Greetings

Chairman Holloway, Chancellor Gittell, distinguished guests, family and friends, mere words cannot express my deep and sincere appreciation to each of you here today in celebration of this special occasion both in my life and in the life of this amazing institution, an institution committed to envisioning and designing it's future to meet the unique needs of our community by lifting and sustaining it through partnerships and collaborations.

It is with incredible gratitude and honor that I stand before you today as the 10th president of River Valley Community College, a college with a successful legacy of providing educational opportunity throughout the region, a college that today honors its past and embraces its future.

A future committed to creating pathways to excellence, pathways to innovation and pathways to student success in partnership with our community, school districts, senior institutions, business and industry and legislative partners.

Together we will lift and together we will sustain.

Today, I salute each of the past presidents of this great college and thank you for the early lifting you did to position River Valley Community College for this moment in time and pledge to continue to lift in partnership with its faculty, staff and students to position it for its next moments and next level of success.

Together we will lift and together we will sustain.

Today, I especially thank Jillian Davis, my Executive Assistant and Dr. Leigh Marthe, Director of The Student Success Center and Chair of the Presidential Inaugural Committee and each member of the committee and our College Community for making this historic day in the journey of our institution possible and a very special one for me. I am so honored to be your president.
Inauguration Speech of Dr. Alicia B. Harvey-Smith
President of River Valley Community College
September 19, 2014

Lifting and Sustaining
Our Community Through Partnerships and Collaboration

Family Introductions

I am very privileged to have the support of my family and friends, many of whom have traveled great distances to be here with us today and their presence simply means the world to me.

Joining me today, first and foremost is my husband Major Donald Wayne Smith, who for 30 years has been my constant support and inspiration. I am so honored to be his wife and that we have embraced this great adventure together.

Also in attendance today are my sister Alice Johnson and brother Carlisle Harvey from Maryland, my brother and his wife Dr. and Mrs. Rufus Sylvester Lynch from Pennsylvania, My aunt Ruby Jackson from Virginia, my uncle and aunt Sergeant Major Retired and Mrs. Conrad Holloway Jr. from Kentucky, cousins: Commander Anthony and Mrs. Holloway from Maryland, Lieutenant Colonel Retired and Mrs. Vincent Holloway Esq. from Kentucky and Michelle Hanson and the Honorable Joan M Pratt Comptroller of Baltimore from Maryland.

I also have some very special friends and colleagues joining me today including: Stephanie Bushrod Dunlap, Command Sgt. Major retired William and Mrs. Jackson, First Sergeant retired Eugene Smith, Dr. Monique Weston Claque Professor Emeritus University of Maryland College Park, Mr. and Mrs. Chima Ugah and my dear friend and mentor, Dr. Wilfredo Nieves, President of Capital College.

Thank you for encouraging me to never settle for what was easy or to shy away from what may appear hard, but to lead authentically and pursue excellence. Your support of me and River Valley Community College means so much. I am sure that my parents are smiling today. My mom is my greatest influence and I am who I am, in no small part, because of her; and for that I am eternally grateful.
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The Message

I am reminded today of those who have nurtured and supported me throughout my journey and remember the words of the scholar who asked, "Who is wise?" and who received the response, "the one who learns from all".

I am fortunate to have learned not only from great teachers, friends and mentors but from my students, who have given me the most treasured lessons of all.

Over the last year, I have had the wonderful opportunity to fall in love; to fall in love with an institution, its faculty and staff who are willing to envision serving students and the community in new and innovative ways.

In love with communities that have embraced me and the awakening of an institution destined to lead in partnership. Together, we will establish strong opportunities that support the economic development of this great state and enhance the well-being of our communities.

And so, it is with great joy, excitement and hope that I accept the leadership of River Valley Community College.

Together, we will lift and together we will sustain.

We have had much success redefining our communications and governance structure, launching strategic planning initiatives, expanding business and industry partnerships, establishing articulation agreements with our local school districts in Sullivan County, the Monadnock Region and Keene, and forging new relationships in Vermont and Massachusetts.

We have made great strides in stabilizing enrollment and establishing articulation agreements with our four year partners.

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I am so humbled by the great work of education and its power of transformation. There is no better profession in the world.

As River Valley Community College continuous to envision and embrace its future in partnership with all of you here today, the four primary strategic directions of access, student success, teaching and learning and sustainability, will enable us to achieve our goals.

Expanding outreach to veterans and improving access to the broader community to educational opportunities and pathways to jobs, training and development and pathways to four year degrees will be important components of our mission and ability to be responsive to the needs of those we serve.

As we work together through increased partnerships and collaborations, I am convinced that the resulting synergy will yield significant success and that we will be a national model.

We have talented faculty committed to improving and expanding the learning experience for our students, assessing and reinvigorating our curriculum and redefining our teaching and learning environment.

And together we will lift and together we will sustain.

We have talented staff committed to exploring barriers to student success and implementing strategies to support students through their academic journey and with our faculty will help students define success on their own terms and achieve the goals set with completion as the ultimate outcome.

And together we will lift and together we will sustain.
Lifting and Sustaining
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We have amazing students at the very core of our thinking requiring us to ask and confirm how each decision we make will improve and expand learning at River Valley Community College and in partnership with our students, we will continue to press forward in pursuit of improving our learning environment.

And together we will lift and together we will sustain.

As we reach out to our community, we also reach out to our past graduates and we thank you for making us proud, from our beginnings in 1968 as The New Hampshire Vocational Institute in Claremont, to offering our first Associate’s degrees in 1999 to our evolution to River Valley Community College in 2008. You are an important part of our family and we invite you back to support our future by design.

And together we will lift and together we will sustain.

We will hold true to the values and ideals that have made River Valley Community College a great institution, while innovating and changing in response to the needs of our students and community.

We will find our way together and emerge a better institution, as we stake claim on the future.

As we reach out to our legislative and business and industry partners, we can do great things in collaboration with you.

We can revolutionize our curriculum, align it with industry needs, better train and develop our workforce and be a catalyst for enhancing economic development in our state.

And together we will lift and together we will sustain.
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There is work to be done and I am more confident than ever, that together, we will do it. The vision remains that River Valley Community College will be a leader in “Innovation, Instructional Pedagogy, Student Services and in the establishment of solid Business and Industry Partnerships” that will enable us to provide greater access to students throughout the region and beyond.

As we look to the future and examine the higher education landscape, yes, there are challenges before us; however, I remain convinced that River Valley Community College is a launching pad for dreams, a beacon of hope and that there are no challenges before us, that we as a community together cannot overcome through intelligent reflection, bold and decisive action, planning and care.

Through the application of CARE© and its elements of compassion, appreciation, respect and empowerment, River Valley Community College will distinguish itself as a destination institution.

We will debate vigorously in search of best answers, commit to asking the hard questions and doing the hard work together to assure that our students receive a Vanguard learning experience to make their dreams reality.

We will be an institution committed to listening and responding effectively to our community, an institution committed to academic excellence, an institution that understands the power of community and believes that together, we can envision the future and that together we can design it!

Most importantly, we will be an institution that recognizes the basic truth that, together we will lift and together we will sustain.

Thank you for being here as River Valley Community College begins its next chapter and to lift us to our next level of success. Thank you and God Bless.