



Richard Bland College BOARD OF VISITOR

BOARD OF VISITORS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MINUTES

12 December 2025

The Executive Committee of the Board of Visitors of Richard Bland College (RBC) met in open session on Friday, December 12, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. at the Office of Poole Brooke Plumlee PC, located at 4705 Columbus Street, Suite 100, Virginia Beach, VA 23462-6749.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

- John Rathbone, Rector
- Albert Poole, Vice Rector
- Vickie Schray, Secretary (Ms. Schray participated remotely from Alexandria, Virginia. § 2.2-3708.3.B.3 allows for remote participation if the member's principal residence is more than 60 miles from the meeting location).

OTHERS PRESENT FOR THE FULL BOARD MEETING

- Dr. Debbie Sydow, President
- Dr. Tiffany Birdsong, Chief of Staff
- Stacey Sokol, Chief Business Officer
- Eric Kondzielawa, Chief Operations Officer
- Charita Johnson, Chief Information Officer
- Dr. Susan Clair, Information Security Officer
- Todd Drummond, IT Project Manager
- Dr. Eileen Strempele, Strategic Planning and Governance Consultant
- Gerrit Smith, Senior Executive Administrator and Clerk to the Board of Visitors

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

Rector John Rathbone called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m., recognized the presence of a quorum, and welcomed attendees to the Committee meeting. He provided an update on Virginia State University's merger attempt with Richard Bland College.

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

President Debbie Sydow reviewed a draft schedule and agendas for the January 28, 2026, Board meeting, noting that Scott Fleming, Director of the Virginia State Council of Higher Education (SCHEV), is scheduled to provide a presentation on the SCHEV strategic plan,

including priorities for higher education in Virginia. President Sydow noted that the draft 18-24 month strategic plan for Richard Bland College aligns with and supports the SCHEV strategic plan. Visitors offered input for revision to the schedule, board meeting agenda, and Finance, Audit and Compliance agenda.

President Sydow also reviewed action items for Board consideration at the January 28 meeting and received feedback for revisions. She noted that all board materials will be revised in accordance with Executive Committee feedback and distributed to the full Board two weeks prior to the meeting.

President Sydow, Dr. Tiffany Birdsong and Dr. Eileen Strempele then presented the draft 2028 Strategic Plan and received board feedback. Revisions will be made, and the final plan will be distributed in January board packets.

In response to Rector Rathbone's challenge to identify a "big, hairy, audacious goal," Dr. Strempele shared highlights of a fundraising project currently underway entitled *Debt-free RBC Degree*, which would drive two strategic goals: 1) reduce financial barriers and 2) incentivize more students to complete the associate degree. All Executive Committee members responded positively and encouraged prioritization of this work.

Members of the RBC IT team joined the meeting. Rector Rathbone and Executive Committee members thanked the IT team for their hard work during this past year that resulted in a favorable VITA rating, significantly higher than in recent years.

A discussion about potential opportunities for the college to create new affiliations and partnerships ensued.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business Rector Rathbone adjourned the meeting at 1:11 p.m.

Approved on 13 January 2026