



The Literature Program

Texts & Technology

Literature/Language Alumni Newsletter -- Fall 2002

A busy Spring semester meant a busy summer vacation for the Literature program. Tom Kinsella finished up a sabbatical spent researching colonial bookbinding in Philadelphia. Lisa Honaker and Deborah Gussman both received Stockton Research and Professional Development grants to finish scholarly articles—Honaker's on Robert Louis Stevenson and Gussman's on Native-American writer, William Apress. The entire program worked hard on curricular revision and a variety of other projects, about which we will have more to say below. A new set of program webpages, which contain information of interest to both current and former literature majors, are one result of our efforts. You'll find everything in them from our mission statement to descriptions of our tracks (with downloadable worksheets) to pictures of and favorite recipes from bashes past. You may find them at <http://caxton.stockton.edu/thelittprogram/>. We'll be asking for some contributions from you for these pages later in this very newsletter.

And now, the news:

We began 2002 with word that we had finally gotten another faculty line for the New Media track we have had in development for the last couple of years. Conducting a nationwide search to fill the position, in March we hired Scott Rettberg, who is completing his Ph.D. in English at the University of Cincinnati. Scott's fields of specialization include Electronic Literature, Fiction Writing, 20th Century American Fiction, 20th Century American Drama, and 20th Century Irish Literature. As co-founder of the Electronic Literature Organization, he brings not only his expertise in New Media and Electronic Literature but also a national reputation and networking skills that should serve both the literature program and the college well. Though he arrived in New Jersey just weeks ago, Scott effectively joined the program over the summer, actively participating in our online and e-mail discussions, and working closely with Ken Tompkins in specifying and developing the requirements for the new track. Scott will be teaching two courses, Introduction to Media Studies and Foundations of Hypertext to kick off New Media Studies this fall. (Descriptions of the track and its requirements may be found on the new program webpages.)

This year, the program also introduced a course in English as a Second Language that is central to the EDUC program's recently approved ESL Endorsement Certificate. Having been given an adjunct position for the Spring 2002 semester for the course, Introduction to ESL, the program hired Mary Steinacker, a local ESL specialist. The course has been warmly received and will now be part of the program's regular offerings each semester. A recent spate of inquiries concerning the ESL endorsement suggests its value to area teachers and would-be teachers. We are proud of our contribution and hope to continue to work with EDUC in preparing teachers in this exciting and increasingly necessary field.

Our other primary activity in the spring was the program's five-year self-study. This year, we invited Josephine Koster, Assistant Professor of Medieval Literature from Winthrop University, to review our program. Professor Koster visited Stockton in early March, speaking to program faculty, literature majors, and division and other college administrators. Her report, which we received in late May, proved to be a thorough and uncompromising review of our program. Responding to both the praise and criticisms in that review, the Literature Program, as noted above, spent the summer rethinking and restructuring our curriculum.

Thus, in addition to the New Media Studies track, we have added an English Education track, which includes separate sets of requirements for Elementary or Secondary certification. This track is designed to serve literature majors who wish to become primary or secondary school teachers, currently the bulk of our nearly 200 majors. (A description of this track may also be found in the new webpages.)

On the extra-curricular front, thanks primarily to the efforts of senior literature major Joshua Raclaw, the program has recently reactivated the Eta Rho chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the national literary honor society. Raclaw persuaded Lisa Honaker to serve as faculty sponsor, then advertised and met with majors to gauge campus interest. With seventeen members signing on late last spring, the chapter will begin its first semester of real activity this fall, when officers will be elected and events planned. It already has met the membership criteria that should guarantee funding from the Student Senate next year. Inquiries about the organization may go to Josh Raclaw at nerd_core@excite.com or honakerl@loki.stockton.edu. The chapter's first meeting will take place on Tuesday, October 1 at 4:30 in F-207.

The program also has a couple of events of its own scheduled for the fall semester:

On Thursday, September 19, we will be holding an informational meeting for majors in Townsend Residential Life Center, Room 1 from 4:30 to 6:00. Program faculty will introduce themselves and talk about requirements for new majors, explain curricular changes to returning majors, and take questions from any and all majors and interested onlookers. Coffee, tea, decaf and assorted cookies will be served.

In October, the program will also be reviving its popular twice-yearly Career Panels. At these events, three or four alumni talk to current majors about their careers after Stockton and how their training as literature students served them in the careers they chose. In the past, we have had alumni working in publishing, teaching, public relations and law, as well as those attending or recently graduated from graduate programs in English, library science, and counseling. A representative from Career Services will also be on hand to discuss the sorts of assistance that office may provide our students. Any alumni interested in speaking at this event or a second one we will be holding in March or April 2003, please contact Ken Tompkins at ken@loki.stockton.edu. We will provide a modest honorarium. Coffee, tea, and cookies will again be served. Watch your mail for specific dates, times, and speakers.

On a similar note, we would like to provide alumni with good things to say about their Stockton literature training another forum to say it in. We are looking for quotes from former students for our Careers page ([http://caxton.stockton.edu/thelittprogram/stories/storyReader\\$41](http://caxton.stockton.edu/thelittprogram/stories/storyReader$41)). Again, you may email Ken Tompkins at ken@loki.stockton.edu with your most quotable quotes.

Finally, it is with mixed feelings that we inform current students and alumni alike that henceforth we will be hosting only one bash a year. End-of-semester workload, exhaustion, and the holiday crunch have

contributed to relatively low attendance at the December bash and persuaded us that perhaps one big bash in the spring would work better for all. So the quantity of bashes may have diminished, but we assure you there will be no fall-off in quality. At the spring bash, you may expect the same delicious faculty-catered fare, well-chosen music, inspired and inspiring student readings, and well-deserved awards. Indeed, plans are underway for even greater hilarity. We'll keep you posted.

In addition to welcoming Scott Rettberg to our program, we also welcome BJ Ward, a poet (and Stockton alumnus), who will be teaching literature and creative writing workshops this fall for Stephen Dunn. We must also welcome back Tom Kinsella, program associates Mary Steinacker, Lydia Fecteau, Fred Mench, Alexander Alexakis, and GT Lenard. As always, we welcome our new students and our returning majors.

That's all from us. We'd love to hear from you, whether you're quotable or not. Our email addresses can all be found on the new webpages.

Best regards,

The Literature Program

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