CLASS Notes

Georgia Southern University

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Welcome to Georgia Southern University / College of Liberal Arts & Social Sciences

Greetings!

It’s that time of the year again: Spring has sprung, and students are preparing for final exams, summer vacation, summer school, or graduation. Congratulations to the Class of 2013 and to all of our undergraduate and graduate students still working toward their diplomas: Thanks for a wonderful year, and we’ll see you again soon.

Several faculty members and students of CLASS have exciting summer plans: Prof. Julia Fischer of the Department of Art will be in Italy next month through July to teach and research, and Southern Chorale will soon depart for Austria, where they will compete in the Linz Bruckner International Festival and continue on a concert tour of Italy.

Then, when everyone returns in the fall, we anticipate another spectacular year of events, research, and service. We can’t wait to tell you all about them!

Please let us know about your summer plans and life events (honors, awards, promotions, and successes) through the online alumni survey or by sending an email to class@georgiasouthern.edu. And, if you find yourself in Statesboro, stop by and see us; we always enjoy catching up with old friends and alumni!

With warmest regards,

Curtis E. Ricker, interim dean
Writing and Linguistics

As a recent visitor remarked, the Department of Writing and Linguistics has established a very distinct national presence. This presence was highlighted when the Department’s proposals to host two major national peer-reviewed conferences were accepted. Last summer, W&L hosted the International Writing across the Curriculum Conference, which brought about 450 scholars to Savannah. This summer W&L is coordinating the annual Council of Writing Program Administrators Conference, also in Savannah. These two conferences are regularly attended by prominent specialists in the field of Writing Studies.

This year has brought a type of Triple Crown to the Department: three of our Creative Writing faculty members have books out this year - a new short story collection from Laura Valeri (Safe in Your Head), Emma Bolden’s first full-length poetry collection (Maleficae), and Jared Sexton’s first collection of short stories (An End to All Things).

In other publications news, “Our Bodies Kept Moving,” a short story by Sarah Domet, was published in the online version of Juked. Eric Nelson had three poems accepted by guest editor Annie Finch for the journal About Place, and Michele Rozga has learned that The Comstock Review will soon publish three of her poems - two in July and one in the fall issue.

Faculty continued productive work in grant-writing. June Joyner and Kathy Albertson, as co-PIs, secured $55,000 from the National Writing Project to fund the Georgia Southern Writing Project, which supports the professional development of area public school teachers and University faculty. Joyner and Albertson also recently conducted two workshops at Glennville Middle School in Tattnall County. These workshops were sponsored by GMS as part of a Young Authors Conference to treat the top 30 students who participated in the Georgia Young Authors competition. A graduate assistant from International Studies, Kozue Kobayashi, accompanied Albertson and Joyner to the conference.

Associate Professor Lori Amy arranged two exciting events this year that furthered the department’s international studies profile: the first-ever study aboard trip to the Balkans (Albania, Corfu, Kosova, and Montenegro) for the University Honors Program and the first exchange of students from Albania to Georgia Southern through the 2013 Albanian American Educational Exchange. The exchange group, representing four different universities and faculties, will work within their university structures to develop peer support groups for academic research and writing. Amy also has continued her research on traumatic memory and identity in Albania under communism and the current government through her involvement with the National Democratic Institute, which is conducting pre-election assessment and evaluation in the country. The pre-election mission, led by former Sen. Howard Dean, has included meetings with leading writers and journalists. She will work with the Coalition of Domestic Observers to monitor the June 2013 parliamentary elections.

As part of the inauguration festivities of the new president of Savannah State University, Dr. Thomas Klein delivered an invited presentation "Sounds of Africa in Old Geechee Gullah Names" at the symposium The African American Experience in Georgia and South Carolina: A Rich Legacy.

Visiting Assistant Professor Rachel Leroy presented "Journal Writing Benefits All Disciplines" at the Scholarship on Teaching and Learning Conference in Savannah in March, and visiting Instructor Jennifer Lambeth served as the announcer for the University Spelling Bee on April 8.

In Fall 2014, W&L will begin offering graduate courses for an online graduate certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages/Applied Linguistics. In March 2013 the department received word that its proposal for its first programmatic foray into graduate education
was approved by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This online graduate certificate will be the first of its kind in the state.

Part of what continues to be exciting about Writing and Linguistics is the achievement of our students. This year the student speaker at Honors Day was Efadul Huq, who is minoring in W&L. One-third of his speech was about the reading and writing that he had done in a poetry class with Emma Bolden. Naima Ozier, a student of Dr. Thomas Klein, won a $100 cash prize for her presentation "Language Distorted: A Linguistic Analysis of Legalese" at the Georgia Southern 2013 Research Symposium. James Morton, who is majoring in W&L, has had a creative nonfiction piece "Ambien" about PTSD, his time as an EMT/firefighter, and his buddy John, published by *Pegasus*, the literary magazine at Abraham Baldwin Agricultural College.

Perhaps the most exciting event for Writing and Linguistics this year involved one of our majors, Evin Hughes, who won the first-ever National College Muhammad Ali Writing Award for Ethics with his essay "Float Like a Plane, Sting Like a Bomb: The Ethics of U.S. Drone Attacks." By winning this award, Evin received a $10,000 prize, attended a gala in New York City at which the film director Olivier Stone presented him the award, and has the opportunity to attend the Norman Mailer summer writing workshop for a week in Provincetown, Mass. While meeting Muhammad and Lonnie Ali and receiving this recognition were fantastic, perhaps the most extraordinary aspect of the award was learning that one of the judges who selected Evin's essay was Elie Wiesel, the Nobel Peace Prize Laureate. Needless to say, we faculty were all proud of Evin and appreciated how this achievement brought further recognition to Writing and Linguistics.

Lastly, the Department has hired its new chair, Dr. Dan Bauer, who is coming to Georgia Southern from Georgia College and State University in Milledgeville, and two new tenure-track faculty members, Dr. Jinrong Li, who specializes in teaching English to speakers of other languages, and Joanna Schreiber, who will be teaching and researching in the professional and technical writing area.

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**At the Front of the CLASS**

My name is Chris Combs, and I am an alumnus of Georgia Southern University, class of Fall 2012.

During my time at Georgia Southern, I found that I am a man of many passions: everything from history to biology to geography, and probably most importantly, writing. I recently left Georgia Southern with two degrees: A bachelors of art in writing and linguistics with a focus in creative writing and a bachelors of arts in geography. Both have interchangeably helped me learn about the world and understand it, an idea that I hold as a high priority in my life.
When I was looking for the college of best for me, I found myself drawn to Georgia Southern, leading to my transfer here during my sophomore year. During that time, I was looking for a new avenue to pursue, a subject that I already had some experience in and one that would assist me in finding my place in day-to-day life. Thus, I found myself experimenting with and choosing a degree in writing. I might not have been the most talented or fluent writer, and I still am not at many times, but in CLASS I found a niche for me, an optimal environment that has allowed me to dig deep so many different inner-caverns that make me who I am: a producer of creative and original thoughts, or at least I like to think so.

My time as a writing student at Georgia Southern has been amplified by an extraordinary faculty that focused so much time on me and convinced me to put forth effort in the literary arts. Every day, via workshops and free-writes, critical thinking exercises, and real-life scenario projects, my abilities as a creative writer evolved. This open atmosphere encouraged a thought process that was all my own. My peers also seamlessly provided a give-or-take system that, for me, has allowed me to identify where and how I must go as a writer.

This past year, I received the 2012 Harbuck Writing Scholarship award. I will truthfully admit that it was a surprise for me. I was ecstatic that everything I had learned up to that point in my career as a writer could be measured in some manner. The scholarship allowed me to realize that an even greater focus on my writing could yield more rewards in my young, still growing career. For the scholarship, I submitted a range of poetry. It was a fantastic opportunity to showcase my writing for both a private audience of judges and a public audience of willing listeners. The scholarship has been an enormous confidence booster for my self-esteem as a writer. Not to mention the fantastic chance to interact and converse with fellow writers, both as new as I, and experienced with much that I can and have learned from.

I honestly say that I owe much thanks to the department and faculty of CLASS and to everyone involved with the Harbuck Scholarship. All of it has bundled into an experience that was planted, sprouted, and has been continuously growing healthy and phenomenal knowledge I can utilize in my career as a writer and elsewhere.

Foreign Languages
Student Alwin Mercedes was profiled by Connect Statesboro.

Prof. David Seaman collaborated on the avant garde multimedia poetry project now published as the book Virtual Mercury House Planetary and Interplanetary Events (Rome, Italy: Edizioni Polimata, 2012). In this bilingual volume, Seaman edited all the English translations, contributed an essay, "An Intermedia Orgy," (97-102) and is pictured as one of the poets reading live via Skype at the Venice Biennale. Seaman also presented two invited lectures in late March on American culture and gun control and sustainability at private high schools in France. The school in Saumur is one where Georgia Southern currently sends two students to serve as English language assistants each year, and, as a result of Seaman's visit, the school in Cholet has invited two Georgia Southern students to serve as English language assistants there for the coming year.
Art
Several students have been accepted to graduate school programs, including Meryl Sutton (BA Art History) by Kingston University in London; Megan Neely (BA Art History) by the University of Georgia in Athens; Lauren Davis (BA Art History) by Piedmont College in Athens, Ga.; and Caitlin Crute (BA Studio '12) by the University of Georgia.

Participation in the annual Empty Bowl Project, which raises money for the Statesboro Food Bank, contributed to Georgia Southern being named to the 2013 President's Higher Education Community Service Honor Roll.

The Department held its annual ArtsFest event.

Professors Elsie Hill and Jessica Burke chaired a session entitled "Raw Data" at the 2013 Foundations Art Theory and Education Conference in Savannah.

Professor Julia Fischer will teach abroad in Montepulciano, Italy, during May and June. She also plans to attend the Association for Research into Crimes Against Art Conference in Amelia, Italy, in July.

Psychology
Professor Amy Hackney was profiled by Connect Statesboro.

Music
The Southern Pride Marching Band performed at Turner Field for the 2013 Atlanta Braves Opening Day.

Of the 19 choirs participating in the Linz Bruckner International Festival in Austria this summer, Georgia Southern Chorale was among four chosen to perform during the festival's Opening Gala Concert.

The Elaris Duo, comprised of Drs. Steven and Larisa Elisha, performed several concerts, including in Savannah, Chicago, and Taipei and taught a masterclass at the National Taiwan University of the Arts.

Literature and Philosophy
Student Gabrielle Jiovenetta was profiled in Connect Statesboro.

Professor Olivia Edenfield recently signed a publishing agreement with the University of South Carolina Press for the publication of a book manuscript entitled Understanding Andre Dubus.

Dr. Tim Whelan was awarded a $6000 Franklin Travel Grant from the American Philosophical Society for his work this summer transcribing approximately 100 letters of the diarist Henry Crabb Robinson (1775-1867). Whelan will be working at the National Library of Scotland, the Wordsworth Museum, the Bodleian Library, British Library, Fitzwilliam Museum and Trinity College Library at Cambridge, Lambeth Palace, the University of London, and libraries at Newcastle, Manchester, Leeds, and Birmingham.

Candy Schille had a paper, "Why Did Dryden Rehabilitate Cressida?", accepted by Restoration.
Under the direction of Dr. Danielle Layne and with the help of the Phi Sigma Tau international philosophy honor society, the Department hosted its second annual undergraduate student Philosophy Conference. This year's theme was Philosophy and Popular Culture, and some 30 papers read by students from as far afield as Pennsylvania and Minnesota.

Dr. Bill Eaton received word from Henry Yates at Kilkenny College, the primary school of George Berkeley and Jonathan Swift, that they will contribute $1000 for the travel expenses of scholars participating in the conference "Educing the Irish Genius: The Kilkenny 2014 Philosophical Symposium," which Eaton has planned. This will allow the Department to provide each participant with a $500 travel grant, bringing together the best scholars of Irish philosophy in the world for the symposium.

Dr. Dustin Anderson received this year's Nichols / Hamlet Award, funded each year by Drs. Betsy and Jim Nichols to help faculty members undertake research abroad. Anderson will use the award to help fund his research this summer in Waterford, Ireland.

The Faculty Research Committee has awarded Dr. Mary Villeponteaux $3572 to help fund her project "The Rusty Sword: The Queen's Mercy in Elizabethan Literature and Culture."

Communication Arts
Student Zoe Campbell (a theater and foreign languages double-major) was named the University's top student for the graduating class of 2013 and honored during Georgia Southern's Honors Day festivities.

Student Kristy Maxwell was profiled by Connect Statesboro.

Professor Brian Graves and senior Jake Taylor unveiled their film project that aims to uncover the somewhat mysterious history of the abandoned meat packing plant on Packinghouse Road in Statesboro.

Prof. Michelle Groover's chapter "Twilight and Twitter: An ethnographic study" will be included in The Twilight Saga: Exploring its Worldwide Popularity, edited by Claudia Bucciferro, a professor at Gonzaga University. The book is expected to be out early next year.

Professor Jim Harbour concluded his Georgia Southern theater career by directing On the Razzle.

Paulson Stadium was sent back in time for the annual Blue and White Game to look as it did during the 1980s for the upcoming film Erk, directed by Georgia Southern alumni.

The Department's Public Relations and Multimedia Communication advisory boards met and Stratton Leopold, the executive producer for Mission Impossible III, spoke to students about film work.

Alumnus Grant Dudley, who now works at HGTV, returned to Georgia Southern to present a CLASS Alumni Connection Series lecture.

Renovation work on Sanford Hall continues, with an anticipated move-in date of March 2014.

Sociology and Anthropology
An eight-person team of professors and graduate and undergraduate students unearthed suspected artifacts at Pierce County's former Civil War prison camp site. Future exploration of the area is expected.

Professor Bill Smith was awarded a research grant from the Midwest Sociological Society Endowment Committee for his research project Prayer in an American Cistercian Monastery.

Political Science
Dr. Barry Balleck offered expert commentary to Savannah television station WJCL on the Boston Marathon bombings.

Professor Robert Pirro was profiled by Connect Statesboro.

Women's and Gender Studies
Georgia Southern participated in Walk a Mile in Her Shoes, an international march that invites men to wear high heels to raise awareness of sexual assault and gender relations.

**Psychology**
Dr. K. Bryant Smalley and codirector of the Rural Health Research Institute Dr. Jacob C. Warren appeared on PBS' *Tavis Smiley*.

**Center for Irish Studies**
Irish scholar Dr. Christine Kinealy spoke on campus about Irish statesman Daniel O'Connell influenced American antislavery icon Frederick Douglass.

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**Alumni News**

**Dr. Lee Berger** was featured on the cover of *Science* magazine for a second time.

**Tameika Porter (MPA)** was named the director of operations for the West Broad Street YMCA in Savannah.

**Danielle Blalock ('11)** is in her second year of the masters program for history at the University of Arizona. She recently received a Tinker Grant, which will help fund her summer thesis research in Chile.

**Chris Minshew ('11)** was awarded a Pulitzer Prize as part of a team of *Denver Post* reporters covering the Aurora, Colo., shootings on July 20.

**Chris Riley ('92)** was named Georgia Southern’s Alumnus of the Year. Riley is the chief of staff for Georgia Gov. Nathan Deal.

**Meg Heap ('86)** was named the College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences’ Alumnus of the Year. Heap is the Chatham County district attorney in Savannah.

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**Upcoming CLASS Events**

**Spring 2013 Doctoral Commencement Brunch**
May 10; 10 a.m.; Russell Union

**Spring 2013 Graduate Commencement**
May 10; 1 p.m.; Hanner Fieldhouse

**Spring 2013 Undergraduate Commencement**
May 11; 9 a.m.; Paulson Stadium

**Music**

May 1
Channel Noise
7:30 p.m.; Carol A. Carter Recital Hall; 912-478-5396

May 2
Jazz Combos
7:30 p.m.; Carol A. Carter Recital Hall; 912-478-5396
May 4-5
Strings at Southern celebration of National Chamber Music Month
7:30 p.m. May 4 and 3 p.m. May 5; Carol A. Carter Recital Hall; 912-478-5396

**Writing and Linguistics**
May 2
Senior Reading
7 p.m.; Allen E. Paulson College of Engineering and Information Technology; 912-478-0739

July 14-21
Annual Council of Writing Program Administrators meeting
Coastal Georgia Center, Savannah; 912-478-0739

**Art**
May 6-10
Bachelor of Fine Arts Senior Exhibition
Reception: May 10 at 5 p.m.
Center for Art & Theatre; 912-GSU-ARTS

**Complete Calendar of CLASS Events**

**Give to CLASS**
The College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences aspires to be nationally recognized for its superior and innovative educational experiences across the humanities, social sciences and arts. Our goal is to provide outstanding programs that are responsive to the needs of the region and to allow all members of the college -- faculty, staff and students -- to serve together to enhance quality of life. If you would like to support CLASS in meeting these goals, please visit our annual campaign website.

Find all the details about the [Eagle Nation on Parade](#) public art project. Contact Sue Bunning at [sbunning@georgiasouthern.edu](mailto:sbunning@georgiasouthern.edu) for more information.