GREETINGS: FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Dear friends of NDSU English,

I am pleased to introduce this second issue of our re-introduced Pen & Pixels newsletter, which highlights events from the exceptional spring we have had. But first, let’s congratulate our amazing graduating majors. In English: Rhianne Bowman, Sara Clark, Randi Haarsager-Neary, Carly Hansen, Gabrielle Hersch, Carrie Hiedeman, Adam Idso, Caleb Laude, McKenzie LeTexier, Ashley McCoy, Ben Pitkin, Lindsey Pouliot, Amy Speiser, and Erin Thostenson. In English Education: Hannah Holzaeuser, Emily Lange, Samantha Jochim, Morgan Miller, and Vanessa Rickertsen. Congratulations students, and we look forward to soon calling you all “friends” as you move on to success in Fargo and the world beyond!

We also have an outstanding group of graduating graduate students, many of whom are continuing with their studies in prestigious programs or beginning new careers. Graduating students with the Master of Arts are: Hannah Stevens, Rio Bergh, Rebecca Crisman, Jasmine Banasik, Rowshan Chowdhury, Shaibal DevRoy, and Rachel Grider. Graduating with his PhD is Dr. Robert Neuteboom. We are so proud of you all! Your success is our success, so please, all of our graduates, keep in touch and remember that NDSU English is always here for you.

I am also proud to announce the tenure and promotion to Associate Professor of three of our professors: Lisa Arnold, Alison Graham-Bertolini, and Adam Goldwyn. Three of our lecturers were also promoted to Senior Lecturer: Benjamin Melby, Kelly Cameron, and Natalie Smith-Carlson. We congratulate our colleagues for these momentous accomplishments, and look forward to sharing in future successes!

This spring has been an especially busy one, as the Department continues with innovative teaching and research, strategic planning (which will be shared in Pen & Pixels in the fall), and outreach to better connect with future students, alumni, and supporters. Our goal is to have a network of friends and partners in the region and beyond who we can involve in our external advisory board, in working with students as interns or mentors, and in helping us work with the community to fulfill our land grant mission.
In March the Department held a coffee-house-style reading of many of our creative writing students and faculty, which went so well that we plan to hold one every semester from now on. Please look out for that invitation and join us for this fun evening of great writing and more.

Please follow us on Facebook (NDSU Department of English), Twitter (@NDSUEnglish), or Instagram (NDSUdeptEnglish) to keep up with our news and events on a weekly basis. But also feel free to email me at r.weaverhightower@ndsu.edu with suggestions or feedback. If you’re on campus, drop me a line and let me buy you a cup of coffee!

Thank you all, as always, for your support of NDSU English! We’re working hard to promote literature and writing on campus, in the community, and in the world. Please join us!

Best,
Rebecca Weaver-Hightower

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**Graduate Student Spotlight:** MA student: Rebecca (Becky) Crisman

*What about NDSU made you apply to the MA program? What was surprising about coming here?* I wanted to stay close to home, as I was (and still am) very close to my family. That being said, I wanted to earn my degree somewhere prestigious, and only a few schools in the Midwest could offer me prestige and location. NDSU has been a surprisingly comfortable fit – I had expected departmental excellence, but the people were the most supportive, caring, hard-working, awesome people. They cared about my success, and about me as a person. I found a second family here, and I am so thankful for my cohort, who were there for me through some of the hardest parts of my life. That was the most unexpected part of coming here – the amazing, bad ass people.

*Where are you originally from?* Bemidji MN is home for me, but growing up my family took a lot of road trips – Fargo was one of the places we visited most. It always seemed like a place full of adventure when I was little. After I graduated with my BA, I was pretty excited to be accepted here! I had wrapped up student teaching in Grand Forks, and could gain more teaching experience and content area knowledge for a few years before taking charge of my own classroom – it was the start of a cool new adventure for me!

*What’s a fun fact about yourself?* I am trained in several different vocal styles – choral, madrigal, theatrical, and opera among them. I am also a fiddler.

*What are your research interests?* I’m interested in Old, Middle, and Early Modern English literature, especially Shakespeare and his contemporaries. My MA is on the 2010 Goold adaptation of Macbeth. I’m looking at the Witches and the film’s use of horror in comparison to other adaptations to argue that the Witches in this adaptation are echoing current Feminist trends and topics.
Near the end of the semester, Graduate Teaching Assistants (GTAs) eagerly await the news as to what classes they’ll teach in the coming semester and what they will look like. *What time will I teach? How many students will I have? What ways will I change or hone my pedagogy for incoming students? When will I need to wake up?* When some classes didn’t fill this current spring semester, instead of focusing on the negative, the NDSU English Department chose to see a potential problem as an opportunity to help GTAs professionalize, learn new skills, and hone some old ones through augmented labor appointments. However, helping students professionalize is not new to NDSU English. Past students have taken part in field experiences that helped them learn about writing program administration and have had opportunities to work with a mentor to research and develop pedagogy for hybrid-style writing courses.

**NDSU English Helps Students Professionalize!**

This semester, Pen & Pixels had the opportunity to speak with three GTAs and two instructors who are taking part in the new labor appointments this spring semester. Rio Bergh and Lee Gullickson are both serving as TAs to Drs. Alison Graham-Bertolini and Holly Hassel respectively while Lindsay Campbell is supporting Hassel’s work on the NCTE journal, *Teaching English in the Two Year College*. When the augmented labor positions became available, students jumped at the chance to learn something new. Campbell explains, “As someone who was torn between either going into academia or content marketing/publishing, I’ve been given the opportunity to have a ‘taste’ of both fields.”

In addition to teaching one course, Campbell is also learning the online platform for handling submissions and reviews for the journal, communicating with authors and with production staff at NCTE, and doing proofreading. She has also had the chance to read submissions with complete reviews and summarize the feedback.

Hassel explains that “the ability to see behind the curtain into the various considerations at work in the timing, review, and selection of scholarship for publication can be tremendously helpful for those interested in pursuing a teaching, research, or editorial career path.” Because Campbell was torn between academia and publishing, she says, “being able to have the ‘best of both worlds’ labor situation was perfect for me.” Campbell now has the opportunity to professionalize in both worlds through this labor arrangement.

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In spring of 2018, for the first time at NDSU, students were able to declare creative writing as their minor. Brady Bergeson and Cindy Nichols, who both teach creative writing courses, helped to establish the minor at NDSU. The need and desire for a creative writing minor has always been apparent as the single creative writing course continually filled to capacity. Bergeson explains that students “have stories they want to tell, ideas and emotions they want to express and share.” Nichols adds to the sentiment explaining the minor is “a way to genuinely enhance and/or balance any major field of study.” The creative writing minor is both an outlet and a way to demonstrate skills and professionalism. While students are often excited for creative writing courses, there is a misconception that it is a “soft” discipline as Nichols explains.

Writing in all iterations requires rigorous practice and study just as any other discipline does. Once students come to that realization, they step up and own their writing process. As Bergeson says, “when they [students] get comfortable changing direction, throwing out pages or starting over, that’s when you see them really growing as writers.” The minor tasks students with writing in a number of genres and start or complete larger projects depending on their interests. This minor enables students to leave the program a more flexible writer who has built a habit of writing practices that fit whatever ambitions they have (for their writing).

The department supports their graduate students!

One of the biggest accomplishments of my MA program was receiving my acceptance to the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC’s or 4C’s). CCCC’s is one of the most prestigious conferences in rhetoric and composition and when I received my acceptance (from Vershawn Ashanti-Young himself!) I was shocked. However, not necessarily surprised as I had the wonderful support of the NDSU English department furthering my goals.

In the spring of 2018, a few weeks before the CCCC’s proposal deadline, a workshop was offered by a few of the professors in the department to help those of us who were interested produce proposals that were more likely to be accepted. During this time, I not only cemented my idea, and felt supported in my direction, but I wrote up the proposal that then was accepted. This workshop was so successful (as myself and Lee Gullickson can attest) that it is being offered again this May!

Once acceptances rolled around, those of us that were new comers to the conference were offered a workshop on how to make the most out of our CCCC’s experience. I truly believe without the direction of my professors, I would not have had a successful experience at a conference with over 3,000 presenters.

CCCC’s this last year in Pittsburgh was one of the most exciting moments of my graduate career, and I can say without a doubt that without the English department cheering me on, I would not have had this experience. Thank you to all who supported me! I hope to see more of you at CCCC’s in 2020!

Written by Hannah Stevens, Pen & Pixels co-author

Volume 6, issue 2

Spring 2019
Working in a library is weird. I’m not talking about the questions I get in a day or the things I see on a daily basis. I’m talking about the sheer numbers of books I see that come across the desk. You have your James Patterson, your David Baldacci, and your Tami Hoag of course, but you also have a plethora of delightful weirdos from the nonfiction section or a neat graphic novel you’d never have found on your own. It is because I work at the library that I came across Thessaly La Force’s *My Ideal Bookshelf*. The concept is simple. Identify roughly ten books you couldn’t live without. The book has examples from writers, chefs, architects, editors, and not only demonstrates how an ideal bookshelf changes person to person, but also how some selections crop up continuously. After talking with Hannah Stevens, co-author of this newsletter, we decided to challenge NDSU English to create their own ideal bookshelf. These bookshelves demonstrate the varied interests that we in the English department have, but there are also some commonalities such as J.K. Rowling’s *Harry Potter Series*, Toni Morrison’s *The Bluest Eye*, and Gloria Naylor’s *Linden Hills*.

NDSU English Graduate Organization has proudly displayed out ideal bookshelves in the graduate lounge on campus. If you would like to participate in the English department’s ideal bookshelf project, please fill out the bookshelf on page 12 and send it to the department! We will proudly display your bookshelf in the department.
The World in Fargo Moorhead is a photojournalism project dedicated to telling true stories about people born outside of the U.S. who now live in the Red River Valley, coordinated by NDSU’s own Ibtissem Belmihoub. Meg Lindholm, local photographer, independent journalist, and co-creator of the World in Fargo Moorhead, noticed the significant increase in the incoming of refugees and migrants to the FM area. Modeled on Humans of New York, Meg thought it necessary to showcase the stories of newcomers to introduce them to the community and allow them to share their identity with their new community. Inherently, “the project reveals the individuality in each person’s life and experience.” Not only does the project lift under-represented voices, but it affects those involved behind the scenes as well. In Belmihoub’s role as project coordinator, she utilized the skills she’s honed in the NDSU English Department and has learned some as well!

Through this role, she communicates with volunteers, gathers stories, and edits and posts them to social media. In her tenure as project coordinator, Belmihoub aimed to “connect it [the project] and bring it to the community more frequently.” She did just that with the help of volunteers, establishing a physical presence for the WIFM through discussion panels, traveling exhibits, as well as other collaborations with other local projects and nonprofits.

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Graduate Student Spotlight: Third year PhD student: Shane Gomes

Where are you originally from? Can you speak to your journey/what brought you to Fargo? I am originally from Honolulu, Hawaii, on the island of Oahu, though I grew up primarily in Keaau, Hawaii, on the Big Island. I also briefly lived in Wyoming, Minnesota, and Colorado. After my undergrad I moved to Spokane, Washington, and after a year there moved to Greeley, Colorado. After finishing my MA, I moved up here to attend NDSU.

What are your research interests? Rhetorical Criticism, Ecofeminism, and Comics are the main ones. I do also have interests in Composition Theory and pop culture criticism as a whole.

What’s a fun fact about yourself? I have no gauge for what other people might find fun in this regard, but, I was in a circus a child/teen, and got really good at stilts. Also, I’ve seen Star Wars, Episode IV well over 400 times (I lost count around the time I was 15.)
Continued from page 3…

Bergh is a TA for Dr. Graham-Bertolini’s American Literature II course, serving as a link between the students and Dr. Bertolini. She explains that Rio “supports their [the students] learning in important ways, including circulating among their smaller discussion groups to encourage student collaboration and providing voluntary review of the material for the midterm and the final.” Bergh is grateful for this opportunity and he explained that this labor appointment gives him “an inside perspective on the rationale for teaching literature in particular ways.” This work helps Bergh develop as a teacher/scholar, which will benefit him going forward into a PhD program.

In similar vein to Bergh’s labor appointment, Gullickson serves as TA for Dr. Hassel’s Introduction to Writing Studies course. Gullickson notes the usefulness of the behind the scenes pedagogy serving as TA for the course saying, “As a TA in the class, I’m able to both teach the students and learn from Dr. Hassel’s pedagogy practices.” Gullickson has been teaching English 120 for over two years and is an accomplished instructor in his own right having received the “Outstanding Graduate Teaching Assistant” Award in 2018. The thing about teaching is it is not a solo activity, but an activity that you improve on from being in a community or instructors and talking about pedagogy. One thing is certain, these graduate students are better prepared for what’s to come after their degrees because NDSU English saw an opportunity to help their students professionalize and rose to the occasion.

When Bison Speak!

On March 19, many English faculty members, lecturers, and friends gathered at Zandbros Variety downtown Fargo to hear creative writers share their written work. NDSU English’s own lecturers Brady Bergeson, Ryan Christianson, Jamee Larson, and Cynthia Nichols in addition to others took the stage and read their work. As Nichols notes, “strenuous dedication is needed to keep writing, particularly when the world so often distracts or impedes us.”

Thank you for these wonderful writers who refuse to submit to the distraction of the world!
EGO Service Awards

By a unanimous vote at the last *English Graduate Organization* meeting of the year, the cabinet members voted to introduce two separate graduate student awards for the 2018-2019 academic year:

- **Internal service award:** a student who supports their fellow graduate students in the department, answers questions, offers kind words and advice, is overall a "go-to" resource for their colleagues. This student exemplifies what it means to be a service-oriented graduate student and department citizen.

- **External service award:** a student who devotes time and service to the greater Fargo-Moorhead community, recognizes the importance of community service, volunteers officially or unofficially to support people in the FM area, gives back to the community. This student exemplifies community citizenship.

The current and recently elected EGO representation voted to annually give both service awards. Both awards will be given at the end of the year English department luncheon on May 3rd. We hope you will join us in congratulating these amazing graduate students!

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This work utilizes the skills Ibtissem has continued to develop as a PhD student in the Rhetoric, Writing, and Culture program in the English Department at NDSU. Belmihoub firmly believes that “sharing stories of newcomers leads to prejudice reduction” and it is easy to see that her work demonstrates the range of possibilities one has by earning an English degree.

Anyone interested in taking photographs or being photographed is encouraged to send a message through the WIFM project’s Facebook page. Be a volunteer and see the good work and societal change that can happen exploring diversity “one person and one story at a time.”
Each year students wait for the day they get to sign up for their classes, simultaneously attempting to figure out credits, requirements, timing, and how to get the most out of their education. Sometimes pickings can be slim, sometimes students wait too long to sign up, and sometimes students sign up for a class not knowing the impact it will have on their future. One such class was Dr. Mary McCall’s Usability and User Experience course, a split class that serves both undergraduate and graduate students focusing on the ins and outs of usability, user experience, and how to perform effective usability testing. Five students from two separate semesters spoke with Pen & Pixels highlighting the impact this class and McCall have had on each student’s professional and academic careers. Krista Aldrich and Shane Gomes both took the usability course in the spring of 2017 and incorporated principles learned in McCall’s course in their own classes. Aldrich, in her English 120 course, designed a rhetorical analysis of a space for her students to engage in during the rhetorical analysis unit demonstrating the assumptions that surround designing a space and the argument as to who is using that space. Gomes, in turn, designed a unit specifically on Usability and Universal Design in his English 320 course. In addition to not only taking content from the course, but forever being unable to look at spaces the same again, Aldrich took a book review she wrote for the course and turned it into her first published review for a journal, as did Hannah Stevens, who took the course the following year. The UX course continues to prove itself invaluable to the academic careers of its students.

A year later, Stevens, Jasmine Banasik, and Amanda Watts excitingly enrolled in the course that so inspired Aldrich and Gomes. Banasik explained how the usability course changed her perspective saying, “It's easy to forget that just because something is easy for us, that it's not easy for everyone - this course opened my eyes to that.” Stevens and Watts, heavily impacted by the course, were inspired to bring aspects of usability to their future endeavors and to their teaching. Watts is currently concentrating on accessibility and knowledge as it applies to archaeology for her dissertation and after taking the UX course found that she looked at both of her worlds, being a student and a teacher, differently. She said, “I consider the text and visual aspects of my course material in course design as an instructor and assess the presentation of material I receive as a student.” UX is everywhere, which Stevens can attest to both as a student and as an instructor, as she designed her online English 120 course with disability and accessibility in mind. However, the influence of the course proved more impactful to Stevens than just course design as after completing the course she stated that it, “really cemented my decision to pursue disability and accessibility as I apply for PhD programs. Though I love literature, Dr. McCall showed me that usability can in fact change the world.” Gomes furthered that thought asserting that “The course was one of the most impactful I’ve taken…when you approach your environment with the understanding that there was a person that designed almost every aspect of it for a specific purpose, it underlines all the people who are not being served by the most basic parts of our world.”

A single course can change your perspective. It can open your eyes and teach you to see things in a new light. Of course, much of that relies on the strength of the instructor. Lucky for NDSU English, that instructor was Dr. McCall.
Krista Aldrich and Emily Wicktor had a chapter proposal accepted for an anthology on Women’s Friendships in 20th and 21st Century Literature and Culture.

Drs. Lisa Arnold, Adam Goldwyn, and Alison Graham-Bertolini received tenure.

MA student Jasmine Banasik successfully defended her MA thesis titled: “What Shall Befall Him or His Children’: The Figure and Anxiety of the Child in Mary Shelley’s The Last Man.”

MA student Rio Bergh successfully defended his MA thesis titled: “Blackness in the ‘Grey Area’: Representations of Virtuous Labor in Venture Smith’s Narrative.” In addition, he has decided to join the PhD program in early American literature at Northwestern University in Chicago.


Brady Bergeson and Jamee Larson, along with two students in the creative writing minor, Bryan Keidel and Brooke Krutsinger, presented a reading of creative work at the Academic Publications Conference at Valley City State University on April 26th.

Dr. Alison Graham-Bertolini, also has a book accepted for publication with Mercer University Press, Macon, GA: Understanding the Short Fiction of Carson McCullers. The book, a collection co-edited with Dr. Casey Kayser of the University of Alabama, is currently slated for publication in 2020. This is Bertolini’s second published collection focusing on the writing of American novelist Carson McCullers. Bertolini has been on the executive committee of the International McCullers Society since 2015.

Dr. Mary McCall had her co-authored book chapter, "Quantification of Disciplinary Discourse: An Approach to Teaching Engineering Résumé Writing," accepted for publication in the International Writing across the Curriculum 25th Anniversary Edited Collection.


Chowdhury, in addition to successfully defending her MA thesis, was also accepted into five PhD programs and has decided to join the PhD program in English Literature at the University of Massachusetts—Amherst. She has been offered full funding, a Teaching Assistantship, and a Summer Fellowship.

MA student Rebecca Crisman successfully defended her MA thesis titled, "Something Wicked This Way Comes: How the Horror Genre Revitalizes Macbeth.”

Lecturer Ryan Christiansen had the article “Pro Football’s Renaissance Men: The Twilight Decade of the 1960s” published in The Coffin Corner, Vol. 41, No. 1.

Shaibal Devroy, in addition to successfully defending his MA thesis, will be attending the University of Southern California, LA for his PhD in English (Research focus: Nineteenth-century American Literature/Studies and Postcoloniality) with a three-year fellowship.
**Devroy** also presented “Repetition and Remaking: George Moses Horton’s Inspired Borrowings from *The Columbian Orator*” at the 33rd Annual MELUS Conference, in Cincinnati, Ohio, March 2019.

**Jamee Larson** has four pieces being published in *The Talking Stick Journal*: two poems, “The Sound of Anger” and “How Will He Know?”, and two works of creative nonfiction, “Monte” and “My First Drink.”

PhD student **Shane Gomes** and Dr. **Emily Wicktor** attended and presented at The College English Association conference.

**Gomes** also had a chapter accepted for publication in an edited collection for Missouri State University on feminism and graphic novels.

MA student **Rachel Grider** successfully defended her MA thesis titled: “Bilingual Rabbits, Bilingual Readers.”

MA students **Lee Gullickson** and **Hannah Stevens**, PhD students **Seth Archer** and **Ashleigh Petts**, lecturer **Jamee Larson**, and Drs. **Lisa Arnold, Mary McCall**, and **Daniel Kenzie** attended and presented at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Pittsburgh, PA.

MA student **Deborah Haley** had an abstract accepted for the book project “Cultures, Countercultures, and Social Multiplicity Critical Essay in Language, Literature, and Pedagogy.”

Dr. **Holly Hassel**'s co-authored article "Editorial Perspectives on Teaching English in the Two-Year College: The Shaping of a Profession" appeared in the newest issue of *College English*.

In addition, **Hassel’s** co-authored piece, "Introduction: Writing Assessment, Placement, and the Two-Year College" was published in a special issue of the *Journal of Writing Assessment* devoted to two year colleges.

PhD student **Dr. Robert Neuteboom** successfully defended his dissertation titled “Composing Comments for Online Students: A Study of Faculty Feedback on Writing in Multidisciplinary Contexts.”

**Julie Sandland**'s English 326 (Writing in the Design Professions) class completed a project titled *Re-Imagine Moorhead*. Student groups researched the history of Moorhead's downtown and re-designed an area of Main Avenue with six building ideas, including a coffee shop, hotel, bar, and ice cream fountain. They presented their work at a poster reception on April 15 on campus, attended by some Moorhead city government officials.


MA student **Hannah Stevens** successfully defended her MA thesis titled, "The Last Breath is Hers: Reassessing Feminist Film Approaches to the Slasher Genre in the #MeToo Era."

Dr. **Rebecca Weaver-Hightower** had two books published late last fall, *Frontier Fictions: Settler Sagas and Postcolonial Guilt* (Palgrave, Dec 2018) and *Archiving Settler Colonialism: Culture, Space and Race* (Yuting Huang and Rebecca Weaver-Hightower eds, Routledge, Nov 2018)

Dr. **Emily Wicktor** received two Library Endowment Grants to purchase print and media resources, “Jane Austen Juggernaut: Scholarly, Popular, and Media Resources,” and “Critical Pedagogy: Scholarly, Popular, and Media Resources.”
Thank you for your support of the NDSU English Department. Your contributions make a difference in our department and university every day. We are currently seeking financial support for student scholarships and for funding graduate student travel to conferences, where students will present their research. If you would like to contribute financially to the department, please do so through this link: https://www.ndsualumni.com/contribute

Please contact the department chair, Rebecca Weaver-Hightower, with any questions:

r.weaverhightower@ndsu.edu
701-231-7143
NDSU Dept. # 2320, P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050

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What’s Your Story?
We want to know where your research, writing, storytelling, etc., has taken you—In addition, we want to know where your initiative and ingenuity have taken your English degree. Send your stories to the Pen & Pixels editors, Krista Aldrich (Krista.aldrich.l@ndsu.edu) and Hannah Stevens (Hannah.stevenst@ndsu.edu).

For your story, please consider sending:
• A description of the event (if applicable)
• A picture
• A short biography