River Valley Community College
Envisioning The Future – Our Future By Design

State of The College Address
Our Continued Vision and Expectations Fall 2014
Alicia B. Harvey-Smith, Ph.D. President

Our Time

Our day, our time, our moment to shine

Step up, step out and take flight

Finding our rightful place

Closer to our goals

Centered in learning – focused on student success

Never caged and unable to fly

Beyond our past and envisioning the future

A future designed by us

Our day, our time, our moment to shine

Building bridges to bring us over

A launching pad for dreams

Together we soar

Embracing new possibilities

Our time

New Destiny!

Good-morning,

I appreciate the importance and power of our words and love using poetry, quotes and eclectic phrases to convey messages. So, as I did last fall, I wanted to open our time today with a poem and words that help frame our current state of the college from my perspective.
These words are important as are all words as they, have the ability to inspire humanity as in the words of Mother Theresa and Martin Luther King or to connect a nation as in the words of Presidents Kennedy, Reagan and Obama.

Words both spoken and written can inspire passion and action and today, I hope to do both. Inspire your continued passion to serve students in a manner that places them at the center of our academic enterprise and inspire our collective action to work together with civility and kindness and with a spirit of care and compassion to accomplish the big and small goals that are before us.

Last fall, I spoke of renewal and the opportunity for us as a college to create a plan for the future by envisioning one by our design and last year we set out together in that direction and what amazing success, we have achieved.

The landscape of higher education is changing quickly and what was ok in the past will no longer allow colleges and universities to keep pace with the world and with the needs of consumers. We must out innovate and have a laser like focus on continuous quality improvement that is responsive to the needs of those we serve. We must do things differently, if we are to survive. You have only to read today’s paper about the closing of Lebanon College, the third college in NH to close since my arrival or understand the reality behind the lay-offs at NHTI to realize that our future will be determined by each of us here today and how much we each are willing to invest in sustaining our college.

I wrote today’s poem not only as a reminder of the importance of the work that we have yet to do in support of student success and as a reminder to not only envision a future by our design but our need to develop a plan to achieve it.

By working together, collaboratively, with integrity, character and honesty and by operating outside of perceived and actual silos, I am confident that this will be our time and that River Valley Community College will grasp the future, it is designing.
Our day, our time, our moment to shine

Step up, step out and take flight

Finding our rightful place together

Over the last year, I have gotten to know many of you as we have worked hard together to re-envision this amazing institution. I have been impressed by the talent and creativity of many in this community, not to mention the passion and simple hard-work of so many others.

We worked to build a sustainable infrastructure to place us on even footing with other higher education institutions and we continue our work in this area. We launched new articulations, forged new partnerships with business and industry, re-examined our processes and barriers and expanded partnerships with our community.

I encourage each of us to embrace moving forward and where you can to help others who may be stuck in ways not serving them or the institution. Even through challenges and set-backs, together we can move effectively to the future that we are designing.

River Valley Community College continues in its season of renewal centered in learning – focused on student success.

There is still much work to be done together and I am confident that we will do it. We will continue to dream and plan together. We will continue to examine our programs, our services, our systems and policies and we will continue make the necessary changes to provide our students the very best teaching/learning environment and to position this institution for even greater success.

It will continue to be my vision that River Valley Community College will lead the way in innovation, instructional pedagogy, Student Services and in the
establishment of solid corporate and business partnerships that will enable us to provide greater access to students throughout the region and beyond.

I have also come to realize the important social mission that we must play in helping our community and responding to the many challenges that it faces. Our success will also hinge on our community’s success.

River Valley Community College must find ways to lift and sustain its community through partnership and collaboration and as a result, great things will happen.

Never caged and unable to fly
Our day, our time, our moment to shine
Beyond our past and envisioning the future
A future designed by us for us

Today, I invite you to continue to envision the future. Envision the possibilities that are before us and envision what it will take for us to get there.

Time, energy and resources will continue to be identified to enable our movement. We will continue to identify the right people, placing them in the right seats, with the right tools, moving in the same direction.

We cannot and will not move forward if only some of us look forward, while others are looking back and holding on to the challenges of the past.

We cannot move forward if good people do nothing. We cannot move forward if we forget the power of our actions and words in our treatment of each other. The culture that we seek to build is based on care and enables our greater success.
Together, we must, identify barriers and develop appropriate strategies as a community of thinkers.

I continue to encourage your passion, optimism, creativity and determination to achieve positive outcomes for our students.

Our future, after-all, will be what we make it. It will be our future – by design.

Our day, our time, our moment to shine

Building bridges to bring us over

A launching pad for dreams

Together to soar

The standard is raised, the expectations are high and I believe that we can make what was once felt impossible – possible.

I continue to ask for your trust in the process as I will continue to trust you to deliver your best self to each task, to our students and to each other.

We will continue to work together to close leadership gaps, training gaps, resource gaps, planning gaps and where they exist, even vision gaps.

I will continue to listen, continue to explore and continue to encourage each of you every day as we move closer our goals.

We will plan as a college, discuss the difficult issues openly and respond in a manner that will always move us forward in fulfillment of our benchmarks.

All of my decisions will continue to be guided by what is in the best interest of our students and I ask that each of your decisions be guided similarly.

We must ask with honesty, “How does every decision, policy and action improve or expand learning and how do we know?”
These simple questions will guarantee our ability to measure and focus our efforts on student success outcomes, retention and college completion.

This academic year, we will continue our work on our Strategic Plan, focused on the core strategic directions of Student Access, Student Success, Teaching and Learning and Sustainability.

We will continue examining our program mix and course offerings to determine their relevancy and currency.

We will continue to implement a plan to develop learning outcomes across the institution for both credit and non-credit offerings.

We will assess the effectiveness of our current infrastructure and make changes where necessary.

We will complete our NEASC Report, prepare for our upcoming visit and raise much needed scholarship funds for our students.

Today, we continue our design process and together we move River Valley Community College forward.

I also ask for your leadership in recruiting, retention and overall development of strategies for sustainability as an ambassador of River Valley Community College.

I hope that you will join me and remain committed to “envisioning and transforming our future by design.”

Embracing new possibilities

No fear

Our time

New Destiny!
Thank You!

At this time, I would like to share briefly some of our 2013/2014 academic year highlights, 2014/2015 priorities and work with you on our annual SWOT activity. But first, the highlights.