



Leena Moussa '25 (at left) with Con Edison intern Carly Diolosa '23

Photo provided by Leena Moussa

## Con Edison – Lighting Up A Connection with Mercy’s Brightest Stars

**C**on Edison, the 200-year-old energy company, has had a longstanding history of ties to Mercy College. With a long list of its employees who are alumni, and students who have completed the company’s co-op program, it serves as a model alliance between higher education and the corporate sector.

When Luis Suarez, M.S. '02 first attended a Mercy College class he did not even need to leave his workplace. On that first day in 2001, Suarez entered a Con Edison conference room with a small group of other Con Edison employees as part of a cohort pursuing their master's degree in organizational leadership. For Suarez and his colleagues in the Mercy graduate degree program, tuition remission and having the

convenience of on-site education was life-changing. “That opportunity (to pursue his master’s degree) was possible through the support of Con Ed, creating a space for employees to think outside of their current boundaries,” said Suarez.

Suarez began working with Con Edison — one of the largest energy companies in the United States that powers New York City and Westchester County, New York

— fresh out of high school as a general utility worker and wanted a way to advance his career. “Once I came out of the field and into the office, I reached the limit of where I could go without a college education,” said Suarez. Through tuition reimbursement, he received his bachelor’s degree, but seeking a higher role in the company the then-fledgling Mercy College program opened his eyes to the professional growth afforded with a master’s degree.

“The skills that I learned played a critical role in me being able to make that jump from my job to a position in management,” said Suarez. Now, with his eldest daughter entering her first year of college next fall, he is evermore grateful for the relationship that Con Edison has with Mercy College. “That relationship changed life for me and for my family,” said Suarez.

Sara Shepherd '08, M.S. '15, Mercy’s director of employer relations,



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works each year with Con Edison to promote co-ops (similar to internships) among students who then apply for these

competitive slots as a cooperative part of a student’s education. “I would say these co-ops provide a professional work experience for students. It’s more of an elevated experience.”

Leena Moussa '25, a current sophomore in the Business Honors Program, landed her co-op position in fall 2022. She was placed in the electronic operations department where she currently assists field managers and collaborates with Con Edison’s information technology department on device issues.

Moussa’s position differs from a traditional summer internship as she is learning on-the-job skills throughout the academic year in conjunction with her classes.

Moussa had plenty of exposure to

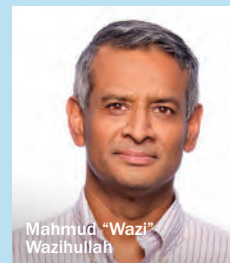
opportunities available at Con Edison. “I knew at least four or five other students who had been a part of the program here and heard awesome things,” said Moussa. Her awareness of Mercy’s presence at Con Edison only grew on the job as she began to meet alumni of Mercy on the job.

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Shepherd states the type of awareness Moussa and other students have of companies while they’re still in college makes for stronger career preparation. “Our goal is to bring employers to campus so students can learn about the many different career paths they can follow. If they see Mercy alumni working at a company, they can clearly see a path from college to a potential career. It’s eye opening,” said Shepherd.

For Mahmud “Wazi” Wazihullah, a professor and director of Mercy’s Business Honors Program, long-

standing collaborations with companies like Con Edison, particularly when it comes to co-ops and internships, are mutually beneficial. “That’s where it all begins — the relationship building within the class and outside the classroom and over time,” said Wazi. He explains that Mercy’s business program in particular works in direct partnership with companies to foster richer



Mahmud “Wazi” Wazihullah

connections. “I like to think that the program we’ve created is both career-oriented and collaborative.” In addition to supporting

a co-op Mercy student program and alumni working at Con Edison, the company has also invested in other ways to serve a younger generation through its partnership with Mercy. Since 2019 Con Edison has supported the K-12 Saturday STEM Academy program at Mercy, funding 100 scholarships in high-needs schools who might otherwise not be able to attend the hands-on learning workshops. Con Edison’s presence remains strong for current, past and perhaps even for future Mercy students. It’s a presence that Suarez still feels in his work life today. “There are a lot of Mercy connections at Con Edison,” said Suarez. “When I find out there’s a Mercy student interning here, I’m always willing to help them out and help them build relationships.”

