



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

**REPORT OF THE RBC FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE**  
**November 2023**

**Dr. Daniel P. Franke**

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

**CDI (Constructive Dialogue Institute)**

On October 27, Dr. Zucconi, Dr. Birdsong, and Dr. Franke met with Mike Wasserman of the Constructive Dialog Institute to discuss rolling out the CDI initiative “Perspectives” in the next calendar year. This initiative, backed by the State Council of Higher Education, is designed to bridge ideological divides on campuses by fostering communication skills and “openness to diverse perspectives.” RBC faculty will help implement this program in several classes in the spring semester, preparatory to its being rolled out to the whole student body in the fall of 2024.

**Faculty-led Student Enrichment**

On October 7, Professor Michell Delano and several of her students participated in the fourth annual Lamb Arts Fest in Downtown Hopewell. RBC students had a tent in the festival, where they offered a variety of art works to the public. The event benefited from beautiful weather and the artistic talents of RBC students were on full display.

Dr. Eric Miller has been very active in leading student enrichment in the biological sciences, with several excursions in September and October.

- On September 19, Dr. Miller took students to the Appomattox River. First, they went to the water treatment facility and dam at lake Chesdin. Then they explored the area enjoying pawpaws (North America’s largest indigenous fruit), learning about the river, as well as seeing the remains of an enslaved village.
- On October 10, Dr. Miller took students to Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) for an educational tour.
- From October 20 to 22, Dr. Miller took students flyfishing, hiking, and exploring Marlinton, WV. Although few fish were caught a great time was had by all and even enjoyed a bluegrass concert one night in town.

- On November 7, Dr. Miller is taking students to Harrison Lake, which is a federally owned fish hatchery, specializing in freshwater mussels.

Dr. Daniel Franke has also led students on several excursions, working with Kristen Kountz, president of the RBC History Club.

- On October 22, Dr. Franke took eight students on a tour of the Petersburg Campaign in the Civil War. They began at Grant's Headquarters at City Point, and then moved to the Eastern Unit of the Petersburg National Battlefield, with stops at Fort Stedman and the Crater in particular. They finished in the afternoon with the Battle for the Weldon Railroad on RBC campus. Students had a chance to use battlefield geography as a classroom to better understand how events unfolded and why. The History Club will pick up the second half of the tour in the spring of 2024.
- On November 3-5, Dr. Franke took four students to the Haskins Society's annual conference at the University of Richmond. The Haskins Society is one of the oldest and most reputable academic societies for medieval studies, and students had a chance to hear leading scholars from around the country present their research.
- On November 11, the History Club will be volunteering in the National Park Service's Luminary Program at Poplar Grove National Cemetery.

On November 1, Dr. Rachel Finney was thrilled to organize and host her students' celebration of the Mexican holiday *Día de Muertos*, in person for the first time since 2019, before the outbreak of the COVID pandemic. Open to students, staff, and faculty across the college, the event was a celebration of Hispanic culture and culinary arts and was well attended. Richard Bland College has been missing this event, long a staple of the fall semester, and its return was greeted with great joy.