

The Independence Club

Pursuing Truth | Defending Liberty Since 1844



HILLSDALE COLLEGE

Ensuring Excellence for Future Generations

The Independence Club

For more than 40 years, the Independence Club has been Hillsdale's annual fundraising campaign, supporting the College's mission of institutional independence and academic excellence for current and future students.

Independence Club members may choose to support the Student Independence Scholarships and Loans or faculty salaries and enrichment, library acquisitions, and Hillsdale's many outstanding academic programs. Each year, thousands of alumni, friends, and parents of students contribute generously. In 2021–2022, 875 Independence Club members provided nearly \$338,697 in support of Hillsdale's independence and other College needs.

The following pages tell the story of Hillsdale's historic, principled stand for independence and highlight some of the bright and talented students who benefit from the financial aid they receive through the Independence Club. The support of Independence Club members, vital to the College's success, will continue to play a key role for decades to come in the lives of these and countless other students.

HILLSDALE COLLEGE

A BEACON OF INDEPENDENCE



For 178 years, Hillsdale College has understood better than any other college in America the importance of educating for liberty.

A liberal education sets one free to fulfill his or her service to family, community, country, and God. From its humble beginnings on the Michigan frontier to its place today as a nationally recognized liberal arts college, Hillsdale has offered the kind of education set forth by its founders in the

College mission statement: “to furnish all persons who wish, irrespective of nation, color, or sex, a literary, scientific, [and] theological education’ outstanding among American colleges ‘and to combine with this such moral and social instruction as will best develop the minds and improve the hearts of its pupils.” True to this mission, Hillsdale was the first college in Michigan and the second in America to graduate women and was educating qualified women and black Americans even before the Civil War.

Student Independence

Scholarships and Loans

As Hillsdale College begins its 38th year of direct competition against the thousands of colleges and universities subsidized by billions of federal taxpayer dollars and politicized by federal programs and regulations, it seems appropriate to review its historic stand for independence—its importance, its rationale, and its future.

In 1984, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled in the case of *Grove City v. Bell* that any educational institution enrolling even one student using federal taxpayer funds would classify as a “recipient” of those funds and become subject to the entire range of federal regulations. Hillsdale’s Board of Trustees voted unanimously to notify the Department of Education that not a single Hillsdale student would accept so much as one cent of federal financial aid for grants, loans, or scholarships.

Hillsdale responded by creating the privately financed Student Independence Scholarships and Loans to replace partially all federal taxpayer-funded grants and loans. Each year, money from those funds assists hundreds of deserving students who believe in and seek the kind of classical liberal arts education offered at Hillsdale. In the 1985–1986 school year, \$276,263 in Independence Loans and Scholarships went to 185 recipients. In the 2021–2022 school year, 486 Hillsdale students received more than \$6.2 million in Independence Loans, Independence Scholarships, and Hillsdale Tradition Awards—one-half tuition scholarships for solid “B” students who demonstrate substantial financial need, do not qualify for merit-based aid, and comply with the award’s work and volunteer requirements. Since 1985, Hillsdale’s historic default rate among all recipients of Independence Loans has averaged around 1.5 percent.

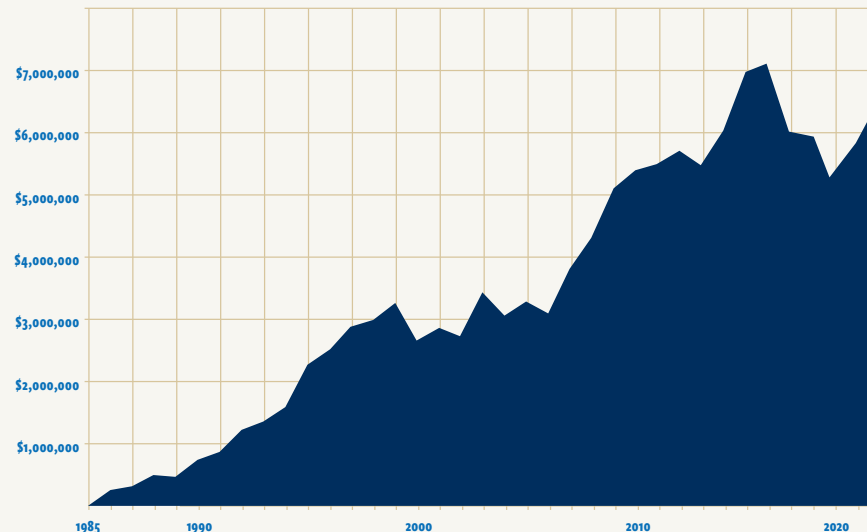
Since the fall of 2007, Hillsdale College has replaced State of Michigan grants and scholarships with privately funded awards, making the College completely independent of taxpayer support.

This year, Hillsdale turned away approximately \$6.5 million in federal and state financial aid because of its principled independence—but that independence is constantly under threat. Our government today routinely passes unconstitutional laws like the Dodd-Frank Act. This law created the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, which is not accountable to Congress, the president, or the American people. It has the authority to regulate every financial transaction in the country, posing a serious threat to the liberty of all.

Hillsdale faces this challenge while competing with other colleges and universities that eagerly grab federal aid handouts. When Hillsdale made the brave decision 38 years ago to replace federal aid with private monies, many said it could not be done. Thanks to the help of alumni, parents, and friends, Hillsdale has maintained its independence and continues to rise to the challenge today, growing stronger in the process and becoming nationally recognized as a top liberal arts college.

THE PRICE OF INDEPENDENCE

Annual Cost of Replacing Federal Taxpayer Aid, 1985–2022



The cost of replacing federal taxpayer aid has risen dramatically since the 1984 conclusion of Hillsdale’s legal battle to preserve its independence.

Projected Replacement Cost for Academic Year 2022–2023: \$6,550,000
Total Replacement Cost since 1985: \$136,451,353

Konrad Verbaarschott | '24

Lee Stillman–Roland R. Witte Tradition Scholarship



Sight unseen, Konrad Verbaarschott traveled across the country from his home in Temecula, California, to Hillsdale College, trusting in God's will and the "glowing reviews" of others. Now an upperclassman, Konrad has seen time and again that Hillsdale was definitely the right decision.

Officially a politics major and Spanish minor, Konrad jokes that he is also "majoring" in Mock Trial. While the competitions require a lot of time and hard work, the results and relationships are rewarding, as the team made it to nationals during Konrad's sophomore year. "I've never felt so deeply connected to a group of people that's not my family," he says.

Konrad cherishes the connections with Hillsdale professors as well, including Mock Trial Coach Jon Church, history professors Brad Birzer and Paul Moreno, and the Spanish Department faculty, as well as the sound advice they impart. "Hillsdale's professors really want you to succeed," he says. Those connections spill outside of the classroom into leisure time as well. "I play squash with Dr. Moreno," he says. "Where else but at Hillsdale can you do that?"

When he's not studying or preparing for Mock Trial competitions, Konrad relishes the time spent with Equip Ministries, especially the weekly "Rooted" gatherings on Tuesday nights. Rooted is a time of fellowship, worship, Bible studies led by a rotating group of local pastors, and prayer. "God has worked mightily at Rooted," Konrad says. "It's very grounding and time well spent."

Konrad plans to study for the LSAT as he deliberates about law school. "I'd like to go into public corruption law or insurance law," he says. But he is keeping his options open. Next year, he will spend a semester working for Congressman Paul Gosar of Arizona through the Washington-Hillsdale Internship Program.

Reflecting on his time at Hillsdale, Konrad appreciates not only the strong academic program but also the resultant relationships and community that have forged his character. Above all, he sees the hand of God that led him to Hillsdale continually at work. "God has opened so many doors for me," he says.

Phoebe Johnston | '24

Noval A. and Palmaneda Smith Endowed Tradition Scholarship



A great teacher can inspire an indifferent student to become an avid learner. Phoebe Johnston of Sandston, Virginia, points to such a teacher in her own high school experience who "rekindled my passion for learning." This same teacher also inspired Phoebe to apply to Hillsdale College. Phoebe applied to many

schools, uncertain of what she really wanted, but trusted that God would make it abundantly clear where she should go. "Doors kept opening for me at Hillsdale," she recalls, "and the financial aid I received was a huge factor; I wouldn't have to go into debt."

Hillsdale's professors continue to stoke Phoebe's passion for learning. An economics major and biology minor, she hopes to pursue a career in environmental policy. While she leans toward attending law school to further this end, she hasn't ruled out graduate studies in economics. "I love going to my economics classes, so I'm torn about whether or not to continue studying economics." This past summer, she received the Teri Leigh Olson Scholarship, specifically for Hillsdale students, for an internship in environmental policy at the Mackinac Center for Public Policy in Midland, Michigan, gaining invaluable experience toward her future career.

Phoebe enjoys helping other students explore their own career options by serving as a career coach in the Career Services Office. "I advocate for students to take advantage of the resources and opportunities that Career Services offers," she says. "I've learned so much and love helping students." A member of the Charger swim team, she mentors her younger teammates, reciprocating the support she received from upperclassmen when she was a freshman. "I can't imagine being at Hillsdale without my teammates," she says. "They are a source of great support, and it's rewarding for me to set an example for my younger teammates." She finds a similar source of friendship and support in her Kappa Kappa Gamma sisters. "It feels like we're a family, united by our common ideals and goals with an appreciation for each other."

"Hillsdale has given me a better understanding of what I believe and taught me how to articulate that to others," she says. "I've grown in every possible way here."

*“Doors kept opening for me at Hillsdale...
and the financial aid I received was a huge
factor; I wouldn’t have to go into debt.”*

—PHOEBE JOHNSTON, '24

FACTS THAT FIGURE

Since the Student Independence Scholarships and Loans were established in 1985, Hillsdale College has grown into one of the finest liberal arts colleges in the country, as the following statistics show.

FACT	1986	2022
Full-time Enrollment (Undergraduate)	1,012	1,500
Full-time Faculty	68	156
Full-time Faculty with Terminal Degrees	68%	91%
Endowed Faculty Chairs	5	38
Student Board Scores (Average): ACT	21	32
Student Board Scores (Average): SAT	930	1420
Average Entering Student High School GPA	3.0	3.93
Number of Applicants	1,070	2,994
Placement (Six months after graduation)	90%	98.8%*
Scholarships and Loans Awarded	\$2,508,666	\$32,700,000
Percentage of Incoming Students from Michigan	61%	22%
Library Total Volumes	128,959	253,295
<i>Imprimis</i> Subscribers	126,000	6,200,000
Buildings	32	78
Total Square Footage	593,171	1,408,683

*Class of 2021

Lydia Hilton | '24

Hillsdale Independence Scholarship



“Smart and accomplished.” That’s how Lydia Hilton describes some Hillsdale alumni she knew from her homeschool community in Lincoln, Nebraska, who were several years ahead of her. “I wanted to be like them,” she recalls. As a Hillsdale student herself, Lydia is well on her way to achieving that goal.

Having been classically educated for her entire K-12 career, Lydia was eager to continue in that vein to prepare for her own future career as a teacher in a classical school. An applied mathematics major and classical education minor, she puts both interests into practice as a math tutor at Spring Branch Academy, a local classical Christian high school.

“Classical education gives us context for who we are,” she says. “You have to grapple with difficult questions. It’s a lifelong process, and you never stop learning.”

Wrestling with those difficult questions can be a humbling experience, but one of great growth. Lydia recalls her freshman Western Heritage class with Professor of History David Stewart. “It was a reality check,” she says. “You have to accept that you might be wrong and not be afraid of that. We are here to grow and to learn together.”

Lydia also serves as treasurer of the Applied Math Club, as a resident assistant in the Dow House for women, and as the president of the Liberty Princess Club, a group of female students who dress as princesses and delight young children at tea parties, birthday parties, and other events in the area. It’s great fun, Lydia says, and also brings balance to her schedule.

“I’m very structured and studious,” she says, “so it’s good to have friends who encourage me to take breaks to have fun. Your peers at Hillsdale have a big effect on you. You find people who bring out the best in you, and you bring out the best in them.”

Micah Miller | '25

Tinsley External Grant



“Our lives are stories. That’s how we communicate,” says Micah Miller of Cedaredge, Colorado. At Hillsdale, Micah has found a place where he can continue to develop his personal story in order to “communicate God to the world and point people toward those things that are good.”

A philosophy major and double minor in Greek and English, Micah notes the incredible influence of his professors in shaping him. “I wouldn’t recognize my first-week freshman self,” he says. “[Assistant Professor of English] Brent Cline and [Assistant Professor of Theology] Cody Strecker have helped shape my worldview and how I view God, myself, the relationship between them, and how I live that out.” Drawn to a philosophical approach to everything, Micah believes that a “person who’s thoughtful about the grand realities of life will be better at whatever they do.”

Communication forms a common thread in Micah’s endeavors, as he looks to a career in teaching at the secondary or collegiate level or possibly entering the ministry. A debater in middle and high school, Micah has continued to hone his craft and mentor younger students by serving as a debate coach for the National Christian Forensics and Communications Association. He tutors four students online each week and advises two debate clubs. Last year, he competed on Hillsdale’s Mock Trial team. As a musician, he serves as director of liturgical worship and on the board of the Anglican Student Fellowship. He also enjoys volunteering and participating in dorm life activities in Niedfeldt Residence. “There’s an excellent sense of camaraderie in Niedfeldt, and I’m glad to live there,” he says.

Growing up as the son of missionaries, Micah says that his family has relied on the generosity of others. Likewise, he attends Hillsdale only through the generous scholarship support he has received. “I’m tremendously grateful to those who support me with scholarships,” he says. “I take that seriously and want to do a good job for them.”

Giving Opportunities

THE INDEPENDENCE CLUB

The Independence Club offers four participation levels to support Hillsdale College's mission of pursuing truth and defending liberty:

**INDEPENDENCE
BENEFACTORS**
\$1,000-\$1,499 annually

**INDEPENDENCE
FRIENDS**
\$250-\$499 annually

**INDEPENDENCE
FOUNDERS**
\$500-\$999 annually

**INDEPENDENCE
PATRONS**
\$100-\$249 annually


THE PRESIDENT'S CLUB

Separate from the Independence Club, the Hillsdale College President's Club recognizes and honors individuals whose pledged commitment to the College totals a minimum of \$15,000 in cash or planned gifts either outright or over a period of ten years. For detailed information about The President's Club, check the appropriate box on the enclosed reply card.

 **TRADITIONAL**
\$15,000 outright
or over 10 years
(*\$1,500/year or \$125/month*)

 **GOLD***
\$100,000 outright
or over 10 years
(*\$10,000/year or \$834/month*)

 **BRONZE**
\$25,000 outright
or over 10 years
(*\$2,500/year or \$209/month*)

 **TITANIUM***
\$250,000 outright
or over 10 years
(*\$25,000/year*)

 **SILVER**
\$50,000 outright
or over 10 years
(*\$5,000/year or \$417/month*)

 **PLATINUM***
\$500,000 outright
or over 10 years
(*\$50,000/year*)

 **DIAMOND***
\$1,000,000 outright
or over 10 years
(*\$100,000/year*)

* Lifetime membership

About

Hillsdale College

Founded in 1844, Hillsdale College is an independent, coeducational, residential liberal arts college with an undergraduate student body of about 1,500. Its four-year curriculum leads to a bachelor of arts or bachelor of science degree, and it is accredited by the Higher Learning Commission.

Hillsdale's educational mission rests upon two principles: academic excellence and institutional independence. The College does not accept federal or state taxpayer subsidies for any of its operations.

Located in rural southern Michigan, the nearly 400-acre Hillsdale campus includes both modern and historic buildings. Excellent facilities include comfortable residence halls, a state-of-the-art health education and sports complex, Michael Alex Mossey Library with its Leighton-Taylor Wing, the Fine Arts building, Howard Music Hall, Kendall and Lane Halls, the Grewcock Student Union, Margot V. Biermann Athletic Center, and the Joseph H. Moss Family Laboratory Wing of Strosacker Science Center. Adjacent to the campus is the College's affiliated primary and secondary school, Hillsdale Academy, which serves as a model of classical education for private and public schools throughout the country.

An ideal student-to-faculty ratio of 8-to-1, rigorous academics, intramural sports, national fraternity and sorority houses, and widespread community volunteerism nurture intellectual, physical, social, and personal growth. A broad perspective is encouraged through opportunities for off-campus internships, overseas study programs, and educational programs sponsored by the Center for Constructive Alternatives, Ludwig von Mises Lectures in free market economics, National Leadership Seminars, and K-12 American classical education outreach programs, including the Barney Charter School Initiative. Hillsdale also publishes *Imprimis*, its national speech digest, with a readership exceeding 6.2 million.

The College offers three graduate programs: the Van Andel Graduate School of Statesmanship, offering both an M.A. and a Ph.D. program in Politics; the Steve and Amy Van Andel Graduate School of Government, based in Washington, D.C., and offering an M.A. in Government; and the Diana Davis Spencer Graduate School of Classical Education, offering an M.A. in classical education.

Partner with us to support an independent, classical liberal arts education!

The Independence Club & The President's Club

Maree Socha, Director
(517) 607-2382
msocha@hillsdale.edu

hillsdale.edu/IndependenceClub

“Classical education gives us context for who we are. You have to grapple with difficult questions. It’s a lifelong process, and you never stop learning.”

—LYDIA HILTON, '24



Hillsdale College's Declaration of Independence, adopted in 1962

Developing Minds. Improving Hearts.



HILLSDALE COLLEGE
PURSUING TRUTH • DEFENDING LIBERTY SINCE 1844

33 EAST COLLEGE STREET
HILLSDALE, MICHIGAN 49242
HILLSDALE.EDU | (517) 437-7341