



JOURNEYS

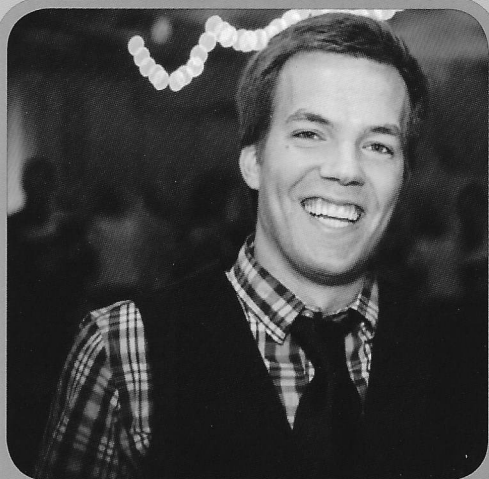
IN CURIOSITY, COURAGE
AND CONTENTMENT

Recent Graduates Reflect on
Their Pathways at the Mount

College is about one's personal journey of discovery. Institutions that prepare students for productive lives enable them to gain the insight they need to explore who they are – while also providing essential guidance as students journey down their chosen paths.

The enduring value of a Mount education resonates through the years. Regardless of their different backgrounds, students gain lasting knowledge and perspective that enables them to achieve their goals after they leave campus.

We wanted to know what recent graduates think about their time at the Mount. We asked Eric McCarter '11, Adam Biglow '13 & '14 and Brittany Alexander '14 to share the impact that a Mount education and all its aspects, has made on their lives. Though they were at the same institution, we found that each formed different yet meaningful personal relationships with professors and other students. Each underwent a unique journey – complete with some unexpected results.



Meet Eric McCarter

Encouraged by his family, McCarter came to the Mount from Wooster, Ohio ready to explore all kinds of new experiences. He pursued his love of sports by earning a Bachelor of Science in sports management degree in 2011. Along the way he surprised himself with the variety of activities in which he took part, and in the strong development of his faith.



Meet Adam Biglow

This local high school football player came to the Mount to play the sport and to study athletic training. Biglow found himself part of a conference-winning team his sophomore year. He discovered a love of business that he turned into a Bachelor of Science in business degree in 2013 and then received a Master of Business Administration degree in 2014.



Meet Britney Alexander

After serving four years in the military, this adult student from Berea, Ky., earned a Bachelor of Science in psychology degree in 2014. Alexander started her freshman year with one idea about her career goals and left with a different, but clear plan for her future.

"I quickly learned that Mount professors not only knew us by name, but also truly took an interest in our lives. You could really feel their desire to have us succeed in their class."

– Eric McCart

Excerpts of their conversations with writer Margaret Rockwood follow.

WHAT WERE YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THE MOUNT IN YOUR FRESHMAN YEAR?

MCCARTER: Hearing about college from an older brother and sister didn't mean I knew exactly what to expect. Since no one knew me from high school at the Mount, I was able to be totally me, with nothing attached. As Dr. Suess said, "Be who you are and say what you want, because those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind."

I liked the idea of living in a learning community in the residence hall. I remember thinking that if Karaoke Night was any example, the experience would be tons of fun!

I quickly learned that Mount professors not only know us by name, but truly took an interest in our lives. You could really feel their desire to have us succeed in their class. As far as my major, my passion was playing sports, so I was thinking that learning how the sports industry operates might be the path for me.

BIGELOW: I got to kick off this new experience by doing something I know and love – playing football. I had a small case of the jitters when I drove to Schueler Field for my first summer 7-on-7 camp. Meeting my football teammates for the first time on a hot summer turf was significantly different than just introducing myself in class. But I got a warm welcome. I found myself performing well and I made the varsity team as a freshman.

My introduction to the Mount's rigorous academics was with organic chemistry. I knew it was necessary for an athletic training major. And even though I will never forget the agony of dislocating my knee when I was a high school senior or the athletic trainers who helped me recover, I still had my doubts about my major. But I figured that was normal for a freshman.

ALEXANDER: When I finally landed at the Mount, I realized it was quite different from New Mexico. But four years of marching and 'yes, sirs' in the military was enough for me. I know I turned down two years on the Azores Islands in Portugal, but it felt wrong for me. At 28, I was above the average age for a college freshman, but I was psyched. I loved the size, the people and the gorgeous campus.

Originally I thought I would chose a major in health care, since that is where the jobs are today. But I was also thinking about physical therapy because it would provide good job prospects and a good income right out of college, but I wondered if I could handle the math and chemistry.

ONCE YOU SETTLED INTO THE MOUNT, WHAT ADVENTURES DID YOU ENJOY MOST? DID YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR FUTURE PLANS CHANGE?

MCCARTER: My family encouraged me to get involved, but I didn't imagine I would be playing Potiphar in the play "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat." It was a leap to go from singing in the shower to singing in front of hundreds of people, but I wouldn't trade the experience.

I officially became a sports management major, and Dr. Linda Schoenstedt had a huge influence on me. She attended the Beijing Olympics and shared so many lessons from that complex case study for sports management. Her stories are epic.

When I needed some extra help with classes, I was skeptical at first about what Project EXCEL could do to help me, but the tutors were terrific. With their help I "got it" in ways I always wished I had. I found that college is so much more about thinking, researching and creating than high school ever was. And I learned that what I do is mine, and it didn't matter what the guy next to me was doing.

BIGELOW: During my sophomore year, we won our football conference championship and brought home a ring, so life was good. I was living the real college experience by living in a nearby house with four teammates.

I discovered that while I admire athletic trainers, I did not want to make a career of it. I was truly curious about everything business-related, so I traded in organic chemistry for microeconomics. Dr. Charles Kroncke managed to illustrate every aspect of business with his real-life examples, such as his infamous pizza parlor and pepperoni pizza analogy.

ALEXANDER: Taking classes like health care ethics, taught by Sister Louise Lears, opened my eyes to the lives of the Sisters of Charity. She was the most tech savvy person I knew at the time. Before learning from Sister Louise, I was unaware of just how interesting the lives of the Sisters of Charity can be. Sister Louise served on ethics committees for hospitals and routinely assisted patients and families in making the best decisions about life and death issues.


All of this had me rethinking physical therapy as my major. Yes, it would be practical, but I seemed to be more interested in ideas and people than science.

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— Adam Bigelow



WHEN YOU WERE AN UPPERCLASSMAN, HOW DID YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH PROFESSORS AND OTHER CONNECTIONS REVEAL INSIGHTS ABOUT YOURSELF?

MCCARTER: Among all the things I valued at the Mount, the connections through the Campus Ministry Leadership Team (CMLT) were the ones I valued most. Kate Romolo was such a great leader and a blessing, and my team members constantly showed me what it means to be a friend. My faith became so central to my life and it played a role in everything I did, or at least how I tried to accomplish things. I also couldn't help but be impressed when I was around the Sisters. It was truly eye-opening, seeing how God works in their lives and how they serve others without wanting anything in return but the success of those they are helping.

BIGELOW: I had a long list of entertaining—and powerful—professors as an upperclassman including Dr. Kroncke and Dr. Gary Johns for corporate finance. Johns is a man with eyes like a hawk. I once made the mistake of glancing at the clock for no more than a second when I heard, "Mr. Bigelow! It is not time to leave yet!" He spent a lot of time giving us tips for the real world, including notes on how to achieve a professional appearance, and little things we could do to distinguish ourselves, like writing with a unique pen. I remember thinking then that I could definitely see myself in a corner office twirling a fountain pen.

ALEXANDER: Aristotle said, 'It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it.' Dr. Michael Sontag could argue any side of an issue so persuasively that I would end up with no notion of his own personal beliefs. Whenever I left his class, my mind was always going full speed trying to figure out how so many different viewpoints could all make sense together.

WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS AS YOU PREPARED FOR GRADUATION?

MCCARTER: I couldn't believe four years came and went so quickly. I remember doing resumes in class and realizing I really did do what I had set out to do in college. I was involved with the Mount as a resident assistant, orientation leader, peer leader, CMLT member, actor, and manager/student assistant coach of the men's basketball team. And the friendships...I made so many close connections and I couldn't imagine not staying in touch with my friends for the rest of our lives.

I thought a lot about where the Lord was leading me at that time. I decided I was meant to take a year off and just serve. So I pursued a placement with National Evangelization Team (NET) ministries. People asked me if I could put up with a bunch of possibly impossible middle and high school kids. I knew I could after being an RA for 35 male freshman.

BIGELOW: I couldn't believe it when I became a senior. So much had happened in those four years. When Dr. Mary Ann Edwards helped me get a co-op position with Procter & Gamble, I didn't know how much she would influence my life in other ways, too. I like to think that the pink jerseys that the football team started wearing in her honor made that year a little better for her, after all that she had been through with breast cancer. I ended up staying on campus to earn my MBA and was already taking some graduate-level courses as a senior.

You know, even if you aren't Catholic, the Mount is a place that gives you the chance to explore and debate what's right and wrong, who you want to be and what you represent. I was never someone who compromises his values, but I think only when you have sorted through why you live by the principles you have, can you truly lead others.

ALEXANDER: I found out there were more veterans at the Mount than I realized. There was definitely some serendipity between my work with my Procter & Gamble co-op job in that I was doing event planning and product donations to Wright Patterson Air Force Base. Who knew I would still be so connected to the military? I was thinking about graduate school down the road, but right after graduation I wanted to get a job working with special needs children. I was ready, but a big part of me was still clinging to the people I loved at the Mount.



Eric McCarter graduated in 2011 then led middle and high school retreats with NET. In 2014, he became a youth minister and teaches religion courses to "possibly impossible" middle schoolers at St. Joseph Catholic School and Church in Fayetteville, Ark.



Adam Bigelow graduated with honors in 2013 and continued on through the Mount's 4+1 MBA program, completing his degree in 2014. After multiple co-ops and internships through the Mount, he accepted a position as a financial representative with Fidelity Investments in Cincinnati.



Britney Alexander graduated with honors in 2014 and accepted a position at Positive Leaps in West Chester, where she works largely with ADHD/ODD children. She plans to return to school in psychology, eventually pursuing a Ph.D., and going into private practice.

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