

Dear Senator Gillibrand:

As an alum of the College of Mount Saint Vincent, I am writing in support of its FY 2011 request to your office for legislatively directed funding. These funds are urgently needed for the renovation of the College's out-of-date chemistry labs.

Let me tell you why renovated chemistry labs are so important not only to the Mount, but to the surrounding community as well. Every year more than 87% of Mount freshmen come from homes within New York City and State. After graduation our graduates stay in the area, where they contribute to the local economy, pay taxes, raise their children, and lead lives of professional achievement in areas such as medicine, education, science, business, government, and nursing.

Because the College believes science is important to a balanced liberal arts education, all Mount students have to take biology and chemistry. But beyond the fundamental importance of the sciences to a 21<sup>st</sup> century education, there are two other compelling reasons that I support the Mount's request, and both touch on areas of national need.

The first is the role the College plays in alleviating the nursing shortage. By every national measure, the Mount's Nursing Program is first rate. Every year we graduate 100 new nurses who are almost immediately hired by hospitals, medical centers, clinics, nursing services and so forth. If the College is to serve this graduating class of nurses in the future it must have access to top-quality chemistry laboratories. Chemistry is a critical part of the nursing curriculum.

Second is the importance the new laboratories will have for the Mount's science students. Fifty new science majors graduate the College every year. In December, the College's science program was named number one in the nation (Dowd et al. 2009) for its ability to graduate Hispanic science majors. Our service to Latino students is a distinction, but we are proud to serve students from every background equally well. Naturally, the College seeks to continue to grow its base of science graduates. To do so, it must have access to top-quality chemistry laboratories.

The College of Mount Saint Vincent is an important part of my life. The work it does to provide first-rate education is excellent. Its impact in the local community, considerable. I ask that you do all you can to ensure that the Mount is able to meet this essential need.