

The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER JANUARY 2020 | VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 1

My fellow alumnae and friends,

The turn of another decade usually prompts one to look back at what has happened in the last 10 years and begs the questions:

1. Are we better off than we were 10 years ago?
2. What have we learned?
3. What should we be doing to make a difference in our community, our institutions, and make our time on this earth actually matter?

As I reflected on this over the holiday, question number one made me smile — the answer is yes! Sweet Briar is really better off than it was 10 years ago because with the vision of President Meredith Woo, we have seen that innovating our college is not only advisable, but is a necessity today.

What have we learned in the last 10 years? Engagement in our alma mater and the women's leadership focus of this college has never been more important than it is today. We cannot be complacent, nor can we lose our sense of urgency for supporting Sweet Briar by telling our story, recruiting students, volunteering our time, and making a financial gift to the College. We can and should do these things every year.

Lastly, what we should be doing to make a difference?

1. Recruiting students.
2. Connecting with alumnae of all decades.
3. We must be advocates for small, private liberal arts colleges in America, stay positive, and maintain our perspective on Sweet Briar's relevance today.

We must push back and show how, with proper planning and execution, success is inevitable.

The value proposition of a women's college with a focus on leadership that challenges women to be curious and critical thinkers, solve problems and steward their environment has never been more important than today. Sweet Briar is an experience second to none.

As President Meredith Woo has said, "Sweet Briar is the right idea at the right time at the right place!" That is Sweet Briar College. As we look forward, let us all be thankful for how far we have come — but focus on the work before us to continue to build this fine institution. With your help, I know we will.

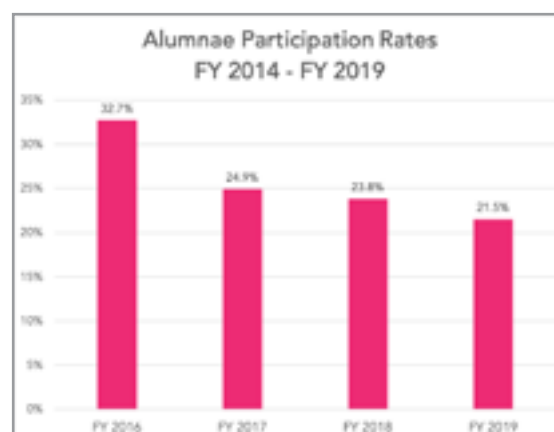
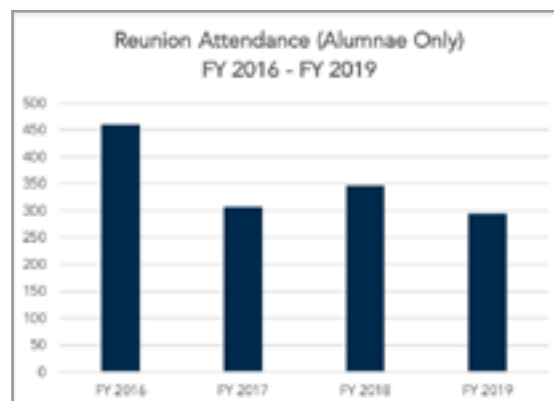
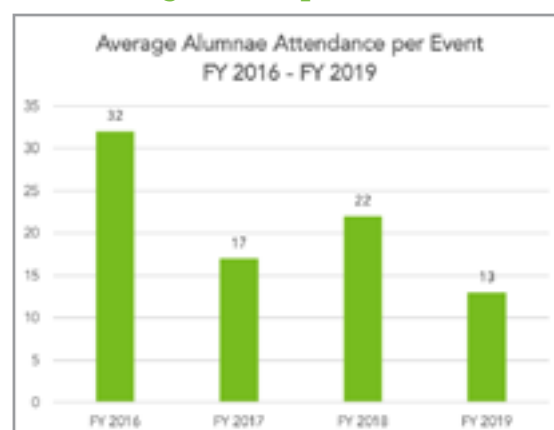
With gratitude,

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

PS: Join me in making a gift to the Sweet Briar Fund at sbc.edu/give.

Engagement Challenge:

Building Participation in 2020



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

Emily Dodson '18, Alumnae
Relations and Development
Associate

Margaret McClellan Driscoll '92,
Major Gifts Officer

Paula Eanes, Office Manager

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

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

Update on Brewer Fund Challenge Grant to support environmental science



The wildflower meadows and apiary at Sweet Briar College in fall of 2019

As we reported in February of 2016, the family advisors of the Judith Haskell Brewer Fund of The Community Foundation Serving Richmond and Central Virginia have awarded Sweet Briar College a two-part gift for its environmental science program and community garden.

The grant provides first, a \$500,000 outright gift over three years, and second, a \$500,000 one-to-one challenge grant to be matched by other College donors, which will result in a \$1.5 million gift. The grant will be used for equipment, faculty support and endowment for program operations.

As of January 2020, just \$145,000 remains to meet the Brewer Fund Challenge Grant before June 30, 2020.

Sweet Briar College has had a long and successful history of educating women in the sciences. Environmental science students have a unique asset at their disposal: the living laboratory of an environmentally and ecologically diverse 3,250-acre campus, which contains woods, lakes, streams, pools, nature sanctuaries, meadows

and mountainsides, as well as many types of wildlife. This landscape is incorporated into many aspects of the environmental science curriculum.

Sweet Briar offers a Bachelor of Science in environmental science and a Bachelor of Arts in environmental studies as well as a minor in environmental science. Both degree programs are highly interdisciplinary, grounded in the wide range of fields relevant to environmental science and studies, including ecology, chemistry, earth science, mathematics, economics and policy. Courses are taught with a contextual awareness of the social, ethical, historical, scientific and technological issues that affect environmental problems.

**To make your gift to the
Brewer Fund Challenge,
visit [sweetbriar.imodules.
com/brewer-fund-challenge](https://sweetbriar.imodules.com/brewer-fund-challenge)
or call (800) 381-6131.**

For more information about supporting environmental sciences, sustainability, or agriculture at Sweet Briar, please contact:

Lea Harvey '90

Director of Strategic Initiatives, Foundations, and Corporate Relations

PO Box 1057 | Sweet Briar, VA 24595

Phone 434-381-6131 | Email: lh Harvey@sbc.edu

Fundraising and Participation Progress: Help Us Make Our Goals!

Unrestricted



Goal: \$6,000,000
Raised: \$1,404,264
Progress to Goal:
23.4%

Restricted



Goal: \$500,000
Raised: \$314,142
Progress to Goal:
62.8%

Participation



Goal: 30%
Current Rate: 7.3%

data collected on Jan. 1, 2020

Make your gift today at sbc.edu/give. Every gift matters!

Updates on Class Challenges

With just six months until the end of the fiscal year on June 30, 2020, the pressure is on for each class to increase its giving and participation in giving to Sweet Briar. Remember, every classmate makes a difference in your class participation whether or not she earned a degree from the College — we are all alumnae!

By now, your the leaders or officers of your class should have reached out to ask you to make a gift. If not, don't wait for them to ask you! Every alumna can make her best gift to Sweet Briar at any time.

This year, Reunion honors those alumnae from classes ending in 0s and 5s, but of course all alumnae are welcome to attend! Reunion classes are eligible for awards in:

- total giving to the Sweet Briar Fund
- total giving to restricted and unrestricted funds
- participation
- Reunion attendance

For all classes, whether or not they are in a Reunion year, winning the highest giving or participation rate within their decade can be a point of pride, too. Did you know that class giving and participation statistics are updated monthly?

Visit sweetbriar.imodules.com/class-giving-statistics to see how your class matches up against

other classes in your decade, both in your current participation rates and the total amount of giving from your class since July 1, 2019.

Remember, alumnae participation rates make a difference in many ways:

1. A gift to Sweet Briar shows your commitment to our alma mater.
2. Potential granting agencies and corporations use alumnae participation rates in their consideration of funding opportunities — the greater the alumnae participation rate, the greater the chance that Sweet Briar will receive a grant or corporate gift.
3. Publications like *U.S. News and World Report* consider alumnae participation rates when ranking colleges and universities in college admissions reports.
4. Showing Sweet Briar's strength, now and for the future.

Making a gift is easy! Visit sbc.edu/give to make your gift online, mail a check to PO Box 1057, Sweet Briar, VA 24595, or call (800) 281-6131 to find out about making gifts in other ways, such as stock, wire transfers, or IRA distributions.

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 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.

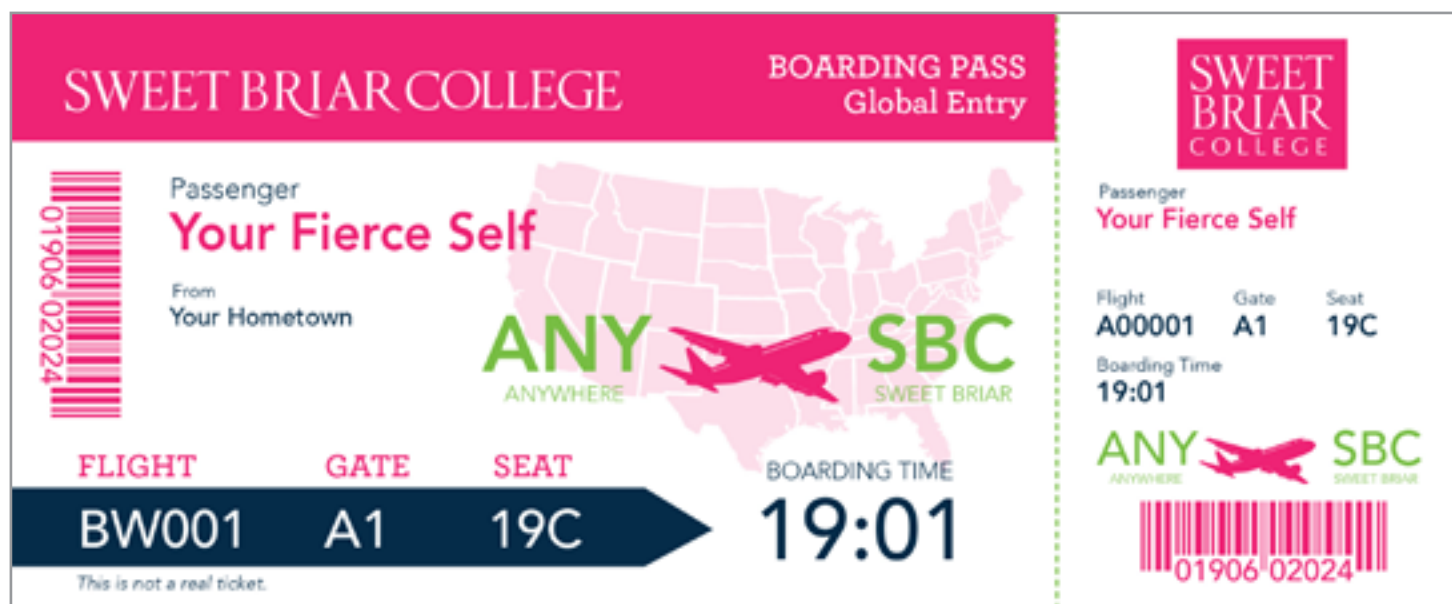
Introducing our Expanded Fly-In Program

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 and ask to take advantage of the program. We'll develop a visit tailored to her interests.

Spring Admissions Events at Sweet Briar

Presidential Scholars*	January 26 February 17
Accepted Applicants Weekend	March 22 - 23
College Counselor Day	April 3
Open House for Prospective Students (juniors and sophomores)	April 25

Prospective students and their families can schedule a campus visit at any time of year! Call (800) 381-6142 or email admissions@sbc.edu to set up your visit.



Reunion 2020

May 29 - 31, 2020
Registration goes live
February 3, 2020 at
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.

