

Volume 27, Issue 6

Cheers from the Chair

Welcome to the Undergraduate Edition of *Reading Matters*! As always, our students have been resilient and creative, not only in pursuing their own individual development as readers and writers but also in helping us all survive and thrive collectively during the COVID-19 pandemic. We are all proud of their achievements and keen to celebrate them together.

I want to thank Director of Undergraduate Studies **Philip Round** for leading our undergraduate programs through challenging times with wit and wisdom. Phil kept us all informed and equipped to deal with the multiple challenges posed by the pandemic and the inadequate policies put in place to handle it. But Phil wasn't alone. He had the expert support of Undergraduate Advisors **Kate Torno** and **Allison Wanger**; English administrative staff **Rebecca Isaacs**, **Hannah Sorrell**, and **Corey Campbell**; and faculty administrators including Honors Program Director **Kathleen Diffley**, English & Creative Writing Director **Ed Folsom**, and Chair of the Undergraduate Awards and Scholarships committee **Matt Brown**. Administration is a collective endeavor, and I am proud of how well our faculty and staff have cooperated this past year to ensure that our undergraduates are informed, engaged, and supported.

I would also like to thank this year's English front desk staff, who kept the ship of EPB afloat on choppy waters: kudos to **Samantha Mayer**, **Braja Servin**, **Mikey Waller**, and **Spencer Yost-Wolff**. It was always a comfort to see you holding down the fort. Thanks as well to the dedicated corps of Undergraduate Ambassadors who assist with prospective student recruitment: **Ben Blumenthal**, **Jalen Carter**, **Morgan Corbett**, **Ellen Fox**, **Kyler Johnson**, and **Mallika Singh**. And Congratulations and Kudos to the Class of 2021, who are entering a changed world full of uncertainties: you have survived and thrived through unprecedented challenges; please know that your class is one of the most memorable to have passed through the halls of EPB. We have witnessed history together and will carry that bond into the future. Please remember that we will support and cherish you wherever you go and whatever you do.

From the Director of Undergraduate Studies

We came back to EPB this year with renewed purpose, and even though we've had our ups and downs, we are still standing. Let's join with Muriel Rukeyser in singing: "To celebrate the waking, wake./ Burn in the daylong light . . ." It has been an honor to work with undergraduate English majors this year and to witness your efforts to

build and sustain community in these uncertain times. From the ATI membership to the English Society, to the writers and editors of our many student publications, English majors have kept the faith in literature burning bright and made our English, English & Creative Writing, English Education, Publishing Track and English Honors program home for aspiring young writers from around the country. Thank you all for making this happen—advisors, staff, and students.

Phillip Round

Director of Undergraduate Studies

Undergraduate Matters

Congratulations to **Andrea Childs**, who was [awarded a 2022-23 Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship to Bulgaria!](#)

Creative Writing Matters

The undergraduate major in English & Creative Writing celebrates another successful year of creative endeavors and community-building, led by our permanent faculty of **Louisa Hall**, **Donika Kelly**, and **Bennett Sims**, and bolstered by the work of four remarkable Provost's Visiting Writers (PVWs)—**Steven Glavey** in playwriting, **Amelia Gramling** in nonfiction, **hurmat kazmi** in fiction, and **Timmy Straw** in poetry. These four recently carried on an annual event—a PVW Reading Series that this year drew an audience of over 100. We were also happy to welcome fiction writer **D. K. Nnuro**, a curator at the Stanley Museum of Art, to our faculty. While things were not fully back to normal (those masks!), it was great to once again be in the same physical room as we responded to each other's writing. We wish all the best to our graduating creative writers; may your open mindset take you far in your creative work, and into fulfilling creative lives.

Ed Folsom

Director of Undergraduate Creative Writing Track

GEL Matters

We're wrapping up a busy semester in GEL with a BANG! After two years of pandemic hiatus, the recent decline in Covid cases and revised CDC guidance means that the Iowa City Schools are finally open to volunteers, which means we're sending two sections of GEL students to the Kirkwood Elementary School campus, and bringing four classes of fourth and fifth graders to the University of Iowa!

This has all happened very quickly, and wouldn't have been possible without the heroic efforts of our new TA Coordinator, **Andrea Cramer** (welcome Andrea!). It also wouldn't have been possible without the quick thinking and flexibility of the two TAs teaching service learning sections, **Jamie Chen** and **Evan**

Goldstein. Donika Kelly has also joined us for our planning meetings to help brainstorm ways to host writing activities for the kids in EPB.

In fact, the quick collaboration that's unfolding shows just how deep and amazing our resources are here at UI: Margaret Gamm, Eric Ensley, and Sara Jacobmeyer Pinkham from the library are all pitching in to coordinate educational activities for the kids, as is Joshua Siefken from the Stanley Museum of Art. We're planning a very busy morning on Wednesday, April 27: so be prepared for an invasion of very small and excited people in the halls of EPB.

Finally, I would be remiss if I didn't mention some of the other amazing service that goes on *within* the GEL program. The textbook committee is totally run by volunteers, including the superb co-chairs **Jeremy Lowenthal** and **Maddison McGann. Reid Dempsey, Jamie Chen, Philip Zaborowski, Matthew Blackwell, Pedro Martinez, Kathleen Shaughnessy, Bronwyn Stewart, Bryanne Estes, and Katherine Randazzo**, have also been hard at work helping to select a common novel for next year and refining the teaching resources available on our very impressive website: <https://gel.sites.uiowa.edu/> The GEL program educates about 3,000 students per year! And it wouldn't be possible without their amazing efforts.

Blaine Greteman

Director of GEL

Honors Program Matters

Warm congratulations to this year's seniors graduating with departmental honors! Almost half of them arranged capstone projects with faculty advisors, who were first intrigued and then outspoken in their praise. Despite a lingering pandemic, all of

these seniors filled honors seminars that have been vigorous, astute, and engaging. Thanks to them and their mentors for doing the department proud.

Senior Graduating with Honors in English, 2021-2022

Emily Flores, Calvin Leslie, Anthony Neri, Lane Shirrell, Gabrielle Wahe, and Brett Zach

Capstone projects: **Kathleen Kenney** (adv. Elizabeth Rodriguez Fielder)

Senior Graduating with Honors in English and Creative Writing, 2021-2022

Afton Aiken, April Bannister, Madison Coleman, Jack Donley, Lily Rosen Marvin, Cassidy Pekarek, Katelyn Peters, Kyle Petrie, Jeffrey Piekarz, Nick Runyon, Oliver Willham, and Xiu Zhang

Capstone projects: **Sonia Beltz** (adv. Louisa Hall), **Noah Bultema** (adv. Marie Kruger), **Andrea Childs** (adv. Bennett Sims), **Madelyn Clark** (adv. Harilaos Stecopoulos), **Ting Gao** (adv. Inara Verzemnieks), **Ashton Hooley** (adv. Colin Kostelecky), **Mastura Ibnat** (adv. Lisa Schlesinger), **Catalina Irigoyen** (adv. Harilaos Stecopoulos), **Franny Marzuki** (adv. Katie Knoll), **Signe Nettum** (adv. Brooks Landon), **Mishma Nixon** (adv. Lori Branch), **Jacob Sammon** (adv. Blaine Greteman), and **Evelyn Shumway** (adv. Donika Kelly)

Kathleen Diffley

Director of Undergraduate Honors Program

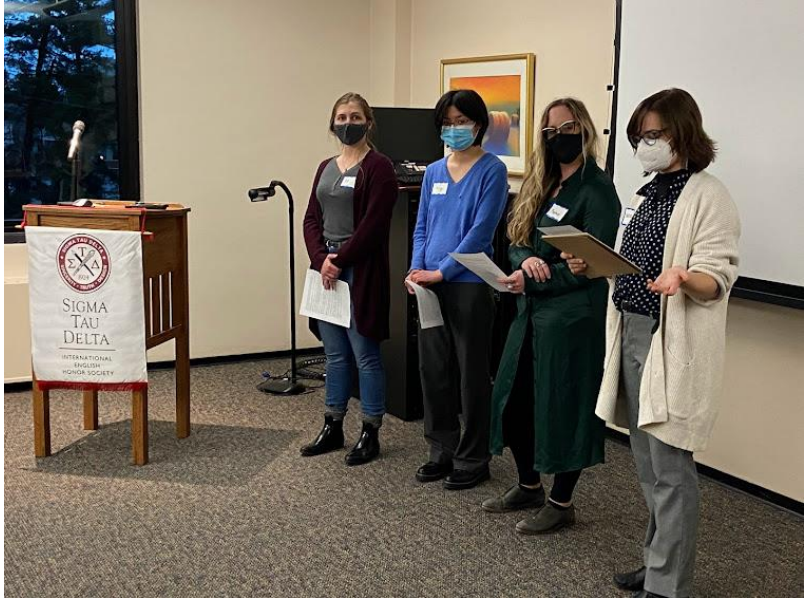
English Society Matters

Congratulations to these students for a job well done leading the English Society this year: President **Evalyn Harper**, Education Chair **Emmylane Linh Palmersheim**, Marketing & Outreach Chair **Samantha Mayer**, Publicist & Webmaster **Olivia Tonelli**, and Treasurer **Signe Nettum**. We're grateful for their contributions to the department's vibrant undergraduate culture!

ATI Honors Society Matters

Alpha Tau Iota (ATI), the University of Iowa chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, International English Honor Society, has had an exciting and productive spring. Events have included the perennial favorite, literary Jeopardy!; a February book exchange dubbed "blind date with a book"; Natasha Deón's virtual book reading (*The Perishing*), through Prairie Lights but with members tuned in from Gerber Lounge; spring induction for our eight newest members; and a colorful convention recap from the three students who traveled to Atlanta this month.

Convention highlights: **Noreasa Higgins, Corinne Swann, and Cassidy Pekarek** represented ATI with aplomb during the Sigma Tau Delta International Convention, held March 30 – April 2. Students delivered their creative pieces confidently, and their appreciative audiences responded with questions that led to robust discussions. Fortuitously, the three panels were scheduled at different times, which gave the Iowa contingent a chance to support each other and hear a variety of interesting papers. Nora, Rin, and Cassidy also listened to featured speakers Nic Stone and Richard Blanco, attended workshops, tasted Atlanta cuisine, learned about Sigma Tau Delta opportunities, and concluded with a stroll through Centennial Park (featuring Skyview Atlanta's impressive Ferris wheel). This academic year the chapter was delighted to welcome seventeen new members. **Nika Drnovsek, Julia Fout, Noreasa Higgins, Olivia Knox, Emily Miller, Jacob Sammon, Corinne Swann, Jacqueline Wahl, and Mikey Waller** joined ATI in the fall. More recently, **Douglas Balster, Cecilia Bradley, Emma Greco, Hannah Greer, Victoria Hummel, Sydney Landin, Miranda Miller, and Siena Palese** became members. I am also grateful to Academic Advisor **Allison Wanger**, who facilitated the recruitment process, attended both inductions, and provides invaluable insights throughout the year. Finally, I want to congratulate all graduating seniors and thank officers **Cassidy Pekarek** (President, Secretary), **Meghan Anderson** (Vice President), **Ting Gao** (Treasurer, Membership Officer), and **Alicia Edmundson** (Historian, Publicity Officer) for their fine leadership. Seniors, we will miss you and wish you all the best as you set forth from the University of Iowa!





Left to right: New ATI members after induction; ATI officers Alicia Edmundson, Ting Gao, Meghan Anderson, and Cassidy Pekarek, introduce new ATI members; Cassidy Pekarek and Allison Wanger, post-induction



Left to right: Cassidy Pekarek delivers her paper; Rin Swann and fellow panelists



Left to right: Nora Higgins replies to audience questions; Nic Stone chats with Nora Higgins and Rin Swann; Nora Higgins, Cassidy Pekarek, Bill Johnson (former UI English grad student and current Executive Director of Sigma Tau Delta), and Rin Swann.



Rin Swann, Nora Higgins, Cassidy Pekarek, and Anne Stapleton at lunch

Anne Stapleton

ATI Advisor

Award Matters

Darwin T. Turner Award

Established in honor of Dr. Darwin T. Turner, chair of the African-American World Studies Program and Professor in the Department of English. The award recognizes outstanding students of color who best combine Dr. Turner's devotion to literature and scholarship with his exemplary qualities as teacher and leader.

Sabrina Lacy

Elizabeth Dietz Essay Prize

This award is given for the best essay on poetry, in honor of Elizabeth Dietz, who was a poet, a professor of Renaissance Literature at Rice University, and a graduate of the Iowa Writers Workshop and the doctoral program in English

Emma Pech, Nora Wall

Emily Wagner Scholarship

This award honors Emily Wagner, who received her B.A. in English from the University of Iowa in 2002. After graduating, Emily pursued her love of reading and writing by joining the Teach for America Corps, and continued her career as an inspiring English teacher, challenging and engaging middle-school students until her death in 2010. This scholarship supports an English major who shares Emily's love

of literature, demonstrates academic excellence, and is a graduate of an Iowa high school.

Tamara Jo Schaapherder

Helen Aicher and Kenneth Ward Nelson Scholarship

This award is for individuals who intend to teach at the high school level following completion of their studies.

Summer Carlson, Samantha Mayer

Helen K. Fairall Scholarships

For Iowa born and educated juniors or seniors with preference to students interested in literature from 1900 to the present. The English Department has nominated the following students:

Lydia Hecker, Sophia Kilburg, Miranda Miller, Alana Scherer

John C. McGalliard Medieval Essay Prize

This award is given each year for the best essay on a topic from medieval literature, in honor of Professor McGalliard, who taught and wrote on Anglo Saxon poetry and literature until 1975.

Ella Michael, Kathryn Reagan

The Louise P. Herring Scholarship

Established in honor of Louise P. Herring, who earned her master's degree from the University of Iowa in 1930 and her doctorate in 1932. It recognizes excellent students with a commitment to English studies as a preparation for life.

Alec Glisson, Maya Torrez

Margaret Leuz and Fred Einspahr Scholarship

Established by John Einspahr in honor of his parents Margaret Leuz and Fred Einspahr. Margaret graduated from Iowa in 1912 with high honors in English, and this award recognizes excellent students who plan to pursue a career in teaching.

Dalton Bantz, Noreasa Higgins

Melvin J. Blough Scholarship

Established in honor of Melvin J. Blough, this award is given to support students studying in the English Department.

Carmela Furio, Alexandra Kautzman, Callan Latham, Megan Mechelke, Natalie Muglia, Maura O'Dea, Tamara Jo Schaapherder, Hunter Wienke

Miriam Gilbert Award for Shakespeare Studies

This award is given each year for the best essay on Shakespeare, renaissance literature, or drama and performance, in honor of Professor Gilbert, who taught Shakespeare at Iowa until 2013.

Lydia Hecker

Ruth Gulden Holsteen and Charles Sophus Holsteen Memorial Scholarship

Established by Jon Holsteen and Nancy Holsteen Lerner in honor of their parents, Charles Sophus and Ruth Gulden Holsteen, natives of Burlington, Iowa. Mrs.

Holsteen graduated with a degree in English and this award honors students who

share her commitment to excellence in the field.

Carmela Furio, Alexandra Kautzman, Callan Latham

The Scott A. Anderson Memorial Scholarship

Scott Anderson received his B.A. in English with highest distinction from the University of Iowa in 1984. He was an honors student, a member of Phi Beta Kappa, a winner of the Hancher-Finkbine Medallion, and, after graduation, he worked as a writer for the UI Foundation and in the television industry in New York and Los Angeles. This scholarship honors students who share his love of writing.

Josephine Geiger-Lee, Megan Mechelke, Natalie Muglia, Maura O'Dea, Josephine Roy, Samantha Sandefur, Lauren Sanyal, Tamara Jo Schaapherder, Amritha Selvarajaguru, Corinne Swann, Hunter Wienke

Sean Wu Memorial Scholarship

This award was established by Dave Wu and Una Yang in honor of Sean Wu and is used to support a freshman English and Creative Writing major who shows promise in this area.

Amritha Selvarajaguru

Sherry Simmons Loring Memorial Scholarship

Established by Eric Loring, in honor of his late wife, Sherry Simmons Loring, who earned her BA in English at Iowa in 1970. The award recognizes students who, like the Loring, have demonstrated their commitment to and pleasure in the life of the mind at the University of Iowa.

Sabrina Lacy

Faculty Matters

Melissa Febos [won the National Book Critics Circle Award in criticism for *Girlhood*](#) AND [received a 2022 Guggenheim Fellowship in General Nonfiction](#).

Bravo, Melissa!

Congratulations to **Florence Boos**, who was reappointed as Collegiate Fellow in CLAS for the next five years.

Congratulations to the following faculty for their promotions: **Inara**

Verzemnieks to Associate Professor with Tenure; **Kathleen Diffley, Blaine Greteman**, and **Dave Wittenberg** to Full Professor; **Anne Stapleton** to Full Professor of Instruction!

Claire Fox, Blaine Greteman, and **Naomi Greyser** were elected to the Faculty Senate.

David Gooblar was elected to Faculty Assembly.

Congratulations to **Donika Kelly**, the [winner of the 2022 Anisfield-Wolf award for poetry](#). [The Anisfield-Wolf Book Award](#) is the only national juried prize for literature that confronts racism and explores diversity.

Congratulations to **Doris Witt**, this year's recipient of the John Gerber Undergraduate Teaching Award.

In Memoriam

Paul Diehl, a longtime English Department faculty member and a brilliant teacher of poetry, died on March 18 at the Solon Nursing Home. Paul joined the English faculty in 1976 and retired as an emeritus faculty member in 2004. Among his many accomplishments, he was instrumental in the development of (and was an early director of) the Nonfiction Writing Program.

Upcoming Matters

Faculty Colloquium: Bennett Sims, "Solaris and Solaristics" - Friday, April 22 | 3:00 pm | Zoom

Undergraduate Recognition Ceremony - Friday, April 22 | 3:30-5:00 pm | Old Capitol Senate Chambers + Zoom