

In Writing

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Comic Book Competition Winner, Kenny Porter

WRT Major Wins Worldwide Comic Book Competition

Krysta Rydecki

Kenny Porter, came across an unusual opportunity in 2012. Top Cow Productions, an American comic book publisher (known for comics such as *Witchblade* and *The Darkness*), was hosting an open Talent Hunt. Big companies like Top Cow normally find writers and artists through submissions and referrals, not competitions. Porter decided to take advantage of this rare opportunity and entered his comic script in the Talent Hunt. There were over 1200 submissions by writers and artists worldwide.

"I checked my email on the day the winners were announced, and I found a message from Top Cow saying I was one of the winners," recalled Porter. "I couldn't believe it. I was beyond happy and honored to be selected."

Porter's comic book, *Artifacts #33: The Teacher & The Preacher*, was released December 11, 2013. It is a one-shot (stand-alone) story with characters owned by Top Cow Productions.

"I wasn't familiar with most of their characters," Porter said, "especially their smaller characters, which were the ones they wanted us to tackle, so I had to do a ton of research."

The story focuses on former priest Tom Judge and his partner Tilly Grimes as they close in on a serial killer known as the Teacher. Using *The Rapture* (one of the lost artifacts), Tom must confront the Teacher and his black magic before innocent souls are lost forever. From the beginning, the reader is plunged into a racing plot with twists and turns through shadows and hellfire. Porter's riveting script and sharp dialogue create

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Alumna Self-Publishes First Novel

Shardae Rudel

Self-publishing is an exciting adventure and, thanks to the internet, the booming ebook industry is quickly becoming the ticket to many writers' success. GVSU alumna Nicole Wilson is just one of the many young authors taking advantage of this new sect of the publishing industry. Her book, *The Persian Door*, has recently been released to the online market under her writing pseudonym N.E. Wilson. The story is a thrilling sci-fi adventure, centering around the main character Lillian who is thrust into a parallel universe where civil war is imminent. There she is faced with the hardship of not only saving the people but also saving herself.

Wilson graduated in 2011 with an emphasis in creative writing focusing on fiction and poetry. She began working on *The Persian Door* as an undergrad in 2007 and finished the novel shortly after she graduated. Through the GVSU curriculum, she was able to gain the much needed experiences of peer-editing, obtaining relevant writing jobs, and attending free workshops that she needed to build her identity as a writer.

When faced with publishing her finished manuscript, Wilson knew self-publishing was the route for her. She found herself getting impatient with the idea of obtaining a literary agent and editor. Instead, she took

the initiative to become the sole proprietor for her book.

"I'm very self-reliant," said Wilson. "I don't like to wait around for my dreams to come true."

Because of the solidarity that self-publishing involves, Wilson had to develop a strategy to reach readers. Her main method was to create a presence in the social media marketplace after finding a tight knit writing community through Twitter. She has also given away copies of her ebook for free publicity on sites such as Yellobric, a London-based charity site.

The process of self-publishing empowered her, making success happen on her own

"It's a career choice that puts you in the driver's seat," Wilson said, "but you're also fully responsible for everything and that can be overwhelming."

terms.

"It's a career choice that puts you in the driver's seat," she said, "but you're also fully responsible for everything and that can be overwhelming."

And by everything, she meant everything. Wilson was responsible for not only editing each page of the book, but also designing

the cover, formatting the ebook, advertising, marketing, scheduling events, and funding. Using websites such as Kickstarter, she raised the money to distribute her book and cover other costs that would otherwise be handled by publishers if she went the traditional route.

The demanding procedure was well worth it, said Wilson. "It's scary at times but it's exciting too! I get to see all my hard work take form and that's really special."

Self-publishing, she warned, is not for everyone. While having some downsides, such as no sales team, no editing team, and generating less revenue than the traditional publishing route, she found it to be the best fit for where she wanted her novel to go and how much control she wanted to have as a writer. It also heavily impacted her skills as an editor. The self-publishing route, like traditional publishing, demands that writers spend time revising their work continuously. While she employs the help of fellow writers and a few trusted friends, she also makes sure to stick with her original intent.

"I want it to sound like me, even if that's flawed," Wilson said. "I want someone to be able to read my work and see myself grow as a writer."

The Persian Door is available for download on Amazon, Goodreads, Sony ebooks, and Barnes & Noble. There is also a hardcopy edition located at Schuler Books in Grand Rapids through their publishing service.

Nominee Winners for the AWP Intro Journal Award

Fiction

"Open Water" by Abbie Dykstra

Nonfiction

"Dive" by Amy Hinman

Poetry

"Third Generation" by Amy Hinman

"Decent Recipe for Tilapia" by Ari Mokdad

"Please Do Not Touch the Artwork" by

Stephanie Ousch

Award Recipients in the Writing Department

Department of Writing Outstanding

Student

Nikki Fisher

Kenneth R. VenderBush

Student Leadership Award Nominee

Amy Hinman

Glenn A. Niemeyer Award Nominee

Marie Orttenburger

Successful Alumna Kate Puisis Reflects on Her Post-Graduation Experience

Marie Orttenger

Alumna Kate Puisis graduated from GVSU in Writing with an emphasis in professional writing in December 2010. Not long after she graduated, she was contacted by a recruiter offering her the chance to interview for a technical writing position at JR Automation, a company in Holland that specializes in designing, programming, and building automated machinery for a variety of industries. When she graduated, Puisis wouldn't have anticipated automation to become her chosen field, but it's where she's stayed ever since. Recently promoted to Technical Talent Acquisition and Marketing Specialist, Puisis said JR Automation has presented her a wealth of opportunity for professional growth, and she plans to continue growing there for the foreseeable future.

Initially, after she graduated, Puisis was interested in working with nonprofits.

"I thought I was going to help them build websites on a low budget and help them type their communication," said Puisis. "Nonprofits are just notorious for not spending a lot of money on marketing, so I kind of always wanted to do low-budget marketing and help them excel in spreading their message."

However, she couldn't find a nonprofit that would spend enough money on marketing to pay her full-time. Then she

"It's your job to just get where you want to be professionally, so I think every writer has the capability, especially coming out of a program like Grand Valley that teaches you so many different things," said Puisis.

got a call from a recruiter looking for technical writers who had seen her résumé posted on LakerJobs.

"I got really lucky," said Puisis.

Puisis said she went into the interview completely unsure of automation and what writing about it entailed. But after some discussion, she became intrigued by the industry.

"I walked into JR and there were automated machinery and robots everywhere, and it wasn't really something I ever thought about. I don't even think about cars, let alone these kinds of machines. So when I got in there and they explained what they do, and that they use InDesign and Photoshop, I was really interested in at least trying it out," she said.

Puisis started at JR as a technical writer, helping to compile manuals and document the machinery. Before long, she began noticing other places where she could apply the skills she'd acquired pre-graduation.

"One thing that I noticed [at JR] is the thing that I kept picking out in all of the nonprofits I worked with: they would have a really hard time with brand identity. They would use a million different fonts, their website wouldn't match their fliers," Puisis said. "When I came into an actual established company, I was surprised that they were doing the same thing. So when I found like 30-35 different logos on the network drive, I just printed them all out and went and showed the director of sales and told him that this is a problem and I'd like to help. That's kind of how the whole thing started."

Once Puisis reached beyond her duties as a technical writer, she established herself as a specialist in all things to do with writing at JR. Now, as the Technical Talent Acquisition and Marketing Specialist, Puisis employs the skills she learned as a technical writer to help JR recruit new engineers as the company continues its steady growth.

"They wanted somebody inside of JR that's used to talking to the engineers and used to working with them, and someone



Successful Alumna, Kate Puisis

who can communicate really well, so that's how they came to me and asked me if I wanted to take the position," she said.

Puisis insisted that it was her initiative to take on other jobs that enabled her to grow the way she has within the company. She believes it is a writer's responsibility to establish him- or herself as someone who is willing to go beyond the job description he or she is assigned.

"It's your job to just get where you want to be professionally, so I think every writer has the capability, especially coming out of a program like Grand Valley that teaches you so many different things, so many different ways to write and design. I think it's your responsibility to take that into your hands and make your career what you want it to be," she said.

Though she's in a field she never even considered, Puisis said she's happy and that she plans to stay at JR.

"I don't see myself moving, not any time soon. I love this position, and it's so new. I'm interested to see where this goes."

Horrocks and Huey Perform and Engage

Hannah VanDenBerg

Each January, the GVSU Writers Series opens the winter semester by inviting two current faculty members to showcase their work in a public reading. This year, Assistant Professor Amorak Huey and Associate Professor Caitlin Horrocks read in the Cook-DeWitt Center for students, faculty, family, and friends.

Horrocks read an excerpt from her working novel, *La Belle Excentrique*, a fiction novel based on the early 20th century French composer and pianist, Erik Satie. Before she began reading, she mentioned it would be the first time for her to read from a piece that she was still actively working on.

"I've been going to events at Cook-DeWitt for years and looking at that piano sitting there, unused. I wanted to do something a bit different with my own reading this year and thought of incorporating music. That's where the novel came in, because it features music heavily," Horrocks said.

Her words truly brought fiction to life, but she took the story one step further by playing a musical selection on the piano from Satie titled "Gymnopedie No.3," with a warm melody that is both sad and soothing.



Writing Professors, Horrocks and Huey

"Horrocks' piano playing gave her piece a synesthetic feel, as her musical writing style echoed the piano's swells and lulls," said attendee, Nikki Fisher.

Huey followed Horrocks by reading a selection entitled "The Letter X Chooses His Own Adventures" from a collection of his poems.

He included audience members by passing out slips of paper to them prior to the reading. Each slip had two words on it. The audience member would choose a

word, in turn directing what Huey read next.

"Because [Horrocks] was playing the piano, I wanted to come up with something interactive, something that would get the audience engaged. Once I decided I wanted to read that first poem, the idea grew from there," Huey said.

The room filled with laughter as one student tried to choose between the

See H&H page 7

Maun and Koscielski Offer Songs and Wisdom about Collaboration

Cara Medvedenko

"If the page can't hold your emotion, sometimes a song can," said Caroline Maun, poet turned songwriter. Maun, Visiting Professor of English, came from Wayne State University to talk with students about her career as a poet and how it transferred into songwriting.

Although she'd been writing poetry for years, she had no experience with music when Dr. Frank Koscielski, a colleague at Wayne State, popped into her office.

"You write poetry that rhymes, right?" he asked. "Come write music with me."

That simple invitation was the start of a

musical career for the two of them. They play in the Detroit area under the band name Black Hat. Koscielski plays piano and sings lead, while Maun sings backup.

When they visited on February 24 as part of the GVSU Visiting Writers Series, Maun spent the first half of the evening giving a craft talk about her poetry and songwriting, followed by a musical performance from the pair.

Maun has published two volumes of poetry, *The Sleeping* and *What Remains*. During the craft talk, she spoke of being surprised to find how naturally her style of poetry transferred into songwriting. She describes herself as an observational

poet who tries to capture the emotion in moments, including difficulties like her broken relationship and final reconciliation with her mother.

"I came to poetry as someone who felt compelled to tell the truth of my experience. My poetry became a testimony," Maun said of her work.

Songwriting, she discovered, was another excellent way to share emotion and experience. She also found that having a collaborator pushed her as a writer, and she encouraged students to find someone to write with if they want to grow as writers.

See SONG page 5

Students Attending AWP Gain Insight to Life After Undergrad

Marie Orttenburger

A few GVSU writing students and faculty got on a plane to Seattle, WA to attend this year's *Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) Conference* between February 27-March 3. Along with thousands of other authors, students, teachers, writing program administrators, and publishers, they convened to deliver and listen to panel discussions, attend readings, meet other professionals in the field, and experience Seattle. Students who attended walked away with plenty to reflect upon and a new understanding of the writing industry beyond the undergraduate level.

This year's conference began with a speech from keynote speaker Annie Proulx, a renowned journalist and writer of both fiction and creative nonfiction. Among her most notable works are *The Shipping News*, *Brokeback Mountain*, and a nonfiction guide to cider-making called *Cider: Making, Using, & Enjoying Sweet & Hard Cider*. Proulx's speech covered the history of American publishing, which GVSU senior Nathan Holtrey particularly enjoyed.

"The speech was like an hour and a half long, and I would have stayed longer," he said.

Throughout the conference, students had the opportunity to attend panel discussions that ranged in topic from craft to curriculum. Conference attendees selected from the program panels that piqued their interest, and they found that some matched their descriptions better than others. In a meeting held to reflect on the conference, students and faculty reported varying impressions of the panel discussions, which ranged from "excruciating" to revelatory of the successes of GVSU's Writing Department.

Senior Ari Mokdad recalled one panel that she found particularly interesting, "From Sea to Sea: Poets on the Power of Water," which featured four poets and an underwater photographer who discussed the flexibility of water in poetry.

"It was absolutely fascinating. I mean I live in a Great Lakes state—I should have thought about using water more often," said Mokdad.

After a day of attending panels, students could go to a variety of off-site readings held at venues around Seattle. These readings were not advertised in the printed program, so to find them, one either had to look at the *AWP* website or come upon them serendipitously via flyers distributed at the conference.

But what came across as one of the more enjoyable parts of the conference was the bookfair. The event included a host of authors, publishers, and small presses with whom attendees of the conference had the chance to speak. Students had the opportunity to meet some of their favorite writers, as well as learn about the scope of the literary market and opportunities for publication. Holtrey waited at *Fight Club* author Chuck Palahniuk's booth to speak with him, while Mokdad explored the variety of small presses and publications, including *Hoot*, a monthly literary magazine that is published on a postcard.

Both faculty and students agree that the best thing an undergraduate writer can walk away with after attending the *AWP* Conference is an understanding of what the possibilities are for a writer post-graduation.

"Students walk away [from the conference] with a sense of what the profession is like," said Department Head Patricia Clark.

Next year, the *AWP* Conference will take place in Minneapolis, MN from April 8-11. Those interested in attending should speak with their professors to determine funding opportunities for the trip.

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"No matter what type of creative writing you do or what your process," she said, "having a collaborator can be a huge help."

Maun spoke at length about the differences between poetry and songs and said the different writing processes were the biggest change for her. Poets write alone then workshop in the late stages of writing. Songwriters, on the other hand, often share rough ideas that they work on together. It's common for a final song to be completely different than where it started.

Maun encouraged students to try writing in new ways and mentioned the different writing processes that collaboration has given her and Koscielski. Sometimes they sit, ask about the topic, and start writing together. They've tried composing the music first and then writing words to go

with it, which is "a very different process," according to Maun. Other times, she sends Koscielski a page of lyrics and waits to see what he brings back.

"As a poet, it's unusual to write your work and then let it go and entrust it to the hands of another creative individual. It's been very rewarding. I highly recommend it," she said.

Regardless of the process, the final songs are always a surprise.

"When I heard our first recording, my head exploded," Maun stated matter-of-factly. "It was so much more than what I had written."

During the second part, Maun and Koscielski played songs from their album *Hooray for Love*. Between songs, they spoke about the importance of performance and revisions and the tie between them.

"When we perform," said Koscielski, "we

get a lot of information about what works. We see the audience nodding and tapping."

These reactions help them revise their songs. The pair said that, like all good writing, good poetry and songs are never a first draft. Their song "Some Dreams" evolved over years as they kept adjusting the notes and even the lyrics.

"We never think of it as quite finished," Maun said about their music.

Throughout the performance, they encouraged students to continue writing and sharing their work, even when it's hard to find people who seem interested.

"Even though you may not have the appropriate audience right in front of you, the globe is large. You'll find the right audience for your work."

To check out Black Hat's music or Maun's poetry, visit carolinemaun.com/blackhat.

Diving In: A Reflection on My Internship with *Waves*

Nikki Fisher

At the start of my junior year, I didn't feel prepared to take on *Waves*, the annual magazine of GVSU's Modern Languages and Literatures (MLL) department, but I dove into my internship anyway. My role as the *Waves* intern was to be the magazine's Editor-in-Chief, though I'm not sure this title has the proper connotations. Really, I wore a few different hats—I was also the magazine's primary writer, interviewer, and advocate. Navigating the waters of this internship helped me understand the interconnectedness of these roles in real-world writing contexts in a way that the classroom setting could not.

MLL's Department Chair Majd Al-Mallah—my supervisor—launched *Waves* in Summer 2012. MLL is the largest department on campus, housing courses in nine

languages including Spanish, French, German, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic, Italian, Polish, and Russian. Ultimately, this meant that there were plenty of languages and events to showcase when it came time to select content. Most of my time with *Waves* was spent as the magazine's primary writer, covering the research-based feature article and other journalistic reports on departmental events. I was the Editor-in-Chief, but I was also the only paid staff writer, which meant that any writing I did not do had to come from a volunteer source.

I've never felt more like a professional writer than I did during my internship with *Waves*. I scheduled my own hours, worked in an office, and felt endowed with trust from Al-Mallah. He was always open to the creative directions in which I wanted to take the magazine. For example, I told Al-Mallah that I wanted to hold a poetry

contest and have the winning poem translated by students into each of the magazine's languages. He was excited about this idea, helped me pull it through to creation, and even donated a prize to the contest's winner.

The rest of my time was spent doing real-world professional stuff. I held interviews with various students, faculty, and alumni to generate content for the magazine. Some of my other responsibilities included organizing meeting times and corresponding with everyone involved via email. Some days, I sat for a two hour shift and spent the entire time sending and responding to email. Though at times this task could be a bit mundane, I learned so much about how to correspond clearly and efficiently in a professional work environment.

The real editing part of my *Waves* experience came into play toward the end of the process, during Summer 2013, when we pulled all the pieces together. I worked with Chelsea Godmer-Blair, our graphic designer, to make sure the texts and visuals worked together in rhetorically effective ways. Toward the end of the summer, I was still copyediting while on a trip out West, reading the text over and over as my boyfriend drove through winding mountain roads.

So many aspects of my internship were great, but the best part was holding the final product in my hands. Paging through the shiny, hot-off-the-printer physical copy, I felt so rewarded by the process it had taken to create *Waves*. I could not have done it without those who shared both their time and their stories. That being said, as editor, being the one to pull all of these pieces together was a pretty incredible experience.

Working toward the larger goal of creating the magazine showed me the true breadth of the writing process. In most writing classrooms, students are both generating and revising several new pieces over the course of the semester. With *Waves*, I was allowed to slow down and revise content over the span of about nine months. More than anything, this internship taught me that writing education cannot happen solely inside a vacuum, but rather requires active writing for actual audiences.



Waves Editor-in-Chief Intern, Nikki Fisher

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a chilling tale with a fresh take on old characters.

Winning Top Cow's Talent Hunt gave Porter insights into what it was like to work with a big company.

"I was assigned an editor and we had to do everything based on what was best for the characters, for the line, and for their editorial mandate," said Porter.

His editor helped him turn his initial script into a twenty-page comic book.

Top Cow paired Porter with Italian artist ROM, who, like Porter, was a 2012 Talent Hunt winner. She was given his finished script, and they corresponded regularly via email to create cohesion between writing and drawings.

"I actually rewrote a couple parts based around her art style and what she was better at doing," Porter said.

The result of collaborating with editor and artist was a twenty-page horror comic about a teacher and a preacher.

"The president/publisher told me my script won because it scared the crap out of him," laughed Porter.

Previous to winning Top Cow's Talent Hunt, Porter had another comic published by the small digital publisher Visionary.

"I got a lot of help from the editor there," he said. "He taught me a lot as far as honing my craft and working for a big company."

When he was 21, Porter picked up a comic at a book store and began exploring the many genres, such as drama, slice-of-life, fiction, and mystery. His writing first got attention when he began blogging and writing reviews for comics he had read. This led him to create his own review site called Sequential Review in addition to writing reviews for other websites. He did not try his hand at scripting comics until 2009 but has been diligently writing comics for years.

Now a senior, Porter has taken full advantage of the Writing Department's new modular curriculum, choosing his courses

according to his personal goals.

"Majoring in writing at GVSU has helped in that I've been able to apply a lot of what I've learned," Porter said. "Aspects of both creative and professional writing have helped a lot. The writing major is now like a choose your own adventure novel, and I chose to do a split—half creative writing and half professional. Professional writing has been really helpful in terms of creating pitch documents, writing cover letters, and trying to sell a whole comic book series in just a single document."

Winning this competition has given Porter professional credibility and recognition at a higher level.

"Majoring in writing at GVSU has helped in that I've been able to apply a lot of what I've learned," Porter said. "Aspects of both creative and professional writing have helped a lot."

"I'm really excited for where I'm at in my career right now," Porter said. "Winning this competition has opened a door for me to do bigger stuff with bigger companies."

Porter will be selling his comic books at upcoming conventions this year in Traverse City and Chicago. At C2E2 in Chicago, Porter will have his own table down Artist Alley.

"Artist Alley is where artists sell original artwork, sketches, books, and where writers have tables and sell their work as well," Porter said.

He will be selling copies of *Artifacts #33*, his earlier comic published through Visionary, and potentially one that is currently in progress.

"I never want to stop writing comics,"

Porter said. "I have too much fun."

Artifacts #33: The Teacher & The Preacher is available at thetopcowstore.com and Comixology.

H&H continued from page 4

words that are seemingly too connected to separate: love and marriage. Huey's fun and playful sense of humor sparkled through his audience interaction and his reading.

"Huey's 'choose your own adventure' format made his entire performance a poem itself, navigating themes of love, loss, and the complicated spaces between," said Fisher. "I'm not sure what future faculty performers could possibly do to step up this innovative performance."

Inviting faculty members to read their work offers students the chance to see their professors in a different light as working professional writers. For fellow faculty members, it's an opportunity to get to know one another's work.

"I'm a big fan of Caitlin's writing, so I was excited both to share the stage with her and also to get a sneak preview of her new novel," Huey said.

Horrocks holds an M.F.A. from Arizona State University. She is the author of the story collection *This Is Not Your City* and her stories and essays have appeared in publications such as *The New Yorker* and *The Best American Short Stories 2011*.

Huey earned an M.F.A. from Western Michigan University. His poetry is published in numerous print and online journals, including *Oxford American*, *The Southern Review*, and *Indiana Review*, to name a few.

Both Horrocks and Huey answered questions, shared advice, and stayed after to interact with the audience. Their passion for their creative work was no doubt inspiring to all who attended.

InWriting

Faculty Advisor: Christopher Toth

Copy Editors: Katie Hagen; Emma Hartman; Marie Orttensburger; Brian Saladino; Aleia Wright

Photo Contributions: Christopher Toth (1), Kate Puisis (3), Hannah VanDenBerg (4), Holly Malinoski (6)

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Alumni News

2006

Mike Salisbury is the Marketing Director for Trade Books at David C. Cook Publishers. In this position, he creates and implements comprehensive marketing plans, promotions, and campaigns for select products.

2007

Meahgan Pear recently took a position as the Marketing Director for Beene Garter LLP, the largest independently owned accounting and consulting firm in West Michigan. She is responsible for the strategic development of the firm's marketing strategies.

2008

Jenn Bedard is working on her Master of Arts degree in English with a concentration in Rhetoric and Composition at North Carolina State University. She was awarded an assistantship position and will be teaching English 101 next fall.

Amy Holwerda is a freelance writer. She has had her work noted in *The Best American Essays 2013* and has appeared in *Quick Fiction*, *The Collagist*, *Flash International*, and *The Sycamore Review*, among others. She currently writes from London, England and blogs about her travels at www.amyholwerda.com.

2010

Robyn Gordon works as a technical writer at JR Automation in Holland, MI. She collaborates with engineers and machine builders to write maintenance, changeover, calibration, and other types of procedures for their machines.

Ariana Hendrix finished a Master of Arts degree in English Language and Literature from San Francisco State University last year.

Susan Kieda works full-time as the advertising and communications coordinator for GVSU. She writes copy for communication materials, proofreads various university publications, and reviews artwork submitted by outside vendors containing logos or trademarks of the university. Susan is also pursuing her Master of Arts in English at GVSU part-time.

Jessica Levine works as a public relations and social media manager for Moncur Associates in Detroit.

Leah Mastee works for Kregel Publications, an independent book publishing company in Grand Rapids, and was recognized as the employee of the month in January.

Kate Puisis was recently promoted to the Technical Talent Acquisition and Marketing Specialist for JR Automation in Holland, MI. In addition to technical writing, she helps JR recruit new engineers as the company continues its steady growth.

2011

Ed Hillerich is an Associate Writer for Group Tour Media.

Allie Oosta is a style copywriter for Amazon.com/Fashion in Seattle. She writes editorial stories featuring the latest trends for apparel, shoes, jewelry, and watches.

Kiera (Wilson) Prince is finishing her Master of Arts degree at Clemson University in Professional Communication this spring.

2012

Karah Bradshaw is a social media sensei and public relations manager at Author Sensei. In this position, she creates and copywrites for websites and manages social media pages.

Hannah Matro works as a financial, writing, and social media specialist for WealthVest Marketing, a long-term savings company.

Michelle (Thomas) Oswald works as the Marketing Assistant at TerraTrike, manufacturer of three-wheeled recumbent tricycles for adults based in Grand Rapids. She feels she was uniquely prepared for success through the great teaching of the Writing Department faculty and her peers.

Megan Smith is the technical communication specialist at VerTech Solutions Group in Denver, Colorado. VerTech is a strategic advisory company that focuses on finding technical solutions for small businesses.

Mieke Stoub works as the Communications Specialist at the Grand Rapids Bar Association. She handles their bimonthly publication *Grand Rapids Attorney*, makes improvements to their website, and designs promotional event materials. She feels fully prepared for this position because of the instruction and advice she received from her professors.

2013

Abigail Ebels started working toward a Masters of Divinity at Western Theological Seminary in Holland, MI.

Lisa Dorrance is a social media marketing coordinator for the Greater Good Group.

Lauren Longo is a brand journalist for CQL.

Jessie Miller is working on her Master of Arts in Eastern Michigan University's Written Communication program. With her graduate assistantship, she teaches freshman composition. She is considering pursuing a PhD after she graduates next year.

Nicole Olweean will be starting graduate school in the fall to pursue a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing with a specialization in poetry.

Erin Quackenbush is a development assistant at Conductive Learning Center.

Matthew Russell is a graduate assistant in Clemson University's Master of Arts in Professional Communication program. He has an emphasis in digital publishing.

2014 Distinction in Writing Recipients

Nikki Fisher

Amy Hinman

Marie Orttenburger

Jarrett Weber