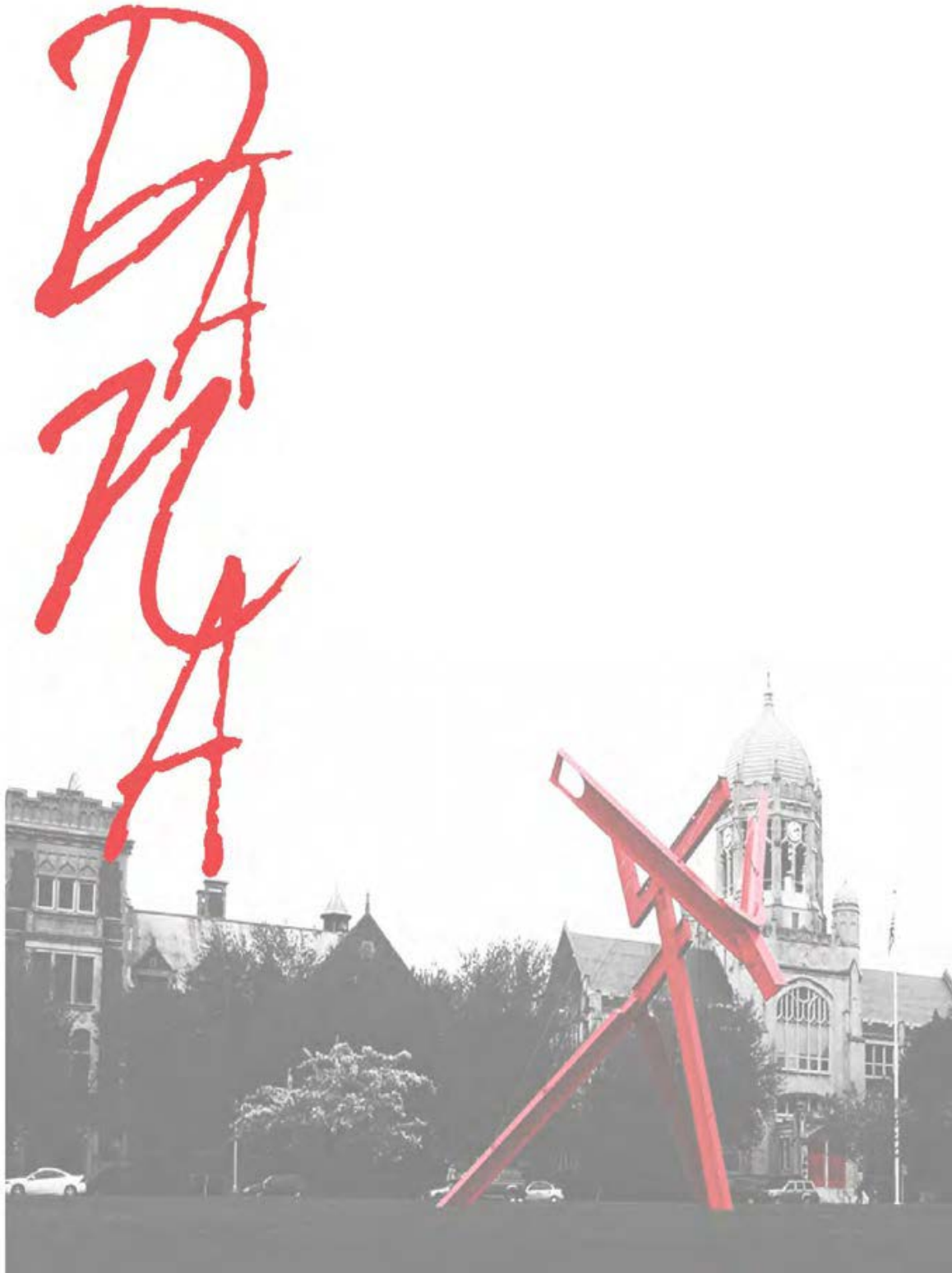


The Dana Interviewer, Class of 2020



The Dana Interviewer

Featuring the Class of 2020

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:

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

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Table of Contents

Dr. Janine Chi-----	3
Dr. Brian Mello-----	4
Dr. Ranajoy Ray-Chaudhuri-----	5
Pre-Orientation-----	6
Victoria Basciano-----	8
Benedict Dawn-Cross-----	9
Meray Faragalla-----	10
Laine Flores-----	11
Nisha Godbole-----	13
Patrick Kantner-----	14
Kayla Kristofco-----	16
Jona Lieberman-----	17
Ariana Lopez-----	18
Jane Mafale-----	19
Rebekah Nachman-----	20
Heather Nielsen-----	22
Abrar Shamim-----	23
Gabriela Solomon-----	25
Jordan Steinroeder-----	27
Alison Stouffer-----	28
Madeleine Vaver-----	29
Brooke Weber-----	30
Senior Accolades-----	32

Dr. Janine Chi

Written by Benedict Dawn-Cross



While this is Dr. Janine Chi's first time directing the Dana Forum, she is no stranger to the program. In fact, much of our conversation covered the history of the Dana program's development; when it began, the program was simply a First-Year Seminar, which Dr. Chi taught in 2005 and 2006, before the Dana Forum was even developed. In addition to her involvement with the program since its early inception, she has acted as a mentor for past Forum projects, and was previously on the advisory board for the program. All in all, the depth of her association with the Dana Program is immense, and the advice she imparted to the senior class of Danas speaks readily to this; at every turn, she was able to guide us in the right direction, making our projects all the more effective. Dr. Chi was appointed director in light of the forum's theme for this year, 'Borders, Nationalisms, Identities,' being approached by Dr. Mohsin Hashim due to her background in Sociology, particularly her research on borders and nationalism. Even the FYS she taught relates to her knowledge, being entitled 'Borders and Belonging.' This in itself made her the ideal candidate to direct this year's forum.

Talking further about the development of the Dana Forum served as an interesting parallel to the Dana Program's mission statement, and the ever-omnipotent theme of student engagement. The Forum began as a way to both enrich the Dana Program, as well as better engage the Center for Ethics with the student body. According to Dr. Chi, the CFE initially made its name on campus by hosting lectures and discussions with dignitaries from off-campus, which it does to this day. However, desiring a way to more effectively involve the student body, simultaneous with the Dana Program's need to expand its vision, the advisory board created the Dana Forum, which continues to engage students at the highest level, whether presenting or simply in attendance.

Talking further about her approach to directing, Dr. Chi mentioned the difficulties coming with the task, specifically her effort to buck the social trend of credentialization and increasing demands of field specialization; if one is a theatre major, one is automatically inclined to go for classes within that major. For college seniors entrenched in their own disciplines, this sometimes causes friction with the Dana Program's mission to enhance student experience across several disciplines, rather than allow students to narrow themselves to one cultural lens. To this end, Dr. Chi brought in faculty members from multiple departments to discuss the CFE topic with the seniors, enabling us to branch out into studies that we might otherwise not have touched by way of our own disciplines. Now immersed in my own forum project, I am highly grateful for the insight Dr. Chi allowed myself and my colleagues in order to complete this undertaking, and hope she will be impressed with our work.

Dr. Brian Mello

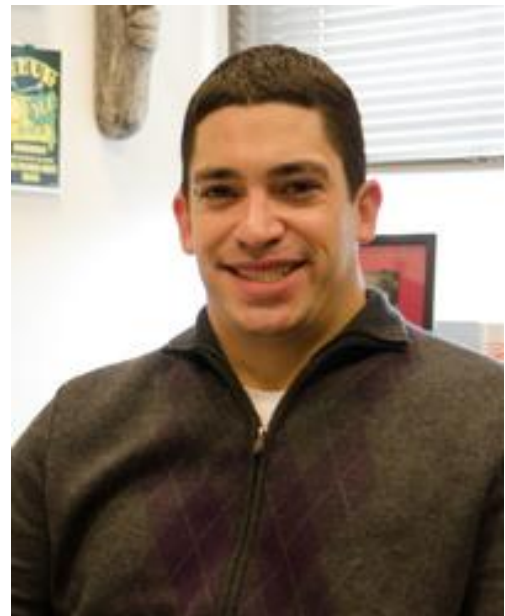
Written by Natalia Cieslar

Like many, Dr. Mello did not know what path to pursue in college. Eventually, his college advisor suggested political science, and today Brian Mello is a professor in the field, teaching courses that focus on Turkish politics and the role the military played in Turkey's transition from empire to nation.

When asked about his favorite memory at Muhlenberg, Dr. Mello fondly remembers teaching the cluster course "Revolution and Protest in the Middle East" with Dr. Stein, in which the students engaged in discussions and simulations that allowed them to be directly involved in the subject. Dr. Mello also had the opportunity to lead a two-week research trip to Ankara, Turkey, along with other Muhlenberg faculty and students. One of the things Dr. Mello most enjoys about Muhlenberg is its focus on integration and exploration and how the political science department can connect and share ideas with people in various disciplines and fields of study.

Because the Dana Forum is linked to the Center for Ethics theme, Dr. Mello has always considered it important that the last voices in any program come from student engagement with the theme. When asked why the Dana program is so enmeshed in this aspect of the CFE, he explained that Dana projects tend to address topics and perspectives that CFE hasn't been able to cover. That these perspectives emerge from student collaboration (with a bit of guidance from faculty advisors) makes this a particularly special way to culminate the programming.

Dr. Mello believes that one of the main purposes of the college experience is to "embrace the invitation to think". He says that the key difference between high school graduates and those who decide to return to college later in their lives is their passion and level of involvement and commitment to their studies. Students should enter college with the mentality that "no matter what I study, I should engage full force." His biggest piece of advice? He chuckles and says, "take your earbuds out in class."



Dr. Ranajoy Ray-Chaudhuri

Written by Liam Safran

In the United States, the major sentiment is that students should not have to know in what discipline they would like to major until the middle of their college career. However, in India, where institutions follow a traditional British system, students must declare a major before entering higher education. These students are also often limited to courses within the scope of their major's studies. Growing up in India, Ranajoy Ray-Chaudhuri thought at first that studying biology as a naturalist was his calling. Later, through a few classes and experiences that he enjoyed, he realized that the multifaceted and extremely relevant aspects of economics that dictate the acquisition of resources across the world better suited his interests. Leaving Jadavpur University in Calcutta, India with a B.A. in economics and Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, India with an M.A. in International Trade and Development, Ranajoy Ray-Chaudhuri pursued his M.A. and Ph.D. at Ohio State University. It was at this institution where Dr. Ray-Chaudhuri, by teaching a few more classes than most graduate students, discovered his love for teaching and appreciation for greater academic freedom. This appreciation would later develop to his affinity towards the liberal arts college. The philosophy behind a liberal arts college that drew Dr. Ray-Chaudhuri to Muhlenberg is the antithesis to the traditional British major-declaring system because it encourages a self-discovery process that extends past admission into an institution.



His passion for teaching, economics, and traveling permeates throughout his career. As for teaching, he not only lectures in Macroeconomics, but also teaches the Dana Scholar Sophomore Seminar where he enjoys interacting with enthusiastic students in a course that aligns with The Center for Ethics theme for 2019-2020: "Borders, Nationalisms, Identities: The Ethics of Global Citizenship." His research focus, reflecting his interests in travelling and desire to materialize academic knowledge into tangible civic engagement, studies the evolution of financial regulations across the fifty states and the international trends between financial growth and the autonomy of central banks. Travelling, by the way, he mentions is an upside to being a professor who does research and has summers off. Only several American states and Antarctica (continent-wise) have not been graced by his presence. Despite his seemingly vast experience and knowledge about banking and financial regulations and policies, he still is humble and agrees with me that it can be easy to get "lost in the sauce" of it all.

Dr. Ray-Chaudhuri partakes in an array of hobbies, many of which display an eclectic taste for the arts. As for music, he enjoys Lebanese indie rock band Mashrou' Leila, Mongolian rock band The Hu, and Balkan brass music. Using YouTube for streaming purposes allows him to not only hear the music, but also see music videos that add to a song's meaning. Furthermore, he enjoys hiking, rowing when he has the time, watching the Netflix show *The Spy*, and visiting museums. Looking at a Chinese propaganda poster on his office wall, he recalls a museum in Shanghai, China that grabbed his interest by showing many propaganda techniques utilized by the Chinese government.

Dr. Ray-Chaudhuri's goal for the future is to design more classes that allow him and students to learn interesting and important topics in international economics together.

A Look at the Dana Pre-Orientation

Written by Adit Dutta, Anna Mirsky, Raivat Shah, and Olivia Tebsherany

Moving in a week earlier than most freshmen truly took the pressure off the need to adjust to a new climate immediately. An open eye and mind allowed us Danas to absorb the Pre-Orientation program not as a series of activities but as a pool of opportunities available for us to take advantage of at a moment's notice. In fact, according to some of our Pre-O leaders like Abrar Shamim '21 and Andrew Leahy '20, the planning portion of the program was the most enjoyable.

“[Being back in Allentown] reminded me of the existence of other opportunities, which helped me rekindle that sense of community,” said Andrew.

“We live in a bubble. It shouldn't be like that. Our duty as Danas should be breaking that down,” said Abrar, a sentiment shared by not only various Danas but also a core principle in the Dana mission.

Despite the incredible value of the Pre-O program, ideas of improvements arose. For instance, Andrew noted how the method of briefing possible program locations could be improved upon. During the Communities in Schools program in particular, “it almost seemed as if they presented their organization as a business model” rather than “an open opportunity for Danas to engage in,” he added. Furthermore, at times, it seemed as if there were too many activities packed into a single day when a break was much needed.

Aside from the intricacies, both Andrew and Abrar concluded that for them individually, they each appreciated the diversity in academia among the Pre-O leaders. Despite being part of Dana together, they really didn't have opportunities in the past to engage with each other to the degree they were able to during this year's Pre-Orientation. “The free food didn't hurt either,” ended Andrew, with a smile.

Emma Lewis '19, another Dana Pre-O leader, believes that the Pre-Orientation program is extremely valuable because it allows Danas to get a better understanding of what their experience at Muhlenberg will be like. Although there was not a pre-orientation when she was a freshman, she mentioned that she definitely would have benefitted from one. She said that “it would have made me integrate the Dana experience into my academic experience if I'd had that at the beginning of the year.” Pre-Orientation was certainly effective in introducing the new class of Danas to cross-disciplinary thinking and the application of knowledge to the larger world and to the local community, concepts embodied in the phrase “citizen-scholar.” This term was highly emphasized during the pre-orientation program, and for good reason.

“The Dana program really frames the whole experience around the idea of being a citizen scholar,” Emma stated.

The early introduction of this concept in pre-orientation allowed the Danas to begin thinking as citizen-scholars early on, before their classes had begun. They would be better prepared for their academic experience at Muhlenberg and how best to navigate it.

When asked what she would like to change regarding the Dana Pre-Orientation experience, Emma said she would have liked to have more free time to get to know new Danas, but the schedule is important. She felt that some of the best parts of the Pre-Orientation experience was the time allotted to get to know our cohorts; perhaps slightly shortening some of the busier days in favor of adding a bit more free time would be

beneficial for next year's class.

Pre-Orientation was not only a good experience for the incoming Danas, but for the Pre-O leaders as well. In fact, Emma described her time as a Pre-O leader as “stellar.”

“I enjoyed spending time getting to know the new Danas!” she commented. Hallie Hoffman ’22 was the only Pre-Orientation leader that had the opportunity to participate as both a freshman Dana and a sophomore leader. When asked what she enjoyed about her freshman Pre-O experience, she said, “Pre-O was the first opportunity I had to get to know my fellow Danas, and I really enjoyed getting to know everybody - some of my closest friends here right now are Danas!” This sentiment should not be overlooked - the Dana 2023 cohort is an extremely tight-knit group, and these connections most likely would not have been as strong without the Pre-O experience.

However, one suggestion that Hallie offered was to have a one-day gap in between Pre-O and Muhlenberg’s official orientation. By doing this, “everyone will have some free time to enjoy the campus, explore Allentown, and get to know their fellow Danas before everyone else arrives on campus!” This possible improvement would be a great way to round off the Pre-O experience, as well as provide a smoother transition between the two orientations. All in all, it is clear that the Dana Pre-Orientation was a success! While there is of course room for growth, this program will only improve with time, effort, and the suggestions of its participants and leaders.



Victoria Basciano

Written by Nesya Sloane



Victoria Basciano: Published author, future optometrist, Staten Island native, and Cold War asset.

I rushed over to meet Victoria in the LC Commons on Monday afternoon, then promptly embarrassed myself when my laptop decided to take the first 15 minutes of our meeting updating itself. Victoria very kindly took this all in stride. Once my computer finally let me access my notes and we got to talking, I discovered many interesting things about Victoria's life and her Muhlenberg career.

Born and raised in Staten Island, New York, Victoria attended Staten Island Technical High School ('Go Gulls!'), where the only second language offered until senior year is Russian. According to Victoria, Staten Island Tech may or may not have been established in 1988 with the purpose of producing graduates who would directly compete with Russian scientists and engineers.

She has also been working at an optometrist's office since she was in high school, and initially came to Muhlenberg with the intention of going to medical school and specializing in ophthalmology. However, after spending some time shadowing doctors, she realized she did not want to work in a hospital, and switched her focus to optometry. Victoria is now in the process of applying to four-year optometry schools, and she hopes optometry will give her the chance to help people without having to sacrifice a work-life balance.

Victoria's life at Muhlenberg is busy to say the least, as I found out firsthand as we tried to schedule a meeting for this interview. In addition to working in the LC Commons, she is currently the president of the Russian club and coming to the end of her term as the president of her sorority, Delta Zeta. In typical Muhlenberg fashion, she is double majoring in Russian and Biochemistry. On the biochemistry side of things, she has been working with enzymes in Dr. Colabroy's lab since her sophomore year, and is now a published scientific author! Between her two majors, she doesn't have much time to take classes just for fun, but says she loved sociology and is looking forward to taking "The Italian-American Experience" next semester. Her favorite dining hall foods are vegan grain bowls (which she had to define for me), but for all-time favorite food she probably has to go with chicken parm.

So if you want to bond over Wii Sports, Big Mouth, or Post Malone, get your eyes checked, or just have a great conversation with one of Muhlenberg's finest, go catch Victoria before she graduates this spring. You won't want to miss her!

Benedict Dawn-Cross

Written by Emma Cornine



Benedict Dawn-Cross came to Muhlenberg from New Haven, Connecticut, where he now lives after moving into the United States from Cambridge, England. He was drawn to Muhlenberg, like many others, because of the liberal arts experience it provides, while still having an exceptional theatre program. He knew upon entering college that he wanted to study theatre, and he now continues to pursue a double-major in Theatre, with an acting concentration, as well as Film Studies. The ability to double major is one of the more prominent benefits of the Muhlenberg education. Ben notes how having the opportunity to double major in these fields allowed him some interesting overlap. This is particularly

evident in his work concerning sound. He has had a strong focus in the area of sound through his film studies track, even interning at the Larry Singer Conservatory in New York City, at which he had separately studied during one of his summer breaks. During this internship, he worked on the sound for the on-camera shoots that occurred within the program. This focus on film sound soon affected his work in theatre.

Ben also has a strong interest in percussion and voice, and has featured in concerts with nearly every music ensemble on campus. Combining his musical abilities with his understanding of sonic technique, he was placed in charge of creating the sound for the Muhlenberg Theatre mainstage production *O, War*. The soundtrack was composed entirely of percussion and vocals. Ben performed the percussion parts himself, as well as taught actors how to use their voices safely at the extremes of volume and range. This was something that he picked up on during his time abroad in Arezzo, Italy, where he studied at the Accademia Dell'Arte, studying physical theatre. He said that his experience in Arezzo was similar to that of a conservatory-style theatre education, as it was so immersive. He also noted that having time to study abroad proved difficult when paired with the pursuit of a double major, but that it was completely worth it, and that he would not trade his experience in Arezzo for the convenience of easier course scheduling.

Back on campus, Ben remains involved with different band and ensemble groups. He has also recently finished working on the sound design for yet another Mainstage Production, *The Bacchae*, and continues an internship editing the Dana Interviewer for the class of 2020, as well as his Dana Forum project, which will be analyzing the effect of Brexit on the representation of migrants in British media, something very close to his heart. He is glad that the Dana Program gave him the opportunity to analyze the internal struggles of his home country. Now that Ben is in his final semester at Muhlenberg, he has some advice for the new wave of Muhlenberg students: “don’t focus on the right way to do things, rather on the best way to do things for you.”

Meray Faragalla

Written by Adin Goldfeder



Interviewing Meray was very enjoyable, interesting, and informative. Here are some of the highlights of the 45 minutes I spent with her:

When I asked Meray how she ended up at Muhlenberg College, she told me that initially, she applied based on the advice of a friend, but after touring, she could see herself here because of the small, nurturing environment. While here, she has declared both Biology and Public Health as her majors which has fueled her interest in becoming a Pediatric Psychiatrist.

Meray has dedicated a significant amount of time engaging and researching the local community of Allentown. Over the last two years, she has conducted public health research on radon awareness in the Allentown area with her team. They investigate the lack of risk communication to the large Spanish speaking population. Her research extends beyond academia, as it drives radon awareness in the Lehigh Valley. She's currently doing a research project on the role of "ethnic restaurants" in Allentown for the Dana Senior Forum. She also conducted research on traumatized migrants while she was abroad in the public health hub of Switzerland.

Throughout her time at Muhlenberg, Meray has been involved with many different groups on campus. She was a part of Muhlenberg College EMS as the Infection Control Officer, a member of the Cardinal Key Society, a tour guide, and an RA, now the hall director of the M.I.L.E housing.

I asked Meray what advice she would give to her freshman self as I expressed to her how busy freshman life is. She reassured me that while life feels crazy now, it gets easier. She gave me some practical guidance on course selection and time management. She also reminded me to enjoy both the social and academic aspects of college and to make meaningful connections with my peers and my professors.

Overall, it was such a wonderful experience to connect with Meray. I'm very grateful that the Dana Scholarship brought me this connection.

Laine Flores

Written by Carina Filemyr



Originally from north of San Francisco, California, Laine traveled east in order to fulfill her “East Coast Persona.” Her favorite articles of clothing are socks, sweaters, and scarves; naturally, she had to come to the opposite coast. Looking for a school that would cater to all of her interests led her to Muhlenberg. Initially attracted to its “liberal arts freedom,” Laine fell in love with the school because of the pervading sense of community. She noticed that all of the faculty and staff showed genuine care for the students, as they all sincerely wanted students to succeed. Since she was five years old, Laine has been involved with theater and productions. Upon taking “Anatomy and Physiology” in high school, she also discovered a passion for science. Muhlenberg has facilitated an involvement with the arts and sciences, both of which Laine hopes to pursue in the future. As a double major in Theater and Neuroscience, she has taken on two of the most credit-demanding majors that Muhlenberg offers.

One of Laine’s favorite memories is one filled with love, compassion, and authenticity. In her sophomore year, Laine was cast as Joan of Arc in a theater production. She had never held a sword before, let alone had any experience in stage combat which was a crucial feature of her character’s storyline. After enrolling in a stage combat class, she was notified that it was filled to capacity and she would have to take it during a different semester. However, luckily for her, one of her friends dropped the class so she could take it, and that moment changed the course of her college career. She is now well-versed in three different weapons, and currently training in a fourth; she hopes to potentially integrate this passion into a future career.

Outside of her rigorous academic schedule, Laine is also very involved in extracurricular activities. As a tour guide, the co-president of Copacetic Rhythms, orientation team leader (OTL), and the artistic director of Bag and Baggage Shakespeare, she can be seen all over campus. Laine attests that one of the best decisions she has ever made “was joining the OL group, as that feeling of togetherness and family is so unique. The support network is so strong; words cannot express how much I love it. The person I am with that group, I want to be forever.”

Her entire junior year was spent abroad; her fall semester was spent in New York City as a part of the first ten students in the Larry Singer Studio, and her spring semester took place in Copenhagen focusing on neuroscience. Laine’s study abroad experiences accurately reflect her varying interests, and she encourages everyone to take advantage of any study abroad opportunity that may be available.

Laine is extremely excited for graduation, as her future undoubtedly promises new opportunities and experiences. Her post-graduation plans are filled with different possibilities,

and she is eagerly anticipating the next chapter of her life. Laine says that “there is no right decision to make, and there is no pressure to know the answer now. In fact, there is no *right* answer!” Potential plans include attending graduate school, acting as a case study patient, or pursuing drama therapy; whichever path Laine decides to take she says “will integrate both her artistic and scientific identities.”

Laine hopes to leave a legacy that will inspire more students to pursue both art and science, and to fully explore each aspect of their person. “Dedicate your energy to the things you’re passionate about; channel it there and don’t spread yourself thin!” she exclaimed, upon my asking of any advice she would like to share. Without a doubt, Laine epitomizes the ideals that she stands for: her passion, character, and drive are leading her to success.

Nisha Godbole

Written by Shivani Iyer



Muhlenberg Class of 2020's Nisha Godbole from Parsippany, New Jersey embodies all of the characteristics of a true Dana Scholar. Nisha entered Muhlenberg with the intention of becoming a Neuroscience major. However, her experiences both in and out of the classroom and her desire to make an impact on a larger population led her to question if Neuroscience was the field for her. In fact, her time in both Dr. Cronin's Issues in Public Health Class during the Fall semester of her sophomore year and Dr. Sprayberry's BIO 151 Lecture helped her find her love for both Biology and Public Health, leading her to double major in those two subject areas. Nisha was convinced that Muhlenberg was the school for her after visiting the campus and falling in love with the community, personal interactions and relationships she knew she could build with her peers and professors, and the interdisciplinary

nature of the classes. One of her favorite memories as a Dana Scholar was speaking on a Panel to incoming prospective Danas at a Dana dinner two years ago and being able to share some of her memories from being in the program.

Something that is very important to Nisha is the ability to get engaged in her community, and it is the forefront for a large majority of her involvement on campus and during her time at Muhlenberg. For instance, Nisha is a member of the service fraternity on campus APO and the leadership Honors Society Omicron Delta Kappa. She is also a tour guide, a tutor in Organic Chemistry, and the president of the Top Naach Bollywood Dance Club. Besides this her constant involvement with the St. Luke's Network from early on in her time at Muhlenberg, both through volunteering and internships, Nisha demonstrates her love and dedication for service and connecting her passion for health and medicine with giving back to the community. As a Muhlenberg student, Nisha has popped the "Muhlenbubble" several times and has been able to explore her interests around the world both during her study abroad in Switzerland and through a MILA that took her to Costa Rica. During her time in Switzerland, not only did Nisha travel most of Europe, she also had the opportunity to participate in a Global Health Program that supplemented her Public Health Major. With this she was given the opportunity to attend conferences at the United Nations and conduct a research project that explored the impact of global aging and the social integration of the elderly within the population.

After graduating Muhlenberg in the spring, Nisha will be attending medical school and is excited and open to exploring different fields of medicine and working with different groups of people. Nisha truly found her identity and place on Muhlenberg's campus and believes that her self-discovery would not have been possible at any other college campus. She has found herself able to be more open and unafraid to try new things after coming to Muhlenberg and she hopes that future Muhlenberg students continue to be fearless of the unknown as well. Nisha is an amazing individual and an exemplary Dana Scholar and I feel so fortunate to have gotten to learn more about her through this interview process.

Patrick Kantner

Written by Ava Duskić



Four years ago in Bethlehem, PA, twenty minutes from campus, Patrick Kantner made the decision to join Muhlenberg and become a mule. Starting with Brain Camp as a high schooler and now ending his college career as a Neuroscience major, Patrick has come full circle. While a full-time college student, Patrick still goes back to his roots and helps the Brain Camp function smoothly, being both an RA and mentor for high schoolers, and also playing an administrative role by picking applicants out of the pool. Being a part of the Neuroscience major,

research has been a major part of Patrick's Muhlenberg experience. During his sophomore year, one of Patrick's favorite memories was working in Dr. Matthieu De Wit's lab. Unlike most research labs, Patrick did not contribute to an ongoing research prompt, but rather cultivated his own. Patrick ended up having a lot of freedom in choosing his research topic and methods of the project, assuming a leadership position as one of the founding members of the lab, along with his girlfriend. While the amount of free will provided proved to have some complications, it also taught Patrick how to fix problems intuitively and assume more responsibility. Patrick felt that his time at Brain Camp helped prepare him for lab work and gave a resemblance to what lab is like for him now. His research revolves around neural reuse, the idea that different parts of the brain can be reused to do different things. Patrick also studied abroad in Copenhagen with DIS, a place where he misses going biking and would most likely go again. He encourages people to go if given the chance as it was an amazing life experience.

However, Patrick is not just a science guy. During his second semester of freshman year, Patrick decided to take advantage of the interdisciplinary aspect of his liberal arts education and took a class in linguistic philosophy. Patrick highly values his time in this class and philosophy in general as it taught him how to ask questions and how to listen carefully. Not only did this help him cultivate his research questions, but it also taught him how to be a sensitive human being that listens to other people's opinions respectfully. Philosophy impacted Patrick so much that he is considering minoring in it. In addition to philosophy, music also plays an incredibly important role in Patrick's life. During his Muhlenberg tour as a high schooler, Patrick learned of Muhlenberg's very own radio show called WMUH 91.7. This fascinated him and worked well to contribute to his love for music so he decided to join freshman year. Fast forward four years and Patrick is the radio show's DJ in control of the music, which mainly contains new releases. Patrick admits it was a bit daunting at first as a freshman but by now it is second nature to him. Being a part of the radio show gives Patrick two hours every week to unwind and focus on his passion for music. Patrick also plays the guitar in his free time. One of Patrick's favorite experiences involved organizing a concert at which bands could come and play. His job was to contact the bands and organize the event, an action he realizes he loves doing, except when money gets involved. The experience reassured his love for music and made him proud to establish an event that people can enjoy thoroughly.

Patrick also values his experience as a Dana. Currently, Patrick is working on his Dana senior project that involves questioning the rise of right wing nationalism and supremacy in the

United States. Patrick and his group are planning on either comparing this event with the rise of Nazism in Germany or the rise of contemporary European nationalism. To find evidence for this project, the group is planning on going beyond news outlets and focusing on YouTube and social media to see how these ideologies are dispersed to the public, focusing on 2015 and on, just before Trump's election. Patrick is excited for his role in the experiment and working on it with his group. In general, if Patrick were to give advice to incoming freshmen it would be to "take [college] seriously but not too seriously". In other words, while grades matter to some in the long term, do not fixate on them and enjoy the moments you have at college while simultaneously working hard towards your career and goals. He also says that students should capitalize on the liberal arts education as it "made [Patrick] a well-rounded person". Patrick plans on going to graduate school to get into a Ph.D. program and continue working on research. He plans on becoming a research/lab technician. When Patrick was asked what three things he would bring to a deserted island, first he asked if there were any survival items included, to which I replied sure. Then, Patrick answered: a good collection of fiction books, music, and coffee. The trifecta of any college student survival guide.

Kayla Kristofco

Written by Haley Arnold



Kayla Kristofco is an English and Film Studies double major. As an incoming freshman, Kayla chose Muhlenberg because of its beautiful campus and the wonderful opportunities it offers its students. She came into the college undeclared, knowing she wanted to do English, but not sure if she wanted to do more. After taking some classes, Kayla settled on Film Studies, now with the hopes of screenwriting. On campus, Kayla is the Music Director for Muhlenberg's radio station, WMUH, where she gets to choose the music they play, and communicate with bands for

interviews. Alongside this, she has been a member of the Muhlenberg Theatre Association and Muhlenberg Film Association. Also, Kayla recounts her study abroad during the first semester of her junior year as her best college experience; she ventured to Prague to study at the well-known Film and TV School of the Academy of Performing Arts, also known as FAMU. In terms of experience in the film world, Kayla took an internship as a Production Coordinator where she communicated with donors, did legal work, and learned about safety on sets.

Kayla is actively writing new scripts for various projects. Most recently, Kayla had a developmental reading for the pilot episode of a TV show called *Unmotivated* on November 23rd as part of her Dana Mentorship Project. The show follows a group of interns for a documentary production company. However, the pointless tasks and crazy antics of the boss force the interns to question whether the job is worth it.

As Kayla nears the end of her undergraduate experience here at Muhlenberg, she reflected on her time as a student and as a Dana Scholar with some advice for other students. Kayla advised that students should not rush through college and life and understand that it is okay to be unsure about what to do after college. Also, in regards to specifically Dana students, she urges that future Danas work to tailor the program to the individual. There are options for everyone and the projects that are required of a Dana Scholar can be applied to any program or career. Finally, Kayla values the connections she has made through her experiences with alumni specifically through screenwriting and working with the radio station. Kayla looks forward to continuing on as a scriptwriter and is excited to see where the future takes her and her career. She encourages the incoming classes to take things one step at a time, and explore their passions, as Muhlenberg truly does have opportunities for everyone.

Jona Lieberman

Written by Jodie Goldberg



Jona, a native to the state, is from Broomall, a town just outside Philadelphia. She applied to Muhlenberg due to a recommendation from her neighbor, who was a Muhlenberg student at the time. Now, Jona majors in French with an Education certification. Jona is involved in multiple clubs, including the Knitting Club, Conversation Table, and she even co-founded the Running Club. During her time in the Knitting Club, she has held multiple roles, including treasurer and secretary, and now serves as the president. Additionally, she loves the Conversation Table because it's a great way for her to speak French outside of the classroom.

Jona had the opportunity to study abroad during her time here at Muhlenberg. She went to Aix-En-Provence, a city in Southern France, with eight other Muhlenberg students. While there, she stayed with an 85-year-old host mother who lived through World War 2 and shared multiple memories with Jona during her stay. During her time in France, she was able to meet other

Americans, but mentioned it was hard to make French friends because she was attending an American University. Jona recounted a funny story during her time abroad, in which she and her friends got off at the wrong bus stop in the middle of nowhere, and had to walk 45 minutes on a path called "Path of the Stone of Fire" to get to the right location. Besides this situation, which she can now look back on and laugh about, Jona loved studying abroad in France; she said she enjoyed getting to speak French every day and getting to hear everyone from Muhlenberg improve throughout their time abroad.

Jona participated in two different research opportunities during her time here. Her most recent project that she worked on involved working with a French professor to talk about the concept of race in France through literature. In France, it's illegal to send out a census about race and the government doesn't even acknowledge race; in France, the government believes the color of a person's skin doesn't matter. To understand this concept, Jona and her professor looked at the writings of James Baldwin, an American, and Frantz Fanon, who was French, and studied how violence and inequality were portrayed through their works. The second project she worked on focused on a Muhlenberg alumnus who fought in World War 1. Through the power of maps, she was able to plot all the places that he went as a supply man for the military, and even followed his journey post-military and discovered he became a lifelong educator.

As her time at Muhlenberg comes to a close, Jona left me with these words of wisdom: "Try everything. Take a class you wouldn't normally take. Go to club meetings. There's so many opportunities here." After college, she plans to teach French at the high school level and maybe even continue on to become a college professor.

Ariana Lopez

Written by Camryn Griffon



Ariana Lopez is from Mankato, Minnesota, and is a Dance Major and Public Health Minor at Muhlenberg College. Ariana has always had a great passion for dance, and from a young age knew that this was her calling. Prior to majoring in Dance at Muhlenberg, Ariana started dancing when she was three years old, attended a professional ballet high school, and has not stopped dancing since. Although she has known since she was 12 years old that she wanted to be a Dance major in college, Ariana was particularly drawn to Muhlenberg because of its unique dance science concentration. As a dancer, Ariana has sustained some injuries and has attended physical therapy; her experiences in physical therapy ignited her fascination with the body and the science behind dance. Ariana's favorite class that she has taken during her time at

Muhlenberg was her Dance History class with her favorite professor, Karen Dearborn. In particular, Ariana enjoyed learning about how dance has changed and evolved over the years. Ariana is also working on an independent project with Professor Dearborn. Specifically, Ariana is forming a symposium on dance through health and wellness with the goal of educating others about how to dance healthily. Through her independent study, Ariana also wants to give people the opportunity to meet Muhlenberg alumni in the dance science field, such as physical therapists. In addition to her independent study project, Ariana also is studying sexual harassment in professional ballet companies as her culminating undergraduate experience project.

For her Dana Forum project, Ariana is researching how Latin restaurants can be sites of both cultural distinction and assimilation. Ariana also took advantage of the opportunity to study abroad through Muhlenberg and completed a semester abroad in Washington, D.C. during her fall semester of junior year, where she participated in an internship program. Specifically, Ariana worked as a program intern and helped to coordinate professional development events.

Meanwhile, Ariana has been very active on campus. Aside from being a Dana Scholar, she has been a resident assistant for three years, and is a peer tutor in Spanish, a Campus Delegate, and a member of the Muhlenberg Dance Association. Overall, Ariana has found the Dana program to be a positive experience. For Ariana, the Dana program has been a good way to meaningfully interact with people from different majors and with varied interests. She enjoys seeing how the Dana Scholars are able to come together and navigate the complex issues based on the topics chosen by the Center for Ethics each year. Ariana is grateful for the opportunity to explore her interest in dance and to experience other disciplines that the general academic requirements at Muhlenberg afforded her. If she could give the underclassmen at Muhlenberg a piece of advice, she would advise them to be open to new experiences and to explore a wide range of disciplines while at Muhlenberg. Finally, Ariana plans to continue her academic career after graduating Muhlenberg by attending physical therapy school.

Jane Mafale

Written by Alexa Ufberg



Jane Mafale is a senior in the Dana Scholar program at Muhlenberg College. She is originally from Fairfield, Connecticut and majors in Psychology with a minor in Dance. Additionally, Jane is in the Elementary Education Pre K-4 Certification Program. For her Dana Mentorship, Jane did research with Dr. Sciutto on ADHD, looking at the Courtesy Stigma towards parents of children with ADHD based on their treatment decisions. This work was, ultimately, accepted at the APA conference in 2019 and presented. She is now completing another mentorship with Dr. Michniewicz on the role of teachers as underdogs and the benefits to professors of disclosing identity to students. Jane presented this research alone as first author at the NITOP Conference in January. For her Dana Internship, Jane held a position at the Boys and Girl Club of America, where she had the chance to learn the behind-the-scenes of a nonprofit organization. This experience was valuable in that it showed Jane another side of working with children, as she is always in the classroom but

never in the administrative side.

Currently, Jane is working hard on her senior thesis regarding student engagement in the college classroom. Specifically, she is looking at the self-determination theory as a motivating factor for engagement, testing the hypothesis that if the needs of students are met, then they will be more motivated to be engaged. Jane was drawn to this idea as she is always eager to learn what teachers can do to better cater to and help their students.

On campus, Jane is the co-president of the Education Society. She is also involved in the dance program at Muhlenberg; she has performed each semester, most recently in *Master Choreographers '20*. One of the highlights of her time at Muhlenberg has been teaching dance through the Muhlenberg Community Dance Center; she has taught ballet and jazz classes of all levels for 3 years. Additionally, Jane studied abroad last year for the entirety of the spring semester in Copenhagen. There, she spent her time taking classes and working in an education program where she taught an English class to 4th graders. From this experience, she was able to learn about the Danish School system and how different the values and practices are there compared to the United States. She shares that this opportunity was invaluable and inspired her to do further research on educational policy and the most effective practices of teachers.

After graduation, Jane hopes to teach for a couple of years and then go back to school to get her PhD in educational psychology, in the hope of doing educational research and potentially working on writing curriculum. She could see herself continuing to teach dance, in addition to being a curricular classroom teacher, but is still unsure on how she wants to incorporate her love for dance into her future. Jane warmly shares that she chose Muhlenberg because of the space it allowed for multidisciplinary study and that she never could have anticipated the doors that the Dana program opened for her by pushing her to achieve even more than she ever thought she could.

Rebekah Nachman

Written by Nate Stratton



When applying to college, Rebekah Nachman knew exactly what she wanted. A Seattle Native, she was attracted to the vibrant community here at Muhlenberg, even though it was a long way from home. She valued the option of having a Psychology and Theater double major with strong departments in each to support her academic pursuits. Other than being a Dana Scholar, Rebekah enjoys singing as a part of InAcchord, the R&B acapella group on campus, and is also a part of the Gospel Choir. She greatly appreciates her acceptance as a part of that choir despite being from a Jewish background, and cites her enjoyment in the group as a model for trying new things at the school.

One of Rebekah's proudest achievements at Muhlenberg is her participation in the Sedehi Diversity Project, which she said greatly expanded her perspective and forced her to think outside of her own personal bubble. Her participation also had an influence on her major as she now is prepared to pursue more theater that tackles important social justice issues. Besides her work in the diversity project, Rebekah has been volunteering in Allentown since her Freshman year. Engagement with the community is an important goal for her because it has strong ties with how she defines herself as a person. When asked how her friends would describe her, Rebekah hoped they would say that she is caring, thoughtful, and most importantly, always willing to help those who are less fortunate.

Rebekah's First-Year Seminar was "1917: The Year that Changed The World." Although the course was not one which she would have sought out on her own, she still believes that the class did its job of teaching her how to write and think. She praises her teacher, Dr. Cooperman, and writing assistant, Pierce Lockett (a former Dana himself) for giving her the necessary writing skills that she continues to build upon in her college career. Now, she's working on defining the parameters of her senior project with three other Danas about how different cultures in the U.S are both preserved and celebrated through food. They will be focusing primarily on Allentown, which is convenient because the city has a strong minority presence, especially among Latinos who make up more than half of the population. It also helps that the four women collectively speak a total of four different languages, providing them with a wide range of different cultures to study.

In the spring of her Junior year, Rebekah did a semester abroad in Seville, Spain, where she took a social sciences course and immersed herself in the Spanish culture. The highlight of

her trip by far was attending the women's march in the city. She was inspired by the women's celebrative approach to protest and intrigued as to how it differed from the marches that occurred in cities around the U.S. "It had a very different energy," she explained, "but it was ultimately successful in bringing unity to the community because everyone was there. It didn't matter what identity you were because it was just one big celebration." Although Rebekah couldn't take a theater course during her time in Seville, she greatly valued the opportunity to travel and see the world. She was able to visit more than eight other countries during her time abroad, which supplied her with experience in a variety of different cultures and served as inspiration for her senior project.

As she approaches the end of her college career, Rebekah plans on pursuing work in the performance world, possibly as an apprentice at a theater for a few years, while also keeping psychology as an option for later on. She does have an interest in clinical psychology and believes that graduate school is likely to be in her future. "I feel like I should try the theater thing first though, at least while I'm young and still have the energy," she laughed. Either way, Rebekah still wishes to blend her academic pursuits with some sort of community engagement. Being connected to the world around her is something she never wishes to lose no matter what profession she ends up pursuing. When asked to give freshmen one piece of advice for their college experience, Rebekah advised, "Take advantage of the resources you have here at Muhlenberg, especially those that will be much harder to access outside of the institution. Even just the library has so many valuable materials that are completely free to explore". She also encouraged students to take classes that don't necessarily connect to their major and to only engage in activities that bring them joy. Rebekah insists that all students need to do is discover the things that inspire them. The rest, she assures, will flow naturally.

Heather Nielsen

Written by Ava Bianchi



I had the privilege of speaking to Heather Nielsen, a senior Dana who is also a double major in Theatre and Music. It turns out that we share many things in common apart from our Theater majors.

Similar to me, Heather was initially planning on going to a BFA conservatory for Musical Theater, however she decided on Muhlenberg so that she could pursue an academic path in addition to focusing on theater. While Heather is from California, she was actually very candid about her desire to leave the west coast for college, saying that if she didn't leave Orange County then she would've stayed there forever.

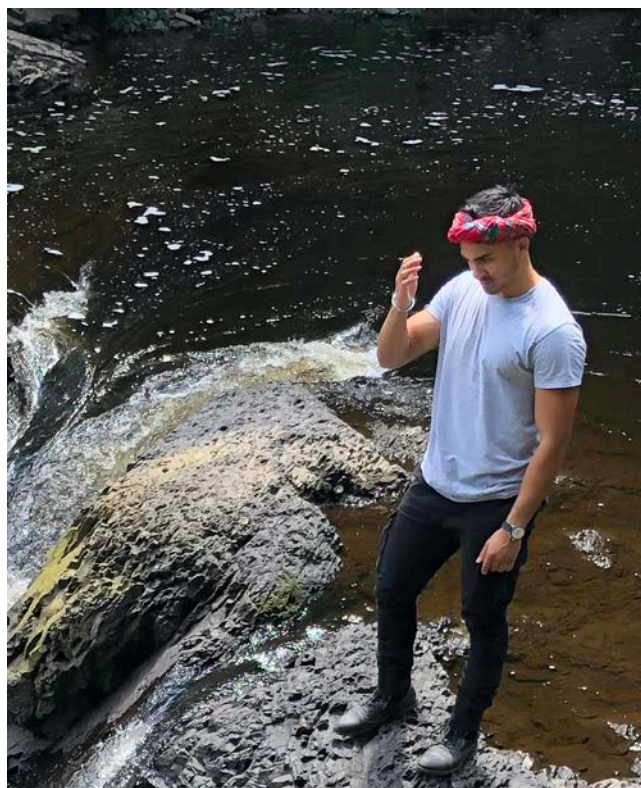
I was inspired by the story of how her Theater concentration changed from acting to directing. Something that I have been thinking a lot about as a freshman has been picking my course of study, and it was reassuring to hear from an older student that it's okay for your interests to change. In fact, this semester Heather will be directing the Mainstage production, *Holy Sh*t*.

As a fellow Theater major I, of course, asked her to recommend some courses and professors, to which I received some very helpful advice; in addition to advice about taking Acting 1, she spoke of her summer at the Larry Singer Conservatory, which, aside from giving her an invaluable learning experience, allowed her time to pursue an internship in Los Angeles at BOLD Management & Production which was founded by Muhlenberg alum, Anna-Liza Recto '90.

Following our conversation, I am really eager to get involved within the theater community here at Muhlenberg, as well as I am looking forward to tailoring my research to a topic in the theater world that interests me. I am grateful to have been given the opportunity to speak with Heather and to have a greater connection with a true Dana Scholar.

Abrar Shamim

Written by Chris Xu



From Milford, Pennsylvania, Abrar Shamim is a third-year senior Biology major. He chose Muhlenberg because of the community that a liberal arts college entails, something that he did not realize he would value so deeply. He also was drawn by its immense capability in preparing students for the professional world and the opportunities presented by Muhlenberg's network to open new doors for him. Abrar is an active member of the Muhlenberg community and has involved himself with many activities in his time at the college. Most notably, as part of his Dana mentorship credit, he is conducting research under Biology Professor Dr. Giancarlo Cuadra on the effect of e-cigarette flavoring compounds on oral epithelial cells. He is working with 5 e-cigarette flavors to determine the inflammatory and oxidative responses that they can trigger in the oral environment, which is the first surface that inhaled compounds encounter. This research

has been particularly impactful on his scientific career as it has allowed him to learn lab techniques and fully appreciate what he has learned in his science classes at Muhlenberg. He is also a Learning Assistant for the General Chemistry I and II classes, something that has quenched his love for teaching. Abrar especially enjoys being the Learning Assistant for General Chemistry because it allows him to make an impact on many freshmen when they first come to Muhlenberg and has been very rewarding. Abrar is a member of Top Naach, a South Asian dance and cultural club, and was the president of the College Republicans during the Fall 2019 semester. This has given him the opportunity to have productive political conversations with students on campus and expand the diversity of political ideology at Muhlenberg.

Starting from his FYS in freshman year, he appreciated the Dana Scholars' program's capability of bringing students from all different backgrounds and academic interests together, as opposed to being stuck in the bubble that many science majors tend to get caught up in. The class molded him into becoming a better writer and at the same time, gave him an outlet to engage in political discussions with other students. Now that three years have passed and he is now completing his Senior Forum and Dana Mentorship program, he looks back and recognizes how the Dana Program has given him a pathway of new communication.

Looking back on his three years at Muhlenberg, Abrar recounts one of the most

grounding moments of his college experience to be his trip to Bangladesh last summer with Dr. Hashim and Dr. Gambino as a part of the MILA course titled Climate Change and Sustainable Development. As a Bengali-American, he had never learned about Bangladesh in an academic setting, diving deeper into its history, politics, and economics taught from another perspective. His most memorable experience from this trip came from a conversation with a ship-worker, who could not imagine the lives of the students in the class; this worker had left his family to work on the ship so that his younger siblings could attend school. He could not even see his parents on Eid, the most important Islamic holiday. Despite his circumstances, the pure happiness the ship-worker emanated was something that has put into perspective what is important to live a fulfilling life.

When asked about advice he would give to a freshman, he mentioned how easy it is to get caught up in the motion of grinding through the schoolwork, taking exams, writing essays, etc. However, he emphasized the importance of letting go of being so systematic every day and devoting time toward the activities and people that truly interest and motivate you. Abrar is excited to pursue his passion for science at Columbia University College of Dental Medicine next Fall.

Gabriela Solomon

Written by Peyton Sloan



Gabi Solomon, a trilingual triplet hailing from West Orange, New Jersey, came to Muhlenberg knowing her detail-oriented and numerically savvy nature, but had no interest in pursuing a future in finance. She had no previous experience with the field in high school and was consequently wary of her preconception of the profession's association with a lack of fun in strict "Wall Street Culture." Hence, she arrived at Muhlenberg on the pre-med track, with biology as one of her first semester courses along with the Dana Scholar First Year Seminar at the time, "1917: The Year that Changed the World." However, in her second semester of her first year, she enrolled in an 8 A.M. accounting class with Dr. Trevor Knox, a decision she thought she would regret, but the class was ultimately remembered as her favorite that semester. Dr. Knox's engaging, collaborative method of teaching that went beyond simply lecturing resulted in Gabi changing her path, leading her to stand today as a senior Dana Scholar Accounting and Finance double major.

Muhlenberg's well-standing reputation in the Jewish community was one of the most prominent influences on Gabi's college decision as she, herself, identifies as a conservative religious Jew. The diverse range of Kosher food, Hillel House, and Chabad on campus made Jewish life feel centered, creating an air of acceptance that only added to her comfort at Muhlenberg. Her Jewish identity likewise played a crucial role in how she chose to involve herself on campus and make a difference. Combined with her personal love of baking and financial interests, Gabi became the founder and co-president of Challah for Hunger, her biggest passion project on campus. Challah for Hunger is one chapter in a nationwide organization with a goal to fight against college food insecurity by raising funds, awareness, and advocating for basic needs for insecure college students. Gabi has been able to indulge in her love of baking while simultaneously making a large impact on the community with Challah for Hunger, though it is evidently only a part of her many food insecurity fighting efforts. Over the years, she has assisted Muhlenberg in implementing financial hardship initiatives, the food pantry, the meal swipe donation program, and the M.U.L.E. Community Cabinet, eventually leading to her recent appearance on PBS to address collegiate food insecurity.

Gabi received offers from multiple colleges to join many scholar groups, but the Dana Scholar program ultimately helped lead her to choose Muhlenberg as it provided her an opportunity to be a part of a community of peers with a diverse range of interests, much like her. Such diversity of academic interest is exemplified by her Dana research with Dr. Cooperman, the head of the Jewish Studies Department as well as her First Year Seminar professor, as it combines elements of both Jewish Studies and psychology. Her impending year-and-a-half-long research investigates how female college students frame their identity, feminist beliefs, and past

religious upbringing with their interaction with the Hasidic sect Chabad organization. She has created and administered her own psychological survey for her research despite her status as a non-psychology major, an interdisciplinary opportunity she realizes she could only receive at a small school like Muhlenberg with professors that truly care about their students. She clearly values interdisciplinary in both college and the grander scheme of life as she states, “Problem solving in this world is not about just one discipline [that] can solve a problem. You have to come at it from many different lenses,” a skill she believes she has practiced in a liberal arts college, especially as a Dana Scholar. Looking back, she is most grateful to the Dana program for causing her to take academic risks to allow her to be her best.

After her upcoming graduation in July, Gabi will be working for Goldman Sachs on Wall Street performing specialized internal auditing centered on Wall Street and big banks, an interdisciplinary position she finds intriguing as it will require her collaboration with several other professions such as lawyers and regulators. She is still working to earn her CPA (Certified Public Accountant) and possibly a CFA (Chartered Financial Analyst) in the near future as she continues to earn her certification hours.

Her advice to her underclassmen is to not be afraid. Push yourself by taking classes you are interested in regardless of the difficulty of the professor. Do not shy away from the Career Center. Take advantage of the campus’s size and be engaged to make a difference. Be mindful to do as much as you can before the opportunity slips away. But most importantly, take advantage of time and focus on improving yourself. She remembers when she was a freshman, interviewing a Sociology major for this same project, though she was without the confidence she now possesses to be so involved. She affirms that such confidence will develop with time, so do not be fearful as she most clearly exemplifies how much someone can develop before it is time for their Dana senior interview.

Jordan Steinroeder

Written by Emma Roppo



Coming from East Port, Long Island, Jordan Steinroeder originally chose Muhlenberg for the chance to play soccer here. Yet, after arriving freshman year, she realized that there was more to conquer here than just soccer.

Jordan's parents run their own building products business, and, growing up, she was interested in how the business world works in America. When she came to Muhlenberg, she realized that not only was she good at numbers, she also had an inclination for Finance, thus she will be graduating with a degree in Finance and Business with a concentration in marketing.

During her time here at Muhlenberg, Jordan was not only a member of the Dana Scholar program and the soccer team, but after one year of soccer, she discovered her love for lacrosse, and has been a member of the lacrosse team since sophomore year. Jordan also spent time tutoring for certain classes, such as Calculus, Financial Accounting, and Microeconomics. Jordan also studied abroad in Spain her junior year, and took finance and economics courses at the St. Louis University in Madrid, and was glad she did, because looking back, she is grateful for the cultural experiences and the travelling she was able to do while studying there.

Jordan was also involved in research here, where, under Professor Slane, she was able to conduct interviews with women who are in the field of business and finance and learn what they have to go through each day in order to continue to break the glass ceiling of a male dominated field. Through this research, Jordan not only learned what she was up against in her field, but stayed in touch with prominent women in her field as well, setting herself up for success when she gets out of college. This past summer, she took the opportunity to do equity research at a bank in New York, building her knowledge and experience in the business field.

After graduation, Jordan will be heading to Philadelphia to begin her position as a Marketing Consultant for the company Accenture. Before that, she hopes to spend her summer taking her birthright trip to Israel. While she is excited to begin her career, she says leaving Muhlenberg will be a bittersweet moment, as her close friends will not be just 5 minutes away anymore, and that is something she will miss having the most.

When asked if she could give advice to her freshman self, as well as current and future freshman Danas, Jordan would not only say to go to class and to put extra effort into everything you do, but to not take any experience here for granted, as the time flies by fast, and "even if you're tired, do not pass up any moment to hang out with your friends, because soon you won't be able to as easily."

Alison Stouffer

Written by Conner Soderstedt



Alison comes to us all the way from Broomfield, Colorado. She knew about Muhlenberg because her mother, her aunt, and her aunt's daughter all attended Muhlenberg. Alison decided that she wanted to come here after she did an overnight visit. She really liked the girls that hosted her, and she was happily surprised with how willing they were to hang out with a high school senior. She also got lunch with the cross country team and could really see herself bonding with the girls on the team.

When Alison began to attend Muhlenberg, she had her mind set that she was going to be a Biology major. She stuck with that major until her junior year when she decided to switch and become an Environmental Science major. Then, during her senior year, she decided to pick up a Spanish minor as well. She had been thinking about trying to pick up a minor since her freshman year, so she only has a few more classes to take to meet all the requirements for the minor.

During her sophomore year and over the summer, she did research with Dr. Meier, in the biology department, looking at the climbing ability of deer mice. During her junior year she did more research with Dr. Iyengar, also in the biology department, looking at isopods. After college she is planning on applying for graduate school and getting her masters in marine ecology or conservation. Before she does that, though, she is thinking about taking a well-deserved gap year and working in a related field or as a park ranger.

Outside of her academics, Alison is a member of the track and field team here at Muhlenberg. On the team, she occasionally does the heptathlon, but her main events are hurdles, high jump, and javelin. Being a Dana scholar has definitely pushed her to engage with the faculty and helped get her involved with student-faculty research. Overall she enjoyed her time here at Muhlenberg and is excited for bigger and better things to come.

Madeline Vaver

Written by Alison Rutyna



Madeline Vaver is a Political Science Major and Spanish Minor from Westborough, MA. Maddy came to Muhlenberg planning to major in English or History, but early on, her involvement with the College Democrats inspired her to become a Political Science Major. She quickly found comfort and passion in the Political Science department, and now serves as president of the College Democrats. Maddy's involvement with the Dana Program further fueled her political interest, as she had the opportunity to intern for State Representative Peter Schweyer, who became

a crucial mentor and solidified her desire to work in politics.

Connected with her Spanish minor, in her junior year she experienced a life-changing and eye-opening semester abroad in Lima, Peru, where she took classes alongside Peruvian students, confronted the effects of Western colonization, and found a love for mountains after experiencing the beauty of the Andes. In addition, through the Dana Program, she has researched with Cathy Oullette, her project comparing the current crisis in Venezuela with that of Cuba in the 1990's after the fall of the USSR. She says that one of her biggest challenges here at Muhlenberg is finding ways to stay hopeful while learning about such pertinent issues and upsetting events in her classes- she spoke of her Human Rights Abuses in Latin America class as particularly difficult to swallow. Her main reason for seeking a position in the political field is because of these issues she has learned about here at Muhlenberg, in her internship and in her Study Abroad experience.

When asked about her advice for first-year students, Maddy stressed the importance of building relationships with professors and visiting their office hours, as they hold a wealth of knowledge. She also recommends taking classes and trying new experiences that are out of your comfort zone. Her biggest point is to be open to change, because through 4 years here, one learns and grows so much that change is inevitable, so there's no point in fighting it. Her favorite part about Muhlenberg is the accepting, close-knit community, and her incredible friends. As for the Dana program, she reflects on how she has liked seeing everyone grow both intellectually and personally over the 4 years, and appreciates her close connections with her class group.

In her spare time, Maddy is also a Writing Tutor, a member of Phi Sigma Sigma, and a passionate competitive powerlifter. She describes the empowerment powerlifting brings physically, mentally, and emotionally, and how through the sport she has created bonds with very diverse groups of people that she likely would not have gotten to know otherwise. For Maddy, powerlifting represents pushing yourself to your full potential. This idea certainly carries with her outside the sport, as she plans to devote the next several years of her life post-graduation to working on democratic campaigns and working her way up in government so that she can create systemic change in our nation. It is certainly empowering to hear her say, "Every action of my career will be geared toward making people's situations better." There is no doubt that Madeline Vaver graduates from Muhlenberg this spring as a force of compassion with the strength and knowledge to make the world a better place.

Brooke Weber

Written by Faith Maldonado



A writer, a singer, an artist, an activist, a Ravenpuff, and a notoriously picky eater—Brooke Weber has an unbelievably colorful personality and a lovely disposition that you can't help but feel comfortable around.

Though she was born in Baltimore, Maryland, her family moved to Shrewsbury, Pennsylvania when she was six years old, and her rural, small town upbringing actually had a profound impact on her educational path: “There’s not a lot to do there, so I got to be creative by finding my own things to do. My friends and I used to write stories together all the time, and we had our own fantasy worlds we would play in. It definitely helped encourage my interests.” Brooke is studying English and Media & Communications here at Muhlenberg, but originally did not plan on coming

here. The stubborn teenager that she was, she was put off by how badly her father wanted her to attend, but after visiting the campus she realized it was the only school where she could truly imagine herself feeling at home.

Today, she’s heavily involved around campus as a writing assistant, member of the all-female acapella group Girls Next Door, orientation leader, member of the English Honor Society, and editor-in-chief of the Muhlenberg Weekly newspaper, which she deemed her most challenging experience over the past four years. Brooke started as a writer in her first semester of freshman year, and by the second semester she had already been asked to join the paper’s editorial board, demonstrating her prowess for great journalism. Though she was at first hesitant to accept the position (being so humble about her incredible skill), she found settling into the leadership role to be more natural than she could have ever expected, and has introduced several new initiatives, such as the “Speaking Your Language” column. Once a week, the paper publishes an article written in a language other than English, spotlighting students around campus who prefer to write in a “home environment,” in their own language, which Brooke thinks is imperative for the diversity of the newspaper.

Diversity is something she holds close to her heart, and she praises the school’s efforts to pursue this much needed diversity on campus: “I love Muhlenberg, and it has a lot of flaws and there’s a lot of ways that this campus can be better, but there are so many people that are working to make it better, and that’s what I value about this place. People are really carving out space for themselves where they feel like it doesn’t already exist, and I love seeing that and being a part of that.” She also loves the way that Muhlenberg has allowed her to study a wide array of subjects alongside people with the same vigor and passion for scholarly excellence. By watching Cold War movies in one class, learning about robots in another, and discussing the death of John Keats in a third, she shares the school’s value for interdisciplinary education on things she wouldn’t normally think about. “When will I ever get these crazy things brought together in one place again?” she asked with a sad grin.

Brooke believes the strengths of the Dana Program to lie in its ability to bring together

intelligent and driven people from all different disciplines, each with their own interests but each eager to learn what their peers are interested in too. She's ecstatic to be back with the people she grew up with for four years in their senior seminar and is excited to see where their research, concerning borders, nationalisms, and identities in conjunction with the Center for Ethics theme, goes. Her internship requirement was fulfilled while studying abroad in Dublin, Ireland, where she worked for *Hot Press*, a well-known music magazine, interviewing both up-and-coming and established musicians. "It was definitely challenging at times," she admitted. "As a 20-year-old, you're handing your writing over to an editor of this huge magazine, and he makes changes, and you have this struggle of artistic identity. But it's so rewarding to pick up a magazine in the store and your story is the cover story."

Brooke isn't sure whether she wants to go into journalism, public relations, or publishing after graduation. She's thinking of applying for the Columbia Journalism Summer Program, for which I wish her the best of luck. In our brief conversation, she shared with me such valuable advice on trying not to underestimate your intellectual capabilities, and explained that she fell victim to this as a freshman too. Over the past four years, she has grown so much as a person (to the point of not recognizing her younger self in a Snapchat Memory from a freshman year theatre trip) and as a thinker. Her new perspectives shape the way she analyzes literature and media, and she finds herself lucky to have gone through the Dana Program, where she met so many fantastic people along the way.

Dana Senior Accolades

Victoria Basciano

Delta Zeta, President
Russian Club, President
Third author for research with Dr.
Keri Colabroy in ACS Biochemistry
(Fall 2019)

Benedict Dawn-Cross

Soundscape Designer/Music
Director, for Mainstage Production,
O, War (Spring '19)
Music Director, Muhlenberg Pep
Band
Music Director, Bag & Baggage
Shakespeare Project
Theatre Talent Scholarship
Study Abroad: Accademia Dell'Arte,
Arezzo, Italy (Fall '19)
Kappa Kappa Psi (National
Honorary Band Fraternity)

Laine Flores

Study Abroad (Fall 2018): Larry
Singer Studios, New York, NY
Study Abroad (Spring 2019): DIS -
Study Abroad in Scandinavia,
Copenhagen, Denmark
Bag & Baggage Shakespeare
Project: Artistic Director
Copacetic Rhythms: Co-President
Orientation Team Leader
Theatre Talent Scholarship
Performed in 5 Mainstage
Productions

Meray Faragalla

Study Abroad: Geneva, Switzerland

(Spring 2019) & Costa Rica (Spring
2018)

Forrest G. Moyer Premedical
Scholarship Recipient

Henry Melchior Merit Scholarship
Recipient

Peer Tutor: Principles of Biology I,
II & III, & Intermediate Spanish I&II

Alpha Epsilon Delta Pre-Health
Honor Society

Public Health Research: Radon Risk
Awareness

Phi Sigma Sigma Scholarship
Committee Head

Hall Director of the MILE
Neighborhood

Nisha Godbole

Forrest G. Moyer Pre-Medical
Scholarship

Study Abroad: Global & Public
Policy in Geneva, Switzerland
(Spring 2019)

President and Choreographer for Top
Naach

Peer Tutor

Alpha Epsilon Delta (Health
Preprofessional Honor Society)

Tour Guide & Campus Delegate

Accepted to Renaissance School of
Medicine at Stony Brook University

Patrick Kanter

Neuroscience Collaborative
Research Program Grant (Summer
2018 and 2019)

Study Abroad: Copenhagen,

Denmark (Spring 2019)
Brain Camp RA (Summer 2018 and 2019)
Philosophy Club Executive Board Member
WMUH Music Director and DJ

Kayla Kristofco

Study Abroad: FAMU in Prague, Czech Republic
Presidential Scholarship
Sigma Tau Delta
Omicron Delta Kappa
Music Director for WMUH
Contributing Editor for MAR

Jona Lieberman

AATF Walter Jensen Memorial Scholarship (2019)
Anne E. Wonsiewicz Scholars in Education Award (2018/2019)
2019 Library Scholar Award Winner
The William M. French Award in Education
Minority Students in Gifted Education published by MAR (Muhlenberg Academic Review) a student peer-reviewed journal
Study Abroad: Aix-en-Provence, France (Spring 2019)

Ariana Lopez

Doctor of Physical Therapy Program, Class of 2023 at University of Minnesota - Twin Cities
Presidential Scholarship
Dance Talent Scholarship
Lutheran College Washington

Semester (Fall 2018)
Peer Tutor: Spanish and Ballet
Campus Delegate

Jane Mafale

Education Society, Co-President
Study Abroad: Copenhagen Denmark (Spring 2019)
Presidential Scholarship
Dance Talent Scholarship
Omicron Delta Kappa
1st Author and Presenter: National Institute for Teaching of Psychology Conference (2020)
Co-author of research presented at American Psychological Association Conference (2019)

Rebekah Nachman

Study Abroad: Seville, Spain (Spring 2019)
Presidential Merit Scholarship
Orientation Group Leader 2017
The Dead Have Arrived: The Transformative Power of Political Performance published by MAR (Muhlenberg Academic Review) a student peer reviewed journal

Heather Nielsen

Study Abroad: Arezzo, Italy (Fall 2018), New York (Summer 2018), Ireland (Summer 2017)
Director for the Muhlenberg Mainstage, Holy Sh*t
Hall Director of Benfer, Robertson, and South Halls
Omicron Delta Kappa
Alpha Chi Omega Sorority

Presidential Scholarship
Theatre Talent Scholarship

Abrar Shamim

Muhlenberg Henry Melchior
Scholarship Recipient

General Chemistry 103/104 Learning
Assistant

Fall 2019 College Republicans
President

Columbia University College of
Dental Medicine Class of 2024

1st Author Presenter at Pennsylvania
Academy of Sciences 2020
Conference

Co-author at American Society for
Microbiology 2020 Conference

Gabriela Solomon

Peer Tutor: Accounting

President and Founder of
Muhlenberg's chapter of Challah for
Hunger

Jordan Steinroder

Varsity Athlete: Women's Lacrosse

Art Talent Scholarship

Peer Tutor

Study Abroad: Madrid, Spain

Alison Stouffer

Varsity Athlete: Track & Field

Centennial Conference Academic
Honor Roll

Study Abroad: Panama (Fall 2018)

Summer Research Grant (2018)

National Science Foundation

Research Experience for
Undergraduates Grant (2019)

Phi Sigma Iota member

Chi Alpha Sigma member

Madeleine Vaver

Study Abroad: PUCP in Lima, Peru
(Spring 2019)

Phi Sigma Sigma Sorority: member

Pi Sigma Alpha (National Political
Science Honors Society)

College Democrats: President

Writing Center: Tutor

Brooke Weber

Editor-in-Chief of The Muhlenberg
Weekly

Sigma Tau Delta English Honors
Society; Presenter at Sigma Tau
Delta Conference 2020

Study Abroad: Dublin, Ireland

2019 Edwin J. Miller Awards in
Creative Writing 2nd Place for
Poetry and Honorable Mention for
Nonfiction

Dr. John A. W. Haas Award Winner

Copy Editor of Muhlenberg
Academic Review; Two essays
published

Theater Talent Scholarship

Columbia Publishing Course 2020