

DANA

The Dana Interviewer

Class of 2014



The Dana Interviewer

Featuring the Class of 2014

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.

For more information, visit

<http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/academics/dana-scholars/>.

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Dr. Jeremy Teissere and Dr. Marcia Morgan

by Michael Schramm

When one thinks of the Dana Program at Muhlenberg College, many thoughts might come to mind: curious students engaged in interdisciplinary learning inside and outside the classroom, students expanding their horizons in every way possible, and students striving to shape the world around them with their own insights, to name a few. The faculty who are responsible for shepherding Danas along this path to enlightenment, if you will, are critical to the development of the intellectual curiosity common to all Danas. Of particular importance are the professors who instruct the Dana First Year Seminars. Drs. Marcia Morgan and Jeremy Teissere teach *The Politics of Memory and Other Bodies* respectively. The Dana Class of 2017 was the first to learn under this dynamic duo, whose collaborative efforts are obvious upon meeting the both of them.



The two courses touched on similar themes, such as embodied cognition and social implications, while dealing with dramatically different subject matters. *The Politics of Memory* investigated notions of collective memory, utilizing a vast array of materials—from literature to newspapers to cinema—to understand how societies remember events. Touching on well-known historical atrocities such as the Holocaust and Apartheid, Dr. Morgan and her students explored how tragedies of immense proportions are culturally remembered differently and why the process of cultural memorialization is as important as the event itself.

Dr. Teissere's *Other Bodies* focused on social conceptions of the human body. "The body is a social act," Dr. Teissere told us, and there are social norms that dictate certain standards. The class focused on the historical transformations of "bodily otherness" since the late 18th century, focusing first on human zoos and freak shows and gradually moving toward more model, less overt norms. People use their bodies in a performative manner, no matter the shape or size or emotional backing. Such performances have taken on different methods with different cultural meanings, but the act of performing itself is still integral to our lives.



While these two courses focus on dramatically different content, Drs. Morgan and Teissere embrace a similar teaching philosophy. Drs. Morgan and Teissere used a "scorched-earth policy" to impress upon their new students that despite their educational and social backgrounds, in the classroom they were all blank slates and intellectual equals. They encouraged them to view reading and writing as a form of thinking, not just as work to be accomplished. In addition, both professors sought to engage the Dana students as citizen scholars. The Danas were pushed to evaluate not just their own work but their peers' as well, so as to develop a stronger sense that intellectual curiosity involves a critical eye as well as an openness to new ideas.

Drs. Morgan and Teissere were obviously proud of their students and the work that they accomplished both inside and outside the classroom. Through their collaboration and commitment, these professors showed their students that intellectual curiosity, openness, and acceptance are important virtues to cultivate and maintain. The Dana Class of 2017 is in good hands.

Adam Karp

by Korrinne Yurick

Over his past four years at Muhlenberg College, Adam Karp has become a model Dana Scholar. The Dana Program is rooted in core values such as integrity, leadership, character, and above all, scholarship. Dana Scholars at Muhlenberg College emphasize interdisciplinary studies and engaged learning, and are student activists not only on campus, but also in the Allentown community. Adam Karp, originally from Springfield, New Jersey, is a neuroscience major and “informal minor” in Jewish Studies. While he spends many nights in research labs and takes challenging science courses in New Science, Adam also works closely with the Center For Ethics, is a vital member of the Hillel community, and enjoys immersing himself in philosophical discussions.



Adam chose Muhlenberg College over other institutions because of the outstanding science program, the caring community, and the invitation to be a Dana Scholar. Adam is currently on the pre-health track and is in the process of applying to medical schools for entry in the fall of 2014. When asked why neuroscience, Adam’s short response was, “I love the brain.” Adam finds the brain extremely fascinating and has devoted his undergraduate study to learning as much as possible about this amazingly complex organ. Adam also explained that neuroscience is a truly interdisciplinary major.

Adam has been involved with two research projects on campus—one with Dr. Williams and one with Dr. Rudski. In Dr. Williams’s lab, Adam works with flies on a research project he described as a computational model for fly visual behavior. With Dr. Rudski, Adam is working on a project called “Jewish Perspectives on Issues on Neuroethics and the Self.” In this project Adam is able to combine his love for science and for Jewish Studies into one project. The goal of Dr. Rudski’s research is to determine how and where Jewish ethics intersects with neuroethics and to enable Judaism to start responding to issues arising from neuroscientific advances.

Adam has gained many internship opportunities as a Dana Scholar. The summer after his sophomore year, Adam interned at NYC Columbia Medical Center in a cerebrovascular lab under Dr. E. Sander Connolly. He worked on starting a five-year outcomes study in order to examine how glycemic variability affects outcomes for patients with intracerebral hemorrhaging. This past summer, Adam interned in Boston at the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary in Dr. Daniel Lee’s lab. This project studied alternative models of auditory prosthetics by using optogenetics to stimulate the auditory context.

Adam describes the Dana Forum he is currently participating in as a time to geek out about a particular theme. This year, that topic is Sex, Ethics, and Pleasure Politics. Within the Forum, Adam and another Dana student, Elisabeth Guenette, are working with faculty advisors Dr. Jeremy Teissere and Dr. Cathy Ouellette. Their research project looks at how ideas of sexual pleasure are taboo in college culture.

Adam has loved his experience with the Dana Program: “It allows you to be in charge of your own learning. For me, the Dana Program has more cohesively allowed me to fully embrace what it means to be a scientist and become a peer to my professors.”

Averill Morash

by Megan Beispiel

Elizabeth Averill Morash, who prefers to go by Averill, is a computer science major with a double minor in creative writing and math. Upon graduation, Averill will be starting work at Google's New York City headquarters as a software engineer, a position in which she sees herself for the foreseeable future.

Averill's experience at Muhlenberg and beyond is as unique as she is, starting with her post-high school journey—which was a rather unconventional one.

Rather than immediately begin college, she decided to take a gap year. She left her hometown of

Bernardsville, New Jersey for Wellen, Germany, where she worked as an au pair for a couple with two young children.

When the time finally came to apply to schools, Averill became interested in Muhlenberg and her decision was swayed by her acceptance into the Dana Program. She explored a variety of interests in the early days of her 'Berg career, dabbling in the Emergency Medical Services and stage managing several Red Door shows. She considered becoming more involved with theatre but she soon found that her true talents lay in computer science. The necessary skills in that discipline came naturally to her. Averill saw that many students needed help in their computer science classes, so she consulted her professor and found a solution to the problem. In true enterprising Dana spirit, and still only a freshman, Averill started tutoring sessions for students in Computer Science I and II.

Later, in the fall of her junior year, Averill departed her home again to study abroad in Beijing, where she lived with a Chinese host family. The program she chose focused on ethnic identity and cultural studies. She attended school at the Minzu University of China, and took classes in ethnic diversity in China, religions of China, and ethnographic methods. Averill very much enjoyed her time abroad, as she was able to experience Chinese culture in a very hands-on way.

Averill's time in the Dana Program could not have been better spent. She had a fascinating and educational FYS, 1968, taught by Dr. Pooley. She enjoyed the subject matter, the instructor, and most of all, the friends she made in the class, who are her closest friends on campus. She was lucky enough to travel to D.C. with her FYS to attend Jon Stewart and Stephen Colbert's Rally to Restore Sanity and/or Fear, which fit very well with their class discussion of the protests of 1968.

The Dana Program, in Averill's words, gave her "an excuse to be intellectually curious." For one of her Dana mentorships, Averill worked with Professor Fadem in the physics department to develop a C++ program that numerically solved the two-body problem concerning planetary orbit. During her other Dana mentorship, this time with Professor Miller from the English department, she wrote a series of short stories about young children. Although Averill has filled the Dana Program requirements, she is doing two more mentorships in the spring semester of her senior year. Averill's experience with the Dana Program and the Dana students was a truly unforgettable one, as it gave her the opportunity to make close friends and work with students who are as active, engaged, and interesting as she is.



Dana Experiment I: Matthew Bocchese

by Becka Andranovich

Objective: To quantitatively learn more about the recently-accepted-to-medical-school biochemistry major from southern New Jersey, also a senior member of the Dana Program.

Procedure:

1. First Year Seminar - 1968: A seminar that included learning about some of Matthew's favorite music, including the Beatles and the Rolling Stones. Where he met good friends, had a fantastic time, and for which he would eventually become a writing tutor.
2. Extracurricular Activities: Served as president of the Catholic Campus Ministry, participated in Fridays at Phoebe's at the nursing home, volunteered at the hospice, is a tour guide, is a student advisor, and is an active participant in the Orientation Planning Committee.
3. Study Abroad: Studied abroad in Copenhagen for a semester. It was a difficult transition at first, but with a warm and welcoming host family with whom he is still in contact, he had an overall excellent experience. Studies there included interning at an actual hospital where he stitched and administered IVs, as well as taking courses on Nordic mythology.
4. Scientific Research: As an experimental biochemist, Bocchese does research on organometallics—meaning he makes metal complexes using organic synthesis.
5. Senior Seminar: Bocchese looks forward to the research aspect of the seminar, which will focus on Sex and the Sitcom. He enjoys being exposed to different ways of thinking in the forum.



Conclusion: Overall, Bocchese's four years at Muhlenberg College as a part of the Dana Program have been transformative. He has had four fulfilling and challenging years, and, as he said, "If you come here and don't change, you didn't go here." He keeps an open mind and finds something worthwhile in everything. As Bocchese so bluntly concluded, "I am a happy Dana."

Olivia Scotti

by Joseph Rorem

Senior Dana Scholar Olivia Scotti grew up in Richboro, Pennsylvania. Her double major in psychology and the Spanish language has some roots in her high school career, as she began her study of psych at this time. Also interested in theatre and singing, Muhlenberg's reputation as a strong school for performance was one of the reasons Olivia shed the moniker of whatever boring mascot her high school had and became a Mule forevermore.

Arriving bright-eyed and bushy-tailed on Muhlenberg's campus, Olivia expected that theatre would remain one of her primary focuses. However, she found that other aspects of campus life held her interest more strongly. For one, she found pleasure in focusing on 'Berg's academics. She declared her psych major as a freshman, and continues to enjoy the opportunities afforded by the department. She has been particularly impressed by how Muhlenberg facilitates independent student research.

Olivia has taken advantage of opportunities to follow her specific interests, and is currently preparing a thesis presentation on autism and its effects on development. She was also able to bring her psych interest to her senior Dana project, which will examine autism and sexuality. This project finds Olivia working with a group of Danas, some of whom have become some of her closest friends at 'Berg. In addition to diving into psychology at the college level, Olivia has pursued a major in Spanish. She spent last semester in Salamanca, Spain, a place she dreams of returning to after graduation day.

Outside of her academic work, Olivia joined 'Berg's all-female a cappella group, the Girls Next Door, as a freshman. This group introduced her to some of her best friends, from her first year all the way until now. Olivia has also been involved on campus as an RA: during her sophomore year, she worked as an RA in Martin Luther Hall.

Her advice to me, a young Dana, was to embrace the fact that I have the privilege of being part of a group of highly intelligent and motivated students. She advised me to remember that even though the most fun times will also come with argument and debate, both of these will help to make me a more well-rounded student and person.



Erin Cummings

by Lauren Kenney

Erin's journey through the Dana Program began in the First Year Seminar 1968. As a first year student, she soon experienced her overall favorite part of Muhlenberg: the "unparalleled" bonds between faculty and students. She felt especially connected to her psychology and media and communications professors, which led her to take additional classes in these academic areas. Soon enough, she was declaring a double major in both disciplines.

Throughout her four years here, Erin has been very involved in the Muhlenberg community! She has kept herself busy by being a tour guide, a peer tutor, a student-athlete mentor, a volunteer at the Office of Community Service, and a member of Alpha Phi Omega. During her junior year, Erin completed an internship with Youth Work Ireland (a national youth advocate program) while studying abroad in Dublin. She is also a member of the field hockey team.

Erin actually equates being a part of the Dana Program to being on a team. Concerning the program, she stated that it is "capping off the tail end of my college experience." She said that it was nice to be back with the other Danas in the senior seminar because she is able to see how each has grown intellectually throughout the past four years. Her Dana Forum project, "Sex and the Sitcom," is a study about sex humor and how it relates to anxiety issues and gender dynamics, using quantitative content analysis.

If Erin could give any advice to underclassmen Dana students she would tell them, "College is one of the most academically challenging periods in our lives. But that doesn't mean you need to live in four years of stress. Explore new things, join clubs, and have fun!" Following her own advice, Erin's methods of relaxation include reading, running, and the all-time college favorite, napping.

As for next year, her plans are not quite set in stone at this point. She has been accepted to the AmeriCorps program in Philadelphia where she would serve as a teacher assistant, helping with truancy issues. However, Erin is still considering the possibility of applying to graduate school. If she does decide to pursue a graduate degree, she asserts that the Dana Program will look great on her resume—especially because this year's Center for Ethics topic has allowed Erin to focus her project in the social sciences, where her strengths lie. Overall, she certainly has come a long way from being a freshman, newly arrived from Fort Washington, Pennsylvania. No matter what path she chooses to follow, Erin will undoubtedly continue to convey some of the most important merits of a Dana Scholar—passion and community engagement.



Jeffrey Robb

by Allysén Bay Merrill

Batman is arguably one of the most famous superheroes with no actual superpowers. He does not have supernatural abilities, but simply the drive, intellect, and resourcefulness, which he employs to fight evil. Similar to this famed man is Jeffrey Ellinger Robb, a senior Dana Scholar who has carved his path at Muhlenberg using no tricks or magical powers, but his own process of discovery in his impressive career thus far.

Jeffrey Robb, who is from Washington, D.C., is a theatre major with a dual concentration in acting and performance studies and a history minor. He is involved with Muhlenberg's hilarious sketch-comedy group Fun With Science as well as An Artist Collective, a group that explores multifaceted means of artistic expression. He starred in this year's Mainstage production of *The Winter's Tale* as Leontes, King of Sicily and in last year's *The Marriage of Figaro*. Jeffrey is also a Writing Assistant and a self-proclaimed comic nerd, and has coordinated the Red Door Play Festival for two years.



Last summer, Jeffrey interned on the set of *The Colbert Report*, assisting production with various tasks in whatever way he could. He gleaned heaps of knowledge from the experience; not only did he have the chance to observe the incomparable entity that is Stephen Colbert, whom Jeffrey describes as remarkable, but he was able to deduce what he enjoyed and disliked about television production. He's decided that he will steer away from the television production route for now, but Jeffrey said the experience enriched his work at Muhlenberg in that it involved comedy and arts production. This year he is doing an independent study with Jim Peck on Buffy the Vampire Slayer. Needless to say, for an avid comic fan like Jeffrey, this has been another riveting experience so far—filled with all the supernatural and wonderful things the world of Joss Whedon has to offer.

When Jeffrey is asked to reflect on his experience with the Dana Program, he concludes that without it, he would not have necessarily thought to make all of his Colbert-Buffy-tastic dreams a reality. He says he is “very grateful that the Dana Program has given me the motivation and reason to pursue this as an option. I'm not sure I would have actively pursued such a study on such a personal level with a professor. It has helped me claim initiative for myself and seek out opportunities that maybe I wouldn't have otherwise.”

And now the resemblance is clear. Like Batman, Jeffrey takes what he is given and turns it into a means for achieving his goals. Whether it be his diligence with regard to his theatre training at Muhlenberg or his dedication to one of his many extracurricular activities, Jeffrey did not wait to be given anything, or dunked in a container of radioactive waste, if you will. Instead he took the initiative to succeed, just like Batman.

Note: Batman is Jeffrey's favorite superhero, as indicated by the metaphor used for this interview.

Cimarron Sharon

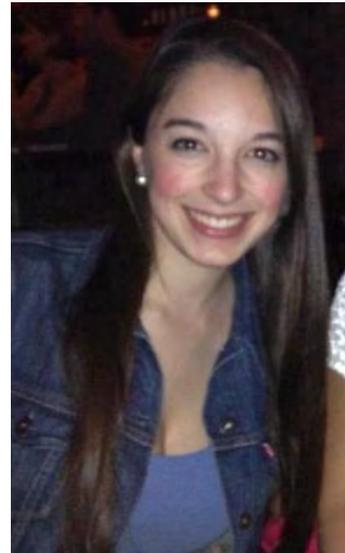
by Emily Kosinski

Cimarron Sharon, a senior Dana in the graduating Class of 2014, is a neuroscience major hailing from Princeton, New Jersey. Upon graduating high school, Cimarron chose to take a gap year in order to pursue her studies of the German language. This is a passion that Cimarron has continued to explore throughout her time at Muhlenberg, and she will graduate with a minor in German in addition to her major in neuroscience.

During her freshman year, Cimarron became involved with Muhlenberg's Environmental Action Team (EnAct). She was interested in taking part in the college's sustainability efforts, and became an active member of the organization. Now, as a senior, Cimarron is the president of EnAct. Cimarron is also a head tutor in Muhlenberg's Peer Tutoring program.

This past summer, Cimarron was involved in a summer research project at Muhlenberg. Under the guidance of Dr. Gotthard in the neuroscience department, she conducted a study titled "The Effects of Cycloheximide and Extinction on Memories Linked by Sensory Preconditioning and a Predator-Based Fear Response." Cimarron also carried out a Dana mentorship by working as a lab assistant for Dr. Gotthard, running research on post-traumatic stress disorder.

Now Cimarron is conducting her senior research project for the Dana Forum. Although her work is in its preliminary stages, she hopes to focus her project on the social and psychological stigmas surrounding political sex scandals. She's had a very busy final year here at Muhlenberg, and is currently balancing her schoolwork with multiple medical school interviews. Although she admits that the process of applying to medical school is stressful, Cimarron is clearly passionate about her work and her interests. Her studies here at Muhlenberg seem to have prepared her well for the path that lies ahead of her.



Evan Teitelbaum

By Emily Sakowitz

Evan Teitelbaum is a business and accounting double major, hailing from Fairlawn, New Jersey. He aims to be an actuary after graduating from Muhlenberg. In addition to being a Dana Scholar, Evan is a member of the Muhlenberg environmental action team EnAcT, president of the Hillel Student Board, a peer tutor, former member of the Muhlenberg Ultimate Frisbee team, and former president of the Business and Economics club.



Evan enjoys the intellectual environment and professor-student relationships that are inherent parts of the Dana Program. His FYS was 1968, which focused on the pivotal events of that year, such as the assassination of Martin Luther King, Jr. Evan particularly liked that the course provided a social spin on history. He also participated in a business mentorship, an independent study focusing on decision-making in companies and corporate environments.

Drawn to Muhlenberg because of its comfort and opportunities, Evan has really enjoyed his experience here. Memorably, he took the Phenomenology philosophy class to satisfy a requirement, but found that it challenged his mind in a new way. He particularly enjoys reading scientific nonfiction books, and is partial to long walks in the woods. When asked for a fun fact, Evan recalls that in kindergarten, he was the #1 rated chess player in the country, before retiring at age six due to work stress.

Joshua Portera

by Sean Watkins

Fairfield, Connecticut's Josh Portera is a theatre major with a double concentration in acting and directing. Having been a part of one Red Door production, one Studio production, and three Mainstage productions—most recently as Bazzard in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*—Josh has successfully taken advantage of all that the theatre department has had to offer. Josh has also been successful in finding ways to meld his interests into one activity that allows him to enthusiastically excel. Interested in history as well as theatre, Josh utilized the Dana Program to combine these two interests. For example, he interned for Dr. Beth Schachter—the chair of the college's theatre department—as a research assistant on a play she had written. Conducting historical research, Josh helped Dr. Schachter fit the play into historical context, develop character backstories, etc. This year, for his mentorship, Josh teamed up with Dr. Schachter once again and served as the dramaturge on her production of *Mad Forest*, Muhlenberg's final Mainstage production for the 2013-14 year. As dramaturge, Josh once again combined his interests in theatre and history to explore the show's setting of the Romanian Revolution and to apply history to theatre.



Josh exemplifies all that the Dana Program is. He has demonstrated an appreciation for intellectual cross-curricular study and has given it a direct and productive application to his own life. This open-mindedness to the more intellectual side of his interests is something that will make Josh more diverse, well-rounded, and successful in his future endeavors. In the long run, Josh sees himself working in the theatrical field. However, his versatility and well-roundedness make it difficult for him to know exactly what he will end up doing—whether he will be an actor, director, playwright, critic, dramaturge, or any other part of the world of theatre.

Congratulations to Josh on a successful four years at Muhlenberg, and best of luck to him as he continues to explore and succeed in the world around him!

Kathleen Rogers

by Molly Albano

I had the pleasure of interviewing Kathleen Rogers. Kathleen will be graduating in the spring with a major in political science and a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. She spent the fall semester of her junior year in Washington, D.C. as an intern at the Institute for Women's Policy Research, a political think tank. She served as a research assistant, investigating the reasons why women do or do not run for office. This semester, Kathleen is formulating a project for her mentorship on the same topic. In the spring, she plans to carry out this project, which will include interviewing members of the Pennsylvania General Assembly.



Kathleen has truly taken advantage of all that Muhlenberg has to offer. She currently serves as a writing tutor and reviews résumés as a Career Assistant in the Career Center. She is also the student director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion. She became involved with this organization in her first year at Muhlenberg, surveying voters on a local level in the Lehigh Valley area and on the national level as well. She was promoted to supervisor as a sophomore before assuming her current position as director. In addition, Kathleen is a member of the Theta Nu Xi Multicultural Sorority, an organization committed to diversity on campus. This impressive list of accomplishments evidences Kathleen's dedication to pursuing her interests and her eagerness to capitalize on every available opportunity.

Although Kathleen was not able to spend a semester abroad, she has participated in a MILA (Muhlenberg Integrated Learning Abroad) course each year and will take a fourth MILA course this spring. In her first year, she traveled to Bangladesh with Dr. Gambino and Dr. Hashim. As a sophomore she traveled to Turkey with Dr. Mello and Dr. Stein, and as a junior she traveled to Spain and Morocco with Dr. Ouellette and Dr. Albert. At the conclusion of the spring semester, Kathleen will travel to Ghana with Dr. Peck and Dr. Gallon for her final MILA excursion.

Upon graduation, Kathleen will take a gap year to gain work experience and apply to graduate schools. She plans to enter the field of academia in the future, hoping to continue her research and to become a professor. Kathleen is a very friendly and driven person and was quick to offer advice and encouragement for my years at Muhlenberg and beyond. She recommends that students new to Muhlenberg take advantage of the plentiful opportunities available on this campus, focusing on just a few about which they feel most passionate. She certainly has the knowledge to speak on this topic, as she will be leaving Muhlenberg with not only a diploma but also an impressive résumé of extensive experiences and accomplishments.

Cyrus Kushner

by Danielle McWalters

Cyrus is a pre-med biochemistry and philosophy double major. Before applying to medical school, he plans to take a gap year to do research on diseases. During his time at Muhlenberg, Cyrus has conducted research in epigenetics, which regards genetics in a broader context. I had never heard this term before so it was interesting to hear about his studies of how our behavior affects genes trans-generationally.

Cyrus is known to occasionally teach martial arts around campus, though only informally. In fact, he won the silver medal in the Junior Olympics in martial arts, which is very impressive. We both use exercise, martial arts, and dance to escape the long hours of work and studying, hunched over in a desk all day.

Though these are very different forms of exercise and art, both are activities that we are passionate about. Cyrus also enjoys doing community service, and he goes to a senior citizens home to help them with daily tasks and make their days more enjoyable. He talks with them about his day, which may remind them of great times they had when they were younger. Although Cyrus acknowledges that it can sometimes get monotonous, he is glad that he has the ability to brighten the seniors' days.

From Cyrus I also learned a lot about going abroad. He suggested it as a way to broaden your horizons from those of the (very) small Muhlenberg community and to take classes not offered at Muhlenberg. It also seems like a good outlet for escaping the stress of senior year. Cyrus seemed to really enjoy meeting people and learning about the cultures of Denmark, Prague, and other European countries. The housing program, which allowed him to sleep at people's houses, brought him a lot closer to the culture in Prague and helped him to make personal connections with the families. In fact, Cyrus made connections with people with whom he still keeps in touch.

Cyrus also talked about the Dana Program requirements, including the senior year class. This year, he is working on the Center for Ethics' topic of sex and will be giving a presentation to faculty members on this topic. Cyrus told me that attempts are being made to unify the Dana Program and diminish the lines between the different years. This year, he said, the class requirements and social objectives are being changed to attempt to achieve this.

Cyrus invited me to meet for coffee or e-mail about questions I had relating to the Dana Program, classes, or anything about Muhlenberg. Even though we have very different interests and goals, it was interesting to see how we were able to find some common ground, which seems to be a large part of what the Dana Program is all about.



Edward Quach

by Trevor Luck

Michael “Ed” Quach is a biochemistry major and Asian Traditions minor at Muhlenberg. With interests in theatre and in science, Ed found that Muhlenberg not only was a good fit for him academically, but that it was the right community for him. A member of Live in Color, the gospel choir, and the Asian Student Association as well as a tour guide, Ed balances his love of performance with his love of scientific inquiry.

Hitting the ground running when he came to campus, Ed became involved in Dr. Hark’s and Dr. Much’s labs as a freshman, washing lab implements for Dr. Hark and assisting Dr. Much with bacterial culturing. By the time sophomore year rolled around, Edward had already begun assisting Dr. Hark with genomic annotation of *Drosophila melanogaster* and had learned a variety of laboratory research techniques that would pave the way for his involvement in a multitude of labs and research projects at Muhlenberg. After completing a prestigious NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates program in plant genomics through Cornell University the following summer, Ed not only realized that his fate lay in graduate school, but he also came to find that he had grown immensely as a young adult. Upon returning from his REU, Ed ventured to Kenya and Tanzania for a study abroad program in field studies. Seeing a completely different side of the world and of living, Ed returned from this philosophical pilgrimage ready to tackle the remainder of his college career with renewed diligence. Ed plans on attending graduate school in pursuit of a Ph.D. in what he coins “molecular life sciences”—essentially the science of biomolecules and bioprocesses at the molecular level.

Ed finds that his status as a Dana Scholar made his quest for research experiences all the more easy to achieve. Not only did the Dana Program provide him with opportunity, but it also provided him with companionship: Ed finds that some of his best friends were made in his Dana FYS, and that his senior Dana Forum was akin to a welcome yet “weird reunion” of the people he began his intellectual journey with at Muhlenberg. Urging underclassmen to pursue their studies with the mindset that academics are about “exploring,” Ed looks to his horizon with a bright future in the making. Given all that he has accomplished thus far, one can only wonder: what experiences await him? What philosophical dragons has he yet to slay?



Rebecca Golden

by Megan Ross

“You have been given this opportunity. You have been given this program. So every year what are you going to do with this program to make it better?”

Although Becca said this to describe her approach to the Dana Program, it did not take long for me to realize this is her approach to every aspect of her life. Within two weeks of arriving at Muhlenberg, Becca had joined Casa Guadalupe, for which she is now a Student Coordinator. This combined several of her passions: Spanish, kids, and serving others. This willingness to help others is present in many of Becca’s activities. She has been a part of the Muhlenberg College Medical Emergency Services since freshman year and currently holds the title of Captain. Becca is also a tour guide and a peer tutor for Biology I, II, and III; General Chemistry I and II; Organic Chemistry I and II; and Biochemistry. In addition, she is a Learning Assistant for Biology I and II. Becca even took inspiration from the Center for Ethics’ forum theme and created Sexual Assault Support Services this semester. SASS is a student-run hotline for survivors or friends of survivors of sexual assault and provides them with someone to talk to anonymously.



In addition to being a selfless individual and an active member of the Muhlenberg community, Becca is also a dedicated and successful student. She says her First Year Seminar, *The Wire* with Dr. Mello, prepared her for writing assignments she faced throughout college in addition to teaching her to remain professional when faced with something (in this case the dark content of *The Wire*) that made her uncomfortable. She took inspiration from another professor, Troy Dwyer, who offered this piece of advice: “If you’re not uncomfortable, you’re not learning.” As a biochemistry major and economics minor, Becca has participated in several internships, independent studies, and mentorships. Her internships have included cancer research at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, the Lehigh Valley Health Network Adult Oncology Unit, and Drexel University College of Medicine. She has also done research on the enzymology of lincomycin biosynthesis under the mentorship of Dr. Colabroy and created an independent study exploring how economics can and does apply to biology. Becca’s favorite class was Experimental Biochemistry, which she took during her junior year. Students had to apply experimental techniques and scientific methodology learned in the class by writing grant proposals for original research projects. A few of the projects were chosen to be funded and carried out, and I bet you can guess whose one of those was.

Becca is going to continue her studies at Drexel University College of Medicine in pursuit of her goal to be a pediatric oncologist. She hopes to continue doing cancer research as well as practice medicine in her dream location: the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia.

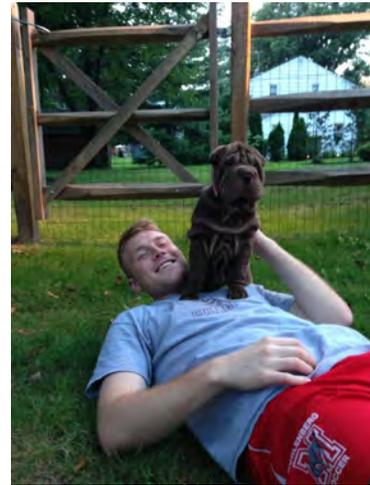
John Chojnowski

by Emma Jahde

John Chojnowski, a Dana senior who hails from Bucks County, Pennsylvania, is a biology major. He is a part of Muhlenberg Connect, but is primarily involved with the men's soccer team. He has also participated in various research projects at the University of Pennsylvania for several summers. While there, he looked at heart morphology in the cardiology lab and at drug effects on vitamin B3 in the lipids lab.

John loved his FYS, taught by Dr. Mello. The whole class was based on the show *The Wire*, through which they explored social justice and its politics. He thought Dr. Mello was fantastic, as he showed new perspectives John would not have seen on his own. It was a class full of "growing pains" as it was challenging academically, but learning about different people's opinions was eye-opening for him, making the growing worthwhile. Being in that class led John to start a mentorship with Dr. Mello. He is currently in the process of writing a paper on the establishment of Turkey as a nation under Dr. Mello's guidance, something John would have never explored or done on his own.

John has also found a mentor in Dr. Klem, with whom he interned in the ornithology lab this last summer. There, John looked at histological sections of a house sparrow and tried to determine how it related to its feeding habits. He is thankful for the Dana internship and mentorship requirements: they forced him into arenas he would never have ventured into otherwise and made for some of his favorite experiences at Muhlenberg. John is still unsure of what he will do after graduating, whether he will continue to pursue research or apply to medical school. Whatever he ends up doing, his experiences and mentors at Muhlenberg have helped him grow in ways he never could have imagined his freshman year.



Nicole Pironi

by Lara Roseto

Nicole Pironi is a neuroscience major with a minor in public health. While at Muhlenberg, she has been actively involved in community service, notably as co-coordinator at the Caring Place Youth Development Center—a program whose mission is to provide safety and support to young people in Allentown coming from discouraging environments. Nicole loves volunteering and helping people—whatever she pursues as a career, she wants to make a difference in someone’s life in whatever way possible. She gets a lot of joy out of seeing others happy. Beyond her passion for science and community service, Nicole enjoys attending lectures, learning about different disciplines, playing frisbee and staying active on the racquetball court.



Nicole came to Muhlenberg from her hometown of Westchester, New York. While she has always been science-oriented, she did not know what she wanted to pursue at Muhlenberg until just a few weeks before she moved in: after watching some videos on the brain, Nicole became enthralled by the field of neuroscience. At Muhlenberg, her passion for neuroscience was further inspired by Dr. Gotthard. Dr. Gotthard served as a mentor to and cornerstone for Nicole, helping her gain internships and prepare for the future. In the summer of 2013, Dr. Gotthard informed Nicole of a research opportunity at Penn State College of Medicine. Nicole jumped at the opportunity and spent her summer working with rats while researching how spinal cord injury affects blood flow to the gut (GI tract); she was even able to perform surgery on the rats. After graduation, Nicole hopes to do more research and then pursue graduate school with the potential goal of becoming a college professor.

Muhlenberg has impacted Nicole by helping her to become a well-rounded person and showing her the importance of interdisciplinary learning. To Nicole, being a Dana Scholar goes beyond valuing academics and learning. It’s about being someone with a hard work ethic who is open to challenges and is able to be both a leader and collaborator. The Dana Program has helped open Nicole’s eyes to different ways of thinking. “Learn to work with others and find what interests you, and [don’t] just settle,” she encourages. “Find something you really like and make it your own. Make it work.”

Ryan Barlotta

by Kayla Staub

Ryan Barlotta, biology major, has had quite the Muhlenberg experience as he rises to meet his future. Having applied to multiple medical schools, he is anxiously awaiting the fruition of his hard work and eventually hopes to become a primary care or emergency physician. Throughout his college career, he has completed several internships in the medical field, including a semester spent at the Lehigh Valley Hospital in the pediatric ward. Over the summer, Ryan also interned at Valley Hospital in Ridgewood, New Jersey in the pediatric and emergency wards, in addition to shadowing a radiologist.

While at 'Berg, Ryan relished his biology courses, including Dr. Klem's ornithology course, in which he went from knowing nothing about birds to being "a kinda expert." As a Dana Scholar, Ryan also fondly remembers his First Year Seminar, *The Wire*, in which he studied the HBO series' interpretation of inner city life with Dr. Mello of the political science department. Ryan also developed an interest in political science—a surprise for the bio major. This new interest introduced him to plenty of new friends, in addition to broadening his academic interests. The senior Dana Forum has also pushed his interests as he researches a new realm—the humanities.

Alongside a rigorous academic repertoire, Ryan was the captain of Muhlenberg's men's soccer team, with whom he traveled to Barcelona prior to his junior season. In addition to showing leadership on the field, Ryan is a leader in the community. With the soccer team, Ryan volunteers with Top Soccer, a clinic designed to teach soccer skills to children with autism. Ryan also participates in College Connect and volunteers his time working with Allentown elementary students in science.

Regarding the Muhlenberg community, Ryan remarked upon Muhlenberg's vast collection of interests. There is no "typical" Muhlenberg student, as faculty, staff, and students alike are multifaceted individuals with diverse interests. He even jokes himself how odd pre-medicine and soccer must seem together!

When I asked Ryan if he had any advice, he sagely reminds us to keep an open mind. "People get stuck walking around with career path blinders," the senior warned, "and you can miss a lot if you only participate in your major."



Joshua Clement

by Timothy Sorenson

Joshua Clement was first drawn to Muhlenberg College by the prestigious Dana Program. He wished to profit from the internship and mentorship opportunities afforded to Dana Scholars. Joshua's initial hope came to fruition in the summer of 2013 when he travelled to Tanzania to do field research in Bulongwa. As a major in sociology, Joshua has worked under the supervision of Dr. Krista Bywater on a recent research project in Tanzania, which was fully funded by the College and ecstatically approved by the sociology department. In Tanzania, Joshua studied how social networks work together through Community-Led Development projects in order to form government groups, businesses, churches, and other essential entities within the community. Joshua has made important scholarly advances in his studying of the impact of religion on the construction of these entities and will use these advances as the foundation for his honors thesis in sociology. Joshua's other main academic interest is philosophy, in which he will be earning a minor. Throughout his four years at Muhlenberg, Joshua has also written for the school newspaper, demonstrating an enthusiasm for English, as well.



Joshua attributes much of his success to the Dana Program, which has allowed him to travel the world and conduct sociological research with the guidance, oversight, and active participation of his professors. Joshua is thankful for his time at Muhlenberg College and is extremely eager to apply the analytical tools he has learned here in a real-world environment.

Gabriela Contino

by Christopher Baumgartel

If you have ever watched someone put together an intricate puzzle, piece by piece, to form something unique and remarkable, you also have an idea of how Gabriela has spent her time as a Dana Scholar at Muhlenberg College. Gabriela is a biology major following the pre-medicine track and she hopes to pursue medical school in the coming years. Like the aforementioned puzzle, random pieces seem to find their fitting place in Gabriela's college career. After pursuing a MILA opportunity in Bangladesh and a study abroad experience in health policy in Denmark, Gabriela decided to mold her intellect around political science and mathematics minors—a direct result of her eye-opening experience with the Danish health care system and the conditions of those in Bangladesh. She directly attributed the openness and breadth of the Muhlenberg College GARs to her ability to expand her curious mind in different directions.



Gabriela has been involved in many aspects of Muhlenberg College in her time as an undergraduate student. She thoroughly enjoys volunteering at the local hospice, where she feels that she makes a major difference in the lives of the people she encounters. She is a peer tutor on campus, as well as a member of the Delta Zeta Sorority, the tennis team, and Students in Newman, for which she has served as secretary and treasurer. Gabriela attributes her diverse college experience to her ability to follow her passions in varying and yet interconnected ways.

Thus, Gabriela is optimistic and excited for the future, especially because she has many hopes for her professional career. Her hope is to use her future medical degree to participate in Doctors Without Borders and help people receive medical attention around the world. The range of Gabriela's experiences at Muhlenberg College has helped her build the academic and extracurricular framework to pursue her medical and philanthropic interests, while also helping her to realize the importance of being a well-rounded and politically-aware individual. At the conclusion of her time here at Muhlenberg College, Gabriela has become well aware of the potential of medicine and health policy in various regions of the world, and she hopes to continue making a lasting difference each and every day.

Paul Stathis

by Patrick Moore

A wolf's howl pierces the black night in the mysterious forest. An owl sitting on the tallest tree hoots, and hears a whistle in return. The owl hops off his branch and begins to wing his way towards his master: Paul Stathis, Lord of Birds. The Lord of Birds has many names and faces, but in this case, we'll stick with Paul. With his owl now patrolling the skies above him, Paul begins to run through the forest and back to where he belongs, Muhlenberg. He became a runner, like his father before him, when he was a boy in Manhasset, Long Island. He uses running not only as a mode of transportation, but also as a way to de-stress. When he arrives at Muhlenberg, he reports to the New Science Building, where his most important work is done. He works in the "Ornithology Room" at the very top of the building.



Around campus, if anyone stumbles across a bird that has flown into a window, they are brought as an offering to New Sci, where Paul helps essentially embalm these birds to aid further studies. He works with his mentor, Dr. Klem. After his work is finished, Paul heads home to his house, where he can relax and reflect on his day and life. Paul wanders into the kitchen, where he plans to make dinner. He opens the window, and suddenly a flock of pigeons carrying grocery bags fly in. He thanks them heartily and they are gone as suddenly as they came. The Lord of Birds does not enjoy baking, but Indian food intrigues him. After he finishes his masterpiece of a dinner, he plans his radio show. On Mondays, Paul plays music of the 60s and 70s from 10 o'clock PM to midnight. He advises everyone to tune in. After this, Paul relaxes and sits in his large chair by the fireplace. A crow flaps in and drops a book in his lap. Although he enjoys reading fantasy books, the crow has chosen a sci-fi book, another good choice. However, Paul isn't interested in reading tonight. He needs to think about his future. The Lord of Birds has grand plans for the world, but you need not know about them. However, Paul will tell you that he plans to go to grad school to study pharmacology or ornithology, but perhaps not directly after graduation. Instead, he may join the Peace Corps to be a science teacher or the Forestry Service—two ideas that his friend and mentor, Dr. Edwards, suggested to him. Whatever Paul chooses after graduation, there is no doubt he will be successful.

Stefanie Cappucci

by Gregory Sacks

Stefanie Cappucci found herself as a Muhlenberg student purely by chance. While she was in the Lehigh Valley area, visiting both Lehigh University and Lafayette College, one of her father's colleagues suggested that she look into Muhlenberg. As she had a great interest in neuroscience, upon visiting the school she met with the department's founder, Dr. Teissere. Now, four years later, she is in her final year here at Muhlenberg, having completed the pre-med track and graduating with a neuroscience major and mathematics minor.

When asked about her choice of major, Stefanie said that she has always been interested in pursuing neuroscience. First of all, she finds the human brain to be extremely interesting. However, she was also drawn to the field due to its interdisciplinary nature, and the ways in which it combines both the sciences and the humanities. One of Stefanie's favorite classes was Mind and Brain. When asked why she enjoyed this class so much, she replied that she found it to be very different from other science courses in that it incorporated elements of both philosophy and science.

Throughout her time here at Muhlenberg, Stefanie has worked on various research projects with Dr. Gotthard. In one of these projects, she investigated "linked memories in the context of PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder)" using rat models. Over the summer, she also submitted a research article through the Boston Children's Hospital, in which she studied chronic pain and the effect of anxiety sensitivity.

The Dana Program was one of the primary reasons that Stefanie decided to attend Muhlenberg. She was very interested in the idea of an honors program, and says that being a member of the Dana Scholars has allowed her to be in classes with other like-minded individuals, creating an intellectually stimulating environment. Stefanie said that one of her favorite parts of the program is that it opened up many doors for research opportunities, as its mentorship requirement pushed her to form closer relationships with faculty.

Outside of her coursework and research, Stefanie is involved in various other endeavors around campus. Currently, she is the president of the Phi Mu Sorority and works at Java Joe's. She is also involved in the College Democrats organization. Moreover, Stefanie has worked as both a lab assistant and a tutor, in addition to volunteering with Best Buddies and at the hospice.

Currently, Stefanie is in the process of applying to medical schools. Stefanie is not completely certain what field of medicine she plans to pursue; however, she is currently intrigued by pediatric neurology, as she likes children and is fascinated by the human brain. So far, she has been accepted to the Hofstra School of Medicine and is waiting to hear back from a couple of other schools.

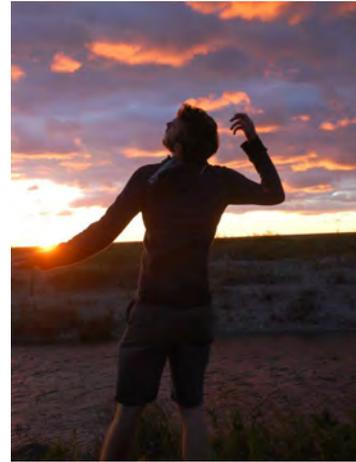
When asked what advice she has for any current or incoming Muhlenberg students, Stefanie replied, "There are as many opportunities here as you make of them. Do your best to make close relationships with both peers and professors."



Nathan Frick

by Alexander Stavros

It's hard to condense an awesome half an hour with Nate into writing after talking about so much; no matter what I write, I won't do our "interview" justice. Nate was coming from a Center for Ethics event so we started off talking about that. As Dana Scholars, I know that all of us will be doing projects and research pertaining to the Center for Ethics topic, but I didn't quite understand exactly what that entailed. Nate explained to me that he was researching how polyamory is defined and studied in both academic literature and within the polyamory community itself. It was interesting to hear what is actually going on with the research and how involved you become; it was especially helpful to hear from a student about what to expect and how the whole process works.



As we talked about classes, Nate, a pre-med neuroscience major, reassured me that there's time for everything and that it isn't as stressful as it seems. He's even taking an aerial acrobatics class, which I'm totally jealous of because it filled up immediately during registration. It is unclear exactly how Nate finds time for everything, though, since he works three campus jobs: he's a Learning Assistant for Psych Statistics, an employee at the information desk, and the lab manager for Dr. Gotthard's lab. Maybe there's more than 24 hours in a day for Nate!

After graduation, Nate's going to take a gap year and then go on to medical school in hopes of becoming a psychiatrist. During this year, Nate wants to shadow and work, possibly getting his bartender's license. I can just imagine a bartending psychiatrist dangling from aerial silks . . . awesome. I'm really glad I was matched up with Nate. It was nice to talk to someone who is similar to me because I hold the same apprehensions that he had when he was a freshman. All things considered, it was an extremely reassuring and productive meeting, and I'm glad that I got to know someone as amazing and interesting as Nathan Frick.

Rianna Sommers

by Morgan Backenstoss

Rianna is an anthropology major and a public health minor from Long Island, New York. Although she came to Muhlenberg planning to be pre-med, she decided to change her focus. She had always loved ancient civilizations and chose to pursue that love through anthropology classes. One of her favorite classes at Muhlenberg was Witchcraft, Magic, and Sorcery. Rianna enjoyed the interdisciplinary nature of the class; in fact, it is one of the things she appreciates about the field of anthropology in general. At the end of her sophomore year, Rianna decided to further explore public health due to her interest in public health advocacy. She is thinking of going into something relating to public health or medical administration. Rianna plans on going to graduate school, but will first take a gap year and work at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia.



Rianna has taken advantage of many great opportunities while at Muhlenberg, including a study abroad experience in London, England. However, one of her favorite parts of Muhlenberg is the professors. During her time here, Rianna has grown very close to her professors—she has even babysat for Dr. Pooley, the professor of her First Year Seminar, 1968. Rianna also completed a mentorship with Dr. Pooley on the cyclically informing nature of culture and language and is currently doing a mentorship with Dr. Hashim.

Outside of class, Rianna participates in many activities at Muhlenberg. She has two jobs—one at the Office of Disabilities and one with the anthropology department. She also tutors Statistical Methods, Human Evolution, Biological Psychology, and Introduction to Psychology. In addition, Rianna is a member of the Muhlenberg Writing Guild, Ukulele Club, and the Anthropology Club. She is extremely invested in and enthusiastic about everything she does.

Perhaps what stood out to me most, though, is what Rianna said about the Dana Program: the Dana Program is whatever you make of it. Rianna has obviously made the most of it. She has made many good friends along the way and has participated in amazing opportunities.

Michael Schramm

by Jacob Parisse

Michael, from Hartford, Connecticut, is a history and political science major. Coming into college he knew that he wanted to study both subjects and declared right away. For as long as he can remember, he has been a history buff. Mike recounts that, as a child, he would stay at home watching the History Channel when he had days off from school. Drawn to the analytical side of political science, Mike enjoys looking at major events with different lenses more so than the number crunching aspect of the major.



Michael's First Year Seminar was about the third season of *The Wire*, an HBO television show that explores inner city life in Baltimore. More specifically, it looks at the political power struggles between police and gang pyramids, the stigma associated with drug sellers and users, and the social ramifications of de-industrialization. Because of his interest in the humanities, Michael was able to approach the subject from a very different angle than his science-oriented peers.

Michael believes that the most definitive choice he made at Muhlenberg was to not go abroad. Originally, Michael believed that he wanted to be a lawyer and was considering study abroad programs in Nepal, Mongolia, and D.C. He was on the phone with his parents airing his concerns with the D.C. programs when his father said, "You don't want to go to D.C. because you don't want to be a lawyer." In that moment things "just clicked" and in the spring of his junior year, Michael decided not to go abroad and instead began his first Dana mentorship. His mentorship took the form of an independent study focusing on Industrial Age America, different social movements, and the responses of marginalized groups to the country's radical changes. At the start of his study, he mostly dealt with secondary sources, so he applied for and was awarded a summer research grant. This grant allowed him to stay at school over the summer and get his hands on primary sources (like newspapers from the era) and continue the project. Michael's independent study developed into both his history thesis and his graduate school writing supplement.

After graduating, Michael hopes to continue on to graduate school, earn his Ph.D. and become a professor. Michael has been working in Muhlenberg's Office of Development and Alumni Relations for the past four years, so when people learn that he isn't applying for development positions at other colleges or nonprofits, they are surprised by the fact that he wants to do more schooling. Regardless, Michael is resolute in his aspirations, saying, "Many of my professors have been discouraging me from grad school, saying that there isn't a good job market for Ph.D.'s, and I know that, but it's what I want to do."

Outside of academia, Michael spends most of his time working for the Muhlenberg Fund or practicing and performing with the on-campus a cappella group, InAcchord. Michael's one piece of advice for freshman: "Explore off campus as much as possible—Muhlenberg really is a fishbowl! There are so many great things off campus. Allentown is small but there is large vibrant life in Bethlehem."

Kimberly Baker

by Emily McGoldrick

Kim Baker of Maple Glen, Pennsylvania is not your run-of-the-mill student, and that quality has proven her to be an invaluable part of the Dana Program. Her honesty caught me off guard, and it was refreshing to say the least. While explaining her journey as a double major in English and studio art, she admits that she approached her academic experience differently by first completing classes for her majors and then focusing on her GARs. This decision allowed Kim to forge relationships with her professors early on in her academic career. When asked which professor has influenced her the most, she couldn't pick just one: Drs. Alec Marsh, David Rosenwasser, and Jill Stephen in the English department have all enriched her academic experience. In fact, her love for writing can be traced to Poetry I with Dr. Marsh, a small class that quickly became a community in which everyone could be "excited and nerdy."

It was with Dr. Rosenwasser that Kim pursued one of her Dana mentorships. She and three other students put together a small seminar about comic theory, which studies why comedy exists, what makes people laugh, and so forth. In fact, the mentorship went so well that she became one of the Writing Assistants for a new class on the topic. Besides being a Writing Assistant, Kim has held positions as a writing tutor and a poetry editor for *Muses*, and is also a member of Students in Newman.

As for the Dana Program, Kim says it "provided opportunities to study things I didn't have the chance to and connects students from other majors who otherwise wouldn't have known each other." She has certainly changed since arriving at Muhlenberg, from finding new interests to becoming less shy than she was as a freshman. Kim recalls her increasing willingness to study new subjects and work with a purpose instead of working to keep busy—something she encourages current and future students to do, as well. When asked how she would describe the ideal Dana Scholar, she thinks for a few moments before settling upon "opinionated and articulate." After spending an afternoon with Kim, I can say with confidence that Kim fits all of these qualities and more.



Andrew Hasenzahl

by Emily Nguyen

It is hard to believe that it was only four years ago that Andrew Hasenzahl was faced with a big decision: where to go to college? Drawn to the sense of community on campus, professors' commitment to their students, and the Dana Program, Andrew eventually settled on Muhlenberg. Now Andrew, who hails from Greenlawn, New York, is only several months away from graduating as a pre-med, biology major.

After wavering between biochemistry, neuroscience, and biology, Andrew eventually became a bio major. His passion for science is obvious. During the first semester of his sophomore year, Andrew jumped right into his mentorship. He will graduate with an impressive 2.5 research credits—going above and beyond the requirements of the Dana Program. For the past few years, he has worked with Dr. Edwards to identify a target for an insecticide that decreases the mosquito population. This could potentially stop the spread of malaria and other mosquito-borne vectors! After spending years in the lab, Andrew has begun to mentor other students and hopes that they will be able to continue the work after he leaves. In addition to this mentorship, Andrew participated in a pre-med observer program at St. Luke's. He shadowed doctors for at least 12 hours in five different specialties and kept a weekly journal, focusing on the doctor's bedside manner and any ethical situations he observed. (He ended up with 18 single-spaced pages of writing!)



This year, in the culminating experience of the Dana Program, Andrew has participated in the Dana Forum with his fellow senior Danas. He and his group members have chosen to research political sex scandals. In the spring, Andrew will investigate the aftermath of sex scandals with regard to the politicians' political careers.

As if he weren't busy enough, Andrew is also a head tutor. It is clear from talking to him that he is really passionate about tutoring. As a head tutor, Andrew has become more involved in the tutoring program by leading tutor trainings and participating in leadership activities with other tutors. Moreover, Andrew believes that tutoring has prepared him to become a doctor. He has learned how to work one-on-one with people and he has come to appreciate the value of being able to explain something. "If the doctor teaches you what [the medicine] is for or how it will help, that really helps," he tells me. In addition to his work as a head tutor, Andrew is also a member of Muhlenberg College EMS and serves on the Academic Judicial Board.

After he graduates in the spring, he hopes to attend medical school and become a doctor of internal medicine and perhaps a primary care doctor. Best of luck to Andrew in his future endeavors!

Andrea Rommal

by Alan Mendez

Andrea Rommal's passions lie in her work. A physics major and mathematics minor, she has learned to make the most of the Muhlenberg experience by exploring how concepts interact with each other across disciplines, and her schedule is chock-full of classes in biology, chemistry, and computer science. In addition to her studies, she has written two unpublished novels: a work of literary fiction and a teen romance (which she asserts is hopefully better than *Twilight*). She plans to get back to her writing after she completes her coursework.

When I asked Andrea about her perspective of the Dana Program, she said she had gained a lot from it, but she then proceeded to speak not of academics, but of friendships. Her close-knit group of friends are all people she met through the Dana Program, and she foresees the bonds between them lasting long after graduation. Turning to academics, Andrea regards Dana Scholars as interdisciplinary people with a wide variety of talents—

we enjoy and are drawn to courses in different disciplines, and we see how these disciplines are connected. For her, the Dana Program took the idea of a liberal arts education and applied it to the subjects that were relevant to each individual's passions. It provided a way to develop the skills and interests inherent in Danas. "We already have the stuff that would make us interesting," she says. "The Dana Program fostered that [so that we could] grow and expand and be better students."

Andrea made many research connections through the Dana Program. Her mentorship with Dr. Adam Clark included her coauthoring a paper with him on string theory, and she spent her internship co-editing *The Dana Interviewer* for the Class of 2013.

After graduating from Muhlenberg, Andrea plans to take two years off before continuing her work. She imagines that she will eventually go to graduate school to study computational physics; she particularly enjoys creating data to simulate experiments that evaluate the logistics of prospective experiments of greater magnitude. In the meantime, she plans on going to Washington, D.C. or New York City in search of a job where she can make use of her knowledge in computer science and physics, possibly as an IT specialist or as a physics tutor. Her plans are intentionally inexact, as she admits knowingly, "You can't have plans for New York; New York has its plans for you."



Elisabeth Guenette

by Lauren Butler

“Create your own opportunities” is a sort of mantra for Elisabeth Guenette. This Dana Scholar has an infectious energy and enthusiasm for life that was evident to me as soon as I met her. During her time at Muhlenberg, Elisabeth certainly created many opportunities for herself. She has been incredibly involved as a member of the Phi Sigma Sigma Sorority, the Muhlenberg Dance Association, and the leadership honor fraternity ODK. Moreover, she has served as the secretary of the foreign language honor fraternity Phi Sigma Iota, the vice president of Le Cercle Français, a tutor, and an RA.

Elisabeth is a French major completing the elementary education certification program. Her interest in French and eagerness to be somewhere where she “would be pushed to be outside [her] comfort zone” led her to study abroad in Nantes, France the spring of her junior year. She considers this the “number one best decision” she made while at Muhlenberg. Elisabeth described this experience as eye-opening in the best sense of the word. She explained, “At Muhlenberg, you’re in this little bubble. Everybody knows it; everybody accepts it. Then you go abroad, and I felt like I was part of a bigger world.” She also took away something much bigger than improved language skills from this experience—it helped her to gain confidence in herself and in her “ability to navigate the world.”

In looking back on her experience in the Dana Program, Elisabeth talked about the invaluable opportunities she had. Elisabeth completed her internship while she was abroad, where she taught English to first, second, third, and fourth graders and planned her own lessons. This internship was an extremely valuable experience for her, as it confirmed that teaching children is what she wants to do with her life. During her sophomore year, she worked on a research project about No Child Left Behind. She intends to complete her research on teaching English to French speakers living in their native countries, as opposed to French speakers in English-speaking countries, who have additional exposure to English outside of the ELL program.

Elisabeth has lots of plans for herself after graduation. She intends to spend the next year doing her student teaching, then substitute teaching. The following year, she will teach English in French schools, then possibly spend a year teaching in Northern Africa or Senegal. After this, she is considering returning to France and becoming certified to teach English as a second language. She knows she wants to end up working as an elementary school teacher. Elisabeth describes her long term goals and her motivation for all these things she wants to do: “Every time you push yourself, you grow as a person, and that’s what I want to do. And I want to help people.”



Sarah Chabolla

by Alison Smith

Sarah Chabolla moved to Muhlenberg from Maryland, where she has lived since she was twelve. As a freshman, Sarah took the First Year Seminar 1968. She loved it because the year under scrutiny was ripe with social movements and activism, things she commits herself to today. The course helped her decide to pursue a major in political science and a minor in Women's and Gender Studies. In addition to interning at Planned Parenthood's national office in D.C., Sarah completed two mentorships. During one of these mentorships, Sarah researched the state of women in Russia with Dr. Hashim; in the other, she studied the performance of national identity in Turkey under the guidance of Dr. Mello. The latter is the basis for her political science thesis and application to the Fulbright program.



This year, Sarah is participating in the Dana Forum alongside the other Dana seniors. The topic of this year's seminar relates well to Sarah's interests in feminism and justice. When we talked, she laughed and said that even with such a provocative theme, the group dynamic is one of the most interesting parts of being in class: some people are interested and engaged, while others are uncomfortable. For her research project in the spring, she will be doing a presentation on politician's sex scandals, focusing on media representation and the effect these scandals have on the careers of those involved. Sarah enjoys going to class to learn and talk, and appreciates how little work she has had to do outside of class.

Sarah has enjoyed being part of the Dana Program because it has allowed her to meet a group of academically-motivated students that she can talk to and get along with—something she also valued in high school. Being in the program helps her aspire to higher goals and has brought her into contact with some of her closest friends here at Muhlenberg.

When I asked her what her favorite thing was about college, she said that it was “how much I've learned, freshman year to now,” both about the world and about herself. Sarah is grateful for her opportunities to build close working relationships with the professors in the political science department, and feels very lucky to know what she wants to do with her life.

Matthew Dicken

by Timothy Canali

During his years at Muhlenberg College, Matt Dicken, a theatre major and member of the Class of 2014, has been quite the driving force behind instrumental movements on campus. He was the first ever performance coordinator for the MTA (Muhlenberg Theatre Association) and held that position for two semesters, paving the way towards a more collaborative and connected MTA. He is also an active member of many multicultural life organizations such as the Feminist Collective, SQUAD (Students for QUEer ADvocacy), and the BSA (Black Student Association). Moreover, Matt is one of the five founding student representatives working on the Diversity Strategic Planning Committee. This epitome of student/faculty coalition works hand in hand with President Helm and administrators to continue a dialogue about the issues with diversity on campus and work towards a better and more diverse Muhlenberg. Matt also works on campus as both a writing tutor and a campus ambassador in the Office of Global Education for the SIT (School for International Training).



Matt's abroad experience landed him in India, exploring national identity as expressed in the arts. This experience led Matt to a cumulative project: "butyou'reaman or: The Seven Men I Came Out to in India." This show, which will hit Muhlenberg's Studio Theatre in the 2014 spring Mainstage season, is sure to be an incredible exploration of a combination of many of Matt's studies and artistic endeavors. It will also fit in nicely with this year's Dana Forum on Sex Ethics. Speaking of the Dana Program, Matt has had a powerful and fond connection to the Dana Program; he even accredits much of his political vocabulary and standings (especially involving diversity) to all he learned from the extraordinary professors in the Dana Program. Matt's FYS, Dr. Brian Mello's course entitled *The Wire: Representations of Inner-City Life*, was a great training ground for Matt to begin to formulate his politics. When he returned to the class sophomore year, this time as a Writing Assistant, Matt found that he learned even more while helping the new Danas unravel the course material. Matt has also taken advantage of the independent study opportunities available through the Dana Program. During his sophomore year, he teamed up with Dr. Marcia Morgan to explore aesthetic theory/philosophy and how they were represented in the arts. He is currently working on an independent study entitled *Radical Embodiments*. This study explores radical American movements in the 1960's with a focus on black power and the gay liberation of politics. And in keeping with his theatrical roots, he is also studying how deviance is performed and how media perceives it.

After graduation, Matt has several possible paths to take. He is interested in attending a language scholarship program to improve his Hindi, as well as attending graduate school in India for arts and aesthetics. Matt has also developed an interest in cultural diplomacy and can see himself eventually applying to work within the U.S. State Department, while always staying connected to his passion for performance. Whatever step Matt takes next, there is no doubt that this Dana Scholar will leave some lasting footprints wherever he goes. On behalf of Muhlenberg College, we thank Matt for the lasting impact he has had on our school, and for the lasting impact he will continue to make in the world.

Alexander Jenkins

by Brittany Smith

“I’ve grown up a lot during college.” I don’t know how Alex spent his time as a freshman, but he’s certainly using it wisely now. During the time in which I conducted my interview with Alex, he was in the process of interviewing for medical school, preparing himself for the Army physical test, and researching bumblebee electrophysiology and conducting microsurgeries on bees with Dr. Sprayberry. A biology major, Alex intends to become an Army surgeon. He loves medicine, and his appreciation for volunteerism and helping people has grown throughout his time at Muhlenberg. He currently volunteers at Casa Guadalupe, and he is a brother of Sigma Phi Epsilon, with whom he helped to conduct a blood drive.

The Dana Program has introduced Alex to a new group of students he might not have met otherwise, helped him open his mind to new perspectives, and encouraged him to think differently in his classes. His favorite portion of the Dana Program was his FYS with Dr. Pooley, although he cited the topic and nature of the Dana Forum as another highlight of his college career. Alex has also been conducting research with Dr. Sprayberry since the fall of 2012, and the summer before his senior year, he held an internship with Albert Einstein Health Network.

When asked what he wished he knew as a freshman, Alex had much advice to offer. He stressed the importance of finding a balance between schoolwork and “the college experience,” a term that he deems too cliché for his time here at Muhlenberg. His lessons included learning not to stress every small detail, since college is something that only happens once: “It’s a marathon, not a sprint.”



Adora Goldovsky

by Michael Schramm

Since her first few weeks on Muhlenberg's campus, Adora Goldovsky has been affected by the Dana Program. Her First Year Seminar, *The Wire*, exposed her and her classmates to new material and a new lens through which to examine the world. Although she was initially intimidated by her internal expectations of her Dana colleagues, she quickly felt comfortable with everyone in her class. She appreciated that students with a diverse set of interests could come together and have such interesting discussions on topics like urban blight and income inequality in such a relaxed, yet intellectual, manner. The class, she said, broke down not only her perceptions of the world around her and her classmates, but her own perception of herself.

Adora's Muhlenberg career has been markedly different from most Muhlenberg students'. Before attending Muhlenberg she was accepted to a 3-3 program with Thomas Jefferson University, so after three years of undergraduate study, she will go on to receive her doctorate in physical therapy in three years. Still, Adora's Muhlenberg career has been heavily influenced by the Dana Program. In addition to participating in the sophomore seminar Reading the Times, she conducted both of her internships in her second year. She worked with Dance Department Chair Dr. Gayanne Grossman comparing active and passive hip turnout in dancers in relation to the Iliotibial (IT) band. Although almost all physiological dance research uses a small sample size of 10-12 students, Adora and Dr. Grossman used retrospective chart reviews of 350 people. This groundbreaking research helped integrate Adora's two main passions—biology and dance—and she is currently working with Dr. Grossman to get their research published. The work also helped her hone her career focus. She has decided to pursue a career in physical therapy for dancers, since there are currently no physical therapists who work exclusively within the dance community.

Throughout her time at Muhlenberg, Adora says she has become especially indebted to Dr. Hashim, the Director of the Dana Program. Since she had only three years to complete all of her graduation requirements, Dr. Hashim's deft hand and charming personality were integral to Adora getting into all of the classes she needed. "I seriously enjoyed all of my GARs," Adora says, "especially my religion class, The Holocaust: Nazi Germany and the Jews. I never would've gotten into that class without Dr. Hashim, and I loved it!"

Now in the second half of the Dana Forum, Adora is exploring the interrelated themes of religion and sex, while at the same time continuing her research in biology and dance with Dr. Grossman. She says the Dana Program let her unlock all of her disparate academic interests. Without the program she may not have been able to incorporate such a wide variety of interests into her already-condensed Muhlenberg career. "The Dana Program provided the freedom to choose what I wanted to do, and pursue those passions!"



Tyler McKechnie

by Alexander Geoffrey

The seat sunk slightly under my weight. I smelled the Mule Express' attempt at a meal. The world appeared and made impressions on me with every whiff of food, squeak of a chair, and glimpse of the table in front of me. The world presented everything Tyler and I needed for a successful meeting. Glancing to my left, I saw a tall, be-scarfed man, smile brimming.

From a very early point, Tyler wanted to double major in theatre and science. Many schools supported his study of one or the other, but Muhlenberg seemed to provide the perfect balance of the two. Tyler planned his schedule from “day negative one,” revving his ambitious drive fueled by Dana blood.

Tyler “Hipster Hair” McKechnie decided that everyone was a bio major, and wanted to shake things up. Upon stepping into the kiddie pool of consciousness classes, Tyler became very intrigued. He realized that his life was littered with an underlying interest in neuroscience, which even appeared in themes from his favorite movies. After completing the first neuroscience class, Tyler realized that “Mind and Brain relates to everything”—even his acting classes.

To Tyler “Visionary Virtuoso” McKechnie the future of theatre will be very much related to neuroscience. Tyler hopes to create a better “experience” with greater audience interaction. He imagines shows in New York during which spectators can walk around on a multilevel set and follow whichever character they desire. Tyler’s new theatre would be designed based on what it is to experience what is going on: he doesn’t want the audience to just see what is happening, but rather perceive and experience the production in an interactive way.

Being a Dana has always been an odd subject for Tyler “Dramatic Dana” McKechnie. He never felt a compulsive need to broadcast his Dana scholarship brighter than the bat signal, as other D-card droppers have been known to do. However, the spirit of a Dana resides in him with great strength. Tyler has written a performance piece entitled “Viper’s Circus” and successfully improvised abroad in a theatre workshop in Spain; he also wrote a final paper on the dichotomous view of New York City from the perspectives of Jay-Z and Alicia Keys in the music video for “Empire State of Mind.”

Standing up, I felt as though I had changed from what Tyler had said. The neuro-theatre Tyler described seemed to bring a new spectacular nature to everything I did. Smelling the Mule Express, feeling accomplished about having completed the interview, and stretching after an hour’s work sitting, I shaped my interview into the opening act of a life-long performance.



Dana Accolades

After soliciting academic and extracurricular accomplishments from all Dana Scholars, we compiled the following list of accolades. However, this is not an exhaustive list!

Class of 2014

Ryan Barlotta

4-year letter winner for Muhlenberg Men's Soccer Team
Attending Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine (Fall 2014)
Captain of Muhlenberg Men's Soccer Team (2013-2014)
Dean's List
Centennial Conference Academic Honor Roll (2011-2013)
Presidential Merit Scholarship

Matthew Bocchese

Accepted to Jefferson Medical College
Dean's List
Forrest G. Moyer Pre-Medical Scholarship
Lead Tutor for Muhlenberg Writing Center
Member of Omicron Delta Kappa
Poster Presentation: "Chiral C_2 -Symmetric Tetramine Ligands for Dearomatization" American Chemical Society Conference in Dallas, Texas (March 2014)
Presidential Merit Scholarship
Stephen R. Arneson Scholarship

John Chojnowski

Centennial Conference Academic Honor Roll
Presidential Merit Scholarship

Gabriela Contino

Accepted to the University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, Temple University Medical School, Cooper Medical School of Rowan University, Penn State Hershey College of Medicine, and the Commonwealth Medical College
Captain of the Muhlenberg Women's Tennis Team
Dean's List
Intercultural Leadership Award (from the Danish Institute of Study Abroad)
Lehigh Valley Ecology and Evolution Symposium Best Research Poster Award
Member of Omicron Delta Kappa
President's Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement and Promise for Postgraduate Work by a Junior

Matthew Dicken

Poster Presentation: "Arendtian Action in Art: Young Jean Lee's Theatrical Imagining of a Feminist Utopia" at Social Research Social Justice Conference at Muhlenberg College (March 2012)
Student Body President Appointee to College President's Diversity Strategic Planning Committee (April 2013-June 2014)

Writer and Performer: “butyou’reaman or: The Seven Men I Came Out to in India,” part of the Theatre Department’s Emerging Artists Festival and Multicultural Center Advisory Board’s Meetings Points series 2014: “Mapping Intersections of Power” (March 2014)

Nathan Frick

Dean’s List

Member of Omicron Delta Kappa

Member of Phi Beta Kappa

Presentation: “Cycloheximide Disrupts ‘Linked’ Memory in a Novel Animal Model of PTSD” at National Psychological Society Conference

Rebecca Golden

Attending Drexel University College of Medicine (Fall 2014)

Co-Presenter: “Reconsiderations for success in gateway classes” (authors: Kelly Cann, Rebecca Golden, Rachel Halpern, and Wendy Cole) at the 46th Annual College Reading and Learning Association Conference in Boston, MA (November 2013)

Forrest G. Moyer Pre-Medical Scholarship Recipient

Founded Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS)

Hired to conduct research on understanding and targeting the TrkB/BDNF molecular signaling pathway as a means of therapeutic intervention for aggressive pediatric neuroblastoma in Dr. Garrett Brodeur’s laboratory at the Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia (Summer 2014)

Member of Omicron Delta Kappa

Member of Phi Beta Kappa

Presentation: “Reconsiderations for success in gateway classes” at the NJ Regional College Reading and Learning Association Conference (March 2014)

Andrew Hasenzahl

Dr. Robert S. Ochner Award

Head Tutor at the Academic Resource Center

Member of Omicron Delta Kappa

Muhlenberg Leadership Excellence Award

Poster Presentation: “Shore Up Your Memory and Become a Star” at National Tutoring Association 2014 Conference

Averill Morash

Dean’s List

Member of Pi Mu Epsilon

Presidential Merit Scholarship

Kathleen Rogers

Honors Thesis Presentation: “The Women of the Pennsylvania General Assembly: Explaining Women’s Representation in Pennsylvania State Politics” at the Pennsylvania Political Science Association’s 75th Annual Meeting in Harrisburg, PA (April 2014)

Member of Pi Sigma Alpha

Paper Presentation: “The ‘Political Ambition’ Of Young Elected Officials: What do we mean by ‘ambition,’ and how can it be attained by potential female candidates?” at the Pennsylvania

Political Science Association's 74th Annual Meeting in Harrisburg, PA and the Midwest Political Science Association's 71st Annual Conference in Chicago, IL
President's Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement and Promise for Postgraduate Work by a Junior

Michael Schramm

Accepted to MA programs at Villanova University and University of Chicago
Dean's List
Dean's Summer Research Grant (Summer 2013)
Highest Honors in History for thesis "Producer or Proletariat"
Member of Omicron Delta Kappa
Member of Phi Alpha Theta
Member of Pi Sigma Alpha
Nominated for Library Scholar Award 2014
Paper Presentation: "Producer or Proletariat: Populism, Socialism, and the Labor Movement" at Phi Alpha Theta Biennial Conference in Albuquerque, NM (2014)
President of InAcchord (2012-2013)
Presidential Merit Scholarship

Olivia Scotti

Founding President of Women's Ensemble (Fall 2012)
Poster Presentation: "Emotion in Music: Does Music Induce Emotion or Simply Represent It?" at LVAIC Undergraduate Psychology Conference (2011)
Member of Omicron Delta Kappa
Member of Phi Sigma Iota
Member of Psi Chi
Presidential Merit Scholarship

Cimarron Sharon

Accepted to University of Pennsylvania's Medical School
Member of Delta Phi Alpha (National German Language Honor Society)
Member of Phi Beta Kappa
Head Tutor at the Academic Resource Center
Poster Presentation: "Cycloheximide Disrupts 'Linked' Memory in a Novel Animal Model of PTSD" at National American Psychological Society Conference
Presentation of Tutor Training: "Shore Up Your Memory and Become a Star" at National Tutoring Association Conference

Class of 2015

John Bennett

Premiered *The Outer Loop*, a feature-length indie comedy that he wrote, directed, and edited; nominated for Best Feature award at the Lehigh Valley Film Festival

Nicole Carusone

Member of Omicron Delta Kappa
Poster Presentation: 2014 American Psychological Association National Convention in Washington, D.C.

James Custer

Captain of Muhlenberg Ultimate Frisbee Team

NSF Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) at Texas A&M (Summer 2013)

Poster Presentation: "Frictional properties of graphene on a functionalized rough surface" at American Chemical Society National Meeting (March 2014)

Poster Presentation: CUR Conference of Research Experience for Undergraduates Student Scholarship in Washington, D.C.

Second Author on Manuscript: "The Influence of Nanoscale Roughness and Substrate Modification on the Frictional Properties of Single and Few Layer Graphene Coatings," submitted to ACS Nano

Vice President of Chemistry Club

Will conduct alternative energy chemistry research on solar panels at Imperial College in London (Summer 2014)

Adora Goldovsky

Accepted to doctorate physical therapy program at Thomas Jefferson University

Dean's List

Presidential Merit Scholarship

Talent Award

Ellen Herschel

Dean's List

Member of Omicron Delta Kappa

Presentation: United Nations HEA Conference on Climate Change and Sustainability in Bangladesh

Presidential Scholars Award

Benjamin Nassau

Dean's List

Member of Omicron Delta Kappa

Presidential Scholar Award

Kyra Smith

Dean's Grant for Summer Research to conduct oral history of the LGBTQ community in Allentown (Summer 2014)

Student Director of the Sedehi Diversity Project 2014

Class of 2016

Jillian Mauro

Cast in an off-Broadway show called *Sex, Relationships, Sometimes . . . Love* by Joelle Arquerros at the Producer's Club and the Jerry Orbach Theatre

Cast in *Urinetown the Musical* at the Civic Theatre of Allentown (May 2014)

Daniel McKenna

Dean's List

Presidential Merit Scholarship

Robert Motz

Dean's List
Marschall Scholarship
Presidential Merit Scholarship
Theater Talent Scholarship

Emily Nguyen

Dean's List
Presidential Merit Scholarship

Shaena Singer

Performer: "Let Fall," which was chosen to go to American College Dance Festival at SUNY
Brockport for adjudication

Katie Skwirut

Dean's List
Member of Alpha Epsilon Delta
Presidential Merit Scholarship

Megan Smith

Dean's List
Espi Guinto Young Writer's Award (2013)

Brittney Tuff

Dean's List
Performer: "Let Fall," which was chosen to go to American College Dance Festival at SUNY
Brockport for adjudication

Jessica Wilson

Dean's List
Presidential Merit Scholarship

Class of 2017

Molly Albano

Dean's List

Morgan Backenstoss

Dean's List
Presidential Merit Scholarship

Christopher Baumgartel

Article: "Middle East peace can be helped by water agreements" in *The Morning Call*
Dean's List
Paper Presentation: "Negotiating Blue in the Garden of Sand: The Politics of Levantine Water" at
2014 Pennsylvania Political Science Association Conference
Presidential Merit Scholarship

Lauren Butler

Dean's List

Presidential Merit Scholarship

Brittany Smith

Dean's List

Presidential Merit Scholarship

Korrinne Yurick

Dean's List

Presidential Merit Scholarship