

The **ETFL** Beacon

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The Newsletter of the Department of English, Theatre, and Foreign Languages at UNC Pembroke

POETRY AND PROSE COME ALIVE

This Fall semester, students and faculty filled the student union with the words of famous authors. On October 31, students and faculty dressed up as and read from the works of their favorite dead writers for the now annual “Dead Authors” event. Entrants read works from a variety of writers including Shakespeare, Edgar Allen Poe, Maya Angelou, and Toni Morrison. While student readers outnumbered faculty, the faculty definitely won in costuming this year. Faculty dressed up as Mary Oliver and Dante, among others. A good crowd gathered to hear the readings and enjoy the sights.



Students and faculty continued bringing literature to the campus with another end-of-the-semester reading event in mid-November. Students brought a favorite reading of their choice to share as a great way to celebrate the end of the semester. Once again, they filled all the seats available, showing the power of language and imagery!

CONTINUED SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE

STUDENTS “HUNGRY” FOR SERVICE-LEARNING

English 1050 students often participate in innovative activities through the many service-learning courses at UNCP. Professor Hannah Baggott Anderson organized a Hunger Banquet involving over 100 composition students in six classes on October 9, 2019. The event was sponsored by UNCP’s Office for Community and Civic Engagement and the CARE Resource Center. English 1050 students in the service-learning courses taught by Anderson and Dr. Autumn Lauzon engaged in a simulation to show the inequality of wealth distribution and how poverty and hunger affect communities around the world.

During the Hunger Banquet, students received an assigned character as they entered with a designated social “class” (upper, middle, or lower), and they could text a number to read the story behind their character. All of these stories were based on actual events. During the event, Anderson and Lauzon highlighted statistics related to poverty around the world. In addition, the simulation involved role playing in which students’ “stories” allowed them to “rise” to the middle class or move to the lower class. These changes in socioeconomic status were sometimes due to changes in employment in which simulated corporations cut their jobs. Also, some characters experienced natural disasters that destroyed agricultural assets.



Student Lindsey Nichols said, “I started as middle class in the banquet, but I was moved to lower class because all of my crops died. So I didn’t have income. It was shocking how quickly things could change!” Through the role playing, students got a better understanding of the complex dynamics of poverty.

The event culminated with a banquet, but not a traditional feast. The “upper class group” got cake and soda, the “middle class” received only bottles of water and packs of crackers, and the “lower class” (which was the largest) had to share a pitcher of water and one box of saltines. The most interesting part of the event was seeing how the upper class

groups never offered to share with the other groups. “What shocked me most was learning that women are more likely to be in poverty than men, and that wealth greatly affects your life expectancy,” said student Lindsey Nichols. “This event has opened my eyes to recognize that there is a problem and encouraged me to educate myself in order to help eradicate hunger and the separation of people by social class,” noted student Clavaria Jefferys.

The Hunger Banquet engaged students in an immersive experience, and it also gave them a chance to think about how they can be agents for change in our communities.

POETRY PARTNERSHIP CONTINUES ITS SUCCESS

“It’s been a memorable experience,” said Dio Hernandez about the Poetry Partnership that he has participated in for the last two years. Hernandez, a UNC sophomore, added, “We have helped the students gain confidence in their writing by



urging them to express themselves, which promotes their future goals and dreams.”

Last year approximately 65 freshman students from UNCP in the service-learning composition courses led by Deana Johnson and Amy Williams hosted a special reading party in February of 2019 for 51 second graders from R.B. Dean Elementary School in Maxton, North Carolina. With the help of Sara Oswald’s Publication Design class, each child’s poem from the reading party was typed, edited, and published into an original publication, a poetry booklet, *Dreams from R. B. Dean*. Each student received a copy.

“We were thrilled to work with the second-grade classes from R.B. Dean, and our collaborative efforts have produced work that students and faculty members from both UNCP and R.B. Dean can be proud of and celebrate,” said Johnson, Director of the College Opportunity Program.

This year’s publication featured a special dedication to Ms. Sandra Cassidy, who was involved with the project for all three years. Ms. Cassidy retired in 2019 after teaching 25 of her 27 years at R.B. Dean Elementary. She and others, such as Ms. Tikia Eaddy, Ms. Janice Gibbs, and Ms. Stephanie McIntyre, were an integral part of the project.

Student Profile: Bridgett Baldwin

A resident of Whiteville, NC, Bridgett Baldwin is a senior English major with a concentration in Secondary Education (Grades 9-12).



What made you decide to major in English?

I have always been an avid reader and, upon deciding to return to school to further my education, I knew it would include literacy as a foundation. I wanted my future students to acquire the same enthusiasm for reading and writing that I have; therefore, I knew becoming an English major would allow me to deepen my knowledge, while providing me with necessary skills that I will carry into the classroom.

What’s your favorite thing about being an English Major?

My favorite thing about being an English major is reading and learning about the different literary time periods, the authors, and their literary works.

What should people outside the major understand about the field?

I wish they understood that it involves more than reading and writing, as it is a treasure chest of history and art as well. Becoming an English major opens one up to wonderful experiences in time and to places never imagined.

What do you like to read for fun? How do you spend your free time?

Reading for fun involves me reading short stories. When not reading, I spend my free time taking care of my flowers. It relaxes my mind; I enjoy seeing the beautiful outcome of work produced with my own hands.

Is there anything else about yourself you’d like to share?

Coming to UNCP as a non-traditional student was one of the toughest transitions I ever made. My first semester I wanted to quit, but one of my professors said to me “No, you are not.” That was the wind that helped push me forward. Having stayed the course, I am appreciative of every challenge that I faced to get this far.

This is my exciting senior year, and life has presented the toughest challenge I have ever faced. In the spring, I was diagnosed with Invasive Ductal Carcinoma Stage 3C. Giving up was the easiest thing to do; however, I decided that giving up was not an option. When I received my cancer diagnosis in April, another professor looked into my eyes (it felt like my soul) and said, “Bridgett, you power through, power through.” Grace and mercy have allowed me to power through. As the sun is peeking out from behind the cloud, I look forward to May. It is these experiences combined with all the impactful knowledge that I have received from all of my professors that I intend to take into my future classroom to make a difference.

The Poetry Partnership Project, an ongoing initiative between the College Opportunity Program, Oswald's PRE 3450 classes, and the Office for Community and Civic Engagement at UNC Pembroke as well as R. B. Dean Elementary, is entering its fourth year of serving students at both local elementary schools and UNCP. UNCP students are already hard at work on the next publication, although they will be working with a different public school partner after the closure of R. B. Dean Elementary. Hernandez stresses that the experience "benefits both the volunteers and the elementary students," highlighting the value of service learning across various communities.

CLASS CONDUCTS WRITING WORKSHOP AT SPRING HILL MIDDLE SCHOOL



Langston Hughes was a poet of the people, capable of raising consciousness and inspiring others. Thanks to their service-learning at an area middle school, UNC Pembroke students enrolled in African American Literature: Traditions & Contexts realized that he still matters, with the power to move and inspire the next generation.

Students in English professor Scott Hicks's class, ENG 2100, visited Spring Hill Middle School in Laurinburg on Oct. 9. There, they worked in teams to teach eighth-grade students about Hughes' life and importance. The eighth-grade students then practiced skills of active reading and critical thinking, sharing their interpretations of selected poems by Hughes. Inspired by Hughes' poetry, the students then wrote their own original poetry, which Hicks and service-learning teaching Assistant Hannah Middleton will transcribe and publish as Spring Hill's first-ever literary magazine.

"This activity is crucial for a General Education literature class," Hicks said. "My students get to share their love for the literature with young people, and they practice the skills of annotation and interpretation and critical thinking that we've been doing in the classroom since the start of the semester."

What's more, Hicks' UNCP students are exposed to the efforts behind the scenes that go into creating the literature that they experience in their anthologies. "I want them to get a feel for what the Harlem Renaissance was like, when Hughes and others were supporting each other and creating the long-lasting expressions that came out of the Harlem Renaissance," Hicks said. "They got to see the eighth-graders excited to create, sharing their work with their peers, enthusiastic to share their perspectives – just like Hughes and other writers were supporting and cheering on each other."

After their experience at Spring Hill, Hicks and his students reflected on their learning. They were impressed by the Spring Hill students' creativity and perspicacity in interpreting and analyzing Hughes' poetry, and they appreciated how excited Spring Hill's students were to write and share their own original work. They also saw how much the middle school students valued them as role models, as they answered many questions about college classes, athletics, and campus life.

Spring Hill teacher Dawn Salzlein thanked the UNCP students for their service to her students. "My students really enjoyed the discussions about Langston Hughes and reading his poetry," she said. "When I eavesdropped, I was pleased with their writing. Your students pulled some heartfelt poetry from mine."

Such partnerships between the university and community depend on the leadership and support of Sandy Jacobs, associate director of the Office of Community & Civic Engagement and director of academic service-learning. CCE provides vital support: (1) a service-learning teaching assistant to coordinate a strong relationship between the community partner and the university and (2) a project stipend to fund the publication of the literary magazine for Spring Hill's students.

"I am honored to have the responsibility to help engage our students in academic service-learning efforts here at UNCP," Jacobs said. "Through service-learning, our students engage in life-changing initiatives that not only impact their lives but our community's as well. Our students are gaining the skills of leadership and active citizenship while becoming agents of change that contribute to our community. Our community has been very receptive to our students, and we hope that in the future the partnership only continues to flourish."

TO BE CONTINUED ...

The three projects above illustrate just a few ways in which our department's embrace of service-learning pedagogy links classroom material with real-world experience to meet community needs. Keep reading the ETFL website and future editions of *The Beacon* for more.

TURN-ABOUT IS FAIR PLAY

Michael Frayn's 1982 classic *Noises Off!* delighted audiences at the GPAC on November 14-15. Full of glorious surprises and delicious comedy, *Noises Off* has been acclaimed by critics as one of the funniest farces ever written. It's opening night of *Nothing On*, the play-within-the-play, and things couldn't be worse—forgotten lines, love triangles—and the audience gets to see the pandemonium unfold both onstage and, after the set is turned around at the first intermission, backstage.



The performances were directed by Jonathan Drahos in GPAC's third artist-in-residence production, giving our Uni-



versity Theatre students the opportunity to work alongside professional artists. Featured in the production were UNCP students Jamonte Madison, Chelsea Williams, and Harley Westbrooks. Carolanne Marano, Carolyn Kegel, Jay Reum, Olivia van Opel, and Noah Yaconelli were among the visiting actors who played leading roles in the production and mentored the UNCP students who served as their understudies: Nolan Sell, Shannell Dixon, Kevin Stepp, Parker Vass, Brittany Terranova, Chris Bates Jr., and Cheyenne Ward. In addition to their madcap performances, the audience was also amused and amazed by the *coup de théâtre* of the rotating set, achieved through the scenic design of David Underwood, lighting design by Eric Voecks, and the work of the student crews who achieved the transformation.

HOLDEN HANSEN IN *THE CONTAINER*

In October 2019 Professor Holden Hansen performed in the Burning Coal Theatre Company's 28-performance run of Clare Bayley's *The Container*. This play, directed by Avis Hatcher-Puzzo, follows the stories of five people fleeing various



war-torn countries and takes place in the shipping container in which they journey to the West. But the set isn't represented on a traditional stage. The entirety of the play is performed in an actual 40-foot-long shipping container, parked in front of Raleigh's Contemporary Art Museum. Given the space restrictions, this production is more intimate than most, with only twenty people able to view each performance. Professor Hansen, who played Afghan businessman Ahmad, reflects that "the close proximity of the audience enhances the symbiotic nature of the transaction that occurs between the audience and actor. This is what makes live theatre a unique form of art, and, in the case of *The Container*, a particularly intense experience." In fact, Hansen recalls a particularly special moment "where I was

aware of an audience member who was responding to the performance in a particularly emotional way. This served as a catalyst for real emotion within myself and my castmates. I don't often actually experience that level of vulnerability on stage." Hansen describes such moments as "gold" for the actor." Given the sold-out showings and positive reviews, such moments must have been "gold" for the audience as well.

For more information on the performance, including reviews, supplemental materials on migration, and an interview with the playwright, please visit: <https://burningcoal.org/the-container-by-clare-bayley/>.

RECENT ETFL PRESENTATIONS AND PUBLICATIONS

ETFL faculty keep busy outside of the classroom; below is a brief round-up of recent research presentations and publications from mid-2019 to the present.

FACULTY PRESENTATIONS

- DR. ANITA GUYNN.** “Native and Non-Native Speakers in the Developmental Writing Classroom—One Big Happy Family?” Claflin Pedagogy Conference. October 2019.
- DR. LAURA HAKALA.** “Creating Spaces for Child Activism: Antislavery Efforts in *Step by Step; or Tidy’s Way to Freedom.*” Children’s Literature Association Conference. June 2019.
- DR. SCOTT HICKS** with Olivia Sadler, Student Assistant for Teaching and Learning for Sustainability, Teaching & Learning Center. “Environmental Attitudes and Knowledge of Undergraduate Students at the University of North Carolina, Pembroke.” POD Network Conference, Pittsburgh, November 2019.
- DR. DIANA LEE.** “Biopolitics, Bananas, and Buendías: Sovereign Power and Nature in Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude.*” London Centre for Interdisciplinary Research. October 2019.
- DR. WALT LEWALLEN.** “That Sinking Feeling: Mailer, Technology, Mood,” Norman Mailer Society’s Conference. October 2019
- DR. ABIGAIL MANN.** “Alice in *Udolpho*: Reading the Radcliffean into Wonderland.” North American Victorian Studies Association Conference. October 2019; “Roundtable and Workshop: Pedagogy.” Victorian Data Conference. November 2019.
- DR. JOSEPH SWEET** with A. Celaya. “Teacher Educators’ and Preservice Teachers’ Interactions with Queer-Themed Literature in Designing Culturally Sustaining Classrooms.” National Council for Teachers of English. November 2019; with A. Celaya. “Preservice Teachers Interactions with The Music of What Happens in Designing More Culturally Sustaining Pedagogies.” Assembly on Literature for Adolescents of NCTE. November 2019; with J. Marsh. “Negotiating Discourses between University and School-Based Literacy Mentoring: Shifting Power, Shifting Authority.” Roundtable Presentation, Literacy Research Association Annual Conference, December, 2019.

FACULTY PUBLICATIONS

- DR. SCOTT HICKS.** “Good Teaching Is ...,” *Bravery: A Digital Journal from UNCP’s College of Arts & Sciences*, vol. 3, March 2019; “Resilience for Sustainability in Higher Education.” *Resilience: A Journal of the Environmental Humanities*, July 2019.
- DR. MELISSA SCHAUB.** *Performativity in Elizabeth Gasell’s Shorter Fiction: A Case Study in the Uses of Theory.* Palgrave Pivot. 2019.
- DR. JOSEPH SWEET** with E. Nurminen & M. Koro-Ljungberg. “Becoming Research with Shadow Work: Combining Artful Inquiry with Research-Creation” *Qualitative Inquiry*. July 2019; “Deep Friendship at a Sausage Party: A Foucauldian Reading of Friendship, Fractured Masculinities, and Their Potential for School Practices.” In D.L. Carlson & N. Rodriguez (Eds). *Friendship as Ascesis: Foucault and Queer Studies in Education.* New York: Palgrave Macmillan. 2019; with Dr. David Lee Carlson. “Foucault and Kristeva: Subject Production, History, and Sense Making” In W. Gershon (Ed). *Sensuous Curriculum: Politics and the Senses in Education.* New York: Information Age. 2019; Dr. Joseph Sweet et. al. “A Pledge of Faithfulness: How Black Christian Fraternity Men Embody Race, Gender, and Religious Identities” *The Journal of Higher Education*. July 2019; Dr. Joseph Sweet and Dr. David Lee Carlson. “Theories of Liminality of Gender and Sexuality in Transparent” *Qualitative Inquiry*. November 2019.