Speaker 1: All right. Well, we're here today talking about self love and one of the questions is, what are you grateful for today?

Speaker 2: I'm grateful to be in school. I'm role playing by the way, for those listening on the podcast. I'm the student.

Speaker 1: One question we had is, what is something that was a challenge obstacle in your life that you are now grateful for?

Speaker 2: I don't know.

Speaker 1: Well, I can share something for me. I've had some real time management issues in the spring, so part of my challenge is I'm serving as department chair and faculty member, and those two roles conflict a lot. So, I don't know whether I should focus on my classes, focus on being department chair, or focus on my family, or focus on myself. And so I found myself at campus until 8, 9, 10 o'clock at night, on the weekdays. Truly hurt my kids who are expecting to be home for dinner. I don't know if you've had any time management issues like that.

Speaker 2: I guess I do now that you've said it like that.

Speaker 1: Like what?

Speaker 2: Like work and school, didn't think about all that.

Speaker 1: Where do you work at?

Speaker 2: Ralph's.

Speaker 1: Ralph's?

Speaker 2: I bag groceries.

Speaker 1: That's neat. What do you do there?

Speaker 2: Bag groceries.

Christina Barsi: Hi, I'm Christina Barsi.

Sun Ezzell: And I'm Sun Ezzell, and you're listening to the Magic Mountie Podcast.

Christina Barsi: Our mission is to find ways to keep your ear to the ground, so to speak, by bringing to you the activities and events you may not have time to attend, the resources on campus you might want to know more about, the interesting things your colleagues are creating, and the many ways we can continue to better help and guide our students.

Sun Ezzell: We bring to you the voices of Mt SAC, from the classroom to completion.

Speaker 6: I know I am going to achieve my goals and I know people here are going to help me to do it.

Speaker 7: She is a Sociology Major and she's transferred to Cal Poly, Pomona, Psychology major, English major...

Sun Ezzell: From transforming part-time into full time.

Speaker 8: Like the time that you spend with Julie about how to write as a CV and a cover letter.

Sun Ezzell: Or just finding time to soak in the campus.

Speaker 9: Think of the natural environment around us as a library.

Christina Barsi: We want to keep you informed and connected to all things Mt. SAC, but most importantly we want to keep you connected with each other. I'm Christina Barsi, Mt. SAC alumni and Producer of this podcast.

Sun Ezzell: And I'm Sun Ezzell, Learning assistant, Faculty and Professional Learning Academy coordinator.

Christina Barsi: And this is the magic Mountie podcast.

Christina Barsi: Hi, it's Christina with the magic Mountie podcast and if you are looking for ways to take your connection with students to the next level, you may want to consider the monthly mentoring program. Eric Lara and Tannia Robles, break down what it means to students to get this type of interaction with Mt. SAC faculty. What the typical framework of a monthly mentor meeting is like, and you'll even hear firsthand from a student mentee taken from the Fall Flex day session. Here is a sneak peek into monthly mentoring.

Eric Lara: Welcome everyone to our presentation. So we're doing innovative mentoring, but also we're going to talk to you about what is the monthly mentor program, how did it become to be here at Mount SAC, and the main purpose is to recruit new faculty and staff to be mentors. So we've spoken to students, we spoke to our ambassadors, we spoke to our minority male initiative students, and what they have told us is that they needed or they wanted that communication with the faculty and the staff outside of the classroom. They don't always feel comfortable going to the faculty. They feel intimidated with the faculty and they don't always feel comfortable going into office hours either. So they wanted to see if there was a different way, a different setting, where they can interact, have that open communication, have that talk, have the conversation and get to know the campus in general, the programs and the faculty and the staff.

Tannia Robles: Part of it is they also want to learn about different types of careers and how you all got to where you are today. So the students express that sometimes they wonder how do people get into the careers that they do? What was their interest growing up? What did they think about when they were about my age? So not my age, of course, their age, because they're much younger. But they have those types of questions, and the way that Mountie Mentor works is that it's so informal that it becomes an opportunity not just for you to mentor but to share about your life experiences, what you've gone through, how you decided your career and it helps them with their career decision making as well.

Eric Lara: So we're going to talk about what the typical two hour looks like of the mentor session. We'll let you know that it's a very informal mentoring session, that is not the typical mentoring that you may think of where you're paired up with two, three, four students and you have to meet with them twice a month. That is not what we are here to do. That is not what the mentoring program is all about. So our mentor meetings are open to all students on campus, both credit and non credits, but we specifically target our equity population. It is open to all staff on campus, faculty and staff on campus. Regardless of your faculty. If you are an administrator, a manager or classified, it's open to everybody. And as I mentioned, the meetings are two hours. They're always on the second Thursday of the month. So in the fall and in the spring, second Thursday of the month, 4:30 to 6:30, typically in 9C stage, cause that's the biggest area.

Eric Lara: But sometimes we move them to Founder's Hall. And in addition to the mentoring, which we will talk about in depth, we do field trips for these students. So we'll go to Vantages Theater, we'll go to a movie just to show them cultural experiences. So we've gone to see Wicked, Hamilton, Aladdin. We've gone to the movies to watch They call me Malaga, Hidden Figures, things like that. So before those events, we do a pre-brief, we talk to them and ask them, "Have you ever been to a play? Have you ever been to Vantages theater?" The majority have never been. We asked them "What do you expect to see when you go to a play?" And the answer is "Old rich white people." And so we take them, they dress up, we take them to dinner, we pay for dinner, we pay for the tickets. And we always take around five chaperones.

Eric Lara: And when the activity is Mountie Mentor related, the chaperones that we invite our prior mentors. So we'll send an email to all the mentors. It's this Friday night and it's typically we leave around 4:00 PM, dinner about 06:00, the play starts around 7:30 or 8:00 and we're back on campus by midnight. And then after we do a de-brief. We'll talk to them and ask them how it went, how do they feel, what do they see, what do they think, what do they see on the stage? Who was sitting next to them? Were they comfortable? Things like that.

Tannia Robles: And then prior to going to the theater, we also talk to them about decorum behavior in the theater, especially because for some of them, this is the first time that they've attended. We send them communication ahead of time that, if they have slacks or jeans, just to look a little bit more formal. So that they understand what type of environment they're going into. So, it's not just about taking them to the theater and these experiences, but really having communication about that experience before and after. The time that you're going to be with the students is usually about 45 minutes towards the end.

Eric Lara: Here's what the typical agenda looks like. The mentors, we're debriefing. We're giving you an overview of what that topic is for that day. You don't have to have prior mentor experience. You don't have to have come to another mentoring session, this could be your first one. You can come to one a year, you can come to multiple a year. We train you or give you that update every single time. We provide dinner, every meeting for everybody. Sometimes we eat separate, just because of the discussion of the topic. And sometimes we'll eat together at 5:00 OR 5:30, when we come together. And then the presenter, there's always some presenter, a panel discussion that talks about that topic and then we break up.

Eric Lara: So there's always going to be two breakout sessions, and that's where the mentoring happens. That's where you're going to be at the table. There's ten to a table, eight students and two mentors per table. We range about 130 students on average per month and about 20 mentors per month. And then at the end we pass out any handouts, any takeaways, any updates that are coming up on campus. And then we do evaluations both for mentors and for mentees.

Tannia Robles: And we try to keep it as active as possible so that it's not two hours of just presentations. The presentation portion is usually at most 30 minutes. So it's quick. And then everything else is from an icebreaker, to them getting out of their seats, to them interacting with the mentors. And sometimes it's guided discussion questions between the mentors and the mentees, or sometimes it could be an activity. So for example, for our Latin X event, what we did is we had students create their own picket signs, they had little index cards, little popsicle sticks, and the mentors and the mentees were in the table talking about why they created their pickets signs, we know what are some of the messages, what it meant to them. So it was great because it's a fun activity, but yet you're learning from that experience together as well.

Tannia Robles: So this is a typical agenda, with an icebreaker happening within the first 15 minutes. So this is with the students. While we're doing the icebreaker, the mentors are in a separate room, getting pre briefed on what's going to happen in that session. So the students arrive, they check in, we do an icebreaker, and then there's two activities, depending on what the topic is for that month. So for this one in particular, it was organization, and the importance of staying organized. So the activity was mapping out. The mentors will encourage students to incorporate classwork, social events, we had planners, the beautiful Mount SAC planners that we have on campus, showing them how to use that planner. It's not enough to just give a student a planner if you're not going to teach them how to use those tools, right? So that was part of this discussion.

Tannia Robles: And then the mentors go around the table, gives students the opportunity to share what they visualize as their typical busy day. So it's such a beautiful experience because as the students are sharing, then also for the mentors, what they tell us is they're learning from the students. You're getting to know students more. You're realizing some of the challenges that they might have, even in relationship to just getting themselves organized. So this is really what it looks like, the mentoring piece.

Tannia Robles: This is the second activity?

Eric Lara: So just like the first one, we do two breakouts. The second one in this case was time management and planning in the planner. Look at your schedule of classes, write them all out. When are you going to study? Do you work? Do you commute? Do you drive or do you take the bus? What is that going to look like? But also a lot of the, this is the first, typically the first, mentor meeting of the year, so we get a lot of first time students. We talked to them about 8:00am classes, we talk to them about 7:00pm classes, and how that looks, how that works. And again, have that discussion and especially from the faculty or staff perspective, what does it look like from your end? What do you expect from them as a student now in college? With the homework, what's the homework load going to look like? If you're going to be working off campus, making that drive off campus and still having to study. So we have that second discussion as well.

Eric Lara: So there are no RCPs for either side, faculty, mentors or mentees. You just show up. So just show up at 4:30 either to 9C stage or to Reagan room depending on if you're the student or the mentor. And as I mentioned before, you don't have to have prior experience, you didn't have to come to the prior mentoring meeting. You can just show up that day. We do send out information through the portal for faculty and staff. It's usually posted on the marquee. It's out through social media and then stakes around campus for the students to see. So if you can promote it in class for the students to show up, perfect. And if you have time to show up, also you can just show up.

Tannia Robles: It's a really lively type of experience in which students just feel really comfortable. They make, they build friendships. I've had the opportunity to talk to some students. I kind of just stick around afterwards. We're cleaning up and they're still sitting around chit chatting. One particular group, I asked them, "Did you all know each other before you came to this event?" "No, we just met today and we realized we all have some of the same classes, different professors, so now we're forming study groups." And I thought, Oh my gosh, I just got chills right now remembering that because I thought how wonderful, right? It's great that they get connected to faculty, to programs, but also to each other and that's what's happening in this program.

Tannia Robles: I want to invite one of our student ambassadors to come up. This is a Sam and Sam actually helps to organize these sessions as student ambassadors are a crucial role in putting together this event, but she also participates as a mentee. So I wanted to just have an opportunity for her to share a little bit about her experience.

Samantha: Hello, my name is Samantha Moraita. I am a student ambassador on campus. I am the eldest daughter of four. I'm a first generation college student and I identify as central America, central American, and then my pronouns are she, her and hers. This will be the end of my second year and hopefully I'll be a spring transfer by next year. I have applied in the summer and I will find out later on. As for a Mountie mentor, being a mentee and then also working on behind the scenes has been like a great pleasure. It's been an awesome experience. And just to backtrack a little bit too, on the social media part, if you follow Mountie underscore InReach, that's our homepage and that's where we actually create videos, publicizing Mountie mentors, and then we actually go through our campus in reaching to the students. That's our job as an ambassador.

Samantha: So personally for me it's, it's not just handing them the flyer, but it's like going through these areas of concentration where students are heavily populated and then talking to them about the event that's going to be taking place. So that's how we target, you know, as many students as possible, with also being the stake signs and social media as well too.

Samantha: Being a mentee, being in that space where we do have a mentor or femtour has been awesome, personally for me, because I do want to know how you got here. What was your experience like? Because I have been inspired by these people standing right here to work in higher education. To come back to the community college level and to be here one day as a career. And so I would like to know, we know what happened, how did you do it and basically we're not asking for you to share, you know, all your personal and your whole life story. But sometimes when you make that connection with one of us, it really helps and it really shows a difference and it proves something for us, as in that you do care and that we're not the only ones going through the same things.

Tannia Robles: So here's a list of last year, what we did as far as topics. Like Eric mentioned, the first one is more about getting organized because that's so important when you're starting this school year. In October, we did a transfer focus, so what we do is we bring people that can speak to that. We brought the transfer center to talk about transfer and what that looks like. And we try to do it so that if not everybody's goal is to transfer, it's okay, because you never want to make students feel isolated that this doesn't pertain to you. We tell them these are the benefits of transfer, this is what transfer looks like, but even if you're not transferring, this is what that transition of moving out of Mt. SAC might look like right? Because once students leave, it is a transition for them.

Tannia Robles: November we had money management. Because we know that budgeting is so important for students, even for us right? I know I'm still learning how to budget my money. So we try to make the topics, real life scenarios, real life topics that are going to be beneficial to them. December, since we're finishing up the fall. It's finished strong in de-stress and the students are in like different strategies on how to de-stress, how to prepare, how to meditate and feel comfortable and hopefully less stressed about their finals.

Tannia Robles: January we did BlacKkKlansman movie and again, like Eric mentioned, when we show a movie, there's always a conversation before the movie and explaining what it is. And at the end there's a discussion. So our movie nights are very long. The movie nights don't have the mentor, mentee piece, because it's a movie. But we still invite the mentors that if they would like to join, they can definitely join, watch the movie, get free dinner as well.

Tannia Robles: And then in February we did self love and healthy relationships, to tie it into the month of February. March goal setting. April an alumni panel. And then in May we do an actual conference. So every May at the end, it's a combination of everything that we'd done for Mountie Mentor. And then they get to come to an all day conference, that's really, we treated it as a professional conference with lanyards, conference bags, padfolios. They get to self select the workshops that they go to. They get breakfast, lunch. It's an all day event.

Tannia Robles: Our highest attendance for last year was 150 students for our Champions of Equity. We showed the Hidden Figures movie, but we also brought in a panel of Women in STEM. Some were Mt. SAC alum that are now in those careers, and some were women that were not from Mt. SAC. Just talking about their experiences of why they decided to go into the STEM fields. What are some of the challenges? What are the things that they love about their career? And we loved it because the movie was focused on women, and women in STEM, but yet there was plenty of males there. It wasn't just women in that theater.

Tannia Robles: And when we say this is the highest attendance, this is 150 students counted, we always have students that show up that when they register they don't put their student ID number. So then we don't know who they are, so they don't get counted as one of the students. So to be honest with you, always joke around and I say, "I think some of the people that show up every month, I don't even know if their Mount SAC students, I think they're on campus" and they say, "Oh sure I want to participate". They see a group, right. So we allow that, that's okay.

Eric Lara: So before we get into the, to model what a mentorship looks like, again, who are our mentors? As we mentioned before, it's everybody across campus from instruction to non-credit to student services. Not all are counselors. We have classified staff, we have managers. And for our faculty, we had 111 Mt. SAC, faculty or faculty and staff participate last year. And for last year was that an average of 16 and it's a little lower because we did have two movie nights and we counted those in the target.

Tannia Robles: You don't need previous mentorship experience. That's why we call it, an innovative mentoring type of technique, cause it's very different. It's also up to you if you want to come to more than one, or if you want to take mentorship outside of that experience. Some of our mentors form connections with students and they continue to have them come up to their office hours, but that's entirely up to you as mentors. So these are some of the areas that our mentors come from. Adult basic education, various student services programs, and then from the instruction side, these are the different disciplines that were represented last year. So it's a wide array of different individuals on campus. We're really surprised we even have like some interest from fiscal services. That were looking for that connection of working with a student because they're so behind the scenes. They see everything that we do is behind the scenes for the operations of the college. But they want to actually see and talk to students to see what the impact is. So we did have some fiscal services as well.

Eric Lara: All right, so what we're going to do now is what a typical pre brief looks like. So what a 4:30pm start time looks like. So, at this point you all our mentors, we have separated you out from the students. You're sitting in Reagan room for example, and you are here for tonight's topic. Self-love. Typically, what happens initially is we go around the room and just introduce ourselves. We find out where, every mentor is coming from are you faculty, are you staff, and what division are you from. From there we go over the binder, especially for new mentors. So this binder will have the agenda for the day, have that topic. It will have the questions that are going to be asked at the breakout. These are just some guiding questions that you're going to be using. So we'll go over those and then we'll go over the binder.

Eric Lara: We have information on tutoring, information on health services, students support and counseling. So if you're not familiar with all the different services and programs that we have on campus, this will help guide that because you do get questions from students, "well how do I get to X place" or one topic, Self Love, you may want to bring up the health center and mental health counseling that we have on campus. And we talk about the STEM center. We talk about different tutoring for math, science, engineering. You'll have information on specific programs like Arise and Aspire, Cal works, EOPS. You'll have information on those programs as well. And then a campus map of course.

Eric Lara: From there we have dinner. Typically, we either eat dinner together as mentors or depends on the night, we'll go and have dinner with the students. And then we just, if there's any questions. But that typically takes 30 minutes. Just what I just talked about now typically takes about 30 minutes because we do go in depth on what the topic is for that day.

Tannia Robles: Once we feel that we have most of the students there, then we have an actual ambassador led or a student led type of icebreaker. So we try to get them pumped up and excited about what's going to happen. We explained to them what the topic is going to be. And then you all come together. And it's so interesting because once we have the mentors and the mentees in the same group, there's this different synergy and energy that happens. They're so excited to have you come in. They're like, "Oh wow, those are, that's like the Mount SAC staff and faculty, right, that are coming to spend time with us". So you can see that excitement and like Eric mentioned, sometimes you automatically grab lunch and then sit down or depending on what the format of that Mountie Mentor might be like, it might be that we eat later in the day or once they get there and check in.

Tannia Robles: And then the presentation, 30 minutes of presentation. So you're sitting there with the students during the 30 minute presentation. For this one we had Adjunct Counseling Faculty, Andrea Torres, and Andrea is phenomenal. For those of you that know her, she's so kind, so loving. But not only that, she also works for health services on campus. So she does a lot of the de-stress and meditation type of workshops. So we thought perfect fit. And what she did is she shared her life experience through self love, how she learned to love herself regardless of all the hardships, and maybe some of the negativity she had experienced in her life. Students loved it, because anytime that we personalize what we're presenting, it just becomes real to them. Before co-leading this initiative last year, I used to serve as a mentor, right? So I would come in, serve as a mentor and I remember feeling also inspired by some of the questions for myself.

Tannia Robles: It helps you to reflect even on your own journey as a reminder of yourself, your experiences. So I feel that in some ways it's empowering and therapeutic for students, but even for us as staff. Like you mentioned, we're humans too. We're humans too, and we have emotions and we have a lot to share and things that we have been through. So Sam wants to share a little bit about her experience as a mentee when she's sitting at a table with mentors. And then what are some of the takeaways and lessons that she's learned from that experience?

Samantha: I can definitely say that the person I am today was not the person I was last year or even two years ago when I first started here at Mt. SAC. I can confidently say that I have developed and learned so much through the mentor experiences I've had on campus with the different colleagues or my different, they are technically my boss, but I also have directors and program coordinators and different support programs that I've been involved in, and I really do look up to them and I learned so much from them.

Samantha: So then the experiences that I've gotten within the Mountie Mentor, I've gotten to realize so many different things like from one that not everyone, like how you previously stated, not everyone here, their goal is not to just transfer. Everyone has a different goal here on campus. As my first year at Mount SAC, I thought everyone here it was going to transfer it, but it made me realize to be open minded and that you know, I have to be aware of my surroundings and the other students have different goals here, whether it's a certificate program or just to graduate with their degree or to even transfer out too as well.

Samantha: I've learned that it's never too late to apply for financial aid. I always thought that there was a deadline, the priority deadline by March 2nd, I thought that was it, and after that I wouldn't be able to apply. But in reality it's never too late.

Samantha: I've learned so many different, tips throughout the year to use here in college and to use at the university level and even to use in my own personal life, especially the health care and the self care workshop that she talks about you. It made a huge impact for me because I am a student, I'm a student worker, I have my own personal life with my family. I'm involved, whether it's on campus with different clubs, different programs, and when I first arrived with different sports. So health, like self care was not in my head at all. It wasn't something that I needed to, that I was aware about. But now that I realized that another tip that was given to me that we had therapists here on campus through our healthcare that was free and I didn't even know that. So I realized that therapy is needed and we need to get of the stigma that it has.

Samantha: I've learned all of that through different counselors and also mentors and femtors. It really does make a difference for myself and I know it does for my peers, because I see it when they come in. I know there's even regulars who go to these Mountie mentors, they're always looking forward to it and they're always like, "I remember you" and now, now it's from, I remember you to, "Oh Hi Sam, are you coming to this Thursday?" So you'll definitely see a lot of students and it's a great program. I can honestly say that for myself.

Christina Barsi: Thank you for listening to the Magic Mountie podcast. Remember to subscribe on Apple podcasts, Spotify, or wherever you like to get your podcasts, so you can listen in the car, in your office, or however you like to listen. Once you subscribe, we'd love to hear what you think by leaving us a review. And don't forget to share your favorite episodes.