

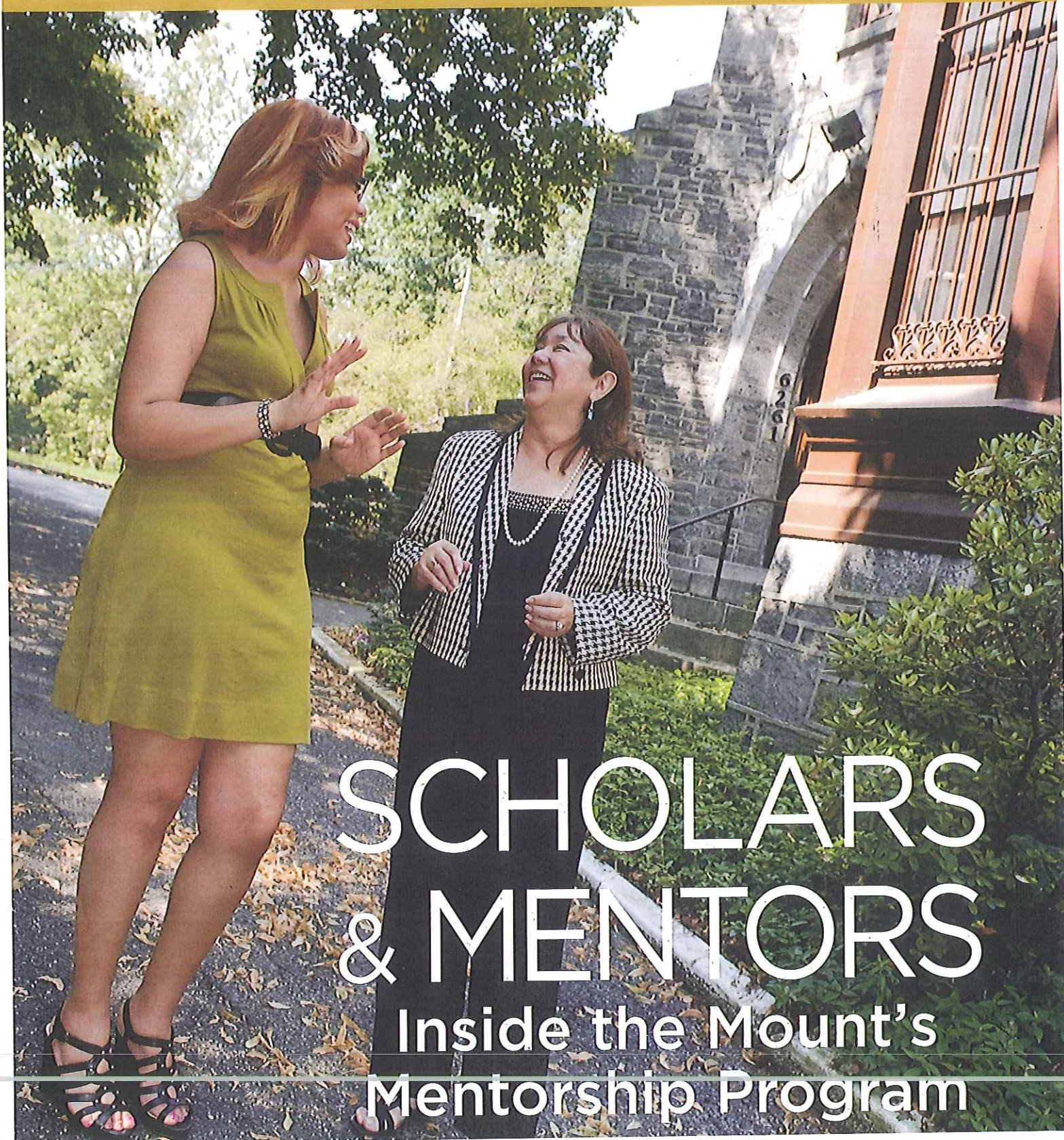


COLLEGE OF MOUNT SAINT VINCENT

NEWS

ALUMNAE/I, STUDENTS & FRIENDS

FALL 2011



SCHOLARS & MENTORS

Inside the Mount's
Mentorship Program



SCHOLARS

By Erin Walsh and Michael Quinn '11

Like many college students, business major Rachelle Henriquez '11 was uncertain of what career path she wanted to pursue after graduation.

But, unlike many of her peers, Ms. Henriquez was able to benefit from the wisdom, insight and guidance of a seasoned and accomplished professional, her mentor and College of Mount Saint Vincent Trustee Maria L. Ellis, a senior associate salesperson with Citi-Habitats.

"With the help of my mentor, Maria Ellis, I was able to answer this question (of what I wanted to do) and also make great connections with amazing individu-

als along the way," says Ms. Henriquez. "I was able to have dinners with Ms. Ellis and her friends, where we discussed how my senior year was going, and also how close I was to making a future career decision."

In fall 2009, the College of Mount Saint Vincent launched an innovative mentorship program that pairs students with distinguished alumnae/i, Trustees and friends of the College. In its first two years, 30 students have participated in the program, which gives students the opportunity to broaden their horizons and experience cultural, professional and charitable activities well beyond the realm available to most co-eds.

Throughout the course of the program, which is spearheaded by Assistant Professor of Sociology Kristin Lawler, students become citizens of the world. They learn the habits that are integral to professional success in all fields.

"Students in the program benefit from developing broad, widely applicable professional skills," says Dr. Lawler. "Flexibility is key, both to professional success and to personal satisfaction. When students know that they can shine in many environments, they develop

the confidence they need to rethink choices when they need to, and also they want to."

The program allows students to see it possible if they work hard and follow passion, says Dr. Lawler.

"People later in their careers realize they should follow what you love, otherwise they are always swimming upstream," she says.

The mentorship program includes a variety of events, beginning with an orientation, in which the mentor and mentee get to know each other. Throughout the program, the pair usually meet for lunch or dinner independently at least once and are frequently in contact via phone and e-mail.

Many mentors provide their mentees with opportunities such as on-the-job shadowing, outings to cultural events or visits to meetings.

One of Ms. Ellis's favorite activities with Henriquez was a visit that she arranged at NBC Studios at Rockefeller Center, the purpose of which was to "explore career opportunities for my mentee, to have a

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Dr. Kristin Lawler

“It’s the mission of the College, and of the mentorship program, to help students figure out what is really meaningful to them...”

Dr. Kristin Lawler



(above) Chief Council to the New York City Family Court Elizabeth Barnett mingles with Mount students at the end-of-year Mentorship Reception

(above right) Information Technology Consultant Mirkeya Capellan with mentee Alexandria Bobe '11 at the Mentorship Reception

(right) Mentor Vikki Pryor, Chief Executive Officer, American Red Cross of Greater New York, with mentee Elena Paulino '11, a history and special education major



MENTORS

understanding of her career choices and the training needed to achieve her career goals,” she says.

The opportunity to directly impact Mount students’ lives was the biggest draw of the mentorship program for Ms. Ellis.

“Being a trusted advisor and guide to our CMSV students is an awesome privilege, an incredible responsibility and most rewarding experience,” she says.

The entire group of mentors and mentees gather each May for a thank-you reception at the College’s Riverdale campus, which gives students an opportunity to express their gratitude to the mentors for their guidance and generosity.

Karen Boykin-Towns '87, vice president of public affairs for global sites for Pfizer Inc, mentored business administration major John McManus '11 during the 2010-2011 academic year. One of the perks of participating in the program for Ms. Boykin-Towns was the chance to interact with a student.

The program allowed Mr. McManus to meet people that he would not normally meet, and

to network with professional contacts that could ultimately lead to a job, says Ms. Boykin-Towns.

Another mentee, history and special education major Elena Paulino '11, met with dozens of successful women at a brunch/networking event hosted by her mentor, Chief Executive Officer of the American Red Cross of Greater New York Vikki Pryor. Ms. Paulino says she has learned a lot from her mentor.

“We have the same passions in life, and hopefully, she can help me take the steps I need to start my own non-profit,” says Ms. Paulino.

For her part, Ms. Pryor says she most enjoyed getting to know such a talented young person.

“My favorite activity was meeting with (Elena) and having long conversations,” she says. “I learned as much from her as she did from me.”

Mirkeya Capellan, an information technology consultant, mentored biology major Alexandria Bobe '11.

Although Ms. Bobe says that she was initially confused as to why she was paired with an IT

management consultant when her dream is to earn a Ph.D. in the biomedical sciences, she quickly learned that “the fundamental steps to success were not that different,” in either field.

“For instance, developing leadership skills and working with people—we all know that’s not the simplest of things,” she says. “One great piece of advice that (Ms. Capellan) gave me when we first met was to write little notes on the back of business cards in order to remember people that I have met.”

Ms. Capellan, her mentor, greatly valued all facets of her involvement in the program.

“The ability to be able to help and guide students with their careers is something that I care about a lot,” she says. “I wish I could have had a mentor when starting my career. It is great to have someone to go to when you need advice or are unsure about certain things. Having that someone makes a big difference.” ■