

Reach High Scholars

P.O. Box 745
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June 14, 2012

Dear Friends of the Reach High Scholars Program:

This letter addresses recent developments in financial aid and also shows the college acceptance results of the RHS Class of 2012 compared to those of other larger schools in Southeastern New Hampshire.

Financial Aid

There has been considerable press comment recently about the increasing amounts of student debt, with many people finishing college owing \$50-100,000 (plus interest on the balances until repaid). Student debt now totals over \$1 trillion and exceeds the outstanding credit card debt in the country. Two recent Boston Globe articles are good brief summaries of the problem – [College Bound? Private Loans Should Be Last Resort](#) (June 6) and [The Real Cost of Higher Education in Mass.](#) (June 12).

New Hampshire has attracted attention because a study entitled Student Debt and the Class of 2010 shows “New Hampshire students” graduating that year with financial aid as having the highest average debt (\$31,048) in the country. And, NH ranked second in the country in the percentage (74%) of all students who graduated that year with at least some debt. One can assume that the average debt will be much higher for the college classes of 2011 and 2012 because of increased “sticker prices” without enough additional need-based grant aid being available.

Those statistics are often quoted to show how bad conditions are for NH students who go to college. In fact, they are based on students (from wherever) graduating from NH colleges. With the exception of Dartmouth (average debt of \$18,712 in 2010), NH colleges are expensive for students who need financial aid. That is because the other private universities (e.g., Colby-Sawyer, Franklin Pierce, New England College, Rivier, St. Anselm’s and SNHU) have insufficient endowment to support much grant-based aid. Moreover, for the school year 2011-2012 need-based grants were completely eliminated for the University System of New Hampshire (UNH, Keene, Plymouth and Granite State) as a result of support from the State being reduced from \$100 million to \$52 million. Although the budget of the University System for the next school year is not yet finalized, there is little hope for improvement.

The majority of private and state colleges outside NH also suffer to varying degrees from reduced budgets and consequently less money for need-based grants. Many colleges are increasingly dependent on tuition income (sadly, financed by loans) to cover their expenses

Several students in the RHS classes of 2011 and 2012 are fortunate to have gone or to be going to well-endowed colleges. Most of them have aid packages with a significant component of grants (some around \$40,000) that do not need to be repaid. Most of these grants are need based (determined by the family’s financial situation) or, in a few cases, merit scholarships that recognize the students’ academic and other achievements in high school. The only debt for most of these students is federal loans that will total at most about \$30,000 at graduation and benefit from favorable interest and repayment terms.

Control Your Destiny

These aid packages are usually sufficient to avoid incurring additional debt. Some parents may take on Federal PLUS (Parental Loans for Undergraduate Students) loans or other debt to cover some, or all, of the gap between the student's aid package and the college's sticker price. That is part of the family's overall financial planning and normally should not involve the student.

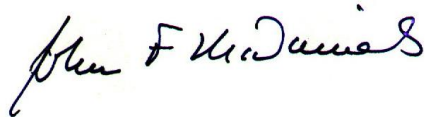
The key is to get into a college that can afford to give substantial need-based grants. As indicated below, we are currently fighting above our weight in that regard.

NH Students Going to Top Colleges

Attached is a comparison based primarily on information in local newspaper articles showing the college destinations of the top students in this year's graduating class at several Southeastern NH high schools. It indicates that the number of RHS students going to top colleges is on a par with the results at high schools two to five times our size and as a percentage of the total class going to such schools **we are clearly #1**. (Had we thought to do this exercise last year, the result likely would have been similar for the RHS Class of '11.)

Unfortunately, data on the entire classes at the other schools is not available to compare such things as total acceptances at two- and four-year colleges. However, based on the evidence at one end of the spectrum we look pretty good. **Congratulations to the RHS Class of 2012!**

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Glen F. McDaniel". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "G".

Top Ten College Destinations of Southeastern NH High Schools

6.14.12

High School # in Class of '12	Raymond 77		Dover 364		Epping 73		Exeter 382	
Colleges & USN&WR Score¹	Dartmouth	91	Harvard	100	RPI	62	Wash Univ. in SL	88
	Hamilton	86	Middlebury	93	Stevens Inst.	51	Cornell	87
	Trinity	76	Bowdoin	92	UNH	47	Lafayette	75
	Lafayette	75	Tulane	62	UNH	47	Boston Coll.	70
	Hobart & WS	65	Boston Univ.	60	UNH	47	Wheaton	66
	RPI	62	Northeastern	57	UNH	47	U of Md.	59
	Bennington	56	Northeastern	57	Duquesne	44	Northeastern	57
	St. Anselm's	49	American Univ.	52	Bowling Green	32	Northeastern	57
	UNH	47	UNH	47	Rivier	NS	Univ. of SC	46
	UNH	47	Univ. of SC	46	St. Joseph	NS	Univ. of ME	37
Total Scores	654		666		377		642	
# to HCCs²	6		5		1		5	
% of All Students to HCCs²	7.8		1.4		1.4		1.3	
High School # in Class of '12	Oyster River 151		Portsmouth 240		St. T. Aquinas 165		Spaulding 278	
Colleges & USN&WR Score¹	Vassar	87	Bowdoin	92	Williams	100	Cornell	87
	Colby	83	Barnard	78	Tufts	74	Tufts	74
	Colby	83	Holy Cross	79	NYU	69	Boston Coll.	70
	Macalaster	81	Tufts	74	Wake Forest	76	Wheaton (IL)	68
	Dickinson	73	Tufts	74	DePauw Univ.	70	Boston Univ.	60
	RPI	62	NYU	69	Wheaton	66	UNH	47
	UNH	47	Hobart & WS	65	Purdue	57	UNH	47
	UNH	47	Northeastern	57	WPI	57	UNH	47
	Elmira	NS	UNH	47	Univ. of VT	52	UNH	47
	Lesley Univ.	NS	UNH	47	UNH	47	Towson State	NS
Total Scores	563		682		668		547	
# to HCCs²	6		7		6		5	
% of All Students to HCCs²	4.0		2.9		3.6		1.8	

¹"Overall Scores" in U.S. News & World Report, America's Best Colleges, 2012 Edition. The scores assess academic quality on these weighted measures: undergraduate academic reputation (22.5%), graduation and retention rates (20%), faculty resources (20%), student selectivity (15%), financial resources (10%), graduation rate performance (7.5%) and alumni giving (5%).

² Highly Competitive Colleges. Those with Overall Scores of at least 60.