

## **Event Title: Forgotten Fertile Ground: Contemporary Poetry and Community Colleges**

**Type of Event:** Pedagogy

**Event Description:** For reasons economic and otherwise, there has been huge growth in the enrollment at Community Colleges. Many students never get the chance to take a class dedicated to poetry, and instead only experience it through Basic Skills or Writing 101 classes. Four experienced Community College faculty, and poets themselves, will look at motivating ways of mining the poetic talent from Community College students. We will discuss methods of eliciting remarkable writing from this oft forgotten segment.

**Event Agenda:** The event moderator will begin by explaining the thought process behind the panelist's realization of the need for this type of event. Each of the four panel members introduce themselves and will present various techniques that they use to elicit creative responses from their students and provide examples of lessons that work. After each panelist speaks, the audience will be invited to engage with the panelists showcasing their own ideas or asking questions.

**Statement of Value:** Teaching writing at a Community College-level requires a different set of tools than similar programs at 4-year schools. The student attracted to 2-year schools frequently has little prior experience with poetry, especially contemporary, in comparison to their 4-year peers, but that is no reason to believe that this large population contains any less creative talent. We look at different ways of approaching, engaging, and guiding these students into the fold of 21st century poetry.

### **Event Organizer & Moderator:**

**John Findura:** John Findura holds an MFA from The New School and an Ed.D from New Jersey City University. He is the author of the poetry collections *Submerged* (2017) and the forthcoming *Useful Shrapnel* (2022). John is the Writing Center Supervisor at Bergen Community College in New Jersey. Twitter: @jfindura Email: jfindura@msn.com

### **Event Participants:**

**Brian Cordell:** Brian Cordell holds an MFA from Vermont College of Fine Arts and is the author of the chapbook, *In Their Final Performance* (2020). Brian is an Associate Professor at Bergen Community College where he teaches creative

writing, composition, technical writing, and literature. Email:  
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**Mary Crosby:** Mary Crosby is an Assistant Professor of English at Bergen Community College where she teaches composition, creative writing, and literature. She is the Editorial Advisor of the student literary journal *The Labyrinth* and author of the poetry chapbooks *Alluvium Stream* and *Cannon Mine*.

**Mike Matthews:** Mike Matthews is author of two books, *Water of Joy* and *Ashes*, published by Finishing Line Press. Mike Matthews has been teaching English writing courses including creative writing, for Central Texas College in Killeen, Texas. He is working on a third book to submit after *Ashes* is released.