

DANA

# The Dana Interviewer

Class of 2015



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Featuring the Class of 2015

The Dana Scholars Program, made possible by the Charles A. Dana Foundation, 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 high school seniors with this honor, one of the most prestigious honors that the College offers.

For more information, visit

<http://www.muhlenberg.edu/main/academics/dana-scholars/>.

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## Andrew Trautmann

By: Tom Herr

Andrew is a native of Macungie, Pennsylvania who has thrived in many aspects at Muhlenberg. During his college search, he narrowed his choices down to two schools: Muhlenberg and Penn State. Andrew finally chose Muhlenberg because of the small and intimate nature of the college. He is thankful for his decision, as he says that Muhlenberg prepares one to be well rounded, and allows one to think in many different tracts.

Andrew has certainly taken advantage of the “think in different tracts” aspect of Muhlenberg. He is currently a Music Performance and Computer Science double major. These two majors may seem very different, but Andrew has found creative ways to combine them in his studies and research. For Andrew’s Dana Mentorship, he has been working on a computer program that analyzes the difficulty of a piece of music and then rates the piece on a difficulty scale. This is a big undertaking, and it combines Andrew’s musical and computer science knowledge. There are many factors to take into account when rating the difficulty of a

piece of music. With years of music training, Andrew knows what aspects in music determine its difficulty. Andrew also has the computer science knowledge to put the musical aspects into the program. Thanks to his double major, he is able to understand both sides of the program in order to make it even more successful. Andrew said he hopes the program will eventually be able to suggest pieces of similar difficulty to the music that is analyzed.

Andrew is very involved in Muhlenberg’s music department outside of his independent study. His music major concentration is performance, focusing on the oboe. He is in several ensembles, including the wind ensemble, the pep band, and Musica da Camera. In addition to playing the oboe, Andrew plays several other woodwind instruments and the organ. Andrew is also a member of Kappa Kappa Psi, the music fraternity on campus. In this group Andrew has been involved in community service with the Muhlenberg and Allentown community, especially in the area of education in the arts.

When Andrew is not practicing or performing, he has done several internships and summer jobs. One of the companies where Andrew interned is Trifecta Technologies, where he helped to develop an Android App. Trifecta has offered Andrew a full time position once he graduates, where he will be an associate developer.

Andrew wishes the best of luck to the new Danas. He has met many of his closest friends through being in the Dana program. Andrew is also very happy with his independent study experience with the Dana program. He found that it gave him much more experience in his subject area and allowed him to guide his own learning.



**Anna Thiessen**  
By: Megan Leahy

If she were stranded on a desert island with only one food to eat for the rest of her life, which would magically provide her with all necessary nutrients, yet taste the same forever more, Anna Thiessen said she would choose burritos. She would have some variety day to day but also a taste she enjoys—an intelligent choice. But Anna has more to offer the world than just the answer to the island game. In her time at Muhlenberg, she has brought her kindness, creativity, and other talents to many aspects of life on campus and beyond.

Anna is a History major seeking a certification in secondary education. She has always wanted to be a teacher, and enjoys the student teaching she's done so far. She plans on possibly looking for a substitute teaching job in Philadelphia after graduation.

As a senior at Muhlenberg, Anna feels comfortable on campus, especially after having participated in so much over her four years. First semester freshman year, she jumped right into campus life and joined the radio, eventually doing her Dana Mentorship with Dr. Nathanson on DJing and college radio at the radio station, which she loved. During her sophomore year, she continued getting involved, participating in many community service opportunities. She worked with Americorps, Scholars in Service to Pennsylvania, and with a literacy center in Allentown. She completed her Dana Internship by assisting with the Dana Sophomore Seminar. Also, Anna taught an adult ESL class, even though she didn't speak Spanish.

Although much of her time senior year has been taken up by other commitments, Anna continues to contribute to the Muhlenberg community, and will continue to contribute to the greater community in the future.



## Ben Nassau

By: Anthony Carracino

Benjamin Nassau, a senior and Dana Scholar here at Muhlenberg College, grew up in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Starting freshman year, Ben established himself as a hard working, dedicated student, and he has the Dana Scholar Program to thank for that. In order to get into the prestigious program, Ben wrote an essay on taking a hypothetical trip to the Arab Spring, a place that interests him very much. Ever since being accepted, Ben has portrayed the image of a Dana Scholar to perfection.

A Math major, Ben has always found interest in solving problems. He is also a huge fan of playing video games. However, that's not all; he likes designing them too! He says that if the mathematics track does not work out for him, he plans to go into game designing. Furthermore, Ben is also a Women and Gender Studies minor. His whole life, Ben has been a supporter of the feminist movement, but he seemed to have trouble explaining his thoughts to people on the topic. That came to an end once he arrived at Muhlenberg. Once he began taking classes regarding gender studies, he knew it was something he wanted to continue studying.

Before coming here, Ben knew that being a Dana Scholar was an exclusive thing. It has pushed him to limits he thought unreachable, and he feels it is a big factor in the type of person he has become today. In his freshman year, he had the pleasure of taking the first year seminar called "The Wire: Representations of Inner City Life." In this class, the students would watch, analyze, and discuss the details of the actual show "The Wire," and relate them to real world topics. There were lots of subjects to talk about in the class, and Ben felt the intensity of the class was on point. What really hooked him was the challenge of it. Someone who would rather take the extra mile, Ben believed that the challenge of the class is what really kick-started his journey as a Dana, excellently preparing him for the next 3 years.

Recently, Ben has been conducting research on Apollonian Circle Packings. He has been studying this for a year and half now, and it primarily deals with tangential circles within one another, following the trends that their radii produce. What he likes about it is that there is a lot of coding involved. For his two credits of mentorship, Ben used this time to continue his research of this interesting topic. After Muhlenberg, Ben plans on going to Grad School to get his Ph.D. in math, to either become a professor or to continue his research.

Ben feels that being a Dana Scholar has made him become a more engaged citizen, understanding what he can do to not only improve the world, but also what he can do to prevent it from getting worse. Being a Dana Scholar has taught him to challenge the norms he is faced with everyday, and to be intellectually subversive. The future definitely has a lot in store for Ben.



**Chris Chaky**  
By: Jonathan Walker

Chris Chaky is a Political Science Major, and Music and Women and Gender Studies double minor hailing from Poughkeepsie, NY. Chris's interest in Political science started early on in his Muhlenberg career; he has long had an interest in how our political systems shape the society that we live in, and how these systems are subject to change. Chris also discovered his interest in the areas of music and gender studies once he became exposed to the diverse and open curriculum at Muhlenberg. He encourages everyone to experience different classes as he did to unearth potential scholarly interests.



Throughout his academic career, Chris has been a very involved member of the Muhlenberg campus community. He has served as the President of the College Democrats and as the President of the Social Justice Collaborative. Chris is also a DJ for W-MUH and works as a Writing Assistant for the Writing center.

Chris has also made the most out of what the Dana Program has offered him as a student. He has participated in psychology research with Dr. Wolfe where he researched how students at Muhlenberg perceive the student minority groups we have on campus. He is currently working on projects to investigate the contemporary American labor movement, and will conduct his Dana Forum work with Kevin Mitchell to analyze performances and experiences at Occupy Wall Street and Tea Party movement protests. Overall, Chris has enjoyed being a part of the scholarly community that the Dana Scholars program creates, and still has many friends from his Dana FYS on The Wire.

During his Muhlenberg career, Chris also studied abroad in London at Queen Mary University, and has interned for several summers with State Senator Terry Gipson, where he handled many campaigning responsibilities. Chris will be attending Harvard University to study Government, where he hopes to be able to focus his studies on American Politics. "Muhlenberg has been a good fit for me," he says, "and it has prepared me to continue my studies at the graduate level."

When describing his involvement on the Muhlenberg campus, Chris imparted some helpful advice on how to get involved. "Students should take advantage of available opportunities," he told me, with regards to club participation. "Muhlenberg is already a great place," Chris told me, "but it's important for all students to get involved to continue to make it even better."

## **Elizabeth Celente**

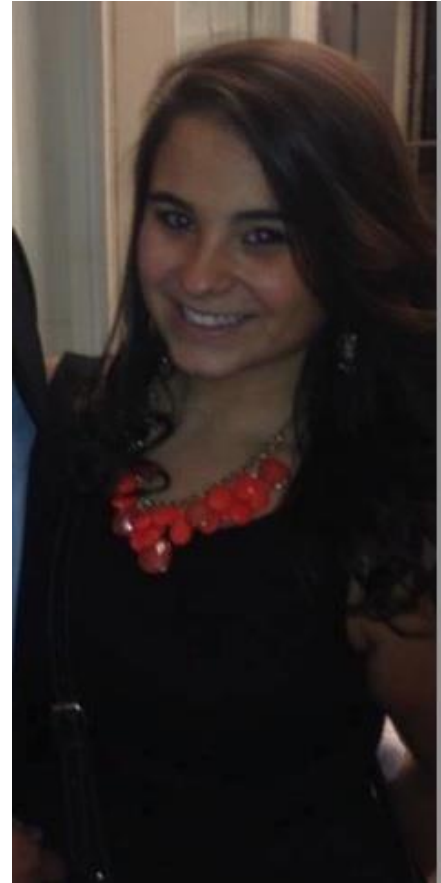
By: Deanna Mayo

From Hospice volunteer to Delta Zeta sorority sister, from tour guide to campus delegate, Elizabeth Celente has proven herself a model Muhlenberg student and Dana Scholar. As a Neuroscience major and Economics minor, Elizabeth has had the time of her life while at Muhlenberg. Through DZ volunteer outreach, she was able to get involved in the local community, which she felt was critical for her personal growth as a student.

For her Dana Mentorship, she conducted research in the lab of Dr. Jeremy Teissère, one of her biggest inspirations while working in her major. With the guidance of Dr. Teissère, Elizabeth studied the effect of plant products on the GABA receptor, using frogs as a model organism; she regards this as her favorite time on campus.

Elizabeth loved her experience with the Dana program, saying that it allowed her to meet students of different academic backgrounds and engage with them in intellectual conversation. The program also allowed her to get more involved with the Center for Ethics.

All in all, Elizabeth could not have asked for a better college experience. In the years to come, you will find Elizabeth studying at medical school in Philadelphia, a long-time dream of hers. The advice she would like to offer future Danas is: “Make the most of everything... and if you are going to do something, put your all into it.”



## **Ellen Herschel**

By: Caroline Dickinson

Coming from New Mexico, Ellen Herschel decided to enroll at Muhlenberg for the opportunity to pursue diverse interests while exploring a different part of the country. Her extensive interests have allowed her to embrace interdisciplinary connections while at Muhlenberg, and will continue to serve her well in the future. As a double major in Theatre and Neuroscience, an active member of the Muhlenberg Theatre Association, Women's Ensemble, and Artist Collective, Ellen has been able to combine her passions for science and art. In part, she attributes her ability to find interdisciplinary connections to the Dana Program.

While many people might not initially connect the dots between neuroscience and theatre, the relationship is natural for Ellen. She says, "Neuro and theatre both look at the same thing - what it means to be human." When asked if she uses her knowledge of neuroscience in acting rehearsals her response was "All the time."

Anyone who saw this year's production of Agamemnon can attest to how well her scientifically influenced acting philosophy works. Ellen's dynamic performance was grounded in her belief in the importance of physicality. As a keen actress and human observer, Ellen knows that body positions can shape a character. Understanding the science behind it all has helped her become a more well rounded performer.

Ellen's flexible and multidimensional way of looking at things has guided her life with an overarching theme of exploration, which seems to have contributed greatly to her success. Ellen's talents and interests will surely take her in limitless directions; she knows that once she graduates she won't ever be done learning and growing.





**Emma McGahan**  
By: Genevieve Wall

Emma is a Muhlenberg senior with a warm, winning smile, who whirls from one activity to the next. As a Theatre major and an Anthropology minor, Emma is brimming over with excitement about what the future holds, and she is grateful for her time as a Muhlenberg student and Dana Scholar.

The Dana program has surprised Emma with how much she can accomplish. As a Dana Scholar, Emma has confronted present social, political, global, theoretical, and ethical issues beyond what she feels she would have otherwise. Emma is especially proud of her Dana Internship—she assistant-directed *Annie Jr.* and *Urinetown* at the Civic Theater in Allentown. The experience pushed Emma to venture beyond her comfort zone, and helped her to take a step towards working in the real world. She said, “I could directly see how the work I was doing was a part of creating something outside of school.”

In her time as a Muhlenberg student, Emma has been incredibly active in professional theatre, especially outdoors. She has been an actor for the New Jersey-based amphitheater Plays in the Park for several summers, during which time she played Cosette in *Les Miserables* (2013) and Ariel in *The Little Mermaid* (2014). She has also been an usher for Shakespeare in the Park, in New York City. Her Muhlenberg education, Dana experience, and active professional life have prepared her well for the next step, and Emma is eager to take it. As she approaches graduation, she is more than ready to “break into the real world.”

Ten years from now, Emma sees herself working in the performing arts. Muhlenberg has brought her together with wonderful people—friends with whom she will stay close, and with whom she can envision working professionally. Her final words of wisdom are a quote from American actress Sierra Boggess: “Don’t let anyone tell you that you’re not enough. You are enough, you are so enough, it’s unbelievable how enough you are.”



## **Jake Krutsick**

By: Laura Gleason

5pm is one of the busiest times in Seeger's Union as students transition from their long day of classes to hours of homework. Raindrops drip down the window as Jake Krutsick enters the bustling student lounge. With a packed agenda, Jake still managed to meet with me and fill me in about his time at Muhlenberg. As if it was rehearsed from his numerous medical school interviews, Jake recited all the activities and organizations in which he was involved.

This upcoming spring, Jake Krutsick, from Ocean City, New Jersey, will graduate with a degree in Biology and a minor in Public Health. Over the past four years, Jake has made Muhlenberg his home and has actively participated in many organizations on campus.

Jake has been a tour guide since his freshman year. This past January, he was placed on the tour guide executive board and will give his final tour this December. Also as a freshman, he applied to be a Residential Advisor. His sophomore year, he was an RA in Prosser, and the following year he was an RA in Walz. This year, he resides in Martin Luther as Head Resident.

Aside from being a tour guide and an RA, Jake is a brother of Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity and Omicron Delta Kappa leadership honor society. In 2013, Jake was the vice president of communications for Sigma Phi Epsilon. He also DJ-ed for the fraternity. During breaks, Jake likes to DJ for sweet sixteens and graduation parties.

As a Dana Scholar, Jake has made the most of his opportunities. Jake interned at Lehigh Valley Hospital and shadowed in the pediatrics unit the spring of his junior year. Before the internship, Jake spent most of his summers working alongside doctors at the Children's Hospital of Philadelphia. During his mentorship, he researched the ethics of pediatric vaccinations and wrote a 50-page thesis paper. This year, his Dana forum focuses on sexual assault at Muhlenberg.

As graduation is approaching, Jake has applied to 27 medical schools and looks forward to studying pediatric medicine. He aims to use his background in public health to reform the healthcare industry into a personal experience for his patients. He would like to open his own pediatric practice, as well as take house calls.

In his spare time, Jake has been able to visit Disney World 77 times. His favorite Disney movie is Finding Nemo, and he enjoys travelling with his family and girlfriend.



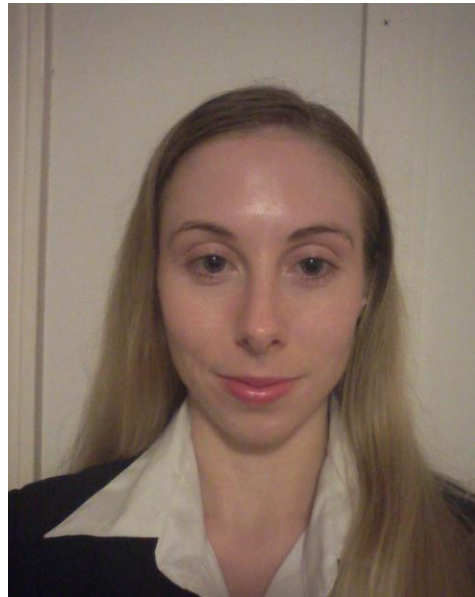
**Jennifer Weeks**  
By: Stephanie Levine

Senior Dana Scholar, Jennifer Weeks, is an economics major with minors in Math and Public Health, hailing from Brigantine, NJ. While she originally came to Muhlenberg interested in the theater program, she quickly found an interest in human biology. This eventually led her to study epidemics, which she made into a minor.

Jennifer enjoys being a part of the Pgram because she has built close relationships with her peers. It was through the Dana Program that she found some of her closest friends. Another aspect of the Dana Program that Jennifer appreciates is how it has challenged her to find internships and mentorships. Her internship took place in her second semester of sophomore year, when she worked as a paid intern in the department of surgery at the Lehigh Valley Health Network (LVHN). Jennifer's interest in economics was discovered through her mentorship. She worked with Dr. Kish-Goodling on an independent study on hydraulic fracturing. Jennifer's mentorship pushed her to present her findings. She wrote a literature review on her cost-benefit analysis of fracking.

Apart from her work with the Dana Program, Jennifer took advantage of the college's MILA course to Botswana. After taking a public health class, she spent two weeks abroad in Botswana completing a research project on HIV-TB co-infection.

If Jennifer could give advice to the underclassmen Danas, she would say to not lock oneself into one line of academics. She suggests doing internships and to start thinking about lines of work, because there are so many great opportunities out there.



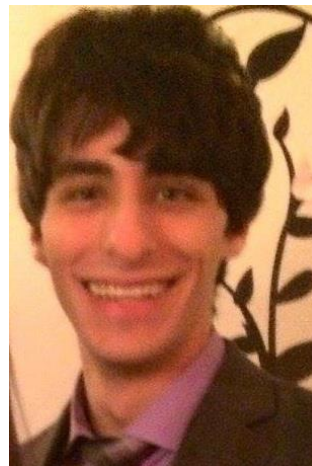
**Jeremy Kaplan**  
By: Julia Leep-Lazar

Jeremy Kaplan is a senior Dana Scholar and a Chemistry and Business Administration double major. Jeremy is from Louisville, Kentucky. As much as he loves life at the Berg, he does not enjoy the fact that it is a bit colder in Allentown than in Kentucky. This year, Jeremy is taking several advanced chemistry classes. His favorite class at Muhlenberg was Organic Chemistry.

Jeremy's Dana First Year Seminar focused on the television show, *The Wire*. The discussions in this seminar focused on class struggles in Baltimore. Jeremy's senior Dana Forum has been mostly about Center for Ethics topics and will culminate in a final research project and presentation. Jeremy has also been working on chemistry research. He has been working with Dr. Keane and focusing on Dearmotization chemistry.

By far, Jeremy's favorite experience at Muhlenberg has been his study abroad semester. He went to Maastricht in the Netherlands to study business administration. He loved gaining experience with different cultures and was able to have many different experiences through travel. He visited countries such as Germany, the Czech Republic, France, Italy and more. Jeremy's advice for freshmen would definitely include finding a way to study abroad. Whether for a semester, a summer, or a MILA trip, studying abroad is certainly an experience worth having, according to Jeremy. Jeremy also suggests trying many different classes, even ones that may be challenging or out of your comfort zone. He says this is a good way to discover what you do and do not like, and to explore different areas of interest you may not have known about.

Jeremy has appreciated his time in the Dana Program, but is excited to graduate. He will take what he has learned through the Dana Program with him throughout his years.



**Jimmy Custer**  
By: Kathryn Prozzo

Jimmy Custer hails from Cheltenham, Pennsylvania, just north of Philadelphia. Four years ago, he made the decision to study at Muhlenberg somewhat arbitrarily. Jimmy was drawn to the aesthetics and the close-knit community of Muhlenberg's campus. Incontestably, Jimmy has made the most of his time here since arriving in August 2011.

A Chemistry major and Math minor, Jimmy never missed an opportunity to conduct research. He snagged a spot working in Dr. Joseph Keane's lab with inorganic compounds, beginning his freshman year. This group was especially interested in dearomatizing aromatic compounds. In Summer 2013, Jimmy spent 10 weeks at Texas A&M researching material science, and studying the chemistry of new materials like graphene. For Summer 2014, Jimmy traveled to London and spent his time doing alternative energy chemistry research on organic solar cells at Imperial College.

In addition to his slew of academic endeavors, Jimmy immersed himself in a bulk of extracurricular activities and organizations on campus. He is the captain of the Ultimate Frisbee Team, Vice President of Chemistry Club, a member of the Student Orientation Advisory Panel (SOAP), and was a Student Advisor for 2 years. Jimmy is also a tutor in chemistry and math, and he is the StrengthsQuest resource manager.

After Muhlenberg, Jimmy will venture to obtain a PhD in materials chemistry. He is currently applying to graduate schools, and is looking to end up somewhere far away and big- a vast change from Muhlenberg. Although Jimmy is seeking new horizons, he has had a wondrous 4 years in Allentown. He cites his favorite memory at Muhlenberg to be the first time he was a student advisor, because he loves meeting new people, talking, and seeing new faces. Moreover, Jimmy feels the best part of being a Dana Associate is that the Class of 2015 Danas are an exceptionally close group. So close, in fact, they would have dinners together and plan sleepovers in Hillel. Jimmy feels it was really great meeting this group his first semester of college.

After making the most of his time at Muhlenberg, Jimmy Custer will indisputably succeed wherever life takes him.



**John Bennett**  
By: Lindsey Sharp

Senior John Bennett grew up in Baltimore, Maryland. As a Dana scholar, he has of course tackled several fields and activities during his time at Muhlenberg. His major is in Film Studies, which he has been interested in pursuing since long before his arrival at 2400 Chew Street. He is also double minoring in French and English. As he made the transition to college, he was not contemplating what to study, but which of his three passions to give priority, and to what extent.

John is an avid reader, a fan of adaptive skiing, a member of the Muhlenberg chapter of Delta Tau Delta fraternity, and he plays the piano. He is also an accomplished writer, as is proven by his position as a lead writing center tutor. If you are not yet convinced of his writing prowess, one of his papers from freshman year won the award for best undergraduate writing, and he furthered his work on that paper, eventually getting it published. He says this was a memorable time in his college career as it shows that one small idea can turn into a much longer thread, as he got to extend and improve that one assignment for several years.

John says his favorite parts of Muhlenberg are the close relationships one can form with the professors and of course, the Dana Scholars program. When asked about the Dana Program and what he likes about it, he mentioned that the senior Dana Forum is very well run, and the professors he has worked with are superb.

The Dana Program is a part of why he chose Muhlenberg, but he was also looking for schools where he could study all three of his passions: French, English, and Film Studies. A big part of the Dana Program, what makes it unique, are the internships and mentorships every Dana student does over their four years at Berg. Last semester, John traveled to Dublin, Ireland to study media and communications, which served as his internship. Next semester, he is hoping his mentorship will either be fulfilled with a mentor with whom he will study the Hollywood cinema afterlife, related to ethereal beings and what implications that has on religion and death, or a more in depth look at Italian cinema, which is his concentration in the Film Studies major.

John does not know exactly where he wants to go from here, but he's hoping to take advantage of any opportunities that come his way, perhaps creating or commenting on cultural capacity. His advice to new and still rising students is to take advantage of all of the social and academic aspects of college, because this kind of accessibility and opportunity to resources and friends is something that needs to be appreciated for the four short years it is available to us.



**Kelly Cann**  
By: Carly DeNigris

Kelly Cann of Manlius, New York arrived at Muhlenberg knowing that she was a problem solver with a natural curiosity for how things work. She quickly declared a biochemistry major and later added a religion studies minor. After graduation, Kelly will attend Drexel University College of Medicine as a part of the Muhlenberg College/Drexel University College of Medicine 4-4 Program.

Kelly was first introduced to the other Dana Scholars when they were in her orientation group and first year seminar, 1968, instructed by Dr. Pooley. This group of people turned into Kelly's closest friends as they went through a semester of learning about the year 1968, including a field trip to Washington D.C. to see numerous memorials.

Over her years at Muhlenberg, Kelly has taken advantage of many research and internship opportunities. Her Dana Research requirement was fulfilled over three semesters, starting in the spring of her sophomore year, with Dr. Hark and Dr. Elizabeth McCain where she investigated the effects of chromatin modifiers on trichome branching. Kelly furthered her research experience this past summer at Lehigh Valley Health Network Cancer Center doing a clinical study of adult Melanoma with Dr. Skandon.

Kelly completed her first internship in the Camp Good Days and Special Times Syracuse, NY office the summer after her freshman year. In the fall of her senior year, Kelly completed an internship at Lehigh Valley Health Network as a requirement for her Drexel College of Medicine Early Assurance Program. She was able to shadow in several areas of pediatrics, including endocrinology, neurology, rheumatology, and general pediatrics.

Kelly can also be found singing in Women's Ensemble, giving tours, or doing her duties as a learning assistant. She also is the Vice President of Muhlenberg Students in Newman Catholic Campus Ministry and is a Muhlenberg Interfaith Leadership Council Representative. Kelly also went to two different CRLA conferences in Boston and New Jersey. She is also involved with the Office of Community Engagement as president of Adopt-A-Grandparent and can often be found spending time at the Allentown Phoebe Home with the elderly residents. She is most certainly involved in many activities, but she would not change a thing because of how rewarding she finds everything.

If Kelly had to give underclassmen Dana Scholars advice, she would say to get involved early because your college experience goes by extremely fast. When talking about it she said, "I can't believe I'm a senior." She feels as though if you work hard and put in the time, you can still get everything that you want done. Also, she thinks the underclassmen should get to know the Allentown community because even though loads of learning comes from inside the classroom, plenty of learning comes from beyond the classroom as well. The Dana Scholar Program gave Kelly many opportunities and she is excited to take her experiences with her next year to the Drexel University College of Medicine.



## **Kerry McGowan**

By: Brock Juliano

Kerry McGowan is Biology major from Medford, New Jersey. However, being a Biology major was not how Kerry envisioned her future at Muhlenberg when she entered as a first year student.

Originally planning on being an Environmental Science major, Kerry decided to become a Biology major after her sophomore year at Muhlenberg. Kerry absolutely loves her field of study. She speaks glowingly about her research and work in marine biology. In her four years at Muhlenberg, Kerry has developed a strong relationship with her mentor Dr. Erika Iyengar. Kerry worked with Dr. Iyengar in her Invertebrate Zoology class, and also as a research assistant in her lab. From Dr. Iyengar, Kerry gained an appreciation for marine invertebrates.



This past summer Kerry had the experience of a lifetime working with Dr. Iyengar at the Friday Harbor Laboratory on San Juan Island, Washington. For several weeks over the summer Kerry researched the kinds of organisms that live on marine snails' shells in epibiotic relationships. When not doing her very exciting research, Kerry had a lot of fun at Friday Harbor. Kerry enjoyed having to row to town to purchase groceries, while also interacting with the other researchers living at the laboratory. Kerry even had the chance to work with seals, and had an extraordinary orca sighting. Kerry's wonderful experience at Friday Harbor cemented her love for marine biology and scientific research.

Kerry absolutely treasures her last four years at Muhlenberg. Kerry loves the close relationships that students form with their professors at Muhlenberg. Not to mention the close bonds that students form with each other; Kerry still is friends with several of her fellow Dana Scholars that she met in her seminar "1968." Kerry credits Muhlenberg with allowing her to grow intellectually with exciting courses such as Invertebrate Zoology and History of the Environment in Latin America. Kerry definitely has made the most of her career at Muhlenberg.

After graduation, Kerry plans on taking a year off working as a lab assistant. Then she plans on attending graduate school and continuing in her study of marine biology. Kerry hopes to work in academia in the future, and hopes to inspire others to find their passions, just as the wonderful professors at Muhlenberg have helped her to find her own life's calling.



**Kevin Mitchell**  
By: Daniel Dobro

Sitting down to talk with Kevin Mitchell, it quickly becomes easy to see why he was invited to be a Dana Scholar. A cursory assessment of his interests and passions (Theatre, English, and Political Science, among other things) reveal a well-rounded and interested learner, someone who seems very able to strike that balance between scholarship and real-world citizenship that is the Dana Program's signature.

It seems Kevin is especially looking forward to the real world. Being a street-smart guy from Los Angeles, he wishes that the Muhlenbubble did less to isolate the 'Berg community. He and I agree that too many people are afraid of downtown Allentown, and that the college could do more to ingratiate itself and the student body more locally.



That said, Kevin strikes me as pretty prepared, considering he'll be pursuing an acting career. He says it's smart to go where you already have a network, so he'll be returning to LA post-'Berg. By his reckoning, with his boyish looks, he'll be more marketable in LA than he would be in New York. To support himself while auditioning he's prepared to work "survival" jobs (he's made sure to gain experience in both office work and food service). He sees the value in being a seasoned and experienced individual, not just in theatre, but in all of life. It's that mentality that led him to Muhlenberg to study theatre, where the liberal arts could be enriching to his whole self, as opposed to a conservatory program. That would be much more rigid and frankly, I think Kevin is too interesting for that.

When I ask Kevin about the pursuit of art, I find he and I think similarly. He doesn't object to being described as 'severely rational.' Even still, his need to create art is not something he can easily let go of, nor do I get the impression that he would want to. When we talk about how crazy the idea is but needing to do it anyway, he says that's how you know you're doing what you need to. You may as well do it the best you can.

Kevin has a lot to say about his growth from the end of high school to the almost-end of college. It's clear he has had to do a lot of growing up, but everything he's done and been through has contributed to his 'best work.' When I ask what he considers his best work, he hardly takes a second to say "Agamemnon." The show, wherein he played the Watchman and was a member of the chorus, has just closed last weekend at this point. I saw the Friday evening show, and can attest to its quality, and Kevin's as an actor. That same night I saw him perform as part of UiP, Muhlenberg's long-form improv group, and was equally impressed.

When I ask Kevin for some advice, he tells me three things: One, take Theories and Methods with Rosenwasser. It'll be life-changing. Two, if you go abroad, go to Arezzo. It'll be life-changing. Three, say yes. Not necessarily 'yes, and' (rule one of improv), and not necessarily in the overcommitted Muhlenberg student of-course-I-can-do-*this*-thing-in-addition-to-everything-else way, but just saying yes to your life, and the people in it. It's a good way to get involved and be present.

Our time has come to a close and Kevin and I both have things to do after this interview. But we agree to definitely talk again. Kevin Mitchell has a lot of wise things to say, and I'm flattered to have been picked to listen to them.

**Kyra Smith**  
By: Julia Tyson

“It’s a self-designed major,” she tells me. “Gender and Sexuality studies, with a concentration in Africana studies.” Her name is Kyra Smith; she looks very collegiate in a stylish floppy hat. “I didn’t think it would be so cold this morning,” she says, a little sheepish. I ask her what she has been most involved with on campus; she described to me her passion for tackling issues of social justice and gender and sexuality. Her First Year Seminar was partly responsible for sparking her passion, a class called The Wire, which she told me created an entire class of social justice advocates. “At least eighty percent are now involved in social justice” she adds.

Kyra is also a Theater Major. She tells me that her aspirations for the future currently center on creating theatrical pieces that promote social justice, as well as an inclusion of her passion for performance art. She is a member of An Artist Collective; I saw her create a series of paintings and collages at an ArtCo event earlier that year.

We return to the topic of her academic pursuits, she is currently recording an oral history of the Lehigh Valley LGBTQ community. In addition to this project, she is currently the Lehigh Valley Coordinating Committee member for the Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition. Quite a title, it required several clarifications on Kyra’s part for me to note it correctly in its entirety. This is an organization that addresses issues of equality in the state of Pennsylvania.

Kyra also tells me that she practically lives at the Multicultural Center on campus, where she wears a variety of hats as a member, leader, and coordinator, among other roles, in the organizations based out of the center, including SQuAD, an organization focused on issues of sexuality and gender, and the Feminist Collective, which seeks to engage in issues of privilege and oppression through a lens of gender-based inequality. While Kyra may have told me that she doesn’t really know what she wants to do with her life after college, I would venture to say that what she has done so far is a pretty good start for just about anything she might want to do.



## **Leah Boecker**

By: Katerina Havlik

Leah Boecker is a senior Psychology major with a Public Health minor. Although she now aims to become a high school counselor, Leah started her academic career here with plans to pursue the pre-med track. After discovering her passion for psychology and counseling, she declared as a Psychology major in her sophomore year.



Her freshman seminar analyzed *The Wire*, a popular TV show about inner-city life in Baltimore. In the spring semester of her junior year she studied abroad in Florence, Italy. There she was immersed in a new culture while expanding her knowledge both academically and philosophically. Leah said that her overall Dana experience has been challenging, but rewarding. She is currently working on her Dana Research Project, which involves the history of the social and political discourse surrounding sexual assault activism in the United States with a focus on college campuses. Leah is also active outside of academics.

She has danced her whole life, enjoys rock climbing, and has taken a course in aerial acrobatics. Leah is a part of the Social Justice Collaborative, which conducts projects focused on solving national and global social justice issues. One project she has been a part of is the Conflict-Free Campus Initiative, a campaign that encourages university officials and stakeholders to commit to measures that pressure electronics companies to responsibly invest in Congo's minerals sector, in order to minimize conflict that is fueled by the purchase of these minerals.

She is also involved in Greek life and has been a member of Alpha Chi Omega since her sophomore year. Leah says that her sorority has helped her branch out of her friend group, and has introduced her to community service opportunities. After graduation, Leah would like to gain job experience by working in higher education, before heading on to graduate school.

## **Macauley Breault**

By: Julia Kotler

Unlike many other students, Macauley Breault came to Muhlenberg with an associate degree because her high school was a high school/college hybrid. This allowed her to double major in Physical science and Mathematics. She also did not have to look very far during the college search process because both of her siblings also went here.

Macauley wants to research biomechatronics or neuroprosthetics, which interpret brain signals and turn them into a command for a robotic arm or wheel chair. So basically, she may save your life one day. Macauley's time here at Muhlenberg has certainly not been wasted. She has done research at Lehigh University where she worked with bioactive glass that is used to promote bone regeneration. Her research also dealt with finding an injectable version of the glass rather than performing an invasive surgery to insert the glass. While the project was not exactly what she wanted to do once she leaves Muhlenberg, Macauley found that she loved research and wants to be a researcher.

This past summer she worked at Carnegie Mellon. This time, she worked with a robot used for cardiovascular surgery called Cerberus. The robot is suctioned to the heart and is used to inject gene therapy, such as stem cells into the heart. Cerberus is controlled by a computer program and Macauley's job was to put in force sensors to help control the robot.

Macauley feels as though Muhlenberg really helped prepare her for her internship at the top robotic research institute in the world, and the education here gave her the tools she needed. The Dana Program also allowed her to see beyond the sciences and think critically about other subjects. She was able to take the information she learned both at Muhlenberg and in the Dana Program and apply it to the field she cares about.

For her Dana Internship, Macauley worked at a prosthetics clinic in Bethlehem where she got to work in the field in which she is interested once again. Her Mentorship involved math research and neural decoding. Macauley also had the opportunity to be a learning assistant, an experience she loved.

Even after all of these great experiences, one of Macauley's favorite memories of Muhlenberg is Hurricane Sandy. Since classes were cancelled for such a long time and no one could go anywhere, it was really fun to hang out with everyone. Macauley said she likes to go into other fields and see the diversity in other majors. She said that the ability to do this at Muhlenberg is what sets us apart from other schools.



## Mel Ferrara

By: Sarah Roussel

*Fast Facts on Mel:*

**Hometown:** Bloomington, NJ

**Study Abroad:** Spring 2014; Morocco & the Netherlands

**Post-Grad Plans:** PhD in Gender and Women's Studies at the University of Arizona with a focus in intersex and transgender studies

**'Berg Class Everyone Should Take:** Multicultural Psych with Dr. Kate Richmond

**'Berg Professors Everyone Should Take:** Dr. Marcia Morgan & Dr. Brian Mello

**Memorable Moment:** At one Dana Class Rep meeting, Dr. Mohsin Hashim, Director of the Dana Program, was midway through a phone call to order Chinese food when he noticed Mel ordered only white rice. She had already had dinner at a different event that night, but Hashim threatened to kick her out of the program if she didn't order more. "Danas eat", he said.



When Mel Ferrara's Muhlenberg journey began, she was a pre-med, intended Neuroscience major on the track team. Almost four years later, she's a double major in Philosophy/Political Thought and Gender & Sexuality Studies, and traded in sports for multiple multicultural organizations and campus jobs. Upon choosing classes with Dr. Brian Mello — the professor for her FYS, "The Wire"— for her second semester, he informed her he believed she wasn't really going to be pre-med, but would switch to political theory. Over the next few semesters, Mel took a variety of politics and gender and sexuality studies courses, and eventually came to Mello's office admitting he was right.

From there, Mel's experience was transformed. She created her own major in Gender & Sexuality Studies and found her niche in transgender and intersex theory. Specifically, she studied men with Klinefelter syndrome [men with an extra X chromosome] both for her Dana Mentorship with Dr. Kate Richmond and while abroad in Morocco and the Netherlands. She additionally declared a major in Philosophy/Political thought.

Mel described Muhlenberg as "a place where you can grow", and multiple times noted the impact specific professors or classes have had on both her personal and academic development. Over the last few years, she's certainly had her own impact on Muhlenberg and its community. Mel's served as Implementation Coordinator of Muhlenberg's Feminist Collective and as co-president of SQuAd [Students for Queer Advocacy], co-founded and served as co-president of MTAC [Muhlenberg Trans\* Advocacy Coalition], has worked on the Sedehi Diversity Project, and has served as Dana Class Representative.

Additionally, she works as a writing tutor in the Muhlenberg's Writing Center, a tutor in the Academic Resource Center, and was a student representative on the Diversity Strategic Planning Committee. Mel's favorite academic portion of the Dana Program is the academic research it allowed her to pursue; she believes it's valuable in allowing students to "fully delve into...things they're passionate about" and that between largely self-driven research and the Dana Mentorship, the program provides very different opportunities than any others on campus. On a more personal level, she also credits the program with some of her best friends on campus—the 2015 Dana Class continues to have sleepovers and get meals together throughout the year. Mel aims to become a professor one day, and it's clear that whatever institution she works at will be lucky to have her.

**Mike Chase**  
By: Katy Mayer

The past four years have been a wild ride for Mike Chase, in the Dana Scholars program. Union, New Jersey, Mike's hometown, is where he began his Dana journey. Looking at Mike's impressive academic and extra-curricular track record, it is easy to see that the Dana Program has shaped his time here at Muhlenberg immensely. As a Biochemistry major who is also very interested in Spanish, Mike became involved with many aspects of scientific research, both at Muhlenberg and abroad.

Academically, Mike was involved with Project Lab for General Chemistry II, and did research with Dr. Meier on hormones and frogs. Additionally, Mike had the incredible opportunity to do stem cell research with Harvard over the summer. The summer after his freshman year, Mike did an internship at Arcadia Hospice. For his Dana Internship, Mike worked at the Phoebe Home. Both of these internships, coupled with his vast research experience, have inspired Mike to continue on the pre-medicine track. He will be attending medical school in the fall. He is hoping to go into Emergency Medicine because it is fast-paced and he enjoys shadowing in the ER.

Some of Mike's favorite things about his Muhlenberg experience include his professors, his extra-curricular activities, and his time abroad. His favorite professor at Muhlenberg was Dr. William Dunham for both Calculus I and II. In addition to his extraordinary academic record, Mike is involved in EMS and participated in the Phone-a-thon. He is also a peer tutor in biology and chemistry. During his junior year, Mike studied abroad in Copenhagen, Denmark. This was a medical program where he was taught by doctors and was able to see and interview patients. His favorite class abroad was called the Complexity of Cancer. All in all, it is easy to see Mike's success here at Muhlenberg. He will be missed next year, but will continue to shape lives in his bright future. I wish him the best of luck!

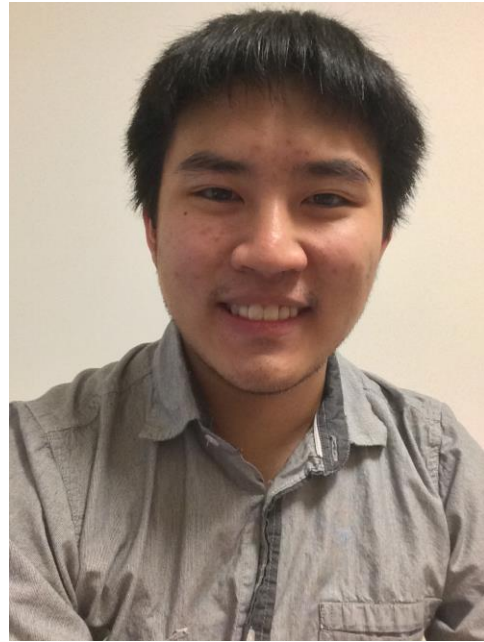


**Michael Kho**  
By: Sara Kass

Michael Kho may just seem like your average Muhlenberg overachiever—he is a Neuroscience major, Math minor, pre-med track fiend. He loves the sciences at Muhlenberg, spending much of his time working to better his knowledge (and sometimes his grades). He is known as one of those frustrating people who does not study until the night before an exam, and yet still gets a better grade than a good majority of the class.

Michael has done research in Dr. Wightman's lab the last couple of years, as a molecular biologist that takes DNA, cuts it up, and puts it back together. He has even modified the biology of microscopic nematodes, *C. elegans*, something not many undergraduates can say they have experienced. Michael also has Dr. Teissere as his advisor, and can be found hanging out in his lab, having rousing discussions about anything from science to just life in general.

In addition to all this science, Michael is a Dana Scholar. He actually lives with two other Danas right now. He still remembers his Dana class field trip to DC, when Dr. Hashim completely missed the bus and the trip. Michael also happens to be the treasurer of the Asian Students Association, a club centered in the Multicultural Center. But to top it all off, one thing you may not know about Michael Kho, is that he is an avid hip-hop dancer, specializing in "popping." He taught himself to pop and tut off of YouTube videos in high school, and has been lighting up the world with his dancing ever since. He can also be seen wearing a series of comical t-shirts. In his own words, Michael is "that random Asian kid in the awesome shirt with headphones in dancing down Academic Row." Michael is planning on taking a gap year after college before applying to medical school. Look out real world—you are gaining one amazing, bright, Muhlenberg graduate, Dana Scholar, hip-hop extraordinaire.



**Myles Dworkin**  
By: Tara Werner

Myles Dworkin does not like free time. The senior not only managed to complete a double major in Mathematics and Biology on the pre-med track, he managed to do it in only seven semesters. Graduating in December 2014, Dworkin will be spending what would have been his spring semester in Colorado working part-time as a ski instructor while also continuing research he has worked on throughout his time at Muhlenberg. After his time in Colorado, he is planning on attending graduate school at Tufts University School of Medicine in a program that would earn him his Masters in Public Health and MD in four years.



While the pre-med track is extremely regimented, Dworkin was able to take full advantage of the liberal arts education he received here at Muhlenberg in his exploration of mathematics. He discovered his passion for math through his high school exposure to geometry, and was able to delve more deeply into the area of study through his double major. He has completed research in both of his primary areas of interest, biology and geometry, during his time here, along with presenting some of his findings at a conference in October. “The professors were great about mentoring students through the project and you could really form a great relationship with them,” Dworkin says. “It’s an instance where Muhlenberg is very good at providing initial exposure into a variety of different fields. I’m sure it would have been nearly impossible for me to have been able to engage in these sorts of projects at a larger university.”

His experiences at Muhlenberg also took place outside of the realm of biology and mathematics, however. He has crafted a lengthy list of extracurricular activities throughout the past three and a half years as an undergraduate. Dworkin is a member of Peer Health Advocates at Muhlenberg (PHAM), the Social Justice Collaborative, along with being a workshop leader and a peer tutor. Additionally, he is on the Academic Judicial Board, helps run Sexual Assault Support Services (SASS), and is the president of the fraternity ATO at Muhlenberg. Of his most rewarding extracurricular, Jazz Ensemble, he says “I have been playing music all of my life and have played trombone in various jazz bands since I was eleven. It has always been a great way for me to relax. The conductor, Tony Giaro, is an amazing person and makes the whole experience super enjoyable.”

As a Dana, Dworkin must complete a senior project with fellow scholars. While the specific framing of the project is unclear, it will be focusing on sexual assault on college campuses. He and his group will particularly be looking at social movements and their effects on public opinion on the issue. He especially appreciated throughout his time as a Dana Scholar the different perspectives he was able to receive during his education here, from his Dana First Year Seminar on the television show *The Wire* with Dr. Mello to his final research project through the Dana Forum.



**Natalie Evans**  
By: Katelyn Winter

Something Natalie Evans has excelled at while at Muhlenberg is balance. The young woman who sat across from me was not just holding a hot coffee in one hand and gesturing happily with the other, but she was simultaneously serving as a writing assistant, developing her senior thesis on the Internet's effect on cognition, and getting psyched (pun intended) for the 100<sup>th</sup> birthday party of Liz, her adopted grandparent in the program for which serves as vice-president. Natalie is a double major in English and Psychology, a dream that began her junior year of high school, but was almost never achieved.



“I come from a family of scientists,” explained Natalie in her charming accent — a combination of the proper English she spoke in England until the age of seven and the New Jersey native she has become since. Coming into Muhlenberg, she had set herself to earning a degree in Neuroscience, but her heart just wasn't in it. The English Department, with its alluring courses like *Decadence: The Literature of the 1890's* with Dr. Scott, one of Natalie's favorite classes, was calling her name. And she answered the call, declaring a major in English and becoming involved in the department by earning a position as a writing tutor and a spot on the executive board for the English Honor Society.

Her academic interests continued to grow in spring of her sophomore year, when Natalie added a second major in Psychology. While many aspects of that discipline played into her already-existing love for English, it also pushed her to branch off and pursue cognitive psychology, a quest for she has already been rewarded.

Natalie chose to fulfill her two mentorships with Dr. Edelman and Dr. Harring, aiding them in research on music and its effects on social bonding. During those back-to-back semesters, Natalie was encouraged to continue on her journey with cognitive psychology, one that won't be ending anytime soon.

During the summer of 2014, Natalie held an internship with the University of Virginia in Charlottesville, in their Early Development Lab. There, she helped run experiments on children focusing on their perception of fiction and how it influences their thought processes. A second experiment dealt with whether or not children have a racial pain bias. Overall, Natalie immensely enjoyed her time in Virginia. Living on her own, learning how to cook, and experiencing life in a place she'd never been to before was her first taste of what life after Muhlenberg might be like. She has plans to “be a real person” before applying and going on to graduate school to earn a PhD in Developmental Cognitive Psychology.

“I'll always be a student,” admits Natalie, alluding to the additional education that awaits her. But her love of research overrides, for now, the pressure to move on as fast as possible to another university. Research, something Natalie has realized needs to be a part of her life, is simply a continuation of the genuine curiosity Natalie has in her field of choice, cognitive and developmental psychology. With great passion comes great responsibility, and Natalie awaits the finale of her time at Muhlenberg with a cheerful and studious disposition, flashing a big smile when she reflects back on the course her interests have taken, and looks forward to where they may lead her next.

## New York City Trip

By: Anne Kitz

Immersing oneself in a unique cultural experience can always be a rewarding experience. This year the freshmen Dana Scholars took a trip to New York City to visit two museums on the Lower East Side. As we absorbed the Museum of Modern Art PS1 site and the New Museum, we found elements that applied to each individual Freshmen Year Seminar, the *Politics of Memory* and *Do You Speak My Language?*

MoMA PS1 is a site for exploratory works, and allows artists to experiment with new ideas or concepts.

Two of the standout exhibits for students were *Retrospective*, by Xavier Le Roy and *Art Amnesty*, by Bob and Roberta Smith. Upon entering the room of *Retrospective*, one is immediately met with a circle of live performers, simply staring and repeating a single date in history. After speaking their specific date, the performers then disperse into their own space within the room. Spectators are invited to go up to any performer to discover, in greater detail, a personal anecdote of the performer. The participants of the exhibition used dancing, verbal communication, and statuesque posing in their performance.

Bob and Roberta Smith's *Art Amnesty* was both progressive and thought-provoking, encouraging students to pause and ask themselves: What does it really mean to be a piece of art? The exhibit gives artists the ability to dispose of their work in dumpsters and ultimately retire from making art, taking a pledge that states, "I never want to see this work of art again." Anyone wishing to display their art one more time may do so in the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor Gallery, taking the pledge that they will never make art again. In addition, children's first drawings can also be collected with a pledge that states, "I will encourage children to be all that they can be. Choose art at school." All artwork is displayed with the promise that it will be securely disposed of after the exhibition. In touring the gallery, it is interesting to see the timeline and transition from the joy that comes with a child's first drawing to an artist's final piece of work after being unsuccessful in their artistic career. The exhibit traces the full life of an artist and encourages observers to ask what the true definition of art is.

The New Museum gave students exposure to a different type of contemporary artwork, while still continuing the theme of new ideas and new artists. The museum's three main galleries were filled with the work of Chris Ofili in the exhibition *Night and Day*. The exhibit spans Ofili's influential career through various artistic mediums such as painting, drawing, and sculpture. Ofili's early works include experimentation with vibrant colors and elephant dung on a canvas before transitioning to dark and contemplative paintings with various shades of blue and dark shades. His most current pieces are tied together with a common thread of extravagant colors and ideas that relate to history, identity, religion, and other outlandish abstract concepts.

In addition to visiting museums, students were also given the opportunity to explore the surrounding area in the Lower East Side. This particular section of New York City is unique in its diverse culture having Jewish communities, "hipsters," Little Italy, and Chinatown all within a few blocks of one another. The surrounding area and museums attest to the culturally diverse roots and background that came together throughout the course of history. Overall, the NYC trip was an outstanding experience, and contributed greatly to our overall FYS experience.



**Nicole Carusone**  
By: Weston Conner

Some people might be taken aback when asked to describe themselves in terms of three fruits and vegetables—not so with Nicole Carusone, who prefers to go by Nikki. To answer the unspoken question in your head right now, she *was* actually asked this question and *did*, in fact, respond with remarkable aplomb. In her own words, her answer was that she is “pretty chill”—as cool as a cucumber one might say, “kinda cute and fun” in the vein of peaches, and a tad bit like a brussel sprout. Yes, the last one surprised me too. “Not everybody likes brussel sprouts” she said, “but I like brussel sprouts,” which, I suppose, is reason enough. This is a snapshot of sorts of Nikki. She is as interesting and kind a person as you could ever hope to meet.

In terms of where she calls home, Nikki comes from Cranford, New Jersey. In regards to what she has done with her time at Muhlenberg, she has vigorously pursued a major in Psychology and a minor in Women and Gender Studies. Balancing her busy roster of classes, Nikki manages to help out as a learning assistant for a psychological statistics class, participate as a research assistant for the Dean of Institutional Assessment, and serve on the executive board of the Soul Sound Steppers. Amidst this wealth of activity, a few gems have stood out. In particular, Professor Richmond’s course on multicultural psychology really resonated with Nikki. It was this course, she mentioned, that got her interested in gender studies.

Nikki’s time at Muhlenberg, however, has had an effect that goes above and beyond the effects of a single class. Her plans for the future have shifted, moving from an interest in learning to become a therapist or clinical psychologist to a fascination with industrial and organizational psychology. Grad school is in her future. Above all else, Nikki said her time at Muhlenberg helped her figure out what she wanted to do with her education and her life. On the other end of the spectrum, zooming in from the grand scale of future plans, Nikki went from writing about *The Wire* for her first year seminar to writing about micro-aggressions—as to what those are, your guess is as good as mine.

Reminiscing about the time she has spent here at Muhlenberg, Nikki offered some words of wisdom and reflections on what she had done. More important than anything else she said, was to “do everything, don’t wait or be scared about anything.” She seized opportunities such as the chance to study abroad in Vienna, which she fondly recalled as the one of the most incredible experiences of her life, and the opportunity to do mentorships, internships, and an independent study. In her opinion, being a member of the Dana Program helped to push her to do things she might not have considered otherwise. The wonderful close community of her fellow scholars coupled with her ability to push herself helped her seek out a mentorship with Dr. Richmond, in which they searched for implicit biases for women in the work place. It also pushed her towards a rewarding internship with Dr. Gotthard, in which they were examining undergraduate research, and an independent study on advanced statistics with a psychology professor.

Nikki, both friendly and helpful on a personal level, and dedicated and intelligent from an academic standpoint is planning to attend the University of Central Florida for grad school. Wherever she ends up in life, Nikki is sure to be successful in her pursuit of what she loves to do.



## Rachel Gonsenhauser

By Jacob Nelson

In the words of the secretary from “Ferris Buehler,” Rachel Gonsenhauser is a righteous dude. Whether or not that’s true (and it is) I hope I got your attention, dear reader.

Like all interesting citizens of the world, Rachel’s story doesn’t follow the expected track. Right now in the waning moments of her time at Muhlenberg she isn’t sure exactly where the future will lead. But being the Renaissance woman that she is, she’s got all the experience she needs to make things happen for herself.

Rachel is an Environmental Science major with a self described ‘emphasis on biology’. Her other labels include being a Latin American and Caribbean Studies minor, the Musical Director of InAcchord, part of the Women’s Ensemble and a dedicated tutor. She went down the Environmental Science path because she thought the ideas and concepts from that field best fit what she wanted to do, and after making this decision, she gave it her all.

For two years she worked on a research project headed by Dr. Iyengar in the Biology Department studying the interactions between aquatic isopods (see ‘little water bug things’) and fish, and as her Dana Internship she was accepted into a National Science Foundation ‘Research Experience for Undergraduates’ at Rutgers University where she spawned sea urchins. That’s right, she was basically a momma sea urchin for the summer. Did you know that job existed? What a world we live in... She also traveled to Costa Rica as part of the MILA program and researched water chemistry while there.

After spending so much time invested in lab work, Rachel made a gusty decision: scientific research wasn’t for her. She liked the subject matter but found lab work was not her cup of tea. (As opposed to coffee, which is her cup of tea. She likes coffee a lot.) She decided there must be a better angle for her to approach her environmental inclinations. That angle isn’t exactly clear at this point and time, but in the adventure of life, the fun comes from not knowing where your next step takes you.

Rachel says her next step could be towards working for environmental justice somewhere, or perhaps teaching. She is ready to get her hands dirty in the real world and she is more than capable of doing so.



## Ryan Gross

By: Johnny Tamburro

Whenever a senior class graduates, many of the remaining students lament the loss of a group of friends, mentors, tutors, and in certain cases, that guy in pep band who would always show an incredible enthusiasm for percussion. That guy in Kappa Kappa Psi who volunteered to help you along your membership candidacy. That guy who you meet, and once you've spoken to him you can confidently declare with a glint in your eye, "This fellow shall go forth unto greatness, so I do decree with absolute certainty!" Fortunately for me, Ryan Gross has been all of these things. Next year he will be off to UNC Chapel Hill to begin dental school, and they're lucky to have him.



Ryan will be graduating from Muhlenberg with a double major in Biology and Music, with a concentration in composition. When I asked him about his medicinal ambitions, he spoke about his plans for the future, they were of marginalized branches of society, people who were unable to access quality or affordable healthcare. Often, such issues are due to medical graduates who choose to work in more affluent areas, however Ryan does not see himself in such a world. Referring back to the lessons he learned in his Freshman Year Seminar on The Wire, He described to me the effect of the seminar on his worldview. "Dana opened up my world past suburbia." He explained. "I want to work with disenfranchised groups to make a difference."

When I asked about his music career, he told me that music was a vital part of his life, however it likely would not become a career. Unfortunately, it seems that the world outside of Muhlenberg will not become enraptured by his mad marimba skills. However his love of music has translated to his Dana research project. The topic of his research is whether digital sampling is inherently disobedient, and whether or not copyright law acts as a form of oppression. His project encompasses politically-charged hip hop, but it goes back to the earliest forms of music to examine how even the way music was borrowed can perhaps be a sign of disobedience.

What have I learned from my time speaking with Ryan Gross? I have learned that Ryan Gross is a person who has squeezed every ounce of potential out of his Muhlenberg education, his Dana Scholarship, and that he is determined to apply both in his future education and career.

## Kristen Wendt

By: September McCarthy

You may have heard her belt it out in InAcchord. Perhaps you've experienced that borderline painful laughing while watching her steal the show in Damsels in Excess. Well, folks, it is devastating but true – Muhlenberg College's resident Funny Girl is graduating. We will all miss her powerful (and hilarious) presence in the 'Berg's performance world, but not to worry. For Ms. Kristen Wendt, everything's coming up roses!

Kristen is a Theatre major who is dually enrolled in the Elementary Education program. Next semester, she will spend her time assistant teaching in nearby Allentown public schools. Kristen has known from a very young age that she wanted to be a teacher, and she attributes this to her excellent elementary teachers, as well as her undeniable talent in grading her stuffed animals' tests. So you might be wondering—what will she do with all that talent and the intensive Muhlenberg theatre major? The best possible of things, you see! As an educator, Ms. Wendt hopes to bring the arts back into the Allentown school district, which has suffered from recent budget cuts. She will use the arts, which she firmly believes are necessary for learning and healthy development, to enrich her classroom on a daily basis. Post-graduation, she hopes to continue teaching in Allentown, and then bring her skills back to her cozy, Connecticut hometown. But wait! She hasn't graduated *yet!!!!* Let's focus some more on Kristen's experience at 'Berg and in the Dana Scholars program...

What does Kristen love about Muhlenberg? Many things. She initially chose this school because of its warm and down-to-earth feel. During her time here, along with participating in the arts, she has been involved in the Newman Center, and has spent time getting to know her professors. And this is what Kristen truly likes about Muhlenberg – everyone is involved in everything. There is no departmental segregation. At first, having to accomplish an Internship, Mentorship, and a final Dana Presentation was slightly intimidating for Kristen, as it is for any freshman Dana. However, Kristen, who had the chance to not only construct, but also help teach a class on how disability is displayed in society, media, and culture, now realizes that the Dana program has been one of the most invaluable parts of her experience here at Muhlenberg.

Best of luck to Kristen, although she doesn't need it. Her wits, kindness, and well-roundedness will get her very far.



## Shauna Kehoe

By: Monica Ransegnola

Shauna Kehoe is a senior in the Dana Program majoring in Neuroscience and Music. When she first arrived at Muhlenberg, she planned on taking the pre-med track, but realized after taking Music Theory 1 that she wanted the room to pursue all of her interests. She is a talented musician, playing violin, flute and piano; one of her favorite activities at Muhlenberg is playing flute in the wind ensemble. Shauna is also a tutor in psychology, and both a tutor and workshop leader in music theory. She is an active member of Students in Newman (once known as the Catholic Campus Ministry). She has a huge appreciation for all of the arts at Muhlenberg, and loves to attend musicals and other shows on weekends when she's not practicing her instruments.

Shauna is grateful to the Dana Program for introducing her to her best friends, all members of the Dana Program with different interests-- some in environmental science, others in math or theater. She is also grateful for the opportunities the program has afforded her over her time here, and urges every Muhlenberg student to take advantage of each opportunity they come across. Shauna studied psychopharmacology abroad in Copenhagen, Denmark last spring, and credits the experience as the best four months of her life.

In the spring semester of 2012 and fall semester of 2013, Shauna was also able to do a Mentorship with Dr. Edelman and Dr. Harring in the psychology department. Shauna did research on music and social bonding with mirror neurons - work that she felt was a perfect synthesis of her two majors. The time spent doing this research also helped her realize that she would like to do more with applied concepts rather than research-based work after her time at Muhlenberg. Currently, Shauna plans to take a year off after graduation, during which she will apply to orthoptics programs.

As a senior, Shauna recalls that the memories of her senior year have been the best so far. She has no regrets for her time here, and believes that she would have missed out on meeting some of her closest friends if she hadn't been a part of the Dana Program. She believes that the Dana Program represents a group of well-rounded critical thinkers who strive to represent Muhlenberg in the best way. As a whole, Shauna sees Muhlenberg College as unique in the kindness of the campus, the welcoming nature of professors and an overall pleasant environment. From her own experience, she advises every Muhlenberg student to not get too caught up in the schoolwork, and really enjoy every advantage the school offers as the four years go by.



**Tess Dul**  
By Gwen Kelly

Tess Dul, originally from Nelsonville, New York, is a double major in Theatre and Math. While for many of us the future is daunting and scary, for someone as determined, conscientious, and hardworking as Tess, the future is an adventure waiting to be discovered. Tess plans to audition and perform for theatres and operas, and with her determination she will surely succeed. The Dana Program has been an important experience for her that has helped her form ideals and values that she will carry with her in her future.

During her four years at Muhlenberg, Tess has gotten involved in a number of activities. When she is not busy working hard on her schoolwork, she is an active member of the Muhlenberg Theatre Association and the Women's Ensemble. She is also a founding member of the Rude Mechanicals. Currently, she is a member of Omicron Delta Kappa, a co-ed leadership fraternity, and Pi Mu Epsilon, a Math Fraternity.

When reflecting on her four years here, she realizes that what she loves most are the people. Everyone is very friendly and helpful, and it is a very comfortable atmosphere to live in.

In the spring of her junior year, Tess studied abroad in Vienna, Austria. There, she focused on music and opera, honing her singing skills all the while. She also participated in a mandatory German intensive that included three hours of German each day. It was a very new and challenging experience for Tess, but rewarding all the same. As her Internship, Tess and another student helped to improve the Dana Sophomore Seminar experience by making it more proactive. Since they were the first class year to have a Sophomore Seminar, they aided in ironing out the kinks and shaping the seminar for the following year. As her Mentorship, Tess is currently researching the connections between Mathematics and Music with Dr. McGuire, which she finds fascinating.

Her advice to the underclassmen Dana students is, "Use your ability as a leader to help other people. Remember to be humble, and use the Dana Program wisely as a way to further your knowledge and understanding of the world."





## **Dana Accolades and Leadership**

After soliciting academic and extracurricular accomplishments from all Dana Scholars, we compiled the following list of accolades. However, this is not an exhaustive list!

### **Class of 2015**

#### **Leah Boecker**

Dean's List  
Psi Chi Psychology Honor Society  
Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society  
Intern for Muhlenberg Admissions Office

#### **Macauley Breault**

Dean's List  
Robotics Institute Summer Scholar at Carnegie Mellon University  
REU for IMI for New Functionality in Glass at Lehigh University  
Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship 2014 Honorable Mention  
Novartis Endowed Science Scholars Program Award  
Robert W. and Edythe M. Mull Award for Excellence in Mathematics  
Speaker at National College Learning Center Association 29th Annual Conference  
Pi Mu Epsilon Mathematics Honor Society

#### **Kelly Cann**

Dean's List  
Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society  
Accepted into Drexel University College of Medicine  
Lehigh Valley Health Network Research Scholar, Summer 2014  
President of Adopt-A-Grandparent  
Theta Alpha Kappa, Alpha Zeta Chi Chapter, Religion Studies Honor Society

#### **Nicole Carusone**

Dean's List  
Presented at American Psychological Association Annual Convention in Washington, D.C.  
Presented at American Association of Colleges & Universities' Conference  
Learning Assistant for Psychology Department  
Accepted to the Industrial/Organizational Psychology PhD programs at University of Connecticut, University of Central Florida, and Florida Institute of Technology

#### **Elizabeth Celente**

Dean's List  
Presented Research at the Society for Neuroscience  
Accepted into Medical School

#### **Christopher Chaky**

Dean's List  
Attending Harvard University to pursue a PhD in Government

Harry A. Benfer Memorial Scholarship  
President of Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society  
Presented a paper at Pi Sigma Alpha National Conference  
President of Muhlenberg College Democrats, 2014

### **James Custer**

Conducted research at Texas A&M with Dr. James Batteas  
Presented a poster at the CUR conference of REU student scholarship and at the American Chemical Society National meeting  
Second author on the manuscript submitted to nanoscale titled: The Influence of Nanoscale Roughness and Substrate Modification on the Frictional Properties of Single and Few Layer Graphene Coatings.  
Conducted solar energy research at Imperial College London with Dr. Natalie Stingelin  
Presented research at the Spring 2015 American Chemical Society meeting  
President's Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement  
Stephen R. Arnesen Scholarship  
Captain of Muhlenberg Ultimate Frisbee  
Accepted into Chemistry PhD programs at University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, Texas A&M, Univ. Wisconsin, Univ. Michigan, and UNC Chapel Hill  
Member of the Student Orientation Advisory & Planning committee

### **Myles Dworkin**

Dean's List  
Presented research on Non-Euclidean Geometry Research at the regional MAA conference  
Miriam E. Koehler Award for Excellence in Mathematics  
Pi Mu Epsilon Mathematics Honor Society  
Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society  
The Forrest G. Moyer Pre-Medical Scholarship  
President of the Alpha Tau Omega Fraternity  
Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society  
Sexual Assault Support Services counselor  
Accepted into the combined M.D./M.P.H. program at Tufts University

### **Melanie Ferrara**

Dean's List  
President's Award for Outstanding Academic Achievement and Promise for Postgraduate Study by a Junior  
Dr. Robert S. Ochner Scholarship  
Pi Sigma Alpha (National Political Science Honor Society)  
Dean of Academic Life Summer Research Grant  
Harry S. Truman Scholarship Finalist  
Gates-Cambridge Scholarship Finalist  
Fulbright Scholarship Finalist  
Co-Founder and Co-President of Muhlenberg Trans\* Advocacy Coalition  
Co-President of Students for Queer Advocacy  
Director of Sedehi Diversity Project 2013

Phi Sigma Tau National Philosophy Honor Society

**Rachel Gonsenhauser**

Awarded Second Overall Research Presenter at the 2014 Lehigh Valley Ecology and Evolution Symposium

Research Intern in Ocean Sciences at Rutgers University's Institute of Marine and Coastal Sciences

**Ryan Gross**

Dean's List

Head Tutor

President of the Muhlenberg College Pep Band

Leadership Team and Worship Team of DiscipleMakers Christian Fellowship

Accepted to UNC at Chapel Hill School of Dentistry, University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine, University of Maryland School of Dentistry, Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine, and Rutgers School of Dental Medicine

Composed three original music pieces, "End of Time" for solo piano, and "Voltage" and "Warsong" for percussion ensemble

**Ellen Herschel**

Dean's List

Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society

HEA Conference Presenter on Climate Change and Sustainability in Bangladesh

President of Women's Ensemble

Student Orientation Advisory Planning Committee, 2014

**Michael Kho**

Dean's List

Published in an abstract to be presented at the Society of Cardiovascular Anesthesiologist meeting

Author from the poster session for Dr. Bruce Wightman's lab at the phillynjworm meeting, 2014

Pi Mu Epsilon Mathematics Honor Society

**Kerry McGowan**

Dean's List

Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

Friday Harbor Laboratories' NSF REU Participant, Integrative Biology and Ecology of Marine Organisms, University of Washington

Crist Fellowship (independent research stipend), Summer 2014

Presented independent research with Dr. Erika Iyengar at Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology

**Kevin Mitchell**

Dean's List

**Benjamin Nassau**

Dean's List

Accepted to several PhD programs for Mathematics

Presented research on Apollonian Circle Packings at two math conferences

Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society

Pi Mu Epsilon National Mathematics Honor Society

Co-wrote and co-directed the play *Terrible, Beautiful Bodies*

**Kyra Smith**

Dean's List

Dean of Academic Life Summer Research Grant

Co-Implementation Coordinator of Feminist Collective

Director of Sedehi Diversity Project, 2014

Lehigh Valley Coordinating Committee Member for the Pennsylvania Student Equality Coalition

Co-Convener of the Lehigh Valley Trans\* Advocacy Summit, October 2014

Head of Education/Programming Committee for the 2015 Youth Action Conference,

"Cultivating New Possibilities for Rural LGBTQ Youth"

**Anna Thiessen**

Dean's List

Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society

**Andrew Trautmann**

Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

Dean's List

Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society

Intern at Trifecta Technologies

President of Kappa Kappa Psi National Honorary Band Fraternity

**Class of 2016****Daniel Bigelow**

Dean's List

President of Delta Tau Delta Fraternity

**Matthew Dacher**

Deans List

President of Alpha Tau Omega

The Reverend Dr. H.H. Bruning Award recipient

Intern for United States Senator, Robert P. Casey

**Rachel Heist**

Dean's List

Student Orientation Advisory and Planning Committee

Tour Guide Mentor and Executive Board member

**Nicole Karsch**

Dean's List

NCAA Centennial Conference Honor Roll

**Richard Kormos**

Assistant Director of Mainstage Production "Agamemnon"

Assistant Musical Director of Mainstage Production "Street Scene"

Lead Bass and Head of PR for The Muhlenberg AcaFellas

Administrative Intern at The Studio Theatre in Washington, DC

**Jillian Mauro**

Dean's List

Director of "The Library" and facilitator of the annual Institute for Jewish

Christian Understanding's Youth and Prejudice Conference

Intern for Larry Singer Studios in New York City

**Dan McKenna**

Dean's List

A Cappella Council President

Dynamics Coordinator

**Emily Nguyen**

Dean's List

Presented "Zaremba and Hensley: Continued Fractions and Congruence Obstructions" at an

EPaDel meeting of the MAA at University of Scranton

Sigma Tau Delta International English Honor Society

**Eric Quitter**

Dean's List

Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society

Decisions to Terminate Life Support - Presented at the National Conference for the American Psychological Society

Placebos, Side Effects, and Intent: The Ethics of Cognitive Enhancement - Presented at the National Conference for the American Psychological Society

**Katie Skwirut**

Dean's List

Co-coordinator for Arcadia-Muhlenberg Hospice Volunteers

Biology Lab Assistant

Internship with St. Luke's Hospital

**Brittney Tuff**

Dean's List

Omicron Delta Kappa National Leadership Honor Society

Pi Mu Epsilon Mathematics Honor Society  
Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society

**Jessica Wilson**

Dean's List  
Intern for the Dana Sophomore Seminar  
Co-President of Chemistry/Biochemistry Club  
President of Protestant Student Faith Community  
President of Swim Club  
Presented research on Synthesis of a Fluorescent Lead (II) Trapping Coumarocryptand at the  
ACS National Meeting

**Class of 2017**

**Morgan Backenstoss**

Dean's List

**Lauren Butler**

Parent's Club Committee Head for Phi Sigma Sigma  
Webmaster for Le Cercle Français

**Trevor Luck**

Dean's List

**Emily McGoldrick**

Dean's List

**Allysen Merrill**

Dean's List  
Musical Director (Fall '14) of the Muhlenberg Dynamics  
Director of "Spotlight" by Buddy Thomas - featured in the Red Door Play Festival

**Lara Roseto**

Dean's List  
Dana Class of 2017 Representative for 2015  
Head Tutor for the Academic Resource Center's Tutoring Program

**Brittany Smith**

Dean's List  
Coordinator, Shape It Up! Volunteer Program

**Alison Smith**

Dean's List  
Espie Guinto Young Writer's Award

**Korrinne Yurick**

Dean's List  
President of Muhlenberg Pre-Health Club

**Class of 2018**

**Laura Gleason**  
Dean's List

**Brock Juliano**  
Dean's List

**Sara Kass**  
Dean's list  
Campus Delegate

**Julia Leep-Lazar**  
Dean's List

**Stephanie Levine**  
Dean's List

**Katlyn Mayer**  
Dean's List

**Deanna Mayo**  
Dean's List

**Kayla Staub**  
Dean's List

**Julia Tyson**  
Dean's List

**Jonathan Walker**  
Dean's List

**Genevieve Wall**  
Dean's List  
Director of "H.R." – featured in the Red Door Play Festival.