

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, FULLERTON

THE anecdote

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH, COMPARATIVE LITERATURE, AND LINGUISTICS



inside:

— PUTTING THE ENGLISH DEGREE TO WORK —
— ENGLISH MAJOR GETS AN INTERDISCIPLINARY EDUCATION —
— PROFESSOR MEETS THE PRESIDENT OF IRELAND

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CONTENTS



3 ENTERTAINING THE FUTURE
RILEY GREENOUGH

4 WORKING TOWARD COMMUNITY

**5 IN THE LAND OF SAINTS AND
SCHOLARS**
J.C. FERMIN

**7 INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY
THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP**
J. CHRIS WESTGATE

ON THE COVER: *CSUF students encounter the magic of Ireland in summer 2017.*

9 UNSEALING SILENCE THROUGH POETRY

11 IN A HILL OF CLOTHES

EMILIE BURNS

13 INFECTIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

CATHERINE CIAVARELLA

14 THE STORY OF COMMUNITY

TREVOR ALLRED

15 THE PROFESSOR IS IN

17 TEACHING THE NEAT AND THE WEIRD

19 THE EDIT



ENTERTAINING THE FUTURE

A CSUF President's
Scholar reflects on the
future opened by her
English major



BY RILEY GREENOUGH

Riley Greenough is an English major who participates in Cal State Fullerton's President's Scholars Program, which provides scholarships and other opportunities in academics, leadership, service and mentorship for high-achieving students.

Long before I came to Cal State Fullerton to study English, I always had a lot to say. Whether I'm writing or speaking, I want to share my ideas and be heard. As I have progressed toward my English degree, my writing has been the perfect outlet for me to express myself. I want to pursue a career that allows me a similar opportunity to be heard and play to my strengths as a writer.

Ever since I was a kid, I've had an interest in the entertainment industry. After years of acting classes and community theater roles, it became clear that I wasn't cut out to be an actress. I had so much to say, and it was hard for me to stick to the script and play the character I was assigned. I liked being myself and always had new ideas about how to make the script better.

One summer I worked behind the scenes at my local Shakespeare festival, keeping written documentation of the rehearsal process, props and set designs. From this experience, I found my strengths didn't lie in my onstage abilities. I was able to use my writing to contribute and be a real asset to the production com-

pany by working behind the scenes.

Theater revealed my interest in the arts and I learned that I wanted to contribute my own voice and writing skills to the entertainment industry. My other professional experiences have taught me that every business has a need for quality writing, whether for website design, advertising, printed materials, or legal documents. I realized that the writing skills I developed as an English major will make me an asset to my future employer.

After becoming involved in the Alameda County's District Attorney's Justice Academy a few years ago, I gained an interest in the legal profession. I'm honored to have mentors like the University Counsel for CSUF, Monique Shay, who have advised me on how I can contribute my passion for writing to the legal field.

One field that seemed particularly relevant to me was entertainment law. The entertainment industry, like every other industry, needs lawyers. As an entertainment lawyer, I can utilize my written and verbal communication skills in a field I have always been passionate about.

My English degree has helped develop my writing skills and make my voice heard. My path to figuring out the optimal career isn't even close to ending, but thanks to my English degree, I have the confidence to make the journey.

We met up with Adrian Agacer and Chenglin Lee, President and Vice President of the CSUF chapter of Sigma Tau Delta to find out how the club has been changing over the last year.

TA: What is Sigma Tau Delta?

Adrian Agacer: It's an international English honor society. Our chapter hosts a variety of events, such as the Far Western Regional conference, a critical theory reading group, book sales, and movie nights.

Chenglin Lee: In Sigma we try to promote a scholarly and academic focus among undergraduate and graduate English students. Talking about research, ideas, and

the problem that Chenglin just mentioned: the fact that we're a commuter campus. This makes it hard to get students to go to our events. This is further complicated by a lack of a student space for English majors to meet either for club events or to hang out. I can speak from my own experience that without a space like this, students feel less inclined to participate in club events. So we've been working to make Sigma a club that will develop student involvement in the department.

How has the club changed over the last year?

CL: We've been trying to focus on specific communities that Sigma should serve. As we've been redefining our club, giving it more of a purpose, we realized we needed

What does the future hold for this club?

CL: Next year we'd like to redesign the Sigma conference so that it emphasizes undergraduate work and also links up with the English department's curriculum, particularly the department's senior seminars. That way Sigma can help produce a larger conversation around what's happening in students' classes. We hope undergraduates can experience higher-level scholarly discussions and feel like they're being taken seriously in those discussions.

We're also excited about our partnership with the local literary nonprofit organization, 1888. This summer we're hoping to set up a reading group in relation to the 1888 Center in the city of Orange. Sigma members will plan the readings and lead

WORKING TOWARD COMMUNITY

For CSUF English students, Sigma Tau Delta is more than just a club

theory can be intimidating, so Sigma tries to create an inclusive atmosphere to make all students of English welcome.

What are some of the challenges the club faces here at CSUF?

CL: The commuter aspect of our campus is the biggest challenge. Unfortunately, many of our students, including myself, often need to work a lot, take care of their families, etc.

AA: When I took up the position of club president, my first thought was "what is the purpose of an English honors society?" In the past, we focused on the prestige of the club. In other words, it was just a line on a member's CV or resume. While that is part of any honors society, I wanted to rethink our position on campus to address

to give more attention to undergraduate students. So we started up a theory reading group last summer to help undergraduates feel more connected to the wider world of the humanities. We're also trying to partner with local communities that are also interested in the humanities, in order to make reading literary theory and philosophy accessible to the public.

AA: And then within the English department community, we've worked with other English club presidents to create a student space for English majors. We've found a space connected to the English department office and we plan to have this space open this fall semester. The room will serve as a space for English majors to study and meet. We want this space to be a hub for student activity and, hopefully, students will feel more inclined to participate in club activities.

the discussion, but it will be open to the public as well as our members. So we're trying to extend our reach to other communities, especially those who are already setting up a space to defend the humanities today and are helping make the humanities more accessible to the public.

So even though we're not a research-intensive university, that doesn't mean we can't have a strong community interested in academic discussions. Part of that has to do with what Adrian was talking about: creating an inclusive atmosphere that fosters a fun, collegial, scholarly community that creates bonds between undergraduates, graduates, faculty, and the wider community.

AA: We don't know what kind of community will emerge from it, but we're hoping to work toward it anyway.

IN THE LAND OF SAINTS



AND SCHOLARS

CSUF students study English literature in Ireland

BY J.C. FERMIN

J.C. Fermin finished his BA in December 2017 with three majors: English, Comparative Literature, and Philosophy. Here he shares his experience studying abroad in Ireland during summer 2017.

Literature has always been one of my greatest passions. I've always enjoyed immersing myself in the realm of ideas and seeking enrichment through my studies. But studying abroad in Ireland gave me a chance not only to discover where some of these ideas came to life, but to dwell in them and among them.

In the summer of 2017 I joined associate professor **Erin Hollis** and eighteen other students at Trinity College in Dublin. Suddenly I was no longer consuming literature, per se—I was experiencing it. The settings of Irish literary touchstones such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* and the many poems of W.B. Yeats effectively came to life before my eyes, as I bore witness to the purview of these and many other authors. It was surreal for me to have seen the same sights, breathed the same air, and walked the same streets as the likes of Oscar Wilde, Bram Stoker, and Jonathan Swift (all of whom were once students of Trinity College, Dublin, where I took up residence). To even walk the streets of Dublin, casually grab a cup of Butler's iced coffee, and regularly embark on the offerings of my itinerary was like a dream. I imagine that if I had instead visited La Mancha after reading *Don Quixote*, visited St. Petersburg after reading *Crime and Punishment*, or visited Algiers after reading *The Stranger*, my wonder would have been as boundless as it was toward my

many excursions across Ireland.

Of course I also fought to demystify



fy this new world I had entered, as I believe I would have done Ireland a disservice if I pretended everything I experienced was magical. Dublin, for all its history, remains a bustling metropolis



brimming with smoke and dust; a lovely place nonetheless, though laden with as much darkness and grime as any inner city.

There was more natural beauty in Ire-

land's coast and countryside, as I beheld the sparkling shores of Howth, the towering majesty of Dun Aengus, and the emerald pastures of County Meath. In all these places, I could believe that fairies were real, that Ireland's old gods towered over the land, and that ancient magic colored the atmosphere. More specifically, I could see what inspired the folklore, what stirred the imagination and the heart so that even today, a storytelling culture still thrives in Ireland. Despite noticing the rise of a new "Silicon Valley" in Dublin, I was glad to witness a culture that still values literature: a community that celebrates the legacies of Ireland's greatest writers while empowering their contemporary counter-

parts.

Ultimately, I did not have to look for magic, or even believe in it, to find it in Ireland—the magic found me. To commemorate it, I even brought some of it home with me, hauling copies of Stoker's *Dracula*, Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, and Lady Augusta Gregory's *Complete Irish Mythology* (among a boatload of other books) on my home-bound flight. As much as I miss my morning routine of hitting Butler's before class with Dr. Hollis, remembering Ireland has taught me to embrace the now—to revel in the passage of time and hope for magic where I can find it...even in the smoke and dust, even in the darkness and grime. Ireland did not present some sort of utopian vision, being a country with a history mired in its share of hatred and bloodshed. Instead, Ireland helped show me that, amidst the tumult of daily living, divisive politics, and foreboding news, beauty and light are still worth searching for.

**“INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY
THROUGH SCHOLARSHIP:
OR,
WHAT I DID ON MY
SUMMER
VACATION”**

A professor's research brings him before Irish President, Hollywood actors

BY J. CHRIS WESTGATE



Professor **J. Chris Westgate**, far right, meets Sabina Higgins, First Lady, and Michael D. Higgins, President of Ireland

In July of 2017, the Eugene O'Neill Society held its Tenth International Conference at the National University of Ireland, Galway. As the President of the Society at the time, I was part of the planning of this conference, which would include talks about O'Neill's plays, exhibits of the NUI Galway theater archives, and presentation of the O'Neill Medallion to actors Gabriel Byrne and Jessica Lange. If this wasn't enough, our conference coordinators in Ireland told the Executive Committee that they had extended an invitation to Michael D. Higgins, the President of Ireland. I was intrigued when I heard this but not expecting much. I was thrilled when we learned that President Higgins not only accepted but asked to deliver a speech at the Society banquet. And I was flabbergasted when I was invited to sit at the President's table at the banquet.

On the evening of the banquet, I found myself sitting between President Higgins and the First Lady of Ireland, Sabina Higgins. To her left was Gabriel Byrne and to President Higgins's right was Jessica Lange. As exhilarating as this was, I have to admit that the phrase "international incident" kept going through my head, with the President's aide-de-camp standing right behind me and the Irish equivalent of the Secret Service distributed throughout the room, whispering into their wrists periodically. Despite this anxiety, it was thoroughly enjoyable. When I asked President Higgins about the movement toward nationalism in the United States and Europe and

its consequences, he responded thoughtfully and at-length about the inclination toward tribalism and imperatives of democracy and pluralism. He was surprisingly optimistic given what was transpiring in the world, and I found myself scheming ways to get Irish citizenship.

Beyond this foray into international politics, I had conversations with Byrne and Lange that resonated with the nature of academia. As we drank wine before the dinner service, I had a chance to talk with Byrne about his performance in the 2005 revival of O'Neill's *A Touch of the Poet*, which I had seen in New York City; and he told me how much that play resonated with his own life—a conversation that he mentioned when accepting the O'Neill Medallion later in the evening. As several of my colleagues told me the next day, a "shout-out" by Byrne had to find its way into my CV somehow. I wonder what they would have thought if I had told them about my conversation with Lange during dinner, which began when she asked what kind of research I did. Explaining my work in theater history about nineteenth century plays and productions, I shared with her a line that I frequently delivered at conferences: "I work on plays that no one has ever heard of and, in all honesty, probably should not care about." After a decidedly long pause, she asked with absolute sincerity, "Why would you ever do that?"

UNSEALING SILENCE through POETRY

A professor shares her experience investigating and reimagining a Nazi work camp

Professor **Irena Praitis** recently published *The Last Stone in the Circle*, a book of poems that addresses daily life in the WWII German work camp of Römhild, a sub-camp of Buchenwald. We caught up with her to find out about her award-winning publication.

TA: What made you turn to this historical moment and this particular camp?

IP: This collection of poems grew out of a mistake I'd made in another book [*One*

Woman's Life]. I learned that the story my grandmother knew about her brother's death was not accurate. I received confirmation from the International Tracing Service that her brother had died at the hands of the Nazis, but not in the place nor in the way she'd heard. When I learned that my great uncle had died at Römhild, I thought, "What's that?" I'd never heard of it. I started searching and discovered it was a sub-camp of Buchenwald—one of 174 sub-camps most of which I didn't recognize. I felt the stories behind the stories opening

up and I thought I needed to learn more. As I learned more, I knew I had to write about it. I couldn't leave these people unimagined.

How did you prepare yourself for writing these poems?

I did different kinds of research. A German man had written a book on this camp and he had gathered eyewitness accounts from survivors. These served as a vital source for the book. I also researched at the US

Holocaust Memorial and Museum (USHMM) in Washington D.C. I was able to look through primary text artifacts on microfilm and then also a wide range of other research sources. The library at USHMM also had a number of literary and poetic books. I consulted those to get a sense of how other writers approached this subject. I also traveled to Germany and visited the site of the camp. There were no buildings remaining—they had been dismantled shortly after the war ended—but the cemeteries and specific locations mentioned by eye witnesses were still there. As I worked on the poems, I had to create an emotional and literal space I physically entered, where I engaged in listening and writing and then, when I was done for the day, I made a point of physically leaving the space concentrating on the idea that I was leaving and returning to my own every day.

What challenges did you face writing poems dedicated to such a difficult context?

With atrocities, few other responses besides art are adequate to even begin to address the scope and intensity of what happened. Art speaks to both the intellectual and emotional reality and aftermath.

That said, I also felt troubled and presumptuous and inadequate to the task. I'd never experienced anything remotely like what occurred. I knew I would fall short in attempting to represent it. But on the other hand, if I did nothing, I would be turning my back on something I had learned, on a series of events and people's lives and stories that were readily forgotten or erased by larger, louder histories. Even if I did less than optimal work, I felt it was better than doing nothing. Also, I thought about how empathy is not dependent on exactitude. It's dependent on effort and on making an attempt and then continuing to make the attempt. Empathy isn't perfect and can't be. It also doesn't need to be. The connection and recurring attempts to understand matter.

I also wanted, with these poems, to complicate what it means to be a person in horrible circumstances. Ta-Nehisi Coates coined a term, "muscular empathy." He

observes that rather than assuming one would behave differently than others in a given historical moment, it might be worthwhile to think about what pressures and conditions would make oneself act in the same way as those historical figures. When faced with our own suffering or the suffering of people we love, what choices might we make? Would we be willing to stand up for principles in the face of our death? Would we be willing to stand up for them if it meant death for loved ones? I returned to this type of question over and

I Asked For It: Portrait of a *Kapo*

I barely survived my first beating at Buchenwald, the worst served up after I joked about more soup. Two *kapos* laid into me. My arms flailed—my eyes, my neck, my ribs—I failed to protect them. As the coals of their teaching rained down on me, I faced the last stone in the circle. Consciousness hobbled back. I learned my lesson. My body crucible, I swore: *never again*. Transferred here, no one offered me this truncheon. I asked for it.

—Irena Praitis

over again while working on this collection.

The figure of the "kapo" comes up repeatedly throughout your book. Can you tell us about this figure and why you felt compelled to write about the "kapo"?

Römhild was a camp that opened late, in the latter years of WWII. By this time, the camps had a well-established system and methodology. One of the developments from other camps was the recruitment of prisoners to serve as disciplinarians. Rather than guards beating and abusing prisoners, other prisoners could do that work. With a few promises (more food, better work and sleeping conditions) prisoners could readily be recruited to discipline their fellow inmates. As I thought about

the people who agreed to this work or volunteered for it, I thought they might have good reasons for taking it up—they needed to survive, for example, because so many in their family depended on them. Would they do anything they needed to do to stay alive because they loved someone so much? Then again, not everyone would have defensible motivations. Others might aspire to power, or enjoy violence. The series of "kapo" poems provided me with an opportunity to address a range of human behaviors and motivations. Also, the "kapo" poems are sonnets, and comprise a crown—a jumbled and broken crown strewn across the collection, but a sonnet crown nonetheless. By choosing sonnets, I wanted to convey the idea that these reasons while individual, are also the range of options ideologically and readily available to us within standard social structures and institutions. From what I could see, frighteningly, the idea of a "kapo" was logically consistent with the structures of the camps as were the possible motivations for people to accept or volunteer for the role.

The last poem in the book focuses on those prisoners who were herded into a cave and sealed inside by an explosion. Is poetry a way to unseal this silence?

One of the more frustrating discoveries in my research was the inadequacy of the legal systems when tasked with the work of seeking justice for the crimes committed in concentration camps. The horrors that occurred were so outsized, so unimaginable, and so far beyond the usual parameters law is meant to address that laws dutifully applied could do little to address the scope of the situation. The legal steps, the trials, they needed to happen, but they could hardly be the last word, I think. The conversation needed to keep going. The remembering and the thinking and the efforts to understand needed to continue and still need to continue. Justice offers a response, but it's a partial response. Healing requires far more effort, time, and understanding. Works of art might provide another means for addressing what is almost impossible to imagine.

IN A HILL OF



CLOTHES

English major experiences interdisciplinary learning while working at a campus art installation

BY EMILIE BURNS

It all started with a simple assignment.

Last year, I enrolled in assistant professor Nicole Seymour's course on "Literature and the Environment." She required that all students must, at some point during the semester, participate in an on-campus activity that dealt with the environment, a kind of field project. She wanted us to experience in a direct way the subject matter of the authors' works that we were reading and analyzing. The task made me nervous. While my major in anthropology encourages cultural interaction, the English major often allows me to hide behind books. I was worried about an assignment that forced me to bring together my bookish interest in English together with a more anthropological emphasis on field work.

However, my worries about this assignment were alleviated when art curator Danielle Clark came to our class. Danielle was looking for volunteers to work with Jarod Charzewski, an artist whose art exhibition, entitled "Reclaimed Landscapes: The Art of Jarod Charzewski," was going to be installed in the Titan Student Union's Begovich Gallery. She needed volunteers to help organize supplies and anything else Charzewski needed to create the installation: hills of clothes, tires, and wires intended to show the overwhelming negative effects that fast fashion, technology, and tire waste have had on the environment. Though still nervous about getting out from behind my books, volunteering to work for an artist seemed like it might be a good fit for me.



Photo credit: Jarod Charzewski

It was a great experience. At first I thought I would just come to give a helping hand in organizing clothes and other materials. In reality I took part in creating the final products of the installation. Instead of merely being told what to do, Charzewski immediately asked me to decide which colors of clothes should be melded together and layered into hills. From beginning to end it was a team effort. I was hooked.

The next time I came to the gallery Charzewski had us help measure and create the wooden frame for the hill that was to be covered in tires. Over and over again he asked how the structure was looking: he valued our opinions, and we worked together to try to make natural-looking slopes and curves to

the wooden frame.

The goal of "Reclaimed Landscapes" was for people to see how the natural world has been impacted and recreated out of discarded items. This experience working at the Begovich gallery re-ignited my passion for creativity and showed me that all of my interests easily jelled. It helped me connect my disciplines—English, anthropology, and visual arts—and allowed me to experience the way we live in delicate ecosystems. I viscerally felt that everything is connected: that if you affect one aspect of an environment it will cause a ripple effect that creates changes in entities that seem to have no connection to the original object. Experiencing the connections we all have to each other was a truly inspiring lesson.

And it all started with a simple assignment.

INFECTIOUS SCHOLARSHIP

A graduate student explains how “contamination” became a good thing at the Acacia conference

BY CATHERINE CIAVARELLA

On March 23 and 24, 2018, the Acacia Group held its annual academic conference in University Hall. This year, Acacia organized the conference with two specific goals in mind: community building and outreach. The conference, titled “Contamination: Adoptions, Influences, and Intrusions Across Textual Lines,” exceeded these goals, bringing in undergraduate and graduate participants and attendees from a variety of CSUs, UCs, and more.

An organization centered on professional development, Acacia held the conference to provide an opportunity for students to hone their presentation skills in a setting that is both academic and familiar. This year, returning alumni and independent scholars especially demonstrated the depth and resilience of the CSUF English Department community.

This year’s theme sought to diversify the notion of *contamination* as a concept and a construct. “Contamination” has historically held negative connotations related to “pollution” and “defilement.” These common perceptions obscure its potential meaning as a transformative change, exchange, or transference of one agent into another. The panels were created to inform certain modalities and applications of “contamination” in various texts and genres. Some panel topics included the contaminating



UC Davis graduate student Namu Ju, left, speaks with CSUF student Wendy Anguiano before a panel.

reach of trauma and grief, destabilizations of gender, science fiction as a literary “contaminant,” and quarantined spaces and places. Special panels considered “contamination” in relation to Shakespeare’s works and Thomas Pynchon’s *Gravity’s Rainbow*.

The conference featured two English Department faculty keynote speakers, Dr. David Sandner and Dr. Nicole Seymour, who each gave compelling presentations which demonstrated the ver-

satility of the idea of contamination. Dr. Sandner’s March 23rd presentation, “The Frankenstein Meme: How the Monster Went Viral,” showcased the development of his database that tracks the “contaminating” influence of Mary Shelley’s *Frankenstein* throughout literature and popular culture. On March 24th, Dr. Seymour presented “A Queer Ecology of Glitter,” which postulated that the “contaminating” qualities of recently banned, non-ecofriendly glitter stem from its historical centrality in the queer community.

In the conference’s call for papers, the Acacia Cabinet posed the question of “How and why does contamination occur in visual and literary texts?” Thanks to the thoughtful presentations, and the invaluable contributions of faculty panel chairs, the conference moved a step beyond the “quarantine zone,” and created a truly collaborative conversation.

A STORY OF COMMUNITY

An alumnus shares how being an English major helped him become a community organizer

BY TREVOR ALLRED

Trevor Allred (BA 2014, MA 2017) is a writer, arts advocate, and community builder.

I found a new word when I started working at 1888. The 1888 Center is part bookshop, coffee shop, gallery, workspace, workshop, and venue. We publish books, produce podcasts, and we invite authors, thinkers, artists, and educators to come share their work and how they did it. We call on community partners to help us make all of this possible. And across these various channels of the arts, I found a common word: *storytelling*.

In my own studies of literature, the study of story was something always present but never recognized in my search for the literary. Through 1888, I have come to find that people are already familiar with literary work, but it isn't called "literature." They know it as "story." People are curious about storytelling.

As a student of literature, I learned how to investigate and promote storytelling through criticism and theory. Now working in the creative industries, I am still on the same project but with different tools, like marketing and collaboration.

Our programming is set up in a way that emphasizes the person in the work, the context for the text. We work to provide a public space for this encounter. People attend our programs because they want to know what people do and hear that story. And because of this connection, the literary arts *is* community.



We come together for this; we connect with this.

Community takes shape when there is participation and support, and this has been one of the most rewarding points in my work. As the Community Manager of the 1888 Center, I get to play a role in bringing people together for two very human, sincere needs: the need to connect through storytelling and a place to belong.

When there is a place, like 1888, that operates on the crossroads of the arts and public space, there is then a collaborative role for the public. Bringing community together takes time, and it is not a solo project. This means that we both serve the community and depend on it,

since our programs would not serve the community if the community did not support and participate in them.

When people enter the 1888 Center, it is incredible to see the moment they understand where exactly they are, that they are not just in a bookshop or coffee shop but are also in a place of ideas. Maybe the person walking in will write the next book we publish in a workshop we offer. Maybe someone will use our workspace studio to develop their ideas and meet a life-changing guest at a podcast the same day. Maybe others will understand this is the beginning of a movement and make the next step.

Collaboration means for us that we are working on the project of community itself.

THE PROFESSOR IS IN

Associate professor **Erin Hollis**, center left, and students at the Little Library ribbon cutting ceremony at CSUF Residence Halls



English professor and Faculty in Residence shares her experience building community in CSUF's residence halls

*Beyond her usual duties, associate professor **Erin Hollis** has also served as Faculty in Residence for the Division of Student Affairs. Before she leaves the position this year, we asked her to give us some insight into her work at the residence halls.*

TA: What is a faculty in residence?

EH: The faculty in residence is a professor who lives on-campus and interacts with students outside of the classroom through programs and informal contact. I have been the FIR for seven years, ever since the position was created in 2011.

Why do you think this role is important for the university?

I think it humanizes professors for students. When students see me walking my dog, Duckie, they see a different side of me. Or when they attend a program promoting autism awareness through a silent disco, they understand that learning extends beyond the classroom. The role is vitally important because it demystifies professors for students, and, since many of our students are first generation students, it can help them to feel more comfortable visiting their professors during office hours and asking for help. The role also shows students a new way of thinking about education: not as a means to an end, but as a lifelong pursuit.

How is this role different from your role as a professor of English?

In the classroom, I can rely on my position as a professor to make students participate and engage. But in my role as FIR, I cannot rely on that, so I have had to figure out how to engage students on a number of different levels. While I use many of my skills from my teaching in my programs, I also have learned how to create activities that encourage student involvement outside of the classroom. For example, one of my favorite programs that I did while in housing was a series of programs called "Welaxing Wednesdays." Students were encouraged to come to these programs to take a break from studying, while also experiencing new things such as painting, yoga, and meditation.

The role is also different in that I am informally having contact with students on a daily basis. I often take walks with some of the residents and discuss their days, or I

will speak with a student about personal situations that they need advice about. I also hear a lot about students' lives outside of class, so I get to know them in a more fully-rounded way.

Have your two roles – faculty in residence and professor of English – influenced each other in any way?

Being faculty in residence has helped me learn how to interact with people from all majors, from all walks of life really, affecting my teaching positively because it has helped me to be more open-minded. But I also constantly apply my teaching knowledge to my position in housing. The first, and most successful, program I did in



Photo Credit: Housing and Residential Engagement

housing was a book club that continues to this day. So my two positions are intertwined; I cannot entirely separate one from the other.

What do you enjoy about this position?

Honestly, I enjoy getting to help students in situations that I might not normally be able to. One of the most rewarding things I do is talk with students during my daily walks with my dog. He always stops to be petted by everyone (attention hog!) and this allows me to interact with students on a daily basis. He also serves as a de facto therapy dog for the residents; many look forward to seeing him! I also love watching students grow up. It is amazing the changes students go through in one year. And when I know students their entire time at CSUF, sometimes even from before they start, I feel so proud of seeing them discover who they are and who they can be. The students I get to know just make me so hopeful for the future. They are

thoughtful, kind, and motivated to change the world. It is impossible to be cynical when I encounter such students regularly.

What have been some of the particular challenges related to this position?

The obvious one is that living on campus doesn't allow me a break from school. I dealt with this early on by creating boundaries for myself so that I would feel like I had a break. The other big challenge was educating people about what faculty do. Many people make comments to me about being a professor that demonstrate a lack of understanding about what it really means to be a professor. Educating people about this has been challenging, but rewarding.

Have there been moments during your tenure that you're particularly proud of?

So many that they are difficult to remember. The most important moments are the small ones. I have had some pretty powerful interactions with students here, including supporting a transgender student during the time they were coming out, listening to students when they were in crisis, giving advice to students when they needed it, that sort of thing. Some big moments I am proud of are giving a speech to NRHH (National Residence Hall Honorary) about butterflies, octopuses, and the importance of being open to change, assisting RSA (Resident Student Association) with two different murder mystery dinners by dressing up like a flapper (a mock bartender) and a ghost bellhop, and creating a themed floor for second year students. I'm also proud of every single time my book club met.

How do you feel about leaving this position?

I have mixed emotions. I have been in this position 4 years longer than was initially intended, so I feel like it is time for someone new. I will miss it though. I will miss the people in Housing and Residential Engagement who I have gotten to know over the years. I will miss the random occurrences from day to day. I will miss the sense of community. But this is my time for moving on, so I feel happy about someone new taking the position. I will always have a home in housing.

TEACHING the NEAT & the

English students reflect on what they've learned from **David Sandner**, winner of the 2018 Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching



Illustration by Theodor von Holst from the frontispiece of the 1831 edition of *Frankenstein*

WEIRD

*Professor **David Sandner** was honored this year with the Faculty Award for Outstanding Teaching, an award given every year by the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. We decided to ask some of his current and former students for their insight into Dr. Sandner's teaching and mentorship. Thanks to Nicole Vandever for helping gather responses.*

Nicole Vandever (BA, 2016; current MA student in English)

Dr. Sandner is incredibly passionate about the locally weird, especially the super neat history of genre fiction in Orange County and at CSUF, and he spreads that enthusiasm for delightfully strange local phenomena through his classes and other academic platforms. That passion is contagious. He teaches science fiction, fantasy fiction, horror fiction, and the strange and wonderful classes and authors that might not otherwise be taught with any frequency. He places the study of genre along side their social and political contexts, and he's also really dedicated to encouraging student work. He has worked together with students to highlight the presence of the science-fiction writer Philip K. Dick in Orange County by organizing the Philip K. Dick conference. Together, Dr. S and his students have put speculative fictions at CSUF on the global map with his PKD conference and his work on

the Frankenstein Meme database. Through these local, national, and international events, he's always encouraging students to do a lot of the leg work and take things wherever they might go (the stranger and more unexpected, the better). Thanks to inspiration and support from Dr. S, students have kept the university's speculative fiction tradition alive through the Science Fiction & Fantasy Lit Club's and its yearly zine. Also, he's just a really nice dude who will talk for ages on the subjects he's passionate about.

Jaime Brody (BA, 2013; MA, 2016; part-time lecturer in the English Department)

It wasn't until grad school that I could finally take a class with Dr. Sandner. It was right up my alley: Science Fiction through the lens of pop culture. We spent the semester looking at the history and trends of the genre, and we collaboratively created a website dedicated to the subject. We learned that Cal State Fullerton had an important role in Science Fiction's history, housing not only important manuscripts like those of Bradbury and Herbert, but also serving as the final roost of one of the most important science fiction writers, Philip K. Dick. Dr. S allowed us to pursue our own academic study of the topic, genre, and its authors. He also mentored Christine Granillo,

Emily Robles, Nicole Vandever and me as we planned, coordinated, and enacted our annual Acacia Conference on a national scale. There, all of the students who participated were able to interact with SF authors, publishers, and friends of the late Philip K. Dick. He helped me believe that, if I wanted to achieve a goal, with careful planning I could. That is the best gift that any professor can give a student, and for that, I am eternally grateful.

True Fong-Vig (English major)

I am always very impressed with the knowledge and passion for Romanticism, Fantasy and Horror which Dr. Sandner brings to all of his lectures. His teaching inspired me to become a member and officer in the Science Fiction and Fantasy Literature club. Without him, I might have missed out on joining one of the finest groups of people I have met at this university.

Wendy Anguiano (BA, 2017)

Ever since I took Dr. Sandner's "Horror Fiction" class, I knew I wanted to be an English major. It was not just my interest in the topic that drew me in, but Dr. Sandner's creative approach. He would often find ways to focus on whatever students found interesting, particularly by providing creative writing alternatives to essays and having students choose their own writing prompts. Dr. Sandner approaches teaching in such a unique way, allowing students to engage with literature in whichever way they deem best. He has always been a supportive and helpful professor.



Elise Letrondo (English major)

I really appreciate the way he expresses his hopes for our papers. The other day he said that he hopes, in a way, to be confused by our papers. He wants us to struggle for a conclusion, and said that he would prefer a paper that he struggles to read over a "good" paper in "proper" form that follows a linear thought process. He seems to care that his students learn to become better thinkers.

Frank Alanis (MA, 2017; part-time lecturer)

Dr. Sander showed me that there is more to being an academic and thinker than simply writing article-length essays. He encourages his students to be creative in their exploration of texts and not to be afraid to try something unconventional. His work in the digital humanities has been inspiring and illustrates a positive and approachable way to collect and distribute information about writers and the discipline. His work on "The Frankenstein Meme" and "Philip K. Dick in the OC" websites have been great examples of an open-access approach to collecting scholarship. This has been inspiring to me, and I hope to continue to follow in his footsteps and contribute to open-access scholarship.

Jessica Shaw (BA, 2017; current MA student in English)

Dr. Sandner always teaches material with passion. He encourages his students to think about texts in multiple ways, and students can then use what they learned in his class when participating in discussions in the Sci-

ence Fiction and Fantasy Club. He is always open to letting his students write papers on topics that interest them, and he encourages them to publish their work in a variety of venues. For instance, Dr. Sandner helped put together an amazing Frankenstein Zine, and he encouraged all his students to submit. He is really dedicated to helping his students succeed.

Elissa Saucedo (English major)

I think that my best experiences in Dr. Sandner's class revolve around Philip K. Dick and Frankenstein. His passion for the two is contagious. Before his class I enjoyed Frankenstein, but never realized how much it has been in my life and the literature I read. The meme project really brought this to life, seeing how viral Frankenstein is. When thinking of Frankenstein I don't immediately think of Charles Dickens, but now I do. You can also see his passion for the subjects he teaches in the way he begins to whisper when he's greatly interested in a subject. As another student put it, "you know it's brilliant when he starts whispering." To truly gain something from his class (and any class) we just need to listen attentively enough so as to not miss something brilliant.

Natasha Mann (BA, 2017)

I took Dr. Sandner's Romanticism course and was always excited for what each class meeting would bring. Not only did he have a fresh and interesting approach to literature that is centuries old, but he also displayed an unwavering passion with each text we would read. I especially liked how he would encourage students to discuss the material and was always willing to help students both inside and outside the classroom.

Christine Granillo (BA, 2007, MA 2016)

Reading Philip K. Dick's *A Scanner Darkly* in Dr. Sandner's Digital Literary Studies in 2014 was a game changer for me, not only because I realized I really love Philip K. Dick novels, but also because the website we created in that class became the catalyst for other projects that would define a large part of my graduate school experience. Dr. Sandner is a mentor who advocates for his students' ideas and provides the encouragement to bring those ideas to fruition. He helped me learn how to do things I never thought I would do, like plan a conference and curate an art show. Dr. S provided me with the opportunity to take the work from his classes into the local community, something that elevated my educational experience in an invaluable way. I have no doubt there are other students who have similarly benefited from the guidance of Dr. S, and even still, many more to come.

the edit:

MISCELLANEA AND ADDENDA

works cited

FACULTY PUBLICATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS, 2017-2018

Publications

Lana L. Dalley

• *Economic Women: Essays on Desire and Disposition in Nineteenth Century British Culture* (Ohio State University Press). Paperback release, 2017.

David Kelman

• "Spectral Comparisons: Cortázar and Derrida." *The Marrano Specter: Derrida and Hispanism*. Ed. Erin Graff-Zivin. New York, NY: Fordham University Press, 2018.

Irena Praitis

• "Too Fast for the Truth," *Kestrell 38* (2018): 9.
• "Alzheimer's Disciples," *SLAB 12* (2017): 226-228.

• "Sastinging/Stagnation," "Nuskausminimas/Analgesic," "Tikėjimas/Faith." *Mantis: A Journal of Poetry, Criticism, and Translation* 15 (2017): 130-135.

• "Diena Apsnuūdo/Langorous Day," "Vejuota/Windy," "Kai panirau/When the sun sank," "Tapsmas/Becoming," "Raktininkas/Keymaker," *International Poetry Review* 42 (2017): 56-61, 154-157.

Nicole Seymour

• *Kelly Reichardt: Emergency and the Everyday*. University of Illinois Press, 2017.

J. Chris Westgate

• "In Ireland He's Considered an Irish-American Playwright: Eugene O'Neill, A Touch of the Poet, and the Irish Play." *Eugene O'Neill Review* 39.1 (2018): 95-113.

Conference Presentations/Readings

Leslie Bruce

• "Supporting Collaboration in Interdisciplinary

Composition Courses." 2018 International Writing across the Curriculum conference. Auburn, AL.

Lana L. Dalley

• "What the Dickens?" A Noise Within theater. Pasadena, CA.

"Congratulations on Your First Job! Now What? Survival (and Mentoring) Tips for a Successful Academic Career." American Comparative Literature Association. UCLA, CA.

• "Reading for the Dangerous Passage." Panel: Dangerous Passages (Benjamin 1940/2018).

• "In support of PredP." Annual Conference of African Linguistics, Michigan State University, MI.

Nicole Seymour

• "Kelly Reichardt: Emergency and the Everyday" (with Katherine Fusco). The Association for the Study of the Arts of the Present conference in Oakland, CA (hosted by UC Berkeley).

• "Awkwardness, Ambivalence, Glee: A Catalog of Bad Environmental Feelings." Invited talk at the UCSB English Department, Santa Barbara, CA.

• "National Critiques of Environmentalism in Contemporary TV Comedy." The National Cultures of Television Comedy symposium in London (hosted by Notre Dame University).

• "Gas-Guzzling, Beer-Chugging, Hypocritical Treehuggers: 'White Trash' and Low-Class Environmentalisms." Invited talk at the University of Manchester in Manchester, UK.

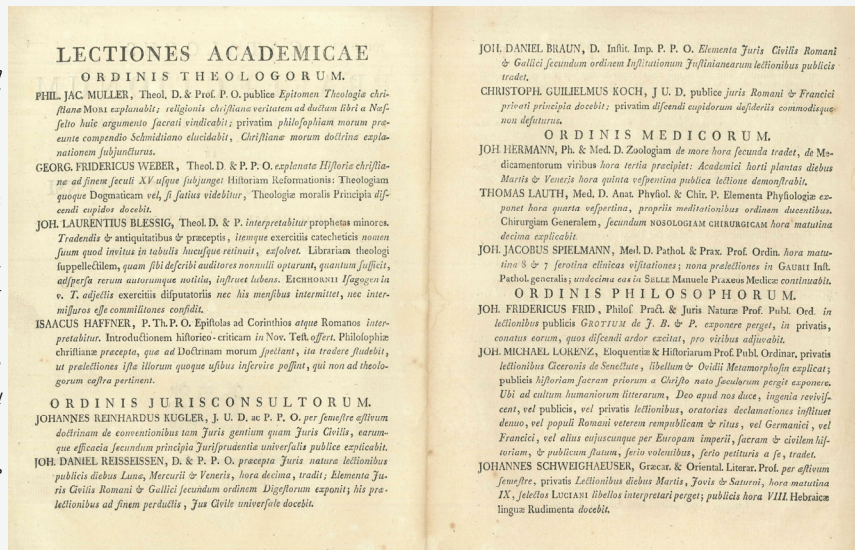
• "Lesbian Rangers, Ecosexuals, and a Brief Contemporary History of Queer Outdoor Sex." The American Society for Environmental History conference in Riverside, CA.

• "#apsáaloofeminist: Wendy Red Star's Crow Humor and Ecosenibilities" (with Salma Monani). The Native American and Indigenous Studies Association conference in downtown LA (hosted by UCLA).

J. Chris Westgate

• "Represented in His True Character: Samuel D. Johnson's The Fireman and the Rehabilitation of the Volunteer Fireman." Comparative Drama Conference, Rollins College, FL.

• "O'Neill's & Byrne's Transatlantic Exchange: Determining the Irishness in A Touch of the Poet." The 10th International Conference on Eugene O'Neill, Galway, Ireland.



• Invited commentator, PCCBS (Pacific Coast Conference on British Studies) Annual Conference. UC Santa Barbara, CA.

David Kelman

• "Invited Panelist at the Association of Departments and Programs of Comparative Literature Panel Session on Academic Careers:

American Comparative Literature Association. UCLA, CA.

Patricia Schneider-Zioga

• "On the universality of Case: Evidence from a Bantu language." Linguistic Society of America Annual Meeting 2018, Salt Lake City, UT.

ALUMNI UPDATES, 2017-2018

Trevor Kaiser Allred (BA 2014, MA 2017) is a writer, arts advocate, and community builder. He currently works as the Community Manager at 1888, a non-profit Cultural Center for storytelling based in Orange, CA.

Nicole Bailey (BA 2010, MA 2013) is Associate Director of Corporate and Foundation Relations in the College of Engineering and Computer Science at California State University, Fullerton.

Jessie Bonafede (BA 2011, MA 2014) was accepted into the PhD program in English, with a concentration in medieval studies, at the University of New Mexico.

Tawny Burke (BA 2012) was accepted into the MA program in School Counseling at Loyola Marymount University.

Denisse Cobian (BA 2010) has worked in advertising since graduation, currently serving as Director of Branded Entertainment Sales at mitú.

Adrianna Crowell (BA 2009) works as a Software Engineer at Drizly.

Agnes Cser (BA 2003) recently completed her PhD in German Studies at the University of Arizona with a dissertation on Schiller.

Jessica Flores (BA 2017) will begin her PhD in Spanish in 2018 in the Romance Languages Department at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She received the prestigious Rackham Merit Fellowship.

Diana Greer (BA 2018) will be attending the M.A. program at USC's Rossier's School of Education starting Fall 2018.

Natalie Harper (BA 2003, MA 2012) works as a High School English Teacher at Troy High School in Fullerton, CA.

Stephanie Johnson (BA 2010) recently completed her PhD in comparative literature at Emory University, with a dissertation on "Legacies of Loss: Traumatic Aftermaths in Twentieth-Century Literature."

Nicky Rehnberg (BA 2013, MA 2015) is currently working on her PhD in History at University of California, Santa Barbara.

Michelle Schmer (BA 2008) is currently an Instructional Designer at Glidewell Laboratories, where she uses her technical writing background to create training videos and support materials.

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