Greetings to all the Ball State English alumni who are receiving this newsletter! Did you know that we have a new president? His name is Geoffrey S. Mearns, and he’s a former English major. This proves our point that you can do anything with an English major—even become the president of Ball State University.

I’m Cathy Day, the Acting Chair of English, and I’ve got good news for you: even though English departments all over the country are experiencing a drop in majors and minors, our numbers are up. See for yourself.

Today I want to 1.) tell you how this happened and 2.) ask for your help so that it can continue to happen!

**How this happened**

1.) We made it easier to major and minor in English.

About 8 years ago we changed our majors from 48 to 36 credits (except for the English Ed major, which is still 48), and we changed our
minors from 21 to 15-18 credits. We responded to the university’s call to improve “time to graduation” proactively instead of reactively.

2.) We introduced and marketed our highly appealing minors.

We have six minors: Creative Writing, Professional Writing, Film/Screenwriting, Literature, Linguistics, and TESOL. And (fingers crossed) in 2018, we’ll add one more: Linguistics and Global Communications, for students in all majors aiming for careers in global and international settings.

The Result: English minors have grown 138% overall in the past five years!

3.) We are visible and have a lot of community.

We don’t have a huge programming budget, like say, Butler University. But we do have lively co-curricular programming that’s well attended by students all over campus.

The African-American Studies minor is back at Ball State, and the English department’s Dr. Emily Rutter played a big part in that. They brought Dr. Angela Davis to campus and filled Emens auditorium.

We have a department blog and social media.

The Result: Our department Twitter account has more followers than any other academic department on campus, and our events are often standing-room only.

4.) We address our students’ concerns about “What am I going to do with this degree?”

We now have seven regularly offered immersive-learning classes.

We feature alumni success stories on our blog, which are then archived on our “Life After Ball State” webpage. We’d love to tell your story, too!

We created the Stars to Steer By career series to show our students all the things they can do with their degree.

The Result: In the last three years, English student engagement with the Career Center is up 190%.

As you can see, we work hard to push against the perception that English is “impractical” or a “dead-end street.” We’re telling our story to prospective students, their parents, and current students—and it’s working!

How you can help us?

• Think of yourself as an English ambassador.
• Share articles like these on social media.
• Talk to college-bound students and their parents.
• When you hear someone repeating the myths about English and the humanities, politely correct them.
• Talk to the recruiters at your place of business and make sure that they don’t dismiss English majors out of hand.

Cathy Day

• If you do the hiring, get in touch with us when you have an internship or job available.
• Better yet, join this Facebook group and share this hiring news yourself.
• Share your career journey on our blog or in person for our career series!
• Volunteer for the Practice Interview Program at the Career Center. English majors love talking to fellow English majors.
• And certainly, a gift to the department really helps.

We pay for pizzas, speaker honorariums, printing costs, prizes for student achievement, and so much more out of “Fund 2701 English General Fund.”

Enjoy this newsletter—which, I might add, was designed and written entirely by English majors. Except for this letter from me, of course!

All best,
Cathy Day
cday@bsu.edu
(765) 285-8584
Three esteemed members of the English Department faculty retired in 2016-17 after long and successful careers in the classroom and as researchers.

**Frank Felsenstein** taught eighteenth-century British literature, Holocaust studies, History of the Book, and other classes for us and for the Honors College. Dr. Felsenstein joined us in 2002. He is known internationally for his 1999 book *Anti-Semitic Stereotypes: A Paradigm of Otherness in English Popular Culture, 1660-1830*. His distinguished research career continued here and included the design and creation of the *What Middletown Read* database, which allows researchers to search library records of the Muncie Public Library from the turn of the twentieth century. An accompanying scholarly volume, *What Middletown Read: Print Culture in a Small American City*, co-written with Ball State History Professor James Connolly, came out in 2015.

**Robert Habich** taught American literature with us for 33 years, during which he became a renowned expert on Ralph Waldo Emerson, his circle, and his legacy. Dr. Habich’s accomplishments include two books on these topics, the most recent in 2011: *Building Their Own Waldos: Emerson’s First Biographers and the Politics of Life-Writing* from the University of Iowa Press. Dr. Habich taught American literature surveys and courses in Transcendentalism as well as senior seminars on America’s Gilded Age. He won Ball State’s Excellence in Teaching Award in 1993.

**Frank Trechsel** taught linguistics in our Department for 24 years. Working mainly with graduate students, Dr. Trechsel taught courses on morphology, syntax, and phonetics and phonology. Dr. Trechsel’s formidable research career focused on the study of two endangered languages spoken in Mexico, Misantla Totonac and Tepehua. With his wife and research partner Carolyn McKay, Dr. Trechsel spent several months each year in Mexico working with native speakers of these languages. The couple have published extensively on the languages in books and articles that reveal the grammar, syntax, and other features of these languages.

**What are they doing now?**

**Dr. Felsenstein**, who lives in Morris, New Jersey, has traveled extensively since last spring but has also found time to publish two articles in *The Times of Israel* and to write a lengthy book review for *Jewish Quarterly Review*. He continues to work on a family history based on his parents’ experiences as refugees from Nazi Germany.

**Dr. Habich** is at work researching some family history. He is also completing an edition of Emerson’s essays intended for use in college classrooms.

**Dr. Trechsel**’s collaboration with Dr. McKay on the Misantla Totonac and Tepehua languages continues.
In May, Dr. Emily Rutter signed a publishing contract with University of Alabama Press for her book *Constructions of the Blues Muse in Twentieth- and Twenty-First-Century American Poetry*, which will be in print Fall 2018. In June, Rutter presented “Archives of Feeling in August Wilson’s Fences and Denzel Washington’s Filmic Adaptation,” a paper drawn from her second book project, at the Sports Literature Conference at West Liberty University.

**Molly Ferguson** was elected president of the *Midwest Regional American Conference for Irish Studies*. In October, she presented a paper, “To say no and no and no again: Fasting as Resistance in Emma Donoghue’s The Wonder” at the Midwest ACIS at the University of Missouri.

**Jill Christman**’s book *Borrowed Babies* has been adapted into a play by Ball State professor Jennifer Blackmer. The play will be produced at Ball State University in Spring 2019 in Strother Studio with Karen Kessler directing.

**Anthony Salazar**’s article “Curing the Vampire Disease with Transfusion: The Narrative Structure of Bram Stoker’s Dracula” was accepted for publication by *English Language and Literature Studies*.

**Elisabeth Buck** (PhD in Rhetoric and Composition, 2016) is publishing her monograph *Open-Access, Multimodality, and Writing Center Studies* through Palgrave Macmillan.

**Kelsey Englert** (MA in English, 2014) had her flash fiction piece “Textbook Endings” published in *Passages North*. She was also featured in our Grad School Confidential series in 2015.
Get to know this year’s new faculty members

Angela Cox comes to us from the University of Arkansas, where she received her PhD in Rhetoric and Composition.

Her research is on definitions of genre and popular fantasy media.

Dr. Cox also does research on National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) and has participated every year since 2005.

She teaches first year writing courses.

Ben Bascom is a specialist in early and nineteenth-century American literature. He comes to the English Department from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where he recently finished a dissertation on early U.S. life writing.

His research and teaching combine a queer studies approach with material text methodologies to reimagine the relation between archive and canon. His scholarship has appeared in *Early American Literature* and is forthcoming in *Common-Place: The Journal of Early American Life*.

Kathryn Ludwig comes to us from Purdue University, where she earned her PhD in English, specializing in twentieth-century American literature and Jewish philosophy.

She has published articles on the topic of the postsecular in contemporary literature and is an officer for the American Religion and Literature Society.

She teaches courses in composition and literature.

Kat Greene earned her BA in Graphic Design and Master’s degrees in Journalism and English here at Ball State University.

She is currently working to complete her PhD in Rhetoric and Composition. Her dissertation involves incorporating the Ball State Common Reader in first-year writing courses. Greene teaches classes in the Writing Program.

Sreyoshi Sarkar comes to us from Baltimore, Maryland.

She earned her doctoral degree in Postcolonial literature and media from George Washington University this past summer.

She specializes in South Asian studies, gender, and eco-criticism, and has published works in journals like *Commonwealth Essays and Studies, South Asian Review*, and *Green Letters Journal*. She teaches courses in world literature and film studies.

Morgan C. Leckie comes to us from Miami of Ohio’s graduate program in Composition and Writing, by way of California.

Her research is on digital feminist rhetorical practices and reproductive justice advocacy.

She teaches first-year writing and professional writing. This fall Leckie taught one section of Jacket Copy Creative, our department’s immersive-learning class that functions as our in-house PR firm.

continued on page 6
Get to know this year’s new faculty

continued from page 5

Brianna Mauk
earned her BA in Technical Writing from Eastern Kentucky University. She earned her MA in Rhetoric and Composition at Ohio University in Athens, OH, and she earned her PhD in Rhetoric and Writing at Bowling Green State University.

Brianna specializes in new media, especially social networking, and researches the intersections between technology, mobility, and writing. Brianna teaches first-year writing and document design.

Laila Aghai comes to us from San Antonio, Texas. She earned her PhD in Culture, Literacy, and Language from the University of Texas at San Antonio. Aghai is working on a manuscript on translanguage and TESOL and she enjoys music and studying foreign languages.

She teaches graduate and undergraduate linguistics courses--both face to face and online.

Sigma Tau Delta chapter founded

In Fall 2017, the Ball State English department chartered the Alpha Chi Upsilon chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, an international English honor society with over 875 chapters in the U.S. and abroad. Faculty sponsors and professors Cathy Day and Mary Lou Vercellotti invited all English majors with an overall and major GPA of 3.5 or above and all active graduate students with a 3.7 GPA or above to apply for membership.

This is the only student group in the English department that includes both graduate students and undergraduates, as well as students from every area of English studies (teaching, creative writing, literature, rhetoric and composition, and linguistics/TESOL).

The benefits of membership are substantial, including stipends for unpaid internships, an online alumni network, publication opportunities for both critical and creative work, internships at Penguin Random House and in Washington, D.C., and thousands of dollars in scholarship and award opportunities.

One especially noteworthy benefit of membership is that students are invited to submit papers and creative work for presentation at Sigma Tau Delta’s annual spring convention, which will be held in Cincinnati on March 21-24, 2018. Students selected to present their work in this national venue also have the opportunity to win convention writing awards and to attend presentations and workshops by nationally recognized authors.

New Sigma Tau Delta Members:

- Allison Akers
- Taylor Baugh
- Sarah Bredar
- Macy J. Byerly
- Kate Carnahan
- John Carter
- Erin Goff
- Madison Hart
- Melissa Jones
- Corinne Lankowicz
- Hannah Partridge
- Noah Patterson
- Carli Scalf
- Taylor Townsend
- Troi Watts
Department comes together for UES + PCM

The Practical Criticism Midwest (PCM) and Undergraduate English Studies (UES) Conferences held on October 13 were attended by over 85 students, faculty, and guests. The graduate students have run PCM in the past, but this year, we added the undergraduate student conference to it and also opened up the conference to participants outside BSU English. We welcomed students from Ivy Tech, Anderson University, and IPFW.

Many undergraduate students spoke to how exciting this experience was, with some expressing that they want to present their work next year. The best presentation awardees were Kathryn Powell (UES), who presented her creative work, “The Listening Horizon” and Abdullah Albalawi (PCM), who presented his research, “Gender Differences in The Speech Act of Thanking in Saudi Arabic.”

The keynote speakers featured four alumni (Leslie Erlenbaugh, Emily Groch, Ashley Mack-Jackson, Aaron Nicely) who shared their experience finding careers with English degrees. The conference ended with the doggerel contest. This year’s winner was Hannah Bovino, who presented her poem, “I’m sorry iPhone.” The conference overall was a fun and educational experience where students, faculty, and alumni could meet and interact.

This year’s conference chair was Angela Tomasello (MA Linguistics Student), who led the graduate student volunteers. Prof. Silas Hansen (Conference Faculty Advisor) and Dr. Megumi Hamada (Assistant Chair of Programs) helped organize the conference.

National Novel Writing Month (NaNoWriMo) is an annual, global event in which participants attempt to write a 50,000 word novel in 30 days during November. Ball State’s English department partnered with Dr. Angela Cox, the Ball State community and the Muncie community to write.

With over 60 members on our leaderboard we accumulated over 300,000 words after the first week. The department created a series of incentives to get students, faculty, and community members writing.

Perks included:

- At 1 million words, Prof. Silas Hansen sings “9-to-5” by Dolly Parton.
- At 2 million words, Dr. Ben Bascom gets a tattoo.
- At 3 million words, the English Department hosts free breakfast in Robert Bell for English majors and minors.

Our first two writers to get to 50,000 words were Audrey Bowers and Allie Hartman. Both received NaNoWriMo scarves as the first two winners of the #MuncieNaNo project!

At the time this newsletter went to press, we were at 932,314 words.

Congrats on winning to all participants!
Becca Wolfley graduated from Ball State University with a BS in Advertising and a minor in Creative Writing in 2015. After graduation, she worked as a content writer and manager for tech company Lesson.ly until May of 2016. She then became the digital copywriter for The Children’s Museum of Indianapolis a month later. She continues to work as a creative for the museum’s marketing department while moonlighting as a freelance copywriter.

“My competition were IT guys with ponytails and Def-Leppard t-shirts, and I walk in with a suit and tie and I’m able to very succinctly articulate both in written and verbal forms, very specifically, how the internet was going to help their business. I was the only one in that area who understood how it was all going to work together.”

Read more about Becca.

Bryan Lubeck graduated from Ball State University with a major in English in 1989. He has gone on to executive marketing positions with several Fortune 500 companies and to a successful career in music.

“I took a proposal writing job at a healthcare staffing company. I was writing, which is what I’d always loved to do. But it was writing proposals, which consisted mostly of cutting and pasting into a Word document. Luckily, the staff saw the creative side of me and assigned me to write marketing copy and internal and external communications.”

Read more about Bryan.

Sean Andres earned a BS in Secondary English/Language Arts Education from Ball State University in 2008 and a MS in Marketing from University of Cincinnati, with a focus on diversity marketing from applied feminist and race theory. His favorite author is Margaret Atwood, and he loves to be outdoors when he’s not writing, researching, and working.

“I took a proposal writing job at a healthcare staffing company. I was writing, which is what I’d always loved to do. But it was writing proposals, which consisted mostly of cutting and pasting into a Word document. Luckily, the staff saw the creative side of me and assigned me to write marketing copy and internal and external communications.”

Read more about Sean.

Become a Star for English Majors

We call these alumni success stories “Stars to Steer By.” If you’d like to be one of our “stars,” email us at bsueng@bsu.edu or call (765)-285-8580
Jared Linder is a two-time Ball State graduate, once as an undergrad with the English department and again as a graduate student earning an MS in Information and Communication Sciences at the Center for Information and Communication Sciences (CICS). He is a recent graduate from the MBA program at Butler University. He also serves as the Chief Information Officer for the State of Indiana’s Family and Social Services Administration.

“Above all things, I am a critical thinker. They teach those skills in classes like 20th-century American literature more than they do in Math 400. When I analyze my life and next steps, I find myself peering through Herman Hesse’s Siddhartha and Joseph Heller’s Catch-22. Those are special places to go that only English majors know about.”

Read more about Jared.

With our “Stars to Steer By” lecture series, co-sponsored with the Ball State Career Center, we strive to inspire liberal arts students by showing them the various things they can do with their degrees. At these events, we love to feature accomplished humanities graduates, especially Ball State alumni, to help give our students knowledge, preparedness, and hope for the future.

On August 30, Assistant Director and Career Coach Eilis Wasserman and Prof. Cathy Day kicked off the Fall 2017 leg of the series with “Finding Your Way with a Humanities Degree.” They talked about developing personally and professionally, overcoming the stigma that is often attached to majoring in liberal arts, and discovering one’s passions.

On September 27, Morgan Gross, a PhD candidate in English, and other graduate students embarked on the panel discussion, “Grad School: What to Expect and How to Prepare.”

On October 18, Prof. Cathy Day presented “Yes, You’re Qualified for that Job: Translating Your Humanities Skills.” She presented a series of job ads and demonstrated to the audience that they were qualified and could apply by translating the language of academia into the language of the working world.

On October 20, Ball State graduate Becca Wolfley visited Professor Day’s section of Jacket Copy Creative. Wolfley stressed the importance of branding and networking for post-college success.

On November 8, Graham Brown, owner of United State of Indiana, a clothing company that helps Hoosiers express their love of Indiana, joined us for “Your Job is to Have Fun: The New Era of Entrepreneurship.” Brown, a 2010 graduate of Anderson University, spoke to our students about how to make it in the real world as a creative.

In Spring 2018, the series continues with topics including “Networking for Introverts.”
The audience was entranced by the talented poet, Mahogany Browne, on September 27.

Browne is a Cave Canem fellow, founder of Penmanship Books, and Poetry Program Director of Nuyorican Poets Café. She is the author of several collections, including the NAACP Outstanding Literary Works-nominated book Redbone and Dear Twitter: Love Letters Hashed Out On-Line. She is also an Urban Word NYC Poet-in-Residence (as seen on HBO’s Brave New Voices), founder of Women Writers of Color Reading Room (housed on Pratt Institute), and facilitates performance poetry and writing workshops throughout the country.

The English department sponsored this event, along with the African American Studies Program, the Multicultural Center, the Office of Institutional Diversity, and the Department of Sociology.

Full house for Mahogany Browne reading

Graduates take the next step in their careers

What can you do with a degree in English? Here’s a sampling of job placements for recent #bsuenglish graduates.

Communications & Marketing

Luke Bell (BA in CW 2016) Writer & Social Media Manager, Fanning Howey Architects, Indianapolis, IN

Lauren Birkey (BA in English Studies 2017) Copywriter & Designer, Spotted Monkey Marketing, Muncie, IN

Ellie Fawcett (BA in Literature 2017) Marketing Specialist and Content Writer, Englin’s Fine Footwear, Muncie, IN

Publishing

Daniel Brount (BA in CW 2016) Page Designer/Copy Editor, Gatehouse Media, Austin, TX

Brandon Buechley (BA in CW 2016) Marketing Assistant, Cardinal Publisher’s Group, Indianapolis, IN

Caroline Delk (BA in CW 2017) Remote Intern, Brent Taylor, Triada Literary Agency, Sewickley, PA

Audrey Hirons (BA in CW 2016) Article Editor, ZergNet, Carmel, IN

Niki Wilkes (BA in CW 2015) Marketing Coordinator, Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, IN

Libraries

Gabriel Barr (BA in CW 2017) Circulation Assistant, Maring Hunt Library, Muncie, IN

Other cool jobs!

Courtney Conley (MA in CW 2017) Administrative Assistant, Bose, McKinney, Evans LLP, Indianapolis, IN

Samantha Taft (BA in CW 2017) Membership Manager, Potawatomi Zoo, South Bend, IN

Teaching

Lauren Eades (BA in English Ed
2017) English teacher, Castle High School, Newburgh, IN

Katie Freeman (BS in English Ed 2017) English teacher, Lapel High School, Lapel, IN

Troi Genders (BA in English Ed 2017) English teacher, James A Garfield 31 Indianapolis, IN

Olivia Germann (BA in Literature 2017) Teacher, Great Achievers Program, Maring-Hunt Library, Muncie, IN

Cate Hoppes (BA in English Ed 2017) Language Arts and Speech Teacher, Zionsville Community Schools

Cassie Lindemeyer (BA in English Ed 2017) English Teacher, Highland Middle School, Anderson, IN

Joel Summer (BA in English Ed 2017) Teacher, Sebring Middle School, Sebring, FL

Graduate School

in Creative Writing

Jeremy Flick (BA in CW 2014, MA in CW 2016) is pursuing an MFA in Poetry, University of KY, Lexington, KY

Meagan McAlister (MA in CW 2017) MFA in fiction writing. Brittany Means (BA in CW 2016) MFA in Creative Nonfiction, University of Iowa

Casey Middleton (BA in CW 2017) and Rachel Lauve (BA in English Ed) MA program Creative Writing, Ball State University

Drew Miles (BA in CW 2017) MFA in Creative Nonfiction, University of South Florida

Allison Tunstall (BA in CW 2017) MFA in Creative Writing, George Mason University in Fairfax, VA

Robert Young (BA in CW 2015, MA in CW 2017) MFA in Poetry, University of Massachusetts-Boston

in Literature

Kathryn Hampshire (BA in Literature 2017) MA in Literature at IUPUI in Indianapolis, IN

Rachel Wright-Marquez (BA in English Studies 2017) MA in Critical Studies in Literacy and Pedagogy, Michigan State Univ., East Lansing, MI

Law School

Blake Lehr (BA in English Studies 2017) Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI

Andrew Wurdeman (MA in CW 2017) University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Haley Gillilan (BA in English Studies 2017) MA in Library and Information Science, University of Missouri

Stef Clark (BA in CW 2017) MA in Library & Information Science, University of Washington in Seattle

Tell us your placement story

• Email us at bsueng@bsu.edu and tell us about you or someone you know

• Tweet at us using the hashtag #mynextstepbsu

• Connect with Prof. Cathy Day on LinkedIn
Two great writers visited Ball State this fall: Kelcey Parker Ervick on October 26th and Ira Sukrungruang on November 15th.

Ervick’s artistic flourish is present in all her works, among them her newest collage *The Bitter Life of Božena Němcová*, a book that Rose Metal Press calls “artistic, rebellious, and unapologetically intelligent”. *The Bitter Life of Božena Němcová* is a biographical collage of found texts, footnotes, fragments, and images by and about the Czech fairy tale writer, whom Milan Kundera calls the “Mother of Czech Prose.”

Ervick is the winner of the 2011 Next Generation Indie Book Award and has received grants from the Indiana Arts Commission as well as the Sustainable Arts Foundation.

In addition to the 2011 Next Generation Indie Book Award in Short Fiction, Evrick was a finalist for the 2012 Best Books of Indiana in Fiction.

You can learn more about her at her [website](#), and see some interviews here.

Ira Sukrungruang is the author of the memoir *Southside Buddhist* that author and scholar Shawn Wong calls a “mesmerizing look at the landscape of America from the ‘southside’ of most everything and everywhere.”

Sukrungruang is also the author of the memoir *The Adventures of Buddhist Boy*, the short story collection *The Melting Season*, and the poetry collection *In Thailand It Is Night*. He is the coeditor of two anthologies on the topic of obesity: *What Are You Looking At? The First Fat Fiction Anthology* and *Scoot Over, Skinny: The Fat Nonfiction Anthology*.

On *The Melting Season*, fellow author Anne Panning states, “Sukrungruang writes with compassion, humor and tenderness about the sting of cultural exclusion and isolation.”

Check out his [website](#) and some of his [interviews](#).

Save the Date for InPrint 2018!

Be sure to come out to see these writers read from their work March 28

**Carolina Ebeid** (poetry)

**Nick White** (fiction)

**Jan Shoemaker** (creative nonfiction)

**Kristen Elias Rowley** (Editor, Mad River Books/Ohio State University Press)