

STATESMAN

SAFE & SECURE

Campus Reopening Report and Recommendations

2020-2021 Academic Year



Richard Bland College
of WILLIAM & MARY

RBC Campus Reopening Tiger Team

Richard Bland College Return to Campus Review

Richard Bland College's mission is to prepare our students for a lifetime of endless potential. Even in the midst of the COVID-19 global pandemic, RBC's administration, faculty, and staff continue to work hard to uphold this mission.

The RBC Reopening Tiger Team

In an effort to focus on the best way to reopen safely and effectively in the fall, President Sydow created the "RBC Reopening Tiger Team," on May 26th. This Team, which combined the work of the Academic Fall Reopening Committee and the Continuity of Operations Committee, was tasked to identify campus reopening options, assess the pros and cons of each option and to develop a reopening recommendation that upholds the College's mission while ensuring the health and safety considerations of the RBC community by adhering to CDC and VDH guidelines. This Team did not consider fiscal issues related to reopening.

The Team initially met on May 28 and had three additional meetings on June 3, June 4 and June 5. The June 5 meeting included the Virginia Department of Health's epidemiologist. The Team concluded its effort on June 10, after providing an open discussion with members of the College's COVID-19 Team.

As student education and success is at the heart of RBC's existence, the capabilities and capacity of the RBC academic team became the driver of Fall reopening plans.

Process

Two feasible scenarios were presented that consider the mission critical delivery of quality instruction while considering the health and safety of faculty, staff, and students.

1. Return to Campus Scenario with mitigation strategies
2. Fully Online Instruction Scenario

In the first scenario, faculty develop their courses to a hybrid format (synchronous) that will reduce on-campus, in-seat capacity at all times to maintain recommended social distancing guidelines. Breaks between classes will be increased to allow for proper disinfection. This option would also provide for residential living experience at a reduced capacity for students to include library and Café operations to support campus life.

In the second scenario, RBC offers fully online instruction in a combination of synchronous and asynchronous instruction that restricts student and faculty access to campus in much the same way that the College operated during the second half of the Spring 2020 semester. Residential housing would be closed and the Café would not be operational.

A survey was developed and administered to students in an effort to gauge their willingness to return to campus or to operate online. The survey was administered to existing and prospective students with 353 respondents. Important summarized findings include that "students do not want to go completely

online and will not return if we are only online.” In addition, students’ responses indicated that, “they are willing to go the extra mile to keep themselves sanitized and keep their peers accountable in order to return to campus.”

The Team reviewed all relevant Executive Orders from the Office of the Governor as they relate to the public health emergency and developed this recommendation around the guidance provided in the Governor’s “Forward Virginia Blueprint.”

In addition, the Team reviewed Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and Virginia Department of Health (VDH) guidelines for college and university reopening, met with the VDH epidemiologist, assessed current data specific to the Crater District and reviewed reopening plans from Radford University, Virginia Commonwealth University and George Mason University.

As new and relevant guidance is made available from the Governor, the State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV), CDC and VDH, the College plan should be adjusted to reflect those guiding principles.

Findings

Realizing that this pandemic situation is dynamic and impacted by many variables, the Tiger Team has made certain assumptions regarding the College’s ability to reopen:

- Regionally, there must be a decrease or downward trend in new and confirmed cases for a minimum of 14 days prior to students moving into residence halls and the start of any in-person classes;
- Crater District testing capacity must be at a level that, at a minimum, supports testing symptomatic individuals and their close contacts;
- Crater District must have a tracing capacity sufficient to trace contacts for all new cases and their close contacts;
- The capacity of the healthcare system (Southside Regional Medical Center) must be steady and capable of, at a minimum, safely treating all patients and new COVID-19 related admissions;
- The capacity of housing must be sufficient to accommodate all residential students who need to be isolated and quarantined;
- Personal protective equipment must be available in sustainable quantities for campus use;
- The Governor must have lifted the shelter at home (phase I) requirement and permitted a partial to full reopening of non-essential businesses in the Crater Health District (phase II or phase III).

With the understanding that the College has developed significant mitigation strategies, it is the Team’s recommendation that the College move forward with a phased return to the campus for the Fall 2020 semester utilizing the existing academic calendar.

Plan

The functional areas of Academics, Student Success, Facilities, Residential Life, Human Resources, Legal Services, Safety and Communications will develop specific plans to support the reopening scenarios while adhering to CDC and VDH guidelines. Highlights:

- Residence Life
 - Residence Life will open residential suites to students, but with a reduced occupancy rate that maximizes student health and well-being and is consistent with CDC and VDH guidelines
 - Implement an educational campaign before students arrive on campus
 - Train Residence Life staff to monitor residential student safety and health standards
 - Establish visitation and gathering guidelines consistent with CDC and VDH guidelines
 - Off-campus visitation will be restricted and subject to review by Residence Life
 - Inside visitation will be consistent with CDC and VDH guidelines
 - Commerce Hall and certain rooms in Patriot and Freedom Halls will be reserved for quarantine and isolation of students
 - An agreement with Days Inn, Prince George, has been developed to provide additional rooms for students requiring quarantine or isolation
 - An agreement with Serv-Pro has been established to disinfect rooms after an incident
 - An agreement with Patient First to provide COVID testing for students is established
 - Students with a positive test result will be isolated by VDH order, as necessary
 - Students will be provided personal protective equipment (PPE) in the form of a “Welcome Home” package. It may include hand sanitizer, face masks, related cleaning supplies and information on COVID-19
 - Additional supplies will be available for students in the Office of Residence Life
- Dining Services
 - The Café seating area will be reduced to 100 seats
 - Large tables will be removed and tables will be 6’ apart
 - Outdoor seating will be established
 - Installation of sneeze guards at service areas
 - Grab and Go food will be available
- Athletics
 - Due to the many complexities related to safeguarding the health of student-athletes, placing Statesman athletics on hiatus in the year ahead should be considered. This hiatus would achieve the primary goal of safety first.
 - Intramurals and open gym
 - Restricted access to exercise facilities and gym consistent with CDC and VDH guidelines
- Academics
 - Move majority of classes to synchronous remote face-to-face format providing students with the option to take the course in-seat or online
 - Ability to rotate students in-seat and online
 - Ability to pivot to strictly online in event of resurgence
 - Cancel fall break

- Complete semester after Thanksgiving online only
- Additional time allotted between classes
 - Allow student/faculty cleaning of space
 - Allow de-densified traffic flow through building spaces
- Monday/Wednesday and Tuesday/Thursday class format
 - Allows deep cleaning of buildings on Friday
 - Allows small group testing and labs on Friday
- Faculty office hours
 - Remote
 - Larger classroom
- Student Success (Appendix 3D)
 - Gatherings
 - No large gatherings will be permitted consistent with CDC and VDH guidelines
 - Elimination of field trips
 - Small gatherings will be permitted, but students will be required to RSVP for the event to ensure space is sufficient
 - Virtual gathering of
 - Clubs
 - Conduct Board
 - Career/Internship Fairs
 - Tutoring online with limited face-to-face tutoring by appointment
 - Shuttles will be offered by appointment or sign up on designated days
 - Library services will be developed consistent with social distancing guidelines
 - Chrome-book sign-out will be by appointment
 - Medical transport will be provided through Dinwiddie County Emergency Services (911)
 - VDH will test students on campus, as necessary
 - Bridge Program
 - Coordination with W&M is ongoing and will be consistent with CDC and VDH guidelines
 - Reviewing guidelines that allow a student to operate a fleet vehicle for transportation to W&M
 - Provide counseling services remotely and by appointment
 - Develop partnerships with off campus counseling providers
 - Transfer Partner program will be developed to offer virtual opportunities
 - Testing Center will develop virtual testing opportunities or by appointment
 - Student absence policy for COVID-19 will be developed in conjunction with Academic programs
 - Disability Services will provide training to faculty for special needs in a virtual environment
 - High-Risk students will be virtually contacted by the ADA consultant to check on the student sense of safety on campus
 - Student Conduct
 - Virtual hearings
 - Develop student health and safety pledge

- Health and safety social norming activities will be developed
 - Provide contract nurse services to students 24/7
 - Provide contract ADA services to students
 - One-on-One Advising services will be remote or by appointment in large classroom setting
 - Learner Mentors will have a larger space reserved for advising
- Facilities
 - Supply PPE kits to all students, faculty and staff at the start of the semester, to include:
 - Washable face coverings
 - Hand sanitizer
 - Information packets
 - Maintain cleaning and disinfecting supplies
 - Install standard hardware in academic, administrative and residential facilities to prevent the spread of disease
 - Sneeze guards
 - Social distancing floor tiles
 - Signs and related static media placement
- Human Resources
 - Face coverings will be required in all common areas, consistent with the Governor's order
 - Faculty and staff will be encouraged to wipe down work spaces using disinfectant
 - Virtual meetings will be encouraged
 - Managers will be provided with break room management strategies
 - Develop signs for hallways, queuing areas, lobbies, and restrooms
 - Elevators will be handicap only
 - Track COVID-19 tracking of employees
 - Manage telework options
 - Manage COVID-19 related illness leave options
 - Provide training to community regarding mitigating strategies
 - Employees to complete by August 1, 2020
 - Managers to complete by July 17, 2020
 - Phased return timeline developed by cabinet in conjunction with Human Resources
 - Develop strategies with managers for employees requiring flexibility or accommodations
- Safety
 - Coordinate VDH resources
 - Develop enhanced COOP for pandemic
 - Develop policy:
 - Prophylactic
 - Mask
 - Testing
 - Building cleaning
 - Access control

- Symptom
 - Temperature checks
 - Symptomatic people protocol
- Testing and Tracking
 - Acquisition
 - Contact tracking
- Develop Shut down protocols
- Communications
 - Develop social norming campaign
 - Utilize signs, posters, video, social media to market the need and use of PPE
 - Educate community through visual reminders

Conclusion

Although it is not the mission of this Team to develop specific plans but to assess the feasibility to reopen in the fall, much work has already been undertaken to mitigate COVID-19 risks on campus.

- VDH has agreed to perform COVID-19 testing on campus or at the Crater Districts testing sites
- VDH has agreed to perform contact tracing
- Face masks have been located and purchased in large quantities
- Disinfection equipment (foggers) has been purchased and tested
- Negotiations with Patient First and Southside Regional Medical Center are underway for contract doctor/nurse support
- Additional housing for isolation and quarantine has been arranged off campus

The Team has worked vigorously to identify the risks that COVID-19 poses to the campus community and to determine if the mitigation strategies are cost-effective, available and can be achieved prior to the first day of classes. It is clear that there is a spirit of enthusiasm on campus, as presented by the Team, the College staff that were interviewed and the students who responded to the survey. This momentum, combined with the mitigated risk and developed strategies, will make the phased reopening of the campus the best option for Fall 2020.