

INSIGHTS



DIVISION of ACADEMIC AFFAIRS
SCHOOL of THE ARTS AND PROFESSIONS
Department of English and Modern Languages

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CELEBRATING BLACK HISTORY

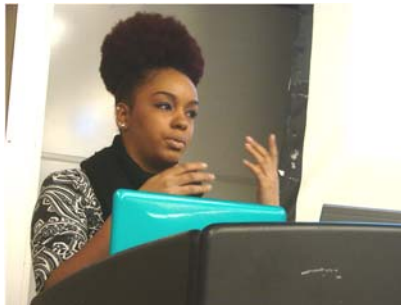
Campus Event Focuses on African American Writers

While UMES students majoring in English are familiar with the accomplishments of African American authors, many of their campus colleagues are not. [The School of Graduate Studies](#) sponsored an event during Black History Month which could help change that.

The Department of English and Modern Languages was well represented at the graduate school's forum on black writers. Senior English major Andrea Townsend and literature professor Dean Cooledge made presentations.

Ms. Townsend, who serves as the UMES chapter president of [Sigma Tau Delta](#), the international English honor society, discussed the poetry of [Nikki Giovanni](#). In 1968, the year she earned her undergraduate degree, Ms. Giovanni also published her first book of poetry. Since

then, she has authored more than 30 books for adults and children and was named one of Oprah Winfrey's 25 "[Living Legends](#)."



Ms. Townsend (left) and Dr. Cooledge (above) provide insight at the February event.

Ms. Townsend offered information about the poet's background and read selections from her work.

Pulitzer prize winning playwright [August Wilson](#) was the subject of Dr. Cooledge's presentation. Mr. Wilson is best known for

his "Century Cycle," a series of ten plays which—decade by decade—chart the African American experience through the twentieth century. All but one are set in the writer's hometown of Pittsburgh.

Dr. Cooledge provided information about the plays and showed excerpts of the productions being performed.

The work of August Wilson is of particular interest to Dr. Cooledge. He has used his research on the playwright to present a semester-long Special Topics class which focused exclusively on the "Century Cycle."

MEDIA SERVE AS A MIRROR

Telecommunications Advisory Board Member is Featured Speaker

The first speaker in the School of the Arts and Professions Lecture Series this semester is well known to the Department of English and Modern Languages.

Michael Kilian, executive editor of [Delmarva Media Group](#), is part of the English department's Telecommunications Advisory Board, a group of private sector professionals who generously share their expertise with both faculty and students.

Mr. Kilian delivered his remarks, "The Role of Media in a Changing Society," on February 12.

He discussed a variety of available news sources and described their content as a reflection of society, acknowledging to his audience it was a "highly imperfect mirror."



Mr. Kilian

As a result, he emphasized the need to consume many different sources to get what he called a "3-D picture of what is going on."

Timely topics, including the suspension of NBC anchorman Brian Williams and news coverage of law enforcement and its use of lethal force, were also discussed.

I'VE BEEN THINKING



By Jessica Land

Editor's Note:

Ms. Land, a Baltimore native, is a junior English major. She is a member of the UMES Honors Program and has served as a tutor in the UMES Writing Center. She returned to campus in January after a semester's absence.



Photo by Joseph Davis

In most academic magazines and journals, we read impressive accounts of students who have found success through undying devotion to their studies, students who have persistently advocated for themselves until they landed the job of their dreams, former students who have gone on to found companies and invent an amazing biological advancement like a perfect dog that will never poop in the house. These are the doers, the people that rise to the top on waves of their own momentum.

And then there are some of us, the sensitive little cowlicks sticking out of a mess of insecurities. We never learn how to be real students, students of life, because we have yet to understand that life is indefinable. We never even learn how to be real people because we are so busy trying to be a doer, albeit one that doesn't know how to *do*, perhaps because we've never learned how to *be*.

We don't learn any of this until we are so depressed and miserable that we fall out of line and slam right into the failure trenches of the wayside. Rock bottom, they call it, the real struggle. But struggle is not always a death sentence.

I had to learn to be. I had to teach myself, through a long and painful process of self-realization, that success is not a concept to be taught in school or learned in Social Economics 101, but an extension of an identity that must be built and nurtured by the individual. It has absolutely nothing to do with school. Forget school.

This past fall and summer, I forsook school to major in the "Creation of Me," and I traveled up and down the spectrum

of my realities until I was no longer afraid of living. It is a difficult thing, learning how to live for yourself, and it is more taboo than simply dropping out of college. All that touchy-feely, introspective nonsense that no one can learn in a classroom is fundamental to human development.

A lot of times, we students focus so much on perfecting our transcripts and building our resumes that we forget what the real selling point is: ourselves. People are not made up of figures on paper, nor should we let that define us. It is imperative, and in many cases the difference between enlightenment and drudgery, to discover one's self, and not only to discover, but to love. It is, perhaps, the only schooling that is true.

"I've Been Thinking" is a monthly column written by members of UMES's Psi Mu chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the international English honor society. Throughout the academic year, the column explores a variety of topics of interest to the campus community.

READY TO SERVE

UMES Writing Center Open For Business

As students across the campus tackle their spring assignments, a team of peer tutors, under the direction of English faculty member Terry Smith, is ready to assist in the [UMES Writing Center](#).

The center, located in Wilson Hall, Room 1107, is open Monday through Thursday from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. and on Fridays from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

The team of ten student tutors features five new members this semester. They represent a variety of academic disciplines. The tutors are selected by a committee of English faculty members based on both writing and interpersonal skills.

While walk-ins are welcome, students who seek assistance are encouraged to schedule appointments in advance through [a link at the center's website](#).



(L to R) Dr. Smith with tutors Morgan Chandler, Mariah Dennis, Liz Ranger, Roxanne Sudendorf, Jonathan Wheeler, Colleen Hendrickson, Jon'mel Davenport, Olivia Coleman and Aundrea Townsend

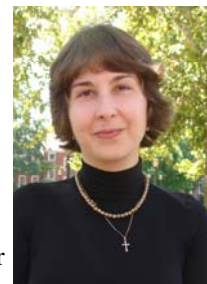
Graduate student Briana Fulton, who tutors during evening hours, is not pictured because she was student teaching at the time the photograph was taken.

MULTI-TASKING

English faculty member Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones has been accepted into the [University of Maryland's Ph.D. in English](#) program.

She hopes to begin her classes at College Park this fall and will continue to teach at UMES while she completes her degree.

Ms. Vlahovici-Jones joins at least three other English faculty members who are currently enrolled in a terminal degree program.



Ms. Vlahovici-Jones



WORD PLAY: Exceptions

The English language is a vibrant language containing a huge vocabulary that is constantly expanding. As with any language, there are rules that must be learned. However, in English, there are also many exceptions that must also be learned.

Consider the linguistic humor in the following portion of the poem “The English Lesson.” There are many versions of this poem on the Internet, but no one knows for sure who wrote this amusing description of the numerous idiosyncrasies in the English language.

The English Lesson: Four All Who Reed and Right

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes, but the plural of ox became oxen not oxes.

One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese, yet the plural of moose should never be meese.

You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice, yet the plural of house is houses not hices.

If the plural of man is always called men, why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?

If I spoke of my foot and show you my feet, and I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?

If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth, why shouldn't the plural of booth be beeth?

Then one may be that, and three would be those, yet hat in the plural would never be hose, and the plural of cat is cats, not cose. We speak of a brother and also of brethren, but though we say mother, we never say methren.

You have to marvel at the unique lunacy of a language in which your house can burn up as it burns down, in which you fill in a form by filling it out, and in which an alarm goes off by going on. Let's face it – English is a crazy language!

1. Which three words are spelled incorrectly for the meaning needed in the title?
2. What is a word that rhymes with box that also has a plural form that ends in “es”?
3. What is a word that rhymes with mouse and house, but its plural is formed the same as mouse?
4. In the word writer, the action that the person does is evident within the word as the root word – write. Similarly, in the word actor, the action that the person does is also the root word. Give an example of a word that refers to a person but the action that the person does is not evident within the word as the root word.

Answers on Page 5.

Word Play, provided by Dr. Barbara Seabrook, is an Insights monthly feature which explores the creative use of language.

FACULTY FILMMAKER

Public speaking instructor Will Rose has received word that “My Bridge,” his short film tribute to the Brooklyn Bridge, will be screened at the Brooklyn Audience Now film festival.



Mr. Rose

Mr. Rose has also submitted the film to [The Best Shorts](#), an international film awards competition. Best Shorts does not hold public screenings as in a traditional film festival; productions are judged by a panel of award-winning industry experts and filmmakers.

TEACHING ENGLISH

During the teaching internship, English education majors complete two “action research” projects as a requirement for their senior seminar. One is completed during the student’s placement in a middle school, and the other is completed during the high school placement. This semester’s teaching interns have begun their projects.

At Wicomico Middle School, Briana Fulton has implemented an incentive program to improve her 7th grade students’ homework completion percentage; preliminary results indicate improvement in all of her classes.

Donald Brown’s project is designed to improve his Grade 9 and 10 students’ writing skills in preparation for Somerset County’s Common Assessment.

Amanda Richard has conducted research to explore effective strategies for improving homework completion. She is experimenting with several different approaches to determine which of the strategies are most effective for her 7th grade students at Somerset Intermediate School.

The English education interns will create a display showing the data related to their projects and make formal presentations of their research results in early May.

TEACHING & LEARNING

Sharing Best Practices and Creative Ideas

Two UMES Department of English and Modern Languages faculty members attended nearby Salisbury University's annual [Teaching and Learning Conference](#) on February 20.



Dr. Champagne at S.U. conference

Photo provided by Dr. Champagne

Language professor Carole Champagne made a presentation as part of a panel titled "Engaging Academically Adrift Students for Critical Awareness of College Life."

Dr. Champagne and her fellow panelists were part of a faculty learning community last fall which read and talked about two

books: "[Degrees of Inequality](#)" by Suzanne Metler, and "[Academically Adrift: Limited Learning on College Campuses](#)" by Richard Arum and Josipa Roksa.

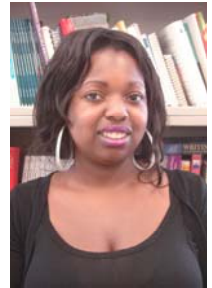
Their discussions revolved around, among other things, current efforts to facilitate civic engagement and critical thinking on college campuses. The conference offered the opportunity to share their conversation with a wider faculty audience.

UMES composition instructor Mary-jo Ulbricht attended several conference discussions including one on best practices in e-learning.

"One of the sessions I particularly enjoyed addressed adding human elements to online courses," Ms. Ulbricht said. "The facilitator reminded us that e-learning must be about the people in the course."

OFFERING AN OPINION

[Recent allegations of racial tensions](#) at Stephen Decatur High School near Ocean City prompted an English major to share her thoughts with the readers of a local newspaper.



Ms. Hubbard

[Senior Briyana Hubbard's opinion](#) appeared in the editorial section of The Daily Times on February 16.

"Recent incidents at Stephen Decatur High School are heartbreaking to me, yet unfortunately do not shock me," she wrote. "I wonder when the students and school system are going to actually confront these issues ... If we want to truly move past racism, we have to get uncomfortable and talk about it."

DESTINATION: SPAIN

Spanish language professor Carole Champagne is traveling to Madrid to attend a meeting designed to facilitate discussions between American educators and Spanish educational organizations.



Dr. Champagne

The goal of one of the workshop's organizers, [Eduespaña](#), is to provide a better understanding of the educational opportunities that Spanish institutions offer American students at study abroad destinations.

Dr. Champagne has been instrumental in assisting a number of UMES students who earned foreign language credits at the [University of Salamanca](#) in northwestern Spain.

The Madrid meeting is scheduled for April 12-19.

TALENT SEARCH

The UMES Drama Society, under the direction of English Professor Emeritus Della Dameron-Johnson, will stage a Jazz and Blues Cabaret this semester.



Dr. Dameron-Johnson
Photo by Jim Glovier

Singers, dancers and stage crew members are needed. Dr. Dameron-Johnson asks members of the campus community who are interested in performing or in assisting behind the scenes to come to her office in Room 1105 of the Ella Fitzgerald Performing Arts Center.

The cabaret, scheduled for April 17-18, will be staged in the Henson Center. It's a change in routine for the drama society; this year the cabaret will replace the annual spring dinner theater production.

To all the students who use the Vista Higher Learning online supersites, do you realize how big that animated professor is in real life?

Foreign language instructor Jacalyn Book "met" the big guy at a recent conference.

Photo provided by Dr. Book

GRAD SCHOOL, HERE WE COME!



Brandon Shoats, who graduated in December of 2013, will earn a [Master of Professional Studies in Sports Industry Management from Georgetown University](#) in Washington, DC. He begins classes this summer.



Kelsey Tate, a senior from Burtonsville, Maryland, has been accepted into the [Strategic Communications program at American University](#). Her entry into the master's program this fall comes with a partial assistantship and additional scholarship dollars.



Briyana Hubbard graduates in May. She'll join Ms. Tate (above) in the Strategic Communications program at A.U. Ms. Hubbard will also receive scholarship support and a partial assistantship while she earns her master of arts degree.

Photo provided by Ms. Hubbard

MISSION COMPLETE

English faculty member Terry Smith is breathing a sigh of relief.



Dr. Smith

In addition to her duties as director of the UMES Writing Center, Dr. Smith serves as co-editor of CEAMAGazine, an annual peer-reviewed journal of the [College English Association Middle Atlantic Group](#). She's pleased to report Volume 24 is now complete and will be ready for distribution at the group's [annual spring conference on March 7](#).

Photo by Jim Glovier

The journal publishes studies based on writing research, discussions of pedagogy, literary criticism, cultural criticism and personal essays concerned with the teaching of English.

STUDENT SYMPOSIUM

Students who plan to present at the upcoming symposium sponsored by the Department of English and Modern Languages have nine different session topics to consider.

They include technical writing, literature, modern languages, public speaking, film, creative writing, internships and networking, language and communication, and student success stories.

Participants are asked to send a brief summary of their projects to the appropriate session moderator by March 31.

The symposium will be held in Wilson Hall on Thursday, April 30.

HONOR SOCIETY

The UMES chapter of [Sigma Tau Delta](#), the international English honor society, reminds interested students that the deadline to apply for membership is Monday, March 2. Applications are available on [the English department's website](#).

Those students who successfully complete the organization's application process will be inducted into the UMES Psi Mu chapter on Friday, April 17. Additional questions about the local organization should be directed to the group's principal advisor, faculty member [Amy Hagenrater-Gooding](#).

Sigma Tau Delta has over 750 active chapters around the world. More than 8,000 members are inducted annually.

DON'T FORGET! THIS SEMESTER, SUMMER & FALL PRE-REGISTRATION BEGINS ON A WEDNESDAY (3/25).

WORD PLAY ANSWERS FROM PAGE THREE:

1. Four should be f-o-r; reed should be r-e-a-d; and right should be w-r-i-t-e.
2. Fox
3. Louse, plural form is lice
4. Carpenter, a carpenter does not carpent.

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