The current academic year is the third and final in my first term as Chair of the English Department, and I would like to start by thanking everyone for electing me to a second term as Chair. The learning curve has been steep over the course of this first term, but I am beginning to get a handle on the job. There is so much to know, so many moving parts to keep track of. I continue to rely on the talented, versatile, and dedicated faculty of the English Department, and on the heroic efforts of our admin Carol McKay, to make the department thrive.

It is my pleasure to highlight the many accomplishments 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 the 2016-2017 academic year includes the following highlights: five published books (four newly published volumes and one reprint), ten ongoing book projects, eight scholarly articles, two creative pieces (a poem and a short story), four editing projects (all journals), and eighteen conference presentations (two of them international).

Our faculty also won awards. Four professors currently hold Endowed Chairs. Drew Geyer holds the G.L. Toole Chair in English #2, Matthew Miller has the John and Mary Grew Chair in American Studies, Katie Kalpin Smith has the G.L. Toole Chair in English #1, and Doug Higbee has the Anonymous Endowed Chair in the Humanities. In addition, Matthew Miller had Sabbatical Leave for the Fall 2016 Semester.

Members of the English faculty provided active campus and community service, including membership on eighteen Faculty Assembly committees (and either chairing or co-chairing eight of them) and twenty-three ad hoc campus committees (and either chairing or co-chairing seven of them). Two faculty administrated programs; three 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.

Much progress continues to be made in the Writing Room. Professor Vicki Collins has expanded her duties and added new capabilities. Over the course of AY 2016-2017, a classroom with space for twenty students was carved out of the existing Writing Room space. Writing Room and English Department funds were used to furnish this classroom with desks and chairs and white boards. In the brand new H&SS 119, we are currently holding Writing Room workshops and teaching sections of ENGL 101, ENGL 110, and ENGL 111 to at-risk student populations (Pacer Pathways, First PACE, and international students). These at-risk sections feature trained Writing Room peer tutors as TAs. And Pacer Pathways students are required to visit the Writing Room (next door in H&SS 112) for professional tutorial help in hopes of further increasing student retention, progression, and graduation. The Writing Room Director’s office is now in H&SS 112. This new office helps the Director to more efficiently oversee the Writing Room. The Writing Room Director now controls a budget (funds formerly earmarked for the Center for Student Achievement) sufficient to pay peer tutors who elect to do paid, rather than for-credit, internships; also, funds are used to purchase supplies such as copier paper, printer needs, name tags, etc. Over the course of the last academic year, Writing Room tutors had appointments with 1158 students. Over that same period, 853 students attended Writing Room workshops.

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
Dr. Geyer has finished up his ninth year at the University of South Carolina Aiken and is enjoying his tenth. It has been a good but incredibly busy year as he continues his attempt to master the art of serving as a department chair, while writing and teaching and distance-running. His new daughter Hadley Grace, now a toddler, has complicated all of the above pursuits in the most lovely, but exhausting, of ways.

In the scholarly activity department, Dr. Geyer had a new book published this academic year. Co-authored with Jerry Craven, and published in 2017 by Angelina River Press, *Parallel Hours* is Geyer’s first foray into the alternative history/science fiction genre. He continues to serve as Fiction Editor at *Concho River Review*.

As far as current projects, he is revising an individually authored story cycle entitled *Lesser Mountains* and working with two other Texas writers on editing a composite story anthology entitled *Dancing on Barbed Wire* that will be published in 2018 by Angelina River Press.

One of the great highlights of the current academic year was the total solar eclipse back on August 21st, 2017. Experiencing totality was one of Dr. Geyer’s top five “bucket list” items, and he was particularly blessed to have been able to share it with family and friends. If you look closely at the attached photo, you will see the slivers of sun-shadows marking the approach of total darkness...

Officially, 2018 is my 30th year of employment at USCA. That number serves as a type of milestone, I suppose. I’m beginning to plan for my retirement, but I’m hopeful that I will have several more years to contribute to our department, with its mission of teaching, service, and scholarship. For now, I’ve settled into my spring routine, teaching Business Writing online, Technical Writing, and two sections of Composition. Last fall, I taught Advanced Composition and Composition Studies. For my service to the university, I’ve served on a search committee for the SOE, and I’m currently chairing the Nominating Committee for Faculty Assembly and serving on a search committee for the English Department. For scholarship, I am looking ahead to presenting at two conferences, in April at the Student Success in Writing Conference held annually in Savannah, and in June at the International Writing Across the Curriculum Conference being held at Auburn University. On a personal note, I continue to enjoy my garden club’s activities, and I’m also serving on a communication committee for my church. I especially look forward to summer break when my grandson, Alexander, will be able to visit and when I’ll be enjoying the bounty of my flowers and veggie gardens. I also have a new puppy named Frasier, a Boykin Spaniel bundle of energy. I strive for at least one nice long morning walk each day with Frasier, mostly just to wear him out!
Dr. Bill Claxon — Associate Professor

Dr. William N. Claxon, Jr.: Retirement Obituary
August 1984-June 2018

Dr. Claxon came to USCA in 1984, a young, naïve, new professional in shining armor. He saw the University grow in stature both physically and academically. He watched the completion of the Etherredge Center, the construction of buildings for Schools of Nursing, Business and Education, the Ruth Patrick Science Center, and the Sciences; he watched the rise of the Convocation Center, the arrival of the historic Penland House, the erection of two residence halls, as well as the Roberto Hernandez Stadium. He has served under three of USCA’s five chancellors, and he has served on most of the Faculty Assembly committees, chairing many of them. He watched as USCA joined Division II of the NCAA and as the University played an instrumental role in creating the Peach Belt Conference. He served his best years as the USCA Faculty Athletic Representative to the NCAA. Now, thirty-three years later, a period that went far too quickly, he leaves, his chain mail a bit tarnished by age and fatigue, but still naïve, and, he hopes, virtuous.

Dr. Katie Kalpin Smith — Associate Professor

Dr. Smith continues to teach courses for the major in the British Literature survey, Shakespeare, and the English Renaissance. In the most recent years, the Etherredge Center has welcomed professional Shakespeare productions to campus for its Cultural Series (most recently Much Ado About Nothing). She has enjoyed seeing these performances and discussing them with her classes.

This year, Dr. Smith’s book, Gender, Speech, and Audience Reception in Early Modern England, was published by Routledge press. The book examines the relationships between speaking women and their audiences. She also presented a paper at the Shakespeare Association of America conference entitled “‘Limed with the twigs that threaten them’: All’s Well That Ends Well and the Language of Entrapment.”

She continues to hold a Toole Chair in Literature, and she serves as the sponsor of the department’s honor society, Sigma Tau Delta.

In 2017, her family travelled around the west again—to California, Colorado, and New Mexico. Two highlights included sledding down dunes at Great Sand Dunes National Park and climbing into Native American cliff dwellings at Bandelier National Monument.
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 College English conference in Hilton Head. He continued work on his ongoing book project about Transnational American Writers. He still holds the John and Mary Grew Chair in American Studies, which is designed to allow faculty to continue scholarship in American literature and to enhance teaching in American literature. He submitted an article for publication on Claude McKay’s *Home to Harlem* and *Banjo that focuses* on the vagabond lifestyles of the main characters.

In terms of teaching, Dr. Miller taught his American literature offerings, Modern and Contemporary American literatures. He still teaches his survey course on African American and American Literature since the Civil War. He still enjoys teaching Writing in the University. He is most excited by his continuing online course on Caribbean Literature because his videos on are starting to get rave reviews. If he gets 10,000 views, he may actually earn a penny per view from YouTube. He also taught an Honors Colloquial on African American Stand-up Comedy.

Dr. Miller continues to serve as the University’s Writing Assessment Director, which means managing the Writing Proficiency Portfolio requirement. This work is very rewarding, and he enjoys working with faculty and students to improve writing across the campus.

Dr. Miller and his family had an amazing day-cation in the North Carolina mountains, where they did some gem mining, hiking, and sweating (!).

Dr. Douglas Higbee — Associate Professor

Dr. Higbee continues to teach Introduction to Literary Criticism and 20th Century British Literature, as well as first-year composition. In Fall 2017 he taught an Honors 101 course which focused on oral history, wherein students interviewed USCA student-veterans on camera and prepared these videos and ancillary materials for archiving at the USCA library.

Dr. Higbee’s co-edited collection of essays *Teaching Representations of the First World War* was published by the Modern Language Association in summer 2017; Dr. Higbee’s co-authored book *In Their Own Words: Augusta and Aiken Veterans Remember World War II* was published by the Augusta-Richmond County Historical Society, also in summer 2017. Additionally, in Fall 2017 he published his 3rd annual issue of the English Department’s journal of undergraduate literary criticism, *The Oswald Review*, founded by the august Dr. Tom Mack, USCA Professor of English Emeritus, with editorial assistance from student intern Jacob Nelson and formatting assistance from USCA Marketing Director James Raby.

Dr. Higbee greatly enjoyed three days in Washington DC reviewing grants for the National Endowment for the Humanities in December 2017, when it was cold, and four days in New York City at the annual MLA conference in January 2018, when it was very cold.

His two dogs tell Dr. Higbee he should take it easier.
Dr. Eric Carlson — Associate Professor

Dr. Carlson still teaches medieval literature. He still writes about violence in Old English and Old Norse texts. He is still working on his book applying Girardian mimetic theory to said texts—but making progress! He still overdoses on dirty, trashy rock ‘n’ roll, and he still revels in time spent with his family.

Aside from some minor progress on his book, Dr. Carlson has been working on a book chapter to appear in Elmes’ and Boviard-Abbo’s forthcoming volume Food and Feast in Early English Outlaw Tales. Dr. Carlson’s essay is a revision and expansion of his 2015 conference paper “Grendel’s Eucharist: An Outlaw’s Last Supper,” in which he explores—via mimetic theory, of course—the ogre Grendel’s feasting on human victims as a perversion of the Christian eucharist. Moreover, this coming May Dr. Carlson will present a paper at the International Congress on Medieval Studies. This paper, tentatively titled “Bad Dog!: Mimetic Crisis and the Fenrir Myth,” will provide a reading of mimetic violence in the Old Norse myth of the Fenrir-wolf in an attempt to show that early Germanic cultures understood both the stabilizing and destabilizing aspects of violence as a cultural institution.

In teaching, little is new under the sun for Dr. Carlson, except for the fact that he is currently teaching a class on the works of J.R.R. Tolkien. He is also noodling around with ideas for an offering of Interdisciplinary Studies 398 that explores the history of the book, and in Fall 2018 for the first time he plans to teach English 385: Studies in Non-Western Literature. He has yet to determine what that course will focus on.

Domestically, son James is a first-grader at Mead Hall and thriving thereat, and wife Ali is now a unit director at the Aiken Regional Medical Center. Team Carlson is still working on their ramshackular old house, and they were recently awarded the Wilds-Lipe award by the Historic Aiken Foundation for their efforts.

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 Leopold’s.
Dr. Todd Hagstette — Assistant Professor

Todd Hagstette feels firmly in the groove of USCA this year, even if he has come to realize (too late, as it turns out) that Year Three is when they dump everything on you. Teaching highlights from 2017 include a Themes in American Literature class on “The Civil War Novel,” a new Writing in the University class, three independent studies on the first half of the American Literature Survey, and an Academy of Lifelong Learning class on “Southern Honor.” Top of the list, though, was mentoring senior English major Meredith Hawcroft in her successful Magellan Scholarship application.

The scholarship front saw – finally! – the appearance of The Field of Honor: Essays Southern Character and American Identity, which Todd edited with the historian John Mayfield for USC Press. Conferences this year included presentations at the Southern Studies Forum in Lille, France (Sep. 2017), the Nordic Association for American Studies Conference in Odense, Denmark (May 2017), and an invited appearance at the April Conference in Krakow, Poland (April 2017).

In terms of new service, Todd became chair of the Campus Life Committee and was asked to join the Strategic Planning Steering Committee for the university, the USCA Commencement Committee, and the Planning Committee for the South Carolina Humanities Festival.

Todd, Elise, and Davis (9) took a cross-country drive this summer, culminating in a week in Beaver Creek, Colorado. At Davis’s insistence, the first stop on the way was in Memphis to experience all things Elvis (including a tour of Sun Studios where Todd warbled inharmonious in Elvis’s original recording microphone). Other highlights of the trip included visiting friends at KU, rafting the Eagle River, seeing Ryan Adams at Red Rocks, wading in the Rio Grande, exploring Meow Wolf in Sante Fe, eating at Simon’s Catch in Elk City, Oklahoma, and then finally getting home.

Vicki Collins — Senior Instructor

Professor Vicki Collins had a busy AY 2017-2018 serving on several campus committees and Boards. Her role as faculty advisor of the Sign Language Club kept her the busiest, as the club joined the Aiken Sertoma Club and the Visual and Performing Arts Department to organize the “Celebrate Sound” walk to raise funds for looping the Etherredge Center. Her teaching included ESOL courses, an Honors course on Heroes & Heroines, and her third time to teach Appalachian Studies to the Academy for Lifelong Learning. Being the Writing Room Director is perhaps her most rewarding role, as she works each day with both faculty and students tutors to improve the services offered.

Scholarly work included reading at the Starkey Flythe, Jr. Poetry Contest and at the North Carolina Writers Network Conference in Sylva, NC. Several USCA English alumni participated in the International Poetry Reading Professor Collins sponsored. She was also a speaker during the SC Writers Association Indie Author Day. She had two poems accepted by Old Mountain Press and two for the forthcoming Unlocking the Word anthology. Her husband treated her to Christmas holidays in Maui. Currently, she is working on a book about unseen characters.
Karl Fornes — Senior Instructor

Karl Fornes is a liar. Last year, Fornes promised to leave the country or otherwise flee if a certain orange-completed person were to be elected president. Alas, beckoned by the opportunity to co-chair a twenty-member committee charged with reviewing and revising USCA’s annual faculty review process, chair a ten-member departmental search committee, and serve on the faculty general education committee, he couldn’t help but break his promise and engage in the self-loathing drudgery of committee work.

On the other hand, Fornes continues to enjoy teaching regular sections of English 101. He also teaches regularly in the department’s professional writing minor and is constantly looking for English majors willing to engage in off-campus internships.

In December 2017, Fornes and his wife, Jennifer Onofrio Fornes, finally finished the Double Deuce, a 700-square foot mansion located on their five-acre barony in western North Carolina. Don’t bother asking precisely where it is, though, as Fornes reserves the right to flee at any time.

Ray Seeger — Senior Instructor

The year Roy Seeger has been collaborating with Dr. Mack and Professor Collins on a poetry event for the South Carolina Humanities Council to celebrate Aiken which will be held (has been held?) on April 13. Also on the poetry front: following in his wife, Amanda Rachelle Warren’s, footsteps, Seeger is the 2018 winner of the Nickens McCray Fellowship for poetry.

This fall semester in addition to his regular courses, Seeger taught a Lifetime Learning course on contemporary American poets Terrance Hayes, Jericho Brown, Mary Ruefle and Claire Bateman. As the faculty advisor to Broken Ink, Seeger is excited about our upcoming 50th issue. In the Fall Semester he attended the College Media Conference in Dallas, where Broken Ink placed second in “Best of Show,” beating their arch-rivals at Costal Carolina.

As is his summer routine, Seeger spent a week with 3000 other English teachers (including his wife) to read AP exams, this time in Kansas City, MO. The highlights of the trip: eating the area’s best barbeque in a gas station, visiting the KC Museum of Modern Art, and finding an all you can eat Sushi restaurant outside of St. Louis, MO.

This year Seeger’s house celebrates its 100th birthday.
In his 8th year on campus, Dr. Bruzina continued to develop his ESOL, composition, and Writing Room offerings and also taught a course on dystopias and science fiction. A proud founding member of USCA’s new chapter of the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), he attended the 2017 Summer Institute in Cincinnati to learn about university financing and the process of protecting academic freedom in an era of Trumpification and hypercapitalism. He participated in the Women’s Solidarity March in Augusta, GA in January. With colleagues Alexandra Roach and Robert Murphy, he gave a campus ICE presentation on cussing and bad language, and in April he presented a class on hunting and ethics for the Academy of Lifelong Learning.

Having recently adopted a high energy yellow mutt stray, he is getting more exercise than he has in years. A result has been the rekindling of his love affair with cheeseburgers and microbrews.

**Jim Saine — Adjunct Professor**

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 (North Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, New York, Hawaii, Illinois, and Virginia), 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 (IL) in addition to joint military strategy and operations at the Armed Forces Staff College in Norfolk, Virginia. He is a graduate of the Command and General Staff College. 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 (part of the nuclear defense industry) 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. In addition to the three years teaching English full-time at West Point, he has taught literature and writing as an adjunct professor at Fayetteville State University (NC), Wheaton College (IL), Tidewater Community College (VA), and Aiken Technical College (SC). He has served as an adjunct English professor at the University of South Carolina Aiken since 2006. In addition to teaching literature, Mr. Saine’s short fiction, poetry, and creative non-fiction have been published in *The Petigru 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. In addition, another of Mr. Saine’s short stories, “Dog-Face Soldier,” received a Gold Medal Award in the 2017 National Veterans Creative Arts Festival Contest. He has also written an unpublished novel entitled *Man in the Pit*. Mr. Saine and his wife of fifty years have four grown children and seven grandchildren and are members of the Midland Valley Community Church of the Nazarene. Mr. Saine’s hobbies include distance running/walking, vegetable gardening, fishing, reading, and writing both fiction and non-fiction. 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.
Liz Owens — Adjunct Professor

Liz Owens, a relative newcomer to USCA, is hardly new to post-secondary education. Liz, who holds MEds in both English Education and Educational Technology, has been teaching college English courses since 1993. Liz is currently teaching English 101 and English 102 courses in the evenings here at USCA.

By day Liz is the Director of Technology for Episcopal Day School in Augusta, GA. She also teaches online English 102 courses for Troy University. She was previously the head of the English and Behavioral Studies Departments at Augusta Technical College.

When she isn’t teaching, Liz enjoys spending time with her husband, Ed (who is an English & physics teacher at North Augusta High School) and their four children. While most people use the phrase “A House Divided” to refer to spouses who support different sports teams, Liz and her husband are a house divided over favorite American authors—Hemingway for Liz, Faulkner for Ed.

Maria Anderson — Adjunct Professor

Maria Anderson did her undergraduate and graduate English studies at Queens College, CUNY, in New York City, and earned an MS in Education from the University of Bridgeport, Connecticut.

Beside being a college adjunct professor, Maria is a published author of both fiction and non-fiction, and an enterprising businesswoman who has been in the writing, publishing, advertising, and education arena for the last thirty years. She has worked for Harcourt Brace, MacMillan, and Wildlife Education, ridden the dot.com wave, had her YA novel published by CRP, written for Time-Life Books, crafted an inauguration speech for a famous dignitary, penned song lyrics for a rock band, written radio and television commercials, critiqued theatrical scripts for an Off-Broadway theater, and written and produced two web shows, Little Shop of Writers, and the kids' animals/nature/conservation program, Zoobooks Presents: A Wild Life.

Maria is from a military family, and has lived many places. She is new to Aiken, where she presently resides with her two horses, three dogs, five cats, and two young adult children, who haven't quite flown the coop.
Although I retired from teaching two years ago, I still devote a great deal of time to the other two categories of professorial responsibility: scholarship and service.

This past year, in addition to writing my weekly “Arts and Humanities” column in *The Aiken Standard*, serving as principal art reviewer for *Free Times*, and contributing articles on local history and the arts for each issue of *Aiken Homes and Lifestyles*, I have two book projects. Volume 3 of *State of the Heart* (USC Press), featuring my chapter entitled “A Nineteenth-Century Poet’s Garden Bower,” is scheduled to be published in August, 2018. This past summer I edited a collection of linked stories by three authors, including the very talented Andrew Geyer; the book, entitled *Dancing on Barbed Wire* will be published in 2018 by Angelina River Press.

In the category of service, I am about to begin my ninth year as Chair of the Board of Governors of the South Carolina Academy of Authors, which manages our state’s literary hall of fame. This coming April in a special ceremony in Beaufort, the Academy will induct Valerie Sayers, Nathalie Dupree, Mary Alice Monroe, and John Blake White. This past fall, I was elected Vice Chair of SC Humanities, our state’s program of the National Endowment of the Humanities. SC Humanities distributes more than $200,000 in grant money each year to museums, libraries, colleges, and other institutions that sponsor public programs in the humanities, particularly literature and history. I am also chairing the planning committee for the 2018 South Carolina Humanities Festival, which will be held in Aiken from April 12 to 14 and feature free lectures, readings, exhibitions, open house events, and tours at a host of venues around town.

In addition to all of this continuing engagement in my discipline, I carved out plenty of time for travel. In May, my partner Michael Budd and I traveled to Vienna and Bratislava for the first time. In October, I represented our state at the National Humanities Conference in Boston.

**Additional Faculty**

**Dr. Jill Hampton—Associate Professor**
Since my graduation in the spring of 2016, I have been living and teaching English in Spain. Last year I taught at an elementary school in Murcia, one of the smaller and lesser known regions of Spain. Murcia can be found along the Mediterranean coastline a little south of Valencia. I had such a great experience in Murcia last year that I decided to teach in Spain again for another year. Now I am living in Madrid and have no regrets about my decision to come back. Madrid is an amazing city.

I do not make a lot of money teaching in Spain, but I make more than enough to get by and travel a little on the side. Teaching English in Spain has provided me the opportunity to travel Europe, learn Spanish, and meet friends from all over the world. I spend my free time hiking, traveling, and drinking cerveza.

Right after graduating from USC Aiken, I received my first professional job at USC Aiken! I work as the Records Specialist for the Office of the Registrar. I assist with the Program Bulletin; interact with faculty, staff, students, and the local community; and develop the exam schedule. I was also elected to the Staff Appreciation Committee for USC Aiken's Classified Employees. Lastly, I will be starting for my MBA in the Spring at USC Aiken!
Mary Rosbach — Class of 2011

My name is Mary Rosbach. Some of you may know me as Mary Ward. I met my husband John in Dr. Carlson’s Development of the English Language class. John graduated in the spring of 2010 with a degree in History and I graduated in the spring of 2011. We were married in September of 2014 and our daughter, Robyn, was born in December of 2015.

After working in retail for several years, I needed a different career. I stumbled across a job posting and accepted a position with the City of Aiken’s Parks, Recreation, and Tourism Department at the Aiken Visitor’s Center and Train Museum. It was only part-time but it sounded interesting. Now, after four and a half years, I am the Tourism Coordinator for the City of Aiken Community Affairs and Tourism Department.

I manage a staff of thirty dedicated volunteers who assist me with programming and answer any questions that visitors or residents may have. It is my job to ensure that the Aiken Visitors Center and Train Museum operates smoothly including rentals and tours of the facility. I maintain the model train and exhibits as well. I’ve also assisted with events such as Joye in Aiken and the SC Humanities Festival. I enjoy serving our community and encourage you to explore your own backyard. You never know what you may find!

Ellice Whatley — Class of 2013

It has been five years since I graduated from USCA, and my degree in English has certainly presented various career opportunities. Shortly after graduating, I worked at Aiken Tech as their Writing Center Coordinator, and I later worked at USCA in the Financial Aid Office. I left USCA last summer to work for The Community Foundation for the Central Savannah River Area, where I am currently the Foundation Associate. The Community Foundation is a nonprofit organization that houses funds for donors throughout the CSRA for the purpose of granting money to non-profits. The funds we receive and the granting we do allow us to make a positive impact in our community. The Community Foundation has even granted to USCA in 2017 and 2018. As the Foundation Associate, I communicate with our donors and our non-profits, and I process all donations and grants. I also plan our annual Press Conference where we announce our Unrestricted Grant Recipients.

The financial aspects of my job might seem to clash with the skill set many would assume accompanies an English degree; but the truth is, even with the financial components of my job, I would be lost if it weren’t for my English degree. Being analytical and communicative, my English degree taught me to turn coal into diamonds. Having a paper due at 8 a.m. tomorrow that you have not yet started and having to teach yourself accounts payable in a day really are not that different. Both are coal, demanding to be diamonds. Because of my English degree, I am in a job that I love, and I feel good about the work I am doing. Even when my job gets busy or stressful, I get to go home each day with a renewed sense of pride in what I get to do.

In terms of my personal life, I have recently bought a home and got married. I have also received my blue belt in Brazilian Jiu Jitsu, and I have spent the better part of this past year training at distance running, which Dr. Geyer can attest to, as I have seen him running many Saturdays pushing a stroller with a child in it and still going faster than me. Overall, I am enjoying life with my husband and my doggos, running, reading, and fighting when I can.
A Tribute to “Ayodele”

By Anniebelle Quattlebaum

In 1984, when Dr. Bill Claxon got the call for his phone interview for a position at USC Aiken, he was on his exercise bike. As he fondly recalls, "My wife said I was so excited afterwards that I talked all the way home about the campus, the people, and the community."

The rest is, as they say, history—a journey that comes to a close after Spring 2018, when Dr. Claxon retires after thirty-four faithful years at USCA.

Born and raised in Nigeria, Dr. Claxon (or Ayodele— an African name his father’s coworkers gave to him, meaning Joy Comes to This House) has a wide cultural background, a background he credits for the person he is today. He noted, “It's been important for my worldview. It has been responsible for my sensitivity, which I think I have through other cultures. It has reduced my ethnocentrism so much so that I'm not sure where my ethnocentric place is.” Dr. Claxon has brought this cultural knowledge to the classroom. For many years he has taught Introduction to Nonwestern Literature, a course he created because he wanted the chance to teach African Literature. "I can't speak knowledgably about all of Africa," he explained, “but I can speak fairly knowledgably about where I was born and raised. One of my favorite writers, Chinua Achebe, is from there. He was in university in the same city I was living in when I was there."

Nevertheless, Dr. Claxon’s interest in Southern Literature led him to specialize in American Literature. Over the years, he has presented multiple papers on Southern Literature, particularly on the portrayal of masculinity in Southern Literature.

Dr. Claxon hails from a family of teachers including his mother, father, aunt, and sisters. It was when he tried a part-time teaching job after college that he made the decision to teach. His love for USC Aiken stems from its focus as a teaching institution and for the close-knit, supportive community.

"Teaching is a very isolated job," he elaborated, “but the faculty here is exceptional in that everyone supports each other. We have some really, really good students who come through us. People might think that we just get people who are local—and we do—but we get some really, really good ones, especially the English department. Most of the students I've found are interested in getting an education. They don’t complain about it, and they're always courteous (to me, anyway).”

Come retirement, Dr. Claxon has many plans laid out. A shelf in his office is filled with a collection of books with central male characters, books he plans to read without worrying about teaching them. Though he has never been big on scholarship, he plans to do much more of it.

In the past two years, he has focused his research on popular culture. Recently, he has presented on the TV series *Once Upon a Time* and its relationship to Faulkner. “I was really surprised when I received an e-mail for the conference from the University of Mississippi press saying they saw the title for my presentation and were interested in talking with me further about it,” he said. Dr. Claxon focuses on the similarities in fragmentation of time, shifts in time, and different perspectives. At some point, he hopes to get in touch with the creators of *Lost* and find out what influence, if any, Faulkner may have had on them. Dr. Claxon presented his second chapter outline on *Once Upon a Time* in March 2018.

Dr. Claxon has much to look forward to. What he anticipates the most, however, is totally relatable. “Sleep,” he replied immediately.
Senior Brunch
2017
Fall 2017 Oswald Distinguished Writers Series: Tim O’Brien
By Anniebelle Quattlebaum

Tim O’Brien is an award-winning American author who is best known for his fictional portrayals of the Vietnam War. His novel Going After Cacciato received the National Book Award in fiction, and The Things They Carried received France’s prestigious Prix du Meilleur Livre Etranger and was also a finalist for both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. He is furthermore the recipient of literary awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, the Guggenheim Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. In addition, he has been elected to the Society of American Historians and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. O’Brien is currently the Roy F. and Joann Cole Mitte Chair in Creative Writing at Southwest Texas State University.

Some of his work includes the following:

If I Die in a Combat Zone: Box Me Up and Ship Me Home (1975)
"I wish Tim O’Brien did not write so beautifully, for he makes it impossible to forget his book. I have read it three times, and three years from now it will still have that terrible power to make me remember and to make me weep." —Gloria Emerson

Going After Cacciato (1978)
"The finest piece of American fiction to emerge from the Vietnam War...Going After Cacciato has the depth and resonance of classic fiction of war." —The Baltimore Sun

The Things They Carried (1990)
"A marvel of storytelling...In prose that combines the sharp, unsentimental rhythms of Hemingway with gentler, more lyrical descriptions, Mr. O’Brien gives the reader a shockingly visceral sense of what it felt like to tramp through a booby-trapped jungle, carrying 20 pounds of supplies, 14 pounds of ammunition, along with radios, machine guns, assault rifles and grenades...In addition, he manages that harder thing of making the reader understand the difficulties and consolations of writing about war—this war, any war, the impossibility of conveying the horror, and the overwhelming need to make sense of that horror by arranging sentences on a page. A vital, important book—a book that matters not only to the reader interested in Vietnam, but to anyone interested in the craft of writing as well." —The New York Times

In The Lake of the Woods (1994)
"O'Brien is like a painter, applying shading with this stroke, depth...O'Brien leaves us with the portrait of a man who travels into his own heart of darkness. It's a trip not many of us would choose to make, but O'Brien makes the journey heart rending, fascinating, and unforgettable." —Minneapolis Star Tribune
Jeanetta Calhoun Mish never dreamed she would write poetry for a living. To her, poetry is not so much enjoyment as a compulsion. In her words, “I can’t not write poetry.” On February 13, 2018, I had the honor of interviewing Dr. Mish. With bright, new cowboy boots that matched the color of her new book, Mish was enthusiastic, humble, and down-to-earth.

It was in the second grade that Mish discovered her love for poetry. She recalled, “I was in second grade and it was early spring and I heard a commotion outside. In the house I grew up in, they used to put windows high up, so I had to stand on my bed and look outside. I saw that a pack of feral dogs had attacked my dog. I wanted to run and save him. He died shortly thereafter. That was what I wrote my first poem about. My mother had always read to me and loved poetry; she read Robert Frost, Lord Byron, some Emily... I knew that poems were about big, emotional themes so I wrote a poem and took it to school and my second grade teacher made a big deal about it. My mother put it on the fridge—you see, my little sister, she was the cute one. She got all the attention. And then I wrote poetry and people were applauding!”

Since then, Mish cannot recall not writing poetry. During her sophomore year in high school, she won the high school poetry contest. Her winning poem, “My First Time,” was judged by the 1966 Oklahoma poet laureate, Rudolph N. Hill. The first woman in her family to graduate high school, Mish intended on setting off for the University of Houston, but instead, postponed college and traveled throughout the United States and Europe.

“Traveling gave me new things to write about,” she explained. “This was not fancy travel—this was like sleeping-on-people’s-couches travel. But it’s more like the real thing. The title of one of Thomas Wolfe’s books is You Can’t Go Home Again; I mean, you can, but you’re not the same person. Not only did I learn things outside of me, I learned a lot about myself. It was as much about seeing me and where I came from differently as it was about seeing different things and what was between all that. It’s a bit cliché, but it’s real. It did change the way I saw myself.”

For young writers, she has this advice: read, write, and live. As she explained, “Writing has to be about life and culture. But if you don’t have a life out here without interactions with people and you never see what they do and how they act and how their accents are—the good and bad things that happen to people—then you don’t have anything to write about. It’s all guess work. I know I had a rich and varied life because I didn’t go to college until later, but you know—do some volunteer work for someone totally different from you and learn about them. Learn about yourself.”

Mish's early life was indeed arduous; she spent her twenties and thirties working jobs in hard labor and nursing homes. Nevertheless, she published her first poem at age 23, all the while writing poems that would later be compiled into her first volume, Tongue Tied Woman (which won a national award when she was 40 years old). During this time, she leaned on poetry, writing poems in her head as she went about the daily grind. “If I hadn’t been able to process things through the poetry, I’d probably be in an institution right now,” she joked. "It gave me something to think about."

Though not as early as planned, she ultimately attended college at age 37, graduating with a Bachelor’s and Master’s in 18th Century British Literature and earning her PhD in Contemporary American Literature. When asked what made her decide to start college, she replied “I was a single mom and I wanted to do better for my son. I intentionally studied literature because I knew I could read books and think about them. I didn’t want to do something that would get in the way of being a mom.”

Since then, Mish has published Landscape Dreams, A New Mexico Portrait; Oklomeland; What I Learned at the War; Into the Great White Sands, and numerous critical essays. She is the editor of the award-winning Mongrel Empire Press and contributing editor for World Literature Today and Oklahoma Today. In 2017, she was named Oklahoma’s State Poet Laureate.

Mish does not take her career as a poet and writer for granted. She affirmed, “I love to teach. I love to unteach...to help people not be afraid. I’ve met wonderful people and other writers. I love sharing with the audience and having author friends. I never imagined I’d get to do this for an actual living; whatever else I would have been, I’d probably still be writing poetry.”

As for her legacy, Mish’s wish is simple: “I want to be remembered as someone who made poetry not scary for people. It didn’t use to be this way. Poetry was everywhere. There was poetry in local newspapers. Poetry was memorized. Everyone wrote poems at least once and nobody was terrified. But there wasn’t that ‘I’m not smart enough to read poetry.’ It’s my mission to bring that back. I think that with a little encouragement and some pointers, everyone can learn to read the most difficult poetry.”
Broken Ink
by Meredith Hawcroft

The 2017 academic year marked the 49th anniversary of USC Aiken’s literary and visual arts magazine, Broken Ink. The publication prepared for its upcoming quinquagenarian edition under the faithful guidance of faculty advisor Roy Seeger.

Broken Ink continued to expand its multimedia submissions by featuring original music and spoken-word recordings accessible through a scannable QR code in the magazine. The magazine also continued to welcome poetry, prose, short stories, creative nonfiction, song lyrics, play scripts, photography, comics, paintings, digital art, and drawings.

After great anticipation, the issue was revealed at the organization’s release party before faculty, staff, students, and other members of the local artistic community. The event featured guest speaker Barrett Warner, who is the author of several chapbooks and the editor of Free State Review. The staff of Broken Ink was once again excited to show off the product of their labor as well as the tremendous talent of USCA’s student body.
Since its acquisition by the Department of English in 2016, the Writing Room has only continued to expand its services. Professor Vicki Collins serves as Writing Room Director, while Anniebelle Quattlebaum took over 2017 graduate Meredith Hawcroft’s position as Lead Tutor.

In Fall 2017, Professor Michael Gibbs joined the Writing Room staff, in addition to student tutors Hannah Jameson, Christine Rhodes, Liam Dakin, and Madeline Thibault.

In Spring 2018, Professor Kyle Williams joined, in addition to Tequila Hightower. Also in Spring 2018, the Writing Room further extended the range of its tutoring services to include students attending Palmetto College. Through Blackboard Connect, online students are now able to access online tutoring sessions from the convenience of their homes.

English instructors, Gregg-Graniteville Library staff, and student tutors continue to lead Writing Room Workshops dedicated to a variety of topics, including using punctuation correctly; forming thesis statements; writing memoirs; correctly formatting in MLA, APA, and Chicago; and even tips and tricks in Microsoft Word. Furthermore, the Writing Room has begun conducting workshops in the dormitories—including Pacer Downs, Pacer Crossings, and Pacer Commons—which offered evening workshops for residents’ convenience.

With a record number of students being tutored and its expanding list of services, the Writing Room’s success continues to soar. The Writing Room thanks the English department and its students for their generous support.
When I graduated high school in 2010, I never imagined I would be at USC Aiken, or for that matter, become an English major. It was during my transfer orientation in 2015, after some extended gap years and flippity-flopping between deciding whether I should major in Business, Elementary Education, Computer Science, or even Biology, that I ripped the “Business major” sticker off my chest and switched to English. I have not once regretted this decision. (Ahem, okay, maybe a few times during finals week—papers for every class, eh?).

Not only has my writing improved, but my confidence in research—and especially in presenting research—has vastly increased. Being the newsletter intern has granted me many opportunities such as interviewing Oklahoma Poet Laureate Jeanetta Calhoun Mish, who had profound advice for me as both a writer and a person, and interviewing Dr. Claxon, a professor I never taken a class from but have heard many wonderful things about.

I could never dream of being a part of a more supportive, caring, and fun major. Each and every English professor I have had has been everything a professor should be, always doing everything possible to help me succeed, whether it was encouraging me to pursue a Magellan project, to become a Writing Room tutor, or to apply for an internship. Come graduation, I feel confident that I will have the tools I need to venture into the “real world” (and hopefully publish a novel).