

THE BROADSHEET

Issue IX, November 2014

What We Are Reading

by Diana Le

I asked current English majors and minors, English faculty, and English alumni what they were reading (particularly outside the classroom) and why. What follows is a list of their responses.

The Secret Place by Tana French.

"I adore Tana French's books and have been not so patiently awaiting her latest".

-Liz Leahy, Class of 2006

The Whispering Muse by Sjórn.

"Found it in a bookstore in Reykjavik."

-Dr. Kevin Plunkett, English Professor

Since You Have Been Gone by

Morgan Matson, *The Breathing Series* by Rebecca Donovan, *The Fault in our Stars* by John Green, *Divergent*

Series By Veronica Roth, *Pretty Little Liars* series by Sara Shepherd. "I like these books because they...

[represent] a mix of different genres and always keep me wanting to read more and more — a little romance, some horror and mystery.

-Jenny Vallinaggi, Class of 2018

Will Grayson by John Green.

"This book is co-written with David Levithan, who is another one of my favorite authors along with John Green."

-Bridget Kennedy, Class of 2018

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Opportunity is Knocking

by Janelle Clarke



Lori Dameron
(Left), Associate
Director of the
O'Brien Center for
Student Success and
Sarah Mackler
(Right), Liberal Arts
Career Advisor.

Landing a lucrative internship or job during one's college career is an item on many undergraduates' To-Do lists. One of the best ways to set yourself up for a job after college is to use your summers as a time to engage in meaningful work experiences before graduating. Gaining invaluable practice in your field of study can greatly enhance the probability of securing a job in your field upon graduation. Because of hectic class schedules, club activities, sports and more, however, students tend not to spend their summers working at an intense internship or job. And, unfortunately, a survey I recently conducted reveals that most English majors and minors neglect finding work during the summer that will help them achieve their career aspirations. Students should take advantage of the myriad resources supplied by the O'Brien Center for Student Success in order to jump-start their careers.

About 40% of all current English majors and minors responded to a questionnaire I sent out regarding the attributes of their summer employment. I asked for information concerning the types of jobs they held, whether they worked full- or part-time, pursued an internship related or not related to their career plans, and their responses have led me to draw multiple conclusions. The majority of students (approximately 15 students, or 65%) indicated that they held positions as part-time or full-time workers unrelated to their English degree. About 9% held no job at all or spent their summers involved in other forms of enrichment such as study abroad programs. It is clear that students primarily held jobs to support themselves while they are pursuing their degrees. Understandably, many students focus solely on earning a paycheck. The survey also found that only about 26% (6 students) who responded said they held part-time or full-time positions involving activity directly related to their

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Included in this Issue:

English Career Night Recap
Interview with Michelle Norton of The Merrimack Review
Opportunity at the O'Brien Center
What English Majors are Reading

An official publication of the Merrimack College English Department, *The Broadsheet* is published monthly during the academic calendar year. Its mission is to celebrate the English Department's role in promoting the literary arts on campus, to acknowledge the accomplishments of faculty and students, to profile students and alumni, and to create a forum in which issues relevant to English studies can be discussed.

What We're Reading *continued from page 1*

A Tree Grows In Brooklyn. "Nostalgia"
-Christina Dimartino, Class of 2018

Nightmare on Main Street: Angels, Sadoomasochism, and the Culture of the Gothic by Mark Edmundson. "I first read this book last spring for fun but also in preparation for teaching my new 'Undead Eighteenth Century' course in the fall. Edmundson draws on literary history to explore why the Gothic continues to haunt us today. The book explores the question of whether or not what simultaneously frightens and attracts us is external or internal, or if we really can distinguish between the two. Though I've read many books over the past six months, this is the one that I'd most recommend."
-Dr. Steven Scherwitzky, English Department Chair

The Flame Alphabet by Ben Marcus
"I spent some time at UMASS Amherst for a summer program last year, and I read the book because Ben Marcus was going to be one of the speakers and my mother just threw it in my lap and said, 'you're reading this.' So I picked it up and after giving it a chance I could not be happier that I read it."
-Rachel Mackelcan, Class of 2018

Emperor of the Air by Ethan Canin, *Tao Te Ching* by Stephen Mitchell, the current issue of 'Rolling Stone' featuring Barack Obama, *The Sirens of Titan* by Kurt Vonnegut
"Emperor of the Air was lent to me by my creative writing teacher, Professor Hajec; the Tao is a great meditational book my father got me into; I have enjoyed reading 'Rolling Stone' and other good magazines since my early teens; and I've grown to love the writings of Kurt Vonnegut since I first read *Breakfast of Champions*."
-Tony Rossetti, Class of 2015

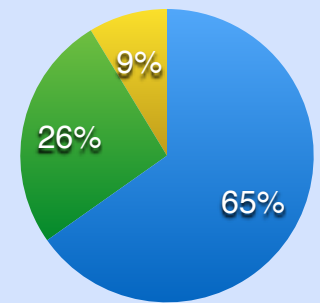
The Salt House by Cynthia Huntington and *Alongshore* by John R. Stilgoe.
"I've been reading these books in preparation for the second iteration of The New England Shore, which I should be offering during the fall of 2015."
-Dr. Paul Vatalaro, English Professor

The recreational readings identified by the English community seem to fall into two categories: those we choose and those that choose us.

Opportunity is Knocking *continued from page 1*

English degree and deeper interests. Despite the large disparity between the number of students who gained experience related or not related to future career goals, the survey revealed an almost even split on whether or not students have ever used the O'Brien Center for Student Success (OCSS). Every survey participant who has taken advantage of OCSS's services expressed that they received help on resume construction. Only three out of the 12 who have used OCSS, however, have actually inquired about internship and other job opportunities. It would appear that the OCSS office, conveniently located on the 2nd floor of the Sakowich Campus Center, is greatly underused by students enrolled in the English program. Ironically, what students do not recognize is that they possess many of the skills and qualities that internship, externship, and co-op employers look for.

- Work Unrelated to English Degree
- Work Related to English Degree
- No Job



As students of the liberal arts English majors and minors have in their degree program been cultivating at least three out of the top five skills recorded on the "[Top 10 Skills Employers Seek](#)" list published by the National Association of Colleges and Employers in 2014. According to Lori Dameron, Associate Director of OCSS, along with these great skills that English majors and minors acquire, the key to obtaining a coveted experiential work opportunity is all in figuring out what your interests are and marketing yourself to specific internships and jobs. In order to take full advantage of the services at OCSS, Lori recommends English majors make an appointment to meet with the liberal arts career advisor Sarah Mackler to discuss what their passions are, look through the approximately 300 job listings OCSS offers, and work on tailoring resumes to those jobs. OCSS can bridge the gap between English majors/minors and their career goals by helping students attain positions that provide experience in their desired field.

The survey I conducted suggests that students in the English program should view the summer as an opportunity to explore different career opportunities or pursue career goals. OCSS partners with a multitude of companies in every sector of employment, but responsibility falls on the student to take advantage of what the O'Brien Center has to offer. With each opportunity seized, we get that much closer to reaching our career goals. As Lori Dameron says, "We [OCSS] can help you with your future. We cannot plan it for you, but we can help you get there. Let us help you." Given the expertise and willingness of the OCSS staff to help us succeed, English students should become as big a presence in OCSS as the more technical majors like Business and Accounting. OCSS offers the right resources to move students in their desired directions. The first step in this direction, though, is for English majors and minors to walk through the OCSS door of opportunity.

Mack to the Future

English major alumni return to share their stories for English Career Night

by Laura Dupre



Patrick, Laura, Alyssa, and Marisa pose for a selfie at English Career Night

It's unsettling to think that the word "career" has replaced "summer job," but the future is coming faster than you think. But don't worry, current students. You aren't alone. If you were at English Career Night this year, I'm sure you're feeling much better about what the future has to offer for English majors and minors. If you weren't, let me fill you in.

English Career Night was nothing short of a success this year. As is the case every year, Merrimack English alumni return to share their stories about how the English degree continues to help them succeed. The evening featured a panel of former students consisting of Chris Mason (class of 2014), who currently works as an editorial assistant at the *Boston Herald*; Anthony Russo (class of 2012), who teaches Theology and Psychology teacher at St Joseph's Prep; Ashley Skeffington (class of 2012), who teaches English and Fine Arts at North Andover High School; Chris Mosher (class of 2013), who serves as a Medical Records Processing Specialist at Logix Health; and Chris Cummings (class of 1996), who works as the Senior Product Manager for Imagitas. The five panelists shared their post-Merrimack experiences and words of encouragement with current English majors and minors. Following the panel presentation, a number of English alumni seated in the audience volunteered their own successful career stories. The panelists made one thing clear: Merrimack's English program has prepared them for the future. Ashley Skeffington, for example, said she has the opportunity to talk to kids about writing plays and presenting different

narratives. She added that her experience at Merrimack helped her grow as "a writer, a thinker, and a person." But do not get caught up in thinking that English majors have to be teachers. Former English majors pursue a wide variety of careers, such as College Library Director, Marketing Coordinator, editorial assistant at the *New England Journal of Medicine*, and advisor at Putnam Investments. The possibilities appear to be endless. Many of the Merrimack English major graduates have even gone on to publish their own writing.

Chris Cummings told the audience that the English major was so important to him because he "learned to think critically, and communicate clearly and effectively." Many alumni commented that the English major prepares students for any job they might find themselves in, simply because of the thinking and communication skills they

cultivate in our program. Anthony Russo advised students to "use your supports." Chris Mason echoed this point. He stressed that students should take advantage of the opportunities they have on campus, particularly those offered through the O'Brien Center for Student Success. Chris interned for CBS radio in Boston during his senior year, a position he got through the O'Brien Center.

The internship involved commuting to Boston on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, but he loved it. Starting out, he found himself composing transcripts for a local sports talk radio show. Chris's skills as a writer and a communicator were quickly noticed, and he was asked to write a few of his own pieces for CBS Boston's online sports blog. This experience led to his job at the *Boston Herald*. He now works as a member of the sports staff and has started covering Bruins' games! Chris told students: "If you have some idea of what you want to do, just go for it." At various times in his life he had been told that being a sports writer

"If you have some idea of what you want to do, just go for it!"

Chris Mason
Class of 2014

"Use your supports"
Anthony Russo
Class of 2012

"I grew as a writer, a thinker, and a person"

Ashley Skeffington
Class of 2012

The Merrimack Review Finds New Life

An Interview conducted by Tony Rossetti

Resurrected in October of 2013 after lying dormant for over a decade, *The Merrimack Review*, which was once published by the English Department, has reemerged as an online literary magazine produced by students of Merrimack College. Under the guidance of Andrea Cohen, director of the Writers House, and led by senior English major Michelle Norton, the bi-annual publication has found a new life. I recently had a chance to ask Michelle a few questions about the *Review*, and her thoughtful responses illuminate the exciting new directions in which she hopes to take it.

TR: *What inspired you to take on the literary magazine?*

MN: Last year I was a part of the magazine's startup with 2014 graduate Robert Cannella. I saw the entire process unfold as we imagined the vision and mission for our creation. I was made the fiction editor for my experience and interest in the fiction genre. I consider myself to have a strong voice and leadership qualities, so becoming head editor for my senior year was an opportunity to exercise my passion for the arts, learn more about editing, and leave a legacy behind when I graduate in Spring 2015. Applying my artistic and literary knowledge to the magazine was the ideal fit for me at this time in my education and my life. I wanted to provide a place for creative minds to show their work and be accessible to readers who are inspired and intrigued by them. Taking this magazine from all angles, exploring other magazines to see what they are doing right, and what we could do better, will set *The Merrimack Review* apart. I found myself last year itching to take on more responsibility, create a vision, and produce something that is a piece of art in its own right. I don't want readers to be over-stimulated, but I don't want them to be bored. [M]oving forward with my new team, our intention is to create a magazine that contributors can be proud of, that future submitters can admire and strive to be a part of, and that I can look back on years from now as I hold a current

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Mack to the Future *continued from page 3*

was an unrealistic goal, but he persisted. By actively pursuing his passion, Chris was able to land a career doing exactly what he wants. It is worth noting that the Herald hired Chris before he graduated! He and many other alumni emphasized that if you are willing to put in the work, you can have any job you'd like.

Other graduates also made it clear that the job you begin with immediately after graduation might not be the position you wanted the most, but the work experience is invaluable, because it will help you build a résumé. Chris Mosher explained, "what you do after graduation does not have to be your 'forever career'; it can be your 'job for now.'" The alumni in the audience were able to further drive this point home by describing the jobs they've done and the positions they've held over the years, some mentioning that they may not have loved their job, but because they were equipped with the critical thinking and essential communication skills that English majors and minors learn to master, they were able to observe and gather a wealth of experience, which equipped them to move on.

So, to recap: You're going to do just fine. As long as you work hard, and use the tools you've developed as a student in the English program, you'll find your place. And if you're struggling, make use of your resources! The O'Brien Center and alumni are more than happy to help.



*Junior English minor
Patrick Gillespie meets
Class of 2014 graduate
Bobby DiSorbo at
English Career Night
to talk about the
English minor and
applying to law school*

The Merrimack Review Finds New Life

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MN: issue, headed by some other Merrimack student of the future, and be elated. I was honored to receive this internship opportunity from Andrea Cohen, Director of the Writers House, and it is all because of her vision for [an] actual space where the imagination can thrive that I was inspired to take on a separate, and equally unique, space for creativity to call home.

TR: *What is your artistic vision for the magazine?*

MN: The magazine is a space for writers and artists of different genres and mediums, so incorporating the uniqueness of each piece into a polished layout is the most vital aspect of my vision. Our first issue was a start, but I have been in collaboration with my editors to create a fresh and colorful look for future publications. Mixed media and complimentary visual pieces will draw in the eye, and the reader's attention will be kept by the content itself. Simplicity in the magazine's orientation, combined with a thoughtful approach to broadening our content, will form a reputation for the magazine as a reputable and impressive compilation of interviews, featured contributors, and other aspects from the art and literary world.

TR: *What kind of submissions are you looking for?*

MN: The submission categories are poetry, fiction, non-fiction and art. Poetry and art allow for multiple submissions, where more than one piece may be accepted, but for fiction and non-fiction we ask that the writer choose his/her best work to submit. The deadline for submission for the winter issue is November 15, 2014, but we will open back up for submissions through Submittable again sometime in January 2014.

“Our intention is to create a magazine that contributors can be proud of [and] that future submitters can admire and strive to be a part of”
Michelle Norton

“Becoming head editor for my senior year was an opportunity to exercise my passion for the arts, learn more about editing, and leave a legacy”
Michelle Norton

TR: *How does this magazine fit into the overall mission of the English Department, and/or, on a broader scale, Merrimack?*

MN: The magazine was started through the Writers House by students, myself included, and has its own identity as a magazine. We decided to incorporate the Merrimack name in order to honor our roots on campus; however, the way in which we connect to the college and to the English Department lies in the commonalities of intention. For example, one of these intentions is to expose students to all types of literature and inspire critical thinking. The literary magazine intends to expose readers globally to [many] types of student-created literature and art, and inspire thinking, creating, and interest. Merrimack College values community, and that is a great influence to us as a space for the literary and art communities to thrive and gain exposure.

TR: *What effect do you think (or hope) that the magazine will have on students, faculty, and the general public?*

MN: I believe that the magazine will have a lasting effect, one that makes a reader eager to get their hands on the next issue, to see what students are creating all over the country. The magazine is a way for contributors to gain readership and for readers to experience work produced by a generation of writers and artists who will inspire the present and future. The beauty of expression is that it is a voice, both narrative and visual, that has its own pitch. *The Merrimack Review* is a place where this voice, this identity and individuality, is valued and shown to the world aside other quality works that differ in their message, their inspiration, and their creators. Compiling pieces that are generated by a spectrum of people will allow readers to find something, maybe many things, that they relate to or enjoy. We don't limit ourselves, and we most definitely do not want our contributors to limit themselves, which is why readers will experience a range of subject matter, tone, feeling, and so much more. Students from all disciplines will have a place to submit their work to a thoughtful team who wants to cover all areas of expression. Featuring, for example, an architectural design or engineered structure, the plans and the execution, would be something our magazine

“[It] is a place where this voice, this identity, and individuality is valued and shown to the world”
Michelle Norton

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The Merrimack Review Finds New Life

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MN: would be interested in. Why? Because this is art. Faculty will be able to see what is being created on and off campus, either within or outside of their departments' fields focus. The general public will read and indulge in the written and artistic pieces we publish, which will gain more exposure for Merrimack College as a promoter of the arts and for the contributors whose voice is eager to be heard.



Michelle Norton, Class of 2015

What's the Word?

English majors submit wise words of Professors or Writers

"Literature doesn't exist in a vacuum. It's created in the world and lives on in the world, reflecting and shaping who we are and how we might be."
-Dr Steven Scherwatzky

"Like a starfish, the heart endures its amputation"
Gail Caldwell
Let's Take the Long Way Home

"The past is always present within us"
- Dr Paul Vatalaro

"I was stranded on the beach, the victim of an age that consumed its own history, part of the tidal wrack and litter flung in from all points of the compass. Despair took me. I flapped on the sands like a fish out of water. 'Hold on. Help is not coming.'"
-John Hay
The Undiscovered Country

"Men are often capable of greater things than they perform. They are sent into the world with bills of credit, and seldom draw to their full extent."
-Horace Walpole

To submit to "What's the Word" email Diana Le at led@merrimack.edu

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Upcoming Events

- Adrian Nicole Leblanc, author of *Random Families*, will serve as Writer in Residence at the Writer's House in November 12-14