

Sweet Briar College Welcomes Back Two Distinguished Faculty Members Dr. Melanie Stine '06 and Dr. Stephen Loftus

Sweet Briar proudly welcomes back Dr. Melanie Stine '06 and Dr. Stephen Loftus, strengthening its faculty with expertise in natural sciences and mathematics.

AMHERST, VA, UNITED STATES, February 17, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- When we started the new calendar year, two familiar faces rejoined the faculty: Dr. Melanie Stine '06, assistant professor of natural science, and Dr. Stephen Loftus, assistant professor of mathematics.

Dr. Stine returned to Sweet Briar after most recently teaching middle school science and math at North Branch School in Afton, VA, after serving as an environmental scientist at consulting firm Ecosystem Services. She previously taught environmental geography as an assistant professor at the University of Texas at San Antonio and received the Outstanding Service Award. From 2015-2017, Dr. Stine taught at Sweet Briar as a visiting assistant professor of Environmental Science. She graduated from Sweet Briar in 2006 with a degree in environmental science before earning an M.S. from Virginia Tech in geography and a Ph.D. from Texas State University in environmental geography.

"I could not pass up the opportunity to work at Sweet Briar again. I love being back here! The beauty of this campus and the opportunities to step outside to do research and explore the many acres of forests and fields with students are unmatched," Dr. Stine said.

"Dr. Stine has a quiet, kind, methodical teaching style, and creatively intertwines her projects and classes with the 'real world,'" said Siena Hasbrouck '16. "I am confident that the current students of Sweet Briar will have an excellent mentor and role model to support them through the years to come, and someone who they will be able to consider a friend, just as I do."



Benedict Hall is a building at Sweet Briar College in Sweet Briar, Virginia. It houses a gallery, lab, and lobby. The hall is named after Mary K. Benedict, the college's first president.

Dr. Loftus returned to Sweet Briar after teaching here from 2017-2021, chairing the math program in the 2020-2021 academic year. During his time at Sweet Briar, he received the Robert Barlow Faculty/Staff Award in 2019 for his support of Sweet Briar's student-athletes. As someone interested in statistical education, Dr. Loftus has published two introductory statistics textbooks: Basic Statistics with Rand An Introductory Handbook of Bayesian Thinking. Dr. Loftus earned his master's and doctorate degrees studying statistics at Virginia Tech and a bachelor's degree in statistics from Appalachian State University.

"I'm excited to return to Sweet Briar and look forward to the opportunity to work with students, dispelling fears of math and stats for some and working with motivated scholars on undergraduate research," said Dr. Loftus.

"Dr. Loftus opened the world of statistics to me, and my life has not changed. He went above and beyond what was expected of him as a professor," said Sydney Campbell, '21, of her time working with Dr. Loftus as a student. "Dr. Loftus provided unwavering support to his students, whether helping us understand a topic covered in class or guiding us on our path to graduate school or the workforce; he was (and still is) always there. Simply put, I would not be where I am today without Dr. Loftus. His advice and support are unmatched, and I am forever grateful for his impact



Dr. Melanie Stine '06, assistant professor of natural science



Dr. Stephen Loftus, assistant professor of mathematics.

on my education and future.”

“Dr. Loftus has been integral to my education and career in statistics. His clear passion for teaching and in-depth knowledge has always been an inspiration,” said Riahn Holcomb-Selbert '22. “From answering questions outside of office hours to providing extra practice problems, he has repeatedly shown care for his students’ success before and after graduation. I am lucky to have had him as a professor and now to call him both my mentor and friend.”

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