

## FROM BAE SYSTEMS GIFT TO CREATE NEW BIOLOGY RESEARCH LABORATORY

Lucie Bryar'76\*

Technical Writer, Office of College Relations, Rivier College

(From: *Campus Forum*, July 1, 2005)



Rivier College students and faculty will soon have a new biology research laboratory, thanks to a generous gift from BAE Systems, an international defense and aerospace company with facilities in Nashua. BAE Systems has given \$54,000 to the College to fund a new lab in Mendel Hall, according to Mary Ann Oppenheimer, director of development for the College.

The College's science department has some newer equipment—DNA sequencing equipment, refrigerated super-speed centrifuge, two table-top micro-centrifuges, a laminar flow hood, CO<sub>2</sub> incubator and several water baths—but until recently, lacked dedicated space to conduct biology research, says Dr. Mark Bolt, associate professor and biology department chairperson. With the move of several biology department offices within Mendel Hall, the College now has space to create a small research laboratory.

Bolt says the gift from BAE Systems will allow Rivier College to act more quickly on the recommendations of a recent report on undergraduate biology education, released by the National Research Council. The report strongly recommends that colleges and universities provide research

opportunities to all science students. “Our goal is to prepare students to make significant contributions in the sciences and we know that begins with hands-on experience in the laboratory,” says Bolt.

President William Farrell says, “We are very grateful to BAE Systems for this generous gift that enhances research opportunities on campus for both students and faculty. BAE Systems recognizes, as we do, that up-to-date research facilities are essential to educating future scientists, medical professionals, and engineers.”

The funding from BAE Systems will provide for new lab benches, sinks, laminar flow hoods, centrifuges, electrophoresis equipment and improved ventilation, among other amenities. The new lab will benefit not only students majoring in biology, but also approximately 600 students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate nursing programs.

Rivier-educated students make up about one-third of nursing graduates in the state of New Hampshire, according to Bolt. With a critical nursing shortage nationwide, the expansion of the College’s biology research facilities has the potential to benefit anyone needing healthcare services in New Hampshire and beyond.

Commenting on the gift, BAE Systems Vice President Aaron Penkacik says, “Our company is committed to being a good corporate citizen. We recognize that the expansion of Rivier’s research laboratory will add to the pool of well-prepared medical professionals in the region and also help to develop tomorrow’s bioengineers, biochemists, and others in science.” Penkacik is vice president of BAE Systems Advanced Systems and Technology Sector, located in Nashua.

---

\* **LUCIE BRYAR** earned a B.A. in English Communications from Rivier College in 1976. She has more than 20 years experience in newswriting, marketing, and public relations, including nearly 14 years as a staff writer for Rivier College. In her current position, she produces the faculty/staff newsletter, *Campus Forum*; Bryar also writes marketing materials for admissions, copy for the college website, and feature and news articles for the magazine, *Rivier Today*.