



Richard Bland College
of WILLIAM & MARY

REPORT OF THE RBC FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE TO THE BOARD OF VISITORS

Dr. Daniel P. Franke, Associate Professor of History

September 2024

Faculty Development Week (August 19-23)

Dr. Adam Zucconi welcomed new faculty and coordinated Faculty Development Week from August 19 to August 23 this year. RBC faculty received valuable briefings and trainings on imminent innovations in assessment and data collection at RBC from Ashley Fuller who is doing stellar work ensuring that RBC's Fifth-Year report to SACSCOC is complete and timely. Dr. Franke led a briefing on RBC's Civic Engagement Task Force, which fulfills SCHEV policy and combines academic assessment with Student Life programming under Mr. Isaiah Lucas to enhance RBC students' abilities to engage in democratic dialogue. Faculty participated in two workshops, one with Wendy Beesley and Dr. Sarah Whitley from the Center for First-Generation Student Success, and the other with Dr. Breana Bayraktar on hybrid teaching. These workshops reflected RBC's commitment to serve first-generation students and also the growing popularity of hybrid course modalities. Both were well-received.

Faculty

Dr. Tiffany Birdsong commenced her prestigious year-long fellowship from the American Council on Education at Randolph-Macon College where she is developing her leadership skills and broadening her experience across the higher education landscape. In her absence, department chairs Dr. Zucconi, Dr. Morgan, and Dr. Henton are taking on enhanced leadership roles.

Dr. Adam Zucconi is fulfilling his new duties as senior chair with the grace, good humor, and professionalism for which he is well-known.

Dr. David Morgan is leading a team of RBC faculty and staff as part of the American Association of Colleges and University's new initiative, the Institute on AI, Pedagogy, and the Curriculum. RBC's application to participate in the Institute was approved on June 3, and the curriculum is scheduled to run from September 12 to the conclusion of the capstone event on April 10-11,

2025. One of the core goals of the team will be to “create and implement a comprehensive AI action plan that results in teaching, learning, and curricular change with measurable benchmarks for charting success.”

Dr. Eric Miller continued his successful summer biology program. Over the summer, he took students to Marlinton, WV for an immersive, science-packed learning experience. They collected fish (native Brook Trout!), snorkeled along Seneca Rocks, collected aquatic macroinvertebrates, did water sampling across the region, went flyfishing, and finished the evenings with campfires and Pictionary. Dr. Miller also volunteered for a health camp over the summer where he taught high school students health- and science-related labs. In May, he accompanied Dr. Heffernan and RBC students on the dinosaur dig in Hanksville, Utah.

Dr. Katie Heffernan led a team of two faculty and five students in May on a trip to the Hanksville-Burpee Dinosaur Quarry in Utah where they worked on the excavation of various dinosaur fossils from the Late Jurassic. Days began at 8:30 a.m. and ended at 5:00 p.m., and students had high praise for this experiential learning opportunity in the warm Utah sun. In June, Dr. Heffernan conducted the preliminary site visit to the proposed RBC study abroad program in Madagascar.

Dr. Kevin Peters accompanied Dr. Heffernan and RBC students on the dinosaur dig in Hanksville, Utah, and greatly enjoyed the opportunity to excavate fossils.

Professor Alexandra Youmans attended the NISOD conference in Austin in May. She has also been publishing on Substack.

Dr. Rachel Finney went to Honduras in June for a week of volunteer work with an organization called Ambassadors for Christ based out of Tegucigalpa. She worked with local, rural preachers near the border with Nicaragua to visit homes, pray with the residents, invite them to church services, and give out bags of dry goods. In the capital, Tegucigalpa, she assisted in taking used clothing donations to children in a public hospital and visited a nursing home where she gave out sandwiches & hygiene bags.

Dr. Daniel Franke attended the International Medieval Congress in Leeds, UK, where he presented a paper on his research in Turkey in the summer of 2023, moderated a panel, and participated in a round table on plunder in medieval warfare. Afterward, he traveled to Germany, Italy, and Austria, conducting archival research that was supported by a grant from the American Philosophical Society.