

THE MIGHTY OAK WITHIN

New initiative helps students identify their greatest potential

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REACH@RIV: Living a Life that Matters students spent time exploring and conducting community service in downtown Nashua.

Just as an oak tree lies within an acorn, each student comes to Rivier with a unique set of talents and potential for growth and accomplishment. While some arrive with a career field in mind—nursing, education, business management—many come in search of a vocation and an education. A new initiative, *REACH@RIV: Living a Life that Matters*, offers students the opportunity to engage thoughtfully and practically about their futures and life choices.

This initiative is supported by a \$50,000 Network for Vocation in Undergraduate Education (NetVUE) grant awarded to the University by The Council for Independent Colleges and the Lilly Endowment, Inc. Grant funds enabled thirty first-year students to participate in the three-day vocational discernment program in September 2016, prior to the start of the fall semester. Daily activities focused on identifying values, goals, individual competencies, and the realities of pursuing each of these.

THE MIGHTY OAK WITHIN: NEW INITIATIVE HELPS STUDENTS IDENTIFY THEIR GREATEST POTENTIAL

“The intentionality of the program makes it truly unique,” says **Sister Paula Marie Buley**, IHM, Rivier’s President. “To have students focus on what’s important to them, the lives they want to lead, and how their choices contribute to building their futures and the greater community can yield amazing results.”



Program activities centered on gaining a sense of self in the world, self-reliance and how each person lives their life, naming life goals and identifying the steps toward achievement, and one’s responsibility to others as a citizen of the world. Utilizing Strengthsfinder™ software, students completed exercises to identify their personal strengths and the careers that require those proficiencies.

“The program isn’t about ‘career’ as its own telos or end goal,” says Program Coordinator and Professor **Brad Stull**. “It’s about searching out one’s values, aspirations, and strengths to discern a meaningful and fulfilling life path. We explore career options as a means for each student to achieve his or her goals. The hope is that they will find that which is rewarding and do it.”

In addition to personal vocational discernment, the *REACH@RIV: Living a Life that Matters* experience helps students develop their appreciative intelligence, the ability to see beyond the present and discover the hidden value in people and

situations to build a better future. Cultivating this ability encourages leadership, creativity, and innovative thinking in the classroom and the workplace.

Kayla Phelps ’20 is a strong supporter of the program. “I would say [joining the program] was one of the best decisions I’ve made so far. It really helped me to transition into college and opened my eyes to something bigger than just being here to get an education.” ■

REACH

Respect • Engagement • Accountability • Compassion • Honesty

REACH@RIV: Living a Life that Matters is an optional component of the first-year student REACH experience. All freshmen take part in Rivier’s REACH program, which stresses academic and personal growth, community engagement, and service to others. The program is founded on five basic tenets:

Respect: Respect oneself and others with civility at all times.

Engagement: Actively participate in your education, learning, leading, and serving beyond the classroom in the greater global community.

Accountability: Accept responsibility for your words and actions.

Compassion: Commit to upholding the dignity and value of all human life and the care of all creation, seeking the common good and the well-being of all, especially the poor and vulnerable.

Honesty: Be authentic intellectually, spiritually, and socially, celebrating the open exchange of ideas and beliefs.

Telos

A Greek word meaning the end goal, result, or fulfillment. Christians believe that life events move toward an end goal of developing a Christ-like character—one of leadership, service, and compassion. As a Catholic university, Rivier strives to help students discern their individual life goals and identify pathways to personal and professional success.