



Introduction
and Synopsis of

The Plan
for Mount Holyoke 2010

Approved by the
Mount Holyoke College Board of Trustees
May 3, 2003

Mount Holyoke College Mission Statement

Mount Holyoke College reaffirms its commitment to educating a diverse residential community of women at the highest level of academic excellence and to fostering the alliance of liberal arts education with purposeful engagement in the world.

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**A complete version of *The Plan for Mount Holyoke 2010*
has been published separately.**

*Do something—teach
—have a plan—
live for some purpose.*

—Mary Lyon¹

Introduction

This *Plan* builds on *The Plan for Mount Holyoke 2003*. That plan distilled a select group of ideas and priorities—goals for a six-year period—thereby providing a clear and measurable set of criteria by which to judge the institution’s progress. The College is in a much stronger position in 2003 than it was in 1997. Institutional confidence is high; we are in the final year of a very successful campaign, thanks to the extraordinary generosity of donors, especially alumnae; and we have had four consecutive years of record-breaking numbers of applications. At the same time, Mount Holyoke continues to defy the dominant trends in higher education toward large, public, nonresidential, professional, urban, and coed. Our endowment remains much smaller than those of many peer institutions; the educational marketplace has become even more competitive; and the larger world is impinging on us in ways we could not have imagined six years ago. This *Plan* seeks to turn challenges into opportunities.

The Challenges of Globalization

The forces of global economics and interconnectivity and the processes of international integration and disaggregation are changing the world. Global responses to many problems are needed, but few institutionalized structures to deal with such problems are in place. We live in an era where collective identities—nation, ethnicity, religion, gender—are called into question, but the quest for personal identity and meaning is stronger than ever.

How do we educate students in such a world? We believe that we should hold fast to our historic mission, seeing it as continuing inspiration to educate students for global citizenship. An important priority articulated in this *Plan* and infused throughout it is our concerted attention to building and enhancing the international dimensions of a Mount Holyoke education, an emphasis that finds its roots and inspiration in the very origins of the College and its history of “purposeful engagement in the world.” Moreover, since we are experiencing only the latest and most intense round of a globalization process that has been going on for hundreds of years, we need to educate students about the historical contexts of today’s realities. We should turn the challenges of globalization into

¹ In one of her daily talks to students, according to Beth Bradford Gilchrist, *The Life of Mary Lyon* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.: 1910), p. 316.

opportunities to engage students in analysis of its multifaceted dimensions, including the internationalization of American experience and the connections between local and global issues and contexts. We should help them to understand a variety of cultures and societies over the course of time, to ponder the links among them, and to search for meaningful ways to respond and to interact across cultures.

Although we have rich resources for and deep interest in these objectives, we need to explore further the programs, alliances, and initiatives that will enable us to reimagine and reinvigorate the possibilities of liberal arts education in the twenty-first century. We need to turn the complexities of academic organization into opportunities, seeing them as places where the institution is growing toward more felicitous structures, of form attempting to follow function.

The Challenges of Change

The rapid advancement of knowledge, the emergence of important new fields, and the radical transformations brought on by technology and globalization demand from graduates ever greater abilities to adapt to changing work environments and to persist in the acquisition of knowledge and skills throughout a lifetime.

Let us prepare our graduates to negotiate such a world with confidence and competence. Students need to learn how to learn, to be analytical, to articulate arguments, to weigh evidence, to evaluate conflicting points of view, to bring in multidisciplinary perspectives, to hone aesthetic sensibility and creativity, to connect the theoretical and the empirical (the big ideas and what's happening on the ground), to respond to challenges not yet even identified. Indeed, the skills and habits of mind developed through a liberal arts education are more important than ever. Yet faculty should engage in conversation about educational goals and effectiveness with students, alumnae, and others outside the academy. And, within Mount Holyoke itself, we should be adaptable to change as well; we should move beyond the inefficiencies and atomization that fragment our efforts.

The Challenges of Meaning and Values

An increasing emphasis on individual, material well-being over the last two decades has pushed aside ethical values and personal responsibility as important guideposts for how we lead our lives and has left a yearning for meaning beyond the material. While in the

larger society, cynicism and apathy threaten to undermine concern for the social good, we continue to attract to Mount Holyoke students who want to make a positive difference in the world.

In response, we need to encourage this idealism and to keep faith in the humanizing dimensions of a liberal arts education: “The liberal arts are the arts of thought, perception, and judgment; the arts that foster humanity and civility of spirit; and it is these arts that Mount Holyoke College places at the center of its life.”² Indeed, it is often the existential and imaginative truths of great fiction or music or film or poetry that offer fresh, nuanced ways to know and savor the subtleties of human life. So, too, do we need to remain true to the sense of concern, responsibility, and purposefulness that guided this institution from the start. We need to reaffirm our commitment to the honor code that connects generations of Mount Holyoke women. We need to ask ourselves: Are we developing enlightened, compassionate, committed citizens and leaders? Does education at Mount Holyoke support the development of ethical judgment and a sense of responsibility for others?

The Challenge of Institutional Identity

As a small, private, residential liberal arts college for women in a nonurban setting, Mount Holyoke goes against the dominant trends in higher education. But we are convinced that distinctiveness constitutes our strength. If we are, in some respects, a niche market, then let us make the most of it. Let us mine each facet of our identity for its incipient strength.

The Plan for Mount Holyoke 2003 taught us the extraordinary potential of marshaling the collective energies of faculty, students, staff, and alumnae in common cause. This new *Plan* envisions an ever more highly functioning institution; an institution self-consciously poised to take advantage of every opportunity; one that is more nimble, supple, and scrappy than the institutions with which we compete. It aspires to have Mount Holyoke become the most focused, relevant, exciting, state-of-the-art liberal arts college in the country. It aims to enhance the College’s position in the marketplace by strengthening the academic program; reinforcing key institutional strengths and values; building connections; improving the campus and facilities; strategically stewarding College resources; and aggressively cultivating institutional support and visibility.

² “A Report, at the Request of the Conference Committee, from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Principles of the College,” September 27, 1971.

Educating Uncommon Women for the Common Good

In turning challenges into opportunities, this *Plan* draws deeply from a sense of history and continuity. It builds upon the historically resonant mission articulated in *The Plan for Mount Holyoke 2003: our commitment to educating a diverse residential community of women at the highest level of academic excellence and to fostering the alliance of liberal arts education with purposeful engagement in the world*. Here is a brief preview of what the *Plan* proposes about each essential component of our identity: academic excellence, the liberal arts, purposeful engagement, diverse community, residential learning, and women's education.

Academic Excellence Mount Holyoke's living tradition of academic excellence is the heart of the *Plan*. We will privilege academic priorities, invest in the people and resources necessary for their realization, and rededicate ourselves to the highest standards of excellence. We will keep faculty ranks vital, strong, and renewed by increasing the number of tenure-track faculty, keeping salaries and benefits competitive with peer groups, strengthening faculty development, building intellectual community, and providing essential support. So, too, will we recruit and retain able, engaged, serious-minded students, encourage and support their educational aspirations, and provide substantial financial aid.

Liberal Arts The liberal arts curriculum—"an education in what we are and have been, and in the worlds we inhabit and have created: the worlds of thought and art, the social and physical worlds"³—and a vibrant culture of strong teaching, research, and mentoring are the foundation of a Mount Holyoke education. This *Plan* asks the faculty to reflect self-critically upon the shape of the curriculum and its relationship to "outcomes," what students should know to live useful and meaningful lives in the twenty-first century. The *Plan* encourages the organic development of the academic enterprise around "desire lines" representing key institutional themes and keen faculty and student interest. Building upon a robust tradition of pedagogical creativity and cross-disciplinary endeavors, it encourages innovation and integration, complementarity and coordination.

3 "A Report, at the Request of the Conference Committee, from the Ad Hoc Committee on the Principles of the College," September 27, 1971, pp. 2-3.

Purposeful engagement in the world is the passionate core of Mary Lyon’s educational vision that has inspired generations of women and continues to inspire us today. We will redouble our efforts to emphasize the links between leadership and the liberal arts, diversity and community, environmental education and stewardship, technological and traditional information tools. We will strengthen connections between the curricular and the cocurricular, academic advising and career counseling, students and alumnae, the campus and the world. We will encourage students to be engaged citizens of our local communities and the larger world and propel them to “make a difference.”

Diverse community is the touchstone of Mount Holyoke’s identity and will continue to be one of its highest aspirations in the twenty-first century. Diversity not only enhances the critical and moral education of Mount Holyoke students, but also represents our collective commitment to social justice, and to thinking deeply about issues of difference, pluralism, and community. We will seek out diversity as we build community. We will encourage students, faculty, and staff to talk about and across racial, ethnic, class, cultural, religious, sexual, and national differences, and we will internationalize the educational experience of all students to prepare them for citizenship and leadership in a complex, interconnected world.

Residential learning shapes ineffably the legacy of Mount Holyoke College for generations of students, alumnae, faculty, and staff. While Mount Holyoke’s campus regularly wins accolades as one of the most beautiful in the country, preserving and renewing our historic buildings and landscape will take commitment, vision, and sustained investment. In this *Plan*, we continue our program of campus enhancement, restoration, and renewal, recognizing how deeply a sense of space and place infuses the experience of living, learning, and working at this extraordinary college.

Women’s education is the great, unfinished agenda of the twenty-first century. As the world’s longest-standing institution of higher education for women, we will take a leadership role in the worldwide education and advancement of all women. We will continue to admit a high percentage of international students, partner with colleges around the world, and hold international conferences on women’s issues.

This *Plan* is aspirational rather than operational. It emphasizes integration, interdisciplinarity, innovation, and internationalization. It does not pretend to have the particulars worked out for the directions it proposes, nor will we be able to accomplish all that is imagined in just seven years. Rather, it puts forward a vision of what is possible if we have the savvy, will, and consensus to make it so. While the document raises some large questions about the curriculum and the way we organize ourselves that will take time for us to consider thoughtfully, it also suggests pragmatic actions we can undertake now to move us forward. This draft *Plan* asks a lot from us. The faculty will need to take the lead and grapple constructively and creatively with the challenges outlined in this document. Priorities will need to be continually evaluated, effectiveness regularly assessed, and implementation plans worked out by standing and ad hoc committees and administrative offices within the annual planning and budgeting processes. Because an institution lives through the intellectual energy and imagination of its constituents, we will encourage the development of creative ideas and proposals to meet the goals of the *Plan*.

Given the state of the economy, we expect we will need to exert considerable control over expense growth in the early years of the *Plan*. But that doesn't mean that we can't move ahead constructively and imaginatively. In many ways, this is a plan to plan rather than a set of ideas for immediate implementation. Moreover, many of the improvements proposed in this *Plan* are not necessarily expensive: indeed, they largely involve focusing and coordinating our efforts. Our goal is to work smarter, to use our resources more wisely and strategically, to garner energy from collaborative efforts, and to seize opportunities to leverage our efforts and impact. Some ideas that will require investment, such as strengthening international outreach or improving the campus and facilities, also have the potential to attract significant external funding, especially in the latter years of the *Plan*, as we move into the next comprehensive campaign.

As we commit ourselves to even higher levels of excellence and relevance, to greater efficiencies and complementarity, to more creative pedagogy and savvier institutional planning and campus stewardship, our collective efforts on behalf of Mount Holyoke College will embody the extraordinary genius of this institution. As Mary Lyon said, "This institution is a great intellectual and moral machine and, if you will jump in, you may ride very fast."⁴ This *Plan* is about how we can all jump in.

⁴ *The Life of Mary Lyon*, p. 316.

SYNOPSIS

I. Focusing on the Academic Program: A Plan to Plan

Reflecting on the Curriculum

- Over the next few years, reflect together on the liberal arts and the changing nature and contexts of knowledge, articulate the goals and desired outcomes of a Mount Holyoke education in the twenty-first century, assess whether our current curriculum and degree requirements facilitate those ends, and undertake improvements.
- Make international education a major emphasis of the College.
- Encourage academic adjacencies and “desire lines” representing keen faculty and student interest.
- Evaluate any proposed new programming with an eye to its fit with other institutional strengths, educational objectives, and potential student interest.

Supporting the Faculty

- Keep faculty ranks vital, strong, diverse, and renewed.
- Find academic structures that facilitate the interests and meet the needs of the talented faculty we want to retain and attract.
- Use faculty positions to encourage coordinated, cooperative programming.
- Increase the number and proportion of tenure-track faculty; keep salaries and benefits competitive. Strengthen support for teaching, advising, and research; grants and fellowships; mentoring and orientation programs; faculty workshops; and recognition of faculty achievement, including a possible merit system.

Encouraging New Ideas

- Encourage integration, interdisciplinarity, internationalization, and innovation with the help of a new 2010 Innovation Fund.

II. Connecting the Curricular and Cocurricular: Education of the Whole Student

Looking at Education Developmentally

- In both teaching and advising, attend to the developmental stages of students' educational programs, helping them to reflect on their education and to take advantage of the rich opportunities afforded by the College.
- Strengthen academic advising; first-year seminars; student/alumnae contacts; the honor code; January Term offerings; internships; leadership, speaking, arguing, and writing opportunities; capstone courses and experiences; and connections between faculty advising and Career Development Center (CDC) counseling.

Educating the Whole Person

- Enhance campus life by constructing a new residence hall; renovating existing halls; and using the newly expanded and renovated Blanchard Campus Center to re-center and revitalize campus life.
- Encourage students to lead balanced lives; support intercollegiate, club, and intramural athletics programs; community service programs; and transportation initiatives linking students to the Five Colleges and surrounding communities.

III. Engaging the World: Education for Citizenship

- Continuing to emphasize the transformative power of liberal arts education and the transformative power of women in the world, build upon interdisciplinary initiatives that have helped to stimulate productive faculty exchange and to address the challenges of educating students for informed and engaged citizenship and leadership.

Diverse Community and Global Citizenship

- Recognizing that difference and community are integrally inter-linked, seek out students, faculty, and staff from diverse backgrounds and draw them into a learning community.
- Use the domestic and international diversity of our community to enrich the academic program, residential culture, and community life and to deepen our shared commitment to mutual understanding and social justice here and abroad.
- Appoint a Director of Global Initiatives and an International Board to coordinate and energize international programming on and off campus.
- Consider establishing a Global Studies Institute that embodies and showcases Mount Holyoke's commitment to the significance of both local and global contexts of diverse community and enlightened citizenship.

Leadership and the Liberal Arts

- Continuing to make connections between the liberal arts curriculum and purposeful engagement, maintain and build upon the Weissman Center's strong track record in coordinated public programs, classes, and faculty and curricular development.
- Further develop the Speaking, Arguing, and Writing Program and pedagogical programs that make "real world" linkages.
- Encourage student leadership initiatives and enhanced opportunities for student leadership development.
- Emphasize the College's role as a leader in the worldwide education of women. Consider developing a biennial international gathering, based on the Pontigny conference model, and a summer leadership institute for adults, particularly alumnae, along the lines of Take the Lead.

Environmental Education and Stewardship

- Building upon the work that has begun, accelerate our progress toward the systematic practice of environmental stewardship and the synergy between curricular and administrative efforts with a clear focus on cost-effective applications of environmentally responsible principles.

- Focus the Center for Environmental Literacy on curricular development and support for departments, programs, and students.
- Move toward sustainability through responsible stewardship of the land by practicing “green” building design and construction, promoting energy conservation, and incorporating environmental stewardship and sustainable practices into the fabric of all campus planning and operations.

Technological Savvy and Integrated Services

- Infuse technology across the curriculum; develop students’ technological competence; support faculty’s teaching and research needs; and build the College’s technological systems and infrastructure, including the enhancement of connections of our campus to the Five Colleges and to global resources.
- Provide the finest technological, user-centered, integrated information and research environment among peer colleges.

IV. Renewing the Campus: Uncommon Common Ground

- Continue the program of campus and facilities enhancement, restoration, and renewal. Top priorities are a new residence hall; the systematic maintenance, modernization, and redesign of existing residential buildings; and the creation of more and better academic space for faculty offices, state-of-the-art classrooms, centers, and interdisciplinary programs.
- Continue to realize the potential of the campus both as a botanic garden and as a vibrant setting for informal and programmed outdoor activities. Over the longer term, reclaim the campus for the pedestrian and use physical space to enhance the programmatic clustering that has been emerging.

V. Linking to Communities beyond the Gate: Connections and Opportunities

Five Colleges and Local Communities

- Strengthen curricular, cocurricular, technological, and transportation links to the Five Colleges and ties to South Hadley and other local communities.

Alumnae, Parents, and Friends

- Engage alumnae more fully in the life and work of Mount Holyoke. Work with the Alumnae Association to form the highest and best partnership in support of the College; continue to enlist the invaluable services of alumnae in admissions, career development, and fundraising work; connect alumnae with the academic and cocurricular programs of the College and as mentors and career advisers to students; communicate campus activities and welcome alumnae on campus; show the College's appreciation for the important work of alumnae volunteers and supporters; use the global connections many alumnae have.
- Keep parents and friends informed and connected to the College.

VI. Sustaining Strong Resources: A College for the Future

Human Resources

- Recognizing that the most critical resource of the College, and its greatest strength, is the people who make up the Mount Holyoke community, make sure all constituencies—students, faculty, staff, alumnae, parents, and friends—are valued and supported, engaged fully in common cause, and committed to the excellence of the College.

- Maintain competitive staff salaries and benefits; make staff training and development a priority; use in-house expertise; build on projects that integrate academic and administrative goals and priorities; intensify the staff's creative engagement in the work of the College; increase efforts to promote diversity, foster community and inclusiveness, orient new employees, and engage staff in conversations on issues of importance to the College community.

Financial Resources

- Over the next two to three years, weather financial challenges of the economic downturn by holding down costs and finding greater efficiencies.
- Over the longer term, work to augment revenues sufficient to support moderate expense growth.
- Grow the endowment, reduce the tuition discount rate, and sustain and build Annual Fund revenues.
- Implement these funding priorities: maintaining competitive salaries; increasing moderately the number and proportion of tenure-track faculty; sustaining our substantial commitment to financial aid; continuing support for capital expenditures to underwrite technology, maintenance, and modernization needs; and establishing a 2010 Innovation Fund to support new initiatives.

Philanthropic Resources

- Continue a vital development program in the post-Campaign for Mount Holyoke College period, establishing new base levels of yearly charitable gift revenue and working in productive partnership with alumnae volunteers and the Alumnae Association.
- Develop plans for the next comprehensive campaign, targeting fall of 2009 for its public commencement.

VII. Building Mount Holyoke's Visibility: An Historic Leader in Women's Education

Recruitment and Retention

- Recognizing that students are an important resource for other students, continue to make recruitment and retention a high priority.
- Maintain focus on the traditional 18- to 22-year-old student population, enhanced by Frances Perkins Scholars and other special populations.
- Increase competitiveness and the academic profile of incoming students; enhance diversity across multiple dimensions; maintain a strong international student presence; explore how the curriculum and courses relate to current and prospective students' interests; sustain strong commitment to financial aid.

Outcomes

- Focus on outcomes by providing substantial support for professional and graduate school, and by helping students to connect to the workplace through strengthened internship opportunities and job placement assistance.

Reputation and Visibility

- Ensure that Mount Holyoke is a voice for the values represented by liberal arts and women's educational institutions not only in academic forums but also in broader public discourse.
- Continue to develop and seize opportunities to enhance Mount Holyoke's reputation as a bold, forward-thinking institution willing to take on important national issues.

Communication Strategies

- Continue to implement an integrated communications strategy designed to advance the excellence of Mount Holyoke College with particular emphasis on showcasing high-visibility programs and noteworthy achievements and honors. Aggressively place op-ed pieces and other reputation-defining stories; maximize use of the Web in marketing the College and promoting its distinctive strengths; and enlist trustees and alumnae in enhancing the College's visibility.

VIII. Assessing Our Progress: Continuous Improvement

- Sustain the habit of continuous improvement across all dimensions of the College, regularly assess goals, and, in 2007, prepare an interim assessment report as part of the decennial reaccreditation review.



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