

UIUC English Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Bulletin

Spring 2019

Edited by Dave Morris, Senior Lecturer in English

We published the first Non-Tenure-Track Faculty Bulletin about a year ago, and we appreciated hearing surprise, interest, and even delight from people across the department when they read of the wide-ranging accomplishments and activities of our non-tenure faculty. It's been quite a year since. Our NTT faculty strongly supported the GEO strike last spring, not merely in word but on the picket line. More of our NTTs have moved back and forth between this campus and the satellite program at Zhejiang University in Guangzhou. We've continued to serve in committee and administrative positions (the last sometimes at dramatically low compensation).

This year has demanded much of our whole community and asked us not merely to define and theorize, but to act in solidarity with each other to build the kind of community we want to see. This work tires us; there are always obstacles, arcane bureaucratic hurdles, endless justifications for the unjust way things are. We engage these obstacles occasionally by bulldozing them with force (as with the GEO strike), or by joining the apparatus and stepping lightly like ballerinas around a whole set of informal yet powerful social hierarchies with extraordinary faith that something better can be made... eventually.

These efforts happen in a variety of venues, but at the basis of them all is a commitment to making a community of writing teachers, embedded in intersecting communities across campus, the local area, and the globe. With varying degrees of certainty, we believe that teaching students to write and to produce knowledge is key to helping them become engaged citizens with real voices. A community of teachers committed to solidarity with each other produces stronger teaching with greater effectiveness and efficiency than adherence to the conservative institutional and social hierarchies that demand, over and over again, to structure our professional lives.

We want to present an update to last year's bulletin featuring several of our NTT faculty, all of whom have had the institution strongly communicate that their non-teaching work doesn't mean much. You'll see published poems, stories, and articles (Bales, Gilmore, and Hays), a Pushcart Prize nomination (Bales), forthcoming books (Garton-Gundling and Morris), and community art and music projects (Cottingham, Emmert, Rubins).

What if we were to act professionally on our commitment to community? What if we were to draw strength from sharing what we had to offer, and to dispense with the unwritten yet ironclad hierarchies with which people seem so comfortable? What might we accomplish? We'll continue to explore those and other questions in next semester's New Academy Series, which will feature talks by Kyle Garton-Gundling, Heather McLeer, and fiction from Mary Hays.

We will begin with three updates. Expect more in the next month. Haven't let us know what you're up to yet? It's not too late! Email Dave (dcmorris@illinois.edu) or Mary (maryhays@illinois.edu) with your news.