



**Richard Bland College**  
of WILLIAM & MARY

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

**Dr. David S. McCarthy**

**W&M Board of Visitors, RBC Faculty Representative**  
*“Strong people don't need strong leaders.”—Ella Baker*

**Alternative Spring Break**

Dr. Eric Miller, Associate Professor of Biology, and Maryia Kienzler, a Resident Life Assistant, took ten students to the North Carolina Outer Banks over spring break. According to Dr. Miller, the students volunteered on a beach cleanup and an oyster reef rebuilding project. They toured the North Carolina Aquarium, a turtle rehabilitation site, and the Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge. In the spirit of an “alternative spring break,” students also went on a kayaking ecotour of the region.

The Richard Bland College Foundation and the Virginia Outdoor Foundation provided funding for the trip. The Office of Communications is creating a documentary film about the trip.

**“Teaching and Learning @ RBC”**

The “Teaching and Learning @ RBC” newsletter that Dr. Jena Zarling launched last year has been extremely popular. In the March issue of the newsletter, Professor Michelle Delano published an article entitled “Storytelling Through Digital Portfolios.” As Professor Delano explains, “students are used to curating content for their own digital spaces; think TikTok, Instagram and YouTube.” She provides straightforward instructions on creating digital portfolios in Canvas, which she has used successfully in her art classes: “Setting up individual Digital Portfolios offers students a dedicated space within the course and gives them a sense of ownership over some of the content. It can be a great way to track student performance over the semester. In addition to embedding content, videos and links, it’s a useful space for posting writing samples, working on rough drafts, tracking individual and group projects, and leaving feedback.” The March newsletter also includes links to several articles that are designed to improve student engagement such as “Recovering Student Engagement at Mid-Course Time,” “Participation Strategies,” “Flipping a Class Helps – But Not for the Reason You’d Think,” and “Sticky Notes and Soft Skills.”

### **Academic Awards Ceremony**

The annual Academic Awards Ceremony is scheduled for April 20 in the Barn Theater. Students will receive Awards of Academic Excellence in the following categories: Communication; English; Foreign Language; Religion & Philosophy; Life Science; Math and Computer Science; Physical Science; Business and Economics; History and Government; Psychology and Sociology; Visual and Performing Arts; and Outstanding Dual Enrollment Student. The 2023 Faculty Excellence Award winner will also be announced. Congratulations to the award winners!

### **Faculty Accolades**

Dr. Thom C. Addington, Assistant Professor of English and Chair of the Languages & Humanities Department, will be submitting an article on Jamaican poet Pamela Mordecai for publication in a special issue of the *Journal of West Indian Literature*. Dr. Addington recently became the Assistant Editor of the *College Language Association Journal (CLAJ)*, and he will be presenting at the CLA Annual Convention in Atlanta on April 8.

Dr. Alice Henton, Associate Professor of English, is conducting research on first-year writing courses, and she plans on completing an article on the topic this fall.

In early April, Dr. Eric Miller, Associate Professor of Biology, brought six students to a “creek to table event” in Marlinton, West Virginia. Dr. Miller reports that these students learned to flyfish “and how to prepare and cook what they caught!” The event was planned in collaboration with the Yew Mountain Center. “In addition to learning about angling and food preparation,” says Dr. Miller, the group learned a great deal “about the vulnerability of our nation’s streams.” At the end of April, a professional forager and tracker will be visiting Dr. Miller’s environmental science class to teach students how to track animals and identify the wild edibles of Virginia.

Dr. Adnan Shahid, Assistant Professor of Business and Economics, published “Does Social Capital Help in Post-Disaster Recovery? Evidence From the Gorkha Earthquake of Nepal” in the *International Journal of Disaster Risk Reduction* 82, no. 2 (November 2022). The article examines the massive earthquake that hit Nepal in 2015, causing approximately 9,000 deaths and destroying over 800,000 homes. “While a few systematic economic assessment studies of this disaster have been conducted,” note the authors, “most do not provide a comprehensive analysis that encompasses economic as well as non-economic dimensions.” Dr. Shahid and his co-authors analyzed “housing, food, water availability, and a permanent source of income as our recovery measures.” They conclude “that the social capital index is at least as effective as the financial capital index in post-earthquake recovery.”

Professor Alexandra Youmans will be travelling to Costa Rica in May to participate in a masterclass with writer Anne Lamott entitled “Better Days: Taming Your Inner Critic.”

Dr. Dan Zelinski, Professor of Philosophy, presented at a conference on the “Ethics and Epistemology of Virtual Reality” at Northeastern University on April 2.