

THE INTERLOCUTOR

Newsletter of the Humanities and Teacher Education (HUTE) Division
Seaver College, Pepperdine University
Spring 2021



THE PIVOT

Dr. Stella Erbes

Divisional Dean of Humanities and Teacher Education

Pivot. Though the 2020-2021 school year has posed many challenges, we, indeed, survived the pivot. We used these moments to reimagine the teaching and learning process. Students, faculty, administration, and staff - we had the ability to be bigger than this moment. We had the ability to leave our legacy right here, right now. And we rose to the challenge. We embraced the pivot.

Congratulations, colleagues. Congratulations on teaching during this unprecedented year. As you will read in this newsletter, the HUTE division still was able to accomplish so much despite a 180-degree swivel to virtual education amid the global pandemic.

Thank you all for pivoting this year with resilience and grace. I wish you all a restful summer to rejuvenate before we come back together in the fall.

“I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” ~ 2 Timothy 4:7



JANUARY TERM

The HUTE Division offered many courses during the January term. Below, several of the professors reflect on their teaching experiences.

HUM 111 with Dr. Jennifer Smith

Dr. Smith shared, "I had a great time with my squad of "legionnaires." (That's what I call them. I am their "Dux," General.) I required 10-minute 1-on-1 check-ins every week and that worked really well to ensure that everyone was on track and comfortable with the course material. But the best new aspect of this digital flip was when I added an optional 5-minute "legionnaire" workout at the end of all of my asynchronous lectures. Most of my students participated and it was a fun and natural way to encourage a holistic approach to learning. Healthy bodies, healthy minds!"



ENG 380 with Dr. John Struloeff

For my ENG 380 in January, my class and I ventured into the topic of 'Science in Literature.' I was a physics major for three of my undergraduate years, but this was the first time I have offered a class that combined science with my professional fields of writing and literature. It worked out amazingly well. We started by reading *Frankenstein* while studying the scientific perceptions of that time period and the famous circle of writers that Mary Shelley was with when she first drafted the novel, then we moved on to Andrea Barrett's brilliant story collection, *Ship Fever*, which includes heavily researched historical fiction that focuses on the biological sciences. Without slowing, we rolled through a wide range of poetry (because all of this had to be done in just four weeks!) on chaos theory and Marie Curie and the anthropic cosmological principle (even one poem written by Google's AI) before finishing with Alan Lightman's *Einstein's Dreams*. Lightman is an MIT physicist, and in this book he explores Einstein's conceptions of time while he developed his famous paper on Special Relativity in 1905. Since I have a verse biography of Einstein soon to be published, I was able to talk in detail about Einstein's life and ideas and also to share the title poem of my forthcoming book and discuss how I navigated the liminal between the historical record and my artistic imagination. In addition to many experiences where the students practiced close reading and analysis (both in discussions and in written assignments), they also crafted a proposal for a novel that focused on their area of interest in science (while also thinking about conflict and narrative expectations and how their subject connects with the current historical moment) and wrote a paper where they analyzed two of our readings using a theory or lens from their professional fields. And I haven't even gotten to the part where the Capitol was stormed by a mob during one of our class sessions!



JANUARY TERM

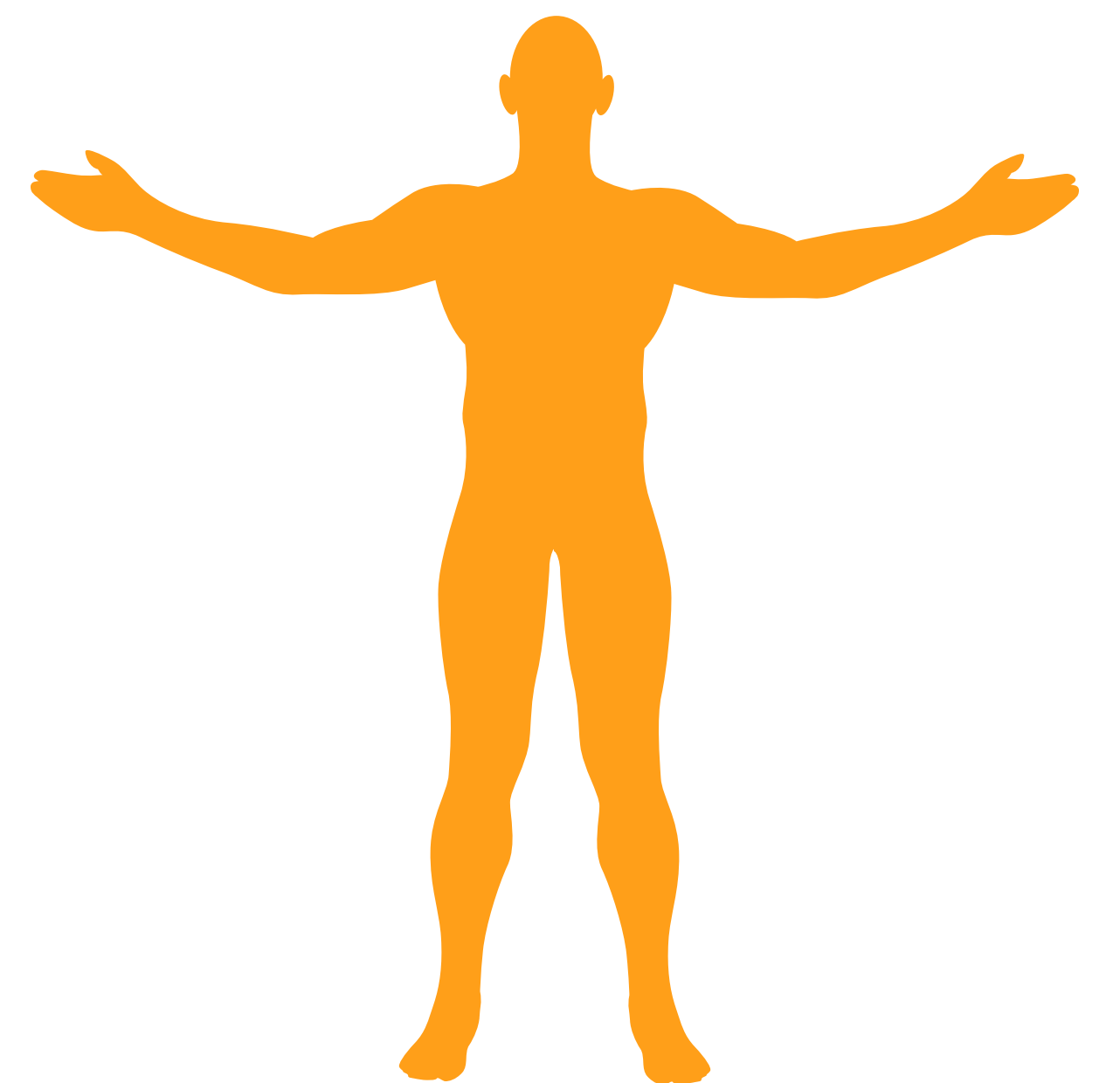


ENG 380 with Professor Julie Oni

I had a delightful time with my dramatic literature students. Reading plays at a moment like this truly reinforced the power of stories to offer timeless insight into cultural tendencies. We explored past plays like Wilson's *The Piano Lesson* and Fornes' *Mud* in conversation with the BLM movement and social distancing, and it was great to see the students engaging with their own experiences in relation to dramatic structure. The icing on the cake was the amazing creativity of their final projects. In the online format, I have been having my students create final video essays instead of standard presentations. For this class, they had three video options, and one of them was to adapt a play we'd studied and present it in video format. I don't usually have so many students choose this option, but this term, they were into it. I got the most impressive array of creative dramatic texts, all from students who were not writing or theatre majors. I had a water polo student adapt Yasmina Reza's *The God of Carnage* into an argument between sports coaches, and another who shifted Amiri Baraka's *Dutchman* from a 1960s subway train to an Uber Pool. Despite the challenges of isolation we're dealing with today, I have been inspired to see the creativity that comes from forced engagement with technology and a re-working of course projects to suit this medium.

HUM 111 with Professor Beau Brannan

I wasn't sure how Jan Term would feel compared to Fall Semester. I had sent out a survey prior to starting to get the student vibe of taking Hum 111 during a Jan Term and I think the general mood could be described as "ugh, but worth it." I tried to frame it as "Australian Summer School" but I don't think it took. But like a good Disney sports movie plot we bonded and had a great term. The approach was to ask, what does it mean to be human? The idea being the thoughts, struggles, triumphs and questions we ponder today are shared experiences with those even 5,000 years ago. One fun creative project was for students to evaluate a business or brand carrying a historical reference or mythological name/logo from our period of study. For instance, most students are unaware the Starbucks logo is a mythological Siren. So they get to unpack the historical/mythological context and then evaluate/argue whether the brand's choice of name or logo makes sense.



HUM 313 with Dr. Paul Contino

My experience teaching HUM 313 over the month of January was one of the most intense yet ultimately satisfying teaching experiences of my career. In four short weeks, five days a week, my students and I traversed European (and some American) history and culture, from the rise of Napoleon to the storming of the US Capitol on January 6. The task was formidable: the students read over 800 pages, studied numerous masterpieces of art, listened to symphonies, and read poetry and philosophy with attentiveness -- and sought to place it all in the context of the history we were studying. The students wrote on our Courses page every day -- before class and, in a pedagogical practice I introduced in this class, immediately after class. They willingly engaged each day in our discussions via zoom, and wrote a final, integrative essay at the end of the month. I was so impressed by the students' studiousness during a challenging time, and completed the class feeling that like them, I had learned a lot.



LEE & LOW BOOKS EVENT

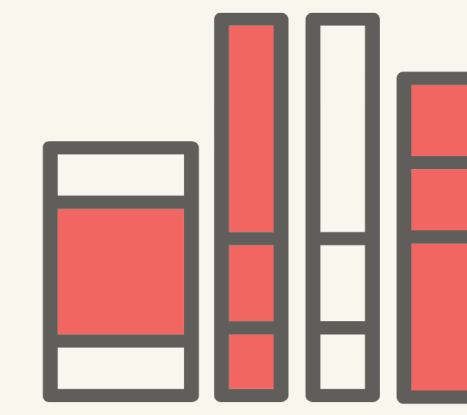
GUEST SPEAKER

THE LARGEST MULTICULTURAL
CHILDREN'S BOOK PUBLISHER IN
AMERICA

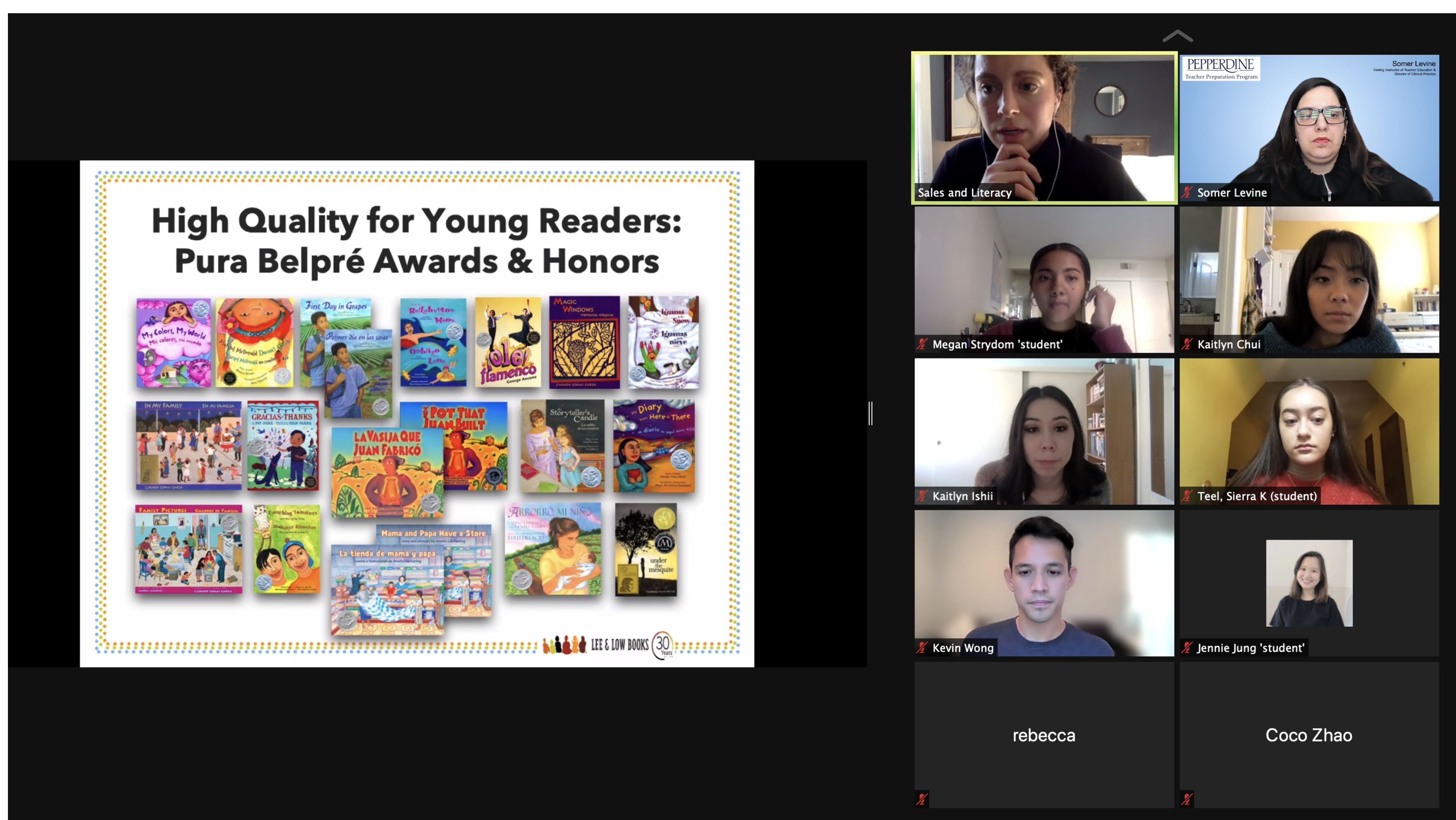
LEE & LOW BOOKS
W/ KATIE POTTER
SENIOR LITERACY SPECIALIST

<https://pepperdine.zoom.us/j/81747070074>

Feb. 17, 2020
1-2PM @ Zoom link



Professor Somer Levine hosted a special event for HUTE students on February 17, 2021, featuring Katie Potter from Lee & Low Books. Katie shared about Lee & Low's mission and presented resources that teachers may find useful in the classroom when selecting books. Below is an image from the event and a student's reflection on the experience.



Student Sierra Teel explained, "The guest speaker event was amazing! The speaker Katie shared so much information with us regarding building our classroom library! She shared that Lee & Low Books has a blog and a newsletter that I plan to subscribe to! She shared all of the different genres that they publish, their personal mission of amplifying BIPOC voices/authors/illustrators, and how they help support educators. I was especially interested in their guided reading programs, social and emotional learning programs, and social activism programs. These programs connect with webinars that can be found on their website where they speak with professionals about each program's theme. They also have a classroom library questionnaire that helps an educator diversify their library. Katie shared with us that they have book lists, and she even personally connects with teachers to help them diversify their personal libraries based on their budget. It was an awesome event!"



GREAT BOOKS CONFERENCE

Great Books Participation at Virtual Undergraduate Conference

On February 27, 2021, eight students presented papers written for Great Books courses at the virtual conference, “Questions That Endure.” The work of three faith-based universities in California, the conference was organized by Concordia University, Irvine (CUI) with participation of students and faculty from CUI, Fresno Pacific University (FPU), and Pepperdine.

After the conference, faculty participant Dr. Tuan Hoang asked Pepperdine students the following questions:

What did you gain the most from this conference?

Natalie Alderton: I think the most impactful part of the conference was being exposed to the unique ideas of my peers. As a freshman who began college virtually, connection is something that can be difficult to find. The opportunity to hear varying perspectives on topics I was passionate about was a meaningful way to gain that sense of connection that the world really needs right now.

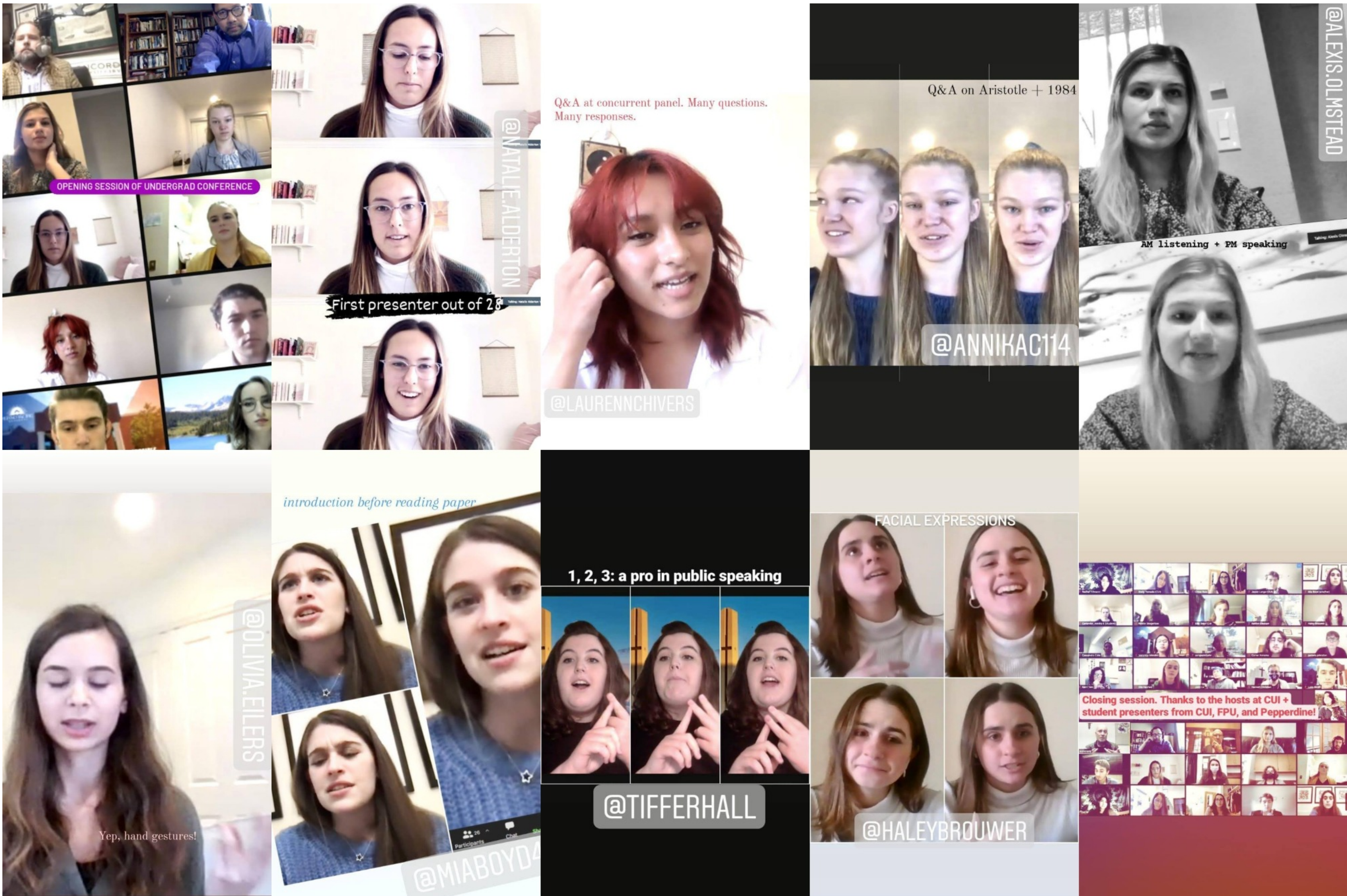
Mia Boyd: I think that the most important thing I gained from the conference was confidence in myself and my work. Leading up to the presentation of my paper, I was very nervous about what everyone would think of my work and my Q&A answers because I had never done anything like this before, but I think that going through this process really helped me feel more confident that my work would get good reception and that I would be able to engage with people while thinking on my feet.

Haley Brauwer: This was the first opportunity I have had to present one of my papers at an academic conference, which was an amazing experience. I would say I learned the most from the different perspectives I was able to hear from other students, whether that be from their own papers or their responses to mine. Overall, it pushed me to refine my beliefs and arguments.

Annika Carlander: I gained the confidence that I can—and would love to—do something like this again! Just the word “conference” was slightly daunting, and I was nervous as I zoomed in, but it was a great experience. I saw my own interests mirrored in other students from CUI, FPU, and Pepperdine, and those discussions were really fun.

Tiffany Hall: This conference had no dearth of opportunity for both professional and personal growth. On the one hand, I was able to network with other students, receiving the contact information of those presenters who I thought were particularly effective. Moreover, I learned what sort of work goes into presenting at a conference and how to present more effectively over Zoom.

Alexis Olmstead: attending the CUI Conference, I gained a newfound appreciation for the liberal arts and the insights it provoked surrounding friendship, politics, theology, and more. I learned so much from the students who presented their research and I am grateful to have engaged in thoughtful conversations with these scholars.



GREAT BOOKS CONFERENCE

Great Books Participation at Virtual Undergraduate Conference (continued)

From writing the abstract/proposal to the end of the conference, what did you find to be the most challenging part?

Alderton: The most challenging part of the conference for me was presenting. I already had the ideas that I was passionate about written on the page, but speaking in front of a group of highly skilled and knowledgeable peers and professors can be daunting. Once I began speaking, my nerves eased a bit, but it pushed me outside of my comfort zone in a positive way.

Olmstead: When writing my paper on Pascal's conception of human wretchedness, I examined several details of the philosopher's theology on God, the Christian religion, and the greatness of mankind. However, when presenting at the conference, I was challenged to connect these ideas to the broader concepts of humility, morality, and agnosticism. By stretching myself to apply Pascal's ideas to different ideas and disciplines, I gained new knowledge surrounding the ethical, moral, and religious undertones of Pascal's work.

Olivia Eilers: One of the things that I found difficult was bridging the gap between the way I speak naturally and my more formal tone of writing. It was a bit tricky to present my ideas in a way that was engaging to listen to and tailored to a live audience.

Did you find any difference between writing the paper for the Great Books on the one hand and, on the other hand, presenting it at this conference?

Boyd: I think that for GB, I was way more verbose; I had a page count to meet and I was just writing for my GB professor. It felt like there was less pressure because I only had to worry about the response of one person to my work, while leading up to the conference I was anxious about how people would receive my paper and Q&A answers. However, presenting was way more fun than I had anticipated and I genuinely enjoyed the conversations and questions that my paper sparked!

Brauwer: Each definitely required its own skill set! In initially writing my paper for Great Books, I could assume my audience (my professor) had background knowledge, while at the conference I had to quickly and succinctly explain the plot of the books I wrote about, because not many people have read *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano*. In my initial essay, I also had the space to fully write out my ideas because there was no page limit, giving me more ability to explore abstract and complex ideas - but there was also an obvious pressure because of this degree of freedom. Presenting at the conference, I was faced with a time limit, so I had to keep my ideas as simple as possible. The Q&A portion of the conference allowed space for more of my creativity though!

Carlander: There wasn't much of a difference between writing the paper for Great Books versus presenting. In retrospect, I think there should have been. I could have narrowed in on my ideas a little more concisely, but, you live and learn. The Q&A session was entirely unique.

Eilers: Yes, I had to make some modifications to my original paper so that it had a more fitting tone and appealed to a wider audience. In order to make my paper more understandable to those who were not in my Great Books class, I adjusted the length, paraphrased more of my quotations, and adapted the content a bit to give background information for those who might not be as familiar with the text as I am.

Hall: I found that presenting at a conference is much different than writing purely for Great Books. The question and answer portion during the conference, in particular, was extremely rigorous, but I view it as wholly necessary for a full understanding of your own topic. I would recommend we incorporate this in the curriculum because it forced me to look at the connections in my paper through a more critical lens.



SIGMA TAU DELTA AUTHOR TALK

Sigma Tau Delta Author/Book Talk with Alumna Katharyn Blair



SPONSORED BY SIGMA TAU DELTA
ENGLISH HONORS SOCIETY

KATHARYN BLAIR BOOK TALK ENGLISH CLASS OF 2011

MARCH 25TH, 4:30 PM PST

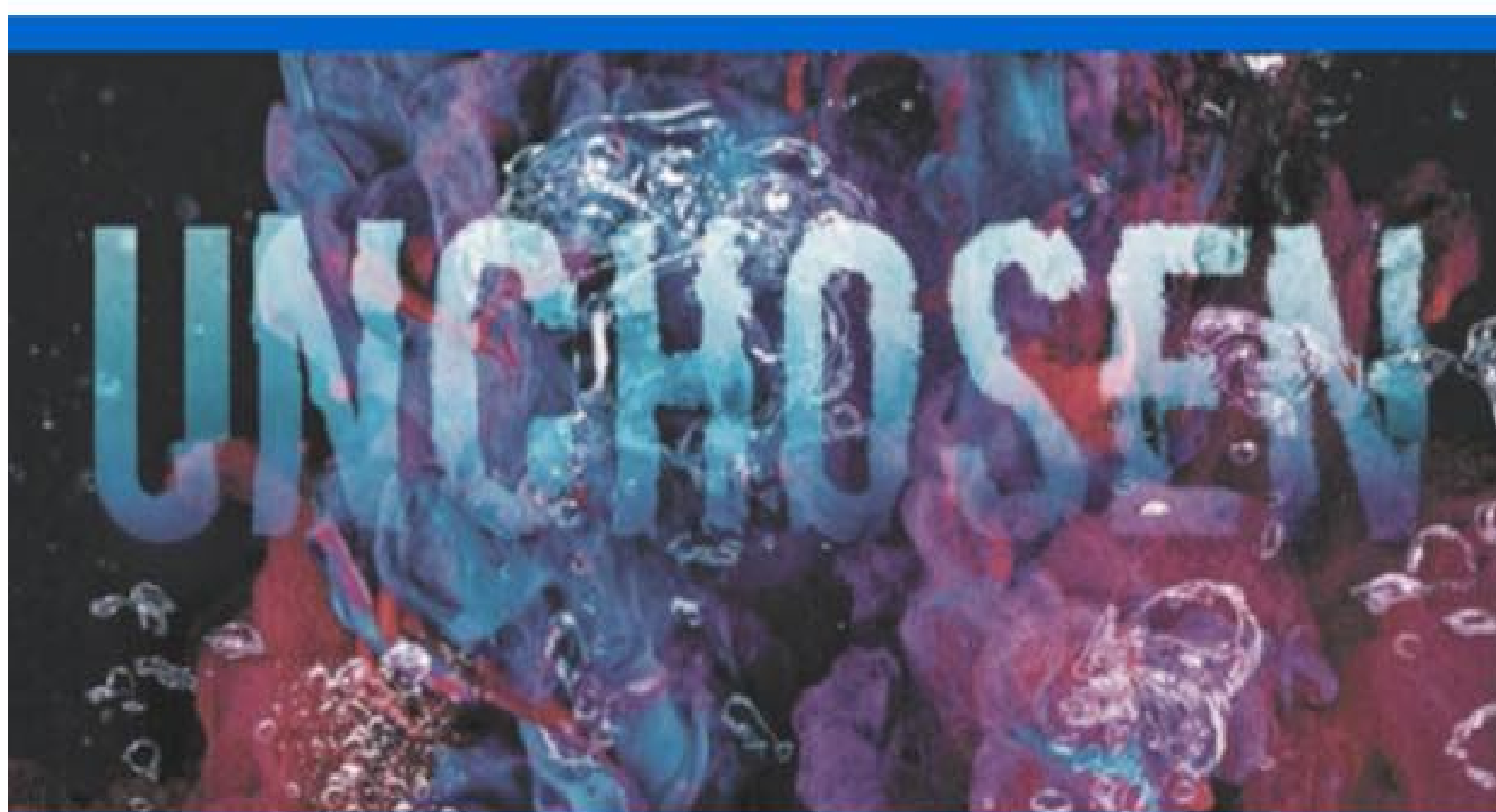
All are invited to Katie Blair's book talk on her most recent YA
novel published through HarperCollins, *Unchosen*!

To receive zoom link register here: <https://forms.gle/RHEjiRrRM96KV7fh7>

Sigma Tau Delta, the English National Honor Society, held a special author/book talk with English Department alumna Katharyn (Katie) Blair. This March event featured candid advice from Katie to English and Creative Writing majors considering writing professionally, as well as those who were interested in hearing more about her books. The event attracted more than 50 Zoom participants, who spent an hour asking questions about working with publishers, writing queries and acquiring an agent.

Katie is an up-and-coming Young Adult Fiction writer whose second novel, *Unchosen*, was published in January by Harper/Collins. Her first novel, *The Beckoning Shadow*, came out in 2019 with the same publisher. She has several more books under contract with Harper/Collins as well as Penguin Random House.

Katie graduated from Pepperdine with a BA in English/Writing & Rhetoric in 2011 as well as an MFA in Screenwriting in 2014. She went on to receive an MA in Literature in 2018 from Claremont University. She has had a busy decade since leaving her undergraduate years but still maintains her Pepperdine connections with former professors. She is married to Ross Lisman, also a Pepperdine grad, and they live in Los Angeles with their three children.



Signed copies now available online at the Pepperdine Bookstore

Signed copies of her novel *Unchosen* are now available for purchase or delivery from the Pepperdine Bookstore. Pepperdine University hosts the Eta Psi Chapter of Sigma Tau Delta on its campus. The faculty sponsors are Professors Julianne Smith, Jeff Schultz and Jacqueline Dillion. Currently, the Eta Psi Chapter has 48 members. This year's student officers are Jaclyn Rothman (President), Nicole Son (Vice President), Sophie Miller (Secretary), and Faith Lane (Historian). Membership in the honor society is open to English and Creative Writing majors and minors who meet certain GPA requirements and have taken at least 48 credit hours.

Submission by: Dr. Julie Smith



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ACCREDITATION SITE VISIT

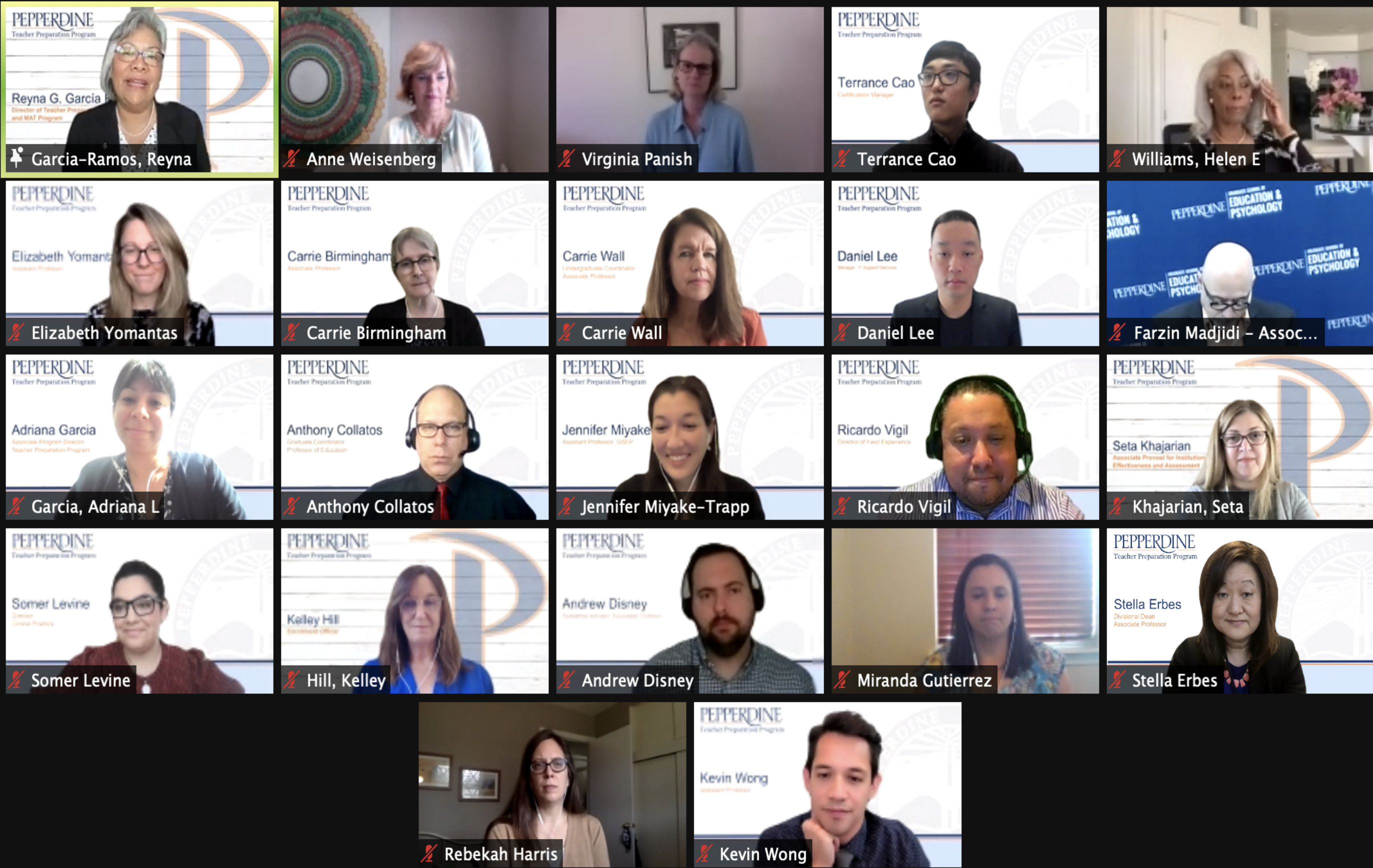
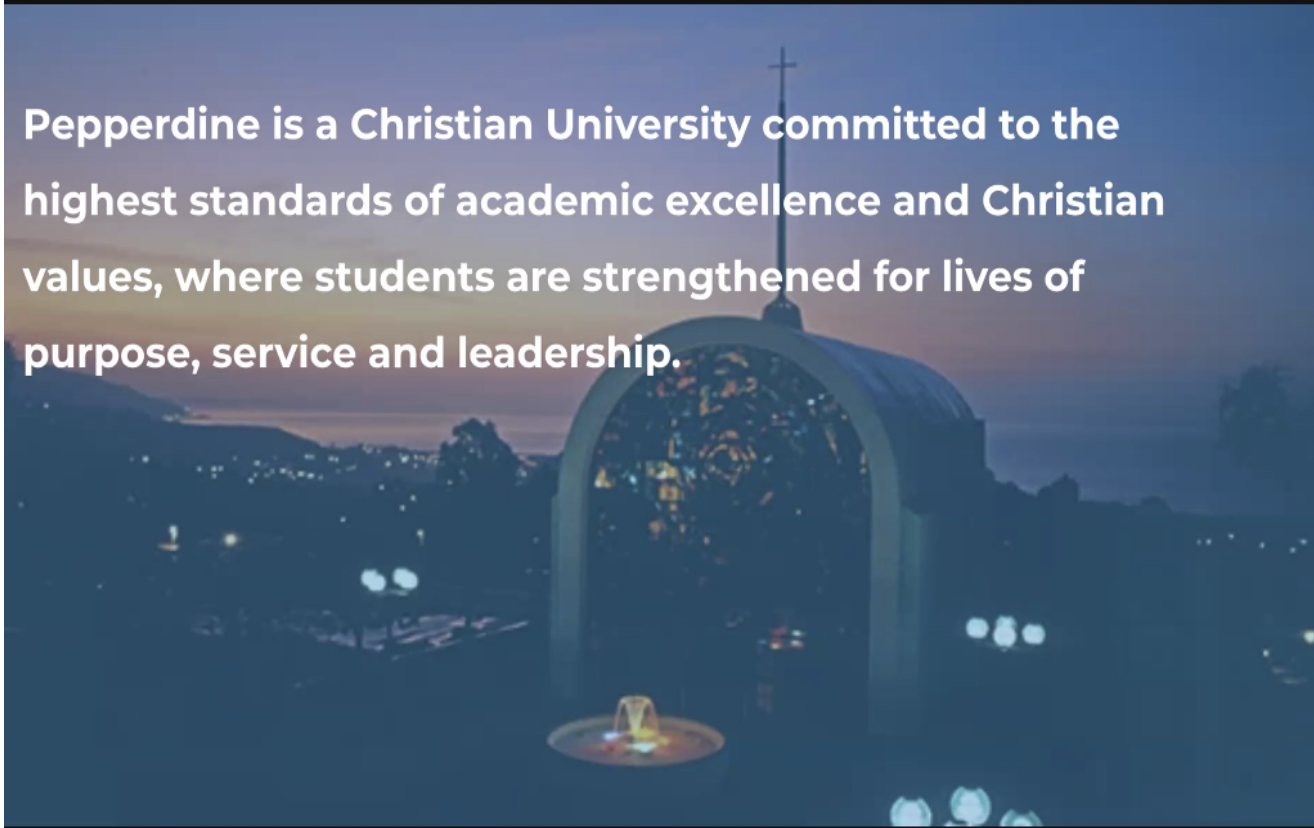
Teacher Preparation Program Passes Accreditation

On Sunday, March 21 through Tuesday, March 23, the California Commission on Teacher Credentialing (CTC) completed a virtual accreditation visit of Pepperdine's Teacher Preparation Program (TPP). Our undergraduate and graduate pathways closely collaborated in preparation for this important event. The three-day site visit occurs once every seven years, allowing the CTC to verify information from the TPP’s annual data analysis and reports.

After a thorough review of all institutional and programmatic information and materials available prior to and during the accreditation site visit--including interviews with administrators, faculty, students, alumni, and local K-12 school personnel--***the CTC accreditation team unanimously recommended Pepperdine’s TPP for accreditation!***

The report stated that the accreditation team “obtained sufficient and consistent information that led to a high degree of confidence in making overall and programmatic judgments about the professional education unit’s operation.” We celebrate this successful review and this validation of the quality of our Teacher Preparation Program.

- Stella Erbes (Divisional Dean, HUTE)
- Carrie Wall (TPP Coordinator - Undergraduate Pathway)
- Carrie Birmingham (Liberal Arts For Education Program Director)
- Elizabeth Yomantas (Professional Development Schools Coordinator)
- Somer Levine (Director of Clinical Practice)
- Michael Gose (Faculty)

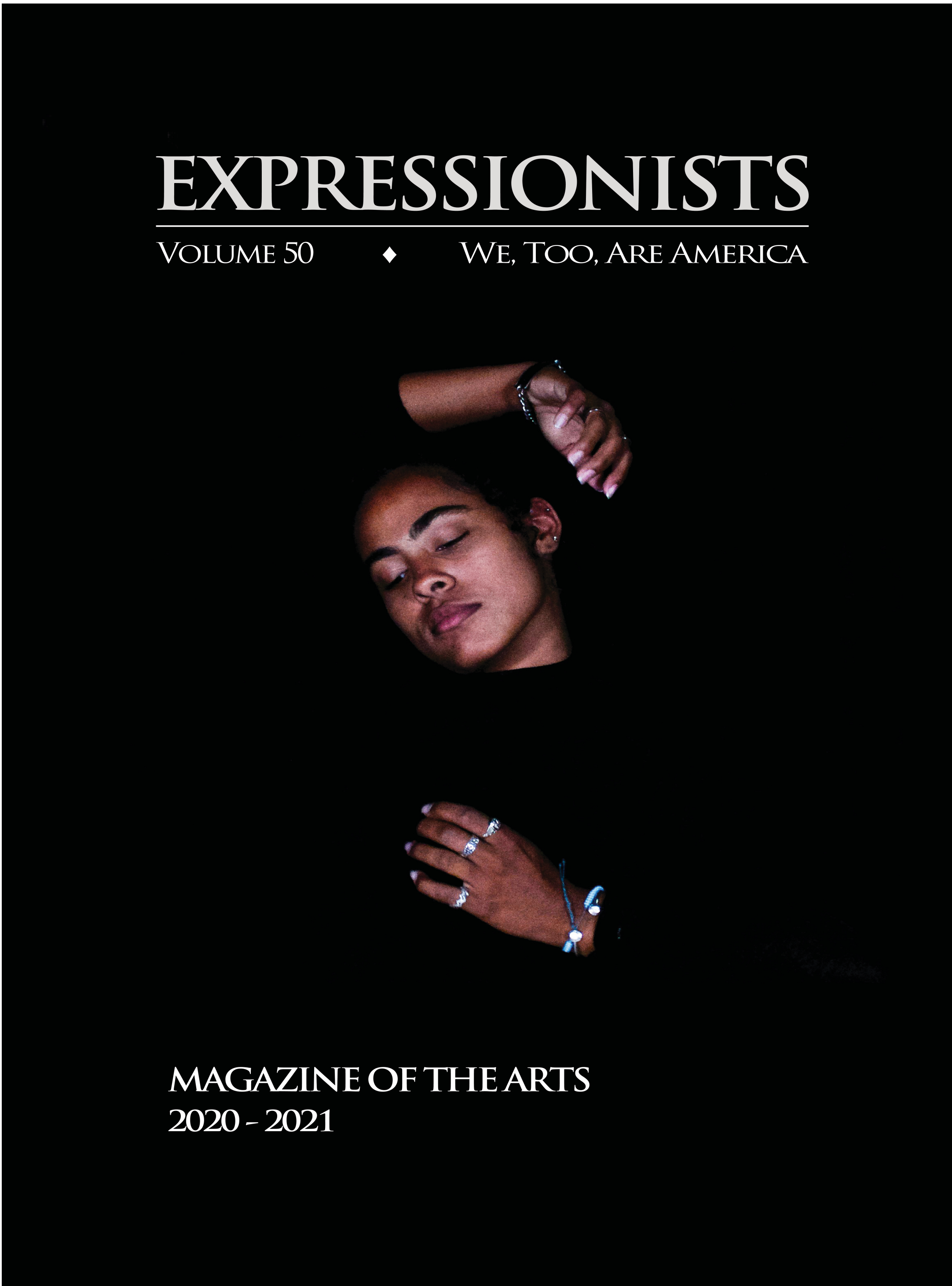


EXPRESSIONISTS MAGAZINE RELEASED

On May 5, 2021, the 50th edition of Expressionists magazine was released. Below, Editor-in-Chief Amanda Cooper shares about her experience serving as editor for this important edition.



I had the immense privilege of serving as Editor-in-Chief of Expressionists magazine for the 2020-2021 school year! The editorial team is proud to present the 50th edition of the magazine, titled, We, Too, Are America. In addition to being a semi-centennial celebration of the Expressionists, the issue also provided a platform for students to ruminate on the many events of the past year. The theme, inspired by Harlem Renaissance poet Langston Hughes’ work I, Too, explores the intersection between personal identity and our national culture, and affirms that everyone, regardless of race, gender, class, or creed, deserves a seat at America’s table. Our team received hundreds of wonderful submissions, which made narrowing down the magazine to 80 pages a very difficult feat! On May 5th, we hosted a magazine release celebration during which students read excerpts from their work and we presented the cover image, photographed by Darcie Hill and featuring Dance in Flight member Erinn Heffes. I have greatly enjoyed my time working with the talented students and staff that make up the Expressionists team, and I look forward to potentially using my skills as an editor again in the future!



FACULTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The HUTE Division congratulates the following faculty members on their recent accomplishments.

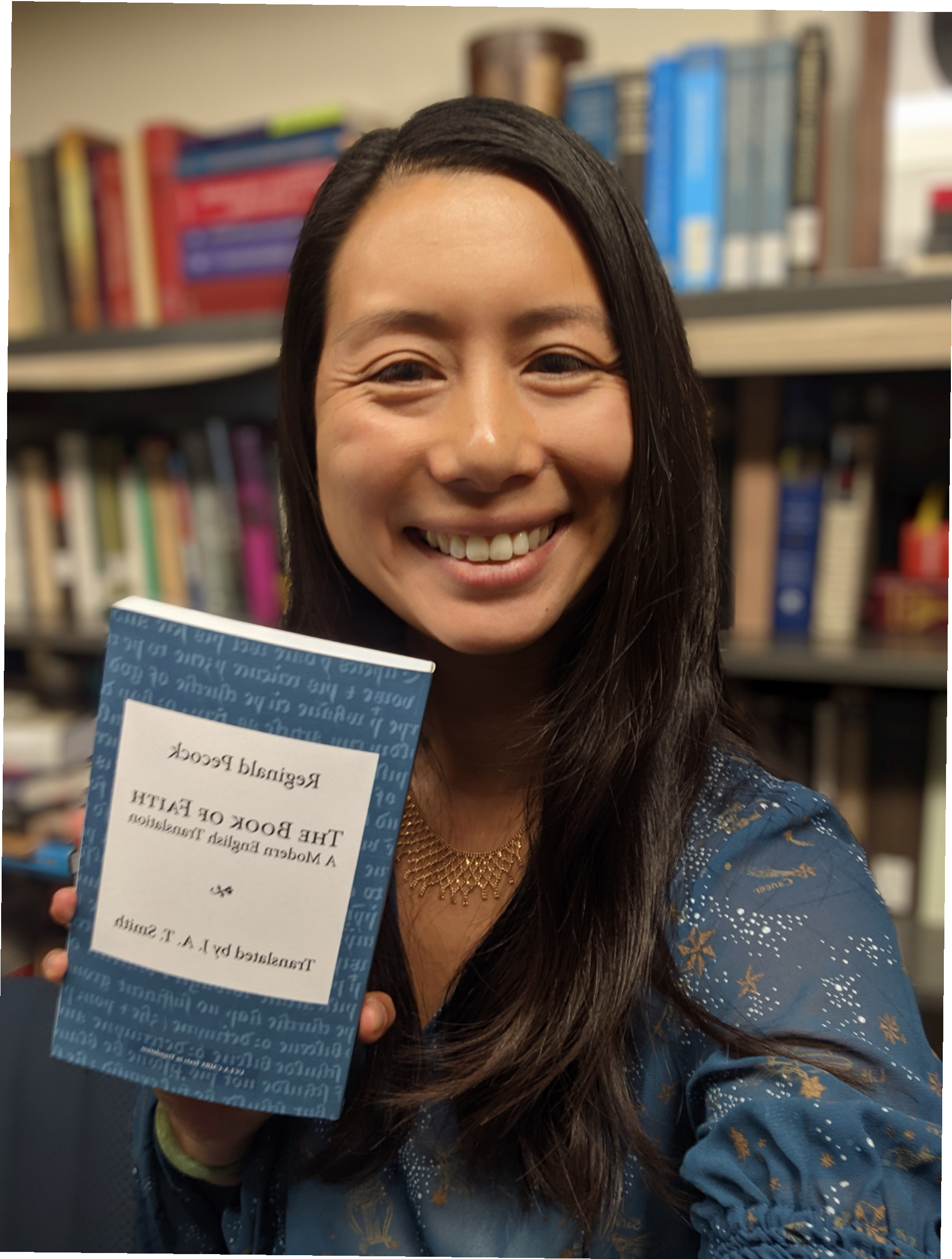
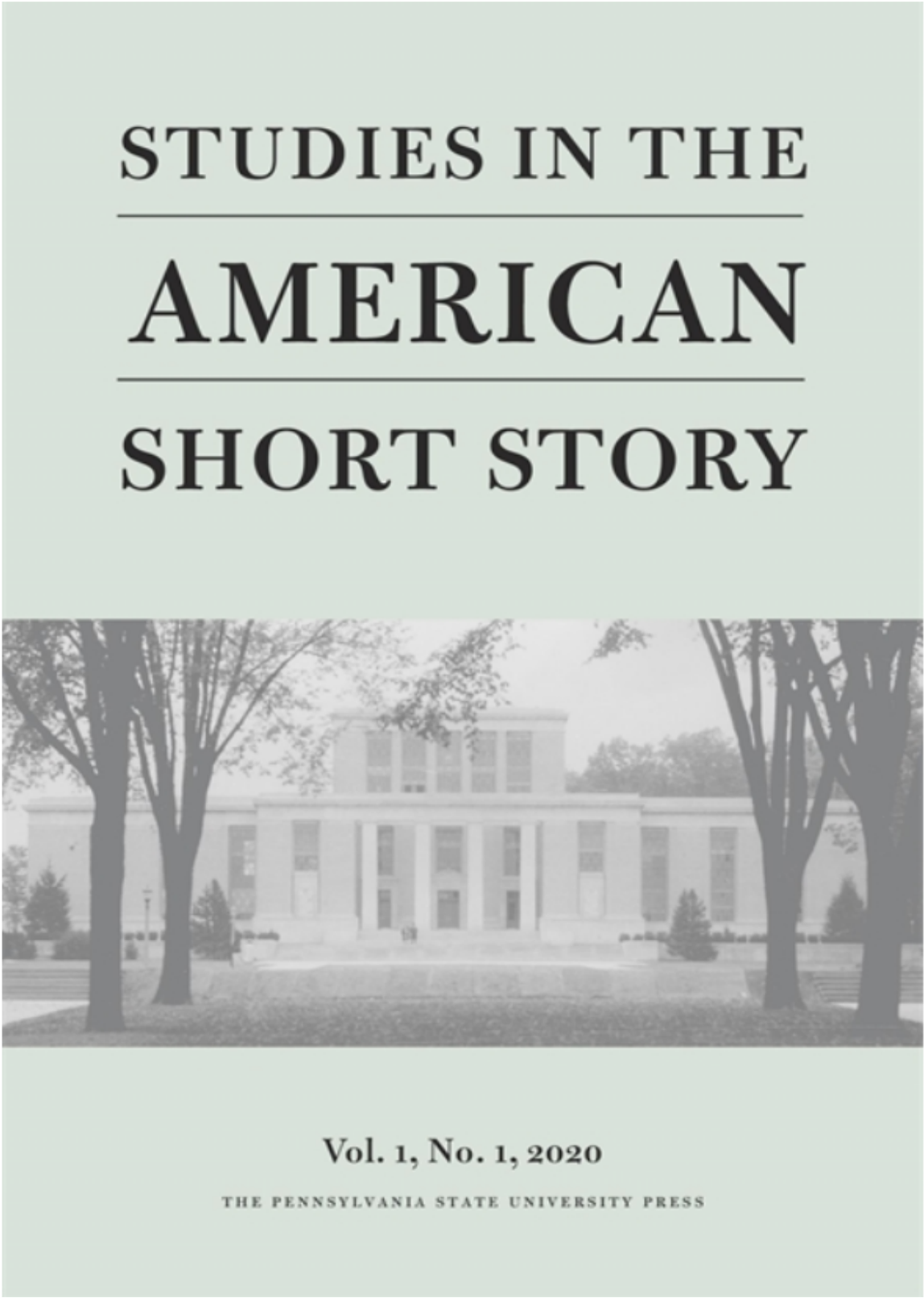


Professor Julie Oni Releases New Play

Professor Julie Oni released her new play titled *Bola Blue Eyes*. Bola, a young Nigerian girl with blue eyes living in LA, comes to realize the conflicting responses to her mother's passed-down trait. She must decide if she will celebrate her Black-girl-blue-eyes inheritance or shun its attachment to skeptical superstitions. For more information about the play, please click on the image.

Dr. James Thomas Publishes New Article

Congratulations to Dr. James Thomas on his most recent publication! "A Rose for Ada: Resurrecting Lyle Saxon's 'The Centaur Plays Croquet.'" *Studies in the American Short Story* 1 (2020): 130-44.



Dr. Jennifer Smith Publishes New Book

Dr. Jennifer Smith published a new book in fall 2020. Click on Jennifer's picture to learn more about the book.

Reginald Pecock. *The Book of Faith: A Modern English Translation*. Translated by J. A. T. Smith. UCLA Center for Medieval and Renaissance Studies. 2020.

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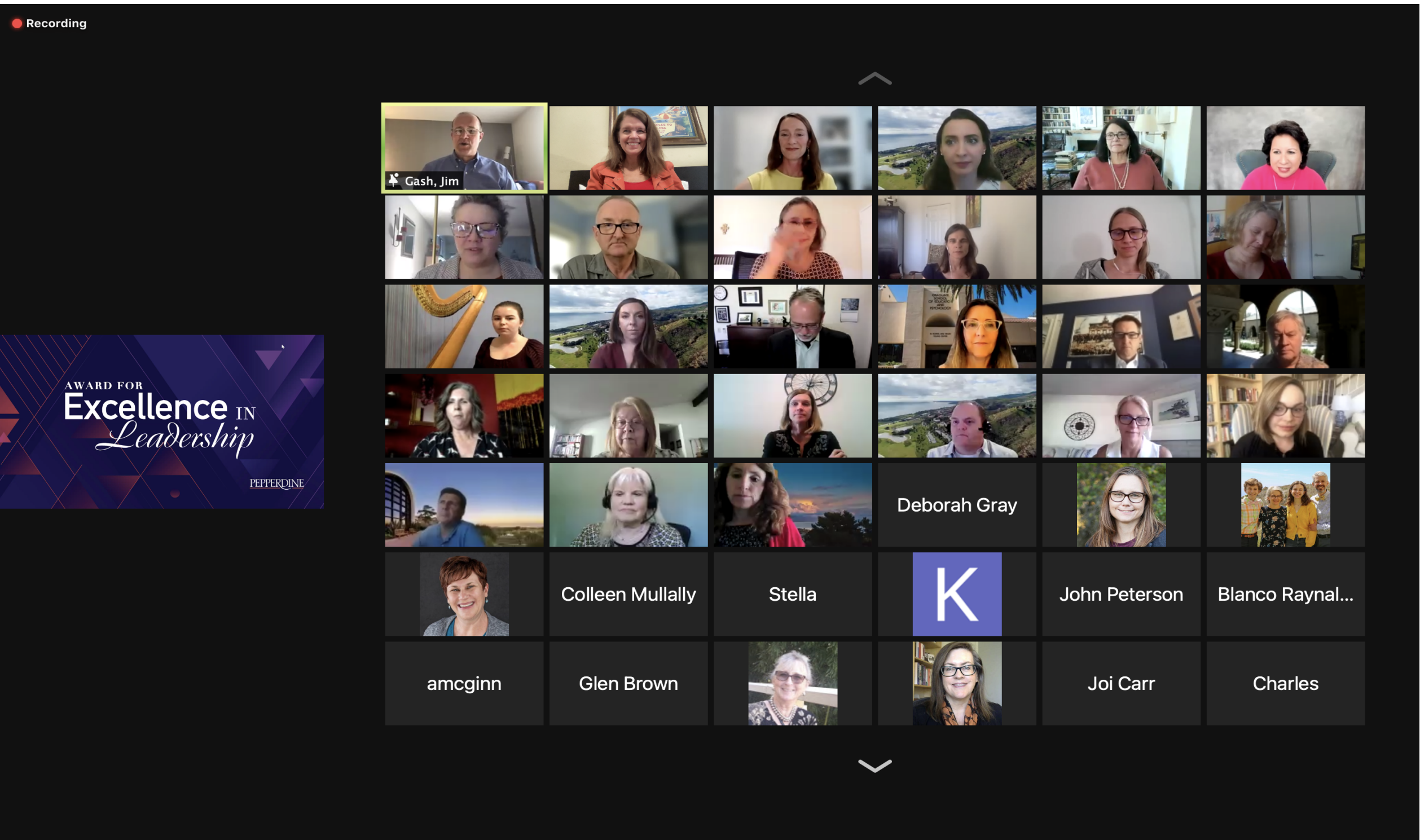
Professor Somer Levine Named Recipient of the 2021 Delaine A. Eastin Fellowship

UC Santa Barbara’s Gevirtz School has named Somer Levine the recipient of the 2021 Delaine A. Eastin Fellowship. This fellowship is given to a graduate student pursuing an MA or Ph.D. in the Department of Education who is the first in her family to attend grad school and show academic progress, with a preference for female students. Click on Professor Levine’s picture to access the press release.



Dr. Cyndia Clegg Receives the 2021 Award for Excellence in Leadership

On Friday, April 30, 2021, Dr. Cyndia Clegg was honored with the Award for Excellence in Leadership. The Award for Excellence in Leadership honors a woman whose academic leadership has made a significant contribution to her profession.



Dr. Stella Erbes Publishes Article in Inside Higher Ed

Dr. Stella Erbes shares reflections and lessons learned during her first year that might serve as a helpful resource for others considering a leadership position in higher education. Her article is titled "13 Tips for New Administrators." Click on the image to the left to access the article.



Dr. Leslie Kreiner Wilson Publishes New Article

Dr. Leslie Kreiner Wilson published a new article titled "Reading Uncle Carl with Antonia Carlotta: Notes on the Unpublished Autobiographical Fragment *The Business of Motion Pictures*, Americana in *The Journal of American Popular Culture*."

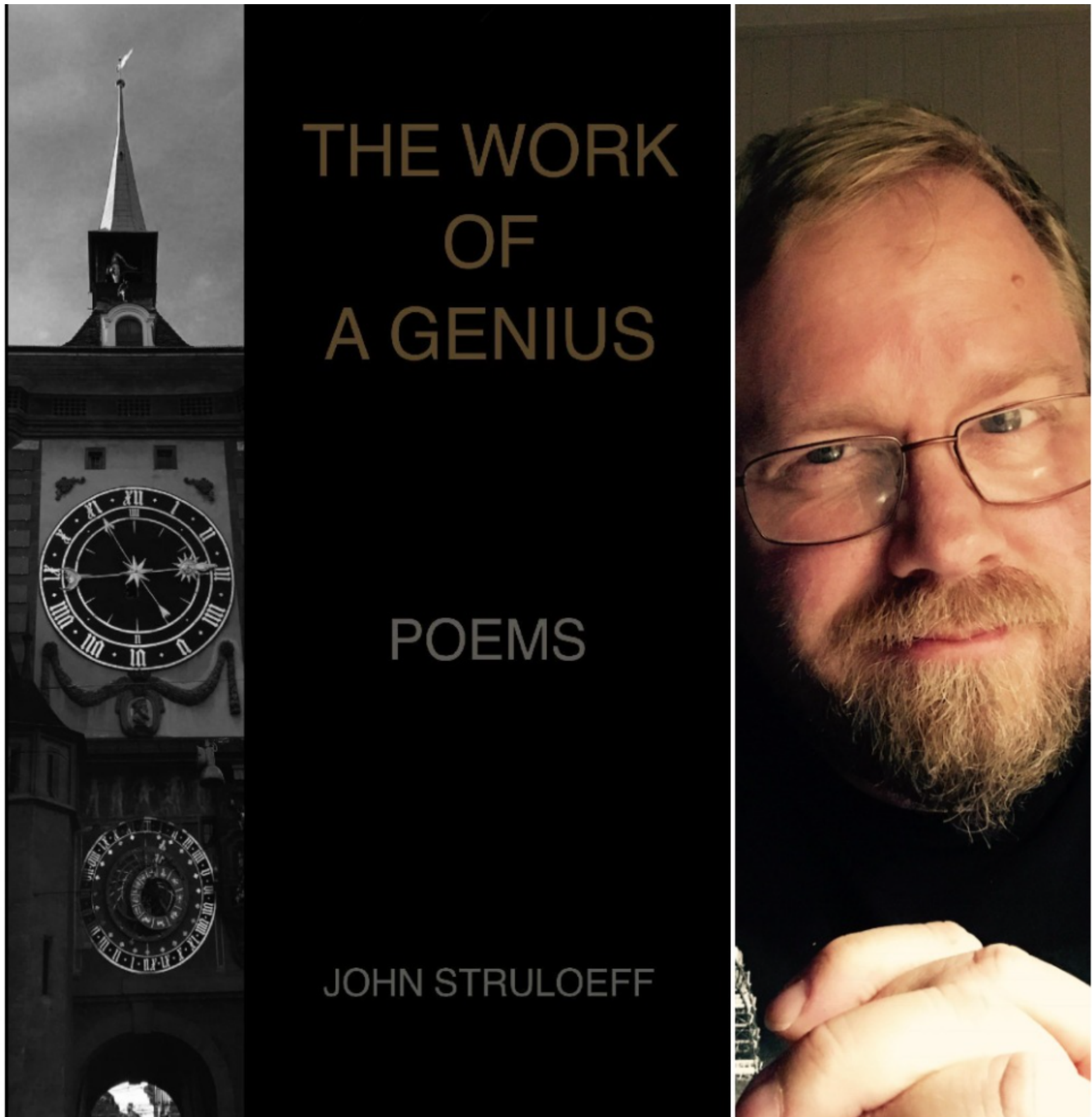
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Dr. John Struloeff Publishes New Book

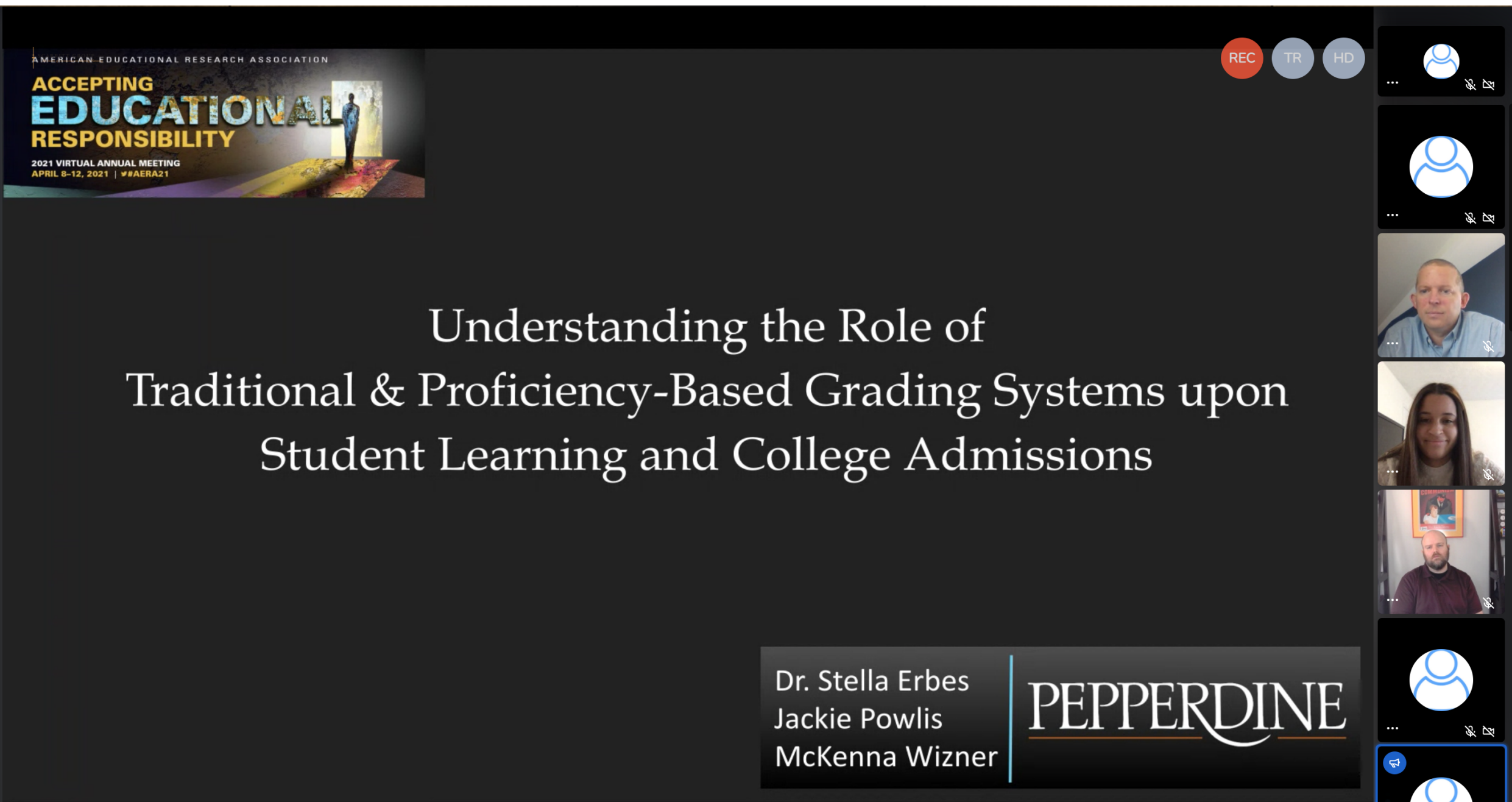
Matt W. Miller, author of *The Wounded for the Water* and *Club Icarus*, wrote the following about Dr. Struloeff's new book titled *The Work of a Genius*:

"*The Work of a Genius*, a poetic journey through the life of Albert Einstein, is nothing less than an act of reclamation. In this age when intellect and empathy are seen as weakness, when the name "Einstein" has become a term of derision and populist bullies lead by fear and the threat of fire, John Struloeff takes back the narrative of what it means to be a person of the mind and of the soul in a post-industrial world that threatens to grind away both. In language that raises the plainspoken to the lyrical, that does not lean on poetic primping or pyrotechnics, Struloeff shows the beauty of a mind trying to reach wider than the sky, of an ear tilted toward the hum of the universe. We see a man with almost divine vision and yet very human flaws in the pursuit of his art, of his physics, who knows in the end what he has known all along: that his "math isn't enough," that the numbers only add up relative to love, and that it is likely that it is both God and gravity that hold the universe together."



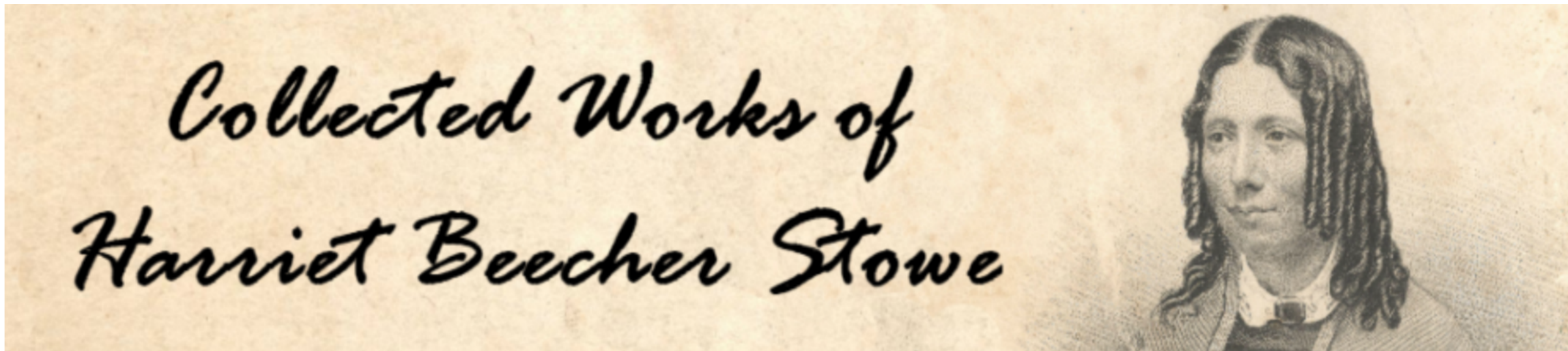
Dr. Erbes Presents with HUTE Students at the American Educational Research Association Conference

On Saturday, April 10, 2021, Dr. Stella Erbes presented a paper with Jackie Powlis ('21) and McKenna Wizner ('21). Their paper was titled "Understanding the Role of Traditional and Proficiency Based Grading Systems upon Student Learning and College Admissions."



Dr. Marie Mullins to edit *The Pearl of Orr's Island*

The *Collected Works of Harriet Beecher Stowe* (CWHBS) has commissioned Dr. Marie Mullins to edit *The Pearl of Orr's Island*.



FACULTY LEARN CORE REFLECTION

Dr. Carrie Birmingham shares about the Core Reflection Coaching 2021 Workshop for Teacher Educators.

All areas of study face the issue of helping students address persistent academic, personal, and/or professional problems. In teacher education, for instance, one teacher candidate is naturally a caring teacher who develops strong connections with her students, but her lesson preparation is thin, and her lessons usually consist of simple delivery of content from the teacher’s guide. Another is an upbeat person who inspires her students with interesting learning activities, but she shrinks when confronted with challenging student behavior. How can we help our candidates to identify and use their strengths to overcome whatever is blocking them from growing in other areas?

Pepperdine teacher education faculty have been participating in a three-day workshop on *core reflection coaching* that addresses this exact question. The workshop series is led by Dr. Fred Korthagen, a Dutch educator who developed this approach and has taught core reflection coaching workshops around the world. A professor emeritus of Utrecht University, Dr. Korthagen is the author of several books and many articles that develop and explain core reflection in a range of teacher education contexts, including one-on-one coaching, group seminars, and the structures of coursework and clinical experience.

Limited to twenty participants, the workshops are held via Zoom on Saturdays with several weeks in between each session. They offer interactive lectures by Dr. Korthagen, modeling of core reflection coaching, and opportunities to practice core reflection coaching with fellow participants in breakout rooms. Dr. Korthagen provides feedback and answers to questions in real time during the practice sessions. In addition, participants are encouraged to practice in the weeks between sessions. Dr. Korthagen offers to read participants’ written reflections about practice experiences and follow up with them in subsequent workshop sessions.

Carrie Birmingham, as a member of the board of directors for the California Association of School-University Partnerships (CASUP), led in the planning and coordination of this workshop. She became acquainted with Dr. Korthagen and his work in graduate school, during which she presented alongside him in a symposium on reflection in teaching at the 1991 meeting of the American Educational Research Association, and she remained in contact with him since then. After two scuttled attempts to arrange for Dr. Korthagen to lead a core reflection coaching workshop in person at Pepperdine, the global move to life on Zoom finally enabled the workshop to proceed. Dr. Korthagen presented from his home in the Netherlands, while participants joined from California, New Jersey, Indiana, Wisconsin, and Tennessee.

Because this spring’s workshop sold out quickly, CASUP is tentatively planning a second workshop to be held in fall 2021. Even though the workshop is designed for teacher educators, it may also be appropriate for anyone working with students in a coaching or mentoring context. In the workshop, participants learn ways to help students make progress in overcoming the kinds of struggles, disconnections, and confusions that are common for students yet challenging for faculty to understand and support.



Core Reflection Coaching 2021
Workshop
For Teacher Educators
with
Dr. Fred Korthagen



PIVOT: CONVERSATIONS ON BECOMING



The Multicultural Theatre Project and Graduate School of Education & Psychology hosted a live intimate conversation series titled "Pivot: Conversations on Becoming." The series featured distinguished guests exploring their personal history, career, and critical scholastic work. Attendees gained wisdom from their lived experience, faith journey, academic contributions, and matters of the heart. Dr. Joi Carr moderated these important conversations.

4/23 | **Dr. Dwight Hopkins**
Alexander Campbell Professor of
Theology
University of Chicago Divinity School

[Registration](#)



5/7 | **Dr. David Carrasco**
Neil L. Rudenstine Professor of the
Study of Latin America
Harvard University and Harvard Divinity
School

[Registration](#)



4/30 | **Dr. Megan Francis**
Associate Professor of Political Science
and Adjunct Professor of Law
University of Washington

[Registration](#)



5/14 | **Dr. Willie Jennings**
Associate Professor of Systematic
Theology and Africana Studies
Yale Divinity School



THANK YOU

Thank you to all who contributed to the spring 2021 edition of the *The Interlocutor*.



Elizabeth Yomantas, Editor