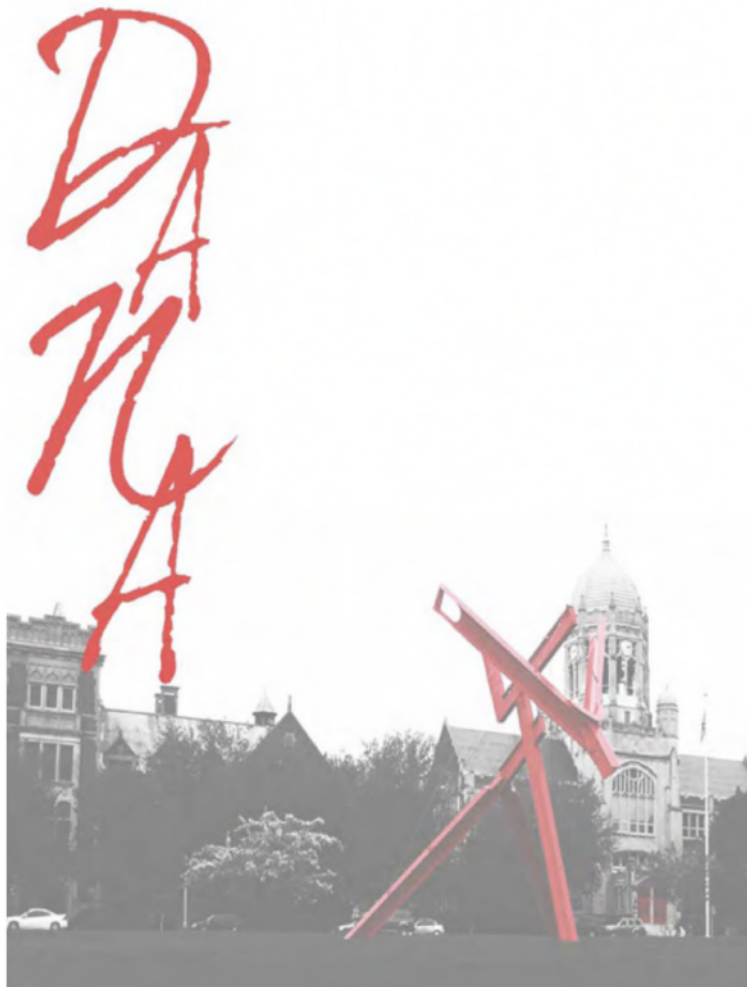


The Dana Interviewer, Class of 2024



The Dana Interviewer

Featuring the Class of 2024

The Dana Scholars Program acknowledges students who display academic potential, good character, integrity, and leadership ability through contributions both inside and outside of the classroom. Each summer, Muhlenberg College awards about thirty exceptional high school seniors with this honor, one of the most prestigious honors that the College offers.

For more information, visit: <https://www.muhlenberg.edu/academics/dana-scholars/>

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Arielle J Touitou

Written by Peri R Kahn

Arielle J Touitou, a Dana Scholar senior, was born and raised in Toms River, New Jersey where she was fostered by a loving family and community that allowed her to develop diverse interests, most notably her love for music and pediatric medicine. All her life, Arielle was surrounded by music. She started inquiring about instruments at an early age and formally began playing the piano in third grade. Similar to her passion for music, Arielle's love for pediatric medicine stemmed from her upbringing and home life. Arielle is the oldest of three siblings. She often found herself in a caretaking role, but rather than seeing it as an annoyance, she enjoyed helping out. As mentioned before, Arielle grew up in a tight-knit community, which she became involved in by babysitting her neighbors and working as a camp counselor over the summer. Both of these experiences grew her love for kids and caring for others. Arielle's passion for music, children, and medicine led her to double major in music and biology (on the pre-med track).



Arielle's passions have helped her thrive in the Dana Program through participating in compelling internships, research, and classes at Muhlenberg. Due to her interests in biology, Arielle participated in extensive research with Dr. Amy Hark in the summer of 2022 as one of her Dana Scholar internship opportunities. Alongside Dr. Hark, Arielle studied evolutionary biology, focusing on the evolution of gene signaling pathways, in addition to gene conservation throughout different species. Furthermore, Arielle decided to conduct her honors thesis and other internship with Dr. Cassie Hartford in musicology. Together with Dr. Hartford, Arielle studied the interconnectedness between music and medicine through the Zimbabwean practice, Mbira. Arielle's research with Dr. Hartford is one of her most proud and exciting accomplishments throughout her time in the Dana Program because it truly encompasses her love of helping others through music and has allowed her to connect with a professor who can guide her through life beyond the red doors.

Throughout Arielle's time at Muhlenberg, she has taken full advantage of the liberal arts curriculum and taken classes across multiple disciplines. Her two favorite classes have been Music and Gender with Dr. Hartford and Organic Chemistry with Dr. Lauren Warning. Music and Gender was Arielle's first class focused on ethnomusicology, the basis of her honors thesis, and it was the first class where she read and wrote about music from an academic perspective. Moreover, Arielle loved Organic Chemistry because Dr. Warning taught the curriculum in a way that made sense to Arielle so learning the material was enjoyable.

Not only has the Dana program allowed Arielle to meet insightful professors and participate in eye-opening research, but the program also provided her first and best friends. Arielle arrived at Muhlenberg during the heart of the Covid pandemic when making friends was

difficult. Luckily, her year was allowed back on campus, and she was able to participate in pre-orientation. These two factors allowed Arielle to “meet really amazing people from all corners of Muhlenberg.” Arielle is looking forward to life after Muhlenberg and credits the Dana Program for much that she has learned and accomplished at Muhlenberg.

Gabrielle McCabe

Written by Nola Y Thompson

Gabi McCabe is a senior at Muhlenberg College and a proud member of the Dana Scholars Program! Her hometown is just twenty minutes away from campus in Bethlehem, PA, so she has lived in this area for her whole life. When Gabi made the decision as a senior in high school to commit to Muhlenberg, she was especially drawn to its remarkable theater program. She also explained that she always knew she wanted to go to a small school with a comforting atmosphere so that she could “talk in class without a hundred eyes staring at me,” and she got exactly what she wanted here at ‘Berg!



Gabi is a Theater and Media and Communications double major and has been involved in all things theater on campus. From serving as a stage manager, assistant stage manager, and costume designer for countless department and studio productions, to being trained as a sound board operator in the booth as well as an usher in the house, Gabi has learned the ropes to every aspect of theater she could. She even served on the Muhlenberg Theater Association (MTA), an all student-run theater organization here on campus, executive board for a year which further demonstrates her commitment to theater. All of these experiences and opportunities are sure to serve Gabi well in the future as she begins her search for a job or apprenticeship in the field of theater administration.

When asked about her study abroad experience, Gabi’s face lit up as she had nothing short of an amazing time. During spring 2023 of her junior year, Gabi studied abroad in London in what she described as an “experiential learning” experience. She recounted the numerous classes she took in theater, museology (the study of museums), and art administration. Additionally, her program went on countless trips to art and history museums, performances, cemeteries, important landmarks, and more. Gabi had a truly unforgettable time becoming immersed in the culture, beauty, and knowledge that London has to offer. Upon her return to campus the following year, Gabi acted as an ambassador for this particular study abroad program (CEA CAPA), and worked to recruit fellow Muhlenberg students to take part in it.

As far as being involved as a Dana Scholar, Gabi took part in an extremely interesting internship with Dr. Hashim, known as the Dana Anti-Racism Initiative, her sophomore year. In collaboration with other Danas and Dr. Hashim, Gabi organized and collected data regarding racism on college campuses which culminated in a final project called “Uncovering the PWI.” For her mentorship, Gabi worked closely with her professor, Jess Bien, on a research project during the fall semester of her junior year. The project was called “Why This Show Now?” and it examined the social and cultural reasoning behind why directors and stage managers decide to put on certain shows at different times or at different locations. Gabi had the opportunity to research the relevance and historical importance of many famous theatrical performances to better understand the motivations behind specific creative aspects and choices within them.

Gabi's thoughtful advice for Muhlenberg students in general is to try your best to take things one day at a time and not get too caught up in the stressful and, unfortunately, ever-present culture and expectations of overworking yourself. She believes that "we can all benefit from a collective deep breath" because taking things slowly and being kinder to ourselves is something we all as college students should focus on.

Gianna Anzalone

Written by Kira S Bretsky

Gianna Anzalone from Jackson, New Jersey is a manifestation of what it means to be a Dana Scholar at Muhlenberg. In 2024, Gianna will not only be graduating with a major in Biology and a minor in Chemistry, but she will also leave campus with an interdisciplinary background in numerous subjects from slime mold to cartography.

Gianna entered the Muhlenberg community at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, during which the college adopted safety measures like virtual learning that made her freshman experience uniquely disconnected from typical student life. She noted that as a freshman, she and her classmates had to transition to college twice: once to a campus without students, and again to a fully populated campus as the year progressed. Due to restrictions at the time, Gianna and the 2024 Dana class could not participate in the program's typical Pre-Orientation; rather, they became acquainted with one another mainly through their First Year Seminars.

Gianna's First Year Seminar was "The Power of Maps" with Dr. Sharon Albert, who introduced her to the ideas she continues to find useful in analyzing the influence of biases in scientific maps and geographic affiliations. For the Center for Ethics's theme this academic year, "The Ethics of the Image," Gianna and her classmate Nesya Sloane (another member of the 2024 Dana Scholars Class) are studying spheres of influence in cartography. Gianna and Nesya, sponsored by Dr. Albert, are the only group that is *generating* images for their culminating project.

In her time at Muhlenberg, Gianna has taken part in two mentorships. During her sophomore year, Gianna participated in a mentorship with Dr. Alexandra Frazer of the Psychology department at Muhlenberg to build mazes for slime mold. These mazes included lights in addition to food stimuli for the slime mold which they used to direct and track their growth. Recently, she spent her junior and senior years on a research project that she designed herself with Chemistry Professor Dr. Bruce Anderson. Gianna's research about the role of plastics in cosmetics was grounded in her understanding of physical chemistry and knowledge of the scientific process from her experience with Dr. Frazer. Currently, this work in cosmetics is guiding her potential continuation of studies in law school; in true Dana fashion, Gianna does not want to limit herself to any single scientific focus. She is considering many ways that she could build on this project, which may include the pharmaceutical legal system as a vector for her work.

In her studies, the perspectives she found through the Dana program outside of the Biology & Chemistry departments became essential resources for her culminating projects. "The Dana experience *is* the liberal arts experience," Gianna said. In addition to her individual and academic work, Gianna has also been a Learning Assistant for 3 years, which is one of the most



prestigious student positions at Muhlenberg: only about 25 total applicants are chosen each year. She is also the Historian for the Chemistry Club, a job she has held since her junior year.

Gianna urges younger Danas to seize the opportunities to extend through multiple disciplines that are presented by the program. “College can feel hyper-focused sometimes,” Gianna told me, a mindset “which you can break out of through Dana mentorships and internships.” To Gianna, the Dana program has been essential in connecting with peers and faculty who have the same drive to think critically as she does. It is a skill she will take with her as she leaves Muhlenberg and continues on to law school this fall.

Jake Azrolan

Written by Emma R Northrop

Jake Azrolan is a Dana Scholar from Long Island, New York. Jake is part of the 3-4 BioDental Program. He will be continuing his education at the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. The Dana Program heavily contributed to Jake choosing Muhlenberg; however, he was also drawn by the wide variety of elective options, which has allowed him to immerse himself in the field of biology and to interrelate what he has learned in biology to the field of dentistry.



Jake has always had an interest in the sciences, having enjoyed his biology courses in high school and doing four years of research in high school as well. Jake has continued pursuing his passion for research while in college at the Bar-Peled Lab Harvard Medical School / Massachusetts General Hospital. There, he worked to find mesothelioma markers to see how it interacts with the body, how it causes cancer, and thus how to stop it. In addition to this, Jake has worked for the Dana Interviewer as the editor, as well as using the Dana Program to have mentorship opportunities to do research outside his field of study. Jake used this opportunity to do research related to A.I. and its possible enhancement of creativity in the artworld.

Similarly, Jake's senior forum project focuses on how A.I.-generated images on current events affect public perception of them. He explains how partaking in this forum helped him to broaden his outlook and perspective of communities around us. In exploring A.I. images, Jake saw how images really deceive people. He maintains that it is imperative for those in the fields of photography and marketing, as well as the general public, to understand the signs for an altered image and not take an image at face value.

Jake is quite involved on campus, he is a member of the dental club, ZBT (Zeta Beta Tau) fraternity, and ultimate frisbee. While he didn't have the opportunity to study abroad, Jake expresses a strong desire to do so in the future. He hopes to experience different cultures, immerse himself with tradition, and broaden his perspectives.

Moreover, Jake encourages students to "Do some clubs, speak with people, really get a study group forming." He also shares "It's very hard to manage your time, it can get overwhelming. Jake stressed the importance to "balance yourself, find something fun and relaxing." He maintains that, while college can be a stressful time, it's also a time for fun. Regarding classes, Jake suggests taking electives outside of one's major, and also art courses. He says, "Take your major for what you want to do, do the minor if you want, but explore everything."

Jake's goals for after he graduates include becoming a dentist, and potentially an oral surgeon. He also has dreams of owning his own practice down the line.

Kayla M Hartman

Written by Niharika Mukkamala

From Long Valley, New Jersey, Kayla Hartman is a vibrant and ambitious individual. She is a double major in theater and business, with a minor in English literature, reflecting her diverse interests and a commitment to exploring the arts from various perspectives. Her main goal is to work in the arts (production or administration), but is also interested in the publishing industry.

Kayla's academic journey is marked by her engagement in the Dana program. The program's emphasis on self-driven projects and interdisciplinary exploration aligns with Kayla's approach to her studies. She appreciates the freedom to build projects and delve into topics she is passionate about, exemplified by her participation in a Dana forum project on Elvis, a subject outside her major but approached through her unique lenses.

One of the defining aspects of Kayla's Muhlenberg journey is her mentorship with Jim Vanvalen, a theater professor, through an independent study during her junior year. Focused on the dynamics of relationships within theater spaces, Kayla explored power hierarchies, envisioning a better business model to protect those involved.

In addition to her mentorship, Kayla is working on an Honors thesis that combines her business major and mentorship experience. Collaborating with Dr. Roland Kushner, Trevor Knox, and Benjamin Carter, she examines the success of arts in different regions, particularly Morris County. This ambitious project showcases her dedication to understanding the nuances of the arts and why nonprofits are or aren't successful.

Kayla's internship at Mayo Performing Arts Center during the summer after her sophomore year provided her with hands-on experience in house management. She contributed to the smooth running of shows, managed spreadsheets, sold merchandise, and worked with audiences.

Beyond her academic pursuits, Kayla has many accomplishments that highlight her involvement in aspects of life apart from school. She has coordinated a play festival (Red Door Play Festival for Student Theater Association) for the student theater association (MTA), is a head tutor, worked at Dorney Park, and professionally sang in a church choir.

From being a fan of over 30 Scooby-Doo movies to having a soft spot for Twilight films, Kayla has many fun facts about her. She enjoys time in the knitting club, where she knits, and has a great love for cats, especially her own 6 cats. It was a pleasure speaking with Kayla, and I hope our paths cross again soon!



Layla M Siahatgar

Written by Samantha L Hoffman

Layla Siahatgar is a Senior Dana Scholar from the suburbs of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. She is majoring in biology as a part of the seven year pre-dental program with the University of Pennsylvania.

Layla first heard about Muhlenberg college because it was fairly close to home. She was drawn in further by the opportunities provided by the Muhlenberg BioDental program. She also wanted to attend a small liberal arts college. She participated in the arts while in highschool so having the opportunity to pursue her degree while not having her interests restricted was important to her.

While on campus Layla has been involved in Berg Votes, a student run organization dedicated to increasing political awareness and involvement on campus. Layla served as the Social Media Chair and the Secretary throughout her time with the organization. Layla is also a member of the Pre-Dental Club which helps prepare students who plan to attend dental school and the Jewelry Club where students have the opportunity to learn how to create their own jewelry.

Layla participated in two mentorships during her time at Muhlenberg with Dr. Kassandra Hartford. Her two mentorships were unrelated to her major and instead were focused on music something Layla is very passionate about. She participated in her first mentorship last semester where she researched bossa nova, a style of Brazilian samba music. Her second mentorship which she is currently participating in is focused on Eurovision, a very popular European song competition.

Along with the mentorships, all Dana Scholars have to participate in the Dana Forum their senior year. The forum is a capstone research project that relates in some way to the Center for Ethics' annual theme. This year's theme is the ethics of the image. Layla's forum project is an incredibly relevant project which focuses on the ethics and implications of AI images in politics, journalism, and media. She is working on this research with Dr. Christopher Borick.

Being a part of the Dana Scholars has been incredibly beneficial for Layla's experience at Muhlenberg. Through the program she has made several close friends and she has met people outside of her major who she wouldn't have interacted with otherwise. She also mentioned that she thinks the program provides some really great opportunities to students. She particularly enjoyed her mentorships and her first-year seminar Course.

When asked about what advice she might have for current and incoming students in the Dana Scholars program she recommended choosing something that you're passionate about for the internship or mentorship that you'll enjoy pursuing even if it doesn't necessarily fall within your major. She mentioned that it's a great way to explore other subjects. She also advises



students to step out of their comfort zone and to take the initiative when meeting new people because you never know what could happen.

After graduating, Layla will be continuing her studies by attending the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine. She plans to stay in the area and possibly pursue a specialization in dental surgery.

Lydia G Brubaker

Written by Justin Lam

Lydia Brubaker is a senior in the Dana Scholar Program at Muhlenberg College. Her home is in Short Hills, New Jersey, and she was interested in Muhlenberg due to its close community and low student-to-teacher ratio. She is an Anthropology major with a Sustainability Studies minor. Coming out of high school, she was excited to learn within all fields of study and was not sure what she would major in. During her first semester at Muhlenberg, she learned remotely via Zoom due to the COVID-19 pandemic.



During this time, she took a variety of classes. In Lydia's sophomore year, she was particularly interested in the Archaeology and Prehistory class she was taking, which led her to take more Anthropology classes and to eventually become an Anthropology major. At the same time, she also enjoyed the science classes she took, especially marine biology, which led to her Sustainability Studies minor.

Lydia did an internship in combating racism with Dr. Hashim as her mentor. She learned a lot through this internship and it helped her grow tremendously as a student and person. She also did a photography mentorship with Professor Kim Hoeckele regarding the origins of food and its journey from production to plate. This was an extraordinarily unique project, as she researched the technology behind tracing the journey that food goes on through blockchains. Her photography captured food in the various stages of this journey, from supermarkets to leftover rotten food, as a visual representation of these blockchains.

Lydia appreciates the Dana Scholars Program because it gave her some community during her first semester as a Freshman when she had to stay virtual. She also likes the interdisciplinary nature of the program, as she is interested in both science and humanity courses. Throughout this program, she was given amazing research and internship opportunities that she otherwise would have had more difficulty finding.

Lydia's favorite kind of classes were anthropology classes with Dr. Carter. She loved Dr. Carter's teaching style. Surprisingly, her favorite class, Asian American Media, is not related to her Major or Minor. In Asian American Media, Lydia enjoyed the class discussions and liked how the class presented history through different mediums.

On campus, Lydia is involved in the club "Disciplemakers Christian Fellowship." This club allowed her to grow in her Christianity and make lifelong friendships, as well as improve in leadership skills, as she serves as Communications Director on the club's Executive Board. She has also been a part of the Food Recovery Network club which strives to minimize food waste at Muhlenberg.

After Graduation, Lydia plans to attend graduate school for teaching elementary education. At some point in her future, she hopes to work at a museum where she can teach younger kids about history. She currently works at a preschool and is excited about future work experiences.

Marguerite A McAree

Written by Lucille E Rudnick

I had the absolute pleasure of interviewing Marguerite McAree for the Dana Forum. On top of being a Dana, Marguerite is an English major and History minor and works in the Career Center.

Before Muhlenberg, Marguerite attended a fabulous public school in Pearl River, NY, that nurtured her enthusiasm for being involved in campus life and set her up for academic success in college. However, credit goes to her mother for her love of English. Outside of academics, Marguerite enjoys reading, creative writing, puzzles, and visiting museums. She is especially interested in how art evolves and influences how we view the world. This directly connects to her Dana Forum project (working under the advisory of Dr. Carter), which focuses on museum studies and how they help create historical narratives through imagery and include/exclude marginalized histories.

Marguerite loves the Dana program and everyone in it! She says the professors and students are so smart and wonderful to be around. She has done two mentorships during her time at Muhlenberg: First, she worked with Dr. Scott to research how Ireland's mythology and language influenced the writing of Dracula, and she will present her 30 pages of work at the National Conference of Undergraduate Research in Long Beach, CA! She credits her Irish heritage on her dad's side of the family for her love and interest in decadent literature and Irish authors in the political and religious context. For her second mentorship, Marguerite worked with Dr. Kucik in passing literature by exploring the concept of passing as white and how it has changed over time, inspired by reading *The Vanishing Half* by Brit Bennett. Marguerite highly values research, and if there were any advice she would give incoming and younger Danas, it would be to "research something you're passionate about!" With a laugh, she also suggested getting mentorships done earlier than both semesters of senior year.

Outside of the Dana program and research opportunities, Marguerite studied abroad in France during the spring semester of her Junior year, where she explored Europe, lived with new people, and spoke French all the time! After graduation, Marguerite will take a gap year to become a nanny or TA and apply for doctoral programs to become a professor of literature.



Matthew D Klinger

Written by Lea S Porotov

Matthew Klinger, hailing from just outside of Boston, Massachusetts, says he came to Muhlenberg for three reasons: the school was affordable, it has a great community, and it has strong academics. It is these strong academics that have allowed Matthew to attain the breadth of knowledge and experience necessary to continue his education in law school, after he finishes up his last year at Muhlenberg. Majoring in Political Philosophy, Matthew is considering a future in Copyright law, and he has a particular interest in the protection of intellectual property in the music industry, a legal niche that has become increasingly more pertinent with the emergence and continuous evolution of artificial intelligence.

Initially attracted to Muhlenberg because of its strong community, Matt has now become quite integrated into the vast number of different clubs and communities found at this school. Aside from serving on the standards committee of the Student Government Association, Matt helped found the Muhlenberg pre-law club, he is part of the campus' Christian Fellowship, and he is an editor and writer for the Muhlenberg Weekly. Matt is also a Dana class representative and a student conduct hearing representative. Matt's extensive list of extracurriculars reflects the interdisciplinary curiosity that is so emblematic of the students in the Dana Scholars Program.

Having conducted research with Professor Montoya on the impact of neoliberal economic policies on American democracy during his Sophomore year, Matt is currently researching the ways in which neoliberal economics influence equity in the schooling system for his Honors Thesis. For his Senior Forum Project, Matt is working with fellow classmate, Nicole Christian, to research the use of the male and female image in advertising as it relates to the Center for Ethics's current theme of the "Ethics of the Image." Matt spent the summer following Freshman year completing an internship at a local law office, where he worked through case files and saw hearings. He credits the Dana Scholar program for inspiring him to search for internship opportunities both on and off campus and for helping him to obtain foundational research skills in undergrad.



Mikah I Samuni

Written by Gabriella M Damens

Originally from Long Island, New York, Mikah Samuni is a psychology major on the Pre-K–4 education certification track. She was drawn to Muhlenberg College for several reasons. When visiting her sister, who also went here, the campus felt like a comforting, welcoming place. She wanted to join a community with down-to-earth people and Muhlenberg seemed like that type of community to her.

On campus, she is involved with Education Society, an organization that supports and provides resources for people on the education track whilst being involved with local Lehigh Valley schools through volunteer programs and book drives. She also studied abroad in Rome, which she describes as “awesome” and highly recommends the experience to anyone considering studying abroad during their time at Muhlenberg.

During her mentorship, Mikah worked on a cumulated body of research on the meaning of grades, how they impact students, and alternative grading methods. Her internship, as an extension of fieldwork for the education program, also connects closely to her interest in education. She worked on and learned about different education practices, classroom management, and differentiation, which means adapting lessons to meet the specific needs of individual students. Her internship also involved a reflective portion of her experiences, things she learned, and things she hopes to get better at.

She spoke highly of the Dana Scholars program and the impact that being a Dana Scholar has had on her time at Muhlenberg. It gave her a community of scholars to work with, helping expose her to different frameworks and perspectives. She appreciated the emphasis on interdisciplinarity, which allowed her to explore different disciplines, expand her understanding, and combine her psychology major with the education track. The focus on a variety of fields and interactions with other Danas in different majors gave her a greater understanding of different disciplines. She also liked and appreciated the mentorship and internship opportunities. Her senior forum project demonstrates the interdisciplinary nature of the Dana Scholars program. It is on the way that female sexuality and female agency are represented in music videos, and the ethical implications that has on its audience and society at large.

After graduation, Mikah plans to be an elementary school teacher. At the time of our conversation, she was also considering going to graduate school for psychology or social work in the future.

When asked about her advice for incoming freshmen, she recommends they try to get involved and make the most of their time at Muhlenberg. The four years here go by much faster than you would think. She encourages freshmen to do as much as they can whilst not overwhelming themselves, doing what makes them happy, and enjoying the experience.



Miriam T Roeder

Written by Troy Brennan

The Dana Scholar that I had the privilege to interview was Miriam Roeder. In getting to talk and listen to Miriam, I was able to learn from a fellow Dana student that has had multiple years of experience at Muhlenberg and being a Dana Scholar. I started off my interview by asking Miriam where she was from and what her major is. Miriam is from the west suburbs of Philadelphia. She also is majoring in American studies and has a minor in stats.

After discussing Miriam's majors and minors at Muhlenberg, I asked her what internships she was able to have through Dana Scholars to help her find a job. Miriam told me that in the previous summer, she was able to become a research analyst at the Office of Institutional Research. This answer proved the hardwork and dedication Miriam has put in. She was able to work hard at Muhlenberg which resulted in her getting an esteemed internship position at a prestigious institution.

After getting to know Miriam's background as a student, I asked Miriam about her favorite classes and memories at Muhlenberg. Her favorite classes have been American Jewish Life and Culture and Sociology of Yoga. Both of these classes I have not taken and Miriam was able to describe them in a way that peaked my interest. She said both classes brought her joy while learning valuable lessons in life. Miriam's favorite memory was during her time as a freshman. She said that although most students were in quarantine, she was able to learn from new experiences and become a stronger individual from the unique experiences that the pandemic brought to college life.

I went on to ask her what aspects of the community at Muhlenberg that she loves, and she said that her favorite part of Muhlenberg's community is that everyone knows everyone. Miriam loves this because she feels that she can create strong connections with her peers and professors that she wouldn't be able to create in a community other than Muhlenberg's. This especially was true for Miriam as a Dana Scholar. She felt that the Dana program enabled her to form bonds with peers and the community of Allentown that she would not have been able to create without being a Dana Scholar. Miriam said that being a Dana Scholar is extremely important to her. She believes that being a Dana Scholar allows her to experience and learn things that she would never have the opportunity to do. In my time as a part of the Dana program, I definitely agree with Miriam. I was able to meet people and experience different perspectives in the Allentown community that I wouldn't have been able to have without being a part of Dana. To finish off our conversation, I asked Miriam for one piece of advice going forward. She said that her biggest piece of advice would be to become involved in the Muhlenberg community and try new things. Reflecting on my interview, I am extremely grateful for the opportunity the Dana program gave me in getting to meet and get to know an older Dana Scholar. I was able to hear advice and learn from a student that has been a part of the Dana and Muhlenberg community for multiple years. I thoroughly enjoyed talking to Miriam and am happy that the Dana program has given me a peer to look up to in my academic and social endeavors.

Nesya Sloane

Written by Caedon R Jones

Nesya Sloan, a senior in the Dana Scholars Program, comes from a small town thirty minutes outside of Boston called Sharon Massachusetts. She is a chemistry major who has done internships in the Muhlenberg Chemistry Department and worked on several projects, doing long term and short term research. She credits her mentors as the entire Muhlenberg Chemistry department staff and has loved doing research alongside them throughout her time at Muhlenberg. She is currently going to attend grad school to obtain her PHD in Chemistry with goals of either staying in academia or going into the Chemistry industry.



The Dana program has meant a lot to Nesya, and her favorite part about the Dana program is the humanities classes she has taken, giving her a break from the science mindset and allowing her to think freely in those subjects. Her favorite classes she has taken at Muhlenberg were Latin American Cinema, Myth Religion and Creation, and her Chemistry Classes. One of her favorite mentors and professors is Dr. Albert in the Religion Department, who she has known since her FYS class her freshman year. Some other of her favorite professors include Dr. Keane and Dr. Anderson, who both teach in the Chemistry Department.

Her favorite memories at Muhlenberg were attending her friends' aerial acrobatic performance and dance performances. She says they were very entertaining and fun to support and watch her friends succeed. Nesya's words of wisdom to new students in the Dana Program are to make a lot of connections in the tight knit community and to try-hard in college, but also not take it too seriously. Congratulations to Nesya on her accomplishments and the Muhlenberg and Dana community can't wait to see the amazing things she will accomplish in her future!

Nicole A Christian

Written by Ryan T Mayerhofer

Nicole Christian is studying biology on the pre-dental track. Nicole comes from a town in New Hampshire called Hooksett. Throughout her time at Muhlenberg, she actively sought out internships and experience to better herself in her future field of work. During her sophomore fall, she embarked on a half-credit internship at the dental office of Leslee R. Dreisbach. Here, Nicole's primary roles were administrative duties and sterilization of instruments. She gained insightful knowledge about the daily workings of a dental office from this experience, which also strengthened her interest in dentistry.

Nicole has also been working on research about the effects of vaping on oral bacteria, with a particular emphasis on how E-liquids affect the hydrophobicity of oral bacteria. She found that exposure of oral bacteria to flavored E-liquids results in a significant increase in their hydrophobicity, which affects their ability to adhere to surfaces and other bacteria. She will soon be submitting a manuscript for this research to the Dentistry Journal for publication. Nicole is also currently doing a culminating undergraduate experience (CUE) with her research professor, Dr. Cuadra, about host-bacteria interactions; she is writing a review paper about how vaping effects host-bacteria interactions in the oral cavity.

Nicole's academic interests also extend beyond the classroom. She has been actively involved in various clubs and organizations on campus, such as serving as a President of the Pre-Dental Club and being involved with the Asian Student Association, STEM Outreach, and Jewelry Making Club. Additionally, her involvement with DiscipleMakers Christian Fellowship is one of her favorite experiences Muhlenberg. After graduating, she plans to attend the University of Michigan School of Dentistry, where she aims to further her education and pursue her passion for dentistry.



Vanessa J Graniero

Written by Reece T Montano

Vanessa Graniero (she/they) is a senior Dana Scholar at Muhlenberg College, originally from Mahwah, New Jersey. Vanessa chose Muhlenberg because of an experience she had sitting in on Larry Singer’s acting class. She remembers feeling so inspired by the work and being so fascinated by how beautiful the rehearsal house was with its view of the park across the street. When reminiscing about this experience, Vanessa recalls: “I was just constantly thinking about how much I wanted to be doing exactly what those students were doing, and so Muhlenberg felt like the right place for me.”

When Vanessa came to Muhlenberg she planned on double majoring in Theatre and Spanish. However, she chose to prioritize Theatre and designated Spanish as her minor. Even though she changed Spanish to a minor, Vanessa still incorporates it into her daily life through music, trying to listen to a new Spanish album/artist a week. In addition, Vanessa is a member of the sorority Phi Mu which gives her a sense of joy and community. Her favorite memories at Muhlenberg are when she is with her sorority sisters, spending quality time together. Vanessa believes that those moments of causal, unplanned quality time are the most important memories, being surrounded by those who mean so much to her. In addition to being a part of Phi Mu, Vanessa works as an RA in the Mile Houses. She is also a part of the Muhlenberg Theatre Association (MTA) and is involved with their theatre productions.

At first, when Vanessa was accepted into the Dana Scholar program, she did not know what it entailed. However, she was honored to be given the opportunity as it validated all the hard work and effort she put into her education. After understanding what it meant to be a Dana Scholar, Vanessa felt like she had a place to talk openly and had the chance to listen and learn about other people’s interests across a wide scope of areas through the Center for Ethics program. Having the opportunity to listen to people’s stories and insights gave her a more well-rounded view of the world around her.

Through the Dana Scholar Program, Vanessa had the opportunity to intern with a company in New York City — New Prospectives Theatre Company. During this internship she worked in a database with female playwrights, up to 1970, who did not get much recognition for their work. In addition, she was able to work on a show in its production process called, “How to Melt Ice.” Having this firsthand experience was unbelievably valuable to Vanessa, as she is studying theatre and hopes to pursue it in the future. Currently, through the Dana Program, Vanessa is working on her final Dana Scholars project where she is examining representations of



Elvis in the media. She is researching how accurate the representations of Elvis are versus how much these representations are being utilized with the purpose to talk about other topic discussions.

To Vanessa, being a Dana Scholar takes time and dedication. There is a lot required of an individual to be a Dana. You must complete an internship/mentorship and take your education a step further. Being a Dana is demanding, you must learn to prioritize. But in the end, it is worth it as it teaches you a lot about yourself and how to work best under pressure – precious life skills that she will always cherish.

Rebekah G Ayre

Written by Gabriella E Colder

Rebekah Ayre is a senior Dana Scholar from Falls Church, Virginia. She is a neuroscience major due to her interest in therapy and workings of the brain. When she first came to Muhlenberg, she initially pursued psychology but realized that she preferred the STEM environment, so she decided on studying neuroscience. She is currently in the interview process for graduate school where she is interested in clinical mental health and counseling. Once she completes her schooling, she would like to become a therapist.

As their internship and mentorship for the Dana Program,

Rebekah engaged in research with Dr. Sprayberry, the chair of the Neuroscience Department, on her work with bumblebees. Together, they study pathways used in odor processing in the bees and how external factors such as pesticides or other odors change the bees' responses. Rebekah has been doing this for a couple of years now and is in the process of training a new member of the team to take over for them.

Over their years at Muhlenberg, Rebekah has been very involved on campus. One of their favorite activities is being a Writing Assistant with the Writing Center. They have had a wonderful time exploring what it is to be a Peer Tutor helping other students with their writing. She was promoted to Lead Writing Tutor because of how much she enjoys representing the best interest of others. Becoming a Writing Tutor and joining that community is one of Rebekah's favorite memories at Muhlenberg, and they are sad that this time will be coming to an end soon as they love it so much.

Rebekah also enjoys making an impact by being a Resident Advisor. She loves helping freshmen by being available to them in their chaotic and interesting transition to college life. Honesty and respect are her bread and butter for forming strong relationships with all residents. In addition, the New Science Building owes much of its smooth operation to Rebekah as she is its Administrative Assistant who keeps everything organized and in check. Rebekah was previously a Peer Tutor and Language Conversation Partner as well.

Rebekah is thankful to the Dana program for pushing them to do the research they have undertaken. They will soon have the honor of being a published author, as their article is scheduled to be submitted for publication in the next year. This is no small feat. They had the opportunity to present their research at a national biology conference in Seattle, Washington. They were also very glad to have met great like-minded people in the Dana program who have fostered a community that values critical thinking and similar academic mentalities.



Rebekah's top advice to underclassmen at Muhlenberg is to not compromise on what works for you and makes you successful. College is a time to explore yourself and discover who you want to be so make sure to stand up for yourself and what you need.

Saoirse J Ozkan

Written by Amina A Akhrorkulova

Saoirse is a student majoring in English and Philosophy at Muhlenberg College. She is from North Jersey, more specifically Mount Olive, and she's on a journey that goes beyond just attending her classes. She actively applies her learning in real-world settings through her internship and community service endeavors.

One significant experience was her internship at the Lehigh Valley Food Bank affiliated with the Second Harvest network in her junior year. Serving as a community relations intern, Saoirse's responsibility was to transition the food pantries' intake system from paper to digital format. However, her role extended beyond digitization; she also played a part in educating the local community on utilizing the new system effectively. By engaging with community members, she not only taught them how to navigate the system but also demonstrated how it could aid them in securing grants to enhance their initiatives.

Last semester, Saoirse participated in a mentorship program that presented many challenges. Delving into copyright laws became a point for her studies and reflection since she values understanding what qualifies as original work. This exploration pushed Saoirse beyond her comfort zone, emphasizing a recurring theme in both her pursuits and extracurricular engagements.

Saoirse has been taking classes with many professors, and some of the professors she has worked closely with include Dr. Coppa, Dr. Borick, and Dr. Robinson. They have given her a perspective and deeper understanding of her major subjects. These professors have had an influence on her, guiding her through the complexities of literature and philosophy and how they apply to real-life situations.

Apart from her studies, Saoirse actively participates in her community by joining farmers' markets and contributing to economic and sustainability initiatives. In her leisure time, she finds joy in crocheting as a way to unwind and express creativity beyond academics. Saoirse's journey is that of a student fully engaged in both academics and community involvement, using education as a tool for creating change. Her experiences blend challenges, community service, and personal development, illustrating that college life at Muhlenberg offers more than attending lectures or preparing for exams.



Zachary D Mikuta

Written by Joseph M Tsocanos

Zachary Mikuta is a Finance and Accounting double major from Hellertown, Pennsylvania; only a 20-minute drive from Muhlenberg College. Drawn to Muhlenberg by its tight-knit community and just-right distance from home, Zach has fit right in at the college.

Zachary has spent his Muhlenberg career hard at work, taking ample advantage of internship opportunities in between semesters. Zach found Campania International (an exterior home design company) and, after working in their warehouse as a way to get his foot in the door, he landed a marketing and cost-benefit analysis internship at the company. Zach then used his experience working for Campania to push his career further. In the Spring of 2023, he attended the Institute of Management Accountants Accounting and Finance Conference, where Zachary was able to mingle with professionals from all over the world.

Despite his career-forwarding achievements, Zachary hasn't slacked off in the athletic and social departments. As part of Muhlenberg's soccer team, Zach has done his part for the team, and his favorite Muhlenberg memory is when he helped carry them to victory in the 2022 Northeast Conference. And beyond the team, Zach is a member of the ATO fraternity. Between numerous on-campus activities and being a collection of like-minded individuals, the fraternity has been an integral part of Zachary's social life and allowed him to expand his friendships beyond the soccer team and the Dana program.

Speaking of the Dana program, Zach has appreciated the program's ability to push him outside his major, making him a more well-rounded person and accepting of other perspectives. He knows that this is a rather textbook experience for Dana scholars and precisely what the program seeks to achieve, but Zachary feels that the program's ability to help students exactly as advertised is one of its strengths.

After Muhlenberg, Zach plans to work as a Private Credit Analyst for LBC Credit, a firm based in Radnor Pennsylvania. After finding a summer internship at the company through an alumni connection and loving it, Zachary decided to join the firm. In general, the LBC Credit focuses on lending to medium-sized companies and seeks to help such companies with refinancing and buyouts.

Finally, a piece of advice Zach has for other Muhlenberg students, specifically Business and Finance majors, is to take classes with Professor Roger Slane whenever possible. Zach loved Professor Slane's classes and considers his teaching a highlight of his Muhlenberg College experience.



Dr. Amy Corbin

Written by Sahil V Maher

Brought up in the suburbs of McLean, Virginia, Dr. Amy Corbin's childhood provided her with a lens into the intricacies of American society, sparking a curiosity that would shape her academic journey. As a distinguished scholar and educator at Muhlenberg College, Dr. Corbin's research dives into the nuances of film, culture, and geography, and unravels the narratives that define our understanding of place and identity.

Growing up in the suburbs of Washington, DC, Dr. Corbin experienced the life of being raised in a predominantly white-centered environment, near other more diverse areas. This upbringing ignited her interest in cultural diversity as well as her keenness on residential segregation in the United States. Through her lens as a film scholar Dr. Corbin examines how media representations influence our perceptions of place and community.

Dr. Corbin's academic journey began at the College of William and Mary, where she pursued a double major in anthropology and literary and cultural studies. It was here that she embarked on a path of exploration where she focused on Native American independent filmmaking for her senior thesis. This project served as a catalyst for her graduate studies, leading her to UC Berkeley to earn a PhD in film studies.

Following her graduate studies, Dr. Corbin's journey led her to Muhlenberg College, where she found an environment dedicated to teaching and student engagement. Recollecting on her experiences as an adjunct professor at various institutions, Dr. Corbin embraced the opportunity to foster connections with her students and cultivate a vibrant academic community.

At Muhlenberg, Dr. Corbin's teachings span numerous subjects, from introductory film analysis to courses on African American cinema. Her commitment to interdisciplinary learning is evident in her integrated classes, which explore themes of colonialism, migration, and other cultural encounters through the lens of cinema.

Outside the classroom, Dr. Corbin finds joy in spending time with her two young children, exploring playgrounds and hiking trails in the woods. As a media scholar, she approaches everyday experiences with a unique eye, analyzing the narratives woven into her daily life.



Dr. Chris Borick

Written by Luca Roberto Pallagrosi

“Embrace your opportunities,” Dr. Christopher P. Borick tells future Dana’s and current Dana’s like myself. Since hearing that, it has stuck with me as a life lesson and has helped me stay motivated during my time here at Muhlenberg. Before our conversation, I was worried about what type of questions I should ask, but after meeting Dr. Borick, all of those worries were eliminated. That is the type of person he is. Coming in as a nervous freshman giving an interview to a respectable professor, he immediately made me feel welcomed. Our time together was more of a conversation between two friends, rather than an interview.



Dr. Borick made his way onto the scene here at Muhlenberg in the fall of 2000, showing the dedicated career he has had for almost 24 years. Not only that, but Dr. Borick and Dr. S. Mohsin Hashim, director of the Dana Scholars program, started their careers at Muhlenberg at the exact same time. Now, here they are as they both heavily involve themselves within the Dana Scholars program and express their gratitude for all Danas.

Dr. Borick grew up in Scranton, PA, and attended Penn State University. Before Muhlenberg, he worked a lot within the government, but his mind always went back to teaching and research. His heart was always meant to be in an academic setting where he could be close with all of his students, which is one of the main reasons why he believed Muhlenberg was a great fit for him. After working for a couple years, he went back to Graduate School to finish up his doctoral work and has been teaching since then for about 30 years. Dr. Borick described how it really is an incredible blessing that he has been able to work in the environment of Muhlenberg for so many years.

Dr. Borick has a major interest in domestic politics and teaches courses on environment and health policy in the United States. Along with this, he does a lot of work on elections and campaigns, which is very valuable to him as he is the Director of the Muhlenberg College Institute of Public Opinion. Being a part of the Dana Scholars program is one of the best features of Muhlenberg College for him. He started in 2002 as a teacher for First-Year Seminars that were specific to Dana students, as well as an academic advisor where he was able to build strong relationships with his students. Since then, Dr. Borick has had lots of involvement in various capacities to the point where can’t keep track. To this day, he stays connected with almost all of his former students.

Dr. Borick has had many “Muhlenberg memories,” but one that holds a special place in his heart was when he received the honor to speak at the annual Muhlenberg College Honors Convocation. Every year, a faculty member gets to address the honors of many students. Being

asked to do that was very touching for him and it made him reflect on the wonderful place he is currently at.

Dr. Borick and I connected extremely well, and he left me off with advice to “be grateful and take advantage of where you are.” He constantly embraced how special it is to be chosen to be a part of the Dana Scholars program and to have no regrets.

Dr. Dustin Nash

Written by Harrison T Neff

Dr. Dustin Nash is a brilliantly unorthodox intellectual. He began his college career strongly passionate about theater and music. He performed on stage, played many live shows with big-name bands like *Raizing Zero*, and still found time for various other hobbies.

However, the Ph.D. had zero interest in religion; in fact, he deliberately avoided his school's religion requirement. After completing this first class, however, he immediately started work on a religious studies minor, but due to time constraints, he could not finish.

This failure weighed on him, so a year later, he attended The Hebrew University of Jerusalem as a visiting graduate student studying the Hebrew Bible. This experience, along with studies in multiple languages from his time abroad and undergraduate classes, gave him the qualifications needed for graduate school. He even considered staying in Israel for a Master's Degree but chose the Harvard Divinity School, where he received his Master of Theological Studies Degree in the Hebrew Bible.

With a diverse personal religious background, his interests in studying religion were always secular and academic. In 2007 he enrolled at Cornell, where he began writing his dissertation, married his wife, and had two children. Unfortunately, these transitions signified the end of his guitar career. He was too busy to keep up with his past practices, but he still played recreationally. Nevertheless, the master multitasker would not be stopped.

Shortly after his time at Cornell, Dr. Nash joined the Muhlenberg faculty as a visiting assistant professor but quickly fell in love with the college. Eight years later, he continues research in religious studies and teaches the Dana FYS, *Proving the Unprovable*, where he discusses how identities are constructed via research, narratives, and memories. Muhlenberg is lucky to have such a great influence on incoming Dana first-years.



Dr. Kassandra Hartford

Written by Jack D Mayerhofer

In the fall of 2015, Muhlenberg College got a great new member to its academic family, Dr. Kassandra Hartford. Dr. Hartford is originally from a small town set between Boston and the Cape in southeastern Massachusetts. Dr. Hartford's academic journey began with a love for liberal arts, leading her from the Crane School of Music to Mount Holyoke College, where her varied interests found a great environment. Dr. Hartford learned a lot in college that ultimately helped her in teaching. Dr. Hartford was also influenced by a familial legacy in education and a personal desire for high-level academic discourse and research. Dr. Hartford started as an elementary teacher for music but had to switch things up when she felt a passion for engaging with college students in deep, meaningful conversations across a wide range of subjects.



Dr. Hartford cares about many subjects but has a great love for music, history, Africana studies, gender studies, and English. Dr. Hartford's current involvement in the Africana studies book club further exemplifies her commitment to exploring and understanding diverse narratives while also helping to aid her love for english. A great aspect of Dr. Hartford's time at Muhlenberg College is her involvement in the Dana program, which helps students' transition to college life through engagement with ethics and community. Currently Dr. Hartford has a mentorship advisee and a thesis advisee and she loves helping students like this in any way she can because Dr. Hartford loves when students have intellectual curiosity.

Among her greatest memories at Muhlenberg, Dr. Hartford recalls a student's senior recital that creatively merged video game music with jazz, an example of the creativity and spirit you can have at the college's music program. This memory serves as a reminder of the creative potential that thrives when students are encouraged to explore their passions in an academically supportive environment. Dr. Hartford has a huge accomplishment coming up and is looking forward to many things throughout 2024. Dr. Hartford has a love for traveling and exploring; for example she is going to visit some in-laws in Wisconsin this summer but will be going through Canada and will be stopping and camping with her dogs along the way. Dr. Hartford has an upcoming completion of her decade-long research project which is a book analyzing race in France, Brazil, and the United States. Everything that has gone into this book shows her relentless pursuit of knowledge and understanding. This book, a monumental achievement requiring extensive research on two continents and the learning of two languages, reflects her deep commitment to racial justice and her scholarly rigor.

To wrap up our meeting, Dr. Hartford had a lot of advice for students but her favorite is to have a lot of intellectual curiosity and not worry about grades. She argues that a genuine interest in learning allows for personal growth, better research opportunities, and more

meaningful recommendations from professors. This perspective is a beacon for students navigating the complexities of college education, urging them to immerse themselves fully in the process of discovery and learning.

Lillian R Palluzzi - Reflection on Pre-orientation

My pre-orientation experience with the Dana Scholar program was unlike anything I could have imagined when starting my college experience. When I first received the pre-orientation schedule I was taken aback. Seeing the number of activities packed into a 4-day schedule was daunting, but it proved to be a valuable and enjoyable experience. Each day was filled with icebreaker activities, group discussions, meetings with staff, visits to local businesses around the Lehigh Valley, and restaurants. This intensive introduction not only familiarized me with Muhlenberg and Allentown but better prepared me for the academic discussions and workload typical of college life.

The first day was marked by warm welcomes and introductions, including a family welcome with President Cathy Haring and Dean Williams, and insights from fellow Dana Scholar students. Having my parents present during this initial orientation day was invaluable, providing them with essential information about the program while allowing me to share one last moment with them before embarking on my college journey. After my family left, I ate at the number one dining hall in the state of Pennsylvania before attending my first real college discussion. At first, I was nervous that I was going to say the wrong thing, or that I would end up talking the whole time due to lack of participation. When the discussion started, my initial weariness went away due to the number of hands that were raised to talk about our assigned topic of capitalism & democracy. It was gratifying to partake in a discussion where each person had something interesting to say about capitalism & democracy, as well as respecting each other's opinions. It set the tone for how the rest of the 3 days would go based on the amount of engagement from all of the students.

Throughout the rest of the 3 days, I was introduced to many places around the Lehigh Valley such as Camelot for Children, Self! LV, the Civic Theater, Valley Youth House, and Valley Health partners. Each of these amazing programs greatly contributes to making Allentown a better place for people from all walks of life. Students were able to ask questions about these programs that helped grow our understanding of the world around us and the many ways in which we can contribute to the community of Allentown. It also gives Dana Scholars options for what potential internships they want to pursue in future semesters. It was great to start networking early and be exposed to many opportunities available all around Allentown.

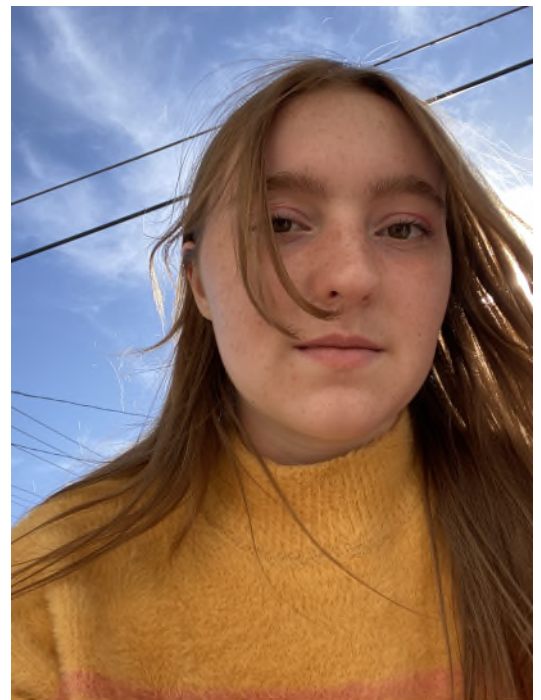
During the week, there were many group bonding opportunities with my classmates. We were taken to places like the bowling alley, Udder Bar, and CuminNEat. We got to know each other better while exploring the different possibilities of where to go off campus to hang out. This helped me settle into college life better since I already had a friend group before the actual orientation. As much as there is value in academics, there has to be a balance in a college



student's social life. These group field trips off-campus in between tours, reading discussions, and learning about the many community spaces in Allentown simulated what it would be like to balance college-related activities to help better prepare us for our upcoming classes and campus life while getting to know all the spots to take potential college friends to in the future. I am grateful for having the opportunity to have this experience before my actual orientation week, and I hope others get to have similar experiences in the Dana Scholar Program.

Fiona I Porter - Reflection on Pre-orientation

Pre-orientation is an essential experience for a Dana scholar. Four days before the rest of campus moves in, all of us incoming students in the program are given an introduction to what being a Dana is all about, as well as meeting and learning from each other, Dana upperclassmen, Muhlenberg faculty, and local organizations in the Allentown community. Though our schedule was busy and action-packed, it was an exciting way to start off the year and prepared me for the intensity of college life. Plus, I truly enjoyed having the opportunity to explore the surrounding Allentown area, engage in intellectual discussions with my peers about world issues, and adjust to Muhlenberg's campus before it was packed with other freshmen. Ultimately, pre-orientation was a great experience in which I formed meaningful relationships, got accustomed to campus, and gained understanding from different perspectives.



The first thing we did after moving in was being introduced to our pre-orientation leaders: Nicole Christian, Matthew Klinger, and Abby Bresalier. All of them are upperclassmen who are a part of the Dana program, and study very different subjects here at Muhlenberg. Nicole Christian is a biology major who is on the pre-dental track and is a member of the 3-4 Penn Bio-dental program. For pre-orientation, she led us in a discussion about inequity in healthcare. It was a very interesting topic that I was thankful to learn about because I didn't know too much about it beforehand. Matthew Klinger is a political philosophy major on the pre-law track, and is a part of the Villanova accelerated law track. For pre-orientation, he led us in a discussion about capitalism and democracy. This was also a very engaging topic because everyone had such different perspectives and beliefs on this one. Usually, when people disagree with politics it can get very heated and people are less open-minded. However, that was not the case at all when we discussed it at pre-orientation as everyone was truly understanding and receptive. Abby Bresalier is a psychology and music double major with a minor in Spanish. For pre-orientation, she led us in a discussion about race and racism. This discussion was very informative because it mainly focused on the psychology of racism- for example, one topic we discussed was how white fragility prevents us from confronting racism- and this definitely expanded my mind in how I think about racism. Overall, engaging in these academic discussions with our pre-orientation leaders was a very enlightening experience that made me excited to be a part of the Dana Program.

Another great factor of the Dana Scholars pre-orientation was the fact that we got to interact with so many amazing non-profit service and community organizations in and around Allentown. Besides the fact that it was very beneficial to be able to see the area surrounding campus within our first days here, it was extremely beneficial and encouraging to see all these great organizations and how they are working for the community. We got to engage with *Camelot for Children*: an organization that provides year round social and educational

opportunities for children with disabilities and chronic or terminal illnesses, *Communities in schools*: a program dedicated to surrounding students with a community of support, empowering them to stay in school and achieve in life, *Self! LV*: a women-led organization that is focused on healing and empowering women in the Lehigh valley who are re-entering the workforce, *Valley Youth House*: a catalyst for youth to achieve their desired futures while providing nurturing and restorative communities, and *valley Health Partners*: a team of doctors who provide accessible health and wellness services on the streets in a family-centered culturally sensitive environment. It was super uplifting and inspiring to hear about how these businesses impact the community.

Pre orientation was truly an immersive and motivating opportunity. I am so grateful to have met my peers this way and be able to participate in all these various experiences on and off campus.

Daniella Zalot - Reflection on Pre-orientation

As a Dana Scholar, I was allowed to move in four days early and attend a pre-orientation where I met the others in the Dana program and learned more about what the program entails. Our schedule for the days before other freshmen and newcomers arrived included learning about our academic requirements, walking to different parts of Allentown, and getting oriented with the campus before anyone else. It was an important experience because it made me acquainted with what I would soon be calling home. Pre-orientation for the Dana Program allowed me to learn more about the expectations through my next four years, learn my way around the campus, and see what the Allentown community has to offer.

One of our first meet-ups was to hear about our pre-orientation leaders, three current students in the program, and Dr. Hashim, who went over Dana Program requirements. They came from three different majors, which allowed us, the newest Dana scholars, to hear from at least one viewpoint similar to ours. Matthew Klinger, a Pre-Law major who is graduating in 2024, who has led discussions about capitalism and democracy. Abby Bresalier, a Psychology and Music major, is graduating in 2025 and she took us through talks on race and racism. Finally, Nicole Christian, a Pre-Dental major graduating in 2024 as well, spoke with us about public health. When going over what is expected of us as Dana Scholars, we were informed of the GPA we needed to maintain, which classes were required throughout our college years, and the internship needed by the fall of senior year. We were also informed of our group project within the program senior year, allowing us to work with other Danas.

Another valuable part of the Dana Pre-Orientation was the fact that we were able to become comfortable with the campus before a lot of people arrived. Our pre-orientation leaders took us on a small tour while we were walking to other locations and answered any questions we had at the beginning of pre-orientation. Later, we were able to get a fuller tour of the campus. They allowed us to look for any of our classes together, finding even those tucked-away rooms. Also, they told us about communal areas and things that go on during the academic year. Getting to walk around campus and get a better idea of where everything was located was a huge help in feeling more prepared for college.

Finally, as Dana Scholars we have to do an internship, so during pre-orientation, we got many ideas of where we could possibly do it. As a group, we visited local charities and other organizations to hear about what the community in Allentown has to offer. One of my favorite places we visited was Camelot for Children. They are a non-profit that has a house that holds not only summer camps but also a year-round program for children with disabilities and chronic or terminal illnesses, giving them a place to play and be educated. We also visited other



organizations that help the Allentown and Lehigh Valley area or businesses that have opportunities open to Muhlenberg students, such as the Civic Theater. It gave us all a feel for what Allentown has to offer and reminded us that we are now a part of this community around the college.

Dana Senior Accolades

Gianna Anzalone

- Presidential Scholarship Recipient
- Learning Assistant for Organic Chemistry I & II
- Research with Dr. Anderson exploring cosmetic toxicity dynamics
- Dean's List, All Semesters
- Chemistry Club Historian
- Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED) Health Professional Honor Society, Inducted Member
- Accepted into Law school (still making a final school decision)

Rebekah G Ayre

- Conducted research through Dr. Jordanna Sprayberry's research lab (SprayLab)
- Presented research on the neuroethology of bumblebee odor foraging at the 2024 Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology conference in Seattle, WA
- Submitted a registered report documenting the research method I developed to a major scientific journal
- Co-counseling internship and mentorship with Henry Gursky LLC
- Resident Advisor for two years
- Office Assistant, New Science Building (Departments of Biology, Neuroscience, and Public Health)
- Attending Villanova University post-Muhlenberg to pursue a Master's of Science in Clinical Mental Health Counseling
- Will also be working as a Graduate Resident Director for Villanova's Housing and Residence Life Office

Jake Azrolan

- Conducted research at the Bar-Peled Cancer Laboratory at Harvard Medical School / Massachusetts General Hospital
- Presented my research in front of a panel of researchers
- Conducted A.I. research with Dr. Borick on the effect of A.I. on current events
- Presidential Scholarship Recipient
- Dean's List
- Dana Scholars Interviewer Editor
- Pre-Dental Club
- Conducted A.I. research with Professor Potts on the effect of A.I. on creativity of artists and published those results

Lydia G Brubaker

- The Lucille Cafouros Award in Anthropology
- Communications Director for Disciplemakers Christian Fellowship
- Member of Lambda Alpha Rho Honor Society
- Dean's List, All Semesters

- Attending Montclair State University for a Master of Arts in Teaching after Muhlenberg
- Dana Anti-Racism Internship
- Anthropology research with Dr. Benjamin Carter
- Receiving an award at the upcoming 2024 Honors Convocation

Nicole A Christian

- The Keith M. Keenly Microbiology Award
- Presented my research at Pennsylvania Academy of Sciences (PAS)
- Presented my research at LVAIC Symposium for Cell and Molecular Biology
- On track to publish research in Dentistry Journal
- Attending University of Michigan School of Dentistry after Muhlenberg
- Member of Phi Beta Kappa
- Co-President of Pre-Dental Club
- E-board of DiscipleMakers Christian Fellowship
- STEM Outreach

Vanessa J Graniero

- Presidential Scholarship Recipient
- Performed as Aegeus in *Medea* (Studios, 2022)
- Active member of the Phi Mu Fraternity
- Member of Alpha Alpha Alpha Honor Society
- Member of Phi Sigma Iota Language Honor Society
- Dean's List, All Semesters

Kayla M Hartman

- Dean's List, All Semesters
- Head Tutor
- Peer Tutor: Microeconomics, Financial Accounting, and Operations and Information Systems
- Candidate for Honors in Business Administration
- Theatre Production research with Dr. Jim VanValen
- Arts Non Profit research with Drs. Kushner, Knox, and Carter
- Red Door Play Festival Coordinator for the MTA
- Knitting Club President
- Performed as Claire in *Bare; a Pop Opera* (2023)
- Performed in 3 Opera Showcases (2022-2024)
- Interned with Mayo Performing Arts Center
- Post-Graduate Internship with RoNetco in Retail Operations Management

Matthew D Klinger

- The George H. Hambrecht Law School Award
- Student Government Association Representative
- Editor at the Muhlenberg Weekly
- Treasurer of DiscipleMakers Christian Fellowship

- Founder and President of Pre-Law Club
- Presented my research at the Issues in Political Economy Conference
- Published my research in the Issues in Political Economy Journal
- Attending Duke Law after Muhlenberg
- Member of Phi Beta Kappa
- Member of Phi Sigma Tau

Marguerite A McAree

- The Morris S. Hoats Award

Gabrielle McCabe

- Assistant Stage Managed: Vampire Lesbians of Sodom, Unstable Connections, and Firebringer
- Production Stage Managed: Oedipus, Sing Happy! A Kander and Ebb Project
- Costume Designed: Tick Tick BOOM!, Reset: New Dances Fall 2023
- Student Employee in Muhlenberg Costume Shop
- Muhlenberg Theatre Association Inclusivity and Equity Chair (spring 2021-fall 2022)
- Dana Anti-Racism Internship
- Dean's List, all semesters

Zachary D Mikuta

- 2024 Library Scholar Award
- Outstanding Academic Achievement for Accounting and Finance
- Dean's List all semesters
- Accepted full-time Analyst position for LBC Credit Partners will start upon graduation
- LBC Credit Partners Private Credit Summer Analyst 2023
- Chi Alpha Sigma National Student Honors Society
- Men's Soccer Captain Fall 2023
- Men's Soccer Centennial Conference Champion 2022
- Member of Alpha Tau Omega
- ABEF Departmental Honors
- The Paul M. White '27 Business Award (2023)

Saoirse J Ozkan

- Presidential Scholarship Recipient
- Member of Phi Sigma Tau
- Dean's List all semesters
- English Basic Honors
- Founding editor of *Wings of Fire*, The Official Proceedings of Muhlenberg's Department of English Writing and Literatures
- Contributing Editor for *Muhlenberg Academic Review*
- Community relations internship with Second Harvest Food Bank
- Conducted research with Dr. Francesca Coppa on copyright law in the United States
- Attending Rutgers Law post-graduation to pursue a JD

Miriam T Roeder

Mikah I Samuni

- Presidential Scholarship Recipient
- Dean's list all semesters
- On track to becoming certified in elementary education for grades k-6
- Completion of the education program, including student teaching
- Margeret E. Berger fellowship recipient
- Independent research conducted in the education field
- Studied abroad in Rome
- Completed internship in the education field

Layla M Siahatgar

- Presidential Scholarship Recipient
- Dean's List, All Semesters
- E-Board of BergVotes
- Pre-Dental Club
- Conducted music research with Dr. Hartford on bossa nova and Eurovision
- Bossa nova research to be published in *Muhlenberg Academic Review*
- Attending the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine after Muhlenberg

Nesya Sloane

- The Leslie R. Anders Memorial Prize
- Learning assistant for Biology 165
- Instructional assistant for General Chemistry II
- Chemistry & Biochemistry Club treasurer
- Trip leader for the rock climbing club
- Organometallics research with Dr. Keane
- Presented research at spring national meeting of the American Chemical Society
- Next year: Pursuing a PhD in chemistry at the University of Colorado Boulder

Arielle J Toutou

- The Lillian and Anthony Fiddler Memorial Award in Music
- The Ralph A. and Mary A. Lichtenwalner Memorial Prize
- Recipient of the "Vaughn Summer Research Grant"
- Conducted research in Dr. Amy Hark's Lab in conjunction with the Genomic Education Partnership (GEP)'s "Pathway's Project"
- Recipient of the "Mazur Research Grant"
- Conducted independent research with Dr. Kassandra Hartford, developed a Music Honors Thesis regarding the healing practices of the Shona community in Zimbabwe and the *Mbira Dzavadzimu*, further discussing the importance of bioethics and understanding healing as it differs in medicinal practices cross-culturally
- Alpha Epsilon Delta (AED), Pre-Health Honors Society Member
- Dean's List Recipient (All Semesters)
- Dana Scholar

- Head Tutor with the Muhlenberg Academic Resource Center (ARC)
- Intern at the St. Luke's Pre-Med Observer Program
- Engagement Intern with Muhlenberg Hillel
- Music Director for A-Town Record's production of "Spring Awakening"
- Production Assistant on the A-Town Records Executive Board
- Fundraising Committee Chair of Phi Sigma Sigma