

# The Berg Focus



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 Muhlenberg College  
Dining

## THE LAST STRAW | Peter Stark

Sustainability. What does it mean? When does it start? How do we engage others?

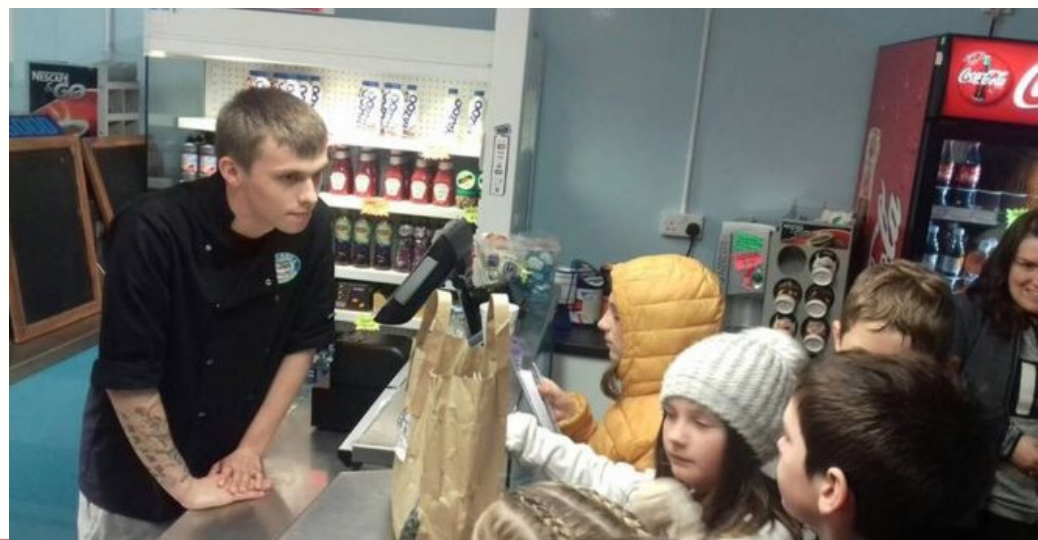
There are many questions that can be asked and answered about sustainability. The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines sustainability as “of, relating to, or being a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged”. While this may well be a technical definition, people of different generations may well have their own definition, one that is important to them. When our newest Sustainability Intern, Miranda Salters, was asked the question her response was **“the ability of our natural world and resources to be prolonged and preserved for future generations-without sacrificing quality of life today”**. Perhaps a member of an older generation, one who grow up with only brown bags for groceries, milk in returnable glass bottles and diapers that had to be washed, would have a similar but slightly different definition. One could hear “I yearn for the simpler days and I want to improve on what has been done to our planet for our grandchildren”. The key ingredients from all definitions should include the words such as “not permanently damaging”, “resources to be prolonged” or “improve our planet.” But when should all this start?

It is never too early to start educating our youth or just as important, listening and learning from them. The earlier it occurs, the better chances we have of improving our planet. Unfortunately, it cannot all be done at one time, but when there are a multitude of small initiatives being undertaken globally, there will be a positive impact. In a small coastal village of NW Scotland, students from the Ullapool Primary School joined forces with Glasgow’s Sunnyside Primary School to lobby local businesses as part of the #NaeStrawAtAw (No Straw at All) campaign. The students, age five to eleven, were part of a beach clean-up on an uninhabited island where they cleaned up thousands of plastic straws. The students also went around to all the local businesses to speak with them about their campaign.



The campaign was to encourage businesses to only carry environmentally sourced straws and eliminate plastic ones. Due to the #NaeStrawAtAw campaign, the 14 businesses in the village have all committed to being a plastic straw free village, perhaps the first of its kind. One pupil, Cailín Erin Patterson, 11, said:

**"There's no need for plastic straws. If you do use a straw it shouldn't be a throwaway one. We're killing our seas with single-use plastic and it's just not necessary."**





What now do we do to engage others? This can be a difficult task but one that we all need to keep at the forefront. We can and should learn from the example and fortitude of children across the pond. Natalie Warhit, a Sustainability Intern for the last several years, when asked about what she sees as continuing challenges responded **“it is sometimes hard to get people to leave their comfort zones to help the environment”**. Education, setting examples and raising awareness are all key factors in getting people to leave their comfort zones. There are several initiatives that are being implemented in the spring of 2018 at Muhlenberg to help with our sustainability efforts. The first, in following the children of Ullapool, we will be switching to individually dispensed, unwrapped paper straws in the Wood Dining Commons, Mule Express, Java Joe, General’s Quarters, and Life Sports Center Café. All stirrers for coffee and tea in all operations, including catering, will be sustainably sourced. Secondly, we will be offering for sale at Java Joe and General’s Quarters reusable Mason Jars with Lids and Reusable Metal Straws.

Proceeds from the sale of the jars and lids will be earmarked for future initiatives of EnAct. Finally, we will be expanding the use of the ‘Berg to Go program to encompass General’s Quarters and Life Sports Center Café. These two locations are already exchange points and now you will be able to turn your exchange card in at the service points to have your food put in a clean ‘Berg to Go container. We are also exploring reusable drink containers that will replace the paper to go cups currently offered at the Wood Dining Commons. As the children of Ullapool have already proved, changes can be made when one perseveres.

We can all make a difference, even if it’s one straw at a time.



## A 'Berg Barista Abroad | Camille Seidel '18

Ciao! I'm Camille. I am a senior studying Theater and Fine Arts here at Muhlenberg. In addition to being a Barista at Java Joe, I've served as the President of the Girls Next Door A Capella group and Co-President of Muhlenberg Improv Association. I'm an active member of the Muhlenberg Theater Association and try to be involved in productions every semester I am able to. Most recently, you may have caught me in the mainstage production of "Conform." I am excited to start working as the Marketing Intern for Muhlenberg Dining Services next semester. Sounds like I'm pretty busy, right? Like most Muhlenberg students, I've found that staying busy and involved on campus is not only integral to the "Muhlenberg experience," but has improved my time management skills and has allowed me to forge meaningful relationships in many different circles within the Muhlenberg community.

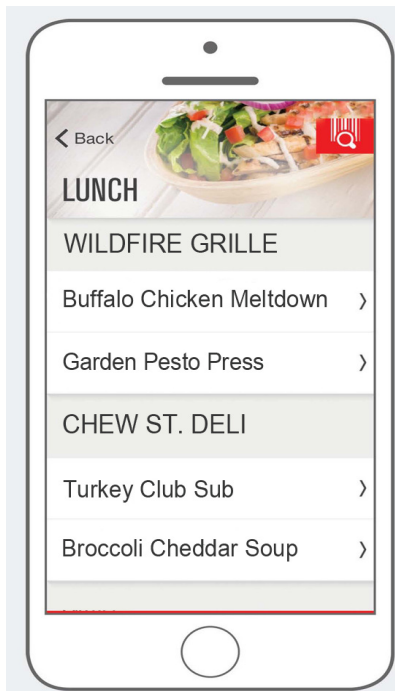
For many of my peers, studying abroad is another important part of the Muhlenberg experience. Last semester, I was fortunate to have the opportunity to study abroad in Italy at the Florence University of the Arts. While I was there, I worked on speaking Italian, explored many parts of Italy, and ate all of the delectable food I could get my hands on. At my school, I took Italian and various different art courses; from Art History to Chemical Art Restoration to a site-specific Drawing class.

I've worked in the food service industry since I was in high school and have always had a huge interest in trying new foods and learning about different food cultures around the world. So, being in Italy, I knew I had to take an Italian Food Culture course! Little did I know, it'd end up being one of my favorite experiences of studying abroad! I tasted different wines, learned to taste the difference in regional delicacies around Italy, and witnessed the cultural importance of food and how it can be considered the "glue" of Italian culture and family life.



Every morning on my way to class in Florence, I treated myself to an authentic Italian cappuccino from my favorite local bar. I would always think to myself, **“If only I could bring the Italian appreciation for coffee and food back to Muhlenberg and to my job at the coffee shop.”** Lucky for me, last September I got to make that happen in a small but impactful way by assisting in planning International Coffee Day at Java Joe. Using my knowledge of specialty coffee beverages from around the world, I helped create recipes for a few International-inspired drink specials. We served Greek Frappes, Italian Affogatos, Vietnamese Iced Coffee, and Golden Milk Lattes which were thoroughly enjoyed by faculty, staff, and students!

As Muhlenberg students, we’re encouraged to find connections between different disciplines and interests and understand the value those connections hold. Studying abroad helped me find and make these connections inside and outside of the classroom. It was amazing to be able to bring these connections back to Muhlenberg and, quite literally, watch the rest of the Muhlenberg community enjoy a little piece of my Italian experience.



# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

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muhlenberg dining’s new app tells you what’s on the menu, what’s for breakfast, lunch or dinner. know the menu items, their ingredients and more - including calories and nutritional info.



## Spotlight on Conference & Event Services

At the conclusion of each academic year in May, many Muhlenberg students wrap up their final exams, move out of their dorm rooms, and head home for the summer. But, Muhlenberg doesn't go into hibernation and simply wait for its students to return in the fall. It is then that our beautiful campus largely switches out of "class mode" and serves as a space for many other opportunities; students complete intensive summer research with faculty mentors, Muhlenberg Summer Theater puts on three mainstage productions, and the Wescoe School's summer semester begins.



JoEllen Rooney  
Conference  
Manager

Perhaps most notably, the Conference & Event Services Department turns the campus into a quasi-hotel-event center that hosts 1,500+ guests over the course of the summer. With the help of several campus departments - the Office of Seegers Union, Campus Safety, and the Office of Residential Services to the Office of Information Technology, Plant Operations, and Dining Services - Muhlenberg is able to host all kinds of events and conferences including: athletic camps, business meetings, religious retreats, and educational conferences, as well as long-term housing for corporate interns working in the Lehigh Valley.



**Conference Assistants, Summer '17**



Just this past summer, Conference Services hosted the **Education First Leaders, Summer '17** Education First High School Exchange, the International Women's Writing Guild, the POGIL Project, and several overnight and day athletic camps facilitated by Muhlenberg coaches - just to name a few. Guests use Muhlenberg's facilities for activities, workshops, and events, enjoy meals in the Wood Dining Commons, and sleep in our on-campus housing.

At the head of the Conference & Event Services Department is JoEllen Rooney. Rooney works year-round to plan and implement several aspects of the Summer Conference Program. In addition to managing all of the operations and logistics at large, she builds and maintains customer relationships, seeks out new customers and works to retain current customers, negotiates contracts, and mentors a team of Conference Assistants that are hired each summer - with her ultimate goal to create exceptional customer experiences.



Muhlenberg students are hired as Conference Assistants and aid in the day-to-day operations during peak conference season. Serving as a Conference Assistant is a great way to gain experience for students. Karl Schultz '18 stated he's gained skills in "cooperation, customer service, and flexibility" from working as a Conference Assistant, "I also learned that there are many more moving parts to something than may appear from the outside."

In addition to gaining work experience, Conference Assistants are able to see Muhlenberg from a unique point-of-view. "Working with Conference Services has added to my Muhlenberg experience by giving me a much deeper respect for what goes on behind the scenes. I have gotten to know many members of the College that may otherwise go unrecognized. I have learned that every person's job, no matter how small or recognizable, is vital to a successful Muhlenberg," Karl added.

Since JoEllen Rooney started five years ago, the Summer Conference Program has expanded dramatically. "When I was hired five years ago, external meetings and conferences were considered a nuisance. We did not have the support from departments across campus to provide a flawless event. Fast forward five years and we finally have the support we need." Rooney aims to continue to exceed revenue goals year after year, grow the Corporate Intern Housing program, and contract with additional educational camps that attract students in the 14-17 age group.

In President John Williams' latest Strategic Plan, "Muhlenberg Opens Doors," fostering the Conference Services Program's growth was one of his priorities. The Conference Services Program benefits the College in several ways: it allows the College to forge new relationships and connections with conference guests, introduces school-age conference guests to Muhlenberg with potential for application interest, and generates substantial incremental revenue for the College. Even though many of the students aren't around to see the Summer Conference season unfold, its advantages continue to make an impression on the Muhlenberg community at large.



*International Women's Writers Guild, Summer '17*





## **Looking for a job on campus?**

**STUDENT EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES ARE AVAILABLE!**

Working with **Red Door Catering** is the perfect opportunity to earn money on campus with flexible hours that fit around student schedules. Contact [catering@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:catering@muhlenberg.edu) for more information.

**Java Joe** hires student baristas to operate the buzzing campus coffee shop in Seegers Union. Baristas complete Starbucks training right on campus. Inquire at Java Joe for more information.

**Student Internships** are available during the academic year. We strive to educate students in marketing, nutrition & culinary management and sustainability. These paid internships may be completed for academic credit. Contact [diningcomments@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:diningcomments@muhlenberg.edu) for more information.

# **Conference & Event Services is hiring Student Conference Assistants for their 2018 Summer Conference Season!**

**Interested in working on campus this summer?**  
Conference Services is looking to hire a group of energetic, cooperative, customer-focused Conference Assistants.

Contact [joellenrooney@muhlenberg.edu](mailto:joellenrooney@muhlenberg.edu) for more details.



# Celebrating Muhlenberg's Cultural and Linguistic Diversity with International Week

Last October, the Languages, Literatures & Cultures Department hosted International Week. International Week's programming is comprised of several different types of events, from visiting guest speakers to fundraising campaigns and poetry nights to film screenings - making the week a highlight of Fall semesters here at Muhlenberg.

Eileen McEwan, chair of the Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures and Mirna Trauger, Lecturer in the Department of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures explained the importance of hosting International Week at Muhlenberg each year. "International Week recognizes and celebrates cultural and linguistic diversity. It's an opportunity for our campus community to come together and engage, in a variety of ways, with the many languages and cultures that are represented on campus, both in the languages we teach and in the multicultural and international groups on campus. The many events throughout the week allow our students to showcase their talents in languages that they are studying and our international students to feature their own talents and cultural experiences."

Over the last few years, International Week has evolved from a one-day celebration to a full week. The week-long celebration was originally envisioned by two alumni - Chris Baumgartel '17 and Mahsheed Mahjor '17 - who collaborated with the Department of Languages, Literatures & Cultures two years ago to create an annual celebration of global diversity at Muhlenberg. This sprouted into the week-long celebration as the campus community now knows it.

Interdepartmental communication and coordination with the Offices of International Student Support, the Multicultural Center, the International Student Association, multicultural student groups, and the community at large has allowed International Week programming to grow. This year, event programming included a performance by acclaimed Puerto Rican poet, novelist, performer, and professor, Javier Avila, who spoke about the beauty of difference through stories and poems, a fundraiser for Puerto Rico in collaboration with the Office of Community Engagement and Multicultural Life, an International poetry night hosted in the Fireside Lounge, a Colombian film screening at the Civic Theatre of Allentown, and a virtual panel discussion with alumni who are working in the international community.



The grand finale of the week was Performance Night hosted in the Event Space. Performance Night was MC'd by the President of the International Student Association, Jouman Barakat '20. It was an evening of performances that highlighted the multiculturalism of our campus: songs, poems, dances, and other performances in a variety of languages and formats. A 2017 student documentary film, "Off the Menu" was also showed. The film was created by David Ossa, Matthew Solnick, and Nikolas Romero and showcases the lives of Muhlenberg Dining Services' team members from Syria, Senegal, and Puerto Rico.

Alongside Performance Night was an International-themed dinner held in the Wood Dining Commons. "Food, just like language, is a vehicle for expressing culture. That is why [we] partnered with Dining Services to put together a delicious menu of international foods for the culminating Performance Night. The delectable dishes prepared by Dining Services offered our campus community a glimpse into what foods are consumed in other parts of the world," McEwan and Trauger remarked. This year's International Week Dinner featured dishes from ten different countries and was enjoyed by faculty, staff, and students. Some fan favorites included: Mexican Tamales, Scandinavian House-Cured Gravlax, Vietnamese Pho, a variety of Spanish tapas, Senegalese Peppered Chicken and Jollof Rice, and Belgian Chocolate Cake - just to name a few!

Most importantly perhaps, International Week is a "reminder to all that there is international student life among us and that we should be proud of it and appreciate the multiculturalism that it brings to campus," Jouman mentioned, "As an international student from Jordan, I think International Week is incredibly essential and necessary for Muhlenberg to celebrate. The value that it represents enriches the college and makes it a more lively place. It is a week where Muhlenberg celebrates international student life on campus and what it has to offer in various forms."

Although Muhlenberg is a learning institution, Jouman explained the danger of using International Week as simply a learning experience. "It's important to realize that it isn't a time to notice everything that domestic students *learn* from international students. This gives the impression that international students are only here in order to teach domestic students. It's a difficult thing to be an international student because you're often unwilling to carry the burden of representing your *entire country* - which is a huge amount of pressure that Western culture imposes on us. It's necessary to take this week to just acknowledge international students' often overlooked presence here on campus."

*Special thanks to Jouman Barakat '20, Eileen McEwan, and Mirna Trauger for their contribution.*





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## Q&A with the New Dynamic Duo of Muhlenberg's Student Life Suite. Associate Directors of Student Engagement, Steve Dutton and Ellen Lentine

### What impact does the dining program have on the campus experience?

Steve Dutton: I think that the success of any program that I work with can benefit from the quality of the food and the quality of the service provided. I think the students, faculty, and staff consider dining and catering on campus as a highlight of their experience because of the staff and because of the food.

Ellen Lentine: I am a firm believer that meals are the most important parts of your day. I believe the Dining Program adds so much value to the student experience. The staff goes above and beyond to make sure the food is well-prepared and delicious.

### What was your first impression of the Wood Dining Commons? Does it remind you of Hogwarts or a ski lodge?

SD: It's breathtaking. The first time I was in Wood Dining Commons was for breakfast during my interview. I remember having to compose myself a little bit and not be distracted by the many food options and physical space. I would put WDC somewhere in between Hogwarts and a ski lodge. Not enough floating candles and Butterbeer to be Hogwarts, yet not quite enough snow (thankfully) to really feel like a ski lodge.

EL: The Wood Dining Commons is absolutely beautiful! It has such a cozy ski lodge vibe to it. My favorite spot is on the comfy chairs next to the fire place; I could stay there all day!

### If you were stranded on a deserted island, what is one food you could not do without? What one food would you not want on the island?

SD: My favorite food is probably buttermilk pancakes, but I could do without them if I had to. So, I'd have to say bacon - I'd miss that too much. I could do without mushrooms on the island or anywhere else.



EL: It may sound weird, but I could not do without brussels sprouts. They are my favorite food by far! One food I would never want to see again is something you Pennsylvanians call "scrapple" (gross).

**What is the most bizarre or adventurous food you have tried?**

SD: Probably escargot. Not that bizarre, but a little adventurous for some, I suppose. I've had it multiple times, typically with a healthy helping of butter and garlic.

EL: While traveling in Africa, I once ate rattlesnake pierogis. They were actually pretty tasty!

**What is your favorite meal to prepare at home?**

SD: We've used meal delivery services quite a bit in the past, like Blue Apron. So I've really enjoyed being in the kitchen the last few years, learning how to cook. So, I guess I don't really have a favorite at this point, but am really enjoying expanding my skill set and knowledge of meal preparation.

EL: I am more likely to burn the kitchen down than to cook something that is edible... My favorite meal for my husband to cook is Pad Thai.

**Being new to the area, what do you think of Allentown, the local community and what it offers in terms of culture?**

SD: While I am new to Muhlenberg, we've lived in Allentown for about 4 years. Some of the reasons we moved back were because of our love of Allentown, the Lehigh Valley, and the opportunities the culture provides in the area. In particular, we love exploring new and local restaurants in the valley.

EL: What I have loved most about Allentown so far has been getting to explore the local parks, the fantastic restaurants, and the really cool microbreweries in the area!

**In terms of customer service, what can transform a good experience into a great or unforgettable one?**

SD: I think the willingness to listen and build relationships can go a long way. My experiences with Sodexo and the entire staff has been nothing but positive. There's always a friendly face to say hello to and they're always willing to listen, hear suggestions, and try to accommodate. I think the ability to anticipate needs of customers (students, faculty, staff, etc.) is what sets good service apart from bad service, and Sodexo at Muhlenberg College does that very well.

EL: What transforms a customer service experience for me is the detail and personal touch that goes into an interaction. One of the things I love about working with the Dining Services team is how they pay so much attention to detail and provide a phenomenal experience for guests and campus partners.



**WHEN:**

**TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2018**

**WHERE:**

**WOOD DINING COMMONS**

**WHAT:**

**BATTLE  
OF THE  
CHEFS**



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