English Language and Literature

THE POWER

The Department of English Language and Literature serves as an extraordinary center of creativity, inquiry, and discovery with a proud tradition of leadership in scholarship and teaching. Our mission as educators is to enable students to become the finest readers and writers of literary texts. Because those texts, in their infinite variety, take as their subjects our fellow humans, our histories, and our cultures, we equip our students both to read the world and write the future, with subtlety, acumen and precision. In recent years, our graduate program has moved up dramatically in the national rankings and our MFA program ranks second in the country. Building upon our successes, our goal is to enhance our prominence in the field as a curricular and intellectual leader.

Our largest-ever fundraising campaign is ambitious, visionary, purposeful — worthy of the name “Victors.” The $400 million goal is built upon the cornerstone of the liberal arts: the idea that a powerful, pragmatic education can transform hearts and minds, can solve problems in a changing world, can yield ideas and innovation across every discipline. That’s why we are focused on raising money so that the best and brightest minds can have access to the College through robust scholarship support, no matter their financial circumstances. So too are we committed to helping every student acquire not just knowledge in the classroom, but experiences outside the academy including innovative entrepreneurial efforts and internships. We strive to support our faculty on the front lines of research, and steward our planet, our community, our campus. To do all this, and so much more, the College needs you — because the world needs Victors.
THE OPPORTUNITIES

Our department has a long and continuing history of teaching excellence. We have more working Golden Apple winners—the highest honor bestowed by undergraduates across the University—than any other department on campus. We are tied with a department twice our size for the most Thurnau Professors, the highest teaching honor the University bestows on its faculty. We teach students about the English language and to read—and re-read—carefully, appreciatively, and critically. Students learn to watch and make meaning unfold, and come to appreciate that knowledge is made through cycles of deepening attention, never simply ‘down-loaded.’ With these skills of interpretation and articulation, our graduates have achieved successful careers as writers, journalists, and screenwriters. Many more have used their skills in analysis and argumentation for positions in law, medicine, business, and teaching. Still others have gained insight into issues of social justice while reading texts in our courses, and have devoted themselves to creating a more just world.

THE IMPACT

Your gifts will enable us to advance our position as one of the top English departments in the country by recruiting and retaining the best faculty possible. And to remain competitive in recruiting the best graduate students, we need support to augment our fellowship program. We must also continue to develop innovative teaching initiatives, including many that reach beyond the four walls of the traditional classroom.

NAMED ENDOWED PROFESSORSHIP

$2.5M endowed

Support to bring new faculty to the Department in the next five years is crucial, especially in the face of increasing competition for top faculty. Outstanding faculty are central to the continuing quality of the program and ongoing leadership of the Department. A Named Endowed Professorship will serve as a powerful recruitment tool for distinguished scholars.

POSTDOCTORATES FOR ENGLISH PH.D. GRADUATES

$1.5M endowed/$70,000 annually

Support would provide an opportunity for a recent graduate of our program to have a year to research, write, and also teach one course per year. It is intended to help scholars deepen and expand their area of expertise while also exposing undergraduates to excellent teaching.

BRIDGE M.A. PROGRAM FELLOWSHIP

$1M endowed

For many years, the Department of English has been concerned about the “pipeline” issue in literary studies, that is the relative scarcity of qualified under-represented applicants, particularly African American students, to be recruited into our Ph.D. program in Language and Literature. We are seeking support to create a Masters Accelerated Degree Program (ADP) with a focus on Black American Literary and Cultural Studies. This program, which bridges the senior year with a fifth year of graduate study, is designed to give advanced students in-depth exposure to graduate study in black American literature and culture and to further their research and critical skills to prepare them for doctoral study.
INTERNSHIP SUPPORT FOR UNDERGRADUATES

$10,000 to $50,000 annually

Students hone their practical skills in real world situations by participating in internships across the United States and in countries around the world. For liberal arts students, this experience is critical. With these opportunities, our students apply their skills in practical ways and gain experience and exposure that lead to future career possibilities. Your gift to the College internship program will help support English majors with funding for summer and academic year internships. We seek gifts for internships that will provide students with support ranging from $1,000 to $5,000 to help cover travel and living costs, as well as stipends for students in unpaid summer internships who, without such support, would not be able to participate because of financial barriers. An endowed gift of $100,000 will provide funding for two to five students.

ENGLISH UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM ENHANCEMENT FUND

$10,000 to $50,000 expendable

The English Department is committed to providing the best educational opportunities for our undergraduate students. Gifts would fund faculty to provide educational enhancements and opportunities for their students related to their classroom teaching. This fund would support class trips, guest lecturers, museum tickets, drama production tickets, as well as special classroom activities such as period dance instruction. The goal is to make the classroom experience as memorable and engaging as possible.

DEPARTMENT STRATEGIC FUND

$10,000 to $50,000 annually

Expendable, undesignated gifts are extraordinarily important to the continuing success and growth of the Department. Contributions to the Strategic Fund make it possible to meet unexpected needs and challenges such as:

- Seed funding for faculty projects
- Sponsorship of distinguished international visitors
- International conferences highlighting the Department’s scholarship ($25,000 per conference)
- Innovative curriculum development and integration of information technology into courses