

Creative Writing Program Review – FY13

College/School	COAH	Year			2012-2013
Department	English and Philosophy				
Academic Program	Creative Writing Minor				
Program Level	Undergraduate				
Students (From IRP)	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10	2010-2011	2011-2012
Graduates Last Five Years *Minor Stated in 2003	5	11	12	20	28
Majors Last Five Years	25	62	98	111	108
Pre-majors Last Five Years	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
<p>1) Learning Outcomes: In the boxes below, please provide the following information: A) academic program learning outcomes B) a data summary of student performance related to the learning outcomes for this program; (include a link to data tables from which this summary was created, if applicable); C) a summary of the curriculum, pedagogical, and assessment modifications that resulted from this performance data and 4) a discussion of future assessment plans.</p>					
A) Program Learning Outcomes					
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Students will closely examine the processes by which creative writers produce literary artifacts in a wide range of cultures and historical circumstances. 2. Students will demonstrate familiarity with a representative selection of creative-writing strategies. 3. Students will apply critical understanding of theories of creativity and imaginative writing. 4. Students will understand defining characteristics of one or more of the genres of creative writing: poetry, fiction, screen- and playwriting, and creative nonfiction. 					
B) Data Summary					

1.

Level	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
4	8 of 18	44%
3	5 of 18	28%
2	5 of 18	28%
1	0 of 18	0%

2.

Level	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
4	7 of 18	39%
3	5 of 18	28%
2	5 of 18	28%
1	1 of 18	.6%

3.

Level	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
4	5 of 18	28%
3	7 of 18	39%
2	5 of 18	28%
1	1 of 18	.6%

4.

Level	Number of Students	Percentage of Students
4	11 of 18	61%
3	5 of 18	28%
2	2 of 18	1%
1	0 of 18	0%

C) Summary of modifications based on the data

Based on the fact that learning outcome number 4 was the only one in which more than 50% of students earned the highest assessable mark, we hope to emphasize the first three learning outcomes, striving to raise the percentage of those earning the highest mark. Our goal is to make the minor more writing centered, by modifying the number of workshops from two to four for completion of the requirements.

D) Future Assessment Plans

We intend as a program to revise the minor to strive for greater assessment continuity. We have worked toward parity across the board in classes at the 2000-level. In 2060 and XIDS 2100, our classes and syllabuses are driven by foundational needs—establishing the basics of strong creative writing. Across sections, we keep the assessment of students similar throughout the assignments, including journaling requirements, testing, writing calisthenics, and workshop participation. We hope to create more alignment, assignment to assignment at the 3000- and 4000-levels. This promises to better fulfill all four of our key learning outcomes from start to finish in the minor.

2) Program History and Context: In the box below, please write a brief (since the last CPR) history of this program at UWG (including current strengths and weaknesses)

Now in its seventh year, the creative-writing minor continues to thrive, having increased the number of declared minors from 34 at the end of the first year to 95 at last count. It is one of the biggest (if not the biggest) minor on campus. Per its mission statement, the creative-writing minor seeks “to usher students into the practice and craft of imaginative writing” and accomplishes this by offering a “wide range of genres—from poetry and fiction to creative-nonfiction and play- and screenwriting,” while undergirding creative processes with critical awareness of how creative writing shapes (and is shaped by) larger cultural realities. Because the majority of required coursework involves a deep commitment to workshop—where students learn how to offer effective criticism of and commentary on each other’s writing—the creative-writing minor also allows students practice with their oral communication skills in academically rigorous environments, and encourages them to appreciate the difficulties of literary production. While our program offers exceptional training to students who aspire to graduate work in writing, the minor also aids students interested in honing their language skills, both written and spoken, and prepares them well for a host of careers in which language plays an integral role. In this way, the minor is key to the University’s larger Core goals, strategic plan, and graduation success rates.

3) Program Planning: Please write a brief narrative on the future plans for this academic program, including how these plans support the UWG strategic plan.

Over the years, the creative-writing program has built a robust reading series (underwritten by and provided for the students of the minor) that has now expanded to include former alumni of the program—several of whom have gone on to graduate writing programs, teaching jobs in the field, and national publication. We hope to diversify the reading series, bringing in more minority poets, fiction writers, and authors of creative nonfiction. This Spring 2013 semester, for example, we have invited African-American poets Opal Moore and Jeff Peterson to campus—a vital initiative given that almost half of the students in our classes are non-Caucasian.

Generally, the program has enhanced the cultural experience for students at UWG (a direct connection to the strategic plan), and made strong community contacts such as those with the Carrollton Creative Writers Club and Underground Books on the Square. The Writer’s Club started to sponsor creative awards for students last year, and through continued dialogue, has now committed \$1,150 worth of prizes this year (an increase of 75%). We hope to continue to develop this kind of support, reaching out to other potential sponsors.

We also foresee the possibility of sending our successful undergraduates to give workshops at retirement homes, community centers, and church organizations. Such involvement would only strengthen bonds between the community and the university. Recently, we have seen more and more senior citizens auditing our classes and attending readings, and we hope to enhance this exchange, as well. In addition, we intend to expand our successful books-to-students program, and bring more writers to campus (budget permitting) to offer one-day master classes to advanced students.

From our introductory 2060 and XIDS classes, all the way up to 4210, our program connects with university writing expectations, and helps students from a wide range of majors with their academic development and well-roundness. We hope to send increased numbers of students into professions that demand strong backgrounds in writing. We also hope to increase options for varied methods of instruction, including the use of technology in creative-writing classes.

4) Strategic and Financial Outcomes from the Previous Review: Please summarize any changes to the budget and staffing in this program since the last comprehensive program review

This is the first program review of the minor. Our budget derives primarily from course fees (\$15 per student), with some supplementation by the English Department. Our faculty is comprised of four tenured writers, along with publishing lecturers who hold terminal degrees in our field.

5) Program Quality: Please evaluate the overall quality of this academic program.

In good health, the minor continues to be one of the most influential cultural forces on campus; students and faculty attend, in increasingly numbers, our readings each semester; we continue to have students interested in graduate work in creative writing, both at West Georgia and elsewhere; and we seem to be attracting more students from the metro-Atlanta area. In 2005, the campus literary magazine, *Eclectic*, won the “Best Content Award” from the Associated Writing Programs, the biggest creative-writing organization in the nation. This is clearly a sign of the strength of our program.

Our students have gone on to prestigious graduate writing programs at the Iowa Writer’s Workshop, the University of Florida, Purdue University, and George Mason University, to name a few. Former student Nick McRae (who recently published his first book of poems on C&R Press) is now earning an M.F.A.—fully funded—at the Ohio State University. This after being granted Fulbright Scholarship to Slovakia. In addition, students have published their own work in a range of national literary venues. With continued university support, we are confident that our student successes will continue to grow.

6) Program Viability: Please discuss the long term viability of this program

Enrollment in the minor is strong. What's more, the program's overall health has positively affected the number of serious writers entering our graduate program. (Many of our brightest writers transfer directly into our graduate classes after finished their degrees.) We hope for this symbiotic relationship—one between our young undergraduates and our seasoned graduates—to remain healthy. In terms of long-term diversity, we have also submitted a proposal for a minority postdoctoral candidate; with roughly half of our minors coming from minorities, we must address diversity seriously in the coming years. In terms of curriculum, we have recently added our own screenwriting class with a trained practitioner in the English department (a class that was previously taught by a member of the Theater program). Finally, our sponsored reading series continues to bring in writers of national renown, and attendees even from outside the university. Such initiatives keep our program visible and attractive to an ever-increasing student body.

7) Program Productivity: Please discuss the productivity of this program in terms of both faculty and students.

The following is a list pertinent faculty publications that reveal the professional strength of our program overall:

Dr. Katie Chapple	<i>Pretty Little Rooms</i> , poems (Press 53, 2011)
Dr. Chad Davidson	<i>From the Far Hills</i> , poems ((Southern Illinois University Press, 2013) <i>The Last Predicta</i> , poems (Southern Illinois University Press, 2009) <i>Consolation Miracle</i> , poems (Southern Illinois University Press, 2003)
Dr. Gregory Fraser	<i>Designed for Flight</i> , poems (Northwestern University Press, 2013-4) <i>Answering the Ruins</i> , poems (Northwestern University Press, 2009) <i>Strange Pietà</i> , poems (Texas Tech University Press, 2003)
Dr. Emily Hipchen	<i>Coming Apart Together</i> , memoir (Literate Chigger Press, 2005)
Dr. Melanie Jordan	<i>Ghost Season</i> , poems (Rope Walk Press, 2009)
Dr. Margaret Mitchell	Fiction in <i>New Ohio Review</i> , <i>American Literary Review</i> , <i>Green Mountains Review</i> , and other journals
Dr. Alison Umminger	<i>Flyover States</i> , novel (Red Dress Ink, 2005) <i>Eye to Eye</i> , novel (Red Dress Ink, 2008)

With regard to student productivity:

West Georgia students have gained acceptance at major graduate programs including . . .

Jeffrey Engelson, Georgia State University
Katy Gunn, University of Alabama
Nick McRae, Ohio State University
Jennifer Mehan, University of Miami
Jeffrey Peterson, Sarah Lawrence College
Matt Sherling, San Francisco State University
Eric Smith, Northern Michigan University and University of Florida
Jen Mehan, University of Miami
Trista Edwards, University of North Texas

West Georgia students have gone on to publish in national literary magazines including . . .

<i>American Literary Review</i>	<i>Birmingham Poetry Review</i>
<i>Cream City Review</i>	<i>Five Points</i>
<i>Green Mountains Review</i>	<i>Greensboro Review</i>
<i>Hayden's Ferry Review</i>	<i>Iron Horse Literary Review</i>
<i>The Journal</i>	<i>Linebreak</i>
<i>Passages North</i>	<i>Pleiades</i>
<i>Smartish Pace</i>	<i>The Southern Review</i>
<i>Tampa Review</i>	<i>32 Poems</i>

UWG students have received scholarships to prestigious summer seminars including . . .

Bucknell Summer Seminars (Bucknell University in Lewisburg, PA)
Sewanee Writers Conference (University of the South in Sewanee, Tennessee)
Summer Seminar for Writers (Sarah Lawrence College in Bronxville, NY)
New York State Summer Writers Institute (Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, NY)
Antioch Writers Workshop (Antioch College in Yellow Springs, OH)
Juniper Summer Writing Institute (University of Massachusetts in Waltham, MA)

Evaluation of this Comprehensive Program Review

1) Administrative Review by the College/School Dean: Analysis and evaluative response regarding the quality, viability, and productivity of the program. Also evaluate the quality and depth of the evidence the program has provided to support its case. Finally, discuss your plans to incorporate this review into the unit's strategic and financial plans.

Creative Writing is the most viable and productive minor independent of a major in the College of Arts and Humanities, probably in the University. It has more students enrolled and annually more graduates than a number of majors. Its high quality is well demonstrated in this report, highlighting the impressive achievements of its faculty and, more to the point, the productivity of the students in the program (they gain entrance to prestigious graduate programs, gain entrance to some of the better known workshops in the country, and publish in first-rate magazines). The program is a major contributor to the vibrancy of campus life—having been instrumental in bringing such writers as the Pulitzer Prize-winning poet Yusef Komunyakaa and U.S. Poet Laureate Natasha Trethewey (another Pulitzer winner) to our campus for transformative events in the lives of our students. The program led the way in transforming our literary and art magazine, *Eclectic*, into an annual publication with a national reputation as one of the best magazines of its kind in the country. Yet the faculty continue to assess the results of the program thoughtfully, and the report outlines some clear plans for improvement. Finally, the report highlights how not only aspiring writers but students with a variety of career plans benefit from this program.

The program supports itself largely through student fees, and the faculty are to be congratulated for excellent community outreach that has garnered both good will and additional funding. Recognizing the costs of the quality events it sponsors, however, this office will work through the upcoming budget development process to identify at least a modest sum to invest in the program.

2) Faculty Review (UAPC or COGS): Analysis and evaluative response regarding the quality, viability, and productivity of the academic program, and the quality and depth of the evidence the program has provided to support its case. Include recommendations for the future of the program.

Program Quality

The program review indicates one of high quality, in terms of student and faculty publications and student placement in graduate programs. Some clarification on the nature of assessments used might be helpful. The data in the review did not indicate the nature of the assignments or how they related to the program outcomes. The program is actively modified according to assessment feedback.

Program Viability

The program is clearly very viable, as indicated by the large number of graduates for a program that is only considered a minor.

Program Productivity

The review indicates that the program has been productive on a variety of levels. In addition to those mentioned in the comments under "program quality," it has been successful in community outreach and establishing contacts with nationally-recognized authors.

Depth of Evidence

Evidence of publications and graduate placements is detailed. As mentioned above, the explanation of assessment activities might benefit from some elaboration.

3) Response to the Faculty and Administrative Review by the Provost's Office

This program review provides clear evidence of the viability, productivity and quality of this program. It is a strong compliment to many majors across campus. Faculty members are to be commended for their work. This program will continue on its normal review cycle.

Jon Anderson
Deputy Provost

Please attach to this report the annual student learning assessment reports since the last Comprehensive Program Review.