

*Mercy Students
Connect and
Network with*

TOP NEW YORK

Entrepreneurs
and
Executives

What does it really take to start and run a business? How does someone rise in the ranks of their company and industry? How can students apply lessons learned from their degree programs to real-world job experiences?

The Mercy College School of Business provides students the answers to these questions, and many more, by giving them access to business leaders through two experiential learning opportunities: The Executive Speaker Series and the Entrepreneurship Speaker Series.

Conceptualized by School of Business Dean Lloyd Gibson, and organized by his assistant Kristin Ludl, both series help further the School's larger strategic goals. In bringing business leaders on Mercy's campus, Gibson and Ludl are raising awareness of Mercy's School of Business and its students within industry circles, providing a resource for professionals to learn industry trends, showcasing Mercy's student body as a qualified talent pool and encouraging students to build self-assurance.

"Students who attend the Executive Speaker Series and the Entrepreneurship Speaker Series learn – they learn lessons that can sometimes only be acquired by networking and building relationships with people with varying professional and personal backgrounds," Gibson described. "And, in terms of the business professionals who come to our events, we hope to position ourselves in the marketplace as a resource for their companies."

Series guest speakers include

leaders from top start-up companies to C-suite executives from New York's most established industries, such as finance, health care, real estate, media and technology. Guests discuss their experience starting businesses and elevating their careers to audiences of students, alumni and community partners. Students are encouraged to practice their networking skills during the events, dress business formal and conduct research beforehand so that they are prepared to ask informed questions.

The first event in the Executive Speaker Series happened in conjunction with the grand opening of the new MercyManhattan Campus. Titled, "The Future of Finance," the panel-format conversation featured Richard A. Rosenblatt, chief executive officer of Rosenblatt Securities and Mercy College trustee emeritus and Dan Chamby, managing director at BlackRock, with Sharon Epperson,

CNBC senior personal finance correspondent, as emcee.

Other series headliners have included executives such as Marilu Marshall, senior vice president, executive management and chief inclusion and diversity officer at the Estée Lauder Companies, and Michael Weinstein, former chief

executive officer of Snapple products and chairman and co-founder of INOV8 Beverage Consulting Group.

"When Marilu Marshall spoke at Mercy, young women in the audience were inspired to see a woman of Hispanic descent, discuss being an attorney, operating at all levels of employment and moving up in a company like Estée Lauder," Ludl described.

Additionally, Jerome Lamaar, a 35-year-old fashion entrepreneur out of the South Bronx, participated in the Entrepreneurship Speaker Series



School of Business Dean Lloyd Gibson, Marilu Marshall and Julia Wexler



(l to r) General Michael Rochelle, Kristin Ludl, Dr. Regina Gibson, Dean Lloyd Gibson, Marilu Marshall, Assistant Professor Victoria Roberts Drogin, Sophia Caputo '20, Director of Employer Relations Julia Wexler, Associate Dean Victor Petenkemani

and wowed students with his high-energy, relatability and down-to-earth candor, and, not to mention, with his roster of impressive clients such as Beyonce, Kelly Rowland, Alicia Keys, Rihanna, Jay-Z and Taraji P. Henson. Lamaar offered helpful counsel to Mercy students during his presentation, including the guidance: “Know who you are when you walk in the room.”

Lamaar’s presentation lifted the spirits of students in the audience and made them excited about post-graduation possibilities. “We wanted to produce the entrepreneurship series so students can envision creating their own career opportunities out of college,” explained Scorpio Rogers, assistant professor and director of the Mercy entrepreneurship program. “One of the things that makes Mercy so special is its exceptional diverse student body

– it is important to us to bring in entrepreneurs and business executives who are representative of our students’ varied backgrounds.”

“Know who you are when you walk in the room.”

Gibson and Ludl are happy to report that the series has led to increased connectivity at Mercy between networks of current students, business partners and alumni. For example, a Mercy alumna who, after a stellar internship performance, secured a job with Estée Lauder Companies, was present at the Marilu Marshall event. For current students in attendance, she exemplified the

possibility of career success after graduation, and acted as a vital resource.

The last in-person event finished strong in March 2020, before coronavirus (COVID-19) social distancing requirements were enforced. Rogers, and two of his superstar students, hosted an Entrepreneurship Speaker Series “Women in Tech” panel in commemoration of Women’s History Month.

Both series will continue in the fall term, this time in a virtual format due to the COVID-19 situation. Gibson and Ludl look forward to hosting Tina Thornton, H.D. ’19, senior vice president, production and chief of staff to ESPN president, and Michael Rochelle, retired United States Army lieutenant general who served as deputy chief of staff, G-1 in the Department of the Army.