

## Creativity



## **Manastash Empowers CWU's Student Artists, Welcomes a Bright Literary Future**

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Patrons visiting Brooks Library the night of April 10 may have been surprised to hear applause flooding from a small second-floor classroom. Though libraries do not generally host raucous celebrations, Manastash Live was an exception. Central Washington University students and faculty gathered to celebrate the student writers featured in the literary journal's upcoming 2018 issue. The audience's support for student artists showed dedication to continuing and furthering the magazine's founding ideals.

*Manastash was started in 1989 by Emeritus Professor Joseph Powell and then graduate student Shannon Hopkins as a platform to showcase excellent student writing. Powell and Hopkins began work on the magazine with only \$500 and a Xerox machine, releasing the first hand-stapled issue in 1990. Manastash has published student poetry, short stories, critical essays, creative nonfiction, and visual art in yearly issues ever since.*

*Now professionally printed and perfect-bound, Manastash has become what Powell calls “the center of the writing program” at CWU. The magazine still serves as a platform to share student writing, but it has grown in scope. Today, Manastash not only empowers student writers and artists by printing and celebrating their work but also by giving practicum students the opportunity to edit and design the magazine themselves.*

*Manastash is currently produced by CWU English students over two practicum courses, one dedicated to editing and the other to layout and design. For the students who work on the magazine, these courses provide opportunities to gain practical experience. Dr. Zachary VandeZande, Manastash’s current faculty advisor, explains that it is important for students to be able to claim the practical skills they obtain from working on the magazine when searching for employment after graduation. VandeZande aims to further empower students professionally by giving them control.*

*Working at American Literary Review as a PhD student, VandeZande says he learned the value of working to “bring things into the world that matter,” and he carries this philosophy into the classroom. By allowing practicum students to make the majority of the choices involved in producing Manastash, VandeZande allows students to be “daring” with the kind of magazine they produce. Not only do the editing and design teams gain experience to bring to the workplace, VandeZande says, they experience the powerful feeling of using their energy to “make good things visible.”*

*Manastash also empowers the students whose work it publishes. For student artists and writers, the visibility and support provided by Manastash are important examples of success. According to Powell, “Publication helps keep up morale” as writers navigate the competitive literary marketplace. VandeZande also sees Manastash as a way to show students what success feels like. “Manastash is not just a literary magazine for the students,” he says. “It’s a way of saying ‘we are proud of what you’ve done.’”*

*Though the magazine and its production process have changed significantly since 1989, VandeZande says he would like to see the magazine’s presence continue to grow, either outside or inside the university. As Manastash continues to grow and change, so will the benefits to its student artists and production teams.*

*Students and faculty will again gather to celebrate Manastash at the magazine’s 2018 launch party, which will take place during the Symposium of University Research and Creative Expression (SOURCE). Those attending the event will be able to pick up copies of the magazine and support, as Manastash has for more than 20 years, the work of CWU’s student artists.*

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