

## COLLABORATE, ACHIEVE, LEAD

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The Learning Commons fosters student achievement  
in a collaborative learning environment



*Rivier University's dedication of the new Learning Commons featured a ribbon cutting ceremony with Nashua Mayor Donna Lee Lozeau, Board of Trustees Chair Dr. Richard Foemmel, Sister Paula Marie Buley, IHM, President, and professional staff with offices in the building.*

**T**he university celebrated the opening of the Learning Commons with a ribbon cutting and dedication ceremony in September 2014. The new facility unites the University's academic support services and provides a collaborative learning environment for students.

"The creation of the Learning Commons is an investment in our students and a commitment to providing learning spaces that foster student achievement," says Sister Paula Marie Buley, IHM, President.

The 15,000-square-foot facility provides a destination for students seeking services that support teaching and learning. Following best practices in higher education, the Learning Commons houses the Writing and Resource Center, Career Development Center, Disability Services, Counseling and Wellness Center, Service Learning, and Student Success Programs. A distinctive characteristic of the

facility is the presence of University Advancement and Alumni Relations, providing a unique opportunity to connect alumni with current students.

Transformed over the summer from an office building into a collaborative learning center, the Learning Commons opened at the start of the fall semester. In addition to access to support services, the building features a Learning Hub and a variety of flexible settings for both group and independent student work.

The consolidation of these services into a central Learning Commons will foster further interaction between students and the University's support service professionals, enhancing learning outcomes directly connected to Rivier's academic curriculum, according to Sister Paula.

The synergy between the support offices and centers has been evident from the start, resulting in coordinated student referrals and sharing of subject matter expertise.

"The placement of the academic and student service departments in one location generates expedient student referrals and an increase in interdepartmental effectiveness," says Elizabeth Bonin, Coordinator of Student Success Programs. She highlighted, as an example, the ability of the Office of Student Success to partner seamlessly with the Writing and Resource Center and Disability Services to advance student research, writing, and comprehension of course content.

Dr. Richard Foemmel, chair of the Rivier University Board of Trustees, recognized the leadership and vision of the Board in moving the project forward. "As a Board, we are delighted to contribute directly to the many paths of student success and to support the work of teaching and learning," says Dr. Foemmel.

Following a blessing by Rivier University Chaplain Brother Paul Demers, S.C. and remarks from Nashua's Mayor Donnalee Lozeau, Dr. Foemmel cut the ribbon, officially dedicating the Rivier University Learning Commons as the University's newest academic facility. ■



Photos by Jodie Andruskevich  
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