

MOUNT HOLYOKE

Director of Leadership Giving

New England | Mid-Atlantic | New York City Metro | South Florida

Mount Holyoke College (MHC), a private liberal arts women's college that is gender diverse, seeks a creative, courageous, and mission-driven Director of Leadership Giving (Director) to cultivate major gifts and lead a growing team during a time of renewal, vigor, and bold action as the College continues its legacy as a trailblazer in women's education and a powerhouse of changemakers and visionaries. The Director will be a proactive and strategic leader responsible for spearheading a donor-centric fundraising program across key markets in the U.S. in support of the [MHC Forward Strategic Plan](#), calling upon the support of a fiercely loyal and connected alum community representative of the fearless leaders and boundless learners who attend and work at Mount Holyoke.

As the oldest member of the historic Seven Sisters colleges, Mount Holyoke's history as an educational institution [forged in dissent](#) is central to its vision for the future. Rooted in a nearly 200-year history of challenging exclusion and advancing gender equity, the College remains unwavering in its support for diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility—even as these values face threats. MHC has been a trailblazer in inclusive admissions policies, becoming the first of the Seven Sisters to welcome trans and nonbinary students. With a proud legacy of global renown, the College fiercely advocates for its international student community, which represents 20 percent of students. Nationally recognized for its high level of undergraduate research, Mount Holyoke continues to invest in scholarly research and discovery. The College earned the prestigious Carnegie Classification as a baccalaureate college with "Arts & Sciences Focus and High Research," and ranks #1 among U.S. institutions for producing graduates who go on to earn PhDs in the life sciences and STEM.

Under [President Danielle Holley](#)'s leadership, the Mount Holyoke community is alive with ambition and purpose to support the MHC Forward Strategic Plan, which lays out a bold vision to ensure Mount Holyoke's enduring excellence and transformative impact. MHC Forward sets the foundation for the College's next comprehensive campaign, set to launch in the fall of 2026. Mount Holyoke's culture of principled boldness and forward-thinking momentum offers an inspiring context for the Director to contribute to a mission deeply rooted in societal impact at a time when [women's colleges are more important than ever](#).

In partnership with the Associate Vice President for Development, the Director will lead a team of six, ensuring the team's professional growth and collective fundraising success. Working closely with colleagues across College Relations, the Director will help develop and execute College-wide fundraising strategies, designing compelling cases for support, and facilitating regular collaboration and communication across campus to advance Mount Holyoke's strategic priorities. As a senior leader on the development team, the Director will serve as a thought partner to campus leaders in identifying fundraising opportunities, enabling data-informed decisions, and implementing innovative strategies. Grounded in creative and relationship-driven approaches, the Director will manage a portfolio of donors and prospects to secure gifts of at least six and seven figures while promoting proven fundraising practices within the Leadership Giving team and across the College.

The successful candidate will bring at least seven years of progressive leadership experience and a proven ability to secure major and principal gifts, in addition to five years of management experience. The ideal candidate will possess outstanding communication skills, passion for Mount Holyoke's mission, and a commitment to inclusive fundraising practices, along with a proactive, thoughtful, and transparent management style. The candidate must possess a high level of integrity and credibility; be a self-starter with a clear set of priorities; and be adaptable to changing circumstances. In accordance with its core values and mission, MHC is especially interested in recruiting members of diverse communities and individuals who will promote and uphold the values embodied within the College's [Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement](#).

Mount Holyoke College

Mount Holyoke College is a selective, nondenominational, residential liberal arts college that welcomes applications from female, trans, and non-binary students. Mount Holyoke's exploratory education opens new pathways for discovery and knowledge, while the collaborative community supports students as they develop skills to solve challenges everywhere. Students are encouraged to see the world through a different lens—exploring beyond traditional boundaries and connecting to global perspectives and points-of-view. Working closely with exceptional faculty and staff, students are challenged to think creatively, act collaboratively, and lead purposefully. That's why Mount Holyoke alums can be found on the leading edge of change—from the arts and humanities to STEM innovation to social justice and beyond. As a community of achievement, Mount Holyoke celebrates what makes each of us extraordinary while cultivating a deep sense of connectivity.

Mount Holyoke's vibrant campus is home to over 2,100 students, with 20 percent of the student body representing 80 countries other than the U.S. Expanding beyond gender diversity, 28 percent of students identify as domestic students of color—African American, Asian American, Latinx, Native American or Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, or multiracial.

With strong traditions and spaces designed for collaboration, the College offers three distinct Academic Centers meant to empower students to become agents of change—globally competent, environmentally responsible, ready to lead. [The McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives](#) is the hub and catalyst for comprehensive internationalization at Mount Holyoke, offering varied and meaningful opportunities for students to advance their global competencies and for faculty to incorporate more global perspectives into their teaching. The exceptional international diversity of the community offers a powerful context for building global competence. [The Miller Worley Center for the Environment](#) is dedicated to actively engaging Mount Holyoke students in the scientific, social/human, and global dimensions of environmental study, enabling students to make connections—across disciplines, across points of view, across constructs—that help them understand the concept of “environment” more broadly in their work, community, and lives. [The Weissman Center for Leadership](#) promotes the exploration and expansion of leadership—in all its many shapes and forms, helping students, faculty, and staff learn the skills to think strategically and yield influence—such as by identifying an audience, honing a message, advocating and organizing for change, and taking leadership in one's daily life.

There is a treasure trove of time-honored [traditions](#) at Mount Holyoke that are emblematic of the ways in which students, alums, faculty, and leaders show up every day, treating each other with respect and affecting positive social change. These experiences and ways of being serve as unifying threads binding past and present students, faculty, and staff.

MHC Forward: The Strategic Plan for Mount Holyoke College

The [MHC Forward Strategic Plan](#) builds on the momentum of The Plan for Mount Holyoke 2023, which successfully advanced over 100 initiatives that strengthened academic excellence, expanded research and scholarship, and fostered a diverse and inclusive community. Key accomplishments included [environmental leadership](#), the creation of innovative learning spaces like the [Fimbel Maker & Innovation Lab](#), and major investments in community infrastructure, along with the establishment of the [Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion](#). Developed through extensive community input, MHC Forward positions the College to meet the demands of a changing world by supporting curricular and pedagogical innovation; enhancing student life, wellness and career preparation; investing in campus infrastructure; identifying new revenue streams; and stewarding resources wisely for a bright future. With clear goals and success metrics, MHC Forward positions the College to lead with purpose for generations to come.

Danielle R. Holley
President, Mount Holyoke College

On July 1, 2023, Danielle R. Holley took office as the twentieth president of Mount Holyoke College. A noted legal scholar and educator, Holley served as Dean of the School of Law at Howard University from 2014 to 2023 prior to joining MHC. She holds a B.A. from Yale University and a J.D. from Harvard Law School and previously served as a law clerk to Judge Carl E. Stewart on the U.S. Courts of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit.

Her achievements during her tenure at the Howard School of Law include the introduction of a six-year BA/JD program; the launch of experiential learning and career preparation initiatives with World Bank, Microsoft, and Amazon Studios, among others; and a 200 percent increase in fundraising success, including a \$10 million grant to support public interest law, the largest in the Howard School of Law's history.

President Holley's scholarship spans the governance of public schools, increasing access to higher education, and diversity in the legal profession. Her contributions to the legal profession and higher education have been recognized with numerous awards including the inaugural Impact Award from the Association of American Law Schools, the American Bar Foundation's Montgomery Summer Research Diversity Fellowship Distinguished Alumni Award, the Lutie Lytle Conference Outstanding Scholar Award, the National Bar Association's Heman Sweatt Award, and the University of South Carolina Educational Foundation's Outstanding Service Award. She was twice awarded the Outstanding Faculty Member award during her tenure at the University of South Carolina School of Law.

Currently, President Holley serves as the co-chair of the Board of the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights. She has also served on the board of the Law School Admission Council and on the board of the Howard University Middle School of Math and Science. She is a moderator for the Aspen Institute, a Liberty Fellow through the Aspen Global Leadership Network, and a fellow with the American Council on Education. She is also a member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated, the trailblazing sorority for Black women in higher education founded at Howard University in 1913.

President Holley is Mount Holyoke's first permanent Black president in the College's 186-year history, and the fourth Black woman in history to lead one of the original Seven Sisters.

Heather McDonald
Associate Vice President for Development

In partnership with Vice President for College Relations Kassandra Jolley, Heather leads a donor-centric development program and oversees the frontline fundraising team, which includes the Mount Holyoke Fund, leadership and principal giving, and gift planning.

Before joining Mount Holyoke in September 2023, Heather served as Assistant Vice President and Campaign Director at University of Connecticut (UConn) Foundation, where she was a key member of the advancement leadership team charged with developing and leading the university's comprehensive \$1 billion campaign. During her tenure at UConn, the Foundation completed four back-to-back record-breaking fundraising years and achieved a 200-percent increase in fundraising over a ten-year period.

Mount Holyoke's mission attracted Heather due to her lifelong commitment to advancing women's rights and those of gender-diverse people. She earned a Bachelor of Arts in Women's Studies, Human Resources, & Social Change from State University of New York at New Paltz, as well as a Master of Education from University of Hartford, a graduate certificate in Nonprofit Leadership and Management and a Doctorate in Educational

Leadership from University of Connecticut. Heather's dissertation examined equity and inclusion as related to women's leadership self-efficacy in higher education advancement. In 2023, Heather earned an Inclusive Philanthropy (DEI) micro-credential from Florida International University.

As a volunteer and civic leader, Heather is a member of the Connecticut Governor's Council on Women and Girls, the Connecticut Women's Council, and previously served on the UConn Women's Center Advisory Board as chair of the fundraising committee, among many other activities in service to the field of professional fundraisers.

Development at Mount Holyoke

With an endowment valued at just over \$1 billion, MHC has a legacy of endowment giving to ensure that "Mount Holyoke forever shall be." In FY25, MHC raised more than \$40 million, including \$10 million in leadership gifts. While several recent years have surpassed \$50 million, the College raises on average between \$30 million and \$40 million in annual philanthropic support, with \$10 to \$15 million in leadership gifts. There are more than 40,000 living alums with a dedicated track record of volunteer support. MHC distinguishes itself by consistently achieving industry-leading participation rates among alums, and this loyalty, pride, and commitment to the College provide ripe opportunity for pipeline growth.

The 30-member Board of Trustees leads by example with a 100-percent participation rate in giving annually. Fundraising priorities include faculty support and research, scholarships and financial aid, student career services and exploration, and the continued revitalization of infrastructure.

The College Relations division comprises a team of 46 professionals in leadership and principal giving, gift planning, annual fund, strategic initiatives, donor relations and stewardship, government and community relations, and operations, including data services and prospect research.

The College Relations team works in close concert with the Mount Holyoke Alum Association, an independent organization that was created at a time when women were not permitted to be trustees of colleges in order to give alums an independent voice and a financial role in the College's future.

Director of Leadership Giving

The Director of Leadership Giving is an experienced, high-level, frontline major gifts professional and a key leader within Mount Holyoke College's Development Team. Reporting to the Associate Vice President for Development (AVP), the Director is responsible for the overall management of the major gifts team and program, charged with managing relationships and securing support from donors capable of making gifts of \$100,000 to \$1,000,000 or more.

The Director of Leadership Giving partners closely with Gift Planning, Principal Gifts, Donor Relations, Annual Fund, and other Development colleagues to maximize donor engagement and philanthropic impact. The next Director must possess strong management experience, relationship-building skills, strategic thinking, and a commitment to inclusive donor engagement.

Essential Duties

- Supervise a team of six (five Gift Officers and one Coordinator), providing thoughtful management and coaching to ensure strategic goals are met that align with the College's academic plan.

- Serve as coach-mentor to gift officers and volunteers to develop effective strategies for assigned regions and prospects.
- Work closely with College leaders to design and execute fundraising initiatives, serving as a thought partner to the AVP, VP, and other senior leaders.
- Provide expert fundraising counsel to senior administrators, members of the faculty, department chairs, and alumni volunteers.
- Manage a portfolio of approximately 75 Mount Holyoke College prospects and donors, guiding individuals through the full donor cycle: identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship.
- Conduct at least 75 substantive donor interactions annually, including 20 or more gift solicitations, with domestic travel required.
- Build meaningful relationships with alums, donors, parents, and friends of MHC that lead to impactful philanthropic commitments.
- Ensure strong collaboration with colleagues across annual giving, gift planning, principal gifts, and donor relations to develop and implement integrated donor strategies.
- Assist in supporting high-level fundraising volunteers, including but not limited to trustees.
- Secure cash, pledges, and planned gifts that align with departmental and campaign fundraising goals.
- Contribute to a team culture centered on collaboration, transparency, and data-informed decision-making.
- Participate in and lead the team in professional development activities.
- Actively support Mount Holyoke College's commitment to creating a respectful, inclusive, and welcoming work environment.

Experience and Qualifications

The ideal candidate will bring many of the following professional qualities and experiences:

- A Bachelor's degree is required.
- Minimum of seven years of development/fundraising experience denoting increasing complexity with five years of supervisory experience preferred, and/or an equivalent combination of education and experience.
- Outstanding written and verbal communication skills.
- Proven success securing gifts of five-figures, ideally with experience closing six- and seven-figure gifts.
- Strong interpersonal and organizational skills, along with written and verbal communication.

- Demonstrated ability to explain complex financial or legal concepts in a donor-friendly way.
- High level of discretion and integrity in managing confidential information.
- Commitment to equity, inclusion, and respectful engagement with a diverse donor base.
- Ability to serve as a proactive, strategic, and creative manager and leader with a strong orientation to being a team player.
- Knowledge of fundraising best practices and campaign planning stages is preferred.
- Experience using fundraising CRMs and proposal software (i.e. Salesforce, PGCalc, TIAA Kaspick tools).
- Availability for frequent domestic travel and occasional evening/weekend work.
- Ability to staff occasional night and weekend events, on and off campus.
- Excellent judgment with the ability to represent the College appropriately.

Location and Schedule

The Director of Leadership Giving can be based on campus in South Hadley, Massachusetts, or—with approval from senior leaders at MHC—work remotely from the Mid-Atlantic, New England, New York City metro, or South Florida.

Mount Holyoke College is situated on a 700-acre campus in South Hadley, located in one of New England's most beautiful and intellectually vibrant regions: the Connecticut River Valley, where the life of the mind finds fertile soil. Mount Holyoke is a member of the [Five Colleges Consortium](#) along with Amherst, Hampshire, and Smith Colleges and the University of Massachusetts Amherst.

South Hadley is a charming community with rich history, ample recreational opportunities, and convenient shopping, art, and cuisine. It is just 15 minutes away from Amherst and Northampton, 45 minutes from Hartford, Connecticut and Bradley International Airport, and 90 minutes from Boston.

Mount Holyoke is offering a hybrid working schedule for most employees, which allows employees to work in the office or remotely. Candidates should expect to work on campus as needed, including during key events.

Compensation

Mount Holyoke College offers a competitive salary budgeted in the range of \$156,647 – \$177,932 annually for this position. The exact compensation offered will be determined by experience. Information about the benefits package is available [online](#).

Interested in Learning More?

Mount Holyoke College has partnered with Talent Citizen to assist in this recruitment. Please reach out to President Tracy D. Welsh, Managing Associate Rachel K. Partin, and Associate José Cisneros to share your resume and cover letter via email at: mhc-dlg@talentcitizen.com.

Mount Holyoke College is a women's college that is gender diverse. The College is committed to providing equal access and opportunity in employment and education to all employees and students. In compliance with state and federal law, Mount Holyoke College does not discriminate on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, genetic information, sex, national or ethnic origin, religion, age, physical or mental disability, marital status, sexual orientation, pregnancy, gender identity or expression, ancestry, veteran or military status, or any other legally protected status under federal, state, or local law.