

## TWO COASTS—ONE GOAL

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Jennifer Bowers' initiative brings her closer to her chosen career.



From the Atlantic coast to the Pacific coast—Jennifer Bowers completed her junior year at Rivier University and spent her summer in California at Stanford University pursuing her aspiration to become a professional researcher.

### Research at Rivier

Bowers learned early in her college career how much she enjoyed research work. “I’ve been lucky to have many opportunities to assist with various projects,” says Bowers. “My first experience was supporting graduate students in Dr. Jerome Rekart’s Behavioral Science Lab during sophomore year. Following that, I interned for a longitudinal

study at Judge Baker Children’s Center in Boston for a year. I also assisted on a related neuroscience study at Beth Israel Medical Center during much of my junior year.”

Bowers’ research work at Rivier and local internships made her a strong candidate for additional study projects. Her strong initiative and support from faculty won her a coveted internship at the Stanford University Cohen Laboratory.

### Research at Stanford

Bowers set her sights on a summer internship that would support her personal and professional goals. “I really wanted to find paid summer research, so I spent a lot of time seeking out opportunities,” she says.

“The application process required two letters of recommendation, an official transcript, a statement of purpose, and a resumé,” shares Bowers. Dr. Rekart provided a recommendation letter, and Dr. Karen Meteyer helped Bowers prepare the rest of her application materials over several weeks’ time.

These efforts landed her a paid research assistant position through The Leadership Alliance. “Of the 175 applicants, just eight of us were chosen to participate in the program,” says Bowers.

The Leadership Alliance is an organization dedicated to providing educational opportunities to students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds. It is a 33-school consortium, which includes Dartmouth College and other prestigious universities: Brown, Columbia, Cornell, Harvard, John Hopkins, Princeton, Stanford, Tufts, Vanderbilt, and Yale.

Bowers was accepted into The Alliance’s Summer Research for Early Identification Program. This program encourages students from the natural and social sciences, humanities and engineering

disciplines to pursue research careers; it is designed for students planning to apply to Ph.D. or M.D.-Ph.D. programs.

The Stanford research project reinforced her social psychology coursework at Rivier and allowed her to contribute to that body of knowledge. “I worked with Dr. Geoffrey Cohen in the Social Psychology area at Stanford,” says Bowers. “The lab had several projects running at once, and I assisted one of his Ph.D. students with his four studies on self-affirmation.”

Bowers work included coding previously collected data for statistical analysis and conducting fieldwork to collect new research data. She shares a positive outcome, “Our research found that self-affirmation intervention was effective in improving cognitive functioning and fluid intelligence in participants under experimentally-induced financial stress.”

### **Preparation for graduate school**

Research experience is highly valued in the Ph.D. application process. Bowers is hoping that her time in Dr. Cohen’s lab will stand out on her graduate school applications. She says, “I feel very lucky to have experienced student life at Stanford University and what graduate school could be like, to have worked on a great research project, to have gained valuable advice for my future, and to have had the opportunity to explore northern California.”

Bowers encourages other Rivier students “not to shy away from sending applications to highly competitive internships. I never thought I had a chance for Stanford’s program, but I was wrong! It’s never too early to think about these things— programs like this offer great experience to students.” ■