veterans Upward Bound (VUB) program*. RBC's VUB goal is to serve at least 125 veteran students through rigorous academics, social intervention programming, enrichment activities, and social services that prepare, motivate, and assist military veterans in developing skills necessary for successful post-secondary education programs. The award of this grant to RBC will yield \$285,000 per annum in new revenue for each of five years.

Shared Consortium

In a shared services consortium, a group of institutions collaborate to manage shared service programs designed to help realize additional value and achieve administrative excellence. Historically, standard shared services include finance, accounting, human resources, and information technology. RBC's shared services consortium will allow the College to produce new revenue, gain efficiencies, and decrease costs associated with non-core business functions. In addition, the shared services consortium would enable RBC to fund other vital strategic priorities.

RBC is currently completing phase one of a three-phase implementation process. The Request for Proposals (RFP) has been awarded. RBC has selected a private sector vendor to establish the consortium and seek higher education partners. The vendor assesses transaction records to determine program viability, with collections as the first focus area. W&M and VSU have expressed interest in this partnership.

University Center

The University Center will allow RBC students to obtain a bachelor's degree in partnership with Virginia State University and Virginia Wesleyan University. Students can stay on RBC's campus for their third and fourth years and continue to be taught by RBC professors while receiving college credit toward their four-year degree. This approach maintains RBC's affordability by charging RBC tuition for another institution's 3rd and 4th year college credits. The University Center will provide RBC students additional university and program options for completing their baccalaureate degree over time. It is anticipated that the Center will further bolster retention rates at RBC and its partner institutions, and increase the number of Virginia residents with a bachelor's degree who are ready to enter the workforce or embark upon terminal degrees.

The University Center has been fully implemented and will begin accepting students beginning Fall 2022.

Verto Education

Verto Education is a private company that provides transformative study abroad experiences to American students by partnering with over 70 well-known U.S. colleges and universities nationwide. Since 2020 Verto Education, in partnership with RBC, has offered credit-bearing, globally focused courses to support students seeking a productive and rewarding first year of college while studying abroad. RBC and Verto Education entered into a partnership agreement in May 2020 amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The RBC-Verto Education partnership represented an opportunity for RBC to expand its student enrollment and geographic reach via an innovative study-abroad experience that delivers a “gap year without the gap.” The RBC-Verto Education study-abroad program enabled first-year students to explore the world and consider their path forward while simultaneously earning transferable college credit and remaining on track with a traditional 4-year graduation timeline.

The Verto partnership provided an excellent opportunity to expand the breadth of the College’s Guaranteed Transfer agreements and International Student Experience initiatives—especially for underserved student populations—while positively contributing to RBC’s bottom line and overall fiscal health. In addition, Verto’s extensive international network offers RBC students the opportunity to study RBC courses abroad to jump-start their post-secondary careers.

Over the last two fiscal years, the study abroad program has provided almost 15,150 credit hours to over 500 full-time equivalents and realized nearly \$750,000 in revenue.

Summary

Over the past decade, Richard Bland College of William & Mary has been intentional in setting and achieving its sustainability goals. Through extensive reorganization for efficiency, new strategic partnerships, and innovative programming, RBC is an emerging model for higher education in the Commonwealth. This new model of higher education prioritizes clear and well demarcated pathways for student credentialing and an accelerated pathway to well-paying jobs in high demand fields.

Sincerely,



Debbie L. Sydow, Ph.D.
President