

January 25, 2017

To Students, Faculty, Staff, Alumni and Parents:

Greetings from Muhlenberg!

Well, we are living in truly interesting times. The historic election this past November and its aftermath have provided and continue to provide innumerable educational moments for all of us, regardless of one's preference for the election result. Our own polling institute, along with just about all the other polls, predicted a different outcome. So, what was for most people a surprising result generated countless discussions and conversations on our campus – both in and out of the classroom – about the nature of our constitutional democracy, demographics, the Electoral College, the societal effects of global trade agreements, the potential impact of future immigration and other social policies on students and their families, and countless other related topics.

These are interesting times for other reasons as well. In many ways, things have never been better here at Muhlenberg. Most importantly, our students and faculty are thriving in the classrooms, laboratories and studios as they go about their academic work. With a culture that fosters enduring, supportive relationships, Muhlenberg continues to bring out our students' full intellectual and personal potential and help them prepare for lives of distinction.



Muhlenberg is more than a top-tier liberal arts college. We also offer a combination of pre-professional programs that is rare for a liberal arts college of our size. These programs include accounting, business, education, entrepreneurship, finance, public health, and, of course, pre-medicine, pre-health, and pre-law. Our graduates excel in each of these areas and many more. Our accounting majors are highly sought by the “Big Four” accounting firms. Our students who pursue finance go on to build outstanding careers at some of the finest Wall Street firms. Our pre-med graduates excel at the nation's best medical schools and enjoy successful careers as physicians of many specialties. The list goes on and on. Of course, some of our accounting and physics majors go on to law school, and some of our English and dance majors go on to medical school. All of our students, regardless of major(s), come away with the lifelong educational benefits of a liberal arts core.

We are forming partnerships to provide our students with fast-paths to success. For example, we recently announced a new partnership with Boston University's School of Public Health, whereby our top public health majors and minors will be able



Boston University School of Public Health

to apply to BU's Masters in Public Health program a full year early, without having to take the GRE. We have also recently announced a similar partnership with Lehigh University's College of

another. We have just passed 1,100 members (far ahead of our first-year goal) and are steadily moving forward. If you haven't yet signed up, why are you waiting?

Also, our Office of Community Engagement has developed a partnership with Air Products to help place student interns with non-profit organizations and schools in the Lehigh Valley. Five students will benefit from internships at nearby non-profits this spring. The Muhlenberg Career Center and Office of Multicultural Life also collaborate with the Office of Community Engagement as part of this program.



We were thrilled to hold a dedication ceremony last November to name the Leffell Center for Jewish Student Life, in honor of the Leffell family's generosity that made our rehabilitation and expansion of this important space possible.

In December, we enjoyed what was very likely the best set of Candlelight Carols services ever in our beautiful Egner Chapel.

Our alumni are engaging at levels not seen before. At our "Toast Heard Around the World" – or "THAW" event – last week, we were so thrilled to see alumni gather at locations on all seven continents (yes, including Antarctica!) to raise a glass in honor of Muhlenberg. Truly, the sun never sets on the global Muhlenberg community!

We continue to make excellent progress strengthening our technology infrastructure. Over the winter break, we adopted G Suite from Google as our new email and calendaring system. We also recently completed our conversion to a new, modern phone system. We are in the process of completing a design upgrade to our website that will make the entire site mobile-responsive.

Midway through their seasons, our athletic teams have had some truly fantastic moments and are certain to have many more. Now that classes have resumed, our students have returned to campus and I urge everyone to come out and cheer our teams on to victory!

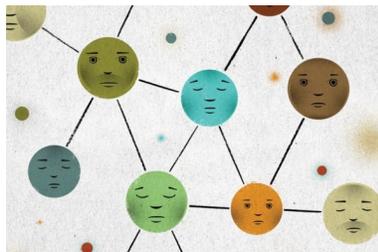


We are making good progress in two important searches to fill senior administrative vacancies: Provost (our Chief Academic Officer); and VP of Enrollment Management. I am deeply grateful to Kathy Haring for the excellent job she continues to do as our Interim Provost. I am also deeply grateful to Chris Hooker-Haring for the outstanding work he has done as the leader of Admissions and Enrollment Management here at Muhlenberg for three decades. Chris' impending retirement at the end of this academic year leaves us with giant shoes to fill, but the search committee and I are pleased with our initial progress in the search and I'll look forward to sharing more details as they become available later this spring.

Recruiting new faculty to Muhlenberg is one of our most important and exciting priorities. This year, we are engaged in eight new tenure-track faculty searches, all of which are making good

progress. We look forward to some wonderful announcements on that front later this spring as well.

We are also delighted that, just last week, Moody's renewed their assessment of our financial soundness and affirmed their A1 rating of Muhlenberg and extended that rating to a debt refinancing to take advantage of lower interest rates.



Our work to implement our Diversity Strategic Plan continues apace. Interestingly, Scientific American magazine just published an article entitled, [How Diversity Makes Us Smarter](#). This article makes the case that “Being around people who are different from us makes us more creative, more diligent and harder-working.” The article is written by Katherine W. Phillips, the Paul Calello Professor of Leadership and Ethics and senior vice dean at

Columbia Business School.

We also continue to receive more and more favorable recognition. Recently, [Kiplinger's Personal Finance Best Values Guide](#) listed Muhlenberg as #53 on its list of the Top 100 Best Value liberal arts colleges. LendEdu just ranked Muhlenberg #12 among “[Pennsylvania's most beautiful college campuses](#).” I doubt there will be any contrary opinions, other than to say we should be ranked even higher!



Muhlenberg Ranked Among Most Beautiful Campuses in Pennsylvania

With all the successes, these times are not without challenges. Perhaps most notably, and along with countless other colleges across the nation, we have seen a surge in the need for our counseling services, driven primarily by an increase in depression and anxiety among today's students. Our Student Affairs staff have confronted this challenge with great skill, and reduced dramatically the wait times that developed initially last September. Nonetheless, we will continue to make program changes and add to resources in ways designed to address this need on our campus in a sustainable way.

Another area where we can and need to do better is alumni engagement and support. Muhlenberg operates on a very lean budget in comparison to all we get done and compared with our competitors. Unlike most of our competitors, however, Muhlenberg does not have a long history of prioritizing alumni outreach and, as a result, has not created a strong, multigenerational culture of engagement with and giving to the College. We appreciate all the more, of course, those who do give year-in and year-out. Going forward, with all the great things happening at Muhlenberg, one of our highest priorities is to engage even more with our alumni and get them more involved. The alumni will hear more from me on this topic in the coming weeks.

We are indeed living in interesting times, and the complexities are only bound to grow. With the active and full support of all members of our global community, Muhlenberg will continue

to evolve and thrive in the years ahead so that we continue to educate our students broadly to bring their fullest selves and potential to the lives they create, the careers they build, and the communities they serve. We are grateful for your commitment to Muhlenberg.

Sincerely,

John I. Williams, Jr.
President