

Talking Points

Sweet Briar Facts

- Sweet Briar is one of only two women's colleges in the U.S. to offer an **ABET-accredited engineering degree**.
- Sweet Briar is consistently recognized as one of the **most beautiful campuses** in the country and the **fourth-largest campus** (3,250 acres) among liberal arts colleges in the U.S. with **eight nature sanctuaries**, two lakes and 18 miles of trails. Twenty-one buildings are on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Sweet Briar's **JYF in Paris** is America's oldest study-abroad program in the French capital at the Sorbonne. Sweet Briar also administers **JYS in Seville**, as well as many other study-abroad opportunities.
- Sweet Briar is among the less than 10 percent of colleges and universities in the U.S. to have a chapter of the national honor society **Phi Beta Kappa** on campus.
- According to the [National Survey of Student Engagement \(NSSE\)](#)
 - **8 out of 10** Sweet Briar students have at least one **internship** experience while attending Sweet Briar, compared to 50 percent at other colleges.
 - **8 out of 10** Sweet Briar students hold a formal **leadership** role in a student organization — twice as many as students at other colleges.
 - **Six out of 10** Sweet Briar students work on **research** projects with faculty — three times more than the number of students at other colleges.
 - **Four out of 10** Sweet Briar students **study abroad** while attending Sweet Briar — twice as many as students at other colleges.
- **National rankings:**
 - Sweet Briar is regularly ranked by [The Princeton Review](#) among the nation's top 20 colleges for Best Career Services, Most Accessible Professors, Professors Get High Marks, Classroom Discussions Are Encouraged and Best College Dorms.
 - Ranked as a Best Southeastern College and Best Value College by [The Princeton Review](#), as well as one of the Top Colleges in the South, Top 10 Best Women's Colleges, Top 10 Best Private Colleges in the South, and [America's Most Beautiful Campuses](#) by Forbes
 - Ranked as a [Best Bang for the Buck among liberal arts colleges](#) by Washington Monthly and one of the [20 Best College Campuses in the U.S.](#) by Business Insider
 - Sweet Briar is one of 11 Virginia colleges, and the only women's college in the state, to be named to [Forbes' 2016 list of 300 Best Value Colleges](#).
- **The Riding Program:** Equine Studies Certificate, 130-acre on-campus riding center, more than 18 miles of trails, and one of the nation's largest indoor college arenas. Students have the opportunity to compete independently or as a member of our field team, hunter/jumper/equitation teams or our IHSA or ANRC/ODAC teams. **Our ODAC team recently won its fourth championship title.**

- **Athletics:** NCAA Division III, Old Dominion Athletic Conference (ODAC) with varsity intercollegiate teams in cross-country, golf, field hockey, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming and tennis

Budget

- Targeted budget cuts of 25 percent across departments have made it possible in 2016 for Sweet Briar to operate all year without tapping into the endowment. This will allow us to keep endowment draw healthy — at 5 percent or below — between now and July 1.

Staffing and Operations/Governance

- Our board of directors recently added two new members and continues to meet nearly monthly.
- Chair of the board Teresa Tomlinson and President Stone held a town hall meeting on campus in February to talk to community members about Sweet Briar's progress.
- This spring, the College welcomed a new director of media, marketing and communications and a new VP for finance/treasurer. We are in the process of filling several permanent positions, including that of VP for enrollment and a director of international study/students. Several faculty positions will also be filled.

Enrollment

Enrollment numbers continue to look strong. Fall on-campus enrollment was 236 degree-seeking students, including 24 first-years and eight transfers; four Sweet Briar students were studying overseas in our Junior Year Abroad programs.

- For spring 2016, on-campus enrollment is larger than in the fall, a rare occurrence in higher education. Twenty former students returned after spending a semester at another institution as a result of the closure announcement, and 11 first-time students transferred from another college and are attending SBC for the first time – clear evidence that Sweet Briar continues to have strong appeal in the student market place.
- New software tools have been launched to match alumnae recruiters with prospective students.
- More than 400 alumnae admission recruiters (AARs) have been supporting our recruitment efforts throughout the fall and spring. Sweet Briar staff and alumnae have been traveling the country for college fairs, high school visits and college nights.
- Our applicant pool for fall 2016 is larger than ever. To date, Sweet Briar has received nearly 1,400 applications — compared to an average of fewer than 800 applications in previous years. While the application deadline was Feb. 1, the College continues to review applications, admit qualified students and process financial aid.
- Accepted applicants have until May 1 to make a final decision, and we have a number of initiatives in place to make sure they receive the information they need to give Sweet Briar College full consideration. Our Accepted Students Open Houses on April 10 and April 24 are crucial milestones in increasing deposits.

SBC International Recruitment/Enrollment Talking Points

- Sweet Briar is seeking to increase the number of academically qualified international students on campus. We have been working since the July 2 transition to rebuild our commitment to a larger and more viable international student presence on campus and to ensure campus-wide support for those students.
- We have been thoroughly assessing our needs on campus in order to accommodate international students. Critical to our success is hiring a professional, experienced director of international students and study abroad. We have just advertised that position, and expect someone to be on board by May. The director will help ensure the smooth transition of international students to Sweet Briar; foster their integration into campus life, particularly in the residence halls; and advise or refer students for assistance on issues ranging from academics to finances, health insurance to taxes. The job description is lengthy.
- We also have been thoroughly assessing the kinds of international students we want to recruit. Most importantly, we will focus our efforts on academically well-qualified students who speak and write English proficiently. We will not offer ESL classes. To ensure students' success at Sweet Briar, accepted students will be required to take a yearlong English composition course that addresses oral participation and research skills; an understanding of American culture, idiom and education systems; and our expectations for Sweet Briar students, such as adhering to the Honor Code. This course will be structured to parallel the course required of Sweet Briar students who go abroad to study in France.
- Our international recruitment efforts are intended to augment our overall recruitment efforts, not to replace them. The numbers of international students on campus cannot be greater than our ability to provide them – and our U.S. students – with the best Sweet Briar education and experience.

Fundraising

Fundraising is going strong. President Stone and the development group have been traveling the country all year to address questions and encourage giving.

- Operating deficits in fiscal year 2015 were substantial and covered only by a large draw on the endowment and a significant gift infusion from Saving Sweet Briar Inc. The budget for the current year (FY 2016) adopted by the board is also balanced, but is dependent on achieving the Sweet Briar Fund goals.
- President Stone has prioritized meeting with as many alumnae groups as possible to answer questions and discuss college priorities. In March alone, he traveled to four cities in Florida, Texas and New York, among other states, meeting with more than 3,000 alumnae and supporters since last August. He encourages everyone to assist in recruiting prospective students and in fundraising.
- Fundraising during #SweetBriarForever Month was a big success, with the Day of Giving on March 3 and Indiana Williams's birthday on March 10 totaling more than \$1.14 million. The radio Streamathon (March 28-30) raised more than \$36,500 in donations and \$24,000 in pledges. Overall, we raised more than \$1.36 million for the Sweet Briar Fund in March alone. We have raised \$5.5 million toward the \$10 million needed by June 30 to meet this fiscal year's budget targets. Those donations will count toward our 2016 calendar year end goal of \$30 million.
- Continued support is needed from each alumna at the most significant level of giving possible for the foreseeable future. [Next is NOW!](#)

Academic Highlights

- All of our pre-vet seniors have been accepted to veterinary schools for fall 2016.
- Our weeklong Explore Engineering Design Course for high school girls will take place for the eighth consecutive time this summer. Partially sponsored by AREVA, the event consistently brings more than 20 high school students from across the country to campus each summer.
- We are working to revive our computer science program, including hiring new faculty. This will complement the College's affiliation with the prestigious BRAID program, which is aimed at recruiting women and ethnic minorities into computer science fields.
- Several star professors are returning to Sweet Briar in fall 2016.

What is on the horizon?

- The College will begin strategic planning discussions in late spring.
- Fundraising and enrollment continue to be our top priority.
- International recruitment efforts are in full swing, thanks to our Women's Leadership Program for Chinese students, launched in March in collaboration with the National Center for Sustainable Development.
- All alumnae and their families are invited to attend the all-classes Reunion June 3-5, 2016. More information is at sbc.edu/reunion.
- Sweet Weeks of Service will happen twice in 2016, with the spring weeks taking place May 16-25.