EMPHASIS ON EXCELLENCE

Induction Ceremony Held for New English Honor Society Members

The Psi Mu Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the international English honor society, welcomed 11 new UMES student members in a formal ceremony held November 15 in the Student Services Center.

They included Toni Ayeni, Briyana Hubbard, Shauna-Kaye Jones, Jessica Land, Achu Mba, Kia Morsell, Elizabeth Ranger, Kelsey Tate, Dre Tingle, Aundrea Townsend and Tiffany Tyner.

Each of the students has at least a 3.0 cumulative grade point average, has completed a minimum of three college semesters and is pursuing either an English major or minor.

The keynote speaker for the evening was Briana Fulton, an English department alumnae and Sigma Tau Delta member who is pursuing a master’s degree at UMES. She told her new colleagues it is their duty to promote interest in literature and language. “You must exhibit high standards of academic excellence,” she said. “You set the example of how to use language and communication skills to help better the lives of others.”

PREPPING FOR JOB INTERVIEWS

“Speed Interviewing” Provides a Candid Critique of Presentation Skills

Members of the English Department’s Telecommunications Advisory Board came to campus recently for what was billed as a speed interviewing session. Modeled after pop-culture’s speed dating, students had two minutes to introduce themselves and present their credentials to local radio, television and public relations managers; then, they received four minutes of valuable feedback on how to improve their interview skills.

Each student met individually with all six of the board members involved. They included Joe Edwards, Operations Manager of Delmarva Broadcasting; Roger Follebout, Community Relations Director of Peninsula Regional Medical Center; Craig Jahelka, General Manager of WBOC TV; Mike Kilian, Executive Editor of The Daily Times; Troy Hill, General Manager of MTS Broadcasting; and Stephen Williams, General Manager of WESM FM.

“I graduate in December,” Brandon Shoats said. “This was perfectly timed for me.”

Ms. Evers’ Boys, the sobering story of the Tuskegee medical study of African American men who suffered from syphilis but were left untreated, was performed recently by the UMES Drama Society.

There is just one female part in the production, so the starring role was shared by two English majors. LaKendra Brown, a junior from Upper Marlboro, Md., portrayed the title character for two nights of the production; Courtney Milligan, a sophomore from Bryans Road, Md., was the lead performer for the other two nights. Both, by all accounts, delivered stellar performances. They were joined by dozens of other students, staff and community members on stage and behind the scenes.

This year’s annual fall theater presentation marked the first time in nearly 40 years that Della Dameron-Johnson focused almost exclusively on preparation for the production. Last spring, she retired from her position as a full-time faculty member in the Department of English and Modern Languages. She continues to serve as director of both the drama society and the gospel choir.

The Secret Voices of Hollywood, a documentary produced for the BBC which includes portions of an interview with film expert and former department chair Richard Keenan, debuted to rave reviews.

“Ratings were very good … and press reaction too,” according to the program’s producer, Guy Evans. “Radio Times magazine called it bewitching. The Observer said it was excellent, and both the Daily Mail and The Sun—Britain's biggest tabloid paper —thought it was fascinating.”

Dr. Keenan has seen a DVD of the program, but he is unsure if copies of the 90-minute film will be available in the United States or if there are any plans for an American broadcast.

The production focuses on the “ghost singers” whose voices are substituted for stars who don’t have the vocal quality needed for a musical role.

Faculty members Carole Champagne, Amy Hagenrater-Gooding and Gabriela Vlahovici-Jones made a presentation at the American Women Writers of Color Conference in Ocean City in November.

They collaborated on a panel titled “Intersecting Americas: Women Creating Space in a Geographic Borderland.” Salisbury University’s Fulton School of Liberal Arts and its English Department are the hosts of the recurring conference.

Public speaking instructor Will Rose, a member of the Screen Actors Guild since 1980, will serve on this year’s television nominating committee for the organization’s annual awards.

Mr. Rose is one of just over 2,000 members, selected at random, who will determine the nominees in nine categories. They include best male and female actors in TV movies, dramas and comedies, best ensemble casts in both drama and comedy series, and outstanding action performance by a stunt ensemble in a drama or comedy series.

The nominees will be announced on December 11. The winners will be named in a live simulcast on TNT and TBS on January 18.

SAG partners with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists to represent more than 160,000 actors, broadcasters, dancers, DJs, puppeteers, recording artists, stunt performers and other media professionals.
“So we are going to spend the semester reading comic books?”

This is pretty much how the first day of class in my ENGL 345 Special Topics class began this semester. Students were apprehensive about the graphic medium to begin with, but as we have studied popular texts like The Walking Dead, memoirs like Fun Home and American Born Chinese and autobiographies rooted in history such as Maus I and Maus II and Persepolis, students have a better understanding how visual storytelling is an important part of literacy, and these works are not to be dismissed.

To further reinforce this point, students were given the opportunity to create their own graphic autobiographical novel showcasing their own story. To do this, my ENGL 345 class teamed up with Brad Hudson’s Sequential Art I & II class to collaborate on a creative project.

Students crafted scripts and gave directions to Mr. Hudson’s art students. They had to delineate how the cover art would appear and pick two to three pages of their overall narrative to illustrate. Taking the script given to them by the students from my English class, the fine art students would then illustrate the story following the directions of the narrator and utilizing their own artistic sense.

It wasn’t easy.

Students had to explain in words how their narrative would be visually represented. After spending the semester discussing iconography, color and visual markers, they had to make the leap from theory to practice. I would be lying if I didn’t say I was impressed.

Around week eleven students met with me for a thirty minute consult. We would discuss their synopsis and the narrative script they had written. Together we brainstormed creative ideas.

Students who came to the meeting feeling apprehensive left energized, and felt more so after meeting with their respective artist.

It is one thing to learn something in class and to be tested on material that has been read and discussed, but it is something new entirely when a student can call those skills and strategies into practical and creative application.

Beyond the creative and literary applications, I feel a personal tie to this project. It is no secret that I love the tears that often get shed during final project week. It isn’t because I’m cold or callous, but there is no greater joy as a teacher than seeing students share a part of their story with me, with the class, and finding that cathartic release that writing and reading provides.

While it has become en vogue to decry the value of the humanities, I see their value every day. EVERY DAY. And this is never more true than on that poignant last day of class when students share via oral presentation their work and explain how it relates to what they’ve learned over the semester.

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE NEW MEMBERS OF THE PSI MU CHAPTER OF SIGMA TAU DELTA!
Students considering whether to embark on a career in journalism or public relations recently heard from someone who has done both. Bill Robinson, the university’s public relations director and its chief spokesperson, was a guest speaker in the English department’s News Writing and Reporting class.

A Delmarva native, he described his many years as a print journalist in Maryland and in South Carolina, and his return home to begin a new career in public relations.

Mr. Robinson reminded students, regardless of which of the two communications careers they choose, they will need to be excellent writers, able to meet tight deadlines, and well versed in current events and community affairs.

Students considering whether to embark on a career in journalism or public relations recently heard from someone who has done both. Bill Robinson, the university’s public relations director and its chief spokesperson, was a guest speaker in the English department’s News Writing and Reporting class.

Two different groups of UMES students who seek careers in television were treated to behind-the-scenes tours of the WBOC/FOX 21 studios in nearby Salisbury recently.

Crew members from Discover UMES, a student video production unit, were members of the studio audience of the locally produced Delmarva Life. Following the program, the students met with hosts Lisa Bryant and Jimmy Hoppa.

The Discover UMES students included Emmanuel Appiah, Melina Gallas, Amber Green, Kia Morsell, Dre Tingle and Aundrea Townsend. They were accompanied by staff member Jim Glovier.

Students enrolled in Television Production and Programming were also welcomed at the station in November. LaKendra Brown, Melody Newman, Jessica Parker, Jasmine Roberts, Jeremy Whichard and William White took a tour led by their instructor, WBOC anchor Paul Butler.

They visited the station’s hi-tech “newsplex” where the news programs aired on both WBOC and FOX 21 are produced.

Mr. Hoffman earned an M.S. in instructional media design from Wilkes University and is completing his dissertation in a doctoral program in higher education leadership at Morgan State.

He returns to UMES after six years as an instructional designer at Salisbury University.

Welcome home!
CULTURE AND ARTS

Foreign language faculty member Carole Champagne participated in Salisbury’s monthly Third Friday celebration in November. The event focused on international culture.

The program, featuring dance, music and food, was a collaboration between, among others, the Salisbury Wicomico Arts Council and the local Sister Cities organization, a group with which Dr. Champagne is affiliated.

“The international student performances at Third Friday were wonderful,” she said.

FOX SPORTS PROMOTION

Michael Wilson, Class of 2005, is now a marketing coordinator for the Fox Sports Media Group in Los Angeles.

He describes his job as planning and putting together sports promos for all FOX sporting events. “I essentially have my hands in every FOX sporting event promo,” he said.

Mr. Wilson

Mr. Wilson is a Salisbury native. He has worked previously for the Armed Forces Network and the Tennis Channel. He has also had the opportunity to perform as a freelance actor in television and films.

RECOGNIZE THAT VOICE?

Ever listen to an audio book? Next time, listen closely; that voice may be someone you know.

As we reported earlier this semester, Spencer Bryant, Class of 2013, has begun a career as a professional voice-over talent. By the end of this month, he will be the voice of eight audio books that are currently in production.

His first narration of a book, Mystical Captive, is already for sale on Amazon where an audio sample is available. Mr. Bryant says that book will also be for sale on iTunes soon.

FOREIGN LANGUAGE ALERTS:

- Dr. Champagne’s Spanish language students will hold a holiday celebration on Dec. 6 from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. in Room 1102 of the Food Science Building.
- The Foreign Language Instructional Center will offer Spanish for Healthcare Professionals I & II Jan. 16 and 17.

NEW CITIZEN AT FLIC

Congratulations are in order for Hawari Abdalla, a student assistant and Arabic conversation partner in the department’s Foreign Language Instructional Center.

Mr. Abdalla became an American citizen at a recent naturalization ceremony held in Baltimore.

(L to R) Ms. Ranger and Ms. Roberts

Photo by Samantha Clarkson

Mr. Abdalla (R) at his naturalization ceremony in Baltimore.

Photo provided by Tammy Gharbi

READY FOR SPRING?

The Center for Access and Academic Success employed a new tool to improve retention recently. “Handle Your Business” night was held to provide an opportunity for students to finalize plans for spring classes, housing, etc.

The UMES Writing Center was represented at the event by two student tutors majoring in English, Elizabeth Ranger and Jasmine Roberts.

Monopoly

1. 4 = quarts in a gallon
2. 24 = hours in a day
3. 3 = blind mice (see how they run)
4. 8 = sides on a stop sign
5. 200 = dollars for passing go in Monopoly

WORD PLAY answers from Page 4:

- 4 = quarts in a gallon
- 24 = hours in a day
- 3 = blind mice (see how they run)
- 8 = sides on a stop sign
- 200 = dollars for passing go in Monopoly

Insights is published monthly during the academic year. It is written and edited, except as noted, by communications instructor Marilyn Buerkle. Copy is proofread by composition instructor Sandy Johnston. Photos are by Marilyn Buerkle, except as noted. If you have information you would like to appear in this publication, contact our editor at 410-651-8349 or email her at mlbuerkle@umes.edu.