Grateful Thanks

Chair Bruce Goebel and Associate Chair Kate Trueblood

Dear Alumni,

We want to start by saying thank you for all the good news you generate, especially given that good news is hard to come by. When we assemble the news you send us from far-flung places, we are amazed and astounded. In the world you are creating, there is kindness, strength, mentorship, and daring. The list of non-profits you run or contribute to is remarkable: Conservation Northwest, the Puget Sound Writing Project, Food Safety News, Seattle Children’s Hospital, The Anchor Project, and the Center for Independent Living North Sound, to name a few.

Game Designer Darby McDevitt Turns to Collaboration

Learn to say Yes. After four university years, this was the one word I still couldn’t say properly. Sure, my profs and colleagues at WWU had given me all the tools needed to learn this valuable mantra, but a diluting mix of arrogance and independence rendered me mute when it came to Yes. I almost learned it too late.

Elizabeth Vignali Takes First Place in the Avon Impulse College Contest and Wins the Attention of a HarperCollins Editor

In September 2011, fifteen years after graduating from high school, I stepped on WWU’s campus as a student for the first time. Here I was—an optician by trade, a mother of two, a sometimes-writer—surrounded by fresh-faced twenty-somethings and businesslike instructors who all looked terrifyingly purposeful. I was here after shunning academia for years out of the vague notion that I could be a perfectly good writer without higher education. I’ll be forever grateful I changed my mind.

Filmmaker Caleb Young Wins American Advertising Federation Awards

I almost became a teacher—except there were really no teaching jobs in the area. Luckily, a job at Hand Crank Films landed in my lap on the day I found out I wasn’t getting the job that I thought I’d landed. Since then, I have directed close to 150 commercials (most of them Hand Crank Films), and have won two Silver Addys (American Advertising Federation Awards) for my work with Huxley and Bellingham Technical College, as well as a Gold Addy for my work with Mackie Speakers.

Abbie Glick Finds Success as Content Manager at Starbucks

The path from Western to Starbucks has been anything but straight. I got my first gig at butter LONDON, an indie cosmetics company, through a friend. I started at the bottom (as they say) and because I had an inherent fascination with the digital space, it gave me an edge on everyone who had studied traditional retail. I was really able to carve my own way within the company, and I learned to be scrappy with limited funds and resources.
Jennifer Whetham
Program Administrator and Faculty Development Coordinator for the Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges

After my time as a graduate student at WWU from 1999 to 2001, my career trajectory led to multiple positions as English faculty at several community colleges in Washington State, where I taught the full range of writing and literature courses — from the lowest levels of developmental writing to 200-level Shakespeare courses. As tenured English faculty at Green River Community College, I was inspired by the two courses in Contemporary American Poetry I took from Dr. Bruce Beasley (still reverberating!). I created a new course—the Poetics of Rap and Hip Hop. In my current appointment as program administrator for faculty development at the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), I manage and provide strategic direction for professional development—creating large-scale learning opportunities for educators who teach in the 34 community and technical colleges in our system.

Teaching at Northwest Indian College

I believe that what we are doing here at NWIC is something radically different than what mainstream or predominantly white institutions are doing. A person or faculty member here should ideally be a tribal member who has invested a great deal of time in understanding the many aspects and minutiae of the larger work being done here. We often say, “the real work.”

Don McCluskey
English Instructor 2007-2012
Associate Dean 2012-2014
Developmental Education Coordinator/ Affiliated Faculty 2014- to date

Former Associate Dean Don McCluskey Undertakes the Real Work of Decolonization At Northwest Indian College

It is impossible to acquire another perspective when viewing the world through the rose-colored lenses of perceived privilege. It doesn’t stop me from trying to do my part though. Decolonization begins in the same place that recovery does (at rock bottom), and yes, it is an inside job requiring acceptance and the eventual support of like-minded people.

Rebecca Saxton
Faculty at NWIC

As a child of immigrant parents who moved to Washington State in the late 1950’s, I was raised to live the American Dream. My parents believed that assimilation into American culture would ensure my success in life and it wasn’t until I attended WWU that I began to question the validity of that dream. During my second year of graduate school, I was invited by Rosanne Kanhai to attend the Women of Color Conference in Vancouver, BC. I accepted her invitation because I was curious about what “those” academics did and came away with an understanding that my assimilation had caused me to see myself as exotic and “other.” That conference led me to explore the effects of colonization on myself and my family through the lens of creative nonfiction, an exploration that continues to this day in the form of essays and performance storytelling.

Support the English department online: http://wwu.edu/give
Teaching at Northwest Indian College (continued)

Leslie Copeland
Faculty at NWIC

Before I came to Western for the MA, I was a single mother and I had worked as a customer service rep at AT&T for six years in Seattle. The customer service skills I learned there helped a lot in teaching! I have a degree in English and History from New Mexico State University, and I had wanted to go back and get an MA for many years. I wanted to further my writing, and I was tired of working for a corporation just to make money for someone else—and of course, I wanted to be a good example to my daughter. I wanted to do something that would be meaningful and not just profitable, and I felt the call to teach.

Growing up, I lived on two wildlife refuges and spent a lot of time in South Dakota and New Mexico roaming the wilderness. My father worked for the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service and both my parents were previously park rangers. My reaction to the solitude was to start reading and writing a lot, and making up stories. When I moved to Socorro, New Mexico, I became part of a small, close-knit community with many Hispanic and Native people. I just learned to take people as they come and never make assumptions. I try to show respect first and foremost, and then I listen to what they are telling me.

Spencer Ellsworth,
Faculty and E-Learning Coordinator

I came to Western hoping to teach creative writing, then later decided I wanted to be a medievalist, and ended up doing neither. I did persist as a writer in speculative fiction, published numerous short stories, and won the Parsec Fiction Contest in 2010. There are quite a few things I wish I had studied more at Western. In my current job, comp theory and decolonization are two things you can't read enough about. But really, it wasn't the subject matter I learned at Western that made a difference, it was the adaptive and creative skills my best professors encouraged.

I graduated during the online-for-profit boom, and so the only real work I could find was with the online-for-profit colleges, trying my best to provide a real education to those students, for all that the admin was running a racket. For obvious reasons, I wanted to get out of that. Northwest Indian College called me a few days before the quarter started, asking me to teach some classes, and I really enjoyed it. Eventually I applied for their E-Learning Coordinator job, hoping that my experience in online education would help me manage the college's growing OL program. And it did.
Graduate Students Shine in Albuquerque

Our graduate students presented at the 2014 Southwest Popular American Culture Association Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. From left to right: Jessica Crockett, Chanel Brown, Caitlin Morris, Anna Lenau, and Lauren Hatch.

Alumni Writers Return

Three dynamic, distinguished alumni came to campus to read and speak about their work. This was a great chance for our students to meet and hear from alumni who have gone on to wide acclaim as poets, editors, filmmakers, nonfiction writers, professors, anthologists, and scholars.

Joshua Young, Julie Marie Wade, and Joshua Marie Wilkinson gave a joint reading to an enthusiastic crowd on Friday, May 16th, at 4 p.m. followed by a reception hosted by Bruce Beasley and Suzanne Paola, all to cap off the launch year of our MFA Program.

2015 WWU Children's/Young Adult Literature Conference

February 28, 2015 marked WWU’s 12th annual Children's/Young Adult Literature Conference. This year's featured speakers included four award-winning authors and illustrators including: Kate DiCamillo (National Ambassador for Young Peoples Literature and three-time Newbery Award recipient), Matt de la Peña (Pura Belpré Award winner for The Living and multi-year recipient of ALA/YALSA Best Books for Young Adults), Yuyi Morales (three-time Pura Belpré author/illustrator medalist), and Joyce Sidman (recognized with the 2013 NCTE Award for Excellence in Children's Poetry and author of numerous award-winning poetry books). WWU's Conference brings in attendees from across the state, the region, and the country. It's a day of celebration and inspiration for teachers, librarians, writers, artists, and children's literature aficionados. In addition, over 100 WWU students attended the 2014 Conference with 88 of those students serving as volunteers. We are committed to their attendance, offering the Conference at a very reduced rate, supported by donations.

Why not join us for the 2016 Conference? Check out the specifics (including Early Bird and group registration) at www.wwuclc.com.

Interested in sponsoring scholarships for WWU students? Please contact Nancy Johnson @ 360-650-3227 or Nancy.Johnson@wwu.edu.

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Jeopardy Magazine Makes the Half-Century

To celebrate the fiftieth edition of Jeopardy, the staff of the student-produced literary and fine arts magazine at Western Washington University held a special release party at 7 p.m. Wednesday, May 28, in the Whatcom Museum Lightcatcher building, which featured performances, refreshments, and distribution of the new issue.

Jeopardy serves as a way for undergraduates to learn about editing and publishing, and it also offers many students the first publication credit of their career.

Our New Faculty

Joshua Cerretti  
Critical and Cultural Theory, focusing on Queer, Feminist, Critical Race, Postcolonial, and Indigenous theoretical approaches

What were you like as a college age person?

From about 18-21, I was in college, but I wasn’t totally there. I entered college thinking it would be a relatively productive way to kill time until I could become a full-time touring musician. As I became increasingly disillusioned with the idea of playing music, I started to take school and my own life more seriously. By the time I finished college, I was just as curious as I had always been, but much more conscientious about the privilege of attending college and the responsibilities that it entailed.

Zoe Cohen  
Assistant Director of Composition  
Composition and Literature, American Drama, Gender Studies, Writing Instruction

What were you like as a college age person?

I was pretty quiet as an undergrad. To be honest, I spent most of my time babysitting and studying, but I also loved to go out to the theater or to hear live music. In a certain sense, not much has changed.

Support the English department online: http://www.wwu.edu/give
Our New Faculty (continued)

Elizabeth Colen  Hybrid Genres, Experimental Writing, Ecopoetics, and Literary Collage

What were you like as a college age person?

Working two full-time jobs and studying Neuroscience.

How did you come to your subject and this profession?

After several years of moving around, with a focus more on traveling and self-guided study (moving book-to-book and subject-to-subject at will), I moved to Atlanta, GA and became involved in the arts community there through photography. I sold prints at shows and to a few private collectors and started making individual collage pieces that incorporated text and image.

Theresa Warburton  Gender Studies, Multiethnic Women’s Literature, Indigenous Studies, Native literature of North America, Contemporary Anarchist and Anti-Authoritarian Theories and Social Movements

What were you like as a college-age person?

When I was in college, I found a pretty good balance between indiscriminately dipping into the course catalog at my small liberal arts school, discovering my love for naps, and exercising my freedom to not give a shit about things I'd previously thought were endlessly important. I found that I was deeply interested in things I'd never thought about before, most notably Russian literature and African cinema, but was also turning away from school as the definitive location of learning in my life. I learned to see myself in terms of communities of people and to explore what that meant. I also loved spending time alone, listening to music and reading. During this time, I got a reputation for saying I was 'just putting my shoes on' when asked how long I would be and then showing up an hour or two later. I was wonderfully distracted by information and experience. Suffice to say, I learned a lot this way.

Greg Youmans  Film and Media Studies, Documentary and Experimental Cinemas, LGBTQ History and Historiography, Queer and Feminist Theory

What were you like as a college age person?

I was an introverted queer kid, often painfully shy in the classroom. I double-majored in English and French literature. I read a lot, and certain authors, especially the many canonical queer French ones, absolutely blew my mind. I also wrote dark, tragic poems and short stories. I still have them but I haven't looked at them in over a decade. I'm building up the courage to reacquaint myself with that troubled earlier version of myself. As a teacher now, I'm always struck that the 18-to-21-year olds in the classroom seem so much more together than I was at their age, but I also know that, in many cases, these are just brave façades of normalcy.

Support the English department online:  http://www.wwu.edu/give
Please visit the gorgeous new Fall Online Edition of the Bellingham Review, which also debuts the new and improved Bellingham Review website. Big kudos and thank you to the Managing Editor Kaity Teer and Editor-in-Chief Brenda Miller for their excellent work on this huge project. http://bhreview.org/issue-69/.

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT AWARDS & SCHOLARSHIPS 2014

Nancy and Ralph Babcock
Bailey Cunningham
Danielle Fioretti

Bonnie Barthold Scholarship
Josepha Burke

RD Brown Scholarship
Jessica Lee
Nicholas Sweeney

Ethel Grady Church Scholarship
Ellie Rogers

Tuition and Fee Waiver
Jessie Ulmer
Margaret Starry

Leslie Hunt Memorial Poetry Award
Katelyn Kenderish

Nancy Johnson Scholarship
Sara Bull

William K. McNeil Creative Writing 1934
Anna Ulmer
Dee Dee Chapman

William McNeil English Literature
Tess Nakaishi
Kathryn Cronin

William Smith Technical Communication Scholarship
Victoria White

Evelyn Steger Scholarship
Ray Rine

Outstanding Senior:
Elizabeth Vignali

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ENGLISH TEACHER ALUMNI

Here’s our list of alumni who are currently English teachers in Elementary and Secondary Education. If you or someone you know should be on it, please let us know! We want to hear from you. Join us on our Facebook page @ Western Washington University English Department Alumni.

An asterisk indicates names added this year.

*Ask, Stefanie, Sitka High School AK
Baker, Laura, Bellingham High School, Bellingham WA
Baldwin (Larson), Jenni, The Overlake School, Redmond WA
Ballew (Mottola), Nina, Parkview Elementary School, Bellingham WA
Bault, Jodi, Vancouver School of Arts and Academics, Vancouver WA
Buckley, Colin, Nooksack Middle School, Nooksack WA
*Burnett, Damon, Bellingham High School, Bellingham WA
Busch, April, Friday Harbor High School, Friday Harbor WA
Caldwell, Natalie, Ferndale High School, Ferndale WA
Carroll, Lynn, Bellingham High School, Bellingham WA
Coats, Neva, Blaine High School, Blaine WA
Cochrun, Alison, Mountain View High School, Vancouver WA
Coulter, Grace, Kulshan Middle School, Bellingham WA
Dalvit, Kyle, Burlington High School, Burlington WA
Danforth, Paul, Burlington High School, Burlington WA
Engles, Melissa, Windward High School, Ferndale WA
Frlan, Dan, Lynden High School, Lynden WA
Gaulding, Erin, Shuksan Middle School, Bellingham WA
Gethyn, Chilcoat, Mount Vernon High School, Mount Vernon WA
Green, Becky, Singapore American School
Greve, Katelyn, Roosevelt High School, Seattle WA
*Gudgel, Kevin, Burlington-Edison High School, Burlington WA
Hancock, Alli, Mt. Baker Middle School, Mount Vernon WA
Harron, Nolan, Allen Elementary School, Bow WA
LaBlond, Logen, Lummi School, Bellingham WA
Lantz, Katie, Squalicum High School, Bellingham WA
Lupo Pete, Kulshan Middle School, Bellingham WA
Norem, Kate, The Bush School, Seattle WA
*Patnoe, Cassidy, Pacific High School, Sitka AK
*Rice, Lisa, Roosevelt High School, Seattle WA
Schoolcraft, Jodie, Kulshan Middle School, Bellingham WA
Setterlund, Todd, Burlington High School (Principal), Burlington WA
Shaffer, Adam, Ten Mile Creek Elementary School, Everson WA
Shimer, Shirley, Windward High School, Ferndale WA
Smith, Dana, Sehome High School, Bellingham WA
*Stanley-Kilpatrick, Rebecca, Wishkah Valley High School, Aberdeen WA
Stauffer, Rob, Fairhaven Middle School, Bellingham WA
Strommer, Sarah, Shuksan Middle School, Bellingham WA
Sullivan, Katie, Chinook Middle School, Lacey WA
Trangen, Edmund, Roosevelt High School, Seattle WA
Williams, Monica, Quitman County Elementary School, Lambert MS
Yearout, Laurie, Fairhaven Middle School, Bellingham WA
HERE COMES EVERYONE: LATEST NEWS FROM THE LIVES OF ALUMNI

Kaitlyn Abrams (BA 2013) worked with Conservation Northwest, the Puget Sound Writing Project, and the Alliance for Contraception in Cats & Dogs. She currently teaches English as a second language in Tbilisi, Georgia.

Heidi Aijala (MA 2013) anticipates being awarded her PhD in May 2018 from the University of Iowa, where she currently studies English Literature with a concentration in Victorian Studies. There, Aijala also teaches Rhetoric. She presented her paper, “(Mis) leading Meditations in Literature” at the Craft Critique and Culture Conference in April 2014.


Rebekah Anderson (BA 1997) is now Supervisor for the Customer Engagement Communications Department at Puget Sound Energy. Anderson also won the Silver Anvil Award for the Public Relations Society of America, and helped bring Lit Crawl— a literary pub crawl— to Seattle, WA, where she serves on the board.

James Andrews (BA 2010) is a reporter and editor for Food Safety News, and has worked there for the past four years. Andrews recently started a website called the Good Pack, promoting local music and supporting charities. He is currently in Vietnam writing a screenplay.

Roselia Arellano-Sandoval (Steward) (BA 2012) is now an instructor at Central Washington University, where she teaches Spanish in the World Languages Department.

Amber Asbjornsen (BA 2002) is Director of Development for Fairhaven College and the Office of Admissions at WWU.

Stefanie Ask (BA 2006) currently teaches at Sitka High School in Alaska. She and WWU-alumni Cassidy Patnoe led the Drama, Debate, and Forensics teams to three state championships.

Anna Attaway (BA 2013) is a second-year student at Harvard University.

Suzanne Bair (BA 2014) interned at Bellingham Alive! magazine and K&L Media as an editorial assistant, writer, and photographer. Her photo was featured on the cover of the October/November 2014 issue.

Taneum Bambrick (BA 2014) is studying in the MFA Program at the University of Arizona.

Michael Benedict (BA 2006) has a novella, Forth and Long, published as an Amazon Kindle Single this year. He completed his MFA at the University of Idaho and currently teaches at Lewis-Clark State College. 

Kili Bergau (BA 2008) graduated with an MA in Library and Information Science from the University of Washington Information School in June 2013. Bergau also studied in Tahiti to research indigenous systems of language, and curated an exhibit with the Digital Public Library of America. She works as MLIS/PhD Program Coordinator at the UW Information School.

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Here Comes Everyone: Latest News from the Lives of Alumni

Alissa Bily (BA 1994) is Operations Manager for iQ Academy Washington in Vancouver.

Sara Bjelke (BA 2012) serves as Daily Living Consultant at Workplace Options in Bellevue, WA.

Lori Brack (BA 2009) has poems recently published or forthcoming in Another Chicago Magazine, Mid-American Review, Weave, and burntdistrict, among others.

Rachel Broenkow (BA 2014) is studying poetry in the MFA Program at the University of Kansas.

Chanel Brown (MA 2014) presented her paper at the 2014 Southwest Popular/American Culture Association (SWPACA) Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Josh Browning (MA 2011) is an associate editor at Frost & Sullivan, a company that provides corporate training services and market research to industries across the globe.

Damon Burnett (BAE 2006 & MA 2012) is currently a full-time English teacher at Bellingham High School.

Anders Carlson-Wee (BA 2000) was awarded the 2014 NEA Fellowship in Poetry. He currently attends the MFA Program at Vanderbilt University in Nashville, TN. His work can be found in the 2012 and 2014 anthologies of Best New Poets: 50 Poems from Emerging Writers.

Ian Chant (BA 2007) is an associate editor at IEEE Spectrum, preparing manuscripts from career scientists for publication.

Zoe Cohen (MA 2014) was hired as Assistant Director of Composition at WWU in fall 2014. Her essay, “Peddlers,” was also published in Fourth Genre that season.

Leslie Copeland (MA 2011) works as an English instructor at Northwest Indian College.

Alison Cooper (BA 2013) is studying in the MFA Program at Columbia College in Chicago, and was awarded substantial funding.

Sarah Cooper-Wisness (BA 2004) works as a staff analyst at Boeing.

Iris Craig (BA 2011) serves as an AmeriCorps member in Denver, CO. Craig recently funded and produced a literary journal that publishes poems by her students at John Amesse Elementary in Spanish and in English. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=deOhkd8PxoQ

Jessica Crockett (MFA 2014) presented her paper at the 2014 Southwest Popular/American Culture Association (SWPACA) Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Crockett was an honorable mention for the 2014 Outstanding Graduate Student Award.

Support the English department online: http://www.wwu.edu/give
HERE COMES EVERYONE: LATEST NEWS FROM THE LIVES OF ALUMNI

Diane DeHaven (BA 1997) works as Executive Assistant to the Director of Sales at Standard TV & Appliance in Portland, OR.

Cameron Deuel (BA 2012) was hired as Marketing Coordinator for Funko, a pop culture focused toy company in Everett, WA. Deuel previously served as Content Coordinator for MediaNet, which focuses on digital music streaming and distribution. http://funko.com

Ian Denning (BA 2007 & MA 2009) works as Senior Content Editor for Killer Infographics in Seattle, WA. Denning also serves as Prose Editor for the Lettered Streets Press and tends bar at the Richard Hugo House. His recently-published fiction can be found in Washington Square Review, New Ohio Review, and Five Chapters, among others.

Bethany Denton (BA 2011) works as Outreach and Admissions Coordinator at Explorations Academy in Bellingham, WA. www.ExplorationsAcademy

Spencer Ellsworth (MA 2009) works as E-Learning Coordinator at Northwest Indian College in Bellingham, WA. His short story, "Five Tales of the Aqueduct," was recently published in the July/August 2014 issue of the Magazine of Fantasy & Science Fiction.

Natalie Emery (BA 2005) works as a Client Services Associate at Rentrak in Portland, Oregon.

Justin Ericksen (MA 2013) currently teaches English at Whatcom Community College in Bellingham, WA.

Zacchoreli Frescobaldi-Grimaldi (BA 2004 & MA 2007) serves as Project Manager and Fund Developer for the Center for Independence (CFI North Sound) in Bellingham, WA. Frescobaldi-Grimaldi also works as the Food & Wine columnist for K&L Media, and serves as a member of the City of Bellingham Parks Board.

Jake Frye (MA 2010) is in his second year of teaching as a full-time, tenure-track reading instructor at Green River Community College.

Wendy J. Fox (BA 1999) recently had her book, The Seven Stages of Anger and Other Stories, published by Press 53. The book was awarded the first 2014 Press 53 Award for Short Fiction.

Nick Gendreau (BA 2014) founded the B-Side, an arts, music, and literary magazine promoting artists in Bellingham, WA. He serves as Editor-in-Chief. http://bellinghambside.wix.com/bside

Abbie Glick (BA 2011) currently works as Site Content Manager for E-commerce at Starbucks.

Danielle Gray (BA 2003) is currently Associate Professor at Whatcom Community College.

Scott Grinsell (BA 2010) is studying in the Master in Teaching (MIT) Program at Seattle University with Elementary and English Language Learners (ELL) endorsements. He anticipates graduating in 2015.

Carter Hasegawa (BA 2001) is an assistant editor at Candlewick Press in Somerville, MA.

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Lauren Hatch (MA 2014) presented her paper at the 2014 Southwest Popular/American Culture Association (SWPACA) Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Laura Hayes (BA 2011) works at Boston University as a teaching fellow and graduate assistant. At the 2014 Northeast American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies Conference at Syracuse University, Hayes presented her paper, “A Product of One Hundred Climates: Natural Artifice and the Making of Femininity in The Rape of the Lock.”

Ruth Helman (BA 2014) is studying at the School of Library and Information Science at the University of Washington.

Cindy Hollenbeck (MA 2002) works as Marketing Communications Manager at the University of Idaho.

Matthew Holtmeier (MA 2008) is currently a Postdoctoral Teaching Fellow in Screen Studies at Ithaca College. He was a visiting professor at Western in 2013-2014.

James Houle (BA 1992 & MA 1997) has taught English in Aichi, Japan since 2002 through the Inuyama NET Program.

Jesse James Hutchings (BA 2012) works as a page at the King County Library System (KCLS), where he previously volunteered as an after-school assistant and tutor.

Emily Jackson (BA 2004) anticipates the publication of her memoir, While Glaciers Slept: Being Human in a Time of Climate Change, in May 2015. Currently, Jackson is pursuing a PhD in Geography and Earth Science at the University of Oregon. She also leads expeditions for the National Geographic Society. http://tinyurl.com/lp4ozrv

Nicole Jackson (BA 2014) works as Project Manager for Space Goat Productions, a comic book studio in Bellingham, WA.

Sierra Jacob (BA 2014) is studying poetry in the MFA Program at the University of Montana with a full tuition waiver and teaching assistantship. She also received a scholarship for academic achievement.

Jim Jewell (MA 2006) is a member of the English faculty at North Seattle Community College. He also serves as Communications Director for 14/48: The World's Quickest Theater Festival in Seattle, WA. http://the1448projects.org/about/

David Johnson (BA 2002) pursued a career in video production. He worked for C-SPAN in Washington, DC and is now Director of Education at TVW in Olympia, WA, where he writes and produces on-air and web-based education programs. Recently, Johnson won an Emmy Award for one of his documentaries. His article, “Turning the Nightmare into a Dream: Eraserhead Revisited,” was also published in Cinematic Detective. http://cinematicdetective.wordpress.com/

Katelyn Kenderish (MFA 2015) presented her paper, “This is the Oncome of Middle Age: Aging in Orlando,” at the 2013 Pacific Ancient and Modern Language Association (PAMLA) Conference.

Anna Lenau (MFA 2014) presented her paper at the 2014 Southwest Popular/American Culture Association (SWPACA) Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

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HERE COMES EVERYONE: LATEST NEWS FROM THE LIVES OF ALUMNI

Ethan Leonard (BA 2012) established the literary journal, Behemoth Review, and currently serves as Editor-in-Chief. http://behemothreview.com

Aaron Linde (BA 2007) is Lead Writer at Gearbox Software. There, he produced Battleborn, a “hero shooter” coming in September 2015 to PC, PS4, and Xbox. http://www.gearboxsoftware.com/

David Lister (MA 2002) serves as a paralegal at PATH, an international nonprofit health organization that values innovation. Lister also serves on the board of the Anchor Project, a new nonprofit in Seattle that mentors youth through the arts and community service. www.theanchorproject.org


Michelle Magnero (MA 2013) attends the PhD program at the University of South Carolina. She was awarded full funding and a teaching assistantship.

Darby McDevitt (BA 1998) was previously a writer and game designer for Foundation 9 Entertainment and Griptonite Games, and is now a scriptwriter at Ubisoft Montreal. In his last ten years as a writer, designer, and producer, McDevitt has shipped at least twenty video game titles for Ubisoft, Electronic Arts, Warner Brothers, and Disney, among others.

Michelle McMullin (MA 2014) was accepted into the Rhetoric and Composition PhD Program at Purdue University. She was also awarded the 2014-2015 Ross Fellowship for Graduate Study.

Caitlin Morris (MFA 2014) presented her paper at the 2014 Southwest Popular/American Culture Association (SWPACA) Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She is currently an Editorial Assistant at Pet Insight Magazine.

Hunter Motto (BA 2010) is the talent buyer for The Crocodile, a major music venue in Seattle. He books contemporary, indie, rock, pop, and urban music bands. http://www.thecrocodile.com/

Heidi Norgaard (BA 2008) works as a Customer Relationship Manager and Administrator for Salesforce.com. www.salesforce.com

Lee Olsen (MFA 2014) was accepted into the PhD Program at the University of Nevada with full funding. Olsen's piece, "Adequate Home," was also published in the Spring 2014 issue of Compose: a Journal of Simply Good Writing. http://composejournal.com/articles/adequate-home/ Other pieces were recently published in Bird's Thumb, Blotterature, and Under the Gum Tree.

Maria-Lynn Olsson (BA 2010) serves as a Literary Coach and Family Support Specialist at Washington Reading Corps in Kenmore, WA.

Joanna Owen (MA 2014) was recently hired as Operations Coordinator at Seattle University.


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HERE COMES EVERYONE: LATEST NEWS FROM THE LIVES OF ALUMNI

Cassidy Patnoe (BA 2009) currently teaches English at Pacific High School in Sitka, Alaska. Patnoe and WWU-alumni Stephanie Ask also led the Drama, Debate, and Forensics team to three state championships.

Rena Priest (BA 2005) works as a writer and administrator for the Lummi Indian Business Council in Bellingham, WA.

Melissa Queen (BA 2009) completed her MA in Creative Writing at Ohio University, and now teaches AP English at KIPP Public Charter School in Eastern North Carolina. Her work has recently been published in *Midwest Quarterly* and *Rattle*.

Ashia Radke (BA 2014) works as Program Assistant at the WWU Foundation.

Keenan Reed (BA 2006) is a writer, editor, and website developer at Thunderfrog Comics, publisher of the *Thunderfrog Charitable Anthology*, a comic series produced to raise money for Seattle Children's Hospital. [http://www.thunderfrogstudios.com/shop.html](http://www.thunderfrogstudios.com/shop.html)

Emma Redman (BA 2012) is now the owner of Blake's Pizzeria in Carnation, WA.

Lisa Rice (BA 2006 & MIT 2009) teaches Language Arts and supervises yearbook production at Franklin High School in Seattle, WA. Rice received funding from Google to provide her student reporters with cameras.

Alex Ruhsenberger (BA 2013) is studying in the MA Program at Montana State University with a full tuition waiver and teaching assistantship.

Matt Runkle (BA 1999) currently studies at the University of Iowa and serves as a member of the College Book Art Association Board. Runkle is the author of the zine *Runx Tales*, as well as the fiction collection, *The Story of How All Animals Are Equal & Other Tales*, published in December 2014 by Brooklyn Arts Press.

Rebecca Saxton (MA 2003) completed her MFA in Creative Writing at the Rainer Writing Workshop at Pacific Lutheran University in 2012. Her essay, "Falling from the Sky," written under the pseudonym Rebecca Mabanglo-Mayor, is forthcoming in the anthology *Kuvento: Lost Things – An Anthology of New Philippine Myths*.

Ariel Schmidtke (BA 2013) had her essay, "The Importance of the Imperfect," published in *Circus Now*, where she serves as Academic Editorial Assistant.

Ian Shuler (BA 2004) is now Content Specialist Copywriter for Ticketmaster in Seattle, WA.

Rebecca Stanley-Kilpatrick (BA 1998 & MA 2001) currently teaches English at Wishkah Valley High School in Aberdeen, WA.


Athena Stevens (MA 2001) works as Creative Director for UW Professional & Continuing Education (UWPCE).

Carly Stratton (La Plant) (BA 2011) is currently Executive Assistant at Bird Street Books. [http://birdstreetbooks.com/](http://birdstreetbooks.com/)

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HERE COMES EVERYONE: LATEST NEWS FROM THE LIVES OF ALUMNI


Wandaya Terry (BA 2010) is finishing her final year as a graduate assistant in the Literature MA program at Kent State University. She is currently an editor of the Graduate Student Newsletter, and served as an editorial intern at Kent State University Press last summer.

Samuel Travis (BA 2008 & MA 2011) was hired as Lead Customer Care Advocate at School Specialty, Inc. in January 2013.

Ethelyn Tumalad (BA 2011) studies at Portland State University's English Graduate Program.

Julie Marie Wade (MA 2003) won the 2014 To the Lighthouse Poetry Prize for Six, her poetry manuscript. She is currently Assistant Professor of Creative Writing at Florida International University.


Rachel Wallace (BA 2011) attends law school at the University of Washington, where she is Legal Extern for the Washington Appellate Project and President of the Student Bar Association.

Jennifer Whetham (MA 2001) works as Program Administrator at the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges.

Amanda White (BA 2014) accepted an admission offer from Central Washington University's English MA Program. She was also offered a teaching assistantship.

Carlee Wilson (BA 2014) previously worked as a writer and editor for WWU's Extended Education's Marketing Department, and now works as Marketing Communications Consultant at WWU.

Trace Wysaske (BA 2014) currently works as a News & Features Writer at Always Nintendo.


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THE LATEST FROM YOUR FACULTY

Kaveh Askari
Kaveh Askari’s essay, “An Afterlife for Junk Prints: Serials and Other ‘Classics’ in Late-1920s Tehran” was published in the volume, *Silent Cinema and the Politics of Space*. His article, “Art School Cinema: Rex Ingram and the Lessons of the Studio” also appeared in *Film History*. In addition, he co-edited the collection, *Performing New Media, 1890-1915* and wrote the preface to *Animated Eroded Landscapes: the Cinema of Ali Hatami*.

Bruce Beasley
Bruce Beasley’s book, *Theophobia* (2012), was selected as one of three finalists for the 2013 Washington State Book Award in poetry. His poem, “Disconnected Limbs Wandered Seeking Everywhere for Union” was also published in the *Indiana Review*. Other poems appeared in the *Cincinnati Review*, the *Gettysburg Review*, and *New American Writing*, among others.

Nicole Brown
Nicole Brown is currently working on two book projects about the rhetorical tradition. She continues to serve on the Writing Studies Committee, and also serves as Director of the Internship Program.

Josh Cerretti
Josh Cerretti received his PhD in Global Gender Studies from SUNY University at Buffalo, where he defended his dissertation, “Abuses of the Erotic: Militarizing Sexuality in the Post-Cold War United States.” He also presented, “‘We Wish to Leave Our Bones upon Our Lands’: Unsettling the Memory of the War of 1812” at the 2014 Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA) Conference.

Elizabeth Colen
Elizabeth Colen’s lyric essay and poem collection, *The Green Condition*, was published in 2014 by the University of Southern California. Her manuscript, *Neshaminy and the Weekly Top 40*, was a semi-finalist for a book contest by Subito Press. Colen’s prose poetry manuscript, *What Weaponry*, was also a semi-finalist for the Akron Poetry Prize.

Jeremy Cushman
Jeremy Cushman’s article, “Our Unstable Artistry: the Counterprofessional Practice of Donald Schon’s Problem-Setting” was recently published in *Journal of Business and Technical Communication*. In March 2014, he presented the paper, “Writing Diagnostic Narratives and Translating Repair” at the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC) in Indianapolis, IN.

Oliver de la Paz
Oliver de la Paz’s newest prose poetry collection, *Post Subject: A Fable*, was published by The University of Akron Press. His poems also recently appeared in the *Indiana Review*, *Tupelo Quarterly*, and *The Account*, among others.

Kristin Denham
Kristin Denham’s article, “Language Study as Inquiry: Rediscovering Parts of Speech” was accepted for publication in *ATEG Journal*. Additionally, she developed the new website: Exploring Language: Daily Language Investigations for English Language Arts, Grades 3-8, [http://www.explorelanguage.org](http://www.explorelanguage.org)

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Dawn Dietrich
Dawn Dietrich continues to serve as Director of Western Reads. With Sam Johnson of Wenatchee Valley College, she presented, “Buzz Tech: Hip New Films on the Post-Millennial Present” at the 112th Annual Pacific Ancient and Modern Languages Association Conference. There, she also chaired the session topic, “Comics and Graphic Narratives I.”

Julie Dugger
Julie Dugger's article, “I'm a Feminist, But…: Popular Romance in the Women's Studies Classroom” was accepted for publication in the peer-reviewed Journal of Popular Romance Studies.

Geraldine Forsberg
Geraldine Forsberg's essay, “Introducing Jacques Ellul to English Education,” appeared in the journal, Explorations in Media Ecology. This year, she was invited to present at Carleton University's Ellul Conference, the National Communication Association (NCA)'s 100th Annual Convention, and the Media Ecology Association (MEA)'s 15th Annual Convention.

Margaret Fox
Margaret Fox is writing a series of articles profiling local nonprofits for the Bellingham Herald quarterly magazines. In addition, she offered professional writing classes to managers at Whatcom Educational Credit Union, and edited grants and reports for Campus Compact, the statewide coalition of colleges and universities.

Allison Giffen
Allison Giffen's essay, “Lessons Learned: Genre and Paternal Desire in Martha Finley’s Elsie Dinsmore Series” was published in the collection, Romantic Education in Nineteenth-Century American Literature: National and Transatlantic Contexts. She was asked to present the paper at the 25th Annual Conference of the American Literature Association in Washington, DC, where she also chaired a panel.

Bruce Goebel
Bruce Goebel is currently writing a textbook for English 598, tentatively titled Teaching College Literature. He serves as Department Chair.

Carol Guess
Carol Guess's new book of prose poems, How to Feel Confident with Your Special Talents (co-authored with Daniela Olszewska), was recently published. She was awarded the 2014 Philolexian Award for Distinguished Literary Achievement by Columbia University's Philolexian Society. In addition, the poetry collection she wrote with Kelly Magee, The Reckless Reminder, was accepted for publication by Noctuary Press.

Lee Gulyas
Lee Gulyas's essays, “The Rest of the Story” and “Pastime,” were recently published in Full Grown People. In 2014, she was also a recipient of an Artist Trust's Washington State GAP Grant.

Nancy Johnson
Nancy Johnson's latest essay is the opening chapter in the new collection, One Big Story: Delving Deeper into Asian Children's Literature. Johnson continues to serve as Director of the Children's Literature Conference at WWU.

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THE LATEST FROM YOUR FACULTY

Kristiana Kahakauwila
Kristiana Kahakauwila’s essay, “The New Hawaiian Warrior,” appeared in the German magazine GEO International, and many of her poems were recently published by Chaminade Literary Review. Furthermore, her debut short story collection, This Is Paradise, received praise from the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, Elle, and O, The Oprah Magazine, among others.

Laura Laffrado

Christopher Loar
Christopher Loar’s new book, Political Magic: British Fictions of Savagery and Sovereignty, 1650-1750, was published by Fordham University Press. He also chaired the panel, “Natural History and Science,” and served on the program committee for the 2014 Society of Early Americanists Conference in London, UK.

Anne Lobeck
Anne Lobeck organized and presented on the panel, “The Story of Language” at the National Council of Teachers of English Convention in 2014.

Kathleen Lundeen
Kathleen Lundeen is currently working on a book-length study of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century astronomy, focusing on the literary and cultural contexts of the period.

William Lyne
William Lyne presented on taxes and tuition in Washington State at the Campaign for the Future of Higher Education Conference this year in New York City. He also presented, “The Big Enchilada: Extended Education and Family Contracts” at the NEA Higher Education Conference in St. Louis, Missouri. He is also the primary contributor of the United Faculty of Washington State Blog.

Kelly Magee
Kelly Magee’s new book of poetry, Reckless Remainder (co-written with Carol Guess), is forthcoming from Noctuary Press in 2016. Stories co-written by Magee and Guess were also published in The After Coetzee Project anthology, the Indiana Review, and Passages North, among others.

Kristin Mahoney
Kristin Mahoney’s article, “Devising and Interdisciplinary Teaching: A Case Study in Collaboration Between Theatre and Humanities Courses” (co-authored with Rich Brown of the WWU Theatre Department) was published in College Teaching. Her article, “The Transition to Modernism: Recent Scholarship on the Victorian/Modern Divide” was also published by Literature Compass.

Mary Janell Metzger
Mary Janell Metzger’s essay, “Teaching Shakespeare’s Tragedies as the Problem of Human Freedom,” was published in Shakespeare in the EFL Classroom by Heideleberg Press. She also presented, “Shakespeare and Philosophy” at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Shakespeare Association of America.
THE LATEST FROM YOUR FACULTY

Brenda Miller
Brenda Miller’s essay, “Ordinary Shoes,” was published in Brevity: A Journal of Concise Literary Nonfiction. Her essay, “Regeneration,” was also published in the anthology, True Stories, Well Told: From the First 20 Years of Creative Nonfiction Magazine. She continues to serve as Director of Graduate Studies at WWU.

Nancy Pagh
Nancy Pagh was nominated for an Outstanding Faculty Mentor Award by the WWU Alumni Association, and won second prize in the Wergle Flomp Humor Poem Contest. In addition, Pagh was nominated for the Pushcart Prize. Her latest poetry can be found in RHINO, Canadian Literature, and Valparaiso Poetry Review, among others.

Suzanne Paola
Suzanne Paola’s newest book, Make Me a Mother: A Memoir, was published in 2014 by W.W. Norton. Her novella, Stolen Moments, was also recently published as an e-book by Shebooks, a new digital publisher of women’s writing. More of Paola’s latest nonfiction and poetry can be found in Parade Magazine, Sweet, and Diagram, among others.

Christopher Patton
Christopher Patton’s poems, “His Step” and “Rest Stop” were published in New American Writing. Other poems recently appeared in Canadian Literature, Contemporary Verse 2, and the Colorado Review, and are forthcoming in Epiphany and Hunger Mountain. In 2013, he was nominated for the Pushcart Prize.

Donna Qualley

Lysa Rivera
Lysa Rivera was invited to the Latino Studies Symposium, where she will present a paper on Ernest Hogan’s High Aztech. She currently serves on the Editorial Board for the journal, Femspec.

Sara Stamey
Sara Stamey’s new novel, The Ariadne Connection, was accepted for publication by Book View Café.

Kathryn Trueblood
Kathryn Trueblood’s e-book, Diary of a Slut, was published by Shebooks, a new digital publisher of women’s writing. Her story “Anything But That,” appears in the winter 2015 issue of Referential Magazine: http://referentialmagazine.org/ She served as the advisor, organizer, and performance coach for “Stories Deployed: The Veteran Chronicles,” a public storytelling performance at WWU. She was also a presenter and workshop leader at the 2014 Port Townsend Writers Conference.

Kathryn Vulić
Kathryn Vulić presented her paper, “Catechetical Devotions in the Vernon Manuscript” at the 19th Biennial New Chaucer Society Congress in Reykjavik, Iceland. One of her essays was accepted for publication in Chaucer: Visual Approaches by Penn State University Press, forthcoming in spring 2016.

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Kami Westhoff
Kami Westhoff’s poems, “Butcher Day” and “The Last After,” were recently published in 2River View. Her poem, “Tiny Weapons” can also be found in the July 2014 issue of Stirring.

Christopher Wise
Christopher Wise wrote the foreword for the recently published book, The Tribulations of a Sahelian Traveler by Michel Tinguiri. He is currently conducting research to write about the civil war in Mali.

Jeanne Yeasting
Jeanne Yeasting’s poem, “Hooligan of Love,” was published in the Mojave River Review’s ekphrasis issue. Other poems were recently published in Cirque. In addition, Yeasting’s proposal for the presentation, “Doha Sparks: Using Digital, Random-Generator Technologies to Develop Authentic Voice in Creative Writers” was accepted at the Tenth International Conference on the Arts in Society in London, UK.

Greg Youmans
Greg Youmans delivered the paper, “One-Way Mirrors: Gay Auto/Ethnography in the 1970s” at the annual Society for Cinema and Media Studies Conference in March 2014. In collaboration with Chris Vargas, he screened a video at the Ann Arbor Film Festival and gave artist talks at Colgate University, Ithaca College, and the University of Chicago.

Ning Yu
Ning Yu is beginning research for a new book. He continues to be actively involved in the Association of Asian American Studies and the Association of Studies in Literature and the Environment.

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Grateful Thanks

Chair Bruce Goebel and Associate Chair Kate Trueblood

Dear Alumni,

We want to start by saying thank you for all the good news you generate, especially given that good news is hard to come by. When we assemble the news you send us from far-flung places, we are amazed and astounded. In the world you are creating, there is kindness, strength, mentorship, and daring. The list of nonprofits you run or contribute to is remarkable: Conservation Northwest, the Puget Sound Writing Project, Food Safety News, Seattle Children's Hospital, The Anchor Project, and the Center for Independent Living North Sound, to name a few.

The future you envision reaches out to young and old through the expressive arts. You are directing or serving on the boards of many literary arts organizations. Lit Crawl, the Chuckanut Writers Conference, Kahini.org, and the 14/48 Projects are those we know of. You are paying forward the mentoring you received as teachers by teaching in schools at every level in the United States and abroad—in all your free time, writing grants to bring technology into your classrooms or coaching your students to win state championships.

You are influencing the social conversation by founding publishing houses, literary journals, and film production companies; by writing and designing for comic book studios and game companies; by winning awards and racking up publishing credentials too numerous to mention. You are writing about technology, and music, and translating the language of career scientists into concepts the populous can understand. You are showing us a way into the future of jobs by serving as content managers and marketing strategists in so many contexts, among them Boeing, Starbucks, Digipen, Gearbox, Nintendo, and Ticketmaster. Whether you are leading an expedition for the National Geographic Society or curating an exhibit for the Digital Public Library of America, you are all adventurers; you are all world-makers; and you've done us proud.

As grateful as we are for the good news, we have to tell you, back here at the ranch, this has been the year of “No.” Our department budget has not been increased in eight years and the toll is real. No funds to bring professionals into the classroom as speakers; no funds for students to attend live screenings of Shakespeare at the Lincoln Theatre; no funds for film showings at the Pickford; no funds to send students to conferences; no funds for matching scholarships to the Port Townsend Writers Conference, and others. We are losing opportunities that are very specific to students, and it is heartbreaking. Students may not remember what they learned in class, but they will remember the professional they met face-to-face; they will remember the performance; or the opportunity they had for their careers. So, we are putting out an all-points bulletin, inviting you to be the professionals that come to speak to our classes, inviting you to be the contributors to the programs that were memorable to you.

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Game Designer Darby McDevitt Turns to Collaboration Designer, Ubisoft Games

Learn to say Yes. After four university years, this was the one word I still couldn't say properly. Sure, my profs and colleagues at WWU had given me all the tools needed to learn this valuable mantra, but a diluting mix of arrogance and independence rendered me mute when it came to Yes. I almost learned it too late.

I graduated in 1998 with a degree in English Lit, tripping out the door with copies of Joyce and Pynchon in my saddlebag. Like them I had every intention of publishing my first novel within three years of graduation. I’d spend the following two responding to interview requests.

Instead I toiled for another ten, finishing what was left of my education, sanding the corners of myself that might have been smoothed years earlier had I said Yes to the incredible opportunities strewn across campus. The Bellingham Review, Klipsun, KUGS—valuable outlets for an aspiring writer and creator. They beckoned and my incredible instructors shooed me thither. But I ignored them all in service of me. I cannot fathom why.

Post-Uni, I applied for numerous jobs in public radio, publishing, journalism. Failures all. I had no portfolio, no practical experience, and no feeling for collaboration. I tried to publish short stories but they were subhuman, lacking a lived-in, inclusive sensibility. At last I found work in video games, a medium still struggling with rudimentary narratives. A local company needed a writer, but didn't know what we looked like. Me, I told them.

Since then I have worked as a writer, designer, and producer on over 20 games—some grand, many modest—published by Ubisoft, Electronic Arts, Warner Brothers and Disney, among others. On every single project all the old lessons of my university years applied: Say Yes to collaboration, Yes to conversation, Yes to new and odd and difficult opportunities. Say Yes to taking on work you've never done, and Yes to work you think you've finished. My beloved profs taught me that. It only took me fifteen years to listen.

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Elizabeth Vignali Takes First Place in the Avon Impulse College Contest and Wins the Attention of a HarperCollins Editor

In September 2011, fifteen years after graduating from high school, I stepped on WWU's campus as a student for the first time. Here I was—an optician by trade, a mother of two, a sometimes-writer—surrounded by fresh-faced twenty-somethings and businesslike instructors who all looked terrifyingly purposeful. I was here after shunning academia for years out of the vague notion that I could be a perfectly good writer without higher education.

I’ll be forever grateful I changed my mind.

During my time at WWU, I grew tremendously as a writer and human being. While I was a “perfectly good writer,” I’d been missing out on the things that might contribute to being a great writer. There is no substitution for instruction from a professor who is passionate about their subject, no replacement for workshopping in class with other creative writers, and no better feeling than being surrounded by people who love what you love.

More practically, there were opportunities available to me only as a college student. I was fortunate enough to be awarded scholarships toward my education, as well as for the Chuckanut Writers Conference and the Port Townsend Writers Conference. I entered a novel-writing contest open only to college students. When I won first place in the Avon Impulse College Contest, I attracted the attention of an editor at HarperCollins who is now waiting for me to finish my novel and send it to her.

I am no longer a student. Once again, I am an optician, a mother, a writer. But now I’m a writer who had a life-changing education. I’m a writer who has a community: some of those terrifying twenty-somethings and instructors are among my closest friends. I’m a writer who has opportunities. Speaking of which, it’s time to get back to that novel.
Filmmaker Caleb Young Wins American Advertising Federation Awards

Since graduating in 2005 with a BA in Creative Writing, I tried to make a living in independent film, which meant spending my wife's hard-earned money. I then went to back to school at Woodring and almost became a teacher—except there were really no teaching jobs in the area. Luckily, a job at Hand Crank Films landed in my lap on the day I found out I wasn't getting the job that I thought I'd landed.

Since then, I have directed close to 150 commercials (most of them Hand Crank Films), and have won two Silver Addys (American Advertising Federation Awards) for my work with Huxley and Bellingham Technical College, as well as a Gold Addy for my work with Mackie Speakers. I have been fortunate enough to work with amazing international clients such as Amazon, Intel, PGC Basketball and Paccar, as well as local clients Vital Choice, the WWU Foundation, Tony's Coffee, Copper Canyon Press and SPIE. Working locally is pretty incredible because I work with a lot of WWU alumni as clients and as colleagues. A lot of us took the same classes and have been able to bring that knowledge into our work. And there is an instant connection when we talk about our time at Western.

I always planned on making films, but my time studying Creative Writing and Film at WWU really showed me how much more I needed to learn about what I wanted to say and more importantly, how to say it. Then I had to figure how to implement that knowledge in my work. A few years after school, I found my voice and directed the feature film, *Do You See Colors When You Close Your Eyes?* (written by my brother and fellow alumnus, Joshua Young), which was Official Selection at Seattle International Film Festival and played around the world. I have recently become a freelance director (calling my company CYoung Creative), though I continue to work with Hand Crank Films on a contract basis.

This summer, I directed a feature film, *Into the Lavender Creases of Evening*, which is currently in post-production, as well as developing a feature film based on Joshua's short story "The Children Smell of Gasoline and Smoke." In the next two years, we plan make three films—all written by Joshua Young (of course). And honestly, if it weren't for our time at Western, I wouldn't be here.

I had a few professors (you know who you are), who not only supported me, but also challenged me. They believed in me and demanded only the best work from me. Those professors have had a huge impact on my creative work and my career.

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Abbie Glick Finds Success as Content Manager at Starbucks

The path from Western to Starbucks has been anything but straight. I got my first gig at butter LONDON, an indie cosmetics company, through a friend. I started at the bottom (as they say) and because I had an inherent fascination with the digital space, it gave me an edge on everyone who had studied traditional retail. I was really able to carve my own way within the company, and I learned to be scrappy with limited funds and resources. It's the best place I could have cut my teeth, really. What I've learned so far in my career journey is that if you're in tune with your gut, and stick to your guns, things work out.

Everyone gets the, “What are you going to do with a writing degree?” question when they graduate, but it never bothered me. I've always been able to communicate much better in written word, and in the digital realm, it's key. Being able to effectively communicate an idea, persuade a colleague to support your initiative or motivate a team to join your cause is what makes any leader or professional successful and being able to do it through a quick e-mail is powerful.

Having recently joined an established corporation like Starbucks after beginning at a startup has been a culture shock. But I understand what makes Starbucks so successful, and it is the leaders within the organization. It makes such a difference to be around leaders who are open to all ideas—no matter their origin—and openly talk about career growth, and even encourage it!

To those of you who are still students, I would say don't dwell as much on grades or obsess about the future, but rather focus time on building connections (inside and outside the campus). The adage, "It's about who you know," is completely true, so your ability to market yourself in a way that's original and sets you apart — that's what people are hiring for these days. I would also say don't back away from a job that seems "lesser than you;" we all start somewhere. I started out answering customer phone calls, but eventually ran the entire e-commerce channel for a business. There's an opportunity in every task.

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Jennifer Whetham  
Program Administrator and Faculty Development Coordinator for the Washington State Board for Community & Technical Colleges

After my time as a graduate student at WWU from 1999 to 2001, my career trajectory led to multiple positions as English faculty at several community colleges in Washington State, where I taught the full range of writing and literature courses — from the lowest levels of developmental writing to 200-level Shakespeare courses. As tenured English faculty at Green River Community College, I was inspired by the two courses in Contemporary American Poetry I took from Dr. Bruce Beasley (still reverberating!). I created a new course—the Poetics of Rap and Hip Hop. In my current appointment as Program Administrator for Faculty Development at the Washington State Board for Community and Technical Colleges (SBCTC), I manage and provide strategic direction for professional development—creating large-scale learning opportunities for educators who teach in the 34 community and technical colleges in our system.

While at WWU, I learned a great deal, of course, about the craft and writing of contemporary American poetry, my major (both from the lens of a literary critic and from the craft perspective), say nothing of composition and rhetoric, the genre of creative nonfiction, film theory, technical writing, and a host of other subjects. However, as I create events to promote effective teaching, enhance student learning, and advance a statewide climate of faculty innovation, it is my apprenticeships in the art and craft of teaching from the exceptional faculty at WWU that continually refreshes and rejuvenates me.

In my very first graduate level course, Marc Geisler took the emergent technology of e-mail (before it was ubiquitous) and employed it to foster deeper learning and connection between the members of my cohort. Years later, reading Jane Tompkin’s “Pedagogy of the Distressed,” I suddenly grokked the magnitude of his design—a classroom that did not divorce his pedagogical practices from his disciplinary and ethical values. At the same time, taking a course from Bruce Beasley that also embodied his values (and his tremendous intellectual passion and energy), I learned, through his assignments and his feedback on my writing, not only my capacities and potentials as a writer, but also how to give feedback in ways that empower, rather than disenfranchise. My work as a tutor at the Writing Center allowed me to witness Roberta Buck and Carmen Werder embody the theory (and paradoxes—we make better writers, not necessarily better papers) of Writing Center pedagogy, as well as providing me with grounded experience in writing across the curriculum in a variety of classrooms. In her creative nonfiction workshop, Suzanne Paola showed me how to create a community of writers—one where my peers and I learned to both support and challenge each other in the recursive process of further uncovering the depths of our own stories—our own narratives.

As a faculty member, I was a pastiche. I took so much from these teachers and synthesized it. Any success I had in the classroom I take from them.

In my interactions with our CTC faculty, I see that they are still dipping into the well of creativity, so to speak. They change what they are doing. They stay current. They do not get stale. There are a large number of WWU grads teaching and holding admin positions in our system, and they are always well-respected and “good hires.” At schools where I have been faculty, WWU has a reputation of turning out exceptionally trained graduates—people recognize the school and the degree. I am honored to be among them.

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I believe that what we are doing here at NWIC is something radically different than what mainstream or predominantly white institutions are doing. A person or faculty member here should ideally be a tribal member who has invested a great deal of time in understanding the many aspects and minutiae of the larger work being done here. We often say, “the real work.”

I began working here as a research intern for the Coast Salish Institute while still a student at Western. That job afforded me an opportunity to do ancestral recovery work for the Semiahmoo burial disturbance, which coincided with the same time period. During that time, I completed the anthropological graduate courses with Todd Kochee and Sarah Campbell at WWU and was certified (essentially) with the same credentials as the students completing their graduate degrees. All of which took place at the same time I was attempting to learn to speak two different coastal languages other than Lummi and completing my BA at Western.

It is precisely that training, my cultural upbringing, and the many people who worked with me that I think offered me a unique perspective on the work of decolonization. When we have teachers come from WWU or anywhere really, it is a wonderful opportunity for them to increase their capacities for teaching and begin to culminate a pedagogy that would make them of value, not only to us, but also elsewhere; however, for a multitude of reasons, that is not often the case.

It goes without saying that the intended purpose of the predominantly white institutional higher-education-grinding-wheel is to weed out the weak and effectively breed another generation of people who believe themselves to be part of the status elite (the illusionary dominant society). The belief is that if one accomplishes the successful completion of a degree, one is then afforded privilege. Perceived privilege is pervasive beyond any one man’s control, and despite good intentions and strong convictions, it will manifest in its most malicious forms.

It is that perceived privilege coupled with the parental guidance they may have received throughout their lives that often prevents faculty who come here from reaching a level of enlightened understanding, respective to their pedagogical growth and/or their personal and professional development or even their own investment in being here. It is of course no fault of their own other than the fact that they drank the Kool-Aid that was served to them.

Where it becomes problematic for me as a tribal member and as an administrator or faculty member of NWIC is when people of that thought process must take instruction or guidance from someone such as myself. In short, it is impossible to acquire another perspective when viewing the world through the rose-colored lenses of perceived privilege. It doesn’t stop me from trying to do my part though. Decolonization begins in the same place that recovery does (at rock bottom), and yes, it is an inside job requiring the acceptance and eventual support of like-minded people.

Not only do we (Native people) need to begin working on the decolonization process, but non-native people must also do the same thing. Again, acceptance is the key. The idea of privilege and status that remains pervasive within American literature and the American psyche must be contended with. Rather than blindly continuing to pursue the fictional Indian, non-natives must begin to see that the Indians in front of them are real human beings deserving of the very same inherent privileges as any of the Creator’s other creatures.

Not a day goes by without me thinking about what our former president Cheryl Crazy Bull used to say; she would say that the work we do is about saving the lives of Indian people and my experience tells me that she is absolutely correct. I do not do the work I do because I get paid or because I think that my education or degree affords me privilege or status because it clearly does not, nor do I do it because it is my intention to ascend the institutional hierarchy.

I do this work because I believe my ancestors have shown me the way here so that I am able to be of benefit to my people and my community. I do it because my kids and grandkids will live and grow in this community. Hopefully, that all occurs with a decolonized mind and spirit.
Rebecca Saxton  
Faculty at NWIC

As a child of immigrant parents who moved to Washington State in the late 1950s, I was raised to live the American Dream. My parents believed that assimilation into American culture would ensure my success in life and it wasn't until I attended WWU that I began to question the validity of that dream. During my second year of graduate school, I was invited by Rosanne Kanhai to attend a Women of Color Conference in Vancouver, BC. I accepted her invitation because I was curious about what “those” academics did and came away with an understanding that my assimilation had caused me to see myself as exotic and “other.” That conference led me to explore the effects of colonization on myself and my family through the lens of creative nonfiction, an exploration that continues to this day in the form of essays and performance storytelling.

WWU also provided me the opportunity to learn about literary publishing through my experience as an assistant editor of the Bellingham Review. This experience, along with previous undergraduate work in physics and mathematics, provided the tools for me to work as a production editor for four peer-reviewed journals published by SPIE, an optics and photonics membership society. Although I found scientific editing challenging and the topics interesting, I kept in mind my experience teaching an upper-division undergraduate comparative literature class soon after completing my MA. I had focused my classes on the postcolonial literatures of past and present U.S. colonies, and wanted to continue the lively academic discussion present in those classes. I decided to complete my MFA in Creative Writing at the Rainier Writing Workshop of Pacific Lutheran University and soon after heard of an open faculty position at North-west Indian College.

The idea of teaching at a tribal college intrigued me; here was an opportunity to merge my writing and editing experience with my interest in cultural theories about decolonization. Over the past two years, I have learned that my experience as a child of immigrant parents is very similar to what my Native American and First Nations students have experienced within their own families. I have learned as much as I have taught; my days are filled with discussions of sovereignty and self-determination alongside placement of colons and in-text citations. As my students move toward a better understanding of the issues affecting their tribes, I have moved into a deeper understanding of what I hope to communicate through my fiction and creative nonfiction.

For me, it all comes back to narrative and I think that's why I became a regular performer with the Bellingham Storytellers Guild. The master narratives of assimilation attempt to silence descendants of immigrants and Native Americans alike in order to mask the legacy of colonialism: historic oppression. Telling the unheard stories of oppressed peoples in both oral and in written form shifts social consciousness. I feel privileged to work with tribal students who are dedicated to creating a more sustainable society for themselves and others, and to walk a path set by my experience at WWU. My advice to future WWU alumni is to follow those ideas that make you question what you once believed to be true.

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Leslie Copeland  
Faculty at NWIC

Before I came to Western for the MA, I was a single mother and I had worked as a customer service rep at AT&T for six years in Seattle. The customer service skills I learned there helped a lot in teaching! I have a BA in English and History from New Mexico State University, and I had wanted to go back and get an MA for many years. I wanted to further my writing, and I was tired of working for a corporation just to make money for someone else—and of course, I wanted to be a good example to my daughter. I wanted to do something that would be meaningful and not just profitable, and I felt the call to teach.

Growing up, I lived on two wildlife refuges and spent a lot of time in South Dakota and New Mexico roaming the wilderness. My father worked for the Federal Fish and Wildlife Service and both my parents were previously park rangers. My reaction to the solitude was to start reading and writing a lot, and making up stories. When I moved to Socorro, New Mexico, I became part of a small, close-knit community with many Hispanic and Native people. I just learned to take people as they come and never make assumptions. I try to show respect first and foremost, and then I listen to what they are telling me.

The thing with respecting the primacy of tribal identity is that as a white teacher of Native Americans, I walk a very fine line. I must avoid attempting to assimilate Natives into white culture while simultaneously teaching them how to function in it. I must respect the fact that I cannot know what it is to have their identity or experience, while I teach them to research and explore it. There are cultural traditions that, for example, only Lummi pass on to other Lummi, and I have no part in that, nor am I to know about that. My motto is that I only take what I am given, and that has worked well for me so far. I have let my students take the lead at times and invited them to share with me so that we can understand each other better, and many of them have done so.

Also, because tribal identities are so sensitive, I make a point of not sharing anything I happen to learn about religious or cultural traditions. I think this is just basic respect. I don't romanticize Native Americans as some people do; I accept who they are on both an individual and tribal basis, and I accept who I am, and if I learn some wisdom along the way, all the better.

One reason I teach is just so I can hang out with all these interesting and fabulous people who also teach! When I was a student teacher at WWU, collaborating with the other student teachers provided the most development for me. I still look to other teachers at NWIC for ideas and support. Even now, I get feedback on my writing from those who were in my graduate program. I'm in a writing group with one of them, and I still collaborate with some of my professors from WWU. Quite a few of us have books in the works and we support each other, going to readings, spreading information via social media, and even editing and critiquing one another's work. So I would say it's a pretty wonderful sense of community that I have now, compared to where I was ten years ago.

I would encourage current graduate students to collaborate as much as possible and get to know everyone. Participate in as many activities as you can manage. I have seen really wonderful projects spring up between people because they met in a class or worked on the Bellingham Review together. There's something about the intensity of graduate school—the way it stirs up minds—that allows this to happen. While I took writing papers and going to conferences seriously, when I look back now, it's the relationships I forged that proved to be the true value of graduate school.

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Spencer Ellsworth,  
Faculty and E-Learning Coordinator

I came to Western hoping to teach creative writing, then later decided I wanted to be a medievalist, and ended up doing neither. I did persist as a writer in speculative fiction, published numerous short stories, and won the Parsec Fiction Contest in 2010. There are quite a few things I wish I had studied more at Western. In my current job, comp theory and decolonization are two things you can't read enough about. But really, it wasn't the subject matter I learned at Western that made a difference, it was the adaptive and creative skills my best professors encouraged.

I graduated during the online-for-profit boom, and so the only real work I could find was with the online-for-profit colleges, trying my best to provide a real education to those students, for all that the admin was running a racket. For obvious reasons, I wanted to get out of that. Northwest Indian College called me a few days before the quarter started, asking me to teach some classes, and I really enjoyed it. Eventually I applied for their E-Learning Coordinator job, hoping that my experience in online education would help me manage the college's growing OL Program. And it did. MORE

Going into this job, I had a lot of learned experience in online class design and supervision but I did not have a real qualifying degree. I accepted the fact that I would have to learn on the fly.

My time at Western gave me an understanding of professional confidence. Kate Trueblood used the aphorism, “We're all working under false passports,” to explain imposter syndrome. I wasn't all that great at literary theory and contemplated dropping out because I felt so challenged. Kate and other teachers encouraged me to do the best work I could, stretch myself, and not to judge myself ahead of time.

I also learned that you should try a little bit of everything if you can. I taught; I helped select books for Western Reads; I worked as an editor for the Journal for Educational Controversy; I coordinated an internship program; and I did an internship in publishing. I wrote fiction, nonfiction, graphic novels, and literary studies. Then again, I burned out a little, so make sure you pace yourself!

At NWIC, we can't assume that the students are coming in with an understanding of what college requires, and we also realize that our students are more likely to have cultural and family obligations. We must realize that each student harbors insecurities, fears, hidden issues such as dyslexia, and only by really becoming involved and interested in their lives can we deal with these things.

There's a great sense of decolonization here. We really try to look at the ways that colonization has shaped our thinking—the way Americans unconsciously focus on globalization rather than on a sense of place, the prevalence of homogenization in education, and of course the extended reading of culture and privilege. Assumptions of Western cultural norms won't do.

One thing I would say to help Western students is: be willing to try new things. That's general life advice, but resist the urge to aim for one slot. A bachelor's and/or master's in English prepares you spiritually for a lot of things, if not on a resume. Get a broad skill base so you don't find yourself qualifying for only three jobs a year.

Also: really understand decolonization. We can't keep giving lip service to post-colonialism and then toss French philosophers at students, declaring them the godfathers. Students need to read the manifestos, the works from the trenches. You’ll learn more about postcolonialism from Vine DeLoria Jr's “Anthropologists And Other Friends” than you will from Foucault.

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Alumni Writers Return

Three dynamic, distinguished alumni came to campus to read and speak about their work. This was a great chance for our students to meet and hear from alumni who have gone on to wide acclaim as poets, editors, filmmakers, nonfiction writers, professors, anthropologists, and scholars.

Joshua Marie Wilkinson, Julie Marie Wade, and Joshua Young gave a joint reading to an enthusiastic crowd on Friday, May 16th, at 4 p.m. followed by a reception hosted by Bruce Beasley and Suzanne Paola, all to cap off the launch year of our MFA Program.

On Saturday, May 17th, in beauty of the Old Main Solarium, the three panelists offered an informal roundtable discussion about their writing and publishing careers including tips they learned while in the field and at their writing desks. When Joshua Young said that he “writes in order to teach, and not the other way around,” his sentiment was echoed in heartfelt ways by the other two panelists. These three will keep the home fires burning for a long time to come!

JOSHUA MARIE WILKINSON graduated in 2000 from Woodring College with a degree in English Education. He is the author of seven collections of poetry, including the book-length poem Lug Your Careless Body Out of the Careful Dusk, which won the Iowa Poetry Prize, and The Book of Whispering in the Projection Booth (Tupelo Press). He has edited several anthologies of essays and poetry, including Poets on Teaching, featuring 99 essays on the art of teaching poetry (University of Iowa Press); and a collection of essays titled Anne Carson: Ecstatic Lyre (forthcoming from the University of Michigan Press). He is an Assistant Professor in the MFA program at the University of Arizona, where he won the College of Humanities Distinguished Teaching Award in 2014. Additionally, he runs a poetry journal called The Volta.

JULIE MARIE WADE graduated from our M.A. program in 2003. She is the author of three poetry collections and three nonfiction books: Wishbone: A Memoir in Fractures (Colgate University Press, 2010, winner of the Colgate University Press Nonfiction Book Award and the Lambda Literary Award for Lesbian Memoir); Small Fires: Essays (Sarabande Books, 2011); Tremolo: An Essay (Bloom Books, 2013). Most recently, she won the 2014 To the Lighthouse Prize from the Room of Her Own Foundation for her manuscript “Six.” She has also won the Thomas J. Hraska Nonfiction Prize, and a Kentucky Council for the Arts Individual Artist Fellowship for Creative Nonfiction. Her poetry books include Without: Poems (Finishing Line Press, 2010); Postage Due: Poems & Prose Poems (White Pine Press, 2013: winner of the Marie Alexander Poetry Series award); and When I Was Straight: Poems (A Midsummer Night’s Press, 2014). An assistant professor in the MFA program at Florida International University, she is married to Angie Griffin and lives in Dania Beach.

JOSHUA YOUNG graduated from our MA Program in 2009. He is the author of The Holy Ghost People (Plays Inverse Press, 2014), When the Wolves Quit: A Play-in-Verse (Gold Wake Press), To the Chapel of Light (Mud Luscious Press/Nephew), and The Diegesis written with Chas Hoppe (Gold Wake Press). His poetry and prose have appeared in from Puerto del Sol, Gulf Coast, Fugue, Vinyl, Court Green, and Salt Hill, among others. He wrote the feature film, Do You See Colors When You Close Your Eyes? (directed by his brother Caleb Young), and it was an official selection at the Seattle International Film Festival, the Montreal International Black Film Festival, and the Athens International Film Festival. He is also co-founder and editor-in-chief for The Lettered Streets Press and the Associate Director of Poetry & Nonfiction at Columbia College, Chicago. He lives in Wicker Park with his wife, their son, and their dog.

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NEW FACES IN OUR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Joshua Cerretti: Critical and Cultural Theory, focusing on Queer, Feminist, Critical Race, Post-Colonial, and Indigenous Theoretical Approaches

What were you like as a college age person?

From about 18-21, I was in college, but I wasn't totally there. I entered college thinking it would be a relatively productive way to kill time until I could become a full-time touring musician. As I became increasingly disillusioned with the idea of playing music, I started to take school and my own life more seriously. By the time I finished college, I was just as curious as I had always been, but much more conscientious about the privilege of attending college and the responsibilities that it entailed.

How did you come to your subject and this profession?

My passion for social justice initially led me to take a lot of courses in political science, economics, and international studies, because I thought those subject areas would give me the tools I needed to make positive change in the world. Instead, I found a lot of methods for assessing injustice, but very few for changing it. Thus began my education in Women's Studies, Ethnic Studies, Queer Studies, American Studies, and other interdisciplinary fields that simultaneously satisfied my thirst for knowledge and hunger for justice. I now have a BA, an MA, and a PhD in Women's and Gender Studies and focus my work in the classroom on giving my students the tools they need to make positive change in the world.

What lead you to choose Western?

The Northwest is a fantastic part of the country filled with incredible vistas, exciting cities, and vibrant communities both Indigenous and immigrant. Bellingham is the smallest city I've ever lived in, but there's still so much to do and a real dedication to what makes this town unique. Western's student-centric approach is a breath of fresh air and there seems to be a real sense of community from the upper administration down that is sometimes lacking elsewhere.

Tell us something about yourself that we might never guess?

I'm a bit of a neat-freak or, as I like to call it, a “Tidy Monster.”

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NEW FACES IN OUR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

ZOE COHEN:

Assistant Director of Composition
Composition and Literature, American Drama,
Gender Studies, Writing Instruction

What were you like as a college age person?

I was pretty quiet as an undergrad. To be honest, I spent most of my time babysitting and studying, but I also loved to go out to the theater or to hear live music. In a certain sense, not much has changed.

How did you come to your subject and this profession?

For as long as I can remember I have loved reading, writing, and thinking about gender and literature, especially drama. I remember feeling astounded and delighted my first semester of college when I was allowed to take two introductory Women's Studies courses, an intro to Shakespeare, and an intro to LGBT lit. I'm pretty sure I resolved immediately never to leave. My interest in Writing Studies and Composition actually came as something of a surprise to me in graduate school and is turning out to be an area that excites and challenges me.

What lead you to choose Western?

I moved to Bellingham from the Midwest so that my fiancé could attend graduate school here. We stayed because I fell in love with the English Studies graduate program, particularly the emphasis on teaching experience and the way it allowed me to invest my energy in both critical and creative work (as if these have ever been two separate things). We both love this part of the country, even if we occasionally miss the Great Lakes.

Tell us something about yourself that we might never guess?

I bake a mean pie, especially of the pumpkin variety. I'm not really the cook in my family, but replicating my mom's amazing pie crust is my one special kitchen skill. It is probably the closest thing I have to a superpower.

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NEW FACES IN OUR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

Elizabeth Colen: Hybrid Genres, Experimental Writing, Ecopoetics, and Literary Collage

What were you like as a college age person?
Working two full-time jobs and studying neuroscience.

How did you come to your subject and this profession?
After several years of moving around, with a focus more on traveling and self-guided study (moving book to book and subject to subject at will), I moved to Atlanta, GA and became involved in the arts community there through photography. I sold prints at shows and to a few private collectors and started making individual collage pieces that incorporated text and image. All the while I was writing stories as well. For a long time I juggled time between writing and photography. Though visual art continues to influence everything I do, somewhere around age 25 or 26, writing won. I started with fiction, then moved to poetry, now I do a little bit of everything.

And teaching? Well, just the idea of getting into a room every week where 25 people have all read the same material is kind of the most exciting thing this book nerd can think of.

What led you to choose Western?
Western provides a perfect confluence of elements. Proximity to the water and mountains, this beautiful town, two nearby metropolises, and the opportunity to work with an amazing community of colleagues in the English department, dedicated teachers, academics, and writers all well recognized in their respective disciplines. I was also drawn to the emphasis on hybrid genres and experimental writing and the fact that Western represents such a diversity of English Studies disciplines; I hope to develop courses in literature of AIDS, ecopoetics, literary collage, and the contemporary epistolary novel.

Tell us something about yourself that we might never guess?
I am addicted to watching So You Think You Can Dance.

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NEW FACES IN OUR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

THERESA WARBURTON: Gender Studies, Multiethnic Women's Literature, Indigenous Studies, Native literature of North America, Contemporary Anarchist and Anti-Authoritarian Theories and Social Movements

What were you like as a college-age person?

When I was in college, I found a pretty good balance between indiscriminately dipping into the course catalog at my small liberal arts school, discovering my love for naps, and exercising my freedom to not give a shit about things I'd previously thought were endlessly important. I found that I was deeply interested in things I'd never thought about before, most notably Russian literature and African cinema, but was also turning away from school as the definitive location of learning in my life. I learned to see myself in terms of communities of people and to explore what that meant. I also loved spending time alone, listening to music and reading. During this time, I got a reputation for saying I was 'just putting my shoes on' when asked how long I would be and then showing up an hour or two later. I was wonderfully distracted by information and experience. Suffice to say, I learned a lot this way.

How did you come to your subject and profession?

I started college planning to be a political speech writer. Then, I wanted to be a diplomat. Then, I wanted to be a poet. Then, I wanted to be a traveler. Then, I wanted to live in a house in the middle of nowhere and read forever. Somewhere in there, I decided that being a professor was the thing that would allow me to do some aspect of all of these things. I applied to graduate school in order to focus on being trained to teach and learn simultaneously. I decided on Gender Studies for my PhD training after my experiences being one of the only women in my philosophy program during my bachelor's program. I wanted a space that took women's social and political commentary more holistically, rather than as an addendum to larger movements. I turned to literature during graduate study because it seems to me to be one of the best ways to understand constellations of different perspectives and to begin imagining new, more just ways of treating each other.

What lead you to choose Western?

I chose Western because the public liberal arts model of education was the kind of environment I was looking for. I am passionate about the idea that education is a collective, communal experience to which everyone has a right and which is an intrinsic part of a just society. And I am committed to the liberal arts ideal in that I see critical inquiry as essential to education. I believe students should have the opportunity to explore the depth and breadth of knowledge in challenging and innovative ways while working with educators who are deeply invested in the practice and experience of teaching. I also wanted to see if I'd ever get used to seeing the mountains and ocean directly abutting each other after spending most of my life in the Northeast. The answer so far is 'not yet.'

Tell us something about yourself we might never guess?

When I was in high school, I wanted to be a classical musician. Then, I wanted to be in a punk or riot grrl band. The only semi-model I saw for combining these interests was Jethro Tull, which I deemed a completely unreasonable (and uncool) aspirational goal. I sometimes think that my inability to pick between classical and punk music (or find some sort of acceptable fusion) forced me to choose teaching as the next acceptable profession on my list.

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NEW FACES IN OUR ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

GREG YOUMANS: Film and Media Studies, Documentary and Experimental Cinemas, LGBTQ History and Historiography, Queer and Feminist Theory

What were you like as a college age person?

I was an introverted queer kid, often painfully shy in the classroom. I double-majored in English and French literature. I read a lot, and certain authors, especially the many canonical queer French ones, absolutely blew my mind. I also wrote dark, tragic poems and short stories. I still have them but I haven't looked at them in over a decade. I'm building up the courage to reacquaint myself with that troubled earlier version of myself. As a teacher now, I'm always struck that the 18-to-21-year olds in the classroom seem so much more together than I was at their age, but I also know that, in many cases, these are just brave façades of normalcy.

How did you come to your subject and this profession?

I come from a family of teachers. My mom and her two brothers all taught elementary school, and I think they modeled some of the skills for me growing up: clarity, patience, listening, enthusiasm, etc. Queer studies was an interest for me from the beginning. Getting to film studies took longer. I was always a ham and liked making videos and Super 8 films, but I don't think I recognized cinema as a legitimate field of study when I was an undergrad. I was on a “masterpieces of literature” kick. Then I spent my junior year in the French city of Lyon, where the Lumière Brothers invented cinema and where there is still a vibrant film culture. I took a film class there on Jean Vigo and Kenji Mizoguchi, and in movie theaters I encountered incredible new films by François Ozon, Michael Haneke, and Lars von Trier. Later, in grad school at UC Santa Cruz, I immersed myself in the study of queer activist and experimental cinemas, which is now my main topic of research.

What lead you to choose Western?

I wish the academic job market worked like that! I was incredibly fortunate to land a job here. I had spent most of my adult life in the San Francisco Bay Area. Last year, I did a stint at an elite private college in rural, upstate New York. I was hankering to get back to the West Coast, and, lo and behold, I landed in this beautiful, quirky town overlooking another bay and the San Juan Islands. I have family nearby, vegan pizza is widely available, and my students remind me of the people I loved working with at Santa Cruz. I couldn't be more thrilled.

Tell us something about yourself that we might never guess?

I make videos, write short stories, and do a lot of other creative projects. I'm often slow to share this side of me with new people. I'm also seldom a ham in professional settings such as the classroom (at least not until the second half of the term). But if anyone wants to see this side of me, examples are easily found online.

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