

COACHING FOR CAREER SUCCESS

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A new mentoring program connects alumni and current students



The goal of every college education is preparation for a successful life—personally and professionally. Guiding first-year students to careers in their chosen professions requires more than classes and credits. To best equip graduates for career success, alumni can offer practical guidance through mentoring.

This spring, the University will launch an Alumni Mentor Program to provide early exposure to career options and professional network building for Rivier students. The program’s cornerstone will be alumni career coaching with mentors sharing the wisdom of their experiences since graduation.

The Alumni Mentor Program was created to fulfill two core goals. The program is designed to prepare students for the transition from college to career beginning in their first year at the University; and it offers alumni opportunities for meaningful engagement with their alma mater.

The program supports the University’s strategic plan goal of expanding opportunities for alumni engagement and developing volunteer models that utilize the expertise of alumni. “Becoming a mentor is a valuable way for alumni to remain connected with Rivier and to provide meaningful service that will have a direct and lasting impact on our students,” says Karen Cooper, Vice President for University Advancement.

Students will benefit from collaboration with those who have “been there”—who have already navigated their way through the job market to land desirable positions, who can share advice on making the most of their time at Rivier, who can provide tips on accessing internships and leadership opportunities, and who can help students begin to develop strong professional networks. Alumni will provide guidance throughout the academic year and may serve as the first crucial link in a student’s professional network.

Mentoring is an established leadership development strategy, helping not only the individual mentee, but also contributing to the growth and sustainability of the whole community, according to a summer 2014 *Journal of Leadership Education* article by Priest and Donnelley.

The Alumni Council, an advisory council that represents all Rivier alumni, is sponsoring this new initiative in partnership with the University's Career Development Center.

“The Alumni Mentor Program will help students in countless ways—giving them the advantage of sage advice based on experience, professional exposure and engagement, and leadership training,” says Marie Sullivan, Director of the Career Development Center. She points out that benefits extend to mentors, as well. “Mentoring a protégé has been known to improve management and training skills, enhance creative thinking, and provide an opportunity to influence the next generation of leaders,” says Sullivan. ■