

# WILLIAM & MARY

BOARD OF VISITORS

RICHARD BLAND COLLEGE COMMITTEE

DRAFT MINUTES

FEBRUARY 8, 2024

GRIMSLEY BOARD ROOM – BLOW MEMORIAL HALL

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. John P. Rathbone, Chair  
Mr. Brian P. Woolfolk, Vice Chair  
Hon. Thomas K. Norment, Jr.  
Mr. Stephen J. Huebner

Ms. Barbara L. Johnson  
Ms. Ardine Williams  
Dr. Daniel Franke, Faculty Representative  
Ms. Kylie McCoy, Student Representative

## **COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Ms. Anne Leigh Kerr

## **OTHER BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Mr. S. Douglas Bunch  
Ms. Cynthia E. Hudson  
Mr. Courtney M. Malveaux

Hon. Charles E. Poston, Rector  
Ms. Laura Keehner Rigas

## **OTHERS PRESENT:**

Dr. Debbie L. Sydow, RBC President  
Dr. Tiffany Birdsong, RBC Chief Academic Officer  
Mr. Justin May, RBC Chief Enrollment Management Officer  
Ms. Stacey Sokol, RBC Chief Business Officer  
Mr. Eric Kondzielawa, RBC Chief Operating Officer  
Mr. Jeff Brown, RBC Chief Development Officer  
Ms. Charita Matthews, RBC Chief Information Officer  
Dr. Susan Clair, RBC Director of Information Technology and Information Security Officer  
Ms. Melissa Mahoney, RBC Comptroller  
Ms. Carrie Nee, W&M University Counsel  
Mr. Kent Erdahl, W&M Director of Internal Audit  
Mr. Andy Byrum, Ellucian Senior Vice President & Chief Information Officer  
Ms. Melissa Mullinax, Ellucian Senior Director General Manager  
Mr. Michael J. Fox, Secretary to Board of Visitors  
Ms. Jessica Walton, Deputy Secretary to Board of Visitors  
Mr. Gerrit Smith, Executive Assistant to RBC President  
RBC Faculty and Staff  
W&M Staff and Students

## **INTRODUCTORY REMARKS**

Mr. John Rathbone, Chair, called the Richard Bland College (RBC or “the College”) Committee meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. and welcomed those present.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Recognizing that a quorum was present, Mr. Rathbone asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the November 16, 2023, meeting. The motion was made by Mr. Ardine Williams, seconded by Ms. Barbara Johnson, and approved by voice vote.

**REPORT FROM THE PRESIDENT AND ADMINISTRATION**

Dr. Debbie L. Sydow, RBC President, congratulated Dr. Tiffany Birdsong, RBC Chief Academic Officer, for being accepted to the 2024-2025 ACE Fellows program and then invited Mr. Andy Bynum, Senior Vice President and Chief Research Officer at Ellucian Managed Services (EMS) to provide a progress update on the RBC-EMS partnership.

Mr. Bynum provided an overview of his role and responsibilities with Ellucian and spoke briefly about the company and highlighted services it offers.

Ms. Charita Matthews, RBC Chief Information Officer, highlighted technological accomplishments achieved over the last 18 months, including moving virtual meetings from Zoom to Microsoft Teams and migrating to single sign-on with multifactor authentication. A discussion ensued about keeping up on software and cyber security.

Mr. Eric Kondzielawa, RBC Chief Operating Officer, introduced Dr. Susan Clair who was recently hired as the RBC Director of Information Technology and Information Security Officer. Dr. Clair gave a brief overview of her past experiences and highlighted her experience at the Virginia Department of Education.

Mr. Kondzielawa noted that RBC is currently a Tier 1 institution, and it is striving to become a Tier 2 institution. He said that as a Tier 1 institution the College is restricted in using cooperative contracts which offer the greatest savings. Instead, the College has to put all projects out to bid, which is inefficient. Mr. Kondzielawa noted that becoming a Tier 2 institution would mean greater autonomy for the College, specifically in the areas of information technology and procurement.

Mr. Kondzielawa provided an update on the completion of the Academic Innovation Center. He said that the building will be substantially complete by the end of February and the 2024 Commencement Ceremony will be held at the building. He concluded by saying the project is on time and on budget.

A discussion ensued regarding the restructuring of RBC to gain Tier 2 status.

President Sydow noted that Kim Boyd, Vice President and Chief Research & Innovation, was not present because she was currently attending the Society for Personality & Social Psychology conference in San Diego, CA, with RBC staff and students. In her absence, Dr. Sydow noted that the Virginia Department of Education conducted a site visit on January 22 regarding a possible RBC Lab School. She said that should RBC want to pursue becoming a Lab School, the application must be submitted by March 1. Lastly, President Sydow reported that RBC received a SCHEV grant for over \$1M for a 1<sup>st</sup> Generation Underrepresented and Underserved (Rural) Student Success Initiative.

Dr. Tiffany Birdsong, RBC Chief Academic Officer, welcomed new staff member Dr. Kalota Stewart, Assistant Professor of Mathematics. She reported on Faculty Development Week and the curriculum study and Learning Outcome review. A discussion ensued about the findings of the Learning Outcome review. Dr. Birdsong highlighted two new partnerships: (1) MOU with Bon Secours Hospital to create a clear pathway for nursing students - to ensure RBC courses allow for a smooth and timely transition into a nursing program; and (2) First Scholars Network. Dr. Birdsong concluded by providing an update on RBC's strategy and programming to support progress across key metrics such as fall-to-fall retention, graduation rates and persistence rates. A discussion ensued regarding persistence rates.

Mr. Justin May, Chief Enrollment Management Officer, provided an update on the higher education landscape and RBC's traditional and dual enrollment. He highlighted RBC's 11% enrollment increase among traditional students and 22% enrollment increase for dual enrollment students from academic years 2022/2023 to 2023/2024. Mr. May also reported on RBC's student demographics and first-generation applications for traditional enrollment, and dual enrollment program expansion. Lastly, he noted the delayed release of the Free Application for Federal Student Aid and how it will impact students. A discussion ensued regarding modes of learning for dual enrollment students, enrollment, and degrees conferred.

Ms. Stacey Sokol, RBC Chief Business Officer, reported on RBC cost drivers and cost mitigation strategies. She highlighted salaries, student support, admissions expenses, and compliance and auxiliary costs as major cost drivers. Ms. Sokol reported on trends in RBC's recruitment, admissions, and course modalities and the effects on revenue and expenditures. She discussed state salary mandates, inflation, and cost mitigation strategies. She highlighted the cost savings attained through outsourcing IT, registrar services, payroll and counseling services. Ms. Sokol noted cost drivers associated with operations and maintenance and cost mitigation strategies in place or underway. She concluded by presenting the cost savings and additional revenues achieved for FY24 through cost mitigators.

A discussion ensued regarding RBC's course offerings versus community colleges; and cost containment efforts related to utilities.

Mr. Jeff Brown, Chief Development Officer, noted that the College's Foundation awarded over \$300,000 in scholarships to over 160 students in the fall of 2023. He reported on RBC's Giving Tuesday and said the College introduced a new giving platform which resulted in a 78% increase in donors from 2022. He also provided a preview of Founder's Week activities scheduled for April 15-20.

Dr. Sydow reminded the committee that the Virginia Secretary of Education was charged during the 2023 special session of the General Assembly with generating a report that would present research and a recommendation regarding the future of RBC. As part of this process Mr. Rathbone, Mr. Brian P. Woolfolk, and President Sydow met with the Virginia Secretary of Education and Boston Consulting Group on Wednesday, February 7, to discuss the issue. Mr. Rathbone and Mr. Woolfolk provided a brief overview of the meeting and spoke of RBC's uniqueness.

Dr. Sydow said the report is expected to be released on February 13.

#### **FACULTY AND STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

Dr. Dan Franke, RBC Faculty Representative, provided an overview of his written report (enclosure A) from the committee materials. In addition, Dr. Franke said that there is a state mandate to produce a plan on free speech and diversity, which he will be drafting. He said the RBC Faculty Affairs Committee recently voted to endorse the Council of President's statement. Dr. Franke reported on undergraduate research at RBC and noted that the RBC Instructional Programs Committee decided to move ahead with a trial course – History 297 (undergraduate research program).

Ms. Kylie McCoy, RBC Student Representative, provided an update on student activities and events. She has heard nothing but positive feedback from students on the Academic Innovation Center.

**ACTION MATERIALS**

Dr. Sydow provided an overview of the resolutions before the committee for approval.

Mr. Rathbone brought forth and requested a motion on **Resolutions 7**, Appointment to Fill a Vacancy in the Instructional Faculty; and **Resolution 8**, Approval to Fill a Vacancy in the Professional Staff. Dr. Birdsong asked that **Resolution 7** be amended to change Dr. Kalota Stewart's title from Associate Professor to Assistant Professor of Mathematics.

Mr. Rathbone asked for a motion to approve **Resolution 7 (as amended)** and **Resolution 8**. A motion was made by Mr. Stephen J. Huebner, seconded by Ms. Williams and approved by voice vote.

**ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business, Mr. Rathbone adjourned the meeting at 10:16 a.m.