

February 7-9, 2024

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Richard Bland College
of WILLIAM & MARY

REPORT OF THE RBC FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE
February 2024

Dr. Daniel P. Franke

W&M Board of Visitors, RBC Faculty Representative

Faculty Development, Spring 2024

Dr. Tiffany Birdsong organized another rewarding faculty development week, January 15-19, ahead of the spring semester start on January 22. The bulk of the seminars focused on the issue of instructive and generative AI in the classroom and on campus in general, with vigorous discussions on academic standards and AI, a useful reading list of recent articles recommending best practices in evaluating and incorporating AI tools into curriculum, and a well-received demo of the instructive AI tool PackBack. Professor Alexandra Youmans led a well-attended seminar on “Responding to Student Writing,” which contained valuable advice and techniques for instructors and connected to the previous day’s discussions on AI. Finally, Dr. Birdsong launched the Academics Book Club, designed to enhance faculty professional development in current issues in pedagogy and higher education more broadly. The common read this semester is *Becoming a Student-Ready College: A New Culture of Leadership for Student Success*.

CDI (Constructive Dialogue Institute)

Pursuant to the SCHEV-CDI partnership, in 2023 Richard Bland College created a task force to explore and implement the CDI curriculum. The task force currently consists of Dr. Tiffany Birdsong, Dr. Adam Zucconi, Dr. Alice Henton, Dr. Ann Ifekwunigwe, Dr. Daniel Franke, Mr. Isaiah Lucas, and Mr. Ben Thoreson. The task force is looking at opportunities to provide on-campus programming to foster civil dialogue and engaged citizenship. In addition, teaching faculty are studying how to implement the CDI curriculum in their individual classes. Dr. Franke has integrated the six-lesson program into his Western Civilization and World History courses and will be reporting on it to the rest of the task force as the semester progresses.

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Art Program community engagement

Professor Michelle Delano has a full program of art and community engagement for her students this semester. They will be doing a mural for Crater Community Hospice on the side of their building (3916 Crater Rd.) and will install 1Kind Thing (1KT is the project where people write a kind thing done by/for them on a tag and attach it to a strand of lights) in their 2 thrift stores for community input. The students will then meet with the CEO & Board of Directors to present their ideas. CCH will provide all materials.

Art App students will be participating in the ongoing RBC 1KT project. Currently they have over 1,000 kind things documented by RBC students.

The art students are also working with Lamb Center for Arts & Healing on the Artist Button project (art on wearable buttons in gum ball machines around Hopewell to raise awareness & programming funds). There is also a plan to place button makers on campus for a student activity. Portfolio Development students will spearhead the project as well as volunteer with other projects dealing with Art and mental health positivity.

Finally, faculty, staff, and students should look for more Tiny Art exhibits with tiny receptions. The Glass Wall gallery will also have a new look. Both will be in the hallway right outside the art studio.

RBC Faculty Grant Recipient

Through the Richard Bland College Foundation, Dr. Eric Miller received a \$5000 grant to fund this year's alternative spring break. The donation was secured from The Petersburg Methodist Home for Girls Foundation. The money will be spent on an experiential learning opportunity similar to last year's Outer Banks trip. The destination is still undecided.

RBC Faculty Research Spotlight

Dr. Katie Bjorkman, Assistant Professor of Mathematics, co-authored an article titled "Illustrating Student Mathematics Identities Through a Network of Identity Frameworks" and published in PRIMUS (Problems, Resources, and Issues in Mathematics Undergraduate Studies) volume 33 (2023) Issue 5. The article was selected by the journal as an "Editor's Choice" for 2024 in the "New Authors" category. The article is freely available for the first two months of 2024.

RBC Faculty Volunteering

Dr. Rachel Finney, Professor of Spanish, continued her tradition of volunteering with Christian missions over winter break, this time in Guatemala. Among other activities, she assisted in the children's feeding center in Antigua Guatemala.

Academic Innovation Center

There are high levels of anticipation among the RBC faculty as the Academic Innovation Center nears completion. Those who have seen the space are very impressed with its layout and its amenities, and the faculty will do their part to make the center live up to its name. There is also widespread approval and satisfaction at the news that RBC Commencement will be held at RBC this year, using the new exterior plaza as a stage.