

PRESIDENTS' LEADERSHIP AWARD



Colleen Toomy *Saint Anselm College*

Colleen is a student leader in Saint Anselm's Access Academy, which is an afterschool program for underrepresented high school students in Manchester NH. Her ability to connect with her students comes from a place of empathy and empowerment, which she uses as a foundation to help students realize their potential. Under Colleen's leadership one of the core humanities classes in the Academy has been redesigned to better represent the interests and needs of the Access students. As result of her efforts, the entire Academy has begun to incorporate student voice in all future decisions and improvements. This is a crucial step in the Academy's ability to meet the needs of some of Manchester's most marginalized students. She brought her passion for teaching and a strong desire to understand the dreams and aspirations of the diverse high school students in her class. This passion led to a position on the Access coordinating team, where she continued to engage her fellow student staff and the Access students in an examination of curriculum.

Colleen's special gift is her ability to help the high school students to define their own interests and goals. The process of empowering students is complicated by a limited confidence with English for a number of high school students, but with patience and support Colleen helped them to find their voice. The creative ideas that emerged are a testament to this outstanding young women's ability to be an effective ally with the underrepresented students. Over the summer Colleen and her team presented their vision for the new humanities course. They wanted to shift away from a broad examination of human contributions across the

humanities disciplines and instead focus on Human Rights which she discovered was of prime interest to her students. In the fall of 2017 Colleen helped design a curriculum that piloted a number of topics including the UN International Statement of Human Rights, the US Bill of Rights and Malala Yousafzai's Nobel Peace Prize speech. With feedback from the students in the fall, Colleen built onto that curriculum in spring 2018 to include the US Civil Rights Movement, Women's Rights, Labor Rights and LGBTQ rights.

Colleen is an amazing young educator and an outstanding choice for the 2018 Presidents' Student Leadership Award.



Campus Compact
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