



**Richard Bland College**  
*of WILLIAM & MARY*

**Approved by the William & Mary Board of Visitors on September 26, 2024**

**APPROVAL OF REVISIONS TO  
RICHARD BLAND COLLEGE'S 2024-2030 SIX-YEAR PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the Commonwealth of Virginia requires public colleges and universities submit a six-year plan approved by its Board of Visitors by October 1 of each odd numbered year and to provide revisions to the plan, if approved by the Board of Visitors, in each even numbered year;

**WHEREAS**, the Commonwealth of Virginia requires the administration of each college and university to provide a draft plan or draft revisions in advance of the final submission in July of each year; and

**WHEREAS**, the revised six-year plan incorporates the following updates:

- anticipation of independent board governance;
- prioritization of Level Two authority for IT and procurement;
- elimination of FAME program due to inadequate ROI; and
- planned revenues and expenditures consistent with Board of Visitors' approval of the college's FY25 budget.

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that upon recommendation of the President, the Board of Visitors approves Richard Bland College's 2024-2030 Revised Six-Year Plan in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 and subsequent guidance from the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia.

## **2023 SIX-YEAR PLAN NARRATIVE (Part II)**

**INSTITUTION:** Richard Bland College

### **OVERVIEW**

The six-year plan should describe the institution's goals as they relate to the Commonwealth's goals as articulated in the *Pathways to Opportunity: The Virginia Plan for Higher Education*; the Higher Education Opportunity Act of 2011 (TJ21); the Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act of 2005; and the Governor's objectives to prepare every graduate for success in life. Please use this opportunity to outline your institution's plans and objectives, especially as they relate to the Commonwealth's goals.

The instructions within the institutional mission and priorities section below ask for specific strategies related to affordability and access to quality postsecondary education that prepare students for success in life. Other sections offer institutions the opportunity to describe additional strategies to advance institutional goals and Commonwealth needs.

### **SECTION A: MISSION & PRIORITIES**

***Key question: What are your institution's unique strengths and how do those inform your strategic priorities?***

<b>A1. What is your institutional mission? Please share any plans you have to change your mission over the six-year period.</b>
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**A2. What are your institution's greatest strengths and areas of distinctiveness that it should continue to invest in? What are your institution's greatest opportunities for improvement?**

RBC prides itself on its ability to make a high-value college credential affordable and accessible to traditional and non-traditional students in the region and across the Commonwealth. The student experience at RBC is unparalleled amongst other two-year institutions as it offers a comprehensive university parallel experience at an affordable cost.

- Early completion
  - RBC has been hailed as a model for dual enrollment in the Commonwealth, enabling more than 2,000 high school students annually to complete college coursework.
  - RBC partners with dozens of public and private high schools across Virginia; Petersburg City Public Schools and Hopewell City Public Schools dual enrollment academies enable dozens of students to complete a high school diploma and a two-year college degree simultaneously.
  - RBC's University College program facilitates seamless transfer to 40+ university partners and enables students to complete 4-year degrees at VSU and VWU while continuing to benefit from the comprehensive approach and environment of support RBC offers on its campus.
- Innovative workforce preparedness programs
  - DroneUp Flight Academy & UAS coursework: A unique partnership with an industry leader, DroneUp, in which innovative coursework in uncrewed aerial systems has been designed to support trainees and offer students the opportunity to gain a credential in this rapidly evolving, high-demand field. In 2023 this collaboration was honored by The Association for Uncrewed Vehicles Systems International (AUVSI) with a second place AUVSI XCELLENCE Award in the Workforce Development category
- RBC has a robust on-campus employment program that offers students the opportunity to work on campus while developing core skills that will support them in their future careers. This program has been designed to align with the core competencies that prepare students for success in the workplace and lifelong career management. An internship model has been incorporated into on-campus employment to ensure that students are gaining mentorship while developing concrete skills in their department, which supports retention and progress towards their long-term goals. Guided Pathways for Success (GPS@RBC) commits to comprehensive guided pathways reforms through the following student value propositions:
  - easy to navigate onboarding;
  - clearly defined pathways that outline workforce-friendly majors and credentials, and effective processes for entering a pathway;
  - a work-integrated curriculum focusing on required soft skills;
  - fast track programs to get academically underprepared students into and through crucial English and math courses;
  - high-touch, intensive student-centric support across the college; and
  - tools for faculty, staff and students that provide useful information about assessment and progress.
- In 2022 RBC established the Office of Research and Innovation as a new venture intended to supplement revenue for RBC's mission-critical goals and strategic priorities, and to further advance financial sustainability. To date, program outcomes have exceeded expectations with grants yielding nearly \$10 million in grant revenue from NSF, DOL, NIH, etc., for student

mental health, supplemental STEM programming, funding to help students academically derailed by COVID to get back on track, to name a few.

Opportunities for improvement:

- Continued emergence as a new model for higher education in Virginia with a governance framework that allows for Board oversight that is focused on regional education and workforce needs as well as continued contributions to the Commonwealth's higher education goals, e.g., dual enrollment;
- Expanded opportunities for innovative programming and brokered agreements between and among educational, industry, and non-profit partners; and
- Expanded student support services focused on retention and completion through further development of Guided Pathways for Success (GPS@RBC) program.
- Expanded RBC Online offerings to include 8-10 week terms for flexible learning, stackable credentials integrated into long-term degree programs, and industry certifications to enhance employability, thereby increasing accessibility and providing robust online support services for student success.

**A3. What are the top 3-5 strategic priorities you are currently pursuing or planning to pursue in the next six years? Please explain how each strategy relates to the strengths and/or opportunities for improvement mentioned above and will ultimately drive better outcomes for students.**

RBC continues to capitalize on its unique position in Virginia public higher education, and RBC seeks to fully develop as a "new model" for higher education in the Commonwealth. RBC's priorities include:

**1. Independent Governance:**

During the 2023 Virginia General Assembly Session, Delegate Emily Brewer, Senator Frank Ruff, and Senator Tommy Norment introduced legislation (HB 1415, SB 1077, SB 1450) to create a new governance structure for Richard Bland College. This legislation would have created a new Board of Visitors to direct the affairs of Richard Bland and have other duties normally given to a BOV. SB 1077 passed the Senate 39-0, but both SB 1077 and HB 1415 were left in the House Appropriations Committee.

Local municipal boards, the RBC Foundation Board of Directors, and the William & Mary Board of Visitors approved resolutions in support of RBC's transition to an independent governance structure. A dedicated, independent RBC board of visitors will help to advance innovation and excellence as RBC continues to evolve as a new model for higher education in Virginia.

**2. Level Two Authorization**

Under Virginia's Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act, RBC is now the only institution of higher education in Virginia currently at Level One authority. During the upcoming six-year period, RBC intends to evaluate the feasibility of entering into one or more memoranda of understanding to obtain expanded operational authority. In particular, RBC is interested in pursuing operational authority in the areas of information technology and procurement.

**3. Learner Success Lab/Guided Pathways for Success (GPS@RBC)** will focus on holistic advising to include:

- Building out the infrastructure, including space and staffing, to support a more robust institutional work study (IWS) program which emphasizes career readiness. Career readiness provides a framework for addressing career-related goals and outcomes of

curricular and extracurricular activities, regardless of the student's field of study and an expansion of on-campus employment offers an ideal opportunity for this.

- Continue to implement curricular and structural changes that emphasize life design and experiential learning. Experiential learning and life design are effective means to drive positive learner outcomes because they increase engagement and relevance, which is essential to increasing student retention. Research suggests that people value their higher education experiences more when they see a strong connection among their education, careers, and day-to-day lives and RBC is committed to providing faculty and staff with the professional development opportunities needed to do this.

#### **4. Expanded Mental Health Services**

By nearly every metric, student mental health is worsening in the post-pandemic period. During the 2020–2021 school year, more than 60% of college students met the criteria for at least one mental health problem, according to the Healthy Minds Study, which collects data from 373 campuses nationwide (Lipson, S. K., et al., *Journal of Affective Disorders*, Vol. 306, 2022). In another national survey, almost three quarters of students reported moderate or severe psychological distress (National College Health Assessment, American College Health Association, 2021). In recent years, ever increasing numbers of students seek mental health services at RBC. RBC would like to provide appropriate resources in line with those offered at other schools throughout Virginia.

#### **5. RBC Online**

RBC Online will emphasize flexibility, accelerated learning, and market-driven certifications, aligning with RBC's vision to be a "new model" institution.

- Offering in-demand certifications and degrees in fields such as cybersecurity, cloud computing, and data science. RBC Online directly addresses the skills gap in the regional job market, thereby supporting local economic development.
- The online platform makes education more accessible to a diverse student body, including working professionals, adult learners, and K12 students, broadening RBC's reach and impact.
- Offering preparatory courses and dual enrollment opportunities for K12 students. RBC Online provides early exposure to college-level coursework, fostering readiness among high school students.
- Aligning the curriculum with national industry standards and certifications, RBC Online ensures students are competitive locally and nationally.

The online platform allows for rapid updates and integration of new technologies and methodologies, ensuring the curriculum remains relevant to current and future industry trends. The online model offers the potential for scalability, allowing RBC to expand its reach beyond the local region.

#### **6. VMSDEP**

State support is requested for the Commonwealth's Virginia Military Survivors' and Dependents' Education Program (VMSDEP). This critically important program has experienced significant growth in recent years and is expected to continue to grow. The requested amount reflects the estimated cost of FY24 actual foregone revenue. This amount has not been adjusted for any base or one-time state support resulting from the 2024 Special Session(s) pending final action and allocations by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. The College is committed to partnering with the Commonwealth to bolster the long-term sustainability of this important program.

**A4. What support can OpSix provide to help you achieve those strategies? Please include both budget and policy requests and reference Part I of your submission where appropriate.**

**Independent Board**

RBC is not requesting additional financial support for its pursuit of independent governing board; however, it would appreciate any support and backing OpSix and SCHEV can give to this initiative in the General Assembly. RBC is happy to provide additional support for its request.

**Level Two Status**

RBC is not requesting additional financial support for its pursuit of Level Two status; however, it would appreciate any support and backing OpSix and SCHEV can give to this project in the General Assembly. RBC is happy to provide additional support for its request.

**GPS@RBC (FY25 \$344,000 /FY26 \$:204,000)**

- **\$150,000: Pathways that link to regional and statewide workforce development needs**  
Student employment has proven to be an effective way for students to earn money and gain valuable experience while becoming more connected with their campus community. In 2020 RBC worked to develop and apply learning outcomes to all campus jobs that help students understand what they will learn on the job and to be able to apply these skills in future employment experiences. We plan to continue to expand student employment opportunities to include additional departments on campus; therefore, additional funding is requested to facilitate this expansion and meet the statewide increase in the minimum wage rate.
- **Student Employment Internship Coordinator (FY25: \$54,000 /FY26: \$54,000)**  
Serves as the primary point of contact for field education with students, faculty and community partners while providing the highest level of customer services, coordinates with school director on field education faculty assignments and other relevant matters relating to delivery of field education services including problem solving of student situations.
- **\$50,000: Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) emphasis on free speech and civic engagement:** Student programming with an emphasis on supporting diversity, free speech, and civic engagement.
- **\$162,000: Three (3) Guided Pathways Life Coaches:** 3 coaches @ \$40,000 salaries +35% fringe benefits (\$54,000 each)
  - Life Coaches will provide tier-1 counseling, life skills, and resilience training grounded in culturally responsive pedagogies and person-first practice cultivated in fields such as social work through mental health skill building.
  - These positions will fill a desperate need at RBC for student mental health and general wellness support, particularly support that addresses the diverse needs of our student body. Indeed, Abrams (2020) points out that in the wake of COVID-19, colleges and universities will need to invest more heavily in mental health and crisis services with the understanding that the college experience will look and feel very different from the way it did before.
  - Finally, the addition of a Life Coach position to the Student Success team (and student support services more broadly) serves to differentiate mental health and general wellness support from the work of Learner Mentors as coordinators of students' guided path through RBC including academic advising, career

counseling, and transfer counseling.

**Mental Health Student Services (FY25: \$499,750/FY26 \$499,750)**

There are three (3) mental health student services initiatives proposed for funding:

- **Mental Health Counselor (FY25: \$87,750/FY26: \$87,750)**  
Position is within Counseling Services department. Responsibilities include assessment of incoming students, providing individual and group psychotherapy, crisis management services, and providing outreach and prevention programming.
- **Mental Health Life Coaches: (FY25: \$162,000/FY26: \$162,000)**  
The Student Success team (and student support services more broadly) serves to differentiate mental health and general wellness support from the work of Learner Mentors as coordinators of students' guided path through RBC including academic advising, career counseling, and transfer counseling. Life Coaches will provide tier-1 counseling, life skills, and resilience training grounded in culturally responsive pedagogies and person-first practice cultivated in fields such as social work through mental health skill building. These positions will fill a desperate need at RBC for student mental health and general wellness support, particularly support that addresses the diverse needs of our diverse student body.
  - 3 @ \$40,000 salary + benefits
- **Telehealth/Student Health Program Expansion (FY25: \$250,000/FY26: \$250,000)**  
Continuation of and expansion of ProtoCall + telehealth services as well as an on-campus *Telehealth Facilitator position* (hourly at \$25-\$35 commensurate with experience) to assist with helping students understand and engage with telehealth services.  
*As noted during the Addressing Mental Health in our Schools and on our Campuses mental health summit at W&M during spring '23, to provide a premier education to our students, we need to address any barriers they may face. For RBC this includes a significant, thoughtful, expansion to the mental health services we provide.*

**VMSDEP (FY25 \$37,800/FY26 \$37,800)**

State support is requested for the Commonwealth's Virginia Military Survivors' and Dependents' Education Program (VMSDEP). This critically important program has experienced significant growth in recent years and is expected to continue to grow. The requested amount reflects the estimated cost of FY24 actual foregone revenue. This amount has not been adjusted for any base or one-time state support resulting from the 2024 Special Session(s) pending final action and allocations by the State Council of Higher Education for Virginia. The College is committed to partnering with the Commonwealth to bolster the long-term sustainability of this important program.

**SECTION B: STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE – ENROLLMENT VOLUME & COMPOSITION**

<b>B1. What do you see as the primary drivers of recent enrollment trends for your institution? Please reference any specific academic programs that have had a significant (positive or negative) effect on enrollment, if relevant.</b>

***Key question: How is your institution managing enrollment in light of state and national trends, and what are the financial implications?***

By being entrepreneurial and establishing strategic partnerships to achieve its mission and strategic

goals, RBC has managed to survive and 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 processes to ensure that all resources are directly aligned with student success and employment.

RBC's strategies include:

- **Market Share Increase:**

- Expanding recruitment efforts into new geographical areas, including underserved and rural regions, has opened up additional markets, bringing in students from diverse backgrounds who might not have otherwise considered RBC.
- Enhanced outreach efforts, including frequent visits by enrollment counselors to high schools and community events, have strengthened relationships with potential students and their influencers (teachers, counselors, and parents), leading to higher enrollment rates. These visits include information sessions and on-site admissions counseling.

- **Awareness Campaigns:**

- Implementing targeted advertising campaigns across various platforms, such as social media, local TV and radio stations, and online search engines, has raised awareness about RBC's offerings and advantages. These campaigns emphasize RBC's programs, affordability, first-generation friendliness, and strong transfer agreement offerings.

- **Student-Centric Processes:**

- Providing enhanced support for students in discovering their career paths has made RBC more attractive. This includes offering career counseling, workshops, and tools such as career assessments to help students align their educational goals with their career aspirations.
- Streamlined and supportive admissions processes have made it easier for prospective students to apply and enroll. Initiatives such as dedicated admissions advisors, timely and frequent follow-ups, and clear communication about the steps required for admission have reduced barriers and enhanced the overall student experience.

- **Increased Referrals**

- Ensuring current students have positive experiences through high-quality education, engaging campus activities, and supportive services has led to an increase in word-of-mouth referrals. In fact, 22% of RBC's Fall 2024 yield chose RBC due to a recommendation from a friend or relative.

- **Expanded dual enrollment opportunities with high school partners in the region and across the Commonwealth**

Dual enrollment allows students taught at home or through a public/private high school to take college-level courses to 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 2023-2024 academic year, RBC helped more than 1991 students to earn college credits, with 64 students graduating with an associate degree.

With 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.

Dual enrollment student population for FY24 was 1991. This population is projected to grow by 5% in FY24 and then by 3% YoY through FY30.

- **Athletics**

RBC has capitalized on its position as the only two-year residential College in the Commonwealth of Virginia, to expand its athletics offerings. Athletics has increased from 70 student athletes in 2018 to 172 student athletes in 2023 with plans to enroll more than 200 high-achieving student athletes competing across 14 sports in FY24. Athletics continues to be a driver in recruiting throughout the Commonwealth and beyond and bolsters auxiliary revenues as more than eighty percent (80%) of student athletes reside in on campus housing.

<b>B2. Please summarize your enrollment management strategy moving forward and the specific actions (if any) you are taking to implement that strategy.</b>
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Changes in enrollment processes that are customer-centric and focused on removing barriers are especially important when serving RBC's 50% first-generation student population. In January 2023, RBC was accepted into NASPA's First-Generation Scholars Program and is working closely with them to review the student lifecycle to ensure greater understanding and reduce barriers to entry. In addition, the College's Marketing & Communications department partners with the Enrollment Management area to drive enrollment through actionable social media platforms and traditional media outlets and forge innovative paths to target and reach prospective students and then continue to engage students throughout their RBC lifecycle and beyond with Emmy Award winning content designed to promote a return on investment.

RBC engaged with Huron Consulting Group in 2021 to refine its future state vision and identify avenues for growth and execution of that vision. Ongoing engagement focused to highlight high-value opportunities and an implementation plan to enable execution of stronger and more deliberate partnerships with both regional and virtual high schools to support development of a robust and diverse Virginia student pipeline. The expansion of existing partnerships and creation of new pipelines aims to serve all student populations, populations, specifically students ages 15-24, including dual enrollment students, those seeking the Transfer Virginia initiative, military personnel as well as student seeking educational flexibility.

To execute this vision, increase competitiveness, and grow enrollment, RBC has refined its strategic enrollment management strategy to explore three primary avenues:

- Core: strengthened relationships with local high schools which have traditionally provided traditionally provided the majority of RBC's resident student population and will likely

- continue to serve as an important pipeline for “traditional” associate’s degree seekers
- Adjacent: Forge partnerships with virtual high schools to tap into the sizable online secondary education market, which is experiencing rapid growth and is comprised of students who may be most apt to pursue an online associate’s degree
  - Transformative: Establish 4-year bachelor’s degree transfer partner programs aligned with fields experiencing material job growth (i.e., largely professionally oriented), and create programming for professional credentialing and two-year degrees in support of lifelong learning and career progression in these fields. This includes the launch of RBC Online, which provides accelerated, engaging, and flexible educational opportunities. RBC Online will offer market-driven certifications and accelerated Associate of Science degrees tailored for seamless transfer to four-year partner institutions or direct transition into the workforce.

Engagement at RBC is evolving to focus on deliberate student pathway counseling (GPS@RBC), career advising, high-touch student services, and partnership advising. RBC continues to utilize Huron Consulting’s work to engage with industry leaders to develop strategic partnerships that support innovation through specialized programming and the creation of meaningful credentials. The College’s Logistics, UAS, and Advanced Manufacturing programs exemplify programming focused on a student’s return on investment.

Going forward, the College will expand its engagements with regional industry partners to understand their needs and partnering to create credentials that lead to internship opportunities and future employment in areas in IT, cybersecurity, A.I. and healthcare. Internally we would focus on creating a strengthened process for collecting and reporting graduate employment outcome data, which may also strengthen our alumni relations work. All of this work emphasizes understanding the industry needs in Virginia and partnering to create programs that prepare learners to enter the workforce and retains talent in Virginia.

**B3. How ambitious/realistic/conservative are the enrollment projections you most recently submitted to SCHEV? What are the greatest unknowns or risks that could lead enrollment to differ significantly from your projections? Please reference national and statewide enrollment trends/projections and cite any other data (e.g. regional trends, performance of prior enrollment strategies) that informed your projections.**

RBC's enrollment management strategy focused on a mix of core, adjacent, and transformational student populations yielded an 2% YoY enrollment increases in its recently submitted SCHEV enrollment projections. RBC is shifting its focus to increasing high-school dual enrollment partnerships and workforce credentials to meet the needs of college-aged students who may no longer see the need for a traditional college education. With this shift in focus, the College projects its ability to continue to buck the national and statewide enrollment trends, as summarized by BCG (-21% nationally, 26% Virginia).

- RBC's full-time student enrollment has dropped by 2.4% over the last decade.
- RBC's part-time student enrollment has grown by 12.0% over the last decade.
- Overall, RBC has realized 4.7% annual growth since 2013

It is important to note that small fluctuations in the number of enrolled students can lead to pronounced fluctuations in RBC enrollment percentages; however, the College appears to be well-situated to survive and be a beneficiary of the enrollment cliff. Fall 2023 projections for schools surrounding RBC are tracking to align or surpass pre-Covid enrollment figures. Increased personnel will allow us to expand RBC's territory to increase awareness and recruitment in the Tidewater region. Marketing will complement the recruitment efforts in the Tidewater region by targeting student through different digital platforms. As COVID has waned, full-time student enrollment from 589 in Fall 2021 to 744 in Fall 2023.

Factors informing projections include

- **Historical Performance:** Recent enrollment trends at RBC have shown positive growth due to strategic initiatives such as market share increase through territory development, effective advertising campaigns, and enhanced student referral programs.
- **Enrollment Cliff:** The anticipated "enrollment cliff" due to declining birth rates in the early 2000s is expected to significantly impact college enrollments starting around 2025 and continuing through 2030.
- **Non-Consumption of Higher Education:** Increased post-high school options, such as vocational training, apprenticeships, and immediate entry into the workforce, coupled with heightened scrutiny of higher education's return on investment (ROI), have led to a segment of the population opting out of traditional college pathways.
- **Economic Uncertainty:** Economic downturns could affect families' ability to afford college, leading to potential declines in enrollment.
- **Competition from Other Institutions:**
  - Increased competition from other local colleges and universities, especially those expanding their online and dual enrollment programs.
  - The rise of national online education providers presents a competitive challenge that could affect our online program enrollments.

**B4. Explain the implications of your enrollment strategy on your institution's financials. Please consider impacts on both revenues (e.g., discounting, financial aid, net tuition revenue) and expenditures (e.g., costs to implement enrollment management strategies, costs of enrolling more students or students with different needs, cost-per-student impact of flat/decreased enrollment).**

- **Dual Enrollment** costs vary depending on program agreement:
  - There are minimal to no direct costs incurred by RBC for courses taught by qualified high school teachers.
    - RBC receives additional tuition revenue by filling course gaps taught by RBC-provided instructors for courses that the high schools cannot provide.
    - Providing these course gaps leads to course revenue that the College would otherwise not realize.
  - The high school partners pay student tuition and/or instructor compensation for online or on-campus courses taught by RBC-supplied instructors.
  - Post-COVID, dual enrollment students attending courses on RBC's campus have increased and exceeded Pre-COVID enrollment numbers.
    - RBC receives full tuition for these students.
  - Online or on-campus RBC-instructed courses (middle college numbers are up).
- **Student-athletes** account for approximately 200 full-time enrolled students per year.
  - Approximately 80% of student-athletes reside in on-campus housing, which equates to 50% of on-campus housing capacity.
- **UAS Flight Academy** – DroneUp anticipates enrolling up to 2000 trainees in the 12-credit UAS certificate program.
  - RBC expects to be awarding certificates in Spring 2024.
  - DroneUp provides additional annual auxiliary revenue of at least \$275,000 through facilities rentals.
  - The permanent DroneUP site should begin operation in FY25 and provide considerable auxiliary revenue through the Innovation Park lease agreement.
- **Department of Labor Grant:** RBC received a Department of Labor grant (award date January 2024). These funds will support our "Back on Track" program to support the development of a comprehensive back-to-education task force designed to effectively provide pathways for traumatized college and high school students to return to educational environments. This 3-year funded program (\$694,000) is linked to increasing student outcomes (admission, enrollment, retention and workforce development).

## **SECTION C: STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE – PROGRAM ALIGNMENT & PERFORMANCE**

### **COMPLETION OUTCOMES**

***Key question: How is your institution supporting all students to succeed in completing their degree in a timely manner?***

**C1. What are your highest-priority completion outcomes targets, both overall and for particular student segments? Please include aspirational targets, realistic expectations, and qualitative targets and specify by when you are aiming to meet those targets (e.g., X% 6-year graduation rate for Pell students by 2030).**

As part of its accreditation process with SACSCOC, RBC's Institutional Effectiveness team has identified six highest-priority outcome targets.

- A 35% graduation rate (150%) by Fall Cohort. For the 2017-2018 cohort, RBC maintained a 38% graduation rate (150%).
- A 90% Fall-to-Spring retention rate and a 65% Fall-to-Fall retention rate. For the 2017-2018 cohort, RBC maintained a 78% Fall-to-Fall retention rate.
- A 55% persistence rate
- A 70% four-year baccalaureate completion rate
- Growth in the percentage of dual enrollment students earning a C or better
- Growth in the number of associate degrees awarded to dual enrollment students

These outcomes corroborate RBC's delivery on Strategic Goal 1 its *Seize Your Potential* plan: offering "an educational product of high value with streamlined pathways." RBC seeks to meet these targets for both the student body as a whole and for different subpopulations based on race/ethnicity, Pell Grant status, etc.

Meeting the following targets would indicate development of student momentum toward credential attainment and ultimately the achievement of the above completion outcomes:

- Increase in Fall-to-Spring retention of students to 90% by 2030 (a 12% increase from 78%)  
Achieving this target will require an increase in Fall to Spring retention in the first year.
- Increase in Fall-to-Spring retention rate of FTIC Black or African American students in this category to 50% by 2030 (a 15% increase from 35%).
- Increase in graduation rate (150%) of full-time, first-time degree- or certificate-seeking students to 60% by 2030 (a 22% increase from 38%)

**C2. What specific strategies/actions are you planning to take to achieve those goals? How will you draw on successes/challenges from your prior completion outcome improvement strategies**

**Student Success**

Student success programs promote student engagement, learning and progress toward the student's own goals. Over the past several years, student success has been firmly cemented as a priority for Richard Bland College.

Guided Pathways for Success (GPS@RBC):

Since RBC's 2016 pilot project to test capacity for data-driven approaches to student retention and success, the College has experienced a fundamental cultural shift resulting in a commitment to comprehensive guided pathways reform. RBC has historically based development strategies around the four key principles found in the American Association of Community Colleges (AACC) Pathways Project: (1) map pathways to student end goals, (2) help students choose and enter a program pathway, (3) keep students on path, and (4) ensure that students are learning. RBC's previous Exceptional Student Experience framework was adapted from these principles, but exigencies and

resource limitations led to the delay of important aspects of the pathways work of ESE@RBC. Its successor, the Guided Pathways for Success (GPS@RBC) framework, is the primary focal point of the RBC six-year plan and the future-sighted strategic plan of the College. It commits to comprehensive guided pathways reforms through the following student value propositions:

- easy to navigate onboarding,
- clearly defined pathways that outline workforce-friendly majors and credentials, and effective processes for entering a pathway,
- a work-integrated curriculum focusing on required soft skills,
- fast track programs to get academically underprepared students into and through crucial English and math courses,
- high-touch, intensive student-centric support across the college, and
- tools for faculty, staff and students that provide useful information about assessment and progress.

#### Student Health Program Expansion

Richard Bland College does not have an infirmary and did not have any related health care support prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the pandemic and the need to develop health care strategies, RBC entered into an agreement with Virginia Commonwealth University to provide virtual health care for our rural, first generation, residential community. A VCU Health physician would virtually meet with a student exhibiting symptoms and develop a treatment plan. This program was a success for the College and was extremely helpful in the management of COVID cases on campus. It was an important strategy for determining isolation and quarantine protocols to keep the community safe. The tele-med health program was expanded in the second semester to include follow up appointments at local VCU Health clinics.

#### Student Employment

Student employment has proven to be an effective way for students to earn money and gain valuable experience while becoming more connected with their campus community. In 2020 RBC worked to develop and apply learning outcomes to all campus jobs that help students understand what they will learn on the job and to be able to apply these skills in future employment experiences. We plan to continue to expand student employment opportunities to include additional departments on campus; therefore, additional funding is requested to facilitate this expansion and meet the statewide increase in the minimum wage rate.

<p><b>C3. How will you use existing/recently provided resources to execute those strategies? Will you be requesting incremental state resources? Please state the request and rationale and explicitly tie to Part I of your planning template.</b></p>
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## **Student Health Program**

Richard Bland College does not have an infirmary and did not have any related health care support prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result of the pandemic and the need to develop health care strategies, RBC entered into an agreement with Virginia Commonwealth University to provide virtual health care for our rural, first generation, residential community. A VCU Health physician would virtually meet with a student exhibiting symptoms and develop a treatment plan. This program was a success for the College and was extremely helpful in the management of COVID cases on campus. It was an important strategy for determining isolation and quarantine protocols to keep the community safe. The tele-med health program was expanded in the second semester to include follow up appointments at local VCU Health clinics.

## **GPS@RBC**

RBC received \$300,000 in FY23 and is requesting full funding to implement the remainder of the guided pathways to avoid passing on the costs to students. Resource reallocation could absorb about 25% of the \$842,190.00 annual costs of guided pathways implementation over the next four years through the placement of current personnel in new roles, leaving 75% of implementation costs remaining: \$631,642.00 per year for four years.

## **Incremental State Resources Requests**

### **Mental Health Student Services (FY25: \$499,750/FY26: \$499,750)**

As referenced earlier, student mental health is worsening nationally and in the Commonwealth. RBC has continued to see increasing numbers of students seeking mental health services to cope with everyday stressors, many of which continue to be amplified post-COVID. Existing RBC mental health staff has reached its maximum caseload as students continually seek counselor services.

There are three (3) mental health student services initiatives proposed for funding:

#### **1. Mental Health Counselor (FY25: \$87,750/FY26: \$87,750)**

- a. Position is within Counseling Services department. Responsibilities include assessment of incoming students, providing individual and group psychotherapy, crisis management services, and providing outreach and prevention programming. Justification: workload demand exceeds resources of existing Counselor

#### **2. Mental Health Life Coaches: (FY25: \$162,000/FY26: \$162,000)**

- a. The Student Success team (and student support services more broadly) serves to differentiate mental health and general wellness support from the work of Learner Mentors as coordinators of students' guided path through RBC including academic advising, career counseling, and transfer counseling. Life Coaches will provide tier-1 counseling, life skills, and resilience training grounded in culturally responsive pedagogies and person-first practice cultivated in fields such as social work through mental health skill building.
- b. These positions will fill a desperate need at RBC for student mental health and general wellness support, particularly support that addresses the diverse needs of our diverse student body.
- c. 3 @ \$40,000 salary + benefits

#### **3. Telehealth/Student Health Program Expansion (FY25: \$250,000/FY26: \$250,000)**

Continuation of and expansion of ProtoCall+ telehealth services as well as an on-campus Telehealth Facilitator position (hourly at \$25-\$35 commensurate with experience) to assist

with helping students understand and engage with telehealth services.

As noted during the Addressing Mental Health in our Schools and on our Campuses mental health summit at W&M during spring '23, to provide a premier education to our students, we need to address any barriers they may face. For RBC this includes a significant, thoughtful, expansion to the mental health services we provide.

**Guided Pathways for Success (GPS@RBC): (FY25: \$344,000/FY26: \$204,000)**

Student success programs promote student engagement, learning and progress toward the student's own goals. Over the past several years, student success has been firmly cemented as a priority for Richard Bland College.

There are four (4) student success initiatives proposed for funding:

**1. Student Employment (FY25: \$150,000/FY26: \$150,000)**

Student employment has proven to be an effective way for students to earn money and gain valuable experience while becoming more connected with their campus community. In 2020 RBC worked to develop and apply learning outcomes to all campus jobs that help students understand what they will learn on the job and to be able to apply these skills in future employment experiences. We plan to continue to expand student employment opportunities to include additional departments on campus; therefore, additional funding is requested to facilitate this expansion and meet the statewide increase in the minimum wage rate.

**2. Student Employment Internship Coordinator (FY25: \$54,000 /FY26 \$54,000)**

Serves as the primary point of contact for field education with students, faculty and community partners while providing the highest level of customer services, coordinates with school director on field education faculty assignments and other relevant matters relating to delivery of field education services including problem solving of student situations.

**3. Center for Teaching and Learning (FY25: \$50,000)**

Researchers note that institutions of higher learning require multiple teams of cross-unit expertise to make progress. One researcher (D'Avanzo, 2009) identifies the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) as one such team, presenting the CTL as a nexus for cross-college communication as well as the refining of assessment and evaluation practices. Investment in a CTL – particularly one invested in the development of instructional technology and/or distance education – can prove a financial boon to institutions.

**4. GPS Program Components - Course Redesign for DE&I (FY25: \$90,000)**

RBC offers courses in over 30 different areas of academic focus ranging from Art to Theatre, all transferrable to four-year Virginia institutions. Over 70% of student respondents to the TOCAR survey administered by the Racial Justice & Equity task force agreed or strongly agreed that RBC should offer more courses focused on racial issues, while 63% of student respondents agreed or strongly agreed that all students at RBC should be required to complete at least one course that includes analysis and skills needed for dismantling racism.

Following the Modern Language Association's model for Humanities Innovation Grants – grants that support the development of courses and other educational programs aimed at building enrollments and revitalizing students' interest in the humanities – RBC will offer

**POST-COMPLETION OUTCOMES**



**Key question: How is your institution preparing all students for success beyond completion (e.g., career preparation)?**

**C4. Please explain how you monitor post-completion outcomes (e.g., employment rates, wage attainment, debt load, upward mobility). What data do you collect? What metrics are you monitoring most closely? What do the data reveal about your institution's greatest strengths and areas for improvement with respect to post-completion outcomes? Please include any relevant data/reports in the appendix or as a separate attachment, including any data that captures outcomes by school/department/program.**

**Student Success**

Three specific data points corroborate RBC's delivery on Strategic Goal 1 of its *Seize Your Potential* plan (detailed in section C1):

- Median earnings of students who received federal student aid from the college at two (2), five (5), and ten (10) years after starting at RBC.
  - Differentiating students who obtained a credential (degree and/or certificate) from RBC from those who did not would provide further evidence of the credential's value.
- Reduction of the number of students who received federal student aid from the college who have defaulted and who are delinquent in loan repayment.
- Placement rates of students who received federal student aid from the college in local industries at two (2), five (5), and ten (10) years after starting RBC.
  - Differentiating who obtained a credential (degree and/or certificate) from RBC from those who did not would provide further evidence of that credential's value.

**C5. What specific strategies/actions, including potential changes to your program portfolio or curriculum, are you planning to take to maximize the career readiness and job attainment of all students across programs of study, including increasing early career exposure for students (e.g., internships) during their time at your institution? How will you draw on successes/challenges from prior initiatives?**

In the Fall of 2024, a new course proposal will be put forward to offer a credit-based Internship course that allows students to earn academic credit for relevant work experience. The addition of this course will be consistent with the way our top transfer institutions offer career readiness opportunities. This opportunity will encourage students to participate in for-credit, structured and supervised internships with a focus on their intended field of study. Internships will provide students with experience in a professional setting outside the classroom and enrich the learning process by supplementing academic fundamentals with experiential learning opportunities.

In 2017-19 a thorough review of on-campus student employment was conducted (see attached report). At that time the expansion of on-campus employment opportunities was identified as a tool to support student retention, persistence, and financial security. A revisiting of this study is needed to meet the needs of the post-pandemic educational and work environments. Expanding on campus employment opportunities will be a strategy used to maximize career readiness and job attainment of students across various programs of study, via increased early career exposure on campus.

Through the ACE Learner Success Lab process, many connections were made with local industry partners. We will revisit, revive, and leverage those relationships to support internship opportunities for RBC students in the community. A focus of our career readiness and job attainment initiatives will

be fostering internship opportunities in the local community, with an emphasis on retaining workforce talent in the Commonwealth.

In terms of addressing challenges, this type of expansion to early career exposure and readiness will require a dedicated staff person that manages external relationships with industry partners and provides broad oversight, including curriculum and student learning outcome oversight for on-campus employment. Dedicated staff, funding, and space for this expansion will be needed to support the expansion.

**C6. How do you intend to use existing/provided resources to execute those strategies? Will you be requesting incremental state resources? Please explicitly tie to Part I of your planning template.**

RBC is committed to increasing student work opportunities as a means of increasing student completion rates and tying to post-completion outcomes. Existing resources and incremental state resource requests are outlined in C3.

## **WORKFORCE ALIGNMENT**

***Key question: How are your institution's programs of study and degree conferrals aligned with the evolving talent needs of the Commonwealth?***

**C7. For which specific workforce needs is your institution best positioned to supply talent, based on regional, industry, or occupation alignment?**

Through the American Council on Education's Learner Success Lab, RBC consulted with local industry partners and community stakeholders to reconfigure its degree offerings to be responsive to these partners'/stakeholders' personnel needs. RBC thus offers the following specialized "career tracks" as concentrations of their foundational associate degree programs:

- Behavioral Sciences
- Business Administration
- Clinical Lab Sciences
- Life Science
- Math/Computer Science
- Physical Science

These offerings suggest institutional strength in meeting personnel needs in mental health, medical/STEM, and commerce sectors for the Virginia Gateway Region.

- Advanced Manufacturing
- Uncrewed Aerial Systems
- Pre-Nursing (Bon Secours partnership)

**C8. What specific strategies/actions is your institution planning to take to better align your program offerings or degree conferrals to current and projected workforce needs? Please provide a list of specific programs you intend to sunset or grow in the next 6 years to increase alignment, partnerships/initiatives you intend to launch or deepen, etc. If you intend to launch any new programs, please explain why your institution is particularly well-suited to succeed in that area.**

Through strategic industry and community partnerships RBC is well positioned to understand and meet the workforce needs of our area, and support retaining talent in the Commonwealth. In the next six years RBC plans to continue to leverage and expand existing relationships with industry partners to inform and ensure that our programs align with workforce needs.

An emphasis will be placed on expanding micro-credentials and certificates that help learners develop tangible skills that prepare them for high-paying jobs, as they pursue their associate degrees. These short, focused credentials will be designed to provide in-demand skills, know-how and experience, while providing a pathway to a certificate or full degree.

Area of focus may include Business Communication, Computer Information Systems, Cybersecurity and Networking, Internet and Information Technology, Health Professions Preparation, and Leadership.

## **SECTION D: STRATEGIC DEEP DIVE – FINANCIAL EFFECTIVENESS & SUSTAINABILITY**

### **AFFORDABILITY FOR STUDENTS & FAMILIES**

***Key question: How is your institution accounting for and improving affordability for students and families?***

**D1. What specific strategies/actions do you plan to take to improve affordability moving forward across your overall student body and priority subpopulations, and what is the expected impact? Please account for a broad range of factors including the full cost of attendance, net price, time to degree, debt load, etc.**

RBC remains committed to offering programs that link students to high-paying jobs while significantly reducing the cost of education for students and their families. The College is focused on providing gap funding opportunities for students, many of whom are first-generation and/or Pell-eligible, through its innovative programming options to enable students to attend college and graduate with little to no debt.

The following outlines the gap funding required Pell-eligible students for FY24:

- FY24 Pell Grant Funding: \$7395
- FY24 RBC Tuition (VA Resident Commuter): \$8850
- Gap funding required: \$1455 (covered through a combination of RBC Foundation scholarships and state-funded initiatives)

FY23 full cost of attendance for residential students, when factoring for room and board, was \$23,053 with an average net price of \$12,268. The net price decreases to 40% to 62% of the average net price for students whose family income is \$75,000 or lower. RBC has consistently been able to offer a residential, university-parallel program at a substantially lower net price than 4-Year comparison institutions within the Commonwealth.

**Dual Enrollment:** College level courses offered to high school juniors, seniors and homeschool students that fulfill both high school and college graduation requirements. Courses may be completed at their home high school for little to no cost. In addition, students can complete RBC instructor-led courses in-person or online. RBC partners with high schools to offer programs leading to full associate degrees through a combination of courses taught by credentialed high school instructors and RBC instructors. Students who complete the RBC associate degree program, or some portion, significantly reduce their overall college debt and time to completion.

**Promise Scholars:** This innovative program is designed to ease transfer from Richard Bland College (RBC) to William & Mary (W&M) for high-ability, Virginia residents who are eligible for a Pell Grant. The Promise Scholars Program will provide W&M courses at RBC, scholarship funds, guaranteed housing, peer-to-peer support, and mentorship to eligible students who have committed to transferring to W&M. Beginning in FY24, the Promise Scholars program is being expanded to other state four-year institutions. Students enrolled in the Promise Scholars program graduate from RBC and their transfer institution with little to no debt.

**Honors Program:** This program supports academic excellence and a culture of service through campus and community service, leadership opportunities, and examining global perspectives. Eligible students enrolled in the program have access to William & Mary Bridge Courses and the Bridge Guaranteed Admissions agreement for transfer to William & Mary. In addition, participants receive

\$500 per semester scholarship, access to honors faculty mentor and 1-1 Advising, access to Honors-to-Honors Transfer Agreements. The Honors Program is designed for enrolled students to graduate with an RBC associate degree on-time with reduced tuition debt.

**Foundation Scholarships:** Eligible students may receive endowed scholarships to help offset the cost of education. In FY23, the RBC Foundation provided \$300,000 in scholarships to approximately 125 students.

**Institutional work study – Resident Assistants:** RBC continues to offer positions as Residential Assistants and Desk Supervisors in residence life. We also offer many work study opportunities.

## REVENUE

**Key question: How is your institution approaching pricing and revenue management? What are the implications on long-term top-line financial health?**

**D2. Please explain the rationale behind your full pricing (i.e. published tuition & fees, including mandatory non-E&G fees) and financial aid award strategy (i.e. net tuition revenue projections). What data informed your assessment of T&F increase feasibility (e.g., market comparisons, student capacity to pay) and estimates of discounts/waivers/unfunded scholarships? What informed your strategy around financial aid awards, merit and need-based, particularly for various student segments by income level and academic preparation?**

When dual enrollment students are removed from the student body mix, income levels are readjusted and averaged over from 2011 to 2021 are as follows:

- 20% lower income (0 to 200% of Federal Poverty Level)
- 18% middle income (201 to 400% of Federal Poverty Level)
- 30% upper income (401% or greater than Federal Poverty Level)
- 33% unknown

### **FY24 Pricing Strategy:**

In a delicate balance to stay true to the College's commitment to serve first-generation and/or students from underserved populations and remain affordable, yet negate the impact of inflation the following tuition model was presented to and approved by the William & Mary Board of Visitors

- 5% tuition/3% mandatory fee increase
  - Tuition held steady for the previous 5 years
  - FY23 CPI: 5.8%
  - Offsets the impact of inflation on the cost of goods and services across operations
  - Offsets the unfunded portion of the 5% state salary increase effective June 1, 2023
- FY24 Tuition: \$300 increase YoY from FY23 for 1 year (\$10 per credit hour)
- FY24 Pell increase: \$500 award increase over FY23

RBC's total E&G funding—exclusive of direct financial aid to students—has increased by only \$6.5 million over the last 7 years during a period of long deferred investment in critical infrastructure, particularly financial and IT security systems and staff required to comply with state and federal regulations. Over the past decade, RBC has strategically grown new revenue streams to help offset operational expenses and to safeguard affordability for students and their families. Today auxiliary and other revenue account for \$7.7 million in FY24 compared to \$6 million generated by tuition and

fees. We have also maintained extremely lean and flexible operations, e.g., salary and wages account for only 53% (\$15 million) of RBC expenses in FY24.

The RBC Foundation awarded \$300,000 in scholarships in FY23 to additionally offset tuition increases and anticipates similar awards in FY24.

**FY25 and FY26 Pricing Strategy:** to continue to remain affordable while negating the impact of inflation

- 3% tuition/3% mandatory fee increase
- Continue to offset the impact of inflation on the cost of goods and services across operations
- Offset anticipated unfunded mandates
- Minimal tuition increases expected to be offset by YoY Pell award increases

### **Financial Aid Awards**

Financial aid is comprised of various awarding components to include (Federal Aid, State Aid, and Merit-Based Aid). Richard Bland College strategy adheres to federal, state, and institutional policies. As a result of adhering to those policies, parameters and guidelines have been built into our FAM system to support those policies. Those parameters are set to automatically award financial aid to include the following programs (Pell Grant, SEOG Grant, VGAP—State Grants and Loans). These programs are need-based programs and are awarded based on the results of the FAFSA. The FAFSA generates an EFC number; and the lower the EFC, the higher the financial aid offer will be. The FAFSA

### **D3. What do you expect to be the impact of your pricing/discounting approach on enrollment numbers/mix (if any) and net tuition revenue moving forward and why?**

RBC does not employ pricing/discounting for students; therefore, we do not anticipate any impact to net tuition revenue in the future.

- Student athletes are the only students who receive institutional unfunded scholarships.
- All other scholarships are funded.

RBC has experienced a significant positive impact on enrollment and financial position in part of the college's athletic programs. As the college expands the sports offered to its students, it has seen a continued increase in the athletic student population. With the number of student athletics on the rise, the college generates additional revenue from tuition, fees, housing, and meal plans. In FY21 a cost/benefit analysis was prepared by the college's finance department which took into consideration the cost of providing education, room and board for the student athletes, as well as the revenue provided from the student and appropriation revenue received per student. This study concluded that financially the athletics program for RBC is net positive. With a current student athlete goal of 200, the program generates over \$200,000 in additional revenue for the school. In addition to the revenue generated by the program, athletics brings an increase in enrollment for the school, with 80% of the student athletes living on campus. With additional students on the college campus, there is higher student engagement and involvement among the student body- from pep rallies to game times, the students at RBC come together to support athletics. By having the athletic programs, the College has also experienced a heightened college profile on a national level, with several teams competing and winning championships.

## **COST EFFECTIVENESS**

**Key question: How has your institution maintained bottom-line financial health and focused investment on the levers that will drive improvements in student outcomes?**

**D4. Reflect on the categories/subcategories of cost that have recently experienced the most significant increases on an absolute or per-student basis. What have been the primary drivers of those increases? Please be specific and include supporting data.**

**APA compliance: (funding/loading driven by APA requirements)**

- IT – unfunded mandates such as cloud-based solutions
- FINANCE - requirements based on APA audits to bolster finance operations (received funding)
- HR – APA compliance

**Administrative salaries:**

- Transfer programming initiative (\$135,000 salary + fringe)
- Office of Research and Innovation (new office, most positions are Grant-funded: \$390,000 salary + fringe)
- Athletics (all positions are auxiliary funded: \$879,120 salary + fringe)

**Office of Research and Innovation (ORI)**

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. In 2022, RBC established a new Office of Research and Innovation (ORI). Over FY23-24, RBC received approximately \$1.5 million in grant funding. This included 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. These funds positively impacted resources for the College 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 dollars to secure funding from various sources. In response to these requests, RBC has received an additional \$4.4 million in grant funds for FY25 bringing our overall total grant funding to \$5.9 million to date. This aggressive RBC: Exploring and Expanding Partnership Opportunities initiative is expected to yield **at least \$6 million in FY2025** alone.

**D5. What specific strategies/actions do you plan to take to contain/reduce key costs and improve fiscal health going forward while improving student outcomes? What are your objectives and what have been your results to date of any already-launched initiatives? What is the expected impact and timeframe of these strategies? Include any short-term costs that would need to be incurred to implement the strategies.**

**Innovation Park**

RBC has received authorization from the Virginia General Assembly and the William & Mary Board of Visitors to enable the RBC 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.

#### **Office of Research and Innovation (ORI):**

RBC received a Department of Labor grant (award date January 2024). These funds will support our "Back on Track" program to support the development of a comprehensive back-to-education task force designed to effectively provide pathways for traumatized college and high school students to return to educational environments. This 3-year funded program (\$694,000) is linked to increasing student outcomes (admission, enrollment, retention and workforce development).

In 2023, we received a Department of Justice, Office Against Violence Against Women (OVW), Campus Safety grant for \$300,000 over 3 years. The goal is to provide violence prevention events on campus linked to increase campus awareness and engagement opportunities. The National Science Foundation awarded \$400,000 under the NSF Enabling Partnerships to Increase Innovation Capacity (EPIIC) program (to support academic industry partnerships at RBC. This will assist with improving student practicum, internship and workforce opportunities on campus and with industry partners. To date, RBC has been notified of 2 additional awards for FY25. The first one for 1 million dollars is designed to build a marketing and engagement until, and the second award for 3.4 million will support the RBC rural student success initiative.

In FY24, ORI submitted 14 grants totaling over \$12 million dollars 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.

#### **Outsourcing for efficiency and to optimize focus on core mission**

- Virtual Registrar
- IT managed services



- Online counseling services

### **Operations and Facilities**

Non-instructional expenses: efficient ways to meet needs while maintaining instructional services.

Hiring more part-time, reduces benefits (operational) to allow funneling to instructional/student support full-time employees (core mission).

### **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.

### **DroneUp Facilities Contract**

- \$275,000 annual facilities rental
- \$175 Room & Board per student per day

**D6. Provide information about your institution's highest-priority E&G capital projects and requests (including new construction as well as renovations) over the six-year plan period and how they align to your enrollment trajectory, student outcomes improvement plans, or other strategic priorities. Please also reflect on your current E&G facilities utilization (especially classrooms, labs and student service areas), particularly in light of any recent trends that might impact space needs (e.g., enrollment trends, shifting learning modalities). How has square footage per student changed over time and why? What efforts have you made to reassess and further optimize the use of your existing facilities, and what has been the impact of those efforts to date? What do you intend to do in the next six years to increase utilization?**

## Capital Project Requests

### 1. **Center for Experiential Learning and Student Success (CELSS): \$6,973,979**

Current spaces are inadequate for robust career and student success programming. The Center for Experiential Learning and Student Success (CELSS) will be housed in Pecan Hall once the offices of Admission, Financial Aid and Human Resources transition to Commerce Hall. The addition and renovation to Pecan Hall will allow RBC to consolidate and increase student programming that better prepares students for the world of work and/or upper-level college or university coursework. Development of the CELSS program is an outgrowth of an analysis of the most recent RBC student demographics, graduation rates, and offerings that have proven effective for student engagement and retention.

The CELSS programs will enhance student success through preparation of students for the world of work and/or transition to senior level higher education institutions. Given the changes in the workplace as a result of the pandemic and new workplace environments resulting from increased inclusion of technology, artificial intelligence and workflow systems, students need more than traditional academic and student development services. The CELSS programs will complement traditional student development through programs such as mentoring (with professionals in a chosen field, with an emphasis on RBC alumni), tutoring, career planning, internships (cultivated with local businesses), service learning, leadership training (including development of a stronger and broader student government component), and simulated workplace tasks/experiences. Housed in a single location, Pecan Hall, the CELSS will allow the College to offer a comprehensive student focused program that will result in graduates who are better prepared for their future. Specific spaces and/or activities to be housed in Pecan Hall include:

- Career Services Center
- Mentoring Center
- Social resources office to provide students with assistance related to food insecurity and related social and financial challenges.
- Honors program
- Tutoring Center
- Flex space for simulated work experience/simulations
- Student Clubs/Organizations
- Social Justice Center in support of diversity, equity and inclusion
- Student Conduct Review Board
- Study rooms/areas
- Collaboration spaces

- Multi-purpose room for student centric activities
- Conference and Meeting rooms

Through the initial work of RRMM Architects, PC, it is estimated that the cost to renovate and add an additional 3,000 square feet (10,273 total square feet @ \$285.99/sq ft) is \$2,938,219.

## **2. Maze Hall Renovation: \$6,632,401**

A recent Facility Assessment found Maze Hall, built in 1935, in need of façade repairs to stop water infiltration to the basement and other areas, updates to meet various code and ADA deficiencies, and mechanical system upgrades to improve make up air, ventilation and filtering. A complete renovation will allow all building systems (except roof and windows) to be upgraded to provide state-of-the-art assets found in the new and recently renovated buildings on the academic (west) side of the campus.

Movement of student related functions out of Maze Hall to the adjacent Commerce Hall building will provide space to move executive level administrators from multiple buildings and create an administrative core space. The continued success of RBC has amplified the need for more administrative personnel, which in turn requires additional spaces. Co-locating these administrative offices in a single building will improve work efficiencies and create a more synergistic environment for the benefit of the College. Renovation of Maze Hall will allow design of the administrative core spaces to reflect contemporary leadership and management practices and office work environments. In addition, it will allow RBC to take advantage of an integrated technology environment that supports both individuals and groups.

Through the initial work of RRMM Architects, PC, it is estimated that the cost to renovate Maze Hall **\$6,362,401**.

## **3. Emergency Operating Center: \$5,000,0000**

An additional need will be the construction of a new campus safety building. This building will be strategically located in a central part of the campus community to ensure easy accessibility from the public while also achieving a location that allows the quickest response to anywhere on campus when responding to an emergency. This building would house the Department of Campus Safety & Police as well as the dispatch center, employee offices (Officers, Chief, Deputy Chief, Investigator, Emergency Manager, etc.), meeting room, evidence room, processing room, and an Emergency Operating Center (EOC). This building project, at this time, will be estimated at \$5 million dollars for a 2500 square foot building.

### **Facilities Utilization**

Since 2020 RBC has seen a diversification of teaching modalities, to include a significant increase in online and hybrid courses. The increase in online courses has supported the trends and requests of current learners, and in some cases has freed up classroom space. The College has engaged in strategic partnerships with various industry leaders to offer for-credit courses leading to industry-recognized credentials as a way to maximize utilization of available classroom space and revenue streams. As we expand internship opportunities this approach may continue.

With the opening of the Academic Innovation Center, we anticipate expanded hybrid and distance learning opportunities. Over the next six years we anticipate bringing on instructional designers and

other experts to train faculty in innovative ways to utilize new and existing learning spaces on campus. We have also expanded online services for counseling services, ADA accommodations, and tutoring and we intend to continue to explore the best ways to meet the academics and student support needs of our students as it relates to changes to current E&G facilities utilization.

**SECTION E: BUDGET REQUESTS**

**E1. Provide additional information for any budget requests in Part I of your planning template that are not described elsewhere in your narrative.**

- Mental Health Student Services (FY25: \$499,750/FY26: \$499,750)
  - \$162,000/\$162,000 - Mental Health Life Coaches (3 at a salary of \$40,000/each + benefits)
  - \$87,750/\$87,750 - Mental Health Counselor (salary + benefits)
  - \$250,000/\$250,000- Telehealth
  
- GPS@RBC (FY25: \$344,000/FY26: \$204,000)
  - \$150,000/\$150,000 - student employment
  - \$54,000/\$54,000 – internship coordinator (salary + benefits)
  - \$50,000 - Center for Teaching and Learning
  - \$90,000 – Course Redesign
  
- VMSDEP (FY25 \$37,800/FY26 \$37,800)
  
- Capital (FY25: \$19,668,034)
  - \$1,331,654 – Statesman Hall HVAC Improvements (note: this was funded in FY 2024)
  - \$359,674– Planning for Center for Experiential Learning and Student Success (CELSS)
  - \$328,571 – Planning for Maze Hall Renovations
  - \$2,630,208 – Planning Emergency Operating Center (new request)

#### **Additional Budget Requests**

#### **Campus Safety & Police: \$910,000 (FY25: \$405,000/ FY26: \$405,000)**

The College is looking at expanding its geographical footprint by initiating a public-private partnership innovation park project. This innovation park will include many industry businesses to include DroneUp, explained in B1. The DroneUp program itself is estimating up to 2000 trainees will be trained at these facilities, explained in B4. Richard Bland College is expecting growth in its student body, as detailed in B1.

The Richard Bland College Department of Campus Safety & Police is the primary law enforcement agency to respond to all campus owned and/or controlled property, as defined in Virginia code 23.1-815. This growth of population within our community, along with the innovation park project, requires growth of its campus safety & police personnel including its emergency management program. This growth would require the hiring of additional personnel to include

- The hiring of three (3) additional full-time Police Officers at a salary of **\$57,000/each + benefits (approx. \$305,000 total)**
- The hiring a full-time Emergency Management Coordinator at a salary of **\$65,000 + benefits (approx. \$100,000 total)**

#### **Additional Operating Costs: \$125,000 (outlying years)**

Post-2024-2026 biennium, additional labor, utilities and operating costs for the new Emergency Operating Center, is estimated at \$125,000 annually.

## **SECTION F: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

**F1. Provide a link to any report your institution has produced about its economic development contributions. You may also share it in the appendix or as an attachment**

The Virginia Business Higher Education Council / Weldon Cooper Center provided economic development report in July 2023. Highlights of that report are available [here](#).

## **SECTION G: FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION AND INQUIRY, FREE SPEECH, ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND DIVERSITY OF THOUGHT**

**G1. Provide a copy of any policy or reports your institution has produced and provide information about annual training or orientation related to this topic.**

### Free Speech

Richard Bland College takes its commitment to constitutional principles of free expression and open exchange of ideas seriously. This includes the principles of free inquiry, free speech, academic freedom, and diversity of thought. The College believes that it demonstrates these ideals through a variety of resources, trainings and programs for our students, staff, faculty, and community. After all, this College, named for one of our founding fathers, rests on the very shoulders of those committed to protect the precepts of the Constitution.

In 2024, RBC created a robust Free Speech and Intellectual Diversity plan, the product of exemplary collaboration between faculty, staff, and executive leadership at the College. This plan draws inspiration from larger Virginia institutions while recognizing and building on RBC's unique position among Virginia's public institutions of higher education. Proposed free speech and intellectual diversity additions to the RBC student experience will enhance the learning environment including ongoing membership in the Constructive Dialogue Institute (CDI), enhancing orientation and faculty development sessions, as well as establishing an RBC Convocation and expanded speaker series.

The College demonstrates this commitment through various webpages, including its free speech notification page. The College provides several links to its various policies, practices, and state regulations impacting free assembly on campus, public demonstration, free speech, dissemination of information, and academic freedom.

Our College's webpage includes guidance on how to report incidents of infringements upon free speech, freedom of expression, academic freedom, and diversity of thought. The College's Office of Student Success presents these policies and protocols during its standard orientation program and as a supplement for incoming and returning students.

0200 Free Speech Notification Policy:

<https://www.rbc.edu/policy-manual/free-speech-notification/>

5080 Freedom of Speech and Assembly on Campus Policy:

<https://www.rbc.edu/policy-manual/campus-safety-police-policies/>

Report on Compliance:

<https://www.rbc.edu/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/Freedom-of-Speech-Compliance-2018->

[RichardBlandCollege-Virginia-Code-Section-23-1.pdf](#)

4000 Communication Policies:

<https://www.rbc.edu/policy-manual/communications-policy/>

Academic Freedom Policy:

<https://www.rbc.edu/faculty-handbook/iv-academic-freedom-professional-ethics/>

**SCHEV Constructive Dialogue Institute:**

<https://constructivedialogue.org/articles/cdi-and-schev-partner-to-boost-civic-skills-at-12-campus-across-virginia>

**Racial Justice & Equity Report:**

## **SECTION H: NEW SCHOOLS, SITES, AND MERGERS**

**H1. Provide information on any new instructional sites, schools, or mergers supported by all types of funding that your institution is considering or planning to undertake during the six-year period.**

### **New Governance Structure**

During the 2023 Virginia General Assembly Session, Delegate Emily Brewer, Senator Frank Ruff, and Senator Tommy Norment introduced legislation (HB 1415, SB 1077, SB 1450) to create a new governance structure for Richard Bland College. This legislation would have created a new Board of Visitors to direct the affairs of Richard Bland and have other duties normally given to a BOV. SB 1077 passed the Senate 39-0, but both SB 1077 and HB 1415 were left in the House Appropriations Committee.

The William & Mary Board of Visitors approved a resolution on November 17, 2022, expressing support for Richard Bland College to transition to an independent governance structure. Richard Bland College understands there is continued interest within the General Assembly to explore a new governance structure for RBC, and RBC welcomes that discussion and potential legislation. RBC believes a new governance structure has the potential to provide leadership that is dedicated to the mission and success of RBC and will help RBC flourish as a new model for higher education in Virginia.

### **Off-Campus Instructional Sites**

RBC remains committed to growing its dual enrollment high school partnerships. To date, RBC has been approved by SACSCOC to offer more than 50% of a degree program at the following high schools within the Commonwealth:

- Rock Ridge High School, Loudoun County
- Hopewell High School, Hopewell City
- Dinwiddie High School, Dinwiddie County
- Prince George High School, Prince George County

The College just submitted a prospectus to add Colonial Heights High School effective January 2025.

## **[OPTIONAL] SECTION I: RESEARCH**

**I1. [OPTIONAL] Highlight any strategic research priorities, programs, or key areas of investment (e.g., hiring plans, critical research agendas, interdisciplinary centers, business partnerships, commercialization efforts) and IP dissemination and commercialization priorities you intend to pursue over the next 6 years that have not already been mentioned in this narrative. What are the anticipated benefits to your faculty attraction/retention strategy, student value proposition, and the economic competitiveness of the Commonwealth?**

**Office of Research and Innovation (ORI)**

As RBC increased grant funding, a strategic priority linked to these additional dollars included building additional engagement opportunities for faculty and students through the Office of Research and Innovation. This priority included 4 areas of focus: 1) Faculty Research Incentives, 2) Increased research agendas linked to faculty areas of interest, 3) Building Community Connections, and 4) i-RBC international opportunities outside of the U.S. and increase experiential learning opportunities within the U.S.

- 1) Faculty Research Incentives – Each Fiscal Year, Dr. Sydow provides funding under the Office of Research and Innovation to support new faculty research that includes students. This year 4 new research teams were supported as follows:
  - Dr. David Morgan (Physics): 3-D Visualization in Science & Math.
  - Dr. Mary Gurnick (Chemistry), Radio-Carbon Dating
  - Professor Michelle Delano (Art): Create & Apply Learning of STEAM Lab Art
  - Dr. Katie Heffernan (Biology: Student Experiential Learning Plan - Paleo Dig
- 2) Increased research agendas linked to faculty areas of interest – FY24 and FY25 proposals link both the student needs (scholarships, paid work experiences, experiential learning opportunities and enhanced learning opportunities) but also faculty opportunities (increased funded research agendas, faculty training and conference support, grants, summer research and workshop opportunities and reduced course loads)
- 3) Community Connections – New Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that include research, coursework, summer workshops, bootcamps and training between local school districts (Petersburg, Hopewell, Prince George, Dinwiddie and Sussex); A health career partnership with Bon Secour Southside Medical Center, and multiple Community Based Organization (CBO) partnerships were formed.
- 4) i-RBC Opportunities for faculty, staff and students  
FY25 will also bring innovation to the campus as RBC will began our **travel abroad** by launching our 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. The goal of this funded program is to establish multiple study abroad programs that provide international opportunities and build health equity leaders. The Madagascar, Africa iRBC program focuses on promoting biodiversity research and understanding the human condition through development and humanitarian assistance. In addition, this semester Dr. Gurnick traveled to the Canary Islands with VCU faculty and students for a research project that included soil sampling and GPS mapping of ancient gardens on the island. Dr. Gurnick assisted with differentiating ancient pastures from agricultural areas. During this trip, Dr. Gurnick reviewed the layout to see if it is feasible for RBC to start a similar trip through the iRBC program. Finally, FY25 will focus on building a London i-RBC program with Engineered Arts, and art literature. Both international components are funded by the U.S. Study abroad Ideas



program.

The I-RBC Program is focused on RBC's 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 E

**[OPTIONAL] SECTION J: COLLABORATION**

**J1. [OPTIONAL] Outline any existing or potential initiatives you have not already highlighted in this narrative that feature collaboration across public higher education institutions (and other state agencies as appropriate) in furthering the goals outlined in sections B-D. What is the expected impact and in what timeframe? What is the timeline for the initiative and how far along is it? What (if anything) would be required from a budget or policy perspective to facilitate the success of the initiative?**

**[OPTIONAL] SECTION K: STATE POLICY**

**K1. [OPTIONAL] Use this section to outline any state policy changes you have not already mentioned in this narrative that would enhance your ability to achieve greater success on the topics, strategies, and initiatives referenced in this narrative. What existing policies, if any, are hindering your ability to maximize outcomes and value for students? What new policies might create conditions that are more conducive to achieving those goals? What strategies or initiatives would these policy changes enable your institution to do or try that you are not yet able to do today? Please be as specific as possible.**

Under Virginia’s Restructured Higher Education Financial and Administrative Operations Act, Richard Bland College is one of only two schools currently at Level One authority. During the upcoming six-year period, RBC intends to evaluate the feasibility of entering into one or more memoranda of understanding to obtain expanded operational authority. In particular, RBC is interested in pursuing operational authority in the areas of information technology and procurement.

**[OPTIONAL] SECTION L: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

**L1. [OPTIONAL] Use this final section to provide any additional context and/or supporting materials you feel should be incorporated into the six-year planning process.**

**On November 16, 2023, the Board of Visitors of the College of William & Mary unanimously approved a resolution for support for Richard Bland College to transition to an independent governance structure.**

**SUPPORT FOR RICHARD BLAND COLLEGE TO TRANSITION  
TO AN INDEPENDENT GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE**

**WHEREAS**, Richard Bland College was established in 1960 as one of five separate institutions, each overseen by an entity then known as the Board of Visitors of the Colleges of William and Mary;

**WHEREAS**, the General Assembly subsequently granted three of those institutions independent governing boards, and those institutions exist today as Old Dominion University, Virginia Commonwealth University and Christopher Newport University;

**WHEREAS**, as Virginia’s only junior college, Richard Bland College has responded to General Assembly directives in place since 2014 to model collaborative, innovative approaches to education that would yield improved attainment of higher education—and attendant credentials—for Virginia citizens and robust economic development for the Commonwealth;

**WHEREAS**, the 2022 General Assembly directed Richard Bland College to present a report by November 1, 2022 on “steps necessary to transition to an innovative model for higher education that prepares citizens for jobs in high-demand fields and in industries critical to the economic development of the Petersburg area, Virginia Gateway Region and Commonwealth of Virginia”;

**WHEREAS**, on November 1, 2022 a report entitled Richard Bland College: A Model for Higher Education Innovation that defines Richard Bland College as an innovative, hybrid model for higher

education in Virginia and recommends the College have a dedicated, independent Board of Visitors was submitted to House and Senate Education and Finance Committees of the General Assembly;

**WHEREAS**; the 2023 Special Session Budget Bill (Item 156, H.1-3) directs the Secretary of Education, in collaboration with the SCHEV Director, the Secretary of Finance, DPB Director, House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff Directors, VEDPA President, and Richard Bland College to report to the Governor and Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by December 1, 2023 recommendations derived from an evaluation of “the creation of a regional partnership and other strategies to improve educational attainment, alternative delivery methods, enhanced efficiencies, and economic and community development for the region and the state ... The review shall include an evaluation of a new governance model building upon the November 2022 report issued by Richard Bland College”;

**WHEREAS**, in November 2022, the Board of Visitors unanimously approved a resolution to express its support for Richard Bland College being transitioned to an independent governance structure;

**WHEREAS**, the proposed 2023 bill was unanimously approved by the Senate but was not considered by the House Appropriations Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, the Richard Bland College Administration will again pursue legislation during the 2024 General Assembly session that would grant Richard Bland College a dedicated governing board without elevating its degree status; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, That the Board of Visitors of the College of William & Mary in Virginia expresses its support for Richard Bland College being transitioned to an independent governance structure.

**On November 28, 2023, the Richard Bland College Foundation Board unanimously adopted a resolution for support for Richard Bland College to transition to an independent governance structure.**

### **RESOLUTION OF SUPPORT 2024 Legislation in Support of Richard Bland College Independence**

**WHEREAS**, Richard Bland College was established in 1960 as one of five separate institutions, each overseen by an entity then known as the Board of Visitors of the Colleges of William and Mary;

**WHEREAS**, the General Assembly subsequently granted three of those institutions independent governing boards, and those institutions exist today as Old Dominion University, Virginia Commonwealth University and Christopher Newport University;

**WHEREAS**, as Virginia’s only junior college, Richard Bland College has responded to General Assembly directives in place since 2014 to model collaborative, innovative approaches to education that would yield improved attainment of higher education—and attendant credentials—for Virginia citizens and robust economic development for the Commonwealth;

**WHEREAS**, the 2022 General Assembly directed Richard Bland College to present a report by November 1, 2022 on “steps necessary to transition to an innovative model for higher education that prepares citizens for jobs in high-demand fields and in industries critical to the economic development of the Petersburg area, Virginia Gateway Region and Commonwealth of Virginia”;

**WHEREAS**, on November 1, 2022 a report entitled Richard Bland College: A Model for Higher Education Innovation that defines Richard Bland College as an innovative, hybrid model for higher education in Virginia and recommends the College have a dedicated, independent Board of Visitors was submitted to House and Senate Education and Finance Committees of the General Assembly;

**WHEREAS**; the 2023 Special Session Budget Bill (Item 156, H.1-3) directs the Secretary of Education, in collaboration with the SCHEV Director, the Secretary of Finance, DPB Director, House and Senate Appropriations Committee Staff Directors, VEDPA President, and Richard Bland College to report to the Governor and Chairs of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance and Appropriations Committees by December 1, 2023 recommendations derived from an evaluation of “the creation of a regional partnership and other strategies to improve educational attainment, alternative delivery methods, enhanced efficiencies, and economic and community development for the region and the state ... The review shall include an evaluation of a new governance model building upon the November 2022 report issued by Richard Bland College”;

**WHEREAS**, in November 2022, the Board of Visitors unanimously approved a resolution to express its support for Richard Bland College being transitioned to an independent governance structure;

**WHEREAS**, the proposed 2023 bill was unanimously approved by the Senate but was not considered by the House Appropriations Committee; and

**WHEREAS**, the Richard Bland College Administration will again pursue legislation during the 2024 General Assembly session that would grant Richard Bland College a dedicated governing board without elevating its degree status; and

**THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Richard Bland College Foundation Board of Directors expresses its support for Richard Bland College being transitioned to an independent governance structure.

The following link provides access to supporting materials that are relevant to RBC's Six-Year planning process: <https://www.rbc.edu/six-year-plan-supplemental-documents/>

Huron Reports

Ace Learner Success Lab Report

Racial Justice & Equity Report

July 1, 2023 Partnership Report

Building Conditions Assessment

SACSCOC Notifications, Approval Prospectuses

APA Reports

New Campus Master Plan