

The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

JUNE 2020 | VOLUME 6 | ISSUE 5

Dear alumnae and friends,

I send you warm greetings from Sweet Briar College. I hope this letter finds you and your loved ones safe and well. In these difficult times, if you are facing loss and hardship, I urge you to reach out and let us know how you are, and if we may help you. I am looking forward to when we can all be together again.

As you know, several weeks ago, I announced our intention to resume in-person instruction this fall. This decision was not made easily or lightly; it was grounded in a careful consideration of the health and safety of our students, faculty, staff and the surrounding community.

Sweet Briar can do this because we have the space to allow for social distancing. We can offer a single residence hall room to each student. We can safely serve meals in our dining hall and provide fresh, farm-to-table food from our greenhouse. Our favorable student-faculty ratio means we can spread out in our classrooms and laboratories. The compact size of our on-campus community makes things possible at Sweet Briar that are not feasible at large institutions. Certainly, the adjustments necessary to make this happen won't be easy, but we will succeed, because the Sweet Briar family has repeatedly demonstrated it can rise to and surmount virtually any obstacle.

These obstacles include the impact of the coronavirus on the economy. Sweet Briar's primary sources of revenue—tuition, room and board, the endowment, auxiliary enterprises such as the Florence Elston Inn and Conference Center and summer programs, and fundraising—have all been affected.


We are applying for aid from the federal government's CARES Act as well as other federal and state agencies. These funds will help cover payroll, technology upgrades, room and board refunds, and auxiliary revenue replacement. We are also seeking funding from foundations and other sources for scholarships, room and board, travel, shipping and activity fees, so that the pandemic does not create new barriers for our students to continue their studies.

We are also looking to you, our alumnae and friends, to help the College in this time of need. If you have not already made a gift to the Sweet Briar Fund this year, and have the means to do so, I encourage you to make a contribution. If you have already given, please know

how grateful I am for your support and how deeply appreciative I would be if you could make another gift to the College before the fiscal year ends on June 30. Together, as one Sweet Briar family, we can ensure the future of the College and the students it graduates.

Thank you for your generosity, your support and your goodwill. Take care, and be well.

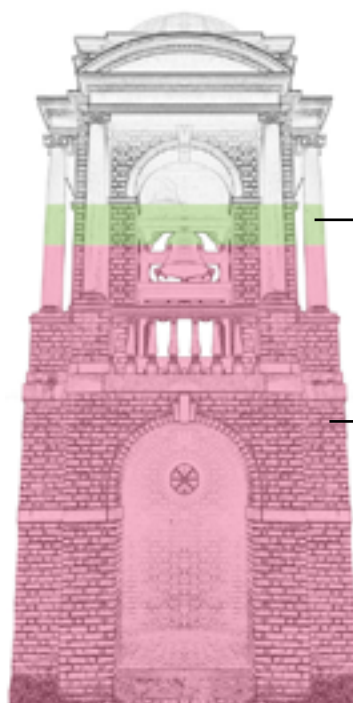
Sincerely,



Meredith Woo
President

2019-2020 Sweet Briar Fund Goal: \$6 million

\$1,726,592 left to raise!



— \$343,434 in current
year pledges
(to be converted by
June 30, 2020)

— \$3,929,974 raised

Make a gift online at
sbc.edu/give!

as of May 12, 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*
Marianne "Mimi" C. Fahs '71,
Secretary
Kelley Manderson Fitzpatrick '85,
Executive Committee Member at Large
Carol McMurtry Fowler '57
Sally Mott Freeman '76
Hon. Bob Goodlatte
Lendon Gray '71
Fred "Buzzy" Griffin
Karen Jackson, *Executive Committee Member at Large*
Keenan Colton Kelsey '66
Gillian Munson, *Executive Committee Member at Large*
Michelle O'Neill '85
Holly Prothro Philbin '95
Mason Bennett Rummel '83
Stephen P. Smiley
Caville Stanbury-Woolery '06
Claude Becker Wasserstein '82
Marshalyne Yeargin-Allsopp, MD '68,
Executive Committee Member at Large

Alumnae Relations and Development Staff

Mary Pope M. Hutson '83,
Vice President for Alumnae Relations, Development and Communications
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 Strategic Initiatives, Corporate and Foundation Relations*
Sarah Lewis, *Associate Director of Stewardship*
Lisa Wray Longino '78, *Director of Major Gifts*
Kathleen Placidi, *Faculty Grants Officer*
Julia Paris '99, *Director of Advancement Services*
Rachel Pietsch, *Assistant Director of Alumnae Relations*
Blair Redd Schmieg '83,
Campaign Coordinator
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 '88, *Major Gifts Officer*
Wanda Vest, *Data Entry Manager*

Update on Reunion 2020 and 2021



While we have had to postpone Reunion 2020 due to COVID-19 for the safety of our alumnae and campus, we are happy to announce the dates for Reunion 2021: May 28-30, 2021 (Memorial Day Weekend). We are even more excited to honor two sets of classes this year: the 1's and 6's as usual, and including the 0's and 5's! Here are our tentative plans so far (more details to come this fall!):

All-Class Reunion

May 28-30, 2021

and

A special early celebration for the postponed 0's and 5's Reunion
(Thanks to the Class of 1970 for this great suggestion!)

Thursday, May 27

We hope you all will join us for this special day and for the rest of the weekend!

The traditional celebration for the 1's and 6's will begin on
Friday, May 28 at 1 p.m.

Rooms at the Elston Inn and Green Village will be reserved for the 50th Reunion classes (1970 & 1971) and Post-50th Reunion classes (1965 & 1966, 1960 & 1961, 1955 & 1956 and earlier) and will be selected by lottery in January 2021. All room requests must go through Rachel Pietsch, assistant director of alumnae relations at alumnae@sbc.edu, 434-381-6131 (not the Elston Inn directly). More details will be provided in September and registration will go live for all classes in February.

Highlights:

(with more to follow in the fall!)

Thursday, May 27, 2021

Behind the Scenes Tour of Campus and Agricultural Enterprises

Special Dinners for the 50th Reunion Class (1970) and 25th Reunion Class (1995)

Welcome Reception and Picnic in Lower Quad for all other classes in the 0's and 5's

Friday, May 28, 2021

Special Dinners for the 50th Reunion Class (1971) and 25th Reunion Class (1996)

Welcome Reception and Picnic in Upper Quad and Dell Party for all other classes

Saturday, May 29, 2021

Convocation with President Meredith Woo
Alumnae College

Tours of Campus and Agricultural Enterprises

Celebration Dinner and Dance

Sunday, May 30, 2021

Service of Remembrance with Alumnae Choir

Keep visiting
sbc.edu/reunion
for any updates!

Sweet Briar Partners with the Local Community

The relationship between Sweet Briar and our surrounding Amherst and Central Virginia community has always been incredibly important. We are grateful for all the people, businesses and nonprofits that make this such a special place to call home.

In addition to bringing tens of thousands of young women and their families to Amherst since the first class arrived at Sweet Briar in 1906, the College campus has served the town and county in numerous ways.

But as much as the Sweet Briar family delights in seeing our neighbors utilize and enjoy the campus, we take even greater pleasure in giving back. Sweet Briar's community outreach efforts aim to support the surrounding area in both difficult times and everyday circumstances.

Recently, the engineering program asked faculty and staff to raid storage spaces for overhead transparency sheets. Together, the Sweet Briar community rescued more than 1,000 old sheets and donated them to local organizations making disposable face shields for workers on the frontline of the current crisis. President Meredith Woo and the College's dining services provider, Meriwether Godey, delivered more than 300 donuts to Amherst EMS and Fire Department, Amherst County Sheriff's Office, Amherst Police Department and the Virginia State Police. Lisa Powell, director of the Center for Human and Environmental Sustainability, has been delivering fresh romaine lettuce grown in the Guion greenhouse to Neighbors Helping Neighbors of Amherst. This summer, Sweet Briar's new 26,000-square-foot greenhouse will produce fresh vegetables that will be donated to numerous local organizations.

Although we're happy to help in the extreme circumstances brought on by COVID-19, we've been proud to support community partners in everyday ways too and the community. Sweet Briar has partnered with:

- Amherst Cares to provide school supplies and food for students in Amherst County.
- Neighbors Helping Neighbors to offer pre-cooked meals to their food sites as well as canned and fresh food.
- Meals on Wheels to help deliver hot meals.
- The Red Cross to host annual blood drives.
- Girl Scouts of Virginia Skyline to host events like the Cookie College.
- Girls on the Run to host their annual event, which brings girls to campus to run the Dairy Loop.

The community, in turn, supports the College. Several local groups provide scholarships to



Sweet Briar Students. The Greater Lynchburg Community Foundation provides scholarships for two first-year students from the Lynchburg region. The Al Stroobants Foundation provides two scholarships covering full tuition, for one year, for students from Central Virginia. Likewise, Stay Close, Go Far Scholarships—awarded by Lynchburg Beacon of Hope—enable students from Lynchburg City Schools to attend a local college or university.

We're grateful for all of these partnerships and with your help, Sweet Briar will continue to look for ways to support and be a resource to our local community.



Planned Giving: Impact of the CARES Act on Your Taxes and Charitable Gifts

As we all navigate this unprecedented global health situation, the Sweet Briar community remains strong and supportive as a resource to you and your family. As you likely know by now, the CARES (Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security) Act was created to help individuals, families, businesses, and nonprofit organizations who are facing challenges during the coronavirus pandemic. Provided below are a few elements that impact charitable giving and tax incentives.

The CARES Act:

- Temporarily suspends the requirements for required minimum distributions (RMDs) for the 2020 tax year. This comes as a relief to individuals who are 70 ½ or older who would have had to withdraw a greater percentage of their retirement accounts.
- Allows all taxpayers to take a charitable deduction of up to \$300, even if they do not itemize.
- Allows cash contributions to qualified charities like Sweet Briar College to be deducted up to 100% of your adjusted gross income for the 2020 calendar year for taxpayers who do itemize.

We are so grateful for your support of Sweet Briar and are committed to continuing to provide students with meaningful opportunities to learn, grow, and contribute to the world. Everyone, including Sweet Briar, is affected by this crisis. We realize that your own needs and the needs for your family take precedence. If you are able to take advantage of these incentives, please consider helping Sweet Briar continue to provide young women a transformational experience in a safe environment, so they can continue the legacy of women making history.

For more information, please contact:

Claire Dennison Griffith '80

Senior Director of Alumnae Relations and Development

PO Box 1057 | Sweet Briar, VA 24595

Phone 434-381-6131 | Email: alumnae@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.

SAVE THE DATE

Founders' Day Weekend

Alumnae Leadership Training Conference

September 18-20, 2020

Commencement Events Postponed to October 2020

Like so many things, COVID-19 has impacted how we will celebrate the accomplishments of our Class of 2020. While we would have wished to celebrate them with all of the traditions alumnae hold dear—Fancy Hat Brunch, Lantern Bearing, Awards Ceremony, Champagne Toast at Sweet Briar House, Baccalaureate and our Community Picnic—that would have been imprudent to do this spring.

We surveyed our seniors to ask them how they wanted to celebrate their graduation—virtually this spring or in-person this fall. The overwhelming response was that they wanted an in-person commencement.

As such, we plan to celebrate Commencement—and everything that goes with it—during the weekend of Oct. 17-19, 2020. We look forward to celebrating the Class of 2020 with all of our traditional fanfare!

Alumnae: We Have a Goal to Reach 30% Participation in FY 2020!

Current participation rate: **16.2%**

Participation rate at this time in 2019: **18.2%**

Sweet Briar's fiscal year ends on
June 30, 2020!

As alumnae, here's how you can make a difference in this important metric:

1. If you are able, make a gift if you haven't done so already! Give online at sbc.edu/give or mail a check to PO Box 1057, Sweet Briar, VA 24595. For gifts of stock or wires, please call our office at (800) 381-6131 for instructions.
2. Get your classmates to join you in making a gift! If you have the time to help ask your classmates for gifts, please reach out to your class officers and offer your help.
3. Ask all those Facebook friends you made five years ago to join you in making a gift! Social media connects alumnae of many different generations, meaning that one post about a gift to Sweet Briar can reach an even larger audience. Share the link to make a gift and ask others to join you!

Getting an Excellent Education Close to Home: Safe and Spacious



The global COVID-19 pandemic has changed life in higher education in many ways, some of which are not yet known. What we do know, however, is that suddenly, students and families are looking for different things as they evaluate which college to attend. Safety is, of course, high on the list of criteria. In addition, many families are looking for colleges closer to home.

Fortunately for Sweet Briar, we're both excellent and safe, making the College a great choice for students who live nearby. We recently sent out a postcard to sophomores, juniors and seniors who live within 180 miles of Sweet Briar. The postcard highlights our innovative women's leadership core and our stunning, spacious and safe campus. It encourages students to schedule a virtual tour or submit an application.

In addition to that postcard, we've implemented a **marketing blitz** throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia. We are underwriting programming on radio stations covering much of the state, including WVTF in Southwest Virginia, VPM in Richmond, WHRO in the Hampton Roads area and WNRN in Charlottesville.

We've purchased Sunday newspaper ads in the Virginian Pilot (above, photo submitted by Sally Old Kitchin '76), Richmond Times-Dispatch, Roanoke Times,



News and Advance, Daily Progress and Bristol Herald. There will also be advertisements in magazines including Lynchburg Living, Virginia Living, Richmond Magazine and regional editions of The New Yorker.

All of the ads will highlight our engineering program, the women's leadership core and the fact that Sweet Briar is a great choice for young women who want to get an excellent education right in their own backyards.

SPREAD THE WORD:

Sweet Briar is safe and spacious and offers single rooms and healthy food!

Classic Collection at the Book Shop

The Book Shop has released a new collection that is sure to spark favorite memories for alumnae from the early 2000s and earlier. The Classic Collection features apparel, drinkware and accessories that reintroduce our classic forest green and pale pink. The items showcase the original red and green seal, the current classic seal, the Crispin Vixen logo and familiar designs. While browsing the Book Shop during Reunion is a must-do that unfortunately can't happen this spring, we encourage you to sit down with your favorite drink for some online shopping at shopsweet.sbc.edu.



The Book Shop
shopsweet.sbc.edu
(800) 381-6106