

March, 2018

Dear Friend:

Though winter weather prevails outside of our frosty windows, I am happy to report that vitality and excitement have returned to the Hillsdale campus as students are studying their way through the first semester of 2018. It is a particularly exciting time for Hillsdale seniors as they prepare for a transition that will set the tone for the rest of their lives. Some will pursue advanced academic degrees, others will move to pursue their chosen career, and others will marry and start a new life as full-fledged adults. It is a coming-of-age rite of passage, and a joy to be a witness to the beauty of it all.

The headlines from articles in [*The Collegian*](#) (the college's newspaper) this past fall included statements such as: *Hillsdale Sets New GPA High*, *Hillsdale College Among Top Ten For Lowest Student Debt*, and *Freshman Class the Best Ever*. We could easily add a few additional headlines such as: *Hillsdale College Number One in Classical Liberal Arts Education* or *Hillsdale College Once Again in the National Limelight*. With much progress afoot at Hillsdale College, it is an exciting time to be associated with this special school. I write today to share further good news as we forge ahead into a New Year alive with promise and possibility.

Members of the Class of 2021 Set Their Sights on Success!

With an average 3.87 high school GPA, a 30.25 average score on the ACT, and 1347 average on the SAT, it is easy to understand why the Class of 2021 has been described as the most highly qualified entering class ever. As the pool of applicants increases, so does the selectivity of the Admissions Office. The acceptance rate for the Class of 2021 hovered at 41 percent chosen from a pool of over 2,400 applicants. According to Senior Director of Admissions Zachary Miller, applications for enrollment in the fall of 2018 are just as steady as last year and the qualifications of the applicants are excellent. In such a competitive pool of talent, considerations for admittance move beyond test scores and grade points. Throughout the year admissions representatives meet with potential students to learn more about their extracurricular club and sport activities, volunteer service, academic and service awards, and other indicators of an individual's dedication to excellence, integrity, and ambition. And so it is that members of the freshman class came to be here determined to study, grow, and excel. Here are some further facts about the Class of 2021 who have cleared the hurdle of the difficult first semester to move into their second semester at Hillsdale College:

- The Class of 2021 consists of 372 freshmen: 183 men and 187 women.
- The entering class is national in scope, hailing from 39 states and three foreign countries. Students from Michigan account for 30 percent of the freshman class.
- This year's student body of 1,556 students represents 49 states, the District of Columbia, and 14 foreign countries. The foreign students' homelands include Australia, Austria, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Israel, Kenya, Korea, South Africa, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom.
- The odds are good that these entering students will return next fall, with a 96 percent freshman retention rate.

- The Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship welcomed seventeen entering master's students and 31 doctoral candidates, bringing the total to 48 graduate students. Ten master's degrees were awarded at the 2017 Commencement, and six master's graduates have stayed on to pursue their Ph.D. at the graduate school.

Please encourage potential students to visit the Admissions website at hillsdale.edu/admissions. The resources there will help potential students learn about all aspects of admission to Hillsdale College, including financial aid and tuition costs, the special program offered for veterans of the U.S. military, and how to apply and visit campus. The official "Visit Days" for this semester are scheduled on February 19, April 20, and April 27. Further details may be found by clicking on "[Visit Campus](http://hillsdale.edu/admissions)" at hillsdale.edu/admissions main website page. Of course, a student may schedule a visit at any time of year, and are especially encouraged to do so when classes are in session.

You may also send information about prospective students, such as name, address, and year of high school graduation to the Admissions Office by e-mailing mbraman@hillsdale.edu, by post to the attention of the Senior Director of Admissions Zachary Miller at the Hillsdale College address, or by phoning the Admissions Office directly at (517) 607-2227. Once a student reaches their freshman year in high school it is time to actively begin to build their "high school" resume, meaning not only earning excellent grades, but engaging in leadership roles such as student government, volunteering with nonprofits, and competing for academic, service, sports, and other types of awards. All of these are factors in a potential student's acceptance at Hillsdale College, since well-rounded individuals tend to fare best at our school—as well as in life.

Don't Let Cost Be a Factor!

When advising the loving parent of a promising potential student recently, I shared the advice to not allow cost be a factor in his son's choice of college. It is a fact that Hillsdale College—with tuition of \$25,540 this year and approximate overall cost (with a 19-meal plan) of \$37,352—represents a "bargain" in the world of higher education. The *actual* cost to educate a Hillsdale student runs over \$70,000, with the difference being made with gifts given by friends like you. The decision as to what college to attend can set the course for a young person's future—including marriage, career, and reinforcing a student's walk of faith. It is no small thing that the close sense of community that exists on our campus fosters growth and encourages serious study of classical knowledge. A 10:1 student-faculty ratio, an average class size of 15, and an amazing 60 percent of students working on campus, all combine to create a feeling of extended family surrounding the young men and women poised on the threshold of adulthood. Like birds leaving the nest, they will learn the basics of flight before soaring into the future.

When talking to potential students and/or their parents about attending Hillsdale College, they should be made aware that there is both need- and merit-based financial assistance available for qualified students at Hillsdale. During this academic year, approximately \$30 million in financial aid will be awarded to 97 percent of Hillsdale students. The financial assistance offered includes privately funded scholarships, grants, and loans. It is good to know that our students pay back the loans they are granted, with the default rate hovering just over 1 percent.

And while being located in a small town of 8,000 in rural Michigan, there is still plenty to do on campus in terms of extracurricular activities. At last count there are [over 100 clubs](#), organizations, and honoraries at Hillsdale. In addition there are seven nationally chartered Greek houses, seven religious organizations, twelve NCAA Division II athletic teams, a nationally ranked shotgun team, several intramural sports clubs, as well as other club sports and activities such as orchestra, choir, theater, and mock trial and debate teams to round out the spectrum of possibilities. Keeping in mind (no pun intended) that studying takes up the majority of students' intellectual time, it is a tribute to youthful energy and enthusiasm that our students can participate in other such activities while remaining in good academic standing. Yes, they are busy just about all the time...

Another Defining Moment for Hillsdale College

There are but a few schools who may claim that they accept *no form* of federal funding—direct or indirect. Hillsdale College stands tall among that small band of academic stalwarts, since the College refuses all forms of state funding as well. We are unique in many ways, including an outstanding 64-hour core curriculum with required courses on the U.S. Constitution, Western Heritage, and real American history, as well as courses in the natural sciences.

Hillsdale College was again in the headlines in early December as the proposed \$1.5 trillion tax package was being debated on the Senate floor. The proposed bill included a tax on the endowment of colleges and universities. Specifically, the proposed tax in the amended Senate bill would consist of a 1.4 percent excise tax on the endowments of private, nonprofit colleges and universities whose endowment is equal to \$500,000 or more per student.

When the tax bill came to the senate floor, an amendment was proposed by Senators Pat Toomey (Republican, Pennsylvania) and Ted Cruz (Republican, Texas) that would have shielded from the endowment tax any colleges that do not receive federal funds. This amendment was a “trigger” for those such as Senator Ron Wyden (Democrat, Oregon) to state that Hillsdale College would effectively be the only school to benefit from the amendment. This caused an eruption of social media nicknames for the amendment such as “the Hillsdale handout.” Since there are at least nine other schools that do not receive federal funds, Senator Toomey pointed out that Hillsdale is not the only such truly independent school. Further arguments by Democrats stated that the amendment was a means of tipping the hat to some of the powerful friends of Hillsdale, some of whom are major donors and some of whom are not. The heated discussion that ensued resulted in some mudslinging against Hillsdale on the part of the Democratic senators, which of course brings to mind the old adage: *there’s no such thing as bad publicity*. Hillsdale College was once again in the limelight.

In the final bill, the tax on college and university endowments is limited to schools with endowments equal to \$500,000 per student, as originally proposed, and the Toomey/Cruz amendment failed to pass. This means Hillsdale College’s endowment will not currently be subject to the 1.4 percent tax on net investment income because our current endowment amounts to approximately \$364,000 per student. Now that the dust has settled, it is good to know that Hillsdale College is the first school that comes to the minds of the nation’s legislators when it comes to freedom from federal funds. For better or worse, our message has penetrated into the very heart of our nation’s government. [Dr. Arnn penned an excellent column](#) regarding the debate and the false accusations raised against Hillsdale College in the Senate chamber. It was published in *The Wall Street Journal* in early December.

That Which the Builders Rejected Has Become the Chief Cornerstone

The Hillsdale College Fall Convocation took place on November 7 in the Searle Center. Faculty, students, and staff assembled on the chilly Tuesday morning to listen to the announcement of the All-School GPA (3.343), learn which Greek organizations won the scholarship cups (the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and Alpha Tau Omega fraternity), and celebrate the presentation of the Emily Daugherty Award for Teaching Excellence to Assistant Professor of Chemistry Courtney Meyet. A thought-provoking speech was given on the “Lessons of the Golden Keys” by Professor of the Year and Assistant Professor of Psychology Collin Barnes. The celebration then moved to two tents positioned at the edge of the Christ Chapel construction site to witness the laying of the chapel’s cornerstone, which is inscribed “For God and Country” in both Greek and Latin.

The cornerstone ceremony began with a welcome by Provost David Whalen, followed by a scripture reading by student Samuel Roberts, ’19. Prior to remarks delivered by President Larry Arnn, the College Chamber Choir serenaded us with “A Prayer Before Singing.” Primary benefactors, Jack and Jo Babbitt gave a memento box to be sealed in the cornerstone, which contained a Bible, the [College’s Honor Code](#) and Articles of Association, and the program for the cornerstone ceremony. While a standing-room-only audience breathlessly watched, a crane operator guided the chapel cornerstone with uncanny accuracy into the southwest corner of the building. Dr. Arnn then spread the mortar for the laying of the stone. It is still a stirring memory to think back on the highly symbolic and meaningful ceremony.

Christ Chapel will serve as a multi-purpose worship, ceremony, and performance space, and will accommodate large events such as Convocations and orchestra and choir concerts. When finished, the chapel will encompass 27,000 feet and seat an audience of 1,350. It is located between the Grewcock Student Union and the Dow Center Hotel. Fundraising for the chapel continues with several naming opportunities, including pews on the lower and upper levels available for a donation of \$25,000 each as well as a scholarship drive to raise \$3 million for approximately 12 half-tuition scholarships for members of the Evensong Choir. The \$12.5 million challenge issued by Jack and Jo Babbitt will match gifts toward chapel construction and endowment on a dollar-for-dollar basis. For further information on Christ Chapel, including a well-done video on the project, visit hillsdale.edu/christ-chapel/ or contact John Cervini at (517) 607-2670 or jcervini@hillsdale.edu.

Leadership benefactor Jo Babbitt summed up the ceremony best by citing Psalm 118:22: “*The stone which the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone.*” This could also be an allegorical statement for Hillsdale College. As a result of the challenge raised by the 1984 Supreme Court decision, some 30 years later the College has become a beacon on a hill when it comes to educating students with the truths that endure.

Leading a Revolution in Education: The Barney Charter School Initiative

The Barney Charter School Initiative (BCSI) continues to gather steam with concerned citizens forming groups with an aim of establishing classical charter schools in their local communities. The [Barney Initiative](#) assists these groups from their inception through each ensuing stage of establishing a school—including assisting in recruitment of administrative staff and teachers, grant writing and curriculum guidance, and even providing help in finding the bricks and mortar that will serve as home to the schools. The work continues past the opening semester, with on-campus summer training programs taught by Hillsdale faculty for principals, teachers, and board members. It costs roughly \$196,000 to steward each classical charter school. Schools do not pay for the services of BCSI; because they are government-funded entities, Hillsdale could not accept payments from them. The expert guidance provided through the Barney Initiative is paid for by generous contributors such as the Barney Family Foundation and friends like as you.

Currently there are 17 schools operating under the BCSI umbrella, with four more set to open this year. Hillsdale alumni—69 as of this writing—are engaged as teachers and administrative staff. One graduate of the class of 2009, Nathanael Rea, holds the position of headmaster at Founders Classical Academy in Schertz, Texas. Each year various classical schools, including those established with the help of the Barney Initiative, come to the Hillsdale campus to recruit during the Classical School Job Fair. A full list of schools established under the auspices of this initiative and other pertinent information may be found at hillsdalecharter.com. Looking ahead, there are six more schools in the formation stage for the school year of 2018-2019 and beyond.

Two challenge grants totaling a million dollars have been issued by the Barney Family Foundation and an anonymous donor. Gifts given for the Barney Charter School Initiative endowment will be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis through these challenges. For further information contact John Cervini at (517) 607-2670 or jcervini@hillsdale.edu.

Tele-Townhall Lights Up the Phone Lines and Facebook!

This past October, a tele-townhall was held on the topic of the Barney Charter School Initiative. Best described as a giant conference call, Hillsdale’s first tele-townhall took place in December 2016. The latest tele-townhall event featured a discussion between Hugh Hewitt, Larry Arnn, and Phil Kilgore (director of the Barney Initiative) with live callers on the line asking questions about classical education. A total of 8,454 individuals joined the tele-townhall by phone, while over a thousand watched the live video of the discussion online via Facebook. The full one-hour discussion may be viewed online at hillsdale.edu/townhall. I encourage you to do so, since it was a fun and yet informative session, and the questions ran the gamut of general to specific inquiries about education in America. It was fascinating to be a part of this process, and we are looking forward to future tele-townhalls on more developing topics.

The Women Commissioners Celebrate 125 Years of Service

The Women Commissioners are a group of dedicated ladies who serve and uphold the College's mission through their good works. It was in 1892 that the Board of Trustees formally recognized the commission's 23 members and charged them with the task of raising \$25,000 for the chair of Lady Principal, now known as the Dean of Women. Some 125 years later and 75 members strong, the Board of Women Commissioners continue their "work, service, devotion, and sweat" as described by President Larry Arnn during a Homecoming Weekend luncheon this past October.

Former successful Commissioners' fundraising projects stand as functioning monuments to the group's "can do" attitude. During a tour of campus you will see buildings like Olds Residence (freshman women's dorm), Mauck Hall (women's dorm), and Mary Proctor Randall Preschool, which were all funded by the ladies group. The Preschool holds a special place in the hearts of the lady Commissioners, since the school was founded in 1929 by the group and for many years was housed in the basement of Mauck Hall. Several Women Commissioners attended the Preschool as toddlers and continue their support to this day. The ladies also contributed to renovations or new construction in other buildings such as the Sage Center (art and music building), Kendall Hall (classroom building), and the Roche Sports Complex.

Currently the Women Commissioners focus on raising funds for 27 scholarships, many of which were established in the memory of past members. It is my pleasure to know many of the ladies who are members of this fine organization, and I can personally vouch that they are each an individual expression of dedication to the College's mission and show their love for Hillsdale and its students in their daily lives. As I write this, I am thinking of Lynne Neukom, who is the athletic training program director for College athletes, in addition to her service with the Women Commissioners. Her mother, Seibra Herbener, is also a longstanding member. Lynne dedicates long days and evenings to taking care of our student-athletes, which can include traveling on the bus with the football team for away games. The physical therapy facilities over which she presides are a haven for College and Academy students recuperating from injuries. Lynne also helps out College employees, providing guidance to assist the "walking wounded." Now that school is back in session, she is back at doing what she does best—taking care of others with the loving care and boundless enthusiasm that so exemplifies the attitude of her fellow Commissioners.

Hillsdale College Around the World

Each year the Hillsdale College cruise takes off for "parts unknown" as they say, and cruisers explore historical sites, listen to speeches by notable experts, and meet likeminded friends all while sailing the high seas. This year's cruise is bound for Hawaii aboard the Crystal Symphony, which will depart from San Francisco on July 15 and return on July 31. We will spend the first four days at sea, enjoying the serenity and from time to time exercising our intellects by listening to speeches by scholars such as historian and author Victor Davis Hanson, former leader of the Czech Republic Vaclav Klaus, and historian John Steel Gordon. In all, there will be at least nine Hillsdale speakers onboard to match up with a total of eight days at sea. The anchor will drop at such beautiful locations as Honolulu, Oahu; Lahaina, Maui; and Hilo and Kailua-Kona, Hawaii. There will be a stop in Baja California at Ensenada, Mexico, prior to the return trip to San Francisco, which will take four days at sea highlighted by further discussions and speeches. Our visit to Honolulu will be marked by a Pearl Harbor Tour on July 21st led by Victor Davis Hanson, which will include a visit to the Pearl Harbor Visitor Center and a narrated tour of the USS Arizona Memorial. For further information, or to book a cabin, please visit hillsdalecollegecruise.com or phone (877) 242 6397.

There are also trips abroad tailored to the younger set—specifically high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors—with [the Hillsdale College High School Summer Study Abroad Programs](#). Organized by the Admissions Office, these trips are a means of seriously broadening the horizons of young men and women while earning three college credits along the way. It is also a great opportunity to introduce them to Hillsdale College, since College faculty and staff accompany these trips, which include many teachable moments. The roster of Study Abroad programs for this coming summer is as follows:

- **June 14–17, 2018, The Land and Literature of England**, includes travel to Windsor, Warwick, Stratford-upon-Avon, Oxford, Bath, London, and Canterbury to study the works of William Shakespeare, Geoffrey Chaucer, John Milton, Jane Austen, and T. S. Eliot.
- **June 24–July 6, 2018, Sir Winston Churchill and World War II**, includes travel to historic locations in England and France including Churchill's home Chartwell, Oxford University, Parliament, the Cabinet War Rooms, Omaha Beach and the American Cemetery, Versailles, the Louvre, and Notre Dame Cathedral.
- **July 5–17, 2018, Western Civilization: Visions from Italy**, includes travel to St. Peter's Basilica in Rome, the Sistine Chapel and Vatican Museums, the Pantheon, Pompeii, and the Colosseum, to name just a few of the fascinating stops on this once-in-a-lifetime tour.
- **July 15–16, 2018, The Roots and History of American Liberty**, includes travel to Independence Hall, Christ Church, and the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia, plus the Gettysburg Battlefield. Sites visited in the Washington, D.C., area include Monticello, Mount Vernon, and the National Museum of American History.

These descriptions almost make me wish I were back in high school again! Please note that the cost varies by trip, and includes flights, necessary transfers, housing, all meals while in Hillsdale, breakfast and dinner while traveling, hotels, land travel by private bus, all admission fees, and tuition for three academic college credits. For complete itineraries and costs please phone (517) 607-2327 or e-mail summerprograms@hillsdale.edu.

The Latest News for Hillsdale College Events in 2017–2018

Already the academic year of 2017-2018 has been a banner year for Hillsdale College, with events far and wide, as well as right here on campus. During the first CCA (Center for Constructive Alternatives) on the topic of *Soviet Communism* in early October, Hillsdale alum and CEO of Frontier Services Erik Prince, '96, spoke on the topic of "Private Sector Solutions to the Longest War in American History." During the second CCA of the year on the topic of *Markets and Policy*, Nebraska Governor Pete Ricketts addressed the topic of reducing the size and scope of government. These talks were in addition to the already excellent roster of speakers at each of these well-attended programs. Should you wish to listen to the speeches delivered during the CCA seminars or other Hillsdale events, please visit the Hillsdale College YouTube channel at youtube.com/user/hillsdalecollege and then enter in the search box the type of program and general topic, for instance "*Hillsdale College CCA Soviet Communism*." Please note that not all speeches will be on this channel depending upon contractual agreements.

Looking ahead, there are many opportunities to join stimulating company and participate in thought-provoking discussions, and to listen to some top notch speakers. The upcoming event list is linked on the Associates page. You will find contact information for each event on the back of the event listing, and may call or e-mail for further information or invitations.

The schedule for this summer's on-campus [Lifelong Learning Seminars](#) (formerly known as Hostels) and Kirby Center seminars is available through the above link. You may also call Peggy Youngs at (888) 886-1174 or e-mail lls@hillsdale.edu.

The on-campus seminar and shooting camps named "[Ladies for Liberty](#)" and "[Couples for Liberty](#)" have proven to be very popular with our guests. The first of these seminars will take place in May, and you may obtain further information by visiting hillsdale.edu/ladiesforliberty, or by calling (517) 607-2563 or e-mailing ladiesforliberty@hillsdale.edu.

Due to the popularity of the on-campus CCA seminars, many guests have asked for the topics and dates of the 2018-2019 seminars, and so they are listed as follows:

- CCA I: September 9–12, 2018, American Political Scandals
- CCA II: November 11–14, 2018, The Cost of Regulation
- CCA III: January 27–30, 2019, Artificial Intelligence
- CCA IV: March 3–7, 2019, Topic to be announced

We hope to see you soon at a Hillsdale event near or far!

Quality Is Not an Act—It Is a Habit

Hillsdale graduates are doing exactly what we hoped they would do with their Hillsdale diploma—they are using the knowledge gained to make positive inroads in American culture, politics, business, and education. Some examples are the Hillsdale graduates working in key positions in the Trump administration. These graduates are working in a wide spectrum of responsibilities ranging from speech writers for President Trump and Vice President Pence to legal counsel to videographer. It is reassuring to know that a Hillsdale alum who majored in Politics is working as the Chief of Staff for the Department of Education. Just think about the impact these young people are having, with the oldest of them having graduated in 2002 and the youngest in 2012. There are many other graduates on Capitol Hill serving in administrative positions for our legislators, or as state representatives and senators, with others weighing the scales of justice. Some fine examples are as follows:

Beth Deer Walker, '87, is currently serving a 12-year term as a judge on the West Virginia Supreme Court of Appeals. David Viviano, '94, serves as a judge on the Michigan Supreme Court and his sister Kathryn Viviano, '90, is a circuit court judge in Macomb County, Michigan. Michigan Supreme Court Chief Justice Stephen Markman teaches a Constitutional Law class for Hillsdale juniors and seniors when his schedule allows. Outside of politics and medicine, Hillsdale graduates have gone on to use their liberal arts education in classical K-12 schools, succeeding in business, or to teach at the college level. In fact, several Hillsdale graduates are back teaching at their Alma Mater and live in an ever-widening circle of academic bliss.

Yes, quality is not an act. It is a habit. Aristotle's ancient wisdom rings as true today and certainly applies to Hillsdale graduates and those who support our fine College. This quote was brought to my attention again on the front of a brochure created by Hillsdale graduate Anthony Manno, '14. Anthony worked as Activities Director at Hillsdale post-graduation and is now helping his dad, Patrick Manno, run the family business of Manno Clothing in Dearborn, Michigan, an enterprise which is best described as fine menswear and tailoring. It is telling that a quote from Aristotle was the phrase that best fit their business model and another example of the modern applications of ancient knowledge learned here at Hillsdale College.

All of us—together—have fostered the dreams of graduates such as those described above and many others we will never meet. The impact of our combined actions is mighty and sometimes hard to fathom from this mortal viewpoint. Yet we know that we are having an impact as we receive reports from those who courageously enter the world shielded by the armor of the good, the true, and the beautiful. Thank you for your friendship.

Sincerely,



Kathleen Ruddy, '82
Director of Associates and Special Projects

KR:rdj
Enclosures

PS: If you would like to receive e-mail updates from me periodically between newsletters, please e-mail your preferred e-mail address to associates@hillsdale.edu. Thank you!