

PROJECT ACHIEVE SUPPORTS DIVERSITY IN THE NURSING WORKFORCE

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In August, the University welcomed ten first-year and seven sophomore nursing majors to *Project Achieve*, a program designed to increase diversity in the nursing workforce. Building on a pilot program funded by a Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) grant, *Project Achieve* offers underrepresented student groups with opportunities to expand their understanding of nursing careers and to hone study strategies that lead to academic success.

“National data shows that diverse and first-generation students benefit significantly through a pre-orientation to the academic environment,” says **Sister Paula Marie Buley, IHM**, Rivier’s President. “In our own experience, this academic preparation, coupled with team building experiences and the support of faculty and student mentors, has led to remarkable retention success.”

The first-year student summer enrichment and sophomore bridge programs focused on anatomy and physiology study skills, nursing professionalism, cultural development, research skills, and an orientation to clinical expectations. Team building and collective problem-solving activities were designed to strengthen confidence, enhance social skills, and ease students’ transition into university life. The time spent on campus enabled students to build relationships and become acquainted with the many support organizations available to them.

“Among the seventeen participating students, seven languages are spoken and five continents are represented,” says **Dr. Paula Williams**, Dean of the Division of Nursing and Health Professions. “The dedication they’ve shown to their studies and the nursing profession is a strong precursor to their academic and career success.”

Project Achieve activities and mentoring will continue throughout the academic year. The strong foundation established during the summer programs encourages and prepares students to fully engage in the university experience and to take on leadership roles in addition to their nursing studies. ■