

A 2013 study from the Higher Education Research Institute at UCLA demonstrated that, among many other qualities, Mount students display a driving curiosity, are willing to research the answers to satisfy that curiosity, and are likely to collaborate on group projects and make class presentations. These facts are borne out in the experiences of two Mount students who are venturing into the worlds of scientific research and social activism. **Katuska Hernandez '15** is bent on a life as a bench researcher. **Gabrielle Loccisano '16** is passionate about making a more just world. Each has made the most of the Mount's opportunities for students who enjoy exceeding expectations.

Katuska Hernandez The Student Scientist

Katuska Hernandez '15, a biology major, was captivated by science at an early age because it "explains why we are the way we are." During her sophomore year, she became fascinated with the idea of doing scientific research on fruit flies, which she studied in genetics class. At the start of her junior year, she began working in the laboratory of Janet Rollins, PhD, Associate Professor of Chemistry. "We learned basic research and lab techniques, and we also learned how to work with the flies—dissecting them, dosing them, caring for them. It's very intricate work and takes a lot of practice to master." With Dr. Rollins acting as principal investigator



and guide, Katuska and five other students collaborated on a major research project, conducting laboratory procedures and tests, writing up their findings, and presenting a poster at last year's Student Research and Service Symposium.

The study, *Using Drosophila Melanogaster as a Model Organism to Study Reproductive Toxicants*, was the result of a joint research grant with Brown University, where Dr. Rollins has an adjunct faculty appointment and where Katuska completed an internship this past summer. It was there that her next career move became firmly cemented. "I want to go to graduate school," she says confidently. "I'd like to do research on the link

between environmental pollutants and cancer. We hardly ever stop to think how things in our environment may be affecting our lives, and that's what I want to study."

Katuska credits the personal attention she gets in the Mount's small classes with helping her find and take advantage of the Mount's exceptional opportunities. "My professors know me, what I'm working toward, and what would most benefit me," such as the internship at Brown and another at Kent State University following her sophomore year. The latter resulted in her work appearing as part of a published research paper.

She feels her experiences at the Mount have made her "more independent, and a critical



thinker. I'm always asking myself questions, the way I have been challenged to think in my classes." She also feels her time in the laboratory holds the key to her future. "It really sets me apart from other undergraduates hoping to go into the sciences. It's extremely beneficial."

"As soon as you explain [human trafficking to people], they are in shock ... that it is so pervasive, and that not enough is being done about it."

Gabrielle Loccisano The Student Activist

Gabrielle Loccisano '16, an English major in the Honors Program, is a complex and thoughtful young woman who readily admits that her small world has opened up significantly since she started as a freshman.

Gabrielle's signature topic of interest is human trafficking—which, she informs us, is now called by a new name, thanks to a United Nations decree: modern-day slavery, a startling rubric that strikes a chord and communicates more effectively—

something the U.N. and others like Gabrielle fervently wish to see happen. Whatever you call this \$32 billion industry that touches so many aspects of daily life, most Americans are only marginally aware of the problem.

"Not many people know what human trafficking is, but as soon as you explain it to them, they are in shock that it exists today, that it is so pervasive, and that not enough is being done about it," she says.

Gabrielle first learned of the crisis through her honors curriculum. Encouraged by advisors, she began visiting high schools to help students recognize that what they post on their Facebook page can make them vulnerable to predators who deal in human trafficking.

Working with members of the Women's Studies Club, she took on additional service projects. Last year, based on data showing that sex trafficking in cities hosting a Super Bowl can double or triple during game week, Gabrielle and her fellow volunteers began calling hotels in advance of the Super Bowl. They did their best to explain the problem, inviting hotel owners to send managers for free awareness training. "There are small things hotel managers can do, even if they are not ready to bring in the police," Gabrielle explains. "They can inscribe a hotline number on the free soaps that are distributed in every room. It may be a small gesture, but for someone who was brought into a hotel against their will, knowing where they can get help could make a huge difference."

Gabrielle says her advisors—Mary Katherine Hamm, S.C., who was the LifeWay Network Coordinator of Education when she worked with Gabby and other Mount students, and Matthew Shields, Director of Campus Ministry—have been a tremendous support. "They educate you about a problem and then let you decide what next steps you are ready to take." The problem of human trafficking is all-encompassing, she points out: it brings in issues

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Cristóbal (Cris) Conde

Cristóbal “Cris” Conde is an investor in start-up companies and a partner in a business incubator, a business support network that facilitates the growth of promising startups. Until 2011 Cris was president and CEO of SunGard, a software firm that he grew into a \$5.6 billion Fortune 500 company, the largest privately-held business software and IT services company in the world. Born in Santiago, Chile, Mr. Conde is a U.S. citizen and has a B.Sc. in astronomy and physics from Yale University. He serves on the boards of several for-profit and non-profit organizations, including the College of Mount Saint Vincent. We sat down to talk with Cris about his decision to remember the Mount in his will, a gesture that, although not uncommon, tends to set a person apart by demonstrating a deep commitment to an institution.

CMSV: WHAT PROMPTED YOUR DECISION TO MAKE A SIGNIFICANT GIFT TO THE MOUNT IN YOUR WILL?

CC: I think a better question to ask me would be, “Cris, you did not attend this college, and you are not the parent of a student here. Why have you decided to become a major supporter of the Mount?”

The answer is that I believe deeply in the mission to make a liberal arts education accessible to students who have to surmount great obstacles to attend a first-rate college. I also believe deeply in that student—one of the first generation in their families to attend college. With a first-rate college education, I believe you can actually change society.

QUALITY
THE PHILANTHROPIST

CMSV: CAN YOU TALK ABOUT THE MOUNT'S LONG HISTORY OF SERVING FIRST-GENERATION STUDENTS?

CC: When I look at this institution's track record for educating students who have the fewest advantages and the most to gain, I know that the Mount's legacy of serving this type of student goes back decades. There was a time when "first-generation student" meant students who came from mostly Italian families. At another time it was mostly Irish families. Today the face of the first-generation student has changed, but the Mount's commitment remains the same—to serve these young people and their families who are striving to better their lives and society.

CMSV: TO WHOM DO YOU GIVE CREDIT FOR THE SUCCESS OF THIS COMMITMENT?

CC: I have faith in the very credible, excellent team that is leading this institution. The faculty, the leadership, the administration—this is a committed team of people who mean what they say.

I look for three things before I invest in a company: one, they must have a great product. Two, they need a plan for getting it to the people who need it. And three, there must be a strong need for it. That's the kind of company I invest in. And it's also why I want to support the Mount—it's a different kind of investment, but the criteria are similar. It has a great product—a first-rate liberal arts curriculum with individualized attention to each student; its mission is to offer access to students with the greatest need and ability; and the world is hungry for this kind of well-rounded, well-educated individual who is learning to succeed in a highly diverse society.

CMSV: YOU HAVE SAID THAT YOU BELIEVE THAT A MOUNT EDUCATION CAN "MOVE THE

NEEDLE." CAN YOU EXPLAIN?

CC: I think your real question is, can Mount students change society? Yes, I believe they can. I went to Yale, where I earned a degree in astrophysics. Yale is a fine school and I am grateful for the education I received there. I could give money to Yale. But would it change society? I don't think so. On the other hand, by being exposed to the rigorous standards and enriched environment at this college, the students here are being molded into exceptional individuals. As graduates, their potential to contribute to society and to their own families is limitless. So when you look at it that way, the Mount can actually move the needle.

CMSV: SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE THINKING THAT WENT INTO YOUR DECISION TO LEAVE A GIFT TO THE MOUNT AFTER YOU ARE GONE. WHAT INSPIRED YOU TO MAKE SUCH A GENEROUS GESTURE?

CC: I started my first company with two friends, a credit card and about \$6,000 in savings. That's because I believed there were no limits on what I could achieve with hard work. Eventually it became one of the largest tech companies in the world with 26,000 employees. I'm an example of what a person can do, given the right education and a belief in one's own potential. And I don't think I'm done yet! That's what I see all around me here—in the students, the leadership, and faculty: limitless potential.

So yes, I have named the College of Mount Saint Vincent in my will. But I've gone one step further. I feel so strongly about ensuring that the College receives the full amount I feel it deserves, I've included a clause that states if I were to die young, the Mount will get the full amount they would receive had I lived to a much greater age.

CMSV: AS A TRUSTEE, YOU ARE OFTEN WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES TO ENSURE THE INSTITUTION'S HEALTH AND MISSION. HOW OFTEN DO YOU INTERACT WITH STUDENTS?

CC: Students are often invited to College events that I attend, and I go to some of their events as well. I find them very personable, very poised, with great stories to tell. They have a certain special quality—they do well in spite of the hardships they may have suffered and the sacrifices their families have had to make. At the Mount, they are encouraged and guided as they surmount obstacles, and they are succeeding in spite of those obstacles. It's inspiring and rewarding to know I am giving something of myself to continue this wonderful legacy.

CMSV: DO YOU HAVE ANY PARTING THOUGHTS?

CC: Everywhere you go on this campus, you can feel a powerful, positive energy. Every time you hear the president speak, every time one class graduates and another class comes in to take their place, you know this is a place that values rigor, encourages dreams, and demonstrates to its students that anything is possible.

Excellence

Distinctions that matter: The Mount was named a 2014-2015 *College of Distinction*—ranked as one of the nation's best places to learn, grow, and succeed.



AUTHENTIC

The Class President

Ciara Rosa '15, a communication major, is a busy, high-achieving student in the College's Honors Program. In addition to regularly making the Dean's List, she has been active in student government since her sophomore year, and now serves as class president. As a Seton Service and Leadership Scholar, she has led outreach efforts to help the homeless in Manhattan and participated in countless service projects. And if all that doesn't keep her busy enough, Ciara is secretary and co-vocal director of the WORDS Performance Group, serves as a peer tutor in the College's Academic Resource Center, and last year she interned for a nationally syndicated television program in Manhattan. She says, "My parents are proud of me and say they know I'll accomplish whatever I set my mind on. They can't wait to see what else I'll achieve in life."

The Bronx native has accomplished much during her years at the Mount, and she is quick to give a measure of the credit to TRIO, the College's federally-funded program that provides first-generation, low-income students with academic and personal counseling, career advisement, tutoring, mentoring, and a wide range of educational enhancement activities. TRIO serves students like Ciara—academically strong, motivated individuals who are at a disadvantage, either economically or culturally as the first in their families to attend college, or who have been diagnosed with a disability. TRIO is one of three programs collectively known as Mount Pathways.

Mount Pathways programs offer evidence of the College's commitment to providing access to opportunity for every motivated student seeking a high-quality education. By opening doors to students who might otherwise be shut out, the Mount can boast of a cultural, racial, and economic diversity that is truly authentic.

Other Pathway efforts include the Mount Access Program, designed for students who demonstrate the potential and motivation to succeed in college but whose test scores and high school grades need a boost, and HEOP (Higher Education Opportunity Program), a partnership between the College and the New York State Education Department that was launched in the fall of 2014. Its goal is to retain and graduate promising students with limited academic and financial resources, but whose aptitude and drive make them prime candidates for success.

For Ciara, who began her TRIO experience at a pre-freshman summer program, it meant meeting new friends and developing a peer support network, as well as working with professional and faculty advisors who continue to support her every step, right through graduation. For the past three summers, Ciara has volunteered with the TRIO program, serving as peer leader helping younger students settle into life at the College. This past summer she was "promoted" to Orientation Coordinator, and spent her days planning the peer leader training and TRIO Week events that took place in August.

Beginning in the summer of 2015, all students enrolled in Mount Pathways programs

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Student Athletes

Shannon Doyle and Patrick McEnany

*When the College formally dedicated its new athletic field during Homecoming Weekend in October, two Mount students were among the first players to dig their cleats into the new grass for play and practice. **Shannon Doyle '15**, captain of the women's soccer team, played the inaugural match against Sage College. **Patrick McEnany '15**, captain of the lacrosse team, joined teammates on the field for the ceremonial Parade of Athletes before the start of the Homecoming men's and women's soccer double-header. Both student-athletes have benefited from their time at the Mount, and are keenly aware of the value of a Mount education that goes well beyond what is taught in the classroom or on the playing field.*

Shannon Doyle (*top photo, right*), a senior with a double major in business and communication, has been playing soccer since the age of four. She describes her love of the sport as “a passion,” explaining that she loves “the competition, the teammates, and the feeling of everyone pulling together to achieve a win that’s shared by everyone.” She says the sport helps her understand competition in business, and to feel comfortable taking risks and challenging adversaries.

The Mount’s small size has been crucial to the success for this accomplished young athlete. “It’s not easy to compete in athletics with a double major,” she says, explaining that her ability to coordinate class and game schedules with her professors was key, and can be attributed to “the small-school advantage that I really appreciate.”

Patrick McEnany (*bottom photo*), a business major with a minor in communication, loves lacrosse. He started playing competitive sports at the age of six, and by high school he was playing football, hockey, and lacrosse. When he came to the Mount, he chose lacrosse because “it has elements of my three favorite sports.”

Patrick says he enjoys being pushed to his limits. “On the field, you have to perform to the best of your ability—not only for yourself, but also out of pride in your team and your school.” Speaking of the field, he is thrilled to be able to play on

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