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Dimensions and Directions

*The Joint Ph.D. Program in English and Education
at the University of Michigan*

Volume 28

Fall 2021

From the Chair

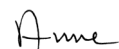
Greetings to all,

In the midst of all the dislocations, improvisations, and challenges of COVID-world, we have had a remarkably good year. We sent graduate Kristin Vaneyk off to Hope College and welcomed three new students in the fall—you can learn more about them in the following pages. Working with Rackham, we deliberately reduced the size of the incoming cohort to preserve resources for students who, in a “normal” year, would have graduated, and we aim to do the same for the coming year. I’m happy to report that the academic job market has rebounded this year, and as I write, students are receiving invitations for interviews and campus visits.

One especially good event this year was the arrival of Ebony Elizabeth Thomas as a member of our faculty. Ebony, a 2010 graduate of JPEE, came to us from the University of Pennsylvania, and she has already built a following of students and colleagues. She taught a well-received graduate course on speculative digital literacies in the fall, became a regular at Chalk and Cheese, and has taken a leadership position in the ELA teacher education program. Ebony will also join colleagues in developing the SOE School at Marygrove, a new venture on the campus of Marygrove College in Detroit. It is a delight to have Ebony as a colleague, and in combination with Laura Aull, a 2011 JPEE graduate who is on the English Department faculty and directs the English Department Writing Program, we have new energy, insight, and commitment to the Program.

Even though there are some academic positions open this year, we recognize that the overall number of traditional tenure track positions is decreasing, and we are giving increased attention to alternative forms of employment for JPEE graduates. In this spirit, and in response to a helpful reminder from one graduate, that our newsletters have not traditionally given space to those not working in academia, we are introducing a new section, “Beyond the Academy,” in our newsletter. I hope you will enjoy reading, in this and future issues, about our new students, current students, and alumni, including those who work beyond the academy.

Sincerely,



Anne Ruggles Gere



Dissertation

2020-2021

Students Writing Difference: Student Ideologies and Translingual Possibilities

Kristin's dissertation study analyzes 15 multilingual students' talk about language and identity in the first-year writing classroom to uncover students' language ideologies and their impact on students' writing. This study tests translingual theory, which argues for contingent and negotiable standards and the production of mixed-language writing for academic purposes, against students' logics and experiences. Translingual literature has positioned itself as an antiracist orientation for writing studies that assumes a natural blending of dialects and languages for multidialectal and multilingual students, and therefore promotes code-meshing as an antiracist pedagogical approach in the classroom.

**Chair: Anne Curzan
Kristin Vaneyk, Ph.D.**



Fall 2021 Cohort

Aaron Bush attended the University of Northern Colorado for both his B.A. and M.A. where he studied English Secondary Education and English respectively. Though his focus now is on hip-hop literacies (particularly graffiti) and student-athlete academic supports, Aaron also hopes to acquire more skills and resources in pedagogy. After teaching middle school, high school (during student teaching), and first-year college composition courses, Aaron's diverse teaching experiences help inform how he approaches the craft as a system of community, activism, and resistance.



Alyse Campbell was born in Chongqing, China and grew up in Olympia, Washington. She completed her B.A. in English and Communications at the University of Washington and worked extensively as a writing tutor and in community literacy programs. While completing her M.A. in teaching, she began her career as a high school English teacher in Chicago as a Teach for America corps member. Her experiences working in urban education and writing centers led her to examine education systems and the literature of marginalized communities. Among her diverse interests, she is particularly interested in rhetoric/composition, secondary English pedagogy, and Asian/Asian American literature.



Fall 2020 continued...



Marquise Griffin is a lifelong Black Midwesterner, Marquise was born and raised in St. Louis, MO and earned his BA in English at Kalamazoo College in 2015. He earned a Masters of Education in Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis at the University of Missouri in 2017 then took two years away from academia.

He spent the first year in Chicago working for some educational nonprofits that served predominantly Black communities. Marquise returned to St. Louis during his second year to serve in AmeriCorps. During this time he taught high school students leadership and college preparatory skills. In 2019 Marquise left the Midwest for a second masters degree in English at Boston College which he completed in 2021.

Marquise's research interests are in how creative writing spaces come into contact with physical places. He's particularly interested in how this process contributes to collective identity formation, resiliency, and educational outcomes for Black communities.



Fall Gathering 2021 in Professor Gere's backyard.

JPEE Current Student Activities

Anna Almore, monét cooper, Carlina Duan, Andrew Moos, and Crystal Zanders served on the English Department Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice (DEIJ) Group. They collaboratively planned and facilitated the first graduate student-led English Department Writing Program (EDWP) orientation.

Anna Almore and **Naitnaphit Limlamai** joined the Center for Black, Brown and Queer Studies Pedagogy Development Summer Institute. They joined a group of educators from across the nation to workshop syllabi and course ideas. The Summer Institute supports and guides advanced graduate students and early-career scholars in the development of new syllabi from inception to final draft. The BBQ+ Pedagogy Development Summer Institute is guided by a commitment to brave classroom spaces, as well as anti-racist, anti-colonial, and queer-informed curriculums and pedagogies.

Jathan Day, Sarah Hughes, Andrew Moos, Katie Van Zanen, and Crystal Zanders collaborated on the article, "What Does a Good Teacher Do Now? Crafting Communities of Care," in *Pedagogy*. They also presented this work virtually at the Writing and Well-Being Conference in January 2021.

Jathan Day entered his fourth year as a graduate consultant for the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) and his second year as graduate administrative and editorial associate for the Sweetland Digital Rhetoric Collaborative.

Carlina Duan and **Katie Van Zanen** are continuing their work as Lead Graduate Academic Liaisons for The Ginsberg Center, helping to co-facilitate workshops around community partnership and civic engagement. They are involved with two Ginsberg Center projects this fall and are members of the 2020 cohort of the Engaged Pedagogy Initiative, a community-engaged learning workshop co-managed by Ginsberg and the Rackham Program in Public Scholarship, and teaching English 126: Community-Engaged Writing. Katie's section of English 126 will produce blog posts for HealthcareCounts, the communications arm of the Washtenaw Health Plan. Carlina's students will work with *Groundcover News*, Ann Arbor's street newspaper that seeks to raise awareness of the plight of homelessness. Carlina and Katie will present at a joint panel on community-engaged teaching for first-year writing courses at Modern Language Association (MLA) in Washington DC, this January 2022. In addition, Katie worked with Ginsberg Center as a Rackham Public Engagement Internship Fellow this past summer.

Carlina Duan is teaching English 126, Community-Engaged Writing, in partnership with 826michigan, a literary arts nonprofit committed to inspiring school-aged children to write confidently and skillfully with the support of adult volunteers; her students will tutor 826michigan students in a virtual Writing Lab each week.

Carlina Duan has three new poems out in the October 2021 issue of *Poetry Magazine*.

Professor Anne Ruggles Gere along with alumni **Anna Knutson, Adrienne Raw, and Sarah Swofford**, and current students **Jathan Day, Ruth Li, and Naitnaphit Limlamai**, presented "Data: Analyzing Longitudinal Datasets About Student Writing Development" at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in April 2021.

An article co-written with **Professors Anne Ruggles Gere, and Anne Curzan**, alum **James Hammond**, current students **Sarah Hughes, Ruth Li, Andrew Moos, Kendon Smith, Kathryn Van Zanen, Kelly L. Wheeler, and Crystal Zanders**, titled "Communal Justicing: Writing Assessment, Disciplinary Infrastructure, and the Case for Critical Language Awareness," was published in the February issue of *College Composition and Communication*.

Jason Godfrey, Sarah Hughes, Andrew Moos, Kendon Smith and Adelay Witherite serve as the coordinators for the Language and Rhetorical Studies Interdisciplinary Workshop, and they are pleased to have **Professor David Gold** continue in his role as faculty sponsor.

For 2020-2021 academic year, **Jason Godfrey** was an Open Education Research fellow—continuing a line of English and Education students to participate in that community. He served as the treasurer for Rackham Student Government and collaboratively created the novel microgrant program, which raised and distributed nearly \$30,000 to in-need graduate students impacted by COVID-19. Also, he has a co-authored book chapter titled “Using Decision-Based Learning to Teach Source Evaluation in One-shot Library Sessions.” Lastly, some fun conference trips turned into fun marathon zoom sessions.

Professor David Gold, Jathan Day, and alum **Adrienne Raw** published "Who's Afraid of Facebook? A Survey of Students' Online Writing Practices" in the September 2020 issue of *CCC*.

Kelly Hartwell recently co-authored the editorial for *Assessing Writing's Tools & Tech forum* with **Professor Laura Aull**. The editorial and accompanying reviews will appear in the October issue of *Assessing Writing*, and are available for preview here: <https://authors.elsevier.com/a/1dn4f3qVb8MJX7>

Ruth Li, Naitnaphit Limlamai, and **Michelle Sprouse** are working as editorial assistants for *Research in the Teaching of English* under the direction of Professor **Ebony Elizabeth Thomas** and two of Ebony's colleagues from the University of Pennsylvania, who serve as co-editors for the journal. They are organizing an In Dialogue essay that brings literacy scholars into conversation with each other.

Ruth Li and **Andrew Moos** worked with faculty in the Sweetland Center for Writing to revise the first-year writing requirement in ways that encompass inclusive teaching.

Ruth Li's recent published articles include: “Visualizing Essay Elements: A Color-coding Approach to Teaching First-year Writing,” in the *Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy*; “Teaching Disciplinary Writing Using Google Ngrams” in *Visualizing Objects, Places, and Spaces: A Digital Project Handbook*; “Analyzing Rhetorical Appeals: A Lesson for College Students,” in *Modern Language Association (MLA) Style Center*; and a blog post, “The Computers and Composition Digital Press: A Ten-Year Retrospective,” in *The Scholar Electric Blog*. She also served as a digital fellow with the Computers and Composition Digital Press (CCDP), a documentarian for CCCC 2020, and a proposal reviewer for CCCC 2021, for which she composed a reflection for *Studies in Writing and Rhetoric (SWR)*.

monét cooper launched the Dancing on Desks Podcast with longtime friend and fellow educator, Erin Thesing. You can listen on Spotify, Apple Music, or wherever you listen to your favorite podcasts. If you're on instagram, follow us @dancingondesks and online at www.dancingondesks.org.

Michelle Sprouse has recently published two articles on social annotation in *Teaching/Writing and Pedagogy*. "Foregrounding the Margins: A Dialogue about Literacy, Learning, and Social Annotation" is a co-authored piece that developed out of a COVID-cancelled NCTE presentation. The second article, "Social Annotation as Transcontextualization in Graduate Reading Practices" was first written as part of a literacy seminar with **Professor Anne Gere**.

Kelly Wheeler is a Graduate Student Mentor for English Department Writing Program (EDWP) this year and is working with first year instructors. She continues to be a facilitator for Graduate Student Instructor (GSI) training for the Center for Research on Learning and Teaching (CRLT) and works with GSIs university-wide. She presented twice this past year (virtually) on sousveillance as a power disruptor and its potential to fill a legal gap between the First Amendment and hate speech.

JPEE Awards

monét cooper was a 2021 recipient of the Diversity, Inclusion, Justice, and Equity (dije) Award in the School of Education. This award recognizes individuals who have demonstrated a commitment to dije in their professional work.

monét cooper is the 2021 winner of the Hurston-Wright Foundation College Poetry Award and has work forthcoming in *This House Will Not Dismantle Itself: Critical Futures in Education* and *Women's Studies Quarterly*.

Megan Garver, Andrew Moos, Kathryn Van Zanen, Kelly Wheeler, Adelay Witherite, and Crystal Zanders received Rackham Graduate Student Research Grants.

Cassandra Otemuiwa and **Kathryn VanZanen** were awarded Rackham Graduate School Humanities Fellowships in 2021-2022.

During 2020-2021, the following students were awarded a Rackham One-term Dissertation Fellowship: **Ruth Li** and **Katie Van Zanen**.

Naitnaphit Limlamai received the Linda Pinder Fellowship for 2021-2022. This Fellowship was created thanks to a generous gift from alum Randall Pinder and his partner Paul Pearson, and it is named for Randy's mother, who was a teacher. In keeping with the sense of community they helped to create when they were in Ann Arbor, Randy and Paul chose to use their resources to provide support for a student who has achieved candidacy, is finishing the dissertation, is on the job market, and has teaching as the only other type of support during the final year.

Andrew Moos, Kathryn Van Zanen, Elizabeth (Adelay) Witherite, and Crystal Zanders achieved candidacy in 2021.



2021 Hopwood Award Winners

Michael R. Gutterman Award in Poetry

monét cooper,

“in search of ancestry in the Census record or, also, cane”

Poetry: Graduate

Carlina Duan,

“Blades of Grace”

2021-2022 Dissertation

Kristin Vaneyk, Ph.D.

Writing Difference: Student Ideologies and Translingual Possibilities

Chair: Anne Curzan

Kristin's dissertation study analyzes 15 multilingual students' talk about language and identity in the first-year writing classroom to uncover students' language ideologies and their impact on student's writing. This study tests translingual theory, which argues for contingent and negotiable standards and the production of mixed-language writing for academic purposes, against students' logics and experiences. Translingual literature has positioned itself as an antiracist orientation for writing studies that assumes a natural blending of dialects and languages for multidialectal and multilingual students, and therefore promotes code-meshing as an antiracist pedagogical approach in the classroom. Using semi-structured interviews, ideological discourse analysis of student talk and writing, and constructivist grounded theory, this project analyzes students' responses to code-meshing and translingual differencing approaches to provide better representation of multilingual student perspectives as they explain the frictions among their linguistic identities, translingual framing, and code-meshing practices.

Throughout their interviews, students' talk revealed ideological barriers to translingual logics. All of the participants believed that academic writing should be impersonal and written in SEAE. Underlying these beliefs is the development and maintenance of ideologies that promote the academic value of standard Englishes over students' home languages, and the implicit argument that students should suppress pieces of their cultural and linguistic identities in academic settings. While their language ideologies prompt their linguistic actions, students are not always aware of their deficit beliefs about their languages and identities, as these beliefs are situated in structures that naturalize the elevation of standard English. Translingual literature argues that students should be trained to use their language difference as a resource, but students don't quite know when, how, or why to incorporate their differences.

Students also reveal that they are sometimes unable to participate in academic conversations because of cultural difference. For multilingual students, race plays a foundational role in the creation, performance, and interpretation of their identities and languages in the writing classroom. As a part of the cultural construction of race, *Americanness* plays a central role in both defining and othering students' identities and their access to classroom participation. In this study, international students report that their writing courses were typically structured upon conventions and conversations central to American culture that were not always familiar to them. To establish their "in-group" positioning, the American multilingual students in this study explained their strategies for using their American cultural identities to negotiate their insider ranking with their peers and instructors.

Ultimately, the implementation of a translingual ecology in the writing classroom depends upon deep ideological shifts for instructors and students. By centering linguistic and cultural difference as the expectation in the U.S. composition classroom, space is created for students to share and value their multilingual identities and competencies. This ideological shift requires a move away from U.S. cultural norms and audiences as the assumed target and a move toward transcultural and translingual negotiation and meaning-making. The de-centering of *American* as the target creates ideological space for multilingual students to have more rhetorical opportunities to bring their full linguistic and cultural identities into their writing projects.

Kristin has taken a position as Visiting Assistant Professor of English at Hope College in Holland, MI.

JPEE Alumni Updates...

Laura Aull ('11) is enjoying directing UM's English Department Writing Program (EDWP), now back in person. She recently worked with E&E student Kelly Hartwell to finish a forthcoming *Assessing Writing's Tools & Tech* forum on automated writing tools. She is excited for a couple of pieces on corpus analysis to come out this year: "Using corpus linguistics to foreground linguistic diversity" in *Methods and Methodologies for Research in Digital Writing and Rhetoric* and "Corpus analysis and its opportunities and limitations in composition" in *The Expanding Universe of Writing Studies*. Finally, along with scuba diving whenever possible, she is enjoying starting her new book project, *Academic Writing Myths*, which is under contract with Cambridge University Press.

A year ago, **Steve Bernhardt** ('81) moved from Santa Fe to coastal Delaware to be closer to family (read "grandchildren"). Mostly retired, he is finishing up a new book *Writing for Biopharmaceutical Regulatory Audiences* with his training and consulting partner, Greg Cuppan, of Salt Lake City. Greg and Steve have worked together since 1995 with 60-some large and small pharma companies. Current training initiatives are underway with Sandoz, Novartis, Apellis, Agios, Jazz, and other companies. The participants represent a wide range of scientific disciplines, mostly PhDs, and work in various European and US cities, and across the Middle East. Steve's *Achieve for Writer's Help*, an online resource for college writers from Bedford/Macmillan, is in its third edition. The suite includes reference, quizzing, exercises, disciplinary guides, and classroom applications for peer review, student tracking, and programmatic evaluation.

Ann Burke ('18) published an article with colleagues in *Teaching/Writing: The Journal of Writing Teacher Education* (Austin, Jeffrey; Burke, Ann; Foley, Ellen; and Rumohr, Gretchen (2021) "Building and Maintaining Sanctuary Spaces through Face to Face Writing Assessment." It is available at: <https://scholarworks.wmich.edu/wte/vol10/iss1/4>)

Beth Davila ('11) is an associate professor of rhetoric and writing at the University of New Mexico. She has two forthcoming articles in CCC—one on the relationship between writing program administration and academic freedom and the other on white language supremacy in writing course descriptions. After an exhausting and challenging year and a half, Beth is rethinking the concept of work and is actively resisting the glorification of busyness in academia for both herself and her students.

As of September 1st, 2021, **Moisés Escudero** ('11) became Full Professor of Language and Education at Universidad de Quintana Roo, Mexico, where he teaches Discourse Analysis and Applied Semantics to pre-service English teachers. His current research examines the influences of teachers' language ideologies and epistemic theories of reading on their intertextual understanding of legitimate and fake-news opinion pieces about the origins of SARS-Cov-2. His most recent publications have focused on English teachers' experiences with Emergency Remote Teaching and on middle school teachers' implicit theories of reading.

Jeanne Halpern ('77) Getting my PhD in E&E in 1977, my days of teaching and research are far behind, but my degree led to a challenging and happy career in the English Department at Purdue University, a wonderful sabbatical at Stanford, and then an unanticipated, bizarre career change to work as a senior communication specialist at the international management consulting firm, McKinsey and Co. May you all enjoy the fruits of your labors as much as I did and do. Go Blue!

JPEE Alumni Updates

Danielle Lillge ('15), Associate Professor of English at Illinois State University, has been at work with colleagues on a newly state approved online and hybrid MA/MS degree program in English education with an emphasis on socially just ELA instruction and accelerated sequence for early undergraduate admission. She will serve as director of the program. Beginning in January, she will pilot the English Education Student Participatory Action Research Project (EESPARC), an effort to link undergraduate teacher candidates historically underrepresented in English teaching with students in high needs rural and urban secondary schools for joint community-based research. Her book project, *Bridging ELA Field and Coursework in Pursuit of Social Justice: A Framework for Pre-Service and Novice Teachers* (Routledge), will be published in 2022.

Margaret Marshall ('91) retired from Auburn University, moved to Montana to be closer to her children and grandchildren, and will now have time to concentrate on a historical project she worked on sporadically over my entire career. In fact, this is a chapter she left out of the dissertation because she didn't have time to find the archives that seemed crucial to understanding the essay from the Atlantic Monthly 1892 that she examined. Margaret is learning so much about the racialized thinking that influenced curriculum and politics in the post-Reconstruction era, about the workings of early philanthropies, and about the people who were involved in these arguments. The connections to current public discussions are astonishing, but like her other historical projects, this is a book about learning to read the past in order to recognize how those debates live on in the language and rhetoric we continue to use. She is taking great pleasure in the project that seems to her a fitting bookend to her career and throughly enjoying helping with child care for the youngest grandchild who was born in the midst of COVID last June and watching her own daughter adjust to being a mother with a career.

Ryan McCarty ('20) is entering his second year as a lecturer in the English Department Writing Program at Michigan, where he's teaching first-year writing and the new graduate student instructor practicum course. He's also continuing to teach science communication writing for PhD students in the Chemistry Department, which is inspiring research into how STEM writers' identities lead them to push innovations in public science writing genres. He continues to think a lot about multilingual learners and the ways that they bring their own sorts of innovations in their responses to the tasks set in classrooms. During quarantine, he spent a fabulous amount of time with family, playing video games and learning how to grow mushrooms in the backyard.

Molly Parsons ('19) and **Christopher Parsons** ('17) both work at Keene State College in Keene, NH. Molly is the Assistant Director at KSC's Center for Research and Writing and serves as the New Hampshire representative to the New England Writing Center Association (NEWCA) Steering Committee. She trains KSC's undergraduate writing tutors and recently co-authored an article, "Good to Know?: Confidentiality and Privacy in Writing Centers and Libraries" in *WLN: A Journal of Writing Center Scholarship*. Chris is an Assistant Professor of English Education and the Coordinator of Secondary English Education at KSC. He teaches their methods courses for English teacher candidates and a course on English language ideologies and grammars; he also work as a field instructor. For the past couple years, he has been a co-chair for the English Language Arts Teacher Educators (ELATE) Commission on Methods Teaching and Learning. Chris has been doing research on teacher candidate field experiences in methods courses and recently co-authored "Beliefs about Methods Courses and Field Experiences in English Education" in *English Education*.

JPEE Alumni Updates Continue...

Sarah Ruffing Robbins ('93) is looking forward to the spring 2022 publication of *Transatlantic Anglophone Literatures, 1776-1920*, a new anthology textbook which she co-edited for Edinburgh University with Linda Hughes and Andrew Taylor. In the meantime, recent publications include "Pandemic Pedagogy" for *ESQ, A Journal of Nineteenth-Century Studies*, and a review essay for the *European Journal of American Studies*. This academic year, she's been retooling three courses: a writing course in cultural rhetorics for undergrads, a seminar on authorship for graduate students, and a class on Feminist and Queer Inquiry that is trying to handle the complex task of blending undergrads, MA students, and doctoral ones.

Gary Salvner ('77) continues to co-chair the Youngstown State University English Festival, now in its 44th year, with three excellent young adult authors booked for 2022. In addition, in his less-frenetic retirement years, he turned to writing YA fiction. Several works are drafted and revised with no publishing prospects as yet, but it's been a valuable experience. Salvner is no longer teaching, but in a sense he wishes he was. Trying to write fiction for young people has wholly transformed his perspectives on how one might teach it.

Ruth Anna Spooner ('16), Ruth Anna Spooner works full-time as an American Sign Language translator for two non-profit organizations (Deaf Harbor and DOOR International) who are partnering together to support 20+ different sign language Bible translation teams all over the world. In addition to her ongoing work with the USA translation team--which has just published 120 new translations in 2020--Ruth Anna is involved with DOOR International's efforts to start a MA+Certification program for sign language Bible Translation Consultants (people who are trained in linguistics, Hebrew and Greek, Bible history and cultures, and translation, and are certified to check and approve translations for accuracy). Currently, there are only 16 Bible translation consultants in the world who also specialize in sign language, and it is estimated we need about 150 consultants to meet the current demand. This new MA+Certification program will be entirely in a few different sign languages (courses, textbooks, resources, *everything*), which means that Deaf people from all over the world will be able to enroll into the program and become translation consultants without the obstacle of having to learn English well enough in order to succeed in graduate-level courses. Ruth Anna is currently living near Minneapolis, but most of her time is spent travelling internationally for various training sessions and meetings.

Kristin VanEyck ('21) completed her PhD in the spring of 2021 and accepted a position as a Visiting Assistant Professor of English at Hope College in Holland, MI. Kristin is teaching a range of courses, but primarily first-year writing (by choice!). Kristin has a forthcoming autoethnographic piece in *Writing on the Edge*, which originated as the Second Year Exam, and she has two other manuscripts in various stages of R&R with CCC, one from a pilot study and the other from a dissertation chapter. Kristin also has two new manuscripts in development about the politically-responsive language prescription and attitudes, both in collaboration with others. Since completing her PhD, Kristin has become increasingly grateful for her colleagues in JPEE and for the training she received for teaching writing, talking about the teaching of writing, and for FYW programmatic awareness.

Joanna Lin Want ('16) is in her sixth year as an Assistant Teaching Professor in the University Writing Program at the University of Notre Dame. This fall, she will present "Grounding the Writing Process: Mindful Walking as an Embodied Writing Practice" at the Conference on Community Writing (online) and next spring she will present "Meeting Students Where They Are: Inclusive Practices for Inviting Well-Being into the Writing Process" at 4C's in Chicago. Currently, she is teaching a place-based, sustainability-focused, and community-engaged FYW course called "Writing About the Environment in Indiana" as part of the Minor in Sustainability at Notre Dame.



We knew each
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 lifetime
 promise

When writing group buddies become hiking buddies. In August 2021, JPEE alumni **Melody Pugh** ('15) and **Aubrey Schiavone** ('17) summited Pike's Peak—one of Colorado's famed fourteeners. Melody is an assistant professor at US Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, CO, and Aubrey is an Teaching Assistant Professor with the University of Denver's Writing Program, Denver, CO.

Welcome Home Laura Aull ('11) and Ebony Elizabeth E. Thomas ('10)

Dr. Laura Aull completed her PhD in the E&E program in 2011 and took a position as assistant professor of English and Linguistics at Wake Forest University in North Carolina, where she remained until returning to UM to direct the English Department Writing Program in 2020. Her current work focuses on historicizing and debunking academic writing myths in English-medium higher education based on research from linguistics, assessment, and writing studies. Otherwise, when she isn't teaching writing pedagogy or linguistics in the English department, she is going back and forth between Ann Arbor and the Western Caribbean, where her family is.

Born and raised in Detroit, Michigan, **Dr. Ebony Elizabeth Thomas** taught in public schools for several years after graduating from Florida A&M, a historically Black university in Tallahassee, Florida. After earning her doctorate from the University of Michigan in 2010, she returned to her master's degree institution, Wayne State University, as an assistant professor of Reading, Language, and Literature in the College of Education. In July 2012, she joined Penn GSE, where she was an Associate Professor in the Division of Literacy, Culture, and International Education. In the fall of 2021 Ebony returned home to the Joint Ph.D. Program in English and Education, School of Education.



Beyond The Academy

Interview with Gail Gibson, Director of the Kessler Presidential Scholars Program, 11/17/2021

(interviewed by Kelly Hartwell)

A 2017 graduate of the JPEE Ph.D program, Gail Gibson describes her work as Director of the Kessler Presidential Scholars Program and reflects on some of the ways her experiences in the JPEE program informed her commitments to the professional, personal, and academic support of first-generation U of M students:

KH: In the acknowledgements for your dissertation, you wrote that your research was “rooted in the experiences of students who are not always seen as expected entrants to higher education,” which seems quite aligned with your work on the Kessler Presidential Scholars Program, which offers four years of support to exceptional first-gen undergraduates from Michigan. Could you tell me a little bit about the work you do as Director of the Kessler Program, and the ways it supports students as they enter the university?

G.G.: When I graduated from the Ph.D. program in the Spring of 2017, I had already started in this role as the director of the Kessler Program [the previous] Winter. When I entered the role, it was an unbelievable opportunity to take everything we know from research about student success interventions and do it in a very well-supported way, because of the Wilpon Family’s [donor] support. And while first-gen support has expanded at the university level, that support isn’t always present when students first come in the door. For [Kessler students], this meant we could draw on research about that population, to understand what kinds of support, beyond financial [would be most valuable]. That’s when we established a peer-mentor program, built out a series of workshops so students could think about what kinds of spaces [they] would want to explore with us, spaces like imposter syndrome, the hidden curriculum of the university, and so on. [Doing so] we also identified belonging as one of our key goals and aims. When students have that [sense of belonging,] they have more success after graduation. In a real sense, our evaluation of the project was critical. We wanted to think about completion rates [and] academic performance semester to semester, but we also wanted to understand these affective dimensions: Do they feel like they belong? And we wanted to make sure those points were established from the start.

We just had the 2017 class, the first class [of Kessler Scholarship students] that was entirely first-generation reach their graduation mark. Working alongside the CEDAR [[Center for Education, Design, Evaluation, and Research](#)] evaluation team in a partnership with the School of Education, we found that graduate rates across three groups, first-gen, the Kessler program, and a control group of students also entering the university in 2017, were 75% for first-gen, 83% for Kessler-supported students, and 84% for the control group, closing that [graduation rate] gap.



Beyond continued...

So now the question is, ‘what else?’ How do we maintain that support and move forward? For example, we want to make sure students have access to high-impact experiences like study abroad and internships as they move through the undergraduate experience. As we built out the Kessler project at Michigan, the Wilpon Family became interested in how it might work at other institutions. From Michigan, we have been leading that work in the Kessler Scholarship Collaboration. It has been a space for development of best practices. It has been where we can begin to build these ties across institutions, and we are expanding further: The Wilpon Family, along with Bloomberg Philanthropies, are working to expand to additional sites so that, by the spring of 2022, the broader, national project will support students at 16 schools. As that project develops, my role will be changing as well. I’m transitioning to lead that national project from the Wilpon Family Foundation. What’s interesting about transitions [like this one] is that, sometimes non-faculty roles live in the [academic] institution, sometimes in non-profit, and sometimes for-profit institutions; this project crosses both of those academic and non-profit boundaries.

K.H.: Are there any particular experiences or values from your time as a student and Ph.D. candidate in E&E that you envision as shaping your work now, or the trajectory towards the Kessler Program?

G.G: There are two truly core values of the Joint program that positioned me particularly well to not only move into this space, but to do the work that has grown and established everything to this point. First, the deeply student-centered nature and ethos of the program, from the ethos of the first year, the writing classes that students enter all the way to dissertation. If you pull any dissertation written by an E&E-er off the shelf, you see this concern for student learning and well-being that isn’t necessarily centered in dissertations coming from other programs. That valuing, centered in E&E, of making the institution better, of ensuring student outcomes, is something that has carried [through] to the other side of my work and informed every decision made.

The other feature I think is so unique and critical is [JPEE’s] sightline to scholarship that is not just for fellow scholars. At a really clear, central level, the [JPEE] program seems to understand that, if we want to do this work and make systematic changes in how students experience higher education, we need to have a lot of allies in different places. And that means having practitioners not working only in faculty roles, [but also] for instance, engaging with donors, or with external organizations, both of which have been a core piece of my portfolio for these years. And my engagement on this new project with the Wilpon Family Foundation and Bloomberg Philanthropy, through an initiative called the American Talent Initiative does all that. The work is always informed by what was valued in the Ph.D. program, and how that [valuing] translates to work on the other side of the degree. I would also add that there is a third element about the social good. I think Anne Gere is a kind of embodiment of a researcher-teacher-faculty-member who is always thinking about how we work towards the better outcome, toward opening the door more broadly [for underserved students] and I think her tenure has allowed JPEE students to think about and act on projects like this.

I do hope that work like the Kessler scholarship can demonstrate that there are rich opportunities for all of us in the professional space that moves beyond the classroom: The critical thinking and research skills can have really fascinating applications outside the classroom route. Our work can have a really broad reach.

For more information, read about the [U-M Kessler Scholars program here](#) and about the [Kessler Scholars Collaborative here](#).





Angell Hall

U-M's graduates have gone on to rocket to the moon, to create cultural phenomena and to lead the country. No matter where they go, they always seem to find their way back. We're fortunate to have one of the largest and proudest groups of living alumni across the globe.

Go Blue!



School of Education

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In memory: Alum Timothy Anderson

We are sad to report the death of Timothy P. Anderson, a JPEE alum who took his degree in 1977. After writing a dissertation titled "Christian Humanism and the Teaching of English," Tim accepted a position at Nebraska's Wesleyan University where he focused on teacher education. He was active in the American Association of Colleges for Teacher Education, and one of his areas of interest and expertise was professional development for teachers, a topic on which he published. Later in his life Tim took up a second career in the insurance business, running an agency inherited from his father.

Tim is survived by Kathleen Anderson, his wife of 41 years, and condolences can be sent to her at 10411 Vincent Road, White March, MD 21162-1919

Stephen Dunning Student Support Fund

As you think about your end-of-year charitable contributions, please consider a gift to the Stephen Dunning Student Support Fund. This is the fund that supports special events, provides Chalk and Cheese refreshment, and, when monies permit, supplements research-related expenses for graduate students. Contributions of all sizes are most welcome. Write checks to the University of Michigan E&E Gift Account and send them to Jeanie Laubenthal, Joint Ph.D. Program in English & Education, 610 E. University, 4204 SEB, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1259.

We are on the web at <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/jpee/>