

ROOTED IN MISSION: RIVIER'S NEW PRESIDENT OUTLINES STRATEGIC PLAN

(Rivier's News Report, September 14, 2011)*

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With encouragement to let Rivier College's mission of "transforming hearts and minds to serve the world" guide their work, **Sister Paula Marie Buley, IHM**, laid out her strategic plan in front of the College's faculty and staff.

In her first State of the College Address as Rivier's President on Aug. 29, 2011, Sister Paula discussed her priorities and goals as she begins her administration. The meeting also included introduction of new faculty and staff by members of the President's Cabinet and an update on the College's financial standing by Vice President of Finance and Administration Joseph Fagan.

Sister Paula began her remarks by sharing the positive impressions she has formed of Rivier during the first weeks of her administration.

"I believe the true state of the College is found in the spirit and commitment of its community: faculty, administration, staff, students, and alumni," Sister Paula said. "It is with this belief that I can so confidently report to you, as a newcomer, that the state of this College is sound, the spirit of this College is strong, and the aspirations of this College are great."

Her plan, entitled "Strategic Planning: Delivering on the Promise to Transform Hearts and Minds to Serve the World," has eight themes, each applying to an aspect of the College's work: academic distinction; student development and leadership; facilities, environment, and technological competitiveness; global awareness; branding and marketing integration; philanthropic commitment and community awareness; and financial stewardship.

Sister Paula reminded the campus community that the College must remain committed to defining itself by what it is—a College that values both the liberal arts and professional courses of study in preparing tomorrow's leaders.

“By celebrating what we are we can more easily envision what we can still become,” she said.

She addressed the theme of student development and leadership, stressing the importance of student activities and services available on campus.

“We will consider the role of athletics and recreation, as well as campus services, for an increasingly varied student population,” she said.

Sister Paula asked that faculty and staff examine how the College's facilities and physical plant “compete and compare” with other schools, reminding the audience of the ages-old adage, “We only have one opportunity to make a first impression.”

She said the College can expand its reach around the world by looking at both current overseas opportunities for faculty scholarship and study abroad programs for students. She suggested that Rivier can take advantage of the global connections of the Sisters of the Presentation of Mary.

She spoke of the role of competitive marketing and communication so that all constituencies will be aware of Rivier's plans for strategic growth and that donors will be able to “see a return on their investment.”

In recent years, the College has practiced solid financial stewardship, which Sister Paula said should continue, and the College should look for ways to be even more effective with its resources.

“And so by focusing on mission, expanding academic distinction, student leadership, competitive resources, global engagement, branding and marketing strategies, philanthropic commitment, continued financial stewardship, and ever increasing institutional effectiveness, we can create a plan in which this entire community can participate and celebrate,” Sister Paula said.

Prior to Sister Paula's speech, Fagan summarized the College's financial situation at the close of fiscal year 2011. He reported that Rivier closed the fiscal year with an operating budget surplus of \$2.1 million. Eighty-eight percent of revenue generated came from tuition, fees, and room and board. The College endowment stood at \$29.9 million at the close of the fiscal year. Fagan reported that the combined costs for undergraduate day tuition and room and board increased 3.7 percent from last year. Evening and graduate tuition went up an average of 4 percent.

* Retrieved September 14, 2011, from <http://www.rivier.edu/news/default.aspx?id=19396>

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