Richard Bland College
BOARD OF VISITORS

APRIL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

April 22, 2026 | 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. | Academic Innovation Center Mamie Locke Boardroom

Members of the Richard Bland College ("RBC" or "College") Board of Visitors met in open and closed sessions at Richard Bland College on Wednesday, April 22, 2026, from 10:00–2:00 p.m. in the Mamie Locke Boardroom of the Academic Innovation Center.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:
- Shawn Avery
- Hon. Peter Blake
- Kevin Massengill
- Dr. Perry Miller
- Penny Parayo
- Dr. Amanda Russell
- Joanne Williams
- Deborah Young
- Jason Pode, Faculty Representative
- Lilli Brown, Student Representative

STAFF PRESENT:
- Dr. Debbie Sydow, President
- Dr. Kimberly Boyd, Vice President and Chief Research & Innovation Officer
- Christie Clarke, Chief of Staff
- Stacey Sokol, Chief Business Officer
- Eric Kondzielawa, Chief Operations Officer
- Dr. Adam Zucconi, Interim Chief Academic Officer
- Melissa Mahoney, Controller
- Mary Weaver, Deputy Controller
- Dr. Evanda Watts-Martinez, Director of Counseling Services
- Dianna Banks, Director of Human Resources
- Dr. Ann Ifekwunigwe, Director, The University Center
- Ben Thoreson, Director of Student Success
- Ashley Fuller, Data and Compliance Officer
- Nathan Moberley, OAG College Counsel
- Dr. Eileen Strempel, Strategic Planning and Governance Consultant
- Gerrit Smith, Senior Executive Administrator and Clerk to the Board of Visitors
- RBC Students, Faculty and Other Staff Members

GUESTS PRESENT:
- Hon. Kenneth C. Alexander, Incoming Interim President, Richard Bland College
- Tina Patterson, Principal & Founder, Jade Solutions, LLC

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

Ms. Joanne Williams called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., recognizing the presence of a quorum, and welcomed attendees to the meeting. Ms. Williams then asked for a vote to **approve minutes** of the January 28, 2026 Board meeting, and the March 26, 2026 Board orientation. The motion was made by Mr. Kevin Massengill, seconded by Dr. Amanda Russell, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Action Items and Presentations

Ms. Williams then asked for a vote on **Resolution 1**, Election of Officers. The nominees were Mr. Massengill for Rector, Ms. Deborah Young for Vice Rector, and Dr. Perry Miller for Secretary. Dr. Russell made the motion, which was seconded by Mr. Shawn Avery, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Rector Massengill then made remarks and stressed the importance of the Board's role in support of Richard Bland College, emphasizing that the work of the Board should always be grounded in public trust. Noting his own experience as an alumnus, Rector Massengill urged Visitors to consistently and conscientiously act to advance the interests of students and their success.

Rector Massengill then asked for a vote on **Resolution 2**, the Board of Visitors Meeting Calendar for 2026-30. A motion was made by Mr. Avery, seconded by Secretary Miller, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Rector Massengill then asked for a vote on **Resolution 3**, the Appointment of a Search Committee for a Permanent RBC President, as amended. The motion was made by Vice Rector Young, seconded by Secretary Miller, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Rector Massengill then asked for a vote on **Resolution 4**, the Board Member Code of Conduct and the Board Policy on Communication, Media Relations, and Confidentiality. The motion was made by Mr. Peter Blake, seconded by Ms. Williams, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Interim Chief Academic Officer, Dr. Adam Zucconi, provided an overview of the College's 2028 Strategic Plan. Dr. Zucconi highlighted strategic priorities focused on 1) build a portfolio of high-value credentials aligned with market demand; 2) improve student outcomes; and 3) optimize resources to remain affordable and accessible.

Ms. Tina Patterson, Principal and Founder of Jade Solutions LLC, provided an overview of the RBC Online Market Feasibility Study. She stated that data collected to date suggests that RBC has an opportunity to own a meaningful position in Virginia's workforce credential market.

Dr. Eileen Strempel, Strategic Planning and Governance Consultant, reviewed key highlights of the Phase I Report on the Future of Richard Bland College to be submitted to the state on or before June 30, 2026. She noted that the report highlights the College's consistent effort to improve key performance indicators, including student enrollment, student outcomes, and financial stability. In addition, the report documents successful partnerships and programs with community partners, including regional employers and other colleges and universities. She outlined the plan and process for compiling 2027 and 2028 reports.

Rector Massengill then asked for a vote on **Resolution 5**, 2028 Mission, Vision and Strategic Priorities. The motion was made by Mr. Avery, seconded by Secretary Miller, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Rector Massengill then asked for a vote on **Resolution 6**, Phase I Draft Report on the Future of Richard Bland College. The motion was made by Vice Rector Young, seconded by Ms. Williams, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Rector Massengill then asked for vote on **Resolution 7**, FY27 Tuition and Fees. The motion was made by Secretary Miller, seconded by Dr. Russell, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Rector Massengill then asked for a vote on **Resolution 8**, FY27 Operating Budget. The motion was made by Vice Rector Young, seconded by Secretary Miller, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

After a break, the Board came back into session at 11:45 a.m. Professor Jason Pode, Faculty Representative to the Board, delivered reflections on the 2025-26 academic year and thanked RBC faculty for their outstanding year of scholarship and service. Lilli Brown, the Student Representative to the Board, introduced herself and reported on highlights of 2025-26 student assembly initiatives, student events, and athletics.

Rector Massengill then asked for a vote on **Resolution 9**, Appointment to Fill Vacancies in the Professional Faculties. The motion was made by Dr. Russell, seconded by Ms. Williams, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Rector Massengill then asked for a vote on **Resolution 10**, Professor Barbara Morgan Emerita status. The motion was made by Ms. Williams, seconded by Ms. Penny Parayo, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Rector Massengill then asked for a vote on **Resolution 11**, Academic Faculty Promotion. The motion was made by Mr. Avery, seconded by Secretary Miller, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Closed Session

At 12:01 p.m., after passage of Resolution 11, Rector Massengill requested a vote to move the Board meeting into closed session for the purpose of discussing personnel matters related to the employment contracts of President Debbie Sydow and incoming Interim President Kenneth Alexander pursuant to the following exemptions under Va Code § 2.2-3711:

Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(1), for assignment and appointment of specific public officers or employees and Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(8), for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Namely, legal advice and discussion regarding employment contracts for public officers or employees.

The motion was made by Secretary Miller, seconded by Dr. Russell, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

Open Session Resumed

The Board reconvened in open session at 1:27 p.m. Rector Massengill requested a vote to move the Board out of closed session. The motion was made by Vice Rector Young, seconded by Secretary Miller, and approved unanimously by voice vote. Rector Massengill then asked for a roll call vote that only matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act were discussed and only matters identified in the motion to have a closed session were discussed. Mr. Gerrit Smith, Senior Executive Administrator and Clerk to the Board of Visitors, called the roll, and all eight Board members present “certified yes.”

Following the certification vote, Rector Massengill requested a motion to authorize the Rector and Vice-Rector to negotiate with the President and incoming Interim President regarding the terms of their employment agreements to facilitate a smooth and effective presidential transition, subject to final approval by the Board. The motion was made by Secretary Miller, seconded by Ms. Williams, and approved unanimously by voice vote.

There being no further business, Rector Massengill adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.

Approved on May 7, 2026