

# MOUNT HOLYOKE

## Gift Planning Officer *South Hadley, MA*

Mount Holyoke College (MHC), a private liberal arts women's college that is gender diverse, seeks a curious, creative, and diplomatic fundraiser to join the MHC Development team as Gift Planning Officer (GPO) 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 GPO will be an integral member of the Development team in securing blended and deferred philanthropic support across 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. Historically, Mount Holyoke has been a premier producer of women who earn doctorates in STEM. According to 2024 data from the National Center for Science and Engineering Statistics (NCSES), Mount Holyoke ranks #1 among baccalaureate colleges for women alums earning PhDs in the life sciences (1972–2022) and is virtually tied for the top spot in any STEM field. The College earned the prestigious Carnegie Classification as a baccalaureate college with “Arts & Sciences Focus and High Research.”

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, launching in the fall of 2026. Mount Holyoke's culture of principled boldness and forward-thinking momentum offers an inspiring context for the GPO to contribute to a mission deeply rooted in societal impact at a time when [women's colleges are more important than ever](#).

The GPO reports to the Director of Gift Planning and plays a central role in advancing the College's strategic priorities as a key frontline fundraiser responsible for managing a portfolio of MHC alums, partners, and friends. In partnership with senior leaders and internal partners, the GPO will utilize data and research to identify and qualify prospects, develop creative and meaningful cultivation plans, and formulate effective solicitation strategies. The GPO will be an engaging and visible ambassador of the College and collaborate across the College Relations division to ensure a coordinated and personalized donor experience. The GPO will be a key contributor in the College's efforts to maintain the prominent role of planned gifts in achieving annual fundraising goals.

The ideal candidate will be a values-driven, goal-oriented professional with four to five years of experience building and nurturing strong relationships to secure resources within a complex organization. The GPO must have a strong understanding of development, technical acumen, knowledge of higher education, and the ability to build trust and collaboration among diverse stakeholders. The successful candidate must have exceptional verbal, written, and presentation skills and a collegial, team-building style with a demonstrated ability to cultivate productive, collaborative relationships. The GPO will bring curiosity, sound judgment, and

a collegial spirit to a high-performing and mission-driven team. 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. Mount Holyoke has the most globally diverse students of any liberal arts college in the U.S., with 20 percent of the student body representing 80 countries other than the U.S. And 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.

**Dana Gillette**  
Director of Gift Planning

As Director of Gift Planning, Dana Gillette works with Mount Holyoke alums and friends who wish to make the College a part of their legacy. Her expertise includes life income gifts (charitable trusts and charitable gift annuities), gifts by bequest and beneficiary designations, and complex outright gifts.

Previously, Dana served as the Assistant Director of Gift Planning at Mount Holyoke College. Dana has more than 20 years of experience working with nonprofits and mission-driven organizations in advancement, including fundraising, communications, volunteer and member engagement, and strategic planning. Prior to joining Mount Holyoke College in 2016, Dana served as Development Director at the Connecticut River

Conservancy and as Associate Director of Development & Communications and Managing Director for Class Action. Earlier in her career, Dana was a fundraising and communications consultant, and Development Director at the Peace Development Fund.

Dana is a member of the Planned Giving Group of New England and has presented for the Association of Fundraising Professionals Western Massachusetts Chapter and Women in Philanthropy. She previously served as a board leader for Temenos Retreat Center and Resource Generation. Dana earned a Bachelor of Arts in Women's Studies from Barnard College, and she is a graduate of the Leadership Pioneer Valley program for emerging leaders.

## 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 \$25 million in planned 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 \$15 to \$30 million in planned 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. Planned gifts have steadily accounted for approximately 40 – 60 percent of the College's annual funds raised. Alums and friends of the College who make charitable contributions are recognized through [giving societies](#), such as the Mary Lyon Society for donors who have pledged bequest and estate gifts.

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 48 professionals in leadership and principal giving, gift planning, annual fund, discovery, 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.

## Gift Planning Officer

The Gift Planning Officer (GPO) is a frontline fundraiser and vital member of Mount Holyoke College's Development Team. This individual manages a portfolio of approximately 120 alums, families, and friends, cultivating relationships that lead to impactful philanthropic commitments, including six- and seven-figure life income gifts, estate gifts, and complex outright gifts. Reporting to the Director of Gift Planning, the GPO contributes to the success of the College's upcoming comprehensive campaign by advancing strategic gift planning efforts and collaborating with internal and external partners.

The GPO partners across the Development team to develop customized gift strategies and provides expertise on planned giving vehicles. Success in this role requires empathy, curiosity, technical acumen, and a commitment to inclusive donor engagement.

## Essential Duties

- Manage a portfolio of approximately 120 Mount Holyoke College gift planning prospects and donors, guiding individuals through the full donor cycle: identification, cultivation, solicitation, and stewardship.
- Conduct 100+ substantive donor interactions annually, including 25+ gift solicitations, with 35 – 50% domestic travel required.
- Build meaningful relationships with alums, surviving spouses, and other supporters, leading to impactful philanthropic commitments.
- Collaborate with colleagues across Annual Fund, Discovery, Leadership Giving, Principal Gifts, and Donor Relations to develop and implement integrated donor strategies.
- Provide technical expertise and consultative support on planned giving vehicles to donors and internal partners.
- Prepare and present customized proposals and gift illustrations for charitable gift annuities, charitable trusts, and complex outright gifts using tools from PG Calc and TIAA Kaspick. Review and coordinate contracts for gift annuities and trusts in collaboration with College counsel, as needed.
- Conduct in-depth conversations regarding complex gift planning opportunities, including gifts of real estate and closely held stock, in partnership with the Director of Gift Planning.
- Oversee the planning and execution of regional Mary Lyon Society stewardship and cultivation events.
- Maintain accurate and timely records of donor interactions and proposals in the College's Salesforce-based fundraising CRM.
- Serve as backup to the Director of Gift Planning in collaborating with the Finance Office to track and monitor estate gifts through the settlement process.
- Secure planned gifts aligned with departmental and campaign fundraising goals.
- Contribute to a team culture centered on collaboration, transparency, and data-informed decision-making.
- Participate in ongoing professional development in charitable planning, fundraising ethics, and equitable philanthropy practices.
- 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.
- Four to five years of professional experience in fundraising, financial planning, law, or a related field.
- Gift planning experience and familiarity with charitable planning tools, tax and inheritance law, and complex gift instruments is preferred.
- Proven success closing five-figure or larger gifts, or comparable high-stakes client engagements.
- Knowledge of fundraising best practices and campaign planning stages.
- Experience using fundraising CRMs and proposal software, such as Salesforce, PG Calc, TIAA Kaspick tools.
- Demonstrated ability to explain complex financial or legal concepts in a donor-friendly way.
- Ability to travel 35 – 50% of the time to different areas of the U.S. with occasional evening/weekend hours.
- Strong interpersonal and organizational skills, along with written and verbal communication.
- High level of discretion and integrity in managing confidential information.
- Commitment to equity, inclusion, and respectful engagement with a diverse donor base.

### Location and Schedule

The GPO can be based on campus in South Hadley, Massachusetts, or work a hybrid schedule from within a commutable distance to campus. 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 one to two times per week, including during key events.

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.

### Compensation

Mount Holyoke College offers a competitive salary budgeted in the range of \$97,717 – \$116,283 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 and Managing Director Rachel K. Partin to share your resume and cover letter via email at: [mhc-gpo@talentcitizen.com](mailto:mhc-gpo@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.*