

Jason Nicholas Vasser-Elong Curriculum Vitae

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Seasoned higher education professional with over ten years of collegiate experience as a faculty member, workshop developer and researcher, with additional expertise in diversity and community arts training.

Education

- 2021-2024 University of Missouri – St. Louis
Ed.D., Higher Education – Educational Practice, KΔΠ
Dissertation title: STEMInism: Analyzing Factors that Improve the Retention of Women in STEM.
Concentration: Student retention and matriculation
- 2012-2014 University of Missouri – St. Louis
M.F.A., Creative Writing, ΣΤΔ
Thesis: Shrimp: Poetry that Analyzes Identity in a post-colonial context.
Concentration: African American Literature
- 2008-2012 University of Missouri – St. Louis
B.A. Major: Cultural Anthropology, ΔΑ
Capstone: Rhyme & Reason: Poetics as Societal Dialogue
Concentration: African Diaspora Studies

Research and Teaching Interests

The African Diaspora

- a) African American Literature
- b) Epistemology of Black Experience

Curriculum Development

- a) Arts-based pedagogy
- b) Abolitionist pedagogy

Student Retention

- a) Women in STEM
- b) Student Success

Literacy Studies

- a) Critical Discourse Analysis
- b) Poetry

Teaching experience (*Courses created)

The University of Missouri – St. Louis

Writing the City: Classes in the Honors College are seminar-style, meaning that they are based in reading, writing, discussion, and critical thinking. As a faculty member, I enhanced existing curriculum by adding units on Cahokia Mounds and Black St. Louis History.

Allies, Spies and Secret Friends *

It is often said that history belongs to the victors, but this course challenges that notion and examines how allyship has shaped the lives of important figures throughout history over space and time. Who helped Phillis Wheatley publish her book and cement her legacy as the first African American woman to publish a collection of poetry? How did a printing press aid the

abolitionist movement? Who were the Freedom Riders? Who were some of the secret friends behind the scenes helping those who could not help themselves? These and other questions are addressed as we examine how members of the White community have laid their lives and livelihoods on the line for African Americans.

Rhyme & Reason: African American Poets in Dialogue with Notions of Slavery, Identity, & Existence * This survey course examines African American poetic tradition from its beginnings in the 1700s to the present. This course explores, through poetry, the lived experiences of enslaved African Americans, whose works are read in dialogue with contemporary African American poets who write about issues relating to slavery. This survey course examines poetry from Phillis Wheatley, Jupiter Hammon, George Moses Horton and others who were enslaved and their works are compared with contemporary writers such as Derek Wolcott, Rita Dove, Jericho Brown, and others. In addition to analytical essays, students will also write their own poetry centered in their lived experiences with identity and the complexities therein.

Independent study: Supervised Student Research

Over the course of three years, I supervised student independent research and encouraged student participation in the Undergraduate Research Symposium.

Independent study: Honors Portfolio Writing (Hybrid)

Over the course of three years, I supervised student professional development interview preparation, e-portfolio as well as resume development.

Introduction to Women's and Gender Studies: Lecturer

This core class introduces students to cultural, political and historical issues that shape gender. Through a variety of disciplinary perspectives in the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences, the course familiarizes students with diverse female and male experiences and gendered power relationships.

Introduction to Feminist and Gender Theory: Lecturer

This course serves as an initial intellectual investigation into gendered ideologies (such as the effects of race, ethnicity, nationality, socioeconomic class, sexuality, and religion) and functions as a bridge to later advanced gender theory and methods courses. Topics included interdisciplinary feminist theories (with a focus on gender equality), including masculinity theory, queer theory, muted group theory, and other evolving frameworks.

Special Topics in Gender Studies: African American History

This course selectively surveyed the experiences of African Americans from the period of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade to the late twentieth century. Among the topics covered: the development of the slave trade and the institutionalization of slavery, slave culture and resistance, the role of African Americans during the Civil War and Reconstruction period.

University of Missouri – St. Louis Bridge Program/Intensive Writing Instructor

Provides unique and comprehensive year-round pre-collegiate programming for St. Louis area high school students and parents.

Harris-Stowe State University (Summer Bridge & Trio Academy)

English Composition & other ideas *

This seminar style survey course is designed to offer high school students the rigor of the college classroom while also helping them understand the complexity and use of English as a mode of communication. Students can expect to learn how to craft an email to professors, develop their own writing process, understand the value of peer review, rhetoric, and the basic mechanics of grammar and citation methods

English Composition: Emphasizes the process of writing effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Advanced Composition: Builds upon the skills developed in English Composition I and focuses primarily upon the process of writing with sources.

American Literature Beginnings to 1865 I: This survey course examines American literature from its pre-colonial beginnings through the Civil War.

American Literature 1865 to the present II: This survey course is designed to cover the texts of the major authors in American literature from 1865 until the present day.

Introduction to Literature: Involved reading and writing about literature from around the world with an emphasis on literary elements and reader responses.

Modern English Grammar: Employs a seminar setting with student recitation and problem solving and includes three moderate exams to assess students on knowledge of useful paradigms.

Themes & Topics in British Literature: In the course students examined important aspects of British literature.

Harris-Stowe State University's Hornet Summer Bridge Program/Writing Instructor: Is a six-week residential experience that allows incoming first-year students to receive the tools necessary to have a successful transition from high school to college.

Webster University

English Composition: Emphasizes the process of writing effectively for a variety of audiences and purposes.

Advanced Composition: Builds upon the skills developed in English Composition I and focuses primarily upon the process of writing with sources.

Courses in production

- Across the water (with Dr. Deneia Y. Fairweather, John Jay College of Criminal Justice).
- Black and Creative: The Intersection of expression during the Black Arts Movement & Its 'South African' equivalent.

Programming experience

- 2025 *Lead Teaching Artist: Saint Louis Artworks*
As Interim Executive Director of Your Words STL, I worked in collaboration with Creative Reaction Lab and Saint Louis Artworks (SLAW) to develop an anthology of poetry for student apprentices at SLAW. I created and led creative writing workshops, edited the manuscript and prepared *Let me introduce Myself* for publication.
- 2024 *Art with Us: Saint Louis Art Museum*
As a teaching artist for the Narrative Wisdom and African Arts exhibit at the Saint Louis Art Museum, I created interdisciplinary curricula, which included a series of art-based learning experiences for participating youth with [The Village](#).
- 2023-2025 *Opportunity Scholars Program: University of Missouri-St. Louis*
As faculty liaison to the St. Louis Scholars, a cohort of students who are finalists for the OSP Scholarship, I developed professional development and social activities for students.
- The Search for the Guerreio: Diving With a Purpose*
As Creative Writing Director, I developed a series of creative writing workshops and talking circles that related to the Slave Ship Guerreio for members of the DWP staff as well as the Youth Diving with a Purpose cohort of students.
- 2022 *Foodways to Culture: Missouri Humanities Council*
As a presenter, I developed and moderated a creative writing workshop centered on foodways and the impact that food has as part of our culture. Participants reflected and wrote poetry and short essays on how the food they grew up eating has impacted their lives as adults.
- St. Louis Veterans Writers Workshop: Missouri Humanities Council.*
As a presenter, I developed and moderated a writing workshop centered on processing trauma for Veterans. Participants reflected and wrote creatively about their experiences as veterans.
- 2021 *Diversity Awareness Partnership: Webster University.*
In collaboration with DAP, I created and facilitated a workshop as part of their “Give Respect, Give Respect” program. Participants included employees from the Saint Louis Zoo and the Missouri Botanical Gardens.
- 2021-2022 *Presenter: Center of Creative Arts (COCAedu)*
After piloting *Let’s Write Read Analyze & Process*, I presented to high school teachers as part of the COCAedu professional development training.

Curriculum Development

- 2025 [English Composition & other ideas *](#)
This seminar style survey course is designed to offer high school students the rigor of the college classroom while also helping them understand the complexity and use of English as a mode of communication.
- 2024 [Across the water](#) (In-progress) Lead researcher for this new course in development with colleague Dr. Deneia Fairweather (John Jay College of Criminal Justice). We are currently collecting data for the course and will develop course materials post research.
- [Black and Creative: The Intersection of expression during the Black Arts Movement & 'Its South African' equivalent.](#) (In-progress)
With permission from the Robben Island Museum at the University of the Western Cape, I will compare the Arts Movement in Cape Town, South Africa to the Black Arts Movement in the United States of America. The focus of this research is to find out how art was used during these two pivotal moments in history and create a course to highlight how those movements were similar, different and how they brought communities together during moments of political unrest.
- 2023 [Ujamaa](#) (Collective Work and Responsibility)
In collaboration with Diving With a Purpose, I developed an arts-based learning curriculum to aid in participant learning experiences as they related to the Spanish Pirate Ship Guerrero.
- 2022 [Allies, Spies and Secret Friends](#)
It is often said that history belongs to the victors, but this course challenges that notion and examines how allyship has shaped the lives of important figures throughout history over space and time.
- 2021 [Rhyme and Reason: African American Poets in Dialogue with Notions of Slavery, Identity and Existence.](#)
This survey course examines African American poetic traditions from its beginnings in the 1700s to the present. This course explores, through poetry, the lived experiences of enslaved African Americans, whose works will be read in dialogue with contemporary African American poets who write about issues relating to slavery.
- 2020-Present [Let's Write, Read, Analyze & Process \(Let's W.R.A.P.\)](#)
My student-centered curriculum is designed to engage student inquiry. Using what students already know about subject matter, my model aids with self-efficacy as students learn new concepts and ideas.

Current Research Projects

The Guerrero Project Homeward Bound – course in progress

I participated in the joint effort of retelling the historic narrative of the Guerrero Slave shipwreck that occurred off the Florida Coast on December 19, 1827, carrying over 561 captive Africans to Cuba. Through a series of interviews, a symposium and filming in Liberia, West Africa from December 3-15, 2024, I gathered qualitative data from living descendants. My data will contribute to the development of my new course “Across the water”.

Across the water – course in progress

In collaboration with my colleague Dr. Deneia Y. Fairweather (Johns Hopkins University), we are developing curriculum to aid in repairing cultural dissonance within the African Diaspora, caused by coloniality within existing educational curricula. Our course will examine how continental Africans, Afro-Caribbeans, Afro Brazilians and African-Americans experience the legacy of colonization. Lastly, our course will address how that dissonance creates cultural barriers within the African Diasporic communities.

Retaining Colored students at the University of the Western Cape – paper in progress

In March of 2024, as the recipient of University of Missouri South Africa Educators Fellowship, I collected qualitative data from students who identify as Colored in a post-Apartheid South Africa. The data will be used to compare how students in Cape Town, South Africa absolve lasting legacies of oppression while obtaining a college education.

Black and Creative: The Intersection of expression during the Black Arts Movement & ‘Its South African’ equivalent. – paper in progress

With permission from the Robben Island Museum at the University of the Western Cape, I will compare the Arts Movement in Cape Town, South Africa to the Black Arts Movement in the United States of America. The focus of this research is to find out how art was used during these two pivotal moments in history and create a course to highlight how those movements were similar, different and how they brought communities together during moments of political unrest.

Professional Positions

- 2025 Interim Executive Director, Your Words STL.
- 2022 – 2025 Assistant Teaching Professor of English and African American Studies, Pierre Laclede Honors College, University of Missouri – St. Louis (UMSL). NTT.
- 2021 – 2021 12th Grade Cohort Manager, College Bound – St. Louis.
- 2020 – 2021 Museum Educator, Contemporary Art Museum.
- 2019 – 2021 Adjunct Faculty, Department of English, Webster University.
- 2014 – 2020 Adjunct Faculty, Department of Humanities, Harris – Stowe State University.

- 2012 – 2014 Graduate Assistant, Student Enrichment & Achievement. Women's and Gender Studies. UMSL.
- 2012 – 2014 Coordinator, The Writers in the Schools Program, UMSL.
- 2012 – 2016 Program Specialist, Missouri Arts Council. Grant Management.
- 2010 – 2012 Docent, Missouri History Museum. Arts and Culture.
- 2008 – 2012 Teaching Assistant, Center for Human Origin and Cultural Diversity, UMSL.

Other Professional Positions

- 2024 – 2024 *Teaching Artist*, Saint Louis Art Museum. *Art With Us*. Created art-based pedagogy and facilitated workshops for youth in connection with the Narrative Wisdom: An African Arts Exhibit.
- Creative Writing Director*, [Diving With a Purpose](#). Featured in "The Search" for the [Guerrero Documentary – BBC](#).
- 2023 – Pres. Owner, [J. Nicholas & Company](#) – an Educational Consulting Firm.
- 2022 – 2023 [Poet – in – Residence](#), Sapiens – Anthropology Magazine: An editorially independent anthropology magazine of the Wenner-Gren Foundation & University of Chicago Press.
- 2021 – Pres. *Executive Board Member*, [Association of Black Anthropologists](#). Programming Committee. American Anthropological Association section group.

Awards and Grants

- 2024 Distinguished Alumni Award, University of Missouri – St. Louis. (Nominated).
- 2023 Focus on Teaching and Technology (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access Award) for Instruction. Awarded.
- The University of Missouri South African Education Program Award. Awarded.
- Regional Arts Commission Artist Support Grant. Awarded.
- 2022 [Best of Sapiens](#), 'Maize and Okra', Poetry.
- 2021 General Anthropology Division: Travel Award, American Anthropological Association. Awarded.
- 2014 Margaret Bush Wilson Scholar, supervised by Dr. Pricilla Dowden – White. Dept. of History: University of Missouri – St. Louis.
- 2012 Distinguished Service Award: Dept. of Sociology, Anthropology & Languages.

Books

- 2025 *Lavendar* (Manuscript in progress). Poetry.
- 2022 Noodin, M., Weeber C., Vasser-Elong, J. [Indigenizing What it Means to Be Human](#). *Sapiens*.
- 2020 Vasser-Elong, J. (Ed.). (2020). *Bamileke Traditions and Globalization*. Chapitre.com
- 2018 Vasser-Elong, J. (2018). *Shrimp*. 2Leaf Press.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles and Book Review

- Vasser-Elong, J. (2024). Arts – based Pedagogy: More than a Creative Approach to Teaching. *Abolitionist Pedagogy Series*. [Link to article](#).
- Rogers, R., Calle-Díaz, L., Vasser-Elong, J., & Pacheco, S. (2023). Peacemaking in Children’s Literature. *Journal of Children’s Literature*, 49(1), 10–29.
- Rogers, R., Calle-Díaz, L., Vasser-Elong, J. (2023). Family literacies as peacemaking. *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 1-26. [Link to article](#).
- Vasser-Elong, J. (2022). Transitions. *Canadian Journal for Netherlandic Studies*, 41(2), 123–123. [Link to poem](#).
- Vasser-Elong, J. (2016). Perfect Water. *Canadian Journal for Netherlandic Studies*, 37(2), 7–20. [Link to Essay](#).
- Vasser-Elong, J. (2016). Treading the Atlantic. *Canadian Journal for Netherlandic Studies*, 37(2), 7–20. [Link to the essay](#).

Articles Under Review

- Vasser-Elong, J., & Fairweather, D. Y. (2025). Cultural Border Crossing: Developing a Sustainable Educational Curricula for the African Diaspora. *Transforming Anthropology*.
- Vasser-Elong, J., Carter K., Kelley, J., Patterson, R. (2024) STEMInism: Analyzing Factors that Improve the Retention of Women in STEM. *Holistic Education Review*.
- Vasser-Elong, J., Carter K., Kelley, J., Patterson, R. (2024) STEMInism: Analyzing Factors that Improve the Retention of Women in STEM. *The Norton Guide to Equity – Minded Teaching*.

Invited Book Review

- Vasser-Elong, J. (2022) *Black man in the Netherlands: An Afro-Antillean anthropology*, Francio Guadeloupe. *Canadian Journal for Netherlandic Studies*, 42 (1), 261-266. [Link to the review](#).

Publicly engaged scholarship

Rogers, R., Tharian, A., and Vasser-Elong, J. (2024). *A Visual Journey through the Research and Art of Peacemaking Literacies*. [Paintings]. *Celebrating the Arts 2024*, Honors College, University of Missouri-St. Louis, St. Louis, MO. United States.

Vasser-Elong, J. (2024). *Selected Works*. [Poetry]. *Ferguson and Beyond: Artistic Responses to a Decade of Social Upheaval*. Webster University's Cecille R. Hunt Gallery. Webster Groves, MO. United States. <https://www.webster.edu/art/hunt-gallery.php> Curated by Terri Reilly.

Vasser-Elong, J. (2024). *Excerpts from Americanesque*. [Poetry] *Turn Upon Them Reveal to Heal: An artistic expression of injustice, healing, and communal outreach*. Gallery 210, University of Missouri – St. Louis. Curated by Allena Brazier.

Vasser-Elong, Jason. 2024. *Dear Brother* [Mixed Media Painting on Canvas]. *Terang' ART II: A Celebration of Art and Hospitality*. The Griot Museum of Black History. Curated by Lois Conley and sponsored in part by Mary Strauss.

Vasser-Elong, Jason. 2021. *Farewell* [Watercolor on Canvas]. *Listen, Look: A Reconciliatory Journey through Black Grief and Joy*. The Griot Museum of Black History, St. Louis, MO, United States.

Vasser-Elong, Jason. 2018. *They Hurt* [Poetry on found object]. *Impact HIV/AIDS Initiative*. The Griot Museum of Black History, St. Louis, MO, United States.

Vasser, Jason. 2018. *Global Cultures* [Juror: Exhibition]. Manchester Arts Center, Manchester MO.

Vasser, Jason. 2016. *Context II* [Juror: Exhibition]. Foundry Art Centre, St. Charles, MO. <https://foundryartcentre.org/context-ii>

Notable publications of essays and poetry

Non-Peer Reviewed Essays and poems

Vasser-Elong, Jason. 2025. "White Noise." *Anthropology News* website, May 27, 2025.

Vasser-Elong, Jason. 2024. "I saw Mike Brown at the library". *St. Louis Post Dispatch*, August 4, 2024. pp. B1–B6.

Vasser-Elong, Jason. 2022. "St. Louis Sound: Then and Now". *St. Louis Symphony Orchestra*. February 1, 2022 <https://www.slsostories.org/post/st-louis-sound-then-and-now>

Vasser-Elong, Jason. 2021. Red Brick. *New Square: SANCHO PANZA LITERARY SOCIETY*, 4(1). <https://www.sanchopanzalit.com/post/red-brick>

Vasser-Elong, Jason. 2020. "From Kente cloth to shrimp: symbols can tell powerful stories". *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. June 12, 2020.

Vasser-Elong, Jason. 2020. Where the 'Shrimp' story begins. *St. Louis American*. June, 17, 2020.

Vasser-Elong, Jason N. 2019. "The accident", "Delmar Loop Pantoum", "City", and "An ode to Imo's." *The St. Louis Anthology*.

Vasser-Elong, Jason. 2018. *Shrimp*. 2Leaf Press. February 1, 2018.

Vasser, Jason N. 2017. "If/Then". *Black Lives Have Always Mattered*, 73–73.

Vasser, Jason N. 2017. "Foster", "June Bug in the Alley". *Crossing the Divide: From the Poets of St. Louis*, 116–117.

Vasser, Jason N. 2014. "Sons of Singleton". *The Sphinx Magazine*, 99(2), 41–41.

Software Articulate Storyline 360 (Learning)
 Canvas (Advanced)
 Office 365 (Advanced)
 Google Suite (Advanced)

Invited Lectures, Presentations and Workshops

2025 *Co-Presenter*. "Anthropology and the Black Experience" Dakar, Senegal. May 14-18. Paper presentation.

2024 *Guest Faculty* for English 3030 – 01. Webster University, Department of English. Dr. Elizabeth Hoover. Poetry Workshop.

Workshop moderator. [Sunday Workshop](#), St. Louis Poetry Center. Poetry Workshop.

Guest Faculty for [Poetry in the Woods](#). Weekend long writer's retreat, sponsored by Washington University in St. Louis.

Presenter. "Education as a metaphor for freedom." The State of Black UMSL. University of Missouri – St. Louis (UMSL). Arts –based learning presentation.

Presenter. "Not just pretty words". Tennessee Aquatic Project. Creative Writing Workshop, sponsored by the Tennessee Aquatic Project.

Presenter. 1000 Thousand Poets and Musicians for Change. Poetry presentation.

Presenter and panelist. "Americanesque: Excerpts". Ferguson and Beyond: Artists and Poets Speak Out. Sponsored by Webster University.

- Presenter.* “Phillis Wheatley and the Pursuit of Freedom”. City College of San Francisco. Guest lecture, sponsored by the City College of San Francisco.
- 2023 *Presenter.* “Rhyme & Reason: Form and Practice”. Dr. Jerome Morris Lecture Series. Sponsored by the Black Faculty and Staff Association at UMSL.
- Workshop presenter.* “Ujamaa: Collective Work and Responsibility”. Diving With a Purpose. Programming for “The Search” for the Guerrero. Biscayne National Park, Florida Keys. Sponsored by Diving With a Purpose.
- Presenter and poetry performance.* “Sankofa is a bird”. Wenner – Gren: Transforming Anthropology Reception. American Anthropological Association’s Annual Meeting, Toronto, Canada. Sponsored by the Association of Black Anthropologists.
- Presenter.* “Routes and Routes”. Missouri Humanities Council. Sponsored by the Missouri Humanities Council.
Featured Poetry performance. “Re: Born Poetry and Open Mic.”
- 2022 *Presenter.* “Foodways to Culture”. Missouri Humanities Council.
- Presenter.* “Summer of the Word.” [Nerdacity Podcast](#). Featured. Online/YouTube. Workshop facilitation. “St. Louis Veterans Writers Workshop”. Missouri Humanities Council.
- Poetry presentation. Webster Groves Arts Commission.
- Workshop facilitation. “Juneteenth: A Brief History”: Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner. Sponsored by Bryan Cave Leighton.
- Poetry presentation. “High Noon Reading Series”. Kranzberg Arts Foundation. Sponsored by the Kranzberg Arts Foundation.
- Workshop facilitation. “Writing for Liberation”. BJC. Writing Workshop. Sponsored by Barnes Jewish Christian Hospital.
- Poetry presentation. “The Black Futurity Group presents a Humanities Week Event: Black Art!”. Sponsored by the University of Missouri – St. Louis.
- 2021 *Poetry presentation.* “Readings from *Shrimp*”. Open Door Reading Series: The Poetry Foundation. Sponsored by the Poetry Foundation.
- Diversity Workshop. “Give Respect, Give Respect”. Diversity Awareness Partnership. Sponsored by Webster University.

Art commentary [“Black St. Louis Artists Explore Generations Of Racial Trauma And How Joy Heals”](#), Henderson, A. NPR.

Poetry presentation. “Kuumba: Creativity”, University of Missouri – St. Louis.

2020 Poetry presentation “Readings from *Shrimp*”. Missouri Writer’s Series. Missouri State University. Sponsored by Missouri State University.

Workshop facilitation. “Let’s W.R.A.P.” Center of Creative Arts: Summer Institute for Educators. Sponsored by the Center of Creative Arts.

Poetry presentation. Writer in Residence: OneCity Stories. Sponsored by the University of Missouri – St. Louis.

2019 Guest lecture. “Baldwin and beyond”. Department of English, Washington University in St. Louis. Ron Austin. Writing workshop.
Poetry presentation. The Griot Museum of Black History & Culture.
Workshop facilitator. COCAedu Summer Institute. Sponsored by the Center of Creative Arts.

Presenter. One City Stories. University of Missouri – St. Louis

2018 Guest lecture. “What are you studying”. Department of Anthropology. Course: Ethnographic Field Methods. University of Missouri – St. Louis.

Guest lecture. “What is Anthropology”. Department of Anthropology. Course: Introduction to Cultural Anthropology. University of Missouri – St. Louis

Research presentations, Keynotes, Group facilitation and Panels

2024 Presenter and Panelist. [PROUD Oak Park Conference](#). *Arts – Integration*. Sponsored by Florissant Valley Community College.

Screening Session Panelist. [BEAN: \(Short Film Premier\)](#). Bean is the short story of the overwhelming obstacles to a basic task faced by a normal teenager in this painful examination of the humanity of a community torn apart by the violence that gave rise to a movement. St. Louis Central Library

Presenter. “Cultural Border Crossing: Developing a Sustainable Educational Curricula for the African Diaspora.” Belize Keeping Up with Language, Culture, Heritage, and the Arts ([KULCHA](#)) Symposium.

Co – Presenter. “Cultural Border Crossing: Developing a Sustainable Educational Curricula for the African Diaspora.” Presented with Dr. Deneia Y. Fairweather. American Anthropological Association’s Annual Meeting.

Group facilitator. *Improving the Retention for Colored STEM students*. University of the Western Cape, Cape Town, South Africa.

Panelist. *African Americans in History and the Arts*, St. Louis Public Library.

Panelist. *African Americans in History and the Arts*. Black Faculty and Staff Association, University of Missouri – St. Louis.

2023 Panelist and presenter. *The African in our American*. African Roots and Heritage Foundation: Pan African Conference. The Department of African Literature and Civilizations. University of Yaoundé 1, Yaoundé, Cameroon.

Presenter and panelist. “Americanesque: Excerpts.” [Poetry at the Point](#). Sponsored by the St. Louis Poetry Center.

Panelist. *The Intersection of Art and Activism*. African American History and the Arts. University of Missouri – St. Louis. Sponsored by the Black Faculty and Staff Association.

2021 Paper presentation. “Treading the Atlantic.” American Anthropological Association’s Annual Meeting in Baltimore, Maryland.

2018 Keynote Speaker. Gateway Writing Project: Conference on Writing. *Writing with Intention*. The University of Missouri – St. Louis. Sponsored by the Gateway Writers Conference.

Presenter. Gateway Writing Project: Conference on Writing. *How Arts Stimulate Student Learning*. University of Missouri – St. Louis.

2017 Panelist. Black Speculative Art Movement Conference, Harris – Stowe State University. Sponsored by the Department of Humanities.

Panelist. MO Assoc. of Community Arts Agencies Conference, Columbia, Missouri.

Panelist. Diversity Conference, Stephens College, Columbia, Missouri.

2015 Keynote Speaker. “Honoring Maya Angelou, St. Louis Poetry Center Spring Benefit”. Sponsored by the St. Louis Poetry Center.

2014 Presenter. LEAP Kickoff: Getting Involved on Campus, University of Missouri – St. Louis.

Keynote Speaker. Epsilon Lambda Scholarship Foundation, Scholarship Banquet. Sponsored by the Epsilon Lambda Scholarship Foundation.

Presenter. Leadership Retreat: Fraternity and Sorority Life. University of Missouri – St. Louis.

Keynote Speaker. New Member Institute: Fraternity and Sorority Life, University of Missouri – St. Louis.

2013 Presenter. The University World View: Unity, Harmony, and Respect for Different Points of View, University of Missouri – St. Louis.

Paper presentation. “Rhyme and Reason: Poetics as Societal Dialogue”, Undergraduate Research Symposium. University of Missouri – St. Louis

2012 Paper presentation. “Rhyme and Reason: Poetics as Societal Dialogue”, Departmental Thesis Presentation.

Presenter. Applied Credit Program, University of Missouri – St. Louis.
Presenter. First Year Experience, University of Missouri – St. Louis.

2011 Group facilitator. Imprint of Fatherhood: Missouri History Museum. America I AM: The African American Imprint Exhibit.

Presenter. Shades of Brown: Office of Multicultural Relations, University of Missouri – St. Louis.

2010 Co – presenter. “Inspiring youth through The Center for Human Origin and Cultural Diversity”. American Anthropological Association’s Annual Meeting in New Orleans, Louisiana. Co – presented with Dr. Jaqueline Lewis – Harris.

2009 Presenter. The Grey Area: Riverfront Radio.
Poetry presentation. The Last Poets: Opening Poetry Performance. University of Missouri – St. Louis.

2008 Presenter. Celebrating a Culturally Rich Mosaic: St. Louis African Arts Festival.

Field experience

2024 Guerrero Project Homeward Bound: Monrovia, Liberia

Researcher: Guerrero Project Homeward Bound

Data collection

- Co – developed a questionnaire with Dr. Deneia Y. Fairweather to gather data on the descendants of the Guerrero; data will be used to develop a course.

Teaching Artist: Saint Louis Art Museum

Curriculum Development and Workshop Facilitator

- Created interdisciplinary workshops for youth in The Village Mentoring Program and creative works related to Narrative Wisdom: And African Arts

- 2023 ‘The Search’ for the Guerrero
Creative Writing Director: Diving With a Purpose
 Curriculum Development
- Developed and presented workshops to students who conducted marine archaeology in Biscayne National Park, searching for the Guerrero.
- 2021-2022 Center of Creative Arts
Teaching Artist: COCAedu
- Presented a final draft of my learning model Let’s Write Read Analyze & Process with high school teachers.
 - Created curricula and piloted my educational learning model Let’s Write Read Analyze & Process with high school teachers.
- 2014 Writers in the Schools Program: University of Missouri – St. Louis
Coordinator: Department of English
- Served as the liaison for area high school English teachers who participated with graduate students who needed teaching experience.
- Women’s & Gender Studies: University of Missouri – St. Louis
Graduate Teaching Assistant with Dr. Sara Ebest
- Developed and expounded upon existing coursework for the Women’s & Gender Studies Department.
- 2010 Archeological Field School: University of Missouri – St. Louis
Student researcher with Dr. Patti Wright of the Department of Anthropology
- Surveyed and excavated for artifacts at the Daniel Boone Home and on Main Street in St. Charles, Missouri.
- Biological Anthropology: Human Variation
Teaching Assistant with Instructor of Record: Dr. Pamela Ashmore, (then) Chair of the Department of Anthropology.
- Facilitated group discussion
 - Enhanced existing curricula
- Field Researcher with the Schmidt Arts Center
Researcher: Collected qualitative data and an artifact for the exhibit: “Objects, Stories and Places”.

Consulting: Workshop development and facilitation

- 2024 – 2025 Consultant. [The Village](#) on programming at The Saint Louis Art Museum. Workshop.
- 2023 – Present [j. Nicholas & Company](#) – an Educational Consulting Firm, Owner.
Consultant. [Tennessee Aquatic Project](#) to prepare students for travel blog writing. Workshop.
- Consultant. [Diving With a Purpose](#) on programming for “The Search” for the Guerrero, a Spanish slave ship that wrecked off the coast of Florida in 1827. Workshop.
- 2022 Consultant. [Missouri Humanities Council](#) on programming for their St. Louis Veterans Writers Workshop.
- 2021 Consultant. Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner for their Juneteenth celebration. Workshop.
- Consultant. Missouri Humanities Council on programming for Foodways to Culture. Workshop.
- 2020 Consultant. Center of Creative Arts for programming for their COCAedu Summer Institute. Programming.
- 2019 Consultant. Center of Creative Arts for programming for their COCAedu Summer Institute. Curriculum Development and Workshop.
- 2014 Consultant. The Foundry Arts Centre, St. Charles, Missouri on exhibit ‘Context II’.
- 2008 – 2013 Consultant. Studio STL for programming for their:
- Confluence Academy, Creative Writing Workshop, 2013.
 - Pagedale Family Support Center, Superhero Power Book, 2012.
 - Wellston Book Project, *How My Life Has Been*, 2008.

Internships

- 2008 – 2012 Connecting Human Origin and Cultural Diversity (CHOCD), UM-St. Louis
The CHOCD, founded in fall 1995, was a joint venture between the Anthropology Department, the College of Education and the Maybuye Center (Archive of the African National Congress) at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa. Co-Presenter at American Anthropological Association’s meeting, Nov. 2010.
- 2010 – 2011 Missouri History Museum, America I Am: The African American Imprint
Programming and Development, 2010-2011.

Developed and facilitated the program *The Imprint of Fatherhood*, 2010.
Workshop Moderator.

2004 – 2006 Children’s Defense Fund: Freedom School Educator
Site Coordinator: Reading enrichment
Site Assistant: Reading enrichment

Professional Development

- 2023 The Kranzberg Arts Foundation
Kranzberg High Low Artist in Residency Panelist
Selected by peers to participate in the Kranzberg Residency programs. As a panelist, I reviewed over 20 applications, met with my cohort of fellow reviewers, and sent recommendations to the board for approval.
- 2018 Gateway Writing Project Conference on Writing
How Arts Stimulate Student Learning
Arts integration emphasizes creativity and innovation, two skills consistently ranked as important for a 21st century workforce. In my session, participants considered how they might integrate the arts into their existing curricula. Beginning with curriculum crosswalks, participants were guided to explore natural areas of overlap between their curriculum and the arts.
- 2016 National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ – St. Louis)
Certified Diversity Facilitator
NCCJ Promotes understanding and respect among all races, religions, and cultures through advocacy and educational programs that embrace diversity, self-awareness, and community-wide change.
- 2012 – 2014 Certificate in University Teaching (CUT) at UMSL
CUT offers the option of a formal course or workshops, conferences for professional development, feedback on teaching, and seminars.
- Unit 1: Teaching for Learning in the University
 - Unit 2: Preparing for University Teaching
 - Unit 3: Teaching with Technology
 - Unit 4: Teaching Practicum
 - Unit 5: Professional Development
- 2008 Regional Arts Commission (RAC)
RAC was founded in 1985 to promote, encourage, and foster the arts and cultural institutions in St. Louis City and County and to contribute to the economic development of the area through a strong presence of the arts.

Professional service

- 2025 [Webster Groves Safe Streets Taskforce](#): is responsible for supporting the project team in planning community engagement and serving as a vital community sounding board for recommendations to the safety action plan. Furthermore, it functions as the leadership body that advocates for the adoption of the plan.
- [Webster Groves Historical Preservation Commission](#): The Historic Preservation Commission protects, enhances, and promotes historic districts, structures, and land in Webster Groves.
- 2024 [Poetry in the Woods](#), sponsored by Washington University in St. Louis
Guest faculty
- Undergraduate Research Symposium, University of Missouri – St. Louis
Juror: Visual presentations
- 2021 – 2024 Student Conduct Committee: Pierre Laclede Honors College
Collaborated with colleagues to develop the Honors Code of Conduct
- 2023 Anti – Racists Educators Group, Committee
- 2023 Journal of Children’s Literature: Editorial Review Board
- 2023 Undergraduate Research Symposium
Juror: Visual presentations
- 2021 – 2023 Student Conduct Committee, UMSL
Convened with faculty and staff on appeal hearings pertaining to student conduct.
- 2021 – 2025 Faculty Liaison, Pierre Laclede Honors College, St. Louis Scholars
The Saint Louis Scholars are finalists for the University of Missouri-St. Louis’ Opportunity Scholars Program. This cohort of students represent students who are first generation and members of various socio-economically deprived groups. Through professional development and community service, students take part in various campus – wide and Pierre Laclede Honors College specific events.
- Provided professional development opportunities
 - Organized a food drive in collaboration with the St. Louis Area Food Bank
 - Organized an Etiquette Luncheon
 - Organized a Volleyball De-stress event for students

2021 – 2024	<p>Academic Advising</p> <p>Advised approximately 60 honors undergraduates each academic semester on course selections, pre-requisites, and offerings in-person, via Zoom, via telephone, via email, or other delivery formats as needed. In addition to registering advisees for courses, I monitored their academic progress and discussed their broader educational aspirations implanting a student-centered theory of advising.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducted prospective student interviews; register admitted students • Referred students to a range of campus resources including tutoring centers, Career Services, and major-related student organizations • Served as liaison between students and advisors in Arts and Sciences as well as faculty advisors in students' home departments • Counseled students about potential career paths based on major and interests
2019 – Present	<p>YourWords STL, Board of Directors</p> <p>YourWords STL uses one-on-one tutoring, creative writing workshops to amplify the voices of St. Louis youth. I was an organizer/collaborator for their Louder Than a Bomb poetry event, 2017.</p>
2017 –2021	<p>Midwest Artist Support Services: Board of Directors</p> <p>MAPS offer free or low-cost resources for working artists in all disciplines—visual artists, musicians, creative writers, craft artists, theater and dance artists, filmmakers, and other originating artists— in the St. Louis region and beyond.</p>
1999 – Present	<p>Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc. (ΑΦΑ). ΙΙΙ & ΔΕΑ Chapters develops leaders, promotes brotherhood and academic excellence while advocating for our communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Executive Board; Assoc. Editor to the Sphinx (ΔΕΑ) • Iota Pi 50th Anniversary: Service and Advocacy Chair
Student Support	
2025	<p>I serve as the Chapter Advisor for the Iota Pi Chapter of Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity Inc.; Iota Pi Chapter seated at Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville.</p>
2024	<p>I supervised the following student research projects:</p> <p>Rae Miller, Junior Studio Art</p> <p>“Art and Artificial Intelligence”</p> <p>Undergraduate Research Symposium: Paper presentation, 2025</p>

Lily Warden, Senior Communications
 “The benefits of language labs”
 Capstone project

Frederick McCullough, Junior in Anthropology
 “Reparations: Generational Perspectives”
 Undergraduate Research Symposium: Paper Presentation

Dominique Bell, Senior in (Cultural) Anthropology
 “African American Spiritual Practices”
 Capstone Project

Shannon McCormick, Senior in Social Work
 “Mental Health in k-12 Learning Environments”
 Pilot with the Center of Creative Arts

2023

Jay Gaskin, Junior in the College of Communications
 “Seeing Me: Influential Queer Black Men in Entertainment”
 Undergraduate Research Symposium: Paper Presentation

Diamond Cannady, Senior in the College of Education
 Data collection for course development “Allies, Spies, and Secret Friends”

Professional Association Memberships

2024 – Present	St. Louis African Chamber of Commerce
2021 – Present	Association of Black Anthropologists (ABA)
2019 – Present	Council on Anthropology and Education (CAE)
2018 – Present	Your Words STL, Board of Directors
2012 – Present	American Anthropological Association (AAA)
1999 – Present	Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc.
2014 – 2023	Association of Writers and Writing Programs (AWP)
2019 – 2022	Association of Africanist Anthropologists (AfAA)
2018 – 2021	Midwest Artist Project Services Board of Directors
2018 – 2020	Arts and Education Council’s Young Friends, Board of Directors
2014 – 2020	St. Louis Poetry Center, Board of Directors

Media Appearances

Roberts, T., Gaye, A. Kushner, D., Vasser-Elong, J. (2024, October 9). *The Significance of the Guerrero* [Radio broadcast]. OKFM, Monrovia, Liberia. [Link to our interview on OKFM](#)

Vasser-Elong, J. (2024, August 22). *Race: Listen. Learn. Live. - Voices of Ferguson* [Documentary]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gbj_Hx1uOF8

Vasser-Elong, J. (2024, March 17). *BBC News: The Documentary – Diving With a Purpose*

[Audio]. BBC News. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/w3ct6p3h>

Christian, D. (Director). (2020, July 12). *Poetry in Motion: St. Louis Poets Take the Mic*
[Documentary]. <https://artsci.washu.edu/events/poetry-motion-st-louis-poets-take-mic>

Brown – Ward, D. (Director) (2017, July 1). *Never Been a Time*
[Documentary]. 365 Degrees Productions.
<https://www.365degreesproductions.com/never-been-a-time>

Professional references and transcripts available upon request