Thank you so much. Good-afternoon, Let me extend a special thank you to the Greater Keene – Chamber of Commerce for hosting today’s luncheon to welcome me and my colleagues. I am honored to have this opportunity.

I arrived in New Hampshire just over two months ago, and it has been wonderful to meet so many throughout the region in such a brief period of time. These meetings have only confirmed that my decision to accept the challenge and opportunity of leading River Valley Community College was the right decision at the right time.

My husband Donald and I have been married 29 years and we viewed this move as our next great adventure and as I have said, so often over the last 2 months; “although, I haven’t experienced my first New Hampshire winter, I am still smiling”.

As I reflect on my pathway to the River Valley Community College Presidency, I am reminded of a quote that says simply, “The biggest adventure you can take — is to live the life of your dreams. So in many ways, my passion and purpose have come together in this dream of an adventure.
I believe so passionately in the transformational power of education and its ability to not only lift an individual, but a community and to shape the future.

I come to New Hampshire, most recently from the state of Maryland, with educational experiences spanning 25 years including:

1. Having taught Language Arts as a Special Educator in Middle and High School
2. Serving as a Basic Skills and Financial Literacy Instructor for the US Army in Fort Polk, LA
3. Providing instruction in Business Management and Developmental Education in New Jersey

With credentialing from University of Maryland – College Park, Johns Hopkins University and Morgan State University, I most recently served as the Vice President of Student Affairs at Baltimore City Community College, a state-sponsored institution serving 19,000 students - 25% of all Baltimore City residents.

Prior to working in this position, I had the good fortune to serve as Dean of Learning and Student Development and Dean of Learning Support Systems for the Community College of Baltimore County (CCBC), the largest provider of higher education and workforce development training in the Baltimore Metropolitan Area, offering degrees, certificates and career training certification and licensure in more than 100 programs.
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Envisioning The Future – Our Future By Design  
Alicia B. Harvey-Smith, Ph.D., President  
River Valley Community College

As an author and advocate for education, I am excited to bring these experiences in educational leadership, community development and business partnership to New Hampshire as President of River Valley Community College.

River Valley Community College has been serving the educational needs of its community since 1968 with locations in Claremont and Keene.

We currently enroll over 1000 students in thirty-five career-oriented programs, supporting transfer and the attainment of specialized skills necessary to enter the job market in technical, business and health-oriented fields.

It is this history that we are excited to build upon. This academic year, River Valley Community College is undergoing a 2.9 million dollar renovation project to improve the learning environments in Claremont and Keene.

1. It is my vision that River Valley Community College will be a leader in innovation, new instructional and student services approaches, that are responsive to the needs of students and the community

2. That we will effectively support the academic and social preparation needed for transfer and or entry into the workforce
3. That we will, establish a solid corporate and business partnership model that will inform curriculum changes assuring its relevancy and alignment with workforce needs
4. That we will expand direct efforts in customized training and development with Business and Industry.
5. Decisions will be guided by what is in the best interest of our students and will focus on the improvement and expansion of learning through multiple pathways.
6. We will ask ourselves, the guiding questions of “How does every decision, policy and action improve or expand learning and how do we know?, This will allow us to focus and measure our efforts appropriately on student success outcomes, retention and completion, be completion defined as the attainment of a degree or certificate, transfer or entry into the workforce.

At River Valley Community College, we are “Envisioning the Future – and recognizing that, it will be “Our Future by Design”.

1. We will begin work soon on our Strategic Plan, which will include a detailed Enrollment Management Component to support our branding, recruitment, retention and pathway redesign efforts.
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2. We will examine our program mix and course offerings to assure their relevancy and currency and we will examine learning outcomes across the institution.

3. In just a few short weeks, we will launch our Spring Retention and Enrollment Campaign (SREC), encouraging students to not only return to College, but to bring a friend and to envision a future with River Valley Community College.

Beyond the economic benefit, it’s a smart investment in the future, as current data demonstrates the strong performance of community college students upon transfer as compared to students going directly from high school to a four year institution.

I conducted a focus group yesterday with fifteen students from our Keene Campus, each with a different story traveling the same journey from a single mom returning to as she said, “to start over and build a new life”, a young disabled veteran who is finding his passion in technology and a recent high school graduate and first generation college student, still unsure yet finding his way through general education classes, all three with dreams of a better life through learning.

I shared with them that they can get there from here as Community Colleges are truly a launching pad for dreams.
1. I have embarked upon a series of listening tours to hear directly from the community their perceptions of River Valley Community College, potential partnership and articulation opportunities, ways to support training and development and strategies to increase college matriculation rate in the region.

2. I invite each of you to “Envision The Future” with us and to share your ideas and feedback by completing and submitting a questionnaire. Copies are available today at the information table.

Once again, I thank you for such a warm and gracious welcome to New England and I look forward to exploring opportunities to partner with you to improve educational and training opportunities.