

Mentor Connection Serves as Networking Platform for Students

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Navigating the job market is much different than it used to be. Nearly gone are the days of apprenticeships and being able to walk right in, ask for a job, and be hired on the spot. Nowadays, networking and reaching out are essential to marketing yourself in the grown-up job world. And here to help is Mentor Connection.

Mentor Connection, as described by Andrea Chartier of Career Services, is a program run by NorthForce in Duluth, partnering with UMD to get students connected to Duluth professionals who are working in their area of interest. In addition to building an organic relationship with a personal mentor in their intended field to show them the ins and outs of how things work, the program includes group sessions of skill building, such as building themselves into what employers are looking for, while also learning how to stand out.

Students of all majors and areas of interest can benefit from the program, according to Chartier. Two such students are junior business management major Nejla Topic, and the student ambassador for

Mentor Connection, Malvern Madondo, who majors in computer science and math.

Madondo reports a great experience with his mentor Nate Alvar, head of Duluth's branch of FMG Suite, an "automated content marketing system for financial advisors." He attended meetings at the company and networked with not only professionals there, but students at UMD and St. Scholastica he wouldn't have known without the program. As student ambassador for the program, he cites its value for budding professionals.

Topic's report agrees in that regard, however she did not experience the fantastic mentor-mentee relationship which would have made the program top notch.

"My overall experience didn't meet the expectations that I had going into it," said Topic. "However, I think the idea behind this program is so amazing. I believe this program has a lot of potential; it just needs a little tweaking."

As networking is an essential part of modern professional life in many fields, the program is invaluable to those intending to stay in the Duluth community. Students can get involved through spring recruitment or signing up on NorthForce.org.

Housing Placement for Fall 2018 Causes an Avalanche of Complaints

Affected Students and Res Life Shine Light on the Situation

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With the semester starting to wind down, the Office of Residential Life are making preparations for Fall 2018. As one may recall, traditional students who attend the College of St. Scholastica are required to live on campus for a minimum of two years. This means freshmen live in Somers Hall, and sophomores live in the on-campus apartments.

This year's application process started off as any other. One would take the short survey, request a meal plan, request which apartment they want to live in, and of course, request who they want to live with.

This year in particular had some recent policy changes that resulted in many students not having any or most of their requests met.

"I had a group of friends who were upperclassmen that I trusted, so I wanted to live with them. No one was told about the plan to have a sophomore community living area until the day the housing placement went out," freshman Reed Erickson said. "I was put in a group of complete strangers. I feel like I'm being treated like a child. This doesn't strike me as a respectful, nor a very Benedictine thing to do."

Another freshman, Chloe Larson, biology major, also had some words to say regarding housing placement.

"I requested to live with friends and I ended up being kicked out of the group and being placed with three random strangers," Larson said, "I don't understand why I couldn't be placed with my friends because I requested to

live with two other people and they are living with one other person, so there would have been enough room for me. I'm not happy with this placement at all."

Freshman biology major, Sean Delorenzo, had similar complaints.

"I was randomly placed which is fine, except I got placed with people I didn't want to get roomed with at all. I set up a meeting with Res Life and I am pretty upset with the outcome and the post service I received," Delorenzo said, "I was told that they don't do anything for 80 days and if people are still complaining, they will take action."

With all of this in mind, the Office of Residential Living has been trying to assess the situation as it has been coming in while still trying to embrace changes for the 2018-2019 school year. The biggest change was making a residential curriculum. According to Elliott Johnston, the Director of Residential Life, the goal for this is to have students embrace an awareness for self, respect for the community and lifelong learning. One way they are trying to incorporate this is to make a sophomore living community. In previous years, there was a sophomore living community where all of the sophomores were living in the brick apartments and Cedar. However, in recent years, sophomores have been scattered around.

"There is so much emphasis placed on first-year students and upperclassmen, that the sophomores don't get really get any emphasis, which is one of the reasons why we are making a sophomore community," Johnston said.

Malvern Modondo Awarded Student Employee of the Year

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Student Employee Appreciation Week demonstrates the college's appreciation to all students who help the college continue forward through various roles on campus. There are more than 750 student workers in around 70 departments on and off campus who contribute to this forward movement. Appreciation week is geared towards recognizing these specific students that work hard at their role in the college community.

This year, the ninth Student Employee of the Year Award was awarded to Malvern Madondo, a junior double majoring in mathematics and computer science. Carefully selected by a committee of faculty and staff, Madondo found out the news with a surprise party put together by the marketing team.

"I didn't suspect anything until the meeting started and we were joined by Jonna Marholz, chair of the Student Employment for Professional Success selection committee. I felt overwhelmed, excited, and thankful at the same

time," said Madondo.

Madondo claimed to not be aware of being a finalist until a friend sent him a picture of the finalists. This was only a day before he found out the big news that he had won.

"I would like to extend my gratitude to the Student Employment for Professional Success committee and all those involved in organizing the Student Appreciation Week," said Madondo.

Madondo works for the web team in the marketing department, which includes creating and editing content on the college's website, researching best practices, and identifying ways to improve processes. He also assists with high-level projects, such as evaluating web elements to make sure they meet ADA requirements and improving search engine optimization on the CSS website.

"Malvern's leadership style is a combination between participative and transformational. His ability to think critically and lead projects from start to finish enhances the capabilities of the marketing department's web team. His industry level skills and innovative thinking

set him apart from other students," said supervisor Lori Luing.

The nominees for this award include finalists: Maggie Grob – Athletics, Phillisha Cham – Office of Diversity & Inclusion, and Sydney Slagter – Foundation/Government Relations.

Honorable mentions include: Laura Aldrich – Admissions, Nicole Ciernia – Career Services, Ari Erola – Residential Life, Chase Heinen – School of Business and Technology, Raini Heyblom – Graduate, Extended and Online, Ricki Mesna – Storm's Den / POD, Matthew Rider – Residential Life, Tori Ward – Outdoor Pursuit, Nouqouja Yang – Storm's Den / POD.

Madondo thanked his supervisor Lori Luing, the Marketing Department, the Office of International Programs, Career Services, his professors, and his friends.

The Student Employee of the Year is a tradition at Scholastica that gives back to the students that work hard every day to keep the college running smoothly. This award is one of the ways to show acknowledgment to these hard-working students.

Major Changes to MLO Application Process Leads to Confusion

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To help incoming freshmen get to know the College of St. Scholastica campus and community, the college offers several different "August Adventures." One of these programs is Multicultural Leadership Orientation (MLO) which aims to teach new students about social justice issues and how to advocate for underserved communities. MLO is led by mentors who work hard to make presentations and educate the incoming students on things most people don't know.

However, there have been significant changes to the application process this year versus previous years. Some students who have been MLO mentors in years past were not accepted for this year's orientation.

According to Chris Davila, director of the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, they did the application process through a social justice lens. Overall, there were 39 applicants, but only 12 were chosen as mentors and four as mentor assistants. For

"We also want to make our actions more intentional, so with this Residential Curriculum, we are able to enable learning outside of the classroom."

In regards to the complaints/concerns this year, they are significantly lower this year than they were the last two years. The last two years had 120 complaints/concerns and this year has only about 70.

"In past years, there hasn't been a request that we haven't been able to make except for choosing the four bedroom apartments. Typically, we get more requests for those than

this year in particular, they chose a very diverse group of people who haven't yet had the opportunity to take on a leadership position. This means students who have already been MLO mentors, or have had leadership positions within social justice clubs, did not get the position.

Tyler Russell, freshman biochemistry major, who was selected for the position shared his thoughts on the new application.

"The application didn't provide any short answer questions regarding why I'm interested, or why I think I'd be a good mentor, or even what my experiences have been with MLO and the experiences that would make someone qualified," Russell said. "Because of this, when the results were sent out, many individuals who did not receive a message of acceptance were quite flustered in confusion as to why they may not have been picked and the reasons of how the particular individuals were chosen."

Braden Chan, sophomore social work major, described his experience.

"I was co-coordinator of

we do have the apartments, but other than that we will be able to get most of the requests made," Johnston said, "The only thing that I would probably change is informing students of the sophomore community, but due to poor communication, this was not able to happen."

For students still confused about their housing placement, one of the most common reasons is that many people filled out the housing contract incorrectly. In order to be placed with one's requested roommates, they all have to mutually request each other,

MLO last year, so initially I was upset. But after taking some time to think it over, I understand why the decision was made. I am a leader of two very well known clubs on campus. I don't necessarily need the experience of being a MLO mentor. I love MLO, and it will always mean so much to me, and I will remain a strong member of the social justice community on campus," Chan said.

This wasn't the only change brought into the MLO program this year. Jordon Moses, Student Activities coordinator who helps organize Welcome Weekend, is also offering a great opportunity for those applicants that didn't get chosen. They have the opportunity to bring their experiences from being an MLO mentor and become a Delta leader. Deltas are individuals who play a big role in Welcome Weekend, and help incoming freshmen transition into college.

These changes are expected to have a positive impact on incoming freshmen and give more opportunities to students who otherwise would not have had them.

otherwise Res Life can't place all of them together.

The Office of Residential Life would also like to remind students of a couple things:

1. Juniors and seniors don't have to live on campus, and if they cancel their housing contract by June 15, they will not have a fee.
2. If one has anymore concerns about housing placement, they urge you to schedule an appointment and express concerns so they can be figured out.