2017 Volunteer Conference Recap

On September 16-17, over 130 Mount Holyoke Fund and Reunion planning volunteers returned to campus to connect with each other, learn about new project and initiatives at the College, and prepare for the upcoming year.

College Update
Sonya Stephens, Acting President

**Acting President Sonya Stephens** shared an update on the strategic priorities at the College, including some pride points that volunteers can use when reaching out to classmates:

- 2,202 students from 47 states and 57 countries
- Student-Faculty Ratio of 10:1
- 50 majors offered, with the opportunity to design an individualized major
- 92% of the class of 2016 were working or in school 6 months after graduating
- 80% of graduates enroll in a graduate or professional program within 10 years
- Mount Holyoke still produces more women with STEM PhDs than our liberal arts college and Seven Sisters peers.
- Mount Holyoke alumnae are particularly successful at earning doctorates in the life sciences with more of our graduates earning the highest degree in the life sciences than any baccalaureate college, and all but 50 of the largest universities (National Science Foundation: Survey of Earned Doctorates, 1966-2015)

Academics at Mount Holyoke
Jon Western, Dean of Faculty and Vice President for Academic Affairs

**Jon Western** shared an overview of academics at Mount Holyoke. Jon spoke about the value of a liberal arts education, the increasing popularity of our [computer science](#) program (MHC will have 50 graduating computer science majors this year), Mount Holyoke's focus on [innovation hires](#), and creating a [maker culture](#) on campus. Jon also pointed out that he has taught at all 5 colleges, and nothing compares to the diversity of lived experience that students bring to the classroom at MHC.

Enrollment and Student Life Panel
Catarina Costa, Associate Dean of Admissions

**Catarina Costa** introduced the [class of 2021](#). This September the College welcomed 535 first years, 32 transfer students and 20 Frances Perkins scholars to Mount Holyoke. Catarina also shared information about Admission's new “Launch a Leader” initiative, where alumnae are asked to identify someone special that they think would do well at Mount Holyoke. When alumnae share a special “Launch a Leader” postcard, the prospective student's application fee will be waived. Please contact Admissions for questions about “Launch a Leader”.

Marcella Runell Hall, Vice President for Student Life and Dean of Students

**Marcella Runell Hall** shared information about the life of students on campus, including the success and expansion of [Living Learning Communities](#) on campus, continued attention to creating a superior Orientation program, and the renovation of the [Blanchard Community Center](#). She also highlighted some special achievements: Mount Holyoke’s residence halls were rated [#12 in the Princeton Review](#) and the [Office of Religious and Spiritual Life](#) was acknowledged at the national level for its programming.
Enrollment and Student Life Panel
Lori Hendricks ’92, Director of Athletics

Lori Hendricks ’92 pumped up our volunteers by sharing inspiring information about our student athletes. She explained how the athletic teams are using the DISC personality assessments to help students understand how they function as high-performing individuals as well as members of a team. Lori also highlighted the academic achievements of our student-athletes, including three teams with the highest cumulative GPAs in the country, a Rhodes Scholar finalist, and a top 30 finalist for Woman of the Year. Lori also spoke about the shifting interests in club sports, drop-in classes, and activity-related events and an increased interest in international games like cricket and netball that reflect our international student body.

Bigger Picture: Philanthropy and MHC
Kassandra Jolley, Vice President of Advancement

Kassandra Jolley shared an update on giving in the United States, discussed trends in giving to higher education, and how Mount Holyoke fits within that landscape. Kassandra also shared information about the College’s finances, and the essential role that alumnae giving plays in supporting the important work happening on campus.

FY18 Strategic Plan for The Mount Holyoke Fund
Allison Butler ’05, Director of The Mount Holyoke Fund

Allison Butler ’05 introduced the fiscal year goals of $8.5 million from 10,000 donors. To reach these goals, the communications for this fiscal year focus on four of the top gift designations, or "destinations" within The Mount Holyoke Fund: sustainability initiatives, student scholarships, faculty support and career preparedness/the Lynk. Allison also demonstrated the new volunteer portal, which is scheduled to launch early in 2018.

Break-out Sessions

In addition to combined informational sessions, there were also break-out sessions for Mount Holyoke Fund volunteers that were more tailored to their individual interests and needs:

- **Young Alumnae Discussion:** Young alumnae volunteers had an open discussion about the challenges of engaging young alumnae and successes from past years. They also brainstormed ways to think strategically and holistically about their outreach.
- **New Head Class Agent Orientation:** Newly elected Head Class Agents came together to talk about how to plan their work for the year, including reviewing their class history, determining the class strategy, and overseeing and recruiting new volunteers. The session also served as an introduction to some of the many resources available to volunteers.
- **Making the Ask:** Leadership Gift Officers described the three steps critical to asking a classmate to make a gift to Mount Holyoke: developing a relationship, demonstrating the impact of a gift, and showing appreciation.
- **Mount Holyoke Forever Shall Be: Pathway to your Legacy:** The Planned Giving team shared ways that alumnae — at any age or stage of life — can begin to think about their support of Mount Holyoke through planned giving vehicles including annuities, bequests, and more.
- **Engaging in Difficult Conversations:** Kassandra Jolley shared suggestions for ways to approach difficult conversations with potential donors.