



The University of Georgia

Graduate School

August 30, 2004

Dr. Arnett Mace
Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost
Administration Bldg.
Campus

Dear Dr. Mace:

At the Graduate Council meeting on August 25, 2004, a proposal to offer a MFA in Creative Writing was approved. Enclosed is a hard copy of the document and it may also be viewed at:

http://www.gradsch.uga.edu/For_Faculty/mfa_proposal.pdf

I am pleased to forward this request to you with my endorsement. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

Maureen Grasso
Dean

MG:lcj

Enclosure

c: Dr. Garnett Stokes
Dr. Nelson Hilton
Dr. Terry Hummer
Ms. Fiona Liken ✓

**The University System of Georgia New Program Proposal:
Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing**

Institution: The University of Georgia, Athens

Date: December 2003

School/Division: The Franklin College of Arts and Sciences

Department: English

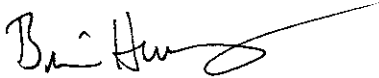
Name of Proposed Program: Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (MFA)

Degree: MFA

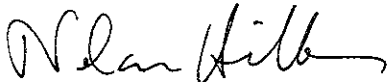
CIP Code:

Starting Date: Fall Semester 2004

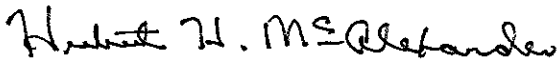
Respectfully submitted to the Board of Regents by the Program Committee on the MFA,



Brian Henry, *Director of Creative Writing and Associate Professor of English*




Nelson Hilton, *Professor of English and Head of the Department of English*



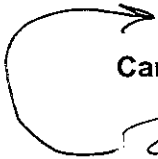
Hubert McAlexander, *Professor of English*



Michelle Ballif, *Associate Professor of English*



Stanley Longman, *Professor of Drama and Chair, Department of Drama*



Carmon Colangelo, *Professor of Art and Director of the Lamar Dodd School of Art*



Wyatt Anderson, *Dean of Franklin College of Arts and Sciences*

Maureen Grasso, *Dean of the Graduate School*



1. Program Abstract

The Master of Fine Arts degree in creative writing closely resembles the MFA in the visual and performing arts and dramatic writing. The MFA in creative writing is regarded as the appropriate terminal degree for students who wish to prepare themselves for a career in the writing of poetry or prose and for those who may go on to teach those genres.¹

The University of Georgia currently offers graduate students in English the opportunity to *concentrate* in creative writing, i.e., to write an MA thesis that is a full-length work of fiction, poetry, or nonfiction prose. However, in two years of scholarly study at the MA level, creative writing students at the University of Georgia are likely to take fewer courses in creative writing than their peers in two or three years of studio/academic study in most MFA programs and are less prepared to produce a book-length work of publishable quality.² The MA course of study does not adequately prepare students for a capstone graduation project, the thesis, or for a career as a writer and teacher.

MA programs in English with creative concentration are being dismantled and expanded into full-fledged MFA programs in order to keep pace with developments in the field. In addition, institutions that have never before offered a graduate degree in creative writing are turning to the MFA as the standard terminal degree; one of the most recent of these is the University of Wisconsin, Madison. It is common, if not expected, for a large English Department at a major research university to offer an MFA in creative writing. Currently, there are more than 99 MFA programs in the United States. The University of Georgia System is among the few which does not yet offer the MFA at its flagship institution.

The annual *U.S. News and World Report* rankings of graduate programs in creative writing demonstrate an interesting correlation between a program's national reputation and the terminal degree it offers. Of the fifteen programs ranked in the top ten (several are tied) thirteen confer the MFA as the professional degree in creative writing.³

The new Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing at the University of Georgia will give the Department of English, the Franklin College, and the University of Georgia the ability to recruit and retain exemplary students and faculty in creative writing. The program will emphasize both studio work (courses based on craft) and traditional literary study and will be designed to attract a diverse and talented student body and to produce graduates who will go on to write and publish books of poetry and prose with national and international publishers.

The transition from the MA in English to the MFA in Creative Writing can be achieved with a modest investment. The Creative Writing Program currently supports approximately 20 graduate students in creative writing per year and will continue to do so when the program converts its offerings from the MA to the MFA.

For more than fifty years the University of Georgia has been home to *The Georgia Review*, one of the most respected literary journals in the United States, and it is also the home of The University of Georgia Press, with its reputation for publishing award-winning literary and critical work. The internationally acclaimed poetry journal *Verse* is also based at the University. The University of Georgia System is therefore in a position to build a mature and sophisticated literary center, one

comprised of the MFA Program, the Press, the *Review*, and *Verse*.

2. Objectives of the Program

Program Goals

- To provide apprenticing writers the opportunity to pursue the appropriate terminal degree in their field at the state's flagship institution;
- To foster a study of literature at the graduate level that marries theory and practice, aesthetics and scholarship, literary conservation and innovation;
- To prepare graduates for careers as writers;
- To improve the University's ability to address the intellectual interests and needs of women and men from diverse ethnic heritages, economic classes, and geographical regions;
- To support and advance the development of contemporary letters at the University of Georgia, in the state of Georgia, and in the nation;
- To increase the University's ability to attract and enroll the best students;
- To increase the University's ability to recruit, hire, and retain the most accomplished and most diverse faculty; and
- To heighten the University's national and international visibility and prestige.

The mission of the University of Georgia is "to teach, to serve, and to inquire into the nature of things." The teaching and study of the craft of creative writing encourages these activities at the highest of levels.

In addition to its particular themes, The University of Georgia Strategic Plan places strong emphasis on three university goals:

- 1) a statewide responsibility and commitment to excellence and academic achievements having national and international recognition;
- 2) a dedication to serve a diverse and well-prepared student body; and
- 3) a commitment to excellence in research, scholarship and creative endeavors.

The establishment of an MFA program in creative writing at the University of Georgia responds directly to these three strategic goals by giving students at the flagship institution of the Georgia system an opportunity to pursue a rigorous course of study that will lead to lives of letters. In

addition, the program will attract students of a wide range of backgrounds—students from various studies across the disciplines, non-traditional students, returning students. Furthermore, a large proportion of students who enter MFA programs are women and minorities who wish to find a like-minded community of others in which to share their ideas and writing. Creative Writing programs across the United States have helped states to “produce a literature as powerful and diverse as [their] people.”⁴

In addition, the establishment of the MFA program addresses directly Themes 1, 2, and 3 of the Strategic Plan. In short order, the program will establish the University as a “regional and national center for research in the fine arts and humanistic studies” and will “nourish the cultural life of the people of Georgia” (Theme 1). By providing the appropriate terminal degree in the field of creative writing, “the university will ensure that its curricula, degree requirements and instructional methods are [more] responsive to students’ educational objectives” (Theme 2). By expanding the graduate population in creative writing, the MFA program will “increase student enrollment in accord with the university’s mission” (Theme 2). Additionally, by providing a place for writers of all backgrounds to gain training in creative writing, “the university will assure cultural diversity in its student body, faculty and staff” and “increase recruitment efforts and enhance retention . . . for students from under-represented populations” (Theme 3).

3. Justification and Need for the Program

a. Societal Need

A brief history of the field⁵

Creative writing programs have earned a place in universities in the U.S., Canada, the U.K., and Australia because, like courses in literature, they enable students to examine literature critically and to consider the ways in which they, too, might contribute to that literature. Additionally, creative writing programs create a necessary bridge between theory and practice, providing scholars additional opportunities for study of the evolving nature of literature and providing writers an opportunity to understand their place in the field of literary criticism. Like strong programs in literary study, creative writing programs also heighten a university’s visibility and prestige and enhance an institution’s ability to attract the best and most diverse students and faculty in programs across the disciplines.

Creative writing has matured as an academic discipline during more than one hundred years of development, and creative writing programs today are among the most popular in the arts and humanities. The first classes in writing as a discipline were offered at Harvard University in the 1880s and emphasized practice, aesthetics, personal observation, and creativity as well as theory, history, tradition, and literary conservation. In 1930, Norman Foerster, an associate professor from the University of North Carolina, became the director of the School of Letters at the University of Iowa. Foerster’s graduate school contained the precursors of today’s creative writing programs: a course of study leading to a graduate degree, seminars for writers on the issues of craft and form, the study of literature as an art, and a creative work for a thesis.

In 1942, Paul Engle founded the Iowa Writers Workshop. Engle’s graduate program specialized in

the education and nurturing of literary artists and offered a course of study culminating in the first Master of Fine Arts (MFA) degree. In 1946, Elliott Coleman followed suit and founded the Writing Seminars at Johns Hopkins University. In 1947, Stanford University and the University of Denver both launched graduate creative writing programs. In 1948, Cornell University founded its creative writing graduate program.

Interest in contemporary letters gained momentum in departments of English in the 1950s and 1960s as many universities also appointed writers as professors. Among these writers were Howard Nemerov and Bernard Malamud at Bennington College; John Ciardi at Harvard and then Rutgers; Kenneth Rexroth at the University of California, Riverside; Theodore Roethke at the University of Washington; John Barth at Johns Hopkins University; John Berryman at the University of Minnesota; and Richard Hugo at the University of Montana.

Soon, writing programs could measure their success by the writers they attracted as faculty and by the students who studied with those writers. Some of the lineages are worth noting here. At Iowa, Kurt Vonnegut taught a workshop that included John Casey, Andre Dubus, Gail Godwin, and John Irving; and John Berryman taught W.S. Merwin, Jane Cooper, W.D. Snodgrass, and Philip Levine. At Duke, William Blackburn taught William Styron, Fred Chappell, and Reynolds Price; Price, in turn, taught Anne Tyler. At the University of California, Irvine, E.L. Doctorow taught Richard Ford. At Syracuse, Donald Dike taught Joyce Carol Oates, who is now a professor at Princeton. At Stanford, Wallace Stegner taught Robert Stone, Barry Lopez, Ken Kesey, Edward Abbey, Wendell Berry, and Raymond Carver. Many winners of the Pulitzer Prize, the National Book Award, MacArthur Fellowships, and the Nobel Prize are among the graduates or professors of writing programs.

A history of creative writing at The University of Georgia⁶

The University of Georgia has a long tradition of fostering creative writing, a tradition that began more than fifty years ago with the founding of *The Georgia Review* and the University of Georgia Press. *The Georgia Review*, founded in 1947 by English Department faculty member John Donald Wade, has grown steadily to its current position as one of America's premier journals of arts and letters. The University of Georgia Press is one of the largest publishing houses in the South. With nearly a thousand titles in print, the press publishes 80-90 titles each year in a range of academic disciplines as well as books of interest to the general reader. Since its founding in 1938, the primary mission of the University of Georgia Press has been to support and enhance the University's place as a major research institution by publishing outstanding works of scholarship and literature by scholars and writers.

The emergence of a creative writing program for students in the English Department started with the creative writing of its faculty. As early as 1954, the department offered courses in creative writing taught by William Davidson, a poet and Editor of *The Georgia Review*, and John Talmadge, a former writer for *The New York Times*. Later, writer Marion Montgomery joined the faculty, a student of the Vanderbilt agrarians and a protégé of Flannery O'Connor, whom he knew. During the 1960s, other writers joined the department, including published poet Coleman Barks and James Kilgo, who later went on to become the program's director in the 1990s. Students in the program contributed to the journal *Stillpoint*, the undergraduate literary magazine, which has been supported by the department and dean for more than thirty years. Today the program is an annual

host to distinguished visiting writers, most recently George Saunders, Tony Earley, Charles Bernstein, Tomaz Salamun, John Edgar Wideman, James Tate, Heather McHugh, and David Lehman, following the English Department's long tradition of bringing eminent writers to read, among them Robert Penn Warren, Eleanor Clark, Peter Taylor, William Stafford, Walker Percy, Toni Morrison, Robert Frost, Flannery O'Connor, and E. Ethelbert Miller. The transition to the MFA at the beginning of the twenty-first century is an important and logical step in the evolution of the creative writing program at the University of Georgia. Offering the appropriate terminal degree in the field will build on the progress the program has made during the past twenty years.

b. Student Demand

Since 1996, the Creative Writing Program office has tracked the number of queries for the graduate degree in creative writing, the number of actual applications, and the number of admissions. Since 1996, the program has received an average of 300 queries per year by phone, mail, or e-mail. In more than 70% of all queries, potential students ask whether the University of Georgia has an MFA program. Those who query the program at the University of Georgia but do not apply report that they would prefer to attend a university granting an MFA degree.

The undergraduate program at the University of Georgia is also a source of talent and interest, and it is expected that, with the development of the MFA, the undergraduate program will serve as a feeder to this program. Currently, the Creative Writing Program offers introductory courses, advanced courses, directed studies, and honors thesis opportunities to undergraduates each year. The program also runs the Maymester Writers' Institute and a study abroad program in creative writing in conjunction with the University's long-standing program in Cortona, Italy. In total, each year more than 320 undergraduates study creative writing at the University of Georgia, and those numbers are growing annually. Since 1996, the undergraduate program has placed approximately 15 students in top graduate creative writing programs across the country, including the University of Iowa, Brown University, the University of Washington, the University of Massachusetts-Amherst, and the University of Virginia. As the University of Georgia's undergraduate program grows and expands, it will continue to push student demand for graduate-level offerings and degrees. It would be of great benefit to the University of Georgia to keep its most talented undergraduates on campus for its graduate program.

c. Additional Supporting Materials:

Publishing Outcomes

Because MFA programs are designed to train writers, it make sense to examine, longitudinally, the publishing outcomes of comparable programs. An examination of the publishing outcomes for graduates of the University of Georgia's program versus the outcomes for graduates of the MFA programs at Virginia Commonwealth University and Indiana University, is illuminating. The program at VCU is approximately the same vintage as the program at the University of Georgia, while Indiana University provides an example of a slightly more established program.

VCU has a total alumni base of 141 students. 12 alumni are tenure-track faculty at a range of institutions, including University of Illinois, Eastern Michigan University, Old Dominion University, Loyola University of New Orleans, and Knox College. More than 30 alumni teach as

full-time or adjunct faculty at universities, colleges, and community colleges. Alumni have published 11 books of poetry and 14 novels (one an Oprah Winfrey book club selection, another the basis for a BBC mini-series). Alumni also have published their work in major literary venues and received Pushcart Prizes; one edits a major literary journal; and three have co-edited a collection of published and unpublished works by the late poet Larry Levis.⁷

Between 1982 and 2002, the program at the University of Georgia graduated 28 MA students and 17 PhDs. Of those, 9 former PhD students are in tenure-track or contract positions at colleges or universities, including Vanderbilt University, Georgia Tech, Mercer University, Georgia College and State University, Albany State, Morehead State, and Lynchburg State. Five have gone on to publish books with independent and university presses. Three current PhD students have books of poetry forthcoming. Four MA students have gone on to study at nationally ranked MFA programs, and one MA student—the only MA student to have published a book—left the program in order to study at an MFA program.

Examination of other MFA programs nationwide indicates that the University of Georgia could improve its graduate publishing outcomes markedly by offering the MFA and providing students the course work and training necessary for them to go on to a lifetime of productive writing. Students graduating from Indiana University's MFA program after 1989 have produced six anthologies with major presses and university presses; 22 books of poems, including one winner of the Yale Series of Younger Poets Award; 12 books of fiction, including a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year; two memoirs; six books of nonfiction; and four books of translation. Since 1970 (the founding of the Indiana program), graduates have produced more than 135 books, or more than four books per year.⁸

d. Supporting Statements

Please refer to Appendix C, which contains letters of support from Associate Dean Hugh Ruppensburg, Dean Wyatt Anderson, Associate Provost and Vice President for Instruction Thomas Dyer, and outside evaluators from two nationally ranked creative writing programs, including the University of Virginia and Indiana University.

e. Public and private institutions in the state offering similar programs:

Within the state of Georgia, Georgia State College and University at Milledgeville offers the MFA creative writing as well as a creative BA. In the western part of the state, the English Department at Kennesaw State College offers a Master of Arts in Professional Writing, which allows students to “concentrate” in creative writing. In Atlanta, Georgia State University offers two of the same degrees that the University of Georgia currently offers—the MA in English with creative thesis and the PhD with creative dissertation—but also offers students the opportunity to pursue the MFA degree, which is ranked #50 in the *U.S. News and World Report*.

4. Procedures used to develop the proposal

In the Winter of 2001, the Head of the Department of English, Professor Anne Williams, appointed the Director of Creative Writing (Julie Checkoway) to chair an advisory committee to examine the success of the MA and PhD in English with creative thesis or dissertation and the

efficacy of instituting the MFA. The committee consisted of members of the faculty of the creative writing program in the Department of English (Julie Checkoway, Assistant Professor, and Kevin Young, Associate Professor), members of the literature faculty in the department of English (Professors Elizabeth Kraft, Hubert McAlexander and incoming department Head Professor Nelson Hilton), and a member of the Rhetoric faculty in the department of English (Assistant Professor Michelle Ballif). In addition, the committee included two outside members—Professor Stanley Longman, the head of the Drama Department and Director of the MFA program in dramatic writing, and Professor Carmon Colangelo, Director of the Lamar Dodd School of Art.

The committee carried out its charge and concluded that the best path for graduate creative writing at Georgia is the establishment of the MFA program. The chair of the committee consulted with directors of other programs across the country, including Michael Martone, Director of the Creative Writing Program at the University of Alabama, and Jesse Lee Kercheval, Director of the Wisconsin Institute for Writers and the University of Wisconsin MFA Program. The committee also examined the findings of a 70-page report which, in the fall of 1999, had been commissioned by Dean Wyatt Anderson and Associate Dean Hugh Ruppensburg from the Associated Writing Programs, the key overseeing body for creative writing programs in the U.S and Canada. In 2001, Professors Checkoway and Young left for other institutions, so this proposal has been revised and submitted with Associate Professor of English, Brian Henry, as Director of Creative Writing. It is with the recommendation of the Associated Writing Programs, the committee appointed by Anne Williams, the vote of the Department of English, and the support of the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at the University of Georgia that this proposal is submitted respectfully to the Board of Regents of the State of Georgia.

5. Curriculum

The MFA in Creative Writing will be offered by the Department of English in the Franklin College of Arts and Sciences. It will be a Studio/Academic degree. Studio/Academic writing programs place emphasis in their curricula on both writing and literature course work and are founded on the belief that the study of literature is an important part of a writer's development. The Studio/Academic MFA at the University of Georgia will rely on faculty in the Department of English, noted for their scholarly achievement, for many of the literature course offerings, while qualified writers on the Creative Writing Program faculty will offer form and theory courses, workshops, and studio hour and thesis direction. The new degree consists of a minimum of 36 credit hours (excluding hours required for teaching apprenticeships and research hours), requires that students be in residence at least four semesters, and is designed for completion in two years.

All MFA students will complete 15 hours of course work in creative writing, complete 12 hours of course work in graduate-level literature (at either the 6000 or 8000 levels), and three hours of electives.

Within the creative writing requirement, students must complete one three-hour course in a genre other than the student's major one.⁹ Elective courses must be approved by the student's major advisor. Students also will register for a minimum of three Research Hours each semester, or a minimum of 12 hours over two years, and six Thesis Hours in the final semester of study.

Creative Writing Courses	15 hrs.
1 Elective	3 hrs.
4 Graduate-level courses in English	12 hrs.
Thesis Hours	6 hrs.
TOTAL	36 hrs.

Teaching Apprenticeships

Students who are assigned teaching assistantships in composition are required to complete a three-hour teaching apprenticeship. Students assigned teaching assistantships in creative writing are required to complete a one-hour teaching apprenticeship with a faculty member in creative writing.

First-year review

In April of a student's first year, he or she will assemble a portfolio of work accomplished in that period for review by the student's committee. The purpose of the first-year review is to examine the strengths and weaknesses evident in the student's work, to direct the student in future work, and to address the issue of continuance. The committee will respond in writing to the student's portfolio and make an assessment of the student's progress toward the degree and performance in both creative writing and literature courses.

Completion of Thesis

The student is required to submit a book-length manuscript (a minimum of 48 pages in poetry, 150 pages in fiction), preferably suitable for publication on its own, which has been approved by a thesis director, one of whom must be on the creative writing faculty.

Requirements of the thesis are as follows:

- it demonstrates evidence of an original voice or style;
- it manifests an awareness of literary tradition(s);
- it exhibits potential to become a published work of literature.

Sample Two-Year M.F.A. Student Schedule

Semester 1

6000- or 8000-level course in creative writing (3 hours)

6000- or 8000-level course in literature (3 hours)

6000- or 8000-level course in literature (3 hours)

Semester 2

6000- or 8000-level course in creative writing (3 hours)
 6000- or 8000-level course in creative writing (3 hours)
 6000- or 8000-level course in literature (3 hours)

Semester 3

6000- or 8000-level course in creative writing (3 hours)
 6000- or 8000-level course in literature (3 hours)
 Elective Course (3 hours)

Semester 4

6000- or 8000-level course in creative writing (3 hours)
 Thesis Hours (6 hours)

TOTAL STUDIO/ACADEMIC HOURS: 36

Admissions Procedures

Students applying to the MFA in Creative Writing are required to submit the following supplemental materials in addition to meeting the Graduate School admissions requirements:

- 1) a one-page statement of intent
- 2) three letters of recommendation
- 3) a portfolio of creative work (10-15 pages of poetry, and no more than 25 pages of fiction or nonfiction prose)

As in MFA programs across the university and the nation, the portfolio portion of the application will be the main criterion on which admissions decisions are based. However, students are expected, as they are in the other degree programs in English, to demonstrate strong GRE scores and academic performance.¹⁰ In assessing candidates, the faculty in creative writing will take into consideration the quality of the artistic work, the seriousness of purpose as expressed in the letter of intent, the candidate's GRE scores and GPA, and the strength of the letters of recommendation. The faculty will choose the strongest students in each genre—poetry and prose—and submit their decisions for review to the Graduate Coordinator and Department Head. The Director of Freshman English also will be informed of these decisions.

6. Faculty

The faculty in Creative Writing is diverse and highly qualified. All faculty are well-published and enjoy national and international reputations in the fields of poetry, fiction, and nonfiction writing. Please see Appendix D for a detailed inventory of the core faculty's current workload, scholarship,

publication record, and professional activity.

Currently, there are four permanent or “core” faculty members in creative writing (Judith Ortiz Cofer, Brian Henry, Reginald McKnight, and Claudia Rankine) and three adjunct faculty members (T.R. Hummer, Jed Rasula, and Philip Lee Williams). T.R. Hummer teaches two courses every three years; Jed Rasula regularly allows creative writing students to take his literature courses for creative writing credit; and Philip Lee Williams teaches approximately one graduate course in creative writing per year. Therefore, by the fall of 2004, faculty members will cover 5-7 graduate courses in creative writing per year.

7. Outstanding Programs of this Nature in Other Institutions

Three programs were selected as models for our degree program: the University of Virginia, a two-year MFA program located at a state university and ranked #4 in the *U.S. News and World Report* rankings for 2001; Indiana University, a three-year MFA program; and the University of Alabama, a three-year MFA program which provides a competitive program in the Southeast. It is important to note that the number of hours of course work indicated below varies, depending on the number of credit hours per course. At Virginia and Alabama courses are three credit hours each; at Indiana, courses are four credit hours each.

University of Virginia

The English Department at the University of Virginia is a two-year studio/academic program offering the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing in poetry and fiction. To receive the degree a student must complete 36 hours in the following categories: 24 hours of course work chosen from the English Department’s overall offerings (which must be divided into 12 hours of writing courses and 12 hours of literature courses [six before and six after 1800]) and 12 hours for the MFA thesis (six of which may be electives). In total, during two years, students complete four studio courses and four literature courses. There is no foreign language requirement for the MFA. Upon completion of the thesis, the student is given a one-hour oral examination on the writing project by two of the writing program’s faculty members. UVA also offers competitive graduate fellowships (the Hoyns Fellowships at \$28,000 per year), which allow students one year without the necessity of teaching. The program consists of seven full-time faculty members and admits 12 students per year.

University of Alabama

The English Department at the University of Alabama is a three- to four-year studio/academic program offering the Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing in poetry or fiction. To receive the degree, a student must complete 48 hours in the following categories: 18 hours of course work in Literature, 21 hours of writing workshops in the student’s major genre, six hours of workshop in another genre (screen writing or nonfiction), up to six hours of electives, up to six hours of directed readings, and six hours for the MFA thesis. In total, over three to four years, students must complete nine studio courses and six literature courses. There is no foreign language requirement. The MFA comprehensive exam is a three-hour written examination. The MFA thesis is a book-length work: a novel, collection of short stories, or collection of poems. Teaching

Assistantships in composition are given to most applicants. In addition, Teaching-Writing Fellowships in creative writing and Graduate Council Fellowship (non-teaching) are also available. The program consists of six full-time faculty members and invites two distinguished visiting writers for a semester-long residency each year. The program admits 20 students per year.

Indiana University

The Creative Writing Program at Indiana University in Bloomington offers a three-year studio/academic program in fiction or poetry. To receive the MFA, a student must complete 60 hours in the following categories: 16 hours of literature and language, 16 hours of writing workshops, four hours of Creative Writing Pedagogy, Topics Courses, Theory and Craft, and 4-12 thesis hours. In total, over three years, students must complete five studio courses and four literature courses. The MFA thesis is a book-length work, ideally of publishable quality. Teaching Assistantships are available by competition and involve teaching three courses per year, two in creative writing and one in composition. The \$6,000 Ernest Hemingway fellowship and a \$1000 William E. Wilson fellowship are awarded to two outstanding incoming students in fiction. The \$6000 Ruth Lilly Fellowship and the \$1000 Samuel Yellen Fellowship are awarded to the two outstanding incoming student entering in poetry. These fellowships provide incoming students with a year of limited teaching. The program consists of 14 faculty members and admits 12 students per year.

8. Inventory of Pertinent Library Resources¹¹

Overview

The University of Georgia Libraries are a sterling asset for the MFA degree program. Not only are the contemporary holdings extensive, but in 1999-2001, the bibliographer for English and American literature actively built both the monograph and periodical collections in close consultation with the Director of Creative Writing. The Georgia Collection makes available literary and historical material relevant to the state, and the film and media collection is extensive and accessible. In 2001, the library underwent a major renovation that resulted in more computer stations and study rooms. In addition, the new Student Learning Center will enhance the library's effectiveness, particularly its reference and online database services. The library also holds some special collections of rare books and manuscripts. With current volumes held at more than 3,600,000, the library at the University of Georgia is the largest in Georgia and is one of the major research libraries in the Southeast. A recent statistical report (1999) from the Association of Research Libraries, a consortium of the nation's research institutions, ranks the University of Georgia Libraries 35th among 111 university libraries in the United States and Canada.

General Collection

The Libraries' collections are especially strong in the history of American Literature and contemporary British and American authors. The literature of the southern United States is also a strength of the collection. Resources for beginning writers include not only writing guides but also approaches to the philosophy of narrative, the nature of stories, the role of the reader in the making of fiction, and advice for writers. Creative Writing involves drawing inspiration from the full

range of the human experience, as well as the intellectual and social contexts that help shape that experience. Thus, faculty and students in Creative Writing may use resources in many subject areas, such as world history, art, philosophy, religion, Women's Studies, and sociology.

Serials Collection

Serial publications are a special strength in the Libraries' literature and Creative Writing collection. A check of the lists of publications covered in three major indexes (Humanities Index, Arts and Humanities Citation Index, and Year's Work in English Studies) shows that the Libraries subscriptions are comprehensive. In addition to the current subscriptions, the Libraries' retrospective holdings of serials are also quite strong. Many titles, which are not owned in the original, have been acquired in reprint or microform editions. In addition to existing serials in literary studies and Creative Writing, including such titles as *Short Story*, *New American Writing*, *Creative Nonfiction*, *The Paris Review*, *Poets and Writers*, *The Kenyon Review*, *Prose Studies*, *Verse*, and *The Georgia Review*, recent serials acquisitions in these fields include *Bomb Magazine*, *Journal of Caribbean Literatures*, *Fourth Genre: Explorations in Nonfiction*, and *Glimmer Train Stories*.

Microform Collection

The acquisition of a number of major microform sets has contributed significantly to the Libraries' holdings in the fields of English and American literature, resources that may serve as historical background or inspiration in the research and creation of a project in Creative Writing. Such resources in *American Fiction on Microfilm, 1774-1900*, *American Periodical Series, 18th Century*, *American Poetry, 1609-1900*, *Early English Books, 1475-1640*, and *Early English Books, 1475-1700*. Additionally, there are a large number of holdings in other disciplines, especially history, that would contribute to research in Creative Writing.

Reference Collection

The University of Georgia Libraries' general collections are supported and enhanced by an excellent research-level reference collection of both print and electronic resources, including specialized indexes and bibliographies, encyclopedias, dictionaries, biographical sources, handbooks, and concordances. The collection also includes bibliographies on individual authors. Online resources are particularly strong for conducting research on past and contemporary authors, as well as pursuing research for a Creative Writing project. The state-wide system for online research, a consortia known as GALILEO (Georgia Library Learning Online), provides an extensive collection of online databases in all fields of academic study, including History, the Humanities, the Sciences, Medicine, and much more. GALILEO is also an evolving project that allows for new acquisitions to be added to the already extensive collection of online resources. Recent additions that pertain to the study and practice of Creative Writing include *Women Writers Online*, a database that provides searchable full-text records of the writings of pre-Victorian women authors; the *Times Literary Supplement: Centenary Archive*, a database that provides full-text for all issues of the *TLS* from its inception in 1902 to 1980, with frequent updates that will soon provide coverage for the present; and *African-American Newspapers: The 19th Century*, a database that provides invaluable information about this period of American history. As GALILEO continues to grow, the resources it provides will serve students and faculty in Creative Writing with a wealth of contextual information for projects and inspiration for developing ideas.

Special Collections

The Special Collections Department (<http://www.libs.uga.edu/hargrett/speccoll.html>), including the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, the Georgia Newspaper Project, the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame and the Georgiana Collection, the Media Archives, the Peabody Awards Collection, and the Richard B. Russell Library for Political Research and Studies, houses significant holdings in the areas of English and American Literature, as well as information pertaining to regional, national, and international affairs. Holdings in English literature comprise more than 3,000 volumes. The American literature collection focuses primarily on Southern writers and includes definitive collections of Erskine Caldwell and Lillian Smith. Other authors collected in depth include James Dickey, Carson McCullers, Tennessee Williams, and Donald Windham. In addition, both books and manuscripts of twentieth-century Georgia writers are actively sought and acquired. The Georgia Writers Hall of Fame project (<http://www.libs.uga.edu/gawriters/>) is an ongoing effort to form a comprehensive collection of rare and scarce editions of the works of Georgia writers, while also inviting citizens from across the state to nominate authors to be included in the collection. Such materials, and the many in-depth resources available in print and increasingly online, make Special Collections at the University of Georgia Libraries able to provide faculty and students in Creative Writing with comprehensive information about the past, present, and future of authorship.

Media Collection

The Media Archives of the Main Library also houses materials that would support a project in Creative Writing. Media holdings—more than 90,000 titles and five million feet of news film—make the department one of the largest broadcasting archives in the United States. Included in the collection are a large number of recordings of poetry, prose, and drama as well as a comprehensive video collection, with new titles continuously being added. The video collection includes the BBC Shakespeare, feature films based on literary works (e.g., *The Grapes of Wrath*), and outstanding past and current television dramatizations, readings, and documentaries submitted as candidates for the annual Peabody Awards for excellence in broadcasting.

A recent acquisition of more than five million feet of news film from the Atlanta television station WSB, dating from 1949 to 1981, represents a visual history of Atlanta, Georgia and the southeast during a period of growth and social change. No other Atlanta area television stations saved their news film, making this collection a unique historical resource and a comprehensive resource for Creative Writing projects that deal with this period of American history.

Services Available to Assist with Creative Writing Research

In addition to the information and instructional services offered at the Main Library's Reference Desk, a number of other services are available to assist the Creative Writing program's faculty and students with their research. Among these are individual reference conferences by appointment, subject-oriented bibliographic instruction sessions for classes, individual and group training on WWW searching, assistance with searches in online databases such as LION (Literature Online), the MLA International Bibliography, and Dissertation Abstracts International.

9. Facilities

With the recent renovation of room 111 in Park Hall, no additional facilities are expected to be required in the near future. 111 houses the offices of the Director and Coordinator, tables for small meetings/classes, a computer desk, a small library for faculty and students, a reading area, and filing space.

10. Administration

The MFA degree program will be administered by the Director of the Creative Writing Program. The Director has oversight over the creative writing budget, which is the ultimate responsibility of the Department Head in English. The Department Head in English, with the approval of the Dean, would have responsibility of reviewing and appointing the Director. The Director will serve a three-year term, which may be renewed.

Faculty in Creative Writing will be responsible for the oversight of course work, the completion of the thesis, and the evaluation of the MFA comprehensive examination. An MFA Advisory Committee, consisting of individuals from across the arts and humanities at the University and several outside members, will serve in an advisory capacity to the Director and to the Faculty and meet at least twice yearly. The program also employs a 75% time Program Coordinator.

The Director of the Program will report to the Department Head in English.

11. Assessment

The program will use a number of instruments to evaluate the quality of the degree program, its academic and intellectual outcomes, and its progress along the points of its strategic plan and the strategic plan of the University of Georgia.

- Course evaluations: graduate students in the program will be asked to evaluate each course and each instructor in a form specially devised for the MFA program and assessing the quality of instruction and of the classroom experience.
- Exit evaluation: graduate students will be asked to complete a written exit evaluation.
- Faculty program evaluations: faculty will be asked to complete a short evaluation of the program each year for the first five years of the program and will submit these directly to the program director and the steering committee for review.
- Annual report: the Director of Creative Writing will write an annual report on the program for the review of the MFA Advisory Committee, the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Dean of the Graduate School. The Director will include in this report the above evaluation materials, an analysis of learning outcomes, and a report on alumni job placement, publication, honors, and awards.

- Advisory Committee evaluation: the MFA Advisory Committee will submit a brief response each year to the Director's report and accompanying materials, and the program will be subject to ongoing review by the Committee during its periodic meetings.
- Graduate Program assessment: the Graduate Program will assess the MFA program every three years.
- External review: the program will conduct extensive, on-campus, and periodic external reviews.

12. Accreditation

There is no national or regional accreditation board for creative writing programs; however, the Associated Writing Programs provides oversight of the 320 creative writing programs in the U.S. AWP also provides assessment services for creative writing programs across the country. In developing the program, the committee consulted extensively with the Associated Writing Programs and with individual peer institutions. Please refer to Appendix F for the AWP Hallmarks for Graduate Programs in Creative Writing.

13. Affirmative Action Impact

Effective graduate programs in creative writing enhance an institution's ability to attract the best and most diverse students and faculty. "Creative writing programs teach ... students [to] make personal choices in a creative writing class, and each choice makes a difference ... when ... students enter a classroom where their personal choices are respected, investigated, and discussed, they may very well enjoy an experience that may enrich their lives forever—and make them feel truly part of the university, its community, and its mission."¹²

The English Department at the University of Georgia has been active for many years in building a more diverse faculty and student body. The department as a whole already offers courses in multicultural literature at both undergraduate and graduate levels. Among its current faculty are scholars and writers of African-American and Hispanic origins. Many scholars and writers of all backgrounds are deeply engaged in the fields of cultural and multicultural studies, world literature, feminist studies, and literary theory.

Because they encourage the development of diverse voices, MFA programs draw enriching populations of nontraditional and returning students, women returning to school after their childbearing years, and ethnic minorities who know that a graduate program in writing is an oasis in which individual witness and articulation are not only welcomed but nurtured. Through its community of scholars, writers, visiting authors, and students, the MFA program at the University of Georgia will reach more widely into the various communities of the nation and help the University of Georgia's population become more reflective of the demographics of the state of Georgia.

14. Degree Inscription: *Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing*

15. Fiscal and Enrollment Impact and Estimated Budget

Overview

The establishment of the MFA degree program in Creative Writing will have a positive fiscal impact on the university, both in the short and long terms. The program will be able to operate for up to five years on its currently designated annual operating budget. The program, in other words, creates no deficit in terms of the operating budget of the Department of English. The addition of graduate students to the program will bring revenue to the University, as only one half will be supported by 4/9 TAs. The degree program can begin with the current number of faculty and the current levels of funding; the creation of the MFA program does not require the immediate addition of personnel or budget. As the program develops and grows, the English Department and the upper administration will evaluate its needs and decide whether the addition of faculty or other resources is merited.

As the program develops, draws regional and national attention, and builds a strong and successful faculty, alumni, and donor base, it is entirely reasonable to expect that it, like other programs of its kind across the country, will be strong on fund raising. The establishment of the Kilgo-Sapelo Fund, named for Professor Emeritus James Kilgo, raised more than \$14,000 in four months in 1999, establishing a restricted endowment to support the Creative Writing Program and serving as a strong indicator of future, more aggressive fund raising efforts. The Program Director and Program Coordinator will continue to work with the University of Georgia Foundation to identify appropriate private and public funding sources for the program. Additionally, the successful Maymester Writers' Institute, an on-site ten-day writing conference, generates revenue, which underwrites programming year-round for both undergraduate and graduate activities in creative writing.

Given the modest size of the MFA program as proposed and what that program will offer—internationally and nationally renowned faculty, University of Georgia Press, *The Georgia Review*, *Verse*, and the University of Georgia libraries—an MFA program at the University of Georgia would be the most highly sought-after and selective MFA program in the state of Georgia. This will facilitate fund raising. With future fund raising efforts directed toward establishing fellowships for first-year MFA students, an MFA program at the University of Georgia could quickly become one of the most prestigious in the country.

Operating Budget

Note: Approval of this degree will require no commitment of additional resources.

The current operating budget of the creative writing program is as follows:

EXPENSE	SOURCE	AMOUNT
---------	--------	--------

Visiting Writers	Arts and Sciences	\$13,800
	English	\$1,800
Supplies	Arts and Sciences	\$2,700
Subscriptions/Annuals	Arts and Sciences	\$1,000
Advertising/Printing	Arts and Sciences	\$4,100
Personal Services ¹³	Arts and Sciences	\$25,000
	Maymester	\$2,000
4/9 TAships (16)	English	\$192,000
Student Awards	Kilgo Sapelo Fund Interest	\$478
4/9 Taships in creative writing (2)	Arts and Sciences	\$24,000
TOTAL		\$266,878

Enrollment

Pending approval, the program will enroll its first MFA students in the fall of 2004 or 2005 (year one). The program will admit six students per year, three each in poetry and prose.

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MFA's enrolled	6	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12	12
PhDs enrolled	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18	18
TOTAL CWP graduate population	24	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30	30

Financial Aid/Taships

All students will be eligible to teach composition or introductory creative writing in their second year of residence, or after 18 hours of course work at the graduate level. Students who matriculate with 18 hours of graduate course work will be eligible to teach in their first year. Assuming that the number of 4/9 TAships in composition or creative writing will stay constant at 18, the following chart indicates the number of *eligible* MFA students who may be supported each year

by a 4/9 TAship.

¹ AWP Assessment of the UGA Creative Writing Program, 42

² Ibid., 42.

³ The exception to these are Johns Hopkins University, which is the second oldest creative writing program in the U.S., and Boston University, whose creative writing faculty include Robert Pinsky, former Poet Laureate, and Derek Walcott, winner of the Nobel Prize. Both programs offer unique 1-year studio/academic degrees.

⁴ AWP Assessment of UGA Creative Writing Program, 5.

⁵ Ibid., condensed from 4-8

⁶ Thanks to Professors Coburn Freer, Coleman Barks, and Hugh Ruppensburg for assistance in the compilation of this history.

⁷ <http://www.has.vcu.edu/eng/graduate/alumni.htm>

⁸ <http://www.indiana.edu/~mfawrite/grbooks.html>

⁹ Courses in dramatic writing, for instance, include DRAM 6000 (dramatic writing); DRAM 7620 (advance dramatic writing); DRAM 7630 (producing the new script, which brings together writers with actors and directors); and DRAM 8030 (seminar in dramatic writing—an investigation of form and style through research on a single playwright and dramatic writing exercises in form and style).

¹⁰ As in the MA program in English, students are not required to take the GRE subject test.

¹¹ Excerpted from “University of Georgia Libraries Evaluation of Collection Supporting the Creative Writing Program in the UGA Department of English,” prepared by Kevin Farley, English and American Literature Bibliographer, March, 2001.

¹² AWP Assessment of UGA Creative Writing Program, 9.

¹³ 75% Educational Program Specialist (no faculty salaries).