

## FIRST TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING CONFERENCE HIGHLIGHTS IMPACT OF GLOBAL RESEARCH AND SERVICE LEARNING

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Photo by Grant Klene

**R**ivier University sponsored its first annual undergraduate studies conference on transformative learning this April in conjunction with Accepted Students Day. The Transformative Learning Conference provided undergraduate students the opportunity to explore, to discuss, and to reflect on the ways in which their participation in various high impact practices have helped them to grow into accomplished professionals; to become more deeply aware of and engaged in solving local, national, and/or world challenges; and, in short, to discover their strengths and vocations.

Dr. Deborah Vess, Vice President for Academic Affairs, created this initiative. “This conference highlights the transformative potential of high impact practices such as study abroad, hands-on field research, undergraduate research, and service learning,” says Dr. Vess. “Student presenters highlighted the ways that their academic experiences in these contexts transformed not only their learning but their assumptions, ideals, behaviors, and career paths. The conference provided a way for our students’ excellent work to be shared in the public realm to inspire and enlighten others.”

This event provided the extended Rivier community an opportunity to experience, first hand, the transformative impact of students’ learning experiences at Rivier. During the event, groups of accepted students and parents interacted not only with current students who were presenting, but also with alumni, faculty, and staff.

Presentations spanned a breadth of academic disciplines and global locations. A sampling of the 17 presentation topics included:

- Internships, Interactions and Global Awareness
- In the Markets: Genetically Modified Produce
- Saltwater pH and Calcium Carbonate in Marine Organisms
- Multimedia Journalism
- Paradise Lost: The Video Game
- Prenatal Cocaine Exposure and Developmental Delays
- Costa Rica, the Environment, and Sustainable Practices ■