

# Muhlenberg

Magazine

FALL 2022

## In Search of Cures

Dr. Howard E. Gendelman '75  
researches novel ways to treat  
HIV, Parkinson's and Alzheimer's

### **It All Adds Up**

Accounting majors have the tools  
to build successful careers

### **President's Report**

As Muhlenberg turns 175, we  
plan for its continued excellence

Howard Gendelman, MD



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Decades of research on neurodegenerative disorders enabled Dr. Howard E. Gendelman '75 to bring potentially game-changing treatments to clinical trials.



**It All Adds Up**

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Accounting students graduate with enough credits to sit for the certified public accountant exam, the technical knowledge to succeed in the field and the well-roundedness that's fostered by Muhlenberg's liberal arts education.

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**ON THE COVER** Dr. Howard E. Gendelman '75 at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC), where he's conducted research since 1993. Photo by Richard Watson, Multimedia Manager, UNMC

## From the President

The fall semester is well underway and the campus is alive with the discovery, collaboration and community that only exist here at Muhlenberg. As you'll read in my report in this issue (page 29), this year we welcomed an extraordinary new class of outstanding students — the most diverse in our history — who were drawn here to the Lehigh Valley from across the region, our country and the world by the powerful blend of liberal arts education and hands-on learning that takes place every day on our campus.

As we prepare to celebrate our 175th anniversary in 2023, we're reflecting on the strengths of our traditions as well as the depth and distinctiveness of the programs that are fueling powerful student outcomes. Our Accounting Program is a powerhouse in both attracting talented students and preparing them to succeed (page 38). One hundred percent of the Class of 2022 graduates from this program seeking jobs secured employment by graduation — that's right, 100 percent! This success is thanks in part to our unique model, which provides students with enough credit hours as undergraduates to take the CPA exam, a requirement that can only be met through a master's degree at most peer institutions.

Making an impact is what a Muhlenberg education is all about, as evidenced by our many alumni in health care and health-care-related fields who played such pivotal roles during the depths of the pandemic and beyond. In this issue, we learn more about the world-changing work of Dr. Howard E. Gendelman '75 (page 32). Dr. Gendelman's team is the first in the world to eliminate HIV from an infected animal. His story — of a globally significant scientist physician who began his journey studying natural science and Russian studies at Muhlenberg — is a true testament to the power of the liberal arts, where a deep exploration of science is layered with an understanding of the human experience seen through the lenses of history and culture.

Our students and alumni are driven to use their education to make a positive impact on their community, and later this year, we will cut the ribbon on a remarkable new space on campus designed to facilitate such innovation and public engagement. As you'll read in this issue (on page 8), at Alumni Weekend we celebrated the generosity and vision of Gerald P. Fahy '79 and Cathleen A. Fahy with the naming of our first new academic building in 16 years, the Fahy Commons. Not only will this building be a home for our academic, experiential and community programs, but it is also designed to meet some of the world's highest sustainability standards.

Wherever you are in your journey as a member of the Muhlenberg community, I hope you will find inspiration in these stories and take pride in the impact that our College has on the world.

**Kathleen E. Harring**  
President

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## A Very Muhlenberg Ukulele

When College shuttle driver **Gary Gritz** read “Why I Build Ukuleles” (Spring 2022), the story of instrument builder **Jon Dale '73**, he had an idea: He was planning to retire in the next year or two, having worked at Muhlenberg since 2006, and he wanted to get himself a retirement gift. He contacted Dale about building him a custom Muhlenberg ukulele — Gritz, a guitar player, figured he could learn the smaller instrument. The ukulele is made almost entirely of Pennsylvania woods (red cedar, black walnut, sycamore and poplar) and its inlays (pictured here, on the College Green) are all Muhlenberg-themed.

WE WANT  
**TO HEAR  
FROM YOU**

If you see a story you like (or don't like), put your thoughts into an email to [magazine@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:magazine@muhlenberg.edu). If we publish your letter in a future issue, we'll send you a free Muhlenberg T-shirt.

## ONLINE STORIES NOT TO MISS

Check out these features on the Muhlenberg website.

### Constructive Summer

A research experience at Harvard Business School. An in-person internship at a county district attorney's homicide bureau. A remote internship at a UN agency dedicated to expanding global broadband access. These opportunities are a few of the many ways Muhlenberg students used the summer to learn, grow and gain experience that will help them this academic year and beyond. To read these stories and more, visit [muhlenberg.edu/summerstories](http://muhlenberg.edu/summerstories).



### Holy Cow, He's on Broadway

Kennedy Kanagawa '08, the puppeteer behind Milky White in *Into the Woods*, says he tried to quit acting three separate times, but it kept pulling him back in. “I eventually came to this very Zen moment of realization,” he says. “I am not doing this for the end goal of being on Broadway. I am just happy performing ... As soon as I made peace with that, I ended up making my Broadway debut.” Read about how he landed the part, without prior puppetry experience or an audition, at [muhlenberg.edu/kanagawa](http://muhlenberg.edu/kanagawa).

### Refreshing the Force

Alejandra (Alee) Long G'22, who received a master's in organizational leadership from Muhlenberg in October, is a 20-year military veteran who is now a master sergeant and senior human resources sergeant in the Pennsylvania Army National Guard (PAARNG). She had trained as a suicide intervention officer (SIO), but she discovered that her training was out of date at a time when she needed it most. For her capstone project to complete her master's, she developed a refresher course for trained SIOs in PAARNG. To learn more about her experience, visit [muhlenberg.edu/aleelong](http://muhlenberg.edu/aleelong).



# Muhlenberg Receives \$500K Gift to Expand Emerging Leaders Program

The gift will increase the number of students who can participate in the program, extend the duration of the program and support the program's writing components.

**M**uhlenberg has received a \$500,000 gift from Barry Weshnak '66 and Carol Anne Cawley Weshnak to expand the Emerging Leaders Program, which offers students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups an opportunity to belong to a community of future leaders. The gift will allow the College to add a third cohort of 15 students to each class of Emerging Leaders, to expand Emerging Leaders from a two-year program to a four-year program (and its pre-orientation from three days to seven) and to grow the writing-related components of the program, which align with Muhlenberg's focus on developing the writing and communication expertise of all students.

expansion supports the College's work as part of the American Talent Initiative, which aims to educate more talented low- and moderate-income students. "I am grateful that they share Muhlenberg's commitment to developing a diverse population of leaders and to broadening the impact of the Emerging Leaders Program."

In 2020, Harring committed to securing increased funding for Emerging Leaders and developing a plan to extend its duration to cover the entire four-year Muhlenberg experience.

The Emerging Leaders expansion will support an increasingly diverse student body; the incoming Class of 2026 included 20 percent first-generation students and 29 percent students of color, the most diverse class the College has ever seen.

"As co-director of the Emerging Leaders Program for the last four years, I have seen the tremendous impact our program has on our students, helping them to thrive academically, professionally and socially. My only regret has been knowing that there are many more students who could benefit from our program, who want to be involved, than we have the capacity to serve," says Chief Diversity Officer and Associate Provost for Equity and Inclusion Brooke Vick. "This gift is going to make a huge difference in our ability to work with a larger percentage of students and keep them connected with us throughout their four years at Muhlenberg."

Barry, who was a social science major at Muhlenberg, is owner and principal at Barrymor Enterprises of New Jersey, a real estate development and property management company. He has

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***"The Emerging Leaders have demonstrated that they are scholars and leaders, and they enrich Muhlenberg College's intellectual community."***

—ROBIN RILEY-CASEY, ASSOCIATE DEAN OF STUDENTS  
AND DIRECTOR OF STUDENT DIVERSITY INITIATIVES

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"Barry and Carol Weshnak's gift supports the College's goals to recruit a diverse student body and to ensure that all students have access to a transformative Muhlenberg education," says President Kathleen Harring, noting that the

also served for 12 years as board president of Big Brothers Big Sisters of Coastal & Northern New Jersey, an organization he's been involved with for 16 years.

Barry learned about Emerging Leaders after watching a "little brother" he and Carol mentored since age 6 attend and graduate from college in New Jersey. The state has a program called the Educational Opportunity Fund, which allows students from educationally and economically disadvantaged backgrounds to move to campus early and make connections with peers, faculty and staff. Through conversations with his alma mater, he learned about the Emerging Leaders Program and the College's commitment to expanding it.

"The Emerging Leaders have demonstrated that they are scholars and leaders, and they enrich Muhlenberg College's intellectual community," says Associate Dean of Students and Director of Student Diversity Initiatives Robin Riley-Casey, who co-directs the program with Vick. "This gift offered by the Weshnak

family will strengthen and increase the scholastic resources that support student success. It is with great appreciation that the Emerging Leaders accept this gift."

The gift is coming from the Morris & Clara Weshnak Family Foundation, which the Weshnaks established in honor of Barry's late parents.

"The core mission for the foundation is the health and education of children," Barry says. "The Emerging Leaders Program fits in there because most of those students coming [to Muhlenberg for pre-orientation] are going to be 17 or 18 years old. So it fits within that mission to help them have a jump-start on success in the hopes they'll reach their full potential."

The Weshnaks have an extensive history of giving to the College, including the establishment of The Barry Weshnak '66 and Carol Anne Cawley Weshnak Endowed Scholarship Fund in Sustainability Studies, The Weshnak Family Scholarship Fund and The Dr. Charles S. Bednar Scholarship Fund. — *Meghan Kita*

*Emerging Leaders participate in a collage-making event on September 16.*



PHOTO BY KRISTI MORRIS

# Brooke Vick Appointed Chief Diversity Officer



Brooke Vick, who has served as the College's associate provost for faculty and diversity initiatives since her arrival in 2018, is the inaugural appointment to the chief diversity officer position.

"I am pleased to appoint Dr. S. Brooke Vick as the College's first chief diversity officer and associate provost for equity and inclusion," President Kathleen Haring says. "Over the past several years, she has served as an integral partner and collaborator in Muhlenberg's efforts to ensure our community meets our commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging. I look forward to working with her as we continue this essential work."

In her new role, Vick will serve as a member of the president's senior staff as well as the provost's senior staff. As chair of the President's Diversity Advisory Council, she will collaborate with the president to identify annual priorities, oversee the development of an annual Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging (DEIB) Report and create a College dashboard. Vick will also represent Muhlenberg at consortial, regional and national meetings that address these priorities. She will be responsible for the coordination and support of faculty and staff in advancing the College's DEIB goals in learning, teaching and operations.

Vick earned a B.A. in psychology, with a minor in women's studies, from Colorado College and an M.A. and Ph.D. in social psychology from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

## Adrian Shanker '09 Joins Biden-Harris Administration

Adrian Shanker '09, who founded Allentown's Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, is serving as senior advisor on LGBTQI+ health equity in the Office of the Assistant Secretary for Health within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. He began the role on October 11. Previously, he was executive director of the Spahr Center in Marin County, just north of San Francisco, a role he began in April of this year.

"I am deeply humbled by the invitation to join the Biden-Harris administration in this role and I look forward to supporting the administration's efforts to advance health equity for the LGBTQI+ community," Shanker said in a press release at the time of the appointment.

Last year, Shanker, who was a political science and religion studies double major at Muhlenberg, joined the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS, which "provides advice, information and recommendations to the Secretary of Health & Human Services regarding programs, policies and research to promote effective treatment, prevention and cure of HIV disease and AIDS," according to its website.

During his time at the Spahr Center, Shanker expanded programming for LGBTQI+ families, launched its Training Institute, oversaw a rebranding of its website and logo and advocated for monkeypox vaccine access. —MK



PHOTO BY LIBBY REYFF



PHOTO BY KRISTI MORRIS

*Lehigh County's Director of Corrections Janine Donate (left to right) discusses the College's Inside-Out Program with President Kathleen Haring, Senator Bob Casey and Professor of Psychology Kate Richmond '00.*

## Muhlenberg's Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program Receives \$231,000 Grant

Muhlenberg hosted a round-table discussion on July 25 with U.S. Senator Bob Casey of Pennsylvania about the \$231,000 Congressionally directed grant from the U.S. Department of Education the College received for its Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program. The program, launched in the spring of 2018 by Professor of Psychology Kate Richmond '00 and developed in partnership with the Lehigh County Department of Corrections, is the first to offer college-level courses inside a Lehigh Valley correctional facility. Richmond's course, in which 15 incarcerated "inside" students and 15 campus-based "outside" students attend class together within the prison walls, deals with mass incarceration in the United States. In addition to Casey and Richmond, the round-table discussion included Inside-Out alumni, President Kathleen Haring, representatives from Lehigh County's Department of Corrections and Muhlenberg's Assessment and Outreach Librarian Jess Denke, an instructor and program coordinator for Inside-Out at the College.

The program is inspired by the National Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program, and its goals — to offer for-credit liberal arts courses within the Lehigh County Department of Corrections that would easily transfer to Lehigh Valley colleges and universities, to build a community of higher education practitioners

committed to supporting local incarcerated students and to share promising practices in Pennsylvania and across the country — are closer to reality thanks to support from Casey and the grant.

"I believe mass incarceration is a public health crisis," Richmond said during the discussion, noting that local prisons are currently the top providers of mental health services in the area. And while there are many valuable job training programs in the correctional system, she says this program is not just a route to a job: "We are focused on the human." Sitting across a table from one another raises the stakes, she says. It helps people communicate at a deeper level and better understand the hurdles some members of our community face.

"We all want to be connected to good jobs; we all want to be connected to our family and our community," Richmond said. "And once we establish relationships with each other, we're able to tackle the hard questions."

In addition to the courses, the grant will help fund a think tank that facilitates dialogue about mass incarceration between Muhlenberg faculty, staff and Inside-Out alumni. The grant will also support a research lab, a team of faculty, staff and student researchers who will assess learning outcomes, evaluate success and report findings. —*Kristine Yahna Todaro '84*

# Muhlenberg Naming Ceremony Reveals **Fahy Commons**

The building was made possible thanks to a gift from Gerald P. Fahy '79 and Cathleen A. Fahy, the largest personal gift in Muhlenberg College history.



PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON

*Progress on the Fahy Commons as of August 2022. The building is set to be completed before the end of the year.*

**O**n Friday, September 23, Muhlenberg College alumni, faculty, staff and students gathered at the site of the College's newest academic building for a ceremony that answered a question.

In 2020, Gerald P. Fahy '79 and Cathleen A. Fahy made a \$7.5 million gift to Muhlenberg College, the largest personal gift in the institution's history, that would provide significant support for two major capital projects: the development of a new academic building adjacent to Trexler Library on the south side of Muhlenberg's campus as well as

the future expansion and enhancement of The J. Conrad and Hazel J. Seegers Union. At the time, the Fahys chose to remain anonymous.

Nearly two years later, the Fahys joined Muhlenberg College President Kathleen Harring, leaders of *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg*, members of the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff and students for a ceremony that acknowledged their contributions to Muhlenberg and officially named the new space: the Fahy Commons.

"The principles that guided the Fahy Commons' design align perfectly with our interdisciplinary approach to the liberal arts: inspire creativity and teach design; contribute to student, faculty, staff and community attraction and retention; build connections with others and social interaction; design a space that is flexible and adaptable; and promote physical and mental wellbeing," said President Kathleen Harring in her remarks.

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***The building brings together programs designed to deepen engagement with the public and build opportunities for interdisciplinary innovation.***

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The Fahy Commons will be a 20,000-square-foot, three-floor building featuring student program and academic spaces. It intentionally brings together programs designed to deepen engagement with the public and build opportunities for interdisciplinary innovation. The Schools of Graduate and Continuing Studies, the Office of Community Engagement, the Muhlenberg Institute of Public Opinion and the Innovation & Entrepreneurship Program, in addition to art studio spaces, will all be located in the Fahy Commons.

The new building will be one of the first buildings in the world expected to achieve the Living Building Challenge Core Green Building Certification, a rigorous sustainability standard by the International Living Future Institute. The Fahy Commons is also being built to pursue LEED Gold certification. The building is scheduled for completion in December 2022 and will open to the Muhlenberg community for the Spring 2023 semester.

During the ceremony, Gerald Fahy said, “We were particularly drawn to be able to support the building’s functions to facilitate students to be innovative, creative, entrepreneurial inventors and artistic while fostering community engagement and activism. Today’s ever complex and rapidly changing world requires that. We are providing the resources that step up our efforts to meet these challenges.”

Gerald Fahy was recruited to Muhlenberg by the late Frank Marino, beloved football coach from 1970 to 1980, and was a running back on the Muhlenberg team. His other campus activities included membership in the Alpha Tau Omega fraternity, where he eventually served as president. In 1979, Gerald graduated with a degree in business administration.

He founded and owns Kenvil United Corp, an organization that specializes in installing steel, precast concrete and cranes for multi-story and high-rise buildings. Gerald and Cathleen have owned and operated their construction company for more than 42 years. While working, Cathleen cared for their four children, and now, their seven grandchildren. Prominent building projects have included the Statue of Liberty Renovation and Museum and the construction of hospitals, colleges, schools and multi-story buildings in New Jersey, New York and Pennsylvania.



PHOTO BY KRISTI MORRIS



PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON

*Top of page, at right: Tours of the Fahy Commons were offered during Alumni Weekend.*

*Above: Vice President for Advancement Rebekkah Brown '99, President Kathleen Harring, Cathleen A. Fahy, Gerald P. Fahy '79 and Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg co-chairs Tammy Bormann '83 P'16 and Mark Paris '80 P'16 at the Fahy Commons naming ceremony*



PHOTO BY KRISTI MORRIS

# Inside the Cell

Professor of Biology and Co-Director of Biochemistry Amy Hark shares her interest in genes and gene expression with students in the classroom, in her lab and via a research consortium she's been part of since 2009.

**P**rofessor of Biology and Co-Director of Biochemistry Amy Hark studies the regulation of gene function. If that sentence makes you want to turn the page, wait: She can explain what she does in terms that are approachable, even for the science-averse.

“Something that is important to me in my professional life is to be able to talk about science not only with people who identify as scientists but also with people who identify in other professional

sectors or even as science-phobic,” she says. “Some of the best teaching experiences I’ve had have been with non-majors, some of whom are really scared to take college science classes.”

As an undergraduate at the College of William & Mary studying biology, she already knew that she eventually wanted to teach. She also found a home in a specific type of biology: “I figured out that what I liked was what I call ‘cells down,’ or anything smaller than a cell: What’s going on inside a cell that drives living systems?”

Here’s some of the story: Within a cell, the nucleus houses strands of DNA molecules called chromosomes. Each chromosome includes hundreds of shorter sequences called genes, each of which serves a purpose in the larger organism. Each gene can be switched on or off (expressed or not expressed), and its status can instruct the cell to do (or stop doing) certain things. For example, humans have a gene called P53 that, when activated, instructs cells to make a protein that puts the brakes on cell division. If a person has a DNA change that prevents P53 from being switched on, they can’t make that protein. Without it, cancerous tumors can grow unchecked.

But what switches genes on or off? As a Ph.D. student at Princeton University, Hark studied how a gene’s placement on a strand of DNA in relation to other genes might affect its expression. As a postdoctoral researcher at Michigan State University, she studied the relationship between how DNA is packaged within a cell and gene expression. In between, she took a sabbatical year to teach at Kalamazoo College in Michigan, an atypical move born out of her love for teaching.

“I liked being in a lab, but something I realized about myself during grad school is that I thrive and I do better when I’m doing multiple things,” Hark says. “So a hundred percent research, which is what most Ph.D. [programs] are like, was not the long-term goal for me. A hundred percent teaching wouldn’t have been the perfect fit either.”

*Below, Hark teaching an introductory biology course; at right, Hark with the plants used in her lab*



PHOTOS BY RYAN HULVAT

***“I love being in an environment where students are still seeking a broad education, but they’re also in this place of figuring out some of the things that excite them the most.”***

—AMY HARK (BIOLOGY)

She's excelled at both at Muhlenberg, where she's won the Lindback Foundation Award for Distinguished Teaching, the Paul C. Empie '29 Memorial Award for Excellence in Teaching and the Bridge Builder's Award, a recognition conferred by students who utilize the Academic Resource Center upon faculty who "have gone beyond expectations to promote an intellectually engaged, inclusive and supportive educational environment." (She's earned this award 19 times.) In her lab, she uses the model plant species *Arabidopsis thaliana* to conduct research similar to what she did as a postdoc, on how the packaging of the plant's DNA affects gene expression. She and her students collaborate with Professor of Biology Elizabeth McCain, who uses scanning electron microscopy to determine what happens to these plants if their DNA packaging is disrupted.

Hark and McCain had just wrapped up a project when the pandemic began. Luckily, Hark's lab had a second project going on, one that required only an internet connection to continue. Since 2009, Hark has been part of the Genomics Education Partnership (GEP), which was established in order to involve undergraduate students in genomics research. The GEP makes available raw data about genomes (the entirety of an organism's genes) as well as computer-generated data about where within that genome specific genes might be. ("If we don't know exactly where the gene is, it's really hard to figure out its regulation," Hark says.) Students then use that data to annotate the genome — describing exactly where specific genes are using multiple lines of evidence — a job that computers just can't do precisely at this point.

"I've loved being part of this consortium, not only for the collaboration with faculty colleagues all across the country, but because my students have a sense that they're part of a bigger enterprise," Hark says.

The senior biochemistry and biology students in Hark's capstone course, Genomes & Gene



Evolution, have worked on GEP research as part of their classwork. Hark also teaches introductory biology and biochemistry courses. She says that teaching would be the hardest part of her professional life to give up because she loves the exchange of information that happens in the classroom, especially at a small, liberal arts institution.

"I love being in an environment where students are still seeking a broad education, but they're also in this place of figuring out some of the things that excite them the most," she says. "To be part of that and to get to know students and their trajectory, I mean ... what a privilege to be part of that process." —MK

## Muhlenberg Announces New Faculty, Promotions

The College welcomed seven new full-time faculty and promoted four more faculty.



**Consortium for Faculty Diversity Fellow in Sociology Odetta Addo** has a Ph.D. in human development and family science and a master's in social work from Syracuse University and a bachelor's from Elmira College. Areas of specialization include socialization, adolescents' academic and behavioral outcomes and parent-child relationships.



**Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance Elizabeth Bergman** received a Ph.D. in dance studies from Temple University, an MFA in dance performance from The University of Iowa and a bachelor's from DeSales University. Her interests include contemporary modern dance, movement improvisation and compositional improvisation.



**Assistant Professor of English Literatures & Writing Beatrice Bradley** has a Ph.D. in English language and literature from the College of the University of Chicago, a master's in English from Brooklyn College, CUNY, and a bachelor's from Vanderbilt University. Her interests include early modern literature; critical studies of gender, disability and race; book history; and health humanities. Bradley is currently working on her first book project, tentatively titled *Sweat: Residues of Embodiment in the Early Modern World*.



**Visiting Assistant Professor of Spanish Daniel Carrillo-Jara** received a Ph.D. in Latin American literature with a digital humanities certificate and a master's in art from Purdue University and a bachelor's from the Universidad Nacional Mayor de San Marcos in Lima, Peru. His interests include Latin American literature and culture, Andean literature and culture and digital humanities.



**Visiting Assistant Professor of Dance Anito Gavino** is a transdisciplinary movement artist, choreographer, educator, writer, cultural worker and storyteller. She has danced professionally with Ananya Dance Theatre, Kun Yan-Lin/Dancers and Latin Ballet of Virginia, among others. She received an MFA from Hollins University and a bachelor's from the University of the Philippines.



**Visiting Assistant Professor of Anthropology Melinda (Mel) Gurr** earned a Ph.D. and master's in anthropology from Syracuse University and a bachelor's from the University of Utah. Her

interests include environmental politics and sustainable development; social movements and collective action; and youth, gender and generation.



**Visiting Assistant Professor of Music, Choral Conducting John Verkuilen** is a Doctor of Musical Arts candidate in choral conducting at the Manhattan School of Music. He earned a master's in choral conducting from The Boston Conservatory and has a bachelor's from Macalester College.



**Assistant Professor of Dance Heidi Cruz-Austin**, who began teaching at Muhlenberg in 2019, holds an MFA in dance from the University of Arts. She is researching ways ballet can offer practitioners a foundation built on strength and solid principles absent of elitist restrictions. As an Afro-Dominican woman, Cruz-Austin's culture and upbringing inform her perspective while her classical ballet foundation provides a comfortable frame to stand on and pull away from.



**Assistant Professor of Dance Natalie Gotter**, who began teaching at Muhlenberg in 2019, received a bachelor's from Tulane University and an MFA in modern dance with an emphasis on gender studies and screendance certification from the University of Utah. She teaches modern dance technique, pedagogy and theory. Her research primarily focuses on utilizing physical feminism as a means to challenge socially imposed rules and expectations of the individual's form.



**Assistant Professor of Psychology and African Studies Justin Preddie**, who began teaching at Muhlenberg in 2021, earned a master's and Ph.D. in social psychology and a graduate certificate in women, gender and sexuality studies from the University of Kansas and a bachelor's from Hampton University. His primary research uses intersectionality as a theoretical and methodological framework to understand how race, ethnicity and gender impact judgments of sexual orientation.

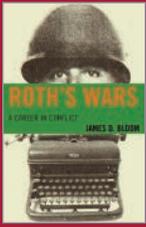


**Lecturer of Dance Robyn Watson**, who began teaching at Muhlenberg in 2021, has a bachelor's in theatre from Temple University. She has performed with innovators and trailblazers in tap dance. She has spent the majority of her dancing career under the artistic direction of Tony Award-winning choreographer Savion Glover, performing in several of his productions, including *Sole Power*, *Stepz* and *Bare Soundz*.



# Welcome Class of 2026

This year's first-year students come from 28 states and four countries. The group is more than 29 percent students of color and more than 20 percent first-generation students, making it the most diverse class in Muhlenberg's history. Learn more on page 29.



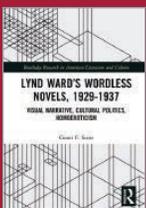
**Jim Bloom (English)**  
*Roth's Wars: A Career in Conflict*  
 Lexington Books,  
 188 pages

Treating Philip Roth as a war writer — as well as a sportswriter, crime reporter, political commentator and Newark chronicler — Bloom offers a thoroughly researched account of the novelist's preoccupation with wars around the world and wars at home.



**Sidney Milkis '72**  
*What Happened to the Vital Center?: Presidentialism, Populist Revolt and the Fracturing of America*  
 Oxford University Press,  
 384 pages

Milkis, the White Burkett Miller Professor in the Department of Politics at the University of Virginia, co-authored this book that tackles a foundational question within American political history: Is current partisan polarization, aggravated by populist disdain for constitutional principles and institutions, a novel development in American politics?



**Grant Scott (English)**  
*Lynd Ward's Wordless Novels, 1929-1937*  
 Routledge, 244 pages

This book offers the first multidisciplinary analysis of the “wordless novels”

of American woodcut artist and illustrator Lynd Ward (1905–1985), who has been enormously influential in the development of the contemporary graphic novel.

## A Broadway Dream, Finally Realized

Within a few years of graduating, Jakeim Hart '16 learned the off-Broadway musical he'd been performing in, *Sing Street*, was being transferred to Broadway. Previews were set to start on March 26 of that year. That year was 2020, and we all know what happened next: Broadway shut down on March 12, and performances did not resume until 18 months later. (*Sing Street* has yet to hit Broadway, and if it does, it will be without its original cast.)

Hart and his castmates found solace in music, and when venues began to open up in the summer of 2021, he returned to the stage to perform songs with four other artists from *Sing Street* who'd also seen their Broadway dreams dashed. And earlier this year, he learned he was Broadway-bound again: He was cast in the screen-to-stage adaptation *Almost Famous: The Musical* as band manager Dennis Hope (and as the understudy for the lead role of rock star Russell Hammond). Previews started October 3 for a November 3 opening date.

**Muhlenberg Magazine** What was it like to have COVID shut down *Sing Street* just before it hit Broadway?

**Jakeim Hart '16** It was the most unnerving time in my whole life because you work so hard for something to come together, you see the finish line, the tape is right there, you're about to cross over and then it's like, “You're disqualified.” It forced not only me but a lot of artists to go inward and see what else we have to offer the world besides our performances. What I did was I delved into music a lot more. I do identify as an actor-musician. I was a musician before I was an actor.

**MM** Describe the character you're playing in *Almost Famous*.

**JH** He is this bloodsucking music executive — the absolute scum of the earth, responsible for ruining rock 'n' roll. Obviously, he thinks he's a good guy, and he sees the potential for all this money to be made, so he's just doing his job at the end of the day. I'm trying to find the humanity and the humor in him, but I am a musician. I would hate this dude if I ever met him. But you've got to work past that so the scene works.

**MM** What was it like to actually start previews for this show? (It hadn't yet opened officially at press time.)

**JH** It was just electrifying. I don't think I've felt a high like that before. [Rehearsals] can be such a harrowing process. You forget what it's like to pause for laughter. Having an audience is the gift that we needed at this point. My mom came. We hugged and cried a bit. I just looked at her and said, “Hey, look, I did it.”



# Mental Health “Gatekeeper Training” Contributes to a Culture of Care

As the Class of 2026 prepared to move to campus, their pre-arrival online training included some familiar topics (alcohol misuse, sexual misconduct) as well as something new: mental health “gatekeeper training.” The training simulated peers in emotional distress approaching the student and asked the student how they might respond. The idea, says Director of Student Support Services Michele Paules, is to normalize needing and asking for help and to ensure students feel prepared if they or their peers experience a crisis.

“Since COVID, the awareness of students struggling with emotional wellness and physical wellness has been brought to the top of many people’s agendas, and that’s integrated with academic wellness,” Paules says. “We want to make sure that students understand from day one that people struggle and people are going to talk to each other about that.”

This gatekeeper training is a result of Muhlenberg’s partnership with the Jed Foundation, a nonprofit that has consulted with more than 370 colleges and universities with the goal of improving student mental health. Funding to bring this training to campus came from human resources, the provost’s office, the president’s office and the dean of students’ office.

The training will soon be made available to all other students, faculty and staff. The concept of gatekeeper training was introduced to those groups last semester, when the College’s Jed committee distributed an infographic detailing the steps to take to respond to student mental health concerns. Muhlenberg is relying on student groups (fraternities and sororities, athletic teams, resident advisors [RAs]) to encourage completion of the online training among upperclassmen, and employees had already demonstrated interest.

“One thing we know from doing initial surveys with staff and faculty is they really wanted to respond well to students experiencing concerns. They’re thirsty for this information,” Paules says.

Another facet of the Jed work that’s ongoing is intentional education about Muhlenberg’s medical amnesty policy, which prioritizes the wellbeing of those in emergency situations so students can seek care for themselves and others rather than worry about the repercussions from a drug or alcohol violation. However, students must know about the policy in order for it to be effective, so last semester, each student received a postcard summarizing the policy (including the fact that it applies to mental health crises in addition to physical ones). This semester, RAs went over it with their residents shortly after move-in.

The Jed committee is currently exploring which recommendations from Jed’s strategic plan to pursue next. The ultimate goal is “to continue to raise awareness about mental health concerns and campus resources and to expand people’s thinking beyond seeing mental health prevention as simply the role of the Counseling Center,” says Vice President for College Life and Dean of Students Allison Williams. “Tending to our community’s emotional wellbeing and mental health is everyone’s responsibility.” —MK



*Members of the Class of 2026, pictured here during Orientation, were required to complete mental health “gatekeeper training” before coming to campus.*

## College Awarded Grant to Support Students’ Healthy Choices

A \$40,000, two-year grant from the Pennsylvania Liquor Control Board will assist Muhlenberg with its continuing efforts to maintain a safe and engaging social environment on campus while reducing underage drinking and, for students 21 and older, reducing dangerous drinking and promoting responsible alcohol consumption. The grant will include funding for student leader and safety officer training and Muhlenberg-specific educational programs.

“Our data shows that the vast majority of Muhlenberg students either don’t drink or do so in a responsible manner that doesn’t interfere with their academics, relationships or personal integrity,” says Tim Silvestri ’91, director of counseling services. “This grant will help us in our efforts to correct student misperceptions about their peers’ use and arm students with more accurate data about the wide acceptance of abstinence and low-risk consumption of alcohol at the College.”

# Exhibiting Leadership

As president and executive director of the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C., Aileen Chumard Fuchs '01 tells the stories of the spaces people design, construct and inhabit.

**D**utch colonists brought the first enslaved Africans to the city now known as New York in 1627. Enslaved people would go on to build the wall Wall Street is named after and the Financial District's Trinity Church, among other landmarks. The New-York Historical Society describes the city as "the capital of American slavery for more than two centuries."

In 2005, the society's museum debuted a two-year exhibition called *Slavery in New York*. It was the museum's largest exhibit ever, taking up its entire nearly 9,000-square-foot first floor. It included ledgers from slave ships, objects created by enslaved New Yorkers, documents from early abolitionists and much, much more. When Aileen Chumard Fuchs '01 visited the exhibit, it changed her life.

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***"Exhibitions are storytelling, and they're history, and they are dramatic and they are amazing."***

—AILEEN CHUMARD FUCHS '01, PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL BUILDING MUSEUM

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"I had a light-bulb moment: This is the kind of storytelling I want to do," says Fuchs, who is now the president and executive director of the National Building Museum in Washington, D.C. "Exhibitions are storytelling, and they're history, and they are dramatic and they are amazing."

Fuchs, who studied theatre and English at Muhlenberg, went on to earn a master's from New York University in public/applied history, which is "about how you interpret history for the public — it's a museum field," she says. She then landed a job with the American History Workshop, which had curated *Slavery in New York*. There, she worked on exhibitions that appeared

in museums in New York, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C.

"I learned so much about the collaborative process between researchers, designers, fabricators and institutions needed to put on these massive-scale exhibitions and uncover new avenues to engage audiences at different levels with different stories," she says.

She took the experience she gained to the Brooklyn Navy Yard, a historic site turned national model for urban industrial development. She helped launch its permanent exhibition about its evolution since it opened as a major shipbuilding facility in 1801. During her six years there, she built public programming around the yard's diverse tenants, worked on the establishment of an on-site high school that would teach students some of the trades practiced there and launched a visiting artists program to enhance the 300-acre space and showcase local talent.

In 2017, she took on the role of president and CEO at Staten Island's Snug Harbor Cultural Center & Botanical Garden. Like the Brooklyn Navy Yard, it was a sprawling, city-owned property that served as a hub for its local community. Its makeup, though, was quite different: 28 historic buildings (including an art museum, a children's museum and a music venue) with a variety of architectural styles, plus 14 botanical gardens. As leader, she would not only be responsible for generating a vision for these cultural spaces. She was also to serve as property manager, which meant overseeing the maintenance of 200-year-old buildings and the 83-acre grounds.

"I happily took on a massive challenge there," she says. "I saw how [the site's] success could transform that community ... It seemed like such an incredible challenge and opportunity to lead."



PHOTO BY JOSHUA FERNANDEZ

At Snug Harbor, she developed a 20-year master plan for the site. She also launched the multi-weekend NYC Winter Lantern Festival, which evolved to feature more than 1,000 elaborate lanterns in more than 50 different displays, live performances, a skating rink, food vendors and gifts for purchase from local artists.

“We needed something big and destination-making that would draw more audiences to the site and put us on the map but also bring elements together for one cohesive visitor experience,” she says. “The first year we did it, everyone said that no one’s going to come to Staten Island during the holidays, and we had 150,000 people.”

In 2021, she was recruited to her current role at the National Building Museum, which “inspires curiosity about the world we design and build,” per its mission statement. Current exhibits include a virtual reality exploration of the reconstruction of the Notre-Dame cathedral after its 2019 fire and *The Wall/El Muro: What Is a Border Wall?*

“Many people said, ‘Are you sure you want to do something that’s that political when you first start?’ And my position is, it’s not political,” Fuchs says. “The wall itself is one of the most significant built environment projects we have as a nation. Let’s look at it through that lens. The team who developed it did an incredible job.”

Just over a year into her role, Fuchs is still learning the city and getting to know the large network of people who support the museum and its work. She has overseen the development of the institution’s four pillars (equity, environment, innovation and wonder) that will serve as a framework for its future. And she is looking forward to growing as a professional in her first nationally-facing museum role.

“As a leader, you develop trust by finding ways to authentically engage with people, and through that engagement, you demonstrate your values,” she says. “I hope to grow as a leader, to really walk the walk on all of that, so that I can unlock the extreme potential of this institution.” —MK

## Professor's Book Selected for Groundbreaking Publishing Partnership

A forthcoming book by Assistant Professor of English and Africana Studies and Director of Africana Studies Emanuela Kucik will be part of the *Black Lives in the Diaspora: Past / Present / Future* scholarly book series in the field of Black studies published by Columbia University Press (CUP) and Howard University.

This collaboration between a historically Black university and an Ivy League university's press is the first of its kind in academic publishing and Kucik's publication will be one of the inaugural titles in the ongoing series.

Kucik's book manuscript, *The Black Blood of Genocide: Tracing Genocide in Post-*

*Holocaust African Diasporic Literature*, is a history of how, since World War II, Black authors have used literature to raise awareness about anti-Black genocide and to encourage the public to help end that violence.

Kucik says she chose to teach at the College in part due to its commitment to interdisciplinarity, which this project also offers: "*Black Blood* examines the overlaps between newspaper articles, memoirs, novels, genocide, human rights and public opinion, and I am so grateful that the series editors are deeply invested in exploring those overlaps with me," she says. —KYT



### Why I Study ... Queer China

Assistant Professor of Anthropology Casey James Miller



I finished my last two years of high school as an exchange student in Hong Kong. I didn't know anything about China — I just wanted to

get as far away from home as possible. At the time I was coming out as gay myself, so I got really interested in Chinese gay culture and history. I did my extended essay for the [International Baccalaureate] on the history of homosexuality in China.

In college, I knew I wanted to study Chinese society. I thought that meant going into political science, but what I really wanted to study was people's everyday lives. I found cultural anthropology when I got my master's. The discipline gave me the tools to study what I was really interested in: What does it mean to

be a queer person living in a country like China today?

As a Ph.D. student, I began doing fieldwork in urban northwest China, in the city of Xi'an, with gay and lesbian activists and organizations. My research focused on queer grassroots culture and activism. It was not only a great way to learn more about what it's like to be queer in the world's largest country, but also to understand the huge changes that are taking place in Chinese culture and society right now.

There have been a lot of arguments in the literature that Western individualism has flooded into the moral and ideological vacuum left by the retreat of the Chinese socialist state. One thing I found that challenges this argument is that, instead of prioritizing their own queer identities and desires, gay and lesbian activists are much

more interested in what it means to be a moral person according to local traditional understandings. For example, they often do not come out to their families, especially their parents, because they're worried about the harm that might cause to their family structures.

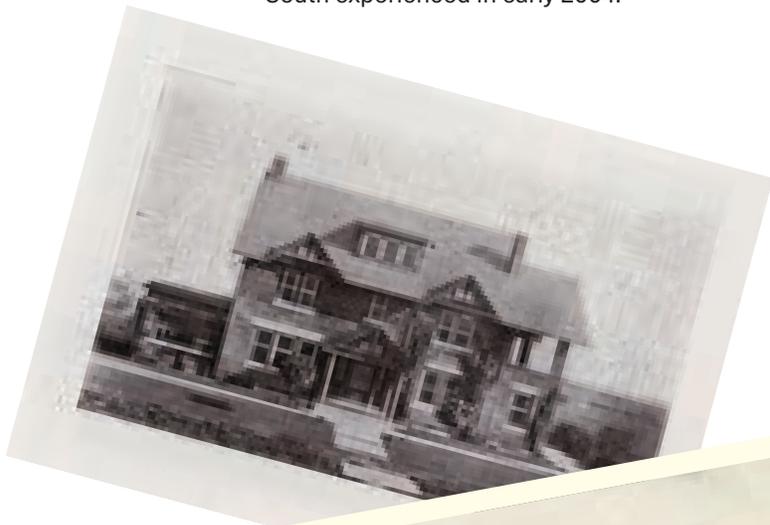
One of the saddest things I found in my research was that, at least among queer men in northwest China, there's this idea that love between two men cannot last long-term. When I asked why, they said, "Love is just like that." It doesn't matter if it's queer or straight. There's this initial period of intense, romantic sexual passion and energy, and that slowly fades and turns to a more stable, familial, dependable intimacy. My queer informants would argue that what's different for queer people is that they can't get married or have children, and that's the glue that keeps people together.

# The Most Haunted Area of Muhlenberg's Campus

Situated approximately where Trexler Pavilion is today, Bernheim House, constructed in 1917 as the home of College treasurer Oscar F. Bernheim, Class of 1892, was the first building on the south side of Chew Street. The home was constructed of "tapestry brick, with Indiana limestone trimmings" and was a particularly spacious three stories, with a distinctive porch on the second floor.

In 1907, Bernheim returned to his alma mater to serve as secretary and treasurer of the College. He filled many other roles, including as alumni secretary, supervisor of buildings and grounds and manager of the dining hall, before he died in the home on February 14, 1946. The building was later used as a residence hall, first for women who were training to become, essentially, resident advisors; then for female German majors; then for performing arts majors. In 1997, Bernheim House was demolished to make way for Trexler Pavilion.

The area where the house stood is considered the most haunted area of Muhlenberg's campus. Legend holds that, in his will, Bernheim asked that his wife's rose garden behind the house be preserved into the future. Benfer Hall, followed by South Hall, was constructed over the footprint of that garden. Visit [muhlenberg.edu/ghoststory](https://muhlenberg.edu/ghoststory) to hear Rachael Ross Weitknecht '04 describe the creepy happenings she and her suitemates in South experienced in early 2004.



*If you have any items of interest to the Muhlenberg archives, please contact [susanfalciani@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:susanfalciani@muhlenberg.edu).*

# Personally Speaking...



# Shobha Pai '24

Psychology and media & communication double major, Bangalore, India

## **She came to Muhlenberg as part of the Next Genius Foundation's scholarship program ...**

"[The foundation has] a list of 20 or 25 colleges, and Muhlenberg was my first choice. Muhlenberg advertised its community, which I hadn't seen other colleges do. If you're an international student like me, you need to think about the community, so you can feel safe on campus and feel like you have a home. There were about 10 people [in my Next Genius cohort] and I was the only one to get a full scholarship [through Muhlenberg's partnership with the program]. I was very lucky. Muhlenberg has exceeded my expectations. The people here — not just the students but the faculty, the staff, the dining staff, everyone — they know personal details about you, which can only be achieved in a tight-knit community. I come from a big city of 8 or 9 million people. The schools there are big too. I never got this one-on-one connection, which I appreciate a lot now."

## **... and she completed her first semester remotely, with a nine-hour time difference.**

"When I got the scholarship [in January 2020], COVID was a thing, but it was in another part of the world. It was part of another reality and not my reality. But in March, everything shut down in India. All the embassies were closed so I couldn't get a student visa. I did my first semester of college online. I took math at 2 in the morning. I had to work in the morning and then do night classes. I could only sleep like three to four hours a day — I'd finish my night classes, but I still wanted to be involved in the campus. I didn't want to just take my classes and go to sleep, so I joined clubs. They met at 7 p.m. Eastern, which was 4 a.m. my time. I'm glad I did it because I got to get to know people so I had friends when I came to campus that spring."

## **She's been involved with research in both her areas of study ...**

"I was always scared to do research. In the academic field, you don't see many people who look like me. It's very much [cisgender], straight, white people who do research, mostly old white men. I was intimidated, but I did the thing you're supposed to do: I told all my professors, 'Hey, I'm into research. If you have any opportunities for me to work with you, let me know.' My first experience was with [Professor of Psychology Erika] Bagley. Every two years or so, she does research into the feelings of belonging on campus, and my research team was the group who did it right after [campus was closed for] COVID. This semester, I'm working in [Assistant Professor of Psychology and Africana Studies Justin] Preddie's lab, which is focused on social psychology around stereotypes. I'm also starting independent research with [Assistant Professor of Media & Communication Harry] Simón Salazar about the representation of South Asian Muslims in [romantic comedies]."

## **... and she's gotten to know a variety of students through her work as a resident advisor (RA).**

"I'm an RA in Benfer Hall, and Benfer is where a lot of student-athletes live. I like working with upperclassmen because they don't need you 24/7, but Benfer wasn't my first choice. I was very intimidated. All of [the student-athletes] are taller and bigger than me. They are very into their sports and very passionate about it. Before, I never spoke to the student-athletes because we don't intersect anywhere. I don't even understand football. Football in India is completely different — it's soccer. At a game, there are only so many times that I can clap when everyone else is clapping. But living with [student-athletes] and talking to them has made me respect them more and be scared of them less. I don't understand the same things they do, but they're nice people."

## **As a digital marketing assistant for the Office of Multicultural Life, she helped launch a podcast.**

"When I took the position, I thought it was going to be making posters and stuff, a typical work-study job where you don't have to do a lot. When I went in there, they were like, 'We want to produce a podcast.' I said, 'I don't know much about production, but I would love to learn.' [Associate Dean of Students and Director of Student Diversity Initiatives] Robin [Riley-Casey] and [former Assistant Director of Multicultural Life] Criss [Braynen] gave me a lot of freedom to say what equipment I needed, what my vision was and stuff like that. I was working with David Holman '22. He's so smart and inspiring and is also a filmmaker. Together, we came up with a podcast called *Voices*. It's very much authentic student voices, slightly filtered, but not completely. We've had episodes on mental health, religion and queerness and experiences of Black women on campus. It has helped me understand the nuances of our community while also understanding its strengths."

# Q&A

## 10 Questions With ... Dr. Jill Stetz-Lewis '89

Veterinarian, Chester Springs, Pennsylvania

3

**If you hadn't been a veterinarian, what would you have been?**

I never had a backup plan, but if I had to choose, it would be either a position in marine biology, to combine my love of animals and water, or in sports medicine, to combine my love of athletics and healing.

4

**What is your favorite place?**

Outside watching the sun rise while being immersed in and amazed by the sights and sounds of nature — with a good cup of coffee!

6

**What's the best piece of advice you have received and who said it?**

My aunt Arlene always told me that there wasn't anything that I could not do if I set my mind to it and believed.

7

**What historical figure do you most identify with?**

Muhammad Ali. He was physically and mentally strong and never afraid to stand up for his beliefs and values.

8

**What is your most treasured possession?**

A cross necklace that my father gave to my mother — it embodies both of my beloved parents and our family values.

9

**What question should we have asked you?**

What is your mantra?

10

**What's the answer?**

I can do anything.  
Blessed, not stressed.

1

**Describe what you do in five words or fewer.** Protect. Heal. Educate. Detect. Analyze.

2

**When did you know you wanted to be a veterinarian?**

When I was in second grade. I have always admired and cherished the human-animal bond.

5

**What are you secretly good at?**

Playing the saxophone. I've played numerous instruments since elementary school but that is my favorite.



# Muhlenberg in the Media

**Kathleen Bachynski (public health) was interviewed for *The New York Times*.**

Bachynski, who has written extensively about head trauma in sports, was quoted in the article “Plagiarism Scandal Puts Renowned Concussions Doctor Under Scrutiny.”

**Alum Kennedy Kanagawa '08 got attention for his Broadway debut in *Into the Woods*.**

Kanagawa is the puppeteer behind the cow, Milky White, and he was featured in both *The Washington Post* (“Into the Woods has a magical cow. Meet the man who mooves her”) and *The New York Times* (“She’ll Have You at Moo: Milky White and the Power of Puppetry”).

**Jacqueline Antonovich (history) was a guest on *Getting Curious With Jonathan Van Ness*.**

Antonovich joined the podcast host and star of *Queer Eye* to explore the history of reproductive rights and forced sterilization in the United States.

**A mid-September poll from the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion (MCIPO) was widely cited.**

MCIPO’s Pennsylvania Midterm Election Survey was mentioned by CBS News, NBC News, *The Hill*, *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *The Independent* (UK) and dozens of affiliated news outlets.

**Paul McEwan (media & communication) appeared on NPR.**

McEwan was interviewed for the September 11 *Weekend Edition Sunday* segment “British pop music has a fraught relationship with Queen Elizabeth.”

**Alum Kevan Shah '22 was featured in *Inside Higher Ed* for his overdose prevention work.**

The article “Students Are Learning to Stop Opioid Overdoses” includes End Overdose Together, the program Shah founded during his time at Muhlenberg to train students and community members to help save lives.

**Chris Borick (political science) was recently interviewed by multiple news outlets.**

Borick, who also serves as director of the MCIPO, spoke with the Associated Press, NBC News, KYW News Radio, *The New York Times*, *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, *The Washington Post* and more for articles related to politics and the midterm elections.

**Marten Edwards (biology) served as the expert source for an in-depth article on butterflies.**

*The Morning Call* article, “It is a sign, a warning’: Migrating monarch butterflies, which summer in the Lehigh Valley, added to international endangered species list,” included information from Edwards about what residents can do to help protect this magnificent butterfly.



## Education Professor Receives National Fellowship Award

The National Academy of Education (NAEd) announced that Mark R. Emerick, assistant professor of education, has been selected as a 2022 National Academy of Education (NAEd)/Spencer Postdoctoral Fellow. The fellowship award of \$70,000 is intended to assist early-career scholars with salary replacement and research expenses to allow them to focus on their research. The selection committee, comprised of leading scholars in education research, selected 25 fellows from an extremely competitive pool of 258 education scholars.

Emerick is studying the potential of career and technical education (CTE) as a pathway for emergent bilingual students to attain college and career readiness. Despite decades of research and advocacy, Emerick says these students continue to experience marginalization and limited opportunity to learn in the U.S. after high school.

“For students whose first language is not English, it’s often assumed that a CTE education is the best path, and it’s assumed that many of these students take that path,” says Emerick. But that’s not the case. In fact, he says, many bilingual students may be discouraged from attending a CTE, in both subtle and more overt ways.

Emerick will conduct a nine-month multi-site ethnographic study to examine how school-level policies and the practices of school leaders, counselors and teachers along the CTE enrollment pathway may contribute to these disparities.

# Physical Education

In his new role, former Muhlenberg point guard Toomey Anderson '03 is expanding access to athletics for the 17,000 students in the Allentown School District.



PHOTO BY MARCO CALDERON

Toomey Anderson '03 in Memorial Hall

For the first time this fall, the youngest students in the Allentown School District will be able to participate in after-school sports without having to leave their schools. Half of the 14 elementary schools in the district are offering tennis and soccer, the other half, flag football and ... mixed martial arts (MMA).

"They're not going to be in contact with each other," says Toomey Anderson '03, the district's first coordinator of athletics and activities K-12. "The technique, the training, the fundamentals of learning how to box and kickbox — those kinds of things will be implemented."

One of the reasons Allentown is adding sports for young students is to feed the middle and high school athletic programs, and wrestling, which is part of MMA, is a sport the district wants to develop. Another reason is to make the district's elemen-

tary and middle schools into community hubs that offer after-school enrichment activities (sports, arts, tutoring) in a safe, supervised environment until parents can pick up their children. Another is to improve attendance by giving kids something to look forward to after a day in the classroom. But the main reason is because trying out a variety of activities is just good for kids.

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***"Until you're exposed to as many different things as possible, you don't know what your true talent is."***

—TOOMEY ANDERSON '03

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“When you’re young, your body is still developing and your mind’s still growing and developing. Until you’re exposed to as many different things as possible, you don’t know what your true talent is,” says Anderson, who was a student-athlete and political science major at Muhlenberg. “I played a variety of sports at that age. Whatever sport was on TV that day, [my friends and I] were outside trying to play it.”

Anderson ultimately specialized in basketball, which he played at nearby Parkland High School. His first visit to campus was with his high school coach, to watch the Scotty Wood Tournament. Muhlenberg’s head basketball coach at the time, Dave Madeira, recruited Anderson to play for the Mules. He was on the team from 1999 to 2003, helping the Mules to three straight Centennial Conference playoff berths. A point guard, he scored nearly 800 career points and earned All-Centennial honorable mention as a senior. (Anderson also played a single season of football at Muhlenberg that year: “I scored a touchdown, so it counts,” he jokes.)

After graduating, he taught algebra to Philadelphia students who’d been removed from the public school system for a few years before taking a job with the Carbon-Lehigh Intermediate Unit as an emotional support interventionist. Throughout that time, he also coached basketball: in Quakertown, at Allentown Central Catholic and on the Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) circuit. In 2010, he began running the major regional basketball tournament, the A-Town Throwdown, that was part of Lehigh Valley SportsFest in Allentown’s Cedar Beach Park.

In 2017, Anderson was recruited to join Allentown’s Executive Education Charter School — the CEO there had worked with Anderson in Philadelphia. Anderson served as Executive’s career and college advisor, as well as its assistant athletic director. He built up the school’s athletics teams, and its boys’ basketball team would win three District 11 championships while he was there.

Also in 2017, the founder of Lehigh Valley SportsFest decided to retire. It wasn’t clear whether the event would continue. Anderson stepped in: “I had visions of doing something more than just sports,” he says. “I have a theme: Everything I do is called ‘awesome.’”

In the past, he’s run a “Camp Awesome” to expose K-5 students from the Lehigh Valley’s cities and suburbs to a variety of activities and to one another. He wanted to turn Lehigh Valley

SportsFest into Lehigh Valley AWESOME! Fest, which debuted in 2018. This year’s event had the A-Town Throwdown as its centerpiece but also included art shows, music and comedy performances and a variety of food vendors serving cuisines from around the world.

“It’s a celebration of arts, athletics, culture and entertainment,” Anderson says. “Allentown’s a melting pot. I wanted to find a way to celebrate all the different aspects we have, drawing people and teams from all over the region.”

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***“The beauty of our district is there are so many people who genuinely care about these students.”***

—TOOMEY ANDERSON '03

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Anderson began his role with the Allentown School District this February, and he’s doing much more than expanding athletics and activities. This summer, he helped orchestrate the district’s Summer Scholars program, which was launched to combat COVID-related learning loss. Participating students spent their mornings working on academics and the afternoons trying out different activities, including sports (like soccer, flag football, volleyball, basketball and track), yoga and mindfulness, art and music. He’s helping the district launch six-week learn-to-swim programs for students, which will address a major safety issue and hopefully have the bonus effect of creating a more reliable summer lifeguard pipeline for the city. Anderson is also surveying parents to guide an expansion of adaptive sports for students with disabilities in the district.

While the district received state and federal funding to launch new programming, additional funds are needed to remove participation barriers (such as good gear and proper attire) for some students. The ultimate goal, Anderson says, is for Allentown students to have equitable experiences to students from wealthier suburban districts. Another challenge is finding adequate staff to run these programs, but the support so far has already been immense.

“The beauty of our district is there are so many people who genuinely care about these students,” Anderson says. “We have great support throughout the district and throughout our community, people who want to get involved and help out the students.” —MK

# Survey Says ...

Are political polls flawed, or does the public expect too much of them?

By Christopher Borick

In the 2016 presidential election, polling famously underrepresented the vote of Donald Trump. However, the polling errors that year weren't that far outside those of previous elections. For example, in 2012, the polling averages had Barack Obama winning nationally by about a point. He ended up winning by about four points. No one seemed to care about the difference because Obama was leading in the polls and he ultimately won reelection. In the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion (MCIPO) final poll in 2016, Trump was trailing in Pennsylvania by four points, but he won by less than one point. In both of these cases the polls were off by similar margins, but in 2016, the MCIPO estimate was on the wrong side of the winner and loser line. A similar disparity between polls and results was seen in other states Trump narrowly won, like Wisconsin and Michigan. That raised the possibility that the polling had encountered a systematic problem, and thus pollsters sought to identify the issue and offer remedies.

One change MCIPO and other pollsters made after 2016 was how data is weighted. Pollsters almost always weight the data because random sampling does not usually lead to a sample that matches the voting population parameters. For example, the voting population is usually around 51 or 52 percent female, so if a sample ends up with only 47 percent female respondents, a pollster would weight the sample so the results would align with the population. MCIPO has traditionally weighted for things like gender identification, racial identification and party registration.

Historically, educational attainment didn't have the same impact on voter choices that factors such as gender and race did. That situation has shifted dramatically since 2016. Now, people with college degrees are increasingly voting Democratic and people without college degrees, particularly white individuals, are increasingly

voting Republican. If MCIPO's 2016 polls had been weighted by education, they would have been more accurate by about two points.

So, MCIPO began weighting for education in the 2018 midterms, and those polls were more accurate. However, in 2020, we again saw similar polling errors that undervalued Trump's support, from MCIPO and many other pollsters. An array of survey methodologists have studied the 2020 outcomes deeply to see what the issue was, and there is no conclusive finding.

In "2020 Pre-Election Polling: An Evaluation of the 2020 General Election Polls," the American Association for Public Opinion Research shared possible explanations for the polling errors. "If the voters most supportive of Trump were least likely to participate in polls then the polling error may be explained as follows: Self-identified Republicans who choose to respond to polls are more likely to support Democrats and those who choose not to respond to polls are more likely to support Republicans," the article says. "Unfortunately, this hypothesis cannot be directly evaluated without knowing how nonresponders voted."

MCIPO did not change its weighting for the 2022 midterm elections, which had yet to take place at press time, to try to account for potential nonresponse. Attempting to weight for such "nonresponse bias" is guesswork, and the institute's models were fairly accurate in the last midterm election. Even if MCIPO produces a methodologically sound poll, its estimates could be a few percentage points off the final results, because that is how sampling works. If you flip a coin 100 times, the most likely outcome is that you would get 50 heads and 50 tails, which captures the reality of a two-sided coin. But sometimes you'll get, say, 55 heads and 45 tails, not because of a methodological failing (e.g. flawed coin flipping) but instead because of simple sampling error. To expect a poll, or even



To expect a poll, or even poll aggregates, to mirror election outcomes is placing far too lofty expectations on the methods being employed.

poll aggregates, to mirror election outcomes is placing far too lofty expectations on the methods being employed. If polls show a candidate ahead by three or four points in a race, don't be shocked if that candidate loses narrowly. Methodological limitations and even modest last-minute changes in voter sentiment could lead to such outcomes.

With increasing challenges facing public opinion researchers, the MCIPO is entering its third decade of operations with important choices ahead. In the Spring 2023 semester, the MCIPO will move into the new building on campus, the Fahy Commons. There, students and I are going to be thinking about what's next: online platforms that we can design and administer. Polling has changed significantly since I began directing polls in the 1990s. Back then, telephone polls were completely landline. Phone numbers were tagged to the state the phone was in, and response rates were relatively high. Today, there's a very fragmented communication scene that complicates sampling, and getting individuals to agree to participate in a poll has never been harder.

Certainly web-based polling options will be a major part of the MCIPO's future, but the

transition is not a simple one. The problem with some online polls — those where participants are recruited via email — is that they may not capture a representative sample. There is no comprehensive directory for email addresses that is equivalent to a universe of phone numbers or mailing addresses that serve as the frames for sampling. A potential way around this is called online probability-based surveying. People complete surveys online, but they're recruited through probability means (by mail or phone).

That's my vision for where the institute is headed: Once we get to our new facility, we're going to fully engage in building our online probability panel for Pennsylvania, and maybe a more specialized one for the Lehigh Valley. These investments will position the MCIPO to continue its mission of providing students with opportunities to engage in high quality public opinion research and to produce polls that accurately reflect the attitudes, beliefs and behaviors of the populations we seek to better understand.

*Christopher Borick is a professor of political science and the director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion.*

# FALL SPEAKERS AND EVENTS



***Binti and Africanfuturism: An Invitation to the Conversation (Center for Ethics)***

The campus community gathered to discuss this year's Common Read, Nnedi Okorafor's *Binti*, in the context of this year's Center for Ethics theme, "Speculative Futures." Okorafor is a Nigerian-American author of African-based science fiction, fantasy and magical realism.

**Jericho Brown (Living Writers)**

Brown wrote the poetry collection *The Tradition*, which won the 2020 Pulitzer Prize for Poetry. He came to campus as part of the Department of English Literatures & Writing's Living Writers series.

**Steven Dietz (LW)**

Dietz, a prolific playwright and director, held a public reading of his 2016 work, *This Random World*.

**Melinda González**

***Latinx Identity at the Intersections of Race and Gender***

Held in celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month, this event began with a presentation from González followed by a conversation with Muhlenberg's Leticia Robles-Moreno (theatre) and Tiffany Montoya (philosophy). It was part of the ongoing event series "From the Ashes of Relentless Racial Crises: Building a New United States of America."



**Amy Kurzweil (LW)**

Kurzweil is the author of *Flying Couch*, a 2016 graphic memoir, and a cartoonist whose work has appeared in *The New Yorker*.

**Fred Moten (CFE)**

Moten is a leading American cultural theorist, poet and scholar whose work explores critical theory, Black studies and performance studies. His visit was supported by the Charles A. and Leona K. Gruber Lectureship in the Arts.

***Say Yes to a Free Press***

This event featured a documentary examining the detrimental impact of Alden Global Capital's purchase of newspapers like *The Morning Call* and a talkback with local journalists.

**David Thornburgh (Election Series)**

***Electoral Reform in the Commonwealth***

Thornburgh is senior advisor of the Committee of Seventy, a Philadelphia nonprofit that advocates for better government, and chair of Ballot PA, a coalition against closed primary elections in the state. His visit was part of the Department of Political Science's biennial Election Series.

**Dominic Tierney (ES)**

***The Biden Doctrine, the Midterms and the Future of American Foreign Policy***

Tierney is a professor of political science at Swarthmore College, a senior fellow at the Foreign Policy Research Institute and a former contributing editor at *The Atlantic*.

**Franita Tolson (ES)**

***America: A Republic We Can Keep, or a Democracy We Should Seek?***

Tolson is the George T. and Harriet E. Pflieger Professor of Law at the University of Southern California Gould School of Law. Her scholarship and teaching focus on the areas of election law, constitutional law, legal history and employment discrimination.



***We Are Proud to Present a Presentation About the Herero of Namibia, Formerly Known as Southwest Africa, From the German Südwestafrika, Between the Years 1884–1915 (CFE)***

This play brings together six actors to tackle the challenge of theatrically presenting the little-known story of the first genocide of the 20th century.

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# Report of the President

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*Kathleen E. Harring*

**T**his academic year, Muhlenberg College will celebrate the 175th anniversary of its founding. From its earliest days as a small seminary to its growth as a dynamic liberal arts college that attracts talented students from across the country and around the world, one thing has not changed,

and that is the College's commitment to preparing students for lives of leadership and service.

While most of our College operations have largely returned to "normal" following the pandemic, deeply complex issues abound. Higher education has been significantly disrupted in recent years, not just by the pandemic, but by several colliding societal and economic factors. These include a reduction in the number of college-going students due to years of declining birth rates, unprecedented questioning of the value of higher education and the daunting issues of cost and affordability. As significant as all of these challenges are, I also see tremendous opportunity for those colleges, like Muhlenberg, who are actively working to adapt, grow and evolve.

I need look no further for the source of my optimism than the Class of 2026 — the most diverse, and one of the most talented, in Muhlenberg history. Our first-year students come from 28 states and four countries and include more than 29 percent students of color and more than 20 percent first-generation students.

Why do these numbers matter? First, our community is now stronger and more capable because these students' experiences and perspectives are elevating learning for all of us. Second, this means we are reaching students who may never

previously have known that they could apply to, be accepted by and succeed at a selective institution like Muhlenberg. And finally, the power of a Muhlenberg education and the impact of our global network will be deepened and expanded by the discoveries, progress and impact these students will make on the world.

Our successful recruiting of these outstanding, diverse students also speaks directly to our goals as a member of the American Talent Initiative. At its core, this nationwide consortium of selective colleges and universities is designed to advance American global competitiveness by accessing the previously untapped talent resource of students who, for financial reasons, may never have applied to one of these institutions. ATI has a goal of attracting, enrolling and graduating 50,000 additional high-achieving, low- and moderate-income students by 2025. I am proud to serve on the ATI national steering committee along with five other presidents to set priorities to advance ATI goals.

But it is not enough to recruit these talented students. We must ensure that they can access the full Muhlenberg experience during their time here. Belonging is at the center of all our diversity, equity and inclusion efforts.

We appointed Brooke Vick as the College's first chief diversity officer this fall. Vick is charged with partnering across campus to ensure that all aspects of teaching, learning and College operations support our goals to make Muhlenberg a place where everyone — students, faculty and staff — succeed and thrive.

One of our strongest programs in this area is the Emerging Leaders Program, which we are now



PHOTO BY RYAN HULVAT

expanding thanks to a generous \$500,000 gift from Barry Weshnak '66 and Carol Anne Cawley Weshnak. The Emerging Leaders Program offers students from historically underrepresented and marginalized groups an opportunity to belong to a community of future leaders.

Making a Muhlenberg education accessible to every talented student who has earned admission is also why need-based scholarships are a key focus of our *Boundless* campaign. More than 97 percent of our first-year students receive grants and scholarships — this year, we offered more than \$16.5 million in grants and scholarships to our first-year students.

We are working to reduce and eliminate costs in other ways, using Open Educational Resources, known as OERs. Through OERs, faculty create materials for their classes that take the place of traditional textbooks. They have the dual benefit of being more timely and innovative and providing tremendous financial savings for students. Muhlenberg is a leader among liberal arts colleges in this effort.

Students come to Muhlenberg to be challenged and supported as they work alongside world-class faculty to design a path that brings together their interests and goals with the training and experiences that will prepare them for lives of purpose. We are constantly working to elevate the student experience. At Alumni Weekend in September, we celebrated Gerald P. Fahy '79 and Cathleen A. Fahy, whose historic \$7.5 million gift made possible two priorities of the *Boundless* campaign: our newest academic building, adjacent to Trexler Library, and the expansion of Seegers Union.

The new building, now the Fahy Commons, will open later this academic year as a hub for public engagement, innovation and creativity — providing a place not only for our students and faculty to collaborate, create and innovate, but also to connect the learning and knowledge happening on our campus with our city, our region and our world. The Seegers Union expansion will provide space for career and professional development programs and advising.

Our College is known for its emphasis on high-impact practices (HIPs) to empower students to connect what they are learning in the classroom with real-world experiences like those they will access at the Fahy Commons and the Seegers Union expansion. When we talk about high-impact practices, we're talking about those opportunities that empower our students to "level up" — to graduate with real-world experience that will help them pursue careers or further education rapidly and confidently. High-impact practices include internships, research and study abroad, as well as first-year seminars, senior capstone experiences and integrative learning courses.

Completion of HIPs improves retention, overall GPA and graduation outcomes compared to students who do not complete HIPs — and the more completed, the higher the impact. We know that these practices are working: between 60 to 65 percent of our students go on to full-time employment after Muhlenberg, and about 20 to 25 percent of our students go directly to graduate or preprofessional programs.

Many of our young alumni are enrolling in our new graduate degrees in organizational leadership and applied analytics. We've also launched a new accelerated bachelor's degree completion program in project management for adult learners who have some college credits, and, coming soon, a master's in medical leadership program.

Our strong outcomes and the quality of our academic experience are recognized in multiple rankings. Niche ranked Muhlenberg in the top 50 colleges for performing arts in the U.S., No. 4 in Pennsylvania for communications, No. 9 in the state for accounting and finance and No. 3 for the best campus. This year, we were also recognized for the first time by *U.S. News and World Report*

## BY THE NUMBERS

as one of the nation's most innovative colleges, ranking No. 51 for innovation among national liberal arts colleges.

Our success — and our ability to provide a transformative educational experience for our students — is fueled by the philanthropy of our alumni, parents and other donors. As I said when we launched the public phase of the campaign last November, *Boundless* is Muhlenberg's commitment to lead a liberal arts renaissance in higher education. The Muhlenberg community has rallied around this commitment. We've made amazing progress, raising more than \$83 million toward our \$111 million goal.

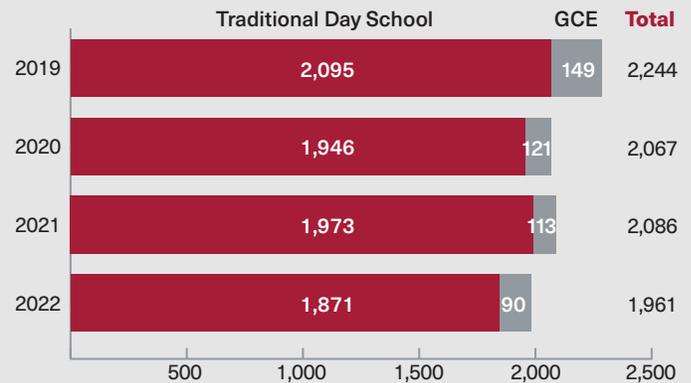
This year, as we prepare to celebrate our 175th anniversary and buoyed by the momentum of the campaign, we are focused squarely on our future. We are in the midst of strategic planning through three initiatives that share the goal of preparing and positioning Muhlenberg for sustainable strength and success in the years to come. They are:

- Identifying and communicating Muhlenberg's distinctive strengths and unique value proposition to prospective students, and identifying strategies that will strengthen enrollment in the immediate future and in the years to come;
- Aligning the College's instructional faculty size to current student enrollment and students' interests and needs; and
- Evaluating athletics to recommend new opportunities through additional sports, larger rosters and non-varsity athletics and recreation to strengthen our distinctiveness as a destination of choice for prospective student-athletes.

These planning processes will prepare us to take bold action to ensure our long-term ability to provide an unparalleled academic experience and to attract and retain the most talented students and faculty.

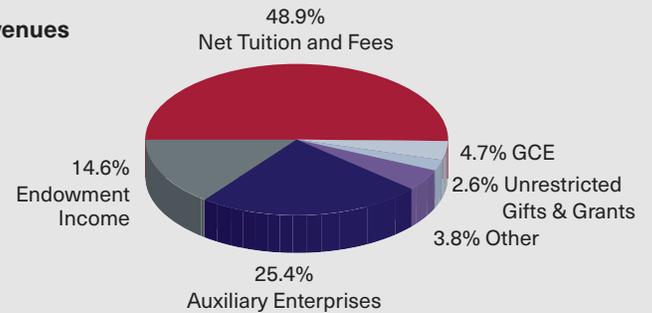
At Muhlenberg, we bring together a spirit of community and a desire to use our passions, interests and talents to pursue learning and growth in a way that happens nowhere else. I could not be more excited about the opportunities, and the challenges, that await.

### Total Fall Enrollment

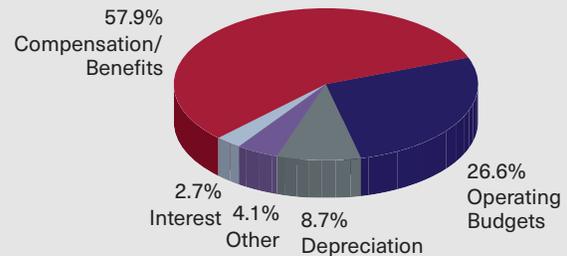


### Budget Summary

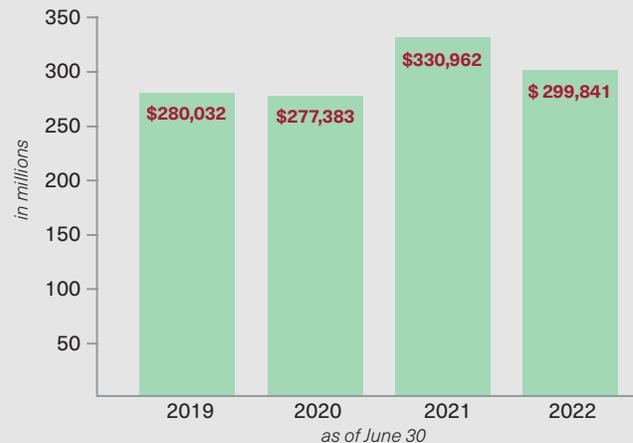
#### Revenues



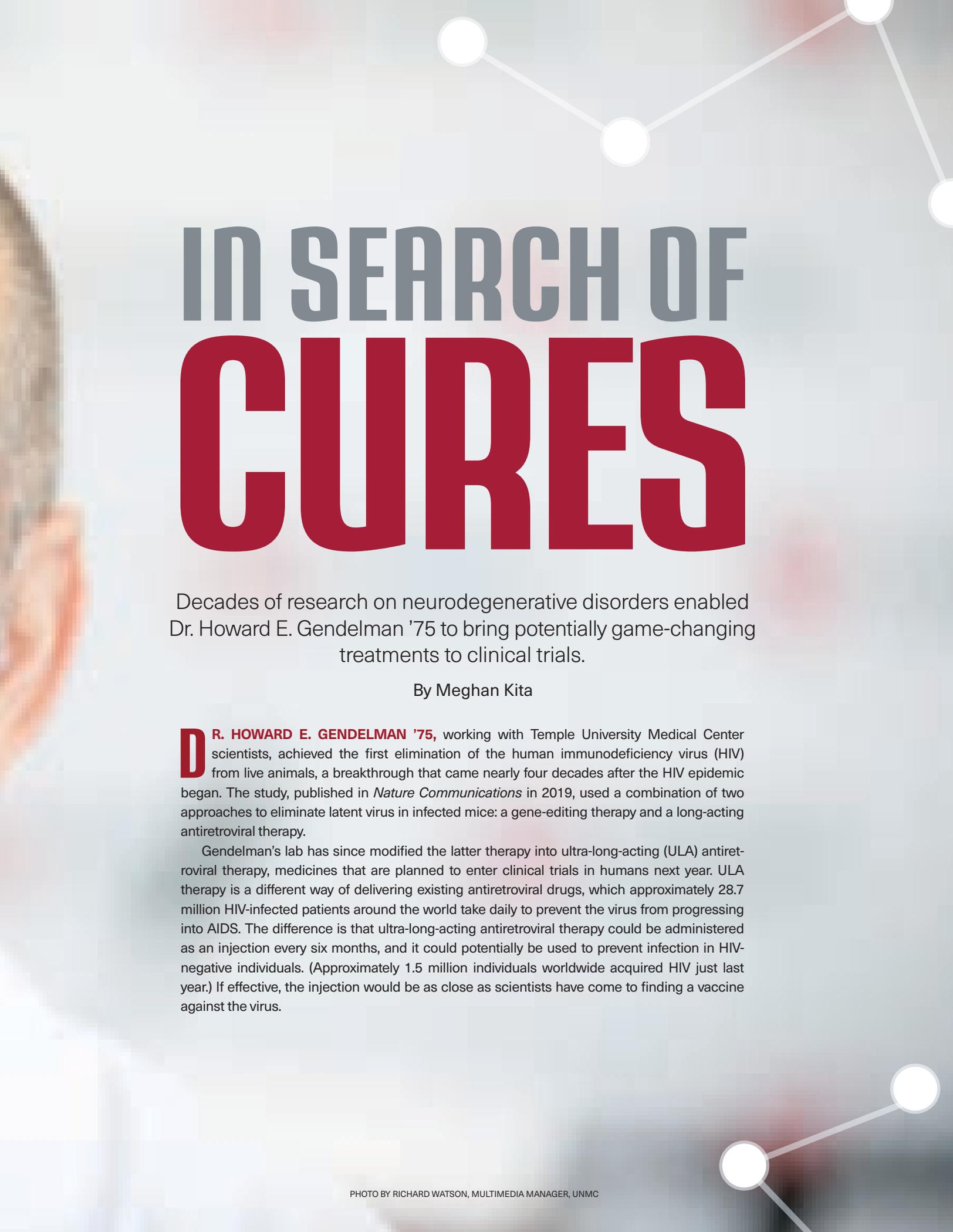
#### Expenditures



### Endowment Summary







# IN SEARCH OF CURES

Decades of research on neurodegenerative disorders enabled Dr. Howard E. Gendelman '75 to bring potentially game-changing treatments to clinical trials.

By Meghan Kita

**D**R. HOWARD E. GENDELMAN '75, working with Temple University Medical Center scientists, achieved the first elimination of the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) from live animals, a breakthrough that came nearly four decades after the HIV epidemic began. The study, published in *Nature Communications* in 2019, used a combination of two approaches to eliminate latent virus in infected mice: a gene-editing therapy and a long-acting antiretroviral therapy.

Gendelman's lab has since modified the latter therapy into ultra-long-acting (ULA) antiretroviral therapy, medicines that are planned to enter clinical trials in humans next year. ULA therapy is a different way of delivering existing antiretroviral drugs, which approximately 28.7 million HIV-infected patients around the world take daily to prevent the virus from progressing into AIDS. The difference is that ultra-long-acting antiretroviral therapy could be administered as an injection every six months, and it could potentially be used to prevent infection in HIV-negative individuals. (Approximately 1.5 million individuals worldwide acquired HIV just last year.) If effective, the injection would be as close as scientists have come to finding a vaccine against the virus.

“ULA therapy started off with a need. Patients have to take pills every day. If they forget to take them, the virus rebounds,” Gendelman says. If clinical trials pan out and enough infected and at-risk individuals could get the ULA therapy injection, “HIV will go away. That’s what we’re going to try to achieve.”

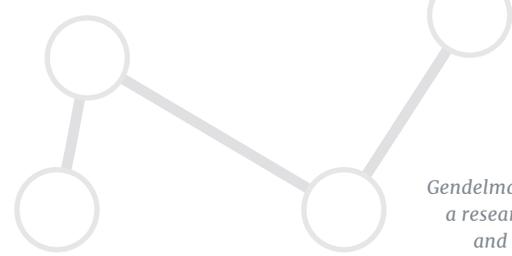
HIV has been among Gendelman’s major scientific interests since the beginning of his career as a scientist. At Muhlenberg, he studied natural science and Russian studies and classical guitar before heading to medical school at Penn State-Hershey Medical Center. After a few years of practicing medicine, he studied neuroscience at Johns Hopkins, where he first learned to do research. He worked at the National Institutes of Health and then the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research before joining the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) in 1993.

Today, he’s UNMC’s Margaret R. Larson Professor of Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases, founding chair of UNMC’s Department of Pharmacology and Experimental Neuroscience, the editor in chief of the journal *Neuroimmune Pharmacology and Therapeutics* and the co-founder of the biotechnology company Exavir Therapeutics, Inc. His broad research interest is in neurodegenerative disorders, a category that includes the neurological manifestations of HIV as well as Parkinson’s and Alzheimer’s diseases. According to Web of Science, which tracks high-quality scholarly citations, Gendelman’s work has been cited more than 13,000 times, putting him in the top quarter of all scientists in terms of citations.

“Most people who go to medical school become doctors. That’s why you go to medical school. I did four other things ... First, I am a physician, and second, a scientist. Being a scientist is something I learned later. Third, I became an entrepreneur — I co-founded a successful biotechnology company. Fourth, I am an inventor and leader,” Gendelman says. “I’ve done a lot of things, and I think that kind of basis was set during my time at Muhlenberg. You can really do anything you put your mind to.”

**I was able to do things [at Muhlenberg] I was even more interested in than science ... Those experiences stayed with me and did make a big impact in the sense of being able to do what I wanted, when I wanted.”**

—DR. HOWARD E. GENDELMAN '75



Gendelman (center) with a research technologist and co-investigator Professor R. Lee Mosley in Gendelman’s lab

## Formative Experiences

Gendelman came to Muhlenberg partly because of its strong premed reputation, but he wasn’t sure whether he’d be able to get into medical school. So, he supplemented his science classes with courses in Russian and music. Guitar was an instrument he’d never played prior to college.

“I was able to do things I was even more interested in than science. I became a really good guitarist. I learned how to speak and converse in Russian,” he says. “Those experiences stayed with me for the rest of my life and did make a big impact in the sense of being able to do what I wanted, when I wanted.”

One thing he wanted to do was spend some time in Russia, which he was able to arrange with help from Professor Ardis Ziedonis '55. Gendelman traveled there on a fellowship in 1973, during the height of the Cold War. He remembers his time in Russia as one of the most transformative experiences he had as a college student.

After completing medical school in 1979, Gendelman went on to a residency in internal medicine, neurology and infectious diseases at Albert Einstein College of Medicine’s Montefiore Hospital in the Bronx. During that time, he read a newspaper article about research happening at Johns Hopkins on lentivirus, a genus of viruses that has an association with multiple sclerosis. That interested him so much that he went back to school at Hopkins to become a scientist.

He continued his research into lentivirus, but he made almost no money and was prohibited from “moonlighting” as a physician to earn more. He also had three children. He accepted a job at a private practice in Westchester County, New York, to better support his family. But an important discovery would change his path.

“I was doing my last experiments with these viruses that were associated with multiple sclerosis, and it turned out that I ended up contributing to classifying HIV. [I discovered] that the viruses I worked with at Hopkins were the parents of HIV,” Gendelman says. “I really didn’t know what to do, because this was very early on and AIDS was a really big thing in the early '80s.”



This discovery caught the eye of the then-new director of the National Institutes of Health's National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, Anthony Fauci: "He called me up and said, 'Look, you have all this background, you need to come to the NIH and continue your work here,'" Gendelman says.

That's what he did: Over the next three years, Gendelman contributed to discoveries about the biology and the neurological manifestations of HIV. The team's ultimate goal during that time was a vaccine, which still has not come to fruition decades later, partly because of the unique properties of the virus. He left the NIH in 1985 for a research and teaching position at Walter Reed, where he continued his HIV research.

## To the Midwest

In 1993, the University of Nebraska courted Gendelman to come to Omaha to help build up its medical center. At the time, it was nothing more than a community hospital. Today, it's a complex with more than 60 buildings known for its highly ranked primary care program and its proportion of graduates practicing medicine in rural areas (it's ranked seventh in the nation for both).

Gendelman's research utilized fetal stem cells, and in 1999, he found himself at the center of a controversy. Upon learning of his work, antiabortion activists — including a prior governor — demanded that UNMC stop the research. Protesters targeted Gendelman's lab and home.

"It wasn't great," Gendelman says of that period. "I couldn't leave my position. I didn't want to be seen as running away from something, and I helped build the place. We stuck it out. The university was very much behind us."

That firestorm led to the creation of the non-profit organization called the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures. The organization has spent more than 20 years lobbying against attempts to restrict biomedical research and therapies that utilize stem cells in the state of Nebraska.

Gendelman's research would continue to evolve, sometimes inspired by his students. He recalls a smart M.D./Ph.D. student in his lab in the early 2000s who wanted to work on Parkinson's disease, which, at the time, Gendelman knew very little about. The two learned about Parkinson's together, and after a series of failed experiments, they started making progress. Gendelman's lab continued studying the disease after the student left and uncovered some important connections between Parkinson's and HIV.

"The immune system plays a major role in Parkinson's disease," he says. "We discovered that there were immune system dysfunctions in Parkinson's disease that involve the same cell that's affected in HIV, a type of lymphocyte."

Gendelman would go on to found UNMC's Center for Neurodegenerative Disorders in 2009, a center that's focused on understanding the causes of diseases like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and HIV in order to bring about potential treatments and cures. The aforementioned discovery, for example, led Gendelman to try an existing drug, sargramostim, to treat the Parkinson's-affected immune system. In a clinical trial that began in 2013, the drug was found to halt the progression of Parkinson's disease in patients who

**My dreams are now literally inches from reality. [My team and I] have discovered the means to halt HIV transmission."**

—DR. HOWARD E. GENDELMAN '75

*Gendelman speaks during a press conference about the first elimination of HIV from a live animal in 2019.*



PHOTO BY RICHARD WATSON, MULTIMEDIA MANAGER, UNMC

received it. Gendelman's team is currently helping to recruit hundreds of patients for a study that could lead to FDA approval.

## Dares and Discoveries

Around the same time he began studying Parkinson's disease, UNMC offered Gendelman a promotion to department chair. Pharmacology was open. The dean said, "You can't be department chair and know nothing about the department. Let me send you for a refresher course."

"He was sending me to a remedial course for second-year med students that flunked pharmacology," Gendelman says.

Instead of moving forward with that, Gendelman offered a proposition: Make him chair of the department (which would be rebranded as the Department of Pharmacology and Experimental Neuroscience) and, within a year, he'd create a new field (neuroimmune pharmacology), write a textbook on the subject, help establish a society and start a new journal. If he could do it, UNMC would have to make him a named professor. If he failed, UNMC could find someone else to do the job. The dean accepted the bet.

Out of that wager came the textbook *Neuroimmune Pharmacology*, the Society on Neuroimmune Pharmacology and the *Journal of Neuroimmune Pharmacology*, with Gendelman as editor in chief. That's also when Gendelman earned the title he has now, as the Margaret R. Larson Professor of Internal Medicine and Infectious Diseases. Previously, UNMC's Department of Pharmacology had been ranked 89th in the nation in terms of how much funding it received from the NIH. Within five years of Gendelman taking over as chair, the Department of Pharmacology and Experimental Neuroscience was ranked in the top 10.

"I like dares," Gendelman says. "When people say 'you can never do it,' it gets me going."

This has been relevant in his research on HIV, which has continued throughout his career. He created mice with humanized immune systems that were ideal for studying different treatment options for HIV. That was one reason he got connected with the research team at Temple University that would co-lead the groundbreaking 2019 study in which the scientists eradicated HIV from these humanized mice. The NIH actually denied Gendelman and his co-author funding for that study because they didn't think it would work.

It did, and now both of the treatments that study utilized in mice are making their way into humans: This year, the gene-editing therapy began clinical trials, which are being led by Temple University scien-

tists, and the ultra-long-acting antiretroviral therapy, co-developed by Gendelman, will begin trials next year.

Gendelman also co-founded a biotech company, Exavir Therapeutics, Inc., which is developing its own gene-editing therapy, currently in preclinical trials, to improve efficacy and safety. Starting the company "was a dare: I'll never be able to find a product and bring it to humans. Very few people can do it. Big companies can do it, but not individual scientists," he says. "We wanted to move our inventions to people ... Having a company would be really important then."

## Continuing to Innovate

Throughout this time, Alzheimer's disease has also been on Gendelman's radar. This has been more difficult to study in animals because "there's no such thing as a demented mouse," Gendelman says. His lab has been busy developing a mouse model in which they can study the effects of Alzheimer's disease and the possibilities of different treatments. That technology is now at a point where Alzheimer's itself will be able to be more directly studied in his lab.

Gendelman was able to continue practicing medicine until a few years ago, when he realized he couldn't do it all. He'd been a physician for 35 years at that point, and was also writing books, serving as editor in chief of a journal, teaching grad students and medical students and playing music during his free time. His lab publishes "major scientific findings every few months," he says, and he has 12 graduate students working with him at any given time.

This April, the Nebraska Coalition for Lifesaving Cures, the nonprofit organization founded to defend stem cell research like Gendelman's, presented Gendelman and his wife, Dr. Bonnie Bloch, with the 2022 Life Saver Award. But if Gendelman's discoveries continue to prove safe and effective in human clinical trials, most of the life-saving he'll do is still ahead of him.

"I am blessed in the fact that two of my dreams are now literally inches from reality. [My team and I] have discovered the means to halt HIV transmission and developed new medicines ... [that will] perhaps someday in the not-so-distant future help make a world that is HIV-free," Gendelman says. "This would be enough for nearly anyone, but for us, it was just a start, as we worked in parallel on a separate road to halt and perhaps even reverse the maladies of Parkinson's disease. A similar path was taken and the results show parallel successes. My experiences, my colleagues and my life of learning have led me through that door and I feel blessed to have lived this life." 

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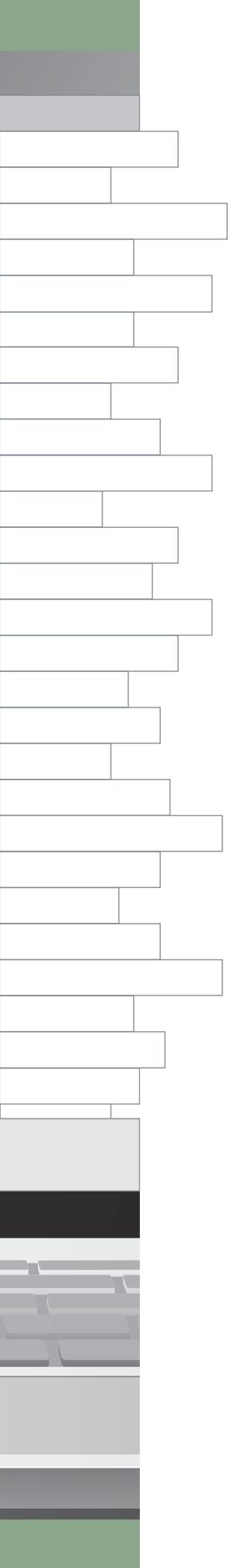
By Meghan Kita

The College's **Accounting Program** stands out from those of peer institutions because its graduates combine certified public accountant (CPA) exam readiness with liberal arts sophistication in just four years of study. Accounting majors earn enough credits to sit for the CPA exam right away, and alumni have the technical knowledge to succeed in the field as well as the versatility, curiosity and emotional intelligence that are the hallmarks of Muhlenberg's liberal arts education.



Sheet1





**A**fter graduation, Doug Dulaney '12, a theatre and accounting double major, moved to New York City with some of his actor buddies. His friends were planning to audition, and part of him longed to join them. But, he had lined up a job at PricewaterhouseCoopers (PWC), one of the “Big Four” accounting firms, and Muhlenberg's accounting faculty had assured him that starting his career at a Big Four firm would open up a world of possibilities. He would work there as an associate while preparing to sit for his certified public accountant (CPA) exam.

Dulaney stayed at PWC for less than two years — entry-level accounting jobs at big firms sometimes lack work-life balance — but his experience there delivered as promised. “After that, pretty much everywhere I interviewed, I got an offer,” he says.

He wanted to move back to his hometown of Boston, and he wanted more time to pursue acting. When he realized his next job, in private equity, would not give him that time, he started doing accounting for arts nonprofits. He's stayed in the nonprofit space ever since.

“If you're working in an arts organization and you're an artist on the side, people get it,” says Dulaney, who managed the finances at a music venue and a theatre before securing his current role as assistant controller of budgeting and operations at Boston's Museum of Science. “If you say, ‘I'm going to audition, I'm going to film something,’ my coworkers will say, ‘That's awesome that you're engaging in the field you're working in.’ I get to live my life in all aspects.”

Muhlenberg's Accounting Program sets students up for this type of success by allowing them to explore their other interests while still providing rigorous preparation for an accounting career. One crucial factor that sets the College's program apart from those of most of its peer institutions is that students graduate with enough credit hours to sit for the CPA exam.

“Being able to get all the credits I needed to sit for my CPA exam right away was really, really helpful,” says Alyssa Pezzella Ehrgood '09, a sales accounting manager for The Hershey Company

who started her career at Deloitte, another Big Four firm. “I didn't have to pay for extra classes or do any type of grad school.”

Because students can sit for the CPA exam right after graduation, Muhlenberg's accounting faculty make it their mission to ensure that students who choose to do so will succeed, meeting the specific requirements in the state they'd like to practice in. What that requires is close faculty mentorship, a curriculum that responds to changes in the accounting field and a focus on ensuring that students are prepared for the interview process as well as their entrance into the business world.

“Accounting is preprofessional in a way that other traditional liberal arts disciplines are not,” says Trevor Knox, associate professor of accounting and economics and director of the Accounting Program. “We would lose part of our relevance if we weren't staying in touch with what employers were looking for.”

One barometer of the program's success is its job placement rate. Every student in the Class of 2022 who earned an accounting degree and who wanted to enter the workforce (versus, say, going on to a graduate program) had a job upon graduating. Another is its reputation, which has been forged in part by the success of its graduates. For example, both Associate Professor of Accounting Ermira Mazziotta

“Our alumni rose to the top in terms of retention ... and quality of the work, how well they performed. That's why Muhlenberg stands out.”

—ERMIRA MAZZIOTTA, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTING

and Assistant Professor of Accounting Ellen Rackas have been invited to attend Deloitte University, a campus in Texas where Deloitte runs educational and leadership programming for employees, potential employees, clients and contacts inside higher education. Faculty from small schools aren't typically invited.

"I asked why we were selected," Mazziotta says. "In feedback from Deloitte, our alumni rose to the top in terms of retention — how long they stayed with the company — and quality of the work, how well they performed. That's why Muhlenberg stands out."

"We have a strong Accounting Program grounded in the liberal arts, and our students get fantastic job opportunities as a result," says Provost Laura Furge. "Our accounting faculty are intentional in the way they have built our program to be continuously up to date and relevant while also supporting student needs and varied interests for a life of learning. Muhlenberg provides a challenging yet supportive environment where students can thrive."

## FACULTY MENTORSHIP

Muhlenberg's accounting faculty, going back to Associate Professors Emeritae Paula Irwin and Jamie Doran, all began their careers in public accounting. Current faculty continue a tradition of providing close advising from the moment a student declares an accounting major. At the start of each semester, there's a group advising session for new majors to acquaint them with the requirements for the major as well as the specific requirements of the states where they may want to sit for the CPA exam. Then, each student has a faculty advisor within accounting who can help them navigate their own particular path.

The CPA exam requires 150 credit hours, which is more than the 128 credit hours required to graduate with a bachelor's degree from Muhlenberg. This is one reason so many accounting students end up double majoring: The process of tailoring the additional coursework to coincide with student interests often results in the natural addition of a double major.

"Muhlenberg manages to squeeze [150 credit hours] in in four years, but they do such a great job, because it doesn't feel like you're running like wild," says Christian Lopez '18, an accounting and economics double major who's now a senior analyst

"Our accounting faculty are intentional in the way they have built our program to be continuously up to date and relevant while also supporting student needs and varied interests for a life of learning."

—PROVOST LAURA FURGE

at the solar company Safari Energy, LLC. "Your advisor helps you know how to pair your classes up properly so you can space out the difficult courses and have a full schedule but not feel like you're losing out on life."

Whether they choose to double major in a related discipline (like finance) or something completely different (like dance) depends, in part, on the state with the strictest requirements of those where they may want to practice. For example, New Jersey requires students to take courses in related fields in order to qualify for the CPA exam, so many students who aspire to work in that state double major in another subject that's part of Muhlenberg's combined Department of Accounting, Business, Economics and Finance.

Faculty advisors also assist students in fulfilling the specific requirements to sit for the exam in a particular state. New York requires accounting coursework that goes beyond the regularly offered in-semester Muhlenberg courses, so the College offers a for-credit internship that fulfills that requirement (and faculty work over the summer as students' internship advisors). Faculty helped a student who was hoping to sit for the CPA exam in California find a remote class to fulfill the state's specific ethics requirement. It's an intensive process that's unique to each student, because students who hope to complete all that's required in just four years can't afford to miss anything.

"We are constantly working with them," says Mazziotta, who likens the process to prehealth advising. "We want to make sure that every student has the opportunity to qualify in the state of their choice."





Associate Professor  
of Accounting  
Ermira Mazziotta

PHOTO BY RYAN HULVAT

## A RESPONSIVE CURRICULUM

The Accounting Program's curriculum is designed to prepare students to excel on the CPA exam as well as in their actual work as public accountants. Knox says that, whenever the content of the CPA exam changes, the curriculum is adjusted accordingly. Mazziotta says that faculty use the weekly reflections from students doing for-credit summer internships to make changes to the program that correspond with the skills students need to succeed in the profession.

For example, Rackas says, Excel experience has become so important that faculty have changed their upper-level courses to incorporate much more Excel training. Instead of having a single class on Excel, it's embedded in all accounting students' coursework because it will be embedded in nearly all their professional work as well. This requires faculty to coordinate what will be taught in each class, but it allows students to build a broader and deeper knowledge that they're constantly expanding.

"At Muhlenberg, we had an Excel textbook, and we took exams on Excel, and I thought that was just normal," says Vanessa Rowan '08, a dance and accounting double major who did accounting for The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts before landing her current role as a director of finance & accounting at the charter school non-profit Building Hope. "Every place that I've gone in my career, I've seen that a lot of people don't have that background in Excel that I have. It got me placed on bigger projects when I was in public accounting, and it helps a lot every day when I'm just looking for a more efficient way to do something."

The Accounting Program also seeks to instill the skills required in any workplace: professional behavior, clear written and verbal communication and the ability to present information to a group with confidence: "Once students declare an accounting major, we very much treat our classes as their first step toward their professional goals," Rackas says. "All student communication is professional."

As another example, in one upper-level accounting course, student groups were required to write a script that would allow them to role-play a real-world situation an accountant might face when dealing with a client. For their final project, Knox reserved Empie Theatre to allow students to act out their scripts.

"My perspective is that those students who are pursuing in-depth an unrelated major tend to be the ones who have the higher emotional intelligence, who are more sensitive to nonverbal cues, who are more attuned to aspects of presentation style than students who aren't performers," Knox says. "Part of what we try to do in our program is bring a little bit of that into the curriculum for everyone."

## A FOCUS ON CAREER READINESS

Another part of the curriculum is rigorous job application and interview preparation. Large firms offer post-sophomore-year leadership programs, and almost all firms offer post-junior-year internships. Either can be the first step toward a job offer. Students must be prepared, sometimes as early as midway through their sophomore years.

"We take it upon ourselves to get them ready," Mazziotta says. "The way we view it is, whenever they interact with anybody, they're representing Muhlenberg."

Preparation begins with resume-building. Over this past summer, Knox was working with rising sophomore accounting students on their resumes. Partners in the Career Center took a first pass, then Knox took a second pass. This work used to take place at the start of the academic year, but that's no longer soon enough.

"That timeline has accelerated in part because we have recruiters, often from Deloitte, on campus in early September," Knox says. "Students' resumes need to be ready to go. We've reorganized our timeline a little bit in order to make sure students are prepared when the job opportunities are available."

The Career Center's relatively new space — it was renovated in 2017 — serves as a hub when recruiters come to campus. Its job and internship platform, Handshake, offers a variety of other opportunities, and accounting faculty and Career Center staff ensure that accounting students are aware of the possibilities.

The next step is interview readiness. Even before COVID began, the Career Center offered students access to Big Interview, a web-based platform meant to help them prepare for online interviews, which have become increasingly common in the last few years. Career Center staff will also rehearse with students, staging mock interviews in their office.

"The Career Center did a great job helping me clean up my resume and understand how to articulate my experiences in a way that would be valuable in the marketplace for work. I did a lot of mock interviews," says Lopez, whose first job out of College was at the Big Four firm KPMG. "Muhlenberg having such a great connection with the Big Four, a lot of them come to the College to interview the accounting students. I had my first Big Four interview in the Career Center. They've done a great job of keeping those connections and having a way for students to smoothly transition into corporate America."

## THE LIBERAL ARTS ADVANTAGE

Once the students reach the professional world, whether that's through a leadership program or an internship, what makes them stand

**"Our accounting majors are looking at things more holistically, so they can put information in context, and that allows them to stand out not just technically or professionally but personally."**

—TREVOR KNOX, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ACCOUNTING & ECONOMICS, DIRECTOR OF THE ACCOUNTING PROGRAM

out is their well-roundedness. While business school students may arrive at those undergraduate opportunities with more in-depth accounting knowledge, "our students prove over and over their ability to both critically think and to communicate effectively," Rackas says.

The breadth of knowledge developed at Muhlenberg also serves graduates well once they enter the workforce. Sami Unger Horrow '10, an accounting and mathematics double major who's been with Deloitte for her whole career, focuses on tech companies in her current role at the firm despite not having a tech background.

"My first manager, I asked him, 'Why did you pick me? Why did you want me on your project?' And his response really stuck with me: 'The way that people with backgrounds like yours go about solving problems is something that we need,'" she recalls. "Because I have the liberal arts, I just think in a very different way than [business school graduates]."

Muhlenberg's Accounting Program curriculum produces graduates with a well-rounded knowledge of accounting and professionalism. On top of that, Muhlenberg's general curriculum, with its emphasis on making strong writers out of all students and its requirements for human difference and global engagement courses as well as integrative learning courses, produces graduates who can adapt to an infinite number of workplaces and on-the-job challenges.

"Having those multiple perspectives is a way that allows our students in accounting to have more interesting and valuable things to say about their accounting work. They can talk about it in terms beyond whether the balance sheet balances and ratios are looking healthy," Knox says. "Our accounting majors are looking at things more holistically, so they can put information in context, and that allows them to stand out not just technically or professionally but personally." 



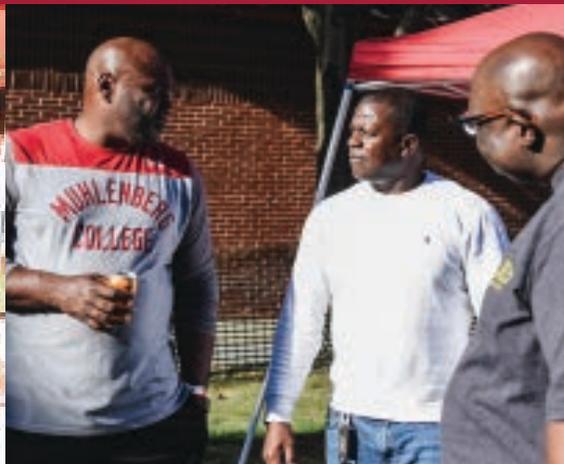
# TAILGATE & CELEBRATE



**SAVE THE DATE:** Alumni Weekend 2023 will take place September 8-10, 2023.



On Saturday, September 24, Muhlenberg College alumni gathered on the East Lawn for the alumni tailgate. A staple of all college homecomings, this year's tailgate saw the return of class years ranging from 1958 to 2022. Reunion class years could elect to have their own tents where classmates could congregate; affinity groups could, too. In addition to offering food and drinks, these tents displayed pieces of College history — framed photos, yearbooks and other pieces of Muhlenberg memorabilia. “[Participation in the alumni tailgate] has grown exponentially every year,” says Natalie Hand '78 P'07, assistant vice president of alumni affairs. “We look forward to expanding this tradition.” The tailgate was one of more than 50 Alumni Weekend events that spanned three days. More than 1,500 attendees from near and far came to campus to celebrate and connect with classmates, alumni and friends.





## Coast to Coast for Cancer

I ran across the country to support a foundation I wish I had known about when I received my Hodgkin's lymphoma diagnosis at age 17.

BY GRETA OHANIAN '20, AS TOLD TO MEGHAN KITA

*This summer, Greta Ohanian '20 completed the Ulman 4K for Cancer fundraising relay with six other people. The team began in Baltimore, the home of the Ulman Foundation, a nonprofit that supports young adults with cancer, and finished in San Francisco. Each runner completed six to 16 miles per day over the course of 49 days. A cancer survivor herself, Ohanian explains what the journey meant to her.*

I found out about the run on Facebook. I hadn't heard about the Ulman Foundation, and when I looked it up, I was so impressed. A lot of cancer organizations are geared towards either pediatric or adult patients; Ulman helps the middle ground.

When I saw the ad, I thought, "This was made for me. There's the cancer, and there's the running." I was diagnosed senior year of high school. I was finishing my cross country season, and I had been running slow. When my mom found lumps on my neck I thought she was making a big deal, but it turned out to be cancer. I was in treatment from late fall into early spring.

Afterwards, I was eager to get my energy back, but it took a long time for my body to recover. I was ready to do the 4K in 2020, but then COVID happened. I ran it virtually and started an Instagram account, @coast2coast4cancer, to share my progress.

Every day, you dedicate your miles to someone who's gone through cancer. I asked around and soon I had more names than days. That made the virtual 4K impactful and is one reason I did the run in 2022.

I didn't know my teammates, but you form a special bond with people who are down to do the same crazy thing you are. There was another survivor, and we bonded a lot. On one run, we talked about our experiences with treatment and life after. It was one of the most raw conversations I've had about cancer.

I loved realizing how different parts of the country are. When we got to Colorado, everyone was excited to start seeing more than just open fields. We ran through Rocky Mountain National Park on Trail Ridge Road, which is at very high altitude with a lot of elevation gain. It was one of my favorite days on the trip but also one of the toughest. The best day, however, was when we crossed into San Francisco and ran into the Pacific.

After 4K ended, I wanted to see how else I could help the young adult cancer community. Ulman offers a Cancer to 5K program, and there is one in New York City that I am participating in. It's a space for survivors to get back into physical activity while bonding with others who have gone through cancer. I'm excited that I get to help other survivors in this way.

*Above, Greta Ohanian '20 runs in Utah's Capital Reef National Park. Above right, more photos from her cross-country journey*

# 10 YEARS *of* THAW

Save the date for the 10th anniversary of  
Toast Heard Around the World (THAW).

**Thursday, January 19, 2023**

One day each year in January for the past 10 years, over 8,000 alumni, students, staff, faculty and friends have gathered to celebrate their connection to Muhlenberg — and to each other.

**It's all about reconnecting.**

*The ways to celebrate Toast Heard Around the World are truly*

# BOUNDLESS

How will you celebrate THAW this year?

**Interested in hosting THAW?**

Please contact [bergalum@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:bergalum@muhlenberg.edu) or call 1-800-464-2374.

**For more information and answers to frequently asked questions:**

[muhlenbergconnect.com/thaw](http://muhlenbergconnect.com/thaw)



MUHLENBERG COLLEGE  
**THAW**  
TOAST HEARD AROUND THE WORLD



PHILADELPHIA, PENNSYLVANIA



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MADRID, SPAIN



PUNTA CANA, DOMINICAN REP.



DENVER, COLORADO



NAPLES, FLORIDA



PHOTO BY KRISTI MORRIS

**Emerging  
Leaders Gift**

Muhlenberg received a \$500,000 gift to expand the Emerging Leaders Program. The gift will increase the number of students in each cohort, extend the program's duration to four years and support its writing components. **p. 4**