



Richard Bland College

BOARD OF VISITORS

BOARD POLICY: COMMUNICATION, MEDIA RELATIONS, AND CONFIDENTIALITY

I. Purpose

This policy defines expectations for how members of the Board of Visitors communicate about Board matters; engage with internal and external stakeholders, including the media; and protect confidential information. It promotes transparency, responsible governance, and institutional integrity.

II. Guiding Principles

1. Collective Authority

The Board acts as a single governing body. After decisions are made, all members support and communicate those decisions consistently.

2. Institutional Integrity and Public Trust

Board communications must reflect professionalism and strengthen the College's reputation.

3. Respect for Shared Governance

Communications should reinforce the respective roles of the Board, President, and Faculty Assembly and avoid involvement in management or operations.

4. Compliance with Law and Policy

All Board communications must comply with federal and state law, including FOIA, privacy requirements, and ethics policies.

III. Official Spokespersons

1. Institutional Spokesperson

The President (or designee) serves as the official spokesperson for institutional matters and media relations.

2. Board Spokesperson

The Rector (or Rector-designated representative) speaks for the Board.

3. Individual Board Members

- a. Do not speak on behalf of the Board unless expressly authorized.
- b. May discuss public Board decisions but may not characterize other members' views.

IV. Communication Protocols

1. Internal Communication

- c. Board members direct operational inquiries to the President.
- d. Communication with campus stakeholders must be professional and respectful.
- e. Email and digital communications must comply with applicable policies.

2. External Communication

- a. Public statements regarding Board decisions are issued by the Rector or President.
- b. Board members may express personal opinions publicly but must clearly state they are not speaking for the Board or the College.

3. Crisis Communication

- a. During emergencies, all statements must come from the President or Rector.
- b. Board members must refrain from sharing information publicly or with the media unless authorized.

V. Media Relations

1. Media Inquiries

All media inquiries related to Board actions or deliberations must be referred immediately to the Rector or President.

2. Speaking to Media as an Individual

When responding in a personal capacity, Board members must:

- a. Avoid confidential or non-public information.
- b. Not discuss internal deliberations or speculate on Board positions.
- c. Clearly state their views do not represent the Board.

3. Social Media Use

- a. Confidential information and internal deliberations must never be shared.
- b. Activity should reflect decorum appropriate to Board service.
- c. Posts should avoid inflammatory or derogatory content about the College or its stakeholders.

VI. Confidentiality

1. Protected Information

Members must safeguard:

- a. Executive session discussions
- b. Personnel, student, legal, or contract matters
- c. Strategic or other non-public information
- d. Any material designated confidential by law or Board action

2. Executive Sessions

- a. Note-taking is prohibited.

b. Opinions expressed and the substance of discussions must not be disclosed.

3. Ongoing Obligation

Confidentiality obligations continue after a member's service ends.

VII. Board Deliberations and Decision-Making

1. Respect for the Deliberative Process

Members engage openly during meetings and maintain confidentiality outside them.

2. Unified Communication

Once a vote is taken, members support the decision publicly.

3. Disagreements

Members who disagree with a decision must express concerns internally and avoid public statements that undermine Board credibility or institutional stability.

VIII. Violations and Remedies

1. Consequences for Violations

Remedies may include:

- a. Formal admonishment by the Rector
- b. Referral to the appointing authority
- c. Removal from Board leadership roles
- d. Other actions allowed by state law

2. Reporting Concerns

Concerns about potential violations should be reported to the Rector or the Executive Committee.

IX. Annual Review and Acknowledgment

- 1. Board members shall annually review and sign an acknowledgment of this policy.
- 2. The Finance, Audit, and Compliance Committee reviews the policy at least every two years and recommends updates.