

# W&M Board of Visitors Supports Independent Governance for Richard Bland College

*The W&M Board of Visitors unanimously approves a resolution of support as RBC seeks General Assembly approval for independent board governance.*

SOUTH PRINCE GEORGE, VA, UNITED STATES, December 11, 2024

/EINPresswire.com/ -- Yesterday, the William & Mary (W&M) Board of Visitors voted unanimously to support Richard Bland College of William & Mary (RBC) in its pursuit of legislation that would grant the institution an independent governing board. In the 2023 Virginia General Assembly Session, a bill that would have enabled RBC to have its own appointed board passed the Senate unanimously, but did not make it to the Governor.



The William & Mary Board of Visitors members who voted in favor of Richard Bland College's independent governance

The 2025 Session is expected to deliberate a bill that would grant RBC independent governance.

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*RBC Committee Chair John Rathbone*

This follows a report from the Virginia Secretary of Education in August of 2024 that recommended creation of a dedicated board for RBC.

RBC Committee Chair John Rathbone and RBC President Debbie L. Sydow are both optimistic about the College’s future.

“Richard Bland College has proven to be nimble, innovative and bold in responding to a changing higher education landscape,” Rathbone said. “It’s a special place that will

undoubtedly benefit by the singular focus of its own governing board.”

“The origin stories of several Virginia institutions of higher education, namely Christopher

Newport University, Old Dominion University and Virginia Commonwealth University, include governance by the W&M Board of Visitors,” Dr. Sydow said. “Each has evolved in response to Virginia’s economic and industry needs, and these universities are presently among the finest in the state.

“Richard Bland College now stands ready to work with a dedicated governing board to explore strategic alternatives and further position itself to optimally serve the educational and economic needs of Petersburg, rural Southside Virginia and the Commonwealth.”



The Richard Bland College campus

While on campus, the Board of Visitors toured the RBC campus grounds, including the new Academic Innovation Center (AIC) and renovated library. They concluded their visit with a luncheon in the AIC with [Promise Scholars](#). Upon graduation from RBC with little to no debt, these Pell-eligible, Virginia students can seamlessly transfer to William & Mary where they will continue to receive scholarships that dramatically reduce the cost of attendance. Most graduate completely debt-free.

To learn more about RBC’s quest for independent governance, [click here](#).

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