

The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER VOLUME 8, ISSUE 1 | JANUARY 2022

My fellow alumnae and friends,

The advent of a New Year and a new start always focuses the mind on the usual resolutions that are famously consistent with health and fitness and sometimes, but rarely, focus on work-life balance. It is a time of the year to make progress on our life goals. It also offers us a moment to reflect on what we actually accomplished in one year of our lives.

Here at Sweet Briar, we're blessed to have experienced a remarkable year where the Sweet Briar community navigated COVID with only a few cases. Our academic and campus focus on sustainability brought a plethora of fresh vegetables to the campus. Through improvements to the trails (thanks to Gary Canfield and others), the community had an opportunity to focus on health as well. The other indicators of success were growing enrollment, winning athletic and riding teams, improving financial ratings with S&P global, and most significantly, **our 10-year reaffirmation of our accreditation status** (with flying colors). What a year of accomplishment for Sweet Briar!

Now, we begin another year of resolutions. Some are personal in nature, and of course, the others are in areas where we work and volunteer, or simply where we spend our time. For those of us at the College, we have resolutions that include the continued engagement of our alumnae and friends for stewarding this beloved place. This year they are as follows:

1. Recruit a student.
2. Help the College connect with high school administrators and counselors.
3. Promote the College. Spread the word and wear the colors!
4. Volunteer as an Admissions Ambassador.
5. Make a gift to the Sweet Briar Fund.

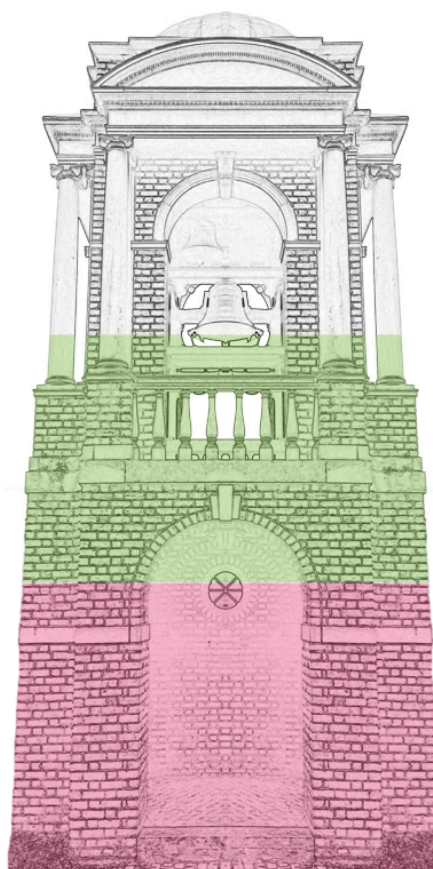
The future of Sweet Briar is in your hands to strengthen our College, promote our distinctive institution to others and always give back to a place that has and continues to give us so much!

Happy New Year!

With gratitude,

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

SWEET BRIAR FUND 2021-2022



GOAL:

\$5 MILLION

PLEDGES:

\$1,424,504

RAISED:

\$1,664,487

As of Dec. 10, 2021.

Board of Directors of Sweet Briar College

Georgene M. Vairo '72, *Chair*

Dr. Meredith Woo,

President of the College

Michael Elliott

Marianne "Mimi" C. Fahs '71

Kelley Manderson Fitzpatrick '85

Sally Mott Freeman '76, *Secretary*

The Honorable Bob Goodlatte

Lendon Gray '71

Fred "Buzzy" Griffin

Martha Holland '72

Keenan Colton Kelsey '66

Gillian Munson

John L. Nau III

Michelle O'Neill '85

The Honorable Chap Petersen

Holly Prothro Philbin '95, *Executive*

Committee Member at Large

Mason Bennett Rummel '83, *Vice*

Chair

Stephen P. Smiley

Norma Bulls Valentine '93

Claude Becker Wasserstein '82

Alumnae Relations and Development Staff

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83,

Senior Vice President for Alumnae

Relations, Development and

Communications

Lea Sparks Bennett '83,

Advancement Services Coordinator

Pam Boydoh, *Executive Assistant*

Lee Anne MacKenzie Chaskes '83,

Director of the Sweet Briar Fund

Margaret McClellan Driscoll '92,

Director of Planned Giving

Paula Eanes, *Advancement Services*

Manager

Heather Colson Ewing '90,

Admissions Ambassadors Manager

Claire Dennison Griffith '80,

Senior Director of Alumnae Relations

and Development

Lea Harvey '90, *Director of*

Strategic Initiatives, Corporate and

Foundation Relations

Caroline Chappel Hazarian '09,

Associate Director of Alumnae

Relations

Keeley Sullivan Jurgovan '92,

Associate Director of Alumnae

Relations

Sarah Lewis, *Associate Director of*

Stewardship, Systems and Major

Gifts

Lisa Wray Longino '78, *Senior*

Director of Major Gifts and

Stewardship

Kathleen Placidi, *Faculty Grants*

Officer

Rachel Pietsch, *Assistant Director of*

Alumnae Relations

Emily Dodson Sadler '18, *Assistant*

Director of the Sweet Briar Fund

Clélie D. D. Steckel, *Director of*

Data Analytics and Development

Communications

Megan Sunwall, *Alumnae Relations*

and Development Assistant

Wanda Vest, *Data Entry Manager*

YOU CAN HELP SWEET BRIAR

Become an Admissions Ambassador

If you're interested in helping to recruit the next generation of Sweet Briar women, become an **Admissions Ambassador**! These alumnae volunteers help reach out to prospective students in our Admissions pipeline to answer their questions, offer relevant information from their Sweet Briar experiences, and encourage students to visit Sweet Briar. **If you are interested in becoming an Admissions Ambassador, please email Heather Colson Ewing '90, Admissions Ambassador Manager, at hewing@sbc.edu.**

Refer a Student

We have made it easy for you to share the great news about how wonderful Sweet Briar truly is! You can personally refer prospective students through a referral form found on both the Admissions and Alumnae pages of our website. This is an easy way to volunteer, as there is no time commitment or follow-up required. Visit sbc.edu/admissions/refer-a-student to make your referral today!

Upcoming Sweet Briar Days

Don't miss your local Sweet Briar Day, coming to a city near you! Please find more details for the events below and register for your local club event at alumnae.sbc.edu/sweet-briar-days.

January 8, 2022

Boston, MA

Minnesota (Minneapolis Area)

Charlottesville, VA

Asheville, NC

San Diego, CA

San Francisco and North Bay Area, CA

Lynchburg, VA

January 9, 2022

Atlanta, GA

Hunt Country, VA

Fredericksburg, VA

Los Angeles, CA

January 13, 2022

Peninsula Club, VA

January 15, 2022

North Texas (Dallas Area)

Triangle Club, NC (Raleigh Area)

January 22, 2022

Charleston, SC

Broward County and Palm Beach, FL

January 30, 2022

Hattiesburg, MS

CANCELED

Important Update

Out of an abundance of caution, we have postponed the rest of our Sweet Briar Days until later this spring when it is safe to do so. We are pleased to invite all our alumnae and friends to President Woo's national Sweet Briar Day this Saturday, Jan. 8 at 3 p.m. EST to give an update on the College. Please check your email for the link to register and submit questions! If you did not receive an email from us, please contact AR&D at alumnae@sbc.edu!

REUNION AND GIVING TUESDAY

Calling all alumnae classes ending in 2 and 7!

REUNION 2022

The party begins once you arrive!

June 3-5, 2022



Dear Alumnae,

We can't wait to see you at Reunion 2022! While this is an all-class Reunion, we look forward to honoring all of you in the classes of the 2's and 7's.

It's a great time to be back on our beautiful campus. Return to Sweet Briar, reconnect with classmates and other alumnae, meet current faculty and staff members and find out about all the exciting things that have happened since the last time you were here—we have so much to show you. Don't miss this opportunity to share in the celebration. Registration begins online Feb. 1, 2022, at sbc.edu/reunion.

Should you have any questions, please contact the office of Alumnae Relations and Development at 800-381-6131. On behalf of the entire Sweet Briar Community, I can't wait to welcome you back!

Warmly,

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

Highlights from previous Reunions include:

- Behind-the-scenes tours of agricultural enterprises at Sweet Briar
 - Special dinners and picnics for Reunion anniversary classes
 - Float at the Boathouse
 - Trail riding
 - Celebration dinner and dance
 - Dell party
 - Alumnae Colleges
 - Vineyard tours and wine tasting
- ...and more!

Thank you to our #GIVINGTUESDAY 2021 supporters!

Goal: 116 donors

Total: 507 donors!

We exceeded not only our first goal, but also our stretch goal, and 507 donors participated from all 50 states and Puerto Rico.

Thank you for helping us build a
#FoundationforSuccess!

COLLEGE NEWS

Sweet Briar caps off great year with reaffirmation of its accreditation



At its meeting in Atlanta on Dec. 6, the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC), Sweet Briar's accrediting body, reaffirmed the College's accreditation.

Every accredited college and university must go through the two-year-long reaffirmation process every 10 years. At Sweet Briar, the reaffirmation process was managed by the academic dean, but required the active support and participation of the entire campus. The re-accreditation process includes an exhaustive review of all its programs and operations both by the College itself and by representatives of SACSCOC from peer colleges and universities. Colleges are required not only to review all their programs and operations to assure that they are in compliance with SACSCOC standards, but they must submit documentation to demonstrate their compliance.

As part of the reaffirmation process, Sweet Briar also developed and instituted a quality enhancement plan (QEP) designed to enhance student learning. Sweet Briar's QEP centers on enhancing women's leadership development through the core curriculum and co-curricular activities.

After receiving the College's report of its own review, together with the required documentation, the SACSCOC Reaffirmation Committee conducted a virtual campus visit in April 2021 to engage with campus personnel and ask questions. After the committee filed a report of its findings and the College responded, and the commission, consisting of representatives of the 11 states making up the southern region, voted to approve Sweet Briar's re-accreditation.

"At Sweet Briar College," said President Meredith Woo, "we take pride in this remarkable outcome.

Unlike some colleges—large and small, elite and not-so-elite, rich and poor, that end up with results that are not clean and stellar—Sweet Briar's accreditation is not subject to monitoring reports, warnings or probation. I am most grateful to the faculty, staff, and students who worked together to make this outcome possible."

The reaffirmation is the culmination of a year of good news for Sweet Briar. The fall 2021 class of incoming students numbered more than 200—the largest group in almost a decade—and the College's donors continue to exceed fundraising goals by almost every measure. Fundraising and enrollment success, combined with sound financial management, led S&P Global in October to raise the school's long-term rating to BB from BB-. S&P also noted that Sweet Briar's outlook is stable.

Sweet Briar's athletics program also continues to impress. In the spring, the NCEA team won the College's first-ever national championship and the tennis team saw a number of successes, including a berth in the NCAA Division III Women's Tennis Doubles Championship. Additionally, Sweet Briar will break ground on a turf field in early 2022 and softball will return to our varsity lineup next fall.

Sweet Briar's vineyard produced its first sellable crop in 2021, an amazing outcome for the College as it invests in its agricultural initiatives. Those initiatives are particularly important in a state where agriculture is the dominant industry.

Despite the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, Sweet Briar College continued to convert challenges into opportunities for success, making 2021 a great year that will provide a strong foundation for the College's continued success.

STUDENTS

Students come together for philanthropy and community service

Since its reinvigoration last year, the second annual Philanthropy Week continues to be a success! This year, the committee expanded on events established last year and were rewarded with increased participation from our students.

The week was filled with 11 events that expressed gratitude to alumnae donors, sparked important conversations, and helped create items to support our local community members in need. With over 215 students attending at least 1 event, Drew Wood '24, Philanthropy Week Committee Member, set the tone for the week quite well during the first event with two alumnae speakers: "To me, philanthropy is not just about physical actions or monetary donations but the sharing of values and ideas."

Philanthropy Week by the Numbers:

- 2 alumnae speakers
- 375 thank you notes written for Giving Tuesday supporters
- Over 50 organ donors recorded
- 40+ items crafted for Miriam's House
- 115 ornaments made for Fairmont Crossing Nursing Home residents
- 3 boxes of items were given to Lynchburg Daily Bread
- Path created at the Plantation Burial Ground and general clean up completed

The students on the Philanthropy Week Committee kicked off the week with a discussion on what students can do to support their local communities. Bruce Blessing of The Meredith Haga Fox Foundation joined students on campus to encourage them to become organ donors and celebrate the life and legacy of Meredith, who was class of 2016. We also honored Debbie Willis '11, through The Debbie Willis '11 Fund, by hosting a COBRA self-defense class which was very well attended by students and highly regarded as an incredibly impactful seminar!

Students also came together for many activities that provided kindness for others, starting with signing postcards to supporters who made gifts on #GivingTuesday. They also decorated ornaments for residents at the local assisted living facility; sewed items for residents at Miriam's House, which helps women and children experiencing homelessness in Lynchburg; helped to restock supplies at Neighbors Helping Neighbors, a local foodbank; and spent a day clearing branches and creating a new pathway at the invisible founders' burial ground.

Of course, one of the events that we looked forward to the most during Philanthropy Week was the Color Run! This celebration brings the community together to get outside and jog a short course around Sweet Briar's

campus, while getting doused with colored powder, creating a tie-dye effect on the runners' attire and a souvenir from the event. Participants also brought items for food bank donations to the Color Run.

Members of the Philanthropy Week Committee are Siena Annable '22, June Alomari '24, Caroline Czarra '22, Kay Humes '24, Peyton Murphy '23, Maddie Swartz '24, Jackie Vari '22, and Drew Wood '24. Philanthropy Week is an investment in the education of our community on what it means to give back through our time, talent, and resources.



SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE

Alumnae Relations and
Development
P.O. Box 1057
Sweet Briar, VA 24595

Make your gift to the Sweet
Briar Fund today at
[sbc.edu/give!](https://sbc.edu/give)

**Save the Date for
SWEET WORK WEEKS!**
Jul. 22 - Aug. 7, 2022

More details coming soon!

Past projects include:

Painting
Weeding
Pruning

Indoor work available, too!

