

## Cheers From the Chair

Dear Colleagues and Coworkers,

Welcome to the 2024 Undergraduate Issue of Reading Matters! It was a great year for undergraduate programs, as we opened our new Literary Loft on the fourth floor, complete with snacks, socializing, and a library of alumni books. This year marks the first that **Marie Kruger** has directed our honors society, ATI, an intimidating task after the legendary tenure of **Anne Stapleton** (and by the way, not to steal **Anne's** thunder, but shouldn't we mention that **Jack Stapleton** will be receiving the Regents Award for Faculty Excellence at this year's ceremony, for the work he did at the height of the AIDs crisis, and has done since, saving thousands of lives? You may know him as the very nice man who hosted some of our holiday parties, and who was **Anne's** other half. But they are a power duo!). But I digress: **Anne** did wonders with ATI, and **Marie** has put her own amazing spin on things, inducting one of our largest ever groups into the society, and keeping them fully engaged with biweekly events and a trip to St. Louis for the annual national convention, where our own **Donika Kelly** was a keynote speaker. You can read **Marie's** full update below, where you'll see she's one of many people who have made our undergraduate experience something really special.

Others who have contributed to that effort are **Kaveh Akbar**, as director of English Creative Writing, who organized our ongoing visiting writers' series, **Harry Stecopoulos**, who as our Director of Undergraduate Studies gained approval for a new 4+1 BA+Masters program, **Lori Branch**, who organized our "Iowa English Reads" group, and of course our advisors **Kate Torno** and **Christine Norquest**, who are just irreplaceable for keeping the trains running and the snacks in the Literary Loft flowing.



Figure 1: The Shanonistas

**Shannon Yost**, as Assistant to the DEO has also helped turn our front desk positions for students into a full internship experience. Those students are **Josie Boyle**, **Josephine Geiger-Lee**, **Emma Birkbeck**, **Kyleigh Call**, and **Sam Mayer**, or as I like to call them, the Shanonistas. They even had a spontaneous "Dress Like **Shannon**" day in her honor, and collectively they do amazing work to make every student, prospective student, and parent who comes to the office feel welcome and get a sense of what makes our department special.

What else? I guess this is my last *Reading Matters*! It's been a good, if short, run and I'm excited that the department will be welcoming back **Loren Glass** next year for an encore performance. Rather than Cheers from the Chair I think I should label this Cheers *to* the Chair and wish him all the best in his new, old, role!

Sincerely,

*Blaine*

## From the Director of Undergraduate Studies

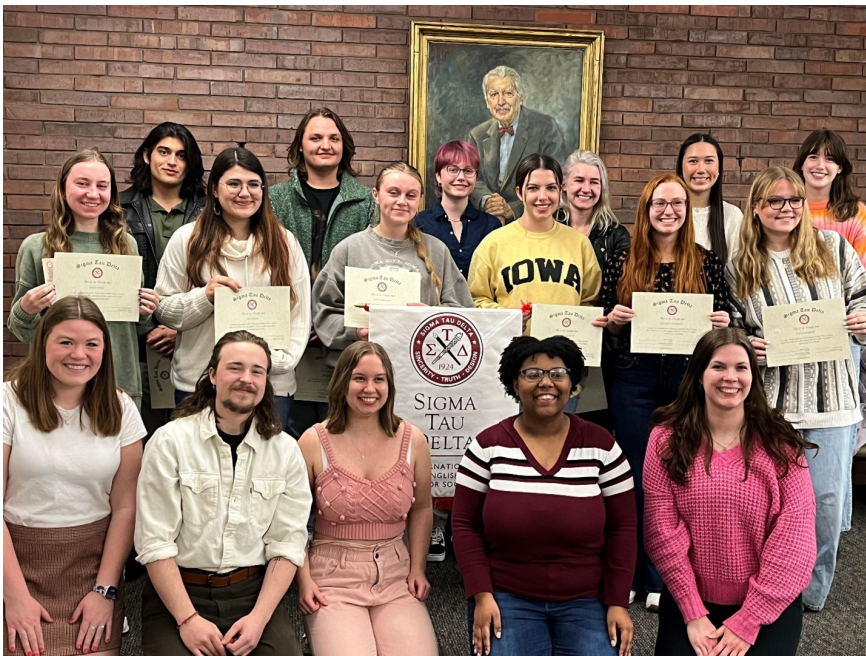
I'm happy to report that our two undergraduate majors are thriving. We currently have 842 majors—the fourth largest number of majors in CLAS. I suspect that number will be even higher in the fall. No surprise, of course. We teach well and most of our classes are at capacity. We're also blessed with two extraordinary student advisors in Christine Norquest and Kate Torno. They both make major contributions to our pedagogic enterprise, and we owe them a great deal.

Our students' many achievements also warrant mention. One talented senior is writing a capstone creative project that draws on Kathy Acker, Samuel Beckett, and Jean Genet; another, an accomplished poet, has the happy problem of choosing between two superb MFA programs; a third student, a bright medievalist, completed an honors thesis on Chrétien's *Perceval*. Seven precocious students shared their work at the annual Sigma Tau Delta convention in Saint Louis. And the enthusiastic members of the English Society have put on one innovative event after another. Even as other English departments struggle to maintain their numbers, we benefit from the presence of hundreds of wonderful students. Next year promises to bring us more of the same.

*Harry Stecopoulos*

## Undergraduate Matters

Alpha Tau Iota (ATI), the University of Iowa chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the International English Honors Society, has enjoyed an exceptionally successful year in promoting the mission of the English Honors Society and foster an inclusive community with a love for creative expression and a commitment to community service. Under the leadership of President **Sabrina Lacy**, a team of dedicated ATI officers (**Sophia Considine** as Vice President; **Madison Sukalo** as Treasurer; **Ella Rupe** as Publicity Officer and Historian; and **Finn Angelos** as Alumni Liaison) recruited an exceptionally large group of 25 new members into their steadily expanding community.



Spring ATI Inductees with ATI officers

Through a series of biweekly events, ATI offered English students a welcoming and inclusive space to engage in conversations about their creative and critical writing, to share their favorite (and least favorite) books, and to transform the Gerber Lounge into a lively Karaoke venue. Several events in the past year have been specifically dedicated to ATI's mission to serve the Iowa City community: ATI members designed alphabet packets for elementary school children (February 2024); they crafted bracelets and donated them to the University of Iowa Children's Hospital (October 2023); and they created bookmarks which were made available to the patrons of the Iowa City Library (November 2023). In addition, ATI organized an event in September 2023 that featured the literary work selected by the international English Honors Society as this year's "Common Reader," Carl Phillips's Pulitzer prize-winning poetry anthology, *Then the War*. The success of the event was recognized by Sigma Tau Delta with a Regents Common Reader Award, the first time ATI has secured such a prestigious acknowledgment from its parent organization.

## Undergraduate Matters

Thanks to the Department's generous support, ATI was able to send a large group of Iowa students to the Sigma Tau Delta convention in Saint Louis. Please congratulate **Sabrina Lacy**, **Miranda Miller**, **Elizabeth Von Loh**, **Amritha Selvarajaguru**, **Kelsey James**, **Katherine Lyu**, and **Madeline Riske** on their poised and eloquent presentations at the convention. They are currently preparing a convention report to share with the Department. Two other highlights from the convention deserve mention: we cheered on the Hawkeyes in their win against UConn, and two members of our team won the Literary Trivia Contest using the memorable moniker "Gerber's Gals" (nicely done, **Amritha** and **Miranda**!).



ATI convention attendees: Kelsey, Kathrine, Sabrina, Amritha, Madeline, Elizabeth and Miranda]



Hawkeyes in Saint Louis

## Undergraduate Matters

To add further accolades to ATI, **Miranda Miller**, one of the convention attendees, has been selected from 146 international candidates (!) to serve in the prestigious Summer Journal Internship of Sigma Tau Delta. From May 15 to August 15, 2024, Miranda will work with Professor Carie King and three other journal interns to review submissions and edit accepted publications for Sigma Tau Delta Review, the organization's critical journal, and Sigma Tau Delta Rectangle, the organization's creative journal.

Finally, I would like to congratulate all graduating seniors and thank officers **Sabrina Lacy** (President), **Sophia Considine** (Vice President), **Madison Sukalo** (Treasurer), **Ella Rupe** (Publicity Officer; Historian), and **Finn Angelos** (Alumni Liaison) for their excellent work leading our Iowa Chapter throughout the year. Seniors, we wish you well on your future journey beyond the University of Iowa. Stay connected!

Alpha Tau Iota's Faculty Sponsor

*Marie Kruger*

# Undergraduate Matters

## Honors in English

### Graduating English Majors

Harkin, Emily

Roy, Josephine Marie

Wilcoxon, Megan Katherine

### Graduating English and Creative Writing Majors

Angelos, Finnegan Alexander

Bell, Georgina Louise

Birkbeck, Emma Joan

Bradley, Cecilia Kay

Brookins, Charlotte Alaine

Brooks, Eva Kelleher

Burd, Josie

Davis, James Finch

DeGroot, Taylor

Erlbacher, Emma Elizabeth

George, Olivia

Goodrich, Antoinette Rose

Haase, Ciara Delaney

Hirsch, Katherine Anne

Hummel, Victoria

Kestner, Anthony

Lacy, Sabrina Mae-June

Linquist, Link Alexander

Lyu, Shijia

Miller, Miranda

O'Brochta, Emily Erin

O'Neal, Robyn Elizabeth

Palese, Siena Gamble

Pech, Emma

Rajwar, Stevie Terry

Reagan, Kathryn Grace

Reid, Cameron Cody

Richardson, Annelise Sabine

Ruder, Kieran Gage

Scherer, Alana Virginia

Shearn, Abigail Therese

Stanton, Emma Jane

Terpstra, Darrin YooJung

Torrez, Maya Moon

## Undergraduate Matters- Scholarship/Awards

*Helen K. Fairall Scholarships:* For Iowa born and educated juniors or seniors with preference to students interested in literature from 1900 to the present.

**Shaye Sullivan, Taylor Conrad, Madelyn Tomson**

*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.

**Jennifer Hogan, Amritha Selvarajaguru**

*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.

**Braja Servin**

*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.

**Josie Boyle, Lillian Giddings, Tanae Thiravong**

*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.

**Isobel Perez, Madeline Riske, Jennifer Schmitt, Sydney Smithgall**

## Undergraduate Matters

*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.

### Josephine Geiger-Lee

*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.

### Katherine Davis

*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.

### Elijah Lewerenz, Braja Servin

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

Sophia Acklin, Abigail Adams, Bradley Beberniss, Gianna Ceriotti, Hannah Cargo, Ellie Fischer, Noelle Franzone, Charles Hickman, Jennifer Hogan, Emma Hussin, Caroline Jilek, Abigail Kloha, Grace Martin, Rebecca Keating, Elle Murphy, Isobel Perez, Madeline Riske, Jennifer Schmitt, Jonah Schwartz, Amritha Selvarajaguru, Sydney Smithgall, Archie Wagner, Shea Winters, Felix Zywicki



## Undergraduate Matters

*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 Be-ta 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.

**Bradley Berberniss, Elisa Burba, Katherine Davis, Ellie Fischer, Charles Hickman, Caroline Jilek, Rebecca Keating, Jonah Schwartz, Rachel Reyes, Elizabeth Von Loh, Archie Wagner, Shea Winters, Felix Zywicki**

*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.

**Savannah Harris**

*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.

**Amritha Selvarajaguru**

*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.

**Josephine Geiger-Lee**

*McGalliard Medieval Prize:* Established by his former student, Professor Dolores Warwick Frese of Notre Dame University, in honor of John McGalliard, a widely known scholar and teacher of Old English, Old Norse, Old Irish, Chaucer, and other medieval subjects at the University of Iowa for more than forty years, from 1931 to 1975. This award is given to an English or comparative literature major who submits the most outstanding essay on a medieval subject.

**Josephine Roy**

## Undergraduate Matters

*The Fiction Prize:* The UI English department's annual excellence in fiction writing prize for his story "Really—a small thing."

### Jacob Boudreau

*The Poetry Prize:* The UI English department's annual excellence in poetry writing prize for her poem "Ekphrastic: Heeler III (Cankles) After Wangechi Mutu."

### Isobel Perez

*The Nonfiction Prize:* The UI English department's annual excellence in fiction writing prize for his essay "Bloodletting, Carcinization, and Me"

### Spencer Cooper-Ohm

#### *The Essay Prizes*

The UI English department's annual excellence in critical writing prize with an emphasis on interdisciplinarity for his essay "'The Progressive Fall of the Highest Goddess in the Religious Epic Poem'"

### Todd Tremble

The UI English department's annual excellence in critical writing prize with an emphasis on pre-1900 historical contexts for her essay "Tests of Character: The Formulaic Role of the Fae in the Four Branches of The Mabinogion"

### Robbie Hubbert

The UI English department's annual excellence in critical writing prize with an emphasis on postcolonial and transnational studies for his essay "'A World Without Humans': Wandering Souls, Propaganda, and Broken Promises in Duong Thu Huong's No Man's Land"

### Dylan McLaren

## Faculty Matters

Melissa Febos had an essay published in [AFAR Magazine](#) last month about the Belgian beguines.

Loren Glass is being named M.F. Carpenter Professor of English, and Jon Wilcox is being named John C. Gerber Professor of English. Loren was also invited to give a talk: "Fiction in the City of Literature." University of Iowa Retirees Association (UIRA). Iowa City, IA. March 20, 2024.

Congratulations to Louisa Hall for being awarded the John Gerber Undergraduate Teaching Award this year. This is awarded to a faculty member, selected by the department, who excels in undergraduate teaching.

Donika Kelly's poem "When the fact of your gaze means nothing, then you are truly alongside" was published in *You Are Here: Poetry in the Natural World*, edited by U.S. Poet Laureate Ada Limón. The poem was featured in the Academy of American Poets [Poem-A-Day](#).

She was a guest on [The New Yorker's Poetry](#) podcast, where she discussed Mary Oliver's "One Hundred White-Sided Dolphins on a Summer Day," and her own poem "Sixteen Center."

On March 11th, Harry Stecopoulos lectured on US literature and diplomacy at the Center for American Studies at the University of Southern Denmark. On March 13th, Harry shared his research on Richard Wright and fossil fuel at the University of Copenhagen's Environmental Humanities Seminar. On March 15th, he delivered the keynote address at a Copenhagen conference on Cormac McCarthy's environmentalism.

## Staff Matters

Katie Berta's first poetry collection, *retribution* forthcoming (Ohio University Press), came out on March 12th. Her review of Gregory Pardlo's *Spectral Evidence* appeared in the *L.A. Review of Books* and a new poem came out in *West Branch*.

Staff member Corey Campbell was named a [2024 MacDowell Fellow](#). She is spending four weeks writing fiction at MacDowell this spring.

## Graduate Student Matters

**Hannah Bonner** had a review, "Illuminations: Elsewhere/Here" published on [Reverse Shot](#) and was selected as the 2024-2025 CLAS Postgraduate Visiting Writer in Nonfiction at the University of Iowa.

**Annie Burkhart** will be defending her dissertation (this month), *The "New Person": Radical Desire in British Literature, 1880-1930*, from which an excerpt titled "Mona Maclean, Adaptably Amorous" will be published in *Victoriographies* this July.

**Aileen Tierney** has been awarded the Digital Scholarship & Publishing Studio Summer Fellowship for Summer 2024. Her plan is to learn Python to further my studies in how digital tools are being used in literary research.

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UI English alums, [please let us know about your career](#).

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