

The Reavis Newsletter

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Department of English Northern Illinois University

FROM THE CHAIR



Having served as Undergraduate Director from 2008-12, it's now my pleasure to serve as chair of our fabulous, award-winning department. I began my duties in July when I was teaching for the third time in our NIU at Oxford University program. It was challenging to begin my leadership role via email but Angie Dybas, our Office Manager Extraordinaire, kept me well-informed. When I returned in early August, we prepared for the fall semester and initiated some new endeavors, including a poetry reading by Burmese poet Ko Ko Thett from the University of Iowa's International Writing program, a "performance" by NIU's Unrehearsed Players of *Twelfth Night* led by Lara Crowley, more professionalization workshops and talks for our graduate students, including a job talk by our doctoral alumna Professor Josh Adair of Murray State, and a new scholarly book celebration to honor Professor Susan Deskis and Professor Jeffrey Einboden, who published books in the last year. Our aim is to create a greater sense of community among faculty and students, while also continuing to pursue dynamic artistic and intellectual work and excellent teaching.

Despite the challenges associated with state-funding issues, our department continues to excel. Our faculty are as excellent as they have always been; not only are we terrific teachers, we rank in the top 10% in terms of scholarship in comparison to our peer institutions. According to the Graduate Studies Program Prioritization Report, the graduate professorial faculty occupy the 94.6 percentile with 43 books published in the years 2011-2015. During that time, we also published 58 articles, 41 chapters, 85 poems, 60 nonfiction essays, and we edited 15 journals. When we consider the faculty as a whole, including instructors and SPS, we published 63 books, 67 articles, 96 poems and 74 essays, and overall we gave 173 conference presentations. We also earned 18 grants and 38 awards. Obviously, our faculty is a scholarly and artistic model for other departments at NIU and beyond. We definitely contribute to the prestige of

the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and NIU through our creation of new knowledge and literary art. Such excellence in scholarship helped us overall in Program Prioritization.

Our graduate and undergraduate programs have performed well. We've been re-vamping our graduate literature programs to ensure greater breadth and depth. Our new writing track and our Creative Writing Certificate in the undergraduate program have helped our undergraduate major rebound during an era that overemphasizes STEM at the expense of the Humanities. With that said, we created a new careers page to help students understand what they can do with their English degree. We are planning on creating a professionalization course that will help undergraduate majors better prepare for the job market.

We are grateful to have received three awards that support our programs. Emily Hipchen established the Founder's Prize as a memorial to her husband, Chuck Bowie, who helped establish MCLLM, our graduate student conference. The Founder's Prize will be used to support the conference. Mike and Anne Malone have established a short fiction prize that helps undergraduate students get published in Towers Magazine. The winning student will also receive a handsome monetary award. We have also received notice that Alison and David Maki are creating the Glenn Meeter Award, which will assist instructors, graduate students, and faculty with faculty development.

For now, let me say that we have a great team of administrators and office staff who keep this department running and thriving. I'm grateful to Undergraduate Director Brad Peters, Graduate Director Jessica Reyman, Michael Day, First-Year Composition Director, Judith Pokorny, Assistant to the Undergraduate Director and Coordinator of Teacher Licensure, Angie Dybas, our Office Administrator, Jodi Long, our Undergraduate Office Support Specialist, Maribel Montelongo, our new First-Year Composition Office Support Specialist, and Stephanie Roach, our new Graduate Program Office Support Specialist, who all make my job much easier and who are delightful to work with.

Honors and Awards

Professor **Jeffrey Einboden** recently learned that he is the recipient of the highly-prestigious American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship. The competition for the award is fierce; ACLS received 1200 applications but only 71 awards were granted. Since 2013, Dr. Einboden has published or contracted five monographs, two of which were contracted by Oxford University Press. His work, which intersects American literary history and Islamic influence, is topical and timely. It has attracted national and international notice, not only within the academy, but also beyond the academy. We are extremely proud of Dr. Einboden's work.

Eric Hoffman, Coordinator of Networked Writing and Research and who works in our First-Year Composition Program, is a recipient of one of this year's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences Awards. According to the college's spokesperson, Eric is one of "11 very special individuals who have made major positive contributions to the college and its reputation for excellence."

Doctoral student **Ashley Heiberger** won the ITBE (Illinois Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages/Bilingual Education) Graduate Scholarship Award.

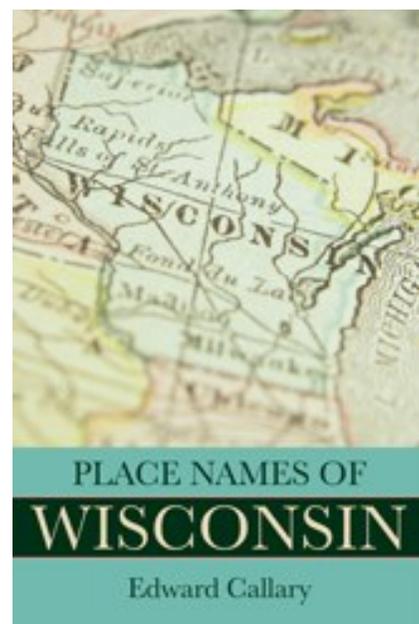
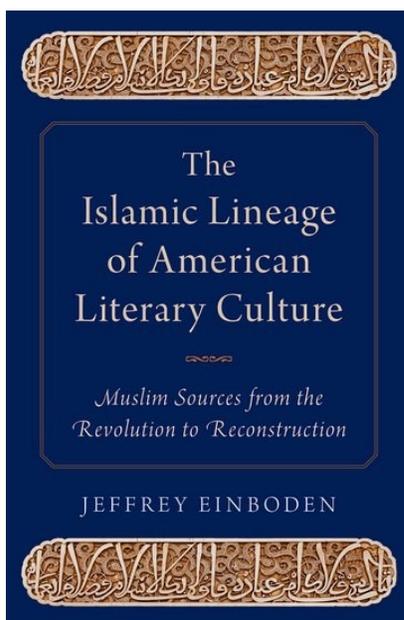
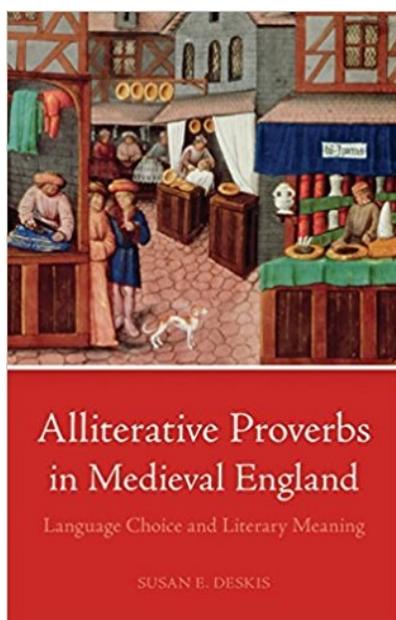
Congratulations to Jeff, Eric, and Ashley!

FACULTY BOOKS PUBLISHED IN 2016

Einboden, Jeffrey. *The Islamic Lineage of Literary America: Muslim Sources from the Revolution to Reconstruction*. London: Oxford University Press, 2016.

Deskis, Susan E., *Alliterative Proverbs in Medieval England: Language Choice and Literary Meaning*. Columbus: The Ohio State University Press, 2016.

Callary, Ed. *Place Names of Wisconsin*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2016.



Promotion Decisions

During summer 2016, the Board of Trustees promoted **Brian May** and **Jeffrey Einboden** to full professors. Congratulations to Drs. May and Einboden!



Dr. Jeffrey Einboden



Dr. Brian May

New Hire

Dr. Betsy Kahn joined us in fall 2016 as an English Education faculty member. She earned her doctorate at the University of Chicago in 1999 and is the author of 12 books and 20+ articles. She has held national and regional offices in teacher education, including serving as president of the IATE. Dr. Kahn is also a former secondary education English teacher, having taught from 1978-2012 and finally serving as chair of her department at James Conant High School. We are delighted to have Dr. Kahn as a faculty member. Her scholarly and pedagogical expertise is highly valued by our students and by the department in general. Welcome, Betsy!



Dr. Elizabeth "Betsy" Kahn

Ph.D. and M.A. Graduates Get Jobs!

We are very happy to announce that four of our doctoral students acquired academic positions for the next academic year. Thanks to **Lara Crowley**, our Job Placement Coordinator, and all those who helped prepare these students to successfully compete in a tight job market.

Erika Sparby accepted a tenure-track offer as an assistant professor of English at Illinois State University for fall 2017.

Kelle Mullineux accepted a tenure-track position as an assistant professor of English at the University of Tennessee, Martin for fall 2017.

Stephanie Opfer accepted a tenure-track position at Tiffin University for fall 2017. In addition to being an assistant professor of English, she will serve as the Chair of Graduate Humanities.

Rhiannon Catherwood accepted a tenure-track position at Onondaga Community College in Syracuse, NY, for fall 2017. Onondaga is considered the flagship community college for the SUNY system.

Congratulations to these students as they begin their academic careers!

SPRING 2016 UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE AWARDS

John C. and Judith M. Gurley Endowed English Scholarship

Oscar Barron

Orville Baker Essay Award

Ibrahim Baig – 1st place

Scott Glavac – 2nd place

Ashely Palmer – 3rd place

S. Orville and Adra Baker Scholarship

Leo Reich

Rosalie Hewitt Scholarship in English

Marilou Terrones

Lynne Waldeland Scholarship in English

Zahra Muhsin

Richard H. Howland Award for Poetry Writing

Ibrahim Baig and Noah Koob

David and Linda Nelson Award for Teacher Licensure in English

Brad Unterberger, Jessica Jacober,
Deanna Okerblad

Robert T. Self Award in Literature and Film

Kyle Killebrew, Kristina Delos Santos

Russell and Jeanne Durning Family Fund Scholarship

Amy Johnson

Charles W. Hagelman, Jr. Scholarship for Study in Oxford

Danielle Bradford, Samantha Erdmier,
Chlorissa Saint Arbor, Marilou Terrones

Liberal Arts and Sciences Deans' Award

Scott Glavac

Outstanding Graduate Students

Lindsay Crane, Ashley Heiberger

Dissertation Completion Fellowship

Ashley Heiberger

Arnold B. Fox Graduate Research Writing Award

Adam Burgess, Doug DePalma

RETIREMENTS

In June of 2016, two of our long-serving faculty members retired, **Professor Phil Eubanks** and **Professor John Schaeffer**.

Dr. Eubanks joined our faculty in 1996 after receiving his Ph.D. at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He is the author of three scholarly books: *Metaphor and Writing: Figurative Thought in the Discourse of Written Communication*. (Cambridge University Press, 2011), *The Troubled Rhetoric and Communication of Climate Change*. (Routledge, 2015) and *A War of Words in the Discourse of Trade: The Rhetorical Constitution of Metaphor* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 2000). He is also the author of 18 articles. During his 20 years at NIU, Dr. Eubanks held numerous administrative positions in the department, including chair, acting chair, interim chair, and graduate director, while also serving on department council, UGSC, UCC, graduate studies committee, and undergraduate studies committee. He directed two dissertations and 14 MA theses.

Dr. Schaeffer taught at NIU for 26 years, after receiving his Ph.D. from St. Louis University. The author of two books, *Giambattista Vico's Universal Law*. 2 vols. Trans. John D. Schaeffer (Lewiston PA: Edwin Mellen Press, 2011) and *Sensus Communis: Vico, Rhetoric, and the Limits of Relativism* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 1990), he also published three book chapters, and 20+ articles. Dr. Schaeffer was also the recipient of two NEH grants and one Fulbright Award. While at NIU, he served as the Director of First Year Composition from 1996-98. He directed four dissertations and also served as the Newberry Library Representative as well as on many other committees, including Graduate Studies, UCC, General Education, and was the Faculty Advisor of the NIU Chess Club.

We thank both Dr. Eubanks and Dr. Schaeffer for their excellent work in our department and we wish them well in their new post-retirement endeavors.

Let us hear from you! Keep up with friends and classmates by sending us some information about yourself!

Return to Department of English, Northern Illinois University, DeKalb, IL 60115-2828 (or e-mail adybas@niu.edu).

Last Name, First Name, Last name at Graduation

Address

City/State/Zip

E-Mail

Degree and Year, Telephone

Occupation, Employer/Firm