



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, 2024

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.

In FY23, RBC entered into a housing agreement with Virginia State University (VSU) to accommodate additional VSU students on RBC's campus. This partnership has generated approximately two million dollars in additional auxiliary services revenue.

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.

Twenty-four partnerships have been established with Governor's schools in Petersburg and Fredericksburg, private schools throughout the Commonwealth, and public school divisions across central and northern Virginia. During the 2023-2024 academic year, RBC helped more than 1,991 students earn college credits, with 64 graduating with an associate degree. This yielded a 25% increase in student enrollment and over a 200% increase in associate degree completion.

The enrollment increases are a direct result of two new school partnerships and course expansions at three additional high schools. With two dozen school partners, RBC's dual enrollment program 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.

The partnership has enabled DroneUp to lease land from the College to construct their flight academy and has rented campus housing, office, and classroom space. DroneUp's long-term plan involves investing \$20 million into a brick-and-mortar research and development facility that is anticipated to create over 100 new jobs in the Petersburg region. Since entering into the partnership, over 220 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 train 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. It provides in-depth coverage of the operational requirements 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 1 million in revenue since FY23.

Global Student Success Program

RBC has transitioned its partnership with Navitas to an in-house international student recruitment and success program known as iRBC. This change allows the College to provide more personalized support and tailored services for international students, ensuring their needs are met more effectively and efficiently.

The iRBC initiative will leverage partnerships with educational consultants from China, Canada, France, Australia, India, and Spain to offer educational opportunities to international students seeking a US education. By managing recruitment internally, RBC aims to enhance the overall experience for international students, from initial contact to graduation.

The iRBC initiative aims to build on the success of the GSSP by maintaining a diverse and vibrant international student population at RBC. The iRBC program is anticipated to expand to over 80 international students on campus by Fall 2026 and more than 120 by Fall 2028. This new approach will ensure that RBC continues to provide a welcoming and supportive environment for international students, fostering academic excellence and cultural exchange.

Innovation Park

RBC has received authorization from the Virginia General Assembly and the William & Mary Board of Visitors to allow the Richard Bland College Foundation Board to develop and manage an innovative business park on underutilized campus property. The Innovation Park, a 180-acre parcel of undeveloped land surrounding the main campus, will complement regional and statewide economic development efforts by attracting businesses and emerging industries that would be enhanced through a relationship with RBC. Specifically, Innovation Park industry partnerships would be required to provide RBC students with internships and workforce development opportunities. 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 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. The master plan includes seven defined parcels for lease, roads, access points, and construction standards. Businesses selected to lease parcels in 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.

To support the site development and planning processes, an ad hoc Innovation Park Committee was officially created to collaborate with the President to 1) ensure that all terms and conditions of the ground lease are followed; 2) devise plans and strategies in alignment with College priorities to achieve established academic, economic development, and fiscal goals of the Innovation Park; and 3) lend expertise in areas of real estate, economic development, law, etc., to

ensure compliance and project integrity. The Committee shall regularly provide information and progress updates to the Board of Directors and perform all such duties as may be assigned to it by the Board of Directors.

Progress is also being made with industry partners regarding infrastructure development. Discussions with Mid-Atlantic Broadband Communities Corporation are ongoing, concerning a possible strategic partnership that could supply fiber line to the RBC campus.

The Innovation Park will provide rental revenue to the College and students will receive valuable work experience in emerging industries, preparing them for a competitive job market. In addition, the Innovation Park businesses will create new high-paying jobs in Dinwiddie and Prince George Counties, as well as the Petersburg metropolitan region.

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 included funding from the National Science Foundation, Congressional spending requests, 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.

These funds positively impacted the College's resources and allowed infrastructure changes such as hiring a Grants Manager and Grant Coordinators, purchasing outcome tracking software, and building faculty-student internships, scholarships, experiential learning opportunities, and paid work experiences.

In FY24, ORI submitted 14 grants totaling over \$12 million to secure funding from various sources. In response to these requests, RBC has received an additional 4.4 million dollars in grant funds for FY25, bringing our overall total grant funding to 5.9 million dollars to date. This aggressive RBC: Exploring and Expanding Partnership Opportunities initiative is expected to yield at least \$6 million in FY2025 alone.

FY25 will also bring innovation to the campus as RBC began its travel abroad by launching the first international trip to Madagascar, Africa (June 2024) through the International RBC (i-RBC) program. I-RBC will continue to 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. This funded program aims to establish multiple study abroad programs that provide international opportunities and build health equity leaders. The Madagascar, Africa iRBC program promotes biodiversity research and understanding the human condition through development and humanitarian assistance. FY25 will focus on creating a London i-RBC program with Engineered Arts and art literature. The U.S. Study Abroad Ideas program funds both international components.

The I-RBC Program is focused on RBCs' customized US exchange delivery approach to increase young adults' access to and successful utilization of the global exchange program. With this in mind, FY25 includes an additional focus on the new i-RBC "incoming" international

students. RBC is engaging in conversations with educational consultants from Spain, Africa, China, France, India, and Australia to increase the number of international students on campus. Through this global perspective, grant funding, and reinvigorating faculty and student experiential learning requests, RBC has increased our US experiential learning opportunities to include:

1. Utah Paleo Dig - Biology Department
2. New York Excursion - RBC Honors College, Student Success and Engagement/SGA
3. Savannah and Tybee Island, Georgia – Culture and Ecosystems
4. Miami, Florida, Healthcare systems - patient-centered care to diverse individuals

University College

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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 promotes degree affordability by maintaining RBC tuition rates for the students at the partner institution. The program enrolled seven students (Beacon Scholars) in its inaugural year. To increase access for future Beacon Scholars, Virginia Wesleyan University has expanded its enrollment options from Psychology and Business to all transfer majors. At Virginia State University, enrollment in the program increased by 100%, exceeding last year's target.

Transfer Scholars Network

After a successful pilot, Richard Bland College was granted full Aspen Institute's Transfer Scholars Network (TSN) membership. TSN connects high-achieving two-year college students with dedicated admissions representatives from top four-year colleges. These TSN institutions have some of the nation's most generous financial aid programs. Richard Bland College is one of only two TSN college partners in Virginia.

In its first year as a full member, one RBC student gained admission to Amherst College, which has a transfer acceptance rate of less than 4%. Significantly, the student will graduate debt-free through an annual Amherst financial aid package of \$96,000. Additionally, through TSN, the student was selected as a Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Scholar, with additional support of up to \$55,000 per year for as many as four years. The partner colleges and universities in the Transfer Scholars Network include Amherst College, Bates College, Bowdoin College, Columbia University, Cornell University, Johns Hopkins University, Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), Mount Holyoke College, Northwestern University, Pomona College, Princeton University, Rice University, Smith College, Swarthmore College, Wesleyan University, 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.

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.