

KEEP-ENG IN TOUCH

A MESSAGE FROM THE (NEW) CHAIR

Dear alumni, current students and friends of the English Department at Eastern:

Waiting until the last minute to write a paper. Struggling with writer's block. These are experiences with which every English major is familiar. And I've dealt with them as I've faced writing my first *Keep-ENG in Touch* message as the new chair since taking over that role in December.

What should I say to set the right tone for my tenure in this leadership role? I guess the best thing I can do is to start by saying thank you to my colleagues, the English faculty, who elected me to this position. And to thank Dr. Lisa Rowe Fraustino for her help and mentorship over the past few years while I served as associate chair and we worked together to lead this department.



I also want to say that I'm committed to being as available to our students, alumni and faculty as possible — available for a chat, for support and to help when I can. I'm determined to help Eastern's English Department keep evolving so that we continue to attract a diverse group of excellent students who know that here they will find faculty committed to their intellectual and personal growth and a program that engages their minds, hearts and futures.

Okay, enough of the inaugural rhetoric. On a more down-to-earth note, with the help of our excellent social media intern, Morgan LaFlamme, one of my smaller goals has already been reached: in addition to our established presence on Facebook and Twitter, we now have an Instagram account and a departmental site on LinkedIn. If you haven't already done so, I hope you'll connect with us there so that you can keep up with what's happening day to day, get a recommendation for your next reading adventure or laugh at some English major humor.

And thanks to this newsletter's editor, Monti Kupson, we've got another interesting overview of all that's been happening for our students, faculty and alumni so far this year. I hope you find it an informative and enjoyable read.

Peace.

Dr. Barbara Little Liu
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A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR:

I want to extend my gratitude to Professor Liu for giving me this wonderful opportunity to become more involved in the department, through which I have had the joy of meeting like-minded appreciators of literature and writing. I also wish to thank Miranda Lau, the department secretary, for all of her assistance in collating photos. Thanks to all of the contributors, without whom this would not have been possible.

Montgomery Kupson
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SEARCH FOR NEW ENGLISH PROFESSOR A SUCCESS: A LOOK INTO THE PROCESS AND WHO WILL BE TEACHING IN THE FALL

By Montgomery Kupson

Contributors: Kyle Hottin and Natalia Torcaso

In fall 2016, the English Department set out on a nationwide search for a new professor with expertise in Rhetoric to join the faculty. The advertisement called for a colleague who could teach first-year English major courses like ENG 204 (Introduction to Writing Studies) as well as strengthen the Rhetoric and Composition concentration. To optimize success in choosing the right candidates, a search committee was established by Professor Rita Malenczyk and included Reginald Flood, Jordan Youngblood, and English Department Chair Barbara Liu.

While the advertisement's primary focus was for someone with credentials in the field of rhetoric, a secondary appeal was cast for a professor with the ability to work in Cultural and Literacy studies. Considering Eastern's diversity, the search committee wanted to strengthen the department's curriculum in giving representation to groups otherwise understudied in academic settings. Thus, they hoped for candidates who also had academic qualifications in African-American, Latin or Indigenous studies with an application of Critical Race Theory and pedagogy.

More than 110 applicants from all across the country answered the call, most of whom had just received or were in the final phases of acquiring their PhDs. "The pool of candidates was very strong," commented Liu. "They all had expertise in the areas we were looking for."

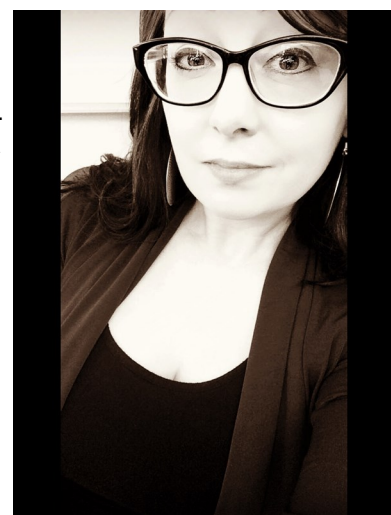
After narrowing the extensive pool of candidates down to 15, the search committee used telephone interviews, followed by rigorous discussions, to come up with a set of final candidates.

The five final candidates were then invited to campus to give presentations to their potential students and colleagues. While here, they met with the Provost as well as with Stacey Close, Associate Vice President for Equity and Diversity, and Dean Carmen Cid of the School of Arts and Sciences, and even had an informal meet-and-greet with the department faculty.

Adhering to the criteria of the search call, all the candidate presentations had an underlying focus on how rhetoric can be used to understand ourselves, other people, and to foster social awareness. Civic justice and its ties to rhetoric as a form of argument was greatly represented in the candidates' research, highlighting the power behind words when it comes to political recognition and human rights activism.

Each of these incredibly poised and qualified candidates brought the experience of an underrepresented demographic to the table with their research, combining rhetoric and cultural studies to give opportunities for otherwise muted voices to educate others about rhetoric and its effects on claiming one's identity. After the long process, it came time to discuss to whom an offer of employment would be extended. Coming to a decision was difficult for the search committee because, as Liu explained, "the candidates were all so good."

Luckily, the offer of employment was accepted and we are pleased to announce that Christine Garcia will become a member of the English Department faculty in fall 2017! Not only will she incorporate her expertise on rhetoric (specifically Chicana and Latina rhetorics) into her curriculum, but also of cultural studies and gender studies. We welcome Garcia and look forward to seeing her efforts in helping the English Department faculty deliver an even stronger education about intersectionality.



Meet Dr. Christine Garcia, our new English professor!

“AN UNLAWFUL ARREST”: DR. CHIRICO INVITES KENNETH KRAYESKE FOR UNIVERSITY HOUR

By Kyle Randall

On Feb. 8, Eastern English professor Miriam Chirico invited Kenneth J. Krayeske to host a University Hour discussion about his attempts to sue the state of Connecticut for unlawful arrest.



Krayeske stood before the crowd with obvious emotion in his voice and movements, still feeling the effects of his case even years later.

After greeting the crowd, Krayeske began his speech by giving a bit of background about himself. Krayes-

ke had always known that journalism was his passion, eventually becoming a reporter for *The Progressive* magazine. But Krayeske also had a passion working for and with politics. He worked for several political campaigns, including Ralph Nader’s 2004 run and Clifford Ford’s attempt to become governor through the Green Party. Over the course of the campaign, he helped to combat institutional racism as the Third Party candidate struggled to compete with the greater resources of the Democratic and Republican parties.

Throughout the campaign he protested against Republican candidate Jodi Rell, and even after the campaign was over, he still spoke out strongly against the Governor. So strongly in fact, that state officials took notice.

Krayeske went to a parade that Governor Rell was marching in, hoping that he would find a moment when he could take some pictures and potentially ask a few questions. He got his pictures as she passed him in the street but as he went to leave, the police arrived. Krayeske was arrested for breach of peace and interfering with the police. His bond was \$75,000, which far exceeded the reasonable amount expected given the charge.

After being released, Krayeske did everything in his power to discover their reasoning for arresting him and setting such a high bond. The police shut him down fast and nothing he did ever had any results. Eventually, he decided to try and sue the state and began the long process of getting prepared to do so. The effort took years, having to depose people ranging from the police officers who arrested him all the way to Governor Rell herself.

He pushed himself to mental exhaustion, despite everyone telling him that he wouldn’t have enough evidence to push forward a strong enough case. Eventually, he was successful, and was ready to move his case forward. He was tired though, and when he took a good long look at the path he travelled to get that far, and realized just how much further he would have to go to achieve his goal, he decided not to go forward. Instead used his free time to be with his family.

JACQUELINE TRIMBLE POETRY READING

By Reilly McKnerney

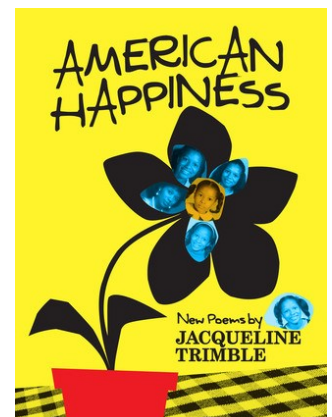
On Feb. 2 renowned poet Jacqueline Trimble visited Eastern to host a poetry workshop. Students listened to her read poems from her latest published piece “American Happiness,” a collection of poems ranging from her childhood, to her strength as a woman, to the death of an unarmed black college student.

Trimble worked with around 30 students, focusing on the importance of enjambment and end-stopped line. She asked the room to change the enjambment and end-stopped lines of a few poems in order to determine how doing so changes the meaning and flow. One group in particular made changes to “won’t you celebrate with me” by Lucille Clifton. This created a poem with even shorter lines, and emphasized certain lines and words. The groups all found creative ways to change the poem and elaborate on why they chose to alter it the way they did.

Following the workshop, Trimble read a few of her poems aloud, including “Closure” and “Church Women.” As listen-

ers we tend to focus on the words and the meaning, but often forget that some of these poems are about her life. As she read “Closure,” it was important to realize that this poem is about her father, the words and the emotional meaning of the poem thus becoming much more impactful.

I would recommend “American Happiness” to everyone, whether they are interested in poetry or not because of its wide variety of poems. Whether one is drawn to “What if Barbie Were a Reality TV Star?” or “Bridge Crossing, Selma 2015,” this book of poems is nothing short of educational. Those who attended the Jacqueline Trimble poetry workshop and reading were lucky enough to experience the talent and poise she possesses.



SIGMA TAU DELTA INTRODUCES “FACULTY FIRESIDES”

By Montgomery Kupson

Contributors: Kyle Hottin and Morgan LaFlamme

On Feb. 27, Sigma Tau Delta began hosting a new series of events in the Student Center Café called Faculty Firesides. The goal of these firesides is to give students a relaxed, informal chance to learn more about the members of the English Department faculty who will be integral to their education here at Eastern. A total of six firesides were hosted during this semester, with Dr. Barbara Liu, Dr. Meredith Clermont-Ferrand, Dr. Maureen McDonnell, Dr. Benjamin Pauley, Dr. Susan DeRosa and Dr. Miriam Chirico as the guests of honor.

The debut guest was our new department chair, **Dr. Barbara Liu**, who has been a member of the Eastern English faculty for 19 years. Her interest in teaching higher education came from a chance viewing of an ad for the Peace Corps in a bookstore. She had always wanted to be in the Peace Corps because it married her two loves of traveling and helping people, and so seeing that ad felt like kismet.



She traveled to Poland alongside the Corps program, where she trained teachers in the English language for two years and eventually developed the college’s writing curriculum. After enjoying that experience, Dr. Liu returned to graduate school to pursue a degree in Rhetoric and Composition.

While she loves teaching, Dr. Liu stresses that there are many non-teaching paths open for English majors. She highlighted the new versatility of the major through the Cultural Studies and Rhetoric concentrations, and the modern capacities of using social media for civic writing purposes.

It wasn’t until she was influenced by a particular nutty professor during her college years that **Dr. Meredith Clermont-Ferrand** (Fireside on March 8) became intrigued with pursuing a career in teaching Medieval Studies. Dr. Clermont



Ferrand believed that this was her calling because it would enable her to pay forward her own experiences to the next generation.

Dr. Clermont-Ferrand also loves going on hikes with her dog and learning about archaeology. However, what she is most known for (outside of her extreme academic excellence, of course!) is her “panda-streaming.” Dr. Clermont-Ferrand has managed to incorporate live videos of panda exhibits into her classes as a stress-reducing resource for her students, especially since there have been studies showing increases in serotonin, a natural chemical that balances your happiness, for those who watch.

After 16 years, Dr. Clermont-Ferrand has truly enjoyed her time here and how Eastern has allowed her the ability to continue being a researcher alongside her responsibilities as an educator.

Dr. Maureen McDonnell (Fireside on March 22) was very much influenced by her own college professors in her English and Theater majors because of their commitment to knowing her personally, not just as another student. These professors’ ability to value her individual pursuit of knowledge greatly influenced how she interacts with her own students.



Dr. McDonnell entered a dual English and Women’s and Gender Studies PhD program in her graduate school years. One of her favorite memories of that time was when her mother attended the Intro to Women’s Studies course she was teaching. She was both shocked and delighted to find out that her mom had done the assigned reading.

McDonnell left her audience with the proposal that they set writing goals for themselves and keep a network of fellow writers close for support. She suggests they follow her daily routine of writing for at least 30 minutes a day and then rewarding themselves for the hard work they’ve done, whether it be drafting a piece, researching or just organizing some ideas.

SIGMA TAU DELTA INTRODUCES “FACULTY FIRESIDES” (CONT.)

As he was attending graduate school, **Dr. Benjamin Pauley** (Fireside on April 3) was originally invested in working with contemporary American literature.

But during his studies, he grew interested in the 18th century. To this day, Dr. Pauley has attempted to bring about the charm of this study to his teaching of ENG 218 18th-Century Britain in Global Context.



Dr. Pauley believes that we need to look at books in a different perspective, where every component of a particular book is evaluated, including its physical production. In order to better access these primary materials, he was inspired to develop

a website which could index freely-available scans of 18th-century books.

After 10 years at Eastern, Dr. Pauley’s favorite part about being a professor is witnessing students grow in confidence and sophistication throughout their college career. He always enjoys English Night for this very reason, as it gives him an opportunity to see senior students present their research to the public to depict their development as critical thinkers.

Dr. Susan DeRosa (Fireside on April 10) learned that she loved writing because of the influence of her fifth-grade teacher. This teacher would always incorporate writing prompts into her curriculum. She eventually reached out to DeRosa



to make the promise that she would always read her work and send feedback. They are still friends to this very day through Facebook, and Dr. DeRosa still has all of the letters she received from that teacher.

DeRosa recently came off sabbatical, during which she worked with Dr. Ferrucci to produce a book focusing on

multimodal writing.

After 18 years at Eastern, Dr. DeRosa still has ideas for developing her teaching repertoire; she would like to create a class that focuses on food consumption and production in writing. As an undergrad, Dr. DeRosa suggests that you try to take as many classes as you can in different areas. The myriad of topics can help you learn what you feel comfortable with and are curious about.

During her time as an undergraduate, **Dr. Miriam Chirico** (Fireside April 24) was involved in community theater as a stage crew member. During one production, she was captivated by a scene in which two characters were conversing through whispers. This conveyance of the characters’ interaction caught Chirico’s eye because it forced the audience to focus on the text of the scene, and how this portrayal is significant to the overall flow of the play. This experience impressed upon Chirico the importance of rhetoric, even when the words are not being read directly on a page.



After graduate school, Chirico taught at the University of North Florida and briefly worked at a law firm. Chirico has been teaching at Eastern for 14 years as an expert in British and American Modernism, especially drama.

Chirico is currently doing research on Christopher Durang, a playwright known in the 1980s for touching on controversial subjects such as religion and homosexuality and churning them into dark comedic plays.

The students who attended these Faculty Firesides certainly learned many things about their professors that wouldn’t normally be disclosed in your average classroom setting. Conversation during these six gatherings ranged anywhere from television shows to hobbies, humorous anecdotes to sharing wisdom about how to navigate the huge horizons of opportunities that come during these college years.

If Sigma Tau Delta continues offering these events next year, you should be sure to check them out!

DISCUSSING DR. RAOUF MAMA AND AFAFIN RAHMANIFAR'S "QUIET MIRACLES" STORY COLLECTION

By Montgomery Kupson

On March 30, English Professor Dr. Raouf Mama delivered an excerpt reading from his short story collection, "It was a Beautiful Day and Other Personal Quiet Miracle Stories." He was joined by the book's illustrator, Professor Afafin Rahmanifar of Eastern's Art and Art History Department to discuss the e-book's marriage between artistic and written storytelling.

This collection of short stories employs true moments of "positive energy, inner peace and a deeper meaning of life's meaning," explained Carmen Cid, dean of Arts and Sciences, as she introduced the author. The five stories encourage the reader to "acknowledge [their] current blessings" in life, as Mama himself tries to exclude gratitude in how he lives life. His stories urge readers to see the beauty in sorrow, turn "agony into a song of thanksgiving" and to appreciate the "human capacity to marvel."

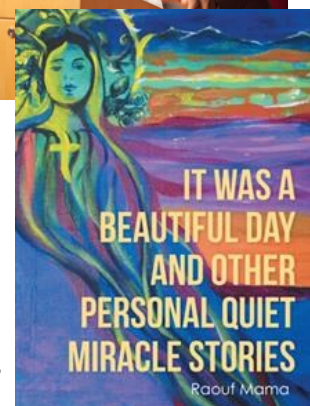
Mama shared that he was inspired to write this anthology of feel-good, heartwarming stories by Wordsworth's poem, "The World is Too Much with Us," especially the line "to celebrate moments of wonder... that felt like miracles to me." The title is a reference to Irish poet John O'Donohue's poetry, whose writing has had an everlasting effect on Mama to "take time to celebrate the quiet miracles that seek no attention."

The book's illustrator is Professor Afafin Rahmanifar, an Iranian painter who utilizes vibrant, unique choices in color schemes and collage skills. Her original work strays from tradition, acting as an "intersecting point of the East and West." In order to deepen the effect of

Mama's storytelling, Rahmanifar said that she wanted to keep the book's imagery "ambiguous, obscure and open to interpretation." She accomplished this by employing symbolic references such as the Evil Eye and birds as "messengers from a heavenly plain" to propel "the reader into a dreamlike world."

The elements of Mama's optimistic worldview culminate perfectly in the first story of the collection, "It Was a Beautiful Day." Mama read aloud this heartwarming story that focuses on the true event of one Father's Day. On the ride home that night Mama, encountered a car accident and realized, through a father's intuition, that amongst the hurt was his own son. Rahim and his basketball teammates had been hit by a drunk driver. The pain of a father certain that his child was dead resonated in Mama's voice as he read.

Even in these moments of certain tragedy, each story showcased in Mama's book carries the readers through an emotional journey that affirms an underlying goodness in all life experiences. Even when it feels like there is nothing to be grateful for, Mama reminds us that there are always those little moments, those "quiet miracles," that we must look out for to remember why life is worth living in the first place.



Left to Right: Dr. Afafin Rahmanifar, Dean Carmen Cid, and Dr. Raouf Mama.

This e-book is available from Westbow Press:
<http://bookstore.westbowpress.com>

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT: ANDREW W. MINIKOWSKI, ESQ.

By Andrew W. Minikowski

Andrew W. Minikowski is currently an attorney at the Connecticut Fund for the Environment. He received his Bachelor of Arts in English and Economics from Eastern Connecticut State University in 2012 and his Juris Doctor and Master of Environmental Law and Policy from Vermont Law School in 2015.

Apart from the diversity of colorful epithets that many people would use — sometimes justifiably — to refer to lawyers, ask actual lawyers and you'll get an array of responses as to how they refer to themselves: "attorney," "counsel," "advisor." My preferred descriptor is "advocate." Ultimately, the practice of law is the art of advocacy, be it on behalf of a disadvantaged client, a community group, or a political or social cause. In my current work on behalf of an environmental nonprofit organization, I frequently serve as the sole voice speaking on behalf of imperiled natural resources or citizens confronted with serious pollution. As such, it is imperative that my legal arguments are as persuasive and logically coherent as possible.

When I began law school, I discovered that my studies as an English major at Eastern had already honed most of the skills necessary to practice law. Although a precise knowledge of the relevant law is a given, the cardinal skill required of the effective lawyer is the ability to write persuasively, concisely and critically. My English studies provided me with the ability to construct a robust written argument, probe my own ideas and theories for analytical flaws, and synthesize diverse viewpoints and facts into a coherent whole. A deep reading of literature and poetry has also proved immensely valuable, as cloaking an otherwise uninteresting legal theory or fact pattern with literary flair or creative framing can capture the crucial attention of a judge when it matters most.

During my initial time as a law student I had no sense of whether I would ultimately excel in the profession, but my command of rhetoric and composition swiftly vaulted me into leadership roles and provided me with access to competitive professional opportunities. As a law student, I was elected Editor-in-Chief of the Vermont Journal of Environmental Law where I oversaw

the editing and publication of a top scholarly journal. Following graduation, I was hired by a Justice of the Connecticut Supreme Court to serve as her law clerk, which entailed researching and composing the first drafts of the decisions of Connecticut's highest court.

Those decisions often addressed some of the thorniest unresolved issues in state law and required me to exercise my full persuasive and creative powers on a daily basis. In my current role, I am frequently tasked with persuading state agency officials and legislators to take action that would best protect the environment and with building coalitions among citizens and groups with diverse viewpoints and interests. Recognizing

themes and marshalling supporting evidence, skills I mastered studying English, are critical tools in accomplishing these objectives. Without the solid foundation of my English education at Eastern, I doubt whether I would have fared so well in my career thus far.

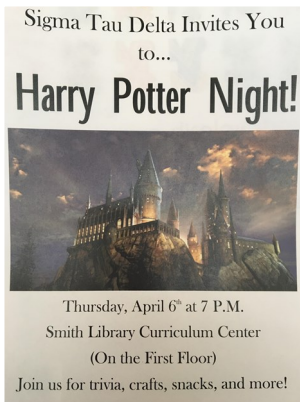
Although the skills that make for good advocacy are of immense practicality to me as a public interest lawyer appearing before a court, administrative agency or legislative committee, these same skills are useful to any person speaking on behalf of a specific cause or group. Given the roiling logical turbulence and fact intolerance that has poisoned our current

public discourse, the mastery of logical and critical argument, both written and oral, has become a required asset for every serious and thoughtful person, regardless of profession. Whether engaging neighbors about a community issue, contacting elected representatives, or convincing colleagues to adopt a particular course of action, a civil and critically constructed argument will prevail against hasty and ill-considered or emotionally charged decision making. These are not the exclusive skills of the lawyer, but that of any well-equipped English major who steps into the advocate's role when the occasion arises.



SOCIAL LIFE OF SIGMA TAU DELTA: ANOTHER HARRY POTTER NIGHT AND OUR FIRST TRIVIA NIGHT!

By Meaghan McFall Gorman



Eastern's chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the international English honor society, has been busy this semester. In response to favorable attendance and interest in Sigma events in the past, we decided to try something new this semester. On March 6th, Sigma Tau held its first ever Trivia Night!

The event was open to all student groups on campus, extracurricular and academic organizations alike. The teams included: The Red Scare, composed of members and comrades of the Radical Students Association club; The Central Intelligence Agency, made up of students from the Environmental Earth Science club and friends; team STD, for Sigma Tau Delta members; and Team United Nations, whose members included Norwegians, Canadians and more (hence the name!)

The trivia game drew from a broad range of content knowledge, questions ranging anywhere from who was the author of "The Vampire Diaries" to naming all the Great Lakes in North America (spelled correctly, too!). In an amazingly tight race, we had to have three tie-breakers before Team Red Scare was awarded first place. The CIA came in a very close second, and The United Nations came in third!

All teams had a great time, exchanging friendly banter and congenially competitive spirit! Accompanied by a plethora of pallet-pleasing foods and beverages, our first Trivia Night was a great success, and Sigma



Team "Red Scare" with their first prize basket

Tau will more than likely try to make this an annual event!

Trivia Night was certainly not our only successful event this semester. Back by popular demand, under threat of the Cruciatus Curse, Sigma Tau hosted our Third Harry Potter Night event on April 6 in the Curriculum Center of the Library. Complete with Bernie Botts' Every-Flavor-Beans, Chocolate Frogs, Licorice Wands, Butter Beer, HP Trivia, House Placement quizzes, Wand-Making and individual House badges — phew, what a mouthful! — the evening was full of possibilities. With it being close to finals week, many students were in the library studying. However, after making an announcement to welcome all students to take a well-deserved study break with Sigma, more Muggles found their way to the event and even brought their friends along, too!

All in all, Sigma has had a successful semester in hosting events, and we hope we can repeat the success of Trivia Night and Harry Potter Night next year! See you there!



Sigma's Vice President Catherine Allegretti (left) and President Meaghan McFall Gorman (right)



ATTENDING THE MEDIEVAL & RENAISSANCE FORUM

By Victoria Randazzo



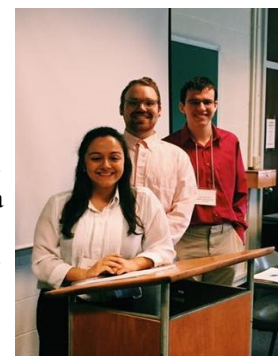
On April 22, my fellow English majors Jacob St. Jean and Christopher Morris joined me in attending the 38th Annual Medieval and Renaissance forum at Keene State College. As I had never been to a conference before, I did not know what to expect. I felt uneasy to say the least, worried that my paper wasn't good enough or that the other scholars in attendance would be competitive. To my pleasure, those worries diminished the next morning.

The three of us had the opportunity to listen to our professor, Dr. Clermont-Ferrand, present her essay on a panel called "Mental Illness in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period." As soon as we walked into the room, there was an instant sense of camaraderie amongst the attendants. We were all here for the same reason—to share our thoughts and listen to new ideas about literature. Theories and ideas about mental illness during this time period bounced between presenters and listeners in the audience, as if in an intimate classroom setting. Notes were being enthusiastically written down and lights started clicking in everyone's heads. The panel was enjoy-

able and engaging, and seeing a professor I've known since my freshman year of school present eased my nerves immediately.

That night, the three of us diligently checked over our essays, marking where to change slides or when to look up from our notes to engage our audience. As our presentation time rolled around, our nerves did make an appearance but we found our audience to be incredibly attentive and responsive. Listeners asked questions and we were able to use our answers to these questions to open up bigger discussions.

At the end of the day, we all walked away with something valuable. The conference had given us a new experience, a new outlook on old perspectives, and a stronger bond with one another as scholars. Attending and presenting in a conference is a great way to share your own ideas and learn about new ones from other scholars who are looking for the same thing, and I would highly suggest the experience to anyone.



Randazzo with fellow presenters, Jacob St. Jean and Chris Morris

THE 2017 NATIONAL CONFERENCE FOR UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH

By Catherine Allegretti

From April 6-8, I had the honor of presenting at the 2017 National Conference for Undergraduate Research (NCUR). This conference, often described as the "SuperBowl of Undergraduate Research," was held at the University of Memphis and welcomed 4,000 students from 400 schools around the country to share research in their respective disciplines. Courtney Werner and Tashanna Edwards joined me in representing the English Department. While I presented a paper on a psychoanalytic approach to Salinger's "Catcher in the Rye," Tashanna shared a chapter of her novel, "Shooting Heaven," and Courtney gave insight into the Oedipus complex present in Robert Cormier's "I am the Cheese." Additionally, Ashlyn Hart, another English major, presented her Honors thesis on representations of disability in the media.

The conference spanned three days, with hour-long sessions composed of three oral presentations divided by topic. There were also hourly poster presentation sessions, where you could walk around and ask students, one on one, about their research. We were given the freedom to attend whatever sessions were the most interesting to us. While Courtney, Tashanna, and I each attended each other's presentations, the best part of the conference was the chance to interact with and learn from other undergraduates doing research in the English field. In my session, there was another presenter who wrote a Marxist reading of "Catcher in the Rye" that allowed for

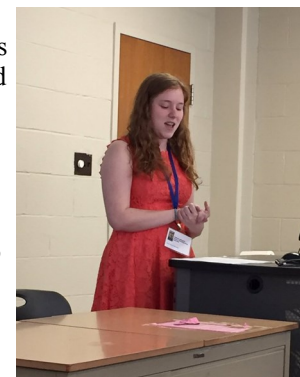


Tashanna Edwards, presenting her novel.

follow-up conversation and questions. Audience members also asked questions to encourage us to do more research and analyze related literature.

Although I have presented this paper at other conferences in the past, NCUR gave me a deeper sense of pride and accomplishment. It gave us a chance to present our passions and intellect on a national scale, where our ideas were met with curiosity and deep respect. The best part was hearing the interest and excitement from audience members. I was asked insightful questions as well as given amazing feedback on my paper, and it was rewarding to know that the research I had done was valued and appreciated by other students. It was also nice to meet a community of other English students from around the country who shared the desire to acquire the skills to analyze and present their ideas through research.

In addition to the four English majors, approximately 20 other Eastern students presented their research in fields like anthropology, communication and biology. Psychology Professor and Eastern's Coordinator of Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Dr. Carlos Escoto encouraged Courtney Tashanna, and I to apply to the conference. I am grateful for his support of our research and his desire to inspire more English majors to present at this conference.



Catherine Allegretti, presenting her *Catcher in the Rye* paper.

ENGLISH MAJOR STARS IN *HAMLET*: FOR KIDS OF ALL AGES

By Matthew Bessette

On March 25, in the DelMonte Studio Theater of the Fine Arts Instructional Center, the Eastern Drama Society presented a 40-minute children's adaptation of what is arguably one of Shakespeare's best-known plays, *Hamlet*. This version, titled *Hamlet: For Kids of All Ages*, blends direct quotes from the original play with modern vernacular and colloquialisms to create an amusing, relatable retelling of the tragedy that is perfect for a young audience.

This adaptation was directed by senior theater and political science major Lucy Shea. Shea is president of the Eastern Drama Society, an organization consisting entirely of Eastern students like myself whose goal is to put on theatrical events that are separate from the professional main-stage season. All of its performances are supplemental shows, such as *Hamlet: For Kids*, which are put on entirely by eager and ambitious students who want to experience theatrical leadership positions firsthand.

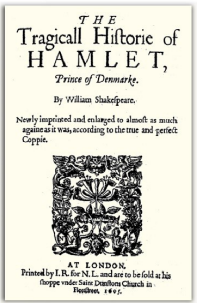
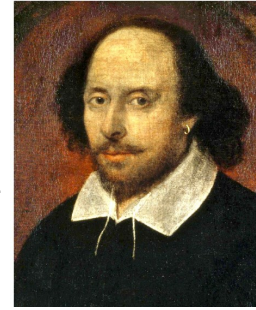
As opposed to the main-stage shows at Eastern, Drama Society shows are not overseen by the professional faculty members of the department; rather, the professors provide wisdom and advice throughout the process but mostly leave the end-result up to the students, creating a fulfilling atmosphere of risk and reward.

Hamlet: For Kids was written by Kyra Baldwin and originally performed in 2016 by Shakespeare on the Sound — a summer acting apprenticeship in Rowayton, CT. In that production, Shea herself played the lead, and enjoyed it so much that she decided to direct it at Eastern through the Drama Society.



Bessette (left) with Austin Washington as Horatio

Being a part of what Shea would call “one of if not the most successful Drama Society event,” was one of the most enjoyable theatrical experiences I’ve had thus far at Eastern. I played the titular role of Hamlet, and it was certainly a fun challenge to mix together original Shakespearean soliloquys in iambic pentameter with modern dialogue.



While the camaraderie between cast members was one aspect of why this experience was so rewarding personally, it was also the structure of the play that made it special. It is a common mistake, especially within the English field, to see plays primarily as pieces of literature rather than live performances. That being said, taking *Hamlet* from the page to the stage is always a breath of fresh air, bringing the characters to life. The children's adaptation goes one step further by utilizing relatable, modern dialects in order to eliminate the distance between these early 17th-century characters and a contemporary audience.

I loved the idea of playing Shakespeare's best-known protagonist, but I was even more excited to play an angsty teenage version of him. The *Hamlet* in this adaptation had all the gritty emotion and tragic motivation of the original, but with ripped jeans, a leather jacket, eyeliner, lightsabers and laughable amounts of sarcasm and sass. I truly felt that his attitude and tendency to rebel against all forms of authority made for an enjoyable character, providing humor and entertainment as well as allowing audience members of all ages to identify with him and his problems.

It is for these reasons that the Drama Society's performance of *Hamlet: For Kids of All Ages* will be remembered as one of the greatest student productions to date. Not only will it hopefully serve as inspiration for other aspiring directors to follow, but it is also a fantastic example of how to adapt a classic so that is still as accessible and enjoyable for modern audiences as it was for the playwright's contemporaries.

HONORING OUR AWARD-WINNING FACULTY!

By Julia Bonadies, Jacob St. Jean, Natalia Torcaso, Cassidy Ricciardone



Dr. Maureen McDonnell, associate professor of English, has been awarded the Board of Regents Award for Teaching this semester for her outstanding dedication to her students' educational success. This honor is given out across all Connecticut colleges and universities, with one faculty member from each campus being a recipient of an award. Being Eastern's awardee also makes Dr. McDonnell a nominee for

the system-wide award. The award honors faculty members who have distinguished themselves as outstanding teachers for at least five years, and have promoted instructional improvements for their programs and departments for at least two years. Through Dr. McDonnell's passion for Women and Gender Studies, she was able to play an important role in transforming Eastern's Women and Gender Studies minor into a thriving new major of its own.

When asked how she felt about receiving the award, Dr. McDonnell happily stated, "It feels awesome! It is really affirming to feel that colleagues and students saw my work and wanted it to be recognized and to have my teaching be singled out as a positive contribution to ECSU."



Dr. Barbara Liu received the 2017 Eastern Faculty Excellence Award for Service to the University. Each year, this award is given to a dedicated faculty member who contributes great service to the University in addition to their teaching and research.

"Of course, as professors, our primary responsibility is to teach," Dr. Liu explains, "but we are also responsible for doing research or creative activities or serving on committees."

During one year of her position as chair of the University Curriculum Committee, the three new majors of Philosophy, New Media Studies and Liberal Studies were created, as well as great changes to the existing English and Theatre major tracks. As chair, she was responsible for coordinating paperwork and communicating with the other departments in instances where problems arose.

In regards to being recognized for her efforts, Liu feels "very honored and happy! Service is one of the parts of our job that the general public doesn't realize we do, and we all do it; it just doesn't get as recognized, so it's really nice to get recognition from my colleagues."

Dr. Daniel Donaghy has been given the honor of becoming Windham's first-ever poet laureate. While Donaghy is proud of this achievement, he sees it as more of a responsibility. "Being poet laureate means that you have been chosen to be the person in your town or, in this case, your county, to make people more aware of the role poetry can have in their lives," he explains.



Over his one-year term, Donaghy will likely host readings around the county to inspire others to write, be it in schools, prisons or nursing homes. "I came from an interesting intercity upbringing, so going into schools in Windham and talking to people who have had less than picture-perfect starts, that can be kind of a gateway for them to think, 'if he can write about that stuff and get through it, maybe I can write about and can get through it, too.'"

Dr. Donaghy hopes to include people in an inclusive, respectful conversation about living through the medium of poetry. "Poetry has taught me to slow down and pay attention", Donaghy mentions, "and no matter what genre you are in, it's about recreating your life and bringing moments alive."

Dr. Reginald Flood has been bestowed this year's Eastern Faculty Excellence Award for Creative/Scholarly Activity for his quality research on African-American arts and culture through poetry.



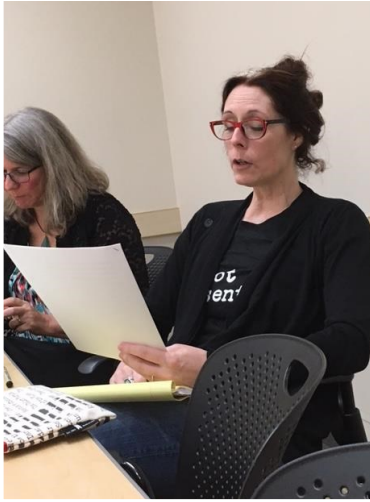
Flood is known throughout the department for the immense value he places on the arts and poetry. "Art changes our civil society into something more than a collection of rules and regulations, and writing poems and plays is a key part of my life," says Flood. However, he feels that nothing intellectually nurtures him more than the role he plays in teaching here at Eastern. "I am grateful for the students here."

His most recent collection, "Refugeed," is the second part of a trilogy that reimagines slave narratives. The collection begins with poems based on transcripts of slave narratives and ends with poems based upon his upbringing in Compton, California. "I will use this genre as an artistic platform to explore contemporary African American life." "Refugeed" is expected to release this November.

As for the future, Flood is working on a third book as well as an untitled full-length play. The play centers around African-Americans who did not migrate North during the Great Migration.

LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON PAYS A VISIT

By Montgomery Kupson



On April 27 and 28, Eastern Connecticut State University had the honor of hosting award-winning author, Laurie Halse Anderson, who came to campus to give three different talks about writing and the creative process. Anderson visited Dr. Lisa Fraustino's Writing for Children and Young Adults and Dr. Allison Speicher's Children's Literature class, and participated in a well-attended Q&A which was open to the general public. While in the area, Anderson also participated in the Literacy Lock-in at Windham High School. As a prolific writer for children and teenagers, her presence at such an events and venues shows that the type of literature that young people admire is worth speaking out about.

By far Anderson's most well-known work within her Young Adult (YA) repertoire is "Speak," her debut novel about a young girl rendered mute after the devastation of a sexual assault. Anderson said that "Speak" was the culmination of many influences, two in particular — the repression of Anderson's own sexual assault as a teen and her daughter's rapid take-off into puberty. Becoming the mother of a teen scared her, especially regarding how to have those important conversations about sex and consent. These two issues are what Anderson thinks caused the bad dream of a sobbing teenage girl that inspired "Speak."

At the time, Anderson never thought "Speak" would get published; neither did many editors in the publishing industry. Fortunately, at the time, there was a rising body of young librarians and teachers open to giving their students books outside of the canon that they'd actually read. Thus, when "Speak" came on the scene, hordes of teenage readers became enthralled and made it a cult classic. Anderson has since continued to have success in the YA genre.

As for her children's literature, Anderson usually sticks to historical fiction. "I hated school," Anderson explained, "except for Social Studies. I love history, especially American history!" "Fever 1793" came to fruition after she saw an ad for a museum exhibit detailing the 200-year anniversary of the yellow fever outbreak that nearly took out the entirety of Philadelphia during George Washington's second term.

Anderson's most recent work is the third book in the "Seeds of America" trilogy, "Ashes." The middle-grade trilogy follows the experiences of families in the North held in slavery during the American Revolution. Of all of her works, Anderson hopes that "in 100 years, this series is what I'm remembered for."

Since the publication of the trilogy, Anderson has been pulled into the conversation about authenticity, and who can write about whose experience. In her opinion, writing outside your life experience *can* be done if the writer commits to the extra research. She warns, however, that "if you write YA or kid lit outside of your culture in a lazy, malicious, or ignorant way, you are harming children." Anderson not only had academic historians comb through the trilogy for accuracy, but also experts in representation of African American children in literature.

Anderson is an amazing resource of advice for young writers. She recommends rereading books as a *writer* instead of as a reader, and to study the author's craft. "If a book wows you, go back and figure out how they did what they did."

Despite how successful she has been, Anderson can attest that the thought of not being good enough has never quite gone away for her. Her advice to writers to combat these intrusive thoughts is to "learn to sit in the discomfort. You have to acknowledge the beasts, but do not give them emotional energy."

Anderson also has advice for future teachers, whom she admires for their work. She hopes that any future educators who were in the audience would learn that "the kid that is in the front row, all jazzed about learning — that kid is going to be a teacher. But please know that the kid in the back, starrng off into space or is always doodling on their papers — that kid is going to be a writer."



Laurie Halse Anderson, visiting Dr. Allison Speicher's Children's Literature class on April 28

ENGLISH NIGHT

By Christina Rossomando

On May 5 in the Betty R. Tipton Room, English Night was held to honor outstanding student scholarship for this past year. The night began with members of the English faculty presenting awards to notable students, and ended with students from each senior seminar course showcasing their seminar projects. Other students who did fantastic research this year also were given the opportunity to present their findings through a poster session.

“The spring semester’s English Night is always a lovely evening,” said Dr. Daniel Donaghy, English professor. “English Night gives professors and students a chance to reflect together at the end of the year’s journey and gives everyone in attendance a chance to see the wide array of excellent work being done within the English Department.”

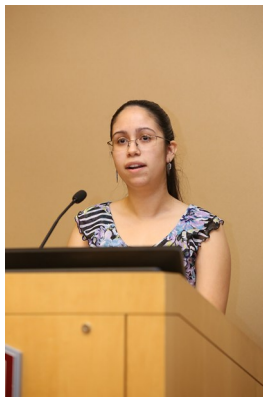
The department awards ceremony acknowledged five different students for their work within the English field. Each student honored was nominated by one or more faculty members based on different criteria. “The students honored exemplified the kind of engaged scholars and university citizens we hope all our students will become,” said Dr. Barbara Liu, English Department Chair. “Based on the kudos each of these students received from my colleagues, I know they’re all very deserving of these honors.” (See the related story on page 14.)

Kathryn Jankura, Taylor Maier and Kelsey Marconis had poster presentations displayed for audience appreciation during the poster session of the night. “This year we worked to better represent — through posters and a handout with abstracts — the great work students are doing in independent capstone projects,” said Liu.

Following the award receptions and poster presentations, senior students from Dr. Liu’s and Dr. Reginald Flood’s seminars presented the research with which they have been engrossed for the past academic year.



Scott Kompare, on Barbara Kingsolver’s “The Poisonwood Bible”



Brianna Hernandez, on her collection of short stories about friendships across faith systems



Kathryn Jankura’s project “No Female Mind: Charlotte Perkins Gilman on Marriage, Motherhood and Employment”

Brianna Hernandez and Scott Kompare represented Dr. Liu’s seminar, “Belief & Doubt in Contemporary Fictions.” Hernandez’s project, “Incoming Call: Long-Distance Interfaith Friendships,” was a collection of four short stories detailing the struggles of four pen pals of different religions. The common thread, remarked Hernandez, was a prevailing theme of love within the personal life and faith of each pen pal as well as for each other. Kompare’s project was titled “The Antithesis of Duality: the Singularity of Nathan Price’s Untenable and Insular Worldview in “The Poisonwood Bible.” Reading passages from his paper, Kompare marked Price’s superiority complex regarding faith as a facet of his antagonistic presence.

Students Killiana Lugo and Jennine Hohler represented Dr. Flood’s seminar, Writing Poems/Reading Culture. Lugo’s project, “Afro-Latino Rhythms and Culture in Puerto Rico,” included information about Puerto Rican festivals and traditions that have African roots, as well as two cultural poems she wrote herself. Hohler’s project, “Aspergians Come in Peace,” drew on the experiences of famous people on the Asperger’s spectrum, like Temple Grandin, who have succeeded in life despite negative stereotypes. Hohler’s project also included original poems that reflected on how such a diagnosis might affect a student’s educational fulfillment.

“This year was my first year attending this event as chair,” said Liu. “I got to MC the night — which was both scary and a lot of fun.” She added that the night was a success, saying, “All the presentations were interesting and well-conceived. They all seemed to work together to articulate the importance of literature in expanding our awareness.”

SPOTLIGHT: ENGLISH NIGHT AWARD WINNERS

By Christina Rossomando

Several students received awards during English Night for their outstanding effort as scholars, from seniors to students in the first-year writing courses.

Senior Catherine Allegretti received the “Service to the Department,” award, which is presented to a student who has helped with departmental projects, coordinated events or organized student clubs that connect to literature or writing. “Catherine has truly made her mark on the organization playing a crucial role in planning and executing some 20 events,” said Dr. Allison Speicher, advisor to Sigma Tau Delta, in her nomination for Allegretti. “Her most significant contribution has been her role as the chair of the new mentorship program, which pairs incoming English majors with veteran students. She was also integral in planning our Warrior Welcome event this summer, which brought together more than 100 students and faculty members. Cat dedicates her time and talents and truly gives her all.”



Allegretti, Morris, Wells and Jankura

Senior Stacy Wells was presented with the “Award for Lifelong Learning,” which is given to a student who has shown a steady love of literature, writing and pursuit of knowledge. “In both classes where I’ve had Stacey as a student, I’ve been impressed by her insight, her willingness to consider literature in a range of ways, and her collegiality,” said Dr. Rita Malenczyk in her nomination. “Stacey’s commitment to her education is evident, and affects the spaces that she shares in dynamic ways.”

Senior Amanda Demaio was honored for “Contributions to the Cultural Life of the Campus.” Demaio has been actively involved as a writer and editor for the campus literary magazine, “Eastern Exposure.” In nominating her, Dr. Daniel Donaghy stated, “A talented and hard-working writer herself, Amanda has been an increasingly active member of the Writers Guild, serving this year as vice president and as poetry editor of ‘Eastern Exposure.’”

Senior Kathryn Jankura was presented the “Commitment for Teaching” award, which is given to a student who has demonstrated commitment through teaching internships, the Writing Associates program, or volunteer work in the area of teaching. “She stood out as one of those students that helps a professor establish a real sense of community that engenders the trust needed to get students to reach, *really* reach, in terms of their writing,” said Dr. Reginald Flood, in his nomination of Jankura.



Christopher Morris with Liu

Junior Chris Morris received the “Academic Excellence Award,” which is given to a student who demonstrates superior ability and dedication to reading and interpreting literature in class discussions or through written work. “I don’t think I’ve ever encountered a student quite as smart, hard-working, sophisticated and versatile,” said Dr. Kenneth McNeil. “He always offers sophisticated and probing insight and his writing is already on the level of serious graduate work. He is also a serious fiction writer, has been a writing tutor and serves as assistant to the director of the Writing Center. On top of that, he works for the local publishing house Elephant Rock Books in Ashford, and is currently president of the Eastern Writers Guild.”

Also received during the ceremony were the First Year Writing Awards for Fall 2016. These awards are for students in College Writing (ENG 100) or College Writing Plus (ENG 100P) whose writing is innovative, creative, splendidly researched or uniquely articulated.

SPOTLIGHT: ENGLISH NIGHT AWARD WINNERS (CONT.)

These awards were presented by the Coordinator of the First Year Writing Program, Dr. Stephen Ferrucci. The award is divided into two subcategories — Creativity and Innovation, and Excellent Research — with one student recognized within each category for the work they produced during the fall 2016 semester.

Patrice Eugene was bestowed the award in the Creativity and Innovation subcategory. Eugene's paper, written for Dr. Meredith James' ENG 100 class, was titled "A Shepherd Beyond Scripture."

Kelli Salimeno was given the award for the Excellent Research category for her paper from Dr. Diane Smith's ENG 100 class. Her paper was entitled "Alcohol Abuse on College Campuses."

All of the outstanding students honored during this semester's English Night exemplify the hard work that students within the department have undertaken. These awards serve to acknowledge not only these efforts but also their dedication to literature, writing and seeking knowledge. "As professors, we try our best to foster these qualities in all of our students," said Liu. "We are especially proud when we can honor the student's through these awards."



Dr. Stephen Ferrucci with Patrice Eugene

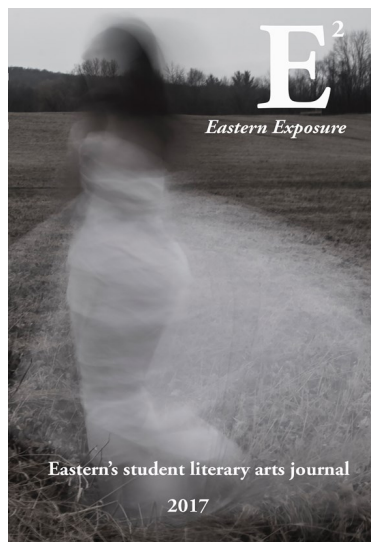
EASTERN EXPOSURE'S SPRING 2017 RELEASE

By Amanda Wilson

After a year of hard work, students of the Eastern Writers Guild are proud to present this year's literary magazine, knowing that they have given student writers at Eastern a voice as well as the chance for others to read their work.

Besides holding coffee houses and inviting published authors and poets to campus, the Eastern Writers Guild also produces a new edition of Eastern's literary magazine, "Eastern Exposure," every year from scratch. This group of passionate students get together every Wednesday to organize, review and accept student submissions for the magazine. This year, the club decided to try something new and have each issue revolve around one central theme, this year's theme being "belonging."

Regarding this sudden switch to having a central theme for "Eastern Exposure," President Chris Morris explained that many national literary magazines have a central theme and that the guild wanted to emulate that. According to Secretary Christina Rossomando, they also thought that focusing on one theme would be interesting because it would show dif-



ferent people's perspectives on the same topic.

The theme of "belonging" was decided upon because it is a topic that is relatable for many different groups of people. This is especially fitting since "Eastern Exposure" is run by and made for college students, many of whom spend their entire college careers trying to understand themselves and where they belong.

"Eastern Exposure 2017" includes poetry, short stories, a script, and artwork, all created by Eastern Connecticut State University students. The magazine is free and gives Eastern students a chance to have their voices heard. The Eastern Writers Guild and its E-Board hope that this year's "Exposure" will give student readers a

new understanding of their peers and expose them to the diverse viewpoints held across campus.

Submissions for next year's "Eastern Exposure" will be accepted through Submittable (an online submission platform) starting in May 2017. If you are interested in assisting in the creation of "Eastern Exposure 2018," make sure to join the Eastern Writers Guild next fall!

NEWSLETTER CONTRIBUTORS

Keep-ENG in Touch

Spring 2017

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Catherine Allegretti is a senior graduating with degrees in English and Communication, and a minor in Spanish.

Matthew Bessette is a sophomore majoring in English (Secondary Education concentration) and Theatre, with a concentration in directing.

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Kyle Hottin is a senior graduating with dual degrees in English and Communication, with a Journalism concentration and a minor in Writing.

Montgomery Kupson is a junior, majoring in English with a concentration in Literary Studies and a minor in Writing.

Morgan LaFlamme is a junior majoring in English (Literary Studies) and minoring in Women's and Gender Studies.

Meaghan McFall-Gorman is a graduating senior with dual degrees in English (Literary Studies) and Political Science.

Kyle Randall is a senior graduating with a degree in English as well as a Communication minor.

Victoria Randazzo is a junior English major with a concentration in Second Education and a minor in Communication.

Cassidy Ricciardone is a junior dual majoring in English (concentration in Early Childhood and Elementary Education) as well as in Elementary Education.

Christina Rossomando is graduating this semester with a degree in Communication (Journalism concentration) and a Writing minor.

Natalia Torcaso is a junior with a dual major in Education (Secondary Education concentration) and English (Creative Writing concentration) with a minor in Spanish.

Jacob St. Jean will be graduating this December with a degree in English and a minor in Creative Writing.

Amanda Wilson is a junior New Media Studies major with a concentration in Communication. She has a minor in Writing.

HELP WANTED! EDITOR AND SOCIAL MEDIA INTERN

*Do you love English?
Do your friends enjoy the articles you share on social media?
Do you want to be more involved in the English department by creating a social media presence
or editing this newsletter?*

If so, you may be interested in the Social Media and Editing Internship! If you are a current student interested in this internship opportunity for fall 2017, please contact the department chair at: liub@easternct.edu.



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