

# The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2019 | VOLUME 5 | ISSUE 9

## My fellow alumnae and friends,

**In the rush of busy lives, we each find our attention spread thinly across an endless and ever-changing to-do list of obligations that swirl about us virtually nonstop.** Despite our best efforts, sometimes all we can do is hold on tight!

For those of us fortunate to have made Sweet Briar our home, we've come by our ability to manage busy lives honestly. The College delivered on its promise to prepare us for the road ahead. And now, despite the progress we've made together on the road to renewing this cherished institution, our beloved Sweet Briar College, she continues to need us.

Our work to secure her future – for our legacy and for future generations of Sweet Briar women – is not yet complete. Your sustained engagement is vital to building a stronger, more vibrant Sweet Briar. I'll be frank, though, we have begun to see alumnae participation receding like the tide – and for the third year in a row.

If we have learned nothing else from the attempted closure of 2015, the event that came close to robbing each of us of a place that profoundly shaped our lives, it is that we must be vigilant when it comes to the institutions we love. Our individual and collective engagement matters. The totals speak for themselves – and paint a picture that Sweet Briar will not be sustainable if we do not firmly place our foot back on the accelerator.

I know we can do it. We each have classmates and friends that can help contribute time as volunteers, secure internships, refer a student for the fly-in program, and even give a gift.

My urgent request to you is to **ENGAGE**. We have navigated some difficult waters together and many have

said (and still say today) that we cannot possibly keep it up. But as Sweet Briar women, know better.

Some two weeks ago, you received a letter from President Woo about the generous alumna who made a gift for a new fly-in program. To date 45- 50 students are making their plans to come SBC in either a plane, train or by car. Our goal is to fly in over 150-200 students so they can be as enthralled as each of us was by our campus on that first drive through the gates.

High touch is how we have secured students in the past – an alumna call, letter, or recommendation have been vital input that converted generations of prospectives into first-year students, and ultimately, fellow alumnae.

My first call to action for you today is to help us raise students.

My second is to find 5 classmates who are not giving to the College and urge them to follow your lead by making a gift. Each of these actions will help us meet ambitious FY20 goals:

- 150 students for next fall
- \$6,000,000 new unrestricted dollars
- \$500,000 new restricted gifts and grants
- \$1,700,000 in pledges made in the last 5 years that need to be converted

Strategists would tell us – raise money earlier in the year and bring as many students as you can to campus fall and early spring. There is no time to waste.

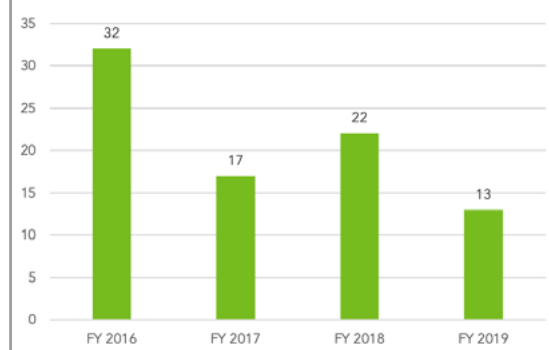
Carpe diem! Viva la SBC!

With gratitude,

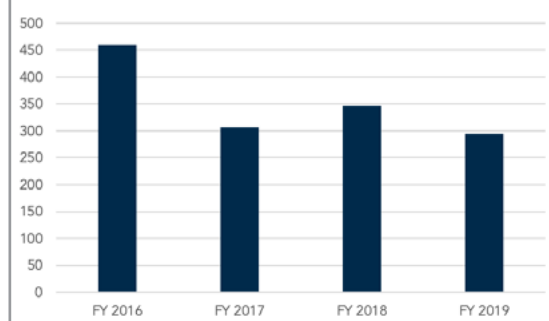
Mary Pope M. Hutson, '83  
Vice President of Alumnae Relations and Development

P.S.: **ENGAGE!**

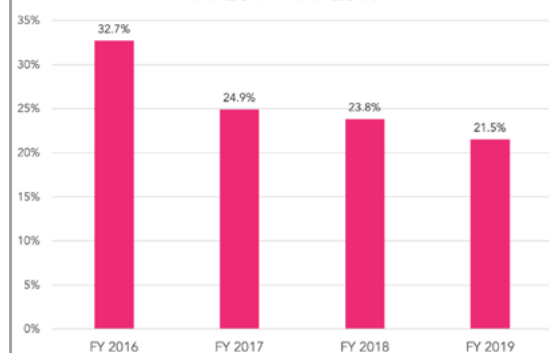
Average Alumnae Attendance per Event  
FY 2016 - FY 2019



Reunion Attendance (Alumnae Only)  
FY 2016 - FY 2019



Alumnae Participation Rates  
FY 2014 - FY 2019



## Board of Directors of Sweet Briar College

Georgene M. Vairo '72, *Chair*

Dr. Meredith Woo,  
*President of the College*

Andrew C. Benjamin, *Vice Chair*  
Scheline Crutchfield

Alice Dixon '82

Marianne "Mimi" C. Fahs '71,  
*Secretary*

Kelley Manderson Fitzpatrick '85,  
*Executive Committee Member at Large*

Carol McMurtry Fowler '57

Sally Mott Freeman '76

Lendon Gray '71

Fred "Buzzy" Griffin

Karen Jackson, *Executive  
Committee Member at Large*

Edward J. "Ned" Kelly III

Keenan Colton Kelsey '66

Gillian Munson, *Executive  
Committee Member at Large*

Holly Prothro Philbin '95

Mason Bennett Rummel '83

Stephen P. Smiley

Caville Stanbury-Woolery '06

Claude Becker Wasserstein '82

Marshalyn Yeargin-Allsopp, MD '68,  
*Executive Committee Member at  
Large*

## Alumnae Relations and Development Staff

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83,  
*Vice President for Alumnae Relations  
and Development*

Lea Sparks Bennett '83, *Alumnae  
Relations and Development  
Assistant*

Lee Anne MacKenzie Chaskes '83,  
*Alumnae Relations and  
Development Associate*

Debbie Cochran, *Executive Assistant*

Paula Eanes, *Office Manager*

Claire Dennison Griffith '80,  
*Senior Director of Alumnae Relations  
and Development*

Alexandra F. Grobman '12, *Assistant  
Director of the Sweet Briar Fund*

Lea Harvey '90, *Director of  
Corporate and Foundation Relations*

Sarah Lewis, *Stewardship Manager*

Lisa Wray Longino '78, *Director of  
Major Gifts*

Julia Paris '99, *Director of  
Advancement Services*

Rachel Pietsch, *Alumnae Relations  
Associate*

Bonnie L. Seitz '01, *Assistant Director  
of Advancement Services*

Clélie D. D. Steckel, *Director of the  
Sweet Briar Fund and Editor of  
The Briar Wire*

Katie Keogh Weidner '88, *Major  
Gifts Officer*

Wanda Vest, *Data Entry Manager*

## IRA Charitable Rollover

*Make a powerful impact on your estate and future Sweet Briar students*



Katie Fisher '17, Faith Rahmer Croker '54, and Susan Croker Fisher '84 at Reunion 2019.

### Benefits:

- If you are 70 1/2 or older, you can avoid taxes on transfers of up to \$100,000 from your IRA to Sweet Briar College.
- If you and your spouse both make a charitable IRA Rollover gift, you can avoid taxes on transfer of up to \$200,000.
- A Charitable IRA Rollover gift will satisfy your required minimum distribution (RMD) for the year.
- You can reduce your taxable income, even if you do not itemize deductions.
- Such a gift is not subject to the 60% deduction limits on charitable gifts.
- Help further the work and mission of Sweet Briar College.

### Did you know?

Certain restrictions and requirements\* must be followed when making this type of gift. You should also consult with your tax advisor to discuss your situation including any impact of your state's tax laws.

### How to:

You can make an IRA Charitable Rollover gift by taking two simple steps:

1. Send a written request to your IRA plan administrator requesting that the distribution be made payable to Sweet Briar College.
2. Contact us to let us know about this important transfer and how you would like to designate your gift.

*\*For example, the following transfers will not qualify: distributions to private foundations, to donor advised funds, or for life income gifts (e.g., charitable remainder trusts).*

### For more information, please contact:

**Claire Dennison Griffith '80**

**Senior Director of Alumnae Relations and Development**

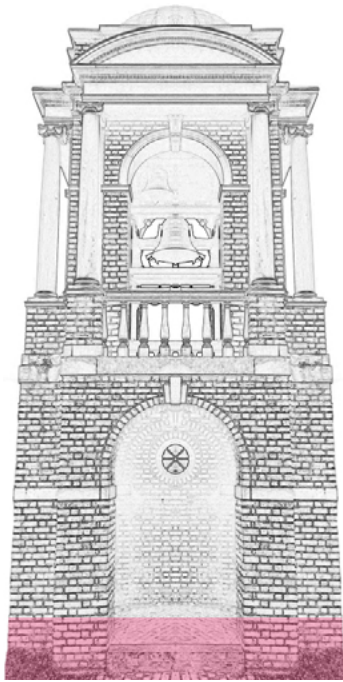
**PO Box 1057 | Sweet Briar, VA 24595**

**Phone 434-381-6479 | Email: [cgriffith@sbc.edu](mailto:cgriffith@sbc.edu)**

*This information is provided for educational purposes. It is not intended as legal advice. Please consult your own advisors who alone are aware of your individual situation and thus in the best position to provide an individual analysis and help you accomplish the best result.*

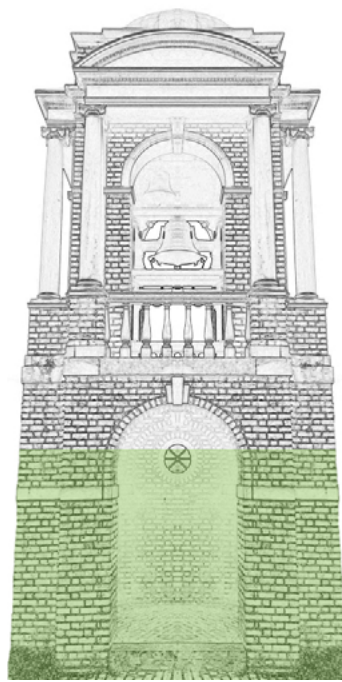
## Fundraising and Participation Progress

### Unrestricted



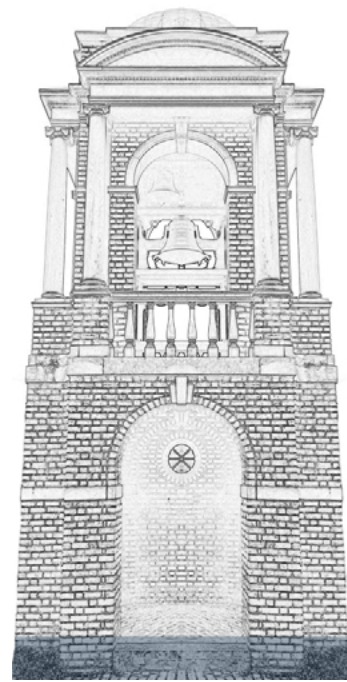
Goal: \$6,000,000  
Raised: \$576,851  
Progress to Goal:  
9.6%

### Restricted



Goal: \$500,000  
Raised: \$169,063  
Progress to Goal:  
33.8%

### Participation



Goal: 30%  
Progress to Goal:  
2.8%

**Make your gift today at [sbc.edu/give](https://sbc.edu/give). Every gift matters!**

## Meet Our Faculty



*Hank Yochum, professor of engineering and physics, associate dean of the College*

"At some point, I realized that I just had to do it all the time. I loved that it was creative. I loved how you could get obsessed about certain tricks, focus on them, hopefully pull them off. When you pull something off, that is yours. You did it. The feeling of even just rolling fast on a skateboard is pretty great. Skateboarding provides an amazing laboratory for progression. I think that my tendency to want to try new things professionally is rooted in skateboarding."

*Keep an eye on our social media accounts as we continue the series and learn about other members of our faculty.*



*Teresa Garrett, dean of the College, vice president of academic affairs*

"I see the world in a different way when I'm on my bike — for example, I notice the man on Coolwell Road who is sitting out in his front yard. I notice the cows looking at me. I notice the tree line ahead of me. On my bike, I feel strong and powerful. When you crest a steep or long climb, there is a satisfaction that is hard to describe. There is something about your heart pounding and legs burning that just feels like an accomplishment. I did the Survival of the Shawangunks, a multi-stage triathlon, in 2015. In 2017, I did the Savageman 70.0. There is a segment of the race called the Westernport Wall that if you make it up without stopping and finish the race, you get your name on a brick that is installed in the road. Yes, I have a brick!"

## Another Busy Fall at Sweet Briar

Fall is always a busy time at Sweet Briar and this year has been no exception.



*Daisy Ceremony*

In August, we welcomed the Class of 2023 to campus and in September, we celebrated Founders' Day with special visitors including Senator Mark Warner and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue. Editor's note: You can read all about Founders' Day on our website and in the upcoming issue of the Alumnae Magazine, which should hit your mailbox by the end of November.



*Greenhouse Opening*

Ariel Levy, a staff writer for The New Yorker, visited campus in October, and Madeline Miller, author of "Circe" will participate in a virtual Q&A in November (we look forward to having her on campus in person in March!).



*Ariel Levy*

Sarah McConnell of the Virginia Humanities radio show "With Good Reason" was the featured speaker at this fall's "At the Invitation of the President" event. She spoke to the community about her job as an interviewer and how she found her way to that job. "I think that every step you take leads to the next," she said. "Our jobs in a way are serendipitous. Few of us who ended up where we are really could have known we'd be there early on." However, she added: "If you really know what you'd love to do, make sure you do it."



*Sarah McConnell*

In October, we hosted our first admissions open house, welcoming nearly 30 prospective students and their families to campus. Next month—Nov. 8-10—we'll host another open house, this time adding events specially designed for prospective legacy students. The same weekend will also feature a Change-Maker Workshop sponsored by our business and economics faculty. The workshop will give high school girls the chance to identify societal challenges, brainstorm ideas to meet those challenges, match the solutions with appropriate business models, and then pitch to a team of judges, Shark Tank-style. Winning team members will be eligible for a one-time \$500 change-maker merit scholarship.



*Fall Open House*

Keep an eye on [sbc.edu/calendar-of-events](https://sbc.edu/calendar-of-events) for the complete list of upcoming events.

## Expanding the Admissions Ambassadors Program

As a part of Sweet Briar's continuing efforts to grow enrollment and lay a solid foundation for the College's future, we've expanded our Admissions Ambassadors Program. Jill O'Ree Stryker '87 and Heather Colson Ewing '90 have been heading up the program as co-chairs for a while, and now Heather has taken on a more formal role with the College as Admissions Ambassadors Manager, facilitating the efforts of more than 120 volunteer ambassadors.

Ambassadors will primarily focus their efforts on 13 states – Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Texas, Illinois, Ohio, New Jersey, Maine, Massachusetts, California, Connecticut, Tennessee, and Minnesota – but volunteers around the country are expanding the reach of the College's admissions office and helping us tell Sweet Briar's story. The volunteers will step away from the process during the evaluation of applications but will step back in and provide support during yield season, ensuring the best possible outcome for our admitted students.



Already, our ambassadors have attended more than 100 fairs and introduced the College to more than 450 additional prospective students. "The enthusiasm and dedication of our alumnae and parents is amazing," says Heather. "They have given countless hours attending college fairs, visiting high schools, and speaking to prospective students on behalf of Sweet Briar. I'm excited to be working with them on this effort."

We can't wait to see the results of their hard work in the fall of 2020, when the Class of 2024 arrives on campus. If you want to become an Admissions Ambassador, contact Heather at [hewing@sbc.edu](mailto:hewing@sbc.edu).

## Introducing our Expanded Fly-In Program

You've probably heard by now that a generous alumna has made it possible for us to expand our fly-in program, bringing prospective students from all over the country and the world to Sweet Briar. We printed more than 20,000 "tickets" and sent them to alumnae, prospective students, college fairs and other events around the country. But prospective students don't need an actual ticket to take advantage of the program. If you know a young woman you think should visit campus, have her contact the Office of Admissions at 800-381-6142 or refer her to [sbc.edu/admissions](http://sbc.edu/admissions) and ask to take advantage of the program. We'll develop a visit tailored to her interests.

### SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE

01906 02024

Passenger  
**Your Fierce Self**

From  
Your Hometown

ANY

ANYWHERE

SBC

SWEET BRIAR

FLIGHT

BW001

GATE

A1

SEAT

19C

This is not a real ticket.

BOARDING PASS

Global Entry

Passenger  
**Your Fierce Self**

Flight	Gate	Seat
<b>A00001</b>	<b>A1</b>	<b>19C</b>

Boarding Time  
**19:01**

ANY

ANYWHERE

SBC

SWEET BRIAR

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**SAVE THE DATE!**  
**Reunion 2020**  
**May 29 - 31, 2020**  
**[sbc.edu/reunion](http://sbc.edu/reunion)**

## Sweet Briar's Land Inspires Poetry

During our 3-week session, students in the Fall 2019 Fellows Studio "Site-specific Art in the Sweet Briar Landscape," taught by VCCA artist Laura Boles Faw, collaborated with students in "The Self and the Poem," taught by Sweet Briar professor Susannah Nevison, to write a poem and imagine, design and create an installation in front of Mary Helen Cochran Library using natural materials harvested on campus. The whole process spanned two days, and inspired the following poem:

### OVER THE GRASS

All of us: see branches  
of the weeping beech,  
mirrors in the magnolia.  
We gather walnuts, insects  
murmur a summer path  
while grass wind-ripples.  
Pendula! Our undulation  
falling & waiting for us  
as light beams green.

