

2018 Faculty Research and Creative Activities Symposium - Abstract

Presenters:

- Jim Blair, Retired Faculty, Department of Communication, Media, & Theatre
- Sarah Fabian, Assistant Professor, Department of Communication, Media & Theatre
- Becca Peterson: Current NEIU Student and Secondary-Ed English Major and Linguistics Minor

Abstract

In Fall 2017, Jim Blair founded Northeastern's inaugural 10-Minute Playwriting Festival and Contest entitled *Nuevas Voces* or "new voices" in collaboration with Sarah Fabian from the CMT Department and Christie Miller from CAPE: Community and Professional Education. Working to celebrate all new voices, the new play festival is structured to feature the work in three categories: current high school students, current college students (ages 17-28), and the greater community (anyone who is 29+). For the 2018 *Nuevas Voces* Festival, Jim and Sarah worked to select three judges to choose the winning plays from the submission pools. Playwriting workshops taught by Jim Blair helped prepare those interested students and faculty, and the winning plays were presented in Northeastern's Stage Center Theatre at the end of January. The winning playwrights received cash awards, a certificate, and three performances of their play in a festival setting under the direction of Adam Goldstein.

The festival was a huge success. So much so that Sarah suggested that it should become a yearly tradition. Christie Miller and Jim agreed; therefore, submissions are occurring now for the January 2019 performances, and will be repeated this spring semester for opening the 2019/20 Stage Center Theatre season in Fall 2019.

Our plan for the Symposium is to feature Becca Peterson's brilliant and provocative first-place entry—*Talking the Talk* through the archival recording. Becca Peterson is a current NEIU student, majoring in Secondary-Ed English with a Linguistics minor. Her work demonstrates what a student is capable of accomplishing. In addition and most importantly, it exemplifies and highlights what good writing, research, and revision can produce. Playwriting, as well as poetry, offers everyone the opportunity to not only refine their writing skills, but also an opportunity for them to express their ideas. Excellence in writing skills and practices is paramount among the communication skills everyone uses in life. The ten-minute play format is a more accessible and less intimidating approach to playwriting compared to trying to write a full-length play.

After featuring her work, we will bring all faculty, students, and audience members together to engage in a productive discussion focused on the playwriting process and creativity while highlighting Becca's accomplishments.