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## Natural transition

By Melanie Radzicki McManus '83



**Ashley Prange '05**

By day, **Ashley Prange '05** mediates mineral disputes. By night, her focus is on other pure minerals: They are the ingredients for her line of natural cosmetics.

When Prange was a political science major at St. Norbert, she knew exactly what she wanted to do: work on Capitol Hill. With the help of **Gratzia Villarroel** (Political Science), she arranged an internship working on policy and international issues with then. Rep. Patrick Kennedy. The minute she picked up her diploma, she

returned to Washington to work on uranium dispute mediation at the U.S. Nuclear Regulatory Commission (NRC).

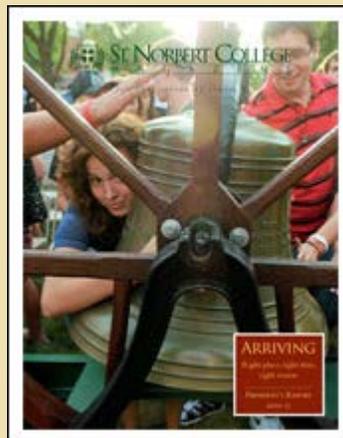
After hours, though, Prange has been working to launch her own company, Au Naturele Cosmetics. This past year, she's lined up investors, talked to lawyers and filled out copious paperwork. "I should have gone to school for business," she says, a bit ruefully.

Prange's dual career as public servant and businesswoman is right in line with entrepreneurial tendencies already evident during her undergraduate career. At St. Norbert, she helped create the Zambia Project, which raises money to educate Zambian children. And, she worked with the study abroad office to set up a program with the University of Cape Town, just so she could study there.

While Prange loves her work, over time she has realized her true passion is health and wellness, a topic that has fascinated her since childhood. The impetus? Make-up.

Several years ago, Prange began hearing a lot about mineral make-up. Unlike traditional petroleum-based make-up, which seeps into one's pores, mineral make-up merely sits on top of one's skin. As someone with self-proclaimed "terrible skin," Prange was intrigued.

Unfortunately, she discovered the products usually weren't crafted from pure minerals and were loaded with cheap fillers like talc, which isn't a good thing to be inhaling all day; in fact, some studies link talcum powder to cancer.



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### Teach me your ways

So Prange mixed up her own products, swapping out the unhealthy fillers for pure, crushed minerals, and creating creamy products and lipsticks with natural ingredients like jojoba, castor and coconut oils.

She liked what they did for her own skin. Friends and colleagues tried her products and loved them, as did associates in the fashion industry. Soon there was such a positive buzz, "It seemed wrong not to take the concept farther," she says. And Au Naturale was born.

Prange formally launches her company online this fall. [AuNaturaleGlow.com](http://AuNaturaleGlow.com) offers everything from creamy foundation and loose powder to blusher, lip gloss, eye shadow and more. All products are crafted from pure minerals and natural ingredients, and no animal products are used. Further, unlike most cosmetics, which are packaged in China, Au Naturale products come wrapped in biodegradable packaging designed and manufactured in the U.S., so they'll not only be natural and vegan, but also green.

Prange's passion for her new career direction is obvious, as is her pride in creating a beneficial product. "Most lipstick is made from [petroleum-based] lipstick oil and crushed crustaceans! But nothing in any of my make-up is harmful. People see a big change in their skin after using it two to three weeks."

Eventually, Prange hopes to donate a portion of Au Naturale's proceeds to her beloved Zambia Project. And she wants current students and alumni to know they should always follow their passion.

"Wellness was always important to me, but I didn't know how I'd make a living at it, so I never considered it as a career," she says. "Now I realize, if you have a drive for something, you'll be successful."

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