



# The Briar Wire

THE SWEET BRIAR COLLEGE ALUMNAE NEWSLETTER

SPONSORED BY THE ALUMNAE ALLIANCE AND PRODUCED BY THE ALUMNAE RELATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT TEAM

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## Letter from vice president for alumnae relations & development

My fellow alumnae, friends and supporters of Sweet Briar:

Sweet Briar needs all of us now more than ever. Our *alma mater* is in transition and is buoyed by new leadership in every corner of our institution. Recently, someone asked me whether enrollment or fundraising was our greatest challenge. I responded, "Neither one. It is leadership." Let's all face it: leadership sets Sweet Briar apart across America and abroad and when fully tapped, is a powerful force for success.

Our moment in time is here and now as we examine where we are and how we chart our pathway forward to build a sustainable institution. We will be saving Sweet Briar for some years to come, and it will require patience, trust in the leadership of the Sweet Briar Board, faculty and staff, empathy for each other and even more determination than ever before. Our collective leadership also requires that we focus on students and fundraising. The administration, faculty and Board of Sweet Briar are beginning their strategic planning to create the vision ahead and will ask for input from our alumnae as they move forward. We all remain dedicated to fulfilling the promise of perpetuity that Indiana Fletcher Williams laid out over a century ago, while making Sweet Briar relevant to this and future generations.

While we look ahead, let's not forget one woman's vision — one leader who unselfishly gave the majority of her assets to benefit others. She gave to those whom she would never know to make an impact on women's education. I hope you will join me and so many others who know that we must give time, talent, and treasure to generations of women we will never know.

If not us, who? If not now, when? **Next is NOW.**

I remain yours,  
Mary Pope M. Hutson '83  
Vice President for Alumnae Relations &  
Development  
mpmhutson@sbc.edu  
(434) 381-6242

## What's next? Your gifts now.

**Next is NOW.** We must realize our vision for Sweet Briar's path to sustainability by addressing the neglect suffered by the College over many years, by providing operational expense relief in the wake of the closure attempt and by protecting the College's endowment to ensure our mission continues. To educate and empower women in perpetuity, we must address what's next — **now.**

To help us address, provide and protect Sweet Briar's future, make a gift to the College today or accelerate your pledge to Saving Sweet Briar through a gift to Sweet Briar College. Visit [sbc.edu/gift](http://sbc.edu/gift) or mail a check to Office of Alumnae Relations and Development, PO Box 1057, Sweet Briar, VA 24595. For other ways to make a gift, visit <http://sbc.edu/alumdev/ways-give> or call (800) 381-6131.

## Distinguished Alumnae Award recipients

At its meeting on January 5, 2016, the Sweet Briar College Alumnae Alliance Council voted on the Distinguished Alumna Award recipient for 2016. Breaking with tradition, the Council voted to give the award to not one, but seven Sweet Briar alumnae: The seven women of the Board of Directors of Saving Sweet Briar, Inc.

The Distinguished Alumna Award honors alumnae who have brought distinction to themselves and to Sweet Briar College through outstanding accomplishment in a volunteer or professional capacity. These seven women made careers out of their volunteer efforts to save Sweet Briar in 2015; to honor them collectively with this award is a small gesture of gratitude in comparison with their tremendous dedication, passion and ultimate success in the preservation of the Sweet Briar College we all know and love.

Sarah Preston Clement '75, Christine Davis Boulware '77, Sally Mott Freeman '76, Jo Ann Soderquist Kramer '64, Ellen Ober Pitera '93, Tracy Anne Stuart '93, and Brooke Linville '04 will be honored during Reunion weekend, June 3-5, 2016. Please applaud their special leadership!

## Board of Directors of Sweet Briar College

The Honorable Teresa Pike Tomlinson '87, Chair

Phillip C. Stone, Esq., President of the College

Andrew C. Benjamin

Jacquelyne "Jax" Bullett '15

Leah A. Busque '01

Alice Dixon '82

William B. Drake, Jr.

Marianne "Mimi" C. Fahs '71

Kelley M. Fitzpatrick '85

Carol M. Fowler '57

Martha S. Fruehauf '80

Everett "Ben" Howerton, Jr.

Gen. Charles C. Krulak, Vice Chair

O. Kenton McCartney

James "Rocky" Query

Mason B. Rummel '83

Allison "Allie" S. Simon '63

Marcia Thom-Kaley

Georgene M. Vairo '72, Secretary

CeCelia E. Valentine '85

Elinor "El" H. Warner '85

Marshalyn Yeargin-Allsopp, MD '68

## Alumnae House Staff

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

Donna Dodd '15 and PA '01  
Associate Director of Alumnae Relations and Annual Giving

Claire Dennison Griffith '80  
Director of Major and Planned Gifts

Sarah Lewis  
Director of Advancement Services

Kathy "kp" Papadimitriou '84  
Director of Alumnae Relations and Annual Giving

Bonnie L. Seitz '01  
Assistant Director of Advancement Services

DJ Stanhope '81  
Senior Associate Director of Alumnae Relations and Annual Giving

Clélie D. D. Steckel  
Associate Director of Alumnae Relations and Annual Giving

Katia Suntseva  
Systems Specialist

Marcia Thom-Kaley  
Director of Alumnae Admissions Recruiters and Assistant Professor of Music

Wanda Vest  
Data Coordinator

For more information about Alumnae House staff, please visit <http://sbc.edu/alumdev/meet-staff>.

## Getting to know the Sweet Briar Fund

As was announced in the booklet mailed out in December, **Next is NOW**, the Office of Alumnae Relations and Development has a goal of raising \$10 million through the Sweet Briar Fund (formerly known as Annual Giving). The rebranding of the Annual Giving program includes significant expansion. The Sweet Briar Fund is being matched by two other critical elements in the initiative. We are asking donors to Saving Sweet Briar, Inc. to accelerate a total of \$10 million in pledges by June 30, 2016. Finally, a group of visionary donors will bring another \$10 million to the table. If we meet these goals by Reunion 2016, we really will all have much to celebrate that weekend!

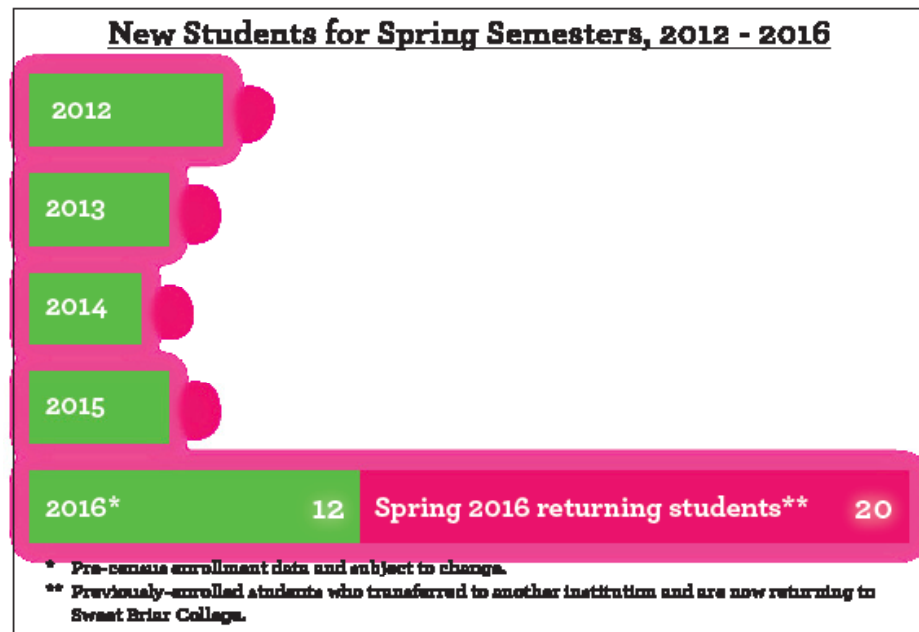
Regardless of whether it is your Reunion year or not, the focus of the Sweet Briar Fund is on unrestricted contributions. Unrestricted gifts now are more than contributions to the Sweet Briar Fund; they are an investment in fortifying an extraordinary educational institution. We are all responsible for Sweet Briar's sustainable future, and the best way to ensure that path to sustainability is through unrestricted gifts, which give the College administration the ability to augment the budget while we are building enrollment.

Champions chosen from outside the alumnae base expand our solicitation and communication with students, faculty, former faculty, staff, former staff, parents and family members, and a new group called "Kids on Campus" (children who grew up in the Sweet Briar community). The local business community is being included in this expanded solicitation group as well, especially since there were key businesses in the area who supported (and continue to support) Sweet Briar.

## Sweet News: High number of new and returning students for spring 2016

The Sweet News column focuses on especially positive and exciting news about Sweet Briar College.

The Office of Admissions is excited to announce that in the Spring 2016 semester, there are 12 new students on campus and 20 returning students. As you can see from the chart below, this is an increase in new students over the past several years. Director of Alumnae Admissions Recruiters, Marcia Thom-Kaley says, "We are **actively** recruiting transfer students and it's working!"



## Reunion 2016

From June 3-5, 2016, Sweet Briar College will host a celebratory Reunion for alumnae and their families toward the end of our fundraising cycle. These events will honor Reunion classes but will also embrace and include **all** alumnae, and **all** classes are invited. More details will come in early February!

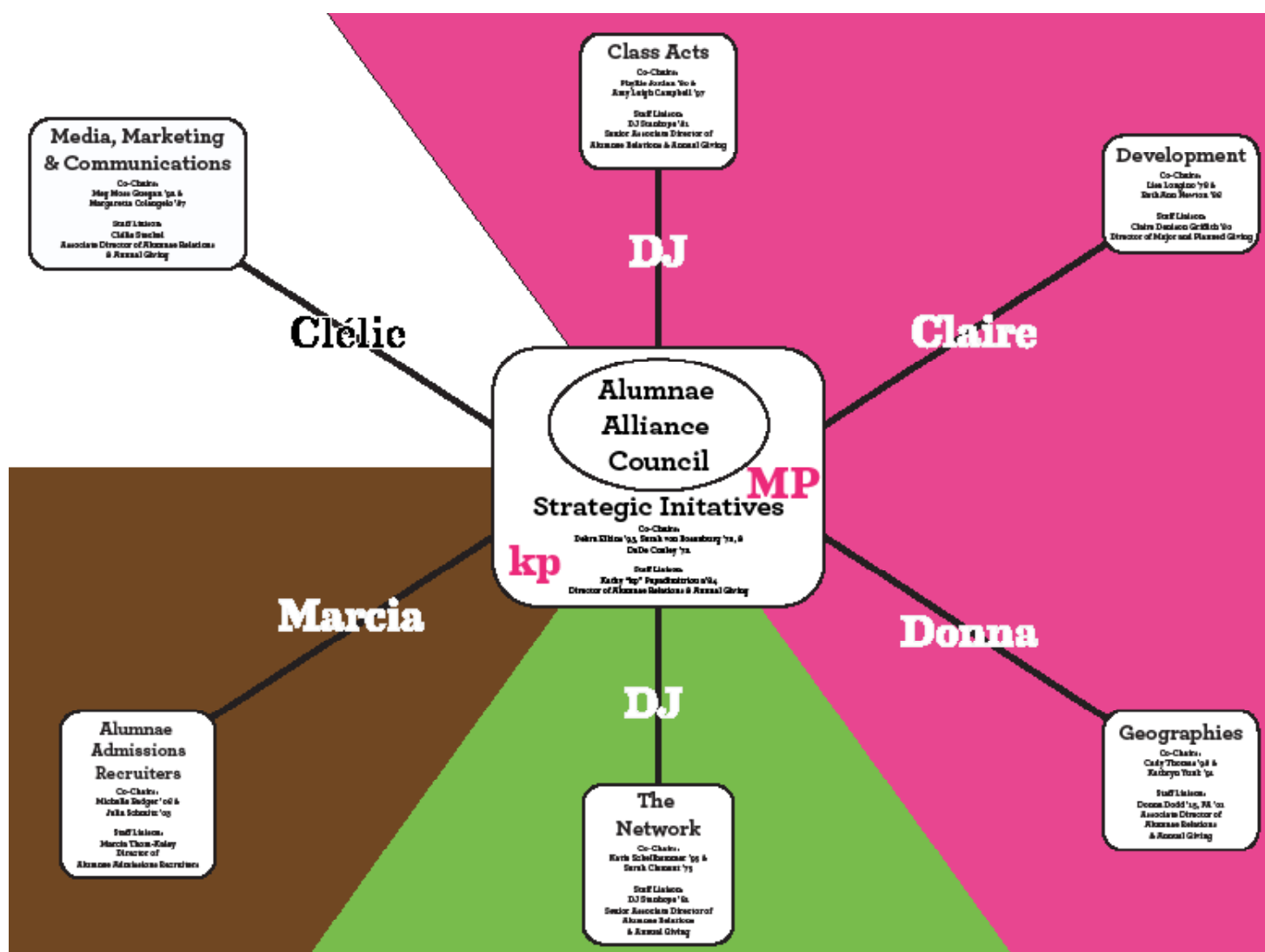
## New members of Sweet Briar's Board of Directors

Welcome and congratulations to our two newest Board members, O. Kenton McCartney and Marshalyn Yearn-Allsopp, MD '68! Both were elected to the Board of Directors on December 13, 2015. Kenton, a resident of Charlottesville, VA is retired from a career in commercial banking and is also the father of two daughters including Katy, Sweet Briar class of 1997. Marshalyn is a developmental pediatrician and epidemiologist in the National Center on Birth Defects and Developmental Disabilities at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, GA. Marshalyn previously served on the Board of Directors from 1981 to 1989 and was awarded the Sweet Briar Distinguished Alumna Award in 1992.

## Alumnae Alliance hub and spokes become a wheel in motion

Since the Alumnae Alliance Council has been established and focused its energy into seven working groups, the structure of the Council itself has solidified and the structure of the working groups have begun to form. Some of these working groups existed under the previous Alumnae Association Board, while others have expanded to support and align with other departments at the College. *While all activities are coordinated and prioritized through the Alumnae Relations and Development office, they ultimately support the specific efforts of other departments. The chart below illustrates these connections.*

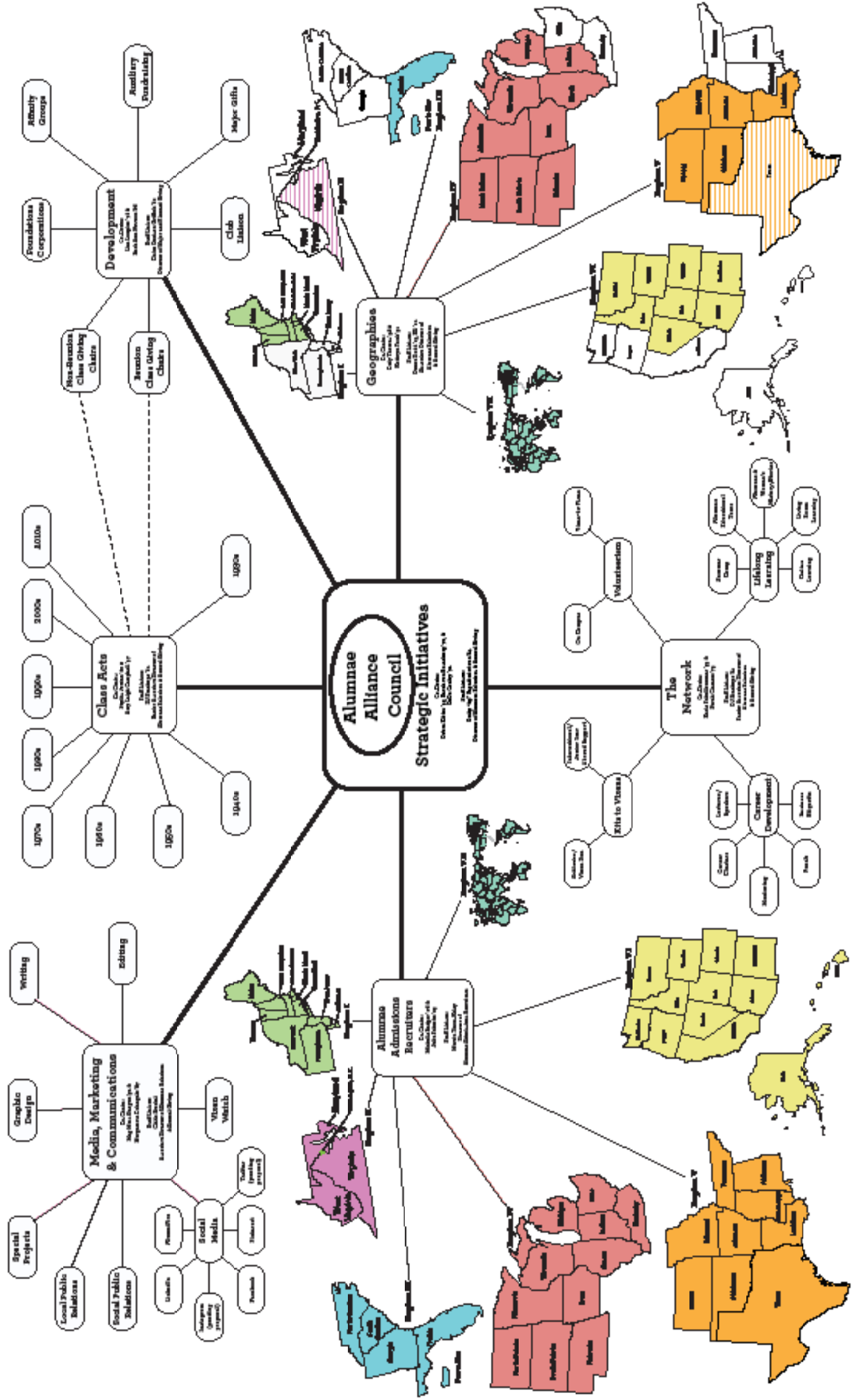
The working groups with a pink background below support the fundraising and communications functions of the office of Alumnae Relations and Development, while the working group with the green background, The Network, supports the Office of Student Life. The working group with the brown background, Alumnae Admissions Recruiters, supports the Office of Admissions and the working group with a white background supports the Office of Media, Marketing and Communications.



*Note: All alumnae support is coordinated through the Alumnae Relations & Development team members, even those that connect to other departments of the College. These team members' names are on the chart above.*

If you would like to be involved with the Alumnae Alliance as a volunteer in one of these groups, please call the office of Alumnae Relations & Development at (800) 381-6131.

As you can see in the diagram below, the working groups have started defining their focus through topical subgroups.



## Vixen Athletics Corner

By Neil Brown, Sports Information Director

### Riding

Sophomore rider Makayla Benjamin represented the United States December 29-31, 2015 in the World University Equestrian Federation (known by its French abbreviation AIEC) Student Riding Nations Cup World Finals in Germany. Benjamin rode in a qualifying show in Sweden earlier this year to earn a spot on the U.S. team along with two other riders. The engineering major from Leesburg, VA won the Silver League show jumping competition and finished third overall. Her finish helped pace the U.S. team to a fifth-place finish.

### Lacrosse

On Dec. 10, Sweet Briar College Director of Athletics Teresa Boylan announced Megan Behrle, '09 as the interim head lacrosse coach.

"I am overwhelmingly excited to come back to Sweet Briar and to get an opportunity to coach the team this season," said Behrle. "I am really looking forward to working with the girls and continuing the long-standing lacrosse tradition at Sweet Briar."

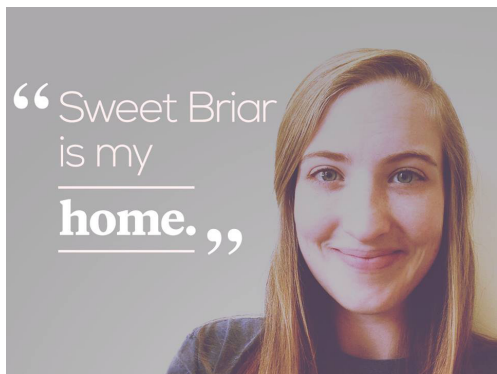
### Swimming

The Vixen swimming team spent Jan. 7-13 in Delray Beach, FL for their annual winter training trip. During the trip, the team practiced twice a day while also taking in the sights and sounds of the Miami metro area. The trip is part of Head Coach Donna Hodgert's training program leading up to the ODAC Championships in Greensboro, N.C. from Feb. 12-14.

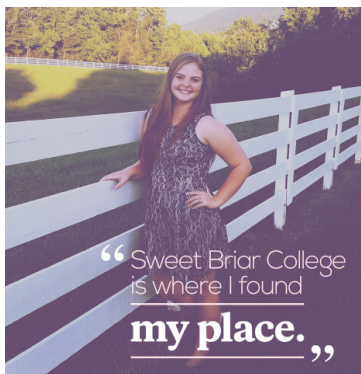
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## Social media campaign highlights returning Sweet Briar students

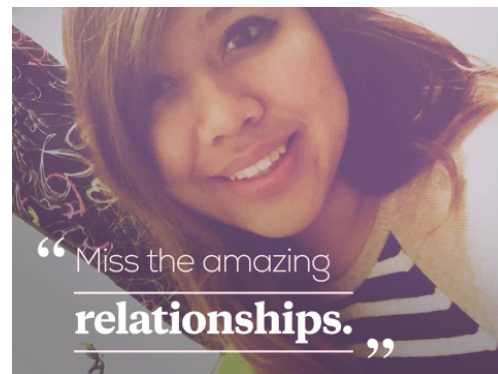
Marketing firm Edelman & Associates has conducted a social media campaign on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram to highlight students who transferred to other institutions for the fall semester and are returning to Sweet Briar College this spring. The campaign combines photos of these students with brief stories describing why they have chosen to come back to Sweet Briar. These communications provide insight to prospective students and their parents about what makes Sweet Briar so special. Some samples of these posts appear below.



*Caroline McDonald '17, art history major*



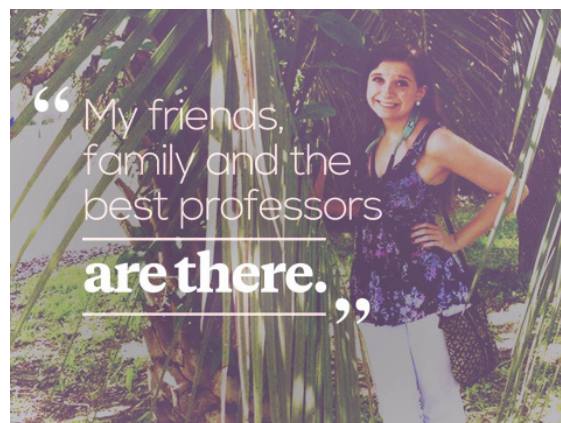
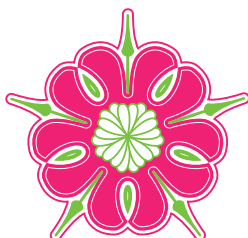
*Taylor Fischer '18, psychology major*



*Chelsea Alvarado '17, psychology major with minors in biology and math*



*Marie-Noelle Cabral '17, psychology major with minors in biology and studio art*



*Noell Cosby '17, biology major with minors in chemistry and dance*

Do you have questions or comments about The Briar Wire? Please contact Clélie Steckel, editor, at (800) 381-6131.

## Admissions Advocate software expands Alumnae Admissions Recruiters Program

Congratulations to Steven Nape, Vice President of Admissions, who collaborated with the Alumnae Admissions Recruiters (AAR) Working Group and Alumnae Relations & Development Office to create “Admissions Advocate.” This software expands the reach of our AARs by matching alumnae with prospective students and college fairs not only by zip code, but by other shared attributes of their experience at Sweet Briar: athletic teams, academic focus, high school attended, and many others. The system will also track high school guidance visits, communications, and college fairs. We are excited – this tool enhances the typical admissions process.

## Vixen Voices: Xin Zhang '16

*The Vixen Voices column includes news about our current students.*

The Office of Alumnae Relations and Development received a special gift over winter break this year: Xin Zhang '16 from Suzhou, China was unable to return home for the break and stayed on campus to work in the office. Unlike our other international students on campus, Xin has been with us all four years and will graduate with a four-year degree.

Why us? Xin, a sociology major with a minor in mathematics, found Sweet Briar by searching the Internet for a college in the United States with a student body of less than 2,000. Since she grew up in a large city, she also wanted a change of pace and looked for a school in a small town. Xin expected that she would get more attention and encouragement with the small class size, but underestimated just how much attention and encouragement she'd receive. She gave the example that in her first semester at Sweet Briar, professors noticed that she was very quiet in the classroom. The director of

international students connected Xin with another student to talk with for an hour each day for her first semester to help her improve her conversational English.

Xin had never set foot on Sweet Briar's campus before she started classes her first year, but says that she knew what Sweet Briar's campus would be like from its website, which made her say from the start, “Wow, it's so sweet!” Xin is currently applying to graduate programs to earn her Masters degree in computer science.

## Notes from Indiana

*The Notes from Indiana column gives details from the history of Sweet Briar and the Fletcher and Williams families.*

The Alumnae Admissions Representatives program was first established in 1932 by Mrs. Bernice Drake Lill, the first Director of Admission and a Wellesley graduate. We do not know the exact number of AARs that first year, but they were confined to the local community. In 1950, there were 56 AARs and with a reinvigoration of the program, an expansion to 120 by 1951. Now, the Alumnae Admissions Recruiters program consists of almost 500 alumnae who attend college fairs, bring admissions packets to high schools, and meet with prospective students. In the fall semester, Sweet Briar alumnae staffed 70 college fairs. For Spring 2016, Marcia Thom-Kaley and her team have 85 college fairs on the books and are still gathering details on other potential fairs.

Source: *The Story of Sweet Briar*, by Martha Lou Lemmon Stohlman '34

*The Briar Wire* is produced by the Alumnae Alliance and the staff of the Alumnae House.

Do you have an email address you want to share with us? Do we need to update your information in our database? If so, please give us a call toll-free at (800) 381-6131 or send an email to [alumnae@sbc.edu](mailto:alumnae@sbc.edu).