

August 27, 2021

Office of the President  
Richard Bland College  
11301 Johnson Road,  
South Prince George, VA 23805

### **Richard Bland College's Future-State Vision**

In May 2021, Richard Bland College (RBC) engaged Huron to explore how the institution could build upon and enhance its high-touch education model and formulate a future state strategic vision for RBC. RBC desires to be a nimble institution, able to serve a diverse set of students in achieving their academic and career goals through tailored RBC support and guidance along that journey. In preparation for several meetings with key stakeholders, Huron analyzed historical financial, operational, and academic data, reviewed representative partnership models in the higher education space, examined the student pipeline (into and out of RBC) data, and ultimately assisted RBC in formulating a transformative vision. The process and findings are included herein, presented in the following sections:

1. Defining RBC's Identity
2. Exploring Student Pathways
  - A. Core: Strengthening Traditional High School Partnerships
  - B. Adjacent: Tapping into the Virtual High School Market
  - C. Transformative: Establishing Bachelor's Programs and Professional Credentialing
3. Operationalizing the Transformative Vision
  - A. Programming Analysis
  - B. Faculty & Staff Analysis
  - C. Partnership & Infrastructure Assessment
4. Developing an Action Plan
5. Appendix

## 1. DEFINING RBC'S IDENTITY

In order to ideate a vision for the RBC of the future, it was necessary to first align on a clear articulation of RBC's identity today. This effort entailed identifying RBC's strategic differentiators from a traditional two-year community college. Huron's research revealed that while RBC's profile largely aligns with the characteristics often ascribed to community colleges, some notable exceptions exist: RBC is relatively selective in admissions; its students are generally traditionally aged (i.e., post high school); RBC has a liberal arts focus; and there is a significant residential / on-campus student presence.

To further understand RBC's identity, Huron analyzed the College's student body, detailing an "average composite fall RBC class" to understand the student lifecycle from applications to graduation and begin to consider how best to grow and improve the student pipeline and post-RBC pathways. Using Fall 2016 to 2019 data, Huron determined the following about RBC's average fall composite class.

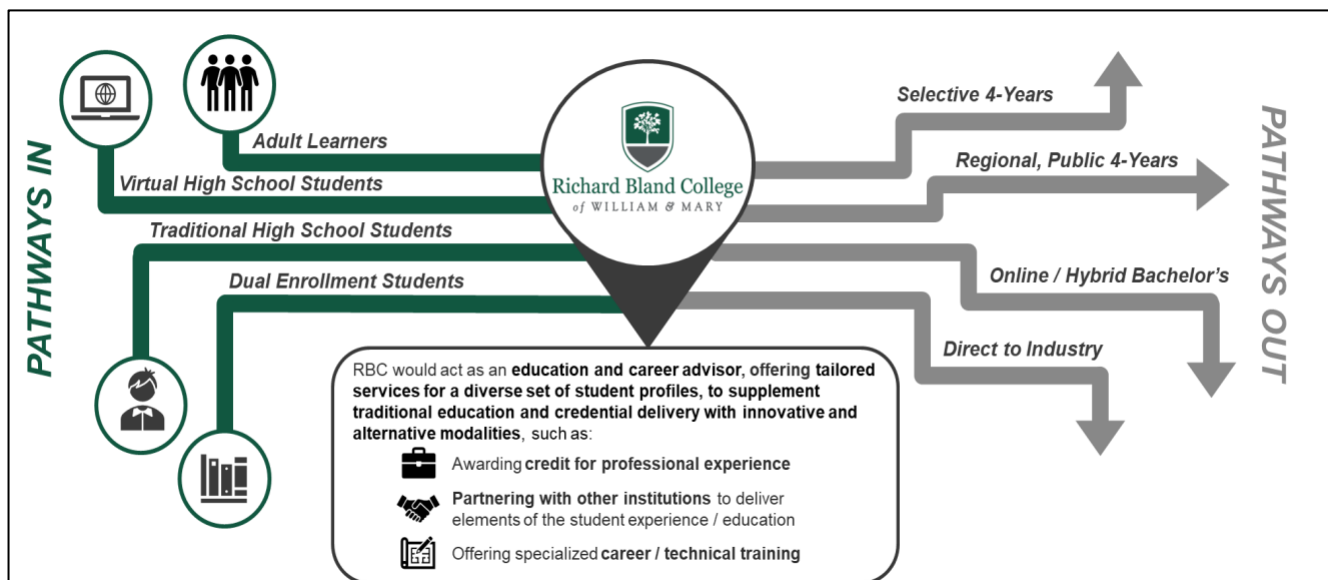
Applied	2,365
Admitted	1,165
Enrolled	563
Retained after 1 Year	297
Graduated 150%	181

Of the 563 students enrolled, 92% of them are first-time students and 8% transferred into RBC. The top 3 two-year institutions transferred to were: 1) John Tyler Community College (31%), 2) Northern Virginia Community College (17%), 3) J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College (10%). The top 3 four-year institutions students transferred to were: 1) Virginia Commonwealth University (15%), 2) Virginia Polytechnic Institute (9%), 3) James Madison University (7%).

The composite class outlined above was then leveraged in conceiving a potential future state vision for well-defined pathways in and out of RBC, to be enabled by uniquely robust student services and advising for enrolled students.

## 2. EXPLORING FUTURE-STATE STUDENT PATHWAYS

The below graphic illustrates how RBC could function and competitively position itself in a future state. It shows a diverse audience of prospective students *in*—including traditional and non-traditional students—who receive high-touch advising and support while at RBC, and then choose from a number of well-defined pathways *out* dependent on student specific strengths, goals, and desired outcomes. While the model outlines a multitude of pathway in/out permutations, it is intended to broadly illustrate RBC’s identity as a “lifelong education and career advisor” for its diverse enrollees.



To define further and more specifically the “RBC of the future,” Huron presented three relevant future state focus areas for consideration: defined as core, adjacent, and transformative opportunities. While each opportunity represents varying degrees of change, investment, and risk, each aligns with RBC’s historical value proposition, identity, and forward-looking strategic goals.

- A. The *Core Opportunity* highlights growth that can be derived from RBC’s existing capabilities and strengths. This opportunity suggests enhancing and where appropriate, formalizing relationships with local high schools (i.e., within 50 miles of RBC), which have traditionally provided the majority of RBC’s resident student population and will likely continue to serve as an important pipeline for “traditional” associate’s degree seekers.
- B. The *Adjacent Opportunity* Huron presented calls for leveraging existing capabilities while tapping into new prospective student markets; namely by forging partnerships with virtual high schools to tap into the sizable online secondary education market, which is experiencing rapid growth and is comprised of students who may be most apt to pursue an online associate’s degree.

- C. The *Transformative Opportunity* suggests standing up a new set of program offerings, including bachelor’s degrees as well as non-degree credentials—potentially through partnerships with other organizations or institutions—aligned with occupational fields experiencing material job growth in the region and more broadly. Students enrolling in and completing these programs would have access to tailored advising and student services aimed at supporting them through their academic journey and into their careers.

Additional detail for each opportunity is presented in the following section.

### **A. Core: Strengthening Traditional High School Partnerships**

This opportunity would require minimum investment and change to existing processes. Enrollment data reveal that 97% of RBC enrollees are from Virginia and 72% are from within 45 miles of the College, suggesting that strengthening relationships with local high schools will be increasingly important, especially as the higher education market becomes more saturated and competitive. Currently, RBC has an existing partnership with Loudon County High Schools on Dual Enrollment programming, but there are several other high schools in close proximity that RBC could solidify relationships with, including:

- Petersburg High School (3 miles)
- Prince George High School (12 miles)
- Hopewell High School (13 miles)
- Dinwiddie High School (15 miles)

In developing partnerships with these high schools, it will be important for RBC to demonstrate its unique value proposition to students. Existing resources at RBC include a dedicated advisor / learner mentor, counseling services, disability services, and academic placement and support, all in support of the “Exceptional Student Experience Program.” For reference, Huron presented market examples as best in class standards for a high-touch student experience, including:

- *High Point University First Year Navigator Support Program*: Student leaders provide transitional support to first-year students
- *UNC Minority Advisor Program*: Peer mentors provide academic and developmental support; students are required to meet at least once a semester

Example pathways out under this “core” opportunity, as illustrated in the pathway graphic in section two, could include selective four-year institutions. Students entering RBC following a “traditional” high school experience may be attracted to the College’s high-touch, preparation-focused experience, and could thus be competitively positioned to transfer into a selective four-year institution. RBC already has existing partnerships with William & Mary and the University of Virginia, for instance, and these transfer pathways could be articulated (and marketed) to prospective local high school students as a model through which to attend and ultimately graduate from a selective institution. Huron identified other example institutions RBC could consider partnering with, including the University of Richmond (Richmond City is the #1 and #2

city by number applied and enrolled respectively) and Gettysburg College (a private, liberal arts institution interested in developing strategic partnerships with two-year institutions).

While not a “transformative” opportunity, RBC must not lose sight of engaging local high schools, as students from the region, and Virginia more broadly, comprise the vast majority of RBC’s traditional student body.

## **B. Adjacent: Tapping into the Virtual High School Market**

The second future-state opportunity reflects one that leverages RBC’s existing operations and strategic distinctions but applies them to a new segment of the education market. The online secondary education market has grown significantly in recent years, and even more materially since the COVID-19 pandemic. Approximately 20% of U.S. school districts have already or plan to offer virtual schooling even following the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> Huron recognizes that this a growing market and believes virtual high schools may prove to be very strong feeders to institutions best prepared to serve them specifically. Thus, Huron outlined several partnerships RBC could consider pursuing to increase the virtual student pipeline into RBC:

- Virginia Virtual Academy (2,100 enrolled as of 2019)<sup>2</sup>
- K12 Private Academy
- The Keystone School
- George Washington University Online High School

Considering these students’ familiarity with online education, they may be more likely to consider an online post-secondary experience, and as such, could represent a material growth lever for RBC, especially given the scalability of enrollment in RBC-branded Sophia Learning courses, for instance (a functionality already available for RBC to leverage). Similarly, RBC’s existing high touch student support model could assist these students in determining a preferred pathway out, like those outlined in the core opportunity above. The College also has several existing partnerships with institutions that specialize in online completion of a bachelor’s degree that could be leveraged for this particularly virtual student pathway, including George Mason University, Old Dominion University Online, Radford University, and Purdue University Global.

## **C. Transformative: Establishing Bachelor’s Programs and Professional Credentialing**

Beyond those core and adjacent opportunities, Huron assisted RBC in envisioning a transformative future-state vision as well, where RBC would establish new program offerings aligned with areas demonstrating growing workforce need in Virginia and beyond. To allow for flexibility in specific offerings, especially given potential change in market conditions or demand, RBC would seek to partner with other institutions or organizations to deliver or support delivery of this program portfolio. This opportunity would position RBC to offer programs that are professionally oriented and provide a variety of credentialing, including two-year degrees, four-year degrees, certificates, and / or associated learning experiences to better prepare RBC’s

---

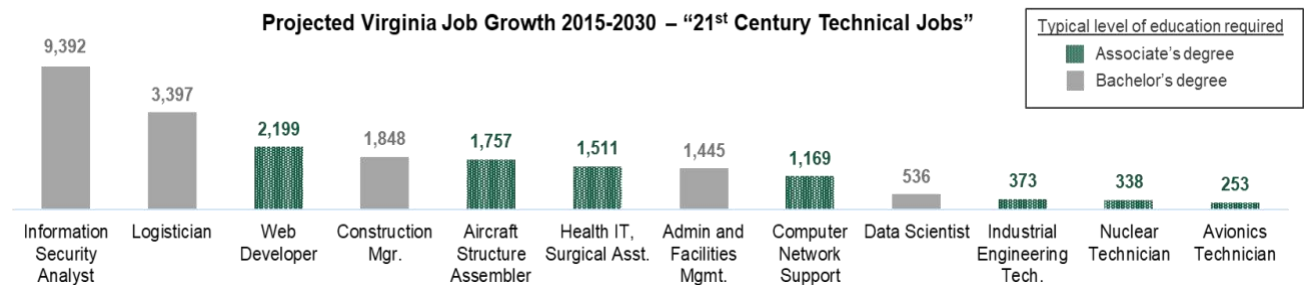
<sup>1</sup>RAND Corporation; <sup>2</sup>Publicschooloptions.org

diverse student body to competitively enter the labor market. Given RBC's desire to increase competitiveness, grow enrollment, and have a lasting impact on a diverse community, the transformative opportunity was prioritized by the leadership team.

To determine which programs to offer, Huron researched projected job growth data in Virginia through 2030 from EMSI, a labor market analytics and economic dataset that leverages data from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. This assessment showed that many jobs are projected to grow materially in the Virginia region in coming years, and that most of those occupations experiencing growth will require at least an associate's degree, if not professional credentials and / or a bachelor's degree. For the purposes of this analysis, Huron controlled for a number of variables to arrive at a set of twelve "21<sup>st</sup> Century Technical Jobs," all of which are projected to show:

- At least 10% growth by 2030 with at least 250 jobs added in the Commonwealth
- At least \$50,000 in median annual earning potential (see Appendix for breakdown by percentile)
- At least an associate's degree, if not a professional credential and / or applied bachelor's degree required
- Minimal years of work experience required, if any

Those jobs are illustrated in the graph below, along with corresponding estimated percent growth between 2015 and 2030.



<b>2015 - 2030 % Change</b>	84%	39%	52%	34%	376%	107%	29%	16%	20%	31%	89%	18%
-----------------------------	-----	-----	-----	-----	------	------	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Further, many of the occupations outlined above are likely to allow for increasing career advancement, especially through attainment of professional certifications and / or a bachelor's degree, ultimately enabling students pursuing these careers to see increased responsibility, promotions, and higher salaries.

This set of occupations presents an opportunity for RBC to set up programming that is highly aligned with these growing fields and for the College to establish itself as an institution that caters to students looking to enter the workforce in competitive and high-paying industries. RBC could partner with students across the lifecycle of their educational and career journeys, offering support (and/or delivery) in obtaining necessary credentials or degrees to enter and advance

across these fields, effectively serving as a “lifelong education and career advisor.” While several institutions in the Virginia region (and some national online providers) do offer programs and credentials aligned with these fields, none of them offer a holistic set of program options designed deliberately to align with these growing “21<sup>st</sup> Century Technical Jobs” (see section 3A for examples of existing programs offered at regional or online institutions).

RBC could thus differentiate itself by offering a portfolio of degrees and credentials aligned with these fields, catering to students interested in pursuing associated careers who would benefit from high-touch and individualized support both while attending RBC and post-graduation. Leveraging partnerships thoughtfully will enable RBC to maintain a nimble and affordable portfolio that could easily be shifted (new investment, divestment, etc.) should market conditions change, to maintain alignment with student demand and remain competitive.

The table below outlines a prospective student’s lifetime of engagement with a potential future-state RBC, where the student receives high-touch advising, earns an associate’s degree aligned with a growing industry, attains industry credentials, and ultimately returns to RBC for a bachelor’s degree to enable further career advancement. This holistic student service and lifetime learning / credentialing model could effectively differentiate RBC from both two- and four-year competitors in the region and more broadly, while serving a segment of the student market who could benefit greatly from these high-touch, focused services.

Example Student Journey		
Step	Title	Detail
1	Selective Admission	Applies to and enrolls in RBC. Expresses interest in manufacturing.
2	High-Touch Advising ★	RBC advisor suggests applying to FAME. Student applies and is admitted.
3	Flexible Scheduling / Online Option ★	Takes courses at RBC online 2x/week. Attends workshops to refine soft skills.
4	In-Semester Work Experience ★	Works 3x/week at Phlow Corp. in Richmond, a local sponsoring employer, while studying for cert.
5	Professional Credentialing ★	Earns Advanced Manufacturing Technician (AMT) Certification.
6	Two-Year Degrees	Graduates in 5 semesters with an Associates of Science degree.
7	Formal Employer Partnerships	Interviews with Phlow Corp. for a full-time job and is hired.
8	Lifelong Learning / Credentialing	Returns to RBC online to earn a credential in Supply Chain Management.
9	Flexible Bachelor’s Completion ★	Earns a Bachelor’s in Logistics through RBC and consortia partner coursework.
10	Professional Advancement	Hired as Supply Chain Manager given additional qualifications.

★ - Represents steps where partner participation / delivery may be considered

### 3. OPERATIONALIZING THE TRANSFORMATIVE VISION

Effectively planning for and executing RBC's transformative future state vision requires significant internal and external / market analysis, as well as close assessment of several strategic, operational, and organizational considerations. In the following section, Huron explores initial considerations and high-level analyses which are intended to inform a more built-out, extensive implementation plan, that would best support execution of RBC's long-term transformative vision.

The following section includes a preliminary review of programming, faculty, staff, and technology / other infrastructure needs, as well as thoughts surrounding additional efforts that would best support development of a comprehensive business plan.

#### A. Programming Analysis

While precise programming decisions will invariably be unique to an institution, the following criteria are often utilized in attempting to prioritize or objectively evaluate programmatic options. It is important to decide which should be defined and utilized to create an objective framework to prioritize new programming / activities for near-term and / or long-term implementation. Example criteria for prioritization include but are not limited to:

- Financial Impact
  - Potential impact on revenue, expenses, liabilities, and / or income
- Market Need
  - Potential student interest
  - Alignment with current / projected workforce needs
  - Program availability regionally (i.e., competitive landscape)
- Academic Alignment
  - Faculty expertise alignment
  - Existing course / curriculum alignment
- Operational Alignment
  - Staff support / capacity
  - Existing operational capability

To create an objective evaluation / prioritization framework, criteria must be selected, with relative weights applied to each. For example, RBC may decide program (lack of) availability in the region should be more strongly weighted than existing course alignment. Developing a dynamic framework with assigned weights will allow RBC to envision the future state more clearly and objectively.

In addition to identifying which criteria should be selected and weighted, RBC must also consider various questions surrounding its academic portfolio more broadly, such as:

- How many programs / certificates should RBC offer?

- What level of investment would each program require to set up?
- Do programs require a particular “ROI” to justify their launch?
- Should any existing programs be phased out / deprioritized? What criteria should inform any divestment decisions?

With respect to the competitive landscape, the table below illustrates regional or online programs that align with those “21<sup>st</sup> Century Technical Jobs” previously introduced. As RBC begins to consider its future state portfolio, it should conduct a deeper market analysis to better understand the competitive landscape and potentially prioritize programs that may best differentiate the College from other institutions.

<b>Existing Regional / Online Program Examples for “21<sup>st</sup> Century Technical Jobs”</b>			
<b>#</b>	<b>Occupation</b>	<b>Institution</b>	<b>Program Name</b>
1	Information Security Analysts	Northern Virginia CC	AAS in Cybersecurity
2	Logisticians	Virginia State University	BS in Information Logistics Technology
3	Web Developer	Northern Virginia CC	Web Design and Development Career Studies Certificate
4	Construction Managers	Virginia Tech	BS in Construction Engineering and Management
5	Aircraft Rigging	Blue Ridge CC	AAS in Advance Manufacturing Technology
6	Health Information Technologist	Tidewater CC	AAS Health Information Management
7	Facilities Manager	University of Virginia	Facilities Management Apprenticeship Program
8	Computer Network Support Specialists	Tidewater CC	AAS Specialization in Network Administration
9	Data Scientist	Columbia University	Professional Certificate in Data Science (Online)
10	Industrial Engineering Technologists	ODU Online	BS in Industrial Technology (Occupational & Technical Studies)
11	Nuclear Technician	Central Virginia CC	AAS in Nuclear Technology
12	Avionics Technician	Liberty University	BS in Aviation Maintenance (Unmanned Aerial Systems Cognate)

The degree to which existing faculty and staff resources and expertise may be able to support new programming will likely also be considered in identifying a program portfolio and the degree to which partners may support it. The following section presents initial analyses around these operational considerations.

## B. Faculty & Staff Analysis

### Faculty Analysis

Huron conducted a preliminary review of RBC’s faculty roster and specific faculty expertise and identified only **low to moderate faculty alignment** with programs that would correspond to those “21<sup>st</sup> Century Technical Jobs.”

Of RBC’s 33 full-time faculty members, fewer than 10<sup>1</sup> currently teach courses in major fields (not including prerequisites or general education courses) that correspond to those growing industries. Huron also researched faculty backgrounds to identify if any faculty members had expertise that lends itself to any of the 21<sup>st</sup> century technical jobs identified, and no significant public information was found to suggest so.

21st Century Technical Job	Related Major Field(s)	RBC Faculty in Field(s) <sup>2</sup>
Information Security Analyst	Computer / Data Science	1
Logistician	Business / Math	7
Web Developer	Computer Science	1
Construction Mgr.	Construction-related Field	0
Aircraft Structure Assembler	Aviation-related Field	0
Health IT, Surgical Asst.	Health / Computer Sciences	8
Admin and Facilities Mgmt.	Business / Facilities-related Field	1
Computer Network Support	Computer / Data Science	1
Data Scientist	Computer / Data Science	1
Industrial Engineering Tech.	Math / Industrial Tech-related Field	6
Nuclear Technician	Nuclear Tech-related Field	0
Avionics Technician	Aviation-related Field	0

<sup>1</sup>1 faculty member in Computer Science, 6 in Mathematics, 1 in Business, and 1 in Science; <sup>2</sup>See Appendix for detail on RBC faculty expertise.

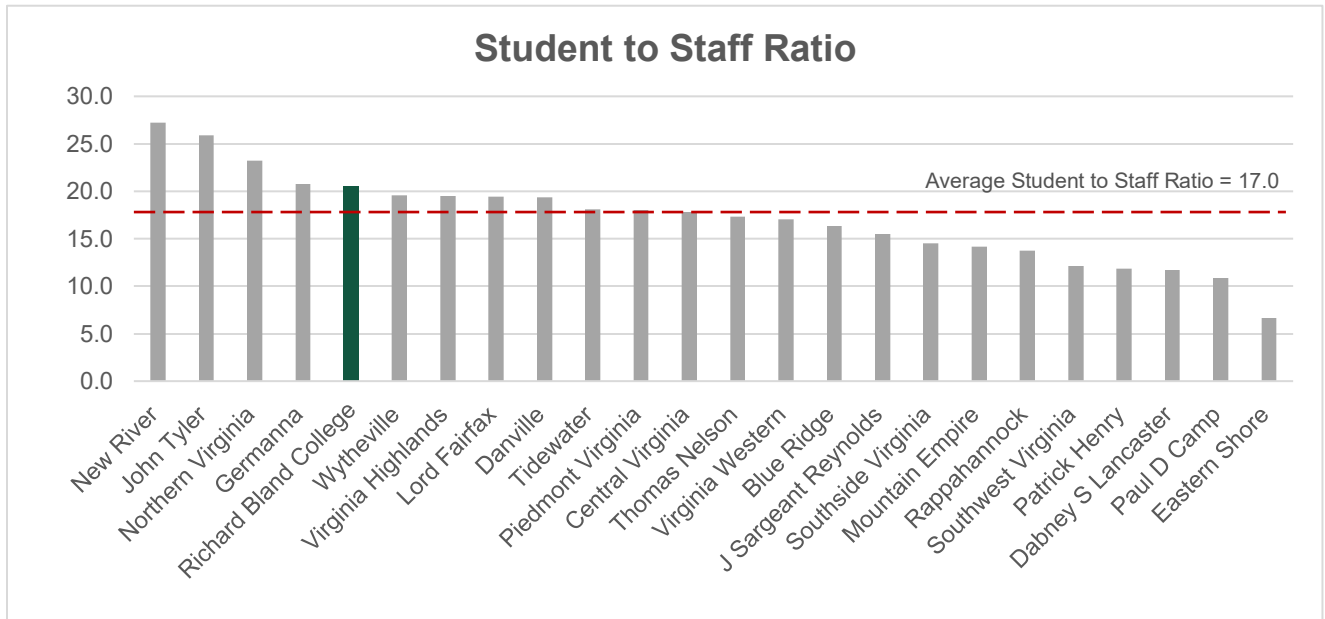
Given this low to moderate alignment, without investment in strategic partnerships, significant hiring would be necessary to offer programs that would provide students with necessary degrees / credentialing to be successful in the fields outlined above. RBC investment in partnerships could likely enable the institution to more flexibly (and affordably) offer prioritized programs to potential students.

Huron also reviewed additional occupations experiencing growth in the Virginia area (further utilizing the criteria outlined in section 2C) to determine if any others might more closely align with RBC’s existing faculty specializations. Several occupations in business fields are experiencing growth in Virginia, such as Accountants and Auditors, Management Analysts, and Financial and Investment Analysts. RBC does have faculty with expertise in math and business and could offer programs in these areas, however the regional market is already quite saturated

with institutions offering business degrees and credentials, suggesting limited, if any, upside to consideration of new programs aligned with those fields.

### Staff Analysis

Determining the appropriate levels of staffing support is also critical in standing up new programming. To contextualize RBC’s current staffing levels, Huron pulled student, faculty, and staff data from 23 Virginia Community Colleges for benchmarking purposes (the State Council of Higher Education in Virginia does not have an identified peer group for RBC).



33 full-time faculty, 19 adjunct professors (assumed 0.3 FTE), and 79 staff members

The above graph illustrates Huron’s findings, all measured by full-time equivalent (FTE), and suggests that **every RBC staff member supports ~20.5 student FTE, while on average across Virginia, each staff member supports ~17.0 student FTE.** Among this set of 24 institutions, RBC shows the fifth highest number of students supported per single staff FTE, which suggests a likely need for more support should enrollments grow (and may suggest a need for additional staff independent of growth, especially given RBC’s high-touch mission and brand). See below for the current breakdown of RBC staff by organizational unit. As outlined below, certain units have minimal staffing and would likely need to grow to support RBC in the future.

Unit	Staff Count
Operations & Capital Assets	16
Finance	11
Enrollment Management	10
Information Technology	8
Police	6

Academic Services	6
Student Life	5
President's Office	3
Athletics	3
Library Services	2
Marketing & Communications	2
Human Resources	2
Development	2
Online & Continuing Education	2

Alternatively, RBC could consider partnering with a third-party to perform certain functions in the future state, such as student recruitment or marketing, for instance. Rather than increasing the number of staff members supporting Marketing & Communications, for example, RBC could partner with an organization like OHO Interactive, a marketing agency with a focus on higher education, to provide services such as content strategy, digital marketing, website design, etc. A partnership approach for staff needs could better enable scale and avoid front-end time and resources that would need to be dedicated to hiring additional staff members.

### C. Partnership & Infrastructure Assessment

Prior to considering new partner organizations to support execution of the College's vision to be a lifelong education and career advisor, it is important to **first review RBC's existing suite of partners**. The table below outlines existing partnerships, all which align well to RBC's future state vision.

Existing Partner	Description
<b>SEI Ventures</b> <i>(Strayer &amp; Capella Parent Company)</i>	RBC licenses online coursework designed for adult or post traditional learners from Strayer Studios courses. These courses are rebranded as RBC courses instructed by RBC faculty.
<b>Sophia Learning</b> <i>(SEI product)</i>	Sophia Learning allows students to take online courses that are self-paced and affordable. This product allows students to work towards their educational and career goals on their own timeline.

<b>Verto</b>	Verto is a private company that provides study abroad experiences. Students are recruited by Verto, enroll in RBC (15 credits), and take the RBC courses at one of Verto's Destination Locations. Verto partners with universities, and courses will transfer automatically. W&M has approved for waitlist students to enter in Spring (guaranteed) after completing the semester abroad.
<b>Central VA FAME</b>	RBC partners with the Commonwealth Center for Advanced Manufacturing (CCAM) and the Manufacturing Institute for the first Virginia Chapter of FAME. In this program RBC has secured nine industry partners that agreed to hire 17 employees (part-time). The students work three days per week and attend RBC two days per week. The wages cover all tuition and fees as well as an additional stipend for the students' living expenses.

To further support the future state vision, RBC could **consider partnering with additional third parties** to support their students throughout their academic and career lifecycle. The following table provides **examples of potential, representative partners** and describes the value organizations like them can provide RBC along the student pathway outlined in Section 2.

<b>Student Stage</b>	<b>Representative Partner</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Value Add to RBC</b>
<b>Pathway In</b>	Noodle	Develops a data-based, higher education marketing strategy to promote online programming and recruit students.	Engaging a third-party to lead all marketing efforts related to online programming would lessen the administrative burden on RBC.
	Create Communication Associates <i>(business unit of Noodle)</i>	Provides full-service marketing services to higher education institutions.	A specialized higher education marketing firm could help RBC further define, design, and build their desired brand around the future-state vision and boost enrollment as a result.

<b>At RBC</b>	MindSumo	Crowdsourcing platform to connect institutions to college students to solve strategic problems.	RBC could leverage a third-party to establish connections between students and companies, allowing students to gain experience in creative problem-solving.
	Noodle	Provide institutions with a platform for distributing online courses, credentials, and certificates. Assists faculty with development of innovative online learning.	A third-party learning management platform would allow RBC to stay nimble while offering various programs in a collaborative learning environment.
	Coursera	Assists institutions in marketing free, online courses.	Similar to Noodle, a revenue-sharing, online learning platform allows RBC to stay nimble and limits the administrative burden of marketing courses.
<b>Pathway Out</b>	Handshake	Ensures equal access to career opportunities across college students. It is the leading early career community in the US.	A platform for job recruitment improves accessibility to job placement among RBC's diverse student body.

#### 4. ACTION PLAN

As part of Phase I, Huron performed preliminary analyses to support RBC in defining its future state vision and in determining RBC's capacity for programmatic growth. In the next steps of the initiative, it will be important to perform additional analyses in greater depth and expand upon them to reflect RBC's strategic vision as it is further refined. Huron has designed the following

action plan to advise in the College's next steps towards implementation of new programming and execution of the transformative vision:

1. Perform Programming Analysis
2. Perform Operational Analysis
3. Develop Financial Model
4. Identify Potential Partners
5. Develop "Sellable" Strategic Vision
6. Prepare for Partnership
7. Establish Partnership
8. Engage Stakeholders
9. Manage Partnership Post-Launch

As outlined in section 2C, Huron performed initial analyses to determine what jobs were projected to grow in Virginia through 2030, and thus, which programs RBC might offer to prepare students for successful careers in those identified high growth fields. Prior to determining which programs RBC should prioritize and ultimately launch, further and more targeted analyses should be performed.

### **1. Perform Programming Analysis**

To inform the Phase 1 assessment, Huron used Virginia labor data from EMSI, a labor market analytics and economic dataset. Moving forward, RBC could consider narrowing or broadening its focus on selected variables in the database to further refine fields and industries to which it may elect to align programming. For example, RBC could narrow the search to the Richmond area and adjust the criteria to include only positions with at least a median annual earning potential of \$75,000. Adjusting the inputs (those variables) would alter the outputs (particular jobs and industries) RBC obtains. Once the College has finalized the list of jobs in the market it would like to consider aligning programming towards, further analysis on program availability can ensue.

In Phase I of the engagement, Huron researched what programs were available regionally or online which were related to the identified "21st century technical jobs" (see section 3A). A secondary step would be to research and document a more exhaustive list of regional or online programs offering credentials or degrees that would align with and/or support the identified technical jobs. Mapping out precisely which programs are available—and their typical pricing, among other factors—will assist RBC in identifying where the most material gaps exist.

### **2. Perform Operational Analysis**

Upon refining the list of high-growth jobs, prioritizing potential related programming, and performing a gap analysis, Huron recommends RBC perform internal operational analyses to assess the College's readiness to launch and support the prioritized programs. Supporting additional programming without third-party support will require a minimum level of staffing across the institution. RBC should assess existing capabilities and identify gaps that could be

performed either in house through hiring or consider how a partner organization may be able to support future state growth. This involves reviewing faculty and staff expertise and capacity, benchmarking with like-institutions, and highlighting where partner support is likely most critical.

### 3. Develop Financial Model

In addition to analyzing programmatic and operational data, building a financial model to illustrate prospective program economics is a necessary step in evaluating the institution's readiness for programmatic expansion. Huron recommends that RBC build a detailed financial model outlining projected enrollments needed to break even or run positive margins for various programs or program portfolio scenarios. Creating a robust model to understand the implications of various operational decisions, enrollment scenarios, and pricing strategies, among other factors, will allow RBC to make more informed and strategic decisions with respect to future-state programming and the faculty, administrative, and other infrastructure needed to support new initiatives.

### 4. Identify Potential Partners

As the higher education industry continues to evolve, particularly with respect to the EdTech space, so expands the number and types of innovative partners with which colleges and universities may choose to engage. Recognizing that RBC both *desires* partnerships and can likely better execute its vision *through* thoughtful partnerships, the College should develop a set of criteria to objectively evaluate prospective partners, who may support future-state operations in a variety of manners (from administrative support to program development, for instance). The following questions should be considered representative of those that may be utilized to identify and prioritize partners in support of various RBC functions and strategic aims:

#### **Academic Programming Partners**

- Programming (e.g., coursework, curricula, credentialing, etc.)
  - What available coursework or curricula does the partner offer?
  - Would programming be RBC branded?
  - How flexible is the coursework? Could RBC adjust it?
  - How aligned are the partner's offerings with RBC's desired focus areas?
  - What unique credentialing services does this partner offer?
  - What program materials does the partner have available to students?
- Program delivery (e.g., online or other innovative delivery platforms)
  - Can this partner offer non-traditional delivery more effectively than RBC?
  - How could the partner offer or support experiential learning in its delivery?
  - How interactive is the delivery? How are students' progress, and ultimately outcomes tracked and measured?

#### **Administrative and Student Services Partners**

- Student services or other academic support
  - Does the partner offer high-touch student services that can be more effectively scaled than traditional models employed at RBC?

- Does the partner offer support that is more effective from a student outcomes perspective than traditional models employed?
- Does the partner enable more cost-effective service?
- Technology / systems
  - What innovate technology platforms does the partner offer that could differentiate the RBC experience from others in the market?
  - What are the financial implications (e.g., upfront cost vs. long-term benefits) of employing a system or other technology solution?
  - Is RBC well-equipped to incorporate the new technology / systems?
- Other administrative support / needs
  - Would the partner cost-effectively relieve administrative burden from RBC considering RBC's relative understaffing on a per student basis compared to most Virginia Community Colleges? (see section 3B)
  - What (if any) additional administrative support would be required to effectively manage the partnership with the third party?

### **Career Services Partners**

- Job recruitment
  - What corporate relationships does the partner bring to the table?
  - What professional experience opportunities does the partner provide?
  - How would the partner ensure equal access to job opportunities across RBC's diverse enrollees?
- Services offered
  - What career preparation services does the partner offer? How are these different from services RBC could provide?
  - Are the services provided high touch? Will students receive individualized career services support?

## **5. Develop "Sellable" Strategic Vision**

An effective action plan thoughtfully considers the institution's comprehensive strategic vision and differentiating competitive factors. In Phase 1, Huron's assessment showed that while myriad institutions in the Virginia region and broader online market offer programs associated with high-growth jobs, none define themselves holistically around the idea of offering a set of program options strategically conceived to align with high growth "21<sup>st</sup> century technical jobs."

To differentiate itself amongst an increasingly competitive market, RBC must thoughtfully and deliberately define its vision to be a "lifelong education and career advisor" and articulate how playing that role fills a unique need in the market. Through intentional partnerships, RBC can stay nimble and offer affordable programs relevant to the market, consistently aligned with (and evolving to reflect) high growth technical jobs.

Huron recommends the College develop a "pitch book" or organized set of materials (PowerPoint Deck, Word Document, etc.) to outline this strategic value proposition to prospective partners. The materials should highlight RBC's identity as a "lifelong education and

career advisor” for its diverse enrollees, and if prepared effectively, clearly communicate that RBC’s vision and mission would serve an unmet segment of the higher education market.

### 6. Prepare for Partnership

Prior to establishing a partnership, particularly a complex or robust partnership, RBC should perform more exhaustive diligence to understand risk and ensure an appropriate mutual fit with a potential partner organization. Efforts here include but are not limited to financial due diligence (RBC and the prospective partner), legal and other risk assessment, accreditation considerations, and stakeholder (students, alumni, faculty, community) involvement, especially for more complex and/or substantive partnerships that may be considered. Creating and agreeing on a partnership governance structure (i.e., decision-making processes and authorities) is equally important to effectively moving the partnership(s) forward.

### 7. Establish Partnership

Upon confirmation of strategic alignment and completion of partnership preparation activities, RBC should contractually establish the partnership with the identified organization. Additionally, in order to track and assess the outcomes of the partnership, Huron recommends RBC define key performance indicators (KPIs). KPIs will enable RBC to track “success” quantitatively and qualitatively as defined by the College.

### 8. Engage Stakeholders

For a successful launch of the partnership, it is necessary to identify and engage key stakeholder groups. Developing and carrying out a communications plan is vital to initiative success, especially if the partnership will impact many constituents or a multitude of constituent groups. Common communications channels include website updates, FAQ documents, an anonymous email for feedback submission, etc.

### 9. Manage Partnership Post-Launch

To track partnership performance metrics, RBC must first determine a “baseline” state to be able to track the KPI delta pre and post partnership. For example, if the College decides to partner with Handshake, an online recruiting platform for students, an example KPI to track would be graduate employment rate. Identifying what the employment rate upon graduation is prior to the partnership would allow RBC to understand the impact Handshake has had (when used in conjunction with several other KPIs). KPIs should continue to be tracked throughout the life of the partnership and should be considered alongside other quantitative and qualitative data.

### Action Plan Timeline

The following action plan offers more detailed steps involved in executing the high-level activities outlined above over the next two fiscal years.

#	Activity	FY2022				FY2023			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.0	Perform Programming Analysis								

#	Activity	FY2022				FY2023			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
1.1	Conduct additional research on programs and degree / credential offerings aligned with relevant fields ("21st Century Technical Jobs") in the RBC region and the broader online market								
1.2	Create an exhaustive list of programs offered with relevant information (distance from RBC, institution type, program pricing, course delivery modality, etc.) and identify most significant gaps in the market								
1.3	Develop a list of program evaluation criteria to assist in identifying what programs RBC would be strategically / most competitively positioned to offer (financial, market need, academic / operational alignment, etc.)								
1.4	Prioritize set of programs to consider more narrowly based on alignment with those criteria (e.g., programs' value proposition, alignment with RBC capabilities, market relevance, alignment with RBC's vision and goals, etc.)								
1.5	Conduct more thorough research on details surrounding prioritized programs / offerings: common curriculum, length of program, certificate requirements for jobs, etc.								
<b>2.0</b>	<b>Perform Operational Analysis</b>								
2.1	Assess RBC's academic and operational data to analyze existing capabilities and identify gaps that could be performed either in-house (i.e., hiring staff) or by a prospective partner organization								
2.2	Review academic course work and faculty data; identify if existing faculty expertise and / or RBC curricula align with programming prioritized previously								
2.3	Analyze current staffing levels by function across the institution and benchmark with like-institutions to contextualize staffing levels								
2.4	Summarize findings to identify specific functions (academic delivery, academic support, student support, etc.) where third-party / partner support is likely most critical								
<b>3.0</b>	<b>Develop Financial Model</b>								
3.1	Gather RBC's financial data from the past 5 fiscal years and build a dynamic model using anticipated programmatic pricing and projected expenses (one-time and ongoing), informed by operational analysis								
3.2	Determine fixed and variable costs to include in the financial model (marketing, recruiting, technology support, indirect costs, etc.)								
3.3	Determine what levels of enrollment are necessary for rationalization of a program's implementation (breakeven or net positive) and perform sensitivity analysis to model enrollment scenarios								
3.4	Conduct sensitivity analysis to identify which programs modeled are scalable, which may see diminishing returns, and/or which may not be financially viable								

		FY2022				FY2023			
#	Activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
3.5	Model out cost, risk, and / or revenue / cost share models and identify how the potential structure of these deals would impact program economics, and thus, a go / no-go decision								
<b>4.0</b>	<b>Identify Potential Partners</b>								
4.1	Utilizing prioritized program decisions, gap and third-party support analyses, develop a strategic, thoughtful list of potential partners (leverage list of partners Huron developed in Phase 1)								
4.2	Identify which element of the student lifecycle partners will support (recruiting, academic delivery, student support, careers, etc.) and define their "value add" to RBC								
4.3	Determine a set of partner criteria or characteristics to assist in identifying the best mutual fit between RBC and the potential partner (academic programming, administrative, student services, etc.)								
4.4	Prioritize partners based on their value proposition, market relevance, and alignment with RBC's vision and goals								
<b>5.0</b>	<b>Develop "Sellable" Strategic Vision</b>								
5.1	Form an internal working group to further refine RBC's future state vision, more clearly defining the role of a "lifelong education and career advisor"								
5.2	Research prospective partners' strategic priorities and identify how best to frame RBC's strategic value in the potential partnership (e.g., identify synergies, highlight mission alignment, reference financial benefits)								
5.3	Develop formalized joint strategic vision for the prioritized partnership; define clear, communicable goals and intended outcomes								
5.4	Outline the proposed details of the engagement (e.g., timeline, revenue / cost sharing, roles & responsibilities, etc.)								
5.5	Leveraging the research and materials above, develop pitch materials to share with prospective partner (e.g., slide decks, summarized output of financial model, stakeholder analysis, etc.)								
<b>6.0</b>	<b>Prepare for Partnership</b>								
6.1	Establish contact with prospective partner and request / schedule meeting to discuss potential partnership, sharing letter of intent								
6.2	Engage with prospective partner on proposed partnership: share pitch materials; outline mutual benefit and RBC's unique value proposition; share findings to date about identified gap(s) in market								
6.3	Upon expressed interest, identify a member of the prospective organization's team to maintain open communication with and schedule meetings to discuss contractual details of mutual partnership; engage RBC legal team								

#	Activity	FY2022				FY2023			
		Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
6.4	Conduct detailed financial due diligence (e.g., economic earning trends, historical sales, competitor and industry data, balance sheet review, etc.)								
6.5	Perform risk assessment, highlighting potential risks of entering into partnerships and likelihood of each risk								
6.6	Identify and address accreditation concerns (e.g., review necessary approvals, compliance requirements, etc.)								
6.7	Create and formalize governance structure to push partnership forward, including defining project leadership, working groups, and broader decision-making authority, among other elements								
<b>7.0</b>	<b>Establish Partnership</b>								
7.1	Finalize contractual agreement to formally establish partnership; reengage legal team								
7.2	Create and launch shared site for project management purposes (e.g., ease of material sharing, timeline tracking, etc.)								
7.3	Develop detailed, shared workplan through go-live and assign responsibility to members of the working group for each step of the plan; establish go-live date								
7.4	Identify and document desired and shared outcomes for both parties and regularly track towards goals; identify stakeholder groups to engage								
7.5	Define key performance indicators (KPI) to track partnership success and determine cadence for reviewing KPIs								
7.6	Create a comprehensive, formal communications plan for all identified stakeholder groups; document communication type, date, intended audience, sender / presenter, etc.								
<b>8.0</b>	<b>Engage Stakeholders</b>								
8.1	Assign project champions among faculty and staff and hold informational sessions / town halls to update the campus community on the strategic partnership prior to go-live								
8.2	Create an email for feedback from campus community and assign someone to manage responses								
8.3	Send out newsletters / post on RBC website weekly updates on partnership and key milestones								
8.4	Announce official go-live of partnership via (virtual) town hall								
<b>9.0</b>	<b>Manage Partnership Post-Launch</b>								

		FY2022				FY2023			
#	Activity	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4
9.1	Calculate pre-partnership financials to serve as a baseline against which to track future-state outcomes; assign team members to track / monitor KPIs								
9.2	Identify a liaison to keep in close contact with partner to ensure open communication regarding operations and outcomes								

Note: RBC may elect to engage a consulting partner to assist with steps 1 through 6 which could expedite the timeline.

## 5. APPENDIX

### 1. 21<sup>st</sup> Century Technical Job Annual Earnings Table

Occupation Description	Annual Earnings by Percentile (\$)		
	25 <sup>th</sup> Percentile	50 <sup>th</sup> Percentile (Median)	75 <sup>th</sup> Percentile
Information Security Analysts	86,113	113,982	141,750
Administrative Services and Facilities Managers	75,499	99,905	132,806
Construction Managers	77,088	99,579	132,073
Data Scientists and Mathematical Science Occupations, All Other	67,086	90,514	124,026
Logisticians	67,187	86,561	108,115
Web Developers and Digital Interface Designers	58,101	79,126	107,423
Computer Network Support Specialists	51,827	68,715	92,795
Avionics Technicians	49,362	68,715	76,701
Nuclear Technicians	55,861	64,335	91,288
Aircraft Structure, Surfaces, Rigging, and Systems Assemblers	41,622	59,904	70,402
Health Information Technologists, Medical Registrars, Surgical Assistants, and Healthcare Practitioners and Technical Workers,	42,191	57,225	80,124
Industrial Engineering Technologists and Technicians	41,030	53,008	66,210

Sourced from EMSI

### 2. Community College Differentiation

RBC's emphasis on flexible and innovate credit models for especially in-demand programs would differentiate it from community colleges and four-year institutions, whose related activities have largely emerged ad hoc.

COMMUNITY COLLEGES	RBC VISION
<i>Widespread curricula focus</i>	<i>High-touch student experience</i>
<i>Local reach with modest investment in select areas</i>	<i>Flexible learning options</i>
<i>Offer credentials / professional opportunities ad hoc</i>	<i>Holistic and deliberate career pathways</i>
<i>Local workforce development</i>	<i>Stackable credentials relevant to courses and in-demand career pathways</i>
<i>Four-year degree preparation</i>	<i>Thoughtful employer partnerships</i>

### 3. Example Credentials in High-Growth Jobs

Job Title	Related Credential
Information Security Analyst	CompTIA Security+
Logistician	APICS Certified Supply Chain Professional Certification (CSCP)
Web Developer	Web Design Specialist – Certificate
Construction Mgr.	Certified Construction Manager® (CCM®)
Aircraft Structure Assembler	Aviation Maintenance Technician Certification
Health IT, Surgical Asst.	Certified Surgical First Assistants (CSFA)
Admin and Facilities Mgmt.	Certified Facility Manager (CFM)
Computer Network Support	CompTIA's Network+
Data Scientist	DASCA Data Science Certifications
Industrial Engineering Tech.	Industrial Engineering Certification
Nuclear Technician	A.S. in Nuclear Technology
Avionics Technician	Airframe and Powerplant (A&P) Credential

### 4. RBC Faculty Expertise

Faculty Focus	Full Time Count
Art	1
Biology	5
Business	1
Chemistry	2
Communication	2
Computer Science / Math	1
English	6
History	5
Math	6
Psychology	2
Science	1
Sociology	1
Spanish	1

## 5. Case Studies

### Case Study 1: SUNY Empire State College

This case study highlights SUNY Empire State College, an institution that has sought to disrupt the traditional higher education experience by recognizing “non-traditional” students’ life experience.

BACKGROUND	MODEL DETAILS	RBC RELEVANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SUNY Empire State was founded in 1971 with the goal of being a <b>disruptor in higher education</b>.</li> <li>Their goal is to educate students at <b>any stage of life and learning</b>.</li> <li>Faculty mentors work closely with students to <b>design individualized degree programs</b>.</li> <li>Empire State employed a “<b>Credit for College Level Learning</b>” model.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Credit for College Level Experience:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Empire State awards credit for <b>verifiable college-level learning</b> from sources such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Courses from other colleges</li> <li>Work experience</li> <li>Volunteer work</li> <li>Military service</li> <li>Independent study</li> </ul> </li> <li>An identified mentor works with the student to determine <b>whether the learning is college-level and how to demonstrate that learning</b>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Offering credit for experience could:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attract <b>non-traditional students</b> interested in leveraging experience for credit</li> <li>Further position RBC as an institution focused on providing <b>opportunities for a diverse student body seeking educational and career success</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>If RBC were to employ a similar model, an <b>objective assessment of “college level learning”</b> would need to be developed (e.g., placement tests, credit, evaluation guides, etc.).</li> </ul>

Offering credit for experience could be an **opportunity for RBC to engage non-traditional (i.e., adult, some college / no degree) learners while supporting RBC’s vision** of holistic engagement and successful student outcomes.

Source: SUNY Empire State College

### Case Study 2: Ancora Education

Ancora Education engages both students and corporations to offer vocational education programs online and in-person across the country.

BACKGROUND	MODEL DETAILS	RBC RELEVANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ancora Education is a group of private, post-secondary schools in <b>10 states across the country</b><sup>1</sup>.</li> <li>Their <b>9 brands offer vocational education programs</b> to employers and students.</li> <li>Ancora’s programs are <b>hybrid, in-person, and online</b>.</li> <li><b>5 VA community colleges are partnering with Ancora Corporate Training</b> to manage their commercial driver’s license (CDL) programs.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Vocational / Technical Offerings:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Ancora brands include colleges</b> that directly serving students, <b>as well as corporate training programs</b> that companies launch to upskill employees.</li> <li>Example programs Ancora offers:           <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Corporate Training</li> <li>Automotive Service Tech</li> <li>Web Development</li> <li>Healthcare Services</li> <li>Skilled Trades</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>RBC may choose to offer more technical programs that <b>align with fields experiencing material growth</b>.</li> <li>Investing in a select offerings likely to experience the greatest growth—and choosing the right partners to support them—could allow RBC to become a <b>leader in high demand programs</b>.</li> <li>Structuring the partnerships thoughtfully could <b>provide RBC with the flexibility to shift away from or invest further in particular fields</b>, should market factors change.</li> </ul>

RBC’s **strategic investment (and likely partnerships) in select programming aligned to high-demand careers** could position the College as a leading provider of relevant education and credentials needed for select occupations.

Source: Ancora Education, Johnson City Press; Notes: <sup>1</sup>Ancora Education is present in Arizona, Georgia, Louisiana, New Mexico, North Carolina, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Texas.

### Case Study 3: Georgia Tech

In April 2018, Georgia Tech published a report entitled, “Deliberate Innovation, Lifetime Education” – the University’s plan to foster a culture of forward-thinking, strategic innovation.

BACKGROUND	MODEL DETAILS	RBC RELEVANCE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Georgia Tech intends to <b>break from the linear model of education delivery</b>, recognizing that higher education must provide opportunities that <b>serve student needs throughout their entire careers</b>.</li> <li>The new approach – <b>Georgia Tech Commitment to a Lifetime Education</b> – envisions the next generation of education delivery to support the student from childhood on, <b>while engaging a diverse population of learners</b>.</li> <li>To do so, Georgia Tech has identified <b>5 initiatives</b> to make progress toward this goal.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Lifetime Education Model:</b> Georgia Tech launched the following initiatives to achieve their vision:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><u>Whole-Person Education</u> – experiential learning, globalization, professional development</li> <li><u>New Products &amp; Services</u> – microcredentials, minimester classes, credit-for-accomplishment</li> <li><u>Advising for a New Era</u> – personalized, technology-enhanced advising</li> <li><u>AI and Personalization</u> – AI based personalization systems</li> <li><u>Distributed Worldwide Presence</u> – experimentation with new modes of interaction</li> </ol>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SUNY Empire State and Ancora were successful largely because they <b>identified and implemented alternative education delivery models</b> that were highly relevant to the times.</li> <li>Despite its reach, Georgia Tech has <b>recognized that a linear education model is becoming less attractive</b> to large segments of the student market.</li> <li>RBC similarly has an opportunity to <b>establish thoughtful modes of education delivery aimed at learners with diverse circumstances</b> and definitions of success</li> </ul>

Georgia Tech has recognized that a **circuitous education and credentialing model is emerging as an increasingly attractive approach** to lifelong learning, engagement, and upskilling for a large market of learners.

Source: Georgia Tech's April 2018 Report, "DELIBERATE INNOVATION, LIFETIME EDUCATION."