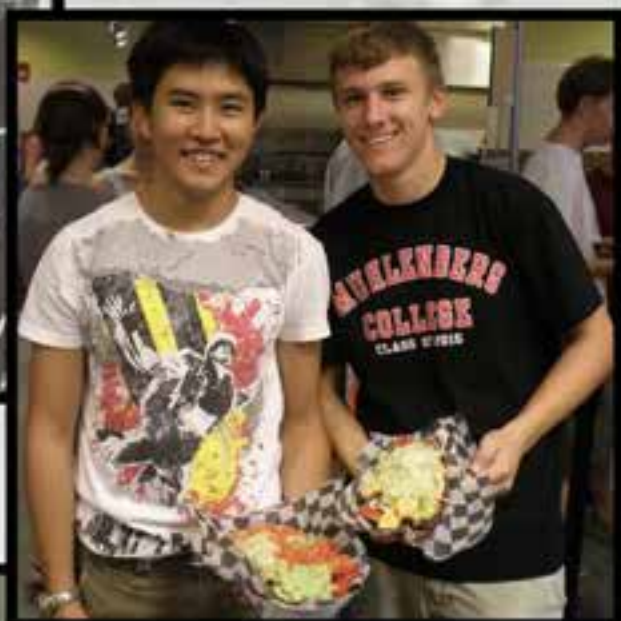


'bergfocus

spring 2013 | volume III | issue 2

dining



then & now

- former interns share their post-graduation stories
- fascinating food facts
- it's no average joe
- guest chef recap



Where are they now?

Margaret Vallone '12 and Stephanie Plumeri '12 both came to Muhlenberg in Fall 2008 with the same goal in mind but with different ambitions; one with a passion for nutrition, the other with an enthusiasm for marketing. Both aspiring for the education and experience that would prepare them for life after College. After they walked across the stage and received their diplomas from President Helm, and after they landed their first jobs in their respective fields, we checked in with the former Muhlenberg Dining interns.



Margaret Vallone

Internship: Culinary & Nutrition, Summer 2010 - Summer 2012
Profession: Food Production Supervisor, Muhlenberg Dining

Stephanie Plumeri
Internship: Marketing, Winter 2011 - Spring 2012
Profession: Front End Developer, TMP Worldwide, NYC



Berg Focus (BF): How did your internship with Muhlenberg Dining help prepare you for the "real world"?

Margaret Vallone (MV): "Everything I did in my internship, I'm doing now. I'm calling vendors and potential vendors for more sustainable options and foods with better nutritional content. I know what it was like eating in the dining hall as a student so I listened to the suggestions then. Now I listen to them in the position I'm in and I can personally make the direct change. It's really fun and very rewarding to make these changes and improvements. I also feel that, because I'm still young, I can really connect with students and they may feel more comfortable approaching me."

Stephanie Plumeri (SP): "Working in the Marketing office for Berg Dining, I got a lot of experience with doing a little bit of everything, juggling different projects at once, and having to adapt to last-minute changes. I know it sounds generic and cliché, but talking about those skills and actually having experience with them are two very different things. I'm the youngest person in my office, and most people think that I'm not as much of a "real world" newbie as I am - I think I have my professional experiences with Berg Dining to thank for that."

BF: What are some of your lasting memories from your time at Muhlenberg and your interactions with Dining Services?

MV: "For me, it was the Sodexo Health and Wellness Symposium in Lancaster, PA in 2011. I was the only intern at the Symposium and was able to present to clients and Sodexo management about the great things at Muhlenberg. We focused on sustainable, local, healthy options. Just being able to see what other chefs are doing was really enlightening."

SP: "I could be bland and mention something ordinary like the enjoyable summer afternoons spent collaborating with Evan (and occasionally goofing off) in the marketing office, or getting to learn more about the food industry and different dietary concerns, but let's face it: what I will remember most of all is PB&J bar. It opened my mind to the limitless possibilities hidden within a simple sandwich."

BF: What did you take from the classroom that has helped you get to where you are now?

MV: "Psychology was a big help with communication and personal skills. I would highly recommend taking Communication and Interpersonal Relations in Psychology. In business, you're always communicating. You need to know the etiquette and how to communicate effectively. You need to know how to create relationships with partners in business. No matter where you work, you'll be working on a team. You may have a job that is singular but you will interact with people no matter what. My other degree is in public health so I'm using what I've learned for constant vigilance as I learned in Dr. Wilson's public health courses."

SP: "Most of the work I do now is based in web development, which involves technical skills I picked up outside of my double major in economics and media & communication. However, both sets of coursework gave me a great deal of different perspectives on human behavior and interaction. This comes in handy for both understanding how clients interact with the sites I build and communicating (I have a degree in it!) with my coworkers and superiors."

BF: How has your overall experience at Muhlenberg carried over to the post-Muhlenberg world?

MV: "Everyone will find their own niche and what's good for them. Everyone will find the place they belong and I feel like I still belong here. Honestly, I wouldn't have this job without my internship. You need to take opportunities that come your way. Internships give you contacts and relationships with people. It takes time. It takes help from the people you know. It may not be perfect but you need to take it. I really wanted to go home after graduating but I decided to do this and I'm very happy I did."

SP: "I hate to sound like a Lifetime movie, but the best things that I took from 'Berg into the big scary adult world were my friendships: with students, faculty, and staff alike. Though I am not completely out of the Muhlenberg world sometimes. I've been trying to unsubscribe from the 'Berg Bulletin for months now, to no avail."

Each semester Muhlenberg Dining serves hundreds of tons of food to fill the stomachs and fuel the minds of students, faculty and staff on campus. In the Fall 2012 semester, we took an in-depth look at what it really takes to feed the machine that is Muhlenberg College.

'Berg Grocery List Fall 2012

Burgers at 'Bergers	> 2,913
Bagel Bombs at GQ	> 4,533
Sushi Rolls at GQ	> 11,703
Sub Connection Subs	> 12,057
Salads at LSC Cafe	> 2,898
Smoothies at LSC Cafe	> 8,296
Cups of Coffee at Java Joe	> 22,161
Matzah Balls	> 3,708
Pizzas at Mangia Mangia	> 6,180
Fresh Pasta in Wood Dining Commons	> 675 lbs.
Organic Fresh Basil Pesto	> 150 Gallons
Matzah Ball Soup	> 206 Gallons
Froyo in Wood Dining Commons	> 990 Gallons

*There were 265,494 swipes into the Wood Dining Commons in Fall 2012!



dining then and now

While the times have changed, the conversations remain the same.

So many fresh-faced 18-year-olds come to Muhlenberg with goals already in place; meet new friends, earn good grades and ultimately create memories. In today's bandwidth-processing world where Facebook makes it easier to meet new people and Wikipedia helps students higher on papers and exams, neither of these technological advancements necessarily enhance the college experience of creating memories.

Think about it. After graduating college there won't be reflections of

that one time someone received 37 "likes" for posting a photo online. However, what will be reflected upon are the smiles, the laughs, the hugs and the tears. One constant that has lent itself as a platform for these interactions for decades has been dining on campus.

Muhlenberg Dining as we now know it is not the same as it was five years ago, let alone 40 years ago. The food has progressed. The venues have expanded. But, the interactions, for the most part, have stayed the same.

"I think the dining hall is a place where many people congregate," remarked Chairman of the Board Richard Brueckner '71. "You get to see your classmates from one time or another. There are a lot of fond moments of creating memories."

"I loved sitting at round or long tables with all of my girl friends and some of my guy friends which literally felt like a time vortex (in a good way)," recounted Muhlenberg Alum Rachel Jakubowicz '12. "We would turn around and it would be an hour later! For me

dining was not only where I ate my meals and left, it was truly an integral part of my four wonderful years as an undergraduate."

But, it's more than just grabbing a bite to eat on campus that sets the stage for conversation. Through its progression over the years, Muhlenberg Dining has created avenues for students to interact with their peers outside of the classroom in a different environment. Some of these chance encounters have cultivated life-altering moments.

Chairman of the Board Richard Brueckner '71 and wife Laurie Cameron Brueckner '72.



"In the time when I was at college, there were students who worked part-time for Dining Services," recounted Rich Brueckner. "We [The Red Coats] wore short, red, bistro-style restaurant coats and used to check people in and out of the lines. I used to study astrology and would try guessing people's [Zodiac] signs. One day I was checking people in and guessed that her sign was a Leo. One thing led to another and in February 1971 we went on a date. We married on April 20, 1974 and have three children, two of whom graduated from Muhlenberg."

Suffice it to say, Rich Brueckner's story is a once-in-a-lifetime-kind-of-moment and while the Red Coats may no longer be a part of the Muhlenberg culture, students still have means to create interactions through working with Dining Services. Today, Presidential Assistants, interns and student leaders work and collaborate with Muhlenberg Dining on a daily basis.

"[As a PA] I made sure to go above and beyond getting to know the men and women in Dining at Muhlenberg," recalls Rachel. "As an alumna, I frequently reflect on

my experiences in the Wood Dining Commons and especially the 'old' Garden Room. The relationships I made as a student were not just of a person serving a meal and a person eating, they were ones that I will always remember. A smiling face here and a quick conversation there."

Long after the four years of meeting new friends, earning good grades and creating memories has come to an end, Brueckner offers this advice:

"Don't leave, stay a part of the 'Berg

Community."

And for the students new to the 'Berg Community...

"Make the best of every moment of your college experience," advises Rich. "Have your fair share of fun but balance it out with education. Create lots of great memories with friends because it will last a lifetime."



Students enjoying dinner and conversation in the Garden Room circa 1970.

"One of my favorite things about the eateries at Muhlenberg was the ability to go from table to table and catch up with a number of friends I didn't usually see during the day."

- Rachel Jakubowicz '12



Students enjoying lunch in the Wood Dining Commons in 2010.

not your average joe



Java Joe Supervisor Lynn Skidmore takes a customer's drink order.

One of Muhlenberg's most beloved destinations underwent a complete renovation in summer 2012, but it was more than just the cabinets and counter tops that were updated.

Java Joe re-opened in September with a plethora of new and innovative menu offerings along with its signature Starbucks caffeinated concoctions. The menu features new options that appeal to those with a sweet tooth but also will satisfy the savory taste buds as well. Cold Pizza Paninis, Fingerling Subs, Wafflins and Mule Ears are just a sample of the trend-setting menu.

"We wanted to create stylish, creative, Muhlenberg-specific menu options at low prices that you can't find anywhere else," explained Director of Culinary Operations Jon Middleton. "We have wonderful, diverse customers who we designed our menu around. We like to think of it as a reflection of art and function."

The menu is affordably priced too!

"In the initial phase of menu development, our team focused on low price points," commented Marketing Manager Evan Rehrig. "Some of the best deals on campus can be enjoyed at Java Joe. For example, guests can enjoy a Cold Pizza Panini, Venti Coffee or Iced Tea and a Mule Ear (our version of an Elephant Ear) for just \$3.99!"



Mike Bruckner shows off the signature "Bruckner Bomber" cupcake.

The concept of an innovative menu was taken a step further when Chef Middleton developed the "Bruckner Bomber" Cupcake, a tribute to Muhlenberg's Vice President of Public Relations Mike Bruckner.

"Mike Bruckner loves two things: chocolate and Caffeine-Free Diet Pepsi," remarked Chef Middleton. "We incorporated Caffeine-Free Diet Pepsi into the chocolate cake and topped it off with a thick layer of chocolate ganache. It's a delicious, decadent dessert."

Though the aesthetics and menu are brand new, the one aspect of Java Joe that remains constant is its superior customer service. Fourth-year Supervisor Lynn Skidmore takes great pride in the operation and her caring and compassionate nature is clearly evident to her employees and customers.

"Java Joe is such a fun place to work," expressed second-year student Barista Francesca "Frankie" Fillis, '15. "Lynn makes it that way. She treats her employees and students like family. Her personality brings a sense of hominess to the Java Joe environment."

Lynn elaborated, "I really care about the kids and whether they're my employees or customers, I treat them like family. I'm very fortunate to have such a great group of conscientious students who take pride in their work. They're known to jump behind the counter, when they're not scheduled, to help out their 'family'."

Through its unique menu, paramount customer service and state-of-the-art digital signage, Java Joe has developed into more of a program than just a destination. On October 4, Java Joe celebrated its Grand Re-Opening Event. Customers enjoyed discounted drinks, live entertainment and prize giveaways.

And though Java Joe certainly brings in the customers, it gives back as well.

"We do a lot of work here for the Wells Spring Food Pantry in Allentown. One-hundred percent of our tips are donated to its cause," acknowledged Lynn. "In the past, we've also donated our time and served turkey dinner to the less fortunate."

To those outside of the Muhlenberg community, Java Joe may be just another 'coffee joint' offering early-morning and mid-afternoon pick-me-ups. But take a closer step inside Seegers Union and you'll realize this certainly isn't your average Joe.



GUEST CHEF FALL 2012 RECAP: They Came, They Served, They Conquered

Each semester select faculty and staff step outside their offices and step behind the lines in the Wood Dining Commons as part of the Guest Chef Program.

"This program dates back to the Garden Room when Dean Green collaborated with us to serve a traditional Southern Foods menu in celebration of Black History Month," explained Muhlenberg Dining Marketing Manager Evan Rehrig. "Since then, the program has evolved into a monthly series that is incredibly popular with our guests."

In Fall 2012, Muhlenberg Dining partnered with three members of staff who participated for the first time: New Athletic Director Corey Goff, new Dean of Academic Life Dr. Mike Huber and new Chaplain Callista Isabelle.

In addition, regarded as one of the most popular events of the year in the Wood Dining Commons, the famed "PB&J" Bar is routinely a part of the Guest Chef program and is hosted each fall by Director of Seegers Union and Campus Events Glenn Gerchman and Assistant Campus Police Chief Tom Dougherty.



Athletic Director Corey Goff.

The Guest Chef program is designed to create interactions between students, faculty and staff that are in a medium that is completely separate from the world of academia.

"Our Guest Chefs are an integral part of the entire planning process," explained Evan. "Dr. Huber developed the OktHuberfest concept and worked with our chefs to create the menu. With Corey Goff, we collaborated for his tailgating theme. And we were very fortunate to be able to partner with Callista in November."

"I loved the opportunity to serve Thanksgiving dinner to so many of our students," remarked Callista Isabelle. "I also loved the chance to serve alongside Muhlenberg Dining chefs and servers. I'm very thankful for this opportunity!"

It is the uniqueness of the atmosphere that makes the Guest Chef program such a success as Dr. Huber confirms.

"The Guest Chef Program provided me with a great opportunity to interact with students, away from academics. During the OktHuberFest, I thoroughly enjoyed short conversations with students while serving up delicious apple strudel."

In the end, it's the willingness of the participants and the consequent interactions with students that feed into the 'Berg culture and make it the special place that it is.



Dean Mike Huber and daughter Stephanie Huber.

WEIGH the WASTE



As weather patterns change and tropical diseases spread to previously inhabitable areas, we are slowly recognizing the damage we're doing to the Earth. A large part of our problem is failing to recognize how abusive we are to our limited supply of natural resources. For instance, according to NPR, the United States wastes 33 million tons of food each year. Just because we are fortunate enough to live in a country that can afford to do this, does not mean that we should.

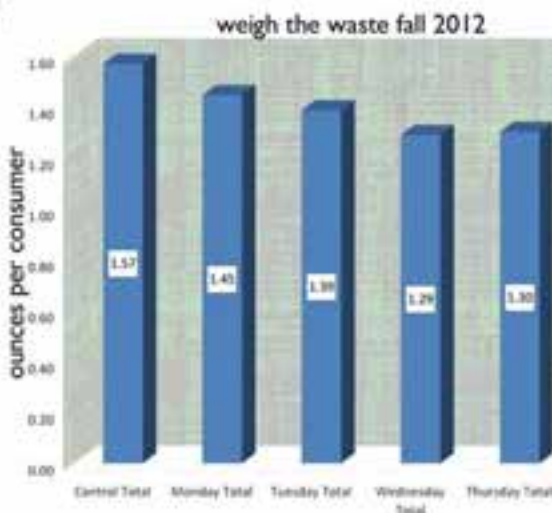
A large component of physical waste at Muhlenberg derives from feeding a large population of students, faculty and staff. In an effort to support the sustainability efforts on campus, Muhlenberg Dining Services introduced Weigh the Waste in Fall 2012. From November 12 - November 15, Muhlenberg Dining employees literally weighed the post-consumer food waste in the Wood Dining Commons. After each meal period results were tabulated and displayed on digital signage for guests to see.

After the fourth and final day of the initiative, one thing was clear: Weigh the Waste was a success. Waste ounces per consumer steadily declined through the week with the exception of the final day when there was a .01 ounce per consumer increase.

"I have experience with implementing this program in the past," explained Muhlenberg Dining Operations Manager Peter Stark. "After each Weigh the Waste program, I noticed that students would begin to ask themselves questions like 'am I really going to eat that second entrée?' As a result, we observed decline in food waste."

For reasons previously mentioned, waste output reduction is extremely important as well as handling waste responsibly. Muhlenberg College has made great strides by switching waste vendors to Sustainable Waste Solutions, the region's only landfill free waste and recycling company.

"It's very important for us to partner with the College to support its sustainability goals," noted Muhlenberg Dining General Manager John Pasquarello. "We certainly feel Weigh the Waste was a success and we look forward to coordinating this program again in the Spring 2013 semester."



WHEN:

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2013

WHERE:

WOOD DINING COMMONS

WHAT:

BATTLE OF THE CHEFS



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