

October 8, 2021

Dear RBC Community,

The delightful work toward an inclusive and equitable campus environment continues! The Racial Justice & Equity Task Force had its first meeting for the semester on September 29, 2021, with campus members working and planning as partners. We were fortunate to have Dana Davis, the RJ&E's newest member, to join us and to offer highly insightful suggestions for our future work as a team.

Campus Partners

We were honored to be joined by creative and ambitious campus partners who remain enthusiastic about the ways to advance the inclusion and equity work at Richard Bland College. Joining us as inclusion allies in the equity movement on our diverse campus were:

- Michelle Delano – Professor of Art
- Dana Slaughter – Residence Life Coordinator & Campus Engagement
- Navelle Watkins – Residence Life, Coordinator & RBC Learner Success Lab – Leadership & Structure Subcommittee Co-Chair
- Charles Lawson, RBC's Horticultural Landscaper

RJ&E Chat Groups with Faculty Partners

On September 30, 2021, Professors Alexandra Youmans, Linda Pittman, Rachel Finney, and LeJeanna Raymond engaged in a productive inclusion and equity chat with Dr. Evanda Watts-Martinez. As a short summary of the advice provided by the group will be shared later, the Racial Justice & Equity Task Force is appreciative of their perspectives and astute insight around the topics of cultural inclusion in pedagogy and curriculum on campus. A great take-away from the group's dialogue was shared by Professor Raymond who believes that the cultural and inclusion transition must occur naturally and seamlessly. Raymond's remark sends us a gentle reminder of the nature of change and its effectiveness based on the encounters within and among members of the RBC community. We must remain patient with each other as the changes on campus emerge naturally from our depths and inner strivings. Following the professor's advice, the Racial Justice & Equity Task Force will be mindful that while change may be viewed as a personal choice for some and a responsibility for others, we must stay the course and be patient with ourselves and each other at all levels of the campus' cultural and inclusion transitions. We are mindful, then, that individuals evolve at their own pace and that feeling anxious to address and resolve any problem may result in the loss of important life lessons and virtues that would have a salutary impact on us personally, and as a community. As the members of the RJ&E Task Force hold themselves to these ideals, we realize that presenting

and reinforcing new models may bring some hesitation and resistance. Therefore, we intend to address these moments with empathy, grace, confidence, and hope.

Link – Shared by Alexandra Youmans



Notable RBC Alumna Honoree, Ms. Rosetta Thurman '02

The Racial Justice & Equity Task Force extends its gratitude to Professor Youmans for providing a link for the website of RBC Alumna, Rosetta Thurman. Rosetta, Youmans' former student, is the founder of HappyBlackWoman.com. Presented on her inspiring page are messages that empower women toward successful lives through personal development and entrepreneurship. The Richard Bland College Foundation honored the former student along with other influential community leaders, including President Emeritus, Dr. James McNeer and Chief Administrative Officer of Dinwiddie County and RJ&E Task Force Member, Mr. Kevin Massengill.

Rosetta Thurman's journey, blog, and podcasts can be accessed at the following link:
<https://happyblackwoman.com/about/>.

The Richard Bland College Foundation's Announcement of the Notable Alumni Inaugural Honorees can be accessed at: <https://www.rbc.edu/newsworthy/richard-bland-college-foundation-announces-notable-alumni-inaugural-honorees/>

Upcoming RJ&E Programs

Candi Pearson – Host, Campus Wealth-Building Series

Candi Pearson, Account Payable Manager & RJ&E Task Force Member is commended for launching the RBC Racial Justice & Equity Task Force's Economic Mobility Platform which will promote wealth-building among RBC's students and employees. Her impressive background in financial literacy has made a positive and favorable impression on Mr. Tom Katovsich who serves as the Youth and College Financial Education Manager at Ft Lee Credit Union. The task force sends its appreciation to Dr. Tiffany Birdsong for her role of connecting the credit union with RJ&E members at a time when financial literacy is needed the most in all communities. During the month of November, Candi will host three different seminars that address specific

aspects of financial competency and wealth. Katovsich will serve as the session speaker. Stay tuned for more details.

RJ&E's Programs & Partnership with Virginia Tech's LGBTQ + Resource Center



Mr. Jason Neiswinter

The RJ&E is in its initial stages of partnering with the LGBTQ+ Resource Center at Virginia Tech. As a part of this partnership, the task force will advance through education, allyship, and advocacy, the concerns, rights, accomplishments, and future careers of RBC's LGBTQ+ community. Jason Neiswinter, a former RBC student, a current Virginia Tech student, and an active professional in several non-profit organizations, will join Dr. Evanda Watts-Martinez in a virtual campus program for students at RBC & Virginia Tech on October 28, 2021. Stay tuned for more details.

Educational & Training Opportunity

Free Listening Session: E-Lessons – Unconscious Bias:

<https://www.mslearning.microsoft.com/course/72169/launch>

We appreciate your continued support for the RJ&E's efforts. We are always looking for students and employees to engage in the inclusion and equity work. If you wish to join us, please contact Drs. Thom Addington or Evanda Watts-Martinez at racialjustice@rbc.edu.

Best regards,

The RBC Racial Justice & Equity Task Force