

Dear student,

On behalf of the graduate students, welcome to the Department of English and the Auburn Family. You have made an awesome (though terrifying) decision in choosing to continue into a graduate program—a decision that will push and develop you into a better scholar, person, and friend. We are excited to get to know each of you over the next year.

At this point, we are sure you have questions. Don't worry—we have answers! In an attempt answer some of these questions, we have compiled some information on the English department, English Graduate Association, Auburn University, and the Auburn/Opelika community for your convenience.

The Department

If you are looking for people who are helpful and supportive, look no further than the Department of English. Our graduate student atmosphere is unique—at least that's what we hear from friends at other schools. As you can imagine, with so few students accepted into our program each year, we get to know our classmates and officemates. You will find your peers have a vast array of hobbies and talents, some of which will likely align with your own in an uncanny way. Others may spark a new interest you didn't know you had.

We spend a lot of time together, and sometimes it's intentional. Even in the midst of a hectic semester full of classes, meetings, and projects we find time to enjoy each other's company. It's common for us to pop in and out of each other's offices, send memes, or grab coffee and lunch. We even get together for birthday parties, trips to the farmer's market, athletic events, exercise classes, game nights, movie nights, shopping trips, hiking trips, trips to the dog park—you name it! Chances are others are looking to do it, too.

Our community is close-knit and excited to welcome newcomers! You will find little competition here; we are all funded equally and we work to motivate, critique, and celebrate one another and ourselves. If you ask for help from a fellow graduate student in our department, you will get it. We are all in this rollercoaster together, and we look out for each other daily.

Our graduate faculty is equally supportive. Our professors make themselves available, often sitting in their offices outside of scheduled office hours or dropping by our offices. They want to know us, they want to help, and they plan their courses to benefit *us*. Our faculty aim to ensure we are ready with the practical skills we need upon graduation. Thus, it's not uncommon to have courses that utilize the semester to build the necessary skills and critical thinking to execute an article length (18-25 page) seminar paper or industry-specific client project. Throughout the semester you can expect to practice writing abstracts, learn the fundamentals of web and document design, prepare for panel and conference presentations, and rip off the metaphorical band-aid by submitting your work to professional journals, along with so much more! Most importantly, the faculty also cares for our input. They are not afraid to stop you in the hallway and ask you what you think about their course design for the next semester. They value our feedback at the end of each semester, our opinions about what we may need in the future. In the 2017-2018 year, for instance, we were even invited to have breakfast with job candidates and attend their presentations. From this, we have already formed essential relationships with our two new African American studies scholars Dr. Ernest Gibson and Dr. Janelle Rodriques who will be arriving this fall. It's an awesome feeling knowing that your voice is being heard in the quest to better the department.

In many ways, we, as graduate teaching assistants, are treated more like faculty than students. We all have office space, key access to the Haley Center for late nights in the office, and mailboxes. We have the option of using the library's campus delivery system which will deliver research materials to your department mailbox. (Depending on who you ask this might be the most amazing aspect of our position. It's like Christmas!) We are also welcome to use the department computer, copy, or conference rooms. We also have the option of receiving funding from the Graduate School and the department for conferences -- for travel, lodging, registration, and meals. As a result, a number of us have presented at national conferences.

Looking for other ways to be involved and build your CV? Many of our cohort are involved in other departments of the University. Some work in the library, the Writing Center, the Lab for Usability, Communication Interaction, and Usability (LUCIA) Lab, and the Harbert College of business. Others choose to help manage and edit our literary journal *The Southern Humanities Review (SHR)* or other publications housed on campus, such as the *International Journal of Acoustics and Vibration (IJAV)*. One of the best parts of our department is the possibility to get involved as much as you desire. We have the power to shape our own education.

English Graduate Association (EGA)

If you are looking to get more involved in departmental goings-on, look no further than EGA. And good news, you are already a part of it! EGA is an organization run by grad students for the grad students. We host events such as publishing seminars, workshops, and research colloquiums where professors will take time out of their schedules to share their tips and lessons learned. (There are almost always snacks and who doesn't like snacks?)

EGA also hosts the Southeastern Liberal Arts Research Conference (SELARC) every spring. This is a conference that has grown exponentially in the past two years, pulling in graduate students from all over the Southeast. There are opportunities to present at this conference and/or help plan and organize. Both options look great on a CV.

Lastly, EGA students are known to have a weekly Happy Hour at The Hound in downtown Auburn and plan off-campus excursions (like Escape Rooms!) for communal decompression, which you will find is extremely necessary to make it through the hardships of graduate study.

For more information on EGA, visit our website at <https://auburnega.wordpress.com/>.

Auburn University

We are sure you know of Auburn's campus— or else you wouldn't have applied. Even still, we would like to mention some of the great things happening here!

First and foremost: parking. Of course you can purchase a parking pass from the Transportation services that range from \$80-\$120. Our alternative option: transit. The university's Tiger Transit system reaches across town, is highly reliable, has conveniently-located stops at most apartment complexes, and, as a result, is often used by graduate students in our department. We suggest using the TransLoc Rider app for live tracking of all buses.

If you haven't heard, which it is hard to imagine that you haven't, sporting events are a HUGE deal. Football season will be in full swing shortly. If you are a fan of football be prepared for traditions like you won't see anywhere else. When you get your Ignited Card made, you will be able to experience any University sporting event. Most events are free for students. Football games, unfortunately, are not. (Tip: you may enter the First-Year Lottery for a chance to purchase a season package or request a free ticket

from the Student Ticket Pool before a game.) Still, the EGA tailgates before home football games are full of just the right amount of socializing and football debauchery.

Additionally, there are countless seminars, social events, guest speakers offered by the Graduate School. The University also houses the beautiful Jule Collins Smith Museum and the theater department productions are engaging with boundless student talent.

The City and Community

The Auburn community is growing daily. Several new shops and restaurants are scheduled to open this year. Until the new and exciting places open, we have compiled a list of our favorite local restaurants/ coffee shops. Let's grab some lunch and/or coffee!

Downtown Restaurants	Local Coffee Shops
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Big Blue Bagel● Little Italy Pizzeria● Tacorita● Draft House● Amsterdam Cafe● The Hound● The Depot	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Mama Mocha's● Coffee Cat● The Bean● Rosshouse Coffee

Again, we would like to welcome you to the Auburn University Department of English! Remember, we've been where you are, we are all here for you, and we're all in this together. See you on the Plains this fall!

Best wishes and War Eagle,
The English Department Graduate Students