A Letter From the Chair

It has been an exciting year in the Department of English. First, we are delighted that two new faculty members will be joining us in Fall 2012: Ryan Cordell, who works in the fields of Digital Humanities and nineteenth-century American literature, and Theo Davis, whose research is in the area of nineteenth-century American literature together with ethics, affect, and aesthetics.

Professor Cordell received his PhD from the University of Virginia in 2010, where he completed a dissertation titled “Apocalypticism in Antebellum Literature and Culture.” He is developing a web-based version of his current research, which uses the tools of the New Field of Digital Humanities to map the publication history of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s short story, “Celestial Railroad.” He is a member of the Digital Humanities Council and of NITLE (National Institute for Technology in Liberal Education), serves on the editorial board of The Journal of Interactive Technology and Pedagogy, and is a core contributor to the ProfHacker blog in the Chronicle of Higher Education.

Professor Davis, who received her PhD from the Johns Hopkins University in 2002, joins us from Williams College where she has taught courses on literary theory, reason and feeling, literary domesticity, and the American Renaissance. She is the author of Formalism, Experience, and the Making of American Literature in the Nineteenth Century (Cambridge University Press, 2007) and is currently completing a book project titled “Minding Ornament,” on aesthetics and the work on Henry David Thoreau and Emily Dickinson.

At the same time, we are very sorry to say good-bye to Professor Guy Rotella, who is retiring after thirty-seven years at Northeastern; you can read a parting interview with Professor Rotella beginning on page five.

Activity and enrichment have been key words this year in all areas of the department, from the Writing Center and Writing Program initiatives that you can read about beginning on page twelve to the fifth annual English Graduate Student Association Conference, which graduate student Lana Cook reports on (page eight). We have sent sixty-seven undergraduates on co-op experiences (Mark Badour shares his impressions on page seven) and twenty-seven graduate students to conferences from CCCC in St. Louis to NeMLA in Rochester, NY. On Thursday, May 3rd, we celebrated our more than sixty 2012 graduating majors, who are heading to further education or employment in law, literature, education, and library science.

This Spring, through the generosity of the Hanson family, the Department partnered with the Humanities Center to bring to campus the award-winning novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (about whom you can read on page ten). Poet Dana Gioia and graphic novelist Art Spiegelman (both sponsored by the Humanities Center) and bestselling writer Tess Gerritsen are some of the other figures from whom students have had an opportunity to learn.

We work hard to connect our students and alumni/ae with such innovative and important people and events and to send our students, well equipped, out to serve the community. Increasingly, we must call upon the generosity of our alumni/ae to help us support these efforts. To find out how you can become involved and support the Department of English, please contact Brian Denning, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, at b.denning@neu.edu or (617) 373-5081. And as always, please visit the website to send us your update at http://www.northeastern.edu/english/alumni/.

Best—
Laura Green, Chair
As NU moves forward with its mission to broaden and strengthen the university’s campus, local, national, and global communities, current students benefit from more out-of-classroom and service offerings, richer global learning and research opportunities, and expanding international co-op and study programs. Our alumni are also building professional relationships abroad and have gained much from their experiences. Here, we profile three alums, Cory Grewell (PhD ’08), Philip Cavalier (MA ’93), and Gabby Gabriel (BA ’11), who have taken their degrees in English around the globe.

I think, especially given the market in the USA, grad students should seriously consider some of these abroad contracts, particularly in the gulf... To say it broadens your frame of reference would be a tremendous understatement.

Cory Grewell, PhD ’08

Networking in Dubai

Cory Grewell (PhD ‘08), has arguably taken his PhD in English further than any graduate from Northeastern, all the way to Dubai. In the summer of 2011, Cory moved with his family to the United Arab Emirates to take a position as an Assistant Professor at the American University in Dubai (AUD).

Cory has been teaching a variety of courses in composition and literature, including developing new courses in Shakespeare and the Epic. His job description is about to change, however, since he has recently accepted an appointment as AUD’s first English Department Chair in a newly formed College of Arts and Sciences. Cory hopes to use the opportunity to develop curriculum for an expanded literature program.

So what do Cory and his family make of living and working abroad? “The family loves Dubai. My wife is teaching Zumba at a couple of local schools and our son, Tristan, is in nursery where he is learning French and Arabic at the tender age of 3. (AUD pays 75% of tuition as a benefit.) Travel opportunities are great from Dubai. I’ve had the chance to visit Oman and Jordan and will be going to India before coming home in the summer. We’ve actually become rather happy here.”

When asked if he’d recommend following his example of reaching beyond the domestic job market to others, Cory responds without hesitation, “I think, especially given the market in the USA, grad students should seriously consider some of these abroad contracts, particularly in the gulf. They pay a little more than what most of us would be able to get in the States, even if we could get a job, a person gets incredibly valuable diversity training, and the networking is completely brilliant. You meet some really well pedigreed and smart people who hail from literally around the globe. To say it broadens your frame of reference would be a tremendous understatement. Many of my colleagues are from the UK and Australia, which could perhaps open those otherwise uncrackable job markets at some point down the road.”

Contributed by Professor Marina Leslie
Experiencing Higher Ed Across the Ukraine

Before he became Provost and Dean at Eureka College, Philip Cavalier (MA’93, PhD State University of New York, Buffalo), his wife Carol Acree Cavalier (MA’92, MTS Harvard Divinity School, PhD Cornell), and their three sons, Toby, Benjamin, and Elijah, spent the 2005-06 academic year in Kyiv, Ukraine, where Phil was a Fulbright Scholar.

Phil taught at two universities in Kyiv and gave lectures at 12 other universities around the country. Acclimating to new surroundings was not easy. “I learned how difficult it is to live in a place where you can only speak a few basic words of the languages of the country (both Ukrainian and Russian are spoken, and frequently jumbled together in sentences, in Kyiv),” Phil writes. “It’s humbling to have extensive education and to hold an academic position but feel very awkward buying a subway token or a bag of milk. My ten months in Ukraine gave me a new understanding of what the immigrant experience in America must have been like.”

Looking back on the experience of living abroad with his young family, Phil writes: “Our boys were 8 (Toby), 4 (Benjamin), and 18 months (Elijah) when we got off the plane in Kyiv. It was a challenge daily, but they all benefited in different ways.

“Finally, I lectured in Alexandria, Egypt, and learned that students there have an impressive knowledge of British literary history, and can make connections to American literature as well.”

During his travels, Phil was exposed to regional and national differences in higher education. “[In Kyiv,] I found out quickly, for instance, that classes do not meet in the same classroom every week—the location constantly changes (very confusing initially). I also learned that students in Ukraine will gladly go hear a lecture, for instance, on James’s late novels. More than 100 students in Lviv attended when I gave that lecture.

“I had the opportunity to do a 4-day lecture tour in Estonia, speaking at universities in Tallinn and Tartu (Yuri Lotman, incidentally, taught for many years at University of Tartu). Higher Ed [in Estonia] is based much more on discussion and dialogue; in Ukraine, students were very uncomfortable if I didn’t lecture and tell them the right way to read a text.

“Finally, I lectured in Alexandria, Egypt, and learned that students there have an impressive knowledge of British literary history, and can make connections to American literature as well.”

When asked what advice he would give to Northeastern students and alumni considering work or fellowships abroad, Phil says, “Do it, do it, do it. Then see as much as you can.”

Phil adds, “It’s not easy, but it forces you to reflect on what you teach, what you take for granted, and who you are.”

Contributed by Melissa Daigle

It’s humbling to have extensive education and to hold an academic position but feel very awkward buying a subway token or a bag of milk. My ten months in Ukraine gave me a new understanding of what the immigrant experience in America must have been like.

Philip Cavalier, MA ‘93
Starting Out in Asia

Recent graduate Gabby Gabriel (BA ’11) did not originally plan to work abroad after graduation. It wasn’t until her last month of undergraduate studies that she realized she was ready to step out of her comfort zone. Inspired by friends who were teaching abroad and by her Fall 2011 tutoring job in the NU Writing Center, Gabby decided to pursue her budding interest in teaching by seeking work in China. “It took me two weeks to find a job despite my limited teaching experience and inability to speak Mandarin,” says Gabby. Because she is also an avid travel blogger, the thought of working and traveling in Asia had double appeal. “I would have the opportunity to travel to a continent I had never been to, while earning money and having that post-college adventure that Northeastern prepared me for. Even if teaching didn't work out, I knew I could develop my photo and video portfolio by documenting my travels.”

After starting her job in February, Gabby quickly learned what it felt like to be an outsider in a culture very different from her own. “Every day, be it on my way to work or simply going to the grocery store, people stare, laugh, and maybe even say things at me that I do not understand. I live in Suzhou, a city just outside of Shanghai, and although there are many white people in the city (especially compared to cities further west in China), seeing a white person is still an oddity for many of the locals. This cultural difference has made me realize how wonderful it is to be from a country that welcomes diversity. This experience has caused me to develop a thicker skin and a heightened sense of self. Even though I have been here for four months, I am still surprised at how sharp the cultural differences are between the US and China. Nevertheless, I have come to appreciate that it is necessary to look past these differences and acknowledge that every adventure has its rewards and challenges.”

When asked what advice she would give to students or other alumni who are considering work abroad, Gabby says, “Go for it. The most important decision is to, at the very least, give it a try. I completed two study abroad programs while at Northeastern, one at Cambridge in the UK and one at Bond University in Australia. Both experiences were well worth it, but completely different from my experience in China.

“English graduates have the unique ability to teach English all around the world if we choose to. Remember the possibilities are endless. Do your research and keep an open mind. The more open your mind is, the easier it will be to make the transition to the country you are considering. Everyone can have an opinion on what might be right for you, but at the end of the day the only way to really find out is to learn through your own experiences.”

If you want to know more about Gabby’s experience teaching English in China or have any other questions, Gabby can be reached at gabbycgabriel@gmail.com. Her travel blog, TheGabTrotter, can be found at http://www.thegabtrotter.com.

Contributed by Melissa Daigle
Beloved Professor Retires

Professor *Guy Rotella* will retire from the English department at the end of the 2011-2012 academic year. Professor Rotella began his Northeastern career in 1974. A specialist in twentieth-century American poetry, he has written or edited eight books, including *Castings* (Vanderbilt University Press), a study of monuments and monumentality in works by contemporary poets. His critical essays on modern and postmodern poetry appeared in such journals as *American Literature, Contemporary Literature,* and *Literary Imagination.* From 1983 through 2009, he edited the Samuel French Morse Poetry Prize, overseeing publication of the series’ twenty-six volumes. He delivered the Klein University Lecture in 1998 and received the University Excellence in Teaching Award in 2009.

What will you miss most about Northeastern?

Well, committee meetings, of course. Less facetiously, teaching has given me my greatest professional pleasure, and I’ll miss the students who kept me more alert than I would have been without their real and imagined expectations. I’ll miss my colleagues, too; near at hand or remote, their intellectual fellowship has fed my own small fires. And although I’d sooner not say it than say it, I suspect I’ll miss the dailiness of department life; it was a harness easy to be easy in, as Frost said about other kinds of power-producing restriction.

What made you decide to become a professor of poetry? Did you have other professional aspirations?

Necessity. It was the only thing I was any good at. And it gave me great satisfaction to help other people learn to notice the confirming things other people had helped me learn to notice: the way, in Heaney’s memorial poem about folding sheets with his mother, the end words of the four opening verses: “line,” “them,” “linen,” “hem,” unfold their own little drama of expansion and contraction, or, on a different scale, the way James Merrill made postmodern doubt ratify firmer faiths in everything from sexual orientation to the mutual reinforcements of fact and imagination.

My other aspirations are amateur (not that professing poetry isn’t): a garden tended well enough to appear nearly natural, an artificial fly laid on the water lightly enough for an inch or two of drag-free drift, sails trimmed in tight but not too tightly. Asked by my high school guidance counselor what I aspired to be, I said (stealing a line from Jackie Vernon), a Viking. He was not amused. I can hardly blame him.

What books are you reading now? What are your plans for summer reading?

I’m immersed in Madeline Miller’s *The Song of Achilles.* Her novel pays a price for restoring the personal warmth Homer’s epic sacrificed so coolly (or coldly), but it’s smart about the economies of genre, lyrically realized, rewarding. George Steiner’s prose is as bracing as a dip in ice water; his *The Poetry of Thought* is no exception. I’m up to my ankles in it. And, as usual, I’ve got three or four books of poetry going: James Longenbach’s *The Iron Key,* Rodney Jones’s *Imaginary Logic,* the new Jorie Graham, for example. Plus the usual soporifics: detective stories work. Oh, and if you’ll take a recommendation, although I read it a while ago, Edmund de Waal’s *The Hare with Amber Eyes* tells a marvelous, scarifying story about people and things and the good and dreadful ways they get confused with one another.

Summer reading? I picked up a calculus text a Math professor down the hall discarded. I was feeling ambitious, but I’ll probably spend more time with Eldridge and the box scores. Meanwhile, if summer reading means reading without ulterior motives—the best kind, I think—I mean to make that a year-round thing.

You’re known for being well-versed in even the most recent scholarship in your field. Is there advice—or secrets—you’d pass on to others who want to stay informed in their disciplines?

The tricks worked, I see. They’re no secret, though. *continued on page 6*
Professor Rotella Retires
continued from page 5

Subscribe to and read the three or four print or on-line journals that matter most in your field. The essays there will summarize the recent, chronicle the current, and forecast the new. Read the book reviews; they help keep you abreast of what you can’t keep up with. And be an audience for the books and essays of your professional peers. If we don’t read one another, who will? To put it another way, however true it is that art changes but doesn’t progress, our training becomes dated: we stay intellectually alive by keeping up; if nothing else, it generates the friction of resistance, and even that can be a source of the heat good teaching and scholarship require.

Are there projects you look forward to completing in retirement?

I plan to produce a description as precise and insipid as this one Ruskin admired, defining open water as “an undulatory thing with fish in it.”

Which scholars and poets have most influenced your work or life?

I like the way you put that. One of the pleasures of the academy is its permission to unite life and work, avocation with vocation. Those last terms are Frost’s. He and the other poets I’ve studied and written about—Stevens, Moore, Bishop, Lowell, Merrill, Waltcott, and Heaney, among them—showed me that it’s the intersections of life and work that matter. And I’ve been lucky in my teachers. My parents taught me that education counts but that the ways of skillful hands are a primary form of knowledge. At school, Jim Brown, Walter Moore, Peter Fiore, Vianney Devlin, Samuel French Morse, John Mahoney, and Anne Ferry showed me how to pay attention and how to frame questions. And I’ve learned much from literary and cultural historians and from theorists, but the practicing scholars who’ve meant most to me have been “close” readers who are nonetheless able to move among multiple registers of readerly distance: the Christopher Ricks of Allusions to the Poets and The Force of Poetry, the Anne Ferry of The Title to the Poem and By Design, Helen Vendler, and more recently, Rosanna Warren and Dan Chisason. To say it again, though, the poets have been most important. From Ashbery, Ammons, and William Bronk to Jorie Graham, Kay Ryan, and Charles Wright, they make both language’s potential and its limitations yield up both meaning and its discontents: a life’s work for working lives.

As a seasoned professor who has seen the ups and downs of the job market, the tenure system, and the field in general, can you offer any advice to students who aspire to study the literary arts?

I’m afraid only of the most generic and useless kind, especially in this frightening, exciting moment when the transition to the digital programs us as we try to program it. If you have a passion for literature, follow that passion, professionally or otherwise. Find forms for expressing your passion that the world will tolerate and reward (however well or meagerly). Then inhabit those and try to improve them. Remember that advice is better to give than to receive.

What professional accomplishments are you most proud of? Is there a pleasurable moment from your Northeastern career that stands out?

I like to think my most recent book, on contemporary poems, comes off pretty well, and that some of my essays on Frost, Merrill, Bronk, and others will be useful for a while. I’m proud of students who’ve gone on to university careers, and of other students who’ve gone on to good lives and been kind enough to say I’d helped them a little in the process. And I’m pleased with my work editing the Morse Poetry Prize. With the assistance of many department colleagues, the series brought more than two dozen young poets into print and helped several of them toward what have become remarkable poetic careers: Carl Phillips, who now oversees the Yale Younger Poets series, is one; Lucia Perillo, a MacArthur Fellow, is another.

The pleasurable moments are countless. The quiet smile when an undergraduate’s perplexity turned to understanding. Word of a former graduate student’s first professional publication. A colleague’s offer to read my work, or a request that I read hers. A certain slant of light in a quad. But here’s a self-indulgent specific. I’d rather read a poem out loud in class than explain it. And it’s a task I take seriously. One day, I was reading, pompously no doubt, Wallace Stevens’ “Sunday Morning,” a great, part modern, part old-fashioned take on the grand Romantic ode. In full throat I approached the gorgeous line, “As a calm darkened among water lights.” My eye lit on what the Norton actually printed, “As a clam darkened among water lights.” My eye lit on what the Norton actually printed, “As a clam darkened among water lights.” Gradually, then faster and faster I collapsed into class-disrupting, class-dissolving, finally class-dismissing laughter: giggle, chuckle, chortle, guffaw, all the way to rostrum-shaking, irrepressible gasping tears. I haven’t regained my composure since. I’m not sure I’d care to.

Contributed by Doctoral Candidates
Megan Tarquiniro Roche and Genie Giaimo. Meg is working on a dissertation which employs cognitive theories of analogy and affect in the service of a historical poetics of adaptation studies and contemporary adaptations in film, literature, music, and art. Genie’s dissertation project examines Contemporary American life narratives, memory, and visual perception.
Student Seeks Co-op in Cubicle Land

Undergraduate English students participate in co-op for many good reasons — to discover what they can do with their major, to learn about an industry, to test what they have learned in the classroom outside of the University walls, to build a resume, to prepare for graduate studies, to travel to a different city, to take a break from classes and earn money. Junior English student Matt Baddour, who is about to embark on his next co-op, said his reason for choosing to go on his first co-op was much simpler: “I wanted to learn what it would be like to work in an office.”

What Matt managed to gain turned out to be more encompassing than he anticipated. His first six-month co-op at publishing house Aptara gave him new angles of vision — on himself, the culture of a formal work setting, the rapidly changing nature of the publishing industry, and on his role as a student back in the classroom.

Most students have never worked in an environment where important lessons are embedded in the everyday act of learning how to work with professionals in a formal environment. Among other things, Matt said that he successfully learned how to communicate and work with people of all ages, personalities, and levels of experience. “It moved me towards maturity.”

Working 9-5 also changed the way Matt organized his time, a skill he carried back into his job as a student once the co-op was over. “It makes you feel like an adult. Co-op forced me to be a lot more organized. You have to get to work on time, which means you have to plan and budget your time.”

This new-found level of organization was life-changing once he got back into the classroom. “I had a real drive to learn. I was craving it.” The result was getting work done early, getting it done well, and earning top grades. “I became a more efficient, more professional student,” said Matt.

For his next co-op, Matt, who has explored publishing and teaching, handily beat out business major candidates for a highly coveted co-op at Bose Corporation. “I have never had a business role in my life,” said Baddour, who had a two-hour interview with four different managers, “but I feel confident.”

Contributed by Lisa Doherty (MA’92), Co-op Coordinator
The Art of “Memory Remains”

In conjunction with their annual conference, the English Graduate Student Association organized an art exhibit based on this year’s theme “Memory Remains.” The exhibit is displayed in Gallery 360, a space dedicated to “enhance Northeastern University’s commitment to celebrating our distinctive take on the visual arts and the strong commitment to our academic plan in supporting creative and artistic endeavors.”

The EGSA conference and exhibit are integrally linked, serving to mutually inspire and provoke further conversation on memory across a number of different artistic and intellectual fields. Our theme seeks to explore the integral role that memory, and its remains, play in our daily lives—both in public and private constructions of self and reality, as well as individual and communal narratives. The selected works from emerging artists range in aesthetic approach and medium, including watercolor paintings, photography, and embroidery. The work of one of the artists, John Shorb, is based the difficult history of cotton production and distribution in the Deep South. While making these pieces, he re-read parts of William Faulkner’s *Absalom, Absalom!* as a way to reflect actively on memory and loss. The EGSA also organized a related film screening of short films by photographer Joanne Leonard and animator Em Cooper.

The exhibit was organized by PhD candidate *Lana Cook*. Lana also planned the first EGSA art exhibit, during the 2011 “Raw Material” conference. This year’s conference and exhibit was overseen by Professor *Kimberly Juanita Brown*, who organized the Postmodern Art exhibit last year in the English Department.

The “Memory Remains” exhibit runs through summer semester and is free and open to the public. To find out more, visit the Gallery 360 website: [http://www.northeastern.edu/northeasterncreates/gallery360/](http://www.northeastern.edu/northeasterncreates/gallery360/).

☞ Contributed by Doctoral Candidate *Lana Cook*. Lana is specializing in contemporary American literature, film, and visual culture.

*Photographs contributed by Doctoral Candidate *Genie Giaino*. Genie was Chair of the 2012 EGSA Conference. Her dissertation project examines Contemporary American life narratives, memory, and visual perception.*
Graduate students have won a number of prestigious and exciting awards this year, including Genie Giaimo who became a Graduate Fellow in The Laboratory at Harvard, Harvard University and received a Mobile Digital Media Grant during Summer Semester 2011 from NU’s Educational Technology Center.

Danielle Skeehan was awarded three important and prestigious fellowships for her doctoral research. She has been awarded and accepted a Mellon/ACLS Dissertation Completion Fellowship which will fund a year of research support for the completion of her dissertation and an additional research fund for travel. Her dissertation is titled “Creole Domesticity: Women, Commerce, and Kinship in Eighteenth-Century Atlantic Writing.” In her project, Danielle examines how Atlantic commerce shaped and defined understandings of “home” for an emergent bourgeois class. Drawing on extensive archival research, she explores the relation of domestic fiction to a commercial and material history of the bourgeois home. Her work reveals the ways in which domestic laborers, indentured servants, and slaves transformed imported and homespun commodities into signifiers of polite, genteel domesticity. The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation/ACLS program received over 1100 eligible applications and awarded 70 fellowships in all humanities fields. Danielle was also awarded the Andrew W. Mellon Fellowship in Early American Literature and Material Texts at the McNeil Center at the University of Pennsylvania, which she declined in favor of the ACLS Fellowship. However, as a recipient of a McNeil fellowship, Danielle will be in residence at the McNeil Center as a Research Associate for the fall semester, and participate in the Early American Material Texts Workshop there in July. Finally, Danielle has received the Paul W. McQuillen Memorial/ Norman Fiering Fellowship at the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University. She plans to spend July and August completing archival research there before joining the McNeil fellows at Penn in the fall.

Rebecca Thorndike-Breeze received a Spring 2012 Dissertation Completion Fellowship from the Office of the Provost. Rebecca successfully defended her dissertation, titled “Ambivalent Recognition: Mapping Intimacies in the Novels of George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, and Virginia Woolf” and received her doctoral degree in May.

Contributed by Professor Elizabeth Maddock Dillon, Graduate Coordinator

2011-2012 Graduate Program Degrees

PhD: Mary Balestraci, Rebecca Thorndike-Breeze, Tanya Zhelezcheva

MA: Verde Culbreath, Chloe Daly, Donna McKean, Jessica Pauszek, Jessica Russell, Brandon Tankersley

For more honors, awards, and achievements from 2011-12, visit http://www.northeastern.edu/english/graduate/graduate-achievements/

You Can Help Support the Department of English

The Department of English is committed to providing a rich educational experience for undergraduate and graduate students. These goals would not be possible without the sustained generosity of alumni and other important members of the Northeastern community. Please consider making a gift, contribution, or bequest to the department. Doing so can make a huge impact on students and faculty, passing on the traditions of learning and discovery to future cohorts.

For information about gifts and giving, please contact Brian Denning, College of Social Sciences and Humanities, at b.denning@neu.edu or (617) 373-5081.
The 8th annual Peter Burton Hanson Memorial Lecture was held on April 12, 2012 and featured a reading and conversation with Nigerian writer, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. Adichie’s first novel, *Purple Hibiscus*, is a staple in postcolonial literature courses across the country, and her most recent work is a collection of short stories entitled *The Thing around Your Neck*. Her second novel, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, deals with the Biafran Independence movement and was the winner of the Orange Prize in 2007. The choice of Adichie was fitting for the English department, which co-sponsored the event alongside the Humanities Center, and reflects the department’s burgeoning interest in postcolonial studies, revealed through course offerings and graduate student work.

The Peter Burton Hanson Memorial Lecture commemorates Peter Burton Hanson (A&S ’91), who perished aboard United Airlines Flight 175 on September 11, 2001, along with his wife, Sue Kim, and young daughter, Christine Lee. This annual lecture, endowed by Peter’s parents, Lee and Eunice Hanson, memorializes Peter’s work and character, and as English professor Stuart Peterfreund stated, enables good to continue from Peter’s legacy. The John D. O’Bryant African-American Institute Unity Gospel Ensemble bookended the evening with gospel songs and encouraged audience participation.

Speaking to a full house, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie began her reading by sharing her condolences with the Hansons, demonstrating respect for the significance of the lecture series both through those words and the work she selected to share. Adichie read two memoirs and a short story which all touched on the theme of loss in different forms, including the loss of self in a relationship, the loss of a close family member, and the communal loss wrought by a plane crash in one’s home country. “Perhaps this is grief: a series of forgetting and remembering,” Adichie recited from her a memoir about her beloved uncle. Adichie’s prose led the audience to reflect on loss and the power of remembering, whether in the form of written memoirs or a lecture series, to share the legacies of loved ones and give renewed meaning to their lives after death.

*Contributed by Doctoral Candidate Jenna Sciuto. Jenna is writing a dissertation on race and gender relations and depictions of sexual violence in the works of William Faulkner, Marie Vieux-Chauvet, and Tierno Monénembo.*
Faculty Updates

Tenure & Promotions

* Neal Lerner, who joined the department as Associate Professor in 2011, has received tenure. Professor Lerner, who is the author of The Idea of a Writing Laboratory (2009), directs the Writing Center.

* Patrick Mullen, who joined the department in 2005, has received tenure and promotion to Associate Professor. Professor Mullen’s book, The Poor Bugger’s Tool: Irish Modernism, Queer Labor, and Postcolonial History, is appearing this summer from Oxford University Press.

* Elizabeth Maddock Dillon has been promoted to Full Professor. Professor Dillon’s latest book, New World Drama: Theatre of the Atlantic: 1660-1850, is forthcoming from Duke University Press. Professor Dillon directs the graduate program.

* Janet Randall has been promoted to Full Professor. Professor Randall is a linguist whose book, Linking: The Geometry of Argument Structure, was published by Springer in 2010.

Retirement

* Guy Rotella will retire at the end of the 2011-2012 academic year. Professor Rotella has taught modern and postmodern poetry and American literature at Northeastern for 37 years.

Other Honors & Events

* Olympics Über Alles, co-written by Professor Samuel Bernstein and Marguerite Krupp (BA ’67) and presented by Eric P. Vitale, played at Kresge Little Theater at MIT this February. Olympics Über Alles tells the story of the 1936 “Nazi Olympics”, when Jewish-American runners Marty Glickman and Sam Stoller became victims of hate-mongering.

* Professor Francis Blessington’s translation of Euripides’ tragedy The Trojan Women has won the 2011 Der-Hovanessian Translation Award of the New England Poetry Club. The Trojan Women will play in Boston at the Factory Theater from May 18 – June 2, 2012.

* Professor Erika Boeckeler has been awarded a 2012-2013 Newhouse Center Fellowship at Wellesley College. As one of a small number of external fellows, she will work on her book manuscript and several other projects and plan interdisciplinary programming related to her alphabet studies.

* Davis Distinguished Professor in American Literature Carla Kaplan has been selected as the 48th Robert D. Klein University Lecturer. The Klein University Lecturer Award honors a member of the teaching faculty who has contributed with distinction to his or her own field of study.

* A book written by Professor Neal Lerner with Mya Poe and Jennifer Craig, Learning to Communicate in Science and Engineering: Case Studies from MIT, has received the 2012 Advance ment of Knowledge Award from the Conference on College Composition and Communication. The selection committee for the award commented that "Poe, Lerner, and Craig’s work advances knowledge not only in the findings of their research about learning to communicate in the STEM fields, but in their research process, in the details of the pedagogical collaboration of which they were a part, and in the clarity of their ideas and writing."

* Professor Lori Lefkovitz, Ruderman Professor of Jewish Studies, will receive an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters degree in June 2012 from her former institution, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College. According to their letter of nomination, the honorary degree "is awarded to one individual each year who has produced scholarship of rare distinction, contributed in an outstanding way to Jewish communal and religious life in North America or Israel, and has acted in keeping with Reconstructionist ideals."
Remember the Northeastern Writing Center? Perhaps you were part of an early version housed in Meserve and directed by Professor Tim Donovan. Or perhaps you knew of the Writing Center when it was directed by Kalo Clarke, called “The Writing Laboratory,” and housed in the Fenway. Whatever version you remember, we want to let you know about important updates to this key component of the Northeastern Writing Program—and we want to hear from you.

The Writing Center in Holmes Hall saw a change in the 2011/2012 academic year with the hiring of Dr. Neal Lerner, a well-known writing center scholar and long-time contributor to key conversations on the theory, practices, and politics of writing center work. Dr. Lerner comes to Northeastern from MIT, where he taught in and co-directed MIT’s Writing Across the Curriculum Program. As a new Associate Professor in the English Department, Dr. Lerner hopes to build on past successes to create a University Writing Center that functions as a hub for a range of writing-related activities on campus and is a key partner in efforts to build the English Department’s profile for research and teaching in composition and rhetoric.

This past academic year was a busy one in the Writing Center. With a staff consisting of English Department PhD and MA students, plus undergraduates from a variety of majors, the Writing Center held over 2500 sessions with Northeastern students. Particular accomplishments include:

- Introduced mobile consulting (online, synchronous).
- Secured two new iPads via an EdTech grant with English Department match.
- Offered evening hours several days per week (these were very popular!).
- Conducted workshops on academic writing and citation practices.
- Held a panel on multilingual writers, featuring faculty, lecturers, and students (both grad and undergrad) discussing how best to address the needs of this student population.

The last topic was particularly important as students whose primary language is not English were the most frequent Writing Center visitors (with Chinese as the most common first language). In addition to serving multilingual writers in a globalized university, we also hope to build in the area of new media composing, writing in the disciplines, and writing in community contexts. These are our core areas of emphasis as we look to build the Writing Center, and the Writing Program in general, in the coming years.

We’re excited about our vision, but we are also challenged by limited resources (particularly our cramped Holmes Hall location). It is not an unfamiliar story in these financial hard times, but it is particularly difficult for an enterprise as central to student success as is the Writing Center. How can you help? Whether you were an undergraduate peer writing consultant, a devoted user of the Writing Center, or just a Writing Center fan, we would like to hear your stories of the Writing Center and connect that past with our future. These stories will be very helpful in our ongoing publicity and fundraising efforts. Contact Dr. Neal Lerner (n.lerner@neu.edu) with those stories and contribute to what the Writing Center might become.

Contributed by Professor Neal Lerner, Director of the Writing Center and Professor Chris Gallagher, Director of the Writing Program.
The Writing Program has undertaken a range of community engagement projects in an attempt both to expand undergraduate and graduate students’ writing experiences and to contribute to worthwhile initiatives in and around Boston.

These projects include:

- An ongoing partnership with 826 Boston, a community-based youth writing center focused on providing tutoring and a range of special projects to underserved students in Roxbury and Boston. The Writing Program has sponsored two College Essay Boot Camps, held on Northeastern’s campus, aimed at providing targeted support for high school students working on their college application essays. We have also provided trainings and tutors for the organization. This spring semester, Prof. Chris Gallagher’s class partnered with 826 to help seventh- and eighth-graders at Mission Hill School write and design a book, which will be published this summer with a foreword by Governor Deval Patrick.

- An emerging partnership with the Boston Busing/Desegregation Project, an initiative run by the Union of Minority Neighborhoods. The BBDP is conducting a citywide “truth process” that aims to address the city’s historical and ongoing struggles to provide quality education to all kids, regardless of their race. Prof. Gallagher is a member of the Learning Community Committee. In April, along with the Union of Minority Neighborhoods and Northeastern’s Civil Rights and Restorative Justice Project, and Community Change, Inc., the Writing Program co-sponsored a talk by sociologist, therapist, and activity Beth Roy, entitled “Learning to Listen for Race and Class.”

- A range of service-learning and internship opportunities for students. In the fall of 2012, undergraduate and graduate students will be working with both 826 Boston and the BBDP. Students in writing courses have also worked with, or will be working with, United South End Settlements, Yawkey Boys and Girls Club of Boston, Sociedad Latina, Youth Development Initiative Project, and more. We have a committed and growing group of writing instructors interested in service-learning courses and projects.

The Writing Program is expanding community engagement because there is strong empirical evidence that such work leads to learning gains for students (see Deans, Tom. Writing Partnerships: Service-Learning in Composition. Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 2002 and the research collected by NU’s Center of Community Service: http://www.northeastern.edu/servicelearning/faculty/research.html). We also know this kind of hands-on, experiential education is consistent with Northeastern’s distinctive approach to education. Finally, we are committed to contributing in positive ways to our neighboring communities—and to learn from them as well. As far as we’re concerned, community engagement is good for everyone.

Contributed by Professor Chris Gallagher, Director of the Writing Program and Professor Neal Lerner, Director of the Writing Center
Your Alumni Updates

We are always eager for news from those of you out there who haven’t yet shared. Please write us and tell us what you are up to! [http://www.northeastern.edu/english/alumni/]

Phil Acree Cavalier writes: I graduated from the Master's program at NU in 1993 after having worked as Professor Mary Loefferholz's grad asst on Studies in American Fiction, and later completed my PhD at University of Buffalo. Mary continued--and continues--to be a mentor for me, and Marina Leslie was a friend and mentor while I was there. Both Mary and Marina attended when I married Carol Acree (Cavalier) (MA, '92). Carol went on to finish her PhD at Cornell and also took a Master's of Theological Studies at Harvard Divinity. Her dissertation in 18th-century literature, won the Grad School of A&S award for best dissertation.

We now live in Eureka, IL, where I am the Provost and Dean of the College at Eureka College. I taught and was tenured at Catawba College in North Carolina (2000-09) before we moved to Eureka. Prior to that, I taught for two years at Auburn University. Carol taught at Auburn as well, and then for a year at Davidson College. In the 2005-06 academic year, our family lived in Kyiv, Ukraine, where I was a Fulbright Scholar for 10 months.

We both benefited greatly from our time working with Mary, Marina, and Kristin Wooverley, and wish you all the best.

★

Donna Halper (BA '69, MA '73) writes: “I just got my PhD in Communication from UMass in May!” Donna is an Assistant Professor of Media and Communication at Lesley University and President of Halper & Associates, a radio programming and management consulting firm.

★

Ben Leubner (PhD, '09) writes: Since leaving Northeastern in the spring of 2009, I've been a visiting assistant professor at Montana State University, where I teach in a variety of fields, including American literature, literary theory and criticism, mythology, and creative writing. I have recently published articles and creative nonfiction essays in 20th Century Literature, Religion and the Arts, Lettres d'America, and The Southwest Review.

★

Candace “Candy” Lowe (BA, English-Journalism, ’70) writes: I'm currently working in IT at Stanford University, in California. Before that I worked as a newspaper reporter in Boston, a deputy sheriff in Arizona and an airline pilot in New Mexico. In my spare time, I write science fiction under the name C. Sanford Lowe. Most recently, I co-authored of a series of novellas about the making of a black hole with G. David Nordley in Analog. When not writing, I collaborate in experimental electronics with my husband and tutor students studying English as a second language.

★

Jason J. Marchi (BA, English-Geology, ’83) writes: My first children's picture storybook was released on November 8, 2011. The book is called The Legend of Hobbomock: The Sleeping Giant, a picture storybook which retells the Quinnipiack Native American tribal legend of how a group of hills in Hamden, Connecticut came to look like a giant man sleeping on his back.” Jason is donating 50 cents from every copy sold to the Sleeping Giant Park Association.

Jason is currently compiling a book entitled Letters to Young Writers: Ray Bradbury as a Mentor.

★

Joseph Scarpato, Jr. (BA, English-Journalism, ’62) writes: After graduating from Improv Boston's improv comedy course in 2007, my wife and I have become involved in local community theater in the Hudson-Marlborough area. After appearing in an improv murder mystery dinner theater show with the River's Edge Players, I have appeared in five REP productions, including Damn Yankees, Urinetown, The Importance of Being Earnest, and Snow White. In 2011, my wife directed me in another improv murder mystery, Death by Chocolate, for the Marlborough Junior Woman's Club, and Once Upon a Broomstick, where I was also Assistant Director.

While at NU, I was Feature Editor and humor columnist (All Hail) of the Northeastern News and President of the Husky Hi-Liters. I was instrumental in turning the Hi-Liters into NU radio station WNEU. I am currently on the NU Alumni Reunion Committee which will help celebrate the 50th Anniversary of our Class of 1962 in May.

★

Patti Sprouse writes: I loved my experience as a graduate student in the Department of English from 1981-1983. I stayed an extra year into 1984 with a lectureship. I think of those times so very fondly and all the people I went through the program with are still vivid details in the fabric of my memories. Hi to all that remember way back when and for those who don't -- just know, it was awesome and inspiring to be there in the center of Boston coming from Columbus, OH as I did...and where I am today.

★

Sheila Totten (BA, ’77) writes: I started at Northeastern as a Medical technology student, then Biology major, and ended up as an English major. I have written promo packs and newsletters for country music people and magazine articles on rodeo and bull-riding for several papers and e-zines, along with Native American news.

Join our group [LinkedIn](http://www.linkedin.com)

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