

IN WRITING

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Students in the Bellamy Creek Program (photo: Aaron Yore-VanOosterhout)

Inside the Department's Partnership with the Bellamy Creek Program

Kallie Crouch and Lucy Billingsley

Editor's Note: The quotes and opinions of Emma Carlisle, Amy Phillips, Amy Ferdinandt Stolley, and Jennifer Torrealano expressed in this piece are their own and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Bellamy Creek Program.

Winter 2025 signals the second semester since the GVSU-accredited program at Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility in Ionia, MI welcomed its first students into the classroom. "Right now, we have roughly 15 to 20 students," the program's Acting Director Aaron Yore-VanOosterhout said. Before enrollment, students completed the same application as other prospective GVSU students along with supplemental writing samples and an interview. Acceptance to the program enrolled the cohort in a five-year track to acquire a B.S. in Public and Nonprofit Administration with graduation in 2029.

The Writing Department first got involved with the program in 2023. "We [the Writing Department] were

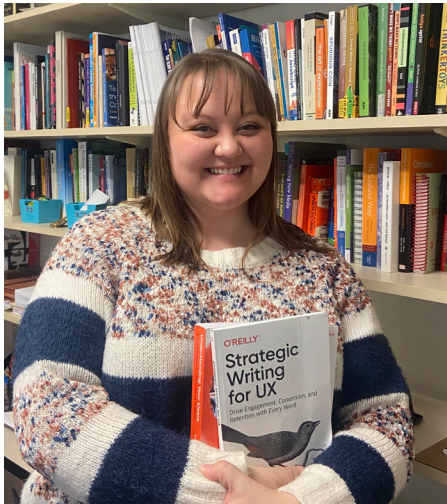
asked two years ago to participate in the Bellamy Creek program, and the first set of courses we offered were WRT 120 [Strategies in Writing - Stretch I] and WRT 130 [Strategies in Writing - Stretch II]," Associate Professor and Department Chair Amy Ferdinandt Stolley said. Affiliate Professor Emma Carlisle, who teaches first-year writing in the program, said that she jumped at the opportunity when Professor Christopher Toth sent out the initial call for the position. "I looked at it [the email] in my car after I parked in the morning to come in and answered it right away." It was the perfect time to reconnect with a population she felt passionate about. "It is fantastic teaching writing to people who have spent years reflecting on their lives and their brains and the way they think about things," Carlisle said.

Going into the program, Carlisle

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Humanities in STEM: New UX Course

Angelina Firmalan



Assistant Professor Kylie Jacobsen
(photos: Angelina Firmalan)

In Winter 2025, the Writing Department ran its new User Experience (UX) writing course (WRT 358) which introduces students to the growing field of UX. In the course, students learn about the process of writing for the user experience, covering topics such as UX writing, interface design, user research, interaction design, and more, to prepare students for interdisciplinary writing careers.

Successful UX writing bridges the gap between creative and professional writing, and in the Writing Department's curriculum, the course combines creative storytelling, research, and technical skills; all of which are integral to a writing career in UX. Assistant Professor and Assistant Department Chair Kylie Jacobsen, who is teaching the course, describes UX writing as a field that "requires incredible creativity. It requires an incredible connection to the marketing department. It requires a lot of technical skill. And at the core of it, you're telling stories to real people during interactions [with an interface] that will directly affect their ability to use it."

A key feature of the course is its portfolio-driven structure that allows students to develop problem-based

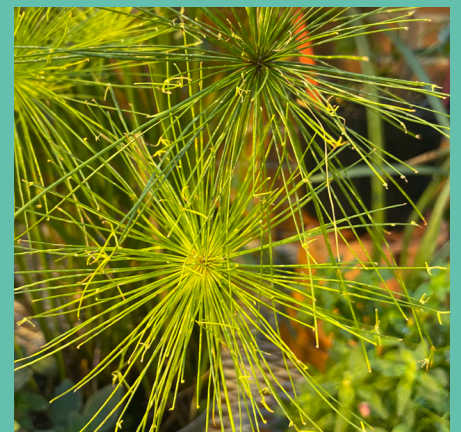
projects. Students interested in the course can prepare to engage with user research and design, usability testing, and prototyping an app. The end goal, according to Jacobsen, is to "come away with a case study report of how you went through an entire UX project," a valuable addition to any student's portfolio. The course, initially proposed by Associate Professor Zsuzsanna Palmer, counts

toward students' Supplemental Writing Skills (SWS) credit and an Issues credit. It currently enrolls students pursuing degrees in writing, biology, computer science, psychology, occupational safety and health management, product design and manufacturing engineering, communications, and advertising and public relations.

[SEE UX COURSE ON PAGE 10](#)

In the Greenhouse Brooke Rempalski

On February 3, Adjunct Professor Sheridan Steelman's two WRT 150: Strategies in Writing pilot courses had the opportunity to visit the Barbara Kindschi Greenhouse on GVSU's Allendale campus and experience what it is like to write in a low-stress environment. Surrounded by lush and vibrant greenery, they experimented with their words in whichever way they were drawn to for the duration of their respective class periods. "I had hoped that through sketching and writing, they would find interesting and engaging topics to write about relative to our environment and how the natural world is so closely connected to our physical, mental,



and emotional health," Steelman said.

Recent trends in student participation and success show this to be a promising tactic. It relieves the pressure on new university students so they can learn their voice from the beginning of their journey and the value of practicing using and applying their own words. "I am already considering changing my curriculum next year to include more time spent on nature writing. Students enjoyed the experience, and it provides another opportunity to develop their writers' voices on a topic that many may not have written about before," Steelman noted. Writing in nature eases students into a safe space as they make a creative discovery for themselves. Hopefully, it is something that they will continue doing for the rest of their learning careers.



Plants inside the Greenhouse (photos: Will James)

Leaning into Interests: Joanna Eleftheriou and Katy Didden at the GVSU Writers Series

Arianna Bevier

On February 24 and 25, GVSU welcomed Joanna Eleftheriou and Katy Didden to campus for the GVSU Writers Series. During the two-day event, students had the opportunity to attend both craft talks and readings presented by each author. Students spoke with Eleftheriou and Didden about poetry and nonfiction, learned about their writing processes, and heard excerpts from their work. The opportunity to participate in craft exercises and activities allowed students to gain a deeper understanding of the topics and connect with their fellow writers.

During Didden's craft talk on February 24, she discussed her work with erasure and persona poems. She shared her writing process and led several writing activities, guiding participants through exercises in double-persona poetry and collaborative writing.

"As a writer, I make sense of experience by shaping it into patterns of form, especially patterns of rhythm."

The interactive portions of the talk allowed participants to practice the concepts they had learned about and gain a deeper understanding of persona. Didden spoke about her love for nature and how it influenced her poetry, especially her collection, *The Glacier's Wake*. Speaking about her writing process, she said: "As a writer, I make sense of experience by shaping it into patterns of form, especially patterns of rhythm." She began writing persona poems in the voices of creatures and features of the natural world because of a dead

wasp in her studio. As she studied it, she was reminded of a Renaissance painting and began to wonder what that painting would look like through the wasp's eyes. This experience led her to write a poem on Renaissance painters from the wasp's point of view, beginning her journey with persona poems. Her ability to bring personality and life to animals and natural features of the world allows her to imbue emotion and deeper meaning in things that might otherwise be overlooked.

Didden also spoke about her work with erasure, a poetic form where poets take a block of text and ink over words and letters to create a poem. She wanted to write in the voice of lava and thought of lava as something preoccupied with creation and destruction. Many of Didden's poems combine the elements of persona and erasure, and some of her poems are written in a double erasure form, writing the poem as a conversation between two personas. Nature is evident throughout Didden's work. Be it a persona poem, an erasure poem, or a combination, her inspiration from and appreciation for the natural world are clear.

During her reading, Eleftheriou discussed her upcoming nonfiction book, *Austere*. She said that the book began as a joke because when she became a professor, the university asked her what research she needed money for. Jokingly, Eleftheriou said that she wanted the university to pay for her to go Greek dancing. This joke led her to think about the different ways in which Americans and Greeks have fun and participate in recreation, which led to her project, focused on fun. Eleftheriou shared an excerpt from her book, touching on the way that duty, responsibility,



Katy Didden (left) and Joanna Eleftheriou (right) (photo: Kylie Jacobsen)

and safety were presented to her as a child growing up in the 1980s. She spoke about her personal experience with anorexia growing up and how it was influenced by the culture around self-help. This idea is elaborated on in *Austere*, which discusses how individuals are often made to feel responsible for their own suffering. *Austere* connects these ideas with themes of neoliberalism and moral judgment around wealth and poverty that were influenced by Reagan and Thatcher in the 1980s. Speaking about her perspective, Eleftheriou said, "Do I really believe they want us to police ourselves, be vigilant, and never indulge in pleasure or rest? Do I think they want taxpayers to take pleasure in punishing work schedules and assume that for all their suffering and failure, only they themselves are to blame? Yep, I sure do." Eleftheriou's essays are thought-provoking and personal; she combines her research with anecdotes from her own life that make the pieces relatable and emotionally resonant for the reader.

On February 25, Eleftheriou gave a nonfiction craft talk at the Russel H. Kirkhof Center. She spoke about writing minor characters and

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New Faculty Profiles

Affiliate Faculty Profile: Amory Orchard

Annelise Racely



Affiliate Professor Amory Orchard
(photo: Annelise Racely)

Having earned degrees in English, Rhetoric, and Composition, including a doctorate, Affiliate Professor Amory Orchard understands the pressures that encompass writing. As she says, “I confess that I have writing anxiety.” This personal struggle has shaped her perspective as an educator, making her particularly attuned to the anxieties students face when writing: “Whether I’m just writing an email to a colleague or turning my research into an article or book chapter, it can make my heart race!” This has helped her influence in the classroom. Orchard is fixated on students’ use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools. Rather than judgment, she is more concerned with the underlying reasons they turn to AI: stress, heavy workloads, or a lack of confidence. By addressing these burdens, she hopes to create an environment where students feel empowered in their writing.

To combat students’ anxieties with writing, develop their skills, and build confidence, she encourages them to engage with writing actively. She tells her students, “Spend a lot of time reading others’ work with

a writer’s lens, paying attention to their strategies, and what makes their voice/style unique and pop off the page.” Orchard also recommends implementing an exercise called modeling, where students rewrite a passage while maintaining its structure, gradually transforming it to reflect their voice. “It might seem at first like copying,” she notes, “but the exercise helps you take more risks with your writing.”

Beyond her teaching, Orchard continues to engage with writing through her projects. She is currently working on submitting her dissertation to a peer-reviewed journal or book collection and would like to dive back into lyrical essays soon. Her passion for writing extends to her students, who she encourages to be curious, take risks, and recognize the value of writing in all its forms.

Affiliate Faculty Profile: David Linden

Maddie Cesarz



Affiliate Professor David Linden
(photo: Megan Stroud)

This academic year, David Linden accepted a job as Affiliate Professor in the Writing Department. Linden came to GVSU five years ago when he was hired as an Adjunct Professor to teach first-year writing during

the COVID-19 pandemic. Three years later, *InWriting* welcomed him as a Visiting Professor after his last promotion as he continued to teach WRT 120: Strategies in Writing - Stretch I, WRT 130: Strategies in Writing - Stretch II, and WRT 350: Business Communication.

During his time here, Linden has found that two of his favorite aspects of working at GVSU are the stand-alone Writing Department, which is unique to GVSU, and the community it provides. “It has a small university

*“I feel like I’ve landed...
I know that Grand Valley
is my home.”*

feel for it [the Writing Department] being as big as it is,” Linden said.

WRT 130 is one of his favorite classes to teach because he can create diverse writing assignments, like the travel essay which requires students to describe their favorite destination and why it is meaningful to them, which he thinks are “the most fun to read.” Aside from this, Linden finds that the small moments he is making have some sort of an impact on students beyond the classroom. These have been some of his favorite moments while teaching at GVSU. “When students feel like they can ask me questions about how they can apply what we’re doing in the future,” Linden said, “that’s the best feeling.”

Looking ahead, Linden feels a sense of excitement when it comes to this new position. It means a lot to him to have the opportunity to teach and explore within his courses, and it has given him a sense of comfort to know that this is where he belongs. “I feel like I’ve landed ... I know that Grand Valley is my home,” Linden said.

Visiting Faculty Profile: Glenn Lester

Sofia Pratt



*Visiting Professor Glenn Lester
(photo: Sofia Pratt)*

Visiting Professor Glenn Lester arrived just last semester at GVSU's Writing Department. This marks his 15th year teaching after 13 years at Park University in Kansas City, MO. Now, he is teaching WRT 120: Strategies in Writing - Stretch I and WRT 130: Strategies in Writing - Stretch II at GVSU.

His love of reading began with the teachers he grew up with. "I was really fortunate to have a lot of amazing teachers as a child," Lester said. He reflected fondly on his fifth-grade writing teacher, who always made an effort to value students' voices and creativity.

These early experiences inspired Lester to turn his love of reading into a love of writing. He earned his undergraduate degree from Hope College with a major in English and a minor in music, then completed his Master of Fine Arts in creative writing with an emphasis in fiction from the University of North Carolina Greensboro. While he was not expecting to fall into a career in teaching, he taught a bit in his graduate program and has been teaching ever since.

So far, Lester has thoroughly

enjoyed his time at GVSU. "My colleagues are wonderful," Lester said. "Everyone really sees themselves as a teacher and is dedicated to the art of teaching and to improvement."

Lester has also enjoys supporting his students in their writing processes. His classes focus on building confidence through sharing work and receiving positive feedback. Lester said, "I think that helps students realize, 'Oh, I do have something to say. I do have a unique perspective. I do have something that only I could write.'"

His favorite experiences so far have been seeing his students realize that they are enjoying writing and have produced some great work. "It's cool to see someone grow and learn," Lester said, "but it's even better to see someone recognize how much they've grown and learned."

Visiting Faculty Profile: Gerald Browning

Cate Woods



*Visiting Professor Gerald Browning
(photo: Megan Stroud)*

Visiting Professor Gerald Browning believes that writing is a gateway for imagination and creativity: "I have looked at writing as an important way to express oneself my entire life. Writing was a way to understand my feelings."

Browning attended University

of Michigan for his B.A. in English with specialization in Writing and a Communications minor. Browning was originally a Political Science major. "My ENG 111 instructor told me that I could be a writer someday, and that was when I changed my major." Browning then attended Illinois State University for his M.A. in English Studies. When asked what was significantly different between his B.A. and M.A., Browning replied, "When I compare the two, the biggest difference was that I felt like I truly began to appreciate English as a major in my master's program. I wanted to get into publishing, however I was really pushed into teaching."

Browning was awarded an assistantship where he taught writing classes while studying for his M.A. There, he found his voice as a writer and teacher: "[Teaching] didn't start out as something I wanted to do, but I grew to love it." Additionally, Browning was researching aspects of Writing Center (WC) Theory. "I really love the support that WCs can bring into a classroom. I was working on a dissertation topic of allowing a student's authentic voice to thrive in an academic environment. My research focused a lot on how 'code switching' [changing mannerisms] for minority students can be empowering in a WC session." Since then, Browning was in charge of two writing centers, Baker College Flint and Baker College Muskegon, being the Program Director of English of the latter for about ten years.

When asked why he chose GVSU, Browning answered, "The moment I stepped onto GVSU's Allendale campus, I fell in love with it. This was the first campus I ever went to that made me feel at home just being here." Browning hopes that while at GVSU he is able to learn from students, faculty, and staff about being part of our community. "I really like schools where you can see that there is a culture of helping each other out."

BELLAMY CREEK

Continued from page 1

said she wanted to maintain the integrity of first-year writing. “I want the students to be able to choose their own research projects and focus their topics and do all of these things that I normally teach,” she said. Like any other first-year writing course, students at Bellamy Creek write two source-based papers and one narrative essay, but how they do so is flexible. “Students have a lot of choices as to how they interpret my assignments, and these students knew what they wanted from the start, so I’ve just opened it up even more,” Carlisle said.

Facilitating authentic research experiences has been a point of cross-program collaboration for the program. “We’ve gotten really creative,” Carlisle said. Jennifer Torreano, GVSU’s Knowledge Market Director, said the collaboration started when GVSU liaison librarian Emily Metcalf reached out with an idea: “Emily asked if the Library Research Center consultants would have time to use the students’ research questions and search terms to find appropriate sources for their assignments. It’s a great use of the consultant’s skills, so I agreed,” Torreano said. “This is a tangible way for the consultants to help their peers who would otherwise not have access



Students in the Bellamy Creek Program (photo: Aaron Yore-VanOosterhout)

to our services.” Research consultant assistance has been crucial to Carlisle’s goal of maintaining student agency in first-year writing, providing students with opportunities to analyze and integrate sources of their choosing.

“These are intellectually hungry students who will do everything I ask them to do and then ask me for more.”

And, if the research isn’t what they expected, Carlisle says students can request additional sources.

Amy Phillips, a graduate student in criminal justice at GVSU and the

program’s Writing Support Tutor, also works with Carlisle’s first-year writing students. “I secretly feel that I have the best job in the program in the sense that I get to sit and just meet with people,” Phillips said. “I get to know them [the students] and their writing and see that growth.” Once a month, Phillips joins Carlisle’s Monday evening class period to assist students while they write, but students also meet with her weekly during Thursday morning study hall.

Phillips says she has been incredibly lucky to be part of the program and build relationships with students over the two-semester period. “I’ve just seen so much progress, and with how they [the students] are thinking about what they’re writing, you can see how



Acting Director Aaron Yore-VanOosterhout in front of the class (photo: Aaron Yore-VanOosterhout)

“*I’ve just seen so much progress, and with how they [the students] are thinking about what they’re writing, you can see how doors have opened.* -Amy Phillips

”

doors have opened,” she said. Carlisle, too, has seen how excited students are to meet with Phillips: “Amy gets very busy. They love her help.”

Beyond writing, community-building is crucial to the program’s success, especially given Bellamy Creek’s isolation from campus. Carlisle said her students “want to be treated like every other student.” In many ways, she has made this her mission, and Yore-VanOosterhout sees her efforts in the classroom and beyond. “She brings awareness of the program and awareness of the students’ needs,” he said. “She has been a tireless

“I’m coming to see how powerful education is. I knew I believed that but I’m really a convert now. This is something you can’t take away from them [students].”

advocate on campus in connecting students to resources.”

More than anything, the program’s faculty testify to the power of education to enrich a community, including how equal opportunity allows students to call the shots in their lives and professions. “Being able to help people who will go on to help people is really exciting for me,” Carlisle said. “These are intellectually hungry students who will do everything I ask them to do and then ask me for more.” Phillips agreed. “I’m coming to see how powerful education is,” she said. “I knew I believed that, but I’m really a convert now. This is something you can’t take away from them [the students].”

According to Stolley and Yore-VanOosterhout the program aims to increase enrollment and course offerings in the coming years. “What I would like to see is not only that we enroll another cohort at the end of

this cohort, but perhaps that we can find some additional funding to bring on another cohort every year,” Yore-VanOosterhout said. “The bigger the student pool, the more students can have choice.” This includes general education electives, such as the section of WRT 219: Introduction to Creative Writing Carlisle will teach in Winter 2026. Additionally, faculty are still evaluating how to increase database access for students within Bellamy Creek. In the meantime, stakeholders across GVSU’s campuses look forward to seeing the program develop. “We’ll continue working close with the faculty as the program evolves,” Torreano said. “We’re free to be creative in finding the best ways to support our Bellamy Creek students.”

At the close of its first year, the success of the Bellamy Creek Program attests to the necessity of accessible higher education opportunities. The program helps Bellamy Creek’s GVSU students design successful futures for themselves using the skills and community they build while enrolled. While the program directors determine the best way to expand its scope and reach, the first cohort looks to their next learning experiences with the rest of GVSU’s student body and the promise of the next academic year.



Affiliate Professor Emma Carlisle with her clear bag (photo: Emma Carlisle)

AWP Intro Award Winners

Fiction

“The Illusion of Choice”

by Carlie Sherwood

Nonfiction

“Mom”

by Gage Williams

Poetry

“I Know Cigarettes Burn”

by Hannah Applebee

“La Petite Mort”

by Michael Breazeale

“To the Little Things, I Remember”

by Kallie Crouch

Honorable Mentions

“Cataclysm”

by Lillian Renier (fiction)

“This Sin”

by Hannah Applebee (nonfic)

“Tide Pool, Pacific Northwest”

by Kallie Crouch (poetry)

“I bought silk pajamas and you tried taking them off”

by Delaney Fries (poetry)

“All signs point to destruction”

by Grace Hasley (poetry)

W.U.T. about AI?: A Conversation for Writers Recap

Audrey Grunwaldt

In the Fall 2024 semester, the Writing Department held the W.U.T. About AI: A Conversation for Writers event to create space for writing students and faculty to share the different ways they are wondering, using, and thinking about Generative Artificial Intelligence (Gen AI) to represent the diverse views of the department. The event served as a safe space to discuss concerns and offer alternative points of view alongside panelists consisting of both students and faculty, including Associate Professor and Department Chair Amy Ferdinandt Stolley, Visiting Professor Gerald Browning, Professor Chris Haven, and Affiliate Professor Elizabeth Kalos-Kaplan.

Stolley opened the discussion with an important question: “If Generative AI becomes the norm for professional, academic, and creative writing, what happens to those things that are distinctly human and make writing sing? Creativity, empathy, rhetorical awareness, language precision, risk, play?” The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) in everyday life has become nearly unavoidable, whether inadvertently through word processor suggestions and spellcheck or consciously through Gen AI platforms like ChatGPT to brainstorm. Even the use of AI-generated answers to Google searches has become normalized. Student conversations around the use of Gen AI in the creative field show concern for its development due to its ability to replicate visual arts and Frankenstein pieces of writing.

However, both Kalos-Kaplan and Browning agreed that Gen AI might be used as a tool in writing classrooms, though with caveats. Kalos-Kaplan described using Gen AI as “having a conversation with a dubiously informed stranger.” While Gen AI does not provide credible



W.U.T. about AI Event Panel (photo: Kylie Jacobsen)

research on its own, Kalos-Kaplan said it provides potential for students to break out of cycles of confirmation bias and approach topics from more authentic and compelling angles. Browning agreed that Gen AI can be used responsibly in classrooms and emphasized that once students have experience writing with Gen AI, they

“It is just a tool [...] to help augment your writing, not necessarily replace your writing.”

will see the ways it fails to compare to their voice as writers. He believes “it is just a tool [...] to help augment your writing, not necessarily replace your writing” and that when it is used, Gen AI must start and end as a tool. While Browning encourages students to treat Gen AI programs as “glorified thesaurus[es],” he points to the fact that AI writing does not capture the human element of writing. “It’s not going to have that creativity,” he said. “It’s not going to have that voice.” Like Kalos-Kaplan, Browning sees where Gen AI can serve as a seed of an idea or offer assistance with brainstorming but falls short when it comes to fostering real, human curiosity and intentionality. “This is where the soul of the writer comes out. [...] No AI can replicate that,” Browning said. “Your

voice is leaps and bounds better.”

As professors of first-year writing, Kalos-Kaplan and Browning shed light on the use of Gen AI for research papers and academic writing, but is there an ethical way for it to be utilized in creative writing? Brainstorming seems like a universal use for Gen AI, but Haven notes that Gen AI is only ever working with a limited data set and while Gen AI might be a tool for other areas of writing at the university level, it does not have a place in his creative writing classes. “The use of Generative AI does not enhance but rather interferes with the development of the writing process for apprentice writers,” he said. “If we outsource creativity to AI, [...] we are in danger of limiting creativity and ingenuity by removing the human factor.” Gen AI fails to account for the process of writing, and the very thing that makes it useful for research makes it the antithesis of what creative writers are learning to do: create.

The panel’s success was in bringing together voices from writing disciplines across campus and all levels of the university, from students to faculty and staff, where participants could grapple collectively with the future of writing in the age of AI. And while the future of Gen AI policy is uncertain and conversations around AI on the university level

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Wordsmiths Revive *Running Out of Ink*

Rachel Miller

In 2015, the GVSU Writing Department publication *Running Out of Ink* served its last issue. Nearly ten years later, GVSU's Wordsmiths, the creative writing club, is reviving the publication to give another voice to student writers on campus.

The Wordsmiths is a creative writing community open to everyone at GVSU. The club meets twice a week on Mondays from 7-9 p.m. and Thursdays from 6-8 p.m. in Lake Ontario Hall (LOH) 167. They host monthly prompt-based competitions and post them on their website to promote student writing by showcasing the writing process from prompt to finished form and writing within a community. President Katie Eckenrode and Vice President Noah MacLachlan spoke extensively about the welcoming atmosphere of the club and their desire to contribute to GVSU student publishing through their website, which worked well with the revival of *Running Out of Ink*.

Eckenrode discovered the anthology when researching writing competitions and publication opportunities for students, which are usually hosted by other departments or necessitate a themed issue. "I was like, 'Okay, we need to bring that back ASAP, along with setting up a website,'" she said. "We have pieces that don't fit in the box, and people are able to express them through *Running Out of Ink* with its broadness of theme, or lack of theme."

The club plans to accept short story and poetry submissions, with considerations for screenplays or play scripts, as long as it is in the form of creative writing. The anthology would continue to be open to all majors and story types, highlighting inclusivity and celebrating competition winners on a resume-building scale. "One of the things that we've tried to

cultivate a lot with this club is creating a sense of community, and you can be yourself without worrying about any kind of judgment," said MacLachlan. "Hopefully, through

"One of the things that we've tried to cultivate a lot with this club is creating a sense of community, and you can be yourself without worrying about any kind of judgment."

the breadth of pieces we collect and publish through *Running Out of Ink*, we can represent the diversity we have here in terms of personalities." Broad submissions are meant to represent the collective voice of the club, which, as Eckenrode notes, is "a very funny, comfortable, chaotic group of friends." By increasing accessibility, she says it will aid the club's mission to create space for all kinds of creative writing and provide a place for students to publish year-round, both digitally and in print.

If the 2025 issue is successful, the Wordsmiths will continually publish new issues annually. To get it off the ground, club members have diligently fundraised to ensure a page count for interested parties, securing bottle drive donations from students and faculty in LOH. Eckenrode said the fundraising campaign was so successful that the Wordsmiths surpassed their initial goal. Submissions for 2024-2025 ended March 9, and the first edition is slated to be printed in April. Students interested in *Running Out of Ink* are encouraged to attend the Wordsmiths' club events or reach out to Eckenrode or MacLachlan for more information.

**Anchored in Poetry
& In the Margins are
seeking directors!**

Interested?

**Contact the Writing
Department for more
information.**



Wordsmiths meeting (photo: Megan Stroud)

How to College: A Collaboration Between First-Year Writing Faculty and the English Department

Inayah Hakeem

Starting college can be uncomfortable. This discomfort goes beyond physical aspects like living in a new place without family or juggling a job and raising children while managing coursework. It could also mean figuring out what you enjoy and what you do not, learning how to manage your time, and, most of all, deciding what career path you want to embark on after graduation—along with all the little nuances in between.

Is it reasonable to say that new students benefit from support as they juggle academic responsibilities, the expectation to be well-rounded and socially engaged, and the personal and social pressures to succeed? So, “how to college?” becomes the looming question. Is there a framework? A crash course? A formula with calculated results? Is there something—a resource—that makes navigating college less intimidating, less stressful, and a little more comfortable?

Writing Department Senior Affiliate Professor Craig Hulst and Senior Affiliate Professor Dauvan Mulally, along with English Department’s Affiliate Professor Roy Black, have responded to this pressing question. Drawing from their experience working with first-year students, they created the How to College program within GVSU’s First-Year Learning Community (FYLC), designed to make the transition into college life a little smoother. GVSU’s FYLC program has been up and running for about five years and consists of paired courses that aid students in the transition to higher education and the development of relationships with faculty and peers. The program helps students figure out how to balance school, responsibilities, and everything in

between by connecting them with courses that go beyond just earning credits. How to College launched in Fall 2024 as a more recent offering within this larger program by pairing students in WRT 120: Strategies in Writing - Stretch I and ENG 100: Reading for College in all Majors.

The creation of a resource for all new students was imperative, as Mulally states: “Over the last few years, we observed students not making a successful adjustment to college, and we wanted to help them develop the skills they need to develop a sense of belonging and persistence at GVSU.”

*“How to College ...
is perfect for incoming
freshman.”*

The idea is simple: instead of navigating college alone, students in the program take connected courses—classes designed to build in sequence—to guide students in building academic skills, making meaningful connections, and getting more out of their education. Beyond this, How to College aims to connect students to the wider GVSU community by centering assignments around the creation of meaningful experiences on campus. For instance, Mulally’s WRT 120 students profiled a campus club or resource and created photo essays to document their transition to and development of a sense of belonging at GVSU. Additionally, the faculty at the head of the program bring campus resources such as the Student Academic Success Center, Counseling Center, Career Center, Office of Multicultural Affairs, Student Life, and more into the classroom so students can have firsthand experiences with the

services these resources offer.

Danny Allen, one of Mulally’s first-year students in the How to College program, reflected on the effectiveness of the paired courses. “The How to College learning community is perfect for incoming freshmen, as it completely takes the fear of having to make friends or find a sense of belonging in the [paired] classrooms,” he said. “It also provides a better learning atmosphere because it seems the classes engage more with each other in discussion.”

This kind of feedback shows that the How to College program helps students take control of their journey and approach college with a more proactive mindset. For new students, the program provides not just academic guidance but a solid support system to navigate the stresses of transitioning into college life. It’s an opportunity for students to feel more prepared, engaged, and confident as they move forward in their studies.

UX COURSE

Continued from page 2

Beyond learning, the course prepares students for professional realities, helping them navigate careers in digital communication, UX research, and the like. As Jacobsen puts it, UX writing “puts humanities into STEM environments.” This sentiment reinforces the importance of trained writers in technical fields. “The value we, as writers, bring is we’re making clear very complex topics that nobody else is trained to do like we can,” Jacobsen said.

By blending writing, research, and technology, the UX writing course provides students with a pathway into new writing careers, broadening the possibilities for writers beyond traditional paths.

Write Your Future: The Writing Department Seeks to Boost Advising

Maddie Cesarz

On March 19, the Writing Department held Write Your Future, an advising event to encourage students to meet with their faculty advisors to plan what courses they will register for next year or get career advice for entering the workforce after graduation. “We wanted to create an opportunity where everybody is checking in with somebody and making sure they [students] are getting what they need out of the next few years,” Professor Caitlin Horrocks said.

The idea for the event came from a disconnect the Writing Department saw between writing students and their faculty advisors. “We found that students would often find their way through it [the writing curriculum] alone,” Professor Chris Haven said. Seeing this as the case, the event was created to be a form of outreach to encourage students to find support in navigating the curriculum and make the modular system work for them.

Faculty advisors found that the event was successful, noting that they were seeing a lot more students reach out. “The event was a great opportunity to (re)connect

with advisees and talk about their immediate and long term plans,” Professor Laurence José commented.

Likewise, writing students felt that the event created an accessible space to meet with their advisors. Freshman student Lily Demata mentioned that she felt intimidated coming to the event, but after speaking with Professor Christopher Toth she found that the experience was “very helpful, I know what I’m going to do with the rest of my time here now.” Senior Genevieve Balivet said that “it was really nice to sit down and talk with my advisor because a lot of times I have to plan ahead for it ... this time it was kind of nice to have a drop-in space.”

The Write Your Future event is just one way the Writing Department seeks to build community among its students and faculty, and faculty advisors are just one way students can access the exciting possibilities within the Writing Department. Both writing faculty and fellow writing students encourage those new to the major to keep in touch with their advisors and look out for other opportunities to get involved.

WRITERS SERIES

Continued from page 3

discussed various minor characters in her published creative nonfiction and other authors’ works. Eleftheriou also discussed syntax and how a writer’s stylistic choices shape the reader’s understanding of character. Students participated in activities exploring the use of syntax and discussed what they discovered.

The opportunity to hear from two authors who write in separate genres was both eye-opening and inspiring. Both authors discussed how their interests and passions guided the research that they chose to pursue, which is something that can sometimes be difficult as a student. It can be easy to get caught up in the stress of assignments and lose the motivation or creativity that guides the writing process. Both the craft talks and the readings offered insight and inspiration into ways to rekindle that creative process and passion for writing.

AI CHAT

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are still ongoing, it is important to remember the human power to create even in the instances when Gen AI is used as a tool, which all panelists spoke to, regardless of their stance. These conversations about the ethical and responsible use of Gen AI in the writing classroom will be ongoing, but conversations at the W.U.T. About AI event demonstrated the power of collective brainstorming as we begin to answer the questions swirling around Gen AI and the writing curriculum.

CORRECTION from Issue 18.2 (Fall 24):

Affiliate Professor Emily Beckwith recieved her PhD from University of Georgia NOT Georgia State University



Writing Majors Hannah Applebee (left), Angelina Firmalan (middle), and McKinley Hixon (right) at Write Your Future (photo: Kallie Crouch)

Letter from the Editor

Maddie Cesarz



Maddie Cesarz (photo: Maddie Cesarz)

By the time this edition of *InWriting* is in print, I will be finishing my last semester, my last class, my last shift at the Writing Center, my last contributions to *InWriting*, and after I walk across the stage, my college experience. Imagining these things happening in succession is somehow terrifying and surreal at the same time, though it presents me with an opportunity to look back because a last cannot exist without a first, and with a lot of lasts happening at the same time, there once was a lot of firsts.

My first time on-campus was peaceful because band camp started a week and a half before the semester did and I had to move in early because of it. I had just dropped my anthropology major because it did not feel like it fit anymore and had no idea what I wanted to do. I had my family asking me if I have decided on anything yet and the first question everyone I was meeting in those first few days asked was, “What is your major?” That was dreadful. I genuinely did not know and so many people still told me that I had the entire year to figure it out and that is what freshman year is for. Boy, were they right.

I did not discover that GVSU

had a writing major until my second semester. I heard about it for the first time from the Writing Consultant in my WRT 150: Strategies in Writing class. Both she and my professor for that class were the ones that told me I should look into it, then after I had declared it as my major, encouraged me to become a Writing Consultant. Thereafter, I started diving headfirst into anything that I could. In four short years I found *fishladder* and *InWriting*, I found community in the Writing Center and in the Laker Marching Band, and I found where I belong.

“...I am lucky to have something that is so hard to say goodbye to...”

Lisa Gullo, the Office Coordinator at the Writing Center, told me recently that I am lucky to have something that is so hard to say goodbye to. I thank her for helping me see that because it is true, and I thank all the rest of the Writing Department and Writing Center faculty and staff for getting me through all those firsts and helping me get to my lasts. It has been a fabulous, wild ride full of memories that I will be taking with me after I graduate.

Finally, I want to give a very special thank you to *InWriting* and all the contributors who have put so much work into it this year. To Kylie Jacobsen and Kallie Crouch, you two were the best Faculty Advisor and Assistant Editor I could have asked for; Kallie, I wish you the best of luck next year. I'm so excited to see how you and the publication continue to grow together. *InWriting* would not exist without any of you. It had truly been a pleasure.

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