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## Message from our Program Director

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# A Message from our Program Director



MAPW Director, Tony Grooms

“You can’t visit death row,” said MAPW 2018 graduate Daniel Lumpkin, “without being changed.” Daniel was referring to his MAPW Capstone project, “Mercy & Grace: The Work of Death Row and Prison Chaplains,” in which he shadowed Chaplain Bernard Miller at Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison’s death row. The project recorded the work of the Chaplain and the stories of many of the death row inmates and their families. Listening to Daniel, it occurred to me just how varied and important so many of the MAPW students’ projects are. I am proud that MAPW allows for this variety and supports students in sometimes difficult projects and travels to presentations that build their careers but also serve the interest of the greater community.

In the past academic year, MAPW students presented at conferences more than a dozen times. Most of the conferences were within the eastern US, but some were as far away as Rome, Italy and London, UK. Supported by MAPW and Graduate Student Association funds, travel to conferences is considered an important aspect of MAPW’s learning experience as it provides opportunities for sharing ideas with and learning from others

outside of the MAPW, and building professional networks. Conference presentations also support the development of students’ academic and career goals.

For example, 2018 Research Award winner Bailey McAlister studied the use of gendered language in university writing centers, exploring how tutors engage with students. She also coined the term “signifier literacy” to explain how First-Year students interact when writing online. She presented on this work at various conferences, most recently the College English Association Conference in St. Petersburg, Florida. Her presentations result from her MAPW course studies, but also from her hands-on experiences as both a research assistant and a teaching assistant. Now, her research is being disseminated for the benefit of other tutors and teachers through academic publications like *Southern Discourse*. Bailey graduates from the MAPW in Summer Semester 2018 and begins her studies as a doctoral candidate at Georgia State University in the Fall Semester.

MAPW students also work with a variety of community partners as interns and consultants. One exciting project is *Green Card Youth Voices: Immigration Stories from an Atlanta High School* in which MAPW award winners Estefany Palacio and Kelsey Medlin, along with Dr. Lara Smith-Sitton’s editing class transcribed and edited the stories of immigrant children for publication.

I invite you to read more about the work of MAPW students in this issue of *MAPWriting*. From its inception more than two decades ago, the MAPW program, through its faculty, students and more than 700 alumni, has made a powerful impact on professional writing in our region. The MAPW program is committed to giving its students the opportunities, networks and breadth of study to pursue meaningful projects that make positive change in our community as our community also changes us.