Winter 2018

arts & sciences enews: Winter 2018

College of Arts and Sciences
ARTS AND SCIENCES

English 1050 Intensive program gives first-year writing students a lifeline for success.

FACULTY

Michael Braun, master faculty specialist of Spanish, is winner of the Barbara Ort-Smith Award from the Michigan World Languages Association. It is the most prestigious distinction an educator in the field of world languages can receive in the state of Michigan.

ALUMNI

An unconventional journey: Just a few short years out of college, Kathryn Giroux (B.A. ’13, Global and International Studies) has traveled the world and landed
a position as lead story strategist with Emmy Award-winning Muse Storytelling.

STUDENTS

Three WMU Arts and Sciences students are using a prestigious national scholarship to study overseas during the University's 2018 spring semester, or longer, through the Gilman International Scholarship Program.

Students Take Hold of Lifeline for Success Through Intensive Program

CONTACT: MOLLY GOALEY

Cammi Lucia refused to fail her first-year writing course at Western Michigan University. It wasn’t that she didn’t have the smarts, or the skills, or the drive to complete her assignments. Life, and circumstances that were out of her control, simply got in the way.

Lucia, of Grand Blanc, was making every effort to balance obligations at home with the unfamiliar experience of being a new college student. A missed class here and there turned into repeated absences, and soon, she found herself at risk of not passing English 1050, an important prerequisite to much of a student’s education at WMU.
“I was having many unexpected events happen in my personal life that made it difficult to attend class,” Lucia says. “Other than that, I really had no issues with the course.”

Concerned with Lucia’s progress, yet encouraged by her capability, her instructor saw an opportunity for Lucia to get back on track and complete the work necessary for passing the class. Through an intervention program called English 1050 Intensive, students like Lucia – who are determined to achieve but are facing obstacles in the process – are given an alternative option.

“We strongly believe that if we accept students into our University, we have an obligation to find ways for them to be successful,” says Dr. Jonathan Bush, professor of English. “The students we work with know that, for whatever reason, they are not going to pass the standard version of 1050. Through the intensive program, achievement is much more possible. What we’re essentially doing is giving them a lifeline for success.”

Bush sparked the idea for the program in 2014 after witnessing so many first-year writing students struggle because of extenuating circumstances. He went to his colleagues in the Department of English, Dr. Adrienne Redding and Dr. Jeanne LaHaie, who made the concept a reality. Redding, faculty specialist, and LaHaie, former faculty specialist, created the program together, designing and implementing the course and materials.

Redding, who has been a key driver of the program since day one, has served as its director since 2016. She, along with Bush and part-time instructor Dr. Lisa Lishman, each currently work with about 10 to 12 students during the semester. Since its inception, English 1050 Intensive has served 151 students total.

“Occasionally there are remediation issues, but we see far less of that than we expected,” Redding says. “More often, there are really significant circumstances that come into play.”

“We were seeing students failing the course who were clearly capable of passing, but other factors were getting in the way,” Bush adds. “Those factors were anxiety, home issues, illness, emotional issues. Sometimes a student just felt like they couldn’t talk to their instructor.”

Nearly all students referred to English 1050 Intensive are there because of an underlying cause. While the program is open to the entire undergraduate population, about 90 percent of Intensive participants identify as first-generation college students, many with “significant responsibilities at home,” Bush says. Sixty-six percent identify as underrepresented minorities.

Enrollment into the program is based on a referral and application system. Midway through each semester, English 1050 instructors receive an electronic survey that allows them to refer struggling students into the intensive program. The program faculty then contact those students and invite them to apply.

“We take as many students as we can,” Redding says. “For example, this year we had 71 referred to us by instructors. We ended up with about 30 of those students. Some choose not to take advantage of the program for one reason or another, but we’ve never not accepted anyone. That
contributes to our success levels too, because we get the students who are motivated enough to apply.”

“The students know they have a good opportunity here,” Bush says. “Basically, what we’re doing is giving them hope.”

**One-on-one support**

Bush and Redding are quick to reiterate that English 1050 Intensive is not a remediation program; on the contrary, it requires an extensive amount of work on the student’s part, and in a condensed amount of time.

“There is no special designation; the course shows up as regular 1050 on their transcripts,” Redding says. “There are four components of writing that the students complete for us, the first three of which are stepping stones to a final research paper. Through these four components, they are really able to demonstrate or develop the skills to write at the college level. And we do this with them in six weeks, generally.”

According to Bush and Redding, about 90 percent of the at-risk students they work with pass the course with a required C grade or higher. The biggest factor to their success, they say, is being able to work individually with the faculty members. English 1050 Intensive participants spend one hour a week in one-on-one sessions with their professors. They meet collectively on Fridays in Waldo Library and the faculty consult with each participant individually.

“We spend a lot of one-on-one intensive time helping them craft their papers and connect with a research topic they’re really interested in,” Bush says. “No matter how great of an instructor you are, in a large class setting you can’t do that.”

“Everything we do in the course is so purposeful and sets them up for success in other areas as well,” Redding says. “Overwhelmingly we hear, ‘this helped me with my organizational skills, it really helped me with time management,’ or ‘I feel like I can ask the teacher questions.’ Because a lot of the time students come to us and say going to the teacher is not a comfortable behavior.”

Bush and Redding say the one-on-one relationships ease the frustration or embarrassment a student might feel about not understanding the course material within the context of a large class setting. Lucia, who describes the time she has spent with Redding as “absolutely great,” agrees.

“Being able to have these one-on-ones really helps me understand the content of my assignments and how to do them correctly,” Lucia says. “And I know I can always go to Dr. Redding for help or if I have any questions.”
Pushing the needle on retention

Data collected by the English 1050 Intensive faculty indicates that students who do not pass first-year writing have the highest likelihood of leaving the University. Of those students, only 33 percent matriculate from the first to second year of college. But encouragingly, the retention rate of students who take advantage of and pass English 1050 Intensive is significantly higher – averaging between 64 to 66 percent. During the last full semester of the program, that number rose to 68 percent.

“We’re really proud of this program, because our efforts actually move the needle on institutional retention,” Bush says. As the English 1050 Intensive course proves, even small numbers of students have the ability to push that needle. Serving 25 to 30 students per semester, the program has raised first-year retention of the University’s more than 23,000 students by 0.7 percent overall and by 1.6 percent among those who took first-year writing in the 2016-17 academic year.

Beyond numbers, the program’s life changing impact is most evident in the students it serves. “Being part of this program has helped me understand writing in a different way,” Lucia says. “It has helped me not just in this class, but in other classes and my everyday life. I am much more confident now because of this course.”

Bell's Brewery partners with WMU, KVCC to offer internship

contact: Molly Goaley
December 14, 2017 | WMU News

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Iconic West Michigan craft brewer Bell's Brewery has announced a partnership with Western Michigan University and Kalamazoo Valley Community College's sustainable brewing program that will offer brewing internships to students in the program.

The Bell's Brewery Development Award will give participants experience in four key departments over the course of one year. Student interns will rotate through and gain valuable insight into Bell's quality, brewing, packaging and brewing innovation at its main brewery in Comstock.

"Talent continues to be in high demand within the brewing industry and by partnering with these two educational institutions, we are able to
inspire candidates who not only have a shared passion for brewing science, but also roots here in Michigan," says Carrie M. Yunker, Bell's director of human resources.

Yunker, along with John Mallett, Bell's director of production, and Stephanie Blodgett, Bell's talent acquisition coordinator, developed this new program with Mike Babb, KVCC sustainable brewing instructor, and Dr. Steven Bertman, WMU professor of chemistry.

"Southwest Michigan is a hub for craft brewing in no small part because of Bell's, and this new position is an unbelievable opportunity for our students. Bell's has put together a thoughtful and generous position for someone to get hands-on experience in all aspects of production at a thriving and world-renowned craft brewery. That they are reserving this position for someone from our program is a recognition of the care and rigor that we have incorporated from the very beginning," says Bertman.

The WMU and KVCC brewing program was developed in 2015 by the two schools, working in close coordination with the industry. The resulting "two-plus-two" program in sustainable craft brewing offers students the opportunity to earn a certificate or associate degree at KVCC, then move on to a Bachelor of Science degree at WMU.

The rigorous science curriculum was developed with input from an external advisory board comprised of a dozen of Michigan's top craft brewers, many of them in West Michigan, which has one of the country's highest per-capita densities of craft brewers.

"This is the kind of collaboration that we envisioned when we created the program together with KVCC," says Bertman

"Partnering the strengths of the two largest institutions of higher education in Kalamazoo with the incredibly experienced and diverse breweries in the area provides a great structure for students who are interested in enhancing the efficiency and sustainability of the industry," Babb added. "We are more than delighted that Bell's is providing this opportunity for our graduates. We sincerely appreciate Bell's support of our award-winning program and students."

Nationally, craft beer accounts for more than 12 percent of beer sales, and the industry is becoming a significant generator of jobs and revenues. Craft brewing contributed $2.09 billion to Michigan's economy in 2016 according to the Brewers' Association, making it ninth on the list of states in which the industry has the greatest economic impact.

WMU and KVCC will start accepting submissions in January. The final day to apply will be March 1, and the internship will begin on April 30.

Those selected must have a completed a KVCC Sustainable Brewing Certificate from the recognized program. This opportunity is available exclusively to KVCC and WMU students.

About Bell's Brewery
Bell's Brewery Inc. began in 1985 with a quest for better beer and a 15-gallon soup kettle. Since then, it has grown into a regional craft brewery that employs more than 500 people over a 32-state area, in addition to Puerto Rico and Washington, D.C. Bell's currently brews more than 20 beers for distribution as well as many other small-batch beers that are served at its pub in Kalamazoo, the Eccentric Cafe. For more information, visit bellsbeer.com.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.

State association honors Spanish faculty member

contact: Molly Goaley
November 21, 2017 | WMU News

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—A faculty member in Western Michigan University's Department of Spanish is this year's winner of the Barbara Ort-Smith Award from the Michigan World Languages Association—MIWLA.

Michael Braun, a master faculty specialist of Spanish, received the award during the 53rd MIWLA Annual Conference in Lansing Oct. 12. Braun is the first person from WMU to earn the honor, which is the most prestigious distinction an educator in the field of world languages can receive in the state of Michigan.

"Teaching for me has always been about being creative," Braun remarked. "I hardly ever do the same lesson plan or teach a class in the same way. My goal is to have my students speak, listen, read and write on a consistent basis."

Braun

Braun joined WMU's Spanish faculty full time in 2004 after teaching Spanish methodology on a part-time basis for three years. Prior to his tenure at WMU, he taught all five levels of Spanish for 12 years at nearby Portage Northern High School and implemented the school's International Baccalaureate Curriculum.

With a combined 25 years' teaching experience at the secondary and postsecondary levels, Braun is recognized for providing students with one-on-one mentorship and invaluable firsthand knowledge combined with real-world application. WMU presented him with the University's Arts and Sciences Teaching Award in 2015-16.
Braun is a member of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages. He has presented award-winning workshops and conference sessions for local school districts and national organizations that include MIWLA and the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese.

He earned a Master of Arts in Spanish and a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and business education from WMU.

**Barbara Ort-Smith Award**

As the state's highest honor for educators in the field of world languages, the Barbara Ort-Smith Award recognizes those who have shown a strong commitment to the profession. MIWLA selects and honors the professional who best demonstrates leadership and the promotion of excellence in world language education.

The award is named for Barbara Ort-Smith, who received the inaugural honor in 1988. Ort-Smith served as the first foreign language consultant in the state of Michigan.

**For more WMU news, arts and events, visit** [wmich.edu/news](http://wmich.edu/news).

**An Unconventional Journey**

*Posted on Friday, October 27, 2017*

Kathryn Giroux (B.A. ’13, Global & International Studies) has only been out of school for a few years, but you wouldn’t guess it based on all she’s done and seen during her time as a student and since she’s graduated.

First working with Samaritas as a refugee specialist, Giroux was able to pay off her student debts. Then she quit and took five months off to travel Southeast Asia. *She is pictured to the right in Thailand.*

“People thought I was crazy to just quit and travel without a job lined up,” Giroux recalled. “I taught English to refugee women at-risk for trafficking in Northern Thailand, and taught English in exchange for housing/food in a small village outside of Hanoi, Vietnam. I bought a scooter, and rode from Hanoi to Saigon with a few friends I met while teaching, sold it, and returned to the US.”
Within two weeks of her return, Giroux was hired with an Emmy Award-winning filmmaking company in Portland, Oregon known as Muse Storytelling (born out of Stillmotion). Today she works as their lead story strategist, managing online university content and handling everything from the complete storytelling process to how to conduct interviews to nonprofit story secrets. She’s taught the storytelling process at workshops, webinars, and during a tour with Canon across Asia. She also writes scripts for online courses and marketing videos.

As a student at WMU, Giroux fell in love with travel through a study abroad trip to Barcelona where she worked with gomio.com creating blog content about backpacking. Once she finished the internship and had a month remaining in Europe, Giroux then traveled to a small village in France for a work exchange at a bed and breakfast. It was her first time traveling alone, but the experience was one she describes as a blast.

“When you learn that you can navigate a new country on your own… I feel like it made me realize that there are a lot bigger challenges I could navigate when I need to as well,” Giroux explained.

Aside from participating with the Sailing Team while at WMU, Giroux also completed an internship with Samaritas in Battle Creek, helping to assimilate new refugees. She was then hired after graduation as a refugee specialist and worked as a primary case worker for 10-25 clients at a time, mostly with Burmese refugees, but sometimes with Iraqi or Rwandan.

She was responsible for making sure that resettlement services were provided and refugees obtained employment within 90 days of arriving in the US. “From housing and financial assistance, to ESL classes, medical appointments, home safety checks, obtaining social security cards and state IDs, cultural orientations, job applications, employment, and follow-up, it really taught me how to coordinate projects, network with community partners, and solve problems creatively,” Giroux said.

"My journey has been unconventional, and I was so fortunate to have found mentors in Dr. Kostrzewa and Scott Friesner who have really helped to cultivate these traits and encouraged me to take the road less traveled. The internship I had at Samaritas was possible through course credit and through an introduction from Dr. Kostrzewa. It really gave me the experience I needed to have an edge after graduating."

As a result of her journey thus far, Giroux believes that diversity of experiences fosters personal growth and fulfilment.

“When it comes to experiencing other parts of the world, specifically, it's important to challenge the echo chamber you've grown up in, compare and learn from differences in cultures so that you can make choices in your own life more intentionally, but also realize that no matter where you are—everyone has the same basic needs, desires, and fears,” Giroux said. “Also, to realize that even when you're on the other side of the world, your actions and your choices have an impact on the environment and others.”
Three students receive Gilman Scholarships to study abroad

KALAMAZOO, Mich.—Three Western Michigan University students are using a prestigious national scholarship to study overseas during the University's 2018 spring semester, or longer, through the Gilman International Scholarship Program.

Katelyn Drummond of Dorr, Kirsten Stowell of Mattawan and Nicholas Talamantez of Kalkaska are among about 1,000 American undergraduate students to receive the Gilman Scholarship to study abroad.

Newest Gilman Scholars

- Drummond received a $4,500 Gilman Scholarship. Drummond is a junior majoring in global and international studies: tourism and travel. She will be studying in Cape Town, South Africa, during the spring semester. She was drawn to Cape Town by the opportunity to be surrounded by beautiful landscapes while studying the country's fascinating history at the University of Cape Town.

- Stowell received a $950 Gilman Scholarship. She is a senior majoring in mathematics as well as in English secondary education and will be studying in Auckland, New Zealand, for the spring semester. Stowell chose this study abroad program because she always wanted to visit New Zealand and it will allow her to complete her teaching internship in a different educational system while still graduating on time.

- Talamantez received a $950 Gilman Scholarship. He is a sophomore majoring in film, video and media studies who is minoring in Spanish. He will be studying in Granada, Spain, for five and one-half months starting with the spring semester. Talamantez chose this study abroad program because it covers such topics as political and media history as well as culture and the environment. In addition, he wanted to spend more than a semester abroad to bond and meet people from around the world.

Because mountains obstruct inland expansion, Cape Town has developed along the coast.
About the Gilman program

The congressionally funded Gilman program supports study abroad by defraying such costs as tuition, room and board, books, local transportation, insurance, and international airfare. It offers grants to students from across the United States; Washington, D.C.; and Puerto Rico. To be eligible, those American citizens must demonstrate high financial need.

The program has been successful in supporting students who are historically underrepresented in education abroad, including first-generation college students; ethnic minority students; and students who have disabilities, are from U.S. states with weak study abroad participation, and are studying in science, technology, engineering and mathematics—STEM—fields.

Gilman at WMU

Applying for a Gilman Scholarship is a competitive process that requires some advising. Dr. Michelle Metro-Roland, WMU director of faculty and global program development, serves as the University's advisor for the Gilman International Scholarship Program and most other federal study abroad scholarship programs.

"The Gilman Scholarship is for students who never thought that studying abroad was within their reach," Metro-Roland says.

Those interested in applying for the scholarship must be federal Pell Grant recipients and should make contacting Metro-Roland their first step. She can be reached at michelle.metro-roland@wmich.edu.

For more information about how the Gilman International Scholarship can be a bridge to the world, visit wmich.edu/studyabroad/gilman. To learn about WMU's study abroad programs and services, visit wmich.edu/studyabroad or call (269) 387-5890.

For more WMU news, arts and events, visit wmich.edu/news.