

Education

College purchases Dominican Sisters' property in Newburgh

The Dominican Sisters of Hope, whose administrative offices are in Ossining, have sold their 13.1 acre property on Powell Avenue in Newburgh to Mount Saint Mary College.

Abel R. Garraghan, chairman of the Mount Saint Mary College board of trustees, noted that the Sisters in Newburgh have expressed their intention to eventually sell their property for some years.

Sr. Lorelle Elcock, OP, prioress of the Dominican Sisters of Hope, and Fr. Kevin E. Mackin, OFM, president of Mount Saint Mary College, were authorized to sign a purchase and sale agreement for the property. After college discussions with financiers, contractors, and the local planning board, the property transfer was closed on July 13, 2011.

The Dominican Sisters, who retain an easement to access a private cemetery on the property near Gidney Avenue, spent 128 years at this site.

"Our mission of education began here in Newburgh when four Sisters of Saint Dominic traveled from New York City in 1883 to establish Mount Saint Mary Academy," recalls Sr. Elcock. "Mount Saint Mary College was later founded by the Sisters as a natural extension of its mission. In 1973, the Sisters formally separated the college from the congregation and subdivided the campus. We are happy that, with this sale, the Dominican Center will be integrated into the college campus."

New Paltz ranks first in nation for providing study abroad opportunities to diverse students

The State University of New York at New Paltz has won the 2011 Innovation Award, conferred by the Diversity in Global Education Network. This accolade recognizes New Paltz as a leader among the nation's colleges and universities for implementing creative, practical strategies that bring study abroad opportunities to the cohort of diverse and under-represented students.

"SUNY New Paltz has an outstanding international education office and the campus' study abroad and Educational Opportunity Programs are second to none in New York and across the U.S.," SUNY Chancellor Nancy L. Zimpher said. "I commend SUNY New Paltz on this national recognition and congratulate the campus on its tremendous success in diversifying higher education abroad."

For most students, study abroad provides a unique value-added educational and life-changing opportunity that complements the traditional on-campus experience. However, for students from traditionally underrepresented groups, the study abroad opportunity may appear to be elusive due to financial, cultural and physical challenges.

Bruce Sillner, Dean of International Programs at New Paltz attributes the success in providing broader access primarily to the strong intercollegiate cooperation among New Paltz's departments, offices and programs. In particular Sillner highlights the cooperation between Carlton Rounds, assistant director of study abroad in the Center for International Programs and Clare Kelly, EOP advisor, in the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP),

Newburgh was proud of its early educational centers, and the Sisters of Saint Dominic were an integral part of that. The



Sisters' presence grew, and they built a large structure with a beautiful gothic chapel in 1927 (the chapel will remain in the building, say college officials).

Mount Saint Mary College was established a half century ago. The Mount remains the only independent four-year college in Orange County. Its national accreditations include Middle States Commission on Higher Education, Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education, and the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education.

From an opening enrollment of 166 stu-

dents, Mount Saint Mary College has grown to serve 2,700 students per year, has awarded nearly 15,000 bachelor's and

master's degrees, and has alumni in all 50 states and a half dozen other countries. Recently, new faculty have been hired each year. Mount grads work in many area hospitals, schools, businesses and other ventures.

"We celebrate and treasure our enduring connection with the community and the many lives we have touched through our ministries," said Sr. Elcock, who serves as a college trustee. "The Sisters forged strong bonds with their students and families, in Newburgh and beyond."

In addition to the \$5 million purchase price paid to the Sisters for the 90,000 square foot building, the college anticipates a substantial investment in renovation costs.

The trustees have approved a \$10 million capital campaign. JMZ Architects and Planners, P.C., engaged in higher education planning for over 25 years, are helping to develop a master plan.

Preliminary plans for the building include a state of the art library/learning commons, which Fr. Mackin believes will

be a great asset. The college is a member of the Southeastern New York Library Resources Council, and also has a reciprocal borrowing agreement with Newburgh Free Library and SUNY Orange library users.

"Our primary purpose is education, in view of the vision and mission of Mount Saint Mary College," said Fr. Mackin. "Our strategic plan calls us to achieve academic excellence while creating holistic living-learning spaces," he noted. "And our number of resident students has grown. Our purchase of the Dominican property is a unique opportunity to help fulfill our strategic plan, design a better living-learning environment, and add some parking and green space."

Garraghan, a trustee since 2004, noted the Mount has been a good neighbor, exemplifying stability and growth, and renovating and maintaining properties.

The Center for Governmental Research in Rochester, N.Y., estimates the regional economic impact of Mount Saint Mary College at \$125 million per year.

Over the years, the college has invested millions of dollars in Newburgh, provides a homeownership initiative program, and has long been a favorite event site for city and other not-for-profit groups.

According to Fr. Mackin, nearly 40 percent of Mount Saint Mary College students are first generation college students.

"We need to steward our resources carefully," he observed. "As an independent college, students and families invest in us to do that. We're challenged not to rest on laurels, but to improve constantly and build for the common good, to continue to provide 'Hope' for today's young women and men."

Ranked a Top-Tier Regional University (North) by U.S. News & World Report, and with federal recognition for community service, Mount Saint Mary College offers strong career preparation in education, health professions, business, psychology, social services and liberal arts.

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