Admitting Students

Mount Holyoke College is a selective liberal arts college, and the college’s admissions policies are not discipline-specific because we are primarily an undergraduate institution, and the geology degree we offer is a B.A. Guidelines for admission are here: https://www.mtholyoke.edu/admission. Of note is that the college was an early adopter of SAT-optional admissions. Also of note is the college’s historically important role as a women’s college with an exceptional 20th century record of graduating women who went on to earn Ph.D.s in science.

In recent years, a student group called STEMPOC (https://events.mtholyoke.edu/group/stempoc) has made progress in an effort to improve access for students of color to science. This group and other student groups have raised concerns about STEM weed-out classes at the 100-level, equity in undergraduate access to science research mentoring, and equity in access to student jobs on campus. New procedures require all student jobs to be listed on a campus-wide job board (so that any qualified student can find out about the job and apply), and the college’s Career Development Center (https://www.mtholyoke.edu/cdc) has helped shape these student employment opportunities as mentored experiences that students can use to develop their interests and resumés. In terms of access to student employment in our department, specific TA positions, and research opportunities with faculty, our department continues to operate ad hoc.

Hiring New Faculty

The Department of Geology and Geography is a relatively small department: seven tenured faculty, one teaching staff, and two other staff. Our most recent tenure-track hire (in geography) joined us about a decade ago. Over the past decade, we have welcomed one geologist and one geographer into our department for teaching fellowships through the Consortium for Faculty Diversity (https://www.gettysburg.edu/offices/provost/consortium-for-faculty-diversity/).

Since our last tenure-track search, the college has made significant changes to hiring procedures (https://www.mtholyoke.edu/deanoffaculty/faculty-and-residency-positions). All applicants for faculty positions now provide three statements concerning (1) teaching philosophy, (2) research plans, and (3) mentoring a diverse student body, in addition to a c.v. and cover letter. Letters of reference are no longer part of the initial application. As we look forward to a new hire in earth science, we hope that these recent changes to hiring procedures
will allow us to recruit a more diverse applicant pool. In addition, a recent change to the charge and name of the college’s Equity in Hiring Committee (formerly the Faculty Affirmative Action Committee) encourages faculty who are elected to this college-wide committee to provide guidance and support to faculty search committees. The new responsibilities of this committee are:

- **a)** Assist in achieving the College’s goals to diversify the College community through the faculty hiring process, with particular attention to historically underrepresented communities;
- **b)** Provide departments and interdisciplinary programs with guidelines and training to fulfill the College’s best practices for inclusive and equitable hiring of continuing and multi-year faculty;
- **c)** Advise departments and the administration in requests for additional hiring authority when such hires would enhance the diversification of the faculty;
- **d)** Participate in and oversee faculty hiring to ensure fulfillment of the College’s diversity, equity, and inclusion goals and procedures;
- **e)** Recommend to the dean of faculty and the president an extension or nullification of a search if it finds that a specific hiring effort has been procedurally inadequate.

This committee’s work will bring us closer to practices that we admire at Gettysburg College ([https://www.gettysburg.edu/offices/diversity-inclusion/search-committees/](https://www.gettysburg.edu/offices/diversity-inclusion/search-committees/)), where one of the members of our pod has a recent experience with faculty searches that prioritize diversifying the faculty.

We are excited about a new hire in earth science, but our covid-related hiring freeze means that we are waiting for the Dean of Faculty to authorize the search. In the meantime, we are aware of Mount Holyoke’s connection to the Doctoral Scholars Program at the Southern Regional Education Board ([https://www.sreb.org/doctoral-scholars-program](https://www.sreb.org/doctoral-scholars-program)), and we hope to use this connection to solicit interest. We will also continue to seek out candidates via graduate advisors and graduate program directors at universities that have successfully supported graduate students and post-docs with marginalized identities. Currently, we have been using a google form to solicit interest in the upcoming search. Here is the basic text of the email that we started sending around, with a link to the google form:

*Please forward this email to anyone you know who might be interested in a tenure-track position in geoscience at Mount Holyoke College. When our covid-related hiring freeze ends (hopefully late this spring or early next fall), we will start a search for a geoscientist whose research interests are in the earth, ocean, atmospheric, or polar sciences. We are especially interested in reaching out to grad students and post-docs with a demonstrated commitment to promoting diversity, equity, and inclusion in the geosciences. Detailed descriptions of the position and Mount Holyoke College are at this link:*

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc-_4F55HdaemX1CC93DNzMjJeDjGq_6an5GFb5im_s3KOWgA/viewform?usp=sf_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSc-_4F55HdaemX1CC93DNzMjJeDjGq_6an5GFb5im_s3KOWgA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

*That google form includes a portal for folks to leave their contact information so that we can directly solicit their applications when the search begins.*

We expect to open this search in summer 2021 and begin reviewing applications in the early fall.