

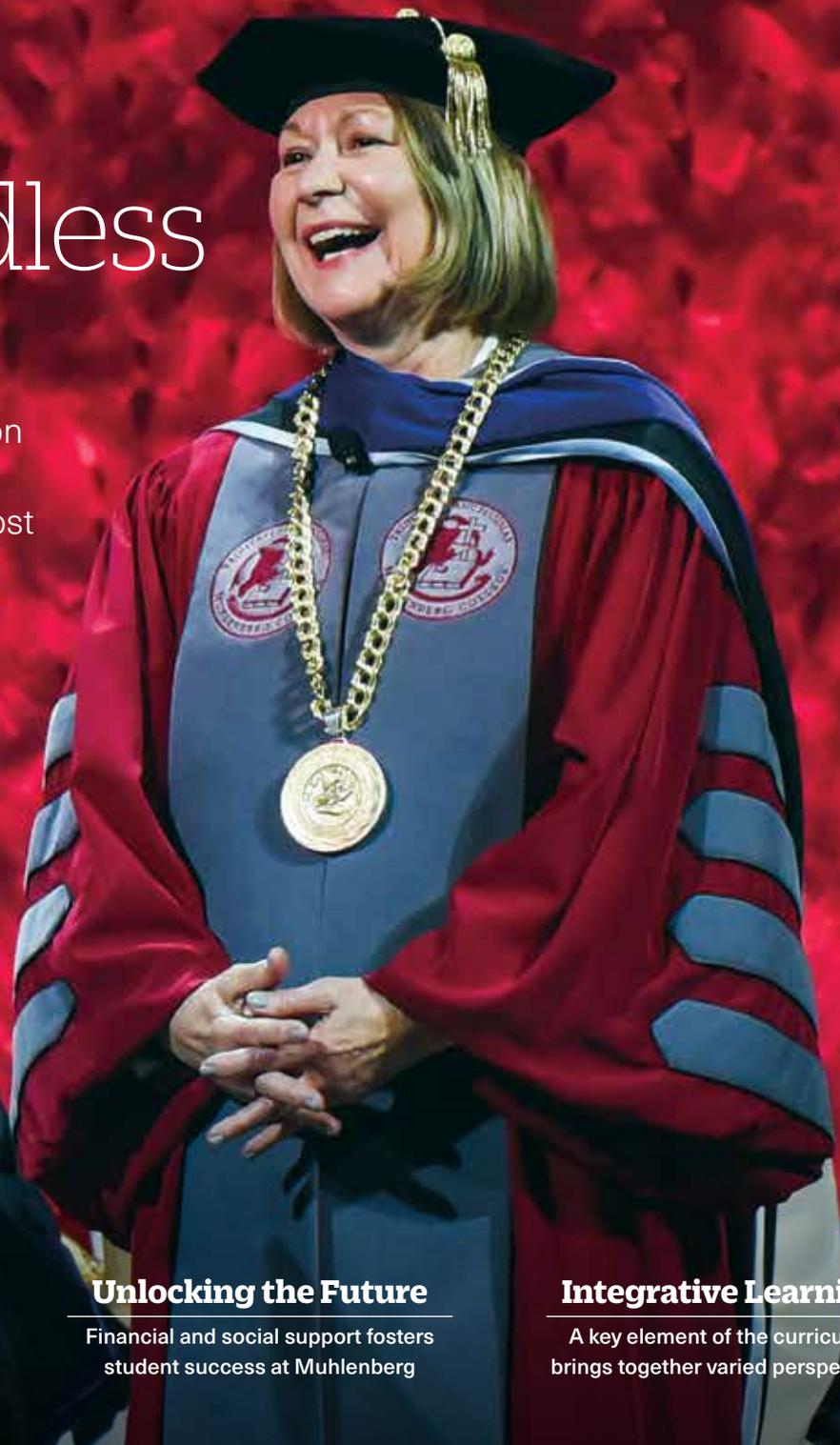
Muhlenberg

Magazine

WINTER 2021

A Boundless Future

Celebrating the inauguration of a new president and the launch of Muhlenberg's most ambitious campaign ever



Meet the President

Kathleen Harring brings a deep history with the College to the role

Unlocking the Future

Financial and social support fosters student success at Muhlenberg

Integrative Learning

A key element of the curriculum brings together varied perspectives

26,000+ REASONS TO **CELEBRATE MUHLENBERG**

At this year's THAW (Toast Heard Around the World), celebrate our past and our future together. Let's connect with friends and classmates, with College leadership and with volunteers.

Let's remember what's always made Muhlenberg special: our community. And let's see how *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg* connects our past to our future.

When the 26,000+ members of our alumni community come together, along with Muhlenberg parents and friends of the College, we become boundless.

THAW

TOAST HEARD AROUND THE WORLD

JANUARY 20, 2022

Connect with Mules at a THAW event in your area or virtually on January 20, 2022.

muhlenberg.edu/alumni/thaw

From the President



This special issue of *Muhlenberg Magazine* marks a momentous time for the College. We called the weekend of November 12-14 the Celebration of Muhlenberg. The two big campus events—my inauguration ceremony and the kickoff of *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg*—as well as everything else scheduled that weekend put a spotlight on the amazing, creative, energetic Muhlenberg community.

As I reflected on my 30-plus years at Muhlenberg while drafting my inauguration address, our community and the ways in which it defines the College was inescapable. The individuals and the relationships that are at the heart of the Muhlenberg experience affect the lives of our students in so many ways, both large and small—and are certainly not confined to one’s time on campus. In my address I noted that “colleges often talk about building community, but at Muhlenberg we *have* a strong community. This community gives us the confidence to continually evolve without fear of losing the collaborative, supportive nature that makes this College so special.”

That collaborative spirit and the evolution it spurs were evident across the weekend. One of the highlights was our annual Celebration of Student Research, Scholarship and Creative Work, which showcased the work of 70 students from across the disciplines. Their presentations demonstrate the depth of curiosity among our students and the important relationships they hold with faculty. This was preceded by a wonderful panel discussion on scholarship in the liberal arts with Assistant Professor of Biology Giancarlo Cuadra, Assistant Professor of Psychology Alexandra Frazer, Assistant Professor of Dance Megan Flynn and Assistant Professor of Art and Sculpture Frederick Wright Jones. These sessions showed the power of the liberal arts and the nature of our collaborative community.

I was humbled by the remarks from staff, faculty and students during my inauguration ceremony wishing the best for me and the College. Each speaker displayed the depth of care, support and commitment that I see every day. Finally, the kickoff of *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg* included alumni, trustees, students and faculty sharing their stories of what it means to be part of a community that does not accept limits on what it can achieve. This campaign, which is the most ambitious in the College’s history, is all about supporting the people, experiences and places that power a boundless Muhlenberg experience. I hope you enjoy reading this special issue and find ways to stay connected to our unique Muhlenberg community.

Sincerely,
Kathleen Harring
 President

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Alumni, Parents and Friends of the College Power New Campaign

Volunteers' own stories of philanthropy inspire other donors to invest in Muhlenberg's future.

Tammy Bormann '83 P'16 co-chaired the College's last campaign, which ended in 2010, and is also co-chairing *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg*, which launched its public phase on November 13. Even though Bormann holds nominally the same position, her role has been completely different.

"In the past, volunteer leadership provided input but was not hands-on," she says. "This time, volunteer leadership provides input and is hands-on—having visits, writing letters, building capacity, getting the word out, speaking with alumni, making asks."

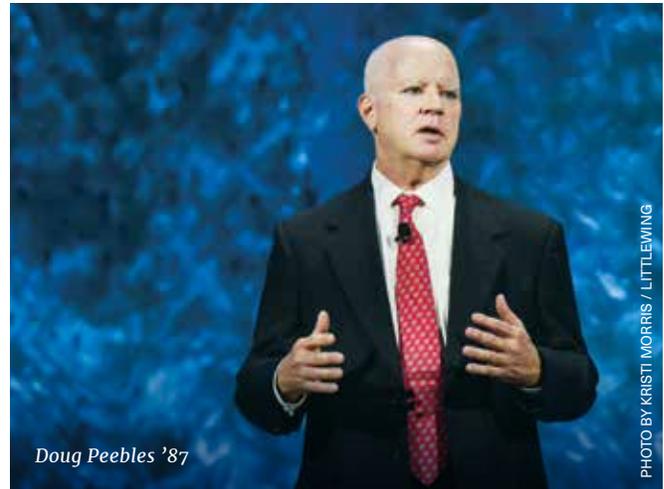
The entire structure of *Boundless* is built upon volunteer leadership, a strategic departure from past campaigns. Previously, College presidents and administrators were the ones meeting with prospects. This time, they're joined by alumni, parents and friends of the College who have invested significant time, energy and resources in the campaign and in Muhlenberg.

"That peer-to-peer piece—where it's not just the College asking you to do this, it's classmates or fellow parents—has a different impact and changes how the message is delivered to our potential donors," says Vice President for Advancement Rebekkah Brown '99. "By volunteers sharing their own personal philanthropy stories, it helps potential donors relate more closely to what we're asking them to do."

Boundless is also the most ambitious campaign in the College's history, seeking to raise \$111 million in seven years. To get there, Brown, her team and the three campaign co-chairs (Bormann; her husband, Mark Paris '80 P'16; and Doug Peebles '87) enlisted the help of nearly 40 volunteers divided into five different committees. Most had not participated in fundraising in this way before.

"Even in the early conversations, there was a lot of hesitation as we were recruiting people," Brown says. "But a lot of what they're doing is telling their Muhlenberg story. When we talk to them about it, they say, 'I can do that.'"

Peebles was among the hesitant, but he felt an obligation to the place that set him up for success, in his career and his personal life. The work has been rewarding: "I like talking about Muhlenberg," Peebles says. "When I talk to people I went to school with or have known for a long time, I already know what they think of Muhlenberg. When I talk to people I've never met before and they think the same thing about



Muhlenberg as I do and all my friends do, it gives you the warm-and-fuzzies about the institution."

The volunteer structure marked a significant shift in the work of the College's gift officers. They needed to match the backgrounds, personalities and philanthropic priorities of the volunteers and prospective donors when considering which volunteer might be best to join for a virtual or in-person visit. It's been a "huge lift," Brown says, but it has paid off: The team was able to raise more than \$71.2 million in the three-year quiet phase before the public launch.

"Watching a talented group of individuals in [advancement] bring this thing to fruition, I actually get more joy out of that than anything," Paris says. "They're doing so much work. Our job is to give them our feedback when they want our feedback, which they always ask for. I do not deem this job as co-chair. I deem this job as a partner to this team."

Now that *Boundless* is public, the team is adding more volunteer partners in new committees focused on young alumni giving and campus community giving. And this volunteer infrastructure, as challenging and work-intensive as it was to build and nurture, will pay dividends long after the \$111 million goal is met.

"This isn't just doing work for this campaign. It's laying the groundwork for future Muhlenberg campaigns," Brown says. "We're building that pipeline of storytellers for Muhlenberg who will be able to assist us in this work."
—Meghan Kita



IMAGES BY RLPS ARCHITECTS

A Four-Year Plan, and Beyond

The Career Center encourages students to think about life after Muhlenberg throughout their time at the College and welcomes alumni who need career assistance.

Strengthening the Career Center was a priority within the College's most recent strategic plan, partly in response to students and their families becoming more outcome-driven. The Career Center has evolved significantly over the last decade, with a greater emphasis on outreach to first-year students and sophomores as well as to alumni and employers. Today, the center engages with nearly 80 percent of students annually. Executive Director of Career Services Sean Schofield is excited about the potential to reach even more of the Muhlenberg community with further integration of post-graduate outcomes into the entire college experience.

The Career Center aims to help students translate their time at Muhlenberg and personal interests into potential paths forward after graduation, whether that means entering the job market or pursuing an advanced degree. This begins with awareness: Staff take part in campus-wide events like Orientation and Family Weekend and are involved with the required first-year course Foundations of Student Success.

For students early in their journeys, the Career Center offers coaching to identify strengths and interests and explore pathways that might align. Then, individual and workshop-based assistance prepares students to build a resume or CV and create a profile on LinkedIn and Handshake, a platform the College started using in 2017 that features 14,900 vetted jobs and more than 6,000 internships.

"Students are getting access to positions that used to only go to Ivy League schools," Schofield says. "We have students who can compete with students from any institution."

The Career Center facilitates internship, shadowing and project-based "externship" opportunities, often with alumni as hosts. These opportunities are encouraged for all classes of students, even first-years: "We know that if students engage early and often with the Career Center, and they take advantage of things like doing projects for alumni or doing a shadow

opportunity, they start to gain insights into their career early on, and that can help them make decisions for later on," Schofield says. And it's just as useful for students to hate one of these experiences as it is for them to love it, he adds, since that inspires exploration of career values and new pathways.

Supporting these hands-on experiences is The Muhlenberg Network, a collection of more than 2,500 alumni, parents and friends of the College who have signed on to connect with students: "We think of The Muhlenberg Network as a global learning lab," Schofield says. "Our internship program, our externship program, job shadows, the career trips—those things are all encompassed in The Muhlenberg Network."

The center assists students interested in grad school by offering workshops and counseling tailored to that path, and the newly launched Graduate School Preparatory Program for Students from Underrepresented Backgrounds is jointly housed in the Career Center (along with the Africana Studies Program and the Office of Multicultural Life). For students seeking internships, the center offers stipends and works to find paid opportunities.

And the support doesn't end when students graduate. Schofield says alumni utilize the center's services as well: "I absolutely encourage our alumni to come back to us, whether they're going through a job transition or just thinking, 'Hey, I want to ask for a raise,'" he says. "We want you to be a Mule for life, and we consider you a Mule for life."

A new home for the Career Center is coming as well. The center will move from the lower level of Seegers Union into an expansion located along Chew Street that will also house new offices for alumni affairs and serve as a hub for student, alumni, faculty, staff and employer interaction.

"It is a physical demonstration of the investment that the College is making in successful outcomes for students and alumni," Schofield says. —Megan Bungeroth '07

Unlocking the Future

Financial aid and continued on-campus support make the Muhlenberg experience possible for more students.



Shelly Zaid-Kunz '22 and Maereg Gebretekle '22 speak with Associate Dean of Students and Director of Student Diversity Initiatives Robin Riley-Casey at the Graduate School Preparatory Program for Students from Underrepresented Backgrounds (GSPP) launch event in September.

PHOTOS BY JOE ROMANO '23

At Muhlenberg, welcoming students from different financial, cultural and social backgrounds—including those who are the first in their families to go to college—is a priority. It’s made possible in part by robust financial aid support amounting to nearly \$60 million per year. The impact is vast: More than 93 percent of

Muhlenberg students receive some form of aid, grants or scholarships.

This year, Muhlenberg welcomed a record number of under-resourced students: 21 percent of students in the first-year class are eligible for Pell grants, the largest federal assistance program for undergraduates. Five years ago, that number was just 11.3 percent. The Class of 2025 is nearly 17 percent first-generation students, up from 10 percent 10 years ago. It is also the most diverse class ever to attend the College, with 23 percent of first-year students identifying as students of color.

All of this growth has been intentional, says Meg Ryan, vice president for enrollment management: “We’re so proud of the record-breaking year, but it’s work that’s been done very carefully over time,” she says.

Expanding Access

Muhlenberg has become a part of a growing movement. In 2018, the College joined the American Talent Initiative (ATI), a network of colleges

and universities working together to expand educational opportunities for low- and moderate-income students. The program aims to attract, enroll

and graduate 50,000 additional students nationwide by 2025. ATI challenged Muhlenberg to have 20 percent or more of students in each

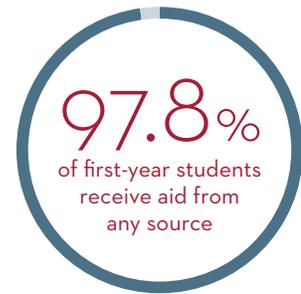
class be Pell-eligible, and the College achieved that with this first-year class. Muhlenberg is accomplishing this goal by working closely with community-based organizations in New York City, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C., that encourage high school students to pursue college degrees.

“The transformative Muhlenberg experience should be accessible to all,” Ryan says.

Meanwhile, colleges and universities across the country are facing enrollment challenges. According to the National Center for Education Statistics, between 2009 and 2019, undergraduate enrollment in post-secondary institutions fell by five percent. While certain demographic segments are growing, issues like the increase in income inequality are also affecting the number of students choosing to apply to college. Dean of Academic Life Michele Deegan says that shifting demographics present opportunities to welcome students who may not have considered Muhlenberg in the past.

“The transformative Muhlenberg experience should be accessible to all.”

—MEG RYAN, VICE PRESIDENT FOR ENROLLMENT MANAGEMENT



“Enrollment is challenging, but ... we’re saying, ‘We want to put a lot of time and effort into making sure well qualified under-resourced students have a chance to go to a college like Muhlenberg,’” she says.

All Kinds of Aid

Financial aid is the first step toward ensuring students from a variety of backgrounds can attend Muhlenberg. Scholarships, grants and programs like work-study play a large part in helping students and their families make the decision to enroll. Mickey Kober '20, recipient of the Marles Campus Impact and John R. Lawrie Scholarships, spoke about the significance of those funds at the 2019 Scholarship Luncheon. He said he was one of four boys in his family; two of his brothers were also enrolled in college at the time.

“I am a first-generation college student and could not be more thrilled to have the opportunity to attend such a prestigious institution,”

Kober told the attendees. “These scholarships are making a substantial impact on my family in terms of financial needs.”

Once students arrive on campus, they may find they have financial needs beyond their aid packages. The path each student takes in their Muhlenberg experience includes opportunities that help broaden their education and prepare them for success after graduation, but many of those opportunities come with a cost.

Experiential learning grants can be used to cover fees to join a club or organization,

to travel to conferences or research programs or for other opportunities that encourage academic or professional growth. Deegan says students can also apply for grants to help pay for experiences such as study-abroad programs and apply to receive stipends for unpaid internships. An emergency grant can help students cover unexpected costs, such as a trip home to attend to a family crisis.

“I am a first-generation college student and could not be more thrilled to have the opportunity to attend such a prestigious institution. These scholarships are making a substantial impact on my family in terms of financial needs.”

—MICKEY KOBER '20

Structures of Support

Beyond financial aid and grants, an array of initiatives exist to support students who are first-generation or who come from under-resourced families on campus. Associate Professor of English Dawn Lonsinger can relate to what some of these students might be feeling because she was a first-generation student herself.

When she arrived at Bucknell University as an undergrad, Lonsinger recalls the existence of affinity groups for women, LGBTQ students, students with disabilities and students of color, “but there was no evidence of any support for students from working class or poor backgrounds for whom college was largely, before stepping foot on [campus], a foreign concept, as alien as *The New Yorker*, Burberry or beef bourguignon,” she says.

At Muhlenberg, she strives to make the college experience less intimidating. In 2019, she helped launch the First-Generation Advocacy and Support Group as a place where students could connect with one another and first-generation faculty and staff. Lonsinger was also instrumental in organizing the Muhlenberg chapter of Alpha Alpha Alpha, which is an honor society for first-generation college students.

In addition, this fall saw the launch of the Graduate School Preparatory Program for Students from Underrepresented Backgrounds, which is co-directed by Assistant Professor of Biology Giancarlo Cuadra and Assistant Professor of English and Africana Studies and Co-Director of Africana Studies Emanuela Kucik. The program aims to help students, from sophomores to recent alumni, consider their options for after Muhlenberg, apply to graduate and professional programs, find scholarship and funding resources and then succeed in those programs.

The tight-knit nature of the Muhlenberg community serves as an additional buttress for any student experiencing difficulty. Deegan and her colleagues try to be attuned to changes in students’ routines and demeanors and to respond quickly. “Often, when a student is having health and wellness challenges, they can lead to academic challenges,” she says. Deegan says the College works to support each student holistically, from enrollment through graduation.

And those efforts are paying off, including for under-resourced students, who excel at Muhlen-



Assistant Professor of Art and Sculpture Frederick Wright Jones, Associate Provost for Faculty & Diversity Initiatives Brooke Vick and Adonis Brooks '23 talk at the GSPP launch event.

berg. According to data included in the 2022 *U.S. News & World Report* rankings, Pell-eligible students showed a 99 percent graduation rate, compared to 82 percent for the general student population. Deegan and Ryan believe that is because of the combination of financial and individualized support from faculty and staff.

A Philosophy of Inclusion

Deegan says that she's proud of the College's efforts to support students from a variety of backgrounds: "In everything we do, we are now asking the question, 'If we create a new policy, if we create a new process for how we work with students, are we leaving anybody behind?'" she says. "If we create a process where some students have opportunities and others don't, that's a problem for us. So we always have to ask this question about

equity and access, always, at every single meeting, to make sure we are following through on our promise to be a more inclusive campus."

And those efforts are positive for everyone, not just for the students who receive financial aid. "We're providing this opportunity to students from all backgrounds as a benefit to all Muhlenberg students," Ryan says. "It's enriching the entire Muhlenberg experience to have a diverse student body and to define that diversity in a broad way."

"If we have students who represent different ethnic and racial backgrounds but not different socioeconomic statuses, we're missing a whole part of the lived experience in this country," she adds, "and then that's not represented in our conversations and our seminar discussions and courses that we have here." —*Kate Silver*

A Magnet for the Best Scholar-Educators

Endowed professorships enhance the educational experience for Muhlenberg students by providing financial support to exceptional faculty.

Professor Linda McGuire's position as the endowed Truman L. Koehler '24 Professor in Mathematics allows her to focus on her current interests—how feminist and diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) related theories can inform practice in mathematics and STEM—in a way she couldn't otherwise. Endowed professorships support exploration, curiosity and growth as a scholar and educator. They also have ripple effects that go well beyond the benefits afforded to the faculty member who holds the position.

"The Koehler professorship grants me time to read, research and gather materials for department faculty to analyze and discuss," McGuire says. "This allows all of us to engage with current conversations and thinking about DEI issues and bring what ideas and initiatives would best fit Muhlenberg to our classrooms and research spaces."

The Koehler professorship is one of Muhlenberg's six endowed professorships, which recognize faculty for exceptional teaching, mentoring and scholarship and provide financial support toward continued excellence. Endowed professorships also impact the academic standing of the institution: "[Having these positions] shows that friends and alumni of the College have confidence in the institution, that their experiences at Muhlenberg were so meaningful that they would like to make a contribution that gives others the same opportunity into perpetuity," says Provost Laura Furge. "It also increases the national reputation of the faculty who hold those endowed posi-

tions. It gives us the opportunity to make connections that we wouldn't otherwise be able to make because our professors may get more recognition that allows them to deepen and widen their networks."

These positions are integral in recruiting and retaining tal-

ented, highly-sought faculty, Furge says. When a prospective faculty member is considering multiple institutions, being able to offer them an endowed professorship can make the difference in their decision. The existence of an endowed position in their discipline, even if it's currently filled, speaks to the College's investment in and commitment to the faculty. When senior professors already at Muhlenberg are granted an endowed professorship, as McGuire was last fall, it serves as an enormous vote of confidence.

Professor of Biology, Director of Sustainability Studies and Rita and Joseph B. Scheller Chair Rich Niesenbaum started at Muhlenberg in 1993 and moved into the endowed position in 2016, upon becoming director of the RJ Fellows honors program. The Scheller funds have supported travel related to research for two books Niesenbaum has published since then, including the textbook *Sustainable Solutions: Problem Solving for Current and Future Generations*. The continued support has allowed him to travel to three countries so far to interview effective sustainable changemakers around the world for his next book project.

"The more active the faculty member is in their field, the more students benefit from their mentoring," Furge says.

One student who has benefited from Niesenbaum's is Claire Pancoast '22. The psychology and sustainability studies double major and RJ Fellow is continuing research on the sustainability of feminine hygiene products that she began over the summer.

"When I decided to do [summer research], I went to [Niesenbaum] and said, 'I want to do this, but I don't know what I want to do.' He was very helpful with talking through it," she says. "I don't think I would have come up with a topic had it not been for our discussion."

It was a topic Pancoast says she hadn't put much thought into previously despite her awareness of the harms of single-use plastics. Niesenbaum was able to lead her in that direction because of his broad understanding of timely topics in sustainability.

"Faculty continually build their expertise as scholars and innovative teachers long after they finish their terminal degree," Furge says. "Having endowed professorships really allows us to recognize the outstanding work from our faculty as they continue to innovate and look for ways to provide meaningful experiences for multiple generations of students." —Dawn Thren and MK



Truman L. Koehler '24 Professor in Mathematics Linda McGuire teaching in October 2019

PHOTO BY RYAN HULVAT

PHOTO BY MEGAN KELLER



Parkway Boulevard Building “Topped Off” at Community Event

A centuries-old tradition, the topping-off ceremony marks an important moment in a construction project with the placement of the final structural beam. On November 3, dozens of Muhlenberg students, faculty, staff and alumni gathered to celebrate this milestone for the first new stand-alone building on Muhlenberg’s campus in 16 years.

A \$7.5 million gift by an anonymous alum and his wife—the largest personal gift in the history of College—included \$2.5 million in funding to begin work on the Parkway Boulevard Building, which will provide more than 20,000 square feet of programming, art studio, academic and administrative space.

Prior to the ceremony, Muhlenberg community members were invited to sign their names on the structural steel. Before the beam was raised, an ever-green tree was fastened to the steel as a traditional wish for good luck for the building’s future occupants and a safe construction process. At the ceremony, Vice President for Advancement Rebekkah Brown '99 addressed the crowd who gathered to watch as the beam was raised and fitted into place.

“Our steel beam, signed by students, faculty, staff, donors and the talented workers who helped this building take shape, will serve as a time capsule that marks your involvement in this important moment,” Brown said. “Your name will live on in the history of this building and as part of the Muhlenberg campus.”

Groundbreaking for the building took place in May 2021, and the building is expected to be open for use in late 2022. —*Bill Keller*

Unrestricted Giving to The Muhlenberg Fund Hits Record High

In the 2020 fiscal year, The Muhlenberg Fund raised more than \$2.56 million in unrestricted giving, its largest ever unrestricted total. It also received its largest ever six-figure gift, \$411,625. Total giving to the annual fund, including gifts “restricted” to an academic department, athletics or another area of the donor’s choosing, was \$4.8 million, the most since the 2017 fiscal year.

Unrestricted giving is important, says Kim Anderson, assistant vice president of advancement services and campaign director, because “it allows the College to direct that money to whatever the most important priorities are. It provides the flexibility for the College to use those funds where they’re most needed.” However, restricted giving allows a donor to direct their gift toward an area they are most passionate about or feel the most connection to.

Both varieties of giving are critical to the financial health of Muhlenberg: “The Muhlenberg Fund plays a vital role in sustaining the College. The most immediate impact any donor can have is through a gift to The Muhlenberg Fund,” Anderson says. “Each year, these gifts impact every corner of campus life and provide a direct investment in our students, faculty and staff.” —*MK*

“The Muhlenberg Fund plays a vital role in sustaining the College. The most immediate impact any donor can have is through a gift to The Muhlenberg Fund. Each year, these gifts impact every corner of campus life and provide a direct investment in our students, faculty and staff.”

—KIM ANDERSON, ASSISTANT VICE PRESIDENT OF ADVANCEMENT SERVICES AND CAMPAIGN DIRECTOR

Integrative Learning Prepares Students to Tackle Complex Problems

A key component of Muhlenberg's curriculum requires students to engage with multiple perspectives in an intentional way.

In 2019, when Director of Innovation & Entrepreneurship Rita Chesterton and Sabrina Kamran '13 came up with the idea for their integrative learning (IL) course, clinical trials and FDA meetings rarely made headlines. Now that they're actually teaching the course—which covers the drug development process, intellectual property rights and the ethical implications of innovation in therapeutics—the real-world relevance is unmistakable.

Chesterton and Kamran's class, Life Sciences Innovations, is almost an even split of science and business majors, with a few from other disciplines as well. Both instructors hoped to attract this kind of mix, since bringing together different perspectives on the same issue is the hallmark of integrative learning at Muhlenberg. Even Chesterton and Kamran, who has a Ph.D. in pharmacology and works in the biotech industry, often have very different takes on what they're teaching.

"This industry, it's not all bad and it's not all good," Kamran says. "We're always thinking about that balance of, 'Are pharmaceutical companies making too much money? But, science is really expensive, and they can put that money back into research and development.' Students have more talking points in their arsenal and know more so they can critically evaluate what's going on in the news."

Integrative learning is at the heart of the liberal arts, says Senior Lecturer of Religion

Studies and Co-Coordinator of Integrative Learning Sharon Albert. It's what happens when multiple perspectives on a single issue converge to create an understanding that's exponentially richer, one that can better solve complicated problems—and most real-world problems, like developing and distributing vaccines and drugs for COVID, are complicated. While integrative learning happens across Muhlenberg's curriculum, courses that meet the integrative learning requirement purposely highlight the consideration of different perspectives.

"What we try to do with the integrative learning requirement is to get students to pause and think about that intentionally. It's not just that it's happening. It's *knowing* that it's happening," Albert says.

Each student must have at least one integrative learning experience during their time at Muhlenberg, though they often have more. Team-taught courses aren't the only ones that qualify; faculty develop a range of integrative learning options to meet student interests like linked courses (two related courses with faculty from different disciplines); MILA (Muhlenberg Integrative Learning Abroad) courses, which have a short-term study abroad component; community-engaged learning courses; and courses linked to College programming such as the Center for Ethics. To qualify for the requirement, a course must dedicate time to having stu-



PHOTO BY PAUL PEARSON

dents reflect on their integrative work, but Albert says what this looks like varies. It could take the form of written reflections, a final presentation, discussion in class or some type of group work.

To fulfill the requirement, Muhlenberg used to require a cluster of two courses, usually taken sophomore year, but scheduling proved difficult. During her time as provost, President Kathleen Harring oversaw the curricular change that established integrative learning as it is today. She credits Albert and Senior Lecturer of Biology and Co-Coordinator of Integrative Learning Kimberly Heiman for working with faculty to develop the wide range of integrative learning experiences that all meet the same learning goals.

“What you see is that students—through incredibly creative assignments—are creating new knowledge, new questions, new answers in ways that they didn’t before,” Harring says.

Heiman calls her integrative learning courses—such as Human Impacts on Local

Ecology, which she co-teaches with Associate Professor of Anthropology Ben Carter—“some of the most exciting teaching I do on campus.” She benefits as a faculty member from seeing how colleagues from different disciplines interact with students in the classroom, and she enjoys learning about fields outside her specialty. But the subject matter of the course isn’t really the point, she says.

“Yes, the students need to see how looking at a particular problem or topic of an IL experience is beneficial to understanding that particular topic. But they’re also learning a skill valued in our modern workplace. If you look at surveys, employers want employees to have the ability to look at a problem from multiple perspectives and try to solve it,” Heiman says. “The IL is not about the topic. It’s about the skills and awareness of the students’ own ability to learn and appreciate multiple perspectives. We are teaching students to appreciate that way of thinking.” —MK

Senior Lecturer of Religion Studies and Co-Coordinator of Integrative Learning Sharon Albert at a poster presentation for one of her classes in November 2019

INTRODUCING



*Center, Beth Donaldson '92;
clockwise from above, a student
dance performance, the stage
in Memorial Hall, guests at the
Boundless launch event*



BOUNDLESS

THE CAMPAIGN FOR MUHLENBERG

The College has already raised more than \$71.2 million en route to its \$111 million goal to support priorities such as financial aid, endowed professorships and campus facilities.

BY MEGHAN KITA

PHOTOS BY KRISTI MORRIS/LITTLEWING

On Saturday, November 13, Memorial Hall transformed from a gymnasium into a performance venue. A stage stood near half court, with blue uplit draping blocking the rear wall to create a backstage area, and rows of chairs filled the remaining floor. Alumni, parents and friends of the College gathered in cocktail attire to attend the launch of the public phase of *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg*.

The College Choir opened the evening, singing *Phantom of the Opera*'s "Masquerade" from its place in the bleachers. Then, a spotlight shined on one of the singers, Aevyn Barnett '22, president of the choir, who greeted the audience.

"Welcome Muhlenberg family, to an evening like no other," they said. "You're probably wondering what is in store tonight. I must admit that sense of 'what's next' was something I immediately felt when I first stepped foot on campus three years ago. Endless possibilities, opportunities, it all felt—"

"—boundless," said Linda Cenci '75 P'06, as the spotlight jumped to where she was standing on the

floor. "That's one way to describe it. Not being constrained or restricted to a single path, major, area or location. That's something that should feel familiar to any Muhlenberg alumni here tonight. Look—not even the stage can contain us this evening."

After Cenci spoke, College President Kathleen Harring introduced the campaign: "We are writing our next chapter of Muhlenberg's legacy and exploring how we can ensure boundless opportunities, curiosity, spirit and participation across our campus for generations to come," she said. "With the *Boundless* campaign, we will inspire the next generation of thinkers, of doers. We will help them achieve, learn to see different perspectives and connect the dots."

Next, campaign co-chairs Tammy Bormann '83 P'16 and Doug Peebles '87 took the stage. They, along with Harring, served as emcees for the event. The event was built upon campaign volunteers (including Cenci as well as Jeff Koehler '79 and Sam Stovall '77, who would speak later) and other members of the Muhlenberg community sharing their

The reception in John Dietrich Field House to celebrate the launch of Boundless. Opposite, from top: College Choir, Robin Chodak '22, Shannon Lambert-Ryan '03 and Fionán de Barra, Chelsea Montgomery-Duban Wächter '15 introducing President Harring





With the *Boundless* campaign, we will inspire the next generation of thinkers, of doers. **We will help them achieve, learn to see different perspectives and connect the dots.**”

—PRESIDENT HARRING

own stories of boundlessness with their peers. This peer-to-peer strategy (detailed on page 2) guided the campaign throughout its quiet phase, which began in 2018, and will continue now that it's public.

“It's often said that an institution helps to shape students, but I also believe that the students shape the institution,” Bormann said at the launch event. “Muhlenberg isn't the same as when I attended, nor do I come back to campus expecting it to be a time capsule of the early 1980s—quite the opposite. I'm delighted to see so much change and progress, but we have more work that we need to do to ensure that Muhlenberg is creating impact across the globe. We have the opportunity—no, the mandate—to move beyond our boundaries and to create impact beyond ourselves.”

The rest of the program introduced the audience to the campaign priorities (see “What





Boundless Will Fund,” page 18) via personal stories from 12 alumni, students and faculty. These individuals spoke about how Muhlenberg helped them achieve their goals and change their own expectations of what they could accomplish. For example, Beth Donaldson '92 shared how College staff ensured she had the financial aid to complete her degree and to study abroad in Spain. Professor of Media & Communication Jeff Pooley praised the culture of teaching and scholarship at Muhlenberg, which has enabled him to mentor student researchers doing, in some cases, graduate-level work.

Robin Chodak '22 said a call from Senior Assistant Director of Admissions and Coordinator of Multicultural Recruitment RaeVaughn Gardner-Williams came at just the right moment, when he was waffling on even attending college. He credited the Emerging Leaders Program for helping him connect with other first-generation students from underrepresented backgrounds and his mentor, Associate Dean of Students and Director of Student

Diversity Initiatives Robin Riley-Casey, for encouraging him to open up to the experience around him.

“College is a time of change, and Muhlenberg has made me grow and change in ways I truly never thought possible,” Chodak concluded.

Some speakers appeared on stage while others were on the floor or in the bleachers. Student and alumni song and dance performances were interspersed between the anecdotes.

“This event was designed to truly represent the College and the multiple constituents who make Muhlenberg, Muhlenberg,” says Vice President for Advancement Rebekkah Brown '99. “The speakers and performers throughout the evening touched on various academic, co-curricular and performance strengths of the College and anyone in the audience could find their connection to Muhlenberg through one of the stories or performances.”

Harring, Bormann and Peebles closed the evening by revealing how much the campaign had raised to date (more than \$71.2 million). Then, Har-



Campaign Co-Chair Doug Peebles '87, President Kathleen Harring and Campaign Co-Chair Tammy Bormann '83 P'16 in front of volunteers revealing the campaign's goal to raise \$111 million by 2025



ring shared how much it would raise before its end in 2025. Behind her, campaign volunteers and staff, holding signs that spelled out BOUNDLESS, flipped them to reveal the goal of \$111 million. Confetti boomed from a cannon and rained from the ceiling as the audience applauded. The celebration continued with a reception in John Dietrich Field House.

"The *Boundless* campaign is all about the people of Muhlenberg and the incredible community they power. Our success is about connection—the ways in which our alumni remain connected to the College and the ways in which students learn to connect knowledge across perspectives and disciplines," Harring says. "And that's why the campaign is resonating with alumni. They know firsthand the power of connection and understand that when they came to Muhlenberg, they weren't just going to college, they were joining a community that would support and challenge them. They see that in Muhlenberg today and want to ensure that experience for the next generation of students."

We have more work that we need to do to ensure that Muhlenberg is creating impact across the globe. We have the opportunity—no, the mandate—to **move beyond our boundaries and to create impact beyond ourselves.**"

—TAMMY BORMANN '83 P'16

WHAT BOUNDLESS WILL FUND

To narrow down the College's strategic plan into a handful of priorities the campaign would support, the Office of Advancement collaborated with consultants and a cabinet of volunteers from the Board of Trustees to research what would resonate the most with potential donors. The team concluded that the following priorities would be most likely to be successfully funded through philanthropy, and these four alumni were among those moved to pledge their support.

PEOPLE ...

Endowed professorships (\$20 million goal)
Student financial aid (\$35 million goal)



Muhlenberg has truly been a family affair for **Jeff Koehler '79**. His father, Truman Jr., graduated in 1952. His grandfather, Truman Koehler '24, taught mathematics at the College for 45 years. And while the youngest Koehler appreciates tradition, what's

far more interesting is the impact that his family legacy can have on the students of today.

Truman Sr. endowed the **Truman L. Koehler '24 Professorship in Mathematics**, currently held by Linda McGuire. The goal, Jeff says, is to "bring on campus bright professors with different ideas, different ways of thinking, who can tout Muhlenberg in their off-campus academic pursuits."

Jeff cites McGuire as an ideal recipient of the professorship: "Sometimes, people will start in the sciences and then drop out," he says. "Linda thinks one factor may be that we are not effectively connecting these students with the great mathematics and science community at Muhlenberg in their early days at the College. She is working on initiatives to cultivate that sense of belonging. It's not just about helping with today's assignment but seeing how engaging with today's assignment supports creating a future in STEM."

For Jeff—who, with his father, created the four-year Koehler Scholarship for a student in the sciences—the best reward for his philanthropic efforts is when students are able to achieve their goals because of the support he provided. "Some of these people may not have been at Muhlenberg without the scholarship," he says. "It's the best feeling in the world, to be able to help them go do what they want to do."

PLACES ...

Seegers Union expansion (\$10 million goal)
Parkway Boulevard Building (\$5 million goal)
Trexler Library renovation (\$1 million goal)



When **Kerilyn Burrows '72** attended Muhlenberg, she benefited from a full-tuition scholarship. During her time on campus and afterward, she always had a feeling she would pay back what was given to her: "I couldn't pay for four years in one crack, but I'd give

a little bit every year," she says.

Then, seven years ago, she moved back home to the Lehigh Valley to be with her mom and sold her home in Ohio, leaving her with some cash. She saw it as her opportunity to help the next generation of Mules.

"I wanted to do something with the chemistry department," says Burrows, who was a chemistry major at Muhlenberg and earned her Ph.D. in chemistry from Lehigh University. "We ended up going with an endowment in the name of Don Shive," a longtime chemistry professor at the College.

Burrows also decided to contribute funds toward a room in the **Parkway Boulevard Building** in honor of her maternal grandmother, Blanche Victoria Borowski.

"She was just an incredible person," Burrows says. "Her mother died when she was in eighth grade, so she had to quit school and take care of the rest of the family."

Burrows came to philanthropy later in life: "Usually, people have a whole family history of giving," she says. "That was never something in our family." Instead, the focus was on what she could do to make the world better.

Now, she sees that philanthropy is one way to do that, and, she says, "I can see what my money is doing."

“I’m hoping that people applying to Muhlenberg will know upfront that it’s not just a four year-involvement with the College. **It’s a lifetime embrace.**”

—SAM STOVALL '77

EXPERIENCES ...

Integrative learning (\$7.5 million goal)

The Muhlenberg Network/the Career Center (\$2.5 million goal)

The Muhlenberg Fund (\$30 million goal)



When **Sarah Stegemoeller '75** thinks back to her time at Muhlenberg, she thinks of the choices that people she doesn't even know made. She attended Muhlenberg with the help of a half-tuition scholarship: “Other people had to make philanthropic

choices before me, so that I could go to college,” she says.

In thinking of how to pay that forward, she thought of the people she met while working in the kitchen as a student. “Lots of kids made money that way,” she says. “I got to meet a lot of people who were longtime Allentown residents.”

It was these people, in addition to the education she received in the classroom, that Stegemoeller thinks of most when reflecting on her time at Muhlenberg. “They were just stunning people who really embraced the students,” she says. “It really made me appreciate how there’s lots to learn beyond the classroom.”

To advance that appreciation, Stegemoeller has donated in support of **integrative learning**, a cornerstone of the Muhlenberg curriculum that requires students to consider multiple perspectives when thinking about a topic. Integrative learning takes many forms—see page 10 to learn more—but community-engaged learning courses, in which faculty and a community partner provide different perspectives, often fit the bill.

For Stegemoeller, integrative learning appeals to the strong sense of community engagement she fostered at Muhlenberg and beyond. “This program is really just the newest iteration of understanding our community,” she says.



When **Sam Stovall '77** thinks about giving back and helping others, he thinks about two ideals: loyalty and love. “You can’t help but develop a love for something you’ve been deeply involved with,” he says. “And you can’t spell involvement without l-o-v-e.”

Stovall was heavily involved while on campus, participating on the track and football teams while also holding two jobs, including working in the cafeteria. That breadth of experience taught Stovall to “love Muhlenberg not just for what it was, but for what it strives to be.”

Stovall particularly appreciated the help that veterans of the financial services industry gave to him as he was starting out. “I was always reluctant to call others when I was searching,” he says. “But a lot of people were very willing to help me out early on.”

He’s paid that forward in spades. He’s given students tours of his office at Standard & Poor’s as well as of lower Manhattan, an experience that he quite enjoys and has invited other alumni to join. “I have a rule where, if a person has the nerve to call or email me, I owe it to them to be responsive and helpful,” he says.

His gift supporting the **Career Center** will help advance that aim, so that Muhlenberg students for generations to come will find a network of helpful alumni as they begin their job search.

“I’m hoping that people applying to Muhlenberg will know upfront that it’s not just a four year-involvement with the College,” he says. “It’s a lifetime embrace.”

To learn more about these strategic priorities, see pages 2-11. Donor profiles by Jeremy Fuchs '14.



MEET THE PRESIDENT

Kathleen Harring brings a deep history with the institution, a passion for the liberal arts and dedication to the Muhlenberg community to the position.

B Y M E G H A N K I T A





President Kathleen Haring began her role in an interim capacity in June 2019. When her official appointment was announced a year later, it was to a changed constituency.

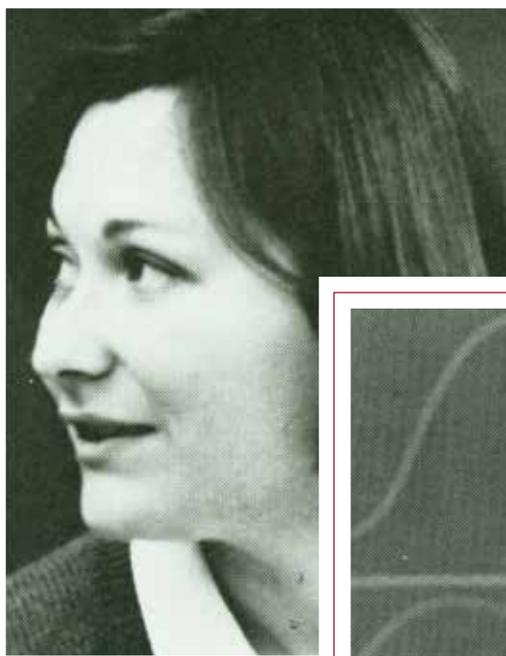
“We are dealing with a global pandemic, a racial reckoning and a great political divide,” Haring says. “All of these events have affected individuals in our community in different ways, but they all deeply affect our collective community.”

Haring, the 13th president of Muhlenberg, has faced choices none of her predecessors had to make: How can the College protect the health of its community and its neighbors without making the Muhlenberg experience unrecognizable from what it was before COVID? What are the best ways to support a more-diverse-than-ever student body as acts of hatred against different marginalized groups surge across the country? How can the College promote the uptake of new, life-saving vaccines in a society rife with fear and misinformation?

Beneath the challenges 2020 introduced are ones that existed pre-pandemic. For years, higher ed professionals have been hand-wringing about the 2025 “enrollment cliff,” when a steep decline in the number of 18-year-olds graduating from northeastern high schools will mean a much smaller pool for northeastern colleges and universities to recruit from. A segment of the American population already questioned the value of higher education generally and the value of a liberal arts education more specifically.

But the value of a liberal arts education is, in part, that it develops the ability to comprehend and work toward solving complex problems. And Haring, a graduate of a small, liberal arts college herself, has spent her entire career teaching and promoting this multidisciplinary, expansive mode of education. She brings the same liberal-arts sensibilities to her tenure as president, and that has enabled her to lead effectively in uncertain times.

“When the opportunity arose for us to seek the next president to lead this wonderful institution, we found that leader prepared and ready to accept the challenge right here in our own community,” says Board of Trustees Chair Richard Crist Jr. ’77 P’05 P’09. “In short order, President Haring’s understanding of Muhlenberg’s unique campus culture, and her ability to move both the College and the community forward in unison, quickly demonstrated to the Board of Trustees that we had the right leader.”



Kathleen Haring teaching in 1986 (left) and 1990 (below), when she was an assistant professor of psychology



A Deep History With the College

Haring grew up in a small town in Schuylkill County, about an hour and 20 minutes away from Muhlenberg. She had relatives in Allentown, the “big city” where her family would go school shopping each year. Her father took a year of premed classes at Muhlenberg before attending Temple Medical School. For her own undergraduate education, Haring chose Franklin & Marshall College, where she studied psychology. She completed a year-long research project with a faculty mentor, and when she arrived at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill for graduate school, she realized the uniqueness of her experience.

“None of my peers in my cohort did that. I had far more research experience than any of them,” she says. “And it really was due to being at a small liberal arts college where faculty worked with students on research.”

“When the opportunity arose for us to seek the next president to lead this wonderful institution, we found that leader prepared and ready to accept the challenge right here in our own community.”

— Board of Trustees Chair Richard Crist Jr. '77 P'05 P'09

As a grad student, Haring discovered a passion for teaching. She tried to emulate her undergraduate professors: favoring discussions over lectures, collaborating with undergraduate researchers in her advisor's lab. After earning her Ph.D. in social psychology, with a minor in quantitative psychology, she applied for faculty positions at small liberal arts colleges, and accepted one at Muhlenberg.

She joined the College as an assistant professor of psychology in 1984. She started out teaching introductory and statistics courses and went on to add classes in social psychology, the psychology of groups, health psychology, the psychology of women and gender and other special topics courses.

In 1993, Haring, an associate professor at the time, took over as chair of the Department of Psychology, a position she would hold through 2005. During her tenure, the department revamped its curriculum and hired a number of new faculty in response to a surge of interest in psychology among students.

“The new faculty we hired, many of whom are still here, were individuals who came in with different teaching strengths, different ideas and different types of research that really engaged the students,” she says. “When I started out in 1984, not as many faculty in the department were actively engaged in scholarship. Now, conducting research is so much a part of the student experience because the faculty are so creative and productive and our students ask such interesting research questions.”

Around the same time she became chair, Haring began a long-term research partnership with Professor of Psychology Laura Edelman. Following a sabbatical in the fall of 1992, Haring presented her work on social categorization and intergroup conflict to colleagues. Edelman, a cognitive psychologist who specializes in perception, approached Haring afterward to say that their work had many interesting intersections and to suggest a collaboration. Over the years, Haring and Edelman have co-authored three papers, given at least 20 presentations and mentored dozens of students.

“I have lots of ideas but am very disorganized. Kathy is very organized and very driven,” Edelman says. “We have

presented so often together that at one workshop, I overheard a member of the audience note that we were so familiar with each other's behavior that we automatically slid between speaking and letting the other person speak, taking the lead or stepping back. We have always had fun and we mesh extremely well.”

In 1995, Haring and then-Professor of French Kathryn Wixon co-founded, with colleagues from across campus, the Faculty Center for Teaching, now known as the Muhlenberg Center for Teaching and Learning. Haring co-directed the center with Wixon until 2006 and directed it solo the following year. Both educators had previously served on a teaching and learning group that planned summer faculty development programs and were interested in creating a center that provided such opportunities throughout the year.

“Thinking about faculty development in the terms of how individuals learn or how students learn is directly related to psychology and the psychology of learning,” Haring says. “The connection for me was very direct.”

In 1999, Haring became a full professor. The following year, she shepherded her department's move from the building now known as Walson Hall to the newly constructed Moyer Hall. During the planning phases, Haring collaborated with College administrators and staff as well as the architects to ensure that psychology's new home would have space for meeting and collaboration (as Walson did) as well as state-of-the-art research facilities (which Walson did not).

“If you go over to Moyer, there's that area on the second floor that's right outside psychology, where there are tables and students hang out there and work and faculty are right there in their offices,” Haring says. “It was important for everybody in the department to keep that communal space for students.”

Teaching a Different Audience

Harring first took on an administrative role in 2006. Then-Provost Marjorie Hass created an associate dean for institutional assessment position in response to increasing standards for accreditation and assessment, and Harring says she was the only one to apply. She had been involved with a number of working groups on accreditation, so she had firsthand understanding of what would be required in this new position.

“It interested me because it involved bringing data together from all sorts of areas of the College to tell the story of Muhlenberg to the accreditors,” Harring says. “I’ve always viewed it that way: that it’s about telling our story in an empirically accurate and engaging manner.”

As associate dean for institutional assessment, Harring led the Muhlenberg group that was part of a multi-institutional grant from the Teagle Foundation to support assessment to strengthen senior-year experiences. As part of the grant, an assessment consultant conducted workshops for faculty and staff at each institution, and Harring says those workshops developed the College’s capacity to collect and use data to strengthen programs and the student experience.

“Kathy had an unusually rich grasp of the national higher education landscape and helped Muhlenberg stay engaged in what was happening beyond our own campus,” says Hass, who is now president of the Council of Independent Colleges. “As an early advocate for the importance of faculty development and assessment, she was an ideal person to invite into a leadership role.”

Harring continued teaching at least one class per year and working with Edelman and students on research even as she became dean of institutional assessment and academic planning in 2013. But in 2016, when she became vice president and dean of institutional effectiveness and planning and also filled the provost role in an interim capacity, she needed to step away from teaching.

“While I missed being in the classroom with students, it wasn’t so difficult because I viewed all of the work that I was doing, particularly in faculty and staff development and in

“Kathy had an unusually rich grasp of the national higher education landscape and helped Muhlenberg stay engaged in what was happening beyond our own campus. As an early advocate for the importance of faculty development and assessment, she was an ideal person to invite into a leadership role.”

— Former Provost Marjorie Hass

assessment, as teaching,” Harring says. “I was just teaching a different audience.”

As provost, a position she held from 2017 to 2019, Harring co-chaired the College’s strategic planning process with former President John Williams. In addition to helping assemble and edit the final plan, she developed and oversaw the community planning process, in which nearly 60 different groups (including students, faculty, staff, alumni, parents and friends and neighbors of the College) shared their thoughts on Muhlenberg and its future.

“It was incredibly helpful to hear perspectives from all campus stakeholders. Interestingly, there was not that much variability across the groups,” Harring says. “It really appeared that there was a lot of agreement on what our strengths, areas for improvement, opportunities and challenges were.”

Harring also created the associate provost for faculty & diversity initiatives position, now held by Brooke Vick, and oversaw the implementation of inclusive hiring practices for faculty. She collaborated with the Office of Advancement to secure funding for what would become the Faculty Rising Scholars Program to support faculty scholarship, one of the goals outlined in the strategic plan, and authored the proposal for the \$600,000 grant the College received from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in 2017. She oversaw the revision of the integrative learning curricular requirement, a cornerstone of the Muhlenberg experience detailed on page 10, as well as the initial planning phases of offering graduate degrees, another goal described in the strategic plan.

A Time of Great Change

Since Harring moved from the provost's office to the president's, the College announced the launch of its School of Graduate Studies and its first two master's degree programs (in applied analytics and organizational leadership). That announcement took place in early February 2020. When the first cohort of grad students began taking classes that fall, they were fully online instead of the planned hybrid model—but the launch proceeded, despite the pandemic.

So, too, did this November's public launch of *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg* (detailed in-depth on page 12), which began its quiet phase in 2018. Harring, Vice President for Advancement Rebekkah Brown '99 and the Board of Trustees debated whether to change course on the campaign as COVID hit. Other institutions were pausing their campaigns or choosing not to start them. Muhlenberg decided to proceed, Harring says, and the campaign, so far, has exceeded all expectations.

During Harring's tenure, the College has also been nationally recognized as a leader in digital pedagogy, thanks to the faculty development efforts that took place ahead of the Fall 2020 semester, and earned the 2020 Carnegie Community Engagement classification. Muhlenberg received its largest-ever gift from an individual, \$7.5 million, which enabled it to break ground on its first new building (see page 9) in 16 years. And the College recruited its most diverse first-year student and new faculty cohorts in its history.

Harring, who is the first woman president of the College, is also technically history-making. While she recognizes the significance, she knows that other women and individuals from under-represented populations who have been "firsts" in other capacities at the institution have paved the way for her.

"What it means to me is that it's incredibly important for us to have diversity and representation across all areas," she says. "Learning, working and playing with others who come from different backgrounds makes us better humans and a better community. We know that diverse groups make better decisions because they are analyzing multiple perspectives."

And the day-to-day decision-making required in a pandemic is significant, Harring says. Every plan she makes with senior staff requires a backup plan and, sometimes, a backup to the backup plan. The pandemic has been, and continues to be, a defining feature of her experience so far as president. Even her inau-

guration—see page 26—took place more than a year after the Board of Trustees announced her appointment to the role, and guests were required to mask indoors. Still, those in attendance celebrated her leadership so far and her vision for the future.

"In addition to [Harring's] superb intellect, her genuine passion, her devotion to the liberal arts environment and her exceptional experience, she possesses something else that I find essential but is often missing in a new president—she knows us, understands us, believes in us and loves us," says Curtis Dretsch, former professor of theatre and Harring's longtime colleague. "She will be an extraordinary leader during a time of great change."

These uncertain times have highlighted what is distinctive about the Muhlenberg experience, Harring says, and what the College needs to foster in order to weather the challenges, known and unknown, that lie ahead.

"My expectation is that there will be a very close integration of academic affairs and student affairs. Things that happen outside the classroom impact what happens inside the classroom and vice versa. Making sure we are providing students a holistic education means that the leaders in academic affairs and the leaders in student affairs, along with faculty and staff, are working closely together to support student success. I saw that integration deepen during the pandemic, and we have to continue that powerful, interconnected education," Harring says. "I truly believe that we need more Muhlenberg graduates, individuals positioned to lead and serve and change our world." 



Muhlenberg Inaugurates Its 13th President,

Kathleen Harring



In a ceremony held in Memorial Hall on Friday, November 12, Harring shared her vision for the future of the College.

By Meghan Kita

Photos by Kristi Morris/Littlewing





“President Harring has demonstrated her courage by successfully leading the College during a pandemic while maintaining our core values.”

— Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Melissa Falk '92



Almost a year and a half after the Board of Trustees named Kathleen Harring the 13th president of Muhlenberg College in June 2020, the celebration of her inauguration was finally able to take place on November 12 in Memorial Hall. After Board of Trustees Chair Richard Crist Jr. '77 P'05 P'09 opened the proceedings, five local politicians (including Harring's former student State Representative Mike Schlossberg '05) were the first individuals to address the audience. U.S. Representative Susan Wild was the last elected official to speak.

“I'm honored to be with all of you on this very momentous occasion, the inauguration of Dr. Kathleen Harring, Muhlenberg's 13th president and the first woman to ever hold the position,” Wild said. Applause interrupted her comments and echoed throughout the space.

The historic nature of Harring's appointment was one of the common themes in the 11 greetings that preceded Harring's introduction and investiture. Another was her dedication to the institution and to the liberal arts. She joined the College as a faculty member in the Department of Psychology in 1984 and served as department chair for 12 years before becoming an administrator. She was provost before she began her role

as president in an interim capacity in June 2019. (To read more about Harring's background and accomplishments, see “Meet the President,” page 20.)

Another theme was the extraordinary nature of Harring's tenure so far: “Even in the best of times, taking on the critical leadership role of college president is daunting. It typically requires belief and courage to move an organization to the next level,” said Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Melissa Falk '92. “With the added complexity and demand of a global pandemic, President Harring has proven her presidential mettle and demonstrated her courage by successfully leading the College during a pandemic all while maintaining our core values of the health and wellness of our community.”

Introducing Harring was Jay Lemons P'14, the president of Academic Search, Inc. and emeritus president of Susquehanna University. Crist conducted the installation of the president, placing the College's presidential medallion around Harring's neck. She received a standing ovation before addressing the crowd.

She began by thanking her family, the day's speakers and the attendees and acknowledging the women who paved the way for her to be the first female president of the College, including

Opposite, clockwise: Student delegates march in the procession, Harring addresses the crowd, the College's Chamber Singers, Student Body President Zaire Carter '22, guests in regalia applaud, State Representative Mike Schlossberg '05





“When you learn, work and play with people who are different from yourself, you deepen your capacity to understand the complexity of those wicked problems.”

— President Kathleen Harring



Clara Lane, the first Black student who enrolled in 1926 in a teaching certificate program; members of the first class of women who began as first-year students in 1957; and the first female provost, Marjorie Hass, who created the associate dean position in assessment and academic planning that was Harring’s first administrative appointment.

“These women, and many others, boldly and confidently blazed the trail for me,” Harring said. “I am indebted to them for leading the way with courage and conviction.”

She went on to describe her own educational journey, which began at a small liberal arts institution, and her deep belief that a liberal arts education equips its graduates to solve “wicked problems.”

“‘Wicked problems’ is a term formally coined by design theorists Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber in 1973 to highlight differences between technological and scientific problems and social policy problems. Developing a COVID vaccine is a scientific problem. Getting shots in arms? *That* is a wicked problem,” she said. “Wicked problems require knowledge and skills across disciplines. They present ongoing challenges, often have ambiguous causes and evolving consequences. Wicked problems involve multiple stakeholders with varying levels of power, all existing within an interdependent universe.”

She reflected on the richness of the Muhlenberg community and recognized some of its members for their commitment to solving a variety of “wicked problems.” She shared that these types of individuals are the rule and not the exception, that she is routinely encountering examples of the transformative power of the College’s liberal arts education on students and on alumni.

She then presented her vision for her time as president: “To make sure that a Muhlenberg education remains critically relevant to our students. To make sure that we recruit and support outstanding faculty. To make sure that we continually re-create the liberal arts for each generation that walks the paths of our beautiful campus.”

“How do we do that?” she continued. “We invest in our strengths—talented students, passionate professors who are exceptional scholars and mentors, and a community of care and compassion. We explore innovative and creative ways to re-invent the student experience. Ways that deeply value and centralize diversity—diversity of background, diversity of context and diversity of viewpoint. Because when you learn, work and play with people who are different from yourself, you deepen your capacity to understand the complexity of those wicked problems.” 

Opposite, clockwise: The inauguration stage, Harring at the reception, the Chamber Orchestra, students present their work and faculty host a panel during the Celebration of Muhlenberg Weekend, Dean of Admissions and Financial Aid Melissa Falk '92

Why I Believe in *Boundless*

I'm co-chairing my second Muhlenberg campaign because I value what Muhlenberg has always been and what it is becoming.

BY TAMMY BORMANN '83 P'16, AS TOLD TO MEGHAN KITA



Muhlenberg has become something much better even than when we were there. The institution has evolved, as every institution should. When people only think about what they knew 40 years ago, they miss everything that's going on now.

Still, Muhlenberg's core values haven't changed. When I think of what's distinctive about Muhlenberg, the one constant has been the centering of relationships—that relationships are the heart and soul of learning and creativity and innovation and leadership. An institution sets the conditions for the people within it, and Muhlenberg fosters an environment where relationships are an important part of learning.

That's why I love the place, and that's why the volunteer aspect of this campaign has mattered so much to me, because it's all relational. It's so consistent with what is one of the most distinctive aspects of Muhlenberg. We learn from each other's successes. We learn from each other's failures. We lift each other up. This has become a core aspect of Muhlenberg's institutional culture: collaboration instead of competition.

The *Boundless* campaign has two purposes. One is to raise money for the priorities the College has set for its future. The second is to welcome people back into the Muhlenberg community so they can be part of what the College is becoming. I think there are many people who feel strongly that the knowledge, leadership and skills they gained at the College have directly contributed to their lives and yet they have been disconnected from the current reality of the institution. When we introduce alumni to Muhlenberg's commitment to boundlessness, we are reaching out beyond our own boundaries to call the Muhlenberg family back to the institution as it continues to evolve and grow. I believe we've got to be invested in that, because if we believe the institution made a difference in our lives, what it becomes should also matter to us. 

In the last campaign, volunteers weren't part of the work of fundraising. [Vice President for Advancement Rebekkah Brown '99] had a very different vision for how volunteers were going to be involved this time. When she and [former President John Williams] met with [my husband, Mark Paris '80 P'16, and me] and asked us to do this, we felt there would be a real difference, and there has been.

The best part of the *Boundless* campaign for me has been connecting with alumni who haven't been back to campus. Many of them have a history of giving but haven't engaged in the here and now of Muhlenberg. I've been in the mix at Muhlenberg for a long time—I just retired from the Board of Trustees after 24 years—and I've loved the opportunity to be able to engage people with what is happening now. Often in campaigns, we are compelled to appeal to everybody's fond memories. Those are lovely, but that's not what Muhlenberg is now.

BOUNDLESS

THE CAMPAIGN FOR MUHLENBERG

“The liberal arts” is not a curriculum; *it’s a way of living.* And imparting the ability to transcend boundaries—to thrive in any situation, not just the ones you were trained for—is the core benefit of a Muhlenberg liberal arts education.



VISIT SITE

REDEFINING BOUNDLESS

Unlocking this opportunity for every student—in fact, *intensifying* Muhlenberg’s lasting impact on every student—requires expanded financial resources. It requires advancing the people, places and experiences that make up the essence of a Muhlenberg education.

It requires the \$111 million in resources that will be sought through *Boundless: The Campaign for Muhlenberg*.

This sweeping fundraising initiative hangs on one simple rationale: As never before, the world is boundless. So must our students be.

Join us at boundless.muhlenberg.edu.



PHOTO BY BILL KELLER