



**Richard Bland College**  
of WILLIAM & MARY

**REPORT OF THE RBC FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE**  
**November 2022**

**Dr. David S. McCarthy**

**W&M Board of Visitors, RBC Faculty Representative**

*"The dogmas of the quiet past are inadequate to the stormy present. The occasion is piled high with difficulty and we must rise with the occasion. As our case is new, we must think anew and act anew."—Abraham Lincoln*

**SOS Fund**

Ashley Fuller and Jason Pode, who are both Assistant Professors of Mathematics, have collaborated to develop the Save Our Students (SOS) Fund of Richard Bland College. The RBC Foundation generously agreed to support the SOS Fund, which debuted this semester. "Our mission is to provide immediate financial assistance to students experiencing a financial crisis that impacts their academic coursework and personal well-being," explain Fuller and Pode. "Currently, students can be referred by faculty and staff of the college to receive immediate funds to cover gas, groceries, or other personal items. It is the future hope of the SOS Committee to expand to self-application by students where funds can be requested to help cover unexpected emergencies due to loss of employment, illness, car repairs, or other needs."

Since the beginning of the fall semester, students experiencing a financial crisis have already purchased books and groceries with funds from the SOS Committee. Given the success of the initiative, there are plans to expand the program in upcoming semesters.

**Experiential Learning at RBC**

Dr. Eric Miller, Associate Professor of Biology, led students on an exciting four-hour ecotour of the North Landing River Natural Area Preserve earlier this semester with grant funding from the Virginia Outdoor Foundation. The preserve is within the Great Dismal Swamp watershed. As Dr. Miller reports, "of the 11 participants, 2 had never kayaked or canoed before, and 1 was an international student." Along the tour, we learned about the history of the Great Dismal Swamp as well as the current conservation of the area. Our tour guide showed various cypress, upland pine, and fully aquatic habitats. Students also enjoyed swimming and spotting/identifying wildlife."

### **RBC History Club**

Dr. Dan Franke organized a screening of *Frederick Douglass: In Five Speeches*, a 2022 Emmy Nominee, on September 21 in honor of Constitution Week. The following month he took students to the 41<sup>st</sup> International Conference of the Haskins Society on medieval studies, which was held at the University of Richmond (October 28-30). Thanks to the hard work of Dr. Franke, the History Club is arguably the most popular student group on campus.

### **Anne Dobie Peebles Forum**

Dr. James B. McNeer, who served as the third president of Richard Bland College between 1996 and 2012, delivered the keynote address for the Anne Dobie Peebles Forum at 9:30 AM on Saturday, October 22 in the atrium of the building named in his honor. Dr. McNeer's engaging speech covered the entire history of Richard Bland College; he included wonderful anecdotes that thoroughly entertained the audience, and he argued that "perseverance" has been the enduring theme of RBC. Dr. McNeer joined the faculty in July 1968, tirelessly serving the college for over four decades.

### **6th Annual Pecan Festival**

The Pecan Festival commenced on October 22 immediately after the Anne Dobie Peebles Forum. It was a picturesque fall day: 15,000 people attended the festival. During the event, DroneUp provided an impressive demonstration of their cutting-edge drone delivery system, and they set up a drone simulator that drew crowds throughout the day. Appreciation goes to all of the faculty and staff who volunteered to make the event so successful!