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SENATE BILL NO. 742

Offered January 8, 2025

Prefiled October 29, 2024

A BILL to amend and reenact § 23.1-2802 of the Code of Virginia; to amend the Code of Virginia by adding in Title 23.1 a chapter numbered 21.1, consisting of sections numbered 23.1-2105 through 23.1-2109; and to repeal § 23.1-2806 of the Code of Virginia, relating to Richard Bland College; governance.

Patron—Locke (By Request)

Referred to Committee on Education and Health

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of Virginia:

1. That § 23.1-2802 of the Code of Virginia is amended and reenacted and that the Code of Virginia is amended by adding in Title 23.1 a chapter numbered 21.1, consisting of sections numbered 23.1-2105 through 23.1-2109, as follows:

CHAPTER 21.1.

RICHARD BLAND COLLEGE.

§ 23.1-2105. Corporate name; name of the College.

A. The board of visitors of Richard Bland College (the board) is a corporation under the name and style of "The Rector and Visitors of Richard Bland College" and has, in addition to its other powers, all the corporate powers given to corporations by the provisions of Title 13.1 except those powers that are confined to corporations created pursuant to Title 13.1. The board shall at all times be under the control of the General Assembly.

B. The institution shall be known as Richard Bland College (the College).

§ 23.1-2106. Membership.

The board shall consist of nine members appointed by the Governor.

§ 23.1-2107. Meetings; officers; committees.

A. The board shall meet at the College at least once a year and at such other times as it determines. Special meetings of the board may be called by the rector or any three members. The secretary shall provide notice of any special meeting to each member.

B. A majority of members shall constitute a quorum.

C. At the first meeting after July 1 in every even-numbered year, the board shall elect from its membership a rector to preside at its meetings, a vice-rector to preside at its meetings in the absence of the rector, and a secretary to preside at its meetings in the absence of the rector and vice-rector.

D. The board may appoint a pro tempore officer to preside at its meetings in the absence of the rector, vice-rector, and secretary.

E. Vacancies in the offices of rector, vice-rector, and secretary may be filled by the board for the unexpired term.

F. At every regular annual meeting of the board, the board may appoint an executive committee for the transaction of business in the recess of the board, to serve for a period of one year or until the next regular annual meeting.

§ 23.1-2108. Powers and duties.

A. The board shall (i) appoint all teachers and fix their salaries, (ii) provide for the employment of other personnel as required, and (iii) generally direct the affairs of the College.

B. The board may confer degrees and, subject to the provisions of § 23.1-303, approve new academic programs and discontinue academic programs offered by the College.

C. All property, property rights, duties, contracts, and agreements of the College are vested in the board. The board shall care for and preserve all property belonging to the College.

D. The board shall (i) make regulations and policies as it deems appropriate for the College; (ii) manage the funds of the College and approve the annual budget; (iii) appoint, remove, and define the responsibilities for the chief executive officer of the College; and (iv) fix the rates charged to students for tuition, mandatory fees, and other necessary charges.

§ 23.1-2109. Courses of study.

The board shall direct the development and focus of the College's curriculum on preparing students for academic and career success, including dual enrollment students, students seeking an associate degree, and students seeking job-relevant skills and credentials. In furtherance of such efforts, the board may:

1. Broker agreements between and among educational, industry, and nonprofit partners and establish collaborative, innovative partnership agreements with local school divisions, public and private institutions of higher education, economic development agencies, employers, philanthropic organizations, veterans

59 organizations, public agencies, and such other partners as necessary to strengthen and streamline
60 educational pathways from high school to work-based learning and associate, baccalaureate, and advanced
61 degrees that prepare students, including nontraditional students, for continuing education and entry into
62 high-demand fields in the Commonwealth, including careers in Science, Technology, Engineering,
63 Mathematics, and Health Care (STEM-H);

64 2. Pilot and implement innovative educational approaches and technologies and promote the
65 development, delivery, and ongoing assessment of innovative, cost-effective degree programs and stackable
66 credentials, including industry-recognized, competency-based credentials that are aligned with and
67 responsive to the educational and workforce development needs of traditional and nontraditional students,
68 including veterans and military personnel, and that advance the economic development needs of employers
69 and industries throughout the Commonwealth; and

70 3. Identify and implement new strategies to support economic and community development in the
71 Commonwealth and to expand opportunities for traditional and nontraditional students, including veterans
72 and military personnel, to prepare for careers in high-demand fields.

73 **§ 23.1-2802. Powers and duties.**

74 A. The board shall generally direct the affairs of the university and Richard Bland College.

75 B. The board may confer degrees.

76 2. That § 23.1-2806 of the Code of Virginia is repealed.

77 3. That notwithstanding the provisions of § 23.1-1300 of the Code of Virginia, the Governor's initial
78 appointments of members to the board of visitors of Richard Bland College, in accordance with § 23.1-
79 2106 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act, shall be staggered as follows: three members for a
80 term of four years, three members for a term of three years, and three members for a term of two
81 years. After the initial staggering of terms, members shall be appointed by the Governor for four-year
82 terms pursuant to § 23.1-1300 of the Code of Virginia.

83 4. That any contracts entered into or rules or regulations adopted by the board of visitors of The
84 College of William and Mary in Virginia on behalf of or related to Richard Bland College pursuant to
85 § 23.1-2806 of the Code of Virginia, as repealed by this act, shall continue in effect as though such
86 contracts, rules, or regulations were agreed to or adopted by the board of visitors of Richard Bland
87 College in accordance with § 23.1-2108 of the Code of Virginia, as created by this act.

88 5. That all real and tangible personal property, property rights, duties, contracts, and agreements of
89 Richard Bland College vested in the board of visitors of The College of William and Mary in Virginia
90 shall be, as of the effective date of this act, transferred to and taken as standing in the name of the
91 board of visitors of Richard Bland College.

92 6. That, no later than June 30, 2026, the rector of the board of visitors of Richard Bland College shall
93 submit to the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Finance, the Chair of the House Committee on
94 Appropriations, and the Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations a report
95 providing recommendations on the future of Richard Bland College, including an examination of
96 options for consolidation with another public institution of higher education.

97 7. That by June 30, 2027, and June 30, 2028, the rector of the board of visitors of Richard Bland
98 College shall submit to the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Finance, the Chair of the House
99 Committee on Appropriations, and the Chair of the Senate Committee on Finance and Appropriations
100 an interim report on Richard Bland College's progress in exploring and implementing the
101 recommendations set forth in the report submitted pursuant to the sixth enactment of this act,
102 including information on its progress in key performance metrics, student enrollment and outcomes,
103 and financial sustainability.

104 8. That the audit conducted by the Auditor of Public Accounts for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025,
105 shall be the last audit for which Richard Bland College is treated as a consolidated entity of the board
106 of visitors of The College of William and Mary in Virginia. The Auditor of Public Accounts shall
107 submit its audit report on Richard Bland College for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026, to the board
108 of visitors of Richard Bland College.