

POST PARADE

FORT HAYS STATE UNIVERSITY ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

FALL 2012

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Post Parade 2012 Student Editorial Team from ENG 385 Professional Editing. Front Row--Darren Carter, Colleen Pennington, Linda Thomasson, Cheyanna Blackburn. Back Row--Anne Houston, Nathan Riedel, Jessica Cook, Taylor Lunsford.

Contributing Student Writers from ENG 602 Topics in Writing: Freelance Magazine Writing--Jessica Cook, Amber Barratt, Jessica Robbins, Jacinta Carter, Bryan Baxter, and Katherine Jones.

The English Department would like to thank Linda Leiker, Rebecca Luedders, and the FHSU Printing Services for their expert assistance in the layout of this year's *Post Parade*.

Post Parade

Fall 2012

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Fort Hays State University is a thriving liberal and applied arts, state-assisted institution with an enrollment of about 8,000 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 for the western Kansas region and beyond. Fort Hays State occupies the southwest corner of Hays, Kansas, 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 from across a wide spectrum of industries—agriculture, education, light manufacturing, medical care, oil, retail, and technology.



Truman Capote and the Legacy of In Cold Blood

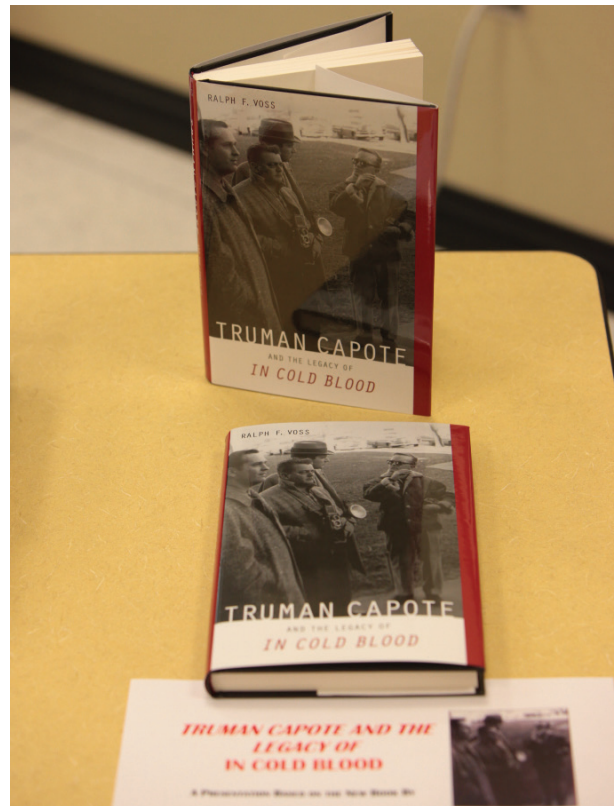
by Dr. Ralph Voss

This spring, the English Department and the Fort Hays State University Keith Sebelius Lecture Series were proud to sponsor Dr. Ralph F. Voss, Emeritus Professor of English, University of Alabama, in a presentation at FHSU. Dr. Voss spoke about his most recent book, *Truman Capote and the Legacy of In Cold Blood*, to a capacity crowd in the Stouffer Lounge of the Memorial Union. He discussed the far-reaching impact that Capote's book *In Cold Blood* has had on popular culture as well as on Capote's own career as a writer. At the end of the presentation, the audience posed numerous questions about the book, including about Capote himself, his associates and friends, and about the impact Capote's book has had on the Garden City area and southwest Kansas.

A native of Lyons, Kansas, Ralph Voss graduated from high school in Plainville, Kansas, and holds a BA in English and History from Fort Hays State University. After receiving his MA in English from Fort Hays State, he earned a PhD in Eng-

lish from the University of Texas-Austin. He taught at LaCrosse High School, LaCrosse, Kansas; Texas A&M University-Commerce; Atlanta Georgia Metro College; and the University of Utah before spending most of his career at the University of Alabama, from which he is now retired. He served as a special summer faculty member at Fort Hays State University from 1992 through 1997.

Besides the book on Capote, Voss's books are *Elements of Practical Writing* and *A Life of William Inge*. He is the editor of *Magical Muse: Millennial Essays on Tennessee Williams*, and co-editor of *Against the Grain: Essays in Honor of Maxine Hairston*; he is also the co-author of *The Heath Guide to College Writing*. He has published over forty essays, articles, and reviews; and he has made over ninety professional presentations.





Dr. Pauline Scott

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT WELCOMES NEW DEPARTMENTAL CHAIR

By Jessica Cook

Fort Hays State University welcomed its new English Department Chair, Dr. Pauline Scott, in August of 2011 from a 16-year teaching career at Alabama State University in Montgomery. Before she began teaching, Dr. Scott received her MA and PhD from the University of Wisconsin-Madison with a specialization in Early Modern English literature and a minor in Italian. As a graduate student, Dr. Scott spent one year studying abroad in Florence, Italy, which she says was a truly life-changing experience. Dr. Scott has been teaching at the university level since 1986, having begun teaching at UW-Madison in the Department of Comparative Literature, followed by a stint as an instructor of Italian. She was the first graduate student there to teach a literary theory course for the Comparative Literature Department. After completing her doctorate, Dr. Scott took a position as a lecturer in the English Department at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro for one year. She was then hired for a tenure-track position in the Department of Languages and Literatures at Alabama State University, where she taught for 16 years.

According to Dr. Scott, her reason for making a change after such a long career at ASU was primarily the challenge of a new position. She enjoys the opportunity for travel and interaction with international students. Also, she was interested in getting closer to her roots, as she is from Wisconsin. Dr. Scott feels more at home here in Hays because she is from a small farming community in southwestern Wisconsin. "I think that

is why Hays makes me feel closer to my roots - there is a wonderful sense of community here that reminds me of home."

Dr. Scott also went on to describe her new life in Hays. She has enjoyed living in a smaller city—Montgomery is a city of 200,000—and she appreciates the personal quality of FHSU's campus. Dr. Scott finds the campus environment enjoyable, especially the numerous cultural events, and the celebration of education. She also enjoys the caring and welcoming atmosphere in Hays, and notes that the students at the university are highly engaged. Dr. Scott especially enjoys the level of engagement and interaction between students and faculty. She finds her colleagues to be helpful, supportive, and friendly.

On a more serious note, Dr. Scott described her vision for the English Department. She stated that there will be some exciting changes, especially in the writing concentration. The program should give students the breadth, depth, and skills to be competitive in the job market. Dr. Scott said that the English Department wants its students to be prepared for life outside of the classroom.

Even though she has accomplished so much as an educator, Dr. Scott didn't set out to become a professor. She originally majored in pre-journalism, but she found that she especially enjoyed her literature classes. This development in her educational career really didn't surprise her since she has been an avid reader her whole life. Still, she did not really consider teaching until she began working as a teaching assistant when she was a graduate student. Dr. Scott loved teaching from the start and felt that she had a natural affinity for it. Dr. Scott also added that "both my grandmother and my mother were teachers, so perhaps it does run in my blood."

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OUTSTANDING FACULTY

Two English Department faculty members have recently received Fort Hays State University Outstanding Faculty Awards: Ms. Brenda Craven received the Outstanding Teaching Award in fall 2010, and Dr. Eric Leuschner received the Outstanding Research Award in spring 2012. Every spring and fall semester, FHSU presents Outstanding Faculty Awards for Teaching, Research, and Service to deserving faculty. Along with the award comes a \$500 stipend, donated by Commerce Bank.

An Instructor of English since 2004, Brenda Craven teaches English Composition I and II and general education literature courses such as World Literature and the Human Experience and Introduction to Literature. A caring, hard-working teacher, Ms. Craven engages



Ms. Brenda Craven

students fully in learning, as evidenced in comments from them:

“I have now taken 26 classes between college credit classes in high school and classes here the past two years, and I have never had an instructor that motivated me to go to class, participate in class, and enjoy the class like Ms. Craven has. . . . She is the best professor I have had to date. You can tell that she truly cares and that she truly loves her job; that passion shows through and makes the classroom a more inviting place.”

“She always gives fantastic feedback on our writing assignments. It is apparent that she spends a great deal of time grading our papers and making sure that we understand mistakes that we have made.”

“Ms. Craven has taken every step possible to make this class tailored to us so that we are excited about the material and therefore are more interested. She hits each learning style so everyone benefits.”

In her other professional activities, Ms. Craven serves as a discussion leader for the Kansas Humanities Council’s TALK program and has recently made a presentation on Margaret Atwood’s novel *Oryx and Crake* at the 21st Conference of the Society for the Interdisciplinary Study of Social Imagery in Colorado Springs.

Dr. Eric Leuschner, Assistant Professor of English, joined the Department in 2005 and has excelled in scholarly pursuits ever since. In this year alone, he has two articles with publication forthcoming: one in the refereed *Ellen Glasgow Journal of Southern Women Writers* and another to be included in an essay collection, *Encountering Ephemera 1550-1800: From Scholarship to Classroom*. He is currently working on an essay on *Tom Jones* to be included in the MLA *Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Henry Fielding* volume that will be published in 2014.

In the past several years, Dr. Leuschner has published refereed articles in scholarly journals and presented at conferences on a variety of topics, including Henry James, Wallace Stevens, *Alice in Wonderland*, academic fiction, eighteenth-century dance, and Tarzan. He has also published numerous entries in literary reference works and book reviews. Further, he has served as a reviewer of submissions to the journal *Publications of the Modern Language Association (PMLA)*, one of the premier scholarly publications in the field of English and American Literature, and for several university presses, further testaments to his scholarly expertise.

Regarding his scholarly activity, Dr. Leuschner states that “I continue to believe that research is most rewarding when it informs or is informed by teaching. Thus, I strive to tie my research agenda and teaching together as much as possible. Particularly in literature courses, the connection provides a positive model for the students in their own research and writing.”

Dr. Leuschner was also named one of the 2011-12 FHSU Men of Merit, a program to recognize men who positively define masculinity through challenging norms, taking action, and leading by example while making outstanding contributions to FHSU and the community.

The English Department is proud to have such outstanding faculty members and is pleased that their work has been recognized by the wider university community.



Dr. Eric Leuschner

Teaching Concentration Has Success in Placing Students

By Amber Barratt

Ninety-four percent of Fort Hays State University English Department graduates in the Teaching Concentration were successful at finding employment as teachers. In 2011, all three students who completed student teaching ended up getting teaching jobs upon graduation. In fact, in recent years the department has had high placement rates with all the graduating students, according to Mrs. Sharon Wilson, who has directed the teaching concentration for the past 10 years.

Destiny Saffer, who completed her student teaching at Thomas More Prep-Marian in Hays, is currently teaching at Garden City High School in Garden City, Kansas, where she is the English instructor for the special education program. Saffer feels that many of her English courses were beneficial in her current teaching job, especially those focused on grammar. “The relationships I have developed with my students make my tough days worthwhile--as well as seeing the ‘light bulb’ when a difficult concept clicks for my students.”

Another successful graduate of the teaching concentration is Andrew Bauer. After student teaching in Russell, Kansas, he spent his first year of teaching at Buhler High School in Buhler, Kansas, teaching freshman and sophomore English. “My favorite part of my current teaching job,” says Bauer, “is getting to know the students on a personal level. I work with a bunch of great kids, and I like the opportunity to establish relationships with them. I’ve found that many of my students are more willing to work for me when I’ve taken the time to get to know them first.”

Bauer fondly remembers the excellent professors at FHSU that were always willing to help. He says that one class he couldn’t have done without is Techniques of Teaching English. “This class seems like an obvious

one, but it provided a lot of opportunities to get some practical experience, which helped me a great deal because it made me aware of some of my strengths and weaknesses before I actually got up in front of a class,” said Bauer.

Sally Spina, senior, is currently enrolled in the teaching concentration. “I love to read and to write poetry and fiction, but I wasn’t sure how I could go into English and make a difference in the world,” said Spina. “Then I realized that by becoming a teacher, I would have the chance to influence an entire generation of people.” Spina, who graduated with a degree in biology later came back to complete the English teaching concentration.

Mrs. Wilson believes that the success of the concentration comes directly from having such dedicated students. “You have to have good knowledge to be any type of teacher. You also must enjoy working with kids,” she said. Mrs. Wilson always advises new teachers to be a mentor to their students and not their friend, and to always behave in a professional manner. She feels these qualities are the strong points of past graduating classes, leading students to be so successful.

Even in the declining job market, Mrs. Wilson has hopes for the students who are graduating in the teaching concentration. Mrs. Wilson said that one of the advantages about teaching is that you can find a job with it in any state.

“Teaching is such a rewarding job. I do believe that teachers can change a life,” said Mrs. Wilson. “A teacher can be an influence on students for the rest of their lives.” Mrs. Wilson even mentioned that she still is in contact with many of her students to this day and loves hearing from them. “I still like to see responses and feedback from past students; it’s nice to know I can still make a difference even though they have been out teaching for quite some time already.”

English Department 2012-2013 Scholarship Recipients

Thanks to the generosity of all our contributors, the following students received financial assistance for their studies. On their behalf, we would like to thank everyone who contributed to our scholarship fund.

Alice McFarland Scholarship
Chelsi Nolan

English Development Scholarship
Meganne Williams

Roberta Stout Scholarship
Kaci Ferguson

Graduate Student English Award
Lisa Jones

James R. & Ruth Start Scholarship
Brylee Courkamp

English Department Scholarships
Sally Spina
Anne Drees
Nathan Riedel

Michael Marks Scholarship
Bryan Baxter

English Department Freshman Honor Scholarships
Kelsey Abendroth
Jera Anne Gales
Kylie Metzger
Kristin Roth

Non-Traditional Student Scholarship
Nanette Brown

Elizabeth Jane "Betty" Lenz Scholarship
Vanessa Beilman

English Graduates Fall 2011, Spring 2012

Bachelor of Arts in English

Michael D. Biondo
Jacinta M. Carter
James E. Carter II
Joshua J. Dreiling
Alicia A. Felver
Traci L. Goebel
Ashley R. (Siek) Hubbell
Lisa K. Jones
Nicole K. Keffer
Xiaoxia (Daisy) A. Liu
Colter R. Palen
Colleen R. Pennington
Trinda J. Quint
Robert G. Rasmussen
Adrienne J. Samia
Jennifer R. (Shriwise) Schmidt
Renee M. Simon
Holly L. Younger

Master of Arts in English

Justin Brown
Summer Dickinson
Debbie LaFond
Kallie Leyba
Nicole Thibodeau

Master of Liberal Studies with English Emphasis

LouRae Doyle
Erin J. Rengstorf
Rebecca Schantzenbach
Lucy Zahnle

Comp Class Publishes 9/11 Millennial Book

By Jessica Robbins

It's the dream of every young writer: that indescribable moment of seeing your own name at the top of a piece of work you've written. That moment is called publication, and that experience is something for which all writers strive. Last fall semester, English professor Linda Smith led her Composition 101 class through the process of publishing a book of their own essays, giving them all the opportunity to publish their thoughts and perspectives about a single topic: the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. They called their published book *Collected Reflections of 9/11: Voices of a Millennial Generation*.

Ten years after the attacks, the events of September 11 were getting a great deal of renewed media coverage, so the topic was on the students' minds. One day, Linda Smith discussed with the class what they would like to write their next major paper about and, as Smith recounts, "The book idea just naturally evolved out of those discussions and the unique perspective of the youngest members of the millennial generation attempting to add their voices to the global discussion of the 9/11 anniversary." The leap from class assignment to published book, though, was spearheaded by freshman Angela Wary, who is majoring in chemistry.

Wary not only completed an essay for the publication, but she was also on the Student Editorial Team and was heavily involved in the making of the book. The last line of her essay succinctly sums up the theme of the book: "Nine-eleven is so much more than an

attack that happened in our nation's history; it altered the way of life of every single individual living in the United States." And for the students in Linda's Smith's class, the process of researching and writing was instructive in those many changes that have come to the United States as a result of the terrorist attacks.

A world of change started with the moment of the first attack. Everyone in the United States and in the world remembers a moment of shock and fear when first becoming aware of what was happening. Many of the American students wrote about what they were doing when they learned about the attacks. They were in elementary school with virtually no awareness of the global forces that would soon become important in their lives. Emily Tenbrink was playing line tag with her classmates. Kyle Zachgo saw his teachers watching the TV at school and was told about the attacks by his friend's mother. Tyler Compton was "pulled out of school to watch the news at home." Greg Goode's father told him to pray for children who had lost their parents in the attacks. The personal, unique memories of the American students breathe life into the book. They are representative of the thousands of children whose lives were changed forever by the attacks. Each of the American students went on to explore some of the ways that the United States has changed as a result of that day.

One major change has been the advent of the Iraqi war. Freshman Jacquelyn Bassett echoes the same sentiments as her peers.

“When the Twin Towers fell, we immediately looked to our government to go to war. . . . Our troops are still in Iraq. Is revenge so sweet after so many years?” Another change is in airport security. Keegan Olson wrote, “Today, anyone attempting to get through security with a knife would most likely be arrested on the spot. With a few knives, terrorists committed the worst attacks imaginable. With nothing but a few knives, they revolutionized air travel.” The student writers didn’t forget racism, either. Angela Wary lamented, “[F]ear brought out an underlying hatred [toward] any country or religion associated with the terrorists. . . . An entire religion is punished for a crime that only a small group of radical individuals committed.”

Interestingly, the book doesn’t just talk about the impact of the September 11 attack on the United States. Three of the students who

contributed essays to the book were international students from China. Seniors Yekang Hu, Meng Du, and Yin Liu approached their



COLLECTED REFLECTIONS OF 9/11

VOICES OF THE MILLENNIAL GENERATION

essays differently than did the American students. Whereas all of the American students who published in the book were freshmen—placing them in second or third grade in 2001—the Chinese students were in middle school at the time. Their perspectives are unique.

Yekang Hu writes in her essay entitled “How the 9/11 Event Influenced China” about the fear felt by people in China: “Even as powerful as the United States is, the U.S. government was not able to avoid [a] terrorist attack. That . . . made some Chinese people feel very fearful about China’s national security. . . . If it was so dangerous in America, other countries must be even more vulnerable.” Most Americans have probably never considered that people in other countries would feel the same kind of fear that paralyzed Americans after an attack on their own soil.

On a different note, Meng Du, a pre-law major, wrote a well-researched critical essay called “9/11, Not Merely a Tragedy,” which briefly touched on several important points. While all of the American students’ essays overflowed with patriotism, Meng was not afraid to challenge the American government’s reaction to the September 11 attacks. She writes, “Later, the United States government admitted that, on the night of 9/11, they had determined to overthrow the Iraqi regime, although no evidence demonstrated any relationship between the Saddam Hussein government and Al-Qaeda.” She goes on to question the Americans’ right to force peace on other nations through “cruel conflict.” Meng Du’s understanding of world politics and critical objectivity will be useful to her when she becomes an international lawyer someday.

Although Meng and all of the student writers had a lot to say about September 11, the process of getting their stories and insights into print was taxing. The student writers had to commit to a process of multiple revisions

over the winter break. They had to submit their essays to a student editorial team, which consisted of four of their classmates (Angela Wary, Andrew Flanagin, Keegan Olson, and Meng Du) and complete a first set of revisions. Then they had to work with a lead editorial team.

The lead editorial team was staffed by upper-level English majors Michelle Webb, Adrienne Samia, and Katherine Jones. Each of these co-editors took time to read the student essays and provide feedback and suggestions. The students then had the opportunity to make changes. When asked what she had learned from the experience, Jones said, “This was my first time editing with others. It’s very interesting to see how each editor approaches a work. There are some changes I never would have thought to make on my own and vice versa. The collaborative effort is obvious, I feel, in reading the book. It makes sense to have a varied group of editors for a varied group of young writers!” Being able to edit a publication is another one of those key dreams for English lovers, and the making of *Collected Reflections* was an opportunity for student writers and editors alike. The editing was completed in November, and the book was published in December 2011.

The professor who orchestrated the project, Linda Smith, found the project rewarding as well. “My greatest achievement as an English teacher is when I can help students begin to see themselves as writers, as members of an art that is at once individual and social. . . . These students and the others found a new way to use writing to engage others; they found their voices, and those voices became the essays in this book. I’m very proud of each of them.”

The slim paperback (featuring color photos) can be purchased for \$10.00 from Ms. Linda Smith. Email her at lsmith@fhsu.edu for details.

Writing Internship Class Added Requirement for Writing Concentration

By Jacinta Carter

In January 2012, the Fort Hays State University English Department launched the pilot semester of ENG 448 Writing Internship, now a requirement for students in the Writing Concentration, under the direction of Dr. Cheryl Hofstetter Duffy. According to Duffy, students need the opportunity to write and edit material that will “showcase their abilities to a prospective employer.” Though academic writing helps students to hone their skills, essays don’t present writers with the option of creating a professional portfolio.

Five students enrolled in the class, finding a variety of internship opportunities from which to choose. I opted to work with the USD 489 Foundation for Educational Excellence. This experience allowed me to build my portfolio with brochures, letterheads, and newsletters I wrote for, designed, and edited to distribute to Hays High alumni and supporters. I also helped update the Hays High alumni database to start rebuilding the Foundation and launch the organization’s fundraising efforts.

Holly Younger helped Patty Nicholas with the oral history project in Forsyth Library. She spent much of her internship researching potential interviewees and transcribing interviews with former FHSU students and faculty. She chose to work on this project because, as a history minor, she was interested in recording history from the “perspective of average people who lived through it.” One of her favorite projects during her internship involved researching and writing trivia about The Wizard of Oz for a display featured in the library.

Jessi Robbins worked with Leslie Paige in the FHSU Graduate Office on the Undergraduate Research Experience (URE). She started out by making a storyboard for a new

webpage and was able to write the content for most of it. She also contributed to URE blogs and Facebook postings. Jessi said she enjoyed working on a project that would benefit so many students, specifically those interested in undergraduate research.

Trinda Quint chose to work with the Political Science Department in its attempt to further enlighten students about the current political situation, something she admittedly knew little about. Despite her lack of political knowledge, Trinda chose this internship because it presented her with the opportunity to work with social networking sites such as Facebook, Twitter, and various blogging websites. She was in charge of setting up the Facebook and Twitter pages, and editing the materials posted on the blogs. She also wrote alumni profiles for the Management and Marketing department.

Jessi Bittel worked with the Biology Department, specifically helping out with the Environmental Club. She chose this internship because of her lifelong love of the environment and found that branching out from the English Department was a positive experience. One of the most rewarding projects she helped with involved writing and editing grants that will help improve bicycle paths and walking near and on campus.

All five interns had similar reasons for enrolling in the class, and similar worries about the internship. Each one cited the need for more writing experience as the motivator for taking on a writing internship, since most writing jobs require two to three years of experience. All of the interns shared the worry that they would be overwhelmed by the internship, considering the hours they were expected to log and the portfolio they were to complete by the end of the semester. Dr. Duffy and the interns’ supervisors were extremely helpful throughout the semester. All of the students feel they walked away with newfound skills, portfolio materials, and references they couldn’t have received anywhere else.



Sigma Tau Delta Students Travel to “The Big Easy”

By Bryan Baxter

Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honor Society, offers membership to English majors who exhibit a high standard of academic excellence. Sponsored by the FHSU English department, the local chapter, Rho Psi, works to promote interest in literature, language, and writing, while inspiring a feeling of camaraderie among fellow members. “The organization provides a network of likeminded individuals who truly love to study and discuss all that is wonderful about the English language,” says FHSU graduate student and Sigma member Michelle Webb.

The major event this year was the Sigma Tau Delta 2012 International

Convention held in New Orleans. FHSU advisor Dr. Lexey Bartlett and five members, including Webb, traveled to the Big Easy in February to attend the convention. Webb was invited to present her literary paper (written for Dr. Carl Singleton) entitled “The Afterlife: An Impossible Possibility,” an analysis of Dickinson’s poem “This World is Not Conclusion,” and Bartlett served as moderator of the “Dickinson and 19th Century American Literature” session.

During the four-day conference, students attended lectures, presentations, and workshops. Ruth Gooding and Sheri Bedore named the “Bad Po-

etry Recital” (which was exactly what it sounds like) as one of their favorite events at the conference. “Some students planned months ahead of time to present a work of horrific form, awkward rhyme, or silly subject matter,” said Gooding. “It was a great evening of laughter.”

The convention-goers also took advantage of a myriad of tourist attractions, including two cemetery tours. The first tour featured the cemetery where legendary voodoo priestess Marie Laveau is buried, while the second tour was centered on vampires. Students treated themselves to some of the amazing food the city has to offer, and Webb bravely tasted a Southern dish made with crocodile meat.

FHSU Sigma members conducted several fundraisers in preparation for the trip. The fundraisers included a variety of activities: selling baked goods at Oktoberfest; hosting “Malloween,” a children’s event held at the local mall; and holding book sales in Rarick Hall and the Memorial Union featuring books donated from across campus.

In addition to providing monetary aid for the New Orleans trip, funds help support the Sigma Tau Delta-sponsored *Lines from the Middle of Nowhere*. The literary and art journal is an annual publication featuring poetry, prose, and artwork by FHSU alumni, faculty, staff, and current students from various majors, allowing many of them to publish their work for the first time.



From Left: Ruth Gooding, Sheri Bedore, Dr. Lexey Bartlett, Miranda Bridgforth, Zach Kastens

FHSU Writing Center Impacts Campus Internationalization

By Katherine Jones

Gathered in the basement of Forsyth library, hidden away from the hustle and bustle upstairs, student tutors and their clients huddle over in-progress essays and roughly drafted outlines. With patience and diligence, tutors and students work together in the arduous process of wading through the pitfalls and intricate quirks of the English language. Can you imagine writing an in-depth paper in a foreign language? Such a harrowing journey would be intimidating and difficult for any young writer. For Fort Hays State University's international students, this journey can be an especially frustrating component of their education. Luckily, the Writing Center's capable peer tutors are there to offer guidance and support in forty-five-minute sessions.

"Forward Thinking and World Ready," Fort Hays State University strives to provide its students with the tools necessary for success in a global society. The process of expanding to accommodate a diverse, multinational population is called "internationalization." In the most recent semester, 350 international students from 24 different countries attended classes on the FHSU campus. The majority of these students come from China. The second largest group is from Saudi Arabia. International students require a little extra support as they find themselves immersed in a new culture with a new educational style.

The Writing Center tutors take their role in the lives of international students seriously. "Obviously, internationalization is key to our

college because we do host so many international students," says tutor Renee Simon. "If the college did not make an attempt to bridge the cultural gaps, we would be falling short of our duties."

The Writing Center contributes directly to internationalization on campus by providing international students with feedback on their written assignments for classes ranging from Composition I to Introduction to Psychology. By helping international students with their essays, tutors also offer students insight into the English language overall, helping them to achieve success in their chosen academic fields. Tutors address problem areas such as subject/verb agreement, article use, and pronouns when working with international students; these and other grammar basics are complicated even for the most fluent of English-speaking students. Tutors also help the students to organize and format their papers according to the requirements laid out by the students' professors.

Established in 2002, the Writing Center's purpose has always been to provide students with the knowledge necessary to communicate their ideas in clear, correct English. While students do bring in specific papers to be revised, the overall objective for tutors is to provide students with the information necessary to succeed in future writings. Tutors at the Writing Center strive to provide long-term knowledge rather than simply offer the quick fix of editing.

Dr. Pam Shaffer, Director of the Writing Center since 2004, explains that “tutors [also] offer students help with research, including using available databases, the online catalog at Forsyth Library, and...evaluating online resources. Of course, the tutors also help students with correct documentation form in doing research, using MLA and APA documentation styles.”

Xiaoxia “Daisy” Liu, an English major from mainland China, is a frequent visitor at the Writing Center. Daisy comes to the Center for two or three sessions per paper, and she feels that the Center has greatly helped her to improve her writing skills and her English fluency.

“Working in the Writing Center encourages me to study harder,” Daisy explains, “and I can really explain the reason why these words and phrases should be used in certain ways. Before I only knew how to use the words and when to use some certain tenses, but now I can explain to anyone why you should use that word or tense in that context.”

Tutors take their position in the education of international students seriously. While language barriers and cultural differences may sometimes be frustrating for both the client and the tutor, the Writing Center’s employees sympathize with the students’ circumstances and exercise understanding and patience.

According to long-time tutor Michelle Webb, “We encourage [the international students] and help them gain confidence not only in their writing but also in their ability to adapt to Western rhetorical expectations that often differ from the writing to which they are accustomed in their native countries. It is through this process—of supporting students’ writing during this difficult transition—that the international students can adapt to a new academic environment and thrive.”

The Writing Center offers international students a safe, comfortable environment in which to address their English language

struggles. Recently, the Center has begun to offer sessions covering oral pronunciation of common English words in addition to tutoring sessions in English writing. Tutors hope to provide international students with the ability to communicate clearly and confidently in oral presentations as well as in their papers.

Sally Spina, Writing Center tutor and a student employee of the English as a Second Language (ESL) Program, feels that the Writing Center should consider offering such services in a more extensive way. She suggests that the Center could consider adding a separate “language lab” as a part of its services. The majority of international students are too proficient in the language to be considered novice ESL students, but they still require a little extra help with verbal skills.

Regarding the future of the Writing Center, Director Dr. Pam Shaffer intends to take internationalization one step further by hiring international students as tutors. She also hopes to provide all current and future tutors with intensive training to provide more insight into the unique problems faced by non-native clients. Until such time as these changes can be implemented, the tutors of the FHSU Writing Center continue to work diligently to provide all students with the tools to succeed.

When students leave the Writing Center at the end of a session, they leave with a new confidence and determination to succeed. Tutors and students take pride in the results of their combined efforts. Adil Bajeel, a student from Saudi Arabia, says, “To become a better writer, you should better your reading within the culture of that language you are learning.” International students recognize the importance of the services the Writing Center provides in their journey toward internationalization. At the same time, workers at the Writing Center anticipate an exciting future full of opportunities to provide education and support of FHSU students from all over the world.

Alabama

Ralph Voss & Glenda Weathers-Voss,
Birmingham

California

Donald Eulert, Santa Ysabel
Dan & Carolyn McGovern, Walnut
Creek

Colorado

Mark & Barbara Dreiling, Denver
Charlotte Hinger, Loveland
Kinder Morgan Foundation, Lakewood
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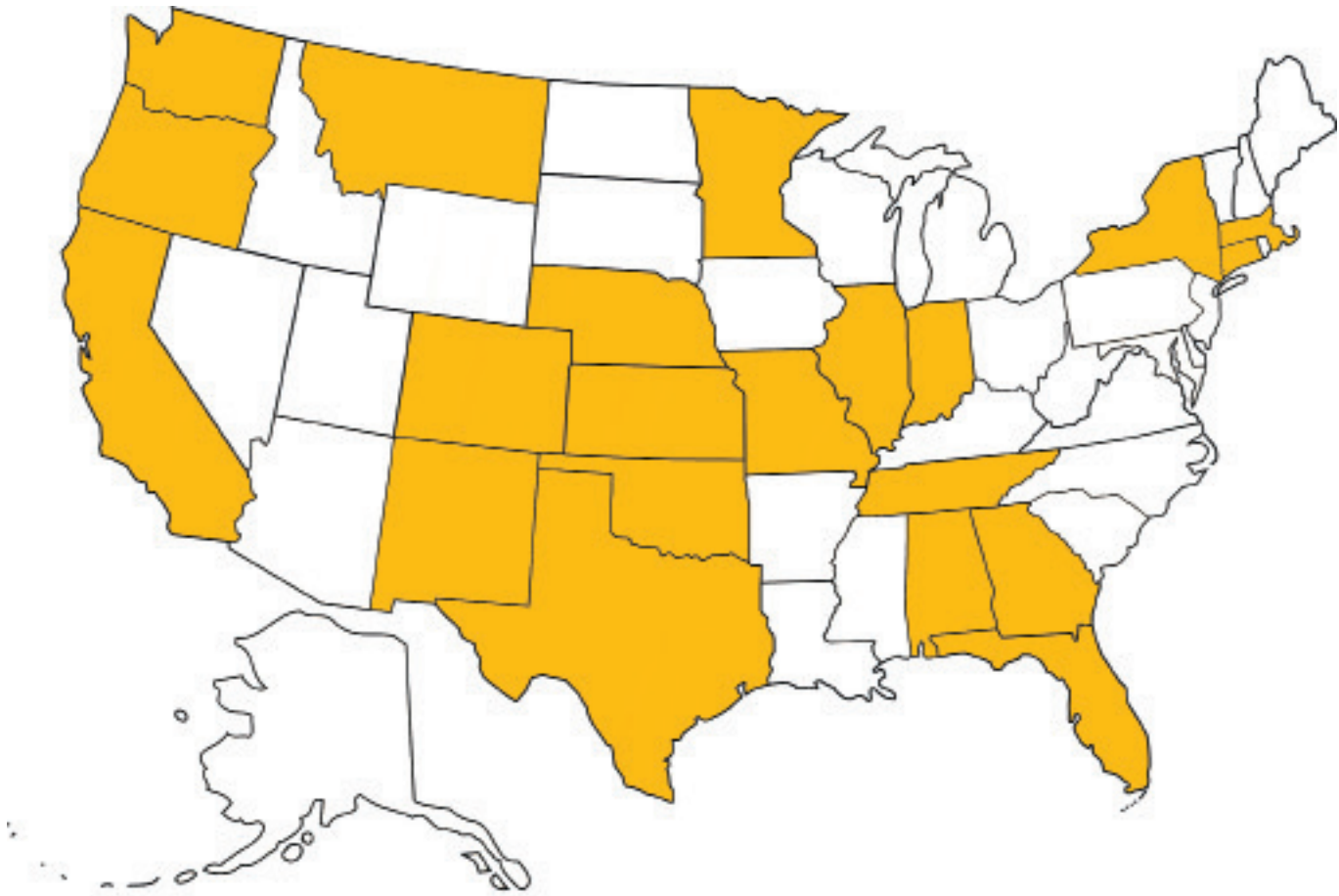
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