

KEEP-ENG IN TOUCH

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

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



This is my last chair's message to readers of *Keep-ENG in Touch* as I will be turning the steering wheel over to the capable hands of Dr. Barbara Liu on December 23. It has been a pleasure working with student interns and writers over the past three and a half years as we developed the best alumni newsletter on campus as well as a robust social media presence to keep us connected.

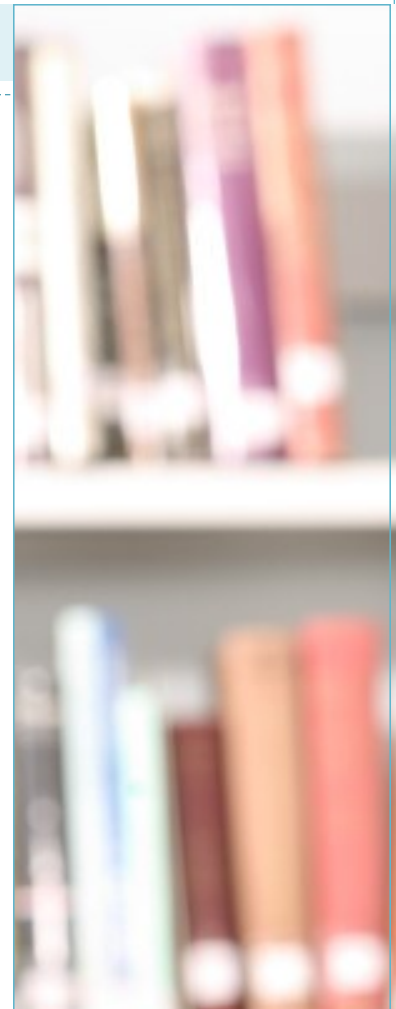
My thanks go to this semester's department interns, Ashley Schmitt and Eddie Pavlisacsak, for adding their talents and creative ideas to the evolution of how we do things.

Dr. Lisa
Lisa Rowe Fraustino
FraustinoL@easternct.edu

A MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR

I would like to say thank you to Dr. Fraustino for giving me this opportunity. The whole process has been a great learning experience. Thank you Miranda Lau, the department secretary, for gathering and sharing the photos with me. Thank you to all of the contributors for your hard work and dedication to this project.

Ashley Schmitt
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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT'S WARRIOR WELCOME

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By Ashley Schmitt

Willimantic, CT. – Eastern Connecticut State University welcomed new and returning English students on Sunday, August 28th, 2016 in the Johnson Room of the Smith Library. English faculty were also in attendance and circulated the room as students became acquainted with new and familiar faces.



English Department professors greeted everyone and introduced themselves, their specialty within the department, and their hopes for the upcoming semester.

Mentors and mentees, students who are involved in a new leadership program developed by Sigma Tau Delta, the international English Honor Society, met for their first time and worked collaboratively with other groups to solve English-related questions. Returning students were encouraged to help incoming students feel comfortable and excited about the English major, the English concentration in the Liberal Studies major, and campus life in general at Eastern.



Group activities were a large element of the Warrior Welcome. One activity involved arranging strips of paper in their correct order. Each strip had one or more lines of poetry on it and students were asked to place them in order to correctly recite works by authors such as Shel Silverstein, Shakespeare, and Dr. Seuss.

Another activity was a trivia questionnaire that Dr. Allison Speicher made about English-related concepts, such as describing literary terms, identifying authors of quotations, and explaining correct MLA citation formats.

The students who answered the most questions correctly were provided a “goodie bag” that included school essentials such as pens, pencils, and small notebooks.



The event concluded with a scavenger hunt throughout the library. Students were asked to work with their mentors and mentees to decipher hidden clues about literary works. When they located their first book, students found a new clue nearby that would eventually lead them to their final destination: Dr. Barbara Liu in the English Department Office handing out welcome bags to first-year students and transfers.

MARIA GILLAN INSPIRES WRITERS

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By Madeline Tatto and Sarah Andrews

Eastern's Writers Guild invited Maria Mazziotti Gillan to share her work with students at a poetry reading on September 21, 2016. Maria Gillan is an American poet who has published twenty-one books and is the founder/executive director of the Poetry Center at Passaic County Community College in Paterson, New Jersey. She is also the editor of the *Paterson Literary Review*, and the director of the creative writing program at Binghamton University-SUNY, where she is a professor of poetry.

Gillan read several poems specifically about her family. When writing poetry, she claimed the error that people tend to make is not being specific enough to the subject of the piece. She stated, "Don't just make a poem about anybody's mother. Make it about *your* mother." Furthermore, Gillan expressed the courage it takes to write about "tough subjects." For example, it took her almost thirty years to write about her father because she was ashamed of his broken English. Another poem relating to "tough subjects" was "What I Can't Face About Someone I Love," which expressed her lost connection with her son. Gillan's poetry has allowed her to move forward after finding the ability to write about the absent relationship with her son.

Throughout Gillan's poetry, readers can gain a strong understanding of her family's past and where she came from. In one of her poems, she says her mother "drew an imaginary line



around us to keep us close." This demonstrates how her mother's fear was the motive for keeping a tight bond between her and her children. She also spoke about the preconceived notions Americans have about poor immigrants, which she feels keenly because she was one. She laughed and said that nobody would have ever expected her to become such an accomplished poet, her brother a doctor, and her sister a nurse. Before any of her siblings stepped into their successful careers, Gillan recalled a time where she felt unwanted by a group of people, specifically by her first boyfriend's family. Due to their higher social class, this opened Gillan's eyes to the barriers of money; the "invisible walls that protected those people from people like me."

In her question and answer period, Gillan discussed her passion for hearing other peoples' stories. She said that people need the courage to put their own personal experiences on the page because if they don't, their story could go unheard. Gillan believes "stories do not have to be ground-shaking moments," but can merely be a memory of somebody doing something, a memory of your own. Maria Mazziotti Gillan closed her reading by emphasizing her passion in hearing other's stories because they can help us authentically learn more about people.

A video of this event can be found out <http://www.easternct.edu/writersguild/2016/12/06/behind-the-scenes-with-maria-mazziotti-gillan/> .



LONG-TIME DEPARTMENT CHAIR, DR. LISA ROWE FRAUSTINO, TAKES SABBATICAL LEAVE

4

By Chisom Sunny-Eduputa



After three and a half years of serving the English department as chair, Dr. Lisa Rowe Fraustino, acclaimed writer of children's books, will be taking a well-deserved break.

To begin our interview, we discuss her most recent book: *WAHH! A Day in the Life of Riley O'Reilly*. This is Dr. Fraustino's first eBook, and also happens to be an "indie" eBook. "Independent." She says, "It basically means sort of self-published. It's a new... well, I guess let me back up. Self-publishing has always been around, but the eBook independent self-publishing is a fairly new development. A lot of authors nowadays are self-publishing eBooks and marketing them through social media. That was not my original intention with that book at all. I wanted to publish it in the traditional ways. I got very bad about sending my work out and it's just been sitting around for years and years and years. So when I was doing an independent study with one of my students, I decided to go ahead and let her have that material to explore because she wanted to learn about digital publishing, the eBook revolution, independent 'indie' publishing, and I thought 'well, heck, I'm probably not going to get around to submitting this to traditional publishers again.' I sent it around to a couple places years and years ago and got some encouraging rejections, but they didn't know how to market it. They didn't know how to think about it as a children's book because the protagonist is actually an adult, and that's kind of a no-no in children's literature, even though some of my favorite books do that, like *Mr. Popper's Penguins*."

We talk about the manuscript's first rejections to which she responds "I sent it out to only a few editors and all of them said the same thing. They said that they loved the characters, and it was very well written and witty, and they just didn't see the market for it because it didn't seem like it was for children and it didn't seem like it was for adults. They didn't know who it was for."

Dr. Fraustino has been the chair of the department since 2013, and has been an employee since 2002. Before becoming the department chair, she was the associate chair- with some of her main responsibilities being scheduling courses and staffing them. As chair, she was responsible for meeting with all the students who had declared majors or minors in the English department, consulting closely with the associate chair, and attending all meetings of the program and curriculum committee — a hard working committee that meets to go over courses, schedules, and department policies, among other things.

By the end of the year, Dr. Fraustino will be going on sabbatical leave, a long break faculty members may be entitled to after having served the institution for a minimum of seven years. She plans to stay home and mostly work as a full time writer-scholar. Her proposal "Critical and Creative Approaches to Anthropomorphism" is what she will spend most of her time working on. Her proposal mainly challenges and discusses the use of anthropomorphic techniques in children's literature. Anthropomorphism is the attribution of human traits, emotions, and intentions to non-human entities and is considered to be an innate tendency of human psychology.

In Dr. Fraustino's absence, Dr. Barbara Liu will take her place as department chair. Dr. Fraustino says, "She's going to start next semester because I didn't want to leave without giving the next chair some mentorship. Already Dr. Ben Pauley has started being associate chair this semester. Dr. Liu, who was associate chair for the last three years, is directing the liberal studies program, and she has been doing that since it started a couple years ago. She's filling in for Dr. Ferruci who's on sabbatical this semester. Dr. Ferruci is the director of First Year Writing. He's off writing a textbook, I believe, and a couple of articles."

Dr. Fraustino says she is very excited to be going on sabbatical leave. She says she feels it a good time to transition as the department is in a strong place. Upon her return, she plans to teach more classes.

EASTERN WELCOMES INSPIRATIONAL POETS

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By Christina Rossomondo

Willimantic, CT. – Eastern Connecticut State University welcomed author Joan Seliger Sidney on Oct. 6. Sidney was accompanied by Eastern alumnus Jordan Thompson.

Both writers spoke to students about their experiences living with disabilities, while giving advice on how to grow as writers. The Eastern Writers Guild, a student club led by faculty advisor Daniel Donaghy that publishes the annual literary journal, *Eastern Exposure*, sponsored the event.



“Joan has been one of the jewels of Connecticut poetry for many years now,” said Donaghy. “Jordan found poetry later in his college career. Neither poet holds back. Neither is afraid to take on the essential questions about what it means to be alive, what their dreams, hopes, sadnesses and frustrations are at any particular time.”

The reading opened up with Christopher Morris, president of Eastern’s Writers Guild, introducing both poets. Thompson began by reading five of his personal poems, bringing audience members to tears. “It was inspiring to see him bring light to such a tragic part of his life,” said Amanda DeMaio, Writers Guild vice president. “I couldn’t help but cry, he spoke such beautiful words.”

As the poets switched positions, Sidney read poems from her two books, *Bereft and Blessed* and *Body of Diminishing Motion*. She described how she uses her struggle with multiple sclerosis (MS) and experiences as a second-generation Holocaust survivor in her writing.

“The more I wrote about it, the more comfortable I became with it,” said Sidney. “A lot of people didn’t know I had a problem, I was embarrassed, and I

didn’t want people to look at me differently. But after writing a research paper on MS I felt that I had finally been granted permission not to be afraid of the topic.”

After the reading, the two authors spoke to the audience regarding their writing process. Although it’s difficult sometimes to write things down, both poets always get their thoughts down on paper. Thompson said “I take a lot of notes. Eventually, after pages and pages of notes, it all just comes together.” Sidney expressed her need for deadlines: “I just need them, without them I wouldn’t get anything done. I audit courses at UConn and I love being in a class with such amazing students and teachers, who stimulate my writing and help me stay young.”

Sidney grew up in Brooklyn, NY, and attended Brooklyn College for three semesters. She then transferred to City College, where she finished her undergraduate degree. For graduate work, Sidney received a Master of Arts in Teaching from Harvard, a Ph.D. from the University of Connecticut (UConn) and a Master of Fine Arts in Writing as well as a Picture Book Certificate from Vermont College. Sidney writes mainly about the Holocaust and dealing with multiple sclerosis. She shared, “It’s important to bear witness to all that was lost, and give those individuals a voice.” Sidney expressed the need to make peace and live with all the tragedies life gives you: “The longer you live the more you realize that everyone has their burdens.” Sidney has worked hard to create inspiring poetry and she stated, “Writing is a wonderful gift; it allows us to confront our fears.”

The reading concluded with Sidney advising all writers to read as much as they can. She said, “Poets read a book, copy down a few lines and then create our own poems. Read as much as you can by whoever you can, keep journals and if you ever get stuck, steal.”



By Christina Rossomondo



Willimantic, CT — Allison Speicher, an English professor at Eastern Connecticut State University, held a book talk on Oct. 12 to debut her new book, *Schooling Readers: Reading Common Schools in 19th Century American Fiction*.

Speicher's book discloses literature that individuals have not been reading and scholars have neglected to study. "I wanted to bring these publications to light," said Speicher, "and explain why we should be reading these. I am recovering the particular literature that I call the 'common school narrative' — fictional stories about one-room schools written during the 19th century."

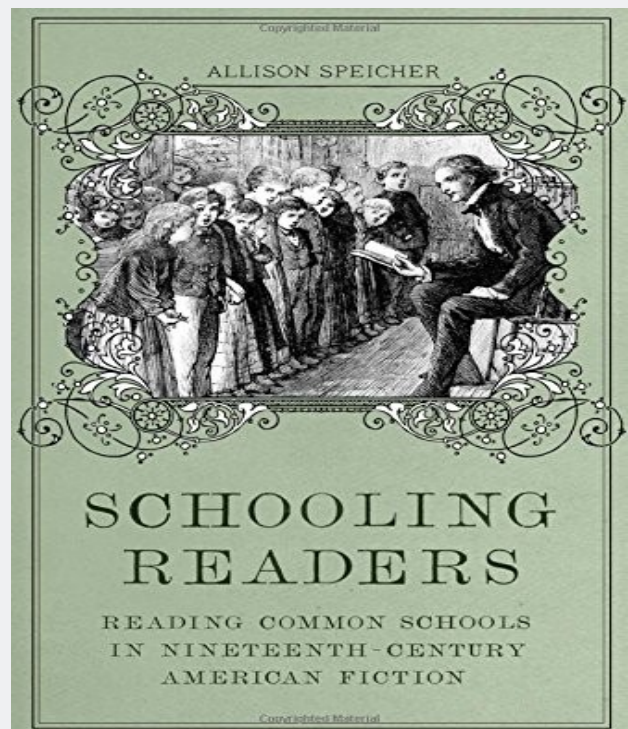
Speicher explained about the importance of that time in history and how it shaped our public school system. "Most scholars have studied literature related to other reform movements during the 19th century," said Speicher, "such as the abolition of slavery, temperance and women's suffrage. There hasn't been scholarly activity around literature about school reform, so that's the gap that this book fills."

Speicher explained that the book started as her dissertation when she was a student at Indiana University: "It all started with a hunch. Nobody knew these stories were out there and I just felt like they needed to be. So I started looking for them in digital databases, particularly the American periodical series, and found 130 stories in a matter of weeks."

Speicher's audience of students and faculty sat engaged as she explained the writing process for her book. "What I do throughout the book is look at the 130 stories that I found," said Speicher. "They are essentially school readers — that's where the title comes from — on issues related to education."

The reading concluded with a question and answer segment, with Speicher elaborating on her writing process with each answer. "I am the kind of person who likes to read all the material and then do the writing," said Speicher. "I do everything they tell you not to do when you write. I don't write every day, I do all the research up front, do a ton of reading, take a ton of notes, and then it's simulated into a comprehensive outline. Then I write it chapter by chapter and go back through and revise."

"We are truly fortunate to have such a talented scholar-teacher in our English Department," said Lisa Rowe Fraustino, professor and English department chair. "As a result of her first book, which breaks new ground in this subject, Allison's reputation is growing rapidly among scholars in the field, as I have witnessed personally at conferences of the Children's Literature Association. Our English, Education and Liberal Studies majors benefit greatly from the deep knowledge of schooling and pedagogy that Dr. Speicher brings to her classrooms."



By Montgomery Kupson

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Dr. Lisa Rowe Fraustino held a book conference on October 26th, 2016 regarding her new anthology of essays about mothers in children's and young adult literature, co-edited by Illinois State University English professor Karen Coats. As head of the English Department Chair and

professor in a sundry of youth literature classes here at Eastern, Dr. Fraustino is well-versed in scholarly analysis and editing the kinds of essays that are featured within her book. *Mothers in Children's and Young Adult Literature: From the Eighteenth Century to Postfeminism (Children's Literature Association Series)* illustrates the role that mothers serve in youth literature through its thirteen critical essays. Amongst these thirteen essays is an article of Dr. Fraustino's own scholarly production titled "Abandoning Mothers."

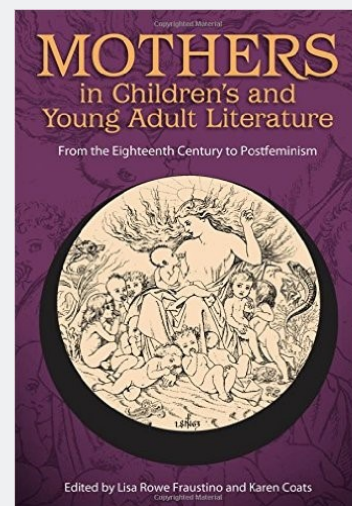
Dr. Fraustino was first inspired to analyze the role of motherhood in youth literature when she became a mother herself. Motherhood brought a new lens for her to analyze children's literature through, making her rethink such beloved picture book classics as *The Giving Tree* and *Love You Forever*. Her new perceptions were further rooted in the analytical approaches she was exposed to in a Feminist Theory class she took as a new mother. The works of famous feminist psychoanalytical thinkers like Julia Kristeva— as well as the skepticisms of her radical feminist classmates— caused her to rethink traditional gender roles and family dynamics. This class caused her to reevaluate, as she says, "the role that mothering plays in what women can do and what society allows women to do." From this came the desire to redefine motherhood as well as prove through critical writing that youth literature is a genre that is worthy of analysis because it impacts social perceptions of motherhood.

The book is the product of 10 years of thought, research, and effort. Dr. Fraustino implemented thorough research, hours of pre-writing planning, and deep revision sessions to ensure that the product she'd be delivering would include well-developed and well-supported claims. She even intersected her research with her teaching which allowed her to think more critically about the subject and find further inspiration within the curriculum. Though her own researching tactics did not change her mind about the subject, she did find that editing the anthology shifted parts of her mindset as a result of being introduced to new critical lenses such as cognitive studies and schema (representations of motherhood through specific models).

YA, as per genre conventions, often focuses on children and their conflicts without the intervention of parents, mothers often seen as overly nurturing and even in the way of their children. This convention emphasizes mothers as being in the background, only defined by their relation to their children. An example that Dr. Fraustino showcased would be the mother-son relationship in *The Giving Tree*, in which the "selfish little son" comes to the mother tree asking for parts of herself to serve his own needs until she's nothing more than a stump. She was appalled at how entitled the son felt to his mother's help without any consideration of her as a person outside of motherhood. With that analysis of such classics in mind, Fraustino's goal for her project is to challenge social perceptions in which women must sacrifice themselves entirely to their children to be considered a good mother.

The completed anthology can be found on the publishers page:

<http://www.upress.state.ms.us/books/1915>



BECOMING AN INTERN

English internships can vary from Teacher Assistants to Social Media Intern, to Editor-in-Chief of the Alumni Newsletter.

During an internship, aspiring professionals in the field can acquire skill sets that prepare them for their future by working alongside scholars who dedicate lots of their time to their studies. Internships not only provide educational materials that enhance learning and teaching; they also provide hands-on experience in a related field. Students interested in the English field of study may benefit from an internship if they want to develop a better understanding of all it entails.

If you or someone you know are interested in earning an internship in the English Department, ask your professors or advisor for more information!

EDITING AND WRITING INTERN: ASHLEY SCHMITT

The goal of this internship is to share important and exciting English Department stories that occurred over the semester with alumni, current staff, faculty, and students alike. I have been responsible for locating writers, editing drafts, and developing the final project. Writers and I communicated frequently about revisions and upcoming story commitments. My biggest take away has been stepping outside of my comfort zone to communicate with new people on campus. I have also enhanced my skills in Microsoft Excel, Word, and Publisher while organizing documents and event dates and times.

Being a transfer and commuter, I never imagined myself doing much at Eastern until I was given other internship opportunities presented by Dr. Chirico as a Teacher's Assistant Intern in Spring 2016. I also helped Dr. Chirico with the Student Proof of Approval Program (SPOA) in Summer 2016. It gave me a lot of experience in leading class discussions. I look forward to applying the skills acquired from all of these internships at Eastern to my future as a teacher.

SOCIAL MEDIA INTERN: EDWARD PAVLISCSAK

The Internship in Writing/English for Social Media involves being responsible for managing the Facebook and Twitter for the Eastern English Department. Over the course of the semester, I found useful links online to post relating to the English major. I stayed up to date with on campus activities so I could promote those, too. Along with being responsible for finding and posting materials for the departments social media feed, I helped out with events such as Fall Orientation for incoming students and also collected and edited professor's biographies for the university website.

After graduating next semester, I plan to pursue a career in either writing or marketing. Regardless of the career path I choose, what I have learned from this semester's internship with the English Department will certainly be very useful. My newfound sense of organizational planning, managing my time, staying up to date on social media, and also the importance of promotion via social media will be applicable in either a career in marketing or in writing. My future, no matter the profession, will benefit greatly from what I have learned this semester.



Widely Acclaimed Jewish Novelist Visits Eastern

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By Kyle Randall

On Thursday October 27, Ruchama King Feuerman visited Eastern Connecticut State University to read a few samples from her novel *Seven Blessings* to an audience of students. *Seven Blessings* was the first novel Feuerman published back in 2004 and it describes the everyday lives of the Jewish people in Jerusalem.



After everyone had taken their seats Feuerman noticed her audience scattered around the auditorium and immediately ushered everyone to sit closer to her. She preferred the intimacy of a smaller group and asked each person for their name before she started to speak. Later on when it was time to ask questions she remembered nearly every name given to her and she often attempted to address the entire audience personally. After we were all settled in closer to her, she introduced herself to us then paused for a moment before she began to talk about where she got her inspiration.

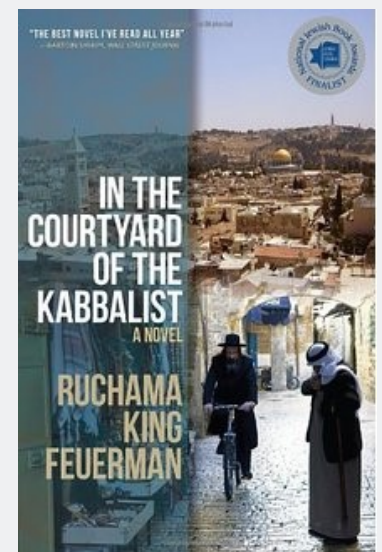
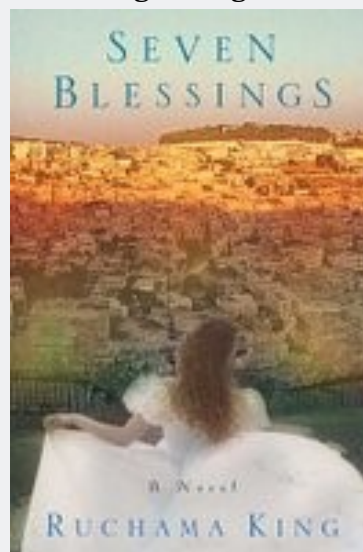
In order to compile research for her book, Feuerman spent about a decade of her life living in Jerusalem where she studied and taught Torah, the Jewish doctrine. Throughout the presentation Feuerman made several references to what she called the “Israel National Pastime.” This phrase described her idea of the Israeli people as matchmakers; almost everyone that she came across loved to try and help single people find someone to be with and love. She learned everything that she could about life in Jerusalem,

ranging from their culture to their daily lifestyles. Once she was sure that she could accurately and faithfully represent the Israeli people, she brought it all together to write a compelling story about people from several walks of life.

While discussing her inspirations for writing, Feuerman described the matchmaking culture. She read several excerpts from various characters in the novel, all of whom are struggling to find love. They all have their own interests, backgrounds, friends, families, and lives to live, but they are all linked through the desire to find companionship and they are all aided by the people around them. These various characters started out in their own separate short stories; however, their shared themes eventually enticed to Feuerman bring them together.

After discussing her first book Feuerman continued on to briefly discuss her second, *In the Courtyard of the Kabbalist* (2013). Once again, she touched upon the everyday lives of the common Jewish person to great success with audiences. This novel is currently being considered for adaptation into a film. In the near future her name may very well make its way up to the big screen for all to see.

To end the event Feuerman answered a few student’s questions and invited anyone who was interested in a signed copy to bring their copies to her. She cheerfully invited anyone who was interested to keep an eye out for her next novel and said goodnight.



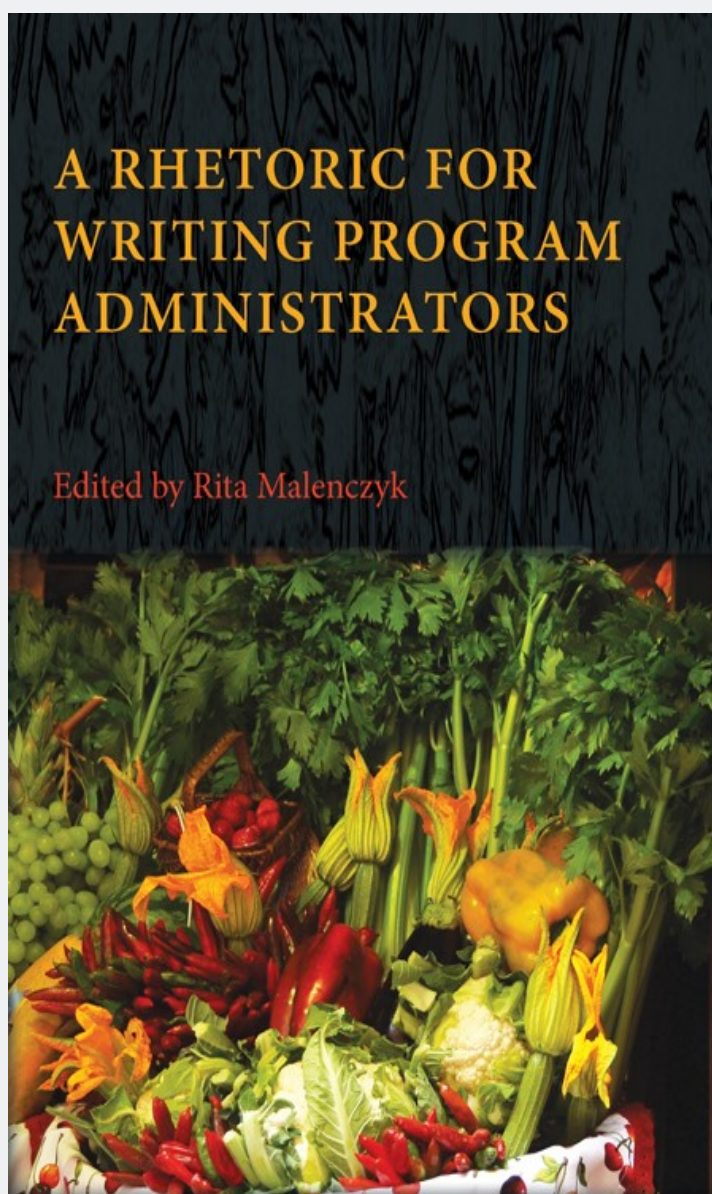
By Yanira Hernandez

Kudos to Dr. Rita Malenczyk for her second edition of *A Rhetoric for Writing Program Administrators* published this year. Rita Malenczyk is not only a Professor of English and Director of the Writing Program and Writing Center here at Eastern Connecticut State University; she has also served as President of the Council of Writing Program Administrators. Malenczyk is admired by her students for her humor in the classroom and a personable style of teaching that make her classes so successful. We are honored that she has led the effort to provide to those in this specific domain of English a collection of essays by peers in the discipline. This comprehensive book provides fellow writing program administrators some critical guidance for success in their field; it is the first of its kind to address the concerns specific to this role in the English department.

First published in 2013, this second edition provides updates to many chapters. It also includes work to address student retention, a recent significant concern of institutions around the country. New to this edition is Linda Adler-Kassner and Elizabeth Wardle's important contributions regarding threshold concepts of rhetoric and composition and a section on technology by Jeffrey M. Gerding and Richard Johnson-Sheehan which explores how technology can fit the needs of writing instructors and facilitate the programs they implement. In total, the book covers thirty-five sections on concerns administrators have regarding the production of writing program curriculums.

Malenczyk shares that she started this book when in collaboration with other Writing Program Administrators who found the same types of questions were repeatedly being raised such as writing across the disciplines, defining an English department, and assessing programs, just to name a few.

The introduction of the book shares a letter from a new writing program administrator who sought to find direction on planning the writing program at her institution. This letter was one of many indications that the field could benefit from a book that would assist informing new Writing Program Administrators. Malenczyk shares that the contributors were "great to work with" and seeks to encourage junior scholars in this field to continue sharing their experiences in order to maintain up-to-date information on this essential field of English.



CONNECTICUT STATE UNIVERSITIES ENGLISH CONFERENCE

12

By Courtney Werner

The 2016 CSU Undergraduate English Conference kicked off with keynote speaker Paul Karpuk, an English professor at CCSU. As students and professors made their way through salads and sandwiches, Karpuk made his case for categorizing English as a “hard science,” rather than the label of “soft science” it is usually given. He sent us off with the encouraging notion that what we do in the field of English involves just as much method and rigor as any other field, creating a sense in the room that throughout the day, as each student presented his or her result of the work in their respective English classes, we would all be sharing something worthwhile with each other.

There was a total of four sessions throughout the day, during each of which 2-3 different panels took place simultaneously, requiring attendees to choose between a variety of topics. During the first session, I opted to attend a panel titled “Responding to Contemporary Issues in Three Genres: Rhetorical Analysis, Argumentation, and Fiction” though it meant missing out on panels discussing the post-contemporary turn in 9/11 literature, and a roundtable on *Moby Dick*. My panel of choice, featuring students from Central, treated its audience to thought-provoking pieces concerning the evolving definitions of gender, the threat of wearable technology, and a fictional

account of a day in the life of an emotional mailbox.

The second session proved just as diverse as the first, with offerings ranging from queering theatre to the adaptations of *Minority Report*. The third session, however, was no choice at all – it was during this session that I made up one-third of Eastern’s panel “Critical and Creative Approaches to Young Adult Literature,” of which Catherine Allegretti and Tashanna Edwards comprised the other two-thirds. Cat presented her psychoanalytic approach to Salinger’s *Catcher in the Rye*, in which she compellingly argued a history of sexual abuse throughout Holden’s childhood which led to his mental instability as a young adult. I similarly took a psychoanalytic approach to another young adult novel, Robert Cormier’s *I Am the Cheese*, demonstrating the lasting effects of a young boy’s Oedipus complex. Tashanna completed our panel with a reading of a chapter from her young adult novel in progress, *Shooting Heaven*, the story of a sixteen-year-old girl with an affinity for cocaine. I, along with everyone else who heard it, can’t wait to read the finished product. All three projects were lucky enough to be completed under the guidance of Dr. Fraustino, who put together our panel and made sure Eastern was represented along with the other talented English students of the Connecticut state universities.



SIGMA TAU DELTA'S "WRITE THE NIGHT"

13

By Catherine Allegretti

Sigma Tau Delta worked to help alleviate some of that end of the semester stress with its "Write the Night" event on Dec. 1 from 9 p.m. - 12 a.m. This event was held in the Curriculum Center of the library. "Write the Night" gave students a quiet and relaxing environment to work on their end-of-the-semester tasks. Over 15 students, a combination of both English majors and non-English majors, came ready to work, study, and line up for some coffee. Those who needed a break from their work could choose from a variety of snacks and participate in board games. At the end of the night, one lucky winner went home with a \$25 gift card to Cafemantic.



Sigma Tau Delta works to provide resources for all students and to promote academic success. This event helped spread awareness about Sigma Tau Delta, while introducing those outside of the English Department to some of the work that this society does.

By Ryan Bahan

Ryan Bahan is currently a Producer and Digital Media Specialist at Vermont Center for Emerging Technologies. He received his B.A. in English at Eastern Connecticut State University in 2015, and his M.S. in Emergent Media at Champlain College in 2016.

My name is Ryan Bahan, and I'm still not really sure what I do. After graduating Eastern in 2015, I've taken on various responsibilities as a Project Manager, Producer, Copywriter, Grant Writer, Website Designer, and Brand Specialist for a plethora of clients ranging from "I have literally no money" to "We are presenting this to The United Nations next week." Throughout these diverse and often unrelated roles, I've been thrown into many, many situations that I was completely and utterly unprepared for. In fact, I probably had no business taking on the responsibilities I did in most cases. I took on web design jobs with little more than a basic understanding of Squarespace and some HTML knowledge. I landed a position as a Project Manager at the Champlain College Emergent Media Center with no prior management experience. I even managed to do sound design for UNESCO after teaching myself the basics of music production on my laptop.

My story isn't particularly unique in terms of background. I don't come from a family that empowered (or contributed to) my network. I'm crippled by student debt. I'm fairly extroverted, but no more or less than the average person. Yet, I have consistently succeeded in delivering substantial products and solutions. Why? Because of the critical thinking, research, and analytical skills I developed in my undergraduate career with the ECSU Department of English. I took on projects of overwhelming magnitude because I knew they could be solved, and my work as an English Major primed me for finding the resources needed to solve them. Want to learn web design basics? Spend a few hours on



Code Academy and in the Squarespace Support documentation. Project Management skill growth? Read up on SCRUM, Agile Methodologies, and 5 Dysfunctions of a Team. Learning a new instrument? Get on YouTube and start taking notes. The entire world is in a state of flux right now. From job markets and economic conditions to food, water, and climate, there is a state of instability and unpredictability that is palatable and real. Old jobs are vanishing. Old ways of thinking are vanishing. Our lifestyles are shifting into tech-centric ways of living and communicating that we are yet to understand. Acknowledging this change is what sets apart the creators from the naysayers.

You have in your pocket and at your fingertips the solution to any conceivable problem — the only limit is how big you can think, and how over your head you're willing to get. Plus, you have another benefit: your critical understanding of the English language. You have within you the ability to digest, interpret, and internalize information in a way that is wholly unique to you, and what you use this ability on will come to define you. I urge you to understand the importance of these ideas. There has never been an easier time to garner knowledge, experience, and applicable skills. There truly has never been an easier time to succeed. Don't ever consider an idea too small to find an answer to, or too large to take on. You stand at the cusp of nearly infinite resources. Use them.

FALL 2016 ENGLISH NIGHT

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By Christina Rossomondo and Ashley Schmitt

The English Department held the biannual event, “English Night” in the Betty R. Tipton Room on Dec. 7. The night began with presentations of scholarships and awards, followed by the Sigma Tau Delta induction, and ended with senior seminar presentations.

The department presented the Constance Campo Scholarship to student Sharon Suchecki. The scholarship is awarded to a non-traditional English student who excels in the classroom and shows sensitivity to gender and diversity issues, as did Ms. Campo. English student Christopher Morris was awarded the David and Janet Phillips Scholarship. This award is appointed annually to an undergraduate student who excels in the field of English, and has participated in theatre, the student literary journal *Eastern Exposure*, or the student newspaper, *Campus Lantern*. Morris has worked with *Eastern Exposure* throughout his time at the Eastern and took the role of club President during the Fall 2016 semester.

Two freshman students were presented the first year writing awards. Natnael Belay and Ismael Rivera were recognized for their innovative, creative, splendidly researched and uniquely articulated work. Belay won the Creativity and Innovation Award for his paper “From Gondar to Eastern,” and Rivera won the Excellent Research Essay Award for his paper “Literacy in Contrasting Environments.”

Students were inducted into Sigma Tau Delta, the international English Honor Society. Chapter President Meaghan McFall-Gorman and vice president Catherine Allegretti along with chapter sponsor Allison Speicher welcomed new members into the group and presented students with their certificates. “Twenty-three students were inducted this year,” said Speicher. “It’s a wonderful and diverse group of bright and committed students.

Expectations for Sigma students are high and once they are inducted we hope they will continue to serve as leaders inside the classroom and out,” she continued.

Five senior seminar students presented their capstone projects during the second half of this event. Dr. Allison Speicher’s “Fictions of Reform” class studied literature on temperance, abolition, and school reform from the nineteenth century. Students took various approaches to delve deeper into one or more of these topics. At the end of the second semester, students shared their abstracts in class and two students were voted to present. Kyle Hottin read from his paper titled “This Little Room of Mine: Nineteenth-Century Tragedies of the Youth and the Rise of Power.” Hottin’s research conveyed the power of childhood deaths in literature. His abstract states “This essay offers insight into author’s ingenious method of utilizing childhood fatalities to change the world, turning sadness into hope.” Ashley Schmitt presented from her paper, “Nineteenth-Century Slavery and Contemporary Sex Trafficking: A Comparative Approach,” which emphasized the commonalities in human trade literature. She claimed “Contemporary sex trafficking reform authors echo the language and plotlines of abolitionist writers in order to evoke emotions and provoke social change in the modern world.” Dr. Ben Pauley’s course, “Imagining Monsters,” examined monsters and the rhetoric of monstrosity from different periods. Three students were voted to present their capstone projects from this class. Catherine Allegretti shared her thoughts on Richard III in her paper “Shakespeare’s ‘determined’ monster: Deformity and Evil in *Richard III*.” She shared “While writers during the time created a link between Richard’s deformity and his underlying evil, this paper examines the way in which Shakespeare shows a softer side of the villain.”

Tammy DeGennaro's project, *Postentum: A Novel*, explores "exactly what it means to be a 'monster', and how our definition of the world is shaped by our own prejudices." Lastly, Madison Forsander presented her project titled, "Pathological Patriarchy: The Monstrous Male Gaze of Robert Herrick and Tyler, the Creator," which compared "outright monstrous behaviors by fetishizing patriarchal ideals of female innocence, commodifying the female appearance, and exercising their unknown male gaze through stalking."

Department Chair Lisa Rowe Fraustino shared, "Hearing the outstanding capstone work of our majors at English Night always makes me proud of our department's students and faculty." Furthermore, Fraustino stated "English Studies produces excellent critical and creative thinkers who can recognize and solve problems – skills that grow increasingly important in what Ralph Keyes has called the 'post-truth era.'"

SPOTLIGHT: ENGLISH NIGHT AWARD WINNERS

By Ashley Schmitt and Christina Rossomondo

The first-year writing awards are given each semester to students whose papers have been nominated by their professors in ENG 100 or ENG 100P and selected by a panel of judges who work as tutors in the Writing Center.

Incoming department Chair, Barbara Liu, introduced the Creativity and Innovation Award winner for this paper "'From Gondar to Eastern': [Natnael] Belay represents the best of us here at Eastern: hardworking, caring, creative, and dedicated to excelling in his chosen field of studies. He deeply understands the value of his education and what he hopes to achieve with it. He is in pursuit of excellence." Ismael Rivera expressed gratitude after earning the Excellent Research Essay Award: "This award made me feel accomplished to have come so far in my writing that I was acknowledged for my work. In high school I was motivated by so many of my teachers who saw potential in me as a writer. I lived through all the issues I discussed in my paper and overcame many obstacles to get where I am in my life. This was an amazing achievement, we all work so hard to get to where we are and with every journey there is a story. Ultimately its your decision to tell that story."

"The night was great!" said Speicher. "So many family members and friends joined us to celebrate the student achievements in earning department awards, being inducted into Sigma, and completing their senior seminars. We couldn't be prouder of our students, and it's always a joy to show them off!"



NEWSLETTER

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Keep-ENG in Touch
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MEET THE SPRING 2017 ENGLISH DEPARTMENT INTERNS

HELP WANTED

Any current student interested in doing a department internship in the spring semester should contact the chair at:

liub@easternct.edu

Montgomery Kupson is a junior at Eastern. She is currently majoring in English with a concentration in Literary Studies and a minor in Writing. She is hoping to pursue a Masters of Fine Arts upon her graduation. Monti is incredibly humbled to be taking up the editor position for this newsletter. Not only is she excited to take the opportunity to learn about the industry of editing; she is also looking forward to being part of the great community of writers and alumni who are as passionate about literature as she is.

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