

DANA

# The Dana Interviewer Class of 2011

Interviews by  
First year Dana students:

FYS "The Wire: Representations of Inner  
City Life" with Dr. Mello  
and  
FYS "1968" with Dr. Pooley



# The Dana Interviewer

Featuring the Class of 2011

The Dana Scholars Program, made possible by the Charles A. Dana Foundation, acknowledges students who display academic potential, good character, integrity, and leadership ability through contributions both inside and outside of the classroom. Each summer, Muhlenberg College awards about thirty high school seniors with this honor, one of the most prestigious honors that the College offers.

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## ***FYS: The Wire: Representations of Inner City Life***

By: Kimberly Burke

In the Dana first year seminar, *The Wire: Representations of Inner City Life*, the students explored different ways in which America's inner cities are portrayed. The main focus of the course is looking at the HBO drama *The Wire* and its portrayal of inner city life in Baltimore. The students also looked at other representations, such as *Cop in the Hood*, *Gangster for a Day*, *The Wire: Urban Decay* and *American Television*, and many excerpts from *The Corner*, a book written by the creators of *The Wire*. In class, students discussed ideas generated from the various readings and episodes of *The Wire*. This class involves a lot of discussion, an open exchange of ideas and thoughts, where students build arguments and opinions about certain topics of inner city life, and sometimes life in general. The class is taught by Professor Brian Mello, who is constantly challenging the students to look at things in a different way. This seminar covers a wide range of topics from education to drug culture to policing, and each topic is explored through several different viewpoints. This class provides an excellent opportunity for students to take another look at society in America, and the issues that need to be solved to help the country and its cities.

## ***Dr. Mello***

By Nicole Cayer

This year, Dr. Brian Mello taught a Dana seminar for the first time. The course was entitled *The Wire: Representations of Inner City Life* and was inspired by the HBO series *The Wire*, which ran from 2002 to 2008. Throughout the seminar students watched episodes of the show and analyzed various texts whose themes coincided with what was presented on the screen. Dr. Mello felt that this particular topic was well suited for the Dana program because of its inherent themes. "Simon and Burns [the show's creators] wanted to inspire a broader conversation about the state of America's urban life, deindustrialization, and questions of race and poverty," he states. "It fits with the goals of the program. Even though the seminar was very much an academic enterprise, it is still rooted within a very real-world context...it had an easy translation into real world implications."

Dr. Mello had taught the course once before as a general FYS, but says that there were two differences this time around. The first difference is the content of the course itself. "I think I actually taught the course better this time. The readings paired up better with what I wanted to do with the show." He also noticed a difference in the students in the class. "From the Dana students there seemed to be more of a willingness to engage with the subject matter." He added that his favorite part about teaching the course this year was "the fact that students felt comfortable in pushing back against what I was saying. I was trying in many ways to be deliberately provocative, with the goal of inspiring some critical thinking. I think everyone rose to the challenge."

## ***The FYS 1968 and the Man Behind It: Dr. Pooley***

By: Elisabeth Guenette

If there is one year in history that people should know about, 1968 is it. It was the year of the assassinations of Martin Luther King Jr. and Robert Kennedy. It was the year of hippie countercultural groups, the civil rights movement, and the women's movement. It was the year of protests against the Vietnam War. It was a year of empowerment for college students, who made a difference in a national perspective. In learning about these events, this course improved students' cultural literacy while focusing on improving writing skills. In encouraging genuine yet civil disagreement, Dr. Pooley created an environment where students could become invested in issues that occurred over forty years ago, such as police riots and the right of the working class to harbor frustrations towards the rebellious college students. Unlike other seminars, 1968 was able to map the seminar into a calendar year in history with an almost one to one chronological flow. Unlike Dr. Pooley's previous seminar, *Whose Hemline is It Anyway: The Culture Wars in American Politics*, which merely touched on 1968, this course was able to go into detail, resulting in deeper understanding rather than knowledge that only skims the surface of such important events in our nation's history. Dr. Pooley's love for the subject matter rubbed off on us all as he laughed at lithographs from mai 68, the rebellion that occurred in France. Who knew history could be so amusing? Additionally, learning about a time in history that many of our professors and parents lived through added a whole other layer to the topic.

It is important to remember, however, that the material we covered was primarily fodder for ameliorating our writing skills. Dr. Pooley states that although it shouldn't necessarily be this way, "it's astonishing how much writing well is synonymous with success. Honing one's writing skills is more important than almost anything else." Throughout the semester, we wrote seven writing assignments (or eight, if you were an overachiever), and turned in five as part of our final portfolio. These assignments ranged from discussing the sexual revolution to comparing an image of Abbie Hoffman, a Yippie leader, to a photograph of our choice from the Muhlenberg 1968 yearbooks. Our final assignment was a research paper comparing a national event from 1968 to an event that occurred on the Muhlenberg campus within the same year. In doing this, we connected large-scale historical occurrences to their smaller counterparts to which we, as today's Muhlenberg students, could relate. Students could revise assignments an unlimited number of times before submitting their portfolio, exemplifying Dr. Pooley's philosophy that improvement is hindered when the first draft is the final draft.

It was evident to all that Dr. Pooley wanted his students to succeed and cared about what they had to say. He describes himself as "an advice giving machine. I have to contain myself." However, he was able to spare one last piece of advice for this year's senior Dana Scholars: "They should be far less nervous about what they're doing next year because what they're doing next year will almost certainly be different from what they're doing three years from now—one's twenties is a series of experiments and careers."

## ***Matt Polhemus: Going to China for Music and Science***

By: Adam Karp

To start off the discussion, I wanted to have some idea of the Dana program in general, and when I asked, Matt only had praise for it. It will “provoke you to think more intellectually,” Matt said, recalling experiences as varied as his First Year Seminar with Dr. Cragin on the French Revolution and his current Dana Forum research regarding the modern day and public perspectives of science fiction. In the meantime, he mentioned that he has been able to explore music, one of his passions, and will soon be participating in the States of China class with a hope of exploring the culture of Chinese music from a firsthand perspective. However, this class will also serve as a chance for him to become further ingrained in his primary fields, medicine and neuroscience. As he searches for medical schools in order to continue his education, Matt will be exploring Chinese medicine with the help of Dr. Teissere, the chair of the neuroscience department.

Matt is a neuroscience major with nothing but a love for his field of study. He adores the sciences in general, which probably explains his love of neuroscience, which he refers to as a “multidisciplinary” study that encompasses all of the major areas of science, especially biology and chemistry. Now that he has finished the requirements for the neuroscience major, Matt will be doing research next semester in Dr. Teissere’s lab regarding the GABA receptor and inhibiting neurons.

Aside from his many academic pursuits, Matt has participated in all sorts of activities on the side, with leadership positions in both the Delta Tau Delta fraternity and Student Council (President and Class Treasurer respectively). However, it was not until the end of his sophomore year that he managed to really get into the swing of college life and start to embrace the opportunities all around. Still, he has had the time to participate actively in all sorts of positions around the college and to be ready with a competitive resume to send off to the numerous medical schools he is looking at.

## ***David Gasalberti: A Dana Scholar’s Experiment in Excellence***

By: Matthew Bocchese

### **Abstract**

David Gasalberti believes that being a Dana means to show excellence in all aspects of life. His many awards and achievements show why he was chosen to be a Dana Associate. His strong academic record as well as extracurricular involvement has led to a fulfilling college career.

### **Introduction**

David is a biochemistry major and economics minor from Stirling, NJ. Most people in his position would set their sights on something simple, such as becoming a doctor, but David is not most people. He is contemplating earning a Ph.D. in addition to his M.D. from Drexel College of Medicine, of whose Early Assurance program he is currently a member.

## Methods

David showed what it means to be a Dana in and out of the classroom. He has always been very interested in research and the application of the principles and knowledge he learns in class. His favorite class was experimental biochemistry because of the independence and intellectual freedom he was granted in that class. When he was not doing schoolwork, David was an HIV counselor as well as a patient advocate at the Caring Place Family Health Center. He was also very active on campus as a member of the judicial panel, a student advisor, and a peer leader for a pre-orientation program.

## Results

David submitted his research from experimental biochemistry and won the prestigious Goldwater Award for his work on solving antibiotic synthesis pathways that occur in bacteria. He also has done research on volatile anesthetics through the National Institute for Health. David had a fulfilling career at Muhlenberg and learned that college, contrary to what he originally thought, is more than just a four-year bridge to medical school.

## Discussion

David exemplified the qualities that every Dana Scholar should try to attain. He learned to value his time at college and enjoy every day. He appreciated the opportunities given to him by being a part of the Dana Associates Program—especially that he was able to meet so many highly motivated individuals with diverse perspectives.

## ***J. Mathew Marini: Required to be Interesting***

By: Averill Morash



I sat down today to talk with Matt Marini, a personable and friendly Dana senior majoring in neuroscience and sociology, about his experience at Muhlenberg. In all that we talked about, Matt stressed the importance of being involved and being an active participant in your education by being motivated and curious. When I asked what Matt wished the legacy of his class would be, he said that he wanted to break down the notion that college is merely a means to an end. He highlighted the Dana collective as a way to dissolve this idea because it is a smaller group on campus and the older classes have a chance to

help the incoming generations turn their Muhlenberg experience from simply a stepping-stone into an opportunity to place their own stones.

Matt says the Dana program helped shape his experience because it pushed him to be curious and required him to be engaged. Like many Danas, Matt sought to bridge disciplines, and the Dana program helped him do that by helping him find and develop an interest in sociology, one of his two majors, as well as helping him set goals to be a deliberate learner.

For all his talk of being an active *student*, Matt is an equally involved member of the community outside of the classroom. In fact, his greatest memories are of the three times he volunteered to be a student advisor. He says it is in conversations with

previous advisees that he sees actual evidence of his influence, which he considers the greatest recognition.

In the near future Matt hopes to be an educator, perhaps for Teach for America or in Thailand, a country for which he has developed an interest. These goals are reflected in Matt's work on campus as a chemistry lab assistant and a student advisor. In the more distant future Matt sees himself in hospital administration. He laughs that that would be lots of paperwork, but points out that paper has meaning and power.

Matt's main advice to younger students is to be involved, take advantage of opportunities that come your way, and increase the level of campus involvement with, and dedication to, social issues. Matt is a great friend and advisor; I am so glad to have had him as my SA.

## ***Dani Zito: A Psychoanalysis of Satisfaction***

By: Olivia Scotti



Danielle Zito is a theater and psychology double major from Long Island who has dabbled in a variety of fields at Muhlenberg. Over the past four years, she has become a Sister in Phi Mu, a member of MTA, a psychology tutor, a tour guide, a campus delegate, a student advisor, an employee of the polling center, the Phone-a-Thon, and the admissions office, and a member of the Hillel Hiring Committee. Her favorite activity, however, has been her participation in the Girls Next Door a cappella group: "I really don't think I could have gotten through college without it. It keeps you sane."

Among her most memorable experiences were studying abroad at Queen Mary University of London and completing her internship at an alternative school on Long Island for adolescents with behavioral disorders, where she shadowed the school psychologist. Dani is so grateful for her internship, as well as for the rest of the opportunities provided by the Dana program: "It [the Dana Scholars program] pushed me to seek opportunities that I normally wouldn't (like the internship and mentorship), which gave me an advantage in the grad school application process. It also let me be more active on campus, like my participation in the Center for Ethics." After grad school, Dani would like "to pursue a doctorate in Psychology," and, ultimately, to "either become a practicing clinician or a school psychologist."

Looking back on her time at Muhlenberg, Dani has very specific advice for freshmen: "Don't take on too much. Do what really makes you happy, and still have time to just enjoy being a college student. You're only here for such a limited time." After discovering unexpected interests, like cultural anthropology, and reliable resources, such as her psychology advisor, Dr. Tjeltveit, Dani feels as though she has grown so much through her college experience: "I feel like I know who I am now, and I rarely ever feel self-conscious because I trust myself. I'm pretty much just honest and genuine. It's helped me to be so happy. It's just the best way to live."

## ***An Interview with DANA Scholar Rachel Gutman***

By: Kimberly Baker



It was a dark and stormy afternoon at Muhlenberg College.

The rendezvous was set for 1:30 p.m. sharp.

I reclined against the sofa, waiting for the suspect. I had only recently been assigned to the case. I was not sure what to expect of the meeting.

Five minutes passed. I situated my computer. A young woman entered the premises, looking around with mild uncertainty. I had come incognito and we had never met, so I called her name to see

if she would respond. It was her current alias; I knew no one in the organization would be foolish enough to reveal her real name.

“Rachel? Rachel Gutman?” She came towards me. “Have a seat,” I said. She sat. I was nervous, but I knew I could handle it.

“I’m sure you know why I’ve asked you here today?” She smiled confidently.

“Of course.”

I nodded. “So you’re willing to talk about—” I glanced around to make sure no one was listening “—the DANA program?” The famed DANA conspiracy was an oft-mentioned underground organization. I had heard fascinating stories about the intellectual elites that formed its ranks.

“I will tell you what I can,” she replied. I knew she would be punished if she revealed too much. I was still amazed that she had agreed to see me at all.

“Will you describe your FYS to me?” The DANA first year seminar was a secretive initiation ritual. I leaned in closer so as not to miss any details.

She touched her necklace, thinking back all the way to her first year in the organization.

“My FYS was called ‘To Hell and Back.’” I suppressed a gasp—it sounded like a particularly arduous initiation. “We studied Dante’s *Inferno*, and then used that as a lens to analyze other literature, like *A Clockwork Orange*.” I nodded in admiration.

“What assignments were you given once you made it through the initial stages?” I asked with interest.

“Now I’m studying psychology and English. I’ve taken a lot of courses in American literature and poetry.”

I typed a few frantic notes.

“Have you had any special assignments? Internships for the DANA organization, perhaps?”

She disclosed that she had been working for the multicultural center. This experience was reportedly beneficial, as it taught her what area in the large field of psychology appealed to her most. It gave her a chance to apply her studies in a real-world setting. She also informed me of her role in transmitting communications through the Muhlenberg radio station. She told me that not many people knew of the station, but that she had made many of her friends working there, and that it was a very rewarding

experience.

“What else can you tell me about your studies?” I probed.

“Being an English major is really good because it teaches you skills you can pretty much apply to anything, like analysis and how to be a strong writer.” I asked if she had taken any courses that were interesting outside of her major. “I’ve taken a few art classes, and some courses like Religions in India and Feminine in Southeast Asia that were interesting. That’s one good thing about Muhlenberg. You can take classes in all different areas.”

I typed these words fervently. Our time had almost run out. “Do you have any advice for incoming students?”

“Make sure you take at least one class for yourself each semester. It’s important to take the classes you want to take when you have the chance. Don’t take all GARs instead of the classes you really want—spread them out.”

“Well, thank you for your time,” I said. She secured her fedora firmly on her head and buttoned the last buttons of her trench coat.

“You’re welcome,” she replied. She turned, and I noticed a flash of blonde hair crowning her otherwise dark right temple. She left as surreptitiously as she had come, fading into the crowds, through the doors, and out of the building. She disappeared away into the mists of Muhlenberg.

## ***Margaret Bernhard***

By: John Chojnowski

She is just any other Dana scholar, a Dana scholar who goes by the name of Maggie. Does being a Dana scholar define her as person, one who is more motivated and studious than most, or is it that she defines the Dana scholar? Dana scholars are people whose favorite hobby is watching movies, favorite colors are yellow and red, favorite ice cream is moose tracks, and favorite place is the beach. Are these the things that make up what a Dana scholar is? In a way, yes, every Dana scholar is like this: an individual. A Dana scholar is a unique individual with special skills and a diverse background. For Maggie, her uniqueness comes not only from her favorite things but also from her time at Muhlenberg. She is a History and Communications double major, who has a fondness for helping people. She loves doing service work and volunteering her time. She is the president of APO, which is a community service consortium that helps kids in Allentown. She also has a job working at the nonprofit Civic Theater, which she got through her Dana internship. What makes Maggie special as a person is just one small piece of what, added together with all of the other Dana scholars, makes the program so special. Just as Maggie will be graduating at the end of this year, a whole new group of extraordinary individuals will be entering into the program as freshmen.

However, on a happier note in relation to Maggie's leaving of the Muhlenberg world, her graduation gift from her parents is a visit to Chile, her native country.

## ***19 Minutes: Getting to Know Rachel Albert***

By: Rebecca Golden



### Prologue:

No, this was not written by Jodi Picoult. If it were up to senior Rachel Albert, however, it would have been. The Ashland, Massachusetts resident loves to read, and Picoult is her favorite author. “I never go anywhere without a book,” Albert confirms. My Sister’s Keeper is her personal favorite.

Rachel is a media and communications and Spanish double major at Muhlenberg. Her favorite color is blue, and she has a fifteen year old sister. Her favorite movies are Gosford Park and How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days. Poised, full of wisdom, and ready to share her experiences at Muhlenberg during her senior Dana interview, it is hard to believe that Rachel came to Muhlenberg unsure of her goals and majors. “I chose Muhlenberg because I knew I wanted to go to a small liberal arts school,” she said, “Muhlenberg had great communications and business programs, which many others didn’t, and I liked that because I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do.”

### Chapter One: On Campus

True to Dana Associate fashion, Rachel has been actively engaged in the Muhlenberg community since she first arrived. She has worked at the circulation desk in the library for four years. Rachel is also a tour guide, a campus delegate, and a peer tutor for Spanish. “I’ve really enjoyed working with students one-on-one and helping them improve their Spanish and go over concepts,” Rachel reflected. “This is my second year as a tutor and it has been a great experience.” She was also the Vice President of the Communications Club from 2008-2009.

In the classroom, Rachel particularly enjoyed her Communications and Public Relations class, and her Gender, Communications, and Culture class. “We studied how gender was represented in movies, which was really interesting.”

Currently, Rachel is working on her honors communications seminar. She is comparing product placement in primetime TV with that in reality TV shows. Specifically, she will focus on Modern Family and Top Chef—Just Desserts. “I was proud and honored to be nominated and accepted into the honors seminar,” Rachel said, “It’s a great opportunity.”

### Chapter Two: Experiences as a Dana Associate

“Right now, we [seniors] are involved in the fall semester of the Dana Forum,” Rachel explained. In this classroom setting, professors from different fields talk to the Danas about the ways in which their field relates to this year’s Center for Ethics theme: Science and Sensibility. Rachel and her peers have formed groups to begin research on a topic in the spring semester. Her group will focus on food labeling and resulting consumer perception.

Rachel completed two Dana internships in her time at Muhlenberg. In the spring of her sophomore year, Rachel interned in Muhlenberg's public relations office. She found this internship to be very beneficial—"it was my first experience writing press releases and such," she commented. Currently, Rachel is interning with Senior Year Experience. As part of this internship, she recently created the popular Win Cash Contest program.

Over the summer, Rachel interned at a small PR agency. She found this to be one of her most valuable internship experiences. "This internship showed me that this is something I wanted to pursue," Rachel said, "It was a small agency so I got to do a lot of hands-on work. I had a very broad experience."

### Chapter 3: A Special Muhlenberg Experience:

This past spring semester, Rachel studied abroad in Seville, Spain. She completed a full immersion experience by living with a host family, signing a contract in which she promised to speak only Spanish, and taking courses in art history and Spanish classes such as Spanish cinema.

"Studying abroad was an amazing experience," Rachel said, "I loved being able to experience another culture. It was so interesting to live with another family, and it was a great chance for me to become more independent and practice Spanish."

Rachel chose to live in Seville because of its rich culture, historical significance, and abundance of traditions. While there, she was able to celebrate two of Spain's major holidays: Semana Santa (Holy week) and Fería. Rachel also got to travel outside of Seville to places such as Barcelona, Madrid, Cordoba, Malaga, Portugal, and Morocco. She even got to try ham for the first time, a feat she says she never would have accomplished at home.

### Epilogue: Life After Muhlenberg and Parting Wisdom:

After graduating from Muhlenberg, Rachel hopes to find a job in public relations at a PR agency with multiple clients. She also hopes to work with some sort of company by doing in-house public relations work. "I hope whatever job I have will allow me to use my Spanish, either with a client or maybe for a non-profit organization."

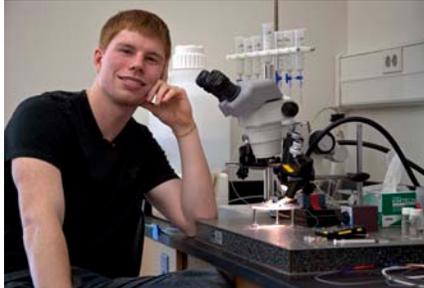
Rachel urges current Muhlenberg students to take advantage of all the opportunities the school has to offer. "Attend all of the different forums and speakers' presentations," she advised, "You have the chance to hear from a lot of renowned speakers for free. Also, study abroad if you can. Life at Muhlenberg goes by really fast...I can still picture everything from freshman year, but it feels far away at the same time."

Though my story on Rachel Albert ends here, it is clear to me that this talented young woman's story is truly just beginning. Good luck, Rachel!

## 217: The Room of the Read and Skip Adventure

*(a.k.a. Read Two Words, Skip Seventeen Words, and Repeat to Obtain a Paragraph on the Dana Jason Boulter OR Read the Whole Thing for a Fairy Tale about the Prince Jason Boulter)*

By: Nathan Frick



As the peaceful summer slowly faded into the chilly season of harvest, a horrendous evil entity began to stir; **only ginger** grew in the fields that autumn, an omen of the impending adventure. Jason, the dashing red-headed prince **of the** kingdom of Muhlenberg summoned the Dana family—renowned for both their wisdom and prophetic powers—and the **senior Danas**, the wisest and most magical of the family, interpreted the strange omen and foresaw the near future. **Jason Boulter** would need to leave his princely position and search the land for the Sage of Light who **was set** firmly against all evil and possessed the magical weapon needed for the kingdom to escape certain doom. **Apart from** the Dana family, Jason contemplated his destiny and knew that he must accept the perilous quest while **the others** in his family watched over the kingdom. He quickly gathered supplies and snuck out that very night **since the** kind king and queen would no doubt interfere to keep him safe if he left at the **beginning of** the next day. With sword in hand, Jason began his search in Trumbower Forest where he encountered **his first** of many trials: the Sphinx. “Answer me this,” said the Sphinx, flashing her claws, “What spends one **year at** four legs, many months at two, and numerous days at three?” Perplexed, Jason repeatedly muttered, “Oh my **Muhlenberg.**” **Fortunately**, the prince eventually thought of the correct answer. “Sphinx, you almost had me stumped. Is it man?” **he managed** to bravely ask as the Sphinx, sure of her victory, ominously sharpened all her claws, forcing Jason **to utilize** every ounce of courage not to flee her presence. “Correct,” sighed the disappointed Sphinx, “and because of **this difference** between you and so many others who have either guessed incorrectly or fled, I will help you **to become** the hero Muhlenberg needs by giving you the gift of information. The Sage that you seek is **a very** difficult person to find due to various magical defenses that he has surrounding himself. I was both **involved and** essential in the castings of these defenses, allowing me to sense where this magic is hiding my **successful student.**” “Wait, you taught the Sage? Then could you tell me of the weapon I need?” Jason asked. “**When he** deems you worthy, the Sage will grant you the weapon for which you search. When all hope **leaves Muhlenberg**, you shall restore peace and goodness throughout the land.” Jason turned to leave. “Wait! I know that **he will** be impressed with the cunning and bravery you have shown in my fearsome presence today, so I **have taken** one of my claws as a token to be worn, proving your intelligence and protecting you from **a total** of forty-four and a half of the Sage’s forty-five deadly magical traps.” Suddenly, the Sphinx vanished. “Why **of forty-five** traps?” wondered Jason as he exited the forest. “Why not a more magically potent number like seventy-seven **and a** seventh?” As Jason traversed over Haas Plains, an ancient witch teleported him to her cottage. “My other **half credits** you with the defeat of the troublesome Sphinx,” croaked an old warlock when Jason stirred from

unconsciousness. **Partially due** to the strange sight of an elderly magical couple holding hands and chuckling darkly and partially due **to the** gag in his mouth, Jason didn't deny the warlock's statement. "I knew because of the claw! Now **research opportunities** will abound in our study of the effects of a hero diet on our squirrel pets! All **made available** by you, the Sphinx slayer and true hero found on Haas Plains!" the witch babbled excitedly. "Only **by being** extremely selective with their diet will our squirrels become a fearful squirrel army! We tried feeding them **a Dana** some years ago, but eating him just made them all see visions of some trippy Acorn Mountain. **Last summer**, we fed them the famed Shankweiler werewolf killer in order to get only certain desirable traits like, **for example**, extreme strength." Though tied up, Jason began trying to loosen the coarse ropes holding him captive, and **he actually** began to make some progress as the witch continued to ramble. When he freed himself, the couple **stayed at** a distance due to Jason's now brandished sword. "Today won't be when I die! I've come from **Muhlenberg** to find the Sage of Light and obtain a weapon that will save my kingdom! The evil won't **continue his** reign of terror over Muhlenberg and I will destroy all evil! I will now stop your horrid **research on** squirrel diets by slaying you! KYYYYYYAAAHHHH!!!!" With a yell, Jason leapt at the witch and impaled her. **Identifying a** true hero worthy of the magical weapon, the old warlock transformed into a glowing old warlock. Dispelling **specific binding** enchantments, the warlock changed the witch into a beautiful—and unharmed—princess. "She was my hero information **receptor. Though** I could not leave this cottage protected by forty-five magical defenses, she could." Jason now realized that **he never** was going to be fed to squirrels because this was the illustrious Sage of Light who had **studied abroad**, been trained by the Sphinx, and been waiting for a true hero. The princess then chimed in, "**He plans** on only giving the magical weapon to one worthy of wielding it. I learned that you planned **on journeying** to find the Sage, and as his information gatherer, I became very interested and thus followed you **to South** Trumbower Forest where I overheard your conversation with the Sphinx. Recognizing your potential, I quickly teleported to **Africa after** seeing her give you the claw in order to prepare the last half test: the coarse ropes." "**Leaving Muhlenberg** must have been difficult, but your harrowing experiences have made you worthy of wielding the weapon needed **in order** to rid the evil from Muhlenberg," the Sage of Light said after the princess's spiel. "I used **to research** the effects of both hair color and music on the growth of an evil monster I named **HIV. Afterwards**, I concluded that red hair attracts evil beings while a song called *The Alma Mater* repels them." "**He plans** to use this knowledge to defeat the evil that threatens the kingdom of Muhlenberg, and I plan **on attending** this beast's downfall," declared the princess. "The weapon is really two items: first let's go to the **Medical School** in order to obtain some black hair dye and then we are off to the Musical Academy **to study The Alma Mater**," explained the Sage of Light. "The black hair dye should be located in the **diagnostics and** laboratory section of the Medical School. If not, it could possibly be in the dilapidated ward of **neurosurgery. In** the Musical Academy, we need to find and teach you *The Alma Mater*, from the beginning to **the end**, so that you can defeat the evil beast and end his dreadful reign of terror, therefore saving **both Muhlenberg** and ultimately the world!" With the end of his arduous quest in sight, Jason, the beautiful princess, **and the** Sage of Light traveled to both the Medical School and the Musical Academy where they used a **Dana program** to hack past the security systems. They

eventually found both the hair dye and the song, which **allowed Jason**, now the prince with black hair, to repel the evil forces threatening the kingdom of Muhlenberg and **to flourish** in the future with his newfound hero status. With the evil vanquished, Jason married the princess and **during his** marital life, he raised three red-headed children, making sure to quickly dye their hair black. During their **college experience**, they learned *The Alma Mater* and grew up to be the next generation of successful Muhlenberg defenders. **The end.**

**Actual Paragraph: As the only ginger of the senior Danas, Jason Boulter was set apart from the others since the beginning of his first year at Muhlenberg. Fortunately, he managed to utilize this difference to become a very involved and successful student. When he leaves Muhlenberg, he will have taken a total of forty-five and a half credits, partially due to the research opportunities made available by being a Dana. Last summer, for example, he actually stayed at Muhlenberg to continue his research on identifying a specific binding receptor. Though he never studied abroad, he plans on journeying to South Africa after leaving Muhlenberg in order to research HIV. Afterwards, he plans on attending medical school to study diagnostics and neurosurgery. In the end, both Muhlenberg and the Dana program allowed Jason to flourish during his college experience. The end.**

## **Robert Torphy**

By: Gabriela Contino



What do the following things have in common: biochemistry, All American, Elite 88 Award, mice, ornithology, and surgery? The answer is simple. These are all things that Dana Scholar senior Robert Torphy has conquered. In his sophomore year, he competed in the National Championships for track and field, and his distance medley relay team became fourth in the nation, earning them the title of All American. In the same year, Bobby was named an Academic All American, and received that honor again his junior year. As if his position as a scholar athlete needed affirmation, Bobby Torphy made Muhlenberg College history when he became the only Mule to have won the Elite 88 Award twice. This award is given to the student-athlete with the highest grade point average at one of NCAA's 88 championships.

When not racing, Bobby is also very busy academically as a biochemistry major on the pre-medical track. He not only excels in his classes, but also does a lot of research. The summer before his sophomore year, he did ornithology research dissecting the digestive tracks of birds. He also had an internship at the Lehigh Valley Hospital, where he was able to scrub in on surgeries for two months. The summer before his senior year, he also participated in very interesting research through the National Institute of Health in North Carolina. This research involved studying recovery

rate after heart attacks by simulating heart attacks in mice.

Bobby was also a learning assistant for organic chemistry and is a tutor in the writing center. His two favorite classes while at Muhlenberg have been Sculpture and Experimental Biochemistry. He says Experimental Biochemistry was his hardest class but the best because he was able to design his own experiments. Bobby likes the Dana Scholars program because it forces you to try out new things and think in new ways. Bobby plans to attend medical school after graduation.

## ***F(x) = Kenneth Boyle Solved***

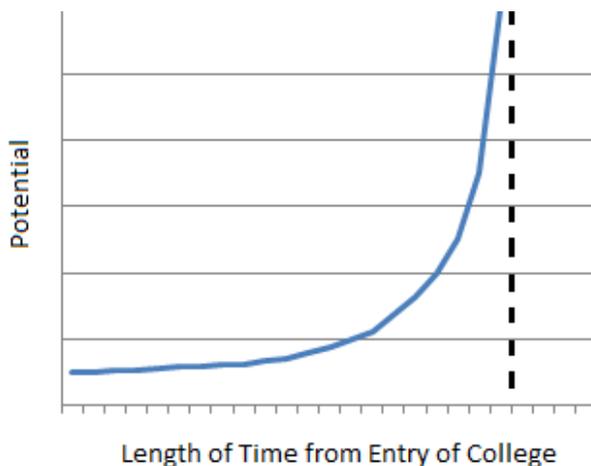
By Andrea Rommal

Read the description below to learn how to approach the following function.

$F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  is a complex function. He is a math major with a computer science minor. Since he was a freshman in college,  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  has not deviated from these two focuses, although he struggled to decide which to major and minor in respectively. In high school, he was interested in theatre but did not pursue it in college both because of lack of time and incomplete dedication to the arts. Instead, he fell head first into the world of mathematics and computers to fill his time with studying and games.  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  has applications in solving other functions. He is a calculus tutor and from this experience has learned that he enjoys instructing others and is motivated by seeing his pupils finally understand a concept.  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  feels that majoring in mathematics opens up many opportunities to contribute to society – one of his life goals. Although  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  is heading toward graduate school upon leaving Muhlenberg, his path is undefined afterward.

Answer these questions about the equation  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$ :

Identify the limit of  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  at the point of graduation from the graph given.



The rapid increase in potential as  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  approaches the asymptote favorably foreshadows his future, but symbolically reflects his uncertainty.

$F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  is keeping his options open for graduate school and beyond. He has not settled into one career path yet and takes things one step at a time (for now, applying for and deciding on a graduate school). As is characteristic of a DANA scholar,  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  started out with high potential which grew due

to support from the program. He enjoys math for its own sake, not just as a pathway to

a career, so he hopes to “find a job I’ll enjoy and won’t have to turn into a workaholic.” He entertains the possibility of either teaching as a college professor or diving into practical application of his mathematical knowledge. Therefore, the limit of  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle after college}$  does not exist.

How can  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  be used to solve other problems?

Solving  $F(x) = \text{Kenneth Boyle}$  teaches us that in life one can “never expect what’s going to come at you, and that doesn’t mean just the bad things.” So, he gives advice to students and readers of this piece to “just enjoy life, enjoy college.”

## ***Jillian Bevacqua***

By: Sarah Chabolla



For the first time in a while Jillian Bevacqua is *being interviewed* rather than doing the interviewing. A media and communications major and aspiring journalist, Jillian is accustomed to interviewing others for pieces she is writing. From being editor of *The Muhlenberg Weekly* to writing freelance like she did this past summer, Jillian has had plenty of journalistic experience. Some of this experience comes from holding more than the required two Dana internships; she has worked at a local public relations firm in Allentown and, most excitingly, at the CNN studio in New York on Showbiz Tonight!

However, Jillian’s true passion lies in writing articles as a journalist. But, this past summer, while she was doing some freelance writing, Jillian encountered some slightly more serious, yet moving stories to write. She interviewed a woman with a two year old who is living with glioblastoma, a type of brain cancer. Jillian described the interview as a powerfully inspiring experience that made her realize that these are the types of articles she wants to write: those of the unsung heroes. I expect we will be seeing amazing things from Jillian in the near future...keep an eye out!

## ***Amanda Nocera***

By: Matt Dicken

Sitting cross-legged in the armchair across from me, Amanda Nocera doesn’t have much of a resemblance to the timid and overwhelmed freshman version of herself she described to me. As an admittedly “very quiet” but good student at an all-girls high school, the transition to college life was somewhat of a culture shock for Amanda. However, she was excited for what was ahead of her and immediately began to explore potential options for her major. Although she came in undeclared and took communications and anthropology classes that appealed to her, she eventually went back to her love for art history, which she has chosen to double major in along with psychology. Now, the Amanda Nocera that met me in a stylish blue top, accessorized with a brown scarf and diamond earrings, seems confident in herself and ready to look

forward to her future.

Amanda has proven to herself in her campus life that she is inquisitive and easily interested, getting involved in many different activities at Muhlenberg and beyond. Beyond being a Dana, she is a member of Psi Chi, the international honor society of psychology, and of the campus's Art Association, where she works to promote art awareness and discusses a different artist with her peers each week. She completed both parts of her Dana internship with her work for the art gallery on campus and she is also an active volunteer at the Caring Place, where she hopes to work next semester. She highly recommends that every student have an experience studying abroad, as she enjoyed her own semester studying the social sciences at the University of Amsterdam. Looking forward to her future, she hopes to move back to New York City where she was born, although she thinks she might transfer boroughs, from her native Queens to Manhattan. Amanda has worked as a tour guide for New York's Museum of Natural History during every summer of college and hopes to continue to work within the field of museum education, either at the same museum or at a separate art museum. She used to see herself more as a classroom educator, but for the moment is fascinated by the museum environment. From the looks of it, she has certainly learned to take the advice she said she would give her freshmen self to "look beyond the moment and realize that there's more to life than what's going on right now. Don't stress out about the little things."

### ***Lisa Tenenhaus: The DANA Accountant***

By Evan Teitelbaum



If Lisa Tenenhaus could be an animal, she would be a bird. Why? So she could fly to Maastricht. It's not that she doesn't love Muhlenberg; it's that her best experience of college was studying in the Netherlands. As an accounting major, the study abroad program in Maastricht was a perfect fit for her. She loved everything about it, but the one thing that really stood out was how nice the people were. She is now going to be doing an independent study in economics with a professor famous throughout Muhlenberg, Dr. Laposata. While Lisa, like some people, still does not understand exactly what the DANA program is about, it has helped her get two internships at an accounting firm. She will be working for one of them, the Big Four accounting firm Ernst and Young, after she graduates from college.

Although this brings much for her to look forward to, she cannot help but look back at her great experiences at college, especially freshman year. Her favorite dorm, despite currently living in The Village, was Prosser. It may have been dirty, squishy, and noisy, but it still produced many fun times. All in all, Lisa has really enjoyed her time at Muhlenberg.

## ***Dylan High***

By: Rianna Sommers



Dylan High is a great example of the kind of young adult that the Dana program hopes to cultivate: bright, open-minded, and passionate. He is double majoring in music and anthropology, taking advantage of the opportunity to dive into different fields of study. In his junior year, Dylan's curiosity led him to Corvinus University in Hungary. While there, he took courses that focused on Hungary as well as Eastern Europe in general. Although he enjoyed those courses, what he liked most about his abroad experience was that he got to see how other people viewed the world and their perception of life. He described their point of view as being more realistic as compared to the American idealistic outlook that positive thinking and a bit of hard work is all you need to succeed. Dylan said that he loved the opportunity to explore a new culture. He found that his stay in Hungary gave him a new way of relating to people, which he said was one of the best things he took away from the experience.

For the Science and Sensibility Seminar, Dylan's group is working to pinpoint when the change in the perception of the nature of scientific learning takes place. They put together a questionnaire that targets high school and college students. The results will be processed through the Polling Center. Even though he is enjoying the work, he stated that in a way, it has started to seem like a class project, since it is a mandatory part of the Dana program. At the same time, however, Dylan is enjoying the opportunity to view the topic of science in a way that he wouldn't have before.

As with anything, the Dana program has its pros and cons. A large issue is the paradoxical nature of the program. A Dana is characterized as having a variety of interests and an ambition to pursue learning. However, the requirements are such that they can be seen as impeding the curious nature that is held in such high esteem since they have the potential to hold a student back. That said, the requirements can also be seen as beneficial because not only do they serve as a motivator for students in the program, but they also provide an opportunity to explore subject matter in depth as well as give the students opportunity to gain new experiences in otherwise uninvestigated territory.

## ***Alayna Martin***

By Jeffrey Robb

Alayna Martin shares many things in common with her favorite superhero, Batman. Not only do they both lack actual super powers, they've both traveled abroad. Alayna spent a semester in the Czech Republic, and strongly encourages everyone to go out and see the world. It's one thing to know that these places exist, but it's an entirely different experience to go out and see them for yourself. As a Film Studies major, she's spent a fair amount of time lugging around tons of gadgets to assist her in

many of her endeavors. Unfortunately, most of these devices do not fit into a utility belt, like the Caped Crusader's. She believes the Dana Program enriched her college career by assisting her financially while at the same time not requiring courses, enabling her to have an independent learning experience. It also introduced her to Dr. Francesca Coppa, her first year seminar professor and chair of the Film Studies Department, who inspired her to pursue a Film Studies major. If she was able to use a time machine like Batman has done on a couple of occasions, and go back in time to tell her freshman self one thing, it would be: Dye your hair blue now! It's going to be okay.

### ***In Retrospection: An interview of Dana Lauren Spirko***

By: Jordan Tepper



Lauren Spirko, a senior Dana Associate, has only one semester left in her undergraduate career. She grew and matured intellectually while attending Muhlenberg College. When she looks back in at her time in college she is amazed to see how much she and her Dana peers accomplished. Lauren entered college unsure of a possible major, but ready to explore. In high school, math came easy to her, but she was not particularly interested in the subject. However, after her first math course at college she fell in love with mathematics and knew it was to be her major. Throughout her years at Muhlenberg she became involved in many organizations including the College Republicans, the judicial panel, campus delegates, and the honors fraternity Pi Mu Epsilon. Reflecting on the best part of the Dana program, Lauren felt sure that it was the opportunity to partake in internships and independent studies with faculty. As a senior, she is working on her Dana forum. This experience really highlights how much was accomplished in her four years at Muhlenberg. Lauren has the opportunity to work with other Danas, with different majors, in order to collaborate and research on a single topic. Lauren's one regret of her whole career as a Dana was that she was unable to study abroad. She decided to be a double major in Math and Economics too late to go abroad. With this said, she advises any future students to get their academic requirements out of the way early, so they can study a wide variety of courses.

## ***Samuel Gottheim***

By: Jonathan Mackow



As a Dana Scholar senior, Samuel Gottheim has proven that he is an ambitious, driven, and engaged student. He is an individual motivated beyond accomplishing the required, and one who will willingly step into the unknown to discover himself. Unfortunately, after all his stepping, Sam has yet to find sure-footedness. Dental grad school, chemistry grad school, and taking time to visit another country to gain perspective are all options open to this senior, and while he isn't sure of his path, no way is the wrong way. What Sam does know is that he wants to apply to the JET program, (Japanese Exchange teaching), where he would teach English to kids as an assistant.

Over his four years at Muhlenberg, Sam hasn't locked himself in the library and studied nonstop; he belongs to the chemistry club, the fraternity  $\Delta T \Delta$ , and the philosophy club, which he founded. Additionally he partakes in the occasional in-class coo, and has liked the increased interactions with faculty because of the Dana program. Having become friends with many professors has made this senior's college life more enjoyable. His college career culminates with his senior year where he got the opportunity to reunite with the same Danas from freshman year. Sam believes it is "fun to reconnect," and to see "slightly different people coming back together." All in all Sam was cheerful when saying, "I like Muhlenberg."

## ***William Konicki***

By: Michael Quach



A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away, there was born a young boy by the name of William Konicki. Unfortunately for him, he was born in times of great turmoil. The empire was keen on his head, knowing it was full of great potential. As a teen, he was forced to steal away from his home planet and off into the great wide galaxies. He traveled for many days and nights, or perhaps just a few hours, until he reached the small planet of Muhlenbergia. On this planet lay a sacred

temple of learning, where young people, strong in the force as William was, could hone their intellectual prowess. Unbeknownst to William, the great high wizard of Muhlenbergia, Warlock Helm, had his eye on him. From the moment William had landed on the planet, worn from his journey away from his parents and through the cosmos, the council of Muhlenbergia had known he was special. The boy was welcomed to the hallowed halls of learning, taken in as one of their own, as a Mule.

Because of his great ability, the young William was chosen to be part of the few, the proud, the Danas. Being chosen as a Dana was no small feat. To be a Dana was to be part of a group that represented the most awesome, talented and good-looking people on the entire planet of Muhlenbergia. On Muhlenbergia, William decided that he would be a self-made man and decided to alter his name a little. At first, he wanted to be called Will I. Am, but that was trademarked, and so he settled on Bill.

Bill worked hard and long on the planet of Muhlenbergia, studying the ancient ways of creature oral science and sonic arts. That is, he was pre-dental and also interested in doing historic musicology. In concert with the mighty warlock of musical knowledge, Dr. Connor, he explored the meaning of music and what it truly is. He and Dr. Connor spent many a night in intellectual thought, stroking their long beards in the highest tower of the Center for the Arts.

In addition to his musical escapades, Bill worked with the supreme snail goddess Dr. Iyengar to co-author a discourse on the wiggly things of the animal kingdom. It's no wonder that he was famed for his skill in the goddess' special course of Invertebrate Zoology.

In the time that Bill was not engaged in the holy arts of learning, he fought to bring his fellow students together to learn the art of light-saber fencing. He was, alas, thwarted by the demons of chance. He also made it his own noble duty to settle disputes between the citizens of Prossero, La Villa, and Taylon, separate provinces in Muhlenbergia's residential districts. As an RA, Bill acted as a peacekeeper, using his light-saber skills to fight back any revolutions that arose among the intellectually restless students at Muhlenbergia. He was notably involved in great tensions between the music and theater zones of Muhlenbergia, concerned with funding for his beloved sector.

This, my friends, is where we join our hero, preparing to depart from Muhlenbergia, no longer the skinny teenage boy who arrived on Muhlenbergia, but instead, searching for a new planet to bring him new knowledge. As the scene settles, Bill stares into the distance, contemplating the ways to Dental planets and musical asteroids. He has interviewed at several different graduate planets and hopes to take charge his future, before it takes charge of him....

## ***Rachel Kitch***

Por: Tyler McKechnie



¿Conoces a Rachel Kitch? Si no, le debes conocer a ella muy pronto, porque estás dejando pasar una oportunidad muy rica. Rachel es muy simpática, y, primamente, estudia los estudios religiosos, pero también estudia el español como asignatura secundaria. Fuera de sus propias clases, Rachel trabaja como “ayudante de escribir” en unos seminarios de primer año, el cual le gustó mucho. El español juega un gran papel en el resto de su vida, también. En su tercer año en Muhlenberg, Rachel fue a Argentina para estudiar varias cosas, y en una de sus “clases”, algo de trabajo independiente, escribió un ensayo que duro unos veinticinco páginas, un proceso al cual que Rachel da mucho

crédito en ayudarla en ser buen ayudante de escribir. Con el programa de DANA, Rachel está llevando a cabo una investigación que se trata de las condiciones de las escuelas en las tres zonas de Allentown. En su tiempo libre, Rachel trabaja como voluntario en “The Caring Place”, una clínica en Allentown, donde ayuda a los clientes en el área de la salud de la mujer y la educación familiar. Rachel cree que los poderes que sean deben ajustar las servicias como las de “The Caring Place” para mejor servir sus clientes quienes no hablan inglés. Por este internado, a Rachel le ha interesado mucho la idea de trabajar – en pocos años - con la salud pública o con inmigrantes en el frente entre México y los EEUU o Guatemala para usar su español y trabajar directamente con los que no se pueden defender a ellos mismos. En el futuro distante, Rachel piense en posible trabajar fuera del país, donde puede ayudar a mucha gente y hablar español.

## ***Ethan Simon***

By: Josh Clement



Ethan Simon is a Dana Student graduating this year. At Muhlenberg, during his freshman and sophomore years, Ethan has been in the peer tutoring program, jazz band, and wind ensemble. He has also been the Youth and Prejudice conference discussion facilitator. Ethan is a double major student in philosophy and economics, with more of a focus on philosophy. He responded to the question of why he picked philosophy as a major with “I was told by people that I always smiled when I talked about philosophy.” Ethan had an extensive study abroad experience, doing an internship in Oman on consumer behavior for one semester with Dr.

Heitmann, and spending another semester abroad in Jordan. He describes study abroad as a necessary learning experience that teaches invaluable life lessons, even if things don’t work out quite as planned, like when Ethan was detained for a period of time in Syria. Ethan also had an important internship with the World Council Affairs of Philadelphia and was an education and programs research intern. During his internship, he spent a lot of time doing political research, conflict planning, and helped create a mock senate manual for teachers. Finally, Ethan is wrapping up his time here at Muhlenberg by presenting his mentorship research paper at the Kellogg-Ford Human Development Center Conference at Notre Dame on February 11-12.

## ***Alyssa Lucadamo***

By Erin Cummings



“No mockery in this world ever sounds to me so hollow as that of being told to cultivate happiness. What does such advice mean? Happiness is not a potato.” This is a quote from Alyssa Lucadamo’s favorite book, *Villette*, by Charlotte Bronte. And after a short session with Alyssa, it seems to me that she is not one to sit around and try to create happiness. Studying as an English major who hopes one day to teach in Pennsylvania, Alyssa said that her favorite college memory was her FYS class, “To Hell and Back”. The intensive writing and analysis of

Dante’s *Inferno* done in the class made her realize her passion for English and, later, helped her decide to choose it as her major. But her FYS also offered more to her than her major; it taught her how to be a great teacher. She said that she loved how her professor taught her that learning was one big puzzle that was never completed. She likes to remember how fun and interesting that idea made the class and hopes to apply it to her own teaching in the future. But Alyssa is more than just an aspiring teacher, she was also a part of the College Democrats, wrote for *Popped*, and loves the color red and mint chocolate chip ice cream. She also studied abroad in London at Queen Mary College. When I asked her what her favorite memory of her abroad experience was, her answer was almost poetic. It wasn’t a specific time. It was a place on the Millennium Bridge with the Globe Theater on one side and St. Paul’s Cathedral on the other. She felt like she was in the heart of the city. This answer is what’s going to get her places in life. She’s not remembering a killer party or a person she met, she is remembering an experience and a feeling. She didn’t wait around trying to cultivate happiness, but went out and found it.

## ***Brittany Sanford***

By: Cyrus Kuschner



Drawn to Muhlenberg’s friendly environment, Brittany Sanford started off her college career in a positive direction. Though her acceptance into Muhlenberg’s Drexel Program could have diminished her desire to excel, Brittany chose to continue her high school research experiences by starting research with Dr. Wightman her freshman year looking at the use of binding receptors in vulvar development, and has continued her study every college year since. Brittany’s love of teaching led her to tutor students in her major of biology and become a Learning

Assistant for multiple science courses, including her current position as an LA for Principles of Bio 2. Brittany was abroad during her junior year and studied in Copenhagen, a city she chose for its scientific significance and lack of a large language

barrier to inhibit immersion with inhabitants. Brittany has also been involved with a number of extracurricular activities, including Colleges against Cancer, and EnAcT, and participates in the Sustainable Living House on campus. Brittany's Muhlenberg experience has been improved by the Dana program, which has helped her obtain internships tailored to her medical interest, such as one at Lehigh Valley Hospital in the Maternal-Fetal Medicine Department. Additionally the Dana program gave a sense of connection to her other Dana comrades, bringing them together again during their last year for the senior forum

## ***Melissa Shapiro***

By: Alexander Jenkins



Melissa Shapiro is a biology major with a chemistry minor from Owings Mills, Maryland. After graduation she plans to go to medical school to become a physician, but she has yet to decide what specific field of medicine she wants to practice. She chose to be a biology major because of her great experience with the subject in high school. Melissa had an excellent biology teacher who got her interested in the material, specifically physiology and biological systems on a cellular level. She attributes her career choice to this early interest in life sciences. Melissa says that the best part about being a DANA scholar at Muhlenberg is that she had the opportunity to meet other driven individuals with differing perspectives. She also enjoyed the internship opportunities that the DANA program offered her, which she enjoyed because they allowed her to apply knowledge that she gained from her courses at Muhlenberg. In her time at Muhlenberg, Melissa also had the opportunity to do independent group research. When asked what advice she would give to Muhlenberg underclassmen, she said to "utilize the many resources available to Muhlenberg students." She also went on to mention that students should take advantage of academic workshops and tutoring services and also to participate in other activities or clubs that they are interested in, and of course, to take a break every now and then and just enjoy being a college student.

# Dana Research

So what are the requirements for the Dana program? First, incoming freshmen must complete the Dana First Year Seminar. Following this seminar the Dana students must complete 3.0 course units. Three options to fulfill the three course units include the Dana Directed Studies, a Dana Internship, and a Dana Forum, all worth 1.0 unit each. Though substitutions can be made for the first two, the Dana Forum – a capstone experience completed during senior year - is required.

## *Samantha Mangel '12 and Matt Marini '11*

By: Stefanie Cappucci

“We could take this to the Society for Neuroscience Symposium,” joked Samantha Mangel ('12). While Matt Marini ('11) laughed along, Dr. Gotthard didn't find the concept so humorous. It was a legitimate goal in her mind, one that with extensive work and some luck with funding and support could come to fruition. Eventually, Samantha and Matt, along with Dr. Gotthard and Caitlin Burgdorf ('12), were able to present their research regarding the effects of the beta-blocker propranolol on the traumatic memory of a rat model of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder). In a crowd of 30,000 people the young DANA scholars were two of less than 500 undergraduates in attendance. The research was performed largely during the 2009-2010 school year under the advising of Dr. Gotthard.

For Samantha, the DANA mentorship program allowed her to do research as sophomore. With the financial and moral support of Dr. Hashim, and thus the DANA program, Matt and Samantha were able to continue and finalize their research due to the promised funds. There was much work to be done, though, before they could fly to San Diego to present their research to esteemed professionals in the field of neuroscience. They had to submit an abstract, create a presentation, and successfully confront the neuroscience community regardless of their lack of experience. The DANA program gave Matt and Samantha the means to travel, and made the idea of presenting their own research a reasonable goal. The concept of mentorships and internships that lay the frameworks for the program also allowed both students to get involved in research they otherwise may have been left out of. However, their success truly comes from seizing opportunity and running with it. The process took over a year and a half to complete, and that was just the portion of research Matt and Samantha worked on together. Perseverance and determination were key; they may have been offered the opportunity, but only because of their own efforts were they able to achieve the level of success they did. Their research was accepted with a high level of interest by many individuals in attendance, some of whom Matt and Samantha had actually cited in their presentation. Both Samantha and Matt have goals of post-graduate studies. The opportunities awarded to them partially by the DANA program, but largely because of their own ambitions, have set them on a track of success in many of the future endeavors they choose to pursue.

## ***Brendan Phelan '12 and Jennifer Bleznak '12***

By: Ryan Barlotta and Nicole Pironi

One of the most important aspects of the Dana program is the program's research requirement. Many Danas are participating in fascinating research projects throughout the Muhlenberg campus. Brendan Phelan, a junior from Rhinebeck, New York, is one of many Dana Scholars enhancing their college experience through research. Brendan is a chemistry major with a minor in economics. His research falls under the category of organo-metallic chemistry. He spends six hours a week with Dr. Keane and three other students in the research group. Brendan explained that his research involves planning and setting up reactions so that he and his group can analyze the products. Brendan chose this specific research project because of its relation to the possible renovation of pharmaceutical production. After Muhlenberg, Brendan plans to go on to graduate school for chemical research.

Jennifer Bleznak, also a junior at Muhlenberg College and a member of the Dana program, is also taking full advantage of the wonderful research opportunities the Dana program has to offer. As an adolescent Jennifer underwent spinal surgery, which helped lead her to discover her passion for medicine. With this passion, Jennifer knew she wanted to be a science major at Muhlenberg, and was drawn to neuroscience for its interdisciplinary nature. Wasting no time, Jennifer began her first research project in August of 2009, during her sophomore year, which lasted until July of 2010, and was carried out with a physician from the local Lehigh Valley Hospital. In the summer of 2010, Jennifer began her second research project, while working in Dr. Sprayberry's neurophysiology lab. Not only has Jennifer found time to manage her rigorous course load and various research projects, but she has become very involved on campus as well. Her academic achievements and wide breadth of interests have allowed Jennifer to take on a position of head tutor in the college's Academic Resource Center, tutoring in not one, not two, but in three subjects! She is also the president of STAND, a genocide awareness group, is involved with Challah for Hunger, and is a campus tour guide.

So how exactly has the Dana program impacted these two? In Jennifer's words "The Dana program is an honor to be a part of. It has made me feel as though my hard work is recognized and I appreciate that. However, it also pushes me to constantly challenge myself to fulfill the qualities of being a Dana." These words, which are equally shared by Brendan, tell it all. The requirements of the Dana program have pushed the Danas to achieve more, and by placing them outside of the classroom, have provided them with essential hands-on experience that cannot be achieved in the classroom. As Brendan goes on to grad school, and Jennifer to medical school, it's clear that the Dana program has more than prepared them for the next step, and with their dedication, determination, and Muhlenberg education, there is no doubt that these two will succeed in their future endeavors, and continue to flourish in whatever they decide to pursue.

# Danas Abroad

## *Lisa Peterson and Louisa DeButts*

By: Cimarron Sharon and Andrew Hasenzahl



Lisa Peterson and Louisa DeButts are two junior Dana Scholars who studied abroad during the Fall 2010 semester. Lisa spent her semester in Spain, and Louisa spent her semester in Italy. Although they had different levels of understanding of the native languages, they both found it easy to adjust to the cultures. They both took classes within their majors while fulfilling their general academic requirements as well. For example, Lisa, a Spanish major, took sevillanos, which is a dance class very similar to flamenco. Both Lisa and Louisa

studied at universities much larger than Muhlenberg. Lisa stayed with a host family while Louisa stayed in a dormitory with 13 other students, 9 of who were also from Muhlenberg. While they were studying in their respective countries, they also visited other areas of the country, as well as other countries. The picture on the left is of the Villa Godolia, where Louisa stayed. The picture on the right is of St. Mark's Basilica in Venice.

Studying abroad is a wonderful experience that Muhlenberg students are lucky enough to have the opportunity to enjoy. It is important while studying abroad to have an open mind towards the culture differences. The people with whom both Lisa and Louisa interacted were very welcoming towards them. Both Lisa and Louisa loved the food in their respective countries, especially the gelato in Italy and the paella in Spain. Because of all the traveling on foot, Lisa said that she would never complain about walking the five minutes to the library again. These Dana Scholars had a great experience abroad, and they encourage other students to study abroad.



# Dana Alums

## ***Rebecca Haverson '10***

By: Rachel Larkey

Rebecca Haverson, a member of the graduating class of 2010, is already doing interesting things just a few months out of college. As a recipient of the prestigious Fulbright Scholarship, she will be spending time teaching English in Malaysia starting in January 2011. At Muhlenberg, Ms. Haverson was an international studies major, with a self-designed concentration in developing nations studies and a minor in dance, although this was not always the case. Haverson, who started as an intended English and dance double major, says that she is “interested in a lot of different things [such as] writing and editing and talking about the writing process.” She mentions that Muhlenberg gave her the opportunity to “pursue these interests... [through] tons of options.” In addition to her burgeoning interests for sociology and sustainable development practices, she also discovered her love for performing and choreography during her four years at Muhlenberg. As a former DANA Scholar, Ms. Haverson credits the program for allowing and encouraging her to pursue “a lot of great internships and research projects/mentorships” within her fields of interest. She says that her professors challenged her to approach her subjects of study not just individually but from an interdisciplinary perspective as well, and that this method of instruction helped her to become “a more complex thinker and writer.”

In addition to receiving her Fulbright Scholarship, which is a monumental accomplishment in and of itself, Ms. Haverson also considers her implementation of the opportunities and advantages offered by the College high on her list of achievements.

For DANA Scholars currently involved in navigating the often daunting journey that is undergraduate study, Ms. Haverson offers this advice: “Let yourself be uncomfortable, apply for things you don’t think you’re going to get, and find professors who challenge and inspire you and stick with them...even if it lowers your GPA.” She says of herself, “Things seem to go in phases for me...I take opportunities I find interesting as they come up and I try not to get attached to one idea of where I want to be or how I’ll get there.”

## ***Matt Balaban '10***

By: Michael Schramm

Matthew Balaban is from Wexford, PA, which is a suburb of Pittsburgh. He came to Muhlenberg from a larger high school, but the academically stimulating environment of Muhlenberg attracted him here. Before graduating in the spring of 2010, he was a Neuroscience and Music double major. Outside of his favorite classes of neuroscience, biochemistry, chemistry, and music, he was very involved on campus. He was an active member of EnAcT (Environmental Action Team) and LSM (Lutheran Student

Movement), and he was a peer tutor for both science and math. Aside from practicing the organ in the chapel, he also was in the college choir, the chamber singers, and harpsichord (the college orchestra). After graduation, he pursued a Fulbright Scholarship in Bangladesh. He is now teaching in a high school in an effort to become more engaged in the complicated world around him, and to gain a deeper understanding of the world around all of us. From the moment he set foot in Dr. Chi's Boundaries and Belonging First Year Seminar, his thirst for knowledge and understanding has taken him through a rigorous and fun four years at Muhlenberg to the jungles of Bangladesh.

## ***Sarah Illing '10***

By: Kathleen Rogers

Sarah Illing is a prime example of the ideal liberal arts student. A prominent goal of liberal arts colleges is to give students the opportunity to explore and experience a variety of disciplines in order to become a well-rounded, wise individual as opposed to a narrow-minded, knowledgeable sheep. When Sarah arrived at Muhlenberg in 2006, she was headed down the pre-med track, but as she challenged herself with a variety of courses and activities, including the required classes for her neuroscience major, her FYS, Other Bodies, Multicultural Psychology, voice lessons, and her involvement with multicultural life, she realized that there was more to medicine than nitty gritty science. She became more interested in the social and psychological aspects of human health. In pursuing these interests, she took advantage of all that Muhlenberg had to offer. Sarah was a writing tutor and a chemistry tutor; she worked on an independent study project about perceptions of community mental health at Caring Place Family Health Program, and participated in two alternative spring breaks to Prague and Washington, D.C. among so many other things. Through her experiences, Sarah gained priceless skills and wisdom that made her an expert at organization, teaching, challenging oversimplification, and understanding people at a deep level. After graduating last year, Sarah received a Fulbright Scholarship and is now working as one of sixteen English Teaching Assistants in Manizales, Colombia. Sarah is happy to say that Muhlenberg transformed her knowledge into wisdom, which can be applied in so many ways. No matter what path she chooses to take in life, her possibilities are endless because her undergraduate education prepared her for anything and everything. Sarah continues to keep in contact with her friends, teachers, and mentors at Muhlenberg, and she hopes to receive a visit from some of her fellow DANA graduates very soon.

## ***Chris Tarassoff '06***

By: Paul Stathis

Chris is a Muhlenberg alumnus and Dana Scholar. During his time at Muhlenberg, Chris double majored in biology and political science. He was also a TA for biology, a tutor and a member of the wind ensemble, College Republicans and ultimate frisbee team. Chris's Dana seminar, and one of his favorite classes, was Life in the City. He went on to do his internships, which were about molecular biology and the Chechen

Wars with Dr. Edwards and Dr. Hashim respectively. The autonomy and flexibility he was offered in the Dana Program was especially appealing to Chris. In his words, “the sky was the limit as to how ambitious I wanted to be on my projects.”

Since graduating, Chris has completed a Master's degree in public policy with emphasis on health care policy. He is currently attending Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and will graduate in May and receive his MD/PhD. Next year he will be working at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania in internal medicine. Last October, Chris married his wife, Erin, who is also an MD/PhD student. They recently bought a home in Philadelphia and are both very excited to move in. Chris loved his Muhlenberg experience, both academically and socially. He has kept in touch with many of his classmates, who he calls the best friends of his life.