Reimagining an architectural gem

Stakeholders from all parts of the Marianopolis community gathered at the newly renovated Library this fall for the College’s Heritage Day, the annual celebration of its roots in the Congrégation de Notre-Dame. Architect Manon Asselin, whose Atelier TAG has been awarded the prestigious contract for the Fifth Pavilion of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts, gave an informative talk on her visionary transformation of the architecturally and historically significant space as an example of the innovative reimagining of heritage buildings into 21st Century public use.

The Marianopolis Library was the creation of another critically acclaimed architect, J.O. Marchand, who left his mark on many of Montreal’s most iconic buildings, including the city’s municipal court and city hall, as well as Collège de Montréal and Place d’Armes Hotel.

“The Library is both a literal and symbolic manifestation of how Marianopolis is rooted in the educational traditions of the Congrégation de Notre-Dame,” says Amy MacLean, who, as Coordinator of Library Services, oversees the addition of about 1,000 titles annually to the Library’s collection of 44,000-plus circulating books. What is not visible is just as impressive: not only does the Library give students free access to 29 online databases and countless ebooks, reference material, journal articles and films, but its expert librarians prepare students for university-level research and citation work.

“Starting in their first semester, all students have at least two training sessions with our librarians,” says MacLean. “By the time they graduate, they are prepared for studies at the world’s top universities.”

Check out the Marianopolis Library’s Pinterest board at pinterest.com/marianopolib
Foundation Chair’s message

Many schools and foundations have multiple priorities. We at The Marianopolis Millennium Foundation have but one priority: to support the College. Funding scholarships that provide a Marianopolis education to our most deserving students — regardless of ability to pay — is the Foundation’s primary focus. Our volunteer group governs and stewards fundraising initiatives, grants funds to support various areas of the College and manages donations and investment capital all in support of helping successive generations of Marianopolis students achieve, grow and succeed. We pride ourselves in our work in support of excellence, which is the name of this publication. This newsletter highlights but a few examples of how Marianopolis prepares motivated young people for the world’s top universities.

One such graduate calls the decision to attend the College “a strategic choice that I made with my parents because in our view Marianopolis was a stepping stone to the best university education.” That former Social Sciences student is Dino Mazzone ’87, who, I am pleased to say, began a three-year mandate as Executive Director of The Marianopolis Millennium Foundation on April 1. He brings his considerable talents to the position and will work closely with the Foundation’s Board of Directors as well as donors, alumni and other members of our community, and he will be responsible for the College’s Development and Alumni Affairs Office. Dino also boasts a well-honed expertise in building relationships and a deep and personal understanding of the importance of giving and volunteering. In addition to his civil and common law degrees from McGill University and managerial and other experience at firms such as Lapointe Rosenstein, McMillan, Shoppers Drug Mart-Pharmaprix and Vitesse Transport Corporation, he has an impressive record of political involvement at the municipal, provincial and federal levels and served two mandates as a municipal councillor in the Town of Montreal West.

You will hear more about and from Dino in the Fall issue of the Marianopolis alumni magazine Alma Matters. You can read below about Jill de Villafranca, the energetic, dedicated and longtime member of the Foundation’s Board of Directors, to whom I extend my sincere gratitude for her tireless service to our College. Meanwhile, I hope you enjoy this newsletter and that you consider supporting the Foundation, either online at marianopolis.edu/donate or by mailing in the attached card.

Please keep in mind that gifts at any level make an everyday difference in the lives of Marianopolis students. On behalf of the Foundation and Marianopolis students, I thank you.

Volunteer raises funds - and the bar

From the very inception of The Marianopolis Millennium Foundation to the present day, one member of this organization’s Board of Directors has stood out among the many dedicated volunteers for her stalwart work on behalf of Marianopolis students. Jill de Villafranca has been there through it all, from stakeholder retreats regarding the College’s future, to the drafting of guiding documents, to countless alumni and fundraising events. Generations of Marianopolis students will continue to benefit from Jill’s commitment to the Foundation’s mission. She has worked constantly, unconditionally and always with a soft spot for the young people who have been fortunate enough to be admitted to Marianopolis. Jill’s particular strength lies in her understanding that both oversight and active involvement are invaluable contributions from Board members. Whether it was helping to organize the College’s move from its Côte-des-Neiges campus or supporting the Heritage Day walk that saw volunteers raise money by trekking to the locations that Marianopolis has called home during the last century, Jill has always led by example. The parent of Katie ’98 and Christine ’02 Kostiuk, Jill stepped down as chair of the Foundation in the fall of 2013 after being the Foundation’s and, by extension, the College’s roving ambassador, its tireless supporter and its cheerleader for over a decade. Jill’s work is not over yet, as she continues to serve in the role of vice chair of the Foundation. The Foundation thanks Jill for her extraordinary generosity and for demonstrating the immense impact that volunteers can have on the lives of others.
Roughly 71 per cent of the Earth’s surface is covered in water in the form of oceans, lakes, rivers and marshes. Water also exists in aquifers in the soil, as groundwater. Although this sheer quantity might lead some to conclude that the world’s water supply is safe from the threat of pollution and overconsumption, the reality is otherwise.

A group of Marianopolis College students learned this and more firsthand thanks to a one-of-a-kind course during the 2014 winter semester. Created and taught by Professor Veronica Ponce, “Water and Environmental Ethics: The Boat Course” is the latest addition to the Marianopolis roster of innovative offerings abroad.

For seven weeks on campus, the students focused on the numerous and pressing environmental issues affecting water in all its forms and explored various ethical theories that are applied to humans’ interactions with the natural environment. They then spent an intensive week on a sailboat in the Bahamas, conducting scientific research on ocean health. With Professor Ponce, who has a doctorate in Philosophy from Duke University, they reexamined in a real-world context the theories they had studied on campus. Students also conducted scientific research on ocean pollution and learned basic navigational skills.

Make no mistake: this week on the high seas was no holiday in the sun. In fact, this incredible opportunity was a transformative experience for the students.

“I had never sailed before and I had never taken a course on ecology or biology or any –gy at all,” says Laura Lalonde, a Creative Arts, Literature and Languages student who is considering attending the California Institute of the Arts in the fall. “Now that I’m back on campus, sitting in the computer lab, thinking about the course, I realize I have changed. This is what happens when an inspirational and hopeful teacher leads a group of driven students.”

Marianopolis program evaluation garners national recognition

Marianopolis College’s innovative approaches to program evaluation and development have been recognized with the Best Practices Award of the Canadian Institutional Research and Planning Association, the group advancing institutional research and planning in post-secondary education throughout Canada.

When it comes to how the College evaluates its academic programs, Marianopolis is well served by its tradition of academic excellence. This winning approach translates to a daily commitment to reach beyond the boundaries of conventional approaches when assessing and developing academic offerings. Instead of evaluating programs individually and over a lengthy cycle, as most colleges do, Marianopolis opts to evaluate them all at the same time and based on a single criterion.

This unique approach has the advantage of engaging all stakeholders simultaneously and allows for changes to be implemented rapidly. In this way, Marianopolis is able to respond more effectively to changing student needs.

“It is an immense honour to have this notable difference singled out by institutional research professionals across Canada,” says Len Even, Marianopolis Director General.
Springtime at Marianopolis means many things. It is when faculty prepare final exams, when staff tend to the myriad details associated with commencement and when students balance the nagging desire to have outdoor fun with the reality of needing to study. For many second-year students, spring is also the time to receive good news about university scholarships.

Kate Chamandy ’14, a rugby player, Social Science student and human rights activist, received great news this spring when she was named one of 30 Loran Scholars in the country and the only Montreal-area recipient of this prestigious $80,000 scholarship. Kate was recognized in large part for attaining strong grades despite having suffered a concussion. In fact, this bright and bubbly International Studies student must take frequent breaks from class and is often in pain.

“I still need help,” says Kate, who is off to Mount Allison University in the fall. “I’m slower to speak and think sometimes. Light and noise do still bother me. But my teachers have been incredibly understanding.” That’s especially so with Professor Leslie Cohen, who has been an enthusiastic champion of Kate. “She’s been so supportive. Plus, I love her business psychology and human relations courses. When I heard about the scholarship, I asked Dr. Cohen if she would write my recommendation and, of course, she did.”

For Academic Dean Christian Corno, faculty being so dedicated is part of the Marianopolis difference – just one aspect of all the non-tangible support that students receive in the classroom and beyond. “Kate’s success reflects the College’s commitment to offer each student particular and specific care,” he says. “In her case, all parts of the College – from the Associate Academic Dean’s Office, to the AccessAbility Services Centre, Academic Advising, Financial Aid Office and her teachers – came together to help Kate not only stay in school but do well and receive this superb external recognition.”

This is not the first time that Marianopolis has supported a concussion-injured student-athlete. Weeks after he started his studies at McGill University’s Desautels Faculty of Management, Matthew Schryver ’13 helped introduce a bill which would prevent and reduce the effects of head injuries in young athletes. The former Honours Commerce student and Marianopolis Student Congress Vice President came up with the idea for the bill after he suffered a concussion that went untreated. He single-handedly assembled a team of healthcare professionals, created the bill’s initial draft based on his research of U.S. laws and sought the expertise of someone with a strong Marianopolis connection of her own, Quebec MNA Kathleen Weil, a generous donor and parent of Juliane ’04, Katrina ’06, Daniel ’08 and Elisabeth ’13 Novak.

This spring, CTV News came to campus to interview Matthew about his efforts to reintroduce the bill following the provincial election and to ask Kate about her impressive scholarship, which she calls “a huge financial relief.”

“The more people who know about identifying and preventing concussions, the better,” Matthew said, standing next to a beaming Kate.

All parts of the College support exceptional student

As a friend of Marianopolis College, you can help deserving students succeed. Get involved in any number of ways: volunteer your time to help create fundraising events, consider joining the Marianopolis Alumni Association board or just get in touch and share your ideas. Call Dino Mazzone ’87, Executive Director of The Marianopolis Millennium Foundation, at 514.931.8792 ext. 205 and help launch tomorrow’s leaders.

marianopolis.edu/donate

Thank you!