Dr. Kualapai’s Spring Sojourn to Lebanon

Last spring, Dr. Kualapai accepted an invitation from the English Department at the University of Balamand in El-Koura, Lebanon, to give a personal narrative writing workshop focusing on war’s impact on the lives of Balamand’s students. “Understandably,” notes Dr. Kualapai, “the students were initially reticent to talk about their experiences, especially with a stranger. But by day two, students and faculty alike were not only sharing their narratives but sharing them with passion and empathy.” The point of the workshop was to help the students find the personal experiences that define the ongoing threat of war in their lives. “The essay I’ll never forget,” said Dr. Kualapai, “was written by a young woman who stood on the third-floor balcony of her family’s apartment, watching the Kentucky Fried Chicken across the street being torched by an angry mob; as the smell of burned chicken filled the apartment, she feared that her own building might be next. And, remarkably, she knew she would miss the crispy-fried American KFC.”

During her short visit, Dr. Kualapai presented two other workshops: one promoting the Fulbright experience for Balamand students and, for the last day of the campus visit, a workshop with the Liberal Arts faculty, exploring Interdisciplinary classroom approaches to help their students grasp the complexity of the Syrian refugee situation.

“My only regret,” laments Dr. Kualapai “is that the visit was too short. I would love to return to Lebanon when the political situation settles, which I pray will be soon. A two- or three-week writing workshop would be an unforgettable experience.”
Texas Heritage Music Days

Melissa Whitney, Schreiner English Graduate, earned her PhD in Literature from the University of Texas at San Antonio this last spring. She has regularly brought students to the annual Texas Heritage Music Days, sponsored by the Texas Heritage Music Foundation and organized by Dr. Kathleen Hudson. Melissa is pictured here in her authentic German garb, and here are just a few of her comments about the living history experience: “I had a wonderful time at the event. I told the story of the German immigrants in Texas, including the bluebonnet legend and the legend of the Easter bunny in connection to the Fredericksburg Easter Fires. We talked about animal products of the time, such as cheese and butter, and I showed them the sheep, and the wool I had shaved off the day before. I showed them how the wool was cleaned, dyed, and spun, or woven. Each child was allowed to take a handful of wool home. I showed them how rag rugs and quilts were made, and they tried weaving on potholder looms. The event was a great learning experience for my students, culminating in making and presenting a creative research poster about German Texans to the class.”

The Writing Center

Bridging Gaps was the theme of this year’s South Central Writing Centers Association (SCWCA) conference in Corpus Christi, Texas, in late February. Under the supervision of Writing Center Director Dr. Kirsten Komara peer tutors from the Schreiner University Writing Center attended the conference and several presented on Schreiner’s efforts to bridge the gaps between the Writing Center and the campus community. The students delivered a panel presentation: Rebecca Jones and Keisha Bedwell discussed the Writing Center’s Stone Soup program; Laura Berlin introduced the Writing Center’s new student outreach Word of the Day; to close the presentation, Rebecca Jones and Maria Diosdado assisted Ashley Firasek in presenting feedback about the center from the Schreiner Community.

Laura Berlin

TUTORING ANYONE??

Do you enjoy writing? Do you enjoy talking about writing? Do you want to work on improving your own writing? Are you a good listener? If you answer “yes” to these questions, then please consider applying for a position as a Writing Center peer tutor.

SU Writing Center tutors approach writing as a process, helping other writers work on paper issues, such as focus, organization, development, and tone. Prospective tutors should be people who really want to listen to their peers in order to help them develop ideas in a way that will effectively communicate purpose. For more information, check out our Writing Center website at http://www.schreiner.edu/academics/writing/
Welcome to Dr. Ryan Naughton

This Fall, Schreiner U. welcomed Dr. Ryan Naughton to the Department of English. He is pictured here sharing a donut breakfast with English majors and faculty. A native Arizonan, Dr. Naughton has lived in Colorado, England, Indiana, Ohio, and now Texas. He earned his BA in English with a minor in history from Arizona State University, his MA in Medieval History from the University of York, UK, and his PhD in English Literary Studies from Purdue University. While his specialization is medieval literature (with particular interests in knighthood and chivalry), Ryan really is a British and World literature generalist with formal training in rhetoric and composition and in linguistics. He enjoys his time in the classroom and looks forward to the challenge of connecting modern students with both "old" and "new" literature. His main teaching philosophy centers on developing students' critical thinking, reading, and writing skills in courses ranging from composition to British literature to History of the English Language. Ryan looks forward to getting to know the students, faculty, and staff at Schreiner and getting used to Texas culture.

Hudson reporting from the edge:

Has:

Taught 4 different classes for spring and 4 different classes for fall.
Produced three coffeehouses and a writer's conference.
Sponsored Schreiner creative writing magazine, The Muse.
Presented a workshop on creativity and the brain at the San Miguel de Allende 2013 Literary Conference in February.
Attended Willie Nelson’s 4th of July concert in Ft. Worth (research for THMF oral history project).
Created a new summer coffeehouse series the second Wednesday of the month at 1011 Bistro on the Guadalupe. Jacob Ames hosted July 10, a Schreiner graduate.
Co-directed the Young Rhetorician’s Conference in Monterey, California, June 27-29.

Is:

Writing "On The Road" column monthly for Hill Country Magazine.
Speaking bi-weekly on a video blog at hill-country-visitor.com.
Working with Schreiner students at the THMF office on campus, planning for September 27 Texas Heritage Music Day.
ALL invited for a day of stories and songs as another way of learning.
Planning the THMF coffeehouse series for the first Wednesday of each month in the Fall semester. September 4 features a return of "Sideshow Tragedy," October 2, Will Owen Gage and November 6, Oliver Rajamani.

Always:

Uses exercise, meditation, and caring for animals to keep me calm and centered
Offers many opportunities for Schreiner students at THMF office on campus.

Find more at www.texasheritagemusic.org and kathleenhudson.net
A Schreiner Philadelphia Story

In the spring semester, Professor Sally Hannay and Professor Silke Feltz had the opportunity to attend a Council for Independent Colleges leadership conference for Department Chairs and Program Directors. The conference, which took place in the beautiful city of Philadelphia, focused on duties and challenges college campus leaders face on a regular basis. Connecting with fellow administrators, hands-on examples, practical tips and effective discussion groups helped Professor Hannay grow into her role as the Chair of the Department of English and Foreign Languages. Along with other useful advice, she learned to avoid being an “easy,” a “folding,” or a “beach” chair. The activities and roundtable sessions also proved to be extremely helpful for Silke Feltz who has been facing more administrative duties as a member and campus coordinator of the Texas Language Consortium. Philadelphia is a city of many fascinating attractions, and although Hannay and Feltz did not experience a Philly cheese sandwich, they did walk the city, saw the Liberty Bell and the famous Rocky steps, and toured the Barnes Museum.

Liberal Education in the Land of the Thunder Dragon

Dr. Kirsten Komara presented a lecture entitled: “Embedded Cultural Contact: Liberal Education in the Land of the Thunder Dragon,” at the South Central Writing Center Association Conference 2013 in Corpus Christi. In her lecture, she discussed Bhutanese students’ discomfort and lack of critical approaches to reading and writing assignments because of their unfamiliarity with liberal arts education and their local Buddhist cultural beliefs. Dr. Komara worked as an English professor and Learning Resource Center Director at the Royal Thimphu College in Bhutan during AY 2010-11.

You Can Quote me on this:

“Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can. That is the only secret. “
Aristotle
Jessica Roberts: It’s her life and she loves it!

Schreiner alumni, Jessica Roberts, lives in Austin and teaches at Del Valle High School, A Title 1 school in South Austin. She graduated from Schreiner with her BA in English in 2011, and her Masters of Education and Certification in 2012. While studying at S.U., Jessica was involved in Choir and theater on campus and in the Kerrville community. She directed shows on campus and off including: The Rocky Horror Show, Antigone (Senior Thesis), Putnam County Spelling Bee, Sleeping Beauty (The Point Theatre) and Doo Wop Wed Widing Hood (Point Theatre). Jessica acted and sang, as well as costumed and property mastered many shows in Kerrville. Jessica shared that Schreiner, “was and is my pathway to adulthood. Before I was a kid and after I know I’m an adult.” Teaching, she says, means everything to her: “My kids ask me all the time why I teach, and my only true answer is: it’s my life and I love it.”

Silke Feltz interviewed Jessica about her new life as a teacher and her learning experience here at Schreiner.

Why did you decide to go to Schreiner?

After venturing out of Kerrville to go to school at Stephen F. Austin State University, I became very homesick. I was 8 hours from home and on my own for the first time. So, after my first semester, and an internship with Disney World, I decided I wasn’t yet ready to venture that far from home. I came back to Kerrville because my family and friends were there, and I went to Schreiner really because of proximity. Later, after dropping out to work full time, I came back because I felt Schreiner was the right place for me. Non-trads, like myself, didn’t have to feel inadequate or like they meant less than the typical, right-out-of-high-school student. I loved Schreiner for its Liberal Arts professors, its commitment to better itself, and I loved being able to be in choir and theater (two of my immense passions).

When did you decide you wanted to teach?

I was sitting in a literature class, I believe it was Dr. Kualapai’s class, when I discovered that my passion for the literature we were discussing was contagious and inspired people to speak up, make connections, and read. It was at that moment, and later when I began directing Children’s theater, that I realized I was good at connecting with people about things I was passionate about. My kids now say that I’m like a preacher of English, one that has tent revivals and casts out the demon of laziness. I agree with them.

Which class prepared you the best for your job?

It was a mixture between my student teaching at Our Lady of the Hills and my literature courses. Not a day goes by when I don’t think of the classes I took and pull texts for my students from them. African American Literature, War Literature, Shakespeare – they all became a center piece of my classroom, and the kids love that it’s not the same old stuffy literature they cannot connect to.

What has been your best teaching experience so far?

Inspired by a class I took at Schreiner I decided to teach Haroun and the Sea of Stories by Salman Rushdie to my students. When I told teachers this they were shocked to hear that he’d written a children’s book with adult themes, and I was so eager to teach it. I had mixed reactions from the students, from: it was confusing and weird, to it was fun and colorful. But nothing can beat the moment, in my fourth period class, when we finished the last paragraph of the book, and I saw one student, with the largest grin on her face, just sigh with delight and say under her breath, “That was such a great book.” For most of my kids this was the first or second book they had actually read, and it was something that, in most cases, they would have never read. Thanks to Schreiner, they did.

What advice would you give current English majors/ current students who aspire to become teachers?

Stay passionate because it is inspiring to young people. I always wanted to be that teacher that students would contribute a love of reading and writing to, and to an extent I think I am to some – not all. Also, don’t rule our schools like Del Valle; they may seem daunting and scary, but these kids need good role models and people to care about them just like any other.
**Collaboration and Travel, oh my**

**Fall Experience:**

My semester started off fantastically! I went to Boston this past September for what the English Department calls “The Fall Experience.” Dr. Kualapai, Christopher Vanderveer, Samantha Sepe, Lane Mozzygemb, Kelly Rundzieher, and I each packed two little travel bags, paid our $500 and were off to one of the most historic places in America. We stayed in a quaint Victorian Manor House while exploring not only the city but the various historical and literary sites that are quintessential to our major. But it wasn't all Pilgrims, Thoreau quotes, and literary tours.

To say that we strayed from the path would be an understatement. At one point we decided we would float down a river in row boats. But between literary perspectives and outdoor adventures, we also had some of the best food on the east coast. In particular, we went to Legal Seafood where I had a lobster bisque so good my jaw hung open after just one bite.

The things I'll remember most are when we went to see the audience interactive play, Shear Madness, and in the midst of arguing with an actress I was called “Cupcake,” pulled up onto the stage, and then forced to read lesbian love letters to the crowd. Or that moment walking the mile stretch of Walden Pond, trying desperately to contact Thoreau's genius for my own novel. Even those quirky stories I heard at Mass Mouth where Christopher and Samantha got up in front of the crowd and told their one-minute stories, followed by glorious applause and accolades! I'll also never forget how my feet hurt after a day of the Literary Walking Tour, the Photographic Walking Tour, and the spooky Boston After Dark Walking Tour.

But more than anything I'll remember how fun my Junior year at Schreiner started off!

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**NITLE—Let’s conference together...**

In April, Silke Feltz, Instructor of English and German, and senior student, Rene’ Garza traveled to Atlanta to attend this year’s NITLE (National Institute of Technology in Liberal Arts Education) Symposium. The theme of the conference was Collaboration between higher education institutions and The Texas Language Consortium. Silke and Rene’ engaged in interactive activities and two plenary discussions hosted by NITLE. They met like-minded faculty members and administrators from across the country and engaged in a conversation about the challenges and goals of collaborating with students and faculty members from other colleges.

When it comes to collaboration, the sky seems to be the limit. The New York Six Collaborators, for example, have established an extremely successful internship program and several colleges expressed sincere interest in learning about how the Texas Language Consortium, a consortium between Schreiner University and four other private liberal arts colleges in Texas, works. The contributions of Rene’ Garza, also a recipient of the Dean Scholarship, were extremely welcomed at the Symposium, and she also presented her findings at Schreiner’s Academic Showcase.

In the upcoming academic year, Rene’ and Silke will continue to collaborate on strengthening the campus presence of the Texas Language Consortium. If you would like to learn more about this exciting inter-institutional, collaborative project, please feel free to contact Silke (sfeltz@schreiner.edu).