

INSIGHTS

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



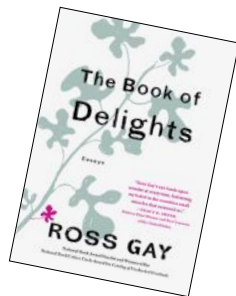
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THE ENGLISH DEPT. IS DELIGHTFUL “The Book of Delights” Common Reader Inspires Published Essays

Response to the English department’s “One Book” project has led to a series of published essays.

The entire campus has been invited to read and discuss the New York Times bestseller “[The Book of Delights](#)” by Ross Gay. As part of that effort, faculty member Amy Hagenrater-Gooding has challenged the students in her honors seminar and her faculty colleagues to write about the simple things that bring them joy.

Through a collaboration with the university’s public relations staff arranged by Dr. Hagenrater-Gooding, a selection of those essays will appear periodically on the [UMES website](#) and/or in the campus newsletter “[The Key](#).”



The first articles to appear were written by composition instructor Carmen Parks and honors students Leah Parker and Charles Smith.

Ms. Parks recounted her delight at being able to attend an outdoor church service, seated in her car in a church parking lot, after being forced, as a result of pandemic precautions, to practice her faith virtually for months. She described it as a “moment of close connection and pure joy.”

Leah Parker wrote about being a student at a historically Black institution.

“I find pure delight and joy knowing colleges in the world are devoted to making everyone feel included,” she said. “Despite the racism that tried to deny minorities an

education, institutions have developed to help everyone soar ... HBCUs have provided the wings students need to help their dreams take flight.”



Ms. Parker



Ms. Parks

Photo by Bill Robinson



Mr. Smith

Charles Smith, like Ms. Parker, is a student in Dr. Hagenrater-Gooding’s honors seminar. His essay provides an amusing description of what sparks his passion. “It’s me chilling in the house and hearing a basketball bouncing outside that gets me going.”

Student photos by Jim Glover

Book cover courtesy of [rossgay.com](#)

SPREADING THE WORD

Campus Radio Show Uses “The Book of Delights” to Make a Point

Two English faculty members, an English graduate and a current student used a portion of “The Book of Delights” by Ross Gay to talk about body image on a recent [Hawk Radio](#) show.

Associate professor Amy Hagenrater-Gooding invited creative writing instructor Dianne Pearce, alumna Bria Townsend and junior Jaylah Easter to discuss how joyful it can be to be comfortable just as you are, and how important it is to be nonjudgmental of others—whether that involves body size, skin color, sexual preference or gender identity.



(L to R) Dr. Hagenrater-Gooding, Ms. Pearce, Ms. Townsend and Ms. Easter in the Hawk Radio studio

The two professors used the radio discussion as an opportunity to encourage the campus community to consider writing and/or performing brief monologues reflecting on body positivity or body neutrality. The material will be used in a theater production focused on the topic that they will direct during the spring semester.

Details on how to participate as a writer or a performer in what the professors are calling “Electric Bodies/Laughing Flesh” appear on page three of this publication.

A TRAGIC TOUR OF LOCAL HISTORY

Tracing the Steps of Racism and Murder

Two of the department's faculty members—one who teaches literature and the other who teaches French—offered an important history lesson for the students enrolled in their freshman honors seminar.

English professor Amy Hagenrater-Gooding and French professor Michael Lane, who also serves as director of the [Richard A. Henson Honors Program](#), took their students on a tour through downtown Princess Anne describing the events that led to the last documented lynching in Maryland.

[George Armwood](#) was murdered in Princess Anne on October 18, 1933, by an angry mob of white men who stormed the jail cell where he was being held on theft and sexual assault charges. He was tortured, hung and set on fire. No one



Dr. Lane (center) and some of the students on the tour pictured in front of the Somerset County courthouse.

Photo by Carrie Samis

was ever charged in the case even though suspects were identified.

This is the seventh year that Dr. Lane has led a student tour in October to commemorate Armwood's death.

The students also learned about three other men who were lynched in the county: Isaac Kemp in 1894, William Andrews in 1897 and James Reed in 1907.

Marshall Stevenson, who serves as dean of the [UMES School of Education, Social Sciences, and the Arts](#) which includes the Department of English and Modern Languages, is a member of the [Maryland Lynching Truth and Reconciliation Commission](#) which is charged with researching the incidences of lynching in the state, holding public hearings in the areas where the violence occurred and making recommendations on addressing the legacy of the crimes.

The commission was created by the Maryland General Assembly in 2019 and was the first of its kind in the nation.

GLOBAL OPPORTUNITIES

Students Consider Careers in the U.S. Diplomatic Corps

Yolanda Kerney described her life as a diplomat in a virtual discussion with UMES students on October 4. The event was arranged by Phillip Broussard, the director of the department's [Foreign Language Instructional Center](#) and interim director of the university's [Center for International Education](#).

Dr. Kerney spent 17 years in the U.S. Foreign Service and worked in an array of overseas locations including the Democratic Republic of Congo, the Caribbean and the Republic of Guinea. Currently a [U.S. Diplomat in Residence](#) at Howard University, she offered her advice on internships, scholarships and careers.

The internship programs for undergraduate and graduate students she described include paid opportunities that may provide a pathway to international careers. "Many of these internships and student programs provide students with



Dr. Kerney appears virtually.
Photo by Elissa Gordon

unique experience and equip them to work in jobs that have a global focus," Mr. Broussard said.

Fellowships such as the [FAIT](#), [Rangel](#) and [Pickering](#) programs provide funding for undergraduate students to complete a two-year graduate degree program and also offer a government job after graduation.

"One of the common misconceptions

students have about the Foreign Service is that applicants must be a fluent in a language," Dr. Kerney said. "While the ability to speak a second language fluently is useful, the Department of State will provide language training to diplomats prior to being deployed overseas, so being bilingual is not a prerequisite."

She also reminded students that [foreign service officers](#) come from all backgrounds and disciplines including engineering, art, music, education, English and other modern languages, science, business and construction management, noting that "you don't have to be a political science or law major." However, Dr. Kerney said the State Department does have unique opportunities for information technology and criminal justice majors.

UMES students can contact the Center for International Education to learn more about global opportunities.

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A NEW ADVENTURE

Stacy Woods, an English alumna who graduated magna cum laude in 2007, has a new job.

She's moved from teaching young children to focusing on adult learners.

After nine years as a early childhood educator in Baltimore city schools, Ms. Woods is now the assessment specialist/off-site coordinator for the Adult Learning Center at [Strong City Baltimore](#).

"I'll be assisting adult learners who need Adult Basic Education ([ABE](#)) courses, [GED](#) courses and [ESOL](#) courses," she said. "I'll run our testing center, overseeing pre and post testing, student course placement and goal tracking."



Ms. Woods at her 2007 graduation

A PERFECT COMBINATION

It may seem like a [PGA golf management degree](#) and digital media coursework have little in common, but senior Sumayah Arcusa has put the two together to her advantage.

Ms. Arcusa, who will graduate in December with the PGA degree and a minor in [digital media studies](#), is currently completing a paid internship as a professional staff member at the [Washington Golf & Country Club](#).

She has impressed her supervisors by turning the club's traditional, but boring, emails and announcements into [simple video messages](#) utilizing her graphic and editing skills.



*Ms. Arcusa
Photo by Joey Gardner*

MULTI-TASKING!

Asha Cole, Class of 2019, is busy these days. She's completing her [master's degree in organizational communication](#) at Bowie State University and she has a new job.

Ms. Cole is now a communications specialist at [AMVETS](#), a national organization serving American veterans, headquartered in Lanham, Maryland. "I run their social media pages, shoot and edit promotional video for them and much more," she told one of our faculty members recently.

In addition to her English degree, Ms. Cole pursued a digital media minor as an undergraduate and was an active member of the student organization Hawk Media.



*Ms. Cole at her 2019 graduation
Photo by Jim Glovier*

SHARE YOUR TALENT

Are you a great writer? Fancy yourself on a stage greeted by thunderous applause? Or maybe you are just plain frustrated by continually being judged by others. If any of those descriptions fit you, here's an invitation.



Faculty members Amy Hagenrater-Gooding and Dianne Pearce are seeking brief monologues to be performed as part of an original compilation of UMES voices reflecting on body positivity or body neutrality. The interactive play, scheduled for April, will focus on issues of identity and self-worth. These may be fictional pieces or personal experiences. Your original monologue should have a performance time of 5 to 7 minutes.

The directors need people of all shapes, sizes, hues and genders; all are welcome to submit and/or perform. Dr. Hagenrater-Gooding and Ms. Pearce want to hear from you by December 1.

COLLEGE BOUND?

After over a year of virtual campus tours and socially distanced recruiting, the university invited high school students and their parents to an on-campus open house on October 21.

The Department of English and Modern Languages was one of many academic units gathered in the Hytche Athletic Center to share information with students who are considering applying to UMES.

The English department was represented by faculty member Marilyn Buerkle who was eager to let students know our department now offers a [bachelor degree in digital media studies](#).

This semester, for the first time, the department welcomed more than a dozen new digital media majors. Next year, they may be joined by some of the students who attended the October open house.



*Ms. Buerkle meets with a prospective student.
Photo by Kia Proctor*

CREATING COMMUNITY

The English department continues to hold a scaled down version of its popular monthly socials at 3 p.m. on the first Wednesday of every month during the academic year.

Since September of 2017, department faculty, staff, students and alumni have spent an hour once a month getting to know each other at an informal gathering designed for conversation and fun.

The pandemic prevented the events last year, but this semester the socials have returned with some precautionary modifications. Homemade baked goods have been replaced by pre-packaged snacks, and the typical classroom location has moved to Wilson Hall's front porch.

Join us on November 3.



October social

Photo by Debra Laforest

CREATIVE LEARNING

Dana Little, the newest member of the department's digital media faculty, spent three days this month exploring new tools, techniques and ideas.



Dr. Little

She attended [Adobe MAX 2021](#), held virtually October 26-28. The organizers describe the annual event as

“positively inspirational—and fun.” Featured speakers included film makers, musicians, journalists, actors, illustrators and others who are all immersed in the creative process.

Dr. Little, whose doctoral research explored the intersection between creativity and technology, was particularly excited to learn more about emerging technologies designed to spark creative learning.

Photo by Jim Glovier

IT STARTED HERE

Diverse Issues in Higher Education [published a recent interview](#) with a professor from Cornell University who is considered a preeminent scholar of the African Diaspora. The UMES English department is proud to claim her as a graduate.



Photo provided by Dr. Boyce Davies

Carole Boyce Davies earned a UMES English degree with a French minor in 1971. She earned a [master's in African studies](#) at Howard University and a [Ph.D. in African and Caribbean Literatures](#) at the University of Ibadan in Nigeria.

“I often tell people I live the Diaspora,” she told her interviewer. “I was born in Trinidad & Tobago, studied in the United States, studied in Nigeria, had a Fulbright in Brazil, did research in the U.S., Brazil, Africa, India, China and the U.K., so I am truly international.”

WRITER TO WRITER

Composition and creative writing instructor Dianne Pearce is getting some coaching from her peers.



Photo provided by Ms. Pearce

She is participating in a writer-to-writer post-graduate semester at [Vermont College of Fine Arts](#).

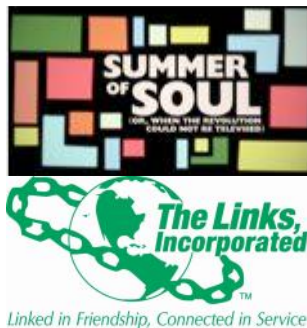
“I am in a group where all post-grads are supporting each other through four rounds of feedback on a project,” she said.

Ms. Pearce is working on her novel “Satan’s Hobbies.”

In addition to working as an adjunct instructor in the UMES English department, Ms. Pearce owns the Delaware publishing company [Devil’s Party Press](#). It specializes in publishing older authors because, according to the company’s website, “the older you get, the better your stories get.”

DOCUMENTARY SHARED *Community Organization Enables Discussion*

UMES English students enrolled in a special topics class were able to watch and discuss “[Summer of Soul](#),” the recent documentary film directed by [Ahmir "Questlove" Thompson](#) about the 1969 Harlem Cultural Festival.



The opportunity was the result of an invitation from a New Jersey chapter of [The Links, Incorporated](#), an international cultural/civic organization founded in 1946 for women of African descent.

The Links chapter in Essex County, New Jersey, offered a streaming presentation of the film to a group of HBCUs, and then organized a discussion with the professors who used the film in their classes.

UMES English faculty member Amy Hagenrater-Gooding showed the film in her Afrofuturism class. She participated in the later discussion with colleagues from Cheney University, Coppin State, Delaware State, Hampton University, Morgan State, Norfolk State and Simmons College.

The Links members divided the discussion into a variety of topics to explore the wide impact the film has had. The topics included music, culture, politics and business.

The film won the Grand Jury Prize and the Audience Award in the U.S. documentary competition when it debuted at the Sundance Film Festival earlier this year.

THE WRITER’S IDENTITY

Cynthia Cravens has taught literature, film and composition courses in the Department of English and Modern Languages since 2012. Even though she now serves as the university’s director of faculty development, her scholarship remains rooted in literature.

She and her UMES colleague Amy Hagenrater-Gooding participated on a panel titled “Geniuses, Addicts, and Scribbling Women: Portraits of the Writer in Popular Culture” at the recent annual conference of the [Northeast Popular Culture Association](#). The panel looked at the writer as a main character and argued for a more nuanced conception of the role of writers in society.

Dr. Cravens presented “Characterizing Genius: The Duty, Discourse, and Labor of Writers in the Jazz Age.” Dr. Hagenrater-Gooding’s presentation was titled “Scribbling Desire.”

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