

Post Parade

Fort Hays State University English Department Fall 2017



FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

Forward thinking. World ready.

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As you can see from that cover photo, I worked with a large and delightful cadre of student editors in my Professional Editing class to bring you the 2017 issue of the *Post Parade*. It's their hard work selecting and researching topics, conducting interviews, writing (and rewriting!) articles, editing one another's work and designing pages that makes this student-driven publication possible. Special thanks go out to my patient and obliging husband, **Bob Duffy**, for the front and back cover photos - and, especially, to **Joshua Renner**, the undergraduate English major and InDesign guru who attended two of my class periods to help students with page layout, and who worked countless hours as our design editor once the semester ended to bring you this visually appealing magazine.

Cheryl Hofstetter Duffy
Managing Editor

Managing Editor
Cheryl Hofstetter Duffy

Design Editor
Joshua Renner

Cover photo of our editorial team:
L to R: Alina Villalovos, Nicole Feyerherm,
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Raven Dick, Matraca Ochs, Judy Sansom,
Lindsay Naegle (with Bo), Susan Hornbaker,
Paul Kirkwood, Caleb Hecker, Chelsea Payne,
Paige Todd, Dr. Cheryl Duffy, Uriel Campos

Founded in 1902, Fort Hays State University is a thriving liberal and applied arts, state-assisted institution with an enrollment of more than 14,000 students. It offers bachelor's and master's degrees in many fields and provides a wide variety of cultural and intellectual resources, not only for its faculty, staff and students but also for the western Kansas region and beyond. Fort Hays State occupies the southwest corner of Hays, Kan., a city of about 20,000 people located halfway between Kansas City and Denver on Interstate 70. The city and its people make their livings across a wide spectrum of industries - agriculture, education, light manufacturing, medical care, oil, retail and technology.

Post Parade — Fall 2017

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Dr. Leuschner's success as chair: Keeping the students in mind

Meetings, meetings and more meetings. This was one aspect of the job Dr. Eric Leuschner had not expected when he became chair of the English Department. "As we develop new programs, like the TESOL Concentration, and expand current ones, like the Accelerated Learning Composition model, I need to meet and work with people across campus." Despite so many meetings, he is still striving to move the department in the right direction. Having gained previous experience from directing the English Composition program in China, Leuschner came prepared for whatever this job could throw at him. Except for the never-ending meetings, of course.



Course scheduling and day-to-day tasks make it a challenge to balance any other responsibilities. One such responsibility is networking. Entertaining donors, alumni and the parents of future English majors keeps Leuschner busy building key relationships.

Between scheduling pains, daily maintenance and hobnobbing, Leuschner still keeps his heart with the students. "I like to make sure that I'm looking at things from the students' perspective." Leuschner's statement guarantees that the department will put student needs first.

One distinct development is his plan to make a more student-friendly "curriculum map." Leuschner would like to make it easier for students to see how their courses each semester work together and build on one another over their four years.

Leuschner's dedication carries over to the faculty. Having an open-door policy (at least in the mornings), he strives to hear ideas, field concerns and keep up-to-date. "We have outstanding students who do so much for the department as well as faculty members who have great ideas for ways to improve the department."

Leuschner's passion to plan the department's future and watch it move forward allows his dedication to shine through. Clearly, Leuschner sees the value of English studies: "As English majors we read and write narratives. But we don't just read stories... we read the world."

About the Writer



Laine Eakins

Laine is an English Major (Writing) at Fort Hays State University. Struggling is her favorite activity.

Congratulations, Award Winners!



Cheryl H. Duffy wins the Navigator Award for outstanding academic advisor May 2017 (pictured left with Kat Goetting, who nominated her).



English majors Nicole Feyerherm and Meagan Englert, center, pose with Cheryl Duffy (L) and Lexey Bartlett (R) after winning Outstanding Undergraduate Researcher Awards April 2017.

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Alice McFarland Scholarship

Sarah Jarmer

Roberta Stout Scholarships

Maleigha Siglinger-Albers
Alexis-Athena Wyatt

James R. & Ruth Start Scholarship

Shaelin Sweet

Michael Marks Scholarship

Brianna Hardy

Elizabeth Jane "Betty" Lenz Scholarship

Merrit Hammeke

Non-Traditional Student Scholarships

Joshua Renner
Paige Todd

English Development Scholarship

Tristan Wilson

English Department Scholarships

Shianne Clark
Cassidy Locke
Paige Phillips
Judy Sansom

The Ralph F. Voss/Elvon & Ruby Feldkamp Scholarship

Jessica Shields

Lloyd Oswald Scholarships

Sheri Bedore
Kelsey Hopson
Christopher Scheideman
Alexis Tate
Megan Wilson

Brett Weaver/Linda Smith Scholarships (with Hawaiian Shirt)

Tiara Bollig
Joshua Renner

Graduate Student English Scholarships

Amanda Little
Amy Krob

Saying farewell as Linda Leiker retires

Linda Leiker made a name for herself at Fort Hays State University. Leiker worked in the English Department as Senior Administrative Assistant beginning in 1992. She worked a solid 25 years before her retirement in December 2016.

“Linda gave a new meaning to the word ‘efficient.’ She just plain got things done!” says English professor Cheryl Duffy. Leiker and Duffy started working at FHSU the same year.

Prior to her job at Fort Hays State University, Leiker had lived in Arizona and California. When she got married, she settled in Kansas. Her first job in Kansas was at the Ford dealership. Then, in June of 1992, Leiker came across an ad for employment with Fort Hays State University. She was hired at FHSU and started working right away. As she spent more time in Kansas, she learned how to enjoy not only the Kansas atmosphere but also the faculty she worked with.

During Leiker’s time with the English Department, she assisted six English Department chairs: Cliff Edwards, Al Geritz, Cheryl Duffy, Carl Singleton, Steve Trout, Pauline Scott and Eric Leuschner. Leiker also worked under two different university presidents, three provosts and over 50 different faculty members. She even mentored students over the years. “Linda taught me administrative skills, but also showed me the importance of connecting with those around you in a way that goes beyond just work,” says Maci Hancock, who had the opportunity to work as Leiker’s student

secretary the last two years Leiker was in the English Department office.

Leiker also brought an institutional memory, a sense of humor and a strong work ethic to her role in the department. She was known for lightening everyone’s workload and making great connections with students and faculty. Leiker says the hardest part about her job was staying on top of everything in the department. Her coworkers note that she not only did this well, but did it with a sense of humor.

Of the 25 years spent in the English Department, what stood out the most for Leiker was when faculty from Germany came and taught within the department. In fact, she absolutely enjoyed the faculty and the students with whom she had the chance to work over the years. Leiker, on multiple occasions, was given opportunities to switch departments, but she stuck with the English department.

She thought the environment was irreplaceable. Even though her favorite subject throughout school was history, the people in the English department always brought her enough joy that she remained there throughout her time at FHSU.

As of right now, Leiker does not have any grand schemes for her retirement. She plans on spending time working on her home, enjoying time with family and acing her golf game. The students and faculty – past and present – thank her for her time in the English department. “I liked the people I worked with and I liked what I did for a living. I am going to miss it,” she says. Fort Hays State University faculty, staff and students will miss her as well.



The new face in the English Department Office belongs to Amy Richecky (pronounced /Ruh-HESS-key/), our new administrative assistant. Having studied business administration at FHSU, Richecky believes she was destined for this role. “I actually love feeling the weight on my shoulders. It’s knowing that I’m relied on heavily, and I don’t get stressed out easily. It takes a lot to get me worked up,” she says.

That’s definitely a plus – because soon after learning the system for managing the office, she had to leave all that behind to learn “Workday,” a totally new software system that unifies all administrative applications at FHSU.

“The faculty have made me feel more than welcome,” Richecky notes. And at the end of the day, she gets to go home to relax (probably not much!) with her husband and two small boys, Carson (4) and Landon (1).

Welcome aboard, Amy Richecky!

by Cheryl Duffy



Linda (R) intimidating her department chairs at her retirement party: Eric Leuschner, Cheryl Duffy, Al Geritz, Pauline Scott and Carl Singleton



About the Writer Lindsay Naegele

Lindsay is a senior who will graduate in December 2017 with a minor in English and a major in Graphic Design.

Congratulations to the Writing Tigers Contest Winners 2017!

English Comp. I

1st Place

Emily Linder

“Sorrow Casserole”
(Brenda Craven)

2nd Place

Diana Sabados

“Reviving an Industry”
(Brett Weaver)

3rd Place

Patrick Cook

“Indifference: The Only Thing
Worse Than Hatred”
(Brenda Craven)

English Comp. II

1st Place

Jinseo Jason Park

“Life Imprisonment Should
Replace the Death Penalty”
(Brenda Craven)

2nd Place

Dana Kang

“The Emergence of an Inevitable
Entity”
(Brenda Craven)

3rd Place

Alexandra Depew

“Increase Guns to Increase
Violence”
(Cheryl Duffy)

The name in parentheses is the instructor
for whose class the essay was written.

The right place for the writing center!

“Writing centers are spaces where students can meet with peers at any stage of the writing process,” says Amanda Fields, Writing Center Director. “They are often one of the only spaces on campus where students can come to talk about their writing without feeling evaluated. The Writing Center serves undergraduate and graduate students across campus from diverse courses and interests.”

The Writing Center was established in 2002 by John Kerrigan, Cheryl Duffy and Al Geritz, who wrote the action plan to fund it. Kris Bair assisted with the transition from Computer Lab to Writing Center. The goal of the Writing Center has always been to provide a safe, respectful environment for students, or even faculty and staff, to create better writing and develop positive habits through one-on-one sessions.

Not only does the Writing Center provide a safe place for students to go for help with their writing, but it also hosts workshops and provides class visits to cover everything from sentence structure to APA style. Students have been heavily impacted by the one-on-one sessions at the Writing Center. “The tutor I discussed my writing with was very passionate on helping me with my paper,” says student Nick Hernandez. “One thing he really helped me with was organization, and I have been improving on that ever since.”

Just recently, the Writing Center has expanded into its own section on the first floor of Forsyth Library, where walls have been erected to provide more space and privacy for the convenience of the students and staff. This distinct space is an improvement over the Writing Center’s most recent location in the middle of the library’s first floor with open tables and carrels. And it’s especially better than its original location hidden in the basement.

The Writing Center’s spring 2017 staff included Director Amanda Fields; Graduate Teaching Assistants Moisés Inácio, Jay Mizno Lee, Seonjin Na and Gilberto Pereira; and undergraduate writing consultants Alexis-Athena Wyatt, Brenna Lawless, Joshua Renner, Kat Goetting, Katherine Qu, MacKinzie Foster, Maleigha Siglinger-Albers and Michael Stueve. The undergraduate writing consultants represent a diverse range of majors, not just English.

“Everyone is friendly and fun to work with, and I am thankful for this resource on campus,” says student Clara Kachanes. “The tutor that worked with me helped me organize my thoughts in a more concise way.”

Fifteen years since its inception, the Writing Center has proven to be a helpful resource for students on campus. “Writing centers are open to everyone, and almost everyone benefits from a conversation about their writing,” Fields says.



About the Writer

Chelsea Payne

Chelsea is a
Communication Studies
major with an emphasis
in Public Relations.



Jaici Simon's "Journal to the World"

From diagnosis to positive blogging

What would you do if you were 22 years old and were diagnosed with a chronic disease that typically affects people over 50?

This past year, Jaici Simon, a junior majoring in English and secondary education, was diagnosed with Rheumatoid Arthritis (RA).

While the news of Simon's diagnosis settled in, she thought, "I am too young to have this disease," and "Why do I have to be the one to endure this lifelong problem?" Accepting the disease was difficult for Simon. "I was bitter and jealous of the healthy college students that surrounded me," Simon says.

Simon needed time to grieve. The biggest challenge she faced was saying goodbye to a normal life. Since there is no cure for RA, she knew the disease would affect her for life. She prepared for a new future—one filled with joint inflammation pain, weekly blood draws, auto-injections and medications that shut down the immune system.

As Simon learned more about RA and what the future held, she became scared and discouraged. It did not help that she was already experiencing daily pain, which she says "naturally wears on a person."

After properly grieving, Simon was given an opportunity to write about her diagnosis in Dr. Cheryl Duffy's Advanced Composition class. Duffy permitted her students to write a final paper within any nonfiction genre they wished. Simon decided on a blog post because she had always enjoyed writing down her thoughts and reflecting upon them. Also, Simon always dreamed of writing material that would encourage others. The combination of her RA diagnosis and her writing assignment inspired her to start her own blog.

Simon had reservations before she ventured into blogging. She was nervous and feared rejection. She had low expectations, thinking only a few family members and friends would view her blog.

Simon's husband, Aaron, finally convinced her to take the chance. He told her she had something important to say to the world, and she just needed to see where it would go.

Simon started her blog "My Journal to the World" in January 2017. She decided to be positive and make the most of her situation. By sharing her struggles and the lessons learned while navigating her journey with RA, Simon hopes to impact others who are struggling as well.

Simon knows everyone struggles with something. She does not want others to feel alone. Her goal is to reach all those who may need encouragement, love and positivity in their lives.

After her first post, Simon had over 100 views in the first week. Over the next few months of posting, she received an overwhelming amount of love and encouragement. Many people contacted her, telling her they were glad she started the blog and that her positive words were just what they needed to hear. They were eager to read more. The encouragement she has received proves she is making an impact on people and achieving her goals.

Simon will not let her diagnosis control her life. "This disease does not define who I am," Simon says. Through her blog, she wants people to see her for the young woman she really is—an avid reader of books, a future middle and high school teacher and a woman who has many other passions she eagerly wants to share with the world.

Simon's advice to those who are thinking about starting a blog is "Just jump!" She notes that people want to have relationships with other people, and writing helps develop those relationships. "It's going to be scary and it's going to be time-consuming, but it's worth taking that jump because you are impacting people and helping them through things you don't even know anything about," Simon says.

Above all, Simon wants to be authentic. She plans to continue her blog by sharing her everyday life experiences.

You can support Simon by visiting her blog at <http://journaltotheworld.weebly.com>



About the Writer

Sarah Holzmeister



Sarah is a senior majoring in English with a writing concentration. Because of her perfectionist tendencies, you can usually find her obsessing over her writing. To relax, Sarah loves spending most of her time outdoors.

Why YA literature?

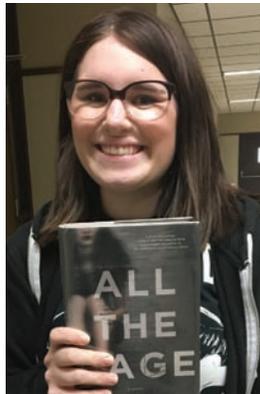
“I think we all believe that a book can change a life.” With these words, Sharon Wilson opened the Banned Books Week Young Adult (YA) Literature Panel. Words have meaning. Words change readers’ perspectives and let some of them know that they are not alone.

Nearly every year, the English Department participates in Banned Books Week by presenting different events over the course of the week determined by the American Library Association. Many students this past spring were passionate about the Banned Books Week YA Literature Panel, an event organized by the English Department’s very own Sharon Wilson. She led a panel consisting of several of her former students: Paulia Bailey, Jacinta Carter, Trey Basa, Aaron Fisher, Krissy Allacher, Shaelin Sweet and me, Alina Villalovos. Wilson said she feels that “censorship is inappropriate on any level, except when you have really young kids,” and each panelist had the opportunity to share why they feel the same.

Wilson’s motivation for assembling the panel stemmed from her feelings about YA: “If teachers are ‘allowed’ to teach YA literature, they can create lifelong readers. The more individuals read, the more critically they begin to think.” Student Shaelin Sweet shares these beliefs and enjoyed the benefits of the panel: “Through the panel, I was able to express my passion for these books and why I believe that they are important and essential to creating well-rounded, diverse adults.”

The panel’s presentation was held in Forsyth Library on September 27, 2016. The first 20 attendees enjoyed pizza just for attending, but the pizza disappeared quickly because so many students and faculty attended the event. Every panelist started out by speaking about a YA book that had impacted his or her life. Each book had been banned from various schools across the country. Student Krissy Allacher was ready to join the movement as soon as Professor Wilson discussed creating a panel. “I knew I had to do it,” says Allacher. “Censorship, especially concerning the topics that are often presented in young adult novels, destroys any possibility of conversation and understanding.”

Everyone on the panel spoke about a book while the audience and other panelists also chimed in occasionally. Topics like rape, homosexuality, diversity and prejudice came up during the event. The books hit on the issues affecting young people



– issues that people don’t like to talk about. Instead of making these tough discussions happen, school officials often ban the books.

The book *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz is the story of a boy finding himself and discovering that he is gay. As one of the panelists, I expressed my passion for YA literature through this banned novel. I argued that high school and middle school students need to be talking about these tough subjects. Students need to know they are not alone. If I would have known that these books were out there back in high school, those years might have been much different for me.

The Absolutely True Diary of a Part-Time Indian by Sherman Alexie hit on the points of prejudice and difficulties that Native Americans experienced both living on and off the reservation. Student Trey Basa read this book and felt compelled to be a part of the panel. He enjoyed the response from the audience: “There seemed to be a lot of reception of the panel’s passion for YA literature. Perhaps we convinced some people in the audience of the positives of YA literature.”

The panel lasted over the scheduled hour in the library because the panelists had much to say about these tough subjects. The audience did not seem to want the event to end, either. Professor Wilson was surprised at the response she got from the panel. “I got so many emails after the panel’s presentation. People responded so much to it; they wanted the kids to come back.” She and her former Young Adult Literature students want everyone to know that words are important. More specifically, words in books. They change lives.

A recording of the presentation is available on YouTube by visiting this site:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tf5gK8ObNeo>



About the Writer:

Alina Villalovos

Alina is a junior at FHSU. She is an English major with a concentration in writing. She also has a mild obsession with cats and Taylor Swift.

From the classroom to the working world

“It’s making me a stronger writer. It’s encouraging precision in my writing – grammar, language, clear readability,” says Sarah Holzmeister, a student in the spring 2017 Writing Internship class. Holzmeister interned with the FHSU Foundation, helping to write and design documents.

She wrote and edited material that went into a booklet for the Journey Campaign, the largest and most aggressive five-year capital campaign in FHSU history, with hopes of raising \$100 million. Holzmeister began by writing segments highlighting athletics at FHSU and the W.R. and Yvonne Robbins College of Business and Entrepreneurship, which meant interviewing donors and writing profiles.

The Writing Internship class fulfills a graduation requirement for English majors in the writing concentration. The class was created to prepare students for writing/editorial positions after graduation and focuses on students interning as well as developing a portfolio. The electronic portfolio includes work they complete during the semester as well as other writing/editorial work they have previously completed.

Professor Cheryl Duffy gives students a list of writing/editorial internship agencies available throughout campus and the Hays area. Students pick their top three choices, and as a class, they decide who will do which internship. Students can also locate their own internships. The agency supervisors review students’ projects. Also, students meet once a week with the course instructor and are required to discuss projects, offer progress reports, give presentations and submit writing assignments.

A writing internship can push students out of their comfort zone and into something they are initially uncomfortable performing. Doing so helps build confidence.

“I am not a confident person, and I deal with a lot of anxiety, so this is forcing me to put myself out there and do something I’m uncomfortable with. By doing something that I’m uncomfortable with, I learn and figure out how to get through it,” Holzmeister says.

Another student in the class, Paige Todd, is visually impaired. “I have technology software that makes it possible for me to read things through a software program,” Todd says, explaining how she can intern as a copy editor.

Todd dreams of possibly pursuing a career in copyediting or magazine writing. In her writing internship, she was responsible for editing an accreditation report for the Nursing Department as well as editing web content and documents for the Financial Aid Office. She enjoyed the work that she did. “I like editing and proofreading,” Paige says. “I really enjoy the whole process of it.”

In addition to Holzmeister and Todd, other students interned this past spring as well. Marissa McHugh edited documents for the Docking Institute, and Eric Menendez wrote feature articles profiling students in the KAMS (Kansas Academy of Math and Science) program. Brianna Hardy wrote brochures and fliers for the KSBDC (Kansas Small Business Development Center) while Kiara Sharp wrote articles and fliers for KSDS Assistance Dogs.

The Writing Internship class prepares students to reach their goals after graduation. Creating an electronic portfolio and interning allow students to gain confidence as well as specific job skills. It’s the ideal transition course from the classroom to the working world.

About the Writer

Susan
Hornbaker



Susan is a English major (writing concentration) who loves the Nancy Drew book series.



It's a small world

International graduate students major in English at FHSU



Seonjin Na, an international student from South Korea, attended FHSU for her M.A. in English. Seonjin worked as a graduate teaching assistant at the Writing Center. This experience allowed her to “help students with their writing and to present writing workshops on campus.” Working at the Writing Center provided Seonjin with valuable teaching experiences. “I love this job because I love meeting different students every day and seeing their improvement after appointments,” she says.

When Seonjin first came to FHSU, she was shocked by the open dialogue that occurred in her classes. “In Korea, we are not used to sharing our opinions and thoughts during the class, so it took me a while to feel comfortable with sharing my personal thoughts with others during class.” Seonjin’s passion is to teach American or British literature in a third-world country. “I believe that learning a second language through its native literature can benefit the language learner the most.”

Jay Mizno Lee attended FHSU for two years while working on his M.A. in English. Prior to attending school, Jay served in the military in his native country of South Korea.

Since coming to FHSU, Jay has had the opportunity to work with “outstanding professors, such as Professor Sharla Hutchinson, who have discussion-driven lectures that allow the student’s voice to be prevalent.” While working on his master’s degree, Jay maintained a job as a graduate teaching assistant at the Writing Center. “It was great to get Dr. Amanda Fields as the Writing Center director. She is motivational and really invests time with students,” Jay says. His favorite author is “William Yeats, whose poetry expresses liberation through creative writing.” Jay is excited to see where life will take him beyond graduation.

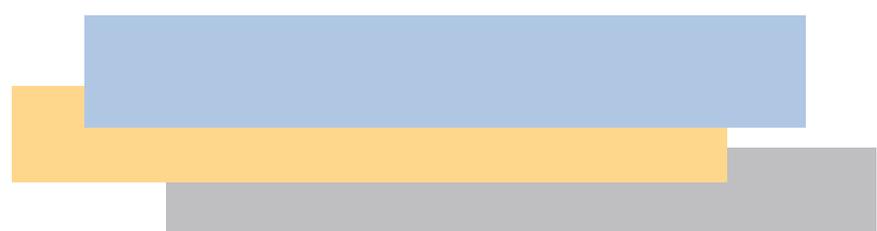


About the Writer

Judy Sansom



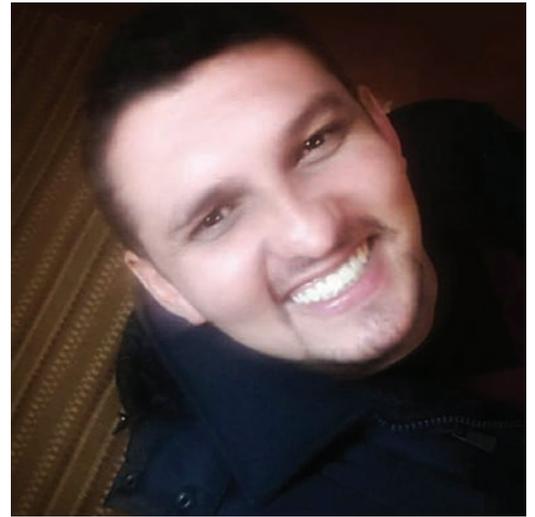
Judy, a senior majoring in English, will be entering FHSU’s M.A. program this fall. “As a misplaced Southern Belle, I still can’t believe I live in a state that doesn’t serve *sweet* tea!”



Moisés Inácio recently enrolled at FHSU to complete his M.A. in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages). Back home in Brazil, Moisés has taught English for many years but plans to become a professor at a public university in Brazil. “In order to do that, I must have a doctorate, so the master’s is not only a way for me to increase my knowledge, but also a necessary step to achieve my future goal.”

Moisés says coming to the U.S. “is a great opportunity for me to improve my English skills, and studying here will probably make it easier for me to get a better job in Brazil.”

Moisés currently works as a graduate teaching assistant at the Writing Center. This job allows him to use his teaching skills to assist students. Although he has only recently moved to Kansas, Moisés is already grateful for the experience. “Everybody has been friendly, and I enjoy meeting new people from different nationalities and learning about their culture.” Moisés expects to graduate with his M.A. in 2018.



Gilberto Pereira traveled from Brazil to complete his master’s degree in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) at FHSU. His expected graduation date is spring 2018.

After obtaining his M.A., he plans to pursue his Ph.D. in Second Language Acquisition. Gilberto chose FHSU because he was awarded a graduate teaching assistant position at the Writing Center, which made it possible for him to improve his teaching skills. “My previous experience was limited to teaching only Brazilian students, and now I have the opportunity to reach more nationalities and cultural educational backgrounds.”

Gilberto has adjusted well to FHSU and expresses appreciation for several professors. “Dr. Eric Leuschner has been very thoughtful and understanding to my issues as an international student. Dr. Amanda Ergun has been extremely helpful with helping me manage housing, banking and documents. I can’t forget to mention Dr. Amanda Fields, who has such a warm heart to teach us how to be a better tutor and future teacher.” Gilberto’s greatest cultural shock was the difference in weather patterns between Kansas and Brazil, but he says, “I have felt welcomed by many friendly people here in Hays.”

Khalid Alzahrani, an international student from Saudi Arabia, has recently enrolled at FHSU seeking a master’s degree in English. His favorite American authors are Ernest Hemingway and Kate Chopin.

Smaller class sizes have been a great benefit to Khalid’s educational process. “In Saudi Arabia there are classes that have more than 30 students, so students don’t really get the chance to have long discussions,” he says. Khalid has adapted well to life on campus and really enjoys the friendly atmosphere. “All of my professors are nice, but Dr. Brett Weaver is by far my favorite because of his unique personality; however, I sometimes have difficulties trying to understand his British accent.”

In addition to the friendliness, “The education system is much better here, which will make me have better knowledge in my field of study. Being exposed to totally different cultures and religions is a great thing – especially in a country as diverse as the U.S.” Khalid plans to move back home to teach in Saudi Arabia after earning his master’s degree.



Sigma Tau Delta Convention

Two new experiences were enough, thank you very much. At least, that's what I thought as we pulled out of the parking lot. Dr. Carl Singleton drove us ten students to and from the Sigma Tau Delta Convention in Louisville, Kentucky. Never before had I visited Kentucky; never before had I been to a college convention lasting longer than a day or two.

Students attending the conference are pictured here – from front to back: Nicole Feyerherm and Meagan Englert, me and Sarah Jarmer, Maleigha Siglinger-Albers and Cassidy Locke, Paige Phillips and Abby Artz, and John Mohlman and Uriel Campos.

The 2017 Sigma Tau Delta Convention made me feel as if I had just been dropped into an alien world, where books were a celebrated obsession.

Only two of the three students in our chapter with accepted papers were able to attend.

Meagan Englert's paper addressed the roles of women in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, and Nicole Feyerherm's literary analysis compared the religious hypocrisy in Frank O'Connor's "First Confession" and Nathaniel Hawthorne's "Young Goodman Brown." Englert also was part of a round table about this year's common reader, *Almost-Famous Women* by Megan Mayhew Bergman.

Registration and the "Welcome to Louisville" speech did not alter my perception of this being a standard convention. That changed after the open mic held that night.

Presentations ranged from the amusing (the introduction to a cookbook based on Jonathan Swift's "A Modest Proposal") to the serious – from the extremely obtuse to the intensely personal. An obvious love for poetry and the gumption to perform in front of a room packed with strangers was foreign to my experience.

Thursday morning, editor Anne VanderMeer impressed us with her frank presentation and answers to our questions. We were told that editing was not a good career choice if our goal was to earn a lot of money. An MFA might be a good thing, or it might not, but it didn't improve the chances of getting published. She advised us not to publish work without some payment. On this final point, she said, "Just because your work is creative doesn't make it less valuable."

One of the strangest events was the caucus. Loud and various unexpected responses to roll call, such as "Troll in the dungeon!" and "Long live the Oxford comma!" kept the process of calling out almost 300 colleges less tedious.

Kuwait, Canada and Puerto Rico were chapters not from the lower 48 states (and I thought I had traveled far).



Author Marlon James spoke that night, followed by Bad Poetry Night, which lived up to its name. Friday afternoon, several of us attended an original poetry session. Author Jeff VanderMeer was the speaker that evening, and SigmaCon, a large costume party in the spirit of San Diego's Comic-Con, topped off the evening.

Saturday morning's *Beowulf* session was incredible; I love that type of literature. The session "How to Write a True War Story" was informative as well. Megan Mayhew Bergman was the speaker that afternoon. The final official event was the banquet; the final unofficial event was another open mic.

We left the convention with various awards: **Outstanding Chapter Award**, **Outstanding Literary Arts Journal (2nd place)** and **Outstanding Chapter Display Board**.

Lexey Bartlett, the sponsor of FHSU's Sigma Tau Delta, also serves as High Plains Regent. Next year, she will be the Convention Chair in Cincinnati.

About the Writer

Paige Todd



Paige is a senior English major (writing concentration) who loves the Lord and chocolate.



Turning the page

with

Kristen~Paige Madonia

This past March, aspiring authors were thrilled to have the chance to meet with Kristen-Paige Madonia, author of the young adult novels *Fingerprints of You* and *Invisible Fault Lines*. She was the 2012 D.H. Lawrence Fellow, and her short stories have appeared in numerous journals, including *Five Chapters*, *The Greensboro Review* and *American Fiction*.

Madonia began her day at FHSU in Forsyth Library, where she hosted a writing workshop, giving students special insight into her skills and techniques. When asked if she outlined her plots beforehand, she answered that she doesn't because she would get bored with that method. She prefers to simply start writing and see where she ends up.

"That was something I felt I could relate to because I'm not a fan of the 'outline every little thing,'" says Alina Villalovos, senior English major. "That was

really cool to hear that an author who got published doesn't outline her stuff." Madonia did have one specific tip regarding planning ahead, however, which was to never finish a day's work of writing without being sure which direction the story will head tomorrow.

During her second event, a faculty-led Q&A session with Brenda Craven and Sharon Wilson, she encouraged the students to "make their own muse," instead of waiting for the right recipe of circumstances needed to spark creativity. For her part, she lights a scented candle every time she writes, to evoke memories and to put herself into the correct frame of mind. She was also adamant about her opinion of a writer's role, stressing to the students that it is not the author's job to get the book published; that should be left to the agent. An author's job is merely to write. She encouraged students to write only what felt good, mentioning that she once abandoned a book halfway through writing it to start another based on a more interesting idea.

Madonia capped off her first day at FHSU with a reading from both of her novels. "The reading was a lot of fun," says Judy Sansom, another English major, studying to become a teacher. "There was a nice big crowd!" The author continued to give insight into her writing techniques, going into detail regarding the process behind *Invisible Fault Lines*. The book centers on the historic San Francisco earthquake of 1906. Madonia essentially transcribed her own experiences with research through her lead character, who happens to be researching the same event.

The following day, students enjoyed the unique opportunity to meet with Madonia in small groups of two or three. These sessions were far more personal, as students had the option to bring examples of their own writing for Madonia to critique, granting them the invaluable perspective and guidance of a published author.

The English department is grateful to English instructor Paulia Bailey for facilitating Madonia's visit to campus. The legwork for the event was extensive, requiring a year's preparation. Bailey's attention was first drawn to Madonia when they met while Bailey was working toward her MFA degree where Madonia served as a mentor in creative writing. Bailey hoped that Madonia's insight would inspire students at FHSU. Her hopes were not misplaced.

Overall, FHSU English students had much to learn from Kristen-Paige Madonia, especially in terms of persistence and motivation. "I feel like she pushed me more," said Villalovos. "Listening to her talk, listening to her journey, inspired me to work a little harder."

About the Writer

Paul
Kirkwood



Paul Kirkwood is a Media Studies major with a minor in English and Procrastination.

At the invitation of John Vincent, a former FHSU student and 2016 director of the Willamette Writers Conference, Dr. Cheryl Duffy and three FHSU English students traveled from Hays to Portland, Oregon – the city of artists, dreamers, and flamethrower-bagpipe-playing Darth Vaders. Vincent had reached out to Duffy, asking if she wanted to submit proposals to present at the conference.

Duffy led two 90-minute sessions: “Writing for the Common Good and Service Learning,” covering all the ways writers can use their talents to make a difference (e.g., through nonprofit work), and “Using Humor to Make a Point or Merely Entertain,” exploring different types of humor writing, including satire.

This was the first time the FHSU English Department had sent students to this conference. The opportunity was made possible thanks to funds provided by FHSU alums Becky P. and Mike Goss.

“It wasn’t theoretical; it was practical,” Duffy says of the conference. Her favorite session was one offered by an agent. “He talked about how to get an agent and some of the do’s and don’ts. It’s not something you’re typically taught, but if you want to get into writing or publication, you need to know it.”

Students Kat Goetting, Seonjin Na and Krissy Allacher benefited as well. “I’m in the writing concentration, and I thought this was a big opportunity to learn writing from people who weren’t my professors. And a lot of the sessions had great handouts,” says senior Krissy Allacher.

Allacher says her favorite sessions covered horror writing and dialogue writing. “The dialogue-writing one was focused on character building through dialogue – how they act and speak. The horror writing one was good because the presenter talked about the basics of horror writing, where to get your story published for the first time and websites that are conducive to first-time writers that also get you the feedback that you need.”

Allacher liked being able to get different perspectives on the same topic. “If you were interested in character

building, there were probably five or six different sessions on character building.”

Allacher also enjoyed meeting other people in the industry, even if it was in unexpected places. “We ended up taking the wrong train, and we saw an editor we had seen at the conference. We thought she was from Portland, but she was actually from Chicago. We were following her lead, and then none of us got off at the right stop. So I ended up talking to her about pitching [story ideas/manuscripts] for about 45 minutes until the next train came!”

Overall, Allacher enjoyed the conference. “It really ended up filling in a lot of gaps for me,” she says.

“Like most major writing conferences, this conference aims to help professional writers, and those who aspire to become professional writers, develop their craft, advance their careers, and build their communities,” says Vincent.

Over 700 writers attended the 2016 conference, making it the largest writing conference in the Pacific Northwest.



Students Krissy Allacher, Kat Goetting and Seonjin Na

About the Writer

Nicole
Feyerherm



Nicole is a junior English major (writing concentration) with a German minor and a distressing absence of cats in her life.

Innovative book hoarder

How Jacinta Carter's love of books morphed into a strong book-reviewing voice

Let's face it: many students love their area of study but not necessarily its common careers. This can lead to either worry or, hopefully, thinking outside of the box.

Jacinta Carter is great at thinking outside the box. She is a book reviewer for many big-name publishers such as Random House and Harlequin, and has automatic access to new books from NetGalley, a website that features authors waiting to be published. Carter receives both digital and physical copies of books and posts her reviews on her blog, "Book Hoarders Anonymous," as well as on Amazon, Goodreads and Listy.

Carter is no stranger to what makes a novel worth reading, as she has three degrees from FHSU. She earned her B.A. in English (Writing Concentration) in 2012, her B.S. in Secondary Education in 2014 and her M.A. in English this past May.

As if her course load were not enough, she has been officially voicing her opinions of novels since June 2016 and hopes to continue for many years to come, hopefully creating a name for herself and landing a more traditional job. Unfortunately, Carter does not receive monetary compensation for her reviews right now, but, she says, "I get paid in free books, which works out pretty well, since that's what I spend most of my money on anyway."

The opportunity to review books for authors sort of just fell into her lap, Carter says. She began posting book reviews on her blog and, consequently, gained some author followers on Twitter, who messaged her, asking if she would review their novels.

Additionally, she has subscribed to different websites offering support for new writers, which also give her access to authors' works so she can review them.

Because she has made so many connections with writers and publishers alike, she believes that one day, if she decides to write a novel of her own, she will be able to call on those people she helped in the past. "After all," she says, "success in writing depends, in part, on who you know."

Most of the novels Carter has reviewed throughout the year have hit the shelves in stores such as Barnes and Noble, Wal-Mart and Target. She was excited to see that one of the most recent novels that she has reviewed, *Small Great Things* by Jodi Picoult, has become a

huge success and is going to be made into a movie soon. Carter is pleased to say that she was able to read it months before most people.

Does she, an all-knowing alumna, have any advice for current students in the English department or other English alumni about where to go with their English degrees? Without breaking stride, she says, "The best advice I have is pretty generic: Just keep writing. When you're trying to break into the world of words, no job is too small. The more jobs

you agree to, the more connections you make—which will only benefit you in the long run. That being said, don't agree to take on a job if you know you can't deliver on time." Good words to live by, Jacinta.

To read some of Carter's book reviews, visit <http://bookhoardersanonymous.weebly.com/> to access her blog.



About the Writer

Matraca Ochs

Matraca is a senior majoring in English, loves to write and has 10 unfinished novels that she doesn't have a long enough attention span to complete.



Dr. Austin goes to Bogotá!

On February 13, while most English professors were preparing their lesson plans for the day, Dr. James Austin was boarding a plane to Bogotá, Colombia. Why? Well, it all started in Cairo, Egypt.

Austin had lived in Cairo, Egypt, with his wife, Dr. Amanda Fields, for four years. He taught courses in composition and creative nonfiction at the American University in Cairo (AUC). Upon returning to the U.S., he did a study on civic engagement among students attending AUC. The goal of the study was to gain insight into how civically engaged five students were through their writing assignments. Though his findings were by no means representative of the whole student body, the results presented a valuable glimpse into how different students took on the same assignment.

The findings of Austin's study showed that the students who came from a wealthy background made strong, somewhat controversial statements in their assignments, but their work remained academic. Students who grew up closer to the other end of the spectrum took a more engaged approach. One such student examined a Muslim charity that she had been a part of for years. Another student from that lower social class wrote about a group of people living on an island on the Nile River in the middle of Cairo. She visited the island and observed firsthand what the culture on the island was like and used the essay to criticize the government for wanting to move the people off the island. Austin would go on to write about this study as part of his dissertation for his doctorate from the University of California, Santa Barbara in 2015.

Back to the opening question – “Why was Dr. Austin boarding a plane to Bogotá?” Austin was leaving to present his study and its findings at the Writing Research Across Borders Conference. The conference has been held triennially since 2008 at different locations across the globe. This year, the conference was held February 15-18 in Bogotá, Colombia. This was Austin's first time presenting at the conference,

though it wasn't his first time attending. He attended a previous convention held at George Mason University in Washington D.C. back in 2011.

The 2017 conference had a variety of scholars presenting from around the world. The majority of presenters were from South America, a fact that makes Austin appreciate the conference's changing location.



“The thing I like about their moving locations is that it favors certain groups over others for that time. For example, all these South American scholars could go, right? They're not going to be able otherwise – it's really expensive to travel to the U.S. or to China or to wherever else it might be next time.... If you only have conferences in the United States, it will favor only scholars from the United States forever. This [conference], I think, is meant to find a way to bring as many groups as possible, and part of that is the location. And I appreciated that.”

Though Bogotá was a new experience for Austin, traveling abroad was by no means a new experience for him. He has traveled to twelve countries over his lifetime, including Canada, Mexico, England, Jordan, The Netherlands, Ireland and now Colombia.

“I remember – maybe it was a school project – looking at a globe, and thinking how interesting it would be to visit all of these places that were there – that they existed simultaneously. What would it be like to actually live there? Even then I understood that I didn't just want to go and be a tourist – I wouldn't have thought of it this way at the time – but to actually spend time there.”

Through the Writing Research across Borders Conference, his love of traveling met his love of writing, both of which he has had since elementary school.

About the Writer

Uriel Campos



Uriel Campos is an English major and a Philosophy minor with a passion for movies and taco trucks.

Teaching outside the borders

Stepping outside of one's comfort zone may seem natural for some, but for most people it does not come easily. Kaci Ferguson – an FHSU English graduate with a concentration in writing – made the ultimate “leap of faith” and traveled the 6,481-mile journey to teach in Jeonju, South Korea.

Ferguson received her TEFL certification (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) in 2015, qualifying her to teach in Korea. She arrived in South Korea later that year, completely blind to where she would be teaching and with what age group she would be working. As it turned out, a normal week involved teaching at three different schools, all of which were fairly different from one another.

“Mondays consisted of me teaching near my apartment complex at a tiny little country school, Wondong, and there I taught 3rd through 6th grade with each class having only about 10 students in it. On Tuesdays and Wednesdays, I would teach a class of roughly 30 6th graders in Jeonju at the largest elementary school in the city, Urim.

“Then on Thursdays and Fridays, I taught in the Innovation City at a brand new school where I taught 3rd and 4th grade,” Ferguson explains. On a typical day she would arrive at school at 8:30 a.m. to prepare for the classes that started at 9:00 a.m. Each class lasted 40 minutes and would generally include different warm-up activities. Then later she would teach from the book, helping students learn new phrases or words.

Ferguson experienced key differences between her life in the United States and in South Korea. “Unlike the typical American classroom, Korean students work a lot harder and take education more seriously.” In Korea, students go to school similar hours as U.S. students, but then Korean students later attend private schools called Hagwons – which further help students learn English,

math and science. Students repeat the process the next day and oftentimes fall asleep in class just out of pure exhaustion.



Beyond the classroom, Ferguson traveled throughout South Korea during the weekends with her friends. She visited the DMZ (Demilitarized Zone), which is a 2.5-mile-wide border that divides North and South Korea. It is patrolled by armed guards, includes thousands of landmines and is currently one of the most hostile areas in the world. Ferguson also went to the Jindo Sea Parting Festival. The festival takes place once a year when the tide is low enough that a path is created between the mainland and an island.

A fireworks display with drums signals the time to cross the path to the island, and many Korean festival-goers hunt for sea creatures as well.

What prompts someone to travel halfway around the world to teach English? Ferguson talked to someone who had actually worked in Korea and communicated with several other people who were teaching abroad. Hearing their stories helped her finalize her decision to make the journey herself. Ferguson had studied abroad in Italy during her sophomore year as an FHSU student, and her experience sparked her taste for traveling and broadened her mind. Her English degree from FHSU laid the foundation for Ferguson and made it possible for her to embark on a life-changing opportunity that not only fueled her love of traveling but also immersed her in a culture far different from Western Kansas.

About the Writer

Caleb Hecker

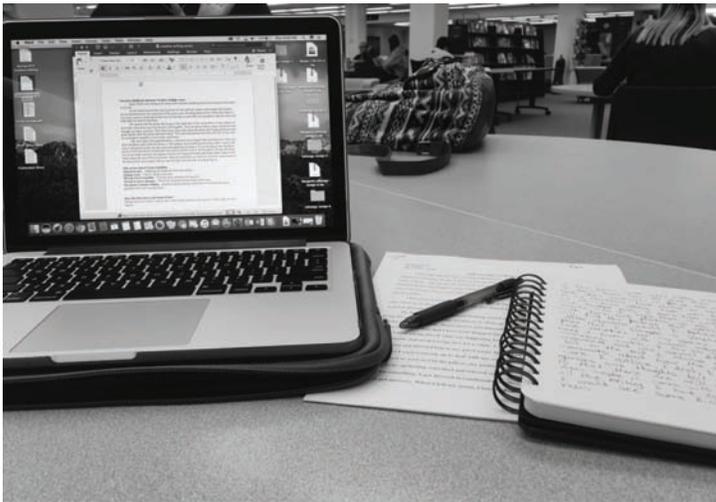


Caleb is a Construction Management major with a minor in English.

Bouncing ideas around the writing circle

Participants in the FHSU writing circle share creative writing, academic writing and anything in between. The writing circle is a safe place open to all students who want to work on their writing and get feedback from their peers.

The writing circle, a new student group on campus, started in the fall of 2016. It is a collaboration between the Writing Center and Forsyth Library. Besides encouraging students to develop their writing and gain experience, a secondary goal is to raise attendance at the library and get more students involved in events and activities hosted by the library and the Writing Center.



The writing circle typically meets in Forsyth Library every other Friday. If students want to share what they are writing, they bring it to the meetings and read some or all of it to get feedback on what works and what needs to be tweaked. The feedback can be random or guided with questions from the authors on specific concerns they may have. If no one wants to share, participants choose a writing prompt and see where it takes them. After a few minutes of writing, everyone has something to share.

Mainly, the writing circle is whatever students want it to be. Each meeting is a little bit different, and the writing that participants discuss is different. The students and their writing shape each meeting and how it progresses. The students decide what kind of writing to bring and talk about. Stories about shopping in a mall, falling in love or even fighting dragons – all such stories are welcomed and encouraged by the writing circle participants. One participant of the writing circle, Tristan Wilson, says,

“Before I started attending the writing circle, I would sit in my room for hours trying to figure out what was wrong with my writing. Now I know that I have a support group I can bounce ideas off, and whose mutual love of words I can connect with. I love the writing circle and look forward to every meeting.”

The writing circle has student-generated guidelines for feedback and general attitude. At the beginning of each semester, students revisit these guidelines, which are key to the writing circle’s success. These rules allow students to feel safe when sharing their writing and ease the worry that someone will be unnecessarily rude. This circle gives students the opportunity to talk with other writers who may be facing similar issues in their writing.

The writing circle has a few long-term goals, one of them being to keep building the number of students involved and maintain a steady attendance throughout the semester. The primary goal of the writing circle is helping students to become better writers and be more confident in their work.

The meetings are monitored and guided by a few different faculty members from the English department and the library. Dr. Amanda Fields and Dr. James Austin are from the English department, and Claire Nickerson is from the library staff. These faculty members take turns running the meeting and participating in discussions along with sharing their own work when asked.

The writing circle is still new to Fort Hays, but, gauging from its early success, it looks as if it will continue as a resource for students willing to share their work and offer feedback to other aspiring writers.

About the Writer

Maggie Krull



Maggie is a junior English major who is part of National Student Exchange. She is visiting from North Dakota State University for the semester.

A degree on your own time: English Summer M.A. Program

Looking to receive your Master of Arts in English but feeling a bit strapped for time and money? The Summer M.A. program offered by Fort Hays State University allows you to take up to five on-campus classes over the course of a summer to help you complete your degree in as few as two years without disrupting your career.

“The camaraderie in the program was superb, and the professors were some of the best I have ever had.”

“It’s amazing how much better I feel – in my teaching field – because of the M.A. in English program,” says Sydney Dippel, a Summer M.A. graduate.

The M.A. program is a 30-credit-hour program that allows flexibility around the course common to all Master’s students, ENG 826 Approaches to Graduate Studies in English. This course is required along with nine others that students choose from a list of offered classes.

“The summer worked for me, too, because of my full-time teaching job. I am busy with coaching and extra-curricular assignments, and like to focus the semesters on my students and players. The summer allowed me to work directly on my coursework,” says Dippel.

Although the program is designed for teachers, it is open to all students wishing to complete their English M.A. Summer students get the reading lists for the summer classes in February, take classes in June and/or July and complete papers and projects by December.

“The camaraderie in the program was superb, and the professors were some of the best I have ever had. Their instructorship to me was absolutely what I needed; there was never a time I felt my questions were beneath them,” Dippel says.

One of these professors, Dr. Sharla Hutchison, also notes how great it is that the students are able to be surrounded by fellow teachers, coming together to develop new material for their own teaching.

“[The grad students] really enjoy being around other fellow teachers,” Hutchison says.

She has taught in the summer M.A. program for numerous summers and says she enjoys the many teachers in her classes. “It’s a great place for them to bounce ideas off each other and get materials to take back home with them.” She also emphasizes that the program benefits not only the students attending but also the professors.

Although you can spread your degree over the course of a few summers with FHSU’s English Summer M.A., the department also offers a traditional master’s degree during the fall, spring and summer.

To gain admission to the M.A. in English, you must have a 3.0 GPA or higher in at least 18 hours of English courses past the general studies composition courses and must complete the graduate school application available at webapps.fhsu.edu/admissions/Graduate.aspx.

About the Writer



Raven Jo Dick

Raven is a Communication Studies major with an emphasis in Journalism. She favors dogs over people and has cried only twice during the Power Rangers movie.



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