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Sylvia Smith Campbell '52

**Conservatism:
Read, Think, Discuss**

I'm not at all surprised to learn of conservative students' concerns. While I consider myself a liberal (small "l"), I can't say I was particularly aware of political or economic biases in my courses at College. Perhaps those of us in the immediate post-World War II classes had other concerns, such as the Cold War. Evidently things have changed!

We all know the country has become more polarized since the 2000 elections, and our communities' and states' feelings seem to be reflected in those who represent us in Congress. What is so unfortunate is that liberals and conservatives seem to have drawn lines in the sand, and the word “compromise” has become a pejorative.

As a retired teacher, I know that it is important to teach students to think for themselves and to arrive at conclusions based on reason and adequate information. A teacher is a human being with strong opinions—so is a professor—but it is up to the teacher skillfully to encourage a variety of viewpoints in meaningful discussion and research. I never found it easy to do, but it can be done.

Sylvia Smith Campbell '52
Denville, NJ

As an instructor of sociology at two different colleges in New York City, I am just the kind of faculty member that Sarah Peyron '06, Jo Jensen '07, and Esa Aigamaua '06 complain about: I challenge my students to think. This is just what my teachers at Mount Holyoke did—present intellectual and moral challenges to all students, left, right, or center. If the young women quoted in this exceedingly one-sided article (after all, what do liberal students think about the campus political climate?) have political views worth defending, they will argue back. It is only a hallmark of cowardice to be unable to deal with the challenge of persuading peers and professors that one is right. I thought we Mount Holyoke women were stronger than that—MHC doesn't train women to be wilting flowers, women who suffer a bout of the vapors whenever asked to engage with topics of social and political importance.

Today, we in the United States live in a time of almost unprecedented conservative domination of the political, cultural, and economic sphere. The Republican Party dominates two branches of government and is working hard on the third. Faculty

members at some public universities are facing lawsuits because they dared express a liberal thought. And conservative Christian colleges make faculty members sign loyalty oaths and religious pledges to get a job. In this environment, the young women who complain that they are in the minority at Mount Holyoke should relish the chance to spend four short years practicing their arguments against a large group of liberal peers. They won't have the chance again anytime soon.

Mikaila Mariel Lemonik Arthur '01
New York, New York

I had to chuckle when reading the summer *Quarterly* issue about conservatives on a liberal campus. I, too, arrived on campus as a conservative raised in a very Republican family. I recall participating in the Amherst fall homecoming parade in 1965 and handing out election pamphlets with my Young Republican friends from MHC. I do not recall any strong liberal leanings of the faculty at that time. In fact the campus seemed like an ivory tower, remote from the rest of the world. But what happened? I started taking courses in history, sociology, politics, and even New Testament studies, and my eyes opened

to the reality of other people's experiences in the wider world. I grew discontent with the sheltered life on campus, started to participate in off-campus antiwar rallies, and transferred to another college where I felt I could be more involved in the “real” world. I became a liberal without benefit of faculty persuasion. In retrospect, I might have stayed and contributed to the embryonic campus discussion, but I was too impatient. So, my advice to the current young conservatives and liberals on campus is to read, think, discuss, argue, and develop open minds. Mount Holyoke sounds like an exciting and engaging place to be these days and very much a part of the “real” world!

Joanna Smith Weinstock '69
Jericho, Vermont

**A Special Horse,
Of Course, Of Course**

I was so saddened to read about the passing of Trilogy, a school horse at the College from 1985 to 2001. Just two days before, I was looking fondly at the ribbons I won with Trilogy when I was a student. I was terrified of jumping, and he guided me through the courses with the attitude, “Don't worry, I know what to do!” He gave

me the confidence to jump and to go on to ride much more difficult horses. When I think of the lessons I learned from Mount Holyoke, I count Trilogy as a valuable member of the faculty.

Elizabeth Marks '94
Westbrook, Connecticut

Re: “Rx for Success”

Was Mary Lyon, a chemist? No! Neither science nor educational leadership were career paths available to women in the early years of the nineteenth century. Yet with amazing energy and unflagging concern for women, she founded a distinguished institution for their education, not “to unite teaching and research and to train women to enter the ranks of American scientists,” as stated in the MHC Web site, but to enable women to become educated teachers. “Rx for Success” to the contrary, no women were admitted to graduate schools

before 1880, much less “the 1840s,” and even then they were regularly denied access to advanced degrees. Nonetheless, our own records tell us that we have had a long history as a prominent source of women who became doctoral scientists. Today, the measurement of baccalaureate origins of doctorates is a task of considerable sophistication and complexity, yet scholarly research repeatedly documents Mount Holyoke's outstanding record of graduating women who earn advanced degrees in the sciences. However, our relative standing with respect to doctorate productivity, as attributed to the National Science Foundation in this article, cannot be confirmed by current data specialists at the NSF and should not be promulgated as fact. Our true excellence need not be exaggerated; Mount Holyoke's contributions are already remarkable.

Sources: Haywood, C. 1959. “Scientific Heritage.” *Mount Holyoke Alumnae Quarterly* (Fall):122-25; MacLean, Sidney R. 1971. “Mary Lyon.” Pp. 443-47 in *Notable American Women II*. Cambridge, MA: Belknap/Harvard University; Green, E. A. 1979. *Mary Lyon and Mount Holyoke: Opening the Gates*. Hanover, NH: University Press of New England; Tidball, M. Elizabeth, et al. 1999. *Taking Women Seriously: Lessons and Legacies for Educating the Majority*. Phoenix: American Council on Education and Oryx.

Elizabeth (Lee) Peters
Tidball '51, '76
Adamstown, Maryland

ship Program. Thanks in large part to alumnae support, our first sixteen CGI interns worked in eight different countries this past summer, several of them going abroad for the first time.

The CGI wishes to thank Akiko Kimura Kusunoki MA'68, Kavita Nandini Ramdas '85, Ahyoung Kwak Chyun '83, Linda Abetz-Webb '88, Joy Shiferaw '94, Carolyn Johnson Reese '60, and Barbara Jones Guidera '57 for providing internships. Special thanks also to Diana Latow Blank FP'00, Mary Clare Leader '80, Anne Read Chalfant '71, and Ernestina Carman '01 for generously offering housing to the students.

Alumnae are welcome to contact me at adeeg@mtholyoke.edu with ideas for international internships in the summer of 2006.

Anita Deeg-Carlin
CGI coordinator of educational opportunities abroad

We Want to Hear From You!

We love getting mail. Send your thoughts, with your full name, address, and class year to Mieke Bomann, Alumnae Quarterly, 50 College St., South Hadley, MA 01075-1486 or mbomann@mtholyoke.edu. We reserve the right to edit letters, especially for length (300 words is ideal).

Be Part of a Quarterly Article

The *Quarterly* staff is gathering information for a feature article on “Redefining Retirement,” and invites your input. If you have something to say about living a vibrant, active, interesting life after retirement, please contact Emily Weir (eweir@mtholyoke.edu, or c/o Alumnae Association, 50 College St., S. Hadley, MA 01075-1486).