

IN WRITING

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Erin Johnston (photo: Erin Johnston)

Ella Graber (photo: Ella Graber)

Internships, Identities, and Inspirations

Michaela Triemstra

Part of GVSU's writing curriculum is completing an internship. For most, completing an internship is a new experience, and it can sometimes be stressful to think about. While an internship may seem nerve-wracking and daunting, it is a great experience for students to go through.

The Writing Department's Internship Coordinator, Senior Affiliate Professor Dauvan Mulally, said, "The internship helps students develop their professional identities, and seeing themselves as writers, editors, and in a future workplace."

WRT 490: Writing Internship, the GVSU writing course which is taken in conjunction with a writing-related internship, is designed to make the transition from school to work much easier and less intimidating. "WRT 490 helps students feel less stressed out going into the workplace when they know their skill set and what they have to offer," Mulally said.

Students also have the advantage of

networking with professionals while interning, and these professionals could be used as references for future jobs. This gives students a competitive edge when they enter the workplace because they have worked with professional writers during their internship experience.

For many writing majors, like Erin Johnston and Ella Graber, their internship experiences have proved to help develop their skills, introduce them to life after graduation, and provide them with opportunities to further their careers.

WRT 490 student Erin Johnston is currently interning with the Grand Rapids Public Museum in archaeology at the Grand Rapids City Archives. Johnston has been developing the skills needed to handle and analyze artifacts, and has been sorting and cataloging a large collection recently donated to the museum. Johnston plans to write multiple pieces during

SEE *INTERNS* ON PAGE 11

CONTRIBUTORS

Michaela Triemstra

Kailey Parkins

Alora Bowers

Mark Lavish

Maddie Cesarz

Layla Kren

Jacob Roberts

Torianna Marasco

Crafted Choices and Confidants

Kailey Parkins



Associate Professors Beth Peterson and Oindrila Mukherjee (photo: Kailey Parkins)

On February 1st, the air in the Mary Idema Pew Library was electric with excitement and anticipation for that night's Writers Series Event to begin. There would be two professors speaking that night: Associate Professors Dr. Beth Peterson and Dr. Oindrila Mukherjee who were eager to share their work with both familiar and unfamiliar faces.

Both professors approached their readings differently, but in equally magnetic ways. Peterson began the night with two short pieces entitled "How We Are" and "What We Don't Talk About," both of which contain mentions of medical care and injury. Everyone was captivated as Peterson read aloud from her pieces, the former of which detailed how she would run 18-mile loops in the country with her friends and broke her hand when a black dog attacked her. "It was a bone no one ever breaks," Peterson explained, "only about one percent of people do, and [the doctor] told me the scar would never heal." As Peterson recovered, she began to contemplate a rather complicated question: How do we deal with trauma?

This seemed incredibly relevant, not only for her pieces, but for the time Peterson was writing them as well. Both pieces were written during

the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdowns that came with it. When discussing how the pandemic affected Peterson and her class, she explained, "Writing is urgent and important. We felt like we were drowning, but writing kept us afloat." Peterson explained how she wrote her second piece in one class period, and sent it to publishing immediately afterward. "What We Don't Talk About" detailed Peterson's

"We felt like we were drowning, but writing kept us afloat."

experience waiting for the results of her pre-cancer biopsy after receiving surgery to remove the mass. "It took a week to get the results back," Peterson writes, "To get through it, I had to tell myself that I was okay every day until I got the call." But when the results came back inconclusive, Peterson had to go through it all again, taking it one day at a time, which Peterson realized a lot of people were doing during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Up next, Professor Mukherjee went a different route with her reading. Instead of reading her finished piece aloud, Mukherjee decided to show

just how different her piece was by comparing its two different versions—its full-length book entitled *The Dream Builders* and its short story "The Confidant." When discussing the chapters within her book, Mukherjee explained, "Each chapter reads like a story, because each story is from a different character's point of view." She explained further how "The Confidant" followed the journey of Pinky, a facialist who kept the secrets of her clients buried deep inside her, and at the end of the story, let them all out by telling everyone about them. "There were some characters I had to take out completely," Mukherjee says, showing her listeners the comparisons, "and there were some storylines that had to be adjusted, all for the sake of the short story." One of these major edits was the removal of a character called Ramona, who would have had an inconclusive storyline if she had been kept in.

During the Q&A, Mukherjee explained how there were ten characters within her longer piece, all of whom are from India and different social classes within it. "It was difficult," Mukherjee explains to Peterson, who had asked her about the ethnic representation within her novel, "I had to research what my characters' lives would have been like, and part of that research was going to India and talking to people." She expressed to her listeners how important it is to think about the issues of representing others who are not like you and doing it in a nuanced way.

This led the group into a discussion about how to not only represent others accurately but also yourself as an individual. Mukherjee asked Peterson how she grappled with the idea of putting herself in a memoir without disguising herself, and Peterson replied that she uses a certain persona, "There

SEE CRAFTED CHOICES ON PAGE 11

Andrew Collard's Debut Poetry Collection *Sprawl*

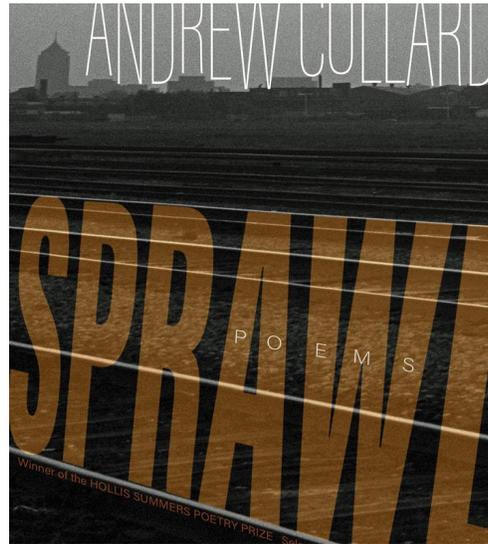
Alora Bowers

Visiting Professor Andrew Collard is a new professor at GVSU this academic year, whose debut poetry collection, *Sprawl*, was published in March 2023 by Ohio University Press. The collection won the Hollis Summers Poetry Prize, and poems from the book have appeared in *AGNI*, *Best New Poets*, *Ploughshares*, and other magazines.

Sprawl is a collection of poetry that presents Detroit as an “Autotopia,” and it emphasizes the city’s role as an “empire centered on the automobile,” a center for industrialization, and the place where Collard grew up. Collard stated, “It delves into local history a bit, touching on the newspaper strike of the 1990s and a missile factory not far from my high school.” The poetry touches on these historical moments, but also Collard’s personal connection to them and the sprawling Metro Detroit area.

Collard’s deep connection to his work is reflected in the slow way that this collection was developed. When asked about his writing process, Collard revealed that his work was not quick in the making, but took years to finally culminate into the portrait of Detroit that it became. He shared that the oldest poem was first written in 2014, but the bulk of the project was written in 2018-19. “It has had a long gestation period. Each poem really comes to me differently—over the course of writing the project, I went through so many phases in my reading and writing that I can’t recall them all. The hardest thing, always, is trying to write while also being a parent and struggling to make a living. The book is largely a response to the latter,” Collard said. This response is seen in the sense of urgency and movement throughout the poetry.

An important part of Collard’s writing process is to keep reading. He



Cover of Collard's Poetry Collection *Sprawl* (photo: andrewcollard.com)

emphasizes that “the most important factor in one’s writing life is one’s reading life, and I would encourage people to read as widely as possible, both within the genre they are writing in and outside of it, especially including things they don’t think they’ll like.” One of Collard’s favorite poets, who inspires his writing, is Muriel Rukeyser, author of *The Life of Poetry*. She was a poetic activist who wrote about queer identity, feminism, social writing, and equality. She wrote the phrase “Punctuation is biological,” which Collard resonates with along with her stance on social writing. “As a writer who explicitly connects the social with the personal, her work continually makes available to me ways to write about my own life and circumstances I wouldn’t have otherwise considered,” Collard said.

Collard’s advice to poets who want to see their work published is to just focus on their writing and read things that stretch their thinking and show them new ways to do things. He shared from his own experience, “Writing poems is something I did before I thought anyone would publish them, and it’s something I’ll keep doing regardless.” However, if

“...the most important factor in one’s writing life is one’s reading life, and I would encourage people to read as widely as possible...”

you have writing that you love and are putting out in the world to get published, don’t let rejections slow you down. Collard said, “It’s a matter of finding the right editor at the right moment, and you have to keep sending out.” ■

AWP 2022-23 Fiction Winner

“Pretty Deaths in Zucchini Season”

Brooke Rempalski

AWP 2022-23 Nonfiction Winner

“The Trolley Problem”

Kai Greenblatt

The Narrative Within the Narrative: Eugenia Leigh on Involving the Reader

Mark Lavish



Eugenia Leigh signing books for line of students (photo: Amorak Huey)

On March 28, 2023, Korean-American poet, Eugenia Leigh, gave a craft talk and led a generative workshop at the penultimate Writer's Series Event this semester. Author of award-winning poetry collections—*Bianca* (2023) and *Blood, Sparrows and Sparrows* (2014)—Leigh began her presentation by exploring how to “revise” one's own history, as well as trauma narratives in creative writing, by transcending the poet's own narrative into another perspective: the reader's.

To begin her analysis, Leigh begged the question of how a poem can be authentic to the poet's life by eliciting anger while also offering hope. Because she believes that only drawing from anger is limiting, Leigh has attempted to discover a way to include more than one emotion from a single story. Through a psychological process called “dialectical thinking,” or having “two opposite truths” at once, Leigh argued that by using deliberate choices in poetry (line breaks, punctuation, omission, and semantics), it is possible to draw out two opposite feelings from the reader by involving them in the experience of the poem rather than passively reading.

Leigh explained that many literary tools and deliberate choices utilize another psychological term called

“instinctive elaboration,” which she defined as the process of the brain trying to solve problems automatically when left hanging by whoever is presenting the problem. In trauma writing, Leigh stated a writer can drop in keywords to elicit emotions and memories; in doing so, the author trusts the reader to connect the provided dots to arrive at the intended conclusion themselves. If the poet had stated the conclusion themselves, the weight of the message might be lost on the reader. Thus, there exists a narrative within a narrative—a story that can be found by reading between the lines, and when a reader discovers that hidden narrative on their own, the emotional impact is exponential.

Leigh also gave a warning for poets: the idea is to be intentional with these choices. The author is not just leaving things out for no reason but is doing so to create tension in the text which is then released by the reader's instinctive elaboration.

Further aiding poets, novelists, and essayists alike in their journeys, Leigh offered two suggestions for aspiring writers regarding the editing phase. First, she argued that the true momentum of a writer's voice is in the first draft; it captures the “raw, diary-entry voice,” which can then be amplified and identified during the editing phase but could be damaged

and inauthentic if edited too early. Therefore, she told readers to not worry about editing until they have written everything down. Second, she warned writers to be conscious when deciding what to omit, where to leave a line hanging, and where to create tension. In other words, say it first, then decide what to withhold later.

While reading poems from *Blood, Sparrows and Sparrows* and *Bianca*, Leigh discussed her inspirations for her work. The main difference between her two works, which were published nine years apart, was the fact that she had experienced so much life between the two releases—having a child, addressing mental health issues like PTSD and Bipolar II disorder, and sobriety. Still, she claimed that there were “conversations” happening between the two works: commentary on the people in her life.

Blood, Sparrows and Sparrows was written when Leigh was in her twenties, which was the result of her dealing with trauma. *Bianca*, on the other hand, was crafted from the perspective of being a mother, which she said “gave her access to feelings” that she did not have before. Rather than talking about her troubles and mistakes like those mentioned in her first book, she focused on the anger she felt about what had happened to her throughout her life. *Bianca* was an alias she used for the destructive version of herself in her early twenties, the version that was coping with trauma and mental illness by self-medicating with alcohol.

During the Q&A session of this writer series, Leigh was asked about being reluctant to write something. She said, “Writing is completely different from publishing”, and argued to write as much as possible first before deciding what should

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New Faculty Profile: Kyle Lucas

Maddie Cesarz



Visiting Professor Kyle Lucas (photo: Kyle Lucas)

Visiting Professor Kyle Lucas is one of the newest faculty members in GVSU's Writing Department. Last year, he graduated from Purdue University with a Ph.D. in English and a specialization in Second Language Studies/Applied Linguistics. During his time there, his research focused on philosophical writing and how teachers can teach philosophical discourse to students learning English as a second language. This led Lucas to help design a master's program for Purdue University that focuses on teaching philosophical discourse to English as second language learners. He taught in the program for a year before graduating and joining the GVSU faculty.

Currently, he uses his background in philosophy – which is a master's degree in philosophy he earned at Western Michigan University – to incorporate philosophical ideas into the WRT 150: Strategies in Writing courses he teaches. When asked why, he responded, “I find [philosophy] engaging material and it's something that I think students tend to have an investment and reaction to that is rewarding in a writing class.”

WRT 150 is a course where students transition from high school-level to college-level writing, but Lucas wants his students to take more than just the development of their writing away from it, and this is his way of doing just that.

Despite his current passion for teaching writing, Lucas never planned on going into writing or English. During the majority of his undergraduate years at Ferris State University, he was studying to become a history teacher, but around his senior year, he decided that he wanted to go to graduate school. So, he switched his major to just history. After undergraduate school, he decided to take a gap year and teach English in South Korea, which he said, “really shaped my path and where I ended up going.” That path is his passion for teaching, especially for students who are English language learners.

“I find [philosophy] engaging material...that I think students tend to have an investment and reaction to that is rewarding in a writing class.”

As a Michigan native, Professor Lucas said that “it felt good to be back” after being gone for those few years he was at Purdue earning his Ph.D. He claimed it was even better for him to arrive at GVSU because everything about it made him feel welcomed, “the campus is beautiful, and the staff is very nice,” he stated. Though, one of his favorite things about teaching at GVSU is the wonderful students, “I remind myself every day to have gratitude that I am able to follow my bliss,” Lucas said. ■

**Writing Major
Outstanding
Student Award**

Audrey Kelly

**Glenn A.
Niemeyer Award
Nominee**

Abigail Caswell

**Kenneth R.
Venderbush
Leadership
Award Nominee**

Bruna Ngassa

**Thomas A.
Seykora Award
University
Winners**

Kaitlin Ambuehl

Bruna Ngassa

Writing Related Clubs and Organizations

Maddie Cesarz

From poetry and journalism to newsletters and newspapers, GVSU's Writing Department, as well as other departments, have created clubs and organizations for those interested in writing and/or editing. Each organization has something unique to offer that can appeal to several interests and they are all happy to accept new members and invite others in the community. If any of the organizations below interest you, check out LakerLink or the Writing Department's website for more information.

Additional writing related clubs: Sour Grapes, The Writers' Room: A Scriptwriting Club

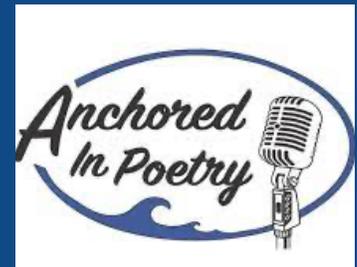


IN THE MARGINS POETRY CLUB

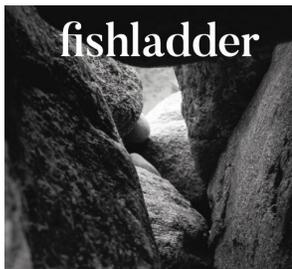
In the Margins is a club open to any student looking to advance their writing skills, share their work, and meet new people. They feature prompts and activities for poetry, fiction, and creative non-fiction writing styles, as well as an optional informal open mic night following each weekly meeting where members can share their work.

ANCHORED IN POETRY

Anchored in Poetry is GVSU's College Union Poetry Slam Invitational (CUPSI) slam poetry team. This club is designed to be a community where poets can create and collaborate in a supportive environment by hosting slams and workshops. Anyone is welcome to join, but team competitors – those who will travel to and compete in the CUPSI competition – are selected after a series of slams.



fishladder



FISHLADDER: A STUDENT JOURNAL OF ART AND WRITING

Looking for experience in the publication process? Apply on the fishladder website during the fall to contribute to the journal. You can read submitted work by students for fiction, non-fiction, or poetry. You can also review for art and photography or apply for an editor position. Consider submitting your own work in the fall for a chance to have your work published in the journal.

THE WORDSMITHS

The Wordsmiths is a club for students who are passionate about creative writing. When they meet, they workshop each other's work or propose a prompt for everyone to write about, but they are open to working on whatever someone has to bring to the table. Many of the members commented on the sense of community the club provides for them and it being much less academically structured.



Grand
Valley
Writing
Department

INWRITING Newsletter

INWRITING

This student organization creates a biannual newsletter about events and other news happening within the Writing Department. Each fall and winter semester we are looking for writers, reviewers, copyeditors, and photographers to help us put together the publication.

STUDENT JOURNALISM CLUB

This club is open to any student who wants to immerse themselves deeper into the journalism community. It's a place where students can help each other strengthen their skills and broaden their horizons and explore opportunities to network with local and national journalists. This club has an annual dues fee of \$10.



THE LANTHORN

If you are looking for experience in a fast-paced news publication environment, join The Lanthorn! You can write, edit, advertise, and more for a variety of sections, including News, Laker Life, Arts, and Sports for print and web. Students get paid per article written.

ORGANIZATION FOR PROFESSIONAL WRITERS

This organization's purpose is to promote professional writing, further other's understanding of the field, utilize skills outside of the classroom, and network with other writing majors, minors, and professionals. They also offer professional development.



STUDENT READING SERIES

The Student Reading Series (SRS) is organized, planned, and publicized by students and consists of monthly readings of student work throughout the year. SRS welcomes all writers as long as the pieces are literary in nature. Even if you choose not to read, they encourage others to support fellow writers and hear some great student work.

Alumni Updates

Torianna Marasco

GVSU writing alumni are exploring outlets of writing all over the world and are working toward careers within the field in more ways than one. *InWriting* is proud to share more about former students and what their writing lives have looked like after gaining alumni status.

2012

MOLLY WAITE received her MA in Arts and Culture from Maastricht University in the Netherlands and is currently working at the University of Twente in the Netherlands. Originally hired as an English teacher, Waite has since become a writing center professional. After she piloted the writing center program in 2019, she worked there to provide peer-to-peer academic writing support to the UT student population. Currently, she is writing training materials for the UT Writing Centre student employees, and an employee handbook. Although she is not currently working on personal writing projects, she looks forward to having free time to explore more of her writing soon.

2013

SAMI BURCH'S career in writing has taken her on an unexpected journey. She is currently working at Mission Design & Automation and has been working in the industry for almost 10 years. The technical writer's first job was to create instruction manuals for custom robotics machines across many industries, but she took an opportunity to join the marketing team, allowing her to focus more on sales materials such as brochures, websites, and social media content. As the company's marketing and communications manager, she has been using what she learned from GVSU's writing program for

graphic design, content marketing, e-newsletters, and more. Between her career and occasional traveling training sessions, Burch continues to make new goals and build the career she has become quite proud of.

2021

ELAINA SMITH is currently working at Central Michigan University as the Assistant Director of Social Media and she is pursuing her MA in creative writing. Her current work-in-progress is an essay about gun violence she is writing for her creative nonfiction class. Simultaneously, Smith is also working on editing a few short stories and flash fiction pieces from previous fiction classes she hopes to submit and publish soon. Since graduation, she has published an essay in *Goatsmilk Magazine* called "The Body Forgives." She appreciates the time she had at GVSU and the experiences that the Writing Department offered.

HANNAH KELLY is an Associate Copywriter for Demand Inc. She writes business-to-business marketing as well as outreach emails for the company. Outside of the workplace, Kelly is drafting a novel, several poems, and hoping to get back into short story and essay writing. Although she has not published any of her work yet, she hopes to explore that side of her writing soon.

2022

ANNA EVANGELISTA was *InWriting's* editor for the 2021-2022 school year. Since her graduation in the spring of 2022, she continues to live in the Grand Rapids area working as a Technical Writer at Dematic. Evangelista's summer internship with Dematic turned into a full-time

position. She claims that all of the information and experiences she gained in GVSU's writing courses have been a major factor in the foundation that helped her reach her current position. Outside of work, Evangelista also spends time writing poetry—mostly for pure enjoyment or to read at open mic nights, but she also hopes to create a book of poetry in the near future. Exploring both of her passions—technical writing and creative writing—is something she plans to continue as she progresses.

PAIGE SIEGRIST moved out to Los Angeles not long after her graduation last spring. She found a job as a production assistant, working on her very first TV show set. The show is called *The Next Crypto Gem*, which Siegrist claimed is quite interesting for anyone in the crypto world. Since then, she has been working at a brunch spot in West Hollywood as well as an assistant for Bspoket—an ad-supported network that focuses on beauty, fashion, and lifestyle driven programming. While working these jobs, Siegrist continues to write film scripts that she plans to enter in screenwriting competitions. Between writing and working, Siegrist claims moving across the country was the best decision she has ever made. She encourages people to not be afraid to make the move away from home after college and follow their dreams, wherever it may take them. ■

Alumni,
we want to hear from you!

Please share about your publications, job positions, or other writing knowledge you have gained since graduation, with inwriting@gvsu.edu.

How Language Makes Writing Timeless

Layla Kren



Dionne Irving at Reading and Conversation at Writer Series Event (photo: Amorak Huey)

“
[Language] turns
writing into a
time capsule
that we can
return to in the
future and still
connect with.”

“Why do we write, to capture time or posterity?” asked author Dionne Irving at her craft talk for the GVSU Writers Series on February 21st. Her presentation, titled “How to Clapback and Flex: Considering Contemporary Culture in Literary Fiction,” explored how language represents time and place in writing.

Dionne Irving is currently an English professor at the University of Notre Dame. Her fiction and nonfiction pieces have been published in numerous journals and magazines, including *Story*, *Boulevard*, and *LitHub*. She is the author of the novel *Quint* and a collection of short stories called “The Islands.”

Irving explained that “language reflects our contemporary moment,” but is constantly changing. She read an excerpt from Ishmael Reed’s *Mumbo Jumbo* to demonstrate how the texture of the language helps an audience understand the setting of 1920s New Orleans. Irving even attempted a Scottish accent to emphasize the effects of dialect when using Irvine Welsh’s *Trainspotting* as an example.

The languages of literature and pop culture are often recycled to create art. According to Irving, “language is cyclical and evocative,” and we often see this in the way phrases rise and

fall in popularity. She referenced how Shakespeare is responsible for coining terms we now consider commonplace such as “cold-blooded,” “swagger,” and “advertising.” Slang is another technique that writers use to bring pop culture into their work. It situates the audience in a specific time and setting.

Irving’s latest work, “The Islands,” tells powerful stories of Jamaican women and the impact of colonialism, “a shadow of Great Britain,” that lasts for generations. With international settings from Jamaica to Europe to the United States, distinctive language traits are necessary to capture the essence of each place. At her book reading later in the day, Irving stated that “places have feelings” and that they have the power to “shape people” through language and vocabulary. Because of this, she tries to visit a place before she writes about it.

Irving also read the first story of her collection called “Florida Lives.” The piece follows a modern-day woman and her husband’s move and assimilation to Florida from San Francisco. Irving demonstrated the power of dialect by once again performing accents, but this time it was those of the Florida native neighbors that became unlikely

acquaintances to the narrator.

The reading was followed by a Q&A session, which mainly focused on her writing process. Irving claimed that sometimes it takes 20 years for a story to feel complete. When asked about challenges with cultivating characters, she said the complicated part of the process is “finding a way into the story.” She advised the audience to try changing the point of view that the story is told.

Dialects and vocabulary are powerful and mere words have the capability to evolve into developed characters and settings. Irving encouraged everyone to “be a sponge,” and pull sayings, phrases, and anything heard in the world around them as inspiration for their writing.

Language reflects a moment. It turns writing into a time capsule that we can return to in the future and still connect with. ■

AWP 2022-23 Poetry Winners

“Upon Becoming a
Totem Pole”

Michael Breazeale

“5 ways to explain
Asexuality and
Aromanticism to my
black mother”

Joi Mays

“they pretend to hold
clouds”

Brooke Shannon

New Faculty Profile: David Linden

Jacob Roberts



David Linden (photo: Jacob Roberts)

Recently, I had the pleasure of speaking to one of our newer professors, Visiting Professor David Linden. Linden received his master's degree in composition and business from the University of Michigan-Flint where he also began his teaching career in 2016. Now, he is teaching the technical aspects of writing here at GVSU. Linden has been working in the GVSU Writing Department since the fall semester of 2020.

Most recently, Linden has been working closely with students in WRT 350: Business Communication, a class helping to shape students' understanding of gathering data, handling research, writing manuals, writing accurate reports, giving oral presentations, and writing proper correspondence for the business world. His course strives to provide a strong foundation to succeed in life far beyond GVSU.

When he is not working with upperclassmen, he can often be found teaching freshmen in the WRT 130: Strategies in Writing (Stretch II) course. When Linden started at GVSU back in 2020, he started on Zoom, along with many of the incoming

Through letters of recommendation and being a reference for past students, Linden appreciates that he has been able to help students in their years beyond GVSU.

students. He faced many of the same struggles that other professors faced: reserved students, the pain of the abrupt online change, and students being underprepared for college writing. But ever since these initial struggles, Linden has been working to welcome students back to the classroom by often telling students of his "Dad Moments." He explains that these are moments where he is trying to be a little more than a teacher by sliding in words of inspiration such as, "I am looking to see the person behind the words."

Linden also went on to describe how much he loves the general culture that surrounds GVSU and especially the dedicated Writing Department. Linden specifically noted that he loves

"I am looking to see the person behind the words."

the fact that the department is not just thrown into the overall language.

We finished our conversation by talking about some of his most fond

experiences here at GVSU, noting that some of the greatest moments were when he was teaching his WRT 350 course. Linden talked about how he loved the culture and overall experience that he gets. The best part of all is when his students would come back and ask him for letters of recommendation or if he would be willing to serve as a reference for past students. He enjoys knowing that he has helped to create a very positive and welcoming culture for what many may assume to be a cold or bland business writing class. In addition to this, Linden appreciates that he has been able to help students in years beyond GVSU. ■

THE NARRATIVE...

Continued from page 4

be published. Also, Leigh always argues for honesty and authenticity in writing.

Regarding retaining freedom in the editing/publishing process, Leigh explained how publishers differ in the number of constraints and suggestions they impose upon the writer. Leigh's publisher, for example, allowed her to either accept or reject suggestions. On a side note, she did explain how poetry publishing feels freer than novel writing, which seems to have more constraints. To best decide what publishers to pursue, Leigh suggested finding authors that you really admire and enjoy and reaching out to those who published their works.

Leigh did not intend to be a writer—in fact, when she was going for her MFA, she said that she felt aimless and did not know what she wanted to do with her life. Not knowing what she wanted to do was part of the process; it pushed her to reach out for help and find ways to achieve her goals. ■

INTERNS

Continued from page 1

her internship, one of which will be based on the research she has done for a few particular artifacts.

Johnston's internship at the museum allows her to combine her interests and see what she could do with a Writing degree in the archaeology field. "Although the field of archaeology is traditionally science-heavy, this internship has given me a unique opportunity to put my skills together in a creative way," Johnston said.

One of the benefits of completing an internship is receiving hands-on experience with topics discussed in class. An internship helps to take learning to the next level. "I think it is important for students to participate in internships because it takes learning from a two- to three-dimensional perspective," Johnston said. "I know as I am working on certain things, I'll have moments where what I have read will click into place allowing those gears to start fully turning."

Johnston said that her end goal is to "create something that is both educational yet respectful to the people behind the stories" because sometimes in writing about archaeological studies, articles that are insensitive or inaccurate are published. Johnston's internship with the Museum has helped her get closer to achieving her goal.

Over the summer of 2022, writing student Ella Graber interned at the travel website, My Michigan Beach. What started as an unpaid internship turned into a paid position at the company. During her time as an intern, Graber demonstrated great professionalism through her communication, writing, and enthusiasm to try new things. So, once Graber completed the internship, My Michigan Beach offered her a paid position as a freelance writer.

Graber's internship offered her an inside look into what a web writing job looks like. She wrote articles about places in Michigan to visit, restaurants to try, fun activities to do, and other underrated activities in Michigan. The goal was to promote fun travel spots in the state for both Michigan natives and visitors. Graber learned Search Engine Optimization (SEO) skills that helped her articles climb to the top of Google searches. In her internship, Graber also learned different strategies to make her writing stand out among others.

"Adapting to different tones and learning the audience that you are writing for is crucial to successful writing for a company or website," Graber said. "It also helped build my confidence in my own writing and was a great first internship that gave me support and encouragement to experiment with my writing and pitch my own ideas."

Graber's advice for students completing their internship is to find something they are passionate about, not be afraid to make mistakes, and know that an internship is a learning process. "There is nothing to be worried or anxious about as long as you try your best," Graber said. "As long as you work hard, stay passionate about what you are writing, and are open to learning as much as possible, opportunities will come your way."

As Johnston and Graber have experienced, internships can open doors and provide new opportunities. They can allow students to both grow as a writer and as a person.

Between WRT 490 and the intern position itself, there is a lot for GVSU writing students to learn. The overall experience is perfect for those preparing to kickstart their careers and to see what their lives might look like after graduation. ■

CRAFTED CHOICES

Continued from page 2

are things I won't talk about, but I'm okay with talking about certain things in certain spaces." This is the key, knowing how much you as the author are willing to talk about, what you are willing to say, and how best to say it while being true to yourself and your experiences—and your comfort level. "There is always a choice," Peterson says, "and it is always crafted."

Overall, the Writers Series Event was a success, and many of the attendees, including myself, walked away with newfound knowledge and a stronger sense of what it means to be part of a community. One that is rich with compassion, experience, and understanding—just as GV is. ■

AWP 2022-23 Honorable Mentions

Fiction: "Home Alone in March" by Ahmari Garrett

Poetry: "One Last Love for a Dying Body" by Caitlin Cooper

"White" by Audrey Kelly

"Ode to Coin Laundry" by Carol Miller

"Missing Texas Teen Found Driving in Nebraska" by Gabrielle Smith

A Letter from the Editor

Torianna Marasco



Torianna Marasco (photo: Torianna Marasco)

Another four years of school have come and gone but my time at GVSU, like that of many of others, was unlike anything I have experienced. I am proud to be graduating this semester with a bachelor of science degree in both writing and studio art.

During my freshman year, the COVID pandemic began, so I packed up my dorm room and went home. When classes were first remote, I was doing schoolwork three hours away from school; it felt surreal. We were finding new ways to learn and communicate—ways we would have never imagined.

Sophomore year came around and the online classes were starting to feel like the new normal, especially since we had no idea when or if it would be safe to resume classes as usual. As a studio art major, I was provided with certain supplies to take home and was following my instructors' videos to do the best I could with limited guidance. However, the classes I was taking for my writing major were often easier to follow; we work mainly online anyway. Either way, I

missed the classroom experience.

Everyone began learning new processes to work with others including collaborative Google Docs and Zoom discussions. Now, three years later, we are still using these concepts to stay on track when life slips a bit out of control. It is our new way of thinking and working.

This past year has been more demanding and yet more rewarding than ever for me. With classes mostly back to normal, it feels like the real experience again—it also means the piles of work keep adding up. Although, through each struggle, I am grateful to continue to learn ways to be a better writer and artist.

Before I walk across that stage, I would like to give thanks to each professor and classmate I have had the pleasure to work with at GVSU for helping me get to where I am today. I am beyond grateful for everyone in both the Writing and Studio Art Departments.

“...I’d like to give thanks to each professor and classmate I have had the pleasure to work with at GVSU...”

As for InWriting, I would also like to personally thank every contributor who helped in the creation of this publication as well as last semester’s. And, a special thanks to Alora Bowers and Professor Kylie Jacobsen, this year’s Assistant Editor and Faculty Advisor. It has been a pleasure working with you all to create these newsletters.

INWRITING

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