

**Diversity Audit of Richard Bland College of William & Mary**

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## **Diversity Audit of Richard Bland College of William & Mary**

Established in 1960, Richard Bland College of William & Mary (RBC) is a two-year, residential, liberal arts transfer institution located in South Prince George, Virginia. Led by Debbie L. Sydow, Ph.D, the first female president in the college's sixty-year history, RBC's core mission is to prepare students for a lifetime of endless potential. RBC is unique in that it is Virginia's only junior college. The College's institutional core values include: A Friendly Family Atmosphere; Enthusiastic Student-Focused Service; The Power of Difference; Building Confidence; and Quality Outcomes (Richard Bland College of William and Mary, n.d. Strategic Plan, 2020-2025). RBC was chosen for this diversity audit for a variety of reasons. The College serves an extremely diverse student population yet its employees overwhelmingly identify as white (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020). Between 2010 and 2018, RBC's average enrollment was 1,925 students and, in 2018, only 49.5% of the student population identified as white (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020).

### ***Enrollment Trends by Race/Ethnicity and Gender (2010 - 2018)***

Race/Ethnicity	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010
<b>Total</b>	<b>2475</b>	<b>2487</b>	<b>2409</b>	<b>2255</b>	<b>1525</b>	<b>1428</b>	<b>1532</b>	<b>1629</b>	<b>1587</b>
American Indian or Alaska Native	12	11	6	10	8	4	6	6	8
Asian	402	298	230	155	26	24	24	27	30
Black or African American	535	544	681	620	542	454	495	526	465
Hispanic or Latino	141	133	43	62	40	34	46	37	55
White	1227	1326	1193	1185	783	820	847	905	938
Two or more races	58	92	111	107	61	51	60	63	50
Race/ethnicity unknown	62	65	133	114	65	41	54	65	41
Nonresident alien	38	18	12	2	0	0	0	0	0

Source: National Center for Education Statistics -

<https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/SummaryTable.aspx?templateId=2700&years=2018,2017,2016,2015,2014,2013,2012,2011>.

2010

Additionally, according to the National Center for Education Statistics (2020), in 2018, there were 108 full-time employees at the College. Of these 108 full-time employees, 74% identified as white which includes 94% of the instructional faculty (National Center for Education Statistics, 2020).

***Full-time Staff by Race/Ethnicity and Occupational Category  
(2018)***

<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Asian</b>	<b>Black or African American</b>	<b>Hispanic or Latino</b>	<b>White</b>
All staff (graduate assistants not included)	108	1	24	3	80
Instruction	35	0	1	1	33
Librarians, curators, and archivists	3	0	0	0	3
Student and academic affairs and other education services occupations	13	0	7	1	5
Management occupations	14	0	5	0	9
Business and financial operations occupations	3	0	2	0	1
Computer, engineering, and science occupations	6	0	1	1	4
Community, social service, legal, arts, design, entertainment, sports, and media occupations	5	1	2	0	2
Service occupations	9	0	5	0	4
Office and administrative support occupations	14	0	1	0	13
Natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations	6	0	0	0	6

Source: National Center for Education Statistics - <https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/datacenter/SummaryTable.aspx?templateId=4100&tableYear=2018>

The purpose of this audit is to understand and evaluate the current effectiveness of RBC's culture of diversity and its diversity programs. Using the tenets described in *Creating the Multicultural Organization* by Taylor Cox (2001), this audit will also identify RBC's most critical diversity problem(s) and will propose a responsive action plan. According to Cox (2001), "Diversity is the variation of social and cultural identities among people existing together in a defined employment or market setting" (p. 3). Well managed diversity is an opportunity to add value to an institution. Additionally, how an institution manages diversity is central to how it solves problems and harnesses creativity and innovation. Diversity is not merely something to have, but something that should add value and enhance performance. The current RBC 2020-2025 Strategic Plan states:

RBC continually strives to build an inclusive and welcoming community of individuals with diverse talents and skills from a multitude of backgrounds who are committed to civility, mutual respect, and the free and open exchange of ideas. We value these differences because each new exchange expands our collective breadth of experience and knowledge, and it makes us stronger and better than we were (Richard Bland College of William and Mary, n.d. Strategic Plan 2020-2025).

Following the death of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, President Sydow formed the RBC Task Force on Racial Justice and Equity. Announced on June 3, 2020, the Task Force has been charged to:

- Conduct an honest assessment of Richard Bland College's historical record as it pertains to racial inequality in higher education in Virginia in order to unpack those elements of

oppression and privilege that have influenced its trajectory, and to chart a new course forward.

- Generate a vision statement that outlines concrete action to be taken, and an assessment plan, to ensure that the institution conforms to its articulated anti-racist, multicultural identity.
- Publicly articulate Richard Bland College's identity as a multicultural institution committed to anti-racist organizational development and commit to perpetual, periodic training and evaluations of how the faculty, staff, and administration are progressing toward the manifestation of this identity.
- Evaluate policing on Richard Bland College's campus to identify and, as needed, rectify policies and practices related to accountability, racial bias, and use of force that do not align with RBC's articulated anti-racist, multicultural identity and Vision Statement.
- Enlist outside experts on diversity and inclusion to provide training for faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Establish relevant, long-term service learning activities in Petersburg and surrounding communities of color.
- Take steps to make the faculty, staff, and administrators more racially and ethnically representative of the communities they serve (RBC Task Force on Racial Justice and Equity, June, 2020).

As such, this audit also provides a timely opportunity to assess the progress of the College's diversity program.

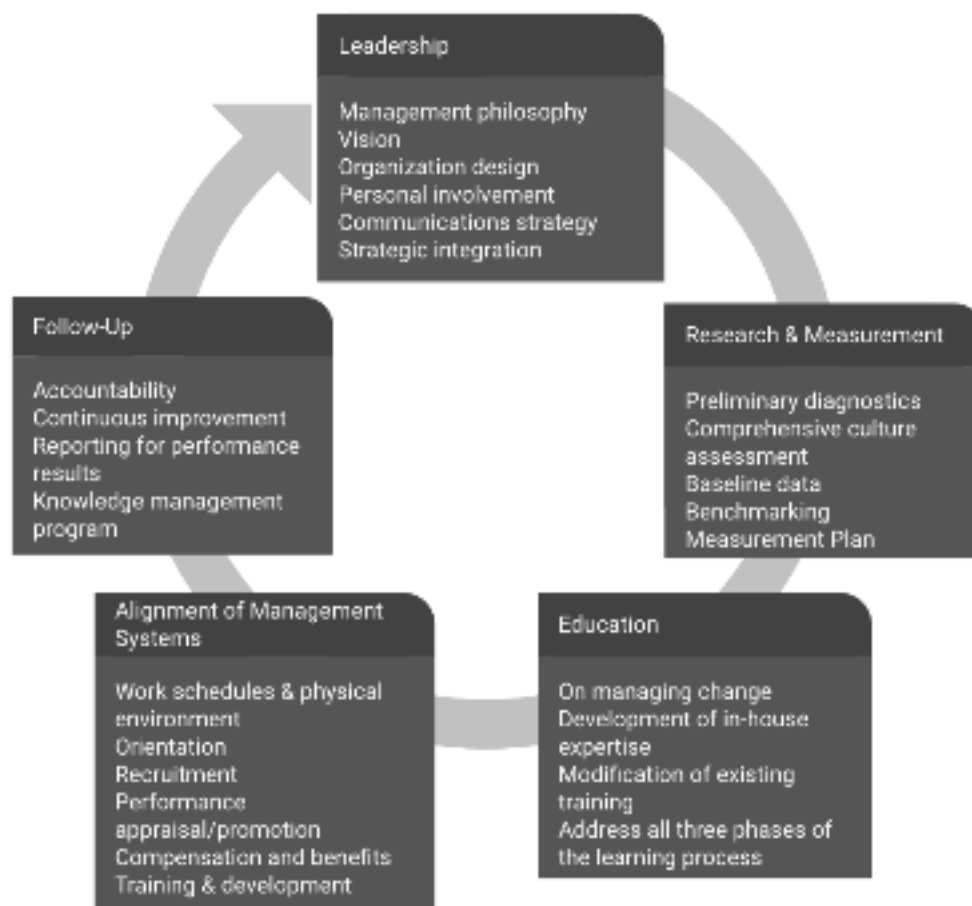
The subsequent report is the result of interviews of three key RBC employees as well as an analysis of information/reports provided by College officials and information publicly available on the RBC website. RBC's Director of Counseling Services and Co-Chair of the RBC Task Force on Racial Justice and Equity was instrumental in helping to identify and secure the interviews of a top-level administrator, mid-level administrator, and representative of RBC staff. Individuals interviewed for this diversity audit included Dr. J. Tyler Hart, Chief Administrative Officer, Ms. Kyle Binaxas, Student Success Librarian, and Mr. Navelle Watkins, Residential Life Coordinator.

It is of significance to note that Ms. Kyle Binaxas and Mr. Navelle Watkins were recommended for interviews as members of the Task Force on Racial Justice and Equity, however, through the course of the interviews both revealed that they do not consider themselves members of the Task Force. The team subsequently reached out for additional information about the composition of the Task Force as well as a status update on their important work. The information gathered from that communication can be found in a separate section of this report.

Cox (2001) identifies a five element continuous loop change model for work on the challenge of diversity. Questions for RBC officials were rooted in these five elements: Leadership, Research and Measurement, Education, Alignment of Management Systems, and Follow-Up/Sustainability.

### *Change Model For Work on Diversity*

Source: Cox, T. (2001)



### **Leadership**

Leadership resides at the top of Cox's model, and is considered the most important element. According to Cox (2001), "To be fully effective, leadership on diversity must start at the top" (p. 33). A leader is further defined as a person who has some influence with others (Cox, 2001). In essence, anyone in an administrative or faculty/staff position is a leader, and our team considered each of the interviewees for the purpose of this audit to be leaders. The importance of leadership is to foster diversity in the workplace through vision, personal example, and strategic integration (Cox, 2001).

**Questions: \***

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
How is RBC's commitment to diversity communicated to faculty/staff and students?	In what ways do RBC employees talk about diversity?	In what ways do RBC employees talk about diversity? What has leadership communicated as it relates to the vision for a multicultural environment at RBC?
Have issues of underrepresentation been identified at RBC? If so, how has it been addressed?	How is a commitment to diversity demonstrated in your department or area?	How is a commitment to diversity demonstrated in your department or area?
At RBC, who are the leaders in work on diversity?	At RBC, who are the leaders in work on diversity?	At RBC, who are the leaders in work on diversity?
	What is the composition of your diversity steering group/task force? Please describe them and how were they selected to serve Why formed now?	

*\*Note: The questions asked, or intended to be asked, are provided for each section. The designated interviewees could not necessarily speak to each question, as such there may appear to be gaps in the provided themes and observations.*

### **Themes of Responses:**

- Historically, there has not been a commitment to diversity communicated by RBC leadership, outside of Human Resources AA/EEO Statement.
- RBC has difficulty attracting diverse faculty, and retaining diverse staff.
- Leaders on diversity were identified at the instructional faculty level, and Director level, not among senior leadership.



### Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:

- “I have not been in a meeting where we are going to talk about the subject of diversity.”
- “There’s no representation in leadership... as a black gay [member of the community], who can I relate to on campus?”
- “That is something our president has shown a real commitment to change, and the critical step that has been taken. Changing this is a long process. The biggest area we are underrepresented is our faculty.”

Defining a vision for change is a crucial part of leadership’s role in creating a multicultural organization (Cox, 2001, p. 38).

### Questions:

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Does RBC leadership have a vision for creating a multicultural organization? Do you believe the vision is shared throughout RBC?	Does RBC leadership have a vision for creating a multicultural organization? Do you believe the vision is shared throughout RBC?	
How is diversity awareness and “contributions to diversity” incorporated into employee performance evaluations? Do you currently have a “valuing diversity” performance indicator?		Are you evaluated on your contributions to diversity as part of your annual performance evaluation? Is there a “valuing diversity indicator” included in your performance evaluation?

### Themes of Responses:

- There is no consensus among the interviewees about whether or not RBC has a vision for creating a multicultural organization.

- None could articulate what that vision would be.

### **Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:**

- When asked if there is a top-down vision for creating a multicultural organization at RBC, a one word response was offered by one of the interviewees - “no.”
- “When it first came out about the Task Force... I thought it was a joke. After George Floyd and Breonna Taylor, the same people who showed that they don’t really care about me, now want to create a Racial Injustice Task Force.”
- Speaking about the Task Force and addressing a historical lack of both leadership and vision: “This was something that I said we needed three years ago [but] it was always, ‘well that is not our focus right now’ and ‘we’re doing this right now.’ When the equity team [was] announced, part of me was like, ‘I don’t even want to bother with this,’ because now it takes people protesting and people dying in order for RBC to say something”

Setting a personal example is another important function of leadership (Cox, 2001, p. 40).

Creating a multicultural organization requires the achievement of strategic integration (Cox, 2001, p. 51).

### **Questions:**

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
How do leaders at RBC model positive behaviors that set a good example for others about the important work of diversity?	How do leaders at RBC model positive behaviors that set a good example for others about the important work of diversity?	How do leaders at RBC model positive behaviors that set a good example for others about the important work of diversity? What have you seen?

Can you explain specifically why success at managing diversity will help with the accomplishment of RBC's mission/vision?	Can you explain specifically why success at managing diversity will help with the accomplishment of RBC's mission/vision?	
The current RBC diversity initiative is in the formative stages, how would you define a reasonable timeline for implementing change?	The current RBC diversity initiative is in the formative stages, how would you define a reasonable timeline for implementing change?	The current RBC diversity initiative is in the formative stages, how would you define a reasonable timeline for implementing change?
RBC's Strategic Plan outlines key initiatives for the next 5 years. How does managing diversity align with these initiatives?	RBC's Strategic Plan outlines key initiatives for the next 5 years. How does managing diversity align with these initiatives?	RBC's Strategic Plan outlines key initiatives for the next 5 years. How does managing diversity align with these initiatives?

### Themes of Responses:

- There are leaders on the faculty, Thom Addington was specifically mentioned; and at the mid-manager level, but not in senior administration.

### Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:

- This is an area where RBC has "some work to do."

Communication is a key component of achieving strategic integration.

### Questions:

Top Level Administrator	Mid-Administrator	Staff
Are there mechanisms for communication and shared learning among people and groups working on various aspects of the strategy for managing people?	Are there mechanisms for communication and shared learning among people and groups working on various aspects of the strategy for managing people?	In what ways have you received communication and learning from leadership regarding RBC's diversity strategy?

**Themes of Responses:**

- Poor communication is the norm.
- No known communication strategy.

**Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:**

- The Covid-19 communication plan was referenced, perhaps as a model.

**Research and Measurement**

According to Cox (2001) change should be data driven. Research and data allow an institution to make informed decisions about education, change, and progress. In order for change to take place, a system for collecting and measuring feedback about specific issues is necessary. Data is a tool that, when used effectively, can help an institution understand where they are and what direction they need to proceed to add value and enhance performance.

**Questions:**

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Do employees have the opportunity to provide feedback about specific issues of the diversity climate at RBC? If so, how is this feedback then examined and used?	Do employees have the opportunity to provide feedback about specific issues of the diversity climate at RBC? If so, how is this feedback then examined and used?	Do employees have the opportunity to provide feedback about specific issues of the diversity climate at RBC?

**Themes of Responses:**

- Prior to the Task Force being created, feedback on diversity was not sought out.

**Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:**

- The performance cycle is a “generic process, where diversity could have been highlighted, but probably wasn’t until the Task Force was created.”

One way research and the subsequent data can be used is to enhance education (Cox, 2001, p. 64).

#### Questions:

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Have you developed any diversity training based on feedback?	Have you developed any diversity training based on feedback?	If you’ve had the opportunity to provide feedback, has any diversity training been offered to employees based on that feedback?

#### Themes of Responses:

- Feedback has not yet led to training being developed.
- Training that took place in November was geared towards enhancing awareness, not developing deeper knowledge or changing behavior.

#### Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:

- “The intention is to have a training such as this as part of new employee orientation.”

Measuring progress is another important function of research and data (Cox, 2001, p. 64).

#### Questions:

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
How do you measure progress with your diversity efforts?Is there a formal method?	How do you measure progress with your diversity efforts?Is there a formal method?	What role does staff play in measuring progress with RBC’s diversity efforts?
	How are you using data? To build commitment, enhance	

	education, diagnose the climate, measure progress?	
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### Themes of Responses:

- This is an area to be addressed by the Task Force.
- The last climate survey was more than three years ago.

### Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:

- One interviewee expects that the College will be disinclined to share the results of the listening sessions due to the nature of the feedback that they received; alluding to a lack of transparency about negative feedback.
- There is not equal interest in receiving feedback from faculty versus staff.
- There is toxic culture that has resulted in a lack of trust, and an unwillingness to speak candidly about diversity issues.

## Education

Education about diversity is a crucial element of Cox's (2001) model and essential in order for change to occur. According to Cox, education should involve all individuals of the organization and should be customized, tapping into in-house expertise when possible. Quality, purposeful education has the power to help employees understand and work better with one another.

Top Level Administrator	Mid-Administrator	Staff
Does RBC regularly engage in/offer diversity training? If	Does RBC regularly engage in/offer diversity training? If	What types of diversity training programs are offered at RBC? Describe the content

so, please describe the training:	so, please describe the training:	and format.
What types of training programs are provided? Describe the content and format. Is it customized to/for RBC?	What types of training programs are provided? Describe the content and format. Is it customized to/for RBC?	Does it feel customized to/for RBC?
Who is the intended audience? How many people are in each training group?	Who is the intended audience? How many people are in each training group?	Who conducts/facilitates it?
Does training vary across employment (EEO) category?	Does training vary across employment (EEO) category?	How often are training sessions offered? Is it mandatory or voluntary?
Who conducts/facilitates it?	Who conducts/facilitates it?	
How often are training sessions offered? Is it mandatory or voluntary?	How often are training sessions offered? Is it mandatory or voluntary?	

### Themes of Responses:

- Optional Safe Zone appears to be the only non-state mandated training addressing diversity.
- The Workplace Enrichment Initiative (WEI) offered a range of training, including on topics of diversity. This initiative seems to be inactive at this time.

### Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:

- RBC has a narrow view when it comes to diversity and this impacts the types of education that has been offered.

- Mentoring is available for new faculty, though new hires are infrequent. The focus though seems to be on learning practical skills for navigating RBC administrative functions.
- There is not a mentoring program for staff, new or otherwise.

The Task Force on Racial Justice and Equity sponsored four events during the month of November, all were focused on developing awareness. The sessions were conducted via Zoom and were open to all members of the College community, participation was voluntary. The topics and speakers were:

- o The Ways Black Lives Matter to Black People
  - o Dr. Evanda S. Watts-Martinez (co-chair of the Task Force)
- o Racial Bias in Action
  - o Ms. Kyle Binaxas
- o The Cost of Exclusion
  - o Rev. Dr. Thomas L. Nins (external speaker)
- o Black Hair Politics
  - o Dr. Latasha N. Elay (external speaker)

### **Alignment of Management Systems**

How well policies, practices, and procedures work to promote an institution's overall culture of diversity and diversity programs is known in Cox's (2001) model as alignment. Alignment can be reflected in performance appraisal and promotion as well as recruitment and hiring through the selection tools used and the composition of hiring teams. Policies that are in place to accommodate employee needs, such as flexible work schedules or encouraging



employees to take advantage of educational opportunities, can be some of the most important elements in promoting a diverse institution (Cox, 2001).

### Questions:

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Does RBC place emphasis on diversity awareness when it hires new employees?	Does RBC place emphasis on diversity awareness when it hires new employees?	Do you believe RBC places emphasis on diversity awareness when it hires new employees? In what ways?
To your knowledge, what efforts have been made to recruit faculty and staff from under-represented groups?	To your knowledge, what efforts have been made to recruit faculty and staff from under-represented groups?	How do you see this around you?
How does RBC's diversity philosophy affect your recruitment techniques? (for employees and students)	How does RBC's diversity philosophy affect your recruitment techniques? (for employees and students)	

### Themes of Responses:

- There is not an emphasis on diversity in the recruitment of new faculty or staff.
- The result is a lack of diversity among the faculty.
- Faculty and staff of color experience burn-out as a result of the small number of them being tasked to account for diversity representation on a significant number of campus committees and initiatives.

### Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:

- Much of the visual diversity on campus is on the custodial and cafe staff.
- There is a failure on the part of senior leadership to recognize that diversity is not limited to racial diversity.

- The onboarding process for staff is lacking, and in addition to leaving them feeling ill-prepared also does not make them feel comfortable or valued on campus.

According to Cox (2001), reflecting diversity competency in selection tools and the composition of recruiting teams are important elements of alignment (pp. 109-111).

### Questions:

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Describe the composition of your recruiting teams. Do your teams use questions that ask for information about diversity competency?	Describe the composition of your recruiting teams. Do your teams use questions that ask for information about diversity competency?	

### Themes of Responses:

- Search committees have minority representation and two sexes.

### Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:

- With regard to the use of standardized questions to assess the diversity competencies of candidates, “there are no diversity related questions that are standard.”

Flexible work policies, such as time off policies and level of work schedule flexibility, are essential to a diverse workplace. According to Cox (2001), “if your organization has more liberal time-off policies, you will be better able to attract, retain, and motivate the diverse workforce” (p. 105)

### Questions:

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
What policies are now in place (if any) that	What policies are now in place (if any) that	What policies are now in place (if any) that

accommodate employee needs such as flexible work schedules or encouraging employees to take advantage of educational opportunities?	accommodate employee needs such as flexible work schedules or encouraging employees to take advantage of educational opportunities?	accommodate employee needs such as flexible work schedules or encouraging employees to take advantage of educational opportunities?
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### **Themes of Responses:**

- The College allows for flexible schedules and work arrangements, such as telework and hybrid schedules, in part as a recognition of the challenges of the campus' rural location. It did not appear that this flexibility translates to educational and professional development opportunities.

### **Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:**

- With regard to professional development, there is a Faculty Development Week between the fall and spring semesters, but staff, who are disproportionately Black, work in areas such as the Registrar's Office or Financial Aid; offices that may be busy during this time, so they are unable to attend.
- Staff can attend sessions, but have heard from to use their lunch to do so, which may disincentivize some from participating

A review of the RBC Human Resources web page (n.d) provides insight into the recruitment, hiring, performance appraisal, and professional development that our interviewees could not, particularly for positions in the staff classification. While assessing the recruitment process, current job postings were reviewed. The job description for a police officer (Richard Bland College of William and Mary, Human Resources, n.d. Employment Opportunities section) does not reference any specific diversity competencies as minimum, preferred or required

qualifications; while the job description for a Head Women's Soccer Coach includes this vague statement, "Demonstrated experience working in and fostering a diverse faculty, staff, and student environment or commitment to do so as a faculty member at RBC" (Richard Bland College of William and Mary, Human Resources, n.d. Employment Opportunities section).

There are detailed search committee guidelines available on the Human Resources webpage. According to the guidelines:

The composition of the committee should represent the diversity of the institution and advance the College's commitment to the principles of affirmative action and equal employment opportunity. The committee should consist of at least one female, one male, and one minority member. A diverse committee is more likely to generate diverse candidate pools and finalist lists (Richard Bland College of William and Mary Human Resources Forms, n.d. Search Committee Guidelines section).

Interestingly, the additional guidance for search committee composition states, "when possible, a majority of the members should have experience participating in successful searches, be open-minded, committed to diversity and fair process, able to negotiate conflict to achieve group results..." (Richard Bland College of William and Mary, Human Resources Forms, n.d. Search Committee Guidelines section). The choice and placement of the phrases, "when possible," and "a majority of" appear to diminish the importance of all search committee members being open-minded, committed to diversity and fair process. If there is any confusion, the published Search Committee Roles and Responsibilities (Richard Bland College of William and Mary, Human Resources Forms, n.d. Search Committee Guidelines section) allude to these values, though not directly referencing diversity:

- Challenge conventional assumptions.
- Treat all applicants in a thoughtful and respectful manner.
- Set aside biases and preconceptions in order to fully consider all those who may be qualified to assume College’s roles.
- Give fair consideration to all applicants.

Each of the forms associated with a search that are available on the RBC Human Resources webpage were reviewed for the purposes of this audit, specifically for content or prompts about diversity or diversity competencies beyond the AA/EEO required language. The findings are reported in the following table:

Form	Diversity Content/Competencies
<b>Request to recruit</b> (Richard Bland College of William and Mary, Human Resources Forms, n.d. Request to Recruit section).	Required/preferred qualifications. There are no fields specifically addressing diversity, or prefilled with any required/preferred diversity qualifications.
<b>Request to offer</b> (Richard Bland College of William and Mary Human Resources Forms, n.d. Request to Offer section).	Ask for the “justification for hire” and “additional information” There are no fields specifically addressing diversity or diversity competencies as a justification to hire.
<b>Reference check</b> (Richard Bland College of William and Mary Human Resources Forms, n.d. Reference Check section).	There are nine total questions, diversity competency is not addressed.
<b>Position description template</b> (Richard Bland College of William and Mary Human Resources Forms, n.d. Position Description Template section).	Broad Function <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Job Specifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This position’s major responsibilities include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>■ Insert</li> <li>■ Other Duties as assigned</li> </ul> </li> </ul> </li> <li>● Minimum Qualifications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Insert</li> <li>○ Enthusiastic commitment to the</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<p>Richard Bland College mission, vision and RBC-19 goals.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Demonstrated experience working in and fostering a diverse faculty, staff, and student environment or commitment to do so as a faculty member at RBC.</li> </ul>
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The New Employees link on the RBC Human Resources website (n.d.) welcomes new employees to “our community of diverse and talented faculty and staff” (Richard Bland College of William and Mary Human Resources, n.d. New Employees section). The website provides information for the new employee under five categories: Getting Started, Appointment with Human Resources, Your First Day, First Week, and First Month. Each section is largely focused on administrative paperwork, learning one’s role, and the physical layout of the community. The New Employee onboarding process does not appear to include any formal acculturation to the culture of the RBC community.

A review of the performance appraisal information published on the Human Resources webpage (n.d.) also revealed a lack of intentionality with regard to embedding diversity or diversity competencies with the processes for both faculty and staff. The core areas of evaluation for faculty and staff include:

<b>Faculty</b> (Richard Bland College of William and Mary, Faculty Handbook, n.d. Employee Evaluation section).	<b>Administrative Staff</b> (Richard Bland College of William and Mary, Human Resources Forms, n.d. Administrator Evaluation Form section).
Teaching Effectiveness	Enrollment
College Service	Programs and Delivery
Professional Development	Resources and Operations
Community Service	

Of course, faculty and staff performance evaluation processes differ. Consistent with the core areas of evaluation, the administrative staff review processes are not intentional about including diversity or diversity competencies on the associated forms. The performance appraisals for staff include:

<p><b>Probationary Progress Review</b> (Richard Bland College of William and Mary Human Resources Forms, n.d. Probationary Progress Review section).</p>	<p>Comments on overall progress Employee development plan Personal Learning goals Learning steps/resource needs</p>
<p><b>Administrative Staff Review</b> (Richard Bland College of William and Mary Human Resources Forms, n.d. Administrative Staff Review section).</p>	<p>Significant accomplishments Goals &amp; Objectives for the Next Performance Period Individual Improvement Plan Supervisor Performance Summary</p>

Just as there is nothing on the Human Resources web page requiring that hiring managers and supervisors include diversity and diversity competencies in these processes or on these forms, there is nothing precluding them from doing so either.

Finally, with regard to professional development, the RBC website indicates that, “RBC employees have access to a centralized pool of money in support of professional development activity. Funds are available to faculty and staff through a formal application process and reviewed by the RBC Professional Development Committee” (Richard Bland College of William and Mary, n.d. Human Resources Benefits, Tuition Waiver and Professional Development section).

### Follow-Up/Sustainability

The final element of Cox's model is follow-up or sustainability. This is an area often overlooked but of extreme importance. Follow-up involves a formal plan for revisiting diversity issues and needs and using the information collected as meaningful data. Developing a plan for keeping score, as well as providing incentives for new behaviors, are important elements to consider within the continuous challenge of diversity.

Cox (2001) describes the plan review process as a crucial part of the follow-up effort (p. 129). These include factors such as who is responsible for continually monitoring the diversity climate of RBC, if there is a formal plan for doing this, and how the information is then used.

#### Questions:

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Who is responsible for continually monitoring the diversity climate of RBC? Is there a formal plan for doing this? How is the information used?	Who is responsible for continually monitoring the diversity climate of RBC? Is there a formal plan for doing this? How is the information used?	Who is responsible for continually monitoring the diversity climate of RBC? Is there a formal plan for doing this? How is the information used?
Keeping "score," what are the benchmarks (markers for success) that you want to hit?	Keeping "score," what are the benchmarks (markers for success) that you want to hit?	Keeping "score," what are the benchmarks (markers for success) that you want to hit?

#### Themes of Responses:

- HR is currently responsible for monitoring the climate at RBC. The HR function of the College expects to receive recommendations on how to do this from the Task Force.



- Keeping score of the markers for success is also the job of the newly developed Task Force. These markers, if established, have not been widely communicated.

#### **Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:**

- It appears as though RBC does not have a formal plan in place for continuously monitoring the climate and using that information in a constructive way. If a formal plan or benchmarks exist they have not been well communicated.
- There are major concerns about the sustainability of any efforts made regarding diversity. There is a history of programs or initiatives that survived and thrived so long as the person that spearheaded the initiative remained at RBC to maintain it. Through consistency RBC and the Task Force will need to work hard to change this narrative over time.

Cox (2001) also recommends the use of incentives, such as personal or group recognition, opportunities for advancement, or monetary rewards for new behaviors (p. 135).

#### **Questions:**

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Are there any incentives (such as personal or group recognition, opportunities for advancement, or monetary rewards) for new behaviors?	Are there any incentives (such as personal or group recognition, opportunities for advancement, or monetary rewards) for new behaviors?	Are there any incentives (such as personal or group recognition, opportunities for advancement, or monetary rewards) for new behaviors?

#### **Themes of Responses:**

- Professional development funds that are earmarked to be used to advance the goals set forth in the RBC Strategic Plan can be used to help fund opportunities for development and training.
- RBC has employee awards that recognize someone who has shown commitment to diversity.

#### **Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:**

- There are people at RBC who want to do the work, they just need the time and space to do so. Employees express feeling swamped and as though they lack the necessary support.

#### **Most Critical Problem(s)**

One of the main purposes of this audit is to identify RBC's most critical diversity problem(s). The interviews conducted were instrumental in helping pinpoint the most pressing issues for growth pertaining to inequity unique to RBC. The team asked each interviewee to discuss what they believed were the most critical areas for improvement with diversity at RBC.

#### **Questions:**

<b>Top Level Administrator</b>	<b>Mid-Administrator</b>	<b>Staff</b>
Overall, what do you believe are the most critical areas for improvement with diversity at RBC?	Overall, what do you believe are the most critical areas for improvement with diversity at RBC?	Overall, what do you believe are the most critical areas for improvement with diversity at RBC?

#### **Themes of Responses:**

- There is a lack of strong leadership on the issue of diversity, from the top of the College's leadership down to middle management.

- There is also a limited understanding of what constitutes diversity. According to one interviewee RBC currently operates under a narrow definition of diversity.
- Finally, there is a lack of diversity among faculty. The composition of the RBC faculty does not mirror its diverse student population.

**Noteworthy Quotes and Observations:**

- RBC has not had new faculty come on board in the last two academic years.
- There is a clear difference in perception and priority of diversity between those on the frontline working with students versus those operating from a bit more behind the scenes.
- Without a broader definition as to what constitutes diversity at RBC, employees will be unable to fully commit to and support the organization's diversity vision and corresponding initiatives.

The differences in our interviewees views of RBC's past and current commitment to diversity education are stark when compared by their classification, faculty versus staff, or their racial identity, white versus an underrepresented minority. The white faculty member articulates hope and pride, while the staff of color share frustration and pessimism that meaningful change will be achieved, let alone sustained. All, however, share a concern that this is an important issue, and that addressing it would enhance student success and retention, again primary goals of the RBC strategic plan.

**Task Force on Racial Justice and Equity Status Report**

The Co-Chairs of the Task Force, Dr. Thom Addington and Dr. Evanda Watts-Martinez, were asked to provide additional information about the Task Force, and a status report of their

work to this point. Their responses were provided in writing (Thom Addington, personal communication, November 30, 2020), and are included, verbatim, below:

Question:	Response:
<p><b>What is the composition of the RBC Task Force on Racial Justice and Equity?</b></p>	<p>The members of the RBC Task Force on Racial Justice &amp; Equity represent the College’s major functional units and community stakeholders. The following members were invited to serve on the Task Force July 8, with its inaugural meeting held July 9:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evanda Watts-Martinez, Co-Chair and Director of Counseling Services</li> <li>● Thom C. Addington, Co-Chair, Instructor of English and Coordinator of the Honors, Promise, and PTK Programs</li> <li>● Eric Earnhardt, Assistant Professor of English and Chair of Languages and Humanities</li> <li>● Jeff Brown, Director of Campus Safety</li> <li>● Cassandra Standberry, Director of Human Resources &amp; Chief Diversity Officer</li> <li>● Nate Jellerson, Manager of Projects and Telecommunication</li> <li>● Ramona Taylor, Legal Counsel</li> <li>● Lucious Edwards, Virginia State University Archivist, RBC Alumnus, and Community Partner</li> <li>● Kevin Massengill, Dinwiddie County Administrator, RBC Alumnus, and Community Partner</li> <li>● Candi Pearson, Accounts Payable Manager</li> </ul> <p>Thomas Travis, Chief of the RBC Police Department, was also included in the Task Force after Jeff Brown transitioned into his role as Director of Campus Safety.</p>

	<p>One member, Joanne Williams, RBC's former Director of Government Relations &amp; Communications, left the Task Force after retiring from the College.</p> <p>Delegate Lashrecse Aird, RBC's Chief of Staff, serves as a supporting member of the Task Force along with Maria Dezenberg, RBC's Provost, and Lisa Pond, RBC's FOIA Officer and Executive Assistant to the President.</p>
<b>To whom does the committee report?</b>	Dr. Debbie Sydow, President of the College
<p><b>Is this a short-term assignment?</b></p> <p><b>Or will this remain a standing committee?</b></p> <p><b>Is participation determined by role on campus? Nomination? Another method?</b></p> <p><b>Is there a continuity plan should someone leave the Task Force?</b></p>	<p>This Task Force will ideally continue as a standing work group or committee of the College under the leadership of a dedicated upper-level administrator.</p> <p>Participation on the Task Force was determined by nomination and invitation with the intent to represent all functional areas of the College as well as its community stakeholders.</p> <p>Should a member of the Task Force step down from their position, the Task Force co-chairs (in consultation with Delegate Aird and President Sydow) will extend an invitation to another campus or community member with a similar skill set and background.</p>
<b>What is the timeline for accomplishing the seven designated goals?</b>	<p>The first phase of the work, data collection and processing, is underway. The Task Force plans to complete data collection and processing before the close of the spring 2021 semester. The Task Force's report and recommendations for accomplishing its stated goals will be submitted to the President over the summer of 2021, and the implementation of these recommendations will begin fall 2021.</p>

<p><b>Did the faculty-wide listening session place as planned?</b></p> <p><b>Can you share any themes about what was shared regarding being welcoming, inclusive, multi-cultural, or anti-racist?</b></p> <p><b>Were there other, confidential, opportunities for sharing?</b></p>	<p>A faculty-wide listening session occurred on July 6, 2020, at 2:00 p.m., virtually through Zoom.</p> <p>Faculty expressed interest in better understanding how to assist students of color, pedagogically and otherwise. Moreover, the faculty called for greater diversity in its ranks and the implementation of more robust language on the College’s commitments to anti-racism work and inclusivity in College policy and documents.</p> <p>During the month of October, faculty were also given the opportunity to confidentially share their thoughts in a survey that asked questions related to diversity, inclusion, and racial equity and provided space for comments and other input.</p>
<p><b>Was a Faculty Statement/Commitment written?</b></p> <p><b>Has it been adopted by the Faculty Assembly?</b></p> <p><b>Can you share that?</b></p>	<p>Eric Earnhardt and Thom Addington are preparing a draft commitment to be presented to Faculty Assembly in January. This fall, the Institutional Effectiveness committee was tasked with considering strengthening the language in and/or around the Strategic Plan’s “Power of Difference” platform as it relates to the College’s commitments to anti-racism work and the fostering of inclusivity. The Academic Standards and Appeals committee (in collaboration with the Faculty Affairs committee) was also tasked with the consideration or drafting of syllabus language addressing diversity and inclusion.</p>
<p><b>Have faculty development activities that focus on anti-racist pedagogical approaches been provided?</b></p> <p><b>Scheduled?</b></p>	<p>Eric Earnhardt and Thom Addington will be collaborating on an anti-racist writing pedagogy roundtable during Faculty Development week in January. Instructor of Communications Jamia Hines has also compiled an anti-racist pedagogy toolbox accessible to all faculty through Canvas.</p>

<p><b>Would you say the focus of the Task Force is on the faculty experience or the student experience?</b></p>	<p>The Task Force understands its work holistically and as community work – that is, it seeks to understand and address the experience of all campus community members with attention to the College’s situation within multiple communities.</p>
<p><b>The News Release indicates that regular updates from the Task Force will be communicated to all college stakeholders?</b></p> <p><b>Communicated by whom?</b></p> <p><b>How will this be communicated?</b></p> <p><b>Will stakeholders be able to react/respond?</b></p> <p><b>Has an update been provided yet?</b></p> <p><b>How often will updates be provided?</b></p>	<p>The Task Force communicates its findings as a body, approving all material as a group before sending it through the proper channel(s).</p> <p>Updates have been communicated to the W&amp;M Board of Visitors, Task Force members, and the President’s Council by the co-chairs. The Public-facing content will be handled through the appropriate process in place at RBC. All communications will be forwarded to the President, the College’s Chief of Staff, and Communication’s Staff members who move forward with the publication of campus newsworthy content.</p> <p>Campus stakeholders will be able to provide responses using the Task Force’s digital portal which should be available on the RBC website by March 2021. A Task Force email address (<a href="mailto:racialjustice@rbc.edu">racialjustice@rbc.edu</a>) is also available for stakeholders’ questions.</p> <p>Updates are offered twice a semester and upon the request of the College’s President and Board of Visitors.</p>

It would be appropriate to provide a version of this status report, a 6-month check-in, to the College as the fall semester comes to an end. Among the recommendations provided in the final section of this audit, is the suggestion that the Racial Equity website be more actively utilized; minimal information about the Task Force membership, progress, and plans could be published there.

## **Recommendations**

### **Change Model for Work on Diversity at RBC**

These are challenging times; the pandemic has necessitated faculty, staff, and students to work and learn remotely, or under hybrid conditions. It might be easy to say that this is not the time to undertake an initiative such as developing a diversity education plan. Diversity, though, is intertwined with the impact of the pandemic, as well as with critically important student enrollment issues, and faculty and staff satisfaction. Now is the perfect time to do the hard work to strengthen the RBC family.

During this audit it was shared time and again that the faculty and staff at RBC may already be stretched to their limits. It would be unfortunate if the work of the Task Force on Racial Justice and Equity lost momentum because there is insufficient human capital to help build a strong foundation for a sustainable diversity education program. RBC and the Task Force should consider turning to a graduate or doctoral program in their region for assistance and support in the form of practicum students, interns, and capstone projects that could focus time and attention on this important work at this critical time.

Developing a successful and sustainable diversity education program is a multifaceted, multi-year process. Short, mid, and long-term goals are recommended based on Cox's (2001) model in combination with the priorities shared by the faculty and staff that participated in this audit and as well as RBC websites and documents reviewed. Once developed, the strategic



process must be translated into an agenda for specific changes in the organization culture and systems, which management must then work to implement (Cox & Blake, 1991).

***Leadership:***

*Management Philosophy, Vision, Organization Design, Personal Involvement, Communications Strategy, Strategic Integration*

**Short-term:**

- Clearly define what “diversity” means at RBC, then integrate this diversity statement throughout this plan.
- President Sydow and members of the Board of Visitors should record a message publicly articulating Richard Bland College’s identity as a multicultural institution committed to anti-racist organizational development. This recorded message should be shared widely then housed on the Racial Equity website.
- The Racial Equity website must be expanded and regularly updated to reflect current, past, future plans and initiatives.

**Mid-term:**

- Take steps to ensure the faculty, staff, and administrators are more racially and ethnically representative of the communities they serve.
- Generate a vision statement that outlines concrete action to be taken to ensure that the institution conforms to its articulated anti-racist, multicultural identity. Publish the vision statement to the Racial Equity website.
- Produce a faculty statement/commitment to propose to the Faculty Assembly for formal adoption after the faculty listening session.

**Long-term:**

- Establish relevant, long-term service learning activities in Petersburg and surrounding communities of color.
- Leadership on the Task Force for Racial Justice and Equity should participate on the RBC Leadership Team/Faculty Council.
- Develop a Strategic Plan for Diversity, establish roles and responsibilities for the components of the diversity program.

***Research and Measurement***

*Preliminary Diagnostics, Comprehensive Culture Assessment, Baseline Data, Benchmarking, Measurement Plan*

**Short-term:**

- Utilize open forums to gain an understanding of the current racial climate on campus, from faculty, staff, and students. An example of such would be a “Crucial Conversations” forum whereby all RBC stakeholders would have an opportunity to safely and openly discuss their views on the current racial climate at RBC.
- Evaluate policing on Richard Bland College’s campus to identify and, as needed, rectify policies and practices related to accountability, racial bias, and use of force that do not align with RBC’s articulated anti-racist, multicultural identity and Vision Statement.

**Mid-term:**

- Enlist guidance from outside experts, such as Dr. Jaime Lester (George Mason University).

- Conduct an unbiased assessment of Richard Bland College's historical record as it pertains to racial inequality in higher education in Virginia in order to unpack those elements of oppression and privilege that have influenced its trajectory, and to chart a new course forward.
- Conduct a climate survey that allows all community members to share their experiences, confidentially, if that is their preference.

**Long-term:**

- Establish a committee to review Civil War and Confederate commemorations and memorials on campus to determine how best assure an environment that welcomes and fosters the success of all.
- Facilitate on-going discussions about diversity-related issues through the use of surveys and by providing regular opportunities for open discussion of diversity-related topics.
- Engage the Office of Institutional Research in annual reporting on diversity, equity, and inclusion markers specifically.

***Education***

*On Managing Change, Development of In-House Expertise, Modification of Existing Training, Educate to Develop Awareness, Deeper Knowledge, to Change Behavior and Motivate Action*

**Short-term:**

- Partner with The Office of Diversity & Inclusion and the Center for Student Diversity at RBC's parent institution, William & Mary, to adopt, align, and replicate everything possible for your campus. Remember RBC does not need to reinvent the wheel, you simply want to bring the wheel that would work for your campus, to your campus.

- Enlist outside experts on diversity and inclusion to provide training for faculty, staff, and administrators.
- Provide faculty development that focuses on inclusive, anti-racist pedagogical approaches.

**Mid-term:**

- Record all training sessions, such as the series that took place during November 2020, and create and maintain an online platform so that these programs are available to access anytime (i.e. a YouTube channel).
- Identify and expand opportunities for diversity-related training. Currently, periodic Safe Zone is the only diversity training available to students, coaches, and staff.
- Restore the Common Read Program, with a focus on readings addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Reference the Common Read webpage that was last updated in 2018 for *Something Must Be Done About Prince Edward County* as a guide.

**Long-term:**

- Roll out a series of mandatory training programs for students, faculty, and staff.
- Establish annual diversity-related training whereby employees and students must demonstrate regular competency of the subject matter.
- Establish a mentoring program for staff. Compensate mentors for participating, and connect participation for both the mentor and mentee to their performance appraisal.

***Alignment of Management Systems***

*Work Schedules and Physical Environment, Orientation, Recruitment, Performance Appraisal, Compensation and Benefits, Training and Development, Promotion*

**Short-term:**

- President Sydow must commit, and regularly recommit, to perpetual, periodic training and evaluations of how the faculty, staff, and administration are progressing toward the manifestation of the college's identity as a multicultural institution committed to anti-racist organizational development.
- Continue to ensure a diverse composition of hiring committees but redefine diversity beyond sex and racial identity.
- Ask a question regarding commitment to diversity during the phone interview process. All applicants, regardless of classification, should be asked a question regarding their diversity competencies. Their response should be considered as part of the overall evaluation of the applicant's candidacy.

**Mid-term:**

- Add demonstrated commitment to diversity and diversity competencies to the performance appraisal process.
- Conduct a comprehensive analysis of RBC's human resources processes with the purpose of uncovering sources of potential bias toward under-represented groups.
- Identify ways the workplace culture may inadvertently put some members of the campus community at a disadvantage through the above analysis. Recruitment, performance evaluations, promotion, and compensation are example objectives.

**Long-term:**

- Build out the on-boarding process to include orientation to the RBC community, including diversity, equity, and inclusion.

- Invest in a dedicated diversity manager position as budget allows. This position will ensure diversity efforts receive the attention needed for seamless implementation and sustained progress of initiatives. This also serves to connect the work to a position which will ensure continuity of the college's diversity efforts.
- Create and maintain an Ombudsman position on campus to support faculty or staff.

### ***Follow-Up/Sustainability***

*Accountability, Continuous Improvement, Reporting Process for Performance Results,*

*Knowledge Management Program*

#### **Short-term:**

- Immediately address all low-hanging fruit that emerged from the open forums. Questions and/or concerns that arise from these open forums should be addressed as part of the strategic process.
- Communicate regular updates from the Richard Bland College Task Force on Racial Justice and Equity to all College stakeholders.

#### **Mid-term:**

- Generate an assessment plan, to ensure that the institution conforms to its articulated anti-racist, multicultural identity.
- Establish accountability measures to ensure the plan is effectively addressing diversity-related issues. Accountability might initially be assigned to the Task Force on Racial Justice and Equity but should eventually be transitioned to the Chief Diversity Officer.

#### **Long-term:**

- Establish opportunities for awards and recognition for diversity, equity and inclusion work (i.e. Demonstrated Commitment to Diversity, Innovation, Outstanding Program or Event, etc.).
- Establish annual diversity, equity and inclusion events, such as RBC Diversity Week or an annual keynote address.
- Publish and disseminate an Annual RBC Diversity Report.

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