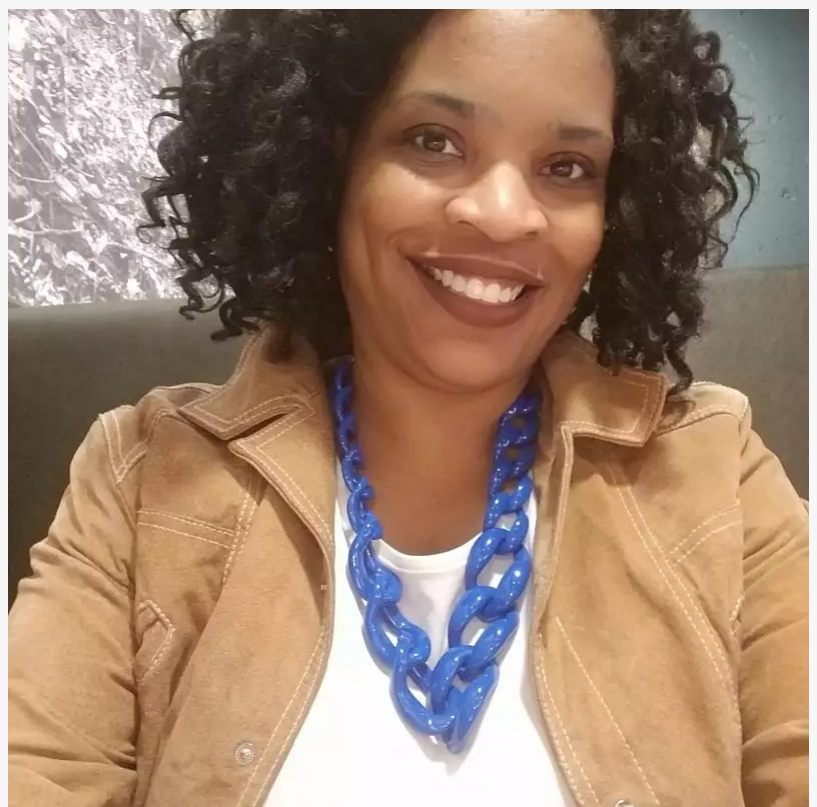


# Sweet Briar College Hosts 20th Annual Virginia Forum, Celebrating Scholarship and State History

*Sweet Briar hosted the 20th Virginia Forum, uniting scholars and students for panels, tours, and dialogue on Virginia's history, culture, and scholarship.*

AMHERST, VA, UNITED STATES, March 29, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- From March 13 to 15, Sweet Briar College's campus was home to the [20th Annual Virginia Forum](#), welcoming residents, historians, and enthusiasts for several academic discussion and exploration days.

Held at a different location each year, the Virginia Forum is an interdisciplinary conference and organization that welcomes work in various disciplines, including anthropology, archaeology, economics, education, environmental studies, geography, history, law, literature, and politics. The wide range of topics was explored through presentations, panels, and other programming related to Virginia. The forum encourages proposals from a variety of groups from across the country, including academics, local historians, applied and public historians, archivists, historic site interpreters, librarians, museum professionals, teachers, writers, and others engaged in the study and interpretation of the history and culture of Virginia to showcase their scholarship at this annual conference.



Dr. Dwana Waugh, Associate Professor of History and Social Sciences & Humanities Division Head

The opening session on March 13 featured a talk by Dr. Lynn Rainville, former Dean of the College and Sweet Briar faculty member, on "Haunted Sweet Briar: Two Centuries of Ghosts, Graveyards, and Folklore at a Southern Plantation and College," followed by a walking ghost tour around campus. Topics from other presentations throughout the event ranged from panels on

"Creating Access and Freedom: Female Agency in the Public and Private Spheres" to "Teaching Historical Methods Amidst the Digital Revolution."

As this year's host, Sweet Briar College and its history were at the forefront of various programming, including a tour of the greenhouse, self-guided tours of the Sweet Briar Museum, Enslaved Community Cabin, and Pannell Gallery, and a tasting of [Sweet Briar College Farm wines](#).



Virginia Forum Attendees, Elston Inn & Conference Center

"The conference was a success. It brought scholars together to discuss important aspects of Virginia's history and culture," said Sweet Briar Associate Professor of History and Social Sciences & Humanities Division Head Dr. Dwana Waugh. "It also showcased the beauty and resources of our campus and allowed our [history majors and minors](#) useful practice in attending academic conferences."

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The conference was a success. It brought scholars together to discuss important aspects of Virginia's history and culture and showcased our beautiful campus."

*Associate Professor of History,  
Dr. Dwana Waugh*

Several other campus community members played active roles during the event. The plenary session on March 14, "Humanities Are the Future: A Plenary on Humanities Centers in Virginia," featured a welcome by the Dean of the College, Dr. Jeff Key. Dr. Waugh was accompanied by three students, Sydney Harris '25, Lane Vuick '25, and Nadia Abrego '26, for a discussion about complicated histories stemming from her fall 2024 course, History Detectives, which examined the 100th anniversary and legacy of

Virginia's Racial Integrity Act.

"As a scholar, this forum reinforced my commitment to understanding history not as a static narrative but as a complex, ongoing dialogue, and I know my peers on the panel would agree," Lane commented on her experience as a panelist. "It was truly an honor to not only be in a position where a room full of brilliant people want to hear my voice but also to create a space to reckon with uncomfortable historical truths."

Dr. Waugh also served on the Virginia Forum Program Committee and Local Arrangements Committee, along with Sweet Briar's Kathleen Placidi, director of institutional grants, and Adrian Broughman, archives and resource sharing manager.

Sweet Briar's role as host of the 20th Virginia Forum highlights the College's capacity to welcome academic conferences and cultural events through its beautiful campus and facilities—including the Wailes Center, campus inn, and event spaces that support intellectual engagement and hospitality. With a 2,800-acre campus, hands-on academic programs, and a commitment to women's leadership, Sweet Briar College continues to serve as a hub for scholarship, conversation, and connection. To learn more about hosting your event at Sweet Briar or exploring academic opportunities, visit [sbc.edu](http://sbc.edu)

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Sweet Briar College: Where Bold Women Thrive, nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, is more than just a campus—it's a launchpad for fearless leaders, innovators, and changemakers.

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