Message from the Chair

Greetings,

I am excited and honored to be writing the chair’s message in this inaugural issue of the English Department Newsletter. I’m new to the position of chair, but I have been a member of the department for fourteen years, so I am well aware of how welcoming, intellectually stimulating, and vibrant the English Department is. The newsletter will help spread the news about our wonderful department to the wider university, the local community, the world of academia, and beyond. The newsletter will also give us—undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff—another way to stay in touch with each other, to share ideas, learn about each other’s interests and accomplishments, find common ground, and build community.

While we are on the subject of the new, I want to take this opportunity to welcome and introduce staff and faculty members who have recently joined the CSUDH English Department. Ms. Lynda Rodriguez, who assumed her post in April 2014, joins Ms. Leslie Bayless as Administrative Support Coordinator. New to the English Department but not new to the university, Lynda has worked in the Provost’s Office and, most recently, Admissions and Records. So, Lynda brings a wealth of experience, along with her sharp administrative skills and affable personality to the department office. Especially as a new chair, I rely greatly on Lynda and Leslie to make sure things are on track and running smoothly. Students, faculty, and others visiting the department will undoubtedly find Lynda and Leslie to be incredibly helpful, knowledgeable, and friendly.

On Tuesday, April 8 the CSUDH English Department’s annual Patricia Eliet Memorial Lecture featured science fiction author David Gerrold. Gerrold is the author of numerous science fiction novels, short stories, teleplays, and film scripts. He is most well known for writing “The Trouble With Tribbles” episode of the original Star Trek series. Gerrold’s other credits for television include Land of the Lost, Twilight Zone, and Babylon 5. Gerrold’s semi-autobiographical novelette The Martian Child won the science fiction triple crown: the Hugo, the Nebula, and the Locus Poll. It was the basis for the 2007 film Martian Child starring John Cusack and Amanda Peet. A 10-time Hugo and Nebula award nominee, Gerrold is also a recipient of the Skylark Award for Excellence in Imaginative Fiction and the Forrest J. Ackerman lifetime achievement award.

In spite of his fame and numerous accolades, Gerrold himself came off as unpretentious and down-to-Earth during his lecture. Students were impressed with Gerrold’s frank, no-nonsense attitude. English graduate student Ron Farol said, “I thought David Gerrold was the type of guy who would tell you how it is. He was a little un-filtered, but I really appreciated his honesty when it came to his early experiences as a writer and teacher. He certainly doesn’t sugar coat anything.”

English professor Dr. Randy Cauthen set the tone for the lecture with his introduction of Gerrold, describing him as an “American patriot” who “fights every day for the kind of country we should have, the kind of country we were taught about when we were kids – a nation

(Continued on Page 2)
We are also very fortunate and happy to have a new faculty member joining the department. Beginning in the Fall 2014 term, Dr. Kimberly Huth takes up her post as Assistant Professor of English and the department’s resident Shakespearean. Dr. Huth comes to us from Knox College in Illinois. She received her Ph. D. from the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she wrote a dissertation entitled “Figures of Pain: Suffering and Selfhood in Early Modern English Literature.”

In the Fall semester, Dr. Huth will, of course, be teaching the upper-division Shakespeare seminar (ENG 467), as well as a graduate seminar in Renaissance Literature (ENG 535), and Practice in Literary Criticism (ENG 307). In the following semester and coming years, she will teach a range of courses, including the British Literature surveys, undergraduate and graduate courses in Shakespeare, Renaissance and pre-1700 Literature, literary theory, and composition. As an added bonus, Kim’s partner, Dr. Tim Glenn, will be teaching a number of composition classes for us this year. We are very pleased to have them both and ask the English Department community to join us in welcoming them to Dominguez Hills.

Another new faculty member, Dr. Jane Lee joined us last year (2013-2014) as an Assistant Professor and Victorian specialist. Dr. Lee received her Ph. D. from the University of Washington, Seattle, where she wrote a dissertation entitled “Reading Matters: Liberal Discourse and the Democratization of Reading in Victorian Literary Culture.” Dr. Lee brought her expertise and research interests to a range of courses, including the second part of the British survey (ENG 303), a graduate seminar in Victorian literature (ENG 546), Practice in Literary Criticism (ENG 307), and Prose Fiction (ENG 326). Dr. Lee has already become an extremely popular teacher with undergraduate and graduate students alike and is much sought after as a classroom instructor, advisor, mentor, and thesis director.

I would also like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the retirement and outstanding service of two brilliant and wonderful colleagues, Dr. Lois Feuer and Dr. Andrea White. Their contributions to the English Department, university, and their respective scholarly fields are impressive and far too numerous to describe here. We will certainly miss having them around LaCorte Hall, but we wish them much happiness and success in this next phase of their careers.

For the present chair, at least, the summer was a time of transition, of moving into a new role as well as a new office. There wasn’t much time for contemplation or unpacking, however, since one is expected to hit the ground running, even if one doesn’t quite know where the ground is yet. The...

"...I am looking forward to seeing again the excitement and enthusiasm that our undergraduate and graduate students bring to the study of literature...”

LCH hallways and classrooms were fairly busy this summer. The English Department ran a full schedule of composition classes, working closely with the Summer Bridge program to prepare the incoming first-year students for the rigors of college reading and writing. I want to acknowledge the extremely able and energetic cadre of adjunct instructors as well as supplemental instructors (SI) who staff the majority of these classes and contribute so much to the students’ success and the department’s ability to meet their needs. The fall schedule is equally robust, including not only a full complement of composition classes (as our Summer Bridge students continue to hone their writing skills), but also the wide range of our undergraduate major classes in literature and linguistics, and graduate courses in literature, rhetoric and composition, and TESL.

As the Fall term approaches, I am looking forward to seeing again the excitement and enthusiasm that our undergraduate and graduate students bring to the study of literature, culture, linguistics, rhetoric, and composition. It’s great to be an English major because English majors, by and large, really enjoy what they study and have a real affinity and passion for it. I look forward to seeing the many varied forms this passion can and often does take, not only in the classroom, but also in other settings and contexts. For example, every year the English Department-sponsored Patricia Eliet Memorial Lecture brings an engaging contemporary writer to the Dominguez Hills campus and the event is always one of the cultural high points if not the cultural high point of the academic year. Last year’s speaker was noted science fiction writer David Gerrold. This year’s speaker has not yet been announced but she/he is sure to be a crowd pleaser, as always. The department also sponsors the student-run literary magazine, Enjambed, which showcases the creative talents of both undergraduate and graduate students. The launch party for the 2013-2014 issue included an outdoor reading by many student writers. And a sampling of the high quality academic work that goes on in our English classes—papers on a wide range of literary topics—typically finds its way into the annual Student Research Day Conference. We hope that many more of our students will consider sharing their passion for English in these and other venues.

I want to extend a special thanks to Dr. Rod Hernandez and Dr. Jane J. Lee for the key roles they played in getting the newsletter off the ground. And a huge thank you also to the talented and motivated graduate students—Melissa Williams, Michelle Weiss, and Ron Farol—with whose efforts the newsletter would never see the light of day. Best wishes for a successful and inspiring academic year.
PATRICIA ELIET MEMORIAL LECTURE

with liberty and justice for all – not just the rich, not just the white or the Christian or the male or the hetero. Everybody.” Dr. Cauthen ended his introduction by calling Gerrold, “one of the good guys, one example of that all-too-rare species – the great writer who, when you meet him in person, does not disappoint.”

Indeed, Gerrold did not disappoint the standing-room-only crowd of students, faculty and fans who had come to see him speak. A former instructor at Pepperdine University, Gerrold’s talk was, in the words of English graduate student Shonte Clayton, “more like a master class in writing than a lecture.” In line with the egalitarian spirit described by Dr. Cauthen, he avoided the typical format where the guest speaker plays or reads his work and then discusses it. In fact, Gerrold declined to show any clips or read any of his writing at all; instead, he devoted most of his time to answering questions as he circulated among the audience. He shared stories about his career, gave writing advice about everything from character development to structure and editing, and reminisced about his time as a student and instructor. Gerrold’s passion for the university environment shone through in his attitude towards the lecture and in his comments about the experience. When asked to reflect on his experience at CSUDH, he said:

“It’s always fun speaking to an audience that’s actively interested and engaged, but the Eliet audience was one of the most fun groups I’ve had a chance to be with in a long time. It’s part of the job of paying it forward. Somewhere in that room, there could have been the next Tesla or Sagan or Feynman. Maybe I was meeting the next Joanna Russ or Octavia Butler. For me, the chance to inspire someone to reach for the stars is also a chance to remember all the people who inspired me.”

The lecture series honors the memory of former English professor Patricia Eliet, who inspired her students and colleagues during the two decades that she taught at CSUDH.

A NARRATIVE ON THE YOUNG RHETORICIANS’ CONFERENCE 2014

By Ronald Farol

On June 26, 2014 I and my esteemed colleagues and friends, Amanda Reyes and Christopher Potts, set out to Monterey Bay for the annual Young Rhetoricians’ Conference. This was the first time Amanda and I would present at a conference outside of CSUDH. Chris had already presented at several other conferences, so Amanda and I were grateful that he was a part of our panel. This conference’s theme was “Crossfires-Voices of Innovation and Standardization.” In past semesters, Amanda, Chris, and I began implementing “innovative” multimodal pedagogy in standardized Developmental English Composition classrooms. Amanda and I showcased our work at CSUDH’s annual Student Research Day, and Chris showcased his work at the various conferences he has attended and most recently at a symposium during President Hagan’s Inauguration Week ceremony.

Presenting our work at CSUDH has kind of always been a double-edged sword. While we are always appreciative of the opportunity, we always felt that our ideas could never reach anyone besides those who support us. So, while we were excited about the Young Rhetoricians’ Conference, we had low expectations, and we had questions and doubt brewing in the back of our minds. Would people take us seriously? Maybe they would give us that figurative pat on the head and stock response that curtly implied, “Well, that was cute. Thanks for sharing.”
Let me backtrack a bit. Before my friends and I set out to the conference, there was one omen that suggested this conference could be an overall disappointment. Our individual blurbs for our panel were not included in the program booklet. Besides the title, “Expanding Literacy in the Developmental Composition Classroom,” all it read was:

This mixed panel of a graduate, a supplemental instructor, and a full-time lecturer will discuss the success and challenges of incorporating multimodal literacy assignments in developmental composition courses. Through this discussion, participants will receive theoretical and practical resources they can use should they wish to create various multimodal assignments.

Considering that many of the other panels had detail-specific blurbs in the program booklet that would help the audience prioritize which panel to attend, as many of the presentations overlapped, we were concerned. I’ll get into more detail about our presentations later, but our blurb was too general considering that Amanda and I were presenting very specific assignments: Facebook Rhetorical Analysis Ice-breaker, a Campus Walk assignment, and a Musical Literacy Autobiography. Chris’s presentation examined the benefits of implementing aural composition in the developmental composition classroom. Our goals generally overlapped as we intended to give students more awareness and autonomy in consuming and composing meaning. All we could do then was hope to meet people at other presentations and invite them to attend ours.

The six-hour road trip to Monterey Bay was nothing short of fun. We had conversations ranging from our past struggles to ghost stories. I particularly relished listening to my friends’ discourse on pedagogy. I was so engrossed in their discussions that at one point I drove twenty miles past a designated onramp. We had to backtrack, but at that point, we really didn’t mind at all. We pulled over to the side of the freeway so that Chris could take the wheel the rest of the way. I stepped out of the car and peered up into a brightly lit midnight sky. Any lingering doubts we had about the conference were miles behind us now.

We reached the Sandcastle Inn at about 1:30am and settled in our own rooms before meeting in Chris’s room to discuss our plans for our panel presentation. We finished tweaking and reviewing our presentations at about 3:00am and had less than four hours to sleep. I didn’t sleep too well, but when I woke up I didn’t feel tired. It must’ve been the nerves and adrenaline. We met up at the kitchen where we had a quick breakfast, and then we were on our way to the Monterey Beach Resort.

When we arrived, we checked in and checked out a presentation rhetorically analyzing tattoos. The instructor was essentially introducing her students to and engaging them through visual rhetoric and narrative. Amanda and I were particularly inspired and now fired up to present. As we feared, our panel blurb was only able to attract a handful of attendees. Our presentation was held in one of the smaller rooms at the resort. When we arrived, we checked in and checked out a presentation entitled “Expanding Literacy in the Developmental Composition Classroom,”

I was nervous, but I hear that’s a good thing: if you’re not nervous, then you don’t care very much. Amanda’s calm and focused demeanor gave me the lift I needed to present my piece about the Facebook Rhetorical Analysis Ice-breaker assignment. This assignment utilizes the students’ familiarity with multimodal texts used in social media sites, and emphasizes how these texts rhetorically create and shape meaning. Some eyebrows rose, which meant I still had their attention. I was in the zone and felt like I do when I perform with my band. After I shared my piece, I gave the floor back to Amanda to explain her Campus Walk assignment, which required students to walk around the campus to observe and analyze the sociogeographical space around them and then present their findings through multimodal compositions. As Amanda presented the theory behind the assignment and some student examples, I scanned the crowd. Two more people walked into the room and sat down. We were doing great, until I presented the Musical Literacy Autobiography.

I argued that one of the students who Amanda and I worked with the previous semester came into my workshop and created a multimodal musical literacy autobiography, thus displaying the pedagogy’s potential “transfer effect.” After that, however, my mind went blank, and I was silent. Five seconds later, Amanda jumped and started where I left off until I found the words to finish my piece. Amanda concluded our portion of the panel. I was disappointed in myself for freezing, and I felt like running to the balcony and jumping into the water. Then the crowd applauded, and when they stopped, one man said, “This is brilliant.” I whispered, “Really?” We hit a home run. Amanda and I quickly glanced at each other and then looked at the man. He asked, “Did you guys come up with this stuff? Not only are students learning, but they’re becoming agents thanks to these assignments.” Two more people chimed in, asked questions, and complimented our work. I could not believe what I was hearing. I thought that these people were only being courteous and generous, until Chris presented.

Chris hit a grand slam with his presentation. By the time he presented, the audience seemed to be a lot more attentive. His presentation was very tight and very well executed. He began by providing a sample of a student’s essay in which the student was demonstrating a stereotype threat and a fixed mindset. He then transitioned to an intervention in the form of a letter-writing program to high school students, which placed his students in a true rhetorical situation. He then ended his presentation on a strong note as he examined and argued that “aural compositions make students more reflexive, more sensitive to...”
rhetorical moves and stylistic effects, more aware of their audience, and, thus, more likely to produce a more sophisticated prose than their peers, even in timed, standardized, departmental essay exams.” He got the audience hooked and kept them interested until the end. In fact, when he ran out of time and had to skip showing a video he had planned to present, the audience kindly demanded that he show it anyway. He received the same veneration that Amanda and I had received.

The feedback from our crowd was so positive; we all had an out-of-body experience. We were being acknowledged, validated, and respected by our fellow peers in the field of Rhetoric and Composition. One lady told us that she actually texted her colleagues, “You guys have to be here. This is this is by far the best panel at this conference.” Amanda was also asked to apply for a doctoral program at Columbia University by the director himself. There was a poetry reading that night, and there she was invited to read her poetry and was encouraged to publish some of her work. Other instructors and professors approached Chris about his work and pointed him to several publications. A few of them asked me to share and email them some of my multimodal compositions. One instructor even invited us to lunch the next day and then invited us to visit her classroom in the near future to collaborate. It felt like we were reconnecting with a long lost family rather than making new acquaintances. That night Amanda, Chris, and I celebrated at a seafood restaurant down by the pier. We were so tired by then, but our state of euphoria kept us up until we finished our dinners and called it a night. I knocked out once I got to my bed, and I never slept so soundly in my life.

The next morning we had lunch with our new friend, attended a few more presentations, and headed down to the beach to soak up the time we had left. Chris rented a beach umbrella and brought some celebratory drinks. As I sat under the shade of the umbrella, I reflected on the whole weekend. Despite our success, I still need to improve my presentation skills, and after that weekend I’m confident I will. The trip and the conference definitely reinvigorated us for the Summer Bridge program that summer. We needed it. I’ve never seen my friends so happy, and they deserved every bit of it. We’re definitely coming back next year, and I would strongly encourage any student thinking about presenting at any conference to do so.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
NEW FACULTY
ANNOUNCEMENT

Beginning in the fall semester of 2014, we are very excited to announce that Dr. Kimberly Huth will be joining the permanent faculty of the CSUDH English department. Dr. Huth joins us from Knox College, where she was most recently a Visiting Assistant Professor of English. She has also taught previously at Virginia Commonwealth University and Ithaca College.

Dr. Huth earned her Ph.D. at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she specialized in Shakespeare and early modern English literature. At CSUDH, she will teach undergraduate and graduate courses in these areas, as well as classes on poetry. Please help us welcome her to Dominguez, and be sure to take a course with her in the near future!

DR. RANDY CAUTHEN’S
SLOW NIGHT

On Thursday, July 24, 2014, CSUDH’s poet in residence, Dr. Randy Cauthen, held a release party for his latest collection of poetry Slow Night, a book set in the third century A.D. and written in the voice of a poet named Po Kuan. The party took place at Stories Books in Echo Park, where he also read excerpts from his collection. A large crowd of students, faculty, and friends were in attendance who enjoyed wine, snacks, intellectual conversation, and perused the shelves of the store afterwards.
INTERVIEW WITH
DR. JANE J. LEE

1. Tell us a little bit about your background and how you came to CSUDH.

Before moving to Southern California, I was most recently living in Seattle. I relocated there in 2005 to enter the graduate program at the University of Washington, where I earned both my Master’s and Doctoral degrees. I truly came to consider Seattle a second home. The Emerald City is lovely; rainy, yes—but lovely. It’s so nice to be able to do one’s graduate work in a pleasant place! But I say it is a second home because I was born in Westwood, raised in Los Angeles, and have moved to varying locations across Southern California, where I have lived most of my life. My family is still in the area, and being able to return here has been such an amazing thing; I wouldn’t say it’s fate, but something like incredible fortune—it really is like winning the lottery.

2. What is your favorite book and why?

For an English professor, this is rather a cruel question. It sounds simple but likely causes most of us great agony. I have an extensive range of interests, and have always loved to read—fiction, history, poetry, fantasy, autobiography; you name a genre, and I probably like it. To give you a sense of that range, I’ll name a few favorites and then perform the dreaded task of choosing one I like best of all. Cormac McCarthy’s *Blood Meridian*—gritty and raw, I love his realistic take on the Western, which is often in danger of being too glorified and sanitized. *Watchmen*, by Alan Moore—not technically a book, but Moore’s graphic novel asks the hard questions about how we would really treat “superheroes,” and setting his dramatization in an alternate version of America just recognizable enough to be scary is brilliant. Neal Stephenson, *The Diamond Age*—it’s one of the best examples of a reimagined, technologically advanced Victorian(ish) age I can think of. Neil Gaiman’s *American Gods*—a tale of ancient and modern mythology? Enough said. I really could go on, but as I am asked for a favorite, it will have to be Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*. Dickens is a superb writer in every sense—funny, scathingly critical, touching, insightful. *Our Mutual Friend* is his finest, and little read. If you want to read Dickens, try this one—my favorite is when he describes people as furniture. It makes me laugh aloud.

3. What unique areas of expertise or research interests do you bring to CSUDH?

I am a Victorianist by training, so I specialize in nineteenth-century British literature and culture. But I believe that periodization can be very limiting. History did not happen in a straight line; it occurs in infinitely overlapping, competing, irregular, erratic ones. Similarly, literature is not written in a factory, churned out one piece after another in succession. It explodes, it trickles, it bursts and strains, shaping and being shaped by the world in which it is produced. So when I study the Victorian age, I often find myself sliding backwards into the eighteenth century and also forward into the twentieth. The dynamic nature of literature means that I may read most intensely within the 1800s, but I am well-versed in English literature more generally. I like to communicate to my students the importance of having a foundation for study, and for English majors, it is critical that they have a background in many kinds of literature and their accompanying historical and cultural contexts. One might want, for example, to study African-American literature—but knowing the ways in which many African-American writers respond to and resist the established styles, topics and texts of Western literature adds a richness and depth to their works in ways not possible otherwise. I try to model the same kind of breadth and complexity in reading I’d like my students to develop.

4. What is your teaching style?

This is perhaps a question best asked of my students! I like to think I’m fun. I get very excited about literature, and I’ve been told it shows when I teach.
level of knowledge and expertise—but I also ask students to learn to use them, and the classroom experience is designed to help them do that. Literature is difficult to teach, because you have such differing opinions about what it means to “study” literature. For me, it is neither an excuse to deliver one interpretative opinion that students can memorize and parrot back to you, nor is it a book club, a free-for-all, a matter of what a student simply thinks or feels about a text. Literature studied responsibly takes into account the formative role it has had in history and culture; it is a thing of power and influence. I want students to gain the confidence to interpret literature within that context—but I also try to communicate the relevance of literature to us now by drawing parallels and connections to our contemporary moment.

5. Did you have any career options before you started teaching?

What an interesting question. Did I have career options? Certainly. Did I ever consider doing anything other than becoming an academic? Never. I have always known that I wanted to be an English professor. Once I understood what literature was—not just an escape, or entertainment, or aesthetic masterpieces (although they can be these as well), but a crucial vehicle for the transmission of ideas, practices, ideologies, and values, it was clear to me that its study would be challenging and rewarding. I took off running down that path, and I’ve never looked back.

6. When did you become a sci-fi fan, and what science fiction book and/or movie would you recommend to someone unfamiliar to the genre?

Ah, my science fiction hobby-horse. Well, I came to science fiction at a very young age. My father, who is a mathematical genius (seriously), and builds rockets (literally), was, unsurprisingly, an avid reader, especially of science fiction. In his wisdom, he never once told me to read anything, but instead sat around the house devouring book after book with such interest and joy he summarily infected me with enough curiosity that I began picking up his books on my own. I grew up on Robert Heinlein, Frank Herbert, Piers Anthony, Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov, and many others who not only showed me new concepts, but new narratives to explore those concepts. Once I discovered Victorian literature, I was delighted to see that the Victorians pioneered modern science fiction—*Frankenstein*, *War of the Worlds*, *Journey to the Center of the Earth* were all born from an era inundated with both the aspiration and anxiety that rapid technological advancement brings. The nineteenth century’s affinities with the twentieth are particularly visible through this genre. I think science fiction is currently underrated and stereotyped, and I would like to disabuse people of these assumptions, if I can. I’d recommend anything by Ursula K. Le Guin; she’s very accessible and interested in social themes that are present in other genres. But as a recent pick, I’d single out Robert Charles Wilson’s *Spin* (2005). It is a sophisticated piece of modern science fiction, complete with lots of technical science, but it focuses on storytelling and emotion, making it intelligible and attractive to a wide audience. Everyone I’ve recommended it to has loved it, and many are not science fiction fans. Some actively disliked science fiction, and have since become converts. Check it out, and let me know what you think!

“Once I discovered Victorian literature, I was delighted to see that the Victorians pioneered modern science fiction.”
ONE STRATEGY FOR CLASSROOM DISCUSSION: DISCUSSION TAG

By Melissa Williams

In the class I worked with this summer as an SI there were three or four students who enthusiastically spoke up and contributed in every class, and there were students who preferred to sit silently in the back of the classroom trying to escape notice. As I worked with the students one-on-one, I noticed that many of the quiet students were making thoughtful, sophisticated observations and connections in their commonplace books and during conversations with me or the instructor. I regularly pointed out such observations and encouraged them to share in the group discussion, but they almost never did. If I explicitly turned my attention on these students they would balk, and feel intimidated, further discouraging them from entering the discussion. This posed a challenge for me, because I believe that an essential part of active reading is discussion with one’s peers, and discussion is truly part of the joy of an English class. It was especially important for my English 088 students, who desperately needed practice with critical reading. I needed to find a way to balance the discussions by getting the quiet students to speak up so that conversations weren’t dominated by only a few students.

One strategy that encouraged more students to participate was altering the physical arrangement of the desks. Changing the physical atmosphere productively disrupted the hierarchy of the classroom. Typically, I would stand in the front to indicate my authority. The engaged, talkative students sat near the front of the desk grid and dominated the discussion, which allowed the quieter students to feel as though their silence went unnoticed in the back of the room. Inspired by graduate-level seminars, I decided to have the students arrange their desks in a circle. The circle placed everyone on the same physical plane, and made it more difficult for students to use space and proximity to the discussion leader (presumably myself) to either dominate or avoid discussion. The equalizing effect was even greater if I seated myself in the circle, rather than standing and lecturing from the outside or the middle. Sitting within the circle placed me on the same level as the students and removed the assumption that mine would be the dominant voice.

Disrupting the physical hierarchy of the classroom alone was not enough to encourage participation from my quieter students. Once the desks were arranged in a circle, I was tempted to simply ask direct questions of the students who avoided participation, but these attempts typically resulted in the student feeling embarrassed or intimidated. In one-on-one discussions, students told me they felt self-conscious about the reactions and judgment of their peers, which would lead to further reluctance to speak up in class. I realized that direct attention from me only exacerbated the feelings of self-consciousness and made students even more hesitant to speak up. I began to wonder if there was a way to get the students to put each other on the spot, and if that would alleviate some of the stress of the discussion. I decided to try an activity based on the well-known “popcorn reading” technique. I began “Discussion Tag” by choosing one student to start the discussion. I chose a student who occasionally spoke up, but not one of the ones who often controls the discussion. I told the student that she could either choose to answer the question, or she could “pass” it to one of her peers. Once the “discussion chain” began, my only participation was to answer questions, clarify points and restart the discussion if it stalled. I also stipulated that the very vocal students were “off limits” for tagging, and invited those students to find an appropriate time to join the discussion spontaneously. Many of the students “passed” at first, but as the discussion progressed I saw the entire class make more of an effort to contribute to the discussion, because not contributing meant they had to put a classmate “on the spot.” After a while the discussion became more natural, and students spoke up without being tagged.

Encouraging classroom participation is a pedagogical concern for many instructors. Discussion Tag is but one tool among many that can help encourage a diversity of voices in the classroom.
JOSE LUIS GONZALEZ: Zócalo

Graduate student José Luis González, who also earned his B.A. in English from CSUDH, published a pair of articles in Zócalo, the online magazine of humanities journalism. Recommended to the magazine by Dr. Randy Cauthen, José wrote one article about his experience mentoring first-generation college students like himself in the University’s Toro Learning Center and another about the efforts of activists in his hometown of Carson to make Shell Oil clean up its waste on land now occupied by a local housing tract. “When you write a commissioned piece,” José says about the opportunity, “you are on a deadline. It’s nerve-wracking, but the pressure, I feel, sparks my latent creativity. The subject matter was something I related to as well. It didn’t feel like a news piece, pure journalism. I was allowed to tell a personal story that was also newsworthy.” José’s articles are available in the Zócalo archive (www.zocalopublicsquare.org/).

AMANDA REYES: OUTSTANDING STUDENT

Amanda Reyes was awarded the Outstanding Student Award as well as the Presidential Award for Leadership and Innovation for her outstanding performance and contributions to CSUDH. Amanda graduated in Spring 2014 with a Master’s in Literature with an emphasis in Rhetoric and Composition. During her time as a graduate student at CSUDH, Amanda participated in multiple conferences and symposiums. She founded the first annual English Language Conference at CSUDH, served as the President of the English Graduate Association, published CSUDH’s MultiLiterary magazine, Enjambed, as Chief Editor, and was published both creatively and academically. Since graduating only a few months ago, Amanda has become the Lead English Supplemental Instructor for the Encounter to Excellence (ETE) and Educational Opportunities Program (EOP) and taught an early start English course this summer.

Graduate Degree Completions

Spring & Summer 2014

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I remember walking from LaCorte to my car one night in my sophomore year at Dominguez and stumbling on a flyer falling off of a bulletin board by some trash cans near the stairs—“Now Accepting Enjambed Submissions,” it read.

I wrote. I wrote in high school and I wrote then, at 18, every little piece of bullshit I felt internally obliged to print permanently into black and white composition notebooks, my phone, napkins, scrap pieces of paper—anything that that could be stained by ink. That flyer was the only thing I saw that mentioned this Enjambed, and I thought—why not? Why not try? If I get accepted, I’ll know. I’ll know if anyone other than myself can stand the sound of my ink whine.

That year I learned the personal and professional importance of a publication. A publication is a form of legitimacy, and validation in any setting can help sustain aspiring artists—especially for those who haven’t even recognized that possibility is out there.

But let’s talk shop.

Going into the 2014 Enjambed edition as chief editor, I knew I wanted to accomplish three goals at minimum: expand the submission participants to include any college student; expand the content to all forms of rhetoric including visual, audio, and digital, like art, photography, graphic design, digital shorts, and screenplays; and lastly, I wanted the magazine to be accessible in both hard copy and digital formats. My re-vision was to transform the Literary Magazine, Enjambed, into a MultiLiteracy Magazine.

After talking about these goals with the team, we were not only able to make each goal a reality, but we also created an updated and active Enjambed social media page and connected the magazine to the English Graduate Association to further boost organization ties within our department. By the time spring rolled around we had a solid crew to work with and several ideas to bring into fruition.

We soon decided that we wanted to go with a theme for this new MultiLiteracy magazine. We did not just expand our audience and content, we also tried a new approach to collecting creative works—one that is quite risky considering this theme could possibly limit the scope of our entries.

During a chain of Enjambed emails and meetings, we first came up with the idea of an inspirational word or phrase as a theme. We threw out things like “passion,” “addiction,” “desire,” “obsession,” “monomania”—you can see from our initial word choices what kind of group we are: troubled bad-asses. Thaddeus then sends an email that goes like this:

This chain of events is important because Raul follows up later with this idea to use quotes instead or in addition to words or phrases—literary, well-known, obscure: something that’ll get the blood running and the pen moving type quotes. After continuing to riff ideas as a group, Raul and I ended up rereading Thaddeus’s email and sort of fell in love with “it came to me in a dream.” That was it. That was our Enjambed theme.

Once we got that settled, things moved quickly. Melissa took the reins on printing, an absolutely critical component to the production process as her connections with Seaside Printing not only gave us the capability to print in the larger 8x7 size, we also had quality ink and paper and the opportunity to triple our page length. On top of this connection, Melissa also got us in touch with Alfonso, our graphic designer, whose software and editing skills added the final polish of the Magazine.

First impressions are huge, so the debate over what our front and back covers should look like was another key decision. We ended up receiving several art and photography submissions. The majority were stand-out pieces, and when we thought about how we created our theme using one of our own quotes, we decided to do the same with
our cover imagery and used one of our submissions. It came to be that the magazine, in essence, was organically created by the very people involved and participating in it.

While the design and printing was taken care of behind-the-scenes, Ron took charge of advertising and graphic designing and ended up creating a spectrum of flyers aimed at reaching several audiences. “MultiLiteracy Magazine” means a multiliterate audience. As Ron took care of the campus and community outreach, Michelle kept up with the Enjamed Facebook page, posting updates and helping cast a wider net of interest.

Finally, the moment of truth came and it was time to gather our readers and sift through submissions. El Pescador kindly agreed to host our round table reading and we spent a few days finalizing our list of accepted submissions. When the list was done, Thaddeus, Ron, and I sat down with each title and piece and began to work on arrangement. We had the theme of “it came to me in a dream,” but we soon noticed that the submissions created their own sub-topics that fit into the larger theme. Once we organized the pieces by sub-topic, we came up with headings to separate each category: “surreal landscape,” “urban living,” “family dysfunction,” “alienation,” “death and hope,” “love and relationships,” and “digital compositions.”

We were cutting it close to our launch party deadline, but we pulled it off. Dr. Cauthen agreed to be a guest speaker and Ron and AJ helped with catering. We ended up with a spread of fusion tacos from Genkiyaki and pizza from Porky’s. Students, contributors, faculty, and family came to the launch party and enjoyed our contributor’s readings and a great spread.

The turnout and support for what all of us had accomplished was inspiring. In the end, we had put together a MultiLiteracy Magazine that included submissions from Cal State Dominguez, Long Beach, Northridge, Fullerton, and Long Beach City College. Our content range was wide and included prose, poetry, photography, graphic design, digital shorts, oil paint, multigenre texts, scripts and charcoal.

I am very proud that we were able to create the first ever Dominguez Hills MultiLiteracy Magazine. While the future is uncertain, the progress and results of last year will resonate and hopefully inspire future Enjamed staff and contributors.

For more information visit our facebook page:
https://www.facebook.com/enjambedcsudh

The online edition of Enjamed, including digital compositions and images in color, can be found at https://cah.csudh.edu/english/
THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE CONFERENCE:
RETOLD IN A MULTIPLICITY OF VOICES

By Amanda Reyes & Toumik Asatoorian

Minimal standards, accomplishments, goals, if any at all. Informal over formal. Chill over stressful. That was the ultimate goal, or non-goal(s) we had in mind when we began discussing the start of the English Graduate Association.

“‘English Association Executive Board Members’ has a nice ring to it. That would look good on a CV,” said Toumik, Ron, and I out loud and in our heads several times for about six months before we finally convinced enough people and found the right paperwork to set up what is now the English Graduate Association.

The room was bland. Two tables were lined up against the back wall like enemy soldiers facing the firing squad. Unbeknownst to us then, we liberated the enemy soldiers from their imminent deaths. Half the platoon became the scaffold for our sustenance, Joe, and sweets. The remaining half were draped with flyers advertising the scholarly spectacle that would soon take place.

It began with Andres Lara, the young lad raised by Toros who spent many winters in the halls of LaCorte. Long days did he spend pining over the works of Descartes while his nights were driven mad by incantations of Stoker’s immortal Dracula. From the many lands of southern California did come a lady, Amanda Reyes, who bore the trials and tribulations of the people we call Supplemental Instructors. Speak she did of their troubles and triumphs. The dark long haired goddess of yarn, Livia Bongiovanni, did issue forth her tale of transgression and liminality. Her treatise of Carmilla’s ambiguous gender did end the chapter concerning the creatures of immortality. From braided maiden to the modern man we moved. Ronald Farol, wielder of new media, imparted his wisdom of multimodal compositions.

Bread was broken and the minstrels feasted. Yay.

Toumik’s Pizza Haiku
Pick up pizza now.
Porky’s. No parking. Ran Late.
Short cut. Back in time.

Flashing forward six months, three bake sales, one Halloween party, two charity drives, a career day presentation, and 12 officer and member bar meetings later, we stood at the threshold of academic legitimacy.

On April 8th, 2014, a dry Tuesday morning, the three of us walked to Ballroom B. We should have walked towards Ballroom A. Toumik’s mistake. We entered Ballroom A. The sea of chairs in “amphitheater” arrangement greeted us.
Ode to Nancy Armstrong
Of all the presenters, but one instructor did speak
How honored we were to hear the beginnings of reflexive research
We knew nothing then but wished not to look weak
Full attention did we pay so that the end of the seats we did perch
She spoke of her class, technology in composition, and the concerns she did have
Unable to contain the excitement of new techniques, several questions could not be subdued
Long have English grads waited to hear such research accounts
Nancy bestowed upon us a curiosity that some did not know they had
Thanks to her courage and resolve, several are inspired to pursue
The growth of their field which no one can now discount

It’s near the end now. People are leaving. The few, we mean, like, three that were left. The door opens. We look back, all five of us. The room that started off so wondrous now seemed ominous. But the lack of familiar faces was a reminder of why we had begun the English Graduate Association at all—to bring a department together. A stranger walks in. A pizza slice is taken. The doors closes. It’s over.

Legitimized? Would that be a fair word to describe our journey? Ballroom B, I mean Ballroom A, was never filled. Not half-way. Not even a quarter. But those of us who stood and spoke in the hopes of sharing our current academic passions remember who was there and who was not.

A rumor grew in the East. Three cycles of the moon later, whispers of an English Department Newsletter swept the campus. E.G.A members were asked to be writers, editors, and graphic designers for the newsletter.

Can you remember the last English Department Newsletter? Can you remember the last English Language Conference? Can you remember the last English Graduate Association?

The English Language Conference was the beginning. It is a foundation from which to build and further develop the potential that is rife within our department. Having been able to make the conference happen without help from anyone or any organization was in itself a success. Having seven graduate student presenters from Dominguez, two presenters from Long Beach, and one of our own Dominguez instructors share their research and experiences was a huge milestone. for The E.L.C was the first of its kind for our department. We cannot wait to see what the future holds for the E.G.A and the future English Language Conference now that the groundwork has been laid and we have the experience of accomplishing so much with so little.
IMPORTANT DATES FOR LITERATURE MAJORS

Graduate Exercise
7 p.m - 9 p.m  LCH B-338 (Contact Dr. Best to verify location)
   a. The Wednesday before classes begin in Fall  (8/20/14)
   b. The Thursday before classes begin in Spring  (1/14/15)

Comprehensive Exams
   a. The first week of November in Fall
   b. The first week after spring break in Spring
   Part 1 (11/4/14) 10:00 - 12:30 p.m
   Part 2 (11/6/14) 10:00 - 12:00 p.m
   Part 3 (11/6/14) 1:00 - 3:00 p.m
   Part 1 (4/7/15) 10:00 - 12:30 p.m
   Part 2 (4/9/15) 10:00 - 12:00 p.m
   Part 3 (4/9/15) 1:00 - 3:00 p.m
   * There is an updated reading list; see Dr. Best

Thesis Deadlines
   a. Submission to the Graduate Studies Office
   b. Submission to the University Library
   Fall                (11/1/14)    Fall                (12/15/14)
   Spring              (4/1/15)    Spring              (5/15/15)
   Summer              (6/10/15)    Summer              (8/1/15)

IMPORTANT DATES FOR TESL MAJORS

MA Comprehensive Exams
LCH A-348 Thursday (11/20/14) 9 a.m-1 p.m

MA Symposium Thursday
LCH A-330 Thursday (12/4/14) 10 a.m-2 p.m

Contact Dr. Wenzell for advising.
Fall 2014 Office Hours:
M/W 1:00-2:00 pm, 5:30-6:30 pm (LCH A332)
email:  vwenzell@csudh.edu

GENERAL REMINDERS FOR LITERATURE MAJORS

*Students must take the Graduate Exercise at the beginning of the program.

*Students writing theses must have complete drafts in the first week of their final semester.

*In the last semester of coursework, you must revise your Graduate Exercise in order to complete the program.

*Graduate students should make sure they are receiving regular emails about the program. If you need to add your email to the mailing list, see Dr. Best.
Acknowledgements
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English Graduate Association
The English Graduate Association is a social and academic club comprised of undergraduate and graduate students who are raising an awareness of Literature, Linguistics, Teaching E.S.L, Rhetoric & Composition, and all things English related. The E.G.A promotes literacy, personal and professional development of student and faculty community and also promotes student professional and ethical leadership, academic achievement, service learning and civic responsibility.

To join or for more information, please contact us at csudhega@gmail.com

https://www.facebook.com/CSUDHEGA