



# 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

**RE:** Progress Report: Exploring and Expanding Partnership Opportunities

**DATE:** July 1, 2023

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.

### Partnership Opportunities

#### **Auxiliary Services**

RBC manages an auxiliary services enterprise designed to supplement College operations. The enterprise's most significant functional areas (98%) are dining, catering, and student housing. The enterprise is further supported through cash sales, facility rentals, a campus market, 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.

In FY23, RBC entered into a housing agreement with Virginia State University (VSU) to accommodate additional VSU students on RBC's campus. This partnership generated approximately one million dollars in additional auxiliary services revenue. In addition, RBC's Creative Services Group produced a successful ad campaign to increase the traditional student population living on RBC's campus. In total, year over year, RBC saw an increase of 65% in housing revenue and an increase of 33% in meal plan sales compared to FY22 figures.

## **Dual Enrollment**

Dual enrollment allows students taught at home or through a public/private high school to take college-level courses and earn 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 degree while simultaneously 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 with the educational credentials to teach at the college level.

In partnership with two county school divisions in northern Virginia, RBC enrolled over 809 students in dual enrollment courses in the 2022-23 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 784 students. During the 2022-2023 academic year, RBC helped more than 1,593 students to earn college credits, with 21 students graduating with an associate degree.

With nearly two dozen school partners, 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.

## **DroneUp Flight Academy & UAS Certificate**

DroneUp, a drone flight and delivery service company headquartered in Virginia Beach, has entered into a multimillion-dollar contract with Walmart to provide drone delivery services for its United States stores. With a need to train drone pilots to fulfill this contract, RBC was selected as the site for DroneUp's training, research and development facility. The partnership between RBC and DroneUp has resulted in the construction of their flight academy on the RBC campus and DroneUp and RBC will train and credential thousands of pilots at this facility over the next few years.

To date, the partnership has enabled DroneUp to lease land from the College for the construction of their flight academy and has rented campus housing, office, and classroom space. DroneUp's long-term plan involves investing \$20 million into a permanent research and development facility that is anticipated to create over 100 new jobs in the Petersburg region. Since entering into the partnership, over 150 drone pilots have been trained at the flight academy on campus. Construction for the research and development facility is expected to commence over the next 12-18 months.

The drone students reside on campus and earn twelve college credits and a certificate in Uncrewed Aerial Systems (UAS). The program builds upon the skills established by the FAA Part 107 Commercial Drone license and provides in-depth coverage of the operational requirements needed to plan and complete advanced manual and autonomous missions. The certificate highlights additional coverage in all areas, including piloting, crew resource management, communications, maintenance, data processing, and risk management. This course

will develop advanced UAS skills, helping students to become exemplary candidates through a guided pathway for positions across the UAS Industry.

Richard Bland College supports the Certificate in Uncrewed Aerial Systems but has equivalencies to 2-Year and 4-Year counterparts, both In-State and Out of State. This certificate will help build the foundation for a preeminent UAS Certificate and Associate of Science in the UAS Program that will match benchmarks with UAS leaders nationwide. The UAS certificate also supports Richard Bland College's Natural Science and Math Department by expanding into new STEM fields.

Through this unique partnership, RBC has received approximately \$600k in revenue for FY23.

### **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 38 chapters nationally.

In the spring of 2021, through a GO Virginia grant and collaboration with the Commonwealth's Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CCAM), RBC launched the first and only FAME Chapter in Virginia with nine (9) industry partners 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 industry partners while completing classes to obtain their associate degree. Since its inception, RBC has experienced a 66% increase in industry partners by adding six (6) in less than two academic years. The College's fifteen (15) industry partners include, AMPAC Fine Chemicals, Amsted Rail, BluePrint Automation, Civica Rx, Coesia, Concrete Pipe & Precast, EPT Connectors, HEYCO, Jewett Automation, Niagara Bottling, Oran Safety Glass, Phillip Morris USA, Phlow, Sabra Dipping Company, and Super Radiator Coils.

Through the FAME Chapter, RBC's partnership with CCAM helps local manufacturers by hiring competent local students, and it helps students by providing them with good-paying jobs that result in little to no college debt and accelerate their careers in high-demand fields. Students who enroll in the RBC FAME program begin making around 25k-30k while enrolled in classes. Upon completing the program, students who opt to start working full-time after graduating estimate a salary range of \$45k-60k.

This partnership addresses the immediate need to fill tomorrow's advanced manufacturing jobs and positions students with a solid education foundation that can be applied to a baccalaureate degree or other academic goals. RBC's FAME partnership is a strategic step that connects businesses to higher education meaningfully, attracting technically skilled students who bring unique life experiences that diversify the RBC campus and the workforce.

### **Global Student Success Program**

RBC and Navitas have partnered to facilitate the Global Student Success Program (GSSP). Navitas is an Australian-based company that is a respected leader in international recruitment

and education services. Navitas supports college and university partners' global reach and strategic goals. Navitas provides its partners access to resources and expertise to help drive large-scale initiatives that deliver tangible, lasting benefits to students, faculty, and staff. RBC sought out this partnership to add diversity to its campus and is Navitas' only two-year college partner. The partnership adds cultural diversity to the general student population at RBC, 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. The program has provided almost 3,500 credit hours to 115 full-time equivalent students and collected over \$2.2 million in revenue. RBC has experienced nearly 100% retention in this program, and of the students who have graduated, over 70% have transferred to the top 100 schools in North America. Additionally, the international students ranked faculty satisfaction at 100% and overall college experience at 83% in the fall 2023 student survey conducted by Navitas. This partnership will continue to expand as RBC strategizes to improve recruitment techniques and support services. RBC and Navitas have set a goal of 81 international students by 2027.

### **Innovation Park**

RBC has received authorization from the Virginia General Assembly and the William & Mary Board of Visitors to enable the Richard Bland College Foundation Board the authority to develop an innovative business park on underutilized campus property. The Innovation Park, a 333-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 workers to support the Innovation Park's industries. The property will remain state property and be utilized by businesses for specified periods through ground lease agreements.

It is anticipated that the first tenant in the Innovation Park will be DroneUp. This Virginia Beach company has already established a flight academy on campus and is currently utilizing campus space for housing students, administrative offices and for drone flight research and development. DroneUp plans to start construction in 12-18 months for their research and development facility.

Development of the Innovation Park master plan is complete and the site is certified for tier 4 construction opportunities. An architectural firm has created the Park's design, including parcels for lease, roads, access points, and construction standards. 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 Innovation 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, the Innovation Park businesses will create new high-paying jobs in Dinwiddie and Prince George Counties, and the Petersburg metropolitan region.

### **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.

On June 1, 2023, RBC submitted a Laboratory School proposal in partnership with Petersburg City Public Schools (PCPS), William & Mary School of Education, Longwood University, and STRIDE/Virginia Virtual Academy. When funded, the STEM Propulsion Laboratory School at RBC will expand access to high-quality STEM education and STEM careers for traditionally underrepresented students from urban and rural communities surrounding the College and across the Petersburg metropolitan region. As students develop their knowledge and skills in STEM, teachers will also have a wide range of professional development opportunities provided by the Lab School. In addition to facilitating National Board Certification, the Lab School will develop, implement, and share best practices in accelerated STEM education for student populations traditionally underrepresented in STEM Careers. RBC will initiate the partnership when it is selected by the Governor’s administration.

### **RBC-VSU Joint 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 (Virtual TPS) to meet the 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, RBC and its partner, VSU, have solid track records of delivering high-quality education to historically underserved audiences. The Virtual TPS School will continue focusing on underserved students while broadening the audiences each partner institution currently addresses. This partnership could be a significant new source of revenue for RBC after the first six years of operation.

### **Research, Innovation and Grants**

In 2022, RBC established a new Office of Research and Innovation (ORI). Over the first year, ORI has received approximately \$1.5 million in grant funding. This includes funding from the National Science Foundation, Congressional spending request, U.S. Study Abroad, State Government – World Learning, Anthem, the Department of Labor, and the Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women.

These funds include STEM and industry initiatives, campus engagement activities, mental health services, and international travel for faculty and students.

In FY23, ORI plans to submit 12 grants totaling over \$10 million dollars to secure funding from federal government agencies, congressional offices, foundations, and other well-known grantors. Funds awarded would positively impact FY2024 resources for the College. This aggressive



initiative is expected to yield at least \$2 million in FY2024 alone and much more in the following years.

FY23 will also bring innovation to the office campus for RBC. While RBC accepts international students, we do not have a US student abroad program. In FY 23-24, the ORI will launch its International RBC (I-RBC) program. I-RBC will utilize funding from the World Learning program as a catalyst to build an exchange program with the full support and engagement of administration, faculty, students, and the community. The goal of this funded program is to establish a study abroad program in Madagascar that provides international opportunities focused on:

- Promoting biodiversity research
- Understanding the human condition through development and humanitarian assistance
- Building health equity leaders utilizing mindfulness practices in virtual reality focused on cultural competence and understanding, positive & health psychology, well-being, and standards of care

These funds will be used to create the I-RBC Program and will be the launch of RBCs' customized US exchange delivery approach to increase young adults' access to and successful utilization of the global exchange program. This program will complement our new virtual reality lab housed in the College's new Academic Innovation building.

### **University College**

The University College is an innovative approach to expanding transfer options for RBC graduates. In partnership with Virginia State University and Virginia Wesleyan University, Richard Bland College students can earn a Baccalaureate degree while remaining on campus at RBC for an additional one or two years.

This approach maintains RBC's affordability by maintaining RBC tuition for the partner institution's 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year college credits. The College is anticipated further to 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. In its inaugural year, the program enrolled seven students (Beacon Scholars) who will take advantage of the unique partnership between Virginia Wesleyan University and Richard Bland College. The goal for next year is to increase participation by at least 50%.

### **Transfer Scholars Network**

In December 2022, RBC was invited to join the Transfer Scholars Network (TSN) as an affiliate. The TSN connects high-achieving two-year college students to dedicated admissions representatives from top four-year colleges. These TSN institutions have some of the nation's most generous financial aid programs.

With RBC's full membership expected in the summer of 2023, the affiliate membership provides Richard Bland College students access to Amherst College, Cornell University, MIT, Mount Holyoke College, Rice University, and Smith College. The exclusive partnership will expand the offerings also to include Bowdoin College, Johns Hopkins University, Pomona College, Princeton University, Swarthmore College, Williams College, and Yale University. Admission

to these institutions is not guaranteed, but the acceptance rate of TSN students is higher than that of similar non-TSN applicants.

### **Shared Services Consortium**

In a shared services consortium, a group of institutions collaborates 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 two of a three-phase implementation process. Phase 1, now complete and operational, recovers student debt for participating institutions of higher education (IHE). Phase 2 includes assessment and redesign of newly designed back-office financial processes and partner onboarding. Phase 3 provides additional onboarding opportunities and further expansion to other IHE's in the consortium model.

The consortium will operate more efficiently, reducing duplicate staffing, and increasing effectiveness across all partners.

### **Summary**

Over the past decade, Richard Bland College of William and Mary has intentionally set and achieved 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 path to well-paying jobs in high-demand fields.