

# The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER NOVEMBER 2018 | VOLUME 4 | ISSUE 8

## Dear Fellow Alumnae and Friends of Sweet Briar,

**H**appy Thanksgiving to each and every one of you a little early! All of us send a special message of thanks for your support of Sweet Briar in our mission to educate women of consequence.

Our students are the beneficiaries of your generosity each and every day. In the classroom and through the leadership opportunities on campus, they are challenged to fulfill the legacy of more than a century of women who take on impossible challenges and make positive change happen in our society. However, a century-long legacy is often taken for granted as we go about our daily lives, even by some of us who have benefitted from this place. This is the place where the arts and sciences are inextricably linked in an inimitable environment for learning. One alumna recently described it as a "diamond in the rough." It is certainly one of a kind.

We have an extraordinary President who possesses a compelling academic vision that our incredible faculty are implementing, setting us on a course to discover new horizons. Students are engaging like never before, and our sails are hoisted high: Our enrollment is on the rise with an increase of 39% over last fall and climbing.

Every ship must have wind in its sails and a dedicated crew to stay the course as well as propel us forward. On Oct. 10, we launched this year's Sweet Briar Fund to raise \$10 million by June 30, 2019. It is essential that we meet this goal to take Sweet Briar to the next level.

Thank you for what you have done in previous fiscal years, but I need to ask you to **make your best gift to Sweet Briar today and continue your strong philanthropic support of the College.**

The excitement of President Meredith Woo's vision of academic innovation echoes across the nation and throughout higher education communities. This gale force, which no other college can claim, is the momentum that will keep Sweet Briar following the path charted with the guidance

of our stars: the alumnae and all supporters who are committed to Sweet Briar's future.

By developing an integrated leadership core curriculum and combining that curriculum with centers focused on engineering, science and technology; creativity, design and the arts; and human and environmental sustainability; President Woo has enhanced an educational community that is a beacon to prospective students and vital to the future of education in America.

Join us as we hoist our sails for the next leg of this exciting adventure.

With gratitude,

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



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## Planned Giving: Make a Gift to the Sweet Briar Fund Through Your IRA

The charitable IRA rollover is now permanent. You can make this type of gift anytime in 2018 or 2019. Your charitable IRA rollover can provide the maximum support for Sweet Briar if you make your gift by June 30, 2019.

### The IRA Rollover Gift to Sweet Briar College

The charitable IRA rollover gift provides a donor who is 70 and ½ or older with the equivalent of a 100 percent income tax charitable deduction.

The gift also reduces the amount that a donor must take into taxable income as an IRA minimum distribution. A donor who is required to take a 5 percent minimum distribution from his or her IRA can instead direct the minimum distribution to Sweet Briar and reduce his or her taxable income.

### Direct from Qualifying IRAs

The charitable IRA rollover is made directly by the IRA custodian to Sweet Briar. The gift is a completely tax-free transfer from the IRA to the College. The gift is not included in the donor's income and the donor receives no income

tax charitable contribution deduction for the gift. **The completely tax-free transfer provides the equivalent of a 100 percent income tax charitable deduction for the gift.**

Example: Susan Smith, who is 71, has a traditional IRA with a balance of \$100,000 consisting of deductible contributions and earnings. Susan can request the IRA custodian to distribute the entire \$100,000 to Sweet Briar. Under the law created in 2015, the distribution of \$100,000 is a qualified charitable contribution. As a result, no amount is included in Susan's income and this gift is a completely tax-free gift to Sweet Briar.

### Double the Tax Smart Gift

Susan and Robert Smith have separate IRAs and both of them are 70 and ½. Each of them can make a charitable IRA rollover of \$100,000 in 2018 or 2019 for a total 2018 or 2019 charitable IRA rollover of \$200,000.

Learn more about the IRA Charitable Rollover at [plannedgiving.sbc.edu/ira-charitable-rollover](http://plannedgiving.sbc.edu/ira-charitable-rollover). ■

### **For more information, please contact:**

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**PO Box 1057 | Sweet Briar, VA 24595**  
**Phone 434-381-6479 | Email: [cgriffith@sbcedu](mailto:cgriffith@sbcedu)**

*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.*

## Save the Date for

# #GIVINGTUESDAY

Details coming soon!





## Engineering Department Hosts 2018 Cardboard Boat Regatta

*The Sweet Briar College Introduction to Engineering class participates in the yearly tradition of designing cardboard boats and racing them in the Lower Lake of campus.*





# Sweet Briar College continues collaboration with Google

by Janika Carey, Assistant Director for Content Strategy



*Professor of Mathematical Sciences Raina Robeva teaches Foundations of Python Programming, a Google-designed course.*

Sweet Briar College is excited to announce a new collaboration with Google to offer computer and data science courses to its undergraduate students. Sweet Briar is one of eight schools collaborating with Google on these pilot courses this academic year — courses aimed to increase undergraduate access to quality computer and data science education by leveraging new technologies and teaching techniques.

The Applied Computing Series teaches the foundations of computer and data science through hands-on, project-based coursework, typically designed to attract students who might not consider themselves destined for a technology career. The courses leverage the tools and techniques used at Google and in the wider tech industry, while also teaching the non-tech skills needed to be successful at work more generally: critical thinking and problem-solving, collaboration, and the ability to communicate and network.

The goal of these courses is to teach students the fundamentals of computer and data science, and to also give them real-world experience in applying and practicing those concepts through creative work. In partnership with colleges and universities, Google hopes to develop an ecosystem where each institution can bring what it does best to the collaboration, with Google creating cutting-edge, industry-relevant content and projects; and colleges and universities providing experienced faculty and the best learning environment possible for their students.

The learning content for the classes is distributed via a “flipped classroom” model of instruction:

Students review, study and practice material outside of the classroom before returning to class to work on collaborative projects coached by Sweet Briar faculty, who help bring learned concepts to life. To develop the most robust curriculum, Google is building these courses in partnership with highly-regarded computer science academics. The Google instructional team builds the centralized content and in-class projects; the courses are then delivered by Sweet Briar faculty in STEM fields.

Students participating in the program will:

- Gain exposure to computer and data science and develop skills that can be applied to their own majors;
- Work with Google employees to learn about the tech industry’s working environments, challenges and nuances;
- Immerse themselves in a project-based curriculum to help reinforce the computer and data science principles they’re learning.

The first course, Foundations of Python Programming, is being offered as a traditional course on campus this fall; the second course, How to Think Like a Data Scientist, will be offered in the spring. Both of these courses are taught by Sweet Briar faculty with guidance from the Google Engineering Education team. The fall course is currently being taught by award-winning math professor Raina Robeva.

More information is available at [g.co/edu/appliedcomputingseries](https://g.co/edu/appliedcomputingseries) and on the Sweet Briar College website at [sbc.edu/stem](https://sbc.edu/stem). ■

## Sweet Briar College, VCCA select inaugural SBC-VCCA fellows

Sweet Briar College and the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts have announced the selection of the inaugural SBC-VCCA Fellowship. Created under the auspices of the College's Center for Creativity, Design and the Arts, the fellowship will support a cross-genre team of three artists who will collaborate to teach a section of Expression and the Arts, the foundational arts course within the College's new core curriculum. The course will take place during the spring 2019 three-week short session, an intensive and immersive experience when students take only one course at a time.

"Our goal was to create an exciting environment where true interdisciplinary work in the arts could take place," said Carrie Brown, professor of English and creative writing and director of the center, "and where students' experience of art leads them to a deeper and more profound engagement with creativity and creative problem-solving, habits of mind that can be broadly applied in virtually any field."

Artists from VCCA, one of the nation's largest residential artists' communities, have always played a role at the College, frequently speaking to classes and sharing their work with the community through a monthly evening salon, and through "Open Studio" afternoons at VCCA, when artists literally open the doors of their studios to visitors. The fellowship, however, which awards each artist a \$5,000 honorarium as well as a four-week residency at VCCA, represents the first formal collaboration between the two institutions and a truly innovative and creative leap.



Aaron Wyanski

"Sweet Briar's model in the arts is that students learn from practicing artists, whether those are writers, visual artists, composers, choreographers or theater directors and actors," Brown said. "The fellowships allow us to open our doors and engage with artists from outside the immediate community, bringing the wider world to Sweet Briar and giving our students mentors across the country. We consider the international

community of artists at VCCA one of Sweet Briar's most unique and meaningful strengths. At virtually no other college in the country can students interact regularly with such an enormous array of artists."

The selected fellowship proposal, entitled "A Multiplicity of Narratives: The Immersive Art of Identity," will be taught by writer Courtney Balestier, conceptual



Writer Courtney Balestier is one of three SBC-VCCA fellows selected to teach a section of the spring 2019 course.

artist Shea Hembrey and composer Aaron Wyanski. According to the artists' description of the course, students will combine "the progressive sketching and design planning of visual artistry, the narrative development and world-building of the literary arts, and the emotional resonance and abstract thinking of sound art, each discipline supporting the others to create deeper, richer work. Students will be encouraged to expand beyond their own lived experiences and create work from a more imaginative place, where a multitude of voices reside."

The response to a call for proposals drew responses from more than 100 artists from across the country and around the world, Brown said, and the proposals were uniformly excellent. "The review panel was very impressed with the high degree of intellectual and artistic rigor behind the course proposals. We're grateful to every artistic team that submitted a proposal and for the time and thoughtfulness that went into designing the courses."

In the case of "A Multiplicity of Narratives," Brown said, "we were especially taken with the artists' opening statement about the course: 'At the heart of great art is empathy: the ability of the artist to imagine herself into another perspective, whether a piece of herself or someone else. This course will cultivate that skill through an immersive interdisciplinary exercise in narrative development, merging concepts of visual art, literature and sound art to explore voice, point of view and identity.'"

Especially intriguing, Brown said, is that students will be asked not only to "imagine large-scale, site-specific and immersive artworks," but also the artists behind those works. "Students will be asked to use literary concepts to imagine the fictional artists behind these works," according to the proposal, "and to understand



these artists as a literary writer would understand her characters. Then, listening being fundamental to empathy, students will be asked to help these fictional artists collaborate on a work of sound art, in the form of a sound walk: a sonic construction that will also serve as a walking tour of the site-specific artworks (as imagined on the Sweet Briar campus). This will require them to explore identity from both individual and collective standpoints, using engagement with sound as a focal point."

Brown said that the notion of empathy, a bridge between individuals or cultures, across time and distance, seems especially relevant at a time when the country — and indeed the world — is so polarized. "Students from every discipline understand that art is a way of understanding both the self and the other," Brown said. "This proposal asks students to do both, which is part of its brilliance."



Shea Hembrey

VCCA, located a stone's throw from the College's main campus, hosts more than 400 fellows a year, artists with honors ranging from MacArthur Fellowships and National Book Awards to Pulitzer Prizes and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, among others. VCCA fellows, who include visual artists, writers and composers, come from around the world, and they bring to campus a vibrant and exciting creative presence.

"This new program is a wonderful enhancement to the long partnership between VCCA and Sweet Briar College," said Joy Heyrman, executive director of VCCA. "We are thrilled to be a part of the transformation of the curriculum and look forward to welcoming the selected team to VCCA in the spring." ■

## Join the Sweet Briar Book Club!

As part of the Lifelong Learning "arm" of the Network, the Sweet Briar Book Club will engage alumnae in reading the same materials students are reading and provide a venue to promote our alumnae/faculty/staff authors. Find [Sweet Briar Book Club on Goodreads](#) and join in to take part in discussions.

## Spotlight on The Network: Career Services and Lifelong Learning

by Co-Chairs Katie Maxwell Schellhammer '95 and Suzanne Ullrich '78

A major selling point of Sweet Briar College to prospective students, and especially their parents, is our small, but mighty alumnae base. We are close-knit and accessible to our current students and fellow alumnae, and one of the easiest ways we can help is through career networking.

Career Services at Sweet Briar is always buzzing with activity. In the 2017-2018 academic year, Barbara Watts, Director of Career Services (with the help of part-time volunteer Luther Griffith) hosted recruiters and conducted programs on a variety of career topics along with hosting a Federal Career Expo on campus. Personalized service is the SBC specialty and one-on-one appointments with students continue to be in demand. Over 75% of the Class of 2018 had a one-on-one meeting and 90% participated in a career services event their senior year.

Last March, students journeyed to Washington, D.C. to visit alumnae on Capitol Hill at the U.S. House of Representatives, Office of the Senate Curator, Senate Foreign Relations Committee, Library of Congress, FEMA, and CATO Institute. Thanks to the alumnae hosts and mentors, our students had an amazing experience, and Career Services plans to repeat the event again this year, March 3-5, 2019. We are also considering visits to Charlottesville, Roanoke, and Richmond. If you wish to participate or host a student, please contact Katie Schellhammer at [katie@schellhammer.net](mailto:katie@schellhammer.net).



Students traveled with Barb Watts, Director of Career Services, and Jeff Key, Associate Professor of Political Science, to visit alumnae in myriad professions in the Washington, D.C. area this past spring.

Students have 24/7 access to career services now via our engagement platform on Career Beam. Students access this platform for career exploration, career planning, job searching, researching employers, finding resume and cover letter templates, and practicing interviewing. Did you know alumnae can take advantage of this, too? Login and [create an account](#) to get started.

Remember the Ring Game? Sweet Briar now has the Scroll Game and the Key Game. As with the Ring Game, students pass around a scroll indicating they have been accepted into graduate school or in the case of a job offer, they pass around a Sweet Briar key. Keep watch for photos and videos this spring of these traditions in action and how students are motivated.



**How can you help?** Follow these simple steps to help us maximize the impact of the network!

1. Create a LinkedIn account and identify yourself as an alumna of Sweet Briar College. When the SBC icon shows up in your profile you will know you have done this correctly. Whether working or retired, this compilation of your work and volunteer accomplishments can provide connections for students and alumnae.
2. Make sure your current position is listed! Include volunteer work you are doing. Find five fellow Sweet Briar alumnae and connect with them on LinkedIn.
3. Using your LinkedIn account, [log in to Alumnifire](#). Sweet Briar has a portal exclusive to our community on the AlumniFire platform. Alumnae can provide help with introductions and networking, resume reviews and feedback, informational interviews, and job shadowing opportunities, as well as directly share job and internship opportunities.
4. Stay engaged. [Connect with Barbara Watts](#) on LinkedIn so she can reach out to you for Career Services panels, and assistance for students as needed.

We look forward to working with you! ■



This fall, the Sweet Briar community read *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie as the College's common read. Adichie spoke at Sweet Briar on Thursday, Nov. 1. Watch the recording of her talk [here](#).

## YOU CAN HELP RECRUIT THE NEXT CLASS OF SWEET BRIAR WOMEN WHO WILL LOVE SWEET BRIAR LIKE WE DO!

Sweet Briar is asking alumnae and friends of the College to personally refer prospective students to the Admissions Office through a new referral form that can be found on both the Admissions and Alumnae pages of our website as part of a referral initiative. There is no time commitment or follow-up required, so please keep it in mind as a simple but significant way to help Sweet Briar's growth and renaissance. Visit [sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student](http://sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student) to make your first referral today!