At the Top
Mona Sutphen ’89, Public Service, and the Company of Leaders
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Mona Sutphen ’89

At an intimate breakfast hosted by Mount Holyoke’s Weissman Center for Leadership and the Liberal Arts, students who had traveled to D.C. in December for the Women in Public Service Project (or WPSP—see page 4) got savvy advice from Mona Sutphen ’89. Sutphen, a member of President Obama’s Advisory Intelligence Board and former White House deputy chief of staff, is a managing director at UBS, the Swiss global financial services firm. She also served on the National Security Council during the Clinton administration.

Over eggs and coffee, Sutphen spent an hour answering student questions, such as . . .

How can we continue what was begun at WPSP?
Sutphen: Public service isn’t just about politics; it’s a way of thinking about your place in the world. And connection can start at the community level. Look around your community—what expertise do you have to offer?

Is there a resource at Mount Holyoke you didn’t use but wish you had?
Sutphen: The alumnae network!

What have you taken with you from MHC during your career?
Sutphen: I’m confident about who I am, and that’s a value Mount Holyoke gave me. And the mentoring that I received here has stuck with me—I hold it dear. [While at MHC, Sutphen worked with international relations professor Anthony Lake, who later become national security advisor for President Bill Clinton and remains a close friend.]

Sutphen’s first rule with regards to careers? Relax! It’s not necessary to map out your entire career before you graduate, she advised. “Every job teaches you something you can use later,” she said. For example, in her first job out of college, she arranged a lot of meetings. Those skills proved extremely useful later on in politics, where every event is like “a giant meeting.”
Bound for Mars

On August 6, when a six-wheeled rover named Curiosity begins exploring the surface of Mars, associate professor of astronomy Darby Dyar will be at mission control, ready to analyze data beamed back to Earth.

Dyar is a participating scientist on the Mars Science Lab program, one of NASA’s most ambitious space missions. With her team of students at MHC, she built a calibration unit on the rover’s ChemCam instrument, which will collect data about the elemental composition of Martian rock and soil. Back at mission control, Dyar will analyze the results, assessing whether the planet is now or ever was capable of supporting microbial life.

Photo of Curiosity liftoff courtesy of NASA
Career Plans Invigorated

Stephanie Roses ’13

Stephanie Roses ’13 admits that she didn’t expect the panels at the WPSP colloquium to have much to offer a biology major intent on heading to an M.D./Ph.D. program. “I was extremely honored to be going. I am a member of the Student Government Association’s Executive Board, so I was excited about the leadership aspects of the event,” said Roses. “I never imagined that my career plans would be entirely changed because of that day in D.C.”

As a first-year student at Mount Holyoke, Roses had considered a major in international relations and given some thought to careers at the United Nations. But biology won out and, over time, she saw her future in either neurobiology or infectious disease. “I wanted to be a physician working in either of those fields; that was as far as I’d mapped things out.”

The WPSP colloquium showed Roses that her interests in international relations and medicine were, in fact, highly compatible. “My conversations with people, including alumnae from the Sister Colleges, introduced me to a range of opportunities I’d never considered—careers in infectious disease at embassies and with public health systems, as well as all kinds of fellowships in STEM fields.”

Those conversations also provided Roses with valuable contacts from different agencies and organizations. At an early panel just for students, alumnae from Sister Colleges who work at the State Department discussed various career paths. One panelist mentioned a fellowship for M.D./Ph.D.s offered by the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS). “She said, ‘Email me. I really want you to apply for this, even if it is in seven or eight years.’ It was so

When Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton launched the Women in Public Service Project (WPSP) this past December, she invited 25 Mount Holyoke students to join her. The guest list for the celebration and colloquium also included former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, International Monetary Fund Managing Director Christine Lagarde, U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues Melanne Verveer, author and activist Gloria Steinem, and Congresswoman Nita Lowey ’59.

The event marked the State Department’s history-making partnership with the Sister Colleges. The WPSP aims to educate a new generation of women for careers in public service at the local, national, and international levels while creating an infrastructure of support and mentoring.

“The launch was just the beginning,” said MHC President Lynn Pasquerella. “Public service will never truly be public until women are equitable partners in shaping policies that serve the needs of humanity.”
cool that even though these women have important jobs, they care about opening doors for us.”

Taking the Stage
Chiedza Mufunde ’12

During the panel titled “A Dialogue among Generations,” Chiedza Mufunde ’12 found herself seated between Congresswoman Nita Lowey, a 1959 Mount Holyoke graduate, and activist and author Gloria Steinem, the 2000 recipient of Congress’s “Living Legend” award. Mufunde was the only student on that panel; the other participants included Jarupan Kuldiloke, a member of the Thai Parliament; Rear Admiral Sandra L. Stosz, superintendent of the U.S. Coast Guard Academy; and Najat Zarrouk, secretary general of the Ministry of Interior of the Kingdom of Morocco.

Mufunde, who served in Zimbabwe’s Children’s Parliament during high school, was asked her opinion on how to empower younger women to take leadership positions, particularly in countries experiencing conflict. Her reply came without hesitation: “I believe that investing in education for women and girls across the globe, especially in Zimbabwe, is critical in developing the generation that will step up in political leadership.”

Mufunde then spoke eloquently about the need for access to education and credited Mount Holyoke with giving her that access, as well as “access to inspiration.”

A psychology major, Mufunde described the WPSP colloquium as “a global expansion of a conversation about women’s leadership that is ongoing at Mount Holyoke.” For her, every aspect of the event was “momentous.” As for sitting on the stage between a Congresswoman and a living legend, she said she saw a glimpse of her future in that moment. “It was unbelievable. I had the chance to speak on the issues I am passionate about in the midst of the world’s most powerful women.”

Soon after returning to campus the next day, she watched the webcast of the panel “to be sure it really happened.” Since then, Mufunde said, she has carried with her Gloria Steinem’s words about hope and dreaming being forms of planning. She added, “And I am working every day toward my dream of creating educational opportunities for the women in my country.”

A Shared Sense of Purpose
Jenna Lempesis ’12

When Jenna Lempesis ’12 opened an email from U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton inviting her to the launch of the Women in Public Service Project it seemed—for a moment—unbelievable.

“Then I thought, This is about women’s leadership. Of course, the State Department would partner with
Mount Holyoke and the Sister Colleges,“ said Lempesis, a politics major and anthropology minor from Lexington, Massachusetts.

Equally exciting was the fact that students were being included in an event of such significance. “Along with it being an incredible honor, I really believed that Mount Holyoke students had much to offer,” she said. “We care about social justice and have a very optimistic difference in the world and intend to do so.”

Still, the actual experience of being in the presence of Secretary Clinton, IMF Managing Director Christine Lagarde, former U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, and so many other trailblazers utterly surpassed all her expectations. From the students-only breakfast at the State Department—where Clinton greeted them—through the daylong program of speakers and panels, Lempesis found herself “captivated” by the discussions and the shared sense of purpose.

“I found certain things especially inspiring,” she said. “For example, when Florence Chenoweth, minister of agriculture for the Republic of Liberia, recounted how she was denied access to agriculture school because of her gender. Chenoweth ultimately sued under the provisions of her nation’s constitution. Now, she oversees Liberia’s agriculture sector.”

Along with admiring the determination of the women who spoke, Lempesis was especially impressed that they made no apologies for their confidence. “Women usually are socialized to say ‘I am sorry, this might be wrong, but . . . ’ or ‘Excuse me for saying this, because it’s a little controversial, but . . . ’ There was none of that at the colloquium,” she said. “It was a powerful example, and something we carried back to campus.”

Lempesis also brought back some material for the final paper she was writing for an anthropology of law course. “My topic was the differing standards for women’s participation in the public and private spheres,” she explained. “During one panel, Gloria Steinem said, ‘Democracy in the public sphere must first be reflected in the private sphere or it’s not democracy at all.’ She also remarked that we should have a ‘men in the private sphere initiative,’ which I loved. Both quotes went into my paper.”

Anne Eisenhower ’09, U.S. Department of State
Public Affairs Specialist in the Office of Strategic Planning in the Bureau of Public Affairs

WHAT ARE YOUR DUTIES? I identify and analyze foreign affairs policy information that could have long-term or short-term impact on the department’s communications effort while advancing the goals of the Secretary of State.

WHAT AT MHC STARTED YOU ON THIS CAREER PATH? My advisor, politics professor Penny Gill, encouraged me to pursue my interest in politics and international relations more deeply. I held a U.S. Senate internship in then Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton’s office. After graduation, I was offered a position at the Department of State.

HOW DOES YOUR MHC EDUCATION SERVE YOU ON THE JOB? It carries me through the multifaceted work of diplomacy by providing a strong base of theoretical and practical experiences. As a double major in politics and art history, I’m able to look at problems with both an analytical and cultural eye—both are essential to good diplomacy. MHC taught me to ask “why” and to pull apart an issue or problem and put it back together in a thoughtful and meaningful way.

DID YOU HAVE A ROLE IN THE WPSP LAUNCH? Yes, I worked with the Office of Global Women’s Issues to hone their communications plan, and to effectively communicate the importance of this project.

YOUR ULTIMATE CAREER GOAL? I’d like to continue working with great people on issues that affect vulnerable people around the world. I have been lucky enough to contribute to that work at a young age and know I will carry those experiences with me wherever my career takes me. I have considered running for office, but making that decision now seems a bit premature.

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Power Lunch
Cynthia Staniszewski FP’13

When Cynthia Staniszewski FP’13 sat down for lunch at the Women in Public Service Project colloquium, an already phenomenal experience became the moment of a lifetime. Seated next to her was Marie Wilson, founder of the White House Project, a national not-for-profit organization dedicated to advancing women’s leadership in all communities and sectors.

Staniszewski began the conversation using her elevator speech, the 30-second statement that summarized her interests, accomplishments, and aspirations. All the Mount Holyoke student leaders had arrived in D.C. with a prepared—and practiced—elevator speech. In fact, Staniszewski, who’d recently attended a Public Leadership Education Network (PLEN) seminar in Washington, had briefed them on what she’d learned there about elevator speeches from women in both the public and private sectors. “It was the ideal moment to put the elevator speech into practice. I knew how to get our conversation started. I was able to succinctly share my story, my goals, what I am involved in at Mount Holyoke,” she said.

Wilson in turn, told her about the history of Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day, a leadership initiative Wilson developed when she worked at the Ms. Foundation. “It was an amazing conversation. We connected over a shared commitment to helping women lead,” said Staniszewski. “Before lunch ended, we exchanged contact information, and I am confident that our relationship will continue.”
In the college library—a center of learning and imagination—Inspirare, the installation, evokes creative inspiration as it brings a breath of light.

—RIE HACHIYANAGI
Associate Professor of Art

Photo: Courtesy of the artist
In an article in Forbes, award-winning filmmaker and Olympian Mary Mazzio ’83 talks about taking risks, pushing your limits, and having it all.

Photo by Richard Schultz

Mount Holyoke was selected as a 2012 “Best Value College” by the Princeton Review.

Five Colleges, Inc. has won a four-year, $1.5 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to explore digital approaches to teaching the humanities and to strengthen connections between the liberal arts and professional education.

Field hockey won the ECAC tournament, and Shara Robertson ’12 earned NFHCA Division III First Team All-America honors.

With 17 alumnae currently serving as volunteers, MHC has moved up three spots this year on the Peace Corps’ top 25 list of small schools producing Peace Corps volunteers.

In keeping with MHC’s historic mission, the Board of Trustees decided not to increase tuition or room and board for the upcoming year.

In South Africa, has been accepted to Mount Holyoke.

The Asian Studies Program has expanded to offer four majors: East Asian studies, Middle Eastern studies, South Asian studies, and Asian studies.

Associate Professor of Chemistry Megan Núñez is one of six professors to receive the 2011 Henry Dreyfus Teacher-Scholar Award. This $60,000 unrestricted research grant and is given to faculty who are accomplished researchers and committed educators.

“Uncommon Playwrights” offered an intimate look into the culture of playwriting in America and the influence of Wendy Wasserstein ’71.

The panel featured Pulitzer Prize winners Suzan-Lori Parks ’85 and Marsha Norman, and Christopher Durang.

The riding team took home top honors at the Tournament of Champions Winter Classic.

Best-selling author Azar Nafisi will deliver Mount Holyoke’s 2012 commencement address when the College celebrates its 175th commencement ceremony. Nafisi, best known as the author of the highly acclaimed Reading Lolita in Tehran: A Memoir in Books (2003), is currently a visiting professor and the director of Cultural Conversations at the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University’s School of Advanced International Studies in Washington, D.C.

Best Value Colleges

The Princeton Review

Private Schools

2012 Edition