

**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.