One Book, One DU

Transformative Direction 4: One DU

In 2016, DU launched a common reading program—DU IMPACT 2025’s One Book, One DU. The idea emerged from the Engaging Community stage of the Strategic Planning Process. During the chancellor’s listening tour, students expressed a desire for more shared intellectual experiences and more opportunities for engagement. One Book, One DU combines two High-Impact Educational Practices—First-Year Seminars and Common Intellectual Experiences—to foster community building, critical thinking, and self-awareness.

High-Impact Practices:
• Facilitate learning outside of the classroom,
• Encourage collaboration with diverse others, &
• Foster meaningful interactions between faculty and students.

Over the summer, incoming students receive a free copy of our One Book selection—a customized edition that includes a welcome letter from Chancellor Chopp. The book becomes a focal point of Discoveries Week through FSEM Dialogues Sessions and the All-Campus Lectures series. Undergraduate Academic Programs host One Book programming throughout the year, such as this year’s campus visit by our One Book author, Molly Birnbbaum.

Paired with the One Book selection is a shared storytelling experience. Incoming students are invited to respond to our One Prompt, inspired by the One Book selection. Other institutions with common reading programs will occasionally include a writing activity—typically an analytical essay contest. What makes One Book, One DU unique is we invite students to share stories and actively join rich conversations on campus.

“Through the shared intellectual experience of reading and responding to a shared text, DU IMPACT 2025’s One Book, One DU program seeks to provide space for our community to:
• reflect upon our backgrounds and how these influence our personal values and beliefs,
• explore our personal and social identities,
• wrestle with the challenges and rewards of building a truly diverse and inclusive community, and
• consider how to respect and celebrate members of our community with vastly different life experiences and perspectives.”

2016–2017
Thomas King’s The Truth About Stories: A Native Narrative
One Prompt: Tell the story of a time you encountered (and were changed by) something unfamiliar.

2017–2018
JD Vance’s Hillbilly Elegy: A Memoir of a Family and Culture in Crisis
One Prompt: Think of a person whose story has left some impression upon you. Tell their story.

2018–2019
Molly Birnbbaum’s Season to Taste: How I Lost My Sense of Smell and Found My Way
One Prompt: Consider something you take for granted and what it might mean to lose it. Alternatively, what is something you’ve already lost and what has that loss meant to you?

Funded by: Undergraduate Academic Programs

One Book Programming includes:
All-Campus Lectures, Faculty Round Tables, & Author Visits

One Prompt Programming includes:

Encountering Stories
A celebration and showcase of first-year students’ responses to the One Prompt. The event contains both a gallery of select responses displayed as designed broadsides and performances from five invited authors.

The third annual Encountering Stories was held on Tuesday October 23rd and included performances from:
- Esther Chung, “Memory” (graphic narrative)
- Kyah Conrad, “Hand” (musical performance)
- Kiana Marsan, “A Letter to the First Death I’ve Ever Known” (prose)
- Connor Rodenbeck, “ENGRAVED // CAGED” (poetry)
- Lizzie Stacks, “Hair” (prose)

Many Voices, One DU
An anthology collecting responses to the One Prompt from DU undergraduate students, graduate students, alumni, staff, and faculty.

The second volume of Many Voices, One DU was published in May 2018 and celebrated with a book launch and exhibit in the Renaissance Room.

To see previous volumes, please visit:
https://issuu.com/du_writing_program/docs/mv2017
https://issuu.com/du_writing_program/docs/mv2018

We are now accepting submissions from all members of our community for the third volume (expected Spring 2019). Submissions deadline is December 1st.