



Feb. 13, 2014

In the Loop

In The Loop is an every-other-daily e-mail newsletter with information you need to keep you in the loop. The idea is to give you an at-a-glance view of what's happening around Mayo and beyond. We'll keep it short and snappy.



Remaking college through collaboration

They say the only constant is change. And according to the authors of a new book called *Remaking College: Innovation and the Liberal Arts*, change is just what liberal arts colleges need to do to "make access to college more affordable and to do more to prepare students for specific careers." And one of the ways the authors suggest schools go about doing that is by establishing "meaningful educational partnerships" with outside entities. Entities, one author writes, like Mayo Clinic.

In a chapter titled, "The Liberal Arts College Unbound," Brian Rosenberg, president of Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn., writes that liberal arts colleges like his would "be able to do more by working together" with industry to offer students "programs that are more carefully crafted to prepare them to deal with issues that affect many different sectors of our economy and our communal lives." One way Macalester is doing that right now, he writes, is through its participation in Mayo's Innovation Scholars Program, a collaborative program that pairs undergraduate science and economics students with a graduate student in business and a project manager from Mayo Clinic Ventures to analyze projects and inventions submitted by Mayo physicians and scientists." It's a partnership and collaboration that Rosenberg says allows students to "gain valuable insights and experience in the translational process associated with inventions and product development."

That's exactly what it's done for Lorela Paco. The Macalester junior and chemistry major tells us that when she first came to Macalester, she was firmly planted in her goal of going to medical school. She became interested in Mayo's Innovation Scholars Program after hearing about it from other students and faculty. Now, she says she couldn't be happier with her decision to participate. "This has been one of the most intense learning experiences I've ever had," she says. "I've actually surprised myself with how much I've learned -- especially in the field, as we've been doing our research."

While she can't get too specific about that research, she tells us that she and her team are looking into the "pros and cons" of a new diagnostic tool for chemotherapy. "Basically, what we're doing is helping Mayo Clinic Ventures and Mayo's licensing managers by taking this particular invention and evaluating its pros and cons," she says. "We'll then give our recommendation of whether we think Mayo should license this particular invention or not."

Regardless of that particular outcome, Paco says this kind of real-world, team approach to learning has been very motivating and has caused her to re-think her long-term career plans. "It's definitely shifted my perspective of what I want to do with my future," she says. "I'm now considering going to biomedical grad school because of this program. I've just found myself loving the things we've been learning. It's been very rewarding."

You can reward yourself, and others, by sharing this story and others on the In the Loop blog.

