


NOMINATION SIGNATURE PAGE

2022 Virginia Outstanding Faculty Awards

Name of Applicant:	Dr. Lauren K. Alleyne
Institution:	James Madison University
Category (choose only one): <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Baccalaureate Institution• Masters/Comprehensive Institution• Research/Doctoral Institution• Two-Year Institution• Rising Star	Masters/Comprehensive Institution
Signature of President or Chief Academic Officer:	
Printed Name of President or Chief Academic Officer:	Dr. Heather J. Coltman
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James Madison University: “Being the Change”

Mission:

We are a community committed to preparing students to be educated and enlightened citizens who lead productive and meaningful lives.

Vision:

To be the national model for the engaged university: engaged with ideas and the world.

Values:

- Academic Quality: We are dedicated to exemplary learning experiences because they are the essence of our mission.
- Community: We thrive when we collaborate, respect and serve others, and appreciate our interconnectedness.
- Diversity: We strive to be an inclusive community that values the richness of all individuals and perspectives.
- Innovation: We believe that purposeful creativity through our collaborative processes leads to knowledge creation, learning and excellence.
- Integrity: We pursue ethical reasoning because it is essential to meaningful citizenship.
- Student Focus: We provide experiences that challenge and support students.

Create, Educate, Engage: A Summary of Accomplishments

Lauren K. Alleyne is a powerhouse in her field: she is a prominent poet, writer, and editor; a visionary leader and administrator; as well as an inspiring educator.

Professor Alleyne's teaching experience spans several contexts and institutions, domestically and internationally: From 4th graders in Iowa to high schoolers in her native Trinidad to medical students in Qatar to [undergraduates around the Commonwealth](#), and students in afterschool programs right here in Harrisonburg, Alleyne's teaching has impacted learners of all levels around the country and, indeed, around the world. Her teaching portfolio here at JMU reflects her expertise in poetry, which she teaches at the introductory and advanced levels. Over the past five years, her average on teaching evaluations has been consistently high—between 4.5 and 4.8 on a 5-point scale—and students have enthusiastically expressed gratitude for what they've learned and the passion with which it was taught to them. Often, they comment on a new appreciation of the power of language gained through her classes. As one student from her Fall 2020 class writes in this unsolicited end-of-semester note, *"This class has honestly been life changing...I had never considered myself a poet... however, thanks to your class, I find myself able to express things in an entirely new and authentic way."*

In addition to teaching her own courses, Alleyne has been a visiting lecturer in other professors' classes at JMU, using poetry to engage and connect with students across disciplines. Commenting on her role as "Poet-in-Residence" for an interdisciplinary class, Dr. Seán McCarthy of the School of Writing, Rhetoric and Technical Communication comments, *"The heartbeat of Lauren's pedagogical approach lies in how she fuses the performer's understanding of theatricality and performance with the writer's ability to deeply connect human experience to the written word."* Ingrid DeSanctis in Theatre writes *"I was continually amazed at her insights about writing, her remarkable sense of humor, unapparelled generosity and rapport with students."* Even within her department, Alleyne's teaching bolsters that of her colleagues'. Dr. Sofia Samatar, who taught Alleyne's poetry then invited her to guest lecture testifies, *"Two students mentioned to me afterward that they didn't know poetry could be so 'real.' Another, who was listening to a poet read for the first time, said he would never look at poetry the same way again. During the weeks following Lauren's visit, her poem came up often in class, forming a touchstone for the students in their study of literary theory...My class will never forget this visit. It brought literature off the page for them. I am grateful to share a department with Lauren, who is so generous with her time, her energy, and her words."*

Sharing energy outside the classroom is another hallmark of Alleyne's teaching and she takes great pride in mentoring students. She is faculty advisor to the JMU student writing group, Word Is Born, and under her guidance, those students have deepened their engagement with the craft by attending conferences and workshops, publishing their work, and performing at open mics on campus and in the community. She has guided several students through the graduate school application process, and most recently, two students from her advanced poetry class were accepted to top programs for film (Columbia University) and poetry (University of Oregon) respectively. Renee Bourdelais (JMU '20) writes, *"I'm really grateful for all of Professor Alleyne's help. I wouldn't have truly considered grad school without the conversations we had...!"* and Ellis Finney (JMU '21) credits Professor Alleyne's "mentorship" "hard work," and "caring and direct" guidance for his success.



Lauren K. Alleyne with students at Washington and Lee and their copies of [Honeyfish](#). (2019)



Alleyne conducts a performance poetry workshop with high school students in eSwatini. (2018)

Alleyne has described herself as a “coach” for her students, and in her teaching philosophy she writes, “Several times over the duration of the course, I hold one-on-one conferences with each student for around 30 minutes, and we sit with a sheaf of their drafts. I coach them through the labor of selecting and inventing, of looking closely at language—testing it, shaping it, and sometimes discarding it and starting the process all over again. We talk about their experience of engaging poetry as poets or hammer out the nuance of an idea into a thesis statement; we sit silently, mouthing the words of an awkward sentence or line over and over trying out different arrangements of the words until they give or we do. I remind them that we are embodied beings, that writing is also a physical act, that language is

produced by tongues and lips, that their thoughts are actually neurons firing away in the majestic organ of the brain. And so, we might do breathwork, or walk, or simply direct our attention to the body and listen to what it wants to say. These moments are what I love and hope to always do in my teaching—model for my students the invisible processes of wrestling with ideas and giving language to the movements of their interior worlds.” Her hands-on, practice-based, student-centered pedagogy continues to benefit our students at JMU.

As a renowned writer, Alleyne has had an impressive creative and scholarly career. She has published in over 100 journals, anthologies and web publications, including top-tier venues like the [New York Times](#), [Ms.](#), and [The Atlantic](#), and has been translated into [Polish](#) and [Spanish](#). Her work has been recognized with fellowships such as an [Iowa Arts Council Fellowship](#); prestigious residencies at Yaddo, Cave Canem and the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown; and several prizes and awards, including the Split This Rock poetry prize, and the [Philip Freund Prize from Cornell University](#). Alleyne’s work has been featured three times in the [Academy of American Poets’](#) highly selective *Poem-a-Day* series (which reaches about 100,000 subscribers) and was a 2019 finalist for the “Best of the Net” (i.e., was in the top 50 of thousands of entries). Most recently she was selected by former U.S. Poet Laureate, Tracy K. Smith, for inclusion in the 2021 *Best American Poetry* anthology, which selects 75 poems from the tens of thousands of poems published in print and online each year.

Alleyne’s first collection of poetry, [Difficult Fruit](#), was published by Peepal Tree Press (UK), the foremost publisher of contemporary Caribbean literature. Poet, international activist, and Director of Lannan Center for Poetics and Social Practice at Georgetown University, Carolyn Forché writes of [Difficult Fruit](#), “There is uncommon spiritual knowledge here as well as political discernment. There is much to learn while accompanying Alleyne on her “raft of language,” ... I have gone with her and would do so again and again.” Former Iowa Poet Laureate, Mary Swander, describes [Difficult Fruit](#) as “a masterful debut.” In a feat unusual for a debut collection, [Difficult Fruit](#) received international attention, garnering reviews and interviews with Alleyne in Trinidad, England and in the U.S. in venues including *The Trinidad Guardian*, *The San Francisco Review*, and *The Western Carolinian*, among others. In 2015, the editors of the journal *IthacaLit* named their poetry prize “The [Lauren K. Alleyne/Difficult Fruit Poetry Prize](#),” writing to Professor Alleyne that “This title will honor [her] continuing contributions to poetry as well as the Black Lives Matter movement.” (Of note: in 2018, VA Poet Laureate, Luisa Igloria was a finalist for this prize!). [Difficult Fruit](#) has been taught in classrooms around the country and world, including at Princeton University, the University of Iowa, University of Michigan, Worcester



Nobel Laureate Derek Walcott with his copy of [Difficult Fruit](#) (2014)

University, Allegheny College, Ipek Universitesi (Turkey), Halle and Erfurt Universities (Germany), and here at James Madison University.



Alleyne's second collection, Honeyfish, was selected as winner of the Green Rose Prize and was published by New Issues Press. It was also published in a UK edition by Peepal Tree Press. Honeyfish has earned recognition locally, nationally and internationally. It was nominated as one of five finalists for the NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Literary Work; and longlisted for the prestigious OCM BOCAS Prize for Caribbean Literature and the Library of Virginia Literary Prize in Poetry. The collection was favorably featured/reviewed in *The Millions*, *Poetry Birmingham* (UK), *Caribbean Beat Magazine* (airline magazine for Caribbean Airlines) and *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, among others. Since the book's release in 2019, Alleyne has given well over 30 readings and talks, including at

Princeton University's *Black Poetry* conference, where she read alongside MacArthur winner, Terrance Hayes and Former Poet Laureate and Pulitzer Prize winner, Natasha Tretheway; the Decatur Book Festival alongside Pulitzer Prize winner, Jericho Brown; The Brooklyn Caribbean Literature Festival (where she was featured as a "Laureate of the Caribbean") and the Virginia Festival of the Book. Renowned Black Arts Movement poet, Sonia Sanchez, writes that Honeyfish is a "*re-imagining of our souls for another generation*" and poet Gabrielle Calvacoressi writes that Alleyne's "compassionate, impassioned and clear-eyed poems are a singular act of resistance and power." **Alleyne's work continues to be noted as powerful, impactful, and essential by scholars, poets and readers alike.**

In addition to her poetry, Alleyne is well-regarded in the field as an interviewer. She has interviewed literary luminaries such as Pulitzer Prize winner and former Poet Laureate, Tracy K. Smith, New York Times bestselling author Marjorie Liu, and her [2014 interview with writer Jamaica Kincaid](#), has been cited in most recent Kincaid scholarship. Her interviews have also appeared in *The Writer's Chronicle*—the national journal for the Association of Writers and Writing Programs—*Guernica*, and *The Asian American Review*, putting her at the fore of conversations happening in the field of contemporary literature, poetry and poetics.

Lifting her work off the page, Alleyne also participates in collaborative, multimedia projects with artists in other disciplines. In 2015, she co-created "[The Gretel Project](#)," an immersive, interactive experience with collaborators Catherine Chung (novelist), Tomiko Jones (visual artist) and Sidney Boquiren (composer); in 2020 she collaborated with choreographer Missy Phol Smith and media artist Michelle Harris (both professors at the University of Rochester) to produce "Red Pilgrimage," a video project based on Alleyne's poem of the same title, which was selected for inclusion at festivals in Rochester, NY; Cincinnati, OH; and Adelaide, Australia. Most recently, she partnered with artist Matthew Fischer to create [Either | Or](#), a collaborative digital exhibit featured at The Intermission Museum.

Alleyne's work at the Furious Flower Poetry Center impactfully integrates her practice and pedagogy. The center is the nation's oldest and only one of two academic centers dedicated to Black poetry. As assistant director for the last five years, Alleyne has worked alongside founder, executive director and former SCHEV OFA recipient, Dr. Joanne Gabbin to build, disseminate and preserve knowledge of the richness of the Black poetry tradition of which she is also a part. One of Alleyne's major undertakings was co-editing the center's third anthology, [Furious Flower: Seeding the Future of African American Poetry](#) (Northwestern University Press, 2020) with Dr. Gabbin. This groundbreaking anthology features critical essays, poems from over 100 Black poets, and a unique section of essays poetics, an element collected for the first time in this anthology. The anthology has already been adopted by high school and college educators, and has sold thousands of copies in its first year.

As editor-in-chief and architect of the redesigned Furious Flower online journal, [The Fight & The Fiddle](#), Alleyne brings the work of the center to the general public. Reconceiving the journal as a platform to integrate research, culture, creativity and pedagogy, Alleyne launched it in its new format in 2017. Each quarterly issue features a contemporary Black poet, showcasing a selection of their work, a critical essay, a writing prompt, and an in-depth interview with Alleyne herself. She has since published 15 issues, featuring and interviewing the likes of cultural icon, Nikki Giovanni and Pulitzer Prize winners Tyehimba Jess, Gregory Pardlo, and Yusef Komunyakaa. The journal has been viewed by over 20,000 visitors from over 80 countries, and has had over 36,000 lifetime views to date.

Along the same lines, Alleyne conceptualized the [“Furious Flower Slam Academy,”](#) a program, which in partnership with JMU’s Valley Scholars, introduces would-be first-generation college students to performance poetry as a means to engage social issues as well as gain confidence in expressing themselves. To date the academy has hosted over 30 students. The [Furious Flower Summer Legacy Seminars](#), a week-long program designed to encourage high school and college educators to include Black poets on their curricula, draws teachers from around the country, and recently, from around the world. Alleyne’s programmatic outreach initiatives have been recognized with grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, Virginia Humanities, The Poetry Foundation, The Academy of American Poets, 4-VA, and The Amazon Literary Partnership.

Alleyne’s service and citizenship as a faculty member is indisputable. Most recently and prestigiously, she served as one of 17 members of the Academic Affairs Strategic Planning Committee at the provost’s invitation. She is a robust member of the English department, where among other things, she is a founding member of the interdisciplinary [Africana Studies Workshop](#), an incubator space for scholars working on Africana scholarship. She has shared her poetry at student events (e.g., the MLK community breakfast and the NAACP student gala); faculty events (e.g., the opening faculty meeting and Noftinger research award ceremony; at college-level events (e.g., the College of Education’s Symposium on Anti-bias Teaching); and philanthropic university events (e.g., the Women for Madison summit). Alleyne also impactfully presented to the JMU Board of Visitors as part of a faculty panel on race and representation. As an advocate for equity and diversity on campus, she is involved in Sisters in Session, an organization of Black women at JMU; the Madison Caucus for Gender Equality; and is affiliate faculty for the African American, African and Diaspora program.



Alleyne hosts the Furious Flower 25th Anniversary reading at the National Museum of African American History and Culture (2019)



Alleyne interviews poet and cultural icon, Nikki Giovanni at JMU. (2019)

Within the literary community, Alleyne is recognized as both active and generous. She contributes service in a variety of capacities, including as an outside thesis reviewer/committee member, a reader for journals and presses, a juror for residencies and state fellowships, a judge for poetry and book prizes, a moderator/panel chair. She has written introductions and blurbs for many collections of poetry. She serves on the board of Split This Rock, a national poetry and social justice non-profit, and is an artist consultant for Harrisonburg’s Any Given Child program.

In her five years at James Madison University, Alleyne has brought national recognition to the university, tremendously and positively impacted her students, produced stellar scholarship, and contributed to the vitality of the campus and the wider literary communities to which she belongs.

Power, Possibility, Poetry: A Personal Statement

As a child, growing up in McBean Village, Couva—a speck within the speck of the island of Trinidad, itself the period at the end of the long Caribbean archipelagic sentence—I lived in books. My favorite reading always involved travel and adventures. Enid Blyton's *Faraway Tree* series was a favorite—at the bottom of the ordinary-seeming garden, there was a large tree, whose sprawling limbs bristled with creatures, and whose cloud-covered branches were portals to other exotic worlds. The children would clamber up and find themselves in a completely different place with strange landscapes and odd customs that inspired wonder, confusion, and adventure. I consumed books like these voraciously, traveling alongside those children to the places they had been, and so my reading convinced me that looking beyond the surface presentation of things—trees, to be sure, but also structures and ideas—was a pathway to revelation, a way to move beyond the limits of the known. Looking back, I see that it is here that the foundation of my practice was formed, and it is the first lesson I try to give my students: **Language is a means of discovery.**

The thing about *The Faraway Tree*, of course, is that the children come back changed, differently attuned to their “real” world, the givens of which are suddenly thrown into question, or at least are no longer taken for granted. Like all journeys, it broadens their perspective. In my classroom, language is the Faraway Tree, and so we read widely and deeply, clambering through the branches of poems. Sometimes I lead the way, walking them through lines and symbols, pointing out the footholds of metaphor and subtext. Other times, I coach from the ground, and they fumble upward, some frustrated at the climb, others exhilarated at the challenge, everyone working the muscles of their curiosity, vulnerability and creativity. I remind them that openness is a practice, that discovery cannot happen if we believe we already know what is ahead. I show them the twofold nature of writing, how language allows them to climb the Faraway Trees of their own internal landscapes to discover the hidden worlds of their imaginations and experiences; and then, having discovered those places, how language helps them to mark a path for their readers to find those places as well. And so, they write—exploratory freewrites, manifestos, joyful and dreaded memories, secrets, questions, monologues in the voices of others—allowing the words to take them beyond the surface givens of their ideas into the unknown. They linger there in drafts, making wrong turns, falling, finding unexpected treasures they bring back with them—the exact way to describe a lover's face or some precious memory the scrim of grief had hidden from view. And then they revise, honing the specificity of their images—Were the chairs lined up like soldiers or cheerleaders? Is the right word *walk* or *amble* or *saunter* or *stride*?—testing the weight of each branch until the poem emerges. Then, in workshop, they send their readers on the journey, poem in hand, only to learn that words alchemize differently in each reader, and so they may or may not take the same route or arrive at the same place, and that's okay, too.

Words, I tell them, shape their realities—we whisper to our loved ones with them, make vows and diagnoses and laws with them. Likewise, I say, they hold the possibility of shaping new realities. Language can unfix us from the familiar and the comfortable, can form pathways to new thinking, experiences, and lives: **words can change us**, I tell them, and for that reason **words can change the world**. It is both belief in and praxis of this power—their power—I aim to facilitate in my teaching. **Thus, language as a pathway to discovery and transformation is the root of my pedagogy.** My classroom is the garden where students are invited to explore the linguistic dimensions of their psychological and physical worlds fully and creatively through the play and hard work of wrestling with words. It is where they practice bravery, comfort with ambiguity, and the risk of pushing the boundaries of their thinking so they make room for new ideas to blossom. I help them challenge, discover, and refine their thoughts, find the best words to articulate them, and encourage them to levy their voices with strength, confidence, rigor, and beauty. By empowering them with an understanding of and engagement with language in this way, I seek to equip them for the lifelong work of self-discovery, empathetic engagement with others and transforming our trouble-ridden world. I am committed to inspiring them to “be(come) the change.”

In terms of my own practice, Rumi writes “Two there are who are never satisfied—the lover of the world and the lover of knowledge.” As someone who falls squarely into both categories, my scholarship emerges from both the drive to know fully (one possible definition of love) and the sense of incompleteness that necessarily accompanies that drive. For me, language both sates and feeds the hunger Rumi describes by providing a means through which I might know the world and unlock the knowledge archived in it. Interviews offer the opportunity to question, to know more wholly the experiences and inner lives of others; essays inspire reach and depth of thought, pushing me into previously undiscovered pathways of thought; and poetry, my primary vehicle, most firmly (and formally) inhabits the paradox. **It is through poetry that I seek to know the world as a human and spiritual construct, and seek to know (my)self as a participant in the making of as well as a product of the world.** Whether it is moving through the landscape of a memory and in so doing finding my childhood (or childish!) disappointment in my father transformed to empathy, or discovering the exact tenor of my grief at the death Sandra Bland, language is *The Faraway Tree* in the garden of my interior landscape to which I return to discover again and anew the world as it manifests in memory and history, to be transported beyond the limits of my own knowing, to be transformed by those journeys, to testify to what I find there, and return to share it with others.

Heaven?

—For Sandra Annette Bland

Where does a black girl go
when her body is emptied?
Of her? And her wild voice,
where does it sing its story
when the knots of history
make a grave of her throat?
What of her future, blue-
broken, unmade? Her name,
—say it!—Sandra, unhoused;
her dreams and memories
lost to their source. Where
does a black girl's love go
when her heart is snapped
shut like a cell door, the key
out of reach as any justice?
And what unimaginable
gift is lost when a black girl
is made a body, her light
dimmed into shadow, gone?
How many angels weep
when a black girl is torn
into wings?

—Lauren K. Alleyne

Father, Christmas

You brought us the tree—a real one,
packed the pine into a bucket of dirt,
lay newspapers to catch the needles,
turned the tree this way and that
until it bristled, showed its fullest side.
You hummed and kept one eye on
the news as we sang carols and argued
over the perfect placement of candy canes
and lights. You lifted us—too small, then
—to the top of the tree, the silver star
gleaming in our hands. Christmas
morning, you waved us to church,
and we returned to a feast-laden table:
the bread you slow-kneaded; the ham
steaming, pink; chow chow laced with heat.
How we devoured your love, hungry
as only children are, we who knew so little
of the price of such sweetness—the full belly,
the brightly wrapped boxes of expectation,
the laughter gurgling over the surface
of next month's bills, the prayers for grace—
we only ever wanted more.

—Lauren K. Alleyne

Mine is also a practice of connection. Salvatore Quasimodo writes that “Poetry is the revelation of a feeling that the poet believes to be interior and personal which the reader recognizes as his own.” **To me, the poem is an invitation to be together—to encounter each other in a spirit of good faith, openness and vulnerability.** In this way, the poem serves as a space in which we can practice meaningful engagement, where we can learn how to share honestly and how to listen deeply, where we can exercise trust and gentleness as we walk the winding roads of someone else's internal landscape. I experience the impact of my work when people come up to me after a reading, teary-eyed, or with stories of their own to share. After a reading at Virginia Military Institute, for example, a young cadet hung back to thank me for reading my poem “[Eighteen](#)” about sexual assault. The poem let her know she was not alone, that she could transform that experience. This is community-building in its most intimate manifestation: one soul reaching out, another reaching back, connecting.

Finally, my poetry engages in the movements for social justice. My writing emerges from the embodied and psychic space of a Black, cis-gendered, female, immigrant, and that intersectionality is inseparable from the language I produce. My work centers on Black life—its joy and grief and resilience. It documents Black interiority, an essential act in a society that

treats Black bodies as disposable flesh: I insist on our humanity, our worth. I write to activate empathy, to move my readers beyond the boundaries of ignorance and hate, to do my part to keep bending the moral arc of this world toward true justice.

Words have taken me around the world, and brought me to Furious Flower, James Madison University, and Harrisonburg, Virginia—places that to the girl in that tiny village at the heart of that small island, were as far away and magical as anything atop the branches of *The Faraway Tree*. I'm fortunate to find myself at an institution that values community, integrity, and diversity, and whose vision is to be “engaged with ideas and the world,” and where through the integration of my creative practice with my pedagogy and service, I participate daily in enacting this vision.

LAUREN K. ALLEYNE | www.laurenkalleyne.com | @poetLKA

James Madison University, Harrisonburg, VA | alleynlx@jmu.edu

Assistant Director, Furious Flower Poetry Center | Professor, Department of English

Affiliate Faculty, African, African American, and Diaspora Studies

EDUCATION

- MFA in Creative Writing (Poetry), Jan. 2006 | Graduate Certificate in Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies, Aug. 2005 | Cornell University, Ithaca, NY
- MA in English and Creative Writing, Dec. 2002 | Iowa State University, Ames, IA
- BA in English, (Magna Cum Laude, Honors), May 2001 | St Francis College, Brooklyn, NY

BOOKS & EDITED VOLUMES

- (Limited edition chapbook) (Un)Becoming Gretel, Kalamazoo Book Arts Center (forthcoming)
- Furious Flower: Seeding the Future of African American Poetry (with Joanne Gabbin), Northwestern University Press, 2020
- Honeyfish (Green Rose Prize), New Issues Press (U.S.) & Peepal Tree Press (UK), 2019
- Difficult Fruit, Peepal Tree Press, Leeds, UK, 2014
- (Chapbook) Dawn in the Kaatskills, Longshore Press, Pittsburgh, 2008
- Before the Hospital: Qatar and the Tradition of Healing (with Autumn Watts, et. al.), Qatar Foundation, 2008
- From the Heart of Brooklyn (with Terry Quinn & Erin Bogart), Vivisphere, Poughkeepsie, 2002

SELECT AWARDS, FELLOWSHIPS & RESIDENCIES

- Finalist, Library of Virginia Literary Award in Poetry | OCM Bocas Prize for Caribbean Literature | Best of the Net-Poetry | NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Poetry, 2020
- Winner, Green Rose Prize, New Issues Press, Western Michigan University, 2017
- Honoree, Philip Freund Prize for Excellence in Publishing (\$5000), Cornell University, 2017
- Finalist, *Poetry International* Poetry Prize, 2017
- Winner, Split This Rock Poetry Prize, 2016

SELECT GRANTS

- Amazon Foundation/Academy of American Poets (\$5,000), 2018, 2019, (\$7,500) 2021
- 4-VA (\$5,000 & \$6,000), 2017 & 2021
- Virginia Humanities (\$4,000, \$7,000, \$5,000), 2016, 2017 & 2021
- National Endowment for the Arts ArtWorks (\$10,000), 2020
- Poetry Foundation (\$12,000 & \$13,500), 2017 & 2019
- Provost Faculty Development Support Award (\$1,500), James Madison University, 2018
- Qatar Foundation Undergraduate Research Development Award (\$30,000), 2007

SELECT PUBLICATIONS (of 132 multi-genre publications):

- "Divination," Best American Poets 2021, Scribner (forthcoming, Sep. 2021)
- "Gretel's Note on Normal" *Shenandoah*, (forthcoming, Fall 2021)
- "Of Origins and Opportunity: *Refugitude* In Roxane Gay's *Ayiti*," Diaspora and Literature, Cambridge University Press, (forthcoming Jul. 2021)
- "Charlottesville, Virginia," *Poem-a-Day Virginia*, Apr. 2021
- Academy of American Poets, *Poets.org Poem-a-Day*, Feb. 2021, Aug. 2020, Apr. 2018
- Selected poems, Affect and Emotion in the Black Lives Matter Movement, SUNY, Feb. 2021
- Selected poems, Revisiting the Elegy in the Black Lives Matter Era, Routledge, Feb. 2020
- "Przycisk" [Play], *Magazyn Wizje* [Visions] (Poland), (trans. Dr. Bartosz Wójcik) Jan. 2020
- "Manager's Tips ..." selected by Rita Dove, *New York Times Magazine*, Mar. 2019

- “Martin Luther King Jr. Mourns Trayvon Martin,” *The Atlantic MLK Special Issue*, Feb. 2018
- “Anthem,” “Gretel Advises America,” *Ms. (Muse)*, Apr. 2018
- Selected Poems, *The Mighty Stream: Poems*, Bloodaxe Books (UK), Nov. 2017

SELECT INTRODUCTIONS & REVIEWS

- Book Review: *Everyone Knows I am a Haunting*, *Anthurium*, (forthcoming, 2021)
- Book Review: *In Nearby Bushes*, *sx salon* (forthcoming, 2021)
- Book Review: *Uses of My Body*, *The Project on the History of Black Writing Blog*, Apr. 2021
- “Introduction,” *A Mouthful of Home* by Tryphena Yeboah, Akashic Books, Jul. 2020
- “Introduction,” *Thank You for Dreaming* by Jeanine Pitas, Lummo Press, 2018
- “Introduction,” *The Walled Wife*, by Nicelle Davis, Red Hen Press 2016

SELECT FEATURES, REVIEWS & INTERVIEWS

- GirlTalk Leadership Summit Presenter, “A Seat at The Table” Apr. 2021
- “Celebrating the Rich History of Black Poetry,” WMRA/NPR, Nov. 2020
- Poet of the Month, National Library & Information Systems—Trinidad & Tobago, Nov. 2020
- “The Poet and the Poem: Lauren K. Alleyne,” Library of Congress, Jan. 2020
- “#NPR Poetry Month: Lauren K. Alleyne,” *All Things Considered*, Apr. 2019

SELECT PRESENTATIONS & READINGS (Of 139 national and international events)

- Poems for a New World Reading, Galway, Ireland, Jun. 2021
- Presenter: Association for the Study of African American Life & History (ASALH), Nov. 2020
- Library of Virginia finalist reading, Oct. 2020
- Speaker: Fairfield University Humanities Institute Hindsight Series, Oct. 2020
- Brooklyn Caribbean Literary Festival “Laureates of the Caribbean” reading, Sep. 2019, 2020
- Virginia Festival of the Book *Shelf Life* Reading, Aug. 2020
- Panelist: College Language Association Conference. Raleigh, NC, Apr. 2019
- Panelist: Associated Writers & Writing Programs Conference. Portland, OR, Mar. 2019
- Cave Canem New Works Reading Series, New York University, NY, Feb. 2020
- Presenter: Black Poetry Conference, Princeton, NJ, Feb. 2019
- Presenter: Poetry Night, Theatre Club Mbabane, eSwatini (Swaziland), Aug. 2018
- Panelist & Presenter: BOCAS Literary Festival, Port-of-Spain, Trinidad, Apr. 2014 & 2018
- Writing Workshops in Greece, Thasos, Greece, Jun. 2015 & 2016
- Martin-Luther-Universität, Halle-Wittenberg | Erfurt University, Erfurt | FLUX FM, Berlin | University of Leipzig, Leipzig | Germany, 2015
- Worlds Festival, Writers Centre, Norwich | Metropolitan Archives, London, England, 2015
- “The Language of Illness,” Literature and Medicine Literary Lecture, Doha, Qatar, 2007

SELECT ACTIVITIES, COMMITTEES & SERVICE

- Member, Board of Directors, Split This Rock, Washington DC, Jan. 2021
- Reader/Judge, Wellesley University Press (2019) | NPR All Things Considered National Poetry Month Listener contest (2019) | National Women’s Hall of Fame Inductions (2018)
- Founding Steering Committee Member, Africana Studies Workshop, JMU, Sep. 2017

SELECT PREVIOUS TEACHING EXPERIENCE

- Weill Cornell Medical College-Qatar, Doha, Qatar, 2006-7 (Writing Center Director)
- Hobart and William Smith Colleges, Geneva, NY, 2007-2010 (Visiting Assistant Professor)
- University of Dubuque, Dubuque, IA, 2010-2016 (Poet-in-Residence & Assistant Professor)
- University of Leipzig, Leipzig, Germany, Apr.-Jul. 2015 (Picador Professor of English)

LETTERS OF SUPPORT: Supervisors | Colleagues | Students | Literary Community

Professor Lauren Alleyne is a collaborative, creative and motivational leader and educator... As editor of *The Fight & the Fiddle*, she has published interviews with the top Black poets and rising stars... Lauren's poetry challenges preconceptions and plants seeds that stir the heart and the mind to strive for deeper understanding and harmony. Her boundless energy and contagious enthusiasm inspire both her students and colleagues.—**Dr. Marilou Johnson, Retired Vice Provost for Faculty and Curriculum; Emerita Professor**

Throughout her time at JMU, Ms. Alleyne has sparkled as a teacher, a poet of considerable achievement and promise, and a devoted citizen who puts her shoulder to the wheel of significant, though often unheralded, service. She is one of our finest. —**Dr. Robert Aguirre, Dean College of Arts and Letters**

When I recruited Lauren as the assistant director of the Furious Flower Poetry Center, I knew that I was attracting a brilliant and energetic colleague to JMU; however, I could not have imagined the extensive contribution that she would make to the operations of the center, the connections she would make with colleagues in our English department and literary departments around the country, her dedicated participation in major projects at the university, and the national recognition she would bring to JMU through her honors and awards.—**Dr. Joanne Gabbin, Executive Director, Furious Flower Poetry Center**

It is my pleasure to support your consideration of poet and professor Lauren K. Alleyne for the honor of the SCHEV Outstanding Faculty Award. She exemplifies what you most celebrate: critical scholarship, especially in the realm of Black poetry, and meaningful public service, particularly in several vibrant literary communities. As the assistant director of the Furious Flower Poetry Center at James Madison University, Lauren animates her role with social justice advocacy and activism, as well as a deep commitment to this art form, both as its champion and as a practitioner of it. In 2019, I selected her poem, "The Manager's Tips for Working at the San Francisco Restaurant and Bar," for publication in the *New York Times Magazine*—the lines are brisk and biting, tightly constructed and skillfully damning. And my 2020 foreword to the latest *Furious Flower* anthology, which Lauren edited with Joanne V. Gabbin, praised not only past work of the center where Lauren has become central, but also the important contributions of those who are committed to the growth and celebration and preservation and future of Black poetry. Lauren already plays a crucial role in these endeavors at her university, in her community, among her peer poets, and on the national scene, and I have no doubt that she will continue to make a serious and significant impact as a teacher, scholar and steward of Black poets and poetry.—**Rita Dove, UVA Henry Hoyns Professor of Creative Writing; Pulitzer Prize winner (1987); former National Poet Laureate**

Ms. Alleyne's scholarship and publishing are also very impressive and far-reaching. The recent publication of her second book of poems, *Honeyfish*, positions her solidly in a significant, transnational literary arena. Her scholarship and creativity places her frequently in performance and public speaking venues reaching large local, national, and international audiences. The breadth and depth of Ms. Alleyne's scholarship and creativity all bespeak her empathic intelligence and imagination, and the shimmering energy of her creative inquiry.—**English Department Personnel Action Committee (PAC)**

When I was planning a BA seminar session on contemporary Black writing this spring, I immediately knew that I wanted to include Lauren Alleyne's work. Alleyne had read to a German audience in 2015, when she was Picador Guest Professor for Literature, and I still have vivid

memories of her reading's profound, visceral effect. I was hoping for the same effect for my seminar, and this is exactly what happened: My students connected with her work far more than with most other readings this semester, and they were unusually eager to engage not only the content but also the language that had touched them so deeply. It was one of my best seminar discussions this semester. Alleyne is one of contemporary poetry's bright lights and she shines even across oceans and cultures.—**Dr. Sebastian Herrmann, Regensburg University, Bavaria**

Prof. Alleyne is an educator and mentor of the highest quality...she has been one of the most important influences in my academic and creative career to date. Prof. Alleyne is incredibly generous with her time and guidance, both inside and outside of the classroom...she gives extremely thoughtful notes on work, genuinely cares about the creative goals of her students, and generates an environment that encourages each member of the class to challenge themselves and one another. —**Evan Nicholls, JMU '20, author *Holy Smokes* (Ghost City Press, 2021)**

You're very knowledgeable about poetry and your writing is incredible. I really like when we're in class and you talk philosophically about poetry, reference personal experience, quote others, etc. It helped me understand everything better. **Student Eval. (Sp. 2018)**

This course was a great poetry elective. After completing Intro to Poetry, I decided to take the advanced class and it became one of my favorite courses taken at JMU—**Student Eval. (Sp. 2019)**

I am an MA student of Literature in Tunisia and I came across your poems in class. Your poetry and your pieces of writings talked to my very soul and heart. I noticed that you are a feminist, a revolutionist when it comes to the body, gender stereotypes, race, and the very definition of femininity and religion...You are a source of inspiration to me and to all the women out there in the world.—**Excerpt from unsolicited letter from Nouha Braïe**

Lauren Alleyne is an amazing poet. She has the ability to take difficult, painful subjects and write strong, beautiful poems that beg to be read and stay with you long after you have stopped reading. Lauren's work has reached hundreds, maybe thousands, of readers through *The Quarry*, a database of social justice poetry and has been selected multiple times as our "Poem of the Week," which reaches around 2,000 subscribers; those poems have been read, shared, and used as a writing prompt at workshops across the country. She was also the winner of the 2016 Split This Rock Poetry Contest, which averages around 300 submissions. Lauren has also been a wonderful colleague and volunteer at Split This Rock. She volunteered at the first festival in 2008 and has continued to contribute to our community for the last 13 years as a reader, curator, panelist, and co-sponsor of readings and events with Furious Flower. We were thrilled to welcome her as a member of the board of directors for Split This Rock, and appreciate her groundedness, ability to ask the tough questions, her commitment to equity, inclusion, and how she challenges the board to be our best selves.—**Susan Scheid, co-chair Split This Rock Board of Directors**

Lauren K. Alleyne is respected not only for her literary prowess, but also for her leadership in literature. She is a poet who knows how to listen and learn as she builds community, and she brings this knowledge into her poems. When I walk into a meeting and Lauren is present, I am assured that the highest standards of professionalism, artistic endeavor and humane behavior are also in attendance. I am thrilled to see Lauren in her role at Furious Flower, as she has stepped into a tradition that brings the best of us together in search of higher ground in our art and community. The world of poetry needs more like Ms. Alleyne. She represents integrity on a national and international level, and teaches accountability, respect, and soulfulness in all her endeavors. —**Tyehimba Jess, Pulitzer Prize Winner (2014); Distinguished Professor, College of Staten Island; Chair Cave Canem Board of Directors**