
ACTIVE VOICE

The English Department of Atlantic Cape

Spring/Summer 2015

COORDINATOR'S NOTE

Thank you to everyone who submitted items for our department's newly relaunched newsletter! After considering a few possible titles, Susan Van Rossum's suggestion *Active Voice* struck the most harmonious chord, both because we want our students to use the active voice in their writing and also because it seems testament to our own activity.

Just as we stress to our students the importance of *process* when it comes to their writing, this humble publication, too, is very much a work-in-progress. I am hoping that, in the future, others might help to put this together and perhaps even more often. For the English Department is large and contains multitudes, as Whitman would note. Even with the current enrollment decline, we are still offering 159 sections this Fall 2015 semester (494 credit hours), relying upon the tremendous work of eleven full-time and at least fifty-five (current) part-time professors in the department.

I hope that, as we read some of the accomplishments of our colleagues, including those who are active practitioners of our craft, both publishing and presenting at national conferences, as well as noting stories from the classroom and recent travels and "good reads," we will all feel a bit more connected as a department. A sense of connection, which sounds so much like one E.M. Forster, has been my own personal goal for us since taking over for Kristi Bergman as coordinator in January of '14.

A few personnel notes: this semester, we welcome back Maryann McCall and Denise Coulter, who were both on sabbatical in the spring! Our best wishes to Leila Crawford and Gene LoPresti, who will be on leave this academic year. And best of luck to Lauren Fonseca, one of our senior adjuncts, who has accepted a full-time position as Tutoring Center Specialist/Coordinator for Academic Support at Stockton! Additionally, we welcome a few new names to the department: Joseph Berenato, Jaclyn Nagle, Ian O'Neill, Brigid Sadorf, Nicole Milan-Tyner, and Gracellen Thorstensen; Brandi Cesari, who joins us in addition to her regular gigs teaching Sociology and managing the Scarborough Inn in Ocean City; and Dawn Warner, who previously taught in the Social Science department and will be teaching sections of composition for us this year. (Dawn has a background in French Literature, so I feel we are *en de bonnes mains*, which I hope means "in good hands.")

As Emerson once said, I greet you at the beginning of a brilliant semester!

—Rich Russell

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Melissa Palmer's *A Life Less Normal* (WiDo Books) will be released in August. Melissa started writing this memoir her first semester teaching at Atlantic Cape. "As corny as it sounds, I feel like my students' bravery inspired me to push on and get this story out in the world," she says. *A Life Less Normal* is available to order/pre-order on Amazon and [WiDo Books](#). Melissa held a reading for her first novel *Twin Oaks* at the Cape May County Campus this past December.

Therese Halscheid's fifth book of poems *Frozen Latitudes* (Press 53) was released in November and received the 2015 Eric Hoffer Book Award (Honorable Mention) for poetry. Her essay "A Patch of Sun" won first place in *Welcome Table's* 2015 Creative Nonfiction Contest, and she was featured in the West Caldwell Poetry Festival and the Collingswood Book Festival in 2015. Therese attended the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation's "A Common Gathering," day-long professional development workshops as part of their Spring and Fountain series. Additionally, Therese taught a Professional Development Workshop for Educators through EIRC, and Professional Development workshops for medical clinicians at UMDNJ, in a series titled *Literacy Medicine*. She was also on a publishing panel at Stockton University.

Elinor Mattern has, in her own words, had a "poem-packed summer"! Elinor read her work at the Moveable Beats Poetry series in Philly and at the Atlantic City Farmers Market as part of a CRDA initiative. She participated in the monthly readings at Dante Hall and attended other readings in the area, including the Rosenbach's yearly Bloomsday gathering on June 16th, and attended Murphy Writers' Getaways in January and May and a poetry seminar in Philadelphia with Daisy Friedman. Along with Joyce Hagen and others, Elinor helped to coordinate the Arteriors Community Art Project in Atlantic City (August 14-16). This summer, she's been teaching non-credit workshops on Business Writing and Culture & Communication. On her list of personal accomplishments, Elinor recently moved to Mt. Holly and bought a new red convertible.

Denise Coulter in early May attended *Bridging Historias: Latino/a History and Culture in the Community College Classroom* at the CUNY Graduate School in Manhattan (right across from the Empire State Building!). This event was funded by the National Endowment of the Humanities. Denise looks forward to employing some of the ideas and books she gained from the day-long conference in her classroom. For more information, visit the [Bridging Historias Resource Website](#). In June, Denise had the chance to serve on a panel that addressed Rowan doctoral students about the trials and tribulations of the dissertation research and writing process.

Maryann McCall contributed to a NASPA Synergy article on career activities and to a book on career infusion in the classroom. She also participated in the McGraw Center Mid-Career Fellowship at Princeton this past spring. Classes she attended included English Literature from 14th to 18th Century; a comparative literature course titled Reading is Not What You Think; Poetry versus Music; The Song in Modern Time; and (her personal favorite) American Literature from 1865 to 1935. Her seminar paper was entitled "Telling Tales: Personal Narrative Writing as a Retention Strategy."

Brandi Granett's panel proposal *Guerrilla Girl Marketing* was accepted for the 2016 Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP) conference in Los Angeles. Here's the description: "Connecting with readers is an increasing challenge in a crowded marketplace. The speakers on this panel established the Tall Poppies, a marketing collective for women writers, to pool resources and increase visibility. We believe that you don't need to compete to get ahead and that when we support each other, we all rise. In this presentation, we share the specifics of creating a collective, establishing a branded social media presence, and expanding the reach of our writing."

Mary McWilliams, as a member of the Faculty Research Group's (FRG) Government Regulations team, contributed as design lead for a presentation made at the June 2015 Academic Forum conference in California. The presentation, given by the Government Regulations' project manager, Louise Underdahl, Ph.D, is part of an approved proposal to research entitled, "A Phenomenological Study of How Federal Government Regulations on Student Loans Affect Student Recruitment and Retention in a Higher Educational Learning Asynchronous Environment." The proposal has also been submitted for publication to the Forum's journal, *The Exchange*. McWilliams has been a part of the FRG and its Gov Regs team for about four years and serves as the FRG's newsletter editor. The FRG is an online community comprised of about 12 teams for adjunct faculty to further their scholarship through research, presentation, and publication.

Tara Pyfrin attended the International Literacy Conference in St. Louis, MO, July 18-20, 2015. Additionally, Tara, along with **Rich Russell**, were named to this year's list of "Top 40 [Young Professionals] Under 40," which is sponsored by *A.C. Weekly* and the Greater Atlantic City Jaycees.

Leila Crawford and **Rich Russell** hosted the 4th Annual Writers' Colloquium on April 30th. Journalism and Creative Writing students who received Communication Awards read from and discussed their work.

Susan Van Rossum is the owner of The Dutch Rose in Swainton. Every Sunday, she writes a blog, so that her students see that she researches and writes weekly. Check out <http://thedutchrose.blogspot.com/> and follow her on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TheDutchRose>

Rich Russell attended a bookmaking/book arts course at the Riverfront Renaissance Center for the Arts in Millville, NJ, June 28–July 2. He stayed with his sister in Hudson, NY, for two weeks in mid-July, attending a week-long [Writing and Thinking Workshop](#) at Bard College. This August, his original collection/zine "Somerset," set in 18th century Somerset, is part of an exhibit of arts and letters at Great Bay Gallery (through September 5th). For the past few springs, Rich also has been a judge, along with **Charles Wray**, at the Scripps Spelling Bee at Galloway Middle School; the winning student advances to the national bee in D.C.

Coming this spring: The Honors Program at Atlantic Cape. Beginning Spring 2016, Atlantic Cape will offer at least two Honors Program courses. Class sizes will be limited to 15; standard assessment will include reading primary texts and writing about primary texts. Faculty will participate in selecting the courses to be offered. The department's own **Effie Russell** has been appointed as the Honors Coordinator and has already begun networking with area high schools. The initial audience will be drawn from incoming NJ Stars students.

ACCELERATED LEARNING PROGRAM (ALP) CORNER

From Stephanie Natale-Boianelli, ALP Coordinator

Who's Who in ALP

The Veterans: Effie Russell, Leila Crawford, Maryann Flemming-McCall, Stephanie Natale-Boianelli, Jay Peterson, Richard Russell, Regina Van Epps, Mary Miklasz, and Melissa Palmer *New This Fall:* Merrill-Jean Bailey, Elinor Mattern, Vickie Melograno, Sam Dodge, Lydia Fecteau, Julie Reinhardt

New Faculty Summer Training

On July 7th, experienced ALP faculty led new faculty in preparing to teach ALP. We worked through the essential components of the program, shared best practices, and talked with guest speakers Daymis Alicea, ALP Academic Advisor, and Allison Monroe, Financial Aid Specialist. After an invigorating and exhausting day, we all left with new ideas for our classrooms. The day's agenda provides a sense of the event:

9:30-10:30 Introduction to ALP (Stephanie Natale-Boianelli)
10:30-11:30 Backward Curriculum Design (Effie Russell)
11:30-12:30 Addressing Non-Cognitive Issues (Regina Van Epps)
12:30-1:00 Lunch
1:00-1:30 Academic Advising and ALP (Daymis Alicea)
1:30-2:00 Financial Aid Overview and Q&A (Allison Monroe)
2:00-3:00 Active/Collaborative Learning (Maryann Flemming-McCall)
3:00-4:00 Thinking Skills/ Active Reading (Stephanie Natale-Boianelli)
4:00-5:00 Aligning the Syllabi: (Richard Russell)
5:00-5:30 Mentor Meetings

ALP Presentations

ALP faculty have presented the program's successful triad model as well as activities and assignments suited to the model at several conferences:

National Conference on Acceleration in Developmental Education (Baltimore, MD) June 2014: Maryann Flemming-McCall, Stephanie Natale-Boianelli, Richard Russell and Regina Van Epps presented "Acceleration at Atlantic Cape: The Triad Model."

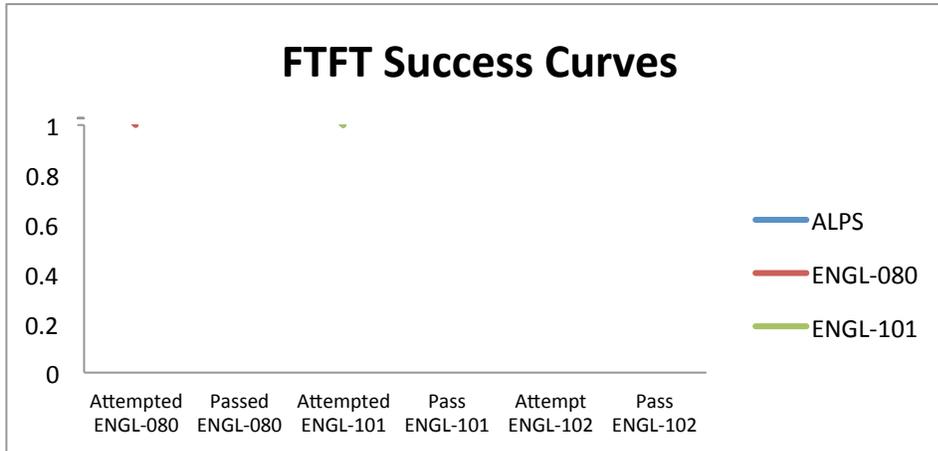
New Jersey Council of Community Colleges Best Practices Conference (Camden County College) April 2015: Stephanie Natale-Boianelli and Richard Russell presented "Acceleration in Developmental English at Atlantic Cape and Mercer: One Problem, Two Solutions" with Amy Vondrak from Mercer County College.

New Jersey Writing Alliance Conference (Georgian Court College) May 2015: Leila Crawford, Stephanie Natale-Boianelli and Richard Russell presented "Accelerating Developmental English at Atlantic Cape: A Success Story."

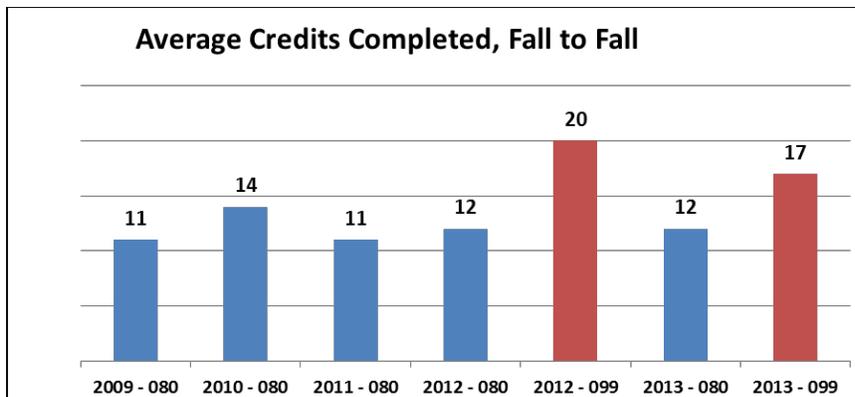
In October 2015, Maryann Flemming-McCall, Stephanie Natale-Boianelli, and Richard Russell will present "Accelerating Developmental English at Atlantic Cape: The Triad Model" at the **Two-Year College English Association Northeast Conference** in Lancaster, PA.

July 2015 Data Update Confirms ALP's Continued Success

The data update provided by Matt Miller shows that ALP students continue to outperform 080 and 101 students:



ALP students also complete and pass more credits than 080 students:



Other findings demonstrated that ALP students are retained at higher rates than 080 and 101 students. When broken down by race, ALP students in all groups succeed at similar or higher rates than both 080 and 101 students.

For more about ALP, including student success stories, visit the program's web site at <http://www.atlantic.edu/alp>

CLASSROOM NOTES

From the desk of Effie Russell: In English 101 and in Accelerated Learning, one of the four books my students read each semester last year was *The Pine Barrens* by John McPhee. I was surprised at how little students know of their local geography. Most did not know of the “pine barrens” and the people who inhabit this part of New Jersey. Some set out on road trips to visit Chatsworth and other areas mentioned. Although the book was written in the 60s, we had fun updating the information with our smartphones or in computer research. Students wrote exceptionally descriptive essays about the people of the pines.

From the desk of Stephanie Natale-Boianelli: During the spring semester, my Tracing Fairy Tales students and I went “into the woods” and explored classic folk and fairy tales, Disney films, feminist revisionist adaptations, and a host of contemporary versions of the tales. We examined fairy tale lineages and the stories they tell about culture and society. Midway through the semester, the students took over the classroom with their own self-selected presentations, which brought us fascinating texts like Pinocchio advertisements. We finished with student papers/projects that explored everything from *The Princess Bride* to the motif of eating the murdered child through writing, artwork and even flag choreography.

From the desk of Charles Wray: “I just don’t see any connection between (the course I’m taking) and my future in (the vocation I’m seeking).” We’ve all sensed this vibe from students through body language or not-so-subtle verbal hints. But a few passages in *The Conscious Reader*, meshed with a Forbes article [“The Ten Skills Employers Most Want in 2015 Graduates,”](#) may offer a counter-PowerPoint. The 16-panel presentation tries to convince new students that English Composition is also a course in Workplace Preparation, if only they could see past the syllabus. To use Charles’ powerpoint, contact him at cwray@atlantic.edu.

From the desk of Susan Van Rossum: My Composition 102 classes spent Spring 2015 researching “Not today, Satan!” It resulted in some interesting discussions on religion, procrastination, and the origin of evil symbols. The fall classes will be exploring pizza. Should be a fascinating look into our food network. I will be starting my Comp 101 class with Chinese fortune cookies for their first essay as we plunge into the world of non-texting writing.

From the desk of Mary McWilliams: The students of my English 102 class this spring were featured in the [May 13, 2015 issue of the Cape May County Herald](#) for their studies on homelessness. We integrated timely *Herald* articles on local homelessness into the course curriculum. Atlantic Cape invited the newspaper’s editor, Al Campbell, to observe Day 3 presentations after which he wrote a front-page story on the students’ work. Each student chose a different angle to research and wrote a major research paper, then gave a class presentation on his or her findings. Students chose such topics as homelessness among women veterans, the mentally ill, the Greek population following its 2009 economic collapse, as well as discrimination and criminalization of the homeless.

ITINERARIES

FLORIDA—In May, **Denise Coulter** visited Key West, FL. While she was there, she had the opportunity to board and tour the Barque Eagle, the same Coast Guard tall ship that stopped in Camden, NJ, in late June. Denise notes: “Here’s the boon of visiting the ship in Key West: no long lines and no big crowds. After a few minutes’ wait, I was strolling around deck and chatting with the crew.”

NEW YORK—**Chris Mozitis** had the pleasure of seeing the musical *Something’s Rotten* in New York City earlier in the summer. The actor, Christian Borhle, plays a hip Shakespeare. To promote the play, Borhle makes [YouTube videos](#).

SOUTH CAROLINA—In July, **Maryann McCall** and her husband took a road trip to Charleston, South Carolina, and Savannah, Georgia. In addition to taking in the history and architecture, they visited the childhood home of writer Flannery O’Connor in Savannah.

EAST COAST—**Therese Halscheid** has been giving several readings for *Frozen Latitudes* in both NJ and PA, including the Penn State area. This June, she went south on a book tour where she read in bookstores near Harpers Ferry, VA, and Asheville, NC.

SOUTHEAST—Dr. **Dorothea Dunayer** and her husband Barry took an extended road trip through the south during May and June. They visited Savannah, Charleston and Fort Sumter, Daytona Beach, and Florida’s west coast. Most important was an extended visit with their six grandchildren ranging in age from 16 months to 15 years in West Palm Beach.

WEST COAST—**Amy Bannerman**’s husband’s career takes her family all over the country from the east coast to the west coast and now to the last frontier. For the past two weeks her family has traveled north along the west coast shoreline. They left their home for the past two years in Southern California, relaxed as the sun set over Point Reyes Lighthouse, contemplated the beauty of the California Coastal Redwoods, and excitedly waited for the ferry in Bellingham, Washington. For the next few years, her family will call Juneau, Alaska home.

ANNOTATIONS

Denise Coulter recommends *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy* by Carlos Eire (2004). Much of the writing focuses on Eire’s childhood memories of living on the island during the transition of leadership from Batista to Castro. A bit of the narrative focuses on his experiences with Operation Peter Pan and what life was like for him when he arrived in America, but most of the chapters describe the life of privilege Eire knew as the son of a judge and how that life slowly slipped out of his grip. Denise notes: “Very moving and informative autobiographical work.”

Maryann McCall read *The Warmth of Other Suns* by Isabel Wilkerson, an account of “The Great Migration,” the movement of black citizens from the South to the North and West from 1915-1975. Maryann writes: “It is a pivotal event in American history of whose existence and scope I was unaware.”

Therese Halscheid keeps returning to and highly recommends the anthology *The Best New American Essay 2013*, edited by John D'Agata. The collection features lyric essays by some of America's best.

FORTHCOMING DATES

Saturday, October 3 @ 10:45 AM
Collingswood Book Festival
Haddon Ave. Collingswood, NJ

Monday, October 5 @ 7:00 PM
Monday Poet Series
Featuring Elaine Terranova & Therése Halscheid
Philadelphia Free Public Library
1901 Vine St. Philadelphia, PA
Contact: Kay wisniewskik@freelibrary.org

Wednesday, October 28 @ 7:00 PM
Featured reader: Therése Halscheid
South Jersey Poets World Above Series
Dante Hall Theatre
14 N. Mississippi Avenue
Atlantic City, NJ 08401
Contact: Emari edigiorgio@gmail.com

April 15-17 and April 22-24, 2016 @ 8 PM
(2 PM matinees on Sundays)
Growing Up in the Other Atlantic City
Dante Hall Theatre
14 N. Mississippi Avenue
Atlantic City, NJ 08401
BACK BY POPULAR DEMAND! The play is a collaboration between Professor Pam Hendrick of Stockton and Turiya Abdur-Raheem. Check the Stockton/Dante Hall website and order tickets early. Shows in 2014 were sold out.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS

*So we beat on, boats against the current,
borne back ceaselessly into the past.*