

INSIGHTS

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



March 2019
Volume 33 Issue 2

DISSERTATION OF THE YEAR!

English Faculty Member Honored by International Association

When [AERA](#), the [American Educational Research Association](#), holds its annual meeting in Toronto in early April, it will recognize the work of English education faculty member Courtney Harned.



Her dissertation, which completed her doctoral studies in contemporary curriculum theory at Salisbury University last year, was selected by the group's Rural Education Special Interest Group as its dissertation of the year for studies in rural education.

Ms. Harned's work, "Understanding Critically Informed, Place-Conscious Literacy Instruction in a Rural Context," examined the ways that students learned when they engaged in instruction that was connected to their community.



Dr. Harned

Photo by Jim Glovier

In announcing Dr. Harned's award, the group noted "reading about the students' discussion of current

social justice issues through a rural lens was ... particularly powerful."

About 64% of U.S. students attend schools that are identified as rural by the United States Department of Education.

"In my study, the eighth grade teacher connected texts to issues—such as racism, poverty and economic decline—that are particularly evident in rural communities," Dr. Harned said. "Really, this goes back to one of the original reasons for compulsory education, to create citizens able to engage in the democratic process."

FOCUS ON INTEGRITY

English Major is Appointed to USM Task Force

English major Augustus Roberts Jr., who serves as president of the sophomore class, is part of the team who will represent our institution at a [University System of Maryland \(USM\)](#) discussion on academic integrity.



Mr. Roberts

"It's something that has to be taken more seriously," Mr. Roberts said.

He will join other USM constituents at a facilitated, workshop-style meeting, "Reframing Academic Integrity: Creating a Shared Institutional Approach," on March 26 at the Maritime Conference Center in Linthicum Heights, Maryland. The goal for the event is for each institution to develop an action plan to assess and improve its academic integrity policies and procedures.

Mr. Roberts is from Largo, Maryland. He will earn a minor in criminal justice in addition to his English degree. He is considering law school once he completes his undergraduate education.

The effort is a result of a directive from the USM Board of Regents to explore what steps should be taken to address growing concerns about academic dishonesty.



(L to R) Angela Seldon from [C-SPAN](#) talks to English majors Ben Desta and Freddie Walls.

CAREER FAIR

English majors joined hundreds of other UMES students to discuss internships and job prospects at the annual spring career fair held February 21 in the Student Services Center ballroom.

WE GROW SCHOLARS

Two English Faculty Members Complete Ph.D.s; More in the Pipeline

Congratulations to faculty members Sandy Johnston and Simeon Shoge. They both have completed their doctoral degree programs and will collect their Ph.D.s at commencement ceremonies in May.

Dr. Johnston's degree, from [Indiana University of Pennsylvania \(IUP\)](#), is in [English: Composition and Applied Linguistics](#). Her dissertation is titled "Towards Comprehensive Internationalization: A Study of International Student Perceptions and Experiences of L2 Writing Across the Curriculum."

Dr. Johnston's advisor described her dissertation as "excellent work."



Dr. Johnston



Dr. Shoge

Photos by Jim Glover

Dr. Shoge is a student in the [Organizational Leadership program here at UMES](#). His dissertation, "An Examination of the Impact of Coach Leadership Behavior and Student-Athletes' Mental Toughness on Student-Athletes' Academic Achievement at a Mid-Atlantic HBCU," was successfully defended in December; he completed a required internship this semester.

According to Dr. Shoge, "the study was intended to encourage the application of transformative leadership concepts in athletic and academic programs ... as well as to improve student-athletes' and non-student-

athletes' academic success."

Dr. Johnston teaches advanced composition, linguistics and English as a second language. Dr. Shoge is a public speaking instructor.

They aren't the only English faculty members who were managing their doctoral coursework while teaching their UMES classes.

Creative writing instructor Melissa Moore is enrolled in a [Ph.D. program in Literature and Criticism at IUP](#); public speaking instructor Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones is completing her [Ph.D. in English at the University of Maryland](#); and composition instructor Mari-jo Ulbricht is earning an Ed.D. in the [Contemporary Curriculum Theory and Instruction program at Salisbury University](#).

PRIZES? GAMES? TREATS? YOU'RE INVITED!

The English department will hold its monthly social for English majors and minors on **Wednesday, March 6, in Wilson Hall, Room 2111, from 3 to 4 p.m.**

WRITING AND PUBLISHING

Adjunct composition instructor Dianne Pearce and her [Devil's Party Press](#) colleague, David Yurkovich, hosted a writing and publishing seminar at [Wor-Wic Community College](#) on February 19.

Ms. Pearce discussed creative writing and writing for publication. She then engaged the audience of students with a 100-word story challenge. Each student wrote a brief story around an image provided by Ms. Pearce and then shared their work.

The event was part of Wor-Wic's Year of the Arts lecture series.



Ms. Pearce

Photo by William Cecil

CELEBRATE WOMEN

The English department will produce a series of five one-act plays, performed by students, in recognition of [Women's History Month](#).



They include "Poof" by Maggie Stoner, "Anger Management" by Jake Drinker, "I Ate Lunch Alone Today" by Jay Walker, "I Dream Before I Take the Stand" by Stella Belle and the premiere of a play written by Department Chair Dean Cooledge titled "Jack and Jill."

For the first time since live productions have been staged in the Wilson Hall Black Box Theatre, in addition to evening performances on Friday and Saturday, there will be a Sunday matinee. The plays will be presented at 7:30 p.m. on March 29 and 30, and at 2 p.m. on March 31.

The University of Maryland Eastern Shore is accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. UMES prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, religion, national origin, disability, marital status, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression. Inquiries regarding the application of federal laws and non-discrimination policies to university programs and activities may be referred to the Office of Equity & Compliance/Title IX Coordinator by telephone at (410) 651-7848 or by email at titleix@umes.edu.

HUMPTY DUMPTY SURVIVES HIS FALL

Student Teacher Works Science & Technology into Poetry Lesson Plan

For most university students, January was a long break between semesters, but Kaitlin Thatcher and Jenna Crockett, teaching interns in the English Education program, started back to school with other Worcester County teachers and local students.

In their 30-day internships, Ms. Thatcher and Ms. Crockett attend school five days a week, assuming teaching responsibilities such as leading classroom activities, developing instruction that supports state learning goals and participating in parent-teacher conferences as well as professional development and other school-based initiatives.

With the current focus on science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM), part of the requirements for Maryland teaching interns is a STEM-centric lesson, regardless of the discipline.

Ms. Crockett recently designed and taught a poetry lesson based loosely on Humpty Dumpty and his untimely fall.

Students were tasked with using a variety of materials to engineer a contraption that would prevent an egg from breaking when dropped from a height of five feet. Students in a creative writing class at Pocomoke High School used sponges, feathers and rubber bands to design their projects, predicting the outcome and explaining their designs to classmates. Surprisingly, all eggs survived their five-foot falls and students rewrote the nursery rhyme depicting the new outcome for Mr. Dumpty.



Ms. Crockett (standing) discusses a design team's egg basket in her creative writing class.

Photo by Courtney Harned

Ms. Crockett's lesson met the [Danielson Lesson Plan](#) requirements that the activity "allow for exploration of the engineering design process, provide an opportunity for students to provide an explanation as part of assessment, and allow students to elaborate on design activity."

Now that the final 50-day internship at a second placement has begun, Ms. Thatcher has moved to Stephen Decatur High School where she is being mentored by Lauren Genovesi and Mandi Wells, and Ms. Crockett has moved on to Pocomoke Middle School under the mentorship of Kelly Russo and Leah James.

Teaching interns will begin their Student Learning Objective Projects, evidence-based research which requires them to work with their mentors to collect and review data, identify a growth target, develop an intervention or other instructional strategy and then assess the impact.

OFF TO A GREAT START

Damanique Vargas, who just earned her English degree in December, is now working at [Def Jam Recordings](#) in New York City.

She serves as a content creator and social media manager for the Mixshow and Lifestyle Promotions department.



Photo at work provided by Ms. Vargas

TV DAY CAMP SCHEDULED

For the second summer in a row, the English department's digital media program will host a TV production day camp.

"Star Power" will be held June 24-28 from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. Participants will be entering 7th, 8th and 9th grades this fall. The cost to enroll will be \$185 which will include lunch in the university cafeteria, a pause in production that proved particularly popular with campers at the department's inaugural Star Power program last summer.

Like last year, the department's digital media staff hope to conclude the week's events with a trip to a local television station and a red carpet ceremony for family and friends.

PROFESSOR AGBASI

Adobi Agbasi, a former UMES women's basketball star and a proud English graduate, is now working as an adjunct professor in her home state of Georgia.

Ms. Agbasi, Class of 2012, teaches at Clark Atlanta University and at Point University.

While her classroom duties keep her busy, those responsibilities are not nearly as time consuming as keeping up with her two young sons.



Family photo provided by Ms. Agbasi

INTERNATIONAL CONNECTIONS

UMES Language Professor Attends Estonian Celebration

As an international traveler and multi-lingual language professor, UMES Spanish faculty member Carole Champagne belongs to a number of international organizations including the [Maryland Estonia Exchange Council](#), [Maryland Sister States](#), and the [Joint Baltic American Committee](#).



Dr. Champagne

Photo by Jim Glovier

Her participation in those organizations brought an invitation to participate in the recent Estonian independence day celebration hosted by the Embassy of Finland.

She reports that the ambassador of Finland, Kirsti Kauppi, gave a humorous presentation of cultural connections

between the two nations.

“The Finnish and the Estonian languages are linguistically similar. No other language in the world is related to them,” Dr. Champagne said. “Both ambassadors joked about several definitions of the same word.”

There was, however, a more serious side to the event.

Guests included many high-ranking NATO officials, and Ambassador of Estonia Jonatan Vseviiov gave a poignant speech about the enduring friendship and support of the United States and other



(L to R) Ambassadors Vseviiov and Kauppi

Photo by Dr. Champagne

NATO allies who never recognized the Soviet occupation of his country.

Maryland’s Secretary of State John Wobensmith and Deputy Secretary of State Luis Borunda were also participants in the celebration. Mr. Borunda, the first Hispanic to serve in his position, has assisted Dr. Champagne in making influential connections.

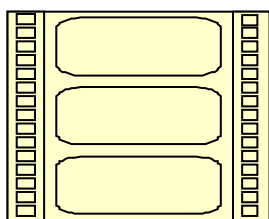
“(Mr. Borunda) has enabled me to work with our Sister States in Peru and Mexico over the past few years,” she said. “I hope to build upon our new agreement between Salisbury (Maryland) and Salinas, Ecuador, through our state agreements.”

Dr. Champagne described the celebration as “another international reunion of a growing family who strengthens our bonds of friendship and solidarity through our common commitment to a free world.”

STUDIES IN FILM

A Japanese Production From a New Perspective

This semester, students enrolled in Cynthia Craven’s Studies in Film class are focused on Japanese films, and they had a



unique opportunity to discuss one of the movies they’re studying with a person who viewed it while living in Japan.

Phillip Broussard, the director of the [UMES Foreign Language Instructional Center](#) and the university’s Japanese language instructor, gave a brief presentation on “[Battle Royale](#),” a dystopian thriller from 2000 that has developed a cult following.

“I provided some insight on the way the film was perceived in Japan and by Japanese critics. I also provided some background on Japanese culture and society during the time of the film to show how certain of those elements influenced the film,” Mr. Broussard said. “It was interesting to be able look back ... it was certainly a film that left a resounding impression on me. I never thought I would one day have the chance to talk to students and share my impressions.”

Mr. Broussard says he looks forward to the opportunity to share his experience and knowledge of East Asia and Japan with more students.

ARE YOU A PELL GRANT RECIPIENT AND DO YOU WISH YOU COULD STUDY ABROAD?

Apply for a [Gilman International Scholarship](#). It provides federal funds for study abroad experiences to qualified applicants, in some cases as much as \$8,000! But you’ll have to hurry, the deadline to apply for 2019 summer or fall scholarships is March 5.

Insights is published monthly during the academic year. It is written and edited, except as noted, by communications instructor Marilyn Buerkle. Copy is proofread by composition instructor Sandy Johnston. Photos are by Marilyn Buerkle, except as noted. If you have information you would like to appear in this publication, contact our editor at 410-651-8349 or email her at mlbuerkle@umes.edu.