Message from the new Department Chair: Marianne Montgomery

I am excited to have recently been named the Department of English’s new Chair. We are fortunate to have successful students at all levels, dedicated faculty who are deeply engaged both inside and outside the classroom, a terrific staff, and a growing network of alumni.

I am beginning my time as chair by meeting individually with every one of the department’s faculty members. In the past two weeks, I have started by visiting ten colleagues, hearing about their professional activities and their interests both within and beyond ECU. I have admired plants, children, and woodworking projects and have learned about teaching, scholarship, and service activities that engage with the fundamental questions of our disciplines and of our time.

Inspired by our individual and collective efforts, I look forward to doing my part to help the department build and maintain a reputation for success. Though we live in challenging times, we have much to celebrate. Go English!

Message from the outgoing Interim Department Chair: Don Palumbo

While 2014-15 and 2015-16 have been a particularly difficult couple of years for the English Department, I am happy to have had the privilege of serving as the Department’s Acting Chair and then Interim Chair from January 2015 through the end of April 2016.

While we have collectively just accomplished something both difficult and tangible in having revised our Unit Code, it is what I have learned about the great many individual accomplishments of the members of the English Department faculty—through having participated in two rounds of composing annual faculty evaluations—that I find most gratifying and even inspirational. I am convinced that we are a truly talented and dedicated community of teachers and scholars. This shows in our collective commitment to providing the best possible instruction in the classroom, in our truly spectacular record of scholarly and creative publication, and in the selflessness with which a great many in the department have provided service to the Department, to the College of Arts and Sciences, to the University, to the profession, and to the communities in which we live.

I must admit that I am relieved to be stepping down as Interim Department Chair—as it is a difficult job even in less trying times, and there have been quite a few truly challenging days in the past sixteen months—and I admire Marianne Montgomery’s courage and self-confidence as she steps into that role. As we continue to face the prospect of having to do more and more with less and less, at least in the immediate future, I am delighted that the Department is now in such good hands.
In March, Jennifer Sisk and Gera Miles took 13 students to Viet Nam. The students were from Jennifer’s Ethnic Studies 2001, Global Understanding, class. The ECU group connected with another group of 8 students and their instructor from Japan. Together, the students participated in service and aide work, and Jennifer’s students wrote about their experiences. The trip started and ended in Ho Chi Minh City with a number of stops in various locations where students sometimes stayed with Vietnamese families. Phan Rang—a salt field village—and Dalat—a coastal city famous for its waterfalls—were highlights of the trip. Jennifer’s effort to organize the trip and arrange sponsors, including the Global Understanding program and the English Department, demonstrates her commitment to expanding the horizons of our students.

**Publications**


Alex Albright. “Jim Grimsley gets Schooled” in *NCLR* (online).

Will Banks, Michelle Eble, Tracy Morse, & Wendy Sharer (co-editors). *Reclaiming Accountability: Improving Writing Programs through Accreditation and Large-Scale Assessments.*


Cheryl Dudasik-Wiggs. “In ‘the spaces between knowing and not knowing’” in *NCLR* (online).

Michelle Eble (co-author, Lynee Lewis Gailet). *Primary Research & Writing: People, Places, & Spaces.*


Anna Froula. "Recasting The Best Years of Our Lives: Gender, Revision, & Military Women in the Veteran's Homecoming Film" in Future Texts: Subversive Performance & Feminist Bodies.


Guiseppe Getto. Familiar History.

Brian Glover. “Hitting Home with the New Story Project: Teaching with the North Carolina Literary Review in North Carolina” in NCLR (online).


Grace Horne. “Lessons in Perspective” in NCLR (online).


Amanda Klein. "Clueless & the end of Gen X: How Cher Horowitz taught us to stop worrying & embrace millennial optimism, post-racial fantasy, & the 1 percent” in Salon.


Thomas Herron. “Complex Spenser: New Directions in Recent Research” in Renaissance Quarterly.


Andrea Kitt (co-editor, Trevor J. Blanks). Diagnosing Folklore Perspectives on Disability, Health, & Trauma.


Leanne E. Smith (co-author, Madalyn McLeod). Alfred the Possum: On the Road with the Green Grass Cloggers.


Nicole Nolan Sidhu. Indecent Exposure: Gender, Politics, and Obscene Comedy in Middle English Literature.


Liza Wieland. “City Portrait: Greenville” in Our State Magazine.

Panels & Presentations


Jessica Bardill provided expertise for the Building the Medical Information Commons: Participant Engagement and Policy project in Houston.

Nikki Caswell and MA student Rex Rose presented “Welcoming ’Unwelcomed’ Emotions and Reframing Failure as Productive Activity” at the Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference in Columbus, Georgia.
Joanne Dunn presented “Students Using Sources: Helping Writers Find, Evaluate, and Integrate Outside Research” as part of an Office for Faculty Excellence workshop panel.

Helena Feder presented “Poetry Reading: New Feminist Poems” as part of Women’s Studies’ Gender to a Tea series.

Timm Hackett led a workshop titled “Collaborative Writing and Office365 at ECU,” which was co-sponsored by the department’s distance education and composition committees.

Ron Hoag spoke on “Why Literature Matters” at the Sigma Tau Delta ceremony.

Mark D. Johnson was invited to conduct two pedagogical workshops for teachers of English as a foreign language at Instituto Cultural Peruano Norteamericano (ICPNA) in Lima, Peru. Seen here working with teachers at ICPNA’s Miraflores location, he was able to work with teachers at the ICPNA’s nine other locations throughout the city of Lima via webcast.

Donna Kain was a co-organizer of the international “Data-to Decision” conference—which focused on dissemination of geo-spatial data—held at the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris, France. Kain also presented “Communicating the Results of Socio-economic Assessments.”

Donna Kain presented “Developing an NSF Abstract/Project Summary” at the NSF Career Award Seminar for the college of Engineering and Technology at ECU.

Amanda Klein spoke on “Youth Identities in MTV’s Scripted Reality Television Show” at Portland State University.

John Hoppenthaler spoke at Wells College in Aurora, NY, as part of its Visiting Writers Series.

John Hoppenthaler presented his work as part of the panel “Male Poets Writing Home & Hearth” at the Annual Association of Writers and Writing Programs Conference in Los Angeles, CA.

John Hoppenthaler participated in the Pamlico Writers Conference in Washington, NC.

Randall Martoccia’s documentary Campus Ghost Walk/Folk Talk aired on Greenville-Pitt Access Television.

Wendy Sharer spoke on “‘I’m Billie Jean & I’m Mad as Hell’: The Answer Song as Feminist Remix in American Music” as part of Women’s Studies’ Gender to a Tea.

Tom Shields was interviewed for a documentary entitled A Colony Lost. The 30-minute film, produced by ECU students, appeared on UNC-EX in January.

Amber Thomas was profiled on WUNC Public Radio.

Luke Whisnant participated in the Pamlico Writers Conference in Washington, NC.

Awards & Appointments

Will Banks was a recipient of a 2015-16 ECU Scholar-Teacher Award, which recognizes outstanding faculty members who integrate scholarship & teaching & who seek to mentor others in doing so. He presented a talk entitled “Students Can’t or Students Don’t? The Difference that Inquiry-Driven Instruction Makes in the Classroom (and Out).” A symposium & luncheon in honor of the recipients was held in March.

Will Banks was awarded external funding from the National Science Foundation for the Tar River Writing Project.

Will Banks was also awarded external funding from the John D. & Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation for “Pop-up & Make: Engaging Smart-Block Students.”

The Summer internship for INdigenous peoples in Genomics Aotearoa (SING-A) program invited Jessica Bardill to serve as ethics faculty, presenting her own research & facilitating the training of Maori scientists & social scientists during January 2016. Departmental funding & the Office of Equity & Diversity supported her travel, & SING-A supported her expenses in the country.

Jessica Bardill received a Faculty Travel Grant from HCAS to present "Restless Remains & Testifying Tricksters: Repatriation & Witness in Kneubuhl's Ola Na Iwi & Vizenor's Heirs of Columbus” at the Native American & Indigenous Studies Association conference in Honolulu, HI.

Nikki Caswell received funding from HCAS to support the publication of her first book, The Working Lives of New Writing Center Directors.

Seedial Frank Deena was awarded supplemental funds to support professional travel.
The Office of Equity & Diversity named Cheryl Dudasik-Wiggs a Deputy Title IX Coordinator and a Campus Security Authority member.

Michelle Eble received ECU’s Centennial Award for Excellence in the area of ambition. The Centennial Awards for Excellence represent the highest awards given to ECU faculty and staff for excellence in the areas of service, leadership, ambition, and spirit.

Erin Frost was accepted in to the BB&T Leadership Fellows program during spring 2016.

Anna Froula received a HCAS Reassignment Grant to assist with her research on “Dialogues on the Experience of War.”

John Hoppenthaler’s Domestic Garden was on the long list for the Julie Suk Award for the best book of poetry published by an independent or university press in 2015. She’s the First”—the non-profit student group mentored by Donna Kain—has received several kudos: Chapter leader Keerthana Velappan received The Substantial U Award, co-president Martha Ervin received a CREED Diversity award, and the organization itself won the 2015-16 ECU Student Organization of the Year Award and was nominated for an ALANA Heritage award.

Andrea Kitta was a recipient of a 2015-16 ECU Scholar-Teacher Award, which recognizes outstanding faculty members who integrate scholarship & teaching & who seek to mentor others in doing so. She presented a talk entitled “A Case for Slender Man: Using the Supernatural and the Folkloresque to Teach Belief Formation.” A symposium & luncheon in honor of the recipients was held in March.

Luke Whisnant’s "In the Debris Field," which was published in Posit in Spring 2015, was nominated for a Pushcart Prize.


Michael Albers organized the Technical & Professional Communication program’s fifth annual Symposium on Communicating Complex Information in February. The keynote speaker was Ginny Redish (Redish, Redish, & Associates) who presented “People are Complex Too.” Guiseppe Getto and Kirk St. Amant also attended.

Tom Douglass co-organized a Veterans Writing Workshop in April. Session leaders were Kevin Powers, PEN Hemingway Award winner and combat Iraq War veteran; Shelby Stephenson, NC poet laureate; John Hoppenthaler, poet and ECU associate professor of English; Robert Siegel, playwright and ECU associate professor of English; and Linda Fox, photographer and ECU alumna. Associated events included a Veterans Book Project, a book and photography display, and an open forum. Co-sponsors: Operation Re-Entry NC, ECU Office of Student Transitions, THCAS, Pirate Veterans, Joyner Library, and ECU Contemporary Writers Series.

Jim Grimsley read from his memoir How I Shed My Skin. Co-sponsors: Greenville Museum of Art, NCLR, & ECU’s GLBT Student Union.

Corinee Guy and Tom Herron announced the winners of the second annual Shakespearean Sonnet-Writing Contest Prize at an awards ceremony in April. Marianne Montgomery discussed the art of Shakespeare’s sonnets, and the winners read their works. Following the ceremony, ECU’s Storybook Theatre Shakespeare performed scene from several of the Bard’s plays.

Co-sponsor: Sigma Tau Delta.

**ECU division**
First place: Charles Haney

**High school division**
First place: Lucas Seijos, West Craven High School
Second place: Lily Creel, West Craven High School

Sponsored Events

Poet and former colleague Pat Bizzaro (retired, Indiana University of PA) presented a reading of his work.

Poet and former colleague Mary Carroll-Hackett (Longwood University, VA) was the keynote speaker at the department’s spring graduation.

Larissa Tracy (Longwood University, VA) spoke on “Justice, Kingship, Adultery, & Treason in Malory: Lancelot & Guinevere, Lovers or Traitors?” Co-sponsors: THCAS, Great Books, & Medieval & Renaissance Studies.

Poet Tracey Knapp (Boston University) visited John Hoppenthaler’s workshop via Skype.

Poet Tanaya Winder spoke during Multicultural Literature Day. ECU’s Spoken Word Poetry Team, WORD OF MOUTH, also performed. Co-sponsors: Multicultural & Transnational Literature, English Club, Ethnic Studies, and Ledonia Wright Cultural Center.
Mark Johnson coordinated the TESOL & Applied Linguistics Graduate Student (TALGS) Conference in February. The keynote speaker was Luciana de Oliveira (University of Miami), whose research examines the linguistic challenges of Common Core, presented on scaffolding second language instruction in the mainstream classroom.

Dr. de Oliveira on campus with students

Student Scholarships & Awards

Russell Christman Memorial Scholarship: Paige Vaughan

Charles & Patricia Moore Scholarship in English: Sarah McKeever (Fall 2016) and Alyssa Harding (Spring 2017)

Debbie O’Neal Award for Outstanding Academic Achievements in Linguistics/TESOL: Morgan Rose Shelor.

Technical and Professional Communication Certificate student Jonah Schwartz was co-winner of the 2017 Society for Technical Communication's (STC) Student Infographic Contest sponsored by the STC’s Academic Special Interest Group (SIG). Jonah will be starting our MA program in the fall.

Transitions

Lindsay Canting, lead administrator, has taken a position with Laupus Library.

Marianne Montgomery has accepted the position of English department chair.

Ken Parille’s digital humanities project The Daniel Clowes Bibliography celebrated its fifteenth anniversary in February.

Timothy Putnam has joined the department as the administrative support associate for the Director of Graduate Studies.

Kirk St. Amant has accepted the Eunice C. Williamson Endowed Chair in Technical Writing at Louisiana Tech.

If we have forgotten any of your glories or neglected to mention one of your stories, please demonstrate your customary graciousness about our news-gathering tenaciousness. As with any journalistic tradition, there will always be another edition.

In other words, send us your stuff, and we’ll get it in next time!
Message from the Editors: Donna Kain & Cheryl Dudasik-Wiggs

First, the obvious—we welcome Dr. Marianne Montgomery as our chair. Dr. Montgomery brings a wealth of experience from across the campus to her new role and epitomizes the level of scholarship and teaching represented by the hard work of the faculty and students in this department. We also want to recognize that Dr. Montgomery is the first woman to be selected as chair of the English Department. During a year when the university has seriously considered Title IX issues and conducted a salary equity study, the choice of Dr. Montgomery is particularly relevant.

We also want to thank Dr. Don Palumbo for picking up the eyepatch and stepping in to helm the ship. Despite budget icebergs and the occasional toothy shark, Dr. Palumbo has maintained his aplomb in navigating the sometimes-turbulent university waters. ARRRGH!!

We also want to encourage everyone to celebrate our collective efforts as often as we can by sharing our work and our ideas. Some of us have enjoyed participating in and attending the Faculty Speaker Series, and we want to take this opportunity to thank Solveig Bosse and Kristy Ulibarri for taking the lead on organizing these events. (They bring good cheese and bread too!) Department faculty members also regularly present their research at events such as Downtown Dialogues, Gender to a Tea, and FacultyTeas. We hope these types of events will continue in the future and encourage our colleagues to come to a few each year.

In closing, we note that Dr. Montgomery’s appointment is not the only obvious change in administration. We have a new President of the UNC system and a new Chancellor. The old chestnut, “May you live in interesting times,” seems applicable. Whatever the changes bring—and we have our share of changes around here—our faculty is always productive, as the lists of accomplishments here attest. We look forward to the next year when the interesting work of planning the future of the department will begin again. Hopefully, we'll “all arrive at a very special place, spiritually, ecumenically, grammatically.”

Have a wonderful summer!

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1 Far be it for us to plagiarize—Sparrow, Jack (CAPTAIN), Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl (2003). Gore Verbinski, Dir.; Ted Elliott & Terry Rossio, screenplay; Walt Disney Pictures (presents) (in association with) Jerry Bruckheimer Films; Jerry Bruckheimer et al., producers.