Recent Faculty/Student Research Projects in the English Department

Eudora Welty Archive
Two undergraduates, Rachel Reinke and Crystal Frost, worked with Professor Julia Eichelberger to research the letters of U.S. Southern writer Eudora Welty. Both students received URCA (Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities) grants to travel with Professor Eichelberger to the Welty archive in Mississippi where the letters are housed. Rachel’s research helped Dr. Eichelberger with two conference papers in 2010; one of which will be published in *Eudora Welty, Whiteness, and Race*, forthcoming from the University of Georgia Press. Crystal received a SURF (Summer Undergraduate Research Funding) grant in the summer of 2011 to help Dr. Eichelberger with her work on a book of Welty's gardening letters, which is forthcoming from the University Press of Mississippi.

Locating ‘Queer Street’ in Gothic Fiction
In summer 2012, Professor Tim Carens and English major Victor Imko received a grant from the SURF program for a project, “Locating ‘Queer Street’ in Late-Victorian Gothic Fiction,” which examined the ways that late 19th C gothic literature treats what people at the time viewed as a deviant sexual identity. Victor spent the first part of the summer investigating Queer Theory, including the work of theorists such as Judith Butler and Eve Sedgwick. During the second phase of the project, he applied those theories to largely forgotten gothic narratives that he thought deserved a place on “queer street” along with better known examples such as *The Picture of Dorian Gray*.

African American Literature, Racial Uplift, and Immigration at the Turn of the Twentieth Century
Professor J. Michael Duvall and student Erin Wooten investigated African American fiction, political essays, poetry, and magazine writing from the turn of the 20th century to see how these writers expressed concerns about the wave of Southern and Eastern European immigrants arriving in the country at the same time. The “new immigration” brought African Americans significant competition for limited economic and social gains. Dr. Duvall and Erin were interested in discovering how African American writers in a period that has been called “the nadir of American race relations” envisioned their fate in relation to all the new immigrants who were also trying to claim an American identity.

Black Female Desire
Professor Conseula Francis and student Brittany Counts received a SURF grant to explore narratives of black female desire in popular culture in relationship to the politics of respectability. This is preliminary research for a book that Dr. Francis is writing on African American popular romance fiction.
Interpersonal Relationships in a Writing Center
Professor Bonnie Devet, director of the College of Charleston's writing lab, worked with Alison Barbiero, a student writing lab consultant, to publish an article in the internationally distributed, peer-reviewed *Writing Lab Newsletter*. The piece was entitled “Dear Labby: Stressing Interpersonal Relationships in a Writing Center.”

Medieval Manuscripts at the British Library
In summer 2011 History major Marca Hoyle and Dr. Trish Ward studied ninth-century Latin prayer books in the British Library in London. In addition to finding evidence of folk religion mixed with orthodox Christianity, they discovered marginalia and other additions to the manuscripts that indicated how the books were read in later centuries. Marca and Dr. Ward presented their findings at the Southeastern Medieval Association meeting in Atlanta in October 2011. Marca is about to begin a Master’s in Medieval Studies at the Medieval Institute at Western Michigan University, where she will be a research assistant in the medieval manuscripts collection.

American Crime Novels
Supported by a SURF grant in 2010, student Lauren Swing and Professor Scott Peeples read American crime novels from the 1840s and 1850s, focusing on depictions of urban life and gender roles. They read numerous long out-of-print novels, outlining their plots and main characters. Their research resulted in a co-authored paper, "George Lippard, Ned Buntline, and the Problem of Female Agency in the 'Male Novel,'” which they presented at the American Literature Association conference in May 2011.

The Gendered Muse
English major Sophia Russell worked with Professor Kathy Beres Rogers on an independent study, “The Gendered Muse in Eighteenth-Century Women’s Writing,” after Sofia read an article that Professor Beres Rogers had written about Jane Winscom's Headache Poetry and became interested in the muse figure. In her paper, Sophia also incorporated other eighteenth-century women writers who dealt with the troublesome character of the muse. Sophia presented a condensed version of her paper, about Jane Cave Winscom, at the Southeastern American Society for Eighteenth-Century Studies conference at Wake Forest University in Spring 2011.