

MOUNT HOLYOKE

Mount Holyoke College
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Hello Recent MHC Alumnae,

I hope that this letter finds you well and enjoying what is left of your first summer after college. Many of you have already started your new careers, traveled thousands of miles, and/or hopefully taken some time to enjoy the company of family and friends. Whatever the summer has brought you, I hope you are well!

I write now in regards to the Mount Holyoke College yearbook, the Lllamarada. As many of you may already be aware of, the Lllamarada, like many college yearbooks, has been struggling to survive and remain relevant over the past few decades. In a joint decision between student staff and the Office of Student Programs, the Lllamarada will discontinue publishing, starting with the 2010 edition.

Despite great student effort and the ongoing support of the College, it has proven difficult to annually solicit sufficient dedicated students to work on the book throughout the year to completion. Additionally, interest in receiving the book has waned among all students, including Seniors, a trend we are seeing nationally. As an indication of student interest, only 320 students of the 2010 senior class had their senior portraits taken for the yearbook; merely 54% of those graduating. Further, the 2009 yearbook has sold less than 100 copies of a decreased goal of 500.

The Lllamarada, like all student organizations at Mount Holyoke College, is an independent student organization driven by student initiative. With the increase in access to high-quality digital photography, social media outlets, and a decrease in college yearbook publications nationally, current levels of student support and enthusiasm for the book is not sustaining.

In the coming weeks Student Programs will be working with our current publishing company, Herff Jones, INC., and the remaining student staff of the Lllamarada, to identify all those parents and seniors who purchased ads and will issue full reimbursements. Student Programs will also work closely with the MHC Student Government Association to ensure that all Lllamarada debts are paid in full and any remaining funds are reallocated to other registered MHC student organizations through the SGA Ways and Means Committee process. The next step will be to develop an appropriate course of action for the Lllamarada that is both sensitive to tradition and relevant to today's students.

Please know that I understand the gravity of this loss and join many of you in your upset and frustration. Nonetheless, I hope you will join me in appreciation of the current yearbook staff that worked incredibly hard on the content and design of the book up to this difficult decision point. Their efforts should not go unrecognized.

All questions and comments may be directed to me at jjnelson@mtholyoke.edu.

Sincerely,
Joshua Nelson