



August 20, 2020

Dear Friends:

In these tumultuous times, the Reach High Scholars Program is continuing to pursue its mission to help students reach higher in their educational pursuits than they had imagined possible.

RHSP brings together two constituencies: (i) its members and (ii) about 100 highly resourced colleges that provide excellent academics and significant need-based financial aid. Dozens of RHSP members have attended those colleges in the past ten years. The long-term goals of our constituencies have not been changed by the COVID virus. The world around them has.

The Current College Scene

Most colleges closed their campuses in March and have announced plans for blends of on-campus and virtual classes in the fall that are currently being revised toward further reducing physical presence. Online classes require faculty capable of adapting their approach to a new delivery format, as well as significant financial resources to implement the required technology. It is a work in progress, even for the schools encouraged by RHSP. Fortunately, they have the intellectual and financial resources to make this transition. UNH can survive with adequate financial backing from the State.

Hundreds of other U.S. colleges, with small endowments and reliance on tuition income, will be challenged by the transition costs and students' inability or unwillingness to pay for a lower-value product. For the past ten years, many colleges have presented a questionable aura of being real. It is likely that several of them will not survive the current disruptions.

RHSP and its Initiatives

We all yearn for a sense of normalcy and miss our old routines. It is easy to be deterred by what we don't know. Instead, the RHSP Board is focused on what we do know; that we have a very good program operating in resilient communities and school districts, of whom we ask for the minimum and to whom we try to provide the maximum. We will make it through this pandemic together.

For the past few months, RHSP has been adapting its initiatives to function in the new environment. Here are our most important developments:

Test Prep. In our Winter SAT Boot Camp for juniors, we had already created, with Academic Approach, a method for individual tutorials by their instructors using the internet and phone. This was done partially to address the differing levels of comprehension detected in the fall PSAT Prep course. The individual approach was more effective, and we are working with AA to continue it

during the coming school year, while classroom teaching is not feasible. Similar individualized test prep would not be found in any other NH high school.

Raymond Roundtables. Our summer academic enrichment program for rising 8th, 9th and 10th graders, was conducted as a “Virtual Harkness” experience this year. For the past ten years, RR has been conducted in collaboration with Phillips Exeter. We are grateful to the Raymond School District for allowing us to use its Google Classroom platform this summer as our Harkness tables in the Middle School were not accessible. We offered online courses in Language Arts, Math and Social Studies, taught by instructors from PEA and others from the Raymond area who have been Harkness-trained. We had 28 students in total - 18 from Raymond, six from Epping, two from Exeter and one each from Derry and Fremont.

College Tours. Because most colleges have closed their admission offices to visitors, we have developed a system of “virtual tours” of our recommended schools. Most of them now offer virtual versions of campus tours, specific interest tours and information sessions. RHSP works with students to develop lists of 15-20 colleges based on their interests and academic qualifications. After doing a virtual tour and information session, they complete a research form with data on the college that will be helpful as they continue their college search and decide where to apply. Once that is done, they earn two RHSP Eligibility Points (the same as for an on-campus visit).

Summer Boarding Enrichment Programs. Over a dozen RHSP members were accepted in summer boarding academic enrichment programs at Brown, Phillips Exeter and St. Paul’s. All those institutions cancelled their residential programs due to COVID and replaced them with on-line courses, which were taken by four of our students. Four others opted to accept a deferral of their PEA acceptances to 2021.

Program Director

During the summer, we learned that **Ashley Close** would be leaving us as our Program Director to work in the admission office of an independent boarding school in Tennessee, a type of job that has been her life-long goal. We are grateful to Ashley for her valuable contributions to RHSP and its students and parents and we wish her great success in her new endeavor.

We are delighted to announce that our new Program Director will be **Sarah Nelson**, who has recently moved to Exeter with her family. Their daughter will start the 9th grade at PEA this fall.

Sarah graduated from Phillips Exeter (in 1990), Harvard (A.B., fine arts major, in 1994) and University of Vermont (M.Ed., higher education and student affairs administration, in 1999).

At Harvard, Sarah was a four-year letter winner in field hockey and lacrosse. In lacrosse, she was All-American (second team) and All-Ivy (first team) in 1992 and 1994. She was on the U.S. women’s national lacrosse team during 1993-2005, playing on the touring team in England (1996) and Australia (2000) and on the World Cup team in Japan (1997), England (2001) and the United States (2005).

During 1995-1997, Sarah was an assistant coach, and during 1997-2000, the head coach, of the women’s lacrosse team at University of Vermont. During 2000-2003, she was an assistant coach, and during 2003-2007, the head coach, of the of the women’s lacrosse team at Harvard.

Sarah was inducted in the New England Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 2005 and the US Lacrosse Hall of Fame in 2015. She was awarded the Positive Coaching Alliance’s National Youth Sports Award in 2014.

For the last several years, Sarah lived in Boyce, VA, with her family. She has been the head coach of field hockey and lacrosse at Powhatan School, a local independent K-8 school, which her daughter attended. Sarah also has had middle-school teaching experience.

Although it is impractical to meet with students and parents in person for now, we will be in contact by phone, email, Skype and Zoom to talk about the various initiatives of RHSP and the college process.

Attached to this letter is a summary of RHSP's accomplishments to date.

Warmest regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "John F. McDaniels". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial 'J'.

John F. McDaniels
Chairman Reach High Scholars Program
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RHSP Outcomes Achieved 2010 to Date

Pre-College Outcomes

- 334 students have participated in Raymond Roundtables.
- 338 students have participated in RHSP's PSAT and SAT Boot Camps.
- 172 RHSP members have done boarding summer academic enrichment programs (typically for two to five weeks) at Brown, Dartmouth, Phillips Exeter and St. Paul's. They had financial aid of over \$862,000 (28% of which was contributed by RHSP and supporters).

College Outcomes

- 94 RHSP members have gone to four-year colleges. Fifty-three of them went to highly competitive colleges ("HCCs") (top 3% in the country); compared to 18 who had gone to similar colleges in the prior 90 years of RHS. Sixteen others have gone to UNH. Raymond has been transformative.
- The 53 had small amounts of debt and need-based grants and scholarships of up to \$69,000 per year that, over four years, will have a total value of over \$7.1 million.
- Those 53 students were 6.1% of all RHS graduates during 2011-20. Based on available data, only two NH high schools (Hanover and Portsmouth) have sent higher percentages to HCCs.
- Colleges attended by RHSP students include: Bard (2), Boston College, Brown, Carleton, Colby, Connecticut College, Dartmouth (3), Hamilton (3), Hobart & William Smith (6), Holy Cross (4), Lafayette, Mount Holyoke, Northeastern (2), Rensselaer Poly (3), St. Lawrence (3), Skidmore (3), Trinity (2), UNH (16), University of Rochester, Union (3), Wheaton (5) and Worcester Poly (6).
- The HCCs emphasized by RHSP have 85-95% 4-year graduation rates. Thirty-four RHSP members have attended those colleges in classes that graduated through 2020. **Thirty-two of them (94%) graduated in four years.** Most are from low- or middle-income families that have paid not more than \$10-20,000 per year and the students, on average, have less than \$30,000 of debt.
- The national average for college graduation in four years is about 40%. According to a multi-year study by the Pell Institute, the odds of graduating from college are about 11% for students in the bottom quartile of family income. Even worse than having a college degree and \$100,000 of debt, is to drop out after two years with no degree and, say, \$50,000 of debt.

Post-College Outcomes

- RHSP alumni who have finished college have gone on to impressive careers. Four are working on or have completed Ph. D degrees (one of whom is now a Professor of Astronomy at RPI). Two are pursuing Masters' degrees. Two were the first and second in the history of Raymond to receive Fulbright Scholarships to study and work abroad. Several are working in high-tech companies, including Amazon, Athenahealth, BAE Systems, Hexcel and IBM Watson.

Return on Investment to Donors

To date, individuals and charitable institutions have made donations of \$144,000 to RHSP and \$242,000 to its Summer Enrichment Partners, for a total of \$386,000. The \$7.1 million of grants and scholarships received by our 53 scholars attending HCCs is a multiple of 18.4X that amount.