



DEPARTMENT of English

SHATTERING
EXPECTATIONS
The Campaign for Liberal Arts

The Department of English – The Heart of the Humanities

In an era of tweets, texts, and Google searches, our world teems with words.

That's why the need has never been greater for people with the skills to clarify, synthesize, and interpret this flood of information. We need people who can write clearly and effectively, who can analyze thoughtfully, who can communicate ideas with the depth that demands more than fragmented sound bites. We need people who can supply meaning.

These are the skills English students develop. Whether reading *Beowulf* or graphic novels, researching digital media or medieval manuscripts, writing literary criticism or poetry, English majors develop the focus, discipline, and problem-solving abilities critical to informed citizenship and future employment.

At the University of Minnesota, students learn these skills under the guidance of the renowned faculty of writers and scholars in the Department of English. They not only prepare undergraduates for their future careers but also excel as writers and scholars, producing

leading-edge research and publication in literary criticism, creative writing, and theory.

Six thousand students take English classes each year, among them 500 majors and minors and 110 graduate students. As the heart of the humanities, English intersects with nearly every aspect of the University curriculum, with faculty teaching courses across disciplines, including such units as the Center for Cognitive Sciences, American Studies, French and Italian, History, Geography, and the Law School.

The Department of English has been home to such preeminent scholars as Joseph Warren Beach, Samuel Holt Monk, and Allen Tate, in addition to Pulitzer Prize-winning authors such as Robert Penn Warren, James Wright, and Saul Bellow, who also received a Nobel Prize in Literature. English has fostered such celebrated writers as Cheryl Strayed and Minnesota State Poet Laureate Joyce Sutphen in the early stages of their careers. Current faculty have been recipients of Guggenheim Fellowships, National Endowment for the Arts and National Endowment for the Humanities Awards, and a MacArthur "genius" grant.

Having received degrees in English, our 8,600 alumni excel as professors, screenwriters, journalists, administrators, corporate executives, engineers, attorneys, doctors, and public policy experts.

Your investment in English will help us to sustain our distinction and to realize our goal of becoming one of the top departments in the country.



The Renovation of Pillsbury Hall as a Permanent Home for the Department of English

English needs a home of its own.

Pillsbury Hall, the University's most historically rich and architecturally significant building, was vacated in 2017, when longtime occupant Earth Sciences moved to a newly remodeled Tate



Laboratory of Physics.

With your support, a renovated Pillsbury Hall, located at the heart of the University's Humanities District, will transform obsolete internal space into a thriving 21st-century environment where English students and faculty can come together to study and collaborate in a building they can call their own.



A Center for Creative Writing

The Center for Creative Writing will consolidate our national visibility in creative writing. Our MFA Program is ranked among the top-ten programs nationally. Your gifts would elevate a dedicated, well-funded center that would rival and eclipse such centers as the Helen Zell Writers' Program at the University of Michigan, the Virginia G. Piper Center for Creative Writing at Arizona State University, the James A. Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas, and the famed Iowa Writers' Workshop—with whom we currently compete for the most talented and diverse young applicants.

100 Internships Connecting Students to Twin Cities Employers

Experiential learning prepares students for employment and jumpstarts the job search. In five years, we aim to support 100 student-interns annually. Your gifts will help them to hone their skills in creativity, communication, analysis, and collaboration with the Twin Cities' dynamic arts, nonprofit, and business organizations.

Through opportunities such as the Paul & Lucienne Taylor Internship Grant, the department assists undergraduates in gaining experience in real-life careers. This grant supports two internships for English majors per year with the University of Minnesota Press. Of the 16 students who have completed this internship, 10 are currently employed in publishing. We see this as a growth opportunity for students who are considering a career in communications and/or the publishing industries.



Marah Walker,
English major and intern

“As a University of Minnesota Press intern, I have been able to explore both marketing and editorial work, a rare opportunity that puts me far ahead of other publishing interns (and soon-to-be job applicants). Because of the support afforded by the Paul & Lucienne Taylor Internship Grant, I have been able to gain real-time feedback on work, allowing skill development for the future. It is because of these types of generous donations that CLA students continue to prosper and excel throughout their careers and lives.”



Endowed Professorships Building a National Leader in English Studies

Our professors are distinguished and nationally recognized for their scholarship and creative writing. They win Guggenheim Fellowships, National Endowment for the Humanities Grants, National Endowment for the Arts Awards, and MacArthur “genius” awards. In recent years, they have garnered internal and external grants in areas as diverse as early modern studies, Asian-American studies, poetry, and fiction writing. Their publications define new fields and cross disciplinary boundaries. Their teaching excellence attracts the University’s top honors.

Your gifts for new endowed professorships will grant faculty the research support, travel, and (the most precious gift of all) time to rise to still higher levels of achievement—establishing the department as one of the top programs in the country.



Dissertation Writing Fellowships for Graduate Students

It’s no secret that landing a college teaching position these days is tough, and we’re proud of our alumni who teach at institutions across the United States and around the world. Your gifts will help our graduates better compete for the most selective tenured positions, providing those engaged in innovative literary study a year to focus entirely on their dissertations. At stake: the continued vitality of literary studies through the 21st century.



**Alex Mueller (PhD 2007),
Associate Professor, University
of Massachusetts Boston**

“I am very grateful for the Ruth Drake Dissertation Fellowship, because it allowed me a teaching-free semester to finish and successfully defend my dissertation. That dissertation was the basis for my first book, *Translating Troy: Provincial Politics in Alliterative Romance*.”

