On behalf of the English Faculty and Staff, I’d like to congratulate all the members of the Sigma Tau Delta Zeta Xi Chapter for supporting this new department newsletter, *Knight Notes*. With 83 full-time faculty and staff members, and another 99 part-timers, our English department is not only the largest department at UCF, but also one of the top 10 largest English departments in the country. This means that we have a tremendous number of great things going on all the time. This newsletter will help us showcase all that great work.

Besides creating *Knight Notes*, the Sigma Tau Delta members—guided by their faculty sponsor, Dr. Kate Oliver—have also launched an English Alumni Chapter of the UCF Alumni Association. Our second meeting took place on April 12th at UCF’s Downtown Center. We plan to keep up the momentum with meetings and social events focused on forging links between our current faculty and students and the nearly 1,900 graduates of the English program at UCF.

I’m just completing my first year as Department Chair, and I’m glad to report that the department is doing very well. I’ve observed nearly four dozen faculty members in the classroom and can say that the quality of teaching in our department is extraordinarily high. From Freshman Composition to our terminal degree programs, the department covers just about everything an English department can.

Research quality and productivity is equally high (have a look at our new “Areas of Study” section on our updated website http://www.english.ucf.edu/ for a long list of the areas of expertise of our faculty).

The Department also sponsors the Florida Review, the Faulkner Journal, The Cypress Dome, the Charles Brockden Brown Digital Archive, the Zora Neale Hurston Digital Archive, the Folkvine.org project, and many more projects and activities. One might think that high quality teaching and an active research and publication agenda would leave the faculty with little time for anything else. However, the English Department is deeply involved with all aspects of life at UCF and throughout Central Florida—from the Cypress Dome Society...
Editor’s Notes

When Dr. Oliver, our faculty mentor, presented the idea of a department newsletter during one of the Sigma Tau Delta meetings, we were all excited. We immediately knew that this newsletter would be a forum for our ideas—a place where we could showcase all the skills we have learned from our professors.

As we put the finishing touches on this newsletter we realized that we were missing a key element—a name. We sat down and tried to think of something that would both reflect our commitment to UCF and to the English department. We threw out a couple of whoppers—mostly dealing with round tables and Medusa (don’t ask), but finally decided that keeping it simple would be best. We’re the Knights that are always reading books and jotting something down. If we poll the department, I’m sure that 90% of the students and faculty would have some sort of note card or notepad in their wallet. Any piece of paper, really, onto which they can write down sudden inspiration. Thus, we decided we would be Knight Notes, the newsletter into which we gather everything that inspires us around the UCF English department.

We hope that English undergraduate students, graduate students, faculty, staff, and especially alumni, who pick up this newsletter, will leave with a better understanding of what is going on around the department, as well as a sense of pride for being a part of the department. §

Indiana de la Cruz is the editor of Knight Notes and a Creative Writing and Digital Media double major.

From the Chair

continued from Page 1

to Service Learning to the Hispanic Student Association to the Future Technical Communicators Club and so on.

During the academic year 2005-06, the UCF College of Arts and Sciences was divided into a College of Arts and Humanities and a College of Sciences. We hope being part of the new CAH will help us advocate for the arts and humanities at UCF.

Our Dean of CAS/CAH, Dr. Kathryn Seidel, will be retiring from the deanship after more than a decade of distinguished service. She’ll be taking a well-earned sabbatical year in 2006-07 and returning to teaching in the department in the fall of 2007. She’ll be succeeded as Dean of CAH by Dr. José Fernández, who served as Interim Chair of the English Department in 2003-04.

I’m very proud to be a member of UCF’s English Department. We have a distinguished history and a bright future. We all look forward to staying connected with our once and future faculty and students. §

—Dr. Thomas W. Krise, Chair

Knight Notes

Knight Notes is published twice a year by the Department of English at the University of Central Florida in conjunction with the Zeta Xi chapter of Sigma Tau Delta.

Write to us at:
University of Central Florida
English Department
Newsletter
Department of English
P.O. Box 161346
Orlando, FL 32816-1346

Dr. Thomas W. Krise,
English Department Chair

Dr. Kathleen M. Oliver,
Sigma Tau Delta Faculty Sponsor

Indiana de la Cruz, Editor,
Layout Editor

Stephanie Gonzalez, Layout Editor

 Contributors:
 Ashley Carney
 Stephanie Gonzalez
 Natalie Rodríguez
 Dr. Rodríguez-Milanés
 Kristen Welch

UCF
Visiting Writers

Latino Writers Enthrall UCF Students

By Stephanie Gonzalez

Throughout the academic year, various English faculty bring authors to campus. This year we had the pleasure of welcoming Junot Diaz and Judith Ortiz Cofer to UCF in the fall and spring semesters, respectively.

Both of these writers were brought to campus thanks to the efforts of Dr. Cecilia Rodriguez-Milanés, a faculty member of the English Department, along with generous contributions from the Department of English and Composition, the Hispanic American Student Association, and Undergraduate Studies, among others.

Junot Diaz came to campus last semester on October 5th for an interactive lecture titled, “Whispers of a New America: A Literary Reading and Some Reflections on Race, Immigration and Latinidad”. He read selected stories from Drown, a collection of his short stories.

Judith Ortiz Cofer came to campus earlier this semester, on March 2nd. At a special reception before the lecture, Cofer mingled with UCF students, faculty, and guests, speaking to them, posing for pictures and sharing her experiences as a writer and as a professor. During her lecture she read excerpts from several of her books, including several poems from her latest collection, A Love Story Beginning in Spanish. She spoke on such themes as identity, culture, writing, and the “papi lindo,” a quintessential Latino heartthrob for whom women will swoon.

Dr. Rodriguez-Milanés had the privilege of interviewing Cofer as part of an anthology she is working on under contract from Prentice Hall. What follows is an excerpt from this interview:

Cecilia Rodriguez-Milanés: In your collection The Latin Deli: Stories of Barrio Women, you include an essay “5:00 A.M.: Writing as Ritual.” Are you still in the habit of rising early?

Judith Ortiz Cofer: . . . What has changed is that I no longer have a little kid whose life is more important than anything in my home. But now I have many many more duties than I used to have . . . When I’m on a regular schedule I still get up at five o’clock in the morning and I work for a minimum of two hours, then I exercise, and then I get ready and I teach . . . . Life is always difficult, and the writer is always looking for that little bit of time and space. Things have changed, good things have happened, but the world has not ceased to intrude.

CRM: Virginia Woolf is a writer that women needed to have a room of their own in order to write. Do you think that getting up at 5:00 A.M., in order to not bother your family, contradicts Woolf’s imperative?

JOC: Well, this is the thing, even though Virginia Woolf inspired my beginning to accept myself as a writer and as an artist, she was really speaking of a world were a woman could have an income without having to go to work. She really was of a privileged class and she could have an inheritance and that sort of thing. She was aware that women had to work . . . . I feel that getting up before everyone else does is making a “room of my own.” I interpret a “room of your own” as a metaphor or a symbol for claiming a space and a time. I’ve written about that in another essay, “The Woman Who Slept with One Eye Open,” where I try to tell these women who have no privacy that they have to somehow create it. Even if it was giving up sleep time. I consider my room of my own that time when no one will interfere with my work, because I do have to go out and make a living. §

Stephanie Gonzalez is the Sigma Tau Delta Secretary and a Creative Writing and Digital Media double major.
By Natalie Rodriguez

Susan Hubbard is not only a creative writing associate professor at UCF, but she’s also an accomplished fiction author who is working on her third novel (tentatively scheduled to come out in spring 2007). Her latest novel, Lisa Maria Takes Off, was published in April of last year. It is a sequel to her first novel, Lisa Maria’s Guide to the Perplexed, published in 2004.

Hubbard, who grew up in upstate New York, wrote her first book in the fourth grade. However, her love for books began before that. “My older sister was a librarian and bought me books, and so I fell in love with reading,” Hubbard explained.

She wrote poetry in her 20s and then worked as a journalist before attending graduate school in Syracuse University. As a creative writing student Hubbard sent her graduate thesis, which was a collection of short stories, to a literary contest. She won and her short stories were published. “I was really amazed, thought it was a prank,” she said about winning the literary contest.

Her latest novel and its sequel originally started off as a short story published in the Southern California Anthology in 2001. She explained that when she read it in a Los Angeles reading, “everyone thought it was a great chapter.”

From there she expanded it into a novel. “Lisa Maria came out of a dream about a girl listening to a story about how her mother and father met,” Hubbard explained. Yet the character itself is a composite of a lot of different people. “Some sarcasm is me,” she added. “Yet she’s [Lisa Maria] a lot feistier, outspoken than I—she’s fun to write about.”

According to Hubbard’s website, Lisa Maria’s Guide for the Perplexed is a comic novel where Lisa Maria Marino, a former copywriter turned maid and advice columnist, offers lessons for surviving the years between 20 and 30.

For her latest novels Hubbard talked to a book agent, then she sent the agent a couple of chapters and an outline. She then met face to face with the agent and said it made a difference. “We’re on the same wavelength, I trust her completely,” Hubbard added. Within a month, her agent sold two of Hubbard’s books, Lisa Maria’s Guide for the Perplexed, and its sequel. In addition to English, her books have been published in Italian, French and Dutch. “I’m writing for people all around the world,” she said.

Her recent novel follows Lisa Maria to London where according to Hubbard’s website, “[Lisa Maria] emerges, if not victorious, at least a little more aware of herself and her persistent ability to lie, cheat, and steal in the name of Love.”

“Making stuff up is great,” Hubbard said. “Every weekend I sit on my laptop and generate pages.”

In between teaching fiction writing at all levels—intermediate, advanced and graduate—she is working on her latest novel. “I love teaching, it’s very satisfying. One feeds the other,” she said, in relation to teaching and writing. “It’s a nice dialogue; it helps me solve problems that go on, whether in the class or in my writing.”

For her upcoming book, Hubbard had the option of choosing between two publishers. She chose Simon & Schuster. “They are very good at marketing the book and are willing to support it,” she said.

Hubbard says that to write a book persistence and discipline are necessary. “It has to matter to you, even if you get rejected. Same thing goes with most art.”

In addition to her successful and well-received novels, Hubbard has recently published one scholarly essay and two short stories. She has another scholarly essay that will be published next year. Other books of hers include Walking on Ice, Blue Money and she is co-editor of the anthology 100% Pure Florida Fiction.

“All who writes must read—you have to read in order to write well,” Hubbard added. For more information please visit www.susan-hubbard.com.

Natalie Rodriguez is a Creative Writing major and a Magazine Journalism minor.
Alumni Spotlight

Juan Martinez, ‘00, ‘04

By Indiana de la Cruz

Everyone has a person that pushes him/her to succeed, a person that helps him/her set, and accomplish, his/her goals. “My wonderful, supportive, understanding parents are at the heart of it all,” says Juan Manuel Martinez, an English Alumnus who graduated from UCF with a B.A. and M.A. in Creative Writing. He considers himself “primarily a student … but one of [his] biggest realizations of the past few years is that [he’ll] always be lagging behind, that [he has] so much to learn that [he’ll] never not be a student.” Despite his modesty, Martinez is definitely not lagging behind.

The young implant from Bucaramanga, Colombia started writing, and getting published, at a young age. He has written for The Orlando Sentinel, The Columbian Post, and The Central Florida Future. While pursuing his M.A. at UCF, Martinez became a Creative Writing and Composition instructor in the English Department.

His creative writing has been published in The Cypress Dome, McSweeney’s, Pindeldyboz, The Morning News, The Santa Monica Review, and Glimmer Train. One of his short stories will appear in an upcoming Latino/a anthology published by Prentice Hall, two of his critical essays are currently under review, and he has begun working on a new novel.

Martinez credits much of his success to the time he spent at the University of Central Florida. “It [graduating from UCF] has helped a great deal in both making me aware of what to expect, how to submit, and why literary journals matter so much.”

Please visit www.fulmerford.com.

Indiana de la Cruz is the editor of Knight Notes and a Creative Writing and Digital Media double major.

Rusty Carpenter, ‘03, ‘05

By Ashley Carney

Two-time UCF graduate and alumnus Rusty Carpenter has a lot to say about the positive aspects of being an active alumni.

Carpenter originally graduated from the undergraduate Technical Writing program here at UCF and immediately continued his higher education in the Technical Writing M.A. program. Thanks to the Alumni Association connections, soon after his graduation, Carpenter received an offer for a regional freelance documentation contract with T-Mobile. Most currently, Carpenter’s employment resides in our very own University Writing Center as Coordinator.

Carpenter says many of the opportunities given to him came through the English Department networking and the Alumni Association. Working closely with faculty and professionals in the Technical Writing field has helped Carpenter to grow in his research and knowledge.

“One major improvement in the English Department that I’ve noticed is the increase in service-learning,” Carpenter said, which he attributes many of his post-graduate successes to the connections made during his personal service-learning experiences.

Concerning his return to the UCF English Technical Writing program as a graduate student, Carpenter gives insight to the benefits of the experience.

“I was given the opportunity to work with faculty on a more intensive level,” he said. “The large projects gave me the opportunity to improve my abilities.”

Aside from his experience with the English Department, Carpenter is
Folkvine: Giving Folk Artists a Voice on the Web

By Kristen Welch

Birds caw and cars pass in front of the tiny wooden building declaring “Free Maps” and “Free Guides”. Is this some forgotten Florida hideaway?

No, it’s actually the entrance to the Folkvine Project, an online organization begun by UCF professors Kristin Congdon and Craig Saper. The project brings Florida’s folk artists and technology together. “Folkvine.org is a series of websites in which we use the art and artist’s sensibilities as models, or analogies, for the design of the sites,” Saper, a professor of English, said.

With his background in English, Saper focused on the way ideas and cultures are expressed. “Folkvine.org is an applied version of the theories and ideas I study: how our choices of expression (visual analogies) create meanings that allow for access to sensibilities unavailable to less figurative design choices.”

The website is made up of postcards which link to the artists’ websites, guides which explain each of the three humanities topics at work, and bobbleheads representing members who speak on different topics. Congdon, professor of film and philosophy, said that each of the guides is there to “link the ideas and concepts between artists that seem really different.” In fact, the website plays host to, among others, a husband and wife who make clown shoes, a woman who makes Hawaiian quilts, and a man who makes art using animal bones.

Each link is as unique as each artist, and each artist has a chance to display her/his art on the web. The websites feature interviews, pictures of each artist’s work, and biographies. The result is a personalized collaboration between technology and aesthetic.

“We kept asking ourselves the question, ‘is this website really about the artists or is it really about us? Is this their creation because we are presenting their work or is this our creation?’ We decided that what we had done was really create something that was collaborative,” Congdon said.

With each new artist, the group holds public events to invite the artist’s communities and families to join in celebrating her/his art. But the website has become more than an academic resource; it has given each artist a chance to be known outside her/his community. At one event, artist Taft Richardson was reunited with his daughter, whom he hadn’t seen in thirty-five years. She had found him through the website.

Currently, the project has earned its third grant for the website, and two more grants to develop an educational curriculum. “We are always looking for extremely dedicated, talented, and conscientious students and staff to work with us,” Saper said. For more information visit the Folkvine Project at www.folkvine.org.

Kristen Welch is the Sigma Tau Delta Historian, a Cinema Studies major, and an English literature minor.

Roving Reporter

What are you Reading?

Name: Sylvia Bustinsha
Major: English Literature/French
Class: Graduating Senior
Sylvia is currently reading Milton’s Paradise Regained. Why?: “Because I have too”

Name: Sarah Wilkening
Major: English Literature
Class: Junior
Sarah is currently reading “Girl Meets God: A Memoir” by Lauren P. Winner. Why?: “I am reading it for fun!”

Name: Constance McIntosh
Major: English Literature/Philosophy
Class: Graduating Senior
Constance is not currently reading any books. Why?: “Because I'm too tired to read.”
iPLAY: Gaining Confidence through Story Making

By Jeannine Ortega

I was first introduced to interactive performance by way of a class offered at UCF, Interactive Performance I. For the final exam in this class the students must find volunteers to help them with their performance. I started out as a volunteer. It was there that I learned about the environment and concept of the box.

In interactive performance there are two kinds of people that inhabit the box. Some are “spects,” unsuspecting volunteers with no experience in interactive performance, and others are “inter-actors,” individuals who have been trained to function in the box with the goal of developing a story. As a spect in the box you are endowed with the role of protagonist. The story is uniquely yours and you wield the power to shape it as you wish. The inter-actors only react and aid you in your role. These individuals aren’t trained actors or experts in theater; they are only trained to serve as tools for their spects. I had a spontaneous opportunity to live three stories of my very own creation. Afterwards, I was encouraged to take the IP1 class in which I am currently enrolled.

I am still being trained in the task of being an inter-actor. The process is hard only in the sense of your individual commitment. The training begins with trust exercises—you might have to touch noses with a stranger or sing a classmate a lullaby. I’m no longer as shy or unsure in the class as I was in the beginning. I’ve had to play girlfriends and mothers; I’m getting use to the spontaneous improvisation.

I had the opportunity to join two clubs that further develop the uses of interactive performance. iPLAY is a club that provides inter-active training to club members. They create simu-life features in which volunteers are selected to function as a spect in a real life setting, such as downtown Orlando. The finished product is a feature film in which the spect is the lead.

iROLEPLAY is also another facet of interactive performance. The inter-actors roleplay in outside settings like social work classes, business classes, and victim services—giving the students in those classes a chance at simu-life training with abused individuals, difficult co-workers, or unhappy customers.

Interactive performance is something that helped me become a more confident person. I learned how to stretch myself and be less afraid of making a mistake. It’s a great experience for anyone who wants to learn more about him or herself and how he/she reacts with others. Everyone learns to trust one another, have fun, and make wonderful stories.

Jeannine Ortega is the Sigma Tau Delta Treasurer, one of the editors of Knight Notes, and a Literature major.

Rusty Carpenter, ’03, ’05

thrilled about the other campus improvements that are taking place such as the new football stadium and the recently approved College of Medicine.

“Alumni go to the Citrus Bowl for football games for UCF but that doesn’t bring them back to UCF [as a campus],” Carpenter said. “Not only will the on-campus football stadium bring back alumni, but members of the community like Non-UCF Alumni or Friends of UCF that still care about our school.”

After the commencements are through and the degrees are awarded, an even more important part of your college experience begins: your Alumni experience. Carpenter is a member of the Alumni Association and the Golden Knights club, which fosters a lot of the athletic fundraising. He also feels that graduating is similar to the first time you leave the nest. “You have an obligation to your UCF family. I think the new English Department Alumni chapter will strengthen ties and build unity,” Carpenter said.

So what does Carpenter have to say about becoming an active alumnus: “It’s the right thing to do.”

Ashley Carney is the President of Sigma Tau Delta and a Technical Writing major.
English Alumni and Friends - What's New With You?

Are you a former UCF English department student? Do you have a unique interest in the UCF English Department? If so, we would love to hear from you. Just fill out the form and mail it to the English Department newsletter (please include any relevant information and pictures). We will print as many news items and pictures as space permits.

We need your support! Donations from friends go into our English Department fund, and allow us to develop new programs, expand our curriculum, and sponsor academic events, activities, and opportunities for students. Donations may be made to the English Department by making your check payable to the UCF Foundation. Please send your contribution to:

UCF Foundation
12424 Research Parkway
Orlando, FL 32826-3208

Please note English Department on the memo line of the check.

Name __________________________________________
UCF Degree(s)/Yr(s) __________________________________
Home address _______________________________________
City __________________ State ______ Zip _______
Home phone ____________________________
Business title ____________________________
Company/Institution _________________________
E-mail _______________________________________
Home page URL _________________________________
Your news: _______________________________________

** Attach additional pages if necessary.

☐ Please send information about UCF programs, services, and communications.
☐ Contribution to the UCF Foundation enclosed.

---

University of Central Florida

English Department Newsletter
Department of English
P.O. Box 161346
Orlando, FL 32816-1346