Price noted that, as early as the 1990s, the idea of memoir was becoming somewhat criticized in the media, especially in regards to young adults. In opposition to this, Price insisted that young people have a great deal to say about their lives and are often the most perceptive to the developments they undergo in the process. “It’s not meant to stroke egos, but rather to trace the ethical sources of our lives,” said Price on memoir writing.

The next Streamlines Conference will be held on November 5, 2016, at the University of Dubuque.
SACRED PLACE:
CELTIC SPIRITUALITY & NATURE
Kevin Koch, PH.D., English Professor

By John Hedderman (‘18)

Dr. Kevin Koch (‘81), Loras College Alum and Professor of English, spoke at the ‘Faith and Values Education Committee Hospitality Event’, February 25th, 2016. He also held the O’Connor Chair for Catholic Thought at Loras College in 2015-2016, for which his in-progress book project is tentatively titled “The Thin Places: A Spiritual Landscape from Ireland to the Driftless.”

Dr. Koch’s presentation, titled Sacred Place: Celtic Spirituality & Nature, provided an overview of the research he had done up until that point. The Faith and Values presentation examined eight principles of Celtic spirituality of nature, focused around eight Celtic feasts and celestial events of the year, and how those principles transitioned from pre-Christian to Celtic Christian times. It became more evident through the presentation how connected we are all to nature in some way or another. Never missing an opportunity to actively involve others, Dr. Koch allowed time throughout the presentation for tables to further discuss nature-related topics. These small group discussions were a useful tool to help individuals understand how persons might have different viewpoints than themselves. It was interesting to note how persons that grew up with different beliefs and values share similar environments but interpreted them in different ways, as did the pre-Christian Celts and Celtic Christians. Through and through, Dr. Koch gave a presentation filled with insight that many audience members may not have otherwise been aware of.

Leaving shortly after the presentation, Dr. Koch spent two months of the Spring 2016 semester living in Westport on Ireland’s west coast, visiting natural and archaeological sites and interviewing people associated with his book topic. Dr. Koch’s Ireland blog can be viewed at: http://www.kevinkochdriftlessland.net/kevins-ireland-blog

Likewise, during the preceding Fall 2015 semester, Dr. Koch also spent time visiting and revisiting sites and interviewing people in the Driftless region, i.e., the Upper Mississippi Valley area that was bypassed by the land-leveling glaciers.

The next step for Dr. Koch, in addition to completing his book, will be to bring what he learned in Ireland back into the classroom. In Fall 2016 he will be teaching the cluster course, ‘Nature of Nature in Ireland’, teaming with Dr. John Eby (History Department) who will be teaching ‘The Celts.’

Dr. Koch is also the author of two books, “Skiing at Midnight: A Nature Journal from Dubuque County, Iowa”, and “The Driftless Land: Spirit of Place in the Upper Mississippi Valley”, along with multiple essays focusing on nature, spirituality and sense of place.

CARMINE STARNINO

By Neil Bingham (‘17)

Carmine Starnino, a Canadian poet, essayist, and editor, visited Loras College to speak to both a large group of students and faculty and individual classes. Starnino began by reading various poems of his spanning across his multiple poetic collections. He ended with his latest work, Leviathan, a collection of poetry inspired by two immense changes in his life: the loss of his father and the birth of his son. The contrast in ideas of both life and death led to a beautiful collection rooted in deep emotion.

One poem, “San Pellegrino,” depicts the hospital room in which his father resided in his late life. In this poem, Starnino’s strong sense of sound comes through to full fruition. He uses mono-rhyme in every line to create a strong repetition. The poem shifts from the hospital room to Starnino’s own childhood, and everything in between, all through the eyes of a man looking at his father in a hospital bed. Following his reading, Starnino dove in to various aspects of his literary career including his experience in editing. Having been on both sides of publishing, his insight was unique and he was able to offer strong words of encouragement to students.
Prof. William Jablonsky earned his MFA in Creative Writing from Bowling Green State University. He teaches many English courses at Loras College, though he specializes in fiction writing. These include Fiction Writing, Advanced Fiction Writing, Fantastic Fiction, and Revision, and Editing & Publishing. He has also taught a course on deconstructionist superheroes. His workshop courses involve students becoming better acquainted and more engaged in the fiction writing, revising, and editing process. As a short story writer and novelist, he prefers writing stories that feature science fiction, fantasy, and horror elements. He is the author of “The Indestructible Man”, a magical realist short story collection; and he is the author of “The Clockwork Man”, a steampunk novel. “The Clockwork Man” can be checked out at the Loras library. He is currently working on a new novel.

What about Loras motivated you to apply for a teaching position here?
Oh, gosh, so many things, actually. I will say I had a long list of places I applied for, and Loras was number two. I certainly liked where Loras was. I happen to know the area because I’m from a couple hours away from here, so I liked it. In fact, it’s really weird that I wake up and turn on the TV and KWQC is on, which is my TV station from childhood; it’s where I used to watch Saturday morning cartoons. Also, I didn’t know Loras too well before coming here. But during the campus visit, I was impressed at how collegial everyone was, the depth of programs, and the school’s willingness to allow me to teach whatever I could dream of as long I can get my ideas approved by the curriculum committee. I like how much academic freedom I have.

What has been one of your most noteworthy professional accomplishments at Loras?
I would say having my second book, The Clockwork Man, accepted during my first week on campus. It was kind of fun. I happened to be walking down the hallway from a meeting or whatever, and I got a phone call from Medallion Press that said, “Hey, we want to publish your book.” I said okay, and it was a good start to my day.

What is rewarding about teaching fiction? I could write a whole book on that, and I just might. I would say the most rewarding thing is that, unlike other classes, until I receive submissions for fiction workshops, screenwriting workshops, or whatever, I have no idea what I’m about to see. So, you could read the works for years and years and never get bored. And what’s also rewarding about it is obviously seeing students improve in their craft over time; actually, seeing them take some artistic choice and let their imagination run wild is rewarding, too. And I will say as a professor, there is nothing better in this world than having one of your former students [Loras alumna A. A. Balaskovits] publish her first book.

What is challenging about teaching fiction?
All of you are pretty motivated in class, but every once in a while, we have a bad night in Advanced Fiction Writing. It gets to 8:30 at night. People are tired and hungry. Yeah, it’s a little frustrating when I have to carry it by myself, but most of the time I don’t, so that’s nice. But one of the most frustrating things about teaching fiction is when you have a student who comes to class with an incomplete idea. And then the class pretty much highjacks the story and says, “Oh, why don’t you write a story about this, this, or this?” which they haven’t done. It’s a completely different story. So that’s pretty frustrating. And I will say that getting through the massive grading at certain times of the year can be a little bit challenging. Other than that, I have no complaints.

What basic advice would you give short story writers who are beginning to submit their works to journals and magazines?
I would say a few things. For one thing, do not give up. Even high quality pieces get rejected all the time for many reasons that don’t have to do with quality. Another thing: do not stare at your Submittable [a submission management system] accounts multiple times a day. And I would say—and this goes for works in any creative writing genre—be aware of where you’re sending your work to. If you take the steps to make your submission good, it will find a home, if you are persistent and if you scope out the right places. It’s really careful targeting that is important.

How did you feel when you discovered that you earned your sabbatical?
I was kind of stunned, actually. To be honest, I applied because I happened to be eligible. Next year I would be eligible to go on one, and I wasn’t teaching J-term, so I thought, Hey, I could take an eight-month break and come back refreshed and renewed. But I couldn’t imagine I was going to get it largely because I knew others were sort of higher up on the ladder than me who’d taken sabbaticals before. So I thought I wasn’t going to get it. And then I got a message from Dr. Stone that said, “Check your e-mail” and another message that said, “Do it. NOW.” So I did, and there you go. She couldn’t tell me until it was official. So I was surprised, but learning that I got my sabbatical brought a spring to my step for the remainder of the day.
What are you planning on doing during your sabbatical?
When you apply for a sabbatical, you have a specific project in mind that you pitch to the academic dean and to anyone else who decides these things. I had a project in mind anyway, which is to write a novel: it’s a kind of revision of an older story of mine. It’s a long novella in its current form, but effectively what it is, is a star-crossed love story that might turn out to be 250 to 300 pages long. One of the two principal characters has a bit of a disability that affects his ability to have a relationship. That disability happens to be—and I invented a condition simply for this purpose—something called molecular aphasia, which is to say the character has bouts of intangibility. For instance, among other things, the character sleeps with a metal plate above his mattress so that he doesn’t accidentally sink into the bed during the night. He can sink through the floor or walk through walls, so he has to wear special shoes so that doesn’t happen. So it’s basically a magical realist metaphor for different kinds of conditions and different kinds of disabilities. And the thing is, the children who are born with it have relationship and interpersonal difficulties due to their inability to touch anything.

Writing the book will take up a large portion of my time. I may paint a room while I’m off, but the fact is, I need to get on a roll with this. And at the moment I have an agent who might be representing the short story collection that I am shoving around at the moment. The agent may accept the short story collection if I have a novel to go with it. So there is some need to get on that as soon as possible.

Is there anything else you would like to discuss regarding your teaching life, writing life, or your upcoming sabbatical?
I will say that freshmen, especially, may be angry with me because I won’t be here to teach Fiction Writing in the spring. Fantastic Fiction will be moved to the fall semester, so that people can certainly take it. And, I will be leaving you in very good hands. My wife, who is my principal reader, has an MFA from the same place where I got mine, and has at least ten pieces of flash fiction published in numerous journals, many of whom are higher profile than mine. She’s going to be taking over the course for me.

The English Homecoming Breakfast on Oct. 3 featured Melanie Devaney as its guest speaker, a woman who benefited greatly from her English education. An accomplished musician and songwriter, Devaney was kind enough to share her story and her beautiful music with alumni, students, and members of the Loras English Department.

Having graduated from Loras in May 2000 with a major in English Literature and Creative Writing, Devaney initially opted for a career in publishing. However, feeling that she could achieve more with a college degree, she later became a journalist for the Galena Gazette. Though accomplished, she soon found the job too unchallenging, and eventually got a job at a coffee house while simultaneously applying to several graduate schools. When all of her applications were rejected, Devaney moved to Florida and got a position first as a marketing assistant and then as an instructor at a dance studio. During this time, Devaney went through a difficult breakup, which inspired her to write one of her earliest songs, “One Little Teardrop.”

Eventually, Devaney moved to Prescott, Arizona, a rough environment filled with even rougher individuals. Life there was difficult, but the challenge enticed her to continue her songwriting. In time, after returning to the Midwest for a while, she realized how important her music was to her, and thus decided to devote all of her talent and energy to her songs. “It’s important to honor your creativity, whatever that creativity is,” said Devaney.

Throughout it all, Devaney asserted that her English skills played a prominent role in her life. Whether it’s writing her songs or in everyday social situations, she holds strongly that her faith-based education received at Loras is one of the most – if not the most - important working and motivating factors in her life. She encourages others with talent in the field of English to pursue their dreams, no matter what life throws at them.
ENGLISH MAJORS EARN FOUR AWARDS IN DELTA EPSILON SIGMA NATIONAL WRITING COMPETITION

Loras College English majors continued their long history of success in the Delta Epsilon Sigma National Undergraduate Writing Competition. Loras writers have won or received Honorable Mention for 25 straight years, but 2016 has proved particularly fruitful with an unprecedented three first-place finishes and an honorable mention:

First Place, Creative Nonfiction: “Searching for Orion,” Noelle Henneman (’16);

First Place, Critical Essay: “An Exploration of Wakefield’s Exterior Reflecting his Inner Self,” Mary Agnoli (’15);

First Place, Poetry: “Thou Dost Breathe,” Hallie Hayes (’14)

Honorable Mention, Fiction: “Drifting,” Logan Miller (’16)

Each of these four works were recipients of the Alpha Award (Best-of-Genre) in the 2015 issue of Loras College’s Limestone Review.

ENGLISH CAREERS DINNER

By Cassandra Busch (’17)

On the evening of Thursday, May 5, the English department hosted an opportunity to bring together the Loras English community from all walks of life: professors, students and alumni alike. The dinner took place at Lina’s Thai Bistro. The guest of honor was program alumna Lauren Milam (’09), who currently works as an insurance Benefits Service Representative at Cottingham & Butler here in Dubuque. This may seem to be a surprising career for an English major, but her story goes to show the wide variety of jobs that are open to those who choose to major in English and the humanities.

Lauren spoke about the path her life has taken, and how it was so different than what she was expecting when she was earning her undergraduate degree. She began with a goal of becoming a teacher, but realized after some time that she wanted to explore a new path. Subsequently she worked at the Dubuque Arts Center as an events coordinator, as a customer service representative at Prudential Financial, and as an account manager at Kendall Hunt Publishers, all before arriving in the position she holds now at Cottingham & Butler.

The guest of honor credited the numerous mentors that she has had throughout the years for some of the wisdom that she has received about life. Through both their advice and her own experiences, Lauren learned about how important it is to be challenged in one’s line of work. She talked about the process of trial and error, and how it is important not to get too discouraged when entering and leaving various positions attempting to find the right fit.

Some career experts now say that the ideal length of time to spend in one job is approximately two years. Career coaches say that your likelihood for a raise could increase by 15 to 20% if you switch positions this often. The length of time spent working one job is much lower than it was in decades past. Advocates for this two year number say that it keeps things fresh and people motivated when they switch jobs this often. It creates a circulating pool of people and ideas that bring in a wider perspective to a company. Lauren concluded her story with encouragement to her English major audience to not limit themselves in their career choices. She said that things work out as they do for a reason, and to not be afraid of veering off their intended path. Loras English alum Michaela Gray (’11), who teaches English internationally for HESS International Educational Group, agreed with Lauren. Michaela, who met and talked with students via face time at the Careers Dinner, was heading for Taipei to spend her second, exciting year teaching abroad.
ENGLISH FACULTY NOTES

Tenure, Promotion, & Campus Awards:

- Kevin Koch, Ph.D., was awarded the O’Connor Chair for Catholic Thought for the 2015-2016 academic year.

Andrew Auge, Ph.D., Professor of English: Dr. Auge published two book chapters over the past academic year: “Surviving Death in Heaney’s Human Chain” in The Soul Exceeds Its Circumstance: Seamus Heaney’s Later Poetry, ed. Eugene O’Brien (Notre Dame University Press, 2016) and “Literature and Environmental Catastrophe: Teaching Leslie Marmon Silko’s Ceremony in the Age of Climate Change,” in Climate Change across the Curriculum, ed. Eric Fretz (Lanham, MD: Rowan & Littlefield, 2016), 67-83. He also presented conference papers on “Irish Catholic Missionaries” and “Seamus Heaney and the Easter Rising.” This spring he will be accompanying sixteen Loras students in Ireland as the faculty director of the Dublin study abroad semester.

Naomi Clark, Ph.D., Asst. Professor of English and Director of the Writing Center: This year Dr. Naomi Clark has been developing and teaching courses for the new Rhetoric and Public Writing minor such as Rhetoric and Political Engagement in the fall and Grant and Proposal Writing this spring. In the Writing Center, eight tutors have held 821 appointments with students so far this year, a 11% increase over the previous year. This semester has also had its share of travel. In March Dr. Clark was part of a round-table discussion at the Midwest Writing Centers Association conference in Cedar Rapids, and in April co-hosted a workshop and presented a paper at the Conference on College Composition and Communication in Houston. In May Dr. Clark will be part of a round-table and give a presentation at the Rhetoric Society of America Conference in Atlanta.

William Jablonsky, MFA, Assoc. Professor of English: It’s been a pretty busy year what with MOI, Catfish Creek, and other associated malfeasance, but Professor Jablonsky got to break in a new group of fiction writers and help polish up a group of veteran writers (two of whom have gone on to publish works in journals) during J-term. Somewhere along the line he found time to shop around a new story collection, so he is hoping by next year to have something to report. Professor Jablonsky also got to read some strange and interesting stories and screenplays involving cooking, mob intimidation, and cannibalism, stories about Bigfoot, and reflections invoking the multiverse, which is why he says he keeps coming back for more - creative writing students at Loras make sure he is never bored.

Will Kanyusik, Ph.D., Asst. Professor of English
Dr. Kanyusik teaches courses in Modern and Contemporary American and British prose and drama, as well as courses in college and critical writing. Kanyusik earned his doctorate from the University of Minnesota in 2013 with a focus in Modern American and British Literature. His dissertation, titled “The Wound at the Heart of Vision: Fraught Masculinities, Marked Bodies, and the Subject of Disability,” focused on the portrayal of masculinity and disability in post-World War II literature and film and was nominated for the University of Minnesota’s Best Dissertation Award in the Arts and Humanities. Dr. Kanyusik also holds an M.A. in English from the University of Minnesota, and a B.A. in English from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Before arriving at Loras in 2015, Kanyusik served as a Visiting Assistant Professor of English at Franklin College in Indiana and at Simpson College in Indianola, Iowa the year before. He completed a book chapter concerning the depiction of disability in the American modernist novel, which was included in a disability studies anthology published in October of 2015. Dr. Kanyusik loves the outdoors, and has been an avid cyclist for most of his life. He is a voracious reader of all kinds of books, loves music, and enjoys cooking, and always looks forward to spending time with his family in northern Wisconsin during breaks from teaching.

Kevin Koch, Ph.D., Professor of English: Dr. Koch held the O’Connor Chair for Catholic Thought in 2015-2016. His research project is titled “The Thin Places: A Spiritual Landscape from Ireland to the Driftless.” During the fall semester he visited and revisited natural and historic places in the Driftless Region, speaking with park rangers, geologists, archaeologists, monks and other religious figures, and Native American leaders. With the O’Connor Chair, Dr. Koch also taught two courses in the fall semester: Language Theory & Teaching of Writing and Nature Writing. In the spring semester Dr. Koch spent two months living in Westport, Ireland, likewise visiting natural and historic places, and conducting numerous interviews. His summer was spent in the early phases of the writing process. And bicycling.

James Pollock, Ph.D., Professor of English and Creative Writing, published The Essential Daryl Hine: Selected by James Pollock, a volume of selected poems he edited with a critical introduction. (The book made The Partisan’s list of the Best Books of 2015.) His foreword to the book was published at Poetry Daily, and his essay about editing the book, “Finding Daryl Hine” was published at Boston University’s AGNI Blog.
His poem “Sailing to Babylon” is forthcoming in the British anthology The Poet's Quest for God: 21st Century Poems of Spirituality. As a faculty senator, he co-wrote a new Intellectual Property Policy. He taught a new MOI course called Robots, Androids, and Artificial Intelligence, and took over the role of teaching the Shakespeare sequence, offering Shakespeare After 1600 as a flipped course that emphasizes various modes of active learning in the classroom. He also gave a presentation on “Nature, God, and Death in Robert Frost and Elise Partridge” at the Legacy Symposium, and a poetry reading at the North American Review Bicentennial Creative Writing and Literature Conference at the University of Northern Iowa.

Susan Stone, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English: Dr. Susan Stone assumed the role of Chair of the Division of Language & Literature beginning in the Fall of 2015. Dr. Stone joined the Loras faculty in Fall 2001, and her leadership positions at the College have included her most recent role as Faculty Chair, Chairing the Faculty Development Committee and Faculty Senate, membership on Academic Council and as Faculty Senator, as well as several moderatorships involving diversity and service, and more. Dr. Stone’s teaching and scholarship areas include 19th-Century American Literature, African American and Native American Literature and Culture, Gender Studies, and Writing.

Erin VanLaningham, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English: This fall, Dr. VanLaningham attended the midwest Irish Studies conference where she presented on Lily and Elizabeth Yeats’ contributions to the Irish Arts and Crafts movement and their development of an Irish female aesthetic. In the classroom, some of Dr. VanLaningham’s personal highlights were reading Anne Lamott’s Bird by Bird with the Capstone Students and Lamott’s Travelling Mercies in a new class she developed, called the Spiritual Memoir. Dr. VanLaningham recently received the “Emerging Innovation” award from the Iowa Campus Compact for her work promoting community based learning as Honors Director. She continues to run half-marathons (Madison this year), and wear the soccer/basketball/baseball/music mom hats for her 13 and 10 year old sons. She is looking forward to a trip out east this summer and kayaking at her family’s cabin in Northern Wisconsin. Best book she read this year: Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. She says, “Read it now!”

James Smith ('60)
Since retiring in 1990 from 30 years of teaching and counseling, James, and his wife, Mary, have traveled to Europe, Great Britain, Ireland, Wales, Scotland, New Zealand, and to Australia twice. Now they are busy with volunteering and encouraging their grandchildren in their activities. Hobbies include "genealogy research, using my iMac and iPad, and taking long naps."

David Arthur Vanderah ('66)
May 2016 was David’s swan song as a writing and cultural history instructor at the Roberta Kuhn Center in Dubuque, an adult enrichment offering located at the Sisters of Charity, BVM, motherhouse, Mt. Carmel, Dubuque. David’s course subjects were "Destinations," "Pilgrimage," two writing classes and, About Dubuque: "Celebrating the Arts in Dubuque," "Bohemian Dubuque" and "Celebrate Dubuque! 175 Years, 1833-2008," the only local course for the centennial year. In 2009 he published a book based on that course.

Rev. Randy Wakitsch ('85)
The Rev. Randy Wakitsch lives in Woodstock, IL, and is a chaplain at JourneyCare Hospice and Palliative Care, and Rector at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Belvidere, IL.

Carol (Steepleton) Steingreaber ('87)
Carol (Steepleton) Steingreaber graduated with dual degrees in English Literature and Writing in 1987. Carol recently published her first humorous autobiography, Pants Optional. Her book has reached both #1 and #2 on the Hot New Releases in the Midwest on Amazon and all the Barnes and Nobles in Iowa are carrying the book. Currently Carol is busy with book signing in Cedar Rapids, Indianapolis, St. Louis and more to come in Naperville and Minnesota.

A quick synopsis of Pants Optional from “Meet the Author Carol Steingreaber” (Facebook): “In her autobiography, Pants Optional, Carol Steingreaber offers a hilarious, unrestricted insight into her life thus far in Iowa, USA. The reader is a privileged passenger on the journey, invited to buckle up for the ride as Carol shares her stories from the sibling squabbles of childhood, to cringeworthy dating moments, marriage and various stages of motherhood. Her witty, "tell-it-straight" writing style conjures up images you can't help but laugh at, often accompanied by photos that speak a thousand (usually comical) words.

Best book she read this year: Americanah by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. She says, “Read it now!”
Carol provides the reader with "UNconventional tips" on a whole range of themes such as housework and hospitals, illness and injury, Nerf guns and nudity, safety concerns and sex, friendship, faith, and a great many more. Moments of eternal embarrassment are interspersed with flashes of comic/parenting genius, and every reader will find a nugget or three (or twenty!) to inspire them. A cracking read, and highly recommended.”

**Will Anderson (’89)**
Will currently is a Professor, School of Broadcast and Cinematic Arts, Central Michigan University. There he has had a very productive year. High points include an unexpected $110 windfall in performance royalties for the staging and broadcast of a couple of his audio drama scripts in Florida and Minnesota, which he estimates firmly places him within the top 1% of earnings for audio dramatists. “Well, at least American ones.”

**Thomas Barton (’89)**
In the 27 years since Tom left Loras, he has used his “Lit-Major-Background” every day and owes his success to it! Why? Dr. Bauerly routinely challenged him to consider what literary characters thought and how characters FELT…not just what they did. He owes his ability to empathize with others to his Loras English Lit degree; “It taught me to consider how clients, colleagues, etc. think and how they feel. It’s a critical business advantage.” With his degree from Loras Tom has gone forth to teach English in the Dubuque Schools for 9 years and coached/sponsored over 60 sports and clubs. Along with that Tom is a four-term elected official on the Dubuque School Board. He then successfully moved into the investment world where he founded Barton Wealth Management. Finally Tom is “Life Trustee” of the Sigma Phi Epsilon fraternity and has started three SigEp chapters, most notably re-chartering SigEp at Loras this fall. Tom also is married with children.

**Pete Moris (’93)**
Pete began his tenure as Associate Athletics Director – Strategic Communications, for Virginia Tech in May 2015. A few highlights of his first year in Blacksburg included helping send out retiring head football coach Frank Beamer in style with a social media campaign to bring ESPN’s College Gameday to campus for Coach Beamer's final home game. While they went elsewhere, they did give Coach Beamer a nice tribute and the @VT_Football Twitter account was named the No. 3 account in college football by Athlon Sports. While not Tweeting about Virginia Tech Athletics, Pete has been trying to convince folks in the Atlantic Coast Conference that “Duhawks” and "Hokies" are actually long-lost cousins in the bird world. Pete had the pleasure of re-connecting with former Loras Director of Athletics Dr. Kevin White, who now serves in a similar role at Duke.

**Lisa Higgs (’97)**
Lisa Higgs continues to teach part-time at the University of Illinois Springfield and to write poetry and book reviews. Her most recent chapbook, *Unintentional Guide to the Big City*, was published in April 2015 by Red Bird Chapbooks. She is also Poetry Editor for *Quiddity International Literary Journal*, President of the Vachel Lindsay Association, and co-chair for the Illinois Bicentennial Coordinating Committee of Springfield.

**Jeremy Salucka (’97)**
Jeremy Salucka (BA Eng Lit 1997) recently dug up his deep midwestern roots and relocated from Rochester, Minnesota, to Albuquerque, New Mexico. Moving to the Land of Enchantment brings him closer to his family and begins a new chapter in his career as a non-profit healthcare communications professional with Presbyterian Healthcare Services, the state’s largest private employer. He is very happy to be dodging tumbleweeds and hot-air balloons instead of torrential rain and snow, and encourages all Loras alumni visiting or living in the area to get in touch!

**Allyson Del Debbio (’04)**
Allyson currently works for Houghton Mifflin Harcourt as a Regional Consultant for their literacy programs. She will be transitioning into the role of Lead Webinar Coordinator for the West Region by the end of May 2016. She currently trains their consultant team, schedules, and delivers online professional learning sessions for teachers and administrators using their programs. Allyson moved to Los Angeles where she lives with her husband Josh and their two children, Henry (1) and Harper (3).

**Thomas McNamara (’07)**
Thomas recently finished his PhD at the University of Illinois Center for Writing Studies, where his dissertation studied the first-year writing experiences of Chinese undergraduates on his campus (which enrolled over 5,000 Chinese students in 2015). Thomas recently accepted a faculty position at California State University, Fresno, where he will be teaching undergraduate and graduate courses in composition and rhetoric.

**Cher Schwartz (’07)**
Since leaving Loras in 2007, Cher graduated from Trinity College, Dublin, with a Masters of Philosophy in Anglo-Irish Literature. She wrote her dissertation on Eavan Boland, reclaiming an Irish Female past through her Outside History collection of poetry using a French Feminist lens. While in Ireland she spent a great deal of time backpacking around Europe, an activity she highly recommends for all prospective travelers!
On her return to Chicago Cher continued her education and obtained her Masters of Education at DePaul University in Secondary Education English/Language Arts. Happily married to her high-school sweetheart, Nick Paustian (also ’07 grad) in 2012; they live in Grayslake, IL, with two adorable rescue dogs, Thor (mastiff lab) and Dixon (pitbull mutt). Cher spends her time working as an English teacher, choreographer, and theater director at Grayslake North High School dividing her time between at-risk sophomores and seniors and senior honor students. Finally, Nick and Cher are currently in the waiting phase of the adoption process! They are hoping to be able to announce a new Duhawk to the family in the near future!

Amy and Matthew Balk (’08)
Currently, Matt is finishing up his doctorate in Rhetoric and Composition at Ball State University. He’ll be defending his dissertation in April. He accepted a job as the Writing Center Director at University of Colorado, Colorado Springs, which he starts in August. Matt and Amy will be relocating to Colorado Springs this summer. Amy is ending her 5th year of teaching language arts at a middle school in Gas City, Indiana. She also coaches high school cross country and middle school track. She accepted a middle school teaching position at a middle school in Peyton, Colorado just outside of Colorado Springs.

Alison Balaskovits (’09)
Alison finished her Ph.D. in English at the University of Missouri in December 2015. She also recently won the Santa Fe Writers Project program awards for her short-story collection, Magic for Unlucky Girls, which SFWP will be publishing in 2017. She also has published stories and essays in various literary magazines and journals, and serves as the social media editor for Cartridge Lit, an online magazine of video game literature.

Sarah (Cunningham) Jackman (’10)
Sarah recently obtained a position as a language arts teacher at Dubuque Senior High School where she is teaching newspaper, yearbook, journalism, and speech. While these are all brand new subject areas for her, she was ready for the challenge and jumped right in! Sarah is loving Senior High School and cannot wait for the future! In other news, Sarah completed her Master's Degree in Literacy Education from the University of Northern Iowa. Claiming, “I really enjoyed graduate school, but I am pretty ready for a break.” However, she will have to wait a while because Sarah and her husband are expecting a baby in August of 2016.

Keith Flinn (’12)
Keith is graduating with a Doctorate of Jurisprudence, taking the bar in Oklahoma, and entering practice in civil litigation. During law school Keith worked under the Honorable Judge Shepherd during a civil bench trial. He also worked under a Senior Barrister in Ireland on the defense of two murder trials, one before the Special Criminal Court (a bench tribunal for terrorism related crime). He even represented an alternative school in poverty stricken north Tulsa. The school educated youth offenders, and during the representation he also helped secure both funding and state accreditation. Keith was a member of the Federal Defense Practicum led by the Honorable Judge Eagan of the Northern District of Oklahoma, and co-taught by the U.S. Attorney's Office, The U.S. Public Defender's office, the Department of Corrections and Federal Magistrates. Adding to his accolades, Keith was a member of the Board of Advocates, as well as the National Trial Championship team, and the Native American Appellate Moot Court team. He was also a member of the Native American Law Student Association, and a delegate to the Student Bar Association. Keith has been working at a civil litigation and trial defense firm for a year now; he has supported a successful civil trial, several successful court filings, and a attention. With all of that Keith still finds the time to continue his writing; presently he is working on two poems.

A special thanks to Professor's Pollock, Jablonski, Koch, and Auge, all of whom fostered and honed my capacity for critical and creative thinking. As Professor Auge more eloquently once put it, the study of literature and writing is far more multifaceted and practical than Americans generally give it credit. I've noticed the skills of textual analysis transfers, and the backdrop of literary symbolism, rhetoric, grammar, and imagination wonderfully complemented my legal education.

Michelle Dutton (’14)
This past spring Michelle Dutton was accepted by the University of Wisconsin-Madison for grad school, where she will be studying Spanish Linguistics in the fall. While at Loras Michelle was a double major in Creative Writing and Spanish.

Teresa Gwardys (’14)
Teresa serves as a Catholic missionary with the Fellowship of Catholic University Students. She is finishing up her second year as a campus missionary at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign and will be returning to UIUC for a third year as the team director. She will still be serving students by inviting them into a relationship with Jesus Christ and His Church, and inspiring and equipping them for a lifetime of Christ-centered evangelization, discipleship, and friendship in which they lead others to do the same; however, with the promotion to team director, she will also be responsible for investing in her fellow missionaries and taking a greater leadership role in developing the program on campus.
Monica Shaffer ('14)
After graduating from Loras College in 2014, Monica completed a year of service working with immigrants getting their citizenship. Currently Monica is the Program Enrichment and Volunteer Coordinator at Ascension Place, Inc. There they house 32 single women experiencing chronic homelessness, mental health and chemical health issues, and more. Monica is responsible for their Wellness Programming, helping clients get acclimated to "normal" life and practice self-care and coping skills. She also is in charge of all their approximately 15 volunteers. She has had a hand in updating the volunteer program as well as service-learning and internship positions.

Andrea Berns ('15)
Andrea Berns has just completed her first year as a master's student in English Studies: Creative Writing - Fiction at Illinois State University. This past year, she has been serving as a Graduate Assistant in the Publications Unit where she assisted with the editing and designing of books such as *Natural Wonders* by Angela Woodward, a novel published by *Fiction Collective 2* (FC2) and the literary/scholarly journal, *Obsidian: Literature and Arts in the African Diaspora*. She will spend her second (and final) year teaching a college-level Introduction to Creative Writing course during the 2016-2017 school year.