



In May, **Sophie Gorjance '16** offered a public presentation in Apple Tree titled “Sensations of Understanding,” the culmination of her year as a postgraduate library fellow. Her fellowship project focused on the many

ways the form of a book can convey information and meaning, and can shape one’s experience of “reading.” Specifically, she explored examples of wordless books, concrete poetry books, and books for sensory-impaired individuals, all of which she gathered for the library’s collection. She also discussed how this project grew out of her Plan work in creative writing, and how it fit into the fellowship as a whole.

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In April, **Lydia Nuhfer '20** and **Claire O’Pray '20** presented a talk, “Digital Analyses of Royal Itineraries from the Crown of Aragon,” at the 40th Annual Medieval and Renaissance Forum at Keene State College. “We looked at digitized itineraries of the Crown of Aragon, using the travel patterns discovered in them to gain a better understanding of medieval travel and how a king’s travel patterns might have affected his reign or geopolitics,” says Claire. Using royal itineraries from between 1291 and 1410, they produced maps and other visualizations to examine differences in travel habits among rulers, in varying political climates, and within individual reigns.

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In June, **Patrick Connelly** (dean of students), **Catherine O’Callaghan** (assistant dean of academic advising), and **Kate Trzaskos** (assistant dean of career education) joined other college teams attending a Life Design Studio, a four-day immersive training in “life design,” at Stanford University. “Life design comes to Marlboro!” says Kate. “We’re bringing back ideas and curriculum to use with Marlboro students, starting with our first years in all First Year Seminars.” Founded by Bill Burnett and Dave Evans, authors of *Designing Your Life*, the Life Design Lab applies the principles of design thinking to approaches to college, career, and other life choices.



Megan Grove (center), coordinator for campus prevention, intervention, and advocacy, leads students in an evening event dubbed “Consent and Cookies,” part of the sexual wellness education programs on campus. Photo by Emily Weatherill '21

## College Stays the Course on Title IX

Last fall, the US Department of Education proposed new Title IX regulations that, if made into law, could require significant changes in how Marlboro addresses claims of sexual harassment, sexual assault, and similar rights violations. Despite these new recommendations, and the clamor of debate about their possible impacts, Marlboro has continued to provide a coherent and compassionate response system with many important improvements in recent years.

“Regardless of the shifting political landscape in Washington around Title IX, Marlboro is still operating under best practices and from a student-centered perspective,” says Patrick Connelly, dean of students. “I think that schools like us that have any kind of moral center are saying, ‘We know what is best practice even if Washington doesn’t fully agree with it.’ We’re going to stay the course as long as there is no legal requirement that we implement the recommendations.”

“Marlboro has worked hard over the years to ensure that we have dealt with Title IX cases fairly, thoroughly, and with respect to our shared community values of safety, learning, and inclusiveness,” said President Kevin in a December letter to the community responding to the new recommendations ([marlboro.edu/new-title-ix](http://marlboro.edu/new-title-ix)). “The community has done this work deliberately and

carefully in consultation with our Title IX counsel, as well as with consultation with community members. We plan to continue this approach and to address the proposed regulations and implementation of them in this manner."

As described two years ago in *Potash Hill* by Robyn Manning-Samuels '14, then coordinator of sexual respect and wellness, the starting point for Title IX policy at Marlboro and other colleges and universities was the 2011 "Dear Colleague" letter issued by the Obama administration ("Positive Sexuality on Campus," Fall 2017). Since then, Marlboro has made great strides in prevention and sexual wellness programs, as described by Robyn, but also in adjudicating sexual misconduct cases and providing support for all parties involved. Part of this comes with having a dedicated Title IX coordinator, Brattleboro attorney Jean Kiewel, rather than pinning the role on the dean of students.

"It's unusual to have someone of Jean's caliber and qualifications at a school this size," says Patrick. "It's a serious challenge to be the dean of students, to support and grow community, when you're also the investigator and the adjudicator for Title IX cases. Being able to fully be the dean of students is a luxury that doesn't exist on many small campuses. Meanwhile, I am able to support a Title IX team that meets regularly and is proactive, not just about investigations but about the educational aspects and constant, ongoing building of a safe and respectful community. That's really unusual too."

That team includes Megan Grove, coordinator for campus prevention, intervention, and advocacy, who



Karla-Julia Ramos '20 enjoys her self-designed cookie during "Consent and Cookies." Photo by Emily Weatherill '21

## Staying Power



The staff-faculty team, Grim Sweepers, won the annual broomball competition in February, showing students that there is more to life than being young and flexible. Photo by David Teter '20

ably filled Robyn's boots as survivor advocate, but has also been expanded to include Dylan Muller, assistant director of residence life and community standards, who acts in the new role of respondent advisor. The team is completed by Jay Sparks, director of campus safety, who is a resource for students and coordinates reporting by contract security officers and on-call staff.

"This expanded team is much more qualified to meet the needs of students and respond to concerns," says Jean. "Not only are we totally on target for meeting the mandates for Title IX, we are doing some really great work that is over and above these mandates. These include offering informal resolution options to cases, and a recent memorandum of understanding with the Vermont State Police that can expedite investigations, if desired. Our Title IX panel has a diversity of conscientious faculty and staff who enthusiastically volunteer their time for the good of the community."

"We are working toward our team and volunteers having trauma-informed training," says Megan. "It's important to know how people hold trauma in their bodies and understand that the way trauma manifests can vary widely. One of our main objections to the new Title IX recommendations is just how dangerous and irresponsible it is to put trauma survivors

in face-to-face hearings with cross-examinations.” The Title IX team is not entirely ruling out all of the new recommendations, and have been able to distinguish those they feel are appropriate or potentially harmful. For instance, more accommodations are allowed for respondents if needed, such as academic or housing accommodations, and that is in keeping with Marlboro’s practice and approach.

But the team fears the overall effect of a number of the regulations, if enacted, could make the process more limited in scope, as well as more stressful and expensive. The team feels it could lead to less reporting of sexual harassment and sexual violence at Marlboro. They are waiting for more legal tests of the new recommendations, but in the meantime they are well-positioned and well-qualified to respond to cases on campus.

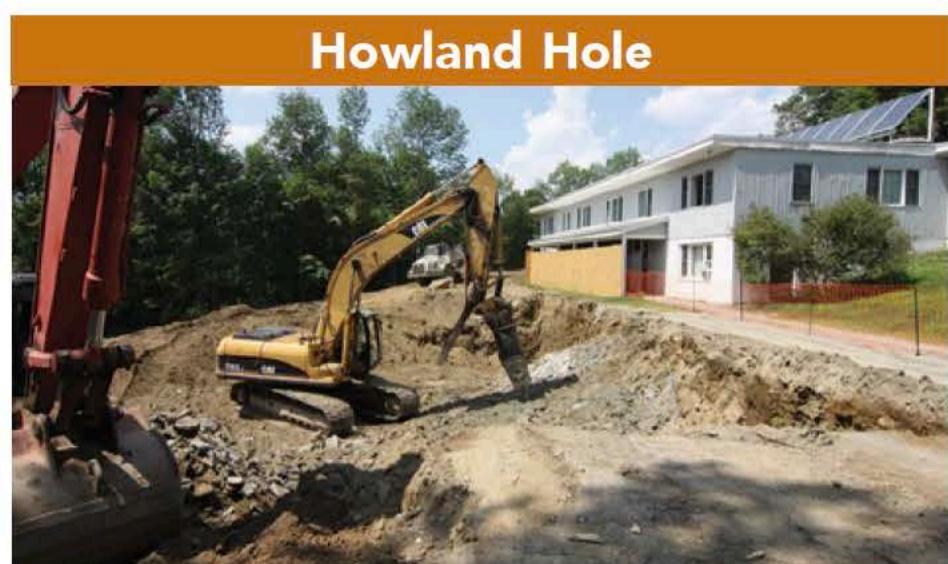
“I can confidently say that in the state of Vermont, for colleges that *aren’t* Middlebury or UVM, we’re doing it the best,” says Patrick. “It truly is amazing, given our resources and given the added complexity of community governance. We’re nailing it.”

## Interns Bring New Energy to Farm and Forest

From May through August, two new interns contributed significantly to ongoing sustainability efforts in two key areas. Jacob Lepkoff and Taliesin Haugh brought a wealth of experience to their roles in the community farm and the forest reserve, respectively, and helped move the college toward goals in each case.



Taliesin Haugh and Jacob Lepkoff shared their expertise as summer interns for the forest reserve and farm, respectively.



In July, excavation started for the new dormitory building to replace Howland, known by students as “New Howland.” No sign of Emily Mather’s grave yet (see page 15).

“These new community members help keep things moving over the summer, when there is most to be gained in managing both the farm and the forest reserve, but when our capacity is usually at its minimum,” says Todd Smith, chemistry professor. As the sustainability projects manager, Todd was instrumental in searching for and hiring these two very qualified interns. “This was a trial run for this summer, to be assessed for possible repetition in future years.”

“Working with any biological system, you interact with so many living pieces of that system,” said Jacob, who graduated from Sterling College with a bachelor’s in sustainable agriculture and has worked on a number of farms for 10 seasons. “It’s a joy to work in a living system because you are forced to observe and guess continuously. It is very engaging and rewarding. With every new experience I feel I’m offered a new opportunity to improve my guesses.”

Jacob worked closely over the summer with students Claire O’Pray ’20 and Emerson Gray Koetter ’22, who were able to pursue their own research interests as well as maintain the farm and produce some food. Taliesin, who recently completed his master’s in sustainable development at SIT Graduate Institute, worked more independently on the forest reserve, but was available as a resource for students conducting research there such as Hailey Mount ’20.

“This internship is an exciting opportunity to build the key systems knowledge, frameworks, and skills required