

DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURES IN ENGLISH

Norval Edwards, BA *UWI*, MA, PhD *York* – Head of Department

WORK OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Literatures in English confronted several recurring academic and administrative challenges during the 2010-2011 academic year. Overall, despite the challenges, the Department maintained its usual standards, receiving on average fairly high student evaluations of its courses and lecturers, and achieving a respectable modicum of academic research, publication, and public service. Despite our small size and limited resources, we are committed to



the project of intellectual and pedagogical transformation that will facilitate both our institutional relevance and the delivery of real education rather than mere certification.

Teaching and Learning

Curriculum Review

The Department of Literatures in English convened a major curriculum planning retreat during the 2010-2011 academic year to review and rationalize course offerings, and to formulate new curricular initiatives premised on interdisciplinary and interdepartmental collaboration. The retreat produced the following recommendations to inform the Department's strategic objectives in teaching and learning:

- Revise the Strategic Action Plan to reflect the paradigm shift from discipline-specific courses to interdisciplinary and

multidisciplinary fields and the attendant pedagogical implications.

- Collaborate with the Institute of Caribbean Studies, Department of Educational Studies, Modern Languages, CARIMAC, Language, Linguistics and Philosophy, and the Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts to create viable minors and concentrations that will attract students.
- Develop more Film Studies and Creative Writing courses so that minors can be offered in these areas.
- Expedite the completion and submission of the proposal for the B.A in Literature and Language Education.
- Aggressively advertise the Department's programmes to high school students.
- Initiate the following measures to deal with the epidemic of plagiarism: writing workshops for students; using Turnitin; creating plagiarism-unfriendly assignments that emphasize creativity, individual voice, and critical engagement.
- Design short courses (with income earning potential) for summer and online delivery. In this light, the Department contacted Mr. Chris Browne, director of *Third World Cop*, to see if he would be interested in teaching a course on screenplay writing for this summer. Mr. Browne expressed his interest in teaching such a course at a later date, as his schedule prevented him from committing to the department's desired time frame.

The Heads of Literatures in English and Department of Educational Studies subsequently met and discussed and completed the proposal for the BA in Literature and Language Education, and this was sent to FAQAC for consideration. The Heads also identified other areas of collaboration such as the developing and teaching of courses in children's literature, creating a joint MA in Literature and the Teaching of English, and content and teaching input in the new Teaching Caribbean Poetry course.

No new courses or programmes were introduced in the 2010-2011 academic year, but the Department collaborated with the Philip Sherlock Centre for the Creative Arts and the Department of Educational Studies to

formulate proposals for a Minor in Theatre Studies and a new joint B.A programme in Literature and Language Education respectively. Dr. Rachel Moseley-Wood, the Department's Film Studies specialist, initiated preliminary discussion with CARIMAC regarding the feasibility of a minor in Film and Media Studies, and she also produced three new Film Studies course proposals, which are currently being considered by FAQAC: LITS2906: Adaptation: Novel to Film; LITS2806: Reggae Films: Screening Jamaica; and LITS3806: Popular Film and Ideology. The Department also agreed to include a course in African Film (LITS3603: African Film, currently taught at Cave Hill) on the curriculum. These courses will constitute the core requirements for the Department's prospective Film Studies minor. Proposals were submitted to FAQAC requesting that the Department's HUMN course codes be changed to LITS, and for changing the level and title of LITS2113-Writing Africa from the Diaspora to LITS3113-Africa in the Black Atlantic Imagination. The Department also drafted a proposal for an internship in Creative Enterprises for Level 2 /3 students, and received guarantees from two organizations regarding placement of students.

BUS Quality Reviews

Dr. Anna Kasafi Perkins of the Quality Assurance Unit did a quality evaluation of the Department on September 20, 2010 and made the following recommendations based on the audit: student representation on various committees should be formalized; initiate measures to improve course assessment instruments; explore ways to support part-time graduate students; and engage in dialogue with the Bookshop and Office of Student Records about improving book purchase mechanism and accessing student data respectively.

Graduate Studies and Research

Due to dismal registration figures, the Department suspended the MA programme for the 2010-2011 academic year. The Department maintained its focus on working with Graduate Studies and Research to ensure more effective throughput of graduate students. In September 2010, the

departmental graduate studies committee conducted an exhaustive review of all graduate students in the programme to ascertain their status. Subsequently, supervisors were tasked with ensuring that delinquent students submitted feasible completion schedules.

Student-Oriented Activities

The Department hosted its annual social for incoming students on September 16, 2010. It was an interactive session that allowed students to meet all the members of the Department, make suggestions about improving academic and administrative procedures, and ask questions about the programme. Lecturers imparted useful tips about study skills, critical thinking, and the disciplinary protocols that students must master in order to succeed. Advice was given about how to choose courses and the optimal mix of core requirements and electives over the three years of the undergraduate programme. The students greatly appreciated the event, which they found both educational and entertaining, and they recommended that it should be done at the beginning of each semester rather than once a year. On April 14, 2010, the Department held its annual Literatures in English Career Seminar. This year the talk was entitled “Life After the Degree in Literatures in English” and featured addresses by two graduates of the Department, Mr. Michael Holgate (1994) and Mr. Robert Lalah (2004). Lalah is a features writer at the Sunday Gleaner and author of the popular “Roving with Lalah” columns and the book of the same name; and Holgate is a dramatist, actor, novelist, choreographer, Creative Director of ASHE and Staff Tutor at PSSCA. Both men spoke about the challenges of finding employment after graduation, assuring their audience that an English degree is a useful tool with which to enter the job market. They affirmed the advantages of an English degree in cultivating analytical skills, critical and creative thinking, and effective communication. Pointing out that possibilities for the English graduate are endless, Mr. Holgate recounted some aspects of his career path after graduation which included working in the performing arts, teaching at the Edna Manley College, filmmaking, directing in the theatre, writing a novel, workshop facilitation, song writing, playwriting and copywriting. The Department agreed to implement a pilot peer-mentoring project in

2011-2012 to assist students in academic writing, study skills, and other required competencies. Ms. Shala Alert, a graduate student, was instrumental in conceptualizing the proposal and the Department commended her initiative.

Scholarly Activities and Outreach

The Department's outreach activities in 2010- 2011 included the following:

Public Lectures

On February 1, 2011, Mawuena Logan gave a lecture on Negritude at Hillel Academy.

Professor Carolyn Cooper gave a lecture, "A Speck of Greatness: Repositioning Brand Jamaica," at the TEDxIrie Conference in Kingston on April 2, 2011.

As part of its Reggae Poetry outreach, the Department hosted public lectures by popular entertainers Vybz Kartel and Tanya Stephens on March 15 and 31, 2011 respectively.

On April 26, 2011, Dr. Erna Brodber hosted her annual public reading of fiction by her creative writing students.

On May 11, 2011, Professor Carolyn Cooper gave a lecture to students and staff at St. Mary's College, Castries, St. Lucia. The lecture was titled "Addi the Teacha! Lessons from the Lyrics of Vybz Kartel."

On May 12, 2011, Professor Carolyn Cooper gave a public lecture entitled "No matter where you come from: Pan African Consciousness in Caribbean Popular Culture" for the UWI Open Campus, St Vincent and the Grenadines.

The Edward Baugh Distinguished Lecture Series: On June 5, 2011, Professor Helen Tiffin delivered the Fourth Edward Baugh Distinguished Lecture at the Neville Hall Lecture Theatre on the topic "Small Islands, Strong Currents: The Significance of West Indian Literature". Dr. Tiffin is

Professor Emerita of English at the University of Tasmania and is recognized as one of the leading scholars in the world in the area of postcolonial studies. She is the author of *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Postcolonial Literatures* (1989; with Bill Ashcroft and Gareth Griffiths), regarded as a foundational text in postcolonial theory.

Book Launches

December 7, 2010: Sonia King, *Jacket... or Full Suit? Paternity Testing From a Jamaican Perspective*

December 9, 2010: Paulette Ramsay, *Under Basil Leaves* and *On Friday Night* (co-authored with Dr. Anne-Maria Bankay)

April 17, 2011: Velma Pollard, *Considering Woman 1 & 2*

Staff / Postgraduate Seminar Series

The Department's Staff / Postgraduate Seminar Series featured the following presenters for the 2010 /2011 academic year:

Visiting Scholars

Dr. Rachael Mordecai, Assistant Professor, in the Department of English, University of Massachusetts (Amherst) presented a paper titled "Queer Sex and the Jamaican Citizen: Patricia Powell's A Small Gathering of Bones" on September 24, 2010.

Michael Morris, a PhD candidate at the University of Glasgow presented a paper titled "Jamaican Scots: Mary Seacole and Robert Wedderburn" on February 18, 2011

Dr. Julie Kim, Assistant Professor, in the English Department, Fordham University delivered a presentation titled "The Carib Atlantic" on April 15, 2011.

Literatures in English Graduate Students

Jodi-Ann Masters, MPhil student, UWI, delivered a presentation titled “Gender Performance and Hegemonic Dialectic in *The Young Desire It* and *Cambridge*” on May 6, 2011.

Workshops

Between December 6 and 9, 2010, Norval Edwards and Michael Bucknor participated in an Item Writing Workshop for the CAPE Literatures in English Examination at the Caribbean Examinations Council Western Zone Office at Caenwood.

On December 14, 2010, Michael Bucknor participated in a CAPE Workshop for 6th Form students at the Glenmuir High School in May Pen, Clarendon. He gave tips on exam preparation and writing good arguments.

Between January 4 and 10, 2011, Michael Bucknor participated in a CAPE Literatures in English Paper setting Meeting at the CXC Hedaquarters in Barbados.

Links with Other Universities (Local)

On May 9, 2011, Norval Edwards served as the External Examiner for Northern Caribbean University’s Language and Content examination for their final-year students.

Initiatives in Collaboration (Regional and International)

Links with Other Universities

Exchange with Malmö University:

Ms. Tricia Wint and Mr. Damian René went to Malmö in semester one of the 2010 -2011 academic year.

International Organizations / Professional Achievement

Dr. Michael Bucknor was elected as Chair of the Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS) at the 15th

Triennial Conference of the association in Cyprus. He will serve in this capacity for the next three years 2010-2013 and will host the 16th Triennial Conference in the Caribbean in 2013, most likely in Derek Walcott's island of St. Lucia. Ms. Tanya Shirley, a PhD candidate and temporary lecturer in Literatures in English was appointed as Treasurer of ACLALS.

Staff Matters

Dr. Victor Chang's retirement and Miss Lisa Brown's departure affected our ability to deliver Shakespeare and Drama courses. Ms. Shala Alert rose to the challenge of teaching LITS2207-Introduction to Shakespeare, one of the core courses for our majors, but we definitely need a permanent replacement for Dr. Chang in order to shore up our offerings in drama and Renaissance literature. On a more positive note, the Department welcomed a familiar face, Dr. Rachel Moseley-Wood who joined us in a new capacity as a Lecturer in Film Studies. Dr. Wendy Grant also joined the Department as a temporary assistant lecturer. Mrs. Cordella O'Gilvie assumed duties in February 2011 as Administrative Secretary, replacing Miss Mary Gray who retired after twenty-six years of dedicated and excellent service. In terms of promotions, Dr. Mawuena Logan's application for tenure was approved at the May 27 meeting of the Appointments and Promotions Committee.

PAPERS PRESENTED

Dr. Michael Bucknor

- "Exploring Black Masculinities Across Multiple Landscapes" conference at the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, "Complicating Revolutionary Romances: Black Diasporic Masculinities and Popular Culture." October 14 - 6, 2010
- "Social Constructivism and Jamaican Popular Romances" to the "Reading Contemporary Popular Culture" graduate class, University of Miami, March 2, 2011.

- “The Present Future of Caribbean Literary and Cultural Studies,” in honour of Prof. Sandra Pouchet Paquet, founding editor of *Anthurium* and Professor of Caribbean Literature who recently retired from the University of Miami. “Performing Masculinities in Jamaican Popular Culture”, March 4, 2011.

PUBLICATIONS

- * Michael Bucknor co-edited with Alison Donnell, The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature London: Routledge, 2011. 704pp. June 15, 2011.

Book Chapters:

- * Bucknor, Michael A. “Olive Senior—‘Grung’/Ground(ed) Poetics: ‘The Voice from the Bottom of the Well’” in The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature London: Routledge, 2011, 85-92.
- * —“Dub Poetry As a Postmodern Art Form: Self-conscious of Critical Reception” in The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature London: Routledge, 2011. 255-264.
- * Edwards, Norval. “Sylvia Wynter: Insurgent Criticism and a Poetics of Disenchantment” in Bucknor, Michael A. and Alison Donnell Eds., The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature London: Routledge, 2011. 99- 108.
- * — “The Foundational Generation: From The Beacon to Savacou” The Routledge Companion to Anglophone Caribbean Literature London: Routledge, 2011. 111-123.
- * Logan, Mawuena. “Postmodern Identity: Blackness and the Making of President Obama.” The Obama Phenomenon: Change We Can/ Ed. Femi Ojo-Ade. Trenton (NJ): Africa World Press, 2010, 104-122.

Refereed Journal Articles

- * Edwards, Norval. “Bob Marley: Two Sightings and One Reflection on Natty Dread “, *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas* 43.2 (Nov. 2010): 194-199.
- * — “Vernacular Sounds, Cultural Theories: The Uses of Sound in Kamau Brathwaite’s Literary and Cultural Criticism”, *BIM: Arts for the 21st Century* 4.1 (Nov.2010): 56-63.

PUBLIC SERVICE

Dr Michael Bucknor

- Editor, *Journal of West Indian Literature* (Regional Journal)
- Chief Examiner, CAPE Literatures in English, Caribbean Examinations Council
- Chair, Association of Commonwealth Literature and Language Studies (ACLALS)

Professor Carolyn Cooper

- Member, Board of Directors, Development Partners and Management International Limited, Kingston
- Regional Editor (Caribbean), *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies*, Routledge.

Dr Norval Edwards

- Review editor, Northern Caribbean University’s peer-reviewed journal, *International Review of Humanities*
- Member, Advisory Board, *Issues in Critical Investigation*, Vanderbilt University, Nashville, Tennessee),
- Associate Editor, *Small Axe: A Caribbean Journal of Criticism*
- Editorial Board Member, *Postcolonial Text*

Mr David Williams

- Member, Executive Committee of the Jamaica Association for Mentally Retarded Persons.

Cross Campus collaboration

The Department publishes the *Journal of West Indian Literature* in collaboration with our sister departments at Cave Hill and St. Augustine, and its members are actively involved in WIACLALS, the regional branch of ACLALS. Additionally the department actively participated in reviewing new graduate course proposals from St. Augustine.

CATEGORIES OF STUDENTS

Undergraduate

Majors	–	138
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First Class Honours:	Stephanie Koathes
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Postgraduate

Registration

PhD	4
Mphil	20
MA	24

Award of Degrees

PhD	Gale Jackson
MA	Erica McFarlane