



Richard Bland College
of WILLIAM & MARY

REPORT OF THE RBC FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE
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W&M Board of Visitors, RBC Faculty Representative

“Who controls the past controls the future: who controls the present controls the past.”—George Orwell

Faculty Development Week (January 9-13)

Faculty were given the opportunity on January 9 and January 13 to finalize syllabi and develop their course pages on Canvas. Between those two days, several sessions were scheduled. On January 10, Dr. Tiffany Birdsong, Chief Academic Officer, hosted a spring semester kickoff event in the Ernst Hall auditorium. Dr. Kimberly Boyd, the Vice President of RBC, then offered a presentation on obtaining grants for research projects. Immediately following lunch, the academic departments held their first meetings of the spring semester.

The next day was devoted to a series of asynchronous virtual workshops on the following topics: “Student Reports as Effective Formative Assessment Tools,” “How to Engage the Unmotivated Learner,” “Pandemics, Politics, and People: The Adaptive Skills Community College Leaders Need to Meet Today’s Challenges, and “A Beginner’s Guide to a Collegewide OER Implementation.” The National Institute for Staff and Organizational Development (NISOD) at the University of Texas, Austin directed these sessions. There was also a separate workshop that provided an update on the TransferVA initiative.

On January 12, faculty discussed the previous day’s workshops during a “lunch and learn” taco bar. After the tacos, there were multiple updates from campus offices relating to student success. The afternoon concluded with committee meetings.

A Champion For Student Success

Congratulations to Jason Pode, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, on receiving the Champion For Student Success Award. Each fall, students are given the opportunity to nominate candidates who have “positively affected the educational experience of an RBC student,” and the recipient is named at the holiday luncheon in December. The nomination statement for Professor Pode captured his passion for teaching and his commitment to student success at Richard Bland College: “He makes calculus easy to understand and

fun to learn. The way he teaches is both informative and engaging, and he makes sure his pace isn't too fast or slow. He makes himself available when a student needs help and he constantly pays attention to see if someone is struggling on a particular question. He accommodates for student needs and is flexible when extraneous circumstances arise He makes it so I can study more, and stress less and thus be more confident when taking the test." According to the nomination, Pote's organizational skills are evident throughout the semester. He ensures that learning outcomes are clear, and he "assigns all our homework for the week at the beginning of the week and due at the end of the week, so we know exactly what to expect for his lectures. This allows those who want to look ahead at the material to do so and start looking at the homework early.... This makes homework a lot less stressful for me since it grants me flexibility in when I want to start and complete it."

"Tiny Art" Exhibition

Students in Professor Michelle Delano's studio art classes created several pop-up exhibits on campus in public spaces. These fascinating exhibits are the size of a typical business card, and as Professor Delano explains, they are displayed on "miniature wooden easels." To encourage student attendance at the exhibition, "tiny food and refreshments were served at Tiny Receptions, aimed at providing a bit of comic relief from academic stressors." The Art Studio in Ernst Hall now features a permanent exhibition space for Tiny Art—replete with easels, lighting, and signage—that will showcase student artwork on a revolving schedule.

Nora Harrison and Monet Cook, both students of Professor Delano, "were the Project Managers and primary artists overseeing public art murals painted on the plywood construction walls in the library. Nora's was a triptych featuring portraits of Sherman the Cat, an adopted RBC [community] member. Monet chose to create a surrealist doppelganger mural across from the elevator, where the mirror image of the brick wall and elevator door seemed to dissolve into deep space."

Experiential Learning at RBC

Dr. Eric Miller, Associate Professor of Biology, took students to tour the Virginia Institute of Marine Science (VIMS) on October 25. "Students learned about shellfish pathology, toured one of the nation's largest fish collections, and learned about many of the research projects going on by their over 100 scientists and over 150 graduate students," says Dr. Miller.

Professor Delano brought international students to several cultural events in Richmond last semester: First Friday Art Walks, an experimental international jazz group at VCU, Jazz Night at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts (VMFA), and an exhibition at VMFA entitled "Storied Strings: The Guitar in American Art" that opened in October and runs until March 19. "Featuring 125 works of art, as well as 35 musical instruments, the exhibition demonstrates that guitars figure prominently in the visual stories Americans tell themselves about themselves—their histories, identities, and aspirations."