Melinda Moustakis, Winner of 2010 Maurice Prize in Fiction

Melinda Moustakis, (Ph.D., Creative Writing/Fiction) 2010, has been garnering great attention for her recent collection, *Bear Down, Bear North*. In April, Melinda received word that she was the recipient of the Flannery O’Connor Award for Short Fiction from the University of Georgia Press. This is one of the top three prizes in the United States, for a first collection that entails publication of the book. Moustakis’s collection will appear in spring 2011.

In August, Melinda was again honored: The University of California Davis English Department and novelist John Lescroart announced Melinda Moustakis the winner of the 6th annual Maurice Prize in Fiction contest. Melinda will receive the $5,000 prize for her winning entry, *Bear Down, Bear North*, selected from 11 novels submitted this year. She is a 2006 graduate of the U.C. Davis M.A. English program for creative writers. The $5,000 prize is a gift from John Lescroart in honor of his father, Maurice, for whom the contest is named.

*Bear Down, Bear North* was selected the best novel submitted by alumni of the creative writing program at UC Davis who haven’t published a book-length manuscript. It is John Lescroart’s hope to inspire the department’s graduates to publish their literary work. Three previous winners have gone on to achieve that goal.

Benjamin Percy judged this year’s contest. He is the author of *The Wilding*, *Refresh, Refresh*, and *The Language of Elk* among many other publications. He is the recipient of the Whiting Award, Plimpton Prize and anthologized in *Best American Short Stories*. He is assistant professor in the MFA program at Iowa State University as well as a member of the faculty at the Low Res MFA Pacific University program.

Because the evolution of any creative process is always interesting, we asked Melinda to share some thoughts about her writing.

“When I was studying writing at UC Davis, the writer Lynn Freed told our class to think about what our obsessions were because obsessions made for good writing and good stories. I started to realize I was, in many ways, obsessed with Alaska because that was where all the interesting stories about my family took place.

I was born in Fairbanks, Alaska, and moved when I was four to Bakersfield, California, because that was the only place my father could find a job after the oil industry bottomed out in 1986.

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I don’t think I would have been so interested in Alaska if we hadn’t moved, because growing up, Alaska became this mythic place where my grandparents on my mother’s side homesteaded and then raised nine children and where all the hunting and fishing stories happened.

We would visit when we could, but then, about six years ago, I started spending summers in Alaska fishing with my uncle, who is an expert fisherman and storyteller. I had always used landscape and image in my writing, but listening to fishermen taught me to think about voice and cadence and rhythm and how to stretch the truth to make a story better.

I began to focus more on characters telling stories in my writing which led, I think, naturally, to exploring point of view, especially after working with Jaimy Gordon and then taking a narrative theory class with Jil Larson at WMU.

_Bear Down, Bear North_ is a project that encompasses all of these components -- landscape, image, voice and point of view in order to tell stories about Alaska that I believe haven’t been told yet, or told in this way. These characters are salt-tongued fishermen and fisherwomen, homesteaders, and hunters and storytellers.

It was also very important to me to make sure there were complex portrayals of women in this landscape because of the women in my family and because I myself love to go fishing.”

Professor Jaimy Gordon reminds us that this is actually the second time that one of our fiction PhDs has won the coveted O’Connor award. In 2001, Kellie Wells won the Flannery O’Connor prize for her collection _Compression Scars_. Kellie, by the way, just joined the faculty of the highly ranked M.F.A. program at the University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, where she began teaching this fall.

Richard Utz, chair, adds: “Congratulations are due to Melinda, of course, but also to Jaimy Gordon, advisor and mentor to Melinda and Kellie. The department feels extremely proud to show once again how our wonderfully productive students and faculty spread Western’s name as an institution from which original literary and critical work hails. Another graduate student, Bill Zorn, received the prestigious Mark Twain Prize for Comic Playwriting from the Kennedy Center’s American College Theatre Festival earlier this year. And since I doubt that the water in Sprau Tower is behind all these successes, I will boldly claim that we are doing something right over here in English.”

**Chair’s Corner**

In a recent conversation with an alumna I realized that many of those who graduated before the 1990s may be unaware of how much the department’s graduate programs have grown in the last two decades. Currently, we have more than 100 graduate students working towards the M.A. in Literary Studies, the M.A.E.T. in the Teaching of English, the M.F.A. in Creative Writing, and the Ph.D. in English ( emphases in Creative Writing, English Education, and Literary Studies). In fact, our department is making one of the most substantial contributions to Western Michigan University’s Carnegie ranking as one of the country’s 76 public institutions designated as research universities with high research activity. As you read on our front page, our recent Ph.D., Melinda Moustakis, is the recipient of the prestigious Flannery O’Connor Award, and our students win major awards and find positions or are accepted by other graduate programs immediately after graduation.

We knew, of course, that we are providing a first-rate graduate education in our department, but now we have been given the stamp of approval by the National Research Council, a nonprofit institution whose mission is to improve government decision making and public policy, increase public education and understanding, and promote the acquisition and dissemination of knowledge in the academy. In the NRC’s recent ranking of 122 English doctoral programs across the nation, our program was very well situated. Our range of rankings in categories such as publications per faculty member, faculty with grants, time to degree, and Ph.D.s with academic jobs, is better than that for English departments at most of WMU’s peer universities (for example, Miami University), and we are also ranked more highly than Georgia State University, Loyola University of Chicago, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Northern Illinois University Marquette University, and Southern Illinois University, to name but a few. Within WMU, only one out of 17 other doctoral programs was ranked as highly, Chemistry, more than reason enough to request that College and University support us relative to our documented productivity.

Congratulations to our faculty and students because they sure do Western proud.

- Richard Utz
The English Department is pleased to introduce our newest faculty members: Thisbe Nissen and Dr. Staci Perryman-Clark

**Dr. Perryman-Clark**’s dissertation, *Back to the Classroom: Afrocentricity and Teacher-Research in First-Year Writing* is a qualitative empirically-based teacher-research study that examines the ways in which African American students and all students perform expository writing tasks using an Ebonics-based Rhetoric and Composition focused first-year writing curriculum. As such, her work focuses on creating culturally-relevant pedagogies and curricular designs to support all students’ expository writing practices. Her published work currently focuses on designing alternative curricular models for undergraduate and graduate courses. Her recent publications include a custom textbook published with McGraw-Hill and journals published in *Composition Studies* and *Composition Forum*.

Currently, Dr. Perryman-Clark is working on a textbook that engages cultural diversity and writing; articles that engage issues of race and gender in writing program administration; and articles that examine the relationship among race, cultural diversity, and first-year writing curricula. Dr. Perryman-Clark currently serves as Director of First-Year Writing, and teaches graduate courses in methods of teaching college writing.

**Thisbe Nissen** is thrilled to be joining the Creative Writing faculty at Western. The author of two novels, *The Good People of New York* and *Osprey Island*, and a short story collection, *Out of the Girls’ Room and into the Night*, she is also co-author (with Erin Ergenbright) of *The Ex-Boyfriend Cookbook*, a collection of stories, recipes and art collages. Thisbe arrives from New York’s Hudson Valley with her husband, Jay Baron Nicorvo (who is teaching Literary Publishing and advising *Third Coast Magazine*), their new baby son, two old cats, and ten frisky chickens.

As they settle into life in Kalamazoo, Thisbe continues work on a novel and a new collection of short stories. She is teaching graduate and undergraduate students in her fiction workshops, and very much looks forward to being a part of Western’s literary community.

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**Staff News**

Our new Administrative Assistant is **Ms. Laura Decker**. Laura brings to this position an impressive background in office management and finance/budgeting. For the last five years, she has worked as a finance analyst (2006-present) and an office assistant (2005-2006) for the College of Engineering and Applied Sciences. Taking the position in our department is something like a homecoming for Laura, as she received a B.A. in Secondary Education (Major: English; Minor: Communication) in 2005, and even taught for us as an ENGL 1000 instructor in the fall of 2004. Her honors include a place on the Dean’s List in 2004 and 2005 as well as an Outstanding Service Award from the Department of Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering, where she worked as a student employee from 2002 to 2005. In addition to taking on her new job, Laura will continue to make progress toward a Master’s degree in Business Administration.

Our former Administrative Assistant, **Michelle Hruska**, has moved to a position at the Provost’s Office.

Also, **Becky Beech** has accepted the University’s early retirement offer. We will miss her grace and humor on the sixth floor and wish her many fine days pursuing other interests. Happy gardening, Becky!
Student News

Curtis VanDonkelaar reports the following stories recently accepted for publication:

“An Archive of Manly Questions” is forthcoming in *The Moon Milk Review*
“He Would Say” appears in the 2010 edition of the *Sierra Nevada Review*
“Meat Cutter: February 15th, 2005” appears in the Summer 2010 issue of *Stumble* (and is available online).

The NCTE Student Affiliate participated in the Spring Bright Ideas Conference in Lansing, in April. With the guidance of faculty advisor Toby Kahn-Loftus, Lindsey Hesslau (right) and Megan Emerson (left) presented a poetry unit to fellow educators. They received the following note from the coordinator:

> “On behalf of the Steering Committee, I would like to thank you for your presentation at the Bright Ideas Conference on Ransom Note Poems, Headline Poems, and other Found Poems. We had excellent evaluations of the sessions, and yours was particularly praised. You have made a wonderful contribution to the professional development of other teachers and pre-service teachers.

> “Thanks again for contributing your time, knowledge, and expertise--not to mention the wonderful materials you provided--to the success of the Bright Ideas Conference.”

Third Coast 15th Anniversary Celebration

Mark your calendars! *Third Coast Magazine* is holding a 15th Anniversary Celebration/Fall Issue Release Party on Saturday, Nov. 6, from 7-9 pm, at the Kalamazoo Book Arts Center (located in the Park Trades Center, 326 W. Kalamazoo Avenue).

The celebration will include readings, refreshments and live music. It’s free and open to the public! (Tell your students! Tell your friends!).

Featured readers include Nancy Eimers (right), William Olsen, and Monica Berlin, who are part of the Fall 2010 issue’s *Symposium on Writing and the Midwest*. There will also be a performance by Austin Bunn of his one act play *Basement Story*, from the Spring 2010 issue.

Live music will be provided by the always wonderful Joe Gross.

Save the date and plan to help celebrate a decade and a half of *Third Coast*, WMU’s own national literary magazine.
Robert Koehler: People who are interested, or remember me, can see some of my work at commonwonders.com. I live in Chicago, not too far from Kalamazoo, but haven’t been back there in a while. When I do come that way I’ll definitely pay a visit to Brown Hall.

Daryl Murphy, M.F.A. sends good news: The Briar Cliff Review chose my story “Philly” as their 2010 fiction winner. Prize was $1000 and publication, and the magazine just arrived last week—a beautiful publication. I hadn’t expected that. It’s volume 22, available through Amazon.

The Ruckus’ world premiere of The Gay American by Kristian O’Hare, directed by Allison Shoemaker, was in May at The Side Project Theatre (1439 W Jarvis Ave), Chicago.

One of our former English students, Rebecah Pulsifer, was accepted at Purdue to pursue her M.A. in English. She also received a teaching assistantship.

After 21-1/2 years as an editor of Rexair LLC’s Rexevents Magazine, Senior Administrative Editor Arthur Schulenburg (1967 WMU graduate) retired. Rexair LLC is the manufacturer of the Rainbow vacuum system.

Rajah Smart (B.A. 2000) sends word of his recent publications:

First, let me thank you for your continued support. All in Love is Fair, Sinners have a Soul Too, and Clarity of Absence have all been a treat to write. With each release comes greater outcomes, so keep your fingers crossed. Not bad for a kid from Flint.

It has been an interesting year and I hope that 2010 will bring even more success. It is my hope to work with others on different projects, but in the meantime, there are two releases on the horizon. However, this year will see the Souls of Pier 35. More information should be on the website soon.

www.rajahesmart.com

Congratulations to WMU alumnus Dr. Nathanael O’Reilly, who has won a $10,000 Emerging Writer Grant from the Australia Council in acknowledgement both of his current success as a published poet and of his potential as an important voice in Australian cultural life. Earlier this year, Nat’s first poetry collection, Symptoms of Homesickness, was published by Picaro Press.

Nat serves as an assistant professor in the Department of Literature and Languages at the University of Texas, Tyler, where he teaches courses on postcolonial theory, British literature, and Australian literature.
President Dunn has informed Grace Tiffany that she is the recipient of WMU’s Distinguished Teaching Award. The award is one of the most prestigious honors our institution bestows upon a faculty member and attests once again to the quality and quantity of teaching and mentoring that are hallmarks of our unit. Please join us in congratulating Grace, who is a most deserving recipient.

Nancy Eimers’s poetry collection Oz was accepted for publication by Carnegie-Mellon Press and is scheduled to appear in 2011. One of the poems in that collection was awarded a 2010 Pushcart Prize and another received the editor’s prize for Fifth Wednesday magazine.

Arnie Johnston, emeritus, sends news that he and Debby Percy Johnston have just signed on again to act as A & E columnists for the quarterly Phi Kappa Phi Forum.

For the second year in a row, Phi Kappa Phi Forum has picked up an APEX Award for Publication Excellence for Magazine & Journal Writing, this time for its spring 2010 edition, themed “Spring Is in the Air.” The spring edition was one of about two dozen winners. The APEX Award-winning spring 2009 edition, entitled “Starting with Beginnings,” looked at various types of formations from evolutionism to dance. Apex Awards recognize accomplishments in editorial content, graphic design and overall impact of magazines, newsletters, newspapers, annual reports, brochures, manuals, Web materials and other mass-communication products.


Katrovas read, conducted workshops, and/or gave talks at Augustana College, Vanderbilt, Tulane, Georgia Tech, College of Charleston, Johns Hopkins, University of Michigan and Charles University in Prague.

Tom Ludwig, part time faculty and a Kalama-zoo County Education for the Arts teacher, has been given one of the Michigan Youth Educator of the Year Awards. He was honored in the Digital Arts, Film and Television category.

Ilana Nash’s essay, “The Innocent is a Broad: Teenage Virgins in Global Contexts,” was recently published in the collection Virgin Territory: Representing Sexual Innocence in Film, edited by Tamar Jeffers (Wayne State University Press, 2010).
**Faculty News Cont.**

**Chris Nagle** recently returned from a long R&R (research & recreation) trip to the UK, during which he presented a paper on “Polyamorousness and the Eighteenth-Century Novel” at the 5th biennial Queer People conference held at Christ’s College, Cambridge (former home to Milton, Darwin, and Borat during their student days).

The theme for the conference was “The Uses of the History of Sexuality” and drew participants from nine countries who shared in four days of rich conviviality and stimulating seminar-style panel sessions punctuated by keynote presentations. Before and after Cambridge, Chris spent several weeks exploring the Lake District and London, respectively, dividing his time between communing with nature, doing research in the British Library, and taking in as much theatre as possible.

**Larry Syndergaard**, emeritus, sends news from a Danish conference he attended:

“I presented a paper, ‘Rich Fluid: The Symbolism of Water in the Child Ballads’ at the 40th International Ballad Conference, July 5-10, in The Netherlands. (The conference theme was Water.) The two plenary papers would have interested some of my colleagues here: Chris Smith dealt with the African-American and Irish-American social and musical collaborations in the special ‘region’ of seaport and riverine America in the nineteenth century. And Simon Bronner interpreted the persistence of some ‘water’ songs and ballads as ‘response to anxiety and a projection of conflicts about masculinity onto the sailor figure,’ using as his case study ‘Barnacle Bill the Sailor,’ both the respectable and the many bawdy versions. Most of the conference took place on Terschelling, a pleasant tourist island, where one could have seen wagon-loads of conference academics with apparently few anxieties and conflicts in improvising ways to disrobe when a chance for a dip in the North Sea, warm and benign on that day, arose.”


**Allen Webb** reports:

“Right now I am pouring myself into finishing *Teaching Literature of Today’s Middle East* which will go to the press in September and be published in early 2011.

This text addresses teaching contemporary Palestinian, Arabic, Turkish, and Iranian literatures, Middle Eastern American literature, European Orientalist works, and film, and political, historical and cultural materials in college and secondary schools.”

Webb is also the editor and authored the introduction and one chapter of *Teaching Literature in Virtual Worlds: Immersive Learning in English Studies*. This is a collection of 11 essays examining the experience of using on-line virtual worlds as teaching tools for specific literary works.

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**What’s New With You?**

Please tell us where you are and what you’re doing. We would love to include you in our next alumni update section.

Email us at engl_news@wmich.edu and include the year and degree with which you graduated, any fond memories of the English department, as well as something you’ve done since your times as a Bronco.
This book in its own idiosyncratic and brilliant way is a remarkable treatment of the relationship between science and religion. Along the way, the book become several things.

First, it does have a plot. Cass Sletzer has written a surprise best seller, The Varieties of Religious Illusion, and has come to be publicized as “the atheist with a soul”. His title is from William James’s The Varieties of Religious Experience and Sigmund Freud’s The Future of an Illusion. He wins over Lucinda Mandelbaum, “the goddess of game theory.” Soon after, Roz, a former girlfriend and anthropologist, appears and invites him to join her in her quest for immortality: advanced cryonics, as it were. Two other figures haunt him in his life: his graduate school mentor and professor, a renowned literary scholar obsessed with messianism, and an angelic six-year-old mathematical genius who is heir to the leadership of a Hasidic sect.

Second, the book is a wonderful send-up of the academic world. Including the folkways and mores of that life, including the deft use of personal and place names. Another of the women in Cass’s life is Pascal Puissant (French for “forceful, powerful, lusty”), and the name of the university in Massachusetts where he teaches is Frankfurter University, a name no doubt derived from the actual Brandeis University. (After all, Felix Frankfurter succeeded Louis Brandeis on the United States Supreme Court.) And the fictional town in which it is located, is Woodham rather than the actual Waltham, Massachusetts.

Academic conferences abound, all requiring the attendance of characters here. Lucinda is the model of the Public Intellectual; as I read about her, I thought of Susan Sontag as her real-life counterpart. And Sontag does rate a passing allusion in the narrative. And, of course, Harvard figures in the novel in all of its Empyrean majesty and might. The satire is no less lethal for being so delicately presented.

The third aspect of the book is its detailed account of Judaism today as practiced by the Hasidic sect and its Rebbe or Grand Rabbi. Particularly impressive is the scene where Azarya, the six-year-old, is presented to the Congregation by the rebbe as the one who will some day become his successor. This young man is, as mentioned, a mathematical genius, and when Cass introduces one of his former instructors to Azarya, he becomes entranced by the man’s insights into the music of Bach and Chopin, selections of which are thoroughly congruent with mathematics.

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Remembering Dr. William Rosegrant

Dave Pugh, emeritus, sends these memories of Dr. William Rosegrant, emeritus, who passed away this summer.

Bill broke categories. His American Civilization Studies in Minnesota enabled him to pull together perspectives from more than just literary sources, and in his early years at Western (50 years ago), he became one of the first faculty to teach on closed-circuit TV, live, unedited, winging it with aplomb at each class session.

I recall one evening when he spent extensive time explicating (for a freshman audience in General Humanities) the American values present in a popular magazine illustration of a living room interior.

His experience during the economic and social conditions of the 1930’s in rural Missouri informed his approach to text, classroom, and student in a very human and humane way, eliciting reactions which intertwined aspects of the arts and cultural patterns far beyond mere literary received opinion on the accepted literary canon taught in English departments.

He could also tell fish stories.
And, finally and most importantly, there is Cass’s mentor, Jonas Elijah Klapper, the messianist, who has read and digested the complete corpus of literature and the arts of Western and Middle Eastern civilization. His seminar bears the academically zestful title of “The Sublime, the Subliminal, and the Self.” He has a truly formidable reputation and an exacting standard for his seven students, one of whom has been working on his doctorate for twelve years. This student, Gideon, worships his mentor and will be devastated when Klapper, in a New York Times op-ed piece, carries his messianism to its fearful and, to him, logical conclusion. (I have heard expressed the idea that Hitlerite Nazism is the logical outcome of the Romantic movement in Europe; I honestly think that this assertion is analogous to Klapper’s op-ed diatribe which is couched in his overblown baroque style in that op-ed piece.)

All of the foregoing precedes the page-turning account of the debate between Cass and Felix Fidley, the leader of the school of thought that says faith rather than reason is what makes us human and which is the basis of our culture. The debate takes place in Harvard’s Sanders Theatre and is a major event attended by a packed hall of students and academics who have been waiting for this confrontation to take place.

Here, Cass presents his view that denial of God does not imply denial of the existence of the soul. Indeed, he defends his view by citing some of the 36 arguments for the existence of God. And in the judgement of the audience, he does win the debate.

This novel is a crossover in that it seeks to show rationalism/reason as a complement of religion rather than an opposing force. The book becomes truly a crossover narrative when the author gives us those 36 arguments in a stand-alone appendix of over fifty pages. And it is certainly no coincidence that this novel has 36 chapters, each an “argument” that serves as a title appropriate to the events of that chapter.

And, through the characters of Lucinda and Klapper (a most suggestive surname, as down-to-earth Roz might well suggest) and of Fidley, we are brought to the conclusion that certitude, the feeling of certainty can be a savage force in human affairs.

And the author? She holds a doctorate from Princeton University and has written the novels The Mind-Body Problem, Properties of Light and Mazel. She has published studies of Kurt Godel and Baruch Spinoza. She is a holder of a MacArthur “genius” Fellowship and was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Sciences in 2005.

For me, it’s a challenging and therefore a stimulating work. I was drawn to it by the title, and once drawn to it, it has led me to resolve to read it again sometime. I was also drawn to it by my awareness that freedom of religion in the public sphere has become thoroughly confused with freedom from religion in that context. I’m amusing myself thinking about some sort of verbal encounter between Ms. Golstein and Christopher Hitchens, the author of God is Not Great, which I have read sometime in the past two or three years.

- Robert Bradley, distinguished alumnus
I park on the corner of Davie and Jones Street. Though the spelling is different, I can’t help but feel that I, too, am at the bottom of the sea, in Davey Jones’ locker, happily at my resting place, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. I walk the ten minutes to Boundary Street under magnolia trees in a final week of bloom and beside the busy Franklin Street I come to know so well.

When I enter the University of North Carolina Press, I am overcome by gratitude as I remember what it took to find myself here, 14 hours away from home in the sweltering heat without pay: just where I want to be.

I must say a certain amount of persistence and stubbornness accounted for my internship at UNC Press; I practically bombarded Zachary Read (Assistant to the Editor-in-Chief, David Perry) with emails before finally meeting with him on my Spring Break. Of course, my position here could also be attributed to quite a bit of graciousness from the Press and good timing.

Yet the question remains: What was a student all the way from Western Michigan University (“Yes, there really is a Kalamazoo”) doing down in the south? A question as seemingly ubiquitous as the chiming of the “bird clocks,” a quirky addition to the Press, as they rang out their Carolina bird calls one after the other on the hour. In fact, what I was doing was finding some answers to another question people from back home were asking me: What are you going to do with a creative writing degree?

I love words. As long as I can remember this has been true, but a career in words seems about as fantastical these days as a book by J.K. Rowling. However, because my parents are wonderful people, and because I am, as aforementioned, quite stubborn, I stuck to my guns about this word business. Happily, the department of English at Western Michigan University was a wonderful place for me to work on my passion for this word business. I learned quickly what a great program we have here and how wonderful the faculty is like Steve Feffer, my playwriting professor, and my poetry professor, a Ph.D. candidate, Laura Donnelly, as well as Daneen Wardrop, Gwen Tarbox, Scott Friesner and Katherine Joslin. I am so thankful for all my education in these short three years, and I felt as prepared to travel the 783 miles to North Carolina for my internship as I am for the world after my undergraduate is complete.

After I graduate in December, I plan to get my M.F.A. in writing. After that, I have some choices. I could continue with school to get my Ph.D. and become a professor of creative writing to help other lost yet stubborn students; I could hope my bills are paid and simply write; or I could work in publishing. Of course the list is endless, as any professor of literature would attest to, or any author for that matter, but the question was personal: what do I want to do?

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I have had experience as a teaching assistant for a college course and have been writing fiction since I learned to write, so I decided to use this past summer to find a place where I could try my wings in the publishing industry. A friend was actually the inspiration in my finding UNCP; he was traveling to North Carolina for the summer and asked that I, too, look for internship opportunities down south. When I came across the Press’ website, I started contacting people there and didn’t stop until they agreed to meet with me.

I was so fortunate to be welcomed in Chapel Hill, and to have found a nurturing place that is also home to a wonderful array of universities. While interning, I also found time to do some graduate school searching, which I can honestly say would have been completely different and misrepresentative had I done so on the Internet rather than the pavement.

My primary job at UNCP was to aid Zach, and anyone else who needed me, in any way possible. When I began I was copying and filling out information for the “denials” database, but soon I was learning more. I started asking more people if they needed my help, and my contact base grew along with my responsibilities and work load. Much to my pleasure, I was trusted to handle writing letters, sending out manuscripts to readers, and given a large project to help the new database flourish. I learned a lot from many of the wonderful people I worked at the Press.

After my internship at UNCP, I realize because of my many choices, I may not ever find myself in a publishing office again, but if I do, I will feel right at home.

Richard Utz received news that our department’s request for a major replacement of and purchase of new computers and software was approved by the College of Arts and Sciences. The department has received the largest amount of technical support ever attributed to us through the University’s Distributed Computer Plan (DCP), and the largest dollop of any unit in the College. Our sincere gratitude for developing the DCP plan and for advocacy work with the Dean and Tech planners goes to Jonathan Bush, Allen Webb, Cynthia Klekar, Jahan Aghdai, Charie Thralls, and all others on our Technology Committee and Directors/Assistant Directors of First Year Writing.

The department has received the following items:

- 23 Apple iMac computers and a networked printer for the First Year Writing Lab in 4210 Dunbar
- 23 Apple iMac computers and a networked printer for the First Year Writing Lab in 4212 Dunbar
- 17 Apple iMac computers and a networked printer for the First Year Writing Lab in 4214 Dunbar
- 23 Apple iMac computers and a networked printer and 24 network jacks for the First Year Writing Lab in 4208 Dunbar
- Apple iWork software for the First Year Writing Labs
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For a contribution of $100, you can be among the special groups of supporters of the programs that make our department special. Your name will be inscribed on a plaque displayed in the department’s central office on the 6th floor of Sprau Tower.

If you would like to make a donation, please make your check out to Western Michigan University Foundation, Department of English and send it to WMU Gift Processing, 1903 W. Michigan Ave., Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5403, or visit www.wmich.edu/foundation/gift/index.html and select “English”

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