Annual Academic Assessment Report Cover Sheet
Assessment reports are due the 1st Wednesday after the Fall Term

Program Information:

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<th>Program Assessed</th>
<th>Creative Writing, M.F.A. &amp; Ph.D.</th>
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<td>Department</td>
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<td>Department Chair</td>
<td>Dr. Gary Totten</td>
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<td>Date Submitted</td>
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Contact Person for This Report

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Please attach a narrative (not to exceed 4 pages, excluding appendices) addressing the following:

- What are the student learning outcomes? Please provide a numbered list.
- Which learning outcomes were assessed?
- How were they assessed? (Programs must use at least one direct assessment of student learning.)
- Undergraduate programs should assess at least one University Undergraduate Learning Outcome (UULO) each year, which may or may not overlap with a program learning outcome.
- Graduate programs should assess at least one outcome related to one of the following graduate level requirements each year:
  - student engagement in research, scholarship, creative expression and/or appropriate high-level professional practice.
  - activities requiring originality, critical analysis and expertise.
  - the development of extensive knowledge in the field under study.
- What was learned from the assessment results?
- How did the program respond to what was learned?

Please limit the narrative portion of your report to no more than four pages. You may attach appendices with data, tables, charts, or other materials as needed. Please explain the relevant conclusions from any appendices in your narrative. Please contact the Office of Academic Assessment if you have questions or need assistance.
MASTER OF FINE ARTS – CREATIVE WRITING

Description and Rationale:

The 2017-18 academic year marks the 21st anniversary since its founding of the Creative Writing International program at UNLV. The Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing offers an emphasis in either Fiction or Poetry, and in a new concentration in Literary Nonfiction for the 2018 admission year – a major growth of the program (cohorts at 10 per year will now grow to 15 per year, Graduate Assistantship resources permitting). The M.F.A. is a three-year studio arts degree which requires the completion of 54 credits of Creative Writing workshops, Forms courses (literature that emphasizes the craft of a particular genre), Literature courses with the Department of English, the completion of the ENG 791 College Teaching in Language and Literature teacher preparation course, plus Independent Study in the M.F.A. Thesis, Literary Translation, and the completion of six credits of International Focus study abroad in a non-English speaking country. All M.F.A. students, while working primarily within their own genres, are required to take at least one Forms and one Workshop course in a genre other than the one of their primary concentration. The M.F.A. at UNLV is distinguished for its international focus, and for requiring students to work intensively in British, American and World Literatures, and for encouraging students to view themselves as public intellectuals and their art in a global context. The M.F.A. in Creative Writing at UNLV is a unique degree for these reasons.

Learning Outcomes:

- Through taking 54 credits of Creative Writing Workshops, Forms courses, Literature courses, and Independent Study in Literary Translation, International Focus (study abroad) and the M.F.A. Thesis, students will acquire the creative and critical foundations on which to build toward excellence in their writing.
- By reading and writing in a genre other than the one of their primary focus, students will develop an appreciation of and versatility with writing in different forms, and of the contexts through which new literature and art is written.
- Through close reading and literary translation from a language other than English, students will expand their worldviews, expand their comprehension of what language can do, and will learn to see their art in a global context.
- Upon completion of the program, students will have written a book-length manuscript of original work with the intention to publish and deemed “of publishable quality” in the opinion of the faculty.

Assessment of Learning Outcomes:

- Assessment measures are subjective as reported by the Creative Writing faculty; as self-reported by students; and are quantitatively measured by periodic surveys of student cohorts both enrolled in the program and post-graduation. Program assessments are designed to measure creative and critical expression through the three-year program of studies; and to assess by reported learning outcomes post-degree, including placement in the workforce or in the profession.
• Students take 30 hours of in-class coursework and are assessed individually by their instructors through portfolio, exams, and critical essays, as well as digital presentations.

• Students take 24 credit hours independently, working with advisors who individually assess translation projects, the international focus experience, and the M.F.A. thesis.

• Current and past surveys (since 2014) show that approximately 50% of M.F.A. students contribute to national arts and letters communities at conferences and/or meetings of the Associated Writing Programs (AWP), American Literary Translators Association (ALTA), the Far West Popular Culture Conference, and at regional meetings of the Modern Language Association (MLA). Also: all M.F.A. students present or read their work in public forums to develop skills as public intellectuals, and contribute to Community Engagement projects in Las Vegas.

• Over the past 3 years (2015-2018), the M.F.A. program has enrolled 34 M.F.A. students. Of the 10 who graduated in 2017, 9 earned their M.F.A. degrees: completion rate = 90%. This fits with the general 90% completion rate in the 21 years since the founding of the Creative Writing International program. Still: the class of 2018 represents an anomaly, with an unprecedented 2 withdrawals and 1 expulsion: 1 before commencing classes due to family reasons; 1 returning student who chose a professional position; and 1 who is leaving after failing two classes and not meeting the Graduate Assistantship responsibilities.

• Over the past 3 years (2015-2018), 90% of M.F.A. students report active new publications, most in smaller literary magazines or online journals; current students in the 2nd and 3rd year cohorts (20 students) report 22 new publications since enrollment, including in such prestigious venues as Glimmer Train, Barrelhouse, and Fence magazines. Recent post-M.F.A. students (within three years of graduation) report publications in such prestigious venues as: The Guardian, McSweeney’s, and The Rumpus. This has been a stellar year for our M.F.A. students winning national awards for their work (all writing developed in workshops at UNLV): 1 M.F.A. graduate’s work selected for the P.E.N. America Best Debut Short Stories 2018; 1 M.F.A. graduate’s work winning a 2018 Pushcart Prize Anthology award and the same writer short-listed for the London-based Caine Prize for Best Writer from Africa; and 1 currently enrolled M.F.A. student won the Summer Literary Seminars first prize for fiction. Also: the cohort of 34 students for the past 3 years report the publication of 5 new literary translations in magazines, in addition to original work in their genres.

• In fall, 2018, the Creative Writing International program attempted a comprehensive survey of all M.F.A. graduates since 2001. This survey yielded incomplete results, because: we could only reach 64 active e-mails of nearly 200 graduates, and of those, only 21 replied (32.8%), which is not statistically significant. However, 20 of the 21 respondents were within 7 years of graduation (only 1 was 10 years since graduation). Of these: 75% are fiction writers; and
25% are poets. **18 of 21** report they are still active writers, or 95%, with 95% also actively publishing (71% with 5 or more publications since graduation; 33% with 10 or more publications since graduation). 33% report a book manuscript currently in submission, and 41% readying a manuscript for submission. 2 M.F.A. graduates in this group have 1 book published; and 1 has 2 books published. Fewer than 10% pursued graduate study after the M.F.A. degree. Workforce data shows: **9 of 21 are teaching**, 2 at the K-12 level, the rest at the college level, with 2 working in administration; **6 are working in literary publishing or at literature-related non-profit organizations**; 1 in government; and 3 (or 12%) are currently unemployed. Though again, the results are not statistically significant, of the respondents, we believe we can state with confidence that 85% have benefitted professionally from earning the M.F.A. degree; and 18 of 20 report the skills learned for the M.F.A. are useful to their professional lives, 9 strongly so, with only 2 reporting little use for the skills learned. Still, **20 of 21 report that earning the M.F.A. degree has improved their quality of life**.

Note: our program and staff will work through 2018-19 to gather more active e-mails of our graduates and run this survey such that responses are enough to show statistical significance.

Also: **our program is currently evaluating responses that suggest program improvements**, which include: improved mentoring for Graduate Assistant teaching; ways to make the first semester less overwhelming (better program orientation); finding ways to increase diversity in the cohorts (already a major effort, with much improved results for the two recent admissions classes); improved mentoring for literary publishing; and increasing faculty (also already accomplished with the new Literary Nonfiction concentration). And: better follow up communications from the program to its graduates.

About application numbers: applications had been dropping off since 2015-16 (131) to an unacceptable 82 in 2017-18. We addressed this drop off with some advertising and promotion, partly of the new Literary Nonfiction concentration, plus other outreach (social media and direct mail). The 2018-19 applications then increased to 196, and we believe based on inquiries and started applications that 2019-20 will result in comparable increases in our numbers of applications.

**NOTE:** The M.F.A. program at UNLV has been consistently ranked among the top 20-30 (of 370 +) in the country = in the top 10%. On average, the number of students admitted compared to number of applications is 7%-10% (depending on the year). The M.F.A. program continues to attract and enroll among the most talented developing writers nationally and internationally for studies at UNLV.
Ph.D. IN ENGLISH - WITH CREATIVE DISSERTATION

Description and Rationale:

The Ph.D. in English with Creative Dissertation and Black Mountain Institute Fellowship program is a three-year Ph.D. degree in the Department of English, requiring 48 credit hours of advanced studies in British, American, and World Literatures. The program of studies is designed to build on the foundations of general literary knowledge earned by the previous M.F.A. or M.A. degree, and for students to continue to develop their critical and creative writing skills in major field areas, including: historical periods, genres, major figures, and special topics. Ph.D. students also must show competence in a foreign language. A qualifying examination is taken during the third year, after the student has completed all course studies and the foreign language competency; and in the third year, while working closely with the dissertation advisor, the Ph.D. student completes writing a creative dissertation, which should be a book-length manuscript of poems, short stories, literary nonfiction (a new concentration) or a novel, with intentions for eventual publication. The Ph.D. with Creative Dissertation Black Mountain Institute fellows program intends to prepare graduates for full-time, tenure track faculty positions at universities, colleges, or community colleges, and for professional writing careers.

Learning Outcomes:

- The 48 credit hours of studies, mainly in Literature classes offered by the Department of English, builds upon foundations brought to the Ph.D. program by previous studies by educating the student to develop expertise in a chosen field.
- Students concentrate on a chosen historical period, a genre, and a major author (or authors) in the first half of the Ph.D. experience. Their professors, through examinations, critical essays, and oral or digital presentations, assess and measure progress subjectively and individually.
- Students demonstrate competence sufficient for research in one foreign language, through either taking course work offered by the Department of World Languages and Cultures or by examination offered by the English Department.
- After course work and the foreign language requirement have been completed, students take a 12 hour, three-day qualifying examination to demonstrate detailed knowledge of: a.) an historical period; b.) a genre; and c.) a major author or group of authors; an examination of the student’s own writing in the context of or in relationship to other writers; and/or a special topic approved by the student’s Ph.D. committee.
- Once the qualifying examination is completed successfully, students finish writing and perfecting the Creative Dissertation, which should be a book-length manuscript of poems, short stories, or a novel, intended for publication, and which is judged to be “of publishable quality” by the student’s Ph.D. committee.
Assessment of Learning Outcomes of the Ph.D. with Creative Dissertation

Program assessment of the learning outcomes for the Ph.D. with Creative Dissertation measure student success by reporting of successful employment in teaching at the university, college, or community college level; or by the graduate's use of the Ph.D. education and credentials to find employment in related fields, such as in literary publishing, or work with nonprofit organizations; and by their successful records of paid publication as professional writers.

Note: data is as yet incomplete for publication records; a current survey of all Ph.D. with Creative Dissertation graduates is in process for 2019; publications reported, along with employment status, does not show all, or specifically, as will be further specified by survey results. Since the Ph.D. with Creative Dissertation program founding, in 2001, we have admitted 30 students, of which 7 are currently enrolled and on track to complete their degrees; 1 student withdrew and did not complete the degree. Self-reports from the remaining 22 Ph.D. post-graduates shows:

(in alphabetical order)

2. Erica Anzalone, Ph.D. 2012: Lecturer, Emerson College, Boston; multiple publications in literary magazines and journals.
3. Christopher Arigo, Ph.D. 2006: Associate Professor, Idaho State University; two book publications; multiple publications in literary magazines and journals.
4. David Armstrong, Ph.D. 2014: Assistant Professor, University of the Incarnate Word, (Texas); four book publications; numerous publications in literary magazines and journals, and at least three independent press awards.
5. Mark Baumgartner, Ph.D., 2012: Associate Professor, East Tennessee State University; multiple magazine and journal publications; also fiction editor of The American Review.
6. Aurora Brackett, Ph.D., 2016: Free-lance writer and part-time instructor at various schools in Nevada; multiple magazine and journal publications; and a Glimmer Train prize and featured publication.
7. Maile Chapman, Ph.D., 2010: Assistant Professor, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; one book publication and multiple magazine and journal publications; editor of “Witness”; short-listed for first novel prize from The Guardian.
8. Katherine Lien Charriott, Ph.D., 2006: Assistant Professor, College of Charleston, editor for Crazyhorse; multiple magazine and journal publications.
9. Olivia Clare, Ph.D. 2017: Assistant Professor, Sam Houston University; two book publications and a third book under contract; multiple magazine and journal publications: a Rona Jaffe Award; and an O’Henry Award.
11. Constance Ford, Ph.D. 2004: Adjunct Faculty, College of Southern Nevada; multiple magazine and journal publications.
12. Colby Gillette, Ph.D. 2014: Lecturer, UNLV; multiple magazine and journal publications.
13. Joshua Kryah, Ph.D., 2005: Assistant Professor, University of Missouri; two book publications; multiple magazine and journal publications.
15. Alissa Nutting, Ph.D., 2009: Adjunct Faculty, Goddard College; three book publications; multiple magazine and journal publications.
17. Derek Pollard, Ph.D., 2015: Lecturer, UNLV; multiple magazine and journal publications.
18. Matthew Shears, Ph.D., 2004: Lecturer, California College of the Arts; one book publication; multiple magazine and journal publications.
19. Vu Tran, Ph.D., 2006: Professor of Practice, University of Chicago; one book publication, and a second book under contract; multiple magazine and journal publications; a Best Short Stories Award; a Whiting Award; and an NEA Literary Fellowship award.
22. Heather Winterer, Ph.D. 2007: Associate Professor, New Mexico State University; two book publications; multiple magazine and journal publications.

We assess that 12 of the 22 have secured full-time faculty positions; 2 are working in related fields; and an additional 4 are using their Ph.D. degrees to secure Part-Time teaching; another 4 are free-lance writers and/or editors.

The Ph.D. with Creative Dissertation program shows a 96% completion rate.

The Ph.D. with Creative Dissertation program shows a 54% placement rate for full-time tenure track (or equivalent) faculty positions in the related field.

Of the remaining 46% (taken as a single aggregate), our graduates show a 75% placement rate in part-time teaching and/or related fields; and a 25% placement rate as free-lance professional writers and/or editors.

OR: of our total Ph.D. graduates, 54% have earned full-time faculty positions; 18% find employment in part-time teaching; 10% find employment in related fields; and 18% work as free-lance professional writers or in other employment.