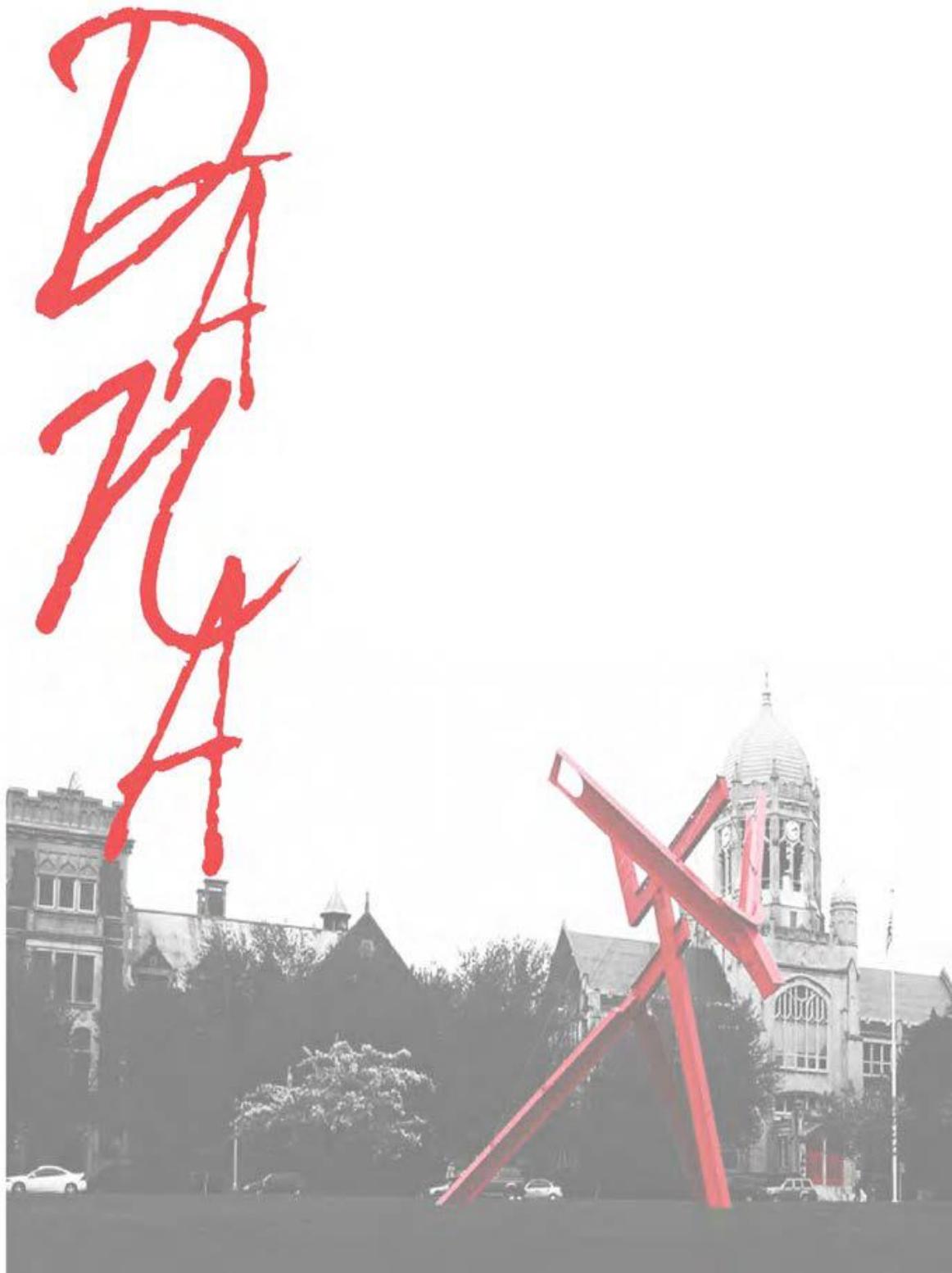


*The Dana Interviewer, Class of 2019*



# The Dana Interviewer

Featuring the Class of 2019

The Dana Scholars Program 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:

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## Table of Contents

<b>Sharon Albert -----</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Thaddeus Robinson -----</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Erika Iyengar-----</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Jordanna Sprayberry-----</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Pre-Orientation Leaders-----</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Victoria Castillo-----</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>James DeMatteo-----</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Michaela Feinberg-----</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Jamie Geenberg-----</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Prianka Hashim-----</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Dana Kneisley -----</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Cateryna Kochan-----</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>Francine Koitz-----</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Emma Lewis-----</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Pierce Lockett-----</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Pooja Menon-----</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Richard Morash-----</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>Blake Peebles-----</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>Nicholas Reit-----</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>Taj Singh-----</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>Patrick Sockler-----</b>	<b>32</b>
<b>Eric Steinbach-----</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Annu Suresh-----</b>	<b>34</b>
<b>Kelly Travitz-----</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Badaal Vachhani -----</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Sally Xie -----</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Senior Accolades -----</b>	<b>38</b>

## **Sharon Albert**

*Written by Viet Le*

Like many, Professor Albert did not know what to do with her life when she was an undergraduate in college. She was an English Literature major but she dabbled in different subjects. She became interested in religion after getting her masters in medieval studies. She realized that religion was everywhere. Whether it be science or any subject matter the effects of a religion can be seen.

As for becoming a Professor, she never actively decided. Professor Albert did a variety of jobs including working as a legislative assistant for parliament in Canada while she was doing her graduate work, and then eventually she “got lucky”. She said that she was in the right place and at the right time to be hired as a professor for Muhlenberg. Professor Albert loves teaching, and Muhlenberg was not her first job teaching students. Before coming here, she taught at the University of Chicago. Compared to Muhlenberg, she likes it here a lot more. It was very intense there and Muhlenberg provided a much-needed contrast. One aspect about Muhlenberg she really likes is teaching evening students in the Wescoe School. Professor Albert believes that students who are willing to come to night classes are very engaged in the classes and the discussions end up becoming particularly meaningful.

Professor Albert became a DANA FYS teacher after applying, but she was always a part of the program in some way or another. She would work with students in the past with their Dana Forum or Dana Projects. She believes that over the years, the Dana program has become a lot more diverse.

Outside of teaching on campus, Professor Albert does research in cultural exchange. In particular, she has dealt with Muslim and Jewish studies in the medieval Mediterranean. Professor Albert also tries to keep up to date with things such as religion and in particular Islam. She is especially interested in core debates in religious studies. An example of such debate is “What does it mean to be objective” regarding religion. Her interest in Islam leads her to scholarship of teaching and learning as well. This involves doing research about how to teach about Islam.

When asked to pinpoint her most memorable experience here at Muhlenberg, Professor Albert couldn’t name a singular event. Rather, she said any moment when a student gets something after struggling and coming to talk to her in her office enthusiastically.

Outside of Muhlenberg, Professor Albert likes to travel, hike and hang out with her family.



## **Thaddeus Robinson**

*Written by Eliana Schuster*

In his nearly twelve years at Muhlenberg, Philosophy Professor Thaddeus Robinson has partnered with the Dana program on multiple occasions, facilitating discussion and exploration for both senior and first-year Dana students.

Fascinated by the concepts of information and education, Robinson has delved into these topics in a great deal of his teaching at Muhlenberg, especially when it has come to points of interdisciplinary focus. Several years ago, Robinson organized the yearly theme for Muhlenberg's Center for Ethics: "Influence & Information: Manipulation." When a later Center for Ethics theme -- "Troubling Truth" -- called upon a similar interdisciplinary exploration of the "ethics of information," as Robinson puts it, he was asked to serve as the organizer and advisor of the Spring 2018 Dana Seniors' Forum. Reflecting upon this experience, Robinson recalls "as the forum leader, I didn't see myself as a teacher so much [but rather] as a sort of facilitator. My job was to find people on campus who might have interesting things to say, and for me it was really fascinating [and] kind of exciting to see what they were going to say but also to have created that situation for 30 students who were interested and motivated to see what they were going to say. [Then,] it was fun to see what the students came up with" Robinson said, referring to the students' capstone group-projects, "and it was also really interesting to see what students from different [academic] backgrounds pursued in different kinds of projects."

In the Fall of 2018, Robinson had the opportunity to work with Dana students yet again; this time, he was working with first year Danas in their First Year Seminar. This course, titled "Ignorance" explored many of Robinson's favorite topics -- information, education, and knowledge -- from the reverse angle of ignorance. Having taught an FYS with the same topic years earlier, Robinson reflected that teaching it to a new cohort of Danas prompted him to approach it in a new light. "What was fun about it for me" Robinson said, "was that [the students] could have almost without my presence had numerous really interesting conversations about the text. It was really curious for me;... sometimes [they] came up with what I thought they would, and sometimes it was totally different and getting to a different place."

In teaching philosophy at Muhlenberg, Robinson reflected that "I go home a lot and I go 'what a great day.' Lots of people's job is to think 'how do I make this spreadsheet work' and my puzzle is like 'how do I present this idea that Plato has to students in a way that will seem really plausible?' And I like to think 'what a privilege to get to think about that as my job.'"



## **Erika Iyengar**

*Written by Kristen Lee*

Biology professor and Dana mentor Dr. Erika Iyengar knew from the impressionable sixth grade that she would become a marine biologist. “I distinctly remember being on a class field trip at the Baltimore Aquarium. On the top floor, there was a wall of pictures. I remember standing there, looking at all the photos of organisms and of marine ecologists. I thought to myself, ‘I love swimming; I love biology; I should become a marine biologist.’”



Driven by her love for the ocean, Dr. Iyengar left her hometown (Media, Pennsylvania) and attended Stanford University for her undergraduate studies. After earning her doctorate from Cornell University, she returned to Pennsylvania and has been at Muhlenberg for 16 years. She rotates between teaching two of the following: Principles of Biology I, Ecology, Field Marine Ecology, Freshwater Ecology, Invertebrate Zoology, Concepts of Biology: Animal Behavior, Evolution, and a cluster course called Planet Alterations.

Dr. Iyengar has had many memorable meetings with former students. She shared, “A large part of my role as a professor is to help students determine what it is that they really love to do. I am excited to see them in future semesters and see how their academic maturity blooms. One interaction in particular stands out when I ran into a student the semester after Bio I and asked her how Biology II was. She looked embarrassed and said she was no longer majoring in biology, or even science. I was surprised--she had done well in my class and I thought she had enjoyed it. Her new major was English. I followed up with, ‘Are you happy?’ She responded, ‘Supremely.’” Dr. Iyengar explained that the point of going to college is to explore academically and find one’s true passions. “I love seeing students find the right academic paths for themselves, wherever that leads,” reflected Dr. Iyengar. “For me, that was always biology. For others, it will hopefully involve understanding biology as it applies to their lives, but not everyone will want to major in it.” Dr. Iyengar emphasized that these realizations are the whole point of a liberal arts education--to find out what one’s interests really are and pursue them. “That’s our goal as professors,” she stated.

Her dedication to biology is not limited to teaching. While at Muhlenberg, Dr. Iyengar has traveled back to the west coast for research at the Friday Harbor Laboratories, a marine lab station run by the University of Washington. During her time there, Dr. Iyengar studies isopods—or in her words, “aquatic roly polies.”

Throughout her years here, Dr. Iyengar has been associated with the Dana program through her research students who happen to be Danas. However, this is the first year of her involvement as professor of the sophomore seminar, which follows the Center for Ethics events as its curriculum. “Because of the topic of the Center for Ethics this year, I wrote an excessively long plea to be the professor for the Dana seminar,” Dr. Iyengar chuckled. She wanted to participate in the Dana program because of the very nature of the Dana students. “I learned so

much from the students during that class. It was an excellent experience," she voiced. "It was inspiring to see their enthusiasm and group-work communication skills from very different perspectives, which was needed considering the grim topics we were discussing. They will be leaders of the future, making the future look brighter!"

## **Jordanna Sprayberry**

*Written by Celeste Samson*

Jordanna Sprayberry's favorite part of being the Senior Dana Forum Professor is the process of facilitating the exploration of new ideas and difficult challenges. Whether she's talking about her own research about human life and its more overlooked effects on flora and fauna or the effect of natural observation through virtual reality on the intrinsic value of the actual natural world, she considers herself a source of scientific perspective. Rather than creating a competitive environment, Dr. Sprayberry champions a type of atmosphere where students can help each other come to meaningful conclusions about their environment and behavior. While a student herself, she spoke often with other scientists, educators, and mathematicians. She kept a sharp focus on her degree in biology while studying undergrad, now wishing she had given herself the opportunity to snag a degree in anthropology as well.

Dr. Sprayberry received her B.S. in Zoology from the University of Rhode Island, and went on to receive her Ph.D. in Biology from the University of Washington and do postdoctoral study at both the University of Washington and the University of Arizona.

Perspective is a large influence on the lens through which she views life, her favorite discovery being her learning to laugh at herself when she makes mistakes. Chess and volleyball slip-ups are an exception to this rule. She values, above all things, good communication, her children, and authenticity. She's usually a cat person and has always been very appreciative of music in all its forms, especially jazz.



## **A Look at the Dana Pre-Orientation Leaders**

*Written by Alexandra Whittington, Owen Mendes, Fiona McGrath, and Jonah Silverman*

At the beginning of the summer following their junior year, the now senior Dana cohort received information about the new pre-orientation for incoming freshman. As Emma Lewis said, “It seemed like a great way to give back to a program that gave so much to me.” All four leaders happened to be working at Muhlenberg over the summer, which they said was essential for planning. In just a little over a month they were able to put together this brand new program. Their preparation involved reaching out to speakers from local organizations, different restaurants, and Muhlenberg faculty. Remarkably, they were able to keep this great program free for the students. Their goal was to create a program that not only introduced the First Year students to the Dana program itself, but also to get them out into the Allentown community and start thinking about what it means to be a citizen scholar. They also made sure to include fun activities and opportunities for bonding between both Dana seminars.

The orientation lasted from Monday August 20th until Wednesday August 22nd. The first day was largely spent introducing everyone into the program and to each other, consisting of minimal ice breakers to the relief of everyone. The next day was centered around a trip to Allentown which allowed for the new Dana class to be introduced to Allentown in a way that most students wouldn’t be able to. They were introduced to charity organizations local to the Lehigh Valley and toured the city and its businesses/attractions. The third and final day was centered around the academic life at Muhlenberg; panels were held for the incoming Danas with the professors of Muhlenberg explaining the opportunities for working with professors and how to take advantage of everything that going to Muhlenberg and being a Dana can offer. Each day was balanced out with a fun activity like bowling or just walking through the park. It was a great way to introduce the new freshman class to life at Muhlenberg as a Dana scholar.

As this is the first year that a Pre-Orientation has existed, and as the orientation leaders are all seniors, they have a unique perspective on the purpose and impact that the Pre-O has on the Dana experience. From their perspective the Dana Pre-O serves as a way to connect the Dana class in a way that did not exist prior. This cultivated a space where friendships and lastings bonds can be made, as before there was no interactions between the Dana Seminars. Along with this, the seminar served as a good way to acclimate students to being on campus prior to the arrival of all the students and Orientation.

The orientation leaders were very reflective in how they were successful and noted that skills and connections that they had developed as Dana’s allowed them to better navigate the tricky work of event planning. The orientation leaders were all in agreement that they recommend being an orientation leader to any Dana Scholar who is not afraid of planning and plenty of phone calls. As far as advice for the future pre-orientation leaders, they advised to be patient and to start planning as early as possible, and most importantly, don’t overlook the significance of on and off campus connections and networking.

## **Victoria Castillo**

*Written by Caroline Armknecht*

For Victoria Castillo, coming to Muhlenberg made sense; she is originally from New Jersey and has pursued a Neuroscience degree here at Muhlenberg. Due to the offer of being accepted into the Dana program and the opportunities that accompanied that offer, along with Muhlenberg's strength in STEM, Victoria decided to come to Muhlenberg. She found that the people in Dana and the STEM departments were equally as passionate about learning as she was, and this mutual interest made her work all the more impactful and interesting.

At Muhlenberg, she had access to great opportunities to do valuable work within the science department that she doubts would have been as amazing an experience at any other school. Most recently, Victoria has worked with Dr. Gotthard on memory research where they looked at how to interfere with episodic memory consolidation via virtual reality. For spring break, Victoria travelled to Paris to present her research on this topic. Alongside this work, Victoria had been looking into the Muhlenberg community's attitude and awareness on green programs on campus for her Dana Senior Forum Project. With this information, she and her group hope to be able to make suggestions on how to improve the school's green programs in the future. This is particularly notable, as she will be leaving a lasting impact on Muhlenberg's campus by making the campus a better place for future students. Besides working on impressive research, Victoria is also a member of Top Naach, the Bollywood dance group on campus! In addition to being a dancer, she is also a strong member of the Muhlenberg community and reaches out to help underclassmen and prospective students through the Campus Delegate Program.

One of the best pieces of advice she would give to prospective students and the Freshman would be, "Don't underestimate the rigor of the classes here at Muhlenberg. It takes hard work, dedication, and effort to succeed in the sciences." In looking back on her own time here, she reflects that she spent the first two years of college learning how to succeed in her classes, and then as an upperclassmen was able to apply all that she had learned while gaining a better understanding of who she is.

Of her experiences at Muhlenberg, some of her fondest memories are of all the traveling she has been able to do with Muhlenberg. Victoria was able to have the opportunity to study abroad in the Spring of 2018 in Scotland. There, Victoria worked hands on in an anatomy and physiology cadaver lab. In reflecting on her experience abroad, she said Scotland gave her the opportunity to live what she was learning and gain hands on experience with the human body before attending medical school, which is incredibly valuable and rare for an undergraduate. In



addition to Scotland, she was able to visit Italy, Rome, and France while abroad. Her favorite part about traveling was that she had learned about these foreign places from classes and books, but she was awed seeing this knowledge translated into real life experiences. Victoria vividly remembers seeing the Mona Lisa in the Louvre, telling me that it is much smaller than it seems in pictures. Victoria is incredibly excited to go back to Paris to present her research, discussed above, and make that a lasting memory in her senior year.

As for the future, Victoria will be taking a gap year before attending medical school in the fall. She does not know yet what kind of doctor she wants to be and is trying to keep her options open. However, she knows that she loves neuroscience, so maybe neurology is in her future. To finish, reflecting back on the Dana program and being a part of it, Victoria said that the people in Dana make the whole experience worth it. Fellow Danas become your closest friends, and that is a friendship that will extend past college.

## **James DeMatteo**

*Written by Marielle Avola*

Originally from Upper Macungie Township, James DeMatteo is a Neuroscience major and active member of the Muhlenberg community. First son of Jim and Marlene, James is a Pennsylvania local who chose Muhlenberg for its incredibly close-knit community. Upon visiting Muhlenberg, he was struck by the caring community environment he experienced.

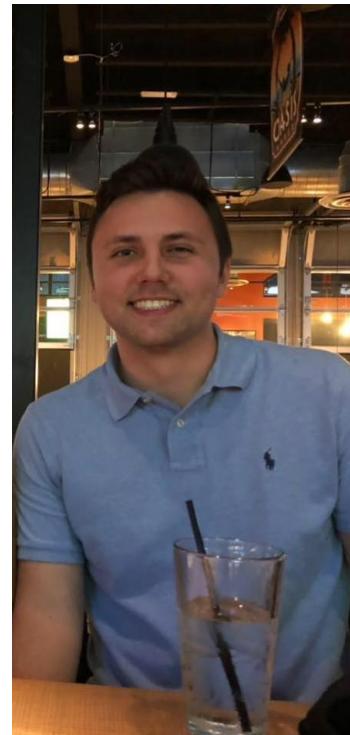
On campus, James is a member of AED, the Muhlenberg pre-health fraternity. He also served as a contributing editor for the Muhlenberg Academic Review and as Dana Class Representative during the semesters of Fall 2017 and Spring 2018. During his time here at Muhlenberg, James has participated in various performance opportunities including dancing for Top Naach for two semesters and acting in two Red Door Festival plays his freshman year.

In the classroom, James conducted a three-semester research project with Dr. Williams, a neuroscience professor. Their research investigated the production of a low-cost, reliable EEG headset for home use. This research project not only exposed James to various laboratory applications of neuroscience, but also engaged him in modern techniques of 3D printing, coding, and product design. Such skills and experiences have enhanced his learning experience to which he attributes as a benefit of Muhlenberg's integrated, liberal-arts community.

James not only seized opportunities on campus, but also engaged with the wider Muhlenberg network. He started an internship his sophomore year, working with a local podiatrist and Muhlenberg alumnus. James has continued to work in the practice for almost three years, during which he has gained invaluable clinical experience.

Such experience has also helped James solidify his career plans. He plans to attend medical school within the next two years to pursue his goal of becoming a doctor, specifically an anesthesiologist. After which, he plans to move to the West Coast where he may continue to establish his career.

As he prepares for the excitement of his nearing future endeavors, James reflects on his time here at Muhlenberg and his involvement in the Dana Program. He believes the program has encouraged him to consider problems not from a singular viewpoint, but as multifaceted issues. James implicates such mentality when engaging with fellow members of the Muhlenberg community as well as the thousands of clinical patients with which he has interacted. As a citizen-scholar, James will continue to apply his undergraduate knowledge and skills to global issues as he serves the community beyond Muhlenberg.



## **Michaela Feinberg**

*Written by Rebekka Broyles*

**M**entorships over the summer. Michaela has done two mentorships with Dr. Sanchez delving into Katangese nationalism.

**I**ntersection between gender and nationalism. Her research is dedicated to making contemporary connections to the relationship between gender and nationalism.

**C**ongo secession. Michaela studied the Katanga Providence's attempted secession from Congo in the 1960's.

**H**istory Major. Although she originally planned on majoring in dance, Michaela found that she had a passion in learning about the past.

**A**nthropology Minor. Michaela took a special interest in studying gender and sexuality along with ethnography.

**E**nvironment project. For her Senior Seminar, Michaela is doing a project with a couple of other seniors from different majors on the Anthropocene.

**L**earning in South Africa. This year, Michaela is taking a MILA course to South Africa to study the history and religion of that area.

**A**chievement of research grants. After proposing her project to the dean, Michaela received research grants from Muhlenberg that allowed her to research here over the summer.

**F**emales protest in the 1960's. She discovered a Katangese women's protest against the United Nations after they were stripped of their freedom of movement and maternity care.

**E**lection series. Her sophomore seminar was focused on the presidential election in which she attended many interesting speeches.

**I**ron Making. She worked to excavate old charcoal burner huts where they used to make iron in the 1800's.

**N**ew York City research. While Michaela did her research in New York, she reached out to the Library of Congress and professors at Oxford for additional assistance.

**B**elief in the importance of humanities research. Michaela was one of the few students who did her research over the summer on the humanities rather than science.

**E**xcitement for graduate school. This year, Michaela will be applying to several graduate schools to learn more about history or library science.

**R**esearch assistant. Michaela works as a research assistant for her previous mentor this year Dr. Sanchez.

**G**uilford, Connecticut. Michaela Feinberg was born and raised in a small town in Connecticut.



## **Jamie Greenberg**

*Written by Danielle Barrett*

Jamie Greenberg is a Dana senior who yields from Lansdale Pennsylvania. She has two majors and a petitioned minor in Religious Studies, History, and Jewish Studies, respectively. An important part of her decision to choose Muhlenberg was the energy of the people here, especially those in the Dana Scholars Program, and her appreciation and recognition of that energy only grew with time.

Her Freshman Year, Jamie was part of the FYS on WW1 entitled 1971; The Year that Changed the World with Dr. Cooperman. Since then, she has only become more active in the Dana Program; she was a Dana Class Representative her freshman and sophomore years, and she regularly organizes informal dinners in the dining hall for the Danas to meet up outside of the classroom setting. Her experience with Dr. Cooperman in her class was clearly fantastic because Jamie went on to fulfill her mentorship requirement with Dr.

Cooperman, studying Women Rabbis in the community. She also worked as a Hillel engagement intern her Sophomore and Junior year during which she welcomed all of the new Jewish students and assisted in the transition to religious life and life in general on campus. In addition to her involvement in the Dana program, and despite the academic rigors of having a double major and a minor, Jamie remains active in other clubs and organizations both on and off campus. She is a tour guide, was an interfaith fellow for a year, and is an off-campus religious school teacher for second and third graders at KI.

Spending four years at Muhlenberg has given Jamie the opportunity to explore the surrounding area, and to have had experiences that were quintessential to her overall college experience. One of her favorite outings off-campus is the odd pairing of Chinese food and Froyo. Specifically, a five-minute drive to Bamboo, and, right across the street from there, Menchie's froyo. She stated that upon entering Bamboo, it is clear it's a Muhlenberg favorite because there are students filling the place.

When asked about advice for the incoming class of 2023, her advice falls right in line with her evident approach to her own college experience. Her main words of advice are, "Enjoy it! Take advantage of opportunities because it goes so fast." It is clear that Jamie has done just that with her college experience. She is looking forward to taking a hard-earned year off after graduation in order to travel and work and is looking forward to continuing her education in Religion at a Graduate Program.



## **Prianka Hashim**

*Written by Rose Glantz*

Prianka Hashim is a Senior in the Dana Scholar program at Muhlenberg College. She is originally from Allentown, PA and is a Neuroscience and Gender & Sexuality double major. After she took the introductory course in Women's and Gender studies she realized it was a great interest of hers and chose to pursue it as a self-designed major. Prianka does research with Dr. Kate Richmond looking at predictors of individual's attitudes toward surrogacy and with Dr. Jeremy Teissere on the GABA Receptor and pharmacological compounds.

On campus, Prianka works as a head tutor in the Academic Resource Center helping Muhlenberg students succeed in subjects such as neuroscience, sociology, and statistics. Additionally, she serves as the Student Director for the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion which takes various surveys and polls throughout the Lehigh Valley. Prianka is also involved with Muhlenberg's Bollywood dance group called "Top Naach". The dance group performs throughout campus at different events. Some of Prianka's favorites include the Diwali and Holi festivals that are held in the fall and spring respectively with cultural activities and lots of great food.

Last year, during Prianka's junior year at Muhlenberg she studied abroad in Copenhagen, where she completed research at the University of Copenhagen. There she was able to travel throughout Europe and explore various countries surrounding Denmark. Prianka loved studying abroad and strongly recommends students partake in the program. In the Spring, Prianka plans to graduate from Muhlenberg and then apply for med school after completing Neuroscience research.



## **Dana Kneisley**

*Written by Corrine Battistelli*

Dana Kneisley is a native of Lancaster, PA. Originally thinking she would go pre-med, today Dana is a neuroscience major with minors in Italian and Spanish. Other than being a Dana Scholar, she has played the cello in the orchestra since freshman year and has been on the executive board for both Spanish and Italian club. Also, Dana is a head tutor, having tutored in Italian, Spanish, psychology, and biology. She prefers tutoring the languages as it provides opportunities for her to go back to the basics and helps her in her higher level classes. When starting the college search, she knew she wanted to pursue a liberal arts education, where it would be possible to foster her dual love for science and language. She applied to three similar schools, but Muhlenberg offered everything she wanted along with a fresh start. The Dana Program was a big part in putting Muhlenberg in first, as it meant the school must have had a high opinion of her to offer such a position.

Her first Dana experience was with her First Year Seminar, which focused on George Orwell. Her Sophomore Seminar revolved around the 2016 Presidential Election. This year, the Senior Forum is about the anthropocene. For her group's project, they are focusing on intersectionality regarding the ways in which climate change disproportionately affects various populations in the United States. They are analyzing the differences between creators of such problems versus those affected, with variables such as different illnesses and accessibility to Healthcare.

When it came time to pick a location for study abroad, Dana had to make the decision between focusing on Spanish or Italian. With fewer opportunities in the US to immerse herself in the culture, along with a love of pasta and the difficult grammar, Italian won the debate. Dana decided to go to Ferrara, nestled in northeastern Italy, for the spring semester of her junior year. She stayed with a local woman and her daughter, who was about the same age as her and was not always around. There were only twelve people in the program, which was relatively small. She and her friends traveled almost every weekend, taking advantage of their proximity to other European countries and cities. When looking back on her experience, she tied it to what she learned about identity and perspective in Mind and Brain, a class part of the neuroscience major at Muhlenberg. Before talking to her, many people must have assumed that she was Italian. However, when she spoke, her accent gave her away, changing the way they look at her.

Since the summer of 2018, Dana has worked with Dr. Jeremy Teissére's research lab for both her Dana mentorship and internship. They have been observing GABA receptors, which are found in the brain, and how different substances affect them. In the lab the research assistants create the receptors in test tubes and then transfer them into frog eggs in order to



better observe the reactions. Then needles measure the electricity in the cell. Each member of the lab uses a natural substance that impacts the receptors. While some are studying passion flower or Earl Grey, Dana is focusing on jujube. These natural mediums may be able to be used as a substitute for other substances, such as Xanax. They are observing where they bind on the receptors and why these natural cures have been historically popular. This research is molecular neuroscience, and requires Dana to be familiar with drug actions and the physics around electricity.

For her CUE course, Dana is working in clinical neuroscience. Out of five students in the course, four of them are Dana scholars. Dana's focus for her paper is people suffering from aphasia, especially bilingual patients. Aphasia affects communication, as those suffering either cannot speak or have difficulty picking the right words. This may come after a stroke or due to a neurodegenerative disorder. Dana's clinical review and experiment is focused on the behavioral aspect of the bilingual patients.

Currently, Dana is looking for a research position focused on either molecular biology or neuroscience. This position would ideally last between one to two years. She is still trying to figure out whether she would like to pursue grad school. The main goal is to apply for those research positions and catch someone's attention. Then she can utilize the experience she has gained as a Dana and a college student to better the medical community.

## **Cateryna Kochan**

*Written by Hallie Hoffman*

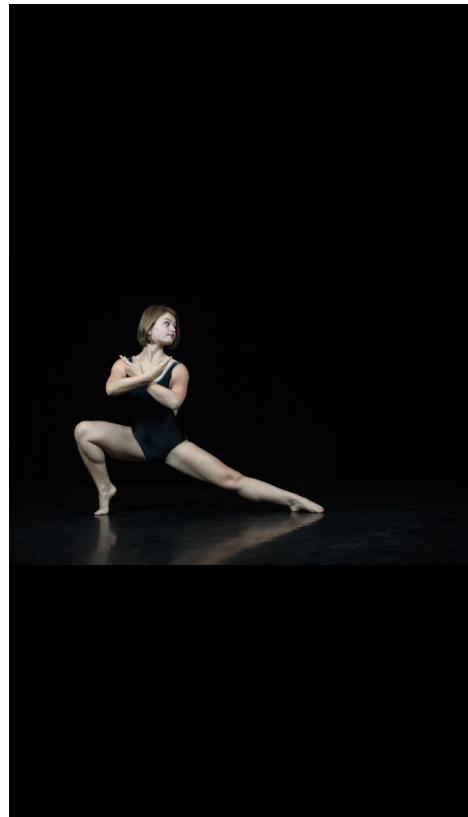
As a Dance and Psychology major, Cateryna Kochan is the ideal liberal arts student. Coming from Upstate New York, she knew that she wanted to study both the arts and the sciences, and decided that Muhlenberg would offer her the opportunity to pursue these interests simultaneously. While these two majors are quite different, Cat has fully embraced their overlaps.

Cat began dancing when she was four years old, and her love for dancing has only grown since then. At Muhlenberg, she studies Dance with a concentration in Dance Science, and is an active member of the Muhlenberg Dance Association, participating in many different dance shows during the past four years. Cat is currently working on a senior thesis exploring the impact of teachers on the learning experience of students and will be presenting this research at two different conferences this semester. For her Dana Mentorship, she is doing another study that integrates dance and psychology, this time studying self-perceptions of students in the dance Classroom.

Through Muhlenberg's Dance Program, Cat studied abroad in Arezzo, Italy, during her junior year, an experience that was both artistically and personally fulfilling for her. This was not her first time abroad, however. Sophomore year, Cat traveled to London for a semester, which was her first time ever being on an airplane! "If you can study abroad, do it," said Cat. "You will change more than you would any other three months of your life."

After college, Cat plans on getting a master's degree in Dance/Movement Therapy. This is something she explored through her Dana Internship over the summer, where she assisted at a dance therapy practice that worked with residents at a senior assisted living home, many of whom had Alzheimer's or dementia. "That was the most life-changing experience for me because it was a realization of, this is right for me, this is what I need in my life, this is what I need to do," said Cat. "I need to help people."

Cat loves being in both a scientific mindset and an artistic mindset, explaining, "I get to close that gap for myself. I get to say, wait, these are related." What she loves most about the Dana Scholars Program is the mix of students, all with different points of view. "It pushes people to get to know other people who they wouldn't otherwise be getting to know," said Cat. "It's just the largest mix of people, and we all get to be using our own strengths...As challenging as that is all the time, that's what happens in the real world, and I think that that should be happening More."



Cat's advice to other students is to do your reading, appreciate free food, develop relationships with your professors, and most of all, "Whenever you can get a moment to get to know someone, take it."

## **Francine Koitz**

*Written by Katherine Behling*

Francine Koitz grew up in Maryland with a passion for both the state and the people in it. She knew without a doubt that a liberal arts school was right for her after attending a Muhlenberg sponsored program the summer before her senior year of high school. The program, “Brain Camp,” and all of the faculty members that she met through the experience really sold her on the liberal arts. Francine also liked the smaller size of Muhlenberg’s student body. Having a parent who worked at a liberal arts institution as well, Francine felt that a school such as Muhlenberg would be the perfect fit.

Although Francine came into college on the pre-med track, she decided on a Biology major and a Math minor. She credits this decision, in part, to what she described as “life changing” courses. One of her favorite classes was her cluster course, entitled “Sensors and Sensation.” Originally the course was just intended to fill a general academic requirement, as it was a higher level math elective. However, “Sensors and Sensation” ended up being one of Francine’s favorite classes that she ever took at Muhlenberg.

Another element of Muhlenberg that drew Francine to campus was the plentiful research opportunities, which she took advantage of throughout her time in college. Francine completed research within the Biology department, not only to fulfill the mentorship component that the Dana Program requires, but also because of a passion for the subject. She spent three years conducting research with Doctor Wightman and enjoyed her time doing so.

Aside from research, Francine is very involved on campus. She works as a peer tutor, and says that it’s one of her favorite activities she takes part in. Francine is also a member of the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) on campus. In addition to these things, Francine helps to organize and lead transition workshops that take place each year. The workshops are intended to bridge the gap that many students feel exists between High School and College, and take place during the fall semester each year.

Currently, Francine is working on her biology thesis, a feat that less than five senior students take on each semester. Not only is there a written thesis involved with the project, but a presentation at one of the biology seminars is also required. Francine’s presentation will take place closer to the end of the semester.

Francine’s Dana Forum project will be focused on environmental escapism, and the question of whether or not virtual green spaces can replace natural ones in a satisfying way. This is a far stretch from her first Dana experience, which was a First Year Seminar class themed around George Orwell’s work. Her project, she says, is a great display of the reasons why the



Dana Program is so interesting. Francine says one of the best things about the Dana program is how interdisciplinary it can be- how everyone brings different backgrounds to the table during discussions, and how many different things you can learn from these perspectives.

After Muhlenberg, Francine has secured a two-year post-baccalaureate program conducting research. Later in life, she plans to head to the west and get a PhD to work in the plant development field of biology. Francine is very excited to take this next step and go out into the world.

## **Emma Lewis**

*Written by Betty BenDor*

Coming into Muhlenberg from her hometown of Sellersville, Pa., senior Emma Lewis was intent on becoming a psychology major. But after taking an Intro to Psych class in the fall that she described as not quite being her “cup of tea,” she enrolled in an Intro to Comparative Politics and International Relations course for the spring semester, where her political science path began.

“I didn’t know political science was going to be my thing,” Emma said. “When I was in high school, I did have a fairly strong understanding of right and wrong, and justice and fairness and equality, so maybe those were some formative personal traits that guided me towards this decision.”

Now nearing the end of her time at Muhlenberg, Emma said that she has never looked back on that decision. She credits the department faculty as being instrumental in her decision to become a political science major. Although there are no official concentrations in the political science department, Emma said that she has purposefully picked classes that focus on American politics, which is her primary area of interest.

While Emma likes to joke a lot about how her travel abroad experience in the spring of her junior year only took her a couple hours south of Muhlenberg, to Washington, D.C., she says the internship-focused aspect of the program was incredibly influential in giving her a sense of what she wants to do following graduation.

“That was a great program for me to get some post-grad experience, just get my feet a little bit wet in what’s to come after graduation in May, which was a really great use of my semester off campus,” Emma said. “Thinking about networking and establishing myself post-grad was something that was important for me to do.”

While in D.C., Emma interned with NARAL Pro-Choice Maryland where she worked to educate the local and statewide community on the issues surrounding reproductive rights. She also got involved in political activism, doing policy research on bills affecting reproductive issues that were active in the Maryland state legislature. She said she potentially sees herself involved later on in similar nonprofit activist work.

She did, however, get a chance to go abroad her sophomore year, when she went to Costa Rica for a MILA (Muhlenberg Integrated Learning Abroad) course with professors from both the political science and environmental science departments. She described this experience as being a great hybrid of the two academic fields.

In regards to the Dana Scholars program, Emma said she felt it was a great way to connect with students from a diverse variety of departments. Looking past graduation, she said



the experiences the Dana program provided will be instrumental in helping navigate conversations in the workplace with people who come from different academic backgrounds.

“I feel like the Dana Scholars program is a heightened liberal arts philosophy. At Muhlenberg, you are already in an environment that emphasizes interdisciplinary critical thinking, analytical thinking, and the Dana Scholars program is a way for you to take another step into that kind of liberal arts atmosphere in the fact that your cohort is full of people from various academic backgrounds,” Emma said. “Conversations that you have in your seminar classes can give you more of an insight into different ways of thinking.”

To fulfill her Dana mentorship requirement, she worked on an independent study regarding conscientious objection to war. Her D.C. program counted toward the internship requirement.

Emma has also been actively involved with the BergVotes club since her sophomore year. She said that she has enjoyed watching the club grow significantly over the past couple years to where it now frequently sponsors events and brings in speakers to campus.

“That kind of commitment to increasing political education and awareness on campus and encouraging young people to believe in their own political efficacy and the importance of voting and getting engaged in politics in our country is definitely something that I will continue outside of school,” Emma said.

She is currently interning with the League of Women Voters in Lehigh County which she said is a great way to bring what she has learned about voter mobilization and education at Muhlenberg to a wider community.

Looking forward, Emma said she is considering taking a year or two off after graduation to get some work experience before she pursues a graduate degree in the field of political science.

## **Pierce Lockett**

*Written by Sadie Huntington*

Dana Senior Pierce Lockett comes to Muhlenberg from Ardmore, Pennsylvania, just outside of Philadelphia. Unsure of what college he would be furthering his education at, Pierce received a promotional letter from Muhlenberg his junior year of high school. However, it was more than just a letter to Pierce. The letter was hand-signed by a college administrator, and Pierce immediately felt an attraction to the school due to its interest and caring nature. “I thought that was just so cool that somebody signed this letter and was curious”, he says.

Coming to Muhlenberg, Pierce was very interested in English and French. Although he started out as an International Studies major, Pierce soon realized that he wanted to follow his passion for literature. After taking his first French class at Muhlenberg, he was “blown away” and decided “I have to be a French major”. His English major was solidified after taking a series of English classes his freshman year which he loved. Pierce is now the French Club President, Lead Tutor in the Writing Center, Editor and Chief of “Muses”, an Arts and Literary magazine, layout designer of the Muhlenberg College Academic Review, Java Joes employee, and member of “SIT”, a standup comedy group. He is confident that studying what he loves was the right choice and he is excited to see what the future holds.

Being a part of the Dana Program was very beneficial to his Muhlenberg experience. He describes his favorite part of the Dana Program as the Mentorships he had through it. Pierce mentored under Dr. Chatzidimitriou of the French Department and Dr. Stephen of the English Department. He found both of his mentorships immensely interesting and thought-provoking and is very grateful that he had the opportunity to work with such attentive and generous professors.

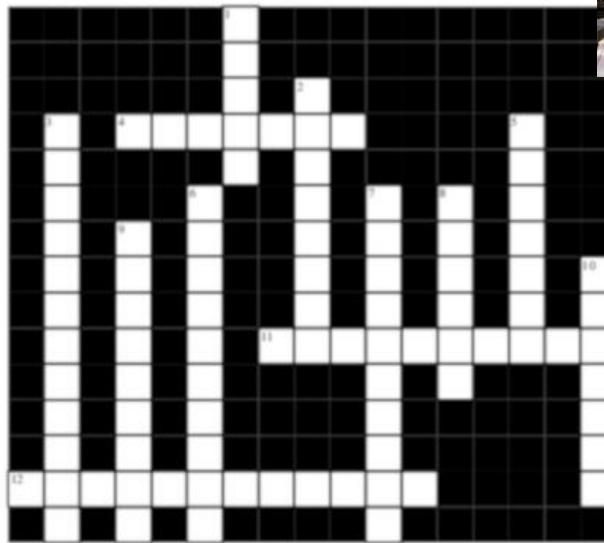
After studying abroad in Paris, France during second semester of his junior year, Pierce is hoping to possibly teach English in France for a year after graduation. He described his study abroad experience as difficult and challenging but would recommend it to every Muhlenberg student. He explains, “It was a very transcendent experience. I learned so so much about myself because of it. I think study abroad is probably the most important aspect of global education, and I think for Dana’s especially, having that ability to go beyond campus and to experience things outside of Muhlenberg is pretty life-changing.”

Now in his final semester at Muhlenberg, Pierce expresses the love he developed for the campus. He says, “I did really love it and I really do love it. It’s going to be tough to say goodbye this Spring.”



# Pooja Menon

Frances Bixby



## Across

- 4 A Muhlenberg dance team that Pooja has been a part of for the last four years.
- 11 The term for a Spanish soap opera and one of Pooja's favorite things to watch to brush up on her Spanish.
- 12 The branch of science concerned with the chemical and physicochemical processes and substances that occur within living organisms and coincidentally Pooja's major here at Muhlenberg.

## Down

- 1 The second-most populated country in the world that Pooja recently traveled to, lovingly referring to it as "the motherland."
- 2 The name of a group of atoms bonded together and what Pooja researched at Muhlenberg last summer.
- 3 The "City of Brotherly Love" where Pooja intends to attend medical school when her time at Muhlenberg is over.
- 5 The fourth-largest city in Spain where Pooja studied abroad and had the opportunity to travel throughout Europe.
- 6 The state that contributes the most students to Muhlenberg's population and that Pooja calls home (specifically Hillsborough).
- 7 The school that Pooja was drawn to for its small school atmosphere and involvement in an eight-year medical program for which she was accepted.
- 8 The name given to types of shows like "The Good Place" and "Parks and Recreation" and one of Pooja's favorite ways to spend her limited free time.
- 9 The name of the Indian cultural club on campus that Pooja cofounded in her freshman year.
- 10 A love language used in twenty countries around the world that happens to be Pooja's minor.

Answers:  
1 India  
2 Molecule  
3 Fusion  
4 Philadelphia  
5 Seattle  
6 New Jersey  
7 Muhlenberg  
8 Stream  
9 Top Nach  
10 Spanish  
11 Tel Aviv  
12 Biochemistry

## **Richard Morash**

*Written by Lauren Kim*

Richard is from Bernardsville, New Jersey. He is a double major of computer science and physics. His campus activities include running workshop for computer science, and being a learning assistant for physics, captain of the Quidditch team. He originally chose to attend school at Muhlenberg because he felt Muhlenberg was the best academic fit and he could be adequately challenged here, which he has found to be fairly true.

The Dana Program has helped Richard by allowing him to connect with people who he wouldn't have otherwise gotten to know by providing a common ground to get to know new people. His favorite Dana experience was the field trip during his freshman year. The class went to Philadelphia to see the play Animal Farm and visit the Art Museum. After college, Richard plans to be a software engineer at Amazon.



## **Blake Peebles**

*Written by Benjamin Chen*

Muhlenberg Class of 2019's Blake Peebles hails from the city of Portland, Oregon. Recognizable by his enthusiastic personality as well as his welcoming nature, he is making sure to enjoy his last semester here on campus. While at first planning to pursue a major in computer science, Blake eventually made the decision to instead set his sights on a theater track (A choice he definitely would not regret). Since then he has become rather invested in the school's theater program, taking part in a number of theater organizations including the Muhlenberg Circus, an improv group called UiP, and the Muhlenberg Theater Association in which he has taken the substantial role of performance ensemble coordinator.

The Dana Scholars program is, of course, one of the greatest highlights of Blake's time at Muhlenberg. He strongly believes that the Dana Scholars program is meant to bring together people who are very engaged with the world around them in order to cooperate and focus on many considerable and pressing issues that have oftentimes been ignored.

While a small and faraway liberal arts college didn't seem to even be an option for Blake at first, everything seemed to change upon his first visit to Muhlenberg College. He was ultimately drawn to the school's tight-knit and friendly community as well as its peaceful location here in Allentown.

Over the past few years at Muhlenberg, Blake has been able to take part in a number of exciting activities and make some incredible memories. Taking advantage of the study abroad opportunity in the city of Arezzo, Italy, he was able to expand his knowledge of theater while experiencing numerous diverse aspects of Italian culture. Realizing that getting the hands-on experience of creating a television show was one of his major interests, he decided that he would be working with one of his theater professors under a mentorship in order to produce their very own Dungeons & Dragons web series. On the other hand, Blake's internship has him working directly in the Dana program as an editor of the Dana Interviewer.

Blake's advice for his underclassmen is to really take advantage of everything that is offered by Muhlenberg as "if you really want to obtain something, it's definitely possible here! You just have to actively seek that particular thing out." In essence, the countless opportunities at



this school for exploring new fields, making new relationships, and “discovering yourself” should not just be swept aside.

Blake is excited to see what the future may hold for him! While Blake has still yet to establish the plans for his future after Muhlenberg, it is quite apparent that his motivation and genuine disposition will allow him to clear any oncoming obstacles and to attain success wherever he may go.

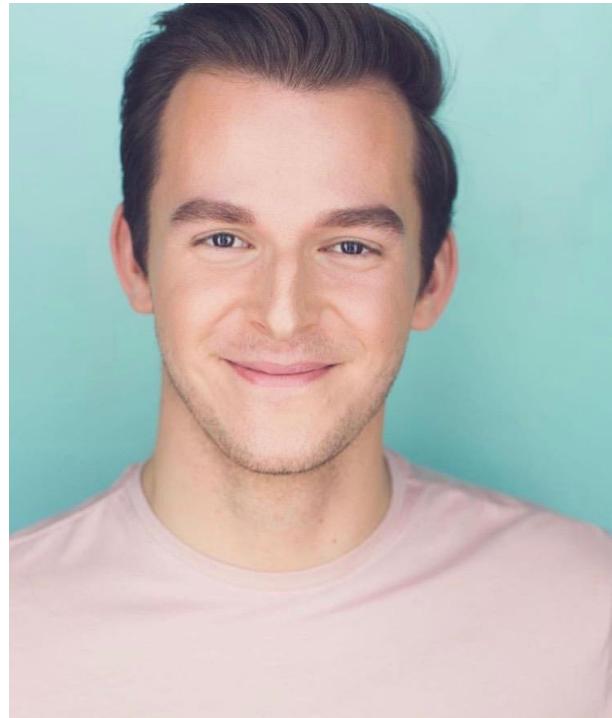
## **Nicholas Reit**

*Written by Ara Ludwig*

Nick Reit, a Dana senior at Muhlenberg college, is an interesting person who is great to talk to. He is a double theater and self designed major. His self designed major is Interarts Performance and Composition composed of a theater, music, dance, and visual art mix that lets him create his own performances with creativity. While some people may change their major in school, Nick has known he wanted to do theater since high school and he has stuck with it. He has been in six main stages during his time here at Muhlenberg and is currently in rehearsal for Mr. Burns. He has been on the board of the Muhlenberg Theater Association since he was a sophomore and has been their publicity manager in the past. Nick is in the musical theater cabaret group SongCycle and the stand up comedy group Sit. He works in the box office and is also a Dana Scholar.

Nick started out the Dana program in his Dana First Year Seminar: George Orwell with Dr. Gambino. He liked the discussions they had had in class and thinks of this class as his first community building experience at Muhlenberg because he knew he would interact the same students all four years. For his senior Dana forum project he is working with Peirce, Taj, Kelly, and Holly to look into the apathy of some people towards global warming and the crisis earth. They are looking into corporations greenwashing their products and pretending to care about global warming to engage with their target demographic. The best part of the Dana program for Nick is the community aspect. He has been able to meet people outside of the theater major and connect with them. Nick has been able to have intelligent conversations from multiple viewpoints and build connections.

When he was home in Wisconsin deciding where to go to school, he had applied to many schools. Muhlenberg stood out because of the liberal arts education that would allow him to take classes outside his major to expand his world view. He also liked the community of Muhlenberg on a larger scale, outside of the Dana program. The community at Muhlenberg and the small size is Nick's favorite part of college. He was surprised, as was I, by the amazing people here and the close relationships he has



been able to build over the years. At Muhlenberg, Nick studied abroad his junior year. He went to the Royal Conservatoire in Glasgow, Scotland. He entered their program and said it was intense in a way that was different from Muhlenberg, but welcome. He was able to learn new ways to think and different ways to do stuff he had not experienced. He was able to travel and go to London, Paris, and Italy. Nick would not change anything about his time abroad or at Muhlenberg.

After graduation, Nick wants to try auditioning and apply for acting apprenticeships or internships. He also wants to continue creating pieces and designing performances using his creativity. Nick Reit is a great person and, when asked what advice he would give to a freshman, said take advantage of all your opportunities and be proactive.

## **Taj Singh**

*Written by Natalie David*

Three years ago Taj sat at a small, green table wedged next to a brick column and a trashcan in Java Joe's to interview his Dana senior. This week, I sat at the same table, in the same seat, with my Dana senior. I pressed "record" on my phone, and we talked. Why Muhlenberg? Funnily enough, Taj's first choice schools were Michigan and Duke, adamantly against the small liberal-arts school in the Lehigh Valley. He actually committed to the University of Michigan, but after applying last minute and getting accepted into the Drexel 4-4 Medical Program, Taj decided Muhlenberg was his best opportunity. At first, Taj took every opportunity to get off campus. But after discovering opportunities for leadership and involvement, Taj fell in love with the experience here. He was glad to know the peers in his small classes, as opposed to the unfamiliarity of a massive school.

Taj Singh hails from Orwigsburg, PA, but grew up in Allentown his entire life. He is a Neuroscience major with a strong concentration in Sociology. His interests are hardly limited to the lab or the library. Taj is a member of Alpha Tau Omega (national leadership fraternity) and Omicron Delta Kappa (national honor society). He is an RA, a hall director, a Chemistry Learning Assistant, a researcher in Dr. Tessaire's lab, co-founder of Top Naach (a Bollywood dance team), and a DJ for campus events. Taj's proudest accomplishment? "Building my own experience by becoming involved in so many things and pushing myself to be better and better." It's his involvement, his ability to connect with so many people that has helped make his time so meaningful here. Taking the opportunities to listen to others, learn about their histories and backgrounds has drastically changed his perspective since he was a freshman. From his sociology classes at Muhlenberg, he was able to learn about the inequities in our society. Through Top Naach, he found a way to connect with other cultures, engage students in Indian culture and traditions. From his experiences as an RA and LA, he was able to discover his passion for guiding and teaching students. He has become more curious, intellectually motivated, outgoing, and present. All of this has culminated into his goals for the future.

For the next two years, Taj is participating in Teach for America (TFA), teaching chemistry to underserved high school students in Baltimore, Maryland. He truly hopes to make a difference in the lives of his students. He acknowledges that chemistry is not a popular subject, but wants to reach his students and show them they can become successful in the future. After TFA, where Taj will also earn his Master's in Education, he plans on continuing to medical school. Not only eager to help his own future patients, Taj wants to participate in Doctors without Borders to work against inequities in the world.



His friends joke that he's "stressed all the time" due to his busy schedule. Taj doesn't think of it that way. He's managed to balance his time and "find the fun in everything", as opposed to viewing activities as just a commitment. The tattoo on his right arm is the word "Chardi Kala", which is the Sikh value of eternal optimism. Having presence and good-spirits in all aspects of his life is a value he carries with him.

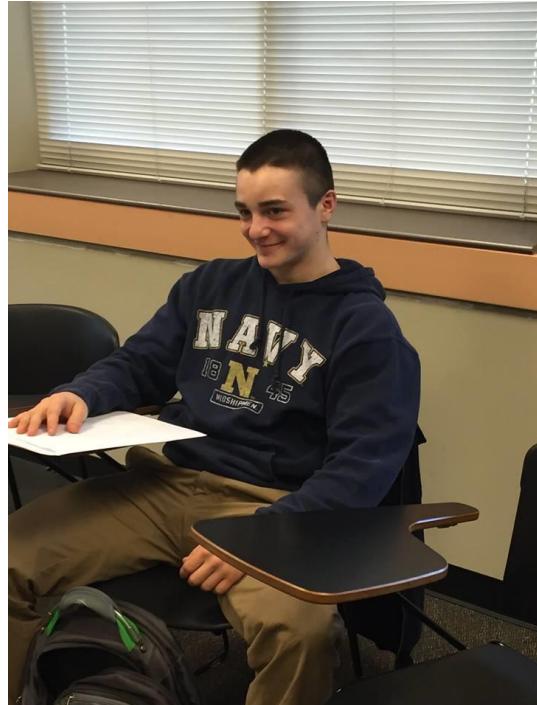
At the end of our interview, I asked Taj to give his freshman self a piece of advice: "I would say keep going and don't see anything as boring. The second you slip away from things you might miss something perspective changing or moving."

I feel lucky to have been able to get to know Taj better, to learn about who he is, and to hear his reflections on his time at Muhlenberg. I know he will make a difference in the lives of his students and his patients.

## **Patrick Sockler**

*Written by Jennifer Moretti*

Patrick Sockler, Muhlenberg senior, former wrestler, and Dana Scholar, is a biology major from Cranbury, New Jersey. He also has a minor in French and Francophone Studies. He is going to medical school after he graduates from Muhlenberg this spring, and he's particularly interested in dermatology. So far, Patrick has been accepted to the medical schools at U Penn, UVA, Temple University, and Jefferson, and Robert Wood Johnson, and he's waiting to hear back from more. He first came to Muhlenberg for its excellent science programs and for the opportunity to join the wrestling team, which he participated in during his first year. His favorite memory from Muhlenberg is winning his wrestling match when the Muhlenberg team competed in Madison Square Garden. Patrick has taken full advantage of all the opportunities Muhlenberg has to offer inside and outside of the classroom. He's a head tutor and workshop tutor in the Academic Resource Center, he holds leadership positions in the ATO fraternity and AED, Muhlenberg's pre-health honors society, and he's in ODK, a leadership honors society. Patrick says that these organizations have provided him with valuable social opportunities outside of Muhlenberg's science community. He has also volunteered at Whitehall Manor with hospice patients. He's done extensive biology research with Dr. Hark, looking at genomes in fruit flies and investigating how speciation occurs over time. Also, he's worked with *arabidopsis thaliana* to test how certain genes affect the density of DNA and trichome development. He credits the Dana program with giving him the opportunity to contribute novel research to the science community through mentorships and internships, which has been an essential part of his biology education and preparation for medical school.



## **Eric Steinbach**

*Written by Lindsey Harris*

Eric Steinbach, a Dana senior, is full of passion and drive. Originally from Edison, New Jersey, he came to Muhlenberg because he loved the small school feeling to be found in Allentown.

During his time at Muhlenberg, Eric has become incredibly involved and devoted. From the start of his freshman year, Eric devoted himself to the Jewish community at Muhlenberg. He has served as president of Hillel and even did an internship at Hillel. For his Dana internship, Eric served as a “Hillel Engagement Intern.”

Besides Hillel, Eric has devoted a lot of time to his fraternity, ZBT. Eric has risen in ranks and served on the executive board of the fraternity as Communications Director. ZBT has allowed Eric to surround himself with a community of true friends. And, judging by the ZBT sweatshirt he wore to our interview, he truly loves his fraternity.

Despite his heavy engagement throughout the Muhlenberg campus, Eric has found the time to find his academic passions and pursue them with vigor. This spring, Eric will be graduating with degrees in both Religion Studies and Economics. Before coming to Muhlenberg, Eric had no intentions of studying Religion, but his New Testament class with Dr. Gruen, now among his favorite professors, converted him. Without Dr. Gruen’s New Testament class, Eric doubts that he would have discovered his interest in the subject.

Between his studies, fraternity, and Hillel engagement, Eric does not possess much free time. But when he does find himself with a spare minute, he loves to read, his favorite book being the Count of Monte Cristo. If not reading, you can most likely find him watching Game of Thrones or eating a steak at Noshery South.

As he leaves Muhlenberg and embarks on his new journey, if Eric could give one piece of advice to future Danas, it would be to embrace the opportunities you have and appreciate the exceptional cohort of people who surround you.



## **Annu Suresh**

*Written by Vijay Rao*

Annu Suresh is from a small town called Greencastle, Pennsylvania. Annu first heard about Muhlenberg from a camp counselor and upon doing further research, she became attracted to Muhlenberg's stellar pre-medical program. One of Annu's most influential classes at Muhlenberg was her Dana Sophomore seminar which focused on the 2016 election. The sophomore seminar was so interesting to her because it was taught so differently than a regular class with a set daily schedule. In Annu's words, "to be a Dana is to be a citizen scholar; to be talking about citizenship in relation to the election is so important. Especially because America has one of the lowest voter turnout rates."

Upon starting at Muhlenberg, Annu knew that she was interested in the natural sciences but she was unsure of her specific interests within the field. After taking the appropriate coursework, she realized that her academic interests spanned the entirety of biology, so she decided to declare as a biology major. In addition, she is also a public health minor. She believes that these that the two go perfectly together because in the bio major one learns about specifics of science and how the body works, but the public health minor allows one to consider the implications of that in a greater context.

Throughout her time at Muhlenberg, Annu has changed so drastically that she says that she does not recognize the person she was as a Freshman. Her years at Muhlenberg have given her substantial amount of confidence by allowing her to acknowledge her personal strengths. Her community here at Muhlenberg has allowed her to thrive and given her opportunities that she would not have had at other schools. When asked if there was someone particular at Muhlenberg that has had a distinct impact on her, Annu ecstatically responded "Can I say the whole bio department!?" Two people that had an especially big impact on Annu were Dr. Paul Meier and Dr. Bruce Wightman, who she worked closely with throughout her time here.

Upon looking back at her time at Muhlenberg, Annu can confidently say that there was nothing that she would change about her experience. Despite things not always being easy, Annu believes that it was all part of the greater experience. To incoming freshman, Annu suggests to always pursue something that makes you happy, regardless of what other people choose to think. Annu is definitely leaving her mark on Muhlenberg as a Dana Scholar, and she is looking forward to continuing her education at Drexel University College of Medicine.



## **Kelly Travitz**

*Written by Brandon Herbst*

Kelly Travitz, a current senior at Muhlenberg as well as an honorable Dana Scholar has had a very busy 4 years on campus with numerous activities and accomplishments to prove it. Originating from the town of Salisbury, Maryland, Kelly found herself choosing Muhlenberg after she had a positive experience meeting the cross country team for which she was being recruited, while also being attracted to the liberal arts experience.

She always knew she wanted to pursue a degree in the sciences, but once being convinced by one of her professors, decided on a Biochemistry major with a minor in public health. Following graduation, Kelly plans on taking a well-deserved gap year to gather some real world experience in the hospital setting providing patient care as she intends on applying to PA school. Being in the Dana program while also being a Biochemistry major has given her a very memorable research opportunity. In the field of Enzymology, Kelly and Dr. Keri Colabroy are currently working on a publication, something that cannot be said for all undergrads that do research.

In addition to her strong academic endeavors, she is has been a proud for both the cross country and track teams for all her years here, as well as a tour guide. It is easy to see from her calm demeanor and engaging personality that she is directly responsible for many college tourists going with Muhlenberg as their school of choice. Some advice that she would like to pass on to incoming freshman is to not pigeonhole yourself too early in your college career. Especially at Muhlenberg there is lots of time and classes you can take to find out what you really want to do. One of her favorite aspects of being at a small school such as this one is being able to develop those close professor-student relationships, and having the opportunity to take many classes with the same professors throughout the years. Best of luck to Kelly as she graduates!



## **Baadal Vachhani**

*Written by Victoria Retterholt*

Baadal A. Vachhani is a senior from Parsippany, NJ and has been very involved in activities at Muhlenberg since his freshman year. He is a neuroscience major with minors in philosophy and public health, and has been doing research both on campus, most recently in Dr. Jordanna Sprayberry's lab, as well as off campus where he researched aortic arch anomalies with a team at the Lehigh Valley Hospital. In his junior year, Baadal established and was the president of AED, the pre-health honor society on campus, which he had worked to organize throughout his sophomore year. He also serves as Hall Director of Prosser, after having been a Hall Director of Walz his junior year, and an RA in Walz his sophomore year. He has been a Learning Assistant for Principles of Biology I and II since his sophomore year, which entails conducting workshops for the students enrolled in the class, holding office hours before exams, and attending lecture for the class. In his freshman and sophomore years Baadal was a member of the Quidditch team, and this year, he decided to join the Ultimate Frisbee team.

When first arriving at Muhlenberg, Baadal knew he wanted to study science, but didn't anticipate that he would be minoring in philosophy as well; after one of his neuroscience classes got cancelled, he decided to enroll in the philosophy class, Neuroethics, which led him to discover his interest in the subject.

When asked about some of things he'll miss most about being at Muhlenberg, Baadal noted how caring the people at Muhlenberg are, including the professors, who take time to get to know you not only as their student, but as another member of the Muhlenberg community.

After graduation, Baadal plans on attending the Penn State College of Medicine at Hershey and pursuing his goal of becoming a physician.



## **Sally (Yue) Xie**

*Written by William Howitt*

Recently, I was fortunate to interview Sally Xie, a senior in the Dana Scholars program. In our half hour session, we covered everything from public health to her senior forum. I was able to obtain an inside take on the Dana program from someone who has climbed the ladder.

Sally is a finance major with minors in health and mathematics. She hopes to synthesize these interests into a career in biostatistics and health policy, and plans to attend grad school after leaving Muhlenberg. Her internships and mentorships at Muhlenberg both reflect these interests; Sally worked in the health center promoting a fit lifestyle, and partnered with an accounting professor to study money that goes into Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs).

Being an international student from China, Sally's favorite thing about Muhlenberg is the opportunities she received. Having applied to Muhlenberg after hearing about it from a friend in high school, she recalls being one of the first students from China accepted into the Dana program. She also was able to study sociology abroad in London.

The culmination of the honors program for Sally is her forum about Anthropocene, or the study of the effects of humans on the earth. While she concedes that it's depressing, she is passionate about the ways that it raises awareness for climate change and mass extinction. It has been an eye-opening experience for her to learn about such a pervasive issue.

Since Sally is nearing the end of her Muhlenberg career, I asked her if there was any advice that she could give me as a freshman. She believes that the two most important things for me to focus on were enjoying my time and organizing myself and my schedule. If I can do that, then the rest will fall into place.



## Dana Senior Accolades

### **Victoria Castillo**

### **James DeMatteo**

### **Michaela Feinberg**

### **Jamie Greenberg**

Theta Alpha Kappa—The National Honor Society for Religious Studies and Theology  
Phi Alpha Theta—The National History Honors Society  
Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Honor Society

### **Prianka Hashim**

Head Tutor of Neuroscience  
Student Director of Institute of Public Opinion  
Student Researcher - Teissere Lab  
Student Researcher with Kate Richmond  
Student Researcher at the University of Copenhagen  
Member of Alpha Epsilon Delta  
Member, Chapter Founder, and President of Iota Iota  
Treasurer of Students for Reproductive Justice  
Treasurer of Top Naach  
President of the Feminist Collective  
Student Leader of Dana Pre-Orientation Program  
"The Magic of Memory": Presented at the national Association for the Coaching & Tutoring Profession conference  
"Transnational Surrogacy": Presented at the national Association for Women in Psychology conference

### **Dana Kneisley**

Presidential Merit Scholarship and Music Talent Scholarship  
President and VP of Italian Club  
President and PR of Spanish Club  
Phi Sigma Iota

Head Tutor

Summer research at Muhlenberg funded by NCRP

Dana Pre Orientation Leader

"The Magic of Memory": Presented at the national Association for the Coaching & Tutoring Profession conference

### **Cateryna Kochan**

Psi Chi Psychology Honors Society  
Poster presenter at the Eastern Psychological Association as well as the Southeastern Psychological Association, Spring 2019  
Pending Thesis in Psychology  
Group Leadership position in the OCE's "Connect with Community" program, Summer-Fall 2018  
Semesters Abroad, Spring 2017, Spring 2018

### **Francine Koitz**

Pi Mu Epsilon Mathematics Honors Society  
Biology honors candidate  
Transition Mentor Fall 2016-graduation  
Head Tutor Spring 2019  
Student Researcher- Wightman Lab  
Muhlenberg College EMS member

### **Emma Lewis**

Muhlenberg College Presidential Merit Scholarship  
Omicron Delta Kappa Leadership Fraternity  
Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society  
Muhlenberg College Dean's List  
Costa Rica MILA  
Lutheran College Washington Semester graduate  
Co-coordinator & volunteer for Art Day community engagement program  
Vice president & secretary of BergVotes  
Secretary of Students for Reproductive Justice

Vice president & music director of Live in Color  
show choir  
Student panelist for Judicial Hearings through  
Office of the Dean of Students

### **Pierce Lockett**

Study abroad: Paris, France (spring 2018)  
Presidential Scholarship  
Espi Guinto Prize winner  
Sigma Tau Delta English Honors Society  
Secretary of Phi Sigma Iota Foreign Language  
Honors Society  
President's Award  
Summer Research Grant (2018)  
Presenter at International Writing Center  
Association International Conference 2017  
Presenter at Sigma Tau Delta Conference 2019  
Lead Tutor at the Writing Center  
Editor-in-chief of MUSES Arts and Literary  
Magazine  
Layout Editor of Muhlenberg Academic Review  
President of the French Club  
English Honors Thesis

### **Pooja Menon**

Arthur C. Peters Memorial Prize(for academic  
success in Chemistry and Biochemistry  
Provost's Grant For Faculty-Student  
Collaborative Research  
Learning Assistant for Biology and Calculus  
Co-founder of Top Naach

### **Richard Morash**

Recipient of the Dr. Anthony J. Marino Jr.  
Award in Computing Science for both the 2016-  
2017 and 2017-2018 school years  
Computer Science Workshop Tutor

Physics Learning Assistant  
Captain of the Quidditch Team

### **Blake Peebles**

Performance Ensemble Committee Head of the  
MTA  
Studied Abroad in Arezzo, Italy  
President of the Muhlenberg Improv Association  
President of the Underground Improv Project  
Director/Creator of The King in Yellow (2018)  
Creator>Showrunner of Dungeon Party

### **Nicholas Reit**

Phi Beta Kappa  
Member of Mensa  
Studied BA (Hons) Contemporary Performance  
Practice at Royal Conservatoire of Scotland  
Self-designed Interarts Performance and  
Composition major

### **Taj Singh**

Presidential Merit Award  
Musical Talent Merit Award  
Baker Arts Merit Award  
Omicron Delta Kappa Honors Society  
Co-founder and President of Top Naach  
Hall Director for the Housing and Resident Life  
Office  
Worked in Dr. Jeremy Teissere's Lab on GABA  
Pharmacology Research.  
Learning Assistant for General Chemistry I and  
II  
Future Alumni Leader Award Nominee

### **Patrick Sockler**

Forrest G. Moyer Premedical Scholarship  
Crist Family Summer Research Grant  
Phi Beta Kappa  
Phi Sigma Iota (Foreign Language Honors  
Society)

Former Treasurer of Alpha Epsilon Delta  
(Prehealth Honors Society)  
Former House Manager and Scholarship  
Chairman of Alpha Tau Omega  
Head Tutor in the ARC  
Organic Chemistry Workshop Tutor

**Eric Steinbach**

**Annu Suresh**

Attending Drexel University College of  
Medicine  
President of Adopt a Grandparent  
Secretary of Alpha Epsilon Delta  
Campus Tour Guide  
Biology 1 & 2 Learning Assistant  
Omicron Delta Kappa  
Student researcher in Wightman lab  
Internship at LVPG Pediatrics  
Presented research at National Tutoring  
Association Conference and the LVMCBS  
Symposium

**Kelly Travitz**

Centennial Conference Academic Honor Roll

Tour Guide  
Enzymology Research with Dr. Keri Colabroy  
Poster Presentation at American Chemical  
Society Conference

**Baadal Vachhani**

Phi Sigma Tau Philosophy Honor Society  
Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership  
Honor Society  
Muhlenberg Alumni Board Summer Intern  
Scholarship Recipient 2018  
Lehigh Valley Health Network Research  
Scholar, Summer 2018  
President/Founder of Alpha Epsilon Delta  
National Pre-Health Honor Society  
Learning Assistant for Biology Department  
(BIO150 & BIO151)  
Recipient of The Forrest G. Moyer Pre-Medical  
Scholarship  
Research Assistant under Dr. Jordanna  
Sprayberry and Dr. Marten J. Edwards  
Recipient of the Award for Academic  
Excellence from Omicron Delta Kappa, 2018  
Hall Director of Walz Hall (2017-2018) and  
Prosser Hall (2018-2019)  
Pennsylvania State University College of  
Medicine in Hershey, PA Class of 2023

**Sally Xie**