

Volume 27, Issue 2

Picnic in the Park

Dear Colleagues and Coworkers,

Life's no picnic but it sure was nice to see you and your partners and your kids and your pets at Hickory Hill last weekend. The food was fine and the weather was divine and it all reminded me of what life could and should be like for a community of writers in the City of Literature. My thanks to all who came and to all who couldn't make it for all you do to keep things running under circumstances not of our making. We may not be able to wrest a world of freedom from this realm of necessity but at least we can picnic in the park, and celebrate ourselves.

LG

Faculty Matters

Matt Brown published "The Mood of the Room" in the summer 2021 issue of *Material Religion*, which the editor called "an emotional phenomenology of the archive" and which Matt called "an essay." He also contributed a chapter titled "Ritual" to the finally published and circulating Oxford UP collection *New Histories of Puritan American Literature*.

Congratulations to Corey Creekmur for codirecting a Mellon Sawyer Seminar on "Racial Reckoning and Social Justice Through Comics" at the University across the academic year 2022-23.

<https://clas.uiowa.edu/deos/ mailing/october-06-2021/mellon-sawyer-seminar-university-iowa>

The Walt Whitman Archive has been awarded its fifteenth grant by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission of the National Archives. Ed Folsom is Principal Investigator, and Stephanie Blalock (PhD, Iowa, 2011), Digital Humanities Librarian at the University of Iowa Libraries, is the Project Manager. This grant supports the work of the Whitman Archive to transcribe, edit, annotate, encode, and publish all of Whitman's two-way correspondence.

Sarah Minor's second book, *Slim Confessions: The Universe as a Spider or Spit*, from Noemi Press will be published on October 15th: <http://www.noemipress.org/catalog/prose/slimconfessions/>.

Congratulations to Will Rhodes, whose project, *Work, Waste, and Reform: The Political Ecology of the Piers Plowman Tradition, 1350-1600*, has been selected for an Obermann Center for Advanced Studies Book Ends award.

Grad Matters

Bronwyn Stewart, who worked with The Englert Theatre this summer as Humanities for the Public Good intern, shares a summarizing video of her work and two blog posts.

GEL Matters

Around 1,500 undergraduates have now submitted their first papers for Interpretation of Literature, and are preparing for or have just taken their midterms, which come in a variety of different forms: standard, in-class exams, reading journals and reflections, and take home essays. Our new cohort of instructors has also completed colloquium, with great help from the Program Associates who have provided them with excellent instruction on everything from teaching ESL students, to handling difficult behavior in the classroom, to trigger warnings and teaching sensitive material.

Special thanks to them, and to the Faculty Advisors who are now doing classroom observations: Florence Boos, Doris Wit, Tara Bynum, Adam Hooks, and Kathy Lavezzo, and to Bluford Adams, who has been shadowing the program this fall and helping in colloquium.

Finally, we have lots of applicants to teach Honors in the Spring, and two volunteers for teaching our service learning class at Grant Wood Elementary – Jamie Chen and Georgie Fehringer-Hicks. We'll all be watching the Covid situation closely, and talking regularly with Grant Wood leadership, to see if it is viable to run this program, after two years of disruption.

Blaine Greteman, GEL Director

Staff Matters

Corey Campbell reviewed the novel *Bewilderness (Catapult)* by Karen Tucker for the journal *Waxwing*.

Alumni Matters

Douglas Dowland's (English PhD 2010) article, "The Problem with Rigor," was published in the *Los Angeles Review of Books* on September 1.

Gregory Galloway's (English MA 1986, MFA 1989) new crime novel, *Just Thieves*, was published by Melville House on October 12. *Publishers Weekly* published a starred review for the novel as well as an interview with the author.

Emeritus Matters

Patricia Foster (professor emerita) has a Notable Essay, "Alabama Triptych," in *The Best American Essays 2022*. She has essays and short stories forthcoming in the *Louisville Review*, *Cutleaf*, and *The Examined Life*. She will read from her short story "The Dragon" at the *Examined Life Conference, 2021*, and has a new book of essays under advance contract with a university press.

Discursive Data Matters

The numbers are out from the Office of the Registrar's Profile of Students and it is evident that, in terms of undergraduate population, the English Department is shrinking but still large. The headline news is that in Fall 2021 English has 847 majors in our two degree programs. That is a drop of some 6% from our 902 majors in Fall 2020. The significant majority are pursuing English and Creative Writing (651 declared majors), which has seen a small drop of 16 students compared with last year (just over 2%), while the decline in those pursuing the major in English is proportionally much greater (196 declared majors, for a decline of 41 students or 17%). The reason for the declines are, of course, hard to pin down. Covid-19 has surely disrupted all kinds of things and made for squirrely admissions patterns for the last two years. The UI as a whole saw a decrease in total enrollment of about 2%. The drop in English majors,

though, clearly matches steep declines in numbers of undergraduates in other humanities departments at the UI and in English Departments across the Big Ten and other comparison groups. In many ways, the stand-out here is the robustness and relative stability of the English and Creative Writing major.

Here are the numbers for the two degrees for the last five years:

FALL 2021

847 majors

196 declared English majors

651 declared English and Creative Writing majors

FALL 2020

902 majors

235 declared English majors

667 declared English and Creative Writing majors

FALL 2019

905 majors

250 declared English majors

655 declared English and Creative Writing majors

FALL 2018

923 majors

305 declared English majors

618 declared English and Creative Writing majors

FALL 2017

853 majors

327 declared English majors

526 declared English and Creative Writing majors

As ever, there are complications in the way the Office of Registrar tracks these numbers, although there is some virtue in using the same methodology for all majors and across multiple years. The reports are freely available online: <https://registrar.uiowa.edu/profile-students-enrolled>. The numbers above reflect both students who declared the degrees as their primary program of study and those who declared it following another major. That is not a meaningful distinction from our departmental perspective but, to avoid double counting, the Profile centers on students' primary program of study, and provides additional information about such students:

English 146 (30 male, 115 female, 1 not reported; 26 underrepresented minorities, 0 int'l)

+ 50 non-primary (13 male, 37 female);

ECW 575 (193 male, 371 female, 11 not reported; 115 minority, 20 int'l)

+ 77 non-primary (24 male, 52 female, 1 not reported)

English Education (primary program in College of Ed) 45 (14 male, 31 female; 7 minority) with an additional 42 non-primary (14 male, 28 female)

I provide at the bottom comparisons for that data across years, along with additional data that can be gleaned, gathered from these and other reports.

English and Creative Writing remains a destination major. The 575 who declare it as their primary program of study make it the seventh largest major in the university. Within CLAS, it lies behind Psychology (1,170), Health and Human Physiology (838), Biology (662), and Human Physiology (623), and a little ahead of Communication Studies (465). It is also the sixth most popular program of study chosen by entering first-year students (133), with just Psychology and Biology attracting more first-year students to CLAS. That is an increase in the number of first-year students declaring English and Creative Writing (last year it was 121), suggesting to me that the numbers in ECW will likely now stay fairly stable.

Here is my fuller record of ten years' data on English Department student numbers for anyone interested, with occasional omissions where I was apparently being sleepy for a year. Happy data delving!

FALL 2021

847 majors

196 declared English majors

651 declared English and Creative Writing majors

Primary Program data:

English 146 (30 male, 115 female, 1 not reported; 26 underrepresented minorities, 0 int'l)

+ 50 non-primary (13 male, 37 female);

ECW 575 (193 male, 371 female, 11 not reported; 115 minority, 20 int'l)

+ 77 non-primary (24 male, 52 female, 1 not reported)

English Education (primary program in College of Ed) 45 (14 male, 31 female; 7 minority) with an additional 42 non-primary (14 male, 28 female)

57 minors in English

Entering First Year students who have declared:

English 26 (7 male, 19 female)

ECW 133 (41 males, 87 female, 5 not reported)

Degrees awarded 2020-21:

English 82 (24 male, 58 female, 0 not reported)

ECW 152 (40 male, 109 female, 3 not reported)

English Ed 23 (6 male, 17 female)

24 minors

4 MAs

9 PhDs

Faculty numbers: 30.75 FTE TT, + 0.5 FTE IF

FALL 2020

902 majors

235 declared English majors

667 declared English and Creative Writing majors

Primary Program data:

English 179 (48 male, 131 female; 21 underrepresented minorities, 1 int'l)

+ 56 non-primary (15 male, 41 female);

ECW 587 (180 male, 401 female, 6 not reported; 115 minority, 17 int'l)

+ 80 non-primary (31 male, 49 female)

English Education (primary program in College of Ed) 41 (10 male, 31 female; 10 minority) with an additional 38 non-primary (9 male, 29 female)

65 minors in English

Entering First Year students who have declared:

English 34 (8 male, 26 female)

ECW 121 (40 male, 80 female, 1 not reported)

Degrees awarded 2019-20:

English 57 (9 male, 47 female, 1 not reported)

ECW 116 (27 male 89 female)

English Ed 15 (2 male, 13 female)

28 minors

4 PhDs

Faculty number: 32.5 FTE TT, + 0.5 FTE IF

FALL 2019

905 majors

250 declared English majors

655 declared English and Creative Writing majors

Faculty number: 30.0 FTE TT, + 0.5 FTE IF

FALL 2018

923 majors

305 declared English majors

618 declared English and Creative Writing majors

In 2017-18 we awarded:

126 BA degrees (80 English, 46 in E&CW)

24 minors

4 MA degrees

5 Ph.D.s

Faculty number: 34.0 FTE TT + 0.5 IF

FALL 2017

853 majors

327 declared English majors

526 declared English and Creative Writing majors

In 2016-17 we awarded

153 BA degrees (137 English, 14 in E&CW)

25 minors

Graduate program: 68 Ph.D. students, 2 MA, 30 MFA in NWP. We award

19 MA degrees

4 Ph.D.s

FALL 2016

787 majors

681 declared English majors

106 declared English and Creative Writing majors

Of these:

588 English first majors (198 men, 386 women, 111 self-identify as minorities, 6 foreign)

93 second majors (28 men, 63 women, 2 not reported)

94 English and Creative Writing first majors (30 men, 64 women, 21 minorities, 4 foreign)

12 second majors (3 men, 9 women)

63 declared English minors

29 in English Ed.

In 2015-16 we awarded:

203 BA degrees

23 minors

11 MA degrees

13 Ph.D. degrees

Faculty numbers:

Tenure-track FTE: 37.25

lecturer FTE: 0.5

FALL 2015

794 majors

687 first majors (218 men, 467 women; 131 self-identify as minorities, 14 are foreign)

107 second majors (39 men, 67 women, 1 transgender)

In 2014-15 we awarded:

216 BA degrees

25 minors

13 MA degrees

16 Ph.D. degrees

Tenure-track FTE: 39.0

lecturer FTE: 0.5

FALL 2014

840 majors

697 first majors (241 men, 456 women; 117 ethnic minorities)

143 second majors (46 men, 97 women)

In 2013-14 we awarded:

220 BA degrees

29 minors

10 MA degrees

10 Ph.D. degrees

Tenure-track FTE: 39.75

FALL 2013

862 majors

735 first majors (260 men, 475 women; 112 ethnic minorities)

127 second majors

In 2012-13 we awarded:

227 BA degrees

30 minors

16 MA degrees

15 Ph.D. degrees

Tenure-track FTE: 39.75

FALL 2012

961 majors (350 men, 611 women)

816 first majors (of whom 123 ethnic minorities)

145 second majors

105 graduate students (43 men, 62 women), of whom 23 ethnic minorities

31 NWP students (10 men, 21 women) of whom 8 minorities

In 2011-12 we awarded:

229 BA degrees

31 minors

12 MA degrees

6 Ph.D. degrees

Tenure-track FTE: 42.25

Jon Wilcox, Associate Chair

Upcoming Matters

EC Meeting - October 15, 2021 | 1:30-2:30 pm | Zoom

Faculty Meeting - October 22, 2021 | 1:30-2:30 pm | Zoom

The Krause Series in Contemporary Nonfiction: Conversation with Editors Callie Garnett and Jean Garnett - October 26, 2021 | 7:00 pm | Zoom

African American Studies 50th Anniversary Celebration - October 28, 2021 | Hilton Garden Inn, Iowa City, IA

EC Meeting - October 29, 2021 | 1:30-2:30 pm | Zoom

The Krause Series in Contemporary Nonfiction: Reading by NWP Alum Amy Butcher - November 2, 2021 | 7:00 pm | Prairie Lights Books (Online)

DCG Meeting - November 5, 2021 | 1:30-2:30 pm | Zoom

DCG Meeting - November 12, 2021 | 1:30-2:30 pm | Zoom

DCG Meeting - November 19, 2021 | 1:30-2:30 pm | Zoom