

Muhlenberg

Magazine



FALL 2019

Mental Health on Campus

An in-depth look at depression and anxiety in today's students

Positive Change

Dr. Paul Zeitz '84 brings optimism to his activism

Write of Passage

Muhlenberg's First-Year Seminars benefit students and faculty

President's Report

The College community can value these points of pride

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Muhlenberg Magazine

FALL 2019

Magazine

FEATURES



The Write Stuff 30

First-Year Seminars allow faculty to explore topics of personal interest as a way to help incoming students develop analytical composition skills.



Mental Health on Campus 36

Utilization of college counseling services is on the rise, nationwide and at Muhlenberg. What does this tell us about students today?



Positive Change 44

A daily commitment to optimism helps Dr. Paul Zeitz '84 continue to tackle seemingly insurmountable problems.

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ON THE COVER Illustrator Davide Bonazzi drew inspiration from the computer game *The Sims* to depict the inner lives of students in a way that complements the complexity of our mental health feature.

From the Editor



The first person I interviewed for this issue's cover story was Director of Counseling Services Tim Silvestri '91. Midway through our conversation, he explained that everyone exists on a temperament continuum between "anxious" and "chill." It's easy to tell where someone falls, he told me.

"Oh yeah?" I replied. "What am I?"

"You're anxious," he said. "Definitely."

My mind began to race. *How did he know? Am I sweating? Maybe I need to give up coffee again.*

No—my "tell" was that I'd set up an interview in April for a story that wasn't due until the end of August. Silvestri can get a sense of where a student falls by asking when their next test is: "Tuesday at 3 p.m." indicates an anxious temperament. "Sometime next week, I think," means chill. Both have their strengths, he said. People like me, for example, can expect to live longer, do better in school and make more money over the course of a career. (All right!)

However, when your body and mind get out of whack—as explained in "Mental Health on Campus," page 36—your temperament indicates which kind of issues you're more likely to face. Chill folks are more likely to become depressed, Silvestri said, while anxious folks are more likely to develop anxiety disorders.

More students are coming to college with diagnoses of anxiety and/or depression, and counseling services utilization has been climbing, nationwide and at Muhlenberg. In this issue, we dig into what those trends actually mean and how the College is supporting its students.

Also in this issue, we examine another support system: First-Year Seminars ("The Write Stuff," page 30). These writing-intensive courses allow incoming students to hone their analytical skills with direction from professors from a variety of disciplines. And, we hear from the always optimistic Dr. Paul Zeitz '84 ("Positive Change," page 44), who's bringing the activist skills he honed in the fight against global AIDS to other modern crises, like climate change.

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Bravo!

Congratulations on a great story of all the work that goes into putting together the summer theatre productions at the College (“Bring It On,” Summer 2019). We have been attending at least two of the shows for many years and never thought about the incredible amount of effort put in by all those involved. We have so much respect for all of the cast and behind the scenes staff.

Joseph Molinari
*part-time lecturer in accounting,
 business, economics and finance*



Radio Recollections

It’s very encouraging to know that WMUH is still the only station that matters when it comes to representing information not normally communicated through the major media outlets (“WMUH Turns 70; These Shows Make It Special,” Summer 2019). I was blessed to be a DJ for four years, music director for two years and station manager for my senior year. During my senior year, we featured news of the world sent to us from the USSR as well as news from the [anti-communist, pro-limited-government] John Birch Society. We were not espousing either view; we just gave them each air time in the spirit of free speech. The reason I mention this is that WMUH has a long history of pushing the envelope to provide the community with a diversity of experiences and thoughts.

Howard Maymon '76

I miss WMUH so much—my time at the helm from '93-'95. Joe Swanson, the station manager at the time, taught me just as much as any professor. I cherish a photo of he and I in the old studio next to the bookstore. I use it as a reminder that once, I was a clueless, beeper-carrying kid who knew nothing and that men like Joe are great mentors. I have tried to learn from all who were willing to teach. And WMUH gave me that first shot at, let's say, “difficult” people management!

Richard Lospinoso '95

Share your thoughts about stories in the magazine. Email your letters to magazine@muhlenberg.edu.

STORIES YOU MISSED

Check out these Muhlenberg features online.

Minding the Data

Professor of Psychology Mark Sciutto began collaborating with Shanthi Project, a nonprofit that brings mindfulness interventions to local schools, five years ago. Now, psychology students are working with the group to collect and analyze information it can use to ensure its continued funding—and continued success. To read more, visit muhlenberg.edu/minding-data.



On the Front Lines of Climate Change

Every two years, Muhlenberg College students who want to fully grasp the scope of climate change have a chance to visit ground zero: Bangladesh. The Muhlenberg Integrated Learning Abroad course, Climate Change and Sustainable Development in Bangladesh, was designed to shed light on the lasting effects of climate change on a country that has contributed very little to the problem. To read more, visit muhlenberg.edu/bangladeshMILA.



New Speaker Series Launches with Expert on Childhood Stereotyping



The inaugural lecture of the John B. Rosenberg '63 and Stephanie Lambert Speaker Series in Psychology took place on September 26 in Miller Forum. Professor Emerita of Psychology and Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin Rebecca S. Bigler gave a talk titled "Understanding and Preventing Social Stereotyping and Prejudice in Children: Lessons from a Career in Developmental Science."

Bigler, who supports the use of gender-neutral language (e.g. ze/hir/hirself), conducted decades of studies to determine how stereotypes and prejudice develop. Ze learned that stereotypes can be observed in children as young as 3 years old and that children generally stereotype based on social groups they can see (they do not stereotype based on political affiliation, for example) and that are given lan-

guage labels (such as "boys" and "girls"). When children see those labels in use, both explicitly and implicitly, they tend to form stereotypes. For example, an adult telling a child "boys don't cry" is an explicit use; a child noticing that all the presidents of the United States have been men reflects implicit gender labeling.

Hir findings led hir to support gender-neutral language for everyone, not just for hirself: "This is not because of my identity. This is because it is a political statement about the role that language plays in causing stereotyping," ze said.

This year, the John B. Rosenberg '63 and Stephanie Lambert Speaker Series in Psychology will bring a spring speaker—details to be announced—to campus in addition to Bigler this fall. (The series will invite one scholar per academic year in the future.) What makes the series distinct, per Alan Tjeltveit, professor and chair of psychology, is that "our students will get to meet and talk with the speakers on a personal level. The series is thus exposing our students to first-rate researchers who inform, challenge and inspire them. Students can build on what they have learned here and draw on their Muhlenberg professors even more effectively." —*Meghan Kita*

New Podcast Explores Career Stories from Alumni

2400 Chew, a biweekly podcast series, documents conversations with Muhlenberg alumni about their current work. The debut episode, which came out September 10, featured Matthew Bourbeau '98, a principal scientist in the Discovery Chemistry group at the biotechnology company Amgen. Upcoming episodes will feature guests including Joe Yahner '94, the environmental sustainability manager for the city of Ventura, California; Emily Glasberg '04, a key accounts manager/entomologist at Clarke, a global provider of mosquito control products and services; and Alan Wolfe '76, a professor of microbiology at Loyola University Chicago. The project is hosted and produced by Tami Katzoff, associate director of career services, engineered by Paul Krempasky Jr., general manager of WMUH, and edited by Morgan Wolper '19. Episodes drop every other Tuesday at noon, and new and archived episodes are hosted on Podbean and can be found on iTunes. —*Tami Katzoff*

Tune in to 2400 CHEW, an all-new Muhlenberg alumni podcast featuring smart people doing really interesting things.
mc2400chew.podbean.com

2400 CHEW
Sink your teeth
into something smart



November 5
Colleen Clark '02, content strategy lead at Airbnb Experiences

November 19
Joe Yahner '94, environmental services supervisor for the City of Ventura, CA

December 3
Emily Glasberg '04, key account manager/entomologist at Clarke, global provider of mosquito control products and services

December 17
Alan Wolfe '76, professor of microbiology at Loyola University Chicago

Brought to you in part by WMUH, "The Only Station That Matters"

FALL SPEAKERS

Exit West—An Invitation to the Conversation (Center for Ethics)

At this panel, Muhlenberg faculty presented brief reflections on Mohsin Hamid’s novel, *Exit West*, the 2019-2020 common read. Then, the campus community discussed the book and its relation to this academic year’s Center for Ethics theme, “Borders, Nationalisms, Identities: The Ethics of Global Citizenship.” To learn more, see page 6.

**Ken Ilgunas
Trespassing Across America**

The author, travel writer and environmental advocate detailed his 2012 journey along the proposed path of the Keystone XL pipeline, where he learned firsthand the state of climate science and denial in the heart of America.

**Jeffrey Fleishman
The Art of the Interview**

Pulitzer finalist Fleishman—who has worked as a foreign correspondent for the *Los Angeles Times* and written three novels—shared insights into good writing and advice for budding writers.

Borders & Immigration—Current Challenges and Constitutional Concerns (CFE)

This Constitution Day panel featured Theresa Cardinal Brown, director of immigration and cross-border policy for the Bipartisan Policy Center, and dealt with a range of important policy concerns affecting immigration in the contemporary American political context.

**Rebecca S. Bigler
Understanding and Preventing Social Stereotyping and Prejudice in Children: Lessons from a Career in Developmental Science**

Professor Emerita of Psychology and Women’s and Gender Studies at the University of Texas at Austin Bigler gave the inaugural lecture in the John B. Rosenberg ‘63 and Stephanie Lambert Speaker Series in Psychology. To learn more, see page 4.

**Ronny Quevedo
Space of Play, Play of Space Exhibit & Talk (CFE)**

Quevedo’s field-sized outdoor drawing includes fragmented diagrams of basketball, soccer, volleyball and handball courts. The artist moved from Ecuador to New York City in the 1980s, and his work reflects on his bi-cultural upbringing and his father’s soccer career as a player and referee in both places.

**Tony Jack
The Privileged Poor: How Elite Colleges Are Failing Disadvantaged Students**

Jack, an assistant professor of education at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, held a public lecture with the same title as his 2019 book, with a discussion specifically for faculty and staff the following day.

**Ieva Jusionyte
Injury and Rescue on the U.S.-Mexico Border (CFE)**

Jusionyte, assistant professor of anthropology and social studies at Harvard University, is the author of *Threshold: Emergency Responders on the U.S.-Mexico Border*, which delves into the lives of first responders under heightened security on both sides of the wall.

**Amy-Jill Levine
On Different Grounds: Jewish and Christian Foundation for Engaging the Middle East (CFE)**

Levine, professor of New Testament and Jewish studies at Vanderbilt Divinity School and College of Arts and Science, is the author of *The Misunderstood Jew: The Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* and *Short Stories by Jesus: The Enigmatic Parables of a Controversial Rabbi*.



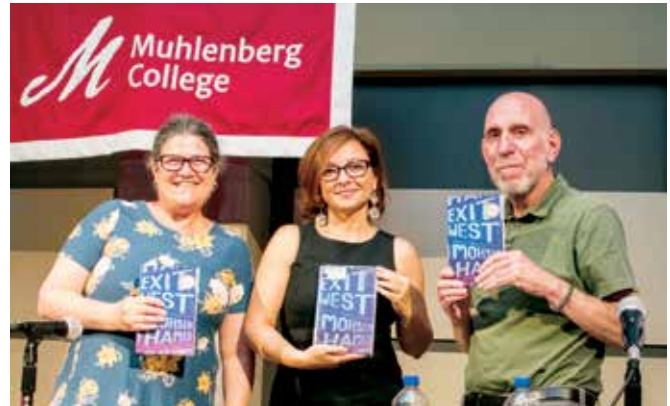
Kaelyn Kappes '21 and Logan Meyer '21 attend the first Center for Ethics event in early September.

Common Read Discussion Launches 2019-2020 Center for Ethics Programming

Before coming to Muhlenberg, the Class of 2023 read Mohsin Hamid's *Exit West*, a novel about two young people who leave their war-torn home. And the first event of this academic year's Center for Ethics programming—which has the theme “Borders, Nationalisms, Identities: The Ethics of Global Citizenship”—was a panel discussion of the novel. On September 3, Senior Lecturer of Religion Studies Sharon Albert, Assistant Professor of French Ioanna Chatzidimitriou and English Professor Jim Bloom led a discussion of the Center for Ethics theme via key moments, characters and symbols presented in Hamid's work.

This year's Center for Ethics program examines questions like: How should we understand and respond to global changes in borders, nationalisms and identities? Are there historical precedents for such dynamic changes to the lives of peoples, states and our planet? What roles do new technology and communication play in crossing some borders while raising other barriers?

The fall programming, which includes a number of lectures, a film, a bus trip to Ellis Island and a gallery exhibition, continues through early December. Additional events will be held during the spring semester. For more information, visit muhlenberg.edu/cfe.



Jill Walsh Appointed Vice President for Human Resources



Walsh, who began her role July 29, is leading efforts in compensation and benefits management, recruitment, performance assessment, training, employee relations

and compliance with federal, state and local law. Walsh brings more than 25 years of combined legal and human resources experience to her role at Muhlenberg. Her previous work includes practicing as an employment law attorney, clerking for the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and serving as VP of HR at SAIC, a Fortune 500 firm.

Muhlenberg College is Now Smoke-, Tobacco- and Vape-Free

On August 15, Muhlenberg officially became a smoke-, tobacco- and vape-free campus, joining more than 2,000 colleges and universities nationwide that have made this commitment. The policy prohibits the use of all smoke and tobacco products, including cigarettes, e-cigarettes (including Juul) and smokeless tobacco, on College property. The College is providing educational programming and access to area tobacco-cessation programs for the campus community. New signage was installed on campus this fall to help make community members and visitors aware of the policy. The implementation of the new policy is not intended to be punitive. Community members are asked to remind those in violation of the policy that the campus is a smoke-, tobacco- and vape-free campus.

English Professor Francesca Coppa's Project Wins Hugo Award

On August 18, the fanfiction site *Archive of Our Own (AO3)* won a Hugo Award, considered one of the highest honors in sci-fi and fantasy, in the category of Best Related Work. Coppa co-founded the site, which is a community for artists, a fan-built social network and a female-designed and -led software project. There are now nearly five million works archived on the site. “With my English professor hat on, I'm really proud of AO3 from a literary point of view—as a grassroots community of readers

and writers,” says Coppa, who's also the new director of the College's women's & gender studies program. “I'm proud that, as a piece of software, AO3's a feminist work. When we designed and built the platform it was 95 percent done by women. It's a female-dominated, open-source coding project with a women-led development team, which was and may still be unprecedented.”
—Kristine Yahna Todaro '84

Muhlenberg Launches New Initiatives for Students Experiencing Hardship

Student hardship isn't a concern unique to Muhlenberg: A recent survey of more than 85,000 college students found that approximately 41 percent of four-year college students had experienced food insecurity within the last 30 days. At even higher risk are marginalized student populations, first-generation college students, students without sufficient medical insurance and individuals who are considered financially independent from parents or guardians. In order to better support students experiencing food scarcity and/or financial hardship, Muhlenberg launched two key initiatives this semester.

One is the M.U.L.E. (Muhlenberg Useful Living Essentials) Community Cabinet. The cabinet, which opened in August, carries items such as nonperishable food items, personal hygiene products and school supplies. It was designed to both meet existing student need and reduce the stigma around using hardship resources.

Muhlenberg students may sign in on an iPad to gain access to the cabinet (located on the lower level of Seegers Union) for any items they need in any necessary quantity and will not be expected or asked to prove a need.

Support for the Community Cabinet has been encouraging, according to College Chaplain Kristen Glass Perez. She, along with Dean of Students Allison Gulati, led the on-campus planning and launch of the Cabinet. Following an afternoon in August working with Krystal Hall '21, student director of the M.U.L.E. Community Cabinet, to organize shelves full of donations, Glass Perez said, "I have heard from both students and staff that they're so glad we have this and wish it had been available earlier. And many noted that they've used a resource like this many times themselves."

The other new initiative is the option for students to apply for emergency and experiential learning grant funds to help cover expenses

beyond what is available through federal financial aid. A national study found that students often need \$500 or less in assistance to ensure that a financial emergency does not derail their timely graduation from colleges like Muhlenberg. These funds, made possible through College and alumni support, are designed to meet immediate student needs, like transportation home during a family emergency, the costs associated with a course field trip or a professional development certification.

"Once students are admitted to Muhlenberg, they are part of this community," says Gulati. "Every student in this community should have the support and resources they need to thrive here and be able to equitably experience all that the institution has to offer."

For more information on these and other initiatives to combat student financial hardship, visit muhlenberg.edu/financialhardship. —Bill Keller



Student Director of the M.U.L.E. Community Cabinet Krystal Hall '21 and College Chaplain Kristen Glass Perez discuss inventory in the recently debuted space.

A Broad Spectrum of Interests

Assistant Professor of Psychology Jonathan Lassiter's research primarily deals with spirituality in the LGBT community, but he's also a dancer, choreographer and clinician.

Jonathan Lassiter grew up a devout Christian in Augusta, Georgia, and he describes himself as “a Southern boy all the way, through and through.” It took leaving the South—first to be part of AmeriCorps in New York City, then to get his doctorate in clinical psychology in San Francisco—to fully appreciate where he came from.

“I missed the direct racism of the South,” he says. “In other places, it’s like, ‘We love everyone,’ and then people deny you opportunities. That’s harder to combat.” And, he adds, people from the rest of the country don’t appreciate good food: “People *share* fried chicken. People don’t eat sweets. Southerners don’t do that,” he says.



PHOTO BY LITTLEWING STUDIO

His formative years had other challenges. “I started to have struggles with my own sexual orientation in late adolescence,” Lassiter says. “I knew I was different from a very early age, but I didn’t have the language for it. I would continue to pray about it. After 12 years of praying, and I still felt this way, it was like, ‘Um, what’s going on here?’”

His movement toward self-acceptance began during undergrad at Georgia College & State University, where he had mentors who were gay male professors. By the time he began his postgraduate work at the California School of Professional Psychology, he had made peace with his identity as a black same-gender-loving man. At the same time, he was reading a lot about HIV in black communities. “I thought to myself, ‘Why would anyone use a condom if they believe God hates them and they’re going to hell?’” he says. “It was a ‘duh’ thing to me, and no one was talking about it at that time. I thought, ‘This is what I want to study.’”

That research became “Extracting Dirt from Water: A Strengths-Based Approach to Religion for African American Same-Gender-Loving Men,” which was published in the *Journal of Religion & Health* in 2014. Since then, Lassiter has continued to study the intersection of spirituality and health in the LGBT community, primarily in black men. His most recent research deals with “how black men who have sex with men understand and define spirituality for themselves.” The first paper to come out of that research has been accepted for publication in the *Journal of Black Psychology*; Lassiter plans to collaborate with the students working in his Spiritual and Psychological Intersectionality in Research and Thought Lab to complete and submit two more papers by the year’s end. He’s also recruiting participants for his Spirituality & Stress Study, which seeks to examine how spirituality helps respondents “cope with culturally distinctive stressors, like police interaction, racist events, microaggressions and racist threats.”

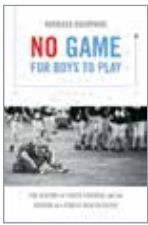
While that’s his main project, he’s also involved with several others. In July, in partnership with Allentown’s Bradbury-Sullivan LGBT Community Center, Lassiter studied how the American Diabetes Association could “culturally adapt their diabetes prevention program for LGBT people in the Lehigh Valley.” He’s hoping to start work on his second book this spring, which will be geared toward a general audience and will address issues around race and mental health in America. (His first book, *Black LGBT Health in the United States: The Intersection of Race, Gender and Sexual Orientation*, which he co-edited, was an academic text.) And, he’s looking into partnering with organizations in his hometown of Augusta to present mindfulness as a stress intervention.

In addition to all that, and to the three psychology classes he’s teaching at Muhlenberg this fall, Lassiter is a licensed clinician in New York State who sees clients remotely. He specializes in working with artists because he is one—a dancer since age 12, specifically. When he lived in New York City before and after grad school, he took classes at The Ailey School, founded by famous black choreographer Alvin Ailey, and in 2013, Lassiter started his own dance company. One of the dances he showcased during that time was called “Spectrum.” “It was about being on the spectrum in a lot of ways. Part of it was autism spectrum; part was the spectrum of emotional expression,” he says. “I carried the spectrum theme out also in the costumes, white into charcoal, gray, black, the rainbow. The colors changed throughout the dance. That’s the way psychology comes into my dance work.” —MK

Defensive Determination

Goalie Jordan Segrave '20 and back Sophie Beeler '21 get set to defend in a September field hockey game at Elizabethtown College. The Mules went on to win 1-0 in overtime, one of four straight shutouts the defense recorded to start the season.





Kathleen Bachynski (public health)
No Game for Boys to Play: The History of Youth Football and the Origins of a Public Health Crisis
University of North Carolina Press, 296 pages

Bachynski offers the first history of youth tackle football and debates over its safety and uncovers the cultural priorities other than child health that made a collision sport the most popular high school game for American boys.



Jen Fellman '08
Forbidden Drive
Broadway Records, 13 songs, 47 minutes

Fellman's debut album, released by Broadway Records, features a variety of love songs—Broadway hits, jazz standards and French songs—including one original song, "New York Treasure."



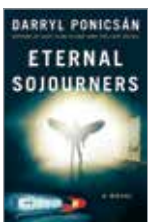
Maura Finkelstein (anthropology)
The Archive of Loss: Lively Ruination in Mill Land Mumbai
Duke University Press, 264 pages

Finkelstein explores the lives of textile mill workers in India's largest city during the current move toward deindustrialization.



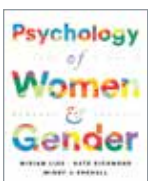
Eduardo Olid Guerrero (Spanish)
The Image of Elizabeth I in Early Modern Spain
University of Nebraska Press, 420 pages

Olid Guerrero served as the main editor for this book that explores the fictionalized, historical and visual representations of Queen Elizabeth I and their impact on the Spanish collective imagination.



Darryl Ponicsán '59
Eternal Sojourners
Skyhorse Publishing, 336 pages

In his 14th novel, the author of *The Last Detail* and *Last Flag Flying* tells the story of a screenwriter who finds himself without his spouse in an unfamiliar place where supernatural happenings ensue.



Kate Richmond '00 (psychology)
Psychology of Women and Gender
W. W. Norton & Company, 832 pages

This textbook focuses on the concerns of students today and deals with important, timely topics such as intersectionality, the experiences of transgender women, sexualization, objectification and microaggressions.





Taking the Circus to **New Heights**

After his first year at Muhlenberg, Noah Dach '16, a dance major and business minor, returned home to Los Angeles and took an aerial silks class, in which students use sturdy fabric hanging from the ceiling to do acrobatic tricks. Dach signed up to face his fear of heights, and he loved it. When he returned to the College, he took the aerial class offered here and founded a circus workshop with Henry Evans '16. As Dach helped choreograph and produce circus performances as a student, interest in the discipline boomed.

After he graduated, Dach taught an advanced aerial class, aerial composition and a course that teaches circus apparatus other than silks at the College as an adjunct. For each of the last three years, Dach has created a circus show for Muhlenberg's Summer Music Theatre (MSMT); the last in the trilogy, *Bohemia*, closed in July. This fall, he began a master's program in dance at the California Institute of the Arts. We asked Dach about how circus at Muhlenberg evolved over his time here.

Muhlenberg Magazine When many people think "circus," they think of big-top tents and elephants, but that's not what we're talking about, is it?

Noah Dach The kind of circus we do is unique in that it has a narrative base, but it's all founded on movement. There's no dialogue, it's all movement, and that's what we tell the stories with. So anyone can understand it. If you're a young child, you'll see beautiful images and spectacle and amazing tricks. If you're an adult, you'll be able to connect with these very intense or deep-thinking emotional stories and narratives.

Noah Dach '16, top, founded a circus workshop as a student and then taught circus classes and choreographed a trilogy of summer circus shows as an alum.

MM What are your MSMT circus shows about, and how do they tie together?

ND The three shows are connected through a family: The first show, *Wild*, is about a young boy who runs away from home and his mom and dad who go looking for him. [The second show], *TAL*, is the story of the mom when she was growing up and deciding what she wanted to do with her life. Finally, *Bohemia* is the story of dad and his group of friends in 1972 dreaming about the future. One of them wants to be an astronaut, another one wants to be a rock star and one of them just wants to fall in love. And it's the journey of where they all end up in their lives and how they stay connected.

MM What was the appeal of bringing your shows to MSMT?

ND The program is really amazing because it brings in a wide range of talents, from professionals to students at the College and alumni, for a really amazing summer of performances for the community. There was a goal I wanted to reach: to be the highest grossing youth show for MSMT. The joke was you could never beat *Seussical*, [which ran in 2013]. *Wild* came close and then *TAL* did it—*TAL* beat *Seussical*.

MM Why did you decide to pursue your master's, and are you planning to continue circus in some capacity?

ND I loved teaching at Muhlenberg, but in order to be a full-time faculty member and enter into the higher education side of this work, you really need a master's. My circus work definitely won't be stopping. Cal Arts has asked me to teach a circus class. I'd like to keep creating work, and to be able to provide other people with the opportunity to create work and be artists. That's the most important part of what I've done with circus at Muhlenberg. We had aerialists and dancers and actors and gymnasts, and I wanted to provide a space for them to utilize their skills.

Muhlenberg Names A. Benjamin Miles III '13 the Inaugural Weiss Fellow



The Weiss Fellowship is a selective trustee mentorship program designed to prepare recent Muhlenberg graduates for service and nonprofit leadership opportunities. The fellowship, named in honor of Muhlenberg Life Trustee Bishop Harold "Hal" Weiss '52, empowers the College's trustees to appoint up to two Muhlenberg alumni to concurrent

two-year terms on the College's board. The fellow will develop a foundation in leadership service through participation in trustee activities, personal mentorship from a board member, responsibility for ethical decision-making and financial stewardship and access to extensive professional development opportunities.

The inaugural recipient, A. Benjamin Miles III '13, has served on the College's Alumni Board since 2015 and is currently co-chair of its nominations and governance committee. Miles' two-year term as a non-voting member began this July and will include a role in the College's triannual trustee meetings as well as voluntary service on at least one standing committee or taskforce.

"Working with alumni from across the decades who share my passion for Muhlenberg has strengthened my commitment to the College as I have observed, firsthand, the positive and lasting impact Muhlenberg has made on generations of alumni," Miles said in his personal statement. "Serving as a Weiss Fellow will allow me to closely observe how the board makes critical decisions at the highest level and to learn about the strategic thought processes that influence major decisions with lasting impacts on the welfare of our College."

"Working with alumni from across the decades who share my passion for Muhlenberg has strengthened my commitment to the College."

—A. BENJAMIN MILES III '13

Applicants to the Weiss Fellowship program must be Muhlenberg graduates who received their degrees from the College within the last 10 years. To learn more, visit muhlenbergconnect.com/weissfellowship. —BK

Why I Study ... Chinese foreign policy rhetoric

Professor of Political Science Chris Herrick

My father was stationed in China during World War II. I heard stories from him about what it was like. A peasant there told my father: "Don't worry about how chaotic China is today. In 50 to 100 years, China will be great again." And indeed, China has risen again.

My undergraduate mentor was from Burma, and that reinforced my interest in Asia. When I went for my master's degree, I worked with a southeast Asian specialist, but nothing quite piqued the same interest in me as China. The



PHOTO BY TOM AMICO

problem when I first came to Muhlenberg was there was already an East Asian specialist. When he retired, I took over.

I joined the ASIA-Network, a group of representatives from 170 colleges that teach East Asian studies, and I met other people interested in China. In 2016, I co-authored a book, *China's Peaceful Rise: Perceptions, Policy and Misperceptions*, with one of those people. The third co-author, Surain Subramaniam '93, was a student of mine.

Now, I'm looking at Chinese foreign policy rhetoric in collab-

oration with [Assistant Professor of Computer Science] Jorge Reyes Silveyra. We use official Chinese government translations of speeches of various high-level leaders and do a content analysis: Which words do they use the most, and how does that change over time? Throughout the entire [former General Secretary of the Communist Party of China] Hu Jintao period, the word "Hu" does not appear as one of the most used terms. You get into the Xi Jinping era, and suddenly one of the most used terms is "Xi Jinping." This is just one more indication of his concentration of power.



Fellowships Help Power Research at the College

In 2019, Muhlenberg experienced a record-breaking year for its Alumni Weekend research poster session—81 students presented their work, 62 of whom had conducted on-campus summer research. Those students had spent eight to 10 weeks exploring a topic of their choosing with a faculty advisor or participating in an existing faculty project. On-campus, part-time research continues throughout the academic year, with options to pursue both independent research for credit or paid research assistantships in faculty labs.

“Undergraduate research is a high impact practice that leads to powerful learning and personal development outcomes for students,” says Kathleen E. Harring, interim president. “These experiences involve close faculty mentorship, regular feedback, opportunities to practice the liberal arts and the development of a scholarly identity. The skills, knowledge and confidence that students acquire as a result of these experiences prepare them for graduate and professional school as well as career opportunities.”

Funding for research at Muhlenberg comes from a variety of sources, including national grants and the Office of the Provost. Donors, too, are increasingly stepping up to support this critical aspect of the Muhlenberg experience.

For Timothy and Kathleen Mazur P’19, the decision to establish the Mazur Research Fund for Musical Inquiry, which will begin to be awarded next year, grew out of witnessing their daughter conduct research at Muhlenberg. Lauren Mazur ’19, a double major in music and English who’s now a law student at Marquette University, began conducting music research on American and Afro-Cuban jazz the summer after her first year at Muhlenberg with Kassie Hartford, assistant professor of music, as her advisor. Lauren continued work on the project throughout her time as a student, and it became her senior thesis.

“Her enthusiasm and her detailed knowledge of what she was researching, her happiness level, her sense of pride, her work ethic—it was amazing to listen to her,” Kathleen says. “The opportunity to work one-on-one with a professor she admired was just such a great thing for her.” The Mazurs wanted other music students to have the same kind of opportunity, which is why they set up the fund.

Jack Ladley ’70 P’01 and Diane Schmidt Ladley ’70 P’01 don’t recall these kinds of research opportunities being available when they were both mathematics majors at Muhlenberg. But Jack, through his role on the Board of Trustees, has heard a great deal about the transformational power of these student/faculty collaborations. He and Diane recently established the Ladley Endowed Student Research Fellowship, which will support student research, focused on STEM projects, beginning in 2020. Both felt that this is ideal timing, coinciding with their 50th reunion next year.

“Our students are excited by these research opportunities, and the faculty is enthusiastic as well,” Jack says. “[Establishing a fellowship] sounded like an excellent idea, a way to support highly motivated students but also to support the faculty. It really resonated with us.”

During the 2019 Alumni Weekend, the Ladleys were able to see details and results of student/faculty research and the types of outcomes their fellowship might fund when they attended the aforementioned poster session. Both were impressed by the quality of the research and by the number of students participating.

“The students get to expand their learning in the classroom to projects outside the classroom,” Diane says. “The chance for students to be funded, to get a stipend and to have a meaningful summer is important.” —MK

A New Start in Singapore

Jeannette Ickovics '84 serves as dean of faculty at Yale-NUS, the leading liberal arts college in Asia.

These days, you can find Jeannette Ickovics '84 in Singapore, ambling through the city-state's many public gardens or searching out a "hawker center"—an open-air market—for some amazing street food (a favorite is Hainanese chicken rice, one of the country's national dishes).

Singapore has been home for Ickovics and her family since 2017. She serves as dean of faculty for Yale-NUS, a small liberal arts college established in 2011. Yale-NUS is the result of a partnership between the Ivy League school, where Ickovics holds an endowed professorship, and the National University of Singapore. It is the first liberal arts college in the country and one of just a few in Asia. And though Ickovics has spent the majority of her career working at a large research institution, her time at Muhlenberg informs her in this new position, in which she oversees 130 faculty members across all departments.

A psychology major at Muhlenberg, Ickovics says the small classes and close relationships with her classmates allowed her to take some risks in and out of the classroom—including becoming a founding member of the Muhlenberg Dance Association.

That risk-taking philosophy served her well after graduation. She first went to George Washington University to earn a Ph.D. in applied social psychology. Near the end of her time there, she was at a conference on women's health. Also attending was Judith Rodin, who was then the chair of the Department of Psychology at Yale. Ickovics followed Rodin into the coat room and asked if there might be a position on her research team. It worked: Ickovics has been with Yale since 1989, first as a postdoctoral scholar, then as a professor in the School of Medicine, School of Public Health and the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences.

Ickovics is a triple threat: She's a top-notch teacher—the American Psychology Association (APA) named her a master lecturer in 2015. She's a mentor and role model who earned the APA's 2018 Strickland-Daniel Mentoring Award and other awards such as the Outstanding Community Partner Award from the New Haven Public Schools. And she's a researcher whose community- and clinic-based work has been funded with more than \$40 million in federal and private funds.

Ickovics's research has focused on the factors that influence individual and community health. Her primary work has been in maternal and child health as well as chronic disease prevention. She developed a clinical model of group prenatal care that results in a 33 percent reduction in risk of preterm birth and an

increase in favorable outcomes, from healthy weight gain to better mental health during and after pregnancy. She's published more than 200 peer-reviewed articles, writing about the impact of discrimination on health, how food and housing security affects pregnancy and even how various community institutions, like museums, can help improve public health.

Partially because her work is rooted in helping others, she earned an honorary degree from Muhlenberg in 2012. "My parents were there, [as were] my husband and children," she says. "I was so humbled and proud. It was a really special moment to reflect on my early days as a first-generation college student, and then to be there three decades later as an honorary degree recipient."

"I'm striving to strengthen communities, and I believe we need to bring evidence to action to make the world a better place for all."

—JEANNETTE ICKOVICS '84

She says her inspiration for working with high-risk communities comes from her parents, who are both Holocaust survivors. Her father was part of the anti-Nazi resistance; her mother survived both Auschwitz and Reichenbach. "Because of them, I am fiercely dedicated to a world free from stigma and discrimination," she says. "I'm striving to strengthen communities, and I believe we need to bring evidence to action to make the world a better place for all."

The last few years have seen Ickovics take a slight turn in her career. She first came to Singapore and Yale-NUS as a visiting professor in 2017, and then was asked to stay on as the dean of faculty. As such, her research has been on the backburner. But Ickovics has taken to Singapore, valuing its "strong sense of community and vibrant arts and culture scene." Her family has traveled throughout Asia, visiting more than a dozen countries over the last two years. And in her new role, she's working to spread the values of a liberal arts education. She comes from what she calls a "liberal arts family." Her husband went to St. Olaf College in Minnesota, and her older son attends Williams College in Massachusetts. "My time at Muhlenberg reminds me about the importance of the traditions and opportunities unique to a small college community," she says. —*Jeremy Fuchs '14*





Mixed Dinks



At Muhlenberg (and many other institutions), first-year students were once required to wear matching hats called “dinks” as a way of visually distinguishing them from returning students. The oldest one pictured here has a logo that matches baseball caps from 1902, which means it likely dates to around the turn of the century. The one with the small brim and red M was likely issued in the late 1940s. Newer dinks have dates printed on them; the newest one held by the College (similar to the bucket hat that’s pictured) was made for the Class of 1969. That group was one of the last classes, if not the last class, to experience the dink-wearing tradition.

If you have items of interest to the Muhlenberg archives, please contact susanfalciani@muhlenberg.edu.

Personally Speaking...



Emily Sinensky '21

Business administration and innovation & entrepreneurship (minor), New York City

She came to Muhlenberg after spending a gap year in Israel.

"A gap year after high school provided an opportunity to expand my comfort zone, to meet new people and to gain more independence. Opting to go to Israel and being surrounded by their advanced technology and innovation was fortuitous in broadening the scope of my career ambitions."

She founded the entrepreneurship club Be Your Own Boss (B.Y.O.B.) as a first-year student.

"At the Fall Activities Fair in 2018, I was looking for an entrepreneurial-focused club, but I realized there weren't any being offered. Later that semester, I attended an event where first-year students and sophomores were invited to meet with students who were business majors and the faculty who teach in the department. That is where I met [Director of Innovation & Entrepreneurship] Rita Chesterton. I asked her if she would help me initiate an entrepreneurship club, and she happily agreed to be the faculty advisor. We worked on the club application over winter break, and B.Y.O.B. was approved by the start of the second semester."

She designed B.Y.O.B. to be event-based...

"I thought rather than meeting weekly just for the sake of getting together, we should have a meaningful, participatory focus on specific events. Our club plans events that include visiting startups and inviting guests to share their entrepreneurial experiences. For example, last spring, we went on a trip to New York City to visit the companies Birch Coffee and Loco Coco to hear from the founders about their entrepreneurial journeys."

...and its signature event is April's Failure Fest.

"A senior at the time [Jake Gordon '18] told me about an event-production company called F---up Nights. The group organizes events in dozens of countries, and at each event, three or four people share their own professional failures in front of an audience. The idea is to promote resilience and discourage giving up in spite of pitfalls. I realized this concept would resonate with our students. We initiated the concept with an entrepreneurial twist, naming it Failure Fest. We invited three Muhlenberg professors to discuss failures of their own—how the failures turned into successes or remained failures from which the speakers learned. Fifty people attended Failure Fest our first year, and attendance doubled our second year. It has now expanded beyond inviting professors to include celebrity guests, such as [*Orange Is the New Black* actor and HAI Riette founder] Tanya Wright. Failure Fest 2019 gained us a bit of fame, as WFMZ-TV covered it as well."

She got her summer internship through a Muhlenberg connection...

"The networking possibilities at Muhlenberg have already paid huge dividends for me personally. At the 2019 Innovation Challenge, I met Rachel Berger '11, who is the founder and executive director at The Artist Co-op (TAC), a co-working space for artists in New York City. Weeks later, I was granted the strategic planning and development intern position at TAC for the upcoming summer. I interned at TAC for three months and had the opportunity to learn what it is like to be a founder, as I had the privilege of working with and reporting to Rachel herself."

...and she's interning this fall at a startup in Bethlehem.

"This semester I am working at Rocket Cloud, located at Ben Franklin TechVentures in Bethlehem. Rocket Cloud is a technology company that helps industrial wholesalers successfully sell through e-commerce. I am a data analyst intern and have been analyzing and identifying trends and opportunities on Amazon. I am so thankful to be a part of a driven team that is eager to change and influence the digital world. Being surrounded by individuals who are ambitious and tenacious has strengthened and confirmed my passion for entrepreneurship."



Tech Support

Two Muhlenberg sports teams turn to data-gathering devices to bring about better results and improved safety.

Light rain turned into a heavy downpour at Varsity Field just prior to the start of the Muhlenberg soccer game against Centenary University on September 14. As the Mules took to the field and began their match, their white jerseys quickly became see-through, revealing the racerback outline of what they wore underneath.

Nothing terribly surprising here—except that this was a men’s soccer game.

The players wore the sports-bra-like vests beneath their jerseys not to make a fashion statement, but because they housed two pieces of technology that are among Muhlenberg’s first forays into sports science. Two fields down, at Scotty Wood Stadium, the Muhlenberg football team has also begun incorporating scientific monitoring of its athletes.

The purpose of the tech? To improve performance and, most importantly, athlete safety.

Upping the Ante

“We’ve been looking at this for years, but it’s been so expensive that it just hasn’t made sense,” says Head Men’s Soccer Coach Sean Topping ’98. “Now they’ve finally come out with some products that are more affordable for teams like us.”

The team uses a system called Catapult Sports PlayerTek+, which is also used by organizations ranging from the Duke University men’s basketball team to Sweden’s national women’s soccer team. Players wear a heart monitor and GPS tracker—housed inside the vests—during

practices and games. Topping uploads the data collected by the GPS trackers (called “pods”), allowing players and coaches to monitor metrics such as sprint distance, distance covered, player load (a measure of physical exertion) and top speed.

The coaches use the data to see how hard players are working in practices and games and to determine recovery time on days after games. Players are given “load points” based on their exertion rates; 500 is considered average for a game, so if the numbers are higher following a particularly intense game, the next day’s practice will be engineered toward lower numbers.

“It keeps us reigned in a little bit and makes sure we’re not overworking them,” says Topping. “But we also want to make sure we get the work in.”

Although the Mules do not currently view the data in real time, it can be used during games to monitor which players are growing fatigued and in need of substitution.

In Muhlenberg’s 1-1 tie against national powerhouse Messiah College, the PlayerTek stats matched the game stats. The Mules got off to a slow start but played much better in the later stages; the metrics showed they worked harder in the second half.

The technology also has a competitive side to it, since players have access to the data on their computers and phones.

“I can compare myself with another athlete, and I can see how far I’ve run against him,” says Zach Cimring ’20, who checks his profile every day. “That brings out another



PHOTOS BY MAGGIE EWALD



Clockwise from top left: Soccer players wear their Catapult Sports PlayerTek+ vests over their jerseys during practice for comfort; the football coaching staff monitors hits in real time; Greyson King '23 helps Jordan Cimring '20 into his vest; an extra layer inside the helmets helps track the force and location of hits; GPS trackers are stored in a case when not being worn inside the soccer players' vests.



competitive level, which I've noticed on the field. We always want to see who has run more. If that's the case, then everyone works harder and it shows in the results."

And it has shown in the results for the Mules, who were regionally ranked for most of the 2018 season and needed only six games to score more goals than they did in 17 games all last year.

"When the guys put it on, they feel professional, and they feel like someone's monitoring them," says Topping. "It ups the ante for them at practice a little bit because they know they're being watched, so to speak, and they enjoy it. So it's been good."

Training Opportunities

"It's a question we get every single week in recruiting," says Head Football Coach Nate Milne about parents' concerns regarding player safety.

To help answer the question, the Mules began using InSite, an impact response system developed by Riddell, one of the team's helmet providers.

The system consists of an extra layer, inserted into the helmet, that has sensor points that track not only the force at which the helmet received an impact, but also the location. Muhlenberg's athletic trainers carry a sideline pack at practice and receive an alert every time there is an abnormality (called a "training opportunity"), whether that be an unusually hard hit or one in a vulnerable spot, such as the back of the head.

"It becomes kind of like an extra eye for the training staff," says Milne. "With 118 individuals out there, there's no way to see everybody at once. But when Player X shows that he was hit in the back of the head, our athletic training staff can find that young man and do their evaluation to make sure that there was no significant head trauma."

The data is also uploaded to Riddell's website, where coaches can see at what point during practice training opportunities occur. Milne has noticed more happening at the end of practices, when players are fatigued and in bad positions.

That presents a powerful teaching opportunity for the coaches. "We've had a couple of players come up when they have a training opportunity and watch the actual play on film," says Milne. "From a coaching perspective, it's great to be able to show a young man, 'hey, your head was down in this situation,' or 'you're in a poor position.'"

One of those players was running back Mark Riggio '20. "I remember the exact play when I was running up the middle and went head-to-head with [safety] Joe O'Ha-

gan. It wasn't a bad hit or anything, just the perfect spot. After practice, Coach and [Assistant Athletic Trainer] Jamie [Scalise] came up to me and they asked if I was all right, and I was like, 'yeah, I'm fine, what's the big deal?' They explained that my helmet went off and it was that hit. It's definitely making me think more about how I'm running the ball and how I'm playing the game."

A handful of players, spanning different positions and different classes, are using the technology this year with brand-new helmets—they are reminded to turn their helmets on before every practice—and Milne would like to retrofit all the helmets next season.

"I am happy with it," says Milne. "It makes our players more aware, more conscious that they're not just throwing their bodies out there willy nilly. If they're going to lay it out on the line on Saturday, we've got to be really smart on Sunday through Friday in what we're doing, and this will help us do that." —Mike Falk



Paul Wheaton '22 (left) and Mark Winter '21 practice while wearing their PlayerTek+ vests.

Muhlenberg in the Media

Rob Springall (admissions), Charles Richter (theatre) and three students were interviewed for a story in *The New York Times*.

The article, "Where 4-Year Schools Find a Pool of Applicants: 2-Year Schools," highlighted Muhlenberg's increasing enrollment of transfer students from community colleges.

Jacqueline Antonovich (history) was interviewed by *The Washington Post*.

Antonovich spoke about her use of Twitter's #twitterstorians hashtag to crowdsource translations of historical work for the article, "The National Archives has billions of handwritten documents. With cursive skills declining, how will we read them?"

Kathleen Bachynski (public health) was interviewed for a *New York Times* op-ed, "Football Is Here to Stay: Despite the concussion controversy, things are looking up."

She says the youth level—before high school—is where the concussion issue is most troubling. Playing organized flag football during childhood instead provides all the benefits of teamwork, exercise and excitement without the neurological risk.

Rich Niesenbaum (biology), Sustainability Coordinator Kalyna Procyk and several Muhlenberg students were featured in a PBS39 segment about the College's new sustainability studies major.

Interdisciplinary by nature, the major focuses on three areas: environment, economics and sociology. It's part of a bigger College-wide effort to encourage sustainability, on campus and around the world.

Francesca Coppa (English) was interviewed on NPR's *All Things Considered*.

Coppa co-founded *Archive of Our Own*, a fan-fiction site that's a community for artists, a fan-built social network and a female-designed and -led software project. *AO3* was nominated for and ultimately won a coveted Hugo Award, one of the top awards for science-fiction; see page 6 for more information.

***Philadelphia Inquirer* included three new programs at Muhlenberg.**

"What's New on Campus?" mentioned the sustainability studies major, an honors society for first-generation college students and an honors program for premed students planning to major in the humanities, social sciences or natural sciences.

Ornithologist Daniel Klem (biology) appeared in *PBS Nature*.

In "Bird, brained—When Birds and Buildings Collide," Klem says that hundreds of millions of birds die in the U.S. every year from collisions with large human-made structures. A two-inch by four-inch pattern on building glass could all but eliminate the problem of birds flying into it.



Muhlenberg Recognized for Sustainability Initiatives

Muhlenberg College was recognized in August as a top performer in the *2019 Sustainable Campus Index*, receiving a score of 100 percent for best practices in the area of water conservation. The College tied for the fourth spot among all higher education institutions nationally for water conservation and reuse as well as effective rainwater management practices. A publication from the Association for the Advancement of Sustainability in Higher Education (AASHE), the *Sustainable Campus Index* recognizes top-performing sustainable colleges and universities overall and in 17 impact areas, as measured by the Sustainability Tracking, Assessment & Rating System (STARS). Last winter Muhlenberg received a STARS Gold Rating for Sustainability Achievements, the highest level of recognition received by any Lehigh Valley higher education institution.

And, in September, Muhlenberg was named to *SIERRA's* 2019 Cool Schools list. The magazine of the Sierra Club considers an institution's curriculum, food, energy, waste, research and transportation when generating the list.

2018-19 Report of the President

Kathleen E. Haring



Shortly after assuming the role of interim president, I left on a planned vacation to Europe. The trip was notable in that it allowed me the time to reflect on my now 35 years at Muhlenberg and the charge I assumed to keep the College moving forward. I have always been grateful to be a part of the Muhlenberg community, but during my two weeks away from campus, I realized

how proud I am to be part of such an excellent institution.

Much has changed at the College throughout my time with the institution. The one constant has been the amazing strength and collaborative nature of the Muhlenberg community. In fact, all of the positive changes that have maintained the excellence of the College in an ever-changing world can be traced to the work and support of our faculty, staff, students and alumni. In this President's Report, I want to share with you those things that make me proud to call myself a member of such an impressive community.

Academic Excellence and Innovation

The liberal arts have been under assault for some time now. The loudest noise typically comes from those who have not experienced the extraordinary, lifelong value of an education that is both broad and deep—one that teaches knowledge from across the disciplines and imbues relevant skills. It is true that, in its purest sense, a liberal arts education is not about job training per se, but it provides a way of learning and understanding that opens career pathways and allows graduates to excel in fields across the professional spectrum.

I would argue that this benefit, in and of itself, remains compelling for today's students. But a long time ago, Muhlenberg's faculty and staff recognized that they could offer more to students. From the advent of adult education more than 100 years ago to the addition of pre-professional majors like business in the 1930s, the faculty have sought to combine a traditional liberal arts educa-

tional experience with a forward-looking approach that prepares graduates to successfully pursue any path they choose.

Muhlenberg remains one of the few top national private colleges to offer our students nontraditional liberal arts programs in accounting, business, education, film studies, neuroscience and public health. We also give our students the opportunity to study analytics, documentary storymaking, innovation & entrepreneurship and statistics as minors. We offer these programs within a unique, integrated curriculum that places learning in these majors within a broad liberal arts context, teaching not only the how of each area but, more importantly, the why.

This past year we elevated our sustainability studies minor to a major. Sustainability-related degrees are on the rise, but most of these programs are at larger universities or have more of a science focus. In typical Muhlenberg fashion, we've taken an entirely different path. Our sustainability studies major is an interdisciplinary program—15 academic programs contribute courses to the major—that gives equal focus to environmental, economic and social factors that must be considered to achieve sustainability. The program prepares students for a wide range of possible career pathways, including fieldwork, legal representation, political advocacy and environmental education.

The sustainability studies major underscores one of the most unique and innovative parts of the Muhlenberg curriculum. A liberal arts education is at its best when it incorporates varying perspectives in the pursuit of learning—leading to the prime competencies of critical thinking and the ability to solve complex problems. Most colleges present this kind of interdisciplinary approach through specific programs or clusters of classes. The faculty at Muhlenberg, recognizing the importance of integrative learning (IL), has instituted an IL requirement that ensures each student will not only engage with this kind of study but that they will reflect on their experiences to purposefully recognize the impact of their IL participation. This is a critical component to helping students understand the importance of weighing different perspectives and methodologies as they solve complex problems in both their professional and personal lives.

A prime example of IL learning this year was an experience developed for resident assistants to learn about and understand different religious traditions and help develop an ability to con-



sider issues that arise from religious difference in a more objective way. This kind of opportunity has impacts that extend well beyond this one experience. It helped prepare our resident assistants to work more effectively with religious diversity at the College and to demonstrate, as student leaders, the practices needed within a diverse and inclusive environment.

Another innovation was the introduction of the Shankweiler Scholars pre-medical honors program. But this isn't an ordinary pre-med program. Muhlenberg has a long history of educating health care providers that includes academic partnerships with a number of medical programs. Through conversation, we found that medical schools were craving undergraduates who were not focused solely on the sciences but were trained in humanistic disciplines that gave them the ability to relate with patients more effectively. From these conversations grew the Shankweiler Scholars, which enrolled 16 students this fall.

Supporting Student Success

We've talked often about the changing demographics of students eligible to enter higher education. This shift has resulted in challenging times in recruiting highly qualified students who can succeed in Muhlenberg's rigorous academic environment. While recruitment is critical for the College, it is central to our mission—and embedded in our strategic plan—that we do all we can to ensure that enrolling students are successful once they join our community.

One of the changes we have witnessed in recent years is an increase in the number of first-generation students attending college. This fall, 20 percent of our new students were first generation. Muhlenberg has always been about relationships, and our recruitment efforts are no exception. Because our admissions counselors are truly engaged with our prospective students, it makes navigating the admissions process easier for first-generation students and gives them an understanding the College is committed to their success.

Last year Muhlenberg College became the fourth institution to establish a chapter of Alpha Alpha Alpha, the newly created honor society for first-generation students. This society recog-

nizes the success of these students, who really are trailblazing. Unlike students with family members who have college experience, first-gen students often have to put in the extra effort to seek out the information and contacts they need to fully take advantage of a college education.

A liberal arts education is at its best when it incorporates varying perspectives in the pursuit of learning—leading to the prime competencies of critical thinking and the ability to solve complex problems.

Our First-Year Seminar program is designed to help our students make the transition to Muhlenberg as successful as possible. The writing-intensive courses have been in place since 1993 (see page 30 for more about this year's course offerings) and—unlike first-year seminars at other institutions—are an opportunity for new students, faculty and returning students to learn together. Faculty from across the disciplines choose topics, often not within their area of expertise, that they wish to explore, and students from the writing assistant program work with faculty to help new students learn how to become better writers.

Growing diversity and inclusion is integral to our values and is embedded in our strategic plan. The increasing number of first-generation and Pell-eligible students—students with fewer family financial resources—also creates increased diversity of all kinds. The College has understood the need to support underrepresented students and instituted several initiatives to help these students thrive at the College. Developed in 2011, Emerging Leaders (EL) is an outstanding cohort program that offers students from underrepresented populations a seminar and a series of workshops focused on leadership and transition. EL has a pre-orientation program and this year added community building and co-curricular opportunities, as well as a new student-led leadership team to support their work. We also have



a gender-inclusive working group made up of faculty, staff and students that has been focused on making the Muhlenberg campus a welcoming and supportive environment for LGBTQ members of our community.

This fall, the College launched a number of initiatives to provide resources for students experiencing financial hardship. Financial hardship comes in many forms and can affect anyone on our campus. A student may need supplies for class or they may be on campus when the Wood Dining Commons is closed and need food. Studies show that the monetary difference between a student being able to thrive or fall behind can be \$500 or less. The most visible of our efforts is the M.U.L.E. Community Cabinet (see page 7 for more), a student-run pantry that provides a range of donated goods, including classroom supplies, food and hygiene products. We also put an experiential learning grant program in place to help students cover costs associated with off-campus opportunities and a student emergency grant fund for unexpected and urgent needs.

Opening Doors

The liberal arts have always been a pathway to professional success. Time and again, studies like the 2018 Hart Research survey report “Fulfilling the American Dream: Liberal Education and the Future of Work” demonstrate the confidence that the business and nonprofit world has in liberal arts graduates. That’s why Muhlenberg has recently taken considerable steps to improve both the depth and engagement of our Career Center and The Muhlenberg Network.

Over the last few years, Muhlenberg has invested in an expanded Career Center, which has yielded a host of extraordinary programs that give our students and alumni a chance to connect and network in ways the College has never offered before. The Career Road Trip, launched in 2016, takes Muhlenberg students to places like New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. to visit organizations, gain insight into various industries and network with alumni. The trips, which can include tours, panel discussions and networking events, provide an opportunity for students to explore career pathways and often lead to internships or even post-graduation positions.

The Muhlenberg Network has also expanded, providing opportunities for alumni. Alumni serve as mentors, provide internships and job-shadow opportunities, as well as volunteer with a variety of programs. The Career Center to Go program sends staff to various regions to work with alumni seeking to change or advance their careers. We have also added lifelong learning opportunities such as faculty-led classes during Alumni Weekend and an online alumni reading group. And there is TheMuhlenbergNetwork.com, a professional online community that has grown in just a few short years to more than 3,400 members.

We offer students an opportunity to work on research that is typically seen at the graduate level as a way of deepening learning and providing pathways for student success.

Alumni Week is one of the most impressive efforts in connecting our students with alumni. What began as a program offered by the Department of Media & Communication in 2011 has expanded to include 17 academic departments with more than 170 alumni participants in 2019. Each spring, alumni come back to campus to meet with students, share stories of their career paths and offer advice—and sometimes professional opportunities—in classrooms, on panels and through networking events.





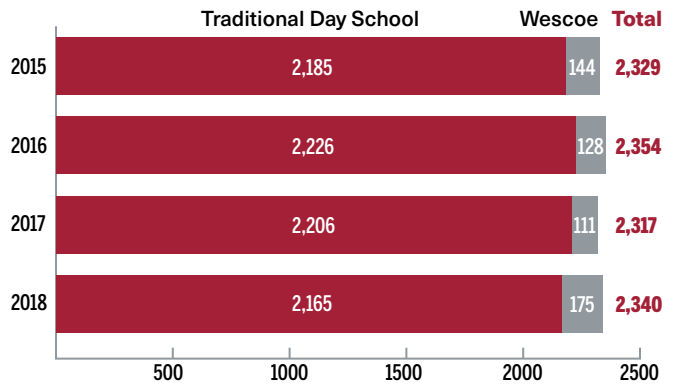
One of the most important takeaways for me from Alumni Week is the deep connection that alumni continue to feel with their faculty mentors. Many of those relationships began and developed as part of completing research work while students. Like many top liberal arts institutions, we offer students an opportunity to work on research that is typically seen at the graduate level as a way of deepening learning and providing pathways for student success. What makes Muhlenberg unique is our Summer Research Program. For about 20 years now, the College has given grants to support students who remain on campus over the summer and conduct research under the guidance of our faculty. There are many things I look forward to at Muhlenberg, but perhaps the one I enjoy most is the students' fall presentation of their summer research. During Alumni Weekend this year, we saw a record 81 students present the results of research conducted with 34 faculty across 16 academic departments. Truly impressive!

For me, the definition of an elite college is outstanding students, faculty, staff and alumni doing amazing things, things that continue to push us and challenge our perceptions. Every time I read stories in *Muhlenberg Magazine* or talk to members of the community about what they are doing, I am taken by an incredible sense of pride: Pride that the College that has been a part of my life for 35 years provides so many opportunities. Pride at the impact our students, faculty, staff and alumni have on their communities and the world around us. Pride that after all these years, Muhlenberg is still teaching me new things.



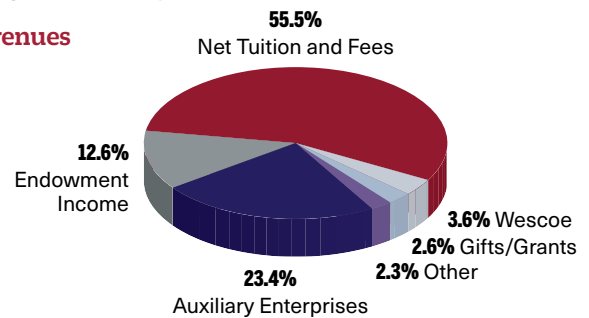
2018-19 BY THE NUMBERS

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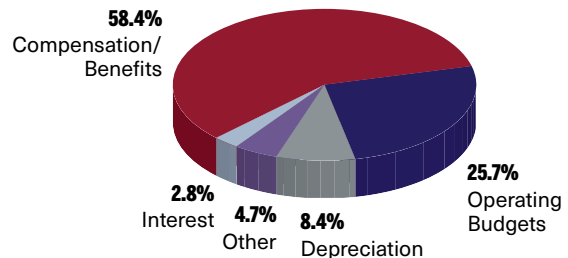


Budget Summary

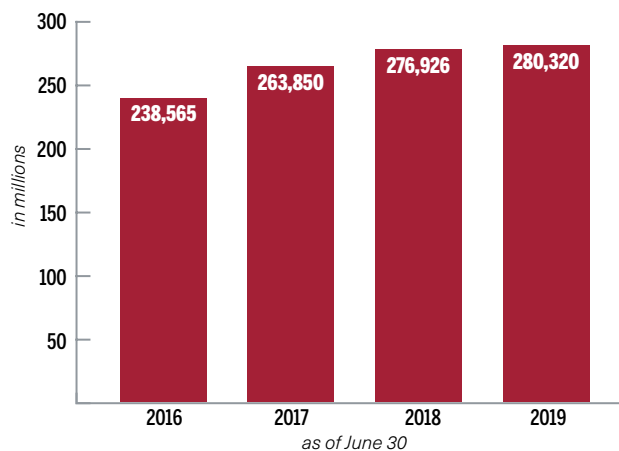
Revenues



Expenditures



Endowment Summary



Judicial Review

The Founding Fathers designed the Supreme Court to be apolitical. Will the Court's current membership be able to uphold that appearance?

By Ross Dardani

Five Democratic senators recently filed an amicus brief in *New York State Rifle and Pistol Association v. City of New York*, for which the Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in December. While the case, which concerns regulations on licensed gun owners in New York City, has generated media attention as the Court's next potential landmark Second Amendment ruling, the brief has drawn coverage, too. "The Supreme Court is not well. And the people know it," the Democratic senators warn. "Perhaps the Court can heal itself before the public demands it be 'restructured in order to reduce the influence of politics.'"

The senators are referencing a new poll in which a majority of Americans agree that there is a need to alter the Court to make it less political. In response, Chief Justice John Roberts said that the justices "don't go about our work in a political manner," but "when you live in a politically polarized environment, people tend to see everything in those terms. That's not how we at the Court function, and the results in our cases do not suggest otherwise."

The Supreme Court's legitimacy relies on the myth of judicial independence: the idea that justices are impervious to external—especially political—influences and reach decisions by impartially interpreting the Constitution. Alexander Hamilton, in *Federalist #78*, argued that the only way to insulate the judiciary from outside forces is by granting justices lifetime tenure. Not having to run for election would allow justices to ignore public opinion when they may be forced to strike down legislation that, while perhaps supported by most people, is unconstitutional. Hamilton believed that while the judiciary would be the least dangerous branch because it lacks the power of the sword (it cannot enforce its decisions) and the purse (Congress controls spending), it would have the power to persuade people of what is constitutionally permissible through rulings that depend

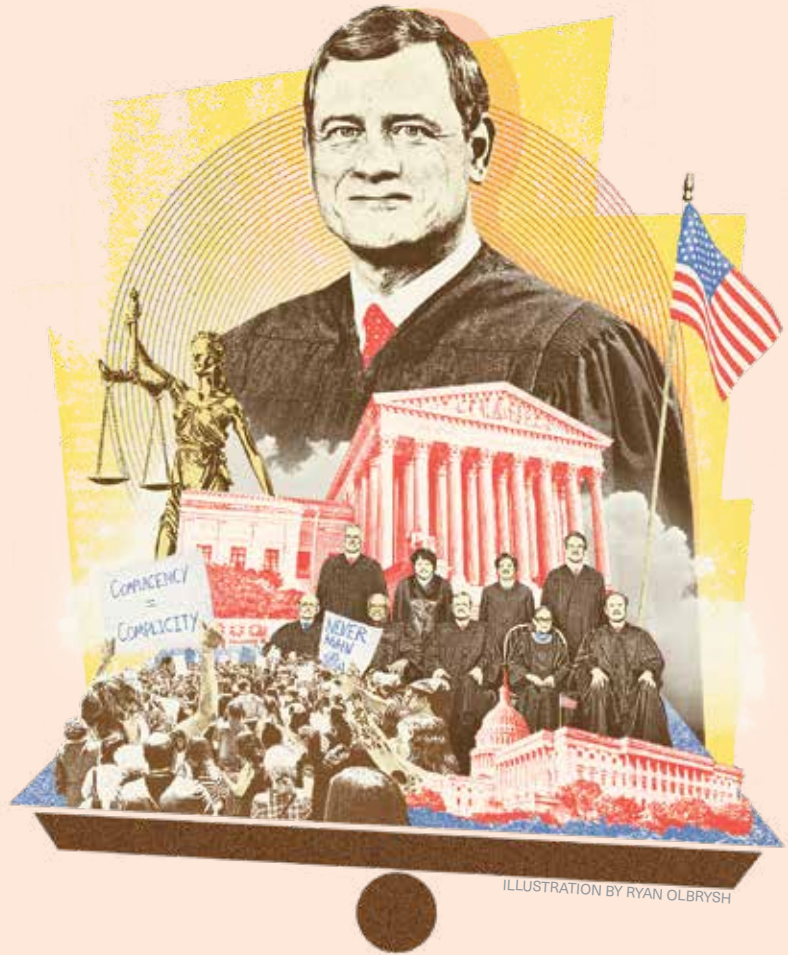
solely on the justices' dispassionate reasoning.

Of course, the Court has always been influenced by the political, cultural and economic forces shaping U.S. society. Its legitimacy depends on public support, yet the myth of judicial independence remains essential to the judiciary's ability to exist as a coequal branch of government. But now, for the first time in the Court's history, all five of the conservative justices have been nominated by Republican presidents and all four of the liberal justices have been nominated by Democratic presidents. What happens to the role of the judiciary when a conservative majority on a highly politicized Court coexists with an increasingly progressive U.S. populace?

There have been times in the Court's history when it continued to issue rulings that were in opposition to a clear national majority. From the mid-1890s until 1937, the Court established a "right to contract" that it argued was implied in the Constitution, which allowed businesses to force laborers to work in inhumane, hazardous conditions, as long as employees were willing to agree to the terms set by their employer. Based on this implied right to contract, the Court, influenced by the dominant economic theory of the time, struck down legislation that attempted to regulate business, including laws that attempted to limit the number of hours an employee could work each day, workplace safety laws, minimum wage laws—Congress was even overruled from prohibiting child labor.

The Court eventually began to allow for an increased level of federal intervention in the economy with a broader interpretation of the Commerce Clause. This shift was only after public opinion had clearly moved against the Court as the Great Depression continued and FDR threatened to pack the Court with justices supportive of his New Deal policies. The "switch in time that saved nine" demonstrates that when the Court has had mo-

If the public is going to maintain faith in the independence of the judiciary, at least one of the justices that make up the current entrenched conservative majority is sometimes going to have to vote against their policy preferences.



ments of conflict against a broad national coalition and is perceived as not acting independently, it has issued decisions to align with the public mood in order to help preserve its legitimacy.

After the retirement of Anthony Kennedy and the confirmation of Brett Kavanaugh last year, Roberts became the swing vote in the most high-profile issues the Court faces. In its first term with this new lineup, the Court rebuked the Trump administration's attempt to add a citizenship question to the census questionnaire. This suggests that Roberts, while a deeply conservative justice, is cognizant of the importance of maintaining an independent judiciary for the long-term health of the U.S. political system. But the Roberts Court's refusal to settle disputes involving political gerrymandering, its broad deference to executive authority, its rulings in favor of big business and its increased willingness to overturn longstanding precedents hint at a future in which the Court's legitimacy will be tested.

If the public is going to maintain faith in the independence of the judiciary, at least one of the justices that make up the current entrenched conservative majority is sometimes going to have to vote against their policy preferences. If not, there will continue to be threats to restructure the Court (e.g. court-packing, getting rid of lifetime tenure) by a broader range of people. These reforms would hasten the shift in public opinion toward viewing the Court as nothing more than a political institution and would diminish its power, prestige and influence in U.S. society. Roberts will find himself forced to balance his desire for a conservative majority on the Court to move the law incrementally but steadily rightward against his concern with preserving the Court's legitimacy as an independent branch of government.

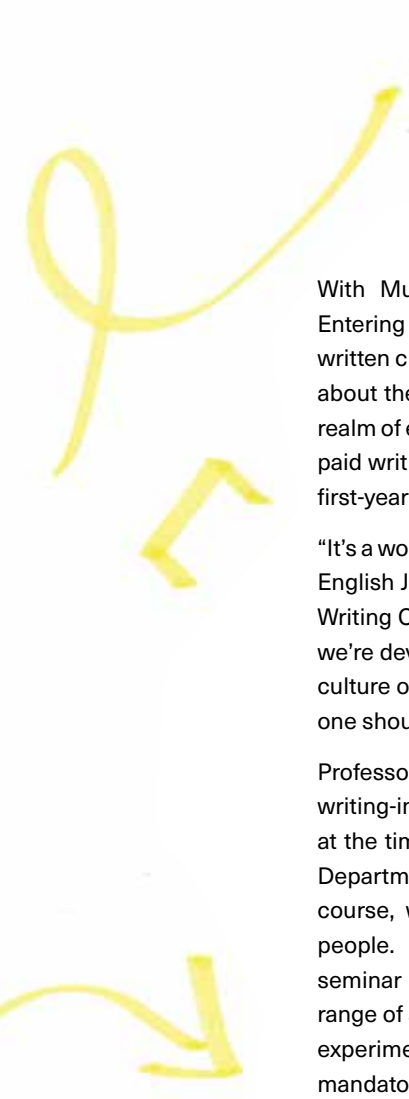
Ross Dardani is an assistant professor of political science at Muhlenberg.

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Muhlenberg's First-Year Seminars allow faculty to explore topics of personal interest as a means of helping incoming students develop analytical composition skills.



BY MEGHAN KITA



With Muhlenberg's First-Year Seminar (FYS) program, everyone learns. Entering students learn how to use observation and analysis to support a written claim. Faculty from all disciplines learn how to teach these skills and about the seminar topic of their choosing, which is not always within their realm of expertise. And the returning students who are part of the selective, paid writing assistant program learn how to collaborate with faculty to set first-year students up for success.

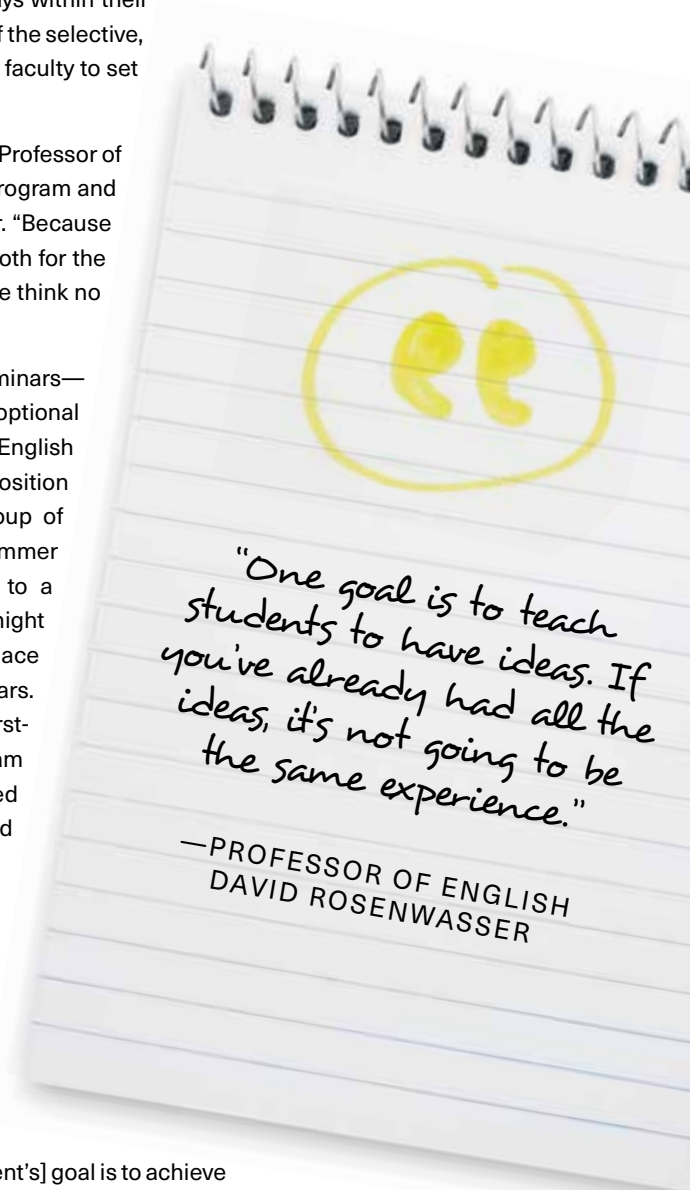
"It's a wonderful program for both students and faculty," says Professor of English Jill Stephen, who co-directs Muhlenberg's Writing Program and Writing Center with Professor of English David Rosenwasser. "Because we're devoted to the idea of writing across the curriculum, both for the culture of writing and thinking it encourages and because we think no one should own writing, there's significant support."

Professor of Philosophy Ted Schick debuted first-year seminars—writing-intensive courses on specialized topics that were optional at the time—at Muhlenberg in the 1980s. Faculty from the English Department alone taught the mandatory first-year composition course, which placed an enormous strain on a small group of people. Rosenwasser and Stephen came up with a summer seminar designed to expose faculty from all disciplines to a range of approaches to writing instruction with which they might experiment. In 1993, Muhlenberg's faculty voted to replace mandatory first-year composition with First-Year Seminars. "They wanted to take on the responsibility of working with first-year writers," Rosenwasser says, "and to this day, the program must be staffed only by full-time faculty who have volunteered to participate." At many other institutions, grad students and adjunct faculty are often tasked with this important work.

Rosenwasser and Stephen teach the three-day faculty summer seminar every other year. A significant number of faculty have chosen to attend; many take it several times. There are about 40 first-year seminars offered annually, which means 40 faculty members and their departments devote resources to the important task of cultivating analytical thinking, reading and writing ability in first-year students.

"It's a different kind of pedagogical experience where [a student's] goal is to achieve certain kinds of skills rather than mastery of a particular body of information," Rosenwasser says. "One goal is to teach students to have ideas. If [the professor has] already had all the ideas, it's not going to be the same experience."

Because the writing process takes precedence over the subject material itself, that means faculty are often learning right alongside their students, especially when they debut a new seminar or introduce new source material into an existing one. Here, some faculty conducting first-year seminars for the Class of 2023 share why they selected the topics they did and something unexpected their students will learn along the way.



People who swear don't have smaller vocabularies than people who don't swear.

—*Very Bad Words* (Alexandra Frazer, assistant professor of psychology)

Why this topic?

"Profanity is something I am interested in as a part of my research area of psychology of language, but I was interested in tying it to broader political and cultural ideas—mainly about freedom of speech and the internet/the media."



The Brothers Grimm did not wander through the small villages and hamlets of Germany collecting their tales from peasants, but heard the tales from their (mostly female) servants in their own house.

—*Reading Fairy Tales* (Grant Scott, professor of English)

Why this topic?

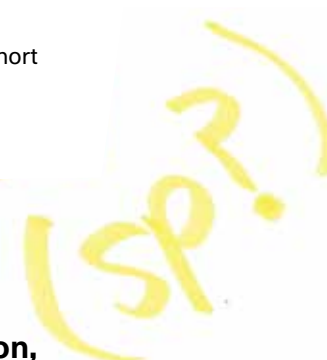
"The topic kept coming up in discussions I had with students, and they said they wished Muhlenberg offered a course on fairy tales. Then, when I was chair of the department, we handed out a questionnaire about the major to all graduating seniors. One question asked them to write down courses that they would like to see offered in the future. Guess what kept coming up? I started thinking seriously about offering a section, since I had some experience with German and had also taken a course in fairy tales in college. I figured it would be a winner. Short readings, great plots, sex and violence, princes and princesses, Freudian psychology—what could be better?"

The standard world map we are all used to, the Mercator projection, was in fact developed for navigational purposes and presents a very warped sense of dimensions. Other projections, such as the Gall-Peters projection, while less useful for navigation, present a better sense of relational size.

—*The Power of Maps* (Sharon Albert, senior lecturer in religion studies)

Why this topic?

"Maps are great for FYS classes because you can take them in so many different directions and show their relevance for all kinds of different disciplines. For instance, in semesters where I've had a lot of students interested in the sciences, we've talked about 'gene mapping.' Also, Trexler Library has the Ray R. Brennen Map Collection, which has been a fantastic resource. We talk about the ways that maps can both shape and are a product of our worldviews, and then the students can actually touch and handle these old maps that present the world in very different ways than we now would."





Eighty-five percent of the world's coffee farmers live at or below the poverty level.

—Coffee: *The Great Soberer* (Keri Colabroy, professor of chemistry)

Why this topic?

“Coffee is a personal passion of mine. My husband and I met working in our campus coffee shop. We are coffee enthusiasts and coffee tourists. We brew our coffee scientifically, we try coffee wherever we go and we financially support families that live in the ‘coffee lands’ of the world, where poverty is the rule rather than the exception. And, coffee is a topic that can be approached from multiple perspectives. The three that form the backbone of my course are coffee and the enlightenment, coffee farming and farmers (with a social justice lens, including fair trade and sustainability) and coffeehouse culture.”

The U.S. military hanged around 125 soldiers for sex crimes in the months following the D-Day invasion. The vast majority of these were African American soldiers convicted on weak evidence and often without due process.

—*World War II in the American Imagination* (Brian Mello, professor of political science)

Why this topic?

“I like to teach first-year seminars that start with widely held and dominant myths about America and then seek to complicate these myths through various course texts. My current course begins with two myths about World War II: one, that it was fought by the greatest generation, and the other, that it was the good war. I start with these myths, and then we read history texts, watch films and read novels that complicate the assumptions underlying the dominant views of World War II in the American imagination. The goal is not so much to prove the myths false as to develop in students capacities for critically engaging with texts and developing a comfort with more nuanced and complicated ways of thinking about and understanding the world.”

One out of every 1,500 babies is born with disorders of sex development or intersex.

—*Transgender Peoples and Cultures Around the World* (Casey James Miller, assistant professor of anthropology)

Why this topic?

“I chose the topic of transgender peoples and cultures because this is a fascinating topic that is rarely taught at liberal arts colleges. When it is taught, it normally is only covered for a week or two as part of an upper-level class on gender and sexuality. This is the only semester-long course I know of that focuses on the topic of transgender peoples and cultures at a first-year level. However, there is a lot of demand for more courses on queer topics, including among first-year students.”





Google processes an average of more than 40,000 searches every second.

—*Looking at the Black Mirror: Technology and Business Ethics* (Rita Chesterton, director of innovation & entrepreneurship)

Why this topic?

“I teach entrepreneurship, and all too often we focus just on whether or not an innovation or business idea can be profitable. We often fail to look at the potential implications of our business on the lives of the consumers. This is where students of the liberal arts have a tremendous role to play in the world of business. I felt that these particular topics would connect to students personally. The main goal of an FYS is to teach students how to produce quality analytical writing; if students are interested in a topic, it makes learning the mechanics of writing easier.”

Before the eighth century, Chinese people usually drank green tea as a medicinal soup. Tea leaves were boiled with onions or scallions and other ingredients, and it was a green, bitter sludge, not a clear, refreshing liquid.

—*How Tea Conquered the World* (Tineke D’Haeseleer, assistant professor of history)

Why this topic?

“It was in conversation with David Rosenwasser and [former Assistant Director of the Writing Center] Kate O’Donoghue ’17 that I was able to narrow the topic down to tea. It sprang from my curiosity about Chinese material culture. I also lived for 10 years in England and really learned to drink tea there. It is also a drink that is enjoyed across the world now, and it has a long history, so I was sure that every student would be able to find something interesting in the topic.”



stat

According to Philadelphia's Museum of African Americans, to create Central Park in 1857, New York City bought out—or some say evicted—the residents of Seneca Park. Seneca Park was founded in 1825 by free African Americans. The residents there, mostly African Americans, fought through the courts both the eviction orders and the level of compensation being offered for their land, but they eventually lost.

—*Reading Museums* (Linda Miller, associate professor of English)

Why this topic?

"I am very interested in narratives—how we tell our stories. Museum exhibits have a story line, and I wanted to explore how these museum narratives were made with the students in my seminar."



At the moment of Japan's surrender, after the dropping of two atomic bombs, there were other events that were also pressuring them to yield. One was the declaration of war on Japan by the Soviet Union and their invasion of Manchuria. Some have argued that this was a major reason for the Japanese surrender.

—*Now I Am Become Death: Brains, the Bomb and the Bellicose* (Brett Fadem, associate professor of physics)

Why this topic?

"I love teaching topics that involve multiple disciplines: My topic, the creation of the atom bomb, focuses on the fascinating history of the WWII era as well as developments in the preceding half century. Ethical questions about war are unavoidable, as are discussions about connections between science, technology and society. Originally, the question of the responsibility of scientists for the creations that stem from their discoveries interested me, but that initial question has branched out into an overall interest in things we can learn from science and technology in that era and the history of the era in general."



Modern witch hunts still happen around the world. In particular, in regions like India, Papua New Guinea, the Amazon region and sub-Saharan Africa, people accused of practicing sorcery have been persecuted as recently as 2018.

—*Witchcraft/Brujería: Magical Resistance for Social Change* (Leticia Robles-Moreno, lecturer in theatre)

Why this topic?

"My FYS topic is witchcraft, understanding it as a reference to people who are seen as dangerous or simply different because they behave or think in a way that doesn't align with certain cultural expectations. I included the Spanish word 'brujería' to open a dialogue with Latinx experiences in the United States. I believe we are living in a time when we all need to be ready to learn that witchcraft is more than a metaphor; it is a call to learning to understand diversity and to embrace our own multiple ways of being in the world." 🍷



MENTAL HEALTH ON CAM



PUS



Utilization of counseling services at colleges and universities is on the rise, nationwide and at Muhlenberg. What does this tell us about students today, and what is the College doing to help its population thrive?

BY MEGHAN KITA

In December 2015, Molly Plotkin '19 was en route to Florida on a winter-break road trip with her parents and a friend. She'd just wrapped up her first semester at Muhlenberg with straight As, and she was looking forward to her first collegiate softball season in the spring.

"The last day of finals was Friday," Plotkin recalls. "Saturday I got home and went with my parents on vacation. And Saturday night, I found out my oldest brother had passed away."

He was a 28-year-old former college athlete who had had knee problems. In the absence of answers, doctors plied him with pain pills. He grappled with addiction for the rest of his life, and he had been sober for six months, living in a halfway house, at the time of his opioid overdose. He was also someone Plotkin describes as "almost like a second father." In the numbness that followed, it never occurred to her not to return to Muhlenberg.

When she did, she struggled. Her GPA fell from a 4.0 to a 3.2. "I couldn't get out of bed," she says. "I didn't want to go to class. I didn't care." When she did go out, it went poorly: She remembers her first panic attack, which occurred during a softball practice. She lacked motivation to seek help. One day, a concerned friend told her, "We're going to the counseling center—now."

That was the beginning of Plotkin's mental-health journey. She soon began working with an off-campus therapist, who diagnosed her with anxiety (which she still deals with) and depression (which she doesn't). Plotkin had regular therapy sessions until the start of her junior year. During her senior year, she produced an honors thesis titled, "The Opioid Epidemic: Perceptions Towards Men, Women & Genderqueer Individuals." She graduated magna cum laude with a psychology degree and an Asian studies minor. She's currently enrolled in a management studies master's program at Boston University, and her long-term goal is to pursue a Ph.D. in clinical psychology before opening her own practice to help others with anxiety, trauma and addiction.

"I went into therapy all stoic: Yeah, this happened, life goes on," Plotkin says. "In therapy, it was: This really crappy thing happened to me. It sucks. How can we grow? Like, I know my senior thesis is going to be hard, but it will help me realize I'm not alone and help me help somebody else. It's very empowering. I wouldn't have had that without therapy—without my friend dragging me to the counseling center."

Nationwide, utilization of counseling centers at colleges and universities is on the rise. According to the Association for University and College Counseling Center Directors, counseling centers at institutions of Muhlenberg's size serve an average of 17.4 percent of the student body, up from 13 percent 10 years ago. In the last academic year, 22 percent of Muhlenberg's student body visited Counseling Services, which saw a 12.4 percent increase in unique clients from the previous year.

One reason for the uptick, at Muhlenberg and nationwide, is because more college-age individuals have been or are being diagnosed with anxiety or depression. A 2018 American Psychological Association survey found that 18 percent of respondents between the ages of 18 and 21 had received an anxiety disorder diagnosis (higher than some other generations) and 23 percent a depression diagnosis (higher than all other generations).

“There is a stereotype that college students are not as thick-skinned as the folks who went to Vietnam, for example. The truth is, what college students are facing right now is not what has been seen before.”

—ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF PSYCHOLOGY KATE RICHMOND '00

Some people interpret these numbers as a sign that today's college students are less resilient than their predecessors. And institutional attempts to support those students—including the expansion of mental-health services—are sometimes met with disdain. Take, for example, a speech then-Attorney General Jeff Sessions gave in July 2018, in which he asserted that “too many schools are coddling our young people” and “schools are doing everything they can to create a generation of sanctimonious, sensitive, supercilious snowflakes.”

That's not a fair characterization, says Kate Richmond '00 Ph.D., associate professor of psychology. “There is a stereotype that college students are not as thick-skinned as the folks who went to Vietnam, for example,” she says. “The truth is, what college students are facing right now is not what has been seen before.”

TODAY'S STUDENT EXPERIENCE

One major stressor, according to Richmond, is the economy: Today's college students grew up in the shadow of the 2007-2009 recession, the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. They may have seen their parents lose a job or a home or otherwise struggle with economic anxiety. Unemployment and underemployment of recent college graduates skyrocketed after the crash, peaking at 9.2 percent and 17.8 percent, respectively, in 2011, according to the Economic Policy Institute. Student borrowing also climbed: Between 2004 and 2014, researchers from the Federal Reserve Bank of New York found increases of 92 percent in the number of borrowers and 74 percent in average balances. Even though unemployment rates have returned to pre-recession levels, the fear persists.

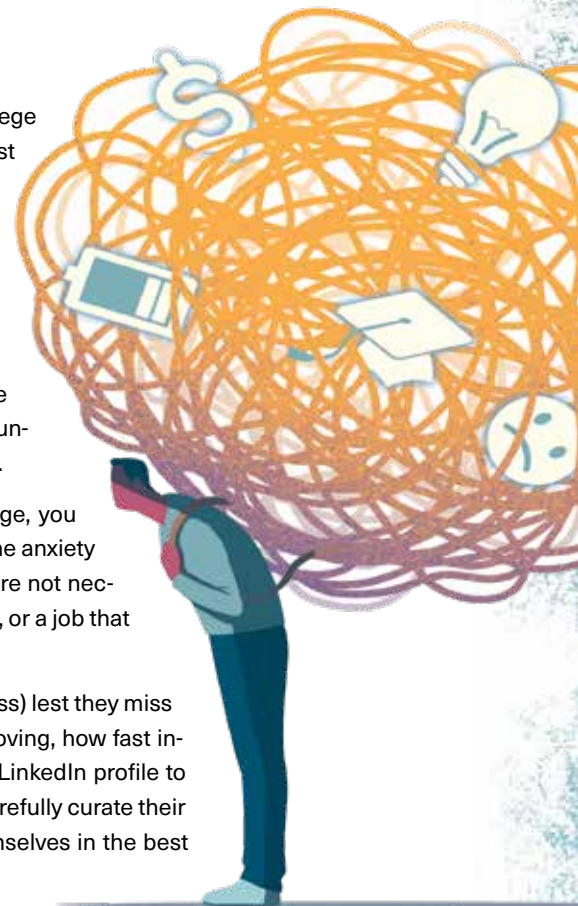
“Previously, there was an assumption that if you worked hard in college, you would land a job,” Richmond says. “That's not an assurance anymore. The anxiety comes from knowing you're investing a lot of money and time, and you're not necessarily sure you're going to achieve the goal of having a career you love, or a job that will help you pay back your student loans.”

Students feel pressure to be constantly connected (including during class) lest they miss an opportunity, Richmond says, and “that's how fast the economy is moving, how fast information is moving.” They're encouraged to maintain a website and a LinkedIn profile to impress future employers or grad-school admissions staff. They must carefully curate their entire online presence, including social media profiles, to present themselves in the best possible light.

“It's hypervigilance. It's 24/7 monitoring, 24/7 surveillance of yourself and other people in order to keep up,” Richmond says. “There's no break.”

The tools of constant internet monitoring—smartphones equipped with push notifications, social platforms with newsfeeds—make it difficult to avoid coverage of news and politics. A 2017 American Psychological Association report found that 56 percent of respondents said staying informed about current events causes them stress. Richmond points to the opioid crisis, the sociopolitical climate and the rise of gun violence and mass shootings as examples of modern-day concerns that are affecting young people.

As colleges and universities strive to become more diverse, the students who find themselves in the minority—because of their race, ethnicity, nationality, religion, sexual orientation or gender identity; because of a disability; or because they're a first-generation college student—may require more mental-health support than their peers in the majority. “When you have a minority status, your identity is not often reflected in things like the people around you or the curriculum or the cultural habits,” Richmond says. “That's a huge strain.”



GOOD STRESS, BAD STRESS

According to Richmond, most experts agree that a combination of biological and environmental factors contribute to the development of depression or anxiety and the severity of each condition. “Anxiety and depression can contribute to one another, but there’s no question that context combined with some genetic disposition plays a role,” she says.

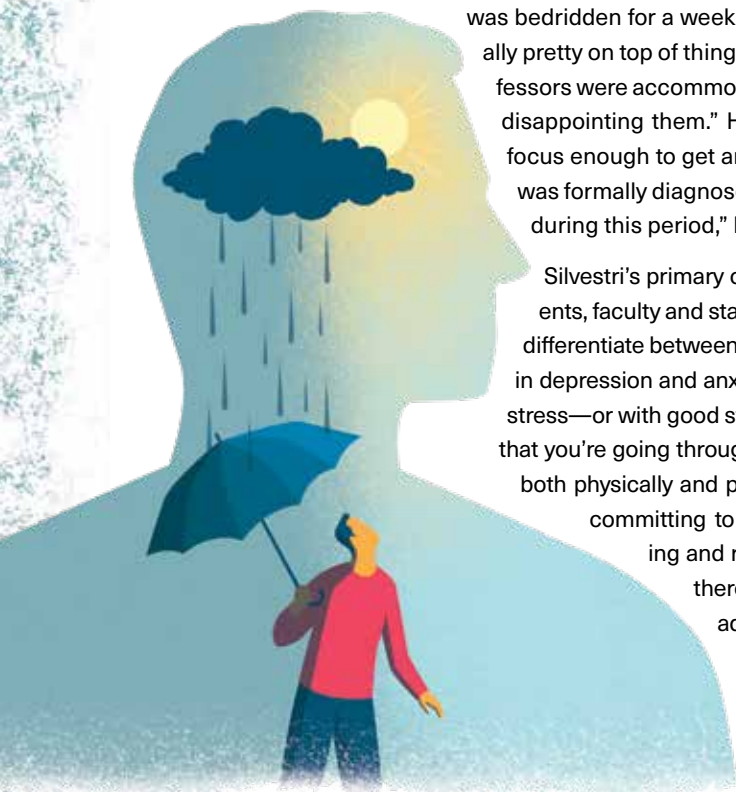
Both conditions develop using similar biological processes, says Director of Counseling Services Tim Silvestri '91 Ph.D., who assumed his role in August 2017. When your brain perceives a threat, your body releases hormones to help you deal with it. One of those hormones is called cortisol, and it’s instrumental in the “fight, flight or freeze” response. Your heart rate increases, non-essential functions (like digestion) are put on pause and you’re ready to respond to the stressor accordingly.

This can be a positive thing, when the threat is acute and dangerous—a predator, for example. It can also be positive when the threat is simply a challenge or demand, like a big presentation or an athletic competition: The cortisol response can give you the energy and motivation to complete the challenge and will promote the production of the hormone DHEA, which engages tissue repair and other healing effects. Silvestri calls this phenomenon “good stress.” Once you’ve dealt with good stress, your cortisol levels return to normal.

The problem happens when the threat is (or is perceived as) something negative that is happening *to* you that you have no power to change—an “oppressive force,” in Silvestri’s words. Getting dumped, being bullied and living in poverty all fall on the “bad stress” continuum. With bad stress, your cortisol levels remain elevated for extended periods of time. This can lead to physical symptoms like insomnia and a change in appetite. Not sleeping and eating too much (or too little) are all physical stressors that feed what Silvestri calls a “cortisol spiral.” Such a spiral can create symptoms in line with clinical anxiety or depression.

This is essentially what happened to one student who graduated in 2019 with a psychology and media & communication degree during his sophomore year. He contracted viral meningitis and was bedridden for a week. “I became fairly behind in many of my classes. I’m usually pretty on top of things, so this really started to get to me,” he says. “All my professors were accommodating and excellent, but then I felt even worse, like I was disappointing them.” He skimped on sleep to try to catch up and he couldn’t focus enough to get anything done. The cycle repeated and repeated. “I never was formally diagnosed but I strongly believe I was pretty seriously depressed during this period,” he says.

Silvestri’s primary outreach program, which he’s presented to students, parents, faculty and staff, is called “Good Stress, Bad Stress.” It addresses how to differentiate between the two, how to respond to each and the role stress plays in depression and anxiety. His prescription for students dealing with acute bad stress—or with good stress that they perceive as bad—is self-care. Recognizing that you’re going through something, that it’s real and that your response is real, both physically and psychologically, can be enormously beneficial. Therefore, committing to some of the small things (like eating healthier, exercising and reducing screen time) can contribute to better sleep, and thereby create an upward spiral. Simultaneously, one can start adding in strategies such as attending counseling, leaning on friends or attempting to initiate an increased focus on academics. This can be effective for students struggling in a class or with homesickness or the end of a relationship, and the majority of Counseling Services visits are for issues like these.



But what about students dealing with chronic stressors, such as a traumatic event, racism or financial insecurity? Counseling Services can help these students in times of crisis and for ongoing therapy. The office can also provide a student with an off-campus provider referral.

HOW WE GOT HERE

While it's true that more college-age Americans are being diagnosed with depression and anxiety, and that counseling center utilization rates are up nationwide and at Muhlenberg, many factors contribute to those numbers.

It helps to begin with a history lesson. In 1980, the American Psychiatric Association published a new version of its *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* that included more specific diagnostic criteria for conditions like anxiety and depression. This meant that a patient could be diagnosed with clinical anxiety or depression

without symptoms of significantly compromised functioning, even though this should be a major factor for diagnosis. If a student, for example, is attending classes, getting good grades and socializing normally, they may not be clinically depressed, although they may have enough other symptoms to technically qualify as such. And, patients can be diagnosed even in the midst of a personal crisis and given medication—the *DSM* criteria do not account for reasonable reaction to real-life events.

An essay in the journal *Philosophy, Ethics and Humanities in Medicine* noted that these new criteria led to an increase in the marketing of several drugs for conditions like mild social anxiety that previously would not have been treated with medication. And in 1997, the FDA relaxed the rules on medical advertising, which led to an increase in diagnoses. Ads from that era often said depression is a serious medical condition that may be caused by a chemical imbalance, which is now thought to be untrue.

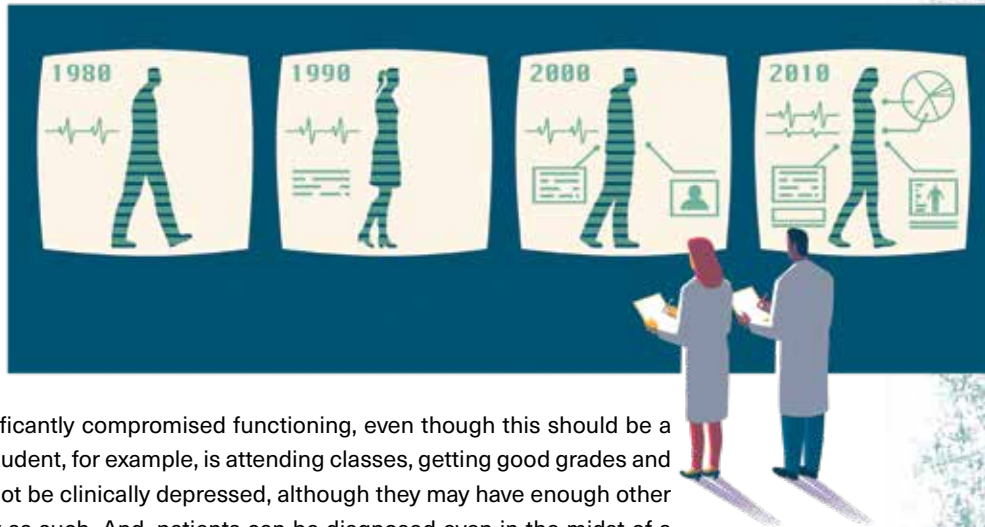
The way the American healthcare system works also supports a “medical model” of mental health-care. For example, an insurance company may only cover therapy if the insured has been diagnosed with a mental illness. “If you want to get help, you have to have a diagnosis,” Richmond says.

LESS STIGMA, MORE SUICIDALITY

Silvestri and Allison Gulati M.Ed., vice president of student affairs and dean of students, both say this generation tends to be more open to discussing their feelings and seeking help than generations past.

“While there's still some stigma associated with mental-health issues on college campuses, that has been broken down significantly,” says Gulati, who has worked in higher education since 2002 and who joined Muhlenberg in August 2016. “Instead of college being the first time students are encountering counseling, many of them have been seeing therapists or have had a diagnosis for some amount of time prior to coming to college. And, people feel more comfortable talking about their issues than they have in the past. They've seen it normalized on TV, social media and YouTube.”

Still, Silvestri says the reason college counseling centers tend to be so busy is because of “the rise in suicidality among a small portion of people. They take up an enormous amount of resources. They



meet more frequently and for longer.” If you look at the numbers with those individuals removed, “utilization rates wouldn’t look so dramatically different in the past 15 years,” he says.

The way that suicidality is assessed has changed for the better: In the 1990s, clinicians would ask patients claiming to be suicidal whether they had a plan to kill themselves, and if they didn’t, they weren’t considered suicidal. The modern model is to ask a patient, “What keeps you alive?” If a patient can’t answer that question, Silvestri says, “I’m going to see that person pretty intensely because there are no protective factors.”

Still, suicide rates have been on the rise, including in young people: In 2000, the rate among adolescents aged 15-19 was eight per 100,000, and among young adults aged 20-24, 12.5 per 100,000. Those rates had risen to 11.8 and 17, respectively, as of 2017.

Experts have different explanations for this increase. Silvestri points to the rise of suicide awareness campaigns about 10 years ago as a possible contributing factor. “These campaigns failed to shift the conversation from death by suicide to response management (what many experts believe to be the essential element of prevention efforts),” he says, “but rather created a false norm for the ubiquity and widespread behavior of death by suicide.” Richmond, alternatively, cites research linking the normalization of violence in media to an increase in tolerance of violence of all kinds, including self-injury, in individuals: “It’s concerning to me that we romanticize suicide, but we should also be mindful of how culture romanticizes homicide. They both contribute to a larger culture of harm.”

Richmond says predictors of suicide include a sense of hopelessness, substance use and impulsivity, all which go hand-in-hand with depression and anxiety. And while there’s no one-size-fits-all approach that can prevent all suicides, it’s important for at-risk individuals to have access to care before they reach the point of self-harm.

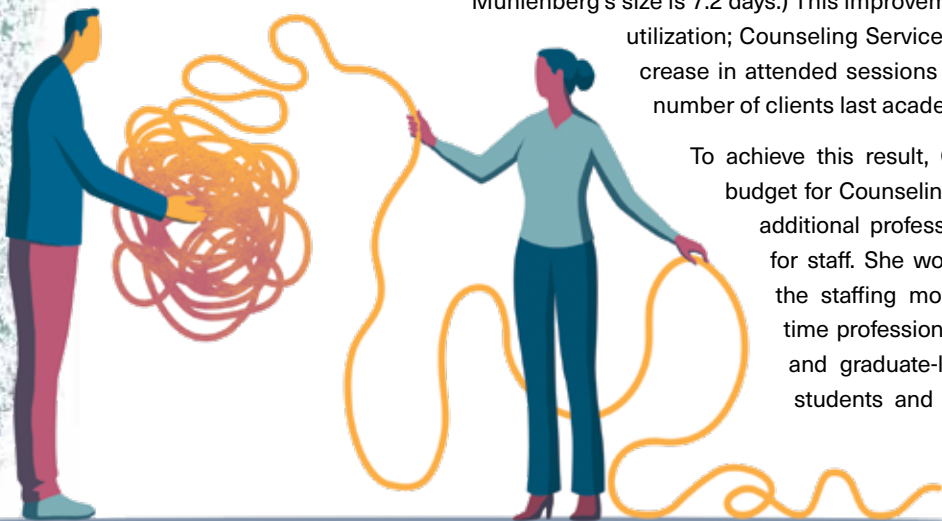
MUHLENBERG’S RESPONSE

When Gulati stepped into her role three years ago, Muhlenberg’s counselors were overwhelmed: The average wait time for an appointment with Counseling Services was 27 days. Student after student voiced concerns to Gulati, so she made overhauling Muhlenberg’s mental-health services a top priority.

Within a year, Gulati had integrated the College’s physical- and mental-health services under the leadership of Brynmarie Dorsey, executive director of Health and Counseling Services. Dorsey led a search committee that ultimately hired Silvestri to head up Counseling Services. Since Silvestri began in August 2017, wait times have progressively decreased, hitting an average of 1.52 days during the 2018-2019 academic year. (The average wait for an appointment at a college of Muhlenberg’s size is 7.2 days.) This improvement happened despite increased utilization; Counseling Services experienced a 27.2 percent increase in attended sessions and a 10.73 percent increase in number of clients last academic year.

To achieve this result, Gulati made adjustments to the budget for Counseling Services to allow for things like additional professional development opportunities for staff. She worked with Silvestri to restructure the staffing model to supplement the two full-time professional counselors with post-graduate and graduate-level interns who could support students and lead additional outreach efforts.

Silvestri also implemented a short-term therapy model with the goal of connecting stu-



dents with ongoing needs to community providers. To better facilitate that, Michele Paules, who'd previously been a counselor, was shifted into the Dean of Students Office to fill a student support services coordinator role. Paules, a licensed social worker, acts as a liaison between students in need and their off-campus providers, their professors, their roommates, their families and other support services on campus. She worked with 400 students last academic year.

In addition to his "Good Stress, Bad Stress" presentation, Silvestri's main form of outreach to students is his "Look, Listen, Link" campaign: Look to see if someone is upset, listen to them and link them to additional help if you feel they need it. Plotkin's experience is evidence that this model works: "When you're going through really challenging moments, it's hard to say, 'I need help,'" she says. "When somebody offers you help, that's easier."

Another priority of Gulati's was the launch of Muhlenberg's Campus Assessment, Response and Evaluation (CARE) Team. Previously, Health Services, Counseling Services and student conduct "were all done in different silos. They could have all been working on the same student and wouldn't know it. By bringing all of that together through the CARE Team, we're able to connect the dots," she says. The goal is to identify students who may be a threat to themselves or to others early, so the College can intervene and provide the necessary support. Teams like this aren't unique to Muhlenberg—the College is one of 514 institutions that belong to the National Behavioral Intervention Team Association, which provided the framework upon which the CARE Team was built. But it's just another way to be proactive, Silvestri says: "We can catch them early, before they go deeply into that cortisol spiral."


“If anything, maybe today’s students aren’t more sensitive. Maybe they’re stronger, more in touch, more capable.”

—MOLLY PLOTKIN '19

LOOKING AHEAD

Gulati says that if numbers continue to trend upward, Counseling Services will likely require another full-time counselor. Paules helped launch a peer-counselor program this semester, a group of peer-to-peer educators to serve as a first level of support for common issues like homesickness and breakups. Gulati also foresees an expansion of group counseling, for "students who have been in individual counseling and now are ready to step down to a lower level of care." And, the College is announcing a partnership with the Jed Foundation, a suicide prevention nonprofit that will work with campus partners to assess risk factors specific to Muhlenberg. "When you connect the dots across student experiences, you're really able to approach the work in a much more preventative way," Gulati says.

Plotkin says she noticed the institutional support the College provides, especially among her professors in the Department of Psychology. "I have to give it to the staff and faculty at Muhlenberg," she says. "They make an effort to check on their students. It's easy to feel like you're only a student, but throughout my experience, I felt like a person, a peer in my work with my professors."

And she has a message for anyone who might question the resilience of her peers: "If anything, maybe today's students aren't more sensitive. Maybe they're stronger, more in touch, more capable." 

The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a free, 24/7 confidential service that can provide people in emotional crisis or distress with support. 1-800-273-8255

POSITIVE CHANGE

A daily commitment to optimism helps Dr. Paul Zeitz '84—a leader in the fight against global AIDS who is broadening the scope of his activism—continue to tackle seemingly insurmountable problems.

BY MEGHAN KITA



“THIS DECADE, FROM 2020 TO 2030, IS GOING TO BE THE MOST **TRANSFORMATIONAL** IN HUMAN HISTORY. WE’RE ON THE THRESHOLD OF A REALLY EXCITING DECADE.”

Dr. Paul Zeitz '84 ends his memoir, *Waging Justice*, on a scene from September 2015. As an employee of President Barack Obama’s State Department, Zeitz attends the United Nations General Assembly in New York City. He watches as the 193 member nations approve 17 global sustainable development goals to be achieved by 2030, including a goal to act on climate change. He feels joyful, like a revolution is just on the horizon.

Since then, the United States has announced it will withdraw from the Paris Agreement, a pledge to limit global temperature rise that the UN brokered as a step toward reaching one of its 17 goals. President Donald Trump and his administration have attempted to weaken or eliminate dozens of environmental regulations. Heatwaves, wildfires, floods and other climate-related catastrophes make headlines regularly. And yet...

“Now, I’m even more hopeful about the possibility of bringing forward sustainable development and climate action than I was when the book ended,” Zeitz says. “This decade, from 2020 to 2030, is going to be the most transformational in human history. We’re on the threshold of a really exciting decade.”

Zeitz knows the risks of inaction, or insufficient action. From 2014 to 2017, he directed a State Department team that explored how to use data to achieve sustainable

development. He now serves as a senior policy advisor for the Foundation for Climate Restoration, a nonprofit organization that advocates for measures that would lower the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and reverse the loss of Arctic ice. He says things like “complete climate chaos is imminent” and “we’re the generation—the people who are living right now—that’s going to determine whether humans will flourish or go extinct.”

How can optimism coexist with statements like these? Perhaps because Zeitz has experience with witnessing an enormous problem, committing to making a difference and then working to see it through. For example, as president and executive director of the Global AIDS Alliance (GAA), he helped pressure Presidents George W. Bush and Barack Obama to earmark billions of dollars to fight AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria in Africa. These investments have saved more than 30 million lives by providing access to testing, medications and mosquito nets.

When it comes to the climate crisis, “the federal government has amazing capabilities that can be brought to bear. What’s missing is the political will,” Zeitz says. “But when you personally commit to something, then everything changes. And right now, I’m committed to the survival of all of humanity.”



FROM ALLENTOWN TO ACTIVISM

After Zeitz left Muhlenberg, where he was a biology major, he graduated from the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine and then earned his master's in public health from Johns Hopkins University. While working for the U.S. Agency for International Development in 1996, Zeitz was assigned to advise the government of Zambia, located in south-central Africa, on matters of public health. He lived there with his family for nearly four years, and he saw the HIV/AIDS crisis up close.

At the time, not even one percent of Africans with HIV had access to the antiretroviral drugs that could keep them alive and prevent infected pregnant women from passing HIV to a developing fetus. The drugs' cost—\$12,000 per patient annually, at that time—was a large part of the issue. Projections showed that one in five Zambians between the ages of 15 and 44 would die from AIDS-related causes at the epidemic's peak.

Upon returning to the United States, Zeitz connected with like-minded activists to form the GAA, an organization meant to stop the AIDS crisis and advocate for the poorest affected countries. In his leadership role there, Zeitz testified before Congress to argue in favor of canceling the debt of countries in need and funding access to life-saving medications. His team helped assemble a group of more than 300 organizations to call for the United States to commit to providing at least \$2.5 billion annually to fight AIDS. In January 2003, it happened: President Bush pledged \$15 billion over five years to treat two million Africans infected with HIV; to prevent seven million new infections; and to care for 10 million other affected Africans, including orphaned or otherwise at-risk children.

Before he left the GAA in 2011, Zeitz collaborated with Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel, who served as honorary co-chair of the GAA, and Desmond Tutu, former Archbishop of Cape Town, South Africa, who worked with the GAA to publish op-eds advancing its agenda. The GAA helped launch Global Action for Children, an organization specifically designed to help vulnerable kids, with \$1 million from Angelina Jolie and Brad Pitt. And, the GAA secured a multimillion-dollar grant to launch the Campaign to End Pediatric HIV/AIDS, a program that ran in six African countries.

Today, AIDS-related deaths globally have been reduced by more than 55 percent since their peak in 2004. In 2000, just 2 percent of those living with HIV globally had access to antiretroviral therapy. By 2010, access had expanded to 24 percent of those with HIV, and by 2018, 62 percent. When Zeitz lived in Africa in the late '90s, less than one percent of those with HIV/AIDS on the continent had antiretroviral access; in eastern and southern Africa today,

that rate is up to 67 percent, and in western and central Africa, 52 percent.

"While we've made incredible progress in the fight against AIDS in Africa, there are still a million people who unnecessarily die each year, and too many young people, particularly women and girls, who become newly HIV-infected each year," Zeitz says.

BEYOND AIDS

Near the end of his tenure at the GAA, Zeitz began to consider how he might apply the tactics he'd used as an AIDS activist to other global problems. He was interested in peace and justice; in protecting the planet as well as public health; in equality for all humans regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, nationality or socioeconomic status. The UN's 17 global sustainable development goals covered all these issues and then some.

Zeitz's advisory work with the Foundation for Climate Restoration allows him to champion the planet-saving cause, which has ripple effects on equity and social-justice issues. He explains that climate work has three facets: restoration, or reversing the damage humans have caused; mitigation, or avoiding causing more damage; and adaptation, or preparing for the consequences of climate change.

"What's happening right now is that mitigation and adaptation efforts are failing because they're only designed to make things not worse. It's not galvanizing humanity," he says. "If you add in climate restoration as the third leg of the stool, then you can accelerate progress on all three levels. It can reinvigorate and energize the global climate response." Through the Foundation for Climate Restoration, he's working on a Climate Restoration Emergency Action Bill with both Republicans and Democrats with a goal of releasing it into Congress as soon as possible.

But climate change is not Zeitz's only concern. That's one reason he created Build a Movement 2020, which he describes as "a newly forming, patriotic, revolutionary political movement." It has five pillars: climate restoration & clean energy transition; sustainable development; ending child sexual abuse and incest; universal healthcare and the end of AIDS; and restoring democracy. Build a Movement 2020's online hub offers a variety of calls to action: petitions to sign, webinars to take, rallies and marches to attend. Some are organized by Zeitz while others are external efforts.


Zeitz imagines Build a Movement 2020 as a network of allies: “While there are a lot of related movements, what we’re offering is an invitation to connect the dots,” he says. “It’s the connective tissue between the movements, so we can actually start winning.” It’s similar to the role the GAA had in uniting a wide variety of groups—including politicians, religious organizations and grassroots activists—with the common goal of ending AIDS. One of the unique objectives of Build a Movement 2020 is a call for a new American Constitution.

“There is this groupthink that the Constitution is sacred and revered, and it has served some people well,” he says. “But why can’t we get together and write a constitution that’s actually more authentically by the people, for the people? I think we can, we should and it would be fun. We can include women. We can include people of color. The first Constitution was written by white, male slave-owners. They intentionally wrote it to protect their privilege and subjugate others. I think it’s run its course. I know we can do better.”

Zeitz admits that he’s not sure whether this concept or Build a Movement 2020 are ideas “whose time has come,” but uncertainty never stops him from trying: *Waging Justice* details campaigns of Zeitz’s that never got off the

“I HAVE TO WAKE UP EVERY DAY AND MAKE THE CHOICE TO BE OPTIMISTIC. WHEN I’M ABLE TO BE PERSISTENTLY OPTIMISTIC—THIS IS A DAILY PRACTICE—I’M MORE ABLE TO BE **COMMITTED AND COURAGEOUS** TO TAKE ON THE BIG CHALLENGES.”

ground right alongside the AIDS work that helped change the world. He is certain that humanity is facing a crisis, and that he’s capable of effecting change—he’s done it before!—so he forges ahead, powered by positivity.

“I have to wake up every day and make the choice to be optimistic,” he says. “When I’m able to be persistently optimistic—this is a daily practice—I’m more able to be committed and courageous to take on the big challenges.” 





ALUMNI WEEKEND 2019

More than 2,000 alumni, friends and family celebrated! New and expanded programs included 15 lifelong learning courses and tours, an Alumni Art Show featuring 12 alumni and a poster session at which 81 students presented research. Class gifts from years ending in 4 and 9 raised a total of more than \$1.5 million. Mark your calendars: Alumni Weekend 2020 takes place October 2-4, with reunions for class years ending in 0 and 5. See you then!





Above, 2019 Alumni Achievement Award winners from left: Matthew Hittinger '00, Douglas Peebles '87, Cliff Allen '69, Dr. Nino Carnevale '59, Diane Miller Sommerville '81, Dawn Eilenberger '79, Nadeem Hussain '79 and Dr. Gail Skowron '78



ALUMNI NEWS

From the Alumni Board President



"I really had a good time! I am not sure why I stayed away for so long." After Alumni Weekend, I reached out to a classmate, saying how great it was to see her on campus. That was her response.

I had been thinking the same thing a couple of weeks prior when on campus for an Alumni Board meeting. About to convene my first gathering as president, I looked around at the almost 50 members, staff and student representatives in the room. They spanned class years from the 1960s to 2023 and had set aside time to volunteer for their College. That's something I didn't do until 12 years ago, so I began to think about my Muhlenberg story.

After a few years volunteering post-graduation, I pretty much "went dark." I resurfaced every five years for reunion and sent in regular donations, but I ignored mail and deleted (unread) email from the College.

Then, one day, I received an email from Muhlenberg which I opened—and in which some part of me took interest—and I hesitantly replied to the request for volunteers.

It was like I hadn't missed a beat. When I answered the call, my alma mater welcomed me back. I noticed, with new appreciation, the beautiful and improved campus. I learned about our incredible students, faculty and staff and our new academic programs. I gained a deeper understanding of the importance of philanthropy at Muhlenberg and learned how responsibly our financial support is used. I felt happy that, despite not being involved as a volunteer, I had at least contributed monetarily to our students over the years.

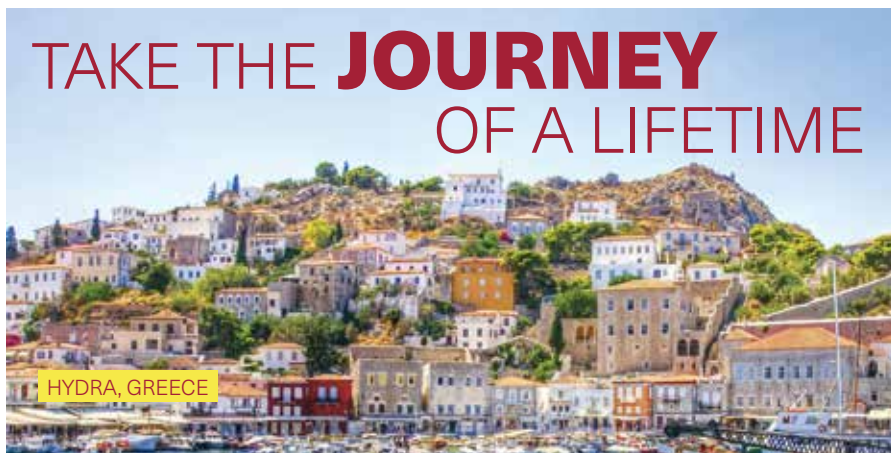
Soon thereafter, I applied to be a member of the Alumni Board. I became close, once again, to some of the people with whom I spent four very special years. I wish I had come back sooner.

There are so many ways to connect with the College. So if you haven't been involved, why not start now? Read that email, listen to a podcast, register for a webinar, volunteer at an event, submit a class note, visit campus, join your reunion committee—I think you will be glad you did.

For more information on the Alumni Board and the many ways in which you can volunteer, visit muhlenbergconnect.com. I hope to see you soon.

Carol Papazian '79

President, Alumni Board
bergalum@muhlenberg.edu



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