

# About Mount Holyoke College

Chemist and educator Mary Lyon founded Mount Holyoke College (then called Mount Holyoke Female Seminary) in 1837, nearly a century before women gained the right to vote. The first of the Seven Sisters—the female equivalent of the once predominantly male Ivy League—Mount Holyoke offered a rigorous program of study at a time when higher education for women was a revolutionary idea. The school quickly became synonymous with academic excellence and brilliant teaching and became a model for many other women’s colleges. In 1893, the seminary curriculum was phased out and the institution’s name was changed to Mount Holyoke College.

Today, Mount Holyoke is a highly selective, nondenominational, residential, research liberal arts college for women located in the Connecticut River Valley of western Massachusetts. The College’s 2,200 students hail from 47 states and 70 countries. Its nearly 250 full-time and part-time instructional faculty are devoted to undergraduate teaching and cutting-edge research. About half of the faculty are women; a quarter are individuals of color; and over 30 percent were born abroad. With a student-faculty ratio of 9 to 1 and with most classes averaging 10–19 students, faculty and students collaborate closely on academic course work and research.

The College operates on a semester calendar, with an optional January Intersession offering opportunities for research, independent study, projects of students’ own choice, travel, internships, and noncredit study. In 2008, the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc., through its commission on Institutions of Higher Education, approved the continuation of the College’s accreditation.

Mary Lyon’s famous words—“Go where no one else will go, do what no one else will do”—continue to inspire the College’s students and its 33,000 alumnae. By offering a distinctive combination of a rigorous liberal arts education, an unusually diverse and international community, a lifelong global network, and a legacy of educating leaders, Mount Holyoke is powerfully positioned to graduate women who will be successful and contribute to a better world.

## Mission of the College

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.

## Seal of Mount Holyoke College



On August 23, 1838, Mount Holyoke awarded certificates to its first three graduates. A seal attached by a ribbon to the diploma bore a design that had been the subject of long and careful consideration by the Board of Trustees. Created by Orra White Hitchcock (wife of Edward Hitchcock, an original trustee of the College), the seal design depicted a centering cluster of palms, a palace in the background, and a block of stone in the foreground. It cited the text of Psalms 144.12: "That our daughters may be as corner stones, polished after the similitude of a palace."

## Facilities

Mount Holyoke College's 800-acre campus is widely considered to be one of the most beautiful in the nation with its neo-Gothic buildings, spacious greens, two small lakes, and a magnificent tree canopy. It is home to more than 40 academic buildings and residence halls. The main campus is an arboretum with a diverse collection of trees and shrubs, while a nature preserve spans more than 300 acres and serves as an environmental classroom.

A massive, \$36-million expansion and renovation of Mount Holyoke's science facilities was completed in 2003. The resulting Science Center was designed to foster interdepartmental interaction, collaborative research, pedagogical innovation, and curricular planning. Students benefit from hands-on work with sophisticated instrumentation often reserved for graduate students at other institutions. The equipment inventory includes a solar greenhouse, a state-of-the-art microscopy facility, two nuclear magnetic resonance spectrometers, a mass spectrometer, extensive molecular biology and genomics instruments, and instrumentation for fabrication and characterization of nanomaterials.

Other facilities include a center for foreign language study, two theatres for theatre performances, a 400-seat auditorium for music performance, specialized computer labs, a lively campus center, the 900-seat Abbey Chapel with its Interfaith Sanctuary, a meditation garden and teahouse, a facility offering child care and child study opportunities, and the Talcott Greenhouse, a 6,500-square-foot complex used for teaching, research, ornamental display, and plant propagation. A new environmentally sustainable residence hall housing 175 students opened in 2008; it was awarded a Gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification from the U.S. Green Building Council.

Mount Holyoke's library has a collection that currently totals more than 750,000 print volumes, including 1,300 periodical subscriptions. The library also licenses access to more than 200 scholarly research databases as well as thousands of ebooks and ejournals. In addition, it shares a catalog with other members of the Five College Consortium; the combined collections provide students and faculty with direct access to more than eight million volumes. The library also features several innovative multipurpose venues for collaboration, research, and technology support.

The Mount Holyoke College Art Museum is among the nation's leading collegiate art museums, with a comprehensive permanent collection encompassing more than

16,000 works from antiquity to the present. The museum offers students work/study and internship opportunities, and brings to the community imaginative and diverse exhibitions that often attract significant national media attention.

Kendall Sports and Dance Complex houses a swimming pool and a diving well, a gymnasium with basketball, volleyball, and badminton courts, a weight room and cardiovascular area, as well as a one-acre field house with indoor track and tennis courts, squash courts, racquetball courts, and studios for dance, aerobics, yoga, and other activities. In 2007, the College completed construction of a new track and field facility, featuring a multipurpose synthetic turf field with lights, surrounded by an eight-lane track with a nine-lane straightaway. In 2009, two new dance studios, a renovated dance performance theater and a renovated and expanded fitness center opened. The equestrian center, one of the nation's largest collegiate facilities, features a 65-stall barn, two indoor arenas, an outdoor show ring, a full cross country course, and a regulation-size dressage ring. Outdoor cross-country courses for riders cut through 120 acres of woods, fields, and streams. The Orchards, Mount Holyoke's 18-hole championship golf course, was designed by the legendary Donald Ross and was the site of the 2004 U.S. Women's Open.