



Richard Bland College
of WILLIAM & MARY

REPORT OF THE RBC FACULTY REPRESENTATIVE
February 2020

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W&M Board of Visitors, RBC Faculty Representative

Experiential Learning at RBC

"Learning is experience. Everything else is just information." – Albert Einstein

With an increased sense of focus on critical thinking and our QEP, the RBC faculty have embraced the power of experiential learning. Experiential learning has been described as viewing learning as a holistic and lifelong process of creating knowledge, with an emphasis on integrating new learning with past knowledge and experiences. With the support and encouragement of our administrative team, the faculty have created a variety of unique experiential learning activities for students. These experiences have not only enhanced students' critical thinking skills, but have also offered once in a lifetime learning opportunities that many may not have had outside of RBC. Below is a selection of some of these activities:

Social and Behavioral Sciences Department

- Members of RBC's Psychology Club had the opportunity to visit Central State Hospital, which is credited with being the first psychiatric institution to treat African American patients in the United States.
- After listening to a lecture on the history of the institution the students conducted a group therapy activity for current patients, assisting them on their journey to healing.
- Psychology Club President, Brandee Manley, stated, *"This was a very eye-opening experience into the reality of working with individuals who struggle with mental health issues...I learned about the amount of patience it takes to work hands-on with individuals. Overall I had an amazing experience!"*

Natural Sciences and Mathematics Department

Members of the Natural Sciences Department collaborated with the James River Society to offer RBC students the opportunity to take a five-mile canoe trip along the James River to study sturgeon migration.

Dr. Eric Miller noted, *“Having the chance to see a sturgeon in the wild is a treat for anyone, but being able to see a male sturgeon breaching is a once in a lifetime opportunity.”*

The Natural Sciences Department plans to host this excursion again as students returned from the trip enthusiastically sharing their experiences with others.

Languages and Humanities Department

For the last ten years Dr. Rachel Finney has visited Guatemala for a medical service trip in collaboration with Health Talents International. This year two RBC students, Amaia Moxon and Jason Kellerhalls, had the opportunity to join her on this journey.

The students were able to utilize their Spanish skills by interpreting for doctors, nurses, and other medical/surgical staff as they treated members of the local community. Due to limited access to healthcare in the area, this trip embodied the power of utilizing travel as a means to learn and serve others.

Dr. Finney and her students will speak about their experiences and share photos from their trip during the February RBC Committee meeting.

Faculty Development

The theme of this year’s Faculty Development week was experiential learning. We welcomed Jen Stanchfield who is internationally known for her work in promoting experiential, brain-based approaches to teaching, training, instructional design, team-building, and social-emotional learning.

Faculty participated in an all-day workshop that provided instruction on brain-based approaches to increasing engagement and motivation in the classroom. This training offered faculty an opportunity to collaborate with one another while learning innovative experiential teaching strategies.

Several faculty members reported that they have adjusted their classes for the spring semester to include some of the techniques presented.