

In Writing

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Riley Collins in her cap and gown (Photo: Riley Collins,)

Our Recent Graduates— Where are They Now?

Rachel Kornoelje

As the end of the semester is quickly approaching, many seniors may be wondering what they will do after graduation. There are several different fields that writers can go into after graduating with their degree. It will help to see where recent graduates Riley Collins, Tessa Dane-Henry, Chiara Licari, and Teresa Williams are now and what their advice is for graduating seniors.

Riley Collins, '18, works at SVK Multimedia and Publishing (SVKMP), a small magazine publishing firm based in Hudsonville, MI. She is a staff writer and also does light editing work on magazine proofs.

Her main focus is working on *Great Lakes By Design* (GLBD) Magazine, but she does write for the other publications that the firm produces as well. She creates content for the print magazine and its website companion, which involves interviewing Midwestern architecture and design firms, and conducting research before drafting features that range from 500-1,500 words.

Her position at SVKMP actually began as an internship with help from Assistant Professor Peterson, who handed her a printed internship listing for the position. She was the first intern to work for SVKMP and worked as a

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The Value of Internships

Lyndsay Mosby



Fugate (left) and Kornoele (right)

(Photo: Lyndsay Mosby)

An internship is a great way for majors to receive first-hand experience. Rachel Kornoele and Brooke Fugate are both interns at the GVSU Development Office in the Communication Department, an internship that is year-round and that they can keep until they graduate. Kornoele is a senior majoring in writing and minoring in advertising and public relations and has been working as an intern since her sophomore year. Fugate, meanwhile, is a junior who is majoring in writing and minoring in English and has been an intern since her junior year.

As interns, Kornoele and Fugate both agree that they work on many different projects, giving them a well-rounded experience and the chance to develop many new skills while still having areas of specialty. Kornoele is a content manager. “I create web pages and content for the web,” something she never knew

she would be good at. Fugate handles the creative side of projects, saying, “I usually do the copywriting for appeals and magazines. I write all the copy for the quarterly newsletter.”

“It’s really cool to have a physical document in my hands that I have worked so hard on!”

When asked about their favorite projects, both Kornoele and Fugate felt that the best assignments were ones that allowed them to work on a project from start to finish. Kornoele’s favorite projects are those dealing with project management. More specifically, she loved creating the Thanksgiving card that the Development Office sent out to donors. For Fugate, she has loved working on *Horizons*, which is a

quarterly newsletter that contains stories from students on how donor gifts have impacted their lives. Fugate says, “It’s really cool to have a physical document in my hands that I have worked so hard on,” and Kornoele could not agree more.

When asked what skills they felt their internship has given them for future careers, both Kornoele and Fugate had plenty to say. Kornoele explained that working for the Development Office allowed her to develop her abilities in web content management and project management, skills she may not have discovered otherwise. “I definitely have grown a lot more confident with communicating, writing, and asking questions,” Kornoele says. The importance of communication skills is something Kornoele could not stress enough. She also explained how applicable her internship was to her future: “Every place has a communications department – every business, every company – because they have to make sure they get their messages out.”

Fugate focuses more on teamwork skills as she explains what she has learned in her internship: “This internship has really shown me how to work with a team and collaborate with coworkers.” Learning how to communicate effectively in these aspects is a skill Fugate will take into the rest of her career. Her internship has also taught her the value in learning how to take criticism on her writing and be able to improve. Fugate feels that learning not to take criticism personally is a big skill, one that she has taken to heart.

Finding an internship can be difficult but Kornoele and Fugate have some advice. Both discovered their job through Handshake and attest that it is a great tool. When looking toward the future, both Kornoele and Fugate stress the importance of getting internships, as the skills one learns are invaluable. Fugate’s summary explains it all, “it’s so important for writing majors to get real world experience in the field they think they want to get into.”

New Publications from Associate Professor Amorak Huey

Elaina Smith

Being from Michigan gave WRT professor Amorak Huey the inspiration he needed to write his poetry collection *Seducing the Asparagus Queen*, which was released September of 2018 through Cloudbank Books. Although this collection is not his biography, it is heavily inspired by the stories and lives and of not only himself, but also members of his family. While the stories of these poems consist of a mixture of truths and imagination, Huey says that all of the emotions are true. The title comes from the Asparagus Festival in Empire, Michigan, where there is an actual asparagus queen, and alludes to the book's themes of growing up in the Midwest, and what that means in terms of family and identity.

Huey moved from Michigan to Alabama when he was young, which inspired his most recent book of poems, *Boom Box*. *Boom Box* was published in March 2019 by Sundress Publications. This collection takes a different approach in telling a similar story, this time, however, through the lens of the 80s and heavy metal and living in Alabama. He combines his love for the written word with his experiences from his adolescence to create the poems in this book.

“Every poem is its own answer to the question ‘what is a poem?’”

Huey's love for language sparked his love for poetry. He enjoys the freedom that comes with writing poems, as they don't have to follow the same formula as a fiction or non-fiction piece would. “Every poem is its own answer to the question ‘what is a poem?’” Huey says as he explains why he thinks poetry is important as a genre. “Every time you sit down to write, you can do anything, so you have to figure out how to use language to capture the human experience.”



Associate Professor Huey with his books

(Photo: Zsuzsanna Palmer)

The writing process for Huey is like solving a puzzle. His favorite thing about writing in this genre is the feeling he gets when his words click into place, even though that doesn't always happen. He says, “Poetry is a lot like playing a game or solving a puzzle in terms of pushing language around on the page and trying to make it do certain things.” Solving this puzzle is the feeling that Huey writes for. He likes knowing that people have read his writing and have connected with it in some way. As a reader himself, he knows what it means to have a piece speak to him and is always delighted when his work can do the same for someone else.

Every once in a while, Huey will get up early and write, but usually does it after his family goes to bed, or while they're busy with homework. Poetry is a convenient

genre for someone with a busy schedule, as he is able to write in smaller pieces. Since poems don't have the same beginning, middle, and end sequence as a piece of prose, it's easier for him to make progress on his work in shorter amounts of time. He states that “you can't finish a whole poem if you have a half an hour, but you can make some progress,” and as all writers know, progress in itself can feel amazing.

You can check out Huey's unique poetic take on the human experience in his new books, *Seducing the Asparagus Queen* and *Boombox*, both available for purchase online.

Well Wishes to Retiring Faculty

Katherine Arnold



Associate Professor Lowe
(Photo: Olivia Mock)



Professor Royer
(Photo: Olivia Mock)

This past school year has been a series of exciting events and wonderful memories! What better way to send off two of our amazing professors in the GVSU Writing Department than by remembering all of the great experiences that we have had with them. Let's take a look at what they have enjoyed most about their times here at GVSU and the experiences they've had with writing throughout their professional journeys.

“Writing can empower us, whether that’s in in the workplace or in your personal life.”

Associate Professor Charles Lowe has made many great memories with his students during the past 13 years that he has been with us. His classes here at GVSU involve writing for the web, document design, first-year writing, and professional writing. He earned his master's in literature and PhD in rhetoric and composition from Florida State University. His inspiration to pursue writing as a career came to him from an advisor who recognized his aptitude and interest in writing as a topic. Lowe's advisor thought that he was suited for writing and urged him to consider writing as a professional pursuit, which was exactly the push he needed to decide that writing was a good focus for him.

As for his decision to teach, he surmised that if he was going to pursue teaching, he needed to have the right outlook. “I think the reason that you should want to become a professor is because you like school,” he says, “and because you like doing research and sharing it with others. Basically, if you like being in school and don't ever want to leave.” Lowe started teaching while he was still earning his PhD in Literature. With around 20 years of experience, Lowe has come to recognize how teaching is worthwhile for him. It stems from teaching others how

to become better communicators, saying, “Writing can empower us, whether that's in the workplace or in your personal life, and in so many different ways.” He feels that bettering your writing can lead to becoming a better person too.

One of his favorite tasks as a writing professor was his work as co-editor of an open-source textbooks series called *Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing*. These textbooks are used by schools all over the country, comprised of essays written by teachers on the subject of writing, as well as designed for first-year writing students. His future writing will involve a potential book project, as well as the consideration of work as a consultant, but Lowe stated that he is keeping his options open.

Professor Daniel Royer has been with us for over twenty years. His classes involve professional writing and writing for the web. He has taught students for 35 years, 23 of which have been at GVSU. He earned his master's at Kansas State University and then his PhD in English from the University of Kansas. Royer focused academically on American literature, language and theories of grammar, as well as writing. After choosing to teach, Royer initially decided on his career in writing when one of his professors introduced him to writing as a potential research opportunity involving disciplinary boundaries. Royer said, “This kind of thing appealed to my practical nature and it seemed to fit well with my ambitions as a high school teacher.” After that moment, he grew to love the public aspect of teaching writing and thought that it would not only be interesting, but worthwhile to teach others about writing alongside societal constraints.

Over the course of his time as a teacher, Royer has come to appreciate what it means to teach others about the writing and technology around them, and he loves to see his students self-awareness and problem-solving skills grow. Royer has found his recent magazine writing classes and the class, Advanced Writing for the

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Writing Dept. 2019 Faculty Awards: Convocation Awardees

Kristie DeVlieger



Senior Affiliate Professor White (left), Assistant Professor Peterson (middle), and Associate Professor Haven (right) with their awards

(Photo: Christopher Toth)

On Tuesday, February 12th, GVSU held its 2018-2019 Faculty Awards Convocation at the Charles W. Loosemoore Auditorium. An annual ceremony, it serves to recognize Faculty milestones of 25, 30, and 35 years of teaching, CSCE awards, PEW awards, and University Awards for Excellence. The convocation address was given by Stephen Mattox, professor of geology and Glenn A. Niemeyer Award winner.

The Writing Department was fortunate in that it had three faculty members selected to be honored at this year's convocation. Assistant Professor Bethany Peterson was awarded a CSCE award for the work on her upcoming book, *Theory of World Ice*. A nonfiction writer and scholar, the book is a collection of lyric essays on glaciers, proof of her success at breaking the mold, "I was so honored to be selected for the Distinguished Early Career Award," she said. "For the past several

years, I've been researching and writing about shrinking European glaciers; my hope is that the research that this award recognized will bring the glaciers' plight to the public eye." She is an early career scholar who has been writing in a way that bridges the gap between scholarly and creative writing.

Senior Affiliate Professor Julie White was awarded the PEW Teaching with Technology Award for her innovative and collaborative use of technology in the classroom. She has integrated Google sheets for writing feedback, as well as Blackboard Collaborate Ultra for office hours. Upon receiving the award, she commented, "Winning this award helped me to realize how much Writing Department faculty support my work and recognize the effort I put into connecting with my students using technology. I am very honored."

Associate Professor Chris Haven was awarded a PEW Teaching Excellence Award for his commitment to his students and careful feedback on student writing. He teaches creative writing, mostly fiction. He had this to say about his award: "I feel like this is a group award because the Writing Department is full of dedicated teachers and students, all of whom help make me a better teacher. I appreciate my colleagues and our dedicated students as we all work together to make our classes more useful and more engaging."

In closing the Faculty Awards Convocation, President Haas stated that "the soul of this institution is embodied in the faculty," specifying that the success of GVSU is due to "great faculty [that] attracts great students." We are fortunate to have several of these faculty members in our Writing Department and are proud of their achievements.

Michelle Dotter Joins Writing Department Advisory Board

Hannah Kelly



Michelle Dotter

(Photo: Michelle Dotter)

When Michelle Dotter was asked to take on the role of editor-in-chief at Dzanc Books, she said yes. “Which is what I usually say when I have no idea what I’m doing,” she added. But although she makes it all sound like such casual luck, her role as the newest Writing Department Advisory Board Member comes in light of her hard work in the publishing field.

The Writing Department Advisory Board, established in 2016, is a group of writing professionals that work as a resource for the Writing Department and students alike, providing feedback on the curriculum and sharing insights about the latest developments in the writing industry. In the past, board members have worked

with Grand Valley to look in on classroom practices and curriculums, as well as meet with students to work on networking skills and help answer career concerns.

“There are so many different ways to work in publishing.”

Dotter hopes to add to the publishing knowledge within the board in order to make students’ transitions into publishing easier: “Publishing can be a murky field, and it can be difficult for students interested in breaking into the field to know exactly what they want to do.” Dotter admitted that when

she was in college, she wasn’t really sure how to get into publishing. “I hope to make that easier for the next round of publishing hopefuls,” she said.

At Dzanc Books, a publishing company founded in Ann Arbor, Dotter has learned a lot about the publishing process: “We’re a pretty small staff, so my responsibilities cover most of the production process,” Dotter said about her role as editor-in-chief. “The editor-in-chief/publisher side is the big-picture stuff: managing the editorial process, developing the business, applying for grants, and handling the printers and distributors.” In addition to this, Dotter is involved in a lot of the day-to-day activities like copy editing, typesetting, and marketing.

Dotter is also the internship coordinator at Dzanc, which has become a popular internship for Grand Valley students. “There are so many different ways to work in publishing, but if you work small house you’ll be doing a lot of different tasks regardless of your specific position,” she said. “Getting broad experience is also a great way to find out what area of publishing you’re most interested in.”

Experience really is the key part to making it in publishing according to Dotter. “The more experience you get in a specific area, the better a candidate you’ll be for jobs in that specialty, but diverse experiences never hurt your resume either.” Dotter also recommended that students looking to get published make sure they find the right place for their work, stating that there are so many publishing options to choose from. “You’ve put your all into writing a fantastic book, essay, short story, poem, or hybrid work—make sure you put just as much effort into finding the right home for it,” she said.

For more on Michelle Dotter, as well as the rest of the Advisory Board, board member biographies can be found on the Writing Department’s website. Students wishing to get more involved with the board can contact the Organization for Professional Writers – which hosts events for the board – at opwgvsu@gmail.com or club advisor Associate Professor Laurence José.

Craft Talk: The Poetry of Our Personal Lives

Alaina Taylor



Oliver Baez Bendorf
(Photo: Olivia Mock)

of her narratives. “But it’s just a version of Janine on the page,” she says. “If it gets too close to me, it tightens up and becomes an interrogation. Then I begin to lie like her.”

Bendorf smiled, adding, “Non-fiction is so interesting to me but so terrifying.” Bendorf shares Joseph’s ideology: he often places himself as the speaker of his poems, though he finds that creating some distance is more than necessary. “When I want to communicate something, I imagine that I am a character,” Bendorf said. “Then I start going into the sensory details, which I think becomes a doorway for my body in the poem.” Essentially the people they portray in their poems are themselves, but not fully themselves. There’s always a little something that they keep hidden, a mystery to the audience.

“I learn something new about it, and about myself every time I read it.”

During the craft talk, each author shared a work from another author that especially resonated with them, that they often return to when creating their own work. Joseph shared first, detailing year by year her relationship with Jack Gilbert’s poem “The Forgotten Dialect of the Heart.” This work has been nearly omnipresent in her academic career and beyond; she even has a line of it tattooed. “There’s some mystery in this poem that keeps calling me back,” she said. “I learn something new about it and something new about myself every time I read it.” She admitted that for a long time, she didn’t understand the poem, why it shifts in focus, or as she puts it, “leaps through portals.” She cultivated an abstract appreciation for the poem, and still finds intrigue in its words and lyricism years later. “This poem is something I recite to myself on long drives. Sometimes I can only remember the first and last lines, and then the rest of the poem is a mystery. I just love the sound of it.”

Bendorf followed up with the poem “Cuba, 1962” written by Ai. He began by reading it aloud, twice. He focuses on the noise the poem suggests but doesn’t directly describe. “I came back to this poem because parts of it started singing in my head, all the sounds that are there and not there.” Bendorf ends his talk by giving out a prompt he developed from Ai’s poem that focuses on using implied sounds. When he finished, Joseph let out a laugh. “One of my favorite poems to teach is Oliver’s poem ‘Title,’ which I just realized is completely from this exercise. Now I understand! It’s so wild to see how it actually begins,” she said.

Both poets expressed that their chosen poems are still mysteries to them. The feeling they bring, the raw, nagging suspicion that something magical just happened, is there. They don’t necessarily always know how they got there, but the feeling remains. The same can be said of both these authors’ works. Especially in the moments after they read, when they’re shuffling papers to find their next piece, the room sits in the remnants of what they’ve just shared. It takes up all the space. You don’t always know why you’re feeling it, but it is undeniably there.



Janine Joseph
(Photo: Olivia Mock)

Is it hard to open up with your own experiences in your writing?” The whole room is quiet for a moment, considering. A student at the back of the room, the one who asked the question, waits eagerly, perhaps realizing that everyone present is trying to formulate an answer.

Janine Joseph and Oliver Baez Bendorf, the most recent visitors in the GV Writer’s Series, incorporate much of their own lives into their work, and the visceral and sometimes heartbreaking way that they discuss it lends itself to an extremely rewarding literary experience.

“I came back to this poem because parts of it started singing in my head, all the sounds that are there and not there.”

When she’d considered the student’s question, Joseph shared with the crowd that she always puts herself at the center

Staff Spotlight Readers: Visiting Professor Thompson and Associate Professor Haven

Hannah Terry



Visiting Professor Gale Thompson

(Photo: Hannah Terry)

On February 5th, students and faculty alike slowly filled the Mary Idema Pew Library Multipurpose room, preparing to witness their fellow teachers and colleagues share their work. Assistant Professor Todd Kaneko greeted the audience, introducing Visiting Professor Gale Marie Thompson as the first speaker of the night.

Author of “Soldier On,” Kaneko said that her poems are not “easy reads,” never giving themselves over to the reader for a seamless experience.

Upon taking the stage, Thompson instantly recognized the faces of her students and coworkers. Still considering herself a “new faculty member,” the familiar faces of fellow writers brought her comfort, warming the hearts of everyone in the room. Thompson began the night with a poem titled “Yes, but More Animals,” which she claims is a “good answer for almost anything.” As the evening continued, Thompson read a poem titled “John Wayne.” This poem was a mourning to lost family members, Thompson explained, specifically to her grandfather, who she

thought was John Wayne as a kid. Thompson read, “I want getting old to prepare me for getting old/ or how else/ can I remember the memory of saying goodnight?”

Gale Marie Thompson continued to be “playful” in her new collection of poems titled *Helen or My Hunger*, which comes out in 2020. These poems were addressed to the ghost of Helen of Troy, examining the numerous symbols of the female body. She focused on the legacy of Helen of Troy, emphasizing the power of females in writing and history. After expressing her adamant support for Associate Professor Chris Haven, Thompson left the stage.

After Kaneko’s introduction, Haven took the stage. He started with a piece of flash fiction called “The Impractical Door,” where he played with clichés. He read, “I woke up one morning and didn’t have amnesia. I could remember everything that had ever happened to me, and I knew my name. It was Carl.” Full of sarcasm and humor, the audience chuckled at every unexpected, witty sentence Haven spoke.

“If you’re ever going to learn something, you need to break something.”

Haven also read from his long-coming project called “Terrible Emmanuel,” which Haven said was a poetry exercise in POV. Haven put the main protagonist into unusual situations, such as proctoring an exam, raising the dead, and shrinking. The audience couldn’t help but be drawn into these unusual situations with the narrator.

In the Q&A that followed, Kaneko asked the two writers: “Why write?” Haven answered that it is “irresponsible” and “risky” to create something that could have mistakes, that could be wrong. Thompson explained that “writing is listening,” trying to put words together to discover something



Associate Professor Chris Haven

(Photo: Hannah Terry)

new. She said that poetry “is about the discovery itself.” Upon addressing the challenges that writers face, Haven pointed to this underlying pressure we as writers have to speak for everyone, but we come to realize that we don’t have all the answers.

After witnessing two writers read their most recent works, students were eager to understand more about their processes. One student asked the writers how they decided what to write about. Thompson told the student not to focus on ideas, but on sounds and that the narrative will follow. Haven had a different approach: he reminded students that writing should be a learning experience. He added, “If you’re ever going to learn something, you need to break something.”

Content Strategy at Google Through the Eyes of Grayson Mack

Melissa Lance

Many writing students wonder: “what kind of career fields can I enter with my writing degree?” There are obvious career paths, such as writing for a newspaper or magazine or working for a publisher. But sometimes a writing degree can take you in an unexpected direction, to a career you may not have been aware of before starting college. This was the case for Grayson Mack, whose current career is an example of just how versatile a writing degree can be.

Mack graduated from GVSU as a writing major in 2015. She now works as a content strategist for Google. A content strategist is someone who develops, plans, and manages content in online environments. Students may have heard their writing professor talk about user experience design or usability testing. Content strategists use these concepts on a daily basis.

Mack owns the content strategy across the support ecosystem for Google Photos, Google Duo, and Android messaging. If a customer of her products has an issue that needs solving, she gives them the tools and information to solve it. She says “...the work I do is really about helping the user succeed, and then showing the business how that helps them meet their needs in quick, efficient, and scalable ways.”

Mack attributes landing her job to her ability to understand a product from both the creator’s end and the user’s end. This is essential to her job, as she acts as a mediator between product and customer, then develops strategies that will improve the experience for both parties.

Prior to her work at Google, Mack climbed a series of stepping stones which lead her to her current position. She began these steps as a student at GVSU. Her belief was to treat school the same way she would a full-time job. She translated her classroom skills into skills that she could put on a resume or speak to in an interview. In her last two years of college, she completed two editorial internships and worked as a Writing Consultant. These were

the experiences that she was able to include on her resume when it came time for job hunting. Her advice for those who can’t have a similar resume is to use whatever you have. Any learned collaboration, leadership, or communication skills are something to include on a resume. As Mack says, “Those are the skills workplaces need, regardless if you learned that through working in a restaurant or on a magazine.”

When asked how she uses writing in her job, Mack says she uses it every day, mostly to write plans for projects. When she discovers a problem, she writes a business case which she sends to her team to update them on the issue. Additionally, she uses her writing skills to edit work that she receives from the writing team.

“I’ve learned to advocate for myself.”

Mack has had a successful career since her time at GVSU, and had accumulated some words of advice to share with fellow writing departments students. She suggests to talk to people in the industries that you are interested in. Ask them thoughtful questions, ask for advice in areas where you need it, learn from them.

Mack gave an additional insight into how she has succeeded in her career, and it’s something that any student could learn from. She says, “...I’ve learned to advocate for myself, my ideas, and my impact... I think that’s a large part of how I landed this position as well.”

If you are pursuing a degree in writing and are wondering what to focus on, it’s worth exploring the more technical areas of the writing field. Having skills in writing and technology can benefit a person in most any field they choose, possibly ones they never knew writing would be needed for. Not only did Mack’s degree take her to an interesting career, but it also allowed her to excel in her field at such a well-known company as Google.



Grayson Mack
(Photo: Grayson Mack)

***Affiliate Professor
Retiring
Thank you Affiliate
Professor Andrea
Kaitany for your
dedication to GVSU.***

GRADS

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freelancer for the firm before being offered a salaried position prior to graduation. Collins also credits Professor Dan Royer, who helped her explore and develop her magazine writing skills.

“Develop writing habits that you can sustain in a professional writing setting.”

Collins has some advice for soon to be graduates: “Develop writing habits that you can sustain in a professional writing setting. If writer’s block hits at 9 a.m., it’s best to have a few ways of combating it up your sleeve.”

Tessa Dane-Henry, ’17, works at JR Automation in Holland, MI as an applications engineering technical writer. She helps the application engineers write proposals. These proposals include a variety of technical information that needs to be communicated so that multiple audiences can understand the content. It’s also important to format the content



Riley Collins
(Photo: Riley Collins)



Tessa Dane-Henry
(Photo: Tessa Dane-Henry)

in a way that best gets the message across to the audience.

Associate Professor Toth had a huge influence in Dane-Henry’s job search. Toth forwarded her information on to some previous students he had that worked at JR Automation. Shortly after, she was contacted by an HR team member about the job. Dane-Henry emphasized the importance

“Writers often offer a unique perspective when analyzing situations, which could offer a solution to a problem that other team members have not yet thought about.”

of having connections with professors and alumni within the Writing Department because they know the skill set that students develop and refine.

Dane-Henry offers great advice to students: “Be confident in your abilities.

Writers often offer a unique perspective when analyzing situations, which could offer a solution to a problem that other team members have not yet thought about.”

Chiara Licari, ’18, works as an Associate at Sabo PR, a public relations firm located in downtown Grand Rapids, MI. She helps clients tell their story from media relations, internal and marketing communications, crisis management, and everywhere in between. She does this by crafting releases, designing collateral, managing social media, and writing content for various organizations with different voices and missions.

“Do your research and reflect that in your resume.”

Licari had originally applied for a position at Sabo PR in February 2018, but she was told that they were looking for someone with more experience, and that they would keep her resume and cover letter on file. In the meantime, she worked as a manager at a restaurant until an opportunity arrived.



Chiara Licari
(Photo: Chiara Licari)

Then in November 2018, she received an email from Sabo PR asking if she was still interested in a position.

She gives credit to Assistant Professor Adrienne Wallace from the Advertising and Public Relations Department, who sent her the original job posting to Sabo PR. “She was always incredibly supportive and helped me stay positive while I was applying for jobs,” she said.

Licari offers advice to graduating seniors. “Do your research and reflect that in your cover letter and resume. Tailoring them to a handful of places you care about will get you hired not only more quickly, but at a place you’re genuinely interested in working at.”

Teresa Williams, ’17, is a first year graduate student at MSU studying digital rhetoric and professional writing, and she works at the MSU writing center as a graduate coordinator.

As a graduate student, Williams has the standard student obligations, but also gets to be part of exciting professional development opportunities. She has also helped to host conferences. As a graduate coordinator for the MSU writing center, she helps out the writing consultants and also does regular one-on-one consulting with students on their writing.

Before deciding to go to graduate school, she had a job as an administrative

assistant and quickly realized that it was not a good fit for her. She left that job and worked at a clothing retailer, which gave her the flexibility and time to finish her grad school applications.

“Don’t be afraid to go back and talk to your professors after you’ve graduated. Their support of you doesn’t stop when you’re handed your degree.”

An important resource for Williams was Grad School Night at GVSU, where she learned what to look for in a graduate program. Associate Professor José was particularly helpful in the graduate school process. “She wrote me a letter of recommendation, read through my CV, and helped me select my writing samples,” Williams said. She looks forward to applying for PhD programs this upcoming fall and wants to be a professor in rhetoric and composition focused on digital studies.

William’s advice for graduating seniors is this: “Don’t be afraid to go back and talk to

your professors after you’ve graduated. Their support of you doesn’t stop when you’re handed your degree.”

Writers have many options when it comes to career choices after graduation. Collins, Dane-Henry, Licari, and Williams are proof that it is possible for a recent graduate to find their desired career path not long after receiving their diploma.



Teresa Williams
(Photo: Teresa Williams)

Alumni Update
Emily Davenport
Boswell (2016)
has accepted the
position of Digital
Marketing Manager
for Hollymatic.
Congratulations!

RETIRING

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Web, particularly engaging and enjoyable.

Two of his favorite past articles were published in *Rhetoric Review* and *African American Review*. In the first, he explored American philosophy and challenged opinions on the subject, and in the latter he delved into what literacy means and how we gain it for ourselves. Royer also said, “My role as a collaborator in helping to establish the Writing Department is something that I’m proud of.”

As for future writing, he hopes to maintain his passion for creating and helping others learn. His future plans involve plenty of room for friends, reading, walking his dog Huckleberry, and work that will engage his passions and skills.

On behalf of the Writing Department and its students, thank you Professor Lowe and Professor Royer! Thank you for your support in this writing community and for making the practice of writing something that students of all ages have enjoyed here. We will always remember your time here with us and we appreciate all the hard work that you have put into making the Writing Department what it is today.

A Practice in Honest Writing

Megan Markel



Assistant Professor
Todd Kaneko (left) and
Michele Morano (right)
(Photo: Abby Schnell)

On November 15, 2018, students and faculty braved the growing snow in order to attend a craft talk and reading of nonfiction writer Michele Morano, who was invited by the Grand Valley Writers Series. Despite the gloomy weather outside, students were eager to join in an honest conversation with the author about distractions that are often faced when it comes to writing, as well as the skills and knowledge needed to break through those challenges.

“Don’t treat whatever it is that you have written as a measure of how good of a writer you are.”

As introduced by Assistant Professor Todd Kaneko, Morano has been recognized and honored by the Best American Essays, American Association of University Women, and many other awards. She is also the Chair of English and a professor at DePaul University, Chicago.

Morano was able to speak to her experience as a professor and conducted an exercise that she does with her current students: encouraging those in the room in the basement of Kirkhof to meditate along with her. This, she says, allows us as writers to pull away from the distractions of phones and the digital spaces around us if only for three minutes, to re-center our minds and our thinking. She then gave further encouragement: “Writing makes us feel vulnerable and often raises all kinds of issues around guilt and shame.” She

said that by doing this breathing exercise and meditation, we are “giving ourselves the permission so that writing becomes none of the burdens that we have to carry.” Through quick-witted banter, she retold the time that she caught a thief who was stealing newspapers off of her front step. Morano also discussed the loss of her neighbors, a topic that incorporated aspects of death, loss, and grief. She admitted that she had a difficult time writing about these topics until she considered writing about them together.

This honesty from the author opened up an opportunity to discuss narrative distance within Morano’s piece and in the writing of the students that attended. The students were able to do a small exercise that explored their own experiences through the lens of present tense and then, later, in past tense. Students then discussed ways that this exercise could open up more possibilities for them to write about difficult experiences without the pressure of making them sound “pretty.” They could retell them genuinely instead.

Morano’s compassion for her own writing and the writing of others was evident through the way that she was really encouraged by the feedback that students were so freely giving. One student said that by doing this, they were able to better understand their feelings about a moment in their life *now*, so that they could write about it in a more honest way. Morano answered a couple more poignant questions about her own writing process at the end of the session, which only seemed to further encourage the many aspiring writers in the room.

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