

STUDENT'S PROFILE: MARIA DOMINGUEZ '13, Social Studies Secondary Education

Julia Agresto

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Drawing on the work ethic and support of her parents, Dominguez continually pushes herself to succeed and be the best that she can be.



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Maria Dominguez was born in Mexico, moving to the United States when she was just five years old—a decision her parents made to allow for better educational opportunities for Maria and her six siblings. The spirit of hard work and dedication was instilled in her at a young age, as her parents strived to achieve the American dream and make the same possible for Maria and her siblings—including putting herself and four of her other seven siblings through college.

“My parents are the reason why I am the way I am today, and they are the people who have pushed me to want to become the person I want to become,” she says. “They have helped guide me to take the right paths in order to achieve my dreams.”

For the last 15 years, she has lived in Nashua and gotten to know all that the city has to offer—including Rivier. She transferred to Rivier from another New Hampshire university during the spring semester of her freshman year at the recommendation of her two sisters, both of whom attended Rivier and loved the community and atmosphere. Maria has found the same to be true for herself, citing the campus community as the aspect of Rivier that is most important to her —“because you are not just a number, you are who you are, and are given the attention you need in order to be successful.”

Although Maria doesn't live on campus, she gets involved in the Rivier community by volunteering as a history tutor. After graduation, she plans on traveling to a small town in Honduras to teach at a school for one month. “It will be a great experience because it will help me better myself not only as a person, but as a professional by becoming aware of what is outside of American borders,” she says. Following that trip, she plans to apply for jobs, and also hopes to go back to school to obtain a master's degree in ELL (English Language Learners) to teach English to students from other countries.

Among many lifelong Rivier memories, Maria says that being chosen to speak at a New Hampshire gubernatorial debate on campus during her senior year is what she is most proud of and will remember long after her time at the University comes to a close. She was tasked with researching the Lincoln-Douglas style debates of 1858, the format utilized for the debate, and introducing it to the audience at the start of the event.

“I remember telling my professor, Dr. Menke, that there was absolutely no way I could speak in front of such important people, but he told me that if he knew I would not be able to do this, he would

never have chosen me for the job,” says Maria. “Those were probably the best motivational words that a professor has given me, because it truly showed me that he believes in me and that he knows I am capable of achieving something great, even if I may find that I doubt myself.”

“Maria represents one of Rivier’s great success stories,” says Dr. Martin Menke, professor and director of Rivier’s Social Studies program. “She came to Rivier not quite sure of her skills, but responded with enthusiasm to the University’s small classes, frequent faculty contact and mentoring by peers and faculty alike with great dedication.”

What Maria values most about her experience at Rivier are the professors. “To know that they are willing to set everything aside to provide that extra attention if I need help demonstrates not only the quality of the school, but how much Rivier and its professors care about me, my education, and my future.” ■