Harvey-Smith formally installed as RVCC's tenth president

River Valley Community College celebrated its first inauguration ceremony Friday morning as the college officially installed Dr. Alicia Harvey-Smith as the institution’s tenth president.

Dr. Ross Gittell, Chancellor of the Community College System of N.H., presented Harvey-Smith with the chain of office medallion and mace to reiterate the importance of the ceremony.

"It is with incredible gratitude and honor that I stand before you today as the tenth president of River Valley Community College," said Dr. Harvey-Smith.

Leading up to the ceremony of investiture and presentation of the medallion and mace — which serve as a symbol of authority and unity — colleagues, business partners, fellow educators, elected officials and community members offered words of praise support.

"It is with confidence that I say we, the staff, look forward to envisioning our future with Dr. Harvey-Smith," said Martha Mott, Director of WorkReadyNH.

It was evident throughout the inauguration ceremony that Harvey-Smith is passionate about the community and the college she oversees.

She even claimed to fall in love.

"I've had the wonderful opportunity over the past year to fall in love," said Harvey-Smith, referring to the community and the college.

Channeling this passion, Harvey-Smith has worked tirelessly to forge relationships and partnerships in the community, focusing on the idea that everyone should work together to lift and sustain the community.

"Thank you [community members] for your early lifting," she said. "Together, we will lift, and together we will sustain."

Over the past year, Dr. Harvey-Smith has seen success in establishing relationships including a new agreement with Granite State College that allows students to earn a bachelor's degree all while staying in Claremont. She's also worked with local manufacturing companies — including Red River and Sturm, Ruger & Co., Inc. — to prepare college students for the future. Lastly, she's connected with area high schools to offer opportunities for high school students to earn college credits while working toward their diploma.

But her work isn't over yet. In fact, it's just getting started.
"There is more work to be done, but I am confident that we can do it," concluded the president.

The inauguration ceremony, which was sponsored by Claremont Savings Bank, follows a week of events sponsored by River Valley Community College. Members of the institution completed community service, displayed work in various showcases and held discussions for the public.

The Walter R. Peterson Award was also presented Friday night to Barbara J. Couch, Vice President of Corporate Social Responsibility of Hypertherm, Inc. The award recognizes individuals whose contributions to New Hampshire best exemplify Walter Peterson's devotion to public service and education.

All money raised from sponsorship toward the Peterson Award is used for student scholarships.