

# The English Aggie





# IDEAAL Capstone Art Gallery: *Who Am I?*

On April 5th, Stark Gallery was full of Texas A&M University students celebrating their Asian-American heritage and their many accomplishments over the course of the school year. The Institute for the Development of Asian American Leaders, or IDEAAL, was hosting their annual capstone art gallery. IDEAAL is a student-led organization that has been a part of Texas A&M's multicultural services for nearly twenty years. Taran Rao, director of this year's art gallery, explained that IDEAAL was "designed to be a safe space and support system for [Asian American freshmen] students as they expand on their own perception of their identity." The organization consisted of biweekly workshops with guest speakers, leadership trainings, written reflections, and

one-on-one mentorship. To conclude the spring semester, IDEAAL hosted an art gallery that allowed its freshmen students to showcase work that answered the question of "Who Am I?". Students completed works that ranged from paintings to poetry to even performances. It was a performance by Audrey Hidajat that particularly stood out to Taran. Audrey's dance symbolized "gaining confidence in herself and expressing her passions." Audrey is now a peer mentor herself, but when she was a freshman, Taran was her peer mentor. He has enjoyed watching her grow as a leader over the years and seeing that growth expressed in her performance.

Anna Huynh, a freshman English major and current member of IDEAAL, first heard about the Institute at an APIDA (Asian American, Pacific Islander, and Desi American) community event. IDEAAL easily caught her interest, and it was the very first organization that she joined on campus. Anna admitted that she had previously struggled to understand and embrace her Asian-American identity within predominantly white institutions, so finding an Asian-American community on campus was important to her. Anna was surprised by the similarities between her upbringing and the upbringing of the other members of IDEAAL, and she found comfort in their shared experiences as Asian Americans. Anna believed that this support system and community atmosphere was what helped her to "come back to [her] roots and fully appreciate them like [she] always wanted to." Older students such as Esther Kim and Vik Subramanian became not only mentors but trusted friends. Anna expressed that she "love[s] learning and hearing about the shared, yet personal, experience of being Asian-American, and [she] honestly [has] fallen back in love with everything that makes [her] who [she is] culturally."

**"I love learning and hearing about the shared, yet personal, experience of being Asian-American, and I honestly have fallen back in love with everything that makes me who I am culturally."**

For the Capstone Gallery Exhibit, Anna Huynh showcased her visual plexiglass poem titled "Tôi Thấy Tôi Là Ai," which was translated to "I See Who I Am." The poem was about Anna "seeing [her] roots and understanding that [she was] a walking mosaic of [her] culture and that [her] parents and [her] ancestors [made her] love being Vietnamese." She was grateful to IDEAAL for the chance to participate in a gallery exhibit and see other people's reactions to her work and hopes to participate in similar events in the future as she continues her academic and artistic endeavors.

**"I am a walking mosaic of my culture."**

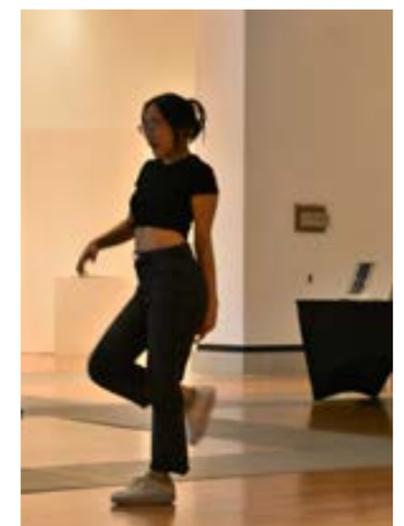
Anna also praised the work of her fellow members, which she found extremely creative and moving. She particularly enjoyed Isabelle Dela Cruz's piece, titled "Work in Progress." Isabelle's artwork and presentation explored the common struggles with identity that young women of color face, and it was a beautiful reminder that "the journey of coming to relearn and love yourself is not a linear one." The piece encouraged acceptance of oneself wherever one was even during periods of perseverance and uncertainty, just as students have found acceptance within IDEAAL.



Pictured above: Anna Huynh with her visual poem "Tôi Thấy Tôi Là Ai"



Pictured above: Isabelle Dela Cruz with her painting "Work in Progress"



Pictured above: Audrey Hidajat during her performance

If you are an incoming student interested in joining IDEAAL, check their website (<https://dmsideaal.wixsite.com/tamu>) for upcoming events.

# Congrats & Good Luck to our Newest English Aggie Graduates!



*Sarah Pardue*

Sarah's favorite memories at Texas A&M are thanks to the amazing people that she has met through Fish Camp and Aggie Emeralds. After graduation, Sarah will move to Florida to participate in the Disney College Program for eight months. Then, she will attend the University of North Texas to pursue a Master's degree in English.



*Bianca Lopez*

After graduation, Bianca plans to work in the Dallas-Fort Worth area as secondary teacher. She will teach English, Language Arts, and Reading through the Teach for America program, a non-profit organization that places educators with high-achieving, goal-oriented students in low-income or Title I schools across the US. Bianca looks forward to the relationships she will build through Teach for America and the opportunities that the experience will bring her.

*McKenna Fridye*

Throughout her time as an undergraduate student, McKenna has been grateful for all of the kind and understanding professors in the English department— especially Dr. Robinson, Dr. McKinney, and Dr. O'Farrell—who have shown that they truly care about their students' wellbeing and mental health. After graduation, McKenna plans to work in Austin as an editor or writer.



*Kayanna Resetar*

At her campus job as an academic peer mentor, Kayanna made great connections and felt the support of her fellow Aggies. After graduation, Kayanna will attend graduate school at Texas State University to pursue a Master's degree in student affairs.

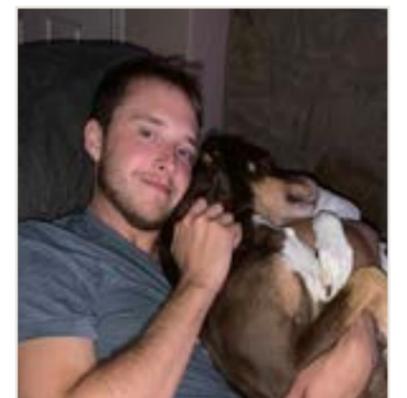


*Matthew Elliott*

Matthew will never forget the memories and friends he has made at Texas A&M University. Matthew is an English minor, and he plans to look for a job in the Texas A&M University Library System after graduation.

*Samuel Tamplin*

Samuel's best memories of Texas A&M University are without a doubt the football games at Kyle Field. Samuel is an English major with a coaching minor, and after graduation, he plans to work as a logistics account executive.



# Student Sonnets

## Poetry Selected From Dr. Francis's Creative Writing Class

### The Moon

Audrey Hendrick

To hold you tight  
And let you poison my skin  
Your rays fill my night  
Preventing the darkness from being my ruin

But oh how that is a lie  
my nightlight, only a reflection of you  
You are deceiving my eye  
You knew.

I study you, loving you from a far  
If I were too close, you will be my demise  
Because I am the still earth and you a star  
So I watch in awe as you fill my skies

But without you, I will join the darkness  
And the void in me would be endless.

### In Defense of Apathy

Tyler Gonzalez

My heart is mercurial, fickle, and small.  
I have a depth, both endless and shallow.  
My chest contains the cosmos, skin a shawl;  
Gaunt from the stars in my eyes, face fallow.

Though the universe implodes within me,  
Stuck am I on the labors of true love.  
For I'm not my own, instead a scream  
From a borrowed mouth, tie grants from 'bove.

Is there the capacity within me  
To let another crack my chest open,  
And stare at the dying stars? Would they see?  
And so my ribs remain shapely, shut-in.

A chest, again hollow and chipped, yearns so  
For another body, for us to burn.

### Flaming Sonnet, Draconian Love

River Scott

My tears implore you to relent your love,  
But your embrace of soothing fire devours,  
The bluebirds tweet, the dragons coo as doves,  
Deception I condemn, lament for ours.

Our love, unable to reduce to ash,  
For it has always been ablaze, my dear.  
Forbidden to succumb to lover's clash,  
Eternal flames assuage and fade my tears.

Its singeing scorch of passion and of threat,  
Exudes a warmth, as cold regret lambasts.  
My hands-your claws-do melt in flames, and yet,  
Our gilded rings remain intact, held fast.

Shall love as mighty as ours conquer all?  
For it has vanquished me, your faithful thrall.

### A Hot Summer Day

Mia Helpert

That hot summer day, you were drinking tea,  
walking with a vase for mother's flowers.  
On the fountain's edge, its water showers.  
The vase breaks, but whose fault? We disagree.

I write to you, for it will set me free,  
but for the two of us, limited hours.  
Soon I'm forced away, stuck in a tower.  
Holding my hand, you said come back to me.

After war, I don't stop searching for you.  
But now you're drowning, praying you don't die,  
while I'm asleep, and I won't see daylight.  
We long for the sea, a dream we both knew.

It's time to give up, and look up at sky,  
knowing that one day we will reunite

# Glancing Back

It's been a great semester, English Aggies! You all have so much to be proud of. Keep up the hard work, and finish the year out strong with your final exams and papers. You've got this!

There have been many successful events over the course of the spring semester. On April 6, the Department of English was helped host Brazos Valley Reads. Thank you to all of our sponsors who helped make the event possible. Thank you to Attica Locke for being our speaker this year. Locke's presentation was titled "Bluebird, Bluebird and the Souls of Black Texans." She discussed her award-winning novel *Bluebird, Bluebird*, her family history, her writing process, and the current state of black Texans and the legal system. If you were unable to attend this event, consider reading Tiarra Drisker's article, found on the Department of English's homepage at [https://liberalarts.tamu.edu/english/2022/03/31/bvr\\_2022/](https://liberalarts.tamu.edu/english/2022/03/31/bvr_2022/).

There has also been some incredible writing by our students this semester. Congratulations to the winners of the Stanley L. Memorial Award, the Rhetoric and Discourse Studies Award, the Science Fiction and Fantasy Award, and the Charles Gordone Awards. Congratulations also to students who have seen their work published in *The Eckleburg Project*, here in *The English Aggie*, and in other publications.

Congratulations are also due to the University Honors and English Departmental Honors students who have completed capstones projects this semester. Their hard work and dedication has led to some extraordinary projects. Thank you to those who have shared their work with the Texas A&M community through their presentations.

Lastly, congratulations and good luck to our newest English Aggie graduates! You all have achieved so much over your time at Texas A&M University. Be proud of yourselves. WHOOP!

The Department of English is excited to offer three new minors beginning in the fall. The Health Humanities, Professional Writing, and Science Fiction and Fantasy minors will be offered to undergraduate students of any major.

The Health Humanities minor will prepare students for installations and creative projects, research studies, the education of undergraduate and medical students, and policy development. This field is inherently cross-disciplinary and collaborative because it uses methods of humanistic inquiry to analyze cultural practices and products related to health and illness. The minor requires eighteen hours, which will include an introduction to the field of health humanities, further study in rhetoric or literature, and a final capstone course. Possible elective courses range from health to communications, history, and biomedical science!

The Professional Writing minor provides a strong professional background which can increase graduates' job opportunities. Students will learn technical editing, rhetorical theory, new media and technologies, effective communication of complex information, and critical reflection of their methods. The minor requires 18 credit hours of coursework, which will include technical and professional writing, technical editing, and rhetoric of style.

The Science Fiction and Fantasy minor will build communication, close reading, and argument-building skills that benefit both liberal arts and STEM students. Students will explore humanity and our relationship to technology and science as well as our desire to explore other worlds and imagine utopian societies. This minor requires 15 credit hours of relevant coursework, such as science fiction and film, fairy tales, graphic novels, or creative writing courses.

# Looking Forward

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