

# VIEW from the Hill



The designs of five SU students were featured during New York City's Fashion Week and at the annual fashion show on campus.

## LIGHTS, camera, FASHION

It has all the makings of a reality television series: Invite a group of student designers to participate in a New York City fashion show. Throw in an MTV crew, the Big Apple press corps, clicking cameras, flashing lights, and models showing off the students' best stuff on a runway surrounded by ultra-hip New Yorkers.

OK, reality TV hasn't gone there yet. But five fashion design majors from the College of Visual and Performing Arts experienced a real introduction to the fashion world when they exhibited their designs in the prestigious Teens in Fashion runway show, sponsored by *YM* magazine during New York City's Fashion Week last February. "It was an unbelievable moment to walk out on the runway and see my entire collection on the models," says Vanessa Delaine '06.

Delaine, Diana Heredia '04, Rachel Katz '05, Krissy Lipka '06, and Elizabeth Lopez '05 were among eight finalists nationwide chosen for the show. To reach the runway, each submitted two design sketches with accompanying fabric swatches to the Teens in Fashion design competition last fall. They were selected from among 72 entrants by a blind panel of judges that included fashion editors from *The New York Times* and *YM*, a fashion photographer, and a designer. "They're talented illustrators who can draw and communicate their ideas rapidly and beautifully," says fashion professor Jennifer Griffin G'89, who oversaw the students' entries. "It's one thing to think of an idea and produce a lovely drawing. But when you actually have to construct the piece and it has to fit and look good, walk down a runway, relate to other pieces, and grab attention, it's a whole other level."

For the show, the students created as many as eight outfits. Their collections ran the gamut from casual sportswear to elegant evening attire and featured a spectrum of colors and fabrics, including knitwear, denim, silk, chiffon, and satin. A key consideration for many of the designs was balancing comfort and style. "You want to be creative, but at the same time it's important to keep in mind what people our age wear," Lipka says. "We like to be comfortable."

In New York, they worked with stylists and models, fitting and altering their collections right up until show time. "A lot of technical stuff outside of your control can come into play," Lopez says. Delaine, for instance, had to request new models—one was swimming in her outfit and another couldn't fit into anything. "People invested a lot of money in the show and the press was there to see what we could do," she says. "We really had to step up to the challenge."

Professor Karen Bakke '67, G'69, chair of the Department of Fashion and Design Technologies, says the show was like a fantasy for the students. "They were living what they'd read about in magazines and seen on television—all the hype and activity and craziness behind the scenes," she says. "They went from student status to star status in one night."

Beyond that, Bakke says, the students' success excited classmates about future contests, and New York press coverage of the show generated interest in the SU program. "It took a while for the experience to sink in," Heredia says. "It hit me that night when I watched the news and realized everyone just saw us on TV and they were talking about our collections."

—Jay Cox