

INSIGHTS

Department of English and Modern Languages
SCHOOL of EDUCATION, SOCIAL SCIENCES, AND THE ARTS
DIVISION of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS


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INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK *Celebration Theme: “You are Welcome Here!”*

The university’s [Center for International Education](#) and the English department’s [Foreign Language Instructional Center](#) co-hosted a weeklong celebration of international education November 15-19.

Both units are led by the department’s Japanese language instructor Phillip Broussard.

“International Education Week helps to promote global cooperation, cultural and linguistic diversity, and foreign language competency,” Mr. Broussard said. “We hope the events also help to enhance self-awareness and the understanding of diverse perspectives.”

The events were wide ranging, some held virtually and others face-to-face. Many included faculty and students from the Department of English and Modern Languages.

Arab language instructor Tegwa Fadl Allah, a native of Sudan, helped to kick off the week with a presentation titled “Women’s Role in the Sudanese Revolution.”



Screen shot of Dr. Fadl Allah’s presentation captured by Debra Laforest.

The week’s activities continued with a study abroad panel discussion which included UMES faculty, students and alumni. Digital media faculty member

Dana Little, French language professor Michael Lane and senior English major Augustus Roberts were among the panel participants.

The discussion provided an opportunity to hear how international study positively affects students’ lives. Those who had studied abroad also said the experience allowed them to learn more about themselves and their home countries.



Panel discussion screen shot captured by Debra LaForest.

Special guest speaker Michael Saffle of the [Boren Awards](#), a generous federal program designed to encourage international study, traveled to campus to meet with students in person. He encouraged his audience to apply for a Boren scholarship to study abroad. They could learn a new language, explore a foreign culture and gain a greater appreciation for the world around them.



Questions from audience members continue following Mr. Saffle’s presentation.

Photo by Elissa Gordon

In addition to a wide variety of information presented throughout the week, participants also had an opportunity for some hands-on fun.

Dr. Fadl Allah was joined by English composition instructor Archana Gupta, a native of India who also teaches the department’s Hindi language classes, for a demonstration of [henna body art](#). They applied temporary henna designs to willing members of the campus community.



Henna demonstration in the SSC

Photo by Elissa Gordon

Toward the end of the week, Chinese and Japanese language students participated in the ancient Chinese tradition of dumpling making. Dumplings, or jiaozi in Mandarin and gyoza in Japanese, are enjoyed most commonly during the Chinese New Year. Socially distanced, masked and gloved students carefully made dumplings using shiitake mushrooms, cabbage and their choice of either pork or chicken.



Dumpling making

Photo by Phillip Broussard

HAWK MEDIA: ROUND TWO

White House Press Office Continues to Invite HBCU Participation

For the second time this semester, a Hawk Media student was invited to participate in a virtual White House press briefing with a representative of the Biden administration.

Back in September, sociology major Ajani Thomas, a junior from New Rochelle, New York, was included in a briefing with White House Principal Deputy Press Secretary Karine Jean-Pierre during [National HBCU Week](#), but time ran out before Mr. Thomas was able to ask a question.

An email the next day promised there would be another opportunity. On November 18, Mr. Thomas got his second chance.

This time the official taking questions from HBCU students was Cedric Richmond.



Mr. Thomas (above), in the English department's television studio, participates in his second White House virtual press briefing (below).



Mr. Richmond, a former congressman from Louisiana and an HBCU graduate, served as co-chair of the Biden presidential campaign and its transition team. He is currently a senior advisor to the president and director of the White House [Office of Public Engagement](#).

The briefing, which lasted nearly an hour, featured questions from all of the students, who represented 18 HBCUs.

Mr. Thomas asked what the Biden administration is doing to create systemic change for the Black community. Mr. Richmond replied with a list of administration priorities, including those in the president's "Build Back Better" plan. A version of that plan recently passed the U.S. House and is awaiting Senate action.

Mr. Richmond offered some closing advice to all the students. "Continue to be leaders. Continue to advocate for change."

PRACTICING ENGLISH

Spanish language professor Edgar Larrea held a recent online conversation class with students at [Universidad Tecnológica de Bolivar \(UTB\)](#) in Cartagena, Colombia.



Photo provided by Dr. Larrea

The UTB students who participated are working to gain greater English proficiency. Their conversation included questions about how the American education system works and what it's like to be a student in the U.S.

Dr. Larrea and Phillip Broussard, director of the department's [Foreign Language Instructional Center](#), are working to create a Spanish immersion program for UMES students who would visit UTB for one month in the summer of 2023.

WELCOME HOME!

The university held an unusual homecoming celebration in November. Typically the official UMES homecoming is held each February, but pandemic precautions prevented that this year.

When alumni returned to campus last month for their delayed event, Adobi Agbasi, who earned her English degree in 2012, made a point of visiting her media instructor Marilyn Buerkle.



Ms. Buerkle and Ms. Agbasi

Photo by Jim Glover

Ms. Buerkle was proud to give Ms. Agbasi a tour of the digital media facilities which were still only on a wish list back in 2012.

ONLINE TUTORING

Terry Kundell, coordinator of the English composition classes and director of the [UMES Writing Center](#), presented at the recent annual conference of the [International Writing Centers Association](#).



Dr. Kundell

Dr. Kundell's presentation was titled "Online Tutoring in the Writing Center: Improving Writing Skills and Social Justice for Minorities." She offered her colleagues five specific benefits of online tutoring.

Photo by Jim Glover

"In this past year plus of fully online tutoring, my tutors and I discovered that we could create safe spaces for minority HBCU students often more effectively than in a face-to-face environment," she said. "We in the writing center realize that we can't return to the normal that was; we must create a new, and better, normal."

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CONFERENCES AHEAD

Faculty Member Has Busy Agenda

When the semester ends this month, digital media faculty member Dana Little will still be busy.



Dr. Little

Photo by Jim Glover

She's the author of a workshop experiment, "Climate Fiction for Social Purpose: A Collaborative Workshop in Interactive Prototyping" at the [International Conference](#)

[on Interactive Digital Storytelling](#), held virtually and in Tallinn, Estonia, December 7-10. The half day workshop will explore inspiration and collaboration in the creation of [design fiction](#).

After that, she's headed to Washington, D.C. for the 79th [Worldcon](#), an international conference which attracts experts in the fields of science and science fiction.

This year's event is labeled [DisCon III](#). It will be held December 15-19.

"Worldcon is known as a safe place for



people of color and actively works to open opportunities to highlight the works of marginalized people," Dr. Little said. "The panels and workshops offered this year touch on a number of areas pertinent to course content within the Digital Media Studies program and to the broader marginalized community found at UMES."

Dr. Little is particularly interested in panels titled "Incorporating Genre Fiction in the Classroom," "How to Start a Fan Podcast" and "Envisioning Black Futures."

"Attending this prestigious academic and creative hybrid conference will help me engage, inform and inspire my DMST students who are interested in ethical, afro-centric content creation," she said.

RECRUITING EARLY

The department's digital media program participated in the 6th Annual [UMES 4-H STEM Festival](#) on November 13.

Nearly 60 young children accompanied by almost 30 adults came to campus on a windy Saturday to have fun learning about science and technology. Because pandemic precautions forced the event outside, DMST staff set up a makeshift outdoor studio so participants could consider careers in television.



Youngsters try their hand at news anchor.

Photo by Jim Glover

ASK THE EXPERT

Students in Dianne Pearce's creative writing class had the opportunity to discuss the creative process in a virtual meeting with James Goodridge, an African American writer who runs the Facebook group for authors [Who Gives You the Write](#).

"They really enjoyed it," Ms. Pearce said. "James didn't start publishing until his 50s, so he talks a lot about how to be a writer who gets started late, and how people often change careers throughout life."

Mr. Goodridge is published by Ms. Pearce's [Devil's Party Press](#) (DPP).

A new issue of DPP's literary magazine "Instant Noodles" is now available. It's a collection of seasonal content. This issue is titled "[Hot Buttered Holidays](#)."

RADIO CONVERSATIONS

Project Driven Learning

Amy Hagenrater-Gooding is always looking for new ways to engage her students in active learning. For the last few semesters, she's encouraged them to hold live discussions on [Hawk Radio](#) as a demonstration of their understanding of her course content.



Dr. Hagenrater-Gooding in the studio with Afro-futurism students



Freshmen honors seminar students prepare for their show.

As those discussions conclude for the fall semester, she is proud of their effort. "While they often approach the idea of being "live" with dread and fear, resoundingly they all enjoyed doing it, and want to do it again," she said. "It's a great, practical project that also helps them build their oral and written communication skills."

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