The Alexander Bush Memorial Scholarship

In the spring of 2011, I received a letter naming me as the first recipient of the Alexander Bush Memorial Scholarship. Initially, my attitude towards the scholarship was little more than appreciation of the financial assistance, as I'd never met or known about Alex. It was not until I began to learn about who Alex was and what he meant that I realized the immense honor I had received.

As the first recipient of the scholarship, I was asked to say a few words about it at the 2011 Broken Ink Release Party. Never having known Alex, I decided to read a few articles to gain some insight and inspiration to use in my speech. Each article was unfailingly positive, presenting Alex Bush as a very involved student who served as President of the Pacer Law Club, Vice President of Sigma Tau Delta, and a Pacer Times staff member, to list just a few of his activities. When he died, Alex was in his second year of law school in Charleston. Yet it wasn't until I spoke with some of my peers and professors who had known him that I truly began to understand the kind of person Alex had been.

Dr. Katie Kalpin Smith recalls Alex as "not one to simply accept others’ views (even the professor’s) without interrogating them first. He was always courteous, though, and what resulted was often an enthusiastic discussion in which multiple points of view were raised. I appreciated then Alex’s reluctance to be passive, his drive to engage thoughtfully with those around him, and his apparent enjoyment of intellectual arguments." This reluctance to be passive was not reserved only for his Shakespeare class, however; Dr. Lynne Rhodes remembers how in both her advanced composition and technical writing courses, Alex "was fun and assertive, willing to discuss, debate, challenge, and contribute to the various projects and assignments. He was a good friend to his peers and a joy to teach."

Even though I never met him, I feel Alex has touched my life through the way he touched others. He remains in our memory as a paragon of dedication, involvement, and intellect. Dr. Tom Mack wrote, "Alex possessed natural leadership qualities. Other students in the English program looked up to him in large part because of his energy, good humor, and unfailingly positive outlook. Since Alex himself served as the newsletter intern in his senior year, it is fitting that we dedicate this year’s issue in his memory."

Thus, the 2011-2012 issue of the English Department Newsletter is dedicated to the life and memory of Alex. I am deeply honored to have received the Alexander Charles Bush Memorial Scholarship, and I strive every day to be deserving of this honor. Alex was a dedicated and optimistic individual, but most of all, he was a good person, unwilling to accept the accepted if it did not seem right. This, more than anything, strikes at the heart of what I believe it means to be an English major; Alex dove beneath the surface meaning of ideas to their cores, in order to exalt the truths and excise the falsehoods embedded within. Losing Alex meant more than just losing a peer, a student, or a friend; his death marks the loss of a man willing to fight for what he felt was right.

-Brady Morris

Anyone who wishes to donate to the Alexander Bush Memorial Scholarship can do so by making a check out to the Aiken Partnership (please write ABMS Endowment in the space marked “for”) and mail it to the USCA Office of Advancement, USCA, 471 University Parkway, Aiken, SC 29801.
Dr. Tom Mack
Professor

Dr. Mack had another great year in 2011. In recognition of his long service as the sponsor of an outstanding campus chapter, he received a special award from the Board of Directors of Sigma Tau Delta at the annual convention of the international English honor society in Pittsburgh, PA in March. At that same convention he hosted a workshop for chapter sponsors; he also pre-screened about a dozen submissions for undergraduate research presentations in American literature.

Dr. Mack is now finishing his second year of a three-year term as Chair of the Board of Governors of the South Carolina Academy of Authors. In that capacity, he hosted in April the Academy’s 2011 induction in Aiken during which three authors—Sue Monk Kidd, Percival Everett, and Gamel Woolsey—were welcomed into the state’s literary hall of fame. He also organized and chaired a panel on the work of the Academy at the South Carolina Book Festival in Columbia in May.

Over the summer, he edited the thirteenth volume of *The Oswald Review*, the first intercollegiate journal in the world devoted exclusively to undergraduate research in the discipline of English; this most recent issue features essays from five students at three American universities, the University of Edinburgh, and the English and Foreign Languages University in Hyderabad, India. *TOR* is published in both print and online formats.

This past October, he presented a paper entitled “The Transmigrating Evil Genius: From Boothby to Rohmer to Fleming” at the National Conference on Liberal Arts and the Education of Artists sponsored by the School of Visual Arts in New York City.

In the category of scholarship, Dr. Mack also continued to make appearances in connection with the publication of his book *Circling the Savannah: Cultural Landmarks of the Central Savannah River Area*; in November, he spoke about the book at the Barnwell County Museum. His review essay of Gilbert Sorrentino’s *The Abyss of Human Illusion* was published in *Magill’s Literary Annual, 2011*; his article on Erskine Caldwell’s *Tobacco Road* appeared in *The Thirties in America*; and his revised article on poet Mark Doty was published in the *Critical Survey of Poetry, Fourth Edition*.

This year (2011) marks the twenty-first anniversary of Dr. Mack’s popular weekly column “Arts and Humanities,” which appears every Friday in *The Aiken Standard*.

Finally, Dr. Mack co-chaired a subgroup of the Fiftieth Anniversary Committee; his subcommittee was charged with coordinating the academic events on the 2011-2012 calendar; he also created the official anniversary theme: “Fifty Years: Still Setting the Pace.”

Dr. Lynne Rhodes
Professor

Over the past year, Dr. Lynne Rhodes was promoted to full professor, and has also been privileged to receive an endowed chair: the Toole Chair of English (2), which gave her resources and incentive to explore and write a memoir. She is currently teaching a creative nonfiction class for the first time. Dr. Rhodes also continued her work with the Aiken Writing Project, holding a summer institute this past July for teachers in the Aiken and McCormick County School Districts.

In her role as USCA Writing Assessment Director, Dr. Rhodes has also been appointed to the position of President-Elect for the Carolinas Writing Program Administrators, an affiliate of the national Council of Writing Program Administrators, and she will be coordinating a conference called “Meeting in the Middle” for North and South Carolina universities and colleges in Charlotte this coming February.
In the past year, Jill Hampton has been turning her focus towards equestrian matters. She presented two well-received papers on the Horse Culture in Irish Literature at a regional and international conference in the spring. Her research identifies and analyzes how various Irish writers depict horses and horse people in their fiction. One of her students, Tara Gail Bostwick—herself from an equestrian sporting family—was awarded a Magellan Undergraduate Research grant of $3,000 to research and document the scrapbooks, photo albums, journals, art, and book collection of her grandfather Pete Bostwick. Tara Gail is also identifying any Irish artifacts and influences she discovers along the way. In the spring, Bostwick will continue to work with Dr. Hampton by tracing Irish bloodlines from the original studs to famous and local stables. In support of this research, Executive Vice-Chancellor Dr. Suzanne Ozment awarded Dr. Hampton a course release for fall, 2011 to work on her book Irish Influences on Polo, contracted with Mellen Press.

Along the way, Dr. Hampton gathered various students and community members interested in supporting equestrian research at USCA to form the USCA Polo Team. Dr. Hampton serves as the faculty advisor to the polo team and club delegate to the United States Polo Association. The Aiken Polo Club has asked her to serve on its junior polo players’ committee as well. Finally, in terms of equestrian matters, USCA has begun a new initiative named Equine Scholars, which seeks to attract a select group of students interested in any or all aspects of Aiken’s equestrian world. Randy Duckett, Vice-Chancellor of Enrollment Services, asked her to be the coordinator of that program. Dr. Hampton is accepting applications and choosing students to begin work in the spring, 2012. Excited by the possibilities of all these new ventures, she is keeping busy on all fronts.

She continues to put together the American Conference for Irish Studies newsletter three times a year, usually a few weeks late but always to much acclaim. With help from the USCA Advancement Office and their graphic design-talented students, the newsletter reflects proudly on our university.

In her teaching, Dr. Hampton has grown even more fascinated by the possibilities of the sentence. As a consequence, she has revised her composition pedagogy to discussing kernel sentences and free modifiers, suspensive, cumulative, and periodic sentences, strong action verbs, and, her students’ favorite, those troubling, prolific “ing” words. In the spring, 2011 semester, she taught Irish Literature for the first time in years and in spring, 2012, she will teach a major authors’ course on James Joyce. Her students continue to astound, dismay, and teach her about life.

Dr. Miller was granted tenure and promotion to Associate Professor last year. He had the opportunity to teach a course on Modern American Literature last spring. This class also hosted 2010 South Carolina Academy of Authors Inductee Percival Everett, who discussed his novel Wounded. Dr. Miller also taught Survey of American Literature II and an online version of Writing in the University. In the fall, he taught a course to commemorate USCA’s 50th Anniversary: American Fiction in 1961. The course focused on “Standard Bearers” such as John Steinbeck and Carson McCullers; “New Comers (to 1961)” such as Kurt Vonnegut, Walker Percy, and Joseph Heller; and “Others” such as Richard Wright and Paule Marshall. He also taught Survey of African-American Literature for the second time.

In research, he evaluated an essay submitted for the Ethnic Studies Review on a cult film, The Man With Two Heads. He also presented a paper on examining J.M. Coetzee’s memoirs Boyhood, Youth, and Summertime for the South Atlantic Modern Language Association. A short article on Junot Díaz’s Drawn came out in print in Notes in Contemporary Literature. At present, he is in the process of revising and placing two articles: one on Chang-rae Lee’s Native Speaker and another on Aleksandar Hemon’s The Lazarus Project. He hopes to attend the CLA convention and present a paper on Pauline Hopkins’ Of One Blood and Dinaw Mengestu’s How to Read the Air in April 2012.

Last, Dr. Miller finished his two-year term as the chair of the university’s Academic Assessment Committee. He relished this role during USCA’s successful reaccreditation by the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools. This year he is serving as chair of the Courses and Curriculum committee. Within the department, he is coordinator of our non-Western assessment.

Personally, his oldest son began fourth grade and his twins started kindergarten. All are learning and growing with ease. Dr. Miller and his wife are excited about the changes that are taking place. Since last year, they also added another family member: a Chiweenie/Terrier dog named Professor Cocoa. (Yes, he knows that he is not very masculine as dogs go, but his bark is deep—sometimes).
The past year has been eventful for Dr. Carlson, to say the least. On the academic front, he presented papers at the Southeastern Medieval Association conference in November, 2010 and at the International Congress on Medieval Studies in May, 2011. Most notably, Dr. and Mrs. Carlson’s first child was born in late April of 2011, a boy they named James Warren after departed family members. Jimmy is a chunky, laughing little cub and already a zealous fan of Green Bay Packers football. Dr. Carlson enjoys teaching Jimmy his phonemes and singing silly songs to him.

In the last year, Dr. Coleman has taught her usual composition and British literature survey courses, as well as her course on the Victorian Age. In the fall semester, she was given the opportunity to indulge in her love of all things Austen and Brontë with a “Major Authors” course in which she took her students on a journey from the proprieties of courtship in Regency England to fiery Byronic heroes (and houses) and the wild English heath.

In the realms of scholarship and service, Dr. Coleman presented on Charles Kingsley’s scientific children’s novella The Water-babies at the Interdisciplinary Nineteenth Century Studies Conference (INCS) in beautiful Claremont, CA; she also presented on the unexpected attitude of noted ‘anti-feminist’ Eliza Lynn Linton on Victorian women and work at the Southeastern Modern Language Association (SALM) conference in Atlanta. Closer to home, she remains actively involved in organizing the Aiken County Language Arts Festival, which will be celebrating its seventh birthday on February 4, 2012.

Outside of work, Dr. Coleman continues to find time for travel and romance. She spent much of her summer in Austin, TX with her new fiancé, and she also managed a quick trip to both Las Vegas (where she lost two whole dollars in the slot machines) and Zion National Park, UT for some much needed communing with nature. Ironically, all these places made her grateful for the cooler summer temperatures of South Carolina.

Dr. Andrew Geyer finished up his third year at the University of South Carolina Aiken and is enjoying his fourth. It’s been exhausting, but fun, teaching courses and digging into service projects. Dr. Geyer also continued his seemingly endless effort to renovate the 118-year-old house that he and his wife, Emily, bought in Graniteville.

As for creative work, Dr. Geyer’s new novel, Dixie Fish, was published in September. Dixie Fish tells the story of Walt Whitman Woodcock, a Southwest Texas ranch boy who comes to Columbia, SC with a seven-point plan for achieving true bliss. Armed with a phonogaphic memory—everything he hears, he remembers—a job waiting tables at the Dixie Fish, and a fraudulent admission to graduate school, W.W.W. sets about the task of creating nirvana in the capital of South Carolina. Dixie Fish is Geyer’s second novel and fourth book overall. In addition to the publication of his new book, Dr. Geyer published three short stories. One of the stories, which appeared in descan in September, won the Gary Wilson Award for short fiction. The other two stories appeared in two new anthologies: Texas Soundtrack (a collection of stories that all take the form of responses to songs by Texas songwriters) and Agave! (a celebration of tequila through poetry, short fiction, creative nonfiction—and, of course, drink recipes).

As busy as he has been with fixing up the house and getting the new book through press, Dr. Geyer has found some time to get writing done. This new work was greatly aided by the course reduction for creative activity that Dr. Geyer received in the Spring 2011 Semester. He made some headway on his story cycle in progress, Lesser Mountains, and got a little bit closer to a draft of a poetry chapbook, entitled Renovation, that centers on fixing up a 118-year-old house.

An avid canoeist and distance-runner, Dr. Geyer also made some time to get outdoors. This summer, he spent two days canoeing a twenty-mile stretch of the Broad River with his oldest son, Joshua.
Dr. Doug Higbee
Assistant Professor

In Spring 2011, Prof. Higbee chaired and presented a paper on a panel at the annual College English Association convention in St. Petersburg, FL, in support of his edited collection of essays entitled *Military Culture and Education*, published by Ashgate Press. This fall he chaired and presented a paper for another panel in support of the book at the biannual conference of the Inter-University on Armed Forces and Society, in Chicago.

Prof. Higbee is currently finishing an article on Brian Turner, an Iraq War poet, and has two books in the works: one on CSRA veterans of the Second World War, a project for which he received a research grant from USCA, and another on teaching First World War literature.

In addition to his regular courses, this year Prof. Higbee will teach Contemporary British Fiction in the fall and will teach Modern British Literature in the spring, despite the chronological oddity of such an arrangement. And he hopes that by the time you read this sentence his extra freezer will be full of venison and squirrel.

Dr. Katie Kalpin Smith
Assistant Professor

Dr. Katie Kalpin Smith happily wed this spring, challenging her colleagues and students to become familiar with her new last name! She continues to teach British Literature and composition courses for the department. She enjoyed travelling to the Pacific Northwest last spring in order to participate in the Shakespeare Association of America’s conference in Bellevue, Washington. She has been at work this year adapting a paper that was presented at that conference in 2010 for publication in *Who Hears? Onstage and Offstage Audiences in Shakespeare*, edited by Laury Magnus and Walter Cannon (to be published by Farleigh Dickinson University Press). Also, she has been writing an essay describing the state of the field of gender, speech, and Shakespeare for the journal *Literature Compass*. This summer she and her family travelled along the Pacific coast, visiting Vancouver, BC, Washington, Oregon, and California.

Karl Fornes
Senior Instructor

Karl Fornes continues to enjoy teaching courses in the composition sequence, business writing, and composition studies while exploring the interaction between our increasingly digital culture and our traditional notions of authorship and text. (Or, he might just be playing on the computer.) He also enjoys crafting his regular column in the Southeastern Writing Centers Association’s publication *Southern Discourse*. The column considers representations of writing and the writing process in the media and popular culture. On campus, Fornes continues to serve as faculty advisor for USC Aiken’s student-run literary arts journal *Broken Ink*. His most important venture of the past year, however, was his run for United State Senate with the slogan "He's Not a Total Moron." The grass-roots candidacy swelled to tens upon tens of supporters, eventually garnering almost one-tenth of one percent of the overall vote.
Professor Collins, who has been teaching at USCA for twenty-two years, serves as the ESOL Instructor for the Department of English. As a presenter for the Writing Room Workshop Series, Professor Collins shared tips with students about “Grammar & Mechanics” and “Writing Well-Developed Paragraphs.” For the Academy of Lifelong Learning, she taught a four-week class on Writing Memoirs. In the summer, Collins taught her annual Young Writers’ Camp under the umbrella of The Aiken Writing Project. She and Professor Seeger were guest poets for English classes at Ridge Spring Monetta High School.

Professor Collins served as a judge for the Aiken County Language Arts Festival, the Washington Group Awards, and the Phebe Davidson Creative Writing Prize. For 2010-2011, she chaired the New Faculty Orientation Committee, was a member of the Freshman Year Experience Committee, a HAS sub-committee, the Critical Inquiry Learning Community, and served as a Judicial Procedures Advisor. She continues to serve as the College Director of the South Carolina Council of Teachers of English (SCCTE) and as a member of the Pacer Club Athletics Board.

Professor Collins volunteers with the Learn English for Living Foundation (LEFL) by teaching English to Hispanics who live in the CSRA; she also facilitates a weekly Hispanic Bible Study at her church. She was honored to deliver the keynote speech at the 2011 Sigma Tau Delta Induction Dinner.

For SCCTE, Professor Collins reviews manuscripts for South Carolina English Teacher. She is a member of The Authors Club of Augusta and The Augusta Poetry Group. In November, she read her poetry and prose during USCA’s 50th Anniversary event “10x10.” In 2011, Professor Collins’ poetry was published in Words, Windhover, and Old Time Mountain Music; a prose piece is forthcoming in Moonshine Review.

On a personal note, Professor Collins and her husband welcomed their first granddaughter, Allyson, this year. Her husband David, who has worked at SRS for twenty-two years, retired in September, so she hopes his golf keeps him busy while she continues to teach. During free time, Professor Collins can be found on the tennis courts at Odell Weeks Tennis Center.

Over the last year Roy Seeger finished compiling his manuscript which has changed dramatically but is still entitled The Distance of the Stage. He is currently trying to find the time to polish it enough so it is ready to send out for publication. Seeger has had several of his poems published in journals such as storySouth and Floating Bridge Review while a poem from his first book was reprinted online in The Poetry Place. Also, his poem “Ode to the Double Knot: For USCA on its 50th Anniversary” has been developed into a Broadside/Poster which he has read and signed at various events such as the 50th Anniversary Picnic at Banksia. He was also a featured reader at various venues such as Mind Gravy in Columbia, SC; the Edgefield Arts Center where he read with the lovely Amanda Rachelle Warren and Gilbert Allen; The Trillium Arts Center in Traveler’s Rest, SC; and at the Broken Ink Fall Reading. He has also taken to visiting local high schools such as Aiken High, South Aiken High and Ridge Spring Monetta High, spreading the word of poetry.

Seeger has also dedicated a chunk of his time as faculty advisor for the Guild of Poetic Intent that has worked at creating an arts community in Aiken. To this end, the club hosted emerging Atlanta poet Mike Dockins at the Aiken Arts Center; self-published and sold a Guild chapbook entitled Soapbox Blues; and continued packing the house at the monthly Café Rio Blanco readings.

On the teaching front, Roy Seeger taught his first advanced Poetry Workshop; he arranged for poet Mike Dockins to visit the class and talk about his book, Slouching in the Path of the Comet (which was required reading). He also received a spring course release to design a hybrid class on poetic forms. He has continued teaching an online version of English 102 and spent another week in Louisville, KY grading papers for the AP Exam. On the home front, Seeger just adopted a puppy his sister-in-law picked up in the street. Her name is Lil, and she is slowly chewing away at his time and sanity (and fingers).

Since 2006, Jim Saine has been teaching two classes at 4:30 and 6:00. His daytime job was as an English teacher at Aiken High School, and before that at Westminster Prep in Augusta, until he retired for the third time this past June (the first two being from the Army and SRS). He’s now here at USCA with four classes as a full time adjunct, teaching two 102 and two 101 classes. He is also sitting in on Dr. Geyer’s AEGL 264 course to test the waters of creative writing and see if he’ll be able to float or drown. It’s been fun regardless, and he has discovered that looking at imaginative literature from the perspective of a writer is already improving his ability to teach said literature.
During the Spring / Fall 2011 semesters, David Bruzina taught English 101 and 201 courses at USCA, helping his students appreciate and meet the unique demands of writing for a university audience. During the summer, he taught at the North Carolina Governor’s school in Winston-Salem, where he also served as Area II coordinator.

He was grateful to have received a PEP grant to attend the CCCC’s convention in Atlanta in March 2011, and he presented a paper on contemporary poetry about the US wars in Iraq and Afghanistan at the 35th annual Philological Association of the Carolina’s Conference in Asheville, NC, as a member of a panel that also included USCA professor Douglas Higbee.

Currently, he’s working on an essay-review of books by young poets Carrie Oeding and Mike Dockins, and he is looking forward to attending some of the Writing Room’s extensive workshop series, writing poetry, and doing some fishing.

Dr. Amanda Warren is happy to announce that, as one of the selected poets in the South Carolina Poetry Initiative’s Annual Chapbook Competition, her first chapbook, Ritual no.3: For the Exorcism of Ghosts, was released in February 2011 during a reading at the Columbia Museum of Art. She has had the honor of reading from her new chapbook at several venues in South Carolina, including the South Carolina Book Festival. She has also had several individual poems published, most recently in the Beloit Review, and has published her very first non-fiction pieces in Meat for Tea. She has also had the opportunity to work with fellow USCA English faculty, Instructor Roy Seeger and Dr. David Bruzina, in presenting a panel on building bridges between college and high-school English courses at the 2011 South Carolina Council for the Teachers of English Conference. In November she was invited to the University of Houston Victoria to present a lecture on their First-Year Reading Experience book World War Z by Max Brooks. Her lecture, entitled “Human/Nature,” applied eco-feminist theory to illustrate how the struggles of the fictional Zombie Wars in the novel subvert traditional western binary divisions between technology and nature as well as traditional male-female roles. She is proud to have taken this first step in becoming a distinguished zombologist. She hopes this first step is indicative of more to come. Closer to home, Dr. Warren remains involved in the Guild of Poetic Intent: The Savannah River Poets of USCA as they schedule readings on and off campus, work to spread a love of poetry and language, and donate their time to support The First Book project.
Dr. Geyer presents his new book, Dixie Fish

Dr. Hampton at the rodeo in Sheridan, Wyoming

Roy Seeger signs copies of his poem "Ode to the Double Knot" at the kick-off ceremony for USCA’s fiftieth anniversary

To commemorate USCA’s fiftieth anniversary, Dr. Matt Miller taught an upper-division course focused on the most significant books published in the United States in 1961, the year that the campus was founded. Students in AEGL 449 assembled a bulletin board highlighting major events of that momentous year

Senior English Education Major Jenny Powell and Dr. Mack display the 13th issue of The Oswald Review, for which Powell was the editorial intern.

The Carlson men
2011-2012 James and Mary Oswald Writers’ Series Hosts John Lane

Naturalist and poet John Lane visited USCA on October 25th and 26th as part of the James and Mary Oswald Writers’ Series. On the main stage in the Etheredge Center, Lane read a selection of poems as well as a few excerpts from his book *My Paddle to the Sea*, which tells the tale of his kayaking trip from his home in Spartanburg to the Atlantic Ocean. Lane spoke about how this trip was influenced by a tragic accident that had occurred during a rafting trip in Costa Rica two years before. Initially, Lane vowed never again to take up a paddle, yet he later changed his mind, setting off on his trip as a means of both experiencing South Carolina’s waters first-hand and putting his life into perspective after the traumatic accident.

Lane’s book examines the deep history and importance of South Carolina’s waterways, while his narrative of the 300-mile journey explores the expansive, forgotten wilderness resting in the heart of our state. “Wilderness is all about perspective,” Lane explained, and *My Paddle to the Sea* illustrates Lane’s own change of perspective as he traveled along the rivers of central South Carolina.

Lane comes across as a writer who is firmly grounded in the present and yet simultaneously connected with the past. His familiarity with water is easily noticed and seems to be a part of his character; Lane’s narrative flows smoothly at times and is frequently diverted at others, but it still manages to end up precisely where it needs to be. His insightful and poetic writing style makes it hard not to enjoy the trip.

-Brady Morris

Graduate Updates

Mona Martin, Class of 1995

After I graduated in 1995 I purchased a Jackson Hewitt Tax Service franchise. Over the years I’ve expanded my business from one location in Aiken to eleven locations throughout the western part of the state. My degree in English has been most valuable to my business career in that it has provided me with a strong ability to communicate effectively. I use my writing skills almost daily in corresponding with clients and the IRS. I deal with many people in my work, from clients, to employees, to IRS agents, bankers, and more, and I am sure that what I learned in my English curriculum has elevated my awareness and interpretation of people and particular situations to a point that I can successfully deal with most obstacles I encounter.
Dr. Lindsay McManus, Class of 2000

I graduated summa cum laude with a B.A. in English from USCA in May 2000. Thanks to the preparation and support I received from the English department faculty, the transition to graduate school at USC in fall 2000 was an easy one for me. I earned an M.A. in American Literature in August 2002 and a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition in December 2007. I was happy to rejoin the USCA family in January 2011, when I began as Tutoring and Supplemental Instruction Coordinator at the Academic Success Center.

I can link all of my successful professional experiences to my experience here as an undergraduate English major. Before I returned to USCA as a staff member, I reviewed textbooks and articles, supervised a large Writing Center, taught all levels of undergraduate English courses, administered and participated in community literacy programs, chaired committees, and presented numerous papers and talks about my studies and experiences. In all of these endeavors, I employed exceptional research, communication, writing, and leadership skills first cultivated in the English department at USCA. I can honestly say that the USCA English department faculty are very involved with and invested in their students. As an English major, I was embraced by all of the resources the department had to offer, and I was able to recognize and practice necessary skill sets early on.

Upon my return, I noticed immediately that the English department continues this tradition of support and excellence. As the Tutoring Coordinator, I work with several talented English majors, and I am pleased to see that they are eagerly soaking in every moment of their undergraduate experiences here.

Jessica Boyette Hoffman, Class of 2010

As Digital Editorial Coordinator for Morris Visitor Publications, the skills and experiences I took away from the English program come into play on a daily basis. My job was created in the company’s new drive to expand their digital presence, and so my job description is constantly evolving as new responsibilities and processes are added. Currently, I research and review information for several print publications and for our web content, and I also assist editors throughout the Southeast with various monthly and annual publications. My curriculum in the English program has enabled me to adapt quickly to the new writing styles – Morris uses AP Style in its publications – and read and edit magazine articles quickly. Of course, I learned valuable communication skills, which come into play every day; only one of the editors I work with regularly is located in my office, and the others are located across the country, so clear communication is of the utmost importance. I owe my success in my job almost entirely to the English program and faculty at USCA and to my experience in the Writing Room. The Writing Room taught me time management and prioritization, and the English program gave me the technical foundation, but I would not have even heard about the position had the English faculty not shared the opportunity with me. I never would have thought I would end up where I am, but I love my job and I am so thankful for the experiences I had in the English program at USCA.
Jamie Raynor, Class of 2002

I liked college so much that I refused to leave. After graduation from USC Aiken in 2002 with a B. A. in English, I put my skills to work in the USC Aiken School of Education completing administrative work and later database, accreditation reporting, and research duties for three years. During my time at the School of Education, I became involved in minor roles with the Employee Alumni Group on campus, which led to me accepting the position of Director of Alumni Relations for my alma mater after completing my M.Ed. in Educational Technology at USC Aiken in May 2005.

In 2007, I added Director of the Annual Fund to my job duties. Building on an annual giving program at USC Aiken allowed me to work with faculty, staff, and retirees for a very successful Family Fund campaign. I also managed a multifaceted alumni campaign through print, electronic, and phone solicitations, along with USC Aiken’s dedicated community friends and business donors. I thoroughly enjoyed my time at my alma mater, meeting thousands of alumni, building relationships with a stellar Alumni Council, meeting lifelong friends in my coworkers, and stewarding donors. This academic year, I’m finishing my coursework for my Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration.

In July 2011, I took this acquired knowledge to Colorado Mountain College on the western slope of the Rocky Mountains where I serve as the Director of Development for the Foundation. I have already met incredible people including successful entrepreneurs, U.S. political leaders, award winning artists, savvy business leaders, and Olympic athletes who live in the 12,000 square miles serviced by the eleven-campus institution of Colorado Mountain College. There is much work to be done, but USC Aiken's English and Education faculty have prepared me with strong verbal and written communications skills and a great ability to analyze and synthesize information in problem solving situations. The USC Aiken Advancement Office has provided me with the development knowledge and supervisor abilities to take on this new life challenge.

Bonnie Swingle, Class of 2010

Although working at the Department of Revenue is not what I had originally anticipated after graduation, it is a great job that allows me to use many skills an English degree offers. Dealing directly and indirectly with taxpayers every day, I need to have good verbal and written communication skills. My English degree exposed me to a broad vocabulary which has been a definite plus in effectively communicating with people of different socio-economic levels.

In the future, I hope to utilize my degree in a more specific manner. I would love to further my English education, as my ultimate career goal is to become an author.
**Monica Dutcher, Class of 2007**

Have you ever had a strong hankering to write? It’s like craving a candy bar. You feel fidgety, distracted and unsatisfied until you get one. Although I have loved words since I was a child, USC Aiken’s English program really brought out the journalistic fiend in me, to the point where, upon graduation in May 2007, it has been my goal to ensure that writing is a part of my everyday life—from my career to the personal projects that keep me scribbling into the night.

All of my English classes at USCA, along with my internship at the *Aiken Standard*, pushed me to think, create and compose like the writer that I am and continuing to become. My professors ultimately taught me that to write means to go beyond organizing language with mechanical accuracy (although this is important and I absolutely loved Dr. Rich’s linguistic class). To write, I learned, means to have a voice to impact other people.

Take for instance Dr. Hampton’s women in media/literature class. In every book we read, including *The Handmaid’s Tale*, *Little Women* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the female authors have a message to convey, whether it pertain to social status, psychological struggle or empowerment. In dissecting literature in this and other classes (I have to give a shout out to one of my favorites: Dr. Mack’s American Romanticism), I came to better understand composition, which served me well when, fresh out of college, I worked as the assistant editor of *Augusta Magazine* (2007-09).

Since December 2009 I have been a technical publications specialist at the MOX Project at SRS. Basically, I help engineers edit what they write. This is where my real hankering comes into play, as technical writing does not satisfy that need and desire to think, create and compose. So I co-founded *Sashay Magazine* (www.sashaymagazine.com), an online and quarterly print publication for “real, rugged and refined women.” I would say *Sashay* is a direct reflection of Dr. Hampton’s women in media class and Dr. Gardner’s creative writing course, the former a celebration of the female and the latter a celebration of rugged individuality and styled prose.

**Justin Price, Class of 2010**

As I write this, I am one month away from moving to Europe to start a new life teaching English as a foreign language. I received my BA of Arts in English in the December class of 2010, and I would have never even considered teaching in Europe as an option if it was not for my schooling, my peers, and especially my educators. Graduation gave me both confidence and courage to pursue a dream, and I am not just saying this to flatter the English department. Dr. Mack and the English professors of USC Aiken have my sincerest gratitude for not only what their curriculum taught me but also for what they as educators taught me, with kindness, patience and tolerance among the most noteworthy of their virtues!

Since graduation, I was accepted into a program in Prague, the Capitol city of the Czech Republic. The 4-week course is designed for students to obtain TESOL certification (Teachers of English as a Foreign Language, also known as a TESOL course). Students learn and practice TESOL and TESOL approaches and methods to teaching and also get first-hand experience teaching in the classroom. The course prepares its students to become educators abroad, and the program boasts over 1300 graduates who have worked in over 42 countries. TESOL Worldwide has a large network to assist graduates seeking employment, and I hope to be one of those graduates, preferably teaching throughout Europe and abroad for as long as possible. I intend to see the world. And I have the USC Aiken English Department to thank, and I must thank them not only for the degree obtained under their guidance but also for what they gave me beyond the degree—specifically, good examples of good people.
Broken Ink: USCA’s Literary Magazine

As USCA’s resident literary and visual arts magazine, Broken Ink represents the creative minds that call USC Aiken home. Each year, Broken Ink assembles a submission judging panel from selected members of the USCA community to rate submissions on a scale from 1 to 5. The editorial staff then selects the highest-rated art and manuscripts for publication in the magazine, on the basis of artistic or literary quality, subject variety, thematic unity within the magazine, and the suggestions of the selection panels. "Last year, we received a record-breaking number of outstanding submissions," writes Maria LaRocca, Broken Ink’s editor-in-chief, "and we hope that trend will continue this year."

All USCA students are welcome and encouraged to submit pieces to the magazine, which accepts works of visual art, from paintings and drawings to photography, in addition to literary works like poetry, fiction, and creative nonfiction. The final submission deadline is February 3rd, after which pieces will be selected for publication. Guidelines for submission can be found on broken-ink.org.

Broken Ink is a fantastic way for undergraduates to share their work with a larger community, and publication in the magazine is a great mark of experience on any fledgling writer or artist’s resume.

-Brady Morris

USCA’s Writing Room

USCA’s resident Writing Room provides a free tutoring service for all undergraduates on our campus. Trained student consultants are available throughout the week to help anyone improve his or her writing abilities and address any problems or questions students may have concerning their writing.

This year has proved exceptionally productive for the Writing Room; by the beginning of November, the Writing Room staff had documented an impressive total of 576 tutoring sessions, showing a significant increase over the previous fall semester total of 332. The Writing Room staff has also dramatically increased the number of writing workshops on a wide range of topics, from grammar and mechanics to critical thinking and revision. “I have always believed that peer tutoring can make an exceptional impact as a form of academic support,” writes Dr. Lindsay McManus, Coordinator of Tutoring for the Academic Success Center, “and our Writing Room is certainly making a positive impact. As USCA moves forward, I think that tutoring services can play a key role in improving student success and retention.”

As a Writing Room consultant, I encourage any student who may be having difficulty with an assignment, as well as any who would appreciate some advice from experienced writers, to stop by the Writing Room, which is located in room 112 of the H&SS Building and open Monday through Thursday, 9 AM to 5 PM, and Friday from 9 to 2 PM.

-Brady Morris
The USCA Honors Program currently includes eleven English majors, representing 20% of all students in the Honors Program. Under the guidance of its new director, Dr. Chad Leverette, the Honors Program offered two colloquium classes during the fall. The first, entitled “Culture and HIV/AIDS,” was taught by Dr. Deanna Gore, while Dr. Eric Carlson taught a course entitled “Violence, Society, and Conflict Resolution.” Here’s what a few of the English students in the Honors Program have to say about their experiences in the program and as English majors in general:

**Tayler Rodgers:** “I wish I could spend my time travelling the country in search of the greatest band of this generation. Realistically speaking, I enjoy curling up with a good book and closely and critically analyzing its contents.

**Brianna Arnone:** “I would not change anything about my experience at USCA thus far; it feels like home away from home (as cliche as that sounds), and I have met many new people and experienced many opportunities to develop useful skills in leadership, writing, and more. I was originally a Communications Major, but I switched my major to English due to my love of reading and writing. In particular, I enjoy analyzing the structural and grammatical aspects of literary works, how they contribute to the work as a whole, and how variations in the structure alter the meaning.”

**Alix Smith:** “Besides having a love of English, I also love to travel in my spare time whether it’s out of state or a county over. I hope to one day travel out west, see the West Coast, and maybe even visit Europe. I also enjoy spending time with my family and friends. *Jane Eyre* is one of my favorite books and I have enjoyed studying it in the Austen and the Brontës 494 class.”

**Clarissa McDermott:** “The honors colloquia show you different ways of looking at things and shed light on aspects of certain topics that you may not have even thought of. In my opinion, I am a better English major because I have been exposed to a variety of lenses that I can use to analyze and evaluate a work.”

**David Welcher:** I’m rather diffidently vain, plagued by my painstakingly meticulous self-scrutiny. I’m the decoy of my decoy, the multitude of multitudes, cursed to quote myself ‘til Lethe runneth over. The honors colloquium on Violence, Society, and Conflict Resolution has added to my long list of reasons, such as corruption, greed, carelessness, and plain stupidity, which are ubiquitous in all levels of society and are rooted in our inherent selfishness, why Earth’s immune system should eradicate us all.
From the Editor

When Dr. Mack first asked if I would like to serve as the editorial intern for this year's issue of the English department newsletter, I was initially a little overwhelmed by the prospects of what I felt to be a truly monumental assignment. Thankfully, I decided it would be a great opportunity to challenge myself in a new way, and it has been an incredibly rewarding and educational experience. Having a clear audience in mind, as well as a great deal of freedom to craft the newsletter in my own way, really allowed me to put my skills as an English major to the test. I had never before undertaken a project of this scope, and I now believe working as the editor for the 2011-2012 issue of *Words, Words, Words* has really given me the confidence to undertake even bigger challenges in the future. It opened my eyes to the world of editing something larger than a paper for class, and I am proud to see what I can accomplish with an entire semester’s worth of work. Gathering the needed information and pictures, while a challenging adventure, was also an enjoyable one, and I appreciate the connections it allowed me to create with interesting people both within the English Department and without.

I am indebted to the many people who helped me along the way, from securing me much-needed information or pictures to advice on content and layout. Most of all, I would like to thank Dr. Mack for all of his advice and guidance, without which the newsletter could never have been, in my mind, a success.

-Brady Morris

Magellan Scholars

Leah Stanley is completing a Magellan Scholar project entitled “Packaging Poe,” which evaluates how South Carolina is exploiting its connections to the famous author for the purposes of literary tourism.

Senior English Major Kevin Kinsey does some research for his Magellan Grant, entitled “Inter-Vocalic Plosive Degradation in Germanic Languages.”

Tara Gail Bostwick is working on a Magellan project that examines the Irish influence on equestrian sports in Aiken.
From the Chair

Happy quinquagenary, USCA! The 2011-2012 academic year marks the fiftieth anniversary of USC Aiken, which began as a branch campus in a Winter Colony mansion in downtown Aiken in 1961, moved to its present 452-acre campus in 1972, and is now for the last thirteen consecutive years “one of the top three public baccalaureate colleges in the South,” according to US News and World Report. The campus’s amazing evolution is encapsulated in the semicentennial slogan: “50 Years: Still Setting the Pace,” which offers a clever nod to USCA’s athletic mascot, the Pacer, while calling attention to the institution’s enviable position in the vanguard of higher education in our region of the country.

Coincidentally, as I mentioned in last year’s newsletter, the Department of English is also celebrating an anniversary this year, our twenty-fifth as an autonomous academic unit. Although the B.A. in English was one of the first degree programs established on our campus in 1977, the year that USCA began granting baccalaureate degrees, members of the English faculty were initially organized as a subgroup of the Division of Arts and Letters until the establishment of undergraduate colleges in 1986. In that year, English faculty members were first organized into a department. The very first Chair was Dr. Liz Bell (1986-fall 1990), and I have had the privilege of serving in that capacity since the spring of 1991.

In those twenty-five years, the department and its programs have evolved dramatically. I pointed out some of the highlights of our unit history in last year’s newsletter, but let me add two more items to that list.

- This fall we registered the largest number of majors in our department’s history—sixty five. For a relatively small program on this campus, this is quite a landmark. Not only in quantity but also in quality, the students who pursue the B. A. in English on our campus are establishing new records. Currently about 20% of the students enrolled in the USCA Honors Program are English majors—we now have eleven outstanding students in that group. In addition, over the last four years, five of our majors have been designated as Magellan Scholars. That is also an enviable record.
- We are attracting better prepared students because, I am convinced, the Department has taken assessment seriously and has used the student performance data that we have collected to improve the quality of our program. Adjustments that we have made to the curriculum, including the creation of both a gateway and a capstone course (senior seminar), have added rigor to the degree. Good students welcome a challenge, and the members of the English faculty have over time raised their expectations regarding student achievement.

Happy quinquagenary, USCA! Happy twenty-fifth anniversary, USCA Department of English! We’ve come a long way since 1961 and 1986 respectively. Here’s to an equally stellar future!

Dr. Tom Mack