



Mount St. Dominic

ACADEMY

Empowering Young Women Since 1892

Caldwell NJ
All-Girls 220 Students

Interim Head of School
July 2021

msda tradition.excellence.distinction.

The Mission

Mount St. Dominic Academy, established by the Sisters of St. Dominic of Caldwell in 1892, is a Catholic, college preparatory school for young women. We are dedicated to the education of young women from a variety of ethnic, religious and economic backgrounds.

The Mount community is committed to seeking the Truth in all aspects of life. The students are able to realize their individual gifts and talents in an atmosphere that fosters academic excellence, respect for diversity, appreciation for the gifts of creation, moral integrity and a heritage rich in Christ-centered values.

Overview

For over 125 years, Mount St. Dominic Academy has been empowering young women. With veritas and caritas at its core, the Mount encourages students to question what they encounter in the world and to be the positive change they wish to see. The Mount calls on students to find their passions and put them into action. The Mount prepares students to be global citizens.

Sponsorship/Ownership

Mount St. Dominic Academy is sponsored by the Dominican Sisters of Caldwell. The Sisters also sponsor St. Dominic Academy, Lacordaire Academy and Caldwell University. The [Caldwell Dominicans](#) became an independent congregation in 1881 and began the [Mount in 1892](#). The Sisters are part of a larger order founded by St. Dominic 800 years ago. There are more than 27,000 Dominican religious in over 100 countries around the world. The Dominican Order is a global community of preachers, educators and scholars.

Dominican Education

An education at the Mount reflects the Four Pillars of Dominican life. Prayer, study, community and mission are the foundation for a successful and meaningful future. Just as St. Dominic inspired his followers with loyalty to learning and virtue, the Mount endeavors to inspire action on behalf of justice and peace and instill a lifelong passion for learning and truth.

The Mount is committed to the education of young women and seeks to help students reach their full potential, to become leaders who will make a difference in the world. The single-gender environment is a critical component of the school's success in education, one that allows the young women to focus on their studies, grow into strong leaders and flourish as individuals.

As a community of changemakers, the Mount's program provides instruction and resources needed to develop essential skills in critical analysis, independent inquiry and effective communication. The [curriculum](#) establishes the foundation for a lifetime of seeking truth through knowledge, dialogue and participation. A Mount education ignites a passion for social justice and civic engagement. In addition, through the lens of Catholic Social Teachings, students develop their own spirituality while learning about social justice around the globe, expanding their world vision and investigating how they can affect positive change in society. Courses in social justice and spirituality galvanize students into action and empower them to advocate for peace, justice, and equality. For more information regarding the special programs available to students with specific interests in STEM, leadership, entrepreneurship and social justice, please follow the link [here](#).

Co-curricular activities play an integral part in the life of every Mount student and complement the classroom-based endeavors of the students. These opportunities enrich the students' academic and spiritual experiences while promoting community and fulfilling the Dominican mission to serve others — both at the Mount and in the world beyond. As an all-girls' institution, female athletes are always in the spotlight. The school offers numerous opportunities for a range of levels and interests. ([athletics](#)) The Mount firmly believes that the arts add texture to the students' lives and that participation in the arts helps each of the student develop her voice and communicate her unique vision of the world. ([arts](#)) Finally, the Mount offers a broad range of clubs and organizations that present the students with opportunities to get involved, take ownership and lead. These include the Siena Community Service program, the Dominican Preachers group, student government and campus ministry to name but a few.

The School Community

The Mount girls spoke about the special environment that they have around them, the warm, tight community of friends, faculty and staff and families. They value the opportunity for academic and personal growth that is available to them and the strong sense of sisterhood that permeates across the campus. The young women know that faculty fully support them as they

focus on self empowerment through academics, athletics and the arts. Faculty and staff at the Mount are strongly committed to girls' education. There is a sense of community underpinned by the history of the Sisters in developing women who make a difference in the world.



The Future

Sr. Frances Sullivan, O.P. '60, who has served as head of school for the past 23 years recently announced her retirement. The timing requires that an interim head be in place for the coming academic year to assist the board and the school in focusing on specific areas and laying the foundation for a smooth transition for the permanent head. As such, key areas of focus for the interim head of school are as follows:

Dominican Catholic Identity: The Dominican charism is integral to all that is done at the Mount. The school is preparing for the reality that it will most likely not have a Dominican Sister as its next head of school. With this likely transition from religious to lay leadership, the interim head will be entrusted to continue to promote the Dominican Catholic identity and to carry on the mission, tradition and charism of the Dominican Sisters. Specifically, the interim head will ensure that these foundational elements inform and shape all that is done at the Mount.

Institutional Advancement: The interim head will be responsible for enhancing meaningful relationships both internally and externally with all constituents (Sisters, faculty, parents, students, alums, donors, the greater Caldwell community, etc.). She/he will take a leading role in developing a comprehensive advancement program, which includes enrollment management, alumnae relations, fundraising, as well as marketing and outreach to ensure that the school has the necessary resources to fulfill its vision and mission of educating young women and maintain its strong position in the Caldwell community. The interim head will articulate and convey to both the external and internal communities the distinctive value of Mount St. Dominic Academy, its Dominican Catholic identity, the outstanding academic and co-curricular programs and the wonderful community, all of which are the hallmarks of the school.

Finances: The interim head of school will ensure the continued viability of the Mount's long-term finances by appropriately weighting income and expense, including tuition affordability, faculty and staff compensation, other program revenue and intensive fundraising. The interim head, in collaboration with the board, will work to continue to enhance the resources as well as establish policies, procedures and practices that protect the long-term financial stability of the school and allow the school to deliver on its mission.

Administration/Faculty: Mount St. Dominic Academy benefits from a committed and dedicated professional faculty, staff and administration. The interim head will continue to effectively engage and mobilize this talent to carry out the mission of the school. As a leader, she/he will work closely with the leadership team to facilitate the school's commitment to academic excellence, ensure the continued growth of teachers and develop strong working teams while delegating appropriately and ensuring accountability. It is critical that the interim head provides for a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities. In collaboration with the dean of academics, the interim head will be attentive to working with faculty ensuring that they not only bring their

expertise and desire to fully embrace the Mount but will fully model and live out the core values of the school which are informed by the charism of the Dominican Sisters.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion: The Mount is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and there is opportunity to build upon this to ensure that the school's commitment is fully realized. Mount St. Dominic Academy seeks to further develop a more respectful and inclusive community consisting of many interesting and diverse components, all of which have meaningful, valued voices and a stake in enriching and enlivening the Mount. The interim head must be relentless in maintaining a community culture at the Mount that honors and embraces diversity and inclusivity.

Strategic Vision: With the transition in leadership, there is an opportunity for the interim, in collaboration with the board, to begin a strategic visioning process, one that establishes an educational vision for the Mount and that unifies the school, recognizes the realities of current educational trends, especially in the education of young women, and balances this with what is appropriate in the context of the Mount's traditions, core values and beliefs. The board and the interim head must establish strategic priorities and ensure that they allow the school to continue to be relevant, that it clearly establishes the key objectives to guide the work of the board and school's leadership and is consistent with the mission and philosophy of the school.

Caldwell University: The Mount and Caldwell University are both sponsored by the Dominican Sisters and are on a common property. The histories and facilities of the two institutions are very much interconnected and, while there have been efforts over the years to leverage this connection, there is an opportunity to evaluate and determine how the Mount might capitalize on this relationship to potentially enhance its program so that it could provide unique opportunities for the students and would also have an advantage in a competitive school market.

Desired Qualities and Qualifications

The board and the school community are interested in candidates who can embrace, articulate and promote the Mount's Dominican Catholic identity as well as its dedication to prayer, study, community and mission. Paramount to success is the candidate's proven ability to embrace the Dominican core values and her/his ability to maintain and model the school's Dominican Catholic mission.

The interim head must be a person of faith who is able to build a school's faith community and is mission-focused, with demonstrated experience in an educational setting. This individual must be student-focused, a visionary with a passion for, and leadership experience in, education, particularly in the education of young women and the willingness to support a culture of learning and high expectations. In addition to being a strategic thinker and skillful manager, the successful candidate is an energizing and inspirational individual who can delegate effectively while ensuring accountability. She/he will have the ability to work closely and comfortably with the board in building a partnership in governance and leadership as well as the desire to be present, visible and engaged with the Mount community. A candidate must have strong communication skills, both written and oral, so that all stakeholders can be appropriately informed of potential needs and issues.

The interim head will have an understanding of organizational dynamics so that appropriate professional structures can be established and maintained to ensure strong collaboration among faculty and staff, mentoring and encouraging them in a direct yet positive way to facilitate their responsibility to providing excellence. The successful candidate will be collaborative and transparent, able to build capacity, be genuinely inviting and respecting the perspectives of others yet be decisive when required. Finally, this individual will have a true love of and appreciation for the school's culture, its deep history and traditions and for educating young women.

The Search Process

Mount St. Dominic Academy has engaged the national executive search firm, Educational Directions, to assist with the search. Candidates should submit all information as soon as possible to the search consultants: Mathew Heersche, Ed.D. mheersche@edu-directions.com, Risa Oganessoff Heersche rheersche@edu-directions.com

Electronic submission of materials is required. **Please send materials in a consolidated pdf format.** Reference letters should be submitted separately.

Candidates should submit the following documents:

- Targeted cover letter explaining their interest and qualifications for the interim head of school at Mount St.Dominic Academy
- Brief personal statement that includes the candidate's vision on leading Mount St. Dominic Academy
- Current resume
- Names, e-mail addresses and telephone numbers of five references