



Charles L. Flynn, Jr.
President
College of Mount Saint Vincent

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Alumnae/i and Friends,

At the Mount, we know the true worth of a liberal arts education. We recognize exceptional quality. We understand authentic value. We know that a life of accomplishment is built on the ability to unpack and map complexity, think creatively, discern the values that are at stake in our actions, and accept responsibility for what we do. We share the attraction to excellence and aversion to mediocrity that help the soul to sing.

The ingredients of an excellent liberal arts education are not complicated: high quality programs; superb, committed, engaging faculty members; and talented, ambitious, hardworking students.

The Mount has these in abundance, so how do we answer those increasingly numerous public officials and policy wonks who claim that education can be excellent if built upon on simplistic scores and surveys devised by well-meaning political committees? One Department of Education official said that we shouldn't have a hard time getting our heads around such a rating system. It's familiar. We do it for blenders.

Last year the College devised a response that can serve as a model for the nation. We set about to summarize true measures of this institution's quality. We sought to convey what makes the College exceptional, and to challenge other institutions to develop a similar summary. The result: a collectively curated constellation of measures that matter—benchmarked results and examples of impressive student achievement. We call our summary **National Measures of Quality**.

At the same time, we announced a Tuition Reset, effective in August, 2015, whereby the College will reduce its tuition, room and board, and fees while simultaneously reducing financial aid packages. These two initiatives plainly show that the value of a superb education, coupled with a price that brings it within reach of more families who earnestly desire and deserve it, is one more authentic measure of value.

In the pages that follow, you will meet a sampling of individuals whose stories illuminate the achievements, excellence, commitment, and brilliance of the community known as the College of Mount Saint Vincent. By focusing on their stories, revealing their human qualities as well as their achievements, we offer our case and show that the Mount does not need a rating system devised by the federal government and does not need to make national headlines to prove that its quality is exceptional and its value is authentic.

Exceptional. At last spring's Student Research and Service Symposium, more than 80 students presented an astonishing array of their discoveries on topics in the sciences, humanities, and social sciences. These original research and service projects, conducted entirely by the students and guided by our dedicated faculty, demonstrate extraordinary academic excellence and commitment to service. I invite you to read about two of these exceptional student presenters, beginning on page 4.

Quality. A Mount Saint Vincent education is made possible through the generosity of alumnae/i and friends. This report includes some especially impressive examples of generosity. With a collective gift of \$85,987, two-dozen members of the Class of 1948 garnered distinction for the most given by any class to last year's Annual Fund. Their pride and spirit are inspiring. Just as stirring was the largest donation from an individual—a very generous \$1 million gift from William and Joan Fishlinger. Their largesse has provided the startup funding for the Fishlinger Center for Public Opinion Research and opens up the possibility of creating new majors in both public policy and market analysis. I will report more on these initiatives as they are developed and rolled out.

Our feature story is about one benefactor who also stands out. A Centennial Society member, he has elected to remember the College in his will. Although neither an alumnus nor parent of a student, he has been inspired by the quality of a Mount education and the opportunities it affords. His commitment is to the American Dream and thus to high quality, life-transforming education. We just had to tell his story. You'll find it on page 6.

Authentic. In late summer, the College was awarded a prestigious, highly competitive Title V grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Totaling \$2.3 million over five years, the grant will help the College to integrate and expand its advising and career education programs. The new Mount Access Program (MAP) joins our existing HEOP (Higher Education Opportunity Program), which supports commuter students, and TRIO, a federally-funded student support services program, in a branded group known as the Mount Pathways.

The Mount holds students to high expectations, but it isn't "do or die." Mount Pathway programs assist in the transition to College, provide counsel and assistance to students who hit bumps along the way, and through the Oxley Career Education Program, engage students from the moment they enter college with the identification of and preparation for their careers after graduation. On page 8 you will read about one deserving student who has thrived as a beneficiary of this support and is giving back in many ways.

Value. Last year our "Outside the Classroom" initiative made an excellent beginning. Students dazzled us with their performances in the Model UN, *The Underground* international literary magazine, the Media Club, and our theater and dance groups. Athletics, too, is enjoying an extraordinary surge in quality and performance. Coaches are deeply committed to student success and retention as well as their athletes' peak performance on field and court. The newly completed Fitness Center in the Peter Jay Sharp Athletic Center has been humming with activity, and the beautifully-appointed Athletic Field, which opened at the start of the academic year, has inspired players and student "fans" alike. On page 9 you'll find stories of two students who exemplify the "complete package," excelling academically while participating in athletics, and still finding time to contribute their share of volunteer service.

Each of the features in this report is ultimately about a beautiful soul. Maybe that is an occasion for us all to reflect once more on Matthew 6:21: "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." Of course, our greatest treasure is found in ourselves and in each other. Our treasure is our involvement, our commitment, our hard work, and our best thinking. Without all of us placing our treasure where our hearts are, we may find that our progress is not as swift or sure. Our goals may exceed our grasp. But by engaging our best selves with generosity and good will, all things are possible.

Many thanks to everyone celebrated here.

With deep gratitude,

Top Ten

Best Colleges ranks the Mount among the top 10 Catholic colleges and universities in the U.S. and 13th most diverse among colleges and universities nationwide.