

Two Centuries: Reflections of Progress

Dear Alumnae/i and Friends,

Mount Saint Vincent became a college in 1911, one hundred years ago. First founded by the Sisters of Charity as the Academy in 1847, the College's growth and change was well planned to meet the needs of changing times. It still is today. As we celebrate the start of our second century as a college, we should take a moment to reflect on how far we've come and where we are headed.

Heraclitus observed that all is change. No news there. Its rapidity is our cliché. We no longer measure change by centuries or even decades. Nonetheless, our purposes are abiding: "Teach Me Goodness, Discipline, and Knowledge." From its first, the College has sought to transform lives. Through our liberal arts curriculum and the education of the whole person, we ask each student to fill a survival package for life.

Education demands a clear-eyed, hope-filled confidence in the future. An operative lament that the world is not what it once was prepares us for nothing. That is why change is not only necessary, but it is also absolutely essential to our mission.

The great pride of the College comes from the confidence and quality with which it serves its students well. We have great students who are talented, hard working and high achieving. We have big arms and are as diverse as New York itself. Whereas many schools talk about getting ready for a more diverse America, we point out that their America of the future is in fact America today. Our inclusiveness is a point of identity. We really do serve our country's greatest needs. We provide opportunity to talented students of every background without regard to family resources. We make opportunity real *for everybody*. That is unusual, yet our pride stems from our nationally-recognized levels of student achievement.

A Decade of Progress

The ingredients of excellent education are not complicated, but Mount Saint Vincent has them in abundance: excellent, committed and engaging faculty members coupled with talented, ambitious and hard working students. High expectations and generous levels of support for authentic student achievement are a winning formula.

By each measure, the College is flourishing. Our faculty is almost 25 percent larger than it was 10 years ago. Across all disciplines, our faculty is intellectually vibrant and deeply committed to student learning. While our College endowment and financial resources are modest, we have worked successfully to pull faculty salaries above the 70th percentile nationally, have continued to hire exceptionally well, and have expanded support for the full faculty engagement in scholarship that enriches the academic programs of the College.

The College now has a substantial program of grants to support faculty initiative and creativity, we have expanded our sabbaticals from one to five a year, and we have increased funding for faculty who present original work at national conferences.

The quality and creativity of our faculty has been affirmed through competitive grants from the National Science Foundation, the National Institutes of Health, the Department of Justice, the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Fulbright Hayes Program, and the Department of Education. The achievements of our faculty are paralleled with students earning competitive research and business internships at M.I.T., Albert Einstein College of Medicine, New York University, Columbia University, Yale University, Rockefeller University, New York Stock Exchange, and Deutsche Bank, to name a few. Biology major Ana Uruena '11 recently received the top award for original work at the American Society of Cell Biology undergraduate research conference in Charlotte, North Carolina. Last year, four of our students won regional awards for original research in mathematics. Students continuously present work at national meetings across the curriculum, in fields including psychology, anthropology, sociology, nursing and biochemistry.

Student achievement reflects the work of faculty members and staff at every level. An extra measure of inspiration, criticism, and help impacts a three-page essay in composition as much as it does in genetic research. The resident advisor who gives time to the student facing an intimidating challenge can make a critical difference.

Our enrollment has grown. Our fall 2010 full-time undergraduate enrollment is 40 percent higher than in was a decade ago, and the number of on-campus residents has nearly doubled over the same period. Our successes are gaining national recognition. A National Science Foundation-funded study showed that, among Hispanic-serving colleges and universities, we have the highest graduation rate in the country for students in science and science-related fields. The NSF also singled out the College as the number one model for other institutions to emulate. A *Washington Monthly* study showed that we have among the best graduation rates in the United States for Pell grant recipients. At a time when students and families are making sacrifices and incurring debt to make opportunity possible, *U.S. News & World Report* identified Mount Saint Vincent alumne/i as having among the lowest default rates in the country. With a goal of 1,500 full-time undergraduates by 2015 and a difficult economy, the College's targets are ambitious, but we are confident that we will meet them.

More Change

As for the College overall, purposeful change is a reflection and a source of excellence. The examples from departments are innumerable and an important indicator of intellectual and pedagogical vitality. So are College-wide initiatives, ranging from the revision of our core curriculum to the data-informed systematization of advising and academic support services. A number of grants help to enrich academic programs. Professor Justine Taddeo has been masterful in seeking grants to help our strong nursing programs serve students pioneeringly well. Professor Natalia Smirnova's grant for

programs in international studies is another example. And our new School of Professional and Continuing Studies provides opportunities for adult and non-traditional students, which supplement our core undergraduate mission. The School offers Master's of Science programs in Education and Nursing and a new MBA program, as well as undergraduate offerings configured to meet the needs of part-time adult students.

All this good work comes with challenges. Undercapitalization continues to be our greatest problem. The *Building Our Future* capital campaign exceeded its goal, raised \$25.1 million, and made substantial progress possible. Nonetheless, our challenges continue to be substantial. We must grow our endowment and are starting to do so. But most obviously, our facilities were in need of upgrades in order to fit the needs of strong academic programs and remain competitive with peer institutions.

We have reduced comprehensive deferred maintenance by approximately one third. Residence halls have all been upgraded (we started Marillac this past summer), and Mastronardi Hall is an important addition to the campus. Renovation has included new windows, new fire alarm systems, new heating systems, new plumbing, new lighting, elevators, sprinklers, new furniture, flooring, new electrical service, security systems, and cosmetics.

In setting priorities for renovation and additional space, the College has concentrated on programmatic facilities that most impact what students, faculty, and staff can achieve together. New state-of-the-art facilities in Communication and Art fill an expanded Maryvale. There is a new Nursing Arts laboratory suite in the Administration Building; the Maloney Computer Center fills a the beautifully renovated lower level of the library; the Peter Jay Sharp Athletic and Recreation Center adds elegant competitive space to the existing facilities that are awaiting renovation, the Grace Center envelope has been restored, and significant repairs to Hayes Auditorium have been completed.

Extensively improved information technology includes new campus-wide systems, 14 laboratories, and more than 250 public access machines. Biology, Chemistry, Biochemistry, and Nursing laboratory equipment is now superb, and we have installed 36 all-smart classrooms. Thanks to advances in technology, one-third of our library collection is now electronic. Members of the Mount community can search and access electronic materials online 24/7. We have made many millions of dollars worth of essential improvements to roads, sidewalks, retaining walls, drainage, and campus lighting. The great staircase to River Lawn is being rebuilt this month. And we have more new boilers and roofs than I care to count.

Most pressing now: complete renovation of the Science Building. Three laboratories were renovated several years ago, and Phase II—new Chemistry laboratories—are in planning. We hope to renovate them soon. The balance of the building urgently needs renovation, as well.

With a goal of \$11.5 million, the renovation of our science laboratories is the most ambitious project in the College's history. A dedicated team of alumnae/i and friends

serving on our Science Advisory Committee are helping to make it possible. The committee is chaired by two internationally-renowned research scientists: Dr. Owen O'Connor, Deputy Director of Research and Clinical Treatment at the NYU Cancer Institute and Dr. Mark Soloski, Professor of Medicine and research immunologist at Johns Hopkins School of Medicine. The members are equally impressive. The committee of extraordinary, committed people says something important about Mount Saint Vincent. Every member has eloquently testified to the quality of education offered at Mount Saint Vincent in the past, the excellence they see in the work of our students and faculty today, and the deep importance—even urgency—of what we do for the future.

The New Millennium

The College has many plans going forward. Our *Strategic Goals and Objective, 2010-2015*, are ambitious and realistic. We have four overarching goals:

- I. The College will grow.**
- II. It will grow with sustainable excellence.**
- III. It will build on its heritage as a Sister of Charity institution and leverage the unique educational opportunities of its location in New York City.**
- IV. In all things, the College will use its resources efficiently and effectively for the maximum benefit of the students it serves.**

So the trajectory is set. We will grow some, but not large. Our purposes are abiding: truly excellent liberal education offered through dynamic programs that transform the lives of students and prepare them for further achievement and service. And we will continue to strengthen the physical and financial infrastructure that support our work. It is the story of a community that is beautiful in every way.

Sincerely,



Charles L. Flynn, Jr.
President