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Editor-in-Chief of the Laureate

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Andrea Walker

Honors Thesis Abstract

Lee Honors College

Abstract for The Laureate

The Laureate is an undergraduate literary journal that is distributed by the Lee Honors College (LHC) of Western Michigan University. It accepts submissions from all undergraduate students from Western. In fall 2012, I was selected as editor-in-chief of this operation with Becky Cooper as my faculty advisor. My first task was to create a team of assistant editors. The LHC and Sigma Tau Delta sent out emails that let students know of this opportunity. I interviewed several applicants before selecting three assistants. My next task was to create flyers let students know how to submit. I created the flyers myself from my own artwork. My assistants and I were very persistent with our promotions. We set up about 300 flyers and visited classrooms to spread the word. I also raised awareness by operating a Facebook and Tumblr page for The Laureate. Once the submission deadline arrived, my next task was to weed through the submissions to find the work most suitable for the journal. After this, I submitted my own poetry by sending my work anonymously alongside an equal number of worthy submissions with the authors' names removed. I asked my assistants to rank each piece in order of preference, and two of my poems ranked the highest. Therefore, I decided that it was reasonable for me to include my highest ranked poem into the journal. My next task was to email all of the authors to inform them of whether their work was selected or not. Some of the authors that were selected were given advice on how to improve their work. One student, in particular, submitted a play that was great in literary merit, but was written in broken English. We met up and worked for two hours to ensure that his work was grammatically correct while still retaining his voice. My correspondence with the authors on several concerns was a consistent occurrence. After much copyediting with the help of my assistants, I arranged the work in the order that I felt was best for the journal. I wanted the pieces to "speak" to each other, and I am very confident that this was accomplished. Once the order was established, Becky and I met with our design team from the Design Center. The student designers created a handful of layouts for me to choose from. I chose the space-themed layout because I felt that it complimented the dream-like nature of the poems and the universality theme of the journal. Following this, Becky, the design team, and I all worked very hard to continue editing the journal to ensure that no errors would make it into the finished copy. Once the journal was sent to the print shop, I began to organize the reading release party. I created a Facebook event and distributed flyers that the design center made to promote the reading. My responsibility was to make sure that we had a proper setting for the reading and Becky took care of obtaining the snacks. On the evening of the reading, the event was opened with touching sentiments from Dr. Andreadis and Becky Cooper. I then facilitated the reading, beginning with the recitation of my "Note from the Editor."