ONE DOWN, MANY MORE TO GO
UMES Writing Center Celebrates Its First Semester

The English department’s writing center held an open house recently to mark its first semester of operation. In just three months, the facility has served nearly three hundred students.

“The feedback I’ve received has been positive,” the center’s interim director, Dean Cooledge, said. “The teachers who send their students to the writing center see a marked improvement.”

Composition instructors do volunteer tutoring, but the mainstay of the operation is a staff of seven student workers.

Amanda Boyer, a junior from Odenton, Maryland says tutoring others has improved her writing skills as well. “You definitely get a better grasp explaining it to people,” she said. Ms. Boyer is proud of the work she’s doing at the center. “It makes me think I’m having a positive impact on my campus,” she said.

Ron Webster, one of the faculty tutors, describes the new center as a “wonderful opportunity” for students. “It’s another tool to use to learn to write better,” he said.

The student tutors have begun a recruitment effort. They’re visiting classes campus-wide to make sure the entire UMES community is aware of the services they offer.

ROYALTY IN THE DEPARTMENT
English Major Selected as Miss UMES

For the fifth time in the last six years, an English major has been named as one of the ceremonial ambassadors representing the UMES campus.

Danielle Bell, a junior from Fort Washington, Maryland, will serve as Miss UMES for the 2008-2009 academic year. She was selected at a recent campus pageant. She will be joined by Rhett Burden, a junior sociology major, who was uncontested in his bid to become Mr. UMES.

The two students will serve as hosts at campus events and will represent UMES at other important functions in the community. Traditionally they also initiate programs that benefit the campus. “I want to do a lot of different programs, but I really want to reach out to the freshmen girls,” Ms. Bell said. “I want to encourage them to get involved.” She believes that will help ease their transition to college life.

Each Miss UMES contestant at the recent pageant delivered a speech that centered on the theme, “HBCUs, the Root of the Black Community.” They also were asked to perform in a talent competition. Ms. Bell presented what she described as a “mime praise dance.”

Ms. Bell admits she was nervous. “The anticipation was crazy,” she said.

The coronation ceremony where Ms. Bell will officially begin her reign as “campus queen” will be held next fall. In September she will travel to Atlanta to compete in the Miss HBCU pageant.

After a May 2009 graduation, Ms. Bell hopes to pursue a career in broadcast journalism.
The 2008 dinner theater production, presented by the UMES Drama Society under the direction of English faculty member Della Dameron-Johnson, played to three nights of sold-out crowds in the Henson Center recently.

*Blues N BBQ* was written by Dr. Dameron-Johnson. Her script chronicles the problems faced by Boss Hogg’s BBQ Shack after the death of the family patriarch. The restaurant is saved by its transformation into a supper club with live entertainment by a host of talented blues performers. Those talented performers were UMES students, administrators, staff, and local community members who presented a musical revue of nearly forty songs that spanned the spectrum of the blues genre. “*Blues N BBQ* is a compilation of some of the music I have enjoyed over the years that exemplifies my definition of the blues,” Dr. Dameron-Johnson said.

A conflict in the plot arises when a local church sends a delegation to the supper club to determine if they object to its operation. The seed for that conflict may have been planted when Dr. Dameron-Johnson was a child. “As a matter of fact, my great aunt, who was a minister, ran off with the circus to become a blues singer,” she said.

This year’s production featured a number of English majors, on stage and behind-the-scenes, including assistant director Thomas Gresham. Mr. Gresham was part of a three-student-team who served as leaders for this year’s show. The Drama Society partners with the students in the UMES Hotel and Restaurant Management Program to present an evening of entertainment that is coupled with a formidable array of gourmet food. This year’s entrees predictably featured a wide range of barbecue including North Carolina pork, Mississippi chicken, Kansas ribs, and a Memphis-style suckling pig. Intermission was marked by a bevy of buffet tables with more than a dozen different types of desserts.

**NCAA NATIONAL CHAMPIONS**

*English Education Major is a Proud Member of the Team*

Every college athlete dreams of becoming a national champion. For English education major Laura Zanrucha, that dream has come true.

Zanrucha is a member of the UMES bowling team that recently made campus history as the first Hawk team to ever earn an NCAA national title. The team’s victory also marks the first ever women’s title at the division one level by a historically black college or university and the first time a woman coach has won a bowling championship.

“It’s awesome to sit and think, out of the whole country, no one is better than you are,” Ms. Zanrucha said. Ms. Zanrucha, a native of Binghamton, New York, will graduate this month, earning her bachelor’s degree in just three years. She is a member of the UMES Honors Program and is currently student teaching at Crisfield High School.

It’s been a challenge to maintain her high academic average and participate in varsity athletics during her entire college career. “I feel like all the hard work of trying to student teach, take classes, go to practice and bowl has paid off,” she said. “I wouldn't change being a UMES Hawk for anything.”

Ms. Zanrucha has another year of athletic eligibility and will be back on campus this fall to begin a master’s degree program. She will continue to bowl and hopes to help her team return to the national spotlight.

“Bowling is mostly a mental game,” she said. “That's what I truly enjoy about it. You have to think.”
ENGLISH EDUCATION NEWS

By Barbara Seabrook, Coordinator of the English Teacher Education Program

Before leaving campus at the end of this semester, sophomore English education majors are reminded to submit their application to be admitted to the UMES Teacher Education Program. An application for the Hazel Scholars scholarship should also be submitted. Both forms can be found on the UMES Education Department’s website. Completed applications should be delivered to the Professional Education Unit on the second floor of Hazel Hall. Passing scores on PRAXIS I and a GPA of 2.75 are required to apply for acceptance to teacher education.

Interested students are encouraged to see www.ets.org for PRAXIS I and II registration forms and instructions, practice tests, and testing dates. The practice tests can be found under “Tests-At-A-Glance.”

English education teaching interns Shannon Schoffstall and Laura Zanrucha are completing their second and final teaching internship placement this month.

Ms. Schoffstall is teaching seventh grade language arts at Somerset Intermediate with mentor teacher Ms. Cindy Lloyd. Ms. Zanrucha is teaching eleventh grade English at Crisfield High School with mentor teacher Ms. Virginia Bailey. Both interns recently presented their electronic professional portfolios.

STUDENT AWARD

Michael Guy has been named the outstanding student in the UMES Department of English and Modern Languages for the 2007-2008 academic year. He received his award from Interim Department Chair Chester Hedgepeth at the University’s honors convocation, held recently in the Ella Fitzgerald Center for the Performing Arts. Mr. Guy’s grade-point-average is 3.8 on our four point scale.

He transferred to UMES in the fall of 2007 and was officially accepted into the University’s Teacher Education Program earlier this year. A native of Pennsylvania, Mr. Guy is a member of the University’s varsity baseball team.

In addition to Mr. Guy’s award as outstanding student, a number of other English majors were recognized at the event for their superior academic achievement.

REPORTER HONORED

UMES alumnus Earl Holland was honored for journalistic excellence recently by the Maryland-Delaware-DC Press Association (MDDPA). Mr. Holland is a reporter with The Daily Times in Salisbury, Maryland.

The Times won twenty-five awards in the annual MDDPA competition, including Mr. Holland’s second place award in the environmental category for his story on how development is affecting the Wicomico River.

During his tenure as an English major at UMES, Mr. Holland was a member of the University’s award winning academic team and served as general manager of the student managed radio station on campus.

Mr. Holland is an Eastern Shore native and a graduate of Snow Hill High School.

PHOTO WINS

The work of English faculty member Joseph Davis was recognized recently at the annual photography show sponsored by the Art Institute and Gallery (A.I. & G.) in Salisbury, Maryland.

His photo, “The Blue Chair” (seen below), won third place in the juried exhibition.

The show, entitled “This is Delmarva,” includes traditional and digital photography with a Delmarva theme or subject matter. It is on display at the organization’s gallery through May 24.

Mr. Davis teaches photo journalism, film, and computer graphics.

Mr. Davis’s award winning photo
We commemorate events, as we mark passage of time and connect our personal experiences with those of our communities. By relating our present lives with those who have preceded us, we reconnect with their collective experience of past events.

Spain observes the passing of two literary masters, Miguel de Cervantes and William Shakespeare, on April 23 in 1616. Barcelona, capital of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya) honors these literary geniuses with “El día del libro y la rosa,” or “The Day of the Book and the Rose.” The medieval custom of exchanging roses for books coincides with the festival of Sant Jordi, the same literary geniuses with “El día del libro y la rosa,” or “The Day of the Book and the Rose.”

We commemorate events, as we mark passage of time and connect our personal experiences with those of our communities. By relating our present lives with those who have preceded us, we reconnect with their collective experience of past events.

Spain observes the passing of two literary masters, Miguel de Cervantes and William Shakespeare, on April 23 in 1616. Barcelona, capital of Catalonia (Generalitat de Catalunya) honors these literary geniuses with “El día del libro y la rosa,” or “The Day of the Book and the Rose.” The medieval custom of exchanging roses for books coincides with the festival of Sant Jordi, the same literary geniuses with “El día del libro y la rosa,” or “The Day of the Book and the Rose.”

Cervantes literary immortality, his lesser known (and wickedly satirical) Novelas ejemplares attest to his primacy as the creator of the modern novel.

Jorge Luis Borges, the Argentinean modern Homer perennially short listed for the Nobel Prize, paid homage to Cervantes in his rewriting-as-parody “Pierre Menard, autor de Cervantes.” We are all children of Don Quijote, stumbling toward an unpredictable future as we battle our real and imagined dragons that define our world. Borges pays tribute to Cervantes by inventing a precursor as successor who rewrote his master’s Don Quijote, a vital work relived as it is reread.

Commemorations coincide with less celebratory events. Valentine’s Day is acknowledged with books and roses (and chocolate, after the Spanish conquistadors’ exploits into the Aztec Empire). My friends who attended and taught at Northern Illinois University will now remember it as the day a former student attacked a full auditorium during a class lecture. I met several professors still in shock during a memorial a few days after the campus shooting this Valentine’s Day.

Last month, the first anniversary of another mass murder was commemorated. While participating in a recent “Latin American Theatre Today” conference, I observed preparations for the event on the campus of Virginia Tech. A gallery curator separating tea lights from their tiny aluminum bases told me that she was preparing for a commemorative exhibit. Wondering how she would incorporate candles into the memorial exhibit, I asked if they represented a type of votive candle for the victims. She laughed, replying that only the bases interested her because they would hold eggs decorated by family and friends of the victims. I watched as she threw away the unlit candles.

Students and parents hold silent vigil over the small granite cubes. The unobtrusive stone circle emerges from the hilly landscape like outcroppings from the Appalachian foothills. The unpretentious “un-monumental” memorial draws pilgrims into its silent vigil as they seek to connect their thoughts and prayers with those who had so incomprehensibly gone before them.

Shakespeare’s dramas endure in our collective memory as they acutely reinterprets, or more precisely, revive the human experience. A recent production of Richard II at the Shakespeare Theatre in Washington reminded me of the poignancy of passage and its immediacy in the collective memory. The dying John of Gaunt tells the Duke of York:

Where words are scarce, they are seldom spent in vain,

For they breathe truth, that breathe their words in pain.

He, that no more must say, is listen’d more

Than they whom youth and ease have taught to glose;

More are Men’s ends mark’d, than their lives before;

The setting sun, and music at the close,

As the last taste of sweets is sweetest, last

Writ in remembrance, more than things long past. (2.1.10-16)
Faculty member Kathleen Winter attended the fifty-ninth annual Conference on College Composition and Communication held recently in New Orleans, Louisiana.

The conference theme was “Writing Realities, Changing Realities.” Ms. Winter presented a paper on authors Adrienne Rich and Tillie Olsen in the feminist workshop. She also was a participant in the “Exultation of Larks,” the annual poetry reading and workshop.

Ms. Winter is a regular attendee at the Four Cs. “I’m always learning something new there,” she said.

The desire to compare notes with other writing center directors led faculty member Dean Cooleadge, the interim director of the UMES Writing Center, to a recent conference at Temple University in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The event was sponsored by the Mid Atlantic Writing Center Association. “Based on what I heard from other professors, I’d say our new center is doing quite well,” he said.

Dr. Cooleadge was also an attendee at a recent forum on E-portfolios held at the University of Maryland’s University College in Adelphi, Maryland.

The English Department’s year long humanities lecture series concluded with a speech delivered by Ruthie Sheffey from Morgan State University.

Dr. Sheffey argued through scholarly evidence that William Shakespeare was directly influenced by people of color. She used Shylock’s discrimination in the Merchant of Venice as an example of that influence, suggesting there was a “humanistic subtext that negates the racism in the main text.” She also said, because of that influence, Othello is a classic example of the tragic impact of racism.

The Salisbury School, a local private school with students from pre-K through twelfth grade, celebrated Global Awareness Day with a focus on France. One of the featured speakers was our own assistant professor of French and ESL, Susan Cooleadge.

Dr. Cooleadge took third graders on what she described as a “one hour trip to Paris.” She also delivered a more comprehensive address as the guest lecturer to the Upper School students. Through discussion and a technology presentation, she gave her audiences a glimpse of French culture, geography, history, food, literature and film.

Dr. Cooleadge first studied French as a Rotary International Exchange Student in Belgium.

Former Department Chair Richard Keenan has little time for rest and relaxation during his retirement. He has a new baby to boast about.

His fourth grandchild, Michael Gavin Mooney, arrived just before Easter.

“It was indeed a good Friday,” Dr. Keenan said.

Michael weighed in at seven pounds, six ounces and was just over twenty inches long at birth. He joins two brothers and a sister in their New Jersey home.

Dr. Keenan’s daughter and Michael’s mom, Liz, snapped plenty of pictures including the one she shared with us (above).

Readers remember errors a lot longer than they remember scoops. That’s according to Greg Bassett, the executive editor of The Daily Times, the Gannett-owned daily newspaper in Salisbury, Maryland.

Mr. Bassett was a recent guest in the English department’s “Ethics in Communication” course taught by Marilyn Buerkle.

Mr. Bassett told aspiring journalists in the class, when he interviews reporter candidates, he is looking for ethical knowledge and moral character. “We discuss ethics as part of the hiring,” he said.

He lamented the recent spate of well publicized plagiarism incidents in daily journalism. “All of us are thrown in to the vat because of that,” he said.
Four English majors took advantage of the department’s academic internship program this semester, earning credits while they honed their job skills.

Senior Brittany Goodman worked in the Community Relations Department at Peninsula Regional Medical Center in Salisbury, Maryland. “I do everything from writing press releases to creating different events,” she said.

Shartanique Watson, also a senior, was a promotions and marketing assistant at WTTG TV, FOX 5, in Washington D.C. She was able to live at home while she completed her degree.

I-Quasia Dorsey, a junior, spent the semester on campus polishing her public relations skills under the tutelage of UMES Public Relations Director Suzanne Street.

Senior Anthony Hall wanted to see what a law office was like before he confirmed his decision to attend law school. He put in long hours in the office of the Somerset County State’s Attorney and says he loved every minute of his experience.

In recognition of National Poetry Month, faculty member Kathleen Winter invited her English 102 students to share some of their original works or favorite poets in a poetry reading. About a dozen students and fellow faculty member Simeon Shoge took her up on her offer.