

MHC Social Innovation Initiative (SI²)

Program Guidelines and Resources

1. Foundation for Successful Proposals

Mount Holyoke urges students to ground SI² project proposals in thorough analysis, building on (a) academic coursework as well as (b) close knowledge of a community and its context.

- a. Academic coursework provides an understanding of mechanisms for social change, the complexity of global challenges, and the structures that enable and constrain both novel and traditional approaches to change. Students considering projects related to poverty alleviation may want to consider coursework in the Development Studies Nexus, for public health they may want to look to the 5 College Program in Culture, Health and Science, and so forth. EOS coursework is appropriate to multiple themes. Community Based Learning (CBL) courses include theory and application.
- b. If a student proposes a project outside of her home community, she should have an understanding of that community and its stakeholders through a CBL fellowship, study abroad, a research project or internship, or other sustained engagement.

2. MHC Resources for Social Innovation

Mount Holyoke makes available a range of resources to help students develop skills in social innovation and entrepreneurship, including:

- The Entrepreneurship Coordinator;
- The Entrepreneurship, Organizations and Society (EOS) Minor and courses in entrepreneurship;
- Internships with social entrepreneurs and enterprises (including Under the Mango Tree, Kakute, Kopernik, Sesame School, etc.) funded by Lynk/UAF;
- Opportunities to develop and test ideas through competitions (Pitch, Draper, Grinspoon); and
- The MHC Entrepreneurship Club.

3. Criteria for Funding

SI² asks students to develop project proposals that meet criteria of impact, sustainability, and partnerships that to ensure impact and appropriateness.

In order to receive Mount Holyoke seed funding, you must meet all 3 criteria. Applications for MHC seed funding must include a sustainability and partnership summary (described below). MHC believes that social innovation projects should strive for sustainability – particularly in terms of project impact and sustained commitment to community, but also ecological. Please describe your goals in this regard and specific steps you will take to ensure sustainability. Even if the implementation phase of your project will be time limited, the committee would like to see evidence of your intention to effect long-term impacts. The review committee also believes that partnerships (with community members, relevant organizations, and/or other social innovators) will be critical for your success. Change is a collaborative effort, requiring the participation of many. Your summary should name your project partners, briefly

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describe their respective roles, and the current status of the partnership (e.g., prospective, discussions begun, collaboration plan solidified). Where possible, we would like you to provide letters of prospective support from partners. (Please see below for appropriately handling communications with prospective partners.)

4. Commitment to Partners

SI² asks students to make a commitment to their projects whether or not they receive financial resources. While MHC students have often secured funding through MHC seed funding mechanisms, this is not guaranteed. Therefore, communications and relationships with (prospective) partners should be framed carefully. Prospective partners must be informed that funding is not guaranteed before they are asked to invest time in planning, writing letters of support, or dedicating their own – often scarce – resources. (Some partners, who have competed for grant or start-up funding before may understand this uncertainty; but students should not take this for granted.) Students might consider developing a primarily plan for action that can be carried out without funding, and a second enhanced (or operational) plan that can be carried out in the event funding is secured.

5. Funding Eligibility

First years, sophomores, and juniors are eligible for seed funding; seniors are eligible under special circumstances. Mount Holyoke is committed to investing in students who are prepared to tackle project implementation full time during the summer; additionally, bringing experience and ideas back to campus in the fall also has benefits for the MHC community. Therefore, seniors who can commit to at least 6 weeks of full time work following graduation and who can commit to sharing their experience with the MHC campus (through project reports, Skype consultations, etc.) will be considered for implementation funding. (Seniors will not be considered for planning funds.)

Students who have received funding from MHC under previous competitions (e.g., for CGI U) are not guaranteed additional funding under SI². Resources are limited and first priority will be to fund students who have not before had access to resources that might advance their social change projects.

For More Information

If students have questions about any of the above points, they are welcome to contact Rick Feldman, Entrepreneurship Coordinator and Visiting Lecturer in Economics (feldman@mtholyoke.edu) or Kirk Lange in the McCulloch Center for Global Initiatives (klange@mtholyoke.edu).

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Attachment 1: Proposal Template

- 1. Project name:**
- 2. Project location:**
- 3. Time commitment for project activities in 2017*:**
- 4. Description of need or opportunity:**
- 5. Intended impact:**
- 6. Specific activities to be carried out, with timeline:**
- 7. Concrete measures of impact:**
- 8. Statement of sustainability:**
- 9. Statement of partnership:**
- 10. Budget:**

*Note: funded students will sign an implementation agreement before receiving funds from MHC.