

Navigating the College Journey: Insights and Wisdom from a Mount Alumnae Panel

Once a Mountie, always a Mountie! Recently, 11 Mount alumnae returned to their MSDA alma mater to share valuable insights with the senior class about their college experiences. The class of 2024 eagerly absorbed the wisdom shared by these alumnae, who offered invaluable advice and fielded insightful questions.

The alumnae panel included:

- Brooke Algieri '23 - University of Miami
- Ashlyn Brooks '23 - Emory University
- Emma Buono '23 - Tulane
- Cara D'Angelo '23 - Georgetown
- Saheli Davitt '23 - University of Delaware
- Reyna Gowie '23 - Penn State
- Annabella Heaney '23 - University of Mississippi
- Kaitlyn Hladik '21 - Providence College
- Olivia LaBruno '23 - Fairfield University
- Ava LaBruno '23 - Providence College
- Melona Johnson '23 - Loyola University Maryland

The alumnae panel, after introducing themselves and revealing their respective colleges, regaled the senior class with candid anecdotes from their freshman days. These narratives reassured the seniors that the initial apprehension about starting college is universal and that, with time, they would find their footing.

The panel imparted a wealth of practical tips, ranging from befriending everyone on their dorm floor to approaching college with an open mind. They stressed the importance of friendliness, putting oneself out there, and giving everyone a chance, emphasizing that appearances can be deceiving. Believing in oneself, overcoming self-consciousness, and understanding that everyone is undergoing a similar new experience were also key messages.

The guests emphasized the dynamic nature of friendships, advising that initial acquaintances might not necessarily become long-term friends as friend groups evolve. Additional guidance covered attending orientations and taking advantage of school resources such as professors, guidance counselors, and resident advisors. The importance of self-advocacy, utilizing summer events and activities, and carrying the lessons and values learned at Mount St. Dominic Academy were also highlighted.

Transitioning to college life, the panel highlighted significant changes from high school, emphasizing personal responsibility, self-care, and the need to establish routines. Practical tips included exercising, attending classes diligently, calculating one's grades, using time wisely, and engaging in extracurricular activities. The panel stressed the importance of participation in larger, coed classes and thorough reading to ensure success in exams.

Financial advice focused on budgeting, evaluating monthly spending, avoiding frequent dining out, and utilizing meal plans. Summer employment opportunities at home were suggested, with an emphasis on saving for the school year. Seeking on-campus employment ahead of time, during the summer, and exploring paid research opportunities were also recommended.

Addressing living arrangements, the panel cautioned against rooming with best friends to avoid constant togetherness. Instead, they advocated choosing compatible roommates, setting expectations, and establishing boundaries. In case of challenges, seeking assistance from resident advisors was encouraged.

In conclusion, the alumnae panel provided invaluable advice to Mount students, preparing them for the college journey ahead. The Mount tradition of giving back and making a difference was once again evident as these alumnae came back home to contribute to the school community.