



Richard Bland College
Board of Visitors

How to Prepare for Board Meetings

March 2026

Expectations, Timelines & Etiquette for the Richard Bland College Board of Visitors

Serving on the Richard Bland College Board of Visitors is an important responsibility. Well-prepared and engaged board members help ensure the College remains mission-focused, student-centered, and strategically strong. The guide below outlines what Board members should expect and how to best prepare for each meeting.

1. Pre-Meeting Preparation

Review Meeting Materials Thoroughly

You will receive an electronic board packet via email two weeks in advance of the Board meeting. Typically including the agenda, resolutions, financial updates, reports and other pre-reads.

Before the meeting, you should:

- Read all materials carefully.
- Flag questions or items requiring clarification.
- Note any resolutions that will require a vote.
- Compare information to prior board decisions or reports when helpful.

Understand the Strategic Context

Aim to review materials through a strategic lens, focusing on:

- Student success and support
- Institutional priorities and goals
- Budget health and resource stewardship
- Short- and long-term planning implications

Submit Questions in Advance When Possible

If you need additional information or foresee a question requiring data or analysis, submitting it early allows staff to prepare a more complete response.

2. Timelines for Meeting Readiness

Two Weeks Before the Meeting

- Board packet is distributed by the Clerk to the Board of Visitors.
- Begin reading all documents.
- Ask clarifying questions or request supplemental information.

3–5 Days Before the Meeting

- Finalize your notes, talking points, and questions.
- Confirm your attendance, whether in person or virtual.
- Review any identified action items or follow-ups assigned to you from prior meetings.

Day of the Meeting

- Attire for the meeting is business formal.
- Arrive early enough to greet colleagues, settle in, and review final items.
- Bring (or have ready electronically) all materials, including agenda, notes, and previous minutes.

3. Etiquette and Professional Expectations

Be Fully Engaged

Board meetings require your complete attention.

Please avoid:

- Side conversations
- Emailing or texting
- Reviewing unrelated materials

This helps maintain focus and respect for presenters and fellow members.

Follow the Agenda

Agendas are structured to manage time and ensure thorough, orderly discussion.
Please:

- Keep questions concise and relevant
- Reserve deep-dive conversations for agenda-appropriate moments
- Respect the Rector's or Chair's role in facilitating discussion

Support Respectful Dialogue

Thoughtful, civil discourse is essential.

Members should:

- Welcome diverse perspectives
- Avoid interrupting
- Disagree respectfully when needed
- Keep comments mission-focused and student-centered

Honor Confidentiality

Board members may receive sensitive or protected information.

Confidentiality helps ensure:

- Integrity of institutional processes
- Trust among leadership, faculty, and staff
- Compliance with applicable laws and policies

Be Mission-Driven

Board service should always reflect the College's mission and the best interests of students. Personal or external interests should never guide decision-making.

4. After the Meeting

Review Follow-Up Items

- Complete any individual tasks assigned to you.
- Respond to information requests from the President's Office as needed.

Stay Informed Between Meetings

Remain engaged in the life of the College.

You may:

- Attend campus events
- Review institutional updates
- Stay aware of state and system-level policy developments

5. Tips for Effective Board Participation

- **Prepare questions ahead of time** to keep discussion focused and efficient.
- **Engage in strategic rather than operational thinking**—focus on oversight, not daily management.
- **Be concise and purposeful** when contributing to discussions.
- **Build relationships** with fellow Board members to enhance collaboration.

Your service on the Richard Bland College Board of Visitors helps shape the direction, strength, and success of the institution. Preparing thoroughly, participating actively, and upholding strong professional standards ensures that the Board continues to lead with excellence and integrity.