

Ella Stott Named Undergraduate Researcher and Creative Writing Student of the Year

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For Ella Stott, writing had never felt like a viable career path until attending USU. In fact, she switched to the major right before her first semester, after believing she would go into medicine.

“My senior year of high school, I earned my EMT certification,” Ella remembers, “but I hated learning the material. I was a finalist for the state’s English Sterling Scholar at the time, which I’d applied to on a whim because I liked my AP Language and Composition course. I thought, ‘What have I always actually loved to do if not medicine?’ And the answer was writing.”

Right after arriving on campus, Ella quickly became involved in research as an Undergraduate Research Fellow, starting two research projects her freshman year, including one focusing on archival research.

“I loved working with a team on archival research, but my favorite part of my time here was learning about writing as a form of research,” she says. “It wasn’t something I thought I could do before coming to USU, and now, it’s all I want to do.”

As a 2024 URCO grant recipient, 2025 Peak Fellow, the awardee of the 2026 Peak Prize: Undergraduate Researcher of the Year Robins Award for the university, and a 2026 recipient of the Joyce Kinkead Outstanding Honors Capstone Award, Ella plans to continue researching as a current MFA student in creative nonfiction at George Mason University.

For Ella, studying at USU provided unwavering support in her goals. “The English Department is truly amazing. I haven’t met a professor that hasn’t been dedicated to their students and supporting them however they can,” she comments. “My mentor Jennifer Sinor has supported me, pushed me, encouraged me, and helped me grow into the writer and human I want to be. That’s the magic of studying here.”

Between publications, conference presentations, and late nights preparing comments for workshops, Ella found a message to share with English students: “Take advantage of everything. USU — and the English Department especially — has so many opportunities to give you an extra push or a new learning experience. Listen to yourself and take breaks when you need, but don’t be afraid to do something beyond the scope of the classroom. There are so many people here in your corner.”