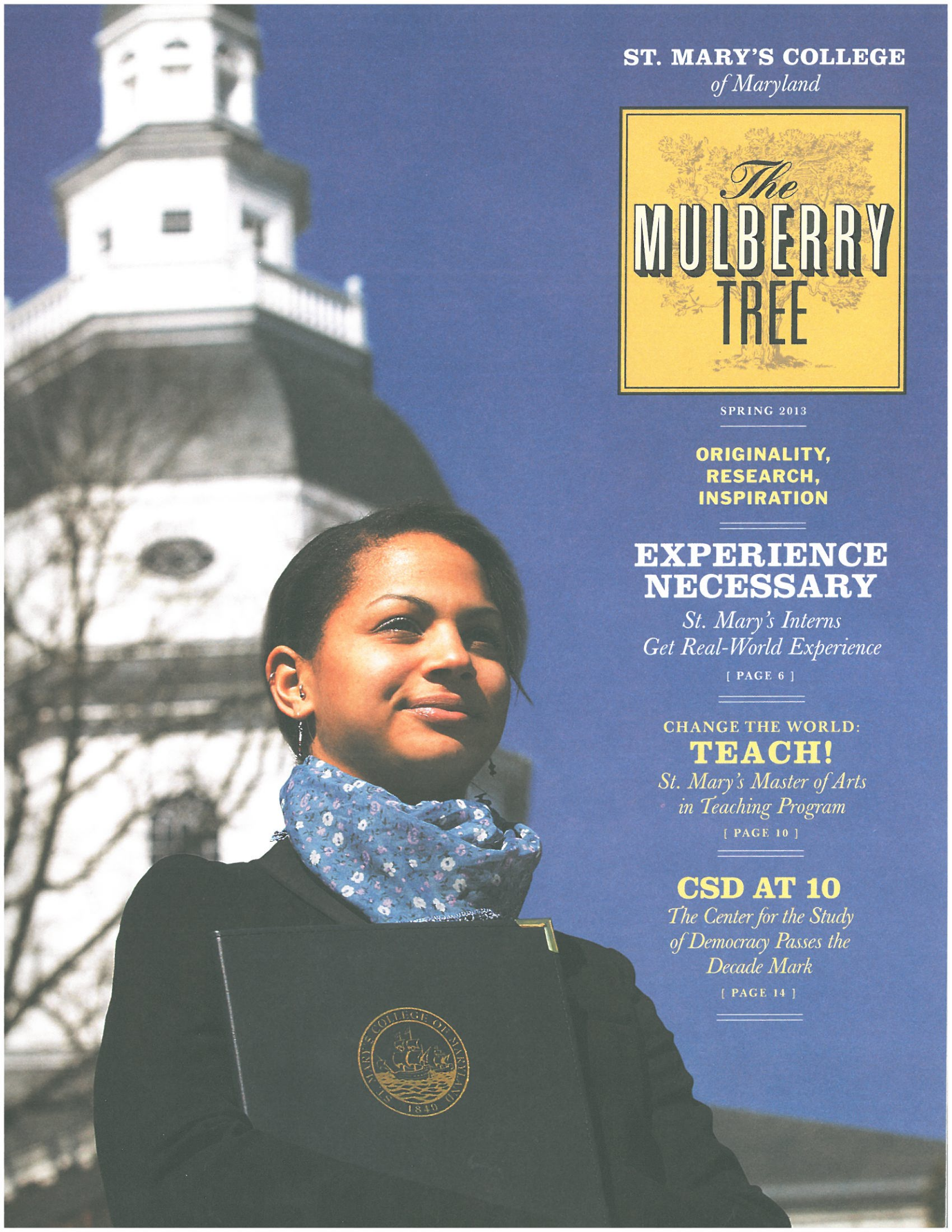


ST. MARY'S COLLEGE  
*of Maryland*



*The*  
**MULBERRY**  
**TREE**

SPRING 2013

**ORIGINALITY,  
RESEARCH,  
INSPIRATION**

**EXPERIENCE  
NECESSARY**

*St. Mary's Interns  
Get Real-World Experience*

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CHANGE THE WORLD:  
**TEACH!**

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**CSD AT 10**  
*The Center for the Study  
of Democracy Passes the  
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# EXPERIENCE NECESSARY:

## LEARNING THE POLITICAL PROCESS VIA INTERNSHIP

BY ANNALISE KENNEY '15, BIOLOGY AND RELIGIOUS STUDIES MAJOR

ST. MARY'S COLLEGE OF MARYLAND political science and public policy students take the phrase "learning by doing" very seriously. The proximity of important political hubs like Washington, D.C. and Annapolis allows students to apply theories learned in class to a variety of real-world internships. The Washington Program and the Schaefer Internship, two internship programs created and overseen by St. Mary's College faculty, allow students to replace St. Mary's sweat-shirts with dress clothes, book bags with briefcases, and classrooms with Congress.

### THE WASHINGTON PROGRAM

Political science professors **Sahar Shafqat** and **Matt Fehrs** designed and launched the Washington Program in the summer of 2012 when they realized that many St. Mary's political science alumni live and work in the nation's capital. "Classes are great theoretically," says Shafqat, "but the actual experience of working in Washington, D.C. is key to a successful career." The Washington Program is a summer-long process. In May, students take an intensive week-long class which gives students an "intellectually rigorous theoretical foundation" for their internship. Each student is matched with an alumni mentor, ideally based on

shared interests. Because the mentor-mentee relationships are flexible and unconstrained by specific guidelines, mentors are able to connect with their mentee on a unique level: "Washington can be a high-stress place, compared to the relaxed St. Mary's environment, and it helps to have someone you can talk with who is familiar with both environments," says **Kerry Crawford '07**.

Alumni mentors were happy to participate in the program directors' vision of a "support network for summer interns," says Crawford. The idea resonated with other mentors who struggled not only to find quality, for-credit internships, but also felt lost in the fiercely competitive Washington, D.C. political climate when

LEFT: *Nina Rabin '13 is the College's Schaefer intern in Annapolis.*



they were student interns. Student participant **Andrew Gear '14** says his mentor provided valuable insight and advice for his internship, education, and future career. Ultimately, his mentor “represented a friendly face throughout the experience.”

What crucial knowledge did mentors impart to their assigned students? “I wanted my mentee to keep her mind open, ask the right questions, and get the most out of her internship by meeting and connecting with people,” says mentor **Paul Shinkman '06**, who adds that he worked to connect his mentee with people who would help her achieve her future goals. “I remember how helpful some of my mentors were in landing a job after graduating from college,” says mentor **Isaac Salazar '02**. “I wanted to pay it forward to the next generation of students.”

Mentor **Jackie Whisman '05** adds that the Washington Program is a great way for students to “develop and maintain relationships and experiences that will help when they graduate.” All parties were thrilled with the program’s trial run. “It was a blast,” says co-director Shafqat. “The students were amazing and the mentors were very generous with their time. Experience is so valuable for launching a successful career in public policy.”

The assigned internships themselves were diverse: **Emma Kaufman '15** was the Public Policy Intern at RAINN (Rape, Abuse, and Incest National Network). After spending the summer working with human rights issues that affect women, Kaufman says her internship “cemented” what she wants to do in her future career. “Working at RAINN allowed me to study and engage in a topic I am tremendously passionate about,” she says. **Andrew Gear '14** and **Elie Keesler '14** interned under Congresswoman Zoe Lofgren and Congressman C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger in the U.S. House of Representatives, respectively. As congressional interns, Gear and Keesler were responsible for “keeping up with and sorting constituent mail, writing letters, researching briefs, giving tours of the Capitol building, and attending hearings,” explains Keesler.

However, no matter the focus of their internship, students agree that the Washington



**“After working on the Hill, I have my foot in the door for so many political and research opportunities in D.C. Look out for me one day!”** – *Elie Keesler '14*

Program was an invaluable experience. Gear’s internship increased his interest in politics, leading him to pursue political internships for the upcoming summer. “My time on the Hill is something I will always remember,” he reflects. Keesler enjoyed meeting professionals involved with security, armed forces, and intelligence fields in and around DC, a special experience for her as this is her intended career area. “After working on the Hill, I have my foot in the door for so many political and research opportunities in D.C.,” she says. “Look out for me one day!”

#### THE SCHAEFER INTERNSHIP

The spring before the Washington Program students set off for D.C., **Emily Burns '13**, the 2012 Schaefer Intern, was making waves in Annapolis. The Schaefer Internship, a prized position held by one St. Mary’s student every spring, allows the intern to act as a government relations staff member for St. Mary’s College at the Annapolis legislature, which meets for 90 days every spring. This carefully selected student travels to Annapolis up to four times a week in order to track potential legislation which may be important to St. Mary’s College. The student then reports back to Tom Botzman, vice president for business and finance, and his staff. “There’s no way I can do my job without the Schaefer intern,” says Botzman.

The St. Mary’s Schaefer Intern holds a unique position among other colleges and uni-



TOP: Washington Program interns pose during summer 2012 with faculty sponsors Sahar Shafqat (row one) and Matt Fehrs (row two).

ABOVE: Katherine Sharpe '14 and Elie Keesler '14 take a moment from their internships to be tourists in D.C.