The 2016-2017 academic year will be my second as Chair of the Department of English, and I would like to start by thanking everyone for their patience with me as I fumble my way toward competence. I thought that the learning curve was steep in my first year on the job, but I am only now beginning to understand how much there is to know. I continue to rely heavily on the incredibly talented and dedicated faculty of the English Department, and on the heroic efforts of our admin Carol McKay, to help me reach the light that I have finally begun to glimpse at the end of the tunnel.

It is my pleasure to highlight the many accomplishments over this past year of our distinguished English faculty, beginning with scholarship. The members of the English Department continue to add to their impressive record of scholarly/creative activity. The list of faculty accomplishments for 2015-2016 includes the following highlights: two published books, eight ongoing book projects, eight scholarly articles, five creative pieces (poems and short stories), three editing projects (all journals), and twenty-two conference presentations.

Our faculty also won a number of awards. Drew Geyer completed the final year of his three-year term as Bridgestone/Firestone SC Professor; he has been awarded the G.L. Toole Chair in English #2 beginning in 2016-2017. Three other English faculty began terms as Endowed Chairs during the 2015-2016 academic year: Matthew Miller as the John and Mary Grew Chair in American Studies, Katie Kalpin Smith as the G.L. Toole Chair in English #1, and Doug Higbee as the Anonymous Endowed Chair in the Humanities. In addition, Katie Kalpin Smith had Sabbatical Leave for the Fall 2015 Semester, and Matthew Miller was awarded Sabbatical Leave for Fall 2016. A member of the English faculty also won one of the five annual awards announced at the annual spring academic convocation: Vicki Collins’s amazing teaching was recognized with the Excellence in Teaching Award.

Members of the English faculty provided active campus and community service, including membership on seventeen Faculty Assembly committees and nineteen ad hoc campus committees. Three faculty administrated programs; five advised student organizations. In the community, our faculty members serve on boards, judge local writing contests, and make presentations to civic groups and to students in area public schools.

As a part of the reorganization currently underway in Academic Success, the Writing Room has been placed back under the direction of the English Department. This change was gradually implemented over the spring and summer of 2016. Vicki Collins has taken over the position of Writing Room Director. In her new capacity, she trains student peer tutors, schedules paid professional tutors, schedules Writing Room workshops, assesses performance, and maintains supplies and equipment. We believe that these changes will greatly enhance USCA’s efforts to increase student retention, progression, and graduation.

It is difficult to overstate how proud I am of everything that the English faculty has been able to accomplish this past year. I would like to close by thanking everyone for all of their hard work. It is an honor to continue to serve as Chair.

— Dr. Drew Geyer, Chair
Department of English
Faculty Updates

Dr. Drew Geyer — Professor and Chair

Dr. Geyer has finished up his eighth year at the University of South Carolina Aiken and is enjoying the beginning of his ninth. It has been a good but incredibly busy year as he tries to master the art of serving as a department chair, while still trying to write and teach. The birth of his brand new baby daughter, Hadley Grace, has complicated all of the above pursuits in the most lovely, but exhausting, of ways.

In the scholarly activity department, Dr. Geyer had three new pieces accepted for publication. The first is a short story entitled “Mexico” which appeared in the 2016 issue of Langdon Review of the Arts in August. The second is a short story entitled “Troubadours” which will appear in the Fall 2016 issue of Amarillo Bay. The third is a piece of creative nonfiction entitled “Writing Naked” which will appear in a new anthology called A Shared Truth: What Deepest Remains that will be out in 2017 from Lamar University Press. “Writing Naked” will serve as a companion piece to “Leaving Lone Star,” an essay that has already been slated to appear in the anthology. Dr. Geyer continues to serve as Fiction Editor at Concho River Review.

As far as current projects, when not on baby duty, he is revising an individually authored story cycle entitled Lesser Mountains and working with two other Texas writers on a composite story anthology entitled Tres Hombres.

Dr. Lynne Rhodes — Professor

Dr. Lynne Rhodes is currently in her 38th year of teaching composition and is still trying new approaches to helping students learn to write. She is conducting her final Aiken Writing Project (AWP) institute right now with Dr. Deborah McMurtrie at Aiken Elementary, and will be handing off the director’s role for AWP this year to Dr. McMurtrie because the focus for this important National Writing Project liaison now includes Reading to Succeed certification for South Carolina elementary teachers. This past year, she co-presented at several state and regional conferences (SCCTE and SCIRA) with Dr. McMurtrie, and they’ll be going to NCTE in Atlanta this November to present their work with NWP. Dr. Rhodes is also working with SACS/COC as a lead evaluator for a Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) this fall.

Books that Dr. Rhodes enjoyed this past summer included And Soon I Heard a Roaring Wind, by Bill Streever; Rain: A Natural and Cultural History, by Cynthia Barnett; and Southern Provisions, by David Shields. She eagerly awaits the October release of The Best American Science and Nature Writing and The Best American Essays.
Dr. Bill Claxon — Associate Professor

Dr. Claxon is in his thirty-second year of teaching at USCA and feeling like a faculty relic. Although he is making plans for his retirement—relaxing, reading for pleasure, writing fiction and perhaps some literary criticism—he continues to be involved in the life of the Department, the University, and the community.

In fall 2015, he had the pleasure of teaching an Academy of Lifelong Learning course on Lee Smith, a contemporary writer from North Carolina, in part to stimulate interest in her anticipated visit to campus in spring 2016, and in part to prepare for teaching a major author’s course on Lee Smith in the spring semester. (He recommends Smith to anyone who has not read her work, especially her novel *Oral History*, and *Guests on Earth*, her most recent.)

In fall 2016, he taught his second course in mystery/detective novels in the Academy of Lifelong Learning. Entitled “A World of Mystery: Part II,” the four-class course focused on each of the following: *The Cellars of the Majestic*, by Georges Simenon (Belgium/France); *A Beam of Light*, by Andrea Camilleri (Sicily); *The Fallen*, by Jassy Mackenzie (South Africa); and *Malice* by Keigo Higashino (Japan).

This past summer, his daughter introduced him to the television series *Once Upon a Time*, and he immediately saw shades of Faulkner in the structure and content of the series. As a result, he has submitted a paper proposal entitled “A Faulknerian Take on Fairy Tales: Edward Kitsis’s and Adam Horowitz’s Television Series *Once Upon a Time*” to the annual meeting of the Popular Culture Association / American Culture Association in San Diego in April 2017. He is completing the final editing of his essay “The Making of a Writer: The Relationship between Nadine Gordimer and *The New Yorker*” and will begin submitting it to journals in January. Finally, he is collaborating on a poetry-prose piece with Will Wright, a graduate of USCA, a well-recognized poet, the founding editor of *Town Creek Poetry*, the series editor of *The Southern Poetry Anthology*, and an assistant editor at *Shenandoah*.

Dr. Katie Kalpin Smith — Associate Professor

This year, Dr. Smith has an article published in the MLA volume *Approaches to Teaching Shakespeare’s History Plays*. Entitled “Teaching Perspective in *1 Henry IV*,” it discusses her approach to teaching that play, as she frequently does in her Shakespeare class. She is grateful that she has had such lively classes with whom to develop these lessons.

Last year was her first as sponsor of the English Department’s Honors Society, Sigma Tau Delta. The officers planned an excellent induction dinner during which they welcomed fourteen new members. Also at the dinner the professors of the department presented the graduating members of STD with honor cords to wear at graduation. A cording ceremony will now be held in winter and spring for graduating STD students.

This summer she and her family visited the Grand Canyon during their summer travels. She is pictured here at the Riverbanks Zoo with her son; they were attending an awards ceremony for her daughter who won a poetry award from the South Carolina Garden Club.
Dr. Matt Miller — Associate Professor

Dr. Matt Miller has had a super productive year. He presented two papers on transnational American writers at the British Commonwealth and Postcolonial Studies Conference in Savannah and the MELUS conference in Charleston. He wrote on Claude McKay's *Banana Bottom* and Paule Marshall’s *The Chosen Place, the Timeless People*—both central works in Dr. Miller’s next book project on transnational American literature. He also presented a paper on ethnic superheroes at the prestigious International Comics Arts Forum, the premier academic conference for comics scholarship. He still holds the John and Mary Grew Chair in American Studies, which is designed to offer faculty support to continue scholarship in American literature and to enhance teaching in American literature. He published an article on Chang-rae Lee’s novel *Native Speaker* on trauma and identity in *Asian American Literature: Discourses in Literature and Pedagogies*. He earned a sabbatical for the Fall 2016 semester to work on his transnational American literature book. He hopes to submit some sample chapters to the University of South Carolina Press.

In terms of teaching, Dr. Miller taught his African and African-American Literature, Survey of American Literature, Writing in the University, and a new course on Caribbean Literature. This later course was taught online over the Summer. Dr. Miller may someday be a YouTube star thanks to his instructional videos on Caribbean novels; he is trending strong in Guyana right now. He plans to update this course every summer. He also taught an Honors Colloquium on Trans-nationalism in American Literature, focusing on the short stories of Vladimir Nabakov and Aleksander Hemon. He also still serves as the University’s Writing Assessment Director, which means managing the Writing Proficiency Portfolio requirement. He also finished a two-year term as chair of the Promotion and Tenure Committee, a very important committee that offers unique challenges and successes.

Unlike last year, Dr. Miller and his family were able to have a full vacation this year. They enjoyed a relaxing (but hot) trip to Hunting Beach State Park. He “lost” quite a few rounds of mini-golf to his children.

Dr. Douglas Higbee — Associate Professor

Dr. Higbee continues to teach Introduction to Literary Criticism and will teach a Major Authors course on George Orwell in Spring 2017. He continues his teaching in twentieth-century literature, and composition.

Dr. Higbee’s various book projects are nearing fruition. Additionally, he has just published this year’s issue of the English Department’s journal of undergraduate literary criticism, *The Oswald Review*, with the editorial assistance of English major David Gladkowski and formatting assistance from USCA Marketing Director James Raby.

Lastly, Dr. Higbee recently renewed his state hunting license and continues getting used to chewing tobacco.

*Dr. Higbee begins gutting a whitetail buck. Photo courtesy of Dr. David Bruzina*
Dr. Eric Carlson — Associate Professor

Dr. Eric Carlson teaches classes in linguistics and medieval literature at USCA; his research analyzes violence as a cultural institution and textual motif in Old English and Old Norse literature. His most recent work in this regard was a conference paper titled “Violent Proxies, Place, and Power in Beowulf and Völsunga saga.” In the paper Carlson argues that when a character steps in as a proxy in the reciprocal violence of feud, he must force his entry—both literally and metaphorically—into the dynamic of violence despite his status as representative of legitimate power. Dr. Carlson is also lurching, haltingly, through the initial stages of a proposal for a book that will analyze Beowulf and related medieval Germanic texts through the lens of Girardian mimetic theory.

When not grading papers or scribbling out ideas on evisceration in Icelandic sagas, Dr. Carlson likes to read and listen to his voluminous collection of vinyl records and CDs; he also writes reviews of music for Razorcake, a not-for-profit music zine based in Los Angeles. In the realm of the written word, Carlson enjoys the works of Neal Stephenson, Charles Dickens, Charles Bukowski, Gregory Corso, and Raymond Chandler. He is also just over half way through twenty-three years of back issues of National Geographic that he inherited from his father-in-law. However, such a short list belies the true breadth of his reading tastes. And as an aging punker whose tastes have expanded, Dr. Carlson’s musical diet consists mostly of punk rock and related genres, with heaping helpings of rockabilly, big band/early jazz, Tom Waits, Beethoven, and selected speed metal acts.

When not groaning under the dual burden (wink) of reading and writing about medieval violence and listening to and writing about dirty, trashy rock ‘n’ roll, Dr. Carlson enjoys bellowing with delight to the daring exploits of his hometown Green Bay Packers. And, joy of joys, Dr. Carlson has once again taken up the sport of hurling with the Augusta Gaelic Sports Club. Yet all of the above pales in comparison to Dr. Carlson’s true calling: husband to wife Ali, and father to a five-year-old hurricane named James. All in all, it’s a good life, and Dr. Carlson is a happy man.

Dr. Julie Wise — Assistant Professor

Dr. Julie Wise worked with some terrific students this past year, with classes including a British novel course and a Major Authors course on Jane Austen, in addition to the usual composition and survey courses. In the fall of 2016, she also enjoyed teaching an Academy of Lifelong Learning course on Jane Austen’s Sense and Sensibility.

This past year, Dr. Wise has continued to develop scholarly projects on fin-de-siècle women poets, presenting her work at the annual Interdisciplinary Nineteenth-Century Studies conference (for which she served on the planning committee) and the Victorians Institute conference. In addition, she published three small pieces with Gale Researcher on Victorian poets and poetic form. Dr. Wise was lucky enough this year to travel to London, where she spent some time at the British Library, peering at delicate letters written during the 1890s. She and her family also took a number of smaller trips stateside, including a visit to Savannah, where her boys happily gorged themselves on ice cream from Leo-pold’s.
Dr. Todd Hagstette — Assistant Professor

Dr. Todd Hagstette enjoyed his first year at USCA and is hopeful that, in beginning his second, he might have finally lost that “new professor smell.” Teaching highlights from 2016 included a class on American Romanticism, an independent study on Early American Literature, and a Themes in American Literature class titled “The Dangerous South.” Todd was asked to adapt this latter course for an Academy of Lifelong Learning offering, which he will teach at the end of Fall 2016.

The scholarship front has been inordinately busy this year. Work continues apace on two edited collections from USC Press (“The Field of Honor” and “Reading William Gilmore Simms”), both in production and due out in 2017. Two more novels in the USC Press Simms Initiatives edition of the Selected Works of William Gilmore Simms were published with critical introductions by Todd: The Golden Christmas and Guy Rivers. Todd was also busy with conferences this summer and fall, with presentations at the Maple Leaf & Eagle conference in Helsinki in May, the St. George Tucker Society in Asheville in July, and the Simms Society Conference in Atlanta in September.

In terms of service, Todd served his second term on the Bradford Dissertation Prize committee for the St. George Tucker Society, continued his role as ex officio board member for the William Gilmore Simms Society, oversaw publication of the twenty-third volume of the peer-reviewed academic journal The Simms Review due at the end of the year, served again as liaison to the American Literature Association for the Society for the Study of Southern Literature, continued as faculty advisor for the USCA chapter of the National Society of Leadership and Success, and joined the university’s Campus Life Committee.

Todd, Elise, and Davis (8) were thrilled to get back into their house this summer following renovations occasioned by the Columbia floods last October. Despite this they had a rather busy travel summer, with an epic trip up the East Coast to New England (including visits to Brook Farm, the Old Manse, Salem Village, and of course, Walden Pond!) and Martha’s Vineyard. Other trips were to Atlanta for the annual running of the Peachtree Road Race (13th in a row!), Garden City Beach for the usual beach purposes, Virginia for family reunion time, and Edisto Beach just to eat at Flower’s Seafood — best fried shrimp on Earth.

Vicki Collins — Senior Instructor

After three years, Professor Collins finished her manuscript, The Silent Appalachian: Wordless Mountaineers in Fiction, Film and Television, published by McFarland Press. Her first speaking engagement about the book was in August in Hendersonville, NC, to the Henderson County Genealogical and Historical Society. Collins’s poem “Unequally Yoked” appears in the journal Ying Yang, a publication from Old Mountain Press.

Operation of The Writing Room has returned to the Department of English, and Professor Collins is currently the director. Renovation of the facility included a small classroom and office. Two major personnel changes are three interns and two English faculty members who serve as professional consultants. Collins’s university service includes chairing the Library Committee, which plans a Cormac McCarthy event in the spring of 2017. She is also a member of the Faculty Welfare Committee and advisor of the Sign Language Club.

Professor Collins was pleased to be the recipient of the 2016 USCA Excellence in Teaching Award. In addition to her normal course load, she teaches courses for the Honors Program and Critical Inquiry for international students, as well as various topics for the Academy for Lifelong Learning. She has approximately thirty advisees, both English majors and undeclared students.
If you are reading this while living under a Donald Trump regime, you can be fairly certain that Karl Fornes is either in Canada or hiding somewhere and waiting for 2020.

Before he left the country, though, Fornes had a pretty productive year. He created an online section of English 201: Writing in the University to serve USCA's online Palmetto College students. The class can now be delivered in a standard sixteen-week semester, as a four-week summer session, or as an eight-week "half semester." As the English Department's Internship Coordinator, Fornes continued to work on developing internships for English majors. The department internship program has expanded to include over a dozen internships, including a new external internship with the Aiken City Manager's Office. He also completed a review of the departmental base text for English 101 and 102, *Easy Writer*, as the publishing company prepares a new edition.

His biggest contribution to USCA, however, is his role as a judge for the "No Shave November" contest. After crushing the competition in the inaugural 2014 contest with his well-appointed lumberjackian beard, Fornes decided to step aside and let others have a chance while he quietly judges the latté-sipping hipster wannabes.

Fornes is now a western North Carolina land baron! You may have visited the Biltmore Estate or, as Fornes puts it, "that nice little shed over there." The Double Duece shames that place. Fornes's 5.24-acre barony features a spacious, 400-square-foot, concrete-floored, one-room mansion that someday might have electricity, water, and plumbing. He would tell you where it is, but he is waiting for the presidential election results in case he needs a hideout.

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Roy Seeger earned an MA in Poetry from Ohio University in 2000 and his MFA at Western Michigan University in 2005, where he was Poetry Editor for the award-winning literary journal *Third Coast*. He has taught numerous classes at both institutions as well as Kalamazoo Valley Community College. Currently, he teaches composition as well as poetry courses at USCA where he is the Faculty Advisor for *Broken Ink*, the University’s student arts journal.

The fall semester came on the heels of Seeger’s summer semester and left him in a frenzy of catching up. So, naturally, he is working on some new poems. He is teaching the usual English 101 classes and utilizing the technology with what Seeger calls “an awkward grace.” He is also having a lot of fun teaching his first section of Intro to Creative Writing, which inspired him to begin a short story tentatively entitled “Ginger Love Doctor.” Seeger is also getting used to his role as Faculty Advisor to *Broken Ink*. On a related note, Seeger has begun collecting old issues of *Broken Ink*—he has one from ’71 that he’s afraid of getting his grubby fingers all over.

On the home-front, Seeger’s house nears its 100th birthday, and he has discovered a place that will crack pecan nuts for $.35 per pound. Puppy and wife rejoice.
Dr. David Bruzina — Instructor

In his 7th-ish year on campus, Dr. Bruzina continued to develop his ESOL offerings and to involve himself in USCA’s growing international student community. He also taught a course on contemporary fiction, led a number of Writing Room Workshops, and team-taught (with colleague Roy Seeger) a course on poetry-writing for USCA’s Academy for Lifelong Learning.

With colleagues Vicki Collins and Amanda Warren, Bruzina attended the Carolina TOEFL conference at Myrtle Beach, presenting a paper on plagiarism and ESOL instruction, and enjoying the seafood and nightlife. (What a fun town!) He anxiously waited for USC Press to mail the first copies of his book Hunting and the Ivory Tower (coedited with colleague Douglas Higbee); and he enjoyed hosting Julie Funderburk, the Guild of Poetic Intent’s Visiting Writer; judging the Poetry Out Loud contest at Aiken High; and spending hot vacation days fishing and drifting on the Edisto River.

After a few blown CPVC pipes and mishaps with steam, Bruzina successfully installed his first tankless water heater. And after a few more burns and some smoke inhalation, he has learned to consistently produce buttermilk-and-cornmeal fried okra.

Bruzina’s favorite books include Penelope Fitzgerald’s The Bookshop, George Saunders’s Civil War Land in Bad Decline, Wendell Berry’s Farming: a Handbook, and Harry Frankfurt’s On Bullshit. His favorite movie is either Tampopo or Alien. He thinks that Walter Pater was anticipating Charles Mingus’s The Black Saint and the Lady Sinner when he wrote about all art aspiring “towards the condition of music.”

An Army brat, Jim Saine was born in Greenwood, South Carolina, in 1945, while his father was serving in the 3rd Infantry Division in World War II. Graduating from high school in Anchorage, Alaska, in 1963, he received an appointment to the United States Military Academy. He graduated from West Point in 1967 with a BS degree in Engineering and was commissioned a second lieutenant in the infantry. A Ranger-qualified Master Parachutist, he served twenty-five years in the U.S. Army in a variety of operational units in Vietnam, Korea, Germany, and the United States to include two tours with the 82nd Airborne Division. During his time on active duty, he earned an MA in English and American Literature from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and then taught English and American literature and writing at West Point for three years. He also taught military science (ROTC) for four years at Wheaton College in addition to joint military strategy and operations at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia. Retiring from the Army as a lieutenant colonel in 1992, he and his family moved to Aiken, SC, where he worked as a training manager at the Savannah River Site for five years.

Mr. Saine then taught English and coached cross-country and track for fourteen years at the secondary school level in Georgia and South Carolina, the last eleven being at Aiken High School in Aiken, South Carolina. He has also acted as an adjunct professor at several colleges, spending the last ten years at USCA. In addition to teaching literature, Mr. Saine’s short fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction have been published in The Pettigru Review, Nights of Horseplay, The Art of Medicine in Metaphors, and The Christian Quarterly. One of his stories was nominated for a Pushcart Prize in 2013. Mr. Saine and his wife of forty-eight years have four grown children and seven grandchildren and are members of the Midland Valley Community Church of the Nazarene. Mr. Saine will tell you that the most important thing that drives his life is his total commitment as an evangelical, born-again believer in Jesus Christ and that he has a Biblical Christian World View. Mr. Saine’s classrooms are characterized by an emphasis in argumentative writing, a New Criticism method of analyzing literature, and a freedom to discuss one’s personal beliefs and opinions without recrimination.

Jim Saine — Adjunct Professor
Kathryn Hauer — Adjunct Professor

Mrs. Hauer earned an M.A. from the College of William and Mary (1985) and an M.B.A from the University of South Carolina (2004). She specialized in American literature and wrote a Masters thesis focused on the Frank Norris’s concept of Naturalism. She teaches as an adjunct faculty member for the English Department at USC Aiken and has also taught as an adjunct professor at the College of Charleston. She currently works as a financial planner and financial literacy educator for the company she founded, Wilson David Investment Advisors. Previously, she worked as an editor for Savannah River Site environmental impact documents. She is committed to helping her students become the best writers and readers they can be. Professor Hauer earned the USCA Office of Global Studies and Multicultural Engagement 2015 Teacher of the Year Award.

Jason Walter — Adjunct Professor

Jason Walter received a BA in Comparative Literature from Clemson University in December 2004. In August 2006, Walter received his MA in Comparative Literature with a minor in playwriting from Clemson University. Walter has taught English at Clemson University, Seneca High School, and Tri-County Technical College. He currently teaches at the University of South Carolina Aiken while also working at the Morris Museum of Art.

Walter has made animated music videos for Burger Records, a record label based out of Fullerton, California; and one of Walter’s music videos was featured on BurgerTV. Walter has been self-publishing his graphic novels and comic strips since 2011. In 2014, his sequential art was featured in the anthology Double Knuckles Forever. Walter was given permission by NYC poet Gillian McCain to use her poem “Holes” as the lyrics for a song that Walter recorded on his first 2014 solo album No Funnies. Walter was also given permission from McCain to make sequential art versions of her poems “Holes,” “Chaos,” and “Child.” In 2014, NYC novelist Sylvia Sanza allowed Walter to use excerpts from her novel Alex Wants to Call it Love as lyrics for Walter’s song “Angel in Reverse” that he recorded on his solo album, which was released by the record label Academia Tapes.

Currently, Walter is avidly working to clearly define addiction criticism in literature studies because as it stands, entities such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous have dominated the field of study with their religious and conservative rhetoric. In April 2016, Walter finished his first novel of fiction, Jonah, which heavily focuses on his approach to addiction literary criticism.
I’ve come to the conclusion that I am not sufficiently retired. Although my classroom career came to an end in 2015, I find myself still heavily invested in the other two aspects of the professorial life: scholarship and service. Some days the deadlines come hot and heavy. I am now writing for three publications. In addition to my weekly “Arts and Humanities” column in The Aiken Standard, I am now contributing museum/gallery reviews to the news weekly in Columbia—in fact, I received an award from the SC Press Association this past spring for my work with Free Times—and I’ve also joined the editorial staff of Aiken Homes and Lifestyles magazine, which is published by the same folks that are responsible for Augusta Magazine.

My service responsibilities are also substantial. I continue to chair the board of governors of the SC Academy of Authors, which administers the state’s literary hall of fame. We inducted four writers in Anderson this past April, and we are scheduled to induct four more in Florence in 2017. I am also on the board of SC Humanities, the state arm of the National Endowment for the Humanities; for that statewide council, I score grant proposals twice each year before they go to the full board. Finally, I am also responsible for the biannual newsletter of the Historic Aiken Foundation and continue to serve on the USCA Cultural Series Advisory Committee. If that were not enough, I’m still lecturing (although not in the classroom). I gave a talk to a sold-out crowd this summer about local history as part of a series sponsored by the Aiken County Historical Museum; in October, I spoke about the controversial Depression-era mural in the federal courthouse at the behest of the Aiken County Historical Society; in November, I talked about my book Hidden History of Aiken County at a lunch and learn program at the Arts and Heritage Center in North Augusta. In addition, I offered a two-part program (lecture and walking tour) on my book Hidden History of Augusta for the USCA Academy of Lifelong Learning.

Although I do derive a lot of satisfaction from all of these activities, there are days when I think that I need to retire from my retirement! Luckily, I squeezed in some travel this past year, including a memorable trip to the Bay of Naples. We toured Pompeii and Herculaneum, sailed to Capri, hired a car and driver to visit towns along the Amalfi Coast, hopped a train to Paestum, and climbed to the top of Mt. Vesuvius. This year’s photo portrait was taken next to the crater of the volcano!
Graduate Updates

Devon Andrews—Class of 2007

After graduating from USC Aiken in 2007, Devon (Eschman) Andrews completed the graduate program in Library and Information Science at USC, earning her MLIS in 2008. Devon is currently the Children’s Services Manager at the Hurd/St. Andrews Library, part of the Charleston County Public Library system. Her favorite part of her job is singing and dancing with toddlers. She and her husband Michael are expecting their first child around Thanksgiving. They have lived in Charleston since 2010 and are currently the proud owners of two very curious beagles.

Brandon Baskett—Class of 2012

Brandon Baskett moved to Columbia, SC from Aiken, SC in 2012, after marrying his college sweetheart, Christina Pressley. He studied Secondary Education, with a focus in English, at the University of South Carolina Aiken. His passion for education, and the positive impact that it can have on young adults, fueled his desire to teach high school English.

In 2015, he completed a Master’s degree in Educational Administration, at the University of South Carolina. Recently, after four years of teaching, he began his administrative career by accepting an Assistant Principal and Director of Freshman Academy position at Newberry High School. Brandon firmly believes that the true goal of education is to teach young adults how to become lifelong learners, while also encouraging them to become productive citizens of good character.
George Lock—Class of 2010

After graduating from USCA in 2010, I began working at the Academic Success Center there. After a couple of years, I felt that I was in need of a change of pace and scenery. I have since earned several Cyber Security certifications and am working on the EC Council’s Certified Ethical Hacker certification. I am working at Citrix in Raleigh, NC providing technical support for a CRM and project management program called Podio and a cloud storage program called ShareFile. I regularly assist with editing online blogs, product update notifications, various support articles, and additional announcements. I assist customers with syncing servers to their cloud storage, setting up their workspaces for project management and assisting with writing JavaScript for calculations. My degree in English has been invaluable when it comes to explaining technical details and instructions to customers in a way that makes it easy for them to understand.

On a personal note, in April of 2016 I got married in Jamaica to an amazing woman. We spend our free time going to various concerts and plays, enjoying many of the local restaurants and breweries, and walking our Weimaraner, Annabelle, through the numerous parks in the Raleigh-Durham area.

Ellice Whatley—Class of 2013

After graduating from USCA, I have worked several different jobs to gain experience and find my place in the work world. Presently, I work in the USCA Financial Aid Office. While Financial Aid may not sound like it is related to English, my degree has certainly prepared me for this job. I am the administrative assistant for the office, so my job relies heavily on my communication skills. I am responsible for e-mailing students and faculty, creating handouts for students and parents, editing the website, and ensuring all of the forms are clear and up to date.

In my free time, I naturally still enjoy reading and writing while my lazy cat, Dr. Kitty, keeps me company. Additionally, I like to hike and go on long runs with my dog, Hank, and I love spending time with my boyfriend and his son. I also began taking classes through the MBA program here at USCA in fall of 2016. Primarily, however, my free time is dedicated to training Brazilian Jiu Jitsu (BJJ). BJJ strangely appeals to similar interests that drew me to major in English. In fact, a fellow English major from USCA, Caitlin Huggins, 2013 graduate, introduced me to the sport.

I still aspire to enter an English graduate program. English is where my heart will always reside, so I spend some of my free time studying for the GRE. My test scores are about to expire, and I plan to enroll in an English graduate program by Fall 2018.
Bettie Williams — Class of 2000

A 2000 graduate who earned simultaneous baccalaureate degrees in English and Communications, Bettie Williams is employed as a Project Coordinator at Augusta University (AU). At AU, she manages large-scale projects and serves as Chief of Staff to the Vice President for Academic Planning and Strategic Initiatives. Williams is currently working towards her Master in Public Administration Degree and plans one day to be Chief of Staff to a university president.

In her spare time, she is an award-winning romance novelist who has been nominated for a Pushcart Prize. Her first published novel, The Rake’s Tale, came out last year. She has been a member of the South Carolina Writers’ Association since 2010 and served as President of the Aiken Chapter for three years. She is also a member of the Project Management Institute.

William Wright — Class of 2002

As my news: I won the Georgia Author of the Year Award from the Georgia Writers Association this year. I also won the Terrain.org Award in Poetry, and in addition to two new books, one an edition (The World Is Charged: Poetic Engagements with Gerard Manley Hopkins (Clemson, 2016)) and another a collaborative book of poems I wrote with Amy Wright (Creeks of the Upper South, Jacar Press, 2016), I recently learned that Iris Press will be publishing a new book of poems called Self-Portrait as Late Autumn Frost and that Mercer University Press will in 2018 publish Wild Chapel: New & Selected Poems by William Wright.
Interning for *The Oswald Review* over the summer was an enriching experience. Throughout the summer, Dr. Higbee and I met up about once a week to discuss the prospective essays.

We started off by editing generally; that is, we searched for fundamental flaws in theses, made sure research was credible, and decided if papers were satisfactory overall.

After we selected the essays for publication, we did more precise editing such as fixing awkward sentences and making sure the essays followed proper MLA format. Overall, *The Oswald Review* we published turned our great!

I am currently working on an essay to be considered by Dr. Higbee and the next intern.
Broken Ink is the University of South Carolina Aiken’s award-winning literary and visual arts magazine. The magazine has published students’ original work since 1971. Broken Ink proudly welcomes creative submissions of any kind including poetry, prose, short stories, creative nonfiction, song lyrics, play scripts, photography, comics, paintings, digital art, drawings, and original music and spoken word recordings.

Professor Roy Seeger continues to serve as faculty advisor for the organization and guides the student staff members in the art of magazine production and the layout of creative content. Sydney Herrick remained Editor-in-Chief for the 2016-2017 school year. This is Herrick’s second term as leader of the editorial staff which is comprised of Jude Jackson, Layout Editor; Nolan Sinclair, Music Editor; Aubry Melvin, Visual Arts Editor; and Meredith Hawcroft, Literary Arts Editor. Anna Norris, Elliot Hudson, and Haley Dixon are among this year’s staff members who also provide invaluable assistance to the organization.

Last year’s magazine was a great success. Broken Ink implemented QR codes for the first time in the magazine’s history, which allowed for multimedia submissions to be included. Readers were able to scan a QR code or visit Broken Ink’s website to hear artists’ complete recordings of songs or spoken word. This innovation also allowed longer literary pieces to be included in the magazine; portions of long stories or nonfiction pieces were printed, and the remainder was included on the website for further reading.

In October, Broken Ink hosted their annual open mic night. This year’s guest speaker was local musician Slayton Johnson, the lead singer and guitarist of the band The And’s. Johnson performed several original songs and also discussed his creative process for writing song lyrics. After Johnson concluded, the open mic portion of the evening began. Students took turns reading poetry, singing, and playing instruments. The event was a great success, and Broken Ink looks forward to more upcoming events, especially their magazine release party to be held this spring.

At the closing of the academic year, the latest issue of Broken Ink will be released. Everyone at Broken Ink is excited to show off their own hard work as well as the tremendous artistic talent of USCA’s student body.
The Writing Room
by Meredith Hawcroft

The past year has been an eventful one for the Writing Room. The Writing Room was previously managed by the Academic Success Center (now known as the Center for Student Achievement); but in the fall of 2016, the Department of English gained control. The department’s acquisition of the Writing Room resulted in multiple changes for the tutoring facility.

Professor Vicki Collins, who was awarded the 2016 Excellence in Teaching Award, began serving as the new director for the tutoring facility while continuing to teach multiple courses. This is the first time in many years that a direct supervisor has been present in the Writing Room to assist tutors and oversee the daily facilitation of appointments. Professor Collins’s leadership has resulted in a highly professional environment where students receive the best services possible. The increased quality of tutoring is also due in part to the addition of professional tutors. The Writing Room was previously staffed solely by students; but Dr. Amanda Warren, Dr. Jill Hampton, and Professor Jim Saine joined the tutoring staff during the Fall 2016 semester. In the Spring 2017 semester, Dr. Hampton and Professor Saine returned and were joined by their colleague Professor Craig Gibbs. Even alongside professional tutors, the student tutors continue to shine. Many of the tutors are English majors, and they represent the department well. English majors who have worked in the Writing Room this year include Anniebelle Quattlebaum, Anna Norris, Sarah Marie Williamson, James Paisley, Sarah Chatelain, and Meredith Grace Hawcroft. English Education major Victoria Bush is also on staff.

In addition to the staffing changes, the Writing Room facilities underwent a remodeling process. Remodeling began late in the summer and was completed midway through the fall semester. The Writing Room remained open throughout the construction process and continued to serve the needs of the student body. The original space was divided in half to allow for the addition of a new classroom and an office for Professor Collins. The computer lab area remains, so students still have an area to study, work on homework, or engage in tutoring sessions; the new classroom, H&SS 119, provides a space for workshops or group tutoring sessions to take place.

With a new director, the addition of highly experienced professional tutors, and dedicated student tutors, tutoring services in the Writing Room are in high demand. Writing Room tutors provided over 1,500 tutoring sessions throughout the fall semester, an all-time record high. The Writing Room also continues to offer workshops that provide students with additional opportunities for self-improvement outside of their normal English classes. During the Fall 2016 semester, forty-two workshops were led by English Department instructors, Gregg-Graniteville Library staff, and student tutors. Workshops covered various topics related to the writing and research process such as writing thesis statements; using punctuation correctly; correctly formatting citations in MLA, APA, and Chicago style; and avoiding plagiarism. In order to provide increased assistance for students who are beyond the level of freshman composition courses, the Writing Room also added Praxis Preparation workshops and a GRE workshop. In total, 542 students were in attendance at these workshops. The Writing Room expects to see similar attendance records throughout the Spring 2017 semester.

The Writing Room staff appreciates the immense support of the English Department during the transitional period this year and are proud of the Writing Room’s vast accomplishments during the first academic year under new leadership.
The Guild of Poetic Intent

by Meredith Hawcroft

The Guild of Poetic Intent is a student-run organization that focuses on the creation of poetry, prose, short-stories, and creative writing of all sorts. The Guild aims to be a supportive place for writers and artists on the USC Aiken campus.

Professor Brandy Horne continues to serve as faculty advisor for the Guild of Poetic Intent. This is her second year to hold the position. She has successfully helped plan multiple events for the organization and has helped the Guild reach a broader audience among the student body. The Guild is extremely appreciative of the support she provides for all of their artistic and world domination endeavors.

During the last year, members of the Guild came together to participate in monthly open night events at local restaurants, including one at Mellow Mushroom in downtown Aiken. The Guild also began hosting open mic nights in the faculty dining room in the campus cafeteria. This location choice made the events more affordable and easily accessible for students, which in turn increased participation and led many new members to join the Guild. The open mic events are open to anyone who wishes to share what they have written or anyone who would simply like to enjoy the work of others.

The Guild hosted their annual Read N’ Feed on September 8th in the Gregg-Graniteville Library. The event was attended by many, and the Guild is proud to report that they ran out of chairs due to the massive number of students and faculty members who were eager to celebrate the beauty of poetry and spoken word. The Read N’ Feed was open mic style, and students read original poetry as well as the work of their favorite authors. The event was also a put-luck and featured pizza and other dishes provided by Guild members. The Guild cleverly uses free food to lure in perspective members and then continues to use free food to convince them to hang around—a tactic that has been successful for many years. Another Read N’ Feed is scheduled to take place during the spring 2017 semester.

At the end of every fall and spring semester, the Guild of Poetic Intent hosts a used book sale on the SAC patio to raise money for organization events as well as select charitable causes. The fall book sale was a great success; the proceeds from the sale were donated to First Book, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to provide disadvantaged children with books. The Guild is currently planning the spring book sale and hopes that it is equally successful.

The Guild of Poetic Intent is also currently planning their Emerging Poet event. Every spring, the Guild hosts an emerging poet (i.e. a poet who has published no more than two full-length collections) at the Aiken Center or the Arts where he or she gives a public reading and participates in discussions with the audience. The guest speaker for this year’s event is still to be announced. Please stay tuned for more details on this event and others hosted by the Guild of Poetic Intent.
In October of 2016, I had the great honor and privilege of meeting Rick Bragg. Given the kind of literature he writes, it wasn’t hard for me to imagine what kind of person he was prior to meeting him. When I approached him, I saw a man who had neglected to wear a tie, with a scruffy beard and slicked-back gray hair. He had a firm handshake and an accent that all but carried in it the essence of the South. It wasn’t long before I heard that same accent relating to me a series of intriguing stories regarding his time as a journalist. Throughout our lunch with Chancellor Jordan and select faculty and students, Bragg entertained us with stories of his becoming a journalist, including a most perilous adventure he had with alligators in Florida. Sitting there and listening to his stories reminded me that sometimes the best stories aren’t the ones that you find in the pages of a book; rather, they are the ones you hear in good conversation over a glass of sweet tea and cheesecake.

That night Bragg further impressed me, along with a multitude of people who came to see him, as the featured speaker for the Oswald Distinguished Writers Series at USCA. Instead of a standard reading like I had experienced at so many other Oswald events, Bragg didn’t read from any of his writings. Instead, he related stories of his youth when he worked odd jobs and eventually became a journalist, saying he wanted to write because he “didn’t want to work hard.” The night was one that frequently made me laugh out loud as Bragg told hilarious, light-hearted stories of his experiences of eating nothing but peanut butter and banana sandwiches for days on end and facing off against a savage chicken called Molly. Though these stories could have easily been fiction, Bragg promised that they were all true, adamant on the position that the reason people write fiction is because they don’t have stories of their own that are good enough to tell. Bragg said that good writing required lots of “color” and that as an educator he was fearful for future generations because of the influence technology would have on the written word. When he finally got the point where he would no longer write or teach, Bragg said that he would retire and at that point would want to do nothing more than sit on a dock overlooking his pond and blow away water moccasins with his shotgun.

In his long career, Bragg has not only written critically acclaimed books such as Ava’s Man and The Prince of Frogtown but he has also worked at several esteemed newspapers, including The Birmingham News and The New York Times. He also writes a column for Southern Living called “Southern Journal.” Currently he is a professor at the University of Alabama where he teaches Advanced Magazine Writing and Creative Nonfiction. Bragg won the 1996 Pulitzer Prize for Feature Writing for his stories about contemporary America; and he has won, not once, but twice, the prestigious American Society of Newspaper Editors Distinguished Writing Award, along with more than fifty other writing awards.
In October of 2016, I had the great honor and privilege of meeting Rick Bragg. Given the kind of literature he writes, it wasn’t hard for me to imagine what kind of person he was prior to meeting him. When I approached him, I saw a man...
From the Editor
by David B. Corder

The summer before my freshman year at USCA, I had decided that I wanted to be a communications major because of various things I had heard. Being a communications major would supposedly give me more opportunities for jobs and allow me to make more money while giving me the opportunity to write. Writing was all that I wanted to do; but specifically, I wanted to be a novelist and thought I could write on the side while working in journalism and making some sort of living. I had doubts, however; and after a discussion with my mom, she sought the advice of one of her old professors, Dr. Sue Lorch, a professor emerita of USCA’s English Department. Lorche’s advice to me was plain. If I wanted to be a novelist, if I wanted to follow my dream, I needed to major in English. So that’s what I did. And I have no regrets.

Now a junior, I cannot express how invaluable the time I have spent studying English has been for me. I’m not the same writer that I was two years ago, and my knowledge of literature has expanded to a whole new plane. During my time here I have made contact with so many other students who share the same passions I do for the written word; and I have built relationships with professors who are not only supportive of me, but who have become friends and mentors. Without a doubt in my mind, English majors are the best students and English is the greatest major. We are a select creed, the best of the best, a mighty guild of writers, readers, and dreamers.

In this edition of Words, Words, Words, it is my hope that you will see just how special USCA’s English Department really is. I was honored this year to be the editor of the newsletter as it opened up so many doors for me and gave me the opportunity to work with so many people. I am proud to have worked on this publication with the guidance of Dr. Geyer. A special thanks to all who helped make this publication a reality this year.

—David B. Corder