

The *E&T* Beacon

Vol. 4, No. 1

Spring 2009

The Newsletter of the Department of English and Theatre at UNC Pembroke

Department of English and Theatre The University of North Carolina at Pembroke

Dennis H. Sigmon
Chair

Mark Canada
Assistant Chair

Teagan Decker
Director of University Writing Center

Deana Johnson
Director of College Opportunity Program

Virginia P. Jones
Coordinator of Undergraduate
English Education

Chester I. Jordan
Director of Theatre

Roger A. Ladd
Director of Graduate
English Education

Cynthia Miecznikowski
Interim Director of Composition

Shelby D. Stephenson
Editor, *Pembroke Magazine*

Tina P. Emanuel
Director of ETL Resource Center

Emma N. Evans
Composition Program Secretary

Carolyn T. Price
E&T Department Secretary

Dedra Sanderson
GPAC Box Office Manager

Newsletter Committee

Melissa Schaub, Chair
Tina P. Emanuel
Jim Helgeson
Walt Lewallen
Sara Oswald
Catherine Parisian

The Key of S

BY WALT LEWALLEN

Dennis Sigmon will be stepping down this summer as chair of the Department of English and Theatre, a position he has occupied since the summer of 2001, a period of explosive growth. Since that time the university's enrollment has increased by about 2400 students, from roughly 3900 to 6300. And the 2001 catalog listing of 23 departmental faculty has grown to 36 faculty according to the 2008 catalog, even after the departure of four members to form the Foreign Languages faculty. A lot has happened.

Under Dennis's leadership the department was the first on campus to widen its scheduling of classes across the day in order to facilitate the increase in Composition and General Education courses. Dennis helped pilot the broad expansion of the department's General Education curriculum through the university channels, after its proposal by Mark Canada and Jesse Peters.

The Spanish Degree Program was developed during his term as chair, and was so successful that the Department of Foreign Languages was formed in 2008, splitting off from the English and Theatre Department.

The department survived the Great Mold Event of '03, first dispersing across campus, then flocking to offices in Jacobs,

with Dennis's good-humored leadership smoothing the way.

In addition the Writing Center has seen great expansion, and the ESL licensure program was developed. With Pat Valenti, Dennis traveled to Harbin Normal University in China to develop our major in English for Chinese students. And the Theatre program has enjoyed significant expansion during this period.

As would be expected during this period of burgeoning growth, the workload of the chair has increased, both within the department and especially the work required for the university at large. Dennis bore this load entirely until the creation of the Assistant Chair position in 2007-8. And he did it with style.

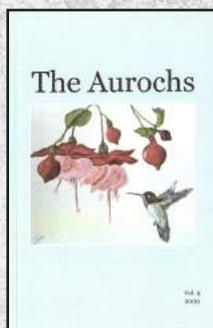
Dennis's term as chair has been enlivened by his creativity, musical talent, and delightful sense of humor. After we had wandered far and wide across campus as homeless waifs displaced by the mold during the fall of 2003, he provided us with the "mold carols" to usher in the holiday season (with such memorable lyrics as "Do you smell what I smell?"). And who could forget the haunting melody and lyrics of "Butterbean Baby"? He transformed the majors' meetings into events that featured faculty and student-themed games, puzzles, and skits. He entertained our graduates with his own song and dance version of "YMCA" redesigned as "UNCP."



Spring 2009 E&T Publications

The Aurochs, Vol. 9

Stephanie Hammond, Editor
Karen Helgeson, Faculty Advisor



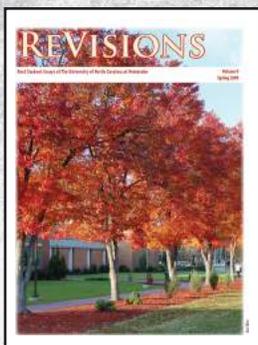
Pembroke Magazine, Vol. 41

Shelby Stephenson, Editor
Tina Emanuel, Managing Editor



ReVisions, Vol. 9

Susan Cannata and Teagan Decker,
Editors
Sara Oswald, Managing Editor



Dennis's leadership has also been marked by his methodical and steady attention to detail, and more importantly by his practices of evenhandedness, solicitation, and careful listening. In my experience with him, he has never conveyed any sign of frustration or anger. This is remarkable and, I think, a sign in itself of his mindfulness in the deepest sense of the term. This open and positive mindset has perhaps been his greatest contribution to the department, for it subtly asserts a strong sense of the security, morale, and spirit necessary for the overall health of a large university department. While no one in such a position is able to please everyone—or occasionally anyone—Dennis's demeanor ameliorates this effect of departmental ecology.

Once Dennis returns to full-time teaching, it is clear that his institutional knowledge will be an invaluable asset as long as he remains with us, not simply for his long memory over 33 years of service, but for his current grasp of the university's and the department's structure. Thanks to Dennis we will continue to function in the key of S for some time. Thank you, Dennis.

Thanks to Richard Vela for generous help with this article and Kay McClanahan for the mold saga.

English Faculty Activities

MONIKA BROWN received a UNCP grant of Academic Leave for Fall 2008 to continue her research on arts adaptations of Goethe's *Faust* in nineteenth-century France. In Savannah in February, she presented "Faust in France: Transformations of Goethe's *Faust* in Romantic Art and Music Drama, 1820-1860" at the *Con-*

sortium on the Revolutionary Era. In April, Dr. Brown published "Collaborative Assignments for World Literature Survey Courses," in the MLA's *Options in Teaching* volume, *Teaching World Literature*. Her essay describes her course structure and highlights the work of nine UNCP students, who are named in the essay and listed in the index. Dr. Brown published two concert reviews in the *Southern Pines Pilot*, "NC Symphony Concludes Excellent Season" and "Christmas with Bach: Surprises from the NC Symphony."

MARK CANADA's essay "News of Her Own: Harriet Beecher Stowe's Investigative Fiction" will appear in the Ignatius Critical Edition of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. He will give presentations on Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie* at the American Literature Association's annual conference in Boston in May and on H.L. Mencken's role in the Scopes Trial in June. He recently reviewed books for *The Thomas Wolfe Review* and *The Edgar Allan Poe Review*.

TEAGAN DECKER attended the Southeastern Writing Center Association Conference at NC A & T University in Greensboro in February, presenting her paper, "Setting Up Shop: Creating Partnerships Between a Regional University and a Local High School via a Writing Center."

JAN GANE has coordinated a writing project this spring with Teagan Decker, Cyndi Miecznikowski, and Frank Myers at Purnell Swett High School to help prepare tenth-graders for the NC Writing Test. The group will help the school develop a school newspaper in the com-

December 2008 E&T Graduates



Joel Mayo,
Karen Ros-
ciano, and
J.J. Welch



Nigel Scott
and Teresa
Thompson



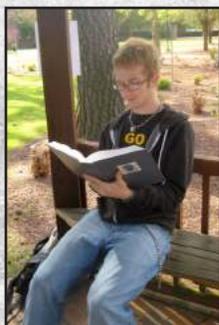
Laury Rose Chavis



Rhea Monti



April 2009 English Club Poetry Reading



Wesley Inderbitzen, Stephanie Starnes,
and Sabrina Taylor

ing academic year and hopes to develop special “writing” events, including poetry slams, workshops with practicing writers, and one-act play performance contests, for students and their families.

GINNY POMPEI JONES presented a paper at the College Composition and Communication Conference (CCCC) entitled “Making Waves in our Departments: Changing Teaching Interns’ Requirements to Include Writing Center Experiences” based on her work with English Education interns over the past five years at UNC Pembroke.

CYNDI MIECZNIKOWSKI conducts writing workshops each fall and spring for *FirstHealth Hospice and Palliative Care* in Pinehurst, and will participate in the Rhetoric Society of America Summer Institute on “Medical Rhetoric: Ethical Issues, Archival Concepts, and Imaginative Writing” at Penn State. Dr. Miecznikowski’s work on her manuscript “Rhetorics of Possibility: Twentieth-Century Sophistry and the Romantic Imagination” will be supported by a Summer Research Fellowship this year. She and Dr. Betty Brown, Professor of Reading Education, are co-directors of an NCQuest grant to support and improve literacy education in Hoke County middle and high schools; that work will begin with a Summer Institute for teachers in English, Science, and Social Studies.

ROBIN OSWALD presented her paper “It’s the End of the World as We Know It: Composition in the 21st Century,” at the 9th Annual English Graduate Student Association Conference, “The Machine in the Garden 2.0,” held at UNC-Charlotte

in January. This paper addressed the impact of digital technologies on the thinking and writing patterns of students.

SARA OSWALD presented “It Was an OK Movie, But It Wasn’t *Beowulf*: Student Responses to the Robert Zemeckis Film” at the session on “*Beowulf* in the Dark in the Classroom” at the MLA Convention in San Francisco in December 2008. In February 2009, she and six members of the *Indianhead* yearbook staff attended the NC College Media Association Conference at NC State in Raleigh. In March, she presented two sessions, one on yearbook theme development and one on yearbook design, at the Columbia Scholastic Press Association Convention at Columbia University in New York. She consulted with Liliana Wendorff on the design and contents of *Letras*, the new Spanish literary magazine sponsored by the Dept. of Foreign Languages. Her students in PRE 3450, Computer-Assisted Editing and Publication Design, produced the inaugural edition of the magazine this spring; they also produced the ninth edition of *ReVisions*.

CATHERINE M. PARISIAN has been on research leave during the spring semester using a series of fellowships enabling her research on the publication history of the works of Frances Burney: McGill-ASECS fellow at the Burney Centre and the McGill Rare Book and Special Collections Library, January 4-31; Katharine F. Pantzer, Jr. Fellow in Descriptive Bibliography—Houghton Library, Harvard University, February 16-March 16; and Reese Fellow, American Antiquarian Society, April 1-30. This summer she will travel to England and France to work at the

E&T Students at Conferences



Grey Sweeney, Craig Wilson, and Stephanie Hammond in Las Vegas at the International Writing Center Association conference.



Stephanie Hammond and Karen Helgeson in Raleigh at the NC CMA conference.



Danielle Powers, Sara Oswald, Carolina Choi, Tiffany Schmidt, and Chantel Moore in Raleigh at the NC CMA conference.



Grey Sweeney in San Francisco at CCCC.

British Library, Oxford, and the Bibliothèque Nationale, funded by a Katharine F. Pantzer, Jr. Research Scholarship from the Bibliographical Society (London). Dr. Parisian has an article forthcoming in the *William Andrews Clark Memorial Library Newsletter* on the French and German editions of Burney's first novel *Evelina*. She participated as panelist on a roundtable discussion, "The Old Fashioned Archive in the Digital Age" at the annual American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies (ASECS) meeting in Richmond, VA in March. As affiliate society coordinator for ASECS, she visited two ASECS affiliate meetings during the spring, the Bibliographical Society of America and the South East American Society of Eighteenth-Century Studies. Her most recent quarterly column in the *ASECS News Circular* appeared in early March (<http://asecs.press.jhu.edu/newscirc.html>).

MELISSA SCHAUB presented "Female Gentlemen: Middlebrow Cultural Producers and the Politics of Modern Gender" at the Northeast Modern Language Association meeting in Boston, on March 1, 2009. This paper was part of a book-length manuscript which Dr. Schaub will work on this summer with the support of a Summer Research Fellowship.

English and Theatre Student Travel

BY MELISSA SCHAUB

English and Theatre faculty and students have ventured beyond campus on many occasions this year. In addition to the conference in Raleigh attended by students in environmental literature (see

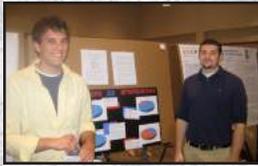
story, p. 6), graduate and undergraduate students in many other classes have been getting a preview of life as professional scholars by attending and presenting at academic conferences. Along the way, they have traveled to destinations both far and near.

In October 2008, Teagan Decker took Writing Center tutors Stephanie Hammond, Grey Sweeney, and Craig Wilson to Las Vegas to present a poster session at the International Writing Centers Association conference. The paper resulted from research they had conducted together into negotiating student and faculty expectations during writing tutorials. Craig Wilson, a Middle Grades Education major, admits that the trip to Vegas was "a lot of fun," but says that the intellectual broadening was also important. "What was so valuable about our time there was the exposure to so many different opinions. We went there with a lot of questions, and on the way back, I realized that a lot of them had been answered." That's the most that any scholar hopes to be able to say about any conference. Funding for the students' travel was provided by the Pembroke Undergraduate Research and Creativity (PURC) Center and the Department of English and Theatre.

Also in October, Richard Vela (English) and Holden Hansen (Theatre) took a dozen English and Theatre majors to the Blackfriars Theatre at the American Shakespeare Center in Staunton, VA.

Dr. Vela has been involved with Blackfriars since 2000, and has been taking students there annually for four years. While students provide all their own travel funding, UNCP pays for the students to be able to experience a customized

**E&T Students at PURC Symposium
6 April 2009**



Grey Sweeney and Craig Wilson



Sara Pack



Ashton Jordan and Noemi Navarette



Wesley Inderbitzen



Pat Valenti and Rachel Young

Four English Education graduate students also presented at the Graduate Research Poster Presentation in March 2009: Marcelo Saenz-Valiente, Dalija Brecher, Stephanie Hammond, and Jocelynn Anderson

workshop on Shakespeare's language and the teaching of Shakespeare. The students also viewed stagings of *King Lear* and *Twelfth Night*.

Faculty advisors and students from UNCP's three student publications—*The Aurochs*, the *Indianhead*, and *The Pine Needle*—attended the second annual conference of the NC College Media Association on February 21, 2009. Sessions at this year's conference, which was held at NC State University in Raleigh, focused on the current job market, the economy, and new media. Representing our department were Karen Helgeson and Stephanie Hammond from *The Aurochs* and Sara Oswald, Danielle Powers, and Kimberly Swindell from the *Indianhead*. Kimberly Swindell was "really excited to see student publications from other institutions." She adds that one of her favorite conference events was a seminar called "Today's Job Market: How to Translate Student Media Skills and Expertise into a Career." "Given our country's economic condition, I found this to be really helpful for those of us in attendance who may consider some form of media as a career," says Swindell.

In March 2009, English Education major and Honors College student Grey Sweeney, along with fellow Honors students Tiffany Schmidt and Jorge Pioucu-da, presented a paper at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in San Francisco. Jesse Peters, dean of the Esther G. Maynor Honors College and a member of the English faculty, also attended the conference and participated on the same panel, which was organized by Kim Gunter (formerly of the UNCP English and Theatre faculty, now of Ap-

palachian State University). Dr. Gunter's panel presented experiences with radical pedagogies in a themed section of Composition II she had taught for the Honors College in spring 2007. Dr. Peters, Dr. Gunter, and the three UNCP students collaborated intensively on this project. CCCC is a premier national conference, and it is unusual for undergraduates' work to be accepted for presentation there. Dr. Peters comments, "The audience was quite impressed with the students, and they represented UNCP (and themselves) very well. It was clear from their discussion that Dr. Gunter's class sparked their interest in critical thinking, community action, collaborative efforts, and social justice." "Being able to present my work at such a prestigious venue was really exciting for me," says Grey Sweeney. "It didn't hurt, of course, that the conference was in such a spectacular place. Both the trip and the conference were learning experiences I consider very meaningful." Funding for the students' trips was provided by the Pembroke Undergraduate Research and Creativity Center and the Maynor Honors College.

UNCP has been expanding support for student research greatly in the past several years. English and Theatre salutes the students and faculty who have taken advantage of the opportunities such initiatives provide. The department is also expanding its traditional Study Abroad offerings. This May, Therese Rizzo will take thirteen students to London for a Maymester class on British literature. Stay tuned to future issues for updates about their trip.

Student Productions

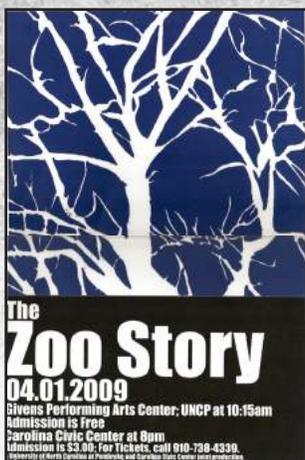
On the Web:

In fall 2008, graduate students in ENGS 5720, African American Literary Study and Pedagogy, created a comprehensive Web resource for high school teachers seeking ways to incorporate more African American literature in their curricula. Visit "Teaching African American Literature: Resources for High School Teachers in Southeastern North Carolina" for more information: www.uncp.edu/home/hickss/taal/.



On Stage:

On 1 April 2009, senior Theatre major Joey Sarno directed two performances of Edward Albee's *The Zoo Story*, one staged in the morning at the GPAC and one in the evening at the Carolina Civic Center in Lumberton.



The Greening of our Curriculum

By Scott Hicks

Jane Haladay of American Indian Studies and Scott Hicks of English and Theatre team-taught a course on multicultural ecoliteracies and environmental literatures in fall 2008. The class included English and Theatre alumnus J.J. Welch (2008) and majors Grey Sweeney and Tamara White-Chambers. A General Education elective, AISS/ENGS 2111, Literatures of Ecoliteracy and Environmental Justice, introduced students to a diversity of human relationships with the natural world. Too often, particular lands and the people within them are undervalued and attacked through colonialism, industrialization, corporate development, and unsustainable technology. Writers Jeannette Armstrong, Ann Petry, Janisse Ray, and others explore the many ways that race and class influence human relationships to the environment and inspire us to create new, environmentally and socially just ways of living in place.

Not only did students read, write about, and discuss important environmental literary texts; they also produced new knowledge. Through environmental oral histories, students documented how local community members perceived their relationship to our immediate ecosystem. Through local flora and fauna projects, students researched local plant and animal life as they created multimedia presentations that documented local residents' relationships to the wildlife with which we share our environment.

Thanks to the generous support of

Bill Gash, associate provost for academic affairs, and the Teaching and Learning Center, students had the opportunity to learn from leading figures in ecoliteracy and environmental justice. Rayna Green, the Smithsonian National Museum of American History's curator and director of the American Indian Program, visited Oct. 21, 2008, and shared her work in indigenous foodways. On Oct. 23, Janisse Ray, the award-winning author of *Ecology of a Cracker Childhood*, met students and, with the support of the department's Writers Series, English and Theatre faculty and staff. On Nov. 6, Dollie Burwell, leader of the Warren County, NC, protest against the dumping of PCBs in her predominantly poor and black community in the early 1980s, visited, inspiring students with her story of activism.

Students in the class were motivated and engaged in the topic, especially as they explored new ways of understanding their relationships to their homeplaces. They were excited to share their motivation with others: four students, including Sweeney and White-Chambers, presented papers about their experiences in the class at the national convention of the American Association for Sustainability in Higher Education in November. Their presentations and participation in the conference—which included a student environmental summit and green jobs fair—were funded by the Office of Academic Affairs.

Later in the year, the University Senate approved a proposal to make this course a permanent part of our curriculum. ENG 2410, Environmental Literature, has been added to the catalog starting in fall 2009.

The Art of the Writing Center

By JIM HELGESON

Can you name the campus educational organization that has increased its services to our students and faculty by nearly 300% in just the last eighteen months? If you answered “None; that’s not possible,” then you haven’t heard about what’s been happening lately at UNCP’s University Writing Center. That’s right; since the beginning of the 2007/2008 academic year, the number of student visits to the Center has grown exponentially—from 300 to more than 800 by the end of this past Fall term. And the numbers continue to rise.

There are probably several reasons for this impressive growth, but chief among them would have to be the arrival on campus in Fall 2007 of Dr. Teagan Decker, the Center’s Director, who came to us from the University of Washington, where—in addition to earning her doctorate—she served as the Assistant Director of that university’s Writing Center.

Here in our own Writing Center Dr. Decker’s wealth of experience has been complemented by the talents of undergraduate and graduate student tutors (nine this term), each of whom has been required to take a “Writing Center Theory and Practice” course and to have had supervised tutoring practice. Dr. Decker describes the relationship between her staff and the students they assist as a “collaboration,” one in which the tutor’s role is not to write the students’ papers for them but to help them identify and work through their major writing problems.

The Writing Center, which is sponsored jointly by the Department of Eng-

lish and Theatre and the Office of Academic Affairs, makes its services available not just to E & T but to all the University’s academic departments and programs, graduate as well as undergraduate. The Center’s “clientele” will find themselves greeted not only by its cordial and highly qualified staff but also by its more than usually congenial surroundings. In addition to an ample supply of the requisite furnishings and hardware, the Center’s newly expanded space in the Dial Building is regularly festooned with quality exhibits provided by the Student Art Club. The exhibits, jointly planned by Dr. Decker and Carla Rokes, director of the A.D. Gallery, contribute to a sense of creativity and industry that pervades the space, a sense that presumably helps inspire a similar creativity in the Center’s patrons.

It would be remiss of me to conclude without adding my own voice to the chorus of accolades the Center has been eliciting from UNCP students and faculty alike. One of my Composition I students this Spring began the term with “English as a Second Language” issues more severe than any I had worked with previously. Sensing that my own coaching might not be sufficient and that there was a good chance this student would fail the course, I referred her to the Writing Center. There she came under the tutelage of English graduate student Stephanie Hammond, one of the Center’s many competent and committed tutors and one who had the ESL training I lacked. By the time you read this newsletter—as may well not have been the case without the Writing Center help—our student will have passed Comp I.

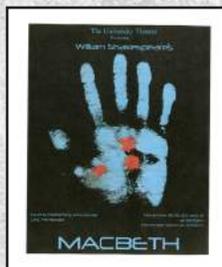


E & Theatre

2008-9 University Theatre Productions

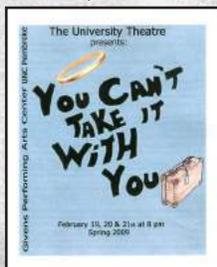
Macbeth

by William Shakespeare
 Directed by Holden Hansen
 November 18-22, 2008



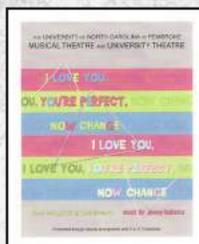
You Can't Take It With You

by George S. Kaufman
 and Moss Hart
 Directed by Chet Jordan
 February 19-21, 2009



I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change

Music by Jimmy Roberts
 Book and Lyrics by Joe DiPietro
 Directed by Hal Davis
 April 22-25, 2009



The University Theatre's fall 2008 production, Shakespeare's **MACBETH**, directed by Holden Hansen, was staged in the GPAC on November 18-22. The first spring 2009 production, Kaufman and Hart's **YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU**, directed by Chet Jordan, ran from February 19-21. Scenes from both productions appear below.

The spring musical, **I LOVE YOU, YOU'RE PERFECT, NOW CHANGE**, produced by University Theatre and the Musical Theatre program and directed by Hal Davis, delighted audiences at the GPAC from April 22-25. Watch for scenes from that production in our Fall 2009 issue.



Macbeth
 November 18-22



You Can't Take It With You
 February 19-21

Graduates' Dinner



Ginny Jones and Julie Blackmon



Angela Rodgers and Renee Musselwhite



Adam Tex Hill and Shelby Stephenson



Jackie Kerr and Stacie Spencer

ΣΤΔ Inductees and Graduates



Scott Hicks (advisor), Talia Cihla, Julie Blackmon, Sabrina Taylor, Brittany Glenn, Tamara White-Chambers, Adam Tex Hill

Ave atque Vale

BY SARA OSWALD

On Thursday, 23 April 2009, the department honored its May 2009 graduating seniors and welcomed new members to our chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, the national English honors society, at a dinner at Sheff's.

May 2009 graduates in attendance were Julie Blackmon, Angela Rodgers, Renee Musselwhite, Jackie Kerr, Stacie Spencer, and Adam Tex Hill. Each received a certificate acknowledging successful completion of the English or English Education program. Graduates unable to attend were Brooke Britt, Jonathan Civils, Christina Marie Clemmer, and Kimberly Swindell. Julie and Adam also received Sigma Tau Delta medallions to wear at the commencement exercises on Saturday, 2 May. Julie and Angela received copies of the 2009 *Indianhead* in recognition of their work on the yearbook staff. Angela and Stacie received framed certificates for Outstanding Achievement; this award

was also earned by Heidi O'Conner, another Sigma Tau Delta inductee, who was unable to attend the dinner. A framed certificate and cash award were presented to Jackie Kerr, who was named this year's Outstanding ET Graduate.

Eleven new members were inducted into Sigma Tau Delta; present at the dinner, in addition to Julie and Adam, were Tamara White-Chambers, Sabrina Taylor, Talia Cihla, and Brittany Glenn. Other inductees were December 2008 graduate Joel Mayo, Sara Pack, and Yanissa Perez de Leon.

Breaking News

Susan Cannata was awarded the 2009 Board of Governors Award for Excellence in Teaching at the 2 May 2009 Commencement. Dr. Cannata is the sixth member of the English and Theatre faculty to receive this award since it was first established in 1995. Congratulations!

PHOTO CREDITS: pages 1, 3, 4, 9, Sara Oswald; pages 3, 5, 7, Melissa Schaub; page 4, Teagan Decker and Anita Guynn; page 8, Tiffany Schmidt and Chet Jordan

This issue of *The E&T Beacon* was produced using Adobe InDesign CS3. Body text is in Adobe Garamond Pro; sidebars and captions are in Myriad Pro Condensed; masthead and section headings are in Adobe Jensen Pro.

News items and announcements for future issues should be submitted in Microsoft Word or Rich Text Format. Photos should be submitted as JPEG or TIFF files. Send news and photos to

melissa.schaub@uncp.edu

This and previous issues of *The Beacon* are available in PDF format on the department's website:

www.uncp.edu/etl/news/

