

HIGH MOUNTAIN INSTITUTE

Position Opening | Head of School



SUMMARY

The High Mountain Institute is seeking a unique and talented leader to succeed the founders as Head of School of this preeminent educational institution. This position requires an individual whose values and attitude embody and exemplify the school's mission of promoting personal and academic growth through the foundation of strong intentional community and meaningful interaction with the natural world. Passionate, imaginative, and transformative leaders with exceptional integrity and communication skills are encouraged to apply.

MISSION

HMI nurtures personal growth through interaction with nature and participation in a strong community. We promote intellectual, physical and personal development through insistence on academic excellence, our philosophy of mentoring and apprenticeship, and rigorous experiential learning. We seek to promote independent thinking and to develop skills of learning and habits of mind that both enhance self-reliance and transfer beyond the boundaries of HMI.

POSITION

The High Mountain Institute is a non-profit, co-educational high school semester and summer school based just outside of the beautiful Rocky Mountain town of Leadville, Colorado. HMI's close-knit and supportive community fosters academic growth, leadership experience, and the development of interpersonal skills, greatly enriching the lives of the students who attend.

HMI offers a variety of programs including: the HMI Semester, a four-month academic and wilderness school for high school juniors offered in the Fall and Spring; the Summer Term, a six-week academic enrichment program for high school students offered each summer; the High Peaks Adventure course for 14-15 year olds offered each summer; the Apprentice Program, a professional residency in traditional and outdoor education for recent college graduates; wilderness medicine courses offered in partnership with the Wilderness Medicine Institute of NOLS (WFR's, WFA's, and re-cert. courses); and several avalanche trainings each January.

The school's mission is focused on developing connections to the natural world and the junction point between intellectual and outdoor pursuits. HMI is dedicated to the development of its high-caliber students through the combination of a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum, real interactions with the natural world, and the active facilitation of a small intentional community.

HMI's enduring credo, Where Nature and Minds Meet, emphasizes the school's pedagogical commitment to experiential, place-based learning. Through interaction with the natural world, students are given an enlivening opportunity to test themselves and their abilities while transcending the boundaries of their knowledge and past experience.

The High Mountain Institute's next Head of School will take the lead of this distinctive, established, and highly functional high school education and wilderness semester school. The Head of School will oversee the operations of the HMI Semester, Summer Term, Apprentice Program, High Peaks Adventure, and the various wilderness education programs that run out of HMI's Leadville campus.

The Head of School is responsible for overseeing the wellbeing and development of 42 students per semester and between 30 and 60 students in the summer, with the explicit goal of promoting and sustaining exceptional student outcomes. Risk management is a priority; therefore, a strong understanding of risk management as it pertains to wilderness travel and residential campus life is a strongly preferred skill.

Since the school's founding, HMI has built itself into a trusted and reputable school with consistent enrollment, stable financials, and steady development. The next Head of School will carry forward these standards, while sustaining HMI's quality of experiential education.

With this in mind, the High Mountain Institute seeks an entrepreneurial, magnetic, and dedicated leader with the managerial skills necessary to carry forward HMI's programs and development. A prevailing passion for the school's mission and vibrant community must go hand-in-hand with a commitment to the education of young people. Charisma and excellent communication skills are necessary to lead an energetic faculty, staff, and student body, as well as to interact with sending schools, families, donors, and potential students.

The new Head of School must have the vision and confidence to carry HMI into the future, furthering its long-term sustainability and looking always to enhancing the program's transformative and empowering student experience.





LOCATION

Ideally positioned in the Rocky Mountains of central Colorado, HMI is located just five miles outside the town of Leadville at an elevation of 10,200 feet – the highest incorporated city in the nation. Just a two hour drive west of Denver – the main arrival point of the school's students – HMI's spacious, wooded campus looks out at Mount Elbert and Mount Massive, the tallest peaks in the Rocky Mountains.

While they are here, groups of eight to twelve students live together in one of five rustic cabins. Each cabin has two bunkrooms and a small living room with a wood-burning stove – the cabin's heat-source – at the center. Each cabin's lighting is entirely solar powered. The Main Building has classrooms, a library, dining hall, offices and numerous places to meet and study. Mt. Elbert is the focal point for the spectacular view from Who's Hall, the central meeting room in the building. The East Building contains more classrooms, a climbing wall, and storage for all of our wilderness equipment. Both buildings have extensive porches and decks that serve as outdoor classrooms. Stuen Hall, an octagonal structure adjacent to the Main Building, is used as a classroom, a place for community meetings, and houses Full Circle – our reflective equivalent to a graduation ceremony. The most recent addition to campus, opened in January 2011, is the West Building, which contains the primary student bathrooms and showers, laundry facilities, as well as apprentice housing and offices.

Beyond the structures, the campus is full of attributes that utilize the surroundings to benefit the student experience: a field beyond the Main Building facilitates soccer and frisbee matches; a nearby fire pit in an open grove of trees is often used for community gatherings; a network of running trails zigzag across the campus, transforming into cross-country ski trails in the winter.

HMI takes full advantage of its location in the Sawatch mountain range, next to the Arkansas River and San Isabel National Forest, where classes are often held and through which student expeditions regularly travel. Within an eight hour drive are the desert canyons of Utah, and closer still are numerous wilderness areas and mountain ranges, all places where students encounter the stunning natural beauty of the American West.



HISTORY

HMI was founded in 1995 by Molly and Christopher Barnes – the current, but departing, Co-Heads of School. Having taught and led students at a variety of schools and outdoor programs, the pair came up with a vision of their own. After narrowing in on the school's mission and unique combination of wilderness experience and high-school education, the couple purchased land in Leadville, Colorado and filed as a 501(c)3.

The school opened its doors to students in the fall of 1998 for the first semester. The arriving students encountered a swinging piece of plywood for the front door of the Main Building and a school in its infancy. Nevertheless, it marked the beginning of a program that has consistently transformed young minds and given high school students the opportunity of a lifetime.

HMI has grown steadily and significantly since. Enrollment has increased over the years, as have the number of dedicated faculty and staff. The wilderness, residential and academic programs have been honed and refined. What began as a semester school has taken on various summer courses, added an academic Summer Term, and has consistently engaged the community of Leadville, creating programs to benefit local students.

PROGRAMS

Place-based learning is a hallmark of the HMI curriculum. Ecology courses come to life on the banks of the nearby Arkansas River; historical discussions of western water rights are made explicit on trips through the desert of southeastern Utah; the themes of American Transcendentalist writers come alive as students encounter for themselves the inspiring beauty of which they read.

While the majority of each term is spent on campus in Leadville, a variety of wilderness backpacking and ski expeditions – three expeditions each Semester, two during the Summer Term – punctuate the student experience. These trips allow students to apply class work first hand, in the field, while finding worthy challenges to strengthen their developing leadership skills. Expeditions allow students to work together to implement and achieve palpable goals, strengthening interpersonal bonds and fostering self-confidence.

Yet, just as much importance is placed on the day-to-day activities of the HMI Semester and Summer Term. On campus, classes are held six days a week, with Sundays typically reserved for outings. Alongside class work, an average day at HMI includes chores, cook crews, morning exercise: activities that promote personal responsibility and a commitment to the greater community. Paramount in all of this is a level of enjoyment and engagement in every activity and project that the students face. Working together, students and faculty strive to find enjoyment in everything they do.

A chief characteristic of the HMI experience is the close-knit community that forms between the individuals participating in each and every one of the school's programs. Through interaction with their peers, instructors, and the natural world, HMI students collectively create an environment based on interdependence, joint effort, and shared experience. This environment fosters a level of comfort and support that provides students with a productive and encouraging atmosphere in which to learn, grow, and try new forms of leadership.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

- ▶ As the face and figurehead of HMI, leads and supports the HMI community as an advisor and role model for students, families, faculty, staff, apprentices, alumni, prospective students and sending schools.
- ▶ Advocates for HMI's mission and pedagogical commitments, and understands the values and culture from which the school has grown, while carrying the school forward.
- ▶ Personally connects with students and families; involved in campus residential life.
- ▶ Actively leads development efforts, including annual campaigns, the endowment, and capital campaigns.
- ▶ Provides oversight of all HMI programming and day to day operations.
- ▶ Maintains, furthers and participates in HMI's wilderness programming and wilderness risk management.
- ▶ Maintains, inspires, creates, and balances HMI's culture.
- ▶ Provides financial and budget oversight and leadership.
- ▶ Provides academic interdisciplinary vision while balancing residential life, wilderness programming and scholastics.
- ▶ Serves as primary liaison to Board of Trustees, including member development, preparation for board meetings, and co-creation of strategic priorities.
- ▶ Responsible for HMI's long term success; develops and implements strategies that further the school's mission.
- ▶ Helps HMI continue to be one of the premier Semester Schools on a national level; fosters and develops relationships with partner schools.

QUALIFICATIONS

The Board of Trustees of the High Mountain Institute is looking for a dynamic leader with the integrity and confidence to lead HMI into the future. Specific qualifications include:

- ▶ Competent in experiential outdoor education and wilderness expeditions, with a demonstrated passion for the wilderness.
- ▶ Previous experience as Head of School, Assistant Head of School, or Executive Director preferred.
- ▶ Track record of success with marketing, fundraising and alumni relations.
- ▶ Experience with small intentional communities, preferably residential education.
- ▶ Proven educator; experience with teenagers in boarding school, semester school, and classroom settings preferred.
- ▶ Possess an understanding of the independent school environment, especially current and evolving standards and priorities.
- ▶ Previous management experience required, including personnel, operations, budgets and board governance.
- ▶ Master's degree or equivalent preferred.
- ▶ Experience in all three legs of the HMI platform: academics, wilderness, and community.

Position Opening | Head of School

All inquiries and initial submissions should be directed via electronic mail to headsearch@hminet.org
We cannot guarantee that correspondence sent directly to HMI will be forwarded.

Applications are requested by August 10, 2012.

Applications should consist of the following items as separate pdf documents:

- 1) Cover letter, including a personal statement and educational philosophy
- 2) Resume

Initial applications will be reviewed confidentially by the search committee to select semi-finalists. For more information regarding the search please visit www.hminet.org/head-search.

The High Mountain Institute is an equal opportunity employer.

