This academic year marks a significant milestone for the department and for me personally. This spring we acknowledge (and celebrate, I hope) the twenty-fifth anniversary of my accepting the challenge of taking on the duties and responsibilities of department chair.

Twenty-five years ago, when the previous unit head stepped down unexpectedly in the middle of the year, I was selected by the faculty not only to complete her term but also to take on a three-year commitment of my own. That first term was followed by seven more. Those years have been transformative.

The curriculum is dramatically different from what it was when I became chair. The B.A. in English has evolved as evidenced not only by the variety of the department’s offerings (40% more courses have been added to the curriculum) but also by our efforts to enhance academic rigor (over the years the faculty have implemented not only a gateway course for majors but also a capstone that includes a senior project defended before a faculty committee). Our majors now have a degree program that reflects the best practices in our discipline, a program that has successfully laid the foundation for their successful transition to graduate school and/or the workplace.

Indeed, even in 1990, our program attracted a high caliber of student. This can be seen by the large number of graduates who have launched successful careers as teachers, lawyers, librarians, journalists, and professors. Today’s English majors, however, have even more opportunities to showcase the reading and writing skills that they have honed on our campus. There are now department-sponsored internships and a number of undergraduate research opportunities that were unimaginable twenty-five years ago. Our department can also claim more Magellan Scholars than any academic unit outside the sciences, and our majors continue to shine at USCA Research Day (in fact, the first gold medal winner back in 2008 was an English major; and our students have maintained that winning record each year in the oral presentation category).

This renewed focus on undergraduate research is thanks to a highly dedicated faculty, whose membership has also undergone a dramatic shift since 1990. Only three of the faculty teaching in the department at that time (Rhodes, Claxon, and me) are still here; the rest have been replaced by younger scholar-teachers whose productivity has, in most cases, eclipsed that of the faculty they supplanted.

In the last twenty-five years, the department has also developed a significant public profile. The Oswald Distinguished Writers Series now brings to campus each year noted authors who interact with our students and the larger community (since 1995, our series has touched the lives of over 18,000 members of the reading public). In addition, we host annually the Aiken County Language Arts Festival, which offers hundreds of students in grades 6 to 12 an opportunity to compete in a variety of literary and linguistic categories. Thanks to The Oswald Review, the first refereed intercollegiate journal devoted exclusively to undergraduate research in the discipline of English, USCA is now known around the world (www.scholarcommons.sc.edu). Indeed, since 1999, the journal has published research by over ninety undergraduate scholars representing more than sixty colleges located in twenty-three states and three foreign countries.

I am justifiably proud of everything that the English faculty and our students have been able to accomplish during my tenure as chair. As I anticipate my retirement in May of this year, I feel sure that our department can face the future with confidence, trusting in the positive and progressive momentum already achieved.

— Dr. Tom Mack, Chair
Department of English
The year 2014 marked many accomplishments for Dr. Mack. In the spring he published his fourth book, *The South Carolina Encyclopedia Guide to South Carolina Writers* (USC Press), which includes 128 essays by 70 scholars, each one focused on a writer who has made a significant contribution to our state’s literary heritage.

*The SC Guide to SC Writers* and *A Shared Voice*, the short story anthology that he co-edited with Dr. Geyer, were each the focus of a separate panel at the annual South Carolina Book Festival in Columbia in May.

This past summer Drs. Mack and Geyer also spoke about their ground-breaking composite anthology at an international conference on twenty-first-century writing hosted by the University of Lincoln in the United Kingdom. Their talk about how they put together *A Shared Voice*, which was named a Foreword Magazine Book of the Year Finalist, was warmly embraced by young scholars whose research is focused on the short story cycle.

This summer also saw the completion of the sixteenth volume of *The Oswald Review*, which Dr. Mack founded in 1999. *TOR* was the first refereed intercollegiate journal in this country devoted to undergraduate research in the discipline of English.

This past year Dr. Mack also mentored English major Caitlin Butler on her Magellan project focused on the Aiken-born poet, novelist, and memoirist Gamel Woolsey. Caitlin is Dr. Mack’s sixth Magellan Scholar.

The year concluded with the announcement that Dr. Mack had won the 2014 Governor’s Award in the Humanities. The award, the first ever presented to a USCA faculty member, acknowledges his contributions to the cultural life of Aiken and South Carolina as a whole.

She has not quit. She has expanded in new directions. She reads good books, she travels to some interesting places, and she writes in her journals. She has planted gardens and harvested excellent foodstuffs which she has canned and preserved. She has shared her flowers. She has entertained best friends. She plays with her grandson. She celebrates being cancer free. She finds time to sit in silence. She finds herself wrapped in God’s peace. She takes comfort in this verse for guidance:

> “Whatever is true, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable - if anything is excellent or praiseworthy - think about such things” (*Philippians* 4:8).

She is relieved to be alive and able to enjoy daily morning and afternoon strolls around her yard where a variety of seasonal blossoms flourish and thrive.
Dr. Andrew Geyer — Associate Professor

Dr. Andrew Geyer has finished up his sixth year at the University of South Carolina Aiken and is enjoying the beginning of his seventh. It has been a good but busy year as he continues to serve as Coordinator of Critical Inquiry in addition to his faculty role in the Department of English.

In the editorial department, *A Shared Voice: A Tapestry of Tales*, an anthology of interconnected short stories by writers from Texas and the Carolinas that Dr. Geyer co-edited with Dr. Tom Mack last year, was named a finalist for the 2014 Foreword Magazine Book of the Year Award in the Short Fiction category. Dr. Geyer and Dr. Mack also presented a panel on *A Shared Voice* as an example of the composite anthology form at the What Happens Now conference in Lincoln, UK. Dr. Geyer continues to serve as Fiction Editor at *Concho River Review*.

As for his own writing, five of Dr. Geyer’s short stories were included in the composite anthology entitled *Texas 5 X 5*, which was published May 2014 by Stephen F. Austin University Press. He also published two articles in the *South Carolina Encyclopedia Guide to South Carolina Writers* and had two pieces of creative non-fiction accepted to be included in a pair of anthologies that will be published in 2015 by Lamar University Press: *A Shared Truth*, and *Texas Monthly Turns Forty*. As far as current projects, he is revising a story cycle entitled *Lesser Mountains* and working on a new novel called *Easy Keepers*. Dr. Geyer received the Scholarly Activity Award at USCA in the Spring of 2014.

Dr. Katie Kalpin Smith — Associate Professor

Dr Katie Kalpin Smith taught Shakespeare last spring 2014 and for fall 2014 taught the English Renaissance, the British Literature Survey (1) and Introduction to Literature and Composition. She is now co-sponsor, along with chapter founder and department head Dr Tom Mack, of the USC Aiken chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the English Honor Society.

In 2014, Dr Smith published the essay “Teaching Guide for Women’s Speech in the Age of Shakespeare.” This essay accompanies her publication from the previous year and aims to assist those interested in teaching her essay in undergraduate and graduate classrooms. Both are published by *Literature Compass*, a journal for literature scholars and students. Also in 2014, Dr Smith organized a panel, along with Dr. Julie Wise, entitled “Teaching Literature from the Distant Past” for the South Carolina Council of Teachers of English.

Over the summer, Dr Smith and her family travelled to the mountains (Smoky Mountains National Park) and the beach before flying out to California. There they visited the northern California coast and the Sierra Nevada mountains. While in Lake Tahoe, she took her children to their very first live performance of Shakespeare: *As You Like It*. As it turns out, they both liked it very much (but to be fair, the baby is not yet terribly difficult to please).
Dr. Eric Carlson — Associate Professor

The past year has been a good one for Dr. Carlson and his family. On the professional front, Dr. Carlson was awarded the 2014 USCA Excellence in Teaching award, perhaps in part for his willingness to wear a dress and big, floppy hat in class. Dr. Carlson has also been working on several scholarly projects over the last year. First, he participated in a roundtable discussion at the Southeastern Medieval Association conference last November, where he spoke on choosing an appropriate translation of Beowulf for the undergraduate classroom. He has also submitted an initial draft of his article “Njal’s Saga as the Keystone Text in the Interdisciplinary Classroom,” which is slated for 2015 publication in a special-topics issue of Studies in Medieval and Renaissance Teaching. Recently he has had an abstract accepted for the 2015 International Congress on Medieval Studies; his paper, titled “Grendel’s Eucharist: An Outlaw’s Last Supper,” will analyze the subversion of the Christian eucharist in the cannibalistic feasts of the ogre in Beowulf. Dr. Carlson hopes to work up a version of this paper for publication as part of writing the paper for this conference. Finally, Dr. Carlson has also had accepted an abstract for an article to be included in Trauma in Medieval Society, to be published by Brill. His article will analyze the function of guilt and emotional control in the Knight’s Tale in Geoffrey Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales. Dr. Carlson’s academic cup runneth over and into his lap, it seems.

On the home front, Dr. Carlson’s wife Ali graduated from the USCA School of Nursing in May, 2014, and she is now gainfully employed (and loving it!) in the cardiac unit at Aiken Regional Medical Center. Their son James continues to thrive, having morphed into a rambunctious and often tempestuous three-year-old who is now known as Typhoon Jimmy as often as not. And finally, dear readers, you may recall that last year the Carlsons had purchased a “ramshackular” old house in downtown Aiken. One year later, initial renovations continue to lurch haltingly toward completion. Huzzah, Carlsons!

In Spring 2014, aside from having a successful turkey season, Dr. Higbee presented a lecture on Wes Moore’s The Other Wes Moore at the annual USCA Critical Inquiry Institute, and in summer 2014 he worked on a book on local World War II veterans, with the support of a grant from the Community Foundation of the CSRA. He also served as Associate Editor of USCA’s The Oswald Review, and continues to work on a co-edited collection on teaching First World War literature for MLA Press.

Teaching-wise, Dr. Higbee’s Maymester 2014 Film and Society course focused on the relation between soldiers and society, and in Fall 2014 he taught the Introduction to Women’s Literature course for the first time, which he found at least as educational as his students did. In Spring 2015, Dr. Higbee plans to teach a Major Authors course on British First World War poet Wilfred Owen.

Dr. Douglas Higbee — Associate Professor

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Dr. Matt Miller — Associate Professor

Dr. Miller has had the opportunity to teach courses in African and African American Literature. He also taught survey of American Literature and an online version of Writing in the University. In the fall, he taught Survey of African-American Literature and a course on the Graphic Novel. Last spring, he concluded an independent research project with Ms. Jenny Gilmore, who finished second at USCA’s Research Day.

Dr. Miller completed his book project with McFarland Press on teaching graphic novels in the college classroom. “Class Open Your Comics, Please”: Essays on Teaching with Graphic Narrative should be out later in 2015. He also is working on his second book on transnational American writing. He earned a RISE grant for his first chapter on Claude McKay and Junot Díaz. He hopes to land a commitment from a university press for that book. In anticipation for that project, he presented a partial chapter at the SMLA conference in November 2014 on Junot Díaz and another on Edwidge Danticat. Additionally, he chaired a panel on transnationalism at SMLA.

This past year he was elected chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee. He remains the university’s Writing Assessment Director. As one major priority, he hopes to improve the connection between the WPP and Writing Intensive courses. Within the department, he remains the coordinator of our non-Western assessment.

As far as family news is concerned, his oldest son began seventh grade. His twins started third grade. Each child has very distinct personalities which is fun, challenging, and rewarding. He enjoyed a fantastic trip to Huntington Beach State Park this past summer. He also welcomed a new member of the family: Princess Molly Miller, a rescued pit bull. She joins the growing menagerie of animals in his home alongside Venus Valentine (cat) and Professor Cocoa (dog).

Dr. Julie Wise — Assistant Professor

Now in her second year at USCA, Dr. Julie Wise has come to embrace her role as a member of the USCA community. Having taught an array of composition classes and having completed a first round of Survey of British Literature II, she has also enjoyed developing several new courses. These courses include a new online section of English 101 for Summer I and a Major Authors course titled “Oscar Wilde and His Circle” for Fall 2014, a course she’ll be modifying for the Academy of Lifelong Learning in Spring 2015.

Dr. Wise brings her fascination with fin-de-siècle literature and culture not only to her Wilde course but also to several scholarly projects on the widely read but long-overlooked 1890s poets Alice Meynell and Dollie Radford. After presenting on Meynell in Houston last spring, Dr. Wise devoted a RISE grant last summer to expanding those ideas into a fuller article on Meynell’s haunted lyrics. Dr. Wise has also been polishing an article titled “Dollie Radford and the Case of the Disappearing Babies” for an upcoming essay collection.

When she manages to step away from her academic pursuits, Dr. Wise does her best to keep up with her two- and four-year old sons, who enjoy nothing better than keeping their parents on their toes.
Vicki Collins — Senior Instructor

Professor Collins spent most of her summer in scholarship activity, doing research for the book she is writing about Appalachian literature. She made two trips to North Carolina—one to Hendersonville to take photos and one to Sylva for a mountain writers’ conference. She recently received acceptance letters of publication for a poem about Appalachia and a braided essay. With the great influx of international students at USCA, Professor Collins’ work with USCA’s International Programs has increased. Plans are underway for a new ESOL course devoted to conversational English and a section of AFYS for internationals. For the fall semester, Professor Collins is teaching two sections of English 111 ESOL, two sections of English 101, and English 449: Studies in American Literature: Appalachian Literature. She is mentoring a USCA graduate who shadows her in the English 111 classes. Professor Collins taught “Appalachian Literature” last spring for the Academy of Lifelong Learning and “Tennessee Williams” and “Advanced Memoir Writing” last fall.

University service includes the following: SS&P Committee (Chair); Library Committee; Judicial Procedures Advisement; International Programs Committee; Pacer Spirit Committee; Pacer Club Athletic Board; FYRE Committee and CI Learning Community; Aiken County Language Arts Festival (Director); Writing Room Liaison; International Poetry Reading (Coordinator), Advisor for Collegiate Sertoma; Advisor for The Sign Language Club; mentoring new faculty; advisement of English majors, undeclared, and international students; Freshman Orientation; CTE Brown Bag Series panel member; AFCI Lecture Series presenter; and USCA Magazine proofreader. Community and state service includes the South Carolina Council of Teachers of English (SCCTE) Board and ESOL volunteer teaching for Learn English for Life. Every semester, Professor Collins is a guest poet in the creative writing class at South Aiken High School. In July, she attended a conference in Memphis for the Family Literacy Project, which will be implemented this fall for ESL learners at Ridge Spring Elementary. The highlight of the Memphis trip was an offer from a biker to ride with him up and down Beale Street!

Karl Fornes — Senior Instructor

Karl Fornes had an eventful year on a floatie in the pool. He wondered how long it would take him to pressure wash the fence. He saw a cloud that looked a little like Dr. Mack. He identified several neighborhood dogs by their barks. He sipped his favorite beverage mixture—La Croix berry-flavored water and Ocean Spray cranberry and pomegranate juice. He considered going inside and adding some vodka to it. He decided against the idea. He wasn’t even sure that there was vodka in the house. He knew it would be delicious, though. He called Jennifer and asked her to stop at the liquor store on her way home, just in case. He got angry at Buster, the neighbor’s Jack Russell terrier who would not shut up. He watched Dr. Mack’s glasses disappear from the cloud, and then he watched Dr. Mack fade away. He did not pressure-wash the fence.
This past November at the St. Paul’s Lutheran Church in Aiken, the USCA Concert Choir performed “The Grapes of Orvieto” a collaboration between Roy Seeger and Richard Maltz, the USCA Choir director. “The Grapes of Orvieto” is also scheduled to be performed in Catholic churches across Italy this summer, including (of course) Aiken’s sister city in Italy, Orvieto. It is an a capella piece. Also, on October 7, Seeger was the featured poet at an open mic venue in Columbia, SC called Mind Gravy. Seeger read poems from his new collection *Prayerbook for the Midwestern Agnostic*. He surely wowed the audiences with his whimsy and vibrato. This performance was also a capella.

Last fall semester Professor Seeger taught a course in Contemporary Poetry and 5 sections of English 101. Yes, five sections. He also taught all of the USCA First Pace students. As the faculty advisor to The Guild of Poetic Intent, USCA’s creative writing club, Seeger supervised the organization of various events including a public reading of Michigan poet and rock star Jamie Thomas at the Aiken Center for the Arts, a spring book sale to raise funds for the First Book charity, and the fourth volume of *Soapbox Blues*, an anthology of poems by Guild members. The Guild has also hosts their own monthly open-mic night at various local restaurants like Mi Rancho and El Cameron Feliz.

As is his summer routine, Prof. Seeger also spent a week in Louisville, KY with 3000 other English teachers to read AP exams. While in Louisville he ate pork belly sandwiches and drank a pale ale that commemorated famed comedian Lenny Bruce. All this in an old Catholic monastery. On another night he saw *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* in the Louisville Park. The Puck was sinister.

On a personal note, Seeger’s wife, Dr. Amanda Warren, is doing well in her new digs as an instructor at Georgia Regents University. Her office has two desks. Also, on the home front: skinks have overrun the backyard. His puppy couldn’t be happier.

In 2014, Dr. Bruzina developed and taught English courses for international students and for students in USCA’s new Pacer Pathways initiative. He also taught a summer creative writing class for middle school students as part of USCA’s Kids in College program. In addition to teaching, Bruzina earned certificates in TEFL and Procedure Writing and was selected for a full-time Instructor position in USCA’s English Department (starting in the Spring of 2015). He also published several poems and a non-fiction piece in the journal *StorySouth*, and he’s editing, with Dr. Higbee, an anthology of essays about academia and hunting.

In his free time, Dr. Bruzina went fishing, hunting, backpacking and kayaking, spending several days exploring the streams and rivers of western North Carolina. He also enjoyed cooking, arguing and frogging with colleagues from USCA’s languages, sociology and communications departments.
Jim Saine — Adjunct Professor

Jim Saine spent the spring semester on sabbatical. Ha! Seriously, though, he taught no classes, because he and his wife were set to go to China to teach English and American Literature (from Beowulf to the Post-Modern period in one semester!) at Shandong University; however, a week before they were scheduled to depart, a family emergency occurred, and they decided that their son and his family needed them more than the Chinese students.

In addition to tending to the emergency, Professor Saine occupied his time this past spring doing a lot of reading as well as writing. He finished the draft of a novel he’s been working on for over a year and is now trying to decide if it’s worthy of publication and if so, what the best route is—there are so many these days.

During the summer, family events were the tour de force. Those included a trip to Texas; a week at the beach; teaching the grandkids how to pick split tomatoes in Granddaddy’s garden, fish, and pick weeds; and a plethora of other less interesting activities. Jim also spent time during the summer preparing for fall semester courses, not only the basic load of English 101 and English 102 courses, but Critical Inquiry as well. Because Dr. Geyer didn’t teach Jim the code for CI—that one really means two and two really means four—Jim has eighty-eight freshmen in CI in addition to the eighty in 101 and 102. It was a busy semester—but he loved it.

Jason Walter — Adjunct Professor

Jason Walter’s sequential art series entitled "No Funnies" has been published by Burger Records, a prominent record label based out of San Francisco, California. Likewise, Burger Records had the “No Funnies” series available for sale to the public via their website. Walter has also directed animated music videos for Burger Records. Walter finished a full-length record of rock ‘n’ roll music this past summer, and it was released on Academia Records, a record label based out of Charleston, South Carolina. For the record, Walter was given permission from Gillian McCain, a New York poet, to use her poem “Holes” as the lyrics for Walter’s song “Holes.” Likewise, Walter was given permission by Silvia Sanza, a New York novelist, to use passages from her novel Alex Wants to Call it Love for his song “Angel in Reverse.” Walter’s comic strip "R.I.P. Lou Reed" was published by the prominent New York writers Legs McNeil and Gillian McCall along with Walter’s comics “Robot Hemmingway,” “The Coolest Guy in the Room,” and “Straight Edged Collage.” Likewise, Walter’s comic strip for the band Jacuzzi Boys was featured in the London based publication Sex Beat.
Additional Faculty

Kathryn Hauer — Adjunct Professor

Ilona Law — Senior Instructor

Dr. Jill Hampton — Associate Professor

Mrs. Law retired December 2014

Dr. William Claxon — Associate Professor
When I first began my adventures as an English major at USC Aiken, the department gave me the excellent opportunity to tutor in the Writing Room. It was through this experience that my interest in student success began. After working in positions from freelance history writer to data researcher, I found myself back in higher education. In my position at USC Aiken’s Veteran and Military Student Success Center, I am part of a team that advocates for the academic success of the veterans and active duty service members in their transition from military to civilian life. As the School Certifying Official for students using VA education benefits at USC Aiken, my daily tasks involve applying critical thinking, communication, and attention-to-detail, invaluable skills I practiced as an English major. Because I constantly review policies for both the university and the Department of Veterans Affairs, critical reading and comprehension is important in my position as I relay key information from the VA to students and staff on campus in order for the school to efficiently process the GI Bill. Thanks to the English faculty at USC Aiken, I have found that the values, knowledge, and perspectives I gleaned from my undergraduate experience have helped me with my position in aiding the veteran and military student population with their transition and academic success.

Immediately after graduating, I enrolled in an entry to practice Masters of Science in Nursing with the Clinical Nurse Leader focus at the Medical College of Georgia. After graduating with my MSN and passing RN boards, I started working at Aiken Regional as a psychiatric RN and transferred within the company to their site in Greer, SC. Within a year of moving to Greer, SC, I decided to pursue my Nurse Practitioner and was accepted into a highly competitive Family Nurse Practitioner cohort at Clemson University where I also teach a psychiatric nursing clinical rotation to undergraduate nursing students at Clemson. I will graduate with this MS-FNP in May 2015 and have been asked to stay as part-time clinical faculty at Clemson upon graduation. I am hoping to work at the CVS Minute Clinic when I graduate.

My Bachelor of the Arts in English was by far my favorite degree. I enjoyed the coursework, the faculty, and the sense of community I encountered at USCA. Having a strong writing background and confidence in my critical reading skills has served me far more than I ever imagined in pursuing my graduate degrees. I am also confident in my research abilities, which have been utilized in every graduate course. Research and writing are important components in any graduate program, and I am thankful to have that background.
Ellice Whatley

After I graduated, it took longer than I expected to find an enjoyable job that pertained to my degree. I worked as a writer/editor at a business consulting company for a while. Working this job certainly taught me how to use information I obtained from my degree in different, more technical ways. Working behind a desk also taught me that I do not enjoy sitting behind a desk all day or technical writing; each day seemed equivalent to a purgatorial punishment. However, I soon discovered that Aiken Technical College was hiring a Writing Center Coordinator, so I applied and was hired shortly after. Since I began working at Aiken Tech, I have loved every day spent here. I am still the Writing Center Coordinator, but I am also presently teaching two Developmental English classes. Needless to say, I could not perform either role if I did not have the experience my degree gave me. Everything that I did as an undergrad prepared me for this job. Even though Aiken Technical College is remarkably different from a four-year college like USCA, I have been able to use my knowledge and apply information in different ways, adapting constantly to these students’ specific needs. As the Writing Center Coordinator, I developed the Academic Success Center’s tutoring manual and several handouts regarding grammar, writing styles, and citations. I am primarily in charge of training the tutors, communicating with the faculty on their needs, and advertising the center. Even though I have been working at the college for only a few months, the Writing Center Job requirements created an easy transition into my role as an instructor. Between my two classes, I have around 40 students. As their instructor, I have focused heavily on building a strong grammar foundation, which is the ultimate goal of Developmental English. My English degree certainly showed me the best way to improve writing and grammar is through personal practice, so my students write a paper each week. I believe I learn something new with every class I teach. This job and experience has also seriously motivated me to apply for graduate school in the near future because this job confirms that teaching at the college level is what I want to do. Obtaining my Master’s degree would provide me with the opportunity to teach different classes or at a four-year university.

Rebecca Barnwell

Since I graduated from USC Aiken in 2012, I have focused on my family and finding a career that would continue to enrich my academic interests. My pursuit of continued education, naturally led me to apply for positions at higher education institutions. When I initially came across the opening for a Student Services Program Coordinator position at the School of Business Administration (SOBA), I was worried that they would not find me qualified for the position because of my non-business degree. I was wrong! In fact, what SOBA needed was a person who could clearly communicate across multiple medias. My English degree and my internship experience with MAU Workforce Solutions were instrumental in proving that I was the right person for the job. I now advise students on a regular basis while providing support to multiple SOBA programs. My writing skills are often put to the test while providing content for our undergraduate student handbooks, our website, and various marketing tools (i.e. flyers, brochures, and social media).

I love my job in higher education and I look forward to continuing my own academic pursuits in the near future. I am particularly interested in a new program that will be offered through SOBA. Next fall, a special MBA program designed for liberal arts students will begin. The curriculum is designed to introduce non-business students to basic business skills that will allow them to be successful either within their current organization or as an entrepreneur starting their own small business.
Jessica Shaw

I graduated from USCA in the spring of 2013 with a major in English and a minor in Professional Writing. During my last semester, I had the opportunity for a Directed Internship through the English Department with Matson Consulting, an Aiken-based agricultural business consulting firm. At the time, my main goal for the internship was to earn some class credit and gain a little experience in technical writing. This opportunity gave me a chance to explore the possibility of a career as a technical writer.

After graduating, I was offered a position as an editor with the firm. I was ecstatic since I honestly had no idea what I would be doing after I graduated. Since then, I have been able to explore different skill sets and further expand my education. I have co-authored multiple articles that have been published in an industry magazine. I was also successful in helping almost 20 small businesses obtain millions of dollars in federal funding through my work on grant applications.

My work as an intern and now as an employee with Matson Consulting has helped me gain a better idea of the type of work I want to do in the future. I am still unsure about where I will be ten years from now, but I know the friendships I formed with students and professors and my education from USCA, along with the skills I have developed post-graduation, will help me wherever I go.

Josh Catlett

I graduated from USCA in the fall of 2006 and afterward spent seven years in three different fields: technical writing, business services, and office management. No matter what job I had at the time, however, there was always the feeling in the back of my mind that I wanted to experience other cultures and perspectives. This feeling was reinforced after a short trip to Japan in 2009.

Ultimately, I made the decision to move overseas in 2013 and began making plans. I moved to Miami later that year and took the CELTA course, and around that same time I decided that South Korea would be a great country for me to begin my travels abroad. I received a placement at a public elementary school in Busan, the second largest province in South Korea at 3.5 million people, and moved here in February 2014.

South Korea is a country like no other. The little things are what make this country so different from the United States. I noticed after a short time here just how much emphasis Koreans place on the group rather than the individual. Many of the differences are on a more superficial level, though. Restaurants serve water in a cup that most Americans would consider the size of a thimble. And, although I haven't witnessed this personally yet, I've been told that weddings sometimes feature a magician before or after the exchange of vows.

I've been treated extremely well here, and it doesn't hurt that South Korea is one of the safest countries on the planet. The people here exude a genuine warmth that reminds me of the southern hospitality in South Carolina. In addition to the Korean friends I've made, I've met people from all over the world and am thankful to have such a diverse group of friends.

I plan to stay in South Korea for at least two years, but afterward I'm not sure where life will take me. I've enjoyed teaching immensely and know I want to continue in the profession, although at some point I'd like to try teaching adults so that I can have more meaningful conversations with my students.

In the meantime, however, I'm focused on enjoying the busy and fulfilling life I lead here in South Korea.
Patrick Sanders

Since graduating from USC Aiken in 2013, I worked briefly at a legal directory in Aiken, SC for a few months. As of August 2014, I have been enrolled in USC’s Masters of Library and Information Science program. The program differs from most traditional programs, as most of the classes are primarily online only, although some classes do require weekly meet-ups. Online classes prove to be a unique challenge, especially for those who have never taken online classes. However, online classes can be beneficial, particularly for students who do not live near the USC campus. The Library and Information Sciences program refers to the students who do not live near USC as “distance learning students.” Some of the students in the program this semester reside quite far away from South Carolina: a couple of students live in Maine and one student lives in Canada, for example. The program offers courses that address various aspects of the Library and Information Science field, such as management, reference services, and digital technology courses. Additionally, USC offers two separate dual degree programs for Library and Information Science students. One can also earn a Masters in English or a Masters in History in addition to the Masters of Library and Information Science. Naturally, the dual degree program allows one to earn both degrees in less time than it would take to earn each degree separately. Right now, I’m currently in the process of applying to the dual degree program by which I can also earn my Masters of English.

USC’s Library and Information Science program supplies students with various job postings for both students and alumni through e-mail. This semester I’m working at USC’s School of Medicine Library as a Graduate Assistant. Since I’ve never worked in a library until now, my assistantship consistently provides me with knowledge of how a library operates. Because the School of Medicine Library is not a typical academic library, but a medical library, I’m also learning how medical school libraries function differently from other libraries. For instance, books in medical libraries are organized under a different system than typical libraries.

One can also find many fantastic opportunities in the Library and Information Sciences program. Other universities with the same program may offer intercollegiate study abroad opportunities for students. This summer, the University of Kentucky is hosting a study abroad opportunity in Ireland for the month of June, which I am set to attend. I look forward to visiting the country not only in experiencing their unique culture but also in understanding how their libraries operate and how their culture has been preserved.

After taking a year off from my studies, I’m ecstatic to be a student again. I look forward to growing as both a scholar and an individual. After completing my Masters in Library and Information Science, and assuming I’m accepted into the dual degree program and complete my Masters of English, I may just be ambitious enough to pursue a Ph.D. in English. Regardless, I face the future confidently.

Stephanie Myers

Shortly after graduation, I began graduate school at the Medical University of South Carolina (MUSC) to pursue a Master’s in Health Administration. As the only student in my program with a degree in English, I was intimidated at first and questioned my abilities, but within a week, I realized how fortunate I was to have studied English. My research, writing, and presentation skills distinguished me from my peers. I have interned with various healthcare managers who praise my writing abilities and request for my input. This past summer, I assisted with research grant proposals that later received funding. I still have one year of graduate school and already see how much I have accomplished because of my communication skills.

Communication, both verbal and written, is the most essential skill needed in every workplace, yet it is unbelievably rare. The English program at USCA provides students with an incredibly diverse skillset that can be applied to and benefit every field. After I graduate from MUSC, I hope to positively impact the US healthcare system, and I have confidence in doing so because of the skills I acquired from the English program at USCA.
Mary Rosbach

Hello, fellow English majors!

My name is Mary Rosbach. Some of you may know me as Mary Ward. I was recently married in September. I met my husband John in Dr. Carlson’s Development of the English Language class. John graduated in the spring of 2010 with a degree in history and I graduated in the spring of 2011. Upon graduation, I was offered a full-time position at T.J. Maxx. I had worked there during college, so I accepted the promotion. In fall 2012, I began management training. However, as time passed, I realized that a career in retail was not for me. After much thought, I turned in my resignation and began seeking other employment in May of 2013.

I stumbled across a job posting for a facilities assistant within the City of Aiken’s Parks, Recreation and Tourism Department at the Aiken Visitor’s Center and Train Museum. It was only part-time work but it sounded interesting. When I was in high school, I had thought about obtaining a Master’s degree in Library and Information Science and possibly pursuing a career as an archivist/curator. The job seemed like a perfect fit and it has been. When I interviewed for the position, my current supervisor was thrilled that I held a degree in English.

My job duties include coordinating the City of Aiken’s Saturday historic tour, maintaining the inventory of brochures at the visitor’s center, keeping up with tourism leads, scheduling volunteers, and posting on social media. I also assist my supervisor with other projects such as our Visit Aiken Magazine, our website www.visitaikensc.com, the Aiken County Farmer’s Market, and other city sponsored events. I have written and edited articles for our magazine and have edited brochures and media releases as well. I had never considered a job in tourism but I enjoy what I do. The best thing about my job is that I am able to use the knowledge and skills I gained during my time at USCA.

I may still obtain a Master’s degree in Library and Information Science and look forward to what the future has in store for me. Come see me at the Aiken Visitor’s Center and Train Museum!

Stephanie Francis

Since graduating in May 2005 with a B.A. in Secondary Education-English, I’ve spent the last nine years teaching both American and British literature at South Aiken High School in Aiken, SC. I have most recently earned my AP Language and Composition certification, and intend to add AP Literature and Composition to my list of credentials next summer. My English studies have always been an integral part of my life, even outside of the classroom. I am a voracious reader; books line my walls at home, teeter precariously on the edge of my nightstand, and litter the trunk of my otherwise neat and clean car. Even my school work bag contains at least two novels that I keep close for those rare “free” moments during a planning period, or when I have ten minutes to dive in to a text during my lunch. Despite my love for all things literary, I’ve had great difficulty deciding on which direction I should take in my graduate studies. I’ve considered pursuing Speech Pathology, Linguistics, Literature and Composition, even Creative Writing. I often wish my decision was as easy as when I was an undergrad at USC-Aiken!
My Magellan
by Caitlin Butler

I was named a Magellan Scholar in the Spring of 2014. The Magellan Scholar program, according to their website, was begun in 2005 to “enrich the academic experience of USC’s undergraduates with research opportunities in all disciplines from science, technology, and medicine, to theatre, music, and art.” This program funds student research projects, providing chosen USC undergraduates from any USC campus with up to $3,000 for salary, materials, and travel.

To be chosen for a scholarship, students must work together with a mentor to submit a research proposal worthy of funding. Much work went into my application; together with Dr. Mack, I began well before the submission deadline to create a proposal detailing my research topic, process, and objectives. Once my proposal was accepted, the real work began.

My topic of research has been the poet Gamel Woolsey, a woman born and raised in South Carolina. My goal is to determine whether or not, based on the qualities of her poetry, she deserves a place in the Southern literary tradition despite the fact that she lived the majority of her life abroad. I spent the summer researching and establishing the qualities of Southern poetry, then closely reading each of Woolsey’s 147 poems. The highlight of this phase was the day I drove to Columbia to read a rare copy of “The Search for Demeter,” kept in USC’s beautiful and historic South Caroliniana Library. Having established the terms of Southern poetry, I created a rubric against which to match all of Woolsey’s poems, and by the end of the summer my presentation was well underway.

The culmination of this year’s work will end in the Spring when I share my results in a series of three presentations, including presentations at USC’s Discovery Day and USCA’s Research Day. My presentations will combine the results of my research with an explanation of my research process to educate audiences on the effectiveness of the Magellan Scholar program as well as Gamel Woolsey’s merit as a Southern poet. The first presentation will be in March at the annual meeting of the Philological Association of the Carolinas. This conference will be held in Wilmington, NC, and I eagerly anticipate traveling to a place I have never been before, as well as sharing Woolsey’s work with many who no doubt have never heard of her.
My SCAA Website Internship
by Blake Bolen

In the final semester of my senior year as an English major at USCA, I was selected by Dr. Mack to partake in a paid internship to write author biographies for the South Carolina Academy of Authors. At first, I thought that I might not be quite cut out to handle the responsibilities and research involved when it came to writing the biographies coupled with the full load of class work I had to face in order to graduate. My fears were soon quelled when I became aware of how helpful Dr. Mack turned out to be as a supervisor.

Dr. Mack was very helpful when it came to completing the biographies. He was very patient with me when I submitted work that was not quite up to par and provided helpful suggestions that kept me on track while still allowing me to incorporate my own artistic integrity. I have never worked for someone who was as quite as firm yet understanding as Dr. Mack. Working under him, I quickly became confident, and I even came to enjoy the work I was doing.

The research I performed turned out to be much less strenuous than I had initially thought it would be. On top of that, I got to learn a lot about specific writers with deep connections to my home state. By the end of the internship I felt that writing the biographies was something more akin to a hobby or a leisurely activity that I could do to pass the time. With this internship, I had the honor of seeing my writing I had come to love be published on the SCAA website, and the $250 I made over the course of the semester is something worth mentioning as well.

On Retirement
by Dr. Stan Rich

After his retirement from the USCA English Department in 2006, Dr. Stanley Rich continues to be actively engaged in Birmingham, Alabama. For two years he has headed a coalition of professionals in the Birmingham area to develop a program to house homeless youth in Birmingham. This will be in the form of a Home Host Family Program. He continues to enjoy reading the novels of Louise Penny, James R. Benn, Donna Leon, David Leavitt, Rita Mae Brown, and J. A. Jance. He continues to enjoy regular lap swimming. Recent travels include Croatia, Slovenia, Italy, Chile, and Argentina.
In the summer of 2014, I was invited to serve as Editorial Intern for the 16th edition of The Oswald Review, under the supervision of Dr. Mack. As a good English major, I decided that reading undergraduate criticism on works by William Faulkner and James Joyce (to name a few) was exactly how I wanted to spend my summer.

The Oswald Review is a journal that features undergraduate research and criticism from around the world. This year, we featured articles from students going to school in New Jersey, West Virginia, Alabama, Colorado, and the United Kingdom. They chose to discuss a variety of topics, ranging from hysteria and the representation of masculinity in James Joyce’s “A Painful Case,” to understanding the concept of death in works by Edgar Allan Poe and Charles Brockden Brown. This edition, as well as previous editions, can be accessed either via the EBSCO database, or by going to http://scholarcommons.sc.edu/tor/.

Over the course of summer break, Dr. Mack and I met numerous times, selecting the final submissions to be published, revising and editing those chosen works, and then revising and editing the same works after they had been formatted for publication. My duties also included the fun job of informing the five winning applicants that their submissions had been approved, and the not-so-fun-job of informing the rest of the applicants that their submissions had not been chosen. As their primary contact, I worked closely with the authors on their revisions, as well as keeping them updated on the overall progress of the journal.

As Editorial Intern, the experience I gained was invaluable. Being a part of the process, from initial selection to final publishing, helped me fully understand how much effort goes into academic writing. While I must have read each of those submissions at least ten times apiece, I wanted to make sure that we published the best possible versions. As a result of our hard work, I assert that we produced an amazing edition, with criticism touching on a variety of fine authors. Perhaps the greatest result of this internship was being able to put my experience on a resume, which ultimately helped me escape the world of retail and get a job as writer/editor at Matson Consulting, a local agricultural consulting firm.

Broken Ink, an annual student literary arts journal, was headed by Karl Fornes in the fall of 2014. At the end of each academic year, a new issue of Broken Ink is sent to the Associated College Press, a national membership organization for college student media, for critique. The 2014 issue was awarded “Best in Show” by the critique panel at the national College Media Association conference.

Each fall, The USCA Department of English and Broken Ink team up to bring a writer to campus for a reading. Ken Hada, an Oklahoma-born poet and professor, read his poems in the SAC on November 6th.
The fall reading of the 2014-2015 Oswald Writers Series on Tuesday, October 7 featured author Phillip Gardner, who showcased three of his short stories.

Born in Goldsboro, North Carolina, Phillip Gardner is a born-and-raised Southern boy. He attended the University of North Carolina at Charlotte and graduated with a Master of the Arts degree in 1976. He currently resides in Darlington, South Carolina with his wife and is the self-proclaimed “happiest guy in America.”

Gardner is an author who, when asked why he has not yet published the next great American novel, describes himself as more of a sprinter than a long-distance runner. He has published several collections of his short stories, including *Someone to Crawl Back To* in 2009, *Somebody Wants Somebody Dead* in 2012, and *Available Light* in 2013.

The world of music has also been impacted by Gardner’s influence. After his college graduation, he spent several years on tour doing covers of popular music, and co-wrote countless songs with his brother Michael and their friend Kenny Soule. Later on, the three musicians came together again with performers Audley Freed and Robert Kearns to form the Gardners of Soule, who for two years rocked the North Carolina club circuit. Gardner is presently singing lead vocals for the Florence-based band called The Woodys. The Woodys play in a variety of genres, mostly from the 60s and 70s, and a variety of songs, from the Temptations to the Rolling Stones.

Currently, Gardner teaches screenwriting, film, and literature-based classes at Francis Marion University, but he takes his greatest pride in the university’s Writing Center, of which he is the founding director. Along with teaching, Gardner is able to work with aspiring young writers every day. In 1994, Garner was awarded the Southeastern Writing Center Association Achievement Award for his work at Francis Marion.

USCA senior James Paisley had the honor of introducing Phillip Gardner at the Writers Series presentation on October 7th. As Phillip Gardner stood behind the podium for his reading, the first thing I noticed (besides his glorious white mane of hair, of course) was the surprisingly quiet way he read his first story, “The Girl and the Bird.” Carried by a soft voice that whispered when I expected a shout, he wove an ambiguously depressing tale that I found myself leaning forward to hear, so absorbed that I nearly forgot to take notes. The entire room was in a similar hush. When the story, ended, however, Gardner’s demeanor immediately lightened. He cracked a joke at normal volume, and I felt everyone simultaneously relax. The first story had done its job; we were all captivated.

Gardner proceeded to more upbeat stories like “Impersonal You,” a breakup story about rather unlikeable people, and “In Answer to Your Question,” which highlighted the bonds of friendship as illustrated by how many fingers an aggrieved individual would allow his pal to keep. With each reading, Gardner’s spirit seemed to rise. I watched him become increasingly comfortable in the spotlight until he was walking around and gesturing animatedly as he answered people’s questions, walking up to the very edge of the seats to personally address the asker.

I found that Gardner’s quirky, unusual writing was a reflection of the personality he gradually revealed to us. He had us all laughing on several occasions, and the end of the night was met with thunderous applause. After the reading, Gardner remained behind to meet his guests and sign copies of his short story collections that were for sale in the lobby.

For more information on Phillip Gardner, visit his website: [http://phillipjgardner.com/](http://phillipjgardner.com/).
The Guild of Poetic Intent
by Ashton Hendricks

The Guild of Poetic Intent is a student-run poetry organization headed by Professor Roy Seeger. Some of the students involved this past year include James Paisley, Sarah-Marie Williamson, Kelsey Blocker, Brent Blackmon, and Terell Douglas-Williams.

The third Tuesday of every month finds the members of the Guild at Mi Rancho or El Cameron Feliz, hosting an off-campus open mic event open to anyone who wishes to share their poems. At the end of the academic year, the Guild compiles a chapbook of poems written by Guild members called Soapbox Blues. This last installment was the fourth edition.

The Guild also hosted a Read N’ Feed in the Gregg Graniteville Library on October 9th. It was a pot-luck open mic in which students were free to share their poetry to a room of receptive poetry enthusiasts and stuff themselves with free food brought by participants. “If you’re lucky, people bring good food,” says Guild head Roy Seeger.

At the end of the fall and spring semester, the Guild hosted a used book sale, thanks to all the professors who donated books. Proceeds went towards First Book, a charity that provides children’s books to disadvantaged families, and the spring Emerging Poet Series.

Each spring, the Guild brings an emerging poet (i.e. a poet who has no more than two full-length collections) to the Aiken Center for the Arts to give a public reading of his or her work, participate in round-table discussions, and visit some of the creative writing classes at USCA. Guild members also create posters and a broadside for each poet. This past April the guest poet was Melissa Tuckey, who was selected by Charles Simic as the winner of the ABZ Poetry Prize. She is also a literary and environmental activist and the founder of the biennial Split this Rock Poetry Festival.

From The Editor
by Ashton Hendricks

As a junior English major, the office manager for Nostalgic Towing, and vice president of the campus chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, I had a busy fall semester. However, when I needed three more credit hours and no time to fill it, Dr. Mack was kind enough to offer me this internship and has graciously guided me through every step of the process.

A perfectionist by nature and a procrastinator by trade, I surprised myself with the discipline I was able to dedicate myself to this project. I utilized my skills as a writer and as an artist to create what I believe to be both a functional and aesthetically inoffensive newsletter.

Thank you to all the teachers, students, graduates, and retirees who contributed to this year’s newsletter, to Dr. Mack for offering this opportunity and holding my hand through the process, and to the library for tolerating my insistent presence at its computers. I’m hoping my experience with this internship will open me up to new opportunities both at USCA and wherever I go when I graduate in the spring of 2016.
Books by USCA’s English Professors

*The South Carolina Encyclopedia Guide to South Carolina Writers*, a collection of 140 essays about writers who have contributed to our state’s distinctive literary heritage, edited by Dr. Tom Mack.

*Texas 5x5*, a collection of short stories by native Texans Jan Seale, Tarry Dalrymple, Jerry Craven, Kristen VanYamen, and our very own Dr. Andrew Geyer, edited by Laurie Champion.

*Class, Please Open Your Comics*; a collection of eighteen essays regarding the use of comics and graphic novels in classroom settings, edited by Dr. Matt Miller and illustrated by Delicia Williams, a 2012 graduate of the English program.