

Bridgewater Past and Present

Bridgewater College is an independent, private liberal arts college founded in 1880 and was the first private, coeducational college in Virginia. Founded as Spring Creek Normal School and Collegiate Institute by Daniel Christian Flory, an alumnus of the University of Virginia and a leader in the Church of the Brethren, who wanted to bring the values and benefits of Jefferson's "Academic Village" to the Shenandoah Valley, the school was named Bridgewater College nine years later and chartered by the Commonwealth of Virginia to grant undergraduate degrees. Bridgewater conferred its first bachelor of arts degree on June 1, 1891.

The College has consistently empowered its students to lead principled lives of purpose and consequence, as they pursue professional accomplishment and personal fulfillment. Bridgewater lives out its mission by embracing the ideals of goodness, truth, beauty and harmony. Grounded in historical ties with the Church of the Brethren, these ideals inspire an education committed to pursuing truth, to living lives enriched by beauty and aspiring to goodness, and to achieving a vision of unity and community.

The student experience at Bridgewater is shaped and defined by connections—between students faculty, alumni, and community members—and with new ideas and the wider world. Bridgewater's commitment to building connections for life allows students more opportunities to flourish than they might have elsewhere—more opportunities to participate in sports, theatre, music, clubs and organizations; to exercise leadership; and to develop and achieve their potential as they are mentored by the teacher-scholars that make up the faculty.

Connections are fundamental to the nature of BC's academic and co-curricular programs, and they form the basis of how every member of the community lives and learns together.